

In The Aftermath Of The Prisoner Exchange: DEMAND GROWS FOR THE RELEASE OF JEWISH UNDERGROUND MEMBERS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 21 (JTA) -- Deputy Premier and Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir took the lead today in the rising chorus of voices emanating from rightwing political circles urging for the release of the members of the Jewish terrorist underground following yesterday's exchange of Palestinian prisoners for three Israeli soldiers held by a Damascus-based Palestinian terrorist group.

The exchange itself, meanwhile, has come under a good deal of criticism -- but much of it is muted, with politicians hesitating to take a public stand against the complex prisoner exchange during which Israel set free some 1,100 Palestinians and others, among them some of the most notorious terrorist mass killers in its prison population for as long as two decades.

Shamir, who is also the Foreign Minister, went public with his demand for the release of the Jewish terrorists -- who are on trial in Jerusalem for a series of violent acts against Arab civilians on the West Bank dating from 1980 and conspiracy to blow up Islamic shrines on the Temple Mount -- at a session of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee. These sessions are nominally secret, but in fact non-sensitive subjects invariably leak out at once.

Shamir: A Reprieve Is Called For

Shamir said that since the Jewish defendants -- some of whom have already been sentenced -- were prepared publicly to express remorse over their crimes and undertake to desist from such action in the future, it would be both right and proper to reprieve them. This was particularly the case now that scores of the most heinous Arab criminals had been set free. He made it clear that he would take up the matter with Premier Shimon Peres and was demanding a debate in the Cabinet or the inner Cabinet.

Commerce Minister Ariel Sharon made similar remarks to journalists in Haifa today. He said that while wholly disapproving of the actions of the members of the Jewish terrorist underground, he supported the release.

Sources close to the Premier said today that he was not in favor of releasing the underground members at present. The sources said this reflected the views of all the Labor Party Ministers in the Cabinet.

However, if the issue should come before the Cabinet, informed sources predicted that those in favor of releasing the underground members would win the vote.

They pointed out that Yigal Hurwitz of Ometz and Yosef Shapira of Morasha had long been advocating the reprieve of the Jewish underground members, and they would be joined in a vote by Yosef Burg of the National Religious Party and Yitzhak Peretz of Shas -- thus creating a majority, assuming all or most of the Likud members would support the reprieve.

Technically, Peres could block a Cabinet debate by insisting that the issue be dealt with by the 10-man inner Cabinet where the five Likud members and five Labor members would presumably square off against one another and result in a deadlock. If Peres took this course, though, it could provoke a crisis in the coalition government.

Process Of Reprieve Or Release

A second technical question concerns the process of reprieve or release if eventually a decision is taken in this favor. The alleged underground members who have already been jailed could be reprieved by the President of Israel at the recommendation of the Justice Minister. But for those still on trial, only a decision of the Attorney General to drop the charges against them could bring about their immediate release.

The Attorney General, Prof. Yitzhak Zamir, is entirely sovereign in this respect, and need not take account of any decision by the Cabinet. Shamir told the Knesset committee that if the political support was there, the technical-legal way would surely be found to release the men.

In the Cabinet, it is reliably understood that only one minister, Likud-Liberal member Avraham Sharir, expressed strong reservations over the terms of the exchange when they were reported to the ministers in April. The ministers were not required to vote: the decision was taken by the inner Cabinet, where the vote was unanimous, and merely reported to the full Cabinet. Sharir reportedly pressed for a vote nevertheless, but he received no support for his demand.

Court Ruling On Underground Members

Meanwhile, the Supreme Court ruled today that the 20 alleged members of the Jewish terrorist underground on trial must remain in custody and refused their bail request. Their appeal came before the court because they have been in custody for a full year.

Many of the wives and children of those held in custody, joined by friends and well-wishers, began a hunger strike in an encampment opposite the Knesset, in an effort to lobby for public and Knesset support for their release.

The trial of the underground members is drawing to a close with summation addresses by counsel expected next week. In the Jerusalem District Court today, defendant No. 1, Menachem Livni, said it was shameful for the state to continue with the trial in the wake of release of the Palestinians against whom the Jewish defendants had sought to act in self defense. "The injustice cries out to heaven," Livni told the court -- and later repeated this to reporters outside.

The debate over the Jewish terrorists, which is quickly becoming a left-right confrontation, has to some extent focused public debate away from the prisoner exchange itself. But there is nevertheless a discernible undercurrent of distress, dissatisfaction and disapproval over the terms of the exchange which seems to cut across party lines and affect Israelis of all political hues.

While there is much understanding for Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin's repeated assertions of "Ein Brera" (no choice), many persons nevertheless feel that the price was too high -- especially the decision to allow

some 600 of the released criminals to remain in Israel, the West Bank and Gaza. In the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee today, Likud Liberal MK Pinhas Goldstein spoke with bitter disparagement of two of the three Israelis released in the exchange -- Yosef Groff and Nissim Salem. The third was Hezi Shai. Goldstein said that Groff and Shai, who with six Israeli POWs who were released in the November 1983 exchange were captured without resisting, should be court-martialed.

Several Knesset members presented motions for the agenda, but the Committee acceded to a government request that no debate on the prisoner exchange be held this week. Next Monday, the government itself will open a debate on the issue with a formal statement to the Knesset.

JAPAN REGRETS RELEASE OF OKAMOTO

JERUSALEM, May 21 (JTA) -- Israel today underwent the painful and humiliating experience of being lectured to by a foreign country about the evils and dangers of surrendering to Palestinian terrorists' blackmail.

The Ambassador of Japan, Shozo Kadota, called on the Director-General of the Foreign Ministry, David Kimche, to inform Israel of his country's "regret" over the release of Kozo Okamoto, who killed 27 people in a terror attack at Ben Gurion Airport in 1972.

(Okamoto arrived in Libya from Geneva today and reportedly collapsed at the airport and was taken to a hospital.)

Kimche, in response, said Israel itself "regretted" that its action had "caused concern and unease in Tokyo. This was certainly not Israel's intention Israel had no choice in light of its humanitarian effort to secure the release of its three prisoners...."

SENATE PANEL VOTES 9-8 TO APPROVE GENOCIDE CONVENTION

By Judith Kohn

WASHINGTON, May 21 (JTA) -- Sen. Jesse Helms (R.N.C.) withdrew today his opposition to Senate ratification of an international treaty against genocide, as the Foreign Relations Committee in a vote of 9-8 approved it for the sixth time in 36 years.

But, in another turnabout, five long-standing supporters of the Genocide Convention abstained in the committee vote, in protest against reservations that had been attached to the ratification bill to overcome conservative opposition.

The committee approved eight conditions addressing conservative concerns over what they considered a threat to United States sovereignty. The two reservations vigorously pursued by Helms, who was able to block ratification on the Senate floor last autumn, are the limitation of World Court jurisdiction in cases of alleged genocide or attempted genocide against the United States; and the precedence of the United States Constitution over the Genocide Convention.

Supporters of the ratification have argued that these conditions dilute the spirit of the treaty, which has been signed by 96 countries. The Soviet Union and Eastern bloc nations have ratified the convention, with reservations, and consequently some West European countries do not recognize those nations as signatories.

The Reagan Administration, which came out in support of the convention last September, has recently come out in support of reservations, and Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman Richard Lugar (R. Ind.) has said he would vote against the convention on the Senate floor if the conditions were not adopted.

The vote today on the reservations was divided along party lines, with the exception of Sen. Edward Zorinsky (D. Neb.) who voted in favor, and Sen. Charles Mathias (R. Md.) who opposed the reservations.

Sen. Christopher Dodd (D. Conn.), who opposed the conditions, abstained in the final committee vote on the bill itself, together with four other Democratic Senators. An aide said that Dodd would continue to fight the reservations when the bill reaches the Senate floor, which will probably be in early June.

AJPA TO DEAL WITH DISPUTES BETWEEN JEWISH FEDERATIONS AND JEWISH PAPERS

SCOTTSDALE, Ariz., May 21 (JTA) -- In a major policy decision, delegates to the recent 43rd annual meeting of the American Jewish Press Association (AJPA) overwhelmingly approved a proposal by AJPA president, Robert Cohn, editor-in-chief of the St. Louis Jewish Light, to deal with the numerous disputes between Jewish Federations and Jewish newspapers in various parts of the country.

Taking note of the AJPA's "long-standing concern" over disputes between Federations and Jewish newspapers, the delegates "urged the parties involved in such disputes in American Jewish communities to seek to resolve them through arbitration, mediation or negotiation."

The proposal also authorized Cohn to appoint an AJPA Task Force on Federation-Jewish Press Relations, which will include editors and publishers of both private and Federation-affiliated newspapers which will offer its "good offices" to facilitate resolution of such disputes.

The AJPA delegates, by an overwhelming majority vote, refused to involve the organization in a lawsuit in Los Angeles brought by the Heritage Southwest Jewish Press, a private Jewish newspaper, against the Greater Los Angeles Jewish Federation and its publication, the Jewish Bulletin. Both the Heritage and the Bulletin, as well as the B'nai B'rith Messenger of Los Angeles, are members of the AJPA.

Delegates also overwhelmingly approved a resolution which "calls on the leadership of the organized American Jewish community to recognize that a vital, free and responsible press is essential to a Jewish community in a democracy, and to make every effort to encourage and support the achievement of those ideals."

During the four-day meeting, Cohn was unanimously reelected AJPA president for his seventh one-year term. He served in the post from 1972-77 and was again elected at last year's AJPA meeting. The AJPA, founded in 1943, is a voluntary organization of over 180 Jewish newspapers, magazines and journalists in the United States and Canada with a combined readership of more than four million.

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- A Center for Prevention of Risk Factors for Coronary Heart Disease has been established at the Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical School in Jerusalem. The new center will bring together a number of researchers on heart disease, which is the primary cause of death in Israel and the western world.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES THE HUNT FOR MENGELE

By Charles Allen, Jr.

(Part One Of A Three-Part Series)

NEW YORK, May 21 (JTA) — The most publicized Nazi war criminal still at large is Josef Mengele, the SS physician at Auschwitz who carried out gruesome medical experiments on inmates, especially twins and children, and who was involved in the murder of hundreds of thousands of Jews in the Nazi concentration camp. He was called the "angel of death" for his "selection" of prisoners arriving at Auschwitz.

Ever since the early 1950's, the search for Mengele has become a sort of political olympiad, with Nazi-hunters, politicians, organizations and newspapers vying with each other in tracking the mass murderer.

Like clockwork, innumerable sightings of Mengele are fervidly reported. He has been "positively" identified, seen, talked to and "verified" at one and the same time in Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay, Colombia, Paraguay and — even in the United States. The worst offenders, quite frequently are newspapers which prefer sensationalistic headlines to facts. More respectable newspapers are relatively cautious about reporting Mengele sightings, but nevertheless also indulge in media hype.

Extreme Forms Of 'Mengelitis'

The waves of "Mengelitis" sometimes takes extreme and bizarre forms. Recently, the front page of the tabloid New York Post screamed: "Angel of Death! May Be Living in Florida!!!" Its flaming "Extra" edition featured the demand of an Israeli Nazi-hunter that President Reagan "have U.S. authorities arrest Mengele who may be living in retirement in Florida." The Nazi hunter, Tuvia Friedman, stated that he had "new evidence" that "Mengele has retired to Florida."

Even the FBI has been caught up in the hysteria on occasion. An FBI memorandum dated December 8, 1966 on "Joseph Mengele, SIV-C (Security Matter-Confidential)" stated that an FBI informer said that "the wanted Nazi war criminal Joseph Mengele is masquerading under the name of Harold Endinan and resides in Riviera, Arizona."

The FBI source further said that "Mengele is masquerading as a construction worker ... has dyed his hair, has scars and has had plastic surgery."

The FBI report added that "The files of the Los Angeles office reflect that Mengele was subject of a report of (a) 'SA' (Special Agent) dated 2/9/44... New York ... (and) was the subject of Denaturalization Proceedings apparently because his name appeared on Nazi Party lists." The FBI checked out this information and of course it proved false.

Every so-called Nazi-hunter in the United States will produce this FBI document to "prove" Mengele has been in the United States, alluding mysteriously to the scars, plastic surgery and dyed hair.

Some False Leads

This correspondent checked out the Mengele reference against the August 1946 "Nazi Party Membership Records" that was part of a U.S. Senate probe in 1946.

The name "Joseph Mengele" appears on Page 9 of that list. His Nazi Party enrollment number

was 05735. He was said to have entered the United States on August 1, 1932, that he was born in Munich on January 1, 1904, lived in The Bronx in 1944 and worked in a warehouse, and that he was naturalized in 1932. The FBI checked out this report, according to my sources, and again found the allegations false. In fact, the "angel of death" was born in Guenzberg, Germany, on March 16, 1911 and most certainly did not live in The Bronx in 1944.

The latest wave of Mengelitis occurred on the eve of the 40th anniversary of the defeat of Nazi Germany and the liberation of the Nazi concentration camps. Those Auschwitz survivors who had actually undergone the tortures of Mengele's experiments on their bodies as well as having witnessed Mengele sending families and friends to the gas chambers, rightly focused on the continued liberty of the "angel of death."

In turn, this eminently proper concern and collective cry of outrage has become a symbol of the entire spectacle of Nazi war criminals who have escaped justice, especially those hundreds, perhaps thousands — some of whom committed far greater crimes than Mengele — who have found haven here in the United States and, in some instances, probably have been used by U.S. intelligence agencies.

Some Questionable Charges

At this flashpoint in late 1984, highly publicized charges were made both individually and collectively by officials of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, Wiesenthal himself and U.S. Senator Alfonse D'Amato (R.N.Y.).

Their charges reportedly derive from documents released by the Freedom of Information section of the U.S. Army's Intelligence and Security Command to Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean of the Wiesenthal Center, and to D'Amato.

Emerging above the hoopla surrounding the released Mengele documents as well as CIA reports that were declassified for D'Amato, certain broad claims have been made by this amorphous group:

- * That Mengele was immediately after the war in the custody of the U.S. Armed Forces and was allowed to escape.

- * That, in a curiously convoluted statement by Hier, the U.S. CIC (Counter-Intelligence Corps) documents "create reasonable doubt as to whether or not the U.S. had a role in the case of Mengele." In short, that the U.S. had in some way utilized or protected Mengele.

- * That Mengele had applied for and got — again with U.S. complicity — a visa to enter Canada.

- * That Mengele had in fact been in Canada.

- * That Mengele in fact had been in the United States.

Because of poor reporting and innuendo, the media have managed to convey the impression that such conclusions have been demonstrated. A careful examination of the general claims against the hard data actually found in the released CIC and CIA documents shows that none of these claims are new, having been made often over the years of Mengelitis.

Moreover, the released documents are often unclear or ambiguous at best. Indeed, the documents sometimes state quite the opposite.

A Few Telling Examples

A few telling examples make the point.

A source at the U.S. Army's intelligence center told this correspondent that "no records" on Mengele

were turned up using the "aliases of Mengele provided by Rabbi Hier of the Wiesenthal Center." The 14 pages of CIC reports, said this Army source, "were unearthed solely by us, not through Hier's leads."

There is not a shred of hard evidence among the documents showing that one "Joseph Menke" had sought a Canadian visa from Argentina "to enter (in 1962) Canada as a landed immigrant" and that "the man Joseph Mengele ... was in fact Josef Mengele" as was asserted at a press conference on January 23, 1985 by the Hier group.

A pertinent fact of monumental proportions that went entirely unreported by the American media was a Jewish Telegraphic Agency story filed out of Toronto on February 19, 1985: "Recently released documents by ... the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) indicate that Josef Mengele did not apply to come to Canada ... was never in Canada, contrary to allegations made last month (January 1985) by the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Canadian representative Sol Littman."

These claims -- made by Hier, D'Amato and Littman -- were made before the Canadian documents were released. A person named Joseph Menke" and living in Ontario had been thoroughly checked out as recently as 1982. He was, of course, not Joseph Mengele.

This correspondent questioned Littman, pointing out to him on February 22, 1985 that D'Amato persisted in making the claim that "Menke" was Mengele and that Mengele had entered Canada.

Littman angrily denied the D'Amato claim which, incidentally, D'Amato repeated before the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors in Philadelphia this past April 22.

Littman also agreed with this correspondent's observations that "there are no hard data in the released CIC documents, that merit an assumed U.S. intelligence utilization" of Mengele.

Last 'Confirmed' Sightings

Earlier this month, Wiesenthal told the media that "the last confirmed sighting" of Mengele was "in a settlement northeast of Encarnacion" in Paraguay. That is precisely the area where, according to CIA documents released in April, Mengele was "reported to be" through CIA informants in 1962, 1968 and the early 1970's.

On the other hand, Serge Klarsfeld of Paris, and, along with his wife, Beate, a rival of Wiesenthal, stated unequivocally this past week: "Mengele is living in a mansion outside of Asuncion, either one owned by (General Alfredo) Stroessner, (German-born dictator of Paraguay) or a friend of Stroessner."

Amidst all this contradictory hoopla, are there any substantial facts that may lead to the resolution of the hunt for Mengele?

(Tomorrow: Part Two)

SENATE MEASURES URGES PARAGUAY TO INVESTIGATE MENGELE'S WHEREABOUTS By Judith Kohn

WASHINGTON, May 21 (JTA) -- A sense of the Congress resolution calling on Paraguay to launch an "immediate investigation" into the whereabouts of Nazi war criminal Josef Mengele was passed unanimously last week by the Senate.

The resolution urges the Paraguayan government to ascertain whether the notorious Nazi fugitive is still living in the South American country of which he was a citizen for some twenty years, and if so, to arrest him and extradite him to West Germany, Israel or Poland -- all of which have sought to bring him to justice.

Wanted for the murder of hundreds of thousands of Jews at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp, and for the gruesome medical experiments he conducted on inmates of the camp, Mengele enjoyed Paraguayan citizenship until 1979, when the government revoked it under international pressure.

The resolution also calls upon the U.S. government to "enlist similar efforts on the part of other regional governments," should a Paraguayan probe fail to locate the German fugitive, and requests that the President submit a report to Congress by October 15, of this year, detailing Paraguay's efforts to apprehend him, the degree to which other countries have cooperated and the final results of the investigation.

Sponsored jointly by Senators Daniel Moynihan (D. N.Y.), Arlen Specter (R. Pa.), Edward Kennedy (D. Mass.), Alfonse D'Amato (R. N.Y.), and Claiborne Pell (R. R.I.), the resolution was passed last Wednesday as an amendment to the foreign assistance authorization bill. It follows an announcement by Israel, the U.S. and West Germany that the three countries are coordinating efforts in the worldwide search for Mengele.

In a statement, Moynihan said the findings of the President's report "surely will be instrumental" in determining how much, if any, foreign aid would be provided to Paraguay next year.

BBI AND BBW REACH AN AGREEMENT

WASHINGTON, May 21 (JTA) -- Agreement on a joint process by which B'nai B'rith Women (BBW) and B'nai B'rith International (BBI) will seek means for a "productive partnership," announced today, has apparently ended BBW plans to quit BBI and set up an independent organization.

In a joint statement, Beverly Davis, BBW president, and Gerald Kraft, BBI president, said the two agencies were starting a joint planning process "to explore alternatives that may be available for women and men in the B'nai B'rith family" to provide the opportunity "for individual identity and agenda, and the sharing of responsibility, programs and projects." The proposal had been approved by the BBI Board of Governors and the BBW Executive Board.

A lengthy series of charges and counter-charges followed disclosure of plans by the BBI to charge at its next convention admission of women to presently mainly-male chapters, which the BBW treated as an attempt to weaken the BBW and a threat to its programs.

After meetings on May 8 and May 9, officers of the BBW and BBI agreed to name a special joint committee to examine possibilities of a relationship acceptable to both groups. The committee will make a preliminary report to the governing bodies of BBW and BBI by next December, with a final report by next February.

BBW said it had rescinded a resolution calling for separation from BBI, cancelled the rest of a series of "town hall" meetings to explain the impasse, and postponed its special delegate assembly, scheduled for June, at which the separation resolution had been expected to be approved.