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HISTORIC BRUSSELS CONFERENCE ON SOVIET JEWRY

SCHINDLER URGES WORLDWIDE DRIVE TO PERMIT FREE EMIGRATION OF SOVIET JEWS; REVIVAL, REVITALIZATION FOR JEWS WHO WISH TO REMAIN IN USSR

BRUSSELS, Feb. 17 (JTA)--Rabbi Alexander M. Schindler, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, called here today for a new international drive to permit the free emigration of Soviet Jews and, at the same time, urged the Soviet Union to allow the revival and revitalization of religious and cultural life for those Jews who remain in the USSR.

He said the latter could not be done unless the Soviet authorities permitted Western Jewish scholars and teachers to come to the USSR to help create new centers for the training of rabbis, educators and teachers to assure the survival of Soviet Jewry.

Schindler, who is president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and a leader of Reform Judaism in the United States, made his appeal before 1000 Jewish and non-Jewish leaders from 30 countries attending the Second World Conference on Soviet Jewry at the Salle des Congres here which began this afternoon and concludes Thursday. (See related stories this page and P. 4.)

"We must widen our demand beyond emigration, insisting on the inalienable right of Russian Jews to live as Jews, as a distinctive religious, cultural national entity," Schindler declared. "Whatever our success in the fight for Soviet aliya, millions of our fellow Jews would live on in the Soviet Union. What meaning has their physical survival if they do not survive as Jews?"

Calls For Genuine Jewish Institutions

Schindler specifically called for the creation by Soviet authorities of a new, modern rabbinical seminary "not the present charade of a Soviet-style geriatrics center but an academy rich with the experts of our faith to transmit this knowledge to young Jews and future rabbis."

He urged further the establishment of a training center for educators and teachers, "not a dingy attic with a handful of Jews who pay obedience to a faith which is dead, but an authentic training center where in the Russian, Hebrew and Yiddish languages, professionals are developed to teach a Judaism which is actively relevant to the present generation of Jews."

The American rabbi stressed that such institutions could only become a reality if the USSR permitted Western Jewish scholars and teachers to come to the Soviet Union to help develop them. Schindler estimated that there are 200,000 Soviet Jews seeking exit visas. "We must summon the civilized world to insist that Russia abide by those conventions to which she subscribed," he said. Schindler read to the opening session of the conference a message from President Ford extending greetings to the gathering and reaffirming America's unqualified support of the right to free emigration.

CHURCH CALLS ON U.S. TO SUPPORT CAUSE OF SOVIET JEWRY WITH ALL AVAILABLE, DIPLOMATIC MEANS

By Edwin Eytan

BRUSSELS, Feb. 17 (JTA)--Sen. Frank Church (D, Idaho), a ranking member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, called on the U.S. government here today to support the cause of Soviet Jews with all its available diplomatic and political means. Church, who heads a delegation of about a dozen members of Congress participating in the Second World Conference on Soviet Jewry, made his remarks at the opening session and elaborated on his views at a press conference later.

The legislator declared, "I believe the Soviet Jews have a right not just a privilege to leave the Soviet Union, to live as Jews unhampered and not subject to discrimination. When I come here to affirm that Israel lives not by suzerainty but by right, I stand not on alien ground but in the great tradition of Western democracies."

Church omitted from his prepared speech references to President Ford and Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger in which he called on them to "more affirmatively manifest the concern of the American government for a more humane treatment of Soviet Jews." The Senator told newsmen afterwards that he thought it was "wrong to mention them (the President and Secretary of State) while abroad."

Critical Of Jackson Amendment

Church, at his press conference, responded to a message to Brussels II from Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D, Wash.), an aspirant for the 1976 Democratic Presidential nomination, who promised that "We shall not retreat" from backing demands for Soviet emigration with material means.

Church, who supported the Jackson Amendment to the Trade Reform Act that linked U.S. trade benefits for the USSR with Soviet emigration policy, told reporters here that he has since come to take a different view. He said the Jackson Amendment has resulted "in fewer Jews being allowed to leave; practically, we have thus lost ground."

Church proposed that U.S. support for Soviet Jews be based more on "moral pressure being brought to bear on the Soviet Union." He said the U.S. "should underseal at every opportunity it has, the right of individuals to leave the Soviet Union" and should do so "at any time it negotiates with the Soviet government and it should clearly show how seriously it views this issue." Church declined to say whether he thought the U.S. should back this demand with material conditions.

First Appropriate Step Taken By USSR

Premier Yitzhak Rabin, of Israel, in a message to the conference, noted that "The present leadership of the Soviet Union has taken the first appropriate step by recognizing in principle the right of Jews who so wish to emigrate to Israel." However, he added, "We will not reconcile ourselves to the continuing policy of intimidation and suffer-

ing inflicted on very many who seek permission to emigrate, so as to intimidate others from emigration. We, the Jewish people, will forever stand firm in our support of the religious and national rights of our Soviet Jewish brethren."

Theme: 'Let My People Go'

"Let my people go" was the theme sounded by all of the speakers as Brussels II opened with the entry into the hall of several hundred Soviet Jews who have immigrated to Israel. Thirty-five Soviet Jews, led by former Red Army Maj. Grisha Feigin, are members of the Israeli delegation to the conference. They waved a blue flag with a gold Star of David which Feigin said was the flag of Soviet Jewry. He presented it to the conference's honorary president, former-Israeli Premier Golda Meir.

Altogether, 550 Soviet Jews, now citizens of Israel, are attending the conference. A group of 100 of them will close the historic gathering Thursday with performances of Soviet Jewish songs and dances.

Yosef Almog, chairman of the World Zionist Organization Executive and acting chairman of the Jewish Agency, who is heading the Israeli delegation to the conference, promised that Israel and the Jewish people will do all in their power to further and facilitate the integration of Soviet Jewish immigrants in Israel.

Among other opening speakers here today were David Susskind, president of the Belgian Jewish community, who declared that Soviet Jewry will never again be abandoned and never forsaken; Claude Kellman, of France, president of the Council of Europe, who pledged to Soviet Jews: "Your cause will be our cause and your struggle our struggle"; and Nissim Gaon, president of the World Sephardi Federation, who stressed that all Jews, whatever their origin, were united in their solidarity for Soviet Jewry's claim.

Arab Conference Postponed

As Brussels II began, Arab sources here announced that the Palestine Liberation Organization world conference to deal with the Palestinian issue and to expose "the true face of Zionism," which had been scheduled to begin in Brussels Feb. 25, has been postponed until the spring. They gave no date. Reliable sources said the postponement was for technical reasons.

Yesterday, the Russians held an elaborate news conference here which included a seven-man Soviet Jewish delegation sent here to rebut statements by conference spokesmen. One of the Jews, Samuel Ziv, said "there is no Jewish problem in the Soviet Union and all those who want to leave can do so." The delegation was subjected to a barrage of questions, sometimes angry, often provocative by reporters who wanted to know the fate of individual arrested Jews and the reasons for Soviet anti-Jewish measures.

KNESSET SPEAKER SENDS GREETINGS

JERUSALEM, Feb. 17 (JTA)--Knesset Speaker Yisrael Yeshayahu opened today's Knesset session by reading a message he had sent on behalf of the Knesset to the Brussels conference. The message expressed "full support for and identification with" the aims and purposes of the conference. The world could not ignore the cry "Let My People Go," Yeshayahu wrote, especially after all that had happened to the Jewish people. The issue was unrelated to the Soviet system of

government, he stressed. He hoped the Kremlin would turn a sympathetic ear to the expressions of solidarity by world Jewry and men of goodwill.

WITHDRAWAL TO NEW DEFENSE LINES

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, Feb. 17 (JTA)--Israeli forces were occupied today with the final phases of their withdrawal to new defense lines in Sinai. The evacuation is expected to be completed by Sunday, the deadline established by the interim accord signed with Egypt last September.

Today, Israeli troops pulled out of the southern sector of the central Sinai region--from south of the Mittle Pass to the Ras Sudar area. Indonesian troops of the United Nations Emergency Force (UNEF) immediately took over the evacuated area which will be part of the new UN buffer zone between Israeli and Egyptian lines.

Tomorrow the Israeli flag will be lowered and the UN flag raised over a section of the old Bar-lev line code-named "Budapest," the only Israeli stronghold to withstand the Egyptian attack on the first day of the Yom Kippur War. The stronghold was dismantled by Israeli army engineers. Israeli forces will also leave Balooza and Romani, site of an old railroad station dating from World War I. Part of the installations, including an airstrip, has been left intact for UN use.

Earlier this week, increased military activity was reported in the Egyptian zone east of the Suez Canal. Helicopters were seen flying over the area and it was assumed that the Egyptians were preparing to move into the old UN buffer zone that will be handed back to them under terms of the interim accord.

Beginning Of Road To Peace

As the Israeli forces moved toward what will be their new permanent defense lines east of the Mittle and Gidi Passes, their commander reminisced to newsmen about an earlier evacuation over a year ago when, under the terms of the cease-fire that ended the Yom Kippur War, Israeli forces withdrew from the large salient they held west of the Suez Canal in Egypt proper.

The commander whose first name, Micha, was permitted to be made public, said the earlier pull-back was much more difficult psychologically because it meant leaving a battlefield and lost comrades. The present evacuation, he said, is part of an agreement that holds out hope, however slight, of being the beginning of the road to peace.

It was noted in connection with the Israeli evacuation, that UNEF would have to increase the size of its forces in order to effectively patrol the longer lines in Sinai.

ANTI-SEMITIC CARTOON

MEXICO CITY, Feb. 17 (JTA)--In a reaction to the boycott of Mexico by American and Canadian Jewish tourists, one Mexican daily has printed an obvious anti-Semitic cartoon aimed at the tourists. A cartoonist, Helioflores, in the newspaper El Universal, drew a Jewish figure in the style reminiscent of Julius Steicher's Stuermer during the Nazi period. The figure was shown painting on a wall the word "Vaca-Sionismo," an apparent pun on the words vacation and Zionism. The "S" was in the shape of the symbol for the American dollar.

GENEVA (JTA)--The World ORT Union executive committee has approved a record \$45.5 million budget for 1976, of which nearly \$25 million is earmarked for ORT schools in Israel and over \$12 million in France.

REPORT SYRIA, JORDAN ARE MOVING TOWARD ESTABLISHING A FEDERATION

By Tuvia Mendelson

JERUSALEM, Feb. 17 (JTA)--"Well informed West Bank sources" say that Jordan and Syria are moving toward the establishment of a federation to be known as the "United Arab State" consisting of two autonomous regions having a combined central government, a unified army and command and a joint parliament that will meet alternately in Amman and Damascus.

The sources were quoted in an article published in the Jerusalem Post today by its Middle East correspondent Anan Safadi. According to the writer, the federation will be proclaimed upon completion of discussions that the sources say have been going on for eight months. These discussions are related to the integration of the policies and economies of the two countries and are aimed at drafting a joint constitution that will seek to reconcile the differences inherent in the socialist regime in Syria and the Jordanian monarchy, the Post said.

Other matters that have to be settled, the sources said, are the presidency and the location of the capital of the projected federation. Under the plan, Syria and Jordan will each become an autonomous region of the "United Arab State." President Hafez Assad will continue to be chief of state of Syria and King Hussein will continue to rule in Jordan. But the West Bank informants who, according to Safadi have close ties with Amman, said Hussein has indicated that he is prepared to be second in command to Assad.

Due By Next June

The new federation will come into being by next June "unless unforeseen developments cause difficulties between the two countries," the informants told the Post. Hussein and Assad are scheduled to meet next month before the Jordanian ruler leaves on an extensive trip abroad that will take him to the U.S., Mexico, Japan and Australia.

Observers here, commenting on the report, said Hussein may be willing to enter into a federation with Syria even to the extent of deferring to Assad in order to guarantee the political survival of his Hashemite regime which has been criticized in the Arab world by supporters of the Palestine Liberation Organization. Of all the Arab states, Syria is the most ardent champion of the PLO and is also presently the largest recipient of Soviet arms.

Syria has a history of linkages with other Arab countries. In 1958 it joined with Egypt, under the late President Gamal Abdel Nasser, to form the United Arab Republic. The UAR lasted only three years and was replaced in 1971 by a limited union with Egypt and Libya known as the Federation of Arab Republics which Sudan was supposed to join but did not. A merger between Libya and Egypt, projected in 1973, before the Yom Kippur War, also failed to materialize.

(In Washington, State Department spokesman John Trattner said today he had no evidence to confirm the report from Israel.)

ISRAEL WILL MAKE NO CONCESSIONS TO RETAIN UNDOF WHEN ITS MANDATE ENDS

JERUSALEM, Feb. 17 (JTA)--Israel served notice today that it will make no concessions to retain the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF) on the Golan Heights when its mandate expires May 31 and made it clear that it

considers UNDOF's continued presence "an inseparable part of the disengagement agreement between Israel and Syria" signed in 1974.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman said "Israel certainly will not initiate removal of the force but it will not agree to making renewal dependent on Israeli concessions or international commitments to the Syrians at Israel's expense." He said "The presence of the UN observer force on the Golan Heights is an inseparable part of the disengagement agreement between Israel and Syria. No blackmail efforts will force Israel to make any commitments in advance."

The spokesman was apparently referring to the situation of last Nov. 30 when Syria agreed to a six-month extension of UNDOF only after the UN Security Council acceded to Damascus' demand to hold a special debate on the Middle East with the participation of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

1976 IS ISRAEL'S SELF-HELP YEAR

MIAMI BEACH, Feb. 17 (JTA)--Zev Sher, Israel's Economic Minister in the United States, speaking at the 10th annual conference of the Israel Histadrut Foundation today, said that "1976 is Israel's self-help year." Sher emphasized "there is no crisis in Israel but its problems are severe and require more than the usual corrective measures suggested in economic text books."

He stated that Israel would try to achieve economic self-sufficiency by the mid-1980s when it would no longer require substantial American assistance. Israel's economic problems stem from two sources, he said, its heavy military needs and the impact of the Arab boycott which has made it more difficult to find foreign markets. Countering this, Israel is seeking customers in the European Common Market and the United States, where the American Jewish community can help promote the sale of Israeli goods, Sher said.

Sher stated that drastic economies being instituted by the Israel government will result in the closing of a thousand classrooms in the public school system and a 10 percent budget cut for institutions of higher learning; subsidies to Kupat Holim for hospital services are being cut and fees for medicine will be charged. Especially severe will be the reduction in the program for housing for young couples.

Ford Administration Criticized

Speaking to more than 1000 persons last night, Simon Weber, editor of the Jewish Daily Forward, criticized the Ford Administration for squeezing out Daniel P. Moynihan from his post as United Nations Ambassador and for proposing former Pennsylvania Governor William Scranton as his replacement. He recalled that Scranton had proposed an "even-handed policy" which in essence was unfavorable to Israel.

Weber also sharply criticized Secretary of State Henry A. Kissinger for preventing a major Israeli victory during the Yom Kippur War. He said Kissinger did not understand either the Arabs or Israel. "While Mr. Kissinger is not an enemy of Israel, he does not know where his policy is leading," he said.

JERUSALEM (JTA)--Yosef Almog, World Zionist Organization Executive chairman, will participate in a meeting of Israeli Ambassadors and Consuls to Latin American countries to be held in Costa Rica next month, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency was informed Tuesday.

SPECIAL INTERVIEW**RIVLIN: BRUSSELS II WILL PLAN NEW EFFORTS ON BEHALF OF SOVIET JEWRY**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 17 (JTA)--It is exactly five years since the first World Conference on Soviet Jewry was held in Brussels. The experience of that conference, and of the intervening five years, both point strongly to the need of another such conference, said Moshe Rivlin, Jewish Agency director-general, and a prime mover behind the second World Conference which opened today.

The second conference will be an occasion for stocktaking, and for planning new efforts on behalf of Soviet Jewry, Rivlin told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency before his departure for Brussels. It will also be a massive demonstration of Jewish and general solidarity with the cause of Soviet Jewry's right to free aliya, he said.

The first conference, he recalled, was held under the shadow of the Leningrad trial. Some of the trial victims are still in prison; others have since been released and are in Israel. Aliya from the Soviet Union was still almost non-existent. But the conference organizers then were confident that they reflected a great, though as yet silent, welling up of Jewish nationalist feeling within the Soviet Union.

If added proof were needed, Rivlin said, it was supplied by the Soviet authorities themselves, who stepped up their persecution of Jewish activists and made strenuous propaganda efforts to disparage the 1971 conference and the motives of its organizers. In the five years since then, 115,000 Soviet Jews have emigrated, more than 100,000 of them to Israel. In the past year, however, there has been a steep fall-off in Soviet aliya, Rivlin noted, and at the same time increased harassment of would-be emigrants by the authorities.

Time Again To Arouse Public Opinion.

"We are convinced," he said, "that the time has come to arouse public opinion again.... That is, after all, our only weapon." Once again, the Soviets are proving to be sensitive to public opinion, Rivlin observed. He cited their current, almost frantic efforts to counter this week's conference by a barrage of hostile propaganda aimed at the Western press in Moscow, and through them at the Western world as a whole.

"Some say," Rivlin continued, "that the aliya of the 100,000-plus has in effect solved the problem of Soviet Jewry. We must show, dramatically through this conference, that that is not the case." If the conference facilitates a new wave of aliya, as its organizers hope, then the drop-out rate (of emigrants who do not go on to Israel) will almost inevitably fall, Rivlin predicted. The wave will of itself sweep the emigrants towards Israel, he said.

He added, with regard to the embarrassing problem of drop-outs: "I am concerned with those who do want to come to Israel. There is no reason to punish them because of those who don't want to come. I am not the judge of anyone who doesn't want to come." But, Rivlin added, "Our task is to make every effort to facilitate the free exit of anyone who does want to live in Israel."

Some drop-outs, he believes, are created by the Soviets themselves who deliberately allow non-Zionists to leave. Some, too, is caused by discouraging letters from Israel. The discouraging letters, of course, are often the results of absorption difficulties of Soviet olim who pour out their heavy hearts to friends and relatives back

home. But over the past five years, Rivlin said, there has been a tremendous increase in understanding on both sides. Israelis and Israeli officialdom have learned a lot and so, too, have the Soviet immigrants.

Rivlin cited the business-like atmosphere at the recent national convention of Soviet immigrants, different from the previous convention in Beersheba in 1973 which broke up in pandemonium as a result of the bitter dissatisfaction which many of the delegates voiced, with the government and with their own leaders.

Must Avoid Anti-Sovietism Taint

The Israeli delegation to Brussels this time is made up half of Soviet immigrants and half of veteran Israelis. The Soviets, said Rivlin, represent a wide cross-section of views and groups among the newcomers. They represent, too, in effect, Soviet Jewry itself, which cannot send its own delegates.

Above all, Rivlin said, the conference must avoid any taint of "anti-Sovietism per se," the charge which the Soviet propagandists are leveling against it. As far as he is aware, he said, there are no forces from within the 1000-odd delegates pulling in that direction.

The conference will put emphasis on those parts of the Helsinki East-West agreement (which ended the European Security Conference last year) that called for the free movement of people. "The Russians signed the agreement and the conference will demand that they honor their signature," Rivlin said.

On a practical level, the conference will consider proposals for new forms of public action designed to stir the Soviets into letting Jews leave. The Kremlin's relations with the West are constantly changing, constantly developing, Rivlin noted. The conference will try to focus on new countries, new organizations; now political groupings in the West which could perhaps be brought to exert their influence upon the Kremlin on behalf of Soviet Jewry, he said.

UNITY WITH SOVIET JEWRY

TEL AVIV, Feb. 17 (JTA)--Unity with Soviet Jews was the watch-word in Israel today as 1000 delegates from 30 countries, including Israel, assembled in Brussels for the second World Conference on Soviet Jewry. Several thousand Tel Aviv residents, including many Soviet immigrants, university and high school students, participated in a solidarity rally in the municipal square. They were addressed by Social Welfare Minister Zevulun Hammer and Acting Mayor Yigal Grippel.

Both speakers stressed that only Jewish solidarity behind the struggle of Soviet Jews to emigrate could overcome what they described as the present-day "Pharaohs"--the Soviet authorities. Meanwhile, Premier Yitzhak Rabin was at Ben Gurion Airport to see off former Premier Golda Meir and Likud leader Menachem Begin who departed for Brussels this morning.

The only sour note in the otherwise solid national front on behalf of Soviet Jewry was sounded by Meir Wilner, head of the pro-Moscow Rakah Communist Party. Wilner claimed the Brussels conference was nothing but a tool for incitement against the Soviet Union. He claimed that Jews enjoy all civil rights and freedom in the USSR.