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**KNESSET MEMBERS CHARGE SETTLERS
WITH MAINTAINING OWN MILITIAS**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- Two Knesset members have charged that paramilitary organizations of Jewish settlers are carrying out systematic reprisals against Palestinians in the West Bank, and are prepared if necessary to confront the Israel Defense Force.

Settler leaders promptly branded the charges "nonsense."

The allegations were made by Yossi Sarid and Dedi Zucker, Knesset members of the dovish Citizens Rights Movement, in a memorandum to Attorney General Yosef Harish that became public Monday.

They urged Harish to take measures to dissolve the militias before "the situation in the territories deteriorates into an all-out war."

Sarid and Zucker mentioned several recent reprisal attacks on Arab villagers, which they said were planned and executed by the paramilitary organization.

Sarid and Zucker claimed settler militias were operating throughout the West Bank in military formations such as companies, taking actions that were normally the role of a state or army.

The militias share missions, coordinate their activities and possess "a versatile arsenal of weapons, vehicles, a developed communications system and alarm system.

"Most of the equipment belongs to the army," the two Knesset members said.

On a Voice of Israel Radio interview, they named some of the alleged militia leaders, including Benny Katzover, chairman of the Samaria Regional Council, and Ron Nahman, mayor of Ariel.

Both accused the Knesset members of trying to besmirch Jewish settlers for political reasons.

Sarid earned credibility with both the public and the authorities since the early 1980s, when he warned that a Jewish underground was active in the West Bank terrorizing Arabs and committing acts of violence.

Sarid and Zucker charge now that militias are under orders from the Council of Jewish Settlements in the Territories.

Nahman said all of the allegations were lies.

"We have a department of security" in Ariel, he said, but not a militia.

Katzover conceded that Jews sometimes "burst out" in response to Palestinian violence. "But the answer is to put an end to the Arab riots and there will be no reaction by Jews," he said.

**ACTIVISTS MIX JOY WITH CAUTION
AT MOSCOW JEWISH CENTER OPENING**

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- The Jewish Cultural Center that opened Sunday night in Moscow, though certainly welcome, has not garnered rave reviews among Soviet Jews or their supporters in the West.

But those who want something Jewish -- of substance -- in the Soviet Union, are quick to

acknowledge this center as a first step.

"At the moment, it's all they've got," said Glenn Richter, national coordinator of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry.

But Richter and others pointed out one ominous note, that the much-reviled Anti-Zionist Committee of the Soviet Public has not been disbanded, despite promises that it was.

This fact tempered the optimism over the center and of the recent articles in the Soviet press supporting Jewish life and aspirations.

Last week, the Soviet Communist Party weekly, Arguments and Facts, published a long article by the co-chairman of the Anti-Zionist Committee, Gen. David Dragunsky, attacking the cultural center.

In Chicago, Marilyn Tallman, co-chairman of Chicago Action for Soviet Jewry, said Jewish culture in the Soviet Union "is Jewish culture as interpreted by the Soviet government, not freely and independently by Jews."

Neither Richter nor Tallman believes that the cultural center yet represents that independent Jewish culture.

But hoping that it one day will, leaders of Soviet Jewry groups in the United States flocked to the opening, to rub shoulders with foreign ambassadors and refuseniks.

Yuli Edelshtein became the first former prisoner of Zion to return to the Soviet Union, returning from his home in Israel to participate in the history-making event.

Mitzvah Mission

Edelshtein, who emigrated 19 months ago, said before his flight from Ben-Gurion Airport, "I think I can perform a mitzvah by returning to Moscow. I hope to develop connections with the emerging Jewish cultural groups there and, as a Jewish educator, to contribute to what is taught at the cultural center."

Edelshtein was granted a visa to return to the Soviet Union through the Soviet Embassy in Canberra, Australia, with the assistance of Isi Leibler, who arranged Soviet visas for the entire Israeli contingent.

Leibler, vice president of the World Jewish Congress, is the main person responsible for the Solomon Mikhoels Jewish Cultural Center.

Both Micah Naftalin, the executive director of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, and the group's president, Pamela Cohen, were there, as were Shoshana Cardin, chairwoman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, and Myrna Shinbaum, the National Conference's outgoing director.

Shinbaum, in a telephone conversation from Vienna, characterized Sunday night's event as a mixture of joy and caution.

"All the Western speakers, while applauding the opening of the Jewish cultural center, expressed caution that there not be too much euphoria, and that we see the actual operation of this cultural center open to all Soviet Jews," Shinbaum said.

Shinbaum described a tumultuous scene at Taganskaya Square, in which hundreds of people packed the inadequate theater that was most recently the Moscow Jewish Musical Theater and which accommodates only 300.

Outside, teeming crowds gathered to witness

history, dancing horas and singing in Hebrew.

The five-hour program, which began at 5 p.m. with the affixing of a mezuzah by Leibler, was heralded by a group recitation of the "She-hecheyanu" -- thanking God "for giving us life, and sustaining us and bringing us to this day."

The ceremonies took place in four languages: Russian, English, Hebrew and Yiddish.

Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel, who dedicated the center, admitted that 25 years ago, when he described Soviet Jews as "The Jews of Silence," he did not believe they would become a major Jewish presence.

"I did not have enough faith in you," he told the crowd. He called on the Soviets to establish relations with Israel and reveal the facts about Raoul Wallenberg, who the Russians say died of heart failure at the age of 35 in a prison.

There were speeches by Roman Spektor and Mikhail Chlenov of the Jewish Cultural Association, as well as Leibler and WJC President Edgar Bronfman, who met Monday with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze to discuss U.S.-Soviet relations and the Middle East.

A brochure, printed in Russian, English and Hebrew, contained the speakers' messages and included one from Yuli Kosharovsky, the longest-waiting refusenik until he received permission in December.

Kosharovsky, present at the ceremony, expects to leave for Israel March 1. He expressed hope "that others will not have to wait the 17 years" and "not have to go through" what he did.

Refuseniks told Cardin they were concerned "that attention not be diverted from their situation." Cardin assured them that "the issue of emigration would remain a priority."

Upstairs at the center, refuseniks and Jews who have not applied to leave milled through two exhibits. One was the "Courage to Remember" a Holocaust exhibit from the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

The other display was photographs of Soviet Jews by Yuri Lev, husband of Olga Goldfarb and son-in-law of former refusenik Prof. David Goldfarb, who returned to visit Russia in October 1987.

YESHIVA TO OPEN IN MOSCOW IS FIRST THERE IN 60 YEARS

NEW YORK, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- The first independent yeshiva permitted on Soviet soil in 60 years will be inaugurated in Moscow Feb. 22 by Rabbi Adin Steinsaltz, according to the New York-based organization that supports his work.

The rabbis and scholars who will train at the Judaic Studies Center are expected to become the religious and cultural leaders of the next generation of Soviet Jews, those who are unable or unwilling to leave the USSR, according to the Aleph Society.

The Soviet authorities affirmed the Aleph Society's exclusive right to choose all curriculum and materials, faculty members and students.

About 80 students were accepted into the Center's day and evening programs, out of 147 applicants.

All were selected by Steinsaltz, the renowned Israeli scholar who is at work on a monumental modern Hebrew translation of the Jerusalem Talmud and the Babylonian Talmud.

The Judaic Studies Center is the first result of agreements signed in October 1988 with Evgeny

Velikhov, vice chairman of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

The center will be affiliated with the Academy of World Civilization, under the auspices of the World Laboratory, an international scientific exchange program which has legal status in the Soviet Union.

The international affiliation allows the yeshiva freer rein than were it to be under official Soviet auspices, a spokesperson for the Aleph Society explained.

Faculty members will thus be free to deliver open lectures for the general public, under the Academy's auspices.

SHAMIR, RABIN RISE IN POPULARITY AS PERES TAKES AN 11.6 PERCENT DIP By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has gained 13 points in popularity since the Nov. 1 Knesset elections, while his political foe, Labor Party leader Shimon Peres, suffered an 11.6 percent decline, according to an opinion poll published in Ha'aretz Monday.

It was conducted by the Pori Research Institute among 1,200 Israelis, who were asked to rate the various government ministers on job performance.

Peres, who became finance minister in the new Likud-Labor coalition government, dropped from a 33.9 percent approval rating before the elections to 22.3 percent now.

A foreign minister in the last government, Peres is the only minister in the present government to show a decline.

Shamir, who succeeded himself as prime minister last November, rose in approval from 27.8 percent to 40 percent.

But the most popular member of the government is Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, a hard-line Laborite whose favorable job rating went from 46.2 percent to 55 percent. Rabin was defense minister in the previous government.

ANTI-ISRAEL TEXT CIRCULATES AS U.N. DEBATE CONTINUES By Andrew Silow Carroll

UNITED NATIONS, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- Debate continued in the Security Council on Monday regarding the situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as representatives from a number of Arab and Third World countries joined previous speakers in condemning Israel for its actions in suppressing the Palestinian uprising.

The debate, held at the request of the Arab group of nations, began Friday.

There were reports Monday that the Palestine Liberation Organization, represented at the United Nations by the Palestine observer mission, is circulating drafts of a proposed resolution that would strongly deplore human rights violations and the shootings of Palestinian civilians by Israeli soldiers.

The resolution would also affirm statements made last week by the Palestine observer mission's representative, who asked that the United Nations intervene in the 14-month-old uprising.

On Friday, Israel's acting ambassador, Johanan Bein, told the Security Council that the Palestinians hurling stones and Molotov cocktails at Israeli troops and civilians are not the innocent demonstrators they were being made out to be.

The debate will continue Tuesday afternoon.

JUDGE RULES AGAINST ANNE POLLARD, SAYS OK TO CONTINUE 24-HOUR WATCH By Marshall Hoffman American Jewish World

ROCHESTER, Minn., Feb. 13 (JTA) -- The federal magistrate hearing the case of Anne Henderson Pollard ruled Thursday that the Federal Medical Center prison facility here has the right to continue a 24-hour watch of Pollard, despite her private physician's contention that such surveillance could be harmful to her medical treatment.

Magistrate Janice Symchych, presiding over the prison courtroom hearing, refused to suspend the continuous surveillance placed on the wife of Jonathan Pollard, convicted of spying for Israel, saying medical opinion was divided on the value of the close observation.

That decision, however, is pending further medical testimony, which is expected to be presented at the hearing's continuation, scheduled for this Thursday and Friday.

Anne Pollard did not take the witness stand Thursday because of the length of testimony and cross-examination by her personal and prison physicians and a warden.

Her attorneys are undecided whether she will testify when the hearing resumes.

This hearing marked the first time Pollard has been able to legally direct her grievances to prison or medical authorities. She has claimed--through her family and attorneys--that prison authorities have forbidden her to have the treatment she needs for several diseases which she claims are life-threatening.

Dramatic events within the past month, however, have allowed her attorneys to successfully petition for a hearing to determine whether Pollard has been subjected to "cruel and unusual punishment."

She reportedly suffers from several serious ailments, including digestive and gynecological disorders, a skin disease -- visible in the courtroom below her rolled-up sleeves -- as well as a neurological disorder.

Pollard appeared pale and bone-thin as she entered the courtroom Thursday hugging her father, Bernard Henderson.

On Thursday, Dr. Edward Michael Goldberg, a Chicago gastrointestinal specialist who treated Pollard prior to her arrest and imprisonment, testified at length on the severity of his patient's ailments, some of which could prove lethal without proper treatment, he said.

Pollard's attorney, P. Hamilton Fox, a former Watergate prosecutor, had asked for an order blocking the 24-hour watch, but Symchych denied the request.

Prison supervising physician Dr. Martha Grogan testified the watch was "the only way we can get an accurate assessment of what she's eating and drinking."

(JTA reporter Susan Birnbaum in New York contributed to this report.)

CALIFORNIA DEMOCRATIC PARTY SPURNS PALESTINIAN STATE CALL By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- Pro-Israel forces won a clear victory at the California Democratic Party convention Sunday, carrying their own resolution while defeating measures advanced by an Arab-American group.

The victory was hailed by Jewish leaders, who had feared that a contrary vote by the volatile Democratic Party in the nation's largest state could have caused a ripple effect across the country.

The face-off in Sacramento was triggered by two resolutions submitted by the Arab-American Democratic Club and the California Democratic Council, a grassroots organization, calling for the establishment of a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

Neither proposal got past the Resolutions Committee, which instead reported out a counter-resolution, backed by pro-Israel forces, which reaffirmed the state party's standing Middle East plank.

The plank urges a dialogue involving the United States, Israel and the Palestinians to secure a just political resolution to the conflict.

It also lauds Israel as America's most dependable and democratic ally in the Middle East.

The pro-Israel resolution was carried by about 70 percent to 30 percent of the 2,800 delegates.

SIX JEWISH DEMOCRATS VOICE SUPPORT OF NEW PARTY CHAIRMAN RONALD BROWN By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- Six leading Jewish Democrats moved swiftly Friday to assuage concern in the Jewish community over the election of Ronald Brown as chairman of the Democratic Party.

They also sought to assure Brown, who managed the Rev. Jesse Jackson's campaign for the presidency last year, that as of now, he has the support of Jewish Democrats.

Brown was elected unanimously by the Democratic National Committee Friday as the first black to head either major political party.

"We offer you our congratulations and our readiness to cooperate with you in the shaping of policies and strategies," the six, all of whom were co-chairmen of the National Jewish Leadership Council in support of the Dukakis-Bentsen campaign, told Brown.

Their message was in the form of a letter delivered to Brown by Hyman Bookbinder, former Washington representative of the American Jewish Committee and a special adviser to Dukakis on Jewish affairs during the campaign.

In his acceptance speech, Brown stressed that as chairman, his job is not to set policy, but to win elections for Democrats.

Bookbinder said that Brown promised that the Jewish community will have complete access to him.

"I've known Brown for over 20 years and he has always understood the Jewish interest, Jewish concerns," Bookbinder said.

The letter was signed by Steven Grossman of Boston, a national vice chairman of the United Jewish Appeal; David Hermelin of Detroit, campaign chairman of Israel Bonds; and Morton Mandel of Cleveland, former president of the Council of Jewish Federations.

Also: Edward Sanders of Los Angeles, a former assistant to President Carter and former president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee; Daniel Shapiro, former president of the UJA-Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York; and Howard Squadron of New York, former chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

SPLINTER GROUP TAKES CREDIT FOR FIRE AT POLLSTER'S HOME

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- A leading Israeli pollster was under police protection Monday after a fire was set at the front door of her Tel Aviv apartment Sunday night.

An anonymous telephone caller to the newspaper Yediot Achronot credited an obscure group calling itself "Sicarii" with the arson.

The pollster, Dr. Nina Zemach, is a director of the Dahaf Co., one of the largest polling organizations in Israel.

Its latest survey, published last week, found that 53 percent of Israelis would favor negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The anonymous caller said his group would take much sterner measures against others "who raise the PLO's prestige and lower the morale of Israelis."

He launched into a long diatribe about the historic role of Sicarii -- dagger-men of the Second Temple -- in the revolt against Rome 2,000 years ago, the Yediot Achronot reporter said.

The damage to Zemach's premises was minor.

IRANSCAM FIGURE MAY HELP BUY AVIA SONESTA HOTEL IN TABA

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- Adnan Khashoggi, a shadowy figure in the Iran-Contra scandal, may be involved in a deal to buy the Avia Sonesta Hotel in Taba.

The multimillionaire Saudi Arabian arms dealer and businessman reportedly has linked up with British press baron Tiny Rowlands to work out a deal with the hotel's principal owner, Eli Papushado.

Papushado is negotiating with the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism for sale of the hotel. Egypt is considered likely to allow the Israelis to continue to run it after Taba reverts to Egyptian sovereignty, probably next month.

But the gap between Papushado's \$70 million asking price and the \$25 to \$30 million offered by the head of the Egyptian negotiating team, Minister of Tourism Fuad Sultan, has yet to be narrowed.

On Monday, Papushado was back in Heliopolis, a suburb of Cairo, to continue the talks that have been under way for the past week.

According to media reports, he was present at a meeting Sunday night at the Tel Aviv home of Israeli entrepreneur Ya'acov Nimrodi.

It was attended by representatives of Rowlands, who owns the London Sunday Observer and the Lonro Group.

He and Khashoggi are said to have offered \$50 million for the Sonesta, which they plan to develop into a resort and gambling casino.

Khashoggi's role in the sale of American arms to Iran remains obscure. He has been described as a middleman and financier who deposited proceeds from the sale into a Swiss bank account.

Israeli media reports said the Sonesta corporation, of which Papushado is the main shareholder, is skeptical of the Rowlands deal.

Nimrodi was quoted by the media as saying he was not involved in the deal, but only "mediating" it.

The negotiations include the Rafi Nelson

Vacation Village at Taba, a less opulent resort than the Sonesta.

Lior Nelson, son of the late Rafi Nelson who built, owned and managed the property, is asking \$3.5 million. The Egyptians say they value it at \$100,000.

Whatever price is agreed on for the two resorts will probably be based on the value fixed by an independent firm of American property appraisers, and will be guaranteed by an American bank.

Cairo, meanwhile, in an unexpected move, is demanding \$5 million from Israel for use of the Taba enclave since it was captured by the Israel Defense Force along with the rest of Sinai in June 1967.

The Israelis promptly rejected the demand, but the Egyptians say such payment is provided for by the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty and the Camp David agreements.

Israeli negotiators said Camp David called only for talks to discuss the various claims and counterclaims of both sides, but such talks were never held.

DESPITE STRIKE SETTLEMENT, ISRAEL'S LABOR WOES GO ON

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- Israel was saved from a paralyzing general strike Sunday, but labor strife continues.

Employees of Bezek, the government-owned telecommunications corporation, announced Monday a three-day strike for higher wages, starting Tuesday morning.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister Shimon Peres, whose energetic intervention is credited with averting the nationwide walkout called by Histadrut, is under fierce attack by Likud.

Peres is being accused of using the Treasury to bail out financially ailing Histadrut-owned enterprises.

The Bezek strike will affect telephone service and black out radio and television because the operating engineers, technicians and repair personnel will be off the job.

Automatic dial phones will work, but there will be no one to service the equipment in the event of breakdowns.

Bezek workers are demanding the 5 percent pay increase recently granted all public sector employees.

But the Finance Ministry decided they were not entitled to the hike because of a higher than average pay increase they received two years ago.

Bezek was split off from the Communications Ministry five years ago in order to be able to pay its employees higher salaries for greater efficiency.

Peres was assailed Monday for raising the tax rate in the top income bracket from 48 percent to 51 percent.

Likud politicians charged the tax hike was meant to salvage financially crippled Histadrut and kibbutz business enterprises, the Labor Party's political base.

Ariel Weinstein, ranking Likud member of the Knesset Finance Committee, urged his party's Cabinet ministers to foil Peres' plan.

Weinstein called it "a sectoral, not a national accord."

Sarah Doron, chairperson of the Likud Knesset faction, called on the party to defeat the measure in parliament.