

Soviet Jewry Activist Groups Shocked Over Death Of Marchenko

LONDON (JTA) — International Human Rights Day was marked here by protests against continued Soviet persecution of dissidents and the continuing difficulties refuseniks face in trying to obtain exit visas.

The temperature of the protests was raised by reports that one of the best known Soviet political dissidents, Anatoly Marchenko, had died in the notorious Chistopol prison in the Tartar Republic while serving a 10-year term for "anti-Soviet agitation and propaganda." He was 48 years old.

His Jewish wife, Larissa Bogoraz, whom he met while both were serving internal exile terms in Siberia, told reporters in Moscow that she had received a telegram from the prison warden saying that her husband had died in a hospital. The telegram gave no date nor cause of death. Bogoraz was summoned by security police and told to apply for the family to emigrate. She and Marchenko have a 12-year-old son, Pavel.

Bogoraz said the last letter she received from her husband was dated November 28, asking that she send a food parcel. The request indicated that Marchenko had abandoned a hunger strike he began August 4 to protest his treatment in prison, where Anatoly Shcharansky had also been incarcerated. Two weeks ago Bogoraz said a KGB officer told her that her husband was "feeling wonderful." She added that she had heard the authorities were force-feeding him.

Spent Total of 20 Years In Prisons

Marchenko, a Ukrainian non-Jew, had spent a total of 20 years in Soviet prisons since first being arrested in 1960. Following his first six-year incarceration, he wrote "My Testimony," a panoramic description of Soviet prison life which became a best-seller in the West.

In 1968, during one of his periods out of prison, he spoke up in defense of a group of Soviet youths who had been arrested for protesting against the Soviet intervention in Czechoslovakia.

In 1981, having spent 15 years in prisons and labor camps, Marchenko was given a 10-year sentence for anti-Soviet agitation. It resulted from his membership in the Helsinki monitoring group, established to record Soviet compliance with the Helsinki human rights agreements.

Shcharansky and Yuri Orlov were his colleagues in the Helsinki monitoring group. Both have been permitted to emigrate after lengthy terms in captivity.

Marchenko's death leave Nobel Laureate Andrei Sakharov as the last prominent human rights fighter still visibly victimized by the Soviet authorities. However, many lesser known activists are fast coming to the fore.

Some 26 Jewish refuseniks are currently in prison or labor camps; 25 more have served time on charges of "slander" or malicious hooliganism; and some 10,000 others undergoing various forms of pressure still wait for exit visas.

Tribute To Marchenko

(In New York City, two Soviet Jewry groups paid tribute to Marchenko. The National Conference on Soviet Jewry said that he was "an inspiration to all freedom-loving people. He was a foremost activist for human dignity and freedom. To his last breath, he protested the Soviet assault on human rights." The Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry said that Marchenko was "one of the USSR's leading activists ... His death came after numerous persecutions which he protested by hunger strikes.")

Waldheim To Visit Japan At The Invitation Of Emperor Hirohito

By Reinhard Engel

VIENNA (JTA) — The diplomatic isolation that has dogged President Kurt Waldheim as a result of the exposure of his Nazi past during last summer's election campaign, may have ended. The daily Neue Kronenzeitung reported that he will visit Japan in the near future, at the invitation of Emperor Hirohito.

Waldheim, who won the election last July 8 despite evidence that he abetted atrocities while serving as a Wehrmacht intelligence officer in the Balkans during World War II, had so far received none of the invitations to visit abroad that normally go to a chief of state. Invitations extended to his predecessor, which he might have honored, were withdrawn.

His isolation was broken briefly during the Helsinki follow-up Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe which was held in Vienna. The Foreign Ministers of the Soviet Union, West Germany, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Switzerland and Cyprus paid him courtesy calls. But other dignitaries notably U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz, made their visits to Vienna contingent on not meeting Waldheim either in official capacity or by chance.

Nevertheless, the President has drawn sympathy in some quarters. Recently, the Arab embassies in Vienna gave a dinner in honor of Waldheim at which the Saudi Arabian Ambassador commiserated with him.

"The Arab world has observed the evil campaign against the Presidential candidate with disgust. It had not been directed against him as a person, but to discredit the credibility of the United Nations," the Saudi envoy said. Waldheim served two terms as UN Secretary

Hundreds Of New Lubavitch Centers To Be Opened All Over The World

NEW YORK (JTA) — The Lubavitch movement announced a major drive to establish hundreds of new Chabad-Lubavitch Houses all over the world to serve Jewish religious, social and educational needs. Plans are well advanced for 120 more houses to open in the next few months, according to an announcement at the conclusion of the movement's three-day conference at Lubavitch world headquarters here last weekend.

The movement also vowed to broaden its outreach program to Jewish children who

receive no Jewish education. It was responding to the address by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem Schneerson, who called for a proliferation of Chabad-Lubavitch Houses.

"These houses will be a place where anyone can come to pray or study and avail themselves of all the Jewish educational and social services these centers offer," Schneerson said.

He referred to the "painful yet inescapable fact that more than three quarters of Jewish children receive no Jewish education whatsoever."

General

Another dinner in honor of Waldheim was organized several weeks ago by the Spanish Ambassador and Ambassadors from Latin American countries. The Mexican envoy, Cuevas Cancino, said on that occasion that he rejects "the slanderous campaign against Austria and her head of state with horror."

Spiritual Thought For The Week

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