

JNF Leader Advises International Travel Only To Countries With Hard Line On Terror

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to South and North America and elsewhere during the turbulent years after the first World War and before the modern state of Turkey was created in 1923. Then, when the state of Israel was created in 1948, about 48,000 lower- and lower-middle-class Turkish Jews emigrated to Israel. Those who remained behind were, for the most part, upper-middle-class and well-to-do Jews who chose to continue to live in Turkey, mostly in Istanbul. There are today perhaps 22,000 Jews in Istanbul, 1,500 in Ismir, and a scattering of Jews in Ankara and elsewhere in Turkey.

The Istanbul Jewish community is lead by a Chief Rabbi and a council of 30 communal leaders. I was truly impressed with the quality of leadership in a Jewish community so small. These were highly educated, very successful business and professional people who, in terms of intelligence and other leadership qualities, compare favorably to leadership groups in the United States and in other countries.

At this writing, I still do not know whether any of the friends we made were murdered in the Neve Shalom massacre.

Turkey has had relations with Israel since 1949. It downgraded that relationship in 1980, allegedly as a result of the steps taken by the Israeli government under Menachem Begin to annex the Golan Heights and to apply Israeli

law to all of Jerusalem. While Turkey has been looking to become deeply imbedded in the western economies, the fact remains that close to half of its trade is with Middle Eastern countries because Turkey must import most of its oil.

In recent months, the relationship with Israel at the diplomatic level has improved, and it is expected that Turkey soon will upgrade the quality of its diplomatic mission in Israel. Since both Turkey and Israel are staunch and militarily strong allies of the United States in that region of the world, one may assume that at other, non-diplomatic levels, the relationship between Israel and Turkey is even stronger.

The hospitality extended by the Turkish government to the American Jewish Congress was undoubtedly viewed by Turkish officials as one way to influence American public opinion. Apparently, the Turkish Jewish community agreed with its government that our visit would be helpful in that regard.

Turkey's leadership is deeply concerned that its reputation in the human rights field has been wrongly tarnished, and that this impacts negatively on European and American political calculations, diminishing its chances of acceptance in the European Economic Community and of increased American aid. (Turkey is now the third largest recipient of foreign aid, behind Israel and Egypt.) That is probably why the Turkish Minister of State with whom we met committed to us, in the presence of the leadership of the Jewish community and of the American Ambassador to Turkey, that Turkey would undertake a major celebration in 1992 of the 500th anniversary of the humane reception accorded by the Ottoman Empire to the Jews expelled from Spain and Portugal at the height of the Inquisition. This is regarded as a matter of

considerable importance to the Turkish Jewish community and, indeed, could become an event of considerable importance in the Jewish world generally.

We advised the Minister of State that the American Jewish Congress tour program would henceforth include Turkey. We told him, too, that we would certainly advise the Jewish community throughout the United States and, to the extent possible, the general community, of the substantial improvement in human rights within Turkey over the past few years, of the secure life that Turkish Jews continue to live, of the improving relationships between Turkey and Israel, and of the importance that we place in a strong and durable relationship between the United States and Turkey.

The tragedy at Neve Shalom ironically has projected the Turkish Jewish community into the spotlight of world attention in a way it had never dreamed of and never wanted.

We at the American Jewish Congress, who joined with the Turkish Jewish community on the happy occasion of our first visit only a short time ago, have now joined with them in their time of mourning. We have done so because they are our brothers and sisters, and we know full well that the guns of the degenerate and cowardly murderers were trained not only at the innocents in Istanbul but at the Jews of the world, for whom bigotry and religious hatred have been a part of life for so much of recorded history.

NEW YORK, N.Y. — Nathan Perlmutter, national director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, said "those responsible for the tear gas bombing at the Metropolitan Opera House are serving the Soviet cause -- not Jews, not the United States."

Mr. Perlmutter went on to say: "The Soviets have been presented with a propaganda gift and by whom? By persons alleging disdain for them.

"Beyond being brutish, it was an action dangerous to those present. Panic might have ensued, persons with respiratory problems might have been dangerously affected.

"One hopes the guilty terrorists will be apprehended, tried, convicted and sentenced to fitting terms of imprisonment."

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