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USSR SEEN HAVING 62 SYNAGOGUES NOW AGAINST 400 REPORTED IN 1960

WALTHAM, Mass., March 27. (JTA) -- An intensive survey by the Institute of East European Jewish Affairs at Brandeis University here, reported today, lists "at least" 62 functioning synagogues in the entire Soviet Union. The survey noted that, in 1960, a Soviet official had stated there were at that time 400 synagogues in the USSR, serving 500,000 "practicing Jews." An edition of a Soviet informational handbook, distributed last fall, gave the number of synagogues in the USSR as 97.

The listing of 62 present synagogues, according to an Institute report, was compiled from varied sources, in the face of Soviet reluctance to reveal the precise number of synagogues in the USSR, and despite divergent figures that have emanated from official Soviet sources. The report said the listing does not purport to be exhaustive, because of the difficulty in obtaining accurate information. "It is possible that some synagogues have escaped our net," the report stated, "but their number is unlikely to be great." The listing is the initial part of a comprehensive study of the state of the Jewish religion in the Soviet Union, undertaken by the Institute.

The completion of the study on a subject about which information is scarce will take many months, said the Institute's director, Prof. Erich Goldhagen. But in the meantime, he said, "to meet the great need for knowledge about the conditions of Jews in the Soviet Union, we are communicating some of our findings to the interested public, laymen and scholars alike."

The institute, a component of Brandeis' Philip W. Lown School of Near Eastern and Judaic Studies, was established last year to increase the fund of basic information on the circumstances of some 3,000,000 Jews living in East Europe. It is the first research program of its kind under academic auspices.

"The Soviet government cannot have but full knowledge of all legally constituted synagogues functioning in the Soviet Union, since every religious body is required by law to register with the authorities," the report stated. "But instead of disclosing the figure, Soviet officials have at various times given widely-differing numbers."

The Soviet figures are not only contradictory but also greater than the actual number of synagogues, the report stated. "Here we shall not seek to answer the question of why the Soviet government has withheld from us the true number of synagogues," said the report. "Is it because it wanted to conceal from the world the true state of organized Jewish religion in the Soviet Union? At the present state of our knowledge, answers to this question will remain speculative."

The report, prepared by Joshua Rothenberg, research fellow at the Institute, also listed the three principal types of Jewish religious associations in the Soviet Union: These are: "Religious Societies" occupying synagogues leased to them by the state; "groups of believers" licensed by the government, which the Jews call "legal Minyanim"; and unregistered prayer groups called "illegal Minyanim."

Soviet Embassy Rejects Petition Bearing 30,000 Signatures

PARIS, March 27. (JTA) -- A delegation of the Jewish Students World Union decided today to send a petition on behalf of Soviet Jewry directly to Moscow, after an official of the Soviet Embassy here refused to accept the petition.

The delegation was received at the Embassy by a Soviet official but, when he was told of the reason for the visit, he said he could not accept the message because the Embassy in Paris was "not entitled to receive such petitions." The petition included photostats of 30,000 signatures of Jewish and non-Jewish students gathered throughout Europe.

The petition, like similar protests and appeals in various other western countries, asked equality of cultural and religious rights for Soviet Jews, efforts by Soviet authorities to combat anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, and permission to Russian Jews to emigrate if they wished to do so. The group said it would continue its efforts. The signatories included some from Communist students as well as professors from many European universities.

U.N. EXPECTED TO ACT TODAY ON BAN OF WAR-CRIMES TRIAL LIMITATIONS

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., March 27. (JTA) -- A resolution calling for the drafting of an international Convention that would ban statutes of limitations on trials and punishment of Nazi war criminals and others accused of "crimes against humanity," was expected here today to be passed tomorrow by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. After Israel amended the draft resolution on this subject, and was backed by the United States and France, among others, Fernando Volio Jimenez, of Costa Rica, chairman of the Commission, expressed his belief that the resolution might be "acceptable to all members" of the 21-man body.

Israel's Associate Supreme Court Justice Haim H. Cohn, who represents Israel on the Commission, introduced an amendment which would authorize the Commission to prepare "as a matter of priority" a Convention "to the effect that no statutory limitation shall apply to war crimes and crimes against humanity, irrespective of the date of their commission." Another statement, presented by Poland, would also call on all governments "to continue their efforts to ensure the arrest, extradition and punishment" of the war criminals.

The Commission was called upon by Israel, Austria, the Netherlands and New Zealand, sponsors of the move for a Convention, to take action in time for passage by the entire United Nations at the next session of the General Assembly, which is to convene in September. The United States and France joined Israel and the three other movers of the resolution as co-sponsors. Morris B. Abram, U.S. representative in the Commission, took the floor and expressed the hope that the resolution would be adopted.

Perlzwieg Appeals for Approval; Brazilian Jew Seeks Special Court

Dr. Maurice L. Perlzweig, permanent representative of the World Jewish Congress at the United Nations, appealed to the Commission this weekend to take prompt action on the banning of statutes of limitations affecting Nazi war criminals. He told the Commission that the WJC, in cooperation with the prosecuting authorities of a number of countries, "had traced more than 1,000 eyewitnesses of such crimes," and that 300 of the witnesses had given testimony in person at trials of ex-Nazis in Europe.

Dr. Perlzweig pointed out that local statutes of limitations in some countries "had already given immunity to some of the most notorious war criminals" and referred to cases where attempts made to extradite known criminals failed because the courts in the countries concerned upheld local statutes to protect such persons.

Another non-governmental representative told the Commission that an International Criminal Court should be established for trying Nazi war criminals and others accused of crimes against humanity. That proposal was made by Dr. Isaac Schiffnagel, of Sao Paulo, Brazil, a Jew, who is secretary-general of the Brazilian Institute for Human Rights.

National Pro-U.N. Groups Elect B'nai B'rith Representatives as Chairman

NEW YORK, March 27. (JTA) -- Dr. William Korey, director of B'nai B'rith's United Nations office, was elected chairman this weekend of the Conference Group of U.S. National Organizations on the United Nations. The Conference Group, composed of 85 American organizations that have consultative status at the United Nations, seeks to increase public understanding of the United Nations and stimulate interest in the development of United States policy in relation to the United Nations.

Dr. Korey has been associated with B'nai B'rith since 1954, and has directed its U.N. activities since 1960. He also represents the Coordinating Board of Jewish Organizations, comprising B'nai B'rith, the Board of Deputies of British Jews and South African Board of Jewish Deputies, which has non-governmental status at the United Nations.

WISE REMAINS AS HEAD OF TEL AVIV U.; RESIGNATION STANDS AS OF NOW

TEL AVIV, March 27. (JTA) -- Dr. George Wise, who resigned as president of Tel Aviv University in a dispute with the institution's rector, Dr. Benzion Katz, agreed last night to continue serving as president until the first meeting of the board of governors next November. Announcing his decision at a meeting of the University's executive board, Dr. Wise stressed that he was not withdrawing his resignation at this stage.

The board decided to recommend the appointment of Dr. Haim Sheba, director of Tel Hashomer Hospital here, and a member of the faculty of the University, for the position of vice-president. That post was vacated by Dr. Yuval Ne'eman, who resigned along with Dr. Wise. Dr. Ne'eman will remain as head of the physics department.

JEVISH HISTCRICAL SOCIETY TO LAUNCH JOINT PROGRAM WITH HEBREW U.

MEMPHIS, March 27. (JTA) -- The American Jewish Historical Society announced plans here today for the establishment of a joint program, with the Institute of Contemporary Jewry of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, aimed at promoting a closer relationship between American and Israeli historians. The project, which was announced by Dr. Leon J. Obermayer, president of the society, at the group's 64th annual meeting here, provides for the publication of American text material in Hebrew, and, of Israeli text material in English.

Dr. Obermayer also disclosed plans by the Society to preserve historic monuments in the Caribbean area, including old cemeteries and synagogues, particularly in Surinam, Barbados, Curacao, Nevis and other islands where large numbers of Jews lived in the 17th and 18th centuries.

Other speakers included Dr. Thomas D. Clark, chairman of the history department of the University of Kentucky; Dr. Howard M. Sachar, professor of history at George Washington University, in Washington, D.C.; Dr. Isaac M. Fein, professor of history at Baltimore Hebrew Teachers College, who is curator of the Jewish Historical Society of Maryland; Dr. Samuel J. Hurwitz, professor of history at Brooklyn College; and Judge Harry A. Iseberg, of Chicago.

FOCUS ON INDIGENOUS AMERICAN JEWISH CULTURE PLANNED BY FCUNDATION

NEW YORK, March 27. (JTA) -- Label A. Katz of New Orleans, former international president of the B'nai B'rith, was elected president today of the National Foundation for Jewish Culture, at the organization's annual meeting. Julian Freeman, of Indianapolis, was chosen chairman of the board.

At the meeting, the board considered means aimed at intensifying and expanding the development of an indigenous American Jewish culture. The Foundation has awarded more than 100 grants in various fields of Jewish scholarship; with a total of some \$200,000.

HERZLIAH GRADUATES OVER 1,000 HEBREW TEACHERS IN FORTY-YEAR PERIOD

NEW YORK, March 27. (JTA) -- Over 1,000 Hebrew teachers, now serving in the United States, Canada and Israel, have graduated from the Herzliah Hebrew Teachers Institute, in New York, during the past 40 years, it was reported here today.

The figure was disclosed at the annual Herzliah Institute dinner tonight. Dr. Miriam K. Freund, former president of Hadassah, was honored at the banquet for her contributions to the cause of Jewish education in America. Principal speakers included Jacques Torczyner, president of the Zionist Organization of America; and Michael Arnon, Israel's consul general in New York.

ORTHODOX INSIST TEACHERS HAVE RIGHT TO WEAR YARMULKES IN SCHOOLS

NEW YORK, March 27. (JTA) -- Two Orthodox Jewish leaders here today strongly criticized a Board of Education Decision that would prohibit Jewish teachers from wearing yarmulkas in public schools. The Board recently rescinded a similar regulation applying to students.

In a joint statement, Moses I. Feuerstein, president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, and Rabbi Israel Miller, president of the Rabbinical Council of America said that the prohibition on the wearing of yarmulkes by teachers is a "violation of their individual religious freedom and a denial of the basic tenets of our Bill of Rights." Rabbi Miller and Mr. Feuerstein said that about 2,000 Jewish teachers in the public school system were Orthodox.

TEENAGE GIRLS ARRESTED FOR DESECRATING NEW JERSEY JEWISH CEMETERY

VINELAND, N.J. March 27. (JTA) -- Two teenage girls were arrested here this weekend on charges of overturning and defacing tombstones in a Jewish cemetery here. The girls, one 15 and the other 14 were released in the custody of their parents. Their names were withheld because of their youth. A police official said the girls told police they did it "just for kicks."

FIVE PLEAD GUILTY IN ATTACK ON ISRAELI NURSE; SENTENCES POSTPONED

NEW YORK, March 27. (JTA) -- Five young men who kidnaped an Israeli nurse from Welfare Island last October pleaded guilty here this weekend to first-degree attempted rape. The original indictment listed 20 counts of abduction, and other crimes for which, if convicted, each defendant could have been sentenced to 100 years' imprisonment.

The nurse, however, was too shaken to testify and the guilty pleas were accepted as a compromise. The five were released on bail pending sentencing, which is set for June 23. The law provides for a maximum 10 years' imprisonment on the charge to which the men pleaded guilty.

HEARING FINDS FEW IN N.Y. STATE ARE MEMBERS OF NEO-NAZI GROUPS

NEW YORK, March 27. (JTA) -- A New York Joint Legislative Committee began a study this weekend of information collected in a series of hearings in several cities on activities of Neo-Nazi anti-Semitic groups, to determine whether such groups were political parties under New York State law. Political parties must regularly file financial and other information on their activities with state authorities.

The hearings ended with a session here marked by a conclusion that two neo-Nazi groups were "insignificant" in numbers, and by the hasty departure in tears by one of the committee members, some of whose relatives had been murdered by the Nazis in Europe. All members of the legislative committee are Jewish, including the chairman, State Sen. Irwin Brownstein.

Among the neo-Nazis who testified were George Rockwell, head of the American Nazi party, and James H. Madole, head of the National Renaissance party. Sen. Brownstein summed up the testimony with the conclusions that the hate peddlers were "extremely small, insignificant in numbers." Referring to an admission by Rockwell that there were only 20 Rockwell Nazis in New York State, Sen. Brownstein said that it was important to know that in a state with 15,000,000 residents, "only 20 were sick enough to join" Rockwell's group. Sen. Brownstein said that the Madole group had between 800 and 1,000 members.

Rockwell thanked the committee members for "helping" him enlist new members with the publicity he was getting from the hearings. His anti-Semitic remarks caused Assemblymen Bertram Podell to denounce the native Nazis and to leave the room fighting tears. His grandmother and her family were among the Jews murdered by the Nazis. Before leaving he said that he had always defended the right of anyone to state his beliefs, but that he sincerely regretted that "these people" had been allowed "to say these things here."

(In Washington, two adherents of the American Nazi Party were arrested yesterday in front of the White House, and charged with disorderly conduct, when they staged a counter-picketing demonstration against an action protesting the United States involvement in the war in South Viet Nam. The men displayed anti-Semitic banners. They were released after posting nominal bail.)

Surplus Dealers in U.S.A. Pledge Not To Sell Swastikas to Nazis

LOS ANGELES, March 27. (JTA) -- The National Surplus Dealers Association of the United States today issued a resolution pledging not to supply the American Nazi party and other hate groups with swastikas emblems and flags. The action was taken at the initiative of the Jewish Federation-Council here, when it was discovered that a store in California was dealing in swastikas.

SENATOR APPEALS AT ADL DRIVE EVENT FOR ACTION AGAINST BIRCH SOCIETY

NEW YORK, March 27. (JTA) -- Sen. Gale W. McGee, Wyoming Democrat, called today for extensive efforts on the part of moderates everywhere to counter planned massive action by the John Birch Society which, he said, is expected to spend \$12,000,000 on this year's Congressional elections.

Addressing a dinner of the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League Appeal, in Scarsdale, near here, Sen. McGee expressed concern over the alarming rate of growth of the John Birch Society. He pointed out that Birch chapters in New Jersey had increased from three to 100 in recent years, and said that the Society was making substantial gains in the South by "capitalizing on the unrest over civil rights activities."

The ADL Appeal is seeking \$5,257,000 to support a 10-point program of community relations, civil rights and intergroup research and education conducted by the League. Sen. McGee also addressed an ADL Appeal meeting in Woodmere, N.Y.

N.J. YOUNG REPUBLICAN GROUP FAILS TO VOTE APOLOGY FOR 'RAT FINKS'

NEWARK, N.J. March 27. (JTA) -- A New Jersey Young Republican committee, investigating charges of anti-Semitism and racial bigotry against the organization's Rat Fink conservative group, adjourned its hearings here this weekend until the Young Republican National Federation agrees to cooperate in the probe. The national group has refused to make available the results of its own earlier hearing on the issue.

The Rat Finks were charged earlier this year with having organized racist and anti-Semitic song sessions at a Young Republican state convention last May, in Wildwood, N.J., and a month later at the national convention in Miami.

Before the New Jersey Young Republican investigating group adjourned its hearings, Clark Allen, Young Republican state chairman, attempted to introduce a resolution that would convey the group's "apology to the citizens of New Jersey for the apparent actions of a small number of Young Republicans." But he failed to get a two-thirds majority vote needed to suspend the rules, so that his resolution could be considered. The resolution was, therefore, not adopted.