

A Provocative Document

The 119 - page study by the World Jewish Congress which was made public at the recent assembly of the WJC in Jerusalem deserves careful attention by those who are concerned with Israel - diaspora relations. The tendency by some to hasty attacks should be avoided.

There is no question that the report, two years in the making, is controversial. The report was not formally presented to the WJC gathering nor was it endorsed in a resolution. WJC president Edgar Bronfman stressed that the WJC "is neither responsible for nor committed to accept or support any of them."

This is a correct position. Some of the "concerns" expressed, such as over the control of the Orthodox rabbinate, Israel's settlement policies in the West Bank and Gaza, and its electoral system, will find people on both sides of the argument in the diaspora as in Israel.

Mr. Bronfman's collective statement -- "We do not believe, however, that this thoughtful, sensitive and significant report warrants the serious consideration of concerned Jews everywhere" -- should be listened to. The 33 member International Commission chaired by Guy de Rothschild of Paris which prepared this report is made up of some of the most prominent,

thoughtful and concerned Jews in the diaspora and in Israel. Their warning, that criticism of Israel's policies by Jews in the United States and elsewhere should not be "swept under the rug" but must be openly expressed to relieve "increasing strains" in Israeli - diaspora relations, must be heeded.

In recent years there has been much more effort both in Israel and the diaspora to improve relations in order to create a real partnership between the Jewish people and the Jewish State. The WJC study, while certainly open to criticism, could provide a catalyst for needed thought and discussion.

The Liberation of American Hostages

BY RABBI MARC H. TANENBAUM

America as with one heartbeat awaited with mixed anxiety and hope the climactic moments in the final act of the release of the 52 American hostages after 14 months of captivity in Iran. It is a drama in many ways of Biblical grandeur.

Quite incredibly, some would say providentially, at the very moment when the terms of agreement for freeing the American hostages from their Iranian bondage were being worked out, the Jewish people throughout the world were reading in their synagogues the passage in the Book of Exodus of negotiations between Moses and Pharaoh for the release of the Israelite hostages from Egyptian bondage. And some of the parallels are uncanny.

Ayatollah Khomeini behaves as if Pharaoh was his mentor - rigid, authoritarian, mean-spirited, vindictive. It took ten plagues to finally force the hard - hearted Pharaoh to let the children of Israel go. And at the last minute, when the Israelites stood on the shore of the Red Sea, he changed his mind again and sought to recapture them only to cause the Egyptians needlessly to drown in disaster.

Through the courage, firmness, and faith of Moses the Israelites crossed on dry land in the midst of the Red Sea. When they finally came to safety, the Israelite hostages broke into song, giving expression to their mingled horror, triumph, and gratitude to their Redeeming God. Jewish tradition therefore calls that Shabbat Shirah the Sabbath of Song.

We can only hope and pray that the weekend of Saturday, January 17th, 1981, will remain the Sabbath of Song of Liberation for the American hostages as it has been for nearly 4,000 years the Sabbath of Song for the liberation of the children of Israel.

WASHINGTON (WNS) -- Former Israeli Premier Yitzhak Rabin has called on the United States to maintain a military presence in the Middle East to demonstrate its credibility in defense of the continued flow of oil to the industrial democracies and to block Soviet encroachment.

A HISTORIC DECISION

The recent 7 - 2 decision by the U.S. Supreme Court revoking the citizenship of Feodor Federenko because he concealed his service as an armed guard at the Treblinka concentration camp in Poland during World War II when he entered the United States should facilitate the Department of Justice's cases against other Nazi war criminals living in the United States. The Justice Department's Office of Special Investigation has denaturalization or deportation proceedings pending against 17 persons and is investigating 200 other alleged war criminals.

The 73 - year - old Federenko's argument, originally supported by a U.S. District Court judge in Miami, that he served involuntarily as a guard at Treblinka in 1942 - 43, was rejected by the Supreme Court. Federenko was admitted to the U.S. in 1949 under the Displaced Persons Act which excluded anyone who had "assisted the enemy in persecuting civilians." In entering the U.S., Federenko signed a sworn statement saying that he had been a farmer and a factory worker during the war.

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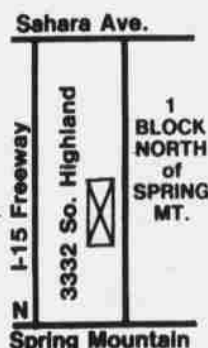
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