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EGYPT CONSIDERING A SMALL STAFF FOR ITS EMBASSY IN TEL AVIV

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- Egypt is thinking in terms of a staff of five diplomats for its embassy in Tel Aviv, considerably less than Israel would like to send to Cairo. Informed sources who disclosed this today said Israel need not hold inflexibly to the principle of reciprocity. But, on the other hand, there must be some parallelism in the size of the two legations, due to open Jan. 26, 1980. The exchange of ambassadors is scheduled for Feb. 26.

Israel, apparently, hoped for larger embassies in the order of 12-15 diplomats in each. A five-diplomat Egyptian embassy in Tel Aviv would be a medium-size legation in Israeli terms, something on the level of the Japanese. It would be in keeping with a trend detected by Israelis visiting Cairo this week -- of trying to keep the opening of normal relations low-key rather than jubilantly ceremonial.

Discussions between Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Butros Ghali and two top Israeli officials, Elisha Ben-Elissar and Yosef Ciechanover, have resulted in the decision to set up "technical teams" which will prepare, during the weeks ahead, such practical matters as the opening of direct telephone and telex lines on Jan. 26, as provided by the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty.

Still uncertain is how the open borders principle will operate. The two sides will have to decide whether tourists will be able to cross Sinai in their own cars or whether they will have to switch to buses operated by each host country.

Similarly, there is apparently no decision yet on the opening of a direct air link. The treaty calls for open air links too after Jan. 26, but, in another provision, it calls for negotiations to begin within six months of that date for a civil aviation agreement.

Pleased By Reception In Cairo

Despite these uncertainties, Ben-Elissar, who is Israel's unofficial Ambassador designate to Egypt, returned from Cairo apparently well pleased. He was received by Egyptian officials as the official Ambassador designate and further developed his already warm relations with some of President Anwar Sadat's closest aides into what he called "real friendship."

Ben-Elissar took his wife, Nitza, with him for her first view of the city that will be her home in the years ahead. The couple met socially with some of the top echelon of Cairo society at private dinner parties given in their honor.

Ben-Elissar, with other aides of Premier Menachem Begin, flew to Aswan to check arrangements for the three-day Begin-Sadat summit due to be held there Jan. 7-10. He said he found everything more than satisfactory.

Issues At January Summit

It will be at that summit, it seems, that key issues presently unresolved in the ongoing autonomy talks may be advanced. The "plenary" round of the talks held at the Mena House Hotel in Cairo yesterday does not seem to have produced

any major leap forward. The problematic issue of Jerusalem -- the voting rights of Arab Jerusalemites in the autonomy elections -- is still a major obstacle to concluding arrangements for the elections. And on the complex of issues labeled "powers and responsibilities" of the projected "self-governing authority (Administrative Council)," the gaps seemed as wide as ever.

The plenary instructed the "working groups" to prepare a "model" of an autonomy scheme, but many observers here feel this is a way of virtually marking time -- or inching forward without coming to grips -- pending the top-level summit next month where the two national leaders will have to grapple with the really difficult problems.

ROME COURT WILL ALLOW EX-NAZI TO APPEAL HIS LIFE SENTENCE

By Lisa Palmieri-Billig

ROME, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- The Supreme Military Court of Rome has decided to allow former SS Commander Walter Reder, the last surviving Nazi war criminal in an Italian prison, to appeal his life sentence, despite expressions of outrage and protests from the families of his victims and others. Reder was responsible for ordering the deaths of more than 3,000 civilians in the towns of Marzabotto, Lucco and Lunigiana in September 1944.

Last March, the military court in La Spezia rejected Reder's appeal. But this week the Rome tribunal nullified that decision on grounds that the lower court "did not take into sufficient account Reder's repentance for his deeds." It returned the appeal to the La Spezia court which will have to decide whether there are grounds for his release. Reder was convicted in Bologna in 1951. Over the years, his lawyers have filed repeated appeals for a commutation of sentence. All of them failed, due mainly to the refusal of the citizens of Marzabotto to see Reder go free.

The townspeople are standing firm against his latest bid. "The gravity of the crimes committed by Reder demands the fullest severity of justice," they maintain. The release of the ex-Nazi, they say, would disgrace the memory of the martyrs and the values of the Italian resistance movement.

Reder is incarcerated in the Gaeta Military Prison which housed Herber Kappler, another Nazi war criminal responsible for the Ardeatine Caves massacre and the deportation of over 1,000 Jews from Rome. Kappler died last year after escaping from a prison hospital.

CABINET MAY SHUT DOWN EL AL

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- The Cabinet is seriously considering closing down El Al, Israel's national air line, which lost \$50 million this year and is expected to lose double that amount next year. The company's management, headed since last month by millionaire industrialist Avraham Shavit, attributes the huge deficits to "inflated" wages paid to air crews. The El Al Board of Directors will meet this Saturday night to discuss the situation after efforts to convince employees to accept a 50 percent wage cut proved fruitless.

El Al flight crews receive part of their salaries in foreign currency and the company pays part of their income tax. Pilots and flight engineers are

paid between IL 40,000 (\$1180) and IL 200,000 (\$6000) a month after taxes. This amounts, in some cases where the higher wage prevails, to a gross income of about IL 420,000 or \$12,350 a month. The management wants to end these special privileges and reduce salaries by half in order for the air carrier to survive.

Shavit, who is president of the Israel Manufacturers Association, expressed doubt that the employees are aware of the gravity of the situation. "It seems they have not yet grasped it," he said. "I will appeal to them to meet our demands. If that doesn't help, there will be no alternative but to close down the company." El Al is a subsidized government-owned carrier and the Cabinet is empowered to order it shut down.

Police have begun preparing for disorders should this come about. One El Al employe expressed fear of riots if thousands of workers suddenly find themselves jobless. "A great deal of El Al's financial difficulties have been attributed to labor strife, particularly wildcat strikes, work stoppages and slowdowns by ground maintenance personnel which have been a regular occurrence in recent years causing many flights to be cancelled with attendant losses of revenue.

Closure of the air line which links Israel with most major cities in North America, Europe and Africa, would cost the government between \$200-\$250 million, mainly in compensation to employes, El Al sources said.

UNIFIL MANDATE EXTENDED

UNITED NATIONS, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- The Security Council last night extended the mandate of the UN Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) for another six months. The vote was 12-0 with two abstentions, the Soviet Union and Czechoslovakia. China did not participate in the voting. The new UNIFIL mandate will expire in June 1980. UNIFIL is supervising the peace in southern Lebanon. The 6000-troop force was established March 1978 by the Security Council to check on the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon and to help restore the control of the Lebanese government over the area.

Meanwhile, it was announced here yesterday that Lt. Gen. Ensio Siilasvuo, head of the UN peacekeeping force in the Mideast, will step down at the end of this year after 12 years of service with the UN. Secretary General Kurt Waldheim said that the post held by Siilasvuo will be discontinued.

KLUTZNIK CONFIRMED BY SENATE UNIT

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- Philip Klutznick was unanimously confirmed today by the Senate Commerce Committee to be Secretary of Commerce in President Carter's Cabinet. The full Senate is expected to act on the nomination before it adjourns for the year-end recess. Klutznick appeared before the committee yesterday where he was praised by both Senators from Illinois, Democrat Adlai Stevenson, who introduced Klutznick, and Republican Charles Percy. Klutznick, who has taken a leave of absence from his post of president of the World Jewish Congress, has long been prominent in commerce, finance and real estate development in Chicago.

ISRAELIS HIT BY SHARP PRICE HIKES

By David Landau and Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- Israelis were hit this week with sharp hikes in the price

of gasoline, home heating oil and industrial fuel and higher rates for electricity and water are imminent. The fuel prices went up by an average of 30 percent, effective at midnight Tuesday. The increases were ordered by Finance Minister Yigal Hurwitz's "economic cabinet" which met Tuesday evening.

Israeli motorists are now paying IL 113 for a gallon of gasoline, a 26 percent increase. More than a third of the price is tax. Heating oil went up by 30 percent and industrial fuel by 35 percent.

At the same time, the Knesset's Finance Committee agreed on a 32 percent increase in the price of electricity for both private and commercial consumers. Water rates are expected to jump by 16.8 percent to cover higher pumping costs. These increases will be followed inevitably by an increase in bus and taxi fares, according to economic experts.

Energy Minister Yitzhak Modai went on the radio at midnight Tuesday to announce the bad news on fuel and to justify the Cabinet's action. He said the higher prices were required to cover the increased prices for crude oil announced by some of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) members in advance of the cartel's price-setting meeting this week in Caracas. He said the increases were also necessitated by the decline of the Pound to the dollar since the last fuel price rises two months ago.

Modai offered some consolation. He told the harried consumers that in some European countries which he did not name, motorists pay even more for gasoline. Economists said today that the latest increases will raise the cost-of-living index by some five percent at a time when inflation is running at an annual rate of about 150 percent.

Electric Workers Shocked

Meanwhile, a major labor relations problem arose today when the National Electric Corp. board of directors announced a decision to limit the free supply of electricity to its 7000 employes. Up to now, electric company employes paid no electric bills no matter how much electricity they used in their homes.

That privilege amounted to hundreds of pounds per month per household. Now, however, their free consumption will be limited to 400 kilowatts per hour which is still double the average private consumption. The employes will be billed on a sliding scale for the power they consume in excess of that amount.

The electric workers reacted angrily. They denounced "unilateral decisions" affecting their wages. A spokesman for the workers said they were ready to negotiate and "do our bit to help the national economy." But they will not tolerate "a one-sided violation of the work agreement."

CANADIAN WJC ASSAILS GOLDMANN

By Ben Kayfetz

TORONTO, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- The National Executive Committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress has assailed Dr. Nahum Goldmann, honorary president of the World Jewish Congress, for two articles by him in the German publication, Die Zeit, and expressed great concern "with a number of statements he made, lending aid and comfort to those who take a negative view of Jews and play down the horrors of the Holocaust." The blast against Goldmann was contained in a resolution adopted by the Congress' committee at its meeting in Montreal last Sunday.

The resolution stated: "Especially do we object to Dr. Goldmann's pronouncement that the Holocaust is an example of something good coming out of something evil, the good being the creation of the State.

of Israel. We reject this proposition and in addition we believe that to raise it before a German audience will only strengthen those who continue to proclaim that Hitler, after all, was a force to be feared.

The resolution, which was addressed to Edgar Bronfman in New York, chairman of the North American section of the WJC Congress, requesting that he make known the feelings of the Canadian Jewish Congress to the WJC Congress Executive and to Goldmann, continued:

"For us, regardless of what followed historically, the Holocaust is and remains an unmitigated evil unequalled in human events. Other statements of Dr. Goldmann are equally objectionable, such as his invidious allusion to differences between East and West European Jews regarding their condemnation of the Holocaust.

"While we appreciate that Dr. Goldmann is no longer president of the WJC Congress, we register our dismay with you, requesting you convey our strong disapproval to Dr. Goldmann."

(A spokesman for the WJC Congress in New York said today that Bronfman had not yet received the resolution. Goldmann himself could not be immediately reached for comment.)

SPECIAL TO THE JTA JTS FACULTY SENATE VOTES 25-19 TO TABLE ACTION ON ORDINATION OF WOMEN Chancellor Says Issue Is Dead For Time Being By Ben Gallo

NEW YORK, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- After nearly three and a half hours of debate, the 44 members of the Faculty Senate of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America (JTS) voted today 25-19 to table a report recommending the admission of women to the Seminary for ordination as Conservative rabbis. Chancellor Gerson Cohen, who had named and headed a special commission to examine the issue, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the vote was "a defeat of the motion to accept women as candidates for ordination at the Jewish Theological Seminary."

Asked whether there was any possibility of the issue being revived, he replied, "I do not foresee the matter being revived in the context of the Seminary faculty," though he did expect it to continue to be a topic of debate in the Conservative movement. He said that the only further action he planned at the present time was to present a comprehensive report on the issue to the JTA student body next month.

The vote, which had been scheduled originally for February, came after a day-long meeting on Tuesday by 175 members of the Rabbinical Assembly (RA), the association of Conservative rabbis, who called themselves the Conference on Halachic Process.

After hearing position papers by five senior members of the JTS faculty, the group at the Tuesday meeting approved a resolution that "we, more than 200 members of the RA assembled at the conference on Halachic Process, express our opposition to the ordination of women by the Jewish Theological Seminary at this time. We call on the Seminary to assure our continuation as a movement committee to halacha and halachic process."

On Nov. 6, the 16 faculty members considered to be halachists sent a letter to Cohen informing him that they believed that the JTS Senate, the academic policy-making body of the Seminary, "as presently constituted," is "not the proper forum for deciding fundamental Seminary policy." The signers also declared: "We will not

continue to participate in debating or voting on the question of the ordination of women unless a proper body is constituted to deal with this question."

Sequence Of Events

The sequence of events that ended today in a rebuff to the substantial opinion in the movement favoring ordination of women began when delegates to the 1977 convention of the RA approved a resolution to admit women to the JTS as rabbinical candidates but withdrew it when Cohen promised to name a commission, comprised of 14 members representing the entire spectrum of Conservative opinion, with himself as chairman, to study the issue and make recommendations.

Cohen promised the 1977 convention delegates that he would commit himself to bringing the commission findings to the JTS Senate to act on the commission's finding early in 1979. But last April, Cohen said he had agreed to a request by JTS faculty members to defer until early in 1980 action on the commission report, which favored ordination of women.

Last January, the commission, in its final report, submitted a recommendation to the 1979 RA convention, declaring it found nothing in Jewish law barring women from the rabbinate and recommending that "qualified women be ordained as rabbis." Cohen was forced to schedule a vote this month instead of in January by the mounting pressure from the JTS faculty members whose opposition to ordination was expressed both in the meeting Tuesday and in the letter of Nov. 6.

LINOWITZ CONFIRMED BY SENATE

WASHINGTON, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- Sol Linowitz was confirmed by the Senate today as President Carter's special representative to the Israeli-Egyptian negotiations with the rank of Ambassador. The vote was 80-13. All the negative votes were cast by Republicans opposed to Linowitz's role in negotiating the Panama Canal treaties. Linowitz, who recently returned from Jerusalem and Cairo where he had talks with Egyptian and Israeli leaders, was selected by Carter to replace Robert Strauss, who is heading the President's re-election campaign.

JOINT ISRAELI-EGYPTIAN SCIENCE PROJECTS IN PLANNING STAGE

BEERSHEBA, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- Yosef Tekoah, president of Ben Gurion University of the Negev, told a press conference here that joint Israeli-Egyptian research and development projects are already being discussed and planned, but the pace of their implementation will depend upon the development of the Israeli-Egyptian normalization process.

Tekoah, accompanied by BGU Rector and solar energy expert Prof. David Wolf, and Yoram Horowitz, Tekoah's assistant, recently returned to Israel after a five-day semi-official visit to Cairo, Luxor and Aswan.

During their trip, they met with Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Butros Ghali and scores of professors, scientists and university administrators. "Everyone with whom I spoke, including government officials, research institute scientists and university professors, expressed a great desire for cooperative projects with Israeli universities, especially in the area of desert studies," Tekoah said.

He disclosed that a delegation of Egyptian scientists will soon be coming to Israel to meet with their counterparts here and announced that a free exchange of non-military scientific publications will be implemented.

EVRON SAYS PLO IS IN DECLINE DUE TO THE HOSTAGE SITUATION IN TEHRAN

NEW YORK, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- Israel Ambassador Ephraim Evron said here that the Palestine Liberation Organization was now in decline as a result of the terrorist attack against the American Embassy in Teheran and that there was increasing recognition among policy planners in Washington of Israel's role as America's only stable and reliable ally in an increasingly hostile Middle East.

In a briefing to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations on Monday, Evron said the only "bright spot" in the Middle East today was the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty and the progress toward normal relations being made by the two countries and their leaders.

"At a time when OPEC is raising oil prices still another time and Moslem fanatics are twisting the tail of the American tiger to see if it is made of paper, Israel's role as a stalwart ally whose people will never turn on America is, I believe, winning increasing official recognition," Evron said.

Noting that his talk marked the anniversary of his appointment as Israel's envoy to Washington, Evron said the tensions and confrontations that had earlier marked U.S.-Israel relations were now "a thing of the past" and that the two countries had achieved a "modus vivendi" in which the natural and inevitable differences between them could be approached constructively and calmly.

He warned, however, that during the past year Soviet Russia had made "significant progress" in strengthening its foothold in the Arab world and that the outcome of the current U.S.-Iranian crisis would have a "direct effect" on the chances of an Arab-Israeli peace.

Warns Against U.S. Arms Sale To Saudi Arabia

Theodore Mann, chairman of the Presidents Conference, reported on his most recent trip to Israel, where he met and spent "long hours" with Premier Menachem Begin and other government leaders. On the proposed sale of advanced American missiles and weapons systems to Saudi Arabia, Mann warned that the United States would be repeating "the same mistake" it made when it dumped huge amounts of arms on Iran.

"If Saudi Arabia goes under," he said, "it will be the result of internal subversion -- not external attack" just as in Iran. "He said the weaponry would also threaten the sensitive Arab-Israeli balance of arms, under which the Arabs have more weapons but Israel has qualitative superiority." Mann added that Egypt's requests for U.S. arms are also "profoundly" disturbing. "Egypt needs economic help from our country, which we strongly support, but not military hardware," he said. He said constituent organizations of the Presidents Conference will begin contacting their Congressmen and the Administration on these issues.

HERTZBERG: MUTING OF DISSENT AMONG U.S. JEWS IS INIMICAL TO ISRAEL

NEW YORK, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- The muting of dissent within the American Jewish community is causing more harm to Israel than its enemies, according to Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg, a vice president of the World Jewish Congress and the former president of the American Jewish Congress.

Speaking of the annual Chanukah dinner of Americans for Progressive Israel-Hashomer Hatzair, Hertzberg warned that "the single most dangerous thing that can happen to Israel is the muting of dissent." He noted that when American Jews wish

to debate the issues that are reported on and discussed every day in the Israel press, there are some in the American Jewish community who charge that it would be "treason" to do so.

"Dissent in the Jewish community was always legitimate in this country on the right," Hertzberg said, noting that no one faulted the critics of the Labor Party government. He recalled that the history of the Zionist movement is replete with dissent. He pointed out that "Jabotinsky walked out of the World Zionist Organization" to pursue an independent policy. "For his heirs to say it is dangerous to dissent is nonsense," Hertzberg declared.

History Of Dissent In Zionist Movement

The Zionist movement, he continued, was in dissent since its beginning. Chaim Weizmann opposed Theodor Herzl on cultural issues and Herzl saw no room for Socialist Zionism in the Zionist movement, Hertzberg said. He noted that since the founding of the State of Israel, American Jews have been asked to unequivocally support the policy of the "in" government.

Most Prime Ministers since Levi Eshkol have come to the U.S. and "called together the Jewish leadership and told them that they were going on a dangerous mission to Washington and must have the unanimous support of the Jewish community. They then returned to Israel and parlayed this domestically into a claim that American Jews are unanimously behind their policies," Hertzberg said he finds that Israelis believe "that all you have to do is push the button, and our comes support for the government." The myth then, he said, is created of American Jewish unanimity.

Hertzberg opined that the future of Israel lies with organizations such as Americans for Progressive Israel and individuals who defend Israel for its lasting values, who are against "occupation" and who see Palestinians as having a national consciousness of their own. He characterized the "Israeli fight as indistinguishable from the Ayatollahs." The authentic voice of Zionism is "not in the leadership of the organizations but that of the people who still speak out," Hertzberg asserted.

2817 IMMIGRANTS ARRIVED LAST MONTH

JERUSALEM, Dec. 20 (JTA) -- Some 2817 immigrants arrived in Israel last month, Yehuda Dominitz, director general of the Jewish Agency immigration and absorption department, told the Agency Executive. Most of the immigrants are Russian, but the dropout rate last month was still 65.3 percent, he said.

Some 34,500 immigrants arrived so far this year. By the end of the year, Dominitz predicted, the number may reach 38,000, an increase of 50 percent compared to last year. There was a slight rise last month in the number of immigrants from France and Great Britain, compared to a drop in the number of immigrants from South Africa and Argentina, Dominitz reported. Some 17,000 immigrants are now in the absorption centers of the Jewish Agency, an increase of 1000 compared to October, he said.

PARIS (JTA) -- French Socialist leader Francois Mitterand told a press conference here that he and his party failed to see why Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasser Arafat should be prevented from paying a visit to France in spite of the fact that many of our friends ask us to oppose such a visit. "Mitterand was referring to Jewish opposition to a visit here by Arafat.