

## PINHAS SAPIR DEAD AT 67, HE WAS ARCHITECT OF ISRAEL'S ECONOMY.

JERUSALEM (WNS)--Pinhas Sapir, chairman of the World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency Executives, and former Finance Minister of Israel, died Aug. 12 after suffering a heart attack while attending a ceremony at a settlement near Beersheva.

Mr. Sapir, the strongman of Israeli politics for the last decade and the architect of Israel's economy, was buried in Kfar Saba, the community north of Tel Aviv in which he lived since immigrating to Palestine in 1929. Earlier thousands filed by his coffin at the Binyanei Ha'oma, Jerusalem's convention hall.

At a special meeting of the Cabinet attended by members of the WZO and Jewish Agency from Israel and abroad, Premier Yitzhak Rabin eulogized Mr. Sapir, noting that he died after a long and tiring day devoted to his two main efforts since becoming WZO AND Agency chairman last year--aliya and absorption. "We who knew Mr. Sapir also know that this was a typical day in his life, much like any other day," Rabin noted that "wherever you turn in this state, you will find traces of Sapir's activities" since there was not one area in Israel's development in which he was not involved.

Thousands lined the streets of Kfar Saba as Mr. Sapir's body was brought from Jerusalem. The funeral party included his widow, son and two daughters, his grandchildren, members of the Cabinet, Knesset, the Labor and opposition parties and Jewish leaders from the United States and other countries.

Rabin was with Sapir when he suffered his heart attack during a ceremony inaugurating a new synagogue at Moshav Nevatim, near Beersheva, which was settled by Jews from Cochin, India. Mr. Sapir, who was responsible for bringing Torah Scrolls from Cochin, India, to the settlement, carried one of the heavy scrolls during the ceremony, refusing a lighter one. He felt ill while in the synagogue and went outside where he collapsed. He was rushed to Beersheva Hospital where he was pronounced dead after attempts to revive him failed.



Mr. Sapir was born in 1908, the son of Mordechai and Malka Kozlowski in the Polish village of Suwalki. He frequently referred to the extreme poverty in the village after World War I. He received a mixed Jewish and general education and even during his youth was known for his organizational and mathematical abilities. He made aliya in 1929, settling in Kfar Saba where he worked in the local orange groves while helping the growers with bookkeeping.

Mr. Sapir was jailed after leading a demonstration against the employment of cheap unorganized Arab labor by the Jewish orange growers. Mr. Sapir was soon in the forefront of Israel's fledgling labor movement along with David Ben Gurion and Yitzhak Ben Zvi. In 1937, he was part of a Histadrut team working on a huge water project which later became Mekorot, the government-Histadrut water company. Sapir was sent on an arms buying mission after Israel's independence and then became director general first of the Defense Ministry and then the Finance Ministry.

In 1953, Sapir entered the Cabinet as Minister for Trade and Commerce working with Finance Minister Levi Eshkol in the fantastic growth of Israel's economy. When Eshkol took over the Premiership in 1963, Mr. Sapir became Finance Minister holding the post with one brief interval until Golda Meir stepped down as Premier in 1974. Most observers believe that Mr. Sapir could have succeeded Mrs. Meir as premier. Some said that Mr. Sapir, considered a dove, feared the awesome responsibilities of war, and felt he was not qualified in political and military affairs. Mr. Sapir was known for his 15-hour work days and for running the country out of the "little black notebook" which he always carried. In his heyday, Mr. Sapir could seal the fate of multi-million dollar ventures with a word. He attracted many large investors to Israel.

During a special Jewish Agency memorial, Agency Treasurer Leon Dulzin hardly able to control tears, said "Who knows and who can understand the ways of the Lord?" Noting that Mr. Sapir had been involved in continuous meetings during the two days before his death, Dulzin said, "he took part in the absorption difficulties of immigrants, he cared for them, met them, studied their problems and endeavored to find solutions to the inevitable absorption difficulties."

Dr. Nahum Goldman, president of the World Jewish Congress, praised Mr. Sapir for "devotion to Zionism and everything Jewish, his fantastic powers of work...his absolute integrity and his disregard for every personal comfort" which made him a representative of the "best type of a Zionist, a halutz and a Jewish idealist."

In the United States, American Jewish leaders praised him for his contributions to Israel, Zionism and the Jewish people, Rabbi Israel Miller, chairman of the Conference of Major American Jewish Organizations, declared that Mr. Sapir was "A Jew to the core, who never forgot his roots, a man of the people, who understood the people and the people understood him."

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