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ISRAEL'S POPULATION NEAR 4 MILLION

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- The population of Israel will reach four million one year from now but will amount to only 5.5 million by the end of the century, according to Dr. Moshe Sicron, the government's chief statistician. He based his projection on the slowdown of the population growth rate in recent years to less than 2.5 percent per annum.

Sicron said that in terms of numbers this amounts to an annual population increase of about 90,000 a year. Most of the growth is the result of natural increase -- the excess of births over deaths. Net immigration -- the difference between the number of immigrants arriving and the number of Israelis departing -- contributed only 30 percent to the growth rate.

Sicron's figures showed a decline in the birth rate over the past five years. He said it reflected "a decrease in the birth and fertility rate within both the Jewish and non-Jewish populations." At the end of 1980, Israel's population will total 3,917,000, of which 3,380,000 are Jews and 637,000 are non-Jews, he said.

VEIT: NOT ALL EUROPEAN COMMUNITY MEMBERS AGREE TO JERUSALEM AS THE UNITED CAPITAL OF ISRAEL

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- Simone Veil, President of the Parliament of Europe, stressed here today that there were many differing views about the status of Jerusalem among the members of the European community. She remarked, in the presence of Premier Menachem Begin, the fact that the group of European parliamentarians she is heading on her visit to Israel is in Jerusalem, should not be taken as an endorsement of Israel's concept of united Jerusalem as its capital.

The visitors met with Begin and other Israeli leaders at the Knesset today. Begin took the occasion to defend the government's decision to deport Mayors Fakh Kawasme of Hebron and Mohammed Milhim of Halhoul. He said the decision was based on the fact that the two mayors had instigated anti-Israeli activity on the West Bank.

Begin also observed that the Jordanian-Syrian border crisis seems to be over. "If the danger of war between the two countries disappears, every man of good will will be glad," he said.

Shimon Peres, chairman of the opposition Labor Party, told the European group that his party did not want Israel to rule over the Palestinian people against their will.

FOCUS ON ISSUES

ITALIAN JEWS HELPING QUAKE VICTIMS

By Lisa Palmieri Billig

ROME, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- In silence, and with no desire for publicity, Jews all over Italy are sending help to earthquake stricken towns in southern Italy. So far, 38 tons of new clothes, box loads of food, and a thousand heavy-blankets bought by

the Rome Jewish community were sent ahead on three trucks and delivered at the Nocera Inferiore and another distribution center.

Five trailers were contributed; three by the Rome community, one by the Naples Jewish community, and one by HIAS, with money collected entirely among its staff in Rome.

The Jewish population of Rome which totals about 16,000, including children, managed to collect about 18 million Lire at donation centers set up in the Jewish schools and other institutions in the city.

Individual Roman Jewish shop owners donated wholesale quantities of badly needed clothing and undergarments with heartfelt generosity. Other badly needed items, such as heaters for tents and trailers, were bought with cash donations. The major Jewish organizations with offices in Rome (HIAS, JDC, ORT and the Jewish Agency) contributed \$100,000 of which \$30,000 came from the JDC alone. Staff members of all these Jewish organizations contributed an average of two days salary each.

Help From Soviet Jewish Refugees

Perhaps most moving of all were the offers of help that came from Soviet Jewish refugees in transit in Rome -- those bedraggled families awaiting passports to continue their emigration to the U.S., Canada and Australia.

Physicians among the Soviet Jews here offered medical aid to the victims while others offered to go to the stricken towns and help dig among the ruins in the hopes of saving lives. But they received no reply from the Italian government. Many among the Soviet Jewish colony have already donated blood.

Last week a truck, packed with clothes and food bought with money donated by Roman Jews, left the capital to meet with the trailer departing from the Naples Jewish community. They headed for the tiny mountain town of Calitri, south of Naples. The town was selected because the president of the Naples Jewish community has friends there to ensure that the gifts arrived at their destination without being hijacked by road bandits.

Solidarity Without Fanfare

These spontaneous, concrete acts of solidarity on the part of Italian Jews with the earthquake victims are being carried out quietly, one might almost say "clandestinely" and anonymously. When I asked members of the staff of the Rome Jewish community and the Union of Italian Jewish Communities why no news items were being printed about Italian Jewish contributions, I was told, "It's not important that others know, what's important is that we act. It's Chanukah time. Let's say these are our special mitzvot for Chanukah."

But another, more bitter truth surfaced. Choosing the way of silence was deliberate on the part of Italian Jews, based on past experience. Apparently, immediately after the 1976 earthquake in the Friuli region, in which 1000 people died, the Union of Italian Jewish Communities sent a sum of 15 million Lire.

Thereupon, a flood of angry letters descended on the Union's office in Rome, all to the effect that the sum contributed was considered a "miserly" amount in consideration of the fact that Italian Jews were amongst "the wealthiest people in the nation."

Misinformation About Jewish Community

"There is so much misinformation circulating about us," said one Jewish community director. "In recent surveys we discovered that the average Italian thinks the Jews in Italy number up to two or three million when in reality we amount to a total population of 35,000, about half that number in Rome and the rest scattered in Milan, Turin, Naples and smaller towns. The Italian people really think we 'control' large sections of Italy's finances. They don't know how we have to struggle to keep our community budgets from falling into a permanent state of deficit," the community director said.

The "image" problem of Jews all over the world has always been and always will be a concern for Jewish public relations, at least so long as anti-Semitism continues to exist as a human disease. Teachers in Roman Jewish schools can often be heard admonishing their pupils to always be on their best behavior in public because they represent the future of Roman Jewry. But it is ironic to discover that the "reputation" of Italian Jewry can be adversely affected by good deeds as well.

100 LEADING SCIENTISTS, SCHOLARS VOICE ALARM AT EROSION OF THE UN

NEW YORK, Dec. 8 (JTA) — More than 100 scholars, scientists and artists in the United States and abroad — including 30 Nobel laureates — joined yesterday in a "statement of conscience" voicing "alarm at the growing danger to world peace resulting from the erosion of the United Nations."

The statement — signed by Simone de Beauvoir, French author; Sir Isaiah Berlin of Oxford University; Nobel Prize physicist Hans Bethe and historian Barbara Tuchman, among others — said that the world body was being "perverted by irrelevant political machinations" that have "crippled" UN specialized agencies such as the International Labor Organization, World Health Organization and UNESCO.

Citing the "assaults orchestrated by the Soviet and Arab blocs in their campaign to isolate and discredit Israel," the signers said:

"The United Nations condemns the historic Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and exalts PLO terrorists. Those who vow to eliminate the State of Israel and refuse to make peace are permitted to sit in the councils of the peacemakers, while Israel, a member state created in fidelity to the principles of the UN, is slandered and faced with the threat of delegitimization."

The convocation was issued at a day-long conference sponsored by the Committee on UN Integrity at the City University Graduate Center. The Committee is composed of Nobel laureates Kenneth Arrow (economics), Hans Bethe (physics), Felix Bloch (physics) and Andre L'woff (medicine). Sir Isaiah Berlin of Oxford University; Robert Kibbee, chancellor of the City University of New York; and Elie Wiesel, chairman of the U.S. Holocaust Council.

Wiesel read the declaration following a luncheon session at which Sen. Daniel Moynihan (Dem., N.Y.) assailed the 1975 General Assembly resolution, passed while he was serving as the United States Ambassador to the United Nations, calling Zionism a form of racism. He noted that the "statement of conscience" read by Wiesel had charged that the UN Resolution "must bear some responsibility for the scourge of anti-Semitism now reappearing in many parts of the world."

The statement adopted by the 100 scientists and intellectuals had been circulated by the Committee on UN Integrity earlier. It was particularly critical of the UN's "tragic failure" in the Mideast:

"In its preoccupation with Palestinian rights, the United Nations neglects the plight of millions of men, women and children in other parts of the world who are in immediate danger of death from famine, disease and war." The statement added:

"The campaign to ostracize Israel has ... made an international charade of efforts to extend freedom of speech and press, to help the working man and woman, to meet the needs of children, to achieve equality of women."

ALLEN SAYS PERCY'S VIEW ON PALESTINIAN STATE DOES NOT REFLECT INCOMING ADMINISTRATION

By Helen Silver

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8 (JTA) — Richard Allen, President-elect Ronald Reagan's foreign policy advisor, said yesterday that Sen. Charles Percy's advocacy of a Palestinian state headed by Yasser Arafat "certainly would not reflect policy of an incoming Reagan administration." But he stopped short of an unequivocal repudiation of the views expressed by the Illinois Republican, slated to become chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee in the next Congress.

Allen, appearing on the ABC-TV "Issues and Answers" program, was questioned about reports that Percy told Soviet leaders during his visit to Moscow two weeks ago that he favored a Palestinian state federated with Jordan but headed by the Palestine Liberation Organization leader because it "would permit Arafat to realize his wish to be a chief of state before he dies." The contents of Percy's conversations with the Kremlin leaders were contained in classified cables sent to Washington by Thomas Watson, U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union, which were leaked to the media over the weekend.

Allen, a member of Reagan's transition team, indicated that Percy had already briefed Reagan and other members of the transition team, including himself, on his talks in Moscow which covered strategic arms limitation, China and Afghanistan as well as the Middle East. Asked specifically if he disavowed Percy's views on a Palestinian state, Allen replied:

"I would say that particular statement, which I understand was not entirely accurate, having discussed this matter with Senator Percy and having a chance to examine the (Watson's) cables myself, it certainly would not reflect policy of an incoming Reagan administration."

He added, "The accurate expression of his (Percy's) views has been on the record for years. So I see nothing new in this and I think that Senator Percy is going to or already has taken steps to clarify the matter." He said that "Senator Percy discussed his trip with me before he left and he also discussed it with the President-elect and indicated to the President-elect that he would get back to both him and to me and to others when he came (home). And he did just that. We lament the use of classified cables."

Says Percy Spoke Only For Himself

Asked if Percy was speaking only for himself in Moscow, Allen replied: "Yes, he was, and I think Senator Percy made it abundantly clear. It is not at all unusual that a distinguished Senator would consult with members of an incoming administration before going to or taking such an important trip as that of going to Moscow which was a pre-planned trip. Senator Percy did extend us that courtesy and we did discuss, but in no way was the visit coordinated to the extent that he was carrying any proposals. He is a Senator and he is entitled to his views... They are his and they do not represent necessarily those of the incoming administration."

Another Republican Senator, Robert Dole of Kansas, replying to questions on the NBC-TV "Meet the Press" program yesterday, said "I doubt it" when asked if he and other Republicans supported Percy's ideas on a Palestinian state. "I haven't discussed this with Senator Percy. I haven't read the cables. But I would hope he is speaking only for Senator Percy," Dole said.

Asked if he was sure Percy was not speaking for Reagan, Dole replied, "Well, again, I don't know. I don't want to second guess. I haven't been privy to some of the recent messages, haven't discussed it with Senator Percy and I understand there is some difference of opinion."

State Department spokesman John Trattner questioned today about Ambassador Watson's cables said, "We are always concerned when leaks occur of material reported to have been classified government telegrams. But I don't have any comment beyond that." He did not comment on the contents of the cables.

ISRAEL URGES UN ASSEMBLY TO DEAL WITH MIDEAST SITUATION, NOT JUST THE ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT

By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, Dec. 8 (JTA) — Israel called on the General Assembly today to address itself seriously to the situation in the Middle East in its full and proper sense, "rather than concentrating on the Israeli-Arab conflict alone."

The call was made by Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, Yehuda Blum in remarks prepared for delivery this evening at the opening session of the Assembly's annual debate on the "Situation in the Middle East." Noting that "In accordance with prescribed ritual, attempts will be made to turn it (the Mideast debate) into another orchestrated attack on Israel," Blum said that the Mideast includes the war in the Persian Gulf, the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and the dispute between Jordan and Syria, among other conflicts.

"These trouble spots, with grave implications for international peace, should certainly give rise for concern on the part of the General Assembly and must have a prominent place in any serious discussion of the situation in the Mideast," Blum declared.

In line with his call to the Assembly, Blum, in his 16-page speech, discussed the various conflicts and trouble spots in the Mideast. The debate on the Mideast is expected to last until the end of this week.

Meanwhile, the Assembly was scheduled to vote tomorrow on a few draft resolutions concerning Palestinian rights. Israel, in anticipa-

tion of tomorrow's votes issued a statement here today charging that those resolutions "are yet another attempt to dictate, through the General Assembly, a one-sided and impractical approach with regard to the Arab-Israeli conflict." According to the Israeli statement, one of the draft resolutions contains "new elements" which are particularly unacceptable.

The new elements, as cited by Israel, are repudiation of Security Council Resolution 242, a call for the establishment in advance of negotiations of a Palestinian "independent sovereign state," and a request that the Security Council impose sanctions on Israel.

STATE DEPARTMENT SAYS EXPULSION OF WEST BANK MAYORS VIOLATES THE FOURTH GENEVA CONVENTION

By Helen Silver

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8 (JTA) — The State Department today expressed "disappointment" over the expulsion of two West Bank Arab mayors by Israel which, it said, was a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. It also registered "disapproval" of the seizure of television tapes by Israeli soldiers from American correspondents covering riots on the West Bank over the weekend.

Department spokesman John Trattner was questioned about the deportations of Mayors Fahd Kawasme of Hebron and Mohammed Milhim of Halhoul after the Israeli Supreme Court upheld the legality of the deportation orders last week. "We are deeply disappointed in it," Trattner said. "My understanding is that deportations are prohibited by the Fourth Geneva Convention, which lays out the duties and responsibilities of an occupying power in an occupied territory. That convention prohibits deportations regardless of motives."

Trattner added, "Previously, a number of times, we have said that we hoped a way could be found to allow the mayors to return to their homes and assume their responsibilities. We believe these expulsions will weigh heavily on families and believe they cannot help but complicate the search for peace in that part of the world."

Commenting on American reporters' encounters with Israeli soldiers, Trattner said, "We are disturbed by the reports that legitimate activities of the press are being interfered with, that is the confiscation of film. We are looking into the matter. Our position on freedom of the press has always been crystal clear and stated repeatedly. We urge other governments to adhere to international standards of press freedom in which we believe and which we respect."

U.S. Arms Deliveries To Egypt

Asked about reports that the U.S. may accelerate arms deliveries to Egypt, the State Department spokesman said "We are not going to get into decisions made or possibly made. When they are made, we will announce them."

He added, "As you are aware, Vice President (Hosni) Mubarak (of Egypt) who was here recently, and a group of senior advisors, discussed a number of matters with us during their visit. The topics covered certainly involved our military supply relationship with Egypt, as well as an exchange of views on regional security and regional defense. I will not be able to get into the substance of these discussions."

Trattner said he had no update on the situation on the Jordanian-Syrian border. He observed, however, that "My impression is that tensions in that situation have noticeably abated. But I don't have any details to provide."

BEHIND THE HEADLINES THE JEWS OF NORMANDY

By Ben Frank

(Part Two Of A Three-Part Series)

ROUEN, France, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- For Prof. Norman Golb of the University of Chicago, a specialist in Hebrew and Judaeo-Arabic studies, Monday, October 13, 1980 will be a day to remember: it was the formal dedication of a medieval building which he has declared to be Europe's oldest surviving yeshiva.

To Golb and to scholars all over the world, the importance of this archaeological find means that Jewish presence in northern France was not only economic and commercial but cultural as well. What makes the story even more exciting was that the location of the structure had indeed been predicted by Golb who reached his conclusions from a study of medieval manuscripts.

Months before the Romanesque building was discovered beneath the parking lot of the Palace of Justice in Rouen here in Normandy, the 51-year-old professor published his hypothesis of a yeshiva in the courtyard in a book titled, "History and Culture of the Jews of Rouen," which appeared in Hebrew in the spring of 1976.

He had researched 150 manuscripts which he studied, in Jerusalem; the British Museum, the Bibliotheque Nationale in Paris; libraries in Budapest, Amsterdam, New York, as well as the Vatican Library.

His selection of the site of the yeshiva on Rouen's Rue aux Juifs (The Street of the Jews) was based on the fact that references to the building stop with the 16th Century. This was the point at which the highly ornamented Palais de Justice was built. "I surmised that they razed the Jewish center to make way for the new construction," Golb told me in an interview.

History Of An Overlooked City

Equally fascinating is the fact that Golb may have discovered why Rouen was overlooked as a center of Judaism during the Middle Ages. It may have been bypassed because Hebrew references to the city were misread by Latin scholars of the Middle Ages. Until the 14th Century, Rouen was known as Rodom.

In surviving Hebrew manuscripts, the name Rodom is written like Rhodaz, a medieval city in southern France. What happened was that scholars, often in recopying the manuscripts, mistook the Hebrew letter "somoach," for a final "mem." Golb said he was fascinated by the possibility that the city they were really talking about and writing about as a "thriving Jewish community," was really Rodom, or Rouen.

"I went back to the original manuscripts at the British Museum and my suspicions were immediately confirmed," he said. Subsequent studies of manuscripts in Paris, Amsterdam and Jerusalem, revealed detailed maps and descriptions of the Jewish quarter and life in the city.

Jews Active In Rouen

Even today, the Jews of Rouen are active in the civic life of this city which is associated with another chapter of French history: on the market square here, Joan of Arc was burned at the stake in 1431.

For centuries, Jews have lived in Normandy whose countryside is serene and peaceful and yet whose coast provided windows to the world for Jews and non-Jews since the Middle Ages. From the beautiful seaside town of Honfleur, Samuel de Champlain set sail to found Quebec and explore the Great Lakes.

In Rouen itself, there are about 400 Jewish families engaged in professions and academic life, as well as industry and commerce. Greater Rouen has a population of about 400,000 and is one of the great industrial centers of France. There is a synagogue and Rabbi C. Perez, its spiritual leader, told me that many Jews came to Rouen in the 1960's from Algeria and Tunisia, and that they have given the congregation a Sephardic tone.

With the archaeological discovery, more Jews certainly will be visiting Rouen. Since that day when the excavations were found, Rouen and the government of France have spent about \$1 million on the restoration. It should be open to the public in the near future. It is a Jewish historic site in France not to be missed.

(Tomorrow: Part Three)

EMIGRATION DROPS MORE THAN 80 PERCENT

NEW YORK (JTA) -- The National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCSJ), reported today that 789 Jews left the Soviet Union in November 1980, a decline of 81.2 percent over the same period for 1979. Burton Lewinson, chairman of the NCSJ, in releasing the figures noted that "in the eleven months of 1980 a total of 20,582 Jews left the USSR as compared to 47,175 in the same period in 1979. This means a decline of 56.4 percent for the year, to date."

"At a time when East and West European nations are meeting in Madrid to review the Helsinki Accords, including the emigration of Soviet Jews, and others, Moscow continues to test Western resolve," Lewinson said. "The emigration of Soviet Jews is one instance of this test. I am certain that our government and others will meet that test and that the American Jewish community and its supporters will do the same. In the meantime, however, thousands of innocent people are suffering even as the Soviet Union claims to have a 'humane' emigration policy."

According to the NCSJ the total number of Jews leaving the USSR in 1980 will be less than 50 percent of 1979. It is not expected to be more than 22,000.

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- The Jewish National Fund is once again ensuring a plentiful supply of Christmas trees for Israel's Christian population and visitors. The JNF plans to distribute some 1500 trees among diplomats, foreign correspondents and Christian community institutions this year, a spokesman said. The JNF is also allocating trees to the Jerusalem municipality for distribution among Christians in the capital. The trees came from a nearby JNF forest.

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- Five people were injured Monday morning, one of them seriously, when a booby-trapped car exploded on Hebron Road in the southern part of the city. Two of the injured were sitting in the car at the time and the other three were passers-by. However, unlike a previous explosion several days ago in downtown Jerusalem, Monday's explosion was believed to be the work of criminals. Police said the two men sitting in the car were involved in an earlier car bombing attempt, which was foiled at the last minute. The seriously injured man was trapped in the burning car after the explosion.