

**37 ALBANIAN JEWS ARRIVE IN NEW YORK
TO REUNITE WITH FAMILY AFTER 25 YEARS**

NEW YORK, June 12 (JTA) -- Thirty-seven Jews from Albania arrived at Kennedy International Airport here Wednesday afternoon for a joyous reunion with relatives whom they had not seen in 25 years.

The coordinated efforts of several American Jewish organizations were responsible.

The new arrivals, members of an extended family, are among the first Jews to have left Albania, a Balkan nation of 3.3 million isolated under a Stalinist dictatorship for 40 years.

Though still governed by the Communist Party, the country is undergoing liberalization. Most of its 300 Jews immigrated to Israel in March and April.

The Jews who landed here on Pan Am Flight 111 left Tirana, the Albanian capital, in December for Rome, to be processed by the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service. They were granted admission to America for family reunification.

During their six-month stay in Rome, they were helped by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, or JDC. Their immigration to the United States was facilitated by HIAS, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society.

On arrival here, they became clients of NYANA, the New York Association of New Americans, which will assist them in finding jobs and living quarters. And the American Sephardi Federation, the association of Sephardic Jews in the United States, is helping them adjust to life here.

But the successful emigration effort was the culmination of work begun in the summer of 1990 by the American relatives of the Albanian family, who asked to remain unnamed.

Fled Nazi-Occupied Greece

The Jews of Albania were originally from Ioannina, Greece. They fled into Albania when Greece was occupied by the Nazis in 1941.

After World War II, the repressive regime of the late Enver Hoxha prevented them from leaving the country. But some managed to repatriate to Greece and came to the United States in 1966.

Last summer, the patriarch of the American branch of the family, who is in his 80s, went to Greece to visit a son. While there, he visited the local HIAS office to register the names of family members in Albania.

They held dual Albanian-Greek citizenship.

When he returned from Greece, the family head approached the JDC, which had some contacts with Albanian Jews over the years. For immigration purposes, they directed him to HIAS in New York.

The time-consuming work of documenting each family member in Albania and his or her relationship to the American family began.

Fortuitously, Albania relaxed its exit requirements at the end of 1990. All but one of the families received passports for the adults and laissez-passer documents for the children.

The remaining family did not have an American sponsor to obtain documents, so HIAS became its sponsor. The agency's Geneva office also arranged transportation out of Albania and Italian transit visas.

**SOVIETS PROMISE NEW PASSPORT LAW
WON'T DELAY SOVIET JEWISH ALIYAH**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, June 12 (JTA) -- A high-level pledge from Moscow that new emigration regulations will not delay the departure of Soviet Jews for Israel has raised hopes here for an upsurge in Soviet aliyah this summer.

The promise was made to senior Israeli representatives in the Soviet capital by the head of OVIR, the Soviet visa authority, according to a report Wednesday in the Israeli daily newspaper Ha'aretz.

Such a pledge would be an unprecedented gesture by the Soviets to a country with which they have yet to restore full diplomatic relations.

Concern was growing in Israel that the reforms designed to overhaul and liberalize Soviet emigration policy would put a brake on aliyah rather than facilitate it.

According to the new regulations, which go into effect July 1, anyone can leave the Soviet Union but must have a passport.

Israeli officials feared that the sheer volume of applications would bog down the already over-taxed Soviet bureaucracy, forcing potential olim to wait months or even years for the required documents.

But the head of OVIR said the passport requirement would be waived in the case of Jews already holding Israeli visas. Approximately 60,000 persons known to be in that category are waiting until the end of the school year to emigrate.

The mere application for a passport will suffice to permit their departure, the Soviet official said.

Knesset Member Is Suspicious

In addition, according to Ha'aretz, the Soviets promised that citizens holding exit permits but who do not yet have Israeli visas would be given priority in the processing of their emigration.

Some 110,000 Jews fall into that category, official sources cited by the newspaper said.

But a powerful Likud Knesset member has expressed skepticism about the Soviet pledge and is urging Jews to leave the Soviet Union immediately, before the new passport law takes effect.

Michael Kleiner, chairman of the Knesset Aliyah Committee, warned against a false sense of security among Jews planning to emigrate.

When the new regulations take effect, the Soviet promises may be hard to implement, facing would-be olim with long, frustrating delays, he said.

"If I were an outside observer, I might conclude that this is a collusion by Israel and the Soviet Union to regulate the pace of aliyah," he added.

Criticism of a different sort was voiced by Alexei Chestakov, the Soviet consul general in Israel, who spoke to reporters in Haifa. He said Israeli fears and dire predictions about the effects of the new passport law are "obsessive."

The law is designed to sweep away previous rules under which people who emigrated from the Soviet Union automatically forfeited their citizenship, he said.

**JEWS LEFT BEHIND IN GONDAR PROVINCE
MAKING THEIR WAY TO ETHIOPIAN CAPITAL**
By Aliza Marcus

NEW YORK, June 12 (JTA) -- The estimated 2,000 Jews in the remote Ethiopian province of Gondar are making their way to the capital of Addis Ababa, where they hope to be allowed to join relatives in Israel, officials of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee reported Wednesday, after a meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy.

The few hundred who have already made it to the capital are being cared for by the JDC, which was a key player in the recent emergency airlift of more than 14,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel.

Although most Ethiopian Jews are originally from the northwestern province, almost all had been moved from Gondar to Addis Ababa over the past few years.

During the May 24-25 airlift, code-named "Operation Solomon," about 350 Jews already in Addis Ababa were also left behind.

JDC officials said they hope that the new Ethiopian leaders who came to power after rebel troops toppled former President Mengistu Haile Mariam last month will allow the old family reunification program to resume.

The Ethiopian airport reopened on Tuesday, "which gives hope to expediting" this matter, said Amir Shaviv, the JDC spokesman.

But whether the thousands of Jewish converts to Christianity will be allowed to immigrate to Israel is something the Israeli government must still decide.

Meanwhile, the JDC medical clinic in Addis Ababa has resumed functioning, and there are plans to establish it as a regional treatment center for tuberculosis, Shaviv said.

The plans, discussed during the meeting Wednesday with Foreign Minister Levy, are part of JDC's general goal of establishing various non-sectarian aid programs in Ethiopia, said Michael Schneider, JDC executive vice president.

Tribute To Those Involved In Airlift

Schneider and the others meeting with Levy, including Heinz Eppler, JDC board chairman, and board member Elaine Winik, expressed their gratitude to Levy for the role the Israeli Foreign Ministry played in the secret airlift.

Levy, echoing the sentiments many have expressed over the past two weeks, thanked the JDC for its role both recently and over the past 10 years in aiding the Jewish community of Ethiopia, officials said.

On Tuesday evening, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations hosted a reception honoring several other individuals involved with the Ethiopian airlift.

They included Rep. Gary Ackerman (D-N.Y.), who mobilized congressional support for Ethiopian Jews; former Sen. Rudy Boschwitz (R-Minn.), who served as President Bush's special envoy to Ethiopia; Uri Lubrani, former Israeli ambassador to Ethiopia; and Schneider of JDC.

The group also played tribute to former Rep. Mickey Leland (D-Texas), who died in an airplane crash during a mission to Ethiopia with Jewish officials.

Levy, who arrived in New York on Tuesday, was to meet in Washington with Secretary of State James Baker and to address the Anti-Defamation League in New York on Thursday.

**ETHIOPIAN BABY DIES DURING BRIT
PROMPTING WARNING FROM OFFICIALS**
By Gil Sedan and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, June 12 (JTA) -- Israel's Health Ministry sent an urgent warning Wednesday to all new immigrants from Ethiopia that ritual circumcisions must be performed only by a qualified, medically trained mohel.

The message, broadcast in Amharic, the language of Ethiopian Jews, followed the death of an 11-week-old infant at a Nahariya hospital Tuesday morning after his father tried to circumcise him with a razor blade at the Shavei Zion absorption center Monday.

The family was among more than 14,000 Ethiopian Jews airlifted to Israel in Operation Solomon on May 24 and 25.

Their tragedy spotlighted the cultural differences between Ethiopian Jewry's relatively primitive society and the advanced Western environment of Israel, to which they were exposed literally overnight.

It is reported to be a tradition among many Ethiopian Jews to follow the strict biblical injunction that boys be circumcised by their fathers. Now the Health Ministry is trying to get the message across that the ritual is done by a licensed professional on behalf of the father.

The Ethiopians, most of whom are religiously observant Jews, are being assured that this standard practice in Israel and most Jewish communities around the world is in strict accordance with rabbinical teaching.

The bereaved father, Sahli Halonung, 38, only meant well when he decided to perform the brit milah on his only son, born in Ethiopia just 45 days earlier.

According to Jewish custom, the ritual is performed on the eighth day after birth.

But the tumult of leaving for and arriving in Israel caused Sahli to postpone the circumcision until he and his wife were settled in Shavei Zion.

He removed the foreskin. But the child hemorrhaged, and when he was finally brought to the hospital, it was too late to save him.

**ARENS DOUBTS ISRAEL TO BENEFIT
FROM BUSH'S 'NEW WORLD ORDER'**

By David Kantor

BONN, June 12 (JTA) -- Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens doubts that Israel will benefit from the "new world order" proclaimed by President Bush after the defeat of Iraq in the Persian Gulf War.

"The new order has been very slow in influencing events," he observed in an interview Wednesday in the German daily Die Welt.

Saddam Hussein is still in power in Baghdad, Syria has virtually annexed Lebanon, terrorism continues and arms shipments to Arab dictators have not stopped, the Israeli defense chief said.

Arens said the Gulf war confirmed a fundamental precept that will continue to guide Israeli policy. "Israel must rely on itself and on no one else," he said.

He noted that it took the international coalition against Saddam Hussein five months to organize and to act.

"Israel is a small and vulnerable country. In the area of security, it has no room for maneuvering. We have no time to sit and wait till our friends are willing to help us. The Gulf war underlined this reality," Arens said.

BAKER SAYS U.S. HAS NO EVIDENCE CHINA SOLD M-9 MISSILES TO SYRIA

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, June 12 (JTA) -- The United States has no evidence that China has delivered surface-to-surface missiles to Syria, Secretary of State James Baker told a Senate panel on Wednesday.

Baker made the statement to the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on commerce, judiciary and state after Sen. Warren Rudman (R-N.H.) raised objections to any Chinese-Syrian deal for M-9 missiles.

Seth Carus, senior fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, a pro-Israel think tank, said it is "not really clear at the moment whether there's any evidence that an actual contract has been signed between these two countries."

But he said confirmation of such a deal would take on a "heightened importance" because any M-9 delivery could take place in a relatively short time frame.

The Bush administration is concerned that medium-range missiles such as the M-9, which has a range of 375 miles, would destabilize the Middle East by increasing Syria's ability to overcome Israel's Patriot missile battery defense.

Syria currently has North Korean-made Scud-C missiles that have a similar range but are considered less effective than the M-9s against the Patriots.

Carus said that unlike the liquid-fuel Scud, the M-9 is a solid-fuel missile, a feature that provides "greater operational flexibility."

In addition, the M-9 is believed to have a "significantly enhanced guidance system" giving it an accuracy of about 65 yards, versus half a mile for the Scud.

Saudi Sale Expected In September

Baker said U.S. concern over an M-9 sale was conveyed to China in a visit last month by Robert Kimmitt, undersecretary of state for political affairs.

He noted that China has agreed to participate in a conference next month in Paris of the five leading arms-supplying nations. The conference is expected to consider possible guidelines for limiting future arms transfers to the Middle East.

In his testimony to the Senate panel, Baker also defended recent U.S. decisions to store \$700 million in arms in Israel and to sell 20 Apache helicopters -- the Army's most advanced attack helicopters -- to the United Arab Emirates.

Prepositioning the arms in Israel, as well as an undisclosed amount in Saudi Arabia, would benefit the United States in the event of another conflict in the region, Baker argued.

"It's just going to make it a lot easier for us if we ever had to do it again, to do it without shipping all of that stuff," he said.

On Tuesday, Maj. Gen. Teddy Allen, director of the Pentagon's Defense Security Assistance Agency, told a different Senate Appropriations subcommittee that the United States will propose a new arms sale package to Saudi Arabia in September.

Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.), chairman of the foreign aid appropriations subcommittee, told Allen: "I don't know how this helps our credibility if we're all willy-nilly doing arms sales around the Middle East."

NJCRCAC DECIDES TO CONTINUE BACKING U.S. SANCTIONS AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA

By Aliza Marcus

NEW YORK, June 12 (JTA) -- The major policy-planning arm of American Jewry has decided to continue supporting U.S. sanctions against South Africa for the time being.

The decision was made Monday at a meeting in Chicago of the executive committee of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council. NJCRAC represents 13 national Jewish agencies and 117 local community councils.

Although the umbrella group acknowledged there has been a "clear change" in South Africa, it decided to reaffirm its existing position in favor of U.S. sanctions because it believes Pretoria has not done enough to dismantle the apartheid system, said Diana Aviv, NJCRAC's associate executive vice chair.

Aviv said NJCRAC agreed that South African President F.W. De Klerk "has made a serious and sincere effort to move the process forward," but more changes need to be in place before sanctions can be lifted.

De Klerk has been campaigning actively for an end to international sanctions, which have cut off his nation's economic and other ties to much of the rest of the world.

The European Community recently voted to relax its sanctions against the apartheid regime, but the United States has not yet moved to dismantle sanctions imposed five years ago.

The U.S. Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986 specifies conditions South Africa must comply with before sanctions can be lifted.

According to Aviv, the South African government has complied in part by releasing political prisoners, rescinding the state of emergency, legalizing formerly banned political parties and revoking the Group Areas Act, under which blacks were banned from moving into certain areas.

Compliance By End Of June?

But Aviv and other monitors of human rights in South Africa point out that an estimated 3,000 people are still in prison on political charges, and blacks cannot participate in the political process.

And while the South African government is in the process of repealing the Population Registration Act, under which people's races are registered at birth, lists of people already classified may be maintained, Aviv said.

The South African vice consul in New York, Peter Rousseau, said the act's repeal was expected by the end of June, though some provisions will still apply until a new constitution is in place.

South Africa's new ambassador to the United States, Harry Schwarz, has told Jewish groups that South Africa will have met the terms for the lifting of sanctions by June 30.

But Aviv said "there is no evidence" it will do so by that date, when the South African parliament is expected to recess for the summer.

Asked about the chances of the United States ending its sanctions policy, Aviv said, "I don't think there's the political will right now for the lifting of sanctions."

During the executive meeting in Chicago, NJCRAC also adopted a statement in support of higher education scholarships for minority students. And it called for Congress to adopt legislation overturning the federal "gag rules" that prohibit family planning clinics receiving federal funds from providing information about abortion.

KLINGHOFFER DAUGHTERS ENRAGED AT ITALY'S PAROLE OF HIJACKER

NEW YORK, June 12 (JTA) -- The daughters of Leon Klinghoffer are enraged at an Italian court's decision this week to grant conditional parole to one of the Palestinians implicated in the hijacking of the Italian cruise liner Achille Lauro.

Klinghoffer, an elderly Jewish man confined to a wheelchair, was shot and thrown overboard by terrorists during the October 1985 hijacking. His body washed up on the shore of Syria and was turned over to the United States.

At a meeting of the Anti-Defamation League held here Wednesday, Klinghoffer's daughters, Lisa and Ilsa, issued a statement strongly criticizing Monday's decision by a court in Genoa to grant conditional liberty to Bassam al-Ashker, now 23.

Ashker, who was 17 at the time of the crime, was identified after the hijacking by Klinghoffer's late widow, Marilyn, and sentenced by a juvenile court in December 1986 to serve 16 years and three months in prison.

As a result of the parole, he is to live with the prison chaplain in a nearby Catholic sanctuary and is to work at the Genoa office of the Red Cross, the Italian news agency ANSA reported.

Magid al-Mulqi, the Palestinian who shot Klinghoffer and ordered his body dumped overboard, was given a 30-year prison sentence. However, neither he nor any other defendants were convicted of murder.

The Klinghoffer daughters were angered upon learning of Ashker's conditional liberty. Noting that he had served just one-third of his sentence, they said his release is a "miscarriage of justice," even given the conditions under which he has been granted parole.

"Community service may be appropriate for such a terrorist while in prison, but it is no substitute for prison," they said in the statement.

Award To U.S. Armed Forces

The Klinghoffer daughters were attending the ADL's 78th annual National Commission meeting here to present the league's Leon and Marilyn Klinghoffer Foundation Award to the U.S. Armed Forces for their role in combatting terrorism through their victory over Iraq in the Persian Gulf War. Accepting the award was Pete Williams, assistant secretary of defense for public affairs.

Ashker is the third Achille Lauro hijacker to be granted a pardon by Italy this year. In January, two of the terrorists serving prison sentences for their part in the hijacking were released and expelled from Italy.

Mohammed Issa Abbas, who provided weapons to the hijackers, and Yusuf Sa'ad, who served as paymaster, had their sentences commuted. They were believed to have headed for Algeria.

Abbas is a cousin of Mohammed (Abul) Abbas, who masterminded the hijacking and heads the Palestine Liberation Front, a radical faction of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

His right-hand man, Abdulrahim Khaled, was arrested in Athens in March for an unrelated crime and is now in a Greek prison awaiting trial. Italy has requested Khaled's extradition to stand trial there.

The Klinghoffer daughters and ADL National Director Abraham Foxman sent a letter Wednesday to Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti expressing displeasure over Ashker's parole. In March, the daughters sent a telegram petitioning the Italian government to extradite Khaled.

GROUPS HAIL REVISIONIST'S ADMISSION THAT HE IS NOT AN EXECUTION EXPERT

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, June 11 (JTA) -- Two groups that have been monitoring the activities of Holocaust revisionist Fred Leuchter have expressed satisfaction with an official statement he has made admitting he is not an engineer qualified to comment authoritatively on execution equipment.

The Anti-Defamation League and Holocaust Survivors and Friends in Pursuit of Justice, which filed a complaint of fraudulent misrepresentation against Leuchter, hailed the signed consent decree that Leuchter submitted Tuesday to the Massachusetts Board of Registration of Professional Engineers and Land Surveyors.

ADL hailed the statement as "a major blow against the Holocaust revisionist movement."

The statement was made as part of a deal with the state by Leuchter, who is the author of a notorious report denying that the Nazi gas chambers were designed to kill people.

Leuchter, who wrote the report on the basis of his professed expertise in the field of execution equipment, was to have gone on trial June 24 in Malden, Mass., for practicing without a license.

In his statement, Leuchter wrote: "I am not and never have been registered as a professional engineer with the board."

The agreement also specifies that Leuchter will be on "pre-trial probation for two years," according to Shelly Shapiro, director of Holocaust Survivors and Friends, a group based in Albany, N.Y., whose April 1990 complaint against Leuchter initiated the legal proceedings against him.

In Tuesday's agreement, Leuchter also stated that he had misrepresented himself before the states of Massachusetts, New Jersey, Alabama and others, as "an engineer able to consult in areas of engineering concerning execution technology."

Moreover, he admitted to having "produced reports, specifically but not limited to 'An Engineering Report on the Alleged Execution Gas Chambers at Auschwitz, Birkenau, and Majdanek' containing my engineering opinions, which I have submitted to other individuals and which were subsequently published."

Leonard Zakim, ADL's New England regional director, said "Leuchter's admission of lying to promote his business, in violation of Massachusetts law, should serve to discredit Leuchter everywhere he travels."

"In effect, he threw in the towel," said Irwin Suall, head of ADL's fact-finding department.

FRENCH REVISIONISTS TARGETED

PARIS, June 12 (JTA) -- Outraged war veterans and former Resistance fighters here have brought legal action against a group of revisionists spreading propaganda among schoolchildren that the Holocaust never occurred.

The latest example was a 15-page pamphlet written in 1979 by Robert Faurisson which mocks "the war fib" that Jews and others died in Nazi concentration camps.

The pamphlet was mailed recently to about 40 French students from the Caen area in north-west France who had just returned from a tour of the former Auschwitz death camp in Poland.

Three organizations of veterans, Resistance fighters and former deportees have filed suit under a law passed last year that makes it a misdemeanor to deny crimes against humanity.