

# JTA daily news bulletin

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## ISRAELI AIR FORCE OFFICER SAYS AUGUST BOMBINGS OF BEIRUT WERE NOT MASSIVE By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 6 (JTA) -- The deputy commander of the Israeli Air Force claimed today that the aerial bombardment of Palestine Liberation Organization strongholds in west Beirut last August never took place on the massive scale reported by the PLO news agency and picked up by the world news media.

According to the officer, interviewed on Israel Radio, the Air Force employed "misleading tactics" to prod the PLO to agree to withdraw from the city. The PLO news agency reported at the time that 44,000 bombs were dropped causing some 1,000 civilian casualties and destroying 700 buildings. Those reports prompted President Reagan to urge Israel to cease the "barbaric raids."

But the raids were largely simulations, the Air Force officer said. Israeli jets were sent over Beirut from dawn until late afternoon at high speed to cause sonic booms. "Most of the operation was to make a big noise around the city, somewhat like Joshua at the battle of Jericho. I think the results of our plan speak for themselves. The PLO decided to leave the city," he said.

He said the fact was that the Air Force flew only 77 sorties over Beirut and dropped a few hundred bombs, mainly outside the built-up areas of the city.

Maj. General Amir Drori of the northern command who led most of the fighting in Lebanon, said on another radio interview that if the original war aims in Lebanon had been defined more precisely, the war would have been fought differently. Drori said there should have been quicker troop movements, landings from the sea and larger forces employed on land which would have avoided contact with the enemy.

### Rockets Fired At Israelis

Nevertheless, a year after the war began, Israeli troops still find themselves under attack. Bazooka rockets were fired last night at an Israel army position at Khalde, just south of Beirut international airport, an area controlled by the multi-national force. There were no casualties but the Israelis sent a detailed report of the incident to the U.S. marine commander in the area.

Maariv reported today that Israel's former Ambassador to Britain, Shlomo Argov, who was severely wounded in a terrorist attack in London in June, 1982, is much improved. But he has not yet been informed that the attempt on his life triggered Israel's invasion of Lebanon a year ago.

The paper published an interview with Argov's wife, Chaya, who said the envoy has recovered his speech and recalls the various languages he speaks. Argov suffered serious brain damage but, according to his wife, he was able to follow the war in Lebanon in its later stages last summer by reading newspaper accounts and listening to radio and television reports.

Argov still suffers from physical disabilities. But the brain damage from which doctors doubted he would ever recover, apparently has been repaired.

## GROUP CALLS FOR NATIONAL UNITY GOVERNMENT TO MEET ECONOMIC CRISIS By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 6 (JTA) -- The rapidly deteriorating economic situation has triggered new calls for a national unity government. A group of coalition Knesset members led by former Finance Minister Yigael Hurwitz maintained that this was the "only way to save the economy." But there has been no response from the Labor Alignment.

Hurwitz argued that no government based on a narrow coalition majority, be it Likud or Labor-led, would be able to carry out unpopular economic measures necessary to correct the situation. Israel's inflation is running at an annual rate of 150 percent, its exports are declining, its balance of trade deficit is growing and its foreign currency reserves are dwindling.

The Hurwitz group reportedly held behind-the-scenes consultations with Labor leaders but got no green light from the opposition. Hurwitz made it clear that he would approach Premier Menachem Begin with proposals for a national unity government only if the Labor Alignment was clearly ready for such an initiative.

Hurwitz has the support of Minister-Without-Portfolio Mordechai Ben-Porat of the Telem faction, Avraham Melamed, a National Religious Party MK and MKs Yitzhak Berman and Dror Seigeman, members of Likud's Liberal Party wing. The former Finance Minister who has been at odds with his successor, Yoram Aridor, said the national unity idea did not pose a threat to Begin's coalition. But Berman, a former Energy Minister in Begin's Cabinet, said if the initiative fails he would feel free to vote as he pleases in the Knesset. Berman speaks for at least two other Likud MKs.

Another coalition partner, Science Minister Yuval Neeman of the ultra-nationalist Tehiya faction, said he had no objections to a national unity government provided that the Labor Alignment agrees to support Likud's massive settlement program on the West Bank.

### 2000 REFUSE TO SERVE IN LEBANON

JERUSALEM, June 6 (JTA) -- An organization of reserve soldiers claimed today that more than 2,000 soldiers have signed a petition so far refusing to serve in Lebanon. The group, called "Yesh Gevul" (There's a Limit) said at a press conference here that many have been punished.

The group was formed last July when 86 officers and men refused duty in Lebanon and signed a petition to that effect. Many were given alternative service in Israel but many others went to prison for disobedience to orders. According to Yesh Gevul, 61 officers and men were tried and sentenced by military courts. (By Gil Sedan)

## CONGRESSMAN PESSIMISTIC ABOUT SYRIA AGREEING TO MOVE TROOPS FROM LEBANON By Rifka Rosenwein

NEW YORK, June 6 (JTA) -- Rep. Ted Weiss (D. N.Y.) said today that after an 11-day trip to the Middle East he is "not very optimistic" about Syria's

willingness to enter negotiations for withdrawal of its troops from Lebanon.

Weiss, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, attributed the current impasse in Lebanon to the fact that "the Syrians still look at Israel's existence as something they're not ready to accept."

"The only saving grace, the only possibility for hope at all, is that Syria acts out of its own self-interest as much as out of ideology," he said at a press conference in his district headquarters. It is up to the United States and others to convince Syria to cooperate based on this rationale, he said.

"The Syrians must leave because they are consigning Lebanon to a situation of non-independence and maintaining 'tumult in the area. The U.S. ought to make that presentation as forcefully and publicly as it can," he said.

Weiss and nine other members of a Congressional study mission met with Premier Menachem Begin, Labor Party leaders Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin, various members of the Knesset and a "cross-section" of the population during their seven-day stay in Israel. He and fellow Foreign Affairs Committee member Peter Kostmayer (D. Pa.) also met with Syrian Foreign Minister Abdul Halim Khaddam and other government officials while in that country. They spent one day in Lebanon, where they met with Foreign Minister Elie Salem.

#### Lebanon Committed To Agreement

Weiss said he felt Lebanon was "still committed to the agreement and would like to see Syria enter the negotiations. 'I don't think they're overly-optimistic,'" he added.

Within Israel, Weiss said, there is a general sense of "unhappiness" about the continued presence of the Israel Defense Force in Lebanon. Many Israelis would like to "at least redeploy to a more defensible position in southern Lebanon," according to Weiss.

He also noted increased pressure on the government to withdraw the troops completely, though not without some assurance of security. He cited a recent Labor proposal to that effect.

"I think there will be a withdrawal to within that original 40-kilometer zone" and that it will be soon, Weiss said. Some in Israel even say that "whether Israel's forces are north of its borders or south of its borders, as long as it has forces it can rely on, it is secure," he added. A combination of Lebanese troops, with Israeli troops close in the north of Israel, plus a continued United Nations presence, would make the area secure, according to many Israelis, Weiss reported.

Meanwhile, Weiss said he felt the "Israeli government is doing everything in its power to insure that they will not have to react to" Syrian attacks "with an all-out confrontation."

"I think both sides have taken great pains to assure one another that they" are not bent "on hostility," he said.

#### ARENS' BROTHER RAPS ISRAEL

By Helen Silver

WASHINGTON, June 6 (JTA) -- About 75 persons participated in a two-hour rally yesterday in Lafayette Park across from the White House to mark the first anniversary of Israel's invasion of Lebanon and 16 years of Israeli "occupation" of the West Bank.

One of the speakers at the rally, sponsored by the Washington Area Jews for an Israeli-Palestinian Peace, was Richard Arens, professor of law at the University of Bridgeport, Conn., and a brother of Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens.

"Israeli human rights violations have been conspicuous since 1967, although they existed before then," Arens charged. He said that "approximately 30,000 Israeli settlers occupy the West Bank, which began as a creeping annexation and developed into a galloping one."

Arens accused the Israelis of using torture "as a routine tactic in police interrogation." He accused the government of Premier Menachem Begin of trying "to clear the West Bank of its rightful inhabitants," adding that this has "been hampered by the invasion of Lebanon, a violation of the Nuremberg principles, which expressly prohibit aggressive war, to say nothing of the Sabra and Shatila massacres."

I. F. Stone, journalist and frequent critic of Israel, asked, "how can we appeal for equal treatment for Jews in Russia or Poland when there isn't equal treatment of Arabs not only of the occupied territory but within Israel itself?" He noted that Jews seek full citizenship in other countries, "foremost among them America," while "a Jewish state denies those liberties not only to Arabs but to Jews who are not Orthodox, and have not undergone proper conversion."

After the rally a group delivered a letter to the White House, addressed to President Reagan, which said: "we call on the American Government to demand that Israel withdraw from the settlements in the occupied territory. We urge the United States to call for unilateral withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon, and their replacement by UNIFIL forces to insure the safety of all the inhabitants of Lebanon."

#### NICARAGUAN DENIES ANTI-SEMITISM

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, June 6 (JTA) -- Ernesto Cardinal, Nicaragua's Minister of Culture, denied at a press conference here reports that Nicaragua's entire Jewish community of 50 families was forced into exile by the Sandinista government but his replies apparently failed to convince reporters present.

The reports also indicated that the regime confiscated Jewish property and took over the synagogue in Managua. Avraham Gorn, president of the Jewish community, had been jailed after the Sandinistas took power.

The Managua daily, Nuevo Diario, in July, 1982, published a series of anti-Semitic articles which included a reference to the "synagogue of Satan."

The minister, who was a priest before the revolution, denied the reports, claiming there were few Jews in Nicaragua, that they had intermarried and did not keep Jewish religious customs. He remarked, "I, myself, am of Jewish origin." He also asserted there were no Jewish institutions in Nicaragua, religious or civilian, and that there were no anti-Jewish feelings in Nicaragua, only "anti-Zionist feelings."

#### SATMAR REBBE VISITS ISRAEL

NEW YORK, June 6 (JTA) -- The Satmar Rebbe, Rabbi Moishe Teitelbaum, was scheduled to fly to Israel on TWA today in his first visit to the Jewish State since becoming head of the Satmar Hasadic movement.

Rabbi Ephraim Stein, a Satmar spokesman, said the purpose of the visit was for Rabbi Teitelbaum to attend the groundbreaking of a new Satmar neighborhood in Jerusalem. The neighborhood will be built without any funds from the Israel government, which the Satmar movement does not recognize, and will provide housing for up to 200 Satmar families, Stein said.

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BONN (JTA) -- A court in West Berlin has sentenced a neo-Nazi activist, Arnold Priem, to an 18-month prison term. The 35-year-old self-proclaimed "fuehrer" of the so-called "Fight Group Priem" was found guilty of illicit arms possession and display of Nazi symbols.

# **BEN-MEIR SAYS ISRAELI TROOP REDEPLOYMENT NECESSARY IF SYRIANS REFUSE TO WITHDRAW**

By Helen Silver

WASHINGTON, June 6 (JTA) -- Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yehuda Ben-Meir said today that while Israel would give no timetable for a possible partial pull-back of Israeli troops in Lebanon, a redeployment of Israeli troops would be inevitable should the Syrians continue to refuse to withdraw their forces from Lebanon.

Speaking at a luncheon sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith attended by some 200 persons, Ben-Meir said Israel would give no deadline for any Israeli withdrawal so as to provide "as much leeway" for the continuation of political efforts by the U.S. to persuade the Syrians to withdraw. Of the U.S. diplomatic efforts, Ben Meir said: "We'll see if it can take off and have some effect."

At the same time, he said, "It is clear that Israel cannot stay forever" in Lebanon. He added: "If it will turn out tragically that the Syrians indeed have no intentions of leaving Lebanon at all, in any circumstances, and are going to stay for an unpredictable degree of time, we will have to rethink exactly how we will deploy ourselves. There will have to be changes ...."

## **Coordination With U.S.**

Ben-Meir pointed out that any Israeli action would be done "through a process of intensive prior negotiations" with the United States and Lebanon. He said there would be coordination between the U.S., Lebanon, and Israel because "We are aware of the difficulties and dangers that might be involved in changes of Israeli deployment in Lebanon in terms of maintaining law and order and stability and preventing the destabilization of the Lebanese regime in which we have an interest."

Ben-Meir also called on King Hussein of Jordan to join in peace negotiations with Israel as a "free agent and not as an agent" of Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasir Arafat. This was an apparent reference to the King's past efforts to seek endorsement of his involvement in negotiations with Israel on the future status of the West Bank.

Ben-Meir called the rearmament of the Syrian forces by the Soviet Union "very, very extensive." He noted that the Soviets have brought into Syria quantities of military hardware unprecedented in the past "both in quantity and quality." He said Soviet involvement in Syrian military affairs is "a joint concern to Israel and the U.S." which both countries are discussing and consulting about among themselves.

## **RABBI JACOB FISHMAN DEAD AT 70**

PARIS, June 6 (JTA) -- Jacob Fishman, who served as rabbi of Moscow's central synagogue since May, 1972, died of a heart attack last Saturday at his home in Moscow at the age of 70. Tass, the official Soviet news agency reported today. He had been in poor health for several years.

Fishman, born in Slutzk, Poland, attended a Moscow rabbinical school but was never formally ordained. The school no longer exists. His first wife and children perished in the Holocaust. Fishman reportedly officiated at provincial synagogues in the USSR until 1964. He was a factory worker when he was selected to replace the late Rabbi Yehuda Leib Levin, who died in November, 1971,

as rabbi of the central or Choral Synagogue. As it is the only Jewish house of worship in the Soviet capital, he was designated Chief Rabbi of Moscow.

Jewish organizations in contact with Soviet Jewry generally considered Fishman to be a docile instrument of Soviet policy. According to press reports today, he recently sent a letter to the U.S. Embassy in Moscow protesting the regular visits of an Embassy official to talk to Soviet Jewish activists and dissidents who congregate outside the synagogue to exchange information.

The letter, signed by Fishman, reportedly complained that the visits were "humiliating for genuinely believing Jews" because the U.S. official, James Glenn, a Second Secretary at the Embassy, is non-Jewish and many of the Jewish activists are non-believers. He claimed Glenn sought to find out which Jews were asking to emigrate and whether they were being persecuted. Fishman's letter drew a sharp retort from U.S. Ambassador Arthur Hartman, who called the rabbi's charges "unfounded and factually false."

## **Visited U.S. In 1971**

Fishman made his first and only visit to the U.S. in 1976 as part of a delegation of nine Soviet clergymen headed by Metropolitan Jubenaly, a high ranking prelate of the Russian Orthodox Church. The visit was sponsored by the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, headed by Rabbi Arthur Schneier, rabbi of the Park East Synagogue in Manhattan.

(At the time of his visit, Fishman said in a press interview, "Things will get better" for Soviet Jews, "things have gotten better in the last 15 years. If there is peace, we can send young people here (to the U.S. to study at seminaries) and we have others to send."

(Schneier told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in New York today that Fishman cooperated fully with the arrangements negotiated years ago by Schneier, to have young Soviet Jews seeking careers in the rabbinate attend the rabbinical seminary in Budapest, the only such institution in the Communist bloc countries. Fishman's associate rabbi in Moscow, Adolf Shayevich, was ordained by the Budapest seminary. According to Schneier, he is likely to succeed Fishman at the Moscow synagogue.)

## **PROBE OF WAR DEMANDED**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 6 (JTA) -- Opposition factions in the Knesset are demanding an official investigation into the government's conduct of the war in Lebanon. The Labor Alignment submitted an agenda motion today calling for a State commission to inquire into "the functioning of the Cabinet during the war in Lebanon." A similar motion was presented by Shinui.

Moshe Shahal, chairman of the Alignment's Knesset faction, said an inquiry was necessary because of "serious conflicting statements" made by various Cabinet ministers during the war. Amnon Rubinstein of Shinui, said there was prima facie evidence that the government violated the "basic law" which subordinates the army to civilian authority.

According to Rubinstein, former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon and former Chief of Staff Gen. Rafael Eitan ran the war according to plans that had been rejected by the government. The charges by opposition spokesmen were echoed by some members of Premier Menachem Begin's coalition.

Deputy Premier Simcha Ehrlich said on a television interview that Begin had told him of many occasions when military action was approved by the Cabinet after the fact. Likud MK Yitzhak Berman who was Energy Minister in Begin's Cabinet during the war, supported the idea of a State inquiry. His Likud colleague, Akiva Nof, however, demanded an inquiry into the conduct of the opposition.

# REPORTERS GET LOOK AT ISRAELI FACILITIES AIMED AT EASING ABSORPTION OF ETHIOPIAN JEWS

By Cindy Kaye

JERUSALEM, June 6 (JTA) -- Ethiopian Jews, who have managed to immigrate to Israel, are receiving special treatment to help overcome the wide cultural gap and other difficulties in the way of their integration into Israeli society, a recent press tour of the Jewish Agency's absorption center for Falashas in Ashkelon revealed.

Relatively little is known about how the Falashas reach Israel. For practical and political reasons it is not a widely publicized subject. But the Chief Rabbinate has recognized the Falashas as Jews despite their long separation from the mainstream of Jewish life.

The Falashas face problems unknown to other immigrants because of their cultural dissimilarities, their color and the hardships they endured getting out of Ethiopia and travelling to Israel. For these reasons, special counselors are assigned to them at the absorption center. They are permitted to remain at the center for 10-12 months. Other immigrants rarely spend more than five months at absorption centers.

The Falashas receive free board and lodging and a stipend equivalent to \$115-\$170, depending on their marital status. They are given intensive courses in Hebrew during their stay at the absorption center.

## Dulzin Denies Discrimination

Leon Dulzin, chairman of the Jewish Agency and World Zionist Organization Executives, told the visiting journalists that rumors that Falashas suffered discrimination in Israel were unfounded. "You can see for yourselves that the Falashas who arrive in Israel receive the same treatment as every other aleh" (new immigrant), he said.

Yehuda Dominitz, director general of the Jewish Agency's immigration and absorption department, added that "Any journalist can visit any absorption center in the country and meet with any immigrant he chooses to verify this fact."

The journalists on tour saw Falasha children at play. Pictures of them inscribed with their new Hebrew names decorated the walls of their play room. One reporter asked a Falasha if the assistance he receives for his family of five is adequate. The man replied that it was not. He admitted however that he has enough money to invest in the stock market because housing, health insurance and utilities are provided free by the absorption center.

Matityahu Drobless, head of the WZO settlement department, said his department is planning a communal settlement for about 100 Falasha families near Kiryat Gat which can provide them with jobs. He said it would be modeled on the settlements which successfully absorbed Jews from Yemen and from Cochín, India who immigrated to Israel years ago.

Although the number of Falashas reaching Israel is said to be increasing, about 20,000 still remain in Ethiopia. Relations between Israel and the Ethiopian government seem to be improving. Evidence of that is seen in the recent visits by groups of Knesset members and Israeli tourists to Jewish communities in Ethiopia.

## REAGAN CONTINUES MFN FOR RUMANIA FOR ANOTHER YEAR

WASHINGTON, June 6 (JTA) -- President Reagan has notified Congress that he will extend for another year most favored national (MFN)

trade status to Rumania following assurances he received from President Nicolae Ceausescu that the education tax imposed on would-be Rumanian emigrants will be dropped.

Reagan, in a message to Congress last Friday, also said he had received personal assurances from the Rumanian President that no other "economic or procedural barriers" would be created to impede the efforts of Rumanians seeking to emigrate. Congress has 60 days to overturn the decision. If it takes no action, the continuation of MFN status goes ahead.

The decision by Reagan followed months of negotiations between the United States and Rumanian officials to have Rumania drop its so called "education tax" which was first announced last November. Since November, the Administration has repeatedly warned that the tax, which requires all emigrants to reimburse the government for the free secondary and higher education they had received, would adversely affect Rumania's MFN status.

Reagan issued a stern warning on March 4 that Rumania would lose its MFN status on June 30 if the tax was still in force. The imposition of the tax violated the terms of the 1974 Jackson-Vanik Amendment which links trade with Communist bloc nations to their emigration policies.

Reagan, in his message to Congress, said, "I have received assurances from the President of Rumania that Rumania will not require reimbursement to the state of educational costs as a precondition to emigration and that Rumania will not create economic or procedural barriers to emigration."

"Based on these assurances, and on the above described emigration performance, I believe the continuation of the waiver applicable to Rumania will substantially promote the objectives of the act," Reagan said, referring to the Trade Act. He noted that about 20,000 Rumanians emigrated last year, of which 2,500 went to the U.S., 2,000 to Israel and the rest to West Germany.

State Department officials reportedly said that Rumania yielded on the education tax partially because it did not want to jeopardize its one billion a year trade with the United States. In 1981, the U.S. imported \$560 million in Rumanian goods, and sold Rumania \$503 million in products.

## Agreement With Israel Promised

Meanwhile, in New York, Rabbi Arthur Schneier, president of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, who returned from a visit to Bucharest last week, said he was told by Ceausescu that the education tax would not be applied to Rumanians seeking to emigrate to the U.S. According to Schneier, the Rumanian President told him that "We will also reach an agreement with Israel, an accord that will be mutually acceptable."

Schneier also reported that West Germany Foreign Minister Hans Dietrich Genscher has also concluded an agreement with Rumania for the lifting of the education tax for ethnic Germans. Schneier is senior rabbi of the Park East Synagogue in New York.

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GENEVA (JTA) -- The international committee of the Red Cross said here Monday that it is taking all measures possible to try and get the permission for its delegates in Lebanon to visit the six Israeli POWs who are held by the Palestine Liberation Organization.

They were last visited by the ICRC delegates in March. The ICRC does not know where they are being held. Circles close to the ICRC say that the fact that the PLO is engaged in internal feuds does not make the ICRC effort easier.