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**FATE UNCLEAR OF JEWS REMAINING  
IN FALLEN GEORGIAN CITY OF SUKHUMI**

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- Direct contact has been lost with the small Jewish community remaining in the Georgian city of Sukhumi on the Black Sea, following its capture by Abkhazian separatists this week.

Around 200 Jews remained in Sukhumi, after five separate Jewish Agency rescue operations brought 1,000 of the war-torn city's Jews to Israel in recent months.

Fifty were to have been evacuated last week during the Russian-brokered cease-fire, but the day the operation was scheduled, the cease-fire collapsed and the rescue was aborted.

Baruch Gur, director of the Jewish Agency department dealing with Eastern Europe, said that Jews who had managed to get out before the city was engulfed in fighting reported few or no casualties among the Jews.

But he said that Jewish casualty figures were not known with any degree of accuracy, as the areas where Jews had lived had been badly damaged in the heavy fighting.

"We only know rumors and estimates brought out by those who managed to escape," he told Israel Radio.

Jewish Agency representatives in the Black Sea port cities have so far located 15 Jews among the 13,000 refugees gathering there.

The fall of Sukhumi, the Georgian government's last stronghold in the Abkhazia region, marked a decisive defeat for the forces of Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze, the former foreign minister of the Soviet Union, after 13 months of the civil war.

Shevardnadze, who was forced to flee Sukhumi to the Georgian capital of Tbilisi hours before the city fell, warned that the defeat could lead to the disintegration of Georgia into civil war between ethnic minorities.

Given the likelihood of continuing conflict, Gur of the Jewish Agency estimated that between 30 and 35 percent of the 16,000-strong Jewish community in Georgia is likely to come to Israel by early next year. He said he expects a majority of the Georgian Jews to have reached Israel within two years.

**Tried To Convince Them To Leave**

Seventy-seven Georgian Jews were scheduled to arrive in Israel this week on a Georgian airline with the help of the authorities there, despite the shortage of planes and fuel.

Gur also said it was premature to predict the impact of Russia's current political crisis on the immigration by Russian Jews to Israel.

Last week Natan Sharansky, head of the Zionist Forum, said the dramatic events in Russia could spur aliyah by "masses of Jews" and called on the Israeli government to be ready to absorb huge waves of new immigrants.

Gur said the resources are in place to bring to Israel the people expected to emigrate and that it is too soon to recommend to the government any change in the absorption policy based on recent events.

Speaking with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency

on the day following the fall of Sukhumi, Gur said he is "very bitter" about the decision by the city's 200 Jews to remain there, despite repeated warnings over many months by Jewish Agency representatives that the situation would worsen and they would be in grave danger.

"We did our best to convince them to leave earlier, to facilitate their evacuation," but they chose to stay behind because of their property, he said.

Gur said the Jews of Sukhumi face danger, as do the people of Kutaisi, the capital of Mengrelia, south of Abkhazia and home to 2,500 Jews.

Former Georgian President Zviad Gamsakhurdia, a bitter rival of Shevardnadze, has many supporters in the Kutaisi area, which make it fertile ground for civil war, said Gur.

"Shevardnadze has difficulty controlling the country, and there is a danger of another civil war," he said.

Gur said he expects Jews from Kutaisi to begin immigrating to Israel more steadily.

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

**NEWS ANALYSIS:  
IN AFTERMATH OF KNESSET VOTE,  
LIKUD BATTLING FOR RELEVANCE**  
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- There is a widespread sentiment in the Likud party that history is passing it by.

The feeling certainly crested last week, when the speaker of the Knesset announced the opposition's defeat in the momentous vote over the government's landmark peace accord with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Even before that vote was taken, Likud politicians were calling for the creation of a national unity government with the Labor Party. Those making the appeal doubtless felt it was high time their party came in from the cold.

A feeling of irrelevance has been afflicting Likud politicians both within the Knesset and in key municipal positions.

"The people want peace," says Giora Lev, the popular mayor of Petach Tikvah. Likud should not be drawn to the extreme right, he says, but must instead be seen in the popular mind as a centrist party.

For Lev, as for another leading Likud mayor, Eli Landau of Herzliya, the party's alliance with more ideologically rightist factions, such as the National Religious Party and Moledet, has dulled its leaders' sense of the public mood.

"You are out of touch," Knesset member Meir Sheerit declared last weekend, embracing the entire party leadership in his accusation.

Opinion polls commissioned by the major Israeli newspapers continue to bear out this assessment, showing a solid public majority behind the dramatic peace deal.

An alliance with Labor in a national unity government would, in the view of its advocates, serve to rein in what they regard as the Labor Party's more exuberant excesses in future peace negotiations.

It would also serve to establish Likud's image as a middle-of-the-road political movement

-- and hence as a realistic threat to Labor in the next elections.

In the short term, however, these calls for a unity government are a truer reflection of the internal condition of Likud than they are of practical political reality.

### Challenges To Netanyahu's Leadership

Political pundits here are unanimous in their view that the prospect of the Labor Party opening the Cabinet ranks to include Likud members is negligible at this time. Labor, after all, is still basking in the afterglow of the historic accord signed in Washington and its Knesset victory.

The prospect of a unity government might brighten, however, if Labor fails to reconstitute its presently suspended alliance with the fervently Orthodox Shas party.

Likud, meanwhile, is currently in a state of nearly complete disarray. Benjamin Netanyahu, the party's recently elected leader, has never been as popular within his party -- or indeed within Israel as a whole -- as he is among American Jews.

His rivals include not only Ariel Sharon and David Levy, who feel they were passed over for the party's leadership, but also the second-generation Likud "princes," like Ze'ev "Benny" Begin, Uzi Landau and Dan Meridor. They all continue to speak disparagingly of Netanyahu's abilities.

Nothing hurts a politician, of course, more than failure; and Likud's failure to hold even its own ranks together in the Knesset vote has rankled members within the party.

For this, Netanyahu is responsible, at least in the minds of his many rivals and critics.

Sharon, never one to mince words, has already spoken out in favor of a "collective leadership of experienced men" instead of Netanyahu's one-man rule. Murmurings against the party leader can be heard from others as well.

In part, the calls for a unity government, along with the charge that the party is out of touch with its own constituency, reflect the general mood of dissatisfaction with Netanyahu.

All this naturally enhances the feeling of collective well-being currently coursing through the Labor Party and its left-wing partner, the Meretz bloc. Voices there can already be heard talking of a new 30-year hegemony of the left.

### 'Deri Affair' Still A Sore Point

But Labor's exultation may yet be short-lived if current difficulties surrounding the Shas party prevent its members from remaining in the governing coalition after Sukkot.

The so-called "Deri Affair," in which party leader Aryeh Deri faces fraud and bribery charges, took a new turn this week, with Deri's aides releasing tape recordings in which his police interrogators are heard making derogatory remarks against his wife, Yaffa.

The police officers, who obviously forgot their tape recorder was running, referred to her Moroccan origins in a way that could be construed as racist -- giving the ousted interior minister new grounds for his long-standing accusation that the investigation against him is tainted with anti-Sephardic and anti-religious bias.

Shas declared midweek that it would make its participation in the Labor coalition conditional upon the appointment of an official commission of inquiry to look into these charges.

An inquiry could well clash head-on with the ongoing judicial process against Deri.

The Knesset is due to vote on the removal

of Deri's parliamentary immunity in October, after which a trial date will be set. If the Shas demand for an inquiry gathers steam, the trial could be deferred indefinitely.

At any rate, this new complication could upset Yitzhak Rabin's many plans to reconstitute his government. The coalition broke apart after Deri stepped down from his post, along with Deputy Religious Affairs Minister Raphael Pinhasi, who is also accused of financial misconduct.

Small as these matters may seem in the shadow of the historic developments that Israel is currently going through, they may yet cast an ominous shadow on Rabin's ability to navigate his ship of state through the coming months of stormy diplomatic negotiations toward peace.

### **IN JERUSALEM, BUILDING A SUKKAH NO LONGER A BACK-BREAKING AFFAIR** By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- Building a sukkah in Israel used to be a back-breaking, all-day affair.

Not anymore.

While planks of wood were once the material of choice for constructing a family sukkah, more and more people are opting for the "prefab" models that many families abroad have enjoyed for years.

Made of reusable nylon or cotton sheeting and adjustable metal poles, the new sukkahs are a welcome change for those who love to celebrate the holiday of Sukkot but hate putting up the makeshift booths where meals are eaten.

On Agrippas Street, behind the Machaneh Yehudah food market, dozens of sukkah vendors had set up shop more than a week before the holiday, which begins Wednesday evening. Shoppers walked from booth to booth, haggling over the fabric that would make up the walls of their sukkah, as well as the poles and decorations.

As much a cultural event here as a religious holiday, the shoppers included everyone from secular Jews to the haredim, or fervently Orthodox.

"We don't eat in the sukkah every day, as religious Jews do, but I wanted my children to feel a part of the holiday," said Maya Cohen, who described herself as a Reform Jew.

"Wooden sukkahs are too much trouble to put up and store, so we didn't have one in the past. But a friend told me how great these new prefab sukkahs are, so we decided to buy one this year," she said.

An Orthodox man wearing a black hat and caftan also said he favored a light-weight sukkah.

"Every year it seems to get harder to put up our wooden sukkah. Maybe I'm just getting older," he said with a laugh. "Also, our children are starting to marry, and the family is expanding, so the prefab sukkahs are much more versatile."

Still, there are many who have no intention of abandoning their traditional wooden sukkahs, some of which have been passed down for generations.

"You see these paintings?" asked one middle-aged man in the Geulah section of the city, pointing to a colorful scene of a shtetl painted onto the inner wall of his sukkah.

"My father painted this from memory. His village was virtually destroyed during the Holocaust, and this is how it looked before the war."

As long as there is Sukkot, he said, "my family will be using this sukkah."

## REFUGEE LEVELS MAY STAY SAME NEXT YEAR, BUT FUTURE UNCLEAR

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- With the current instability in Russia as a backdrop, the United States has been considering how many refugees, including Jews from the former Soviet Union, to admit in fiscal year 1994.

Since 1989, the United States has been admitting tens of thousands of Soviet Jews each year as refugees, and advocates see the trend remaining steady for 1994.

But there are hints from the Clinton administration that the program could be phased out within the next couple of years, a development that would greatly upset the Jewish community.

Many Jewish groups remain concerned that the politically and economically unstable situation in the former Soviet Union is continuing to result in persecution of Jews.

But some in the U.S. government think that with the fall of the Soviet Union, there is little need for special refugee programs for Jews from that region.

President Clinton is expected to ask Congress to permit 55,000 refugees to arrive here from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe during the 1994 fiscal year, which begins Friday.

During the 1993 fiscal year, Congress provided funds for a maximum of 50,000 refugees from the former Soviet Union and another 1,500 from Eastern Europe. The combined total for 1994 would allow an additional 3,500 refugees to enter the country.

In the past, Jewish groups have reached informal agreements with the government that a high percentage of refugees from the former Soviet Union will be Jews.

In previous years, about 80 percent of the refugees have been Jewish, and the number is expected to remain about the same or drop slightly if large numbers of people fleeing Bosnia-Herzegovina seek refuge in the United States.

Martin Wenick, executive vice president of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, one of the key groups dealing with Jewish refugees, said last week that he expects the number of Jews admitted from the former Soviet Union to stay at about 40,000, the same level as in fiscal year 1993.

### Would Like To Phase Out Program

HIAS estimates that approximately 37,000 Jewish refugees from the former Soviet republics will have immigrated here by the end of the 1993 fiscal year. By comparison, 47,750 arrived in 1992 and 27,628 arrived in 1991.

In testimony before House and Senate committees last week, administration officials and refugee advocates discussed the often-touchy questions surrounding both current and future refugee programs.

Currently, there are two major refugee programs, serving Southeast Asia and the former Soviet Union, which together account for the bulk of the refugees admitted to the United States each year.

The administration plans to cut the Southeast Asia program within a year and hinted that it would like to phase the Soviet program out within a couple of years.

In testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee last Thursday, Secretary of State Warren Christopher spoke cautiously of improve-

ments in the Russian political situation that could result in changes in upcoming years.

In reply to a question from Sen. Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.), Christopher said, "The situation in the Soviet Union is rapidly changing in the direction of greater freedom and less persecution."

"I would expect over the next couple of years to have quite a dramatic change" in the refugee situation in the former Soviet Union "if the conditions of growing freedom persist in the Soviet Union," the secretary said.

But he added that the situation is still unstable, as witnessed by the current political crisis pitting Russian President Boris Yeltsin against the Russian Parliament.

Also, in response to a question from Sen. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa), Christopher commented on the ongoing anti-Semitism in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

"Those problems, those ugly problems are not behind us," he conceded.

### Concern Over Bosnian Refugees

HIAS officials said that Warren Zimmerman, the State Department's refugee affairs director, was more blunt about the future of the refugee program for the former Soviet Union, in testimony the same day before the House Judiciary subcommittee on international law, immigration and refugees.

Zimmerman, they said, discussed phasing out the refugee program and replacing it with a regular immigration program. But he, too, raised concern over the continuing instability in the former Soviet Union.

HIAS officials say they are in constant touch with the administration over the fate of the refugee program. If it were replaced with a regular immigration program, they say, it would be much harder for Jews to immigrate here from the former Soviet Union because of more stringent entry requirements.

Another concern for Jewish groups and others is the issue of refugees from Bosnia.

Concerned about the "ethnic cleansing" taking place in that former Yugoslav republic, HIAS has urged the administration to ensure that efficient facilities are in place to process those Bosnians who wish to seek refuge here.

The administration's plans call for a worldwide total of 120,000 refugees to enter the country during the 1994 fiscal year, a reduction of 2,000 from 1993.

Because of the unstable situation in Bosnia, which could result in a higher number of Bosnians seeking refuge here, the administration is combining the numbers for the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe this year, to encourage flexibility.

It is possible that if more Bosnians are allowed to enter the United States, the number of Jews allowed to immigrate here from the former Soviet Union would decrease slightly, but HIAS does not expect a significant drop.

Wenick of HIAS was one of a number of refugee advocates testifying at last week's House Judiciary subcommittee hearing.

In written testimony prepared for the hearing, he called for a total of 150,000 refugees to be admitted, 30,000 more than the administration's figures, and stressed the continuing problems facing Jews in the former Soviet Union.

**REMINDER: The JTA Daily News Bulletin will not be published Friday, Oct. 1.**

# **BEHIND THE HEADLINES: NEW FORMS OF JEWISH CHARITY EVOLVING BASED ON RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL VALUES** By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- Laura Solomon, her husband and two other couples are planning a tzedakah collective, through which they will jointly decide how to distribute their charitable dollars.

The three young couples are good friends who met through their Philadelphia synagogue and have several reasons for wanting to try to pool their efforts.

"The whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and everyone brings to the table new possibilities," said Solomon.

"By aggregating, we have the ability to make more of an impact to improve the community. We're sometimes frustrated by the nickel-and-dime giving" that we can afford to do on our own, she said.

Theirs will be one of a few dozen formal and informal tzedakah collectives around the country, some of which began in the 1970s, born of a desire for intensive personal involvement in deciding where each charitable dollar goes.

Tzedakah collectives make up one facet of a quietly growing movement of Jews who, by making socially and spiritually conscious decisions about how they contribute and invest and spend their money, are building a "Torah of money" for contemporary life.

The term has been coined by Lawrence Bush and Jeffrey Dekro in their new book "Jews, Money & Social Responsibility: Developing a 'Torah of Money' for Contemporary Life."

According to Bush and Dekro, developing a "Torah of Money" means making decisions based on social responsibility spurred by Jewish spirituality.

It is about basing financial decisions on an ethos in which "the dictates of the bottom line and the teachings of the 'Most High' are harmonized," write the authors.

And it is an approach to money -- particularly in the area of tzedakah -- which seems to be catching on.

The charitable organizations within the Jewish community that focus on this ethos are relatively small groups.

## **New Groups Have Grown Despite Economy**

But over the past several years, as the recession has battered the ability of even philanthropic heavyweights to keep up donations, these ethics-based agencies have grown.

For example, Mazon: A Jewish Response to Hunger, has more than doubled its income and grantmaking in the past four years. This past year, it disbursed \$1.65 million to anti-hunger programs, up from \$700,000 in 1989.

Mazon disburses money to anti-hunger programs within the Jewish community, to non-sectarian agencies domestically and to crisis areas like Sarajevo.

In 1985, the year it began making grants, the Jewish Fund for Justice disbursed \$30,000. In 1992 it donated \$421,525 to housing and community revitalization projects.

The Shefa Fund gave out about \$37,000 during its first year, 1988-89, and this year will facilitate the disbursement of eight times that amount -- \$225,000 -- in contributions to projects related to social and economic justice, the impact

of gender and the arts. The fund was founded by Dekro, co-author of the "Torah of Money" book.

The New Israel Fund, which disburses money to a wide range of projects in Israel dedicated to issues including civil rights, women's rights and Israeli-Palestinian coexistence, has more than doubled the amount it raises since 1988.

NIF in 1988 raised \$3.3 million. In 1992, the last year for which figures are available, the organization raised \$8.4 million.

Something about the way these groups do business is clearly appealing to American Jews.

Foremost among the attractions is the sense of personal stewardship that contributors to these funds feel over their donations.

People want a sense "of direct participation in the process," said Dekro.

"People giving small sums are not likely to feel part of the process because federations are run by wealthy people. That means that people with smaller amounts to donate do not feel directly part of the process," he said.

## **Attractive To Those Feeling Excluded**

These newer groups "all represent new forms of giving, and are attractive vehicles for people who have been marginally identified" because they feel that Jewish community institutions have excluded them, he added.

Accountability is greatly valued by these groups' donors.

We get "a high level of scrutiny" from contributors, said Norman Rosenberg, executive director of the New Israel Fund. "They question what's in the annual report, ask for progress reports. The demand grows as time goes by."

Other influences -- like the social responsibility movement and a desire to connect to and express Jewish values through every act -- are also at work.

"Many of us were raised in an age of pursuit of social justice and having money was something we condemned when we were younger," said Dekro.

"Now we know we need money for our families and we are finding that more money is available to us. We are trying to combine positive social values and the resources available to us for our needs and the larger needs of society as a whole," he said.

But social action is only a "secondary" motivator, said Irving Cramer, executive director of Mazon. "The principle glue is a sense of religion, a sense of spirituality, of tradition."

All of these facets of the "Torah of Money" are part of an effort to engage Jews consciously in the Jewish process of giving charity, and using that to strengthen their bond to the Jewish community -- in short, utilizing tzedakah as a vehicle for Jewish continuity.

"People feel excited when they discover these Jewish vehicles for them to participate as Jews" in tzedakah, "when they had been raised to believe there was only one way to give, and that was to their federation," said Dekro.

According to Marlene Provizer, executive director of the Jewish Fund for Justice, the opportunity afforded by some of these new philanthropies to marry spirituality, community and social responsibility "connects people to a sense of mission and purpose and feeling part of a community of shared values, which mitigates against a sense of isolation.

"People want to make a Jewish statement and see it as part of their Jewish identity."