



BEGIN; ISRAEL WILL STICK TO ITS OWN VIEW OF 242; INSISTS ISRAEL ADHERES TO 242 AND THERE IS NO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN THAT AND ISRAEL'S PEACE PLAN By David Landau and Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 8 (JTA)--Premier Menachem Begin reaffirmed in the Knesset today that Israel remains committed to United Nations Security Council Resolution 242 and continued to claim that there is no contradiction between the resolution and his peace plan. But last night, in an emotional appearance before the Likud Knesset faction, Begin insisted that Israel would stick to its own interpretation of 242 even if it is not shared by the rest of the world.

The Begin government's contention that the resolution does not oblige Israel to make territorial withdrawals from the West Bank looms as a possible subject of confrontation between Begin and President Carter when they meet at the White House next week.

An American official said here yesterday that Washington "feels the positions of governments on international documents should, if possible, be consistent" and therefore Israel should abide by the interpretation of 242 applied "universally" in the past by the nations that sponsored it and by those states that accepted it which include Israel.

The official said that Israel's current position denying the applicability of 242 to the West Bank was one of the "underlying problems" in the way of a joint declaration of principles acceptable to Egypt and Israel. He added, however, that Egypt's demand for an Israeli commitment to total withdrawal from the occupied territories also constituted a key obstacle since Israel would not accept it and the U.S. would not support such a demand. The official indicated that 242 would be the focus of attention in the Carter-Begin talks which, he said, would be "frank and thorough."

Israel Has A Right To Its View

Although Begin reportedly reached an understanding with the American Administration, through Ambassador Samuel Lewis, to play down differences over 242 on the eve of his meeting with Carter, the Premier nevertheless heatedly defended his interpretation of that document in addressing the Likud MKs last night.

"There is an Arab interpretation to the resolution, there is a French interpretation and there is an American interpretation which the Arabs reject," he said. "Why shouldn't Israel have her interpretation? Has anybody said the Arab interpretation was an obstacle to peace?" he asked. He claimed that the Americans knew all along what Israel's interpretation was but refrained from mentioning it until now.

Says Cabinet Will Have To Shape Up

Begin insisted that the settlements issue was blown up out of proportion and vowed never to dismantle the Sinai settlements and never stop insisting on Israel's right to protect them with its own forces. He alluded to the rift in his Cabinet over settlement policy and indicated anger toward ministers who questioned his policies.

"I suffer great pains when friends who went along with me for years now attack me, but I am willing to accept the suffering with love. On my grave one should write 'he acted for an Israeli peace plan,'" Begin said. He also referred to enemies of the government who must be watched. He promised that when he returns from Washington he would "make order in the Cabinet within two weeks." All ministers, he said, will have to abide by Cabinet resolutions.

Begin And Allon Clash

At the Knesset this morning, Begin clashed angrily with former Foreign Minister Yigal Allon of the Labor Alignment. Allon submitted a motion to debate Begin's impending visit to Washington. It was defeated by a vote of 51-31 but the Labor MK was sharply critical of the Begin government's interpretation of Resolution 242. He said it was "surprising" in view of Begin's assurances that Israel accepted the resolution. He said that while 242 was not his "dream document," it was preferable to the present government's interpretation as expressed on the West Bank.

Begin responded by attacking the so-called "Allon plan" for the West Bank, a proposal drafted by Allon after the Six-Day War. He called it a "childish" farce, noting that it was never accepted by the Arabs or by the U.S. He also castigated Allon for raising the issue of 242 just before his trip to Washington. Allon responded that "the government's hard line may be disastrous for Israel." He said "We should not be interested in governing 1.1 million Arabs and the world will never put up with it."

EHRLICH DENIES RESIGNATION THREAT OVER SETTLEMENTS ISSUE BUT IDENTIFIES FULLY WITH WEIZMAN

By Gil Sedan and David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 8 (JTA)-- A spokesman for Finance Minister Simcha Ehrlich denied today reports that Ehrlich has threatened to resign over settlement policy. He made it clear, however, that the Finance Minister identifies fully with Defense Minister Ezer Weizman on that issue.

Rumors that Ehrlich had threatened to quit circulated yesterday after it was learned that Weizman, currently in the U.S. to discuss Israel's weapons needs with American officials, had telephoned Premier Menachem Begin on Monday to warn that he would resign if development work continued at Gush Emunim settlements on the West Bank in defiance of his ministry's orders to halt such work. It was reported subsequently that Ehrlich said if Weizman resigned, he would do the same.

Weizman and Ehrlich represent a Cabinet faction that wants all settlement activity frozen for the duration of the current peace negotiations. Their dispute with Cabinet hardliners, headed by Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon, has been an open secret in political circles here for some time.

It became public yesterday as a result of Weizman's call to Begin which also raised doubts about the ability of Begin to control his own ministers. In some quarters, the Likud-led coalition was seen as hopelessly divided and floundering at a moment of the most delicate diplomatic negotiations that could determine Israel's future.

Some observers said Weizman acted in an unstatesmanlike way and accused him of disregarding the fact that he is on an important official mission for the government. Deputy Premier Yigael Yadin who is Acting Defense Minister, announced yesterday that Weizman's orders to halt development work at Beit El and Nebi Saleh on the West Bank would be carried out faithfully, and therefore there was no cause for him to resign.

Yadin made that point several times in the course of a radio interview. He also said that when Begin returns from Washington, the Cabinet as a whole would have to address itself to the "intolerable" present situation in which differences between ministers are made public.

Meanwhile, in a statement conveyed here today from the U.S., Weizman expressed regret that the issue had been publicized and claimed it was "partially distorted." He stressed the extreme sensitivity of the settlement issue and the "agitation" it naturally creates when it is the subject of "clarification" between policy-makers. Weizman added that "absolute secrecy" was required in these debates and regretted that in this case it was breached.

Challenge To Begin Seen As Precedent

Nevertheless, observers here believe that whatever attempts are made to paper over the rift, the scars of this week's events will remain deep in the fiber of Israeli politics. Weizman's direct challenge to Begin was seen as a precedent, and the fact that he was supported implicitly by Ehlich was given considerable impact to its potential.

The observers said the lines have been clearly drawn and if another row erupts on settlement-related issues, Begin would be hard-pressed to survive an all-out challenge by Weizman. Should he Defense Minister resign, the repercussions would be felt not only in the Likud bloc itself but through the entire coalition structure.

To what extent the American Administration will seek to exploit these differences remains to be seen. Some here fear that this internal dispute came at an inopportune time and could open the way for Washington to drive a wedge between moderates and hardliners in the Israeli government or even to conclude that Begin can be dislodged in favor of more moderate political forces.

The Gush Emunim, meanwhile, declared war on the government's settlement policy and vowed to continue their settlement drive on the West Bank regardless of the consequences. Several hundred Jewish followers demonstrated outside the Knesset this morning. They claimed that the government had betrayed those who voted it into power and demanded to know "who runs the country, Begin or Weizman?"

SOVIET JEWISH WOMEN ARRESTED

NEW YORK, March 8 (JTA)--At least seven a group of 23 Jewish women were arrested today when they demonstrated in front of the Lenin Library near the Supreme Soviet in Moscow demanding unification with their families in Israel, the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry and the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews reported they learned from sources in the USSR.

The women, who staged their demonstration to coincide with International Women's Day, were arrested after they removed their coats and displayed slogans on their blouses stating "Let us go Israel" and Stars of David. The women were rounded by more than 100 police agents and

those displaying the slogans were arrested. There was no immediate information as to what happened to them after the arrests.

According to the two Soviet Jewry groups, the 23 women issued an appeal to Mrs. Rosalynne Carter, Queen Elizabeth and other leading personalities which stated: "We have been fated to continue our life of uncertainty far away from our relatives, denied the possibility to bring up our children in the Jewish tradition and to get jobs on the basis of our qualifications."

ZIONISM TERMED 'CANCER TO HUMANITY'

By Michael Solomon

MONTREAL, March 8 (JTA)--The Canada-Israel Committee, the umbrella organization of the Canadian Jewish Congress, the Canadian Zionist Federation and the B'nai B'rith, lodged yesterday a strongly worded complaint with the Quebec press council concerning an article in the French-language monthly, Ici Quebec (Here is Quebec), terming Zionism "the cancer of humanity."

The Canada-Israel Committee said this was a "malicious libel," against Zionism, Israel and Jews in general. The article in the March issue was written by the editor-in-chief, Jean Cote. Cote called Israel "a dagger in the heart of the Arab world" and accused Israel of using "cruelty without precedent in the history of the world" in its treatment of Palestinians.

Ici Quebec is a monthly pro-separatist paper which represents the right wing of the Pequist Party which is now in power as the provincial government. The magazine was established a year ago and has a circulation of 15,000. "International Zionism is the generalized cancer of humanity, the home of violent racism and the ferment which has fed wars in the Middle East for the last quarter of a century," the article said.

The March issue of the magazine includes an article accusing Israel of poisoning shipments of Jaffa oranges to Europe as a way of discrediting the Palestinians and creating sympathy to aid Zionist fund-raising campaigns.

Jewish Community Assails Article

The Canada-Israel Committee, based here, said "the articles are shocking and unfortunate especially at a time when there is more chance of achieving peace in the Middle East than ever before. Such blatantly propagandistic efforts can only serve to promote tensions and misunderstandings in Quebec society and to unnecessarily provoke elements within it."

Listed in the table of contents as a collaborator in the anti-Zionist article is Roger Delorme, broadcaster and unsuccessful Progressive-Conservative candidate who has been accused in the past of anti-Semitic views. Delorme has been quoted assaying that the Diary of Anne Frank is a forgery and that no more than a million Jews were killed by the Nazis.

Marcel Chaput, director general of the magazine, said he was not surprised at the reaction of the Jewish community to the articles. Chaput said: "With Jews, you have to agree with them or they call you racist. Jews don't want independence for Quebec so why should I support independence for Israel? What have Jews done for the French-Canadians in Quebec? Nothing. They have done nothing for French Canada."

Asked about the article on the Jaffa oranges, Chaput said: "It is not necessarily an affirmation,

but Israel can be expected to have done it. The Royal Mounted Police in Canada have set fires and planted bombs. Why shouldn't Jews poison their oranges?" he asked.

Premier Rene Levesque's assistant press secretary, Nicole L'Heureux, stated today that the Quebec provincial government "has absolutely no political or financial links" with the magazine.

JEWISH AIDE TO CARTER WITHDRAWS OVER DIFFERENCES ON MIDEAST POLICY

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, March 8 (JTA)--The White House said today that Mark Alan Siegel, President Carter's liaison with the American Jewish community, has withdrawn from those duties because "he has had and has some differences" with the Administration's Middle East policies. But Siegel, 31, who holds a doctorate in political science, has not resigned from the Presidential staff and no decision on his official future has been taken yet, Presidential Press Secretary Jody Powell told reporters today.

Siegel, Deputy Assistant to the President on Political Affairs since Carter's inauguration 14 months ago, dropped his role with the Jewish community last week, Powell said. He said President Carter regards Siegel's reasons for leaving that function as "reasonable and honorable."

Powell said he was "not inclined" to relate the Siegel matter to "more general things" and that it had no effect on the President's Middle East policies which include an aircraft sales package to Israel, Egypt and Saudi Arabia that has aroused concern in the American Jewish community.

Asked by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency for details of the Siegel case which was leaked to the press last night, Powell said that Siegel "had and has some differences of opinion and had some concern both of the process and the product" of the President's Middle East policy "particularly as it relates to the Middle East arms sale package." He said that "in light of the differences, he (Siegel) thought he no longer should be put in a position of explaining a point of view he could not in good conscience do."

Question Of Siegel's Future

Powell's statement that he does not know "what Siegel wants to do" prompted speculation that he was implying that Siegel will resign from the Presidential staff with an appropriate statement that would satisfy his personal career, the President's need to maintain authority over his aides and the concerns that Siegel's action will have on the American people.

However, Powell said, Carter, Presidential Political Assistant Hamilton Jordan who is Siegel's superior, Siegel and he himself will discuss Siegel's future and supply the "answer" to the public as soon as they can. Powell could not estimate when a decision would be taken. "It's a tough problem to deal with," he said.

Also At Odds With Brzezinski

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency has learned that Siegel has been at odds with the President's National Security Advisor Zbigniew Brzezinski on Middle East policies and felt that Brzezinski's views were the ones that have aroused the greatest concern in the Jewish community.

Siegel has been addressing Jewish groups all over the U.S. to give the Administration's point of view on Middle East affairs. His position apparently became more difficult as concern over the Administration's Middle East policies increased and he

but to have shared some of those concerns. Last week, Siegel drew audible criticism when he defended the President's position on Israeli settlements and the aircraft package deal before the Young Leadership Council of the United Jewish Appeal here.

Powell said that Siegel's liaison post will not be filled for the time being. It was indicated that the President's Counsel, Robert Lipshutz, and his domestic policy director, Stuart Eizenstat, who have also dealt with Jewish groups, will continue that function along with their other duties but on a broader and more intensive scale. In addition to his liaison assignment, Siegel's titles are Political Deputy to Jordan and political liaison to the state and national Democratic parties.

BEGIN NAMES YITZHAK SHAVEH, A SCIENTIST, AS PRESIDENTIAL CHOICE

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 8 (JTA)--Premier Menachem Begin has surprised the Israeli political community by indicating his preference of a little known scientist, Prof. Yitzhak Shaveh, for the Presidency. Begin's move became known in the Knesset late last night, causing raised eyebrows and much wonderment.

Shaveh, 54, is a researcher at the Nahal Sorek nuclear research facility near Tel Aviv. Shaveh had been working in a Paris lab on a year-long sabbatical. He was born in Cairo of Syrian parents and studied physics at the Hebrew University. For some years in the 1950s, he worked on government arms research projects, and since 1967 has specialized in isotopes at the Nahal Sorek Institute.

Begin reportedly telephoned Shaveh in Paris last week and invited him back home "for a chat." Shaveh told newsmen today he was "stunned" to learn that the Premier was offering him the Presidency. The Knesset is due to vote for President Ephraim Katzir's successor April 5. Shaveh said he has not yet made up his mind whether to run for the office. "I don't know if I am the best man for the job," he said candidly. He had lost nights of sleep this week thinking hard about it, he said.

Even if Shaveh does eventually agree to run, there is no certainty that he will win the nomination, despite Begin's backing. Early word from political circles was that the National Religious Party was not comfortable with the Premier's choice and still preferred Laborite Yitzhak Navon.

Sources in the Democratic Movement for Change said their party, too, would probably prefer Navon --and thus the coalition forces may split, it would seem, over the Presidential nominee. Navon so far has not formally announced his candidacy and is unlikely to do so without ascertaining in advance that he is assured of massive support.

Political observers remarked on the irony of the Premier's move. It closely resembled Premier Golda Meir's step five years ago when she took Katzir from relative anonymity to make him Labor's choice--also in order to stop Navon from winning the nomination. Navon's fault in her eyes was his Rafi-Ben Gurionite past. In Begin's view, the veteran Jerusalemite and Labor Knesseter is apparently too pronouncedly doveish.

WASHINGTON (JTA)--Rabbi Moshe Sherer, executive president of Agudath Israel of America, conferred with Secretary of State Cyrus Vance. It was understood that the brunt of the conversation related to shipment of matzohs from the United States to Jews in the Soviet Union for the Passover holiday.

BACKGROUND REPORT THE OUTLOOK IN FRANCE

By Edwin Eytan

(Second part of a two-part series)

PARIS, March 8 (JTA)—The French elections March 12 and 19 might change the regime for the first time since the Gaullists took over 20 years ago. A number of basic issues are under consideration, including the role of Jews in major political parties, Israel's friends among the nation's political leaders and the consequences of a Socialist-Communist victory regarding France's policy towards Israel.

* Are there Jewish candidates and do Jews hold influential positions within the major political parties?

Jews have traditionally been very active in French political life. The country has had three Jewish Prime Ministers in the first 20 years which followed World War I—Leon Blum, Rene Meyer and Pierre Mendes-France—and countless Ministers. This proportion has, however, fallen during the last years. Currently the only political parties in which Jews play top level roles are the Communist Party and the minute Left Wing Radicals.

Within the current government there are three Jewish Ministers: Simone Veil, who is the Health Minister but is not running for election and has little influence on general policy; and two junior Ministers, Olivier Stirn, in charge of overseas territories, and Lionel Stoleru, Assistant Minister of Labor. Stoleru is believed to have good "personal relations" with Giscard but also has little influence on party decisions. There are no top level Jewish advisors either at the Elysee, the Gaullist Party or the pro-Giscard Independent Republicans.

Within the Socialist Party, one man, Georges Dayan, is reputed to be Socialist Party leader Francois Mitterand's closest advisor and will probably be rewarded with a top level ministerial post should his party win. Another Jew, Jacques Attali, a 35-year-old economist and active in the Jewish community, is the party's top economic expert.

Within the Communist Party, Jews play an important role in the central committee and one of them, Charles Fitterman, is the party's number three man and reported to be one of the main contenders for the succession of party secretary general Georges Marchais.

* Who are Israel's best friends among the country's political leaders?

The two men generally believed to be sincere in their pledges are Socialist Party leader Francois Mitterand and Gaullist leader Jacques Chirac. People who know them well say that they both feel a strong personal commitment to Israel and its survival. This personal involvement does not mean, however, that if elected they would let these personal considerations dictate their political decisions. It is generally assumed, however, that they would be more inclined than other prominent political personalities to listen to Israel's cause and take it into consideration.

Israeli Views Of Political Situation

* What is Israel's stand? Does it take sides? Hundreds of French Jews have contacted the Israeli Embassy in Paris, Israeli diplomats and journalists to ask how to vote, and what vote would better suit Israel's interests. The Embassy has given no advice. It keeps a strictly neutral

stance and avoids at all costs from becoming involved in French internal political affairs. Israel will have to work and cooperate with whatever party will win.

Privately, Israeli diplomats in Paris are divided into two schools of thought. One believes that the current center-right majority has considerably improved its position and will probably continue to do so. It also stresses that things might be far worse with a Socialist-Communist government.

The other school of thought claims that "nothing can be worse" than the continuation of the current Gaullist pro-Arab and anti-Israeli tradition. These diplomats believe that the very fact of a government change will bring an improvement both with the advent of a left wing government and force the center-right opposition to adapt its policies to a more pro-Israeli line if it should want to regain power one day.

These opinions are, however, strictly private. No Israeli diplomat or Embassy official has taken any open position on Israel's preferences or which side it favors.

* What will change if the center-right Gaullists win?

Should they win, it will probably be by only a few seats, according to all public opinion polls. The close shave they will have had will probably make them more receptive in the future to the arguments put forward by the French Jewish community and Israel's friends in France.

The polls also foresee that Chirac, one of Israel's main friends, will control a majority of the center-right deputies and will thus be in a position to modulate French policy. Should the current majority win, a slow but definite improvement in Franco-Israeli ties can be expected. It will be an evolutive process which, experts believe, will take several years to be felt.

Consequences Of A Leftist Victory

* What will change if the left wins?

This is the big unknown and will depend on several factors: the Communist share in the victory, the composition of the next Socialist-Communist government and also the relative weight of the left wing within the Socialist Party itself. Basically there are two main possibilities: the Communists win over 20 percent of the popular vote and form a joint government with the Socialists holding some half a dozen top ministries; or the Socialists score mainly by themselves and form the bulk of the new government.

In the first possibility, the new government's position will probably be far more pro-Palestinian than it is now. It will encourage national liberation movements and support the Palestine Liberation Organization. Should the Socialists form the bulk of the new government, the relations might improve in certain aspects, such as bilateral ties, but will be exposed to tension on the Palestinian question.

Day by day policies will continue to be run by the Quai d'Orsay officials and the government will presumably be so fully engaged in internal matters that it will have little time for such foreign affairs considerations as the Middle East. Also, ties with America will be loosened and this in turn will have an influence on the new government's policy in the Middle East.

Many political experts believe that most Jews will vote according to their personal interests and sympathies not on the basis of what France's policy might be in the Middle East.