

JTA daily news bulletin

Copyright © 1979 Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Inc. All rights reserved.

Published by Jewish Telegraphic Agency / 165 West 46th Street / New York, New York 10036

Vol. XLVII - 62nd Year

Monday, December 10, 1979

No. 233

CARTER ADMINISTRATION UNVEILING

MASSIVE ARMS AID FOR ARABS

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- The Carter Administration is unveiling a massive arms program for three of Israel's Arab neighbors that includes about \$3.5 billion in credits for Egypt, up to 200 tanks of the M-60 class for Jordan, and advanced munitions for Saudi Arabia, informed sources reported.

Arising from this preparation in enhancing U.S. military relations with the three Arab countries is an as yet unanswered question: What plans does the Administration have for Israel in terms of additional credits, for economic and military support and the balance of power theory in the Near East?

Israel indicated early last fall that it needed about \$3.4 billion in overall U.S. assistance to help meet increased costs resulting from inflation and the growth of power on its borders. This assessment was ridiculed then in high quarters as unrealistic but the programming for Israel's neighbors now indicates that the Israeli figure has practicality.

For the current fiscal year, Israel is scheduled to receive \$1.8 billion in economic and military aid. The military package for Egypt, which requires Congressional approval, was informally presented to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at a closed meeting Dec. 5 by Harold H. Saunders, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs. Saunders reportedly testified that the Iranian situation made it more important than ever to support Egyptian President Sadat's government and weld a long-term security relationship with Egypt.

Concern And Skepticism

His testimony was received with "concern and skepticism" by all of the committee's eight or nine members present, according to the informed sources. Senators present included Committee chairman Frank Church (D. Idaho); Jacob Javits (R. N.Y.), the ranking minority member; Paul Sarbanes (D. Md.); and Joseph Biden (D. Del.), who have expressed themselves most strongly on the central theme that delivering such quantities of new weapons to Egypt would risk a duplication of the U.S. error in calculating the Shah of Iran would be a powerful and unshakable ally by supplying his government with a huge arsenal.

Last year, the Carter Administration provided Egypt with 50 F-15E warplanes. This was part of the \$2.6 billion warplane package that included Israel and Saudi Arabia. Early this year, the Carter Administration allocated \$1.5 billion in weaponry as part of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. Israel received \$3 billion in that program in connection with the treaty, all of it for shifting its bases from the Sinai to the Negev.

Last month, the Administration informed Congress it was selling Saudi Arabia \$200 million in advanced munitions for delivery in 1980. These include lasers and cluster bombs and Sidewinder and Maverick missiles. Congress still has time to

vote on this program but indications are it will not try to do so.

Although Jordan has rejected the Camp David accords and propagandizes against entering the Egyptian-Israeli-American negotiations on autonomy for the West Bank and Gaza, King Hussein's government is earmarked to receive tanks that Saudi Arabia will buy for it. Jordan has already contracted to buy Centurion tanks from Britain. Analysts here said the question emerging from these purchases is why Jordan is engaged in this buildup.

Analysts here noted that Egypt has a hostile force on its western border in Libya while Hussein's government may be facing trouble from Syria or Iraq or from among the Palestinian Arabs within its own border. It was noted that when the State Department issued its "travel advisory" two weeks ago to Americans not to go to a dozen Moslem countries, most of them Arab, because of the Iranian crisis, it did not include Jordan, Saudi Arabia or Egypt.

How the program will shape up may depend to a large extent on the results of a visit David McGufford, Assistant Secretary of Defense for International Security Affairs, is to make in two weeks to these three countries and Israel.

Knesset Unit To Discuss New Arms Deal

(In Jerusalem, it was reported today that Premier Menachem Begin is scheduled to meet this week with the Knesset Security and Foreign Affairs Committee to discuss the implications of the reported new arms deal. The meeting is scheduled to take place at the request of committee chairman Moshe Arens. By this afternoon there was no official Israeli reaction to the reports from Washington. Both political circles here and the Defense Ministry were waiting for official clarifications from Washington. Unofficially, political sources were quoted to express surprise at the scope of the reported arms deal, although, they said, the actual arms deals in the making were known to Israel for some time.)

SCHINDLER URGES CHANGE IN JEWISH LAW THAT A CHILD'S RELIGION IS DETERMINED ONLY BY THE RELIGION OF THE MOTHER

TORONTO, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- A revolutionary change in Jewish Law that would regard the child of a mixed marriage as Jewish, if either parent was Jewish, was proposed by Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), at the UAHC's 55th General Assembly meeting here.

Some 4000 delegates, representing nearly 750 Reform synagogues in the United States and Canada, heard Schindler call on the Reform movement to change the 2000-year-old Jewish tradition that a child's religion is determined by the religion of the mother. He urged the validation of Jewish lineage through the paternal as well as the maternal line.

Schindler's proposal was rejected today by both Chief Rabbis of Israel but hailed by a leading American Conservative rabbi. Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren told reporters in Jerusalem that Schindler's proposal was aimed at "the wind-

pipe of Judaism." Its meaning was the destruction of Judaism. Sephardic Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef said he was not surprised to hear such a proposal coming from the Reform movement. He cited the Talmud as saying: "The son born to a gentile, is likewise a gentile."

Hailed As A Courageous Idea

Rabbi Harold Schulweis, of Encino, Calif., secretary of the Rabbinical Assembly, hailed Schindler's proposal as "a courageous idea that goes to the heart of the struggle for Jewish survival." Schulweis, who addressed the convention delegates on another subject, told reporters who asked him for his comment on Schindler's proposal that it "deserves the most serious study and consideration." He said the suggested change was "based on the reality principle — the growing intermarriage rate among young Jewish people."

For this reason, Schulweis said, "I believe the Conservative movement is morally and judicially bound to respond to the deep concerns of the Jewish laity on this matter as expressed by a serious and responsible Jewish statesman." Regarding the child of a mixed marriage as Jewish if either parent is Jewish also aims at overcoming "what amounts to a sexist distinction," Schulweis said, adding that "limiting the child to the religion of the mother is in fact discriminatory against the father."

"A child who is raised by a Jewish father who takes his or her father's name, who adopts the Jewish lifestyle and Jewish identity of the father — this child has a right to be considered Jewish and in such a case the religion of the mother is no longer relevant," Schulweis said.

Cites Intermarriage As A Major Factor

In his presidential address last Friday night, Schindler declared: "the status of Jew should be conferred on any child, either of whose parents is Jewish, provided they both agree to raise their child Jewishly and do so." He called on the congregations, rabbinical and seminary bodies of Reform Judaism, in cooperation with the Conservative movement, to "initiate a decision-making process" that would lead to validation of Jewish lineage through the paternal as well as the maternal line.

A major factor cited by Schindler in urging the historic change is that the Jewish intermarriage rate is currently approaching 40 percent with the "preponderant majority" of such marriages involving Jewish men and non-Jewish women.

"The right of these men to determine the religious character of their children must be secured," he said. "Here is still another way to make certain that our grandchildren will be Jews, that they will remain a part of our community and share the destiny of this people Israel." He added: "I want the child's rearing and ultimately his or her self-definition to be on a par with genealogical factors in determining Jewishness. And I want the genealogical factors to be paternal as well as maternal."

Schindler conceded that a "tradition standing two millennia should not be altered lightly," but he said that the circumstances which gave rise to that "time honored usage" no longer applies. The tradition of Jewish lineage on the maternal side only, he said, reflected a polygamous society in which the children of the various

wives lived with their mothers.

"We no longer live in such a society, in part at least because in the 11th Century, Rabbi Gershom issued an edict that changed the Hatacha and outlawed polygamy," Schindler said. The matrilineal tradition was reinforced by "brutal persecution" during the Middle Ages," Schindler said, when a "compassionate law" permitted children of women who had been raped to be considered as Jewish.

Confronted With A Dreadful Anomaly

In the absence of such persecution today, Schindler said, "adherence to the matrilineal principle confronts us with a dreadful anomaly: the offspring of a mixed marriage, whether reared as a Jew or not, is automatically a Jew so long as the mother is Jewish. But if the mother is not Jewish, the child must ultimately undergo formal conversion even if he or she is raised as a Jew and lives in an intensely Jewish home," he said. "This is nonsensical, absurd."

Schindler said he also saw the issue as part of the "struggle for the equality of the sexes," a major precept of Reform Judaism. In this instance, he said, "we are trying to protect the rights of men." Citing rabbinic sources, he said that Jewish tradition provided "ample justification for a paternal as well as a maternal yardstick." He explained that "tradition invokes the God of our fathers in prayer. It rules that we be summoned to the Torah by our father's name. It reminds us that we live by Zeckut Avot (the merits of our fathers)." Schindler also observed that in ancient Jewish Law, only the paternal line is held relevant in matters of inheritance and some aspects of genealogy.

For example, he said, whether one is a Kohen (priest) or a Levite depends on the father's priestly claim and not on the mother's. "Thus does tradition offer a way to heal itself," he said. In urging that the matter be studied by the Reform movement Central Conference of American Rabbis and by the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, as well as by the Conservative movement, Schindler acknowledged that "we must always be restrained by a reverence for the sensitivity of Klal Yisroel, the Jewish people."

BEGIN ASSURE UJA CONFERENCE

THAT PROJECT RENEWAL WILL PROCEED

NEW YORK, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- A message from Premier Menachem Begin of Israel declaring that "Project Renewal will proceed actively and energetically in the context of the government's new economy measures" highlighted the United Jewish Appeal's national conference here this weekend.

The message was delivered at a leadership dinner at which UJA national chairman Irwin Field reported that the 1980 regular campaign total to date of \$115 million represented "the largest amount of money raised, in the most communities, at the earliest date since the 1974 campaign, which began immediately following the Yom Kippur War." The 1980 drive seeks a regular campaign increase of some \$100 million, Field said, with maximum additional pledges for Project Renewal; the social rehabilitation program designed to rejuvenate the lives of 300,000 immigrants living in Israel's distressed urban areas.

Buoyed by these developments, conference delegates listened with concern the next morning as Jewish Agency treasurer Arkiva Lewinsky described a serious shortage in cash receipts which,

combined with the eroding effect of near-runaway inflation, is threatening drastic cutbacks in many of the Agency's human support programs.

Settlement plans in the Galilee and Negev will be curtailed, and the youth aliyah program will accept 2,000 fewer underprivileged children this year unless there is a significant quickening of cash flow, Lewinsky indicated. The emergency has developed, he noted, at a time when the high cost of carrying out Israel's peace treaty obligations was increasing the Jewish Agency's share of responsibility for immigrant absorption and social progress.

Awards And Tributes

The first UJA Humanitarian Award was presented to Henry Ford II at the leadership dinner by Max Fisher, chairman of the Jewish Agency Board of Governors and past UJA national chairman.

At a "Convocation of Solidarity" at Lincoln Center's Avery Fisher Hall, UJA president Frank Lautenberg presented the 1979 UJA David Ben-Gurion Award for excellence and valor to Argentinian Jewish editor Jacobo Timerman, and offered a warm tribute to Boris Penson, the Soviet Jewish artist who was among the Prisoners of Zion chosen in absentia for last year's Ben-Gurion Award. The Organization for Rehabilitation through Training (ORT) was honored on the occasion of entering its 100th year.

In presenting the Humanitarian Award, Fisher cited Ford's refusal to succumb to the Arab boycott of Israel despite the business losses involved, as well as the auto magnate's efforts to alleviate unemployment and urban crisis in Detroit. In his response, Ford focused on the nature of philanthropic responsibility.

"As people concerned with others," he told the UJA campaign leaders, "part of your responsibility will be keeping alive the spirit of generosity, the spirit of caring. Perhaps all of us can draw strength from one of the heroines of World War II... Anne Frank died believing in the goodness of people. What you are doing in UJA brings us closer to the world Anne Frank deserved to have."

Timerman, who has resumed his career as a journalist in Israel, told an audience of more than 1000 at the Avery Fisher Hall event that he found strength to survive severe torture during his imprisonment through his Jewishness.

Penson, denied painting materials during his nine years in Soviet prison camps, has achieved international recognition for his etchings and watercolors since reaching Israel. In appreciation of American Jewry's support of his struggle for freedom, he presented the UJA with a book of his poignant series of etchings entitled "Prison Views". He called on American Jews to continue their efforts "to free Russian Jewry from spiritual slavery."

The audience at the "Convocation of Solidarity" also heard an impassioned plea by Falasha liberation leader Baruch Tegegne, asking for immediate action on behalf of the Jewish community in Ethiopia. "Jewish people are dying now in Ethiopia," he declared. "They cannot wait years until help will come one day. We have reliable information that the Ethiopian government is now ready to let our people go to Israel. Won't you save 28,000 Jews from sure death? The time is now."

UIA LEADER SAYS PROJECT RENEWAL WILL CHANGE FACE OF ISRAEL WHEN COMPLETED

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- Irving Kessler, executive vice chairman of the United Israel Appeal (UIA), told the annual meeting of the UIA's Board of Trustees last Friday that Project Renewal, the \$1.2 billion world Jewry project to rehabilitate Israel's slum neighborhoods by building decent housing for more than 300,000 Jews living in substandard conditions, will change the face of Israel "and our people" when successfully completed.

Delivering a paper on the UIA's role in Project Renewal, Kessler said the Project's funds are transferred by the UIA to the Jewish Agency to implement programs called for under Project Renewal.

"We are now consulting with the finest minds in the world from academia, fields of construction, business and such institutions as the World Bank to develop first a monitoring and then an evaluating system which will have a maximum continuing impact on our activities," concerning Project Renewal, Kessler said. He added: "With cooperation and good will, we shall fulfill our obligations both to recipient and the donor so that they become confident partners in building a better Jewish State. We will proceed through careful planning, and constant communication; by making corrections as we go along, we shall find the most productive means of completing our task."

The UIA's Board of Trustees re-elected Jerold Hoffberger to his second term as UIA chairman. Melvin Dubinsky and Max Fisher were re-elected honorary chairmen.

ARABS DENY ELON MOREH LAND SALES

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- Some 20 Arab landowners from the environs of Elon Moreh swore solemnly at a meeting with their mukhtar last Friday that they had not sold their lands to Jews. The ceremony followed Israeli press and radio reports to the effect that several dozen dunams of land had in fact been sold secretly, and that Jews — with the active involvement of Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon and the State Lands Authority which is under his jurisdiction — hoped to buy up a total of 20 dunams (50 acres). That size of tract would be sufficient, according to Jewish sources, to sustain a settlement at Elon Moreh.

In light of the swearing ceremony, East Jerusalem newspapers yesterday published firm denials of the land sales reports. But informed Jewish sources insisted, nevertheless, that the reports were true. They said the sales had not been recorded in the Land Registry as yet for fear of the vendors being murdered. (The sales would be valid even without registration.) Haaretz reported today that the Treasury had earmarked IL 10 million to finance these purchases.

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- All municipal services in Tel Aviv came to a halt Sunday as 10,000 municipal workers staged a 24-hour warning strike for not receiving their November salaries. Garbage was piling up fast in the city's streets. City hospitals and other emergency services operated on a weekend and holiday basis. Mayor Shlomo Lahat and Interior Minister Yosef Burg accused each other for the financial difficulties of Tel Aviv.

ADL REPORT SHOWS INCREASE OF ASSAULTS AGAINST JEWISH INSTITUTIONS IN 1979

NEW YORK, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- Assaults against Jewish institutions, cemeteries, houses of worship and private property have more than doubled this year compared to 1978, according to a national audit conducted annually by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

The findings, made public last Friday at the ADL executive committee meeting here, revealed 129 reported incidents in 1979, against 49 in 1978. The incidents include desecrations, swastika daubings, anti-Jewish graffiti, arson attempts and firebombings. Of the 129, 51 were attacks upon homes and stores owned by Jews, the ADL said.

According to Nathan Perlmutter, ADL's director, the 1979 figure is the second highest since the worldwide swastika epidemic which began in Cologne, Germany, at the end of 1959 and triggered 810 anti-Jewish incidents in this country during 1960 and 170 incidents in 1961. During the rest of the 1960's and through 1977, the average anti-Jewish episodes per year was about 45.

The ADL audit is based on reports gathered by the ADL's fact-finding and research departments through its 27 regional offices throughout the country. Perlmutter pointed out that since some incidents go unreported, the total is higher than the audit shows.

Breakdown Of Incidents By States

The report revealed that the largest number of 1979 incidents, 38, occurred in New Jersey. New York State was next with a total of 26; California had 15; Massachusetts 14; Arizona, 11; Florida, seven; Michigan and Nebraska, four each; Kansas, three; Indiana and Rhode Island, two each; Connecticut, North Carolina and Oklahoma, one each.

Perlmutter noted that the increased manifestations of anti-Semitism corresponded with the U.S. Justice Department's report of a 450 percent increase in racially-motivated vandalism over a six-month period this year as measured against all of 1978. The ADL made public last month a comprehensive report on the Ku Klux Klan which revealed an increase in membership activities and violence.

Perlmutter said that the acts of hostility directed against Jews and Blacks are symptoms of a general social malaise, "exacerbated and exploited by bigots seeking to scapegoat history's classic scapegoats." He also attributed the increase in these forms of crime to "the sense its perpetrators have of softness in our criminal justice system." He pointed out: "Sad experience has taught Jews that in troubled periods like today's, the discontented and frustrated are prey for the hardcore bigots."

TEMPORARY INJUNCTION FILED AGAINST COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA TO HALT PRODUCTION OF 'PLAYING FOR TIME'

By Rachel Je Sidel Wolk

PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- Jack Litz, a Philadelphia attorney who is national action chairman of the Jewish War Veterans of the United States, filed a complaint here last Friday for a temporary injunction against the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to stop production of the television film "Playing for Time," starring

Vanessa Redgrave as Auschwitz survivor Fania Felenon. The British actress has become controversial because of her outspoken support for the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The film is based on the life experiences of Felenon, a musician who was forced to play in the Auschwitz orchestra which provided background music while prisoners were being marched to the gas chambers.

In a telephone interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Litz said that on Oct. 23 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania entered into an agreement with Syzygy Productions, Ltd. of New York, an independent company that is filming the movie for CBS. The agreement gave Syzygy permission to film at Ford Indian Town Gap, a military base owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

Litz said the basis for the complaint, that was filed on behalf of the JWV of the U.S. and Pennsylvania Department of the JWV, is that the Commonwealth did not comply properly with the Administrative Code that requires specific signatures on such an agreement. The signatures of the Governor and of the General Services Administration are missing, he said.

Although the Commonwealth has received many letters of protest and has acknowledged that its decision was controversial, the agreement was signed. The agreement includes the phrase: "Whereas the parties hereto recognizing that this film project may engender some controversy, are willing to carry out the terms and conditions of this agreement notwithstanding such controversy."

Litz said that the agreement allowed public land to be used by a for-profit agency with no compensation to the Commonwealth. Production of the film has been underway for the last three weeks and Redgrave has been on location.

JNF ANNOUNCES \$8.5 MILLION GOAL

NEW YORK, Dec. 9 (JTA) -- The Jewish National Fund of America announced the largest fundraising goal in its history this week -- \$8,500,000 for its 1980 campaign year -- to meet the "unprecedented need for land reclamation and development in Israel arising out of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty." Rabbi William Berkowitz, JNF president, made the announcement following his election for a second two-year term at a meeting of JNF officers. Berkowitz, who is also the spiritual leader of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun, explained the JNF had been encouraged to set the record-breaking goal in view of its experience during the past years, which he reported had been "among the most successful fundraising years" in the 78-year history of the JNF.

"The mounting turmoil in the Middle East and the unrest among Arab nations places an even greater urgency on the need for a stable and secure State of Israel. The peace process between Israel and Egypt, and the continuing friendship of Egypt and the moderates of the Arab nations, is predicated on the strength and viability of the Jewish state," he said. "To help secure the peace, the JNF has launched the most extensive work schedule it has ever undertaken, to create new opportunities for living and working in the Jewish state. By cultivating and developing large segments of land both in the Negev and in the Galilee -- for agricultural use, for population redistribution, and for economic development -- the JNF is making vital and direct contributions in the building of a stronger and more secure Israel."