

**ISRAEL STILL HOPEFUL ABOUT  
RELATIONS WITH LEBANON DESPITE  
GEMAYEL'S TRIP TO DAMASCUS**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 29 (JTA) — Official circles here continued to cling to the hope that something may be salvaged from Israel's efforts to establish at least quasi-diplomatic relations with Lebanon despite President Amin Gemayel's trip to Damascus to see President Hafez Assad of Syria. One Likud MK called it a trip to "Canossa." (Canossa was the village in northern Italy where Emperor Henry IV made humble submission to Pope Gregory VII in 1077.)

While Gemayel's abrogation of the May 17, 1983 Israel-Lebanon withdrawal and security agreement is considered a foregone conclusion, officials quoted by Israel Radio today expressed hope that the Israeli mission maintained near Beirut would not be ousted and that Gemayel will not surrender totally to Syria's demands.

The officials reiterated Israel's belief that cancellation of the May 17 accord would be a grave blow to Lebanon's sovereignty and independence. Some observers felt that Israel would benefit insofar as it would now be free to decide on a further pullback or redeployment of the Israel Defense Force in south Lebanon.

The government has hesitated up to now because of a lingering hope that Gemayel may yet resist Syrian pressure. In such circumstances, a redeployment of the IDF would weaken the Lebanese President's resolve. But many observers now believe that Gemayel's last reserves of resistance to Syria were shattered by the withdrawal of the U.S. marines from Beirut.

The U.S. position is that Gemayel brought the disaster on himself by refusing to yield a fair share of political power to Lebanon's majority non-Christian population, relying instead on American firepower to enable him to "stand tough" against his internal rivals.

**Gemayel Committing Political Suicide**

According to Likud MK Ehud Olmert, a member of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, Gemayel has signed his "political death warrant" by going to Damascus to meet Assad. He doomed his own regime and is "a puppet of the Syrians now," Olmert said. He predicted that the Syrians "will discard him soon enough" because "they can find better puppets."

Olmert, one of the most influential members of Likud's younger element has conceded that Israel did "not achieve all of its objectives" in the Lebanon war and supports another partial pullback of the IDF in south Lebanon.

His brother, Yossi Olmert, an academician who heads the Lebanon and Syria department at Tel Aviv University's Shiloah Institute on foreign policy, operates under no political or partisan restraints. Long a critic of the Likud government's policies in Lebanon, he declared recent developments "a great victory for Syria."

Syria has won a major success in Lebanon, he said. It has managed to roll back a diplomatic process involving Israel and another Arab country and this was the first time since the mid-70's that Syria's persistent ef-

forts to thwart peace diplomacy in the region has been crowned with unequivocal success, Olmert said.

He also suggested that Gemayel's "death warrant" may prove more than political. His surrender under Syrian pressure could cost him his life, given the high quotient of violence in Lebanese politics, Olmert said.

He predicted, however, that Syria will have its hands full in Lebanon where internal strife makes life extremely difficult for outsiders. The Syrians can hardly hope to control that country without outright military occupation, he said.

**SKEPTICISM EXPRESSED THAT HUSSEIN  
WILL ENTER THE MIDEAST PEACE PROCESS**  
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 29 (JTA) — Political circles here are skeptical of reports that King Hussein of Jordan may soon enter the peace process and dismiss Hussein's latest round of talks with Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasser Arafat as leading nowhere.

The sources, reacting to a Voice of Israel Radio report that Hussein has informed the United States that he would join the peace process within "a matter of weeks," "with or without Arafat," observed that Washington has frequently spread rumors to that effect and they have always proven false.

The Reagan Administration was optimistic when Hussein and Arafat held a series of meetings last spring. But those talks broke off in April after Arafat failed to give Hussein authorization to represent the Palestinians in peace talks with Israel.

The East Jerusalem Arabic newspaper Al Kuds reported today that a delegation of 15 West Bank leaders met with Arafat in Amman yesterday and handed him a petition urging the PLO to enter the peace process jointly with King Hussein.

The delegation included Mayor Elias Freij, of Bethlehem, an influential moderate, and Hikmat Al-Masri, a former Speaker of the Jordanian Parliament who has good relations with Arafat. The delegation will present a similar petition to Hussein, Al Kuds reported.

**One Tangible Outcome Of Hussein-Arafat Talks**

The Hussein-Arafat talks have had one tangible outcome — revival of the joint Jordan-PLO committee which provides financial assistance for development projects on the West Bank. The committee was frozen by Jordan nine months ago after the failure of the Hussein-Arafat talks. The committee is now expected to dispatch emissaries to Arab countries to raise money for its activities.

Palestinian sources here told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that the focus of the present Hussein-Arafat meetings is the search for a formula for Palestinian representation in a Jordanian delegation to future peace talks.

The failure of the two men to find a formula last year was attributed to pressure on Arafat from Syria and hardliners within the PLO who oppose any negotiations with Israel. Since then, the PLO has split and Arafat, having been forcibly ousted from Lebanon by Syrian-backed PLO dissidents, may have nothing to lose by entering an arrangement with Hussein.

West Bankers nevertheless remain sharply divided.

Pro and anti-Arafat demonstrations have been held all week in the casbah of Nablus, the largest Arab town on the West Bank. They are seen here as a form of pressure not to surrender the Palestinians' right to make "independent decisions" to Amman.

# 7 CANADIAN LEGISLATORS MEET WITH ARAFAT IN AMMAN WHILE ON A MIDEAST TOUR SPONSORED BY THE ARAB LEAGUE

By Michael Solomon

MONTREAL, Feb. 29 (JTA) --Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Conservative opposition leader Brian Mulroney dissociated themselves today from the meeting seven members of the Canadian Parliament had with Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasser Arafat in Amman, Jordan yesterday. The MPs are on a Middle East tour sponsored by the Arab League.

The Prime Minister's Office said Trudeau had not sanctioned the 10-day trip which the MPs, Liberals and Conservatives, made in their private capacities. An aide to Mulroney said he was not aware of the trip. The meeting was angrily denounced by Canadian Jewish groups.

According to the Arab League office in Ottawa, Arafat urged the MPs to press the Canadian government to officially recognize the PLO. An Arab League spokesman, Yassar Askari, said the MPs represented the Canada-Arab World Parliamentary Group consisting of more than 70 MPs and Senators.

## Jewish Leader Denounces Meeting

Frank Diamond, executive vice president of B'nai B'rith in Canada, said: "I am exceptionally disappointed that the members of Parliament who represent Canada would meet with a terrorist. It is particularly disappointing that they would meet with Arafat on a day that he has taken credit for ordering an explosive device to go off in a shopping center in Jerusalem." Two grenades exploded outside a shop in West Jerusalem yesterday injuring 21 persons.

Diamond added that he regretted that the MPs were not planning to visit Israel to see "the other side of the coin." The group's itinerary will take them to Baghdad, the West Bank, Damascus and Tunis. They are due to return to Ottawa on March 6.

The Liberal MPs on the trip include Ian Watson and Jean LaPierre, both from Quebec, and Norm Kelly from Toronto. The Conservatives are Robert Corbett of New Brunswick; Howard Crosby of Nova Scotia; Ron Stewart of Ontario; and Lorne McCuish of British Columbia. The Canada-Israel Committee declared today that their meeting with Arafat was "an embarrassment to all Canadians."

# NAHAL COMMANDER ORDERS EXCISION OF MAGAZINE EDITORIAL WHICH PRESENTS GLOOMY VIEW OF THE IDF IN LEBANON

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 29 (JTA) -- Soldiers were wielding scissors today cutting out an editorial from Bamahane Nahal, the weekly magazine of the Nahal (para-military corps) which presented a gloomy view of the lot of Israeli troops assigned duty in Lebanon.

The deletion, after the magazine had gone to press, was ordered by the Nahal commander Brig. Gen. Yosef Eshkol, according to an Israel Defense Force spokesman. It is the commander's right and duty to see to it that the publication suits the army's wishes, the spokesman said.

The offending editorial was written by Meir Doron, editor of Bamahane Nahal. He referred to soldiers

returning "erased from yet another stint in Lebanon. I see them getting poorer from (one tour of duty to another) ... I have friends and they are becoming fewer ... I am afraid we are not counting our closed hearts among the casualties of this war," Doron wrote.

The editorial was excised only from those issues of the magazine going to servicemen discharging their military duties at Nahal settlements which combine agriculture with military training. It was left intact for civilian subscribers.

# ROSENNE: DIASPORA-ISRAELI CONFRONTATIONS DEMONSTRATE STRENGTH OF THE UNITY OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 29 (JTA) -- Israeli Ambassador Meir Rosenne stressed last night that the occasional "confrontations" between diaspora Jewry and Israel demonstrates the strength of the unity of the Jewish people.

"The mistake of our enemies has always been to exaggerate differences of opinion; to try and describe differences of opinion as a lack of solidarity," Rosenne told a dinner celebrating the 40th anniversary of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC) at the Washington Hilton Hotel.

"The enemies of ours never understood that this was the most important expression of strength," the Ambassador explained. "Only if you are strong can you afford the luxury to disagree."

## Contribution Of NJCRAC Praised

Rosenne said the NJCRAC's "contribution is immense in strengthening the links between Israel and the diaspora." He read a telegram from Israeli Premier Yitzhak Shamir in which Shamir expressed Israel's "appreciation" to the organization made up of 11 national and 111 local Jewish community relations agencies for the "role you have played in explaining Israel's just cause and defending it."

Rosenne recalled that in 1961 when he served in the Israeli Consulate in New York, Shlomo Argov, the then Consul General, and the late Isaiah Minkoff, NJCRAC's founding director and executive vice chairman, and several others began working on behalf of Soviet Jewry establishing the movement which eventually saw more than 250,000 Jews emigrate from the USSR. Rosenne at that time worked with the Embassy on the Soviet Jewry issue.

Noting that the NJCRAC had worked to help not only Jews but also non-Jews, Rosenne suggested that instead of writing books on Jewish history the biographies of some 400 Jewish leaders attending the NJCRAC's four day plenary session here could "teach future generations what we stand for and what we fight for."

The four-day session in which the delegates mapped the NJCRAC's policies and strategies for the coming year ended today.

# SUSPENDED SENTENCE FOR YOUTH WHO CONFESSED TO TORCHING SYNAGOGUES

HARTFORD, Conn., Feb. 29 (JTA) -- A Superior Court Judge suspended prison sentences he originally imposed on a Jewish youth who confessed to synagogue arson here and placed 17-year-old Barry Dov Schuss on five years' probation Tuesday. Judge John Brennan also ordered the youth to continue psychiatric treatment. He was under treatment at the time of his arrest.

Schuss, who comes from an Orthodox family, admitted setting fire to two West Hartford synagogues last August and September and to the home of the rabbi of

one of them, Rabbi Solomon Krupka, and the home of State Representative Joan Kemler, who is Jewish.

Brennan heard pleas for leniency from two local rabbis, the youth's family and others. He had originally sentenced Schuss to seven years each for the synagogue fires and 14 years for each of the fires at the two homes, the sentences to have been served concurrently.

#### U.S. EYEING GEMAYEL-ASSAD TALKS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 29 (JTA) — The Reagan Administration, with an eye focussed on President Amin Gemayel's talks in Damascus, stressed today that if the May 17, 1983 agreement between Lebanon and Israel is abrogated, those who do so will have the responsibility for finding an alternative method for the departure of foreign forces from Lebanon.

"Those who seek to abrogate it bear a responsibility for finding and achieving some alternative way for assuring Israel's withdrawal," State Department spokesman John Hughes said. He noted that Israel has made clear its attitude on abrogation.

While Hughes did not go into what the Israelis have said, Israeli officials have declared that if the agreement is abrogated by Lebanon, Israel would not be bound by any of the commitments it had made under the agreement and its forces would not leave Lebanon until there is a government in Beirut that can assure the security of Israel's northern border.

Hughes said the Administration will have to wait and see what the outcome is of Gemayel's talks with President Hafez Assad of Syria aimed at bringing about a reconciliation between the various factions in Lebanon. Syria's main price for its support and the support of the Syrian-backed factions in Lebanon now opposed to the Gemayel government, is abandonment of the May 17 agreement.

#### U.S. Still Supports May 17 Accord

Hughes said that if Lebanon does abrogate the agreement, the U.S. will have to face this new "reality." But, he said, the U.S. still considers the agreement a good one. He said the U.S. was asked for its help in achieving the agreement and believes its efforts were "honorable," "worthwhile" and "the right thing to do."

He said responsibility for the subsequent failure was not that of the U.S. but that of Syria which refused to negotiate the withdrawal of its forces from Lebanon.

At the same time, Hughes rejected the view that the U.S. was disengaging itself from the Lebanese situation. He reemphasized the Administration's position that the transfer of the U.S. marine s from Beirut to ships of the Sixth Fleet offshore was a redeployment, not a pullout.

Prince Bandar, the Saudi Arabian Ambassador to Washington, met with Secretary of State George Shultz yesterday and gave him a letter from King Fahd to President Reagan reportedly urging the U.S. to stay actively involved in Lebanon. The letter also reportedly urged U.S. support for abrogation of the May 17 agreement.

Hughes maintained that the U.S. still has the option for a military response in Lebanon. The Administration reportedly rejected a request yesterday by Gemayel for the U.S. to use its firepower to maintain the military status quo in Lebanon.

Hughes said today that the U.S. position remained what it has always been, that if Americans are fired upon the U.S. will fire back. He also said that if

military action was taken against civilians in Lebanon, the U.S. would "certainly consider appropriate responses" but he would not explain what those responses might be.

While the Administration maintains that it is not disengaging from Lebanon, Reagan's special envoy, Donald Rumsfeld, is not expected to return to Lebanon on his next visit to the Middle East. Instead, he is expected to concentrate on the Administration's hopes to bring Jordan into negotiations with Israel over the West Bank.

#### ISRAEL MIGHT HAVE A CONSTITUTION WITHIN THE NEXT TWO YEARS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 29 (JTA) — Justice Minister Moshe Nissim believes Israel will have a Constitution within the next two years, resting on 10 basic laws.

He told reporters yesterday that within the time frame, the Knesset will enact three more basic laws, bringing the total to 10. One basic law was adopted yesterday, dealing with the legal system. The other three, now in the process of preparation, concern the State Comptroller, human rights and legislation.

In June, 1950, the Knesset resolved not to enact a formal constitution but to adopt basic laws which would collectively form one. The process has been delayed over the years owing to objections by various political parties, notably the religious factions which insist that the only binding constitution is the Bible and halacha—religious law.

Nissim expressed the hope that when a Constitution finally materializes it will reflect the national consensus.

#### CLARIFICATION

In the latter section of the second of a three-part series on Canadian Jewry, in the February 8 Daily News Bulletin, reference was made to an action of the government of Ontario in taking over the assets of a trust company. The president of the company, it was reported, has made allegations about unspecified anti-Semitic motivations behind the affair.

This view is not shared by Ontario Jews, or by Canadian Jews in general. The government of Premier William Davis of Ontario has always had congenial relations with the province's Jewish community. The Premier and his government, moreover, have been strong supporters of Jewish philanthropic agencies within the province and have consistently supported the aims and aspirations of the State of Israel, both through political and economic channels.

Since the article was written, it was learned that the company which took over the receivership of the trust company is also owned by Jewish interests, indicating clearly that no anti-Jewish animus was involved in the Ontario government's original action.

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MEXICO CITY (JTA) — President Miguel de la Madrid Hurtado and top Mexican scientists and public figures are participating in the Weizmann Institute's international leadership conference which began here Wednesday. It was decided to hold the conference here to emphasize the growing ties between Institute scientists and their Latin American counterparts, ties which have been formalized by cooperation agreements with scientific bodies in Mexico, Brazil, Venezuela, Costa Rica, Panama and Colombia.

# **SPECIAL INTERVIEW** **SOLVING THE SEPHARDI-ASHKENAZI** **SOCIAL, CULTURAL GAP IN ISRAEL** By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, Feb. 29 (JTA) — A leading expert on the issue of the social and cultural gap between Sephardi Jews, or Orientals, and Ashkenazi Jews in Israel believes that the problem can be solved by creating a pluralistic society, whose members would live "in peace and harmony."

In fact, Dr. Maurice Roumani, director of the Elyachar Center for Studies in Sephardi Heritage at the Ben Gurion University of the Negev in Beersheba, claims that Israeli society and the political establishment have been more receptive to a pluralistic society in the past few years.

"I think this is going to be the trend in the future, which will lead us to a genuine social and cultural integration," he said here in an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Roumani, 45, is on a brief visit to the United States under the auspices of the American Association of the Ben Gurion University whose president is Robert Amow. Roumani, a Libyan-born, American-educated scholar, who is also an expert on Mideast politics and Arab-Jewish relations, said that the social gap between Sephardim and Ashkenazim has two major aspects: economic and cultural.

He noted that the National Insurance Institute in Israel recently issued a report indicating that the number of families below the poverty level has increased by 20,000 to a total of 50,000 families. "Most of these families are Oriental Jews," Roumani said. "This is a regression in terms of bridging the socio-economic gap in Israel."

## An Improvement Under The Likud Government

Pointing out that this regression occurred during the recent period of the Likud government, he said: "For some of us this is not surprising. It is common knowledge that Oriental Jews supported the Likud and brought it to power. I think they did so not so much because they supported the Likud's economic ideology, but as a protest vote against the Labor Party and its 29 years of paternalism and undermining the Sephardi heritage while in power."

According to Roumani, there has been a change in this regard under the Likud government. "The Likud and Menachem Begin, its leader, restored for the Orientals the image of a traditional Jew with whom they can identify." The Likud also helped the Sephardim in developing a positive self-image on the personal level, he observed. He noted that under the Likud government there are more Sephardi Jews in the Knesset and in high government positions.

Under the Likud government the economic gap seemed, until recently, to have been narrowed, Roumani said. He said that the Oriental Jews have enjoyed the economic prosperity in recent years together with the rest of the population. "That well being might have been false but nevertheless the individual's economic situation has improved," Roumani said.

This situation, however, has drastically changed in the last few months, and the economic gap has widened, Roumani said. "I regard the economic gap — although it affects children's schooling and their way of life — as soluble," he said, adding: "Recent history has shown that with resources, properly channeled, economic hardship can be alleviated."

He continued: "What is more important, and becoming pressing, is the cultural gap in Israel; namely, what kind of culture we are going to see in Israel? Is it going to be a reflection of Ashkenazi Jews or is it going to reflect the pluralism of the Israeli society? Israel is a country where East can meet West and South can meet North. It can be very exciting to all members of society. Cultural pluralism is the answer to the cultural gap in Israel."

Roumani said that "interestingly enough" the trend toward pluralism was started under Labor rule in 1976. In that year, he recalled, the Education and Culture Ministry established the Center for the Integration of Oriental Jewish Heritage which has been subsidizing since then teaching and research on the subject in all universities in Israel.

## The Role Of Ben Gurion University

Roumani said that the Elyachar Center for Studies in Sephardi Heritage at Ben Gurion University started in 1976 with only eight courses and a handful of students. Today, he said with obvious delight, the Center offers 35 courses and has some 600 students, about 12 percent of the total student population at the university.

He noted that Beersheba is a town whose population is 70 percent Oriental. "Our university is oriented toward community involvement. Many Orientals were given the opportunity to attend the university. Many students are enrolled now in the center's courses, seeking their roots and gaining self respect," Roumani said. He said that courses on Sephardi heritage "are contributing to pluralism in Israeli society."

## An Achievable Goal

Roumani said the trend toward a pluralistic society can be achieved, "providing we control it." He said that teaching Sephardi heritage courses should be introduced into the curriculum of elementary and high schools all over the country.

Roumani noted that reaching the goal of a pluralistic, integrated society might take 5 years. But it all depends on "the inputs in terms of new centers (for Sephardi heritage) and the rate of integration."

Roumani, who recently published a critical study on an educational program to integrate Oriental Jews into the Israeli army, said that he believes that the army in Israel is a very good educational instrument toward integration. "It is a leveler of everybody," he said. "All soldiers, Sephardim and Ashkenazim alike, are put on the same level." He added, however, that the army is a reflection of Israeli society and the "culture of the army is Ashkenazi."

## U.S. LABOR SECRETARY TO VISIT ISRAEL

WASHINGTON, Feb. 29 (JTA) — Labor Secretary Raymond Donovan is going to Israel to co-sponsor with Israeli Labor Minister Aharon Uzan a conference on Labor In Changing Industrial Societies in Jerusalem March 5-8. Representatives of U.S. trade unions and businesses are also expected to participate.

Among the persons Donovan is expected to meet with are President Chaim Herzog, Premier Yitzhak Shamir, Histadrut Secretary General Yehoram Meshel and members of the Knesset Social and Labor Affairs Committee. While Donovan has visited Israel before, this is the first time he is going as Secretary of Labor. Before departing on Friday, he is expected to meet with Jewish communal leaders in New York.