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INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS DEPARTMENT
AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The American Jewish Committee was founded in 1906 in response to the brutal pogroms in Kishinev and elsewhere in Tsarist Russia. Since that time, AJC has maintained as its central purpose the protection of Jews around the world. In this pursuit, it has become a significant and respected factor on the international scene.

The goals of the International Relations Department today fall into five principal categories:

- a) Strengthening the security and well-being of Israel, interpreting its concerns in the United States and elsewhere, and seeking to contribute to the domestic quality of life, particularly in the sphere of inter and intra-group relations;
- b) Combatting of anti-Semitism and protection of endangered and otherwise vulnerable Jewish communities, including those in the Soviet Union, the Middle East and North Africa, Ethiopia, and South Africa;
- c) Enhancement of the quality of Jewish life, particularly in smaller communities in Central and South America, and Europe;
- d) Promotion of international human rights standards and adherence, including religious tolerance, the right to leave, human rights education, and respect for civil and political rights;
- e) Pursuit of inter-religious dialogue, especially with the Vatican and the hierarchies of the Catholic Churches in Europe, Central and South America, Africa and Asia.

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PROPOSAL FOR THE CONVENING OF A WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE
ON COMBATting INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM

"Terrorism deeply troubles the American people. A Roper Poll conducted before the TWA 847 hijacking showed that 78 percent of all Americans consider terrorism to be one of the most serious problems facing the U.S. Government today, along with the deficit, strategic arms control and unemployment..."

That statement depicting the feelings of the American people toward the growing menace of international terrorism emerges as one of the conclusions of the "Public Report of the Vice President's Task Force on Combatting Terrorism" issued in February 1986 (p. 17). The report then adds:

"Terrorism deeply troubles the American people. They feel angry, victimized, vulnerable and helpless. At the same time, they want the United States Government to have a strong and consistent national anti-terrorist policy. While such a policy exists, the Task Force believes that better communication is necessary to educate the public to our policy and to the ramifications of using force during terrorist attacks." (p. 21)

One of the significant recommendations of the Task Force calls for the launching of a "Public Education Effort" in these words:

"Because of the lack of understanding and currently available information concerning our national program for combatting terrorism, a broad education effort should be undertaken to inform the American public about our policy and proposals as well as the many ramifications of the use of force against terrorism, including death of innocent people, destruction of property, alienation of allies and possible terrorist reprisals. The education effort should take the form of publications, such as this report, seminars and speaking opportunities by government officials." (p. 27).

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In keeping with the objectives of the Task Force recommendations, this paper proposes that one of the most effective means for achieving widespread "Public Education" would be the convening of a White House Conference on Combatting International Terrorism. Based on other experiences with White House Conferences - on Children and Youth, on Aging, on the Family, on Foreign Aid and Trade - this mode (or some adaptation of it) provides a national mechanism for seeking to realize the following purposes:

A) A national forum for educating key leadership from major segments of American society about the facts, policies and programs of our Government in combatting international terrorism. Much of the basic information contained in the Vice President's Task Force Report on Combatting Terrorism is generally not known -- even to informed Americans. The use of that report, together with the documents issued by the Director of the Office for Counter-Terrorism and Emergency Planning of the State Department, the Justice Department, the CIA, the FBI, the FAA, and other appropriate U.S. agencies, in the preparations for the White House Conference and for its program discussions, could raise the consciousness of American public opinion molders and provide them with a firm grounding in the data that is available about the long-term problems of international terrorism and the concerted action that is required to combat it.

B) The national forum of a White House Conference might bring together key leadership of the major groups that compose American society -- business, labor, media, education, religious, racial, ethnic, civic, and other voluntary groups. This cross-sectional and interdisciplinary forum would be invited to consider and exchange views regarding the key themes and issues that are outlined in the Task Force Report; namely,

- (1) The Growing Threat of Terrorism - the nature of terrorism; the geographic distribution of international terrorist incidents; U.S. casualties resulting from international terrorist incidents; domestic vulnerability; terrorist incidents in the United States.
- (2) U.S. Policy and Response to Terrorists - current policy; managing terrorist incidents; coping with the threat; alleviating causes of terrorism; U.S. resources for combatting terrorism (law enforcement, prosecution of terrorists; better security for civil aviation and maritime activities; increased assistance to other governments; better, more timely intelligence); personal and physical security; Federal Agencies' roles in combatting terrorism; international cooperation; political, economic, and military considerations in determining responses.
- (3) The Role of Congress in Combatting Terrorism - current legislation; pending legislation; potential legislation.
- (4) American public opinion - examining attitudes toward economic sanctions, military actions; role of U.S. government agencies in assuring security of citizens; role of U.S. citizens in advancing international cooperation with counterpart voluntary agencies abroad.
- (5) Terrorism and the Media - Promoting increased cooperation between the Government and media in assuring timely, factual information; examining journalistic guidelines to protect lives and national security during a terrorist situation.

- (6) Task Force Conclusions and Recommendations - national policy and program recommendations; policy criteria for response to terrorists; a proposed new National Security Council position; American personnel requirements in high-threat areas; international cooperation through additional international agreements; close extradition loop-holes; impose sanctions against Vienna Convention on Violators; evaluate and strengthen airport and port security; intelligence recommendations for consolidated intelligence center of terrorism; increased collection of human intelligence; exchange of intelligence between governments; legislative recommendations; study of the relationship between terrorism and the domestic and international legal systems; communications recommendations for support program for hostage families; launching a public education effort; and working with the media.

C) A White House Conference will inevitably bring together a diverse group of citizens of varying political and ideological views, but with effective, skillful conference leadership that need not preclude the genuine possibility of developing a national consciousness - and even a consensus - for support of a strong, reasonable government policy and program for combatting the epidemic of international terrorism.

This writer's experience with White House Conferences on Children and Youth, Aging, Foreign Aid and Trade, World Hunger and Refugees demonstrated that such forums can help forge broad and powerful national constituencies that back critically-needed legislation, funding, and public opinion support for necessary political action.

As was the case with other successful White House Conferences, a dramatic by-product could be the formation of Governors' and Mayors' committees. These provide local instrumentalities that enlarge the involvement of community leadership for implementing on a long-term basis the findings and recommendations that are crystallized at the White House Conference and its various workshops.

Given the magnitude of the threat of international terrorism to American and Western democratic values and institutions, a White House Conference on Combatting International Terrorism may well be an idea whose time is now.

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INCITEMENT TO NATIONAL, RACIAL AND RELIGIOUS
HATRED IN UN FORUMS*

by Sidney Liskofsky

Since the UN General Assembly, in 1975, adopted Resolution 3379 equating Zionism with racism, people have debated whether this action was a manifestation of the old classic anti-Semitism, or only of hostility to the State of Israel, or to its occupation policy.

There are many people who hold that attacks on Zionism, because they deny Israel's right to exist, are by that token alone anti-Semitic. I would distinguish between two grounds for calling this denial anti-Semitic. One relates specifically to the Jewish people's rights to sovereignty in pre-1948 Palestine, the other to Jews' alleged inborn corruption. If the basis is the former, then it is debatable because the denial may derive from a conflicting religious and historical claim. On the other hand, if the denial is based on the Jews' unsuitability, because of innate characteristics, to have a state of their own, then it is surely anti-Semitic.

I will show that the clear implication of much of UN rhetoric ostensibly related to Israel and Zionism is that Jews -- out of greed, treachery, barbarism, corruption, racism, bloodthirst, manipulative power and a host of other innate evils -- could not possibly establish or govern a decent state anywhere on earth. I will argue that anti-Jewish speech is indeed common at the UN, that it appeared long before 1975, that it remains prevalent today and that it is focused in the Arab, Muslim and Marxist-Leninist states, and that it is purveyed also by certain other Third World governments as well as by several regional organizations centered in the Third World -- the Arab League, the Organization of Islamic States, the Organization of African Unity -- and by several UN-accredited national liberation movements, notably the PLO.

I will cite examples from the General Assemblies of 1971 -- four years before the Zionism=racism resolution...and of several subsequent years, but mainly of 1985, the 40th anniversary of the victory over

* This paper was given at the International Legal Conference on Anti-Semitism, Anti-Zionism and the United Nations, sponsored by the Center for International studies of the New York University School of Law and The Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights, April 13-15, 1986.

Nazism and the UN's founding, an occasion that was supposed to center on solemn reflection about the condition and future of mankind.¹

It is true that the Zionism-racism equation appears to have fallen out of favor in the past three years or so; it was deliberately omitted from the final documents of the 1983 world conference at the end of the first UN Decade to Combat Racism, and of the Nairobi world conference last July marking the end of the first UN Decade for the Advancement of Women. Nevertheless, and notwithstanding protestations by some Arab speakers that Israel, not Jews and Judaism, is the enemy, the evidence inside and outside the UN is that anti-Semitic language has been and remains the lingua franca in the Middle East dispute.

Outside the UN, the facts speak for themselves. Arab terrorists hijacked a TWA flight last June and tried to single out the Jewish passengers. The hijackers of the Achille Lauro killed one passenger on board: Leon Klinghoffer, a Jew. Islamic extremists killed several Lebanese Jewish hostages only three months ago. Last year, Arab youths shouted "slaughter the Jews" as they rushed a delegation of Knesset visitors to the Temple Mount. (Whether this visit was warranted or wise is open to question, but that is not the issue here.) (Press releases S/4788-4791, Jan. 22-27, 1986) And a woman linked to the TWA bombing earlier this month referred to her late husband as a veteran "fighter against the Jews." (The New York Times, April 16, 1986)

More than ten years ago, Bernard Lewis, the noted Near East historian, questioned claims advanced by Israel's non-Communist accusers that they abhor Zionism but revere Judaism as a divine religion. There is, he said,

a vast Arabic literature of denigration and denunciation of Jews...cullled in the main, from European anti-Semitic literature. ...[Discussions of Jewish religion or history rely] very largely on such typical products of Christian anti-Semitism as The Protocols of the Elders of Zion...[which] now has more editions in Arabic than in any other language. (Bernard Lewis, "The Anti-Zionism Resolution, Foreign Affairs Quarterly, October 1975, pp.48-50.).

Only recently, Dr. Lewis concluded that the volume and diffusion of such literature -- written by eminent authors and sponsors -- in schools, colleges and mass media in the Arab world, "seem to suggest that classical anti-Semitism is an essential part of Arab intellectual

¹ The sources consulted, in addition to a large quantity of records of the 1982 and 1985 General Assemblies, include a sampling from other sources: the 1971 Assembly, and several subsequent Assemblies, several Security Council meetings, the 1983 International Conference on the Question of Palestine, UN-sponsored regional seminars on this question, and reports of conferences on the Non-Aligned Movement, the Organization of Islamic States and the Organization of African Unity.

life at the present time -- almost as much as it was in Nazi Germany." (New York Review of Books, April 10, 1986, p.33)

The pattern, outside the UN, of failure to distinguish between Israelis, Zionists and Jews, characterizes anti-Israeli and anti-Zionist rhetoric inside the Organization as well.

The classic anti-Semitism found in the Protocols of the Elders of Zion and Mein Kampf -- charges that Jews or Zionists control the media, manipulate the economy, disseminate pornography, and so on -- are heard repeatedly from UN delegates, and are apparently all too widely tolerated.

Again and again, it is charged at the UN that Zionists -- or is it Jews? -- manipulate the U.S. Government, its political leaders and its institutions; that they exploit the American people and deprive the poor to pay for Israel's armaments and high standard of living; that Israel wants not only all the land between the Nile and the Euphrates, but all of Africa as well; that because Jews believe they are "the chosen people," they are racists; that Zionists wound the religious sensibilities of Muslims and Christians; that Jews are Christ-killers; that Jewish greed, materialism, media control and "bewitching" political power, cultural domination, pornography, and so on, are poisoning civilization; that Zionism and South African apartheid are both similar creations of Western imperialism, which accounts for Israel's strategic alliance with the U.S.; that Zionists are worse than the Nazis with whom they collaborated before and during World War II; that Israel is a racist entity -- or in the Iranian embellishment, a racist non-entity; that Israel and Zionism are so evil that any resistance, terrorism included, against the Judeo-Nazis is justified; that Israel's state terrorism, not this resistance, is the real terrorism.

1971

In the past 15 years or so, Arab and Soviet bloc representatives have come to prefer the word Zionist to the word Jew -- for which purpose the Zionism=racism resolution provided an ideal camouflage --but the evidence is overwhelming that they mean both. In 1971, when Israel's Ambassador Yosef Tekoah remarked at the Security Council that many people still believe in The Protocols of the Elders of Zion, Ambassador Baroody of Saudi Arabia replied:

I...do not want to commit myself one way or the other, because it would be very controversial. However, one Jew told me [that] those Zionists behave as if The Protocols of the Elders of Zion were true. I am not going into details. (A/PV 1975, Oct. 22, 1971).

According to Baroody, Zionists railroaded the U.S. into World War I so that American Jews would help their cause (S/PV.1955-1982, Sept. 25, 1971). He himself had witnessed how Zionists "have made this city of

Manhattan their own." When wealthy Zionists felt great pressures in the Western democracies, "they looked to a virgin territory [i.e., Palestine]." So wasn't it understandable, he asked, that after they had "massacred" the Arabs of Palestine, the victims would say: "If Hitler can solve the Jewish problem we shall be happy." (Ibid)

At the 1971 General Assembly, Ambassador El Fattal of Syria said his small country could not control the world's mass media, "but we know who does." Another Syrian asserted that the Jews' belief that they are the "chosen people" was the rationale for their efforts to "rule the world from end to end." The Nazis, too, considered themselves superior and "chosen," which is obviously why the Zionists collaborated with them (ref.).

Joining in, Ambassador Jacob Malik of the USSR, stung by criticism of his country's treatment of Jews, charged that the "Zionist Mafia of the United States" had penetrated "every pore of life from top to bottom of this country." He warned:

Do not poke your long noses in our Soviet garden,... anyone who pokes his long nose in our garden will find himself without a nose. You had better carve this on your own noses, Zionists. (A/PV/1975, Oct. 21, 1971).

On another occasion, he called The New York Times "an organ of American Zionists -- [and] not just American Zionists." (S/PV/1582, Sept. 15, 1971).

1979-80

In 1979, moderate Jordan's Hazem Nuseibeh asked in the Security Council whether the world had "been polarized into an omnipotent race and subservient Gentiles, born...to serve the aims of the 'master race'." (A/PV.86, pp.38-40, March 16, 1979) In 1980, he informed the General Assembly of an omnipotent Jewish cabal, of "people like Lord Rothschild [who] every day, in iron-clad secrecy, decide and flash round the world how high the price of gold should be on a particular day." (ref.)

1982

From Syria: "Israel has exceeded all the crimes perpetrated by the Nazis..." (A/37/PV.8).

From Jordan: "Israeli Nazis" (S/PV.2388, Aug. 8, 1982) and "Zionist Nazi racist gangs" (S/PV 2396, Sept. 18, 1982).

From Iraq: Zionism is a "racist, imperialist, political movement that...believes in the purity of the Jewish race and is based on terrorism, repression, treachery and expansion [like] Nazism" (A/37/PV, 87).

Ukrainian SSR: "The tragedy of Beirut has brought back to the memory of mankind...the bloody crimes of the Nazis."

The PLO: "...crime, drug taking and prostitution are the trademarks of the society that [the Zionists] want to establish for the Jewish people" (S/PV.2375, June 6, 1982).

1983

Libya: "Who are the owners of pornographic film operations and houses? Is it not the Jews who are exploiting the American people and trying to debase them? If we succeed in eliminating that entity, we shall by the same token save the American and European peoples." (A/38/PV.88 p. 36. Dec. 8, 1983).

Cuba: Hitler had "much to learn from Israeli leaders" (A/37/PV.23) Zionists are "racist sadists,... the enemies of humankind" (A/37/PV.86).... The "enormous" economic power of Jews in the U.S. (ref.).

And Djibouti: "Zionist neo-Nazis" (A/37/PV.16).

Comoros: The "Zionist entity" is "the incarnation of evil." (ref.)

And Uganda: "the twin brothers in the furtherance of racism and aggression -- namely, Israel and apartheid South Africa..." (ref.).

1984

And from Saudi Arabia, this gem of Talmudic scholarship, offered at a UN Seminar in Geneva on tolerance and respect in matters of religion and belief, in December 1984:

What is common between Hitler and Nebuchadnessor?...Why did Nebuchadnessor expel and scatter them [and] Hitler want to exterminate them?...It is because they call themselves the chosen people...I have studied the subject scientifically... The Talmud says that: "If a Jew does not drink every year the blood of a non-Jew he will be damned for eternity"... This belief is the reason which has caused the discrimination and oppression against the Jews since the era of Nebuchadnessor to the era of Israel.

Who is this scholar? None other than Mar'uf Dawalibi, secretary to the Mufti Haj Amin-al Hussein, advisor to the Nazis in Berlin between 1942 and 1945. He also resurrected the libel that in 1840 Jews in Damascus had slain a Christian priest and collected his blood for ritual purposes.

* * *

1985

We come to 1985. At the close of the 1985 Assembly, U.S. Ambassador Vernon Walters observed that its tone had been "less controversial" and "more balanced" than usual. Even Israel's Ambassador Benjamin Netanyahu acknowledged relative improvement in votes on issues related to Israel. On the other hand, Secretary General de Cuellar "hesitated" to call the atmosphere less controversial, and to Netanyahu the anti-Semitic rhetoric seemed worse than ever. Study of the rhetoric in this Assembly suggests that while some diminution of African and other support for the Arab anti-Israel agenda was a factor in the defeat in July of the effort to reaffirm the substance of Resolution 3379 at the Nairobi world conference on women, tough US opposition was surely a significant determinant.² The PLO response to the defeat was that it had no choice but to submit to the undemocratically-imposed amendment to delete the proposed reference to Zionism, but that the resolution equating it with racism remained in force (The New York Times, July 27, 1985).

In 1985, every conceivable issue, whether or not related to Israel, the Palestinians or the Middle East, was exploited.³ Let us turn first to matters of religion.

The PLO representative, in addition to the expected epithets "neo-fascist junta in Tel Aviv," Nazi collaborator, and so on, called Israel a "theocratic state."

Many people, and many Jews -- Israelis among them -- believe in the separation of church and state and would prefer a secular or religion-neutral Israel. However, as Conor Cruise O'Brien has observed:

Among the "subjective feelings" of Israel's Arab adversaries, belief in secular democracy barely exists. Nevertheless, it is in this language that they have chosen to make their case to the West, knowing that it will be music to the inward ear

² President Reagan and the U.S. Congress had made it clear that if hostile references to Zionism appeared in the Conference's final document -- which was to project "Forward Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women" to the year 2000 -- the U.S. would walk out, withhold financing and refuse to participate in any activities connected with it.

³ The principal hate-inciters were the PLO, the Arab and several non-Arab Muslim states (Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan); the USSR and its satellites -- except for Hungary, Poland and Rumania; the USSR allies and sympathizers in Africa and Latin America -- Vietnam, Ethiopia, Sudan, Burkina Faso, Guyana, Surinam, Nicaragua and especially Cuba (for years a PLO point man in the UN), and the dissident communist states -- China and Albania (who also enjoyed calling the Soviet Union "social imperialists" and other nasty names).

of liberals. (Edward Alexander, "Liberalism and Zionism," Commentary, February 1986, p. 31).

Muslim spokesmen who call for a secular democratic state, O'Brien continues, "are engaging in double-talk, masking the realities of what is, on both sides, a religious-nationalist culture conflict." And, he notes, the translation of "Fatah" is actually the opening of a country to Islamic conquest.

The fact is, many Arabs and Muslims who, with Western audiences in mind, condemn Israel for letting religion dictate to government, argue the case for dismemberment of Israel precisely on Islamic religious grounds. At the 1984 Assembly, the Iranian delegate promised, in the name of Islam, that "soon - in our own lifetime - the Moslem ummah, or nation, will start to discharge its religious duty regarding the liberation of Palestine from Zionist occupation" and rid this "centre of corruption" of "those Ashkenazi Jews who travelled to Palestine with mythical dreams to go back to their beautiful homes in London and Paris and New York" (A/39/PV.76, p.66, Nov. 28, 1984). At the 1985 Assembly, the same speaker called on the UN to "cleanse" itself of the "cancerous Zionist entity," warning "certain selected monarchs" against seduction "by the imperialist beast." The Arab world, he said, if it acted according to Islam, "could take Palestine by force" with all the assets of the Moslem countries in the Zionist banks in the United States:

with all the resources, the oil, the manpower... market and economic resources; and, above all, their hands and brains all would be mobilized and utilized according to the way of God.... The Moslem world must conduct itself according to Islam in order to restore its rights and to hoist once again the flag of Palestine over the entire Islamic land of Palestine. The Zionist entity is nothing...The Moslem nation is really a great, superior nation. (A.40/PV.107, 12/6/85).

In other words, theocracy, chosenness and superiority.

All the same, the Jews' belief that they are a "chosen people" -- whose theological import is to impose on them a responsibility to live righteously -- is repeatedly called racism. Yet, according to the Iranian delegate who threatened that the Moslem countries in the Middle East would "soon consider the final solution," only Moslems are chosen to own and control the territory of Palestine.

Nor was he the only one to indulge in this kind of incitement. A Bahrain representative, at a loss for a quick response to the Israeli representative's charge that she had told less than the truth about a particular issue, exploded with, "Who had killed Jesus Christ, the Arabs or the Jews?" (A/C 3/40/SR. 53, p.17, Nov. 25, 1985).

According to the Syrian representative, not only had the Zionists' "degraded values" put Palestine on the "international real estate

market," but they prevented Moslems and Christians from exercising their religious rights, and "used the holocaust to generate feelings of guilt." (A/40/SPC SR. 16 p.12, Oct 29, 1985).

The Kuwaiti spoke of "so called" anti-Semitism and the Zionists' "unquenchable thirst for Arab blood." (A/SPC/40/PV.17, Oct. 17, 1985). He disputed a report about Arab countries' oil sales to South Africa on the grounds that it was carried in a journal published "in New York -- where else could it be? It was a Zionist centre..." (GA/40/SHC/2075, Oct. 17, 1985).

Libya's representative lumped Israel with South Africa as "the most heinous" of colonialist settlers in history: "We should immediately destroy this scourge." (Ref). The Algerian representative spoke of the oneness of the Tel Aviv and Praetoria regimes' goals and "the reality of their alliance [which] have caught the African continent in their grip" (S/PV. 2614, p.26, October 4, 1985).

The PLO representative said that Jewish beliefs in the chosen people and promised land were Zionist inventions designed for establishing a racist state in Arab Palestine. (The Zionist movement, that is to say, was born 3000 years ago in Egypt, not in Basle in 1897.) Moreover, Zionism was "designed" to harm the holy places of Christianity and Islam. "It is the enemy not only of all Arabs but also of non-whites, both Christian and Muslim." (A/40/PV.106, Dec. 6, 1985)

Where is the Soviet bloc in this picture? To be sure, it characterizes Israel as racist, colonialist and so on. But at the 1985 Assembly, in response to a critical report on Soviet conduct in Afghanistan, a USSR spokesman tried to divert the discussion by declaring that Israel had committed "acts of genocide" in Lebanon "on a par" with those of the Nazis in World War II.

Another Soviet representative boldly pronounced the falsehood that among the UN's very important contributions to the struggle against racism and racial discrimination were the "historic international instruments" it had adopted against colonialism, genocide, state racism and Zionism" (ref.). In fact, the Zionism=racism resolution was not an international "instrument" in the accepted sense of a convention or declaration, and moreover, it had been adopted by a sharply divided vote. Not long ago, in the March 1986 session of the Human Rights Commission, the USSR's Dmitri Bykov charged that Jews -- repeat Jews -- had helped Hitler to power and financed his war machine (Jewish Telegraphic Agency, March 13, 1986).

A Czechoslovak threatened that the fate of Nazi war criminals at Nuremberg awaited Israel's leaders (A/40/PV. 102). And joining in the Assembly's discussion of the problems of youth, the Bulgarian representative considered that the "most acute" problems facing youth in developing countries cannot be resolved without the elimination of colonialism, neo-colonialism, zionism and apartheid, and without the

restructuring of international economic relations..." (A/40/PV. 77, p.96, Nov. 14, 1985)

Cuba's representative condemned U.S. imperialism's strategic alliance with "expansionist, exclusionist Zionism against the Arab and African countries, in connivance with South Africa's racist regime..." (A/40/PV. 9, p.92, Sept. 25, 1985).

What about Africa? Some African delegates say, in private, that they vote against Israel and join in anti-Zionist statements out of political necessity. Nevertheless, in 1982, the Organization of African Unity incorporated into the preamble of its Human Rights Charter the proposition that the "duty" of the African peoples is to join the struggle to liberate the continent from Zionism (Ref.) This Charter may be in force before long and will never be amended, so that even if we can imagine a real peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors, the duty to struggle against Zionism will stand as a treaty mandated duty of African peoples.

Only last year, the well-intentioned British representative of the relief organization OXFAM in Marxist Burkina Faso, a Black African state, felt compelled to refuse an emergency donation of meningitis vaccine from the American Jewish World Service lest the government refuse to accept it and it spoil on the docks. Had not a Burkina Faso spokesman said that the institutionalized racism supposedly buried in World War II had "reemerged in South Africa and Israel," which "arrogantly practice ...the abhorrent systems of apartheid and Zionism"? (A/40/PV.4, Sept 23, 1985).

Zimbabwe's Prime Minister Robert Mugabe was quoted by the representative of the United Arab Emirates as having pronounced that the "evil crime of apartheid is not only limited to the African continent; as a matter of fact, the principle of Zionism is dangerously and racially equivalent to the concept of apartheid," and the increasing cooperation "between the Boers and the Zionists" is "in reality an unholy alliance." (A/40/PV.84, Nov. 20, 1985).

Turning to Asia, the Vietnamese representative called Zionism "another monstrous form of racism which should be eliminated." An Iranian said that terrorism --according to him "a new development in our region" -- required "honest" consideration. After all, he said, the victims of a powerful "gang of Zionist burglars" have "no other option" (A/40.PV. 107).

The Malaysian deplored "the blatant exploitation aroused by victims of terrorism for political ends." Anyway, who are the real terrorists? Israel, to be sure, the home of "state terrorism." Moreover, "resort to arms against foreign occupation, domination or colonization is not terrorism (A/40/PV. 102, p.13, Dec. 3, 1985).⁴ These

⁴ A Ukrainian expressed the same view on behalf of the socialist countries, which "fully acknowledge the invaluable rights of people under

remarks, and others like them, were heard during the discussion before the General Assembly adopted by consensus a resolution condemning as criminal "all acts, methods and practices of terrorism wherever and by whomever committed." (A/40/1003, Dec. 9, 1985). This resolution was greeted by many as a sign that the UN is capable of constructive action in this regard. One can only hope so.

There is no time here to cite the hundreds of statements in which malevolence toward a state and a people breaches the boundaries of civilized discourse. However, it would be less than fair to overlook the evidence that some Third World nations -- Jamaica, for example -- stay well within these bounds. In 1985, a representative of Senegal, which supports the Palestinian cause, repeated the "treasured words" of former President Senghor calling upon Arabs, Jews and blacks to join together in a "triad of suffering peoples. Colonialism, slavery and, for the Jews, exile, pogroms and persecution, had given an edge to nationalism and strengthened the determination to fight for freedom and justice" (A/SPC/40/SR.22).

Nevertheless, what I have been arguing is that classic anti-Semitism, some of it expressed in modern rhetoric, can be heard in the UN to this day.

I have also demonstrated the perversion of generally understood words in the rhetoric: If black poverty in America can be called genocide, if harsh Israeli practice in the occupied territories is holocaust, if murder of innocent civilians is not terrorism but resistance to oppression, if reference to the Holocaust and complaints of anti-Semitism are mere ploys to dodge legitimate criticism of Zionist and Jewish practice, then do genocide, Holocaust, anti-Semitism and terrorism have any meaning at all? Is it possible to conduct serious human discourse, let alone the discussion of international agreements on norms of private conduct and government responsibility? George Orwell, among others, has warned of the dangers to freedom of corrupting language. Need one underscore the danger of this condition in UN discourse?

If incitement to hatred against Israel, Zionism and Jews were confined only to the UN, then, however regrettable, they would merit less attention. But words spoken at the UN travel far.

At UN-sponsored Regional Seminars on the Question of Palestine, held annually since 1976, and attracting participants from local political and academic institutions near by, one can often hear expressions of hatred against Israel and Zionism -- Jews -- that outdo those in the General Assembly. At the 1984 Seminar in Tunis, a Mali participant said that "the objective of Israeli-South Africa collusion is

the oppression of colonialism to struggle by all available means, including armed struggle, against those who suppress their aspirations to liberty, self-determination and independence" (A/40/PV.36, pp. 34-35, Oct. 16, 1985).

the conquest of Africa, all of Africa" (p. 55). At the 1982 Seminar, a speaker claimed that the world media are victims of "a Zionist filter" that permits "unprecedented and unparalleled world brainwashing" (p. 83). Another speaker said that US "Jews ... are prospering at the expense of black people" (p. 71). At the 1981 Seminar, a participant said that Zionist circles in Venezuela had unleashed an intensive campaign to control Latin American media and to blackmail them systematically (p. 172). A Cuban stated in 1981 that in the United States, "Jewish economic power is undeniably evident. Its influence is notorious" (p. 212).

"The tormented land of Palestine stands littered with the Zionist versions of Belsen and Auchwitz," one presenter intoned at the 1981 Seminar in Colombo (p. 24). The Angolan Ambassador to France, Luis de Almeida, told the 1982 Seminar in Dakar that Zionism uses "murder, assassination and genocide" to achieve its racist ends. "Those who yesterday were persecuted in the Nazi holocaust", he said, "have become today's butchers" (p. 78).

Much of the rhetoric at UN headquarters and UN-sponsored meetings elsewhere is disseminated throughout the world and educates the public about values, issues and events. The UN's Department of Public Information (DPI) facilitates coverage of the Organization's innumerable sessions, conferences, seminars, and other meetings, and reports them daily in its own press releases. Hundreds of correspondents represent news organizations all over the world. They do not always delete anti-Semitic remarks about Israel, Zionism and Jews uttered in UN debates. The DPI prepares and distributes its own information materials, as per its mandate. It places articles in newspapers and magazines, and its meeting tapes, films and "news packages" are transmitted by satellite to remote corners of the earth.

That an instructor from South Africa at the state University of New York (Stony Brook) would include in his Political Science course an assignment to report on Zionism as one of three forms of racism, the others being Nazism and apartheid, may be indicative of the reach of these information activities.

Arab, Muslim and Communist-government incitement to hatred against Israel, Zionism and Jews threatens efforts to fulfill the Charter's directive to "practice tolerance and live together in peace as good neighbors." It violates UN-proclaimed and repeatedly underscored ethical and legal norms against promoting and inciting national, racial, or religious hatred and violence.⁵

⁵ The Covenant on Civil and Political Rights bans "any advocacy of national, racial or religious hatred that constitutes incitement to discrimination, hostility or violence" (Article 20). The Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination requires that States Parties to ban invidious distinctions based on "race and colour," "descent" or "national or ethnic origin," intended to impair the equal enjoyment of human rights as well as "organized and all other propaganda activities

I do not pretend to know exactly how this dangerous UN-focused national, racial and religious incitement can be stopped. Perhaps some day it will be feasible to repeal outright resolution 3379 as in 1950 the General Assembly formally revoked (with less moral justification) a 1946 resolution relating to Spain (39(1) of Dec. 12, 1946 and 386(5) of Nov. 4, 1950). This is not in the cards today, and may not be for a long time, if ever. But surely it is in order to make a concerted effort to persuade friendly delegates and their governments to acknowledge the problem, to refrain from making excuses for it, and to try to create an environment in which peer pressure contains it.

* * *
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which promote and incite racial discrimination." This ban encompasses not only intentional incitement but also propaganda activities which have that effect (Articles 1 and 4). The 1970 Declaration on Friendly Relations Among States, initiated by the USSR and adopted by consensus, requires that every State settle its disputes with other states "by peaceful means," and "respect" their "personality" (Res. 2625 (XXV), Oct. 24, 1970).

THE STRUGGLE BETWEEN PRAGMATISM AND EXTREMISM *

by Dr. George E. Gruen

The crucial issue facing us in the Middle East today is the ongoing struggle between two fundamentally opposing approaches to life and to the solution of problems: the pragmatic and the ideological.

The pragmatic, pluralistic approach acknowledges that there are many sides to every issue and seeks to work out a practical solution by harmonizing conflicting interests through negotiation, compromise and conciliation. This is what we would regard as the democratic or American way. This is the approach being followed in the Middle East today by the governments of Egypt, Israel and Jordan.

But this practical, problem solving approach is being challenged by those who believe not only that their cause is just, but that it is absolute. They believe that they hold the Truth. They regard all who disagree with them as evil and any means are justified to eliminate opposition and to achieve their sacred objective. The enemy is demonized ("The Great Satan") and any compromise is regarded as betrayal and heresy. The exponents of such extremist views use this religious rhetoric, even though there may be a secular basis to their ideology. Examples of this are the doctrinaire communists and the chauvinistic nationalists of the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine based in Syria, and some of the supporters of the ultra-nationalist Tehiya party and Meir Kahane's Kach party in Israel.

Unfortunately, in the Middle East today, while there are various economic, social and political reasons for strife within the region, in many cases there is a religious factor that is either at the root of the dispute or that exacerbates pre-existing tensions. Four current examples in the Middle East are the civil strife in the Sudan, the savage inter-communal fighting in Lebanon, the escalating Iran-Iraq war and the Afghan mujahadeen's struggle against Soviet occupation. It is worth noting that these Middle East disputes are separate from and in addition to the perennial Arab-Israel conflict. Thus, even if Israel were to satisfy the demands of the Palestinians, this would not achieve peace in the Middle East as a whole. Religion is at least one important key element in all these international and internal conflicts.

To illustrate how religious fervor can be cynically manipulated and financed let us look at this strange chain of connections: The official-

*This paper is based upon the introductory remarks delivered at a panel discussion on the Middle East, held at Columbia University on April 6, 1986 as part of a Community Conference on "Critical Issues on the World Agenda," sponsored by Congressman Ted Weiss.

ly atheist Soviet Union supplies weapons to Libya and Syria. They in turn provide training for terrorists on their territory, including fundamentalist Shi'ite followers of Iran's Ayatollah Khomeini. Members of such fanatical religious groups as "Hizbollah" (Party of God) and "Islamic Jihad" (Holy War) eagerly go on suicide missions against what they regard as the enemies of Islam, be they Americans, Israelis, Lebanese Christians or even fellow Shi'ites who follow the more pragmatic Amal movement of Nabih Berri. (For Ayatollah Khomeini, even the king of Saudi Arabia, that most Islamic of states, is considered a heretic because he is the head of a monarchy and not an Islamic republic, like that in Iran.) Another Lebanese pro-Iranian Shi'ite terrorist group, the "Organization of the Oppressed on Earth" has been kidnapping and murdering helpless members of the tiny remnant of the Lebanese Jewish community.

This clash between the pragmatic and the extremist approaches also affects the search for peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

Until a few weeks ago there seemed to be "a window of opportunity" for progress beyond the bilateral peace treaty between Egypt and Israel to dealing with other aspects of the Camp David Accords, in particular the start of negotiations between Israel and a Jordanian-Palestinian joint delegation.

There had been three positive developments:

1. Within Israel there has been a change of leadership. Unlike Prime Minister Menachem Begin who rejected the idea of Israel's giving up any territory in Judea and Samaria (the West Bank) and the Gaza District, and would have limited the concept of Palestinian autonomy to personal matters, Prime Minister Shimon Peres has a broader view of Palestinian rights under autonomy. Peres also supports the underlying concept of the Reagan Initiative of September 1982 and UN Security Council Resolution 242 that in exchange for peace and recognition, Israel would relinquish much of this territory to a Jordanian-Palestinian federation. (Although Peres' view is challenged by the Likud partner in the National Unity Government, the latest Israeli public opinion poll shows 62% support negotiations with Jordan and non-PLO Palestinians.)

2. King Hussein has in principle agreed to negotiate with Israel if he has an international umbrella and credible Palestinian backing. (Hussein: "If Israel gives me back everything Jordan had on June 4, 1967, including East Jerusalem, I can sign a peace treaty. For anything less I need a Palestinian partner to agree to the concessions.") I won't go into the lengthy negotiations between Hussein and Yasir Arafat. Their apparent agreement of February 11 of last year finally collapsed earlier this year.

One major source of internal discord was the nature of the proposed Palestinian state on the West Bank and its relation to the East Bank. Would it be a federation like the United States in which the Sovereign

State of New York and the Sovereign State of New Jersey can each determine for itself such "vital" matters as the drinking age and the use of seat belts, but matters of foreign policy and defense would be in the hands of the central federal government? Or did "self-determination" as demanded by the Palestine Liberation Organization mean a sovereign and truly independent Palestinian state with its own army and foreign policy -- including potential alliances with the Russians, the Syrians, even the Libyans? The latter was unacceptable to the U.S., Israel and I believe even to King Hussein.

3. The third positive development was the seeming readiness of West Bank Palestinians to participate in the process, and the amber light being blinked at them by mainstream PLO persons around Arafat. But the American and Jordanian hopes that Arafat would finally agree to change the PLO's policy of terrorist attacks upon Israelis and non-recognition of Israel were dashed. (Arafat's own Fatah took "credit" for the Katyusha rocket attack, March 27, on a school playground in Kiryat Shemonah.)

Another negative development is that even more radical Palestinian elements, who had broken away from Arafat and were backed by Syria, Libya and other opponents of Jordanian-Palestinian negotiations with Israel, have resumed their longstanding tactics of intimidation and assassination of fellow Arabs. One of the tragic victims was Zafer al-Masri, the recently appointed Mayor of Nablus. I had met with him a year ago when he was head of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of this major West Bank city. He told me enthusiastically about the breakthrough he had achieved in obtaining both Israeli and Jordanian approval to open a bank, which would have a direct telex connection to Amman and which would officially trade both in Jordanian Dinars and Israeli Shekels.

Zafer al-Masri was a bright and dedicated young Palestinian. He wanted to end the Israeli occupation just as much as the Palestinian extremists plotting in Damascus or Tripoli. But he was a pragmatist. He believed that politics is the art of the possible and that realistic progress for the Palestinians required cooperation with both Jordan and Israel. For this he was killed.

When Prime Minister Peres was asked recently in New York what Israel would do now to solve the Palestinian problem, he replied: "We can facilitate the conditions to solve it, but it is for the Palestinians to solve their own problems." He called the PLO the greatest tragedy for the Palestinians, because it was unable to decide on peace for fear of further fragmenting the organization. He noted that it was ironic that "the PLO was an organization created with a vision, but it now appears that the vision has been ignored and preservation of the organization itself has become the sacred cause."

Typical of the pragmatic problem solving approach that characterizes his policies, Prime Minister Peres stressed that "The Palestinians are not our enemies, but their policies of belligerence,

hatred, and war are. Why should we want them to suffer? We seek to solve the problem not by military means but in a fair way by negotiations."

Peres said he would continue to seek out Palestinians ready to enter into dialogue with Israel. Secretary of State George Shultz has just indicated that the United States will support these efforts to broaden the peace process. I hope that they will be successful, and that moderate, pragmatic Palestinians will come forward. But knowing of the strength of the fanatical, rejectionist elements in the Middle East I would not be too optimistic that there will be any dramatic breakthrough for peace in the near future. In the meantime, if the United States remains firmly committed to Israel and supportive of the principles of the Camp David Accords, there may yet emerge Arab and Palestinian leaders ready to sit down with the Israelis for the hard give and take of negotiations that will lead to a just and lasting peace.

AMERICAN JEWISH
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ARCHIVES

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**Results of March 1986 Smith Research Center Poll
of Israeli Jewish Public Opinion***

The two central issues that were examined were foreign affairs, especially related to the peace process, and religious pluralism in Israel.

Regarding the peace process with Jordan, Shimon Peres continues to get a mandate from Israeli Jews as can be seen from answers to the following question:

"Do you support the position of the Prime Minister, Shimon Peres, who is ready to enter into direct negotiations with a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation on the condition that there are no known PLO members?"

	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>No Opinion</u>
March Poll	62%	33%	5%
August 1985 poll	59%	37%	4%

These data suggest strong encouragement from the Israeli public to pursue this policy and show increased support compared with August 1985 when this question was last asked.

It is important to note that the high level of support given to Peres in his pursuit of direct negotiations with Jordan was given at a time immediately after the Hussein-Arafat talks had broken down, with the attendant disappointment in Israel. The pursuit of peace remains high on the Israeli agenda.

We were interested in learning from the Israeli public what kind of concessions they would be willing to make to bring Hussein and Jordan to the negotiating table. As can be seen from the following table, Israelis show some reticence about making concessions:

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NOT SURE</u>	<u>NOT READY</u>	<u>NO OPINION (%)</u>
Do you feel Israel should...				
1. Promise at least some territorial compromise?	34	21	36	9
2. Stop further settlement in the territories?	34	18	42	8

* This study was sponsored by the American Jewish Committee and was carried out by Hanoch Smith of the Smith Research Center among 1,245 Israeli Jews in a representative sample that included all types of settlements including kibbutzim, between March 10-21, 1986.

3. Give Jordan representation on Arab Municipal councils in Yehuda and Shomron (The West Bank)?	28	23	41	8
4. Give special status in Jerusalem to Jordan -- like Jordanian flag on Moslem holy places?	22	18	54	6
5. Evacuate certain areas, like Jewish settlement inside Hebron?	21	14	59	6
6. Agree to some PLO representation in the delegation?	14	18	62	6

Hardly one-third of the population appears ready to make concessions to Jordan to bring them to the peace table on two items: a promise of territorial compromise and stopping further settlement. The percentage is lower on the other items and is especially low regarding PLO representation. The order also suggests on what items there would be flexibility if indeed the negotiating process really did begin.

The relatively low percentages ready to make pre-concessions to bring Hussein and Jordan to the peace table must be seen in the context of the breakdown of the Hussein-Arafat talks, the immediate silencing of Arab moderates in light of the assassination of Nablus Mayor Zaafer al-Masri, and the continuation of terrorist activities in and outside of Israel. Should negotiations with Jordan actually begin, great changes in Israeli attitudes towards concessions could follow. We already have the precedents of Egypt and Sadat. Prior to Sadat's historic mission to Jerusalem, less than 10% of the public in a Smith poll believed that there was any Arab leader interested in peace. Immediately after Sadat's visit, an overwhelming majority of Israelis supported then-Prime Minister Begin in his negotiations all the way through Camp David and subsequently.

Several other key questions were asked in this area with the following response:

	<u>AGREE</u>	<u>DISAGREE</u>	<u>NOT SURE (%)</u>
1. Israel should offer territorial compromise in Yehuda and Shomron (The West Bank) for a credible peace guarantee.	41	50	9

2. Israel should have permanent control over Yehuda and Shomron.	65	30	5
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3. Palestinians have a right to a state in the territories so long as it does not threaten Israel.	27	67	6
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The identical questions were asked in a survey conducted by the Smith Center for the AJC nearly three years ago, in June 1983. Then a slightly higher percentage, 43%, agreed to offer territorial compromise, only 59% wanted permanent control over Yehuda and Shomron and 33% gave Palestinians the right to a state. All these data suggest a hardening of Israeli public attitudes over the period.

There is a connection between these responses. Israelis are concerned with the credibility of peace guarantees and, given the lack of credibility in recent Arab responses, Israelis visualize their need of some permanent presence in the security context. This lack of credible response from the Jordanian-Palestinian camp makes the setting up of some Palestinian entity more and more of an unacceptable risk to Israeli Jews. This would suggest that the sooner King Hussein finds a way to enter into negotiations with Israel, the easier it will be to make concessions.

To conclude, while the public supports Peres in pursuing the peace process, there is a reluctance to make far-reaching (prior) concessions. Time has not softened the Israeli position; perhaps it has hardened it.

Internal Problems and the Question of Pluralism

The Smith Research Center poll of March 10-21, 1986 also examined questions related to religious pluralism and other internal Israeli problems for the American Jewish Committee as part of its ongoing program of examining the attitudes of both publics on questions of mutual interest to Israelis and Americans. The Israeli public was asked its view on certain key issues:

	<u>AGREE</u>	<u>DISAGREE</u>	<u>NO OPINION (%)</u>
1. The government should grant Reform and Conservative rabbis the same status as Orthodox rabbis.	45	39	16
2. Secular Jews should be able to marry before Reform and Conservative rabbis if they wish.	53	36	11

3. Recognition of Reform and Conservative Judaism would weaken Jewish values in Israel.	31	56	13
4. In the Diaspora, Reform and Conservative Judaism lead to assimilation.	35	52	14
5. You agree with the decision of the rabbis regarding ritual immersion of Ethiopian Jews before marriage.	28	66	6
6. The presence of Christian missionaries is a threat to Judaism in Israel.	35	56	9
7. In your opinion a Cohen must not marry a divorced woman.	32	54	14

Regarding the key issue of granting equal status to Conservative and Reform rabbis compared with Orthodox rabbis, there is only a plurality of 45% in favor to 39% opposed. Yet clear majorities see no threat to Jewish values if they were recognized and would allow secular Jews to marry before Reform or Conservative rabbis. A very strong majority, 66%, were unhappy about the decision of the Chief Rabbis involving the ritual immersion of the Ethiopians before marriage.

In an interesting pattern, 35% thought Reform and Conservative Judaism lead to assimilation, 35% thought the presence of Christian missionaries is a threat to Judaism in Israel and 32% thought a Cohen (Priest) must not marry a divorced woman.

The data suggest that there is a hard core of about one-third of the Jewish population which holds very firm positions against Reform and Conservative Jews and a small majority which holds liberal positions on the subject, or what could be interpreted as moderate positions on the questions of the threat of Christian missionaries and whom Cohanim may marry.

However, on the key issue of equal status, there is some slight increase in the non-recognition camp. From the data it would seem that the struggle for pluralism in the sense of equal status for all the principal branches of Judaism has many barriers to overcome.

Two other key questions were asked:

To the question, "Kahane represents a threat to democracy in Israel," 70% agreed, 27% did not agree and 3% had no opinion. However, the data should not be interpreted as suggesting that these 27% agree with Kahane. They simply do

not see him as a threat to Israeli democracy without in any way identifying with him. It should be noted that in the Smith March poll, support for Kahane and his party was down to 3% after having peaked at 9% in the August 1985 poll.

Another question of high sensitivity related to Ashkenazi-Sephardi relations. To the proposition: "Present tension between Ashkenazi and Sephardi Jews is temporary and will soon disappear," 49% of those asked agreed, 41% disagreed and 10% had no opinion. This represents a very sharp decline in the six months since August 1985. Then 60% felt the tension was temporary and 35% felt it was not. It is difficult to explain this abrupt shift in public opinion. Some explanation could be in the ethnic aspects to the leadership struggle in Herut, increased unemployment which hit the development towns mainly where Sephardi Jews predominate, and a feeling of a growing gap between rich and poor in the wake of economic policy. Whatever the causes, the findings suggest that more attention be given to dealing with this problem.



REPORT ON THE
CONFERENCE ON THE CONDITION OF MINORITIES IN THE SOVIET UNION
UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

by Allan Kagedan

The Conference on the Condition of Minorities in the Soviet Union, held March 19-21 in Bonn, cosponsored by the American Jewish Committee's International Relations Department and the Institute on East European Law of the University of Cologne and funded by grants from the Elson and Volkswagen Foundations, was designed with several goals in mind. These included: to cement ties between American Jews and the German academic and governmental community on a subject of common interest; to foster broader public interest and awareness in West Germany of the plight of Soviet Jews and Germans; to conduct pioneering research in the comparison of the statuses of these two groups in the USSR; to identify their legal status and basis for advocacy on their behalf in bilateral and multilateral settings; to propose remedial measures for these groups; and finally, to lay the basis for future joint ventures between American Jews and Germans on this and other topics.

The meeting marked a significant step forward in West German willingness to place the cause of Soviet Jewry on its public, as well as private, agenda with the Soviet Union. It also encouraged West German leaders to speak out on the Soviet Jewry issue as a whole, not only on individual cases, like that of Anatoly Shcharansky, as had been the case previously.

A month after the Conference, on April 17, the Bundestag, for the first time in its history, unanimously passed a resolution calling on the West German Government to urge the Soviet Government to end discrimination against, and to fully respect the rights of, Soviet Jews. The resolution was based on a text adopted by the Strasbourg-based Council of Europe, whose Secretary General Marcelino Oreja, met with AJC leaders in Washington, D.C. last March for a fuller length discussion of human rights, Soviet Jewry, and international terrorism. During the debate over the Bundestag resolution, the concluding statement of the Conference on Minority Rights was inserted into the Bundestag's official record. Further, Lutz Stavenhagen, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and Christian Democratic Party (CDU) representative who had tendered the opening reception at the Conference, spoke movingly of the plight of Soviet Jewry (statement attached). CDU member, Dr. Herbert Hupka, in his supporting speech, referred extensively to the conference's findings. In terms of the broader public, the colloquium generated stories in major German newspapers, including Die Welt (3/21/86) and the Kolner Städtanzeiger (3/23/86), and in several American wire services.

Conference Program

In his opening address to the meeting, Volker Rueue, deputy president of the governing Christian Democratic Party and its chief spokesman for foreign affairs, said: "The Soviet Union must understand very clearly

foreign affairs, said: "The Soviet Union must understand very clearly that the question of disarmament can not be separated from the state of political relations between East and West...including the question of human rights." Moreover, he indicated that Soviet policy on Jewish emigration would be a test of the Kremlin's sincerity about warming East-West relations.

The Conference drew some 50 scholars of international law, and foreign relations, half of them German scholars representing the country's leading research institutions dealing with Soviet affairs. The meeting adopted a concluding statement (attached) calling for Soviet compliance with accepted standards of international law in its treatment of Soviet Jews and Germans, UN adoption of a Declaration on Minority Rights, and UN Human Rights Commission drafting of a Declaration on the Right to Leave. Clearly, the Conference served to stimulate interest in the Soviet studies and international law communities of the plight of Soviet Jews. The Conference also made a significant scholarly contribution in several areas. This report will now touch on some of the ideas presented in Bonn.

Socio-Cultural Condition

The Jewish and German groups, respectively the 16th and 14th largest ethnic groups in the USSR, both suffer from a lack of a viable territorial unit. This deficiency helps to explain their relatively low level of ethnic language retention (Jews 14%, Germans 57%), and why they have difficulty participating in their ethnic cultures, even to the degree permitted other territorially-based nationalities.

Societal attitudes towards members of both groups are negative. Indeed, in the media and in literature, Jews and sometimes Germans are depicted as alien, suspicious, sinister. This mistrust breeds a climate where it is easy to deny equal opportunity to Jews and Germans in employment and education. The image of the Jews has been tarnished particularly by the large-scale "anti-Zionist" campaign in the USSR. The heavy concentration of the Soviet media on the Soviet victory over "German fascists" has had a negative fallout for Soviet Germans.

Status under Soviet Law

Constitutionally, of the USSR's 101 groups, 58 have territorial units named for them; it is within these units that cultural rights are exercised. Jews have a nominal unit -- Birobidzhan -- Germans have none. The Soviet regime, since the 1920s, has neglected non-territorial ethnic groups.

Soviet citizens do not have the right to learn or use their own languages; what they do possess, formally, are rights to receive the texts of laws in these languages and to use their language in the courts. But in the key -- and burgeoning -- area of administrative law, citizens have no language guarantees. In fact, ethnic language use is permitted in the various nationality republics, but Jews and Germans, who are without viable units, can not benefit from this.

The right to speak Hebrew is not protected under Soviet law. Hebrew is defined as a religious language, not a native language of a group, and therefore it falls under the Church-state separation decree, and can not be taught in the schools. This per se should leave the door open to private Hebrew language education. But even here, Soviet authorities can suppress the teaching of a subject by declaring it to be contrary to the "interests of state and society."

Status under International Law

The principal guarantee of minority rights in international law is Article 27 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which confers on "persons belonging to [ethnic, religious or linguistic] minorities...the right...to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language." Other instruments, the UNESCO Convention against Discrimination in Education, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, also include minority rights provisions.

Since 1978, efforts have been underway to draft a declaration on minority rights, that would clarify and interpret Article 27's terms. Thus far, a working group of the UN Human Rights Commission has been able to agree only on a preamble for a declaration, even here with phrases not agreed on. With the scholarly community's help, a minority rights declaration can be achieved.

Soviet Jews and Germans would clearly fall under the definition of minorities prepared by Judge Jules Dechenes of Canada, currently under consideration. Furthermore, international law provides a basis for condemning Soviet policy toward the Hebrew language, inasmuch as this policy represents an effort at forcible assimilation.

Freedom of Movement

Historically, freedom of movement reached its acme by World War I; respect for this right declined precipitously thereafter. A major factor in this change is Soviet policy towards emigration, a policy replicated in Marxist-Leninist regimes on every continent. The USSR and its friends resort to sealed borders because as regimes believing in the unity of the individual and the state and pursuing collective goals, they are hostile to those who wish to opt out. This amounts to a re-jection of rule by consent.

Significantly, the restriction of emigration on the purported grounds of the loss of intellectual talent or "brain drain" is made not by truly needy countries, but by those with a collectivist agenda.

There are good reasons for enlightened regimes to reverse their no-emigration policy: releasing the discontented can lead to greater social stability, promote international communication, advance a feeling of cooperation rather than coercion in a society. Indeed, blocking free movement seems to harm the interest of society as a whole -- let alone many individuals -- and this can serve only the interest of a particular ruling group.

In international law, current efforts in the UN to draft a declaration on the right to leave offers the best opportunity in decades to focus international attention on, and adopt more precise standards regarding, this right. Such a declaration should include, first, a reassertion of the primacy of the right itself, and second, make clear that, in interpreting this right, states cannot impose limitations based on activity itself protected by provisions of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and other international instruments.

Specific provisions of the declaration might include: that statutes or administrative regulations governing the right be made public and available to applicants; a time limit for processing an application, normally not exceeding three months; denials of applications should be accompanied by written notification detailing the reasons for refusal; a requirement of appeal procedures publicized; refused applicants should have recourse to judicial or other independent tribunal; foreign exchange or other limits should not have the effect of prohibiting travel or emigration; emigration should not be grounds for denationalization; applications for emigration should be renewable at reasonable intervals, without prejudice.

East-West Relations

Western efforts to aid Soviet Jews and Germans can succeed most feasibly regarding emigration. The Soviet leadership, reluctant to permit exit, would be even more recalcitrant regarding suggestions for changing the internal condition of these minority groups. In the context of talks over arms and other matters, negotiation over emigration is also possible.

One means of encouraging a more liberal emigration policy on the part of Communist regimes was the Jackson-Vanik Amendment, enacted by the US Congress in 1975. This measure, which has clearly beneficial effects regarding Romania and other Soviet bloc states, has also established a link in the minds of Soviet leaders between possible trade benefits to them and freer emigration. Jackson-Vanik, which has survived changes from one U.S. Administration to the next, and shifts in foreign policy priorities within Administrations, has had a beneficial impact with respect to individual cases, may encourage broader policy changes in the future.

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5/6/86

Statements & Speeches



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THE SITUATION OF THE JEWS IN THE SOVIET UNION

Statement by Dr. Lutz G. Stavenhagen,

Minister of State in the Federal Foreign Office, in the German Bundestag

April 17, 1986

Editor's Note: On April 17 the Bundestag appealed unanimously to the leadership in Moscow to end discrimination against the approximately two million Soviet Jews. In a resolution passed with the votes of all parties in the parliament, the federal government was called upon to urge Moscow to insure that Jews are permitted the right to the unimpaired exercise of their religion and their cultural tradition.

I am pleased to note that the debate on the draft resolution reflects a large measure of agreement in our assessment of the situation of the Jews in the Soviet Union and of its consequences. The federal government needs no invitation to take action in this respect. It has already spoken up for the Jews in the Soviet Union in bilateral contacts with the Soviet leadership and also through its interventions at the human rights meeting in Ottawa in the framework of the CSCE. That commitment will remain a fundamental concern of the federal government. We regard it as a moral duty and political responsibility.

Everyone will understand our humanitarian efforts being primarily oriented to the manifold problems of ethnic Germans in the Soviet Union. We nonetheless also stand up for the Jews in the Soviet Union, mainly because these two minorities are in a similarly difficult situation. In many respects Jews and Germans there share the same fate. Both are under heavy pressure of assimilation, both are largely denied the right to cultivate their linguistic, cultural and religious identity, and many members of their communities are denied the right to leave the country, a right which is vouchsafed by international agreements.

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We are at the same time conscious of our common destiny with the Jewish people, which has deep historical and spiritual roots but which also bears the dreadful scars of Jewish persecution and destruction under Hitler.

In the final analysis it is a question of respecting human rights. Protecting those rights is today no longer the concern of individual states but a question of international responsibility.

Since the entry into force of the UN human rights convention and the adoption of the CSCE Final Act there exist generally valid rules of law which have also been accepted by the Soviet Union and which we invoke also in our commitment on behalf of the Jews. Soviet arguments that our efforts are tantamount to interference in their internal affairs are therefore unjustified and have no basis in international law.

Let me repeat, of the just under two million Jews in the Soviet Union more than 250,000 have left the country since 1968. Official documents show that over 350,000 who have likewise sought permission to leave have been held back. These figures speak a clear language. The Soviet Union must realize that, in the light of these facts, any attempt to gloss over the problem by supplying distorted accounts through the media can only damage its reputation and credibility.

The federal government calls upon the Soviet leadership to make serious efforts to help all those who, in some cases for more than ten years, have been suffering persecution because they profess to be Jewish, speak the Jewish language and practice the Jewish religion, and because they wish to leave a country in which they see no future for themselves and their families.

We must appreciate, however, that the exercise of human rights can only be achieved in cooperation with, not in opposition to, other countries. It is a bitter but inescapable fact that we cannot force others outside our country to respect human rights. We have to try to convince them and work to ensure that the world does not become indifferent to this problem. That is the purpose of the resolution we have been debating today.

How difficult it is to secure due respect for human rights is shown by the years-long efforts to help Anatoly Shcharansky, whose release was the outcome of the joint efforts of the president of the United States and the federal chancellor.

We remain hopeful that the Soviet leadership will, in their own interest, come to appreciate that the elimination of force and suppression is a precondition for lasting cooperation and the safeguarding of peace. General Secretary Gorbachev has stated on several occasions, and most recently at the Soviet Communist Party Congress, that the Soviet Union attaches fundamental importance to the guarantee of human rights. May these words also be followed by deeds in his country.

Statement of the International Protection of Minorities

An international conference on the rights of ethnic (national) minorities under international law was held in Bonn, FRG, March 19-21, 1986. The Conference, jointly sponsored by the "Institut für Ostrecht" of the University of Cologne and the American Jewish Committee, discussed in particular, the situation of the German and Jewish minorities in the Soviet Union from the standpoint both of international law and of Soviet internal law and practice. Gravely concerned for the fate of these and other ethnic minorities in the Soviet Union and of ethnic minorities everywhere, the participants agreed on the following statement:

Preamble

Convinced:

That the freedom to identify with one's ethnic group is an inalienable element of human dignity and a fundamental human right, and that this freedom includes the group's right to respect for its cultural, religious, linguistic, and other characteristics;

That discrimination or intolerance directed against an ethnic minority or against its members violates their human rights and endangers their tranquil existence within the society;

That the peaceful and fruitful development of a multi-ethnic society can be achieved only when all of its ethnic minorities are assured a status recognized in law and respected in fact to that their members may freely express their communal character;

That, ultimately, a state's relationship to ethnic minorities which is based on respect for human dignity, tolerance and equal treatment, exerts a positive influence on international relations, and reduces tensions with

the governments and nationals of other states bound by sentiment and concern to the particular minority.

A

The Conference called attention to the following principles of international law applicable to the protection of ethnic minorities:

- 1) While prohibiting discrimination against individuals on the basis of their race, nationality, language or religion, international law, acknowledges that the prohibition of discrimination alone, necessary and important though it is, is inadequate to protect them in their group capacity, since it assures them only formal equality with the majority without facilitating their free and full development in their socio-cultural distinctiveness. Accordingly, international law requires states to take in the social, economic, cultural and other fields, special and concrete measures to ensure the adequate development and protection of certain ethnic groups and individuals belonging to them.
- 2) The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966) and the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965) guarantee to members of ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities the right freely to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, and to use their own language or languages. These guarantees, which are crucial in enabling minorities to achieve genuine protection of their rights under international law, can be enjoyed in fact only if their members have the right to develop and maintain appropriate institutions and infrastructures.

- 3) The effective exercise of these guarantees is dependent, moreover, on other rights in the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights as well as in other international agreements, especially the right to freedom of movement within the state; the right to leave one's country and return to it; freedom of religion or belief; freedom to hold and express opinions; freedom of assembly; and freedom of association. The effectiveness of the rights of ethnic minorities and their members depends also in the right of the family to protection by society and the State, including the right of parents to educate their children in conformity with their own religious and moral convictions. In addition, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) obligates all States' Parties to promote, through education of their citizenry, understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic and religious groups. This Covenant as well as the UNESCO-Convention Against Discrimination in Education (1960) also recognizes the right of individuals and institutions, including members of ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities, to establish and direct their own educational institutions.
- 4) According to the aforementioned and other internationally recognized human rights, minorities, can be effectively protected only if the States' Parties fulfill their obligations under such provisions as Article 2 (3) of the Convention on Civil and Political Rights, which ensure an effective remedy to persons whose rights have been infringed. Complaints of human rights violations must be heard by independent tribunals according to due process of law and not left to the discretion of administrative officials often applying unpublished directives from higher authorities.

- 5) We call upon the United Nations to adopt a Declaration ensuring adequate cultural, religious and linguistic rights of minority groups and of their members.

B.

Concerned about the special situation of the Jewish and German minorities in the Soviet Union, the Conference agreed as follows:

- 1) Soviet practice in the protection of minorities fails to assure the full exercise of rights nominally guaranteed to them in its own domestic law and falls short of standards, prescribed by international law, to which the Soviet Union has bound itself. That practice is directly contradictory to these prescriptions in major respects, notably, in denying the members of its ethnic minorities the very rights that would enable them to develop their own community life within Soviet society.
- 2) Moreover, by permitting ethnic minorities to engage in the collective development of their communities solely on a territorially administered basis, Soviet law effectively deprives over three-quarters of the more than one hundred "peoples" or "nationalities" living in the Soviet Union of the possibility to lead meaningful lives in the social and cultural spheres. This territorial criterion favors disproportionately the country's more numerous indigenous "peoples" settled in concentrated location, discriminates against the smaller minorities, and contradicts sharply the international law relating to the protection of minorities.

We call upon the Soviet Union, in shaping its internal law, relating to ethnic minorities, to accord them facilities required for the full exercise of their

cultural, religious and linguistic rights.

- 3) The long-standing situation of the German and Jewish minorities explains the special significance to them of the human right of everyone to leave any country, including his own, and to return to it. Their members look to this right to enable them to maintain family contacts, to be reunited with their families, and to enjoy their group culture including the right to do so in their cultural homelands. The right to leave and to return is not guaranteed by the Soviet Constitution, and the largely unpublished legal acts pertaining to this right relegate issuance of permits to administrative officials who are free to exercise their responsibilities arbitrarily. Accordingly, it is urgent that the mandate of the UN Commission on Human Rights to draft a declaration on the right to leave and to return be successfully implemented as quickly as possible. We appeal to all governments to promote energetically the long overdue undertaking of the United Nations to this end. We consider that the declaration adopted at the international colloquium on this subject in Upsala, Sweden, in 1972, provides an excellent basis for this endeavor.
- 4) We disapprove emphatically the Soviet practice of revoking the citizenship of members of ethnic minorities who temporarily leave the country so as to prevent them from returning to their homeland. This practice, which is made possible by the Soviet Union's citizenship law of December 1, 1978 and its implementing regulations, violates the right to citizenship irrespective of ethnic origin. It also violates the prohibition against arbitrary deprivation of citizenship as provided in Article 15 (2) of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, as well as the human right to return to one's country guaranteed by Article 12 (4) of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights.

The Conference urged the Soviet Union to cease the practice of forcible revocation of citizenship of the individuals in question and appealed to it to bring its domestic law and practice into consonance with accepted standards of international law.

- 5) The Soviet Union, in contravention of Article 2 (4) of the Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, fails to ensure the members of its ethnic minorities effective legal protection of their group rights or individual human rights.

Soviet legal science long has urged substantial expansion of judicial and administrative protections in accordance with the mandate of Article 58 (2) of the Soviet Constitution of 1977. The Conference appealed to the Soviet government and to the responsible legislative bodies of the country to enact the legal measures required to bring its institutions and procedures for the protection of human rights into consonance with the standards both of international law and of the Soviet Union's own Constitution.

Adopted March 21, 1986.

Gorbachev and the Jews

Allan Kagedan

IN EARLY 1985, on the eve of Mikhail Gorbachev's accession to power, rumors began circulating of a possible resumption of large-scale Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union. During the 1970's, over 250,000 Soviet Jews had received permission to leave the USSR, including 51,000 in 1979 alone. In the 1980's, however, the figures had declined precipitously, dropping as low as 896 in 1984, and 1,140 in 1985.

The first Soviet hint at a change in emigration policy came in February 1985, when the chairman of the Soviet State Bank, V.S. Alkhimov, reportedly told a visiting U.S. trade delegation that "if good relations were restored with the United States, 50,000 Jewish émigrés annually would be no problem." In July, there was a second report, this time that the Soviet Ambassador to France, Yuli Vorontsov, had offered his Israeli counterpart large-scale Jewish emigration in exchange for two concessions: an end to Israeli and American Jewish criticism of the USSR, and a pledge to direct emigrating Jews exclusively to Israel.

Gorbachev's visit to France last October brought the rumors to a head. Journalists now wrote of a possible airlift of Soviet Jews, either directly from the USSR or else via Poland to Israel, on French aircraft. The logistics of such an emigration would tend to limit it to no more than a few hundred families, but it would still serve as a dramatic prelude to the November summit meeting between Gorbachev and Ronald Reagan.

As it turned out, the summit came and went without an airlift. Several Russian spouses of American citizens were allowed to leave, and so was the longtime Jewish refusenik Ilya Essas. But the release of these few carefully selected individuals was a far cry from the major exodus of 20,000-50,000 Jews annually that had been talked about. Then in January of this year, just prior to the release of Anatoly Shcharansky, a Soviet diplomat in Washington started the rumor mills going again when he suggested to an official of an American Jewish organization that a renewal of emigration might be at hand, along with the resumption of diplomatic relations with Israel, severed by the USSR in 1967.

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That the Western media took all these hints at face value is hardly surprising. Western observers have long maintained that Soviet emigration policy depends on the climate of U.S.-Soviet relations, citing as evidence the decline of emigration after 1979 when the Senate, in response to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, refused to ratify the SALT II treaty. Gorbachev clearly wished to improve superpower relations: what better way to warm up the negotiating atmosphere than by releasing Soviet Jews? Then, too, the Soviet leader was said to be a modernizer with a craving for American trade and technology: what better means of procuring American treasures than to let Soviet Jews go, as Leonid Brezhnev had done in the 1970's?

Yet Gorbachev did not act in accordance with this line of analysis, and the signs are few indeed that he will do so in the near future. One theory that has been advanced to explain this inaction is that Gorbachev has not yet consolidated his power sufficiently to make such a crucial decision. The trouble with this idea is that there is no way of measuring "consolidation." The process may take a year or a decade; indeed, judging from the case of Nikita Khrushchev, ousted after six years in office, it may even be reversible. But even if the consolidation hypothesis is accepted, it simply begs the question.

In his recently published memoirs, the Soviet defector Arkady Shevchenko provides an interesting glimpse of Soviet decision-making on the question of emigration. Shevchenko, who served in the Soviet foreign service for twenty years before his defection, maintains that foreign-policy considerations play less of a role in Soviet emigration policy than one might have thought. As he describes it, there is a constant struggle in the Soviet government between the advocates of emigration, who see no reason to hold onto Jewish "troublemakers" with their public demonstrations and all the rest of it, and the opponents, who believe that letting the Jews go would give rise to all sorts of intractable problems domestically. In this contest, Shevchenko says, the views of the foreign ministry were "neither sought nor welcomed." They came into play only when the arguments of the two opposing camps appeared to be evenly balanced.

This does not seem to be the case at the mo-

ment. Moreover, there are good reasons why any Soviet leader would find it troublesome to let the Jews go, and to Gorbachev at the present time the reasons are if anything more compelling than they were to Brezhnev. To see why, it is necessary to take a look at Soviet internal affairs, beginning with the condition of Soviet Jews today.

ACCORDING to the 1979 Soviet census, there are 1.8 million Jews in the Soviet Union, constituting .69 percent of the Soviet population. (The actual figures may be slightly higher since the penalties of being identified as Jewish could entail some underreporting.) Soviet Jews are an aging group with a low birth rate, and with a significant rate of intermarriage. Though their numbers have been dwindling steadily since 1959 (2.27 million), they are still the third largest Jewish community in the world, after the United States and Israel, and will probably remain so for years to come.

In the matter of emigration, however, where the Soviet Jews live and what they do are more important considerations than their numbers. As of 1979, nearly 86 percent of Soviet Jews were living in one of the three so-called Slavic republics of the USSR—the Russian, the Ukrainian, and the Byelorussian. To put it more precisely, they were clustered in the major cities of these three republics: Moscow, Leningrad, Kiev, and Minsk.

As for what they do, figures from 1973 indicate that Jews then accounted for 6.1 percent of all scientific workers, 8.8 percent of all scientists, and 14 percent of all scientists with the rank of doctor (equivalent to a post-Ph.D. degree).

It is true that these proportions have been drastically reduced of late by government-approved discriminatory policies and practices, which have restricted the number of Jews entering the professions and prevented those already there from advancing in their careers. Between 1968 and 1981, thanks to discrimination, the overall number of Jews enrolled full time at a university dropped by half; outpacing demographic factors and emigration. Quotas limit the number of Jews admitted into scientific establishments, and they are virtually barred from sensitive research institutes on grounds of being poor security risks. Even among the cultural elite, according to one recent émigré, a little bit of open anti-Semitism is considered "good form." And of course Jews have been further relegated to the fringes of Soviet society by the incessant campaign of vilification against Israel and Zionism which has been going on in the USSR since the 1960's, and which has continued under Gorbachev.

The campaign of discrimination and propaganda aimed at Soviet Jews has seriously eroded, although it has not yet reversed, their disproportionate representation in the more advanced sectors of Soviet society, and it is directly responsible for the fact that some 400,000 Jews have completed the first step in the emigration process

(officially requesting permission to join families in Israel). But even while the Soviet regime treats Jews as outsiders, permitting them to emigrate is another matter.

The Soviet leadership realized a long time ago that the threat of force, while a powerful tool for curbing dissent, is of limited value when it comes to controlling an empire that spans 8.6 million square miles and contains over one hundred separate nationalities. In addition to force, the ruling elite must convince the population that life under Communism is better than life in Western countries. The Kremlin spends tens of millions of dollars annually jamming radio broadcasts from Western countries in order to prevent "dangerous" ideas from infecting the Soviet populace, ideas that might lead the public to demand changes in the direction of political reform. Soviet publicists work tirelessly at depicting the West as heartless, immoral, materialistic, racially discriminatory, and constantly on the verge of economic ruin—in contrast to the equality and justice prevailing in the East.

The very existence of an emigration movement raises obvious questions about these claims to superiority. What the regime fears is not just that large numbers of Soviet citizens will themselves demand to emigrate but also that those who stay behind will be led to question Soviet dogma. Among other things, those who emigrate remain in contact with family members left behind, thus opening up another channel of information about life in the West which threatens the ideology of control.

In addition to undercutting Soviet doctrine about the relative merits of life in the East and West, Soviet leaders fear that Jewish emigration will have a severe impact on nationality relations. On the simplest level, it may spark similar demands from other nationalities. If the Jews are permitted to leave, why not the Soviet Germans and Armenians, who likewise have Western advocates calling for their release? And even if these other groups were not led to demand emigration *per se*, it has been axiomatic in the Kremlin ever since Stalin that any assertion by one nationality of its rights will trigger automatic expressions of what *Pravda* calls "chauvinism, nationalism, and parochialism" on the part of other nationality groups. If Jews are rewarded for their ethnic stubbornness, will not other groups be emboldened, if not to apply for exit visas, then at least to become more resistant to encroachment on their cultures? For decades, the Kremlin has been pressuring non-Russian nationalities to speak Russian, abandon their religion and culture, and merge into "the Soviet people." Though the campaign has become more sophisticated in recent years, as Soviet leaders have come to realize that the task of homogenizing Soviet society will be long and drawn-out, the ultimate goal of Soviet nationality policy is still uniformity, and Jewish self-assertiveness threatens it.

Beyond setting a bad example for other nationality groups, the Jewish desire to emigrate also poses a fundamental ideological problem in its own right. The Jews are in a sense the perfect candidates for the kind of cultural homogeneity envisaged in Soviet nationality policy. Owing to their special historical circumstances—the fact that they are city dwellers and nearly all of them speak Russian (thanks in large part to the Nazi slaughter of millions of their Yiddish-speaking brethren and the dismemberment by Stalin of their cultural institutions)—the Jews are among the most “advanced” of the Soviet nationalities in the matter of cultural assimilation. In accordance with Lenin’s prophecy, they “lost” their own language and culture and, with no territorial unit of their own (Birobidzhan aside), have been able to mix freely with other nationality groups. The Jews, in short, have been freed from the crutches on which so many of the other nationalities still depend. To Soviet leaders the desire of this particular nationality group to take flight (not to mention the sudden interest among its younger members in studying Hebrew) seems like some atavistic repudiation of the future—that future which supposedly belongs to Marxism-Leninism, and in whose name the sacrifices of the present are rationalized. The fact that the Jews are seeking nothing more than the exercise of nationality rights formally guaranteed by Soviet law is, in this view, beside the point. If Jews have seen the light of socialism, why should they want to revert to nationalistic darkness?

A final consideration working against the release of Soviet Jews is the regime’s determination to outstrip the West militarily. Since the primary mission of Soviet science is to develop technology in the service of military needs, there is constant fear of a “brain drain” of Jewish scientists and technicians. So fearful are the Soviets of losing qualified personnel that they imposed a “diploma tax” in 1972 on all Jewish professionals who were given permission to depart. This may seem to fly in the face of the campaign to reduce the number of Jews in the scientific and cultural establishments altogether, but the two phenomena are actually just opposite sides of the same coin.

In the 1970’s, in the heyday of Jewish emigration, the Soviets tried to limit the damage by giving exit visas mainly to Jews living on the geographic, sociological, and economic periphery of Soviet society. Thus, between 1968 and 1980, the Soviets permitted 60 percent of the Jewish population of the Georgian republic, 50 percent of the Jewish population of the Lithuanian republic, and 36 percent of the Jewish population of the Latvian republic to exit. For the three Slavic republics, on the other hand, the comparable figures were: Ukrainian, 12 percent; Byelorussian, 7 percent; and Russian, 4 percent. In attempting to account for this difference, the conclusion is inescapable that when it came to a choice, the Soviets were willing (and may actually have preferred) to

do without the more traditionally-oriented Jews from the non-Slavic republics, but far less willing to do without their more acculturated and professionally advanced brethren from the Slavic republics.

But the reservoir of Jews from non-Slavic regions has to some degree been depleted. There are only 28,000 Jews remaining in the Georgian republic, another 28,000 in Latvia, and 15,000 in Lithuania. The Uzbek republic still has 100,000 Jews left, but many of them (or their parents) originally came from the Slavic republics during World War II, so they tend to have more in common with the more Russified Jews. That leaves Moldavia, with a Jewish population of 80,000, but even this substantial number is not sufficient to bring the total figure up to 250,000—the number of Jews who left during the emigration of the 70’s. To match this figure, the Soviets would have no choice but to allow significant numbers of Jews from Moscow, Leningrad, and Kiev to go as well.

The problem with letting these heartland Jews out involves not just their professional qualifications, but also their likely destination. In the 1970’s these Jews, in markedly greater proportions than Jews from the other regions, opted for passage to the United States or other Western countries rather than Israel. One can assume that the same would be true of any new mass emigration from these cities—a prospect the Soviets cannot possibly contemplate with equanimity. Emigration to Israel has its headaches, to be sure—notably in Soviet relations with the Arabs—but at least it does not pose grave ideological problems. The choice of Israel can always be presented on the home front as a manifestation of reactionary nationalism. Emigration to the bastion of world capitalism, on the other hand, is akin to heresy and calls into question everything Marxism-Leninism is supposed to stand for.

GIVEN these negative considerations, there would seem to be little basis for the Soviets to change their current no-exit policy. To judge by his recent behavior, indeed, Gorbachev shows no intention of opening the gates, and in fact he seems to have developed at least a rhetorical strategy for dealing with his “Jewish problem” accordingly. As far as the outside world is concerned, that strategy is, in a nutshell, the same one advocated by Mikhail F. Nenashev, former editor of the flagship Communist-party newspaper, *Sovetskaia Rossiia*. Nenashev, offering pointers on the effective use of propaganda, urged Soviet leaders never to convey the impression—in responding to questions from foreign sources—that they were afraid to speak out on certain subjects.

Whether or not he owes it to Nenashev (who has since been promoted to run the entire Soviet publishing industry), this was the approach Gorbachev used in a French television interview last October when he was asked a question about the

mistreatment of Soviet Jews. Not only was there no truth to the charge, he declared firmly, but Soviet Jews actually enjoyed *more* rights than Jews did "anywhere else in the entire world." Having thus taken the bull by the horns, Gorbachev went on to describe the significant role Jews play in Soviet "political and cultural life"—a point he would emphasize again in his celebrated exchange with Jesse Jackson during the Geneva summit.

Gorbachev specializes in provoking confusion whenever he makes public utterances on the Soviet Jewish question, especially on emigration policy. On one occasion he can state publicly (as he did on French television) that the regime stands by its policy on family reunification and will permit Soviet Jews with relatives in the West to depart. On other occasions he can take a different tone entirely, issuing stern warnings to the West (as he did in a recent speech in the Ukraine) that the Soviet Union scorns any notion of exchanging Jews for higher levels of trade and will tolerate no attempt by the United States "to try and use trade for interference in our internal affairs."

The purpose of this calculatedly ambiguous strategy is to keep Western observers guessing. By raising hopes for emigration one day and dashing them the next, all to extensive press coverage, Gorbachev succeeds in diverting attention from the actual plight of Soviet Jewry—not just the abysmally low emigration figures, but also the incidents of harassment, imprisonment, and intimidation of Hebrew teachers and emigration activists which have actually increased sharply in number since he took office in 1985.

DOMESTICALLY, also, in his dealings with the Soviet Jewish population, Gorbachev is following a far more sophisticated strategy than his predecessors, one designed to pacify Soviet Jewry and contain its discontents without actually making any real concessions. Thus, at a time when discriminatory practices against Soviet Jews remain at the highest level they have been since Stalin, the Soviet media are suddenly afire with accounts of anti-Semitism—in the West. Under Gorbachev's direction, isolated Western incidents of vandalism—against a synagogue or Jewish graveyard—have been magnified to the proportions of pogroms, and newspaper columns are peppered with appeals from the usual token Soviet Jewish notables beseeching the U.S. Congress and the Canadian Parliament to combat anti-Semitism in their respective countries. To drive the point home still further, the official government publishing house, Novosti, brought out a volume last year entitled *Jews in the USA: Through the Eyes of Americans*. Purporting to base itself on American sources, the book concludes that anti-Semitism still thrives in the United States, causing American Jews to "live in an atmosphere of perpetual fear and disillusionment with American reality."

If conditions are portrayed as being this bad in America, they have been made to seem even worse in Israel, via a barrage of propaganda designed to convince the Jews of the Soviet Union that emigration to this "racist," "genocidal" state, bent on slaughtering its own youth in a series of endless expansionist wars, would be a disastrous mistake. Whether concerning Israel or the United States, the message behind this manipulated version of reality is the same: stay put. be happy with your lot, you're better off where you are now.

On the cultural front, Gorbachev, like his predecessors, still refuses to allow Soviet Jews to study Hebrew or—with a few exceptions—practice their religion. He has, however, given a bit more breathing space to "official" Soviet Jewish culture, that is, Yiddish-language books, plays, and other cultural events. Last July there was a mini-series on Soviet television based on the Sholem Aleichem "Tevya the Dairyman" stories, and in December, the Jewish Chamber Music Theater troupe presented a program of "Tum Balalaika and Other Jewish National Songs" to a packed house in Moscow. The performers, many in their twenties and thirties, sang in Yiddish but spoke Russian between songs. In the same vein, Gorbachev has permitted a modicum of religious observance among older Jews: the Kiev Jewish community recently acquired a bakery for Passover *matzah*; the Moscow synagogue is undergoing repairs; a few younger rabbis are being trained in Hungary.

It is worth remembering in this connection that Nikita Khrushchev also presided over a miniature revival of Yiddish-language culture—in 1961, with the publication of the monthly *Sovetish Heymland*. But this gesture no more signaled any real change in Soviet policy toward the Jews than do the token concessions currently being offered by the Gorbachev regime. They are simply an attempt to inoculate Soviet Jews against emigration fever, and build up their tolerance for the hostility and unequal treatment they must endure daily.

In a sense, then, Gorbachev has turned the former Soviet approach to the problem of Soviet Jewry on its head. Instead of refusing to discuss it with Westerners, he and his officials are only too eager to talk about how happy and privileged the Jews are in the Soviet Union. And instead of keeping up the Marxist pretense that there is no such thing as a Jewish people, Gorbachev pointedly contrasts the condition of that segment of it which lives in the Soviet Union with its supposedly miserable fellows in Israel and the United States. By seeming to acknowledge occasionally that this people may even possess a culture of its own—if only in a version acceptable to Marxist doctrine—he attempts to manipulate Jewish expectations domestically and lull Western Jews into inaction.

In short, Gorbachev would prefer to keep Soviet Jews where they are, and is pursuing this aim far more cleverly than his predecessors.

SOVIET JEWRY: BACK TO SQUARE ONE?

by David A. Harris

Let's not fool ourselves. The situation of Soviet Jews is today no better than it was before the November Summit meeting between President Reagan and Soviet General Secretary Gorbachev. In several respects, conditions have actually deteriorated.

Gorbachev has now been in office for 13 months and any immediate hope for improvement in the Soviet Jewry picture has clearly been dashed. The first Summit has come and gone, as have last fall's 35-nation Conference on Human Rights in Ottawa, the February Soviet Communist Party Congress, and Gorbachev's basic consolidation of power. Now, inveterate optimists that we must be, we pin our hopes on the elusive second Summit, or possibly the return of Soviet envoy Anatoly Dobrynin to Moscow to serve in a key role as a Secretary of the Central Committee of the Soviet Communist Party. After all, the thinking goes, is not Dobrynin actually a moderate who will be able to interpret sympathetically to his Kremlin colleagues the importance of emigration liberalization as a means of "softening" American public opinion towards the Kremlin? Always possible, but not much more likely, really, than the forecasters' hope that Gorbachev's relative youth or, before him, Andropov's contact with a less orthodox Hungary might diminish their ideological rigidity. Or do we believe that, willy-nilly, Soviet Jewry will benefit if Soviet-American relations expand in other sectors?

The sad reality is that since the Summit emigration has been cut by 63%, from 128 in November to only 47 in March. The sad reality is that since Gorbachev's accession to power, nine Jewish activists have been arrested and imprisoned, totalling 36% of the entire group of Prisoners of Conscience. The sad reality is that, notwithstanding Gorbachev's shrewd efforts to portray the Jewish community as "a privileged minority," reports have now been received about government plans in Tbilisi to demolish one of the few remaining synagogues in the USSR. And despite movement in some sectors of the bilateral relationship -- air safety, consular, cultural, scientific, people-to-people, commercial and even technological -- very little progress in the human rights area can be shown for it. Despite a few carefully calculated and well-timed "gestures," the picture is as grim as ever.

The Soviets are engaged in a multi-pronged strategy whose principle elements are:

- 1) Neutralization: The Kremlin is seeking improved relations with the U.S. in the arms control and commercial spheres. On human rights, it is looking for the minimum possible price to pay to effectively neutralize criticism of their behavior among enough key U.S. interest groups to be able to move ahead on other fronts.

- 2) Disinformation: At the same time that Moscow seeks the absolute minimum number of positive gestures, it floats, from time to time and in a carefully planned way, hints of impending positive change. "Let's talk again after your presidential elections," said Ambassador Dobrynin with a wink and a nod to an American Jewish leader in the summer of 1984, suggesting that positive change might be in the offing regardless of who won. And various rumors (ultimately false) of large-scale emigration have been allowed to seep into the West -- 50,000 Jews, 15,000 Jews, 900 Jews -- during the last 15 months. While we may not think of ourselves as easily duped, we do earnestly want to believe these reports. Hence, almost in spite of ourselves, we hesitate to rethink our strategy in the hope that the latest rumor or confidential aside from a Soviet official will miraculously prove true. Well, since 1979 none of these has proved true, far from it. This should in no way minimize the significance of, say, Shcharansky's release, even if part of a spy swap, or Essas' emigration, but is to assert that their freedom must be seen as singular events and not a forerunner of major changes in Soviet policy.
- 3) Patience: The Soviets have patience for issues that don't really matter to them, for time works generally in their favor, or so they want us to believe. Activists may give up the struggle, other Soviet Jews, seeing no chance to leave, may make the decision to accept their fate and get on with "normal" Soviet lives; and, with the exception of a small band of Western Jewish zealots, the issue will hopefully fade away from the Western consciousness. Don't Americans become easily distracted? Who talks anymore about African famine in 1986? Wasn't that last year's topic? Aren't we now all consumed by the terrorism issue? And what will be next year's issue? Let Westerners adapt to the notion that the Kremlin will not change its internal policy on Jews and we are expected to react out of all proportion when a few long-term refuseniks or former Prisoners of Conscience are released, or the proportion of Muscovites among the emigrants increases, as it did last year.
- 4) Counter-propaganda: Not only are Soviet Jews not an oppressed minority, say Soviet propagandists with increasing frequency, they are actually a privileged group, disproportionately well-represented among the nation's professional elite. At the same time, the Soviets continue to lash out at the rampant anti-Semitism they allege is a feature of Western life. It is, of course, a modern-day version of the "big lie" -- create facts, attack rather than hide and grab the headlines, as Gorbachev sought to do first with the French press and later in his encounter with Jesse Jackson in Geneva.
- 5) Pressure on Jewish Organizations: The Kremlin has been seeking to convince the American Jewish community that support for U.S. abandonment of the Strategic Defense Initiative ("Star Wars"), arms control initiatives, a return to detente, opposition to economic sanctions and embargos, and a Soviet role in the Middle East peace process could lead to reciprocal Kremlin movement on the Soviet

Jewry question. Moscow even went so far as to persuade a Jewish organization to request the assistance of Israel in seeking to tone down, if not cancel, anticipated Soviet Jewry demonstrations in France during Gorbachev's October 1985 visit. In return Moscow indicated it might permit the emigration of several hundred additional Jews. The Jewish organization went ahead; the Kremlin failed to produce.

Another organization recently took out a quarter-page ad in the New York Times in March and called for waiver of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment which links most-favored-nation trade status with emigration performance; repeal of the Stevenson Amendment limiting government credits to the Soviets; and increased trade in the non-strategic sector, in the belief that such a plan would successfully address the current situation. Clearly, the Soviet hope is that the current stagnation may lead other agencies to move in a similar direction. Until now, however, none have, though leading American Jewish figures have unambiguously indicated a willingness to review their positions on Jackson-Vanik in response to, but not in anticipation of, significant improvement in emigration.

In 1979, at a time when more than 4,000 Jews per month were leaving the USSR, had anyone predicted a monthly total of only 47 in March 1986, they undoubtedly would have been met with disbelief. Had anyone been asked in 1979 to forecast the reaction of the Western Jewish community, which was not even then fully content with the figures because of the continuing repression of such Prisoners of Conscience as Anatoly Shcharansky and the plight of the refuseniks, should it one day be faced with an emigration not of 4,700 per month (August, 1979) but 47, predictions would have doubtless ranged from thunderous and unrelenting criticism to massive demonstrations. Yet, faced as we are with a cut of this magnitude, our reactions seem rather mild. The Soviets, from their viewpoint, acted cleverly, whether by design or not. They used the proverbial "Hungarian salami" tactic, cutting off one slice at a time rather than big chunks. Emigration plunged from 51,000 to 1,000 not in one year but over five years. In a sense, it permitted us psychologically to adjust to each new level, somehow easing the shock of the decline.

The Soviets have tried to change the rules on us and we now need to be very wary. Especially instructive in this regard is the experience of April 1985. When emigration increased from 97 in March to 166 in April, several articles appeared in leading U.S. newspapers describing this as a possible trend. A U.S. diplomat, quoted in the Washington Post (May 5), saw this development as "signalling an improvement in human rights." Six or seven years ago we would have described a total of 166 as an unmitigated disaster. Now it augurs progress! When favorable attention is given to what may be short-lived phenomena at best or, at times, outright disinformation, without waiting to determine if a significant new trend is, in fact, at hand, then we are again falling victim to the Soviet strategy.

Let's visualize a scenario: if emigration increases, though marginally, from month to month, Sakharov is freed, and another dozen binational marriage cases are resolved, coming as it would after Shcharansky's release, the resolution of ten marriage cases, and the release of a few well-known refuseniks, could this not create pressure to make concessions to the Kremlin in other spheres, particularly the commercial? On which side would American supporters of the Soviet Jewry issue find themselves? Will we and the Administration necessarily arrive at similar interpretations of Soviet "gestures" and appropriate "rewards?" And, presupposing improving ties, is there not a risk that a few years from now we may see a bilateral relationship that is well developed in many spheres yet with only a few "gestures" insofar as Soviet Jewry is concerned?

There is recognition in the Jewish community that an opportunity may well have been lost in 1979 to acknowledge the high emigration rate by appropriate reciprocal steps, leading the Kremlin to doubtless conclude that nothing it could possibly do in the Soviet Jewry sphere would ever satisfy the U.S. anyway, so why even bother, especially given all the problems it reportedly creates for the Soviets, e.g. brain drain, ideological undermining, disgruntlement from Arab countries, etc. This time, the mainstream American Jewish community has gone to considerable length, both in public and private, to assure all concerned parties that we would respond favorably to significant progress in the emigration area. In a sense, however, that is the easier part of the strategy. The more problematic is what happens if there is no progress, or if, though we may not want to think about it, the situation deteriorates further. Seldom has the Jewish community faced such a daunting challenge.

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5/6/86

MEXICO: DIFFICULT STEPS TOWARD NORMALIZATION

By Sergio Nudelstejer

After the devastating earthquake that hit Mexico City on September 19, 1985, the painful rescue of survivors and the burial of thousands of dead, the city is beginning to heal its wounds. It is tearing down buildings beyond repair, gathering debris and embarking on an extremely costly program of rebuilding to insure that those rendered homeless by the catastrophe will be housed. Millions of Mexicans have joined President Miguel de la Madrid in the campaign to rebuild, as have many foreign nations, demonstrating solidarity with the people and government of Mexico.

Yet, in addition, Mexico confronts other severe economic problems. Tourism, which once provided substantial revenue, has diminished greatly. Oil earnings, hitherto a primary source of income, have declined considerably, depriving the country of needed funds. Mexico now faces a debt of \$98 billion and is unlikely to be able to fulfill these obligations. Despite pressure from political and social groups to declare a moratorium on debt repayment, the government of President de la Madrid has decided to renegotiate its debt with creditor nations and banks.

In 1985 the cost of living rose substantially. The rate of exchange of the Mexican peso dropped from 227 pesos per dollar in March 1985 to 500 in April 1986. Inflation in 1985 reached 65% and is expected to hit 100% this year.

Many enterprises, unable to prosper in an unstable economy, have closed down, while others work on a shorter schedule. Unemployment has increased. This, in turn, has led to escalating violence -- thefts in factories, banks and private homes -- and a sense of general apprehension in the country at large. The Jews in Mexico are deeply concerned about these developments.

THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The Jewish community numbers 45,000 to 50,000 and is heavily concentrated in Mexico City. The other population centers are: Guadalajara with nearly 180 families, Monterrey with 120 families and Tijuana with 75 families. 55% of the Jews are Ashkenazim from Eastern Europe in origin, 40% Sephardim from the Middle East, North Africa and the Balkans, and the remainder Israelis who have immigrated to Mexico in recent years. The community enjoys civil and religious liberties. 14 Jewish schools, study centers and yeshivot exist in Mexico, together

with a large number of synagogues, women's organizations, youth groups and other community institutions. On the whole, the condition of Jewish life in Mexico is excellent.

There are no Jews presently holding government posts, but Jews do work in various offices of the federal administration and many Mexican Jews are well-known in the fields of science, art and literature, academia, law and medicine.

The devastating earthquake last September, coupled with Mexico's current economic problems, has led to several troubling incidents for Mexico's Jewish community. In addition to general and widespread destruction, the quake caused six deaths among Mexico's Jews and serious damage to the Jewish community's Kehilah Ashkenazi building, forcing several institutions housed there to move their offices to temporary quarters. Many Jewish businesses, most significant among them clothing factories, were also hit. Some have been rebuilt but others have suffered irreparable damage to machinery, equipment and merchandise.

Seamstresses who had previously worked in the hard-hit clothing factories have blamed the Jewish proprietors for the loss of their jobs. And certain leftist groups have taken advantage of the plight of the seamstresses, now left jobless, to publicly accuse Jewish business owners of underpaying and otherwise exploiting workers, and employing minors. Relevant government ministries have verified that these claims are entirely unfounded and were initiated by leftist groups wishing to discredit both the government and Jewish-owned businesses, but the media has given extensive coverage to this defamatory campaign.

The Jewish community in Mexico, through its representative institution, the Central Jewish Committee, has contributed 700 million pesos (\$1.4 million) to the National Reconstruction Campaign. The community recently gave an additional 250 million pesos (\$500,000) to the government for the reconstruction of a high school in a populous area of the city. The school will be named "Rene Cassin" after the late French-Jewish lawyer, Nobel Laureate and architect of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. At the same time, the Mexican Government received a contribution of \$500,000 from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, as well as assistance from many Jewish communities in Latin America and Europe, including emergency technical help from Israel. On two different occasions President de la Madrid has publicly expressed his appreciation for the help given by the Mexican Jewish community to the country's reconstruction efforts.

RELATIONSHIP WITH ISRAEL

Bilateral relations between Mexico and Israel are cordial. Israel purchases more than one-third of its oil needs from Mexico, part of a

substantial bilateral commercial link between the two countries, with the trade balance favoring Mexico. The two nations also engage in technical, scientific and cultural exchanges.

A PLO office was opened in Mexico in 1976 after former President Luis Echeverria's promise to that effect in a meeting he held with Yasser Arafat in Cairo in 1975. The PLO representatives in Mexico use every opportunity to promulgate anti-Israel, anti-Zionist propaganda in universities and among workers and various political groups. The office maintains close contact with the PLO offices in Cuba and Nicaragua, and has been successful in gaining some support for the Palestinian cause. On the other hand, many liberal and democratic groups are worried about the presence of the PLO office in Mexico and the venomous pro-Arab, anti-Israel propaganda it produces.

Another major concern is the fact that in international forums, and especially at the United Nations, Mexico continues to oppose Israeli rule over the territories acquired in 1967. This is part of a larger Mexican policy that opposes the acquisition of any territory anywhere by force.

Further, on December 11, 1985, Mexico voted in favor of a pernicious anti-Israel resolution in the U.N. General Assembly. The resolution, sponsored by a number of Arab and other Moslem nations, India and Yugoslavia, called on all member states to "sever diplomatic, trade and cultural relations with Israel...and to cease forthwith, individually and collectively, all dealings with Israel in order to totally isolate it in all fields." Even though Mexico has not acted to follow through on any of these provisions, its vote came as a blow to the Jewish community which had believed that Mexico would likely abstain on such matters. Indeed, ever since the Mexican votes in favor of the infamous "Zionism is racism" resolution, first at the Women's Decade Conference in Mexico City in 1975 and later the same year at the U.N. General Assembly, the Mexican Jewish community has worked unstintingly to reverse the Mexican position, with a good deal of success. In fact, the Mexican delegation to the End-of-the-Decade-for-Women Conference in Nairobi in 1985 opposed politicization of the meeting and sought to prevent introduction of the "Zionism is racism" issue into the deliberations.

JEWISH-CHRISTIAN RELATIONS

The relationship between the Jewish community and the Catholic Church in Mexico is one of mutual respect and dialogue. When the Archbishop of Mexico, Cardinal Corripio Ahumada, visited Israel in 1984, accompanied by a 200-member delegation, he was welcomed by Israeli religious and civil authorities, including Teddy Kollek, the mayor of Jerusalem. Upon his return, Cardinal Ahumada reported very favorably to representatives of different religious faiths on his visit. This trip

was an outgrowth of increasingly frequent contact and exchanges between Jews and Christians in Mexico, which has led to greater understanding and friendship between members of both faiths.

CONCLUSION

Mexico is facing a particularly difficult period in its history. With one of the highest external debts in the world, a loss of revenue from falling oil prices, a burgeoning population, and the devastation wreaked by last year's earthquake, the country suffers from profound economic uncertainty. At the same time, Mexico's geographical position, and its role as one of the four members of the Contadora Group, together with Colombia, Panama and Venezuela, makes it deeply concerned about developments in Central America and the political and economic instability that has afflicted the region at its very doorstep. Finally, its relations with the United States, and preoccupation with such issues as trade, tourism and immigration, are major factors in its foreign policy considerations.

The Jewish community is a well established part of Mexico, firmly committed to its prosperity and development. It enjoys good ties with the government and an active communal life. Manifestations of anti-Semitism do arise from time to time, occasionally inspired by right-wing groups and at other times by left-wingers under the guise of anti-Zionism, and fanned by the PLO presence in the country. Yet anti-Semitism, while of some concern to the Jewish community, is not considered a major threat, nor has it affected Mexico's bilateral ties with Israel. The greatest challenge today facing the Jewish community, other than the vital communal questions, is to assist in the national effort to overcome Mexico's daunting economic difficulties and to help set the country on a course towards economic stability and well-being.

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COSTA RICA: IMPORTANT FACTOR FOR PEACE IN CENTRAL AMERICA

by Sergio Nudelstejer

Winds of democracy are being felt throughout Latin America and bringing significant change to the region. Democracies first sprouted in Argentina, Brazil and Uruguay and more recently in El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala. In Costa Rica, a new president, Oscar Arias Sanchez of the social democratic Partido Liberacion Nacional (National Liberation Party - N.L.P.), was elected in February and will take office on May 8. Arias, a 44-year-old economist and lawyer, defeated the Social-Christian candidate, Rafael Angel Calderon Fournier, winning 55% of the popular vote. The N.L.P., the party of outgoing President Luis Alberto Monge, also won a majority in the Legislative Assembly.

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION

The new president will be faced with an unemployment rate of 12%, inflation at 15%, poverty affecting 200,000 citizens and a serious housing shortage. As he pledged during his electoral campaign, Arias hopes to build 80,000 homes during the four years of his regime and to create 100,000 jobs. He also plans a tax reform which will benefit salaried workers and to impose higher taxes on corporations. Further, he must tackle the daunting task of seeking to reduce a bloated government bureaucracy that now employs 25% of the country's labor force. Finally, the Arias government will have to find ways to increase exports in the next few years. Last year, export earnings totalled only \$900 million.

A DEMOCRATIC GOVERNMENT

Costa Rica has been for decades a model democracy in the region. Known as "the Switzerland of Central America," the country is governed by a Constitution adopted on November 7, 1949. The president is chosen in democratic elections, serves a four-year term and cannot succeed himself. He is responsible for appointing a Council of Ministers. The legislative branch consists of a 57-member Chamber of Deputies likewise chosen by the electorate. Judicial power resides in the Supreme Court of Justice, whose seventeen members are chosen by the Chamber of Deputies for a minimum term of eight years.

The Constitution prohibits the formation of an army. To preserve order there exists a 9,000-member police force called the "Guardia Civil" (Civil Guard), which largely changes with each new government.

The Costa Rican population of 2.7 million is growing at a rather high rate of 2.8% annually. The country enjoys a 90% literacy rate. Catholicism is the dominant religion but there is absolute religious freedom and tolerance for all religious groups.

INTERNATIONAL POLICY

Costa Rica owes approximately \$4 billion to overseas creditors and will be faced with very serious problems of repayment in the coming years. At the moment it is managing interest payments, but the country has no current capacity to continue such payments indefinitely. Finding a solution to this debt crisis will be one of the most immediate and significant challenges facing President Arias.

President Arias has publicly declared that he will base his foreign policy on the principles of self-determination and non-interference in the internal affairs of other countries. Full respect for human rights, civil liberties and the right of asylum will continue to be a hallmark of Costa Rican policy.

Costa Rica intends to maintain its neutrality in any conflict. This will be a basic guideline of the new government. In the specific case of relations with neighboring Nicaragua, President Arias hopes that bilateral relations will be "correct". In talking about the prospects of peace in Central America, Arias recently said: "I see it as very difficult to achieve peace in Central America unless, first, there is democracy in each of the region's nations." Clearly, the newly-elected president was referring to the Sandinista regime in Nicaragua. In recent declarations to the press, the new president added: "To negotiate, there must first be a will to do so and this is something that Nicaragua has not yet demonstrated."

During the next four years, President Arias will use the prestige of Costa Rica as a peace-loving country to conduct a foreign policy active in the search for democracy and regional stability in Central America, and will seek a solution to the unrest created by the Sandinista regime. According to Arias, democracy signifies ideological pluralism, freedom of action for all political parties and absolute respect for civil liberties, including freedom of the press. Thus, the challenge before Costa Rica is to find solutions to regional problems through dialogue and diplomacy, not through military means.

The president-elect, during an interview with the Madrid newspaper El Pais, stated clearly the obligation of the Sandinista regime to abide by its original pledges, which had led countries such as Costa Rica to help the Sandinistas overthrow the Somoza dynasty after more than 40 years in power. The Sandinistas, Arias recalled, had expressed their desire to build a new Nicaragua, not a second Cuba. The president-elect noted that the people of Costa Rica feel profound disappointment with what has happened in Nicaragua since 1979. The installation of a Marxist-Leninist government in Managua is not only a betrayal to the world, he asserted, but to the Nicaraguan people as well, because they never suspected that one dictatorship would be replaced with another.

Arias is a supporter of the Contadora Group, though Costa Rica is not one of the four members. He believes, however, that it is time for the Contadora process to begin to show positive results, specifically that Nicaragua must be persuaded to sign the peace agreement that the Sandinista regime has heretofore been unwilling to accept.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Costa Rica is a model nation in the area of human rights, thus it came as no surprise when the Organization of American States (OAS) decided that the Interamerican Institute of Human Rights should be located in San Jose, the capital city.

The Jacob Blaustein Institute for the Advancement of Human Rights of the American Jewish Committee, together with the Interamerican Institute of Human Rights, sponsored a successful seminar in Costa Rica in the summer of 1985 on the theme: "The Advancement of Human Rights in Education." Official representatives of the ministries of public education of a number of Latin American countries, as well as professors from many universities attended. The seminar focused on the importance of human rights in the educational system, starting with textbooks in elementary and junior high school and continuing through high school and university. The Interamerican Institute of Human Rights has subsequently proposed a number of other joint projects with the Jacob Blaustein Institute to promote the advancement of human rights and human rights education, including the involvement of additional Latin American countries in this effort.

COSTA RICA AND THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

The small Jewish community in Costa Rica numbers approximately 2,000, almost all of whom live in San Jose. Jews represent less than 0.1% of the total population of the country.

The representative institution of the community is the "Centro Israelita Sionista de Costa Rica" ("Zionist-Jewish Center of Costa Rica") which maintains a social and cultural center, a synagogue and a day school, "The Chaim Weizman Institute," that runs from kindergarten to high school. About 90% of the Jewish children attend this school. In May 1973, the Ministry of Public Education accorded to Hebrew the same status as a foreign language as it does to English and French in the country's school system.

Interreligious ties are carried out through the "Asociacion de Amistad Judeo-Cristiana" ("Jewish-Christian Friendship Association") whose mainstay has for many years been the remarkable Father Benjamin Nunez. Father Nunez served twice as Costa Rica's ambassador to Israel, as well as ambassador to the United Nations and, more recently, to UNESCO. It was Father Nunez who, at the U.N. General Assembly in 1975,

publicly defended Zionism when it was viciously compared to racism. He has also been a strong advocate in behalf of Soviet Jewry, an issue that has generated the support of many Costa Ricans.

COSTA RICA AND ISRAEL

Relations between Costa Rica and Israel have been very cordial since the founding of the Jewish state. During the government of now outgoing President Luis Alberto Monge, the Costa Rican Embassy was transferred from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, the first of only two countries (El Salvador being the other) to do so since adoption of the U.N. resolution of August 1980 calling on states that had established diplomatic missions in Jerusalem to withdraw them. President Arias has stated repeatedly that he will keep the embassy in Jerusalem.

Israel and Costa Rica participate in a series of bilateral technological and scientific exchanges. Israel trains Costa Ricans technicians in irrigation, agriculture and other key development sectors. Israeli technicians are frequently invited to serve as consultants to agricultural and scientific projects at the request of the Costa Rican government.

It is also important to note that outstanding Jews have participated in different governments of Costa Rica. At the time of writing, there are reports that the regime of President Arias, scheduled to take office in May, will include a number of Jews in the executive branch, and that a few Jews will serve in the Legislative Assembly.

In sum, prospects over the next four years for the continued strong functioning of a democratic state firmly committed to peace and human rights are excellent, and the small Costa Rican Jewish community shares in that sense of optimism. What is worrisome, though, are the economic challenges facing the country and the tension and uncertainty generated by the Sandinista regime just to the north of Costa Rica. These are two factors that will have to be watched very carefully in the coming months.

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4/29/86

ANTI-SEMITISM IN ARGENTINA: OLD AND NEW

by Jacobo Kovadloff and Susan Rothblatt

In a recent AJC paper, The Argentine Jewish Community Under Alfonsin, (Global Issues, Vol. 1, No. 1, January 1986), the question was raised whether President Raul Alfonsin, installed in office 2 1/2 years ago in democratic elections, would be able to ensure a stable political and economic future for Argentina and eliminate endemic anti-Semitism in Argentine society. The Alfonsin Administration has effected many reforms: it has restored constitutional rule and civil liberties, weakened the opposition Peronist party, ending a brutal civil war and quelling the armed forces, and implemented strong economic measures to cut inflation and ease a tremendous debt. Yet, several months later, there is still skepticism regarding the Argentine situation.

There is general agreement within the Jewish community and among democratic non-Jews that anti-Semitic incidents, rampant from 1973 to 1983 under Peronist and then military rule, today are essentially part of an effort by underground groups to challenge democratic rule. The Catholic Church and other non-Jewish institutions have also been targets of vandalism and attacks. Yet in March of this year, a new and troubling anti-Semitic outbreak occurred at a rally, organized by the labor movement, protesting Alfonsin's new economic plan. Whereas synagogue bombings, swastikas and anti-Semitic publications, among other anti-Jewish activities, generate scant press attention, this latest incident received front-page newspaper coverage.

Because of its potential impact on the country's economic policy, the entire nation was following the rally; thus, the entire nation witnessed the outbreak. Three factors: the event's large repercussions; the fact that never before has a major public rally, and one, moreover, unrelated to specifically Jewish issues, played host to an anti-Semitic outbreak; and the strength and unique rightist orientation of the Argentine labor movement with its ties to a history of anti-Semitic incitement suggest that anti-Semitism may not have subsided but may remain a strong, underlying force in Argentine society. As Dr. David Goldberg, President of the Delegacion de Asociaciones Israelitas Argentina (DAIA), the umbrella organization for Argentine Jewry, recently remarked, "Those old anti-Semites are still present in the country along with new ones, despite the fact that we are moving towards a full democracy with full benefits of a state of law." In very important ways, the March incident grows out of Argentina's current political and economic situation and its past.

The Debate Over Alfonsin's Policies

The primary problem facing the Alfonsin government has been Argentina's economic and fiscal woes. The country's debt had reached \$50 billion, the third largest in the world. Inflation, at one time at 1,000% annually, is still in the double digits. Alfonsin's new economic plan, the Austral Plan, begun June 14, 1985, has proved successful in curbing inflation but has also significantly lowered the income of all Argentines, particularly of the working class. These seemingly hardened economic conditions have created inevitable dissatisfaction among Argentines. The Austral Plan follows standard International Monetary Fund (IMF) austerity measures: wages and prices have been frozen, government spending cut, exports stimulated, and foreign investment encouraged, all measures which favor external creditors over the Argentine population. And prices, despite the freeze, are rising, rendering salaries and consumer power even weaker.

An intense debate over the merits of the Austral Plan has ensued between several small leftist parties and the leaders of the Peronist-dominated trade unions. There are two major protagonists in these polemics: Cesar Jaroslavsky, the majority leader in the Chamber of Deputies of the Radical Party (Alfonsin's party, liberal by American standards) and a Jew, who favors the plan; and Saul Ubaldini, leader of the Confederacion General de Trabajo (CGT), and a member of the brewery workers union, who opposes it. Ubaldini and the trade unionists object to the measures' budget restrictions and to the limits placed on wage and price increases. They assert that, as the value of salaries has diminished by 25% in relation to the cost of living since the implementation of the Austral Plan, salaries must be increased by 25% to compensate. The government has offered only a 5% increase. In addition, they support a moratorium on the country's external debt payments in contradiction with the current policy. Equally significantly, Ubaldini and his followers oppose the plan on the basis of its close connection to the IMF and the United States. The CGT condemnation of the recent U.S. bombing of Libyan installations and the "complicity of Great Britain" as "imperialistic aggression" is indicative of their position vis-a-vis the United States.

The CGT and General Strikes

The labor movement holds a great deal of power in Argentina, and within the movement, the CGT enjoys a virtual monopoly. Although each union in Argentina represents only one industry, worker affiliation with the union is mandatory. As a result, general strikes called by the CGT can effectively temporarily paralyze the nation. The CGT is organized in a corporate structure, with its roots in the Peronist authoritarian system, and it maintains close contacts with right-wing elements. In the 1983 general elections, for instance, the labor forces secretly aligned with the armed forces against Alfonsin. And, the Peronist party, despite the fact that it includes several Jews, has a long history of anti-Semitic feeling.

On March 25, 1986, the CGT called for a 10-hour general strike and mass rally in downtown Buenos Aires, the fifth such CGT manifestation since Alfonsin took office in December 1983, to protest the implementation of the IMF agreement. The night prior, the Argentine film, "The Official Story," had received the Oscar for best foreign picture at the American Academy Awards ceremony. It was the first time that Argentina, or indeed any Latin American nation, had won an Oscar. The news caused great jubilation and a nationalist upsurge which carried over to March 25.

At the rally, top political leaders of several populist and leftist-oriented parties which support the CGT's position sat on the dais alongside Ubaldini. Ubaldini, however, was the only speaker. Responding to prior accusations by members of the government that the trade unions were anti-democratic, pro-fascist and engaged in an effort to topple the current administration, Ubaldini in his speech used diatribes to attack President Alfonsin and several prominent members of the Alfonsin cabinet, including the Ministers of Finance, Labor and Health and Welfare, and Cesar Jaroslavsky. Of the majority leader, Ubaldini said, "he would make a good a candidate for the comic Oscar." The comment provoked demonstrators close to the stage, identified by several Argentine papers as members of the Peronist youth, including former members of the Montoneros guerrilla group, to begin shouting anti-Semitic slogans: "Jew, son of a bitch," "Jewish bastard," "Jewish braggart." Ubaldini appeared shocked and took some time before responding: "The (Jewish) community is not to blame," he said. "There is a black sheep (Jaroslavsky) in every family."

The approximately 233,000 Jews living in Argentina, and particularly those who consider themselves assimilated, are understandably greatly worried. Police and news reports estimate that 150,000 people took part in the rally, although the CGT put the number at 375,000, and that some 5,000 of these participated in the chanting. Millions of other Argentinians witnessed the event live on television, listened to radio reports or read about it in the papers. The rally received a tremendous amount of publicity and the press stressed the anti-Semitic dimensions: "Anti-Semitic Manifestation," "From the Salary of Fear (the title of a French film mentioned by Ubaldini) to the Jewish Condition of Cesar Jaroslavsky," "A Dose of Anti-Semitism," some of the headlines read.

Responses

Although involvement in and awareness of the incident was extensive, there were few immediate rebuffs outside of the Jewish community and even the Jewish community's response proved troubling. None of the representatives of the parties present on the dais responded, despite the fact that all claim themselves to be fighters for democracy and human rights. La Nacion, the influential conservative daily, commented gently on Ubaldini's last statement, remarking that it was "tardy and short." La Razon, a liberal, pro-government paper, noted that Ubaldini had "thought" but not "reflected."

The Radical party expressed solidarity with Jaroslavsky and organized a meeting to discuss possible responses. President Alfonsín sent a letter warning that "such insults against Jews by a small group of people taking part in the CGT rally threatens the whole Argentine population, men and women, who are fighting daily to build a better society." Alfonsín called for both parties to "put aside their differences" and for those "trying to divide the Argentinians... to remember the painful recent times of mourning in our homeland." The Peronist Party spoke out against the "provocative slogans," at the same time reiterating that their Justicialist philosophy rejects sectarianism, intolerance and discrimination which undermine the goal of national unity. The Union of Democratic Center made the strongest statement, addressing the specifics of the event instead of issuing a general plea: "Once again," the Union asserted, "it appears that a bizarre totalitarian, fascist, Marxist attitude has broken out in shameful aggression against the Jewish community."

It is disturbing too that the crowd of protestors rallied to Ubaldini on this occasion. For Ubaldini, although accepted from within the movement and by the government as labor's spokesman, is, in fact, not popular among the other union leaders and is fast losing the support of the workers. It is significant as well that General Ramon Camps, one of the most well-known generals in charge of the brutal repression in the military era and a leader of a right-wing group, currently in jail, saw fit to send a telegram of solidarity to the rally, pointing out thereby, the parallel between the attitudes of the demonstrators and the virulently anti-Semitic Peronists. Ubaldini, at least, repudiated the telegram, stating that he hoped that "never more would the boot (military) control the governmental palace."

DAIA, expressed only minimal outrage in its press conference the day following the rally. While voicing the community's vexation over the event and noting the lesson of the Holocaust that such incidents cannot be overlooked, Dr. Goldberg emphasized the relatively small number of demonstrators involved and termed Ubaldini's reaction "wholesome." Goldberg speculated that the CGT rally was "infiltrated" by a "small group" incited by totalitarian publications. Ubaldini, declining an invitation to attend the conference, sent a letter in which he first highlighted the "contribution of your (the Jewish) community towards strengthening democracy as well as the country's development and prosperity" and blamed the outbreak on an "isolated group" whose attitude in no way "represents the thinking of the workers' movement." The insults, Ubaldini seemed to suggest, were targeted only at Jaroslavsky.

Jaroslavsky not only considered the DAIA statement weak, but also disagreed with Goldberg over the roots of the incident. According to Jaroslavsky, the anti-Semitic chants were prearranged and orchestrated, and stemmed from a strong lingering fascist influence in Argentina's modern trade union movement. Jaroslavsky declared that he awaited "a public apology from Ubaldini" if Ubaldini wished to prove himself a "righteous man." In a television news interview, he appeared greatly disturbed by the event and by the silence of many politicians.

Other Jewish institutions in Argentina, among them the Sociedad Hebraica Argentina and the B'nai B'rith, likewise considering the DAIA response insufficient, issued separate statements and published paid ads. Their actions revived debate within the Jewish community over the monolithism of the Argentine Jewish community. DAIA claims to be the only and rightful official spokesman.

Several weeks following the incident, on April 14, 1985, Ubaldini called his own press conference at CGT headquarters, inviting, in turn, Dr. Goldberg and other DAIA members. In his statement, Ubaldini disassociated the CGT from the March 25th outcry and denied that the CGT was in any way racist or discriminatory. Once again, he praised the contributions of the Jewish community to Argentine society, and once again, the conference received abundant press attention. Indeed, the scope of publicity occasioned by the outbreak, both immediate and after, most likely contributed to Ubaldini's realization that a stronger reaction from the CGT was warranted.

At the current time there is no legal recourse in Argentina for victims of discrimination or racism. During the constitutional government of Dr. Illia who, like Alfonsin, was of the Radical Party, the Argentine Congress had modified the penal code to make such attacks punishable. Several years after, the then military government abolished the provisions. There is today in Argentina a new anti-discriminatory law, already approved by the House, pending in the Argentine Senate. The Senate has claimed that other urgent legislative priorities have delayed consideration of this bill. In addition, DAIA, while agreeing with the law in principle, has found fault with its framing and proposed an alternative, further stalling it. The March outbreak points out the need for passage of such anti-discriminatory legislation and other strong statements and measures. As the generally good reactions of President Alfonsin, the media and several politicians attest, Argentina is certainly not a haven for anti-Semites. Yet neither is it, despite increasing secularization and pluralism, a model democracy in which manifestations of prejudice are rare.

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5/2/86

JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN A TURBULENT REGION

by Marcel Ruff

This is the fourth occasion since early 1984 that FEDECO meets with the American Jewish Committee.

We had the pleasure of having you with us during the Biennial Convention which took place last year in Antigua, Guatemala. In May of that year, our vice-president, Moises Sabbag, was present at your 78th Annual Meeting in New York, during which we presented FEDECO's analysis of the "Central American Situation and its Impact on our Jewish Communities." Later on that year we were invited by the AJC's Miami Chapter to their Annual Meeting here in Miami.

And today we are honored to be here again and thank you, in the name of the presidents of the communities of our Central American countries and myself, for your invitation to be with you.

The Jews which form the Federation of Jewish Communities of Central America and Panama are today engaged in a tremendous struggle for actual survival, caused by great forces which are shaking Central America, and which, to wit, are:

Political: From Nicaragua we have the export of extreme leftist revolution, including the PLO.

Economic: The general recession of Latin America and the further drop in prices on world markets of agricultural products, which are Central America's main source of income, have caused high external debts of all our countries. This has led to devaluation of most of our currencies, import restrictions, and severe financial recession in our area.

Social: We have had continuous unrest, lack of personal security, vandalism, and kidnappings.

Finally: Foreign sponsored anti-Zionism which can easily turn into anti-Semitism. Also,

Anti-Israeli propaganda. . .

PLO agents in Central America. . .

Recent Palestinian immigrants. . .

Arab efforts to have access to governments . . .

* This speech was given at the AJC's National Executive Council in Miami, Florida, November 10, 1985.

All these factors have led to a certain emigration of Jewish families from the region.

What is FEDECO?

It was created in 1963, filling important needs: to unite and serve our small communities, maintain communication and cooperation between all of us in the area, represent our communities as a unit in international events and with international Jewish organizations, and create interchanges in the educational, cultural and religious fields, especially among our youth.

Today, FEDECO's further mission is to analyze and interpret political situations and their impact on our countries and on our communities.

FEDECO's member countries are, starting at the northern tip of Central America: Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica and Panama. Nicaragua had some 18 or 20 Jewish families, and since the Sandinista government only 2 or 3 Jews live there.

All of our communities face similar problems, such as religious, educational and youth and aliyah. They are more easily solved by larger communities, such as Panama with 5,000 Jews and Costa Rica, with 2,500 Jews, than with much smaller communities such as Honduras with 40 families divided between Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula, and Guatemala, down to 210 from 300 families a few years ago and, finally, El Salvador, with today 40 families from the 130 who lived there in 1976.

Although there are very good Jewish schools and youth movements in two of our countries, the outside influence is making an ever-increasing impact. This has resulted in intermarriages and assimilation. Nahum Goldman once said that "for generations we Jews fought to be like the others. . . today we have to fight to be different!!"

Therefore, our problem today is not only anti-Semitism but also avoiding our disappearance as small Jewish communities through assimilation.

Notwithstanding, FEDECO continues in its constant efforts to provide our communities with youth camps, seminars and cultural events, and seeks to keep our youth's identity through relations with Israel and Jewish communities in other countries. FEDECO maintains contact with AJC and the other important international Jewish organizations.

Returning to Central America's situation, in the last 15 years we have seen a rupture of the social structure and within the last 5 years, of economic conditions. This, of course, has affected all our Jewish communities. Also, 5 years ago, we saw the penetration from the outside of the New Left Marxists in open form -- for it existed previously only undercover.

This process has permitted terrorist organizations to establish a firm basis in Nicaragua. The PLO functions openly there, and through Nicaraguan subversive elements, national liberation movements have spread into El Salvador and Guatemala. Also, there has been a new immigration of Palestinians into Guatemala in the past 2 years. Today the Palestinian community is larger than the Jewish community. Honduras also has a very large Palestinian population at present. All this is a matter of great concern to our Jewish communities.

We can recall that during FEDECO's last convention in January of 1984 in Guatemala, the situation at that time in two Central American countries was precarious: they had military regimes, problems of security, kidnappings and considerable anxiety. Furthermore, there was no visible change in the horizon. Today, 2 years later, we are witnessing a process of a new democratization in Central America. El Salvador, for example, had democratic elections last year. Although the guerrillas still have a strong foothold there, the country has a more or less stable situation. We could call it a "stable instability." Guatemala held primary elections November 3 and Presidential elections December 8. It was an unusual display of civics, with 8 civilian candidates in a completely democratic atmosphere. Honduras' elections were late in November. The condition there is stable, possibly in part due to the presence of United States forces. The main problem facing Honduras is its border with Nicaragua.

Costa Rica has had a long history of democracy and continues along this road.

Panama had elections in 1984 and a change in presidency. There are signs of insurgents moving towards Panama, yet there is more continuity and stability since the U.S. became partners in the canal.

How does all this affect Jews in the region? It is historically true that Jewish communities fare better under democratic governments. In Guatemala, the community has good relations with the government, and relations between Israel and Guatemala have always been excellent. It is with satisfaction that we recall that this country was the first, after the United States of America, to vote for the creation of the State of Israel in 1948 at the United Nations. Two Jews have held ministerial posts. In the past elections, one of our community members ran for vice-president and a prominent leader of the Guatemalan Jewish community held an important position in the electoral council.

In Costa Rica, Jews have participated very actively in the country's politics. This country has the great honor of being the first one to have moved its embassy to Jerusalem, by President Louis Alberto Monge. His wife, the first lady of Costa Rica, is Jewish.

In El Salvador, although quite reduced in size and worried about all the problems mentioned before, the small Jewish community has kept well organized and has good relations with the government. This country also has the honor of having moved its embassy to Jerusalem. This was

done by President Magana last year. El Salvador and Costa Rica are the only two countries in the world today who have their embassies in Jerusalem. These outstanding gestures, coming from two very small nations in this world, are a sign of their particular friendship toward Israel, notwithstanding the pressures of Arab countries. Both deserve the sincere recognition of all of us Jews.

Notwithstanding Honduras' very small Jewish population, a Jew holds the position of personal economic advisor to the President with the rank of Minister. It must be noted, though, that the lack of Jewish education and Jewish life there has led most of the youth to go abroad for higher education, many to Israel.

In Panama, the community has always been active in politics. They have good relations with the government. The community is strong, well-organized, and has a good Jewish life.

Considering that the size of our communities in relation to the population of Central America and Panama is equivalent to 1/10 of 1%, our participation in the various sectors of our country is a positive sign.

Conclusion

During many years FEDECO has maintained close relations with AJC, mainly through its Mexico City office.

Today, the American Jewish Committee could make use of existing relations with our communities to establish further contacts throughout our region. Thus, you would obtain a more realistic knowledge of the social processes which are taking place in a very sensitive region which is of concern to the United States. These social changes can lead to political and economic formulas which could even affect your country. In this manner, the American Jewish Committee could have a more objective picture, which may not coincide with information obtained through a media which has often been distorted. Therefore, visits to our region from leaders and members of the American Jewish Committee would be mutually beneficial.

As is evident, the small Central American Jewish communities are by themselves not a "power group." Nevertheless, they were instrumental in the creation of Israel. They are the only ones who have moved two of their embassies to Jerusalem. They have suffered the brunt of the Marxist infiltration to this hemisphere and, in addition, are exposed to the dangers of terrorist tactics, having lost to these movements some of their most brilliant and productive members. Therefore, our hopes lie in receiving the effective public expression and support of major American Jewish organizations of which the American Jewish Committee is a worthy example and a trustworthy ally of FEDECO.

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Marcel Ruff is President of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Central America and Panama (FEDECO).

PROSPECTS FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY IN CENTRAL AMERICA:
A DIPLOMAT'S VIEW

by Fernando Berrocal

I want to thank the American Jewish Committee for this invitation and for the opportunity to talk about the situation in Central America and the future of democracy in this region, vital for the world and for the interests of the West.

First, I would like to unite my voice to those who today, in many parts of the world, will protest because of the absurd resolution taken by the United Nations ten years ago, comparing Zionism with racism. My country, Costa Rica, 10 years ago voted against this resolution and today I reaffirm before all of you this criteria that is shared by all free men, independent of their race or religion. Only the intolerance of a small group of countries and the fear of others made the United Nations commit such a grave error. The friends of the state of Israel unite today with the ideals of liberty and fraternalism of the Jewish people and the Jewish communities all over the world to protest against this resolution.

Central America Is Not A Monolith

Now I will talk about Central America: The error is usually made, in the United States as in Europe, of seeing Central America as one, with no differences. The truth is very different. The five countries that make up Central America - Guatemala, Honduras, El Salvador, Nicaragua and Costa Rica, as well as Panama on the South - each of them has separate historical characteristics, differences in social and racial integration, variations in economic development, and a different appreciation of problems, like militarism or the real and effective exercise of democracy.

The historical experience of Costa Rica is not the same as that of Guatemala, nor is El Salvador's the same as Honduras', much less as Nicaragua's. As an example, Costa Rica is a socially and racially integrated country. Guatemala, on the other hand, which is the biggest country in Central America, is not. While Costa Rica has existed as a democracy for 100 years and every four years the people freely elect their President and the members of Congress, Nicaragua, as another example, suffered 35 years of family dictatorship - first the older General Somoza Garcia, and later his two sons, Luis and Anastasio, better known as Tachito - and now has a regime equally totalitarian, even though it is of a totally different ideology. While Costa Rica abolished the army in 1948, the other four countries have a long and historically influential military experience. For instance, many people have forgotten, but in 1969, sixteen years ago, Honduras and El Salvador had

* This speech was given at the AJC's National Executive Council in

a war, and these countries have not yet even resolved their border differences. I do not mean to imply by this that some countries are better than others. What I am saying is that it is not true that Central America is one unity, and this is the first point that I want to make very clear to you.

The Central American Common Market

In 1961, the five countries endorsed the General Economic Integration Treaty and created the Central American Common Market. It was based on the idea that being isolated, geographically small and lacking a big consumer market, the five countries individually considered were not economically productive. A common market was then created, with no economic frontiers or custom barriers. The idea was excellent and the five countries, between 1961 and 1975, experienced economic development as never before. At the same time, the Central American Common Market created new enterprises and commercial bonds which exist even today, in spite of the conflicts of the last five years. So much so that, using Costa Rica as an example, nearly 25% of exports even today are destined to the Central American market.

The Sandinista Triumph in 1979:

This plan changed radically in 1979. That year the Somoza dictatorship in Nicaragua was overthrown. A first event that I wish to emphasize is that it is not true that the dictatorship tumbled because of a military triumph by the National Liberation Sandinista Front (FSLN). The military triumph was still far away when the dictator Somoza fled Nicaragua. The dictatorship fell because of the international pressure of a group of Latin American countries, specifically Mexico, Panama, Venezuela and Costa Rica, as well as the decision of the Carter Administration to withdraw all military and political support from the Somoza regime. What was lacking for this group of democratic countries at the moment that the Somoza dictatorship tumbled was a guarantee of a future of democracy and liberty for Nicaragua. A resolution adopted by the Organization of American States (OAS) in 1979 was not binding and lacked the means of verification to assure that the new government of Nicaragua would have a democratic orientation. There was ingenuousness and little vision of the future. Meanwhile, Fidel Castro, the Cuban communist leader, unified the three sandinista sectors, formed a collegiate administration of the top nine comandantes who constitute the National Directory - three from each of the original sandinista groups - and above all, excluded all democratic leaders from the higher levels of power in Nicaragua. The National Guard, Somoza's army, surrendered with no guarantees. The comandantes then took Managua. It seemed to be a triumph for democracy and the OAS, but, in reality, real victory belonged to Fidel Castro and Cuba.

A Communist Revolution in Central America

In 1979, the situation in Central America changed radically. The legitimate and justified feeling of opposition to the brutal dictatorship of the Somoza family, shared by the Nicaraguan people and by the international and democratic community, obscured the fact that, a Marxist-Leninist oriented group was taking power in Nicaragua with the purpose of spreading the communist revolution to all of Central America. As Tomas Borge, one of the nine sandinista comandantes said, and I quote, "This revolution goes beyond our borders." The ideology of the sandinista revolution, as well, was equally determined by Humberto Ortega, brother of President Daniel Ortega, and Minister of Defense, who declared in a meeting with army and military officers that: "Marxism-Leninism is the scientific doctrine that guides our Revolution, the instrument of analysis of our Vanguard for understanding its historic role and for carrying out the Revolution...; Without Sandinismo we cannot be Marxist-Leninists, and Sandinismo without Marxism-Leninism cannot be revolutionary; that is why they are indissolubly linked and that is why our moral force is Sandinismo, our political force is Sandinismo, and our doctrine is Marxism-Leninism." This revolutionary internationalism, as a main political foundation of the Sandinista government, is clear, as are its Marxist-Leninist philosophical principles. Also, the facts, from 1979 until this date, underscore this reality. It is not, then, a lie of the international press nor a manipulation by Washington.

The Military Situation in Nicaragua:

At the moment that the Somoza dictatorship fell, the National Guard or army of Nicaragua consisted of about 7,500 regular soldiers and 4,000 paramilitary troops. Today, six years later, the regular troops of the Sandinista Popular Army number about 70,000 soldiers and nobody knows the exact number of paramilitary and other security forces. We also have to take into account the increase in artillery, tanks, fighting helicopters and gunboats. This military structure, the most powerful of Central America, has as professional advisors, as was stated in a 1983 report, more than 400 Cubans, nearly 100 Soviets, about 50 East Germans as well as Bulgarians. Today, the number of Soviet Bloc military advisors has increased. At the same time, in Nicaragua's capital, Managua, PLO offices have been opened, as well as ETA (Basque) and other terrorist organizations, which have close links and are financed by the radical governments of Libya and Iran. This new situation, as you can easily understand, means a dramatic and dangerous new political and military situation for both Central America and the United States.

The Contadora Group

Because of the spread of the regional conflict, as a consequence of the strengthening of strong guerrilla activity in El Salvador, supported by Nicaragua, and conflicts in the border zones of Nicaragua with Honduras and Costa Rica, a group of Latin American democratic countries -- Mexico, Venezuela, Columbia and Panama -- formed the Contadora Group in

1983. Its purpose is to mediate in the Central American conflict in order to procure a negotiated and political solution to the military conflict and, at the same time, to create conditions which will facilitate the process of national reconciliation in the countries fighting civil war, such as El Salvador and Nicaragua, as well as to guarantee democratic and pluralistic governments in the region. The Contadora Group now has a support group composed of Argentina, Brazil, Peru and Uruguay. In addition, the United States conducted, in 1983 and 1984, a process of bilateral negotiations with Nicaragua in the port of Manzanillo, in the Gulf of Mexico. These bilateral negotiations today have been suspended and resumption, in the short term, does not seem likely. As you know, President Reagan succeeded in getting support from the Congress for a program of humanitarian help for the contra groups, that is, the anti-sandinista guerrillas, who operate militarily in various regions of Nicaragua and who are seeking the fall of the sandinista government through military and political means. In this difficult context, the text of the Act of Peace and Cooperation in Central America, sponsored by the Contadora Group, is presently being negotiated. However, in a speech to the United Nations General Assembly on October 21, the President of Nicaragua, Daniel Ortega, conditioned, dogmatically, the solution of the Central American conflict and the signature of such Act, upon a prior solution of the bilateral differences between the United States and Nicaragua. Without this solution there will not be peace in Central America, said Ortega who, a few days before, had suspended civil and political rights, including the right of assembly and also the free exercise of religious activities eliminating, thus, criticism and opposition within Nicaragua. The sandinista government has also ordered a general military mobilization. You should know that nearly 100 Nicaraguan refugees cross the Costa Rican border every day, and this constitutes one of our biggest problems. As a consequence, and even though formally the negotiations that the Contadora Group sponsored are at their final stage, in the last forty-five days of negotiations, the truth is that we are now at the lowest point and farther away than ever from achieving peace and resolving the Central American conflict. In my opinion, the Contadora negotiations are at a point where they can fail completely. What is left then? What can we hope for in the future? What will happen in Nicaragua? Which are the options?

The Three Alternatives

As you can understand, the problem is very complex. One solution is political: to ensure by means of democratic countries, as the Contadora Group wants to do, that a firm and verifiable compromise favorable to national reconciliation, democracy and respect for human rights is adopted. My country, Costa Rica, has firmly supported this alternative. We are prepared to sign and we will accept any system of international verification. Besides, if peace is achieved the five Central American countries would have to receive strong international financial support to bring economic recovery and to reach higher levels of economic growth and social well-being. The other solution is a military solution: to attack the problem frontally and, by the problem, I mean the

existence of a Marxist-Leninist regime in Central America. This alternative implies the active military and political participation of the United States in the Central American crisis. In my opinion there is not a military solution without the Americans getting involved. But: Is Washington prepared for this alternative? Is Central America prepared? How will Latin American countries react? What will be the repercussions of this decision on relations between United States and the Soviet Union? How will Europe react? What will be the public reaction in the United States? Nicaragua is not the island of Grenada. Even if, strategically and geo-politically, the situations can be compared, in practice military intervention by the United States and other forces in Nicaragua would have a series of consequences much more profound and dramatic than those of the island of Grenada. Some analysts will compare the Nicaraguan situation with that of the Dominican Republic. In 1964, the United States, with the support of other forces, militarily intervened on this island in the Caribbean, and today, 20 years later, the Dominican Republic is a democratic and politically stable country. The Dominican Republic did not become another Cuba. The question is: Can the sandinista Nicaragua of today really be compared to the Dominican Republic of 1964? Are we or aren't we living in the same world as before? All these are the complex and difficult questions that arise at the moment, thinking about a military alternative. The third option is the worst of all: leave Nicaragua alone so it will continue to go deeper into a Marxist-Leninist revolution. With this alternative we should ask ourselves: Can the Central American democracies coexist with an expansionist and totalitarian regime? My answer is categorically no. The country that would be most affected with the consolidation of the sandinista regime would be Costa Rica. We do not have an army. We practice a policy of total respect for human rights. We have been able, with great difficulty, to overcome a strong economic recession and this year the Costa Rican economy shows positive signs of a real recovery. Costa Rica is the oldest and most stable democracy in Latin America. For more than 100 years, in my country, every four years we have totally free elections. For Costa Rica to coexist with a communist totalitarian government with which it shares a long border would be a national catastrophe of unforeseen consequences for the future. The same is true for the situation in Honduras, El Salvador, Guatemala, and even Panama in the South.

The Communists Have to be Stopped in Central America

That is why this difficult and complex time for Central America is vital for us. That is also why our country, even though the majority of Costa Ricans support a political and negotiated solution of the crisis, like the one sponsored by the Contadora Group, have to prepare, in the eventuality that this doesn't work, to ask for the support, even military, and the solidarity of friendly democratic countries. This will be for Costa Rica, no doubt, a difficult decision, but eventually it will have to be taken. Communism has to be stopped somewhere. Cuba was lost. We cannot lose Nicaragua, much less all of Central America. We want a democratic, pluralistic and free Central America. We want a Central America where human rights are respected. We don't want

Nicaragua to return to a dictatorship like that of Somoza. We don't want El Salvador to return to a oligarchic and military government. We support democracy in El Salvador and in Honduras. We are happy because in Guatemala, after many years, the people participated in free elections and a democratic government was elected. And do we want a fascist totalitarian dictatorship to be replaced by a totalitarian and expansionistic dictatorship of the left, as is happening in Nicaragua? The Central American battle is for freedom and democracy, and there is no democracy without free elections, free press, respect for human rights, national reconciliation and economic and social progress with justice for all.

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Dr. Fernando Berrocal is Costa Rican Permanent Representative to the United Nations.



FINDING A MIDDLE WAY IN SOUTH AFRICA*

by Murray Friedman

"There is no doubt that an end to apartheid in South Africa is coming," the Afrikaaner member of parliament in the "for whites only" National Party that rules the country leaned over to tell me. The setting was a luncheon of liberal, opposition, white Progressive Federal and ruling National Party leaders invited to meet a group of American social scientists and writers on a study mission last month.

Virtually everyone we met agreed. The only questions that remain concern what kind of society will replace it and whether change can come about without large-scale violence that will make the current disorders seem puny in comparison by bringing about economic devastation to a land that is the richest on the continent of Africa.

The forces that will determine this are now jockeying for position.

There is the dominant National Party led by P. W. Botha, the State President, with 126 members in the 176 member parliament that reflects the militarily powerful four and a half million, mainly Afrikaaner, whites in a population of twenty four and a half million people. The Nats have been giving ground slowly -- much too slowly and under intense pressure -- but in their eyes with bewildering speed in recent months. Marriage and sex laws have been changed. Blacks and other ethnic outsiders are beginning to be allowed to live and do business, in practice, in major cities like Johannesburg and Cape Town and the bitterly hated pass laws, required for the country's more than fifteen million blacks (and others) after working hours, are scheduled to go in July. Make no mistake about it, however. The essential and ugly patterns of apartheid remain. These include the absence of voting rights and political representation, segregated schools, economic exploitation, and harassment and brutalization of all kinds. Having built and maintained a system of oppression in a systematic manner for close to 40 years, Afrikaaners fear not only the loss of power and privilege but anger and retribution from those they have kept in thralldom for so long.

Their "liberalizing" moves are bitterly resented by the Conservative Party, an extremist faction that broke off from the Nats and has 18 seats in the "whites only" parliament. Drawing its strength from the Afrikaaner, lower middle class -- and what would be called "Middle America" in our own country -- it is bent on becoming the nation's

* This article appeared in the Philadelphia Daily News, April 17, 1986.

leading party. Dr. A. Treurnicht, its leader, claims it is unnatural for whites and blacks, the mixed race of coloureds and Asians to live together side by side. His vision of democracy -- along with the Nats -- is that each group must have separate development in their own homelands. As the Nats eye changes, they are looking over their shoulder at the Radical Right which opposes every move and threatens to displace them.

At the other end of the social and political spectrum are the more than fifteen million Zulus, Xhosas and other black tribes often in conflict with one another, the nearly three million coloureds and close to 800,000 Asians. Many have become radicalized by the years of oppression. Their hearts, for the most part, are with the banned African Nationalist Congress (ANC) led by the imprisoned Nelson Mandela who has been the focus of world-wide efforts to secure his release and the United Democratic Front (UDF), a collection of labor unions and other activists who have been carrying on the day-to-day protest activities. And ANC espouses violence to achieve its political ends presumably as a counterforce to the violence utilized by the government. It is Marxist in orientation. Nothing gets black leaders in South Africa more angry when this is pointed out. As P. Qoboza, editor-in-chief of the black City Press told several of us, Communism is a far away danger, if at all, next to the here-and-now problems of apartheid. Capitalism has become contaminated by its association with racism.

No one, however, really knows what an ANC that has or shares power will be like in practice. In Zimbabwe to the North, which we visited, a Marxist government that secured independence in 1980 is long on socialist rhetoric while simultaneously encouraging private enterprise. A number of the white businessmen who fled are returning. One of the best placed observers we met told us that Mandela has been saying to visitors that he places education above revolution -- there have been school boycotts recently -- noting the badly spelled letters he receives from his grandchildren.

In this respect, probably the most important element at the moment in the situation is the black young people, kids 13, 14 and 15, in the townships who have been rioting and engaging in "necklacing." Suspected collaborators with the government have had tires filled with gasoline tied around their necks and set afire. They, more than political leaders of whatever ideology, may control the situation at least outside the major cities which remain calm.

Somewhere in between these extremes are a remarkable group of moderates including a number of union leaders and academics. Among them are the largely reform-minded, English speaking whites. They find their main outlet in the Progressive Federal Party (27 seats in the parliament), along with much of the business leadership of the country, English newspapers, and the universities -- even the Afrikaaner University of Stellenbosch. Without exception, they are opposed to disinvestment -- pressing foreign businesses to pull out of South Africa -- although they admit the threat of it has been useful. They point out that

these businesses have often been in the forefront of making real equal opportunities on the job and in other ways, and economic growth is central to the progress of all groups. It may be significant that the sharp increase in protest and violence in the last two years has coincided with the sharp rise in unemployment. The sense of alienation among blacks is so strong, however, it seems likely that most blacks favor disinvestment. What have they got to lose?

One hope for peaceful and significant reform through cooperation between whites and blacks may hinge on the response at home and abroad to the initiatives taken by the leader of the six million Zulus, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi. An opponent of apartheid -- he refused to accept the Afrikaaner offer of a separate homeland for KwaZulu claiming his people are South Africans -- he has called for negotiation and power-sharing with whites. As we were leaving the country, Buthelezi had joined with the white administration of the province of Natal in a request to the national government to establish a bi-racial governmental structure somewhat like states in the United States with protections for other ethnic outsiders. For the Afrikaaner fear of "one-man, one-vote-one-time," Buthelezi has suggested "one-man, one-vote-in-a-federal system." Thirty one of 38 delegations accepted the invitations of Natal whites and the chief of the Zulus to take part in an indaba, or conference, to discuss the idea which, it is hoped, will present a model for a national solution. Militant blacks are boycotting the indaba but the national government has agreed to send a high powered delegation as "observers."

Can moderation built on cooperation between whites and blacks work? Helen Suzman, a member of the parliament and elder stateswoman of reform sadly told a member of our group, "Liberalism in South Africa has run its course." If she is right, the prospects for that country and all its inhabitants are indeed stark.

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Murray Friedman is Middle Atlantic States director of the American Jewish Committee. He has just returned from a study mission to South Africa as a guest of the South African Foundation, a business-oriented group closely resembling Philadelphia's Urban Affairs Partnership.

SOUTH AFRICAN JEWRY -- CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE*

By Murray Friedman

Last month, Hazel Egdes-Shochet was elected mayor of Sandton, a suburb of about 115,000 just north of Johannesburg. In her inaugural speech this first, Jewish woman mayor in South African history called for and then secured passage of a resolution that created an extra seat -- an empty seat -- on the Town Council that in the words of her inaugural address would "symbolize the people within our community who are denied representation, and our willingness to share in local government."

Mrs. Egdes-Schochet's action was one of many taken by individual Jews in this country and through the South African Jewish Board of Deputies over the years against a repressive regime that has barred 15 million blacks, 3 million, mixed-race coloureds and some 80,000 Asians from inclusion in the country's economic and political system. As the crisis has heated up, however, the Jewish community finds itself caught in the middle between two powerful social forces locked in deadly conflict -- an increasingly angry and alienated majority of the people many of whom are bent on overturning the system and a militarily powerful, mainly Afrikaaner, four and a half million whites who, under mounting pressures, have begun to give ground but in a manner that may be too little and too late.

South African Jewry consists of approximately 120,000 people. Roughly half live in Johannesburg (63,620) and another 20 percent (28,000) in Cape Town and the Peninsula. It is extraordinary how central this tiny group is to many aspects of the life of the more than 23 million in the country. The mayors of its two largest cities are Jewish. Rather than the exception, this has been the rule. Similarly, Jews play important roles in the 27 member, anti-government, Progressive Federal Party in parliament. Helen Suzman, the grand, lady of the party, has symbolized for years the effort for reform. Its leader now, Harry Schwarz would become the state president in the event it gained a majority in the 176 member body.

In addition to playing leading roles in the business life of the country, Jews head what would be the equivalent to the ACLU or Community Legal Services in Johannesburg, another the military arm of the banned African National Congress (ANC) and a third has authored a plan -- more

* This article appeared in the Jewish Exponent of Philadelphia on April 25, 1986.

of which later -- being discussed seriously as a model for bringing a bi-racial solution to the crisis faced by this troubled land.

South African Jewry is an intensely Zionist community. Over the years, it has sent considerable numbers of its young on aliyah to Israel. A South African, Emanuel Shimoni, served as the Israeli Consul General in Philadelphia a few years ago.

Anti-Semitism has been at a very low level since World War II. As the crisis has deepened, however, pressures on Jews are growing. The extremely modest changes in apartheid developed by the Afrikaner National Party that governs the country has spawned a right-wing, the Conservative Party, that has broken away from it. This 18 member group in the "for whites only" parliament favors continued racial separation with blacks relegated to "homelands." Such a rigid stand, it is hoped, will cause it to become the country's leading political party. While not formally anti-Semitic, its Christian nationalist basis is deeply disturbing to Jews. The latter would not be able to hold office unless they publicly promote Christianity. In addition, a small amount of virulently anti-Semitic literature is being circulated charging Jews with every conceivable sin by all-out Fascist elements. This is not seen as a matter of great concern at the moment by Jewish leaders.

Considerably more significant are pressures coming now from certain elements of the black protest movement and the Left. Despite the excellent record compiled by Jews on civil rights, blacks tend to see them as part of the white power structure which oppresses them. The focus, of course, is less on Jews than on capitalism which has come into disfavor with most blacks because of its association with racism. That business leadership -- including Jewish business leadership -- has been in the forefront of efforts to bring about serious change seems to have little weight among these elements in the present feverish atmosphere, and who can really blame them.

Jews in South Africa -- like virtually all moderates I met with -- are strongly opposed to disinvestment. They recognize that the threat of it has been useful. However, they fear that pushed beyond a certain point, it would increase unemployment and destabilize both the economy and the society itself. Significantly, the growth of the protest movement has coincided with a sharp increase in unemployment, especially among young people.

In the last two years, black leadership and blacks themselves have become radicalized particularly as the government has moved so slowly to make fundamental changes. The banned African National Congress (ANC) whose imprisoned leader, Nelson Mandela, is the subject of world-wide efforts to secure his release, is highly popular. The ANC has a Marxist orientation. In addition, it condones the use of violence in response to what it deems the far more widespread violence utilized by the government. An important new element in the picture is the young people in the townships outside big cities who are out of work or engaged in

school boycotts. They have turned to violence including "necklacing," placing tires filled with gasoline around the neck of "collaborators" and setting fire to them.

Jews and Israel, it should be noted, are not the center of concern of black militants. However, to the degree that the movement is linked to the Third World, it tends to see Israel as an outpost of Western imperialism in the Middle East. Although the interracial, United Democratic Front, the coordinating arm of protest within the country, has not adopted a specific stand in respect to Jews, it has appeared to shy away from formal contact with the organized Jewish community and demanded a denunciation of Zionism as a pre-condition for such contact. Within the leadership of the Azanian Peoples' Organization which has a strong black consciousness and excludes whites from membership, anti-Zionism is accompanied by anti-Semitism.

Feeling against Israel picked up after the incursion into Lebanon in 1982 especially in the Moslem community. A typical flyer circulated in Capetown last November called for a boycott of a number of companies described as "Zionist organizations that send 80% of their profits to Israel ... who buy arms to murder our Arab brothers."

The Jewish community has reservations about Bishop Desmond Tutu who gained international recognition last year when he won the Nobel Peace prize. While he was made a number of laudatory statements about the positive role played by Jews in the liberation struggle, his ambivalent feelings about Israel are worrisome. Invited by Jewish leaders to visit that country, he has refused. Some people have said that the invitation was meant to embarrass him.

No-one, however, really knows what an ANC or other elements of the protest movement would be like in practice. In Zimbabwe to the North, which I visited, a Marxist government that secured independence in 1980 is long on Socialist rhetoric while simultaneously encouraging private enterprise. A number of white businessmen who fled are returning. One of the best-placed observers I met with told our group that Mandela has been saying to visitors he placed education over revolution -- perhaps a reference to school strikes -- noting the badly spelled letters he receives in prison from his grandchildren.

The deteriorating situation in South Africa has resulted in growing anxiety among Jews especially as the isolation of the country in the world has increased. There has been a sharp rise in inquiries about Aliyah to Israel and pick-up of movement to Australia and other places. Young people do not see much of a future for themselves. Nonetheless, there is no sense of panic as is sometimes reported. The community goes back three or four generations. Its firm roots, the decline of the Rand from a two-thirds to a half its value and, curiously, the arrival of a number of Israelis in recent years, have tended to stabilize the community. Jews are placing their hopes on the moderates in the National Progressive Party, the anti-government, English newspapers, universities (including Afrikaaner Univeristy of Stellenbosch), newly

organized labor unions which are the only form of political expression permitted to ethnic outsiders and an extraordinary black leader, Chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi.

The latter heads the six million Zulu tribe, the largest, black group in South Africa. He is a vigorous opponent of apartheid. He has refused to permit his territory, KwaZulu to be set aside as a "homeland" claiming that he and his people are as much South Africans as anyone else. Most recently, he leveled a blistering attack on President P. W. Botha "as dragging white South Africa down." But Buthelezi believes in negotiations with whites to work out a bi-racial solution that will provide protection for the various groups that make up the country. He is attractive to Jews, in addition, because he has been to Israel and has strong ties to the labor movement there.

On his initiative, the white-led government of Natal has joined with him in an appeal to the national government to create a new, constitutional arrangement for that part of the country that could serve as a model for a national solution to the crisis. The idea is an outgrowth of a plan drawn up for the Buthelezi Commission by Professor Lawrence Schlemmer, director of the Center for Applied Social Sciences at the University of Natal. For the white fear of "one-man, one-vote, one-time," the Natal option (as it has come to be called) would substitute "one-man, one-vote in a federal system." This is not unlike our government where certain powers are reserved to the states who are part of a national sovereignty and representation in the U.S. Congress is apportioned along population (the House) and state (the Senate) lines.

As the group of social scientists and writers I was traveling with were leaving the country, an indaba or conference was about to get underway in Natal in which some 30 out of 38 groups invited had agreed to come to discuss the idea. It is symptomatic of the state of affairs in the country that the ANC is boycotting the indaba and the national government has refused to take part but is sending a high-powered group of observers. Newspapers also carried a story that the home of Schlemmer who, incidentally is Jewish, had been gutted in an arson attack -- all his books and papers were burned -- and the words "No Indaba" scrawled across the door. Whether the attack come from the Left or the Right is not clear.

Of special concern to me and, I think to many in my group is the rhetoric employed by some both in South Africa and the United States to isolate Chief Buthelezi and make him into a pariah. He has been referred to as a "turncoat" for his willingness to talk to the national government and some occasional violence engaged in by some Zulus. Buthelezi has spoken out against such violence. Whatever direction the current struggle takes, it is clear that he will figure as a major force.

Can a middle way be found to resolve the situation in South Africa in a way that can lead to a more just and bi-racial society? Helen Suzman who has devoted her life to this sadly told a member of our

group, "Liberalism in South Africa has run its course." If she is right, this will be a sad day for Jews and, I firmly believe, the people of this country regardless of their racial or ethnic background.

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Murray Friedman is Middle Atlantic States director of the American Jewish Committee. He recently returned with a group of social scientists and writers from a study mission to South Africa as a guest of the South African Foundation, a business-oriented group closely resembling Philadelphia's Urban Affairs Partnership.



5/7/86

JACQUES CHIRAC, FRANCE AND THE MIDDLE EAST*

by David A. Harris

Jacques Chirac, the newly-named French prime minister, returns to the key position he first held from 1974 to 1976 under President Giscard d'Estaing. Leader of the Rally for the Republic (R.P.R.), the neo-Gaullist party he has led for a decade, and two-term Mayor of Paris, Chirac's accession to power portends a possible shift in France's pro-Israel posture under President Mitterrand. Although Mitterrand's term continues until 1988, the French political structure provides for a distribution of power between the top two posts, thus permitting Chirac to have a major impact on the direction of French domestic policy, and, if he has his way, on foreign policy as well, the traditional domain of the president.

As Mayor of France's largest city, Chirac has enjoyed good relations with the 300,000-member Jewish community. Jewish leaders praise his openness, accessibility and energy. In December, Chirac addressed a mostly Jewish gathering at the naming of Rene Cassin Square, even quoting from the Talmud in honoring the late French Jewish Nobel Peace Prize winner and human rights activist. Early this year, after lengthy and complex discussions between the Paris City Hall, Ministry of Culture and Jewish community, agreement was reached to create a museum of Jewish art. Chirac's support for this project was crucial to its successful outcome. Indeed, the municipality has offered a building gratis.

In August 1982, a kosher restaurant in Paris was attacked, leaving 6 dead and 22 wounded. Mayor Chirac returned from vacation to attend a memorial ceremony and condemned the "horrible" and "racist character" of the tragedy. At the time of the bomb blast at the Rue Copernic synagogue, which left 4 persons dead, Chirac immediately dispatched an aide to the scene and himself came to the site the next day. Yet when a mass demonstration to protest this anti-Semitic attack was organized, the R.P.R. hesitated to participate because of the heavy involvement of the Socialist and Communist parties in the manifestation. Finally, however, the R.P.R. decided to join to "express its solidarity with the national elan against racism," according to Chirac.

* This article appeared in the Washington Jewish Week, March 27, 1986; the Jewish Chronicle of Pittsburgh, April 3, 1986; the Palm Beach Jewish World, April 4-10, 1986; and in a number of other Anglo-Jewish papers.

Chirac was interviewed at length in 1982 in the French Jewish monthly L'Arche. Of the French Jewish community and its ties with Israel, he said, "History shows that Jews have resided in what is today France for more than 2,000 years, and that, despite the persecutions and expulsions, they always lived in at least one part of the country, from Marseille to Alsace...I do not forget that during the Middle Ages the French rabbis were celebrated and one of the first to use the French language was the famous Rashi...It is normal that in the hearts of the Jews there is a place for Israel, the object of twenty centuries of hope and prayers, the biblical Promised Land, and the place where Holocaust survivors live."

French Jews, nevertheless, are concerned about the possible impact of Chirac and his R.P.R. party on French foreign policy in the Middle East. France is a significant military and economic power with substantial global interests, including the Middle East and North Africa. One of five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council and a founding member of the 12-nation European Economic Community, France is further centrally placed to address Middle East issues.

The election of Mitterrand in 1981 ushered in the most unabashedly pro-Israel French leader in years and strengthened Franco-Israeli bilateral ties, a move that Chirac has criticized as excessive, according to a 1982 study on France by the London-based Institute of Jewish Affairs. Does the Socialist reversal in the recent election and ascendancy of the R.P.R., under Chirac's leadership, therefore, augur a change in this generally favorable French policy to Israel? Chirac's previous foreign policy record, notwithstanding his good ties with French Jews, gives pause for thought.

As prime minister, Chirac negotiated the French nuclear cooperation agreement with Iraq. He claimed that the construction of a reactor near the Iraqi capital posed no risk to Israel and was adequately safeguarded by French restrictions on its operation, yet Israel, of course, did not share Chirac's sanguine view. It found it necessary to conduct a successful preemptive strike against the facility in June 1981.

According to a New York Times account, Chirac flew to Libya in 1976 for an official two-day visit, the first by the head of a Western government since Qaddafi came to power in 1969. At the time Chirac spoke of the "close and longstanding" ties between France and Libya, and added, "I think we shall be discussing political problems as well as French-Libyan cooperation, which should be extended and well-balanced." At the end of the visit, Chirac and Libyan officials signed agreements for France to build a nuclear power plant in Libya (but not research facilities or the facilities to produce heavy water), and several technical and cultural accords. Three months later, France agreed to build 10 naval ships for Libya armed with sea-to-sea missiles and anti-aircraft guns.

Also during Chirac's tenure as prime minister, France permitted the P.L.O., which had hitherto been part of the Arab League representation, to open its own Information and Liaison office in Paris. He claims,

again in the L'Arche interview, that, "Everyone knows - for reasons about which I will not now comment - that I learned about this decision from the radio." Other observers, however, argue that Chirac had certainly never opposed the move in government decision-making circles, though it is true that the final decision was, in any case, President Giscard d'Estaing's.

In the L'Arche interview, Chirac dwelled at considerable length on his Middle East views: "France has never equivocated about Israel's right to exist and live in peace. I recall the discussions I had as prime minister, especially in Tripoli and Baghdad, where I emphasized this point as a fundamental tenet of French policy...If there are differences between France and Israel - and this is the case - it is due to the different ways in which we approach the search for peace in the region. These concern method but not the substance (of Israel's right to exist)."

On the Palestinian question, Chirac told L'Arche, "It is indisputable that there is a Palestinian problem and that any return to peace in the region requires, in one way or another, a Palestinian entity - a land for this people - and, therefore, negotiations to determine its modalities...I well know that Israel asserts that the P.L.O. is not representative. This was, at one time, France's position on the Algerian F.L.N. (independence movement). I am not certain such an approach is the best way to achieve peace."

In response to a question concerning the R.P.R.'s unenthusiastic reaction to the Camp David Accords, Chirac replied, "If I had reservations about the Accords, it was because I do not believe in the adage 'divide and conquer.' Cutting the Arab world in half, as a result of the Accords, resulted, it seems to me, in further alienating certain Arab states from the peace process." In addition, explained Chirac, France did not participate in the multinational Sinai peacekeeping force because "this initiative was an outgrowth of Camp David... about which we had our reservations. I wish to add that it is my belief that what France can best do for Israel is not to align itself systematically with every Israeli position. In such a case, France would lose its credibility as a mediator...I am terribly upset by the Middle East situation and wish, above all, that there could be a conciliation of feelings which could lead to peace."

In 1984, in a meeting with an American Jewish Committee delegation, Mayor Chirac, while acknowledging his strong and long-standing ties with Iraq and its leaders, said, "If Israel is attacked, the Europeans should immediately be on Israel's side. We have first to support Israel, but also to support peace. Nobody contests Israel's right to exist, but the problem is that Israel wants territory and settlements. The political costs, however, are too great." He added that Iraq and Israel actually had common interests in their opposition to Syria, the real Middle East menace. One day, he speculated, Baghdad and Jerusalem might actually reach an understanding and draw Amman in as well.

Later in the year, Chirac made his first trip to Israel and, by all accounts, it was a successful mission. He met with a wide range of senior government officials and toured the country. After meeting with Prime Minister Peres, Chirac stated in a January 1985 interview in L'Arche, "I was very impressed by my conversation. He is a profound, forward-looking, honest man, and I was taken by this approach." The mayor also visited Yad Vashem, the memorial to the Holocaust victims. He said in the same interview, "My emotion became a physical reaction, pressing on my soul and heart and constricting my throat. The exceptional quality of the monument and especially the intensity of the exhibitions, particularly the photographs, are such that one truly discovers a new dimension of the Holocaust tragedy." And as is the case with so many first-time visitors to Israel, Chirac was struck by the country's small size. "It is true that if one does not know Israel first-hand, it is difficult to appreciate the exigencies that geography places on the life of the people, especially because of the shortness of distances and what this means for the country's security," he explained.

Will Chirac's pro-Arab tilt of the 70s once again prevail as he assumes office? To what degree will the unprecedented leadership configuration of a Socialist President and neo-Gaullist Prime Minister result in changes in French external policy until the 1988 presidential elections? Has Chirac's position been softened by his warm ties with the Paris Jewish community and visit to Israel? Will the new foreign minister, Jean-Bernard Raimond, the current French envoy in Moscow and a career diplomat, reflect the traditional Arabist thinking prevalent in the Foreign Ministry, or counsel a more independent line? And how will the unprecedented success of the extreme right-wing National Front Party, gaining nearly 10% of the vote and 33 seats in the National Assembly, affect the political process?

While it would be premature to answer these questions, there is an apprehension in segments of the French Jewish community that the advent of Chirac and the R.P.R. may bring an effort to strengthen further France's position in the Arab world. Whether this can be achieved without downplaying relations with Israel is a matter that will bear watching in the coming months.

* * *

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5/2/86

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