

INTENSIVE, HIGH LEVEL CONTACTS BETWEEN ISRAEL AND EGYPT RESUME; HOPE EXPRESSED FOR A THAW IN THE TWO-AND-A HALF YEARS OF 'COLD PEACE'
By Gil Sedan and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- Intensive, high level contacts between Israel and Egypt resumed Tuesday in Jerusalem and Cairo. No details were released and official comment here was limited to cautious expressions of hope that these latest developments could lead to a thaw in the two-and-a-half years of "cold peace" between the two countries.

Premier Shimon Peres and three senior Cabinet ministers met for five hours Tuesday night with an unidentified Egyptian emissary of President Hosni Mubarak. Gen. Avraham Tamir, Director General of the Prime Minister's Office, was scheduled to leave for Cairo by the end of the week.

And in the Egyptian capital, Mubarak on Wednesday received visiting Israeli Energy Minister Moshe Shahal. The latter told Voice of Israel Radio later that the meeting was good and useful but divulged no details.

Tuesday night's meeting which began at 9 p.m. local time and ended at 2 a.m. Wednesday morning, was attended, in addition to Peres, by Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin; Minister-Without-Portfolio Ezer Weizman who is attached to the Prime Minister's Office as a liaison with Israel's Arab community; and Minister-Without-Portfolio Moshe Arens, Acting Foreign Minister in the absence of Yitzhak Shamir who is presently visiting Europe.

The identity of the Egyptian emissary was veiled in secrecy. Local media claimed it was Ossama Al-Baz, the chief of staff of the Presidential Office in Cairo and one of Mubarak's closest aides and advisors. The Charge d'Affairs at the Egyptian Embassy in Tel Aviv, Mohammad Basyouni, insisted Wednesday that the envoy was Abdul Halim Badawi, a Deputy Foreign Minister active in past negotiations with Israel but of a lower rank than Al-Baz.

The media nevertheless persisted in referring to Al-Baz and Israel Radio reported Wednesday he returned to Cairo by car immediately after the meeting with Israeli leaders.

Talks Might Serve As A 'Good Beginning'

Rabin, the first participant at the meeting to publicly comment on it, told the annual conference of the Israeli Aviation and Aeronautics Society in Tel Aviv Wednesday, "Let us hope that the mere fact that President Mubarak sent a special emissary -- whose name I am not permitted to divulge -- and the talks that were conducted last night will serve as a good beginning."

Rabin indicated that by "beginning" he meant a return to the process of normalization between Israel and Egypt. According to media reports, none officially confirmed, the Egyptian emissary did raise issues concerning bilateral relations, including a demand that the Taba border dispute be resolved through international arbitration -- a process Israel up to now has rejected.

But he also reportedly spoke of Mubarak's recent peace initiative. The emissary was said to have explained to the Israeli ministers that what the Presi-

dent had in mind at this time is not a comprehensive peace initiative but a proposal for a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to go to Washington to discuss a possible settlement with Reagan Administration officials.

Only if an understanding is reached with the Americans, the emissary reportedly said, would Israel be invited to join the talks.

Elements Of Mubarak's Initiative

Mubarak's initiative has not been launched officially. Its contents and premises were reported in an interview with the Egyptian President published last Sunday in The New York Times. Mubarak is scheduled to meet with President Reagan at the White House on March 12.

According to the Times, he will urge the Reagan Administration to invite Jordanian-Palestinian and Israeli delegations to Washington to lay the groundwork for direct peace talks between them. Alternatively, Mubarak offered to host such a meeting in Cairo, according to the Times. But there was some confusion over whether Mubarak viewed this as an alternative to an international conference on the Middle East -- which Israel rejects -- or a prelude to an international conference.

The political correspondent of Voice of Israel Radio reported Wednesday there was no mention Tuesday night of any proposed Israel-Jordanian-Egyptian-American conference to take place in Cairo.

Rabin, in his talk to the aeronautical engineers, said he hoped the meeting here and Tamir's talks in Cairo would serve as instruments to implement the real meaning of the peace treaty Israel and Egypt signed in 1979.

However, he cautioned, "hopes and expectations are not enough. They have to be translated into deeds, and I believe that they can be translated if both sides are able to overcome the kind of relatively small obstacles that still lie ahead on the road to achieve it."

Rabin added, "Only the future and what both sides will do, will show us if the hopes will materialize."

Meeting Attacked By Left And Rightwing Extremists

Although no details of Tuesday night's talks with the Egyptian emissary were available, the meeting was sharply attacked Wednesday by left and rightwing elements, Jews and Arabs.

Voice of Israel Radio quoted one of the participants -- not identified -- as saying that Tuesday night's talks were "grotesque." Likud MK Dan Meridor, reportedly briefed by Arens, claimed that the talks were no more than a public relations gesture intended to please American policymakers and U.S. public opinion.

The rightwing Tehiya Party attacked what it thinks to be Mubarak's initiative and urged Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Shamir to cut short his European trip and return to Israel immediately.

The Tehiya Knesset faction, which opposes the Labor-Likud unity coalition government, said it supported negotiations to exchange peace for peace but not peace in exchange for negotiations that would give up any part of "Eretz Israel," their term for a greater Israel incorporating the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Tehiya position reflected the fears of Jewish settlers in those territories who appear nervous any time peace discussions with the Arabs seem likely. The Secretariate of the "Council of Jewish Settlements in Judeaea, Samaria and the Gaza Region" called on the settlers Tuesday to prepare for a struggle against any move to induce Israel to relinquish territory.

The Council urged the government to proclaim that in any future talks with Jordan, it will insist that in exchange for peace with Jordan and other Arab states, Israel will offer peace but nothing more.

At the other end of the political spectrum, Meir Wilner, secretary of the pro-Moscow Hadash (Communist) Party, objected strenuously to Mubarak's initiative on the grounds that it ignored the right of the Palestinians to their own state and was simply another formula to impose the Camp David autonomy plan.

Wilner echoed the Soviet line that only recognition of Palestinian rights and inclusion of the Palestine Liberation Organization in an international peace conference could resolve the Middle East conflict.

12 Labor MKs Welcome Mubarak Initiative

At the same time, however, 12 Labor MKs signed a petition Tuesday calling on Peres to welcome the Mubarak initiative. Shulamit Aloni of the Citizens Rights Movement (CRM) urged the government not to rule out pro-PLO personalities in any Jordanian-Palestinian delegation to peace talks.

There was little enthusiasm in Arab ranks over the initiative. The pro-PLO East Jerusalem daily A-Sha'ab claimed in an editorial Wednesday it conflicted with the idea of an international conference on the Middle East and, in effect, ignored the PLO.

Hussein-Arafat Accord On Verge Of Unraveling

Meanwhile, the agreement between King Hussein of Jordan and PLO chief Yasir Arafat on the framework for negotiating a Middle East settlement, seems to be unraveling.

According to reports from Tunis, where Arafat currently maintains his headquarters, the PLO is demanding that any negotiating delegation include not only Jordan and Palestinians but representatives of Syria and Lebanon as well. They want the delegation members to be appointed by a committee of the heads of Arab states.

A PLO spokesman in Tunis confirmed that there are differences among the PLO leadership over the Hussein-Arafat agreement which was announced on February 11. Salah Halaf, one of Arafat's deputies, also known as Abu Iyad, complained that the Mubarak initiative included concessions favorable to Israel and the U.S.

WEST GERMAN OFFICIAL RECEIVES 'CORRECT' BUT NOT 'WARM' RECEPTION ON HIS OFFICIAL VISIT TO ISRAEL By Gil Sedan and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- Franz Josef Strauss, the Prime Minister of Bavaria, arrived here last night on an official visit declaring himself to be a friend of Israel. "I will never do anything to harm Israel," he said at welcoming ceremonies at Ben Gurion Airport where he was greeted by Ezer Weizman, a Minister-Without-Portfolio attached to the Prime Minister's Office.

Strauss was seeking to defuse the anger expressed by Israeli leaders and Knesset members over his

advocacy of the sale of West Germany's sophisticated Leopard II tank to Saudi Arabia. He was received today by President Chaim Herzog and by Knesset Speaker Shlomo Hillel. His reception was "correct" but not "warm," according to media reports.

He also visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial where he placed a wreath. He is scheduled to meet this afternoon with Premier Shimon Peres, on whose invitation he came to Israel, and with Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir who will return from his current European trip before Strauss' departure Friday.

Incensed By Strauss' Remarks

Many Knesset members declared they would boycott official receptions for the Bavarian leader who heads the rightwing Christian Social Union (CSU), a partner in the Christian Democratic Union (CDU) coalition government of Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

They were incensed by remarks attributed to Strauss by a West German newspaper calling for arms sales to Saudi Arabia and other Arab states in order to provide work and jobs for Germany's armaments industry.

Claims Remarks Quoted Out Of Context

Strauss said on his arrival that he had been quoted out of context by a West German trade paper last December in connection with an interview he gave last October. He stressed his role in "cutting through bureaucratic red tape" to provide Israel with West German technology.

He said he always opposed a Palestinian state on the West Bank -- which brought him "death threats" from Arabs -- and that he believes the greatest danger Israel faces is not the Arabs but the Persian Gulf war between Iran and Iraq which could trigger a world war.

Strauss had high praise for the quality of the Israeli army which he claimed could fend off any attack. He remarked that Israel's fear of West German arms in Arab hands was like former world heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali fearing boxing gloves on the hands of a child.

Strauss also said that West Germany would participate in efforts to track down and capture Josef Mengele, the Auschwitz death camp doctor, the most notorious Nazi war criminal still at large. The Bonn government will do everything possible, he said, including a one million Mark reward for information leading to Mengele's capture.

UN SECRETARY GENERAL SAYS UNIFIL POSITION IN SOUTH LEBANON IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY DIFFICULT By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar warned today that the position of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) "is becoming increasingly difficult" as a result of terrorist attacks against the Israel Defense Force in south Lebanon and the IDF counter-measures in retaliation.

In a statement issued by his spokesman here, the Secretary General stated: "UNIFIL is now stationed in an area where active resistance against the IDF is in progress, and in which the latter is engaged in active counter-measures. UNIFIL, for obvious reasons, has no right to impede Lebanese acts of resistance against the occupying force, nor does it have the mandate or the means to prevent counter-measures. In these circumstances, the men of UNIFIL have done their utmost to mitigate violence, protect the civilian population and to reduce acts of reprisal to the minimum."

The Secretary General said that UNIFIL is in a "dilemma" with no easy solution. To withdraw the force, he said, will be against the interests of the Lebanese people, "while to involve it actively in the current violence would merely create a further complicating factor in an already extremely difficult situation."

De Cuellar said that the only course for UNIFIL at present "is to maintain its presence and to continue within its limited means to carry out its existing functions in the area."

Diplomats here said that de Cuellar's statements can be seen as an attempt by the Secretary General "to prepare the ground" for the renewal of UNIFIL's mandate which expires in April.

Meanwhile, the Security Council is scheduled to meet tomorrow morning at Lebanon's request to discuss "Israeli aggression in south Lebanon."

JDC TO RECEIVE U.S. GOVERNMENT FOOD FOR FEEDING PROGRAMS IN ETHIOPIA, ENOUGH TO SUSTAIN 279,000 PEOPLE

NEW YORK, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee announced today that it was advised yesterday in a letter received from the Office of Food for Peace of the Agency for International Development (AID) in Washington, that the U.S. government has approved an initial allocation of 7,500 metric tons of wheat flour, soy flour, non-fat dry milk and vegetable oil for JDC programs in the Gondar region of Ethiopia. According to the announcement, the JDC can expect to receive a total of 30,000 metric tons over the next 12 months.

JDC president Heinz Eppler lauded the responsiveness of the U.S. authorities, saying that "the generosity of the American people, in both public and private sectors, is a proud chapter in our history."

Ralph Goldman, JDC executive vice president, said that the 30,000 tons "are enough to sustain 279,000 people and have an estimated value of \$5.18 million." He said the food will be distributed in the Gondar region where JDC has been asked to operate in cooperation with the Relief and Rehabilitation Commission of Ethiopia. The first shipment of the U.S. food supplies is expected in May and early June.

Goldman noted that even in advance of the receipt of the U.S. government advisory, JDC had arranged for the distribution of Faffa, a high energy food supplement, which contains a formula of grains and cereals intended for malnourished children. He said the first delivery of the Faffa is to be made March 4, with subsequent deliveries of 30 tons a month taking place over the next six months -- enough to feed 7,000 to 10,000 children a day. The Faffa can be served as porridge or baked into bread.

The purchase of the Faffa was made with an allocation of \$250,000 from the \$1.8 million in cash donations JDC has received since it opened its mailbox to donations earmarked for famine relief last November 1st.

EMUNAH WOMEN OF AMERICA LAUNCHES 'OPERATION JOSHUA' TO AID ABSORPTION OF ETHIOPIAN JEWISH OLIM IN ISRAEL

NEW YORK, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- The Emunah Women of America has announced the launching of "Operation Joshua," a multi-faceted, long-term program to ensure the successful absorption of the recent Ethiopian Jewish immigrants to Israel.

Beverly Segal, chairman of Operation Joshua, said the Ethiopian immigrants are observant Jews and, as such, have specific needs which are often ignored during the regular Israeli absorption process. Operation Joshua, she said, "is distinguished from the other fine humanitarian efforts on behalf of Ethiopian Jews because it recognizes the unique cultural and religious needs of these people."

Segal noted that when the religious needs of the Jews from Moslem lands were ignored during their absorption in the 1950's and 1960's, the result was that "a disproportionate number of Israeli welfare families, broken homes, and delinquents came from this immigration The mistake was made once. It should never be repeated."

According to Segal, "Many Americans are under the impression that it was enough to transport the Ethiopian Jews to Israel. Nothing could be further from the truth. It will take millions of dollars, lots of hard work, and years of effort to ensure their proper integration into Israeli society."

Some Operation Joshua Programs

Among the programs of Operation Joshua, Segal said, are free day care for thousands of Ethiopian children, provision of tuition, room, and board at Emunah schools throughout Israel for hundreds of young people, free counseling for all ages on the traditional dietary and family purity laws, political rights, and the availability of religious education; and both volunteer and professional support groups throughout Israel.

"Most important of all," Segal said, "is that Operation Joshua is developing a new leadership from within the Ethiopian Jewish community to make the new arrivals proud and self-sufficient in the years ahead."

Segal said the name Operation Joshua was selected because, "While Moses brought the Jews out of exile, it was Joshua who brought them into the land of Israel and made the walls come tumbling down."

FEINSTEIN REPORTED SERIOUSLY ILL

NEW YORK, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, president of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, a leading authority on halacha, was described today as being "seriously ill" in Cornell Medical Center where he has been hospitalized since last Thursday.

Rabbi Hersh Ginsberg, the Orthodox Union's director, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that a day of prayer is being proclaimed for tomorrow at the Western Wall in Jerusalem on behalf of the ailing Orthodox leader. Feinstein will be 90 years old tomorrow. Born in Russia, he came to the United States in 1937.

JEWISH ACTIVIST GRANTED VISA

NEW YORK, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- Inna Brukhina, a Moscow refusenik, has been granted an exit visa to Israel after waiting since 1978 to emigrate, it was reported today by the National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCSJ). Brukhina, a 38-year-old musician, has been involved in Jewish religious and cultural activities since 1980, shortly after her visa application was refused on unspecified grounds. She has held Israeli citizenship since 1983.

In September 1984, Brukhina was implicated in the investigation of Prisoner of Conscience Yuli Edelstein when her home was searched on the basis of an alleged drug search. Although no drugs were found, the officer conducting the search claimed it is "a well-known fact that Jews use drugs in their religious rituals." Authorities later intimated that an investigation of Brukhina's activities was about to be launched.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES OLIM NEED THEIR ROOTS AND THEIR PAST

By Daniella Niv

JERUSALEM, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- "A tree without roots will not grow. New branches will sprout only if the roots are preserved. The mistake made during the 1950's in the absorption of the mass aliya of Jews from North Africa was to try to destroy our roots and erase our past," said Eli Amir, the new director-general of Youth Aliya.

History has turned full circle for Amir, who was himself a ward of the Youth Aliya organization. As a 13-year-old Iraqi immigrant, he was sent to kibbutz Mishmar Ha'emek in the Jezreel Valley. There, in the fields of the ideological socialism of the Hashomer Hatzair kibbutz, he felt the full impact of the social and culture shock, which threatened to engulf and denigrate his own roots and tradition.

Amir assumed the position of director-general in November after his predecessor, Meir Gottesman, retired. He is determined not to repeat the mistakes of the '50's and '60's. "I know what it is like to leave one's family at a young age, and I am no stranger to the pains of absorption," said Amir in a recent interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. Amir left Baghdad in 1950 with his parents and six siblings, when he was 12 years old. His family lived for a number of years in tents in the makeshift "ma'abarot" immigrant camps.

Amir has no bitterness about his own painful absorption process. "However difficult and painful my first experiences on the kibbutz were, it was there that I learned to be an Israeli," he said. "The kibbutz was the best passage I could wish for into Israeli society."

A Moving Document

He recently published a novel called "Tarnagol Kaparot" ("Scapegoat"), in which he recounts the experiences of a group of Iraqi and Moroccan teenagers sent to a kibbutz through Youth Aliya in those years of mass immigration.

Through the eyes of Nuri, a young Iraqi immigrant similar to Amir himself, we perceive the clash of cultures on the kibbutz as it appeared to those who were made to feel that their traditions were worthless, their families primitive.

Nuri is torn between a desire to be like "them" in a society which proclaims that there is no "them" and "us," and his need to retain his own identity, his own music and his values. He clings to his own name, despite callous attempts to Hebraicize it into "Nimrod," yet he listens to a Mozart concerto time and time again, in an effort to assimilate "their" music, while the familiar sounds of the traditional oud gradually lose their soothing value on him.

He recounts the pain of a young boy who watches his father, a respected middle-class businessman from Baghdad, humiliated by the mass spraying of D.D.T. as they alight from the airplane in their promised land, and reduced to poverty and menial work in the ma'abarot.

"Scapegoat," a moving document of the origins of the social gap between Ashkenazi and Sephardic Jews, has been incorporated into the Israeli high school syllabus. It is soon to be translated into English.

Amir left the kibbutz after three years and returned to the ma'abarot to support his family. He started work as a messenger boy in a government

office, studying the while in the evenings. He worked his way up the ranks of the civil service, and in 1969, was appointed assistant to the Minister of Absorption and Immigration. He has spent the past 16 years dealing with problems of Absorption, in the government and in the Jewish Agency.

Now, in his new position heading Youth Aliya, Amir plans to encourage the children of emigrants to return to their homeland. "I want to create a young society of, say, 30 teenagers from New York, who would come to live on a kibbutz for a few years," he said. "The parents took these children to the U.S., now it is the children's turn to bring their parents back to Israel. It would also like to create a similar project for the children of Russian emigrants who did not reach Israel."

The emphasis "must be on socialization, on helping the new olim feel that they belong, that they are part of the mainstream of society and not an alienated fringe group. And most important, we must not destroy their roots," Amir stressed.

A Challenge To Amir's Credo

Nowadays, Amir is faced with a challenge to his credo. Hundreds of Jewish Ethiopian children, brought to Israel in the recent massive air-lift known as Operation Moses, are in the care of Youth Aliya. Many were orphaned along the long and weary route to Israel, or split from their families when the operation was prematurely cut off by the Sudanese government in January.

"We have to maintain the culture and roots of Ethiopian Jewry," said Amir. "Man is not a machine; he gets used to a new culture and learns new habits according to his own internal clock." The shock is inevitable, beginning with the first encounter with the "big bird," the airplane which lifted them out of their traditional society and landed them in a modern technological one. "We must not press them and expect them to adopt within days," said Amir.

BIRMINGHAM FESTIVAL OF ARTS TO HONOR ISRAEL

BIRMINGHAM, Feb. 27 (JTA) -- The Birmingham (Alabama) Festival of Arts, the world's oldest continuing arts festival, will celebrate its 35th year by honoring the arts and culture of Israel, April 25-May 5. The festival, held annually, is a two-week exhibition of the cultural, educational, historical and social accomplishments of the honored country.

A highlight of this year's Festival will be a 10-day International Fair featuring the sights, sounds and flavor of the Old City of Jerusalem. The theme of the Fair -- "Shalom ... A Trip Home" -- will be featured in the educational exhibits, popular Israeli foods, craft demonstrations and travel information. Throughout Birmingham, colleges, schools, museums, department stores and organizations will be sponsoring different events in honor of Israel.

For example, The Birmingham Museum of Art will showcase Israel in Antiquity, presenting artifacts on loan from the Jewish Museum of New York and The Israeli Museum in Jerusalem. Dr. Ofer Bar-Yosef of Harvard University and Prof. Eliezer Oren of Ben Gurion University of the Negev will present several programs on archaeology. The America Friendship League is assisting in bringing Israeli mime artist Pablo Ariel to Birmingham for public performances throughout the community.