

JTA daily news bulletin

Contents copyright. Reproduction only by previous arrangement.

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

Vol. LIX - 64th Year

Friday, February 20, 1981

No. 35

MENDELEVICH RECEIVES JOYOUS WELCOME ON ARRIVAL IN ISRAEL

By Hugh Orgel and David Landau

TEL AVIV, Feb. 19 (JTA) -- ¹⁹⁸¹ Mendelevich arrived in Israel last night to a joyous welcome from hundreds of singing, dancing, cheering people, including Cabinet ministers who came to Ben Gurion Airport to greet him. The former Prisoner of Conscience, the last of the Jewish defendants at the 1970 Leningrad hijack trial to be freed, had spent 11 years in Soviet prisons and labor camps. His unexpected release this week electrified the nation.

Premier Menachem Begin hailed it as a great event for the Jewish people and Leon Dulzin, chairman of the World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency Executives, called his arrival here "a festival for the Jewish people." He said Mendelevich had "suffered as an Orthodox Jew and as a Zionist ... He embodies the very essence of the Zionist struggle -- not to surrender, and to triumph in the end."

Absorption Minister David Levy was on hand at the airport to personally present Mendelevich with Immigrant Certificate No. 1 as he stepped off the El Al plane that brought him from Vienna. The certificate is the first of the new series now issued by the Absorption Ministry instead of the Jewish Agency as was the case in the past.

Greets Welcomers In Hebrew

The 33-year-old Orthodox Jew looked haggard from his long ordeal and the excitement attending his freedom. Speaking fluent Hebrew, he told the welcomers, "As you greet me, so I greet you who are here building up this country. May we all continue to observe the holy commandments enjoined on us by God."

According to his sister, Rivka Dori of Gush Etzion who was at the airport to meet him, Mendelevich insisted on walking from Ben Gurion Airport to the Western Wall in Jerusalem -- a distance of some 40 miles, mostly uphill. He said he had studied maps while in prison and thought the distance was not too great. But friends and relatives deterred him from undertaking that feat. He was persuaded to travel by car to the outskirts of the city and continued his pilgrimage from there on foot.

Elements In Mendelevich's Release

The reasons why the Soviet authorities decided to release Mendelevich at this time -- more than a year before he was due to complete his 12 year sentence -- and allow him to leave for Israel remained a mystery. All Begin would say, in a radio appearance yesterday, was that the Israeli government received hints two days earlier that he might soon be freed. He would not explain where the hints came from or how the release was achieved.

Levy told reporters at the airport that many friendly governments, organizations and individuals had been active in attempting to obtain freedom for Mendelevich but that much work remained to be done to secure the release of other Jews imprisoned in the USSR.

According to reports from Vienna yesterday, the World Jewish Congress played an important role through its president, Edgar Bronfman, who has close personal contacts with the Soviet Ambassador in Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin.

Dulzin said Mendelevich's release was one of a number of recent "signs" that give grounds to hope that Jewish migration from the Soviet Union this year would be "much higher than last year." He said that while Israel could not read the Kremlin's motives, the Jewish Agency's assessments of these matters had proven fairly accurate in the past.

Dulzin said that a desire by the Soviets to improve relations with the new American Administration, the combined efforts of world Jewry with governments, international bodies and even Communist parties outside the USSR and the forthcoming Communist Party Congress in Moscow usually an occasion for amnesty, all contributed to the hope for an upswing in emigration figures.

YADIN DISSOLVES HIS PARTY

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 19 (JTA) -- The reformist political party founded by Deputy Premier Yigael Yadin, which surged to prominence by winning 15 seats in the 1977 Knesset elections, was dissolved by its founder yesterday. The 63-year-old internationally prominent archaeologist and former Chief of Staff of Israel's armed forces said the party, originally known as the Democratic Movement for Change, would not stand for election when Israelis go to the polls again next June 30.

Yadin said on a television interview that he had come to the conclusion that he himself was not a "political asset" but he insisted that his movement had accomplished much of what it set out to do -- a claim many Israelis might dispute. "I can look the 200,000 people who voted for us (in 1977) in the eye and say we did great things," Yadin said.

Among them he mentioned its role in ending the 30-year rule of the Labor Party which was defeated by Premier Menachem Begin's Likud four years ago; social and legal legislation it introduced in the Knesset; and the help it gave Begin, after joining his coalition, in carrying through the peace process with Egypt which was opposed by many in Begin's own Herut party.

Says Party Made Mistakes

Yadin admitted that his party had made mistakes, among them the inclusion of the "Change" faction, more reformist than its other constituents, which Yadin contended was "naive." The "Change" faction broke away about two years ago to form an independent opposition party, Shinui.

The Democratic Movement, which remained in the Cabinet, was further reduced in size by individual defections and its electoral constituency faded away. Public opinion polls in recent months have indicated that the DM would not win a single Knesset seat in the next elections.

Its three Cabinet ministers were consistently voted down by Likud hardliners on issues in which they opposed government policies such as the proliferation of settlements in the occupied territories and new concessions to the religious bloc. Yadin's movement also failed in its 1977 campaign promise to reform

Israel's proportional representation electoral system in favor of a more representative system.

Yadin ended his political swan song on a humorous note. He told the TV interviewer that at lectures he gave in the U.S. he was always introduced as "a great chief of staff, a great archaeologist and a great politician." He observed that "it's true that all three are connected with the soil. Soldiers dig trenches, archaeologists excavate and as a politician, I find myself now deep in the ground."

FALWELL: I'M NOT AN ANTI-SEMIT

TEL AVIV, Feb. 19 (JTA) — Jerry Falwell, the leader of the Moral Majority movement in the United States, arrived in Israel today on a visit and denied that he was an anti-Semite. Falwell has been criticized by some American Jewish leaders for fostering a climate which could lead to religious intolerance and encourage anti-Semitism.

Asked at Ben Gurion Airport about charges that he was anti-Semitic, Falwell blamed the National Council of Churches (NCC) for spreading that rumor. "We have actually been anticipating that charge and predicted it much before it happened," he said. "The reason is that the National Council of Churches, which originated a great deal of that, has itself begun to be quite anti-Semitic, in my opinion. When you endorse the Palestine Liberation Organization and suggest that we negotiate with (Yasir) Arafat and the PLO, I think you become anti-Semitic."

This was a reference to the Middle East policy statement which the NCC adopted late last year which called on Israel to recognize the right of Palestinians to national self-determination, including a "sovereign state." This call came under fire from American Jewish organizations.

EX-NAZI FILES TO RUN FOR SEAT IN CONGRESS FROM MICHIGAN

DETROIT, Feb. 19 (JTA) — Gerald Carlson, of Dearborn, a former member of the local American Nazi Party and a self-proclaimed white supremacist leader, who won the Republican nomination for Congress in Michigan's 15th District last August but was defeated in November, has filed to run again.

This time, Carlson is seeking the 4th District seat previously held by David Stockman who is now director of the Office of Management and Budget in the Reagan Administration. Carlson said he will run on a "white rights" platform and stress problems of urban decay.

He won the 15th District Republican nomination last summer in a heavily Democratic district. Embarrassed Republican officials attributed his 33 percent showing in the November election to the Reagan landslide victory. In the primaries he received 55 percent of the vote. Carlson now faces strong opposition in the March 24 Republican primary race in the 4th District, including two state legislators.

Carlson reportedly had been a member of the Ku Klux Klan, the National States Right Party, the John Birch Society and the American Independent Party before joining the Nazis.

BRIGHT OUTLOOK FOR ISRAEL'S AVIATION INDUSTRY IN THE 1980s

TEL AVIV, Feb. 19 (JTA) — The outlook for Israel's aviation industry in the 1980s is bright according to various experts and officials in the

field, with respect to the manufacture of aircraft, the economical transportation of passengers and freight and the marketing of Israeli-built planes abroad.

Yosef Ma'yan, Director General of the Defense Ministry, told the 23rd annual Israel Aeronautical Conference here several days ago that Israel will invest \$1 billion over the next eight years to develop the Lavie jet fighter, a second generation combat aircraft that will replace both the Israeli-made Kfir and the American Skyhawks. Ma'yan said he was not aware that any other country plans such second generation aircraft and if they did, they would be more expensive than the Lavie.

Menachem Leviathan, head of the engineering department of El Al, described fuel economy measures being taken by the airline with its Boeing jet aircraft. He said they were being copied by other airlines which use the Boeing planes. Leviathan cited a recent precise study made of the in-flight fresh water requirements of El Al passengers which led to a reduction of the water carried and an attendant increase in the weight available for fuel, passengers or freight. He said this saved some \$1 million a year.

He said other savings were theoretically possible but had to be tested. He mentioned in that connection the construction of a mathematical model of the optimum speeds a plane should fly under various wind conditions.

Meanwhile, Israel Aircraft Industries announced that their Israel-designed and produced Westwind executive jet has captured almost 25 percent of the American market for such aircraft. They said 223 of the planes have been sold in the U.S. so far. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism has promised an allocation of 12 million Shekels (about \$1.3 million) to encourage the development of IAI's Astro 1125 executive jet to replace the Westwind 1124 model. The Astro is expected to be airborne sometime in 1984-1985.

ISRAEL EMBASSY IN CAIRO MARKS ITS FIRST ANNIVERSARY

TEL AVIV, Feb. 19 (JTA) — The Israel Embassy in Cairo is this week marking its first anniversary as Israel's first diplomatic representation in an Arab country and its staff members say they no longer feel like pioneers but like "normal diplomats."

During the past year, 5,500 Israelis crossed the Neot Sinai border post in the Sinai on their way to Egypt by road, but only 300 Egyptian tourists have come to Israel this way.

The border crossing point has handled a total of 142,000 passengers, of whom 17,000 were foreign tourists. Most of those using the border facilities were local Arabs from the Sinai going to and from their former homes and places of work in the northern Sinai.

TEL AVIV (JTA) — The army has announced a public call-up exercise of reserve soldiers and made it known well in advance to avoid misinterpretation by Arab countries. Under Israel's "open" call-up system, passwords known to members of the various units are broadcast by radio, television and in the press. The men so notified report immediately to their units. The call-up will be for a few hours, to test the efficiency of the system. In all such exercises care is taken to ensure that the Arab states know it is an exercise only, and not a real mobilization.

MIXED SIGNALS FROM ISRAEL AND U.S. FRIENDS OF ISRAEL TOWARD U.S. SALE OF ARMS EQUIPMENT TO SAUDIS

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Feb. 19 (JTA) — Mixed signals appear to be coming from Israel and from American friends of Israel toward the proposal that the U.S. deliver to Saudi Arabia additional fuel tanks and bomb racks to enhance the combat performance of the 60 F-15 jet fighters Saudi Arabia was authorized to purchase here almost three years ago. The issue is now under consideration by the Reagan Administration.

Key Senators have voiced protests against delivery of the extra equipment on grounds that it would upset the Israeli-Arab military balance and effect the security of the U.S. besides repudiating the pledge made by Defense Secretary Harold Brown to the Senate in 1978 that the F-15s being sold to Saudi Arabi would not be given improved combat capability.

In Jerusalem, however, caution was expressed in the past few days by Israel government officials and similarly in Washington by some friends of Israel that the Congress should not make overt moves against the proposed delivery and thereby create a confrontation with the Reagan Administration which thus far has been strongly supportive of Israel. In that connection, observers noted the State Department's blast this week at the non-aligned nations conference in New Delhi which called for moves to deprive Israel of its credentials in the United Nations General Assembly.

Nevertheless, Sen. Edward Kennedy (D-Mass) told the Senate, "I am strongly opposed to suggestions coming from very high sources" that the Saudis receive the extra equipment. He said the deliveries would "threaten U.S. security, Israel and the peace in the Middle East."

Congressional Opposition To The Sale

Two weeks ago, Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich) told the Senate that "no real Saudi security need" is "filled by this equipment but real regional tensions and instability would be created." Levin, who recently visited the Middle East as a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee, said that the Saudis are vulnerable to "a commando-like assault" against key points in their oil pipelines and against such assaults "the F-15s have little value."

Levin added, "The oil weapon threat must be put in its place. The Saudis must know that we know they need our protection and if they cut off oil to us in retaliation for some action they do not approve of, we will have that much less incentive to protect them against the threatening world they face."

When the move to provide the extra equipment surfaced last summer, 69 Senators sent a letter to President Carter reminding him of Secretary Brown's pledge and reiterating their opposition to the deliveries. Early last week, Sen. Joseph Biden, of Delaware, the second ranking Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, began sounding out Committee members on a letter to President Reagan against the proposed delivery.

Biden began his effort after Defense Secretary Casper Weinberger said the Reagan Administration looked with favor on the Saudi request, but it was halted when Congress recessed for George Washington's Birthday. The Senator is in Delaware and

an aide told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that he would not return to Washington before next week.

Percy: 'Not The Way To Do It'

Meanwhile, Sen. Charles Percy (R. Ill) chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, told a group of selected reporters at a breakfast meeting here this morning that he had "heard many Senators" talk of a letter to the President opposing delivery of the equipment but "that's not the way to do it."

Percy said he told Israel's Ambassador in Washington, Ephraim Evron, last night that no Administration decision will be made on the delivery until it is taken up with his committee. "I think Congress will go along" with the delivery and that "it can be done in such a way that would meet with Israel's approval," Percy said.

Asked what the U.S. would do for Israel in return, Percy said "That's down the road." He said the Israelis know the problem.

There have been indications in the past several weeks that Israel will not seek additional military equipment here except possibly interceptor planes, but that they would seek a commitment by the Reagan Administration to co-produce in Israel weaponry that would enable Israel to manufacture equipment for sale abroad. This has long been an Israeli desire in order to ease its severe economic situation.

PRIZE ESTABLISHED FOR BEST WORK ON HOLOCAUST AND ISRAEL'S REVIVAL

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 19 (JTA) — An Israeli family which has requested anonymity, has established an annual prize for the best literary work on the Holocaust and Israel's revival for which authors of any faith or nationality will be eligible, it was announced here by the Board of Trustees of the Yad Vashem Memorial Foundation. An inter-denominational board of trustees has been appointed to administer the \$7,000 award which has been named the Katzetnik Prize.

The prize will be granted "To a candidate of any faith or nationality for an original work of excellence on the Jewish Holocaust and Israel's revival, a work which testifies against hatred between fellow men and encourages, through mind and deed, the dignity of man created in the image of God."

Its genesis was unusual. According to Joseph Klamman, a local journalist, he was approached by a prominent Tel Aviv resident about 18 months ago who said his family wanted to donate the capital sum of \$70,000 to establish an award in the name of a writer who was an inmate of a Nazi concentration camp and signed his works "Katzetnik 135633," the camp number tattooed on his arm. According to Klamman, the donor's only son had been a drug addict.

Extensive treatment in Israel and abroad failed to help, but his readings of books from his father's library by "Katzetnik" cured him of his addiction because of the deep emotional impression they made, according to Klamman's account. He said the family had wished to credit the author but the latter asked that the prize be named simply "Katzetnik" in memory of all who perished in the Nazi death camps.

The author's wife, Nina Di-Nur, and Gideon Hausner, a Knesset member and head of the Yad Vashem Foundation, named the prize trustees who are now appointing an inter-denominational committee of judges. They include Father Marcel DuBois, a Catholic who teaches philosophy at the Hebrew University, and Farid-Wajdi Tabari, the Kadi (Muslim religious judge) of Jerusalem.

'NON-ZIONIST' JEWISH AGENCY BOARD MEMBERS ANNOUNCE ENDORSEMENT OF THE WZO'S JERUSALEM PROGRAM

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 19 (JTA) -- The "non-Zionist" members of the Jewish Agency Board of Governors have announced their "endorsement" of the World Zionist Organization's Jerusalem Program which declares the "centrality" of Israel in Jewish life.

At the end of a three-day retreat in Caesaria, the Board announced endorsement, too, of two other cardinal planks of the WZO ideology: fostering Jewish "and Zionist" education; and "active encouragement" of aliya from the free world.

Board chairman Max Fisher of Detroit termed the endorsement "historic" and said it meant "we are all one family ... we are all Zionists."

In practical terms, the "endorsement" will mean an overhaul of the Jewish Agency -- to be planned and formulated by a series of sub-commissions -- to meet what Fisher called "the aims of the eighties." Agency chairman Leon Dulzin told reporters that "within one year" these sub-commissions will have reported back and the new "joint approach to the main Jewish issues" will be on the way to implementation.

Meaning Of The Endorsement

Dulzin and Fisher made it clear at a joint press conference here last night that the "endorsement" of Zionist goals by the diaspora Jewish leaders who comprise the "non-Zionist" half of the Agency Board of Governors did not mean that the organizations represented by those leaders would immediately affiliate to the WZO. The endorsement, Dulzin explained, was "by these leaders personally."

But Dulzin predicted that within five or 10 years there would indeed be a "unitary" Zionist movement (that is, not based on a party label in the diaspora) and that the "brave action" taken by the Board members this week in Caesaria would with time affect the organizations and communities from which they hail.

Fisher said such an action would have been inconceivable 10 or 15 years ago. Among those who endorsed the Zionist aims this week, he noted, were four presidents (three past, one serving) of the Council of Jewish Federations.

Both Dulzin and Fisher noted that neither the Jerusalem Program nor the WZO constitution "obliges people to make a personal commitment to aliya." It was "an historic step forward, though," they said, for the so-called "Zionists and non-Zionists" to unite now behind a program that set aliya -- from the Western world as well as distressed countries -- as a supreme goal.

In a personal statement Dulzin added that he "has never liked it when Zionists, no matter how old they are, demand of other Zionists that they go on aliya -- while they themselves stay in the diaspora." He said he made the comment "as an aleh who came to Israel out of Zionism."

His remark was directed at some young Zionists in the diaspora who demand that the WZO insist on a personal commitment to aliya from its leadership.

LAHIS RESIGNS FROM AGENCY POST

JERUSALEM, Feb. 19 (JTA) -- Shmuel Lahis, for the past three years Director General of the Jewish Agency, resigned yesterday. The Agency

Executive confirmed his resignation, and chairman Leon Dulzin said a small appointment committee would be set up at once to search for a successor.

Lahis' resignation had been brewing for more than a week -- ever since he publicly criticized the Agency and the government for their approach to "yerida." He recommended that a Deputy Premier be named to lead the "national struggle" against yerida which, he warned, threatened the future of the State. But his recommendation was rejected by both the government and the Agency. Following this, he openly criticized the Agency -- his employer -- in a radio interview.

Max Fisher, chairman of the Jewish Agency's Board of Governors, said yesterday that following Lahis' open criticism it would have been unthinkable for him to stay on. "It is not a matter of freedom of speech," Fisher said, but of fundamental rules of administration.

THEFTS FROM SYNAGOGUES CONTINUE

NEW YORK, Feb. 19 (JTA) -- A total of 17 Torahs of an estimated value of \$186,000 have been stolen from synagogues in various parts of Brooklyn since last month. While they have yet to come up with clues, local police believe the thefts are linked and may be the work of an organized gang which steals the holy scrolls on consignment for fences operating in other regions of the country.

The largest single theft occurred during the night of Jan. 3-4 when thieves made off with seven Torahs valued at \$105,000 from the Yeshiva Yavne synagogue, a congregation in the Boro Park section. On Feb. 9, eight more Torahs and other religious artifacts were stolen from the Avenue Z Jewish Center near Brighton Beach. They were valued at \$75,000.

The latest theft of two Torahs valued at \$6,000 was from the Hasidic Synagogue in the Midwood section of Flatbush. Witnesses described the thief as a white male. There have been other thefts from synagogues and churches in Brooklyn, mainly of gold and silver ornaments. The Torahs, however, have no re-sale value except to congregations.

One police theory is that the stolen Torahs are being sold by fences to newly established Jewish communities in the "sun belt" -- the south and south-west -- where many Jewish families from the north-east have resettled in recent years.

MAPAM WILL CONTINUE ALIGNMENT WITH LABOR PARTY IN NEXT ELECTION

TEL AVIV, Feb. 19 (JTA) -- Mapam will continue in partnership with the Labor Party at the next elections but will insist that the agreed platform of the Labor-Mapam alignment will not be identical with that of the Labor Party alone, the Mapam convention decided. Mapam will insist on continuation of the present arrangement whereby its members obtain every seventh seat won by the alignment in the elections.

Some Labor members have demanded that this number be reduced on the grounds that one in seven would mean over-representation for Mapam.

Mapam will demand freedom to vote as it chooses on religious affairs, the electoral system, settlement policies and on the question of extending Israeli law to the Golan Heights, unless this is part of an overall peace agreement.

Members of the Labor settlements on the Heights are demanding that Israel law be imposed there and the party as a whole tends to agree, though there is some opposition. But Mapam is against such a move.