

# 'Hope Is Not Lost' PERES PLEDGES ISRAEL WILL DO ALL IN ITS POWER 'AND EVEN MORE' NOT TO END RESCUE OF ETHIOPIAN JEWS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 8 (JTA) — "Hope is not lost" for the rescue and repatriation of Ethiopian Jews, Premier Shimon Peres declared in a statement to the Knesset today. He pledged that the government "will do all in its power, and even more than that, not to end this operation, which is so humane and so Jewish, until the very last Jew from Ethiopia reaches his homeland."

The statement was the first by Peres to Israeli lawmakers and the public since the airlift rescue of Ethiopian Jews was suspended Sunday after its premature disclosure here. "Despite the difficulties and the breakdowns, hope is not lost," he said. "The single main problem before us is how to continue this exhilarating rescue operation, and to bring it to a successful conclusion."

Peres took full responsibility for the press conference last Thursday night at which government and Jewish Agency spokesmen confirmed that an airlift had been bringing thousands of Ethiopian Jews to Israel since last November, via Sudan and an obligatory stopover in Europe. Many Israelis have charged that the press conference, which gave the previously secret airlift worldwide publicity, contributed to suspending it.

Peres said he had approved the conference after "consulting with all the relevant bodies" in an effort to divert public attention away from "sensitive aspects" — meaning apparently the airlift from Sudan — to Israel's efforts to absorb and integrate the Ethiopian newcomers.

## Urges Absolute Discretion In The Future

But the Premier did not take issue with his critics. He urged, instead, absolute discretion in the future. "We must renew the self-discipline and the necessary silence," he said. "National confidence is required in order to complete this sacred mission."

The airlift, although known to the media, was subject to military censorship until last Wednesday when a small magazine published by West Bank settlers quoted the director of the Jewish Agency's aliyah department Yehuda Dominitz, as saying that the vast majority of Ethiopian Jews were now in Israel.

With censorship broken, the Israeli and foreign media published sensational accounts of the arrival of Ethiopian Jews in Israel, their welcome in most places but rejection by some townships where unemployment is running high.

## 'No ... Outward Differences Can Divide Us'

Peres may have been referring to this when he called for an "honorable and serious process of absorption to prove an ancient truth in our lives: that despite whatever differences of origins and shades and emphases, we are one nation, bound to one ancient, wondrous heritage. No physical force or outward differences can divide us."

The Premier added: "All of us, representatives of the Jewish people and of the State of Israel, rabbis and public servants, government and citizens, towns and development towns, kibbutzim and moshavim, the center of the country and the periphery — we must all meet this exciting challenge of absorbing our brothers and sisters from a distant land."

"We must do this while respecting their customs and way of life, their special culture and heritage and their deep feelings. For we are all one people. There are no white Jews and there are no black Jews. There are just Jews. History and faith tie us together forever."

Peres cited rabbinical authorities including Rabbi Avraham Hachohen Kook, the first Chief Rabbi of Palestine, who ruled that the Ethiopian Jews were full-fledged Jews and called for their redemption.

It was not until 1973, however, that the Israeli rabbinate ruled that the Ethiopians were bona fide Jews entitled to repatriation and it was only in 1975 that the Israeli government found them eligible for citizenship under the Law of Return.

Peres concluded his statement with a call for aliyah from lands of distress and other lands: "The State of Israel is the only real guarantee of the existence of both Jews and Judaism. And when a time of opportunity has come, let us not turn to picayune (arguments), let us not miss it. Let us all mobilize to the principle that unites us, and not to passing quarrels. Aliyah continues and it will continue."

## Peres Pays 'Debt Of Honor' To Begin

The Premier told the Knesset that he wished "to pay a debt of honor to Menachem Begin whose government invested much effort and resourcefulness in order to make possible the first thin and secret trickle (of Ethiopian Jewish immigration) which broke through the barriers."

The organized rescue of Ethiopian Jews began shortly after Begin and his Likud-led government took office in 1977. But the airlift it inaugurated was forced to end after two flights when Begin's Defense Minister, the late Moshe Dayan, made the politically dangerous disclosure that Israel was selling arms to the Marxist regime in Ethiopia with which it has never had diplomatic relations.

## In The Wake Of The Ethiopian Exodus Leak: REMNANT OF JEWISH COMMUNITY REPORTED IN STATE OF PANIC, FEAR By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 8 (JTA) — The remnant of the Jewish community in Ethiopia lives in a state of panic and fear since the airlift rescue of Ethiopian Jews received world-wide publicity following its disclosure in Israel last week in a public relations fiasco that forced its suspension.

This was the disquieting news brought from Ethiopia by an unidentified non-Israeli diplomat, published in Maariv today. There have been conflicting reports of the number of Jews still in Ethiopia. Figures given by different Jewish Agency spokesmen in recent days range as high as 10,000 in Ethiopia and another 4,000 in refugee camps in Sudan waiting for planes to carry them to Israel.

Whatever their number, they fear increased hostility from their non-Jewish neighbors now that it is known that thousands of Jews have been flown to safety from that famine-stricken war-ravaged land.

The unidentified diplomat confirmed reports that the Ethiopian Air Force has bombed columns of refugees trying to cross the border into Sudan, Maariv reported. He said a number of Jews were among these refugees.

The Ethiopian Jews fear not only reprisals from their own government which was furious over the airlift disclosure, but assaults by starving non-Jewish Ethiopians to steal what little food the Jewish refugees have.

#### SPECIAL TO THE JTA ETHIOPIAN JEWS LEARN'G TRADES AT ORT SCHOOLS IN ISRAEL By Avi Feinglass

NEW YORK, Jan. 8 (JTA) — ORT, which for five years operated technical assistance programs helping Ethiopian Jews in remote villages such as Ambaber, Teddah and Wollega in that country's Gondor province, has been operating intensive training and re-training courses for Ethiopian Jews at ORT schools in Natanya and Kiryat Gat in Israel throughout the last year, according to Alvin Gray, president of the American ORT Federation.

The new arrivals have been receiving vocational training in fields such as accounting, biology, drawing, metalwork, and dressmaking, and receiving orientation in Israeli industry practices. These ORT courses are slated to be expanded to a weekly curriculum of 130-150 hours in the coming months, in cooperation with the Ministry of Labor and the Jewish Agency.

"ORT's courses for Ethiopian Jews in Israel have been quietly operating for some time," noted Gray, "but we avoided publicizing the fact in line with the policy of not drawing undue attention to the fact that scores of Ethiopian Jews have been brought to Israel in recent years and thousands more have arrived in recent weeks. Now that the story has broken in the press, we can point with pride to ORT's work on their behalf now and in the past."

#### JDC-ORT Program In Ethiopia

ORT first began operations helping Ethiopian Jews in 1976 in an American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee-ORT program, constructing and operating schools, medical clinics, and wells for the village communities of Gondor province in northwestern Ethiopia where the bulk of the Jewish population was located.

ORT's substantial program operated for five years serving the total population of the area, employing some 200 teachers and administrators in Gondor and aiding thousands until 1981 when the Ethiopian government closed the program.

ORT taught courses in basic crafts such as carpentry, sewing, pottery making, metalwork and welding, as well as in agriculture and Hebrew. To counter the ravages of diseases caused by polluted water, ORT constructed and maintained wells and systems of pumps, pipes and taps.

Prior to the ORT project, the infant mortality rate among Ethiopian Jews was running as high as 40 percent due largely to water borne diseases.

ORT water projects in 75 villages, combined with improvements in sanitation and hygiene, decisively lowered the mortality rate.

According to the census taken by ORT in 1977, some 28,000 Jews lived in Ethiopia. In 1979 ORT assisted 2,000 Ethiopian Jewish families in Gondor province with aid in the form of oxen, tools, seed, fertilizer and agricultural and crafts training. In 1980 an additional 900 families received such aid and matzot were distributed to the Jews of Gondor province, the first such distribution ever performed by an organization.

ORT projects included building and operating 22 ORT schools, and two clinics, one in Ambaber and one in Teddah. ORT also built a road, a flour mill, 25 synagogues and promoted cottage industries.

"ORT continues to aid Ethiopian Jews today, after their arrival in Israel," said Gray, "with courses and training programs geared to meeting their special needs. What ORT has done, is doing and will do for Ethiopian Jews is in keeping with ORT's 105-year-old policy of helping Jewish communities, wherever in the world they may be."

#### ASSESSMENT OF ETHIOPIAN NEWCOMERS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 8 (JTA) — A senior psychologist on the staff of the Jewish Agency has rebutted reports in the local media which have deeply hurt newly arrived Ethiopian Jews by describing them as "primitive" and stressing their unfamiliarity with such Western amenities as toilets and toothbrushes.

Dr. Zvi Yadin, who is the psychologist in charge of the absorption of Ethiopian Jews, told reporters today that the newcomers were culturally developed in many ways "but their ways simply are different from ours."

He said, for example, the Ethiopians are fastidious about dental care, but in Ethiopia they used special twigs to clean their teeth instead of toothbrushes which were unknown to them. "I wish that Israeli children's teeth were as healthy as those of Ethiopian old men," Yadin said.

He said the newcomers are equally fastidious about their personal hygiene. But they look askance at the idea of a toilet inside their home because in Ethiopia they were used to outside facilities.

Yadin described the Ethiopian women as extremely modest and much care and discretion has to be exercised when submitting them to medical examination. The fact that they publicly breast-feed their infants reflects common Ethiopian mores, not a lack of modesty, he said.

The Jewish Agency is employing about 100 Ethiopian "old-timers" — those who arrived here months ago, or in some cases years ago — to help absorb the newcomers. They act as communicators, relaying the feelings and desires of the new arrivals who speak no Hebrew. But they also inform the newcomers of Israeli media comments about them.

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JERUSALEM (JTA) — Excavations being carried out by the Institute of Archaeology of the Hebrew University in cooperation with the Israel Exploration Society have revealed impressive fortifications and a water supply system at Tel Yoqne'am in the Jezreel Valley that apparently date from the days of King Solomon (10th Century B.C.E.).

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES THE UNIQUENESS OF ISRAEL'S ECONOMY

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 8 (JTA) -- The best and most dramatic demonstration of the uniqueness of Israel's economy is the airlift and absorption of thousands of destitute immigrants from Ethiopia.

What other country, suffering from an acute economic crisis and threatened by recession and unemployment, would embark on a venture like that?

Finance Minister Yitzhak Modai, speaking to Anglo-Jewish journalists last week on the uniqueness of the Israeli economy, was barred from citing that obvious example. The details of the historic rescue effort were then still under censorship in Israel.

### Cogent And Convincing Examples

But the minister was not short of other cogent and convincing examples -- all showing just what he's up against.

\* If chronic Latin American debtors, such as Mexico or Brazil, were to do nothing but work to pay off their foreign debts, spending nothing at all on themselves, it would take them six months to do it. Their foreign debts, in other words, is about one half of their annual gross national product (GNP).

For Israel, in the same hypothetical circumstances, it would take a whole year to pay off the foreign debt -- and more than another whole year to pay off the internal debt -- the money owed by the government to the citizens.

\* Israel's commerce with the outside world is equal to its entire GNP. That is a stark indication of Israel's overwhelming dependence on foreign trade for food, for raw materials and for industrial goods.

The United States, by way of comparison, trades to the value of four percent of its GNP. And even a "normal" country like Australia, trades to the value of 30 percent of its GNP, Modai said. The Israeli figure is veritably unique.

\* The government's budget is more than 70 percent of the GNP. This, too, is vastly higher than in most "normal" countries. In the U.S. and Europe, the proportion is between 25 and 35 percent. The reason for Israel's uniqueness in this, said Modai, is the crushing, unavoidable burdens which the State has shouldered throughout its history.

Defense accounts for 22 percent of the budget; social services over and above the basics account for a further 18 percent; and 38 percent of the government's budget goes for debt-service.

"That leaves you with just 22 percent of the budget with which to give your people the things that governments normally give their people," Modai observed. He noted that the uniqueness of the Israeli social services budget stemmed directly from the ongoing, lasting needs of immigrant absorption.

### A Tangible Expression Of Success

The huge external debt is not something to be ashamed of, Modai continued. On the contrary, it is the tangible expression of Israel's incredible success in building an advanced nation in three-and-a-half decades while defending itself constantly against large and sophisticatedly-equipped enemies.

"When we began," said Modai, "there was barely a nation, with hardly any infrastructure and virtually no raw materials. Five major wars and one major peace -- all of these are enormously costly in money terms, apart from their other traumatic effects. That is the backdrop to Israel's debt."

He added two other points which are often taken for granted in reviews of Israel's economic problems and achievements: the people are among the most heavily taxed on earth, and the administration, by and large, is "clean -- that is, free of rampant corruption. In fact, in Israel if you want to be a President or a Minister, not only don't you make money, it usually ends up costing you money."

### Backdrop Of Present Dire Crisis

This, then, is the backdrop, the Finance Minister continued. But Israel has suffered during the past decade from other "uniquenesses," some of them objective factors, others brought on by economic mismanagement. Together, they have led her to her present dire crisis.

Since the 1973 Yom Kippur War, the cost of arms has soared far in excess of inflation, even Israeli inflation, as the Middle East arms race grows ever more deadly and advanced.

Israel had no option but to keep up. The problem, however, was that since the 1973 war its economic growth dramatically declined. In part this was due to the oil crisis. In 1979, for instance, Israel was spending 10.6 percent of its budget on oil imports.

The oil crisis, moreover, caused a world-wide shrinkage of trade, with foreign countries naturally adopting protectionist policies to shield their own industries. Israel found it all the harder to export, to compete.

While the oil price rise triggered a wave of rises in the prices of almost all raw materials, Israel had no raw materials of its own to "cash in on."

### Effect Of The Trade Gap

The trade gap grew ever wider, and the "regular" means of bridging it -- U.S. aid, world Jewish investment and philanthropy, credit from commercial banks -- grew ever more inadequate.

"This gap brought on our inflation," Modai continued, "because the government naturally sought to bridge it by printing money. But while most inflations make governments rich and citizens poor, this one had the reverse effect because of that remarkable Jewish invention, linkage."

The linkage of wages to the cost-of-living exists elsewhere of course. "But we Israelis developed it to a fine art. This ensured peoples' income regardless of their productivity" and it spelled disaster.

The minister drove the point home with another pithy aphorism: "Israel," he said, "is the only high-inflation country where the government is poor and the people are rich." Because of the inbuilt linkage, the people failed to resist inflation sufficiently, and it just grew and grew. "That," Modai concluded, "is why we have now come to the end of the road."

The foreign reserves are being rapidly eroded as Shekel-holders flee to Dollars. Credit-lines threaten to dry up as overseas financiers study the parlous state of the Israeli economy.

The government plans to tighten up on tax-collection. Modai believes there are tens of thousands who get away without paying. It intends to streamline, to boost efficiency, to spur high-tech industry.

But all that is in the farther future. The immediate, inevitable though unpalatable remedy is to cut. To cut brutally into the bare flesh of government spending. The goal is \$2 billion annually. During the current fiscal year (ending in March) only a paltry few hundred million will be trimmed. The really deep incisions are planned from April onwards.

Will the ministers agree? "They'll have no choice," Modai says philosophically. "For all their fractiousness, Israelis are very good at looking facts in the face when they absolutely have to."

#### SIX RABBIS ARRESTED AT RALLY AT SOVIET NEWS CENTER IN N.Y.

By Kevin Freeman

NEW YORK, Jan. 8 (JTA) -- Six New York area rabbis were arrested yesterday and charged with criminal trespass stemming from a nearly two-hour demonstration at the offices here of the Soviet news agency Tass. They were protesting the Soviet Union's treatment of its Jewish population.

The six were released and ordered to appear in court on January 24. An unidentified employee at the Tass office was quoted in news reports last night as calling the demonstration a "Zionist provocation."

The protest was held to coincide with this week's arms talks in Geneva between senior Reagan Administration officials, including Secretary of State George Shultz, and Soviet officials led by Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko.

#### Statement By The Rabbis

Seeking to link any Soviet commitment on arms control to their past record on human rights, the six rabbis said in a statement that "If the Kremlin is to be trusted, it must show that it abides by the multitude of international human rights treaties it has signed."

The rabbis, wearing phylacteries and reading from prayer books, noted the plight of Soviet Jewish Prisoner of Conscience Anatoly Shcharansky, whose wife Avital is currently in Geneva reportedly meeting with members of the United States delegation.

Furthermore, the statement assailed the continued Soviet harassment and persecution of unofficial teachers of Hebrew and Judaism who have been arrested and sentenced in recent weeks, and "the hundreds of thousands of Soviet Jews who have dared to apply for exit visas and who may be doomed to be denied emigration forever."

The rabbis were: Avraham Weiss of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale who is chairman of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry; Daniel Fogel of the North Shore Synagogue in Syosset; Bruce Ginsberg of the Bethpage Jewish Community Center; Charles Klein of the Merrick Jewish Center; Alan Meyerowitz of the West Clarkstown Jewish Center in Spring Valley; and Gerald Skolnik of the Forest Hills Jewish Center.

Meanwhile, the rabbis have vowed to continue their protests, and have sent a letter to the Soviet Mission to the United Nations here informing them

of their continued actions on behalf of Soviet Jewry. Also, the rabbis called on Jews and non-Jews to stage protests at Soviet offices to dramatize the plight of Soviet Jewish Prisoners of Conscience.

#### CARDINAL UNDER FIRE FOR PRAISING NAZI WAR CRIMINAL

By Kevin Freeman

NEW YORK, Jan. 8 (JTA) -- Timothy Cardinal Manning of Los Angeles has come under sharp attack from two leading American Jewish organizations for a letter he wrote on behalf of Nazi war criminal Andrija Artukovic asserting that Artukovic had "earned the respect of the priests of his church" and suggesting that he was "innocent" of charges stemming from his Nazi-related activities.

Artukovic, 85, the former Interior and Justice Minister of the puppet state of Croatia set up by the Nazis in occupied Yugoslavia during World War II, is being held without bail at a prison ward at Orange County-University of California Medical Center. He was arrested by federal authorities last November on an extradition request by the Yugoslav government, accused in connection with the murder of 700,000 Serbs, 40,000 gypsies and 20,000 Jews in wartime Croatia.

The letter, which Manning wrote to Artukovic's son Radoslav, was dated November 27 and was filed along with other documents in Federal District Court last month. It said in part: "For many years he (Artukovic) has earned the respect of the priests of his church and they are deeply concerned for his welfare. In a spirit of compassion, I write these words to you hoping your cherished father will merit the indulgence of the court and be returned to the care of his family. The action would coincide with the judgement of innocence already given in January 15, 1959."

#### 'An Insult To The Memory' Of Those Murdered

Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean of the Los Angeles based Simon Wiesenthal Center, protested Manning's letter in a telegram to the Vatican's secretary to the the Secretariat for Relations with the Jews, Msgr. Jorge Mejia. Hier said the letter "is an insult to the memory" of those murdered in Croatia during the Holocaust, adding that "such inappropriate and insensitive actions can only set back the forces of tolerance and mutual respect within our respective communities."

Harvey Schechter, Los Angeles regional director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, expressed his distress at Manning's praise of the alleged war criminal, and likened it to the comment often made about criminals that "they were good to their mothers."

Noting that Manning's letter to Artukovic's son described him as "your cherished father," Schechter asked the Cardinal, "What about the tens of thousands of cherished fathers whose lives were snuffed out thanks to the role Andrija Artukovic played in the wartime government in Croatia?"

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JERUSALEM (JTA) -- Encouraging figures on Israel's export performance in 1984 were released Monday. They show an overall rise of 13% in exports compared with 1983. In cash terms, Israel exported close to \$5.50 billion worth in 1984.