

ve Interview

Repairing Strains with US Jewry Priority for Israel's New Envoy

By Edwin Black
Special to the Advocate

Israel's new Ambassador, Moshe Arad, has identified repairing strains with American Jewry as one of his "top two or three priorities." The remarks came during a wide-ranging exclusive interview, his first since arriving in the United States. Moreover, Jewish leaders who have worked with Arad feel that rather than a compromise candidate, Israel has chosen the best man for the job.

The 52-year old, Rumanian born diplomat joined the Foreign Ministry in 1962, and in 1968 was appointed press secretary of the London Embassy. In the early seventies, Arad served in the New York consulate and Washington Embassy. In 1976, he returned to Israel as chief of the director-general's bureau. Eventually, he rose to the rank of inspector-general of the diplomatic service. In 1983, he was appointed Ambassador to Mexico, where he served with distinction. (See separate article)

Blunt and incisive, Arad speaks eloquently on Israel's behalf. He exudes a feeling of credibility if only for his willingness not to mince words when dealing with Israel's problems. For example, he readily conceded what Israel has been denying for months: that there are strains between Jerusalem and the Diaspora.

"I can't identify the specific time the problems began," says Arad. "But there were some events, including the Pollard affair, which put serious strains on the relationship. To deal with it, however, we must recognize it. My mission here — among other things — is to try to re-establish or strengthen those aspects of the relationship which might have been affected."

American Jewry's list of complaints include insensitivity over the Pollard affair, the recurring potential for passage of exclusionary "Who is a Jew" legislation, lack of input with the Jewish Agency, the urgent need for Israeli electoral reform, continued attacks against Jewish pluralism and a general feeling of "being taken for granted."

Arad conceded, "an additional layer of trust is needed," and that he would secure it by "direct dialog, openness and by listening carefully to and being sensitive to American Jewry's views." But he added, "Equally, I must make sure the American Jewish community understands the views and perspectives of Israel."

Jewish leaders who have worked with Arad are enthusiastic. "It is not always easy for an Israeli Ambassador to establish rapport with the local Jewish community. But if anyone can, it is Moshe Arad," observes Sergio Nudel-



Moshe Arad

stejer, a leader of the Central Jewish Community of Mexico and currently director of the American Jewish Committee's Mexican and Latin American office.

Reached by telephone in his Mexico City office, Nudelstejer recalls, "When Arad came here, he had no experience in Latin American affairs or culture. He couldn't even speak the language — and in Latin America, without knowing the language, you cannot enter the mentality of the people. First thing, he became fluent in Spanish. Soon he could read the newspapers, communicate

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Japanese City Appears Firm On Exclusion of Jerusalem

By Judith Antonelli
Advocate Staff

The Japanese city of Kyoto appears to be standing firm in its decision to exclude Jerusalem from the World Conference of Historical Cities to be held in Kyoto in November.

A letter to the national office of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith dated July 16, from Koichi Haraguchi, counselor for public af-

fairs at the Japanese Embassy in Washington, substantiates this conclusion. The Embassy had been in contact with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Tokyo, which in turn had communicated with the city of Kyoto. Haraguchi was responding to a letter written to the Embassy in May by ADL National Director Abraham Foxman.

Haraguchi's letter stated that the conference's plan-

ning committee in Kyoto recommended that Jerusalem not be invited, "irrespective of its long history and tradition," because it is the "subject of political controversy" due to the 1980 U.N. resolution condemning Israel's annexation of east Jerusalem. (Japan was one of the countries which voted for the resolution.)

The letter then went on to say that Kyoto "opposes ra-

cial and religious prejudice" and did not make the decision for "religious reasons." The decision, said the letter, is left solely to the discretion of Kyoto and the Japanese government will not interfere.

Boston, which is Kyoto's sister city, is the only U.S. city invited to the conference. Thirty-five cities have been invited, and the criteria for inclusion are that the city have 500,000 people and be at least 1200 years old. The issue of Jerusalem's exclusion was raised in June by Mayor Raymond Flynn and State Senator Lois Pines at a luncheon held in honor of Kyoto's Mayor Masahiko Imagawa and City Council President Akira Kitagawa. The Kyoto officials promised to work for Israel's inclusion when they returned home.

"At this stage we're still waiting to hear from them," said Philip Perlmutter, executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council. He dismissed the argument that Jerusalem was excluded because it is politically controversial as "hocus-pocus" and cited other cities which were invited in spite of

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Moscow Cautions Israel on Missiles, Beefs Up Syrian AF

JERUSALEM (JPFS) — The Soviet Union has softened its stern warning on Israel's reported development of the Jericho II medium-range missile, and has invited Israel to join in a Soviet initiative to eliminate such weapons, which have nuclear capability, from Asia.

But even while Moscow is reportedly withholding similar missiles from Syria, it has been confirmed that the Syrian Air Force has already received several of the Soviets' top-line jetfighters, the MiG-29, which Israeli defense sources consider a genuine threat to Israel's air superiority.

Moscow Radio's Hebrew-language broadcast at first condemned Israel's missile program, calling it a provocation to the Soviet Union and a threat to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's efforts to curb the world arms race.

But in a later broadcast, the Soviets called on Israel to support the Gorbachev initiative for the elimination of medium-range missiles in Asia. The gist of the broadcast was reported on Israel Radio and Israel Television.

The Russians underscored that it was in Israel's interest to join the initiative, because Israel would then be able to live without the fear that the Soviets might station such missiles in Arab countries.

According to the broadcast, the Soviet Union has no intention of stationing medium-range nuclear missiles in any of the countries in the region because it does not want to upset the balance of power. However, Moscow said it reserves the right to station missiles in the Middle East based on agreements with the countries in the region.

The Syrian Air Force meanwhile has recently integrated the first of its MiG-29 jets received from the Soviet Union.

For some time now, Israel has been monitoring this process with concern. Syrian pilots have undergone lengthy training in the USSR to familiarize themselves with this advanced plane, whose performance resembles that of the United States-built F-15 used by Israel.

Soviet maintenance and operational personnel have joined the permanent Soviet

team of advisers in Syria, to help in the integration of the new MiGs.

Israeli defense sources estimate that it will take some time before the Syrian pilots achieve meaningful operational levels. However, the introduction of these planes in both the Syrian and Iraqi Air Forces poses a danger to Israel's air superiority, they said.

Questioned about reports in the London paper "The Guardian" about a number of

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Tishe'ah Be-Av Guides Mourning Toward Light

By Nehemia Polen
Special to the Advocate

Editor's Note: Tishe'ah Be-Av will be marked on the 9th of Av, corresponding to Tuesday, Aug. 4, starting the evening before.

There is an essential asymmetry in the relationship between good and evil.

Evil is obsessed with the good, which it attempts at once to destroy and absorb. Good is attracted, not to evil, but to more intensive forms of the good beyond itself, which it attempts to emulate but knows it may never reach.

This asymmetry of interests and concerns infuriates evil still more, heightening its vindictiveness. Yet in the end, we believe, the power of evil is contingent and temporary, while that of good is permanent and absolute.

The Midrash tells us (*Lamentations Rabbah*, Proem 9) that at the time of the destruction of Jerusalem, Ammonites and Moabites, two tribes which the Bible excludes from the community of Israel, rushed into the Holy of Holies. There they found the Ark of the Covenant, with two golden cherubim, wings spread over the Ark cover as mandated in the book of Exodus.

They took those angelic figures and paraded them around the streets of Jerusalem for all the pagan invaders to observe. You see, they said, the Jews are no different than the rest of us; they claim not to be idolaters, but look at what we found!

This Midrash encapsulates the anguish of Israel for the last two thousand years: her glory trodden in the dust, her spiritual treasures exhibited in a manner which cruelly distorts their significance and mocks their uniqueness. Yet the tragedy of the destruction has had its redeeming grace.

Thrust into a hostile world without land or tangible heritage, Israel has proven that it is possible for a people to survive purely on the strength of spirit. The unseen Jewish God was not impaled by the spears of the Roman soldiers who sought Him in the burning Temple; instead His Presence, the Shekhinah, went into exile along with the suffering people, and still accompanies them on their journeys to this day.

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US Zionists Campaign in Israel for Pluralism

By Margie Olster

NEW YORK (JTA) — "Stop Religious Coercion, Start Pluralism and Tolerance." These imperatives headline a series of advertisements co-sponsored by three American Zionist organizations which appeared in Israeli newspapers Wednesday.

The advertisements aimed at Knesset members seek to persuade the government to oppose a proposed amendment sponsored by the ultra-Orthodox Shas Party which would give the Rabbinical Courts authority to validate conversions, marriages and divorces performed abroad. For the moment, Shas has withdrawn the amendment.

Friends of Labor Israel, Association of Reform Zionism (ARZA) and Mercaz (the Conservative Zionist movement) sponsored the ads. Friends of Labor Israel has also mounted a telegram campaign to Foreign Minister

and Labor Party leader Shimon Peres expressing support for his efforts to defeat the bill.

At the same time, Hadasah, the American women's Zionist organization, has undertaken its own efforts to oppose such legislation.

These four American Zionist organizations have joined a number of other American Jewish groups in taking an emphatic stand against changes in the Law of Return or proposed legislation which would have the ultimate effect of giving religious leaders authority over the validity of Conservative and Reform conversions.

A delegation of American and Canadian Jewish leaders which included representatives of the major funders for Israel — the United Jewish Appeal, United Israel Appeal — and the Council of Jewish Federations, the National Jewish Community Relations Council, and others made an unscheduled trip to Israel in attempts to block passage of such an amendment.

The delegation warned Tuesday in Israel that amending the Law of Return or other measures which would delegitimize Reform and Conservative Jewry would split Jewish communities abroad and widen the

gap between Israel and world Jewry. If such legislation received a majority vote in Knesset, it would endanger UJA support and other contributions to Israel, the leaders warned.

Peres told the leaders that the "Who is a Jew?" issue and other proposed laws are being used as bargaining chips for coalitions and support for early elections. Peres said the issue should not become an internal political battle.

Simmy Ziv-El, executive director of Friends of Labor Israel, said the people supporting such amendments are "trying to legislate discrimination." About 90 percent of affiliated American Jews are associated with the Reform and Conservative movements, he said.

"The government can't send them a message saying, 'We want you to make aliyah, but we will legislate you into the realm of the non-legitimate.'"

Likud decided to support the Shas-sponsored proposals and the proposed amendment to the Law of Return which would stipulate that a Jew be converted "according to halacha" to qualify for automatic Israeli citizenship granted to all Jews under the Law of Return.

Several months ago, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir pledged that he would do everything in his power to assure passage of the amendments. This followed Shas' threats to support Labor's call for early elections if Li-

kud did not support the measures.

On July 8, Likud MKs voted almost unanimously in favor of the amendment to the Law of Return and for a second Shas amendment which would require all converts to Judaism to obtain the (Orthodox) Israeli Chief Rabbinate's endorsement in order to be fully recognized as Jews in Israel. Despite Likud's support, both measures were narrowly defeated.

In other developments in Israel, Shas, which is composed primarily of ultra-Orthodox Sephardic Jews, indicated it may submit a substitute bill if a Knesset majority for the Rabbinical Courts bill cannot be guaranteed. The substitute bill would require converts to submit to the Interior Ministry a document with details

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THE GEISHIS FAMILY — Pictured in their Leningrad home two years ago are (clockwise, from bottom) Mendel Geishis (Elizaveta's husband), Elizaveta, Grigory, and Paulina holding baby Bela.

Glasnost Empty Promise, Says Freed Prisoner of Conscience

By Judith Antonelli
Advocate Staff

A recently-released prisoner of conscience from Leningrad feels that the new Soviet policy of "glasnost" has provided more openness for anti-Semites than it has for Jews.

"Glasnost is a very nice word, but there is nothing behind it," said Grigory Geishis, 27, who emigrated to Israel in June. "It is a way for

Gorbachev to look good to the West. But it's not real, it's not an opening."

Grigory is visiting the U.S. for three weeks with his mother, Elizaveta Geishis, 50, who was also released in June. They spoke to the Advocate this week primarily through translation by Elizaveta's sister, Sofia Shtil, 40, who lives in Sudbury and left the Soviet Union in the mass emigrations in 1979.

All three are electrical engineers, and all three applied to leave in 1978. For some reason — she does not know why — Sofia was granted an exit visa and Grigory and Elizaveta were not. The Geishis family was harassed in its home, and Grigory was expelled from the university. Both he and his mother lost

their jobs and had to find low-paid, manual work.

Grigory and Elizaveta were active participants in Jewish life — taking Hebrew classes, planning Purim shpiels, helping prisoners. In 1980 Grigory was arrested

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Glasnost Empty Promises

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for "refusing to go into the Soviet army."

He spent two years in a labor camp on the Polar circle. "There was not enough oxygen there," he described. "I was placed in solitary confinement as an 'enemy of the people.' I was brought food every other day, and allowed to go to the lavatory twice a day."

When he was released from prison in 1982, the police found him a job as a field electrician. "All the other workers were drunk all the time and I was the only one who could climb up the poles," he said. After a year he got a job as a watch repairman and took evening classes in college.

Elizaveta was a cancer patient who had undergone surgery in 1983, and then developed a thyroid tumor. "Congress spoke on her behalf as an ill person," Sofia described. Elizaveta is now undergoing thyroid treatment in Israel.

Elizaveta, too, is critical of glasnost. "It only deals with small details," she said. "It will never permit the real troubles to be opened up, it will never show that the system is wrong. It will just let some steam out. People can talk about being unhappy,

but things won't change."

Although anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union is not new, glasnost has given more blatant neo-Nazi groups the means with which to express themselves. In particular, a group called "Pamyat" ("Memory") has surfaced, calling for the initiation of pogroms and the expulsion of Jews.

"Pamyat has been underground and became more visible about a year ago," said Grigory. "Of course it is connected to glasnost — otherwise they would be silent."

The threat of Pamyat is "not just polemics. Jews are afraid of physical violence." He explained how members of the Leningrad synagogue take the religious books and objects home out of a fear that the synagogue will be vandalized and destroyed. Pamyat has already vandalized 80 graves in a Leningrad cemetery as a "celebration" of Hitler's birthday.

In the spirit of glasnost, the Soviet newspapers published pro and con articles on Pamyat. "But when they wrote about demonstrations of Jews," Grigory said, "they only published criticism . . . The only voice of Jews in the Soviet Union is the Anti-Zionist Committee, the 'official

voice' of Jews."

The Anti-Zionist Committee is made up of Jews whom Elizaveta and Grigory describe as "traitors . . . people with no morals or self-respect." It is a government tool which instills and justifies hatred of Jews by portraying them as exploiters and destroyers of the Russian people.

"They say that Jews own the bars and taverns and make Russians into drunks," Elizaveta said, giving an example. "They always portray Jews as serving an evil purpose . . . They call for slaughter by their actions."

"It is the good fortune of the Jews that the simple Russian doesn't read books," said Grigory. "Otherwise there would be pogroms."

Elizaveta and Grigory — along with Grigory's wife, Paulina, and their four-year-old daughter, Bela — have settled in Tel Aviv.

"Israel is a wonderful country," Grigory said. "Everything is not smooth, but at least it is my home and my troubles."

Although Grigory believes that every Soviet Jew must make an individual choice about where to live, he believes that emigration should first be to Israel.

"A Jew leaves the Soviet Union with an Israeli visa," he said. "If he takes an Israeli visa, he should go to Israel. Afterwards, he can go to any country he wants. If he wants to go to America from the Soviet Union, let him fight for an American visa."

"It is very understandable that so many Soviet Jews emigrate to America instead of Israel," he continued. "Official Soviet propaganda against Israel is much more intensive [than against the U.S.]. It emphasizes war, terrorism, the economic problems. The people who go to other countries don't really know about Israel. Let them go there and learn."

He emphasized that he believes that people must choose for themselves where to live, but that making Soviet Jews go to Israel first is not a violation of freedom of choice because "people are allowed to emigrate from Israel."

Grigory is getting involved in the Soviet Jewry movement in Israel, but is not yet sure of his career plans. "I only know that I want to study more," he said. "It is the first time in my life that I have free choice, and there are so many opportunities."



OUTGOING PRESIDENT of the Boston Chapter of Hadassah, Nancy Falchuk (left) accepting the Presidential Citation for outstanding leadership and service to the Jewish people, to Zionism and to Israel from National Board Member, Marjorie Housen (right).

Deadline Notice

All copy for editorial and advertising offices must reach the Advocate offices by each Tuesday at noon, typed double-spaced.

Tishe'ah Be-Av Guides

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It would no doubt strike many American Jews as odd to call our religion the "despised faith," as Judah Halevi once put it. We are not comfortable with the prayer book's suggestion (in the *Tahanun* prayer) that we are "utterly detested" among the nations. Much has changed, so we think. Yet the daily newspaper tells a different story: the Jewish State is alone in the councils of the world, while our tormentors are received with honor in the highest places.

These are facts which we attempt to minimize, discount, and deny. Especially around the time of Tishe'ah Be-Av. Tishe'ah Be-Av is a day of fasting, a day of mourning, and neither fasting nor mourning is very popular with us — and certainly not both together.

Jewish mourning practice has come to focus on the serving and eating of food. We remember to cover the mirrors, but not to take off our shoes, let our beards grow, or sit on low stools. But our distance with mourning does not go to the heart of the matter.

The fact is — let us be honest about it — few of us really care that the Temple is missing, or wish that it return. We have not made our peace with Leviticus and with the animal sacrifices which are prescribed there. We have long forgotten the intense joy, depicted in the book of Psalms, at being in the presence of the divine Glory in the Jerusalem Temple. We have forgotten the sense of security, grandeur, and spiritual potency which that presence bestowed. We have forgotten the rapture of prophecy, so closely linked with the Temple. We have forgotten all of this and more, so that there is nothing left for us to mourn.

Yet God's gifts are irrevocable; they are beyond the domain of space and time. The impress of those gifts still remains chiseled in our souls, breeding a dissatisfaction, a questing, a perpetual unrest. As *Sefas Emes* (*Devarim* 5657) reminds us, when the Temple stood, its radiance shone in the face of every Jew. Theological anti-Semitism seems to have metastasized throughout the world; based as it is on the notion of supersessionism, it was impossible as long as the Temple was in existence: "Jerusalem remembers/in the days of her affliction and of her anguish/all her treasures that she had from the days of old . . ." (Lam. 1:7)

Hasidic tradition has it that when the enemy found the cherubim on the day of the destruction, the two figures, which symbolize God and Israel, were in deep embrace. Never were the two more in love than on that day, long ago, when they both went on the road to exile. (See R. Zvi Elimelech of Dinov, *Bnai Yisaskhar*, p. 111b.)

That is why it is said that the Comforter was born on Tishe'ah Be-Av. Our destinies are still linked tightly together. It is that knowledge which gives us the strength to mourn, as well as to look beyond the mourning to the days of light, which we know await us.

Rabbi Dr. Nehemia Polen is Rabbi of Congregation Tifereth Israel in Everett. He is widely appreciated as a teacher, speaker and writer. The Advocate is privileged to print his reflections intended for a popular audience.

Moscow Cautions Israel

(Continued from Page 1)

Mig-29s being held back from the Syrians as a sign of Soviet reluctance to continue boosting Syrian military capabilities indefinitely. Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir told Israel Army Radio:

"I would propose to our public not to seize on every scrap of a report published in some newspaper somewhere and draw conclusions from it or base on it endless assessments and hopes."

"True, there were reports that the USSR is not supplying these missiles to Syria, but this need not be out of friendship or concern for Israel's security. This can also be due to Syria's stand vis-à-vis Iraq, which is also the Soviet Union's ally; it can stem from the conflict between Syria and the PLO. The PLO, as is known, is today the Soviet Union's protégé."

"Thus it's certainly possible to place different interpretations on this delay. It's possible to attribute this to the Soviet concern for such elements as Iraq and the PLO, and not necessarily Israel."

Speaking on Israel Army Radio, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, in the first Israeli reaction to the Soviet broadcasts, said that Israel does not regard the Soviet Union as an enemy.

Peres said that the broadcasts on the missile reports were not tantamount to a threat. "Our military strategy has always been defensive. To think that we would threaten the Soviet Union is absurd," said Peres.

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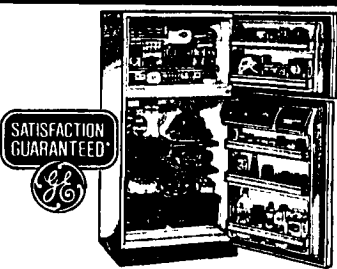
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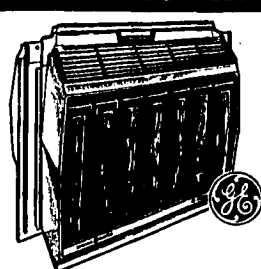
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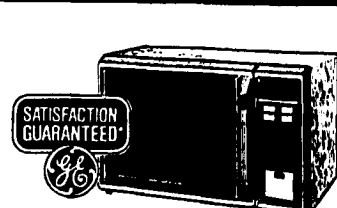
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