

The Peres-Hassan Meeting: A POSSIBLE STEP TOWARD PEACE By David Landau and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, July 24 (JTA) — Premier Shimon Peres' surprise two-day visit to Morocco which ended early Thursday morning apparently amounted to little more than a frank exchange of views on the Middle East between the Israeli leader and his host, King Hassan II.

But that in itself was regarded by many observers as an accomplishment, as was the joint communique published simultaneously in Jerusalem and Rabat Thursday which made clear, politely, that the two leaders could reach no agreement. But the possibility was held out for further contacts in the future.

"I don't think anyone expected that in one meeting we would reach agreement on all subjects," Peres told reporters after his pre-dawn arrival at Ben Gurion Airport Thursday. He added, "It certainly contributes to speeding up the peace process."

The joint communique described the meeting as "of a purely exploratory nature, aiming at no moment at engaging in negotiations." It outlined in general terms the positions of Hassan and Peres.

The Moroccan ruler, who is chairman of the Arab League, urged Middle East peace on the basis of the resolutions adopted at the Arab League summit conference of September 1982 at Fez, Morocco, which called for Israel's total withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization and the creation of a Palestinian state.

Peres informed the monarch that those terms are unacceptable to Israel. According to the communique, "Peres clarified his observations on the Fez plan, putting forth propositions pertaining to conditions he deems necessary for the installation of peace." The communique did not elaborate.

Hassan Is Determined To Move Ahead

Moroccan officials said Hassan is determined to go ahead with his search for better Israeli-Arab understanding. In a televised address Wednesday night, Hassan said Peres had refused to accept what he termed the "path to peace." He said he had explained the meaning of the Fez statement and Peres replied that Israel could not withdraw from the territories and could not hold discussions with the PLO.

Peres, who said he hadn't heard Hassan's television address, told reporters at the airport, "I wasn't surprised by the position the King took. I just remembered that when (Egyptian) President Anwar Sadat came to Jerusalem, in the Knesset itself, he delivered practically the same positions."

He said he responded to Hassan's presentation of the Fez plan by offering Israel's plan for a Middle East settlement which is basically direct talks without prior conditions, where every party can suggest its own plan of approach, "and when direct talks take place between the Arab side and our side, I wouldn't be surprised that the Arabs propose their position which is different from our own."

He added, "It is because we don't have an agreement that we have to look for an agreement." Peres noted further that "The King was very careful to speak on behalf of himself, so the positions he has represented are the positions, as he describes it, of the 22 Arab countries. He says that the Fez plan represents the widest possible Arab consensus."

More Than A Common Denominator

Peres acknowledged that "the gap is still wide and demanding." But he said he believed "The King and myself found there is much more than a common denominator, if not for anything else at least for the mere fact that we could have met face-to-face and tried to look where there are opportunities and not only where the problems reside."

Peres stressed that "The talks ended with two things — an agreement that there would be a continuation, and secondly, with a joint statement, despite the fact that in the joint statement there are separate points of view."

He observed that "One must also remember that he (Hassan) is formally the head of the Arab League, and for this reason he naturally did not speak only for Morocco, but for what he assesses to be a consensus of the Arab states." In that connection Peres said, "I want to express my appreciation for his courage. I believe that he is indeed a man who is seriously, honestly and deeply looking for peace."

Hassan, in his television address, chastized other Arab states for remaining "passive" throughout the long Arab-Israeli conflict. He called the Arab countries "lazy." The King had obviously taken a risk in talking to Peres. He was blasted by Syria and Libya for "treason." Syria broke off diplomatic relations with Morocco on Tuesday.

Egyptian reaction to the Peres-Hassan meeting was strongly positive. President Hosni Mubarak welcomed it as a "good initiative" that must be supported by all who favor peace in the region. The Egyptian Charge d' Affaires in Tel Aviv, Mohammed Bassiouny, speaking at a reception Wednesday night, said Egypt supported the Peres-Hassan meeting. He described it as a positive step toward direct talks between Israel and moderate Arab leaders and a movement toward peace in the Middle East.

Peres: 'An Historic Visit'

Peres said he considered his trip to Morocco "an historic visit" in the context of the Middle East peace process because it is in no way comparable to other visits in Israel or by Israelis in other places, and also not comparable to the contacts that were held previously with King Hassan.

"We know that former Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin was there (in Morocco), the late Moshe Dayan was there, but the fact that he (Hassan) gave it public status — this is essentially another call to the Arab world" as if to say, "Sirs, the time has come to meet and talk in daylight, to speak about the topic which interests us all, and endangers us all."

Nevertheless, Peres would not call his talks a breakthrough. He said he preferred to think that another step and status was added to the peace process. "It certainly contributed to speeding up the peace process," he said, referring in that context to Israel's relationship with Egypt which he hoped would be improved once the Taba border dispute is on the way to resolution.

Peres said that King Hussein of Jordan had not been in the picture. "King Hassan told me that he wanted this meeting to be a Moroccan initiative — not a Russian, American or European one, or that of any other Arab state. This was his initiative. He did not want it described as a response to, or being carried out under an initiative by another country, and for this reason King Hassan and myself did not inform any other nation in the Middle East about the existence of the meeting."

Peres said the establishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and Morocco was not discussed. "We had enough other topics to discuss," he said.

News Coverage Was Scant

Peres flew to Morocco Monday night in an Israel Air Force executive jet accompanied by a small entourage of advisers and Israeli radio and television reporters. He was Hassan's guest at his summer palace at Efra, about 160 miles southeast of the capital, Rabat. He had a total of 10 hours' discussion with the King and with the King's top advisors and ministers. These were interspersed with tours of the countryside and banquets.

News coverage of the meeting was scant during the two days, but all accounts agreed that Peres and his party were treated with warmth and friendship and the hospitality accorded them was lavish. On Wednesday Moroccan sources said Peres had delayed his departure an extra day for further talks with Hassan. But, as it turned out, his plans to return home late Wednesday were not changed.

Israelis were taken by surprise when news of the visit broke Tuesday morning. It was the first and only public face-to-face contact between an Israeli Premier and an Arab chief of state other than Egyptian President Anwar Sadat who went to Jerusalem in November, 1977. It was widely noted here that Hassan played a major role in arranging the Sadat visit.

Laborites in general were elated by the visit. Likud circles were dubious. There was some negative reaction on the left wing of the political spectrum which saw the meeting as an attempt to circumvent direct negotiations with the Palestinians. Peres' trip was fiercely denounced by the far right.

The immediate reaction from the U.S. was strongly positive, though Washington stressed it had no hand in bringing about the Peres-Hassan meeting which it knew of in advance. The State Department said Tuesday that the talks were "an historic opportunity" and urged "all governments" to support the new dialogue. It hailed "the courageous initiative by these two leaders."

Asked at the airport if he had been in any way constrained in his talks with Hassan by political factors in Israel, Peres replied, "I tried to speak within the framework of the agreed-upon policy of the national unity government."

GRENADE INJURES 13 ISRAELIS IN JERICHO

TEL AVIV, July 24 (JTA) — Thirteen Israelis from a settlement in northern Israel on a day sightseeing visit to Jericho were injured Thursday afternoon when a grenade was tossed at them as they were passing through the West Bank town.

Three persons were reported in serious condition while three others were reported to have sustained moderate wounds. Seven others were slightly hurt from the grenade. George Habash's terrorist organization, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, claimed responsibility for the attack.

The 13 sightseers had stopped in the center of Jericho to return bicycles they had rented for a trip around the town and environs when a grenade was tossed at them from a nearby rooftop. The injured were rushed to a hospital in Jerusalem while the Israel Defense Force imposed a curfew in the center of the ancient town and carried out searches.

The vacationers had been on a trip organized by the Nature Preservation Society, which frequently rents bicycles in Jericho for tours around the Dead Sea area.

U.S.-ISRAEL TOURISM ACCORD MAY BE THWARTED BY ISRAEL'S STIFF TRAVEL TAX

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, July 24 (JTA) — Israel's stiff travel tax, a subject of heated debate among Israelis, may thwart a U.S.-Israel tourism agreement expected to be signed when Vice President George Bush visits here next week.

Tourism Minister Avraham Sharir confirmed in an interview Wednesday that Washington is pressing Israel to repeal the tax on grounds that it undermined the reciprocity inherent in the agreement. Sharir has called the tax "idiotic" and counter-productive. But Finance Minister Moshe Nissim says he would be prepared to raise it if the Knesset Finance Committee called for an increase.

The travel tax, a feature of the austerity economic program, was instituted more than a year ago to raise revenue and help preserve Israel's dwindling foreign currency reserves. At present it amounts to \$120 per capita for Israelis travelling abroad, plus a 20 percent surcharge on their airline tickets.

Last summer, the tax was set at \$300 in the peak travel months and an estimated 250,000 Israelis were deterred from vacationing abroad. Sharir denounced the tax, maintaining that the revenue raised was more than offset by the reduction of tourism to Israel. That was because airlines, which "want their planes full in both directions," cut service to Israel, he explained.

The Finance Ministry, on the other hand, thinks the tax should be increased because many Israeli travelers avoid paying the 20 percent surcharge. They do so by having their airline tickets purchased for them abroad. The Ministry believes the surcharge should be abolished and the tax, which is unavoidable, raised.

Sharir stressed the importance of a tourism accord with the U.S. and wants nothing to stand in its way. He cited the 40 percent drop in American tourism to Israel so far this year because of the terrorist scare. He said there are signs of a possible improvement later in the year.

Another agreement that Bush hopes will be wrapped up during his visit concerns the Israeli-Egyptian border dispute over Taba.

The two countries have been deadlocked over the terms of reference for the arbitration panel which is to resolve the issue and have been unable to agree on the third member of the panel who will be from outside the region.

Israel has accused the Egyptians of foot-dragging over the procedures that have to be completed before an arbitration document is signed. U.S. State Department lawyers and cartographers have arrived in the area to join a measuring and map-making expedition to the disputed site on the Red Sea near Eilat. But Egypt has not yet indicated it is ready for that procedure.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL ASKS U.S. ATTORNEY GENERAL TO PREVENT DEPORTATION OF EX-NAZI TO THE USSR

By Kevin Freeman

NEW YORK, July 24 (JTA) -- Concerns about the fairness of a Soviet court trial of an accused war criminal prompted Amnesty International to ask Attorney General Edwin Meese to prevent the deportation of Karl Linas unless Linas can be guaranteed a fair trial.

Josh Sugarmann, a spokesperson for Amnesty International, the Nobel Prize-winning human rights group based in London, confirmed that its executive director, John Healy, sent a letter to Meese expressing the organization's "grave doubts" about the fairness of a Soviet trial. The text of the letter dated June 27 was not made public.

Linas, 66, of Greenlawn, Long Island, is being held in a federal prison in Manhattan and is facing a death sentence from the Soviet Union for war crimes committed while a concentration camp commander in his native Estonia.

Linas was stripped of his U.S. citizenship in 1981 by U.S. District Court Judge Jacob Mishler, who found him guilty in participating in the death of Jews and Communists at the concentration camp. He was ordered deported in 1984 and lost his appeal in May before a three member panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals. His attorneys have until July 31 to appeal the case to the Supreme Court.

Sugarmann said Amnesty International became aware of information which suggests that Linas was not given a fair trial in 1962 when he was sentenced to death in absentia for his war crimes.

According to Sugarmann, an account of the court order suggests that Linas was sentenced before his actual trial took place. Linas was sentenced on December 7, 1961 but he was actually tried in January 1962, Sugarmann said.

Amnesty International's Rationale

This information came to light from an article written about the sentencing by correspondent G. Grigoryev in Socialist Legality, the official organ of the USSR Procuracy. The article appeared on December 7, 1961, and according to Sugarmann, it was obtained through the U.S. Library of Congress in Washington.

"To our knowledge, it is authentic," said Sugarmann in an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. In addition, he said the Amnesty International has learned that since 1979, 40 persons have been sentenced to death after being convicted of crimes during World War II. He said eight have been executed, while the status of the remaining 32 persons remains uncertain.

"Amnesty International has grave doubts about the fairness of these trials," he said. "We believe that for individuals who used torture... there should be no safe haven. But everyone charged with political crimes should be given a fair trial."

Sugarmann added that Amnesty International is requiring that Meese not consider granting the Soviet request for Linas until the following criteria are met: that he be tried in public in view of the international media and that his family be allowed to attend; that he be allowed to select his own defense attorney and that witnesses be allowed to testify on his behalf; that he be granted the right of appeal; and that he not be sentenced to death.

DEMJANJUK MEETS WITH HIS FAMILY FOR FIRST TIME SINCE HIS EXTRADITION

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, July 24 (JTA) -- John Demjanjuk, held in the Ramle prison awaiting trial on charges of war crimes as the suspected notorious Ivan the Terrible sadistic camp guard at Treblinka, Thursday met his family for the first time since his extradition from the U.S. last February.

His wife Vera, 60, their 26-year-old daughter Irene, accompanied by her husband Edward Nishnik and their seven-month-old baby Edward Jr., had arrived in Israel Wednesday and were reportedly angered that they were not allowed to visit him immediately upon their arrival.

They were told that the necessary permission would be granted Wednesday and that they would henceforth be allowed to spend two hours with him twice a week, instead of the regulation 30-minute visit to prisoners once a week.

Prison authorities said the special arrangements have been made in view of the special circumstances--the distance the family has come, and the fact that Demjanjuk, who is 66, knows nobody else in Israel.

The Demjanjuk file is now in the hands of the state prosecutors who are preparing charges against the suspected war criminal, who denies that he is Ivan the Terrible and was not at Treblinka at the time of the crimes with which he is to be charged. He claims that his detention and extradition is a result of mistaken identity.

SHAMIR HAS EYE OPERATION

JERUSALEM, July 24 (JTA) -- Vice Premier Yitzhak Shamir underwent a cataract operation on his left eye Wednesday. The operation was performed at Jerusalem's Hadassah Hospital by Prof. Hanan Zauberman, head of the ophthalmology department, who said later that the surgery was "successful." Shamir, who was at work until shortly before the operation, is expected to be released from the hospital by Friday and to be back at his ministry very soon.

ATHENS (JTA) -- Margarita Papandreou, wife of Greek Prime Minister Andreas Papandreou, has accepted an invitation to visit Israel extended by Knesset member Shulamit Aloni who visited Greece this week. She said she would go to Israel late this year or early in 1987 in her capacity as president of a women's organization affiliated with her husband's Socialist Party.

BACKGROUND REPORT THE JEWS OF MOROCCO

By Kevin Freeman

NEW YORK, July 24 (JTA) -- The nearly 15,000 Jews in Morocco, scene of this week's dramatic talks between King Hassan and Israeli Premier Shimon Peres, enjoy religious freedom as well as the right to emigrate to Israel, a step taken over the years by some 350,000 Jews who have left for Israel since 1948.

Beyond these freedoms, unusual inasmuch that Morocco is a Moslem nation and technically at a state of war with Israel, the Jewish community also runs a vast support network of Jewish welfare and educational institutions, operated with government approval and support and with funds from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Nevertheless, while relations between the Moroccan Jewish community and the King remain cordial, it was reportedly King Hassan who in 1984 prevented entry to an international conference in Marrakesh of an Israeli writer and philosopher, Aharon Amir. He was invited to the World Conference on Poetry by its chairman, former Senegalese President Leopold Senghor.

This was ironic since just several months earlier, a 35-member Israeli delegation went to Rabat to attend the first National Conference of Moroccan Jewish Communities. They were invited with the consent of King Hassan. The delegation consisted of Knesset members, academics, mayors, and Israeli journalists. Crown Prince Sidi Mohammed, Hassan's son, addressed the conference's closing session.

Expressions Of Support

Similar expressions of support between the Jewish community and Hassan occurred when nearly the entire Moroccan Jewish community turned out en masse to celebrate in March 1984 the 23rd anniversary of their King's ascension to the throne.

In each of the major cities, including Casablanca, Tangiers, Fez, Marrakesh and Rabat, the Jewish community renewed its pledge of loyalty and support for the King at huge parties and dinners, wrote Jewish Telegraphic Agency correspondent Milton Jacoby from Casablanca.

Jacoby quoted an unidentified Moslem leader who was president of the Municipal Council of Marrakesh as saying, "There's never been any real differences in Morocco between the Mussulman and Jew. Let us inspire in our children and grandchildren the same spirit of amity that bring us here tonight."

David Amar, head of the Moroccan Jewry since 1956, said in an interview with the JTA that the Jews of Morocco consider themselves "Moroccans first and foremost." He said the "response of Jewry on March 3rd was to confirm our allegiance to our King."

Jewish Communal Organizations

Many of the Jews in Morocco live in Casablanca. Five communities -- Marrakesh, Rabat, Meknes, Fez and Tangiers -- range in size from about 800 to about 1,000; three range from about 100 to about 5,000 and the rest have 100 or less members, according to the World Jewish Congress.

Each remaining Jewish community has a communal organization, the Committee, and all these are united in a coordinating body, The Council of the Jewish Communities of Morocco, a member organiza-

tion of the World Jewish Congress. The Council is the representative organ of the Jewish community in matters relating to the institutions of government, according to the WJC.

The schools were established by the Alliance Israelite Universelle in 1862. Curriculum and staff have changed, however, to accommodate the increasing number of Arab students in the schools. The Moroccan government contributes financial assistance. ORT, Ozar Hatorah and the Lubavitch movement also operate schools that have government support, according to the WJC.

An example of JDC activities in Morocco was the shipment to the Jewish community there from New York in 1984 of more than 10,000 Hebrew books, including 8,000 prayer texts for Sephardi rites and 2,000 school texts. The shipment was described as the largest at the time of religious texts in the history of the JDC relationship with Morocco, which dates from 1946.

The JDC budget for aid to Moroccan Jewry was more than 2.2 million in 1985, according to a JDC spokesperson. The JDC maintains an office in Casablanca where the bulk of the Jewish community resides. About half of Morocco's Jewish community received some sort of assistance from JDC operations. About 1,200 aged or handicapped Moroccan Jews receive cash grants while 1,500 to 1,800 receive monthly food packages. The JDC provides other programs and forms of assistance as well.

Moroccan Jews In North America

In October 1985 some 150 delegates representing 750,000 Moroccan-born Jews around the world gathered in Montreal for the first World Assembly of Moroccan Jewry and pledged to help promote a just and lasting peace in the Middle East.

Morocco's Ambassador to Canada, Ahmed Mamoud, told the delegates that their action will "help preserve the identity of your community and guarantee the preservation of the links between the Moslem and Jewish communities of Morocco, ties which contributed greatly to our common national heritage."

The Assembly reported that about 15,000 Moroccan Jews live in the United States. Montreal, with 30,000 Moroccan-born Jews, has the largest Moroccan Jewish community in North America. The JDC reported that Jewish emigration, which began with the establishment of the State of Israel, continues at a rate of about one percent a year.

LUBAVITCH BUILDING DEDICATED IN TEL AVIV

TEL AVIV, July 24 (JTA) -- The Crown Heights section of Brooklyn is a multi-racial neighborhood that has seen better days. It is also the site of the Habad Hasidic movement, presided over by the Lubavitcher Rebbe, Menachem Schneerson from a three-story building at 770 Eastern Parkway, a thoroughfare modeled after the Grand Boulevards of Paris.

An exact replica of the building was dedicated Tuesday at Kfar Habad, world headquarters of the Habad movement. Its dedication was part of the annual Bar Mitzvah celebration organized by Habad for boys whose fathers were killed in Israel's wars. This year 83 youngsters, observant and secular, were honored at the ceremonies, attended among others by Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir. The replica is expected to be a meeting place for the movement's Hasidim from all parts of the world.