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SOUTH LEBANESE VILLAGERS, FARMERS GET APPROVAL TO WORK IN ISRAEL

By Yitzhak Shargit

TEL AVIV, Aug. 1 (JTA) -- Israel has decided to let villagers and farmers from southern Lebanon work in Israel, Labor Minister Moshe Baram announced yesterday. The first group of 17 came through the security fence today and the number is expected to grow to 170 in the next several days.

The 17 Lebanese workers, whose names were withheld and whose pictures were forbidden to be taken because of fear of terrorist reprisals, went to work in the Dubek Cigarette Co.'s tobacco sorting plant in Safad. They will be paid Israeli wages and will be insured against job accidents on the same basis as workers from the West Bank. The workers were met in Israel by the military commander of the northern region and by the Labor Exchange man for the area.

The rest of the Lebanese workers, who're scheduled to arrive this week, will be employed by the Jewish National Fund in afforestation work in northern Israel. However, opposition to the employment of large numbers of Lebanese workers have come from such local labor leaders as Yaakov Pilar, secretary of the Building Workers Union in the northern Galilee.

"We are having trouble enough finding work for our own members," Pilar said declaring that his union would not allow the Lebanese to be employed in construction work. "We should provide them with food and medical services as humanitarian gesture but we cannot give them our livelihood," he said.

Fence Originated In 1930s

The fence along the northern border, which is now being called "the good fence," goes back to the 1930s when the British Mandate government put up a fence to prevent the entry into Palestine of armed Arab gangs. The British asked Solel Boneh to build the fence which entrusted the work to the Haganah. It was during the construction that the late Yitzhak Sadeh, the founder of the Palmach, began moulding the image of the Haganah since the work on the fence gave him the opportunity to legally train soldiers.

Although the fence was not needed during World War II Jewish settlers along the border maintained it and it became the Israeli-Lebanese border after the War of Independence in 1948. Over the years Israel has spent millions of Pounds strengthening and re-enforcing it.

Lebanese Situation Under Scrutiny

Meanwhile, Defense Minister Shimon Peres said that Israel has to closely watch the situation in southern Lebanon since the area now exists in a vacuum. "We must carefully watch to see if and by what this vacuum is filled," Peres said in a television interview. He said while the area poses no threat to Israel now the question is what will happen in the future. Peres noted that Israel has not intervened

in the Lebanese strife even though the Palestine Liberation Organization has caused a political and geographic rift in the area whose affects will be felt for a long time. He said it has been estimated that the number of persons killed in the Lebanese civil war has passed the 40,000 mark and that more than one million persons have left the country.

WORLD CONCLAVE OF JEWISH JOURNALISTS

TEL AVIV, Aug. 1 (JTA) -- A world conference of Jewish journalists from the Jewish and general press will take place in Jerusalem January 11 - 14, 1976. The decision to hold this meeting was taken by the World Federation of Jewish Journalists in conjunction with the World Zionist Organization, the Foreign Ministry, the World Jewish Congress and the government tourist office.

At a meeting this weekend at Beth Sokolow, it was agreed that the conference would deal with such issues as the role of the Jewish press in the struggle for the Jewish continuity, the struggle against the anti-Semitism and the struggle for Jewish heritage, tradition and values, and the status of Jewish journalists.

The relationship between Israel and the diaspora will be the subject of a special session during the conference, it was decided. It was also proposed to hold a symposium on the Jewish press and its role in contemporary Jewish life at a special session to be held at the home of President Ephraim Katzir in Jerusalem.

U.S. FEDERAL DEPARTMENTS CANCEL SPEAKERS AT MAIN UNIVERSITY'S MIDEAST-U.S. BUSINESS CONFERENCE

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1 (JTA) -- The decision of the U.S. Department of Commerce to cancel its participation in the University of Maine's Middle East American business conference has been followed by withdrawal of speakers representing three other federal departments, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency has learned.

Horace Webb, Commerce's communications director, said it "is my understanding" that the government speakers scheduled to take part in the five-day conference starting tomorrow at the university's campus will not take part.

According to a report from the conference site, upwards of 350 Americans and Mid-East visitors have registered and paid a fee of \$1,000 each. Of these, more than 200 were from Iran and Arab states, including Egypt, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia.

Panelists in the conference originally included four representatives from Commerce along with two field officers who were to pass out information about international trade. Speakers also were scheduled from the departments of State, Treasury and Justice. Late last week, the Commerce Department withdrew its field representatives from the conference. The decision on the speakers were said to have been taken after aspects of the conference, including a discussion of how American firms could get off the Arab blacklist were reviewed.

Raps Aims Of "A Minority Group"

Reacting to the Commerce Department's decision, John R. Brown, Jr., the conference director, charged in a telegram to Commerce Secretary Elliot Richardson that "the subversion of a major department of the U.S. government to the aims of a minority group with foreign allegiances is an insidious condition which cannot be tolerated.

Brown was presumed to be referring to Jewish organizations which have protested against the exclusion of Israel in the original planning and discussion of means to get around the Arab boycott of Israel and American firms owned or managed by Jews.

Responding to Brown's assertion, Peter Hale, director of the Commerce Department's acting group for the Near East, telegraphed Brown, stating: "Your allegations that our decision was somehow based upon religious or political pressures are entirely unfounded and do credit to no one."

Hale reminded Brown that he had broken his pledge to the government since he had assured him in June that the discussion of the Arab boycott would be a limited to an agenda item called "the Legal Framework of the Boycott." But now, Hale said, panelists plan to tell participants at the conference how to be de-listed. "The principle way for companies to be de-listed from the blacklist is to comply in some degree with the requirements of the boycott," Hale said, noting that Congress has charged the Department of Commerce with encouraging American firms not to comply with it.

Hale also noted that when the Commerce Department participates in a conference on the Middle East, "generally Israel should not be excluded." He said the conference had not included Israel but now, "belatedly you have offered Israel representatives an opportunity to participate."

HOUSE ACTS ON ARAB BOYCOTT

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Aug. 1 (JTA) -- Another strong measure has advanced in Congress to counter the Arab economic boycott against Israel and discrimination against American Jews and companies doing business with Israel.

The House, by a voice vote, and without dissent, adopted an amendment Thursday to the International Banking Act that requires foreign banks, in their operations in the United States, to adhere to national and state civil rights laws in the same manner as American banks. They will not be permitted to do business in the U.S. unless they agree to comply with these laws. The amendment has gone to the Senate for approval.

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency was informed by the House Subcommittee on financial institutions led by Rep. Fernand St. Germain (D, R.I.) that about 50 foreign banks operate in more than one state, and approximately the same number within one state. Under the amendment, all would be covered by federal and state laws that bar discrimination on grounds of race, religion or sex.

The author of the amendment aimed at stopping Arab boycott-related discrimination is Rep. James J. Blanchard (D Mich), a first-term Congressman who declared, "The boycott has involved religious discrimination against

persons of the Jewish faith." That kind of discrimination "has no place in the United States," he added.

Inducements For Discrimination

Blanchard noted that James Smith, U.S. Comptroller of the Currency, last year notified all banks in the nation that some might have been offered loans by foreign investors on the condition that "no member of the Jewish faith sit on the bank's board of directors or control any significant amount of stock." Smith's letter warned against cooperating with such offers.

Blanchard also cited the testimony of a Commerce Department lawyer that some American firms have reported receiving requests to engage in religious discrimination in connection with the boycott and he mentioned the refusal of former Secretary of Commerce Rogers Morton to deliver to Congress information on compliance by U.S. firms with the Arab boycott.

The purpose of his amendment, Blanchard said, is "to clarify the views of Congress on discrimination, for all of those both in this country and abroad who are uncertain about our intentions." Enforcement of his amendment would be put in the hands of bank regulatory agencies such as the Federal Reserve System.

Earlier last week the Senate adopted a provision in its Tax Reform Act that would bar a tax benefits to American concerns that boycott Israel and business executives would face up to a year in jail if they failed to report any earnings in any country that requires participation in a boycott. These provisions were adopted 86-1 and is now in the House for its consideration.

EGYPTIAN VIOLATIONS CITED

TEL AVIV, Aug. 1 (JTA) -- Defense Minister Shimon Peres revealed today that Israel has lodged a complaint with Gen. Ensis Sillasvuo, the commander of the UN peace-keeping force, about a number of violations of the interim Sinai agreement by Egypt. These violations, Peres told the Cabinet, included a flight of Egyptian helicopters over the buffer zone, the movement of Bedouins from the north to the south in the buffer zone and the larger than permitted number of army regiments east of the Suez Canal. Sillasvuo, who met with Peres Friday, promised to take up the complaint with the Egyptians.

ISRAELI ATHLETE LOSES OUT

MONTREAL, Aug. 1 (JTA) -- Esther Roth, Israel's top entry in the 1976 Olympics, finished sixth in the women's 100-meter hurdles but set a new Israeli record of 13.04 seconds. This beat her semi-finals time of 13.06 seconds which had bettered her previous record of 13.09 seconds. Ms. Roth, 24, was the only member of the 1972 Israeli Olympics team, 11 of whose members were massacred by Arab terrorists in Munich, on the current Israeli team.

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- The Knesset wound up its summer schedule last Wednesday with a marathon nine-hour session and went into recess until after the Sukkot festival.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES THE POSSIBLE DREAM

By Murray Zuckoff

NEW YORK, Aug. 1 (JTA) -- Bruce Cohen is a young Reform rabbi with a mission -- and a dream. He wants to find a way to build Jewish-Arab cooperation in Israel. At the age of 31, after three years as assistant rabbi at Temple Mishkan Israel in Hamden, Conn., Cohen is going to Israel to live among Arabs in what he sees as the first step in the development of a "Jewish peace corps." He calls his idea "Project 5737," which stands for the next year in the Jewish calendar.

A graduate of Cornell University's School of Industrial and Labor Relations and a former neighborhood organizer among Black and Hispanic groups in Newark, N.J. and in East Harlem, N.Y., Cohen says he believes that he could offer "an added dimension to help understand and seek solutions to Israel's most complex problem: how to create social conditions that allow both Israel's Jewish citizens, coming primarily from the Third World, and its Arab citizens to develop along parallel -- but not necessarily mutually exclusive -- lines of economic, social and cultural development."

Cohen, who has issued a feasibility study of "possible American Jewish involvement in Arab-Jewish projects of cooperation and in Israeli programs to uplift Edot ha Mizrach -- Afro-Asian Jewish refugees in Israel," says this "becomes more apparent daily."

As evidence for this he cites the continuing "discontent within Edot ha Mizrach" which foments riots and disaffection. "As an index of this complex social malaise, we should note that more people emigrated than immigrated (to Israel) during this past year." In addition, Cohen also notes that in this past year, Arab riots in the occupied territories became more frequent and violent.

"More importantly," he states, "within Israel's established and internationally recognized borders of 1948, Arabs, who heretofore had displayed acceptance and often tacit support of existing governmental policies, demonstrated their displeasure in the streets and in the polling booth."

Question To Be Asked

The question which must be asked, Cohen states in his feasibility study, is: "Are we witnessing a dramatic turning point in Israel's ability to survive?" Furthermore, "How long can a nation of three million citizens remain mobilized, absorb recurrent social discontent from over half of its populace, experience an increase in emigration as well as a considerable decrease in immigration, confront spiraling inflation and unmet social needs amidst an international economic turndown?"

Cohen, who affirms that he is a Zionist, says it is "understandable" that at a time when Israel is being attacked on all sides and the image of Zionism is falsified wholesale, the Israeli government must devote its prime attention to the more pressing fronts -- the political, economic and military spheres. "But, who does seek to confront the fact that the ethical and moral dream of the early Zionists is rapidly eroding?" he asks.

Cohen believes that in order to tackle these myriad problems, which he sees as intercon-

nected, "the intellectual and professional expertise of the diaspora remains the major untapped resource of an already overburdened and overtaxed Israeli society." The parallel development of Edot ha Mizrach and the Arabs in Israel "must become a primary goal of the American Jewish community's agenda," he says.

Feels Certain Of Receptivity

The rabbi says he sees no problem in evoking American Jewish interest in his project nor in recruiting the manpower necessary for his Jewish peace corps. "The generation that sat in at the Woolworth lunch counters for social integration, occupied Sproul Plaza for free speech, marched on the Pentagon for peace and gathered at Woodstock for human harmony, retains its passion for social justice. But it lacks the modus operandi for achieving this goal."

Cohen feels certain that there is receptivity to a solidly worked out program to do something in Israel to deal with these problems. Instead of wallowing in what he sees as feelings of depression, impotency and worthlessness which now permeate the American Jewish community because it lacks "any viable means to effectuate our ideals," ways should be explored by the American Jewish community leadership to involve professional social workers, teachers, doctors and scientists "who can assist the Edot ha Mizrach and the Arab community in Israel, thereby strengthening the Zionist ideal of a just and righteous society," Cohen states.

An Opportunity At Hand

In addition, he notes, "the disenchanting of our generation" can be offered the opportunity "to also act upon their ideals by committing themselves to at least two years of service towards achieving social cohesion among Israel's diverse cultures." The real potential for active involvement in the unmet social needs of Israel on the part of the college generation of the sixties may be evidenced by the fact "that some of the brightest and most dedicated of my colleagues at Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion (Cincinnati campus) are presently in Israel working in social welfare activities," Cohen points out, citing Rabbis Myron Kinberg, James Ponet, Mayer Perelmutter and David Forman.

There are also, he observes, several skilled and dedicated American Jews in Israel endeavoring to bridge the gap between Jews and Arabs. Among them, he says, are Jack Cohen of Hillel, Bernard Resnikoff of the American Jewish Committee and Richard Hirsch of the World Union of Progressive Judaism.

Encouragement From Diverse Elements

Cohen, who is now preparing research for Project 5737 in New York City and New Haven, reports he is receiving encouragement from major American Zionist and Jewish organizations for his venture. The New Haven Jewish Federation, he says, is the fiscal agent for his project which will cost an estimated \$15,000 for the first year. He also has received assurances of help for his study of Arab-Jewish relations in Israel from such diverse elements as Givat Haviva, the Israeli Mapam-Kibbutz Ha-Artzi Educational Institution involved in furthering Arab-Jewish cooperation and understand-

ing, and from Prof. Joseph W. Eaton, director of the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public and International Affairs Pitt-Haifa Program.

Cohen also expects to raise funds for his program within the next two weeks before leaving for Israel by holding "coffee hours" in various communities, including Buffalo, Montreal and Toronto. He says he has also been assured of receiving IL 1500 a month and office space in Israel as well as plane fare from the Abbie Nathan Shalom Peace Foundation.

From Blueprint To Reality

On arriving in Israel he will commence studies of the Arab community and learn Arabic as well as perfect speaking Hebrew at Givat Haviva, interview Israeli officials working with the Arab sector and Arab and Edot ha Mizrach community leaders, meet with representatives of American Jewish organizations, find an Arab colleague for the knottier communications problems and live in Arab and Edot ha Mizrach communities. Cohen has worked out a complete timetable for activities through March, 1977.

But, he was asked, will what is now basically a blueprint be capable of being transformed into a viable reality. Cohen responded by noting that his blueprint is based on earlier efforts in Palestine that met some success in the late 1920s and early 1930s, such as Brith Shalom and Ichud which were led by such giants of Zionism as Martin Buber, Arthur Ruppin, Hugo Bergmann, Dr. Judah Magnes and Henrietta Szold.

In addition, he smiled, "I am a Zionist. Reform Judaism evolved as a response to use of ceremony and observance for its own sake. It was a new affirmation of the prophetic, ethical and moral elements in Judaism. This accords with the principles of early Zionism -- that Israel should be 'a light unto the nation.' Project 5737, I hope, will help Israel to be the kind of example of social justice and internal harmony which will inspire all nations in the way the founders of Zionism intended it should."

FOUR NIGHTS OF DEMONSTRATIONS GREET SOVIET CULTURAL FESTIVAL

AMBLER, Pa., Aug. 1 (JTA) -- Four nights of protest demonstrations against the continued harassment of Soviet Jews ended Thursday night as the Soviet festival of music and dance appeared at the Temple University Music Festival here. Members of the Soviet Jewry Council of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Philadelphia held banners and distributed literature at all four performances.

At the demonstration, Joseph Smukler and Stuart Wurtman, co-chairman of the Soviet Jewry Council, presented a statement to Johnson Ashley, manager of the Russian performing company. The statement urged the Soviet government to end its imprisonment of more than 40 Soviet Jewish prisoners of conscience. Copies of the statement in English and Russian were provided for all troupe members.

Ashley told reporters that he would distribute the statement to the 170 performers, emphasizing, "They will probably take it with a grain of salt." He also noted that "because the performers have the statement does not mean it will reach Soviet authorities."

Smukler and Wurtman said the demonstrations were not staged to protest the appearance of the Russians. Rather, they were aimed at

calling attention to the plight of Soviet Jews denied the right to emigrate and the right to practice their religion in freedom.

Because of the controversy surrounding the performance, Dr. Marvin Wachman, Temple University president, issued a statement welcoming the Russians to the festival, but at the same time "supporting the right of the Council to inform our patrons of its concerns about emigration policies of the Soviet Union."

The audience received pamphlets upon entering which described Soviet Jewish performers currently denied exit visas to emigrate to Israel to practice their profession. Enclosed was a public opinion card addressed to Soviet Communist Party Secretary Leonid I. Brezhnev which was to be mailed by JCRC upon return to an information table set up at the entrance doors. A random sampling of patrons browsing through the pamphlet brought mixed reactions, according to Alex Einbinder, a Jewish Exponent reporter.

One woman said she would fill in the postcard. Another commented, "It does not concern me." A middle-aged man reported "that as a non-Jew I have always felt strongly about this; I will mail the card myself." More than 200 demonstrators nightly lined the roadway leading to the Festival carrying placards. A sampling of the signs: "Soviets Arm World Terrorists"; Mayer Gorbakov, Violinist, Is not Playing Tonight"; Dr. Mikhail Shtern, Boris Penson in Prison. Crime: Sought Freedom": "Soviet Package Tax Unfair to Jews."

AGNEW DENIES HE IS A BIGOT

NEW YORK, Aug. 1 (JTA) -- Former Vice President Spiro Agnew defended his right to criticize Israel while denying he was anti-Semitic. "I'm entitled to my opinion without being followed around by the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League and being accused of being a bigot," he said in an interview on ABC-TV's "Good Morning America" show. "I could be wrong, but I'm not a bigot."

The ADL charged Agnew last week with taking over a tax-exempt foundation, Education for Democracy, for the purpose of organizing a movement to reflect his anti-Israel, pro-Arab views.

Victor Gold, Agnew's press secretary when he was Vice President, appearing on the same program last Thursday, took issue with an article published by the foundation's newsletter which criticized the United States for not going along with a United Nations General Assembly vote that Gold said "would have effectively abolished and done away with Israel."

Agnew said he agreed that the article was "a biased piece." But he added, "What I am defending myself against is a charge of anti-Semitism, not the fact that I may be biased -- not even the fact that I may be wrong in my opinion."

Agnew repeated his charge that the major American news media "favors the Israeli position and does not in a balanced way present the other equities." However, he agreed that major newspapers were now becoming "a little more objective." Agnew said he was not charging a conspiracy in the media. "I say that the American people have been routinely exposed to quite a lot of pro-Israeli propaganda."