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ISRAELI COURT UPHOLDS DEPORTATION OF ARABS CONSIDERED SECURITY RISKS By Gil Sedan

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JERUSALEM, Aug. 24 (JTA) -- Israel's High Court of Justice issued a ruling Thursday firmly endorsing the deportation of Palestinian activists considered security risks by the military.

The court upheld Maj. Gen. Yitzhak Mordechai's decision to expel four Palestinians described as leaders of the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank. Mordechai commands the central front, which includes the West Bank.

The Defense Ministry was expected to carry out the deportation order within hours after receiving the court's decision.

Those ordered deported were Mahmoud el-Matour, commander of the Palestine Liberation Organization's Al Fatah organization in Jerusalem and Ramallah; Oda Ma'ali and Majid Labadi, members of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine; and Dr. Taysir Aruri, a member of the Palestinian Communist Party and a physics professor at Bir Zeit University, which has been shut down for most of the intifada.

Since their arrest about a year ago, the four had been fighting deportation through judicial and administrative remedies. But Israel's military courts have never overruled a deportation order.

The judges in this case gave their full support to the policy of deportation, which they maintained is more effective in coping with the leadership and local committees of the Palestinian uprising than simply trying them in court.

They also backed the commanding general, saying that his approach was "serious and responsible," that he was "highly selective" in deciding who was to be expelled and that he resorted to deportation only after concluding that it "was necessary to the security of the state."

MAN SHOWN TRAINING DRUG 'HIT SQUAD' IS IDENTIFIED AS ISRAELI RESERVIST By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 24 (JTA) -- A mercenary who allegedly helped train a "hit squad" for the Colombian drug cartel was identified Wednesday night by Israel Television as a colonel in the Israel Defense Force reserves.

He is Yair Klein, founder and president of Hod Hahanit (Spearhead), an Israeli firm that exports security and military know-how, the television report said.

His alleged activities on behalf of drug traffickers were exposed in an NBC News broadcast Monday of what was purported to be a videotape made by a Colombian drug syndicate.

The videotape, broadcast Tuesday on Israel Television, showed uniformed men being trained and the faces of the trainers, who NBC said were Israelis and South Africans.

The man identified as Israeli was heard speaking Hebrew, which was translated into Spanish.

The Foreign Ministry said Wednesday that it was conducting a thorough investigation of the NBC report. Its statement stressed that if the report was true, the individuals involved were acting on their own, in violation of "Israeli law

and policy, which is strongly committed to the war on drugs."

Israeli police said Wednesday they have asked Interpol, the international police information clearinghouse, for help to identify any Israelis involved in training "hit squads."

Yehoshua Caspi, chief of police investigations, said he was seeking more information from the Colombian police and from the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency to see if the NBC News report could be substantiated.

According to Israel Television, Klein has been active in military training abroad since retiring from the IDF.

He employed a number of former senior IDF officers in his firm. Israel Television named Col. Avraham Zedaka, a paratrooper and former commander of an anti-terrorist squad, and Ya'acov Briyan, a helicopter pilot.

Briyan told Israel Radio Thursday morning that he never actually worked for Hod Hahanit. He said he was contacted by the firm some time ago and asked if he would be willing to serve as a special consultant on helicopter operations, if such services were required.

According to Briyan, the company never again contacted him, and he assumed that his services were not needed.

The Colombian drug traffickers are known to maintain armed gangs and assassination squads.

The U.S. State Department is interested in reports that Israelis and South Africans may be training them, and is said to be giving serious attention to the NBC videotape.

Experienced Combat Veterans

But to many Israelis it comes as no surprise. There is no shortage of experienced combat veterans in Israel who retire from active service at relatively early ages.

Because there are limited opportunities at home, they seek to market their skills and know-how abroad.

The Defense Ministry in 1986 instituted a licensing system for firms and individuals who want to deal in the export of either military weaponry or military skills.

The licenses are temporary and require periodic renewal. One license is required to initiate contacts with a prospective buyer. Another must be obtained to commence negotiations and a third is required before a contract is signed or implemented.

Those tough requirements are intended to limit damage that might be done to Israel by the activities of Israeli mercenaries abroad.

The Defense Ministry's criteria for issuing licenses include the applicant's identity, the type of equipment or knowledge offered for export and the country of destination. Every license must be approved by the ministry's director general.

Defense sources disclosed recently that about 800 individuals are licensed to export military equipment and know-how.

Hod Hahanit sources were quoted as saying that the firm had the necessary export licenses.

But Ma'ariv quoted security sources Wednesday to the effect that the firm's license to export to Colombia had expired and had not been renewed.

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ISRAELI REPORTED KIDNAPPED By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 24 (JTA) -- Security forces were conducting a large-scale manhunt in the area of Tulkarm on Thursday following the reported kidnapping of an Israeli debt-collector by masked men in the West Bank town.

A curfew was clamped on Tulkarm and neighboring villages as armed units conducted house-to-house searches.

Roadblocks were set up, but as of Thursday evening no progress was reported.

The victim, Shaul Mashani of Bat Yam, was abducted Wednesday evening as he drove into Tulkarm in a local taxi, apparently to collect debts.

The taxi driver told police later that his cab was stopped at the entrance to town by masked men wielding knives and axes. They forced him to detour and took Mashani with them, telling the driver his fare would return after a while.

But he didn't return. After waiting several hours, the driver reported the incident to the police.

ARAB-COMMUNIST BLOC TO RUN FOR HISTADRUT By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 24 (JTA) -- A new Communist-Arab coalition that in theory could change the face of Israeli politics will test its strength in the Histadrut trade federation elections in November.

Three left-wing parties joined forces Monday to present a joint list, not only for election to the Histadrut Central Committee but to the NA'AMAT women's labor organization and the regional labor councils.

The coalition consists of the Democratic Front, a front organization of the Communist Party; the Progressive List for Peace and Equality; and the Arab Democratic Party.

It is the first time the major political groups with influence in the Israeli Arab sector have joined forces in an elections.

The Communists and Progressives in fact have been archenemics for years, each competing for the Arab vote.

Both have looked askance at the Arab Democratic Party formed by Abd-el Wahab Darousha, a former Labor Knesset member, who defected in protest over Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin's tough policies toward the Palestinian uprising.

Darousha's party and the Progressive List emerged from last year's Knesset elections with one scat apiece. The Communists won four.

The three parties apparently realized the folly of letting their differences take precedence over their common interests. Had they reached an agreement prior to the elections, they might have gained another one or two mandates.

In that case, given the delicate electoral balance that prevailed after the elections, the three leftist parties might, in theory, have given Labor the necessary majority to form a government.

It is unlikely, however, that Labor or any mainstream party would form a coalition with the Communists.

The joint list was not easy to form. Negotiations between the three factions, held at Communist Party headquarters in Haifa, were stormy from beginning to end.

The major controversy was over who would head the list. The Progressives and Darousha wanted an Arab. The Communists insisted on a Jew.

It was not that they had become overnight converts to Zionism but rather how to resolve the practical matter of image.

For years, the Communists have received most of their support from Arab voters. Their institutions are equally divided between Jews and Arabs and they present themselves as a joint Jewish-Arab political force.

Had an Arab headed their Histadrut elections list, the Communists feared they would be identified as an Arab party.

In the end, a Communist -- and a Jew--Binyamin Gonen, was agreed upon as the person to head the list.

The remaining places will be divided among the Progressives and the Arab Democratic Party.

The joint venture could have a significant effect on Israeli politics if the combined party does well in the Histadrut elections.

The Israeli Arab constituency has a potential of 12 to 15 Knesset seats.

So far they have never realized it because of political friction within the Arab community.

If the three parties remain united for the next Knesset elections, they may gain wide support among Israeli Arabs who are frustrated over their inability to extend help to their brethren in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

With Arab support, a new Communist-Arab coalition could easily become the third largest political faction in Israel, after Labor and Likud, and could replace the religious parties as the power brokers in coalition politics.

Whereas the religious parties always maneuver between Labor and Likud, the Arab force would align only with Labor.

HERUT YOUNGER, LABOR BETTER EDUCATED By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 24 (JTA) -- Herut politicians are younger but Laborites are better educated, according to survey by the Institute for Israel Studies of the differences between office-holders of the country's two major political parties.

The results, published in Ha'aretz on Monday, showed that 35 percent of Herut officeholders are under 39 years of age compared to only 18 percent of Laborites.

But in Labor, 56 percent have a high-school or university education, compared to 36 percent in Herut, the dominant faction in the Likud bloc.

Among Herut officeholders, 52 percent are of Asian or African origin, in contrast to 32 percent of Laborites.

And with respect to religious observance, 60 percent of Herut and 30 percent of Labor define themselves as being largely traditional.

ARENS OFF TO VISIT KENYA By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 24 (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Moshe Arens was expected to leave for Kenya on Thursday for the first official visit by an Israeli foreign minister since the East African nation broke diplomatic ties with Israel during the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

Arens is expected to sign a variety of agreements for Israeli-Kenyan cooperation.

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HABIMAH CANCELS MADRID PERFORMANCE; SEEN AS SETBACK TO RELATIONS WITH SPAIN By David Kantor

MADRID, Aug. 24 (JTA) -- Habimah, Israel's national theater, has canceled scheduled performances in the Madrid Autumn Theater Festival next month, which Israeli and Spanish officials agree could threaten to set back the development of cultural exchanges between the two countries.

The reasons given here for the cancellation vary from a dispute over who would pay the expenses of the Israeli troupe to a last minute change of program.

Whatever the cause, there have been angry reactions in government and theatrical circles here.

The Madrid Festival, which begins Sept. 21, is considered a major international cultural event that attracts leading artists from many countries.

Habimah was scheduled to perform "The Dybbuk," but a dispute arose over an alleged commitment by the festival organizers to pay the return air fare of the Israeli troupe and the air freight for the stage sets.

The Spaniards were also supposed to have picked up the hotel bills and other expenses.

According to another report, Habimah told the Spanish organizers that they could not perform "The Dybbuk" because certain members of the cast could not make it to Spain.

It was suggested then that Habimah perform another play, "Adam." But several days later, the Israelis cabled that they could not stage it on the dates previously agreed on.

Jose-Maria Gonzales Sinda, the leading producer and director of this year's festival, accused Habimah of unprofessional conduct and unfair attitudes.

One potential area of trouble is the long delay of a decision by Israel to participate in "Expo '92," a major international exposition to open in Seville in April 1992.

IN NEAR REPEAT OF JULY BUS INCIDENT, DRUNK ISRAELI GRABS STEERING WHEEL By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 24 (JTA) -- An inebriated Israeli attempted to wrest the steering wheel from the driver of an Egged bus Thursday in what could have been a repeat of the July 6 disaster that took 16 lives.

But this time, the driver overcame the assailant and no one was injured.

The incident occurred on a bus bound from Jerusalem to Rishon le-Zion, about 10 miles west of the capital.

A man who appeared to be drunk sitting behind the driver rose suddenly and tried to steer the bus off the road.

"He grabbed the steering wheel with one hand and lay on the window platform," said the driver, Shraga Shababo of Maoz Zion.

"As soon as I saw him, I hit the breaks and pulled the hand brake. I then forced him down on the platform, but he began wrestling with me.

"I gave him two punches in the face and I think his head is open," Shababo said, who eventually overcame the attacker before he was arrested.

The incident last month, which took a high toll of dead and injured, was classified as a terrorist act, although the Arab perpetrator could not be linked to a terrorist organization.

PERES' PLANS FOR FINANCIAL GROWTH DERIDED AS POLITICAL BY LIKUD By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Aug. 24 (JTA) -- Finance Minister Shimon Peres' proposals to slice through bureaucratic red tape to expedite projects beneficial to the national economy are being derided by Likud politicians.

One reason may be that Peres seems to be pursuing a shrewd political strategy to exploit strains within Likud and curry favor with Shas, the largest of the religious parties and that one that controls the Interior Ministry.

In any event, the Labor Party leader is standing fast.

This Sunday, Peres will submit to the Cabinet his legislative proposals to significantly speed up the processing of 100 selected projects that require government approval.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has made no public comment yet on Peres' ideas, but some of his aides have been faintly disparaging, hinting in comments to the news media that the finance minister was "empire building" at the expense of other ministries.

Heaped Scorn

Ariel Sharon, the Likud minister of industry and trade, on Wednesday heaped scorn on Peres' ideas from Paris, where he is vacationing.

In a radio interview, Sharon charged that "the worst bureaucracy, the most frustrating delays encountered by projects and investments stem from the Finance Ministry itself."

Other Likud sources requesting anonymity dubbed Peres' high profile schemes a "publicity stunt" that would not cure unemployment and economic stagnation.

But Peres has the support of Interior Minister Arye Deri of Shas, whose bureaucracy is responsible for licensing and other processes that can hasten or delay many projects.

Dov Kehat, director general of the ministry, said it would cooperate with the Treasury to reduce waiting periods for projects deemed in the national interest.

According to Peres, the 100 projects to benefit from his plan would be selected by a ministerial committee consisting of himself, Deri and Minister of Construction and Housing David Levy.

Respond Within One Month

Peres' proposed bill would require all ministries and local authorities to respond to license applications within one month, or within three months in certain cases.

If they do not, teams of government experts would take over from the regular licensing authority and expedite the project.

Another measure pushed by the finance minister on his frequent visits to economically depressed areas also ran into determined opposition.

Peres proposed that local authorities that are financially well off should contribute to a national fund to supplement the government's badly depleted education budget.

Those funds would be spent where needed rather than in the localities that contributed them.

Not surprisingly, the proposal drew howls of protest from such affluent communities as Holon, Ramat Gan and Herzliya.

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BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
POPE JOHN PAUL'S ROLE IS QUESTIONED
IN LATEST CATHOLIC-JEWISH FLARE-UPS
By Ruth E. Gruber

sics have added yet another chapter to the tumultuous relationship between the Vatican and the Jewish community in the 11 years of John Paul's pontificate.

The denial of God's covenant with Jews in three recent homilies by Pope John Paul II and a Polish cardinal's controversial decision to block removal of the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz have seriously embittered delicate relations between Jews and the Roman Catholic church.

These events have raised the fundamental question of where the pope stands on Jewish-Catholic dialogue.

While John Paul took a historic step on April 16, 1986, by becoming the first pope to visit a Jewish synagogue, and has been active in promoting Jewish-Catholic dialogue, his tenure has also been marked by setbacks in the course of reconciliation begun by the second Vatican Council in the mid-1960s.

"Only the pope can remedy the situation which has been created," said Rome's Chief Rabbi Elio Toaff. "His taking a clear position on the fate of the ecumenical center at Auschwitz would placate the protests which, it is well to remember, do not just come from Jews.

"And by now it has become essential that the Vatican also reconfirm its theological vision of Judaism," he said. "We don't know anymore what to think and often we have the impression that there is not one church talking, but two -- and in contrast with each other."

Toaff's reference was to the exception taken by three Catholic cardinals to Polish Cardinal Franciszek Macharski's decision to block removal of the Carmelite convent from Auschwitz.

Macharski said his decision was based on protests by Jewish groups over the delay in moving the convent by the date specified in a joint Jewish-Catholic agreement reached in Geneva in 1987.

Cardinal Albert Decourtray, one of the four cardinals to sign the agreement, subsequently issued a statement sharply criticizing Macharski's stand.

Without Prior Knowledge

The Italian press quoted sources at the Vatican as saying that Macharski had issued his statement without the knowledge of the pope—which some observers said was hard to believe, given the close relationship between the two men and the pope's continuing interest in events in his homeland.

Jewish leaders are profoundly concerned that the pope has never spoken out on the Auschwitz convent controversy.

"Why is the Vatican silent on this?" asked Tullia Zevi, president of Italy's Jewish communities. "That's what we want to know."

This is the not the first time the pope has been taken to task over the Holocaust.

In June 1988, Nobel Peace Prize winner Elie Wiesel criticized the pontiff for a speech he gave at the Mauthausen concentration camp that failed to mention that any Jews had died there.

"It is now clear," Wiesel wrote. "This pope has a problem with Jews, just as Jews have a problem with him. His understanding for living

Jews is as limited as his compassion for dead Jews."

Weisel also criticized the pope's decision, a little more than a year later, to receive Austrian President Kurt Waldheim in a private audience at the Vatican. This was at the height of the controversy surrounding accusations that Waldheim had a Nazi past.

"Was this yet another attempt to whitewash the Church of its heavy responsibility for the European anti-Semitism that led to mass murder?" wrote Weisel.

Beyond his attitude toward the Holocaust, the pope sparked protests and tremendous anger within the Jewish community by receiving Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat at the Vatican in September 1982.

Jews are rankled by his constant support for the "Palestinian people's right to have a homeland" -- a policy set by his predecessor, Paul VI -- and his continuing refusal to recognize the State of Israel.

Jews 'Betrayed' God's Covenant

Theological questions also have dogged the pope, the latest coming on the heels of the convent controversy.

In homilies on Aug. 2, 9 and 16, the pontiff called into question the fidelity of Jews in biblical times to divine law. He spoke of their "betrayal" of their special alliance with God.

The pope said that according to the Old Testament, God did "choose" Israel, but "on condition that the people observe the law that he gave, with the Decalogue and the other prescriptions and norms. For its part, Israel dedicated itself to this observance.

"The history of the ancient alliance attests to us that this dedication many times was not maintained. Especially the prophets reproved Israel for its unfaithfulness and they interpret the tragic events of its history as divine punishments.

"They (the prophets) threaten new punishments, but at the same time, they announce a new alliance," the pope said, making clear that by this new alliance he meant the birth of Christianity.

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith immediately issued a sharp criticism of the homily, expressing "deep concern over the theological implications."

Temporary Setback

Some in Italy see this latest development as only a temporary setback.

"Never has there been the impression that John Paul II wanted to abandon the line of dialogue sanctified by the council and inherited from John XXIII and Paul the VI," veteran Vatican correspondent Luigi Accattoli wrote in Corrière Della Sera newspaper.

"For almost every conflict, there has been a renewal of agreement," he wrote.

Toaff, however, said it remained to be seen what would now happen vis-a-vis Jewish-Catholic relations. "It depends on the position that the Vatican adopts," he said.

"Lately the dialogue has already slowed down," Toaff said. "It remains very cordial with Cardinal (Johannes) Willebrands, who heads relations with Judaism.

"For the rest, we are profoundly deluded. And I'm convinced that in the end, the Carmelite convent in Auschwitz, symbol of the Jewish Holocaust, will not be moved."