

SIX JEWS AMONG THE VICTIMS IN MEXICO CITY'S EARTHQUAKE

By William Saphire

NEW YORK, Sept. 23 (JTA) -- Six Jews were killed by the earthquake that devastated the center of Mexico City last Thursday. They were buried yesterday, Rabbi Morton Rosenthal, director of the Latin American Affairs department of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, informed the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today. Between 3,000 and 5,000 people were killed in the earthquake.

One of the dead was a woman who succumbed to a heart attack, brought on apparently by the quake. The others appear to have died in the rubble of collapsed buildings. Rosenthal obtained his information from sources in Guadalajara, Mexico's second largest city, who were unable to supply names or ages of Jewish victims. The sources told him they had telex communications with Mexico City which, four days after the disaster, remains unreachable by telephone from the United States.

Rosenthal confirmed reports from other Jewish groups here that the main Jewish residential neighborhoods in Mexico City sustained little or no earthquake damage. But Jewish owned businesses, warehouses and factories near the center of the city are believed to have suffered severe damage and property loss could be heavy. Those premises, however, were not occupied during the early morning hours when the quake struck.

Damages To Jewish Buildings

Rosenthal was the first to report Jewish fatalities. He said that the Ashkenazic Kehila building, known locally by its address, Acapulco 70, had smashed windows but apparently no other serious damage. The building, housing the offices of the Ashkenazic community, is located in the Condesa district, not far from the center of the city.

Rosenthal said there was also some damage to an old Sephardic synagogue. Otherwise, the Sephardic neighborhood in the Polanka district was unharmed, according to Yitzhak Schonfeld, a 22-year-old Brooklynite who has been a student at the Keter Torat Yeshiva in Mexico City for four years and returned home Saturday night. He spoke to the JTA by phone yesterday. He said "many buildings were destroyed" in the Jewish textile industry section of the city and that some buildings in the Ashkenazic neighborhood were cracked.

A spokesperson for the American Jewish Committee told the JTA today that as far as they knew, as of this morning, "the neighborhoods more or less where Jews live were not touched" by the earthquake and that the Israel Embassy in Mexico City was not damaged.

Sidney Gruber of the World Jewish Congress, said he heard "second hand" that the areas where most Jews live were undamaged. He said he has been trying, so far without success, to contact the offices of the Committee Central Israelita de Mexico.

Jacob Kovadloff of the AJCommittee's Latin American department told the JTA he had to rely on friends in Houston for information on Mexico City Jews because telephone and cable connections are down.

SHULTZ: U.S. IS COMMITTED TO CONTINUE ISRAEL-ARAB NEGOTIATIONS

By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, Sept. 23 (JTA) -- Secretary of State George Shultz declared today that the U.S. is committed to continue negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbors with the goal of reaching a peaceful agreement.

"The past year has seen major efforts toward new negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbors," Shultz told the General Assembly today. The Secretary of State, who opened the Assembly's general debate, added:

"The U.S. is committed and engaged in support of those efforts in accordance with President Reagan's initiative of three years ago." Shultz said that progress in the Middle East can only be achieved through direct negotiations, based on United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

"There is no other way, an evasion of this reality only prolongs suffering and heightens dangers. Nothing positive will ever be achieved by chasing illusions of 'armed struggle'; but much can be accomplished by parties who are committed to peace and engaged in serious dialogue," Shultz said.

'The Moment Is At Hand'

He concluded his brief remarks on the Middle East by declaring that "The moment is at hand--this year--to make major progress and to begin direct negotiations."

Shultz also recalled that 15 years ago, peace between Israel and any of its neighbors seemed "a remote if not impossible dream." But he said that finally "a courageous leader, Anwar Sadat, abandoned the old ways of thinking and took the step no other Arab leader was prepared even to contemplate: He recognized that the State of Israel was here to stay and with Prime Minister (Menachem) Begin, vowed there would be no more wars. Peace and normal relations were established and the Sinai was returned."

Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who arrived in New York last night, was at the General Assembly during Shultz's address. Later, Shamir addressed the Presidents Club of the Israel Bond Organization. (See separate story, P. 3.)

KOCH DENOUNCES FARRAKHAN AS A 'NAZI IN A CLERICAL COLLAR'

By Kevin Freeman

NEW YORK, Sept. 23 (JTA) -- Mayor Edward Koch yesterday denounced Black Moslem leader Louis Farrakhan as a "Nazi in a clerical collar" and said he hoped Farrakhan's scheduled rally at Madison Square Garden on October 7 does not draw protest demonstrations "so as not to give him even greater notoriety."

"I hope that no one will do that," declared Koch in remarks during dedication ceremonies of the new Riverdale YM-YWHA, the Fred and Anna Landau Building. "But I am sure that those hopes are in vain because there will be people not recognizing that they are helping him, who in justifiable anger -- indeed fury -- will do that."

Today, Koch was meeting with Jewish leaders to map strategy regarding Farrakhan's scheduled rally, it was learned here.

The Mayor noted yesterday that ecumenical services will take place on October 5 in New York marking a "national day of mourning" for Black South Africans and he suggested that this forum be used by leaders -- especially non-Jewish leaders -- to speak out against Farrakhan. Koch, in other remarks, noted that despite Farrakhan's anti-Semitic preachings, he "has the right to speak" at the rally.

Anti-Semitic, Anti-Zionist Diatribes

Farrakhan, head of the Chicago-based Nation of Islam, propelled himself into the national spotlight last year with his association with the Rev. Jesse Jackson during the Democratic Presidential primary campaign. He accompanied Jackson to Syria to help negotiate the release of a captured Navy aviator. Later, Jackson dropped Farrakhan from the campaign.

But it was Farrakhan's anti-Semitic, anti-Zionist diatribes that drew much national attention, and particularly angered the Jewish community. He has been quoted as describing Judaism as a "dirty religion," and calling "the presence of a state called Israel ... an outlaw act."

In a June, 1984 speech at his headquarters in Chicago, broadcast on local WBEE radio, Farrakhan said Israel "will never have any peace because there can be no peace structured on injustice, lying and deceit and using the name of God to shield your dirty religion under his holy and righteous name."

But despite the intense criticism of Farrakhan from a wide spectrum of the religious and political community, he has retained his drawing power. Last June he addressed a rally of some 10,000 at the Convention Center in Washington, and earlier this month addressed more than 15,000 at a rally at the Forum in Los Angeles.

Both speeches contained Farrakhan's usual vicious anti-Semitic canards. In Washington, he said, "I'm not backing down from the Jews because I know their wickedness. I'm not separating just Zionists out because the Zionists are the outgrowth of Jewish transgressions."

The speech in Los Angeles, site of the second largest Jewish community in the United States, resulted in serious strains between Black and Jewish leaders. Jewish leaders called on Black civil rights and political leaders to denounce Farrakhan before the speech for his past "anti-Semitic and anti-American" remarks.

'Moderate' Black Leaders Fail To Act

According to Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, some "moderate" Black leaders failed to condemn Farrakhan, and he noted, some of these same leaders had seats on the stage at the Forum during Farrakhan's address.

Mayor Tom Bradley, who is Black, refused repeated private and public requests from Jewish officials in Los Angeles to denounce Farrakhan prior to the speech. Bradley later condemned Farrakhan's racism and bigotry. Bradley said local Black leaders met at his request with Farrakhan's representatives seeking to urge the Black Muslim to delete "the rhetoric of racism and hate."

Farrakhan told his Los Angeles audience: "I did not come here to Los Angeles to attack Jews or to attack anyone but to tell the truth." He asserted that Jewish groups opposed to him had gone "to Black leaders with an already signed statement telling them to sign it or else."

He said some Black leaders bowed to the pressure by Jewish leaders while those who did not were told by Jewish leaders they would not forget. Farrakhan then said: "We will never forget who sold our fathers into slavery. Don't push your six million down our throats when we lost 100 million" in slavery.

ARENS SUMMONS BRITISH ENVOY TO PROTEST ABOUT ARMS DEAL AND INVITATION TO TWO PLO MEMBERS By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 23 (JTA) -- Acting Foreign Minister Moshe Arens summoned British Ambassador William Squire to the Foreign Ministry today to convey Israel's displeasure over British plans to sell Jordan and Saudi Arabia \$4.4 billion worth of combat aircraft and other advanced weaponry and to protest Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's invitation to two ranking members of the Palestine Liberation Organization to meet with her in London.

Arens, substituting for Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir who is in New York attending the United Nations General Assembly, told reporters after the meeting that he had informed the British envoy that Israel regards these moves as a radical deviation from the common position taken by Western democratic nations with respect to the Middle East.

He said he disagreed with the views expressed by some Western experts that the weapons sales would not affect the military balance of power in the region. "I would be very surprised if anybody with knowledge of military technology and the Mideast arms balance would make such a statement," Arens declared.

Referring to the Tornado jet fighter-bomber which Britain has contracted to sell to Saudi Arabia, Arens observed it was a good aircraft, especially suited to high speed, low level penetration raids, a capability that causes serious concern in Israel. He noted that the Saudis have an air base at Tabuk which is a very short jet flight from Israel and which could serve as a base for attacks on Israel.

Arens added that the Tornado is a significant addition to the very large weapons arsenal the Saudis already possess. "If these weapons were insignificant and really made no difference to the arms balance, you wouldn't think that either the Saudis or the Jordanians would purchase them," he said.

B'NAI B'RITH ALLOCATES INITIAL \$1,000 FOR DISASTER RELIEF IN MEXICO

WASHINGTON, Sept. 23 (JTA) -- B'nai B'rith International has allocated an initial \$1,000 for disaster relief in Mexico and called on its lodges, units and individual members to make similar contributions.

B'nai B'rith International president Gerald Kraft, who announced the plan to aid the victims of last week's disastrous earthquake, said that funds would be distributed as soon as the most effective use of the money can be determined.

Checks should be made out to B'nai B'rith International, earmarked "Mexico Earthquake Relief," and mailed to B'nai B'rith Community Services, 1640 Rhode Island Ave., N.W., Washington, D. C. 20036.

2,000 RALLY ON BEHALF OF SOVIET JEWRY

NEW YORK, Sept. 23 (JTA) -- Some 2,000 persons staged a rally today across from the United Nations urging that the issue of Soviet Jewry and human rights be given "high priority" in discussions between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The rally, sponsored by the Coalition to Free Soviet Jews, coincided with an address to the General Assembly by Secretary of State George Shultz and came on the eve of the address at the UN by Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.

Hebert Kronish, chairman of the Coalition, said, "The situation of Jews in the Soviet Union is becoming increasingly desperate. Soviet Jews who are applying for exit visas are not only being refused, they are being persecuted and imprisoned."

He said, "Our message to the Soviet Foreign Minister is that we do not intend to relent in our efforts to end the harassment and intimidation of Soviet Jews. We intend to devote our full energies on their behalf, and we will continue to demand that they be delivered from exile."

Only 29 Jews were permitted to emigrate from the Soviet Union last month, according to figures released by the Intergovernmental Committee for Migration, based in Geneva. This is a sharp drop from the 174 allowed to leave in July. So far in 1985, the Soviets have allowed 704 Jews to leave the country. By contrast, over 50,000 were allowed to leave in 1979.

SHAMIR: BEGINNING OF ECONOMIC RECOVERY IN ISRAEL HAS BEGUN

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, Sept. 23 (JTA) -- Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir today told the Presidents Club of the Israel Bond Organization that although there is a long way toward an economic recovery in Israel, the beginning of such a recovery has already taken place.

Speaking at the luncheon meeting at the Regency Hotel here, the Foreign Minister and Deputy Premier said that Israel needs now to increase exports and increase investments in its economy. "For that we need the support of the Jewish business community in the United States and around the world. There are signs that we are going to get that help," Shamir said.

Recalling that he recently completed a visit to Japan, Shamir noted that the Japanese business community is extremely fearful of the Arab boycott and therefore has been withholding conducting business with Israel. He said that Israel is very much interested in developing economic ties with Japan. He called on American Jewish businessmen who do business with Japan to use their influence with the Japanese, and convince them to do business with the Jewish State.

Main Problem In The Mideast

Turning to Israel's relations with its neighbors, Shamir said that Israel is interested in improved relations with Egypt. He said that there are differences in the unity government in Israel as to how to get this improvement.

But he said the main problem in the Middle East is that Israel still faces the Arab's denial of its existence. "We still face terrorist activities," Shamir said, which is the "outstanding expression of the Arab refusal to accept Israel."

The Israeli Foreign Minister blasted Britain and its Premier, Margaret Thatcher, for inviting two Palestine Liberation Organization leaders to visit London. "It is a terrible blow to the peace process in the Middle East, and an appeasement of terrorism. We hope no other Western country will behave likewise," Shamir said.

He praised the United States' strong position against terrorism. He said that despite differences between the two countries, the relationship between Washington and Jerusalem is very good and the cooperation on all levels between the two governments continues. "We are friends," he declared.

REAGAN AND MUBARAK MEET FOR AN HOUR; NO CHANGE IN U.S. OR ARABS' POSITIONS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Sept. 23 (JTA) -- The Reagan Administration is still hopeful that direct negotiations between Israel and a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation can begin before the end of the year, a senior Administration official said today.

The official made the statement as he briefed reporters on the one-hour meeting at the White House between Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and President Reagan at which he indicated there has been no change in the positions of the United States or the Arab countries. When it was suggested at the end of the briefing that the report just given was "bleak," the official replied, smiling, "The situation is not bleak."

During a picture-taking session in the Oval Office before the meeting, Reagan was asked whether he agreed with State Department officials who had been saying that this is the "year of opportunity" for making progress toward a peace settlement in the Middle East. "Everyday is an opportunity," the President replied.

The official said that Mubarak wants to push the momentum forward on the peace process and he "thinks time is wasting" and "hopes initiatives can be taken." Mubarak "is anxious that the process be given a push," the official said. But while saying that Mubarak has many ideas, the official would not give any details of how the Egyptian President sees the process being pushed ahead.

However, the official noted that Mubarak believes the U.S. should talk to a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and stressed that the Palestine Liberation Organization has given "implicit" recognition of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 in the agreement signed with King Hussein February 11. Mubarak said the PLO would make this recognition "explicit" during the "dialogue" between the U.S. and a joint delegation.

Reagan reiterated the U.S. position that the U.S. is ready to talk to the PLO once it accepts publicly the two UN Resolutions and Israel's right to exist. "We have asked very plain, they must be equally plain," the official said. He said Mubarak did not discuss his meeting with King Hussein last week, since Reagan will be hosting the Jordanian monarch next Monday.

The two Presidents also discussed Israel-Egyptian relations and the Administration official said the U.S. was "happy" that Egypt and Israel had agreed to hold another meeting on the Taba issue in Cairo Thursday which the U.S. will attend.

Mubarak met with Reagan after meetings with Treasury Secretary James Baker and Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger and a luncheon meeting with Vice President George Bush. He was scheduled to meet with members of the Senate and House late this afternoon before leaving for New York where he is scheduled to address the UN General Assembly on Wednesday. Hussein is to address the Assembly on Friday.

SPECIAL TO THE JTA JEWISH LIFE REKINDLED IN OSLO

NEW YORK, Sept. 23 (JTA) — The dramatic story of how an isolated European Jewish community, without a rabbi for more than 20 years, bounced back from the Holocaust with the aid of the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture and the local community, came to light recently, according to a report by the Foundation.

From 1958 to 1980, Oslo, Norway, functioned without a rabbi. It fell upon Michael Melchior, the eldest son of a Danish family counting six generations of rabbis, to rekindle Jewish life in one of world Jewry's loneliest outposts. There are some 900 Jews in Norway, almost all of them in Oslo, of a population of 4.115 million.

Trained in Israel with the help of the Foundation and the Oslo community, Rabbi Melchior opened the first kindergarten in Oslo since the Holocaust and revitalized the afternoon schools, which teach children from ages 7 through 13. In 1979, there were 39 children receiving religious instruction at the Jewish Community Center in Oslo. The number for 1985 is 68.

Melchior has reactivated the youth groups. Teenagers study Jewish history, Zionism and religious texts. More than 80 percent of all Jewish youth are now being reached.

Working With Children

Herman Kahan, vice president of the Oslo Jewish Community, describes one way in which Melchior works with children:

"Expectant faces wait every Friday for the weekly appearance of 'Michael,' as they call him. One week, he appears as a pirate; the next, an expectant mother. His imaginative disguises inspire the children to listen to his words and appreciate Shabbat as something very special. And special it is for the children who bake challah, say kiddush and light the Shabbat candles every week. Basic elements of Hebrew are taught in the Jewish kindergarten; and every 17th of May, the Norwegian national holiday, the children march under their own banner in a children's parade.

Through the children's choir that Melchior initiated, he has also brought new life and increased attendance at the synagogue, bringing into the synagogue's orbit much of the community's youth and many young couples as well.

Adult education has also been a focus of Melchior. A large number of workshops have been organized under his leadership with study groups in Pirkey Avot, Jewish thought, and Jewish holidays. Melchior's wife, Hannah, has taught classes for potential converts.

Kosher Food Center Established

Melchior was instrumental in establishing the Kosher Food Center, a grocery which at the time of its opening in November 1981 had the largest selection of kosher foods in Europe. Since 1982, the Center has provided food amounting to \$30,000 each year to the Jews in Poland. This enterprise has come about thanks to an agreement with Norway's Church Relief Society (Kirkensnødthjelp).

In addressing the larger concerns of the Jewish community, Melchior interprets Judaism and the Jewish community to the Christian community through regular contacts with churches, universities, schools and service groups.

One of Melchior's greatest achievements is the creation of the Norwegian Council of Soviet Jewry, in which he serves as co-chairman with Christopher Gjøtterud, Professor of Physics at the University of Oslo. The Council has been very successful in raising the issue of Soviet Jewry at the highest level of government in Norway.

At the end of this year, Melchior will make aliya. The Oslo Jewish leaders have come up with a plan which will be put into action next year.

Melchior will commit himself to reside in Oslo for four months of every year — including the High Holy Days — and will receive a salary which covers his year's expenses. This solution will enable him to continue his studies in Israel the rest of the year.

The help that the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture has provided Melchior is in line with the emphasis the Foundation is placing on service to dispersed Jewish communities — communities that are isolated both from Jewish life and from other Jewish communities.

ROSH HASHANAH IN MONTEVIDEO

MONTEVIDEO, Sept. 23 (JTA) — The celebration of Rosh Hashanah in Montevideo had a very significant impact in the general population of Uruguay, thanks to the initiative of B'nai B'rith in this country.

Alfredo Neuburger, B'nai B'rith International's director for South America, reported that three special programs on the significance of Jewish New Year have been aired by three of the four television stations, on the evening of September 14, the afternoon of Sunday the 15th, immediately prior to the start of Rosh Hashanah and on Tuesday the 17th, upon the conclusion of the two-day celebration.

The programs included a presentation by Vito Atijas, acting president of the Uruguayan district of B'nai B'rith, and Eduardo Kohn, executive director; greetings by the Israeli Ambassador in Uruguay, Dr. Manojem Carmi, and films showing Jewish life in Israel and the diaspora.

After describing briefly B'nai B'rith's history and philosophy, Atijas indicated that "our organization, the oldest and largest Jewish service movement, is proud to present to the Uruguayan people images of the Jewish nation throughout the world." Atijas concluded by wishing "that we in B'nai B'rith commit our effort to help build a world of peace for all humanity."

The combined audience of the three programs was close to two million people throughout the country, which is the equivalent of over 80 percent of the total population.

AN ODD COUPLE

JERUSALEM, Sept. 23 (JTA) — A tiny aberration from the total hostility between Israel and Libya took place earlier this month in Milan, Italy. An Israeli diplomat was active in drafting an international diplomatic document — and a Libyan diplomat was active in having it endorsed by a United Nations agency. The event occurred at the Seventh UN Congress on the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders.

The Israeli delegation, together with Australia and the United States, drafted a resolution on domestic violence entitled "Victims of Crime" — and the Second Committee of the Congress, chaired by Libya, adopted the resolution unanimously. The Israeli diplomats reported back to Jerusalem on this rare chink in the bleak wall of enmity.