

JTA daily news bulletin

(212) 575-9370

Contents copyright: Republication only by previous arrangement.

Published by Jewish Telegraphic Agency / 165 West 46th Street / New York, N.Y. 10036-2574

Vol. LX - 65th Year

Monday, February 22, 1982

No. 35

CABINET APPROVES AUSTERITY BUDGET

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- The Cabinet today approved a 475 billion Shekel (\$26.4 billion) austerity budget which would reduce expenditures for education by three percent and freeze defense spending at current levels. It immediately touched off a two hour protest strike by teachers.

The paring of the education budget represented a compromise between Finance Minister Yoram Aridor, who had demanded a 7.5 percent cut, and Education Minister Zevulun Hammer, who wanted no cuts at all. Their differences were mediated by Economics Minister Yaacov Meridor.

The Cabinet added several provisions, including assurances that there would be no second shifts in public schools because of the reduced budget and a promise to add several dozen classrooms "to solve specific problems."

The Cabinet also stated that its wage policy for the public sector would include the educational system and that any deviation from the policy would have to come from the Education Ministry's budget as approved today.

That provision stirred the ongoing controversy with teachers over implementation of the Etzioni report which recommended last year a drastic reform of the education system to improve its standards and the salaries of teachers. The Treasury is opposed to the recommendations on grounds that they are inflationary. The teachers, charging that the government has no intention of implementing them, walked out of their classrooms for two hours today.

EAST GERMANY AND THE PLO ARE ACCUSED OF ABETTING NEO-NAZI VIOLENCE IN WEST GERMANY

By David Kantor

BONN, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- A senior official of West Germany's internal security services has accused East Germany and the Palestine Liberation Organization of abetting neo-Nazi violence in the Federal Republic.

Gerhard Boedden, who heads the department combating terrorist activities, charged at a seminar in Rome dealing with international terrorism, that the German Democratic Republic specifically and the Eastern European Communist bloc in general, knowingly and systematically support neo-Nazi groups in West Germany in order to portray it as a country wracked by right wing extremism.

Boedden also charged that the PLO has been training German neo-Nazi terrorists and leftwing urban guerrillas. His remarks, widely reported by the West German news media, disturbed officials here. They came at a time when Bonn is involved in difficult and sensitive efforts to improve ties with the East German regime.

Boedden's implication of the PLO has also embarrassed Chancellor Helmut Schmidt's policy of wooing Arab states and organizations especially Saudi Arabia which is a major financial backer of the PLO. Although government officials have acknowledged, in response to parliamentary questions, that there has been military cooperation between German neo-Nazis and the PLO, they have tried to play down the issue.

HAIG CONFIDENT PEACE PROCESS WILL CONTINUE AFTER ISRAEL LEAVES SINAI

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- Secretary of State Alexander Haig said he was confident that Israel and Egypt would continue the peace process after Israel's final withdrawal from Sinai April 25.

He told a press conference in Bal Harbour, Fla., last Friday, after meeting privately with the AFL-CIO executive council, that his two visits to Israel and Egypt last month and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's visit to Washington earlier this month, left him "very confident that both parties have pledged themselves to continue with the process." The press conference was piped into the State Department in Washington.

Haig had no direct comment, although he indicated his denial, on a report in The Washington Post that he was concerned that Egypt would rejoin the other Arab states after it gets back the Sinai. The article, by Bob Woodward, one of the newspaper's editors, claimed to be based on notes taken over the past year at staff meetings in the State Department. The notes, the Post said, were taken by one of the participants at these staff meetings.

Ambassador Moshe Arens of Israel also refused to comment when asked about the article by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency as he was leaving the State Department after paying a courtesy call on Undersecretary James Buckley.

Worried About Egyptians Future Role

According to the article, Haig said at the January 4 staff meeting that "It's worrisome that Egypt is slipping back into (the) Arab world, don't want autonomy discussion (on Palestinian question) ... Saudis (have) an arrogant mentality that is absolutely devastating." Overall, Haig said the dangerous Middle East situation "comes from kicking Israel in the ass."

Haig also said during the January 18 staff meeting, according to the Post, that he returned from his Mideast trip convinced that once Israel returns Sinai to Egypt, the delicate web that ties the United States and Egypt together will unravel quickly and Washington will be the loser.

"Egypt will go back into (the) Arab world with (the) U.S. isolated as Israel's sole defender," Haig was quoted as saying. Also in the January 18 meeting, he said that before going to the Mideast, "My nose told me that a post-Sadat Egypt was going to be very different. Only thing keeping Egypt from going back to pre-peace treaty stance is the Sinai territory return. Whole atmosphere (in Cairo) 180 degrees different from last May," during an earlier Haig visit when President Anwar Sadat was still alive.

Haig also reportedly said at this meeting that the new situation under Mubarak "had led to paranoia in Israel With Arab resources and Europeans pining for military sales we need to keep Egyptians engaged in peace process If no hope, then we need to reassess our relations with the region."

On the peacekeeping force in Sinai, Haig said in an October 15 State Department staff meeting that Lord Carrington, Britain's Foreign Secretary, was a "duplicitous bastard," a reference to an apparent British claim that Saudi Arabia was putting some kind of pressure on Britain, according to the Post report.

Haig said, the Post report continued: "European friends — just plain cowardly. British lying through their teeth on MFO (Multinational Force and Observers, the Sinai peacekeeping force). Saudis never pressured British and Europeans on MFO."

When Haig was asked in Bal Harbour about the article, he said: "First, it couldn't have been me speaking — it was too clear. Second, I don't recall at any period in my year's incumbency in the State Department such existing staff meetings, and third, I hope this finally puts to rest the charge that there is no imagination in the State Department."

In London, the British Foreign Office declined to comment on The Washington Post story.

Egypt Committed To Peace Process

In Cairo, Prime Minister Fouad Mohieddin said yesterday in a policy statement to the People's Assembly (Parliament) that his country was committed to continue with its present Middle East policy after Israel hands back the final portion of Sinai.

Meanwhile, it was reported in Cairo that Mubarak is to make his first trip to Israel next month, but an exact date remains to be fixed. At the same time, it was reported that Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir is scheduled in the Egyptian capital tomorrow on a three-day visit to discuss preparations for Israel's withdrawal from Sinai.

He will be seeing Foreign Minister Kamel Hassan Ali and other senior officials, but no meeting is scheduled with Richard Fairbanks, the new U.S. special envoy to the autonomy talks, who arrived in Cairo today from Israel where he had discussed the autonomy issue with Premier Menachem Begin and other senior officials.

ISRAELI SOLDIERS DISPERSE DEMONSTRATORS PROTESTING THE CLOSING OF BIR ZEIT UNIVERSITY

JERUSALEM, Feb. 21 (JTA) — Israeli soldiers used tear gas yesterday to disperse Arab demonstrators and their Jewish supporters in Ramallah protesting the closure of Bir Zeit University by the Israeli authorities last week. According to local sources, several journalists and demonstrators were roughed up by the troops. Seventeen persons were detained.

Five Jewish members of the Public Committee of Solidarity With Bir Zeit were arrested in Jerusalem yesterday after demonstrating outside the home of Menachem Milsan who heads the new civil administration on the West Bank. They were released today after their attorney appealed to the Supreme Court on grounds that their detention was illegal.

Bir Zeit University, regarded as a hotbed of Palestinian nationalism, was shut down last week after a representative of the Israeli civil administration was reportedly beaten up by students on the campus. The university had been closed for two months late last year because of anti-Israel demonstrations by the students and had been reopened barely six weeks when the second shut-down was ordered.

TERRORISTS HIT ROME SYNAGOGUE

ROME, Feb. 21 (JTA) — A hand grenade was hurled at the central entrance of the main synagogue here last Thursday. There was little damage. The terrorists were not identified. The synagogue has been the target of anti-Semitic acts during the past months. Several times, small groups of neo-Nazis passed by the synagogue during services shouting out Nazi slogans. Security guards have been posted on occasion outside the synagogue to deter neo-Nazis from disturbing services. The Jewish community feels that Jewish organizations and installations in Rome do not receive sufficient protection from the Italian police.

PRO-HITLER PLAY SHOWN IN LONDON

LONDON, Feb. 21 (JTA) — The Jewish community is shocked by a play, adapted from a novel by a French Jewish academician, George Steiner, in which Hitler, not dead but now a sprightly 91, defends the "final solution" and points an accusing finger at Israeli avengers who have captured him and put him on trial in the jungles of Brazil.

The play, which opened at the Mermaid Theater, with a skilled actor, Alex McCowen, portraying Hitler, consists of two parts. In the first, Hitler's captors catalogue the sufferings of their loved ones.

In the second half, Hitler delivers a rambling monologue, the point of which is that he modeled his National Socialist doctrines on Jewish separatism; that the Old Testament has subjected mankind to moral blackmail; and that the "final solution" was indispensable to the creation of the State of Israel because it taught the Jew how to drive the "lice-ridden" Palestinian Arabs from his land.

In the play, Hitler has the last word: that he, not Theodor Herzl, is the true founder of the Jewish State and that the Jews should acknowledge him as their Messiah. The play is titled "The Portage to San Cristobal of A.H." The author of the novel on which it is based presently teaches at Cambridge.

OPPOSITION GROWING AMONG NCCJ MEMBERS TO PRESENTING REAGAN A HUMANITARIAN AWARD

NEW YORK, Feb. 21 (JTA) — The decision of the National Conference of Christians and Jews (NCCJ) to present President Reagan, during a dinner here March 23, a humanitarian award is facing growing opposition by members of the NCCJ.

President Reagan is to receive the Charles Evans Hughes Gold Medal for "courageous leadership in governmental, civic and humanitarian affairs." The medal is named after the Chief Justice of the U.S. from 1930 to 1941, who was co-founder of the NCCJ. Reagan agreed to receive the award.

The growing controversy within the NCCJ is whether the President should be presented with the award in view of his economic and social policies. The New York Times quoted a confidential memorandum of the NCCJ staff workers which said:

"Because of the effect of these (Reagan's) policies and prevailing perceptions as to their intent and outcome, intergroup relations are being severely strained. The memorandum suggests that the decision to honor Reagan 'is in clear violation of published selection procedures.'"

WIFE OF FORMER SOVIET OFFICER IS REPORTED TO BE CRITICALLY ILL

NEW YORK, Feb. 21 (JTA) — According to information received from Minsk by the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, refusenik Nadezhda Ovsishcher, wife of former Col. Lev Ovsishcher, suffered a second massive heart attack in the past week. She is

presently listed in critical condition and is hospitalized. As a result of the severe coronary failure Mrs. Ovsishcher was, at one time, pronounced "clinically dead; (cessation of vital signs.) She is now visited three times daily by her husband, who brings her food to help her recovery. The Ovsishchers have been struggling for exit visas since 1972. Their daughter, Tatiana, lives in Israel.

FRENCH PRIME MINISTER PLEDGES SUPPORT TO ISRAEL, PALESTINIAN PEOPLE

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Pierre Mauroy reiterated in an Arab capital France's "loyal friendship for Israel which has the right to live in peace within safe, recognized and guaranteed borders" but added that Paris is also the friend of the Palestinian people.

Mauroy, who was speaking last Friday in Tunis, the site of the Arab League secretariat, said he wanted to make his government's position "clear." He said: "President Francois Mitterrand will clearly tell the Israelis our position which can be summed up as: 'Justice for all the nations, security for all states.'" The French Premier also said that the Palestine Liberation Organization "cannot be kept away from the negotiations for a global peace." Mitterrand is scheduled to visit Israel next month.

Tunisia Considered Generally Moderate

The Tunisian government of President Habib Bourguiba is generally considered moderate in Middle Eastern affairs and Tunisian Premier Mohammed M'zali has reportedly told Mauroy that Tunisia welcomes Mitterrand's forthcoming trip to Israel, "as only Israel's best friends can prevail on it to moderate its positions and ultimately reach an agreement with the Palestinians."

The Tunisians reportedly fear, however, that time is running short and that unless an agreement is soon reached, a new war will break out in the area.

M'zali told the French Premier at the state dinner he held in his honor Thursday night that "it is of the utmost urgency to explore new ways to break the (Mideast) deadlock and to start a true peace process." He warned that "unless the PLO is fully associated with the negotiations, these are doomed to fail."

France, and especially its new Socialist Administration which supported Bourguiba's quest for independence, has traditionally close ties with Tunis, its former protectorate and still a major political and economic partner.

In Abu Dhabi, where he is on an official trip, French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson also repeated Mitterrand's pledges of friendship for Israel but added that "a Palestinian state must be created in the (Israeli) occupied territories which should be evacuated according to (United Nations Security Council) Resolution 242." Cheysson said that "neither the PLO nor the Arab states would accept a state located elsewhere than where the Palestinians live, in the territories themselves."

PERUVIAN DIPLOMAT AFFIRMS HIS COUNTRY'S FRIENDSHIP FOR ISRAEL

WASHINGTON, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- Peru's United Nations vote February 5 condemning the extension of Israeli civil law to the Golan Heights had no bearing on that country's traditional "close friendship for Israel" which continues with

uninterrupted strength," according to a top Peruvian diplomat. Alfonso Rivero, Minister Counselor of the Peruvian Embassy here, told representatives of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and the American Jewish Committee that President Belaunde Terry of Peru had emphasized this point in a recent statement in which he described his country's relations with Israel as "normal and in many respects fruitful, especially in scientific and technological fields."

In a meeting with Marvin Rappaport, associate director of ADL's Washington office, and Hyman Bookbinder, the AJCommittee's Washington representative, Rivero said that the Peruvian UN delegation had specified during the General Assembly debate that it did not support the punitive measures against Israel called for in the resolution.

Noting that his nation is unalterably opposed to sanctions and would also oppose efforts to expel Israel from the UN, Rivero pointed out that Belaunde had said in the same statement: "Israel has a right to a seat in the United Nations and should not be separated from it."

Rivero's comments were in response to questions raised by Rappaport and Bookbinder. The ADL and AJCommittee representatives expressed the Jewish community's shock and dismay at seeing Peru become the only member of the Andean bloc to align itself with the enemies of Israel in voting for the UN resolution.

CHRISTIAN LEADER CALLS FOR BETTER COORDINATION OF NON-JEWISH SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- Rev. Isaac Rottenberg, executive director of the National Christian Leadership Conference for Israel, has called for a more unified approach among Christians supporting Israel.

Speaking to the Jewish Federation Council Community Relations Committee's Commission on the Middle East, Rottenberg said that non-Jewish support is often ineffective because the groups, coming as they do from different Christian ideological viewpoints, are so fragmented there is little opportunity for cooperation, coordination or communication.

"The ineffectiveness was clearly demonstrated during the AWACS debate," he observed. "Here we had a number of prominent people in the country playing around with anti-Semitism just to win a political fight and Christians did not band together to deplore this."

Rottenberg praised numerous programs aimed at creating dialogues between Christians and Jews but said a true dialogue should lead to a tangible demonstration of solidarity, one recognizing the role of Judaism in Christian history, as a living faith, and as a people who have survived a terrible trauma -- the Holocaust. "The danger in too much non-productive dialoguing is that with Israel threatened with extinction, all some groups would be doing is conducting a dialogue with no tangible results," he warned.

The minister noted that numerous Christian groups supporting Israel are being established around the country especially among evangelical Christians. Very often, he observed, the groups may have some animosity toward each other.

But this is not really important as far as support of Israel is concerned, and could be a very powerful force of support if a mechanism was established to bring the leaders of these bodies together to chart a common course of action.

"There are always stories in the press about this Christian group or that doing something for Israel. While this is good it does not take the place of a coordinated effective support," he said.

MEXICO'S PRESIDENT EXPLAINS HIS COUNTRY'S FAILURE TO CAST VOTE IN UN ON ANTI-ISRAEL RESOLUTION

MEXICO CITY, Feb. 21 (JTA) — President Jose Lopez Portillo of Mexico explained to leaders of the American Jewish Committee visiting here that his country's failure to cast a vote on the February 5 United Nations General Assembly resolution demanding punitive action against Israel should be regarded as an abstention because that was the intent.

The Mexican Ambassador to the UN was absent when the General Assembly voted to censure Israel for annexing the Golan Heights. Lopez Portillo said the Arab-sponsored resolution was not compatible with Mexico's principles, and noted that the Mexican Foreign Ministry issued a statement at the time making this clear.

He stressed that Mexico's relationship with Israel continues to be one of "constant friendship and understanding." Any differences expressed at international forums, Lopez Portillo observed, should be viewed in the light of a disagreement between friends, "a right and mature relationship." He also emphasized the friendship of his Administration, and himself personally, toward Mexico's 50,000-member Jewish community.

Presidential Candidate Praises Jewish Community

The AJCommittee's Board of Governors met the President for 50 minutes in the course of their week-long mission to Mexico. They also met with Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado, leader of the Institutional Revolutionary Party who is the leading candidate for the Presidency in the elections next July 4. He pledged that if elected he would seek to enhance Mexico's "already excellent relations with Israel" through the further development of technical and economic agreements.

Madrid Hurtado expressed particular warmth toward the Mexican Jewish community, praising its cultural, technological and scientific contributions to the nation. He is presently Mexico's Minister of Planning and Budget.

The AJCommittee delegation was headed by the chairman of its Board of Governors, Howard Friedman of Los Angeles. The various meetings were also attended by Sergio Nudelstejer, who heads the AJCommittee office established in Mexico City 16 years ago and is also Secretary General of the Central Board of Mexican Jewry.

The purpose of the AJCommittee mission was to gain first hand impressions of the changing Mexican Jewish community and to discuss joint action programs dealing with Mexican Jewish relationships and with youth groups. The delegation met with the U.S. Ambassador to Mexico, John Gavin, and with the Israeli Ambassador.

GERSHOM SCHOLEM DEAD AT 84

JERUSALEM, Feb. 21 (JTA) — Gershom Scholem, one of the foremost Jewish historians of this century whose research into the Kabbalah shed new light on the role of mysticism in Jewish history, died here yesterday at the age of 84. Funeral services will be held tomorrow.

A lecturer at the Hebrew University since 1925, Prof. Scholem was born in Berlin to an assimilated family but became interested in Judaism at an early age. His absorption with the subject was fanned by his contacts with such writers, scholars and philosophers as Martin Buber, Chaim Nachman Bialik, S.Y. Agnon and Zal-

man Shazar, who was later to be a President of Israel. The Kabbalah intrigued him. But Scholem found little to guide his research in earlier works. Historians such as Heinrich Graetz dismissed the compendium of Jewish mysticism as an accumulation of nonsense while others idealized it unquestioningly.

Went Back To The Original Source

As a young scholar, Scholem went to the original source. His doctoral thesis was on the "Seffer Hahabair" (The Book of Clarity), one of the basic books of the Kabbalah, which he translated into German. His first research work was published in Germany in 1923, the year he settled in Palestine. During his first two years there he served as head of the Judaica and Hebrew departments of the Hebrew University's library, and afterwards as a professor of Kabbalah.

In the course of nearly 60 years, he published hundreds of books, articles and research papers which today form a comprehensive archive on Kabbalism. He discovered many unknown manuscripts and deciphered the language of Kabbalah.

One of his major scholarly achievements was to prove that the "Zohar," the most famous of the Kabbalah books, was written in the 13th century by Rabbi Moshe de Leon, not by Rabbi Shimon Bar Yohai as previously believed. In his later years, Scholem devoted himself to research on the Messianic movements in Judaism.

AFL-CIO COUNCIL OPPOSES U.S. ARMS SALES TO JORDAN

BAL HARBOUR, Fla., Feb. 21 (JTA) — Calling Israel "America's reliable friend and ally in the Middle East," U.S. labor leaders expressed opposition to the sale of advanced mobile missiles and F-16 fighter jets to Jordan.

The executive council of the AFL-CIO, meeting here to formulate the organization's domestic and foreign policy for the coming year, declared in a statement issued last Thursday that the possible supply of such weapons to Jordan "is justifiably viewed by Israel as a serious threat to its security."

Referring to statements attributed to Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger urging the sale of the weapons to Jordan, the statement said: "Giving formidable weapons to those who have adamantly refused to join the peace process can only undermine that process (Camp David) as it enters a crucial and delicate state."

The statement also called on the Reagan Administration to reaffirm its support for Israel and to halt the flow of arms to Israel's enemies who oppose the Camp David peace process.

GOLAN DRUZE CONTINUE GENERAL STRIKE

JERUSALEM, Feb. 21 (JTA) — Druze on the Golan Heights continued their general strike, begun eight days ago, with no sign of relenting after negotiations with Defense Ministry officials over the weekend proved fruitless. Following a public rally last night, the strike was tightened. On orders of the Druze clergy, food shops which had been allowed to remain open several hours a day for the benefit of the local population, were shut completely.

The Druze are protesting the arrest of four leaders of their largest clans last week for alleged incitement against Israel's annexation of the Golan Heights.

The four men remained under administrative detention today — meaning that no charges were filed against them. Organizers of the strike said it would continue until they were released. It was uncertain today whether negotiations will be resumed.