

Mission to Visit with Hebrew Teachers in the USSR

Margolis Tells of Trip to USSR

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'Soviet Jews Eager to Learn Hebrew'

The director of the Bureau of Jewish Education of Cleveland returned from a trip to the Soviet Union earlier this month, tremendously impressed with the desire of young activist Jews to learn Hebrew.

Henry Margolis, who spent two weeks visiting Moscow, Kiev and Leningrad, said there are some 500 people who are studying and teaching Hebrew in Moscow alone. They study for three hours once a week.

He said the young people teaching in these underground Hebrew sessions are already "second and third generation." That is, they are the students of the first activists, many of whom have since emigrated to Israel.

THEY TEACH with very little printed material, Margolis said, using mainly a few copies of a basic Hebrew textbook, "Eleph Milim," that are available in the city. They also have a small amount of other material, including audio-lingual Russian-Hebrew lessons that were prepared in Cleveland.

Margolis said that the teachers in Moscow were mainly mathematicians, physicists and engineers, who were now out of work because of their having applied for exit visas to go to Israel. They are now mostly supported by their wives and by doing odd jobs. Almost all were 30 years of age and under.

An important aspect of Margolis' mission was to bring these



לשכת התנועה
דקל"ב לנו ועד
התנועות למורים
עבריים

לבוש ידוע כי רשמי
מטעם ועד זה
מוכר על ידי
ועד התנועות המרכזי
למורים עבריים
באגודות העבריים
ועל ידי משרד החינוך
והתרבות בישראל
הועד מודיע כי

עמדה בדרישות של
ועד זה לקבלת רשיון
ולפיכך הממשל
מוסמך, כרת
להורות עברית
ליצנייה נה

КЛИВЛЕНДСКОЕ БЮРО ЕВРЕЙСКОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ
ОТДЕЛ ЛИЦЕНЗИИ НА ПРЕПОДАВАНИЕ ЯЗЫКА ИВРИТ
США

УДОСТОВЕРЕНИЕ ВЫДАННОЕ НАСТОЯЩИМ
ОТДЕЛОМ ПРИЗНАНЫ ВСЕАМЕРИКАНСКИМ
ОТДЕЛОМ ЛИЦЕНЗИИ НА ПРЕПОДАВАНИЕ
ЯЗЫКА ИВРИТ-и-МИНИСТЕРСТВОМ ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ
ИЗРАИЛЯ

УИМ ОДОСТОВЕРЯЕТСЯ, ЧТО

УДОВЛЕТВОРИТЕЛЬНО ПРЕДЪЯВЛЯЕМЫМ
ОТДЕЛОМ ДЛЯ ВЫДАЧИ ЛИЦЕНЗИИ, И В
СООТВЕТСТВИИ С ЭТИМ ОБИЧЕН ПРАВОМ
ПРЕПОДАВАТЬ ЯЗЫК ИВРИТ, В ПОДТВЕРЖДЕНИЕ
ЧЕГО ПРИЛАГАЕТСЯ НАША ПЕЧАТЬ И
СООТВЕТСТВУЮЩИЕ ПОДПИСИ _____
ЧИСЛА _____ МЕСЯЦА _____ ГОДА

ПРЕДСЕДАТЕЛЬ ОТДЕЛА ЛИЦЕНЗИИ-
ДИРЕКТОР БЮРО ЕВРЕЙСКОГО ОБРАЗОВАНИЯ

Hebrew teachers license from Cleveland translated into Russian.

teachers officially certified Hebrew teachers' licenses from the Cleveland Board of License. These licenses were the same as those given Hebrew teachers in Cleveland, except that they were translated into Russian.

Margolis said that the licenses were significant in that they would possibly give the Hebrew teachers an official status, thereby forestalling their being banished from Moscow as "vagrants" since they were unable to obtain other forms of employment.

Margolis said he did not know if these licenses would be recognized by Soviet authorities, but he said they could be a "tremendous morale factor."

THE IDEA for the licenses came from Dr. Louis Rosenblum, executive director of the Cleve-

land Council on Soviet Anti-Semitism, who has spoken with Soviet emigres in Israel about the needs of the Jewish activists still in Moscow.

Margolis' trip was undertaken in behalf of the council, the Bureau of Jewish Education and the College of Jewish Studies.

The Russian-language certificates were prepared here with the aid of Russian speaking local people and a local artist; unfortunately, there were errors in the translation work, and they will have to be done over.

Margolis says he has a list of 32 Hebrew teachers to whom the certificates will be sent.

More important than the certificates, however, is the desperate need for adult reading material in easy Hebrew, Margolis said.

A GOOD DEAL of Hebrew

material sent to Soviet Jews has never reached its destination, but Margolis feels that they can be taken in in small quantities by visitors. (Margolis says he saw no searching of tourists either arriving or leaving the country.) Margolis also said he feels small envelopes containing newspapers, magazines or paperback books could be sent through the mails and would have a better chance of getting through than large, bulky packages.

Margolis plans to be in touch with his colleagues in Jewish education throughout the United States in an effort to obtain their cooperation in getting this type of material into the Soviet Union.

While he was very impressed by the dedication he found in Moscow, Margolis said he found "a pall" over the Jewish community in Kiev and Leningrad, with very little going on there in the way of Hebrew study.

He said that Moscow Jews felt freer to act. He attributed this in part to the presence of foreign newspaper correspondents in the capital.

C O P Y

BUREAU OF JEWISH EDUCATION (Letterhead)
Bet Friedland - 2030 South Taylor Road - 371 0446
Cleveland, Ohio 44118

Dear Colleague:

I have just returned from a two week visit to Russia where my mission was to contact people involved in Hebrew teaching, to ascertain what is going on in this area and to determine their needs. Having achieved my purposes, all that remains now is to meet the needs as I understand them.

There are some 500 adults involved in learning and teaching Hebrew in Moscow. Classes are held once a week for three hours and consist of 5 or 6 students. The basic text is Rosen's Elef Milim which apt students generally master in 3 months. Those who give evidence of aptitude then begin to teach others, while continuing their studies with more advanced teachers. All my conversations with the teachers were conducted entirely in Hebrew. I attended a session involving some 10 teachers, conducted entirely in Hebrew with presentations by five people on such matters as grammar, Bible and poetry.

On the attached page I have listed the kinds of materials which are desperately sought. The surest way to get the material in is with tourists. I have included the names and phone numbers of some of the teachers who may be contacted by tourists bringing in material. There is very little hope of getting through the mails any Hebrew material. Nevertheless, I think a widespread attempt to send materials by mail should be made with the hope that even if a small percentage gets through it will serve an important function. Neither I nor any other tourist entering or leaving the country with me was searched.

I say to you in brief that my experience was an inspiring one. How could it be anything else for one who had witnessed the courage and vigor of fellow Jews campaigning vigorously to establish and deepen their sense of identity with Israel and the Jewish people in the face of oppression and cruel harassment? Surely, they merit all the aid and support we can provide. Anything you can do will be appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

/s/ Henry Margolis

Henry Margolis
Director

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List of Needed Materials

- Rosen, Elef Milim, Books I and II
- Luah Hashemot Hashalem, Barcalai
- Luah Hapoalim Hashalem, Barcalai
- Gesher books, with and without vocalization, Pirkei Avot, literary material
- Hebrew history books
- Hebrew-Hebrew and Hebrew-Russian, Russian-Hebrew dictionaries
- Nehama Leibowitz material on the sidrot.
- Lamatchil, Lamishmacha, Omer