

WZO LEADER PREACHES ALIYAH TO NEW SOVIET JEWISH CONGRESS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- The head of the World Zionist Organization has been allowed, for the first time in history, to preach aliyah directly to Soviet Jews in Moscow.

And according to Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the WZO and Jewish Agency Executives, he received a rousing response.

Dinitz delivered the keynote address Tuesday afternoon at the founding conference of the Congress of Jewish Organizations and Communities of the USSR, the first event of its kind since the Bolshevik revolution.

More than 700 Jews, representing 75 communities all over the Soviet Union, gathered in Moscow's Cinema Center to attend the five-day conference, which began Monday.

Their purpose was to establish an independent confederation of Soviet Jewish organizations that would develop a consensus on the priorities and objectives of their constituents.

Dinitz reported by telephone Wednesday that aliyah was a focal issue of the proceedings, and that the atmosphere surrounding it was very favorable.

He said he and other Israelis were approached by hundreds of delegates who asked specific questions about immigration and conditions in Israel.

Dinitz began his speech in Hebrew, saying he brought the delegates and all the Jews of the Soviet Union "birkat shalom m'Yerushalayim" (a blessing of peace from Jerusalem).

He used the occasion to thank the Soviet authorities for facilitating the participation of top Jewish Agency and Jewish Diaspora leaders at the conference.

He also noted that there were still hundreds of refuseniks whose problems in gaining permission to emigrate had to be resolved.

No Israeli Immigration Quota

"Israel has no quota on immigration," Dinitz told the gathering, a reminder that the United States has placed a ceiling of 50,000 on the number of refugees it will admit annually from the Soviet Union, including non-Jews.

Dinitz promised the congress that five additional shlichim, or emissaries, from the WZO would be sent soon to five Soviet cities to encourage and assist Jews contemplating aliyah.

He said the current backlog in applications for required invitations to come to Israel would be cleared up soon and that thereafter, the process would take only two months.

Dinitz also pledged that the Jewish Agency and the government would see to it that not one immigrant from the Soviet Union would be without a home or without a job.

Reports from Diaspora Jewish observers said some delegates insisted that the congress emphasize aliyah, while others maintained that equal importance should be given to conditions for Jews who choose to remain in the Soviet Union.

A suggestion was made that the U.S. government be asked to increase the number of refugee slots and that other countries should be asked to

admit Soviet Jews.

A non-Jewish human rights activist representing the Russian People's Front apologized for the anti-Semitic demonstrations outside the cinema hall Monday by members of the right-wing chauvinist group Pamyat, who physically harassed some of the delegates.

The speaker said neither Pamyat nor another anti-Semitic splinter group called Motherland would have any success in the upcoming elections.

Pamyat also staged a demonstration Wednesday. But according to reports from Moscow, it was non-violent.

There was also a demonstration by several dozen masked Palestinian students in Moscow, who tried to persuade delegates to the conference not to support the State of Israel. They were dispersed by police.

One of the most moving moments of the day, Dinitz reported, was a concert given Wednesday evening at Moscow's Tanganka Theater by Jewish artists and musicians from all over the Soviet Union.

When a string quartet from the Latvian city of Riga struck up the sentimental notes of the Israeli national anthem "Hatikvah," hundreds of Soviet Jews in attendance rose to join in.

LIST OF 1,300 WAR CRIMINALS COMES TO LIGHT AFTER 44 YEARS

By Elli Wohlgeleenter

NEW YORK, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- A list of hundreds of previously unidentified Lithuanian war-crimes suspects, as well as a precise accounting of the fate of Jews who were killed there, has come to light after 44 years, the Simon Wiesenthal Center said Tuesday.

The list was culled from 160 files of testimony from Jewish survivors taken after the war by a survivor of the Kovno ghetto, according to Efraim Zuroff, director of the Wiesenthal Center's office in Israel.

The survivor, Leib Kunichowsky, had visited 10 displaced persons camps, taking notes from eyewitnesses about events that occurred in 171 small towns and villages of Lithuania. Kunichowsky himself turned over the two briefcases of files to Yad Vashem three months ago.

Zuroff said in a telephone interview that the material "relates to numerous places about which there is very scanty material to date. We are certain that among these people are criminals that escaped to the West, and we plan to determine their post-war destination and submit the names to authorities to be investigated."

The biggest unanswered question is why Kunichowsky, who lives in Florida, waited until now to turn over the documents. Zuroff speculated that Kunichowsky originally had wanted to get the files published as a book.

Realizing that there were no takers, and yielding to his advancing age, he finally decided it was better to have the names and files kept in a safe place.

Zuroff said he was aware of the files when he worked for the U.S. Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations in the early 1980s. He had formally requested access to them then, but to no avail.

The 1,300 names on the list are Lithuanians who collaborated with the Nazis in 1941 and 1942, when wholesale mass killings of Jews took place, especially after Germany invaded the Soviet Union on June 22, 1941.

The 1,683 pages, handwritten in terse Yiddish with vowels, detail line by line the facts and names surrounding the deportation or murder of individuals and families.

The names of the Lithuanians are also written in English. In addition, Kunichowsky had witnesses sign their pages of testimony.

His documents are invaluable in that they provide rare historical documentation from the few Jews who survived the mass killings that took place in Lithuania.

Neal Sher, director of the OSI, said that in terms of prosecuting those Lithuanians who are still alive, "it might prove useful if it identifies people who are alive in the United States. It could be a useful source."

Sher said the list, which he called a "unique holding," includes names already known to OSI, as well as new names. The list will also help in identifying and prosecuting war criminals in Canada, Australia and Great Britain.

"We don't know how important it will be just yet," he said, but "it's clearly a valuable addition to what we have, in terms of the plight of Lithuanian Jews -- there's no question. It adds to the history of crimes that took place in Lithuania."

Raoul Hilberg, an eminent historian of the Holocaust, said he was very disturbed to hear that such a list existed and had not been given to OSI 10 years ago, when the agency was established.

10 Years To Corroborate

"If a person had been going around a D.P. camp taking notes and didn't give it in (to OSI), then your real story is not that such a list existed, but that someone could have been sitting on it for profit," Hilberg said.

He said it takes a "major effort to verify one name," let alone 1,300. Each name must be "subject to scrutiny, one by one, to find out if they're alive and if any of them was in any battalion."

The prosecution of the Lithuanians could prove difficult, Hilberg said. "You have to have clear evidence that they did something," he said, as well as "corroborating witnesses -- more than one."

"Corroborating such a list will take 10 years," making prosecution impossible for the many more elderly perpetrators who will die off by then, he said.

"This almost makes me mad," Hilberg said. "What good is all this? Why didn't he hand in this list to the U.S. government? Was he waiting for someone to give him \$100,000?"

Zuroff said Kunichowsky came to the United States in 1948 or 1949, then made aliyah in the mid-1970s. He lived in Bat Yam for 10 years before moving back to the United States.

JEWISH GROUPS SHOCKED AND CONCERNED BY BOMB ATTACKS ON OFFICIALS, NAACP By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- Jewish organizations have joined civil rights groups in expressing shock and dismay over a series of letter bombings directed at public officials and the

offices of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Law enforcement officials now believe that the bombs, which have killed two persons, were sent by white supremacists.

American Jewish organizations, realizing that they could also become the target of attacks from such groups, are taking extra security precautions.

The bombings began Sunday at the home of Judge Charles Vance of the 11th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals, in Birmingham, Ala. Vance was killed and his wife was seriously hurt.

On Monday, a similar bomb fatally injured Savannah, Ga., Alderman Robert Robinson. A third bomb was found later Monday in the courthouse where Vance worked.

Both men dealt with the issue of drug enforcement, leading authorities initially to suspect that they had become targets of the Colombian drug cartels.

But the FBI and the Justice Department are now pointing the finger at white supremacist groups. Both Vance and Robinson had been involved in the issue of busing to desegregate schools.

Vance had worked on a case of school busing in Jacksonville. Police found a package bomb Tuesday at the Jacksonville NAACP office.

FBI Director William Sessions said Tuesday that a racial motive "is one of the factors in the back of our minds."

Heightened State Of Alert

Ira Silverman, executive vice president of the American Jewish Committee, sent a letter Wednesday to the Rev. Benjamin Hooks, NAACP's national director, expressing condolences and offering the NAACP any help it might need.

"These bombs remind us that the fight for social justice is not without danger. If we can do anything to help in this time of pain, please let us know. Our thoughts are with you," he wrote.

Later in the day, Albert Vorspan, senior vice president of the Reform movement's Union of American Hebrew Congregations, sent a mailgram to Hooks, saying that UAHC "stands with you against threats and violence by racists and haters."

"Their vicious assaults cannot undo the gains or intimidate the coalitions of decency in America" he added.

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith issued a statement on Tuesday calling for the further strengthening of "ongoing surveillance and prosecution of violence-prone extremists."

ADL "stands ready to assist in bringing to justice those responsible for the heinous murders," said Abraham Foxman, the organization's national director.

The threats also mandate heightened alertness at ADL offices, Foxman said.

The National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council is coordinating a security strategy with other Jewish organizations, which would include a rehearsal of what steps to take in the event of an attack.

Jerome Chanes, the group's co-director for domestic concerns, said NJCRAC would soon be sending out a "security alert for Jewish organizations and agencies, as we normally do when situations as this arise."

The alert would detail "prudent and necessary steps" that Jewish groups "should always be taking, particularly with regard to suspicious packages."

**PROGRESS REPORTED, BUT UNCONFIRMED
IN ISRAELI ENVOY'S TALKS WITH U.S.**

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- Israeli Cabinet Secretary Elyakim Rubinstein may have made some progress this week in resolving differences with the Bush administration over the peace process.

A pro-Israel source on Capitol Hill quoted an administration official as saying that Israel and the United States "have closed some of the gaps, but several remain."

But a State Department official said Wednesday that Rubinstein did not achieve "any breakthroughs" in his meetings at the State Department from Monday to Wednesday. The official described the talks as "exploratory."

Ruth Yaron, chief spokeswoman at the Israeli Embassy here, would not say if Rubinstein received any of the assurances Israel is seeking in structuring proposed talks in Cairo between Israel and a Palestinian delegation.

Daniel Kurtzer and Aaron Miller, two key State Department specialists on the Middle East who sat in on the meetings, also refused to comment Wednesday.

The peace process also came up Tuesday afternoon in discussions at the State Department that Secretary of State James Baker had with a delegation of American Jewish leaders.

They included Seymour Reich, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations; Malcolm Hoehnlein, the conference's executive director; two past chairmen of the conference, Kenneth Bialkin and Rabbi Alexander Schindler; and Max Fisher, a leading Republican and former president of the Council of Jewish Federations.

No Egyptian Requests Yet

One participant termed the 40-minute meeting "just a progress report" on the Middle East peace process. He added that there was "nothing that was of any extraordinary consequence." He said the group was assured that Baker "is dogged in his determination to carry the peace process forward."

Rubinstein met primarily with Dennis Ross, who heads the State Department's policy planning staff; Richard Haass, senior director for Near East and South Asian affairs on the National Security Council; U.S. Ambassador to Israel William Brown; Miller; and Kurtzer. He also met briefly with Baker.

Egypt's ambassador to the United States, El Sayed Abdel Raouf El Reedy, is scheduled to meet with the State Department team this week to "hear what the Israelis had to say," the State Department official said.

A key assurance Rubinstein was seeking was that the United States will not insist that East Jerusalem Arabs be part of the Palestinian delegation meeting with Israel in Cairo. Israel is worried including them will damage Israel's position in future talks on the final status of the administered territories.

Israel annexed East Jerusalem after the city was reunited in the 1967 Six-Day War. It is considered to be an inseparable part of the capital.

Israel also wants the Cairo meeting to focus just on implementing the Israeli plan for Palestinian elections in the territories, which would lead eventually to talks on the territories' final status.

**TERRORISTS WHO FIREBOMBED BUS
IN JERICHO GET LIFE IMPRISONMENT**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- Three terrorists from Jericho were sentenced by a Ramallah military court Wednesday to life imprisonment, ending speculation that their case would be the one to end Israel's unwritten ban on capital punishment.

The accused were found guilty Dec. 13 of firebombing an Egged bus on the northern outskirts of Jericho in October 1988, just prior to national elections.

They caused the deaths of Rachel Weiss; three of her sons, ranging in age from 21 months to 4 years of age; and an Israel Defense Force soldier, David Delorosa, who died of asphyxiation trying to rescue passengers.

Israel has yet to impose the death sentence on a terrorist, and the prosecutor therefore asked for life imprisonment. To everyone's surprise, the presiding judge, Col. Yossi Shapiro, remarked that the court would not be bound by the prosecutor's request.

That suggested the possibility that the court would impose the death penalty.

Tension was high in the packed courtroom Wednesday, as Shapiro read his ruling, which was devoted mainly to the arguments for and against capital punishment for terrorists.

He rejected it in this case, saying, "The court should not be swayed by voices in the public and in the media calling for capital punishment."

The defendants are Ahmad Takroui, Juma Adham and Mahmud Abu-Harabish. No members of their families were present in the courtroom. Their attorney announced she would appeal the sentences.

Israel has executed only one person in its history: Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann.

Another convicted war criminal, Ukrainian-born John Demjanjuk, is under sentence of death. But his conviction has been appealed to the High Court of Justice.

**SETTLER CONVICTED OF RETALIATING
FOR STONING INCIDENT IN WEST BANK**

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- A Jewish settler who stoned an Arab car was sentenced to four months of public service and fined \$500 by a Jerusalem district court Wednesday.

Dina Ben-Har of Kiryat Arba, the Jewish settlement adjoining the West Bank Arab city of Hebron, drew an additional six-month suspended sentence after she admitted the charge in a plea bargain.

The incident occurred six months ago, when the bus on which Ben-Har was returning from Jerusalem came under a hail of stones near El-Arub refugee camp.

No one was hurt, but the windshield was broken and the driver and several passengers, including Ben-Har, tried unsuccessfully to apprehend the attackers.

When Ben-Har saw a car with blue license plates, indicating Arab ownership, she picked up a rock and hurled it at the vehicle.

Ben-Har said she was trying to vent her anger and frustration over an earlier incident, when a boy traveling with her son was injured by a stone.

**MAN BRAZILIANS ELECTED PRESIDENT
WANTS GOOD RELATIONS WITH THE JEWS**

By Eliezer Strauch

SAO PAULO, Brazil, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- Brazil's president-elect, Fernando Collor de Mello, seems interested in maintaining good relations with Brazil's Jewish community, one of the two largest in Latin America.

His answers to questions of Jewish concern, submitted in writing by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency before Sunday's runoff elections, were largely positive.

But some of his responses were tinged with the same ambiguity and evasiveness on certain issues that surfaced during the campaign and probably cost him more than a few Jewish votes.

The 40-year-old Collor, who describes himself as a "conservative Social Democrat," won a close race against trade union leader Luis Inacio da Silva, a former metal worker popularly known as "Lula."

On the issue of anti-Semitic propaganda, Collor seems to be a great believer in the separation of powers.

He told JTA that he would "use his influence" to have Brazilian courts prosecute neo-Nazis who slander Jews and circulate books that say the Holocaust was a Jewish fabrication.

He explained that such issues are dealt with by the judiciary and that in his executive capacity, he can do no more than motivate the judges to act in accordance with the constitution, which forbids any kind of racial discrimination.

"My relationship with the Jewish community has been frank, open and constructive," Collor asserted in his reply to JTA's questionnaire.

"Therefore, my attitude as to the aspirations and specific problems of the Brazilian Jews will be determined by a permanent, democratic dialogue," he said.

Ambiguous Position On The PLO

Collor rejected Brazil's "pragmatic diplomacy" in the Middle East during the past two decades, which has given priority to relations with the Arab world at the expense of Israel.

Pragmatic diplomacy is discriminatory, he said. "We intend to have an open, dynamic relationship with all countries in the world."

Asked if his government would allow the Palestine Liberation Organization to open an office in the capital city of Brasilia and grant it diplomatic recognition, Collor replied:

"I believe in the self-determination of peoples. However, we cannot admit the destruction of one state by another through terrorism and bloodshed."

Collor spoke critically of the PLO during his campaign this summer, but promptly withdrew his remarks when the powerful Arab lobby objected.

Jews also sensed something manipulative and gratuitous in his claim, during a campaign speech to Jewish groups, that one of his grandfathers, a labor minister in the 1940s, was the son of "German Jewish parents."

The fact is, there is no prominent Jew on the president-elect's staff.

But if Collor was not the ideal candidate from the point of view of Brazilian Jews, his opponent was even more worrisome to that largely middle-class community.

Although da Silva calls himself a "progressive Catholic" and non-Marxist socialist, many Jews had visions of finding themselves in a Cuba-

like regime if he was elected.

Collor will be sworn into office March 15, unless incumbent President Jose Sarney decides to resign before his term officially expires.

That happened in Argentina earlier this year, when President Raoul Alfonsin bowed out ahead of schedule, leaving runaway inflation and other economic woes for his successor, Carlos Saul Menem, to handle.

Brazilian Jews, estimated to number 250,000 to 300,000, seem to have learned to live and even prosper with high inflation.

Most Jews make their living as storekeepers or owners of small- to medium-sized manufacturing plants. There is a sizeable number of professionals. There is also a small group of Jewish multimillionaires, who rank among the richest Brazilians.

**ROMANIAN JEWS AND ISRAELI STUDENTS
REPORTED UNHARMED IN CURRENT UNREST**

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- There have been no injuries to any Jews or Israelis living in the Romanian city of Timisoara, where mass killings of people demonstrating for political reforms have been reported in recent days, reliable sources said Wednesday.

The sources said none of the estimated 20 Israelis studying medicine and dentistry at the university in Timisoara has been harmed.

They are among some 1,000 Israeli students at universities throughout Romania, which has been swept in recent days by demonstrations for the same type of reform that has taken place elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

Initial reports indicated that a ban on travel into and out of the country had not affected the flow of Soviet Jewish immigrants to Israel, whose preferred route is to fly from Moscow to Bucharest, and then from the Romanian capital to Tel Aviv.

But Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency Executives, reported from Moscow late Wednesday that he had received reports of delays and disruptions along the Romanian route.

Dinitz, who spoke by telephone to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency's Jerusalem bureau, said that Israeli consular officials in Moscow were now "looking for additional routes" to fly Soviet Jews to Israel.

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

JEWS BUSINESSSES IN PANAMA LOOTED

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- The major impact of the U.S. military operation in Panama on the country's tiny Jewish population appeared to be the looting activity that was taking place Wednesday on the streets of Panama City.

Businesses, of which a considerable number are owned by Jews, were being hit Wednesday by roving bands of heavily armed looters, according to Rabbi Morton Rosenthal, director of Latin American affairs for the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, who was in telephone communication with Jews in Panama.

Panama's Jewish population numbered about 3,800 in 1986, according to the 1989 American Jewish Yearbook. At the time, that represented 0.17 percent of the population.