

U.S. MAY REQUIRE FURTHER ISRAELI COOPERATION AS THE LEGAL PROCESS IN POLLARD SPY CASE UNFOLDS IN THE U.S.

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 23 (JTA) — Washington has left open the possibility that further cooperation from Israel may be necessary as the legal process in the Jonathan Pollard spy case unfolds in the U.S. This is the interpretation by observers here of the statement released by the State Department last Friday following the return to Washington of the team of U.S. investigators sent to Israel two weeks ago to question persons who allegedly had contacts with Pollard.

The case therefore was not closed by the American statement. Its wording, implying that the U.S. expects ongoing cooperation from Israel, was insisted on by State Department legal advisor Abraham Sofaer, who headed the American team.

It is awkward for Israel, observers say, because while Jerusalem was indeed anxious to return to the U.S. sensitive documents it obtained by unauthorized means, it is not willing to contribute directly to the conviction of Pollard in an American court.

According to these observers, Israel and the U.S. Justice Department as well would prefer that the 31-year-old Navy counterintelligence analyst plead guilty to lesser charges than espionage. Such a plea would relieve Israel of any further role in the legal process and would avoid a long, unprepossessing trial with intense media coverage focussed on Israel.

Israel Dismantles Unit

Israeli authorities, meanwhile, have dismantled the Liaison Bureau for Scientific Affairs, the obscure unit of the Defense Ministry that apparently was in the intelligence-gathering business and allegedly used Pollard. Raphael Eitan, the former chief of Mossad who had served the last three Prime Ministers of Israel, was removed as head of the disbanded unit. He has not, however, been dismissed from government employ.

Eitan allegedly recruited Pollard and was his "handler" during the 18 months in which the civilian employe of the Navy, who is Jewish, supplied Israel with secret information for pay. Eitan was one of the persons questioned by the American investigators. The latter departed Israel apparently satisfied with the results of their inquiry, which was conducted in tightest secrecy.

There is no information here on the reasons for a last minute hitch that developed which prevented the issuance of a joint U.S.-Israeli statement on the matter. Sofaer, and his aides, stayed on in Israel several days after other members of the team returned to Washington but apparently was unable to agree on a joint statement. The statement by the State Department Friday was issued in the name of the American officials only.

MORMON EDUCATION CENTER COMES UNDER FIRE FROM SECULAR JEWS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 23 (JTA) — The controversial Mormon educational center now under construction next to the Hebrew University campus on Mt. Scopus poses a threat to secular Jews no less than to the religious community, a member of the Hashomer Hatzair Kibbutz Baram told a press conference here today.

Dr. Elli Ben-Gal, a member of the kibbutz which is affiliated with Mapam, maintained that the problem is not entirely religious but a threat to the entire Jewish community, even though it is the Orthodox who have mounted a determined campaign to kill the project. Ben-Gal appeared at the press conference convened by the Public Committee Against the Mt. Scopus Mormon Mission.

"We, the secular Jews, are the target population of the missionaries," he said. "Students will go to study there (the Mormon center) because fees will be cheaper or because they might be offered scholarships in the U.S." The center is sponsored by Brigham Young University of Provo, Utah, the educational institution of the Mormon Church, headquartered in Salt Lake City.

Non-Confidence Motion By Aguda

The Agudat Israel Party introduced a motion of non-confidence in the Knesset today over the issue. The three other religious parties in the Knesset — National Religious Party, Shas and Morasha — did not co-sponsor the motion as they had originally threatened to do. Apparently they were satisfied that the government will name a ministerial committee to study the project.

The Aguda charged that the Cabinet gave the committee no specific terms of reference, no timetable, nor has it yet named the members. The Aguda motion is not considered a threat to the unity coalition government, even had the other religious factions joined.

The entire Orthodox bloc in the Knesset amounts to no more than 12 seats. But the government was anxious to avoid any non-confidence motion on the Knesset floor at this time because of serious differences between Labor and Likud on several vital issues.

Pressure By Pro-Mormon Lobby

It was learned, meanwhile, that the government is under considerable pressure from the pro-Mormon lobby not to interfere with the project. Public figures in the U.S. reportedly have sent letters to the Prime Minister's Office urging Israel not to take any measures which could be interpreted as a restriction on freedom of religion in Israel. The groups here opposed to the center fear possible missionary activity.

The creed of the Mormon Church, officially known as the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, requires all members to devote one or two years of their lives to missionary work. The Church says it does not undertake such work in countries where it is prohibited by law. There has been a Mormon presence in Jer-

usalem for many years. Abba Eban, chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, defended the Mormon position today. He said he knew of no attempts by any Mormons to proselytize Jews. If the center is halted, a 20-year effort to establish Jerusalem as an open city for all faiths may be ruined, Eban said.

The Mormon project is also fortified legally. It has the approval of national and local authorities and has obtained the requisite building licenses from the government and the Jerusalem municipality.

ODESSA HEBREW TEACHER GIVEN EXIT VISA

NEW YORK, Dec. 23 (JTA) — Yakov Mesh, a 33-year-old Jewish activist and Hebrew teacher in Odessa, has received permission to leave for Israel, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry reported today.

Mesh, who first applied to leave the Soviet Union in 1977, will go to Israel with his nine-year-old son Marat and wife Marina. Mesh's brother and mother live in Israel.

A former boxer in the Soviet Army, Mesh has been refused permission to leave, ostensibly for "security reasons" because of his army service, the NCSJ reported. For the past year Mesh has been under pressure by local authorities and had been threatened he would be placed on trial for his activities.

Mesh has been the object of a continuing campaign, especially by Dr. Joel Levin, a plastic surgeon in Miami who has participated in boxing bouts to bring Mesh's case to public attention.

Mesh is a friend of Yakov Levin, a Hebrew teacher in Odessa arrested and sentenced to three years in a labor camp last November as part of an intense KGB effort to destroy the unofficial Hebrew study network in the Soviet Union.

Mesh refused to testify against Levin and other Odessa Jewish activists. He was interrogated several times and beaten, suffering liver damage while in police custody, the NCSJ said.

30 HOUSE MEMBERS CALL UPON REAGAN TO PARDON 5 RABBIS WHO CHOSE PRISON

By Judith Kohn

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23 (JTA) — Thirty members of the House of Representatives have put their names on a proposed resolution calling on President Reagan to pardon five rabbis who chose to go to prison to dramatize the plight of Soviet Jewry.

The five rabbis were convicted two weeks ago of violating a District of Columbia statute that prohibits demonstrations within 500 feet of the Soviet Embassy.

Disturbed that the 132 rabbis, ministers, Hebrew teachers and others who have participated in planned arrest rallies since last May have been subjected to what they say is selective prosecution — no charges have been pressed against those arrested at similar protests in front of the South African Embassy — the five rabbis opted to dramatize the issue of Soviet Jewry by going to jail rather than accept a suspended sentence, probation and a fine.

Maintaining that their oppressed brethren in the Soviet Union had no option of freedom, they began serving their 15-day sentence at the minimum security prison in Petersburg, Virginia, December 13.

The day before the rabbis were to report to prison, Rep. Michael Barnes (D. Md.), sent a telegram to the President urging him to pardon the five as "a real life example" to the Soviet Union "of what true justice and compassion in this holiday season mean."

Barnes maintained that the rabbis — four of whom are his constituents — had been sent to prison during the last days of Chanukah and before they had a chance to appeal their case or settle their affairs. He called the "unusually harsh sentence and its excessively swift execution" an "outrage."

A "sense of the House" resolution calling for a Presidential pardon was introduced by Barnes last week and has won 30 sponsors to date, including Barbara Mikulski (D. Md.) who, like Barnes, is a candidate for the Maryland Democratic Senate nomination, Morris Udall (D. Az.) and Tom Lantos (D. Calif.).

Lawmakers Applaud Rabbis' Commitment

At a press conference at the Capitol last Friday, Representatives Steny Hoyer (D. Md.), Pat Schroeder (D. Colo.), Benjamin Gilman (R. N.Y.), Barnes, Mikulski and others, joined with spokesman for the Interfaith Conference of Metropolitan Washington and the Washington Board of Rabbis, which has sponsored the demonstrations at the Embassy, to express their solidarity with the rabbis and with oppressed Jewish refuseniks and Hebrew teachers in the Soviet Union.

Standing before a row of photographs of Prisoners of Conscience and harassed Hebrew teachers and Jewish activists, the legislators applauded the rabbis' commitment and promised their continued support.

"We are here to pay tribute to the indomitable human spirit and to send a message to the Soviet government that Congress and the American people of all faiths will never, never, never abandon the cause of religious freedom," Hoyer said.

The legislators interrupted their statements to speak by telephone with David Oler, one of the five jailed rabbis. "We admire your courage and commitment," Hoyer told Oler before the television cameras. Mikulski called it an "incredible paradox" that "you are in prison so that others can be free."

One hundred and thirty two people have been arrested in the seven planned arrest rallies that began last May. Of those, 43 rabbis and a Lutheran minister, the Rev. John Steinbruck, have thus far been tried and convicted, and all but the five who opted for jail were given suspended sentences, probation and fines.

Staff members in Barnes' office said that although the proposed resolution did not come to a vote before the current session of Congress adjourned last week, it served the purpose of highlighting the plight of Soviet Jewry that was the basis of the rabbis' decision to go to jail.

Early Release For Rabbis

Meanwhile, the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry reported today that the rabbis are scheduled to be released from prison tomorrow, three days early, for "good behavior" and because of the holidays.

CHARGES DISMISSED AGAINST 24 PERSONS

NEW YORK, Dec. 23 (JTA) — New York Criminal Court Justice Richard Lowe dismissed "disorderly conduct" charges today against 24 persons arrested November 19 for staging a sit-in on the street in front of the Soviet Mission to the UN here. The sit-in, to protest on behalf of Prisoners of Conscience and refuseniks in the USSR, coincided with the hour of the Geneva summit

meeting between President Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. The defendants included eight rabbis as well as the National Coordinator of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, Glenn Richter. The rabbis, all from the New York metropolitan area, were Irvin Beigel, Edward Feld, Matthew Futterman, Julie Gordon, Matthew Kamens, Allan Meyerowitz, James Michaels and Robert Port.

Since January, 360 individuals, including 153 rabbis, have been arrested in the peaceful mass actions held at Soviet offices in New York as part of "Operation Redemption."

PRO-ARAB LOBBYING GROUP PUSHING EFFORTS TO REVIVE OLD ESPIONAGE CASE AGAINST DEFENSE DEPARTMENT MEMBER
By Judith Kohn

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23 (JTA) — Against the background of recent tensions over alleged Israeli spying activities in the United States, a pro-Arab lobbying group is boosting its long-standing efforts to revive an old espionage case against a senior member of the Department of Defense.

A Justice Department investigation was undertaken in 1978 to explore the possibility of espionage charges against Steven Bryen, then a senior aide to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, after former director of the National Association of Arab Americans (NAAA), Michael Saba, claimed he overheard Bryen offer secret Pentagon documents to an Israeli Embassy official at a Washington hotel.

The investigation was dropped two years later after the Justice Department reported that it had failed to find conclusive evidence of espionage activity.

Maintaining that the case against Bryen, who was subsequently appointed Assistant Deputy Secretary of Defense for Economic Trade and Security Planning in the Reagan Administration, had been closed prematurely and under pressure, the NAAA has been trying to get the case reopened for some time.

An Auspicious Atmosphere

But in the auspicious atmosphere created by the recent string of "Israel spy scandals" — including the case of Jonathan Pollard and a current investigation into the possible illegal sale to Israel of military technology for improving cannon barrels — the lobbying group has begun to push its case into the public eye.

An article by David Shipler that appeared on the front-page of yesterday's New York Times, describing a heightened concern in U.S. agencies over intelligence leaks to Israel, recounted much of the case against Bryen conveyed at an NAAA conference here today.

NAAA Releases 180-Page Report

The NAAA, which lobbies against U.S. economic and military aid to Israel, announced today its release of a 180-page report by a Washington law firm which it said corroborates its claims that the Bryen case was closed prematurely and under pressure and that the Assistant Deputy Secretary should never have been given a top-secret security clearance.

NAAA executive director David Sadd said the report had been forwarded to the "appropriate oversight authorities" in the Justice and Defense Departments and to the House and Senate Judiciary and Armed Services Committees, from whom they requested an investigation into the manner in which the Bryen case was pursued and subsequently closed.

The report includes numerous documents from the Bryen investigation obtained by the NAAA under the Freedom of Information Act. But Sadd accused the Justice Department of obstructing efforts by the law firm to obtain all the documents it has requested under the Act.

The Shipler article quoted John Davitt, who headed the Justice Department's Internal Security Section at the time of the investigation, as saying he had objected to the appointment of Bryen to an extremely sensitive security post in the Defense Department. Bryen's responsibilities include the protection of U.S. military technology from foreign powers.

In his interview with Shipler, Davitt said he found it "difficult to understand how anyone reading this (Justice Department) file could conclude well, this matter was investigated and he was given a clean bill of health and all of the allegations were resolved in his favor."

Davitt said that a suggestion by some of the prosecutors handling the case to have it brought before a grand jury several years ago was rejected by Philip Heymann, who headed the Justice Department's criminal division.

Pushing his case against Bryen before reporters today, Sadd observed that Bryen had been employed by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and that his wife, Shoshana, currently heads the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs, a pro-Israeli organization.

'Old Story In A New Wrapper'

Defense Department spokesman Robert Prusha told the JTA today that his department regards the investigation of Bryen as "fully closed," and the NAAA report as "an old story in a new wrapper." He maintained that Bryen's background had been thoroughly reviewed by the Justice Department and that the Assistant Deputy Secretary had been cleared of all the allegations.

Bryen was recently promoted to the post of Undersecretary of Defense for Trade and Security Policy.

ROSENNE: DON'T LISTEN TO SOVIET RUMORS

HOLLYWOOD, Fla., Dec. 23 (JTA) — Meir Rosenne, Israel's Ambassador to the United States, has warned American Jews not to be taken in by "rumors spread by the Soviets" that the release of several thousand Jewish refuseniks from the USSR is imminent.

"If the Russians want to make a gesture, they don't need to announce it," the Israeli envoy told 200 delegates attending the Pan-American Convention of the World Union of General Zionists here. "All they need do is start releasing the 400,000 Jewish men, women and children who have applied to emigrate to Israel."

Rosenne declared there has been "no change" in the Soviet attitude toward Israel but noted "some change" in the position of Poland. He said that Poland recently announced it would open an "interest section" in a third country's embassy in Israel. While this is the "lowest form" of diplomatic recognition, it raises some hope that the Polish government ultimately will raise the level of its relations with Israel to that of resident ambassador, Rosenne said.

Rosenne urged his audience to "continue the struggle for Soviet Jews so that they are not forgotten, so that the Russians will know they cannot improve relations with the West while they continue to persecute Jews, and so that those in the Kremlin who understand the importance of improving the USSR's human rights policy will have ammunition for their positions."

BEHIND THE HEADLINES MAKING DESERTS BLOOM

By Marlene Goldman

NEW YORK, Dec. 23 (JTA) — A remedy to curtail starvation among millions of people in the Third World countries is being explored in Israel: desert development. Training for this task is now going on at the Jacob Blaustein International Center for Desert Studies, where students and scientists from around the world are seeking ways to make deserts bloom. The Center for Desert Studies at the Ben Gurion University Sde Boker campus, a branch of the Blaustein Institute for Desert Research, has for the past year, its first, been holding workshops, seminars and conferences on arid land research, development and settlement. Dr. Shabtay Dover, executive director of the Blaustein Center, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

The Center, he said, provides a wide range of information and knowledge on "how to develop an arid zone, how to provide services in sparsely populated areas," and how to change the ecosystem of desert areas to make them fertile and life-supporting.

This is the technical element in the fight against starvation. But there is also a social element involved in the transformation of deserts, and that is to assure that the identities and cultures of the local indigenous inhabitants are not destroyed in the process. Integrating the ecological and the social elements is basic in the fight against starvation, said Dover, who is also associate director of the desert research institute.

Some Examples Cited

For example, Navaho Indians from Arizona were taught how to utilize spring water to irrigate and grow their own food. "The main success was that it enhanced their self-sufficiency and their pride" in that they no longer had to rely on government food stamps and canned food donations, Dover said.

A group from Thailand, financed by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, spent two months at the desert studies center to study Israeli technology on how to raise algae as fish food in artificial ponds. Another two groups, from Kenya and Peru, were recently at the Center to learn how to trap run-off water from desert flash rainstorms for commercial farming.

Two scientists from the People's Republic of China's own desert research institute came for six weeks to work with the Center's desert ecology group. And currently, a scientist from Nigeria is studying how to heat homes with solar energy.

Combining Necessity With Know-How

Despite the impressive number of students and scientists from Third World countries, most of the visitors to the Center are from Western Europe, Canada and the United States, Dover said. While he feels that it is "fruitful" to have these technologically advanced scientists and students for consultations and exchange of opinions, Dover said that "the original idea was to have more students from the less developed countries because we feel that our research is relevant to countries in which desert development is crucial."

Countries like Australia and the United States have desert regions, but they don't feel compelled,

nor do they find it necessary to develop their deserts, Dover said. On the other hand, Third World nations in the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia have the imperative need to cultivate their deserts but they lack the technological skill, he noted. Israel, however, has the combination of technological know-how and a history of having transformed its own desert areas into fertile land.

"We believe that our knowledge should be transferred to those countries," Dover said, and that is a primary aim of the desert studies center.

Other Ongoing Projects

Other projects in which both the Center and the Blaustein Institute are involved include integrating desert development with the settlement of nomads. "We believe that in an era of desert development, there is no place for nomadism," Dover said. He noted that Bedouin society in the Negev is now in transition "and we are helping them to become integrated in the development of the desert and yet keep their own identity and culture as much as possible."

The Social Studies Center of the Blaustein Institute is studying the process of urbanization and economic change among the Negev Bedouins and ultimately hopes to intensify pastoralism through the use of modern methods.

Also at the Institute is the Marco and Louise Mitrani Center for Desert Ecology, a unit concerned with the effects of desert development and industrialization on the desert ecosystem. "We must develop industry and tourism in the desert as well because agriculture is not the natural solution for the desert," Dover said.

In response to this need, the ecology unit has 12 scientists researching three basic areas: ecophysiology, aimed at protecting desert plants and animals; understanding the position and function of the desert ecosystem for teaching as well as research; and ecotoxicology, studying toxic materials used in desert industrial parks.

One result cited by Dover is in the town Ramat Horav where a large chemical industry produces toxic wastes. "We found a way to segregate toxic material and to neutralize the water so the water can be used for irrigating ornamental plants around sand dunes," Dover explained.

Ways Of Reaching Third World Nations

While the main purpose of the Blaustein International Center for Desert Studies is outreach and implementation of projects researched there, Dover revealed that "we don't put too much effort to contact the people in the less developed countries mainly because of the political obstacles. In many cases we don't have political relations with these countries and in other cases they are defined as our political enemies."

But the Center does reach Third World nations, Dover said, "because we publish our work in international journals and we lecture in many international meetings," such as a recent conference in Tucson, Arizona, where 600 scientists worldwide participated.

According to Dover, the Israeli government has offered generous support for the International Center and Desert Studies Center despite Israel's difficult economic situation. If the economic situation improves, he said, the Blaustein Center may expand its research and include units on human physiology and genetic engineering of desert plants and animals.