

# JTA daily news bulletin

Published by Jewish Telegraphic Agency / 165 West 48th Street / New York, New York 10036

Vol. LIX - 64th Year

Tuesday, March 10, 1981

No. 47

## ISRAEL DISPLEASED WITH U.S. DECISION ON SAUDI ARMS BUT WILL NOT CONFRONT U.S. ON ISSUE

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 9 (JTA) — The Cabinet stated officially today Israel's displeasure with the Reagan Administration's decision to provide Saudi Arabia's F-15 combat planes with offensive capability. But apparently, the government will let the matter rest there and accept the U.S. offer of additional military hardware for Israel.

At a special session devoted to a briefing by Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir on his talks in Washington last month, the Cabinet declared that the supply of offensive equipment for the Saudi aircraft will upset the military balance of power in the Middle East and endanger Israel's security. However, it endorsed the position recommended by Shamir. His thesis is that there is no point in creating a head-on confrontation with the Reagan Administration over the Saudi arms deal.

According to Shamir, Israel should instead concentrate on obtaining appropriate equipment from the U.S. to cope with what it sees as a new military challenge created by improving Saudi Arabia's air power.

## 4 CREWMEN DEAD, 21 MISSING FROM ISRAELI SHIP WHICH SANK ABOUT 95 MILES EAST OF BERMUDA

By William Saphire

NEW YORK, March 9 (JTA) — The Coast Guard said this morning that four crewmen are dead and 21 missing from the Israeli bulk carrier Mezada which sank yesterday in heavy seas about 95 miles east of Bermuda. The rescue of nine others has been confirmed and two are reported rescued but this was unconfirmed, the Coast Guard said. The Navy and Coast Guard are conducting a massive sea-air search for the missing men.

Capt. Johnny Singer, operations manager of the Zim Lines in New York, owners of the vessel, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that there were 35 men and one woman aboard the Mezada when she foundered. He said the woman was the wife of an officer but he would not identify her or anyone else by name pending further information on the rescue operation. He said, however, that the Mezada was commanded by Capt. Gera Levin and that the crew were mixed Israeli and foreign.

According to Singer, the Coast Guard's information is "still preliminary. They are still getting people out of the water. There are still people in the water" as of this morning, he told the JTA.

Transport Minister Chaim Landau sent Capt. Haim Harari, a senior official of the Ministry's shipping division, to Bermuda today to assist in the investigation of the Mezada's sinking. It was reported from Tel Aviv. Landau also sent thanks to the American and other vessels engaged in the rescue operations. Family and friends of crew members milled outside the Zim Lines offices in Haifa for information but the company management advised them to go home and promised that they would be informed of any new development. Petty Officer

Greg Creedon of the U.S. Coast Guard Eastern Sea Frontier in New York told the JTA this morning that the Navy has four ships engaged in the search and rescue operation, including the giant aircraft carrier Forrestal, two frigates and one destroyer. Coast Guard C-130 aircraft and five helicopters from the Forrestal are conducting the search from the air, he said.

According to Creedon, the rescued seamen and the remains of three of the deceased are presently aboard four merchant ships. He said the Damodar Tasaka, bound for Italy, reported eight survivors and one deceased aboard but provided the names of only six survivors. The Polycrest, enroute to Rotterdam, reported one survivor; the motorship High Seas Promise, enroute to Bermuda, said it had one survivor and one deceased aboard; and the motorship Erlangen Express, also bound for Bermuda, reported one deceased. A Navy helicopter based in Bermuda rescued one crew member yesterday.

The Mezada, a 19,000-ton bulk carrier built for the Zim Lines in the 1960s, sailed from Ashdod three weeks ago with a cargo of potash and was due in Baltimore today, according to Singer.

Benny Ze'evi, the Ashdod port pilot who took the ship out of the harbor, said today that everything had been in good order aboard when he left her, it was reported from Tel Aviv.

## STUDY SHOWS ORTHODOX JEWS WILL SUFFER PROPORTIONALLY MORE THAN OTHER GROUPS BY BUDGET CUTS

By David Friedman

NEW YORK, March 9 (JTA) — The Orthodox Jewish community, because it is largely a "lower working and middle class" group, will suffer proportionally more than other communities as a result of President Reagan's proposed budget cuts, according to a study by Agudath Israel of America.

The study by Agudath Israel's Office of Government and Public Affairs, directed by Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky, while noting "it is difficult not to support the motivation behind the President's budget proposals" of some \$50 billion in the 1982 fiscal year which begins Oct. 1, said the proposed cuts would have a "devastating impact" on the Orthodox Jewish community.

Orthodox Jews already spend as much as 22 percent above other Americans for living costs peculiar to the observance of Jewish law, the Agudath analysts stressed. They noted that the number of poor among Orthodox Jews are also increasing, even among "kollel" students (postgraduate rabbinic fellows), who have come to rely on such federal programs as food stamps, the Urban Development Action Grant, the Small Neighborhood Development program and Medicaid to survive.

## Examples Of The Negative Effects

In citing some examples of the negative effects of the cuts, the Agudath study said that a family of four with an income of more than \$11,000 would no longer be eligible for food stamps. "Obviously, this does not take into account the 22 percent higher cost for kosher food and tuition," the Agudath said.

"A similar case was made for the child nutrition programs where a family of four earning more than \$15,000 would no longer be eligible for the federal assistance given to schools for meals. This will create havoc for parents who will now be forced to pay additional costs for meals in the private schools, which, when added to rising tuition, will prove to be yet another unexpected increase for thousands with children in yeshivos."

Agudath Israel also stressed that the elimination of jobs from the Public Service Employment (PSE) program and the Comprehensive Employment Training Act (CETA), which the Administration wants to phase out, "would eliminate many jobs from Orthodox Jews and also hurt many agencies which have used workers from the program to assist in various community tasks. While the elimination in the PSE program would be a loss to the Orthodox Jewish community, the preservation of ongoing other CETA programs is essential."

Agudath Israel stressed that tuition tax credits rather than the tax cuts proposed by the President would help the Orthodox Jewish community it serves. "While the tax cuts will be relatively small and in most cases will be just enough to offset higher social security taxes, tuition credits which the President has promised to support does provide some measure of relief," the study argued.

Sens. Daniel Moynihan (D. N.Y.) and Robert Packwood (R. Ore.) are sponsoring a bill to provide tuition tax relief which is being supported by Agudath Israel and other Orthodox Jewish groups.

At the same time, the Agudath study also expressed concern about the Reagan Administration proposals to convert many categorical grants into block grants. "The Reagan Administration's proposal to consolidate education funds into two block grants, one for local education agencies and one for state education agencies, will hurt yeshivos and other non-public schools," the report said.

"The return to the block grant system poses the danger of reverting back to the days when state and local education agencies would not mandate a fair share of education funds to the non-public schools." Yeshivos now benefit from many categorical grants, including programs for new immigrants, disadvantaged children, and bilingual education.

The Agudath study also expressed concern that the change to block grants would harm the many neighborhood programs now funded with federal categorical grants.

#### Federations To Assess Impact Of Budget Cuts

Meanwhile, the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF) has invited representatives from 40 Federations for a meeting at CJF headquarters here Thursday to assess the impact of the Reagan Administration's proposed budget cuts on Federation programs and the Jewish community in general. It was originally reported that the meeting was to be held in Washington. On Friday there will be a meeting between the CJF and the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC) to discuss strategy for dealing with the situation.

#### ARABS APPEAL AGAINST LAND SEIZURE

JERUSALEM, March 9 (JTA) -- About 62 Arab villagers on the West Bank appealed to

the Supreme Court today against the seizure of 1000 acres of land by the Military Government in January. The land has been earmarked for an industrial zone around the Jewish settlement of Ariel in the Samaria district.

The appellants, residents of five villages in the vicinity of Ariel, claim the land belongs to them and urged the court to ban its use for any purpose, regardless of the outcome of the appeal.

Meanwhile, no settlement has been reached in the teachers' strike that began on the West Bank last week on the issue of wages. It has since taken on political ramifications involving the Military Government and the government of Jordan, both of which pay parts of the teacher's salaries, and local elements said to be guided by the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Jordan declared last week that it opposed the strike. A delegation of West Bank teachers went to Amman to discuss the situation and are due back today but there has been no word of any change in the Jordanian position. Education officials were meeting in Nablus today to try to work out a settlement.

#### ISRAEL WARNS AGAINST ATTEMPTS BY 'PLO CRIMINALS' TO FLY INTO ISRAEL ON TERRORIST MISSIONS

By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, March 9 (JTA) -- Israel warned today that an attempt "by PLO criminals" to fly into Israel from Lebanon last Saturday "on terrorist missions" represents "a new departure with potentially serious implications" and that Israel is "duty bound to take all appropriate measures necessary to protect the lives and safety of its citizens." The warning was contained in a letter Israeli Ambassador

Yehuda Blum sent to the President of the Security Council, Ambassador to Peter Florin of East Germany.

Blum pointed out that the flights by the "PLO criminals" were made "in single-seater gliders with auxiliary engines. One terrorist brought his plane down north of Rosh Hanikra and was captured. The other terrorist landed his craft early in the morning in western Galilee near Kibbutz Afek. He took a young man hostage and after wandering around for several hours he eventually reached the village of Tamra where he first broke into a house and was subsequently captured."

The terrorist, Blum continued, "told the people in the house that his mission was to take hostages and demand the release of other terrorists detained in Israeli jails." The Israeli envoy requested that his letter be circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

Meanwhile, the Security Council was scheduled to meet later this afternoon to discuss Lebanon's complaint against "repeated Israeli attacks in south Lebanon." Blum met today with U.S. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick to discuss the upcoming Council's session. He also met with Florin in that connection.

#### ABU-HATZEIRA ON WITNESS STAND FOR EIGHT HOURS DEFENDS HIMSELF AGAINST CHARGES OF BRIBERY

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 9 (JTA) -- Religious Affairs Minister Aharon Abu-Hatzeira spent more than eight hours on the witness stand in district court here yesterday defending himself against charges that he accepted bribes in return for monetary grants by his Ministry to Hasidic and other religious institutions in Bnei Brak.

Testifying for the first time in the trial which opened Feb. 24, Abu-Hatzeira attempted to convince the three-judge panel that the grants made were en-

tiely proper and in no way unusual and did not constitute kickbacks for bribes, as alleged by the prosecution. The Minister appeared confident throughout most of the five hours of questioning by Attorney General Gabriel Bach.

But he was rattled at the outset when Bach presented evidence which showed, according to the State, that Abu-Hatzeira had been involved in an effort to persuade the chief prosecution witness, Bnei Brak Mayor Yisroel Gottlieb, not to testify. The Minister conceded that he was aware of the efforts but insisted that he was in no way involved in them.

Abu-Hatzeira is on trial with his aide, Moshe Gabbai, who allegedly received the bribes and passed them on to him; Shmuel Daskal of the Vishnitz yeshiva, and Rabbi Amram Korach of the Yemelite Culture Foundation, both of whom allegedly paid the bribes.

Also involved is the Spinka Hasidic yeshiva in Bnei Brak whose director, Herman Fruchter, testified earlier in the trial that he gave Gottlieb IL 260,000 in 1979 intended to buy larger grants from the Religious Affairs Ministry to the Spinka institution. Fruchter was granted immunity for testifying.

The State contends that part of the bribe money was illicitly turned over to the Likud Utemura, a faction within the National Religious Party (NRP) headed by Abu-Hatzeira. Bach told the court yesterday that he was shocked to learn that party politics and factional politics within parties were among the criteria used by the Religious Affairs Ministry in awarding monies to certain institutions.

#### Claims Practice Was Common

Abu-Hatzeira in fact confirmed that this was the case and defended it on grounds that it was common practice in all government ministries. He admitted that he authorized large grants to the Vishnitz and Spinka yeshivas in part to help Gottlieb's standing in Bnei Brak after his defeat in the 1978 mayoral elections there. Gottlieb was, at the time, a major figure in the Likud Utemura faction.

The faction split last summer when Abu-Hatzeira fired David Lippel as Director General of the Religious Affairs Ministry, apparently angering Gottlieb and turning him against the Minister. Abu-Hatzeira contended that his former friend and associate had slandered him for personal or political revenge. He recalled that he had opposed Gottlieb's long-standing ambition to become a Knesset member.

Gottlieb, who received immunity to testify, has been the key witness against Abu-Hatzeira and his co-defendants. His testimony, during the first week of the trial, generally followed the prosecution's case but contained some inconsistencies. At one point he amended earlier testimony that he had received a cash bribe from Rabbi Korach in the amount of 5000 Shekels. He said the money was in fact a charitable contribution. Shlomo Tussia-Cohen, the chief counsel for the defense, demanded that the case be dismissed but the judges denied his motion.

#### REAGAN ASSURES JEWISH REPUBLICANS THAT HE IS TOTALLY COMMITTED TO ISRAEL'S MILITARY SUPERIORITY

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, March 9 (JTA) — President Reagan today assured Jewish Republicans who supported his election campaign that he was

"totally committed to Israel's military superiority" and would see to it that the U.S. enhancement of Saudi Arabia's 62 American-made F-15 warplanes would not disturb the balance of power between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

Reagan gave those assurances at a 20-minute meeting with five leading Jewish Republican supporters at the White House. They also met with Vice President George Bush and top Presidential aides in the course of the White House meeting which lasted about two hours.

Max Fisher, who was honorary co-chairman of the Committee for Reagan-Bush, the top Jewish group supporting the President's election, told reporters, "We came out feeling relieved." He said "Reagan stated categorically that 'the balance of power in the Middle East will not be disturbed.'" He quoted the President as stating he was "totally committed to Israel's military superiority and the security of Israel."

Fisher said that after discussion of the President's economic and defense programs "we were convinced we should give him total support and we will give him total support." Fisher made it clear, however, that those meeting with the President did so as "representatives" of the Coalition for Reagan-Bush and that "we were not representatives of any joint Jewish community effort." He noted that the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations represented the Jewish community.

Gordon Zacks, of Columbus, Ohio, said of the Saudi arms deal, "We preferred that there would not be a sale" of the additional equipment "but since there is a sale, we are comfortable" because "the balance of power will be maintained." He said that "in subsequent talks" the qualitative security of Israel and its economic position would be discussed.

The others attending the meeting were Theodore Cummings of Los Angeles, who was honorary co-chairman, with Fisher, of the Coalition for Reagan-Bush, and Jack Stein and George Klein of New York. In addition to the President and Vice President, they met with Richard Allen, chairman of the National Security Council; Undersecretary of State James Buckley; Assistant Secretary of State Paul Wolfowitz who heads the State Department's policy planning staff; Murray Wiedenbaum, chairman of the Council of Economic Advisors; and Edward Harper, deputy White House Chief of Staff for domestic policy.

#### ANNE HOCHSTEIN DEAD AT 52

WASHINGTON, March 9 (JTA) — Funeral services were held here today for Anne Hochstein, associate publisher of The Jewish Week, who died Saturday of a heart attack at the age of 52. She was the wife of Joseph Hochstein who publishes the American Jewish weekly and was the newspaper's controller and business manager. Mrs. Hochstein was born in New York City and pursued a career in airline advertising and public relations. She served in those capacities with Avianca, the Colombian airline; National Airlines, and Alitalia. The Hochsteins were married in 1962 and lived in Washington.

\*\*\*

TEL AVIV (JTA) — Former Foreign Minister Moshe Dayan said he had no plans to meet Egyptian President Anwar Sadat on his visit to Cairo beginning Monday night. But he said before boarding his plane: "If Sadat extends me an invitation to meet him when I get to Cairo, I will regard it as a nice gesture." Dayan said he was going to Cairo at the invitation of Anis Mansour, Editor of the weekly journal October, to take part in a symposium organized by the magazine.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES****THE JEWS OF FRANCE**

By Ben Frank

(Part One Of A Three-Part Series)

PARIS, March 9 (JTA) -- All over France, in Paris, in Lyon, in Cannes, in Nice, all eyes are turned toward Rabbi Rene Samuel Sirat who early this year became the new Chief Rabbi of the Jewish community of France, the fourth largest Jewish community in the world.

Sirat, who is 50 years old, is an educator, scholar and intellectual. His academic credentials are impressive indeed. That is why the French Jewish community is hoping he can stem the high tide of assimilation and intermarriage, the latter of which probably is even higher than the often-quoted U.S. rate of 48 percent.

In an interview at his office in the Consistoire Central, it becomes obvious that Sirat's goal is to stress education. He wants to double the number of kindergartens, day schools and secondary schools that now exist in France. Today, there are more than 50 day schools, more than 200 Talmud Torahs, several hundred synagogues and more than 600 organizations and associations, for a Jewish population of about 700,000.

His target is to reach out to those who have no ties at all to Judaism, to tell them, he said, "we love them; we want them to come back."

A professor, Sirat has had much experience with young people and students. For many years, he has been involved in academic affairs at the Sorbonne. He was director of the Hebrew section there and the man most responsible for the development of Hebrew studies on the university level. He sits as chairman of Ph.D. candidates in Hebrew and is president of the Inter-University Center for Higher Education in Contemporary Jewry.

**Changing Jewish Scene**

Born in Bone, Algeria, Sirat has the distinction of being the first Sephardic Jew elected Chief Rabbi in this century. Significantly, France is one of the few countries outside of Israel where the Jewish community since World War II has changed from a majority of Ashkenazic Jews to one of Sephardic Jews.

While it is true that the integration of the massive waves of Sephardic Jews who arrived in the 1950s and 1960s from North Africa was excellent, while it is true that the adjustment and co-operation between Ashkenazim and Sephardim is probably one of the best in recent Jewish history, and while it is also true that Sephardim and Ashkenazim now say there are no differences between them anymore and that they are united, despite all that, Sirat's election was not lost on the Sephardic Jews who are the overwhelming majority today in France.

Tradition reigns in France and Sirat was elected by the Consistoire Central which was organized by Napoleon. It was the first Consistoire which appointed the first Chief Rabbi of France, David Sintzheim, a Sephardic Jew. In effect, the Chief Rabbi is the chief spokesperson of the Jews in France.

Today, it is Sirat, as well as Baron Alain de Rothschild, chairman of the Representative Council of Jewish Organizations in France (CRIF) and also chairman of the Consistoire, who speak for French Jewry and, when necessary, make "representations" to the French government.

Sirat is extremely articulate and capable of calling on political skill and diplomatic language

if needed. Those who saw him on French television recently say he was "a master of the political word."

He has declared that his program includes fighting racism aimed against Jews, as well as against non-Jews. "We also are against racism aimed against Arabs or Blacks," he added. He was pleased at the huge mass demonstration in Paris that turned out to protest the bombing of the synagogue in Rue Copernic last October. "The feelings were warm and they stirred us all," he stated. "Still, the community must be vigilant," he cautioned.

**'Don't Forget Us, We Exist'**

Representing 700,000 Jews, the rabbi hopes for stronger bridges with American Jewry. He wants American Jews to know the French community. And he had a special message to American Jews: "Don't forget us, we exist." Over and over again, he repeated that he feels that American Jewish and French Jewish leaders should meet more often and noted that it is a "pity" that the American Jewish community is not familiar with the French Jewish community.

The American Jewish community is the largest in the Western world; France is the second, Sirat observed. Yet, contact between "the great Jewish communities in the diaspora," he said, "occurs only in Israel."

And he seemed to feel that there is not too much interchange between the groups themselves in France or in the U.S.

Like a new president, Sirat has the hopes and aspirations of the Jewish people of France flowing out to him. In is a new beginning for Sirat. As he faces the task ahead, those who know him say he will succeed.

(Tomorrow; Part Two)

**BOMB EXPLOSION INJURES 9 PEOPLE**

JERUSALEM, March 9 (JTA) -- Nine people were injured today when a bomb exploded in a market stall in downtown Gaza near the city hall. The explosion, caused by a Soviet-manufactured hand grenade, occurred as Mayor Rashad al-Shawa was meeting with Israel's Military Governor Yitzhak Segev to discuss, among other items, plans for the reopening of the "Palestine Bank" in Gaza.

The bank was closed after the Six-Day War, but recently the owners asked for permission to reopen it. Permission was granted on condition that it would not be named "Palestine Bank." The bank petitioned the Israel Supreme Court to allow it to reopen under its old name, claiming that the Military Government's objection was based on political consideration. The court issued a restraining order against the ban on the use of the name "Palestine Bank" and the Military Government subsequently decided to withdraw its objection but made it clear that the use of the name "Palestine" will not be regarded as a precedent.

\*\*\*

TEL AVIV (JTA) -- Three Israeli tennis players were the first Israeli sportsmen ever to play in competition in Egypt last weekend. Haim Arlosoroff, Shai Puni and Zohar Ben-Rey went to Cairo not knowing if their applications for participation in the \$75,000 Volvo Grand Prix meet would be allowed, as they had received no reply to their earlier application. They were allowed to play, and Arlosoroff won his qualifying matches, enabling him to enter the Grand Prix main draw, to be played later this week.

\*\*\*

TEL AVIV (JTA) -- Large quantities of sweet water, found in the Negev, will be used for industry, agriculture and the army in the Negev.