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EGYPT WANTS TO WAIT UNTIL AFTER ISRAEL'S ELECTIONS NEXT JUNE TO RESUME THE AUTONOMY TALKS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 15 (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Butras Ghalil of Egypt said his government preferred to wait until after Israel's elections June 30 to resume the autonomy talks but insisted that it had no preference between a Likud or Labor government as the negotiating partner.

In an interview on Israel Radio over the weekend, Ghalil explained that Egypt did not want to interfere in Israel's election campaign and therefore the negotiations for autonomy on the West Bank and Gaza Strip should better be left until after Israelis have gone to the polls.

With respect to suggestions that Cairo might prefer to negotiate with a Labor-led regime, Ghalil said, "Why all this speculation that A is better than B or B is better than A? We are negotiating with the Israel government as such. But why negotiate with a government which may not be in power in a few months?"

Ghalil repeated Egypt's complaint that Israel is not doing enough to improve the political climate between the two countries to further an agreement on the Palestinian issue. "It is not so much the details but the new atmosphere on the West Bank and Gaza," he said.

"Unfortunately, what has happened has led to a completely new atmosphere since we began these negotiations. Certainly, the establishment of settlements, closing universities, putting people in prison, having curfews on Arab cities creates an atmosphere which will never encourage the Palestinians to put hope in the future."

SECURITY WATCH INSTITUTED ON ISRAEL'S BORDER WITH LEBANON

TEL AVIV, March 15 (JTA) -- Israeli security authorities are reported to be keeping a close watch on southern Lebanon where, according to reports from the region, soldiers ostensibly from the regular Lebanese army are taking up positions not far from the Israeli border.

Fears have been expressed that the government in Beirut may be giving way to Syrian pressure by sending Syrian soldiers close to the Israeli border in the uniforms of Lebanese regular army soldiers. Tension is reported to be high between Major Saad Haddad's Christian militia forces and the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), with the militia claiming that the UNIFIL troops are allowing Lebanese or Syrian soldiers to move southwards without an adequate check.

If they come as Lebanese troops their presence may be welcomed throughout the world as a sign of the Beirut government's restoration of its authority in areas held by Haddad, who is regarded in Beirut as a traitor for his cooperation with Israel.

ISRAEL PARTICIPATING FOR THE FIRST TIME AT INTERNATIONAL ANNUAL FAIR IN CAIRO

TEL AVIV, March 15 (JTA) -- The Israel flag was raised today over the international trade fair in Cairo, marking the first time Israel has had a

pavilion at the international annual fair in the Egyptian capital. Over 50 Israeli companies are showing their wares, mainly agricultural machinery, including irrigation equipment in which Egyptian visitors have shown great interest.

Also for the first time, Egyptian newspapers are publishing advertisement dealing with the Israeli goods on display at the fair. Israeli Ambassador to Egypt, Eliahu Ben-Elissar, who leaves his post tomorrow to enable him to run in the next elections, said Israel's participation in the fair was "most exciting and important."

ISRAEL PONDERING STEPS TO COUNTERACT U.S. ARMS TO SAUDIS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 15 (JTA) -- Israel has not yet received official confirmation from the U.S. that sophisticated AWACS (Airborne Warning and Control System) aircraft are to be supplied to the Saudi Arabians. Naftali Lavie, the Foreign Ministry spokesman who accompanied Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir on his recent talks in Washington, said, however, that Shamir had been told that America was planning to supply additional alert systems to the Saudis.

"We were not informed on specifics but told that America intended to supply more equipment to increase Saudi Arabia's defense capability, including alert systems," he said. "We understood that this might be something like the AWACS," he added. Lavie said, however, that Israel will await official confirmation of the reports before deciding what steps to take to counter this new supply which would expose Israel completely to Saudi aerial surveillance and limit its mobility.

Shamir had expressed to American officials Israel's concern over the arms supply, pointing out potential dangers to Israel from such advanced weapons being passed on by Saudi Arabia to other "confrontation" states. More weapons to an area as unstable as the Arab world did not help peace and stability in the region, Shamir told the Americans. Lavie noted that "apparently his warning had no impact because just as we came home we heard of the new planned supply."

The Foreign Ministry is also studying an announcement by British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher that high-level contacts may be opened later this year between Britain and the Palestine Liberation Organization, Lavie said. He noted that Britain appeared to be reacting to America's lack of enthusiasm for British and European initiatives in the Middle East and had decided to "go it alone." (See separate story from London.)

A Grave Danger For Israel

Meanwhile, Moshe Arens, chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, said in a radio interview that the supply of arms to Saudi Arabia from the U.S. and Europe represented a grave danger for Israel. "Some people in Washington may see these arms as a great danger to the Soviet Union and that this is the way to halt Soviet penetration of the area."

"I am not of that opinion, I find it very difficult to believe and assign almost zero possibility

to a scenario in which the Saudi air force will wage battle against the Soviet air force, but there is a not insignificant probability that all this equipment will be used against Israel."

Arens said the American supply of weapons would only encourage the Europeans to sell even more of their own military hardware to the Saudis.

THATCHER GIVES GREEN LIGHT TO HER MINISTER TO HOLD TALKS WITH ARAFAT OR OTHER PLO OFFICIALS

By Maurice Samuelson

LONDON, March 15 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher has publicly given her fellow ministers carte blanche to hold talks with Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasser Arafat or with other PLO representatives.

Answering a question in Parliament last Thursday, she said that while there were no immediate plans for Foreign Secretary Lord Carrington to meet Arafat, it might be necessary for him to meet PLO representatives later this year when Britain will hold the presidency of the European Economic Community (EEC).

Since the PLO would simultaneously hold the presidency of the Arab League, she was inferring that a ministerial meeting with the PLO chief would take place in the context of the Euro-Arab dialogue. Although there have already been numerous official contacts between Britain and the PLO they have not yet been at such a high level.

Strong Protests By Jewish Community

Mrs. Thatcher's statement, virtually confirming that a Carrington-Arafat meeting is inevitable will trigger strong protests by the Jewish community. Greville Janner, MP, president of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, has called a meeting of the communal leadership to consider her statement.

The Israeli Embassy has commented angrily on the disclosure that Benjamin Strachan, the British Ambassador to Lebanon, had a 20-minute meeting with Arafat in Beirut last Monday. The Embassy accused British diplomats of "consorting with assassins."

Israel is already at loggerheads with Britain over her leadership of the so-called European initiative on the Middle East. Despite widespread public distrust of the PLO, the most influential British newspapers, such as The Times, The Guardian and The Financial Times, support the European call for involving the PLO in Middle East peace negotiations.

But they also recognize that Israel's Labor Party seems as strongly opposed to PLO participation as is the present Israeli government.

PLO Plans To Open Office In Dublin

Meanwhile, the London PLO representative, Nabil Ramlawi, has announced that he plans to open a PLO office in Dublin, capital of the Irish Republic. The Irish Foreign Ministry said it could not prevent such an office being opened but that did not mean it would give the PLO diplomatic recognition. The Israel Embassy in London, which also serves Dublin, has voiced its concern to the Irish authorities.

15,000 ULTRA-ORTHODOX JEWS CLASH WITH POLICE IN JERUSALEM

JERUSALEM, March 15 (JTA) -- About 15,000 ultra-Orthodox Jews attacked police on

the Ramot Road yesterday afternoon in a continuation of disturbances that have plagued the area on several successive weekends. Only two injuries were reported, one among the demonstrators and the other a policeman. But there were no arrests this time in contrast to last weekend when a large number of Orthodox Jews were arrested for hurling rocks and bottles at police.

Yesterday's demonstration was led by Rabbi Yitzhak Weiss, chief rabbi of the Eda Haredit, the umbrella organization of the ultra-Orthodox in the Mea Shearim quarter. While foreign and local television crews filmed the disorders, the demonstrators launched sporadic assaults on the ranks of mounted and foot policemen, chanting "shabbos, shabbos." The police drove them back with water cannons.

The demonstrations are to protest vehicular traffic on the Sabbath along the Ramot Road where it passes through the religious quarter. Disturbances have occurred regularly since the road was opened in 1978 linking Jerusalem with the northern suburb of Ramot. In recent weeks however, they have become confrontations between religious zealots and the police rather than with Sabbath violators.

Interior Minister Yosef Burg warned that the police and security forces have their hands full combatting terrorists and should not have to battle Sabbath demonstrators. He was referring specifically to a terrorist ambush of an Egged bus on the Ramot Road late last night. (See Story P. 4) He said he hoped that incident would lead to a "cease-fire" between the local residents and police.

Some observers here link the latest Ramot Road disturbances to the visit of the Belzer Rebbe, Yisrochur Dov Rokeach, to the U.S. where he life was allegedly threatened by members of the rival Satmar Hasidic sect. The Eda Haredit and the Neturei Karta in Jerusalem are closely identified with the Satmar Hasidim. (By David Landau)

LEA BEN DOR DEAD AT 68

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 15 (JTA) -- Lea Ben Dor, a former editor of the Jerusalem Post whose relatively hawkish views and acerbic commentary on events in the Knesset were widely respected, though not always shared by her colleagues, died here last week at the age of 68. She was buried Friday. Her funeral was attended by Mayor Teddy Kollek, government officials, Supreme Court justices and leading members of Israel's journalistic community.

In eulogizing Mrs. Ben Dor, Kollek paid tribute to her talents as a journalist, political commentator and a patriot, recalling her various services to the State. She was associated with Israel's secret service during the early years of statehood and at one point took a three-year leave of absence from the Post to work in the Prime Minister's Office.

Mrs. Ben Dor was the daughter of George Halpern, a prominent Zionist from Germany who was one of the founders of the Bank Leumi and the Migdal Minyan Insurance Co. She often recounted to friends her memories of visits to her father's home by Chaim Weizmann, the first President of Israel, and other Zionist leaders.

Strong Supporter Of Ben Gurion, Dayan

She was educated at Roedean, a prestigious girls school in England, and at Cambridge and London universities. She joined the Palestine Post, as the newspaper was known before 1948, in the middle 1930s and took leave during World War II to serve with the British Army in Egypt.

During the 1950s and '60s her influence was strongly felt at the Post. She and then-editor Ted

Lurie were strongly pro-Ben Gurion and saw to it that the views of Israel's first Premier shaped the "line" of the paper. Her often sharply worded column on doings in parliament became an institution on Israel's political scene.

Mrs. Ben Dor remained a hawk and a staunch admirer of former Defense Minister Moshe Dayan after the Yom Kippur War when many of her Post colleagues held different outlooks. The clash of views became serious when Mrs. Ben Dor assumed editorship of the Post after Lurie died in 1974.

But chronic asthma and impatience with administrative duties, rather than political differences, cut short her tenure on the newspaper. She retired after less than two years but remained a member of the Post's Board of Directors.

COURT RULING MARKS VICTORY FOR SABBATH OBSERVING JEWS

By David Friedman

NEW YORK, March 15 (JTA) — A federal appeals court in Chicago, in a 2-1 decision, has upheld the constitutionality of a provision of the U.S. Civil Rights Act which has protected the rights of Sabbath observing Jews, according to the National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs (COLPA).

The Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals rejected the argument that the provision of the Act, which requires employers and labor unions to make "reasonable accommodation" to the religious needs of employees unless an "undue hardship" would result, violates the "establishment of religion clause" of the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution.

Howard Zuckerman, COLPA's president, hailed the decision as a "reaffirmation of an individual's right to avoid having to choose between religious principle and gainful employment." COLPA, joined by the Agudath Israel of America, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the National Council of Young Israel, the Rabbinical Council of America and the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, had filed a brief in support of the constitutionality of the provision.

Specifics Of The Court Ruling

The case involved Darrel Nottelson, a Seventh Day Adventist, who was fired from the A.O. Smith Corporation in Wisconsin for refusing to join the labor union at the company because his religion prohibits him from joining or financially supporting labor unions. "Labor agreements at the Wisconsin company required all employees to join the union, the Smith Steel Workers, AFL-CIO, and to pay dues."

Nottelson filed suit in a federal district court in Milwaukee and his position was upheld. The A.O. Smith Corp. and the union filed an appeal in the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals which again ruled in favor of Nottelson.

The appeals court said that by accommodating the needs of religious minorities, the law "does not confer a benefit on those accommodated, but rather relieves those individuals of a specific burden that others do not suffer by permitting them to fulfill their societal obligations in a different manner, as in this case, by substituting a charitable contribution for union dues." Nottelson had offered to make a contribution to a non-religious charity equivalent to what his union dues would have been.

Zuckerman noted that while the payment of union dues does not pose a problem for Jews, the constitutionality of the protection for Sabbath

observers who require adjustment of hours on the job is of great importance to observant Jews.

SOLOVITZ FAVORS GRANTS FOR ISRAEL INSTEAD OF LOANS AND CREDITS

LOUISVILLE, Ky., March 15 (JTA) — Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D. Md.) said this weekend he would support a shift in the U.S. aid program for Israel to grants instead of loans and investment credits. He noted that the Reagan Administration has earmarked \$2.2 billion for Israel, the same as this year, more than half the sum in loans.

Sarbanes, a member of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, spoke at the 34th biennial convention of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) which ended here today. The more than 650 women attending the four-day convention also heard a plea for increasing the Jewish birth rate and presented the NCJW's Faith and Humanity Award to Abraham Harman, president of Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Sarbanes stressed that continued United States support for Israel "is not a Jewish concern" but "concern for all people of principle and vision." During the NCJW's Foreign Policy session, Sarbanes also criticized the Reagan Administration's reduction of funds for the resettlement of Soviet Jews in the U.S. as "pennywise"

At that session, Barbara Leslie, the NCJW's non-governmental observer at the United Nations, stressed the NCJW's leadership role in cooperation with the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council in evaluating the U.S. role at the UN. The UN is "not only incapable of making peace and protecting human rights but actually aggravates tensions and defends tyranny," she charged.

Plea For Increasing Birth Rate

The plea for increasing the Jewish birth rate was made by Dr. Bernard Reisman, an authority on Jewish communal and family life at Brandeis University. In an era of "zero population growth" which requires at least 2.1 percent birthrate to remain stable "the Jewish birth rate stands at 1.6 percent," Reisman said. He urged Jews to follow the Biblical mandate, "those who are able ... be fruitful and multiply."

The NCJW presented its highest accolade to Harman as it reaffirmed its continued support of education for the disadvantaged by renewing its contract for a second decade with Hebrew University for the operation of the NCJW Research Institute for Innovation in Education. Harman said that with its 10-year-old Research Institute, the NCJW has "built an edifice more lasting than stone ... You built people. You stand for the idea that nobody should be written off."

The delegates reelected Shirley Leviton, of Hewlett Harbor, Long Island, as the NCJW's national president for a second two-year term. In her acceptance speech, she said that NCJW offers its members "the opportunity to increase ... efforts for self-realization and self-fulfillment—as women, as Americans, as Jews, as skilled citizen volunteers and as supporters of Israel." She reminded the members, "We have never wavered between the progress of ideas and the maintenance of tradition."

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Justice Haim Cohen, who retired from the Supreme Court last Wednesday after 21 years on the bench, said that he will spend the next few months working on a draft constitution for Jerusalem that would provide for Israel's sovereignty over the entire city but allow East Jerusalem Arabs functional autonomy. Cohen said he is undertaking the project at the behest of Mayor Teddy Kollek and would examine Kollek's idea of zoning Jerusalem into boroughs similar to London.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES THE JEWS OF AUSTRALIA

By Joseph Palcokoff
(First Part Of A Six-Part Series)

MELBOURNE, March 15 (JTA) -- To an American Jew visiting Australia, the vibrancy of Jewry on this island continent under one flag is astonishing. Australia's polyglot population of 14 million with some 60 ethnic strains includes about 70,000 Jews whose roots go back to the 1830s when a thousand British Jews, many alleged to be convicts but mostly "free settlers," came to this vastness "down under" then used as a penal colony under the Union Jack.

Today, about 35,000 mainly Eastern and Central European Jews live in Melbourne and 30,000 in Sydney. Much smaller communities are found in Canberra, Adelaide, Brisbane and Perth, all widely separated geographically but linked by hard-working communal leaders anxious to preserve relationships and scoring considerable success with superior Jewish schools and youth programs, kosher hospitals and restaurants, religious and social centers, and a variety of media services. Welfare societies in the largest communities cooperate on a federal basis.

Melbourne has seven Jewish day schools with majorities of the area's Jewish children in attendance. Its Mount Scopus High School, with some 2,500 students -- 1000 more than 15 years ago -- is perhaps the world's largest Jewish high school. Half the children of Soviet Jews, above the average among those immigrants in Australia, attend Melbourne's Jewish schools.

Sam Lipski, the distinguished former correspondent in Washington for Australia's leading newspaper and now director of Australian-Israeli Publications as well as the Jewish Telegraphic Agency's Australia correspondent, estimates that between 80 and 85 percent of Melbourne's Jewish children between 5 and 12 years of age attend Jewish schools and that Mount Scopus enrolls 55 to 60 percent of Jewish youth of high school age.

Phenomenal Rise of Orthodoxy

Melbourne has a Yiddish theater, a Yiddish radio program and an English weekly, a hospital with a kosher cuisine, six kosher restaurants. "The rise of Orthodoxy in Melbourne is phenomenal," Lipski told this reporter. "Food shops, butcher shops, bakeries thrive. On Saturday afternoons between 300 and 400 attend the Lubavitchers' yeshiva. This has happened in the last 20 years."

Sydney has a 200-bed kosher hospital, an English-language weekly, a sports center, three old age homes and two kosher restaurants. Its school system is smaller than Melbourne's and not as highly attended, but nevertheless a remarkable achievement. One-third of the Soviet children in Sydney are enrolled in the kindergarten and fewer in the grades. However, as in Melbourne, "the Jewish community is growing in religious outlook," according to Victor Kleerekoper, editor of Sydney's Jewish weekly.

Thriving Community In Canberra

Unlike their counterparts in some other capitals, virtually all of Canberra's Jewish civil servants, academics and other professionals adhere to the Jewish community. Only four of Canberra's businesses are Jewish-managed or owned. Most of the city's 500 Jews in a general population of 225,000 are associated with the

Jewish center which is located on five acres of land presented to the community by Australia's Government.

Canberra's community was organized in 1949. It has a weekly radio program and a monthly publication, and a Liberal and an Orthodox congregation, both "under one roof" at the center but without a rabbi for either. Community president Ted Whitgob said the combined Orthodox-Liberal Sunday school is attended by almost all the city's Jewish children. Many Israeli academics come to Canberra since it is the seat of the national university and Australia's most important post-graduate institution.

Robert Phillips, vice president of Adelaide's Jewish Board of Deputies, said that the Jewish community numbers about 2,000 in the general population of 800,000 in that city in south Australia. About 400 families belong to the Orthodox congregation and 120 to the Liberal. The Jewish day school, which is for all Jewish children, has about 50 in kindergarten and 30 in the elementary grades that is now in its fourth year.

"It is very viable and extremely good," Phillips said. A home for the Jewish aged will be started in June. Many Jews visit Israel regularly and six families have made aliya. Adelaide, which has a magnificent cultural center for its general population, has "no real wealthy Jews" and, as of this time, no kosher restaurant.

An Unusual Achievement

An unusual achievement by Australian Jewry and a mark of its dedication to Jewry everywhere was its participation and support in forming the Asia Pacific Association last May in Hong Kong to help bring the small Pacific communities closer to the mainstream of Jewish life and help provide the children with Jewish education. Represented at the meeting were Hong Kong, Singapore, Thailand, Taipei, the Philippines, India, Japan and South Korea.

Kirth Rathner, director of the United Jewish Educational Board in Melbourne, who had conducted educational work in some of these Pacific communities over the past seven years, was named the Association's executive director. Isi Liebler of Melbourne is its president, and Joe Gersh, also of Melbourne, who visited the South Asian communities a year ago to prepare the ground for the Association, is its secretary.

MANHUNT FOR THREE TERRORISTS

JERUSALEM, March 15 (JTA) -- Police and security forces are conducting a massive search for three terrorists who ambushed an Egged bus in the northern suburb of Ramot last night, slightly wounding one passenger in a hand grenade and machinegun attack. The vehicle was halted when a grenade exploded on the road in front of it. The driver ordered all passengers to lie on the floor as bullets peppered the bus.

The passengers left one-by-one through a rear door after the shooting ended. Some of them said they saw three figures slip away in the dark in the direction of a nearby Arab village. The dragnet began shortly afterwards and continued this morning.

TEL AVIV (JTA) -- The Council to Save Jews in Arab Countries announced Sunday it will launch a worldwide campaign to try and save the 4,000 Jews still living in Syria. Spokesmen, including a former Syrian Jew who recently visited Damascus, reported that Syrian Jews are in dire plight, oppressed by the Syrians, caught between rival Moslem factions and living in fear of their lives. Appeals for help are to be made to the heads of friendly countries throughout the world.