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EXCLUSIVE TO THE JTA
FORMER MORAL MAJORITY OFFICIAL IS
AUTHOR OF SPEECH DEPLORING EROSION OF
'CHRISTIAN VALUES' IN SCHOOLS WHICH
IS BEING DISTRIBUTED BY D.O.E. OFFICE
 By Kevin Freeman

NEW YORK, Jan. 23 (JTA) — Robert Billings, a former official of the Moral Majority who is now director of the regional liaison office of the Department of Education (DOE) in Washington, is the author of the speech, mailed by a DOE regional director in Denver to six western states, which deplored the erosion of "Christian values" in American public schools, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency has learned.

Billings, a former executive director of the Moral Majority, has been described as the "Christian Right's inside man" in the Reagan Administration, according to Congressional sources. These sources asserted that Billings, who identifies himself as a doctor, received his doctorate from a Tennessee correspondence school since shut-down by state officials after it was labeled a "diploma mill." Billings could not be reached for comment.

Billings' role as author of the speech distributed by Thomas Tancredo, head of the DOE's regional office for western states in Denver, surfaced today as Jewish community organizations along with Rep. Patricia Schroeder (D. Colo.) stepped up criticism of Tancredo's use of public funds to mail the speech to Christian schools, and inadvertently, to an undetermined number of Jewish schools.

The 12-page speech was attached to a cover letter, signed by Tancredo, on DOE stationery. The cover letter described as a "dangerous phenomenon" that "we see more and more signs of governmental intervention into areas of parental responsibility which have, for centuries, been held inviolate." Tancredo invites recipients of the letter to "feel free to edit, reproduce and distribute as you see fit."

D.O.E. Brushes Aside Criticism

The speech, which praised Christian schools and said "godlessness" was taking over in "this Christian nation," drew an angry response from Schroeder, who, while seeking an investigation of the use of federal funds for the mailing, asked acting Secretary of Education Gary Jones whether this represented "official policy of the Department of Education to promote or establish a Christian nation."

DOE officials in Denver and Washington brushed aside Schroeder's criticism, in separate interviews with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Greg Cunningham, special assistant to the regional representative in Denver, said the mailing of the speech by his superior, Tancredo, was not a reflection of departmental policy.

Says Controversy Due To Jewish 'Hyper-Sensitivity'

Cunningham blamed the controversy, partly, on the "hyper-sensitivity of certain elements in the Jewish community." He did not identify those elements. The National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs in New York, which provided the JTA with a copy of the cover letter and the attached speech, has written a letter of protest to Secretary Jones.

According to Cunningham, the speech, which officials in Washington said was delivered some five years ago by Billings to an unidentified group, was sent to Tancredo by Billings with the request that the regional representative in Denver pass the information on to "constituent groups" concerned with Christian education.

Cunningham asserted that it was "common policy to pass along expressions of opinion to constituent groups who might have an interest in Christian education, regardless of whether they agree or disagree." He added that the views expressed in this speech by Billings, and other items passed on to the constituent groups, is "not a reflection of policy" at the regional level or in Washington.

Cunningham said he did not believe the speech "plowed any new ground" and that Billings sought to convey the position of religious freedom and tolerance in the U.S. He said Billings was Tancredo's immediate superior in Washington. Billings reports directly to the Education Secretary.

D.O.E. Official Cites 'Intent'

Tom Moore, deputy assistant for public affairs at the DOE in Washington, said in a JTA interview that the "intent" was to circulate the speech to constituent groups interested in Christian education.

According to Moore, Jones has instructed the Department's Office of General Council to conduct a probe into the use of federal funds by Tancredo to mail the speech. If it was determined that the mailing violated some federal statute, the government could be reimbursed for the fee, Moore said.

Aides to Schroeder, a member of the House's subcommittee on civil rights, said the Congresswoman has asked the U.S. post master general to conduct an investigation.

'A New Era For Spain's Jews'
SPECIAL LAW PENDING RECOGNIZING
JEWISH RIGHTS AND PRIVILEGES ON
PAR WITH CATHOLICS, PROTESTANTS

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Jan. 23 (JTA) — The Spanish government and the Spanish Parliament are about to vote a special law recognizing the Jewish community's rights and granting it the same privileges enjoyed by the Catholic church and the various Protestant congregations.

The president of the Spanish Jewish community, Samuel Toledano, announced yesterday in Madrid that this special law, which he described as "revolutionary," is slated to be approved "without any difficulties" before the end of the year.

Toledano said the law would take the form of a "Concordat," the special sort of agreement binding the Vatican to various states, and would grant the Jewish community the legal rights enjoyed by the Catholic Church.

The Jewish community would have jurisdiction over matters of personal status concerning its members. Jews, just like Catholics, would be able to undergo only a religious wedding which would automatically be registered with the state registrar's office.

Rabbis will enjoy the same privileges as Catholic priests, will be exempted from military service and would not have to testify in court on any matter related

to the ministry. They would also have free access to prisons, hospitals and other state-controlled institutions to which they might be called. Synagogues and religious and cultural Jewish institutions would be tax exempt and would enjoy other special fiscal privileges.

Some 12,000 Jews live in Spain, mainly in Madrid, Barcelona, Seville, Malaga and the Costa Brava. Some 70 percent arrived from Morocco in the 1950's while most of the others stem from Germany, Central Europe, Latin America and the Middle East.

There are two rabbis and five synagogues. Two other synagogues dating from the Middle Ages have been turned into state museums. Toledano said that a third historic synagogue in Toledo is now the property of the Catholic Church. He called on the state to take it over and convert it and its priceless art treasures into a Jewish art museum.

According to Toledano, the new law is backed by a majority of Deputies and is being held up only because of the Protestant churches' difficulty in setting up a unified delegation able to sign a similar agreement.

He said "a new era has started for Spain's Jews with the return of democracy." He said century-old privileges have nearly totally disappeared and the Jews, maybe for the first time in Spanish history, enjoy equal rights with the rest of the population.

ISRAELI TREASURY OFFICIALS WARN THE GOVERNMENT THAT ITS ECONOMIC POLICIES ARE LEADING COUNTRY TO DISASTER

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Jan. 23 (JTA) — Senior Treasury officials, at a closed meeting yesterday, warned the government that its economic policies are leading the country to disaster, Israel Television reported last night.

According to the report, officials of the Treasury's budget department called for the immediate implementation of an emergency budget, lest Israel be left without foreign currency six months from now. They warned that the draft budget submitted to the Cabinet Sunday, amounting to \$22.9 billion, would not foster the needed changes in the economy.

According to the officials, the TV report said, what the Cabinet discussed this week was not budget cuts but budget increases. The Defense Ministry asked for a larger budget to cover the costs of the withdrawal from Lebanon.

The officials expressed doubt that the government is capable of facing such challenges as the need to cut price subsidies for basic products. They warned that the government would be forced to inject massive amounts of currency into the economy which would re-fuel inflation and create a foreign currency reserves crisis.

On the same TV program, Hebrew University economist Michael Bruno suggested that the government tackle the economic crisis the same way it dealt with the withdrawal from Lebanon — by setting a target and reaching it within a definite timetable.

HEAVY PRISON SENTENCES FOR TERRORISTS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 23 (JTA) — Five members of a sabotage and espionage ring received prison sentences today in the Haifa District Court. The sentences ranged from nine years to life imprisonment.

The ring, which was uncovered in August, 1983, planned to explode a car bomb under the 36-story Shalom Tower skyscraper in Tel Aviv, Israel's tallest building. Other targets, according to the charge sheets, included the Haifa oil refineries, Dizengoff Street in Tel Aviv, and bus stations in Jerusalem and northern Israel.

The gang was uncovered when a Lebanese national, Farid Abdel Halik, 21, tried to drive a booby-trapped Mercedes car through the Rosh Hanikra frontier checkpoint on the Israel-Lebanon border. An examination of the car yielded 121 pounds of high explosives in a reserve gasoline tank. Also found were detonators and electronic sabotage equipment. Abdel Halik was today sentenced to life imprisonment.

Other members of the ring sentenced today, five Druze from Galilee, some of whom had served in the Israel Defense Force, were Ramat Kawikas, 23, to 15 years in prison; two others to 10-year sentences; and one to nine years. Salah Kawikas, 27, the ringleader, was ordered to undergo psychiatric examination after he claimed that he was insane.

13 JDL MEMBERS ARRESTED AT RALLY AT SOVIET MISSION TO THE UN

NEW YORK, Jan. 23 (JTA) — Thirteen members of the Jewish Defense League, including its national director, Fern Rosenblatt, were arrested at a demonstration in front of the Soviet Mission to the United Nations.

Several of the 75 JDL members who were marching in front of the Mission in sub-zero weather, were injured by police who swung their clubs when the demonstrators refused to move from the designated area where demonstrations can be held. One JDL member was knocked to the ground and beaten. He was taken to the hospital to have his wounds treated and later released.

Capt. Carl Jonasch, spokesman for the local police precinct, said the 13 who were arrested were released after being charged with disorderly conduct for violating the Shorter Decision of 1980, which regulates demonstrations close to embassies. A hearing was set for March 6 at the Manhattan Criminal Court.

The "emergency demonstration" last Sunday was to protest the recent escalation of anti-Semitism by the Soviet government and the increasing numbers of arrests of Jewish activists and teachers of Hebrew and Judaism. Rosenblatt referred specifically to the arrests of Yuli Edelstein of Moscow, Yaakov Levin of Odessa and Leonid Schrier of Chemovitsky, each sentenced to three years in prison, and Yosef Berenshtein of Kiev.

Amid signs of "Free Shcharansky Now," "Free Soviet Jews," and "Never Again," were pictures of those the JDL said were victims of the Soviet Union, including Nadia Fradkova, declared insane and sent to a mental hospital for applying to emigrate to Israel.

As the 75 demonstrators marched to the site of the Soviet Mission they were confronted by three dozen police officers. The arrests began about 15 minutes after the demonstration began.

LOCKHEED CORP. FINED FOR VIOLATING ANTI-BIAS PROVISIONS OF EXPORT ACT

NEW YORK, Jan. 23 (JTA) — The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith today commended the U.S. Commerce Department for its handling of the Lockheed Corporation's violation of the anti-discrimination provisions of the Export Administration Act. The ADL had earlier brought the violation to the attention of the Department.

Abraham Foxman, ADL's associate national director and head of its International Affairs Division, said the ADL had informed the Commerce Department that

a Lockheed subsidiary, Lockheed-EMSCO of Houston, posted an internal job notice for research chemists in Saudi Arabia which stipulated: "The customer has stated no Jewish applicants or women would be acceptable."

Under the terms of a consent agreement announced on January 18, Lockheed was fined \$10,000 and stripped of its export privileges to Saudi Arabia for a one-year period.

In praising Commerce's action, Foxman declared that "it is a clear reaffirmation of the Department's determination to combat Arab boycott activity, including religious discrimination against Americans."

ISRAEL AND LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES SIGN CONTRACTS

By Jaime Reibel

BOGOTA, Jan. 23 (JTA) — Israeli Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, Moshe Shahal, negotiated important petroleum and coal contracts with Colombia and Mexico at the beginning of January, it was reported here by informed sources.

Under the terms of the agreement with Mexico, Israel will purchase \$800 million worth of petroleum annually, covering approximately 40 percent of its consumption. This makes Mexico Israel's largest acknowledged oil supplier, followed by Egypt.

Mexico, in turn, has agreed to purchase \$100 million worth of Israeli industrial products yearly. This represents a 20-fold increase over Israel's best level of exports to the oil-rich Central American country, and traditional supporter.

The coal contract with Colombia, a renewal of an existing accord, is for a total of \$200 million over a five-year period. In exchange, Colombia will buy a variety of Israeli products valued at \$500 million over the five-year span.

These contracts reflect the increasing importance of bilateral Israeli-Latin American trade relations throughout the hemisphere, the sources said.

RECORD 146 COMMUNITIES TO TAKE PART IN UJA SUPER SUNDAY '85

NEW YORK, Jan. 23 (JTA) — In what has become an inspiring and spectacular demonstration of community and volunteer spirit in just a few short years, the United Jewish Appeal's Super Sunday 1985 will see a record 146 U.S. communities participating, according to Sanford Hollander of MetroWest, New Jersey, UJA Super Sunday national chairman.

The annual one-day telephone marathon, now in its fifth year, is the biggest national fundraising event on the UJA campaign calendar, involving more people and raising more money than any other single national program. In many of the participating communities, Super Sunday will be January 27; in others, the date will depend on local campaign calendars.

"Last year, 135 communities took part, and their 38,000 volunteers raised more than \$33 million—itsself a record for a one-day mass appeal," said Hollander, a UJA national vice chairman. "This year, in communities from Tidewater to Tucson, from Orange County, New York to Orange County, California, and all the way to Honolulu, we hope to reach more people and raise more money in a single day than ever before — a projected \$36 million."

"Making fund-raising history has been the history of Super Sunday. When the people we call across America hear those telephone messages from their friends and neighbors about the damaging effects of Israel's economic crisis on the health and human ser-

vices we support there, and about the needs of the absorption of Ethiopian Jewry, the Jewish needs in our own communities and around the world, we know they will respond generously, and Super Sunday will once again surpass its goal."

In order to help communities plan and implement their Super Sunday programs, five day-long regional training workshops were held across the country from October through December. Almost 200 Super Sunday chairpersons, other campaign leaders and professionals from 70 communities attended the workshops in Chicago, Newark, New Orleans, Los Angeles and Boca Raton.

KLARSFELD DENIES THAT HE AND HIS WIFE HIRED A TERRORIST TO KILL BARBIE

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Jan. 23 (JTA) — Nazi-hunter Serge Klarsfeld has emphatically denied that he and his wife, Beate, had hired a terrorist known as Juan Carlos in 1982 to assassinate former gestapo commander Klaus Barbie who was living at the time under the protection of the Bolivian government.

The allegation that the Klarsfelds had targeted Barbie, now awaiting trial in a Lyon prison for crimes against humanity, appears in an article in the February edition of Life magazine. According to Life, the Klarsfelds acted out of frustration that their 10-year attempt to bring Barbie to justice had made no progress.

Klarsfeld, a lawyer, admitted that he had contacted Carlos and paid for his trip to Bolivia, but not with instructions to murder Barbie. He did not explain what Carlos' mission to Bolivia was or when he was recalled. Life described Carlos as a known terrorist, "a Bolivian socialist of Indian extraction."

Klarsfeld, who is Jewish, and his German-born wife have been instrumental in tracking down many wanted Nazi war criminals all over the world. As early as 1972 they identified Barbie, the wartime Gestapo chief in Lyon, who was living in Bolivia under the alias Klaus Altmann.

According to Life, they called off the alleged assassination after a change of government in Bolivia resulted in Barbie's expulsion from that country early in 1983. He was immediately seized by French authorities and confined to the same prison in Lyon where he and his henchmen once tortured and murdered members of the French resistance and Jews. Barbie is held responsible for the deportation of most Jews in Lyon to Nazi death camps.

Barbie is expected to go on trial later this year. The French investigating magistrate, Christian Riss, reported last week that he had completed his report on Barbie's wartime activities and turned it over to the prosecutor who will formulate specific charges against Barbie.

PARIS (JTA) — The President of France and Israel will jointly inaugurate the "Land of Israel" exhibition here next June. The exhibition will retrace 3,000 years of Jewish history "from dream to reality and from the Bible to our own days." The exhibition is being organized by a special international committee and will be held in Paris' prestigious Grand Palais generally reserved years in advance for international exhibitions. The Dead Sea Scrolls as well as thousands of other archaeological finds, pictures, books and manuscripts will be gathered from museums the world over for the occasion. The exhibition's commissioners, Iona Fisher for Israel and Solange de Turenne for France, said yesterday that dozens of cities and museums have already investigated the possibilities of housing the exhibition.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES ISRAELI PLANS FOR FIGHTING FAMINE AROUND THE WORLD

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 23 (JTA) — Israeli economists and agricultural researchers hope that a thaw in the cool relations between Israel and Egypt may revive plans for a joint venture which could help relieve famine in various parts of the world such as the one causing hundreds of thousands of deaths in Ethiopia.

The joint venture was based on the use of an Israeli invention developed four years ago and already in use in the Negev for the long-term storage of grains.

In Israel, this approach to grain storage is used for stocking imported grains. The Israel-Egypt plan, discussed but never implemented, would preserve surplus stocks for eventualities such as the Ethiopian famine.

The Nature Of The Israeli Invention

The Israeli invention, a product of the Volcani Center for Agricultural Research at Bet Dagan near Tel Aviv, is a huge plastic tent-like structure supported on a thick wire mesh. The plastic is the same used to protect Israel's combat tanks from the broiling sun.

The plastic silos began as an experiment utilizing dry desert conditions to preserve grain stocks without pesticides. Wheat stored in the plastic silos has deteriorated by only one-tenth of one percent over two years.

According to the data available to Israeli experts, the Ethiopians use pesticides. But rodents, insects and mould are said to destroy up to 50 percent of grain stored each season.

The Secret Of Israel's Success

The secret of Israel's success, according to Jonathan Donahay, of the Volcani Center, is that it is air-tight:

"You get a form of hermetic storage where, if there are insects — and generally there are insects present — or if some of the outer layers of the grain become a bit damp due to moisture ingress and mould starts to develop, you get production of carbon dioxide, and so you get low oxygen concentrations and high carbon dioxide concentrations that are eventually sufficient to kill off the insects — and so you get a sort of self-sterilization effect."

Like much of Africa, Israel imports most of its grain. But unlike the African countries, Israel has silos around the country for storage, and has an efficient road and trucking system for distribution.

Crop Failures Can Be Averted

The man in charge of the import of essential foods into Israel is Meir Yagil, of the Ministry of Trade and Industry. He maintains that food shortages can be predicted six months in advance; the famine in Ethiopia was foreseen three years before it materialized. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FOA) had issued warnings well in advance and has since warned of other food shortages likely to occur elsewhere in the world.

But as so often happens, the warnings were disregarded until it was too late.

Yagil says that with the first indication of crop failures, countries like Ethiopia could avert disaster by trucking the Israeli-invented plastic silos into crisis areas where they could be assembled and filled with grain stocks to act as a buffer against the lean years.

An Israeli Innovation

Even though it does not need to truck silos around the country, Israel does use the plastic tents. They cost only about \$20 per ton of storage capacity and they can be used year after year. A concrete silo, of the type familiar throughout the world, costs hundreds of dollars a ton to build.

Israel presently has 30 of the 1,000-ton capacity plastic silos for grain storage in the southern Kiryat Gat region. Zvi Dromi, manager of the southern storage area, helped develop the new silos and he will probably be sent abroad to help set up any that are exported.

He claims that the reason Israel has not yet exported the plastic silos is that other countries do not know about them. Dromi says: "We haven't got the right system to market them because that costs a lot of money and I can't send anyone around the world on a marketing tour."

As for international bodies such as the FOA, Dromi says: "I think they don't know the potential of the system, and they don't know how quickly we can build them here in Israel. And my heart breaks when I hear that in Ethiopia, especially, people are dying because they don't have food or a piece of bread to eat."

He says that to feed eight million people in a place like Ethiopia, 300 plastic silos are required for each 1,000 tons. "You can use each silo two or three times a year. But you don't have to wait for all 300. You can start with something like 50, and even that small number would help the starving people of Ethiopia — or those who may starve in the future in other predictable famines."

Dromi says that to prepare and ship 50 silos to Ethiopia, and then set them up at the needy sites, would take no more than three months.

Israel Is Ready For Future Eventualities

The Israeli plastic silo experiment was started four years ago, and from the earliest days plans were drawn up for a joint Israel-Egypt venture in which the Israeli-made and supplied plastic silos would form the basis of what the Volcani Institute hoped would be the establishment of an emergency grain storage area in the Sinai, to serve Asia and Africa.

The Institute's scientists say that grain could have been trucked from such a storage area to Ethiopia in three days, as opposed to the three weeks it took to ship supplies from the United States.

The hot, dry Sinai climate would be ideal for the self-sterilization process brought about by the effect of the giant plastic bag on grain preservation against insect and moisture damage.

It was the cooling-off of relations on the part of the Egyptians which shelved the joint venture idea. Volcani researchers hope that now that the "freeze" appears to be coming to an end, the idea may be revived and implemented.

The famine in Ethiopia will not be the last shortage in Asia and Africa. Others are predicted. Israel is ready with its plastic silos to store the surpluses of fat years to feed the hungry in the lean years.