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5 WZO EMISSARIES, TWO LOCAL WZO EMPLOYEES ARRESTED IN ARGENTINA

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, July 25 (JTA) -- Israeli authorities are making efforts to secure the release of five World Zionist Organization emissaries (shlichim) who were arrested in Cordoba, Argentina over the weekend. They are Mr. and Mrs. Yitzhak Estrugo of Kibbutz Bahan; Mr. and Mrs. Yosef Pick, of Tel Aviv; and Amnon Rudin, of Jerusalem, a son of an Israeli police official. Two local employees of the WZO, also arrested, have not been identified here.

According to information received here, the Estrugos were arrested Thursday morning and the others 24 hours later. Just prior to the arrests the emissaries had participated in a seminar organized by a local youth movement, "El Committee," which is affiliated with the Labor Zionist kibbutz movement in Israel, Ihud Hakvutzot VeHakibutzim.

The reasons for the arrests are unknown but may be connected with "El Committee," which the Buenos Aires authorities regard as leftist and opposed to the Argentine regime. There is special concern for the Estrugos who hold Argentinian as well as Israeli citizenship and reportedly were detained by the army while the others are being held by police.

Convinced Arrests Are A Mistake

Mordechai Bar On, director general of the WZO's youth and chalutz department which is responsible for the emissaries, said he was convinced that the arrests were a mistake because none of the detainees was involved in political activity that could be interpreted as hostile to Argentina. He was hopeful that they would be released once the misunderstanding was recognized.

Pick is the only one of the five who is a permanent resident of Cordoba serving as a shalich to the local Jewish community. The others were in that city only for the Zionist seminar. Sources here said the five were involved only in Zionist and Jewish educational activities and were not members of any leftist political bodies. "On the contrary, they are politically oriented to Labor or to the right of it," a WZO source said. The source also noted that "The Argentine authorities do not detain persons involved in Zionist and Jewish activities which are entirely legal there."

FOIL TERRORIST ATTEMPT IN NETANYA

TEL AVIV, July 25 (JTA) -- The alertness of an off-duty civil defense guard prevented what could have been a serious terrorist atrocity in Netanya. The incident happened about 10 days ago but was only revealed last night after police rounded up other members of a terrorist gang in the Nablus area.

Police said the off-duty guard became suspicious when he saw two West Bank youths carrying a heavy valise. He alerted another civil defense guard who was on duty and they stopped the youths. Police sappers were called and

they found a large improvised bomb inside the valise. The two youths told police they had intended to place the bomb on the Netanya beach which was crowded with thousands of bathers, mostly women and children. Police investigation led to the arrest of three more West Bank youths. The five youths, who made up an El Fatah cell in Samaria, are also suspected of having placed a bomb on a bus in Kfar Saba about a year ago.

DEATH SENTENCE FOR LEVIEV COMMUTED TO 15 YEARS IN PRISON

NEW YORK, July 15 (JTA) -- The death sentence imposed by the Moscow Municipal Court in December, 1974 on Mikhail Leviev has been commuted to 15 years in prison, according to reports received by the Greater New York Conference on Soviet Jewry. Leviev, the manager of a store in Moscow, had been charged with "economic crimes" and "anti-Soviet activity."

According to Malcolm Hoenlein, GNYCSJ director, Leviev had applied for and received permission to emigrate to Israel together with his family. A few days prior to their scheduled departure, Leviev was detained by Soviet police and held incommunicado while a two-and-a-half year investigation was undertaken, leading to the trial. Three non-Jews, tried along with Leviev on similar charges, received five to nine years sentences. Because Leviev allegedly would not cooperate with the prosecutor, he alone was condemned to death.

As soon as word of the death sentence was received in the West, thousands of telegrams and appeals were sent to the Moscow Procurator and other Soviet officials. Part of the campaign in the West include demonstrations organized by the GNYCSJ and other Soviet Jewry groups; protests by Congressmen, District Attorneys and other elected officials; as well as appeals by Leviev's wife.

Robert Abrams, GNYCSJ chairman, said that the commutation is once again an indication of the potential effectiveness of pressure from the West. He added that these actions, and many others, may well have been the critical factors in saving Leviev's life.

U.S. IMPLIES IT IS IN DIRECT CONTACT WITH THE PLO IN ITS EFFORT TO EVACUATE AMERICANS FROM LEBANON

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, July 25 (JTA) -- The State Department has strongly implied that it is in direct contact with the Palestine Liberation Organization in the U.S. effort to evacuate remaining Americans from Lebanon. "It is recognized that the PLO is obviously an important element in maintaining security in West Beirut," Department spokesman Frederick Brown said Friday. "Any arrangements relating to security necessarily involves them."

Brown called newsmen together in a special news conference after he had said earlier in the day at his regular briefing that the U.S. is "not in direct contact with the PLO." He had also specifically excluded any element of the

PLO while saying that the U.S. was "in contact with the parties concerned" in the Lebanese situation.

Brown said, in making his special announcement, that U.S. policy is not changed by his statement. The United States position is that it will not deal with the PLO as long as it insists on its policy of refusing to recognize Israel's sovereignty as an independent state.

The PLO matter arose when newsmen questioned Brown on why the evacuation that had been scheduled for last Tuesday continued to be delayed and the report by columnists Rowland Evans and Robert Novak that the PLO "is under high-level suspicion here of fabricating its warning that it could not guarantee safe evacuation this week of U.S. diplomats from Beirut in order to turn them into virtual hostages."

The columnists said that PLO Chief Yassir Arafat wants "serious U.S. pressure on Syrian President Hafez Assad to withdraw from Lebanon leaving the PLO intact to negotiate a political settlement with other major factions in the civil war."

Daily Exchanges With Parties Concerned

The U.S. a week ago drastically reduced its embassy staff in Beirut to a dozen persons and asked all of the remaining American citizens in Lebanon, about 1,000, including those with dual citizenship, to leave last Tuesday from Beirut in a convoy to Damascus. The embassy had warned that it could no longer protect American lives in Lebanon.

Safe passage for the convoy has not been obtained, however, the U.S. is now planning an evacuation by air and sea this week. Brown had declined to discuss what he said were "daily exchanges" taking place with "the parties concerned in Lebanon." Brown acknowledged that sections of the U.S. Sixth Fleet in the Mediterranean are close to Lebanon which, he said, would be normal in situations like this.

ISRAELI FIRM BUYS 20 TONS OF TOBACCO FROM LEBANESE GROWERS By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, July 25 (JTA) -- The Dubek Cigarette Co., Israel's largest cigarette manufacturer, bought 20 tons of tobacco from Lebanese growers in the first large scale commercial transaction across the northern border. Up to now all trade has been on an individual basis but tobacco growers organized and elected a representative to deal with the Israelis.

The growers were paid in Israeli currency, which can be used to buy food, fuel and other commodities in short supply in southern Lebanon. Israel is expected to buy hundreds of tons of tobacco from the Lebanese farmers.

Although southern Lebanon has been spared the ravages of the civil war, the economic situation there is bad. Many people are out of work and there have been several requests that Israeli authorities allow the Lebanese to take jobs in Israel. However, there are several problems that would have to be worked out first, including what the effect would be on West Bank workers.

If permission is granted it will probably be only for agricultural workers, although construction workers and technicians might be included at a later date. Meanwhile, it was learned that the Syrians are publishing a paper for the areas

of Lebanon they hold which provides the Syrian position in the Lebanese situation.

CABINET MOVES TO IMPROVE STATUS OF THE CIRCASSIAN COMMUNITY

JERUSALEM, July 25 (JTA) -- The Cabinet decided today to improve the official status of Israel's Circassian community consisting of some 3,000 Moslems of Caucasian origin who have successfully integrated into Israeli society. The Cabinet's action places the Circassians on the same official level with the more numerous Druze. Both minorities serve in Israel's armed forces from which the Arab population is barred.

The Circassians will be dealt with henceforth directly by government offices rather than through the various ministerial Arab departments. Officially, they will enjoy virtually the same privileges as the Jewish population. But according to some Druze leaders experienced in dealing directly with government departments this is a mixed blessing. The Druze have complained that since they were accorded the same treatment as Jewish citizens the quality of government services they receive has deteriorated rather than improved.

TEENAGE ISRAELI-SYMPHONY BAND WINS TOP AWARD IN INTERNATIONAL FESTIVAL

BOTTINEAU, N.D., July 25 (JTA) -- The symphony band from Kiryat Ono, a suburb of Tel Aviv, made its first trip to the United States a resounding success Friday night when it won the top award in the International Youth Band Festival here. Thirty-three bands from 22 states and nine countries competed in the three-day musical festival.

The Israeli group, composed of 50 teenagers between the ages of 12 and 20, were awarded the top prize on the basis of musicianship in the symphony competition, the highest of three categories. They played "Symphonia Nobilissima," by Jaeger; "Hebrew Suite," by Petrushka; and the "Slavonic Dances," by Dvorak.

The teenagers, who have been in the U.S. since July 12, warmed up for their competition by playing 11 concerts, including one last week at Mt. Rushmore and another at the Centennial celebration in Rapid City, S.D. The latter concert also marked the 51st birthday of the symphony's founder and director, Aharon Alkalay.

From here the band will perform a series of concerts sponsored by B'nai B'rith at Winnipeg and Carberry, Manitoba; Chicago, Toledo, Baltimore, New York and in front of the White House in Washington. The band, which has won international competitions in Britain, Austria and the Netherlands, was formed in 1961 by Alkalay when he was a teacher at Kiryat Ono's elementary school. He founded the city's conservatory a few years later.

SISCO: U.S. EFFORTS TO GET ISRAEL TO MOVE TOWARDS SETTLEMENT NOT MATCHED BY USSR WITH ARAB ALLIES By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, July 25 (JTA) -- The United States has often tried to persuade Israel to go beyond its established position in American efforts towards a Middle East settlement but the Soviet Union has not taken a similar step with any Arab leader, according to former Undersecretary of State Joseph J. Sisco. In an inter-

view Friday with CBS, the former diplomat said the "commitment" of the U.S. and of the West is for a "practical solution" of the Arab-Israeli dispute.

"What I have found wanting," Sisico observed, "in Soviet policy based on my own experience has been this: that when there has been a negotiation, and when the United States has played a role, I have never found that the Soviet Union has been willing to apply its own persuasion vis-a-vis those with whom it is close that would go beyond a position that a given Arab leader or a given Arab state was taking at the time."

Continuing, Sisico said: "There are many occasions in our relationship, special as it is, with Israel, where we have tended to try to encourage them (Israelis) to go perhaps beyond where their established position may be" but "I cannot find any really concrete evidence where the Soviet has taken this sort of position."

Sisico, now president of the American University here, said the U.S. and the Soviet Union "have always agreed to disagree when it comes to the substance of a settlement." He said he has always felt that the U.S. and the West has much more to gain from a peaceful resolution than does the Soviet Union. "We can out-compete the Soviet Union in circumstances of peace," Sisico said.

Sisico's remarks followed CBS interviewer Richard Hottelot's comment that some in Washington think Soviet public support for the PLO and coolness toward Syria in the Lebanese situation, despite the close relationship between Syria and Soviet Union over the past 25 years, is because Syria sees an independent convergence of interests by Syria, Jordan, Egypt, the United States and "even-Israel" toward a negotiated peace and the Soviets want to block that because if there is peace in the Middle East there is no room there for the USSR.

CHARGES AND COUNTER-CHARGES FLY AS RABIN AND JOURNALISTS MEET

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, July 25 (JTA) -- Premier Yitzhak Rabin and Israel's journalistic establishment clashed angrily at a meeting of the Israeli Press Council here. The Premier accused the press of being unfair, unbalanced and alarmist in its presentation of the news and accused it of publishing stories without checking the facts. The journalists retorted that the government suppressed information or gave misinformation. The only agreement to emerge from the meeting was that the debate begun Friday will be continued.

Rabin claimed that if Israel had libel laws as tough as those in Canada, newspapers here would forever be paying damages. He differentiated between freedom of the press and what he said was the responsibility of the press to check facts. He cited examples of what he considered the Israeli press' carelessness with facts. He said that during his five years as Ambassador to Washington, American journalists invariably checked with his office and solicited his viewpoint before printing stories related to Israel. "Be hostile, but be accurate," Rabin declared.

Journalists responded to Rabin's remarks by accusing the government of failure to provide facts or providing erroneous facts. They noted

that the Rabin Administration has abolished the weekly press briefings. "At least give us the right to ask questions even if you retain the right to refuse to answer," one journalist told Rabin.

BORDER POLICEMAN KILLED

TEL AVIV, July 25 (JTA) -- An Israeli border police sergeant was killed and two other border policemen and an Israeli soldier were injured when a bomb exploded this morning near the refugee camp of Balata, near Nablus. The dead man was identified as Abd Hatib of the Druze village of Horfiah.

The three policemen and the soldier were standing near the camp when the explosion went off. Nearby shops were ordered closed by the authorities and several persons were being questioned by the police.

ISRAELI WOMAN LEADER SAYS SHE SCORED SUCCESS AT VANCOUVER CONVENTION

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, July 25 (JTA) -- The head of the Council of Women's Organizations in Israel, Mrs. Pnina Herzog, scored a remarkable success in an international forum recently, when she was voted chairman of the health committee of the International Council of Women at its convention in Vancouver, Canada. Mrs. Herzog received 80 votes while a Belgian candidate for the honorary post received 30.

Delegates from 68 countries attended the convention. Mrs. Herzog told the JTA in an interview. There were no Arab delegations present, she said, and everyone made strenuous efforts to keep politics out of the deliberations.

She recounted one particular achievement during the debate: at the Asia and Oceania caucus, of which Israel is a member, the Iranian delegate proposed that that caucus recommend to the plenary that it adopt a resolution endorsing the "Declaration of Mexico" on women's rights. This declaration included a restatement of the UN General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism. The Australian delegate at Vancouver demanded -- as a holding action -- that copies of the Mexico text be circulated before the vote be taken on whether to endorse it.

Mrs. Herzog asked for the floor to propose that instead of endorsing the Mexico declaration, the plenary should be asked to endorse instead the "World Plan of Action" -- which was the original draft of the declaration of Mexico without the offensive anti-Zionism reference. This was carried without opposition by the Asia and Oceania caucus and later by the full plenary.

Mrs. Herzog, widow of the late top Israeli diplomat, Yaacov Herzog, also presented motions on social issues which were well received. She told the JTA the next meeting of the Asia and Oceania caucus would probably be held in Israel during 1978, her invitation having been well received by fellow caucus delegates.

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) -- Norman Buckner, assistant director of the B'nai B'rith International Council, told Jewish leaders here that the Jewish world is apprehensive about the distribution of Nazi literature in Argentina. Buckner, who is visiting Argentina, Chile, Uruguay and Brazil, said he is exploring the possibility of setting up Hillel Foundations in Latin America.

ISRAEL BARRED FROM ASIAN GAMES

MONTREAL, July 25 (JTA) -- Haim Giovinsky, secretary general of the Israel Olympic Committee, said here yesterday that Israel will resist any effort to exclude its athletes from participating in the 1978 Asian Olympic Games. His statement followed an announcement here earlier yesterday by the Asian Games Federation (AGF) that Israel will be excluded from the 1978 Games because of the security and expense involved if Israel was to participate.

The AGF ruling yesterday was the culmination of a resolution passed at the AGF executive committee meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, last April. It was decided to hold an airmail ballot among the 25 AGF members on Israeli participation in the Games. If no reply was received from member countries, it was assumed to be an approval of the resolution.

Syed Zafar, AGF secretary general, said after the Federation's meeting here yesterday that he had received 12 replies in favor of the Kuala Lumpur resolution which stated that since the AGF was having difficulty in finding any country willing to host the Games, Israel should be asked to refrain voluntarily from taking part for security reasons.

Giovinsky denounced the ruling, declaring: "Israel will not put up with the evil design to oust her from the family of Asian nations and will continue to fight any interference of politics in sport."

LAWMAKERS ASK USSR FOR ASSURANCES AGAINST POLITICIZING 1980 OLYMPICS

WASHINGTON, July 25 (JTA) -- The Soviet Union was called upon last Thursday in both Houses of Congress for assurances against politicization of the Olympic Games scheduled for Moscow in 1980. Criticizing Canada's stand against Taiwan in the current Montreal Games, Sen. James B. Pearson (R, Kansas) asked in a Senate speech whether the Canadian precedent would form a basis for the Soviets to "exclude the Israelis at the request of the Arabs" or the West Germans by the East Germans or the United States by African nations.

"I urge both the International Olympic Committee and the Soviet government to issue public pledges that no athletic team will be denied participation at the Moscow summer Olympics," Pearson, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said. "If the Soviet Union should decide, for whatever reason, to refuse any athletic team permission to participate, then the IOC should select an alternative site for the games."

In the House, Rep. William S. Broomfield, (R, Mich.), ranking minority member on the House International Relations Committee, spoke of the "ugliness of international terrorism injected into the Olympiad" in Munich four years ago when 11 Israeli athletes were murdered and "further debasing" of the "Olympic ideal by permitting political considerations to dictate standards of eligibility" in Montreal.

"One would hope, Broomfield said, "that the Soviets will honor and abide by their commitment to the IOC and not attempt to exercise restraint or control over the participants."

McGOVERN DENOUNCES STORY IMPLYING FINANCIAL CONSIDERATION INFLUENCES HIS PUBLIC POSITION ON ISRAEL

WASHINGTON, July 25 (JTA) -- Sen. George McGovern (D, SD) has denounced a report in the

Washington Post which, he said, implied that "my public position on the State of Israel is influenced by the fact that a piece of property I own has been rented to the Syrian Ambassador."

The implication was contained in a story last week under the by-line of Eugene L. Meyer who noted that McGovern has been receiving rental income from Syrian Ambassador Sabaah Kabani since March, 1975 and "has come under increasing criticism from pro-Israel groups here for what they consider stands more sympathetic to the Arab cause and critical of Israeli policies."

McGovern, who has asked the six-member non-partisan Senate Ethics Committee headed by Sen. Howard Cannon (D, Nev.) to determine whether he has done "anything unethical or improper," was vigorously defended on the Senate floor last Wednesday by two staunchly pro-Israel Senators, Abraham Ribicoff (D, Conn.) and Hubert H. Humphrey (D, Minn.). Ribicoff declared, "It is unthinkable to me that George McGovern would permit any financial consideration to determine his position on any issue affecting the welfare of this country or the peace of the world." He said he rejected the Post's story "completely."

Humphrey, associating himself with Ribicoff's remarks, said McGovern "has had the courage to speak with people of different persuasions in the Middle East" but "that does not in any way mean that he is the captive of any one group or that he has an allegiance or alliance with any group that would in any way violate his own sense of what is right for the national interest of the United States."

"Example of Yellow Journalism"

McGovern, who is chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's Subcommittee on Near Eastern Affairs, called Meyer's story in the Post "the crudest example of yellow journalism that I have witnessed in many years." The story quoted Hyman Bookbinder, Washington representative of the American Jewish Committee, as saying that while McGovern's record on aid to Israel is "generally good," he has "more often than others...indicated some less than total support for the current Israeli position." The AJ Committee official was also quoted as saying that plentiful Arab money develops "a potentially general softness and attitude about your client."

Bookbinder said that he was "distressed over Meyer's reckless stringing together of unrelated comments to give the impression that I believe Sen. McGovern's position on the Middle East may have been the result of the rental of his house."

McGovern, who asked that the text of the Post story and Bookbinder's remarks be inserted into the Congressional Record, explained that the property in question was rented by his attorneys. He told the Senate last Wednesday that while he does not agree "down to the last detail with every single position the Israeli government has taken, I think it would be catastrophic if Israel's independence, freedom or survival was destroyed" and "I am determined to do all in my power to prevent that."