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KGB TRIES TO PRESSURE MOSCOW JEWS TO REFRAIN FROM HOLDING CONFERENCE

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, Dec. 13 (JTA)--Details of the KGB interrogation of Moscow Jews who are organizing a symposium on the state of Jewish culture in the Soviet Union, were published here today. The newspaper Maariv also published what it said was the contents of criminal file No. 41035 opened by the KGB against the organizers who are charged with "spreading material which slanders the Soviet Union and Soviet society."

The material covers the questioning which began last Friday and is continuing in Moscow today and tomorrow. According to Maariv it was smuggled to Western sources by Pavel Abramowitz, one of the organizers of the symposium scheduled to be held Dec. 21-23. The charges and interrogations are aimed at banning the symposium on grounds that it is influenced by anti-Soviet elements abroad, the nature of the questions indicated.

Abramowitz, a 36-year-old electronics engineer who has been seeking an exit visa since 1970, took detailed notes during 4 1/2 hours of interrogation and managed to retain them. The notes taken by others were confiscated by the Soviet authorities, Maariv said. According to the report, the questioning started Friday when Joseph Bellin, his wife Dina and her mother, Michael Tzlenoff, Felix Kandel, Arkadi Meir and Yuli Kosharovski were ordered to appear at KGB headquarters.

Questioned For Eight Hours

On the same day, Vladimir Prestin, Vladimir Lazarus and Abramowitz were summoned to the Attorney General's office. Prestin and Lazarus were questioned for over eight hours by senior officials, surnamed Pantyochin and Borowik. Abramowitz was interrogated by an official surnamed Laritchev. The latter presented him with 60 questions relating to the symposium and its organizers.

Abramowitz's first reply was that the symposium and its organizers were in no way connected to the charges of spreading slanderous material against the USSR. He replied to most of the subsequent questions by referring to his initial reply, Maariv reported.

He was asked several leading questions, such as "How did you receive instructions that directed the work of the committee (of organizers) from foreign elements? Did you receive instructions through representatives of the Western imperialist news agencies working in Russia? Have you or your colleagues received recommendations or instructions from abroad? Have you been asked to relay anti-Soviet material to foreign representatives?"

Abramowitz also was asked about Jewish publications in the USSR. He replied that these publications contained no anti-Soviet material. According to the information relayed by Abramowitz, three other organizers--Eliyahu Assas, Joseph Begon and Larissa Vilenskaya--were ordered to appear for questioning today and Prof.

Benjamin Fein, chairman of the organizing committee, and a person surnamed Wolbowski were ordered to appear tomorrow. (See related story P. 3.)

U.S. DROPS CASE AGAINST EGYPTIAN DIRECTOR OF ARAB INFORMATION CENTER

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13 (JTA)--The U.S. government has quietly dropped its case against Amin Hilmy II, the Egyptian director of the Arab Information Center in New York after the State Department reversed its position and decided he has diplomatic immunity, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency has learned at the State and Justice Departments.

The Center, which issues slick propaganda glorifying the Palestine Liberation Organization and seeking to discredit Israel, is being sued by the Department of Justice in federal court on charges of violating the U.S. Foreign Agents Registration Act.

Specifically, the Justice Department charges in its suit that the Center's advertisements last year that featured the anti-Zionist resolution adopted in the UN General Assembly were not identified as coming from the Center. Such identification is mandatory under U.S. law. The Department also charged the Center had refused to allow agents of the Justice Department to inspect its books, correspondence and financial records.

Hilmy was sued along with the organization. He is a permanent observer of the Arab League at the UN, the State Department said. The Department backed Justice in February but in September the State Department ruled, according to a Department source, that Hilmy also is a member of the Egyptian delegation to the UN and is therefore entitled to diplomatic immunity. Justice thereupon dismissed the charges against him and he is continuing at the helm of the Center's operations.

The case against the Center is scheduled to be aired Jan. 18. Government sources indicated to the JTA that with Hilmy no longer a defendant the case probably will be concluded with a consent decree in which the Center will agree to abide by the regulations in the future.

RABIN SUGGESTS WEST BANK MAYORS COMPRISE PART OF JORDANIAN

DELEGATION AT GENEVA CONFERENCE

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 13 (JTA)--A suggestion that the mayors of West Bank towns comprise part of the Jordanian delegation to a reconvened Geneva conference was raised by Premier Yitzhak Rabin at yesterday's Cabinet meeting, it was learned today. Rabin said he would have no objections if the mayors participated, presumably representing the Palestinians on the West Bank.

The matter came up when Minister of Tourism Moshe Kol of the Independent Liberal Party proposed that the Cabinet devote a session to the Palestinian issue. Rabin rejected that idea and reiterated Israel's basic policy with respect to the Palestinians--namely that there must be

third state between Jordan and Israel, that there will be no negotiations with terrorist organizations and that the Jordanian delegation to Geneva could include Palestinians.

These principles have been stated by Israeli leaders before. But Rabin's remarks yesterday were the first by an Israeli leader to specify what Israel thought the Palestinian representatives should be. The mayors are the only elected representatives of the Palestinians recognized by Israel and the proposal was consistent with Israel's efforts in recent years to encourage West Bank leadership as a counter-force to the Palestine Liberation Organization.

But it is recognized here that the West Bank does not exist in a political vacuum. Any decision to transform the local municipal leaders into political representatives of the West Bank population would have to have the support of Jordan, the PLO or both.

Skeptical Reactions From West Bank

Initial reactions from the West Bank today were skeptical. East Jerusalem sources told reporters that the only West Bank mayors likely to support the idea were those favorably inclined toward the Hashemite regime in Jordan and after the municipal elections last May they were a distinct minority. Furthermore, the sources said, it is uncertain that the Geneva conference will be reconvened and uncertain that Jordan would participate.

A delegation of mayors incorporated into a Jordanian delegation would also mean, in effect, a reversal of the Rabat summit decision of 1974 that designated the PLO the sole representative of the Palestinian people.

Nevertheless, the Rabat conference's decisions have been limited by political realities. Jordan continues to play a major role on the West Bank and a decision to include mayors in its delegation to Geneva is not far-fetched. It is also possible that PLO sympathizers could thus slip into Geneva by the back door. At the moment, however, official Arab policy demands PLO participation at Geneva as a separate entity.

MRS. JACOBSON SAYS TRIP TO ARAB COUNTRIES IS A PERSONAL ONE; ISRAELIS EXPRESS SHARP CRITICISM

NEW YORK, Dec. 13 (JTA)--Mrs. Charlotte Jacobson, chairman of the American Section of the World Zionist Organization Executive, who leaves Thursday on a visit to Egypt, Syria and Jordan, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that the trip was a personal one, prompted by her life-long interest in health and social problems. Mrs. Jacobson, a past president of Hadassah, will be traveling with a group of 15 women.

In a statement to the JTA, she emphasized that she and the group "will not be meeting with any Arab political leaders and will not be representing any organizations or groups on this trip." She added, "They are interested in seeing what social and health services are available to the people in these Arab countries as compared to what Israel makes available to its Arab and Jewish citizens."

Mrs. Jacobson's trip has been sharply criticized in Israeli news media and on the Israel State radio. Although there has been no official comment in Jerusalem, sources there reported that Premier Yitzhak Rabin believes the invitations extended to Mrs. Jacobson and her group are part of the current Arab propaganda offen-

sive aimed at projecting a peaceful image and weakening support among American Jews for Israeli policies. Informed sources said Rabin was annoyed.

Dulzin Says Nothing Wrong

On the other hand, Leon Dulzin, WZO and Jewish Agency Treasurer said today that there was nothing wrong with Mrs. Jacobson visiting the Arab countries. He noted that the visit was described as a private one and that no political talks would be held.

The Israeli radio said, however, that the trip could harm Israel. The newspaper Maariv accused Mrs. Jacobson of "extending a hand to Arab propaganda." It said the Arabs were "trying to prove that they have nothing against Jews, even if they are Zionist functionaries, and that only Israelis are their enemies."

According to reports from Jerusalem, an aide to Rabin said Mrs. Jacobson had asked Rabin's approval before deciding to make the trip and was told that Israel took no position on the activities of overseas Jews. Rabin has said in the past that he did not object to foreign Jews meeting with Arab leaders as long as they did not represent themselves to be speaking on Israel's behalf.

JEWISH MAYORS ELECTED IN ONTARIO

By Ben Kayfetz

TORONTO, Dec. 13 (JTA)--Jewish mayors were elected in several major Canadian cities in the municipal elections this month in the province of Ontario. Lorrie Greenberg was elected mayor of Ottawa, Canada's capital, by an overwhelming vote of 84 percent. In North York, a borough of more than 4000 residents within Metropolitan Toronto, Mel Lastman was re-elected mayor. He polled 80,000 votes to his opponent's 20,000. Philip White was re-elected mayor of York Borough. In Mississauga, a large suburb west of Toronto, Dr. Martin Dobkin failed to win re-election.

The city of Kitchener now also has a Jewish mayor, Morley Rosenberg. Known as Berlin until World War I, this city was founded by German-speaking immigrants and still contains a large core of residents of German origin. The prevailing religions are Lutheran and Mennonite. Numerous Jewish aldermen, school trustees and some controllers were also elected in the Toronto area and elsewhere in Ontario.

ROSENTHAL NAMED TO HIGH POST

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Dec. 13 (JTA)--Rep. Benjamin S. Rosenthal of New York has been named to two of the most important positions in the leadership of the Democratic Party in the House of Representatives. Rep. Henry Waxman of California also has been signally honored by his colleagues in the leadership hierarchy.

Rosenthal, who is entering his ninth term in Congress, was appointed by Majority Leader Jim Wright of Texas to be one of three deputy whips. Speaker Thomas O'Neill of Massachusetts appointed him as one of the 24 members of the Democratic steering and policy committee, the most important leadership body in the House.

Rosenthal was one of eight Congressmen selected by O'Neill. Waxman, who comes from Los Angeles and is entering his second term, was chosen to represent California's Democrats on the committee as a regional member. There are 12 regional members on the committee. New

York's delegation re-elected Jonathan Bingham of New York City as their committeeman.

California, which has 29 Democrats in its House delegation of 43 members and New York which numbers 28 in its list of 39 are ranked as "regions" in the committee selection.

California Democrats were unanimous in selecting Waxman and New York backed Bingham without dissent. The New York delegation also voted unanimously that Rosenthal receive a high leadership post. Rosenthal is considered the chief spokesman in the House for the nation's consumers as chairman of the commerce, consumer and monetary affairs subcommittee of the Government Operations Committee. Rosenthal is 53-years old and Waxman is 37.

PLANS TO HOLD MOSCOW SYMPOSIUM PROCEEDING DESPITE HARASSMENT

NEW YORK, Dec. 13 (JTA)--Plans by a group of Soviet Jewish scholars to hold a symposium in Moscow Dec. 21 on Jewish culture in the USSR are proceeding despite threats and harassment by the Soviet authorities. The Soviet secret police has confiscated all materials related to the event. The apartments of the organizers have been searched and dire warnings have been sounded by Soviet officials.

But the four organizers are determined to go ahead. A declaration to that effect which described the action of the KGB, was sent to the Committee of Concerned Scientists here. It said the police confiscated some 40 papers prepared for delivery at the seminar, many written by Western scholars who plan to attend.

The organizers said preparations for the symposium were completely open. But, according to the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, Deputy Minister of Culture Vladimir Popov warned that the symposium is "in violation of Soviet law" and was banned because "it would express a narrow Zionist and nationalistic point of view." The Soviet news agency Tass accused the organizers of "trying to instigate hostility among Soviet nationalities."

Commenting on these developments, Eugene Gold, chairman of the NCSJ, said "It is obvious this warning is an attempt by Soviet authorities not only to prevent the symposium but reflects their attitude toward the Helsinki Final Act, signed over a year ago, which guarantees the rights of minorities to free expression of their cultural heritage." Dr. H. Eugene Stanley of Boston University, co-chairman of the Committee of Concerned Scientists, expressed dismay at the interference by Soviet police in a purely scholarly undertaking.

20 Offered Visa 'Bribes'

Meanwhile, the Greater New York Conference on Soviet Jewry reported that 20 participants in a regularly held Jewish cultural seminar in Vilna, Soviet Lithuania, were offered exit visas on condition that they testify that the seminar is an anti-Soviet activity. The participants flatly refused and expressed fear that the authorities were planning anew to break up unofficial seminars, the GNYCSJ reported.

It also reported that Soviet police have detained Elena Semikova, of Leningrad, editor of "Jews in the USSR," the only autonomous Jewish magazine published in the Soviet Union. She was picked up and held for interrogation while her apartment was searched. The police seized a schedule of the symposium set for Dec. 21 and

various personal letters, the GNYCSJ reported. Questionnaire Being Distributed

In a related development, the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry released a questionnaire for Soviet Jews which is being distributed by Jewish activists in the USSR in preparation for the symposium. The questionnaire states that it "is intended for the elucidation of the aims and viewpoints of the Jews based on questions pertinent to Jewish self-awareness."

The 34 queries include, "What would your reaction be if you were to experience discrimination based on your nationality at work or in the course of your professional activities?" "Do you consider the abolition of the item 'nationality' from Soviet internal passports desirable?" "Are you familiar with Jewish history?" "How do you relate to Judaism as a religion?" "Given the opportunity, with no hindering factors, would you attend a synagogue?" "What is your attitude toward the emigration of Jews to Israel?" "Do you consider it desirable for the Jews to continue to exist in the USSR as a separate nationality?"

An SSSJ spokesman said that 1,000 Soviet Jews have already responded to the questionnaire and the hope is that at least 1,500 will have responded by Dec. 21. The goal, he added, is not so much getting responses from activists but from the "silent sector."

HENRY D'AVIGDOR GOLDSMID DEAD AT 67

LONDON, Dec. 13 (JTA)--Sir Henry d'Avigdor Goldsmid, chairman of the Bank Leumi in Britain, died last weekend at the age of 67. A leading Jewish member of the English aristocracy, he held many other positions in Jewish and non-Jewish life. He was president of the Jewish Colonization Association and a former chairman of the Anglo-Israel Chamber of Commerce.

A respected member of the Conservative Party, he was MP for Walsall South from 1955 to 1974, and for two years served as Parliamentary private secretary to the Housing Minister, Duncan Sandys, now Lord Duncan-Sandys.

Sir Henry, a bullion broker, was a great-grandson of Count Henry d'Avigdor, one of Napoleon III's nobles. He was a member of the firm of Mocatta and Goldsmid, founded in the 17th Century. In World War II he was twice mentioned in dispatches and decorated for bravery.

SYMPOSIUM BOOSTED ANTI-ZIONISM

LONDON, Dec. 13 (JTA)--Despite scanty coverage in the world press, a recent Baghdad international conference is another step on the road to giving anti-Zionism intellectual respectability. This is the conclusion of a report by the Institute of Jewish Affairs on an "Ideological Symposium on Zionism as a Racist Phenomenon" held in the Iraqi capital Nov. 8-13 under the auspices of the Center for Palestinian Studies at the University of Baghdad, the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Arab League.

The gathering was attended by 300 delegates from 46 countries, including Britain, France and the United States as well as the Soviet Union, Eastern bloc and Third World countries. An Iraqi news agency reported that the symposium's proceedings will eventually be published and widely disseminated. It added the symposium was marked by a deep academic spirit.

ZIONISM IN ACTION

NAHAL SETTLEMENTS TO GO CIVILIAN

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 13 (JTA)--Two Nahal (para-military) settlements in the Jordan Valley will go civilian next month, further strengthening the Jewish presence in that region. Israel Keren, deputy director of the Jerusalem region of the World Zionist Organization's settlement department told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that plans call for the intensive cultivation of a variety of crops intended mainly for the European export market.

The settlements are Nahal Naaran and Mitzpe Shalem. They are located in an area that grows melons, peppers, tomatoes, eggplant and corn. The mild weather in the Jordan Valley allows these crops to ripen early and they can be shipped to Western Europe before similar crops from other countries hit the market, Keren said.

The Jordan Valley is not entirely dependent on agriculture. The settlement department is also working on plans for tourism projects and perhaps even some form of light industry, especially for the summer months when agriculture and tourism are weak.

As far as agriculture is concerned, one of the main problems in the area is water. In the Fatzael region, north of Jericho, a water demand of seven million cubic meters is forecast but a supply of only six million cubic meters is presently available.

One possible solution is to draw sweet water from the Jordan River by means of two pumping stations already operating. Another solution is to develop new methods of growing vegetables in water of higher salt concentration than usual.

A Pilot Project

The settlement department, in conjunction with the Volcanic Institute of Agricultural Research in Rehovot has tried to raise fish in salt water in the Feshha Springs near the Dead Sea. Tilapia fish are grown in what is professionally known as "marginal water," at a temperature that never goes below seven degrees centigrade. This allows for quantities of fish already in the spring. Similar experiments are being conducted to grow fodder for cows and vegetables.

This is a pilot project, but Yeshayahu Nun, an agricultural planner at the department, says that in some respects commercial quantities can be expected. There is no doubt on the part of the researchers that the more severe the water shortage in Israel becomes, the more effort will have to be invested in the exploitation of salt water.

The most recent innovation is the experimental watering of palm trees with salt water containing 2000 milligrams of chlorine instead of the maximum of 400 milligrams in drinking water. At an initial stage 20 such trees will be irrigated with salt water. The trees are expected to grow without difficulties. But it is not known yet whether the yield will prove worthwhile.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

EFFORTS TO RESOLVE A DISPUTE

By Jon Fedler

BONN, Dec. 13 (JTA)--Attempts are being made to resolve a dispute that has surfaced recently between the Israeli Embassy and the German-Israeli Society (Deutsch-Israelische Gesellschaft--DIG), a group organized to promote better relations between West Germany and Israel. Israeli officials have accused DIG of meddling in

Israeli politics instead of furthering social and cultural links and have charged the Society's secretary, Rainer Bernstein, with pro-Arab bias.

DIG supporters rejected what they call the "misinterpretation" of its functions and say it was not organized to carry out "uncritical public relations work" for Israel. Israeli Ambassador Yohanan Meroz met with DIG president Heinz Westphal last month to try to settle the issue. Embassy sources said the meeting was "open and objective" but inconclusive. A second meeting between the Embassy and DIG officials is scheduled for next month.

DIG, which was formed 10 years ago, claims about 2000 members, including 100 Bundestag deputies and several Cabinet ministers. Israeli officials have been unhappy with its activities of late. They noted that in October, Bernstein took a group of West Berlin teachers to Israel without consulting the Embassy as is the usual practice. In Israel, a trade union body known as "Experiment" arranged for the group to meet the Communist Mayor of Nazareth, Seif Zuabi. As a result, the Israeli Foreign Ministry called off a planned reception for the teachers.

Later, Meroz boycotted DIG's annual meeting allegedly because one of the invited speakers was Prof. Emeritus Ernst Simon of the Hebrew University. Simon is a member of the "Euber Circle," a group of Israeli intellectuals who advocate that Israel reach an accommodation with the Palestinians.

Political Differences Disclosed

The controversy has brought to light political differences within DIG. Westphal, a Social Democrat, has defended Bernstein's position. He said that "DIG discusses the Mideast situation uncritically. We don't want to force advice on Israel but we are deeply concerned about bringing peace to that region." But DIG's deputy president, Erik Blumfeld of the opposition Christian Democratic Party, accused Bernstein of representing "Jusos," the Social Democrats' militant left-leaning youth movement and of "maintaining contact with sympathetic circles in Israel."

Recently, the Bundesjugendring, a left-wing umbrella organization that claims to represent West German youth organizations with about 4 million members, defended DIG, of which it is a member. It adopted a resolution stating that "critical solidarity" was necessary to deepen understanding between Israel and West Germany and that DIG had made "an important and indispensable contribution to this goal." The resolution stated further that the "distorted and polemical attacks" on DIG were tantamount to "an attack on the cause of German-Israeli understanding."

TEL AVIV (JTA)--The added-value tax, imposed in Israel earlier this year and on the West Bank on Dec. 1 has been the pretext for continuing demonstrations by high school youths and shut-downs by local merchants in the Judea and Samaria regions. The youngsters have been boycotting classes for several days. They congregated in the center of towns or in the old section, set up road blocks, burn tires and stone Israeli vehicles. A curfew clamped on Nablus Saturday where the incidents were most serious, was lifted late in the day but was re-imposed Sunday when demonstrators got out of hand.