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SOVIET SPOKESMAN SAYS ALL JEWS WHO WANT TO EMIGRATE HAVE DONE SO

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- The official Soviet spokesman for the summit meetings between President Reagan and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev repeated the Soviet position Wednesday that most Jews who want to emigrate from the USSR have already "done so."

Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Gennady Gerasimov called "incorrect" claims made by organizations supporting Soviet Jewry in the United States that 400,000 Jews want to emigrate.

He said that about 1,000 Jews a month have obtained exit visas this year. He did not mention that most of them are from a list of 11,000 long-term refuseniks the United States had given Soviet authorities last year.

"We cannot merely encourage people to file these applications to leave, just to please some people here," Gerasimov said. He did not mention the new government regulations issued in January that make it more difficult to apply for exit visas.

Gerasimov, who is sharing the briefings on the Reagan-Gorbachev talks with White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater, made his remarks in response to a question from Rabbi Avraham Weiss, national chairman of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry.

Weiss, who spent eight hours in jail Tuesday for going too close to the Soviet Embassy, also noted that the SSSJ and other groups have started a campaign to prevent the Soviet Union from receiving untied loans from American banks to finance trade with the United States, until emigration increases to the 1979 figure of 51,000.

"We are against linkage," Gerasimov said. He said that an attempt to expand Soviet trade with the United States in the 1970s was "killed by the Jackson-Vanik Amendment."

Reagan, Gorbachev Discuss Rights

Meanwhile, Fitzwater said that Reagan and Gorbachev "had long discussions on human rights." But it was not clear whether this occurred during the two-hour meeting they had Wednesday, much of it alone without their aides.

Fitzwater said the discussion centered on Afghanistan and the Iran-Iraq War. He said that while the Arab-Israeli conflict was on the original agenda, it had not been discussed as of Wednesday.

Reagan has referred to the importance of human rights in all of his public statements. Gorbachev has not mentioned it once.

But Fitzwater said a working group on human rights was set up Wednesday and it was possible that there would be a public statement on this issue after the closing summit session Thursday.

Meanwhile, Rabbi Arthur Schneier, president of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, was among a group of prominent Americans who met with Gorbachev Tuesday at the Soviet Embassy. The human rights issue was not raised by any of the participants.

Schneier, who is rabbi of the Orthodox Park

East Synagogue in New York, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that he spoke briefly with Gorbachev who remarked on a comment by Schneier at an international forum in Moscow last February.

At the time, Schneier said that both Reagan and Gorbachev, in speeches on different topics, had used the phrase "if not now, when?" and predicted that a summit would be scheduled this year. Neither had credited the line to the sage Hillel's famous statement about the need to help others, the rabbi said.

He said both Gorbachev and his wife, Raisa, remembered the phrase.

Schneier, who a few weeks ago got the Soviets to agree to import Jewish prayer books and kosher food, is staying at the Madison Hotel, where the top Soviet officials are housed. He said this has enabled him to continue his discussions with Soviet officials on efforts to make it easier for Jews in the Soviet Union to observe their religion.

LABOR AND LIKUD BATTLE OVER COMPOSITION OF WZO EXECUTIVE

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- The Labor Party and Likud continued to dicker Wednesday over the composition of the new World Zionist Organization Executive, to be elected at the 31st World Zionist Congress here this week. So far they seem far from an agreement.

Informed sources said Likud is demanding it get to fill the key office of WZO treasurer before it agrees to the distribution of other portfolios. The congress on Monday elected Laborite Simcha Dinitz to be chairman of the WZO Executive. He defeated the Likud candidate, Science and Technology Minister Gideon Patt, by a vote of 310-220.

Traditionally, the post of treasurer goes to the party of the losing candidate for chairman. But Labor hopes to relegate Likud to the relatively minor portfolios. It was reported reluctant to make any concessions unless Likud agrees in advance that Labor could head both the aliyah and settlement departments of the WZO.

Likud has proposed that the settlement department be shared by both parties, as is the case in the outgoing Executive.

Meanwhile, the Labor Zionist caucus named three members of the outgoing Executive to serve on the new Executive. They are Uzi Narkiss, Uri Gordon and Nissim Zvilli.

IDF SOLDIER KILLED IN LEBANON

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- One Israel Defense Force soldier was killed and another injured when their armored personnel carrier triggered a road mine near Rashef village in the central sector of the southern Lebanon security zone Tuesday.

The dead soldier, Sgt. Ron Tandit of Moshav Amikam, near Hadera, was buried in the Binyamina cemetery Wednesday. He was killed on his 20th birthday.

TERRORIST CONFESSES TO MURDER OF TWO WEST BANK SETTLERS

By Gil Sedan

ALFEI MENASHE, West Bank, Dec. 9 (JTA) - A 25-year-old Arab from Kalkilya has confessed to the murder of two members of a Jewish settler family in the West Bank last April when he set their car ablaze with a Molotov cocktail, the Israel Defense Force announced Wednesday.

Ofra Moses, 35, from the settlement of Alfei Menashe, near Kalkilya, was burned to death and her 5-year-old son, Tal, died of burns three months later. Her husband, Abraham; their two other children, Nir, 15, and Adi, 9; and a friend, Yossi Hilleli, 14, were all badly burned, but they recovered.

Their faces and bodies are still scarred and they are still grieving over their loss. But the surviving members of the Moses family had an impromptu party at their home here Wednesday night to celebrate the capture of the killer. They sliced a huge cake, a personal gift from Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

The incident on the night of April 7 aroused fury among West Bank settlers, who accused the IDF of failure to protect them from terrorists. Several dozen settlers rampaged through Kalkilya, the nearest Arab town, the following night. They caused no injuries, but did considerable damage.

The Moses family learned of the arrest of the suspect, who has not been publicly identified, in a telephone call from the Defense Ministry Wednesday morning. They were told he confessed and re-enacted the attack.

Several hours later, Gen. Amram Mitzna, commander of the central sector, paid a personal visit on the family to inform them of the successful resolution to the case.

"I return a personal debt to the family and the entire people of Israel," Mitzna said. He pledged that from now on, the people of Alfei Menashe can travel safely on the local roads.

Abraham Moses told reporters later, "I am glad that the murderer was caught, but I am concerned he will not get his due punishment, the death sentence."

The suspect also reportedly confessed to other terrorist acts, including a Molotov cocktail attack four months ago on the car of Edna and Menashe Regev of Alfei Menashe. They were injured, but later recovered.

(Tel Aviv correspondent Hugh Orgel also contributed to this report.)

RABIN COMING TO U.S. TO SIGN PACT ON STRATEGIC COOPERATION

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- Israel and the United States will upgrade their 4-year-old strategic cooperation agreement when Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin visits Washington next week.

Rabin will sign a new memorandum of understanding with U.S. Defense Secretary Frank Carlucci, Haaretz reported Wednesday. According to Israel Embassy sources in Washington, it will parallel U.S. agreements with NATO allies.

One feature will give Israel its long-sought right to participate in bidding for U.S. army procurement contracts. That privilege was not specified in the strategic cooperation agreement signed during Premier Yitzhak Shamir's visit to Washington in November 1983. President Reagan announced at that time the creation of the U.S.

Israel Joint Political Military Group.

Rabin is due in New York Friday and will go to Washington Sunday for three days of talks with top administration officials. In addition to Carlucci, he will meet with Gen. Colin Powell, Reagan's national security adviser; Navy Secretary Joseph Webb; Army Secretary John Marsh; Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead; and former Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger.

Rabin will visit the United States Military Academy at West Point, N.Y. on Dec. 16, before returning to Israel.

According to Haaretz, the defense minister will use his trip to the United States to promote Israel's military industries and, specifically, to seek an agreement enabling the American armed forces to purchase Israeli weapons systems.

U.S. FILES DENATURALIZATION PAPERS AGAINST ALLEGED NAZI

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- The U.S. Justice Department has initiated denaturalization proceedings against Stefan Reger, 65, an alleged SS guard at the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration/death camp during World War II.

The Justice Department accuses Reger, a resident of Yardville, N.J., of lying about his alleged SS past to immigration officials when he entered the United States in 1952. He became a citizen in 1957.

According to the Justice Department, Reger, a native of Filipovo, Yugoslavia, was an SS guard at Auschwitz-Birkenau between March 1943 and January 1945. Reger had said he served in the 91st Grenadier Regiment of the German Army between 1943 and March 5, 1945, and from then until April 29, 1945 as a private in the Waffen SS, the combat arm of the SS.

Reger reportedly told an agent of the U.S. Army Counter Intelligence Corps in 1952 that he received the blood-typing tattoo given by the SS. These tattoos were generally placed under the arm.

In a complaint filed Monday in federal court in Trenton, N.J., the Justice Department alleged that Reger was an SS Death's Head guard at Auschwitz-Birkenau, overseeing the "confinement, torture, forced labor and execution of thousands of prisoners" and their transfer between camps.

Reger would not speak to the press or reveal the name of his lawyer, who reportedly advised him to remain silent. A woman who answered his phone later said he was not home.

Neal Sher, director of the Office of Special Investigations of the Justice Department, said Reger had been "wrongly naturalized." He said that Reger had been identified by comparing archives from foreign nations with immigration records.

ARAB STUDENT KILLED IN GAZA UNREST

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- Israel Defense Force soldiers killed a 17-year-old Arab high school student and wounded at least 10 others, one seriously, after their vehicle came under a hail of fire-bombs at the Jebeliya refugee camp in the northern Gaza Strip Wednesday.

The gasoline bombs, thrown from the yard of the Faluja school, exploded, but caused no damage to the vehicle. A curfew was imposed on the refugee camp.

BAD WEATHER IN ETHIOPIA MAY MEAN REDOUBLING OF RELIEF EFFORTS

By Andrew Silow Carroll

NEW YORK, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- When Aryeh Cooperstock last visited Ethiopia's northern Gondar region, just this past September, he found a people slowly and steadily recovering from the despairing effects of the famine that still ravaged the country in 1985. Crops were growing as tall as his head, and as many as 60,000 Ethiopians were benefitting from American contributions of oxen, seeds, fertilizers, pesticides, and farm implements.

But when Cooperstock returns to Gondar next week, he is fearful of what he might find. This time parts of the region have seen too much rain, and while other regions of Ethiopia face a drought as severe as 1984's, Cooperstock worries that much of the recovery he has encouraged, as the director of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee's International Development Fund, will literally be washed away.

JDC's aid to Gondar, where the majority of Ethiopia's 20,000 Jews live, is the latest and most vivid example of that Jewish organization's low-profile effort to extend help where it is needed most.

"As Jews, we have an ethical imperative to help others," said Cooperstock, explaining the raison d'être of JDC's programs in more than 70 countries. "Of course, we go where Jews are, in hopes of improving the image and status of Jews living there."

Using that approach, the "Joint" (as JDC is called for short) is active in Kenya, where Israeli experts under its sponsorship work on a goat-raising project with Kenyan farmers; in Morocco, where "Project Carolyn" provides dental care for children in impoverished areas; and in El Salvador, where, together with the tiny Jewish community there, the JDC rebuilt a kindergarten in one of the poorest neighborhoods.

But the JDC's most dramatic, and possibly understated, efforts in recent years have taken place in Gondar. There, Jews left behind after 1984's Operation Moses live virtually indistinguishably from their non-Jewish neighbors, living in one-room mud "tukuls" and tending small plots of land.

New Famine Expected

As a result, they face what at least one organization, the American Association for Ethiopian Jews, is calling a repetition of the 1984-85 famine, when 3,000 Jews were included among the approximately one million Ethiopians who died of starvation and disease (out of a total Ethiopian population of 45 million).

According to a spokesman for the United States Agency for International Development (AID), the United States has already this year provided 142,000 tons of food and \$56.6 million in aid.

As in other countries, the aid JDC is providing to Ethiopia must be non-sectarian -- the Joint is allowed to work with Jews, but not only with Jews, Cooperstock said.

"We never didn't help non-Jews," he said. On the other hand, while JDC never hides its Jewishness, "we don't flaunt it either," he added.

At the time of the 1983 famine, JDC channeled to starving Ethiopians more than \$4 million in cash, food, medicine and clothing donated by the American Jewish community.

As the famine subsided, the JDC returned to the long-term development programs it had begun as early as 1983. They include a medical clinic in the village of Tedda and the training there of traditional birth attendants, a recently-inaugurated clinic in Gondar City, improvements in the region's water supply and a ceramics project in the Waleka area.

According to Cooperstock, Ethiopians import even the tiny cups they use for drinking coffee, and the ceramics project is exploring ways of manufacturing and marketing pottery and building materials using Ethiopia's indigenous clay deposits.

The Joint's agricultural project, successful up until this year's unfortunate weather, operates with the assistance of \$1.3 million in grants from United States AID and an additional \$150,000 from USA for Africa's Live-Aid campaign.

Limits On Use Of Funds

The bulk of JDC's \$55 million budget comes from United Jewish Appeal funds earmarked for "international concerns." But because U.S. law limits American funding in "unfriendly" Marxist states like Ethiopia to "recovery" projects only, the JDC has been turning to Jewish communities in Denmark, Sweden and Canada for assistance in its development projects.

"We're asking the Swedes and others to go to their big international development agencies and ask them to make funds available," said Cooperstock. "The Danes approached their development officials and they were delighted to honor a Jewish request."

The JDC's International Development Fund is not the only American Jewish relief organization providing aid to developing countries. For instance, the Boston-based American Jewish World Service, founded in 1985, is meeting this week with international disaster specialists to discuss impending food shortages in Ethiopia.

According to the group's president, Laurence Simon, the World Service has also been planning a response to direct requests from independent relief committees in the war-torn Ethiopian provinces of Tigre and Eritrea. They hope to apply the advanced Israeli grain storage techniques that they have introduced in Sri Lanka, Togo and the Philippines.

Cooperstock acknowledges the work of the AJWS. "There's room for two flowers in the garden," he said.

Still, Cooperstock is proud of the JDC's standing in the international community. "The Ethiopian government has said we are an example of how an effective NGO (non-governmental organization) should work," he said.

Cooperstock's return to Africa next week will be undertaken with the Interfaith Hunger Appeal, a coalition that includes Catholic, Lutheran and other relief organizations.

He worries that the public will not respond to the current famine as it did in 1984, and he hopes publicity surrounding the interfaith mission will "raise the level of public awareness about the impact of hunger."

"This time around the Ethiopian government has acknowledged and asked for assistance," said Cooperstock. "I'm just afraid people will suffer from 'donor fatigue.' People won't respond because it happened before."

"But the effects of this famine will be the same. Starvation, unrest, refugees. We want to show not just what hunger is, but what hunger causes."

BEHIND THE HEADLINES: AS GAON GOES, SO GOES THE WORLD SEPHARDI FEDERATION

By Andrew Muchin

JERUSALEM, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- The 60-year-old World Sephardi Federation is undergoing a potentially fundamental transformation -- carefully crafted by its president and organizational DNA of the last 16 years, Nessim Gaon of Geneva.

Federation leaders, including Gaon, recruited more than 200 local Sephardi leaders from throughout the Jewish diaspora this summer to serve on the federation's newly created board of governors, which was Gaon's idea.

The obvious effect was to broaden the financial and power base of the federation, as the leaders, from 16 countries, each pledged \$15,000 over the next three years, or \$3.3 million.

Although the federation's decision-making bodies now represent a wider geography of views, whether the federation will become any more democratic in its pursuits on behalf of Jews of Mediterranean origin is still in question. So, too, is the speed with which it can expand its programming, an avowed priority.

The federation did not even recognize the board of governors as an official policy-making body until Dec. 2, the last of three days of the federation's World Sephardi Congress held here.

By then, the congress had no time to consider the other priorities that Gaon and other leaders had expressed throughout the congress:

- * To foster a general resurgence of pride and unity among the world's 2.5 million Sephardim.

- * To improve and increase Sephardi education to prevent assimilation in the diaspora.

- * To resuscitate their traditions in Israel, including Orthodox but moderate religious practices, and reclaim their yeshivas from the Ashkenazi religious authorities.

- * To increase educational and developmental assistance to Israel's 1.2 million Sephardim, a slight majority of Israel's Jewish population, but an overwhelming majority of the Jewish poor.

- * To utilize their origin in Arab lands to the advantage of Israel by opening channels of dialogue with Arab states.

The congress left those issues to the presidium, the top policy-making body, which presumably will approve them. That procedure was Gaon's idea.

Revival Began In 1971

It was also Gaon, a 64-year-old Sudanese-born businessman and international Jewish leader, who revived the moribund federation in 1971. He has served as president of the world body ever since. His ideas and activity have spurred three recent major accomplishments.

He won approval in 1978, from then-Premier Menachem Begin, for Project Renewal, the diaspora-Israeli cooperative rebuilding of Israel's impoverished development towns, which mainly comprise Sephardim.

Under his leadership, the world federation has introduced, with the Jewish Agency, a scholarship program that has sent 7,000 underprivileged students to Israeli universities, and a bar mitzvah program that has provided the education, ceremony and gifts to 5,000 underprivileged boys.

The recruitment of the board of governors, undertaken in cooperation with Alberto Nasser of Rio de Janeiro and Stephen and Liliane Shalom of

New York, transported Gaon throughout the Americas in August. Both he and Nasser said the local leaders told them they had awaited for years the opportunity to move from their local posts into the world Jewish scene.

Why now? Until a few years ago, it was impossible to consider such a step or talk of a Sephardi resurgence, Gaon explained during an interview last week in his suite at the Laromme Hotel here, the site of the congress.

The Sephardim in Israel faced major problems even at the outset of the 1980s -- institutionalized poverty, lack of educational opportunity, a dissolving family structure. "All this needed most of our time and attention," he said, leaving few resources for other efforts.

But, the impeccably dressed, multilingual man added, "The situation greatly improved and is continually improving."

In this new atmosphere, Gaon has urged the federation to centralize its programming in Israel with the establishment of Sephardi House, a combination Sephardi world community center and administrative office.

WZO Asked To Hand Over Department

Gaon said ideally the house would include the Sephardi Communities Department of the World Zionist Organization, with its \$650,000 budget. He complained that half the budget is earmarked for administrative and overhead expenses. He said the federation would ask WZO, which is considering restructuring anyway, to hand over the department.

Gaon, who is president of the Israel Bonds organization in Switzerland, proposes a parallel program in which the development towns would offer local bonds, backed by the national government or the Jewish Agency, in order to raise from \$200 million to \$400 million to provide opportunities for employment.

The vast socioeconomic differences among Sephardim were reflected in the makeup of this year's congress. Some of the diaspora Sephardim had made fortunes in one or two generations, while the poverty of the Israeli Sephardim was a major focus of the proceedings. Did the Sephardim who went to the diaspora, Gaon was asked, make the better decision?

Israel always was the dream of most Sephardim, he replied, but many, including him in 1949, chose other locales. Israel confiscated their fortunes at the border, he explained, leaving them impoverished, and then left them to languish in development towns. That was all he would say.

Another diaspora-Israeli difference nearly ruptured the federation, but instead demonstrated Gaon's personal "suasion." The Israelis heatedly opposed Gaon's approved organizational restructuring plan, because it lowered Israeli representation on the federation presidium from one-half to less than one-third.

The top leaders from both sides met in Gaon's suite until the wee hours of last Wednesday morning, agreeing to give the Israelis 14 of 35 seats on an expanded presidium.

Superseding parliamentary procedure, Gaon then asked the congress to accept the new plan at its Wednesday plenary. It did, of course. Not that his every whim becomes federation policy. But when opposition arose, it was his charm and sometimes calculated forcefulness that overcame.

The federation is bigger now, and essentially new. Whether or not it succeeds in its goals, Gaon most likely will be the guiding force.