



Israel Proposes Negotiations With Arabs on Five-Year Plan to Solve Refugee Problem

UNITED NATIONS, N. Y., Dec. 14 (JTA)—Israel proposed to the United Nations today that, as a first phase of an overall Arab-Israeli agreement on the Middle East crisis, the U.N. initiate negotiations on a five-year plan for the economic development of the entire Middle East, which would rehabilitate Arab refugees and integrate them into the economic life of the entire region.

Shortly after the Israeli proposal was laid before the U.N., the United States introduced a draft resolution deploring the fact that "no substantial progress has been made on the reintegration or resettlement of the Arab refugees. The U.S.A. urged, among other steps, that the world organization's special Arab refugee relief set-up, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees, "continue" its efforts to rectify the relief rolls "to assure the most equitable distribution of relief based on need." One of the points made in Israel's presentation disagreed sharply with the UNRWA statistics from which the relief rolls are made up by the agency, calling many of the figures "inflated."

The Israeli plan was proposed to the General Assembly's special political committee by Ambassador Michael S. Comay, Israel's representative to that 123-member committee which has been debating the Arab refugees problem for the last week.

Comay Tells Committee Israel Has Prepared 'Detailed, Practical' Proposals

In a lengthy address to the special committee, Mr. Comay "welcomed" the Middle East resolution adopted by the Security Council November 22, placing the solution of the Arab refugee problem "in the broad context of peace." He recalled also that that resolution had authorized the U.N.'s special representative, Ambassador Gunnar Jarring (who arrived in Israel today), "to establish and maintain contacts with the states concerned in order to promote agreement and assist in efforts to achieve the peaceful and accepted settlement."

"Since June," said Mr. Comay, "the Israel Government, through groups of experts, has been working on detailed and practical proposals on the refugee question. It is clear that Israel has neither the duty nor the capacity to solve this problem by itself. But the Government will participate fully in an international and regional plan to dispose of it in the broad framework of an effort to establish a permanent peace." He appealed to all U.N. members, particularly to the Arab states, to consider the Israel proposal seriously "on simple humanitarian grounds." Referring to the Arab states, he declared:

"Across the wall of hostility and misunderstanding which still unhappily divides us, my Government would voice a solemn appeal to neighboring governments. They should not hurry to reject our offer, but ponder it well on the same human grounds that prompted it. The swift and bloody encounter of last June has changed more than we can yet realize, in the lives and outlook of the peoples in the Middle East. None of us can go back to where we were before. We in Israel, too, have buried and mourn our dead, tended our wounded and crippled, and counted the grim cost of war. Our conscience is clear before God and history. For our small people, the alternative to victory was not defeat or even loss of independence, but physical annihilation. Let us now forego rancor and reproach. On both sides of the cease-fire lines, one can sense among ordinary men and women a weariness of conflict, a profound longing for the chance to lead their lives and bring up their children in peace and human dignity. That, at least, is the mood that has emerged in the population, both Jewish and Arab, throughout the Israel-held area.

"The time has come to move along the path of reconciliation. That may be a long and difficult path after all that has happened. Surely the forward step which Arab leaders could most readily explain and justify to their own citizens, is one which concerns the refugees. What we have proposed constitutes a challenge to Arab statesmanship, and it is our earnest hope that the response will be positive."

"I would recall that in its statement before the committee during the last General Assembly, my delegation suggested the establishment of a re-integration and compensation fund; which would provide the financial means for a solution of the refugee problem in all its aspects — land settlement, economic integration, training, migration, and compensation for property. We then stated that the Israel Government could be counted upon to give its prompt and substantial financial support to such an initiative. I am instructed now to reaffirm that commitment."

Says Arabs 'Inflated' Figures on Refugees and Displaced Persons

Mr. Comay reminded the delegates that, in the annual report on UNRWA's operations, filed here by Laurence Michelmore, the agency Commissioner-General, the latter had stated that Israel's cooperation with UNRWA, to help it carry out its work on the West Bank of the Jordan River and in the Gaza Strip, had been offered as far back as last June 14, and that that cooperation had been "effective." He complimented the agency on its "zeal and devotion" and its general labors "in spite of the difficulties

created by the hostilities. He said the Israel Government had provided UNRWA with services valued at a million Israeli pounds (\$350,000), during the six-month period ending December 31, 1967, in addition to contributing a like sum to the agency itself. Israel, he said, is now considering a further contribution to UNRWA to be earmarked for vocational training for Arab refugee youth.

However, Mr. Comay questioned many of the figures concerning the refugee population and movements as reported by Mr. Michelmore, saying that many of those data, furnished by the Arab "host" governments, were "inflated" and grossly inaccurate. The Israeli delegate questioned particularly two of the points to which Mr. Michelmore had referred in his report -- the matter of textbooks for Arab schools in Israeli-occupied areas and "the discrepancies between UNRWA statistics and the results of the population census carried out by Israel authorities in the areas in question."

Regarding education of the Arab children in Israeli-occupied areas, Mr. Comay noted that the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization had ruled in its constitution that such education "shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups" and the maintenance of peace.

"In the context of the Israeli-Arab conflict," he said, "it is of special concern what attitudes young children are taught in school. Objectionable material is being deleted from school textbooks in the Israel-held areas, and it is my Government's sincere hope that similar steps will now be taken in UNRWA/UNESCO schools, wherever they may be. In Dr. Michelmore's statement, he mentions that the need to modify textbooks has reduced the number of them that are available. I have since been able to inform him that the Israel educational authorities are able to fulfill orders from UNRWA for a complete range of textbooks."

Suggests Joint Study of Data; Reports Israel's Economic, Social Programs

Regarding the statistical figures, he told the committee that Israel had proposed a joint study of all available data because the matter is "complicated and technical." "We are concerned" he said, "not merely with determining the number of registered refugees that physically exist in the area. In our view, there is also need to clarify certain questions of eligibility and the reflection in refugee statistics of the substantial degree of economic integration which has been taking place."

Touching on the nature of the displacement of Arabs in the various areas involved in last June's war, and voicing "compassion for all civilians on either side who have been affected by the recent war," Mr. Comay said his delegation "would certainly agree that assistance should be given to those in need of it." "At the same time," he added, "it is incumbent upon us to understand the nature of these population movements if we wish to prescribe for them. Most of these figures (given in the Michelmore report) have not been verified by any independent source but have been supplied by Arab governments concerned and, in our opinion, are inflated."

Mr. Comay reported on Israel's efforts to repatriate Arabs who had moved to the Jordan-held East Bank of the Jordan River, and noted Israel's "open-door" policy for those Arabs to return to Israeli-held territory. "The moral of the story," he said, "is that all governments concerned must cooperate in facilitating cooperation."

After reporting that Israel has inaugurated many economic and educational programs for the Arabs in the areas it holds -- refugees and non-refugees -- Mr. Comay concluded: "On its record till now, and its economic and social programs for the period ahead, the Israel Government can properly claim that it is discharging its responsibilities towards the inhabitants of the areas, and ensuring their safety, welfare and security."

"I do not wish to suggest that there are no problems. That would be neither truthful nor convincing. There are resentment and suspicion surviving from the past, some difficulties of economic and emotional adjustment to the present, and anxiety about the future. All that is natural. But conditions are in every way better than anyone would have dared to expect some months ago."

"What is reassuring is that daily life is so normal, and above all that the barriers are crumbling and people are mingling freely. Incidents and clashes along the cease-fire lines are regularly reported in the press. The great untold story is that, in the area presently held by Israel, two-and-a-quarter million Jews and one-and-a-quarter million Arabs are co-existing without serious strife. That phenomenon is the basis for some sober confidence for the future of Israel-Arab relations in the Middle East, and for the future of the refugees."

U.S. Draft Urges Rectification of UNRWA Relief Rolls; Endorses Jarring Mission

The United States resolution was presented by Rep. L.H. Fountain, North Carolina Democrat, a member of this year's Washington delegation to the Assembly. The resolution would request Mr. Michelmore to include among his plans rectification of the relief rolls; would request the virtually dormant Palestine Conciliation Commission to continue its work; and would urge all governments "as a matter of urgency," to aid UNRWA to solve its serious deficit problems. Referring to the mission of Ambassador Jarring, Rep. Fountain said that "all members of the UN have a great stake in the success of his mission to the Middle East." He reiterated his government's support of the mission. In light of Ambassador Jarring's mission, he called on the committee to "concentrate on immediate practical measures to improve the lot of the refugees."

He said that over the years the United States has contributed over \$400 million dollars, or almost 70 percent of the funds required by UNRWA. Congressman Fountain called for a permanent solution to

the plight of the refugees, as stated by President Johnson in his speech of June 19. He said that all refugees who were displaced from their homes by the conflict last June should be allowed and encouraged to return to their homes. "Let us hope and pray that, with the assistance of Ambassador Jarring, a just solution of the problem of the refugees will, at last, within the framework of an overall settlement, be developed and implemented."

Jarring Sees Eban in Jerusalem; Scheduled to Meet Eshkol Today

JERUSALEM, Dec. 14 (JTA)—Gunnar Jarring, the United Nations special representative for Middle East talks, met tonight for an hour with Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban in what was described as a preliminary meeting.

The emissary arrived today in Israel and had lunch with Foreign Ministry officials. He refused to talk to newsmen or to discuss his further plans during his stay in Israel. However, it was reported that Mr. Eban reiterated to him Israel's position that only direct talks with the Arabs can lead to a solution of the Middle East deadlock, and that Israel would welcome any effort by the diplomat to bring the Arabs to a conference table with Israel.

Mr. Jarring is scheduled to see Prime Minister Levi Eshkol tomorrow, and may proceed in the afternoon to Jordan.

Wilson Declines to Invite Joint Discussions Between Israel and Egypt

LONDON, Dec. 14 (JTA)—Prime Minister Harold Wilson declined a proposal in the House of Commons today that Britain utilize its newly-restored diplomatic relations with Egypt to invite the Prime Minister of Israel and the President of Egypt to London for a joint discussion, under his chairmanship, on reopening the Suez Canal to navigation by ships of all nations.

The proposal, submitted in writing in question form, was answered in writing by the Prime Minister, who said that the correct way to proceed in this matter is on the basis of the November 22 Security Council resolution on the Middle East.

Israelis Clash With Jordanians, Syrians; One Syrian Infiltrator Killed

TEL AVIV, Dec. 14 (JTA)—A Syrian infiltrator was killed and an Israeli soldier was slightly wounded in two separate clashes that took place last night in the Beisan Valley, and in the area of the Golan Heights near the Israel-Syrian cease-fire line.

The soldier was wounded in a heavy exchange of fire that was begun by Jordanians at about 10 o'clock last night and lasted for half an hour. The Jordanians used small arms and mortars against an Israeli patrol on the West Bank of the Jordan, in the Beisan Valley. The Israelis returned the fire and silenced the Jordanian guns.

Earlier in the evening, an Israeli patrol intercepted an armed group about two miles west of the Israel-Syrian cease-fire line, and killed one of its members in an exchange of fire. The dead Syrian was in possession of a Russian-made Klatchnikoff assault gun.

59% of Rafi Convention Votes for Mapai Merger — But Issue Still Not Decided

JERUSALEM, Dec. 14 (JTA)—The secretariat of the Israel Workers Party (Rafi) was scheduled late today to decide what to do in the wake of a 59 percent vote at a party convention last night to merge with Mapai. Although the margin in favor of merger was substantial, judged by ordinary electoral standards, there was hesitation to proceed because many party delegates eligible to vote did not cast ballots, and there is known to be considerable opposition to merger among the party's rank and file. The most noteworthy abstainer was former Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion, founder of Rafi, who declared that he would remain opposed to the merger even if voted unanimously, but would not stand in its way.

Rafi's Secretary-General Shimon Peres and Defense Minister Moshe Dayan are both strong supporters of a merger with Mapai. Gen. Dayan told the party convention that the power needed to carry out Rafi's program could come only from within a united labor party, not from outside. He said that he would work within the united party to replace Prime Minister Levi Eshkol and Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir. A united party would command 55 seats in the Knesset (Parliament), compared to the 10 now held by Rafi.

Meanwhile Mapai and Achdut Avodah, another labor faction, made it clear that they would proceed with their merger if Rafi does not join.

Mandelbaum Gate — Demolished Earlier — Now Off Official Israel Map

JERUSALEM, Dec. 14 (JTA)—The Mandelbaum Gate in Jerusalem, which served as the official point of entry and departure between Jordan-held Old Jerusalem and Israel in the 19 years between the Israeli War of Independence and the Six-Day War last June, was officially deleted today from the Israel Gazette.

The gate itself was demolished three months ago in the reunification of the two parts of Jerusalem, but the Gazette had not kept up with events. The same issue of the official Government publication listed the Jerusalem Airport as the new legal point for entry and departure.

Jerusalem Municipality Adds Arabic to All Official City Forms

JERUSALEM, Dec. 14 (JTA)—Jerusalem's municipality has added Arabic to all stationery and forms intended for Arab residents, whose letters and material will be in Arabic only, for now on.

White House Aide Indicates U.S. Might Consider Arms Help to Israel

WASHINGTON, Dec. 14 (JTA)—President Johnson's personal adviser on international security affairs, Walt W. Rostow, met yesterday with Congressmen of the Jewish faith in response to complaints that the Administration's response to Israel's military supply requirements has been inadequate, it was learned today. Mr. Rostow met with the Congressmen at the Capitol. He declined to make any commitment of the new Israeli needs that were dramatized by the French suspension of contracted plane deliveries to Israel. The White House official indicated that the matter might be considered in due course. Participants in the meeting emphasized that the United States must take responsibility for the sale of arms, especially aircraft, to Israel, in view of President de Gaulle's policies. France had been the major supplier of the Israeli aviation needs.

The Congressmen who took part in the meeting were representatives Leonard Farbstein, Benjamin Rosenthal, James Scheuer, Herbert Tenzer, Lester Wolff, all New York Democrats; Joshua Eilberg, Pennsylvania Democrat; Samuel Friedel, Maryland Democrat; Charles Joelson, New Jersey Democrat; and Seymour Halpern, New York Republican. They represented a majority of the Jewish members of Congress.

N.Y. Garment Makers Drop Plans for Unified Action Protesting de Gaulle Attitude

NEW YORK, Dec. 14 (JTA)—A spokesman for a group of Manhattan garment makers, most of them Jewish, confirmed today that the producers had dropped plans for a unified protest against statements last month by President Charles de Gaulle of France, which were widely denounced as anti-Israel, anti-Jewish and anti-American.

Members of a committee of 10 of the garment makers, who originally talked about launching a boycott of French fabrics, decided to register protests only as individuals. Jerry Silverman, president of the firm bearing his name, said that members of the group had talked the question over with United States Government officials, international trade executives and other officials, and that they had been advised against any boycott.

Mr. Silverman said the producers had been advised that U.S. Government trade agreements with France would be hurt by nongovernmental action. Other members of the committee said that another reason for the decision not to make a group protest was concern that it might be considered an expression of dissatisfaction by Jews against Gen. de Gaulle's anti-Jewish statements. One member said "we are all Americans first."

(In Paris, today, Dr. Joseph Weil, honorary president of the Jewish consistory of the Lower Rhine, announced that he has returned his French Legion of Honor medal to President de Gaulle, because of the anti-Semitic remarks made by the general at his recent press conference.)

Rumanian Chief Rabbi Reports Religious, Cultural Freedoms for Jews in Country

NEW YORK, Dec. 14 (JTA)—Dr. Moses Rosen, chief rabbi of Rumania, reported here today that there were 100,000 Jews left in Rumania. Of these, he said, 50,000 are in Bucharest and the balance in approximately 75 to 100 communities throughout the country. There were 400,000 Jews in Rumania at the end of World War II.

Addressing a group of Yiddish writers, he said that the Jews in Rumania enjoyed full religious and cultural freedom. There are over 150 synagogues open and functioning, 50 of them in Bucharest. Between 700 and 800 worshippers attend services at his own Choral Synagogue, each week, he said. There were 500 synagogues at the end of World War II.

There is a Yiddish theatre in Bucharest, which is supported by the Rumanian Government. There is also a publishing house for Yiddish books. In 1967, the Federation of Rumanian Jewish communities published a Hebrew calendar, which had a sale of over 12,000 copies. The Federation also publishes a semi-monthly newspaper, which is printed in three languages — Rumanian, Hebrew and Yiddish. It has a circulation of 10,000 copies.

Rabbi Rosen also told the writers that the Rumanian Government had given to Israel a gift of over 3,000 Torah Scrolls, valued at \$2,000,000. These holy scrolls came from synagogues that were destroyed by the Nazis during the war, and also from synagogues that closed down after World War II as their members emigrated.

Third Auschwitz Trial in Germany Hears of Atrocities Committed by Inmate Guard

FRANKFURT, Dec. 14 (JTA)—A former inmate of the Auschwitz death camp, who is now a resident of Tel Aviv, testified today in the third trial here of Auschwitz camp personnel that one of the camp's inmate guards, Josef Windek, had drowned two prisoners and also attacked prisoners for no apparent reason.

Hans Salz, the witness, also testified that, as early as 1936, three years after Hitler came to power, his father was taken to a concentration camp, and his mother had been imprisoned in 1943. Windek faces charges of committing 1,700 murders as an inmate-guard. These guards were known as "kapos." Windek wept in the court room after the testimony, and declared that "a great injustice has been done to me."

British Jews to Commemorate Mendele Mocher Seforim in Special Programs

LONDON, Dec. 14 (JTA)—The 50th anniversary of the death of Mendele Mocher Seforim, regarded as the father of modern Yiddish literature, will be commemorated by British Jewry in a "Mendele Year" beginning this month.