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SOME 250 STUDENTS FROM THE WEST BANK HOSPITALIZED; TERRORISTS SUSPECTED OF MASS POISONINGS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 28 (JTA) -- About 250 students from Arab girls' schools on the West Bank remained hospitalized today from the effects of a poison gas or other substance introduced into their classrooms by unknown persons. None of the youngsters was reported in serious condition. The Health Ministry and army chemists are analyzing the substance but have not yet determined its nature or source.

The mass poisonings occurred in Jenin and nearby Arab towns in the northern Samaria district. According to Palestinian sources, the students began to fall ill a week ago, complaining of headaches, dizziness, stomach pains and other symptoms. A number of adults, including several Israeli soldiers, were also reported to have been affected.

Maj. Amit Sayyad, head of the Israeli civil administration in Jenin charged on a television interview that "enemy elements," meaning apparently Palestinian terrorists, were responsible. He claimed their motive was to incite the local populace against Israel or to punish students who did not participate in anti-Israel demonstrations.

Investigation Is Urged

But an army spokesman said yesterday that there was still no proof that the poisoning was the result of a deliberate act. The mayors of Jenin and the nearby town of Arabe sent letters to United Nations Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar and to the Israeli Health and Defense ministers urging an investigation. Some local Arabs accused Israeli settlers of trying to poison the children.

Voice of Israel Radio reported today that 10 students at a Jenin boys' school were beaten by masked men after they refused to leave their classes to demonstrate. According to the report, the masked men also appeared at a school in Arabe but fled when security forces arrived.

Clashes On The West Bank

Meanwhile, rock-throwing incidents continued to escalate on the West Bank. Two Israeli police officials were killed in separate melees but were unhurt. Gabi Eshton, Superintendent of Police for the Samaria district, was surrounded in Burka village by Arab youths who burned tires and stoned his car. He fired a weapon into the air and escaped. The Israeli police chief in Nablus was also the target of stone-throwers as he drove through the city. His car was badly damaged.

EXPERTS ASSESS ANTI-JEWISH ATTITUDES ARISING FROM LEBANON WAR

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, March 28 (JTA) -- While classic forms of anti-Semitism are under control or even diminishing in Western Europe, there is an urgent need to counteract anti-Jewish attitudes arising from the Middle East conflict, according to Jewish commu-

al experts from nine countries attending a forum here sponsored by the European office of the American Jewish Committee. The forum is chaired by Tullia Zevi, president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities.

It was stated at the forum that many Jews perceive, rightly or wrongly, that anti-Jewish attitudes were fostered by what they regarded as biased media coverage of the war in Lebanon last summer, particularly on television. This resulted in the "demonization" of Israel, the portrayal of the Palestine Liberation Organization as an innocent victim and an attribution of "collective guilt" which held all Jews responsible for the plight of the Palestinians, the experts said.

In addition, anti-Israel hostility in many countries spilled over onto the European Jewish community creating tension and, at times, a dangerous atmosphere for Jews. The experts stressed the need for discussions between Israelis and the Jewish communal leadership on the effects of certain Israeli policies on European public opinion and on European Jewish communities.

Meetings with media representatives were urged to discuss the nature of the war in Lebanon, its coverage by the media and its consequences. The experts warned, however, that it was important not to lump all the media together because of the excesses of some.

While shocked by recent terrorist attacks on Jewish institutions in Europe, Jewish communities do not see these as signaling an upsurge of anti-Semitism in Europe but rather an attempt by Arab forces to bring the Middle East conflict to the European scene to frighten Europeans away from support for Israel.

TERRORISTS ATTACKING IDF SAID TO COME FROM WEST BEIRUT AND AREAS HELD BY THE SYRIAN FORCES

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 28 (JTA) -- The commander of Israeli forces in Lebanon, Brig. Gen. Amnon Lipkin, told foreign correspondents based in Beirut that terrorists who attacked Israeli soldiers in Lebanon came from West Beirut and areas held by the Syrians, passing through regions held by the Lebanese army and the multinational force.

He said the terrorists belong to the Palestine Liberation Organization, most of them from its mainline Fatah organization controlled by Yasir Arafat. Lipkin said that during the past four weeks seven or eight ambushes had been laid against Israeli forces, killing two Israeli soldiers and wounding seven others. He declined to say how many of the attackers had been detained.

In reply to a question, he said the IDF would not enter Beirut in pursuit of attackers. He said the maintenance of order in Lebanon was not easy but also not an impossible task.

Lipkin indirectly criticized the multinational force, saying they could do more to prevent terrorist attacks. He said Israeli soldiers had strict instructions to avoid any conflict with members of the international force, adding he hoped the relations with them would improve.

In Honor Of Lubavitcher Rebbe's Birthday: N.Y. GOVERNOR AND LEGISLATURE PROCLAIM '82 DAYS OF EDUCATION'

ALBANY, N.Y., March 28 (JTA) -- Governor Mario Cuomo, the New York State Assembly and State Senate have proclaimed "Eighty-Two Days of Education" in honor of the 81st birthday of Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe, and the start of his 82nd year.

A joint resolution of the Senate and Assembly declared that the proclamation of the period, March 25 to June 14, was issued "as world Jewry is now celebrating the 81st birthday of its revered leader." March 25 corresponds to Nisan 11, 5743, Schneerson's birthday. The first day of Schneerson's 82nd year is Tamuz 3, corresponding to next June 14.

At a special reception at the Legislative Office building here, Rabbi David Raskin and Rabbi Shmuel Butman of the Lubavitch Youth Organization were presented with the joint resolution document by Assembly Speaker Stanley Fink; Assemblyman Howard Lashe; Sen. John Marchi; Rabbi Israel Moshowitz, Cuomo's representative; and 100 members of the Senate and Assembly.

Presenting the Senate resolution, Marchi said he was "privileged" to have been received by Schneerson. Fink said Schneerson "has done so much for education throughout the world."

Cuomo was host for a special reception for the Lubavitch Youth representatives and the Senate and Assembly leaders. He presented to the Lubavitch leaders his proclamation of March 25 to June 14 as "New York State Eighty-Two Days of Education." Butman, director of the Lubavitch Youth Organization, opened the sessions of both the Senate and Assembly for the proclamation event.

JEWISH LAW SCHOOL STUDENT ASSOCIATIONS JOIN FIRST NATIONAL JEWISH LAW SCHOOL STUDENTS NETWORK By Ben Gallob

NEW YORK, March 28 (JTA) -- An official of the first National Jewish Law School Students Network said today that Jewish law school student associations at 20 colleges and universities have joined the new umbrella organization to coordinate association activities and facilities communication between the member affiliates.

The Network was organized at the first national conference of Jewish law school students, held at Harvard Law School earlier this month and attended by about 100 students, according to Richard Berenson, a Harvard student who is co-chairperson of the Network's first executive board. Eve Lerman of the University of Michigan Law School is the other co-chairperson. Berenson said all 20 associations are represented on the executive board.

Berenson, in a statement issued in connection with a report on the first conference and amplified in a telephone interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, said he felt "there is a great deal that Jewish law school associations can do to protect Jewish interests on campus and to build a sense of community among Jewish law students."

According to a report in the Harvard Law Record, the day-long national conference "focus-

sed on the special problems that Jewish practitioners sometimes face -- religious dilemmas, ethical conflicts, anti-Semitic clients and judges -- and on specific ways that attorneys have found to combine a Jewish commitment with the practice of law." Prof. Alan Dershowitz, one of the speakers, told the delegates that, "barely 20 years ago, blatant anti-Semitism was quite common in the legal establishment."

Jewish Interests On Campus

Asked to describe Jewish interests on campus which the associations, through their new Network, could act to protect, Berenson told the JTA that there were a number of past and current projects sponsored by the Harvard association on behalf of such interests which the Network was planning to promote among its 20 member student associations.

Among the programs the Harvard association organized is videotaping of lectures given at law school classes during the High Holy Days which can be studied by Jewish students who choose not to attend class on those days, Berenson said.

He said the Harvard University administration arranges for the videotaping, a procedure which began "several years ago" after "some pressure" was exerted on the university administration by the Harvard association. Berenson said the association is now seeking to persuade the administration to change the dates for such classes so that Jewish students can attend actual classes and not be dependent on videotapes.

Berenson said another situation in which the association acted involved a conference a year ago sponsored by the American Indian Association, which invited participation by a member of the Palestine Liberation Organization Mission at the United Nations.

Berenson said the Harvard association organized a silent protest outside the meeting hall. He said some 200 students, including non-Jewish Harvard students and faculty members and students from nearby colleges, came to join the protest.

He said Network planned a monthly newsletter, with the first issue to be out around April 15. He said members of affiliated associations had reported to the chairpersons they were working on reports and articles for the Network newsletter, as yet lacking a name and an editor, and that he expected 150 copies of the first issue would be printed and distributed.

That estimate raised the issue of the number of Jewish students in the 20 associations. Berenson said he estimated the number of active members in each association at around 30, making the active national membership of Network around 600 students. He said the network planned annual national conferences, with the second one probably to be held next March at a site yet to be chosen.

Schools With Jewish Law Student Associations

He listed the schools at which Jewish law student associations had been formed, in addition to Harvard and Michigan, as: American University in Washington, Antioch School of Law, Boston College, Boston University, Bridgeport University School of Law, Cardozo Law School, Columbia University Law School, Georgetown University Law School, George Washington University, Northwestern University, Maryland University, Northeastern University, Hofstra University, Temple University, Yale University, Villanova University, Cornell University, and Suffolk University in Boston.

FOCUS ON ISSUES WOMEN SURVIVING THE HOLOCAUST

By Aviva Cantor

NEW YORK, March 28 (JTA) -- The first conference on "Women Surviving: The Holocaust" concluded an arduous and often tense two days of eliciting testimony from survivors in an attempt to ferret out what was particularly "female" about their experiences and behavior during that traumatic era, revealing both the absence and the urgency of serious research on the subject.

The conference, held at Stern College here last week, was sponsored by the Institute for Research in History and Programs in Public Philosophy under a grant from the New York Council on the Humanities. Close to 400 people, the overwhelming number of them women and a goodly number of them survivors and survivors' children, took part in the gathering, some of them traveling there from as far away as the south, midwest and London.

Dr. Joan Miriam Ringelheim, a Kent Fellow at The Center for the Humanities of Wesleyan University, convened the conference after finding little research on the subject, or indeed interest in it by scholars in the past several years she has been studying it. The history of the Holocaust, she said, was incomplete without this information.

The conference format was built around blocks of questions asked of survivor panelists by moderators as well as members of the audience. The moderators' questions were rooted in the premise that women had experiences in or responses to the ghettos, concentration camps and resistance groups that were different from those of men.

Four Major Issues

Four major issues came up repeatedly in the questions directed at survivors by panelists and participants: were women less or more vulnerable during the Holocaust because they were women? what survival strategies specific to women did they employ? what was the nature of women's resistance? and, what were relationships between and among women like?

There was general agreement that women were more vulnerable than men in situations where they were involved with minor children. Dr. Sybil Milton, archivist at the Leo Baeck Institute and one of the few scholars to make a formal presentation, on "Issues and Resources," at the conference, said that "women went to their death with children" when they underwent a selection upon arrival at a death camp. These women, she added, were not necessarily the children's mothers, but also relatives, friends or anyone standing with a child at that time.

One survivor said that while women were killed in larger numbers than men when they arrived at the camps with children, they survived the camps in larger numbers. This statement, about survival rates, however, was not substantiated with statistical data.

Issue Of Vulnerability

There was some difference among survivors as to whether the German "purity laws," prohibiting sexual contact between Germans and Jews, prevented the rape of Jewish women. One survivor said the laws prevented mass rape but not "sporadic cases."

Survivors agreed that women were less vulnerable under certain circumstances because their Jewish identity could not be easily and immediately proved, as could the men's because of circumcision. Vladka Meed, who had participated in the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, said it was "safer" for women to go among Poles and work as underground couriers.

Vera Laska, a non-Jewish Auschwitz survivor who had served in the Czech resistance movement, added that women were generally not suspected of underground activities because of the prevailing patriarchal views of women as innocuous.

Female Survival Strategies

Considerable time was devoted to exploring whether women had employed specifically female survival strategies. Milton said in her presentation that women in the Warsaw Ghetto survived starvation better than men because they knew from experience about cooking, nutrition and meal planning and, unlike the men, could conserve and manage food. Several survivors amplified this with stories of how their mothers had carefully rationed out the meagre supply of bread available, so it would last.

Milton also pointed to housekeeping skills and emphasis on appearance as survival strategies. Women's concerns for their appearances and for keeping clean, she said, was a factor in spiritual resistance that "enabled them to maintain some part of their former personality" in the concentration camps. This, however, as one participant said privately, was also true of men.

Several survivors related the importance of their mothers' "feminine wiles" in distracting Germans from looking at their papers and under other circumstances.

While most survivors seemed to view all these aspects of women's traditional role as positive and effective, survivor Mira Hammernish pointed to its negative side. Having left the ghetto to her mother's distress, she said, she survived because "my mother's maternal power did not touch me. The qualities Jewish families emphasized could be our undoing."

Obviously concerned about the focus on these strategies as a key to survival, several survivors emphasized again and again that they survived through luck and luck alone. Said one: "We are remnant of a hurricane; we survived through chance."

Role Of 'Female Bonding'

There were a great many questions on relations among women, and whether "female bonding" contributed heavily to survival, especially in concentration camps. Susan Cernyak-Spatz, a survivor of Theresienstadt and Auschwitz, said that friendships in the camps were based on one's work commando, which shared the same bunk. "Without the close support of this group, you couldn't survive," she said. Laska added: "The bonds I formed in the concentration camps will last forever."

Several survivors told of being saved in the camps by their mothers and sisters. What the men's relationships were like was not discussed nor, indeed, has it been a subject of research.

Survivors pointed out that in resistance groups, the strong and intense bonds of friendship were not exclusive to women, and that all friendships in these groups were close. Helen Levine, a former partisan, said, "we were all like one family; we cared for each other." Meed added that, in the absence of a family in the ghetto and under conditions of loneliness, "I don't know if I would have survived without this closeness."

Resistance in the camps often took the form of sabotage, which survivors said was very widespread and pervasive. Laska told of people throwing pebbles into machines to stop production; another survivor told of putting good bullets into the pile of defective ones and vice versa; a third, of destroying clothes in camp warehouses so they could not be shipped to Germany.

Very little, however, was revealed about ghetto resistance, or women's role in it, beyond the mention that the majority of couriers were women. Some panelists expressed the view that "just living from day to day" in the ghettos constituted resistance. "Everyday life in the ghetto was full of sacrifice and heroism," Meed said.

This tendency to glorify women's behavior and ignore possible negative aspects of it was a characteristic of the entire conference and seemed to infuse statements by many survivors as well as members of the audience. Many of the participants in the conference appeared to seek to draw on the Holocaust for their Jewish identity or want to believe that all women were brave and kind, or both.

The moderators did not ask survivors about negative aspects of women's behavior, such as women becoming *kapos*, and most survivors did not volunteer such information. The only exception was at the panel on concentration camps, where two survivors told how other women had put them in danger out of fear of collective punishment.

The Crucial Omission

The most crucial omission at the conference was of presentations by scholars to put the survivors' testimony in historical context. In addition to Milton, the only other Holocaust scholar to address the gathering was Prof. Henry Friedlander of Brooklyn College, who spoke about "The Camp Setting." There were no introductions along similar lines to the panels on ghettos and resistance.

There was a virtually total absence of Jewish cultural and political context as well. There was no discussion of the traditional roles of European Jewish women as enablers in the family and community, nor was any information presented on the cultural, religious and political life of European Jews, and the role women played in it, before and during the war.

This tended to strand the testimonies of the female survivors in a vacuum, and made it impossible to determine the degree to which the background and milieu of Jewish women's behavior during the Holocaust were contributing factors in their actions.

With all these limitations, the conference, whose proceedings are slated for publication, was significant as well as unique. It encouraged female survivors to think about how being women was a factor in what they experienced and did, and to bring to the fore and share in an accepting atmosphere information historians had never elicited before. Thus the conference opened up this vast and largely unexplored area, called serious attention to its urgency and, in the words of one participant, "legitimized it" as a subject of study.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES A CERTAIN IRONY

By James Rice

CHICAGO, March 28 (JTA) -- Morris Ghitzis, an 88-year-old former pharmacist of Chicago, finds a certain irony in his life these days. He has been writing for American Yiddish publications for more than 40 years. But in Chicago there are no longer any Yiddish schools or publications.

The only place his articles and books are being published now is in the Soviet Union. Three years ago he became a featured writer in Sovietish Heimland, the government sponsored Yiddish magazine.

Ghitzis mused about this in a recent interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency shortly after The New York Times published an article dealing with new support for Yiddish in the Soviet Union.

The articles referred to a book by Ghitzis to be published as a special supplement in Sovietish Heimland. The Times described this as "an unusual case of a book by an American Yiddish writer being published."

Ghitzis pointed out to the JTA that this was not "unusual," since Sovietish Heimland has been publishing his works for the past three years. In 1980, Aaron Vergelis, editor of Heimland, visited Chicago on a trip to the United States and invited Ghitzis to write for the publication. Ghitzis said he is regularly and well compensated for his work.

The book by Ghitzis, that is to appear as a special supplement in Heimland's May edition, not March as erroneously reported in the Times, is entitled "Mensch zu Mensch," which Ghitzis translated as "From One Human Being to Another." He would not describe the story in detail, but said it was a romantic tale about a wealthy old man and a beautiful young woman.

Proud Of His Friendships

Ghitzis has numerous acquaintances among Jewish literary figures and communal leaders. He spoke with special pride of his friendship with Boris Smolov, editor emeritus-in-chief of the JTA and with the late Irving Abrams, former president of Chicago HIAS. Ghitzis and his wife of more than 60 years have no children, but he has a brother in New York and sisters in Israel and Peru. His parents, who remained in the Soviet Union, died in a Nazi concentration camp in Transnistria.

Ghitzis was born in Russia where he became a pharmacist, practicing three years in Donbas, a steel center, where he "learned much about the life of the proletariat." He also is a talented amateur painter. The walls of the Ghitzis' modest apartment are covered with his paintings.

A friendly man, whose alert manner and vigor belie his age, Ghitzis has also produced a film, "Yiddish Poets and Writers in America," which is in the archives of YIVO and the National Center for Jewish Film, formerly associated with the American Jewish Historical Society.

'DAYS OF REMEMBRANCE' PROCLAIMED BY GOVERNOR OF WEST VIRGINIA

CHARLESTON, West Virginia, March 28 (JTA) -- Governor Jay Rockefeller has proclaimed the week of April 10-17 as West Virginia's "Days of Remembrance of the Victims of the Holocaust."

During a proclamation signing with state legislators and area Jewish leaders, the Governor said: "We must always remember this tragic chapter of our world's history. Once we forget, we could open the door for other events just as devastating."

"Bigotry, such as that portrayed by the Nazi Germans, provides a breeding ground for tyranny to flourish, and we must remind ourselves frequently of the horrors of World War II to prevent another Holocaust," Rockefeller said.

The Governor urged citizens of West Virginia to overcome prejudices and inhumanities through education, vigilance and resistance, especially through this important week.

BONN (JTA) -- The Frankfurt-based Central Welfare Office of Jewish Communities in West Germany has reported a very small drop in the number of Jews currently registered in the Federal Republic. They total 28,202, 70 fewer than were registered as of July, 1982. The number is expected to decline further. The largest Jewish community is in West Berlin where 6,548 Jews are registered, followed by Frankfurt and Munich.