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The Afghanistan Relief Committee has been formed to provide humanitarian aid - tents, clothing, and medicine - to the hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees from Soviet aggression. The Committee's goal is to raise \$10 million.

From its principal office in New York, the Committee is cooperating with groups with similar aims in many states. Affiliated committees are already active in a number of cities. We urge concerned citizens to form local committees throughout the country.

The Committee has surveyed the needs of the Afghan refugees in Pakistan and formulated a plan of work. It has arranged to be advised on the spot by the U.S. Ambassador and the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, along with its own representative. It expects to make use of existing private mechanisms for physical distribution, which it will closely supervise, rather than creating its own local infrastructure.

Jews in Afghanistan

BY RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM

They say there were once 40,000 Jews living in Afghanistan. Today there are but a few families -- no more than 100 people -- and their whereabouts in the current situation are unknown. Most of the people lived in Kabul, some in Herat and there are reports of one remaining family in Balkh.

Some date the origins of the Jews of Afghanistan to the days of the First Temple and though that may be difficult to document there is ample evidence of later migrations into Afghanistan from Southern Russia and from Persia.

In the late 1870's thousands of Jews went from Herat to Persia to avoid a punitive war tax -- but as late as 1927 it was still possible to count 60 distinct Jewish communities. In 1933, following the assassination of Nadir Shah, the Jews were driven from the countryside and concentrated in the municipal centers for safety.

Another significant exodus from Afghanistan took place in 1944, a time of famine, and thousands more went into India -- eventually going on to Palestine.

The establishment of the State of Israel brought a messianic fervor to the Jews of Afghanistan and an intense desire for "Aliya," though the government refused to allow them to leave. As late as 1950, when the Jewish population was estimated as being between 3,000 to 8,000, Jews paid an infidel tax and had to report for military service though they were not allowed to bear arms.

Despite the prohibition on immigration the Jews did find their way out -- family by family. Most came to Israel, some to the United States.

A JDC report received in 1971 describes the situation at that time as follows: "The Jewish community is rapidly shrinking though there is no overt threat. In Kabul there are 25 to 27 families and about 25 in Herat... One major area of difficulty is education. When the Jewish youngster reaches about 8th grade he frequently receives pressure from students and teachers to bring about conversion therefore few finish high school and there are none

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THE AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

date January 4, 1980
to FOREIGN AFFAIRS DEPARTMENT
from George E. Gruen *GEG*
subject Jews in Afghanistan

Following the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, we decided to update our information on the Jewish community in the country. As of about four weeks ago there were fourteen families in the country, totalling about eighty persons. Nine families were in Kabul, four in Herat and a widow and two children were all who remained in Balkh, the ancient Jewish center near the Soviet border.

At least three of the families had obtained passports and intended to leave, but our informant believes that they had not managed to do so by the time of the latest coup.

A relative in New York, who is a member of the Afghan Jewish Foundation, has just left for India and will try to contact the community from there.

The Jews are generally merchants dealing in carpets and jewelry and in the past were able to leave via Teheran. Because of the recent turmoil in Iran, they have approached our friends for help. Members of the small Jewish community have maintained regular contact with their relatives in New York and some of them know Hebrew.

Historically, the Afghani community in Balkh is reputed to date back to the times of the First Temple. The modern community in the country developed as an extension of the Persian Jewish community in the 19th century. There were about 5,000 Jews there in 1948, about 4,000 of whom went to Israel after 1951. The 1971 American Jewish Yearbook estimated the population at 800. As noted above, this number has now dwindled to about eighty.

GEG/e1

CSCCE DIGEST

COMMISSION ON SECURITY AND COOPERATION IN EUROPE

U.S. Congress • Washington, D.C. 20515

202/225-1901

May 16, 1980

HUMAN-RIGHTS ACTIVISTS

The New York Times carried a UPI item (May 12) citing the Commission's May 12 press release which reported that more than 600 human-rights activists have been jailed in the Soviet Union since the signing of the 1975 Helsinki accords. "The Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, which monitors compliance with the accord, said that nearly 560 Soviet dissidents were arrested between June, 1975 and May 1 this year for advocating political, religious and ethnic rights. It said that 56 had been jailed recently as the Government prepared for the Olympics," the Times said.

David K. Willis, of the Christian Science Monitor, reported (May 1) that "the relentless Kremlin crackdown on dissidents is still going strong in advance of the Moscow Olympic Games and in defiance of U.S. and West European opinion." The article said that human-rights activists "still free in Moscow report official harassment and warnings to leave the city before and during the Olympic Games." The article added that "Jewish emigration, which topped 50,000 last year, has dropped by about one-quarter in the first three months of this year - from 12,100 a year ago to 8,695 this year." The Willis piece speculated that "the Soviets want to take advantage of the crumbling detente (or at least, hardline KGB officials do) to try and clear away as many dissidents as possible. They also want to prevent large numbers of contacts between dissidents and foreign visitors, especially Jews, during the Olympic Games."

Several U.S. newspapers reported on the recent Amnesty International study which said that Soviet authorities have imprisoned or restricted more than 400 human-rights activists in the last four years, including at least 100 forcibly confined in psychiatric hospitals. The Washington Post reported (April 30) that Amnesty said "it believed scores of other dissidents have been rounded up since the study was completed last summer." The Wall Street Journal said (April 30) that Amnesty's report "brings all the strands together into one extraordinary whole."

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Drawing on official Soviet sources as well as accounts by prisoners and those close to them, Amnesty paints a bleak, discouraging picture of a surreal system in which a political or religious dissenter has little chance against an almighty state...Amnesty charges that Soviet political trials 'more closely resemble show trials than serious attempts to determine guilt or innocence.' It says it 'still has not heard of a single case in which a Soviet court has acquitted someone charged with political or religious offences.' It cites the 'outright persecution' or some lawyers who defended political clients too effectively." The Christian Science Monitor carried an editorial (April 29) which said that Amnesty's report "suggests that things have not changed all that much since the period in the Siberian labor camps about which Solzhenitsyn wrote - and which are recalled again in his new literary memoir describing the extraordinary measures of courage and concealment that brought his first publication in Russia. Indeed, the current victims of repression in psychiatric hospitals do not have even the limited rights of the prisoners in the camps."

Eric Bourne, of the Christian Science Monitor, reported (May 6) that "Despite persistent harassment and even imprisonment, Poland and Czechoslovakia are upholding their tradition as the East-bloc countries with the most active dissidents... In Czechoslovakia, the human-rights movement has beefed itself up after its principal activists were jailed last fall. It has enlarged its committee in Prague and added members from four provincial centers...And in Poland, five prominent writers have made a public protest over the March arrest of Miroslaw Chojecki that, in effect, challenges both the state's censorship and the regime's exclusive control of the publishing and printing industry."

A follow-up article in the Monitor (May 12) reported that more than 20 Polish human-rights activists "protesting harassment will remain on a hunger strike in a Warsaw church for another week" despite the May 10 release of Miroslaw Chojecki. According to the Monitor, the decision to release Chojecki "is believed to be a gesture to create a better image for Poland in its present anxiety to see detente restored between the Soviet bloc and the West."

The New York Times carried an article by Anthony Austin (May 5) on Igor Guberman, a writer and Soviet human-rights activist, who is in a Soviet prison, "sentenced as a criminal, a target of particular animus on the part of authorities and the cause celebre in the Jewish activist movement." The Austin piece said that "the reason for his downfall, his wife and friends say, lies at least partly in the satirical political verses that he was suspected of writing."

London's The Times reported (May 7) that arrests of Soviet human-rights activists "are now running at an average rate of between five and 10 per week. The KGB's pre-Olympic purge is affecting all categories of dissent and most parts of the country." The article said that the number of "dissidents subject to long-term imprisonment or psychiatric internment in the purge recently passed 200. Those who have undergone interrogation, house searches, dismissal from their jobs, or other forms of intimidation, total several thousand." The Times said among those arrested recently are: Aleksandr Lavut, Mart Niklus and Iosif Dyadkin.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Candis Cunningham, staff correspondent for the U.S. International Communication Agency (USICA), wrote an article (April 29) on the Commission's April 29 hearing on Soviet treatment of ethnic groups. Cunningham quoted Rep. Dante B. Fascell, the CSCE Commission Chairman, as saying that "One of today's most important political issues is governmental policy towards ethnic groups...All too often, when a Soviet citizen puts national or ethnic rights to test, the wrath of the Soviet system rains down" in violation of the Helsinki accords and other international agreements. The USICA piece focused on the testimony of the four witnesses who left the Soviet Union recently: Lev Ulanovsky, who described the recent upsurge of Soviet anti-Semitism; Juri Lina, who spoke of nationalism in Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania; Aishe Seitmuratova, who testified on the campaign of the Crimean Tatars to return from Soviet exile to their Crimean homeland; and Nadia Svitlychna, who described the Ukrainian struggle for preserving ethnic identity.

Human Rights Internet newsletter (March/April issue) carried a feature article on the Commission and CSCE activities. The piece said that in the early months of 1980 - prior to the Madrid review meeting this fall - the Commission "will be working on preparations for this important meeting. It is the hope of the Commission that the U.S. and its sister democracies keep in the proper historic perspective the goal of balance between the various sections of the Helsinki accords. The U.S. should keep the human rights provisions in the forefront, for it is these which made the Helsinki Final Act a unique document of international diplomacy."

RELIGIOUS LIBERTY

Richard M. Harley, of the Christian Science Monitor, wrote a feature article (May 2) which reported that "a series of tough new prosecutions of Christian dissidents in the Soviet Union appears to be part of the Kremlin's concerted effort to clear out dissidents before the summer Olympic Games in Moscow." The Monitor piece quoted Giorgi Vins, exiled Soviet Baptist pastor who directs a Christian rights monitoring organization

based in South Bend, Ind., as saying that "For Christians it means new suffering for their faith, because the KGB is strengthening its forces for that particular time." Vins said that persecution of unregistered Baptists in Moscow, Leningrad, Estonia and some parts of the Ukraine and Moldavia "have increased considerably since January."

SCIENTIFIC EXCHANGES

Science magazine (April 18 issue) carried an open appeal by Scientists for Sakharov, Orlov and Shcharansky (S.O.S.) which protested "the human rights violations by the Soviet Union in the cases of Sakharov, Orlov and Shcharansky." The group of scientists and engineers pledged a moratorium on professional cooperation with the Soviet scientific community "for a period beginning May 12, 1980, the anniversary of the founding of the Moscow Helsinki Watch Group, and ending at the completion of the November 1980 Madrid Conference to monitor the Helsinki accords. During this period we will not visit the Soviet Union or welcome Soviet scientists and engineers to our laboratories."

CSCE MEETING IN MADRID

The New York Times reported (May 6) that President Carter "has tentatively chosen former Attorney General Griffin B. Bell to head the United States delegation to the next round of follow-up talks on European security." The Times said that the choice of Bell to represent the United States at the CSCE meeting in Madrid this fall, "came as a surprise to many State Department officials who had urged the President to choose someone with broad diplomatic experience." The article reported that White House officials said President Carter "asked his longtime associate from Georgia to take the position to show his personal commitment to the cause of human rights in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe."

The Washington Post carried an article by Dusko Doder (May 9) which reported that U.S. allies "have reluctantly followed Carter's drive to boycott the Moscow summer Olympics. They have given only halfhearted support to his sanctions against the Soviet Union. And they have privately warned that the entire system of European security and cooperation established by the 35-nation conference in Helsinki in 1975 could break down as a result of the hard American position." The Post news analysis said that "with the current East-West freeze, several major allies including France and West Germany have privately called for the postponement of the Madrid meeting, fearing a total impasse. Since Carter was not expected to change his policy during a presidential election campaign, West Europeans have been worried that the Soviets and their allies may decide to walk out of the Madrid meeting and thus destroy the entire Helsinki structure."

El Pais carried an interview with British Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington (April 27) in which the Foreign Secretary said that the CSCE meeting in Madrid "will have increased importance as an opportunity for reassessing the implications of recent events. It is essential for the credibility of the progress of the CSCE that we tackle these implications. We continue to hope for full and balanced implementation of the Helsinki Final Act."

THE 1980 SUMMER OLYMPIC BOYCOTT

The New York Times reported (May 12) that the executive committee of the West German National Olympic Committee "called for a boycott of the 1980 Moscow Olympics because of the Soviet Union's military intervention in Afghanistan." The article said the decision by the executive committee "was in line with the West German Government's call on the committee last month to back the Carter Administration's campaign to boycott the Games."

ANSA (May 3) noted that "a compromise may have been found to enable the various nations to go to the Moscow Olympics in July without attaching any political significance to the move... The Olympic committees of most of the Western European nations met (May 3) in Rome and approved a document which proposed that national flags and anthems was a sporting choice and not a political one." According to ANSA, the document was approved by 18 nations: Andorra, Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France (who made the proposal), West Germany, Britain, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Malta, Holland, San Marino, Switzerland and Turkey. Spain, Portugal and Sweden, who were unable to attend the meeting, telegraphed their approval of the proposed compromise solution.

Paul Lewis, of the New York Times, reported (May 14) that France's national Olympic Committee decided "to send a team to the Moscow Olympics, rejecting President Carter's call for a boycott of the Games in protest against the Soviet intervention in Afghanistan." The Times quoted Secretary of State Edmund S. Muskie, who is in Brussels for a NATO conference, as saying that he was "very disappointed" in the French decision. The French decision on May 13 "came just two days before the German Olympic Committee is to decide whether to send a team to Moscow," the Times said.

FREE-FLOW OF INFORMATION

A VOA broadcast of April 22 reported that U.S. Ambassador to Poland William E. Schaufele met with members of the Warsaw Club of Catholic Intellectuals April 21 to discuss U.S.-Polish academic, educational, cultural and informational exchanges. VOA quoted the Ambassador as saying that the United States and Poland "are signatory states to the Helsinki Final Act affirming

the value of a free-flow of ideas and peoples among nations and the rights of citizens to exchange ideas freely within our two countries." The United States, the Ambassador said, believed in the principles outlined in the Final Act when it was signed and "the U.S. continues to believe, not only in the provisions of that agreement, but also in the basic principles and values embodied in the Final Act...one of the fundamental bases of good relations among states, particularly between Poland and the U.S., is predicated on our ability to develop, maintain, and, whenever and wherever possible, expand a meaningful bilateral dialogue...our shared traditions, our common fight against tyranny, and our close familial relationships demand nothing less." Ambassador Schaufele noted that "it is the policy of the United States Government to build more durable ties with the government and people of Poland. One of the most effective means for doing so is the exchange of people, information and ideas."

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMERCIAL EXCHANGES

Jonathan Harsch, of the Christian Science Monitor, reported (May 7) that "Carter administration officials and U.S. farmers are paying close attention to grain harvest forecasts - for the Soviet Union. The Reason: Until President Carter's January 4 embargo on new grain sales to the Soviets, 'the Moscow pipeline' looked like it provided the best long-term outlet for America's overflowing supplies of corn, wheat and soybeans. Now farmers and administration officials say that the embargo's effect depends largely on this year's Soviet grain harvest... If there is a bumper Soviet crop - considered highly unlikely on the basis of current weather and planting reports - the Soviets apparently won't suffer from the embargo... If the Soviet grain harvests range from poor to disastrous, the situation could be very different." The Monitor piece said that "a serious shortfall in the Soviet Union's own production would force it to return to the U.S. as a major supplier - either directly or indirectly."

France-Soir reported (April 19) that French wheat "is being exported to the U.S.S.R. despite the EEC embargo on such exports... It was decided that permits granted before January and hence not naming the importing country would remain valid. This has given rise to a blatant anomaly: While France did not export wheat to the U.S.S.R. before the embargo, since the embargo was imposed exports already shipped or planned amount to almost 500,000 tons."

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD

Members of Congress who have entered into the Congressional Record remarks on behalf of Ida Nudel include Senators Pell, Dole, Javits, Heinz, Tsongas, Jackson, Percy, Williams and Levin and Representatives Fascell, Bingham, Stack, Barnes, Sensenbrenner, Kemp, Edwards, Spellman, Heckler, Derwinski, Zablocki, Waxman, Yatron, Lehman, Schroeder, Hollenbeck, Solarz, Blanchard, Pepper, Drinan, Scheuer, Wolff, Glickman, Fauntroy, Harris, Lent, Maguire, Rinaldo and Fish.

Members of Congress who have entered remarks on behalf of Soviet Jewry include Senators Levin and Boschwitz and Representatives Fascell, Fenwick, Porter, Wirth, Howard, Harris, Harkin, Courter, Dougherty, Edwards, Gilman, Kemp and Waxman.

Members of Congress who have entered remarks on behalf of Raoul Wallenberg include Senator Proxmire and Representatives Dornan, Gilman, Bonker, Derwinski, Scheuer, Dodd, Rinaldo, Long, Blanchard and Solarz.

Other Helsinki-related statements recently in the Record include Senator Armstrong and Representative AuCoin on the U.S. grain embargo to the Soviet Union; Representative Bonker on Amnesty International's report on Soviet political prisoners; Representative Brown on behalf of Andrei Sakharov; Senator Jepsen on Soviet persecution of Christians; and Representative Fascell on the fourth anniversary of the Moscow Helsinki Group.

CSCE COMMISSION ACTIVITIES

Members of the Commission's staff participated with non-governmental organizations in two regional meetings on U.S.-CSCE policy. Acting Staff Director Sam Wise attended a meeting May 13 in New York with Max Kampelman, the designate co-chairman of the U.S. delegation to the CSCE review meeting in Madrid, and Warren Zimmermann, the Department of State representative. Wise chaired the working group on civil, political and religious rights. Commission staffer Marty Sletzinger attended a meeting May 14 in Pittsburgh with Kampelman and Zimmermann. Sletzinger chaired the working group on Basket I and Basket III issues. The meetings in New York and Pittsburgh -- the first of an envisioned six-city tour -- are part of a joint Department of State - CSCE Commission effort to inform the public of U.S. preparations for the Madrid meeting and to solicit suggestions and recommendations from non-governmental organizations.

The Commission issued a press release May 12 in commemoration of the fourth anniversary of the Moscow Helsinki Group. Founded by noted physicist Yuri Orlov, this group has provided new impetus for the citizens' human-rights movement throughout the world. In view of the anniversary, the Commission compiled an update to Amnesty International's recent publication which reported that more than 400 Soviet human-rights activists were imprisoned or similarly restricted between June 1, 1975 and May 31, 1979. The Commission has learned that from June 1, 1979 to May 1, 1980, 71 Soviet human-rights activists were convicted on various pretexts and 86 Soviet citizens have been arrested for advocating political, religious or ethnic rights.

Commission staffer Catherine Cosman participated in a panel discussion on April 28 at American University on the subject of religious rights under international law. Cosman presented an overview of the legal status of religion in the U.S.S.R. and then interpreted for Ayshe Seytmuratova who talked on Soviet Islam.

Acting Staff Director Sam Wise and Commission staffer Yale Richmond attended the May 2 National Conference on Education and the World View in Washington, D.C. The Conference focused on efforts to change undergraduate college curricula so as to encourage international awareness. Wise and Richmond also attended the May 1 meeting of the National Advisory Board.

Commission staffer Susan Pederson attended the April 29 open scientific meeting in honor of Andrei Sakharov and his professional achievements. Sponsored by the Sakharov International Committee (a newly-formed organization of leading scientists and public personalities), the session in Washington, D.C. was the first in a series of events planned in defense of Sakharov.

Acting Staff Director Sam Wise spoke to the Ohio Helsinki Accords Council on April 26 on the background and activities of the Helsinki Commission, as well as the upcoming CSCE review meeting in Madrid. He also participated in bilateral CSCE talks with Sweden May 8-9. The talks focused on the upcoming CSCE review meeting in Madrid.

The Commission will hold a hearing on religious rights in the U.S.S.R. and Eastern Europe at 9:30 a.m., May 21, in Room 2212 of the Rayburn House Office Building. The scheduled witnesses are: Professor Bohdan Bociurkiw, Professor Thomas E. Bird, Professor Alexandre Bennigsen, and Mrs. Arina Zholkovskaya-Ginzburg.