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PERES SEES NOTHING WRONG WITH SHULTZ OFFERING ADVICE ON HOW ISRAEL SHOULD HANDLE ITS ECONOMIC PROBLEMS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 27 (JTA) — Premier Shimon Peres declared last night that Secretary of State George Shultz is one of Israel's best friends in Washington and it was quite proper for him to offer advice on how Israel should handle its economic problems.

Peres, addressing a Labor Party group here, was referring to a letter he received from Shultz two weeks ago suggesting that the Israeli government must take tougher economic measures before the U.S. considers its request for increased economic aid.

The letter, leaked to the press this week, drew a sharp response from Gad Yacobi, Minister of Economics and Planning, who said the government knows what has to be done and does not need "lecturing." Peres, however, defended Shultz. His advice, he said, was "truly that of a friend, without pressure or insults."

The Premier added that it was natural and proper for Washington to carefully scrutinize Israel's economic plans when it was being asked for increased aid. He said Shultz's letter was not critical but in fact praised the "general direction" of the government's economic policies. He simply urged greater urgency and determination to implement those policies, Peres said.

Finance Ministry Working On A Plan

The Finance Ministry was reported today to be working on a one-year wage-price stabilization plan to take effect when the three-month wage-price freeze ends in January. Some elements of the plan, leaked to the media, indicated that the Ministry seeks to hold down real wages. While workers will receive their regular monthly cost-of-living increments, there will be no wage hikes during the year the plan is in effect.

Peres was probably alluding to this last night when he said real wages would be held to their 1982 levels during a one-year recovery plan.

According to unofficial reports, the Finance Ministry will not impose another blanket freeze on the price of staple goods but would try to control and moderate price rises. Government price subsidies would continue but at a relatively low level. The prices of imports are expected to soar after the current freeze expires. Thereafter, they would be allowed to rise in tandem with the price of the dollar in Israeli currency.

Greek Jewish Community Is Angered And Disturbed: COURT IN CRETE RULES THAT JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES SECT IS PART OF A ZIONIST CONSPIRACY TO RULE THE WORLD

ATHENS, Dec. 27 (JTA) — The Jewish community is angered and disturbed over a ruling by a court in Candia, Crete, that the Jehovah's Witnesses, a Christian sect, bears a close resemblance to Judaism and is part of a Zionist conspiracy to rule the world from Jerusalem.

Joseph Lovinger, president of the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece, an affiliate of the World Jewish Congress, denounced the ruling as "sheer nonsense" and warned that it would be seized upon by reactionary elements for vile propaganda purposes.

Israel Singer, executive director of the WJC, expressed confidence that the bizarre opinion expressed by the court does not reflect the personal or political views of Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu with whom he has discussed Greek-Jewish relations.

The court in Candia upheld a claim by the Greek Orthodox Church that the Jehovah's Witnesses do not constitute a religion but is "an organization close to Judaism aiming at the creation of the world Zionist empire with Jerusalem as its center."

Basin For Court's Decision

The court acted on a petition of the Holy Archdiocese of Crete seeking to block formal recognition of the establishment of a "Christian Church of Jehovah's Witnesses of Crete."

The court cited the purported beliefs of the Jehovah's Witnesses, drawn from the Old Testament prophet Ezekiel, to claim that the sect seeks a "theocratic Zionist state" in which "some of the them will be appointed as governors of the most important areas of the world and that the ruler of Jerusalem will be issuing directions concerning world affairs."

The court stated further that the Jehovah's Witnesses are "against Christianity and the nation" and have the "political-economic character of an organization close to Judaism.... They do not recognize any homeland except Israel."

Reference books describe the Jehovah's Witnesses as identifying themselves as primitive Christians who believe that the kingdom under Christ will replace earthly governments. The sect claims a membership of 554,000 and its headquarters are in Brooklyn, New York.

The court ruling in Crete was apparently influenced by the Greek Orthodox Church's determination not to allow a possible rival religion to establish itself on the Greek-ruled island.

A local pro-clerical newspaper described the Church's objections as "an expression of the fight of the Orthodox people against the heretics and devil-driven Witnesses of Jehovah who mislead and misguide uninformed and simple members of our people, while they fearlessly fight the Orthodox faith and Greece."

ITALY OFFERING TO MEDIATE TALKS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND JORDAN

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 27 (JTA) — Italy's Defense Minister, Giovanni Spadolini, arrived here on an official visit today with an offer from his country to mediate negotiations between Israel and Jordan.

Spadolini told a press conference, after a meeting with his host, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, that there has been a discernible change in Jordan's attitude and that Italy, along with other European countries and the United States, were working to bring about talks between Jordan and Israel.

The Italian defense chief observed, however, that Israel must recognize the rights of the Palestinians as outlined in the Camp David agreements.

Spadolini, who was greeted with full military honors at Ben Gurion Airport, brought with him a letter from Premier Bettino Craxi to Premier Shimon Peres affirming that Italy's traditionally friendly attitude toward Israel has not changed. There had been some consternation in Israel over Craxi's greeting with Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasser Arafat in Tunis last month.

Craxi will meet with Peres in Jerusalem tomorrow and with Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir. At his meeting with Rabin today, the two men discussed the Lebanese situation and appeared to be in general agreement over the issues involved.

There were some differences on details. Spadolini was not sure that the Israel-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA) could be relied upon to maintain security in the border zone after the Israel Defense Force is withdrawn from Lebanon. He said he would prefer a single Lebanese army in charge, controlled from Beirut.

But the Italian minister said he hoped Israel would not be overly hasty in pulling the IDF out for fear of a blood bath among the various warring factions. Rabin agreed that this was a danger and cited the outburst of violence last week between Lebanese Druze and Christians.

Nevertheless, Rabin told the visitor that if Israel does not receive a satisfactory reply to its proposals when the Israeli-Lebanese military withdrawal and security talks resume at Nakura next month, it will have to consider unilateral options, including the possibility of a complete withdrawal of the IDF from Lebanese soil.

Rabin said he could not understand Beirut's objections to Israel's proposal that the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UN'FIL) take over security responsibilities from the IDF in all of south Lebanon except the immediate border zone. Spadolini replied that the opposition came not from the Lebanese but from the Syrians, who exert a powerful influence over the Beirut government. This is a view shared by the Israelis.

THREE IDF SOLDIERS WOUNDED By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 27 (JTA) — Three Israeli soldiers were wounded in south Lebanon today when an explosive device detonated as their patrol passed along a road four miles southwest of Ansar village.

A patrol of the South Lebanon Army (SLA) safely dismantled a roadside bomb in Sidon today. Two gunmen were killed yesterday in a clash with an Israeli patrol near Adousieh village south of Sidon.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, touring military installations in northern Israel yesterday, repeated to reporters that if there is no satisfactory reply forthcoming from the Lebanese when the military security and withdrawal talks resume at Nakura next month, Israel will have to act unilaterally with respect to the Israel Defense Force's position in south Lebanon and its withdrawal.

He said that United Nations Undersecretary-General Brian Urquhart has made some suggestions to Beirut, and Israel is awaiting the Lebanese reaction to them. He stressed however that "if the Lebanese do not accept our suggestions, we will have to reconsider our participation in the Nakura talks and on the whole question of a political-military solution to the problem of south Lebanon."

TWO SUSPECTS HELD IN RAPE-MURDER OF AN ISRAELI WOMAN SOLDIER By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 27 (JTA) — Two men are being held as suspects in the rape-murder of a woman soldier, Hadas Kedmi, who disappeared while hitchhiking last November 29 in the Haifa area, it was learned today. Her remains were discovered 12 days later in a wooded area on Mt. Carmel.

The suspects were arrested several days ago but the police withheld the news until now. Their identities have not been disclosed. An autopsy indicated that Kadmi, 20, was held captive and repeatedly raped by more than one man before she was murdered.

The police are also continuing their search for a male soldier reported missing in the same area two weeks before Kadmi disappeared. The soldier, David Manos, was reportedly seen in bars in the Tel Aviv area but police, following that lead, found no clues. They are now searching orange groves where a body could be concealed, the inference being that the police are fairly certain that Manos was a victim of foul play.

BRAZILIAN PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE PLEDGES TO REVISE BRAZIL'S VOTE FOR THE UN ZIONISM-RACISM RESOLUTION

SAO PAULO, Dec. 27 (JTA) — Tancredo Neves, the projected front-runner in the elections for Brazil's first civilian President in 20 years, promised a delegation of national Jewish leaders that his Administration would change the vote Brazil cast in favor of the "Zionism is racism" resolution in the United Nations General Assembly in 1975, the World Jewish Congress reported.

The leaders of the Confederaçao Israelita do Brasil, the central representative body of Brazilian Jewry and the WJC affiliate here, told Neves of their concern with the unbalanced position taken by Brazil with regard to the Middle East, and the increasingly overt Arab activism in the country. Neves took note of the Jewish community's concern and said he understood it. He said that his government would revise Brazil's vote on the "Zionism equals racism" resolution.

The Confederaçao hosted separate luncheons at the Hebraica Club here for Neves, the opposition candidate, and for Paulo Maluf, the government-backed right-of-center candidate.

Significance Of Meeting With Neves

Although the elections, slated for January 25, will be indirect, with the actual Presidential selection entrusted to a 686-member electoral college, the two candidates have engaged in an electoral campaign as if each had to win millions of votes. Even the Jewish community, which is of significance principally in Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and Porto Alegre, became an arena for the two candidates.

At this stage in the campaign, the victory of Neves is considered almost a foregone conclusion and he is behaving as if he is the President-elect. In this context, the meeting he had with the Jewish leaders is of significance.

The Jewish delegation was headed by Benno Milnitsky, president of the Confederaçao, and Neves was accompanied by some of his main advisers. The atmosphere of the meeting was "extremely friendly," and the main issues of Brazil's political agenda were discussed, a spokesman for the Latin American branch of the WJC reported.

DARMSTADT CITY COUNCIL TO FUND BUILDING OF FIRST SYNAGOGUE THERE SINCE NAZIS DESTROYED TWO SYNAGOGUES DURING KRISTALLNACHT

By David Kantor

BONN, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- The city council of Darmstadt has decided to provide funds to build the first synagogue in that Hessian town since Nazi mobs destroyed the two old synagogues there during the infamous Kristallnacht nearly a half century ago.

It will serve the 120 surviving Jews in Darmstadt and several other small Jewish communities in the southern region of the State of Hesse. Ruediger Breuer, a Darmstadt official who initiated the project, explained, "We are fed up with paying lip service to the suffering of the Jewish community in our town. It is high time to take action and we intend to do just that."

Synagogue Opening Set For 1988

The projected opening of the synagogue is November 9, 1988, when Jews in Germany and throughout the world will be marking the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht, the first nationwide episode of carnage against German Jews organized by the Nazi regime.

On that date in 1938, Darmstadt had fewer than 2,000 Jews. Their two synagogues, one built in 1737 and the other in 1850, were gutted. By April, 1939, only 258 Jews remained in Darmstadt. Most of them were later deported to death camps in Germany and Eastern Europe.

Breuer, a member of the Social Democratic Party (SPD), said the project originated at last month's commemoration of Kristallnacht, when he asked the chairman of the local Jewish community why no synagogue has been built since the end of World War II almost 40 years ago. The reply was that the town's Jews could not afford one.

Since 1946 they have been worshipping and giving religious instruction to their children at various temporary locations, none in good condition or with basic facilities. When this was brought to the attention of the city council, it was decided that Darmstadt would see that a synagogue is built in the city where Jews have lived since at least the early 14th century.

No estimate has been made yet of the cost of the project. Town officials said they will try to get the federal government and the government of the State of Hesse to share in the cost.

ISRAEL'S NATIONAL FLAG TO BE PERMANENTLY DISPLAYED IN THE KNESSET

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- Israel's national flag will be permanently displayed in the Knesset following a unanimous vote for a motion by Tehiya MK Rafael Eitan. The former Chief of Staff maintained that it was unseemly that the national colors should not be seen in the chamber.

Apparently the matter was never raised during the 36 years of Israel's independence. Knesset Secretary Shmuel Yaacobson said none of the veteran MKs with whom he had discussed it had any recollection of a similar motion in the past.

Labor MKs Shevah Weiss and Simcha Dinitz suggested that the flag be displayed only on special occasions, but they were overruled by their Tehiya and Likud colleagues.

Yossi Sarid of the Citizens Rights Movement (CRM), supported the motion but insisted that the Knesset open each session hereafter with a report on the situation in Lebanon. According to Sarid, it is more important to introduce reality into parliament than symbols.

WITNESSES SOUGHT AMONG SURVIVORS OF NAZI ROCKET FACTORY

NEW YORK, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- The Department of Justice has asked the assistance of the World Jewish Congress in locating survivors among laborers at the underground V-2 rocket factory attached to the Dora/Nordhausen concentration camp, it was announced here today by the WJC.

The Justice Department request comes in the aftermath of the disclosure that Arthur Rudolph, the German-born space official who developed the rocket that carried American astronauts to the moon, surrendered his American citizenship earlier this year and left the country rather than face charges that he had brutalized slave laborers at the Nazi rocket factory during World War II.

According to the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations -- the agency responsible for prosecuting Nazi war criminals presently living in the United States -- Rudolph "participated in the persecution of forced laborers, including concentration camp inmates, who were employed there under inhumane conditions." A third to one-half of Dora's sixty thousand prisoners died.

The Office of Special Investigations, in seeking to locate survivors of the Dora/Nordhausen concentration camp, has advised that it particularly wishes to contact persons who worked in the main rocket production facility (Mittelwerk underground plant) prior to January 1, 1945.

Individuals who can be of any assistance in this investigation are asked to contact: Bessy Pupko, World Jewish Congress, One Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016, (212) 679-0600.

EL AL SUSPENDS WEEKLY FLIGHTS TO RUMANIA

TEL AVIV, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- El Al announced yesterday that it has suspended its weekly flights to Rumania until the Rumanian authorities explain why passenger boarding procedures at Bucharest airport, in effect for years, were suddenly changed last month.

The old procedures were promptly restored after El Al cancelled a flight but no explanation has been forthcoming. There was no indication why El Al insists on an explanation, or what procedural changes were involved. A company spokesman, Nachman Kleinman, refused to give details.

Israel's national airline has maintained once-a-week service between Tel Aviv and Bucharest. The Rumanian airline, Tarom, flies to Israel twice weekly. For the time being, El Al passengers for Rumania are being landed at Vienna where they change to another airline for the flight to Bucharest.

BONN (JTA) -- West Germany was the largest single source of tourism to Israel in Europe in 1984, according to the Israel government Tourist Office in the country. The Frankfurt-based office also reported that German tourism continued to increase during the entire year, with record numbers of West Germans going to Israel.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES VOLUNTEERS FOR ISRAEL

By Jill Kline

(Editor's Note: Jill Kline, a former Jewish Telegraphic Agency correspondent from Phoenix, Arizona, is now living in Israel.)

ASHKELON, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- Most of the Israeli soldiers watch with admiration and in bewilderment as American volunteers eagerly tend to their assigned tasks at an army camp. Some soldiers are inquisitive and amicable about them sharing their workload and space, while others appear wary and suspicious as to why anyone would waste time doing menial labor.

Mental or not, the volunteers' eagerness for work revitalizes the soldiers' spirits during the day-to-day routine to which they are obligated.

Volunteers For Israel, which started in 1982, was originally designed to alleviate the personnel shortages during the Lebanon war by working in emergency warehouses and on agricultural settlements.

Because of Israel's involvement in Lebanon, the burden on Israel's reservists has become almost unbearable; therefore, now each volunteer replaces a reserve soldier, enabling that soldier to remain home, relieving him or her of reserve duty and thus saving his/her National Insurance payment for reserve service. Every day of service that a volunteer can do makes it possible for an Israeli to serve a day less. A thousand volunteers for 30 days shortens the reserve duty of each 1,000 soldiers by a month.

Essential Element Of The Program

The essential element of the program is for the soldiers to realize that world support and encouragement exists in their ongoing battle for a peaceful coexistence in the Middle East. The program, as of now, is only offered in the United States and France, with future plans underway to include other countries. It has already brought some 3,000 volunteers to Israel.

The volunteer groups average 25 per group, consisting of men and women, students and senior citizens. They travel to Israel unaware of their final destination, which could be at any army base situated throughout the country, from the Golan to the Negev.

The volunteers spend three to four weeks working at odd jobs such as screwing nuts, bolts and washers onto the sides of tanks; hosing down engines; sorting uniforms; washing dishes; painting signs; cutting grass and trimming trees and hedges. They work a full day, like the soldier, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The work is tedious, however the days pass quickly due to the novelty of donning an army uniform and boots; perhaps being covered to the elbow with thick yellow grease; and always chatting with a soldier or fellow volunteer on the job and off at coffee breaks which seem to come every 10 minutes.

There Is Seldom A Free Moment

The volunteer seldom has a free moment. The weeks are tightly scheduled to include Hebrew classes; guest speakers lecturing on Israel's economy, politics and life in general; and day trips to Jeru-

salem, Tel Aviv and the Museum of the Diaspora. The workload is always shared with at least one other volunteer, while a host of shy soldiers stand close by ready to assist and chat.

The meals are taken in the mess hall with all the soldiers, and many of them take advantage of mingling with the volunteers after eyeing them at work sites during the day. The night activity is centered at the various clubhouses on the base where soldiers love to challenge volunteers to a game of backgammon or checkers.

It's impossible to walk the base alone without a soldier wanting to accompany the volunteer and bombard him or her with questions about America or trying to persuade that person to stay in Israel. The only time one has to oneself is during the weekends, but even then, invitations to a soldier's home are almost always accepted.

Not only does the volunteer obtain an intimate view of Israel's army, but also has the opportunity to partake in an in-depth tour of an Air Force base with brief explanations about the Mirages, Panthers and F-15s on display in hangars while busy mechanics scurry about doing repairs and maintenance work on them.

A Close Comradeship Develops

Eventually, a close comradeship develops between the soldier and volunteer, and among the volunteers themselves. Volunteering creates a special bond with those involved -- a bond based on common concern for a cause and giving to that cause freely and openly.

Volunteers For Israel staffs recruiting officers in 40 locations across the U.S. working with a minimal budget on a voluntary basis. Operating the offices is financed by the \$25 registration fee which every volunteer is obligated to pay.

The only major expense is air fare ranging from \$500-\$600. The Defense Ministry allocates a small budget, which in the past was used for subsidizing the air fares of the volunteers. This money has run out, however, but El Al grants substantial reductions. The reduced airplane tickets for participants are good for two months. Clothing, housing and food costs are provided by the Israeli army.

ISRAELI SOLDIER ON TRIAL APPEALS FOR CHANGE OF VENUE

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 27 (JTA) -- David Ben-Shimol, an 18-year-old infantry soldier charged with firing an anti-tank missile at an Arab bus last month in which one passenger was killed and 10 others wounded, appealed for the second time in as many days Monday to the Supreme Court demanding that his trial be held in a military court rather than in the Jerusalem District Court.

As a result of the appeal, the trial--which was scheduled to begin Monday--was postponed until next week. The defendant wants to be tried in a military court, because in such a court, unlike the civilian courts, life imprisonment is not the only sentence possible in a murder case. The Supreme Court has rejected a previous appeal with the same request.

Ben-Shimol's lawyer argued in the appeal to the high court that as a soldier, the defendant had the privilege of being tried by a military court. The decision of the Attorney General to press charges against him before a civilian court has put him at a disadvantage, compared to similar cases in the past.