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THIRD LEBANESE JEW KILLED

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Feb. 17 (JTA) — The body of a Jewish hostage shot and badly beaten before his death was found Sunday morning in west Beirut. Ibrahim Benesti, 54, is the third Jewish hostage to be murdered in two months by a Shiite fundamentalist group.

The gang, "The Organization of the Oppressed of the World," said they have kidnapped two more Jewish hostages. They are believed to hold already five other Jews.

Benesti's body was found dumped near a vegetable market in the Kaskas area, which borders on the green line separating de facto the Christian east from the predominantly Moslem west Beirut. He had been shot once in the back of the head, but medical examiners say he had been badly tortured and beaten before his "execution." His chest and stomach were covered with cuts, bruises and burns.

A statement found pinned on the body said he had been killed "for having been an Israeli spy" and as an example "to all other Israeli agents." Police found in one of his pockets Polaroid photographs showing the victim and two other middle-aged bearded men with visible scars on their faces. They were identified as Yehuda and Yossef Benesti, presumably members of the same family. Yehuda Benesti was reported last year as one of the seven Lebanese Jews who were abducted last spring.

Two months ago "The Organization of the Oppressed of the World" murdered two other Jewish hostages, Prof. Isaac Tarrah, 59, and Haim Cohen Halala, 38. Since these killings, most members of Beirut's already small Jewish community are said to have fled. Some reports say there are now less than 20 Jews left in the city.

The group had also claimed responsibility for the hijacking of a TWA airliner to Beirut in June 1985. The hijackers had then demanded that Israel set free all Shiite prisoners held in Israel and in south Lebanon. Israel had refused to deal with them or give in to their demands.

Statement Found On Benesti's Body

The statement found pinned to the group's latest victim renewed this demand. It said that 300 Shiites are being held prisoners by the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army in a camp near the Israeli border. The SLA has refused to free the prisoners it holds in Khiam, some 20 miles north of the border.

The group also said Benesti had been killed to protest "Israel's violation" of the El Aqsa mosque on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. It called the victim "a pillar of Israeli espionage in Lebanon." The dead man was known, Jewish circles said in Paris, as a quiet businessman who minded his own business. He settled in Beirut, coming from Sidon, 35 years ago. It is not known if he was married and had children.

There are still contradictory reports on how many Jewish hostages are still held by the terrorists. According to most counts and to the terrorists themselves, the group now holds five of the original seven kidnapped in spring 1985, plus the two kid-

napped last week. Some private sources say the terrorists might only hold a total of six as they could be counting one man, known by two names, twice.

PROSPECTS FOR EMIGRATION OF JEWS FROM ETHIOPIA ARE GRIM, U.S. OFFICIAL SAYS

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, Feb. 17 (JTA) — A State Department official said Monday that the prospects for the emigration of the some 9,000 Jews who still remain in Ethiopia are grim and that the situation is not likely to change in the near future.

"Ethiopian Jewry's present situation is without prospects at all," Princeton Lyman, United States Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, told the plenary session of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC) at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. "I do not anticipate any dramatic breakthrough in the situation" in the near future, he added.

Lyman explained that most of the emigration of Ethiopian Jews in the last few years, including the airlift known as "Operation Moses" which brought about 10,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel more than a year ago, took place through the Sudan.

But this is no longer possible since the removal of Sudan's moderate, pro-Egyptian president Gaafar Nimeiry last spring and the establishment of a radical regime amidst political turmoil all over the country, Lyman said. He said that "Operation Moses" has become a major political issue in the Sudan, viewed by many Sudanese as an "insult to Sudan's national honor."

In view of this development, Lyman asserted, "it is impossible to conceive of the Sudan as a pathway for Ethiopian migration in the near future."

A Complicated Situation

The situation of Ethiopian Jews is complicated by the attitude of the military-Marxist-pro-Soviet government in Ethiopia, Lyman said. "The government objects to free Jewish emigration. They resent the attention of the international community to the Jews of Ethiopia. But at the same time they are sensitive to the international attention to the Jews," he said.

Lyman said that relationships between the U.S. and Ethiopia are not good, and that that makes it difficult on Washington to exert any influence on the issue of Ethiopian Jews.

According to Lyman, Ethiopian Jews were not hit by the terrible drought in that country, because the Gondar region where they live was not part of the drought area. He said, however, that they continue to live in "great poverty."

Lyman said that despite the grim prospects for the emigration of Ethiopian Jews, efforts on their behalf must continue, including visits by American Jews to that country. "It is important to keep up activity and concern for the Jews of Ethiopia," he concluded.

Integration Into Israeli Society

Another speaker at the plenary session, which opened Sunday and will conclude Wednesday, was Chaim Aron, chairman of the Immigration and Absorption Department of the Jewish Agency, who focused on the

problems of integrating Ethiopian Jews into the mainstream of Israel's society. Apart from the problem of adjusting to a modern Western society, the Ethiopian community in Israel today has its unique problems, Aron said. He disclosed that about 40 percent of the community is of one-parent families of either a mother or a father with one child or more. He said many of the Ethiopians who came to Israel left their spouses or families behind. "One of the parents is missing or was lost on the way (to Israel)," he said.

Another problem, according to Aron, is that of leadership in the Ethiopian community. "They already have 12 different organizations," and they cannot decide on one leader or organization to represent them, he said, adding: "The Ethiopians in Israel are very divided. They must unite in order to achieve their goals."

AVITAL AND ANATOLY SHCHARANSKY NOW FEEL THE SAME WAY ABOUT EACH OTHER AS THEY DID BEFORE THEIR SEPARATION

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Feb. 17 (JTA) — Avital and Anatoly Shcharansky say they do not feel any different about each other now than they did 12 years ago before their separation. This is the core of what the couple divulged in an interview Monday on ABC-TV's "Good Morning, America."

"I must disappoint you," Anatoly Shcharansky responded to host David Hartman's opening question about their personal rapport, a subject which has intrigued people both in Israel and abroad since the two were reunited last week after their 12-year separation the day after their wedding in Moscow.

The couple exchanged affectionate looks frequently during the interview from Israel which appeared to override the apparent differences in outward garb. Avital Shcharansky wore a head covering in accordance with Orthodox interpretation of Jewish law, while Anatoly Shcharansky was as bareheaded as the first day he stepped off the plane in Israel.

"He's the same," replied Avital, adding that they didn't feel they had been separated at all.

When asked by Hartman how her husband's account of his prison ordeal tallied with what she had known through her contacts, she said she "was amazed" by his ability to overcome the difficult conditions he had lived through. Avital Shcharansky's main source during her husband's prison confinement was his mother, Ida Milgrom, who was only able to visit her son infrequently during the nearly nine years of his incarceration in Soviet prisons.

Asked to pinpoint what allowed him to be able to avoid "falling in line" as so many other political prisoners do, Shcharansky replied, "The fact that I was dreaming of being a free man. I was simply trying to remain myself all the time."

Skeptical About Change In Soviet Policy

Shcharansky also indicated his skepticism regarding unconfirmed news accounts that his release from Soviet prison might be a harbinger of more freedom for Soviet Jewish dissidents. "All this talking makes me very skeptical," he said.

He made the same point Sunday in an interview from Jerusalem on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press" when he cautioned against undue optimism that any substantive changes in Soviet policy are imminent. Shcharansky stressed that recent moves by Soviet

leader Mikhail Gorbachev to "demonstrate" to the West that "he is ready to make some changes in his policy" should not be interpreted as a shift toward liberalization.

"Unfortunately, there is a set tradition that almost always when the Soviet Union makes such signs (it) immediately takes some steps in (its) inner policy in order to discourage those who can be encouraged by those signs," Shcharansky told the reporters.

He illustrated this warning by noting that after the Soviets signed the Helsinki accords in 1975, pledging implementation of provisions on family reunification, dissidents were arrested for calling attention to Soviet violations of these agreements.

Shcharansky said that if the Soviets are indeed going to pursue a policy of "more liberalization," on emigration, they should be "encouraged." But, he warned, "if it is some separate acts, it must be made clear that they wouldn't be able to deceive the West so as they were trying to do 10 years ago."

Conditions In Soviet Prison Camps

Conditions in Soviet prison camps, Shcharansky added, have been "becoming worse and worse" in the past two-and-a-half years. He was not asked by the reporters to specify what conditions he referred to. "The more Gorbachev was speaking about the civilized methods of behavior, the more I was surprised by the fact (of) how uncivilized the policy of the camps is."

Meanwhile, Shcharansky said that he has accepted an invitation extended by Mayor Edward Koch to visit New York. He will go there, he added, after he has had a short rest.

GERMAN MAYOR RESIGNS FOLLOWING UPROAR OVER HIS STATEMENT THAT A FEW RICH JEWS SHOULD BE KILLED

By David Kantor

BONN, Feb. 17 (JTA) — The Mayor of a West German town who suggested that "a few rich Jews should be slain" in order to balance the budget, has resigned under a barrage of criticism. Wilderich Von Mierbach of Korschenbroich, a town of 27,000 in North Rhine-Westphalia, said he was quitting to avoid further damage to West Germany's image abroad and to the process of German-Jewish reconciliation.

Von Mierbach made the anti-Semitic remark at a meeting of the town council's budget committee last December. The local newspaper, owned by a member of the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), the Mayor's party, suppressed it but it came to general media attention last month and triggered outrage.

Von Mierbach offered an apology. But the Jewish community in nearby Dusseldorf filed a law suit and calls for his resignation came from non-Jewish as well as Jewish quarters.

Last Friday the Mayor said he'd had enough and could no longer take the media pressure. Word from headquarters of the CDU in Bonn that he could no longer rely on its support apparently prompted his decision to leave office.

TERRORIST BOMBINGS IN ISRAEL

JERUSALEM, Feb. 17 (JTA) — Six people were injured when a bomb exploded on a Petach Tikva-to-Tel Aviv bus Friday morning. Two bombs exploded in a Jerusalem suburb Sunday morning without causing casualties or damage.

The bus bombing occurred as the vehicle was passing through the religious township of Bnei Brak just north of Tel Aviv. Two of the passengers sustained slight injuries and three were treated for shock at a nearby hospital. The sixth injured passenger was driven away in a private car. His condition was not known. Police cordoned off the area to search for clues.

The early morning bombing in Jerusalem occurred near a bus stop in the French Hill suburb where soldiers travelling to the West Bank usually congregate to hitch rides. Later in the morning, a bomb exploded in a garbage can near the Kupat Holim medical center in the Ramot Eshkol suburb. Police said they do not believe the second bomb was planted by terrorists but did not say why.

There have been six bombings in various cities and towns since last Thursday. The explosion in the bus Friday was the only one to cause casualties.

2 IDF SOLDIERS KIDNAPPED AND 2 OR 3 SLA SOLDIERS KILLED IN LEBANON

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 17 (JTA) — Two Israel Defense Force soldiers were kidnapped in south Lebanon Monday, two or three South Lebanon Army soldiers were killed and another SLA man is missing, after a three-car convoy of IDF and SLA soldiers was caught in an ambush at noon Monday, the IDF spokesman said.

The spokesman said that extensive searches by reinforced IDF troops were being carried out in the security zone near Beth Yahun village north of Bint J'ba'il and in the region north of the zone where the attackers presumably fled, probably taking their hostages with them. The incident occurred in the south Lebanon area patrolled by the Irish contingent of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL).

According to military sources, the incident occurred when three civilian cars carrying the SLA and IDF men were on what was described as a routine patrol in the security zone north of Bint J'ba'il.

The first car, carrying two SLA soldiers, passed safely at a bend in the road near the checkpoint at Beth Hanoun on the edge of the zone, but the second car, carrying an IDF officer and two SLA soldiers, was damaged by a roadside bomb. The two SLA men were killed.

The third car carried two IDF officers, an SLA driver and an SLA soldier, and it was apparently those in the third vehicle who were captured by terrorists, whose membership in any particular organization is so far unknown.

Exaggerated Reports Denied

Military sources said the situation was still unclear, and further details were still awaited. But the sources denied the exaggerated reports from Sidon which spoke of a battle between the Irish UNIFIL soldiers and the IDF, or the movement of a large column of IDF tanks northwards.

The IDF sources said the present operation in Lebanon following the incident is to cut off escape routes to the kidnapers and their prisoners, and to try and find the location of the missing IDF and SLA soldiers. Beirut television was reported to have shown pictures of an IDF soldier it said had been captured.

TOGO AND CAMEROON EXPECTED TO RESTORE DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH ISRAEL

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 17 (JTA) — Togo and Cameroon are expected to be the next African states to restore diplomatic relations with Israel, sources here said Monday. Speculation to that effect was raised by news that the Foreign Ministry's Director General, David Kimche, is visiting both countries this week.

Ivory Coast re-established diplomatic ties with Israel last week and officials here said at the time that two other Black African nations would shortly follow suit. Togo and Cameroon, like Ivory Coast, were formerly governed by France, though a part of Cameroon was once administered by Britain under a League of Nations Mandate.

They would bring to five the number of African states which broke with Israel after the 1973 Yom Kippur War to re-establish diplomatic relations. Zaire and Liberia resumed their ties with Israel last year.

RITA LURIE DEAD AT 74

CLEVELAND, Feb. 17 (JTA) — Funeral services were held here Sunday for Rita Lurie, a social worker and volunteer on behalf of Jewish Welfare causes here. She died last Wednesday at the age of 74 in her daughter's Pacific Palisades home after a long illness.

Lurie was a long-time volunteer on behalf of the Jewish Federation in Cleveland, its Jewish Family and Children's Service Agency, and her synagogue, The Temple. "She considered helping other people, whether family or friends, as her profession," said her son, Rabbi Brian Lurie, executive director of the Jewish Community Federation of San Francisco, the Peninsula, Marin and Sonoma Counties.

A native of Russia, Lurie was brought as an infant to the U.S., where her family settled in Tindle, South Dakota. They moved to Cleveland when Lurie was in high school. She lived in Beechwood, Ohio, a Cleveland suburb, for many years after marrying the late Lawrence Lurie, whom she met when both attended Case Western Reserve University. Lawrence Lurie died in 1972.

GOLDSTEINS TO LEAVE THE USSR

NEW YORK, Feb. 17 (JTA) — The National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCSJ) has confirmed that Isai and Grigory Goldstein of Tbilisi have been given permission to leave the Soviet Union. They are expected to go to Israel. The Goldsteins were among the founders of the present-day repatriation movement among Soviet Jews.

The Goldsteins, both of whom are physicists, have been refuseniks since 1971. Over the years, they were periodically harassed and questioned by the KGB. Grigory, the older of the two brothers, was arrested for "parasitism" in 1978 and sentenced to one year in a labor camp. Although fired from their jobs, they have been working as television repairmen, and in other related technical jobs.

Recently the brothers, together with Isai's family, which includes his wife Elizaveta, their son Avi, his mother-in-law, and their mother, were on a list of 19 Jews in five families submitted by Senator Edward Kennedy (D. Mass.). Following a visit to Moscow earlier this month, the Senator announced that they would be permitted to leave the Soviet Union.

STATE DEPARTMENT'S ANNUAL HUMAN RIGHTS REPORT CITES COMPLEX HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN THE WEST BANK

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 17 (JTA) -- Israel's human rights problems are largely due to the "tensions" between Israeli authorities and the Arab residents of the areas taken in the 1967 Six-Day War, according to the State Department's annual reports on human rights throughout the world.

This assessment in the Department's 10th annual "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices" released last Thursday is essentially the same as has been made in the past. The 1,140-page report, which is mandated by Congress, covers human rights conditions in all countries that are members of the United Nations.

"The complex human rights situation in the occupied territories is largely the result of the fact that since the 1967 war and in the absence of a peace settlement, the territories remain under military administration and there is friction between occupation authorities and the Palestinian population which opposes Israeli control," the 1985 report said.

Symptoms Of Friction

"Among the symptoms of friction are active resistance to the occupation, including episodes of violence, sometimes encouraged by outside extremist groups. Friction also arises from security measures taken by Israel to counteract terrorist acts and threats of terrorism, and to counter other kinds of activities which the Israeli authorities assert endanger security."

The report adds that "another cause of friction is the introduction of civilian settlers, although settlement activity has slowed."

In addition, the report noted that "frictions are exacerbated by some Israeli political elements who advocate annexation or permanent Israeli control of the territories as well as by the refusal of the principal Palestinian organizations to recognize the State of Israel."

The report also pointed to "a marked increase in violent acts in 1985" against both Jews and Arabs in the West Bank. "One or another faction of the PLO as well as a variety of PLO dissident groups claimed responsibility for nearly all acts of violence against the IDF or Israeli civilians," the report said. But it adds that most of the violence "appears, however, to have been spontaneous and local."

Israel itself is praised as a parliamentary democracy "characterized by its openness and by its wide-ranging and lively public debate of all issues."

Situation In Syria and Iraq

The report also contains information on the condition of Jews in other countries.

On Syria's 3,000-4,000 Jews, the report said they are free to practice their religion, and their general situation "has improved in recent years, despite continuing uncertainty over the community's future" and they enjoy "a relatively good standard of living, access to higher education, and entrance into the professions."

But "Jews are subject to restrictions on foreign travel, however, and unlike other Syrian communal groups, the passports and identity cards of Jewish citizens contain a notation that the holder is Jewish," the report adds.

In Iraq, where the Jewish community now numbers only about 400, the report finds "there is no evidence of recent persecution." In 1985 a Western journalist visited the last known synagogue in Baghdad and confirmed that it is still functioning.

Conditions In Lebanon and Morocco

The report noted that "Lebanon's tiny Jewish minority has been intimidated by kidnappings during 1985 and very few Jews remain in their traditional neighborhoods in west Beirut."

In Morocco, the some 10,000 Jews operate schools and institutions as well as 20 major synagogues, and have the support of the King. Unlike the situation in other Arab countries, Moroccan Jews are allowed to maintain close ties to Jews elsewhere, including Israel.

Jews In Tunisia, Yemen Republic and Ethiopia

Jews also worship freely in Tunisia, although synagogues and Jewish-owned shops have been attacked during period of tension, according to the report. But it notes that after the Israeli raid on PLO headquarters in Tunis, "the government took extraordinary measures to protect the Jewish community."

In the Yemen Arab Republic, the report finds that the tiny Jewish community lives peacefully, practices their religion freely and suffers no unusual economic hardships.

"They maintain only very limited contact with Jews abroad," the report adds. "Communications between Yemeni Jews and their coreligionists and relatives in Israel are strictly prohibited."

The report said that in Iran, Jews are permitted to practice their religion, but unlike other groups Jews are subject to travel restrictions.

In Ethiopia, the government continues to prevent emigration and to restrict Hebrew instruction, according to the report. But the report said that claims of genocidal or brutal action against Ethiopian Jews is unfounded. (See related story, P. 1.)

Soviet Union Criticized

The report repeats the criticism of the Soviet Union cited in another recent State Department report of official anti-Semitism, crackdowns against Hebrew teachers and continued low emigration.

At a briefing Thursday Richard Schifter, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, was asked if he believed the release of Anatoly Shcharansky may mean a change in the Soviet attitude. He said he had "high hopes" that emigration may be allowed to increase.

The report found conditions better for Jews in other Eastern bloc countries. In Rumania, the government continues to support a widespread and active Jewish community organization. The same is true in Czechoslovakia.

In Argentina, the report found that the 250,000-member Jewish community practices its religion freely, although anti-Semitic incidents do occur occasionally. The government has condemned religious prejudice and there is legislation pending that would provide penalties for racial, religious and other forms of discrimination.