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Sanenbaum

REPORT JAN 30 1984

From the Israel Office of the American Jewish Committee
Reliev Ethiopia 9, Jerusalem.95 149 Tel. 228862, 233551 Cable: Wishom, Jerusalem

HOW POOR?

(Special Report - January 25, 1984)

How poor have Israelis become as a result of 190 percent inflation in 1983? If one is to judge by a recent report of Israel's National Social Insurance Office (Bituach Leumi), then at least 550,000 Israelis are said to be currently living below the poverty line, which is an income (before tax) of about 14,000 Israel shekels (IS) per wage earner, or approximately \$115, at the current rate of exchange. A family of three (parents and one child) that earns less than IS 37,000 (before tax) per month, or approximately \$300, is also considered to live below the poverty line.

The figures, provided by the National Social Insurance Office, indicate that the number of Israelis that are impoverished has doubled during the years of the administration of the Likud Government, and now includes 5.6 percent of all the salaried families in Israel. Add to these the pensioners, social welfare cases, etc., and one arrives at the figure of more than a half million poverty-stricken Israelis.

Statistics are, however, difficult to appreciate in human terms. Many Israelis, such as factory workers, postmen and even medical interns, take home less than \$200 per month. Yet, to understand the nature of the problem, it is essential to view the estimated expenditure of the average Israeli family. A common misconception for many observers of the Israel scene is that life in this country is not expensive. While this may be true of public transportation (\$0.15 for a local fare) and such subsidized items as bread (\$0.12)

almost every other aspect of modern life costs much more in Israel than in most Western countries, due to sales tax, duties, etc., that add up to a hefty bill that is not commensurate, in any way, with average and even above average salaries. In January, the so-called average family, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics in the Office of the Prime Minister, spent IS72,635, or approximately \$600 per month on groceries (IS4,147); food (IS13,545); home maintenance (IS7,426); home equipment (IS5,244); clothing and shoes (IS4,602); furnishings (IS3,345); education, culture and entertainment (IS6,757); transportation and postal services (IS8,440).

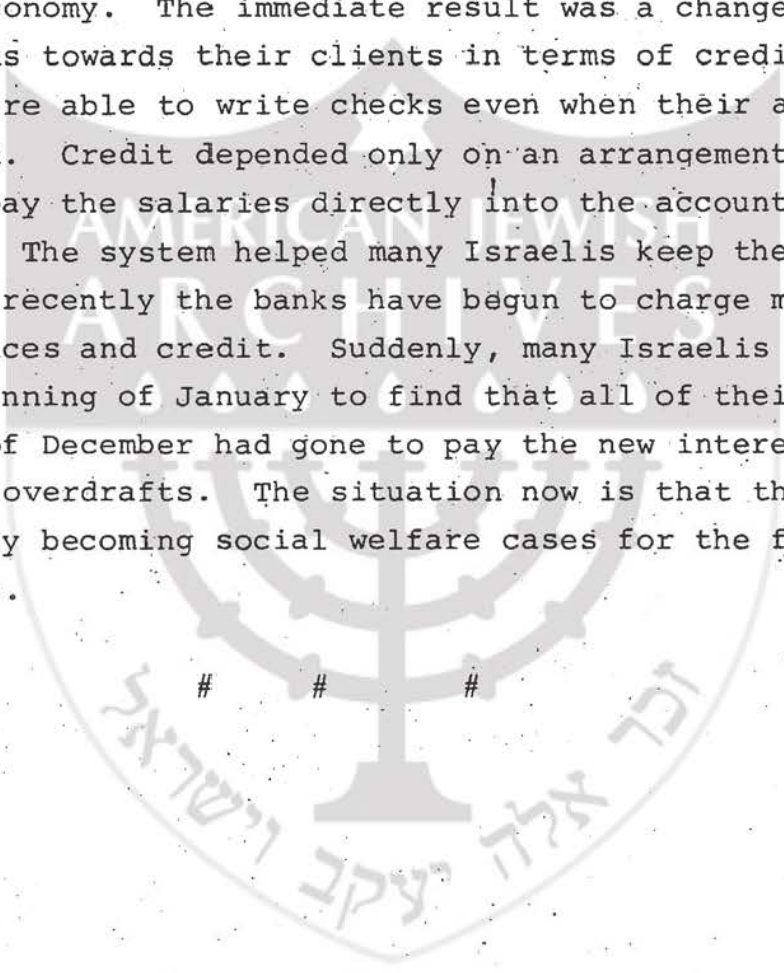
While it should be almost impossible to comprehend how Israelis, who earn well below \$600 per month, are able to make ends meet, let us take the real-life case of a veteran civil servant, J.B., middle-aged, with four children, two in high school and one in pre-kindergarten. This wage earner has achieved the maximum number of years entitling him to the highest increment in the grade of pay he receives, which, together with car expenses, is currently about \$750 per month. Yet his admitted expenditure in one month alone (December 1983) was nearly double his salary. Moreover, last summer, before a series of devaluations of the shekel, his monthly salary, after nine years in his current job, had reached nearly \$1,000 after tax.

Like many Israelis in similar circumstances, J.B. admits that he has been able to supplement his salary by earning an additional income after hours with skills he uses during the day as a civil servant. In other families, it is the spouse who brings home an additional salary, which is probably no more than \$200 a month, such as earned by secretaries.

One of the major problems that Israelis face is that the current system of wages, linked to the country's cost-of-living index, has become outdated as inflation has begun to total almost 200 percent per year. The reason that this is so is that salary adjustments, made every three months at about 85 percent of the index increase, come too late and too little to be effective, causing better paid earners like J.B. to lose about 40 percent of their original annual income.

As a result of this new situation, Israel's current "Public Enemy Number One" is the commercial banks who were once described as "the oxygen of the state". For a very long time, the banks were encouraging their clients to invest heavily in bank stocks that paid off handsome returns (20 percent after inflation!) until the bottom dropped out of the market together with the decline of Israel's economy. The immediate result was a change in the policy of the banks towards their clients in terms of credit. In the past, Israelis were able to write checks even when their accounts were overdrawn. Credit depended only on an arrangement whereby employers pay the salaries directly into the accounts of their employees. The system helped many Israelis keep their heads above water, but recently the banks have begun to charge much more for their services and credit. Suddenly, many Israelis were startled at the beginning of January to find that all of their wages for the month of December had gone to pay the new interest rates on their 1983 overdrafts. The situation now is that these Israelis are actually becoming social welfare cases for the first time in their lives.

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JAN 30 1984



REPORT

From the Israel Office of the American Jewish Committee

Rehov Ethiopia 9, Jerusalem 95 149 Tel. 228862, 233551 Cable: Wishom, Jerusalem

CASE CLOSED?

(Press Summary - January 22, 1984)

Almost a year after the tragic murder of Emil Grunzweig, who was killed in a grenade attack on a group of "Peace Now" demonstrators last February, as they stood outside the offices of the Prime Minister of Israel in Jerusalem, the Israeli police announced on Friday that they had apprehended two suspects. The dramatic announcement was made at a press conference attended by Israel's Minister of the Interior and the Police, Dr. Yosef Burg and Police Inspector General Arye Ivtzan on the very day that advertisements in the Israeli press, sponsored by the "Peace Now" movement, had called on Israelis to join a demonstration on the fourth of February that would follow the same route taken by Emil Grunzweig, the day he was killed. The advertisement entitled "A year since the death of Emil", noted that "the war government is still in power, the Israel Defense Force is still inside Lebanese mud, the unjust and wicked policies continue in the (administered) territories and the Jewish terror that caused the death of Emil, continues and grows."

For nearly a year, during which time the Israeli Government and Police were suspect that they were not doing everything necessary to apprehend the perpetrators of "Jewish terror", the Israel security forces were quietly at work stitching together every piece of evidence, including such painstaking work as tracing the manufacture of the grenade that killed Grunzweig. Eventually, the police were able to determine the origin of the grenade, quantities manufactured and distribution to various units in the Israeli army. This aspect of the investigation, it is believed, led the

the police to David Shemtov, a 20 year old Jerusalemite, who was in the habit of stealing grenades from his army unit and selling them to underworld criminals.

Accordingly, 8,966 grenades of the particular model that killed Grunzweig had been manufactured and were distributed to 40 Israel army units, among which Shemtov did his reserve duty.

From Shemtov, the police were led to Yona Avrushmi, a 28 year old Jerusalemite, who had served three years in jail on theft and drug charges. The press reported that Avrushmi, who lost a brother-in-law in the Lebanese war and a brother in the 1973 Yom Kippur War, allegedly purchased the grenade that killed Grunzweig, from Shemtov.

Without a doubt, the dramatic announcement by the police on the weekend came at a time when cases of so-called "Jewish terror" are on the increase, leading many to believe that such an underground group does, in fact, exist and that the police have not been doing enough to apprehend the culprits. Those most critical of the police had claimed that the system has always been able to apprehend Arab terrorists but not Jewish ones.

The editorial in Ha'aretz praised the police, but reminded its readers that the man being held for the murder of Emil Grunzweig was only a suspect. Nevertheless, the newspaper noted "that it is now apparent from what is known that the police acted indefatigably since the terrible murder in order to find those responsible for it. The work of the police did not take place under usual conditions. Public pressure on the police had been great, and every action or non-action of the police in this affair was watched carefully. Under these circumstances, the police had a difficult job of tracking and also maintained the secrecy necessary for the success of the investigation."

The editorial in the opposition newspaper Davar, published by the Labor Party, noted, as well, that the case against Avrushmi must yet be proven in court, but "it is now permitted to say that the Emil Grunzweig murder case, after almost a year, is about to be solved. Inside the file on Yona Avrushmi is enough alleged proof

to prosecute him. The security forces and the police deserve credit for the tremendous effort that they invested in the composite investigation of the murder and for the success of that effort... Certainly, every one in Israel will feel relief in this development. Even if less is known than known, and even if the suspect was employed in one of the settlements (Ofra), and is active in one of the political parties, it is possible, at this stage, to conclude that he was not the emissary of any public or organization of any sort. For this too, without a doubt, all will feel relief..."

Even so, Davar asks its readers to remember that more important than "who pulled the trigger" is the question, "what was the atmosphere that provided the public-ideological Jewish excuse for the criminal act?"

The other opposition newspaper, Al Hamishmar, in a front page commentary by Aliza Amir Zohar, does not see why the police work and the findings deserve special congratulations. "The finding of a suspect in the death of Emil by Israel's police only proves one thing: that the police worked hard to solve this case, and this is something that should be obvious in each case of murder and all the more so in the case of a murder that created a terrible schism in the history of Israeli democracy."

Ms Zohar asks: "So what? What are we to conclude, and why the strange joy of those who called the press conference? Does it in any way lessen the responsibility of those that did and continue to create an atmosphere of lynch around the entire peace camp? We still do not know who the suspect is...He appears to be a simple person that is not active in any party or organization. That is why the fear is so especially great -- that a simple person, who believes what the leaders of the country tell him, and who speak to him from the television sets and the headlines of the newspapers, as they wave fingers in the direction of Emil and his friends with one accusation: traitors, traitors -- leading to the simple conclusion: traitors have to be eliminated. And he eliminates them..."

The editorial in the Jerusalem Post, entitled, "Anything for applause", is critical with the way that Interior Minister Dr. Yosef Burg and Police Chief Arye Ivtzan, announced the capture of the suspect in the murder of Emil Grunzweig. "Instead of focussing on the capture, the thinking public must wonder what purposes were intended to be served by this public exhibit of contempt for due course of the law.

"Even before an indictment was submitted to the courts, the minister in charge of police chose to publicly identify and indict a suspect. Such a departure from accepted practice does not occur, where the law is honored, even when officials want to quiet a citizenry panicked, for example, by a crazed Jack the Ripper on the loose."

The Post concludes that "the unprecedented press conference was a message no less notable than the arrest itself..." that leads one "to suspect that Dr. Burg sought in this way to come to the aid of his prime minister and fragile government who face a vote of no-confidence this week in the Knesset..."

The editorial in Hazofeh, published by the National Religious Party, headed by Dr. Burg, notes that the suspect has not yet been proved guilty in court, but that "the very arrest itself, should be gratifying to those for whom the well-being of Israeli society is dear to him. Because, far beyond the shock felt by the Israeli public as a result of the murder, was the harmful phenomenon that deepens the gap and the arguments among different parts of the public. There were circles that were not ashamed to make use of the murder for narrow sectarian needs and to accuse others without the basis of facts. Everyone spoke about the inner strength of Israeli society, but there are those whose needs and words hurt the very sacred principles in whose name they spoke."

Hazofeh reminds its readers that the murder of Emil Grunzweig is not the only case that opponents of Israel's current government use to besmirch Israeli justice under the administration of the Likud. "There are those who remind us, from time to time, that the culprits responsible for the attacks on the mayors of towns in Judaea and Samaria, and those who made the murderous attack on the Moslem college in Hebron, and other incidents, have not yet been apprehended. These knights of justice prompt the security forces only when the case is Arabs who are the victims, but when the victims of murderous terror are Jews, they depend on the ability of those responsible for law and order. The motives of that selectivity...is easy to see through..." the editorial concludes.



Marc Dannebaum



REPORT

From the Israel Office of the American Jewish Committee

Rehov Ethiopia 9, Jerusalem 95 149 Tel. 228862, 233551 Cable: Wishom, Jerusalem

JAN 17 1984

T.N.T.

(Press Summary - January 8, 1984)

Is there or is there not an underground Jewish terrorist organization operating inside Israel and on the West Bank against Arab Moslem and Christian targets? That is the question scheduled to be on the agenda of Israel's parliament, the Knesset, where it was first raised last week by an opposition Labor Party member of the Knesset, Yossi Sarid. His request that Israel's legislative body deal with the issued followed several recent attacks on Moslem and Christian places of worship and other acts against West Bank Arabs that were claimed by the alleged perpetrators to be the work of a group that has called itself "T.N.T.", or "Terror Neged (against) Terror". (1)

Originally, as reported last month in the weekly Report from the Israel Office of the American Jewish Committee (2), such a clandestine organization, calling itself T.N.T., did exist many years ago, but its members were apprehended by the Israel Police and the organization ceased to exist. The reappearance of T.N.T. was met by the Police with some skepticism, and Robert Rosenberg, writing in the Jerusalem Post (December 16), quoted a police officer who said that "...one has to think of crazy right-wing Jews...but this Terror Against Terror business doesn't smell right..." The implication, at the time, was that whoever had chosen to take credit for the placement of a total of half a dozen hand grenades on the premises of Christian and Moslem holy places in Jerusalem

(1) Terror is also used as a Hebrew word.

(2) See "Body Count" (December 18, 1983)

was not necessarily from a "small group that is led by somebody with a lot of experience and with the self-discipline at least for a while, to keep silent". Neither did the same police officer rule out the possibility that the hand grenades could possibly have been planted by Arabs as a provocation.

The decision to bring the issue before the Knesset, according to Davar, the daily newspaper published by the opposition Labor Party, was unanimously adopted by the Knesset members at last Thursday's (January 12) session, following preliminary discussions led by Mr. Sarid for the Opposition and Interior and Police Minister Dr. Joseph Burg on behalf of the government. Mr. Sarid charged that more than a year ago he had warned that a Jewish underground was operating on the West Bank, but that the Israeli Government had chosen to refute his claim. He noted that, in the past months alone, an organization calling itself "T.N.T." had taken responsibility for ten acts of violence. "This underground exists", he said, "because it claims that it exists. It informs the newspaper staffs of attacks about to be perpetrated and takes responsibility for them in advance."

Mr. Sarid also criticized the Israel security forces for their inability to locate and apprehend those responsible for acts of violence against Arabs on the West Bank, although these same security forces had a high record of success in apprehending Arab terrorists responsible for attacks on Jews. Not one case of harm to Arabs on the West Bank was ever solved, he noted. "Is this only by chance?" he asked the Knesset.

Dr. Burg responded that neither the police nor the security forces support any sort of Jewish terror and that such acts of violence are contrary to "the law, sensibility and Jewish ethics". He did, however, note that the recent acts against Arabs pointed to a common denominator as evident from the hand grenades in use in the Israel Army that were placed by the perpetrators, but he warned that there was no real evidence to indicate the true identities of those involved in these acts. He did promise the Knesset that the government would "not let up until we find them".

A spokesman for the Likud Party, Knesset Member Roni Milo, dsicounted Mr. Sarid's charge that Israel's security forces were only investigating Arab terror against Jews. Milo explained that this was so in the past "because that was the terror we had up until now".

Maorizio Yager, writing in Al Hamishmar, published by the opposition Mapam Socialist Party, offers his readers a "profile" of the Jewish terror organization that calls itself T.N.T. He notes that Israel's police, security forces and politicians are showing their concern regarding the recent attacks on Arabs, but that the investigations have not achieved any results. He reports that the investigations are following two leads: settlers on the West Bank and members of the Jewish Defense League (J.D.L.), led by Rabbi Meir Kahane. He adds that "up until now, most of the candidates to fill terrorist groups were immigrants from the United States, former members of Rabbi Kahane's league, but it appears that only recently were they able to break the barrier of isolation that surrounded them, and they have inducted within their ranks members from among those born in Israel. As proof, Yager describes the mysterious caller who has taken credit for the recent terror acts in the name of T.N.T. "There is very little we can learn from his voice, except that he speaks fluent Hebrew, without a foreign accent, and is described by his listeners as 'correct and sympathetic'".

Yager suggests that followers of the J.D.L. may be receiving assistance from settlers on the West Bank who served in the Israel Army in command positions and are excellent fighters. "If one or two of them joined T.N.T., then there is no doubt that the organization used their wide experience and knowledge obtained in the Israel Army, whether as regards fighting tactics or in the use of explosives and weapons. Neither should it be forgotten that during service in the reserves, it is possible to take home a number of hand grenades". He also suggests that T.N.T. may be using the services of underworld criminals, including "elements that have never hidden their dislike for Arabs". He cites the methods employed by the J.D.L. on the campus of Haifa University three years ago,, when underworld thugs were used to reinforce the "two or three J.D.L. students" who were involved in a fracas between other Jewish and Arab students.

Yager predicts that the next step in the activities of T.N.T. is to step up the terror campaign against Arabs on the West Bank in an effort to frighten them into leaving the country. This, he claims, would very much match the declared intentions of Rabbi Kahane's "Kach" movement which only last week published posters calling for Arabs to leave. As Yager sees it, Rabbi Kahane's appeal and the tactics of T.N.T. could easily find their welcome among Israeli settlers on the West Bank who are disappointed by their government's inability to prevent the rash of stone throwing at Jewish-driven vehicles by Palestinians on the West Bank.

Ma'ariv, the afternoon newspaper, in an editorial entitled "T.N.T.", has joined those calling for a thorough investigation of Jewish terrorism against Arabs. "If there is a Jewish terror organization, acting against Arab targets and religious sites, then the police and the general security service have an obligation to act against it with all the severity and resourcefulness that they use against Arab terrorist attacks aimed at the Jewish population".

In the opinion of the editorial, "there is reason to believe that such a Jewish organization exists. And while arguing the theoretical question if it does or does not, no step nor effort should be left unexamined if it can prevent their schemes".

Ma'ariv concludes that "Israel cannot tolerate within its midst any kind of terrorist activity from whatever direction. (The State) must protect all of its citizens, Jews and Arabs. As the (country) leading the fight against terror, (Israel) cannot allow itself any leniency towards Jewish terrorists".

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From the desk of...

ANN PATRICK WARE

February 6, 1978

Dear Marc,

*I don't know what you thought of
Monsieur Oesterreicher's statement
in the Times but I wanted you to
know why I couldn't sign it.*

Best wishes always.

Ann Patrick

Room 872, 475 Riverside Dr., N.Y., N.Y. 10027 - 212/870-2895

Commission on Faith and Order, National Council of Churches

January 25, 1978

Monsignor John M. Oesterreicher
The Institute of Judaeo-Christian Studies
Seton Hall University
South Orange, New Jersey 07079

Dear Monsignor Oesterreicher:

I am sorry, first of all, to be so late in replying to your invitation to sign the statement sent by mailgram and, secondly, to have to tell you my reasons for not signing it. As my secretary told you, I believe, I have been in California for the past week, and although the statement was forwarded to me, I was moving from place to place. This is my first day back in the office.

My uneasiness about the statement lies both in its timing and in a part of its content. While negotiations for a settlement are in progress I do not think it appropriate to speak. I do not agree that the administration's policy is naive. If it appears to lack direction, it may well be that it is attempting not to set limits to the debate. Frankly I have been pleased by some of the actions of the administration, and I may be displeased tomorrow. It is for that very reason I do not wish to include that element in any statement which would appear in the midst of a rapidly shifting scene.

I find the upholding of the right of Israel to deal with another group as the Iraqis have done to the Kurds or as "the great powers and the new African states" have done to others an unhappy analogy at best. I understand the point of the argument but the historic examples of its application are not helpful to the cause of Israel. Or so I believe.

Finally, since no money has been requested of the signers, I presume that some one or some group is paying for this advertisement. It may be that you yourself are financing it, and if so, I applaud that use of money. There is always a suspicion, however, that Jews finance these ads, and I would be embarrassed to admit, if questioned, that I had not contributed to the cost of the ad and that I did not know who was financing it.

My commitment to the State of Israel is strong and unequivocal and I am hard put to make a decision not to sign your statement. In my view it has splendid portions within it, especially the first several sections, and I am sorry that I cannot go on record as saying that statehood is not an inalienable right. I cannot prove that it is, but I certainly cannot prove that it is not.

Thank you for sending me the statement and thereby including me in your understanding of "Roman Catholic leaders."

Sincerely,

(Sister) Ann Patrick Ware, S.L.

APW:eb

