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SHAMIR LEAVES ON 12-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT TO ARGENTINA AND URUGUAY

By Hugh Orgel and Gil Sedan

TEL AVIV, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir left on a 12-day official visit to Argentina and Uruguay today in face of criticism from many quarters in Israel over the Likud government's apparent friendship with rightwing dictatorial regimes.

Shamir's reply was that Israel is not free to choose its friends according to the nature of their internal politics. He noted that he was invited to Argentina by President Renaldo Bignone and to Uruguay by President Gregorio Alvarez to meet with them and their foreign ministers. He pointed out that he has visited a number of Latin American states in the past, including Costa Rica, Mexico, Colombia, Ecuador and the Dominican Republic with regimes that vary from democratic to authoritarian.

Issue Of Disappeared Jews In Argentina

The Foreign Minister stressed that he would not be discussing arms sales to Argentina and Uruguay since that was outside his province. But he promised that in Argentina he would try to find out what happened to the many Jews who have disappeared after police and security forces arrests in recent years.

He admitted that this was a very delicate subject and he preferred not to expand on it before his departure. The Labor Party has issued a statement criticizing Shamir's trip to Argentina. He pointed out that the military junta in Buenos Aires was responsible for the disappearance of thousands of Argentine citizens, including hundreds of Jews suspected of dissent.

"I am aware of this problem and I will do my best," Shamir said. He told reporters at Ben Gurion Airport that he was also aware of the growing importance of Latin America in world politics and the world economy.

According to some reports here, the Jewish community in Argentina had asked Shamir to reconsider his visit to their country because of the current tensions there. Shamir said he planned to spend time with local Jewish communities wherever he goes and would also preside over a meeting of Israeli Ambassadors in the region.

SHAMIR SAYS AN ISRAELI MILITARY MISSION WILL VISIT HONDURAS BUT HE SIGNED NO ARMS DEAL WITH HONDURAS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- Defense Minister Ariel Sharon, who returned tonight from visits to the U.S. and Honduras, disclosed that an Israeli military mission would leave for the Central American country next month but denied reports that he had signed any arms sales deals with Honduran officials during his brief stay in Tegucigalpa, the capital, last week.

According to Sharon, the military mission to Honduras is part of a general program to strengthen Israel's military cooperation with Latin American countries.

Sharon said that reported plans for a diplomatic shuttle by U.S. special envoys Philip Habib and Morris Draper to assist in negotiations between Israel and Lebanon might be useful in advancing the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon. "But for an agreement between Israel and Lebanon on normal peaceful arrangements, direct talks are essential," he said. "After all, it is Israel and Lebanon which have to live in peace side by side and there is no alternative to direct negotiations," he added.

(American officials accompanying U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz in Rome yesterday reportedly said the shuttle plan would be an attempt to break the impasse in talks between Israel and Lebanon over Israel's insistence that they be conducted in Jerusalem and Beirut. The latest Habib plan would remove the question of venue, the officials said.)

Sharon told reporters tonight that he had not met with U.S. officials in Washington during his latest trip because no such meetings had been planned. "I did not request any meetings before leaving for America and neither did I request any meetings during my stay in the U.S.," he said. He said the purpose of his short visit to New York was to meet with leaders of the American Jewish community and explain some of Israel's problems to them. (See separate story, P.2.)

2 ISRAELI SOLDIERS WOUNDED IN LEBANON

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- Two Israeli soldiers were wounded in Lebanon today when their jeeps were attacked with grenades and small arms fire near Nabatiya, several kilometers north of the Israel border town of Metullah. Israeli troops were searching the area for the attackers.

Another Israeli soldier was wounded Friday by unidentified gunmen just outside of Aley village in the Shouf mountains of eastern Lebanon. Israeli forces had surrounded the village in an effort to end fighting between local Druze and Christian Phalanges.

More than 20 residents of Aley and nearby villages have been killed or wounded in the fighting which escalated over the weekend. A curfew imposed on Aley by Israeli forces three days ago was still in effect today.

Heavy fighting was also reported over the weekend in Tripoli, a city of some 250,000 in northern Lebanon where the Syrian army is said to be in control. The combatants are reportedly pro and anti-Syrian elements in the local population.

A Shi'ite Moslem serving in Maj. Saad Haddad's Christian militia in south Lebanon was killed in a clash with a Fijian battalion of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). According to UNIFIL sources, the militiamen in two jeeps tried to break through a roadblock.

REPORT WEIZMAN INTENDS TO ESTABLISH NEW CENTRIST PARTY TO PARTICIPATE IN THE NEXT ELECTIONS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- Former Defense

Minister Ezer Weizman, who quit Premier Menachem Begin's government in 1980, reportedly intends to establish a new centrist political party to participate in the next Knesset elections.

Weizman, who has kept himself out of the political scene in Israel for the past two years, had no comment on the report. But Dror Seigerman, a Knesset member of the Liberal Party wing of Likud, said the founding convention of the new party would be held next month. Seigerman and former Energy Minister Yitzhak Berman, also of the Liberal Party, have been mentioned frequently in connection with rumors of a new party headed by Weizman.

According to the latest report, Weizman disclosed his political plans to President Luis Alberto Monge of Costa Rica while on a recent business trip to that country. That information was disclosed by David Turgeman, Israel's Ambassador to Costa Rica, who, at Weizman's insistence, was present at the meeting initiated by Monge.

Turgeman said Weizman told the Costa Rican President that if general elections are held next year he would form a new party. He said he could not accept the political and social concepts of Labor Party leader Shimon Peres and that Peres has made and is still making serious mistakes which play into Begin's hands.

Weizman, who as Defense Minister played a major role in the Camp David meetings of September 1978 and in the subsequent negotiation of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, left Begin's Cabinet because of serious policy differences with the Premier.

According to sources here, a new political party headed by Weizman could constitute the balance of power in the next Knesset elections. While it would hardly be welcomed by Likud, it could also rob Labor of votes in the manner of Yigael Yadin's Democratic Movement for Change (DMC) which won 15 seats in the 1977 elections, contributing to Labor's defeat by Likud.

SHARON: PEACE BETWEEN ISRAEL AND LEBANON IS MUCH CLOSER

NEW YORK, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- Defense Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel told Israel Bond leaders here that "peace between Israel and Lebanon is much closer now than when we started our peace agreement with Egypt in 1977." He asserted that Lebanon "may be the second Arab country to sign a peace agreement with Israel" but cautioned that "we must see more support by the United States to arrive at peace with Lebanon."

Sharon made his remarks at a dinner last week launching the Israel Bond Organization's 1983 campaign in the Greater New York area. The dinner, at the Essex House, which also honored eight noted American Jewish leaders, produced more than \$14.5 million in the sale of Israel Bond securities. The event was held under the auspices of the Society of Canal Founders (\$100,000 or more purchasers) and the Israel Prime Minister's Club (\$25,000 or more investors).

Says Talks Are Going On

The Defense Minister told the audience, "We believe in and we must have direct contact with the Lebanese leaders. Some of these meetings are open, some are secret, but talks are going on." He disclosed that Israel's border with Lebanon is open and that hundreds of Lebanese--businessmen, writers, poets, journalists and doctors--are crossing into Israel every day. "We

believe normalization must be part of the security arrangement," Sharon said.

He warned that it would be a mistake to postpone a settlement with Lebanon in order to arrive at an over-all agreement in the Mideast but emphasized that the destruction of the PLO gives Israel an opportunity to discuss peace with the Palestinian inhabitants of Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip.

The guests of honor were Nathan Ancell, Joseph Gruss, Samuel Hausman, Hermann Merkin, Ira Miller, David Minkin, Irving Rosenbaum and Louis Roussio. Sharon presented them with the Bond Organization's premiere Israel 35th Anniversary Award in recognition of their contributions to the creation and development of Israel.

Jack Weiler, Israel Bond national treasurer and honorary chairman of the Greater New York campaign, who served as dinner chairman, reported that the Bond campaign throughout the free world was \$70 million ahead of last year and that total sales since 1951 will surpass \$6 billion by the end of the year.

While Sharon was in New York last week, he also met with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations where he said that Israel is "close to" a security arrangement with Lebanon and outlined the terms of security arrangements. (See December 10 Bulletin.)

At The 30th World Zionist Congress: ASSEMBLY BOGGED DOWN OVER ALLOCATION OF PORTFOLIOS IN NEW EXECUTIVE

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- The 30th World Zionist Congress was bogged down over the weekend while Labor and Likud fought a bitter behind-the-scenes battle over the allocation of portfolios in the new Executive.

As the wrangling continued today, hopes faded that a new Executive would be elected, leaving the rest of the week open to deal with the alarming increase of anti-Semitism around the world and other urgent issues. The Congress is scheduled to close next Thursday, December 16.

In another development since it opened last Tuesday, Charlotte Jacobson, outgoing chairman of the World Zionist Organization-American Section, urged sweeping reforms in the structure of the WZO. Akiva Levinsky, WZO Treasurer, warned that the \$1 billion the Jewish people raises annually for Israel from all sources "is not sufficient to meet the needs of the Jewish people."

His remarks coincided with publication of the WZO Comptrollers report containing scathing criticisms of Keren Hayesod. Comptroller Ben Zion Meiri said the KH overhead amounted to 13.3 percent of its income in fiscal year 1981-82.

The Labor Zionists are demanding greater representation on the WZO executive in light of the gains they made in the Knesset since the last Congress four years ago. The Labor Alignment presently holds 50 seats compared to 34 in 1978 and as a consequence insists on heading at least one major department--either aliya or youth aliya -- in addition to those it already chairs.

Likud is prepared to concede some smaller department to Labor. The dispute has been embittered by ideological conflicts which emerged during the ceremonial session last Tuesday night. The Laborites have accused Likud of trying to re-write Zionist history to play up the role of Vladimir Jabotinsky's Revisionist movement and downgrade the contributions of Labor which founded the Jewish State and governed it for its first 30 years.

WZO Executive chairman Leon Dulzin delivered a sharp attack from the podium against veteran Laborite Yitzhak Ben-Aharon, a former minister in Labor-led

governments. Ben Aharon had spoken of the "demise" of Zionism and suggested that Zionist Congresses were unnecessary and should be abolished.

Mrs. Jacobson, who represents the World Confederation of United Zionists, which comprises Hadassah, Bnai Zion and the American Jewish League for Israel, endorsed Dulzin's proposal to establish a commission to work out reforms. She suggested special elections for Congress delegates inside Israel instead of the present allocation of delegates based on Knesset strength. She also vigorously attacked what she said was the persistent refusal of the WZO to give its American Section greater authority over issues which concerned American communities. She mentioned specifically the appointment of shlichim (emissaries), their deployment and work patterns.

Decision On Allocation Of Delegates

The Congress Court, headed by retired Supreme Court Justice Moshe Etzioni, meanwhile, completed its allocation of delegates to the various parties, a process made difficult this year because of the failure to hold elections in the U.S. and disputes over the outcome of the elections in Britain and France.

The Court decided there would be 651 delegates; 168 for Likud; 145 for Labor; 98 for the World Confederation of United Zionists; 55 for Mizrahi; and smaller numbers for the minor parties.

World Jewry Raises \$1 Billion A Year For Israel

Levinson, in his address, said the \$1 billion raised annually for Israel by world Jewry represented the receipts of the United Jewish Appeal, Keren Hayesod, the sale of Israel Bonds and direct contributions to hospitals, universities and yeshivas in Israel. This is "a sizable sum and not to be scoffed at." But it is less than the burden borne by Israelis who, in addition to taxes must pay involuntary loans to finance the war in Lebanon, he said.

Levinson said that in the future he proposed to allocate far larger resources to youth and education work, especially to universities so that they can enlarge their study programs for Jewish students from the diaspora.

Comptroller Cites Irregularities

The Comptroller, in his report, accused the KH of permitting widespread financial abuses. He said he found instances where flight expenses abroad were mislabeled as telegram and telex expenses. He charged that a third of all employees at the KH headquarters in Jerusalem were given inflated titles and drew higher salaries than other WZO professional staff. He alleged irregularities in the overtime pay and procedures and abuses by shlichim abroad who in some cases sought reimbursement for vacation trips disguised as legitimate expenses.

KH Chairman Challenges Report

Meiri's report was challenged by KH chairman Avraham Aitai in a letter published in The Jerusalem Post today. He said a "number of administrative weaknesses" have been corrected and others are in the process of being corrected. He noted that the KH staff in Jerusalem has been reduced to 111 from 145 employees.

Avi-Hai criticized the Post for publishing the Meiri report. "Criticism has its place, but so does positive coverage of a great volunteer move-

ment of identification with Zion and Israel," he wrote. According to insiders, Avi-Hai attempted to prevent publication of the Comptrollers report but was overruled by Dulzin.

UN RESOLUTION SAYS MIDEAST PEACE IS NOT POSSIBLE UNLESS ISRAEL WITHDRAWS FROM ALL TERRITORIES

UNITED NATIONS, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- The General Assembly passed a resolution by a vote of 113-4 with 23 abstentions declaring that "a comprehensive, just and lasting peace in the Middle East cannot be established without the unconditional withdrawal of Israel from the Palestinian and other Arab territories occupied since 1967, including Jerusalem." The United States, Canada, Costa Rica and Israel voted against the resolution, which is non-binding, at the Assembly session last Friday.

The measure, which made no reference to Israel's right to exist, also asked the Security Council to "recognize the inalienable rights of the Palestinian Arab people, including the right to self-determination and the right to establish its independent Arab state in Palestine." Under the terms of the resolution, the Council would take steps to bring about the creation of such a state.

The American delegate, William Sherman, criticized the resolution as an attempt to prejudice the nature of a Mideast settlement. He added, however, that the Assembly measure represented "the beginning of a more generalized effort at accommodation" because it did not condemn past U.S. initiatives such as the Camp David accords and President Reagan's Mideast proposals.

In another action, a call for all UN member-states to support preparations for an international conference on Palestine next August passed by a vote of 123-2 with 17 abstentions. Israel and the U.S. voted against it. The conference, to be held in Paris at the headquarters of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, was denounced by Ambassador Yehuda Blum of Israel as "another act of narcissistic excess." He said both resolutions "deliberately ignore the inalienable rights of Israel and the Jewish community."

FRANCO-ISRAEL COMMISSION TO RECONVENE NEXT MONTH By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- The Franco-Israeli Cultural and Educational Commission will reconvene next month in Jerusalem. The talks were unilaterally suspended by France last June. The French Foreign Ministry announced today that a French delegation will leave for Israel to negotiate a new cultural agreement.

Israel had bitterly protested against France's tacit decision to "freeze" all bilateral contacts at the outbreak of the "Peace for Galilee" campaign last June. The French government first cancelled the commission's scheduled session and later announced that it had been postponed but gave no date for reconvening.

French diplomatic sources explained today that the decision to renew the talks was taken at a "high level" apparently to defuse Israeli accusations on this subject.

The French delegation to Jerusalem will be headed by a career diplomat and will consist of representatives of various cultural and educational bodies. The commission is scheduled to work out a new Franco-Israeli cultural agreement to replace one that expires at the end of the year.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES THE JEWS OF ITALY

By Ben Frank

(Editor's note: This is the first in a series of articles about the Jews in Italy.)

MILAN, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- This city is the gateway to Italy, the money maker of this republic, the industrial and commercial capital of this nation of 62 million people. This European trading center boasts international fairs, a silk market, nearly 1,000 banks, 32,151 firms and 26,981 manufacturers. It is a city that produces and sells everything.

Within this thriving and throbbing metropolis is also a vital Jewish community of 10,000 people, about one-third of the entire Jewish population of Italy. Jews and Jewish sites are visible everywhere. There are about 10 synagogues, five kosher butcher shops, Talmud Torahs and a day school. Jewish and Italian cultural and social activities are intertwined in a complex mosaic.

For instance, next to the world famous Ambrosiana Museum of Piazza Pio XI Square, which contains Judaica and features the designs of Leonardo da Vinci, is "Coen's Butcher Shop," operated by Jews from Egypt. Along with typical Italian street names are also streets such as Piazza Tel Aviv and Via Sally Mayer which is named after Sally Mayer who was a noted Jewish industrialist and philanthropist. There is a Jewish day school at 4/6 Via Sally Mayer.

In shops and outdoor cafes of the famous Galleria, the center of political and social life of the city and situated near the Milan Cathedral and the La Scala Opera, one can hear men and women speaking Arabic. Some of them are Jews from Libya. Several thousand Libyan Jews came here in 1948 because they spoke Italian. Until the middle of World War II, Italy controlled Libya.

Life Style Of Milan Jews

There are also about 1,000 Iranian Jews here. They maintain their own synagogue and club, for young people. They are excellent businessmen, skilled in the diamond and carpet trade. They are very pro-Israel and are actively involved in behalf of the Jewish State. Many Egyptian Jews also settled here, the result of the emigration from Egypt after the 1956 and 1967 wars. Jews from Nazi Germany also settled here. They fled Hitler in the 1930's.

The diversity of the Jewish community in Milan is also characterized by the presence of many Ashkenazim, who in the last century found their way to this city as they moved into Southern Europe. In the past few years Milan has also become the home for a small number of Soviet Jews and Israelis.

The headquarters of the Jewish community and the Documentation Center on Italian and World Jewry is at Via Eupili 6. At the Documentation Center this visitor saw Jews studying the history of the Holocaust as well as the history of Jews in Italy before the 20th Century.

The Lubavitch movement maintains a synagogue and a yeshiva at Via Carlo Poerio 35 and has made progress in imbuing the Jewish community with a measure of religious consciousness. Jewish leaders, however, point out that the Lubavitch are not part of the mainstream of Jewish life and that the separation between them and the highly assimilated Italian Jews remains to be overcome. There is a great deal of assimilation and mixed marriages, but Italian Jewry survives by the immigration of new groups which replace those who have become assimilated.

Milan Jews are engaged in professions rather than as entrepreneurs or small businessmen, as are the Jews of Rome. Jews here are conscious of the need for acquiring higher education. While higher education is not free in Italy, 90 percent of the Jewish youth attend college where they study medicine, engineering, chemistry, business and architecture.

Part of the reason Jews settle in Milan is the cultural life and the diversity of social activity. It is after all, the home of the legendary La Scala opera house, the home of Verdi and Puccini. It is also the center of fashion shows and of taste and tastebuds. Many Jewish businessmen told this visitor that Milan is actually "a famous fortress of delicious cuisine."

Jews And Non-Jews Intermingle

There is an easy intermingling of Jews and non-Jews. Kosher food can be obtained at the senior citizens home as well as through the Lubavitch center. Jews hold kosher banquets and Bar Mitzvahs and weddings at the Hilton Hotel. Many Jewish businessmen gather at the Hotel Executive on Viale Surzo, which caters to commercial and government personnel from around the world.

Although Italians are a politically involved people, they are more interested in "la dolce vita" (the good life), in vacationing, in getting away to the shore, in indulging their palates, in visiting the numerous cafes and in visiting the museums and the opera. Italian Jews are not immune to the pleasure principle.

But politics does intrude, and there are controversies and discussions. During the war in Lebanon, Israel's popularity slipped. However, there was no visible sign of any anti-Israel feeling among Italians here. There was an attempt by a small subversive, illegal leftist group, Communists Organized for Proletarian Liberation (COLP), to bomb the Jewish community center on the night of September 29, but this was severely condemned by officials and the public.

The official Communist Party itself undertook a propaganda campaign against Israel and every night sent out a sound truck blaring anti-Israel statements. As the truck travelled through the city, nobody seemed to listen; nobody seemed to care. The war was far away and there were pleasures at hand to attend to.

FEIJ J SAYS MOST WEST BANK RESIDENTS SUPPORT CONFEDERATION WITH JORDAN

JERUSALEM, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- Mayor Elias Freij of Bethlehem said in a Voice of Israel Radio interview today that most Arab residents of the West Bank support the idea of a confederation between Jordan and self-governing Palestinians in the territory. He said the attacks on Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasser Arafat by elements of the PLO leadership because of his contacts with King Hussein of Jordan were of no significance.

Freij, a moderate who has long favored a political solution of Israel's conflict with the Palestinians urged the PLO and Israel to recognize each other simultaneously. He said the PLO would gain many advantages from such a move and warned that time was running out for the Palestinians because of Israel's intensified settlement activity in the occupied territories.

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- The Cabinet spent four hours Sunday reviewing the projected 535 billion Shekel budget for fiscal 1982-83. It calls for five percent across-the-board cuts in the budgets of most ministries. The Defense Ministry will not be affected because of the need to pay for the war in Lebanon.