

### Jewish Leaders Visit Ethiopia, Make Significant Contact With Falashas

ADDIS ABABA (WNS) — Sixteen North American Jewish leaders who completed a 10-day mission to Ethiopia, under the auspices of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC), reported that they experienced some of the most significant direct contact with Ethiopian Jewry in many years, including participation in the uniquely Ethiopian-Jewish festival of Seggid, along with 600 Falashas gathered from remote villages in the Gondar province.

The mission members spent almost a full day at the Seggid, a festival combining the joy and religious rites, chanting of prayer and fasting of Yom Kippur and Simchat Torah. Government and military personnel were present, and two of them addressed the assem-

bled Ethiopian Jews at the conclusion of the ceremonies. The festival is normally concluded with food, which was omitted this year because of growing food shortages in which grain prices have risen 140 percent in recent months.

The delegation, NJCRAC's third mission to Ethiopia in the past three years, was able to receive permission to visit five Jewish villages in Gondar including Ambober, where the Seggid observance was held, Woleka, Aba Antonius, and the villages of Attege and Kashersheit which had been visited by outsiders since ORT's worldwide social welfare, educational and medical projects in Ethiopia were terminated in 1981. With local government approval, the mission distributed medical and school supplies to the Ambober and Gondar

### France's Chief Rabbi Receives Formal Invitation To U.S.S.R.

PARIS (WNS) — Chief Rabbi Rene Sirat of France has received a formal invitation to visit the Soviet Union and plans to go next spring -- if he gets a

visa.

The invitation, which said it was extended by "rabbis in the Soviet Union," was delivered to Sirat by a Soviet diplomat. The diplomat told reporters that the Soviet authorities would do everything they can to facilitate his trip and his stay in the USSR. Sirat was invited to the Soviet Union by the Chief Rabbi of Moscow in 1981, shortly after his election as Chief Rabbi of France. He said at the time that he planned to visit Moscow "as soon as circumstances permit," meaning as soon as he

received visas for himself and his party. He applied several times during the last three years for a Soviet visa, without success.

While the famine crisis has only reached the fringes of the Gondar province, where most Jews live, both officials and inhabitants of the Jewish village are very fearful Gondar will be the next area affected by the growing famine in Ethiopia. The Americans and Canadians on the mission found the earth to be cracked with deep fissures and extremely dry in most of the places they visited throughout the country, including the Jewish villages and other areas even where "Tef," a grain unique to Ethiopia, sorghum and other grains were being harvested, but at much lower levels.



### State Department Report Depicts Crude Soviet Anti-Jewish Propaganda

WASH. (WNS) — Soviet propaganda has been depicting Israeli leaders as inheritors of "Hitler's fascist mantle," according to a State Department report released here.

The report, the 17th annual review of Soviet and East European compliance with the Helsinki Final Act, noted that during the six months being studied, April 1 to October 1, 1984, there has been "increased levels of

anti-Semitic rhetoric thinly veiled as 'anti-Zionism'." According to the report, "Soviet propaganda maintains that Israeli and Western intelligence encourages emigration in order to obtain state secrets from Soviet citizens. It further alleges that 'Zionist' collaborated with fascists during World War II to send many innocent Jews to their deaths. These Zionist

elements, so the argument goes, now comprise the ruling circles of Israel, which has inherited Hitler's fascist mantle. Crude Soviet propaganda posters often depict images of Hitler together with Israeli officials who in turn are often depicted poisoning Arab drinking water.

This crude propaganda appears aimed at frightening Jews from seeking to emigrate. "The rate of emigration from the Soviet Union continued to decline below the disappointing figures of early 1984 and has come to a virtual standstill," the report said.

From April 1 to August 30 only 423 Jews left the USSR. The report noted that some Jews "have reacted with despair and, for the time being, have stopped applying to leave, while others apply as frequently as possible -- once every six months."

The State Department presented the semi-annual report to the Commission on Security and cooperation in Europe, headed by Rep. Dante Fascell (D. Fla.), which monitors compliance with the Helsinki Act. The Department called the "overall record of compliance" on human rights by the Soviet Union and other East European countries "seriously flawed."

The report found a few bright spots in Eastern Europe. In Czechoslovakia, Rabbi David Miller was ordained becoming the first resident rabbi since 1970. The report also noted that in Hungary last May, authorities quietly began allowing any Israeli to visit, dropping the requirement that only those with relatives in Hungary could travel there. Two delegations, representing the Hungarian Jewish community, also visited Israel.

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