

ISRAELIS REMAINING IN ETHIOPIA ARE SAFE AS REBELS TAKE CAPITAL

By Gil Sedan and David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 28 (JTA) -- The Israeli officials who stayed behind in Ethiopia are reported to be safe despite the chaos in Addis Ababa, which fell to invading rebel forces at dawn Tuesday.

All Israelis in the capital have found shelter in hideouts prepared ahead of time, Asher Naim, Israel's ambassador to Ethiopia, told Israel Radio on Tuesday.

According to Naim, some 350 Ethiopian Jews who were unable to make it to the airport on time to be airlifted last weekend to Israel were also evacuated to hideouts.

The Israeli Embassy reportedly is taking care of their needs, including providing physical protection.

Naim said that fierce battles began early Tuesday morning near the presidential residence, not far from the embassy. The rebels reportedly occupied the palace, the parliament and the headquarters of the Organization of African Unity.

A senior Foreign Ministry official here said Tuesday that Israel is "looking forward" to establishing cordial working relationships, including technological cooperation, with the evolving new government in Ethiopia.

Haim Divon, assistant director general for Africa, said in an interview with Israel Radio's English-language service that he hoped the rebel organizations are convinced by now that "Israel did not supply any arms" to the regime of former President Mengistu Haile Mariam, who fled the country May 21.

Ethiopian Officials In Israel

Israel Television disclosed Tuesday evening that Mengistu's half-brother, Kassa Kabede, is now in Israel, having arrived on one of the Operation Solomon flights.

Kabede, who was educated in Israel and is fluent in Hebrew, was actively involved in diplomatic negotiations between the Mengistu regime and Israel.

But government sources here stressed that Israel has not offered wholesale asylum to officials of the Mengistu regime.

Only Kabede and one other Ethiopian official involved in the Jewish rescue operation have been granted entry.

Divon of the Foreign Ministry said there should be no basis for hostility or mistrust between the insurgents and Israel.

He said Israel had not yet had an opportunity to make direct contact with the rebel organizations, but he indicated Israel had signaled its good will through the Americans.

Divon played down fears here that if the northeastern province of Eritrea gains independence, it might cede control over the Red Sea coastline to Arab powers, thereby threatening Israeli strategic interests.

He said there is no certainty at this time that Eritrea will become an independent state. "I am not so sure that the other groups would be happy with that development," he said.

ISRAEL CONTINUING EFFORTS TO RESCUE ETHIOPIAN JEWS, CONVERTS LEFT BEHIND

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, May 28 (JTA) -- Israel is continuing efforts to bring the rest of the Jews remaining in Ethiopia to Israel, Housing Minister Ariel Sharon said Tuesday.

During a visit to an absorption center in Kiryat Shmona, Sharon told new immigrants that Ethiopian Jews who converted to Christianity would be brought to Israel as well.

President Bush's special emissary to Ethiopia, former U.S. Sen. Rudy Boschwitz (R-Minn.), will be arriving here Wednesday, to see if he can assist in bringing the remaining Jews to Ethiopia.

Boschwitz, who was instrumental in persuading Ethiopian authorities to allow last weekend's Operation Solomon airlift, will be arriving from London, where peace talks are under way between Ethiopian government officials and various rebel factions.

He is to meet with Foreign Minister David Levy and attend a special reception held in his honor by the Jewish Agency at the Diplomat Hotel in Jerusalem, home for the moment to 1,200 Ethiopian newcomers.

According to Israeli officials, an estimated 350 Jews were left behind in Addis Ababa when they failed to reach the airport in time for the weekend airlift to Israel. They are now under the protection of Israeli officials.

In addition, between 1,500 and 2,000 Jews are believed to be still in the northwest province of Gondar, where most of the Jewish population lived before migrating to the capital.

Thousands More In Gondar

It now appears that the number of converts living in Ethiopia is much higher than was originally believed.

Micha Feldman, head of Jewish Agency operations in Ethiopia, told a festive session of the World Zionist Organization Executive on Monday that in addition to some 3,000 converts in Addis Ababa, there are at least another 10,000 in Gondar province.

"According to some estimates, there may be as many as several tens of thousands of converts" there, he said.

The Jewish Agency, meanwhile, has completed its initial survey of the latest arrivals, registering the total number of immigrants to come on Operation Solomon at 14,194.

The immigrants have been taken to 44 absorption centers throughout the country, 39 located in hotels and guest houses, and five in mobile homes sites.

"Operation Solomon has been the jewel in the crown of the aliyah activities of the Jewish Agency in the past two-and-a-half years," said Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the Jewish Agency.

Uri Gordon, head of the Jewish Agency's Immigration and Absorption Department, praised the cooperation among all the agencies that took part in the operation.

"Had we been able to adopt the same level of coordination also in regard to Soviet immigrants, their absorption would have looked totally different," he said.

JEWISH AGENCY REQUESTING \$40 MILLION BY JUNE 15 FOR ETHIOPIAN ABSORPTION
By Aliza Marcus

NEW YORK, May 28 (JTA) -- The American Jewish community is being asked to come up with \$40 million by June 15 to pay for the initial costs of absorbing the more than 14,000 Ethiopian Jews airlifted to Israel last weekend.

But the amount is small compared to the enormity of Israel's heroic effort to help these people adjust to their new homeland, said Martin Stein of Milwaukee, chairman of the Immigration and Absorption Committee of the Jewish Agency Board of Governors and a past national chairman of the United Jewish Appeal.

"The fact that this little country is doing that is just a miracle. It's a legitimate miracle," said Stein, who returned Sunday evening after an overnight "eyewitness mission" to Israel with 16 other UJA and federation officials.

Stein, who watched two planes unload their emergency cargo of hundreds of Ethiopian Jews, said the "image is burned in your memory."

"You see people coming off who have nothing other than the clothes on their back, having this regal appearance, this wonderful appearance of being in the right place, of being home," he recounted in a telephone interview Tuesday.

The \$40 million is the initial installment of an estimated \$130 million that will be needed to cover the first-year absorption costs for the olim, said Gerald Nagel, a UJA spokesman.

The money will be raised by federations in conjunction with UJA and administered in Israel by the Jewish Agency.

The sudden and dramatic financial need comes on top of the Jewish community's past and planned outlays to assist the 1 million Soviet Jews expected to make aliyah by the end of 1993.

"We are inspired by the bold commitment of the people of Israel and reminded of our own challenge, through our regular and Operation Exodus campaigns, to help make this aliyah successful, like the continuing and not-less-remarkable aliyah of the Soviet Jews," said Nagel.

A Stream Of Volunteers

Last year, Operation Exodus in the United States raised over \$420 million for Soviet Jews. Worldwide Jewry will be contributing, through a loan guarantee program and more fund raising, an additional \$1.5 billion to Israel's ongoing absorption needs.

The sum needed for the Ethiopians is "an additional challenge and we welcome the opportunity," said Nagel.

The Jewish Agency has opened 44 absorption centers around the country, where the Ethiopian Jews will live for their first year. Because of the vast differences between Ethiopian and Israeli cultures, the Ethiopian Jews could not merely be provided money and expected to find their own apartments, as Soviet Jews are these days.

Stein said that as the Ethiopians arrived, the outpouring of support from Israelis was tremendous. "At hotels, the people coming with clothes were like a stream, and they were finally asked to stop," he said.

Joel Tauber of Detroit, a UJA national vice chairman who was also part of the mission to Israel, said that the street outside one hotel had to be closed because it was so crowded with Israelis coming to offer their help.

"On top of everything else, it's so over-

whelming to think that Israel will absorb these people, and American Jews want to be part of this," Tauber said.

Many of the newly arrived Ethiopian Jews have relatives who came during the secret Operation Moses airlift of 1984-85, when about 12,000 were flown to Israel.

Stein described one moving scene in which an Ethiopian young man, who came to Israel seven years ago and now is a university student, was waiting at one of the reception hotels to assist the new immigrants. "The first two people coming off the bus were his parents," he said.

WHAT'S IN A NAME? A LOT OF TROUBLE WHEN IT COMES TO REGISTERING OLIM
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 28 (JTA) -- Immigration and Jewish Agency officials are experiencing great difficulties in registering the more than 14,000 Ethiopian Jews who arrived in the Operation Solomon airlift last weekend.

The newcomers themselves are being kept confined to the hotels and absorption centers to which they were sent, until the complicated process can be completed. The officials do not want them wandering around a still-unfamiliar country, in search of family members who preceded them to Israel.

The problem is compounded now because even the relatives who preceded the new arrivals are themselves wandering from one reception center to another, seeking family members.

The search for missing kin is being assisted by the Israel Broadcasting Authority's latest program, an Immigrants Network, which broadcasts two hours a day in Amharic the names of the newcomers and the reception centers where they have been placed.

But the problem remains of registering the names, and the difficulties are myriad.

There is presently no available means in Israel of printing out the unusual Amharic script, of which no print fonts are available. The Israeli newspaper Ma'ariv has adopted the only available method, printing daily a photograph of lists of the new immigrants written roughly by hand.

But even the names themselves represent a problem. Family names have not been in use within the Ethiopian Jewish community, whose members bear only a given first name, followed by a patronym, the name of the father. Computer lists are therefore useless in compiling a register of families.

One suggestion is to give the immigrants new family names, based on the given name of the grandfather most recently deceased.

Another problem arises from the fact that none of the newcomers was ever issued certificates indicating date and place of birth. And for most Ethiopian Jews, calendar dates are vague.

Most of them recall they were told they were born, or that a certain event happened, in "the year the Italians bombed Gondar," "when Haile Selassie left Addis Ababa" or in "the third year of the great famine."

But absorption officials are determined to overcome all the problems.

"It's going to be like Ellis Island at the turn of the century," one veteran official said. "When a new immigrant from Russia or Poland, responding to an immigration official's question as to his name, said 'Nicht verstanden' (I don't understand), he was registered as Nick Vorstand."

RESCUE HAD BEEN PLANNED FOR MONTHS AND MAY HAVE COST ISRAEL MILLIONS

By Aliza Marcus

NEW YORK, May 28 (JTA) -- Planning for last weekend's emergency airlift of Ethiopian Jewry to Israel began last October, when Israeli officials and others concerned with the cause realized there was a danger of the Ethiopian government being toppled by rebel forces.

The airlift of more than 14,000 Jews, which started last Friday and ended 30 hours later, was the culmination of months of intensive negotiations with Ethiopian officials, who viewed the Jews as bargaining chips for military hardware.

Although Israel refused to send arms to Ethiopia, in line with U.S. foreign policy toward the former hard-line Marxist regime, the Jewish Agency for Israel is said to have paid \$35 million for the emigration, according to a report Sunday in the Israeli paper Yediot Achronot.

The report said that former President Mengistu Haile Mariam, who fled the country last week, secretly visited Israel last summer and presented to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Defense Minister Moshe Arens a long list of arms requests.

After much foot-dragging, Israel agreed to furnish some military equipment, "but nothing that actually shoots," the newspaper reported.

Jewish Agency officials had no comment on the report that money was paid for the airlift, but one well-placed source said the \$35 million was given partly to offset the revenue lost by Ethiopian Airlines for not being the sole transporter of the Jews. The hurried airlift was conducted mainly by Israeli planes.

During weekly immigrant flights arranged in the waning months of Mengistu's rule, Ethiopian Airlines charged \$1,000 for each adult carried, and \$500 for each child, according to the source.

Fears Of A Bloodletting

Mengistu's shaky hold on his country, which was under attack from three rebel groups, fell apart last week when he fled to Zimbabwe. Before he left, he turned the government over to Vice President Tesfaye Gebre-Kidan, who has since ceded control of the capital to the rebels.

Although the rebels made promises that they would not harm the Jews remaining in the capital, Jewish officials were worried a rebel takeover might lead to a general bloodletting there.

Despite the country's notoriety as one of the poorest on earth, the Jews have been receiving better treatment than other Ethiopians. And that prompted concern that they could be subject to reprisals if the central government fell.

The Jews, who were being fed and otherwise assisted by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, were in danger of coming under attack even from civilians.

"Everyone was afraid that unless the Jews were moved out before the rebels walked in," their situation would become extremely precarious, said Michael Schneider, president of the Joint.

The months of negotiations over the fate of Ethiopian Jewry began in earnest last October, when Prime Minister Shamir appointed veteran diplomat Uri Lubrani to negotiate the exit of Ethiopian Jews.

Lubrani, a former ambassador to Ethiopia, then contacted the Joint and asked it to enlist U.S. Jewish organizations in obtaining cooperation from the U.S. government, Schneider said.

The organizations worked under a shroud of secrecy and were in almost daily contact with the U.S. administration. Those involved included the American Association for Ethiopian Jewry, American Jewish Committee, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Council of Jewish Federations and the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

'One Of The Proudest Moments'

The Joint, an apolitical organization whose aim is to assist Jews in distressed countries, was a key player both in coordinating efforts and providing relief to the Jewish community in Ethiopia.

The president of the Ethiopian Jewry association here, Nathan Shapiro, praised Schneider of the Joint as having been a prime figure in coordinating the emigration of the Jews.

"He is responsible for what is one of the proudest moments in Jewish history," said Shapiro. "He is legitimately a hero."

Shapiro said that plans for the airlift were in place a month before the actual event took place, and that the last few weeks "were like living hell."

"We felt very certain that the airlift would happen, because we had the cooperation from everyone," Shapiro said. "The question was how long before it would happen. Could we get it done before the chaos?"

Two weeks before the operation, officials from the Jewish Agency and the Joint met with the heads of the Ethiopian Jewish families and gave out the necessary papers to allow for quick processing of their exodus.

Paths on the embassy grounds were fenced to help organize the masses of Ethiopian Jews that would soon descend on the premises.

A day before the airlift took place, buses were ordered on the pretext that the Jewish Agency was organizing a visit to the local zoo for the 4,500 pupils on the embassy grounds.

U.S. diplomatic efforts to bring about the mass emigration have received high praise from Jewish groups, especially President Bush's decision last month to send former Sen. Rudy Boschwitz (R-Minn.) to Addis Ababa as a special envoy.

Used Jews As A 'Shield'

Boschwitz told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency last Friday that his 13 hours of talks with Mengistu and Prime Minister Tesfaye Dinka had produced no formal agreement on the airlift.

Another source said Mengistu showed little interest in speeding up the emigration, but as "the rebels got closer, it became apparent that it was necessary to expedite matters."

On May 22, a day after Mengistu fled the country, Bush wrote a letter to Ethiopian acting President Tesfaye, asking him to allow the airlift to begin. He agreed late the following day, and the operation got under way last Friday.

Boschwitz said Bush's letter was necessary to "cement" the negotiations, which mainly involved Ethiopia and Israel.

The former senator said Mengistu had been holding the Jews as a "shield" and that his resignation made the emigration possible.

"Mengistu felt that as long as he held onto the Jews, the Americans and the Israelis would prevent him from collapsing," he said.

(Contributing to this report were JTA correspondents David Landau and Gil Sedan in Jerusalem, and Howard Rosenberg in Washington.)

GROUPS DISMAYED AT COURT DECISION ON RULE BARRING ABORTION COUNSELING

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, May 28 (JTA) -- Major Jewish organizations have expressed deep disappointment with a Supreme Court ruling last week that bars federally funded family planning clinics from discussing abortion with their clients.

Groups opposing the 5-4 ruling include the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, B'nai B'rith Women, Na'amat USA, National Council of Jewish Women, United Synagogue of America and Women's American ORT.

Orthodox Jewish groups took no position on the decision, urging instead that any Jewish woman considering abortion consult with rabbis versed in traditional Jewish law.

The May 23 high court ruling, in *Rust vs. Sullivan*, upheld regulations that the Department of Health and Human Services issued in 1988. The regulations cover a 21-year-old federal grant program to 4,500 family planning clinics under Title X of the Public Health Service Act of 1970.

Section 1,008 of the act states that "none of the funds appropriated under this subchapter shall be used in programs where abortion is a method of family planning."

Among the regulations was one that states that a federally funded clinic cannot provide "counseling concerning the use of abortion as a method of family planning or provide referral for abortion as a method of family planning."

Sammie Moshenberg, the NCJW's Washington representative, said Congress may try to circumvent the decision by striking the language from Title X that Health and Human Services used as the basis for its regulations.

The Senate last year approved such a provision, which had the support of 62 senators, but it was stripped from a bill reauthorizing Title X for the 1991 fiscal year after President Bush issued a veto threat.

But Moshenberg said there is a "pro-choice majority" in both the Senate and House of Representatives that will grow because of the court ruling, and that could override any veto.

Will Have 'Pernicious Consequences'

The regulations were challenged by Planned Parenthood of America and the state and city of New York, which argued that the regulations violate the right to free speech guaranteed by the First Amendment. The petitioners also argued that the regulations infringe on a woman's right to have an abortion, as implied in various constitutional amendments.

Many of the Jewish groups joined a friend-of-the-court brief on the petitioners' behalf.

Chief Justice William Rehnquist, writing for the majority, rejected both of those claims, while recognizing abortion as a "protected right."

"To hold that the government unconstitutionally discriminates on the basis of viewpoint when it chooses to fund a program dedicated to advance certain permissible goals, because the program advancing those goals necessarily discourages alternate goals, would render numerous government programs constitutionally suspect," Rehnquist wrote.

Justice Harry Blackmun, writing the main dissenting opinion, argued that "until today, the court never has upheld viewpoint-based suppression of speech simply because that suppression

was a condition upon the acceptance of public funds."

Blackmun also rejected Rehnquist's argument that such regulations do not violate the First Amendment rights of clinic staffers to express themselves freely.

"It has never been sufficient to justify an otherwise unconstitutional condition upon public employment that the employee may escape the condition by relinquishing his or her job," Blackmun wrote.

Justice Sandra Day O'Connor, who wrote her own dissent, agreed that "serious constitutional problems" are raised because of the regulations' "content-based restrictions on the speech of Title X fund recipients."

The court's decision "denies patients the right to receive full and comprehensive medical advice from their physicians," said Ann Lewis, chairwoman of the AJCongress Commission for Women's Equality.

The decision "amounts to nothing more than a gag order," said Harriet Horwitz, president of B'nai B'rith Women.

It "will have especially pernicious consequences for those women who rely on government-supported medical care," said Reese Feldman, president of Women's American ORT.

"The ruling actually compels the giving of medical advice that the physician may not believe," said Samuel Rabinove, legal director of the American Jewish Committee.

NEW FRENCH PREMIER CONFERS WITH JEWISH LEADERS IN PARIS

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, May 28 (JTA) -- France's newly appointed prime minister, Edith Cresson, told the umbrella group of French Jewish organizations Sunday it has a "precious and essential" role in a permanent dialogue between the Jewish community and the French government.

Cresson was the guest at the annual dinner of CRIF, the Representative Council of Jewish Institutions in France. In her talk, she described as unbearable and intolerable anti-Semitic acts and "the allegations of those denying the existence of the (Nazi) gas chambers."

She paid homage to Jews for their role in the French resistance against the Nazis and noted that this year commemorations are being held on the 50th anniversary of the first roundups of Jews in France.

"Thousands of Jews were jailed in the 'Camps of Shame' of Pithiviers, Beaune la Rolande, Drancy and Compiègne," she said, recalling the camps, which were all situated near Paris.

"While responsibility for the deportation and their annihilation rests with the Nazis, let us not shy away from the fact that the German occupiers found assistance and complicity within the French police and administration of the Vichy government," she said.

She referred to current efforts to bring wartime collaborators to justice, which "have been submitted to the courts. Let them do their work," she said.

Some observers believe this meant the prime minister would not seek to hasten trial proceedings against Rene Bousquet, the 81-year-old former prominent banker and corporate leader who is to stand trial for crimes against humanity for his role while head of the Vichy police during World War II.