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SOVIET JEWISH ACTIVIST TO GO ON TRIAL MARCH 11

NEW YORK, Feb. 26 (JTA) — Igor Guberman, a 44-year-old Soviet Jewish activist, will be brought to trial on March 11 after being held in prison incommunicado since his arrest last Aug. 13. The National Conference on Soviet Jewry reported today. Guberman, a writer and author of popular science books, has been active in the Jewish cultural movement in Russia and was a contributor to the samizdat (unofficial) publication "Jews in the USSR."

According to the NCSJ, Guberman was harassed by the Soviet secret police since 1978 when he first applied for emigration for himself and his wife and two children. He was arrested, the NCSJ reported, after he refused to cooperate with the KGB which was seeking information on the Jewish cultural movement in the USSR. He has been charged with trafficking in stolen icons. Since his arrest, Guberman, who lived in a town near Moscow, was permitted to see no one except his lawyer.

The NCSJ reported that Jewish sources in Moscow are concerned that Guberman's trial will signal a new crackdown on emigration activists and dissidents. Although other activists have been tried in the past on false charges, none has been brought to trial recently. The NCSJ noted that until Guberman's trial was announced, the Soviet authorities had limited themselves to harassment and imprisonment for periods of up to 15 days, the maximum allowed by Soviet law without formal charges.

ISRAELIS, EGYPTIANS EXCHANGE CREDENTIALS IN COLORFUL CEREMONY

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 26 (JTA) — President Yitzhak Navon and Egypt's Ambassador Soad Mortada stressed their countries' "faithful adherence" to the letter and spirit of the peace treaty at a ceremony today marking the envoy's presentation of credentials. This "meticulous fidelity," said Navon, "might well serve as an example to others."

"Egypt," the Ambassador said, "has faithfully adhered, and will continue to adhere to all her obligations in accordance with the letter and spirit of these agreements with the aim of strengthening peace and establishing good neighborly relations." The two speeches were longer than is customary on such occasions. Navon read his in Hebrew and the envoy in Arabic. Each was then translated into the other language.

Mortada appeared nervous as he strode into the Presidential residence flanked by Chief of Protocol Yaakov Aviad and the President's military aide, and followed by seven members of the Egyptian Embassy staff. But he quickly regained his composure as he launched into his speech. He expressed his pride and honor at having been chosen by President Anwar Sadat to be Egypt's first Ambassador to Israel.

After the ceremonies the President and the Ambassador sat down and, with media cameras clicking and whirring, engaged in a lengthy and what seemed to be relaxed conversation in Arabic.

Outside, on the suburban street where the Presidential residence is located, buses and cars continued to ply their routes. Only a handful of passersby stopped to await the Egyptian Ambassador's departure. A dozen-odd young right-wing demonstrators chanted weakly that united Jerusalem must remain Israel's capital and a young American immigrant was hustled by police into a police van for shouting "Palestine — no."

(In Cairo this morning, Israel's first Ambassador to Egypt, Eliahu Ben-Elissai, presented his credentials to President Sadat in ceremonies at the Abdine Presidential Palace. Receiving the envoy, the Egyptian leader declared, "Today we are opening another new chapter in the history of our nations. It is a living symbol of our firm determination to live together in peace and harmony.")

(In Washington, State Department spokesman Hodding Carter issued the following statement on behalf of the United States: "The exchange of Egyptian and Israeli Ambassadors marked an important milestone in the process of peace in the Middle East. In a region now the scene of considerable tension and violence, this simple diplomatic exchange between two former adversaries takes on great meaning. Although we have yet a long way to go for a just, lasting and comprehensive peace in the region, this exchange represents a signal achievement.")

Egyptian Embassy Opened For Business

The Egyptian Embassy in Tel Aviv, located temporarily on the 12th floor of the Hilton Hotel, opened for business this afternoon. The visa section, on the ground floor, is being readied and will open today or tomorrow. The Foreign Ministry announced that it was closing its temporary visa section that had been issuing Egyptian visas on behalf of the Cairo government for the past few months.

As is customary, Mortada presented a copy of his credentials at the Foreign Ministry before driving to the President's residence. He had a 30-minute conversation on political matters with Yosef Ciechanover, Director General of the Foreign Ministry and Elyakim Rubinstein, head of the Egyptian desk.

In his speech after presenting his credentials to Navon, Mortada, a 56-year-old career diplomat who had never been to Israel before, observed that his country's peace treaty with Israel was aimed at "restoring peace and stability and legitimate rights to all parties, first and foremost the right of the Palestinian people to a free and secure life. In this way," he continued, "we shall be able to set a good example of peaceful coexistence between the people of Israel and the Arab peoples of this region, removing the dangers that imperil their security and ensuring a comprehensive, just and lasting peace."

Mortada ended by stressing "the position of Egypt which derives from her Arab and Islamic responsibilities, as well as her commitment to the principles of the United Nations, non-alignment and African unity." Navon began his speech by extending "a most cordial welcome in the Presidential residence in Jerusalem," a significant phrase in view of the envoy's earlier clarification that the ceremony would not signal Egypt's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Navon noted that the peace treaty "was not meant to be a separate agreement, but the prelude to further agreements with other countries in our region."

FORMER ANTAGONISTS, NOW COMRADES

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, Feb. 26 (JTA) — Ranking Egyptian and Israeli generals, former antagonists on the battlefields of Sinai, smiled, joked, shook hands and embraced as they shared conversation and cocktails at a reception in the sprawling Defense Ministry complex just outside Tel Aviv last night. The Egyptians are members of the entourage of Defense Minister Kamal Hassan Ali who arrived in Israel yesterday for a five-day visit as the guest of Defense Minister Ezer Weizman.

Weizman gave the reception in Ali's honor last night. "So many years ago we saw each other through the sights of rifles and now we sit around one table together," he observed. Indeed, it is nearly seven years since those Israeli and Egyptian soldiers last met — at rifle, artillery and rocket range — in the heat of the Yom Kippur War. Last night, with their countries bound by a treaty of peace, they were able to reminisce together and exchange stories of their battle experiences.

Gen. David Ivri, commander of the Israeli Air Force, conversed with his Egyptian counterpart Lt. Gen. Abdul Mun'im, Ariel Sharon, Israel's Agriculture Minister, who commanded an Israeli division in the Yom Kippur War, talked animatedly with Gen. Ibrahim Qurabi, commander of the same Egyptian Second Army that Sharon had faced in Sinai in 1973. Gen. Don Shamon, a field commander during the Yom Kippur War, discussed the tactics and maneuvers of those days with a group of former Egyptian field commanders as if they were reviewing a lesson in military history.

'We Feel At Home Here'

Some of the officers were in uniform, others in mufti. The atmosphere was one of comradery that prevails wherever soldiers get together. It was noticeable from the moment the Egyptian party landed at Ben Gurion Airport yesterday, in a driving rainstorm, to receive a warm welcome with full military honors. Hassan Ali, wearing civilian clothes and a dark fur hat, inspected the guard of honor composed of Air Force cadets. A young woman soldier held a large umbrella over his head. A meeting with Weizman followed during which the two defense ministers reportedly agreed on several matters including the movement of Israeli tourists to parts of Sinai now under Egyptian control.

At last night's reception, Weizman said, "We have still problems to solve — the West Bank and the danger from our east which I hope will disappear when our neighbors will learn from the Egyptians. My friend, Gen. Ali, is just as good at maneuvering in politics as he is handling a war machine."

Hassan Ali responded: "We feel at home here, which proves that our relations are improving and deepening as more time elapses. They are not only political contacts but personal and friendly relations and understanding. I truly hope the nations in the region will follow our example towards peace."

BEGIN: EGYPT DEVIATING ON AUTONOMY

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 26 (JTA) — Premier Menachem Begin termed Egypt's position in the autonomy talks today a "wide deviation from the Camp David agreements." In a radio interview on

the occasion of the exchange of Ambassadors between Egypt and Israel Begin denied that the autonomy talks were in "deadlock." He maintained that the three parties, Israel, Egypt and the U.S., could still reach agreement by the May target date "if we all remain faithful to Camp David."

Begin observed that the Camp David agreements, painstakingly negotiated, advisedly defined the projected autonomous body as "an administrative council." For the Egyptian side, therefore, to propose a body with legislative and constitutional powers was "a decided deviation from Camp David," he said. It was a proposal "which Israel cannot accept We hope to persuade the Egyptians that they are raising difficulties for the negotiations by deviating from Camp David." Begin added that "agreements have got to be observed — just as we have both observed the peace treaty between us."

Begin said the government was "thinking about" the problem of the legal status of Jewish settlements on the West Bank and would soon publish its decisions. He said they would not contradict the Camp David agreements.

The Premier was moderate and circumspect on the question of American arms supplies to Egypt. "This is a problem of quantities and quality. It must be clarified in contacts between governments, not in public declarations," he said. Replying to an army radio interviewer who tried to press him on this issue, Begin said, "I have said it is a problem. That is enough."

On the credentials ceremonies in Cairo and Jerusalem today, Begin said "This is a special day in the annals of the two nations and of the Middle East. Let us remember what passed between our two peoples in 31 years of hostility, five wars, bloodshed, widowhood, bereavement This is a good day, a nice day both for the Egyptians and for us Israelis."

U.S. ARMS PACKAGE FOR EGYPT

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, FEB. 26 (JTA) — The Carter Administration has formally unveiled an arms package for Egypt that would make the government in Cairo a U.S. military surrogate in the Middle East, according to analysts here. The State Department said yesterday that it is informing Congress of its proposal to send to Egypt 40 F-16 fighter aircraft, 250 M-60 tanks, and additional equipment including 550 armed personnel carriers.

Two weeks ago the State Department said that it was providing \$1.85 billion to Egypt in arms credits in the fiscal year starting next Oct. 1 and is contemplating an additional \$800 million in the following fiscal year. The operational program, it is understood, is to spread at least \$4 billion over five years to Egypt. This figure could be considerably increased if Egypt should receive F-15 aircraft starting probably next year.

The decision to arm Egypt to an extent unprecedented represents a policy shift that fits into the "Carter Middle East doctrine" as a result of the upheavals in the Middle East. In announcing the arms package, the Department said "the Egyptian government hopes in due course to order such F-15 aircraft as may be necessary for its defense needs."

Only a year ago, Secretary of Defense Harold Brown and Secretary of State Cyrus Vance assured Congress that the Carter Administration had no intention of converting Egypt into a military power on the line of Iran. The F-15, considered the world's foremost fighter, costs about \$18 million, and the F-16 is about \$11 million. U.S. sources said that Egypt has decided to "devote resources" to less expensive hardware.

EVRON ASSURES U.S. JEWS THERE IS NO EROSION OF ISRAEL-U.S. RELATIONS

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Feb. 26 (JTA) -- Ephraim Evron, Israel's Ambassador to the United States, cautioned American Jews today not to regard Israeli-American relations as being eroded and expressed "our gratitude" to President Carter for his part in achieving the Egyptian-Israeli peace.

Addressing a breakfast session of the United Jewish Appeal Young Leadership Conference at the Sheraton Washington Hotel shortly after Israel and Egypt formally exchanged Ambassadors today, Evron advised, "Let's be more objective when we face various issues" involving Israel and the U.S.

He noted that a question has been put to him as to "how far has erosion between the U.S. and Israel gone?" He said, "When I didn't respond in an affirmative manner, I was criticized because I didn't buy this idea that there has been an erosion." Evron recalled that despite President Truman's recognition of Israel as a State in 1948, Truman also had taken steps contrary to Israel's positions. "Had there been an erosion in Truman's position?" the Israeli envoy asked.

"The basic relationship" between Israel and the U.S. as "countries" and as "governments," he said, "is unique and unshakable. I don't mean we don't have arguments but we would be making a great mistake were we to say that the U.S. is turning its back on Israel" because "it would be encouraging the Arabs to think that is happening."

Declaring, to applause, that "full diplomatic relations" between Israel and Egypt are "a reality" and "is beginning today," Evron emphasized that "much, much credit is due to President Carter for his perseverance, for twisting arms -- (Egyptian President Anwar) Sadat's arms -- for achieving peace. So today, I want to extend to him our gratitude for the role he played in achieving that peace between Egypt and Israel."

The Israeli Ambassador drew laughter when he said he didn't want to interfere in American politics. He noted that he has listened to Sen. Edward Kennedy (D., Mass.) and "it was a pleasure to hear him expound support for Israel." He said he also heard the Republican Presidential aspirants and "I couldn't find any unfriendly candidate."

Evron said "The basis" of U.S. - Israel relations "is healthy and deep and we must know how to build on it" and "how to handle ourselves," when "not to act, when to press our case when we should."

No Tampering With UN Resolutions

Touching on other subjects, Evron said "The Jew has the right to live in Hebron" and rejected that it is "a hindrance and an obstacle to peace." Evron also emphasized that "the basis" for the Camp David accords is United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 "as they are today."

Evron said "Israel took terrible risks in the peace it signed. I'm saying to the people in Washington, about what they call 'new initiatives' that on one thing they should be certain. Today we are not going to repeat the mistakes that cost us so dearly in the past." The envoy added, "I don't want to believe -- I don't believe -- the U.S. Administration will follow this course."

Before Evron left the breakfast hall, Rabbi

Meir Kahane, founder of the Jewish Defense League, demanded the podium. When the chairperson demurred, because he was not on the program, shouts of "let him speak" came from the audience. Kahane said he would speak for 15 minutes but he cut his remarks by half as people began to leave. He denied that peace has been attained between Israel and Egypt, demanded the "annexation" of the occupied territories, the placement of Jewish settlements there and the "removal" of the Arabs. He exhorted his dwindling audience to immigrate to Israel.

The three-day Young Leadership Conference which closed today, was addressed at its opening dinner Sunday night by Sens. Paul Sarbanes (D., Md.), a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, and Robert Packwood (R., Ore.), Republican caucus chairman. Sarbanes emphasized that "It is a grievous misreading of history to suppose that the conflicts in that troubled region (the Middle East) arose in response to the fact of Israel. On the contrary," he said, "Israel has been and remains a rock of stability and strength which constitutes an important strategic asset to America and the West."

Sarbanes said, "Support for Israel is not a Jewish concern. It is the concern of all men and women of principle and vision. The millions of other Americans who support and sustain Israel is not a Jewish lobby or an Israel lobby. They are an American lobby striving for what is best in America's principles."

Packwood said, "In the last half of this century, the history of the Middle East is Arab intransigency and Israeli willingness to compromise in hope of getting the peace they have never gotten." He noted that "Some European nations are trying to change" Resolution 242 and want Israel to rely on the UN and the U.S. Packwood recalled earlier "guarantees" such as the pledge of freedom of navigation through the Straits of Tiran, that did not hold. "Israel is reluctant to accept pledges" in view of their failure in the past, he said, adding, "If I were Israel, not one inch would I give up."

AID FOR IRANIAN JEWISH STUDENTS, FAMILIES

NEW YORK, Feb. 26 (JTA) -- An additional \$100,000 has been authorized to supplement prior sums granted and make a total of \$250,000 allocated to help Iranian Jews who fled the turmoil of their country to come to New York during the past year. In announcing the new grant, Harry Mancher, president of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies, explained that Federation's Committee on Communal Planning (CPC) and several Federation agencies, in conjunction with New York United Jewish Appeal, continue to work actively to meet the urgent needs of Iranian Jews of the city. The \$250,000, he added, is part of a total amount of \$500,000 being made available for aid.

Of this, New York UJA and Federation have each allotted \$100,000. In addition, Federation last year distributed \$60,000 to its Jewish Board of Family & Children's Services to set up a special assistance unit. Some months ago, Federation's Fund for Jewish Education allocated \$40,000 to 12 yeshivot enrolling Iranian Jewish students. New grants through Federation's Communal Planning Committee amount to another \$50,000 for emergency relief and additional payments to yeshivot. And the Lubavitch organization previously expended \$50,000.

NEW YORK (JTA) -- Governor Hugh Carey of New York, in a proclamation released Tuesday, has designated March-Las the "Sabbath of Remembrance in Solidarity with Syrian Jewry Day." -- Efforts on behalf of the beleaguered Syrian Jewish community "should be supported by all New Yorkers," he said.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**ISRAEL AND THE GLOBAL TENSIONS**

By Uzi Benziman

JERUSALEM, Feb. 26 (JTA) — A number of government officials believe that Israel's political situation has never been so good. Although the international community faces increasing tension in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, Israel's political moves seem to be successful, according to these officials.

Against the backdrop of global turbulence which preoccupies the superpowers, their respective allies and many other smaller countries, the Israeli-Egyptian axis seems an island of tranquility.

This depiction may reflect a certain sense of wishful thinking rather than a sober evaluation of the relations between Cairo and Jerusalem. But it does express, nevertheless, the authentic feeling here that serious international developments are taking place which have no connection with Israel or its conflict with the Arab world.

Main Problems Of Mideast

This proves, some Israeli officials say, the validity of Israel's long-held, often-voiced contention that the main problems of the Middle East do not stem from the Israeli-Arab conflict, but are a result of the rivalry between the superpowers which exploit the Israeli-Arab dispute to foster their global rivalry.

The manifestation of Soviet purposes, reflected in the invasion of Afghanistan and in their deployment along the borders of Iran, supports Israel's view that the crux of the Middle East conflict is not the Palestinian problem but rather Soviet aggression and intrigues.

According to this thesis, Western public opinion, realizing the dangerous significance of the radicalism and religious fanaticism of the "Islamic revival," will now become convinced of Israel's argument that the difficulties in resolving the Palestinian problem are not the real obstacle to establishing a stable arrangement in the region.

On the contrary, say these officials, the threats and fears that Westerners feel in the face of the "Islamic revolution" will convince them that the establishment of a Palestinian state would mean the destruction of the State of Israel.

Questionable Realism

That, in brief, is the optimistic assessment current in some government circles here. One may, however, question the realism of some of those observations. Statements recently made by Secretary of State Cyrus Vance and by one of the State Department's senior representatives in Tel Aviv, reflected a clear tendency to see a linkage between U.S. resistance to Soviet expansionism and a solution of the Palestinian problem.

According to this logic, the ability of Washington to check Soviet aggression in the Middle East by establishing a front of moderate Arab states under Western patronage, depends to a large extent on Israel's readiness to satisfy Egyptian expectations regarding the West Bank, and Saudi Arabian sensitivities regarding Jerusalem.

Israel, therefore, is likely to face increasing pressure both from the U.S. and from Egypt to be flexible in interpreting -- and implementing -- the Camp David Palestinian autonomy scheme.

While Israel intends to vest autonomy in an administrative council which would have only limited authority to rule the daily life of the inhab-

itants of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, Egypt seeks to endow the council with wide powers and responsibilities, including legislative and juridical roles.

In Israel's view, Egypt's long-term goal is to enable the autonomous authority to declare itself, after the five-year interim period, as the constituent assembly of an independent Palestinian state. Officials in Jerusalem totally reject what they call the artificial linkage that the U.S. has created between its prospects of tackling Russian expansionism and the solving of the Palestinian problem.

Resisting Misguided U.S. Policy

In private conversations, Cabinet members and high-ranking officials in the Prime Minister's Office stress that Israel does not intend to be the victim of a misguided American policy. These sources even make comparisons between the British pro-Arab decisions in the 1940s and what they see as the present American tendency to sacrifice Israel's vital interests in order to improve the prospects of defending oil sources in the Middle East.

Premier Menachem Begin himself has vowed publicly of late, in clear references to American public statements, that Israel will not let itself be "sacrificed to a policy of appeasement." His aides argue that American decisiveness in protecting Western oil interests in the region does not depend in any way on the extent of Israel's flexibility on the Palestinian problem.

The Americans, after all, allowed the Shah to fall without any connection to the future of the West Bank. And the Kremlin's decision to occupy Afghanistan was similarly taken without reference to the Israeli-Egyptian controversy on the powers and the responsibilities of the self-governing authority to be established on the West Bank and Gaza. The Begin government is critical and skeptical of America's claims that the autonomy talks are somehow linked to the broader strategic tensions.

But some officials here take the skepticism a step further, and argue that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was actually not a bad thing, from Israel's self-interest viewpoint because it forces the U.S. to become much more energetic and credible in the defense of its interests in this area.

The Afghan crisis, moreover, and the Iranian crisis before it, are resulting in a polarization within the Arab world, say these Israeli analysts, into moderates and radicals. This is happening without reference to the deadlock over the Palestinian question, and the U.S., despite its theorizing, cannot afford to let the Palestinian issue stand in the way of its urgent need to shape new and closer relations with the Arab moderates.

JNF IN LAND RECLAMATION WORK

JERUSALEM, Feb. 26 (JTA) — The Jewish National Fund is currently engaged in massive land reclamation work at more than 50 sites all over Israel, JNF chairman Moshe Rivlin reported today. In an address at Yahel, the Reform movement's kibbutz in the Arava region, he noted that land is being leveled for the first of four new settlements that will constitute the "Pithat Shalom" bloc near the Gaza Strip.

Giant earth-moving machines have to remove some 1.5 million cubic meters of soil to prepare the land for each of the settlements. The heavy equipment is at work "day and night," he said. He also noted that the JNF has planted some 70,000 trees in the Arava district in the last three years, extending from Naot Hakikar to the edge of the Dead Sea and as far south as Kibbutz Eilat near the town of Eilat.