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Campaign Of Terror, Intimidation Unleashed Against Relatives Of Riga Defendants

LONDON, Jan. 17 (JTA)--A campaign of terror and intimidation against Jews in Riga, among them relatives of defendants in forthcoming trials, was reported today by reliable Jewish sources. Two Riga Jews, Simon Jassul and Margarita Shpilberg, received identical anonymous letters stating, "Kikes, you continue to live. Hitler has not managed to finish you off." Mrs. Shpilberg is the wife of Arkady Shpilberg who is under arrest and awaiting trial in Riga. The letter threatened further, "All of you are to be slaughtered. All of you go to Israel. You don't want to work. Go from here. We hate you." Jassul and Mrs. Shpilberg went to the KGB, the Soviet secret police, but were refused help because the letters were anonymous, the sources said. According to the same sources two relatives of accused Jews in Riga have been dismissed from their jobs. They were identified as Dr. Pinhas Khanokh, brother of Leib Kanokh who is awaiting trial in Riga and Zanyil Zalmanson, whose sister Silva and brother Isak received stiff prison sentences in the Leningrad hijack trial last month. Another Riga Jew who lost her job, according to these sources, is Frida Zaslavskaya. She was fired from an agricultural agency when she applied to her employer for references in order to file for an exit visa.

Two Prominent Russian Jewish Activists Receive Permission To Emigrate To Israel

According to reliable sources, Soviet authorities have given two prominent Russian activists permission to go to Israel. One of them, identified as Boris Tsukerman, applied for his visa only two months ago and will leave on Jan. 25. The other, Vitaly Svichinsky, will leave Jan. 23. According to the sources, they will depart with their families. Israeli sources have placed at about 1000 the number of Soviet Jews who came to Israel last year. Only a few of the exit visas have gone to activists--Jews who have been openly agitating for their right to emigrate. The sources described Tsukerman as a physicist who became an expert of Soviet law and who has been challenging the Soviet regime in its own courts on issues like government censorship of private mail. He was also said to act as a liaison between Jews who want to leave and Soviet dissidents, scientists and intellectuals, Jews and non-Jews among them, who have been chafing under official repression.

The sources said that Tsukerman's departure would deprive the dissidents, who call themselves the Democratic Movement, of their most potent source of legal advocacy against the Soviet bureaucracy. The source quoted one Moscow Jew as saying that if Jews of Tsukerman's caliber are permitted to leave, it would set back the cause of Soviet Jewish emigration. The person quoted also expressed the view that too many of the activists use their emotions rather than their intelligence to gain their objectives. Today's report indicates a change of policy toward Jewish emigration though not necessarily an opening of doors to all Jews who want to leave. Some observers believe that by permitting the departure of activists who are also prominent members of the Jewish community, Soviet authorities reason that they are getting rid of prime agitators and at the same time defusing the dissident movement. The Russian sources reported that the second trial of nine Jews in Leningrad, already postponed once, will be delayed until the end of February and that the pending trials of Jews in Riga and Kishinev are also experiencing delays. According to reports received by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency last week, the second Leningrad trial and the trial in Riga were to take place later this month and the Kishinev trial during the first ten days of February.

Cabinet Condemns Violence In Struggle For Soviet Jews; Former Soviet Jews Applaud JDL

JERUSALEM, Jan. 17 (JTA)--Sharp differences of opinion have developed in Israel over the tactics of harassment and violence employed by Jewish militants against Soviet personnel and property in the United States and other countries. Such tactics were condemned by the Cabinet today in an unprecedented resolution declaring that the government "vigorously opposes acts of terror" in the struggle for the rights of Soviet Jews to emigrate to Israel. Immediately after the resolution was made public it was angrily denounced by militant nationalist circles here. The circles told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that the government had no reason to adopt the resolution because it had not been asked to comment. They claimed that for years the New Left had "perpetrated atrocities throughout the world but no government has gotten excited about it." The tactics of Jewish militants abroad, notably the Jewish Defense League in New York and other American cities, have been severely criticized by most Israeli newspapers. But judging from casual conversations with ordinary Israelis, it is by no means certain that such opinions are shared by a majority of the population, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency correspondent reported.

Eight former Soviet Jews living in Israel sent cables to American Jewish leaders denouncing their condemnation of the JDL and denying that the JDL's acts endangered Soviet Jews. The cables, addressed to Dr. William A. Wexler, president of B'nai B'rith and Rabbi Herschel Schacter, chairman of the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry, said they were convinced that the JDL's "policy and activities are most effective." The group also attacked Israeli authorities for alleged softness in fighting the Soviet Union on the issue of Jewish rights. Their cables said, "The Soviet government should be brought to understand that the liberation of Soviet Jews is preferable to endless international complications." One of the signatories, Dov Sperling, claimed that the recent cancellation of the Bolshoi Ballet's scheduled American tour was forced by the JDL and hailed it as the first public surrender by Soviet authorities to Jewish pressure. The wording of the cables implied that the signers believed that further straining of relations between Washington and Moscow would convince the Kremlin that it would be more expedient to let Soviet Jews emigrate than to allow relations with the U.S. to deteriorate. The Cabinet resolution did not single out the JDL by name but the target of its attack was clear. The resolution specifically mentioned acts of violence against Soviet establishments in the U.S. and Australia where JDL followers have been active.

The resolution marked the first instance in which the Israel government officially denounced acts of violence on behalf of Soviet Jewry. Foreign Minister Abba Eban dissociated himself obliquely from such acts in a statement last week. The chief spokesman for militant nationalism in Israel, Herut leader Menachem Beigin, tonight declared support of acts of harassment against Soviet diplomatic establishments abroad, although he stopped short of endorsing violence. In a speech prepared for delivery at Tel Aviv University, Beigin urged Jewish youth all over the world to "demonstrate endlessly" outside Soviet Embassies for the right of Russian Jews to go to Israel. Beigin observed that Communists, acting under orders from Moscow, have organized demonstrations outside of various embassies. "It is only an act of historic justice if, for the right of Jews to return to the land of Israel, constant demonstrations are held outside the embassy of the Communist country which prevents the exercise of this right," Beigin said. The Cabinet also passed a resolution today saying it "welcomes the awakening among the Jewish people in the diaspora, particularly the youth, and its solidarity with the struggle of the Jews of the Soviet Union" as well as the actions of governments and other influential bodies "to call for the rights of Soviet Jews to emigrate to Israel. The government considers it essential that this public political action be continued and intensified."

Big Four Guarantee Not Ruled Out After Peace Treaty Signed But Not Substitute For Accord

JERUSALEM, Jan. 17 (JTA)--Israeli officials said today that they were not opposed to a Big Power guarantee of a future peace settlement between Israel and its Arab neighbors but insisted that it follow the establishment of a peace treaty and not be a substitute for one. The idea of Four Power guarantees has been advanced by Egypt and is supported by France. An Israeli spokesman said that in Israel's view, peace-making activities must center on United Nations mediator, Dr. Gunnar V. Jarring, not on the Big Four. He said that "guarantees are no substitute for a peace treaty including agreed borders which are final, secure, and recognized." He said that once this is achieved, "we can consider the possibility of great power guarantees." The official maintained that this represented no departure by Israel from past policies. (Premier Golda Meir characterized as "nonsense" Egypt's demand for an Israeli withdrawal time table as the condition for extending the current cease-fire beyond its Feb. 5 expiration deadline. She made that remark last Thursday night in the first part of a two-part interview with Walter Cronkite on CBS Radio Network. She also rejected the idea of a UN peace-keeping force as "guardians of peace" in the Middle East. "We've had that before and had three wars. Not one of them was prevented by UN personnel in the area," Mrs. Meir said.) Herut leader, Menachem Beigin, in a speech prepared for delivery tonight at Tel Aviv University, claims that it was clear from the onset of the Jarring talks that Israel's agreement in principle to withdraw from occupied territories has no advanced peace prospects "by one iota." According to Beigin, whose Gahal faction walked out of the government last summer because of its acceptance of the cease-fire and the Jarring talks, the negotiations only invited pressure for further retreats. He urges a "national policy" based on Israel's "right to the land of Israel... (which has) been reunited and shall never be torn asunder."

Lebanon's Rejection Of Peace Treaty With Israel Not 'Last Word' Says Galili

JERUSALEM, Jan. 17 (JTA)--Lebanon's rejection of an Israeli offer to negotiate a permanent peace treaty based on the present borders between the two countries does not represent the "last word" from Beirut, according to Cabinet Minister Israel Galili. Galili, a Minister-Without-Portfolio of the Labor Alignment, stated his views during an armed forces radio interview Friday night, several hours after the official announcement that Israeli commandos raided a guerrilla coastal base 30 miles inside Lebanon on Thursday. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency learned from informed sources last week that the peace offer to Lebanon was among the proposals Premier Golda Meir handed United Nations mediator Gunnar V. Jarring when he visited Jerusalem a week ago. The commando raid was mounted to destroy a base on the Lebanese coast about ten miles south of Sidon from which guerrillas were allegedly sending men to infiltrate Israel by sea, the announcement said. At least 10 guerrillas were killed and many others were wounded, a military spokesman reported. Six Israeli soldiers were slightly wounded in the action.

Israeli intelligence learned about the sea base as the result of the capture of five guerrillas who landed in northern Israel from a rubber boat on Jan. 2. Their alleged mission was to kidnap an Israeli citizen. The guerrillas were spotted by a family living near the coast which summoned security forces. Three of the intruders were captured after a brief gun battle and two others were picked up later as they attempted to make their way inland. A sixth guerrilla escaped. (Lebanon complained of the Israeli raid in a letter to Security Council President Sir Colin Crowe Friday. The letter claimed that an Israeli agent provocateur arranged to put five Palestinian residents of Lebanon ashore in Israel so that they could be captured and serve as a pretext for the Israeli commando raid on the Lebanese coast. The letter protested the raid but did not ask for a Security Council meeting.)

Galili: Israel Must Be Prepared For Renewed Fighting; Jarring To Meet With Arab Envoys

JERUSALEM, Jan. 17 (JTA)--A Cabinet Minister said that Israel must be prepared for a renewal of fighting by Egypt after the current cease-fire extension expires on Feb. 5 but that it is too early to draw any conclusions as to Egyptian intentions. According to Israel Galili, who was interviewed by the armed forces radio Friday night, the Egyptians have not yet asked for a meeting of the Security Council nor have they responded one way or the other to Israel's proposals submitted to United Nations mediator Gunnar V. Jarring a week ago. Until there is a response, the Labor Alignment Minister-Without-Portfolio said, Israel must be prepared for renewed hostilities. He said the Egyptians were apparently trying to pressure Jarring, with Soviet help, to place the subject of Israel's withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories on top of the agenda of the Jarring peace talks. He said Israel would never agree to this, although Israel has offered to talk about territorial subjects at an early stage of the talks. (At United Nations headquarters in New York, Dr. Jarring has scheduled a meeting tomorrow to receive Jordan's view on the Mideast peace. The UN envoy received Egypt's proposals last Friday and scheduled a meeting with the UAR envoy tomorrow. Mohammed el-Zayyat, Egyptian ambassador to the UN, declined to disclose the UAR's proposals although it was believed they called for Israeli withdrawal and a meeting of the Security Council before Feb. 5. Jordanian Ambassador Muhammad el-Farra said that in his meeting tomorrow he will present the position of his government "on the implementation" of Resolution 242.)

JNF Unfolds Master Plan For Arava; Humphrey, Taft Favor Continued Aid To Israel

NEW YORK, Jan. 17 (JTA)--One thousand delegates from all parts of the nation gathered here today for the inaugural of the 70th anniversary of the Jewish National Fund. A dramatic new program for the conquest of the Arava, Israel's most forbidding desert, stretching from the Dead Sea to the Red Sea, was unfolded by Ambassador Jacob Tsuri, world chairman of the Fund in Jerusalem. He told the delegates that the reclamation by the JNF of 10,000 acres of soil and the preparation of sites for six new settlements, three of which are already in an advanced planning stage, will pave the way for the first human habitation since the dawn of time in this neglected sector of the Middle East. The Master Plan will require a substantial financial commitment from American Jewry over an initial three-year period. Other JNF tasks in the Arava will include the construction of high earth dams to divert flood waters, the sweetening of the salty soil, planting shelterbelt avenues of trees around fields, and blazing access roads. U.S. Senators Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota and Robert Taft, Jr. of Ohio, who addressed the delegates at the overflow assemblage, declared unequivocally their support of Israel during the critical Jarring talks with the Mideast powers, and called upon the administration to intensify its aid to the Jewish State.

JNF national president Herman L. Weisman hailed the new Arava project as "vital to Israel's future" and expressed confidence that there would be a broad-scaled and enthusiastic response from the American-Jewish community to complete one of the most ambitious programs in Israel's history. He also alerted the delegates to the controversy that is currently sweeping Israel with regard to public land ownership, the principle which was taken over by the State from the Jewish National Fund, and which is now under attack by segments of the Israeli public and press. Taft warned that a blind over-reaction to U.S. involvement in Vietnam poses a serious threat to the capability and will of the U.S. to promote a peaceful solution in the Middle East. Forces of neo-isolationism at work in America today must be considered the single greatest threat to the continued existence of the State of Israel. Even if these neo-isolationists give up service to an American commitment to Israel, they are proposing policies that detract from the credibility of a meaningful commitment. They make it impossible for the U.S. to honor one." He did not identify the neo-isolationists.

Humphrey insisted that "it is in the best interest of all concerned with peace in the Middle East that the U.S. unmistakably clear its bond with Israel." He said, "The measure of our commitment to Israel is also the measure of the chance for Arab world peace." Continuing, Humphrey observed: "Israel's recognized and guaranteed borders must be such that population centers will not be exposed to the violent whims of dissident guerrillas. I also applaud assurances of the government of Israel that once negotiations begin, with a firm peace in mind, Israel will be flexible on final borders." The Palestinian refugees must be given the choice of repatriation or compensation." Lord Janner, president of the British Zionist Federation, expressed his concern over recent events in New York City. "We in Britain are concerned about the activities of small but very vocal bodies who advocate violence as a means of helping the cause of Israel, and are convinced that such actions are self-defeating," he said. "I personally am very disturbed to see what's happening here, although of course I realize that the Jewish Defense League is a small group which does not represent the mass of American Jewry, who are playing an important and responsible role in assisting their government to support a strong and independent Israel."

Goldmann: JDL Tactics A 'Catastrophe'; Soviet Jews Differ On JDL; JDL'ers Indicted

TEL AVIV, Jan. 17 (JTA)--Dr. Nahum Goldmann said here today that the world convention of Communist parties next March will be decisive for the situation of Jews in the Soviet Union. According to Dr. Goldmann, who arrived here last night for a two-week visit, the Communist parties of the western world influenced Soviet authorities on the side of leniency in the Leningrad trial, manifested by the commutation of the two death sentences to prison terms and the reduction of several other sentences. Dr. Goldmann said that during the three months since he was last in Israel he met with a number of prominent Russians, but he named only one of them, the Soviet Ambassador to Washington, Anatoly F. Dobrynin. He said he talked to Dobrynin before the Leningrad trial last month. He said he would report on his various talks abroad to Premier Golda Meir, Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir and other Cabinet officers. Dr. Goldmann referred to the harassing tactics of the Jewish Defense League in the United States as a "catastrophe," and noted "their intentions are good but their deeds cause unimaginable harm." The tactics of the JDL appear to have divided Jewish opinion in the Soviet Union according to various reports received here recently. A majority of Soviet Jews are neither actively trying to emigrate nor are they protesting JDL acts in letters to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow. But they fear the JDL tactics will give Soviet authorities an excuse for anti-Semitic activities.

They are apprehensive that the bombings of Soviet premises in the U.S. and the harassment of Soviet personnel will be linked by Russian authorities directly to Soviet Jews who are openly demanding emigration rights and have already been branded as "traitorous." This could affect the outcome of the new trials of Jews which are expected to open next month in Leningrad, Riga and Kishinev, the reports said. A further concern of Russian Jews is that the anti-Soviet tactics abroad will obscure the legitimate grievances of Jews in the USSR and will harden the Kremlin leaders against the pressure for leniency that seemed to persuade them to commute the two death sentences last month. But other Soviet Jews, mainly those who have committed themselves to an all out struggle for emigration rights, seem to approve of the JDL. They believe that the Soviets respect only force and insist that anti-Semitism is native to the Soviet Union and cannot be made any worse by the JDL tactics. (In New York, two JDL leaders and a third man were indicted Friday by a Federal Grand Jury for using fictitious names to buy three rifles. Under indictment are Sandor Sternberg, 20, a Brooklyn College student; David Sommer, 32, a Queens high school teacher; and Aaron Blumenthal, 22, a Philadelphia resident believed to be in Israel. According to U.S. Attorney Whitney North Seymour, Jr., the defendants are charged with violating the Federal Firearms Control Law. Federal authorities described Sternberg as "director of defense" of the JDL and its chief karate instructor. Sommer was described as a member of the JDL's national board and editor of its newsletter, "Never Again." Rabbi Meir Kahane, national chairman of the JDL, said this weekend that he would go to Washington tomorrow in an effort to meet with Secretary of State William P. Rogers. On Tuesday Rabbi Kahane is scheduled for arraignment on charges of disorderly conduct.)

