

**CHANGES SWEEPING SOVIET UNION
HOLD PROMISE AND PERIL FOR JEWS**

JTA Staff Report

NEW YORK, Aug. 25 (JTA) -- The changes sweeping the Soviet Union in the wake of the collapse last week of the attempted coup by hard-liners are bound to accelerate liberal reforms from which the Soviet Jewish community can only benefit.

But Soviet experts and observers fear that dangers lurk for Jews once the euphoria over the victory of the democratic forces dissipates.

Instability looms if the reforms fail to produce swift improvements in the economy, and ethnic strife may force Jews to take sides in contests between conflicting nationalities vying for power in the breakaway republics.

Soviet Jews exhibited remarkable courage when the military coup struck Aug. 19 with strong signs that it might succeed.

Leaders of the Vaad, the umbrella body of Soviet Jewish organizations, immediately announced their support of the constitutional process forcefully upheld by Boris Yeltsin, the president of the Russian republic, who is the only Soviet official ever elected by popular vote.

The top officials of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry wrote to Yeltsin in Moscow last Thursday, expressing their "admiration and deepest respect" for his "courageous leadership, which led the forces of democracy in opposition to the reactionary forces who, in desperation, sought to turn back the clock of time."

Shoshana Cardin, the group's chairman, and Martin Wenick, its executive director, pledged their continued support of the Russian president's efforts.

Jewish Martyr Is Buried

A Russian statement by Cardin was prompted on learning that one of the three young men killed Aug. 20 resisting tanks and becoming instant martyrs for democracy was Jewish.

He was Ilya Krichevsky, 28, shot in the head as he tried to rush a tank advancing on the Russian parliament building.

Yeltsin eulogized the three men Saturday, as a crowd of 100,000 gathered in the newly named Square of Free Russia for their funerals, which were televised nationally.

Relatives of the Jewish victim agreed to bury him with the other two, even though Jewish religious law forbids burials on the Sabbath. Krichevsky's coffin was draped with both a Russian flag and a white Jewish prayer shawl, or tallit.

"We join the mourners for him and the two other heroic men who were prepared to fight to defend democratic principles," Cardin said in her statement.

In an interview, Wenick, a former U.S. State Department specialist on the Soviet Union, spoke of the prospects of instability as the Soviet people try to cope with the most dramatic changes in their country since the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917.

What worried him was "the morning after, when the euphoria wears off."

Right now, the country is "being run more

by committee than by law," he said. There is "inefficiency, centralism."

Wenick asked pointedly, "What's the map of the Soviet Union going to be? What are the relations of the parts to the whole? There you're getting into questions about the rights and role of ethnic minorities."

Asked if growing intolerance of minorities was possible, he replied, "There's clearly the potential for a certain amount of anarchy. We know what's broken down. But what is in place to replace it?"

"There's some concern about Jews getting caught in the middle of ethnic problems," Wenick said. The most dangerous areas are the Ukraine and Moldavia, "one of the areas where historical anti-Semitism has had a fairly deep hold."

Asked about Yeltsin's reported ties to some ultranationalist groups, Wenick said Yeltsin met with a group from the anti-Semitic Pamyat movement in 1987, but that their conversation was about the preservation of Soviet monuments.

"I have seen nothing subsequent to that to indicate that he has harbored anti-Semitic views," he said.

In addition, people close to Yeltsin kept in close contact with the Jewish community during the coup.

According to Rabbi Arthur Schneier, president of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation in New York, at the height of the failed putsch last week, a 24-hour direct telephone line was opened between the office of the Soviet chief rabbi, Adolph Shayevitch, and Yeltsin's cohorts holding out in the Russian parliament building.

Pamela Cohen, president of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, said, "There have been problems with Yeltsin before he became president, but since his election, he has surrounded himself with very, very fine cadres of advisers, including some who were political prisoners. We have not seen any anti-Semitism emerge."

Changes At The Foreign Ministry

As for the Cabinet reshuffle following collapse of the coup, Wenick said he had met with the new head of the KGB, Vadim Bakatin, when he was a national security adviser to President Mikhail Gorbachev.

"He struck one as being staunchly in favor of democratic reforms and certainly did not seem to be inclined to impede emigration," Wenick said.

"He promised to look into any problems that might result in bureaucratic delays," he added.

According to Wenick, the Soviet Foreign Ministry is "in somewhat of a cloud" because at least some of the people there were in contact with the coup plotters.

Gorbachev fired Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh, who at least appeared to have fence-straddled during the coup, waiting to see which side would prevail.

Bessmertnykh was the first Soviet foreign minister ever to visit Israel and had "been part of the process in terms of improving relations with Israel," Wenick said.

But he doubted that Bessmertnykh's replacement would have "any impact on the Jewish question," though it "raises some questions on how the Foreign Ministry will operate."

**TRADE BENEFITS LIKELY FOR USSR,
BUT TO BE WITHHELD FOR ROMANIA**

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Aug. 25 (JTA) -- American Jewish groups expect the newly restored and reform-minded government of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev to soon be granted U.S. trade benefits for the first time since 1951.

At the same time, they are backing the Bush administration's decision last week to only partially waive trade sanctions against Romania, where Jews have increasingly become targets of popular anti-Semitism since the ouster and execution of dictator Nicolae Ceausescu in December 1989.

Congress is expected to vote in September on granting the Soviet Union most-favored-nation trade status, when it considers ratifying a U.S.-Soviet trade agreement signed by Presidents Bush and Gorbachev in June 1990.

"Clearly, they are going to reinstate it," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive director of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. He predicted the United States will be granting the Soviet Union "a lot more benefits" in the coming months.

Countries with MFN status receive the lowest possible duties on their imports into the United States, and in turn give U.S. goods similar treatment.

MFN status for the Soviet Union was revoked during the Korean War. And in 1974, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the U.S. Trade Act made granting of MFN status and other benefits conditional on recipient countries allowing their citizens to emigrate freely.

Current Eastern European beneficiaries include Czechoslovakia, Hungary and Poland. But Romania has not received MFN status since 1988.

Partial Waiver For Romania

Last week, Bush decided to grant Romania a partial waiver of trade sanctions, which would make it eligible to receive credits for the purchase of American farm products but would leave it ineligible for MFN status.

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater cited the fact that Romanians enjoy "wide freedom of emigration" as a reason for granting the partial waiver and said that a full waiver will be "decided on the basis of further substantial progress toward a market economy and democratic pluralism."

The World Jewish Congress said a partial waiver was a "correct" decision, in that Romania "still has somewhere to go" in improving its internal human rights situation for minorities.

Any future U.S. judgment that Romania has expanded democratic pluralism "would take into account the human rights situation" facing Jews, said Elan Steinberg, WJC executive director.

Since Ceausescu's downfall, anti-Semitism has resurfaced in Romania, as nationalist sentiment flourished and citizens were given the freedom to express views long suppressed by the former Communist regime.

"We don't accuse the government of being behind it," said Steinberg. But the WJC urges Romania to "take much more forceful action" to punish those who commit "hate crimes," he said.

As for the Soviet Union, MFN status has been linked since the mid-1970s to the emigration question. But after the Soviet legislature adopted a long-promised emigration reform bill in May,

President Bush decided the time had come to waive Jackson-Vanik sanctions and grant MFN status.

The National Conference on Soviet Jewry has endorsed the granting of MFN status to the Soviet Union since December 1990, on the basis of the steady stream of Jewish emigration plus expected Soviet assurances that the emigration will continue.

A Link To Broader Reform?

But the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews opposes ratification of the trade agreement until after the Soviet emigration reforms are shown to be working.

Nevertheless, Pamela Cohen of Chicago, the group's president, predicted Congress would ratify the trade agreement and thereby grant MFN. "There are other issues facing the Congress and U.S.-Soviet relations, and they are not going to be in the mood to create another fight," she said.

By not yet having approved MFN for the Soviets, Congress has "held out far longer than we had any right to expect," she said.

Neither the National Conference nor the Union of Councils wants to see Congress condition MFN for the Soviets on improved market reforms, as the Bush administration has done with Romania. The groups argue that doing so would de-emphasize the direct linkage to emigration made in the Jackson-Vanik Amendment.

But Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) said last week that Congress should approve the U.S.-Soviet trade agreement only "when we know we're going to have a full commitment to reform and when irreversible steps have been taken." The Washington Post reported. Leahy chairs the Senate Agriculture Committee.

**GERMANY TO SPEED ENTRY OF JEWS
FROM USSR, BUT NO INCREASE SEEN**
By David Kantor

BONN, Aug. 25 (JTA) -- While Germany's Interior Ministry has promised to speed up the processing of visa applications from Soviet Jews seeking admission to Germany, no new commitments have been made with respect to numbers, ministry sources said over the weekend.

A request to allow more Jews to enter the country was made by Jewish community officials at an emergency meeting with Interior Minister Wolfgang Schauble last week.

The meeting took place shortly after the Aug. 19 military coup by Communist hard-liners threatened a return to authoritarian rule in the Soviet Union. But the urgency of the situation diminished when the coup collapsed two days later.

The German Jewish community, nevertheless, is anxious to see the Jewish population grow. It numbers about 40,000 at present, a far cry from the 600,000 German Jews before World War II, of whom 100,000 lived in Berlin.

Several German intellectuals have campaigned for free Jewish immigration. They said it would benefit not only the Jewish community, but German society as a whole.

Israeli officials here are opposed. They insist that Israel must be the destination of Jews who leave the Soviet Union.

German policy now is to admit Soviet Jews who have relatives in Germany or who can prove family origins in Germany. They must apply for visas at German consulates in the Soviet Union.

**SHAMIR DISMISSES RIGHT'S DEMANDS
PEACE CONFERENCE PLANS BE SHELVED**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 25 (JTA) -- Demands by hard-line Cabinet members to cancel or postpone the Middle East peace conference planned for October were sharply dismissed Sunday by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and rebutted by Foreign Minister David Levy.

Housing Minister Ariel Sharon, a Likud hard-liner, sided with ministers of the small rightist parties, who argued that last week's aborted coup in the Soviet Union should give Israel second thoughts about the conference.

President Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev decided at their Moscow summit last month that their countries would co-sponsor the conference, aimed at opening direct talks between Israel and the Arab states and Palestinians.

Israel agreed in principle to participate under certain conditions guaranteed by the United States. In weekend interviews, Sharon charged that the Americans were already backing away from their commitment not to include the Palestine Liberation Organization in the peace process.

He called on the government Sunday to "freeze" the process. Shamir replied angrily that there had been no change in the U.S. position.

Rehavim Ze'evi, a minister without portfolio who represents the far right-wing Moledet party, argued that events in the Soviet Union and "the behavior of the Palestinians," many of whom supported the coup before it collapsed, justified postponement of the peace conference for at least six months.

Minister of Science and Energy Yuval Ne'eman, leader of the rightist Tehiya party, asked, "What is the Soviet Union?"

'No Advantages For Israel'

"Will the conference be summoned by President Bush and 15 separatist republics?" Ne'eman asked, referring to the possibility that the independence movement sweeping the republics that comprise the Soviet Union might fracture the country into separate entities.

Ne'eman also maintained Syria does not want peace, based on its refusal to attend a regional conference on water resources scheduled for October in Turkey, because Israel has been invited.

But Foreign Minister Levy, the government's staunchest supporter of the peace process, objected to proposals to slow or abandon it.

Such demands make no political sense and contain no advantages for Israel, he said. "If we stay out of the process, will our situation improve?" Levy asked.

Political analysts believe the United States and the Soviet Union will continue to cooperate in the aftermath of the failed coup. Moreover, the victory of the moderates many speed up the normalization of relations between Israel and the Soviet Union, they said.

Aliyah officials reported at Sunday's weekly Cabinet meeting that visa applications by Soviet Jews have soared since the attempted coup. The largest aliyah potential is in the smaller towns, they said.

Transport Minister Moshe Katsav, who was visiting the Soviet Union when the coup occurred on Aug. 19, said he had reached an agreement with the Soviet authorities to establish direct flights to Israel from Moscow, Leningrad, Riga and Kiev.

**TRIPLE STABBING IN JERUSALEM
MARKS RENEWED INTIFADA EFFORT**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 25 (JTA) -- A triple stabbing in Jerusalem and mounting unrest in the West Bank mobilized security forces over the weekend.

Police set up roadblocks at exits from the city as they searched for a knife-wielding Arab who wounded a policewoman and a teen-age couple near a bus station in the Ramat Eshkol neighborhood of Jerusalem on Saturday night.

Four suspects were reported in custody by Sunday morning. The assailant, described by witnesses as a tall, heavy-set young man, attacked his victims with a long knife, shouting "Allahu akhbar" (God is great).

The policewoman, who was not immediately identified, was stabbed in the stomach and collapsed. She was reported in "good" condition at a hospital.

The couple, Assaf Sharon, a 19-year-old university student, and Sigalit Ben-Yehuda, also 19, were the next victims in the area.

They wrestled with their assailant, who inflicted light wounds and fled in the direction of Nablus Road, a main thoroughfare linking Jerusalem with the West Bank.

In the West Bank itself, the weekend was marked by a spate of gasoline bomb attacks.

Two of the bombs were thrown Saturday night at an army lookout post near the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron. There were no casualties or damage.

Shots were fired Friday at the civil administration headquarters in Jenin, and a gasoline bomb was thrown at an Israeli vehicle there Saturday. Jenin was placed under curfew.

A gasoline bomb was thrown at an Israel Defense Force patrol in Nablus without causing casualties or damage.

Another Building In The Old City

Meanwhile, six Arab women were wounded Saturday when Israeli soldiers fired on a private clinic. The soldiers claimed stones were thrown at their vehicle from the direction of the clinic.

The escalation of Arab violence seems to be in response to provocative moves by Jews in the Old City of Jerusalem and in Hebron.

Last week, yeshiva students took over another building in the Moslem Quarter of the Old City. It is adjacent to the apartment purchased some years ago by Ariel Sharon, Likud's hard-line housing minister.

Sharon rarely occupies the apartment, but his acquisition of it was viewed as a deliberate provocation and encouragement to other Jews to encroach on the Moslem enclave.

Similar occurrences in Hebron have increased tension there. A bus station in the Arab town, confiscated by the army several years ago, has been turned into a temporary dormitory for about 120 students of the Shavei Hebron yeshiva.

The Defense Ministry, meanwhile, has allowed 15 Jewish families from nearby Kiryat Arba to settle in what was formerly a military post at Eshkolot in the Hebron hills.

The Jerusalem police normally take extra security measures just before the High Holidays. Owing to the deteriorating situation, they are now beefing up security two weeks before the holiday season, which starts with Rosh Hashanah at sundown, Sept. 8.

REACTION MIXED TO STATEMENT OF REGRET FROM POLISH CARDINAL

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Aug. 25 (JTA) -- A conciliatory statement issued last week by Cardinal Jozef Glemp of Poland has been met in the American Jewish community by reactions ranging from warm and welcoming to openly disdainful.

In the statement, dated Aug. 12 but released only last Friday, Glemp expresses regret over "misunderstandings" with the Jewish community and appears to retract statements he made two years ago in a homily in Poland.

At that time, Glemp, who heads the Roman Catholic Church in Poland, suggested that seven Jewish activists who had demonstrated at a controversial convent located on the grounds of the former Auschwitz death camp had intended to destroy the convent and kill the Carmelite nuns living there.

In the statement released Friday, Glemp admits that the group, led by New York Rabbi Avi Weiss, "did not intend to kill the sisters or to destroy the convent."

He also calls anti-Semitism "evil and contrary to the spirit of the Gospel."

But the cardinal fails to address specifically the charges he made in his now-infamous homily of Aug. 26, 1989, that Jews were "getting peasants drunk," "spreading communism" and acting "from a position of a people raised above all others."

Outrage over Glemp's comments from Jews and Catholics worldwide forced the prelate to cancel a visit to the United States that he had planned in the fall of 1989.

Glemp now plans to visit the United States next month at the invitation of Archbishop Arthur Maida of Detroit.

His statement, which took the form of a letter to Maida, is seen as an attempt to address American Jewish concern over the Polish primate's past remarks.

'Cold And Insufficient'

But according to Harvard Law School Professor Alan Dershowitz, Glemp's letter does not go far enough.

"Glemp only retracted his statement about Rabbi Weiss in order to avoid a lawsuit," said Dershowitz, who initiated lawsuits on behalf of Weiss in Poland and in the United States, accusing the Polish cardinal of slander and defamation.

"To me, the headline should be 'Cardinal Cops a Plea,'" he said.

"Had it been a from-the-heart apology, he would have apologized for his outrageous statements on the Jews introducing communism to Poland."

Dershowitz plans to wait two weeks before taking any further legal action, to see whether Glemp goes further in apologizing for his remarks about Weiss and his anti-Semitic statements.

Unofficially, Glemp's new statement was called "cold and insufficient" by the head of one major American Jewish organization, who asked not to be identified.

"It was a grudging statement on the part of Glemp," he said. "The whole reference to the Jewish community is in two sentences."

While American bishops are eager to have Glemp come to this country "without too much of a crisis in Catholic-Jewish relations," it does not

appear that Glemp is ready to apologize for his past statements, the Jewish official said.

Officially, Jewish organizational leaders mostly welcomed Glemp's statement, though many were cautious about it.

'Spirit Of Reconciliation'

Seymour Reich, chairman of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, which represents world Jewry in official dealings with the Catholic Church, said that the organization "acknowledges the step taken" by Glemp "as an effort toward improving relations between the Catholic Church in Poland and the Jewish community."

But, he said, "we expect that there will be further clarification from the cardinal while still in Poland and when he arrives in the U.S."

The Synagogue Council of America, the body representing Reform, Conservative and Orthodox rabbis and congregations, "welcomes this spirit of reconciliation," said Rabbi Jack Bemporad, chairman of the group's interreligious affairs committee.

"Cardinal Glemp's statement clearly indicates that he seeks reconciliation and positive relations with the Jewish community," Bemporad said.

Henry Siegman, executive director of the American Jewish Congress, said it is "unfortunate that Cardinal Glemp did not find it in his heart to acknowledge simply and directly the anti-Semitic implications of his homily."

"Nevertheless, we are hopeful" that Glemp's comments "presage a new and less troubled relationship," he said. "There is much work yet to be done."

Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, said, "We view this as the first step in a process in which he will clarify his untoward remarks of two years ago."

"The next step should be a victory for decency," he said.

The Anti-Defamation League, in a statement, suggested that Glemp "find an opportunity to address the issue of anti-Semitism in Poland in a homily that will forever erase the blemish of his 1989 remarks."

Rabbi A. James Rudin, national interreligious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, received Glemp's letter warmly, and stated that it "helps close a painful chapter in Catholic-Jewish relations."

May Face 'Tough Questions'

One of the elements requested by American Jewish leaders in the flurry of behind-the-scenes communication with the National Conference of Catholic Bishops that has taken place over the last several weeks was that the Polish primate make his statement public in Poland, in Polish.

The letter was made public in Poland on Friday, sources say, but it is not yet clear how far the Polish Episcopate, of which Glemp is president, has disseminated his statement.

American Jewish leaders are planning to meet with Glemp in Washington on Sept. 20, the day after he arrives in the United States, and again toward the end of his trip, on or about Oct. 7, in New York.

But one Jewish leader warned that unless Glemp addresses more expansively his remarks of two years ago, before he leaves Poland, he has "got to anticipate that he's going to be faced with some tough questions when he meets with the Jewish community."