

**SETTLERS CLAIM ABUSIVE TREATMENT
OF DETAINEES SUSPECTED OF EXTREMISM**

JERUSALEM, Sept. 11 (JTA) -- Five Jewish settlers have been arrested in recent days as suspected members of a new violent Jewish underground.

The arrests, originally shrouded in secrecy, have sparked widespread protest by other settlers.

The demonstrators charge that those detained for their suspected involvement in planning and carrying out violent attacks on Arabs are receiving abusive treatment.

The settlers claim the men are being tortured and denied legal access and that their families are not being informed of their whereabouts.

Over the weekend, hundreds of residents of Kiryat Arba protested the alleged torture of Israel Defense Force Lt. Oren Edri, one of the five detainees.

Knesset Member Zevulun Hammer of the National Religious Party has called for an inquiry into the conditions under which Edri and other suspects are being held and interrogated.

The General Security Services has denied the charge that the suspects have been tortured.

For his part, Environment Minister Yossi Sarid, a member of the ministerial committee on General Security Services affairs, said there was absolutely no basis to the charges the detainees were being tortured or abused in any way.

"I can say clearly and even officially," he said, "that the investigations are being carried out according to all rules, laws, methods, and I can see no problem."

Said To Have Supplied IDF Arms For Attacks

Nonetheless, he pledged that complaints would be investigated.

Edri, arrested Sept. 2, reportedly was interrogated about the December slaying of three Arabs from a village near Hebron and about the fatal shooting in July of an Arab taxi driver in Jerusalem.

Edri is known to be connected with the Keren Yosef Yeshiva in the West Bank town of Nablus, and is understood to have been supplying activists there with IDF arms and helping them plan attacks on Arabs.

The head of the Keren Yosef Yeshiva, Rabbi Yitzhak Ginsberg, is reportedly under investigation for praising the actions of Dr. Baruch Goldstein, the Kiryat Arba settler who murdered 29 Muslim worshipers on Feb. 25 at the Tomb of the Patriarchs. Ginsberg reportedly described the act as a mitzvah, or religious good deed, and said that the Arabs deserved to die.

The Haifa District Court last Friday rejected Edri's appeal against his continued detention.

The other detainees include two brothers from Kiryat Arba, Eitan and Yehoyada Kahalani, who have been detained for nine days and are suspected of extreme right-wing activity. They were arrested in the Tel Aviv area and on Sunday reportedly were still not being permitted to speak with their attorneys or families.

Two other suspects, Elyashiv Keller of Hebron, and Rabbi Ido Elba of Kiryat Arba, have been remanded for nine and 10 days respectively.

Meanwhile, two activists from the Kach Party, founded by the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, have been released from administrative detention. They were imprisoned following the banning of the Kach Party and other extremist organizations in the wake of the Hebron massacre.

NEWS ANALYSIS:**WARMING SIGNALS FROM SYRIA ELICIT
HOT DEMONSTRATIONS FROM THE GOLAN**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Sept. 11 (JTA) -- Prospects for peace on the Israeli-Syrian track appear to be warming up, and so, too, are the efforts of those opposed to surrendering the Golan Heights.

As Israeli officials voiced a measure of satisfaction Sunday over a speech by Syrian President Hafez Assad the night before, Golan Heights settlement leaders and sympathetic politicians launched a hunger strike at the ancient ruins of Gamla on the Golan.

Assad, speaking in a televised address to his newly elected parliament, pledged Saturday night to accept "the objective requirements of peace."

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres responded to Assad's remarks, saying, "He is not talking war any more; he is talking peace."

Speaking at a briefing for foreign correspondents, Peres nonetheless cautioned that serious negotiations with Syria still lie ahead. "They have not yet taken place," the foreign minister said.

Other highly placed sources, while expressing gratification at the tone and tenor of Assad's remarks, also insisted that a long and rocky road still lay ahead for Israeli and Syrian peacemakers.

The Assad speech appeared to be another step forward in the recently quickened pace of the Israeli-Syrian peace track. Diplomatic and political attention is increasingly focusing on this track both in the region and abroad.

Last week, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin for the first time outlined a two-stage land-for-peace proposal that would involve a testing period of limited withdrawal on the Golan over a three-year period.

And U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher and his top aides reportedly are consulting intensively about how they can best contribute to nudging the process forward. A quick shuttle by the secretary later this month is said to be in the works.

On the Golan Heights, meanwhile, settlement leaders vowed to escalate their campaign against surrendering the plateau. For more than a year now, the country has been dotted with banners proclaiming "The nation is with the Golan." But the winds were taken from the movement's sails when the breakthrough with the Palestine Liberation Organization a year ago removed the Syrian track from the top of the agenda.

Now, however, the battle is beginning to be waged in earnest, as symbolized by the site chosen for the hunger strike.

Gamla is a Second Temple-era fortress that fell to the Romans during the Jewish uprising (66-70 CE) after heroic resistance. Many of its defenders committed suicide rather than be taken captive.

On Saturday night, thousands of Golan settlers and their supporters rallied in the township of Katzrin, the so-called capital of the Golan Heights.

At the rally, Labor Knesset member Avigdor Kahalani urged Rabin to desist from his policy of withdrawal, and vowed to break with his party in the Knesset over the issue.

Kahalani heads a group of Labor parliamentarians who say they will submit legislation requiring approval by 65 percent of the nation in a plebiscite on withdrawal.

Rabin has pledged to hold a referendum before undertaking a significant withdrawal on the Heights.

Kahalani believes that while a majority of Jewish Israelis would oppose withdrawal, a referendum could pass with the votes of Israeli Arabs.

However, opinion polls published in the media last week indicated a groundswell of support among the general population for withdrawal-for-peace.

According to some political commentators, it was these polls that prompted the prime minister to confide in a radio interview last week that he is prepared for a three-year partial withdrawal period.

During this time, Israeli-Syrian "normalization" would be put into effect and tested, prior to a final withdrawal by Israel.

Rabin said later this partial withdrawal would be relatively small and probably would not involve settlements. But he did not spell out the dimensions of the envisaged final withdrawal.

Israel has until now demanded five years as a minimal period for testing the durability of normalization and security arrangements and the sincerity of Syrian intentions.

Answers Israeli Reporters' Questions

Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa rejected Rabin's offer, saying that "there is no need for a long period to conclude the withdrawal."

But he also fueled the warming atmosphere last week, speaking of hopes for a "a warm peace" between Israel and Syria. And, for the first time, he answered questions from journalists who identified themselves as Israelis.

Israeli analysts said Assad's address Saturday indicated awareness of the heightened political tensions in Israel and of the need to swing Israeli public opinion in his favor, particularly given Rabin's pledged referendum.

Thus, Assad made a point of noting that the Syrians were "men of our word."

"We mean what we say and keep our undertakings," the Syrian president said.

Pro-withdrawal advocates in the Israeli domestic debate often stress that the Syrians have scrupulously adhered to the terms of the Separation of Forces agreement concluded with Israel in 1974.

That accord provided for a U.N. force of observers to monitor a narrow border zone on the Golan, with rigorous arrangements limiting forces

on either side of the line. The limitation of forces on the Syrian side stretches much farther back than on the Israeli side, a situation which Israel insists will have to apply to new security provisions to be concluded in the context of a full peace treaty.

While stressing his determination to win back the entire Golan, and at the same time obliquely expressing his disapproval of the PLO and Jordan for making their separate peace with Israel, Assad, in his speech over the weekend, signaled -- to the Israelis and to his own people -- that he is prepared to move toward the kind of full peace with diplomatic and trade relations that Israel wants.

Assad also stressed, as he has in the past, that Syria's decision to negotiate peace with Israel represents a "strategic" decision, not merely a tactical move.

It was particularly significant, Israeli experts said Sunday, that Assad gave these indications in a statement intended mainly for domestic consumption.

Israeli officials have long challenged the Syrian leader both to offer public gestures to the Israeli populace and to set about the important task of educating his own public to the nature of a real peace with the Jewish state.

His promise to accept the "objective requirements of peace" plainly was intended to convey to his audience, in the ornate Parliament chamber and beyond, the fact that peace with Israel will mean more than military redeployment.

ISRAEL AGREES TO SEND POLICE TO HAITI By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Sept. 11 (JTA) -- As the United States readies for the possible invasion of Haiti, Israel has pledged to send 30 police officers to the island when the fighting concludes.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin authorized the contingent Sunday, after President Clinton telephoned last week for Israeli aid to oust the present military rulers of the Caribbean island.

Clinton did not request military participation in the imminent U.S. army invasion, but was seeking civilian police participation to bring about the return of law and order to Haiti.

The Israeli police officers will include current members of the police as well as retirees.

The commander of the Israeli police contingent, retired Prison Commissioner Gavriel Amir, is scheduled to arrive in Washington at the end of this week to participate in planning conferences for post-invasion activities in Haiti.

14TH ISRAELI SOLDIER KILLED IN LEBANON By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Sept. 11 (JTA) -- An Israeli paratrooper was killed and another wounded while on patrol in the central sector of the southern Lebanon security zone last week.

Sgt. Ohad Nissim, 20, of Ashdod, who was buried on Friday, was the 14th Israeli soldier killed in action in southern Lebanon along the border since the beginning of the year.

Recent heavy artillery and mortar exchanges, mainly with the Iranian-backed Hezbollah forces, have been described as a "veritable war" by Israeli Defense Force commanders.

BOOK ABOUT MITTERRAND'S VICHY TIES SENDS SHOCKWAVES THROUGHOUT FRANCE

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, Sept. 11 (JTA) -- A newly published book detailing the activities of French President Francois Mitterrand before, during and after World War II has sent major shockwaves through the president's Socialist Party and the general public here.

The book, already touted as the major event of the literary season, describes Mitterrand as a right-wing student activist in prewar Paris, as a faithful officer of the collaborationist Vichy regime in 1942 and as a close friend of Rene Bousquet, a former Vichy official charged with crimes against humanity for ordering roundups of Jews for deportation.

On the cover, a shocking photo shows a young Mitterrand being received in 1942 by Marshal Philippe Petain, the Vichy head of state.

Most of the revelations of the book, "A French Youth: Francois Mitterrand 1934-1947," are not new. Much of the information has been exposed by right-wing publications in France over the past 30 years. But Mitterrand's friends always dismissed the revelations as pure disinformation.

What appears different this time around is that Mitterrand -- for reasons known only to him -- consented to and assisted in the research for the book, written by Pierre Pean, a French investigative journalist.

Admiration For Petain

At 77 and reportedly suffering from prostate cancer, Mitterrand is currently serving his last term as French president.

The book details the president's activities from 1934, when the young Mitterrand arrived in Paris from the provinces to study law, until 1947, when at 31, he became a Cabinet minister in the postwar French government.

Throughout the book, many myths and legends surrounding Mitterrand are shattered, including the belief that he was engaged in left-wing politics from an early age.

Instead, Pean shows that in 1934, Mitterrand joined an extreme right-wing Catholic -- but not anti-Semitic -- organization run by a Col. de La Rocque, the head of Les Croix de Feu (the Crosses of Fire).

Although Mitterrand knew many members of the French extremist terrorist group La Cagoule ("The Hood"), he never was a member of the organization, according to Pean.

During the war, Mitterrand, a sergeant in the French army, was captured and held as a prisoner of war by German troops. His fellow prisoners remember that like most of them, he favored the "Revolution Nationale," the policy of Marshal Henri Philippe Petain.

After he escaped from captivity in 1941, he immediately went to Vichy, not to play a double game, as his supporters had asserted, but out of his admiration for Petain and his desire to participate in what was to be a "French revival."

He began his service under the Vichy writing intelligence reports on the enemies of Petain's regime, namely, the communists and Gaullists.

Although insisting he was never an anti-Semite, Mitterrand apparently had no concerns about the Vichy laws against Jews and foreigners.

And in 1942, as a high-ranking member of the administration in charge of the French former war prisoners, he was received by Petain, the photographic recording of which is revealed for the first time on Pean's book cover.

Mitterrand's ambition drove him to seek the most coveted decoration of the Vichy regime, the Francisque. This implied an oath of total fidelity to Petain. He was awarded the decoration in mid-1943.

But by then Mitterrand, like many high-ranking members of the Vichy administration, began to question the outcome of the war and initiated contacts with the underground Resistance.

Toward the end of 1943, Mitterrand made a secret visit to London, returned to France and became a prominent leader of the Resistance.

What remains a mystery to many was Mitterrand's continued relations with hard-line right-wingers, like the man who funded the "Cagoule" terror ring and who, after the war, financially supported Mitterrand.

Another mystery was his friendship with Bousquet, the man responsible for the infamous Vel d'Hiv roundup of Jews in 1942. Far from hiding it, Mitterrand told Pean that Bousquet was "a man of exceptional caliber. I found him to be rather likable, straightforward, almost brutal. I was seeing him with pleasure."

Bousquet was murdered in his home last year.

The revelations in Pean's book shocked many in Mitterrand's Socialist Party.

But Nazi-hunter and lawyer Serge Klarsfeld, president of The Sons and Daughters of Jews Deported from France, said the book's revelations were not news to him.

"I have been saying that Bousquet was a close friend of Mitterrand's for years," Klarsfeld said. "We have now to be very careful, because to some extent, Pean's book is also trying to say that the Vichy regime wasn't manned by all-evil people."

ISRAELI SUSPECT IN THEFT OF JUDAICA

By Agnes Bohm

BUDAPEST, Sept. 11 (JTA) -- Interpol has issued an arrest warrant for an Israeli citizen suspected of involvement in last year's theft of a priceless collection from the Jewish Museum here, according to Hungarian media reports.

The man, identified as Arie Bakal, is a Romanian-born Israeli. The 51-year-old Bakal is reportedly a popular figure in the flea market in Jaffa, Israel.

He is the third suspect in what has been described as the biggest theft of Judaica of this century.

The precious items, which were stolen last December, were recently discovered in Romania and returned to Budapest, where they have again been put on display.

All the suspects have been described as of Romanian origin. One of them is being held by police in Germany and reportedly will be extradited to Budapest by mid-September.

The other is believed to be at large in Austria, and unlike the suspect in Germany, cannot be extradited to Hungary under existing law. The investigation into the theft is ongoing.

GROUP HELPS ISRAELI PARENTS WHO CARE FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN

By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM, Sept. 11 (JTA) -- Esther Wachsman was the mother of five healthy, active sons when she learned that she was pregnant with twins.

It has been seven years since the twin boys were born, one of them with Down's syndrome.

Since the day that Rafael, who is moderately-to-severely retarded, was born, Wachsman admits she has been living with "a tremendous burden."

In the course of picking up Rafael from an afterschool program one day, she explained that "he needs 100 percent, 24-hour-a-day supervision. He cannot be left alone because he can endanger himself and his surroundings. He doesn't understand not to turn on the gas or run into the road.

"I have three boys in the army at the moment, and three in school," she added. "My husband and the boys are helpful when they're home, but that isn't often enough. The day-to-day burden falls on me. If it weren't for Shalva, I don't know what I'd do."

Shalva, the Israel Association to Relieve the Handicapped Child and Family, is helping families like the Wachsmans cope with the problems associated with caring for a disabled child.

Established in 1990 by Kalman and Malky Samuels, Shalva runs a year-round afternoon program that serves 80 retarded and autistic children, from toddlers to young adults.

Once a week on a rotating basis, the kids sleep over, allowing their parents and caregivers a much-needed rest. In the evenings, Shalva's building serves as an informal meeting place for mentally retarded teen-agers and young adults.

Shalva also runs a two-week summer camp program and serves as a respite for parents who cannot care for their disabled child for short periods of time, perhaps during the week of shiva or after a birth.

Located in a rented house in the religious neighborhood of Har Nof, Shalva provides creative, loving care to children who would otherwise be stuck at home in the afternoon and evenings.

Fills A Gap Society Has Yet To Fill

After spending the morning in school, the children are bused to Shalva, where they stay until 6 p.m.

Shalva is free to all families. Since it receives no government funding, it relies solely on donations to provide its services.

Kalman Samuels, who, along with his wife Malky, recently received the President's Award for Volunteerism, says that Shalva fills a gap that Israeli society has yet to fill.

"A handicapped child requires constant attention and stimulation," he said. "The school day ends at 12:30, leaving the child and his parents to fend for themselves the rest of the day. Most Israeli children attended chugim (clubs) in the afternoon, but these children usually don't have that option."

Though he is reluctant to blame the government, Samuels, who emigrated from Canada two decades ago, makes it clear that it should do more to help parents of disabled children.

"It's ironic," Samuels said, "that it's the parents who don't institutionalize their children, who work so hard to keep them at home, who suffer the heaviest burden, both financially and otherwise. The government pays for a child to be institutionalized, but except for a small stipend of a few hundred dollars per month, the parents are on their own."

He maintains that "people don't realize what the parents of a disabled child are going through. They don't want pity, so they keep up a brave front. Nobody realizes that they are totally cracked inside."

Samuels speaks from experience. In 1977, his son Yosef, then a healthy 11-month-old baby, received a routine DPT vaccination. Complications ensued, and Yosef became totally deaf and blind.

He recalled that "after the inoculation, Yosef had violent neurological symptoms. He had convulsions, his eyes rolled in his head. We thought he had suffered brain damage. A relative of ours, a famous physician in New York, got us in touch with doctors in the U.S., so we decided to move to the States."

Upon their return to Israel four years later, the family struggled with Yosef's disability -- and the needs of their other, healthy children. At the age of 8, Yosef made a Helen Keller-like breakthrough, thanks to a devoted teacher who taught him how to sign into the palm of her hand.

'Every Child Has Potential'

Now an extremely bright, energetic 18-year-old with an active social life, Yosef attends a special school in the mornings and an afternoon program much like Shalva.

Using his own son's remarkable achievements as a model, Samuels believes that "every child has potential."

This is the guiding principle at Shalva.

On a warm day in late August, the ambulatory kids romp in the garden, where a swing and slide are always occupied. Those who cannot walk, due to cerebral palsy or other disabilities, are tended to by staff members and volunteers. There is an almost one-to-one ratio between children and caretakers.

At 4:30 a volunteer musician from the neighborhood arrives, and the children are herded into the living room for a sing-along.

After some more playing, dinner is served. Those with good coordination feed themselves vegetarian hot dogs and chocolate pudding. The volunteers assist everyone else.

Aaron Shushan, who has come to pick up his son, Yossi, 18, said his family could not function without Shalva.

"It means a great deal to us," said Shushan in a very quiet voice. "Yossi is a very moody child. Sometimes he is too sleepy, other times he is hyperactive. Sometimes he bothers our other kids, or he can hurt himself. This way, we know that for a few hours every afternoon he is well taken care of."

Esther Wachsman seconds the motion. She says that while she considers Shalva a "personal life-saver," her top priority is her son's welfare.

"The staff here coordinate with Rafael's school teachers, so the learning is continuous. I know he's happy here. When I say, 'Get ready, we're going to Shalva,' he runs to the car. That's a blessing."