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REPORT SITUATION OF SYRIAN JEWRY IS SHARPLY DETERIORATING

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, Feb. 22 (JTA) -- The situation of Syrian Jews has sharply deteriorated in the last two months, with the reimposition of restrictions on internal travel, intensified harassment, frequent arrests and torture of members of the community, a Syrian Jew who escaped with his family six weeks ago, charged at a press conference here today.

The 37-year-old Syrian Jew, who wore a black mask to conceal his identity, was presented only by his first name, Albert. He told the press conference, held at the Drake Hotel and sponsored by the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York (JCRC), that he arrived in Israel with his wife, three children and other family members Dec. 10, 1978 after he escaped from Syria, "through the mountains," to a neighboring country. From that country he and his family were able to reach Israel, where they now reside. He did not give further details concerning his escape, claiming he did not want to endanger other would-be escapees.

According to Albert, who read a statement in Arabic which was translated, simultaneously, "scores" of Syrian Jews have been escaping from Syria in recent weeks. "The remaining family members of those who escaped are tortured. Many are maimed and injured," Albert disclosed. He said that all the restrictions by Syrian authorities on the Jewish community, which were lifted in 1976, were fully reimposed since the beginning of last December when a few members of the Syrian Jewish community succeeded in escaping.

Those restrictions ban free movement within the country, transfer of property, attending universities and other details of basic human rights. The Muhabarat (Syrian secret police), Albert said, had in the last month alone brutally beaten some 20 men in Damascus and Aleppo because they were suspected of helping Jewish families who successfully managed to flee the country.

Appeals For Understanding, Help

"I appeal through the American media to world opinion to understand the plight of Syrian Jews and help us gain and enjoy our freedom," Albert said.

Albert unfolded his personal story of life in Syria, where he was detained and tortured several times since he was 13 years old. At one point he lifted up his shirt and exposed to the reporters a huge scar, which he said was the result of torture in a Syrian prison.

Richard Ravitch, president of the JCRC, expressed deep concern over the fate of the 4500-member Syrian Jewish community, particularly in the wake of events in Iran. Referring to a recent State Department report on the status of human rights in various countries, Ravitch charged that the report cited moves by the Syrian government to ease limitations on the rights of Syrian Jews but failed to note that these have been rescinded and more severe treatment imposed.

Noting that Washington allocates \$90 million in aid to Syria, Ravitch declared that the Jewish community will demand this aid be halted until the Syrian government stops denying its Jewish citizens their human rights. Ravitch announced that the 26 member organizations of the JCRC, representing the organized Jewish community in the metropolitan area, were being mobilized, together with concerned Christians, civic and human rights organizations on behalf of Syrian Jewry.

New York State Attorney General Robert Abrams described plans during today's press conference for a broad-based city-wide Legal Coalition for Syrian Jewry that would include leading attorneys and jurists, public officials and legislators. Abrams, an honorary chairman of the Legal Coalition, declared that "every possible channel will be utilized to exert influence and assure the fundamental rights of Syrian Jewry."

U.S. DENIES BUMPING AMERICANS TO HELP 33 ISRAELIS LEAVE IRAN

WASHINGTON, Feb. 22 (JTA) -- The help the United States provided in the evacuation of the last 33 Israelis from Teheran last weekend did not cause any Americans to lose their places on the aircraft evacuating U.S. citizens from Iran, the State Department said yesterday. "No Americans, no Americans were removed from the plane or told to give up their seats," Department spokesman Hodding Carter emphasized.

Premier Menachem Begin of Israel revealed Tuesday in a briefing to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee that 33 Americans were taken off a Pan-Am plane in Teheran to make way for the 33 Israelis. In thanking the U.S. for its help, Begin said that were it not for this, the Israelis might not have gotten out and would have been in desperate danger.

Carter said the U.S. Embassy in Teheran "did help" in the evacuation of the Israelis. "The Iran government granted clearance for the Israelis to leave Iran," he said. "Iranian government officials assisted Israelis at the Iranian airport. In fact, the Iranian government suggested to the U.S. that we provide transportation on chartered aircraft that we had arranged. We did so."

HOUSE UNIT URGED TO ASSURE RIGHTS OF JEWISH DAY SCHOOLS

By Ben Gallob

WASHINGTON, Feb. 22 (JTA) -- Two spokesmen for different groups of Jewish organizations have testified before a House subcommittee in support of action to assure that religious schools are protected in their right to accept only students of their own religious faith without risking loss of tax exempt status but they differed on legislative approaches to that goal.

The spokesmen were Martin Cowan, secretary of the National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs (COLPA), and Nathan Z. Dershowitz, director of the Commission on Law, Social Action and Urban Affairs of the American Jewish Congress. The testimony was presented to the Subcommittee on Legislative Oversight of the House Ways and Means Committee in hearings which began Tuesday and conclude tomorrow. Cowan testified yesterday. The statement by Dershowitz was made in testimony submitted today to the subcommittee.

The hearings were the latest in a series of developments involving private religious schools and the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), which has been making new efforts to identify more effectively non-public schools which practice racially discriminatory policies, for which they are subject to loss of tax exempt status. The subcommittee called the hearings to determine whether the IRS, in its various steps to find racially discriminatory private schools, had overstepped its authority.

Cowan testified for Torah Umesorah, the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools; the Association of Advanced Rabbinic and Talmudic Schools; the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada; the National Council of Young Israel; Agudath Israel of America; Poole Agudath Israel; Rabbinical Council of America; Rabbinical Alliance of America; Religious Zionists of America; and the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America.

Dershowitz testified for the AJCongress, the American Association for Jewish Education, the Council of Jewish Federations, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council and the Synagogue Council of America.

Background Of The Issue

The issue dates back to July, 1970 when the IRS issued guidelines reportedly aimed at "white academies" organized by parents opposed to attendance by their children at integrated public schools. The exemption of Jewish and other religious schools from the guidelines -- which basically required private schools to prove absence of racially discriminatory admission policies -- was affirmed by a 1975 revision. It specified that "a school that selects students on the basis of membership in a religious denomination or unit thereof will not be deemed to have a discriminatory policy if membership in the denomination or unit is open to all on a racially non-discriminatory basis."

But when the IRS published late in 1978 new revised proposals, concern was widely expressed by non-public school organizations and religious groups over apparent ambiguities in the revised proposals relative to religious schools. In response to thousands of complaints, the IRS held three days of hearings last December at which representatives testified for Jewish and Christian schools. Cowan and Dershowitz testified at those hearings, each for the same organizations represented in their testimony to the House subcommittee.

The 1978 proposed revisions were aimed at private schools organized in areas in which public schools are being or have been integrated. A private school in such a school district could, under the 1978 proposed revisions, be presumed by the IRS to be discriminatory if its minority enrollment was not at least 20 percent of the proportion of the minority school age population in the area of such a public school, or if there had been a substantial increase in its white student enrollment which might be related to the integration of the local public school.

Cowan and Dershowitz testified at the IRS hearings that the absence of Black; Hispanic and other minority group children from Jewish religious schools simply reflected the fact that very few such minority children are Jewish. Following the criticism, both at the IRS hearings and by mail, IRS Commissioner Jerome Kurtz invited six private school agencies to meet with him

on Jan. 11.

Kurtz indicated at the Jan. 11 meeting, which included Jewish and non-Jewish agencies, that the IRS was determined to avoid any adverse effect on religious schools and added that, while the IRS intended to retain a statistical yardstick, it would not necessarily be 20 percent. But when the IRS published a new set of guideline revision proposals in the Feb. 9 Federal Register, the 20 percent yardstick was retained. April 20 was listed as the deadline for "public comment" on the newest proposals.

Urges Protection Of First Amendment Rights

Cowan testified yesterday before the House subcommittee that Congress should consider legislation to assure that religious schools were protected in their "First Amendment" rights to accept only students of their own religious faith and to accept all such students -- including transferees from public schools -- without endangering their tax exempt status.

Cowan said that Jewish religious schools would be unable to meet the 20 percent test because they admit only Jewish students, which he claimed was a constitutional right under the First Amendment, and there are very few Jews in this country who are Black, Hispanic or members of other minority groups.

He told the subcommittee that COLPA had proposed to the IRS that while the Jewish organizations opposed numerical tests in general, because they might have the effect of quotas, the IRS applicable ratio, if it was to be applied, should be one relative to the proportion of Blacks and other minority members in the affected community who are Jews, and not the proportion of all minority group members. The IRS rejected that suggestion in its February guideline revision proposals.

Cowan asserted that the IRS was infringing on the religious rights of Jews by basing its 20 percent yardstick on the proportion of all local minority group members, rather than on the proportion of Jews among such minorities. He contended that the IRS could not enforce public school desegregation by "infringing" on the First Amendment rights of religious schools to accept only students of their own religious faith and to accept all such students. He argued that in situations in which Jewish children transferred from public to religious schools, a similar constitutional right was involved, a position the IRS rejects.

Suggests Congress Should Postpone Action

Dershowitz suggested, in his testimony, that Congress should await the results of public hearings being held by the IRS instead of passing a bill, H.R. 214, that would bar the IRS from revoking the tax exemption status of racially discriminatory private schools. H.R. 214 was introduced Jan. 15 by Rep. Philip Crane (R. Ill.) but no hearings have as yet been held on it.

Dershowitz cautioned against barring the IRS from revoking the tax exempt status of discriminatory private schools because that would "be perceived in minority communities as a signal to private schools that they may continue, and are in fact encouraged, to discriminate without fear of losing their tax exemption."

He reiterated the positions of both groups of Jewish organizations that lifting the tax exemption of private schools solely on racially-imbalanced enrollments would "unfairly burden" Jewish religious schools because there are few Jews among American minorities. He declared that "although Judaism worldwide is a color-blind faith and there

are Oriental Jews and Black Jews, as well as Caucasian Jews, the fact remains that few non-Caucasian Jews have settled in America."

PEACE TALKS PROBLEMS ARE BEING HANDLED AS A PACKAGE

WASHINGTON, Feb. 22 (JTA) -- The leaders of the Egyptian, Israeli and U.S. delegations continued their discussions on completing an Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty under continued news blackout conditions at Camp David. At the beginning of the second day of deliberations today, a joint statement issued at the State Department said that Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, Egyptian Prime Minister Mustapha Khalil and Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan continued their talks "aimed at finding solutions to the outstanding problems in the negotiations."

"All the ministers agree that these remaining problems should be handled as a package and they are approaching them in that manner," the joint statement said. "In their talks today, they are discussing the various elements of that package."

State Department spokesman Hodding Carter refused to discuss any details nor would he comment on whether oil that Israel seeks is a subject of the discussion. "My instructions are even clearer -- not to be clear," Carter said in telling reporters he would not be any clearer on "the form and substance" of the discussion of "the various elements of the overall package."

CARTER FAVORABLY DISPOSED TO SADAT'S ASPIRATION TO SERVE AS GUARDIAN OF WESTERN INTERESTS IN NORTH AFRICA

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Feb. 22 (JTA) -- President Carter reacted favorably today to Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's expressed aspiration to serve as the guardian of Western interests in North Africa and the Middle East. Although he said he was not immediately endorsing those ambitions, he observed that Egypt "can be a legitimate stabilizing force." Carter made his remarks in response to questions during a surprise appearance before the annual National Foreign Policy Conference for editors and broadcasters at the State Department.

They followed Sadat's assertions to Defense Secretary Harold Brown in Cairo last Saturday that he needed American military equipment in vast quantities to fill the role of the area's keeper of the peace.

The President pointed out that Egypt has five divisions in Sinai, east of the Suez Canal, which, if withdrawn as the result of a settlement with Israel, "would mean these divisions would be available" to protect Arab countries. He said that "any nation that would threaten to attack another Middle Eastern nation would face the threat that these (Egyptian) forces would be used to protect the peace."

"Egypt is very powerful in the Arab world. They can be a legitimate stabilizing force," Carter said. "The potential is there for Egypt to help to protect other relatively defenseless Arab countries and preserve the peace in the Middle East."

However, the President said he would not, at least immediately, endorse Sadat's request for the vast arms program he outlined to Brown or Sadat's vision as a "policeman" in the area within Egypt's sphere of influence. "I can't comment, of course, on any nation being a policeman. That would be a very serious mistake," Carter said.

The President said that the U.S. receives many requests for economic and military assistance "in excess of what our nation can provide." He noted that Israel and Egypt are the two largest recipients of American assistance and in that respect Sadat's requests would not be "unique."

Notes Sadat's Peaceful Intentions

Carter praised Sadat for demonstrating in a very dramatic way his peaceful intentions toward Israel. In this connection, he noted the Egyptian President's trip to Jerusalem in November, 1977 and his participation in the Camp David summit conference last September as proof of his good intentions.

Asked if the U.S. was sufficiently pressing Jordan and Saudi Arabia to support the Camp David formulas, Carter said "We have approached the limits of legitimate influence and pressure -- probably -- on countries in that region in support of Camp David." He referred to Brown's visits to Saudi Arabia and Jordan to seek support for the Camp David negotiations. He observed that the Camp David formulas "are a very firm and well advised foundation" for the peace process in the Middle East.

ZUABI RESIGNS FROM THE KNESSET

JERUSALEM, Feb. 22 (JTA) -- A veteran Arab member of the Knesset, Saif A-Din Zuabi, resigned today. He said he did so for reasons of health and because of "the deterioration of relations between Jews and Arabs" in Israel. He accused the government of taking too weak a hard against Arab extremists.

Zuabi comprised the one-man Arab List affiliated with the Labor Alignment and had served in every Knesset since the first. His departure was viewed as the end of an era in relations between Jews and Arabs in Israel. He was always a supporter of the Establishment. In announcing his resignation he charged that the weak hand taken by the government against Arab extremists was creating anarchy in the name of democracy and was the main reason for the recent upsurge of anti-Israel views among Arab citizens of Israel.

The former MK, who is known to have a heart condition, rarely appeared in Jerusalem during the 18 months since the Ninth Knesset was elected. He spent most of his time at his home in Nazareth, where he had served as Mayor for 10 years. His political decline followed his defeat in the last mayoral elections by the Communist Party candidate, Tawfik Zayyad. At that time, Zuabi blamed the Labor Alignment for failure to give him sufficient support against the well-oiled Communist Party machinery. He will be replaced in the Knesset by a Bedouin, Sheikh Hamad Abu Rabia, who served in the Eighth Knesset.

LAPID TO HEAD BROADCASTING AUTHORITY

JERUSALEM, Feb. 22 (JTA) -- One of Maariv's senior editors, Yosef (Tommy) Lapid, was elected by the Broadcasting Authority Plenary as the Authority's new director general, taking over from Yitzhak Livni. Lapid, 48, born in Yugoslavia, was the Likud and National Religious Party choice for the post. He was reportedly favored for the post by Premier Menachem Begin, and by Education Minister Zevulun Hammer, who will now submit the election for formal Cabinet approval. There have long been complaints within the Likud and NRP of a "leftist" bias among television and radio staff, and Lapid's appointment is apparently seen as a means of "correcting the imbalance." Some Likud members even talk of a "left-wing Mafia" having ostensibly taken overwhelming control of the news and current affairs departments of the State-run electronic media.

SPECIAL INTERVIEW

A COMMITTED JEW AND ZIONIST

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Feb. 22 (JTA) -- Baron Guy de Rothschild, head of the world-famous banking firm, recalled how as a child he used to walk on Yom Kippur day to synagogue practically crossing Paris from one corner to another in top hat and tails. "We all, the entire family, used to troop behind my father to synagogue on holy days. It was all part of my Jewish upbringing. Since then, some of my values of Judaism might have changed but the core has remained," he said.

De Rothschild, who serves as president of France's Central Jewish Welfare Fund, the Fonds Social Juif Unifié (FSJU) and co-chairman of the United Jewish Appeal, has come under attack from certain French Jewish circles over an interview he granted to a local magazine. One paper, the Jewish Tribune run by a Strasbourg-based rabbi, even called for his resignation from his two community posts taking him to task for having said, among other things, that his second marriage is a mixed marriage and that he "feels a foreigner" in Israel.

Believes in Diversity Of Opinions

In an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Guy de Rothschild explained his position. "I feel deeply Jewish and I am a Zionist but I also believe in the diversity of opinions and sentiments among members of the Jewish community."

He said he intends to continue serving the French Jewish community "for as long as they want me to do so and in whatever capacity they define and this for as long as my health permits. I belong to the category of Jews who are involved and devoted to the development of Judaism in all religious, social and cultural matters. I prayed for the success of Zionism in the days which preceded the second World War and the independence of Israel."

De Rothschild told the JTA how together with his wife he demonstrated on Israel's Independence Day in May, 1948: "Together with Mrs. Mendes-France (the wife of France's Jewish Prime Minister), we marched down the Champs Elysee to celebrate Israel's birth." The Baron, a member of France's exclusive Jockey Club, has rarely if ever, joined any other public demonstrations.

"I also avidly follow news from Israel and," he recalled, "during my stay in New York during World War II I used to be a regular reader of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency's Daily News Bulletin." He added with a smile, "I still read it today."

Personal Definition Of Judaism

His personal definition of Judaism is "solidarity." He said: "This is the key word, solidarity with all those who are Jews, first with those in my own community, France, then with Jews all over the world and especially with those made to suffer because of their Jewishness. It also involves respect and help for Jewish culture, Jewish civilization and Jewish religion."

De Rothschild first visited Israel in 1932 when he was 23. "I toured the Jewish colonies, I went to see the Jewish settlements," he recalled. He has often returned since, once in 1945 while still serving as a Captain in Gen. de Gaulle's Free French forces.

"It was one of my most moving trips to Israel, then Palestine still. The war was drawing to its

end and I was having a seder in Kibbutz Ein Gedi with a young kibbutznick, Teddy Kollek, and a young writer, Arthur Koestler."

Role Of Diaspora Jews

The Baron was asked if he felt that Jews living in the diaspora have an obligation or the right to take a stand on Israel's policy. "An obligation? Definitely not. A right, neither. I agree with what (former Israeli Foreign Minister) Abba Eban once told me: "Only those who risk shedding their blood for Israel should have a voice in its basic policy matters." Guy de Rothschild feels, however, they can play a discreet role in trying to bring certain people together or help in the peace process.

If his name were not Rothschild, would he still play such an important role in Jewish affairs, in spite of his many other activities? De Rothschild was asked.

"If my name were not Rothschild, I would be a different man, I would have had a different upbringing, a different basic education. As it is I cannot forget that my father, a keen horse racer, never let one of his horses run on a Saturday. I also constantly remember how my mother used to tell me nearly every day you must strive hard to be forgiven for what you are and what you have. I told my children the same thing. My grandchildren will hear it in their turn. I would not be what I am if I would not have passed my Bar Mitzvah with all the serious concern which it involved. Naming my son David should show something."

Surprised At The Virulent Attacks

The Baron is a slim man with light blue eyes, silvery hair and a world-wise smile, looking much younger than his 70 years. He runs his worldwide business empire from the sixth floor of the banking house that bears his name. A whole panel of his bookcase is devoted to Judaism and Israel.

De Rothschild is a little surprised at the virulent attacks levelled against his interview by the Jewish Tribune. It needs all kinds to make a world. Until now, he has received only some 15 letters concerning his statement: 10 were against, five in favor.

De Rothschild was elected FSJU president by its executive committee which was elected democratically by all the organization's members. "My continuing presidency is something between the committee and myself. My colleagues on this body know that I have for long advised them to start looking for my successor and that I had always been against overlong tenures in office. What I mainly regret is that the attack was not so much directed against me personally, as against the institutions, have the honor to serve."

WAR CRIMINAL FOUND LIVING IN SPAIN

AMSTERDAM, Feb. 22 (JTA) -- The Dutch war criminal Auke Pattist, now 58 years old, who was sentenced to death in absentia by a Dutch special tribunal in 1948, has been living in the Spanish town of Oviedo in the northwestern province of Asturias under his own name for many years.

This was published yesterday as front-page news by the Dutch mass daily, De Telegraaf, on the authority of Simon Wiesenthal. Pattist during the German occupation of The Netherlands headed a raiding commando unit of the German SD in the province of Drenthe. In that capacity he arrested many persons whom the Germans wanted to liquidate, including many Jews; Pattist was arrested immediately after the war but in 1946 managed to escape.