

**BACKGROUND REPORT  
U.S. PERCEPTION OF SYRIA**

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Jan. 19 (JTA) — The Reagan Administration believes that the Syrians want to negotiate a withdrawal of their troops from Lebanon, but on their terms.

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency has learned that this is the feeling of the Administration despite the lack of progress made during special Mideast representative Donald Rumsfeld's three-and-a-half hour talk in Damascus last Friday with Syrian President Hafez Assad. Rumsfeld reportedly told the Israelis later that chances for an agreement had "decreased."

Assad has made it clear that he wants Lebanon to abrogate its May 17 agreement with Israel and for Israeli troops to pull out of Lebanon before he will consider the withdrawal of Syrian troops from that country. At his meeting with Rumsfeld, he reportedly added the condition that the United States withdraw its troops too.

The Administration believes that a major concern of Syria with the May 17 agreement is that it will make Israel the protector of Lebanon. Syria sees itself as the protector of Lebanon.

**Syria Does Not Want To Absorb Lebanon**

The U.S. does not believe that Syria wants to absorb Lebanon, something that is believed in Israel. Instead, the Administration noted that when Lebanon and Syria were removed from the control of the French in 1946 the Syrians agreed that they were two countries, but one people. At the same time, the Syrians maintained that they will not let Lebanon be used as a base or corridor for an attack on Syria.

The U.S. has accepted that Syria has long played an influential role in Lebanon. It is believed here that Syria wants stability in Lebanon and that is one of the reasons its army first went into the country in 1976 at the request of the then Lebanese government.

But the Administration is arguing that the security arrangements that are now being negotiated between the various factions in Lebanon will provide the beginning of national reconciliation in Lebanon and thus stability. Syria is believed behind the groups opposing that agreement.

However, Syria also opposes the May 17 agreement as part of what it sees its role as the leader of the Arab world. They want to derail Egypt's peace treaty with Israel and the Camp David process. They believe that the Arabs can get more from Israel united than negotiating separately and do not want to see Lebanon go the way of Egypt.

**Attitude Toward May 17 Agreement**

The Administration has both publicly and privately supported the agreement, which after all, came about through the personal mediation of Secretary of State George Shultz. But it has been stressing that it is not a peace treaty and that Lebanon rejected many Israeli demands. Instead, the agreement is a "delicate, balanced package of compromises," is the way it is put.

The Administration has also stressed that it is the only agreement existing so far for the withdrawal of foreign troops from Lebanon. However, there are hints that the Administration would not oppose changes if that is what Israel and Lebanon want.

In expressing understanding for the Syrian view, the Administration Mideast experts stress that negotiations with Assad are long, detailed and tough. After all, it is noted, then Secretary of State Henry Kissinger met with the Syrian leader for more than 30 times to reach the 1974 Israel-Syrian disengagement agreement.

At the same time it is being stressed that when the Syrians made an agreement, whether formally as they did with the Israelis in 1974 on the Golan Heights or informally in Lebanon when Syria implicitly agreed not to move against the Israeli army, it can be trusted to keep it. The problem is that no one in Washington seems to know how to get Syria to come to an agreement.

**LIKUD COALITION DEFEATED IN THE  
KNESSET ON THREE PROCEDURAL MOTIONS**

By Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, Jan. 19 (JTA) — The opposition prevailed over the Likud coalition in three Knesset votes on sensitive matters yesterday. All, however, were procedural motions and only one touched on a subject of serious political content.

The latter was the 58-3 vote in favor of debate on a motion to freeze settlement building on the West Bank and Gaza Strip for economic reasons. It was submitted by MKs Yitzhak Berman and Dror Zeigerman of Likud's Liberal Party wing who argued that it was irresponsible to spend large sums on settlements in those territories at a time of economic crisis demanding drastic budget cuts.

Although the government is adamantly opposed to a settlement freeze, it yielded to demands for a debate on the subject. The three MKs of the ultra-nationalist Tehiya faction demonstratively walked out of the chamber before the balloting. They were joined by another diehard, Rabbi Haim Druckman of the one-man Matzav faction.

The government lost by a narrow 51-50 vote on an opposition motion to debate the allegation by Minister of Commerce and Industry Gideon Patt last week that Israel's economic woes are the result of a conspiracy by the Labor Party and Histadrut to topple the Likud government by causing industrial strife. Patt's charge has already been labeled by critics "The Protocols of the Elders of Histadrut."

The opposition won 46-41 on a motion for formal debate on the establishment of a parliamentary committee to investigate the collapse of government-backed bank shares last October. The committee will try to ascertain whether the Bank of Israel and the Treasury acted improperly to maintain the shares at a high price after thousands of individual holders dumped them in favor of Dollar purchases. The issue is further complicated by charges that senior bank officials benefitted from the Treasury's action.

Although the government would have preferred to avoid debate on these matters, its normal four-vote majority could not be mustered yesterday. Ariel Sharon, embroiled in a bitter feud with his Herut colleagues over his responsibility for events in Lebanon when he was Defense Minister, refused to attend the session. He was reported to be "sulking" in the Knesset dining room while the votes were held.

Knesset Speaker Menachem Savidov disqualified himself on grounds that he cannot vote on sensitive matters while serving as acting President. President Chaim Herzog is presently on a state visit to two African countries.

Education Minister Zevulun Hammer of the National Religious Party, convalescing from a recent heart attack, did not attend the session. Former Premier Menachem Begin has not appeared in the Knesset since he announced his resignation last summer. And Likud could not count on the votes of Berman or Zeigerman, both "mavericks" who frequently oppose government policies.

#### BEHIND THE HEADLINES

KAYSTON HONORED BY JTA BOARD FOR 48 YEARS OF SERVICE; STRESSES JTA'S IMPORTANCE DURING PAST FIVE DECADES

NEW YORK, Jan. 19 (JTA) -- John Kayston, retiring executive vice president of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, was presented with a plaque at the annual JTA Board of Directors meeting in Atlanta for his 48 years of "outstanding and dedicated service to promoting the dissemination of Jewish news around the world."

Martin Fox, JTA president, in presenting the plaque to Kayston, praised him for his many years of service to the JTA. "To work in one job for 48 years is quite rare in our society today." Other comments from Board members included Philip Slomovitz, editor and publisher of The Jewish News of Detroit and JTA vice president. In a letter to the Board he wrote that Kayston "is a pioneer in Jewish journalism who has earned every blessing and honor that can be accorded him."

Board member Hy Vile of Kansas City stated: "Dedication and sincerity such as demonstrated by John Kayston is far, far too rare on the public scene. From 1936 to the present has evolved a different world. John Kayston has helped to shape that world."

Following the meeting, Kayston expressed some thoughts on the world he helped to shape. He expressed his belief that the past half century is the most momentous period in Jewish history. The two most important events during that period which profoundly affected Jewish life, he said, were Hitler's murder of six million Jews, the Holocaust, and the birth of the State of Israel.

#### Some Behind-The-Scenes Stories

There is general agreement, Kayston observed, that the JTA played an important and vital role during these turbulent years in collecting and disseminating news affecting Jewish lives everywhere. Little is known, however, of some behind-the-scenes stories in which JTA was involved.

One such story, Kayston recalled, was the deportation of Boris Smolar, then JTA's chief foreign correspondent, from Berlin in 1933. He went to Nazi Germany in 1933 to stay for a few days to do a series of articles on the plight of the Jews in Germany and stayed for four years. His stay there was fraught with danger. Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels alluded to this when he said that Smolar was a "courageous

man" for daring to send out reports about the Nazi regime. The JTA office in Berlin was closed in 1933. In their deportation order against Smolar, the Gestapo stated that his presence in Germany was "a danger to the Third Reich."

Kayston also recalled that in 1945, immediately after the Allied victory in Europe and the liberation of the concentration camp inmates, JTA was able to obtain lists of survivors in various countries under Nazi occupation and sent them for distribution in the United States and other countries so that relatives could get in touch with the survivors.

There is no question, Kayston said, that the excellent reporting of Smolar, JTA's chief foreign correspondent during the 1920's and 1930's, from Europe and the Middle East helped to a large extent to establish JTA's credibility with the general media.

#### The Role Of The ONA

Kayston also reminisced about the Overseas News Agency (ONA), founded in 1940 as a subsidiary of the JTA. At that time, some of the daily newspapers which subscribed to the JTA news service, especially The New York Times, felt they no longer could use the "Jewish Telegraphic Agency" slugline, because the name was too "parochial" and implied biased news reporting.

Partly as a result of this, Jacob Landau, founder of the JTA and its managing editor, enlisted the help and expertise of such prominent journalists as Herbert Bayard Swope and William Allen White in establishing a general "non-Jewish" news agency. Hy Wishengrad, JTA editor at the time, became editor of the ONA and Victor Bienstock its chief foreign correspondent.

Within a year, ONA news was carried by more than 50 daily American and Canadian newspapers. Its reporters and correspondents included outstanding journalists and writers such as Theodore White, Meyer Levin, David Schoenbrun, Elie Abel, and Gabe Pressman.

ONA's correspondent in Stockholm was Willy Brandt (later to become Chancellor of West Germany) who used the assumed name of Karl Frahm. He made several undercover trips to Nazi Germany in the early 1940's and was the first correspondent to report on Hitler's "final solution" of the Jewish question, the Nazi slaughter of European Jewry.

During World War II, ONA established a foreign language news service where ONA news was translated into more than 20 languages and distributed to the foreign-language press in the U.S. and Canada and overseas. Regrettably, Kayston pointed out, the ONA was dissolved in the early 1950's.

"What an important function it could perform today to counter anti-Israel propaganda and Jew-hatred so rampant in the world today," Kayston said. He expressed his belief that serious thought should be given to establish again a news agency for the general media based on the JTA worldwide news network.

#### JTA's Struggle For Independence

"Throughout all my 48 years with JTA," Kayston said, "JTA had to fight for its independence. Hardly a day passes when one or another Jewish organization, or some political faction in Israel, does not want to dictate to JTA editors how to run the agency and what news to print and which stories to suppress. JTA's independence and its impartial reporting is its most valuable asset. If it should ever deviate from this policy, it would lose its effectiveness."

**A LEADING ISRAELI DRUZE CONDEMNS GEMAYEL FOR RENEGING ON ACCORD WITH ISRAEL; QUESTIONS DEPENDABILITY OF PHALANGISTS AS ISRAEL'S ALLIES**  
By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Jan. 19 (JTA) -- A leading Israeli Druze denounced Lebanese President Amin Gemayel for renegeing on the May 17 Lebanese-Israeli agreement and questioned the dependability of the Phalangists as allies of Israel.

Zeidan Atashi, chairman of the Israel Druze National Council's Task Force on the Lebanese, told a press conference at the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York this week that he would like to see Israel and the United States support a different Lebanese President acceptable to all the warring factions in Lebanon.

He claimed that Gemayel is unacceptable to the Druze community as well as to most Lebanese. Gemayel, Atashi pointed out, even now is not President of Lebanon. "Syria controls 40 percent of the Lebanese territory, Israel about 30 percent, Gemayel doesn't even control western Beirut," Atashi contended. All Gemayel controls is a stronghold of Maronite eastern Beirut, and this is "only through the American security provided him," he said.

Responsibility For Inviting the PLO Into Lebanon

Atashi explained that the Lebanese Parliament, which is "overwhelmed by Maronites and Phalangists," was the Lebanese authority to accept and admit the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1970. "It was not the Druze community," he said.

Then, in 1975, when the PLO "contested the authority and property of those Phalangists," the Phalange extended "very cordial invitations to the Syrians," so that the Syrians might rescue the Lebanese from the same PLO presence. With the "chaos resulting" from the occupation of both forces, "the same group invited the Israelis to rescue them from both sides," Atashi said.

Atashi, a former member of Knesset and a former Israel Consul in New York, is on tour of the U.S. to clarify the status of the Israeli Druze community, their history and their contributions. He emphasized that he is not seeking to intervene in American affairs but is looking for ways to make America more credible in the Middle East.

He said that he "loves and admires" the U.S. and "it hurts me to see the Americans killed for no future benefits," a reference to the servicemen who have been killed in Beirut during their stint as part of the multinational force. Atashi said he foresees a bloodbath involving local Lebanese factions the minute the marines are withdrawn. But following the bloodbath, Lebanon "will decide what to do via its own people," he said.

Syrian Ambitions In Lebanon

Discussing Syrian ambitions in Lebanon, Atashi said they are aimed at recovering "Greater Syria" by challenging the weak party in the area, namely, Lebanon. The Syrian Nationalist Party has existed inside Lebanon for the last 30 years, he said, and maintains paid agitators there.

He predicted that "We will not have an easy task regarding Syrian withdrawal." One reason for this, he opined, is that the Syrians, who were invited to Lebanon by a central government, do not now feel that Gemayel represents a united, centralized authority.

As for the Israeli occupation of Lebanon, Atashi said he favors a pullback from all populated areas even if pockets of terrorists remain there. He said Israelis, who are "sensitive people," cannot themselves continue to eradicate terrorists. That should be the task of the local population.

He explained that "diplomacy allows for a lot of exits" and suggested that, given the situation "as it is," it might be in Israel's interest to offer military help to the Lebanese Druze community just as the Syrians are offering theirs.

Goals Of The Task Force

Discussing the Israeli Druze task force on the Lebanese, which was formed in October, 1982, Atashi said its goals are to "save, support, sympathize (with) and rescue our Druze brethren from any imminent danger to their existence" in Lebanon, and to rescue Israel's image in the eyes of the Lebanese Druze.

"Because of the lack of responsibility or blackmail by the Phalange, toward the Israeli government," preventing any Israeli contact with the non-Phalangist non-Maronite movements in Lebanon, the initial Israeli policy toward the Lebanese Druze was "very unkind," Atashi claimed. The task force has sought to "offset the embarrassment" the Israeli Druze felt.

The task force works by putting intensive pressure on the Israeli government through press conferences, demonstrations, and other lobbying activities, Atashi pointed out. The demonstrations, he said, are "not for reasons of inequality or negligence toward the Druze community of Israel," but for the "future of our brethren."

Drawing a parallel between Jewish efforts on behalf of Soviet and Syrian Jewry, and underlining Israeli Druze support for such rescue activities, Atashi asked: "Why can't I do the same thing -- to rescue my brethren -- in this great democracy, Israel?" He defended the Israeli Druze as "very authentic Israelis, neither extremist nor leftist."

Atashi claimed that as a result of the task force's activities, there is currently a dialogue going on between the Israelis and the Druze in Lebanon, and that its activities have "softened the situation and bridged the gap, in many cases, between our brothers and the State of Israel."

He pointed out that one of the sore points between the Israeli Druze and the Israeli government had been the continued refusal on the part of Israel to act on the repeated requests by the Israeli Druze that Israel eject the three Phalangist battalions from the Druze areas of the Shouf mountains which are killing the Druze there.

Atashi said the Israelis were unable to do this because "it would destroy the bridges between them and the Lebanese authorities." The Lebanese Druze then went ahead and fought the Phalangists on their own, he said, but at a very high price to themselves.

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TEL AVIV (JTA) -- President Chaim Herzog and his wife, Ora, received a very warm welcome Wednesday when they arrived at Kinshasa, Zaire, the first Black African nation to restore diplomatic ties with Israel after breaking them during the Yom Kippur War. Herzog, on his first African tour since taking office, will also visit Liberia. Israeli reporters accompanying the Presidential party, said the road from Kinshasa airport to President Mobutu Sese Seko's residence was lined with thousands of people waving Israeli flags. The government daily, Elima, called Herzog's visit "the consecration of renewed friendship between Zaire and Israel."

## SPECIAL TO THE JTA EMERGENT SPANISH-ISRAELI RELATIONS

By Michael Fooner

(Part Three Of A Three Part Series)

BARCELONA, Jan. 19 (JTA) — Carlos Talvi had a party in his honor recently, celebrating his 50 years as secretary of the Jewish Community of Barcelona. In keeping with tradition, the happiness of the occasion was mixed with a measure of sorrow. "It looks like a sad future," Talvi said, "in Barcelona, and in all Spain."

The Jewish community is declining. Ironically, the decline has set in at a time when the Jews never had it as good as they do today in Spain.

And, double irony, it comes at a time when Jews all over the world are reviving an interest in Spain of the Middle Ages and in the Jews' history and culture there.

The most direct measure of this revival is in tourist activity, and the most dramatic recent indicator is in Israel. From 1975 to 1979, the annual number of Israelis visiting Spain doubled, and doubled again from 1979 to 1982, according to Charles Ochletree of the Spanish National Tourist Office.

And this year alone the number is almost re-doubled, to 60,000, according to Tourism Minister Enrique Baron. In a large measure this reflects the opening of direct airline service between the two countries for the first time, along with improving official relations between the two governments.

### Cultural Heritage Attracts Foreign Jews

In the United States, "the Jewish market" is being assiduously cultivated as Jews become conscious of their Spanish cultural heritage. Toledo, with its two surviving medieval synagogues, Seville, with its Maimonides statue, and Barcelona, with its ancient Hebrew inscriptions and its "Mountain of the Jews" called Montjuich are getting the full treatment in travel literature. Until two years ago there was only one organizer of "Jewish-oriented" tours to Spain; now there are six.

South America and North Africa are also places sending lots of Jews, but most have gone to Spain for shelter from anti-Semitism in their home countries as much as for recreational travel. According to Talvi, as many as 10,000 Argentine Jews came to Barcelona during the years of political troubles there, just as thousands of Moroccan Jews came in earlier years for the same reason.

But they have done very little to strengthen the resident Jewish community, Talvi said. Some Moroccans did join, but the South Americans keep to themselves in expatriate clusters and look to return to their native lands as pressures there ease off.

### A Community In Decline

Talvi by himself is a complete repository of the "Jewish experience" in modern Spain. He was born in Salonica and emigrated to Barcelona as a youth, married, had two children, and now has six grandchildren. He is the first and only secretary the Jewish Community ever had, from the time it was organized half a century ago. He has seen it grow, from a few refugees to a vigorous and promising community of 5,000 persons, and then reverse down to maybe 450 families, maybe 1,000 active members.

In 1954, Barcelona proudly opened the first synagogue to be established in Spain since the 15th century when Judaism was forbidden and all Jews were

expelled. The new Jewish community acquired a five-story building as their center and operated two synagogues, one for Ashkenazim, one for Sephardim.

Today the decline is reflected in the dwindling of the Sephardic congregation although they still muster a minyan for most services, while the Ashkenazic synagogue didn't even open for services on the High Holy Days this year.

From Spain's largest Jewish community, Barcelona has dropped behind Madrid, but even there, the community leaders observe a decline with no reversal in sight. Twelve other cities with organized Jewish communities have been tiny and no longer are expected to grow.

All this has happened while Spain was growing into a model of tolerance and well being for Jews. There is now complete religious and political freedom, civil rights, equality and economic opportunity. Anti-Semitic incidents from fringe groups in the past were promptly attended to by police. The economic recession has hurt all Spaniards, but at the Jewish Community Center officials report there are no special problems of Jewish poverty or unemployment.

### Reasons For The Decline

The reason for the decline is the attraction of Israel, leaders of the communities in Barcelona, Madrid and Seville agree. The young people with Jewish awareness simply find Israel more exciting, and their elders upon reaching retirement are also emigrating. Add to this the attrition from those who choose assimilation into the secular world, say the community leaders, and the living Jewish presence will gradually fade from Spain.

But it will not disappear. There will always be for visitors a romantic glow from the past, the "Golden Age," the great medieval poets and philosophers, and the tales of the Jewish financiers who managed the affairs of royalty, and bankrolled the discovery of America.

### STUDY SHOWS HALF OF ALL WEST GERMANS STILL HARBOR ANTI-SEMITIC FEELINGS

BONN, Jan. 19 (JTA) — Half of all West Germans still harbor anti-Semitic feelings of varying intensity, according to a study by Cologne University based on a sampling of 2,000 adults. The study showed that only 24 percent of the population fully rejects anti-Semitism.

The implication of the study is that very few Germans have changed their minds about Jews despite the widespread publicity given the massacre of Jews during the Nazi era, including the American-made Holocaust television series which appeared on national television here several years ago.

The Cologne inquiry found that persons of low income and little education are more anti-Semitic than academics and office holders. Anti-Semitic feelings are more intense among older Germans, those who lived during the Nazi era. Anti-Semitic sentiments were found in up to 88 percent of people living in small towns and villages, compared to 48 percent in large urban areas. There are, at present, about 30,000 Jews in the Federal Republic.