

# Soviet Jews Step Up Efforts to Overcome Emigration Barriers, New Harassments

NEW YORK (JTA) — Soviet Jews are stepping up their agitation against the barriers to emigration. According to reliable Jewish sources, the new tack is to declare Israeli citizenship before obtaining visas and leaving the Soviet Union. This has been done already by Riga activists Osei Eliashevich and Mr. and Mrs. Faitelson, whose first names are unavailable. They recognize, it is understood, the possible adverse effect their announcements may have on the fate of their emigration applications, but are willing to take the risk in their attempt to dramatize their plight.

It has been learned that 23-year-old Yosif M. Mendelovich of Riga, who was sentenced to 15 years at last December's Leningrad trial, has been denied visits by his relatives. In addition, his requests for a copy of the Old Testament have been rejected.

The American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry charged Monday that two recent incidents indicate a step-up in harassment of Soviet Jewish activists. Rabbi Herschel Schacter, AJCSJ chairman, quoted tourists returning from the USSR as reporting that a Muscovite Jew, David Drabkin, has received threatening letters, one stating:

"We warn you, David Drabkin, that your anti-Soviet Zionist activity will bring you troubles. A stone might accidentally bruise your head or a car might trample you or you might not be living after getting involved in a fight. Take into account that we are not speaking idly."

Drabkin has signed petitions protesting emigration roadblocks. The second incident involved another Muscovite Jew, Pinhas Krugler (or Klugliak), who, it was reported was beaten near his home toward the end of January.

Rabbi Schacter added that according to his informants, the 33-year-old man was attacked by two well-dressed men carrying lead pipes and yelling: "This is for the song 'Let My People Go' that you sing, and for your applications for emigration to Israel." When the victim reached the police station, his face covered with blood, he was warned he might be sentenced to three to seven years in jail for false testimony, according to the report. "Both of these instances," Rabbi Schacter said, "are but the latest examples of a campaign designed to intimidate Jews from applying for emigration to Israel."

The Soviet authorities place Jews in the impossible position of being denied the ability to express themselves as Jews, and then frustrated as well in their attempts to leave the Soviet Union for Israel, where they feel they can be fulfilled as Jews."

The Soviet government is planning to make concessions to the Jews of Birobidjan to distract world public opinion from the pleas of Soviet Jewry for equity with our Soviet communities, according to reliable Jewish sources, which said the Kremlin's leaders will discuss a revival of Jewish colonization at next month's Communist Party Congress and have decided to permit synagogues, yeshivas and schools. In addition, the only Jew in the Soviet hierarchy—Deputy Premier Veniamin Emmanuilovich Dymshits, a 69-year-old politician and engineer, winner of the Order of Lenin and two-time winner of the Order of the Red Banner of Labor—visited Birobidjan recently to supervise the planning of public buildings and housing.

Birobidjan, in Eastern Russia, was designated in 1928 as a Jewish Autonomous Region for "contiguous Jewish settlements" based on agricultural and industrial opportunities. There were an estimated 50,000 Jews in the 14,000 square-mile region in 1939 out of a total esti-

mated population of 108,400. There are now an estimated 15-16,000 Jews out of a total estimated population of 198,400.

Fifty college and high school students calling themselves the Ad Hoc Committee to Revitalize the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry picketed for 90 minutes Feb. 2 outside the mid-town building containing the offices of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. They charged Dr. William A. Wexler and Yehuda Hellman, chairman and executive director of the Conference of Presidents, with deliberating the American Jewish Conference by denying it autonomy and the legal status required for fund raising.

They added that after seven years of existence, the American Jewish Conference had only one full-time paid professional on its staff and was unable to demonstrate until Sept. 20 for the Leningrad Jews arrested June 15. The student group charged Dr. Wexler and Hellman with being "more interested in the prestige of the Conference of Presidents than in a strong Soviet Jewry body." A student spokesman said "The American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry has tremendous potential, but the Conference of Presidents is strangling it at its very sources." He added, without elaboration, that "if no policy changes are forthcoming from the Conference of Presidents, other actions will be planned." The spokesman stated that no Jewish Defense League members took part in the demonstrations.

**Trial of Eight Students Postponed Till May**  
WASHINGTON (JTA) — The newly established Superior Court which replaces the General Sessions Court has postponed the trial of eight young Jewish students from Feb. 9 to May 17, it was announced by their lawyer, Lawrence Finegold. The youths were charged with unlawful entry last November of the local Soviet news agency, Tass. The eight students had chained themselves in the news office in the National Press Building after sending a message in Russian over its teletype to Moscow demanding that the Soviets allow its Jewish citizens to leave the country. Washington police used wire cutters to release the students from their chains and dragged them out of the building to waiting patrol cars. They were freed after relatives vouched for them in court, when required.

A Soviet violinist who is a Jew denounced the "small group of hooligans" who, he said, tried to "wreck" performances by Soviet artists touring the United States under the U.S.-Soviet cultural exchange program. The performer, Leonid Kogan, said he personally witnessed an example of these "outrages" during his recital at Carnegie Hall in New York on Jan. 23.

Kogan's remarks were issued by the Soviet Embassy here with an accompanying statement which said the violinist was describing "attempts staged by Zionist provocateurs." Kogan himself however used the word "hooligans" with no identification. He made his remarks to a correspondent of Sovetskaya Kultura.

A copy was delivered by the embassy to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency office in Washington. Kogan said the "hooligans" were trying to "reduce" to a minimum or frustrate in general, the cultural exchange program between our countries." He added "I am very grateful to the American public which has shown once again that it fully dissociates itself from these hooligans and their action." He said that following his recital, "many Americans came to my dressing room to express ap-

preciation for the concert and their indignation and protest against the impudent acts of the hooligans."

**World Conference in Brussels to Focus on Soviet Jews**

BRUSSELS (JTA) — More than 400 prominent Jewish leaders in 50 countries have indicated they will participate in the World Conference on Soviet Jewry, to be held here Feb. 23-26, according to a conference spokesman. Those expected to attend include United States Sens. Jacob K. Javits of New York and Abraham A. Ribicoff of Connecticut; Prof. Albert B. Sabin, president of the Weizmann Institute in Rehovot, Israel; Avraham Harman, president of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem; Israeli Supreme Court Justice Haim Cohen, Gideon Hausner, Knesset member and prosecutor of Adolph Eichmann; Dr. Immanuel Jakobovits, the chief rabbi of Britain; Dr. Jacob Kaplan, the chief rabbi of France; Eva Violet, the Marchioness of Reading (England), Abraham Shlonsky of Tel Aviv, the noted Hebrew poet; Dr. Gershon Scholem, president of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities and professor emeritus at the Hebrew University; writers Saul Bellow, Eli Wiesel, Manes Sperber and Andre Schwarz-Bart; and former Israeli Premier David Ben-Gurion, who will deliver the closing address.

The opening session will be addressed by Prof. Raymond Aron of the Sorbonne in Paris and by Arthur J. Goldberg, former U.S. Supreme Court Justice and former ambassador to the United Nations. The sponsors of the conference are Jewish Agency, the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry, the European Conference on Soviet Jewry, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the Latin American Conference on Soviet Jewry and the Board of Deputies of British Jews. The British delegation will be headed by Michael M. Fidler, president of the Board of Deputies. The American delegation will number 130.

A delegation from Detroit, headed by Judge Lawrence Gubow, president of the Jewish Community Council, and Walter Klein, Council executive director, will include Fred Rose, Helen Opatowski and Judy Grant.

**Jewish Woman in Riga Reports Seven or Eight Families Get Exit Permits**

TEL AVIV (JTA) — A Jewish woman in Riga reported that "seven or eight" Jewish families in the Soviet Latvian capital have received exit permits and that others have been told by Soviet authorities that they would be issued exit visas when peace was restored in the Middle East. The woman, Mrs. Rivka Aleksandrovich, was contacted by telephone by Kol Israel radio. She is the mother of Ruth Aleksandrovich, one of five Riga Jews under arrest and reportedly awaiting trial on charges of alleged anti-Soviet activities.

Mrs. Aleksandrovich denied rumors current in Israel that 40 Jewish families in Riga received exit permits. She confirmed that Maj. Grisha Feigin, a former Soviet Jewish Army officer who was released from a mental institution last month, is preparing to leave shortly for Israel. Mrs. Aleksandrovich said he has turned his flat over to the authorities and is now visiting friends to say goodbye.

Feigin was incarcerated briefly in a mental institution after returning his World War II combat medals in a gesture of protest against Soviet anti-Jewish policies.

Wickedness is a myth invented by good people to account for the curious attractiveness of others —Oscar Wilde

## Esquire Article Describes Israel

NEW YORK — Israel is where travelers have learned to expect the unexpected, claims Esquire's travel editor Richard Joseph in the March issue.

According to Joseph, Israel offers such attractions as horseback riding, water skiing, underwater archeology and sailboating. "One of their favorite trails takes you south through the cattle-grazing country, downhill to the Mount of Beatitudes, where riders dismount to look over an Italian Franciscan hospice and a beautiful chapel..."

For water skiing, while Joseph admits it is not a necessity to go to Israel he writes, "Where else can you use water skis to follow in the footsteps of Jesus?"

For the underwater enthusiast, Israel is considered to be the richest archeological region in the world. In the clear waters of the Red Sea off Eilat, the underwater explorer can search King Solomon's major port from which he shipped metals from his nearby mines.

What is comparable to Hamilton Harbor in Bermuda is Israel's Bay of Acre or Bay of Haifa—Joseph explains, "It depends on whether you live in the ancient Phoenician port or modern Israel's third largest city." Regattas of 420-class sailboats made in Israel are held almost every Saturday morning. A few boats are available for hire, and boat owners are often looking for crew.

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