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ANTI-SEMITIC LETTER CIRCULATED IN TEHRAN EXTOLDS HITLER, WARNS JEWS TO GET OUT OR FACE BEING KILLED

By David London

JERUSALEM, Jan. 25 (JTA) — "Drinkers of Moslem blood, we warn you to leave our country as soon as you can, for if not we will kill all of you Jews." This passage, and others like it, appear in a letter recently circulated among Jews of Teheran and other cities in Iran. The letter was read out by Labor Zionist leader Yehiel Leket at a press conference yesterday. He said it had been brought back from Iran by an emissary sent out by the Israeli Labor Party on a mission to save Jews there.

The letter was signed: "The Popular Front of Islamic Youth in Iran." It accused Iran's Jews of extorting money by usury and sending it to the Zionist state illegally. It stated: "... every epoch needs its Hitler who must root out the Jewish scourge."

Leket reiterated Labor Party allegations that the government and Jewish Agency had failed in their policies regarding Iranian Jewry. He denied that Labor sought to make "political capital" out of the tragic situation. "After months of soothing statements, to the effect that much was being done that could not be published, it turns out," Leket said, "that on the ground very little is in fact being done." Leket is secretary general of the World Labor Zionist Movement and a former Knesseter.

Accusations Are Refuted

His accusations were refuted by Urdud Knesseter Moshe Katzay, who has recently visited Iran, is of Iranian origin, and was this week elected as chairman of an umbrella organization of all Iranian immigrant societies in Israel. He spoke of the dearth of Jewish and Zionist education in Iran which had caused the community there to become distant from Israel and eroded their Jewish identity.

Katzay urged other parties not to exploit the situation for party-political ends but to work together to seek ways of saving Iranian Jewry.

Jewish Agency and government sources have said repeatedly in recent weeks that the major obstacles that confront all "saving efforts" is the widespread indifference to them on the part of Iranian Jews. Many Jews seem to feel that their futures in Iran are not endangered -- or else that they will be able to get out, if necessary, at a later stage.

Meanwhile, El Al has suspended flights to Teheran pending clarification of the situation there following the announcement by the Iranian government that it was closing all airports to civilian traffic. As a result, El Al had only one flight to Teheran this week and was forced to cancel several scheduled and charter flights. This came at an especially inopportune time in view of efforts being made in Israel to persuade Iranian Jews to come here. (See related story P. 3.)

POISON FRUIT THREAT CONDEMNED

AMSTERDAM, Jan. 25 (JTA) — The Dutch government condemned today a threat from an "Arab Revolutionary Army" (ARA) to poison citrus fruits shipped to Holland from Israel, calling it "a direct threat" to the health of the nation. The threat, contained in a letter, said the "campaign

would be carried out on a much larger scale than such contamination of Israeli citrus exports last year when some shipments of oranges were contaminated with mercury. The ARA letter said this time poison would be used which would make it more difficult to detect than mercury.

The Israel Embassy at the Hague said Israel had taken "all appropriate measures" to nullify all attempts to poison Israeli fruits and vegetables exported to Europe. An Embassy spokesman indicated that such letters had been mailed to several European governments, saying Israeli produce would be poisoned unless a "democratic state" was established in "Palestine."

The letters, mailed in London, were received also by government officials in Belgium, Denmark, Sweden and West Germany. A copy of the letters received at the Hague indicated it was sent to all nine members of the European Economic Community, and to Rumania and Yugoslavia.

After ARA sent a similar letter last year, threatening to use mercury, a number of oranges coming to Europe were found to have been injected with mercury. Six children, five Dutch and one West German, became slightly ill after eating the contaminated fruit. Two million boxes of Israeli oranges and grapefruit arrive in Rotterdam each season.

The Dutch Ministries of Foreign Affairs, Justice, Interior, Agriculture and National Health have coordinated programs to determine how the channels of distribution of the Israeli fruit can best be protected. Regional food inspectors and Dutch citizens have been asked to be very alert on the problem.

VATICAN DISAVOWS CAPUCCI

ROME, Jan. 25 (JTA) — The appearance of Msgr. Hilarion Capucci, the former Greek Melchite Catholic Archbishop of Jerusalem, at the Palestine National Council conference in Damascus this week, where he espoused the cause of the Palestine Liberation Organization, caused acute embarrassment to the Vatican. The Holy See issued a special statement yesterday saying that Capucci, who had been assigned to pastoral duties in Latin America, "made the trip to Damascus on his own initiative, without the authorization of the Holy See and without having previously informed the Holy See."

It was learned that this official disavowal by the Vatican of Capucci's actions followed on the heels of a high-level meeting Tuesday night between the Israel Embassy here and a top Vatican spokesman. Israel released Capucci from prison in 1977 after he served three years of a 12-year sentence for gun-running for the Palestinians across the Lebanese-Israeli border.

The Vatican promised Israel that Capucci would not be assigned again to the Middle East, and in November 1977 he was sent to Latin America as a Vatican visitor to Greek Melchite Catholic communities there. President Ephraim Katzir of Israel agreed to Capucci's release in 1977 when the Vatican intervened with a personal request by the late Pope Paul VI. After a brief sojourn at a Rome sanatorium, Capucci was then transferred to Buenos Aires.

In an interview with Lebanese newspaper "Al Watan," this week, Capucci claimed there was nothing in the Israel-Vatican deal to prevent him making short visits to the Middle East.

Pope Orders Two Investigations

Nevertheless, Pope John Paul II has ordered the Vatican Secretariat of State to open two investigations. One, to be carried out by the Papal Nunciature of Venezuela, Msgr. Giovanni Mariani, is to bring to light the circumstances in which Capucci left the country where he had agreed to live.

The second is entrusted to the Papal Nunciature of Damascus, Msgr. Angelo Pedroni, who is to report back to the Vatican on whether Capucci intends to obey the Vatican order to return immediately to South America. For the Church, Capucci is guilty of having disobeyed the order to reside in South America and tend to the 250,000 Greek Melchite Catholics there.

DISPUTE FLARES OVER 'PROJECT RENEWAL'

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 25 (JTA) -- Sharp words were exchanged yesterday between Jewish Agency chairman Leon Dulzín and Absorption and Housing Minister David Levy over Project Renewal, the \$1.2 billion government-Agency plan for refurbishing slum areas of Israel. At a meeting between top Agency, government and United Jewish Appeal officials, Levy insisted that the operative execution of the project must be in the hands of his Housing Ministry (to which he was recently appointed in addition to his Absorption portfolio).

"The time has come," Levy was reported as saying, "for well-meaning Jews abroad to stop thinking of their Israeli brethren as an unfortunate lot incapable of looking after their own affairs, and requiring contributors from abroad to do things for them."

Prominent UJA leaders who were present at the meeting were quoted by Yediot Achronot as having retorted that there would be "not one cent" for Project Renewal unless the Jewish Agency was fully involved in the operational execution of the project. Jewish Agency sources told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that the reports and quotes were substantially accurate.

They said the issue would be taken up tomorrow by the "Coordination Body," the supreme government-Agency council which meets sporadically under the chairmanship of Premier Menachem Begin. The sources said that at the meeting yesterday, Dulzín and Deputy Premier Yigael Yadin sided with the UJA leaders against Levy. Yadin, as the senior minister in charge of social policy, is the government minister designated to oversee Project Renewal on the part of the government.

Scathing Criticism Reported

Project Renewal, meanwhile, has come under some sobering and scathing comment from none other than its Agency-appointed director general, Eliezer Raphaeli.

Speaking recently to the presidium of the Zionist General Council, Raphaeli called on "all those involved in the project to begin publishing the truth -- so as to cease raising false and delusive expectations" among the 45,000 families who are the "target population" in some 160 slum areas throughout the country. "Whoever supposes that tomorrow there will be no social distress in Israel as a result of Project Renewal is duping the public," Raphaeli said.

He added that since Begin had announced the project some 18 months ago the relevant government ministries had taken virtually no practical measures at all to bring it to realization. He noted that tomorrow's meeting would be the first between the government and the Agency top

policy-making level that would convene to endorse the project.

Zionist General Council chairman Yitzhak Peretz, a Likud Knesset member and former Mayor of Dimona, said cynically that "many people had earned their professorships out of Israel's social distress, but hardly anything has been done in practice" (to alleviate it). Peretz called for a "lowering of profile" on Project Renewal, and stressed the need for action rather than words.

Raphaeli disclosed that it was already clear from studies done that the \$1.2 billion referred to in initial estimates would not be sufficient to cover the cost of the entire project.

STORMY DEBATES DUE AT RA CONFAB

By Reena Sigman Friedman

NEW YORK, Jan. 25 (JTA) -- Stormy debates are expected at next week's Rabbinical Assembly 79th annual convention in Los Angeles, which will take up the question of the ordination of women as rabbis within the Conservative movement. Some observers had been under the impression that delegates to the RA convention would vote on the issue. However, the situation was clarified this week by Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, executive director of the RA.

According to Kelman, the 1977 resolution establishing the Commission for the Study of the Ordination of Women as Rabbis stated only that the delegates to the 1979 convention were to receive the Commission's report. It would be unnecessary for RA members to vote on the report, Kelman said, since the RA does not have the power to ordain rabbis. After discussing the report, the delegates will refer it to the faculty of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS).

Upon creating the Commission, Dr. Gerson Cohen, Chancellor of the JTS committed himself to personally backing the Commission's findings before the members of the Seminary faculty. But, as Kelman explained, the final decision of whether or not to accept the Commission's findings will be the "sole prerogative of the faculty."

Meanwhile, Rabbi David Weiss Halivni, Professor in Rabbinics of the JTS, pointed out that he continues to remain opposed to the ordination of women, by way of pointing out that an ambiguity in an earlier report made it appear that he had been opposed in the past but had changed his stance.

MORDECHAI BRAVERMAN DEAD AT 86

TEL AVIV, Jan. 25 (JTA) -- Mordechai Braverman, one of the defenders of Tel Chai in the Galilee, alongside the legendary Yoseph Trumpeldor, died here Tuesday at the age of 86. Braverman arrived in Palestine in 1917 as a member of the American battalion of the Jewish Legion which had fought together with the British army against the Turks in Palestine during World War I. After the war, Braverman was a founder of the Beer Tuvia settlement. He joined the Hashomer in the pre-Hagana days and was a member of Mapam his entire adult life.

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- The reconstruction of the Jewish Quarter in the Old City of Jerusalem will be completed within a year and a half, managers of the government corporation in charge of the project said here. Some 450 flats have been sold since work in the Quarter began more than 10 years ago. Another 200 flats will be built to house some 4,000 residents. The corporation maintains special rules to assure the special character of the Quarter.

CONNALLY, ANNOUNCING HIS CANDIDACY FOR GOP PRESIDENTIAL NOMINATION, STRESSES ISRAEL'S IMPORTANCE TO U.S.

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Jan. 25 (JTA) -- Former Treasury Secretary John Connally, announcing his candidacy for the Republican Presidential nomination in 1980, said yesterday that the Middle East oil crisis brought about by the turmoil in Iran emphasized the "strategic importance" of Israel to the United States.

The three-time Governor of Texas, speaking at the National Press Club, also urged quick agreement by Egypt and Israel on a peace treaty but suggested they make their own arrangements without the "intervention" of the United States which he said has failed.

Connally, whose political theme centered on "strong leadership both at home and abroad," did not mention Israel or Egypt in his prepared remarks but spoke extemporaneously when he was questioned about Iran, and then, in the course of discussing that situation, he suddenly swung into full endorsement of Israel both morally and strategically. He gave no accolade to any other Middle East country although his law firm in Houston is counselor for Arab oil interests.

"I have long looked on Israel not only as a nation that deserves our support on a moral standpoint but I have long looked on Israel as a nation that deserves our support from a strategic standpoint," Connally began. "That clearly brings into sharp focus the strategic importance of the preservation and strength of the State of Israel today. Nothing could be more important at the moment than that."

"We recognize not only the moral commitment but the strategic necessity of maintaining the strength of Israel. This puts a new dimension, it seems to me, in the minds of a great many people who are dealing with the problem related to Iran and oil."

Connally, who a few minutes earlier was defending himself as a lawyer for Arabs, went on to say that "we are going to have to encourage and to do in whatever way we possibly can, to bring a resolution of the Israeli-Egyptian problem as quickly as possible if indeed they can do it. We clearly have shown our intervention is not the way it is going to be done but we are going to have to recognize that this move in Iran closes the pincer movement -- or probably will result in the closure of the pincers on the oil in the Middle East."

In this situation, he said, "Soviet interests" now are controlling the "mouth of the Red Sea" emphasizing that "we are indeed in a crisis situation -- I mean it." Connally added "we need to move -- not only in Iran -- but in all the Middle East -- what is left of the security and stability in the Middle East."

Sees No Conflict Of Interest

Connally acknowledged in response to a question that his Houston law firm, which he said has 208 lawyers, has Arab countries as clients but he said that would not create "a conflict of interest" for him because "as a candidate I won't be a member of the firm."

"Let me assure you that they have our professional ability," Connally said of the firm's Arab clients. "They don't have our philosophy or our conscience."

Connally's "preliminary organizational strategy committee" to assist his campaign chair-

man, former Postmaster General Winston Blount, listed Rito Hauser, the New York lawyer, among its 10 members. Connally was Secretary of the Navy to President Kennedy and Treasury Secretary for President Nixon after he changed from the Democratic to the Republican Party during the Nixon Administration. He also served in various capacities for Lyndon Johnson before Johnson became President and for President Ford.

JORDAN INTERESTED IN ISRAELI PLAN

By Gil Sedar

JERUSALEM, Jan. 25 (JTA) -- The Jordanian government expressed interest in an Israeli plan to connect the Mediterranean with the Dead Sea by an inland canal, Yediot Achronot reported yesterday. The plan calls for the digging of a canal from Haifa, through the Valley of Jezreel, to the town of Beisan all the way down to the Dead Sea.

More details on the Jordanian reaction to the plan were presented Tuesday, according to the paper, before a Knesset committee by Shlomo Gur, director of the team which is planning the project. The committee is a joint body to the Knesset Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, the Finance Committee and the Economic Committee.

According to the plan, the part of the canal between Haifa and Beisan will allow for navigation. It will then link up with the Jordan River, all the way down to the Dead Sea. By taking advantage of the differences in the elevations between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea, a number of power stations can be built along the Jordan River which will allow for cheaper electricity.

Also, according to the plan, a harbor will be built in Beisan which could serve Jordan as well. Under the present situation Jordan has only one water outlet -- the port of Aqaba on the Red Sea. The Beisan port would give the Jordanians access to the Mediterranean.

The plan was raised in the Knesset by former Foreign Minister Yigal Allon. The committee heard a comprehensive report Tuesday on the economic advantages of the program. Dr. Zvi Arad, of Tel Aviv University, said there was no doubt that such a project would be economically feasible for Israel.

BEGIN, GOVERNMENT SAID TO BE WORKING TO BRING IRANIAN JEWS TO ISRAEL

JERUSALEM, Jan. 25 (JTA) -- Officials in Premier Menachem Begin's bureau asserted that he and the government had been acting energetically for a lengthy period now to arrange means of bringing Iranian Jews to Israel. The officials said most of what was being done had to be kept secret for the present. They noted that at the moment, Iranian Jews who wished to do so could leave the country -- and their distinct implication was that not many were choosing to leave despite Israel's efforts to avail them of the opportunity and facilities to do so.

The officials strongly denied sharp allegations of neglect and mishandling of the situation made Sunday by leading Labor Party figures, among them former Foreign Minister Yigal Allon. The officials accused Labor of seeking to make "political capital" out of the Iranian situation. Any complaints or comments that Labor had could have been raised more appropriately and more effectively in secret forums, not in public, the officials observed.

Their comments were prompted by charges from Allon of "massive mismanagement" on the part of the government and the Jewish Agency in regard to the Iranian Jewry situation.

Knesseter Uzi Baram scored the government's "conspiracy of silence" motivated by its desire not to offend the Shah.

ATTRACTION OF JEWS TO CULTS ASSESSED

NEW YORK, Jan. 25 (JTA) -- Jews are attracted to "cults" in somewhat greater proportion than their percentage of the population, according to Dr. Irving Louis Horowitz of the Rutgers University Department of Sociology. This general assessment was accepted by the score or so participants — educators, sociologists, political scientists, theologians and community relations experts — at a two-day Conference on Cults sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith at the Summit Hotel this week.

The fact that large numbers of young Jews become members of new religious movements was given as a prime reason for the conference by Theodore Freedman, director of ADL's national program division. He said that although no hard facts are available, the ADL decided to critically examine the cult phenomenon because of reports from various parts of the country about the "involvement" of young Jews in various new religious movements, although the total number involved may not be as large as popularly imagined.

"The events in Jonestown" (Guyana), Freedman said, "appear to be symptomatic of a malaise in American society and we decided to take a look at the phenomenon. There is deep concern about the political connotation of many religious cults and the possibility that there may be more Jonestowns."

Horowitz, indicating that the current rise of cults is a Christian as well as a Jewish problem, said it is a problem of the confrontation between science and Judaism "in which the rational component has created a schism as in all religions." He added that those attracted to cults seem to be "yearning for certainty."

Denies Hasidism Is A Cult

To a comment that Hasidism is a "cult," Rabbi Israel Miller, Vice president of Student Affairs at Yeshiva University, declared that "Hasidism does have all the characteristics of a cult — charismatic rabbi, uniform garb, warm, loving structure, the people live close to each other though not in common, use music — with one important difference, it adheres to the traditional value system of Judaism."

Miller stressed that while the Hasidim succeed, other branches of Judaism apparently fail in transmitting this value system to the next generation. He said, therefore, that "we have to seek out what is missing in our society that deprives us of this ability, that makes people feel they can move on to a greater good without these values." He noted that one problem in this area is that "we have permitted government to take over too much of our lives so that it has taken over responsibilities once accepted by the family and religion."

While no consensus developed in the course of the conference as to the best way to approach the rise of "cults" in the recent period, there seemed to be agreement that more study is essential, that new religious movements are not uncommon in American history or, in fact, human history, that it represents some kind of failure of transcendent religion, that the new religious groups should not be prosecuted because of their beliefs but only if acts of force and fraud are employed.

JUDGE RAPPED FOR BIASED REMARKS

MINNEAPOLIS, MINN., Jan. 25 (JTA) -- The Jewish Community Relations Council, Anti-Defamation League of Minnesota and the Dakota,

at its board meeting last week, voted to file a formal complaint with the Minnesota State Board on Judicial Standards concerning Judge C. William Sykora's recent remarks to an alleged shoplifter. According to the complaint, he had told the defendant, a survivor of the Nazi Holocaust, "Well, with your experience over in Germany -- and I was over there and saw some of those concentration camps -- if anybody, if anything would teach a person to learn and obey the law, I would think that it would be that."

The complaint stated that "the Jewish community was shocked and disturbed" by the Judge's remarks, and that he "not only demeaned her (the defendant) as a person, but was an affront to the entire Jewish community." It was added that Judge Sykora "reflects a total lack of understanding of Nazi Germany and the perversion of law under that tyrannical regime, and of the process that inevitably led to genocide."

During the Hitler era, "more than 400 decrees and edicts were issued and laws passed against Germany's Jewish citizens, which ultimately led to the destruction of much of European Jewry as well as the deaths of millions of non-Jews," the complaint stated. "The experience of Nazi Germany and its debasement of the law should never be invoked as a lesson for obedience to the law in our society. Such an equation is an affront to the citizenry of any society that reveres the law." It concluded by urging that the Minnesota State Board on Judicial Standards take "appropriate action" because the Judge has brought his "office into disrepute."

NJCRC TO PUBLICIZE PLIGHT OF FALASHAS

CINCINNATI, Jan. 25 (JTA) -- In conjunction with Premier Menachem Begin's reiteration of Israel's recognition of the Falasha Jews of Ethiopia as "Jews in every respect," the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRC) will make a special effort to bring the situation of the Falashas to wider attention and to support agencies involved in trying to save them from chaotic conditions in Ethiopia.

The announcement came following a report made by Benjamin Abileah, director of Israel's Information Center in New York, to a session of the NJCRC's Plenary meeting here. Prof. Howard Lenhoff, president of the American Association for Ethiopian Jews, also addressed the meeting. Abileah said that a delegation of Falasha Jews now living in Israel was received by Begin in Jerusalem Jan. 5, and Begin stressed the priority accorded by his government to the emigration of Falasha Jews to Israel.

The Falasha Jews who have lived in Ethiopia since the time of King Solomon, and who have resisted attempts to convert or subjugate them, have been estimated to once have numbered a quarter million, but they have been decimated by attrition and persecution. The estimated 28,000 Falashas now are caught between the chaotic conditions of civil war, invasion by hostile neighboring countries, and the depredations of marauding slavers. Many refugees are now homeless in neighboring territories, the Plenary meeting was told.

ROME (JTA) -- President Sandro Pertini received Israel's new Ambassador to Rome, Dr. Moshe Allon, in an official ceremony Tuesday in which Allon presented his credentials.

He said Pertini expressed his good wishes for Israel and peace in the Middle East.