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**MYSTERY SURROUNDS FATE OF LEBANESE
JEW TERRORISTS CLAIMED TWICE
TO HAVE 'EXECUTED'**

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, June 21 (JTA) -- The mystery deepened over the fate of Elie Srour, one of six Lebanese Jews kidnapped in West Beirut on March 30, 1985. A terrorist group, calling itself "The Organization of the Oppressed of the Earth," claimed last Friday that it had "executed" Srour in "reprisal" for recent Israeli air strikes at terrorist targets in south Lebanon.

But the same organization announced Srour's "execution" last December 30, alleging he was an Israeli "spy" who "belonged to the Mossad while claiming to act as president of the Lebanese Jewish community."

The latest "execution" was announced in a handwritten note discovered by police along with a photograph of the victim. The photograph was identified as Srour but police could not say when it was taken.

Srour was seized more than two years ago outside his electrical appliance shop in west Beirut. He had headed the Hevrat Kadisha, the Jewish burial society in Beirut.

Ten Lebanese Jews have been kidnapped during the past two-and-a-half years. Their captors claimed that seven were "executed." Only three bodies were found. No traces have been found of Srour or the others.

The Jewish community here and groups in Israel have been trying to learn the fate of the missing men, so far without success. The announcement of Srour's "execution" twice in six months, each time for different reasons, has added to the puzzle.

(In New York Sunday, Morris Abram, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said "The contempt for human life by Shiite terrorists is underscored once more by the murder of Elie Srour . . . Coupled with the kidnapping of the American journalist, Charles Glass, this latest atrocity reveals again the cruelty of the terrorists and their mindless nihilism.")

He added that the war against terrorism will be won "when the West exhibits the will and the strength to crush those who challenge the rule of law and the moral values of civilized society.")

**SHAMIR, RETURNED FROM AFRICA TOUR,
SAYS HE RAISED ETHIOPIAN JEWS' PLIGHT
WITH AFRICAN LEADERS**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 21 (JTA) -- Premier Yitzhak Shamir said on his return from West Africa Sunday that he had raised the plight of Ethiopian Jews with the African leaders he met and urged them "to try to exert their influence on Ethiopia so that this problem will be resolved." There are between 7,000-15,000 Jews remaining in Ethiopia in dire circumstances but unable to leave.

Shamir said Israel is ready to solve the problem "in any possible way to put an end to this trag-

edy." He said of his hosts, "I found considerable response among all of them. . . I spoke with heads of state, I asked them to intervene with the Ethiopian authorities. Whether and how far this will help, no one yet knows. We are trying."

Shamir, who visited Togo, Cameroon and Liberia, said his trip "generated tremendous reverberations on the African continent" and "a number of African states which had not yet renewed relations with us are showing an interest and are acting in the most suitable manner to renew relations."

The countries Shamir visited have restored diplomatic relations with Israel which they broke during the 1973 Yom Kippur War. So have Zaire and Ivory Coast. But 24 other Black African states still have no ties with Israel.

Financial Inducement Demanded

Maariv reported Sunday that Israel's eagerness to make progress in negotiations with African countries to renew diplomatic ties, possibly during Shamir's trip, prompted some of them to "raise their price." Maariv quoted an expert on Africa who accompanied Shamir as saying that negotiations with certain African states "became a matter of bargaining and, in some cases, even extortion."

According to Maariv reporters Tamar Golan and Rafael Mann, the expert was referring to Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and the Central African Republic. The President of Gabon was particularly blatant, demanding hefty monetary credit either directly from Israel or from Washington via Israel, in addition to the standard request for economic aid from Israel, they reported.

Avi Pazner, Shamir's media adviser who accompanied him on the trip, hinted there was some truth to reports certain African governments were demanding financial inducements to restore diplomatic ties. The Foreign Ministry's African experts were said to have warned against commitments Israel would not be able to fulfill, the Maariv correspondents said.

Shamir told reporters on his return that he has "no doubt that we will see further renewals of diplomatic relations in the wake of the visit." He said, "In general, the heads of the African states are satisfied with their relations with Israel. They are grateful for everything we are doing for them. Naturally, they would like to see more aid, but they are well aware of Israel's limitations and I also stressed these limitations: Israel is not an economic power."

Shamir said he made clear that what Israel has to offer is "experience and proficiency and expertise in various areas. . ." which "we are ready to share with our friends in all sincerity and in all seriousness and with concern for their interests."

The Premier conceded that "There are Arab pressures and there are negative reactions by the Soviets. But despite these pressures, I think that a number of countries have resolved to overcome and disregard these pressures and form ties with Israel."

VATICAN 'PROFOUNDLY GRIEVED' BY JEWISH ANGER OVER POPE'S SCHEDULED MEETING WITH WALDHEIM BUT IT WILL NOT BE CANCELED

By Edwin Eytan (Paris)
Lisa Palmieri-Billig (Rome)
Yitzhak Rabi (New York)

June 21 (JTA) -- The Vatican said Saturday that it is "surprised and profoundly grieved" that the planned meeting of Pope John Paul II with President Kurt Waldheim of Austria at the Vatican June 25 has raised doubts about "The Holy Father's respect for the Jewish people."

The Vatican statement, which quoted extensively from the Pope's speeches on his recent visits to West Germany and Poland strongly condemning the Holocaust and anti-Semitism in all its forms, left no doubt that the Pontiff is determined to receive Waldheim in audience next Thursday regardless of accumulated evidence of his complicity in Nazi atrocities and persecutions during World War II.

The announcement last week that Waldheim will be granted a papal audience shocked and outraged Jews all over the world. They have been urging the Pope to reconsider. Theo Klein, president of the French Jewish community, stated in a letter to the Vatican Secretary of State, Cardinal Caseroli, that if the meeting takes place, "European Jewry will speak out about the Catholic Church's silence during the Second World War while Jewish families were annihilated."

Jewish Leaders Ask Early Meeting With Pope

Tullia Zevi, president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, was quoted widely in the Italian media over the weekend as remarking that the Pope "is honoring a man upon whom a war crimes inquiry is pending."

The Italian government has repudiated Waldheim's visit.

In the United States, representatives of major Jewish organizations called Friday for an early meeting with the Pope to clarify his decision to receive Waldheim. At the same time, the American Jewish Congress announced withdrawal of its sponsorship of a meeting American Jewish leaders had scheduled with the Pope in Miami next September 11.

Six other organizations released a statement asserting that the scheduled meeting has become "an inappropriate forum to discuss this (Waldheim-Pope meeting) and other urgent issues of Catholic-Jewish relations."

The statement added, "In the light of these circumstances, we urge that an early meeting with the Pope take place to clarify for us, and all those who share our dismay, the motivation for imparting the honor of Papal audience to Kurt Waldheim." The statement was signed by the Synagogue Council of America; the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith; the American Jewish Committee; the World Jewish Congress; B'nai B'rith; and the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

In a separate statement, Ruth Popkin, president of Hadassah, called on the Pope to cancel the audience. "We urge you to join with the government of Italy in rejecting Waldheim's proposed visit and to heed the protests of the Jewish community in Rome which speaks eloquently for those who survived the crimes of the Holocaust," Popkin said.

The Italian government, which said last week that Waldheim would be received with all of the ceremony accorded a visiting head of state, issued a statement Friday distancing itself from Vatican policy on the issue.

The statement noted that "The only government officially proclaiming its willingness to receive Waldheim is that of Tripoli (Libya). Italy will certainly not be the country to follow this example... There are no longer any historical necessities for foreign heads of state to have contacts with Italy during their visits to the Holy See."

The statement apparently referred to the revised Concordat between the Vatican State and Italy, signed last year, which defines distinct and independent relations between Italy and the Vatican.

The Vatican, for its part, denied that an invitation had been extended to Waldheim. "It is against Vatican policy to invite heads of state," a spokesman said.

According to informed sources, Waldheim's audience with the Pope was requested by the new Archbishop of Vienna, Cardinal Hans Hermann Groer, and Vienna's Auxiliary Bishop, Kurt Kreen. It is said to have been supported by Dr. Alfons Stickler of the Roman Curia who heads the Vatican Library.

CARDINAL O'CONNOR ASKED BY B'NAI B'RITH LEADER TO URGE POPE TO CANCEL AUDIENCE WITH WALDHEIM

NEW YORK, June 21 (JTA) -- Seymour Reich, president of B'nai B'rith International, suggested Sunday that John Cardinal O'Connor, the Archbishop of New York, urge Pope John Paul II to cancel his audience with Austrian President Kurt Waldheim, scheduled to take place at the Vatican June 25.

In a statement issued here, Reich said it was incredulous that Waldheim would be received at the Vatican because of his persistence in seeking an audience with the Pope.

"That is hardly a reason to bestow upon an unrepentant Nazi who lied for 40 years about his wartime activity the honor of being received by the Pope," Reich said.

"I believe it would be appropriate for John Cardinal O'Connor to suggest that the audience be cancelled in view of the sense of outrage that the Jewish community feels at this invitation.

"Cardinal O'Connor might also wish to advise the Vatican that because our government has barred Waldheim from these shores, the granting of an audience will be seen by many Americans as a slap in the face to the United States. We trust that Cardinal O'Connor will exhibit no less insistence in urging the Pope to withdraw this incomprehensible invitation than those who sought it," Reich said.

MAJORITY OF ISRAELIS SYMPATHIZE WITH WEST BANK SETTLERS, POLL SHOWS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 21 (JTA) -- A majority of Israelis polled this month sympathize to greater or lesser degree with the behavior of Jewish settlers in the West Bank who have been sharply criticized by the Israel Defense Force for violent actions against the local Arab population -- most recently the armed attack on the Daheisha refugee camp the night of June 6.

**Special Interview
NEW HEAD OF SCA PROMISES TO TRY
TO BRIDGE GAP BETWEEN THREE
BRANCHES OF JUDAISM IN U.S.**

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, June 21 (JTA) -- Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman, the newly elected president of the Synagogue Council of America (SCA), promised that as leader of the organization he will strive to bridge the gaps and iron out the differences between the three major branches of Judaism.

"We are going to deepen the cooperation and understanding between Conservative, Orthodox and Reform Judaism," Klaperman said in an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency shortly after his election to the influential post last Monday. He succeeded Rabbi Herbert Baumgard of Miami.

The SCA, which comprises the rabbinic and congregational branches of Conservative, Orthodox and Reform Judaism, "Brings together on a daily basis the leadership of the three branches in Judaism," Klaperman pointed out. "Despite many differences among these constituent agencies, they continue to seek a community of interest and to focus on a wide range of moral and social problems which our society faces," he said.

"The SCA," he added, "as a coordinating body, has been able to achieve a unique level of cooperation among these religious bodies. The SCA is the only national representative Jewish religious body that can speak today with one voice to the Christian world, to governmental agencies and the United Nations."

Strengthening The Synagogues

Asked about the priorities and major challenges facing the SCA in the coming years, Klaperman said he sees a major task in making the synagogue once again "the central institution of the Jewish community."

Klaperman asserted that in too many instances, the synagogue "has been pushed to the periphery of the decision-making process in the larger Jewish community."

Klaperman, who has served Congregation Beth Shalom of Lawrence, New York, since 1950, said that the SCA "is committed to strengthening the synagogue so that it be "a strong partner with Federations, Jewish community relations councils and Jewish secular bodies -- in addressing the challenges facing us as Jews and as citizens of the wider world."

The SCA acts as the representative Jewish religious voice to national and international Christian organizations, deals with Jewish concerns relating to social and humanitarian problems, and represents the Jewish religious community to the White House, State Department, Congress and the United Nations, Klaperman explained.

On humanitarian and social issues, he said the SCA will intensify its efforts to address the needs of the Jewish terminally ill and their families. He pointed out that the SCA's first national conference on hospices for the Jewish community and its nationwide program of education, guidelines for synagogues, hospice newsletters which collect and disseminate information about developing Jewish hospice programs, "have stimulated synagogues."

"The critical challenge," the Rabbi said, "is to develop sufficient numbers of trained Jewish volunteer care givers to work with the Jewish

terminally ill who are currently embraced by hospice programs predominantly under Christian or secular auspices."

Klaperman disclosed that the SCA will undertake a national Jewish registration drive, because "the findings of the SCA's recent Jewish voter registration studies in Southern Florida indicated dramatically the need to educate and register Jews to vote."

Another goal of the SCA, Klaperman said, is "to intensify working relationships and achieve new accords with major Christian religious bodies in the U.S. and elsewhere."

The SCA represents 2,500 Conservative, Orthodox and Reform synagogues in America. It has 3,500 rabbis and about four million members.

**TERRORISTS LINKED TO MURDER OF NABLUS
MAYOR CAUGHT BY SHIN BET**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 21 (JTA) -- The terrorist gang believed responsible for the murders and attempted murders of Arab moderates in the West Bank has been rounded up by Shin Bet, the internal security services. Gen. Amram Mitzna, commander of the central sector who announced the capture at a press conference Friday, described the gang as "one of the most dangerous to have operated on the West Bank in recent years" and had high praise for the work of Shin Bet.

The gang is believed to be affiliated with George Habash's Syrian-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) which recently re-joined Yasir Arafat's mainstream Palestine Liberation Organization from which Habash had split many years ago.

The number of terrorists arrested was not disclosed by Mitzna. All are residents of the Samarja region of the West Bank and operated in Jenin and Nablus.

They are suspected of the assassination of Zafr Al-Masri, the Israel-appointed Mayor of Nablus in March 1986, the attempted murder of Jenin Mayor Abdallah Lahluh last month, during which his driver was wounded, and the murder of Afula resident Albert Bukhris, in 1985.

Their other victims include border policeman Jamil Faris who was killed and another border policeman wounded in Nablus in January 1986; Uri Ovid, an Israeli from Tiberias who was wounded in the Jenin marketplace in August 1985; and Haim Tanami, an Israeli from Massur, wounded in Nablus in June 1986.

Revenge Feared

The linkage of Al-Masri's murder to the PFLP gang raised tensions in the West Bank where some members of the slain mayor's family have sworn revenge. But his brother, Hikmat Al-Masri, a former Speaker of the Jordanian parliament, was quoted as saying the family is grateful to the Israeli authorities for solving the murder. He rejected the idea of revenge, saying "vengeance will come from Allah."

Nevertheless, observers here believe resentment is likely to mount against the PLO and Arafat who received the PFLP back into the fold. It was noted that Al-Masri's murder immediately followed the break-off of talks between Arafat and King Hussein of Jordan on Palestinian participation in the peace process. It was apparently a warning to other public figures not to cooperate with Jordan or Israel.

OPINIONS DIFFER OVER ROLE OF U.S. JEWS IN ISRAELI AFFAIRS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, June 21 (JTA) -- A symposium on Israel-diaspora relations at the B'nai B'rith International headquarters here Tuesday quickly turned into a debate over whether American Jews should participate in Israel's political controversies.

Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, vice president of the World Jewish Congress, declared that it must "cease being heretical within the diaspora for all the various opinions in Israel to be supported and be supported publicly."

He said that up to now it has been acceptable within the Jewish community to be to the right of Israeli policy or more hawkish than Israel, but not more dovish. He said the American Jewish community is liberal and must not allow the perception to continue that it is part of the right, in Israel or the U.S.

Yoram Peri, a Tel Aviv University political science professor, said that American Jews should participate in the debate between Labor and Likud. He noted that since 1967 there has been no official "Israeli line" since the country has been divided on issues.

Keep Out Of Debate

But M. J. Rosenberg, a special assistant to Sen. Carl Levin (D. Mich.), disagreed, saying American Jews do not have the "obligation" to get into this debate. He said if American Jews would bombard Congress with opposition to Israel's policies in the West Bank, as Hertzberg urged, it would undermine support for the \$3 billion annual aid Israel receives from the United States.

Rosenberg, former editor of the Near East Report, published by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, said neither AIPAC nor most other Jewish organizations take stands on the issue of the administered territories or other political issues debated in Israel.

He said their main concern is to ensure continued support for U.S. aid to Israel and a strong U.S.-Israel relationship.

Hertzberg charged that American Jews and their leaders have considered criticism of Israel as "treason" because they see Israel as the guarantor of Jewish survival in the U.S. "You don't have to go to shul, you don't have to be terribly learned, and you don't have to be terribly involved in anything, but so long as Israel is there and you are with it, the American Jewish community will survive," Hertzberg said.

He said the general situation has been "Israel decides and the diaspora obeys."

But Abraham Foxman, associate director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, disagreed, declaring while "Israel decides for itself . . . the diaspora decides whether they obey." He said the question is not whether to dissent, but to exercise this right "with responsibility" by weighing the consequences of dissent.

Rosenberg said the reluctance of American Jews to criticize Israel is due to a feeling by American Jews, only a generation after the Holocaust, that the previous generation of American Jews "didn't do a damn thing" to help the Jews murdered by the Nazis. He also stressed that Jewish criticism of Israel is used by the minority in Congress and the Administration who are anti-Israel. Hyman Bookbinder, of the Washington office of the American Jewish Committee, said

that since the Pollard espionage affair there has been a change for the better in a greater willingness to criticize Israeli policy. Daniel Thursz, executive vice president of B'nai B'rith, seemed to agree, noting that a few years ago B'nai B'rith would not have been able to sponsor such a debate.

Attitude Of Young Israelis

Peri gave a brief outline of the Israeli view of this issue. He said the founding generation of Israelis believed "the only place for all Jews was in Israel." Jews who did not make aliya should support Israel economically and politically "and must not disagree with Israel," he said. Their Israeli-born children held the diaspora in contempt and also agreed that Jews outside Israel had "a secondary role," Peri said.

But, he added, the next generation, now in their 30s and 40s, have come to realize that Israel is not always right and that Jews both inside and outside Israel "have a right to criticize and dissent."

He said that while Israel is the center of Jewish life and only through the exercise of political sovereignty can Jews live a full Jewish life, other Jewish communities are "legitimate." "American Jewry is not heading toward annihilation by anti-Semitism or by assimilation," he added.

He said Jews in Israel and the diaspora "influence each other whether we want it or not," he said this means not only the right to dissent, but also that "we have an obligation to assist each other."

ISRAEL, CHINA SAID TO MAKE 'MEANINGFUL PROGRESS' IN CONTACTS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 21 (JTA) -- "Meaningful progress" was made at a recent meeting of Israeli diplomats with representatives of the People's Republic of China, according to a report in Hadashot Sunday.

The Israelis, headed by Avraham Tamir, Director General of the Foreign Ministry, gained the impression that China would be ready to establish diplomatic relations with Israel if an international conference for Middle East peace is convened, the report said.

According to Hadashot, the Foreign Ministry attaches considerable importance to the statement by a senior Chinese diplomat in Paris concerning possible advances in relations with Israel if progress is made in the peace process.

An international conference under United Nations auspices would include China as one of the five permanent members of the Security Council.

MANY RUSSIAN JEWS IN U.S. REPORTED BECOMING CHRISTIANS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 21 (JTA) -- A serious problem of conversion among Soviet Jewish immigrants who have settled in the U.S. was reported by Maariv. According to the newspaper, which cited a survey by "American-Jewish elements," hundreds of Jewish children are studying at church schools and thousands of former Soviet Jewish citizens apply for aid to missionary and church welfare organizations.