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JEWS STUNNED BY TUTU'S SUGGESTION HOLOCAUST PERPETRATORS BE FORGIVEN

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- Archbishop Desmond Tutu's suggestion that the Jewish people forgive and pray for the perpetrators of the Holocaust has stunned Israelis and Jews in the Diaspora.

Remarks by the 1984 Nobel laureate on Tuesday at the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial here evoked more negative reaction than any of the various critical words he hurled at the Israeli government since his arrival here last weekend.

Tutu, the Anglican archbishop of Cape Town and a leading anti-apartheid activist, is well-known as a sympathizer with the Palestinian cause.

In interviews published before his arrival and during his visit -- spent mainly in East Jerusalem and the West Bank -- Tutu repeatedly compared Israel's treatment of Palestinians with the situation of black South Africans under the apartheid regime.

His visit went fairly smoothly, nevertheless, until Tutu showed up at Yad Vashem.

He placed a wreath in the Memorial Hall, studied the photographs of concentration camps and of the skeletal Jewish inmates, and wrote in the guest book: "This is a shattering experience, and the world must never forget our inhumanity to one another."

Before leaving, Tutu sermonized to Jews. "The positive thing that can come," he said, "is the spirit of forgiving, not forgetting."

"We pray for those who made it happen, forgive them and help us to forgive them, and help us so that we, in our turn, will not make others suffer."

An 'Insult' To The Victims

In New York, Elie Wiesel, the 1986 Nobel Peace Prize recipient, was quick to chastise Tutu. "No one has the right to forgive except the dead themselves," Wiesel said, "and the dead were killed and silenced by their murderers."

"For anyone in Jerusalem, at Yad Vashem, to speak about forgiveness would be, in my view, a disturbing lack of sensitivity toward the Jewish victims and their survivors. I hope that was not the intention of Bishop Tutu."

Stronger reaction came from Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean of the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center, the largest Holocaust study institution in the United States.

He said Tutu's call for prayer and forgiveness of those responsible for Nazi genocide was "a gratuitous insult to the Jews and victims of Nazism everywhere."

"Bishop Tutu showed the arrogance of an ancient crusader who had come to Yad Vashem with a bag full of Christian morality," Hier said.

"The bishop surely knows where that Christian conscience was when millions of Jews and others suffered at the hands of the Nazis."

Despite the controversy, Israeli officials are feeling relieved that Tutu's visit did not trigger an upsurge of violence in the administered territories, as many of them had feared.

Tutu also had a cordial meeting Tuesday

with the only Israeli leader he chose to see, Minister for Religious Affairs Zevulun Hammer.

The archbishop told reporters that during his Christmas visit to the West Bank, he saw "the anguish of those who are victims of injustice and oppression."

But he said he also saw the "anxiety and fears of the Jews, and that is why we say very firmly that Israel has a right to exist as a sovereign state."

"But I pray, too, that Israel and the Israelis will hear the cry of the Palestinians that they, too, are people created in the image of God," said Tutu.

ISRAEL RECOGNIZES ROMANIAN REGIME, SENDS MEDICAL SUPPLIES AND DOCTORS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- Israel has extended full recognition to the new regime in Romania and has also sent emergency medical aid to that country.

But misgivings were expressed by some veteran diplomats here over the future of Romanian Jews, now that the 24-year rule of President Nicolae Ceausescu has been brought to a violent end.

Foreign Minister Moshe Arens informed the Knesset on Wednesday that Israel's ambassador in Bucharest, Zvi Mazel, is maintaining normal diplomatic relations with the interim government headed by President Ion Iliescu.

Abba Gefen, a former Israeli ambassador to Bucharest, warned Wednesday on Israel Radio of the danger of resurgent anti-Semitism in Romania.

He said that however ruthless Ceausescu's internal policies were, he did not permit anti-Semitic excesses and was the only East bloc leader to maintain diplomatic relations with Israel after 1967.

Ceausescu and his wife, Elena, were executed Dec. 25 after a secret trial.

An indirect warning was sounded by Yitzhak Arad, director of the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial and museum.

He observed that the relative freedom of expression permitted under President Mikhail Gorbachev's glasnost policies in the Soviet Union allowed the virulent anti-Semitism of ultranationalist right-wing groups such as Pamyat to surface.

With the replacement of communism by nationalism in a nation beset by severe economic problems, there is always the danger that Romanian Jews will be made scapegoats, he said.

Six Tons Of Medical Supplies

Meanwhile, an Israeli air force Hercules transport plane took off Wednesday morning for Bucharest, carrying six tons of medical supplies and equipment, accompanied by two Romanian-speaking Israeli doctors.

The medical relief is for the victims of the violence that accompanied the overthrow of the Ceausescu regime. Tens of thousands of civilians were reported to have been killed or injured in street fighting between the army and the loyalist Securitate, Ceausescu's secret police.

According to Ambassador Mazel, one Jewish woman was killed by a stray bullet.

There were no casualties among the hundreds of Israeli diplomats, business people and students in Romania when the revolution broke out.

The Israeli doctors plan to stay in Romania for about two weeks to oversee the distribution of medical supplies. They will also advise whether it is necessary to send any of six other Romanian-speaking doctors and two nurses who are standing by in Israel, to help relief efforts being undertaken by the Romanian Red Cross.

Another apparent casualty of the Romanian uprising is the flow of Soviet Jewish immigrants who have been flying to Israel via Bucharest.

For the time being, they are being rerouted via Budapest. A group of 500 arrived from there Wednesday, bringing to 1,600 the number of Soviet Jews who landed in Israel this week.

Israel and Hungary re-established diplomatic relations in October.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:

FOR ROMANIAN JEWS, PRECARIOUS PAST GIVES WAY TO UNPREDICTABLE FUTURE

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- There were few, if any, Jews on the barricades during the bloody uprising in Romania these past two weeks, which overthrew the regime of President Nicolae Ceausescu, who was executed with his wife, Elena, on Dec. 25.

For one thing, about half of the country's 30,000 Jews are over 65 years of age, too old for street fighting. But mainly, Romanian Jews have ambiguous feelings about the momentous events in their country.

While their relationship with Ceausescu was precarious but comfortable, their fate under the new regime is unpredictable.

Given Romania's long history of indigenous anti-Semitism, Jewish fears are understandable, as nationalistic passions replace Communist dogma in a deteriorating economic situation.

The small Jewish community played a role disproportionate to its size in Romania's academies of medicine, science, and even history and literature. Several Jews are tenured university professors, and others belong to the country's top scientific bodies.

Jews will not forget that Ceausescu's Romania was the only Warsaw Pact country to oppose the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia that crushed the so-called Prague Spring of democratic reforms in 1968.

Most important was the fact that Ceausescu, alone among East bloc leaders, continued to maintain full diplomatic relations with Israel after the 1967 Six-Day War.

Have Enjoyed Religious Freedom

On the domestic front, Romanian Jews enjoyed considerable religious freedom under Ceausescu. Their communal institutions were allowed to function. They were allowed to maintain ties with international Jewish organizations and received much needed aid from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

There are close to 70 Jewish communities in the country, with 120 synagogues still in use.

In some small villages where a few dozen Jewish families survive, the shuls are often wooden structures dating from the early 19th century.

A Jewish federation provides homes for the aged, some of them up to Western standards, as well as medical facilities, kosher canteens and a

rich cultural life.

But if during the 24 years of Ceausescu's rule Jews enjoyed certain privileges denied most Romanians, including the right to emigrate, theirs was a nervous existence.

They were aware of their unofficial status as hostages to Romania's relations with the superpowers, particularly the United States, where Ceausescu believed Jewish political clout was the key to trade benefits.

If disappointed, he could at any time turn against the tiny Romanian Jewish community, as he often made clear to its leader, Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen.

Rosen, who sat in Parliament in Bucharest, was in fact the chief Jewish hostage. If there was manifest unfriendliness toward Romania in Washington or any Western capital, he was held responsible by Ceausescu.

There have been many moments of high tension.

A few years ago, the popular journalist and writer Corneliu Vadim Tudor published a volume of anti-Semitic poems, some of which exceeded in virulence the worst of the Nazi era in Germany.

Rosen, who was abroad at the time, hurried home to try to prevent their dissemination.

The problem was that Tudor was a close friend of Ceausescu's son, Nicu, whose personal protection he enjoyed.

Rosen, half cajoling but also warning that the Western world would not remain silent, managed to have the offensive book withdrawn.

Fears Of New Anti-Semitism

But Jews have little leverage with the new regime in Bucharest. Unlike East Germany, Hungary, Poland and Czechoslovakia, where Jewish intellectuals were closely involved with the forces for democratic change, Romanian Jews know little about their country's new leaders.

The new president, Ion Iliescu, is a 59-year-old former Communist Party official who fell out of favor with Ceausescu.

Moreover, his newly assembled government will hold office only until April, when Romania is scheduled to have its first free elections since World War II.

That in itself holds no fear for Jews. But they are seriously concerned about resurgent popular anti-Semitism.

A groundswell of anti-Jewish sentiment surfaced in Poland, despite the fact that the new regime there has strong liberal wings and two leading Solidarity members, Adam Michnik and Bronislaw Geremek, are Jews.

There are also reports from Hungary and Czechoslovakia of "right-wing nationalist movements reawakening anti-Semitism among the poorest and least-educated segments of society.

In recent days, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency has been in contact with several Romanian Jews living in Bucharest. None of them seemed to regret the fall of the dictator. But many had grave misgivings about the future.

They hope the promised free elections will take place next spring and bring Western-style liberal democratic parties into power.

Nevertheless, many Jews, even the elderly, plan to leave the country before then.

"We have seen too much bloodshed and too much turmoil," said one Romanian Jew. "We feel, whatever the economic sacrifice involved and the risk of starting a new life at an advanced age, that the time has come for us to leave."

SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN RAPPROCHEMENT VIEWED WITH EQUANIMITY IN ISRAEL

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- Israeli policy-makers do not seem concerned that Egypt and Syria have resumed diplomatic relations after a 12-year rift.

Some believe, in fact, that the rapprochement between the two Arab powers could have a positive impact on the peace process in the Middle East.

The resumption of diplomatic ties was formally announced Wednesday in a joint communique from Damascus and Cairo. It followed a two-hour meeting in Damascus between Syrian President Hafez Assad and the Egyptian prime minister, Atef Sedki.

President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt is scheduled to meet with Assad in the first week of January. The two men have long been at loggerheads.

Syria severed ties with Egypt when the late President Anwar Sadat visited Jerusalem in November 1977, breaking ground for the peace treaty Egypt signed with Israel two years later.

Syria's action was emulated by most other Arab countries, and Egypt was ousted from the Arab League, to which it has since been readmitted.

But according to Energy and Infrastructure Minister Moshe Shahal, Syria is now acknowledging the wisdom of Egyptian policy, including peace with Israel.

"We must see Egypt as a contributing factor to reach similar political settlements with other Arab countries," Shahal said.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on Tuesday that despite its potential dangers, Egypt's new relationship with Syria could neutralize Damascus' negative attitude toward the peace process.

Science and Development Minister Ezer Weizman, who served as Arab affairs adviser in the last government, said at the weekly session of the Inner Cabinet on Wednesday that Sadat was right when he predicted Egypt would eventually regain its central position in the Arab world despite making peace with Israel.

ISRAEL LAUNCHES DUAL ATTACKS ON COMMUNIST FACTION IN LEBANON

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- The Israel Defense Force launched ground and air attacks against facilities of the Lebanese Communist Party on Tuesday.

The air raid, conducted by missile-firing fighter-bombers, severely damaged a multi-story building in Rumaila, about 20 miles south of Beirut, which the IDF described as the Communist faction's headquarters.

It followed by several hours a paratroop assault on a Communist base near Hasbaya, at the southern end of the Bekaa Valley, about 14 miles north of the Israeli-patrolled security zone in southern Lebanon.

The attack was backed up by tank and artillery fire, an IDF spokesman said.

He said four terrorists were killed. There were no Israeli casualties.

The IDF has rarely targeted the Lebanese Communist Party, which seems to have little

influence in a region that is mainly Shi'ite Muslim or Maronite Christian.

But the small faction allegedly cooperates with terrorist groups and was responsible for an attempt two years ago on the life of Gen. Antoine Lahad, commander of the Israeli-backed and largely Christian South Lebanon Army.

Tuesday's operations were described as part of the IDF's continuing campaign to drive terrorist groups as far as possible from the security zone and the Israeli border.

WIVES OF ACCUSED IDF OFFICERS DEMANDING GOVERNMENT INQUIRY

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- The wife of an Israel Defense Force colonel who ordered his troops to break the bones of protesting Palestinians insists that Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin should bear responsibility for those orders and should himself resign.

Col. Yehuda Meir, who was military commander in Nablus when the Palestinian uprising broke out, now faces court-martial for those orders.

His wife, Orna Meir, has organized the wives of several high-ranking IDF officers into an ad hoc group to demand a government inquiry, which would establish the origin of what have since been determined were illegal orders.

Meir is accused of ordering his troops to break the arms and legs of 20 bound-and-gagged Palestinians from the nearby West Bank villages of Beita and Huara in January 1988, a month after the intifada broke out.

Orna Meir says Rabin was the source of those orders. "We point at the defense minister as an element responsible for giving explicit and unequivocal orders," she told Israel Radio on Tuesday.

Rabin was, in fact, widely quoted at the time as saying soldiers should "break the bones" of intifada activists.

"There is nothing doubtful or unclear" about the orders, according to Orna Meir. "All those who acted in the period of the beatings in January to February 1988 acted on orders. It cannot be that so many soldiers and officers deviated from orders. This was the method," she said.

She said Rabin and some senior officers later realized that the orders were illegal and sent a letter, signed by the chief of staff, to local commanders in February 1988, ordering a halt to the practice of beatings.

"We demand that a government committee of inquiry be created. It would reveal the truth, so everybody will know who gave the order," Meir said.

"We ask the defense minister to accept responsibility for what has been and is happening with officers and soldiers. And if he cannot do so, we call on him to resign," she added.

Col. Meir was reprimanded by Chief of Staff Gen. Dan Shomron, after a hearing by a disciplinary court last year. But at the same time he was promoted and allowed to take unpaid leave until 1992, when he will be eligible for a full pension.

But civil rights groups in Israel appealed to the High Court of Justice. And, in a rare reversal of a decision by the army judge advocate general, the justices ruled Sunday that Col. Meir must face a court-martial.

If found guilty of issuing illegal orders, he could be sentenced to up to 20 years in prison.

PUBLIC ENEMY CAUSES STIR AGAIN TYING JEWS TO JESUS' CRUCIFIXION

By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- The controversy surrounding the rap music group Public Enemy has reignited with the release of its new album's first single, "Welcome to the Terrordome."

The song's lyrics revive the ancient accusation of Jewish responsibility for the crucifixion of Jesus, and implies that Jews have done the same to the song's narrator:

Crucifixion ain't no fiction

So-called chosen, frozen

Apology made to whoever pleases

Still they got me, just like Jesus.

The words appear to refer to the storm of controversy surrounding the group last summer, when group member Richard Griffin (known as "Professor Griff") gave a newspaper interview in which he made anti-Semitic statements, among them that the Jews "were responsible for the majority of wickedness that goes on across the globe."

After Griffin's statements were roundly condemned, the band's lead singer, Chuck Ridenhour (stage name Chuck D), briefly suspended Griffin from Public Enemy and then temporarily dissolved the group. But less than a month later, the group reassembled and Griffin was reinstated.

During the height of the controversy, one of Public Enemy's managers, Lyor Cohen, arranged for Ridenhour to speak by telephone to the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Rabbi Abraham Cooper about Jewish sensitivities.

In November, Cooper and Ridenhour met face to face when Cohen brought the young rap singer for an hour-and-a-half-long tour of the Wiesenthal Center's Holocaust museum, but this meeting took place after "Welcome to the Terrordome" had already been written.

'Code Words For Farrakhan'

Cooper said Tuesday that he is certain the phrase in the new single, "tell the rab to get off the rag" -- street language for "tell the rabbi to stop complaining" -- is a direct reference to him, although he said that the personal reference "is not the issue."

Instead, Cooper said, "the issue is the use of the code words of Farrakhan."

The phrase "so-called chosen," Cooper said, "is pulled right out of the lexicon of Farrakhan's ideology."

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency was told that because of the holidays, neither representatives of Public Enemy's management nor CBS Records, which is distributing the single, could be reached for comment.

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith sent a letter Tuesday to Thomas Mottola, the president of CBS records, saying that the ADL is "troubled that CBS plans to facilitate the distribution of the anti-Semitic sentiments voiced in Public Enemy's new recording, thus lending your considerable resources and prestige to the group's bigotry."

The letter notes that "if those in positions of leadership in the creative arts wink at such blatant bigotry, it sends the message to millions of young Americans that these sentiments are acceptable -- a message carrying destructive implications for the future of American democratic pluralism."

JERUSALEM POST EDITOR RESIGNS, CITING EDITORIAL INTERFERENCE

By Jacqueline Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- The resignation this week of Jerusalem Post Editor Erwin Frenkel has pushed to the boiling point a long-simmering confrontation between the newspaper's editorial staff and the Canadian-based company that took over the paper last spring.

At issue is the Post's editorial integrity and the right of foreign investors to purchase Israeli newspapers and make substantial changes in their political orientation.

Frenkel announced his resignation Tuesday, triggering a protest and demand from the editorial staff that the publisher, Yehuda Levy, be fired by the paper's owners.

The immediate cause of Frenkel's resignation was Levy's apparent decision to replace Frenkel as the Post's representative on Israel's powerful Committee of Editors of Daily Newspapers.

In his resignation letter to Levy, Frenkel, 56, wrote that such a move had "irrevocably compromised" his editorial authority, since it would effectively make Levy editor in chief of the Post.

But the confrontation between editor and publisher is really an outgrowth of a dispute three weeks earlier over a Post editorial defending the paper from public criticism voiced by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

The paper, which is viewed as having a left-wing orientation, defended its right to criticize Shamir and the policies of his Likud bloc.

Levy demanded that the editorial not appear in the paper's international edition. Frenkel acceded, but balked when Levy suggested that he would write an editorial of his own.

Frenkel's Decision

Levy's application to join the Editors Committee came a few days after that and was submitted without Frenkel's knowledge. The committee replied that it was up to Frenkel to decide on Levy's candidacy.

At that point, Frenkel tendered his resignation, which he made clear to the staff was irrevocable.

Last month, the Post's other editor, Ari Rath, 64, took early retirement, at the insistence of the paper's new owner, the Toronto-based Hollinger Inc.

Levy is a former army officer who served as a Jewish National Fund representative in western Canada, where he got to know F. David Radler of Vancouver, the president of Hollinger. The company paid around \$20 million in April to buy the Post from the ailing Koor industrial conglomerate.

Following Frenkel's announcement, the Post's editorial staff held an emergency meeting Tuesday night and resolved to send a letter to Radler, demanding Levy's resignation.

The staff also resolved to declare a formal labor dispute and to empower its works committee to take industrial action, including a strike, after the statutory 14-day cooling-off period.

The staff has long been sensitive to what it regards as outside interference. Last April, when it appeared that British publisher Robert Maxwell might buy the paper, the Post carried a front-page "Statement to Our Readers" declaring that the editors were "intent on safeguarding the editorial independence and journalistic integrity of the newspaper."