

JTA daily news bulletin

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

Vol. LVIII - 63rd Year

Wednesday, January 9, 1980

No. 6

PALESTINIAN POLITICAL INTELLECTUAL LEADERS SAY NO TO CHANGING CHARTER

By Maurice Samuelson

LONDON, Jan. 8 (JTA) -- Eleven prominent Palestinian political and intellectual leaders have unanimously rejected making changes in the Palestine National Charter, so that it no longer calls for the extinction of Israel. The proposal was put to them by the Arab-owned "Middle East" monthly because of claims that the Palestine Liberation Organization could not become a partner in Middle East peace talks until it dropped the extreme passages in its basic document.

The Palestinians, all of whom have been described as moderates, declared that the Charter should not be changed and that this was not necessary for a continuation of the PLO's pursuit of international recognition.

They include: Prof. Edward Said (Columbia University); Dr. Fayez Sayigh (consultant to the Kuwaiti delegation at the United Nations); Prof. Hisham Sharabi (Georgetown University); Sidky Dajani (PLO executive committee member); Mahmoud Labadi (PLO spokesman); Zehdi Labib Terzi (PLO representative at the UN); Sabri Jiryis (director of the PLO research center); and Khaled Fahoum (chairman of the Palestine National Council).

They gave a unanimous "no" to the following questions: Should the Palestine National Charter be changed? Should the Palestinians set up a government-in-exile with a new provisional constitution for Palestine? Would changing the Charter lead to a U.S.-PLO dialogue or force Israel to recognize the PLO?

Prof. Said, once thought of as a possible Palestinian participant in Middle East talks, stated: "In the present context, pressure to change the Charter is an assault upon Palestinian rights." Sayigh also opposed changing the Charter but added that should circumstances warrant it, "consideration might be given to the adoption of a new political program."

Some Provisions Of The Charter

The Palestine National Charter was adopted by the Palestine National Council in 1968, four years after the creation of the PLO, of which the Council is the Plenary Assembly.

Among its provisions is that "armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine" (Article 9), and "the Arab Palestinian people, expressing themselves by the armed Palestinian revolution, reject all solutions which are substitutes for the total liberation of Palestine" (Article 21).

However, most of the PLO leaders questioned also claimed that these provisions did not nullify the PLO's right to pursue a political solution.

CONGRESSMEN MEET WITH ARAFAT

WASHINGTON, Jan. 8 (JTA) -- A six-member Congressional delegation visiting the Middle East met in Beirut yesterday with Palestine Liberation Organization chairman Yasir Arafat; it was reported here today.

Rep. Toby Moffett (D., Conn.), head of the delegation, told a press conference after the meeting that the Congressmen urged Arafat to

halt military operations against Israel from Lebanon. "Moffett added that if the Palestinians desire international recognition they must assume a policy of non-violence, not only in Lebanon, but generally."

Moffett, who is of Lebanese descent, and the other members of the House -- Reps. Nick Joe Rahall (D., W. Va.) and Mary Rose Oaker (D., Ohio), also of Lebanese descent; and Robert Carr (R., Mich.), Harold Hollenbeck (R., N.J.); and Paul McCloskey (R., Calif.) -- left yesterday for Damascus. The delegation, which was appointed by House Speaker Thomas O'Neill (D., Mass.), will conclude its 10-day Mideast tour in Jerusalem where they expect to meet with Premier Menachem Begin; Labor Party chairman Shimon Peres and members of the Knesset.

While in Lebanon the delegation also met with President Elias Sarkis. Before leaving Washington last Wednesday, Moffett said the delegation would discuss with Sarkis the prospect of developing a separate U.S. policy on Lebanon similar to the U.S. policy with Israel and Egypt. Moffett told the press conference in Beirut yesterday that he and the other delegation members would, upon their return home, urge the U.S. government to work toward the creation of a Palestinian state.

BEGIN: ISRAEL AND EGYPT ARE ON THE SIDE OF RIGHT, NOT WRONG

By David Landau

ASWAN, Jan. 8 (JTA) -- Israeli-Egyptian agreement on the issues involved in the Iranian and Afghanistan crises should serve as "a foundation of good will, cooperation and understanding on which we shall build in the future." This was the central message of Premier Menachem Begin's public remarks at a dinner here last night following the first working session of his summit with President Anwar Sadat.

"Thank God," said Begin, "Israel and Egypt are on the side of right, not wrong; justice, not its opposite; freedom, not slavery" in the face of these two setbacks for the West. "But there was no indication from either Begin or Sadat, or their aides, that the shared outlook would express itself in specific operational terms in the immediate future."

On the bilateral issues between the two countries, it was Sadat who set the tone in his after-dinner comments when he said that "We have overcome in the past much more difficulties than we are facing now."

The two leaders seemed relaxed and at ease in each other's company during a dinner given by the Sadats for the Begin at the Israeli Premier's hotel. They exchanged banter freely, and even at moments when the conversation stalled, there was none of the fidgety awkwardness between them that characterized their earlier encounters.

At their 50-minute meeting earlier yesterday, which Begin described as "a kind of tour d'horizon," the two leaders discussed regional and global developments and put off until today a detailed review of the outstanding bilateral questions: autonomy and normalization. But it seemed clear already that when they do take up the bilateral matters, Begin and Sadat will seek to avoid confrontation, and will resort once more to the device of "agreeing to disagree" on issues still in dispute.

Sadat was pointedly positive in his references

at the dinner address to the "progress that has been achieved." Continuing, he declared:

"We both agreed that if anyone had told either of us three years ago that all this would be achieved today, neither I nor my dear friend Menachem Begin, the Prime Minister of Israel, could have believed it...."

"Thanks to God and to the efforts and genuineness of such leaders as Menachem Begin and Jimmy Carter, we have reached this point.... We have laid the cornerstone for a just and comprehensive settlement and for peace to prevail forever." It would be "only a matter of time," Sadat asserted, before others joined the peace process. "History never goes back," he assured.

A Day Of Sightseeing

The sightseeing part of Begin's stay in upper Egypt began this morning with a somewhat hurried visit to the famed temple of Ramses II at Abu Simbel. The Premier, due to meet with Sadat in Aswan at midday, allowed himself only a brief half-hour to take in the wonders of this ancient site, 200 miles south of here.

Begin listened without reacting to the erudite explanations offered by the enthusiastic young curator of Abu Simbel, Dr. Atef Abu Dahab. His wife, Aliza, though, showed lively interest in the artistic and mythological significance of the rich bas reliefs that adorn the temples. Later, she invited Dr. Abu Dahab to visit Israel and see the archaeological excavations there.

Aliza Begin was especially fascinated by Abu Dahab's account of the precision geometry and astronomy of the ancient Egyptians, whereby they ensured in the building of the temple that the sun's rays shone into the holy of holies precisely on the day of the King-God's birthday.

Asked to sum up his impressions after the tour, Begin said, "This is a pagan temple, 3500 years old, and we have seen with great admiration all that they built. This is Egypt."

Begin and his party were flown to Abu Simbel and back aboard Sadat's Boeing 737 jet. Accompanying them were Egyptian Housing Minister Ahmed Hifnawi and his wife who have been delegated as the Begins' official hosts during this visit. Yesterday afternoon, following his lunch-time working session with Sadat, the Premier and his party toured the Aswan High Dam.

AGUDA ISRAEL LEADER URGES RECOGNITION OF TORAH AS SUPREME IN JEWISH LIFE

By Barbie Zelizer

JERUSALEM, Jan. 8 (JTA) -- The sixth "Knessia Gedolah" (World Congress) of the Aguda Israel movement heard a plea at its opening session here last night for recognition of the Torah as supreme in Jewish life. Rabbi Eliezer Shach, a member of the Aguda's Council of Sages, said the Torah must be the focus of a unified Jewry, superseding all other elements.

He told the several thousand delegates jammed into the Binyanei Haooon convention hall that neither the State nor the occupied territories, nor the Land of Israel nor the government can guide the Jewish people. Only the Torah can sustain and guide it through the generations to come, he said.

Another member of the Council of Sages, the Gerer Rebbe, made an emotional plea to his followers to immigrate to Israel. The assemblage also heard a telephoned message from the head of

the Council of Sages in the U.S., Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, who was unable to attend the gathering in Jerusalem because of illness.

A message of congratulations cabled by the Lubavitcher Rebbe in New York was mentioned but not read. Shach had threatened to walk out if it was read in full and, in fact, did leave when the cable was referred to over the loudspeaker. His rift with the Lubavitcher stems from their support for the State of Israel.

Anti-State sentiment was also manifested by the baring of a number of Cabinet and Knesset members from the convention hall, including Deputy Premier Simcha Ehrlich and Minister-Without-Portfolio Moshe Nissim-Knesset Speaker Yitzhak Shamir was allowed in but departed after an hour. Several hundred Aguda faction members who were not invited tried to storm the doors and scuffled with mounted police.

Flap Over Refusal To Invite Navon

The refusal of the convention organizers to invite President Yitzhak Navon, a non-political figure whose presence at the opening of all party conventions is regarded as an honor, further emphasized the non-Zionist or anti-Zionist sentiments of the Council of Sages, the Aguda's supreme authority. As a result, Mayor Teddy Kollek of Jerusalem boycotted the convention.

Mapam MK Chaika Grossman dispatched a letter to Premier Menachem Begin urging him to oust the Aguda from his coalition because it was unseemly to include a non-Zionist party in the government. Aguda spokesmen had said Navon was not invited because many of the rabbis were too old to rise upon his entering the hall. (See related story.)

Outside the convention hall, large groups of Orthodox youths from the Bnei Akiva movement and the Poalei Aguda Israel shouted protests against the "anti-Zionist" meeting being held inside. Members of the National Religious Party, another coalition partner, were also barred. Danny Vemus, the NRP's secretary general, explained, "There is no real reason for us to expect to be invited by Aguda Israel when they did not want the President to attend their convention. We are too much of a Zionist party to be desirable guests."

Premier Menachem Begin, who is in Aswan for his summit meeting with President Anwar Sadat, is scheduled to address the closing session of the five-day congress.

RELIGIOUS ZIONISTS BLAST AGUDA'S REFUSAL TO INVITE NAVON TO CONCLAVE

NEW YORK, Jan. 8 (JTA) -- Two leaders of the world Mizrahi movement criticized the decision of Aguda Israel not to invite President Yitzhak Navon of Israel to its world congress now in session in Jerusalem, it was reported here today by the Religious Zionists of America. Rabbi Simon Dolgin, chairman of the Mezkaz Olami Shel Mizrachim (Mizrahi world center) in Jerusalem, denounced Aguda reasoning for its action. In remarks to a Yom Diyun (a day of study) of rabbinic leaders of the Mizrahi movement, Dolgin pointed out that a delegation of Hasidic rabbinic leaders had risen to its feet when it called on President Carter in Washington Dec. 17.

Similar sentiments were voiced by Rabbi Louis Bernstein, president of the Religious Zionists of America, upon his arrival yesterday in Jerusalem to attend a meeting of the World Zionist Organization Executive. He reported wide resentment of the Aguda's snub of Navon in religious circles in the United States. "Rabbinic leaders in Poland would

welcome local bishops with Torah scrolls," he stated, "but they apparently rated higher than the President of a Jewish State."

"I am appreciative of the Aguda action, though," Bernstein continued. "It points out the basic difference once again between religious Zionism and Aguda Israel: Religious Zionism sees in Israel the center and core of Jewish existence in the present and future. It is not just another State and its President, as head of State, at least rates the same courtesy as any other chief of state. But there are those who will never learn the bitterest lessons of history."

STATE DEPT. SAYS U.S. AIRCRAFT ARE HOLDING 'TRAINING' EXERCISES IN CAIRO

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Jan. 8 (JTA) -- American aircraft are engaged in "training" exercises with Egyptian airmen at the West Air Base in Cairo, the State Department said today. The Department's chief spokesman, Hodding Carter, refused to comment as to whether the U.S. aircraft were reconnaissance planes. But he emphasized that they were there for training purposes with the Egyptian Air Force.

State Department sources also said that "possibly" additional U.S. aircraft will go to Egypt. The sources said they were "not aware" that the American planes may have flown over Sinai or made any use of the Israeli facilities on the peninsula. This is the first time American aircraft have been engaged in such exercises.

Asked if the U.S. aircraft might use Israeli facilities as well as Egyptian, a source said "We have under review use of such facilities in a number of countries." He declined to comment on "specific possibilities."

Yesterday, Egyptian Defense Minister Kamal Hassan Ali said the U.S. could use "Egyptian facilities." In connection with the joint U.S.-Egyptian exercises, he stated that "We have been discussing the question of facilities with the United States." He said the exercises were aimed at training Americans in the use of those facilities. Earlier, President Anwar Sadat offered Egyptian facilities to the U.S. -- but not bases -- to enable the rescue of American hostages in Teheran and to protect Arab countries against aggression.

Palestinian Radicals And The U.S. Hostages

In another development, the State Department today gave a carefully worded response to Rep. Philip Crane (R., Ill.), who said it appeared that "Palestinian radicals" were involved in the seizure of the American hostages in Teheran. Crane, who is seeking the Republican Presidential nomination, made his comment yesterday following a briefing from Deputy Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Asked about Crane's remark, Carter replied that such reports come "from a variety of sources, much of it contradictory." He said, "Insofar as anybody said at the Deputy Secretary level that there were definitely Palestinians there, that would be a mistake in the interpretation of what the Secretary said." Later, however, Crane's office told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the Congressman "definitely came away with the impression" that Palestinians were involved.

Pressed on the issue of Palestinian involvement in the seizure of the hostages, Carter said "We have evidence that suggests a number of things but I would not give you that one as one of the suggestions. The problem here is that re-

ports come all over the place" and "it is hard to decide," Carter said. He added, "But I really want to lead you away from the notion that anybody here is confirming" Palestinian involvement.

This development came as reports received here from Beirut quoted Arab leaders as saying that U.S. efforts to safeguard Western military and economic interests in the Middle East are doomed unless the U.S. presses Israel hard for an overall Middle East settlement, including "self-determination" for the Palestinians. The U.S. has been cautious in discussing the Palestine Liberation Organization's activities in the hostage situation since the Americans were seized more than two months ago in Teheran.

HIGH COURT MOVES ON ELON MOREH

By Barbie Zelizer

JERUSALEM, Jan. 8 (JTA) -- The Supreme Court gave the government 10 days today to show cause why Elon Moreh should not be evacuated without delay. The order nisi was handed down in response to an appeal filed yesterday by 18 Arab landowners from Nablus and Rujeib village, against the five-week extension that the Cabinet granted the Elon Moreh settlers on Dec. 30.

Justice Alfred Vitkon acted for the high court in this instance. He was one of the panel of five judges who ruled last Oct. 22 that Elon Moreh was established illegally on seized Arab lands and must be removed in 30 days. The Cabinet, acting on its own initiative, granted two extensions of the deadline.

Today, Likud MK Dov Shilansky expressed dissatisfaction with the way Attorney General Yitzhak Zamir has handled the government's case in this matter and asked the Justice Minister to appoint a special panel of private attorneys to reply to the latest court order. Zamir had warned the Cabinet last month that the government would have a hard time defending the new extension granted Elon Moreh. Shilansky said if the government can't defend itself, the entire issue should be referred to private lawyers who can.

It was reported meanwhile that the Elon Moreh settlers have modified the conditions under which they would be willing to move from Elon Moreh to a new settlement being built for them at Djebil Kebir. They said they would leave if the government pledged to initiate legislation to change the legal status of the West Bank in a way that would bar future court challenges to Jewish settlements. Until now they have said they would refuse to budge before such legislation is adopted.

HOSPITAL REVERSES ITS POLICY

NEW YORK, Jan. 8 (JTA) -- The University Hospital of New York University, which had been accused of discriminating against observant Jewish patients by charging them for kosher meals, terminated that policy as of this evening, a hospital spokesman reported today.

The complaint had been made at the end of December by the National Council of Young Israel, an association of Orthodox synagogues in the United States and Canada. Nathaniel Saperstein, Young Israel president, had asserted that the hospital's practice of billing such patients for kosher meals was "unconscionable." He said that Young Israel had made repeated requests to hospital officials to change the policy, but that the hospital had refused. He noted that major hospital insurance firms "consider kosher food as a normal expense and reimburse the hospital for it." (By Ben Gallob)

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

'LAST MATERIAL GESTURE'

By David Kantor

BONN, Jan. 8 (JTA) — The Bonn government's "last material gesture" toward Jewish victims of Nazism has been an embarrassing issue here for several years. Last Dec. 14, guidelines for an arrangement to pay new reparations were agreed upon between the major political parties. However, the indications are that the embarrassment will increase.

Under the suggested formula, Bonn will make available a total of 440 million Marks over a period of four years, of which 240 million Marks will be paid this year. Of that amount, 40 million Marks will go to the Central Organization of Jewish Communities in West Germany (Zentralrat). In each of the years of 1982 and 1983, 100 million Marks will be made available.

The bulk of the money is to go to the New York-based Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, which is to distribute it among survivors of the Holocaust. The government with the Claims Conference on how and where a part of the money will be invested. But no details are as yet available.

The idea of the "last gesture" came up in the early 1970s after it was made clear that many Jewish survivors of Nazi persecution were not in a position to forward their claims against Germany on time to benefit from the original reparations agreement. Most of the Jewish survivors lived in the Soviet Union or other East European countries when the deadline for filing claims expired; they were neither informed nor legally able to take the necessary measures in order to get financial compensation for suffering, or to recover property plundered by the Nazis.

Earlier Approaches On Reparations

Former Chancellor Willy Brandt, chairman of the ruling Social Democratic Party, negotiated the matter with Dr. Nahum Goldmann, chairman of the Claims Conference. He reportedly promised that 1 billion Marks would be made available for the so-called "hard cases" among the Jewish survivors. But it became obvious that Brandt had gone too far both politically and financially.

His successor, Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, felt himself committed to the idea of a "last gesture" but adopted a much more pragmatic and realistic attitude. He nominated former Finance Minister Alex Moeller to continue the negotiations with the Claims Conference. After a long period of hesitation, Goldmann accepted an offer of 660 million Marks which seemed to reflect a sincere desire of the Bonn government to make final amends. But Schmidt made the arrangement conditional on the support of the Christian Democratic opposition. Despite lobbying efforts from both Social Democrats and Jewish organizations, this support could not be assured, at least not in advance.

According to the Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, the agreement between Goldmann and Moeller was opposed by Franz-Joseph Strauss, leader of the Bavarian Christian Social Union who is now the opposition candidate for Chancellor.

Latest Developments Outlined

Following a new round of negotiations in which leading Israeli politicians were also oc-

asionally engaged, all three parliamentary factions in the Bundestag agreed to a "last gesture" to be fixed at 440 million Marks. Differences of opinion remained about who should present the necessary parliamentary motion on the issue. The opposition argued that it was up to the government to include the sum in its budget. The ruling Social Democrats sought a joint initiative of all parties represented in the Bundestag.

Last Dec. 11, the government included the 440 million Marks "last gesture" in its budget for 1980 and asked the opposition to accept it in advance. No agreement could be reached, however, in the Bundestag committee dealing with budgetary matters and the issue went to the parliamentary factions for final consideration.

The main problem was caused by the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) and the Bavarian Christian Social Union (CSU) joint faction which demanded additional clarification as to the use of the money to be paid. Later on it was made clear that the issue involved a move to link the "last gesture" payment to the financial claims of certain groups of civil servants of the Third Reich, among them people who were never cleared by the de-Nazification tribunals and who were barred from material benefits under the Constitution.

The outcome of the debate among the parliamentary groups was that the three factions represented in the Bundestag urged the government to ask for a supplementary budget which will include the 440 million Marks. In another motion the three factions on Dec. 14 urged the government to explain to the Bundestag what consequences were to be drawn from the "last gesture" toward the Jewish survivors in regard to other groups of "hard cases" and, in particular, the former civil servants.

As matters stand now, a debate is scheduled in the Bundestag by March 31 in which, on the initiative of the CDU-CSU opposition, the issue of the "last gesture" will be aired along with material claims of civil servants of the Hitler era. But there is ample reason as far as many people are concerned to try to avoid linking the fate of the victims with that of their oppressors and to spare the Bonn government additional embarrassment.

TEL AVIV (JTA) — A million school children had an unscheduled half-day off Tuesday as teachers staged an afternoon strike to protest the government's refusal to pay them an additional cost-of-living allowance. Although a special committee ruled that the teachers should receive the extra payment, Finance Minister Yigal Hurwitz said he wants them to wait until the end of the school year because "we do not have the money."

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Energy Minister Yitzhak Modai has postponed his visit to Cairo by two days. It was scheduled to begin Tuesday but he will not arrive there until Thursday. Modai is due to hold talks with his Egyptian counterpart on Egyptian supply of oil to Israel. Representatives of the Egyptian Energy Ministry suggested the postponement on the ground of technical difficulties.

TEL AVIV (JTA) — Haifa's 10 movie houses were shut down by their owners Sunday for an indefinite time to protest against the city tax on movie tickets. The owners claim the municipality is taking too large a share of their box-office proceeds and say they will not reopen until the special movie tax is waived. As a result, the streets of Haifa are almost empty during the evening hours.