

## LIBERIA TO RENEW ITS DIPLOMATIC TIES WITH ISRAEL

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Aug. 14 (JTA) -- Liberia has decided to renew its diplomatic relations with Israel, it was announced in Monrovia, the nation's capital, last night. Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir expressed Israel's warm gratification at this development and expressed the hope that many other African states would follow Liberia's example.

Liberia is the second state -- after Zaire last May -- to renew ties with Israel. Most African countries severed diplomatic relations at the time of the Yom Kippur War in 1973. Following the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty and Israel's withdrawal from Sinai, there has been a discernible movement among many African states in the direction of restoring full relations with Israel.

Israeli sources are reluctant to specify which African countries are regarded as "in line" to follow in the footsteps of Zaire and Liberia -- apparently for fear of dislocating delicate contacts that are underway.

Israeli sources said Liberia's decision had come after long hesitation and in the face of Arab pressure. There had been many contacts between Israel and Liberia, including a recent visit here by the Liberian Defense Minister during which he reportedly conferred with Premier Menachem Begin.

Israel has not maintained an interest section in a foreign Embassy in Monrovia (as it does in a number of other African capitals). But ties have been kept up through the Israeli interest section in neighboring Ivory Coast and there have been numerous official visits in both directions in recent months -- carried through with discretion.

## CABINET POSTPONES ECONOMIC DECISIONS

By David Landau and Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 14 (JTA) -- The Cabinet ended its session today without approving any of the budget cuts proposed by Finance Minister Yoram Aridor last week or those recommended by the Ministerial Economic Committee last Wednesday after three days of deliberations behind closed doors. The Cabinet is scheduled to continue its assessment of the proposed cuts at a special meeting tomorrow.

The major difficulty at the Cabinet session today was the Treasury's demand that the defense budget be slashed by 20 billion Shekels. Defense Minister Moshe Arens is fighting hard against the proposed cut and has told his Cabinet colleagues that he would insist on a Cabinet decision, implying that the responsibility for the defense budget cut should be borne by all the ministers, not just by himself alone.

## Arens Cites Hard Choice

Arens was quoted by Haaretz last Friday as saying "The choice is between our standard of living -- and life itself." Some observers interpreted this to mean that Arens felt the proposed 20 billion Shekel cut would impair and thereby endanger the nation's vital defense needs.

Treasury and Defense Ministry representatives were to meet tonight in informal sessions to try to

bridge the differences between Arens and the Treasury. Arens had indicated last week that he was willing to allow a five billion Shekel cut, but not more.

Aridor had also called for cuts in the budgets of other ministries, including health and social welfare, education, transportation and communications. The Ministerial Economic Committee approved a package of cuts in these areas.

However, a fight is looming between Education Minister Ze'evulun Hammer and the Treasury. Hammer is abroad on vacation, but he has let it be known that he will not accept an assault on free secondary education which he considers one of this government's major achievements. The Finance Ministry proposals call for a 2.5 billion Shekel cut in the education budget.

## SHAMIR LEAVES MONDAY FOR A 3-DAY OFFICIAL VISIT OF RUMANIA

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Aug. 14 (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir leaves tomorrow for a three-day official visit of Rumania. He is formally the guest of Foreign Minister Stefan Andrej, but is expected to meet also with President Nicolae Ceausescu.

As in previous instances of high-level Israel-Rumania encounters, Shamir's visit has given rise to speculation that Rumania may be involved, or may be seeking involvement, in a new Middle East initiative. Observers noted that President Hafez Assad of Syria is scheduled to pay a state visit soon to Bucharest.

Over recent months the personal aides of Ceausescu and Premier Menachem Begin have exchanged visits. Begin's director general, Mattityahu Shmuelovitz, and a Ceausescu aide, Vassily Pungan, have delivered messages between their two chiefs.

In a television interview last night, Shmuelovitz said he expected the Shamir visit to broaden and deepen ties between the two countries in the fields of trade and culture, as well as to provide a forum for top level political exchanges. While in Rumania, Shamir is expected to meet with Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen and other Jewish leaders.

## GEMAYEL PRESSING ISRAEL FOR TARGET DATE ON TOTAL WITHDRAWAL

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Aug. 14 (JTA) -- Lebanese President Amin Gemayel was reported today, as Lebanese Druze intensified their attacks on government forces, to be pressing Israel to issue a public commitment that Israel's imminent start of redeployment of its troops in Lebanon is part of a withdrawal process linked to a specific target date for total withdrawal and specific schedules for interim withdrawals.

Gemayel is understood to be urging that course on Israel both directly and through Robert McFarlane, the new special Mideast envoy of President Reagan, who was received by Syrian President Hafez Assad and rebuffed, as was his predecessor, Philip Habib, on the United States proposal that Syria pull its estimated 40,000 troops out of Lebanon.

McFarlane met here last Thursday night with Premier Menachem Begin and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir to report the failure of his Damascus mission and, according to Israeli sources, said Assad still insisted on an unconditional Israeli troop withdrawal and continued to spurn the Israeli-Lebanese withdrawal pact which was signed last May but is still unratified.

Gemayel was reported to believe that an Israeli announcement of a specific withdrawal time-table would help him deal with his critics in Lebanon, who contend that the redeployment is meant to bring about an effective partition of Lebanon.

Gemayel has indicated that he understands that Israel's readiness to issue a public timetable on withdrawal would remain contingent on a Syrian withdrawal, or at least the issuance of a parallel Syrian time-table. But he feels that a clear Israeli assurance would help him fortify his shaky position.

#### Israel Seeking Ratification Of Pact With Lebanon

Israel has to date declined to issue such a timetable. Israeli policymakers simply continue to reiterate that Israel has no territorial ambitions of any kind in Lebanon. Some Israeli leaders are believed to want to apply some pressure on Gemayel for ratification by Lebanon of the May 17 Israeli-Lebanon pact, which remains legally a dead letter because instruments of ratification have not yet been exchanged.

Lebanon has been reluctant to proceed with ratification for fear of further infuriating the Syrians. But Israel has contended that ratification would reduce Syrian pressures on the Gemayel regime.

Information from Beirut today suggested that Gemayel was now more prepared than before to negotiate with the Druze based in the Shouf mountains over the Druze's political future, a willingness reportedly evoked by the beating the Lebanese army received from Druze fighters last week. That was the view here after a meeting in Tel Aviv Friday between McFarlane and Shamir and Defense Minister Moshe Arens.

The Gemayel regime was severely jolted when, after Druze artillery bombarded Christian areas of Beirut, Druze warriors dislodged Lebanese army units from positions near the Shouf mountains and Druze leaders kidnapped three Lebanese Cabinet ministers, but subsequently released them.

Israeli officials also agree, on the basis of talks with McFarlane, that Gemayel is now more ready than previously to negotiate with Israel over its coming redeployment, and specifically on the need to coordinate the entry of Lebanese army units into the Shouf mountains to replace Israeli forces as they are withdrawn.

Israeli sources said that Gemayel's regime is now convinced that the redeployment not only cannot be prevented but that it could come swiftly once the infrastructure work along the new Awali River withdrawal line is completed in the next ten days to two weeks.

#### The Immediate U.S. Concern

The immediate Reagan Administration concern is to help accomplish the redeployment, to which it has reluctantly acquiesced, without that withdrawal toppling the increasingly shaky Gemayel government in a new upsurge of internal fighting.

Those concerns were presumably heightened yesterday when rival Christian and Druze militiamen fought new artillery battles in the mountains ringing eastern Beirut, and Walid Jumblatt, the pro-

Syrian leader of the Druze forces, said he would "fight to the end" to keep Lebanese government troops out of the Shouf mountains as well as to force the resignation of the Gemayel government.

McFarlane, rebuffed in Damascus, was devoting his efforts to helping to prevent the imminent Israeli pullback from creating a geopolitical gap in the Shouf mountains. The Reagan Administration, it was reported here, wants Gemayel to negotiate with Jumblatt who is getting close backing from Assad who appears embarked on an effort to topple the Gemayel regime.

The Reagan Administration reportedly believes that if the Druze see that Gemayel can survive and exercise sovereign Lebanese authority, the Druze will distance themselves from the Syrians and conceivably might be prepared to cooperate with Gemayel's at present increasingly shaky government.

Shamir reiterated, at his meeting with McFarlane in Jerusalem Thursday night, that Israel's redeployment plans did not mean Israel intended to dig in at the Awali River line and thus in effect partition Lebanon but neither was he willing to provide a unilateral time-table for total Israeli withdrawal without a parallel Syrian commitment to withdraw.

#### UN PARLEY ASSAILS ISRAEL, S. AFRICA

GENEVA, Aug. 14 (JTA) -- Israel's policies in the West Bank and South Africa's policy of apartheid came under severe criticism at the United Nations World Conference to Combat Racism. The conference, which ended yesterday, voted 104-0 for measures to combat apartheid, ranging from economic sanctions to a complete cutoff of all scientific, cultural and sports contacts.

The conference also approved a final declaration that included a paragraph condemning Israel for what was termed intensified cooperation with South Africa and another paragraph describing Israel's "racial discrimination against inhabitants of the Arab occupied territories."

The United States and Israel boycotted the two-week conference attended by 124 nations because of the 1975 UN General Assembly resolutions equating Zionism with racism.

During the last hours of the conference, the Soviet Union was the most vociferous in denouncing Israel for its "cooperation" with South Africa and for "racism" in the occupied territories. It was apparent that the USSR, which antagonized the Western delegates by its bellicose manner, was seeking a Western walkout from the conference so that it could appear as the only friend of the African nations.

The Egyptian delegation actively supported the anti-Israel declaration and one of the Egyptian delegates bitterly attacked the "Israeli racist practices" in the West Bank. A group calling itself "The Council of International Indian Treaty" denounced Israel for aiding the government of Guatemala. The African delegates refrained from attacking Israel.

#### CHURCH GROUP SAYS ISRAEL IS LARGELY RESPONSIBLE FOR MIDEAST TURMOIL

VANCOUVER, Aug. 14 (JTA) -- The Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches ended last Thursday after adopting, among a number of resolutions on political issues, one which continued the umbrella organization's hostility toward Israel.

The resolution, which placed major blame on Israel for the recurrent turmoil in the Middle East, asserted that Christian guilt and remorse over the Nazi Holocaust have "often led to uncritical support of the State of Israel."

The conference of the World Council, often under sharp criticism from other churches for allegedly neglecting theology to concentrate on political issues, was attended by 900 delegates representing 300 churches.

The Mideast resolution urged "greater awareness among member churches about the urgency and justice of the Palestinian cause." Philip Potter, the World Council's general secretary, told reporters that Jews "have been able to look after themselves—we have to look after those who have no one to help them."

#### STATE DEPT. REJECTS AS 'IMPRACTICAL' A PROPOSAL TO ADMIT SOME 10,000 PALESTINIAN REFUGEES INTO THE U.S.

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Aug. 14 (JTA) — The State Department has rejected as "impractical" a proposal that the United States admit some 10,000 Palestinian refugees.

The proposal was made by a State Department "working" group which has been studying means of alleviating "the plight" of the Palestinians, Department spokesman John Hughes said last Friday. He denied that Secretary of State George Shultz ever personally proposed that the U.S. consider taking in a large number of Palestinians.

Instead, Hughes said that Shultz has stated publicly on many occasions his "keen interest in the overall plight of the Palestinians." In this connection, the Secretary of State ordered studies "on what might be done, if anything, to improve the lot of the Palestinians," Hughes said.

He stated that the proposal, which reportedly at one time was to admit as many as 50,000 Palestinians, was made at "low level." Hughes maintained that Shultz had never considered the proposal and that the proposal itself is no longer under "active consideration" within the State Department.

#### A Tragic Indictment Of Arab States

(In New York, Herschel Auerbach, national public affairs chairman of the Zionist Organization of America, said that the State Department study was in effect a "tragic and pathetic indictment of Arab states which, after 35 years, still refuse to normalize the lifestyle of Palestinian Arab refugees living in their midst.")

(The problem of the Palestinians, Auerbach stated, "is first and foremost the problem of the Arab states who created the tragedy to begin with and who now continue to perpetuate it." He added: "Is it not hypocritical and even uncivilized that the Arabs have not used their extraordinary financial resources to resettle their brethren, while they continue to spend vast amounts of petrodollars on offensive weaponry aimed at the Jewish people?")

#### STATE DEPT. BLASTS SOVIET AUTHORITIES FOR FALSE DRUG CHARGES AGAINST IMPRISONED JEWISH REFUSENIK

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Aug. 14 (JTA) — The State Department has charged that Soviet authorities have made a false drug charge against an imprisoned Soviet Jewish refusenik and has called this "disturbingly reminiscent of the Stalin era."

State Department John Hughes read a strong statement last Friday in defense of Lev Elbert, a 35-year-old Kiev civil engineer, who was convicted in May of evasion of reserve military service. Elbert has been refused permission to emigrate to Israel since 1976 because of his military service during 1973-75

which, according to the Union of Councils of Soviet Jews (UCSJ), was spent mostly digging ditches.

In early July, while being transferred to a new prison camp, Elbert was accused of having sewn a bag of hashish into his undershirt and was charged with "possession of drugs for personal use," which carries a three-year sentence. He was placed in a cell with common criminals for five days but was transferred to a regular cell after staging a hunger strike. He was then allowed to see his wife, Inna, their 13-year-old son, and his father.

Meanwhile, according to the UCSJ, Elbert's wife began a hunger strike August 1 to demand that Soviet authorities drop the drug charge. Earlier reports stated that the authorities had found drugs in a pocket of a coat that had been purchased for Elbert in Kiev and smuggled into the prison camp. There was no clear explanation of who purchased the coat and who had smuggled the coat into the camp and who had placed the drugs inside one of the coat's pockets.

#### Typical Of Stalinist Era

"Based on the reports we have received, we find the narcotic charges against Mr. Elbert unconvincing," Hughes said. "Elbert has no history of drug abuse, and has no reason to risk worsening his situation by attempting to smuggle hashish into a prison camp."

Hughes said that "this incident is disturbingly reminiscent of practices seen in the Soviet Union during the Stalinist era in which a prisoner's sentence was commonly compounded by additional falsified charges against him, and in which certain prisoners were singled out for especially repressive treatment so that they might serve as 'examples' to others. We condemn this latest move against Elbert, and call upon the Soviet authorities to see that he is not further victimized by such implausible accusation."

#### ANTI-DESECRATION LAW BROADENED TO INCLUDE DAMAGES TO EDUCATIONAL AND RESIDENTIAL PREMISES

ALBANY, N.Y., Aug. 14 (JTA) — Governor Mario Cuomo has signed into law an amendment to a 1982 New York State law which increased the penalty for acts of desecration against synagogues and churches to include damages to educational and residential premises.

Two bills for that purpose sponsored by Assemblyman Sheldon Silver (D. Manhattan) were approved last July by the Assembly and similar measures, introduced in the State Senate by Sen. Norman Levy (R-C, Nassau), were approved overwhelmingly in each house.

One of the measures amends the state penal law to expand the crime of aggravated harassment in the first degree to include damages to institutions maintained for religious instruction. The other measure requires insurance firms to report all claims in excess of \$250 for casualty losses resulting from desecration, vandalism and theft of religious articles suffered by houses of worship to the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS).

Silver said, when the measures received legislative approval, that the DCJS, after establishing a state-wide central registry for such acts, will issue rules to detail the contents of such reports. Local law enforcement agencies, in addition, will be required to file similar reports with the DCJS so that leads can be developed on overall patterns of such acts in New York State.

**BLAST DAMAGES COLOMBIAN SYNAGOGUE**

**BOGOTA, Aug. 14 (JTA)** -- The Beth-El Synagogue, in the coastal Colombian city of Baranquilla, was damaged by an explosive device which detonated only hours after Friday night services ended, the World Jewish Congress reported today.

According to the Confederacion de Asociaciones Judias de Colombia, the central representative body of Colombian Jewry and the WJC affiliate here, the explosion occurred early last month shortly after Sabbath eve services attended by some 150 persons. Despite property damage, there were no civilian casualties.

Reporting on the incident, Edgardo Gorenberg, acting undersecretary of the Latin American branch of the WJC, said the force of the explosion had blown a hole in the roof of the synagogue one meter in diameter. According to the authorities, this was an isolated incident with no group or person having claimed responsibility for the bombing. Gorenberg said he knew of no telephone calls or messages made by the perpetrators in connection with the attack.

**Not The First Violent Anti-Semitic Act**

In a speech made at the synagogue, the president of the local Jewish communal fund, Daniel Amon, noted that this was not the first act of anti-Semitic violence in the country. He referred to recent incidents in Bogota, particularly vandalism of the Medellin synagogue there and an attempt against the residence of the Israeli Ambassador.

In an advertisement taken out in the local press, the Jewish community of the city expressed its thanks to the civil, military and religious authorities for the expression of their support and solidarity against "the attack perpetrated against our temple."

**ARSON DESTROYS PART OF A SYNAGOGUE IN CONNECTICUT**

**WEST HARTFORD, Conn., Aug. 14 (JTA)** -- A fire, which Fire Department investigators say was clearly the work of arsonists, destroyed the sanctuary and study hall of the Young Israel Synagogue here last week.

The fire, which was reported at 3:30 a.m. last Wednesday, destroyed many religious articles and prayer books as well as the synagogue's main halls. The Torah scrolls suffered only minor damage. According to the Fire Department, arsonists set fires in five locations in the synagogue. There are no leads yet as to who the arsonists might be.

According to Rabbi Solomon Krupka, the spiritual leader of the congregation, there had been no significant history of vandalism against the synagogue building, which was built six years ago. He reported that the synagogue is now being tested for possible structural damage due to the fire, while the congregation is exploring the possibility of continuing its prayer services in the building's basement. The synagogue has set up an emergency fund to completely rebuild its sanctuary and study hall, and to replace all of its religious articles and prayer books which were destroyed in the fire, Krupka said.

Harold Jacobs, president of the National Council of Young Israel, expressed his "grief and outrage at the wanton destruction of the Young Israel of West Hartford. The National Council of Young Israel will offer every possible assistance to the stricken community, including the co-operation of the Young Israel Endowment Fund in the effort to rebuild the synagogue."

Krupka noted that there has already been a heartening response from throughout the Hartford area to the tragedy, with many individuals, both Jewish and non-Jewish, offering assistance, as well as offers of facilities from many local synagogues and churches.

**BOMBING OF SYNAGOGUE IN SOUTH AFRICA DENOUNCED AS COWARDLY ATTACK**

**JOHANNESBURG, Aug. 14 (JTA)** -- Ambassador Eliahu Lankin of Israel denounced the bomb attack against Temple Israel here on August 6 as a cowardly attack on a place of Jewish worship and directed at the Jews as a people.

He told the close to 600 people who gathered at the synagogue last Friday night "There are neo-Nazis all over the world, perpetuating the Nazi ideology of anti-Semitism, but the Jews are no longer defenseless. We stand fearless and the Jewish spirit will never be broken."

Temple Israel was damaged by an explosion just hours before President Marais Viljoen and other dignitaries, including the city's Jewish Mayor, Allan Gadd, and Lankin were scheduled to attend ceremonies to mark the 50th anniversary of Reform Judaism in South Africa. Police investigators said that two limpet bombs were used in the attack. No one has claimed responsibility. It was the first such attack on a synagogue in the history of South Africa.

The meeting Friday night was called by the Board of Deputies of South African Jews and the South African Zionist Federation as a show of solidarity and strength against terrorist attacks. "Under no circumstances will the community be intimidated and scared into submission," said one of the organizers.

**An Attack On All Jews**

Rabbi Gunther Plaut, president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis and Dr. I Abramowitz, president of the Board of Deputies, joined Lankin in his condemnation of the bombing. "The world must know it was an attack on all the Jews -- their values and spirit," Plaut said.

He warned that anti-Semitism is a cancer in society and that it would grow if it was not checked. "The unknown perpetrators of this attack on all the Jews can break windows, and maim and injure, but they can never maim the eternal spirit of the people of Israel," Plaut declared.

Itz Kalmanowitz, chairman of the Zionist Federation, said the greatest tragedy was that "such outrages were applauded in some parts of the world and by some people in South Africa. The Jewish people will not be intimidated nor placed under pressure. We chose to meet tonight symbolically where our enemies chose to do their dirty work a few days ago."

Julius Weinstein, president of the Zionist Federation, said the bomb attack served only to unite the Jewish community further. "We are one people and we stand together determined in our resolve," he said. "We will not be intimidated by any acts of violence."

Telegrams from all over the world were sent by Jews and non-Jews condemning the attack and expressing sympathy with the Jewish community.

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**TEL AVIV (JTA)** -- Two more army reservists have been sentenced to prison terms for refusing to serve in Lebanon. This has brought the number who have so far been sentenced for refusing to serve to 83, with 12 presently in military jails. One of those sentenced recently was a military police sergeant. He refused for a second time to serve as a guard at the Ansar prisoner of war camp in south Lebanon.