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Three Soviet Jewish Families, Including Yasha Kazakov's Family, Given Exit Visas

JERUSALEM, Feb. 9 (JTA)--Soviet authorities have granted exit visas to two Jewish families in Moscow and have ordered them out of the country within 11 days, Kol Israel radio reported today. The report was based on a telephone conversation an Israeli friend had with David Drabkin, a well known Zionist activist. Drabkin told the friend that his family and the family of Yasha Kazakov had received orders to leave Russia. (Authoritative Jewish sources in New York confirmed the report to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. They added that another Jewish family, that of Vadim Borshtshavsky, also has been let go.) Kazakov, a youth in his early 20s, was permitted to emigrate more than a year ago and has been agitating ever since for the release of the rest of his family. He came to the United States last winter and staged an eight-day hunger strike at the Isalah Wall near United Nations headquarters to dramatize the alleged plight of his family. Young Kazakov is presently serving in the Israeli Army. Drabkin, 43, an electronics expert, has reportedly been the victim of threatening letters by opponents of Soviet Jewish agitation for emigration rights.

The name of the Israeli friend who received the information from Drabkin was withheld by Kol Israel. The radio station which is government-owned but operates independently, has itself placed calls to Jews in Russia in recent weeks in attempts to elicit information on the trials of Jews said to be pending in Leningrad, Riga and Kishinev. Kol Israel reports that a total had begun in Riga last month proved false. The expected arrivals in Israel shortly of the Drabkin and Kazakov families has prompted authorities to seek employment for them. The Israel Manufacturers Association announced today that it was appointing a special committee to place Russian Jewish emigres in suitable jobs. Vitaly Svichinsky, an architect who arrived in Israel from Moscow with his family a week ago, has reportedly been offered a position with the engineering department of the Kfar Onno municipal council. Another well known Soviet-Jewish activist, Boris Tsukerman, arrived in Israel with his wife and two children on Jan. 25. Tsukerman is a scientist. It is not known whether he has obtained work in Israel. Mark Moshevit, chairman of the Manufacturers Association, said last night that the absorption of Soviet Jews into the Israeli economy would not pose a serious problem because most of them were professionals or highly skilled workers.

Security Precautions At London Airports After Terrorists Threaten More Hijackings

LONDON, Feb. 9 (JTA)--Security precautions at London airports have been tightened following warnings by West Germany that Arab terrorists were planning to attempt additional airline hijackings. The security chief of the various airlines were scheduled to meet today at the headquarters here of the British Overseas Airways Corporation (BOAC) to discuss steps against such attempts. West German airports were alerted yesterday to terrorist threats to attack German planes because of Bonn's ties with Israel. (In Beirut, Lebanon, today, a spokesman for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which engineered four hijackings last September, denied that the PFLP has sent men to Europe on hijacking or sabotage missions. In Bonn, however, Western airline companies have received leaflets from the PFLP warning them that next time the guerrillas will use gas released from whiskey bottles to foil attempts to subdue them. In addition, it is learned, the West German police are aware of the presence in their country of four Arab guerrillas and have forwarded their passport numbers to London.)

Door Left Open For Further Study Of Sadat Plan, But No Withdrawal Before Peace Accord

JERUSALEM, Feb. 9 (JTA)--Premier Golda Meir left the door open today to further examination of Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's proposal to reopen the Suez Canal. But she made it clear that Israel will not withdraw its forces from the waterway before a firm peace settlement is achieved. In a major political address to the Knesset, Mrs. Meir said "Our position has not changed. We view with favor the reopening of the Canal to free navigation and will favorably discuss proposals aimed at restoring civilian life in this area to normalcy and to effect a mutual de-escalation of the military build-up." But she added, "to me it seems strange to propose the withdrawal of our forces from the Canal outside the framework of agreed arrangements for the absolute termination of the war." She said that President Sadat's proposal "in its present version" was "obscure" and "simply not clear. The essence is missing." She indicated however, the Israel was prepared to explore it and all other outstanding issues with Egypt. "Direct face-to-face contact between us would make it easier to examine every proposal on Egypt's part or on Israel's part with the purpose of achieving unequivocal agreements on all provisions, including the conditions and times for the implementation of the agreements," Mrs. Meir said. By late this afternoon an acrimonious debate was still going on in the Knesset over Mrs. Meir's statement. Menachem Beigin, leader of the opposition Gahal faction, called Sadat's proposal an "ultimatum" and demanded that Israel reply to it with "an absolute rejection."

Diplomatic observers in Jerusalem had the impression tonight that Premier Meir was keeping the Sadat proposal alive but that its fate hinged on what meaning Israel would place on it. Sources said the offer was doomed if Egypt insisted on a total Israeli withdrawal from certain areas. On the other hand, if Sadat has in mind a mutual reduction of forces along the waterway, even on a large scale, he would have a talking point with Israel, the sources said. Mrs. Meir claimed that Sadat's proposal, as he presented it to the Egyptian National Assembly last Thursday, tried to achieve a strategic advantage without making any actual progress toward peace. "I do not propose to detail at this time the serious questions which the President of Egypt has left obscure," the Premier said. "In return for the withdrawal of Israel's defense forces, Egypt does not promise to implement the main clause of the Security Council's Resolution (242) which is the achievement of a peace agreement between the

parties and of secure and agreed borders," she said. Mrs. Meir continued, "The sole return that is offered us is to begin at once with the clearing of the Canal and its reopening for navigation--this too without making it clear that navigation will be free and that within the framework of the service that is to be rendered to the world economy, Israel's right to free navigation in the Canal would also be honored." She emphasized, "I must make it unequivocally clear that Israel is wholeheartedly prepared to lend its support to the opening of the Canal to free international shipping for all states, including Israel. It is not we who are responsible for blocking the canal."

Premier Rejects Arab Charge That Israel Is Trying To Evade Discussion Of Issues

Mrs. Meir criticized Sadat for the "threat imposed" by his acceptance of a 30-day extension of the cease-fire. She said that was tantamount to announcing a date for the resumption of hostilities. "It is too short a period for us to be complacent," she said, adding that "Our strength grows and continues to grow and if war should be forced upon us we will face it and we will win." Mrs. Meir noted with satisfaction that the United States government did not lend its hand to attempts to place difficulties in the way of the Jarring talks by discussions of substitutes for a peace settlement or by trying to saddle Jarring with instructions. But she said Israel had "serious concern" about Washington's recent expression of readiness to discuss Big Power guarantees of a future Mideast peace settlement. She said Israel felt this way even though the U.S. had stressed that it did not view guarantees as a substitute for a peace settlement. She urged the U.S. government not to lend its support to "any steps that might be abused for evading peace." Mrs. Meir rejected charges by the Arab states that Israel was trying to evade discussion of outstanding issues between them. She claimed that the opposite was true, that it was the Arabs who failed to present Jarring with direct answers to Israeli proposals. She said Arab spokesmen always referred in very general terms to peace for the entire region, an expression that would seem to exclude Israel from the ranks of those nations to which regional peace should apply.

Belgin contended that "the reopening of the Suez Canal would serve the imperialist purpose of the Soviet Union" by shortening the voyage of Soviet warships from Odessa to the Far East by 16 days. Chaim Zadok, of the Labor Party, said Israel could not withdraw without peace, but discussions should be continued. Itzhak Raphael, of the National Religious Party, thought the Sadat proposal had put an end to the Jarring talks, but that under the circumstances the talks were the only thing left. Meir Yaari, chairman of Mapam, said he favored a controlled thinning out of forces on both sides of the Canal. He said Israel should state clearly what its minimum demand was. Shlomo Lorintz, of the Agudat Israel, thought Israel should continue to negotiate even if no peace was in sight. Gideon Hausner, of the Independent Liberals, urged the government to reject any foreign guarantees. Yigal Horowitz, of the State List, said his party would support the government's policy. Labor MK Moshe Carmel warned that Israel must not be tempted to withdraw because her security would be jeopardized. Meir Wilner, of the pro-Moscow Kachon Communists charged that Israel's refusal to withdraw was a result of Jerusalem serving American interests. Mordechai Surkiss, of the Labor Party, wanted the government to reject Sadat's proposal out of hand. Sheikh Jaber Maudi, a Druze MK, expressed regret that Sadat's speech hadn't contained a single reference to peace.

Knesset Endorses Government Decision To Ban Commercial TV For Time Being

JERUSALEM, Feb. 9 (JTA)--The Knesset last night endorsed a government decision not to permit commercial television in Israel for the time being. All coalition parties except the Independent Liberals, voted for the ban but rejected attempts to make it permanent. The main government objection to advertising on Israel's nationally-owned television service is that it would stimulate private consumption at a time when the government is trying to hold the line against inflation. The coalition was supported by the opposition Gahal faction. The latter made it clear however that it was going along with the ban "only for the time being and in given circumstances." The Agudat Israel and Poalei Agudat Israel also voted with the government and tried unsuccessfully to have the ban made permanent. The Knesset rejected a motion by the Free Centre faction favoring commercial television and the establishment of private tv outlets. Yigal Allon, Deputy Premier and Minister of Education, said he would seek an additional budgetary allocation to establish a second television channel to be devoted exclusively to education, culture and art. Allon was one of the few members of the government known to have favored advertising on tv when the matter was before the Cabinet a week ago.

Five Labor MPs Protest Mobil Co. Discrimination Against Israeli, Jewish Products

LONDON, Feb. 9 (JTA)--Five Labor MPs protested to the Race Relations Board today that the Mobil Shipping Co. was discriminating against Israeli and Jewish products. The five cited a letter which the tanker operator, a British subsidiary of the Mobil Oil Co., sent to British ship chandlers asking them not to stock products of Israeli or Jewish origin aboard Mobil tankers calling at Arab ports. The protest was signed by Clinton Davis, Peter Archer, Dick Leonard, Ronald Murray and Maurice Orbach. They claimed that the letter was a violation of the race relations act.

West Bank Arabs, Palestinians Meet Secretly To Discuss Future Of Territory

JERUSALEM, Feb. 9 (JTA)--A number of prominent West Bank Arabs have been meeting secretly in Beirut with a similar number of Palestinians from Jordan to discuss the future of their territory and the possible establishment of a new entity independent of the Hussein regime in Jordan. Israeli authorities were aware of the meeting in advance but took no steps to prevent the West Bankers from leaving for Beirut, via Cyprus, ostensibly to settle "family affairs," the Jewish Telegraphic Agency learned today. Israeli authorities on the West Bank prohibit political activities, especially any that might be directed against King Hussein, but they do not consider themselves obliged to interfere in anti-Hussein activities on foreign soil. Sources said the meeting could not be held in Jordan for obvious reasons, although the participants include two former Jordanian Cabinet ministers, Dr. Kadri Tukan and Rashid el Nimr, both now residents of the West Bank. Jordanian authorities permit no activities calculated to strengthen Palestinian elements within the Jordanian population.

Federal Government Charged With Failure To Assist Rigmans in Securing Exit Visas

NEW YORK, Feb. 9 (JTA)--The attorney for Leonid Rigerman and his mother has charged the federal government with "failure to assist these two Americans in securing exit permits from the Soviet Union for the purpose of returning to the United States." Daniel Greer, whose formal title is First Deputy Commissioner for Ports and Terminals, wrote to Secretary of State William P. Rogers in Washington yesterday to protest that the U.S. has done nothing to effect the Rigmans' departure from the USSR since granting Leonid Rigerman U.S. citizenship last Dec. 19--53 days ago. Rigerman, a computer programmer, and his mother, Mrs. Esther Rigerman, had sought American citizenship for him on the ground that she was born in the U.S. Greer charged that during a two-hour meeting in Washington Jan. 6 between Martin J. Hillenbrand, Assistant Secretary for European Affairs, and Soviet Ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin, "at no point was the plight of the Rigmans raised" by Hillenbrand. Greer noted that since Dec. 19 State Department officials had "repeatedly assured" him and Congressional leaders that action was being taken to effect the Rigmans' exit.

"To date," Greer asserted, "our government has failed to discuss the Rigerman matter with the Soviet authorities at a high level." He said the Rigmans' safety in the Soviet Union was in jeopardy and demanded that their case be given top priority at the upcoming meeting in Moscow between U.S. Ambassador Jacob D. Beam and Deputy Foreign Minister Vasily V. Kuznetsov. The Jewish Telegraphic Agency has for several weeks sought comment from the State Department on progress in the Rigerman case. A high Department source confirmed today that Hillenbrand indeed did not raise the matter with Dobrynin in their Jan. 6 meeting, on the ground that "it is all handled in Moscow." The source said the Department would follow up on the case, but he would not indicate how or when. He remarked, though, that he was "not optimistic" about the Rigmans' chances of emigration, despite their official U.S. citizenship.

Mrs. Meir Considering Retiring Before End Of Term; Plans To Designate Sapir As Successor

JERUSALEM, Feb. 9 (JTA)--Premier Golda Meir is considering retirement before her term of office is up in 1973 and plans to designate Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir as her successor, according to persistent rumors current in Jerusalem. Mrs. Meir is 73. Sapir, 64, was born in Poland and settled in Palestine in 1929. Should he succeed her, the reins of power in Israel would continue to be held by the old generation of Labor Zionists from Eastern Europe. According to the rumors, Israel's popular Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, has agreed privately to continue to serve in a government headed by Sapir. If this report is correct, Dayan, a 56-year-old native-born Israeli, may have put aside his own ambitions to succeed to the Premiership. According to public opinion polls taken in recent years, Dayan is the first choice of most Israelis to become Prime Minister.

The reports that Mrs. Meir plans an early retirement stem from indications that she is increasingly fatigued by the burdens of office, although her health is said to have improved since she took office in 1969. According to the reports, her decision will be determined by the progress of the Jarring peace talks. If there appears to be a danger of a new war, she will serve out her term. But she would prefer to retire and pass her mantle on to Sapir so that he can gain experience as Premier before the next national elections. Sapir has been assiduously cultivating all sections of the Labor Party and is said to have achieved an unassailable position of influence and power with the Party leadership. However, some sources express doubt that he could lead the Party to an electoral victory in 1973 unless he had some prior experience as Premier.

Orthodox Jewish Leaders Criticize Rockefeller's Parent-Aid Bill View

NEW YORK, Feb. 9 (JTA)--Orthodox leaders criticized Gov. Nelson A. Rockefeller today for declaring his opposition yesterday to the Speno-Lerner Parent-Aid bill, which would provide indirect support of private schools. Rabbi Moses Sherer, executive president of Agudath Israel, declared that the bill "is a necessity if the non-public schools in New York State are to continue fulfilling their educational responsibilities in providing a large segment of the state's student population with quality secular education." Rabbi Bernard Goldenberg, director of school organization for Torah Umesorah, said: "We support the Speno-Lerner bill. We think it's constitutional both in terms of the First Amendment and the New York State Constitution, inasmuch as aid is given directly to the parent and is geared to the income of the parent. We feel Gov. Rockefeller's position in a sense is a copout on his promises to the Hebrew dayschool movement." In opposing Speno-Lerner at a press conference in Albany yesterday, Rockefeller said it would mark "the first step to undermine, if not destroy, the public school system of our country, not just the state." He added that such a bill would be "copied" by Southern states and would represent "the end of the whole movement to integrate the public schools of our country."

But Rockefeller reiterated his support for repeal of the so-called Blaine Amendment, which bars aid to private schools. A spokesman for the Governor declined to clarify his seeming inconsistency, preferring to let Rockefeller's statements stand by themselves. Rabbi Sherer offered his belief that Rockefeller "is confusing the issue by joining the Blaine Amendment repeal controversy with the Speno-Lerner Parent-Aid bill, because the Parent-Aid bill is a method of helping the non-public schools now without violating the Blaine Amendment." The Orthodox leader added that "it is therefore unfortunate that he persists in working for repeal of the Blaine Amendment when those whom he claims he is trying to help have been telling him that his efforts could only have the opposite effect." Rabbi Sherer said he would go to Albany to explain to legislative leaders "why the Parent-Aid bill is a necessity." Rabbi Goldenberg observed that Torah Umesorah's basic position is "that the only concern of the state in terms of education should be the need of the child, rather than his creed, and that the state's responsibility is to deal with the children's education, rather than with the type of school building he attends." The state, he added, "cannot tell the child what to think but should teach the child how to think."

Shaaray Tefila Dismisses Rabbi On Charges Of Unfitness; Rabbi Denies Charges

NEW YORK, Feb. 9 (JTA)--The board of trustees of Shaaray Tefila, one of the largest Reform congregations in the United States has dismissed Rabbi Philip Schechter on charges of unfitness to serve as a rabbi. Rabbi Schechter told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that he had been dismissed because he had tried to modernize procedures of the synagogue, including introduction of experimental services, which had evoked opposition among some "powerful members" of the board. Frederick Block, president of the board, told the JTA today that Rabbi Schechter was still spiritual leader of the congregation but that, in view of the controversy, he had proposed and the board had agreed to give Rabbi Schechter a paid leave of absence until the end of his contractual year in June. He had been hired last July. Rabbi Schechter has refused to bring the matter to public attention on his own initiative but he did agree to discuss the matter with the JTA at the request of the news agency. He said he had been informed by Block that the board had rejected a 3-2 recommendation of a special five-man committee, appointed by Block, that Rabbi Schechter be retained and voted for his immediate ouster on Jan. 31.

According to Rabbi Schechter's account, three members of the board brought eight pages of charges against him, including complaints that he was a "hippie," that he did not wear proper garb as an officiating rabbi and that he introduced innovations they felt were not proper for the 125-year-old synagogue. Under both the state Religious Corporation law and the congregational by-laws, a rabbi cannot be dismissed without a congregational hearing. Rabbi Schechter told the JTA he asked for a congregational hearing which was refused him. However, he said, when word leaked to the congregation about his Jan. 31 ouster, congregants began collecting signatures for a petition for a congregational meeting and that many more than the minimum 20 names were collected. Rabbi Schechter said the congregational meeting will be held on Feb. 16. The basic statement made by Rabbi Schechter to the JTA was confirmed by Block who added that he named the five-man special committee because Rabbi Schechter had become a "controversial figure" and the center of a dispute which he felt was bad for the synagogue. After the board voted not to retain Rabbi Schechter, Block said he made the proposal for a leave of absence, in the hope that the situation would calm down.

Dismissed Rabbi Charges He Was Never Given Chance To Defend Himself Against Charges

Rabbi Schechter said that at no time during any of the hearings preceding his dismissal was he asked to participate so that he could defend himself against the charges. Rabbi Schechter does not have a written contract, at his own choice. He said he had come to the congregation from a pulpit in Atlantic City with the stated assignment of "modernizing" the congregation and that he had been consistently opposed by certain members, both on the board and outside of it. He said his foes on the board took the position that since he did not have a written contract, a clause in the state Religious Corporation law banning dismissal of a clergyman without a congregational hearing did not apply. He said the board meeting which voted not to extend his tenure was held in secret. However, word of his ouster became known and a group of confirmation class students and some of their parents picketed the synagogue at services last Friday, seeking signatures to protest the dismissal.

Block was asked whether an affirmative vote by the congregation at the Feb. 16 meeting would be followed by a reversal of the board's position. The board will meet on Feb. 17. Block said the situation was without precedent and that he did not know. He added that under congregation by-laws, authority to hire a rabbi rests with the board of trustees. Meanwhile, Rabbi Bernard Bamberger has been called out of retirement to serve during the interim period. Rabbi Schechter told the JTA he would return to Shaaray Tefila, if the congregational vote is favorable and if the board reverses itself, only on condition of a complete change in the "climate" of the congregation's procedures. He said the by-laws would have to be revised to eliminate secret hearings. He also said a policy of refusing use of the synagogue's community house to local service organizations was wrong and should be ended.

Youth 'Revolt' At RZA Conclave; Issues: Democratic Elections, Youth Representation

NEW YORK, Feb. 9 (JTA)--A "revolt of youth" occurred at the convention of the Religious Zionist Organization of America which closed Sunday at Long Beach, N.Y., the Jewish Telegraphic Agency learned today. About 60 youth delegates participated in what was essentially a conflict between the established leadership of the Mizrachi-Hapoel Hamizrachi movement and its younger elements over basic reforms. Benny Ben-David, a spokesman for Noar Mizrachi, the RZA youth organization, told the JTA that the main issue was democratization of election procedures and the way the convention was run. A flyer issued by the youth faction said it had "threatened to break up the convention because very few of the delegates had been duly elected according to their constitution." But the youngsters expressed satisfaction that they received 25 percent of the membership on convention committees. Ben-David told the JTA that at last year's convention, youth membership on committees was "negligible." In addition, two representatives of the youth element were elected national vice presidents.

Ben-David said another point at issue between the youth and the established leadership was the matter of priorities. The youngsters want more money for youth activities and Jewish education while the elders are concerned chiefly with raising money for Israel, Ben-David said. He said the youth revolt developed when the convention praesidium reneged on its alleged promise to allow Dov Sperling, a Russian Jewish emigre from Israel, to address the convention. Sperling, a firebrand who supports the tactics of the Jewish Defense League, is a controversial figure here and in Israel. Ben-David told the JTA that the praesidium agreed to let him speak but later backed down when the convention's main speaker, Israel's Orthodox Minister of Interior, Josef Burg, refused to appear on the same platform with Sperling. Ben-David said his group was confident that youth would exert greater influence at next year's convention.