

**MUBARAK SAYS HE WON'T CANCEL PEACE TREATY WITH ISRAEL AS PRICE OF REGAINING ARAB LEAGUE MEMBERSHIP**

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 11 (JTA) -- President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt denied today that he would cancel Egypt's peace treaty with Israel as a means of regaining membership in the Arab League.

"If this is the way to join the Arab League, to cancel our agreement, I tell you frankly we do not want to join," he said in an interview from Cairo on the CBS-TV "Face the Nation" program.

While calling President Hafez Assad of Syria a "good man," Mubarak rejected the suggestion that Assad can force Egypt to abrogate its peace treaty with Israel as Syria did with Lebanon which broke its May 17, 1983 agreement with Israel a week ago. "Whatever we decide we don't change," the Egyptian President declared. "This agreement is constitutionally approved in this country."

Mubarak seemed evasive about reports that he had told King Hassan of Morocco last year that Camp David is dead. He said today that "Camp David is the only document which is agreed upon" by Israel, the United States and an Arab country "since the Palestinian problem started."

**Conditions For Returning Envoy To Israel**

At the same time, Mubarak said that he would not send back Egypt's Ambassador to Israel until Israel withdraws completely from Lebanon and begins some movement on the Palestinian issue. He said he did not want "cold relations" with any country, including Israel. He noted that he has not sent back Israel's Ambassador to Egypt or closed the Israeli Embassy in Cairo.

But Mubarak charged that it was Israel, not Egypt, which was violating the Camp David agreements. He listed as violations the "annexation" of East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights and the "freeze" of the autonomy talks unless some of them are held in Jerusalem. He claimed that former Premier Menachem Begin and the late President Anwar Sadat had an agreement that the talks would not be held in Jerusalem.

Mubarak said it would be a "grave mistake" if Congress linked aid to Egypt with the return of the Egyptian Ambassador to Israel, as some in Congress are urging. Instead, he said the U.S. "should persuade" Israel to take the necessary steps.

In that context, Mubarak said that when he urged the U.S. to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization at the end of his recent meeting with President Reagan in Washington, he was not saying anything he had not said publicly in Cairo. He maintained that for King Hussein of Jordan to enter negotiations with Israel, he needs the support of both the U.S. and Egypt.

He said he met with PLO chief Yasir Arafat in order to help Hussein form a delegation which would include PLO representatives "so as to put him on the beginning of the road to negotiations with Israel."

Mubarak also denied reports that unlike his predecessor, Sadat, he was moving away from close relations with the U.S. But he cautioned that when the U.S. is forming its policy in the Middle East it should not use an "American computer" as it has been doing but an "Arab computer."

"Ask your friends in the area. We will give you good advice," Mubarak said.

**Israel Urged To Adopt More 'Flexible' Policy**

Meanwhile, Israel's Minister of Commerce and Industry, Gideon Patt, visiting Cairo, was told by Egyptian Foreign Minister Kamal Hassan Ali today that Israel must adopt a more "flexible" policy if it wants to encourage other parties to join in Middle East peace negotiations.

According to reports from Cairo, Hassan Ali told the Israeli visitor that Israel should abandon its "expansionist policy" by freezing settlement building in the occupied territories. He urged Israel to withdraw its forces completely from Lebanon because its invasion of that country in June, 1982 had a "negative impact" on the peace process.

Patt went to Cairo over the weekend to attend the international trade fair there. He has indicated that he hoped to discuss the possible revival of flagging Israeli-Egyptian trade relations.

**U.S. MILITARY CHIEF SAYS ISRAEL IS A STRATEGIC ASSET TO THE U.S.**

WASHINGTON, March 11 (JTA) -- Gen. John Vessey, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told leaders of the World Jewish Congress that Israel is a "strategic asset" to the United States and disclosed that "strategic cooperation between the armed forces of the United States and Israel have marched along steadily" despite any foot-dragging by "politicians."

In an unprecedented briefing last Thursday at the Pentagon for a high-level delegation of American leaders of the WJC, Vessey said there was "no reluctance in the armed forces to help Israel." The hour-long session covered security aspects relative to the Middle East, Latin America, the East-West balance, and the strategic arms question.

Vessey stressed that Israeli-U.S. strategic cooperation should serve the common interest of both countries. He noted: "We don't want to endanger Israel's security by asking them to do something for us in the larger strategic picture that doesn't make sense for them."

Noting that a strong Israel is a strategic asset to the United States, he added that "an Israel we have trapped into being put into greater danger because we have pushed them up against the Soviets, doesn't help Israel and doesn't really help us."

In response to criticism by Bernice Tannenbaum, chairman of the WJC International Affairs Commission, over the proposed sale of Stinger missiles to Jordan and Saudi Arabia, Vessey said that the request of the weapons had been initiated by the two Arab countries. "Jordan is frightened to death of Syria," he said, and the U.S. would insure that proper "safeguards" were part of any such arms delivery.

Questioned about the widely-reported American "tilt" toward Iraq in the war with Iran, Vessey made clear that America sought to see "no winners, no losers" in the conflict. In discussing the current "cold peace" relationship between Egypt and Israel, Vessey confided that in his private talks with the Egyptians he stressed the need for that relationship "to warm up."

Vessey conceded that "we are not going to get high marks for achieving a great strategic victory in Lebanon." At the same time, he emphasized the need to retain influence in the country, stating, "We should not get out of the region." He was sharply critical of those "politicians" who had set as the basis for policy the "unrealistic" goal of a strong central government in Lebanon.

Intelligence reports, he said, pointed to "plenty of signs of instability in Syria" and took note of the rivalry between the "ruthless" Assad brothers--President Hafez Assad and Rifaat Assad. The course of events might lead to Sunni elements taking control in Syria which could result in a more moderate regime, Vessey concluded.

The delegation, representing the WJC-American Section, was headed by its chairman, Rabbi Arthur Schneier.

#### CIVILIAN WORKER KILLED IN LEBANON

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 11 (JTA) -- An Israeli civilian worker, employed by the government's Public Works Department (PWD), was killed in Lebanon last Thursday when his vehicle was ambushed from the roadside a mile south of Lake Karoun in the eastern sector of the front. He was the fourth PWD fatality in south Lebanon.

In January, a PWD employe was killed and two were wounded when their convoy was fired on and hit by two grenades. They were engaged on road construction work for the Israel Defense Force near Ansar. One of the men wounded died last month and the second man wounded died today.

Civilian construction workers are employed by the IDF. They returned to work in Lebanon after a week's absence. They are demanding war risk compensation and life insurance similar to that provided Israeli soldiers in Lebanon.

In related developments, two hand grenades were thrown at an IDF patrol near Nabatiya in south Lebanon Friday morning. There were no casualties.

Sharp exchanges of fire between Moslems and Christians continued in Beirut over the weekend as leaders of the warring factions prepared for another round of reconciliation talks with the Lebanese government in Lausanne, Switzerland, beginning tomorrow. A Lebanese journalist was killed outside the French Embassy in Beirut when he was caught in crossfire Friday.

#### CABINET REFRAINS FROM DISCUSSING REDEPLOYMENT OF IDF IN LEBANON

JERUSALEM, March 11 (JTA) -- The transfer of border crossing points between Israel and Lebanon from military to civilian control was discussed by the Cabinet today. But there was no discussion of the redeployment of the Israel Defense Force in south Lebanon, Cabinet secretary Dan Meridor said.

He added that there has not yet been a decision in principle to redeploy the IDF, a move long expected and considered more likely now in view of Lebanon's abrogation last week of its May 17, 1983 withdrawal and security agreement with Israel. Meridor

said the Cabinet would discuss redeployment only when the army has finalized plans to carry it out.

#### ANTI-ISRAEL INCIDENTS ON WEST BANK

JERUSALEM, March 11 (JTA) -- A seven-year-old Arab boy was injured during a demonstration at the Balata refugee camp near Nablus today. The child, struck by debris from a ricocheting bullet, was treated at a local hospital. A curfew was imposed on the camp. The melee started when camp residents burned tires, waved Palestinian flags and threw stones at Israeli soldiers sent to restore order. A Molotov cocktail was thrown at a civilian vehicle on the main street of Gaza today without causing injuries or damage.

#### PETACH TIKVAH CHIEF RABBI ARRESTED AFTER ALLEGEDLY LEADING GROUP OF JEWS WHO ATTACKED RESTAURANT FOR BEING OPENED ON THE SABBATH

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 11 (JTA) -- Petach Tikvah's Chief Rabbi, Baruch Salomon, was arrested yesterday for allegedly leading ultra-Orthodox Jews who broke into a restaurant that was opened on the Sabbath, according to eyewitnesses, they broke furniture and doors, smashed crockery, glassware and windows.

The incident was the third in as many weekends where Orthodox Jews resorted to violence to force the closure of places of business and entertainment. On Friday night they demonstrated outside the Heichal cinema in an attempt to prevent patrons from entering. Police prevented a confrontation with a group of secular youths who held a counter-demonstration against "religious coercion."

Salomon was released shortly after his arrest and kept his promise to report to the police after the Sabbath. He was carried there on the shoulders of ultra-Orthodox Jews. The police said he would be charged with trespassing and damage to property if sufficient evidence was obtained.

#### Aguda Demands Investigation Be Dropped

Aguda Israel circles demanded that the investigation of the rabbi's behavior be dropped forthwith, Aguda MK Menachem Porush threatened that the party would leave Premier Yitzhak Shamir's coalition if this was not done.

But other Aguda circles denied today that a walk-out was threatened. The Aguda is presently attempting to secure larger financial allocations for their yeshivas at a time of drastic cuts in government expenditures.

Interior Minister Yosef Burg, a leader of the National Religious Party, was reported today ready to veto the recent by-law instituted by the Mayor of Petach Tikva to allow places of entertainment to remain open on the Sabbath. Should he do this, the cinema could be sued for giving "illegal" performances on Friday nights.

#### REPORT PROJECT RENEWAL HAS BEEN VERY SUCCESSFUL

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 11 (JTA) -- The future success of Project Renewal lies with direct ties between slum neighborhoods in Israel and grass root Jewish communities in the United States which "adopt" the neighborhoods and lobby on their behalf with Israeli government and Jewish Agency officials, according to Prof. Daniel Elazar, president of the Jerusalem State and Public Center.

So far, the partnership between diaspora Jews and the residents of some 80 neighborhoods badly in need of rehabilitation has been very successful, Elazar told

a press conference here today. He summed up the findings of a survey that traced the progress of Project Renewal during the five years since its inception.

Project Renewal was established as a partnership undertaking between Jews in the U.S. and elsewhere in the Western world and the government and Jewish Agency. In addition to regular funds raised for Israel through the United Jewish Appeal in North America and the Keren Hayesod in other countries, a special fund is allocated for the slum clearance and other activities of Project Renewal.

The survey indicated that during the five years of the Project, ties with the Jewish establishment abroad have weakened and so has the financial assistance. The survey recommended closer relations with grassroots Jews. "One can no longer rely on connections with the men on top only," Elazar said.

He observed that the project must provide Jewish communities overseas the opportunity to maintain personal relations with Israelis who are not policymakers in order to preserve the initial success.

"The two parties have signed a kind of pact, and diaspora Jews have contributed to determining the future of those neighborhoods," Elazar said. By lobbying on behalf of the neighborhood, they have managed to cut through red tape. "This would not have happened without the partnership," Elazar said.

#### LEADERS OF LEBANON'S WARRING FACTIONS TO BEGIN TOMORROW SECOND ROUND OF RECONCILIATION EFFORTS

By Edwin Eytan

LAUSANNE, March 11 (JTA) -- Leaders of Lebanon's eight warring factions gathered here today to open tomorrow a last chance conference to put an end to blood-letting and fighting. All the main eight leaders, including Lebanese President Amin Gemayel and opposition leaders Walid Jumblatt, a Druze, and Nabih Berri, a Shiite, said on the eve of the conference that they will do "whatever we can to try and reach a solution." Observers say the chances for success are slim as both the opposition and the backers of Gemayel are deeply split among themselves.

Some of Gemayel's supporters, such as former President Camille Chamoun are still bitter for his capitulation to Syrian demands in scrapping the May 17th agreement with Israel.

A spokesman for Chamoun said it will be difficult to reach an understanding with him after his recent betrayal, Chamoun and the President's father, Pierre Gemayel, conferred here this evening and drew up a joint working paper which they will submit to the conference tomorrow afternoon when it convenes.

The opposition is equally divided and observers say that Berri and Jumblatt are split over their views of Lebanon's future. While Jumblatt is reportedly in favor of a federation on the basis of ethnic or religious "cantons," Berri wants to maintain the country's unity, feeling that it belongs as such to the Arab and the Moslem world.

Syria's Foreign Minister Abdel Khalim Khadam is due to arrive tomorrow only after meeting in Damascus today with a Soviet delegation headed by First Deputy Premier Geidar Aliyev, the highest-ranking Soviet official to visit Syria since 1980.

The official Syrian news agency said Khadam and Aliyev discussed the current international situation, the Middle East and Soviet-Syrian relations. In a speech at a banquet yesterday in Damascus, Aliyev

said the USSR supported Syria and congratulated Damascus for thwarting American-Israeli designs in the Mideast through its "steadfast anti-imperialist line." The original reconciliation conference opened in Geneva last October and lasted four days. It ended in failure.

#### The Beginning Of Soviet Jewry Week; SHAMIR URGES ALL FREEDOM LOVING PEOPLE TO JOIN IN MARKING THE WEEK OF SOLIDARITY WITH JEWS IN THE USSR

By Gil Sdan

JERUSALEM, March 11 (JTA) -- Premier Yitzhak Shamir opened today's Cabinet meeting with a brief statement noting that the week ahead will see the beginning of Soviet Jewry Week. He urged all freedom loving people in the world to join in marking the week of solidarity with Jews in the Soviet Union.

"We will never rest until we are re-united with our brothers and sisters from the USSR," Shamir declared. He said words could not express his love and admiration for Jews in the Soviet Union who are risking their lives and liberty by studying Hebrew which is forbidden by the Soviet authorities.

#### Anniversaries Of Two POCs

Next Thursday, March 15, will mark the seventh anniversary of the arrest of Anatoly Shcharansky, the 36-year-old Jewish activist imprisoned for alleged treason, and the first anniversary of the arrest of Yuri Tamopolsky, 47, for alleged "defamation of the Soviet State and social system."

Both Shcharansky and Tamopolsky had applied for permits to emigrate to Israel, their only "crime." But the Soviet authorities incarcerated them on other charges as a pretext for preventing their departure. Both men have become symbols of the struggle of Soviet Jews for the right to emigrate and to practice their faith in the USSR.

Many others in the same position endure harassment and face arrest at any time on charges concocted to preserve the credibility of Moscow's insistence that it allows Jews to emigrate for the humanitarian purpose of family re-unification.

Tamopolsky, his wife Olga and daughter Irina have been refused visas since 1976. Shcharansky has been denied the right to join his wife and mother in Israel.

#### PARAT'S RESIGNATION FROM KNESSET EXPECTED TO RESULT IN RESHUFFLING OF THREE-MEMBER TEHIYA FACTION

JERUSALEM, March 11 (JTA) -- The resignation of Hanan Parat, a Gush Emunim militant, from his Tehiya Party Knesset seat last week, is expected to produce a reshuffling of Tehiya's three-member Knesset faction and a lurch toward the far rightwing by the seriously troubled National Religious Party.

Parat quit the Knesset after rumors that he was negotiating with Interior Minister Yosef Burg to return to the NRP, his original political base, were confirmed and reported in the media. Burg seemed surprised by the sudden move, noting that his talks with Parat were far from over. Some observers attributed Parat's defection from Tehiya in the midst of bargaining with the NRP to political naivete.

Burg himself has come under heavy fire by the media and from some elements within his own party for cynically selling out to the far right in an attempt to improve the NRP's political fortunes. The 74-year-old minister has long been a spokesman for moderation in the NRP and the government.

## SPECIAL INTERVIEW THE FALASHAS: AN ENDANGERED PEOPLE By Kevin Freeman

NEW YORK, March 11 (JTA) -- An official of the American Association for Ethiopian Jews (AAEJ) described the conditions of the Jews of Ethiopia as "untenable" and warned of a "quicken" pace of deterioration of the situation of the 18,000-member Falasha community.

"It is hard for me to draw any inference that things could be better than they were several years ago" for the Falashas, said Eli Rockowitz, a vice president of the AAEJ who visited Ethiopia two months ago, in an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. The AAEJ, a national grassroots activist organization dedicated to aiding the Falashas, claims a membership of 22,000 people.

Factors contributing to the deteriorating conditions of the Falashas, according to Rockowitz, include: the worst drought in North Africa in a decade; the intense military activity along Ethiopia's border with Somalia; and the ongoing conflict between the government forces and anti-government rebels and separatist movements in areas where Falasha villages are located; the continued ban on the teaching of Hebrew and Jewish studies; and the conscription of Falasha youth into military service.

The Marxist government in Addis Ababa does not officially seek to eradicate the Falashas, Rockowitz said. But Falashas are greatly persecuted by their neighbors -- Christians and Moslems -- "who have age-old animosities and suspicion of the Jews," he pointed out. The government, because of the military situation in the region, is unable to maintain law and order and thus protect the Falashas, according to Rockowitz.

### Describes Situation In Three Villages

He assessed his first visit to Ethiopia last January as a member of a delegation of nine activists who spent 10 days in Gondar city visiting Falasha villages and speaking with Ethiopian Jews and other sources familiar with their plight. The group's itinerary, planned beforehand in cooperation with the Ethiopian government, included scheduled visits to three Falasha villages, two of which -- Ambober and Wallecka -- have been described as "showcase villages" by Rockowitz and other Jewish visitors.

The showcase villages are labeled as such because tourists are allowed to visit them and, as Rockowitz observed, "Bibles are set up on tables with the pages open for you to see and Torahs are in the ark. It's all like a museum." But according to Rockowitz, these villages are not representative of the more than 400 Falasha villages scattered throughout Ethiopia, although many are located in the Gondar province.

The group visited Ambober, a mixed village where approximately 1,000 Falashas live and where there is a synagogue and a number of spiritual leaders; Wallecka, which also has a synagogue and spiritual leader and which is a central tourist attraction, is a village which Rockowitz said "the government had no problem with us seeing." Also visited was the mixed village of Tedda where individuals spoke broken Hebrew and there was no synagogue or spiritual leaders.

The group did visit one village which was not on the itinerary and said the group spoke with a "trembling" and fearful spiritual leader who pressed the view that the plight of the Falashas has deteriorated. Rockowitz said he did not want the name

of this village published although he conceded it was within view and walking distance to the other villages, all located near Gondar city.

The official government reason for the group not being able to tour other Falasha villages during their 10-day visit was that documents could not be processed and permission could not be obtained through the proper authorities, Rockowitz said. "We were given to understand from contacts," he added, "that there was a substantial amount of military activity" in these other areas.

The AAEJ official concluded that because certain villages were kept off limits to tourists, even though they were within walking distance from Ambober and Wallecka, suggests that conditions are different there. "The combination of the drought and the rebel activity both prejudice the conditions of the Falashas," he said.

Asked specifically how it can be determined that conditions are worse off for the Falashas in other areas where he did not visit, Rockowitz said: "To some degree we have to infer. We were told in the villages where we were and by people other than Falashas that the military situation and the drought led them to believe that the situation was worse off ... No government official is going to say we cannot let you go to these villages because the conditions are wretched."

"We were directed to certain villages where religious articles and the synagogues were in perfect condition and other neighboring villages were kept away from us," Rockowitz said. But he added that while the synagogue was kept in perfect condition, the general living conditions of the Falashas in these villages were "indiscribably poor."

The study of Hebrew is forbidden and could result in severe punishment by the authorities. It is not formally taught, Rockowitz said, and the delegation detected no signs of Hebrew books in the villages. But the children were able to write and speak Hebrew, indicating that the Falashas make a concerted effort to preserve Hebrew knowledge, he said.

### Villages Depleted Of Teenage Youths

Other factors leading to a deterioration in the Falasha plight is the loss in many villages of youths, some to the military by forced conscription, and others who are able to make the arduous and long trek to escape the country. These factors leave Falasha villages with many elderly and very young children.

"So what we heard on the spot is that the villages are depleted of teenage youths" and the remaining Falashas "are not able to sustain themselves as well because of the lack of help in the fields harvesting crops," Rockowitz said.

### Calls For Rescue Efforts

Rockowitz called on American Jewish groups which have helped rescue Jews from oppressed countries to intensify their rescue efforts on behalf of the Falashas. He also called on Israel to make a concerted and increased effort for the Falashas.

While crediting Israel with getting Falashas to Israel once they have escaped Ethiopia, Rockowitz said Israel must undertake a large diplomatic initiative in Ethiopia in order to save the Falashas. "If we're talking about saving the Jewish community as a whole, we need to see a total commitment by Israel and Jewish organizations toward a diplomatic initiative in Israel," he asserted.