

Prisoners Of The State

By Raanan Isseroff

Evyatar Slonim, a 22-year-old man, a teacher of emotionally disabled children using horseback-riding therapy, scion of Chabad, descendant of the famous Feiglin and Slonim families, was arrested this week in Israel, sentenced to jail for six months, on charges of . . . what?

This is the very question his parents are asking. We asked his cousin Rabbi Moshe Feiglin of the Aliyah Institute in Crown Heights the same question. The family is concerned that their son is being made a scapegoat. For the charges and evidence don't seem to exist, yet Evyatar is in prison. The other young men jailed with him range in age from 18 to 24, each with similar stories.

As reported by UPI News, Evyatar was arrested "based on alleged involvement in a radical Jewish organization" (Kahane Chai). In an interview with Evyatar's mother, Mrs. Gila Slonim, an *oleh* from Australia: "In March of this year, Evyatar was arrested by the Shabak (Shin Bet, Israel's General Security Service); he was held in their cells (equivalent to solitary confinement) for 12 days. For the first 8 days he was denied the right to see a lawyer, and a gag order was placed on his case for a month, so you never got to hear about that travesty of justice. At the end of 12 days, the court could no longer allow the Shabak to keep Evy, as there were no grounds for this. He was given an Administrative Distancing Order forbidding him from being in Yehuda and Shomron for a year and Jerusalem for six months.

"We toyed with making a public outcry once the gag order was lifted. We felt that by airing this in public we would in some way be betraying our country. Because as soon as we began to shout, the whole world was going to find out, and as loyal citizens who love *Eretz Yisrael* we were very uncomfortable with this.

"Today, the government has crossed the red line and placed three young men in prison without the right to a trial. This transgresses basic human rights . . . and our beloved homeland cannot be run in such an undemocratic way.

"We feel that Evy and the other two victims are scapegoats who have been targeted at a time when the government is trying to show it is doing something to rein in terror.

"In fact, Evyatar was on a family holiday at the time when the house in Douma was burned, removing any shred of doubt that he could be involved with such a heinous crime."

Just as no charges were pressed, so was no alibi sought.

The other boys, one of whom is the late Rabbi Meir Kahane's grandson, are all suspected of being involved with graffiti on a church (typical Arab activity), and while it's not stated explicitly, each article on the boys' arrests carries the story of the burning to death of a young Arab boy (again typical Arab activity)—and, by the way, of a mentally deranged person who stabbed people at a gay-parade. While there is admittedly no connection between the

three incidents, nor even evidence of the boys' connection to any of them, the media implication is clear: We are experiencing here an organized "wave" of extremist hate activities by religious Jews.

Organized? Wave? Extreme? Seemingly it is more of a "wave" of arrests and imprisonment of Orthodox men and women by police and Shabak without evidence.

At least the press is beginning to report the absurdity of Israeli justice, unbecoming for the most democratic state in the Middle East.

UPI: "Israel detains alleged Jewish extremist without trial for six months." *The Jewish Press*: "Six Months Jail without Trial for Teen" *Turkish Weekly*: "1st Jewish suspect faces Israel's 'Admin Detention.'" *Jerusalem Online*: "Israel's Attorney General Approves Administrative Detention Against Three Extreme-Right Activists." In Evyatar's case, the court was about to drop the charges due to lack of evidence—"the Shin-Bet feared the boys would be released by the court for lack of evidence"—and used the administrative detention law to hold them.

Ynet reported on an interview with the parents of Mordechai Meyer, one of the arrested boys:

"Meyer's parents, Gedalia and Sarah, said: 'We are United States citizens and our children grew up there, in a democracy, among loving people and all our family is there. We raised the kids to love nature and all souls. We had a good livelihood. We left everything due to our love for Israel—our children as well—and we are kind of shocked.'

"Gedalia spoke of the night of detention: 'We made *aliyah* from the United States to a democratic state. Our son was at home last week. They knocked on the door last night, showed a document stating that they were taking him to jail for six months without suspicion and without explanation. Suddenly, we now find ourselves with our son in jail and don't know anything. We thought there were fair courts here. Mordechai studied Torah, liked everyone, lives outdoors in Samaria (West Bank).

"My son pointed out: Dad, they had to arrest *someone*."

How Could This Happen?

Writers in the Jewish newspapers and, most sadly, even in the Orthodox press constantly write—mistakenly—that Israeli use of "administrative detention" laws are applied only against "Palestinians."

The law seems to have a few names. One is the Jewish Terrorist Law. Honenu, the legal aid group defending the boys, has hundreds of similar cases where administrative detention was used against Jews—mostly Orthodox Jews.

Other Similar Cases

Yehuda Landsberg was arrested last year. Like the boys arrested more recently, he was accused of non-provable crimes with no

evidence linking him to them. Yet he was jailed for two years. The Shabak, faced with no evidence linking him or the other two men jailed with him, set out to create evidence.

For two weeks, Yehuda was handcuffed to a low chair in a painful position by day and not allowed sleep. At night he was put in a feces-filled room. He refused to eat—for the food, besides being rotten, was of questionable *kashrus*. (Coming from such people, who could trust its *kashrus*?) Finally, after two weeks and being totally delirious, he cracked. When asked what he confessed to, “I don’t know” was all he said. “They want me to spy on my friends.”

Moriah Goldberg, an Orthodox young woman, was first arrested at age 13 with two friends for protesting the giving of Gush Katif to the Arab enemy. She was jailed for a month. After her case was publicized by Amnesty International, Israel finally relented and let her and her friends go.

In 2012, while doing her national service working in Gush Katif Museum in Jerusalem as a tour guide, Moriah was arrested after midnight, dragged in cuffs out of her parents’ home, interrogated, and jailed until the charges were shown to be baseless and she was released.

As reported in *HaAretz* (June 13, 2014), “A rare scene transpired last week at the Jerusalem Magistrate’s Court: Arieh Perl and another minor from Kedumim were indicted for carrying out a hate crime in Abu Ghosh. The case was exceptional because they were not caught in the act and never confessed to the offense during the investigation, and the indictment was based solely on circumstantial evidence.

“This indictment joins another handed down based on circumstantial evidence at the end of May against three students from the Dorshei Yechudecha Yeshiva high school in Yitzhar for an alleged hate crime committed in Gush Chalav in April. There, too, the minors survived the Shin Bet security service’s scathing intensive interrogation without letting out a word.”

Is ‘Price Tag’ Fabricated?

Did the Shin Bet apologize? Not quite. *HaAretz* also reported Shin Bet’s rather odd response: “Shin Bet officials note this development in the war against so-called ‘Price Tag’ attacks with satisfaction. These are the first cases of indictments without confessions (and evidence) since the Price Tag movement was declared a forbidden association in June 2013.”

No evidence. No confession. Yet Israel claims a “Price Tag association” to be at work within the Orthodox community. This absurd claim follows a long chain of arrests that Israel admits are lacking evidence and confessions. Even the confessions gained were obtained through torture. On this basis Israel presumes there to be a “Price Tag conspiracy.”

Commenting on Meir Ettinger’s case, *Jerusalem Online* reported: “The Nazareth Magistrates Court extended Ettinger’s arrest for another five days. Ettinger, a grandson of Rabbi Meir Kahane, is a prime target for the Shin Bet’s Jewish Department. He is considered

one of the leaders of the extreme right in the West Bank. He is accused of unlawful assembly, arson, and conspiracy to commit a crime. But there isn’t evidence connecting Mr. Ettinger to any of the charges.

“Meir Ettinger’s attorney said, ‘This is a showcase detention and interrogation. Israeli authorities are attempting to show that they are taking action following the attack on the family in the village of Douma.’”

What Law Allows This?

Imagine: With no evidence, anyone, anywhere in Israel may be picked up by government agents, disappear, be tortured (interrogated) for as long as necessary, denied a lawyer, denied being seen by a judge. Denied the right to be judged by evidence. Then be self-incriminated by statements made while being tortured mercilessly. Welcome to Israel. That’s what administrative detention is.

Through a loophole in the law, it can be used against anyone in Israel. It’s been used many, many times to unfairly convict hundreds if not thousands of Orthodox Jews for imagined crimes of political dissidence against the state, as “dangers to national security.” The victims are arrested and, in the face of a lack of evidence, they are tortured until a confession is extracted. Many times even if no confession is extracted, they are still convicted.

How Democratic Is Israel?

This opens the question of Israeli democracy in general. Are Israelis asked if they would like their homes, businesses, and land given away to Arab terrorists—or are they being told after secret negotiations? More democracy in action.

The government’s democracy appears to be a right reserved for the privileged few in power, not a right to be enjoyed by all Israelis. Israel continually demands from the United States the right of self-determination, yet those rights don’t seem to extend to Israelis themselves.

Commenting on this situation and Israel’s secret negotiations, the Lubavitcher Rebbe remarked in a discussion in 1979 after the Camp David agreement: “If the secret negotiations are so good, so why are they secret? Show us all the ‘good’ that is going on there!” (*Sichos Kodesh* 1979 vol. 3, Tu B’Av) v

For donations for funding the arrested boys’ considerable legal expenses, Eyvatar’s cousin Rabbi Moshe Feiglin of Aliyah Institute in Crown Heights has begun an emergency collection.

To donate using PayPal, use the e-mail comfort@aliyainstitute.com. To donate by credit card, visit https://aliyainstitute.com.clhosting.org/templates/articlecco_cdo/aid/633285/jewish/Donate-Online, and enter a note that this is for the Slonim family and the other boys arrested.

Or send checks—payable to Aliya Institute, with a memo that it’s for the Arrested Boys Emergency Fund—to Aliya Institute, 525–527 E. New York Ave., Brooklyn NY 11225-4513