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JEWS URGED TO OPPOSE BUSH'S MOVE TO LIFT SOUTH AFRICAN SANCTIONS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, July 10 (JTA) -- American Jewish organizations are being urged to lobby Congress to block President Bush's decision to lift U.S. economic sanctions against South Africa.

If Congress fails to do this, Jewish groups should support action challenging Bush's decision in the courts, said Diana Aviv, associate executive vice chair of NJCRAC, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

But at least one major Jewish group has already backed the president's move.

Bush announced at a news conference Wednesday that he was signing an executive order lifting the economic sanctions, imposed by Congress in 1986.

South Africa had met all five conditions set by Congress, including the release of political prisoners, Bush said.

He said the moves made by the white-minority government of President F.W. de Klerk to dismantle apartheid are "irreversible."

"Progress has been made slow and often painful, but progress has definitely been made," Bush asserted.

But Arden Shenker, NJCRAC's chairman, said in a statement that despite the "considerable progress that has been made," there are still discriminatory laws, and "the black majority remains disenfranchised."

Shenker argued that "sanctions and political pressures" are still needed, because "the ongoing effort to dismantle apartheid completely has reached a critical stage."

Israel May Follow Suit

The 12-member European Community decided in April to lift its sanctions, paving the way for the U.S. move.

The Israeli Cabinet, which has been taking cues from the United States on South Africa, is expected to make its decision on lifting sanctions at its regular meeting Sunday. Israel had earlier indicated that it would not lift its economic sanctions before the United States did so.

Aviv of NJCRAC told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that she was not surprised by the president's decision to lift sanctions. She recalled that Bush and his predecessor, Ronald Reagan, "never made any secret of the fact that they thought sanctions were not effective."

Bush has interpreted the law on sanctions in its narrowest form consistent with this view, she said.

The U.S. sanctions were imposed after Congress overrode a veto by Reagan. Bush has made it no secret that he would lift the sanctions as soon as he thought he could legally do so.

The president stressed Wednesday that he believed the efforts to dismantle apartheid were more the result of the "forward-looking" de Klerk than the impact of the sanctions.

NJCRAC, which is the American Jewish community's policy-planning arm, is maintaining its stand against lifting sanctions after consultations with leading anti-apartheid members of Congress, including Reps. Howard Wolpe (D-Mich.), William Gray (D-Pa.) and Ron Dellums (D-Calif.) and Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass.).

NJCRAC is sending out a memo to its 13 national Jewish member agencies and its 117 local Jewish community affiliates, urging that Congress be pressured to block Bush's action.

But Aviv conceded that there appears to be little hope of mustering the two-thirds majority in Congress needed to override a presidential veto of a blocking motion.

She said the congressional supporters of continued economic sanctions are more likely to take the issue to the courts.

ADL Backs President's Decision

While NJCRAC is taking a strong stand against the lifting of sanctions, it is not yet clear whether national Jewish agencies will enlist in the effort to stop the president's action. Most are reassessing the issue in view of Bush's action.

The Anti-Defamation League issued a statement Wednesday expressing support for the president's decision. It said ADL accepts Bush's "assessment that South Africa has met the conditions for change embodied in the 1986 Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act."

Another NJCRAC member agency, the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, believes the umbrella group should not only consult with anti-apartheid forces in the United States but with South Africa's Jewish community, too.

William Rapfogel, executive director of the Orthodox Union's Institute for Public Affairs, said his group plans to have such discussions with South African Jewish leaders before it makes its own reassessment of the situation.

The Orthodox Union has criticized NJCRAC for not taking into consideration the views of South African Jewry. It made this point in dissenting from a statement in support of sanctions contained in NJCRAC's 1990-1991 Joint Program Plan for Jewish Community Relations.

South African Jews, including some of the leading Jewish opponents of apartheid, have long been opposed to economic sanctions.

One of them, Harry Schwarz, a longtime opposition member of the South African Parliament, is now ambassador to the United States. He has been arguing before American Jewish groups that economic sanctions hurt the black majority more than the white minority.

'Not Yet Made Substantial Progress'

But Aviv, who is a South African native herself, argued in her memo to NJCRAC member agencies that South Africa has not satisfied the five conditions mandated by Congress.

Starting with the last condition met, Aviv agreed that 10,000 political prisoners had been released since African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela was let out of prison in February 1990. But another 1,000 are still in prison, 19 of whom are on death row, she said.

Another condition was lifting the state of emergency and releasing those detained under it. While this was done last October, an earlier 1986 law, which gives the government almost identical powers "in so-called unrest areas," remains in force, Aviv said.

Pretoria has met another U.S. condition by

lifting the ban against the African National Congress and 34 other parties. But none of South Africa's 30 million blacks can vote or run for office, Aviv pointed out.

The government also abolished the Group Areas Act, which set up racially restricted areas, and the Population Registration Act, satisfying another U.S. condition. But Aviv said a loophole allows white residential communities to bar blacks to protect existing "norms and standards."

While the registration act was repealed so that persons will no longer be listed by race at birth, the government did not address the rights of 4 million blacks who were "forcibly removed from their land and dumped in areas designated for them," Aviv said.

Another condition was for the government to enter into good-faith negotiations with representative members of the black majority. Aviv maintained that what has gone on so far has only been "talks about talks."

Finally, Aviv's memo stressed that while considerable progress has been made to remove the apartheid laws, the impact of these laws on people has not been addressed. "Many discriminatory laws and others that deny full and free participation in a democracy still remain in place," she said.

"The South African government has not yet made substantial progress in the establishment of a non-racial democracy," she said.

(JTA correspondent Hugh Orgel in Tel Aviv contributed to this report.)

LEADING ARMS-PRODUCING NATIONS AGREE ON NEED FOR DISARMAMENT IN MIDDLE EAST
By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, July 10 (JTA) -- The five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council agreed here Tuesday on measures needed to eliminate weapons of mass destruction from the Middle East.

The two-day meeting involving representatives of the United States, Soviet Union, Britain, France and China concentrated on chemical, biological and nuclear weapons, as well as delivery systems, such as ground-to-ground missiles.

The five nations, which together account for 85 percent of the world's arms exports, said they would like to see those weapons frozen and eventually banned. They laid out the steps they think are necessary to achieve that goal.

The U.S. representative, Undersecretary of State Reginald Bartholomew, called the accord "really groundbreaking."

The two-day meeting was the outgrowth of a proposal President Bush made in May for a weapons freeze in the Middle East, in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War. French President Francois Mitterrand outlined his own disarmament plan for the Middle East several days later.

Participants at the conference here agreed on the need for all countries in the region to submit all of their nuclear activities to the control of the Vienna-based U.N. International Atomic Energy Agency.

The conference also called for the interdiction of imports of materials used in the construction of nuclear weapons.

Although no country was named, observers here immediately predicted pressure on Israel to submit to international scrutiny of its nuclear activities, which it has so far refused to accept.

Israel is widely believed to have an arsenal of nuclear weapons, an allegation it will neither confirm nor deny. Israel has pledged repeatedly it will not be the first country to introduce nuclear weapons in the Middle East, but it has refused to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

The conferees proposed "a ban on the import and production of materials that can be used to produce nuclear weapons," according to a statement issued after the meeting.

Other goals on which the conference agreed included a treaty forbidding the use of chemical weapons as well as a freeze on the number of ground-to-ground missiles in the region and their eventual destruction.

PLO NOT RESISTING LEBANESE ARMY AS IT GAINS CONTROL IN LEBANON
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, July 10 (JTA) -- The Lebanese regular army continued to consolidate its control of southern Lebanon, moving troops and tanks Wednesday into the port town of Tyre with no resistance from the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Two large Palestinian refugee camps in the area were encircled by the troops, whose announced mission is to disarm local guerrilla groups.

Reports from Lebanon said the PLO was turning its heavy weapons over to the Lebanese army as a "gift" on orders from PLO chief Yasir Arafat in Tunis. The Tyre operation is expected to be completed within 48 hours.

The guerrillas were allowed to retain their small arms and personal weapons, as they were when Lebanese regulars took over the port of Sidon last week.

The Palestinian fighters apparently have retreated into the Mieh Mieh and Ein Hilweh refugee camps east of Sidon.

Reports from Tyre said the Beirut army was greeted by jubilant flag-waving crowds. The Lebanese commanders met with officers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, whose area of operations includes Tyre.

A UNIFIL spokesman said the new deployment of the Lebanese army was reported to U.N. headquarters in New York.

UNIFIL is an international peacekeeping force of 5,000 troops contributed by nine nations. It was created in 1978, two years after the start of Lebanon's civil war.

The Lebanese regulars were also reported to be conferring with representatives of the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army, which patrols the southern Lebanon security zone and controls the Maronite Christian town of Jezzine, north of the zone.

Israel has made clear it intends to retain the security zone and its alliance with the SLA as long as hostile foreign forces remain in Lebanon.

Syria protects the Beirut government headed by President Elias Hrawi and opposes Al Fatah, Arafat's mainstream PLO faction, which has been ensconced in southern Lebanon.

Syria backs anti-Arafat Palestinian dissidents deployed in eastern Lebanon.

Four radical Palestinian groups belonging to the Damascus-backed Palestine National Salvation Front have told Syrian Vice President Abdel Khalim Haddam they support the Lebanese regular army's occupation of southern Lebanon and favor the withdrawal of PLO forces from that region.

But Arafat was quoted as saying the PLO will not quit southern Lebanon.

E.C. DOESN'T LINK HELP FOR ISRAEL WITH WELFARE OF THE PALESTINIANS
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, July 10 (JTA) -- Israeli leaders seemed pleased by their talks with a European Community official who came here to discuss both economic cooperation with Israel and the welfare of Palestinians in the administered territories.

They were satisfied that Abel Matutes, the European Commissioner for Mediterranean affairs, made no reference to linkage between the two issues at his meetings here Wednesday with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Foreign Minister David Levy and Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i.

Only last month, the chairman of the E.C. Council of Ministers at the time, Foreign Minister Jacques Poos of Luxembourg, conditioned privileges for Israel on resolution of the Palestinian issue and a European role in a Middle East peace conference. Poos made that position clear to Levy during a meeting in Paris that took place June 5.

But now, Matutes, who is from Spain, confirmed that the E.C. intends to include Israel in its economic sphere after the 12 member states become a single economic unit in 1992.

He indicated Israel would get the same privileges as members of the European Free Trade Organization, with no political strings attached.

The first practical result of the talks here will be a discussion by a joint team of Israeli and E.C. experts on how to incorporate Israel into the European economy.

Moda'i cautioned, however, that with the best of intentions, it would take several years before the process is completed.

JERUSALEM POLICE DEFER ACTION AGAINST TIKKUN MAGAZINE EDITOR
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, July 10 (JTA) -- Jerusalem police have deferred action on charges that Michael Lerner, editor of the California-based, progressive Jewish magazine Tikkun, incited Israeli reserve soldiers to refuse duty in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Complaints from irate citizens were received after Tikkun held a weeklong conference here in support of Israel's peace movement.

Participants urged withdrawal from the administered territories and favored a Palestinian state alongside Israel.

A police spokeswoman told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that law-enforcement officials were trying to decide whether Lerner, an American citizen, violated the law.

They are seeking legal advice. But since the matter does not have high priority, it will probably be some time before the police decide one way or the other, the spokeswoman said.

In a statement issued from Tikkun headquarters in Oakland, Calif., Lerner said, "It's no surprise that Israeli right-wingers sought to deflect attention from the substance of the discussion at the Tikkun Solidarity Conference by raising this phony charge against me."

Lerner said refusal to serve in the West Bank or Gaza is nothing new in Israel. It has been advocated by a leading Israeli philosopher, Yeshayahu Leibowitz, and by an Israeli organization Yesh Gvul (There is a Limit).

While individual acts of refusal have been prosecuted, no one has been prosecuted for advocating refusal, Lerner pointed out.

SENATE PANEL VOTES TO BAR THE USE OF PASSPORTS STAMPED 'ISRAEL ONLY'
By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, July 10 (JTA) -- A Senate subcommittee has voted to bar the use of U.S. diplomatic or tourist passports that are stamped with the words "Israel only."

U.S. consular officials issue such passports to citizens wishing to travel to both Israel and Arab countries, which routinely forbid the entry of those carrying passports with Israeli visas.

But some members of Congress feel that issuing the "Israel only" passports reinforces the Arab nations' political ostracism of Israel.

State Department officials said Wednesday that they would be concerned with any new law that inconveniences tourists to Israel by having their current "Israel only" passports invalidated.

If an amendment sponsored by Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) became law, such passports would become null after a 90-day grace period.

The amendment was approved by the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on commerce, justice, state and judiciary as part of the 1992 State Department appropriations bill.

The version of the bill that passed the full House last month does not contain the language, but pro-Israel activists hope it will be added to the final version of the bill.

Earlier this year, Lautenberg was traveling on a diplomatic passport when Saudi Arabia and Kuwait barred his entry because the passport contained an Israeli entry stamp.

To circumvent the problem, Lautenberg obtained a second U.S. diplomatic passport.

The Lautenberg amendment would bar U.S. diplomats from using separate passports, so that "Arab countries would have to take them or leave them," said Mark Medin, assistant Washington representative of the Anti-Defamation League.

Steven Schlein, Lautenberg's press secretary, conceded that if members of Congress were rebuffed and still wanted to enter an Arab country, they could use a tourist passport that did not have an Israeli entry stamp in it.

Will Maslow, general counsel at the American Jewish Congress, called the Lautenberg amendment "symbolic, and it helps, but it's a fringe effort."

BEGIN SEEMS OLD SELF IN RADIO TALK
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, July 10 (JTA) -- Former Prime Minister Menachem Begin, a near recluse since his surprise retirement in 1984, seemed back in his old form in a rare media appearance Wednesday.

Interviewed by army radio on the 60th anniversary of the creation of the Irgun, the underground guerrilla group he led, Begin lashed out at critics. He included an apparent swipe at the United States, which took a dim view of Israel's bombing raid on an Iraqi nuclear facility near Baghdad in 1981, when Begin held office.

"They will no longer dare play the game which they played when we attacked the reactor in Baghdad," he said. "Israel's just cause was proven when the Scud missiles were launched against us."

Begin flared with anger when he was asked to compare the intifada with the Irgun's operations against the British Mandate in Palestine.

"This is blasphemy," the former prime minister said. "Have we ever attacked citizens, have we ever attacked British citizens?"

NAZI MALIGNS JEWS ON TELEVISION, SPARKING A PROTEST IN AUSTRALIA

By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Australia, July 10 (JTA) -- A 10-minute discussion with a self-proclaimed Nazi who maligned Jews on Australia's most popular daytime television show has raised a storm of protest.

"The mother of all controversies" was how Ray Martin, host of "The Midday Show With Ray Martin," described the fallout from the appearance of David Palmer, who styles himself "fuhrer of Australia."

Martin said the program received more than 400 protest calls within two hours of Palmer's interview. It has an estimated audience of 1.5 million in a country of 17 million.

The West Australian minister for cultural affairs, Dr. Judyth Watson, urged the producers "not to include this type of material in future programs."

Professor Graham de Vahl Davis, chairman of the Public Relations Committee of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies, attacked the decision to invite Palmer as an abuse of free speech. Martin interviewed him after Palmer's appearance.

Michael Danby, editor of the Australia/Israel Review, said he was astonished by the "total lack of taste and political judgment" of the TV show.

A spokesman for Jewish communal organizations told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency they were "considering" legal action under state anti-racist laws but doubted the laws would cover interviews of that type.

Palmer, who struts about in Nazi-style uniforms, heads a tiny group with a long name, the National Security in Defense of Australia Party, which shares the acronym NSDAP with Hitler's Nazi party.

It got its biggest publicity boost on the Ray Martin show. Palmer used the program to accuse Jews of seeking to undermine "white Australia" and burning their own synagogues for mystical religious and dishonest economic motives.

He accused Arabs and Asians of creating ethnic tensions, said Australian Aborigines were "2,000 years behind" Europeans and claimed Japanese are "superior to whites" because of their "racial purity."

WOMEN PROTEST MALL AT RAVENSBRUCK

By David Kantor

BONN, July 10 (JTA) -- Women from Berlin demonstrated Wednesday against plans to build an enormous shopping mall close to the memorial to victims of the Ravensbruck concentration camp, through which 90,000 women inmates once passed.

The cultural affairs minister of the federal state of Brandenburg, Heinrich Enderlein, called the plans a "scandal."

The German Jewish community lodged a protest and urged Brandenburg to ban the project, slated for land once occupied by Soviet troops.

The state government is examining the legality of the land sales to developers. But Eberhard Dentzer, director of the memorial, said it was too late. According to Dentzer, "the shopping center is already a fact."

The protesting women were led by Inge Rabe, whose mother, Erna, was held in Ravensbruck. But Mayor Wolfgang Engler of nearby Furstenberg said recently that his town would not be held hostage to the former concentration camp.

PROBLEM OF RESURGENT ANTI-SEMITISM DISCUSSED AT INTERNATIONAL GATHERING

GENEVA, July 10 (JTA) -- The eradication of anti-Semitism "is a litmus test of our generation's civilization," Samuel Wise told a meeting here this week of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe.

Wise is staff director of the U.S. congressional Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe and a member of the U.S. delegation to the CSCE gathering here. It is convening to discuss the subject of national minorities.

Wise devoted his speech to the phenomenon of anti-Semitism, which he observed "has been devilishly persistent and diabolically widespread through the ages," especially in this century.

He noted that "it is particularly troubling in societies undergoing transition, since anti-Semitism has historically been linked with the forces of reaction.

"Its entry into the political arena in these unsettled times bodes ill for lasting, fundamental reform and democratization," he said.

"It is precisely because anti-democratic forces have attacked democracy and freedom of opportunity -- including economic opportunity-- by labeling them as 'Jewish' or 'pro-Jewish,' that political leaders who truly value democracy should take a public stand," he said.

Wise cited events in the Soviet Union and Romania as examples of anti-Semitism surfacing at times of social change.

Romania, he pointed out, dedicated a memorial last week to Romanian Jews slaughtered in World War II. But its parliament also recently honored the memory of Ion Antonescu, the fascist dictator who cast Romania's lot with Hitler and "supervised anti-Jewish pogroms and massacres."

In the Soviet Union, Wise said, "the long-awaited loosening of central controls over society has unleashed many anti-Semitic groups and newspapers associated with official organizations, such as the writers union."

But "only one person, to our knowledge, has been tried on charges of violating Soviet laws against inciting ethnic animosities," he said.

"Governments can curb anti-Semitism, not only by prosecuting the criminal acts it inspires, but by loudly condemning the sentiment itself," the U.S. delegate said.

It is the "signal from the top" that can influence public opinion and create standards of what is acceptable and what is not, he said.

ITALIAN LEADER'S REMARK DRAWS FIRE

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, July 10 (JTA) -- Italian President Francesco Cossiga has been lambasted by scholars and political commentators for his remarks equating communism with Nazism, which he made during an official visit to Hungary last week.

The president said in his defense that he was not referring to communism as an idea, but "to that specific, monstrous, very concrete Soviet communism imposed by tanks."

Historian Giuseppe Galasso observed that communism and Nazism, while both totalitarian systems, had different values.

"Nazism is linked to race, to the idea of an imperial predominance imposed by force. Communism, while it is totalitarian, is motivated by the idea of social redemption and equality," he said.