

Pravda Editor Criticizes Soviet Emigration Foot-Dragging

NEW YORK (JTA) — A rare public remark by an editor of an official Soviet newspaper, chastising bureaucratic foul-ups in the emigration process, casts a ray of hope for Soviet Jews awaiting exit visas.

According to press reports from Moscow, Pravda editor-in-chief Viktor Afanasyev has criticized Soviet emigration policy by saying that delays in the processing of exit visas were creating negative publicity for the Soviet Union in the West.

Afanasyev's remarks in the official Communist Party newspaper are seen as another instance of "glasnost," the campaign of public openness put into effect by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in an alleged attempt to make a change in social and economic problems facing the Soviet Union and causing negative publicity in the West.

Afanasyev's comments were made Monday in a report on his recent visit to Canada, where he said the issue of Soviet Jewish emigration was raised in a "sharp" discussion of human rights with about 20 Canadian Parliament members.

'All Is Not Right Here'

"It seems to us that all is not right here," wrote Afanasyev in Pravda. Afanasyev, who is a member of the Communist Party Central Committee and holds other official positions in addition to his editorial position, remarked that "Bureaucratic behavior has penetrated here as well. Questions are not always resolved smoothly and quickly."

Afanasyev said, "We are dragging out, dragging out decisions about the departure of a dissident." Although refraining from specific mention of any dissident, he nevertheless said that people wishing to leave the Soviet Union acquired "hero status" in the West as their requests for emigration visas were prolonged. "Having thoughts about it for a long time, sometimes too long," Afanasyev said, "we release this 'great person' and provide an occasion for the next round of anti-Soviet campaigning."

Temple Beth Am News

With Channukah over and the menorah put away for another year, we get into the mainstream of 1987. Plans are already underway for our annual community Passover Seder, to be held April 13, 1987, and more information will follow when the details are confirmed.

We wish to thank Karen and Marc Simon for opening their hearts and their home to us, and allowing us to hold our first tea for prospective members there. It is because of the warmth and kindness such as the Simon's have shown that enable us to keep growing as a congregation. New members are always welcome. Simply call the Temple office, any board member, or attend a Friday Night Service at the Center for Religion and Life, 4765 Brussels, on the UNLV campus. Please join us.

Our children had a great time at their annual Brianhead retreat (and ski trip). Rabbi and Micki supervised a range of both religious and secular activities that kept the kids busy and challenged.

Rabbi and Micki also, along with Temple Board Member and Religious School Principal Phyllis Darling, attended the regional UAHC conference in Huntington Beach (LA), Ca. They came back with many exciting ideas. (But we'll try to control them.)

Rabbi Hecht participated for the second year in a row in the annual interfaith celebration of the birthday of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The service, as usual, was inspiring.

Anyone wishing to place a tribute should contact Zelda Cassatta, or the Temple office.

Our Men's Club is off to a fine start after a big turnout at Art's Place for a Sunday Brunch and organizational meeting. A steering committee was formed, and more information can be obtained from Temple Vice President, Mel Kochan.

Sisterhood has selected a full slate of officers. Frances Copeland, Interim President, is now President for a full term. Her executive board consists of Vice Presidents Toby Daun, Harriet Donitz and Evelyn Pillisher; Recording Secretary Lillian Wallace; Corresponding Secretary Frances Goldman; and Treasurer Susan Gerech. They and the rest of the Sisterhood Board will be installed at Friday Night services February 13, 1987. Their next meeting will be February 3 at the Center at 11:30 a.m. Sisterhood stays very active. Their sunshine is busy, they sponsor and cater our Friday Night Oneg Shabbats, and they manage our new Judaica Shop. If you have a need for gift items, or wish to sponsor an Oneg, please call Sisterhood.

Hank Greenspun Honored



Ben-Gurion Centennial Fellows Hank and Barbara Greenspun, community leaders of Las Vegas, Nevada view the David Ben-Gurion Centennial Obelisk at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, Israel following the ceremonial unveiling recently by the President of Israel, Chaim Herzog, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Vice Premier Shimon Peres. The Obelisks are engraved in perpetuity with the names of all the Centennial Fellows. Mr. Peres spoke of the vital importance of the Negev for the future of the State of Israel and of his appreciation of the generosity and foresight of those who had contributed to the fulfilling of David Ben-Gurion's vision. Over one hundred Fellows from around the world were honored at the State memorial ceremony, 27 of whom are from California and other Western States.

Ben-Gurion University of the Negev is supported in the U.S. by American Associates, Ben-Gurion University with offices at 292 S. La Cienega Blvd., #322, Beverly Hills, CA 90211 (213) 854-6161.

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