

**SPECIAL INTERVIEW
A SPECIAL HOMECOMING**
By Kevin Freeman

NEW YORK, May 8 (JTA) — For Stephen Tencer, his return last weekend to the site of the concentration camp at Bergen-Belsen that after liberation 40 years ago by the allied forces served as his home for three years as a displaced persons camp, "was a very important homecoming for me."

"It was bad enough to go to Bergen-Belsen under any circumstances then to go in this circumstance—of trying to rectify a horror that was done to those who are buried there," said Tencer, chairman of the Second Generation Council of New Jersey.

The horror, according to Tencer and a delegation of 51 other American members of the International Network of Children of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, was President Reagan's visit to the site of the death camp at which thousands of men, women and children were slaughtered, followed by his visit to the German military cemetery at Bitburg where some 50 SS soldiers are buried among the 2,000 war dead.

Cites A More Personal Mission

In an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Tencer also said he had another, more personal mission, besides participating in a protest at Bergen-Belsen. "I also had this personal mission I was on which I guess I didn't think much about, and that was going back to my hometown," Tencer said.

It was his first visit to West Germany and the hospital in Celler where he was born. Celler is located outside Bergen-Belsen's former displaced persons camp that he called home. The site of the former DP camp is now used as a base for a British military unit attached to NATO.

In Celler, however, where he visited briefly with a friend, he said he found a "negative reaction" to the controversy that surrounded Reagan's visit to the military cemetery Sunday, a visit that drew intense outrage for weeks from Jewish groups, war veterans and the Congress.

"I don't know whether you could say it was a small town mentality, anti-Americanism or anti-Semitism," Tencer said. He recalled that one hotel owner informed him that there were only two "good" American Presidents — John Kennedy for his "Ich bin ein Berliner" speech at the Berlin Wall, and President Reagan for his visit to Bitburg.

Joining Tencer in the JTA interview were three other members of the Network who just returned from West Germany: Menachem Rosensaft, founding chairman of the International Network of Children of Jewish Holocaust Survivors; Eva Fogelman, chairperson of the Network's psycho-social committee; and Jerzy Warman, the Network's president.

Each participated in the ceremony at Bergen-Belsen, which began some 20 minutes after Reagan and West German Chancellor Helmut Kohl left the site. They had requested from the Bonn govern-

ment permission to protest at the gates of the site of Bergen-Belsen, but, according to Rosensaft, were refused permission to demonstrate, just a day before Reagan's visit, by the United States personnel responsible for security arrangements.

"The President of the United States," Rosensaft declared in the interview, "was able to accomplish in Germany what he could never have accomplished in the United States — to prevent an orderly, peaceful protest against the visit."

After the President left the camp site, the delegation entered it to say Kaddish, and to "reconsecrate" the mass graves of thousands of victims of the Holocaust who are buried there. "What we mean by reconsecration is not that we have any religious authority to confer holiness on one place or another," Warman explained.

"But, rather by a symbolic statement that although what happened, happened, we still want to assure survivors ... that the memory of the victims that lie buried there will be preserved."

'Collective Memory Needs To Be Developed'

All four indicated that they had no problem with efforts at U.S.-German reconciliation, the stated purpose of Reagan's visit to Bitburg. But as Fogelman stressed, "We felt that the message of reconciliation that Reagan was giving is not the message of reconciliation that we as children of survivors and Jews want the Germans to know."

"We feel that the act of reconciliation needs to include both memory and commemoration," Fogelman said. "A collective memory needs to be developed of what had happened and the message that Reagan is giving people is that, in fact, there is no difference between the victims and the perpetrators."

Rosensaft, an outspoken critic of Reagan's Bitburg cemetery visit where he laid a wreath during a brief ceremony, said, "We support and are in favor of reconciliation with the Germany of the past 40 years meaning the Germany that has tried to create a new image for itself and to reject all of the attributes of the Third Reich. We will not accept any reconciliation with Nazism and we will not accept any type of rehabilitation of the SS."

"This is the first time in 40 years that an event took place at Bergen-Belsen in opposition to the wishes of the entire Jewish community," he added. "You had the travesty of a religious ceremony at Bergen-Belsen in which only priests and ministers — Christians — spoke in the name of the Trinity at a cemetery and at mass graves which are more than 90 percent Jewish. This was an absolute and utter desecration."

Concern Over Public Opinion Polls

The four children of Jewish Holocaust survivors expressed some concern over public opinion polls conducted before the Bitburg visit which indicated that a slim majority of Americans disapproved of the cemetery visit. Warman attributed the public opinion view to the power of the White House to "manage events" and diffuse controversy. (A New York Times/CBS News poll taken Monday showed the American public equally divided over Reagan's Bitburg visit. See separate story.)

Tencer viewed the public opinion split on the Bitburg visit as a result of general American support for the actions of the President. On the other hand, he said he attributed the results of the opinion poll to the lack of knowledge among most Americans of the events of World War II, and particularly the Holocaust.

Fogelman suggested that despite the poll's results, there was exhibited among the many who opposed the Bitburg visit a strong consensus against it, and that group made their voices heard in the media and among the general public. Rosensaft added that he felt many Americans were not concerned about the Bitburg visit.

Overall, however, all four of those interviewed expressed the view that some good may come from the controversy — perhaps as Fogelman suggested, an increase in Holocaust education and a general awareness of the plight of Jews under the Nazis.

POLL SHOWS AMERICANS DIVIDED OVER REAGAN'S VISIT TO BITBURG

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, May 8 (JTA) — The American public is equally divided over President Reagan's visit to the German military cemetery at Bitburg, according to a New York Times/CBS News Poll published in the Times today.

The poll showed that a total of 41 percent of the American public supports the visit while 41 percent said Reagan should not have made the visit. Eighteen percent had no opinion.

The poll was based on telephone interviews conducted Monday evening, a day after Reagan visited Bitburg, with 692 adults around the United States, excluding Alaska and Hawaii. The poll carries a margin of sampling error of plus or minus 4 percentage points. The poll included 22 Jews, 21 of whom said Reagan should not have gone to Bitburg and the other one undecided.

Half of those who supported the trip singled out the need for good relations with West Germany. Those who opposed the visit cited atrocities against Jews and war memories generally.

The survey, however, showed no significant change in Reagan's overall standing with the public. At the end of February, a Times/CBS News poll showed 59 percent of the public approved his handling of his job. In this poll, 56 percent approved.

The poll's findings indicated that Reagan's visit to Bitburg along with his visit to Bergen-Belsen diminished the public's opposition to the Bitburg visit. An April 22 poll by The Washington Post/ABC News found that 51 percent of the public opposed Reagan's planned visit to Bitburg while 39 percent approved.

Jewish Alienation Cited

Meanwhile, Richard Wirthlin, the President's poll-taker, said yesterday that it is pretty clear "that the Jewish community has been strongly alienated" by Reagan's visit. He said the visit created antagonisms within the Jewish community "stronger than we were able to measure in survey research." He said that all Americans "even in the eye of the storm ... divided almost equally on whether the President should go to Bitburg or not."

GERMANY'S PRESIDENT CRITICIZES NATION'S INDIFFERENCE TO CRIMES COMMITTED BY NAZIS AGAINST JEWS

BONN, May 8 (JTA) — The President of the

Federal Republic, Richard Von Weizsaecker, today sharply criticized the indifference of the German public, including his own generation, to the unprecedented crimes committed by the Nazis against European Jews. He said many more Germans had knowledge of the sufferings of the Jews than were willing to admit it after the end of World War II.

Weizsaecker made his remarks in an address to a joint session of the two houses of the West German Parliament — the Bundestag and Bundesrat — in what was seen as an attempt to ease the pain caused Jews here and abroad by the visit President Reagan and Chancellor Helmut Kohl made to the military cemetery at Bitburg Sunday where members of the Waffen SS are buried along with other German war dead.

Weizsaecker, who is said to have been personally troubled by Kohl's insistence that Reagan visit Bitburg, described the 40th anniversary of the end of World War II in Europe as a day both of liberation from Nazi terror and mourning for the millions who perished in death camps. In listing the victims of the Nazis he referred first to the six million Jews, followed by Russians, Poles and others.

He said that the actual killing of Jews was done by a relatively few and was widely concealed from the public. Nevertheless, he added, every German could see how the Jews had been persecuted. "Who could remain innocent after the synagogues went up in flames, after the sacking of Jewish businesses, after the stigmatization (of the Jews) with the yellow star?" he asked.

Everyone knew that the trains loaded with Jews went eastward, Weizsaecker said. "When at the end of the war the whole truth about the Holocaust emerged, many, too many, justified themselves by saying that they knew nothing, or even did not suspect anything." He added that while there was no collective guilt, all Germans are burdened with the consequences of Nazi crimes and must be held liable. (By David Kantor)

ISRAELI CITRUS JUICE SERVED TO REAGAN AND WEST EUROPEAN LEADERS

TEL AVIV, May 8 (JTA) — Members of Kibbutz Givat Brenner were pleasantly surprised last week to see that President Reagan and the heads of West European states were treated to fresh orange juice bottled in their kibbutz "Rimon" fruit-juice bottling plant.

The kibbutzniks nudged each other, while viewing a segment of a television newsreel, when they noticed the bottles on the tables at a banquet held in Bonn in honor of the heads of state during their economic summit meeting.

The bottles clearly bore the label of the Hitchcock brand — the brand name used in Europe for the Givat Brenner citrus juice product. The Rimon factory last year exported some \$12 million worth of citrus fruit juices to Europe, mainly to West Germany and France.

CORRECTION

A reference by Nathan Perlmutter, director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, to President Reagan's "gentle eloquence" at Bergen-Belsen inadvertently appeared as Reagan's "gentle eloquence" in the May 6 Daily News Bulletin Special Supplement.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES A TALE OF 3 CENTRAL EUROPEAN CITIES

By Aviva Cantor

(Part Two Of A Five-Part Series)

BUCHAREST, May 8 (JTA) — Mass aliya from Rumania began about 25 years ago with the parent generation of today's youth. The main reasons for aliya at that time were economic — the destruction of the middle class — and the reunification of families, Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Families had been divided by the war and by the aliya of close to 109,000 Jews in the period between 1948 and 1951, despite official attempts to discourage it. In the late 1950's, when the anti-aliya campaign was discontinued, a "snowball effect" began to be created, he said.

With more and more Jews having relatives and/or friends settling or already living in Israel, aliya came to be a normal occurrence. An average of 1,200-1,500 go on aliya each year out of the estimated population of 25-26,000 Jews.

The result of this process is that 96 percent of the post-war Rumanian Jewish population of 400,000 has settled in Israel, a fact that Rosen regards with pride.

Two Factors In Zionist Success Story

A great deal of the credit for this Zionist success story goes to Rosen and his vigorous, courageous, and imaginative leadership as Chief Rabbi and president of the Federation of Jewish Communities of the Socialist Republic of Rumania. Two factors stand out: his understanding of how to cultivate a relationship with the authorities that is mutually beneficial to the regime and the community, and his emphasis on Jewish education.

"If you want aliya," he said, "you first need to have Jews." And, he added, "we have no noshrim (dropouts, immigrants who leave for but don't settle in Israel). They go to Israel because they want to go there, not because they want to leave here."

After the Communists gained power in post-war Rumania, they organized a governmental body called the Democratic Jewish Committee (DJC), comprising Jewish Communists and the Zionist workers' parties. Following the establishment of Israel in 1948, the Jewish Communists expelled the Zionists from the DJC and it became a Yevsektzia (in essence, Jewish section of the Communist Party).

The DJC, Rosen told JTA, took over and "terrorized the Jewish communities, seeking to stop aliya," and conducting a strong campaign against it. The "bankruptcy" of this policy led to the Committee's dissolution in the mid-1950's.

It took a decade of struggle, Rosen continued, to create a "climate of mutual confidence" with the authorities. "I explained what Zionism is, and how it is no catastrophe if a few thousand Jews go — they can build socialism without them."

Identification With Zion

Today, Rumanian Jews not only go on aliya, but they also "have the opportunity to express our identification with Zion freely," he said. "Revista Cultural Mozaic," the community's 10,000-circulation 20-page semi-monthly publication (which has three pages in English and one page each in Yiddish and Hebrew), regularly runs news items about Israel interspersed among its articles about Jewish history, culture, and religion. A recent issue has a picture of the Western Wall.

The vigorous program of Jewish education began in the Stalinist era when Rosen founded 19 illegal Talmud Torahs with 40,000 pupils. Today, there are 24 schools with 600-700 children. "The small number of pupils today is a paradox," said Rosen, "but it really points to our success," because so many children grew up and left for Israel.

The Talmud Torah has classes on Jewish history, tradition and culture twice a week, and chorus or orchestra twice a week. Pupils may study the Hebrew language for Bar Mitzvah or aliya preparation, but Rosen believes it is more important to spend the school hours on conveying "the Jewish spirit, knowledge of history and tradition" rather than on language instruction.

In addition, there are Oneg Shabbat lectures for the youth on Jewish subjects. Five to 10 times a year, the communities outside Bucharest also hold lectures (a total of 82 by 30 speakers in 1983). The lectures are given by Jewish intellectuals "not one of whom would set foot in the community 20 years ago," Rosen told JTA. He eventually attracted them to the communal seders; the Six-Day War was also an influence. Many are now actively involved.

'They Are Now Ours'

When Jews began to leave Rumania en masse in the early 1960's, the Jewish Communists, artists, and atheists remained behind. "Their children, educated in an anti-religious, anti-Zionist milieu, were far from Judaism," said Rosen. He started giving lectures every Wednesday night, eventually attracting 500 people. "The children entered a Jewish milieu. We made Jews out of them. They are now ours," he said.

Ninety percent of the youth go on aliya. A recent development affecting the youth has been the rise of Rumanian nationalism, Rosen said. "In Stalinist times, the youth was internationalist. Now they are interested in Rumania — in its history, literature, culture."

"This leaves the Jews feeling like a strange element in the country. Their original milieu is no longer present, and they remain up in the air." Many youth, 90 percent of whom attend university, feel they can do better professionally in Israel, as well.

Spirit Of Yiddishkeit

The spirit of Yiddishkeit, the love of Jewish culture and of Israel on the part of the youth were movingly apparent at a farewell concert tendered the World Jewish Congress delegation at the conclusion of its visit to Bucharest.

Four groups presented musical numbers in the hall, which was standing-room-only. There was a choir of children — the youngest of whom seemed about four and barely out of the thumb-sucking stage — singing religious, folk and Yiddish songs. They were led by Dan Schlanger, a former actor in the State Yiddish Theatre, who is waiting to go on aliya with his wife, Dana Schlanger, who accompanied the chorus on the piano, and is the musical director of the Menora Band.

The band, a "religious pop orchestra" complete with electric guitars and percussion instruments, gave lively jazzed-up renditions of Israeli tunes and folk songs they had originally heard on recordings. The Zamir Orchestra, directed by octogenarian Victor Rothenberg, featured about a dozen youth and two older men, playing new compositions. These included variations on Jewish themes by Prof. Dumitru Bughici, whose son and daughter were playing first violin and piano, respectively.

Finally, the Shira Vezimra Chorus and Orchestra of 40 teens and post-teens sang a dozen songs — religious melodies, Israeli hits, Rumanian and Yiddish folk-

songs. One of them was "Mein Shtetele Yas" (My Little Townlet Jassy), wherein Rumania's second city was remembered as fondly as was Belz in the original lyrics.

Problems Facing The Elderly

One of the consequences of the departure of so many young people is the large number of elderly who remain without relatives. Jewish men in Rumania have a life expectancy of 78; women, 81, according to Hersh Yancu, head of the community's Polyclinic. The elderly, who constitute 60 percent of the community, are provided assistance if they need it, by the Federation's Social Service department.

This assistance takes the form of cash grants, "meals on wheels," medical care, clothing, day programs, and residence in old age homes. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee provides 80 percent (\$4 million) of the social service budget, the Federation, 20 percent. (See JTA Bulletin, March 5, 1985.) These services "enable them to live in dignity and give them the feeling that they are not forgotten," said Rosen.

The families of these old people are, however, far away (although some of the 60,000 Israeli tourists who visit Rumania each year are their children), and they are very lonely. When the WJC delegation visited the Amalia and Rabbi Moses Rosen Old Age Home and the Martin Balus Home, scores of old people surrounded them, wanting just to touch their arms and exchange a few warm words.

A feisty old man in his 90's appeared at the delegation's lunch and insisted on playing a violin solo. He followed them around the building later, again and again trying to continue his concert.

Another problem is that of religious divorce. Rabbi Yitzhak Meir Marilus, rabbi of the Great Synagogue (down to 150 worshippers from the pre-war 1,000), told JTA that some "men run away to Israel, leave their wives behind and send the get (divorce document) in the mail." He has to sort it all out.

Future Of The Jewish Community

Rosen, who is 72, runs a tight ship. Will the community be able to continue as is after he retires to Israel, where he has a home in Tel Aviv and a chair at Bar-Ilan University? The answer, he said, could depend on whether world Jewry wants to help, by sending rabbis to serve in Rumania for periods of two to three years.

Rosen predicted that in 10 to 20 years, there will no longer be a Jewish community in Rumania. "But," he said, "it will end in dignity — it will end with the respecting of Jews and the proclaiming of the love of Zion without shame."

(Next: Budapest)

U.S. WANTS PALESTINIAN MEMBERS OF JOINT JORDANIAN-PALESTINIAN DELEGATION TO BE PNC MEMBERS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, May 8 (JTA) — The United States is proposing that the Palestinian members of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation be members of the Palestine National Council (PNC) who are not members of the Palestine Liberation Organization, the State Department indicated today.

Secretary of State George Shultz is expected to make this proposal, among other suggestions, when he meets this weekend with the leaders of Israel, Jordan and Egypt.

However, State Department deputy spokesman Edward Djerejian would not confirm this or say whether any list of possible members of the delegation has been drawn up. He repeated his assertion that public discussion is not "appropriate" prior to Shultz's Middle East trip which starts with his arrival in Israel tomorrow.

Djerejian said yesterday that the U.S. is considering meeting with a joint Jordanian-non-PLO Palestinian delegation, but only if this is to be a prelude for the delegation to have direct negotiations with Israel.

He indicated today that the Palestinians could be members of the PNC. He noted that the U.S. has met with members of the PNC in the past who, he pointed out, included some American citizens.

The PNC officially calls for the PLO to engage in an "armed struggle" for the destruction of Israel. Although in 1983 it passed a resolution calling for a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza, with Jerusalem as its capital, it stressed that this was only the first step in "completing the liberation of all Palestinian territory."

U.S. Cites Differentiation

But Djerejian stressed that the U.S. differentiates between the PNC as an organization and its individual members. He would not say how the U.S. would determine whether individual members accept U.S. conditions for meeting with the PLO — acceptance of United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and Israel's right to exist.

He noted, however, that "Israel is aware of our position on the PNC" and has been so since 1983. Israel officially does not differentiate between the PNC and the PLO and has made clear that it will never negotiate with members of the PLO.

The U.S. position is seen as aimed first at getting King Hussein of Jordan to convince PLO chief Yasir Arafat to allow non-PLO members to represent the Palestinians on the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. Arafat has insisted that only the PLO can speak for the Palestinians.

Richard Murphy, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, apparently pressed the U.S. position during his recent visit to the Middle East with Hussein and with Palestinians he met while in Israel.

If this problem is surmounted, U.S. officials have expressed confidence in the past that Israel would not object to Palestinian delegates who come from the West Bank and Gaza although they may object to those from outside the territories.

The February 11 agreement between Hussein and Arafat for a joint delegation does not call for direct negotiations with Israel, upon which the U.S. insists, but for an international conference which would include the five permanent members of the Security Council. Both Israel and the U.S. are opposed to such a conference.

In addition, the U.S. has called for explicit acceptance of Resolutions 242 and 338 and has said that the Hussein-Arafat agreement which speaks of acceptance of all UN resolutions on the Middle East, many of them anti-Israeli, does not meet this condition. All of these factors may become clearer after Shultz's visit to the Middle East.