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**Tragedy Averted in Marseilles:
POWERFUL BOMB FOUND IN A
CROWDED HALL WHERE CHILDREN
WERE ABOUT TO STAGE A PURIM SHOW**
By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- A powerful bomb was placed last night in a crowded Jewish meeting hall in Marseilles where children were about to stage a Purim show. Police experts found and defused the bomb about half an hour before the festivities were to begin. Marseilles police say the bomb, which contained about a pound of powerful explosives, was placed where it "would do most damage, near the back of the crowded hall."

Marseilles Mayor Gaston Defferre, who was to address the meeting, later said the bomb apparently had nothing to do with the forthcoming French municipal elections, in which Defferre is running, and added: "This is an anti-Semitic attack. The bomb was set to explode in the middle of the Jewish Purim festival and hurt as many people as possible."

Bomb Was 'Aimed At the ... Jewish Community'

Defferre dismissed police speculation that the bomb was linked either to the forthcoming elections or to Defferre's crackdown on Corsican extremists in his capacity as Minister of the Interior. He said "the bomb was obviously aimed at the city's Jewish community."

A routine police check discovered the bomb in the men's room at the back of the hall in which over 500 people were expected. At the time, only the organizers, about 30, were inside the building. They were evacuated while police experts checked the hall and the building from top to bottom. The Purim children's evening was organized by the Jewish National Fund (Keren Kayemeth Le'Israel) and a local Jewish radio station.

No one has claimed responsibility for the attack but police said the explosives were of a type similar to those used by Corsican extremists.

ISRAEL DENIES PLO REPORT ON POW EXCHANGE AGREEMENT By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- Israel has denied a report by the Palestine Liberation Organization that an agreement has been reached on an exchange of eight Israeli soldiers held by El Fatah for 800 of the 1,000 Palestinian prisoners held by Israel in the Ansar refugee camp in south Lebanon.

Gen. Moshe Nativ, head of the Israel army's manpower branch, said Friday that there was no agreement but that negotiations were still in progress. The claim of an agreement, made by El Fatah commander Abu Jihad, was confirmed, however, by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) in Geneva Friday.

According to an ICRC spokesman there, a prisoner exchange will take place shortly but "only when the agreement between Israel and the PLO will be confirmed."

In addition to the eight soldiers held by El Fatah, two Israeli soldiers are prisoners of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command headed by Ahmed Jabreel, and three are held by the Syrians.

ICRC Visits Six Israel POWs

The ICRC said in Geneva that six of the eight Israelis held by the PLO have been visited by its representatives but not the two held by the Jabreel group, although the Red Cross is seeking permission to see them. The ICRC also said that in the event of an agreement between Israel and the PLO ... the Red Cross would be in charge of the technical details of the transfer, such as the list of names and the methods of carrying out the exchange. According to the ICRC, two parallel channels are being used in the exchange operation, an Austrian channel and the Red Cross in Geneva. The Austrians, at the request of families of the Palestinian prisoners, "have been mediating between the PLO and the Israelis," the ICRC said.

An ICRC spokesman said that it has been contacted only the Palestinians and that if an agreement is reached, it would take some time to implement.

Appeal By The Mother Of A POW

Meanwhile, the mother of Yosef Groffe, one of the two Israeli soldiers held by the Jabreel group made a public appeal in an East Jerusalem Arabic newspaper Friday for the release of her son. She asked that at least the Red Cross be allowed to visit him and confirm to her that he is alive and well.

Jabreel was quoted on the Jordan Radio's Hebrew broadcast as willing to allow the mothers of the two Israeli prisoners to visit them. But no reply has been received to requests transmitted to Beirut for details of the arrangement.

ARENS SEES A TESTING TIME AHEAD IN U.S.-ISRAEL RELATIONS By David Landau and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- Defense Minister-designate Moshe Arens attended his first Cabinet session today and gave what Cabinet sources described later as a sober but not pessimistic analysis of Israel's relations with Washington.

Arens will be formally sworn into his new post by the Knesset this week. He briefed the Cabinet today, however, as Israel's Ambassador to the U.S. He predicted a testing time ahead in Israel-U.S. relations but said he detected an increasing appreciation of Israel's role and position in the Western world.

According to Arens, while President Reagan's Middle East proposals, enunciated last September, remains Administration policy, there are second thoughts in some quarters as to the benefits accruing to Washington from the proposals. He also said he was very much encouraged by a recent Gallup Poll which showed that Israel has recouped much of the public support it had lost in the U.S. as a result of its invasion of Lebanon last year.

Arens reportedly told the Cabinet that Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger is the key Administration official with close ties to the Arab world and

that tended to mould his thinking in a way inimical to Israel. He said Secretary of State George Shultz was beginning to realize that the Israeli-Arab conflict was not as cut and dried as some Administration circles may have thought.

Arens Prepares For His New Post

Arens spent most of the day preparing to assume his new post. He paid his first visit to the Defense Ministry where he was greeted with full military honors.

He promised to run the Defense Ministry and conduct this contacts with the army General Staff as a "team man" rather than a "prima donna."

Arens held his first working session with Chief of Staff Gen. Rafael Eitan this evening. One of his first jobs will be to find replacements for the senior officers dismissed or shifted in compliance with the recommendations of the commission of inquiry into the Beirut refugee camps massacre, and a replacement for Eitan who retires in April.

Israel Must Look After Its Own Interests

Arens returned to Israel from Washington Friday. He refused to answer most questions by reporters about U.S.-Israeli relations except to say that Israel, first and foremost, must look after its own interests, one of which was maintaining as good relations with the U.S. as possible. He also said that he assumed former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon who he is replacing still has a great deal to contribute in the area of defense.

Arens said a headline in The Los Angeles Times a week ago quoting him as saying that Israel might consider a pre-emptive strike against Syria was misleading although the Times' story itself was "reasonably correct." He said he had told the newspaper, in reply to a question, that "if Israel were ever to find itself in mortal danger, as has been the case in the past, we would, of course, consider taking the necessary measures."

REPORT ISRAEL AND LEBANON ARE CLOSE TO AN AGREEMENT By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 27 (JTA) — U.S. special envoy Philip Habib returned to Israel today amidst reports that Israel and Lebanon are close to an agreement. He is scheduled to meet tomorrow with Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir to whom he will present the agreement he reached with the Lebanese over the weekend.

According to reports from Lebanon, Habib brought back to Israel a memorandum from Beirut specifying the issues on which the parties are still at odds. Shamir told the Cabinet meeting today that there are still 20 percent differences.

However, Lebanon's Premier, Shafik Al-Wazani, told the Beirut English weekly, "Monday Morning," that there was now a reasonable chance of achieving the beginning of an Israeli withdrawal.

Wazani said the present American efforts to reach an agreement between the two countries were characterized by "new energy and vitality." He said Lebanon was ready to work out any security arrangements which did not include an Israeli presence in south Lebanon.

At today's Cabinet meeting, Education Minister Zevulun Hammer asked Shamir what he knew about Jordan's intentions toward joining the peace talks and how Israel is prepared to meet such a development.

Shamir replied that there was no clear idea what King Hussein had in mind. He welcomed Hussein to join the talks, but reiterated that Israel would not accept any preconditions.

Premier Menachem Begin had earlier rejected two conditions asked by Hussein as an inducement to enter peace talks with Israel. He told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee last Friday that Hussein's call for a freeze on settlement activity on the West Bank and for giving East Jerusalem Arabs the right to vote in elections for a self-governing body on the West Bank were unacceptable.

According to Begin, Hussein is as much opposed to the autonomy plan favored by the opposition Labor Party as he is to the Israel government's autonomy plan.

51 SENATORS SUPPORT RESOLUTION OPPOSING U.S. ARMS SALE TO JORDAN By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 27 (JTA) — A resolution opposing the sale of advanced U.S. arms to Jordan was introduced last Thursday by Sens. John Heinz (R. Pa.), Edward Kennedy (D. Mass.), Gary Hart (D. Col.) and Rudy Boschwitz (R. Minn.). It was supported by 47 other Senators.

The resolution is similar to one sponsored by a majority of the Senate last year but never voted on because the Reagan Administration has not officially proposed selling arms to Jordan.

Heinz said that while the Administration has still not announced its intention to sell specific arms to Jordan, it has reportedly discussed with Jordan the possibility of providing F-5G and F-16 aircraft, portable Stinger anti-aircraft missiles, Sidewinder air-to-air missiles and laser-guided bombs.

"We are all anxious to find a way to persuade the King (Hussein) to join the peace negotiations," Heinz said. "But Jordan must enter negotiations as a state committed to peace, willing to compromise, not as a reluctant participant brought to the table by a weapon sale." He added that with Hussein's "past record on non-commitment, an arms sale at this time without definite assurance would be a gamble with terrible odds."

3,000 PEOPLE IN PEACE NOW RALLY By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 27 (JTA) — Some 3,000 members and supporters of the Peace Now movement braved the cold and rain here last night to hold a torchlight demonstration march around the Defense Ministry compound.

Protesting the continued service of former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon in the Cabinet, they marched symbolically from near the entrance to the Defense Ministry to the Tel Aviv Museum Square at the Ministry's rear entrance "symbolizing Sharon's exit from the Defense Ministry but his entrance to the Cabinet through the back door," as one of the organizers said.

The parade was led by men and women wearing horns on their heads and banners reading, "Against Rhinocerosness" — a reference to the Eugene Ionesco play, "Rhinoceros," recently rerun on Israel television, about the herd instinct and the abject and unquestioning acceptance of a strong leader.

Very heavy police guards and ambulances escorted the march, which was held in perfect order and with no incidents. The Labor movement, which had joined Peace Now in organizing a demonstration last week which was cancelled due to bad weather, declined to participate in yesterday's march.

130 RETIRED U.S. GENERALS AND ADMIRALS URGE REAGAN TO REVITALIZE U.S.-ISRAEL STRATEGIC COOPERATION

NEW YORK, Feb. 27 (JTA) — President Reagan was urged, in an open letter signed by 130 retired American generals and admirals "to revitalize the strategic cooperation between the United States and Israel, thereby enhancing the safety and well-being of the free peoples of the world."

The letter, which appeared in the form of a full page advertisement in The New York Times today, drew comment from the Defense Department, which was also reported in the Times. The Times stated that "A Defense Department official said ... that the advertisement appeared to be part of a campaign to persuade the United States to agree to a memorandum of understanding with the Israelis that has already been rejected."

The advertisement, placed by an organization called Center for International Security in Washington, D.C., and listing Joseph Churba as "coordinator" said "We believe that the victory of Israeli-modified weapons and tactics over those of the Soviet Union (in the Lebanon war) presents the free world with a tremendous opportunity to reduce the impact of Russia's extraordinary growth in tactical force and battlefield technology."

Warns About Strained Relations

The ad also warned that "the current strained relations between Washington and Jerusalem do not auger well for utilizing what you yourself have called 'Recognizing the Israeli Asset' in your Washington Post article of August 15, 1979 ..."

The ad went on to say: "Your 1979 views have proven prescient indeed, Mr. President. We concur in your assessment of our ally's ... geopolitical importance as a stabilizing force, as a deterrent to radical hegemony and as a military offset to the Soviet Union.' Therefore, your present initiative on the Middle East must carefully consider the Israeli requirement of strategic depth for her own security, lest our ally be transformed from a strategic asset into a liability."

"We have every confidence, Mr. President, that transitory political strains will not be allowed to detract from the fundamental congruence of strategic interests cemented by a common heritage of Western values and democratic ideals."

The Times reported that a "White House spokesperson said that she was not familiar with the advertisement and would not comment on it." But, the Times story added, a Defense Department official recalled that "an American team headed by Andrew Marshall negotiated with the Israelis and returned to Washington with a draft agreement on sharing information."

The official, who noted that the United States and Israel already were parties to at least 20 previous such agreements, said that the Pentagon rejected the proposed memorandum because of conditions the Israelis sought to impose.

Earlier this month Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger rejected the "framework" for an agreement worked out between the U.S. and Israel for the exchange of weapons and technological information Israel had learned during its operation in Lebanon. Ambassador Moshe Arens denied Israel sought tough conditions as claimed by Weinberger in vetoing the agreement. Arens said Israeli conditions were aimed at ensuring that there is a "minimum risk" that the

information fall into Soviet hands through "some inadvertent" manner.

U.S. INVESTORS ESTABLISHED 18 NEW FIRMS IN ISRAEL IN 1982

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, Feb. 27 (JTA) — During 1982 American investors established 18 new companies in Israel, a number of them with mutual American-Israeli ownership. In addition, during the past year, 10 companies, which were established previously by Americans in Israel, were expanded.

Speaking at a press conference here, Israel Pickol, Israel's Economic Minister to the United States, said, however, that the war in Lebanon and the economic depression in America had a negative effect on American investments in Israel and on exports of Israeli goods to the U.S.

Pickol noted that until 1981 Israeli exports to the United States were growing continuously. This growth was particularly evident in 1980-1981 when Israeli exports to the U.S. grew by 25-30 percent compared to the previous year. "It seems that in 1982 there was no increase in Israeli exports to the U.S. It is estimated that it will be the same as in 1981 in the range of \$1.25 billion," Pickol said.

According to Pickol, the Israeli industries that were hit hardest because of the decline in exports were the diamond and jewelry industries, the production of the Westwind executive jet, and building construction materials. But, at the same time, Pickol said, there was an increase in the export of sophisticated electronic products made in Israel, chiefly computers.

Although the war in Lebanon caused many potential American investors to shun Israel, it seems that Israel's success in the war — the destruction of sophisticated Soviet missiles and the good performance of Israeli-made arms — established Israel's technological reputation, Pickol said. "Israel became a center of developing and sophisticated technology of advanced science and producer of high quality technology," Pickol contended.

CEAUSCESCU AUTHORIZES SHIPMENT OF JEWISH RELIGIOUS ITEMS TO ISRAEL

BUCHAREST, Feb. 27 (JTA) — The Federation of Rumanian Jewish Communities has announced that 305 Torah scrolls and some 9,000 volumes of the Talmud have been shipped to Israel with a special authorization from the Rumanian government. The Federation said that an additional 30 — 40,000 books of Jewish religious interest will be sent to Israel in the next few months.

A Rumanian law prohibits the export of old books of historic or artistic importance but these shipments to Israel have been granted a special permission by President Nicolae Ceausescu at the request of Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen.

Rosen issued an official statement thanking Ceausescu for the authorization to export the books to Israel "so that they can continue to be used for the same holy purpose with which they served our fathers and grandfathers." The first major shipment of scrolls to Israel took place in 1966 when 3,500 Torahs were sent to various Israeli institutions.

A special Israeli committee, which includes Religious Affairs Minister Yosef Burg, Bar-Ilan University President Emanuel Rackman and Rosen himself will decide on how to distribute the newly arrived scrolls and books.

SYNAGOGUE COUNCIL OF AMERICA OPPOSES NUCLEAR ARMS RACE

NEW YORK, Feb. 27 (JTA) — The Synagogue Council of America has appealed to the governments of the United States and the Soviet Union to agree to a bilateral, mutually verifiable total cessation of the manufacture and deployment of nuclear weapons.

In a statement adopted last week, the Council also called on President Reagan and Congress to press vigorously to achieve "effective non-proliferation treaties and to stop the transfer of nuclear arms technology to other nations."

Rabbi Walter Wurtzburger, president of the Synagogue Council, stressed that this statement was not meant to imply an endorsement of numerous proposals for a nuclear freeze. Various Jewish organizations, both religious and secular, have made statements in recent years calling for a bilateral halt of nuclear arms technology, but the Synagogue Council's statement is the first nationwide unified declaration on the issue from the major rabbinical and congregational organizations. The Council represents the rabbinical and synagogue agencies of Reform, Orthodox and Conservative Judaism.

Wurtzburger said the Council's statement will enable the organization "to marshal its resources and to mobilize the Jewish religious community in an effort to prevent mankind from drifting into a nuclear holocaust." Rabbi Irwin Groner of Southfield, Mich., chairman of the Council's domestic affairs committee, said that the "unanimous declaration puts the Jewish community on record as being deeply committed to joining all responsible efforts to avert the threat of nuclear war."

'A Special Sense of Responsibility'

The declaration on the dangers of nuclear arms was stated, in part: "As Jews, we are most deeply concerned with the ominous threat which nuclear arms race poses to the survival of humanity. We are survivors of Hitler's Holocaust and experience a special sense of responsibility to raise our voices against the drift into a nuclear holocaust. At a time when the superpowers possess strength enough to wipe humankind off the earth, it is the height of folly to develop ever deadlier weapons in a futile search for spurious security."

"It is our sacred duty not to allow familiarity with the nuclear threat to lead to indifference toward the ever increasing dangers of a nuclear war either by design or by accident. It is our religious duty to speak out when humankind's survival is at stake. We must raise our voices against those experts who believe the myth that a nuclear war is winnable. Time is running out. We must convey our sense of urgency concerning the need to help bring about a mutual reduction of nuclear arms and stockpiles."

"While it is true that unilateral disarmament would only invite nuclear blackmail or outright aggression, mutually agreed upon bilateral disarmament and reduction programs would represent a step towards the prospect of peace."

The Synagogue Council also issued a resolution calling for the Jewish community to be educated "about the perils of nuclear proliferation in keeping with the teachings of Judaism which stress the pursuit of peace; and (to) sensitize the Jewish community to a recognition that indifference is a fatal mistake leading to world destruc-

tion." The resolution also stated that the Jewish community should "declare itself morally bound to participate in the struggle against proliferation and to commit itself to join with others in working towards eliminating the threat of nuclear war for the sake of all humankind."

FORMER NAZI DEATH CAMP GUARD IS ORDERED DEPORTED

NEW HAVEN, Feb. 27 (JTA) — A 75-year-old retired factory worker, Fedor Fedorenko of Philadelphia, has been ordered deported for concealing his wartime work as an armed guard at the Treblinka death camp.

The deportation was ordered by Gordon Sacks, a federal immigration judge, who ruled in a 27-page order that Fedorenko "assisted in the persecution of persons because of race or religion" between 1942 and 1945 as a guard at a Nazi death camp in occupied Poland. Judge Sacks ordered Fedorenko deported to the Soviet Union, where he was born, but it was reported that it was not certain the Soviet Union would accept him.

Brian Gildes, of New Haven, Fedorenko's attorney, said he had not talked to his client since the deportation ruling was made but he felt Fedorenko would appeal the ruling.

Under the order, Fedorenko has until March 8 to file an appeal with the Board of Immigration Appeals in Falls Church, Va. After the appeals board acts, the case could be heard by a federal circuit court and the U.S. Supreme Court.

On January 21, 1981 the Supreme Court, in a 7-2 ruling, revoked Fedorenko's citizenship, which he received in 1970, holding that Fedorenko has "illegally" obtained his citizenship because he had lied about his past when he entered the United States in 1949.

A federal court judge in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., ruled in Fedorenko's favor in 1977, saying the government had not proved that he committed any atrocities. The court also upheld Fedorenko's contention that when he was captured by the Germans in 1941 he had been forced to serve as a guard in Treblinka. A five-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals in New Orleans overturned the ruling in 1979, saying that Fedorenko had illegally concealed his wartime role. The decision set the stage for the Supreme Court ruling.

The Supreme Court decision set the stage for the deportation hearing. Judge Sacks, who normally presides in Buffalo, heard the case in New Haven in July 1981. Fedorenko worked for 20 years in a factory in Waterbury, Conn. before moving to Philadelphia.

BEGIN CALLS FOR TOLERANCE

TEL AVIV, Feb. 27 (JTA) — Premier Menachem Begin has called on Israelis to show tolerance, rid themselves of hatred, and show understanding of each other. In a statement to Yediot Aharonot, Begin said that differences of opinion were legitimate and should not lead to physical confrontation.

Begin's statement, issued after repeated calls by opposition and leftwing elements, was the closest the Premier has yet come to denounce violence such as led to the killing of a Peace Now demonstrator in Jerusalem two weeks ago.

TEL AVIV (JTA) — A Soviet-made hand grenade was discovered in a bus near Tel Aviv and detonated without casualties or damage Sunday morning, police said.