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No. 1

ISRAELI OFFICER DIES OF WOUNDS IN LEBANON

By Hugh Orgel

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The spokesman said he was one of two soldiers wounded when their vehicle was ambushed by small arms fire near Kfar Sil, a village south of Beirut, at about noon yesterday.

Weather-related problems are also troubling Israeli forces in Lebanon. The army has put a specially trained and equipped "Alpine regiment" into action to help soldiers overcome difficulties caused by the bitter cold and snow in the mountainous Shouf area to which Israelis are not accustomed. The unit is said to be combat ready, but its principal task appears to be to dig out soldiers bogged down by heavy snow-falls.

'NORMALIZATION' REMAINS OBSTACLE IN ISRAEL-LEBANON TALKS BUT ISRAELIS EXPRESS SOME SATISFACTION WITH PROGRESS SO FAR

By David Landau

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No Progress Known On Withdrawal Talks

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When Habib was in the region in December he spoke with some optimism of the prospects, but Cabinet sources said nothing further had been heard from the Americans. Withdrawal of foreign forces is to be an item on the Israel-Lebanon talks agenda. Israel assumes that Lebanon will conduct parallel discussions with the Syrians.

Cabinet sources were tightlipped about reports of an Israel-Palestine Liberation Organization indirect dialogue over a prisoner exchange. The sources said Israeli policymakers invested enormous effort -- through a variety of unconventional means and contacts -- to make headway on this issue. But they refused to confirm or deny reports that Austrian Chancellor Bruno Kreisky and leftwing Israeli politician Ariele Eliav are involved in these efforts.

Cabinet Briefed On Violence In Lebanon

The Cabinet heard extensive reports from army officers and intelligence officials on the situation in the Shouf mountains, where violence between Christians and Druze is taking a toll of local lives, sometimes involving Israeli soldiers.

Today's Cabinet communique said the ministers heard of "steps taken to maintain security in the area and to increase precautionary measures to avoid IDF soldiers being hit." Cabinet sources stressed that in fact only very few IDF men had been hit in the Shouf; most of Israel's casualties currently are in the coastal area or around Alei village, near the Beirut-Damascus road.

The sources said Israel was determined to retain its deployment in the Shouf range until Syria indicated its readiness for a mutual partial pullback in which both armies would vacate the mountains, Israel southwards and westwards and Syria eastwards.

Israel's position is that no such pullback can take place unless its prisoners of war and missing soldiers are first restored and until the PLO's estimated 6-7,000 fighters in Lebanon leave the country.

MASSACRE INQUIRY PANEL ENDS HEARINGS AFTER SHARON AVOIDS SECOND APPEARANCE By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- The commission of inquiry into the west Beirut refugee camps massacre of last Sept. 16-18 ended its formal hearings today after it became unnecessary for Defense Minister Ariel Sharon to appear before the body a second time.

He had been summoned today by chief of army intelligence Gen. Yehoshua Saguy for cross examination on certain points of his original testimony. But attorneys for the two men agreed at the last minute that Sharon would make written replies to two key questions. The hearings, in progress since last October 20, would have concluded their second round with Sharon's scheduled re-appearance. The panel is now expected to finish work and submit its recommendations within the next few weeks.

Sharon and Saguy were among nine senior Israeli political and military figures warned by the commission in November that they might be harmed if the panel reached certain conclusions on the basis of their original testimony. The law provides that persons so notified may re-appear to give additional testimony, examine evidence and question witnesses. But this is not mandatory.

Sharon was summoned by Saguy to answer questions about two documents prepared by Israel army intelligence on September 15, a day after the assassination of Lebanon's President-elect Bashir Gemayel which precipitated the Israel army's entry into west Beirut. The documents were said to have discussed the possible effects of the entry into the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps by elements of the Christian Phalangists, the Lebanese armed forces controlled by Gemayel. The Phalangists perpetrated the massacres.

Sharon, in his testimony before the commission, said he had not received the army intelligence documents until the afternoon of September 17, when the massacre had been going on for more than a day. He was subsequently warned by the commission that he might be harmed if it were found that he neglected to consider the danger of revenge and bloodshed by the Phalangists or neglected to take precautions to avert such danger.

12 PERCENT WAGE AGREEMENT AVERTS GENERAL STRIKE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- Finance Minister Yoram Aridor and Histadrut Secretary General Yehruham Meshel signed a new wage contract for public employees late Thursday night. As a result, Israelis were able to usher in the new year freed from the threat of a paralyzing general strike which would have affected virtually all government services from the local to the national level.

The agreement, which provides for an across-the-board 12 percent wage hike for all civil service employees was seen as a retreat by Aridor. The Finance Minister would not budge for weeks above the nine percent increase he originally acceded to. But as more and more civil servants joined the strike each day for the past week, suspending classes for over a million school children and allowing garbage to pile up and fester on the streets, Premier Menachem Begin came under increasing pressure from elected officials to intervene.

Begin normally allows his Finance Minister a free hand to run the economy. But this time, with the situation assuming crisis proportions, he reportedly prevailed on Aridor to yield.

The 12 percent hike was demanded by Histadrut to compensate civil servants for the erosion of their real wages by triple digit inflation. It is linked to a new system of cost-of-living increase payments of a flat four percent monthly. The amount would be subject to review every three months to allow for possible increases during the preceding quarter.

Histadrut had been insisting on a 12 percent pay raise and continuation of c.o.i. increase payments every three months of up to 80 percent of the consumer price rise index. The 12 percent will be retroactive to September. The c.o.i. payments system is subject to further negotiations.

Teachers, university lecturers, nurses and social workers refused to accept the accord signed over the weekend. But they said they would adjudicate their demands without resorting to a strike.

EL AL MAY FLY AGAIN

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- The El Al cliff-hanger teetered over the weekend but came up today pointing skyward. Airline and court sources said some planes may be airborne within the next week or so, probably on the route to South Africa

which the company apparently found its most lucrative in the past.

Israel's national air carrier, grounded for more than three months was facing liquidation, by decision of its shareholders, meaning the government which holds 98 percent of its shares. Talks about re-organization broke down last Thursday night and a Jerusalem district court said Friday it would appoint a permanent receiver this week to wind the company up and sell its assets to private interests.

But last night, at a meeting at his Jerusalem home, district court Judge Yaacov Bazak gave the temporary receiver, Amram Blum, permission to try to get the idle aircraft back into service as soon as agreement is reached on backpay for furloughed employees and severance and other entitlements for the many who will be dismissed.

Management Shake-Up Looms

There are many other debts amounting to millions of dollars. The government is expected to find the money. But there are other problems. The pilots still refuse to accept the agreement Histadrut signed last month with management on behalf of the airline's 5000-odd employees. The pilots, the highest paid group in the company, say Histadrut cannot act as their bargaining agent on issues in dispute with management which impinge on aircraft safety, such as longer hours in the cockpits.

But the pilots are a minority of the workers. Airline sources say qualified pilots are in abundant supply all over the world because of current airline business slumps.

Judge Bazak accepted Blum's choice of Rafi Harlev to replace Yitzhak Shander as president of El Al and has consented to Harlev's decision to replace five of the airline's eight vice presidents. That move would come as some consolation to the 500-600 permanent employees and the 350 temporaries slated for dismissal under the new labor contract.

BEGIN BACKS GOREN, YOSEF FOR RE-ELECTION AS CHIEF RABBI

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- Premier Menachem Begin intervened personally at today's Cabinet meeting in favor of amending an existing law so that Israel's two incumbent chief rabbis can stand for election to second 10-year terms.

Begin was opposed on this matter by Yosef Burg, Interior Minister and Minister for Religious Affairs who is a leader of the National Religious Party and Justice Minister Moshe Nissim, a member of the Liberal Party wing of Begin's Likud. The law at present limits a chief rabbi to one ten year term. Shlomo Goren is the Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi and Ovadia Yosef is the Sephardic Chief Rabbi.

Begin originally wanted Goren and Yosef to be given tenure until they reach age 70, without elections. He agreed to elections on condition that the two incumbents be allowed to run. Chief Rabbinate sources told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that Yosef's re-election was virtually certain.

Goren also has a strong chance of winning, but much will depend on who decides to stand against him, the sources said. One frontrunner is Rabbi Yitzhak Koltitz, of Tel Aviv, a Dayan (judge) of the Supreme Rabbinical Court.

1982 A BAD YEAR FOR POCs, REFUSENIKS IN SOVIET UNION

NEW YORK, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- Theodore Mann, chairman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, announced at the year's end that "deterioration in virtually all facets of Soviet Jewish life occurred" in 1982, most notably in the continuing drop in the

the number of Jews permitted to emigrate with Israeli visas. "This decline in emigration was accompanied by a wave of threats and arrests of Jewish activists, and the heightened oppression of Jewish culture and religion," Mann reported. At the same time, he noted, "three Jewish prisoners, all of them active in emigration efforts prior to their arrests, completed their sentences."

Mann, a Philadelphia attorney reported that "the total number of exit visas granted to Jews last year fell to over 2,600, representing an unprecedented 95% drop from the 51,320 exit permits granted in 1979, the peak year for Jewish emigration. The nearly 110 visas issued to Jews who arrived in Vienna, in December, marked the lowest monthly figure recorded since the current phase of emigration began in 1971. These drastically low figures, at the year's end, left an estimated 400,000 Jews who have shown an interest in reaching their homeland with little hope for the new year," Mann said.

New Arrests

Exacerbating this "tightening of the reins on emigration," Mann maintained, were several arrests of Jews seeking to leave for Israel, most recently Novosibirsk activist Feliks Kochubievsky, who received a two and half year labor camp sentence, and former POC Isif Begun, who was exiled twice before, and was again arrested and threatened with an unprecedented third trial and a long term in a labor camp. Mann observed that although former POC Evgeny Lein was released from labor camp in mid-year, he, too was threatened with re-arrest.

"These arrests and threats nurture fear among the refuseniks throughout the Soviet Union -- the fear that not only will the fulfillment of their dreams of emigrating to Israel be stunted indefinitely, but that their lives will be constantly disrupted by the KGB (security forces) and by the misuse of the law practiced by Soviet authorities," he stated.

Status Of POCs

According to Mann, "the status of two Jewish POCs was altered significantly this past year," indicating "no change in the unending abuses inflicted on Jews already suffering under the Soviet penal system." Anatoly Shcharansky, sentenced in 1978 to 13 years of imprisonment, undertook a hunger strike in September to protest his isolation by the authorities. Sentenced in 1981 to three years in a labor camp, Aleksandr Paritsky was transferred in December to a strict prison environment as further punishment.

"Although three Jewish POCs-- Ida Nudel, Boris Chernobilsky and Vladimir Slepak -- were released from exile or prison," he asserted, "they are being punished again, and their futures are dim as they are thrust back into the emotionally physically-draining difficulties of refusenik life." Nudel, who left her Siberian exile in March, following completion of a four-year term, was finally granted permission to reside in Bendery (Moldavian Republic), after nine months of wandering from city to city. Both Chernobilsky and Slepak returned to Moscow, after completing their sentences of one-year in a labor camp and five-years exile, respectively. Slepak, who in the late 60's was one of the creators of the current emigration activities, had at one time been singled out by President Jimmy Carter for public recognition. He first applied to go to Israel in 1970.

A former public member of the U.S. delegation to the current Madrid Conference to review compliance with the Helsinki Final Act, Mann found the emigration of several long-term refuseniks "a blessing, but, nevertheless, a vivid reminder that the gates have closed to over 10,000 refuseniks who pray that their requests to emigrate will miraculously be approved and the gates will not lock them into lives of oppression."

Among the long-term refuseniks who received visas in 1982 were: former POC Amner Zavorov, Shmuel Shvartsband, Zigmund Rozental, Grigory Freiman, Oleg Popov, and Vladimir and Hanna Magarik.

DUTCH RADIO AUDIENCE GETS LOX WITH ITS EDAM

By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- As 1982 faded and 1983 approached, Dutch radio listeners were treated to 90 minutes of Jewish jokes, told by well known American Jewish comedians, dubbed into Dutch, complete with the Yiddish accent that seems to define that type of humor.

The producer of this cream cheese-and-lox flavored Edam was Nico Hammelburg, whose programs specialize in the humor of ethnic minorities in The Netherlands -- Turks, Moroccans, Guyanese or whatever. Hammelburg, who is Jewish, takes his subject seriously.

The jokes were delivered by such international favorites as Myron Cohn, Robert Klein, David Steinberg, Rodney Dangerfield and Woody Allen. Distinctions were made between comics who were the rage in the "borscht belt" and those who made it big in Hollywood, Las Vegas and the TV talk shows. In most cases, they are the same person.

Hammelburg left nothing to chance. A special segment dealt with the prototypical "Jewish Mother." And let it not be said that Dutch broadcasting lags behind its American counterpart for in-depth analysis. A Jewish psychiatrist, Dr. Samuel Janice, was on hand to explain how and why American Jewish comics tick.

Dr. Janice might have pondered whether the program's effect on its overwhelmingly non-Jewish audience might not have confirmed long held stereotypes about Jews. As for Jews, a generation after the Holocaust, very few if any of the types depicted by the comics still exist, in Holland.

LIZ TAYLOR ADDS FOOT NOTE TO MIDEAST MISSION

TEL AVIV, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- Screen star Elizabeth Taylor who checked into Beersheba's eye, ear, nose and throat clinic briefly last Thursday for treatment of a sore throat and other cold symptoms, required medical attention again yesterday.

This time it was for a slightly bruised foot Ms. Taylor suffered when the car she was riding in to pay a call on Defense Minister Ariel Sharon at his Negev ranch, skidded on a rain-slicked road and ran into the car ahead of it.

The superstar, on a voluntary good-will and peace-keeping visit to Israel, made it to the Sharon spread where she and her party spent several convivial hours with the Sharon family. A physician was summoned to apply necessary treatment to the terminal end of the Taylor vertebrae. She returned to her Tel Aviv hotel later in the evening without further incident.

BONN (JTA) -- Jewish groups and members of the opposition have called on the Bundestag to demand repayment of the 1.2 million mark debt incurred by the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party in 1981.

ISRAEL'S ECONOMY DOWN IN '82, CONSUMPTION UP, YEAR-END FIGURES SHOW

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- Israel's economy performed poorly in 1982 but Israelis as a whole lived better, if their rate of consumption is a guide to the good life.

Year-end figures released by the Central Bureau of Statistics showed that in 1982, for the first time in 30 years, Israel's gross national product failed to increase by so much as a decimal point. But purchases of consumer goods were up 16 percent.

The international balance of payments deficit -- the difference between Israel's hard currency reserves and what it owes overseas creditors -- increased by a half billion dollars. Real wages declined by three percent on the average; the wages of civil servants were eroded a full six percent in value by triple-digit inflation. But private consumption of all consumables rose five percent.

A treasury spokesman said the economy was not all that bad. He cited stability in exports, employment and increased investments. Israel's economy is linked to most Western economies which are in almost continuous crisis, he said. But for Israel, 1982 could turn out to have been a "great economic success story."

The Central Bureau also provided some encouraging data: Increased investments in machinery and industrial equipment and a slight decrease in the number of unemployed.

THE CUSTOMS GIVETH ... AND THE TAX-MAN TAKETH AWAY

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- Israel dropped customs duties by up to 10 percent today on about 1,100 items imported from European Economic Community (EEC) countries. But Israeli customers will hardly notice the difference.

Concurrent with the reduced customs levies, sales taxes were increased by a like amount on most of the same items. The bargains disappeared into the exchequer. Motor vehicles are not any cheaper today because the sales tax equals the amount by which duties were lowered.

The reduction of duties on European goods are the fourth stage of a bilateral customs reduction agreement signed by Israel and the EEC eight years ago. By 1989, all duties on European imports will be eliminated, except for a few selected agricultural products.

December, 1982, was a record month for tax collections on stock exchange transactions. Since the "Peace for Galilee" operation began last June, the State collected 5.5 billion Shekels on stock deals.

POLICE SEIZE 'PLO PROPAGANDA' IN RAIDS ON E. JERUSALEM BOOKSHOPS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- Jerusalem police said today that they seized large quantities of "PLO propaganda" in a series of raids on East Jerusalem bookstores and news stands in the last two weeks. They intend to press charges against seven males, including a minor, for illegal possession and distribution of the outlawed material.

According to the police, the material confiscated at 15 book shops and news stalls include Palestinian flags; calendars depicting the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in west Beirut where hundreds of Palestinian civilians were massacred by Christian Phalangists last September 16-18 while Israeli forces were in occupation of the sector; audio cassettes with Palestinian nationalist songs; T-shirts with Palestinian flags and anti-Israel slogans; and "booklets promoting the Palestine Liberation Organization and other terror organizations."

The police accused the merchants of selling the material at exorbitant prices which allegedly included contributions to the PLO.

SCHOLARS REJECT CHARGE ST. MAXIMILIAN WAS ANTI-SEMITIC

WASHINGTON, Jan. 2 (JTA) -- Allegations that the recently canonized St. Maximilian Kolbe was anti-Semitic have brought several scholars to the new saint's defense.

St. Maximilian, a Polish Conventual Franciscan priest who volunteered to die in another man's place at the Nazi concentration camp of Auschwitz in 1941, was formally declared a saint and a martyr by Pope John Paul II in ceremonies at the Vatican Oct. 10. In December columnist Richard Cohen, who writes for The Washington Post and other newspapers, said that in Father Kolbe's canonization the priest's anti-Semitism "was swept under the carpet" and the church treated it "as a negligible blemish in an otherwise admirable life."

Cohen quoted two statements from Father Kolbe's writings which referred to the spread of communism as part of a Masonic conspiracy by Zionists to take over the world.

In a letter to the Post, Eugene Fisher, executive secretary of the National Conference of Catholic Bishops' Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, said the documentary record of Father Kolbe's writings and actions belies the charge of anti-Semitism. He cited writings in which Father Kolbe repudiated anti-Semitism, and he noted that an estimated 1,500-2,000 Jewish refugees were harbored at the beginning of World War II in the monastery Father Kolbe founded and headed in Poland.

Fisher traced the allegations of anti-Semitism to an article last April in a leading Austrian paper, Wiener Tagebuch (Vienna Journal), but said American scholars had analyzed the article and rejected its conclusions last summer. The priest, said Fisher, "should be not a point of division but a symbol of unity among all who would oppose the evil of anti-Semitism today." The Wiener Tagebuch article had said that Father Kolbe was associated with "rabid, racist anti-Semitism" and that he himself was anti-Semitic.

When the assertions were reported in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch last June, Daniel L. Schlafly Jr., associate professor of history at St. Louis University, and Warren Green, director of the St. Louis Center for Holocaust Studies, issued a joint statement labeling the charges "false."

"Father Kolbe's writings do contain a few references to Jews which reflect the common anti-Semitic beliefs propagated in the 'Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion,' which was a well-known forgery, as well as reflected in the popular Polish-Catholic culture in the interwar period." They added:

"These references were only a tiny fraction of the total works (of Father Kolbe) and were more than counterbalanced by his insistence that one must always act in a spirit of missionary zeal, charity and prudence," Green and Schlafly said.

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