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VORONEL AND WIFE IN ISRAEL

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, Dec. 29 (JTA)—Prof. Alexander Voronel, one of the leading activists for Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union, arrived here this morning with his wife, Nina, successfully culminating a two-and-a-half year struggle for their own emigration rights.

The 44-year-old theoretical physicist who was dismissed from his job and stripped of his academic prerogatives when he first applied for an exit visa in April, 1972, landed at Ben Gurion Airport with a large group of Russian-Jewish emigrants from Vienna. They travelled in an Austrian airliner owing to the shut-down of El Al because of a labor dispute. (See separate story.)

A large group of Israeli and emigre scientists were at the airport to greet Prof. Voronel. He was welcomed by Prof. Yuval Ne'eman, president of Tel Aviv University and himself an internationally prominent physicist, who assigned a position to Voronel on the university faculty a year ago. Voronel's son, a mathematics student who lives in Jerusalem, was also at the airport.

KGB Fears Jewish Scientists' Activities

Voronel's case was brought to world-wide attention when he organized scientific seminars at his Moscow apartment to enable other dismissed Jewish scientists to keep up with the latest developments in their fields. Voronel freely admitted that another purpose was to bring the plight of Jewish academicians and intellectuals to the attention of world opinion. His seminars were constantly harassed by the KGB (secret police).

One such gathering, scheduled for last July when former President Nixon was in Moscow, was prevented from taking place by Soviet authorities who sealed Voronel's flat and arrested whoever sought entry to it. Voronel told reporters at the airport that the seminars were part of the struggle for emigration and had proved effective. "Instead of us fearing the KGB it was the KGB that feared the activities of Jewish scientists," he said.

Voronel was offered an exit visa last month on condition that he end the seminars. He told the Soviet authorities that was not in his power and that other activists would take over the weekly meetings. He was nevertheless allowed to depart. Voronel said today that he hoped his colleague, Prof. Mark Ashbel, would continue to organize and conduct the meetings.

MAZEL TOV, FIVE TIMES

JERUSALEM, Dec. 29 (JTA)—Mrs. Tova Medina, 31, who had undergone hormone treatment after being childless for seven years, today gave birth to quintuplets—three boys and two girls—at Hadassah Hospital. A hospital spokesman said the infants were in incubators and were in comparatively good health. The smallest of the quints weighed about three pounds.

Doctors said it would be some time before they could say whether the infants would survive. Mrs. Medina, who was reported doing well, was seven and a half months pregnant when her labor pains began. The babies were delivered by Caesarian operation. This is the second group of

quintuplets delivered in Hadassah Hospital in three years.

Mrs. Medina and her husband, Moshe, are immigrants from Morocco and reside in a two-room house in the northern Negev development town of Sderot. Moshe works as a warden in the Beer-sheva prison, and Tova is employed in a pharmacological laboratory in Kibbutz Bror Hall. The Medinas made no preparations for quintuplets. "We wanted to see the outcome before we did anything," Moshe explained.

DENY U.S. PRESSURE ON ISRAEL

By Gil Sedan and David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 29 (JTA)—Foreign Minister Yigal Allon told the Cabinet today that there was no American pressure on Israel to come forth with new proposals on which to base a second stage of negotiations with Egypt and that Israel has made none beyond what the Foreign Minister conveyed during his visit to Washington earlier this month. Allon was commenting on press reports that the U.S. was demanding new ideas from Israel. He said all such reports, "both local and foreign," were incorrect.

Earlier "official sources" in Jerusalem also denied current reports from Washington of United States pressure on Israel for more generous concessions to Egypt in advance of Soviet Communist Party Secretary Leonid I. Brezhnev's visit to Cairo next month. The sources said such reports were "without foundation."

The reports, citing sources in Washington, have been current in the Israeli press for several days. They gained a measure of confirmation from the recent reports of President Ford's meeting with pro-Israel lawmakers in which Ford reportedly implied that America would like to see more generous Israeli offers which it could submit to Egyptian President Anwar Sadat before the Brezhnev visit, scheduled for mid-January.

There have also been some private indications from well-placed officials in Jerusalem that the U.S. is using the upcoming Brezhnev demarche in to Egypt as a means of pressure or leverage in the on-going dialogue with Israel to urge greater concessions.

The "official sources," in their statement, however, asserted that "since Foreign Minister Allon's return from Washington (two weeks ago) Israel has not been asked, and has not intended, to make any new proposals beyond those made by Allon. All reports of U.S. pressure for concessions by Allon are without foundation," the official sources added. keen observers noted that the statement was carefully phrased in the past tense. It did not, therefore, rule out the possibility of an Israeli reconsideration of offers and demands in the future.

AGRANAT COMMITTEE TO SUBMIT FINAL REPORT TO CABINET

By Uzi Benziman

JERUSALEM, Dec. 29 (JTA)—The Agranat Committee, established a year ago to investigate the conduct of the Yom Kippur War, will submit its final report to the Cabinet shortly. Unlike the committee's two interim reports which dealt with the behavior of the government and the military high command during the days immediately preceding

The surprise attacks by Egypt and Syria on Oct. 6, 1973, the final report will evaluate the performance of Israel's defense forces during the first three days of battle.

The report is expected to concentrate on the events of Oct. 8, by all accounts one of the most crucial days of the war, when the Israeli army, having fully mobilized, launched its first counter-attack against the Egyptian army in Sinai—and failed with severe losses in dead and wounded. That failure has been pondered for more than a year by military experts, politicians and analysts.

No Indications Yet Of Verdict

There have been no indications yet of what verdict the Agranat Committee has reached after thousands of hours of investigation, testimony and study. It is doubtful, in fact, whether the final verdict will ever be made known to the public. But the tenor of the final report may be deduced from the open discussions in the public media so far—the battlefield accounts, analyses and re-creations by some of the top commanders involved—which point to serious weaknesses, by no means general, but not altogether unique, in the fighting qualities of the Israeli army at the time of the Yom Kippur War.

The Agranat Committee is a highly respected, non-partisan body. Its chairman is Supreme Court Chief Justice Shimon Agranat and the rest of the panel consists of Supreme Court Justice Moshe Landau; State Controller Yitzhak Nebenzahl; and former Army Chiefs of Staff Yigal Ya'alon and Haim Laskov, all men of unquestioned competence and integrity.

The committee's first interim report precipitated the resignation of the Cabinet of former Premier Golda Meir and forced the resignation of the Yom Kippur War Chief of Staff, Gen. David Elazar. At the committee's recommendation, Gen. Shmuel Gonen, commander of the southern front, was suspended from his command and several other high ranking officers were demoted or forced to resign, among them the former head of army intelligence Gen. Eliahu Zeira.

It remains to be seen whether the final report precipitates a further shake-up of Israel's military establishment. Although the Egyptian army was eventually defeated and Israeli forces succeeded in gaining a large wedge on the western bank of the Suez Canal putting Israel in a superior military position when the cease-fire was declared, the defeat of Oct. 8 was a bitter pill and tragic in terms of the Israeli casualties.

Some Elements In Report

Accounts made public so far indicated several cases of poor tactical planning; several cases of false or misleadingly optimistic battlefield reports that caused the political leadership to make wrong decisions; cases in which senior commanders stayed too far behind the front; instances of open hostility between officers and privates in certain units; some cases in which the standing tradition of the Israeli army to retrieve all wounded men from the battlefield was not carried out.

The accounts also indicated that while the nation's political leadership showed high sensitivity to the possibility of heavy casualties in the direction of military operations, certain officers did not demonstrate the same consideration in planning some specific operations.

A common denominator running through all of the accounts reflected an abandonment of traditional values such as integrity and a high level

of morale. Some analysts have attributed this to the fact that after the brilliant victory of the Six-Day War, the Israeli army lost its elite qualities, became too representative of civilian society and was thus influenced by the corruptive processes that affected the country in the euphoria of the 1967 victory and the "seven fat years" of prosperity that followed.

TEL AL REMAINS GROUNDED

TEL AVIV, Dec. 29 (JTA)—El Al, Israel's national airline, grounded by decision of its own management since Thursday night because of a work slowdown by maintenance crews, continued today to dispatch its passengers and cargos by foreign carriers despite a loss estimated at IL 2 million a day. Histadrut's efforts to mediate the dispute have failed so far. The Histadrut executive announced this afternoon that it would waive its obligations to the maintenance workers unless they agreed to resume normal work routines by noon tomorrow.

Mordechai Ben Ari, El Al's managing director, has notified all of the airline's employees to stay at home. The maintenance workers received letters stating that their services were no longer required but the letters did not refer to dismissals.

Ben Ari said, however, that employees who were not working would not be paid. As this applies to employees not involved in the slowdown, it appeared that El Al's strategy was to have the latter exert pressure on the maintenance crews to resume normal work. El Al said it would not resume service until it had firm assurances that labor troubles will not jeopardize its future operations.

Foreign Airlines Picking Up Passengers

Meanwhile, at El Al's request, foreign airlines have flown extra planes to Israel to pick up passengers holding El Al tickets. The airline said the arrangement was working smoothly despite delays caused by the different flight schedules of the foreign carriers. Foreign cargo planes are also picking up Israel's winter exports to the European markets, mainly fresh fruits and flowers.

Histadrut's ultimatum to the maintenance workers was adopted by a 76-16 majority. Likud abstained. Likud and the Independent Liberals called for compulsory arbitration of labor disputes involving essential services but the Histadrut Central Committee rejected that proposal by 77-30.

RABIN BREAKS COLLAR BONE IN FALL

JERUSALEM, Dec. 29 (JTA)—Premier Yitzhak Rabin attended today's Cabinet meeting with his shoulder in a plaster cast following a fall at his Tel Aviv home Friday which broke his collar bone. The latest X-rays showed that the bone was being held in place by the cast but doctors have advised the Premier that he would have some pain.

The accident occurred when Rabin slipped in his bathroom. Earlier reports that he fell on wet pavement outside his home were incorrect. He was taken to Tel Hashomer Hospital where X-rays determined the nature of the injury and the cast was applied. Mrs. Rabin spent most of yesterday on the telephone answering the calls of friends and colleagues who wished the Premier a speedy recovery.

Doctors said today that Rabin would have to wear the cast for another three weeks and did not promise that he would be without pain. They said, in fact, that the pain was likely to grow stronger as the healing process progressed. Rabin, in severe pain last night, summoned his doctor who administered pain-killers. The Premier was able to resume his normal work schedule today.

JEWISH ACTIVISTS WORRIED ABOUT FAHMY, GAMASSI VISIT TO USSR

LONDON, Dec. 29 (JTA)--Jewish sources in the Soviet Union reported today that Jewish activists are worried over the unexpected visit to the USSR by Egyptian Foreign Minister Ismail Fahmy and War Minister Abdel Gamassi. The activists feel that Fahmy will discuss the issue of Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union to Israel in view of his statement two weeks ago that Israel should freeze its current population and suspend immigration for 50 years.

The two Egyptians, who arrived in Moscow today for what is believed to be discussions and arrangements for Soviet Communist Party Secretary Leonid I. Brezhnev's visit to Cairo next month, came to the Soviet capital two days after Brezhnev sent what was described in Cairo as an "urgent message" to Egyptian President Anwar Sadat.

Hitch In Brezhnev-Sadat Talks?

There was some speculation that the ministers' visit indicates that some hitch has developed in plans for the Brezhnev-Sadat talks or in the preparation of agreements they were expected to sign. The agreements included possible Soviet arms supplies to Egypt. Observers noted that Brezhnev's visit to Cairo, which had been given a steady build-up earlier this month, has not been mentioned in either Pravda or Tass in recent days.

Soviet Jewish activists noted that while Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko rejected any Soviet understanding on linking U.S.-USSR trade with emigration, and that the Soviet Union would consider such linkage as interference in her internal affairs, Russia has never flatly denied that such an understanding had been reached between Gromyko and Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger.

One factor in the Gromyko denial, as reported by Tass, was seen as an effort to placate the Arabs. The situation, therefore, according to Jewish sources, remains uncertain since giving in to Fahmy and Sadat on the issue of emigration would be tantamount to letting them interfere in the Soviet Union's internal affairs at a time when Kissinger and President Ford have been advised not to do so. Attempts to persuade prospective applicants to refrain from applying for exit visas continue throughout the USSR, the sources reported.

DOCTORS SCORE STERN TRIAL

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 29 (JTA)--Seven prominent physicians, four of them deans of medical schools in the Philadelphia area, have charged that the trial of Dr. Mikhail Stern in Vinnitsa was aimed solely at intimidating Jews who wish to emigrate from the Soviet Union. They made the accusation in a cable to the chief prosecutor in the Ukrainian city urging that the charges of "economic crimes" against Dr. Stern be dropped because they "make a mockery of Soviet justice."

The cable was signed by Drs. Joseph Di-Palma, dean of the Hahnemann Medical College; Paul Friedman, past president of the Philadelphia County Medical Society; Roger W. Sevy, dean of Temple University Medical School; Robert J. Slater, president and acting dean of the Medical College of Pennsylvania; Edward Stemmler, dean of the University of Pennsylvania Medical School; John Templeton, president of the Philadelphia County Medical Society; and Herbert

Waxman, deputy chairman of the Temple University department of medicine.

Dr. Stern, 56, a former member of the Communist Party and former head of the clinical section of the Vinnitsa Endocrinological Hospital, is accused of accepting bribes and extorting money from patients. Charges that he had poisoned patients in order to treat them have been dropped. Stern was arrested last May after his sons, Viktor and August, applied for exit visas to go to Israel.

As his trial entered its second week, Jewish sources in the Soviet Union reported that the prosecutor has demanded a sentence of nine years at a strict regime labor camp for Dr. Stern. The sentence was demanded despite the fact that virtually all of the prosecution witnesses have retracted testimony damaging to Dr. Stern.

500 Doctors Urge Stern's Freedom

In a related development, the Greater New York Conference on Soviet Jewry reported that 500 doctors in the metropolitan area have called on Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger to immediately intervene on behalf of Dr. Stern. In petitions sent to Kissinger by Rep. Lester L. Wolff (D.N.Y.), the doctors denounced the Soviet's persecution of Dr. Stern as a "moral outrage and a travesty of justice." The petitions were collected by the New York Medical Committee on Soviet Jewry, an affiliate of the GNYCSJ. Dr. Lowell E. Bellin, the city's health commissioner, is honorary chairman of the committee. Dr. Samuel Korman is chairman.

In a statement, Dr. Bellin and Dr. Korman said: "The cause of humanity and justice demands that Dr. Stern be released and the charges against him dropped. This is our appeal to Dr. Kissinger and we are hopeful that he will take appropriate action to help us achieve this goal." In addition, the two doctors stated: "There must be an enormous public outcry among his (Dr. Stern's) colleagues in the medical profession here and around the world, to pressure the Soviets to give Dr. Stern his freedom."

MRS. HELEN DALSHAIMER DEAD AT 74

BALTIMORE, Dec. 29 (JTA)--Funeral services were held here Friday for Mrs. Helen Dalshaimer, the first woman president of the World Federation of YM-YWHAs and Jewish Community Centers, who died here Thursday at the age of 74. A former president of the Baltimore Jewish community center, Mrs. Dalshaimer was an honorary board member of the National Jewish Welfare Board, a leader in the Associated Jewish Charities of Baltimore and in the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds and a past president of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods.

She was member of the executive committee of the JWB Women's Organizations Services and served on the JWB board beginning in 1946. In 1960, Mrs. Dalshaimer received the JWB Frank L. Weil Award for her "distinguished contribution to the Jewish Community Center field." During her many years of activity in the Jewish community she was also a member of the Board of Governors of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, Board of Trustees and executive committee of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, and the North American Board of the World Union for Progressive Judaism.

AMSTERDAM (JTA)--Israel's popularity in Holland has slightly dropped this year as compared to 1973. A public opinion poll conducted here last week by The Netherlands Institute for Public Opinion reveals that 37% of the population is pro-Israel compared to 40% last year.

FORD REITERATES BELIEF THAT WAR IN THE MIDEAST IS HIGHLY LIKELY

WASHINGTON, Dec. 29 (JTA)--For the second time in less than a week, President Ford has expressed his belief that there is a high likelihood of war in the Middle East. His latest statement was made yesterday, in a year-end interview with UPI in Vail, Colorado where the President and his family are on a Christmas holiday. Last Monday, syndicated columnist Joseph Alsop reported that Ford considers there is a high chance of renewed war in the Mideast within hardly more than half a year.

Ford's latest warning came when he was asked by UPI to comment on Alsop's earlier disclosure. "I firmly believe, unless there is some movement on a step-by-step basis (toward) peace in the Middle East, there's a high degree, there's a high likelihood of war," he told UPI. Declaring he was encouraged despite rising tensions in the area, Ford said: "I think all parties recognize another war would be a real tragedy, both in lives lost and the financial cost. I think its consequences could be very serious."

Asked what he planned to do about the situation, the President stated: "Keep on working, trying to get Israelis and Arabs to expand the disengagement efforts that were successful in 1973 and 1974, to broaden the agreements (between) the Israelis and the Arab nations. If we keep working on it, and get some success, I think we can prevent another bloody conflict...."

Speculation On U.S. Mideast Intervention

Ford also stated that it would be "inappropriate" to comment on recurring reports that there is a National Security Council contingency plan for the United States to take over some Arab oilfields, or help Israel to do so, if there is another Arab oil embargo. There had been some reports that the Pentagon was thinking in terms of a military intervention against the Arabs in case of a new oil embargo to protect U.S. "vital interests."

On Dec. 17, the Defense Department denied reports that American troops were being trained to take over Mideast oilfields in the event of another embargo. Department spokesman William Beecher insisted that "there has been no change in the training of any of the services of any kind" to warrant this speculation. He declined to comment on any contingency plans or to say if the Department considered as feasible a U.S. military takeover of oilfields. Beecher referred to a statement by Defense Secretary James Schlesinger that the U.S. was not contemplating any military action of any kind in the Mideast.

The speculation arose when the U.S. army's magazine, "Soldiers," reported in November on a helicopter assault training exercise near Fort Riley, Kansas, on a target named "Petrolandia." The Defense Department stated subsequently that the name was due to an unfortunate typographical error and the proper name should have been "Patrolandia." On Dec. 18, White House press secretary Ron Nessen charged that talk of U.S. military intervention in the Mideast was irresponsible.

Nevertheless, unofficial talk in certain high circles in Washington has been that U.S. Marines would attempt a takeover of Libya's vulnerable oil fields. A takeover of the Persian Gulf oil fields is seen as impractical because the wells and pipelines are highly vulnerable to sabotage.

Alsop, in his column, had stated that Ford felt that another Mideast war will have shocking con-

sequences, ranging from re-imposition of an oil embargo to the emergence of a measure of serious anti-Semitism in the U.S. Alsop also reported, "Because of Vietnam, he (Ford) does not think the American people will stand for an active role (in the Mideast) unless the Soviets intervene first. But in that event, he plainly feels that our own military intervention cannot be excluded." Nessen refused to comment on Alsop's report last week. He said the conversation between Alsop and Ford had been off the record.

25 U.S. JEWISH LEADERS LEAVE FOR ISRAEL TO DISCUSS ISSUES CONFRONTING ISRAEL, AMERICAN JEWS

NEW YORK, Dec. 29 (JTA)--A delegation of 25 leaders of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations left last night for Israel where they will confer with top government officials, military commanders and Jewish Agency spokesmen. Rabbi Israel Miller, chairman of the Conference of Presidents, headed the leadership mission, whose four-day visit will include meetings with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Foreign Minister Yigal Allon, Defense Minister Shimon Peres, Finance Minister Yehoshua Rabinowitz, Army Chief of Staff Mordecai Gur, Air Force Commander Benjamin Peled, Jewish Agency Chairman Pinhas Sapir and President Ephraim Katzir.

In a statement explaining the purpose of the mission, Rabbi Miller declared: "We are coming to Israel to take common counsel with its leaders on the issues that confront the people of Israel and the Jews of America, including the military and economic strength of the Jewish State as an essential element of the Middle East and the situation confronting Jews in the USSR and in Syria. We will be exchanging views as well on the effort to build understanding of Israel's cause among the makers of public opinion and public policy in America."

Still another purpose of the visit, Rabbi Miller said, "will be to express our unity with Israel and to voice our faith in its government and its people. We will bring with us a message of solidarity not only from American Jews but also from millions of Americans of every race, religion and ethnic origin, who demonstrated by their support of our great rally against Arab terror on November 4 that the American people reject the Palestine Liberation Organization's call for the destruction of Israel and repudiate the action of the UN in turning the General Assembly into a forum for murderers."

Many of the members of the Presidents Conference mission to Israel met last week with President Ford. In that meeting, the President reaffirmed America's commitment to Israel's integrity. "In our meetings with Israel's political, military and social welfare leaders, we will both listen and speak," Rabbi Miller stated. "We expect our conversations to be beneficial to us when we return to the U.S. and useful to the leaders of Israel as they adopt policies and draw plans to interpret those policies." . . .

JERUSALEM (JTA)--The Jewish National Fund is currently engaged in rehabilitating forests in the northern part of the country, damaged during the Yom Kippur War and other hostile actions. During the current season, JNF has planted some 200,000 saplings, among them 30,000 in the Golan Heights in memory of the armored units' soldiers who fell during the Yom Kippur War. The forests of Mount Carmel, both remnants of natural woodlands and forests planted by the JNF, will be augmented this season by 35,000 trees to be planted on an area of 350 dunams.