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State Department Refuses To Endorse Bills For Visas For Soviet Jews

WASHINGTON, Aug. 18 (JTA)--The State Department has refused to endorse the bills in both branches of Congress to provide 30,000 emergency visas for Jewish citizens of the Soviet Union who wish to leave that country and settle in the United States, it was disclosed here today. The State Department claims that the U.S. Attorney General has the authority to admit "a substantial number of Soviet Jews" and "there is therefore little technical need" for the proposed legislation. The Department's position was revealed in a letter to Rep. Emanuel Celler, Democrat of New York and chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, whose office made it public. The Congressman, who is traveling in Europe, was informed about it yesterday in Oslo.

David M. Abshire, Assistant Secretary of State for Congressional Relations, signed the Department's letter to Celler. While "deeply sympathetic to the humanitarian aims of the proposed legislation," Abshire said, the Attorney General has acted in a number of emergency refugee situations to take refugees into the U.S. when "existing machinery and visa and conditional-entry numbers were insufficient to meet the demand." Abshire elaborated: "This means was used to assist large numbers of Hungarian refugees after the 1956 uprising in Hungary, and is presently being used for large numbers of Cuban refugees. You may be certain that in a similar situation the Department would strongly support the use of parole by the Attorney General for a substantial number of Soviet Jews." With Congress in recess until Sept. 1, leading advocates of the emergency visa bills were not immediately available for comment. A spokesman for Rep. Edward I. Koch, Democrat of New York and sponsor of the House bill, described the Abshire letter as "not satisfactory." The spokesman pointed out that Abshire did not, for example, write that the Secretary of State has recommended to the Attorney General "that the means for emigration be made available, which would, in effect, say to the Jews of the Soviet Union: 'You are welcome to come to the United States.'"

One hundred and twenty Representatives have co-sponsored the visa measure introduced by Koch on March 4. Thirty-four Senators support the upper house version. The Jewish leadership in the U.S. has split on the issue. Such leaders as Rabbi Bernard A. Poupko, president of the Religious Zionists of America, and Rabbi Abraham Gross, president of the Rabbinical Alliance, have argued for the legislation. Herman L. Weisman, president of the Zionist Organization of America, has asserted that "at the present time it is neither realistic nor productive to support unproven propositions which serve only to divert attention from the basic issue--aliya (to Israel) for Soviet Jewry." Political observers here believe that the State Department's opposition to the visa bills, as well as to the proposal for Yiddish and Hebrew broadcasts into Russia on the Voice of America, is based on a desire not to offend the Kremlin during this period of delicate negotiations on various international issues.

Charge Made City Welfare Dep't, Paves Way For Block-Busting Jewish Sections

NEW YORK, Aug. 18 (JTA)--The Association of Jewish Anti-Poverty Workers charged today that the city's Welfare Department has leased homes in the heart of Jewish neighborhoods "and dumped multiple fatherless families into those houses," thus allegedly paving the way for block-busting in the Jewish sections. Elly Rosen, Association executive director, said the alleged dumping practices by Jules Sugarman, head of the Human Resources Administration and who is also Commissioner of Social Services, was unfair both to the Jewish communities and to the welfare families who "are greeted with anger in those communities because the residents know that in their wake comes the block-buster." He noted that Mrs. Eleanor Holmes Norton, the city Human Rights Commissioner, recently directed hearings on block-busting in the Jewish sections of Laurelton and Rockaway in Queens, and in East Flatbush in Brooklyn. Block-busting is a practice of unscrupulous realtors who sell a home on a white block to a Black family and then offer to buy homes from the other white families on the block at deflated prices caused by the panic the realtors seek to create. The realtors then sell the homes to Black families at inflated prices.

Noting that Mrs. Holmes had deplored the practice and promised to do everything possible to curb it, Rosen said: "I suggest that the good commissioner start her work right within her own administration and order fellow-commissioner Jules Sugarman to cease and desist from destroying our neighborhoods by this nefarious practice." He charged also that city housing authorities lease or purchase such homes in Jewish neighborhoods and make them available to the Welfare Department. He asserted that the welfare department places families "in these homes they would not admit into city housing projects." Rosen said Jewish neighborhoods were the easiest to bust, "because 'unlike other communities, Jewish communities do not protect their rights with guns and cross burnings.'" He said the Association would seek legislation when the New York Legislature convenes in the fall "to stop city government agencies from undermining stable neighborhoods by the practice of dumping welfare clients." He said he had sent a letter to Sugarman, asking for a meeting to discuss the block-busting and other matters affecting Jews in New York City. Sugarman, currently on vacation, was not available for comment. Sugarman's office declined comment on the charge.

Sapir: No Plans To Devalue Pound; Fear Of Devaluation Spurs Sales

JERUSALEM, Aug. 18 (JTA)--Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir said last night he did not plan to propose any devaluation of the pound in the wake of President Nixon's wide-ranging changes in United States fiscal and trade policies. He made the statement to the Ministerial Committee on Economics. But some sources reported that a definite decision on devaluation would be taken at a later date, possibly in a few weeks, after the impact of the Nixon economic moves on world monetary markets could be more accurately assessed. In the meantime, foreign currency transactions were restricted to dollars for the third day. Uncertainty over the future of the Israeli pound caused a jump yesterday in the ratio of the dollar in the free market to more than four pounds as against the three-and-a-half pound

official rate. But by this morning, the dollar had dropped and was trading at just under four pounds. But fears of devaluation spurred purchases of securities on the Tel Aviv stock exchange and a rush to buy such appliances as refrigerators and washing machines by Israelis seeking to protect the value of their pounds. However, merchants said that delivery of such purchases would be in accordance with new pound rates if any changes took place before delivery. Officials stressed that while such buying was heavier than normal, it did not reach anything resembling panic buying. An emergency meeting on the effects of the Nixon measures was held today at the Export Institution offices in Tel Aviv. Speakers observed that it will be the exporters who will have to absorb the bulk of the increase in customs duties.

Sharaf Says Mobile Homes Not Answer To Israel's Housing Problems

JERUSALEM, Aug. 18 (JTA)--American-style factory-built homes are not the answer to Israel's housing problem, according to Housing Minister Zeev Sharaf. Such mobile homes would pose a number of problems, he told newsmen following his return from an inspection of housing innovations in the United States. The problems, according to Sharaf, are that wood, which is important in American-made homes, would have to be imported by Israel; the country does not have the space for such homes; Israel's roads are not sufficient for trucks hauling mobile homes by trailer; and the idea of mobile homes is based on the principle of a car for every housewife, and two-car families are the exception in Israel.

But Sharaf agreed that Israel has something to learn from the U.S. in the field of housing. "We need to learn thorough planning, construction, scheduling and performance control from America, three fields in which we are very weak," he said. "None of the architectural or engineering facilities here teach scheduling or execution," he added. One of the American innovations Israel could adopt, he said, is the modular system--entire kitchen and bathroom units that are brought ready-made to the building site. "My hosts in America did everything to make my visit as profitable as possible," Sharaf noted, "and they showed great eagerness to help Israel."

Agronomist Says Urban Problems' Solution is Middle-Sized Towns

TEL AVIV, Aug. 18 (JTA)--Dr. Raanan Weitz, the Israeli agronomist, suggested yesterday that urban problems could be solved by the creation of a series of middle-sized towns. Dr. Weitz, head of the Land Settlement Department of the Jewish Agency and former chairman of the Institute of Agriculture, spoke at the sixth conference on urbanization, being held in Rehovot. Other speakers expressed fear that his plan would give rise to monolithic groups and hence ethnic clashes. French scientist Jean Canaux suggested a series of small centers, one kilometer (six-tenths of a mile) wide, to be connected by roads and open spaces. Prof. Robert C. Weaver of the Bernard M. Baruch College of New York University, who was Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in the Johnson administration, proposed that "bucks, brains and bodies" be used to "eliminate the evils" in cities.

Predict Golan Heights Population Will Reach 15-20,000 Israelis in 7 Years

TEL AVIV, Aug. 18 (JTA)--A Jewish Agency settlement official said here today that within the next seven years, the population of the occupied Golan Heights was expected to reach to between 15,000 and 20,000 Israelis. The forecast was made by Meir Shamir, the outgoing director of the Jewish Agency's Hill Settlement Department, who also reported that five more settlements would be established in the area in the next two years. Speaking at a farewell party in his honor; he also reported that all settlers in the existing 13 settlements in the Heights will be housed in permanent housing. He has been named to direct the Jewish National Fund development department. He will be succeeded at the Jewish Agency post by Yaacov Arad.

Orthodox Jews Demonstrate in Protest Against Autopsies

JERUSALEM, Aug. 18 (JTA)--Several thousand Orthodox Jews demonstrated this afternoon in protest against autopsies. Speakers asked for a change in the law which permits post mortem examinations. They said man should be left to die and rest in peace with his body in the shape in which he had lived. The demonstration had a police permit and took place without incident although the police did have to prevent members of the League Against Religious Coercion from interfering with it. Yesterday, 17 doctors at the Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Center in Jerusalem issued a statement defending the performance of autopsies by pathologists as a service "vital to us" because it helps "establish diagnoses of patients' illnesses" and thereby aids in future treatment.

Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra Concert Proceeds For East Pakistan Children

TEL AVIV, Aug. 18 (JTA)--At the suggestion of Zubin Mehta, the India-born conductor and director of the Israeli Philharmonic Orchestra, the orchestra will give a concert Saturday night for refugee children among the East Pakistan families who have fled from their country after the military crackdown by the West Pakistan Army. Proceeds of the concert will be made available for such aid through UNICEF, the children's fund of the United Nations.

Eban To Avoid Paris Unless He Receives Official Invitation

PARIS, Aug. 18 (JTA)--Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban will spend several days in France in October, but according to current plans will carefully avoid this capital city. On Oct. 4, Eban is scheduled to address the Council of Europe Meeting in Strasbourg during its general debate on the Middle East. The Council serves as a sort of European Parliament with an advisory voice. Eban will probably drive straight to Strasbourg from Basel, Switzerland. These plans, Israeli circles here explain, could be changed if the French government decided to use the opportunity of Eban's visit to invite him here for a meeting with his French counterpart, Maurice Schumann. It is generally believed here that should such an invitation be extended, Eban will switch his route and come to Paris. Schumann has said he will meet Eban at the airport anytime, but Israel insists on an official invitation. Schumann is the only Foreign Minister of a major European country not to have yet issued such an invitation. Meanwhile, a Knesset delegation led by Speaker Reuven Barkat is due here Aug. 30 to attend the Interparliamentary conference scheduled for Sept. 4-9. Political circles here expect the Israeli group to take advantage of its stay to expand contacts with French colleagues.

Eban: Israel Ready To Reach Accord With Egypt On Canal Reopening

JERUSALEM, Aug. 18 (JTA)--The question of reopening the Suez Canal is deadlocked, but the gerles of Egyptian "deadlines" are probably intended to serve political purposes and the cease-fire will continue, Foreign Minister Abba Eban told foreign journalists here this morning. Israel, he continued, has been and is ready to reach an agreement without prejudice to the security of either side, but the United States apparently believes it is possible only if Israel is prepared to make or accept proposals fully in Egypt's favor. But the Egyptians, Eban said, have found the cease-fire--one year and 10 days old today--to their own benefit too, and they know that a resumption of shooting is not in their interest either militarily or internationally. Therefore, Eban concluded, Egyptian political activity, but not military activity, should be expected in the coming weeks, despite President Anwar Sadat's threats that there must be war if Israel has not agreed by year's end to vacate all the occupied territories. Replying to questions, Eban said there has been continuous contact with the accredited leaders of the Palestinian Arabs. But he added that those leaders, not wanting any such contact, have referred the Israelis to the Jordanian and other Arab governments.

The Foreign Minister criticized France by implication in declaring that there is no difference between selling arms to Egypt and selling them to Libya, and that if an embargo is imposed on the sale of arms to other countries it should apply to all countries. France has been selling arms to Libya, which has agreed to a federation with Egypt and Syria, but France has denied Israel 50 Mirage jets that Jerusalem has already paid for. French arms sales to Libya, Eban charged, encourages Arab extremists. Referring to reported Arab plans to isolate Israel and the United States in the United Nations General Assembly, Eban stressed Israel's attempt to establish her own network of diplomatic contacts. Regarding the invitation by the Soviet Committee for Peace to six Israelis to visit the USSR for two weeks, Eban said it would have been better if those invited represented a wider range of political opinion. He noted that no representative of the anti-Moscow Maki Communists was on the guest list.

The invitation, which is seen here as a Soviet attempt to sound out the possibility of a resumption of Soviet-Israeli relations, was reportedly sparked by the recent visit to Moscow of Meir Wilner, a Knesset member representing the pro-Kremlin Rakach Communists. In July the Soviet journalist Victor Louis, who is believed to be a political agent for the Soviet government, made an unannounced visit to Israel. Also in July, chairman Moshe Sneh of Maki disclosed that Soviet diplomats had approached two Maki members to discuss a possible resumption of relations. While there is no Rakach member among the six Israelis invited, there is no Maki member to balance out Wilner's earlier visit. The six invitees are all vocal opponents of the Meir government. Eban said today he hoped they would have the intellectual courage to inform their Russian hosts of the major political views in Israel, even if they do not endorse them. (In Paris, all of the French press commented today--if without emphasis--on the invitation. The conservative Le Figaro said that local observers in Israel called it an example of "new trends of thought" in the USSR, and more of an edging away from the Arab cause--as a result of recent developments in the Sudan and elsewhere--than an openly pro-Israel step.)

Rabin Says He Disagrees With Reports Sisco's Mission Was A Failure

NEW YORK, Aug. 18 (JTA)--Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's ambassador to the United States, told more than 100 Jewish leaders yesterday that he disagreed with press reports calling State Department official Joseph J. Sisco's recent mission to Israel a failure. An interim agreement to reopen the Suez Canal is still possible, and in fact is more likely than an over-all settlement, Rabin advised leaders of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. The transition from war to peace, Rabin observed, was not an act but a process, not a question of signatures on documents but of relations among human beings. Egypt, he said, must therefore demonstrate to a greater degree her professed desire for peace with Israel. Rabin received enthusiastic applause for his more-than-hour-long speech.

Methodist Council Leader Assails Anti-Semitism As Un-Christian

DENVER, Aug. 18 (JTA)--The president of the World Methodist Council asserted today that "anti-Semitism and violence have no place in the Christian program." Dr. Charles C. Parlin, head of the Council since last August, reminded the 3,000 delegates to the Council's convention that "the Church had its beginnings among a subjected people (the Jews) living under an army of occupation (the Romans)." Condemning the actions of Methodist youths who have disrupted services, Dr. Parlin charged that their so-called "Christian motivation" has "caused physical violence." As head of the World Methodist Council, representing nearly 40 million Methodists in 87 countries, Dr. Parlin is the leading spokesman for that religion. The Council, which holds its conventions every five years, is meeting at the University of Denver. Dr. Parlin's remarks were scheduled for delivery tonight.

Convention Of Jewish Group Expresses Solidarity With Israel's Peace Aims

SAO PAULO, Aug. 18 (JTA)--The Latin American Jewish Communities' Southern Region convention adopted a resolution at its closing session declaring abiding solidarity with Israel's fight for existence as a free and independent sovereign State. The resolution expresses the unanimous wish of the 120 delegates from seven countries represented at the conference for Israel's success in her "unflinching effort to achieve peace in the Middle East and for the development of harmony among all peoples of that region." The resolution also stated that Israel, and Jerusalem as the capital, remains the spiritual center of all the Jewish people.

Crippled Children Get At Better Deal In Jerusalem

JERUSALEM, Aug. 18 (JTA)--Life for crippled children in Israel has greatly improved since the opening of a new Orthopedic Department in the Alyn Hospital for Crippled Children recently established here. Alyn cares for all the crippled children of Jerusalem. At present there are 87 patients, of whom 10 are Arab. Alyn provides long-term care, and acute patients requiring surgical operations are attended to at Hadassah. Where long periods of post-operative hospitalization are needed, the little patients are transferred to Alyn, thus freeing the Hadassah beds for urgent cases.

COLPA, Agudath Israel Leaders Hail Nixon's Pledge To Aid Private Schools

NEW YORK, Aug. 18 (JTA)--Leaders of two Jewish organizations today hailed President Nixon's declaration last night at a dinner of the Knights of Columbus that he would help reverse the current closing of private and parochial schools. Julius Berman, president of the National Commission on Law and Public Affairs, stated that the organization welcomed the President's "offer of help in efforts to reverse the continually worsening financial plight of parochial schools." Rabbi Moshe Sherer, executive president of Agudath Israel of America, sent a telegram to Nixon stating: "Your forthright stand, coming in the wake of the tragic decision by the U.S. Supreme Court on this issue, may prove to be a historic turning point in the struggle to end discrimination from which the non-public schools have been suffering for so long." On June 28 the Supreme Court ruled 8-1 that public aid to private schools for secular purposes constituted "excessive government entanglement with religion." It declared unconstitutional programs that reimbursed private schools for instruction in secular subjects. Last night, Nixon told the Knights of Columbus audience that "you can count on my support!" to halt the trend of the closing down of non-public schools.

Commenting on this statement, Berman declared that "while it is clear that the President was referring specifically to Catholic parochial schools in his address last night, it is clear that his reference should be understood to include all religiously-sponsored non-public schools." He stressed the President's statement that "we must see to it that our children are provided with the moral and spiritual and religious values so necessary to a great people in great times." Berman added that "it is our hope that those organizations that have fought so successfully to deprive the non-public schools of governmental aid will realize the financial disaster that may result from these efforts and join hands with the President to save the non-public school system, including those established under Jewish auspices." Rabbi Sherer, in his telegram to Nixon, stated that the Legislative Commission of Agudath Israel will present its findings to the President's staff in the near future.

AJCongress Critical Of Nixon's Private School Aid Pledge

NEW YORK, Aug. 18 (JTA)--The American Jewish Congress today criticized President Nixon's pledge of government support for parochial schools and called on him to "uphold the Constitution instead of promising prohibited government aid to sectarian institutions." In a statement commenting on Nixon's remarks last night, the AJCongress said Nixon's support of government aid represented "a turning aside from his constitutional responsibility and from the nation's commitment to equal opportunity for disadvantaged children." Will Maslow, executive director of the AJCongress, declared: "The primary and proper purpose of parochial schools is to propagate the faith. The government has no obligation to assist in that aim and is constitutionally prohibited from doing so. Just as we have called on the Jewish community to provide adequate support for Jewish day schools--without tainting their independence or infringing on the rights of others by seeking public funds for religious education--so do we respectfully suggest that the Catholic community provide the support its parochial schools require. Any claim that government failure to support parochial schools represents a denial of constitutional rights to Catholic parents can only result from a misreading of the Constitution."

Commenting on Nixon's statement that private and parochial schools were closing "at the rate of one a day," Maslow declared: "In fact, Catholic schools are actually increasing in numbers, according to the 1970-71 report of the National Catholic Educational Association's Data Bank." Maslow said government aid to religious schools would result in a diversion of necessary funds away from public schools. He questioned the "wisdom and propriety of efforts by the Administration to circumvent Supreme Court decisions." For example, he said, "the President's directive to hold school busing for integration down to a bare minimum seriously undercuts the Supreme Court's ruling on desegregation." On the call by Terence Cardinal Cooke for government funds which precipitated the President's affirmative response, Maslow said he "deeply regrets" the Cardinal's statement and wished he had urged "private Catholic support of private Catholic schools rather than a government subsidy. Only in this way can religion be free of government interference and government be free of religious influence."

CCAR President Warns Admission Of Red China To UN Will Aid Anti-Israel Drive

CHICAGO, Aug. 18 (JTA)--The admission of Communist China to the United Nations, while necessary, only adds another adversary against Israel to the international forum, Rabbi David Polish, president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, told a Jewish National Fund dinner here tonight. He expressed his regrets that the UN had lost its "credibility as the vehicle to achieve peace in the Middle East." He sharply condemned the partisanship of both UN Secretary General U Thant and UN mediator Gunnar V. Jarring, adding "the debates in both the Security Council and the General Assembly have become nothing more than a propaganda forum for the Arabs and the Soviet Union." He predicted such a debate at the next General Assembly session. Rabbi Polish said he believed that once in the UN, Communist China would try to "curry favor with the Arab states by outdoing the Soviet Union in carrying out acts against Israel." The CCAR president observed that "Only a lasting peace directly negotiated with the Arabs can bring stability to the area." Rabbi Polish said, "By resisting all pressures to enter into settlements that would only be interludes before other attacks upon her, Israel has served the cause of peace for herself and for her friends." He called on American Jews to reaffirm their solidarity with Israel during the religious services at the forthcoming Jewish High Holidays of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, and concluded: "Whatever brotherly differences may exist among us, let no one doubt our common determination to defend Israel upon whose survival our own survival depends."

Report Palatnik Appeal Scheduled To Be Heard Thursday

LONDON, Aug. 18 (JTA)--The appeal of Raiza Palatnik, the Odessa Jewish librarian sentenced to two years in a labor camp for alleged anti-Soviet activities, will be heard tomorrow, according to reports from the USSR. This afternoon, women of the Committee of 35, clad in black and heavily veiled, staged a peaceful protest outside the office of Intourist, the Soviet tourist agency, in central London. A spokesman noted reports that Miss Palatnik was very ill and in great pain and was being denied medical care. "Please help us to save an innocent woman," she pleaded.