

113 Lawmakers Urge Gorbachev To Release Wallenberg Or To Provide Public Accounting Of His Fate

WASHINGTON (JTA) — More than 100 members of the House have signed a letter urging Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev to free Raoul Wallenberg, the Swedish diplomat who saved thousands of Hungarian Jews from the Nazis during World War II.

The letter, signed by 113 Congressmen, urged Gorbachev to release Wallenberg, who was arrested by the Red Army outside Budapest in January 1945, or provide a "full, complete and public accounting of his fate."

"We believe he still lives and we urge that he be permitted to leave the Soviet Union," said the letter which was mailed last week to the Soviet Embassy here for forwarding to Gorbachev. Rep. Tom Lantos (D. Cal.), who initiated the letter, said he felt this was a good time to make another effort at gaining Wallenberg's release in view of

the Soviet Union's recent moves in increasing Jewish emigration and releasing political prisoners. "We're hopeful that the Soviet leaders will respond favorably on this issue as they have on a number of other human rights cases," Lantos said. "The Wallenberg case would be a perfect opportunity to demonstrate the policy of glasnost" or openness.

The Soviets have long claimed that Wallenberg died in Lubyanka prison in 1947. However, there have been numerous reports from persons released from Soviet labor camps that they have seen a Swedish prisoner fitting Wallenberg's description.

Lantos and his wife, Annette, both of whom were saved by Wallenberg in Hungary, have long led the effort to bring public attention to the Wallenberg case.

Lantos initiated the move in which Wallenberg was named an honorary citizen of the United States in 1981. A street in front of the planned U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum has been named Wallenberg Place.

Israel Urged To Cease All Arms Exchanges With South Africa

NEW YORK (JTA) — Two American Jewish groups are calling on Israel to take its newly adopted sanctions against South Africa one step further by ceasing all military exchanges with the racist government.

American Jewish Congress president Theodore Mann and New York Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC) president Lester Pollack have issued separate statements which praise the new Israeli sanctions while noting that they are only a first step toward total disengagement from military trade with South Africa.

The Israeli government decided to prohibit any new military contacts with South Africa and to allow existing military contracts to expire. The new sanctions allow Is-

raeli companies to uphold existing military contracts.

"We now urge Israel to go the extra distance -- by halting all arms sales under pre-existing agreements as quickly and expeditiously as possible," the AJCongress statement said.

The statement also expressed disappointment with the findings released by the State Department that Israel, France, Italy, Great Britain, West Germany, The Netherlands, and Switzerland all violated the 1977 United Nations arms embargo on South Africa.

The JCRC, like the AJCongress, said it finds "no moral justification for the sale of arms, the transfer of technology or the provision of fuel by any country, so long as Pretoria's racist policies remain in effect."

The pressure of sanctions is aimed at convincing the South African government to change its apartheid policies, the JCRC said.

"We share with Israel a concern for the Jewish community of South Africa and welcome Israel's recent constructive first step.



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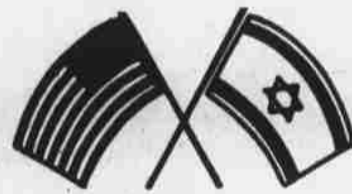
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