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Israeli Leaders Dismiss Egyptian 'Rhodes-Type' Peace Talk Proposal

JERUSALEM, Oct. 9 (JTA) -- Israeli Government leaders appear to attach little importance to yesterday's statement by an official Egyptian spokesman that Egypt would be willing to enter into Rhodes-style peace talks with Israel provided that they were carried out through an intermediary and were not construed as direct negotiations.

Sources close to Premier Golda Meir said today that the offer by Dr. Esmet Abdel-Meguid in Cairo was nothing more than a restatement of Egypt's old position "camouflaged." The opinion in high Israeli Government circles is that the Egyptian statement was so full of ands, ifs and buts that it became meaningless, sources here said. There has been no official reaction as yet. But Foreign Minister Abba Eban was expected to state the Government's position at a press conference tonight.

One point of contention concerns Dr. Meguid's reference to the so-called "Rhodes formula" as the context for talks with Israel. Egypt insists that the 1949 Arab-Israeli armistice talks on the Mediterranean island of Rhodes with Dr. Ralph G. Bunche of the UN serving as mediator included no direct contacts between the opposing parties. Israel, on the other hand, says that records bearing Dr. Bunche's signature proved that Arab and Israeli negotiators were in the same room on several occasions.

Dr. Abdel-Meguid indicated yesterday that Egypt considered the pattern followed by UN peace envoy Dr. Gunnar V. Jarring to be within the Rhodes formula. For nearly a year, Dr. Jarring shuttled between Jerusalem and the Arab capitals but his mission so far has been fruitless. Israel viewed his mission not as mediation but as an effort to bring the two sides together for peace talks. Government sources indicated today that Israel would not agree to Dr. Jarring becoming a mediator.

Defense Minister Moshe Dayan told a student audience in Tel Aviv yesterday that Rhodes-style talks did not constitute a deviation from the principle of direct negotiations. He warned, however, that the United Nations must not be given any functional role in settling the Middle East conflict such as setting up demilitarized zones.

UN Assembly Plans Full Debate On Aerial Hijacking; Soviets Object

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y. Oct. 9 (JTA) -- The General Assembly's steering committee agreed today to place the subject of aerial hijacking on the agenda for a full scale debate. The committee acted on an 11-nation petition which said it had become "urgent" for the United Nations to devise legal methods which might be undertaken by member states to prevent further incidents of air piracy.

The only serious objection to the agenda item was raised by the Soviet delegate, Jacob A. Malik who questioned the motivation behind the issue at a time when "some circles engage in noisy propaganda about some individual cases of hijacking." Mr. Malik's remark was seen as a reference to the Aug. 29 hijacking of an Israel-bound TWA airliner by Arab commandos who forced it to land in Damascus. Two Israeli passengers aboard the plane are still held captive by Syria. He was also believed to be referring to Israel's protests against the Syrian action when he said, "The faster the causes of some cases of hijacking are eradicated, the sooner will the consequences disappear and the seizure of aircraft will come to an end."

The backers of the General Assembly debate submitted a draft resolution calling on individual nations to provide for the prosecution of hijackers and guarantee the prompt release of the passengers, crew and aircraft involved. The nations are The Netherlands, Argentina, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Lesotho, Luxembourg, Malagascar, and New Zealand.

Scientists' Conclave In Soviet City Urges Syrians To Release Scholar

TEL AVIV, Oct. 9 (JTA) -- An international meeting of scientists in a Soviet city has urged the United Nations to make every effort to secure the release of Prof. Shlomo Samueloff, one of two Israeli nationals held captive in Syria since a TWA airliner was hijacked to Damascus by Arab commandos on Aug. 29.

The resolution on behalf of Prof. Samueloff, a member of the faculty of the Hebrew University-Hadassah Medical School, was reported here yesterday by Prof. Aharon Katzir of the Weizmann Institute, who just returned from a meeting of the International Council of Scientific Unions in Erevan, capital of Soviet Armenia. Prof. Katzir represented the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities. He said the resolution applied to Prof. Samueloff because he was participating in an international project to study the earth's biological productivity which brought him under the auspices of the Council of Scientific Unions.

Overseas Jewish Capital Used To Buy Half Of Shares Of Zim Co.

WASHINGTON, Oct. 9 (JTA) -- The first major infusion of international Jewish capital into an Israel government-owned enterprise took place here yesterday with the announcement that negotiations have been concluded for the purchase of 50 percent of the shares of the Zim Israel Navigation Co. by the Israel Corporation, Ltd. The announcement was made by Dr. Astorre Mayer, chairman, following a board meeting attended by Israel's Minister of Finance, Trade and Industry, Zeev Sharef.

The Israel Corp. Ltd. was formed in Jerusalem on Aug. 29, 1968. It was an outgrowth of the international economic conference for Israel convened by the late Prime Minister Levi Eshkol the preceding June, which was attended by several hundred leading Jewish businessmen and financiers from all over the world. It was announced yesterday that the board of directors authorized the corporation's managing director, Michael Tzur, to proceed with negotiations for the acquisition of stock in the Haifa Refineries Ltd. and Haifa Chemical Ltd.

The purchase of the Zim stock will increase the company's share capital from $20 million to $35 million. Mr. Tzur said that 172 units totalling $17.2 million have already been sold. The offering has been approved by the Security and Exchange Commission.

The Zim Lines, founded in 1945 by the Jewish Agency and the Histadrut, became a government-owned corporation during the 1960s. It presently operates a fleet of more than 140 ocean-going vessels of which it owns 78 and charters the rest from foreign flags. The company was in serious financial difficulties several years ago but these have been alleviated by the disposal of its money-losing passenger liners, according to a company spokesman. The Zim Lines transports about half of Israel's maritime freight and has a $200 million development plan ear-marked for the next five years.

The Israel Corp. elected four new directors yesterday. They are F. Weill, of Loeb, Roades & Co.; Dr. T. Rosenbaum, of the International Credit Bank, Geneva; Joseph Mazer, of the Hudson Paper Mills and J. Venzky, of the Israel Investors Corp.

Interest Fades In Mosque Fire Trial After Defendant Confesses Guilt

JERUSALEM, Oct. 9 (JTA) -- Accounts of the El Aksa mosque fire trial moved from the front pages to inside pages of Israeli newspapers today indicating flagging interest in the proceedings since the accused arsonist, Denis Michael William Rohan, admitted in court Tuesday that he had set the fire. The 400 seat concert hall in the Jerusalem convention center was half empty as Mr. Rohan's defense lawyer, Yitzhak Tunik, took testimony from a young Arab guide who had escorted Rohan around the Temple Mount area, and several other minor witnesses. There were only 20 newsmen in the courtroom compared to 45 when the trial opened Monday.

The damaged mosque itself was the scene of a Moslem ceremonial last night. The occasion was a holiday commemorating the ascent to heaven of the Prophet Mohammed from the site on which the mosque now stands. That religious event makes the El Aksa mosque the third holiest shrine of Islam. The mosque was re-opened for prayers two weeks ago, its burnt-out section concealed from worshippers by a partition.

The defense testimony at the trial today was intended to support Rohan's plea that he was mentally ill at the time of his offense. The principal witness was 18-year-old Munir Kazaz who worked during the summer as a temporary guide in the Temple Mount area. He is the son of the Muezzin, a religious functionary who calls the faithful to their daily prayers. Kazaz testified that Rohan "wandered around the Temple Mount area talking to himself and seemed a little off balance." He said that young Arab boys who served as guides regarded the 28-year-old Australian as a "simpleton."

UJA Mission Arrives In Israel For Two-Week Study Of Problems

TEL AVIV, Oct. 9 (JTA) -- A group of 350 American-Jewish community leaders arrived here yesterday on the United Jewish Appeal's 15th annual study mission headed by the UJA's general chairman, Edward Ginsberg, of Cleveland. The group will spend two weeks in Israel and will be briefed by the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister, the Minister of Defense and the Foreign Minister. The group flew to Sharm el-Sheikh to view the military base safeguarding Israeli access to the Red Sea.

Israeli Foreign Ministry Says Visa To Former Nazi In Accord With Regulations

JERUSALEM, Oct. 9 (JTA) -- The Foreign Ministry said today that an Israeli visa issued to an admitted former Nazi in Bonn was proper and in accordance with standing regulations. The holder of the visa, Dr. Alois Fink, 67, is in Israel as a judge in an international dog show.

He was invited by the organizers of the show who said they knew of his past Nazi affiliations and that he made no attempt to conceal them when he applied for a visa at the Israeli Embassy in Bonn. A Foreign Ministry spokesman said that when a visa applicant declares that he had been a member of the Nazi Party, he is asked to state on his word of honor that he was never personally involved in any activity against Jews. Such a statement is legally binding in West Germany and is accepted by Israel, the spokesman said. If found to be untrue, the person can be prosecuted for perjury. According to unofficial sources, tens of thousands of ex-Nazis have come to Israel as tourists in recent years.

Arabs Reported Shocked By British MP Plans For 'Commando' Center

LONDON, Oct. 9 (JTA) -- The reported assertion by a pro-Arab British Laborite Member of Parliament in Beirut that the Arab cultural center she planned to establish in London would serve as a "commando outpost" has caused consternation in Arab circles, it was reported from Beirut yesterday. The statement was attributed to Mrs. Margaret McKay who represents the Clapham district of London. She claimed to have purchased a building for the center with $96,000 donated by Shiekh Zaid of Abu Dhabi, an oil-rich Persian Gulf state.

Her reference to it as a "commando outpost" jolted the Arabs, especially the Palestinian guerrilla organizations which claim to know nothing of the plan, London Times correspondent Paul Martin reported from Beirut. According to Mr. Martin, Arab spokesmen said the description was a distortion of the center's real purpose. Mrs. McKay later modified her statement and called the building an "Arab outpost" which would help "forward the liberation of Palestine." The MP also said she was a member of El Fatah, the largest Palestinian guerrilla organization which, she said, presented her with a badge. In announcing the new center for London, Mrs. McKay refused to discuss with newsmen Arab terrorist attacks on Israeli premises and Jewish property in London, telling newsmen that "if we want to win the sympathy of the West, we should do so in Western Ways."

The Liberal Friends of Israel here called on the British Labor Party today to demand Mrs. McKay's resignation. The organization said she was "now more than an embarrassment to the Labor Party. She is a menace." The Liberal Friends group said Mrs. McKay's statement in Beirut and her allegedly admitted membership in El Fatah, "could only encourage irresponsible elements in the Middle East" and that Britain could not afford such "irresponsible behavior" by a British MP.

Mrs. McKay aroused a storm in Labor Party and Government circles last month when she reportedly accused Prime Minister Harold Wilson of yielding to pressures by Zionist Jewish Labor MPs.

S. African Government Urged To Shift 1970 Election Date From Passover

JOHANNESBURG, Oct. 9 (JTA) -- Two South African Jewish weeklies have appealed editorially to the Government to change the scheduled date of the 1970 general elections from April 22 because it conflicts with Passover. The appeals were published in the South African Jewish Times and the Jewish Herald.

The conflict was previously brought to the Government's attention by the South African Jewish Board of Deputies which asked for a change and pointed out how the conflict would affect Jewish voters, candidates and election workers. Their memorandum so far has elicited a statement from Prime Minister John Vorster expressing regret that the election date was fixed entirely in ignorance of the Jewish calendar. Both newspapers and the Board of Deputies condemned efforts by the opposition parties to make political capital out of the situation.

Government officials said that the Prime Minister had discussed the problem with Chief Rabbi Bernard Casper and that the Chief Rabbi had accepted the Prime Minister's explanation. They noted also that the senior rabbi of the United Hebrew Congregation here, Rabbi A.H. Lappin, has said that Jews would be able to vote after sunset on election day without violating Jewish Religious Law.

Israel Rejects Arab Charges At UNESCO On Purchase Of Scroll

PARIS, Oct. 9 (JTA) -- An Israeli spokesman defended today his country's acquisition of the Temple Scroll, an historic relic purchased from a Jordanian antiquity dealer with the aid of the Wolfson Foundation in London. Dr. Moshe Avidor, Israel's delegate to the United Nations Education and Social Council (UNESCO) addressed a meeting of its executive board here in reply to Arab accusations that Israel is violating international agreements on the safeguarding of historic relics.

The UNESCO board also heard a report by H.J. Reinink, its special commissioner assigned to Israel, who charged that Israeli authorities had ignored his request to spare the Abu Saud houses near the West Wall in Old Jerusalem which were demolished. Mr. Reinink said that while the houses were not very valuable as monuments, "they were of cultural interest as an example of period architecture and should not have been touched."

Dr. Avidor said that Israel had saved the Temple Scrolls from oblivion. He said Israeli scholars were "shocked" by the condition of the scrolls which were partly rotted away but managed to preserve the largest part of them. He said the scrolls were acquired from a Jordanian dealer known to archaeologists as Kando for a "goodly sum." The Wolfson Foundation contributed about $77,000 toward the purchase.

The UNESCO board also heard today from the Egyptian Minister of Culture, Dr. Tharwat Okasha, who charged that the Al Aksa mosque fire was part of a deliberate plan to wipe out Moslem property in Jerusalem. He called the Israeli report on the blaze "deceitful" and claimed that the trial of the confessed arsonist, Denis Michael Rohan in Jerusalem was a "mock trial."

Ben-Horin Named To Succeed Ben Natan As Israeli Envoy To Bonn

JERUSALEM, Oct. 9 (JTA) -- The appointment of Eliashiv Ben-Horin as Israel's new Ambassador to West Germany was announced here yesterday. Dr. Avigdor Dagan was named Ambassador to Norway.

Jewish Defense League Advertisement, Tactics Denounced By New York Jewish Leaders

NEW YORK, Oct. 9 (JTA) -- A representative cross-section of the New York City Jewish community, led by Arthur J. Goldberg, today resoundingly denounced the militant Jewish Defense League. The censures were voiced by religious and secular Jews at a press conference called by an ad hoc group of leaders opposed to the self-defense group which claims 6,700 members.

The meeting was called in the wake of the publication this week of a large Defense League advertisement in the New York Times calling for the defeat of Mayor John V. Lindsay in the November mayoralty election. The leaders were also disturbed by JDL members' disruption of a campaign appearance by Mayor Lindsay in Temple Beth Shalom in Brooklyn on Tuesday.

Mr. Goldberg told the conference that he deplored injection of racist and ethnic issues into the campaign, a position that other speakers echoed. The former Supreme Court Associate Justice, United Nations Ambassador and American Jewish Committee president compared an appeal to racial antagonism on the basis of support or opposition to a candidate to "crying fire in a crowded theater."

He declared that he opposed private organizations performing governmental functions to physically protect private citizens. Government is fully equipped and prepared to protect religious institutions and the lives of American citizens, he said, adding that he felt there was no need for an organization like the JDL in the city's communal life or that of the nation. He expressed the belief that none of the mayoralty candidates -- Mr. Lindsay, Mario Procaccino, or State Sen. John V. Marchi -- are racists.

Stanley Lowell, a vice chairman of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, presented a position paper of his organization which rejected the "paramilitary operations" of the JDL as "destructive of public order and contributory to divisiveness and terror."

The NJCRAC, composed of nine national and 82 local Jewish community relations agencies, asserted that "Jewish security -- indeed, the security of any ethnic or racial group -- does not lie in taking the law into one's own hands. That kind of simplistic approach to the complicated problems of our time can only produce warring groups, not solutions."

Advertisement Blamed Mayor Lindsay For Many Evils

The anti-Lindsay advertisement, which drew considerable consternation, said "the Jews of New York City cannot afford four more years of John Lindsay." It blamed him for "a violent outpouring of anti-Jewish hate during the ... school strike," accused him of maintaining anti-Semites and racists on the public payroll, and assailed him for silence on a "reign of terror against Jewish merchants in so-called ghetto areas."

The advertisement, signed by JDL national chairman, Rabbi Meir Kahane, who was present at the press conference, and JDL general counsel Bertram Zweibon, also blamed Mayor Lindsay for what it said were "intolerable levels" of crime in Jewish neighborhoods involving terrorism and synagogue vandalism. It asserted that the "philosophy of Lindsayism" was responsible for a de facto school quota system that discriminated against Jews.

At the meeting, run by Howard Squadron, co-chairman of the American Jewish Congress governing council, a statement denouncing the advertisement as conducive to "a campaign of hatred and vilification" against the mayor was read. Signed by 300 Jewish leaders and prominent figures, it asked "our co-religionists to ignore all such offensive appeals, to vote as they see fit for the candidate of their choice."

A statement by Dr. Bernard Mandelbaum, president of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, was read by Rabbi Benjamin Kreitman, a Conservative leader. The Seminary head denounced the JDL for "wicked, irresponsible talk." He said its behavior was contrary to Jewish tradition, that it was not defensive but "offensive" and was "not in league" with responsible Jewry.

Rabbi Edward Klein (Reform) of the Stephen Wise Free Synagogue taxed the JDL as "self-appointed, self-annointed," and said it spoke for itself only. He termed the advertisement an insult to Jews and said that Jews as voters were "not in anybody's vest pocket" -- meaning they do not vote as a bloc.

Rabbi Joseph Lookstein, chancellor of Bar-Ilan University in Israel and rabbi of Kehilath Jeshurun synagogue in New York, said Jews do not believe in vigilantism but rather in vigilance as a matter of protecting the community. Rabbi Leon Fink, whose synagogue was the scene of JDL screaming and booing of Mr. Lindsay this week, said that the incident marked the first time in his 10 years in its pulpit that a person's "freedom of communication" from that pulpit was denied.

One voice was raised in a mild defense of the JDL by Rabbi Louis Newman of Manhattan's Temple Rodeph Sholom who said from the floor -- he was not on the panel -- that however mistaken the defense outfit was in its tactics, it "has sought to create a different image of Jews in the United States -- we are not an acquiescent or supine people."