

WELFARE MINISTER PLEADS NOT GUILTY

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- Minister of Absorption and Welfare Sharon Abu - Hatzeira, along with co - defendant and former aide, Moshe Gabay, pleaded not guilty in Tel Aviv District Court at the opening of their trial for alleged embezzlement and fraud. The trial is expected to last until the end of the year during which time the prosecutor intends to call about 61 witnesses.

State Attorney Gavriel Bach said at the opening session that he would prove that Abu - Hatzeira had misappropriated public funds amounting to millions of Pounds between the years 1973 - 1977 when he served as Mayor of Ramle. He allegedly took the money from a charitable fund which had received it from the Interior Ministry to establish scholarships for yeshiva and other students among Israel's Sephardic community. Abu-Hatzeira was administrator of the fund set up in the name of his late father who

has been chief Rabbi of Morocco.

The Welfare Minister, who heads the Tami Faction, a coalition partner in Premier Menachem Begin's Likud lead government, took leave of absence from his cabinet after trying in vain to have the trial postponed. Abu - Hatzeira was acquitted of charges of bribe taking in a trial earlier this year. Those charges stemmed from alleged wrong doings when he served as Religious Affairs Minister in the first Begin government. At that time he was a member of the National Religious Party. He is currently charged on 10 counts of fraud, betrayal of trust and conspiracy to commit a crime.

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STUDY MILITANT GROUPS

NEW YORK (WNS) -- A significant number of militant Ku Klux Klan activists have broken away from the main bodies and joined by known Nazis, are planning more drastic action than the standard Klan cross burnings and rallies. That is one of the findings of a six month long investigation by the American Jewish Committee into current Klan activities. Also reported were:

Dissatisfaction with "moderate" Klan leadership, leading in one instance, to as suspected attempt to bomb The Temple, Nashville's largest Reform Congregation, as well as to a plot to bomb a transmission tower belonging to a TV station supposedly Jewish owned. Furthermore, the report said, several Nashville Jewish businessmen were threatened with violence; increasing joint ventures with Nazi groups, one of which led to a charge that six Klansmen and Nazis had murdered five Communist Party workers; the emergence of women in the Ku Klux Klan activities. Initially their presence was detected when a 50 year old woman was taken into custody in

Klan efforts in West Germany.

The breaking of militant activists from established Klan groups does not appear to be an isolated

phenomenon according to the AJC's Trends Analyses Unit.

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