

VOL. 69 - 74th YEAR

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 1991

NO. 160

**AS TENSION MOUNTS IN MOSCOW,  
JEWISH ACTIVISTS BACK YELTSIN**

LONDON, Aug. 20 (JTA) -- Six leading Jewish activists in Moscow have urged Jews in the Soviet Union to support "the lawfully elected Russian authorities" and the preservation of democracy, in response to Monday's military coup.

The message, telephoned Tuesday to the Institute of Jewish Affairs, a World Jewish Congress affiliate here, was an appeal to support Boris Yeltsin, president of the Russian republic, who is the highest-ranking opponent of the coup.

It coincided with contradictory media reports from the Soviet Union, some of which suggested that the eight-man emergency committee that deposed vacationing Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev was unravelling in face of determined resistance, led by Yeltsin.

The Jewish activists urged the widest possible dissemination of their message.

The message called "upon all Jewish communities, secular, political and religious leaders throughout the Soviet Union to back the stand of the president and the administration of the Russian republic against the unconstitutional coup.

"Today, when the republic of Russia is in the vanguard in defense of liberty and democracy, we appeal to Jewish organizations who cherish freedom to openly support the forces of democracy and cooperate with the lawfully elected Russian government, which has taken upon itself the burden of responsibility for the future freedom of our country," the message said.

It was signed by Lev Katzman, Alexander Shmukler, Valery Engel, Mikhail Chlenov, Leonid Roitman and Valerya Babayeva.

**Fear Of 'Repressive Acts'**

Chlenov is co-chairman of the Vaad, the umbrella body of Jewish organizations in the Soviet Union. Jewish activists were planning to meet under its auspices Tuesday in Moscow.

In Washington, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry reported Tuesday that it had been in touch with Chlenov by telephone.

Chlenov said his primary concern is that Jewish communal, religious and political organizations continue to function during the crisis.

He also expressed concern over possible "repressive acts," such as threats of violence against the Jewish community.

In that connection, Chlenov noted that the new government's 12-point declaration warned that groups that do not adhere to its principles would be banned. But the threat was not directed specifically against Jewish groups, he pointed out.

Soviet television said Tuesday that Prime Minister Valentin Pavlov, one of the eight who seized power, was ill with high blood pressure and confined to bed.

Defense Minister Dmitry Yazov, another member of the emergency committee, was also reported to have fallen ill and resigned. But that was denied by one of Yeltsin's aides, Politburo member Mikhail Surkov.

Surkov denied rumors that another leader, KGB chief Vladimir Kryuchkov, had also resigned.

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

**EARLY REPORTS SAY JEWISH EMIGRATION  
UNAFFECTED BY SOVIET LEADERSHIP CHANGE**  
By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Aug. 20 (JTA) -- Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union appears so far to be unaffected by Monday's overthrow of President Mikhail Gorbachev.

"People appear to be leaving, and there appears to not yet be any change in Soviet emigration policy," an official at the U.S. State Department said Tuesday.

The consular and refugee offices at the U.S. Embassy in Moscow "are up and working as normal," the official said.

In Jerusalem, Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel, described the emigration situation as "business as usual."

A Jewish Agency spokesman said its operations throughout the Soviet Union were functioning normally and that offices of OVIR, the Soviet visa agency, were "open to the public."

The agency, which coordinates immigration to Israel, reported the arrival Tuesday of two plane loads of Jewish emigres who had left the Soviet Union after Monday's coup.

About 75 other Soviet Jews arrived Tuesday in Budapest, one of the Eastern European capitals through which emigres pass en route to Israel.

In Washington, Martin Wenick, executive director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, reported that about 500 mainly Israel-bound Soviet Jews had arrived at various Eastern European transit points.

He said about 50 Soviet Jews visited the Israeli Consulate in Moscow on Tuesday "for either entry visas or for information about services."

**No 'Absolute Panic'**

Describing the overall climate in the Soviet Jewish community, Wenick said, "People are concerned, and there is an uncertainty about the future, but we don't sense an absolute panic."

Among the Jewish activities apparently disrupted by the coup were the operation of several Jewish camps, said Wenick. They were "disbanded because the feeling was the children ought to be back with their parents," he said.

But Jewish camps run by the Jewish Agency were running as usual Tuesday. And Lishkas Ezras Achim, a Brooklyn-based organization affiliated with the Lubavitch Hasidic movement Chabad, said it would continue to operate dozens of summer camps for Jews in the Soviet Union.

It also said it would continue with plans to send rabbis to the Soviet Union to help the Jewish community prepare for the High Holy Days.

Agudath Israel of America currently has about 50 rabbis or teachers in the Soviet Union. Some have "expressed the intent to remain in the country, while others are cutting their stay short," the group said in a statement Tuesday.

On Monday, 55 Soviet Jewish teachers in training attended a seminar on "philosophy of the Jewish home" at the Aleph Society's Judaic Studies Center in Moscow.

Rabbi Yehiel Pouppko of Chicago, who is leading the seminar, said the center "expects to continue its teaching activities regardless of changes in government."

**NEWS ANALYSIS:**

**ISRAELIS WORRY NEW SOVIET REGIME  
WILL END REFORMS OF GORBACHEV ERA**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Aug. 20 (JTA) -- Israelis are deeply concerned that the overthrow of Mikhail Gorbachev by Communist hard-liners this week could halt or even reverse the far-reaching changes that the deposed Soviet president managed to effect during his six years in power.

Israel and the Jewish people have been important beneficiaries of many of those changes.

Most significantly, Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika led to dramatic changes in the way in which the Soviet government treated its Jewish population, the world's third largest.

It was Gorbachev who freed hundreds of political prisoners of conscience, including Anatoly Shcharansky, and then allowed Jews and people of other faiths to practice their religion freely.

Gorbachev then opened the floodgates of aliyah, increasing the level of Jewish emigration from just over 1,000 in 1985, the year he took office, to more than 200,000 last year.

Those years also saw the start of a new peace process guided by the United States in tandem with a newly cooperative Soviet Union.

Finally, perestroika has led to burgeoning political, economic and cultural relations between Israel and the nations of Eastern Europe, formerly part of the hostile Soviet bloc.

As Israelis watch the drama unfold on the streets of Moscow this week, they wonder what will become of all this progress.

Events in the Soviet Union are too fluid for observers here to predict their consequences with any degree of confidence. The government has refrained from publishing an official reaction.

**Return To Pro-Arab Policy?**

But there is hope here -- though little more than hope -- that nothing much will change, even if the hard-liners under Gennady Yanayev, the Soviet acting president who replaced Gorbachev, manage to retain power.

It is hoped that the new regime will not cut off Jewish emigration, for fear of offending Western and especially U.S. opinion.

Jewish Agency Chairman Simcha Dinitz expressed that view Monday night. It dove-tailed with the government's decision to pursue "business as usual" with respect to aliyah.

Not all observers are optimistic. Professor Galia Golan, a Hebrew University scholar, predicted a swing back to a tougher, "pro-Arab" foreign policy by the new Kremlin leadership.

That could have an impact on Soviet aliyah and sour Moscow's willingness to cooperate with the United States in orchestrating a Middle East peace conference.

For the immediate future, Israeli officials are expecting an upsurge of immigration as Soviet Jews rush to leave before the gates are closed. As long as transportation is available to the transit points in Eastern Europe, Jews holding exit permits and Israeli visas will continue to leave, the officials believe.

Some Israeli commentators have noted, with a touch of cynicism, that since the coup, the lines have disappeared from the Soviet consular office in Tel Aviv.

Many of those waiting for visas were Soviet olim unhappy with Israel who hoped to return to their former homeland. Suddenly, they are happy

to be here, columnist Nahum Barnea observed in the mass-circulation daily Yediot Achronot.

Another column in Yediot suggested that a suspension or diminution of aliyah would be a welcome breather for Israel's severely strained economy. But that is very much a minority view.

**A Stalled Peace Process**

On the other hand, some press cynics are suggesting that despite protestations to the contrary, leaders of the hard-line Likud government are secretly pleased that the peace process may be stalled.

"God is a Likudnik," wrote the diplomatic correspondent of the Labor daily Davar, who guessed that Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir will be far from unhappy if the changes in Moscow mean the peace conference scheduled for October will not take place.

The prime minister, after all, is "faithful to the ideology of gaining time," he wrote.

Barnea of Yediot reported jokes making the rounds in government circles that Israel actually helped the hard-liners unseat Gorbachev, in the hope of gaining such a delay.

When Agriculture Minister Rafael Eitan of the right-wing Tsomet party, a former Israel Defense Force chief of staff, met in Moscow last month with Yanayev, who was then vice president, "they discussed not agriculture but how to deploy armored personnel carriers," Barnea jests.

But in a more serious vein, observers pointed out that even President Bush was unable to say with confidence at his White House news conference Tuesday that plans for the Middle East peace conference in October would proceed unaffected by events in Moscow.

"It's far too early to say what will happen to the Middle East conference," Bush told reporters in the Rose Garden. "I hope that there will be no frustration of that on the part of the Soviet Union, who have heretofore played a very constructive role," he said.

Israeli analysts believe that if the hard-liners in Moscow retain power, the peace conference will, at best, be delayed.

But others expect a radical lurch of Soviet foreign policy away from the rapprochement themes of the Gorbachev years.

They warn that Syria, whose agreement to attend a peace conference with Israel was the outstanding success of recent U.S. diplomacy, may now reconsider in light of the Soviet coup.

**Arabs Rejoice At Gorbachev's Downfall**

The Arab rejectionist states -- which Bush referred to Tuesday as "renegade regimes" -- rejoiced at the departure of Gorbachev. So, initially, did the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Subsequent statements by the PLO were fence-straddling, indicating an awareness that sympathy for Yanayev could cost it dearly in terms of Western opinion, as did its early support for Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein.

Meanwhile, Agriculture Minister Eitan had warm words to say for the Soviet acting president. He said that at their meeting in Moscow, Yanayev referred to the heads of certain Arab states as dictators and took pains to assure his Israeli guest that the Soviet Union would not return to a system of dictatorship.

But many analysts believe Yanayev is merely a figurehead and that the forces behind the coup are more hard-line officials whose records on Israel and human rights are questionable.

## PALESTINIANS FEEL MOSCOW COUP CAN ONLY ADVANCE THEIR CAUSE

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 20 (JTA) -- Senior officials of the Palestine Liberation Organization and some prominent Palestinians in the West Bank seem convinced that the coup in the Soviet Union that deposed President Mikhail Gorbachev will advance their cause.

At the very least, they expect it to staunch the flow of Soviet Jewish aliyah and restore Moscow to its former position as the main backer of Arab aspirations.

Statements to that effect were made by Yasser Abed Rabo, a close associate of PLO chief Yasir Arafat, and Taisir Kube of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

Hatem Abdul Kader, an editor of the East Jerusalem daily Al-Fajr who is considered to be a key activist in the PLO's Al Fatah wing, told Israeli reporters that Palestinians were familiar with the new Soviet leadership and expected it to act in their interests.

An Al-Fajr editorial ridiculing the United States maintained that the collapse of perestroika means the end of the "new world order" President Bush proclaimed after the Persian Gulf War.

The editorial urged the new regime in Moscow to help the Third World fight American global influence.

Ghassan al-Khatib, a lecturer at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank and a leading Communist activist, declared: "We the Palestinians hope that the change in the Soviet Union will push the peace process in the direction of international legitimacy."

An opinion poll conducted by the weekly Al-Baider a-Siassi, found most Palestinians welcoming the change in Moscow.

### Anger On The Israeli Left

That attitude drew angry reactions from Israelis, including some on the left usually sympathetic toward the Arabs.

Professor Amnon Rubinstein, a leader of the Center-Shinui Movement, said he was disappointed and angry over the Palestinian reaction. They have proved again that they have not learned their lesson from history, Rubinstein said.

He referred apparently to Palestinian support for Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and their glee when Scud missiles fell on Israel -- both of which alienated their sympathizers on the Israeli left.

A more moderate Palestinian viewpoint was expressed Tuesday by Dr. Hanan Ashrawi immediately following her return from a series of meetings in Europe. She expressed regret over the regression from democracy in the Soviet Union.

Ashrawi returned with East Jerusalem activist Faisal Hussein amid clamor from the Israeli right wing to put them on trial for alleged meetings with PLO officials in Europe.

Police announced that the two would soon be summoned for questioning.

Ashrawi and Hussein were among the Palestinians who met with U.S. Secretary of State James Baker during his series of visits to Israel in May and June. They won the U.S. administration's de facto recognition as the legitimate representatives of the local Palestinian community.

Their European tour was seen here as an attempt to introduce the Palestinian view abroad and to coordinate positions with the PLO.

Syria, meanwhile, has expressed concern that

the Soviet coup would give Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir a pretext to back out of the Middle East peace conference.

Radio Damascus said Tuesday that the Israeli government was working to sabotage the conference scheduled for October.

Paradoxically, many Israelis were saying the change in Soviet leadership would give Syria an excuse to back out of the peace conference.

## SOVIET OLIM WORRY ABOUT FAMILIES MORE THAN FATE OF FORMER HOMELAND

By Cathrine Gerson

TEL AVIV, Aug. 20 (JTA) -- Soviet Jewish immigrants here are closely watching the progression of events in Moscow.

But they seem less concerned about who ends up ruling their former homeland than how the stunning events of the past few days will affect relatives and friends there.

"For all I care, the country can go up in smoke, but I want my cousins out of there first," said Yevgeny Levy, a taxi driver who came to Israel from Kishinev in 1969.

Almost identical feelings were expressed by a more recent arrival, Marina Seidel.

"I personally don't care what happens to that country, but my sister is supposed to come here next week, through Budapest, and I am worried," said Seidel, a 30-year-old civil engineer who immigrated to Israel a year ago.

"All my other relatives and Jewish friends from Leningrad are here already, but my sister, Elena, is still there with her husband and daughter," she told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

A few immigrants questioned waxed nostalgic about good times in Russia, walks in the woods and meeting friends over bottles of vodka. But all agreed their overriding concern was the fate of family and friends left behind.

Levy, the taxi driver, is in his mid-40s and speaks Hebrew with barely a trace of an accent. He defines himself as a "real Israeli" after 22 years in the country.

### 'Kept Telling Them To Get Out'

Like most immigrants, old and new, he was worried but not surprised by the news from the Soviet Union.

"Although we've all discussed the possibility of the army taking over in Russia, of them saying they've had enough, we were still stunned this morning," he said Monday.

"But I believe nothing serious will happen," he added. "They can't turn the country on its head, and to make the people go back to the old ways is just impossible.

"People will suffer through some hard times but nothing much will happen," Levy predicted.

He admitted that he was worried about his relatives in Kishinev. "I kept telling them to get out, to leave while they still could, but they said, 'There's nothing to worry about, everything will be fine.'"

Levy said his wife stayed home from work Monday to try to reach them by telephone.

The Jewish Agency and the Absorption Ministry said Tuesday that immigrants were continuing to depart the country without interference, and that everything appeared to be functioning normally.

But Levy was skeptical. "Whatever happens, it will be bad for the Jews, like everything else in that country," he said.

**GERMANY COMES UNDER PRESSURE  
TO ALLOW IN MORE SOVIET JEWS**

By David Kantor

BONN, Aug. 20 (JTA) -- The ouster of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev by Communist hard-liners this week has increased pressure on the German government to ease its restrictions on the immigration of Jews from the Soviet Union.

Heinz Galinski, chairman of Germany's Jewish community, was received Tuesday by Interior Minister Wolfgang Schauble for a discussion of the problem. Although no figures were announced, it was understood that they agreed on generous treatment of Soviet Jews who apply for German entry visas.

A statement released by the Jewish community office here Tuesday said it was besieged with telephone calls from relatives of Jews in the Soviet Union begging for help to get them out.

"Hour by hour, we receive dozens of calls for help. People back in Russia are scared," the statement said. "We feel obliged to receive as many of them as we can."

The German government adopted immigration restrictions in March after large numbers of Soviet Jews settled in Berlin.

Soviet Jews were required thereafter to apply for visas at German consulates in Soviet cities. Preference was given to those who have relatives in Germany or could prove their families originated there.

But the processing has been slow.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government has since come under heavy pressure to accept larger numbers of Jewish refugees who have family or cultural links to Germany.

It is expected to intensify as a result of Gorbachev's fall from power.

The Jewish community said it would try to make help available and provide security for Jews trapped in the Soviet Union, who may become targets for harassment and discrimination.

**ISRAELIS INVITED TO SUBMIT CLAIMS  
FOR DAMAGE CAUSED BY IRAQI MISSILES**

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Aug. 20 (JTA) -- Israeli civilians will be invited to submit claims against Iraq for property damage caused by Scud missile attacks during the Persian Gulf War, an Israeli official confirmed here this week.

Robbie Sabel, legal adviser to the Foreign Ministry, said advertisements will appear in the Israeli press shortly advising citizens how to go about the process.

The Israeli government will establish an office in Jerusalem to handle the claims, Sabel told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. He predicted they will run into millions of dollars. The largest share will go to people whose homes were demolished by the Iraqi missiles.

But he said the negotiations would last "many months" and that it would be "a long time until the compensation money reaches the Israeli banks."

Sabel came to Geneva to attend the opening meeting last week of the U.N. special commission established to deal with multinational claims against Iraq.

Each country will be asked to submit consolidated claims on behalf of its citizens, in addition to the claims of the governments themselves, he explained.

Governments, for example, could claim compensation for work days lost by their departments and agencies because of the war.

Israel is only one of many countries eligible for compensation from Iraq. Its claims, while substantial, pale compared to those of Kuwait, the country invaded and occupied by Iraq, which are expected to amount to \$15 billion.

Other countries expected to submit claims include Egypt, Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand and the Philippines.

A separate commission will deal with claims of Palestinians, by far the largest group of foreign workers forced out of Kuwait. No state is willing to represent them.

The Iraqis will pay compensation out of the revenues accruing from the supervised sale of its oil. A limited sale of Iraqi oil was authorized last week by the U.N. Security Council.

About 70 percent of the profits will be returned to Iraq for humanitarian uses. The balance will be placed in a U.N.-administered trust fund, from which the various claims will be paid.

**GULF WAR ENDED AT THE RIGHT TIME,  
U.S. EX-GENERAL TELLS UJA LEADERS**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 20 (JTA) -- The Persian Gulf War was stopped at the right time, a recently retired U.S. Army general said here Tuesday, defending a decision by the White House that many Israelis took issue with.

They thought the war should have continued until Saddam Hussein was removed from power in Baghdad, one way or another.

But according to Lt. Gen. Thomas Kelly, the decision to end the war after the liberation of Kuwait was right for the simple reason that all the objectives of the war had been achieved.

The objective was to regain Persian Gulf stability, not regional stability in the Middle East. "To have gone into Baghdad would have meant more casualties, much more money, and we would have bought Iraq's problems," Kelly said.

The general has been on the lecture circuit since his retirement. In that capacity, he joined the United Jewish Appeal's Prime Minister's Mission presently in Israel to observe the absorption of Soviet and Ethiopian immigrants.

The mission is limited to the UJA's largest contributors, each of whom made a personal commitment in excess of \$100,000 toward the 1992 annual campaign.

Kelly spoke at length to the UJA leaders on the Gulf War, during which he became widely known for his daily news briefings.

He predicted Hussein would not stay in power long. Sooner or later, the Iraqi people will realize the calamity that he brought upon them and will depose him, Kelly said.

"Iraq will not rebuild itself as long as Saddam Hussein is in power," he said.

One reason Hussein will be overthrown, Kelly said, is the destruction of his capacity to wage war and Iraq's technological inability to rebuild itself.

Thanks to the Gulf War, said Kelly, the world has been spared the threat of Hussein using nuclear and chemical warfare, threatening global stability.

Kelly also praised the Patriot missile, which, he said, "very possibly changed the course of the war" by keeping Israel from entering the conflict.