

## A CONFERENCE THAT BEARS WATCHING

American Jewish community leaders are concerned that the third and final conference of the UN's Decade for Women to be held in Nairobi in 1985 is likely to wind up as another anti-Israel, anti-Zionist conclave. The first two conferences -- Mexico City in 1975 and Copenhagen in 1980 -- set the precedents.

The National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC) went further charging the Decade conferences have been "hijacked" by PLO supporters and sympathizers and that the Nairobi convention might be marked by attempts "to manipulate the conference" by forces indifferent and even inimical to women's programs.

In a nutshell, the Mexico conference was launched to improve the status of women. It did adopt a working paper, The World Plan of Action, which was used as the basis for a U.S. National Plan of Action, supported by women's movements and many in the Jewish community.

But before this was agreed upon the conference adopted the Declaration of Mexico which equated Zionism with racism. "The Mexico Conference marked the beginning of the intensive assaults against Israel and the democratic Western Nations in United Nation Conferences," the NJCRAC said.

Five years later at the 1980 Mid-Decade conference in Copenhagen, the misuse and abuse of international conferences continued undaunted. "From the outset of preparation for Copenhagen, procedural rules were ignored and extraneous political considerations were allowed to dominate," the NJCRAC position paper said. "Parliamentary procedure was disregarded when it did not meet the needs of those who

had 'hi-jacked' the conference, namely the PLO and their Arab and Soviet bloc allies."

"Waiving all the rules, an official conference document rewriting the history of Palestine and Israel and viciously slandering the Jewish people was accepted as a basic reference for the conference." In addition, the Copenhagen conference not only equated Zionism with racism but also provided that the United Nations aid to Palestinian women should be given in consultation and cooperation with the PLO -- items strongly opposed by the United States.

The U.S. has recently been playing a stronger hand at international UN conferences. Earlier this year, during the first stages of planning for the Nairobi conference at the Vienna conference on the Status of Women, the U.S. succeeded in cooling off the hotheaded Arab states. But the NJCRAC said the Vienna planning conference once again adopted the proposed inclusion of Palestinian women as a major agenda item and included several anti-Zionist resolutions.

The stage has thus been set for the 1985 Nairobi conference and for the continuation of vehement anti-Zionist, anti-Israel resolutions to use the Decade of Women as a pawn and political tool for extremist purposes. Unfortunately little to benefit women is achieved at a conference which spends its time slandering the Jewish people. Keeping an extended eye and ear toward developments about the Nairobi conference would indeed be in the best interests of the Jewish people, and, moreover, the interests of all women.

PARIS (WNS) -- A group of prominent French intellectuals, including Nobel Prize winners, have appealed to the French government and to world public opinion to intervene on behalf of Soviet Jewish Prisoner of Conscience Anatoly Shcharansky who is serving a 13-year prison sentence in the Soviet Union.

## ARABS FAIL TO BAR ISRAEL FROM UNESCO

PARIS (WNS) -- Another Arab attempt to have Israel barred from participating in a United Nations agency failed as the credentials committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) overwhelmingly approved the Israeli delegation. Arab states, led by Syria and Iraq, backed off from seeking to have Israel barred after the committee rendered its decision. The United States had warned prior to the vote by the committee that it would not pay its share of the UNESCO budget if Israel were excluded. The U.S. contributes 25 percent of the agency's \$200 million annual budget. Western delegates suggest that the most of the Arab states may have wanted to avoid a showdown with the Reagan Administration while most of their governments seem to support the Reagan peace initiative for the Middle East.

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