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BEGIN: MAY 26 IS NOT 'DEADLINE,' NOT 'ULTIMATE DATE' FOR CONCLUDING THE AUTONOMY TALKS BETWEEN EGYPT, ISRAEL By Yitzhak Shargil

MAALOT, March 17 (JTA) -- Premier Menachem Begin said today that May 26 is not a deadline or the final date for the successful conclusion of the autonomy talks between Israel, Egypt and the U.S. "We are still hopeful that by the 26th of May we shall reach an agreement, provided all partners are faithful to what we agreed upon at Camp David," Begin told delegates to the 22nd convention of Americans and Canadians in Israel, being held in this new immigrant town near the Lebanese border.

But, he added, "It is not a so-called deadline or ultimate date. If proposals that contradict the Camp David accord come up, we shall continue to negotiate. Just as the negotiations for the peace agreement (with Egypt) lasted six months, not three (the original Camp David time limit), I am hopeful that with efforts exerted we shall reach an agreement," Begin said.

He warned, however, that Israel would not accept any proposals that might come up in the autonomy talks which are contrary to the Camp David agreement. The Premier cited as an example, the question of Jerusalem. He said Israel is not ready to discuss any change in the present status of the city as its capital and as an undivided city. Similarly, Israel cannot accept the idea that citizens of Jerusalem should participate in the voting for an administrative council for the West Bank.

Begin rejected the idea of a legislative council which, he claimed, not only contradicted the Camp David agreements but would constitute a Palestinian state in everything but name. He said Israel also cannot accept the idea that the movements of its army in the territories in times of danger would require prior permission from the administrative council.

FUTURE AID FOR ISRAEL, EGYPT UNCERTAIN UNDER CARTER'S PROPOSED BUDGET CUTS By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, March 17 (JTA) -- Whether the allocations already presented to Congress on economic and military assistance to Israel and Egypt, totalling more than \$5 billion, will be reduced as a result of President Carter's anti-inflation program was an unanswerable question here today.

Under the presentations made to the Congress, Israel is earmarked to receive for the third straight year \$1 billion in military assistance and \$785 million in economic aid. Egypt is earmarked for \$3.4 billion, most of it in military assistance for what the State Department has said is to update its defense.

A top White House source told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that "it is premature to speculate" on the cuts that will be made in the budget for the coming fiscal year and said it is unlikely that details will be made known before Carter sends the proposed cuts to Congress April 1.

At the Office of Management and Budget, which will make the final decision subject to

Presidential approval, the JTA was informed "foreign aid is on the list to be cut but we have no idea to what extent it will be. We are taking a hard look in that area." Carter said in a speech Friday that he would cut the budget which he previously submitted for the 1981 fiscal year by \$18 billion.

ENTEBBE RESCUE MISSION COMMANDER VIEWS TEHRAN HOSTAGE SITUATION

TEL AVIV, March 17 (JTA) -- Gen. Dan Shomron, who commanded the spectacular Entebbe rescue mission in July, 1976, implied today that the American hostages, today in their 135th day of captivity at the U.S. Embassy in Teheran, might have been rescued via a similar operation.

Shomron, who spoke to reporters in Cairo where he is visiting as a member of an Israeli military delegation, said in reply to questions that there is virtually no hostage situation for which a solution cannot be found. He said this was true for the Teheran hostages but there were political considerations which ruled out a military operation in their case.

Shomron, commander of Israel's southern front, was accompanied in Cairo by Gen. Yehoshua Sagy, chief of military intelligence, Gen. Moshe Nativ, head of the army's manpower branch and Michael Shur, director general of military industries. The delegation, headed by Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Zipori, is in Egypt to foster friendship between the military establishments of the two countries.

BRITISH FOREIGN SECRETARY TRIES TO 'ASSURE JEWISH LEADERS ON BRITAIN'S STAND ON ISRAEL, P.L.C. By Maurice Samuelson

LONDON, March 17 (JTA) -- Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington told Jewish leaders today that in a Middle East settlement, Palestinian recognition of Israel's right to exist should be balanced by Israeli acceptance of Palestinian political rights. At the same time, he assured them that there had been no change in British policy towards the Palestine Liberation Organization or over Palestinian rights since his address to the UN General Assembly last September.

According to a Foreign Office spokesman, he also stressed British support for Israel's security, reaffirmed backing for the Camp David agreement and hoped that the negotiations on autonomy would be successful.

Lord Carrington gave his assurances during an hour-long meeting with five leaders of the Jewish community who had asked to meet him following signs of a pro-Palestinian shift in British and European Economic Community (EEC) policy.

The delegation was headed by MP Greville Janner, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews. It included Lord Janner, his father, who is the president of the British Zionist Federation, Arye Handler, chairman of the Board of Deputies' Israel Committee, Eric Moonman, chairman of the Zionist Federation, and Michael Fidler, director of the Conservative Friends of Israel.

Greville Janner later said that he felt "reassured" that Lord Carrington had stated categorically and publicly that there was no change in British policy. The delegation also achieved its other aim of

showing the united opposition of British and European Jewries to the PLO and to a Palestinian state. Later, however, Lord Carrington replied in the negative when asked in the House of Lords whether he regarded the PLO as a terrorist organization. He said he did not think the PLO "as such" was a terrorist organization, although some elements of the PLO had in the past associated with terrorists. He added, "It would be a great mistake to think you can get a settlement without account being taken of the PLO."

SHARON CONVINCED U.S. IS SEEKING TO CREATE A PALESTINIAN STATE

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, March 17 (JTA) — Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon returned yesterday from a visit to the U.S., convinced that it is seeking the creation of a Palestinian state and that Israel must vigorously oppose such a policy. He insisted that he was not interfering in American domestic politics when he exhorted Jewish leaders in New York last week to "stand up" to the Carter Administration.

Sharon told reporters at Ben Gurion Airport, "Four years ago I did not call for supporting Carter and now I did not call to vote against him. All I did was to convey a clear-cut reminder that the existence of Jerusalem and Israel and their security are not an internal American affair. They are the life and death question for Israel. I told the American Jews that it was time to speak of this in clear, loud voices," he said.

Sharon's remarks while in the U.S., prompted Minister of Trade and Industry Gidon Palf to question Premier Menachem Begin yesterday as to whether the Agriculture Minister's statements did not jeopardize Israel's case. Begin suggested that any discussion of the matter should be held in Sharon's presence. It may be taken up at next Sunday's Cabinet meeting.

While in the U.S., Sharon met with Secretary of State Cyrus Vance, special Ambassador to the Mideast Sol Linowitz, and other American figures. He said on his return that neither the Americans he spoke with nor the American Jewish community is aware of the facts of the situation with respect to the settlements. They lack maps and material which explain the importance of the settlements, he said, adding: "I regard this as a failure of our information campaign. We must present our case in bold, true facts and this will help us out of the present situation."

BLUM SAYS ISRAEL FEELS ISOLATED IN VIEW OF UN, EEC PRO-PLO MOVES

NEW YORK, March 17 (JTA) — Yehuda Blum, Israel's Ambassador to the United Nations, told some 600 participants at the mid-winter conference of the National Committee for Labor Israel here yesterday that during the past few weeks Israel has felt intensely isolated among the family of nations. He cited as examples the anti-Israel resolution adopted by the UN Security Council on March 1 and the European Economic Community accommodating itself to the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Blum told the conference, which was dedicated to the 60th anniversary year of Histadrut in Israel and which also honored attorney and civic leader Aaron Solomon, that the UN resolution, for which the U.S. voted along with the other 14 Security Council members, denies Israel its basic right to security and survival and opposes the Camp David accords. "For the first time in the

history of a Security Council resolution, PLO terminology aimed at the destruction of Israel has been adopted," Blum declared.

The Ambassador added: "The acceptance by the Security Council of this PLO terminology is another step in accommodating the PLO, a trend which has become obvious in the past two or three weeks, particularly within the European countries."

Sol Chaikin, president of the International Ladies Garment Workers Union, cited Solomon for his devotion to the cause of humanity and egalitarianism. He further noted that although the forces within the American trade union movement may be changing, the basic principles remain and that the expression of the AFL-CIO will continue to steadfastly support Histadrut and the State of Israel.

GISCARD, SCHMIDT AGREE ON MIDEAST

By David Kantor

BONN, March 17 (JTA) — French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt were reportedly in full agreement today that cooperation of the Arab world with the West in the Afghanistan crisis implies an urgent solution to the Middle East conflict. In their informal consultations in Hamburg yesterday and today, the two leaders also agreed that the Euro-Arab dialogue should be renewed and intensified, and that the European Economic Community (EEC) should go ahead with its preparations of a Middle East initiative to fill in the diplomatic vacuum expected after the May 26 deadline for the autonomy negotiations between Egypt, Israel and the United States.

According to government sources in Bonn, both Giscard and Schmidt believe that the conflict with Israel is a higher priority to the Arabs than Soviet expansionism. Last week Schmidt said in a press conference here that what the Arabs call Zionist danger is for them more acute than the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan and its repercussions to the Middle East.

Meanwhile, the German radio reported today that Israel has shown its displeasure with the expected European initiative urging the participation of representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization in any future Middle East settlement. The issue came up in a meeting in Jerusalem between Israel Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir and German Minister for Research and Technology Volker Hauff, who is currently visiting Israel.

CABINET GRANTS TEACHERS' WAGE DEMANDS

By David Landau and Yitzhak Shargil

JERUSALEM, March 17 (JTA) — The Cabinet decided yesterday to grant the wage demands of striking teachers in compliance with the order of a district labor court. But it avoided the problem of where the extra money — estimated at IL 3-5 billion — would come from. That matter was referred to the Economic Committee, headed by Finance Minister Yigal Hurwitz, who objected strenuously to wage hikes for the teachers.

This morning, however, the committee agreed unanimously to Hurwitz's proposal to pare the budget of each government ministry by 1.5 percent in the coming fiscal year. This is expected to provide the cash to pay the teachers without printing more money to fuel inflation.

The Cabinet's decision means that the government has abandoned its plans to appeal to the national labor court against the district court's order. Hurwitz had objected but was overwhelmed by the majority sentiment of his colleagues. The latter were apparently influenced by Education Minister Ze'evulun Hammer of the National Religious Party who hinted

that he might quit unless the teachers got their raises. Such a move could have precipitated a Cabinet crisis and possibly toppled the government.

Ministers Fall Into Line

Hurwitz, nevertheless, demanded that the Cabinet show him where the extra money was to be found. His IL 405 billion national budget recently adopted for the next fiscal year made no provisions for higher teachers' salaries. Suggestions that "other budget items" be cut were not popular. Deputy Premier Yigael Yadin declared that he would oppose any reductions in welfare and social betterment.

The decision by the Economic Committee was facilitated by Defense Minister Ezer Weizman who assented by telephone to prune the defense budget by 1.5 percent. The other ministers then fell in line.

Hurwitz, Hammer and other members of the economic team insisted that the concession to the teachers would not touch off a new round of wage demands from other employe groups. They were swiftly proven wrong when the Engineers Association announced last night that it wants the same raises the teachers have been given.

Ironically, it was the wage increase won by the strong engineers' union more than two years ago that led to the teachers' demands for higher pay. A clause in the teachers' contract links their salaries to those of government-employed engineers. The teachers finally won their victory and, in fact, received slightly more than the engineers. The latter now insist on equal treatment and are demanding the same increment.

EGYPTIANS SNUB ISRAEL'S ENVOY BUT ARE RECEPTIVE TO ISRAELI GENERAL

By David Landau and Yitzhak Shargil

JERUSALEM, March 17 (JTA) -- Israel's Ambassador to Egypt, Eliahu Ben-Elissar, is getting the cold shoulder from Cairo's diplomatic and social set in sharp contrast to the genuinely warm reception the Egyptian military has given a visiting Israeli General, Dan Shomron, commander of the southern front.

Shomron, who commanded the famous Entebbe rescue operation in July, 1976, is a member of a large Israeli military delegation headed by Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Zipori. Today he was the guest of the Egyptian Second Army and its commander, Gen. Ibrahim el-Auadi, who was Shomron's antagonist on the field of combat in the Yom Kippur War. Shomron became the first Israeli officer to visit an Egyptian army unit in field deployment.

Ben-Elissar, on the other hand, has had little social contact with Egyptians since he presented his credentials to President Anwar Sadat last month, according to Sami Greenspan, the Yediot Achronot correspondent in Cairo. Prime Minister Mustapha Khalil has not yet found time to receive him. He is not invited to parties and Egypt's social elite refuse to meet with him beyond the minimum requirements of protocol, Greenspan reported.

According to Greenspan, Ambassador and Mrs. Ben-Elissar had to call off a party they planned to give this week when 15 prominent Egyptians declined their invitation. The invitees included senior officials, newspaper editors and literary figures.

Ben-Elissar has yet to be interviewed by a leading Cairo newspaper. Al Akhbar sent a reporter but the story has not appeared. Greenspan observed

that the Egyptian press marked Ben-Elissar's arrival in Cairo three weeks ago with a flurry of critical articles referring to the Israeli envoy's hard-line statements on Jewish settlements in the occupied territories.

But the "social boycott" does not extend to the Egyptian man-in-the-street, Greenspan, himself a native of Cairo, reported. Wherever the envoy goes he is greeted with smiles, handshakes and even kisses for himself and his wife, Nitza.

GERMANY TO QUESTION EX-LATVIAN COP

By Ben Kayfetz

TORONTO, March 17 (JTA) -- West Germany wants the Ontario Supreme Court to order a North York man, who was a Latvian police officer during the Nazi occupation, to tell what he knows of two mass executions of civilians in Latvia in the early 1940s. The testimony of Harold Puntulis, a builder, would be part of the prosecution's case in the trial against Albert Eichelis, a Latvian police chief who was Puntulis' superior officer.

Eichelis is charged with murder and conspiracy in the mass execution of 270 men, women and children near the Latvian town of Rositten, now Rezekne about 140 miles southeast of Riga. This includes the execution of 170 imprisoned residents of the village of Odrini in January, 1942 and the execution of 100 Jews in September or October, 1941.

Eichelis was the district police chief for Rositten and Puntulis was in charge of one of the police stations. West Germany wants the North York man to testify about what happened to the 270 persons. According to documents filed with the court, Puntulis will be asked whether he knows if Eichelis shot those who weren't killed immediately in the execution.

West Germany says Puntulis' testimony is "essential," but that Puntulis refused to give any evidence seven years ago, even in a proposed hearing before the West German Consul General in Toronto. Puntulis, who has been in Canada since the late 1940s, is a Canadian citizen and can't be forced to give evidence outside Canada. But he can be ordered to give testimony under oath before a special examiner in Toronto. A transcript of this testimony could be used in the West German trial.

Lawyers for both the West German government and Puntulis have agreed to ask the Ontario Supreme Court to keep the hearing secret. Eichelis was tried in absentia by a Latvian court in 1965 and was sentenced to death for war crimes during the Nazi occupation of Latvia. Puntulis was also tried and sentenced to death by the Soviet Latvian court, a fact not mentioned in the news reports here. Puntulis' name has been widely mentioned in the last 15 years as a man charged with serious war crimes but he has not been charged in Canada or extradited.

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- The number of Soviet Jews leaving the USSR is declining, Rafael Kotlowitz, acting chairman of the World Zionist Organization Executive and head of the immigration and absorption department reported to the Executive. Kotlowitz said the decline began last November, when the Soviet authorities first reduced the number of exit visas they had granted. In the Ukraine and Moldavia the government issued exit permits only to those Jews who had immediate families in Israel. Some 40 percent of all Jews leaving the USSR used to come from the Ukraine. Their number has shrunk to 20 percent. At the same time, Kotlowitz reported, the dropout rate has also increased to 57 percent.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES DESPERATION IN DAMASCUS

By Solly Press

JOHANNESBURG, March 17 (JTA) -- Due perhaps to the ascendance of the heterodox Alawid minority over the Syrian branch of the Baath pan-Arab movement, the Syrian regime has come to oppose -- more stridently than its predecessors -- the Christians, Jews and Sunni Moslems in Syria and the Fertile Crescent.

Consequently, Syria's Christian founder of the Baath, Michel Aflaq, has fled to Baghdad, a gain for the Iraqi Baath. Sunni Moslem fanatics have turned to assassinating supporters of the Hafez Assad regime. Last month, the Damascus Lawyers' Association publicly demanded the lifting of the state of emergency in force since 1963. There have been intermittent charges from the Palestine Liberation Organization that the Assad regime has turned "Black Septembrist," and from Moscow, that Syria has not moved towards Marxism.

Now, a confluence of interests has brought this disparate trinity closer together. Assad desperately needs a foreign adventure to divert his countrymen's attentions elsewhere. PLO chief Yasir Arafat is fearful that Israel, together with "normalized" Egypt, will achieve a separate deal with the West Bankers and Gazans, and Soviet President Leonid Brezhnev urgently requires an olympian red herring to draw the world's eyes away from the Afghan crisis and the Islamic Conference's condemnation.

Hence the renewed propoganda line that Israel is planning a war against Syria and that the West supports Islam in Kabul but opposes it in Nablus. The truth is that the Soviet Union backs the PLO against all non-Marxists in the Middle East while suppressing 20 million Afghan Moslems and millions more inside the USSR. The current aming by Russia of Assad and Arafat is, of course, directed not only at Egypt, Israel, Turkey and Lebanon, but also at the oil-rich Arabian Peninsula.

Is it too late to divert Assad from the path of treachery? Premier Menachem Begin in Israel, Maj. Saad Haddad in south Lebanon, and President Anwar Sodat in Egypt are remaining watchful. It is to be hoped that the rest of the Middle East and the West will have been alerted by Afghanistan's fall.

There was a time when Aflaq's influence in the Baath pan-Arab renaissance movement was still felt, that Israeli Socialists and Baathists had come together for talks in Britain, under the encouraging eye of the Socialist International. Both sides had a stake -- and still have -- in the revival of their region, in the improvement in the quality of life, in education, in combatting religious fanaticism, in development, and much else.

The Past And Future

Unlike the earlier Hashemite-led pan-Arabs, the Baathists at first appeared capable of reaching out beyond the aristocracy. Also, the Baath constitution of 1951 was the first Semitic document to call for the involvement of Ethiopia in regional affairs, and for Middle Eastern status for Mediterranean Europe. There had even been a glimmer of hope for democracy when the Baathists, in common with other Syrian parties, joined forces in 1961 to oust Nasserist tyranny from what was then the "Northern Province" of the United Arab Republic.

Perhaps the Baath was born too soon. Perhaps the Balkanization of the Middle Eastern subregion in which it found itself was too great an obstacle for its planners. More likely, the fact that the Baath's leadership appeared to be in too great a hurry and devoid of understanding the incremental techniques of true region-building on the pattern of the European Economic Community, made Baathism shoot its bolt.

There is no way that Umayyad-style neo-imperialism -- which is what the Baath came to represent after the Alawid ascendance -- can be disguised as regionalism. Hence it would be surprising if the rantings of the Syrian Foreign Minister, Abdel Khalim Khadaam, before the Assembly of the Council of Europe, will be seen as constructive by the EEC organizations, at least.

If the Baath has failed to understand regionalism -- and that seems to be the case also with the Iraqi faction -- someone or something else should take place. It will be recalled that, in the beginning, the modern pan-Jewish (Zionist), pan-Arab, and the Ethiopian reconstructionist movements also began as parallel developments. Under the impact of contemporary events, however, they diverged.

Today, two generations after their rise, they still have enough talent to face the new challenges of regionalism, beyond the tried and failed federation, league and empire. The regionalist approach is not an unattractive alternative to waiting for the Messiah. If anything, it may hasten his coming.

SIX JEWS WIN LITERARY AWARDS

By Chaim Lozdeiski

MEXICO CITY, March 17 (JTA) -- Six Jewish authors, poets and journalists have been named the winners of the 1979 Fernando Jeno Literary Awards in recognition of their writings in Yiddish, Hebrew and Spanish. They are the poet Moshe Shulstein of Paris, and Yitzhak Luden of Tel Aviv, in the category of Yiddish writing; Naomi Wisnitzer and Bentzion Epstein, both from Israel, writing in Hebrew; and Ariel Roffe, for his biography of Menachem Begin, and Aminda Narosky, both of Buenos Aires, writing in Spanish.

The awards, which carry a cash prize of \$500, will be presented to the recipients at a literary event on March 25. They are sponsored by the Fernando Jeno Fund which is administered by the Central Jewish Committee of Mexico.

SIMON WISHNIACK DEAD AT 87

MEXICO CITY, March 17 (JTA) -- Funeral services were held here for Simon Wishniack, a pioneer of the Jewish community in Mexico, who died at the age of 87 after a long illness. Wishniack, a businessman and philanthropist, was born in Siberia and came to Mexico from the United States after World War I. He was a founder and president of several local Jewish institutions, among them a Jewish day school, the Jewish Banco Mercantil and the first Jewish cultural center in Mexico. He was also active in the local motion picture industry.

HAIFA (JTA) -- A military court imposed life sentences Monday on five terrorists, including two Palestinians from Kalkilya who were convicted of murdering an Israeli soldier they picked up as a hitchhiker. The others, two Syrians and a Pakistani, were captured seven months ago when they landed in Israel in a rubber boat on a terrorist mission. The court found that their orders were to seize hostages for the release of imprisoned members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and if that was not possible, to kill anyone they met.