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Witnesses Say Soviet Jews in Concentration Camps For Demanding Right To Emigrate

PARIS, April 12 (JTA)—Three witnesses from the Soviet Union told an international gathering here today that a number of Russian Jews have already been sent to concentration camps or sentenced to prison terms for demanding their right to emigrate and especially for making public appeals in that respect. The witnesses testified in closed session at the European Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry which opened here today attended by more than 360 delegates from 17 countries. Their identities were not disclosed in order to protect the families they left behind in Moscow and Leningrad. The witnesses, two men and a woman, were described as past members of the Komsomols, the Soviet Communist Party youth organization. They described in detail the cases of several Russian Jews who went to jail and whose families were subjected to severe harassment because they had applied for exit permits to go to Israel.

After the testimony was heard the conference adopted a resolution urging the Soviet Government to grant Jews "their constitutional rights" and the right "to emigrate to Israel for those who wish to." It expressed solidarity "with those Jews who face their situation with courage and dignity," expressed "grave concern" over the "continued deterioration" of the Jewish position in the USSR and recommended that a world conference be called "at the earliest possible date to deal with this burning issue." The conference was presided over by Claude Keilman, of the French Jewish Consistory, who denounced the Kremlin's "anti-Semitic campaign of colunry disguised as anti-Zionism." According to the witnesses a large part of Soviet Jewry wants to emigrate to Israel and thousands have already filed applications to leave. Many of these have been deprived of work and other elemental rights after Soviet authorities turned down their emigration applications, the witnesses said. They described as a dangerous new trend the arrest of Jews who have applied for exit permits, especially those who sent appeals abroad.

Cited as an example of such instances was the case of Mrs. Lilia Abramova Ostman, of Chernovsky, who was arrested in Dec. 1969 and sentenced to two and a half years in prison by a state court last Jan. 8 for "slandering the Soviet Union and insulting the authorities." Mrs. Ostman had requested permission to emigrate in order to re-unite with her elderly father in Israel. She had also submitted several unsuccessful applications on behalf of her husband, her adopted child and her younger sister. When the authorities rejected them she declared that she no longer considered herself a Soviet citizen and refused her identity card. At her trial she told the court that she based her request on the Soviet Constitution and on the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of which the USSR is a signatory. After sentencing, her sister was expelled from school and her adopted child was forcibly placed in an institution, the conference was told. Also related was the case of Boris Kochubievsky, a Jewish engineer sentenced to three years in prison in Jan. 1969 for slandering the Soviet Union after he unsuccessfully applied for an exit permit. The witnesses told the conference that Soviet Jews feel themselves to be "a deprived minority." They lack most cultural and religious needs, mainly synagogues, Jewish books and clubs, the witnesses said.

Police Disperse Students Protesting Hebron Policy And Goldmann-Nasser Decision

JERUSALEM, April 12 (JTA)—Hundreds of Israeli youths clashed with police and soldiers yesterday in their second demonstration in four days against allegedly expansionist, inflammatory and anti-peace policies of the Israel Government. Eight students were arrested and four of them, including a girl, were treated for minor injuries after a small group of demonstrators scaled the wall surrounding Premier Golda Meir's home. The rest battled steel-helmeted police outside the wall. The police, carrying metal shields, dispersed the youngsters with clubs and high pressure water hoses. Some reports said mounted troopers took part in the melee. Last Wednesday, five persons were hurt—three requiring hospitalization—as police broke up what was described as a peaceful sitdown demonstration on a main intersection outside of Premier Meir's office.

The demonstrators on both days protested the government's rejection of a plan for Dr. Nahum Goldmann, president of the World Jewish Congress, to go to Cairo to meet with President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. Yesterday's demonstrators also denounced a plan, recently approved by the Cabinet, to settle some 250 Jews in the all Arab town of Hebron on the occupied West Bank. The demonstrations began with a march of about 150 on Hebron which was blocked by Israeli troops as cars and trucks filled with students entered the occupied zone near Bethlehem. The youngsters carried signs demanding, "Let The Hebron Settlers Go to the Negev;" "Let Goldman go to Cairo;" "Send Golda to the Old-Aged Home." A brief clash ensued when soldiers attempted to grab the signs. The youngsters were confronted at the roadblock by the Military Governor, known as "General Ghandi," who told them "Sometimes I doubt your Jewishness."

The State-owned radio today described the demonstrators as "peaceniks." Other sources said they were mainly members of Communist and leftist factions. The youths described themselves as Israel's "New Left." Most in today's clashes were Hebrew University students, joined by some faculty members and by other youngsters from Tel Aviv and various kibbutzim. According to one report, the demonstrators were applauded by Arabs in a passing bus as they confronted the soldiers outside of Bethlehem. Arab Christian men brought them water. Unable to proceed to Hebron, the youngsters

returned to Jerusalem where they massed outside of Mrs. Meir's home in the fashionable Rehavia section. The 72-year-old Prime Minister was eating lunch at the time. Aides said she took no notice of the turmoil outside. One observer remarked that President Nixon watches football games on television and Premier Meir eats lunch when peace demonstrators appear outside their residences.

Israeli And Arab Representatives Meet To Discuss Peace

Charges of police brutality were made by a few demonstrators. One Hebrew University mathematics professor said bruises on his face were caused by police using a club with a nail protruding. District police commander David Ofer denied this. He said only truncheons and water cannons were used. The water was dyed blue, apparently to enable police to pick demonstrators out of the crowd for arrest. But no arrests were made apart from the eight youngsters who scaled Mrs. Meir's wall. Wednesday's demonstrations involved an estimated 400 youths said to be members of "Peace and Security," Hashomer Hatzair, "New Left," Baalim Hazeck and Communist factions. Their sit-down followed a call to action by Dahn Ben-Amotz, a popular entertainer and author. Prof. Yehoshua Arieli, of the Hebrew University told them, "This government must go. As long as it exists there can be no effective initiative for peace." He referred to the aborted Goldmann mission to Cairo.

While the core of the demonstrators appeared to be mainly from leftist splinter groups, the Goldmann affair, according to observers, exposed widespread discontent and frustration in Israel over the lack of progress toward peace. The observers said that Israelis are far from desperate over the continuing war of attrition and its mounting casualties or the economic dislocations as yet barely felt, but are weary of the apparently unbreakable deadlock and the futility so far of the government's approach toward peace with the Arabs. The Cabinet's veto of the Goldmann-Nasser meeting, though overwhelmingly endorsed by the Knesset last week, aroused a storm of criticism here over the way the government, especially Mrs. Meir, handled the affair.

Israel's mass circulation newspaper Maariv reported yesterday that a senior Israeli representative met this week with a senior Arab representative to discuss the possibility of advancing peace prospects and restoring the cease-fire agreement. The report was signed by Moshe Zak, one of the editors of Maariv who is regarded as one of Israel's best informed journalists. Zak said the meeting was kept top secret because the government believes that a strict ban on publicity is necessary to maintain contacts between Arabs and Israeli personalities. He said Foreign Minister Abba Eban's Knesset speech last week contained obvious allusions that Nahum Goldmann's reported invitation to Cairo was just a "marginal occurrence" and "only one of many diverse contacts between Israeli and Arab representatives designed to pave the way for direct talks." Mr. Eban claimed that Dr. Goldmann could not represent Israel even in such marginal endeavors because his political views are diametrically opposed to official government policy. By linking the Goldmann affair with the Hebron plans, yesterday's demonstrators were expressing views held by Israeli "doves" that the government was not only quashing a peace move but was bent on creating "faits accomplis" in the occupied territories that would remove them from the area of negotiations should the Arabs ever agree to talk peace with Israel. Hebron is regarded by religious Jews as a holy city, the purported site of the Patriarchs' tombs.

Four Israeli Soldiers Killed On Egyptian Front; Israeli Settlements Under Fire

TEL AVIV, April 12 (JTA)—Israel Air Force planes attacked Egyptian positions in the central section of the Suez Canal zone for 15 minutes today and returned safely to their bases. Four Israeli soldiers were killed on the Egyptian front over the week-end as new fighting erupted there and flared all along Israel's borders and cease-fire lines from the Lebanese frontier in the Northwest to the desert reaches south of the Dead Sea. Eight Arab guerrillas were killed in the latter region last night in a clash with an Israeli patrol. A suspected terrorist was killed in the Gaza Strip this morning when he tried to escape an identity check. Two residents of the Arab town of Ramallah were wounded when a hand grenade exploded in a street today. More than a dozen Israeli settlements came under Katyusha rocket fire Friday and Saturday from behind the Lebanese and Syrian borders and in the Beisan and Jordan valleys. The only casualties were a settler in Bafna who was slightly wounded Friday morning and a settler in Avivim who was wounded in an exchange of fire with saboteurs who crossed into Israel from Lebanon Friday night.

A military spokesman said the most serious action occurred in and around the Suez Canal zone. Three Israeli soldiers were killed there Friday afternoon when their vehicle struck a mine north of Kantara. They were identified as Lt. Aryeh Bombiger, 23, of Starysh settlement and Pvt. Nissan Yanov, of Kibbutz Begavim and Pvt. Mordecai Baum of Uddim, both 21. Sgt. Assaf Shofet, 29, of Givat Hen, was fatally wounded when his patrol was attacked by anti-tank guns and mortar fire in the Mitleh region Saturday afternoon. Israeli and Egyptian forces exchanged heavy artillery and mortar fire in the southern region of the canal zone Friday night and Saturday morning. There were no Israeli casualties. Targets of Katyusha rockets, apparently fired by guerrilla forces, were Kiryat Shmona near the Lebanese border, Beisan township facing the Jordanian demarcation line, Moshav Margalit in Upper Galilee, Kalyta on the north shores of the Dead Sea and the Potash Works at Edom on the south shore. A military spokesman said at least ten settlements came under fire in the past 24 hours.

Mideast Without Israel Would Threaten U.S. Interests And Boost Soviet Influence

DETROIT, April 12 (JTA)—The danger of serious deterioration of American interests in the Middle East as Soviet Union influence expands throughout the area was presented today by Rabbi Jay Kaufman, executive vice-president of B'nei Efrith. Posing the hypothetical picture of a Middle East without the State of Israel, Rabbi Kaufman asserted that the United States could "not remain impassive if Israel were not on the scene at all. Our nation's security would be greatly jeopardized if the Soviet Union

succeeded in its goal of gobbling up the Arab world, the oil deposits of the Persian Gulf and much of East Africa. It is Israel's ability to stop the advance of the Soviet Union through its Arab clients which alone prevents that triumphal march," he said.

Considering this and the recent major change in the military pattern of the area because of the arrival of thousands of Russian troops to man new and sophisticated SAM-3 missiles, Rabbi Kaufman declared it was especially unfortunate that the U.S. had recently denied shipment of further Phantom aircraft to Israel. Rabbi Kaufman made his remarks at Wayne State University tonight to the opening session of a two-day conference on the Middle East and Soviet Jewry being conducted for communal and student leaders in the Detroit area by B'nai B'rith International Council. Billy B. Goldberg, of Houston, chairman of B'nai B'rith cabinet on Israel affairs, told the meeting that it was "odd, and of continuing concern, that the one democracy in the area, threatened on every side by countries which daily announce their intention to destroy it, should be presented as a military threat to its neighbors. Israel's military position now, as always, is a purely defensive one."

Sisco In Cairo Proclaims U.S. Wants To Be Friend Of All People In Area

Washington Post correspondent Jesse W. Lewis, Jr., reported from Cairo that Assistant Secretary of State Joseph Sisco arrived in the Egyptian capital Friday and said the United States wants to see a just peace replace the senseless killing and destruction in the Middle East. America wants to be the friend of all the people in the area, he said at Cairo's International Airport. Mr. Sisco reiterated American support for the United Nations Security Council resolution of November 1967. "We support that resolution because it looks ahead to a peace which would be mutually beneficial to all and give unfair advantage to none," he said. "I have come to see and hear for myself, to understand your concerns, your hopes, your expectations. I look forward to the opportunity that my presence here affords for a first-hand exchange of views and the opportunity that it affords to deepen the dialogue between the United States and the nations of the Middle East."

Mr. Sisco's trip to Mideast capitals has been officially described as an "orientation tour" prior to his meeting in Teheran April 20 with the U.S. chiefs of mission in the Mideast. Press reports from Cairo say he has already been informed by Egyptian Foreign Minister Mahmoud Riad that Egypt insists on nothing less than Israel's total withdrawal from the Arab territories it occupied in the June, 1967 war. There was no official U.S. statement following the Sisco-Riad meeting but informed sources in Cairo said it was made clear to the American diplomat that peace could be achieved only by fulfilling that condition. President Nasser told the newly formed Central Committee for Preparing People for Battle yesterday that there was no alternative to war with Israel which would be long and fierce. According to news dispatches, Nasser said that "Strictly speaking" a cease-fire agreement with Israel never existed because it was not accepted by the enemy." Mr. Sisco, who is Assistant Secretary for Near Eastern Affairs, is the first American diplomat of high rank to visit Egypt since Cairo broke diplomatic relations with the U.S. during the June, 1967 war. He will visit Jerusalem, Amman, Jordan and Beirut, Lebanon before going to Teheran. Diplomatic sources in the Middle East believe he would discuss during his tour recent signs of progress in the Big Four talks on the Middle East, and also some American concessions believed made in bilateral conversations with the Soviet Union. Mr. Sisco and Soviet Ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin resumed the bilateral talks in Washington last month.

Arabs Protest Israel's Existence; Label Belgin 'Criminal' And Recall Deir Yasin

NEW YORK, April 12 (JTA)--About 70 Arabs, protesting the existence of Israel and shouting "remember the massacre at Deir Yasin," demonstrated yesterday for an hour in front of the Israel Embassy. The group, calling itself the Committee for Arab-American Relations, chanted in Arabic and English and carried the pre-1948 Palestinian flag. Dr. M.H. Mehdli, an Arab propagandist who lead the protesters said the demonstration was to commemorate the "massacre" of 1948 in which a large number of Arabs were killed by rightwing Jewish terrorists. The incident was condemned by the Israeli government. Dr. Mehdli denounced Menachem Begin as a "criminal" for having participated in the incident. "Now Begin is a member of the Cabinet," Dr. Mehdli said. "This is similar to having Adolph Eichmann as a member of the German Cabinet." Mr. Begin is minister without portfolio and leader of the Herut faction. Another, unidentified Arab participant in the demonstrations asserted, "We are not against Judaism. We are against Zionism. Judaism is a religion and we respect that, but Zionism is a political movement which we oppose." Several members of the group held up a replica of an Israeli flag and cut out the star in the center as a symbolic gesture to indicate a "Palestine" without Jewish "domination."

Yeshiva University Students Protest Secularizing Curriculum; Official Denies Charge

NEW YORK, April 12 (JTA)--Ninety-one of Yeshiva University's 350 students staged an orderly demonstration at the school's main center this afternoon, charging the administration with seeking to secularize the curriculum. They massed for 90 to 120 minutes during a luncheon prior to ordination ceremonies, according to associate public relations director Bert Jacobson, who gave the JTA the figure of "exactly 91 people with picket signs." Mr. Jacobson said the proposed "separate charter" for the university's religious program could not be considered secularization. He said that students had met several times with university president Dr. Samuel Belkin at his home; and he commented that in his view the protesters represented a student fringe that had failed to join the majority understanding of the charter plan.

Israeli Produced Passenger-Cargo Plane On Maiden Voyage

TEL AVIV, April 12 (JTA)--Israel counted itself among the aircraft producing nations of the world as its first commercial airplane, a twin-engine turbo-prop passenger and cargo transport called the "Arava," took off on its maiden flight at Lydda Airport. The plane is manufactured locally by Israel Aircraft Industries.

Dr. Teller Charges Government Policy Designed To Turn Jews Away From Supporting Israel

DETROIT, April 12 (JTA)--Dr. Judd L. Teller, the Jewish historian and program coordinator of B'nai B'rith's International Council, charged here today that certain government officials were staging a campaign aimed at turning American Jews away from supporting Israel via "leaks to the press." This campaign, he said, resembled, in intention if not in intensity, the Kremlin intimidation of Soviet Jews. "Some," he said, referring to the unnamed government sources, "want the Jew to disappear through 'benign neglect,' or would use assimilitative pressures to achieve their purpose. Such 'benign neglect' included, during the Hitler period, callous disregard of appeals for the rescue of European Jewry." Dr. Teller, who addressed the closing session of a two-day B'nai B'rith community conference on the Mideast and Soviet Jewry, did not identify the government sources. Dr. William Korey, head of B'nai B'rith's United Nations offices, said the Soviet Union's Jewish policy "has raised the shadow of Statist anti-Semitism." Although begun as a means of showing the Arabs its solid opposition to Israel, it has "swiftly degenerated into an irrational anti-Semitic campaign into which have been pressed Jews high and low, proclaiming their undying loyalty with pathetic fulsomeness, signing outrageous libels against Israel and world Jewry." Dr. Korey declared. "But," he said, "they have no intention of submitting meekly any longer. Scores of them are boldly declaring to the Soviet authorities, and to the UN and the world, that they will not tolerate humiliation and that they demand the right to leave for Israel. No amount of propaganda and pressure is likely to undo such feeling."

Philadelphia Board Of Rabbis Supporting Anti-Vietnam War Fast And Work Strike

PHILADELPHIA, April 12 (JTA)--The Philadelphia Board of Rabbis has declared its support of the nationwide anti-Vietnam war fast and work strike scheduled for Wednesday. The executive committee's statement, sent to board members and to the Moratorium Committee, was signed by Rabbi Elias Charry, board president, and Rabbi Harold B. Weintrap, chairman of the Religious and Social Action Committee. They expressed their "horror at the loss of lives, both military and civilian, still going on in Vietnam and threatening to spread to other countries in Southeast Asia." The war, they said, "has made it impossible for our country to cope with (its) many unmet domestic needs." They endorsed the City Council resolution calling on President Nixon and the Congress to "act immediately to end the tragic waste of American lives and resources in Vietnam." The statement said the rabbis supported the fast "as a means of bringing to the attention of the administration our dissatisfaction" with its "slow pace" of Vietnam withdrawal and its appropriation for warfare of "so many billions of dollars" that could otherwise be used for social needs.

N.Y. Telephone Co. Ends Policy Of Not Hiring Sabbath Observers

NEW YORK, April 12 (JTA)--The New York Telephone Co. has dropped a long-standing policy of refusing to hire computer programmers who are Sabbath observers, following several months of negotiations with the National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs. Julius Berman, COLPA president, reported. The test case involved a Brooklyn Jew who applied for examination for such a post and was rejected. Mr. Berman said the applicant was told specifically that the firm did not hire Sabbath observers for such jobs because their religious requirements could create complications in the company's computer operations. He said COLPA decided to seek an agreement on hiring such applicants, rather than by filing a formal complaint. Edward Rhine, an attorney and COLPA vice-president, prepared and sent a letter to the company president, protesting the no-hiring policy. The COLPA official then began a series of discussions which led to a company decision to drop the ban. The agreement was confirmed in a letter from James T. Morris, assistant vice-president to COLPA.

AJCongress Announces Support Of Congressional Efforts To Restructure Welfare System

NEW YORK, April 12 (JTA)--The American Jewish Congress announced today its support of efforts in the Senate and House to restructure the welfare system but warned that reform must be accompanied by other measures to assure every American "a decent standard of living and a fair opportunity to share in the abundance of this nation." In a resolution adopted at a meeting of its Governing Council, the Congress praised the Nixon Administration's Family Assistance Bill as "a serious attempt to cope with some of the inadequacies of the present welfare system, which is often punitive and degrading as well as ineffective." However, the resolution stated, the administration bill "falls substantially short of what can be regarded today as a satisfactory plan for welfare." In addition, the resolution stated, other measures must be taken to include: "Strengthened programs of social security, unemployment, hospital and health insurance; higher federal minimum wage standards; and more vigorous efforts to root out discrimination in employment, education and housing." The AJCongress statement said the organization's concern for welfare reform was based on "the social and religious tradition of the Jewish people."

N.J. Superior Court Hears, For First Time, Arguments On Church-State Separation

TRENTON, N.J., April 12 (JTA)--New Jersey Superior Court for Mercer County set a precedent when it entertained arguments last Friday on public aid to private schools. Leo Pfeiffer, special counsel of the American Jewish Congress, said that the proposed aid for construction at private institutions "would make a mockery of the First Amendment if its prohibition could be evaded by 'earmarking' state grants to specific parts of a sectarian school." He added: "Money granted to a college advances its purpose, no matter how the money is entered by accountants on its books." Mr. Pfeiffer represents four New Jersey members of the AJCongress in the case of Clayton v. Karvick, begun in 1967. "The crux of the matter," the attorney contended, "is that the buildings, like the furnace in the church, are not ends in themselves but means to an end, and any financial grant that aids the means advances the ends. The end of a church college, like the end of a church, is to advance religion; else why have church colleges?" Continuing, Mr. Pfeiffer observed: "The money granted to them goes into their general treasuries; the dollars in those treasuries...cannot be distinguished from each other. What moneys the colleges get from New Jersey free them to spend other moneys on other functions, including religious instruction."