

# JTA daily news bulletin

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## **CURRENT PRICE FREEZE ON BASIC COMMODITIES TO REMAIN IN EFFECT**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, July 16 (JTA) -- Premier Menachem Begin prevailed on his Cabinet yesterday to maintain the current freeze on the prices of basic commodities subsidized by the government for the time being. That decision and the announcement by the Central Bureau of Statistics yesterday that the cost-of-living index rose by only 3.5 percent in June compared to 4.8 percent in May and a record 8.7 percent in April, promised some respite for harried consumers.

The Treasury expressed satisfaction with the decline of the C.O.I. rate for the second consecutive month, attributing it to the government's restraining efforts and the slower rise of seasonal factors. But economic analysts were skeptical. They said the slower rise in the price index during the last two months was due mainly to seasonal drops in the prices of certain items, chiefly fruit and vegetables and the government's delay in raising prices which, nevertheless, is inevitable.

Begin insisted on the delay to cool down inflation. His economic ministers on the other hand, had pressed for the reduction or elimination of price subsidies for basic commodities which the Treasury can ill afford. This would lead to sharp price increases. As a result of yesterday's decision, the prices of such items as fuel and frozen meat will remain stable for the time being. Gasoline now sells at about \$2 a gallon.

Further discussions of prices will take place soon, possibly this week and another chain of increases is considered likely. The July consumer price index is expected to rise inasmuch as it will include updated costs of housing which are calculated every three months. The government's basic program calls for an adjustment of prices to the world market levels while compensating the needy. The premise is to shift subsidies from commodities to the low income consumer.

A further acceleration of inflation is expected to result from end of season sales next month. But the Treasury hopes to keep prices down as much as possible through August when the C.O.I. payments, due salaried workers in October, are calculated. The price index now stands at 330.3, based on the 1976 average of 100. Prices have risen by 68 percent in the last 12 months. If inflation continues at the rate of the first half of 1979, the inflation rate will reach 80 percent for the year.

## **ISRAELI SPORTS OFFICIAL SAYS ISRAEL WILL PARTICIPATE IN THE MOSCOW OLYMPICS IN 1980**

By Haskell Cohen

NEW YORK, July 16 (JTA) -- Shmuel Lalkin, secretary general of the Israel Sports Federation, said here that the members of the Israel Olympic Committee "feel at this point Israel will definitely appear at the Games in Moscow next summer." Addressing a luncheon for him by the U.S. Committee Sports for Israel, Lalkin said "Our relationship with the Russians has improved steadily and all indications are

that we should have smooth sailing with the Russian Olympic officials."

The Israeli sports official reported that the Soviet sports authorities "invited our yachting people to participate in the Games in Tallinn this summer and requested that our four-man and four-woman crews in rowing join the competition which will be held in August in Moscow." These moves, Lalkin said, "prove to us that the Russians are serious about their sports relationship with Israel and consequently it is our firm opinion that we shall appear in force at the Games next summer."

Lalkin, who toured the United States for a month under the auspices of the U.S. Committee Sports for Israel, noted that Israeli athletes are preparing for the 1980 Games. One of the top possibilities for a medal in the Games is Amir Ganiel who is training under the famous swimming coach Don Lamon on the West Coast. He is one of Israel's brightest stars and together with Esther Roth plus the seven or so American athletes who made aliya, Israel will have strong representation next year.

Among the American athletes Lalkin also mentioned who are expected to make an impressive showing at the Moscow Olympics were Marty Rosenberg, the sprinter who represented the U.S. in the past Maccabiah Games, and Dan Gardner, the discus thrower.

## **SECURITY COUNCIL TO DEAL WITH REPORT ON THE ADMINISTERED AREAS**

By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, July 16 (JTA) -- The Security Council is expected to meet here Wednesday to consider a report by a three-member commission that investigated Israeli settlements in "Arab territories occupied since 1967." The commission was established by the Security Council on March 22 and its members are Bolivia, Portugal and Zambia. Israel did not cooperate with the commission and did not allow its members to enter the territories under its control. It had allowed other panels of inquiry to make impartial investigations freely in the past but does not consider this commission to be objective and impartial.

A spokesman for the Israeli Mission to the United Nations told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that the report by the commission is "one-sided and includes many distortions and errors." He pointed out, for instance, that the report charged that the Arab population in Jerusalem and the West Bank has declined by 32 percent since Israel assumed control in these areas, while in reality, he said, there was an increase in the Arab population during that period. The Israeli spokesman said that Israel will take part in the Council debate.

In its recommendations to the Security Council the commission urged the Council to "launch a pressing appeal to the government and people of Israel, drawing again their attention to the disastrous consequences which the settlement policy is bound to have on any attempt to reach a peaceful solution in the Mideast." The report also recommended that "Israel should be called upon to cease on an urgent basis the establishment, construction and planning of settlements in the occupied territories."

According to the report, Israel has established so far 133 settlements; 17 in and around Jerusalem

62 in the West Bank, 29 in the Golan Heights, and 25 in the Gaza Strip and the Sinai. Members of the commission spent 10 days in the Mideast meeting with Arab leaders in Jordan, Syria, Egypt and Lebanon, including Yasser Arafat, the leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

#### **CAUTION URGED FOR 'UNDERSTANDING' WITH ROMANIA ON EMIGRATION**

NEW YORK, July 16 (JTA) -- Jacob Birnbaum, national director of the Center for Russian and East European Jewry, urged "great caution" on the issue of Jewish emigration from Rumania in light of that country's "poor record" since 1975. Birnbaum, who noted that the Center has been instrumental in obtaining the emigration of a substantial number of Rumanian Jews in recent years, was commenting on the recent reported "understanding" between some Jewish organizations and Rumanian diplomats which may resolve the problem of Jewish emigration.

This was an apparent reference to a statement issued last week in Washington by Jack Spitzer, president of B'nai B'rith International and representing the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, that the leaders of these organizations were giving an unqualified endorsement to the continuation by the United States of most-favored-nation status to Rumania "on the strength of understandings between the Conference of Presidents and the Rumanian government." Hearings on MFN are due to start in Washington Thursday.

According to a study by the Center, the rate of Jewish emigration from Rumania has plunged from 250-350 monthly in the early 1970s to 50 a month in 1979, while the number of Jews who sought to leave "remained heavy." As of June 30, only nine passports had been issued for Rumanian Jews for July. Despite Rumania's commitment to comply with the Jackson-Vanik Amendment and Bucharest's ratification of the Helsinki Agreement, "new emigration obstacles and harassments have multiplied since then," the Center said.

Birnbaum said that "without very solid evidence of good faith lasting over a period of at least six months, Congress would be in violation of its own laws in providing further extensions of most-favored-nation trade status at this time."

These assurances and evidence, Birnbaum stated, should include written assurances of: intention to comply with the Jackson-Vanik Amendment; recognition of a simple letter of intent to emigrate as being the first step to simplification of the emigration procedure; immediate steps to release long-separated families, at least 500 by September 1979, leading to a reversal in the 250-350 monthly emigration rate; and granting amnesty to several dozen former "scapegoat" Jewish prisoners from the 1960s, as promised last summer, then giving them the opportunity to emigrate.

#### **JUDAH RICHARDS DEAD AT 66**

NEW YORK, July 16 (JTA) -- Funeral services were held yesterday for Judah A. Richards, chairman of the Jewish Information Bureau, and a long-time activist in Jewish and Zionist affairs. He died Saturday at his home in Great Neck, L.I., at the age of 66. As chairman of the Bureau, a non-profit service agency which provided answers to inquiries on Judaism and Jewish affairs, he succeeded his late father, Bernard G. Richards, who founded the Bureau in 1932.

A life-long Zionist, Richards was a vice president of the American Jewish League for Israel and was frequently a keynote speaker for the United Jewish Appeal and State of Israel Bonds. An avid sailor and environmentalist, he was active in the Israel Maritime League and served as chairman of the Boating Pollution Control Committee. Richards worked as a public relations executive with Executive, Inc., and was instrumental in setting up their Teaching-by-Telephone systems that has helped thousands of home-bound students to participate in classroom learning. He was still a consultant to the firm at the time of his death.

#### **ALFRED WERNER DEAD AT 68**

NEW YORK, July 16 (JTA) -- Alfred Werner, an art critic, poet and author, who came to the United States as a refugee after being imprisoned in Dachau, died here Saturday at the age of 68. He was the author of biographies of many renowned artists such as Chagall, Modigliani, Picasso, Max Weber and others.

Arriving in the United States in 1940, Werner, who was born in Vienna, lived at first from support he received from programs aiding Jewish refugees. But before long he started to write articles for American publications, among them The New York Times, Commentary and Art Magazine. Over the years, he also wrote columns dealing with Jewish artists for the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. In addition to his writing, Werner established himself as a lecturer at universities and other institutions. He earned a J.D. degree in 1934 from the University of Vienna. Between 1949 and 1952 he studied art at New York University. In 1975, he was a visiting professor at Rutgers University.

#### **JNF PRESIDENT VOWS WORK WILL GO ON IN THE GALILEE**

NEW YORK, July 16 (JTA) -- An attack by local Arab villagers on a Jewish National Fund road-building crew in western Galilee last week was denounced by Rabbi William Berkowitz, president of the JNF of America as an "unlawful, violent and brutal negation of Israeli rights." He said that despite the attack the JNF is continuing work on the road. The incident occurred near the Arab village of Mailia where the JNF was building an access road to a new lookout post settlement called Mitapeh.

Berkowitz noted that by prior agreement the village elders had promised there would be no harassment of the workers. Berkowitz claimed that the attack was apparently instigated by outside political agitators. He said it demonstrated that "for the terrorist PLO and for many Palestinians, any JNF reclamation work -- indeed the very idea of a Jewish State -- is a provocation in itself and the location is irrelevant." He added, "If anything, this incident strengthens our resolve to raise the funds needed for immediate acceleration of JNF projects in Israel."

Berkowitz said the new settlement is one of 30 such lookout posts for protection against possible terrorist attack now being built throughout Galilee on Israeli-owned land.

#### **DAYAN: LET U.S. OPERATE SINAI BASES**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, July 16 (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan has suggested to the Cabinet that Israel suggest to Egypt that the U.S. Air Force operate the three air bases that Israel is to vacate in Sinai under the peace treaty. Dayan said the Egyptians might consider, as he does, that radical strategy changes in the area since the peace was signed, notably the

fall of the Shah in Iran, might justify the U.S. using the bases, with the Egyptian and Israeli air forces also using them. Ministers reacted with interest to Dayan's idea, though many felt it would not be accepted by the Egyptians. There was much bitterness, however, when it turned out that the idea was leaked from the Cabinet chamber hours after yesterday's weekly meeting ended. Cabinet ministers said they felt the leak might have killed the idea before it could even be tested.

Dayan attended his first Cabinet session yesterday after his operation three weeks ago for the removal of a tumor from his intestine. He looked well but was still hoarse from damage sustained to his vocal chords during the operation. He plans to make an official visit to Holland the last week in July.

#### **JEWISH LEADERS LAUD CARTER'S ENERGY PROGRAM; PLEDGE COOPERATION**

NEW YORK, July 16 (JTA) -- President Carter's energy program calling for an immediate sharp reduction of oil imports and the eventual elimination of American dependence on foreign oil was lauded by American Jewish organizations today. They pledged their cooperation.

In a telegram to the President, applauding his nationwide television address last night on energy policies and other issues, Theodore Mann, chairman of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC), said:

"We join with you in the faith that the American people will respond to the need for equitable sacrifice by all segments in the common effort to achieve the national goal of reducing our dependence on foreign oil. The Jewish community relations field, as represented by the NJCRAC, is committed to a policy, and has embarked on programs, making energy one of our major priorities. We can assure you of the support to these ends of the eleven national organizations and 107 local community agencies which have always worked for a free, just and strong America."

A similar statement was issued by Harris L. Kempner Jr., chairman of the American Jewish Committee's Energy Committee, who noted that the President's proposals were consistent with recommendations made last week by the A.J.C. Committee and 11 other major national Jewish organizations. These include: mandatory conservation measures; institution of oil import quotas; incentives for speedy development of synthetic fuels and solar power; and the removal of red tape that has hampered domestic energy development.

"For the sake not only of our economic health but also our political integrity, we must free ourselves from dependence upon foreign sources of energy," Kempner said. "The President's speeches have made it clear beyond doubt that this is his goal. . . . On behalf of the American Jewish Committee we pledge our fullest cooperation." Ivan J. Novick, president of the Zionist Organization of America, said, "President Carter has correctly singled out the energy problem as the 'immediate test' so that our nation can 'seize control again of our common destiny.' I believe the American people will now understand fully that our great nation has been victimized by the oil-producing Arab countries dominating OPEC, including some who claim to be America's friends. . . . We welcome his (Carter) call for a free America and we agree that our nation must regain its traditional precepts

of morality and confidence in its ability to meet all challenges."

#### **STEP TAKEN TO CLEAR BEDOUINS OFF NEGEV LANDS**

By David London

JERUSALEM, July 16 (JTA) -- A special bill that would expedite the government's seizure of Bedouin lands in the Negev to build two new U.S.-financed air bases was cleared today by a special Cabinet committee headed by Premier Menachem Begin and will be presented in the Knesset by Finance Minister Simcha Ehrlich early next week, officials said. The measure would empower the Israeli authorities to evict the Bedouins after a 90-day notice but gives them the right to appeal.

Unlike regular land seizure proceedings, the Bedouins will not be allowed to challenge the seizure orders before the courts in advance of their eviction. They will be granted the right of appeal, first to a special tribunal of top level civil servants and after that to the courts over the compensation in money or land they are offered.

Bedouin leaders complained bitterly today that they were not getting the same treatment as Jewish settlers who will have to evacuate the Rafah salient of Sinai when it is returned to Egypt.

Government officials, defending the bill, stressed that the land must be seized soon because work on the air fields must be completed within three years under terms of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty and normal land seizure proceedings can drag out for years. They said further that the Bedouins have no title to about 95 percent of the land, only possession rights that they will be offered compensation at rates in excess of the normal level for similar evictees; and that they will be able to appeal on the question of compensation.

#### **ARYEH CHEN DEAD AT 51**

JERUSALEM, July 16 (JTA) -- Aryeh Chen, recently appointed director of the Brit Ivrit Olamit, died in Jerusalem this week at the age of 51. Chen was born in Brazil and made aliya in 1952. In the mid-1960s he served as a teacher-emissary in Rio de Janeiro and in the 1970s in Holland. In Israel he was a teacher and headmaster and wrote plays on the side, some of which won notable success. He was appointed director of the Brit Ivrit Olamit only six months ago, but, according to officials of the World Zionist Organization under which Brit Ivrit Olamit functions, Chen already had made his mark as an innovator.

WASHINGTON (JTA) -- Some American businessmen have complained to the Carter Administration that they are losing a competitive edge in the Middle East because of the U.S. anti-Arab boycott laws and other legislation, but the State Department is not considering any recommendation to alter the laws. Reacting to a published report here of the complaints, the Department said that they are not of sufficient importance for it to consider law changes. The anti-boycott legislation was adopted to block discrimination by Arabs against Americans on grounds of race or religion.

WASHINGTON (JTA) -- A State Department spokesman said Monday that the U.S. will honor its commitment to have a military grouping in Sinai after July 24 when the current mandate expires for the United Nations Emergency Force. He noted that there is not the same sense of urgency since Egypt and Israel are no longer belligerents as they were when UNEF was formed in 1973.

**SPECIAL INTERVIEW****MFN TO THE USSR ON A TRIAL BASIS**

By David Landau

**JERUSALEM, July 16 (JTA) --** Howard Squadron, president of the American Jewish Congress, believes that the U.S. should agree to grant most-favored-nation trade status to the Soviet Union for a trial period of one year to see if the Soviets live up to their pledges on Jewish emigration. Squadron, who attended the 15th annual American-Israel Dialogue in Jerusalem, sponsored by the AJCongress, which ended last Friday, expressed his views on this and other major issues in an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

He stressed that the one-year MFN grant would not be extended automatically, but only after Washington reviewed the situation. In addition, he insisted that the trial period be undertaken only when and if the Soviets carry out their undertaking to Australian trade union leader Bob Hawke to release 12 Jewish activists currently imprisoned in the USSR.

The promise to Hawke, Squadron said, must be seen as a test of Moscow's good faith. Hawke was given the commitment last spring by a member of the Soviet Politburo. Such persons do not talk out of turn or unadvisedly, Squadron said. Therefore, failure to carry out the commitment would be a breach of pledge.

He said that Rep. Charles Vanik (D. Ohio) was "more receptive" to the one-year trial idea than Sen. Henry M. Jackson (D. Wash.), co-author of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment linking U.S.-Soviet trade with Soviet emigration practices. Jackson's position must be seen within the framework of his across-the-board suspicion of the Soviets and opposition to the SALT II Treaty, Squadron said. "It is not as simple for us (American Jewish leaders) as it is for Jackson," he observed. For the Jews the major consideration is to keep up the flow of their coreligionists coming out of the Soviet Union, he said.

**The Issue Of Dropouts**

On a related issue, that of "neshira" (dropouts), Squadron said his opinion was that HIAS and the Joint Distribution Committee should perhaps be asked to decide for themselves on their future policy towards Jewish emigrants of different categories.

He said the AJCongress as a body had not yet discussed Premier Menachem Begin's "compromise proposal" whereby the American Jewish leadership would persuade HIAS and the JDC to offer aid only to those would-be "nashrim" who have close relatives already in the U.S. Those without such relatives would be required to go to Israel with Jewish Agency aid or to proceed to a Western country on their own.

Squadron cautioned that "all the limitation ideas that have been suggested are going to have a rough passage" through American Jewish policy-making forums. His feeling was that there is unanimity within the U.S. organized Jewish leadership that "it would be better if they (the nashrim) went to Israel ... and it would be marvelous if the Russians would agree to let them fly to Israel directly. But the view is that if people want to go somewhere else they must be permitted to do so."

Phil Baum, a close aide to Squadron and a man intimately familiar with Soviet-Jewish affairs, said he had noted of late a discernible shift in sentiment among local Jewish Federations caused by the larger numbers of Soviet immigrants who

had been arriving. Squadron agreed that "there is more debate now" on the "neshira" issue than in the past. But both men felt that the "bottom line" at present within organized U.S. Jewry was still against restrictive limitations to be imposed at Vienna.

**West Bank Settlements Dispute**

On another controversial issue currently preoccupying leaders in Israel and the U.S., settlements on the West Bank, Squadron warned against American Jews "getting into a dispute of this kind." A debate within U.S. Jewry gives the Washington Administration the impression that the community has no position and therefore need not be taken into account in the whole process of the autonomy negotiation.

Therefore, he observed, the U.S. Jewish leadership should go "public" only on issues on which there is unanimity -- such as the recent rebuttal by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations of the Administration's charge that the West Bank settlements are "illegal."

At the same time, however, Squadron said the Jewish organizations had a duty to convey to the Israeli government the fact of the situation inside America, namely, that "public opinion regarding Israel is not good. ... Congress is beginning to respond unfavorably to the apparent appropriation of private lands." The Jewish groups could offer useful advice on how to present the Israel government's position in the most favorable way, Squadron said.

He maintained that Israel's bargaining position in the autonomy talks was good, because it was the only participating party, in the absence of Jordan and the Palestinians, with a direct interest in the land in question. It could therefore afford to adopt tactics that would secure for it a better public opinion response in the U.S., Squadron said. He stressed that he was not saying that U.S. public opinion should mold Israeli policy, but it should be one of the policy considerations.

**Jewish Political Influence In U.S.**

He contended that Jewish political influence continued to be strong and growing in the U.S. American Jews are "educated, affluent, intense, cohesive and articulate," Squadron observed, and, "perhaps most important, we will fight for Israel's security without regard to how that struggle might affect our own status as a minority in America." He cautioned, however, that "we cannot win every battle." He cited the Saudi arms deal as an example of a lost fight. "We win some and we lose some. But whatever the outcome we are not afraid to take on the Administration when it is Israel's security that is at stake," Squadron said.

**TWO-YEAR PRISON SENTENCE UPHELD**

**NEW YORK, July 16 (JTA) --** A high court in the Soviet Union has upheld the two-year jail sentence of Leningrad refusenik Boris Kalenderov, the Greater New York Conference on Soviet Jewry reported. Kalenderov, a 22-year-old student, has been in prison since last May on charges of draft evasion. He had been faced with the prospect of spending two to three years in the army followed by an additional waiting period of at least five years before obtaining a visa. Kalenderov and his parents first applied to emigrate to Israel in 1973.

**COPENHAGEN (JTA) --** Left-wing organizations in Denmark, together with Palestinians, are arranging a "Palestinian Week" in October where there will be exhibitions, films and lectures.