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ANOTHER JEWISH INSTITUTION IN EAST JERUSALEM OBJECT OF ARSON

JERUSALEM, Feb. 24 (JTA)-- The second time within a week, an attempt was made to set fire to a Jewish religious institute in East Jerusalem. The arson attempt was made Friday night at the Habad Synagogue in the Jewish quarter in the Old City, causing only minor damage with no one hurt. Last Sunday a similar attempt was made on a Jewish bookstore, a few blocks from the synagogue. In both cases kerosene was spilled under an iron gate at the entrance, and then lit. In both cases the fire was discovered shortly after by passersby and neighbors, and extinguished before it could do serious damage.

Police arrested several East Jerusalem residents in both cases, but the similarity in the manner of both arson attempts may indicate that the actual arsonists are still at large. Police increased recently surveillance in the Old City, after Jewish quarter residents complained that security measures were lacking. The current arson cases began two weeks ago when three Christian religious institutions in West Jerusalem were set on fire, but it is not clear whether the fire at the Jewish institutions was meant to be a reprisal, officials said.

Another indication of some unrest in East Jerusalem was the arrest of 11 East Jerusalem men and one woman near the weekend on suspicion of taking part in a hostile organization and distribution of illegal leaflets. The group--most of its members young intellectuals--teachers, college and high school students and one poet--was mainly suspected of distributing leaflets urging East Jerusalem residents not to vote in the municipal elections on Dec. 31. At the first stage of investigation it did not appear that the group was suspected of any actual hostile acts, such as sabotage, police said.

Police meanwhile are stymied in the investigation of the disappearance of "Alfajr" newspaper publisher, Yusef Nassri Nassr. The 35-year-old publisher disappeared from his East Jerusalem home two-and-a-half weeks ago, and no word has been heard from him since. Police have concentrated their efforts on the possibility of a political kidnapping, but although dozens of East Jerusalem and West Bank residents have been interrogated, no indication has been found about the fate of the missing journalist.

ISRAELI MIAs ON NORTHERN FRONT, PRESUMABLY POWs, LISTED AS 80

TEL AVIV, Feb. 24 (JTA)--The Israeli army has set the number of Israeli soldiers missing in the northern front--presumably imprisoned by the Syrians as prisoners of war at 80. This number includes air crews, armored corp soldiers and artillery men as well as other soldiers. This number was reached after careful examination of all details of the remains of soldiers found in the battle area. The number of 80 includes soldiers recognized in press photos, and those

interviewed by foreign correspondents.

WEST GERMAN PROTESTANT LEADER URGES HOLLAND TO RELEASE 3 NAZI WAR CRIMINALS FROM PRISON

AMSTERDAM, Feb. 24 (JTA)-- The president of the West German Evangelical Church, Ernst Wilm, in a letter to Dutch government officials urged The Netherlands to release the remaining three Nazi war criminals held in Breda Prison. In a letter dated Dec. 19 but only made public this weekend, the Protestant leader urged the release of the three in view of their poor health and confessions of guilt and repentance. One of them; Joseph Kottaella, 66, is partially paralyzed and has lost his power of speech due to a stroke he suffered early last Oct. The other two are Franz Fischer, 71, and Ferdinand aus den Fuentes, 75.

Justice Minister Andries van Agt, in a press conference over the weekend, acknowledged that he and Premier Joop den Uyl had received Wilm's letter last Dec. He said the present Dutch Cabinet had not yet discussed the matter. Van Agt called Wilm, who spent three years in Dachau concentration camp, a "highly respectable man" but had no good word for the "bund heimkehrer" in West Germany which is likewise campaigning for the release of the three war criminals.

Van Agt's acknowledgement of the letter comes at a particularly sensitive moment, the eve of the annual commemoration of the anti-Nazi "February strike" which took place in The Netherlands on Feb. 25-26, 1941. Dutch Communists are expected to use the occasion for a separate mass demonstration in Amsterdam to express their demands which include opposition to the release of the Nazi war criminals. Exactly two years ago, the contemplated release of the three by the previous Dutch Cabinet caused such a furor that the idea was abandoned. At the time, Van Agt was among those who proposed pardoning the war criminals.

JEWISH BOOKSHOP DESTROYED

LONDON, Feb. 24 (JTA)--A Jewish religious bookshop on Cheetham Hill Road, Manchester, known as "Pincus," has burned down this weekend as a result of an explosion. Police are seeking the culprits.

FORD PRAISES LEADERS OF ISRAEL, EGYPT FOR LARGE SHARE IN ACHIEVING SUEZ DISENGAGEMENT

NEW YORK, Feb. 24 (JTA)--Vice-President Gerald Ford told Bnai Zion here tonight that "a large share" of the credit for the Suez disengagement accord "accrues to the courage, goodwill and vision of leaders in both Egypt and Israel" and disclosed that Secretary of State Henry Kissinger "has already conveyed some initial Syrian ideas on disengagement to the government of Israel." Ford said that "we are, of course, addressing ourselves to the issue of Israeli prisoners of war held by Syria." He added that "humanitarian considerations indi-

cate that Syria and Israel should exchange full lists of prisoners and that both sides permit Red Cross visits to POW camps."

The Vice President spoke at the 66th annual award dinner of the American Fraternal Zionist Organization where he was presented with the order's 1974 America-Israel Friendship Gold Medal "in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the furtherance of America-Israel friendship." He said he was "very proud" that American diplomacy "relieved the dangerous global pressure point at the Suez Canal," adding that Egypt and Israel "now have the opportunity to implement a scenario of peace step by step in such a manner as to build mutual confidence." Kissinger is leaving tomorrow for the Mideast on a new round of talks aimed at an Israeli-Syrian disengagement accord.

Ford said the expulsion of Alexander Solzhenitsyn was regrettable but that it should not affect the Nixon Administration's efforts for detente with the Soviet Union, which Ford credited for the fact that "some 35,000 Soviet Jews have found new homes in Israel."

The Vice President linked U.S. military aid to Israel in the Yom Kippur war with the expanded defense budget proposed by the Nixon Administration. He said that, during the war, "specific material shortages were brought to light" and that "the new budget would increase our airlift capacity to deploy forces overseas in time of emergency." He said "an era of peace is within reach--for the super powers as well as the Middle Eastern countries" but that "to reach that objective we have no alternative but to maintain a strong defense."

Nixon, Ford Praised For Efforts

Rabbi Israel Miller, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, told the 1,600 Zionist and Jewish communal leaders that the U.S. "has made it clear that it will not sacrifice Israel to Soviet aggrandizement and to Arab aggression, not only because of its own global interests, but because of the fundamental moral posture of our country." Rabbi Miller said "we express our gratitude to the Vice President and through him to the President for their support of Israel."

He said that Kissinger's plans to confer with Syria on disengagement "looms large in our concerns" because Syria "has been the most intransigent of Israel's Arab border-neighbors." He denounced Syria's "brutal treatment of Israeli prisoners of war and its inhumane and uncivilized refusal to abide by the Geneva Convention and release the names of the POWs and permit them to be visited by the International Red Cross."

Messages were announced at the dinner from various officials including President Nixon, Israeli President Ephraim Katzir, Premier Golda Meir, and Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban. Nixon said Ford's "deep-rooted commitment to the friendship between our country and the State of Israel has been further enhanced by the humanitarian compassion and civic concern that characterize so many of your organization's programs."

Katzir lauded Ford as "a staunch and perceptive champion of the cause of strengthening the bonds of friendship between Israel

and the United States." Mrs. Meir called him a "great American leader whose whole career bears testimony to his profound humanitarianism, his fearless support for freedom everywhere and his genuine friendship for Israel." Eban lauded Ford for his "efforts to strengthen the bonds of friendship between the people of the United States and the people of Israel" and for his "unswerving and meaningful champion-ship of the State of Israel in its struggle for peace and security."

GOLDMANN: POSSIBILITY OF WAR UNLESS U.S.-USSR DETENTE IS MAINTAINED

TEL AVIV, Feb. 24 (JTA)--Unless the detente between the Soviet Union and the United States is maintained, there is a danger that no settlement will be reached in the Middle East and this means a possibility of a renewed war, Dr. Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress said today at a luncheon meeting with Israeli editors and WJC leaders. According to Dr. Goldmann the present situation offers the first real possibilities for reaching an arrangement--temporary or permanent--with the Arabs, conditioned by the international situation. He said that both the U.S. and USSR are interested--for separate reasons--in maintaining the detente they have reached.

He therefore expressed his support for the present policy of the Israeli government as expressed by Defense Minister Moshe Dayan and Premier Golda Meir. Dayan has stated that Egyptian President Anwar Sadat wants peace and it is now the most appropriate moment to go forward with the negotiations. Mrs. Meir has stated that it is worthwhile to take some risks if peace is to be achieved. Dr. Goldmann recalled his discussions with the late David Ben Gurion who said that time was working in Israel's favor while Dr. Goldmann responded that he feared that time was working for the Arabs "and to my great regret I was right."

As to the WJC, Dr. Goldmann said its plenary assembly will meet for the first time in six years in the Hague at the end of April for 10 days. He revealed the establishment of a special department at the WJC dealing with the Third World. This, he said, was specially important now that relations between Israel and the "Third World" nations have cooled down or have been ruptured. Some 500 delegates from 64 countries will attend the assembly.

KOLLEK REJECTS ISLAMIC DEMAND FOR A DIVIDED CITY OF JERUSALEM

JERUSALEM, Feb. 24 (JTA)--Mayor Teddy Kollek repeated today his conviction that Jerusalem should remain united as the capital of Israel. Kollek reacted to the Islamic summit conference in Lahore which called for "the restoration of the holy city of Jerusalem to Arab sovereignty."

Kollek said he did not expect a different resolution, but as the mayor of "united Jerusalem" who was aware of the everyday life in the city, he expressed his conviction that life in Jerusalem under Israeli rule was much better for its citizens than it had ever been during the 19 years of Jordanian rule. Noting that "we are striving for the solution of all religious and political problems within the framework of one city," Kollek added: "There is complete personal freedom and free access to the holy places for everybody of all religions and national origins."

KISSINGER DUE IN ISRAEL WEDNESDAY; EFFORTS TO FORM CABINET IN HIGH GEAR

By David Landau and Gil Sedah

JERUSALEM, Feb. 24 (JTA)--Secretary of State Henry Kissinger plans two visits to Jerusalem and two to Damascus this week, it was reported unofficially today. Kissinger's initial goal is to create a framework in which Israeli-Syrian disengagement talks could later be held, perhaps by military officials working at the front, as at the Israeli-Egyptian Kilometer 101 talks, or at Geneva, it was noted. Meanwhile, the Labor Party central committee met today in Tel Aviv to discuss members for the new Cabinet after weekend attempts to persuade Gen. Moshe Dayan, the outgoing Defense Minister, and Shimon Peres, the outgoing Transport Minister, to accept posts in the Cabinet failed. The decision by Dayan and Peres not to join the new Cabinet was made final Friday night at a meeting of the Labor party's Rafi wing. That meeting followed a fruitless session between Dayan and Peres and Premier Golda Meir and Labor Minister Yosef Almogi.

Mrs. Meir made an impassioned plea tonight to Dayan and Peres to reverse their decisions to leave the Cabinet. "You have no right to go," she said, at this time when "I know that fateful decisions will have to be taken." She said she well understood that there came a time in political leaders' careers when they are tempted to say to their party, "Take back your mandate," having reached a "breaking point" under carping and criticism. But she was begging the Rafi minister to summon up the inner strength to resist this temptation. While Mrs. Meir addressed the central committee of the Labor party central committee, Dayan sat in front the row, his head bowed, his face inscrutable, as she once more spelled out her firm position against a national unity government. Likud, she said, has the word "no" on the masthead of its ideology. Likud policy would prevent any peace prospects and endanger friendship with the U.S. She could not say how long the minority government would last.

Almogi, who initiated that meeting, said later he feared a possible split in the Labor party but Peres insisted that the eight former Rafi members would not leave the party and would support the new Cabinet. One problem which must be solved promptly, observers said, is selection of a new Defense Minister. Mrs. Meir was understood to be considering two actions: first, to name a new Defense Minister quickly, probably former Chief of Staff Yitzhak Rabin, or Gen. Haim Bar Lev; or to maintain the portfolio herself with the hope of persuading Dayan to change his mind, while Rabin or Bar Lev assumed operative responsibility at the Ministry. Reports on Dayan's plans to leave his post were that he would do so as soon as the make-up of the new Cabinet was announced and presented to President Katzir and the Knesset, presumably Wednesday or Thursday. Dayan's office has cancelled all meetings and functions previously arranged for him as Defense Minister.

Another Labor effort to persuade the National Religious Party today not only failed to bring any progress toward that goal but brought a rejection by NRP negotiations of an Alignment appeal to support the new Cabinet, even if the NRP would not join it. The NRP negotiators said their party would either vote against the new Cabinet or abstain when it is presented to the Knesset. Aharon Yadin, the Labor party secretary general, speaking at the Labor party central committee meeting, denounced Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren for his role in the "Who is a Jew?" deadlock which led to the NRP decision against joining the new coalition. Yadin said Rabbi Goren surrendered to pressures from Orthodox rabbis in other countries on the issue and "endangered" the authority of the Chief Rabbinate. Yadin said the "young guard" of the NRP had deliberately torpedoed the coalition talks and "pretended" that the conversion question was the key issue while their real concern was over the possibility of a return of West Bank territory to Jordan in any future peace talks.

Meanwhile, according to unofficial reports, if Kissinger finds that progress on the substantive issues between Israel and Syria can be achieved by his own direct participation, he might agree to expand his "shuttling" between Damascus and Jerusalem. Observers noted that this was what happened when he came to the Middle East to work out a framework for Israeli-Egyptian disengagement. Whether the Kissinger visit was discussed at the weekly Cabinet meeting today was not indicated, although it was generally assumed it had been. Informed sources said Dayan and Peres were expected to participate in the Kissinger talks, since the new Cabinet is not expected to be presented to the Knesset before next Monday, after Kissinger leaves. A discussion of the proposed talks with Syria did take place yesterday at Mrs. Meir's home, with senior Ministers, including Dayan and Peres, participating.

The influential Cairo newspaper, Al Ahram, said Kissinger would come to Israel with a list of Syrian-held Israeli prisoners, as Israel has demanded, and thus set the stage for detailed disengagement talks. While there was no official confirmation for the report in Jerusalem or in Washington, political observers here said it was true and that Kissinger's visit meant that the way was open for the disengagement negotiations. (In Washington, there was a flurry of diplomatic activity as Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy and Joseph J. Sisco, Under Secretary of State-designate, met several times this weekend prior to the departure of Kissinger to the Middle East tomorrow. Kissinger and Fahmy also met today in an apparent last minute effort to tie up loose ends concerning Kissinger's new effort to get Israeli-Syrian disengagement talks started. The Secretary is due in Damascus on Tuesday and in Israel on Wednesday. It was confirmed here that among those accompanying Kissinger on his new Mideast round will be Robert J. McCloskey, ambassador-at-large, who will act as advisor and ad hoc negotiator; George Vest, State Department spokesman; and Sisco. It was also learned that Ellsworth Bunker, chief U.S. representative at the Geneva talks, may also accompany Kissinger.

3 SOVIET JEWISH HUNGER STRIKERS URGED TO END ACTION FOR REASONS OF HEALTH BUT DECLINE TO DO SO

NEW YORK, Feb. 24 (JTA)--Two Jewish leaders and one Christian leader sent a cable to the three Moscow Jewish activist hunger strikers urging them to end their week-old action in order to avoid becoming seriously ill. The cable, signed by Richard Maass, chairman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, Rabbi Israel Miller, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, and Sister Ann Gillen, director of the National Interreligious Task Force on Soviet Jewry, was sent this weekend to David Azbel, Vitaly Rubin and Vladimir Galatsky who began their hunger strike Feb. 15 in Azbel's Moscow apartment.

The cable stated that "your desperate plight has been brought to the attention of the American people and your appeal (issued and released last week) to the Senate of the United States has been forwarded to all Senators. We are gravely concerned about your strength. People of good will are standing with you, and many Americans have joined in sympathy hunger strikes. You are not abandoned even though your phones have been disconnected by Soviet authorities and you are out of contact. Be assured that Jews and non-Jews alike stand with you in solidarity in this desperate hour."

The NCSJ reported today that the hunger strikers responded that they would not end their action until they were "united in Israel." The NCSJ said it had been informed that the three activists are suffering from the effects of the hunger strike, particularly Azbel. The three have been subsisting solely on water. The Soviet Jewry group also reported that the three hunger strikers urged continued efforts to get their telephones back in working order.

Meanwhile, the Academic Committee on Soviet Jewry, in a cable signed by its chairman, Prof. Hans J. Morgenthau, expressed solidarity with Azbel, Rubin and Galatsky "as you and your colleagues seek implementation of the universally recognized right of free emigration. The refusal to grant you exit visas violates international morality and law and runs counter to the policy of detente."

AJCONGRESS LEADERS WARN NRP DEMAND ON WHO IS A JEW POSES MAJOR THREAT TO JEWISH UNITY

TEL AVIV, Feb. 24 (JTA)--American Jewish Congress leaders warned here that the National Religious Party's demand for halachic conversion posed a major threat to Jewish unity around the world and to large scale immigration from America. Mrs. Naomi Levine, Executive Director of the AJCongress, said at a panel discussion on "Who Decides Who Is A Jew" held at the Bar Ilan University, that the NRP demand can serve only to weaken Jewish unity at a time when it is sorely needed.

It is based, she asserted, not on halachic requirements but on what appears to be the effort of the Orthodox rabbinate to obtain a monopoly on conversions. Four American Orthodox members of the university faculty, Arnold Anker, dean of the Bar Ilan Law School, and professors Charles Leibman, Howard Lewine and Daniel Elazar differed with Mrs. Levine, stressing the danger for Jewish integrity in "free for all" conversions.

YARIV TOUR SPARKS RECORD- BREAKING UJA MEETINGS

NEW YORK, Feb. 24 (JTA)--Maj. Aaron Yariv, Israel's chief negotiator with the Egyptians at Kilometer 101, former Chief of Military intelligence, and newly-elected member of Knesset, was the guest speaker at record-breaking United Jewish Appeal meetings in Chicago, New York and Los Angeles. At the east and west coast meetings, Yariv shared honors with long-time friends William Rosenwald and Danny Kaye.

Rosenwald, UJA honorary general chairman, was one of the founders of the UJA. He is credited with personally raising \$250 million for Jewish humanitarian causes in some 40 years of communal activity. The dinner meeting sponsored by the UJA of Greater New York and the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies cited Rosenwald on his 70th birthday.

Yariv stated that Rosenwald personified three superb qualities--confidence, realism and perseverance as exemplified by 40 years of public service. The General applied these same characteristics to the present situation in Israel. He stated that the Israelis are confident, despite the loss of life that the security and safety of their country will be preserved; that the road to peace will require a realistic understanding of the difficulties and possible pitfalls; and with confidence and realism, the Israelis will have the staying power to develop a strong, vibrant nation at peace with its neighbors.

In Los Angeles, Yariv greeted another friend, entertainer Danny Kaye, who returned to the U.S. from the Far East for the occasion. In what he described as a happy reunion, Yariv presented Kaye with an ancient artifact of the Bronze Age, dug from an archeological site. The presentation was in recognition of Kaye's morale building efforts during the Yom Kippur War. At the outbreak of the hostilities, Kaye cancelled his commitments in the U.S. to entertain front-line troops in Israel. He appeared before thousands of Israeli soldiers on the Golan Heights and in the Sinai.

More than 900 community and entertainment industry leaders attended the dinner meeting. About \$300,000 in new and increased pledges were made that evening as an expression of tribute to Kaye and Yariv.

ACTION URGED ON ISRAELI POWs

WASHINGTON, Feb. 24 (JTA)--Greater Washington's Jewish Community Council urged this weekend the U.S. government "to employ every means possible" to bring Syria into compliance with the Geneva Convention on war prisoners and "to facilitate an immediate exchange of prisoners" between Syria and Israel. Leaders of the Council, representing 170 synagogues and Jewish organizations in the Washington area, presented Under Secretary of State-designate Joseph J. Sisco with petitions bearing more than 7,000 signatures protesting Syria's refusal to abide by the Convention and noted that Israel has complied.

The delegation met with Sisco at the State Department as he prepared to depart tomorrow with Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger for the Middle East where they will attempt to bring about disengagement of Syrian and Israeli forces. Israel has declared it will not negotiate with Syria until the POW issue is resolved. The delegation asked Sisco to urge President Nixon, Kissinger and the UN to intercede.