

## SOVIET OVERTURES TO ISRAEL REPORTED

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- The Soviet Union appears to be making overtures toward Israel in the course of quiet contacts at senior diplomatic levels which have been going on for some time, according to an article in Haaretz Wednesday by Akiva Eldar.

At meetings in recent weeks, the Soviets seemed interested in a trade-off whereby they would renew discussions on the establishment of Consular relations with Israel and on the problem of Jewish emigration in exchange for Israel's agreement to Soviet participation in the Middle East political process, including an international conference for Arab-Israeli peace, Haaretz said.

The contacts began early in October after then Premier Shimon Peres met with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze in New York. The USSR reportedly is reassessing its Middle East policy, and, according to reports from Israeli Ambassadors in several European capitals, Soviet diplomats have expressed regret over breaking relations with Israel in 1967.

They have also indicated it was a mistake for Moscow to rely solely on Syria with respect to its interest in Middle East developments. According to Haaretz, the USSR is aware of Israel's concerns.

In all their discussions, Soviet officials have called attention to television programs and theatrical presentations in the Soviet Union devoted to Jewish themes as a sign of their willingness to re-examine Soviet attitudes toward Israel, Haaretz reported.

## ANTI-SEMITIC ARTICLES IN RUMANIA

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- Violently anti-Semitic articles have recently appeared in two Rumanian publications, including the Communist Youth League weekly. The French news agency AFP reports from Bucharest that Rumanian Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen believes that these publications "have created a climate" which made possible the fire which recently broke out in a Moldavian synagogue.

The Rumanian authorities said at the time that the fire broke out as a result of a robbery attempt. But Rosen told the French news agency that he "doubted" this explanation. The Chief Rabbi said that in any case, the publication of the anti-Semitic material created a climate which made such acts possible.

The fire which damaged the Bohush Synagogue broke out during the night of October 30-31. Four young men were arrested a few days later and charged with robbery and arson. The news agency correspondent quoted unnamed Jewish and Israeli sources in Bucharest as describing the fire as "an anti-Semitic act."

The Communist youth weekly recently published a poem describing the arrival in Rumania "of a poor and miserable people. We slashed their throats and hung them on hooks." The word "Jew" does not appear in the text but it is generally assumed that the poem refers to the 1941 Bucharest pogrom during which three men, includ-

ing the synagogue's cantor, were murdered and hung on butcher hooks by neo-fascist partisans of the then dictator, General Ion Antonescu.

The popular weekly "Saptamana" published a "historic" study claiming that the 1941 Iassi pogrom resulted in the death of "only" 500 people while it is generally assumed that between 4,000 to 12,000 died in the mass massacre of the city's Jews.

Several anti-Semitic articles appeared in the official press four years ago, most of them signed by a poet, Corneliu Vadim Tudor, noted for his close connection with the country's top leadership. After Rosen protested, Rumanian President Nicolai Ceausescu promised that he would personally "see to it" that this sort of incident did not reoccur.

Ceausescu also promised to stop the publication of the anti-Semitic writings of a 19th-century poet, Eminescu, and formally condemned anti-Semitism and called on the Communist Party to combat it.

## A SENIOR OFFICIAL OF THE P.M.'S OFFICE HAD CONTACT WITH NORTH BUT KNEW NOTHING OF FUNDS TO THE CONTRAS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- Israel admitted Wednesday that a senior official of the Prime Minister's Office had contact with U.S. Marine Corps Lt. Col. Oliver North but that he knew nothing of the transfer of proceeds from the sale of American arms to Iran to the Contra rebels in Nicaragua.

A statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office said that North, who was fired last week from the staff of President Reagan's National Security Council, had briefed Amiram Nir, the Prime Minister's advisor on terrorism at the time of the arms deal. But Nir was not told the money would go to the Contras, the statement said.

The statement was Israel's latest contradiction of repeated assertions in Washington that Israeli officials knew where the profits of the arms sale went. North was named by U.S. Attorney General Edwin Meese as the key figure in the transfer of funds to the Contras, ostensibly without the knowledge of President Reagan or other top Administration figures.

Meese, at a White House press conference November 25, implicated "representatives of Israel" in the transfer of money paid by Iran to Swiss bank accounts maintained by the Contras. Reagan said Monday that "another country" had facilitated the weapons shipments to Iran and deposited the overcharge in the Contra bank accounts. He did not name the other country but was widely perceived to be referring to Israel.

Sources here said Wednesday that the President was not referring to Israel and Israel therefore decided not to address the President directly on the matter. It has, however, given "clarifications" to Secretary of State George Shultz and to Meese.

The U.S. Ambassador to Israel, Thomas Pickering, noted Tuesday that there were differences "but not necessarily contradictions" between the Israeli and American versions of the transfer of money to the Contras. He praised Israel for its

willingness to give whatever assistance is needed to clear up the affair. He said his Embassy has not been asked to question anybody in Israel.

It was learned, meanwhile, that Israel has informed Pickering that it would allow Israeli officials involved in the Iran arms shipments to testify before Congressional committees inquiring into the affair and would provide whatever documents are asked for. Instructions have gone to the Israel Embassy in Washington.

**ISRAELI HIGH COURT RULES THAT TIME OF DEATH CAN ONLY BE DETERMINED BY MEDICAL STANDARDS**  
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- The Supreme Court ruled Wednesday that medical standards alone determine the precise time of death which is the time when the brain ceases to function. Sources at the Chief Rabbinical Council said the ruling did not conflict with halacha, at least not in the specific case to which it was applied.

The ruling was on the appeal of a man convicted of murdering his wife by setting her afire and pushing her from an upper floor of a building. The woman was rushed to a hospital where doctors determined that her brain was not functioning though other organs were. She was kept alive for several days by artificial means but died when the mechanisms were removed.

Her husband argued that death was caused by detaching medical equipment, not by the fall. But the high court rejected his appeal on grounds that the woman was brain dead upon arrival at the hospital.

Although the Rabbinical Council agreed in this case that death was determined in accordance with halachic principles, the ruling could raise problems in the future with the religious establishment. The rabbinate has strongly opposed heart and other organ transplants on grounds that a donor could not be declared dead as long as the heart continued to beat. Doctors point out that hearts can be kept beating by artificial means long after brain death.

Justice Moshe Bejski, who headed the panel of jurists examining the case, said he studied the Chief Rabbinical Council's guidelines before handing down his decision. He stressed, however, that only modern medical principles can apply when determining the time of death, not principles adopted "many generations ago."

**A SALUTE TO IMMIGRANTS**  
By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- A Jewish refugee from Switzerland during World War II and a New York politician born in Tulsa, Oklahoma, were honored here Tuesday night by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) for their contributions to American society and their symbols of hope as immigrant or descendant of immigrants who succeeded in America. Also honored was the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago for its efforts on behalf of refugees and immigrants.

The Irish New Yorker who received the 1986 Liberty Award for his "lifelong commitment to the cause of human rights and the continuance of America as a haven to the oppressed and persecuted" was Sen. Daniel Moynihan (D. NY).

Unable to leave Washington for the dinner at the Pierre Hotel because of the Iran arms affair, Moynihan's award was received by his

daughter, Maura Moynihan, who spoke eloquently and infectiously about her upbringing in Cambridge, Mass., Washington, D.C., and New York City among her Jewish friends.

The 6-1/2-year-old girl who came to Forest Hills, Queens, from Zurich in 1940 to escape probable persecution grew up to be the Governor of Vermont. Madeleine Kunin delivered the guest speech at the dinner whose theme was "A Salute to Immigrants," a capping-off ceremony for the year that celebrated the centennial of the Statue of Liberty and generations of immigrants who have made America what it is.

**Early Jewish Uprising**

Kunin, who a month ago was reelected as only the third Democratic Governor of Vermont, spoke warmly of her European Jewish upbringing and recalled her family's fear that Switzerland might not remain neutral.

Kunin admitted that "the Jewish experience in my political life is an interesting exploration ... in an extraordinary time in the United States in terms of our ability to express ourselves on the political and social issues of our time ... Rarely in our history have Jews had the opportunity to be openly political, as American and identifiable as Jews, without fear of dire consequences."

At a press conference prior to the dinner, Kunin was questioned about her Jewish affiliation and its relationship to her government office. Kunin differentiated between her personal and her political life. As Governor, she said, "I do not feel myself Jewish." She contrasted this with the "personal level," in which she is a proud Jew, a member of a Conservative synagogue and ever mindful of her heritage. She is "not a Jewish Governor," she clarified, "but a Governor who is a Jew."

Although there are Jews living in Vermont, "the Jewish population of Vermont is not enough to elect a Governor." Her religion, she emphasized, had absolutely nothing to do with her candidature or her election. "I've never felt impeded by being Jewish," she said. Rather, she underlined that she was a Democratic Governor in a Republican state.

In her speech, Kunin said that "Jews, in fact, have learned through long and often tragic history that real economic opportunity is never assured without a system that also provides political justice ... To be a mainstream politician for any of these groups is a fairly recent phenomenon, even in this country." Often, she said, this new factor "is still not accepted as a matter of course, but it happens, and that is what is important."

**Moynihan Praises HIAS**

Moynihan, in his acceptance speech read by his daughter, praised HIAS representatives "who translated the abstract message of liberty into such tangibles as a warm meal, clothing, assistance in resettlement and employment counseling" and furthermore, extended these services to non-Jewish groups.

He declared: "It is a measure of the high esteem afforded HIAS that your agency has regularly been asked to assist with the immigration and absorption of such diverse non-Jewish groups as Asians, Vietnamese boat people, Cuban, Cambodian and Haitian refugees. The diversity of those currently receiving your assistance bears testimony to the vitality of the American promise and the nobility of the prophetic tradition from

which HIAS draws its strength and inspiration." The Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago was named recipient of the Zvi Hirsch Masliansky Award of HIAS "for efforts on behalf of refugees and emigres of all nationalities that has set standards for resettlement agencies throughout the United States." The award was presented by Stephen Shalom, a member of the HIAS board of directors, whose wife, Liliane Shalom, organized and chaired the Liberty Dinner.

**STATE DEPARTMENT REPORT SAYS  
SOVIET COMPLIANCE WITH HELSINKI  
ACCORDS REMAINS 'SERIOUSLY FLAWED'**  
By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- The compliance by the Soviet Union and Soviet Bloc countries with the human rights provisions of the Helsinki Accords remains "seriously flawed," State Department spokesman Charles Redman said Wednesday.

Redman gave this assessment as the State Department released the 21st Semi-annual Report on the Implementation of the Helsinki Final Act. The report, which covers the period April 1-October 1, 1986, was submitted to Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R. NY), chairman of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which monitors compliance with the accord.

"The overall record of compliance of the Warsaw Pact nations with their CSCE (Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe) commitments remained seriously flawed," the report stated. "Although some positive steps were taken by these governments, the status of implementation over the current reporting period did not change significantly from earlier periods."

The report listed as positive steps the emigration of Anatoly Shcharansky's mother and brother to Israel and a decision to allow the emigration to the United States of 65 divided families. "By the end of the reporting period, however, roughly half of these had not yet received their exit documentation," it was noted.

**'Particularly Severe Treatment' Cited**

Specifically dealing with the issue of Soviet Jews, the report declares that they "have suffered particularly severe treatment over the last several years with arrests, trials and convictions of many Jews, especially those who actively pursue their own religious and cultural traditions."

"Moscow Hebrew teacher Aleksei Magarik, who was arrested in March at Tbilisi Airport allegedly in possession of hashish, was sentenced on June 9 to three years in a labor camp."

"Moscow Hebrew teacher and labor camp inmate Yuli Edelshtein, who suffered a broken leg and torn urethra in a February fall, and who had long been refused treatment in a regular hospital, was finally operated on in July and is slowly recovering."

"Moscow Hebrew teacher Iosif Begun has been denied visits by his wife and son for more than one year, and the authorities refuse to forward his letters to his family."

"Leningrad Hebrew teacher Vladimir Lifshits, who was sentenced to three years in a labor camp for 'anti-Soviet slander,' has suffered a serious deterioration in his health due to harsh prison

conditions." During the six months covered by the report no other Hebrew teachers were arrested. But the report notes that information is "beginning to surface of a crackdown on several Jewish activists in the Ukrainian city of Cherkassy. A ritual bath (mikva) in Moscow's Marina Roscha Synagogue was reportedly destroyed by the Soviet authorities on September 9."

The report said that Jewish refuseniks continue to be harassed. Leningrad refuseniks Boris and Margarita Yelkin and Yevgeni Leyn were detained by the militia for several hours after a reception at the (U.S.) consulate in July," the report said.

"Six other Leningrad Jews were detained in April while on their way to a private exhibition of Jewish art. Periodic interruption of telephone service, occasional house arrest and frequent detention by the militia for several hours, ostensibly for document checks, continue to be common forms of harassment."

**Situation In Rumania**

The other Soviet bloc country in which Jews were the victims of human rights violations was Rumania, according to the report.

During the period covered by the report, "an historic and unique synagogue and a major Jewish community facility -- an old-age home housing some 80 persons -- were abruptly demolished to make way for urban renewal, despite earlier government assurances to the contrary," the report said. "These actions led to considerable Western concern regarding the fate of other important Jewish facilities in Rumania."

The report added that "the Jewish community was also disturbed by an article seeking to show that the 1941 pogrom in Iassi, in which many thousands died, was an event of only minor significance and one for which Rumanian authorities bore no responsibility. The Jewish community has protested vigorously, fearing this incident might foreshadow the reemergence of anti-Semitism in Rumanian publications."

The State Department stressed that the United States delegates to the CSCE follow-up meeting, now going on in Vienna, "have highlighted Soviet and East European compliance failures."

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TEL AVIV (JTA) -- Security forces apprehended a terrorist gang on the Golan Heights reportedly preparing to strike at Israel, it was announced Tuesday. The gang was headed by a youth from the Druze village of Masada and is linked to George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a Damascus-based terrorist organization. Its members will be tried by a military court.

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JERUSALEM (JTA) -- The families of Jewish victims of Arab terrorists are demanding the death penalty for any Arab convicted of a terrorist act involving murder. They met with senior officers of the military prosecution and vowed afterwards to continue their campaign for capital punishment.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

## A JEWISH MOUSE ON AN XMAS STOCKING

By Andrew Muchin

NEW YORK, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- What's a nice Jewish cartoon character like Fievel Mousekewitz doing in places like these?

The rodent star of Steven Spielberg's new animated film "An American Tail" is the centerpiece of two major Christmas sales promotions, both apparently with Spielberg's blessing.

At more than 7,000 McDonald's restaurants across the United States, Fievel is pictured on four facsimile-stocking Christmas tree ornaments, each given free to purchasers of a \$5 book of gift certificates.

The books also contain a coupon for \$5 off a \$25 Fievel doll at 801 Sears department stores nationwide. Sears has exclusive rights to sell merchandise based on the movie's characters, according to James Podany, director of marketing communications for Sears Roebuck & Co., Chicago.

Sears is placing the characters on a variety of children's products as a draw for sales during the Christmas season, however, Podany insisted that Fievel is not pictured on any Christmas-related items such as a wreath or tree ornament.

'Ill Advised' And 'Tacky'

The use of an identifiably Jewish character to boost Christmas sales is incongruous to say the least, isn't it? "I think it's ill-advised" and "tacky," said Dr. Eliot Spack, executive director of the Coalition for Alternatives in Jewish Education. He noted that he was expressing his own opinions, not his organization's policy.

However, he told JTA that the Fievel campaigns did not pose major assimilation problems for Jews. "I'm not personally worried that we're going to lose thousands of Jews over it," he said, explaining that children won't easily identify the mouse as Jewish, since Fievel is an uncommon Jewish name.

He chalked up the Fievel promotions to capitalism. "Chanukah and Jewish linkages have clearly been exploited for many years" in the promotion of Christmas and non-religious events, he added.

Spokespeople for the companies involved, in interviews with JTA, denied any tackiness or incongruity in the use of Fievel.

Podany of Sears said the Fievel-centered campaign appears at Christmas-time only to concur with the release of the movie.

Marvin Levy, a consultant to Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment and Universal City Studios, Inc., both of Universal City, Calif., acknowledged that Fievel is Jewish and even receives Chanukah gifts in the film, but he said the film is less a Jewish story than one of immigration that fosters universal American values such as the "melting pot."

"No one thought of it with a religious significance," he said of the many Jews, including himself and Spielberg, among the leadership of Amblin and Universal. "We would probably be as sensitive as anybody," he added.

But might not children who see the film and then see the character pushing Christmas sales get the wrong impression of Judaism? "I really don't think so," he said. "I don't think anybody here thought of it as being as much of a Christmas promotion as a (generally ecumenical) holiday promotion." According to Terri Capotosto, media relations manager for McDonald's Corp., Oak

Brook, Ill., the movie represents American values of inter-cultural understanding, hope and family heritage.

Moreover, both Capatosto and McDonald's customer relations representative Chris Garrity noted that families can participate in the Fievel promotion without getting involved in Christmas. Scenes from the movie decorate the packages of McDonald's meals for children from November 24-December 24, which sends week is accompanied by a different Fievel storybook.

No Offense Intended

She said she didn't see anything wrong with placing Fievel on the Christmas tree ornaments, and added that McDonald's employees, including Jews, had discussed the issue at length, concluding that Fievel transcended any one ethnic group.

But she said, "We certainly apologize if someone has misinterpreted (the Fievel ornaments) ... We obviously wouldn't do anything that would offend anybody."

PROCEEDINGS DROPPED AGAINST PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR GHOULISH PARLOR GAME

BONN, Dec. 3 (JTA) The State Prosecutor in Darmstadt has dropped proceedings against unknown parties responsible for a ghoulish parlor game which sends pawns representing Jews to Nazi death camps, because no clues to their identity have been found after nearly a year of investigation, it was announced Tuesday.

A spokesman for the Prosecutor said it is likely that the games were manufactured in the United States. If so, it might take years to gather evidence, by which time the perpetrators would benefit from the statute of limitations.

Copies of the board game were mailed anonymously to 70 schools all over West Germany at the beginning of the year. The parcels were postmarked in Darmstadt.

MUBARAK IN MESSAGE TO SHAMIR; LET'S PROMOTE PEACE IN THE AREA

JERUSALEM, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt has sent a message to Premier Yitzhak Shamir expressing hope that Egypt and Israel would continue to cooperate to "promote peace in the area." The message was conveyed to Shamir Tuesday by Energy Minister Moshe Shahal who returned from a visit to Egypt last week.

In Cairo, meanwhile, Mubarak told reporters Tuesday that he expected Palestine Liberation Organization chairman Yasir Arafat to be in Egypt soon to discuss "further steps toward peace." He said Egypt was trying to solve the issue of Palestinian representation at an international peace conference on the Middle East.

Mubarak is scheduled to visit Iraq shortly for a meeting with President Saddam Hussein.

VIOLENCE CONTINUES IN THE OLD CITY

JERUSALEM, Dec. 3 (JTA) -- Anti-Arab violence and vandalism continued in the Old City. A Molotov cocktail was thrown at an Arab-occupied house in the Moslem quarter, causing slight damage but no casualties. Several more blazing gasoline bombs were found in the neighborhood, near the Shuvu Banim yeshiva where stabbing victim Elishu Amdid had been a student.