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REPORT MASS KILLINGS OF FALASHAS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Hundreds, perhaps thousands of Ethiopian Jews known as Falashas have been killed there as a result of the violent upheavals in their strife-torn country, according to a report in today's Davar-based on Falasha sources in Israel and the United States.

The worst carnage among the Falashas, the report stated, took place in the revolution against Emperor Haile Selassie two years ago. Radical tribes from the southern Sudan regarded the Falashas as pro-Royalists, and treated them accordingly. At the same time, government forces fighting the revolutionaries in the vicinity of Falasha villages spread death among them.

The Davar sources said that during these sad and bloody events Falashas had been subjected to rape, pillage and torture; young Falasha girls had been sold into slavery. According to the sources, the wholesale killings had stopped under the new leftist regime, but the Falashas were being treated as "a hostile minority."

Some of the Falasha activists here and in the U.S. accuse the Israeli authorities of having failed to spur their aliya when it was still possible to do so. There has been a great deal of academic discussion over the years as to the true origins of the Falashas and their Jewishness. But both of Israel's present Chief Rabbis, Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren and Sephardi Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, have ruled that they are proper Jews but should, nevertheless, undergo a symbolic conversion ceremony.

Says Falashas Face Extermination

(In a recent interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in New York, Dr. Greenberg, founder and immediate past president of the American Association for Ethiopian Jews, told staff correspondent Rochelle Saidel Wolk that the 28,000 Falashas "are facing extermination because of the indifference of the Jewish world. This is true for Israel and the Jewish Agency, and strangely, it is also true for the American Jewish leadership, which has always been concerned with the plight of Black non-Jews."

(Continuing, Berger told Wolk: "In the last few years, Israel has officially declared that Ethiopian Jews are eligible to settle under the Law of Return. Yet no effort was made to bring them to Israel after 1948, and after formal diplomatic relations were initiated between Israel and Ethiopia in 1956, no schlichim were sent to recruit and prepare them for aliya." Nevertheless, some 300 Falashas have managed to get to Israel, he added.

(Meanwhile, "the Ethiopian Jews who live in the northwestern sector of this underdeveloped country are trapped in a pincer of contending armies, in a situation similar to that of the Jews of Poland during World War II," Berger said. "Not permitted to own their own land, they live in squalor as tenant farmers. Thousands have been dispossessed from their native land. Reports state that some have been killed, some sold into slavery and some left to rot in refugee camps in places like Sudan and Djibouti."

(The future of the Falasha in Ethiopia "is hopeless," Berger stated to Wolk. "They wait for Israel and world Jewry to rescue them with 'wings of eagles' as the Yemenite Jews were rescued in 1948.")

NAVON INVITES POPE TO ISRAEL

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- President Yitzhak Navon has extended an informal invitation to Pope John Paul II to visit Israel and its holy places. Addressing a reception for Christian community leaders on the occasion of Christmas, Navon recalled that the Pope had expressed a desire to visit the holy places in his own Christmas address this year.

"I am certain that I express the feelings of both the people and the government of Israel when I say that it would give us great pleasure to see His Holiness among us and to receive him with the respect and honor that is due him," Navon told the Christian dignitaries. However, a source close to the President said an official invitation would not be sent to the Pope unless there is a more definite indication that he plans to visit the holy places.

Speaking later at a symposium on interfaith relations in Israel, Navon said that one of the conditions for peace in the Middle East was a greater understanding of the region's culture by Israelis. "It is no mere coincidence that there is such a wide cultural gap between Jews and Arabs despite their common origin," he said. "It is no mere coincidence that many underestimate the language spoken by Jews who come from Islamic countries."

Navon also observed that the encounter between Israelis and Egyptians after a peace treaty is signed would present many problems. The Egyptians, who for years regarded Israelis as monsters, will have to learn to regard them as human beings, he said. "But our problem will be to face a rich culture which we do not yet know." Yosef Emmanuel, secretary of the Interfaith Committee, said his organization is trying to establish direct ties with Muslim personalities and organizations in the Arab countries.

WEIZMAN WORRIED ABOUT HARDLINE MINISTERS STONEWALLING PEACE MOVES

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Defense Minister Ezer Weizman is unhappy with the Cabinet's slow movement toward renewing the peace talks with Egypt and is seriously concerned that the chances of peace are slipping away while hardline ministers stonewall against any compromise, sources close to the Defense Minister have indicated.

Weizman, who with Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan headed the Israeli negotiating team at the Blair House talks in Washington last month, believes that the peace talks have been bogged down needlessly in a morass of legalisms, the sources said. As a consequence, he has resolved to devote his time exclusively to defense matters.

Yediot Achronot reported today that Weizman stormed out of a meeting this week with Premier Menachem Begin and Minister of Agriculture Ariel Sharon, the most outspoken Cabinet hawk. "I can't sit with that man any more," Weizman was quoted as saying with reference to Sharon.

Eventually Begin calmed him, the newspaper said.

That was not the first time, however, that Weizman lost his temper with Cabinet colleagues who he thought were dragging their feet on peace issues. He is known to have stalked-out of a least one Cabinet meeting in the past two months and was furious when, during Begin's absence in Canada last month, the Cabinet refused to approve elements of the draft peace treaty he and Dayan had worked out with the Egyptians in Washington.

Weizman reportedly rests his hopes on the expectation that Dayan will eventually take a firm stand against delaying tactics by Cabinet ministers. Dayan is trying to steer the Cabinet toward a decision that will make the resumption of talks possible. He has spoken of the need for compromises by both Israel and Egypt on the key issues in dispute. This drew the wrath of some of his colleagues at the special Cabinet session Tuesday. A decision is expected when the Cabinet convenes this Sunday for its regular weekly meeting.

IAAF TO EXAMINE BARRING OF ISRAELI ATHLETES IN THE ASIAN GAMES

By Haskell Cohen

TEL AVIV, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- The Asian Games are over but the sad memory lingers on here in Tel Aviv. Israeli sports authorities are disappointed bitterly that the local athletes were not invited because of so-called security reasons.

Although it comes as no solace, the local Asian Games Federation committee has been advised by John B. Holt of London, General Secretary of the International Amateur Athletic Federation (IAAF), that on Jan. 19 a council meeting will be held in London to examine the consequences insofar as they affect the athletes who took part and the member federations who authorized their participation in the Games.

The IAAF did not issue a permit previously for the Games to proceed which meant participating athletes concerned, automatically became ineligible for the Moscow Olympic Games in 1980. As stipulated in Rule 11 in the IAAF Guide, before exercising any power under the rule involved, the council must notify the member of the alleged infringement of the rule and afford an opportunity to the member of being heard.

Pleased With IAAF Step

All federations affected, therefore, have been invited to be represented at the Jan. 19 meeting. However, for practical reasons, a proposal is being made to the Asian officers, who were present in Bangkok, to nominate a delegation which will represent all those members who will be unable to be present.

Haim Glowsky, honorary treasurer of the Israeli Olympic Committee, upon receiving notice of the hearing, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency: "We are pleased no end to witness at least one sport federation, namely, the International Amateur Athletic Federation, keep its word in attempting to punish those responsible for keeping our athletes out of the Asian Games.

"We trust that the fellow members of this august body will keep its word as to the resolution passed in Puerto Rico, earlier in the year, whereby participating athletes in the now non-sanctioned Games will be punished for their activity contrary to the IAAF's dictate.

"Disciplinary action to be taken in London cannot make up for the disappointment suffered by our athletes. Nevertheless, the fact that the IAAF seeks to keep its word indicates to us that

there still is some justice available in the sports world currently fermented by the politicizing of sports by several of the prejudiced nations around the globe."

BEGIN: NO CHANGES IN STRUCTURE OF PRESENT COALITION CABINET

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Premier Menachem Begin insisted today that he would make no changes in the present structure of his coalition Cabinet. Addressing a meeting of Likud colleagues, he specifically ruled out additional portfolios for the National Religious Party which has become the second largest party in the coalition since the Democratic Movement for Change (DMC) split.

The NRP, with 12 seats in the Knesset, has been demanding additional representation in the Cabinet. It presently controls the Ministries of Interior, Education and Religious Affairs. After the resignation of Transport Minister Meir Amit, the Democratic Movement, formerly DMC, was reduced to two portfolios held by Yigael Yadin who continues to serve as Deputy Premier, and Yisrael Katz who is Minister of Labor and Social Betterment.

Begin said that if the NRP was granted additional seats in the Cabinet the other coalition partners would be similarly enlarged. He said that in any event, he would act first to fill the offices of Transport Minister and Minister of Commerce, Industry and Tourism which have been vacant for some time.

CENTRALITY OF ISRAEL

TEL AVIV, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- S. Z. Abramov, the new chairman of the Israeli Executive of the World Jewish Congress, mounted a call for an intensified effort to revive the feeling of the centrality of Israel in the life of the Jewish people, a feeling which he claimed has dangerously faded out in some Jewish communities.

Addressing the Congress as he took over the chairmanship from Yitzhak Koren, Abramov said that not only has there been a constant erosion in recent years in the recognition of Israel's centrality but also what he termed an undermining of the spiritual infrastructure of Zionism and Israel. He said there are well-known Jewish intellectuals who claim that Zionism has not solved the Jewish problem and that the State of Israel has not solved the problem of anti-Semitism. In addition, he noted that there is no rush on the part of Jews to make aliya.

He said it is up to the Israeli Executive of the World Jewish Congress to reverse this attitude by building bridges to diaspora Jewry and improving the image of Israel in the eyes of world Jewry. Efforts would also be made to make Israelis understand the life of diaspora Jewry and their problems, and not to regard them solely as sources of funds, he said.

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) -- Several hundred people took part in an open air public meeting in solidarity with Syrian Jews. The meeting, in the sports field of the Sephardic Athletic Club, was organized with the support of the DAIA and several other mostly Sephardic organizations. Sephardic leader Ruben Beraja, Israel charge d'affaires Herzl Inbar and Argentine Socialist leader Luis Pan addressed the meeting. A message was sent to the Syrian Ambassador here asking him to transmit to his government the request of Argentine Jewry that Syrian Jews should be allowed to emigrate and that persecution against Syrian Jews be halted.

REMINDER: There will be no Bulletin dated Jan. 1, due to New Year's Day, a postal holiday.

ISRAEL BUYING OIL FROM MEXICO TO OFFSET SHORTAGES FROM IRAN

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Officials of the Energy Ministry said today that Israel was in no danger of running out of oil despite the drastic curtailment of production in strife-torn Iran which supplies about 70 percent of the country's annual needs. They said Israel was maintaining its requirements through purchases of Mexican oil and the production of the off-shore oil fields in Sinai.

They also said Israel was planning to import coal and explore shale oil reserves. They acknowledged that Mexican oil costs five percent more than oil from Iran. The Sinai oil fields are to be returned to Egypt under a peace treaty but Israel is seeking a treaty guarantee of access to that oil at regular market prices.

Meanwhile, the U.S. is committed to provide Israel with adequate oil supplies in case of an emergency. The American guarantee was given to compensate Israel for relinquishing the oil fields in western Sinai under its 1975 interim agreement with Egypt. The Energy Ministry said that Israel currently imports about 7.3 million tons of oil a year at a cost of \$700 million. The Sinai fields produce 25,000 barrels a day, about one-sixth of Israel's needs.

RABBIS CONCERNED ABOUT FUTURE OF LATIN AMERICAN JEWISH YOUTH

NEW YORK, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Eleven Sephardic rabbis from seven Latin American countries, attending the first International Conclave of the Sephardic Rabbinate of America here, stressed their concern for the future of Jewish youth as they described the problems and conditions of Jewish life in their respective communities. The three-day gathering, held from Dec. 18-21, was sponsored by Yeshiva University and the World Sephardic Federation.

The co-hosts were Dr. Norman Lamm, president of Yeshiva University, and Dr. Solomon Gaon, chairman of the World Sephardic Federation and director of Sephardic studies at the university. A second conclave is planned to take place in Mexico City next year.

Facing 'Spiritual Suicide'

The visitors from Latin America said they were confronted by "spiritual suicide" among Sephardic youth in their countries. Gaon observed that "in their new surroundings, our people have often abandoned the family values which were so evident in the old countries" where Sephardic Jews originated, such as Turkey and the Balkan countries and the Arab countries of North Africa and the Middle East.

Gaon said the only exception was the Jews of Syrian origin "who by great sacrifice have built Torah institutions in their communities." He said that what is needed are "experienced and well-trained educators who will be able to face these difficulties and turn the tide of assimilation and spiritual suicide."

In a message to the gathering from Geneva, Dr. Nessim Gaon, president of the World Sephardic Federation, stressed that Sephardic communities must "strengthen one another and also seek help from the Ashkenazic communities." He said that "promoting and encouraging Jewish education everywhere is the only way to guarantee the continuity of our Jewish identity."

Situation In Venezuela

In some Latin American communities, the

small number of Jews contributes to the problem of assimilation. Rabbi Pynchos Brenner, Chief Rabbi of the Union Israelita de Caracas in Venezuela, noted that the entire Jewish community in that city amounts to less than one percent of its residents. As a result, he said, Jewish youths encounter fewer Jewish influences when they attend local universities than they do in New York or in Argentina. According to Chief Rabbi Shelomo Benhamu of Buenos Aires, there are 800,000 Jews in Argentina, two major Jewish newspapers and numerous yeshivas.

Another Venezuelan rabbi, Rabbi Jacobo Garzon of the Asociacion Israelita de Venezuela, reported that most of the Jewish teachers in Caracas are visiting Israelis who stay for a year or two and establish only passing relationships with their students. But, he said, an Instituto Superior de Estudios Judaicos was established recently to provide more advanced Jewish studies for those who want it.

Situation In Mexico

Rabbi Abraham Palti, of Mexico City, said there are 40,000 Jews there but they are divided into four separate communities that have little to do with one another except on an official level. He said, however, that the rabbinic leaders of the four communities have been meeting recently to plan to bring the groups together as a result of Yeshiva University's Realidad program.

The Realidad program is sponsored by the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, an affiliate of Yeshiva University. It was described at the gathering by Dr. Abraham Stern, director of the seminary's department of youth services.

The seminary has sent teams of its own and Yeshiva University students and advisors to Mexico and Colombia to meet with Jewish youth in informal settings, to allow them to experience a traditional Jewish atmosphere and to question observant young Jews about Jewish viewpoints, practices and traditions. The program has been funded with the aid of the Mexican industrialist, Marcos D. Katz. Lamm emphasized that Yeshiva University views the Realidad program as vitally important and is committed to its continuance.

Another major issue raised at the conclave was the need to share experiences and resources. In that connection, a steering committee was established to plan future conclaves. Its honorary chairman is Rabbi Jacob S. Kassin of Congregation Shaare Zion in Brooklyn, who is chief rabbi of Near Eastern and Oriental Jews of Brooklyn. Dr. Solomon Gaon will serve as chairman.

PROMISE ON STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS

TEL AVIV, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Hans-Jochen Vogel, the West German Minister of Justice now visiting Israel, said today that he and the Social Democratic Party opposed ending the statute of limitations on the prosecution of Nazi war criminals which is scheduled to expire in exactly one year. He told representatives of the World Federation of Polish Jews here that his party would do its utmost to see to it that Nazi war criminals do not escape justice, however long it may take to bring them to trial.

Vogel suggested that Nazi hunter Tuvia Friedman, head of the war crimes documentation center in Haifa, go to West Germany with a group of his supporters to explain to the German public why the statute of limitations should not be ended. The statute designates a period of time during which war criminals may be prosecuted; those who evade trial receive automatic immunity after it expires.

SPAIN'S JEWS GIVEN RELIGIOUS EQUALITY UNDER NEW CONSTITUTION

NEW YORK, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Spain's 12,000-member Jewish community achieves full religious equality as one feature of the new Spanish constitution approved in a nationwide referendum early this month. "This dramatic change in the situation of the Jewish and other non-Catholic religious minorities in Spain truly deserves to be hailed as one of the major steps toward greater democracy incorporated in the 169 articles of this new, basic Spanish document," declared Richard Maass, president of the American Jewish Committee.

The key clause in the constitution is its Article 16, which guarantees religious liberty both for individuals and communities, and goes on to declare that no one shall be obliged to declare his religion, ideology or beliefs. For Spain's Jews, the new document marks the accomplishment of a struggle to achieve equality that has taken over 30 years, Maass pointed out.

First, there was the drive to have the right to publicly perform Jewish services, denied under the Concordat between Spain and the Vatican of post-Spanish Civil War days. Then came the building of the first modern synagogue in Spain, in Barcelona, in 1955, but without any exterior sign that it was a Jewish building. Then in Madrid in 1968 came an inauguration of a synagogue in a ceremony marked by the presence of government officials, and with exterior signs that it is a Jewish place of worship.

But even today, certain limitations exist on full Jewish communal exercise -- the community, for example, cannot own its religious properties directly -- which the new constitution will make possible, Maass noted.

The next step in implementing the constitutional guarantee of full equality will be the passage of a law establishing the relations between the Spanish government and religions in the country. The text of such a law has been the subject of more than a year's discussion between representatives of the Spanish government and representatives of the different religious communities, Maass said.

Background Of Constitution

He recalled that it was one year ago, in an unprecedented move in Spanish history, that the government authorized the Minister of Justice to bring both Jews and Protestants into full consultation, along with Catholics, on the drawing up both of the constitutional clauses on religious liberty and the draft law on religion.

The AJ Committee made available to leaders of the Spanish Jewish community advice from leading constitutional experts on church-state law in other lands; and a delegation of AJ Committee leaders met with top officials in the Ministry of Justice in Madrid last April to discuss the draft religious law, Maass said.

The fact that the new constitution guarantees equality does not mean there will be the kind of separation of church and state known in the United States, he noted. A first draft of the constitution did declare that Spain should be a "non-confessional" state. This, however, was dropped in the face of strong protest by Catholic authorities, who declared that although not opposed to separation of church and state, they wanted stronger constitutional safeguards on their rights to teach and preach.

The compromise adopted calls for public

authorities to "take into consideration the religious beliefs of Spanish society and consequently maintain cooperative relations with it and other religions." This compromise lays the ground for arrangements whereby methods of financing religious education -- but for all religions -- will be worked out in cooperation with the state.

STATE DEPARTMENT SAYS U.S. NOT OUT TO IMPOSE WILL ON ISRAEL OR EGYPT

WASHINGTON, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- An expression of concern that the Carter Administration was exerting pressure on Israel in the peace negotiations with Egypt elicited a response from the State Department that the U.S. has "no intention of imposing our own suggestions on either of the parties." That assurance was contained in a letter written by David A. Korn, director of the Office of Israeli and Arab/Israeli Affairs at the State Department, to Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, president of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada.

Korn said he was responding at the request of the White House to a telegram Feinstein sent to President Carter protesting alleged U.S. pressure on Israel. He wrote, "Our policy, as stated by President Carter, remains 'not to try to impose our will on anyone but to act as a trusted intermediary' in the peace negotiations. The United States is not undertaking its efforts in the belief that it can impose a settlement upon the nations involved."

Korn explained: "Our involvement in the negotiations between the parties stems from the unique confidence that both sides to the conflict place in the United States as a mediator and partner to the peace process. We interpret our role as intermediary in the broadest sense. And while we are prepared to bring U.S. influence into play to help both sides on issues we consider crucial, and to introduce ideas and suggestions of our own when we believe this will advance the negotiations, we certainly have no intention of imposing our own suggestions on either of the parties."

The letter reaffirmed that "America's commitment to Israel is based on a unique and profound relationship, which includes a common cultural tradition and shared democratic values. This commitment to the security, strength, and well being of Israel has been reaffirmed by every American Administration since the modern State of Israel was established thirty years ago. It is the cornerstone of our peace efforts."

FIVE JEWS ON HONORS LIST

TORONTO, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut, president of the Canadian Jewish Congress, is one of five Jews named in the Christmas list of those receiving Order of Canada Awards, the highest award given by the Canadian government. Plaut, 66, is the retired spiritual leader of the Holy Blossom Temple here.

The other Jews, who were among 64 Canadians honored, are Joseph Cohen, a 57-year-old Vancouver businessman; Albert Hochbaum, a 68-year-old Delta, Manitoba naturalist, and Monroe Abbey, 74, a Montreal lawyer and former president of the CJC and the Montreal Federation of Jewish Philanthropies. Plaut was named a Companion of the Order and the others were named members.

Another recipient of the Order of Canada Award is Hans Blumenfeld of Toronto, an 86-year-old town planner and architect. Born in Germany, he became a member of the Soviet Communist Party but was expelled from it in 1935. Blumenfeld was rejected for Canadian citizenship in 1960 but was accepted in 1964.