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**SOVIET JEWISH VA'AD ESTABLISHED;
FIRST UMBRELLA GROUP IN HISTORY**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 21 (JTA) -- Soviet Jewry achieved an historic milestone Thursday, when its representatives voted in Moscow to establish the Soviet Jewish Va'ad, an umbrella body that will coordinate activities of Jewish organizations all over the Soviet Union. It is the first such institution in Soviet Jewish history.

The Va'ad fulfills the primary goal of the founding conference of the Congress of Jewish Organizations and Communities of the USSR, which was to establish an independent confederation of Soviet Jewish organizations that would develop a consensus on the priorities and objectives of their constituents.

Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency Executive, promised the new body the full support of the Israeli government and the agency in all of its endeavors and activities.

Dinitz, speaking in Hebrew, urged the Va'ad to make Israel the center of its cultural activities.

Va'ad is the Hebrew word for committee. Mikhail Chlenov, the conference organizer who heads the Jewish Cultural Association, was elected its chairman.

The conference, attended by some 700 delegates from 75 cities and towns across the Soviet Union, opened at Moscow's Cinema Center Monday and closes Friday. Representatives of international Jewish organizations and Diaspora Jewry attended as guests and observers.

Meanwhile, a group of 15 Soviet Jews seeking to emigrate to Israel began a five-day hunger strike when the conference opened in Moscow. But they are not protesting the refusal of Soviet authorities to give them exit visas.

In a statement issued through the Bay Area Council for Soviet Jews in San Francisco, the group complained of delays of between six to 18 months in obtaining invitations from Israel, which are needed to apply for permission to emigrate.

"We turn to world Jewry. Help us out," the statement said.

B'nai Brith Canada wrote, meanwhile, to the Soviet ambassador in Ottawa, Alexei Rodionov, to express concern over "the presence of the anti-Semitic group 'Pamyat,' which demonstrated outside the conference with placards that said 'Jews Out' and 'Down with Communism and Zionism.'"

The letter observed that "The rapid growth of Pamyat is of grave concern," and urged the Soviet government "to be ever vigilant in its efforts to curtail the spread of anti-Semitism."

**SOVIET JEWS EN ROUTE TO ISRAEL
TURNED BACK AT ROMANIAN BORDER**

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Dec. 21 (JTA) -- Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel via Bucharest has been stopped because of the unrest in Romania, according to reliable sources here.

Some 80 Jews who were traveling to Israel via Bucharest by train were turned back at the

border Wednesday night by Romanian authorities, the sources said.

It is not known if there were any Soviet Jews on airplanes flying via Bucharest at the time.

The action was taken as Romanian leader Nicolae Ceausescu declared a state of emergency following a reported massacre of 4,000 people in the western Romanian city of Timisoara, during demonstrations for political reform.

Romanian authorities sealed all borders earlier this week. But until Wednesday, the flow of Soviet Jews through Bucharest continued uninterrupted.

Since then, however, the Romanian Embassy in Moscow has ceased issuing transit visas to Israel. But those already in Bucharest are reportedly being allowed to continue on to Israel.

Bucharest has been the favored route taken by Soviet Jews intent on making aliyah. Direct flights have been provided from Moscow to Bucharest and then from the Romanian capital to Tel Aviv.

Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency Executives, who was in Moscow for the first Soviet Jewish congress, held an emergency meeting with officials at the Israeli Consulate there Wednesday night, to look for alternate routes.

They discussed flying out emigrating Jews via Finland or Czechoslovakia.

The national airlines of Israel and the Soviet Union have agreed to begin direct flights between the two countries in January. But the accord must still win approval from their respective governments.

Meanwhile, as of Thursday evening, there were no reports of Jewish casualties or damage to any Jewish facilities in Romania.

**IRAQ WILL HAVE NUCLEAR WEAPONS
WITHIN 5 TO 10 YEARS, STUDY SAYS**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 21 (JTA) -- A strategic survey of the military balance in the Middle East lists Iraq, Syria and Jordan as potential threats to Israel in the next few years.

The biggest potential threat is Iraq, which by conservative estimates will be able to produce nuclear weapons within five to 10 years, according to "Middle East Military Balance 1988-89," just published by Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies.

Israel sent bombers over Baghdad in 1981 to destroy a French-made nuclear reactor purchased by Iraq, which the Israelis claimed could produce weapons-grade plutonium.

But there is a more immediate threat from the battle-hardened Iraqi army, which is a far more effective fighting force after the eight-year war with Iran than it was in the past, the study said.

Syria has reported further reductions in its defense budget, but has actually increased both its operational activities and military expenditures in most fields.

The Syrians seem to be preparing for the option of an independent military offensive in 1990 to recapture the Golan Heights from Israel,

according to the report.

The researchers also noted that Jordan has taken its U.S.-supplied Hawk anti-aircraft missiles out of their permanent bases and deployed them on mobile platforms, in violation of its commitment to the United States.

The missiles pose a direct threat to aircraft flying from airfields almost anywhere in Israel.

Jordan's armed forces were increased by 27,000 men for a total of 150,000.

Egypt's armed personnel now number 920,000, a reduction of 60,000, including reservists.

Israel increased its armed personnel by 60,000 reservists, and can now mobilize a total of 600,000.

500 KIBBUTZ PEACENIKS SAY THEY'LL TALK TO PLO By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 21 (JTA) -- Some 500 peace activists from kibbutzim announced that they would go to Cairo for talks with representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

That would be a clear violation of the law, which forbids Israelis from any contact with the PLO. But the activists say they intend to conduct their mission "within the limitations of the law."

Their plans triggered a heated debate in the Knesset on Wednesday, the focus of which turned out to be the law itself.

Ran Cohen of the Citizens Rights Movement said it was a "stupid law," because it was pitted against morals, against conscience and against "the natural drive for peace."

"Whoever creates that tragic dilemma between the desire for peace and the rule of law leads thousands to violate the law," Cohen said, adding it would "be better to abolish this unfortunate law."

But Hanan Porat of the National Religious Party urged that the law be upheld.

"A law is a law, for better or worse," Porat said. "If in your view it is bad, then take it to the streets, convince the masses, wear out the public personalities, do whatever you wish to change it, but do not knowingly violate the law."

TWO ARABS KILLED IN CLASHES WITH IDF By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 21 (JTA) -- Two Palestinians were killed when they clashed with Israel Defense Force troops in the West Bank village of Beit Furik on Thursday.

IDF sources said youths hurled stones and bricks, slightly injuring a soldier. The troops opened fire with plastic bullets.

A hospital source in Nablus said five residents were injured in disturbances, one seriously.

JNF PUSHKE BOXES STILL BLUE, BUT NOW COME WITH DISCLAIMER By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, Dec. 21 (JTA) -- The traditional blue boxes of the Jewish National Fund of America will look a bit different from now on as a result of a recent court ruling.

The boxes, known as pushkes in Yiddish, will still carry a map of the State of Israel, as they have for decades.

However, a disclaimer reading "Funds contributed to the Jewish National Fund of America are used only for projects within the Green Line"

will now accompany the map.

In a Dec. 6 ruling, Judge Shirley Fingerhood of the New York State Supreme Court ordered the disclaimer on all JNF fund-raising materials, including the blue boxes, which show a map of Israel that includes the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The decision came after a yearlong legal battle between JNF, which supports afforestation in Israel, and a group called "The Ad-Hoc Committee for Jewish Survival in Judea, Samaria, Gaza and the Golan."

The committee filed suit against JNF, charging that the charity misled donors into believing that it supported projects on both sides of the Green Line, while in reality, it only allowed funds to be used within the pre-1967 borders.

Offers To Print Disclaimer

JNF had earlier in negotiations offered to print the disclaimer, but the committee had not accepted it.

The committee's leader, Michael Teplow, also heads Tehiya USA. Teplow said that his group was not satisfied with the disclaimer and would pursue its case until JNF agrees to allocate funds in the administered territories.

Judge Fingerhood was asked to hold JNF in contempt of court for defying an earlier injunction, in which the organization was ordered to cease producing "deceptive" literature.

But Fingerhood denied the motion for contempt, and instead clarified the earlier injunction to specify that the disclaimer be printed on fund-raising material "which contains a map, outline of a map or a depiction of the area of the State of Israel showing the territories beyond the Green Line."

The committee continues to maintain that even this injunction is too weak.

"If a picture is worth a thousand words," Rubin said, "then clearly the small disclaimer now required on JNF literature cannot counteract its misleading and deceptive nature."

The injunction is related to a charge based on the General Business Law regarding misleading advertising. It is the only original charge by the committee against the charitable organization which is still standing.

Fraud Charges Dismissed

Four additional charges of fraud against the organization were thrown out by Fingerhood last March, and the committee is appealing that decision.

Meanwhile, JNF is appealing the decision not to dismiss the first charge.

JNF's communications director, Stuart Paskow, expressed satisfaction with the modified injunction.

"JNF originally volunteered to put a disclaimer on all our material containing maps of Israel," Paskow said. "Had the plaintiffs accepted this offer, the case would have been over quite a while ago."

JNF maintains, as it has throughout the case, that the committee's charges of fraud and deception are without factual basis.

"The JNF of America has never made false claims that it sponsored projects beyond the Green Line, and it has never denied that it works only within pre-1967 Israel," said Paskow.

"Those individuals who write to us asking for a statement of our policies are told exactly where we stand," he said.

E. GERMANY TO RETURN JEWISH PROPERTY, BUT COMMUNITY NOT SURE IT WANTS IT

By David Kantor

EAST BERLIN, Dec. 21 (JTA) -- The East German government is reported ready to give back to the Jewish community buildings that were confiscated by the Nazis more than 50 years ago, but the gift may prove more a headache than a favor.

There are many obstacles to the proposed restoration of property to Adas Israel, an Orthodox community that was separate from the mainstream Jewish community in pre-war Berlin and still retains its unique identity. The still existing Adas Israel hopes it can revive itself in the liberal climate that now prevails here.

Mario Offenberger, a leader of Adas Israel, welcomed the authorities' decision as a turning point in East Germany's attitude toward the congregation.

Some former community members campaigned for five years to re-establish the former Orthodox community in Berlin, arguing that it would be morally reprehensible to in any way allow the shutting down of the community by the Nazis to be the final verdict of history.

But the community has decreased considerably since the Holocaust, and its present leaders see no need or even possibility to maintain a separate group. The community lacks recognition and funds, and it is questionable that it could support itself, even with its former premises restored.

In pre-war Berlin, there were three kinds of Jewish congregations: the Reform, or Liberal; Adas Israel; and the more Hasidic groups. Adas Israel had its own cemetery. The government recognizes the community's special status, even now.

Membership Of 200

Adas Israel claims a membership of 200, which may be generous. But it says many more Jews will join once the community is re-established.

It applied for funds from the West Berlin municipal authorities, but was rejected in its appeal by Heinz Galinski, veteran leader of the entire West German Jewish community.

Galinski and his associates say there is no need to structure Jewish life in Berlin on the pre-war model.

They stress that their community accepts all Jews, who are free to participate in the democratic process of choosing their representatives.

But the Adas Israel people don't agree. They charge that the established community has neglected their needs, concerns and traditions and is not even willing to memorialize those victimized by the Nazis. They also point to the pluralism in many Jewish communities around the world, notably in the United States, where different trends exist side by side.

A prominent Jewish activist who asked not to be named said that, to the best of his knowledge, not a single member of Adas Israel lives in East Berlin. Moreover, he said, the situation is hardly comparable to what existed before the war.

Berlin is still divided between two countries, even though the Wall has been practically obliterated. The number of Jews living in both parts of Berlin is very small, compared to the hundreds of thousands who lived there before the Nazi persecution. In 1932, there were about 172,000 Jews in Berlin. Now, about 6,200 live in Berlin, of whom 6,000 live in the West.

REFORM JEWS CHALLENGE AUTHORITY OF GREAT BRITAIN'S CHIEF RABBI

London Jewish Chronicle

LONDON, Dec. 21 (JTA) -- The Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues, the organization of Liberal congregations, issued a statement last week asserting that the chief rabbi had no authority to speak for it.

The statement came as a great surprise, because the chief rabbi of Britain and the Commonwealth is the recognized religious representative of British Jewry in all affairs of state, and the statement represents a potential schism in a traditionally unified community.

The chief rabbi has by tradition been an Orthodox rabbi, and while the majority of affiliated Jews in Britain are said to be Orthodox, a substantial minority are not.

The statement, reported in The Times of London, incurred the wrath of the normally staid Board of Deputies of British Jews, British Jewry's representative body in the secular realm.

"Ill-conceived and ill-timed," said board President Dr. Lionel Kopelowitz.

The incumbent chief rabbi, Lord Immanuel Jakobovits, will retire shortly, and the process of choosing a successor is under way. The Liberal and Reform congregations do not participate in electing the chief rabbi.

Kopelowitz pointed out that the chief rabbi has "a representational role" which, though not defined, "is recognized both within and without the Jewish community as the public religious representative of the whole of the British Jewish community."

Kopelowitz added that he was firmly convinced "that it is not in the communal interest for any group to take up a hard position at this stage before any new chief rabbi has been appointed, to say whether they would or would not accept him in a representative capacity."

Rosita Rosenberg, the Liberal Union director, said Kopelowitz's comments were "offensive."

"We are very happy for non-Jews to perceive that Anglo-Jewry is represented by one person at a state occasion," Rosenberg said.

"But how can he speak for us, when he doesn't recognize any of our rabbis or our conversions? Many of his rabbis are not willing to sit on the same platform as our rabbis."

"How can he speak for us on issues like 'Who is a Jew?' or the ordination of women, when his views are diametrically opposed to ours?" Rosenberg asked.

POPE TO RECEIVE ARAB MINISTERS

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Dec. 21 (JTA) -- Pope John Paul II will receive three Arab foreign ministers and an official of the Arab League at the Vatican on Saturday, to discuss the situation in Lebanon and other Middle East issues, according to an announcement by Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro Valls.

The pope was reported to be considering a visit to Lebanon last summer, but the worsening security situation there prevented it.

Valls said the pope's meeting would be with the foreign minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Saud al Faisal, the Moroccan foreign minister, Abdelatif Filali, Foreign Minister Ahmed al Ghazali of Algeria and Akbar Al-Ibrahimi, deputy secretary of the Arab League.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:**REICH, LERNER DEBATE OVER WHO SPEAKS FOR U.S. JEWS**

By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, Dec. 21 (JTA) -- One of the most prominent figures in the American Jewish institutional world sat elbow-to-elbow with organized Jewry's harshest critic recently for a panel discussion entitled, "Who Speaks For American Jews?"

It was the first time that Seymour Reich, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, had shared a podium with Michael Lerner, editor of Tikkun magazine, who has frequently condemned the structure and operation of the organized American Jewish community.

The visual contrast between the two could not have been more striking as the tall, impeccably groomed Reich rose to make his opening statement and Lerner, wearing his yarmulke and scruffy post-'60s beard, listened intently.

In his speech, Reich said that neither he nor the Conference of Presidents claims to speak for all American Jews.

"We are not a monolithic community," Reich said, and the Conference of Presidents does not "seek to muzzle expressions of viewpoint different from ours."

"But if we do not represent all American Jews, we do speak in the name of the broadest coalition of the world's largest Jewish community," he added.

He said that the large and diverse number of organizations under the conference's umbrella is the reason "why the media are interested in what we have to say," and "why the makers of public policy come to our platform."

Full Spectrum Of Views

But Lerner charged in his presentation that the Conference of Presidents, like the present leadership of many Jewish organizations, does not use its prominent positions to accurately represent the full spectrum of views of American Jewry when it comes to Israeli policies.

"What is correctly reported as support of all of us for the State of Israel is incorrectly reported to be support for the policies of the contemporary government of the State of Israel," Lerner said.

He cited a recent study by sociologist Steven Cohen, which showed that nearly half of American Jews are deeply troubled by Israeli policies.

Yet, when Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir returned last month from a visit to the United States, he stated publicly that American Jews fully support his actions, despite efforts by his Israeli opposition on the left to undermine that support.

Lerner said there are only two possible explanations for the misrepresentation of the views of American Jewry.

"One possibility to consider is that he is straightforwardly lying to the people of Israel," Lerner said.

The alternative theory, he said, is that Shamir "has been lied to, or fudged to, that the facts have been misrepresented to him by those who speak, or claim to speak, for American Jewry."

Overall, Lerner said, a climate exists in the organized Jewish world in which Jews do not feel they can tell Shamir in "loud and clear voices"

that his policies are "destructive politically or morally abhorrent."

The danger in these voices not being heard, he said, is that Israelis do not realize that their continued administration of the West Bank and Gaza Strip is costing Israel support among American Jews.

The cost in the United States, he said, is that many Jews have become disaffected with the organized American Jewish world because there is no forum for their views.

On that point, Reich said the Conference of Presidents "respect(s) the idea of pluralism."

But he warned that since American Jewish support is vital to the continuation of the massive aid that Israel receives from Washington, "any perception of American Jewish disaffection with Israel would be extremely serious."

Rabbi David Saperstein, co-director of the Reform movement's Religious Action Center, was another panelist at the event at Manhattan's 92nd Street Y, and although he sits on Tikkun's board and has taken many left-leaning positions, he took issue with some of Lerner's points.

Saperstein said he "truly believes" that voices of dissent "have been heard in the mainstream Jewish community," and that many of those who are openly critical of Israeli policies are also active in Jewish organizations.

**FIRST A WASHOUT, THEN A WIN
AS BUSH SPINS DREIDEL WITH KIDS**
By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Dec. 21 (JTA) -- President Bush played dreidel at the White House on Thursday, first getting a no-decision on "nun" and then winning a pot of chocolates on "gimmiel."

Bush played with students from the Charles E. Smith Day School here as part of the first large-scale Chanukah celebration at the White House.

"From now on in the White House, we will be thinking in terms of a 1,009 points of light," Bush quipped, after the Synagogue Council of America presented him with a menorah.

The celebration was attended by close to 100 Jewish leaders, administration officials and day school students.

After this year's main event, a delegation led by Rabbi Abraham Shemtov, Lubavitch's national director, met with Bush, in keeping with an 11-year-old Chanukah tradition at the White House involving American Friends of Lubavitch.

In addition to presenting him with a menorah, the group videotaped Bush congratulating Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, the Lubavitcher rebbe.

Bobbie Greene Kilberg, director of the White House's public liaison office, said the dreidel-playing event was the president's idea and that it would be the start of a Bush tradition.

As for the Synagogue Council's selection as the group presenting the menorah, Gunther Lawrence, its spokesman, said that the White House "wanted to get a representative group" covering a wide spectrum of U.S. Jewry. The group has Orthodox, Conservative and Reform rabbis in its membership.

JTA will not publish a Daily News Bulletin on Monday, Dec. 25, because of the postal holiday in the United States.