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FOUR DEMOCRATIC FRONT MEMBERS KILLED IN INFILTRATION ATTEMPT

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 2 (JTA) -- Four Palestinian terrorists were killed by a paratroop patrol in the southern Lebanon security zone Wednesday night while trying "to enter Israel and seize and kill Israelis," an Israel Defense Force spokesman said Thursday.

According to the spokesman, the nature of their mission, which occurred four miles from the Israeli border settlement of Adamit, was clearly stated in leaflets found on the bodies.

"We hold our weapons high, to carry on the just armed struggle of our people being carried on under the leadership of the PLO," the spokesman quoted from the leaflets.

The four men killed were members of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a PLO splinter faction led by Nayef Hawatmeh. One infiltrator escaped, and there were no Israeli casualties.

A spokesman for Hawatmeh's group in Lebanon confirmed the clash and the casualties sustained.

It was the second foiled infiltration attempt by the Democratic Front in a week. Three guerrillas were killed by the Israeli-backed South Lebanese Army on Feb. 23 as they were on their way to attack targets inside Israel.

The scene was visited Wednesday by Maj. Gen. Yossi Peled, commander of the northern region. Peled said several terrorist groups linked to the Palestine Liberation Organization have been intercepted and destroyed since PLO leader Yasir Arafat renounced terrorism last year.

LABOR SMARTING FROM ITS DEFEAT IN 12 MAJOR MAYORAL CONTESTS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 2 (JTA) -- Angry rumblings of discontent are sweeping the rank and file of the Labor Party in the aftermath of Likud's widespread victories in Tuesday's mayoral and town council elections.

As a result, the months ahead may see sweeping reforms of the party's apparatus and changes of leadership, political observers believe.

Likud candidates unseated 12 Labor incumbent mayors while Laborites managed to oust Likud and independent rivals in only three localities.

Labor took some consolation in retaining the northern port city of Haifa, which the party has governed without interruption for more than 40 years. But its victory was close, and Likud may demand a replay.

The Labor Party's new secretary-general, Micha Harish, who took office officially Thursday, said he would convene the party's leadership bureau and Central Committee to examine the causes of Labor's latest defeat.

But he will hold off until after the March 14 runoff elections in 21 communities where no mayoral candidate won 40 percent of the vote.

He stressed that the party's energies must focus now on the Histadrut elections six months away.

The goal is to ensure the re-election of Laborite Yisrael Kessar as secretary-general of the trade union federation, against what is expected to be a powerful challenge by Likud.

But Labor's trouncing by Likud on Tuesday and in the Knesset elections last Nov. 1 has created a groundswell of unrest in the party on all levels.

Knesset Whip Haim Ramon said the municipal election results proved he was right when he insisted after the November loss that Labor take the role of a "fighting and constructive" opposition.

Vote In Haifa Contested

Instead, it became the junior member of a coalition with Likud and the whipping boy for unpopular policies on the economy and the handling of the Palestinian uprising, Ramon said.

Completion of the civilian ballot count in Haifa gave Labor incumbent Mayor Arye Gurel 40.5 percent of the vote, barely enough to defeat his Likud challenger. The soldier vote, still being tallied, is not expected to change the outcome.

But Likud, which made gains in the Haifa City Council, is charging "numerous incidents of illegal voting and mishandling of ballot slips."

Foreign Minister Moshe Arens, Likud's election campaign manager, said his party may demand new elections in Haifa.

It is considering application to the High Court of Justice for an order restraining Labor from acting on the election results, pending an appeal for a new round of voting, Arens said.

Labor officials said Likud was proving to be "bad losers."

IN UMM EL-FAHM, ISLAMIC VICTORY CREATES DISBELIEF AND UNCERTAINTY

By Gili Sedan

UMM EL-FAHM, Israel, March 2 (JTA) -- The weary representatives of the various parties, sitting at a conference in the mayor's office here, kept rechecking their figures, rubbing their eyes, and uttering time and again: "It is unbelievable, just unbelievable."

Indeed, as election returns poured in from polling stations in Israel's second largest Arab city, the data seemed unreal.

The victory of the Islamic bloc was sweeping. One ballot after another showed a victory of some 75 percent for the fundamentalists, which would ultimately give them 11 out of 15 seats on the town council.

It is a meteoric rise, out of the blue. The Islamic bloc is a newborn political baby, hardly known in the Israeli political arena until now.

And yet, in a knock-out election campaign, the Moslems managed to put an end to the 14-year rule of the Democratic Front for Peace and Equality, a front for the Hadas Communist Party.

Umm el-Fahm, whose population numbers 25,000, was not the only Arab locality where the Moslem fundamentalists won a sweeping victory.

They also took over Kafr Kasim, in the central region, and Kafr Kanna, in Galilee. And they became the second strongest party in the partly Christian town of Nazareth.

In short, Moslem power became a new factor

in Arab-Israeli politics early Wednesday.

Although not even their most enthusiastic supporters predicted such a victory, euphoria was in the air from the early morning hours Tuesday.

Cars carrying the green flag of Islam traveled all day through the narrow alleys of this crowded Arab town, astride the main road from Hadera to Afula. They would not permit anyone to evade voting.

Winning Votes With Money

As the muezzin called worshipers to noon prayers, it sounded as if he also called them to prepare for the victory celebrations.

Just opposite the town hall, the target of Tuesday's election, supporters of the small radical Abnaa el-Balad group sat at their headquarters, as if in mourning.

Five youths were chatting with a middle-aged man, almost afraid to confirm that the worst of their fears was about to materialize.

"They are lying to the people, but the people want to believe them," said one youth, as he cracked sunflower seeds.

"They soak in money," added the middle-aged man. "With that much money, one can buy anything."

Indeed, a few yards away stood the living monument to Moslem grandeur: a huge community center, with a mosque on top, now in the process of being built.

It is funded entirely by donations. "Where exactly do they raise this money?" asked another youth.

The new community center, spreading over 1,500 square yards, is the most impressive project of the Islamic bloc, but not the only one.

In the past 10 years, the bloc has provided the local population with cheap medical services, a rich library and huge sums of money for local welfare projects, such as a chain of kindergartens for children under 4.

In fact, hatred of the Communist administration seems to have been a chief motive for the massive support for the Islamic bloc.

After years of frustration with both Labor-led and Communist-led municipalities, the local population finally found an alternative, which had proven itself in local volunteer projects.

Warning From The Government

But Israeli leaders had a different interpretation. A number of public figures, including Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Vice Premier Shimon Peres and Ehud Olmert, the minister in charge of minorities, expressed concern over the rise of Moslem fundamentalists.

Olmert issued a statement Wednesday warning Israel's Arabs not to be caught by the web of Moslem fundamentalists, who are "hated throughout the world." He warned them they might tip the delicate balance between Jews and Arabs in the country.

The truth is that no one really knows who is behind the movement that took over Umm el-Fahm. It was formed about 10 years ago under the leadership of Sheik Raed Salah Mahajneh, and has since engaged itself industriously in social projects.

The election campaign was effective in its simplicity. The message was: "Islam is the solution."

Sheik Raed Salah Mahajneh, the leader of the Islamic bloc in Umm el-Fahm, is only 30. He is a graduate of the Islamic College of Hebron

and, until now, an unknown figure in Israeli politics.

The authorities and the Moslems are now eyeing each other suspiciously, each not quite certain how the other side might react.

The test case will be March 30, the day when Israel's Arabs commemorate Land Day, a day of protest against the government's policy toward Israel's Arabs. It remains to be seen how Umm el-Fahm will behave on that day under a Moslem leadership.

U.S., BONN EXPLORING REFUELING CAPACITY OF LIBYAN JET FIGHTERS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 2 (JTA) -- Intelligence services in the United States and West Germany are continuing to investigate whether West German firms have been helping Libya acquire the technology for midair refueling of its bombers, which would allow it to attack Israel and other countries with chemical weapons.

Neither Bonn nor Washington has been able to confirm that Libya now has the capability to refuel its warplanes in midair, officials of both countries said here Thursday.

The Libyan planes, manufactured in France and the Soviet Union, cannot presently reach Israel and return, without landing to refuel.

Air Force Lt. Col. Rick Oborn, a Pentagon spokesman, would not say whether the United States believes Libya has the midair refueling capability, but cited press reports "that they have the necessary equipment."

Oborn said that even if Libya has the equipment, it would also need time to train pilots to conduct successful refueling. Using such equipment "does not come naturally to the pilot," he said.

A spokesman at the West German Embassy here said the inquiry into refueling is part of Bonn's investigation into the participation of West German firms in helping Libya convert a pharmaceutical plant into one that could manufacture poison gas.

He referred to the 18-page report on the matter his government issued in January. He said the government was now examining "whether one or several members of the federal armed forces were involved in the midair project in Libya during or after their period of service."

William Webster, director of the Central Intelligence Agency, was asked about the participation of German officers by Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) during an appearance before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee on Wednesday.

Webster said he would prefer to discuss this in closed session, but told Helms, "you're right on target."

Meanwhile, State Department spokesman Charles Redman said Thursday that the Bush administration still believes that Libya is using the plant in the desert at Rabta, south of Tripoli, to manufacture nerve gas and mustard gas.

He said a single inspection of the plant would not prove that it is only being used for pharmaceuticals, since a chemical weapons plant "can be easily modified to appear to be a pharmaceutical production facility."

"All traces of chemical weapons production can be erased on short notice," or within 24 hours, he said.

(JTA correspondent Howard Rosenberg in Washington contributed to this report.)

WARNING OF 'REFUGEE EMERGENCY,' SENATORS PROPOSE DOUBLING QUOTA

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 2 (JTA) -- A bill to double the number of refugee slots for Soviet emigrants to 50,000 was introduced in the Senate on Wednesday by Sens. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.) and Robert Kasten (R-Wis.).

"A refugee emergency has now developed in the flow of Jewish refugees and others from the Soviet Union," the two senators said in a statement.

By the end of this month, the flow of Soviet emigrants is expected to reach the ceiling of 25,000 set for refugees from the Soviet Union for the 1989 fiscal year, which began last Oct. 1, Kennedy and Kasten said.

The refugee ceiling had actually been increased from 18,000 by President Reagan before leaving office in January by taking quotas that were expected not to be used by refugees from Southeast Asia.

The bill provides an extra \$150 million to pay for the processing and resettlement of the additional refugees.

The funds are to be taken from the \$665 million appropriated for states absorbing a large number of refugees. Kennedy and Kasten said that it is expected that only \$70 million of these funds will actually be used by the states in the 1989 fiscal year.

In a letter urging support for the bill, Kennedy and Kasten warned, "If funds are not found by April, refugees will be turned back, left to languish in Rome at great cost in care and maintenance, and the voluntary agencies involved in the program will be forced to close down."

The senators stressed that their proposed legislation is only a stopgap measure. "Clearly, longer-term solutions must be found to deal with Soviet migration," they said. "But if we do not respond now to this emergency, we will be turning our back to our longstanding commitment to assist Soviet refugees."

EMIGRATION DOWN IN FEBRUARY, BUT MORE JEWS GOING TO ISRAEL

By Susan Blinbaum

NEW YORK, March 2 (JTA) -- Soviet Jewish emigration declined for the second straight month, totaling 2,425 in February, according to figures provided Thursday by both the National Conference on Soviet Jewry and the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews.

The two organizations reported that 308 of the Jews, or 12.7 percent, went to Israel, compared to 7.3 percent last month. UCSJ also reported that 549 non-Jews left the Soviet Union on Israeli visas in February.

A total of 2,796 Jews left the Soviet Union in January, and 3,652 emigrated the month before, according to the National Conference.

But National Conference spokesman Jerry Strober noted that February is the shortest month of the year, and the fewer number of days could partially account for the decline.

Strober also said he found it "interesting to note" a perceptible rise in the percentage of emigrating Soviet Jews opting to go to Israel.

This rise is significant in face of the thousands of Soviet Jews stranded in Ladispoli, near Rome, hoping to obtain permission to come to the United States as refugees.

The increase could indicate that a growing number of Soviet Jews are choosing to go to Israel, now that they are encountering difficulties going to the United States.

But "one month doesn't make a trend," Strober advised.

Refusals Based On Secrecy

Despite the drop in overall emigration in the last two months, Soviet Jewry activists are projecting that above 30,000 Jews will emigrate this year.

Pamela Cohen, president of the Union of Councils, said she does not think the decrease means fewer people are applying to emigrate because of the problems in Ladispoli.

"Those receiving refusals now are people who applied within the last year, before the situation in Rome became as publicized as now," she said.

But Cohen also sounded a note of alarm. "We are very suspicious that the migration drop since December indicates that the Soviets have reinforced their previous behavior pattern," she said.

She claimed that the Soviets have begun once again to deny some Soviet Jews exit visas, based on their involvement or the involvement of family members in work deemed to be a state secret.

MOSCOW'S 'BREAD OF AFFLICTION' TO BE HOMEMADE THIS PASSOVER

NEW YORK, March 2 (JTA) -- Signs of Moscow's leavening of its stand on Jewish culture will continue to be felt this Passover, as Soviet authorities are cooperating with a New York City Council member to ensure that kosher for Passover matzah will be available for the holiday.

Furthermore, Soviet authorities are also allowing the importing of kosher Passover wine, which will be sold at reasonable prices.

Konstantin Kharchev, the Soviet minister of religion, and Councilman Noach Dear, co-chairman of the Joint Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in the Soviet Union, officially launched matzah-baking activities Wednesday in Moscow, Leningrad, Minsk and Kiev.

Dear said he arranged with Kharchev's consent to have Rabbi Yuri Kamishev and Rabbi David Karpov of Moscow's Marina Russia Synagogue supervise the baking jointly with Rabbi Adolf Shayevitch of Moscow's main synagogue, thus ensuring that the baked matzah will be acceptable to all Jews in the Soviet Union.

Shayevitch is a state-appointed rabbi, while the Marina Russia rabbis are not overseen by the Ministry of Religion.

Dear said that the Soviet Union agreed to allow for kosher matzah "because they earnestly want to improve life in the Soviet Union. After a trip I sponsored a few months ago, they saw that there was no conflict being loyal to your religion and to your country."

The matzah will be made from 160 tons of flour brought in by truck to the Soviet Union from Strasbourg, France, where it was milled under rabbinical supervision. The project costs about \$200,000.

At a Soviet-initiated news conference at the Moscow bakery, Kharchev thanked the American people and American organizations for helping Soviet Jews. He said the matzah baked in the Soviet Union will be sold at a fair price.

ZIONIST LEADER ACCUSED OF TRYING TO 'UNDERMINE' ISRAELI PREMIER

NEW YORK, March 2 (JTA) — A major representative body of American Jewry accused one of its members Thursday of publishing "a falsehood in The New York Times" and trying to "undermine the prime minister of Israel."

The charges were made in a statement issued by Seymour Reich, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. They referred to an op-ed article by Menachem Rosensaft published Tuesday in the Times.

Rosensaft was one of five American Jews who met with the Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat in Stockholm on Dec. 7. He is also president of the Labor Zionist Alliance, a constituent of the Conference of Presidents.

Reich said it is "without foundation" to write, as Rosensaft did, that "there were concerted, albeit unsuccessful, efforts" to bar him from meetings of the conference.

Rosensaft said in his op-ed piece that it is "naive to think that Prime Minister (Yitzhak) Shamir will present a credible peace proposal when he visits Washington this spring."

Reich called this "a pre-emptive strike to undermine the prime minister of Israel." He added, "In pre-judging the prime minister's forthcoming visit, Mr. Rosensaft damages the cause of peace, wounds Israel and harms U.S.-Israel relations."

JNF MUST REDRAW MAP OF ISRAEL, BUT JUDGE DROPS ALL OTHER CHARGES

By William Saphire

NEW YORK, March 2 (JTA) — The Jewish National Fund of America said Thursday that it expects a temporary injunction restricting its use of a map of Israel in fund-raising activities to be lifted when it submits a new map for court approval "in a week or 10 days."

According to Stuart Paskow, JNF's director of communications, that will clear the land reclamation and afforestation agency of all charges brought against it by the Ad Hoc Committee for Jewish Survival in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, Gaza and the Golan.

Paskow told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that New York state Supreme Court Judge Shirley Fingerhood has dismissed four of the six charges brought against JNF by the ad hoc committee, which supports the concept of a "Greater Israel."

The charges dismissed had to do with fraud and misrepresentation, Paskow said.

But on Feb. 21, Fingerhood granted a motion to restrain JNF from using a map of Israel that included all of its annexed and administered territories.

The judge agreed with the ad hoc committee that the map was "misleading," because it does not reflect JNF's policy of not allocating funds for projects beyond the "Green Line," the name commonly given the boundary between Israel proper and the administered territories.

Paskow told JTA that JNF clearly stated that policy in writing in all of its fund raising. He said the map was an "insignificant" part of the campaign.

Michael Teplow, a spokesman for the ad hoc committee, said it initiated the legal action last October to restrain JNF "from continuing the use of their misleading ads and a return of past donations obtained through misrepresentation."

JUDGE DEFENDS AND LEADERS DENOUNCE SENTENCE GIVEN TO SYNAGOGUE VANDAL
By Andrew Silow Carroll

NEW YORK, March 2 (JTA) — A 16-year-old who torched a Brooklyn synagogue during last year's High Holy Days was sentenced, as expected, to four months of weekend jail stays, 200 hours of community service and five years' probation.

The sentence drew immediate criticism from Brooklyn Jewish leaders and public officials, who protested outside the courthouse that the sentence was too light and did nothing to discourage anti-Semitic acts.

Speaking from the bench, State Supreme Court Justice Thaddeus Owens said that since proposing the sentence in January, he had become the victim of "an avalanche" of hate mail and that he and his family members had been harassed.

Lewis Franceschi pleaded guilty to all counts in last September's attack on Congregation Rabbinical Institute Shaarei Torah in Brooklyn's Midwood section. Six Torah scrolls were unrolled and destroyed in the incident, which took place on the Saturday night between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

A second youth, age 11, is being charged in family court, but because of his age neither his name nor charge has been disclosed.

At Wednesday's sentencing, Franceschi read a statement saying he would like to "apologize to everyone and especially the Jewish community for the terrible thing I did during the Jewish High Holy Days."

Franceschi will begin serving his weekend sentences June 23. In addition, he must finish high school and write an essay about the German persecution of Jews between 1933 and 1945.

In sentencing the youth, Owens denied charges by some Jewish leaders that he was anti-Semitic. Owens, who is black, said his own experiences growing up in Arkansas had sensitized him to discrimination against others.

Nevertheless, City Councilman Noach Dear, who represents Midwood, said he would continue to press for an investigation of Owens. Dear said the sentence "sends the wrong message out to anti-Semites."

TWO FORMER KKK MEMBERS SENTENCED IN CALGARY ON CONSPIRACY CHARGES
By Ben Kayfetz

TORONTO, March 2 (JTA) — Two men from Calgary, Alberta, were sentenced to five years in prison Tuesday for conspiring to blow up the Jewish community center there and murder a prominent Jewish businessman.

The defendants, Roger Hamilton, 19, and Timothy Heggen, 30, are former members of a local Ku Klux Klan group.

But the alleged mastermind of the plot, former Alberta KKK leader Tearlach Mac a'Phearsin, was not charged because he was the police informant.

The accused pleaded guilty to a single charge of conspiracy involving a plan last June to bomb the Jewish Center in Calgary, and a residence they mistakenly took to be the home of Harold Milavsky, chairman of Trizec, a real estate company.

Hal Joffe, president of the Calgary Jewish Community Council, praised the way the police handled the case.