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SOVIET JEWS ALARMED BY THREATS OF VIOLENCE FROM ANTI-SEMITES

By Susan Birnbaum and Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, Feb. 1 (JTA) -- There has been a sharp escalation of fear among Jews inside the Soviet Union, in the wake of new threats of violence by members of anti-Semitic groups, according to Soviet Jewry activists in the United States and Israel.

The growing concern over the possibility of violence is "heightened by economic deterioration and uncertainty" over the future of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, said Martin Wenick, national director of the National Conference on Soviet Jews.

But he cautioned against exaggerating the threat to Soviet Jews. While reports of threatened pogroms are disturbing, said Wenick, there does not appear to be any imminent danger to Jewish lives.

Whether the threats are legitimate or merely empty promises, they have ignited a very real sense of panic among Soviet Jews.

In activist circles, the word "evacuation" is becoming more common when discussing the need for stepped-up Jewish emigration.

A group of former Soviet Jewish prisoners of Zion released a statement in Israel this week stressing "the need for immediate evacuation of Soviet Jewry."

The statement, signed by Yosef Begun, Ida Nudel, Vladimir Slepak, Yosef Mendelevich and others, noted with alarm that Soviet Jews receiving exit visas now must wait a year before they can leave for Israel, in part because of a shortage of flights leaving the Soviet Union.

Meanwhile, "the strengthening of anti-Semitic groups, murders and the threat of pogroms have become the norm of life for Soviet Jewry," the statement said.

Threats Of Pogroms In May

Fear among Soviet Jews peaked this past weekend when a member of the ultranationalist, virulently anti-Semitic group Pamyat predicted pogroms for May 5 during an appearance on the nationally televised program "Before and After Midnight."

In Leningrad, where anti-Semitic activity is said to be widespread, a group called the Patriots reportedly has been handing out leaflets in the subway calling for a pogrom on May 13.

Another incident that has Jews worried occurred on Jan. 18, during a meeting at the Writers Union in Moscow. A group of 20 to 30 members of Pamyat reportedly disrupted the meeting, smashing the building's windows and calling out epithets against Jews.

According to various accounts from both the National Conference and Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, the intruders threatened that while they carried only megaphones that day, they would eventually return with guns.

The local militia removed the perpetrators from the building, but did not arrest or punish them, reported Pamela Cohen, president of the Union of Councils. She said she had been told that Pamyat members beat some of the writers.

The incident was reported on television and

in newspapers, and the threats made against the Jews were included in the news reports.

"The population is being whipped up (against Jews) by the ultraconservative nationalists, and it is being condoned by the Communist Party," contended Cohen. "Gorbachev is either unwilling or unable to stop it."

Talk Of Temporary Relocation

Dr. Margaret Pollner, a cinematographer who returned from Moscow last week said the television and newspaper coverage amounted to free publicity for the anti-Semitic groups. Pollner, who was in the Soviet Union working on a documentary, said she was taken aback by the level of fear among Jewish university students.

Lynn Singer, executive director of the Long Island Committee for Soviet Jewry, reported that Soviet Jewish activists met Wednesday to discuss "how they will evacuate if pogroms come and how they are going to protect themselves."

Cohen of the Union of Councils said that Leningrad Jews have been discussing the possibility of temporarily locating to cities friendlier to Jews, such as the Latvian capital of Riga or Alma-Ata, in the central Asian republic of Kazakhstan, until they are able to leave the country.

Wenick of the National Conference warned against overplaying the actual threat of pogroms at this time. Worldwide publicity about such incidents might goad ultranationalists to perpetrate copy-cat acts, making pogroms a "self-fulfilling" prophecy, he said.

DEPUTY SECRETARY OF STATE TOLD OF RISING ANTI-SEMITISM IN USSR

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 1 (JTA) -- A delegation of eight Jewish leaders met here Thursday with Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger to express concern over the increase in anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union.

The State Department meeting took place as Secretary of State James Baker prepared to depart for two days of meetings in Moscow next week with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.

Shoshana Cardin, chairwoman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, said Eagleburger told the delegation that the Bush administration was surprised by the rapid growth of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union.

The Jewish leader said Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev should be urged to make a public statement condemning anti-Semitism similar to the one President Bush made in his State of the Union address Wednesday night, Cardin said.

She said the delegation expressed its appreciation for Bush's remarks.

"Everyone one of us must confront and condemn racism, anti-Semitism, bigotry and hate," the president said in his nationally televised address. "Not next week, not tomorrow, but right now. Every single one of us."

Cardin said that a letter was presented for Baker, asking him to urge Gorbachev to sign documents allowing direct flights between Moscow and Israel.

She said that regularly scheduled flights out of the Soviet Union to Western Europe are booked solidly through January 1991.

The matter is especially urgent, Cardin said, because of the growing fear among Soviet Jews about the potential for anti-Semitic violence.

She said that, as has been the case before every major U.S.-Soviet meeting, the National Conference presented a list of longtime refuseniks, which it hoped Baker would take up with Shevardnadze.

It includes 138 persons denied exit visas because of their alleged access to state secrets, 100 refused because of financial obligations to "poor relatives" and about 58 others refused for arbitrary reasons.

Eagleburger raised the issue of settling Soviet Jewish immigrants to Israel in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, a practice the State Department this week said would be an "obstacle to peace."

But Cardin said that Eagleburger acknowledged that so far, only 1 percent of Soviet Jews immigrating to Israel have gone to the West Bank. Most of the immigrants prefer urban centers, she said.

Also participating in the meeting were Seymour Reich, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and president of B'nai B'rith International; David Harris, Washington representative of the American Jewish Committee; Jess Hordes, director of the Washington office of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith; Albert Chernin, executive vice chairman of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council; Constance Smukler, NCSJ vice chairwoman; Martin Wenick, NCSJ executive director; and Mark Levin, NCSJ associate executive director.

REPORTS SAY JEWS IN AZERBAIJAN FLEEING OVER FEAR OF ONSLAUGHT

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Feb. 1 (JTA) -- Almost all of the estimated 25,000 to 30,000 Jews in Baku, capital of the Soviet republic of Azerbaijan, want to leave for Israel immediately to escape ethnic strife.

That was the consistent theme of telephone reports to leaders of B'nai B'rith International and the Long Island Committee for Soviet Jewry.

A report in The Los Angeles Times on Tuesday said Azerbaijan Jews are fleeing to Moscow by the thousands, and that some of the refugees report incidents of Jews being beaten or threatened by Moslem extremists.

The reports to BBI and the Long Island Committee came from contacts in Moscow, who spoke by telephone to Yegev Sokhulotsky, a member of the Jewish cultural association in Baku, and to other Jews in Baku.

According to these sources, there are no reports of anti-Semitism, but Jews want to avoid involvement in the ethnic warfare between Azerbaijanis and Armenians in the Caspian Sea port, where thousands of Soviet troops have been sent to try to restore order.

The Jews fear being asked to choose between the mainly Christian Armenians and the predominantly Shi'ite Moslem Azerbaijanis, both their longtime friends.

Meanwhile, three Jews killed in the fighting in Baku have been identified and a fourth partially identified. There were conflicting reports of

three more casualties.

Jews in Baku who provided the information by telephone stressed repeatedly that no Jews were killed because they were Jews, but that they were caught in cross fire when Soviet troops entered the city on Jan. 20.

All of the identified Jewish fatalities occurred on that day.

The first Jewish fatality to be reported was identified as Jan (Yakov) Mayerovich, an engineer.

Another Jewish victim was Dr. Alexander Marchevka, a physician who was reportedly treating a patient in an ambulance that came under fire.

A third Jewish victim was Vera Besankina, a teen-ager who was at home with her mother and brother when a stray bullet entered their apartment.

Leaders of B'nai B'rith received their information in calls to two sources in Baku, Leonard Mishne and Dimitri Korsh.

Mishne spoke to B'nai B'rith's international affairs director, Daniel Mariaschin. Korsh, reportedly a journalist for Tass, spoke to Hillel Kuttler, coordinator of Soviet chapters of B'nai B'rith.

There were conflicting accounts in their reports. Mishne spoke of another doctor named Kosnovsky, fatally wounded by machine-gun fire while riding in an ambulance with a 3-year-old child believed to be Jewish, who was also killed.

According to Mishne, another Jewish teenager, Boris Glickman, was wounded.

Mishne said invitations from Israel, necessary to begin the emigration process, were arriving. Korsh, however, said there was no mail delivery.

Korsh told Kuttler that he has been waiting six months for an invitation even though his sister was already in Israel.

SHAMIR ASSURES REICH THAT ISRAEL WON'T PUSH SOVIETS TO TERRITORIES

NEW YORK, Feb. 1 (JTA) -- Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir assured an American Jewish organizational leader Thursday that Israel "is not encouraging Soviet Jews to settle in the West Bank or Gaza."

Seymour Reich, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, telephoned Shamir on Thursday morning and later said he was convinced it was not Israeli policy to "intentionally" settle the Soviet immigrants in the administered territories.

Shamir "has never called for settlement of Soviet Jews beyond the so-called Green Line -- that is, in Gaza or the West Bank," Reich said. "The prime minister's views on the territories are well known -- but he has never linked that issue with the settlement of Soviet Jews."

Shamir is a proponent of a "Greater Israel" and does not believe the West Bank and Gaza Strip should be surrendered as part of a peace settlement.

He caused a diplomatic furor recently when he said that the flood of Soviet immigrants requires a "big Israel." His comments were interpreted as implying that the Israeli government would settle the Soviets on the West Bank and in Gaza.

Shamir's fellow Likud member, Minister of Construction and Housing David Levy, has, in fact, proposed the construction of new housing units on the West Bank. Officials from the Labor Party have strongly objected to Levy's proposal.

**U.S. WANTS FOREIGN AID FLEXIBILITY,
BUT DOESN'T PLAN TO CUT ISRAEL AID**
By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 1 (JTA) -- Senior State Department officials urged Congress on Thursday to give the Bush administration greater flexibility in providing economic and military assistance to foreign countries.

But Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger said that even if Congress did so, Israel and Egypt would continue to receive the same level of aid the two countries have enjoyed for the last several years.

His comments seemed to lift the uncertainty about whether there would be a reduction in aid to Israel, in light of a proposal made earlier this month by Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.).

Dole suggested cutting aid to the five largest recipients by 5 percent, in order to provide funds for emerging democracies in Eastern Europe and Panama.

The five countries are Israel, Egypt, the Philippines, Turkey and Pakistan.

While not mentioning Dole's specific suggestions, Eagleburger said the "Dole proposal has generated what we would consider to be a useful debate on the subject."

The deputy secretary's remarks were made as he and other State Department officials briefed reporters on the department's budgetary requests for the 1991 fiscal year.

They include \$1.8 billion in military aid and \$1.2 billion economic aid for Israel, and \$2.3 billion in military aid and \$965 million in economic aid for Egypt.

Egypt has been linked with Israel in the aid package, ever since the two countries signed the 1978 Camp David Accords. Aid to several other countries is also earmarked by Congress, giving the administration little discretion in apportioning aid to other countries.

'Rapid Changes' Cited

According to Eagleburger, 92 percent of the \$4.7 billion in military aid, and 82 percent of the \$3.2 billion in economic aid, is earmarked by Congress.

This fiscal year, in addition to retaining the earmarks, Congress also cut the total foreign aid budget, meaning the administration had to cut or eliminate aid for countries throughout the world, the deputy secretary said.

"We need greater flexibility to meet the rapid changes taking place around the world," said Eagleburger.

Conditions in such places as Eastern Europe are changing so rapidly that flexibility is needed to meet problems as they occur, rather than have the money earmarked for specific items, he said.

Nevertheless, the administration has no plans to reduce aid to the Middle East, especially with Secretary of State James Baker "deeply engaged in the effort to move the peace process forward."

He appeared to rule out a change in the appropriations for Israel and Egypt, even if there is no progress in the peace effort, because the Middle East "continues to be a terribly sensitive area and issue."

"The need to maintain stability in the area at the same time the secretary is working hard to bring about movement in the peace process would seem to me to argue that, in fact, that is an area where assistance should continue at the level we

have suggested," he said.

Baker himself sounded a similar theme in testimony Thursday before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. He, too, stressed that the administration's request for flexibility is not aimed at any specific country, but at the system of earmarking most items.

More Money For Refugees

In his testimony, Baker mentioned that he had requested a \$70 million supplemental appropriations bill for the State Department's refugee budget for the current fiscal year.

Dede Spitznagel, a spokesman for the Office of Management and Budget, confirmed the request Thursday, but said OMB had not decided whether to seek the funds from Congress.

The money is needed to bridge a shortfall to bring 40,000 Soviet refugees to the United States this year with full government aid. An additional 10,000 refugees will be admitted with private assistance.

The State Department's 1991 budget includes a little more than \$450 million for bringing 110,000 refugees to the United States, including 40,000 government-funded Soviet refugees.

The \$450 million is \$82 million more than the department's refugee budget this fiscal year, so the same shortfall this fiscal year is not expected to occur in 1991.

(JTA Washington correspondent Howard Rosenberg contributed to this report.)

**OFFICIAL FROM HUNGARY SAYS
REPARATIONS BEING CONSIDERED**
By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Feb. 1 (JTA) -- Hungary would consider reparations to victims of Nazism and other persecutees, but financial burdens preclude it from happening now, the president of the Hungarian Parliament, Istvan Fodor, said here Wednesday.

"Our final determination of this issue is only dependent on our financial capabilities," he said at a news conference at the Pierre Hotel, before a benefit dinner of the Emanuel Foundation for Hungarian Culture.

He admitted that Hungary was largely silent about the collaboration of many Hungarians with Nazis during the Holocaust.

But discussing reparations to the victims of Nazism is no longer taboo, he said.

"We are touching here on an issue that for a long time was even forbidden to mention," he said.

It is "a question which is very much" in the area of discussion "of the Hungarian government, the Hungarian Parliament, as well as public opinion."

"I must admit and add that the consequences of the Holocaust" affected "not only the victims of Nazism but also those who fell victim to other events after Nazism," including the deportations of Hungarians to the Soviet Union, Fodor said.

"A great number of people were severely persecuted. An offer of proper reparations for them has not been taken," he said.

Speaking "not in my official capacity" but as an ordinary citizen, Fodor denied there is anti-Semitism in Hungary now but admitted he could be wrong.

He explained that Hungarian law forbids racial or religious persecution and imposes substantial punishment for such acts.

SHAMIR AND KOHL EXCHANGE LETTERS OVER ISSUE OF GERMAN REUNIFICATION

By David Kantor

BONN, Feb. 1 (JTA) -- Chancellor Helmut Kohl and Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of Israel exchanged angry letters recently on the issue of German reunification, the Munich daily Seud-deutsche Zeitung disclosed this week.

A spokesman for Kohl, Eduard Ackermann, confirmed the report Wednesday but insisted that Bonn's relations with Israel did not suffer as a result, and that the matter is now considered to be closed.

According to Ackermann, the correspondence was initiated by Kohl, who expressed surprise and indignation over Shamir's remarks to Jewish audiences in the United States late last year that a reunited Germany could pose a mortal danger to Jews.

Shamir observed that the Germans once tried to annihilate the Jews and might try again if they emerge a large, powerful nation.

Kohl protested strongly against the equation of today's Germany with Nazi Germany and stressed the democratic nature of the Federal Republic.

He agreed that remembrance of past crimes was a necessity that is taken for granted in West Germany.

At the same time, the chancellor wrote, Germans, like any other people, must not be denied their right to self-determination.

Shamir's reply, which the newspaper described as sharp, defended his right as prime minister of Israel to "speak out our hesitations and our fears."

Observers here believe Kohl was extremely irritated by Shamir's attack on reunification, which the chancellor strongly advocates.

LIKUD'S INTERNAL BATTLE HALTS PROGRESS ON PEACE PROCESS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 1 (JTA) -- A political struggle between rival factions of the Likud bloc appears to have temporarily arrested further progress in the Middle East peace process.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Minister of Industry and Trade Ariel Sharon are engaged in a fierce battle to control the agenda of next Wednesday's Likud Central Committee meeting, which has turned into a major referendum on Shamir's peace policies.

Shamir expects the 2,000-plus members of the committee to endorse his peace initiative. Sharon, who chairs the committee, hopes to dismember it.

Until the outcome is known, the peace plan unveiled by Shamir last spring and nursed along since then by the United States remains stalled.

The next phase of the process is a meeting U.S. Secretary of State James Baker is to have with Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens and his Egyptian counterpart, Esmat Abdel Meguid. Its purpose is to work out the terms of a Israeli-Palestinian dialogue in Cairo.

The meeting of ministers was supposed to have taken place in January, but it has been repeatedly delayed, apparently because of outstanding differences between Israel and Egypt over a number of points. According to reports from Washington, many of those differences have now been resolved.

There was speculation this week that Baker might try to meet with the Israeli and Egyptian ministers while in Eastern Europe on Feb. 10 or 11, immediately after his meetings in Moscow with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.

Arens will be in Prague on Feb. 9, and coincidentally, Baker is considering a stop in Czechoslovakia.

But Baker reportedly has now decided to put the meeting on hold until after Likud decides its direction.

The Shamir-Sharon power struggle became more divisive Thursday, when the prime minister threatened to oust Sharon from the government after the pivotal meeting. Sharon replied that he would not be intimidated.

Shamir was furious because Sharon is circulating an agenda among Central Committee members calling for a series of votes on Shamir's foreign and domestic policies.

Shamir demands that the party rank and file vote only once, in a show of support for the major policy speech he intends to deliver to the Central Committee.

KENYAN LEADER SAYS MIDEAST PEACE CANNOT BE IMPOSED BY OUTSIDERS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 1 (JTA) -- President Daniel arap Moi of Kenya said Wednesday that peace in the Middle East cannot be imposed from outside.

It will not be done by "discussing or passing resolutions," Moi said, in a meeting with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations at the Willard InterContinental Hotel.

There has to be a "genuine desire for peace," which can only come when Israel and the Arab countries gain the "confidence" needed to take risks for peace.

Moi continued his neutral position when he was asked whether Kenya would vote for the repeal of the U.N. General Assembly's 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism. Kenya abstained in the vote. Moi said when the resolution to repeal comes up, he will then consult with his foreign minister on Kenya's position.

Kenya, which like most African countries broke diplomatic relations with Israel after the 1973 Yom Kippur War, resumed them in December 1988.

"When we decided to establish diplomatic relations with Israel, we decided on our own," he said. Kenya is one of the few countries to have its embassy in Jerusalem.

Moi added that Kenya now looked to Israel for technological help and from investments from Israeli businessmen.

Saying that Jews are "good businessmen," Moi also urged investment and tourism from Jews in the United States.

Moi also asked Jewish leaders to press the Bush administration to increase U.S. aid to Kenya. He said Kenya is one of the best friends the United States has, yet receives less aid than countries not as friendly.

Moi spoke of his own warm relations with Jews in Kenya, where there has been a Jewish community since 1895.

He was accompanied on his visit to Washington by his personal physician, Dr. David Silverstein, president of the Nairobi Hebrew Congregation.