



daily news bulletin

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Vol. XXXIX - Fifty-Fifth Year

Thursday, October 19, 1972

No. 202

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McGOVERN AIDE SAYS CANDIDATE'S

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FORMER CHIEF RABBI OF EGYPT

ARRIVES WITH FAMILY IN U.S.

NEW YORK, Oct. 18 (JTA)--Rabbi Chaim Douek, former Chief Rabbi of Egypt from 1952 to April 1972, arrived this afternoon with three members of his family at Kennedy Airport. The 68-year-old rabbi, who had been residing in Paris since he left Egypt last spring, was greeted by relatives and officials of United Hias Service, Synagogue Council of America and the Rabbinical Council of America. Rabbi Douek was accompanied by his daughter, Pauline; his son, Jacques; and his daughter-in-law, Rose.

The rabbi, who underwent a minor operation while in Paris, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency

he was in "good" health and that he will settle in Brooklyn where he hopes to serve in a synagogue "If God will help." He said he left Egypt "in a miracle with the help of God." Rabbi Douek, who indicated he was extremely tired after his trans-Atlantic flight, added only that he will stay at the home of his daughter, Angele.

His arrival here was made possible with the help of Hias, which has helped resettle 16,000 Egyptian Jews since the Suez crisis of 1956. Resettlement here was arranged through the New York Association for New Americans (NYANA).

PROTEST AGAINST EXIT TAX COINCIDES WITH VISIT OF RUSSIAN SCIENTISTS

WASHINGTON, Oct. 18 (JTA)--About 50 lawyers, engineers and scientists picketed the National Academy of Science here today to protest against the Soviet "diploma tax" demanded of educated Jews seeking to emigrate. The picketing was timed to coincide with the visit of Dr. M.V. Mstoslav Keldish, head of the Soviet Academy of Science and six Russian scientists who are on a six-week tour of US scientific installations.

While Dr. Keldish was in the building, a letter was hand delivered to Prof. Philip Handler, president of the National Academy of Science, from six Jewish scientists in Moscow who said they have been deprived of their jobs and denied exit visas.

The letter pleaded with Prof. Handler to intervene because his Soviet counterpart "has never spoken to any of us or answered any of our messages." The letter was dictated by telephone from Moscow last night to Dr. David Korn, chairman of the Soviet Jewry Committee of the Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington. Howard Lewis, director of information for the National Academy told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that Prof. Handler had received the letter and "intends to discuss the matter with Dr. Keldish."

The letter from Moscow was signed by Profs. David Asbell, Aleksander Lerner, Benjamin Levich, Boris Moisheson, Roman Rutman and Aleksander Voronel. Their letter stated that having been fired from their jobs and forced to do manual labor, has "brought about our professional death." The letter added, "Our situation is getting graver and graver each day."

JEWISH FAMILIES GRANTED EXIT VISAS WITHOUT PAYING EDUCATION HEAD TAX

NEW YORK, Oct. 18 (JTA)--Reports from Moscow today indicated that a number of Jewish families have been granted exit visas without paying the education head tax to which they were previously subjected. One Jewish source reported that 19 families were told today that they would not have to pay a collective visa fee amounting to some \$300,000, provided that they leave the Soviet Union by Oct. 28. The same source said that six other families were told that they would lose their visas if they did not pay fees aggregating \$200,000 by Nov. 6.

According to another source, 19 Jewish families have been granted exit visas hitherto refused them by Soviet authorities. At least six of those families had been refused visas earlier because they were unable to raise the fees that amounted collectively to \$200,000. The sources said all the families had applied for visas before the tax was instituted last Aug. 3. The sources noted that in the past the visa tax was made retroactive to all applicants. According to the sources, the development indicated that Soviet authorities may be redefining some of their visa policies.

Both sources reported that the visa grants were made following a private meeting between 10 Jewish intellectuals in Moscow and Western newsmen. The Jews insisted that the "ransom" fees were still in effect and that educated Jews were compelled to pay if they wanted to leave, the sources reported.

BORIS PENSON, JAILED ARTIST, GRAVELY ILL

NEW YORK, Oct. 18 (JTA)--Boris Penson, the 26-year-old bachelor artist serving a 10-year "strict regime" sentence in Leningrad, has an ulcerous condition, is denied proper medication and is in "very poor physical health"--so poor that he "can't last--according to a childhood friend now working for his release. Furthermore, says Mikhail (Misha) Neiburger, 27, Penson is denied permission to paint, and "for a painter not to be allowed to paint, it's like death." He was arrested in June, 1970, for allegedly attempting to steal a plane to cross the border and escape to Israel.

The brown-bearded Neiburger, who tends an apple orchard at Kibbutz Maron Golan in Israel, where he immigrated from Riga 15 months ago, reported on Penson's condition to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. He is here, under the auspices of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, in connection with an exhibit of Penson's paintings at the Jewish Museum. The exhibit which opened yesterday and will run through Nov. 26, was brought to this country from Israel by the National Conference on Soviet Jewry. The exhibit is sponsored in New York by the Greater New York Conference on Soviet Jewry under the auspices of the NCSJ prior to a national tour.

Demand He Be Allowed To Paint While In Jail

Speaking in Hebrew, Neiburger said Penson's father died recently at age 74 and his nearly 60-year-old mother is alone in Riga, denied communication with her prisoner son. The last time Neiburger saw Penson, a year ago, the then 25-year-old inmate's hair had turned white after a year in jail.

Neiburger recommended public pressure on the American and Soviet governments on Penson's behalf. He also urged that demands should be mounted for Penson to at least be allowed to paint while serving his term, which ends June 15, 1980.

Penson's paintings were confiscated on his arrest--the later ones incorporated Zionist symbols--but Neiburger managed to smuggle out more than 100. An Israeli committee has been formed on Penson's behalf; it includes such names as Avraham Shlonsky, the poet; Mrs. Esther Herlitz, the diplomat, and Adiel Amoral, a Knesset member.

Recently, Penson wrote that the Leningrad prisoners were being "kept together with war criminals" and served a 500-calorie-a-day diet of "horrible food"; were denied transfer to a foreigners' zone after renouncing Soviet citizenship; were accorded "cruel treatment during hunger strikes," and were "continually persecuted because of our nationality." He added: "Generally speaking, lawlessness, irresponsibility, arbitrary treatment.... This is about everything I can say on our general situation."

U.S.-USSR TRADE ACCORDS SIGNED

Soviet Emigration Policy Not Discussed In Trade Negotiations Between Two Nations

WASHINGTON, Oct. 18 (JTA)--Secretary of Commerce Peter G. Peterson said today that he did not initiate any discussion of Soviet emigration policy in the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on a lend-lease settlement and bi-lateral trade agreements. Peterson made the statement in response to a question by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency at a White House news confer-

ence which followed the announcement of the signing of the settlement and trade agreement this afternoon. The Soviet Foreign Trade Minister, N.S. Patolichev was the chief negotiator for the USSR.

Peterson said later that "We find the Soviet negotiators to be careful readers of our media and they informed us that they were aware of our views on the matter." The White House also announced that President Nixon has directed the US Export-Import Bank to extend credits to the Soviet Union because "it is in the national interest."

Secretary of State William P. Rogers who opened the press conference, reminded that 2/3 of the Senate supports the Jackson Amendment to the East-West Trade Act which opposes trade benefits for the USSR unless Soviet emigration restrictions are eased, replied, "We're going to handle this in channels we have been using."

The Secretary of State said in response to questions that "Quiet diplomacy holds out the greatest promise of success" in this matter. He added that Jewish leaders with whom he has talked on the matter of emigration agreed that "quiet diplomacy is the best approach."

Quiet Approach Is Right

Asked if he was encouraged of possible changes in Soviet emigration policies as a result of his negotiations with the Russians, Peterson said "We leave it entirely to Nixon, Rogers and Kissinger. They believe the quiet approach is right." Asked if he had been instructed to proceed with the trade talks without regard to the Jackson Amendment, Peterson replied that he was not told by the White House explicitly to ignore the amendment but only to proceed.

He added that the President would proceed at the right time with this matter. He said Nixon had a long talk with Patolichev following the signing of the lend-lease agreement at the State Department and the trade agreement at the Department of Commerce.

Asked if the issue of Jewish emigration from Russia would be a factor in Congressional approval of the most favored nation clause in the trade pact, Peterson observed that "We have 3-4 months before the treaties are submitted to Congress." The Jackson Amendment will not come up for debate until after the new Congress convenes in Jan. At another point Peterson remarked that "we can do a lot of trading" without a most favored nation clause.

SAPIR PROMISES SLUM CLEARANCE, HOMES FOR NEWLY MARRIED COUPLES

JERUSALEM, Oct. 18 (JTA)--Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir has promised slum clearance and homes for newly married couples unable to find living quarters they can afford. Sapir and Housing Minister Ze'ev Sharef appeared before the Labor Party's housing policy committee to discuss allocations for housing in next year's budget.

Sapir explained the budget would include the means to solve the problem of 3000 needy young couples without homes of their own. He said newlyweds would be offered loans on easy terms or provided with flats at reasonable rents. Sapir stated he was confident that some 38,000 slum-dwelling families would be re-housed during the next two years and another 10,000 the following year. He noted there were presently 65,000 families living in slum conditions.

An Israeli spokesman said today that terrorist headquarters are still located in Beirut despite widespread reports that they had been moved.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**WHAT NEXT AFTER THE ELECTION OF THE NEW CHIEF RABBIS?**

By David Landau, JTA Middle East Bureau Chief

JERUSALEM, Oct. 18 (JTA)--The election of two new and relatively young chief rabbis was hailed in Israel as an opportunity--perhaps a final opportunity--for the chief rabbinate to become a meaningful force in the spiritual life of the Jewish people. The magnitude of the change is best expressed by the fact that the average age of the two chief rabbis has dropped by a generation; Rabbi Issar Yehuda Unterman, 86 and Rabbi Yitzhak Nissim, 79, gave way to 56-year-old former chief army chaplain Shlomo Goren and 51-year-old Ovadiah Yosef, in that order.

The electors' choice was welcomed by most Israelis. Goren and Yosef are vastly popular and respected in their respective communities, as noted halachic authorities and yet as men of the world; men of the sabra generation by upbringing if not by birth. As one army general told his former comrade-in-arms Shlomo Goren when he came to congratulate him: "At least we now have a chief rabbi to whom we can speak in Ivrit (Hebrew)." Not that Unterman spoke no Ivrit; he spoke it well--but with a diaspora accent, and, in the view of most people, a diaspora attitude.

What will the election results mean for Israel and for world Jewry? Within hours of his election, Goren announced that he would set up a Rabbinical Court to rehear the mamzerim case--the cause celebre which brought the election about. He also appealed to the Independent Liberal Party to give him a year's grace before pushing the Hausner bill on civil marriages to a Knesset vote. Premier Golda Meir too, is known to have appealed to Mapam not to support Gideon Hausner's bill but give Goren a chance.

The ILP, however, has already rejected Goren's plea and says it will seek a vote soon. The party claims with justice that no change in the chief rabbinate can bring about a change--within the halacha--for the main body of "unmarriageables," the Cohens and divorcees.

Will Never Abolish Law Of Mamzerim

Goren may well solve the plight of Hanoch and Miriam Langer, the mamzerim brother and sister, by proving halachically that in their particular case the law of mamzerim does not apply--but he would never, could never abolish the law of mamzerim, nor the law banning Cohens marrying divorcees. No rabbi could do so and remain within the Orthodox fold, says the ILP. Goren himself believes that he can prove in almost all cases of mamzerim that the law does not apply, but he has never said anything about Cohens and divorcees.

At any rate, the election of Goren will certainly alleviate the tension, at least temporarily, between Orthodox and secular, which was threatening to reach dangerous proportions. While the outlook for the specific areas of potential conflict might not seem to have changed, the general atmosphere will doubtless be markedly improved with the advent of the new chief rabbis.

The election last Sunday also produced a new chief rabbinate council. Gone are the more extremist rabbis of Unterman's period--Bezalel Zolty, Eliezer Goldschmidt and Shaul Yisraeli of the Rabbinical Supreme Court--and in their place come younger men who Goren says will comprise a "Zionist" council. (The ten-man council has the power to legislate new halachic ordinances--provided they do not clash with existing ones.)

Zolty, Goldschmidt and Yisraeli are also contemplating resigning from the Supreme Court now that Goren heads it. The senior judge, Rabbi Yosef Shalom Eliashiv, has already resigned, and if the other three follow him, Goren will have the chance to make a clean sweep in the court too.

Leading Rabbis To Advise On Halacha

In another immediate post-election statement, Goren said he intended summoning a synod of all the leading rabbis in the world to advise on questions of halacha. Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik of Boston, the leading American halachic authority, Monday cabled Goren his congratulations on the victory.

Other diaspora rabbis are still suspicious of Goren, since his detractors in Israel claim he has reformist tendencies. They will no doubt follow his early moves carefully. The election of Yosef and his harmonious work with Goren until now as joint chief rabbis of Tel Aviv will help Goren win the trust of other rabbis, since Yosef is accepted and respected in right-wing rabbinical circles.

Any hopes that Goren will be softer on non-recognition of Reform conversions are quite groundless. He is as hostile to the Reform and Conservative movements as any other Israeli rabbi. Thus too there is no chance that he will support the Conservative demand for official recognition for Conservative rabbis operating in Israel. Goren is on record as opposing the "Who is a Jew" section of the Law of Return in its present form and will press, along with Aguda and right-wing National Religious Party members, for its amendment to define conversion as only by halacha to the exclusion of Reform conversion.

On the other hand, persons seeking to convert to Judaism in Israel are likely to benefit from the new rabbinate; Goren and Yosef will work for speeding up the conversion process which at present can take months or even years.

SYRIAN OFFICIAL TO GET U.S. VISA

WASHINGTON, Oct. 18 (JTA)--The State Department said today that it was reversing a previous decision and would now allow a visa to be granted to an officer of the Syrian UN Mission, Dia Allah el Fattal, whose visa was revoked by the US Immigration and Naturalization Service Oct. 2 during the height of the screening of Arab personnel for possible terrorist connections. Fattal was reported in Rome at the time.

No visa has been issued to his wife who is reported to be an activist working with Palestinian extremist groups. State Department spokesman Charles Bray said today "We have concluded after a very thorough review that the weight of evidence" pointed to Fattal being allowed to return to New York. Asked about Mrs. Fattal, Bray said that since she has not applied for a visa the question was "academic." Bray reiterated that the US has the right to deny a visa to UN officials under the agreement with the UN.

THAILAND-ISRAEL SIGN AIR PACT

JERUSALEM, Oct. 18 (JTA)--A four-man Israeli delegation arrived in Bangkok yesterday to sign a civil aviation agreement with Thailand providing for reciprocal landing rights in each country. The delegation is headed by Ephraim Zussman, director of civil aviation at the Transport Ministry. The agreement, which was concluded in principle some time ago, provides El Al with a link in its projected Far Eastern route which it hopes to extend to the Philippines, Japan and eventually Australia.



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Cohen said that in terms of Israel's defense, McGovern's defense posture calls not only for the continued presence of the two aircraft carriers now in the Mediterranean but also an increase in the number of escort and attack submarines. He quoted Rear Adm. (Ret.) Gene LaRoque, a former commander of part of the US Sixth Fleet and now director of the Center for Defense Information here, that "the ability to respond effectively may actually be increased under the McGovern plan."

FORMER CHIEF RABBI OF EGYPT ARRIVES WITH FAMILY IN U.S.

NEW YORK, Oct. 18 (JTA)--Rabbi Chaim Douek, former Chief Rabbi of Egypt from 1952 to April 1972, arrived this afternoon with three members of his family at Kennedy Airport. The 68-year-old rabbi, who had been residing in Paris since he left Egypt last spring, was greeted by relatives and officials of United Hias Service, Synagogue Council of America and the Rabbinical Council of America. Rabbi Douek was accompanied by his daughter, Pauline; his son, Jacques; and his daughter-in-law, Rose.

The rabbi, who underwent a minor operation while in Paris, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency

he was in "good" health and that he will settle in Brooklyn where he hopes to serve in a synagogue "If God will help." He said he left Egypt "in a miracle with the help of God." Rabbi Douek, who indicated he was extremely tired after his trans-Atlantic flight, added only that he will stay at the home of his daughter, Angele.

His arrival here was made possible with the help of Hias, which has helped resettle 16,000 Egyptian Jews since the Suez crisis of 1956. Resettlement here was arranged through the New York Association for New Americans (NYANA).

PROTEST AGAINST EXIT TAX COINCIDES WITH VISIT OF RUSSIAN SCIENTISTS

WASHINGTON, Oct. 18 (JTA)--About 50 lawyers, engineers and scientists picketed the National Academy of Science here today to protest against the Soviet "diploma tax" demanded of educated Jews seeking to emigrate. The picketing was timed to coincide with the visit of Dr. M.V. Mstoslav Keldish, head of the Soviet Academy of Science and six Russian scientists who are on a six-week tour of US scientific installations.

While Dr. Keldish was in the building, a letter was hand delivered to Prof. Philip Handler, president of the National Academy of Science, from six Jewish scientists in Moscow who said they have been deprived of their jobs and denied exit visas.

The letter pleaded with Prof. Handler to intervene because his Soviet counterpart "has never spoken to any of us or answered any of our messages." The letter was dictated by telephone from Moscow last night to Dr. David Korn, chairman of the Soviet Jewry Committee of the Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington. Howard Lewis, director of information for the National Academy told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that Prof. Handler had received the letter and "intends to discuss the matter with Dr. Keldish."

The letter from Moscow was signed by Profs. David Asbell, Aleksander Lerner, Benjamin Levich, Boris Moisheson, Roman Rutman and Aleksander Voronel. Their letter stated that having been fired from their jobs and forced to do manual labor, has "brought about our professional death." The letter added, "Our situation is getting graver and graver each day."

JEWISH FAMILIES GRANTED EXIT VISAS WITHOUT PAYING EDUCATION HEAD TAX

NEW YORK, Oct. 18 (JTA)--Reports from Moscow today indicated that a number of Jewish families have been granted exit visas without paying the education head tax to which they were previously subjected. One Jewish source reported that 19 families were told today that they would not have to pay a collective visa fee amounting to some \$300,000, provided that they leave the Soviet Union by Oct. 28. The same source said that six other families were told that they would lose their visas if they did not pay fees aggregating \$200,000 by Nov. 6.

According to another source, 19 Jewish families have been granted exit visas hitherto refused them by Soviet authorities. At least six of those families had been refused visas earlier because they were unable to raise the fees that amounted collectively to \$200,000. The sources said all the families had applied for visas before the tax was instituted last Aug. 3. The sources noted that in the past the visa tax was made retroactive to all applicants. According to the sources, the development indicated that Soviet authorities may be redefining some of their visa policies.

Both sources reported that the visa grants were made following a private meeting between 10 Jewish intellectuals in Moscow and Western newsmen. The Jews insisted that the "ransom" fees were still in effect and that educated Jews were compelled to pay if they wanted to leave, the sources reported.

BORIS PENSON, JAILED ARTIST, GRAVELY ILL

NEW YORK, Oct. 18 (JTA)--Boris Penson, the 26-year-old bachelor artist serving a 10-year "strict regime" sentence in Leningrad, has an ulcerous condition, is denied proper medication and is in "very poor physical health"--so poor that he "can't last--according to a childhood friend now working for his release. Furthermore, says Mikhail (Misha) Neiburger, 27, Penson is denied permission to paint, and "for a painter not to be allowed to paint, it's like death." He was arrested in June, 1970, for allegedly attempting to steal a plane to cross the border and escape to Israel.

The brown-bearded Neiburger, who tends an apple orchard at Kibbutz Maron Golan in Israel, where he immigrated from Riga 15 months ago, reported on Penson's condition to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. He is here, under the auspices of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, in connection with an exhibit of Penson's paintings at the Jewish Museum. The exhibit which opened yesterday and will run through Nov. 26, was brought to this country from Israel by the National Conference on Soviet Jewry. The exhibit is sponsored in New York by the Greater New York Conference on Soviet Jewry under the auspices of the NCSJ prior to a national tour.

Demand He Be Allowed To Paint While In Jail

Speaking in Hebrew, Neiburger said Penson's father died recently at age 74 and his nearly 60-year-old mother is alone in Riga, denied communication with her prisoner son. The last time Neiburger saw Penson, a year ago, the then 25-year-old inmate's hair had turned white after a year in jail.

Neiburger recommended public pressure on the American and Soviet governments on Penson's behalf. He also urged that demands should be mounted for Penson to at least be allowed to paint while serving his term, which ends June 15, 1980.

Penson's paintings were confiscated on his arrest--the later ones incorporated Zionist symbols--but Neiburger managed to smuggle out more than 100. An Israeli committee has been formed on Penson's behalf; it includes such names as Avraham Shlonsky, the poet; Mrs. Esther Herlitz, the diplomat, and Adiel Amoral, a Knesset member.

Recently, Penson wrote that the Leningrad prisoners were being "kept together with war criminals" and served a 500-calorie-a-day diet of "horrible food"; were denied transfer to a foreigners' zone after renouncing Soviet citizenship; were accorded "cruel treatment during hunger strikes," and were "continually persecuted because of our nationality." He added: "Generally speaking, lawlessness, irresponsibility, arbitrary treatment.... This is about everything I can say on our general situation."

U.S.-USSR TRADE ACCORDS SIGNED

Soviet Emigration Policy Not Discussed In Trade Negotiations Between Two Nations

WASHINGTON, Oct. 18 (JTA)--Secretary of Commerce Peter G. Peterson said today that he did not initiate any discussion of Soviet emigration policy in the negotiations between the United States and the Soviet Union on a lend-lease settlement and bi-lateral trade agreements. Peterson made the statement in response to a question by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency at a White House news confer-

ence which followed the announcement of the signing of the settlement and trade agreement this afternoon. The Soviet Foreign Trade Minister, N.S. Patolichev was the chief negotiator for the USSR.

Peterson said later that "We find the Soviet negotiators to be careful readers of our media and they informed us that they were aware of our views on the matter." The White House also announced that President Nixon has directed the US Export-Import Bank to extend credits to the Soviet Union because "it is in the national interest."

Secretary of State William P. Rogers who opened the press conference, reminded that 2/3 of the Senate supports the Jackson Amendment to the East-West Trade Act which opposes trade benefits for the USSR unless Soviet emigration restrictions are eased, replied, "We're going to handle this in channels we have been using."

The Secretary of State said in response to questions that "Quiet diplomacy holds out the greatest promise of success" in this matter. He added that Jewish leaders with whom he has talked on the matter of emigration agreed that "quiet diplomacy is the best approach."

Quiet Approach Is Right

Asked if he was encouraged of possible changes in Soviet emigration policies as a result of his negotiations with the Russians, Peterson said "We leave it entirely to Nixon, Rogers and Kissinger. They believe the quiet approach is right." Asked if he had been instructed to proceed with the trade talks without regard to the Jackson Amendment, Peterson replied that he was not told by the White House explicitly to ignore the amendment but only to proceed.

He added that the President would proceed at the right time with this matter. He said Nixon had a long talk with Patolichev following the signing of the lend-lease agreement at the State Department and the trade agreement at the Department of Commerce.

Asked if the issue of Jewish emigration from Russia would be a factor in Congressional approval of the most favored nation clause in the trade pact, Peterson observed that "We have 3-4 months before the treaties are submitted to Congress." The Jackson Amendment will not come up for debate until after the new Congress convenes in Jan. At another point Peterson remarked that "we can do a lot of trading" without a most favored nation clause.

SAPIR PROMISES SLUM CLEARANCE, HOMES FOR NEWLY MARRIED COUPLES

JERUSALEM, Oct. 18 (JTA)--Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir has promised slum clearance and homes for newly married couples unable to find living quarters they can afford. Sapir and Housing Minister Ze'ev Sharef appeared before the Labor Party's housing policy committee to discuss allocations for housing in next year's budget.

Sapir explained the budget would include the means to solve the problem of 3000 needy young couples without homes of their own. He said newlyweds would be offered loans on easy terms or provided with flats at reasonable rents. Sapir stated he was confident that some 38,000 slum-dwelling families would be re-housed during the next two years and another 10,000 the following year. He noted there were presently 65,000 families living in slum conditions.

An Israeli spokesman said today that terrorist headquarters are still located in Beirut despite widespread reports that they had been moved.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**WHAT NEXT AFTER THE ELECTION OF THE NEW CHIEF RABBIS?**

By David Landau, JTA Middle East Bureau Chief

JERUSALEM, Oct. 18 (JTA)--The election of two new and relatively young chief rabbis was hailed in Israel as an opportunity--perhaps a final opportunity--for the chief rabbinate to become a meaningful force in the spiritual life of the Jewish people. The magnitude of the change is best expressed by the fact that the average age of the two chief rabbis has dropped by a generation; Rabbi Issar Yehuda Unterman, 86 and Rabbi Yitzhak Nissim, 79, gave way to 56-year-old former chief army chaplain Shlomo Goren and 51-year-old Ovadiah Yosef, in that order.

The electors' choice was welcomed by most Israelis. Goren and Yosef are vastly popular and respected in their respective communities, as noted halachic authorities and yet as men of the world; men of the sabra generation by upbringing if not by birth. As one army general told his former comrade-in-arms Shlomo Goren when he came to congratulate him: "At least we now have a chief rabbi to whom we can speak in Ivrit (Hebrew)." Not that Unterman spoke no Ivrit; he spoke it well--but with a diaspora accent, and, in the view of most people, a diaspora attitude.

What will the election results mean for Israel and for world Jewry? Within hours of his election, Goren announced that he would set up a Rabbinical Court to rehear the mamzerim case--the cause celebre which brought the election about. He also appealed to the Independent Liberal Party to give him a year's grace before pushing the Hausner bill on civil marriages to a Knesset vote. Premier Golda Meir too, is known to have appealed to Mapam not to support Gideon Hausner's bill but give Goren a chance.

The ILP, however, has already rejected Goren's plea and says it will seek a vote soon. The party claims with justice that no change in the chief rabbinate can bring about a change--within the halacha--for the main body of "unmarriageables," the Cohens and divorcees.

Will Never Abolish Law Of Mamzerim

Goren may well solve the plight of Hanoch and Miriam Langer, the mamzerim brother and sister, by proving halachically that in their particular case the law of mamzerim does not apply--but he would never, could never abolish the law of mamzerim, nor the law banning Cohens marrying divorcees. No rabbi could do so and remain within the Orthodox fold, says the ILP. Goren himself believes that he can prove in almost all cases of mamzerim that the law does not apply, but he has never said anything about Cohens and divorcees.

At any rate, the election of Goren will certainly alleviate the tension, at least temporarily, between Orthodox and secular, which was threatening to reach dangerous proportions. While the outlook for the specific areas of potential conflict might not seem to have changed, the general atmosphere will doubtless be markedly improved with the advent of the new chief rabbis.

The election last Sunday also produced a new chief rabbinate council. Gone are the more extremist rabbis of Unterman's period--Bezalel Zolty, Eliezer Goldschmidt and Shaul Yisraeli of the Rabbinical Supreme Court--and in their place come younger men who Goren says will comprise a "Zionist" council. (The ten-man council has the power to legislate new halachic ordinances--provided they do not clash with existing ones.)

Zolty, Goldschmidt and Yisraeli are also contemplating resigning from the Supreme Court now that Goren heads it. The senior judge, Rabbi Yosef Shalom Eliashiv, has already resigned, and if the other three follow him, Goren will have the chance to make a clean sweep in the court too.

Leading Rabbis To Advise On Halacha

In another immediate post-election statement, Goren said he intended summoning a synod of all the leading rabbis in the world to advise on questions of halacha. Rabbi J.B. Soloveitchik of Boston, the leading American halachic authority, Monday cabled Goren his congratulations on the victory.

Other diaspora rabbis are still suspicious of Goren, since his detractors in Israel claim he has reformist tendencies. They will no doubt follow his early moves carefully. The election of Yosef and his harmonious work with Goren until now as joint chief rabbis of Tel Aviv will help Goren win the trust of other rabbis, since Yosef is accepted and respected in right-wing rabbinical circles.

Any hopes that Goren will be softer on non-recognition of Reform conversions are quite groundless. He is as hostile to the Reform and Conservative movements as any other Israeli rabbi. Thus too there is no chance that he will support the Conservative demand for official recognition for Conservative rabbis operating in Israel. Goren is on record as opposing the "Who is a Jew" section of the Law of Return in its present form and will press, along with Aguda and right-wing National Religious Party members, for its amendment to define conversion as only by halacha to the exclusion of Reform conversion.

On the other hand, persons seeking to convert to Judaism in Israel are likely to benefit from the new rabbinate; Goren and Yosef will work for speeding up the conversion process which at present can take months or even years.

SYRIAN OFFICIAL TO GET U.S. VISA

WASHINGTON, Oct. 18 (JTA)--The State Department said today that it was reversing a previous decision and would now allow a visa to be granted to an officer of the Syrian UN Mission, Dia Allah el Fattal, whose visa was revoked by the US Immigration and Naturalization Service Oct. 2 during the height of the screening of Arab personnel for possible terrorist connections. Fattal was reported in Rome at the time.

No visa has been issued to his wife who is reported to be an activist working with Palestinian extremist groups. State Department spokesman Charles Bray said today "We have concluded after a very thorough review that the weight of evidence" pointed to Fattal being allowed to return to New York. Asked about Mrs. Fattal, Bray said that since she has not applied for a visa the question was "academic." Bray reiterated that the US has the right to deny a visa to UN officials under the agreement with the UN.

THAILAND-ISRAEL SIGN AIR PACT

JERUSALEM, Oct. 18 (JTA)--A four-man Israeli delegation arrived in Bangkok yesterday to sign a civil aviation agreement with Thailand providing for reciprocal landing rights in each country. The delegation is headed by Ephraim Zussman, director of civil aviation at the Transport Ministry. The agreement, which was concluded in principle some time ago, provides El Al with a link in its projected Far Eastern route which it hopes to extend to the Philippines, Japan and eventually Australia.