

**ISRAEL, PALESTINIANS SEEK CLOSER TIES
WITH MOSCOW IN WAKE OF FAILED COUP
By Gil Sedan**

JERUSALEM, Aug. 22 (JTA) -- With Mikhail Gorbachev back in control of the Soviet government, Israeli officials and Palestinian leaders alike scrambled Thursday to seek improved relations with Moscow.

Foreign Minister David Levy expressed hope that Israel and the Soviet Union would soon resume talks aimed at re-establishing full diplomatic relations, which Moscow severed in 1967. The two countries now have consular relations.

It is generally assumed here that full relations will be restored before Israel participates in the Middle East peace conference that the United States and Soviet Union are proposing to hold in October. But there has been no official confirmation from the Soviet side that it is ready to take that step.

The Palestinian leadership, meanwhile, has backtracked from its initial enthusiasm for the attempted takeover of the Soviet government by Communist Party hard-liners.

A Palestinian delegation from the administered territories that was supposed to visit the Soviet Union next week postponed its trip without explanation. Speculation here was that the group had planned to shore up ties with the short-lived regime.

East Jerusalem activist Faisal Hussein and other Palestinian leaders met with a Soviet consular officer here and made a point of distinguishing their "neutral" attitude toward the coup and the emotional reaction in support of it voiced by "Arabs in the street."

But their protestations seemed to many Israelis to reflect second thoughts among local Palestinians, who fear they may have rushed too soon to support the wrong party.

Extra Housing Being Prepared

Levy referred caustically Thursday to the joy expressed by "some elements" who were blinded into believing that a reactionary regime in the Soviet Union would help the Palestinian cause.

They were repeating the same mistake that led many Palestinians to support Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein when he invaded Kuwait a year ago, the foreign minister said.

But Hatem Abdul Kader, an editor of the East Jerusalem daily Al Fajr, said Wednesday that the Israeli press had purposely focused on the emotional reaction of the street, whereas the Palestine Liberation Organization's official reaction had been restrained, treating the coup as an internal Soviet affair.

While the Palestinians' enthusiasm for Gorbachev's ouster clearly had much to do with their dismay over the Soviet Union's warming relations with Israel, it was also an indication of their resentment over his decision in the late 1980s to permit virtually free Jewish emigration.

Ironically, though, the coup attempt may end up spurring Soviet Jewish aliyah. Israel is now anticipating an upsurge in immigration, even though the immediate danger for Soviet Jews is apparently over.

Israel's Housing Ministry is preparing 20,000

housing units for immediate occupancy to meet the expected demand. And the Jewish Agency for Israel announced this week that its transit centers in Eastern Europe can accommodate as many as 100,000 Jews a month if need be.

Jewish Agency Chairman Simcha Dinitz expressed hope that the Soviet authorities would continue to permit departures for Israel as they have in the past.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
COLLECTIVE SIGH OF RELIEF HEARD
ON THE STREETS OF 'LITTLE ODESSA'
By Debra Nussbaum Cohen**

NEW YORK, Aug. 22 (JTA) -- Though they did not celebrate quite as jubilantly as their relatives and friends in the Soviet Union, Jewish emigres in the Brighton Beach section of Brooklyn breathed a collective sigh of relief Thursday that the attempted military coup in Moscow had failed.

"Everything's OK now" was an oft-repeated refrain as the Jews who had once lived in Minsk or Moscow went about the business of daily life.

On the morning after Mikhail Gorbachev was restored to power, they could be seen opening up their restaurants and delicatessens, or shopping at the colorfully laden fruit and vegetable stands that seem to dot each corner of "Little Odessa."

"Most of the people are happy, but don't care that much," said Sofia Palkin, 40, owner of Symphony Cafe, just off Brighton Beach Avenue, the neighborhood's main street.

"People had many troubles before they left Russia," she said. "Now they say 'God bless America, God bless Israel.'"

Palkin, who arrived in New York 12 years ago from a small town near Kiev, said she thinks the Soviet Union will not be all that much better off than it was before, now that the coup has come and gone.

"It is a very poor country. Big lines are everywhere," she said, adding: "It is not a good country. It has been many, many years since it was."

Leo Turovets, 53, said that he was "shocked" when he learned that Gorbachev was back in power, which he heard Wednesday afternoon when people came into his small grocery store asking for champagne.

"Gorbachev is not strong like (Boris) Yeltsin, not strong enough to keep the country running," he said, referring to the president of the Russian republic, who led the opposition to the attempted takeover.

"Gorbachev is always changing his mind about this policy or that one, like playing," Turovets said. "Around the world he did nice things, but for Russians, not. Prices have gone up 200 percent; a dozen eggs is like \$6. There is no food, no clothes. This is his fault."

"They must put Yeltsin in power, to the top. Yeltsin should be president of the Union," he opined.

During the three days of the aborted putsch, Turovets tried to call his sister, who lives in his native city of Kiev, as well as cousins and uncles who live in Zhitomir, about 80 miles outside Kiev, and in the Urals.

He was able to get through to his sister, a

high school teacher, who said she knew nothing of what was happening in Moscow and Leningrad, because there were no reports on Soviet television or radio stations, which had been effectively censored by the ruling "emergency committee" from broadcasting anything other than what the junta issued.

Instead, the television played only music, "just Tchaikovsky, Beethoven and a few movies," said Turovets, who came to the United States 14 years ago.

'Would Have Been Like Stalin Again'

Luda Spirt, a clerk behind the salami counter of Stolicznaya Deli who said she was in her 40s, spoke of her frustration trying to get in touch this week with friends and the few family members remaining in Odessa.

And even when she was able to reach them by telephone, "if they didn't like what you asked, they cut you off," she said.

When asked who "they" were, Spirt, who has been in America for 15 years, just nodded knowingly. When asked if she thought the KGB listened in on calls, she said, "Oh yes, now more than before."

Spirt, who sells at least 50 kinds of sausage in the fragrant shop, said she was glad when Gorbachev was restored to power Wednesday, because "it's better than the KGB taking it in their hands. It would have been like Stalin again."

"At least under Gorbachev, people can think and dream of a better life," she said.

"My family in Israel is happy," she said. "It's hard to find a job, but it's better than Russia."

Lilly Gutnik, 72, came to this country alone nine years ago, after her husband died and her son was felled by pneumonia. She loves this country, because "America gave me the chance to stand on my own feet and gave me the chance to see freedom," she said.

Now that Gorbachev is back in control, she hopes that President Bush will "help him."

"The Russian government has to finish what it began," she said, "and go to a free market. They have to give the Russian people to breathe, to eat, to raise generations, to open their eyes to how other people live."

"It is now a different world," she said. "Everything must be open."

REPORT SAYS ISRAELI PILOT IS ALIVE AND WILL BE VISITED BY THE RED CROSS By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Aug. 22 (JTA) -- Ron Arad, an Israeli air force pilot held hostage in Lebanon for nearly six years, is alive and will be visited shortly by the International Red Cross, according to a news report Thursday from Beirut.

The news source, considered reliable, said the Lebanese authorities were guaranteed that Arad was in good health.

But the report was promptly discounted in Jerusalem, where a Defense Ministry spokesman said Israel had "received no new information" about Arad or the six other Israel Defense Force personnel missing in action and believed to be captives in Lebanon.

Well-informed sources quoted by a French news agency said no information was available about the other six MIAs and that they were presumed dead.

Red Cross spokesman Gabriel De Montmolin

told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency here that the humanitarian organization would divulge no information about Arad or any other hostage until its representatives visit the captives and make positive identification.

All contacts concerning hostages are secret, De Montmolin said.

Arad was shot down over Lebanon in 1986 and taken prisoner by Amal, the mainstream Shi'ite militia. He is believed to have been subsequently transferred to the custody of a radical group within Amal.

Meanwhile, Lebanese Foreign Minister Fares Bouciz will visit his Iranian counterpart, Ali Akbar Velayati, at the end of the month, in connection with a hostage exchange, the Swiss Telegraphic Agency reported Thursday.

Iran has influence with extremist Shi'ite groups in Lebanon said to be holding Western hostages.

Unofficial sources in Jerusalem said Israel was keeping a close watch on consultations over the hostages currently going on in Teheran between Iranian government leaders and Lebanese Shi'ites.

Israel has demanded complete information on the condition and whereabouts of its MIAs in Lebanon as a precondition for any deal or preliminary "gesture" involving a hostage exchange.

U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, who has been in the forefront of negotiations for a prisoner exchange, was expected to return to Geneva on Saturday from a vacation in Portugal.

(JTA correspondent David Landau in Jerusalem contributed to this report.)

MOBILE HOMES FOR YESHIVA STUDENTS ERECTED IN HEBRON, ENRAGING ARABS By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 22 (JTA) -- A move by Jewish settlers to set up living quarters for yeshiva students in the heart of Hebron has enraged Palestinian Arabs in the West Bank town.

Some vented their anger Thursday by hurling a gasoline bomb at an Israeli vehicle in Hebron. The bomb missed its target, causing neither casualties or damage.

But it was a clear indication that the Arab population is seething over the planting of 10 mobile homes inside a former bus station in downtown Hebron, which has been converted into a military base.

The trailers will serve as dormitories for 120 students of the Shavei Hebron yeshiva. The yeshiva's principal, Aharon Domb, sees no provocation.

He said the homes were placed on Jewish-owned land with the approval of the Israeli authorities and would serve as temporary quarters for the students until the new yeshiva building is completed.

But Mustafa Natshe, a former mayor of Hebron who was deposed by the Israeli authorities, said, "We were surprised by the decision of the Defense Ministry to approve deployment of the mobile homes."

Natshe recalled that the Israel Defense Force seized the bus terminal for security reasons after a recent stabbing. But now, he said, "they have let civilians into it. This means that the residents of Hebron were cheated."

The mobile homes, which cost \$100,000, were funded jointly by several Jewish settlers groups.

CROATIAN LEADERS IN SOLIDARITY WITH ZAGREB'S JEWS AFTER BOMBING

ZAGREB, Yugoslavia, Aug. 22 (JTA) -- The leaders of Yugoslavia's Croatian republic, including the president and Cabinet ministers, expressed sympathy and solidarity with the badly shaken Jewish community here this week.

Officials of all ranks condemned the two bombings early Monday morning that severely damaged the Jewish community center building in the center of Zagreb and the Jewish section of the municipal cemetery.

There were no casualties.

The police announced a \$14,000 reward, payable in German marks, for information leading to the arrest of the perpetrators.

The Croatian-Jewish Society of California has offered an additional \$100,000 reward.

The community reported receiving hundreds of letters and telegrams of support from all over Yugoslavia and abroad.

Community leaders were especially gratified by the many messages from Croatian political parties, state institutions, members of parliament and representatives of religious organizations and churches.

Dr. Franjo Tudjman, the president of Croatia, made a public statement on television Wednesday on his return from Belgrade, the national capital.

Several thousand people attended a rally Tuesday organized by the Croatian Democratic Party to protest the assault on the Jewish community. The gathering was broadcast live on Croatian television.

Only hours after the bombings Monday, the Jewish community's offices were visited by ranking officials of the municipality and the republic. They included Deputy Prime Minister Mate Granic, Interior Minister Ivan Vekic and Mladen Vedris, president of the Zagreb City Council.

'Criminal Terrorist Attack'

The twin blasts occurred simultaneously at 4:58 a.m. Monday, the community reported. One badly damaged the community building at 16 Palmoticeva St. in downtown Zagreb. The other destroyed part of the Jewish cemetery, which occupies a section of Zagreb's Mirogoj Central Cemetery.

The blast at the community center was the stronger of the two. It shattered every window in the building and some in nearby houses.

According to initial reports by experts, the building's structural integrity may have suffered.

The concussion collapsed parts of the walls on the main floor, where the communal offices are located. The main doors at the entrance to the building were reduced to rubble, and cars parked across the street were damaged.

Severe damage was done to electrical, gas and other utility installations in the building.

At the cemetery, several monuments and graves were destroyed.

A statement read Monday night over Zagreb Radio said that "the government of the Republic of Croatia bitterly condemns the criminal terrorist attack on the Jewish community center in Zagreb" and "expresses its solidarity with the Jewish community and all Jews in our country" and "its readiness to protect them.

"It is doing everything so that the perpetrators of this crime are found as soon as possible," the statement said.

POLICE PROMISE GREATER VIGILANCE AGAINST UNREST IN CROWN HEIGHTS

By Jackie Rothenberg

NEW YORK, Aug. 22 (JTA) -- Police officers in the strife-torn Crown Heights section of Brooklyn will pursue a more aggressive approach to arresting those responsible for acts of violence and vandalism, Mario Selvaggi, chief of patrol for the New York Police Department, said Thursday.

Selvaggi, while stressing that no changes in policy were being made, said that the police presence would be significantly increased and that officers would exercise heightened vigilance.

The promised changes heartened members of the Jewish community in Crown Heights, where racial tension between blacks and Jews has flared into violence for the last three days.

The unrest was set off by a traffic accident Monday, in which a car driven by a Hasidic man struck and killed a 7-year-old black child. Gangs of black youths began rampaging through the neighborhood and, three hours later, Yankel Rosenbaum, a 29-year-old Hasidic scholar from Australia, was killed in retaliation.

At a news conference in Crown Heights on Thursday, called by the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, memorial candles were lit and prayers said for both Gavin Cato, the young accident victim, and Rosenbaum.

JCRC President Kenneth Bialkin said that while "the time to talk is coming, the time to act is now."

He said Jewish community leaders are counting on the police and Mayor David Dinkins to restore calm on the streets of Crown Heights. But if racial tensions continue, they said, the National Guard should be put on alert.

Deaths Cannot Be Equated

Dinkins, who held a brief news conference later Thursday with Brooklyn Borough President Howard Golden, said there is no need for the National Guard to respond.

"Our police department is quite capable of handling this situation," he said.

Throughout the week, representatives of Jewish organizations have expressed the view that there is a great injustice in the way Jews are being treated as a result of the accident that took the life of young Gavin Cato.

While the organizations have stressed the tragic element in both the child's death and Rosenbaum's, they have also made pointed distinctions between the accidental death of the child and the intentional murder of the Hasidic scholar.

"To equate the two is to invite the complete disintegration of civilized existence in our city," the American Jewish Congress said in a statement.

One concern of the Jewish community was addressed Thursday when, according to Sgt. Edgar DeLeon of the police department's Bias Incident Investigation Unit, police officially gave the murder of Rosenbaum a "bias log number," meaning the case is being investigated as a bias crime.

In addition, DeLeon said, all assaults and complaints in the area that took place after the accident are being investigated as bias incidents.

Rabbi Shea Hecht, chairman of the National Committee for the Furtherance of Jewish Education, said most blacks in Crown Heights support the Hasidim and many had come by to express shame for the actions of some of their fellow blacks. "With tears in their eyes, they came and said, 'Please don't judge us that way,'" he said.

ANOTHER EXECUTIVE ARRESTED FOR ROLE IN HELPING LIBYA PRODUCE POISON GAS
By David Kantor

BONN, Aug. 22 (JTA) -- Police in the German city of Mannheim have arrested another former executive of the Imhausen chemical company, who will face charges of complicity in helping Libya build a factory to produce poison gas.

Hans-Joachim Renner was picked up Tuesday on orders from the same Mannheim court where three other former Imhausen executives are currently on trial.

Chief Prosecutor Peter Wechsung said he ordered Renner's arrest because there was a chance he might try to escape or destroy evidence that could lead to his conviction.

According to the prosecutor, Renner knew from the start that "Pharma 150," the project he worked on from 1984 through 1988, was helping Libya build a plant to produce chemical weapons, in violation of Germany's export regulations.

Three other Imhausen executives, Eugen Lang, Friedrich Schoffel and Rudiger Berndt, went on trial last month. Lang admitted in court last Friday that he knew the true purpose of his work.

Jurgen Hippenstiel-Imhausen, founder and former manager of the company, is serving a five-year prison term for his part in the poison-gas project.

KALMAN KAHANA, TALMUDIC SCHOLAR AND FORMER KNESSET MEMBER, IS DEAD
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Aug. 22 (JTA) -- Rabbi Kalman Kahana, one of the last surviving signers of Israel's proclamation of independence in 1948, was buried here Wednesday.

A longtime leader of the Poalei Agudat Yisrael party and a widely respected Talmudic scholar, he died in Jerusalem this week at the age of 82.

Kahana, scion of a family of rabbis, was born in Lvov, in what was then Poland, and was educated at the Berlin rabbinical seminary in Germany, where he was a favored disciple of the seminary's Talmudic luminary, Rabbi Yehiel Weinberg.

After settling in Palestine in 1938, Kahana studied under the "Hazon Ish," Rabbi Yeshayahu Karelitz of Bnei Brak, the foremost scholar of the strictly Orthodox community in Palestine at that time.

Kahana was a founding member of the Poalei Agudat Yisrael Kibbutz Chofetz Chaim, in the northern Negev, and served for many years as its rabbi.

He also served as a member of the Knesset from 1949 to 1974 and was deputy minister of education in several Labor-led governments from 1962 through 1969.

Throughout that period, he continued his Talmudic studies and research. He published several scholarly works, particularly in the area of "mitzvot hatluyot ba'aretz" -- laws applying to agricultural life in Israel.

After retiring from politics in 1981, Kahana founded a scholarly institute in Jerusalem devoted to the same area of Jewish law.

The Poalei Agudat Yisrael party has since merged with Agudat Yisrael and is represented in the Knesset by Avraham Verdiger.

JTS CHANCELLOR EMERITUS GERSON COHEN DIES AT 66

NEW YORK, Aug. 19 (JTA) -- Funeral services were held Sunday for Rabbi Gerson Cohen, chancellor emeritus of the Jewish Theological Seminary, who died early last Saturday morning of a disease of the nervous system. He was 66.

Cohen's 13-year term as JTS chancellor began in 1972, when he succeeded Rabbi Louis Finkelstein as head of Conservative Judaism's spiritual and academic center.

He resigned in June 1985 due to ill health, saying he was no longer able "to give the job the 125 percent effort it deserves."

Although Cohen's tenure may be best remembered for the seminary's 1984 decision to ordain women, Cohen himself called the move overly controversial and divisive.

In fact, Cohen was vehemently opposed to the idea when it was first raised in 1978.

"Religion is committed to tradition," he said in 1985, "and we're committed to halacha (Jewish law) and to those usages that have been so accepted as to carry halachic weight."

Ordaining women, he believed at the time, violated that principle.

Cohen established a commission to study the question and, he hoped, to reject it.

"The first real witness was a well-known rabbinic authority I had hoped would kill the issue once and for all," he said.

"As a result of questioning him and his point of view, I was shaken. We began to discuss principles rather than correct politics. I was converted to the moral rectitude and halachic validity for this change."

From then on, Cohen was an ardent supporter of the move.

Wrote Several Scholarly Books

Cohen oversaw the building of the new seminary library, which houses the most outstanding collection of Judaica outside Israel. The original library was ravaged by fire in 1966.

Born in New York in 1924, Cohen was elected a Phi Beta Kappa while at the City College of New York, from which he graduated with special honors. In 1948, he was ordained by the seminary.

Cohen, who also held bachelor's and master's of Hebrew literature degrees from the seminary, received a doctorate in Semitic languages from Columbia University.

Prior to his appointment as chancellor, Cohen served the seminary as its librarian and taught Talmud, Jewish literature and history.

Under his direction, the seminary created an Institute for the Study of European Jewry to examine the Holocaust's impact on survivors as well as the contemporary Jewish world.

"It is not enough to mourn the dead," he said at its establishment in October 1984. "Remembering involves digesting the experience."

He also taught at Columbia University, where he served, too, as director of the Center of Israel and Jewish Studies.

Cohen was a member of the President's Commission on the Holocaust and a fellow of the American Academy for Jewish Research.

He wrote several scholarly books, among them the "Story of the Four Captives" and "Reconstruction of Gaonic History." Recently, his "Studies in the Variety of Rabbinic Cultures" was chosen to be the second volume in the Jewish Publication Society's Scholar of Distinction Series.