

A Case Of Murder Or Anti-Semitism?

(Continued from page 8)

It was financed exclusively by the city and the regional authorities. The museum covers four floors and has a staff of more than 20. At its entrance, carved in rock, stands a figure representing the Jewish deportees, a gift of the region's best known sculptor, Gerald Oudinot.

Ironically, Oudinot's son was guilty of the only anti-Semitic manifestation known in Besancon, one seized upon by Nakash's defenders in Israel as "proof" of an anti-Semitic atmosphere. The young man posted a sign outside a cafe he owned saying "Jews and monkeys are forbidden to enter this bar." He was sued by LICRA and fined 5,000 Francs.

"There might be anti-Semites in Besancon -- we cannot read into peoples' hearts," Lorach said. "All I know is that after the Rue Copernic Synagogue bombing (in Paris in 1980) over 3,000 people marched in protest through this city's streets." There are 150 Jewish families and fewer than 500 Jews in Besancon.

Background Of Local Jewish Community

About a third of them came here from North Africa in the 1950's and early 1960's. They have had integration problems. Besancon is a cold city, climatically and psychologically. But those who spoke to this reporter said they encountered no anti-Semitism.

What of Nakash's family? Its first member to arrive in Besancon was Vivi's older brother, Marco, born in 1954 in Setif, Algeria, when it was still a Department of France. The entire family moved to France after Algerian independence. In 1958 they settled in Bagneux, a poor and dreary Paris suburb.

Marco worked as a clerk, then as a salesman at a flea market. In 1976 he was arrested and sentenced for pimping. After serving time, he arrived in Besancon and took a job as a waiter at a restaurant/bar owned by a Jewish family from Algeria, the El Beze brothers. One of the latter reportedly has a criminal record.

Hoods Work Over Recalcitrant Patrons

Later, Marco opened a bar of his own in partnership with an Alsatian Catholic couple. It was called "The Select." Like other bars in town, it catered to a working class, and, in some cases,

criminal clientele. When patrons failed to settle their bills, musclemen were hired to "collect."

One of the bar's problem customers was Hakkar, who drank a lot, didn't pay and boasted of it to his friends. He was known locally as a hoodlum. According to Hassen Hamoudi's testimony at his trial, Vivi Nakash asked him and Charlie Mimi to help his brother Marco deal with the problem. The three of them were childhood friends from Bagneux.

Police stressed that Nakash would not have asked an Algerian Arab, Hamoudi, and Mimi, a mulatto, to help if his reasons for attacking Hakkar were political.

Guns Obtained In Paris

The three obtained guns in Paris. According to Hamoudi, they planned to use them in a hold-up and to give Hakkar no more than a thorough beating. Police tend to believe that version. After tracking Hakkar on the night of February 24, they chased him. For some reason they panicked and opened fire. When police reached the scene of the shooting Hakkar was dead with 14 bullets in his body.

The murder was quickly solved, but by then Nakash had fled to Israel and Mimi to Florida. They got away because of a jurisdictional mixup at police headquarters between the city and regional police. Hamoudi was arrested a few days later in the south of France.

Janine Simonin, a non-Jewish lawyer who has close ties to the Jewish community here, said she was "horrified" by what she read and heard about the defense put up for Nakash in Israel.

As for anti-Semitism in Besancon, she recalled that when the Israeli Ambassador, Ovadia Soffer, visited the city last year "he was welcomed like a king." The museum of the French Jewish deportees was decorated with huge Israeli flags. "Can anyone doubt our city's feelings toward Israel?" she asked.

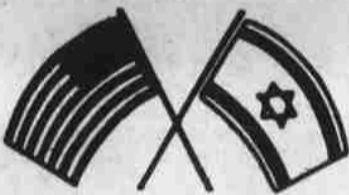
On Monday, Israel's Supreme Court will decide whether or not to overrule Justice Minister Sharir's decision not to deport Nakash.

Mitzvah In The Woods



Erevan refusenik Dr. Vili Palanker (r) and his son Evgeny (Nachman) celebrate the Sukkot holiday in the forest, holding an *etrog* and *lulav* which made their way into the USSR, in a photo just obtained by the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry. Evgeny, 20, is under strong threat of a forced Red Army draft, despite his exemption due to his epilepsy. The SSSJ urges immediate protests to: Minister of Defense Marshal Sergei Sokolov, Ulitsa Kirova 37, Moscow, USSR (Airmail 44¢/1/2 oz).

TEL AVIV (JTA) — Israel Defense Force Lt. Col. David Leiser was sentenced to seven years and reduced in rank to private by a military court for smuggling hashish from Lebanon into Israel. He was dismissed from the army. Leiser had been in command of a border check point. He was found guilty on seven counts of drug smuggling involving the illegal transportation into Israel of about a half ton of dangerous drugs valued at \$158,500.



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