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SOVIET JEWS ON HUNGER STRIKE IN ROME TO DEMAND ENTRY TO U.S. AS REFUGEES By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- A dozen Soviet Jews were camped outside the U.S. Embassy here Monday, on the fifth day of a hunger strike to protest the refusal of American immigration authorities to allow them to enter the United States as refugees.

The hunger strikers, mostly young people, are spread out on the sidewalk on the fashionable Via Veneto, across the street from the U.S. Embassy.

"They were originally planning a seven-day strike, but now they say they will continue until they get visas," said a staff member of the Rome office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which provides temporary housing and other services for the immigrants.

The hunger strikers, who are refusing all food and subsisting only on water, are among more than 400 Soviet Jews whose applications for U.S. refugee status have been rejected twice by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service: once initially and again upon appeal.

They have been joined in their protest by as many as 100 sympathizers carrying banners with slogans such as "Stop Discrimination."

Tens of thousands of Soviet Jews allowed to leave the Soviet Union under the liberalized policies of Mikhail Gorbachev have been flocking to Rome, where they stay in temporary quarters awaiting U.S. entry visas.

But as their numbers increase -- 50,000 Jews may leave the Soviet Union this year, compared to 1,000 three years ago -- the United States has tightened its criteria for issuing visas.

Funds Cut Off For Some

In order to qualify for refugee status, immigrants must prove they had a "well-founded fear of persecution" in their country of origin. Until last September, all Soviet Jews were presumed to fall into that category.

Now, each visa request "is considered individually. The ones that don't meet refugee status requirements don't get refugee visas," a U.S. Embassy official here explained.

JDC, which aids the immigrants while they wait for visas, has provided a daily stipend of \$6 to each Soviet Jew in Italy.

But under a new policy adopted this summer, it has cut off funds to immigrants who have been refused visas more than once and have been judged by HIAS, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, not to be bona fide refugees.

The Jewish assistance agencies are making a concerted effort to persuade the rejected visa applicants to go to Israel.

But they have had little success among the disgruntled Soviets, who have been staging small demonstrations outside the U.S. Embassy for weeks.

The hunger strike is not directed against JDC policy, but only at obtaining visas, according to JDC staff members.

A medical doctor engaged by the agency has been visiting the hunger strikers daily to monitor their condition.

CATHOLIC CLERGY JOIN JEWISH LEADERS IN CRITICIZING POLISH CARDINAL'S SPEECH By Edwin Eytan

NEW YORK, NY 10001-5010

PARIS, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- Catholic officials joined Jewish leaders in the United States and Europe on Monday in condemning remarks made over the weekend by Cardinal Jozef Glemp, the highest-ranking Catholic official of Poland.

Glemp shocked even his supporters in the Solidarity movement by the language of a sermon he delivered Saturday admonishing Jews to stop protesting the presence of a convent on the grounds of the former Auschwitz death camp.

It was delivered in the Polish city of Czestochowa, at the shrine of the Black Madonna, Poland's most revered icon, and contained echoes of classic Polish anti-Semitism.

He accused Jews, among other things, of using the mass media for anti-Polish propaganda and offending Poles and their sovereignty on the convent issue.

Even the Solidarity daily Gazeta Wyborcza, normally supportive of the Catholic Church, found Glemp's remarks of fensive.

"The words used by the primate threaten to be deeply painful to many descendants and brothers of Holocaust victims," the Polish newspaper said.

Especially on the eve of the start of World War II, "we listened to these words with regret and pain," the Solidarity paper added.

In Paris, a prelate of the French Catholic Church made a strong, if indirect, response to Glemp's remarks.

It was contained in an article written by Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, the archbishop of Paris, that appeared Monday in the daily newspaper Le Monde.

The article included a stinging denunciation of Nazi crimes and a reiteration of the meaning of Jewish martyrdom.

'Let Silence Return To Auschwitz'

Cardinal Lustiger adopted an indirect approach so as to express his views without breaking or being perceived to break Church discipline, French Catholic circles said.

Lustiger made no specific mention of the controversy over the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz or of Glemp's homily with its heavy anti-Semitic overtones.

"Whether we like it or not," the French cardinal wrote, "the center of this tragedy (the Holocaust) is the election of Israel (as the chosen people) and the saving of humanity."

Lustiger then boldly referred to his own Jewish origin. He was born Jewish but raised as a Catholic after his parents perished in the Holocaust.

"I am one of those who should and could have been one of them (the Jewish martyrs). We were doomed to the same annihilation, but we were spared. Sometimes we knew how and why, sometimes we did not."

Lustiger said he did not believe "that Auschwitz symbolizes a madness without a past and without consequences. We should search into the past and also examine all that followed as it is not enough that the Nazi empire collapsed.

"This does not mean that the temptations which caused it have disappeared."

The bishop of the French city of Evreux, Msgr. Jacques Gaillot, who generally favors the Palestinian cause, stated flatly that Glemp's homily "hurts and harms our Jewish brethren."

He favored relocation of the convent "to let silence return to Auschwitz."

Glemp's homily also was attacked by two French Jewish leaders, Theo Klein and Jean Kahn, respectively the past and current president of CRIF, the Representative Council of Jewish Organizations in France.

'Makes Our Work Much Harder'

In Rome, Jewish leaders were full of praise for Pope John Paul II's eloquent condemnation of anti-Semitism over the weekend.

Chief Rabbi Elio Toaff of Rome and Tulia Zevi, president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, saw it as an antidote to Glemp's harsh words.

In New York, Rabbi A. James Rudin said that despite Glemp's remarks, a planned meeting between U.S. Jewish leaders and a top Vatican representative would take place in early September. But he said the speech is "going to be part of the climate" affecting discussions on the convent.

Glemp "revived some of the worst anti-Jewish canards of the past," said Rudin, who is chairman of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, which coordinates dialogue with the Catholic Church.

"For those of us who are working with Polish Catholics, it makes our work much harder," said Rudin, who also is American Jewish Committee's national interreligious affairs director.

(Contributing to this report were JTA correspondent Ruth E. Gruber in Rome and Steve Lipman, a staff writer for The New York Jewish Week.)

U.S. FIGHTING PLO BID TO JOIN WORLD TOURISM ORGANIZATION By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- The Bush administration said Monday it would fight attempts by the Palestine Liberation Organization to join the World Tourism Organization, which is meeting this week in Paris.

"In our view, the self-declared State of Palestine, which we do not recognize, does not meet the generally accepted criteria under international law for statehood and thus does not qualify for membership in international organizations," said Richard Boucher, the State Department's deputy spokesman.

"Nor do we believe that bestowing legitimacy upon the self-proclaimed 'state' would advance the efforts to promote peace in the Middle East." he said.

The United States has communicated its views to the WTO Secretariat and is "consulting closely with like-minded friends on how best to block these PLO efforts, which we will continue to oppose vigorously," he said.

The WTO, which began meeting in Paris on Monday, is the latest of several international agencies the PLO has sought to join in a bid to gain recognition for the Palestinian state it declared last fall.

The United States has been largely successful in blocking such efforts.

SYRIA SAID TO OFFER ITS BASES FOR COMMANDO ATTACKS ON ISRAEL By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- A well-placed Bush administration official has given credence to reports that Syria has invited Palestinian Liberation Organization commandos to attack Israel from Syrian soil.

The official said, however, that it was "unlikely" that PLO leader Yasir Arafat would accept the offer.

According to a wide-ranging interview published two weeks ago in the Kuwaiti newspaper Al-Anba, Syria's defense minister pledged to give Arafat "every help possible" in conducting commando attacks from Syrian bases.

"We have told our brother commandos to come to the Syrian front and coordinate with us," Gen. Mustasa Tlass said in the interview, which was reported by the State Department's Foreign Broadcast Information Service.

Tlass, who is also a deputy prime minister, said Syria would have to oversee any raids because it would "provide blood and cover and be the target of Israeli retaliation."

In addition, Tlass said two- or three-person commando operations would be ineffective, and that Syria would not hijack Israeli planes or lay mines in the Jewish state because those would just be "trivial actions."

A Syrian-PLO agreement to coordinate attacks against Israel would not only pose a potent new threat to Israel, but represent a dramatic change in the positions and allegiances of the two Arab powers.

Arafat and Syrian President Hafez Assad have been arch-enemies for the last six years. And in recent months, the two have been moving away from supporting international terrorism.

War In 'The Coming Years'

Arafat officially renounced terrorism last fall, prompting the United States to launch a dialogue with the PLO. But earlier this month, his Al Fatah faction of the PLO called for renewed "armed struggle" against Israel.

Syria is no longer actively promoting terrorist attacks and is "moving in the right direction" in that area, the U.S. official said. He praised Syria for cooperating in the investigation of the bombing last December of Pan Am Flight 103 over Scotland.

The United States returned its ambassador to Syria in September 1987, after a yearlong hiatus, spurred in part by Syria's decision that summer to expel the Abu Nidal terrorist group from its soil.

Assad reportedly would like to involve Arafat in more attacks against Israel, in part because that might cause the United States to end its dialogue with the PLO, which the Syrian president opposes.

Tlass' interview with the Kuwaiti newspaper also provided insight into Syria's conception of conventional warfare with Israel.

When asked if direct war with Israel would exceed the capabilities of Syria's army, Tlass would only say, "Expanding the front here with us would mean that (Israel's) front would be expanded." He predicted war with Israel not in "the coming days, but the coming years."

Asked how strong the Syrian army is, he said, "The Syrian army is the strongest Arab army nowadays. The Israelis said this, and not me."

9 REPORTED KILLED IN SUNDAY RAID, AS ISRAELI JETS RETURN TO LEBANON By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- Israeli air force jets flew "mock raids" over Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon on Monday morning, apparently aimed at intimidating Islamic fundamentalists. But unlike an air strike the day before, no bombs were dropped.

The pro-Iranian Moslem fundamentalists acknowledged that nine of its members died and 35 were injured in the Sunday evening attack, during which Israeli jets bombed Hezbollah installations in the Ein Abusawar region, south of the port city of Sidon.

Hezbollah initially denied any casualties from the Israeli raid and later admitted one or two fatalities. It announced Monday, however, that nine dead had been buried and that the injured were hospitalized in the Sidon area.

Reports from Lebanese sources of another bombing raid by Israel on Monday were denied emphatically by a military spokesman here.

Later reports of a simulated raid by four Israeli jets were confirmed by Israeli sources. The low-flying aircraft broke the sound barrier. The sonic boom heard over a wide area apparently was mistaken for bomb explosions.

In Washington, the U.S. State Department appeared to be dismayed by the raids in Lebanon, but refrained from criticizing Israel directly.

"This incident underscores again the urgent need for security arrangements which will ensure stability and security for northern Israel and southern Lebanon," said Richard Boucher, the department deputy spokesman.

"Incidents of violence in this region are part of the cycle which has caused needless suffering to Israelis and Lebanese alike," he said.

The Israeli military actions come three weeks after a truck bomb planted by Hezbollah members exploded in the middle of an Israeli army convoy in southern Lebanon. Five Israeli soldiers and a South Lebanon Army militiaman were wounded in that attack.

ABC CAMERAMAN INJURED IN RIOTS SPARKED BY KILLING NEAR JERUSALEM By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- A large force of police fired tear gas and rubber bullets Monday to end rioting in the Arab village of Beit Safafa, in the southern suburbs of Jerusalem.

An Israeli cameraman working for ABC News was slightly injured by a rubber bullet that struck his forehead. He was identified as Shlomo Frankel.

Four police officers and four Palestinians also were reportedly injured, but there was no immediate confirmation of these casualties.

The disturbances erupted when local youths staged a funeral procession for 21-year-old Khaled Salman, who was fatally shot in a clash with police on Sunday.

The youth's body was snatched from Mokassed, the Arab hospital in East Jerusalem, before the cause of death could be determined.

He was reported to have been shot in the chest three times with live ammunition. The police insist only rubber bullets were fired.

A senior police officer was appointed to investigate the death, only the second Arab fatality in East Jerusalem since the Palestinian uprising began more than 20 months ago.

Jerusalem police in fact are proud of their record. They say they have managed to enforce law and order in the city with minimum casualties

By contrast, 615 Arabs and 40 Jews have been killed in violence related to the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Meanwhile, Palestinians staged a partially effective commercial strike Monday. It was called to protest the deportation of five Palestinian activists Sunday.

The Israel Defense Force chief of staff, Gen. Dan Shomron, said the deportation policy would continue, because it is "an effective means of punishment," even if it stirs protests in the short term.

He stressed, however, that deportation should be used selectively and only against persons whose role in the uprising is clear.

HEBRON RABBI FACING 20 YEARS, AS TRIAL FOR KILLING ARAB BEGINS By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- Rabbi Moshe Levinger, the Gush Emunim militant who led the Jewish settlement movement in the West Bank, finally went on trial in Jerusalem District Court Monday for killing an Arab and wounding another during a shooting spree in Hebron last September.

Levinger, 54, pleaded not guilty to a manslaughter charge that carries a maximum penalty of 20 years' imprisonment.

His trial was to have opened in April, but it was postponed three times as a result of delaying tactics.

Levinger first said he couldn't find a lawyer. Then the one he did find, Ya'acov Nehoshtan, challenged the Jerusalem court's jurisdiction over the incident, which occurred in the West Bank. Later, he asked for more time to study the case.

On Monday, when Nehoshtan claimed the charge sheet was unclear, Judge Ezra Hadaya lost his temper and ordered the trial to begin immediately.

Levinger insists that Jews and Arabs can coexist peacefully in Israel and the territories, provided the Arabs recognize that the land belongs to Jews and they are here to stay.

He is accused of firing shots, first into the air and then toward the local marketplace, after his car was stoned near his home in the Jewish quarter of Hebron almost a year ago.

One of the bullets killed a 42-year-old Arab shoe vendor. Another Arab was wounded.

Levinger, who is free on bail, told reporters after leaving the courtroom that "they should try the real criminals," whom he identified as "the leaders of the intifada."

Before appearing in court, Levinger and six supporters marched to the East Jerusalem home of Palestinian activist Faisal Husseini, followed by a trail of reporters.

The demonstrators carried placards reading, "Terrorist to prison."

Husseini, 49, is one of the most prominent leaders of Palestinians in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and a supporter of the Palestine Liberation Organization and a two-state solution.

As Husseini emerged from his home, Levinger shouted, "You are here to kill Jews. You are the biggest terrorist in Israel."

While the reporters scribbled their notes, Husseini replied, "Was it I who killed someone with a pistol?"

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ISRAELI POLICE BEGIN INVESTIGATION OF COMPANY'S DEALINGS IN COLOMBIA By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- Two Israel Desense Force reserve officers were interrogated by police investigators Monday about their allegedly unauthorized export of military equipment and know-how to non-governmental groups in Colombia.

Reserve Lt. Col. Yair Klein, who heads a security consulting firm called Hod Hahanit, appeared at the criminal investigation division headquarters of the national police in Petach Tikva, at the request of the Defense Ministry.

He said he welcomed the police probe, in order to clear his name of rumors that he trained "hit squads" for the drug cartels in Colombia.

Also appearing was the No. 2 man at Hod Hahanit, Reserve Lt. Col. Amatzia Shouali, who was in charge of the paramilitary training program in Colombia.

The government, on the eve of the police probe, formally dissociated itself from any IDF personnel who may have engaged in illegal activities in Colombia.

Cabinet Secretary Elyakim Rubinstein read a brief statement to that effect after the weekly Cabinet meeting on Sunday.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir appeared on television Sunday night to reassure the public measures ^\to prevent such activities and to bring the perpetrators to justice.

On Monday, the prime minister urged Israelis not to jump to unfounded conclusions that certain people were involved with drug traffickers.

Such allegations surfaced a week ago, when NBC News broadcast a videotape showing uniformed men in Colombia being trained by a Hebrew-speaking officer. The trainees were described as drug "hit men."

Could Open 'Pandora's Box'

When the videotape was shown on Israel Television, the officer was identified as Klein. He readily admitted in television and radio interviews here that his firm had provided equipment and know-how in Colombia about 18 months ago.

He said it trained security guards for farmers and cattle ranchers who were troubled by guerrillas and cattle rustlers their government could not control.

Klein denied involvement with drug traffickers. He said, however, that they may have entered the picture after he terminated his contract in Colombia and was replaced by mercenaries from the United States, Britain and South Africa.

While it is legal for Israelis, mainly retired IDF officers, to engage in the export of weapons, technology and combat expertise, such activities are governed by an elaborate set of rules and a strict licensing system,

Inspector Yehoshua Caspi, commander of the criminal investigation division, is personally heading the probe of Hod Hahanit. He said its primary focus will be to determine whether Klein and his associates violated Defense Ministry regulations in their activities in Colombia.

The investigation apparently is not particularly concerned over whether the subjects were involved with the drug cartel, though Israel's Foreign Ministry issued a statement last week saying that Israel is "strongly committed to the war on drugs."

CABINET HEARS REPORT ON INCREASE IN ANTI-SEMITISM AROUND THE WORLD By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- There were 35 incidents of anti-Semitic violence in Europe and South America in the past year, compared with six incidents three years ago.

That was one of the disturbing statistics contained in a special report presented to the Cabinet at its regular weekly meeting Sunday.

The report was compiled from Israeli and Jewish organizational sources which keep track of anti-Semitic manifestations in North and South America, Western Europe and the Soviet Bloc states.

The report said that anti-Semitism was frequently disguised as anti-Zionism and denial of the Holocaust.

An especially dangerous aspect, according to intelligence experts, is that the extreme right wing and extreme left in several countries make common cause in attacking Jews.

The Cabinet issued a communique on the subject which stressed that "awareness" is the best counter measure to anti-Semitism and pledged that the government will act to heighten that awareness among Israeli citizens.

According to the communique, "the incidence of anti-Semitism is increasing significantly in many countries; some Jewish communities are that the government would take legal and other being targeted by extreme anti-Semitic, racist and terrorist organizations.

> "Attempts are being made to deny the Holocaust took place as well as to de-legitimize Zionism, and these attempts disguise anti-Semitic trends.

> "Hostile propaganda of various kinds is spreading, including use of the notorious 'Protocols of the Elders of Zion.' There are occurrences of violence against Jewish individuals and institutions."

> The Cabinet communique stressed "Israel's destiny and central role in the encouragement of aliyah and the struggle against anti-Semitism.

> "The government of Israel together with the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency will support organizations and Jewish communities in any responsible action that may promote this goal."

23 NEO-NAZIS ARRESTED IN BAVARIA By David Kantor

BONN, Aug. 28 (JTA) -- Police arrested 23 armed neo-Nazi activists in the Bavarian town of Wunsiedel, after a raucous demonstration and clashes with anti-Nazi protesters.

They will be charged with illegal possession of weapons, displaying Nazi symbols and disobeying police orders.

The neo-Nazis gathered in Wunsiedel Aug. 19 to observe the second anniversary of the death of Rudolf Hess, who killed himself in West Berlin's Spandau prison, where he was serving a life sentence for war crimes.

Hess, who was Hitler's deputy, lived in Wunsiedel and is rumored to be buried nearby. The actual place of his burial was not disclosed to avoid making it a neo-Nazi shrine.

The activists maintain that he was not a suicide, but was killed on the orders of the Allied powers in West Berlin. Several mass-circulation newspapers in West Germany have published stories lending credence to that allegation.