

CAMEROON RESUMES TIES WITH ISRAEL Accords Also Reached On Bilateral Matters By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 26 (JTA) -- President Paul Biya of Cameroon announced Tuesday that his country was resuming diplomatic relations with Israel, 13 years after it had severed ties after the Yom Kippur War. The announcement capped the two-day visit by Israeli Premier Shimon Peres, the first Israeli Premier to visit Cameroon since 1966.

Peres and Biya held several rounds of talks on bilateral matters Monday and on Tuesday they announced that cooperative agreements had been reached on trade, industry, agriculture, tourism and security. There was no immediate indication that agreement had been reached on Israeli military aid to Cameroon, although this issue was an expected topic on the Peres-Biya agenda.

Reasons For Cameroon's Decision

At a meeting with reporters Monday, Biya said that Cameroon's decision to restore ties with Israel was the result of ongoing relations between the two countries during the past few years. According to Israeli officials, the two countries have had secret trade relations since 1981.

When Biya took power in 1983, Israel was allowed to establish an interest section in Yaounde, the capital of Cameroon. Since then, Cameroon re-evaluated the situation of Israeli-Black African relations, Biya said.

He noted that African nations broke relations with Israel because of its occupation of the Sinai Peninsula. However, now that Egypt and Israel have signed a peace treaty and Sinai has been returned, there is no reason for African nations not to resume relations with Israel, Biya said.

Cameroon is the fourth Black African nation -- after Ivory Coast, Liberia and Zaïre -- to resume relations. Twenty-nine African countries severed ties with Israel under Arab pressure in the wake of the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Only Lesotho, Malawi and Swaziland continued relations.

Israel also has "semi-diplomatic" relations, at the interest section level, with the states of Gabon, Ghana, Kenya and Togo. Gabon and Togo are regarded in Israel as the most likely to resume full relations soon.

Peres And Biya Condemn Apartheid

At a joint conference Tuesday, at the end of Peres' visit shortly before his departure for Israel, a nine-hour flight, Biya and the Israeli Premier both condemned the apartheid policy of the government of South Africa, and expressed concern over events in that country.

But Peres made it clear, in remarks to reporters, that Israel would not take the lead in urging economic sanctions against South Africa. "We don't feel it is for us to be making policy vis-a-vis South Africa," Peres was quoted as saying. "We are a party to world policy. We shall follow the resolutions, but I don't think we have to take the lead in formulating a policy toward South Africa. That does not mean that we are indifferent. A Jewish person could never support apartheid."

Biya announced that he had accepted an invitation by Peres to visit Israel. He thanked Israel for the speedy medical relief it extended to his country following the volcanic gas explosion near Lake N'ios, about 240 miles northeast of Yaounde, which killed an estimated 1,500 people, according to unofficial reports.

A medical team which accompanied Peres to Cameroon brought four tons of equipment to aid survivors of the disaster. The team remained behind after Peres left "until its mission is completed," according to reports from Yaounde. According to these reports, the team still had not reached the disaster area by Tuesday. They reportedly took a long and difficult route to the villages hit by the gas explosion.

Peres' visit to Cameroon was marked by a lavish reception tendered by Biya and by extensive greetings by thousands of Cameroonians who were at the Yaounde airport when Peres arrived. Some of them, who had studied in Israel previously, greeted Peres with "shalom." A special issue of The Cameroon Tribune was published with Peres' picture on the front page and a headline in Hebrew saying "Mr. Peres, Welcome to Cameroon."

The Hebrew letters, however, were printed upside down. On his return to Israel, Peres sought to stop in Kenya for a public meeting with President Daniel Arap Moi but the Kenyan leader refused to do so, according to a report in Haaretz. Arap-Moi reportedly said that the time was not ripe for such a meeting, and that he preferred to maintain the relations with Israel at its present level.

Reunited At Last: **SHCHARANSKY'S FAMILY ARRIVES IN ISRAEL** By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 26 (JTA) -- The family of former imprisoned Soviet Jewish activist Natan Shcharansky was reunited with friends amid emotional greetings at Ben Gurion Airport here Monday night.

Natan's mother, 77-year-old Ida Milgrom, arrived with her elder son Leonid, 41, his wife Raya, 40, and their children Alexander, 14, and Boris, 18 months. Natan, 38, had flown to Vienna earlier Monday to meet his family's flight from Moscow and accompany them here aboard an El Al flight.

Although the family and close friends had asked well-wishers not to come to the airport, the arrival area was packed tight with local and foreign reporters who jostled and pestered the family for statements they were apparently not prepared to make.

Milgrom, with tears in her eyes, told the crowd: "I am happy, happy, happy to be at last with all my children." She sat between her sons, holding their hands. She spoke in Russian and Natan translated for her into Hebrew and English.

An Important Lesson

Both thanked all those who made the reunion possible. Natan, now fluent in Hebrew, said: "This is not simply wonderful. It is an important lesson that no quiet diplomacy, even at the highest levels, can help if it is not accompanied by a strong public campaign to convince the Soviet Union to let our people go."

Leonid denied a Newsweek magazine report that he did not think he would remain in Israel. "It is very, very good to be here on our land. I am very happy that the case of Shcharansky has ended just now," he said.

He added that Soviet Jews did not feel more hopeful after last week's Soviet-Israel talks in Helsinki. "These talks," he said, "meant nothing to Soviet Jews." He stressed that the situation of Soviet Jews was very bad.

Leonid begged off further questions, explaining that he was "very, very tired ... I have a young baby here. Please let me go."

From the Cameroons, Prime Minister Shimon Peres sent a cable of welcome to the family, saying this was a great day for them and for all Israelis.

In Vienna, the family reunion took place in private, in an airport security room. The family later spoke to reporters. Leonid said he was "very, very tired after the last few days in the Soviet Union. There are so many correspondents here. It is difficult to face it again. I am not a movie star."

An Emotional Farewell In Moscow

In Moscow, the family bid an emotional farewell to friends at Sheremetyevo International Airport. "Now I don't have Soviet citizenship. Now I don't have a passport," Milgrom said. "But I have the dream of being reunited with my Anatoly (who has changed his name to Natan), who lost his life and regained it -- and what more could a mother want."

She had refused to emigrate from the Soviet Union while Natan was imprisoned. She visited him in prison whenever she was allowed. She said her separation from her friends would be difficult and admitted to being nervous. "I want to cry and I want to laugh," she said.

SELF-DETERMINATION FOR PALESTINIANS IS URGED BY LUXEMBOURG'S F.M.

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 26 (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Jacques Poos of Luxembourg, who is here on a three-day visit, called on Israel to recognize the right of Palestinians to self-determination. In addition, he said that any Middle East peace talks must include the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Poos met Monday with 15 Palestinians from the West Bank, most of them prominent PLO supporters. According to participants at the meeting, he said he supported the 1980 Venice Declaration of the European Economic Community (EEC) that supported Palestinian self-determination and the inclusion of the PLO in Mideast peace talks.

During his visit to Israel, Poos also met with Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who told him that terrorism would have to be eliminated before other Mideast problems could be resolved. Poos reportedly agreed with Shamir's assessment that there would be a continuation of the talks between Israel and the Soviet Union which began in Helsinki last week.

In addition, Poos promised to help Israel in speeding up the negotiations on its agricultural exports to the EEC. The talks have been bogged down because of Spanish objections to the proposed tariff-free quotas for Israel. Luxembourg will raise the issue at the meeting of EEC Foreign Ministers next month.

SPECIAL TO THE JTA ETHIOPIAN JEWS IN ISRAEL STAR IN ISRAEL-AMERICAN LITTLE LEAGUE

JERUSALEM, Aug. 26 (JTA) -- Baseball may be America's national pastime, but it certainly is getting a lot of attention in Israel these days -- especially from some young Ethiopians who play for a team

called the American Association for Ethiopian Jews (AAEJ) All-Stars. Even though these children had never seen a baseball or bat in their lives, they have shown an amazing aptitude for hitting and throwing. Their secret? Besides enthusiasm, they played a homemade stick and ball game in their grass hut villages in Ethiopia. And, they're all masters of the sling-shot -- the weapon used against marauders at home.

The AAEJ All-Stars Team is part of the Little League network being set up in Israel by Randy Kahn, a Little League baseball coach from Houston who visited his sister in Israel in 1985 and became determined to bring the sport to the enthusiastic children there. While softball is played in Israel, baseball is a new sport in the country.

When Kahn returned to Houston, he collected used baseball equipment from synagogues, churches and recreation departments and then brought the gear back to Israel, where he began teaching the youngsters the rudiments of the game.

Meanwhile, Kahn's father, attorney Leonard Kahn, also of Houston, created the Israel-American Baseball Corporation, a non-profit organization that raises money for the League in Israel.

Upset Victory For Ethiopian Team

The games are played on soccer pitches and open grass fields where diamonds are marked out for the 10 teams in the league. In one game this summer, the AAEJ All-Stars faced a mixed squad called the All-Stars from Ramat Hakovesh and Tira, a team consisting of Jews from Kibbutz Ramat Hakovesh and Arabs from Tira. It proved to be an upset victory for the Ethiopian team, 5-2, and one that was captured by an NBC-TV crew filming the Operation Moses story.

Included on the AAEJ All-Stars are immigrants from Ethiopia who live at the Ben Yehuda Absorption Center in Netanya, an immigrant from the USSR and several kibbutz youngsters.

Rabbi Yosef Miller, coordinator of the AAEJ's office in Israel, is excited about Israel-American baseball because of the brotherhood it fosters.

"Not only do you have interesting ethnic combinations on the teams themselves, but the healthy, honest competition between the teams helps to strengthen ties that can be hard for some of these kids to form after the hardships they've been through with immigration and separation from their families left behind in Ethiopia," Miller said.

ADL URGES WEST GERMAN STATE NOT TO REVIVE FIRST VERSE OF NATIONAL ANTHEM

NEW YORK, Aug. 26 (JTA) -- The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith has called upon officials of the West German state of Baden-Wuerttemberg to reconsider their "ill-advised decision" to revive the long-banned first verse of the national anthem which contains the words "Deutschland uber alles."

In a cable to Baden-Wuerttemberg's President, Lothar Spaeth, Abraham Foxman, ADL's associate national director and head of its International Affairs Division, pointed out that the words "Deutschland uber alles, like the swastika, symbolize to the world the brutality of Nazism. Giving legitimacy to such a highly identifiable symbol of the Nazi regime can only weaken the effort to educate the public of Nazism's evil and can raise questions about the German commitment to reject that past."

A copy of the ADL cable was also sent to Gunther van Well, West Germany's Ambassador to the United States.

SPECIAL TO THE JTA THE JEWS OF BRAZIL By Rochelle Saidel

(Part Two Of A Four-Part Series)

SAO PAULO, Aug. 26 (JTA) — Jews as individuals have always worked on human rights and social justice during Brazil's authoritarian regimes, but there has been no community stance. Rabbi Henry Sobel of Congregacao Israelita Paulista here is considered the outstanding example of an individual who is a leader of the community, and at the forefront of the human rights struggle.

Sobel's reputation stems from his courageous stand at the time of Vladimir Herzog's death in 1975. All discussions about the involvement of the Jewish community with the issue of human rights in Brazil seem to emanate from this one focal point: the so-called Herzog affair.

The Death Of A Journalist

Herzog was a well-known Brazilian journalist. He taught at the University of Sao Paulo, and was director of the Department of Journalism at TV-Cultura. He was a Jewish leftist, with former ties to the Communist Party. According to Sobel: "Herzog was a Jew. Not an observant Jew, but a Jew. A Jew with great intellectual capacity, universal in his vision and deeply committed to humanitarian causes, both in Brazil and abroad."

On Monday, October 27, 1975, the newspapers reported Herzog's death, at the age of 38. He was found dead in his prison cell, and the official explanation issued by the army was that he had committed suicide. He had been arrested that weekend, summoned to "intensive hearings" at the International Operations Department of the Second Army Division, Sao Paulo.

"We were then at the height of repression in this country," Sobel recalled. "Unfortunately, Vlado (Herzog) was not the first nor the last to suffer at the hands of a totalitarian regime."

Sobel said that he consulted with the people from the Chevre Kadisha, the congregation's burial society, who are responsible for the washing and purification of a body before burial. Three witnesses affirmed to him (in confidence, out of fear) that they had found visible signs of torture on Herzog's body. The Brazilian authorities had issued a communique claiming that a suicide note in Herzog's handwriting had been found in his cell.

Funeral Had Wide Repercussions

Herzog's funeral took place on Monday, October 27, at the Jewish Cemetery in the Butanta section of Sao Paulo. "The funeral had wide repercussions in the local and international press," Sobel said. "In addition to the tragic circumstances of the death, a large number of the 600 people who had attended the funeral had the impression it had not been celebrated according to traditional Jewish rites."

"In an interview which I gave to the press on the following day, I clarified that the burial rites had been strictly observed, in accordance with Jewish law. I stressed, furthermore, that the Jewish community was shocked by the violation of Herzog's fundamental human rights, and that he had been the victim of a system which killed him. I declared categorically to the press that Herzog had been buried with all due honors as a Jew, as a Brazilian, as a human being."

"According to Jewish law, a suicide is buried on the outskirts of the cemetery," the rabbi explained. "It is a way of condemning visibly the sin committed by a person who destroys his own life. This was not the case at Vlado's funeral; he was buried right in the center of the burial grounds."

Sobel continued: "I was extremely concerned not only with the barbarity of the crime, but also with the unfavorable image of indifference attributed to the Jewish community. I made a point of declaring to the press that the synagogue supported human rights as strongly as the (Catholic) Church, and that Jews were as disgusted and distressed with Herzog's death as all other Brazilians."

With the notable exception of Sobel, the Jewish community generally remained silent. A few days after Herzog's death, the journalists' union requested an ecumenical service. Sobel participated, along with Cardinal Dom Paulo Evaristo Arns and Rev. Jaime Wright, representing the Protestants.

Sobel Came Under Fire

The Jewish community was not happy with Sobel's forthright and vocal stand, nor with his participation in the ecumenical service. For the most part, since the 1950's the Jews of Brazil had survived and thrived by not making waves. They kept a low profile, took care of problems through personal contacts with individual members of the military regime, and gingerly guarded their economic prosperity.

Sobel had arrived in Sao Paulo in 1970, soon after his ordination from Hebrew Union College. Criticisms from the Jewish community, he recalled, included such statements as: "It's easy to be brave when you have an American passport," and "Sobel behaved like an American, rather than a Brazilian."

Sobel says now that he had tacit approval from only one leader of the community, but an important one: Dr. Benno Milnitsky, president of the Confederaçao Israelita do Brazil, the umbrella organization for Brazil's Jewish community.

"Jewish representatives were conspicuously absent from the ecumenical service, but I had quietly been given the 'green light' by Benno," Sobel said. Milnitsky, a Sao Paulo attorney who was Confederaçao president in 1975 and holds that position today, concurred.

One leader of the community who asked to remain anonymous told this reporter that he personally interceded with a Minister of the military government to prevent Sobel from being exiled. Sobel said that his exile was a distinct possibility, but that no one in the Jewish community came to his aid. Sobel did, however make a special trip to Brasilia to advise the American Ambassador of his plans to participate in the ecumenical service.

"Everyone was scared and terror was rampant in 1975," Sobel recalled. "Anyone who spoke out on human rights was labeled subversive. The Jewish community kept a super-low profile. It was an act of defiance even to go to the ecumenical service."

A Turning Point

Critics and proponents of Sobel's action now agree that the 1975 Herzog affair and subsequent ecumenical service was a turning point in the repressive military regime. Approximately 8,000 people filled the Sao Paulo Cathedral on October 31. Among them were federal legislators, university professors, students and representatives of student councils. Shortly after the

service, President Ernesto Geisel fired the Commander of the Second Army, Sao Paulo, who had been responsible for Herzog's death.

The rabbi emphasized that Herzog was not arrested for being a Jew. "He was arrested, interrogated, tortured and murdered because of his leftist ideology and his former connections with the Communist Party," Sobel said.

"He happened to be a Jew. But the reaction would have been exactly the same had he been a Catholic or a Moslem or Buddhist. Analyzing the episode in retrospect, it would have been extremely harmful if anyone, individual or institution, would have protested against the murder of a Jew. In Herzog's case, I am fully convinced, there were no anti-Semitic connotations whatsoever."

(Tomorrow: Part Three)

SPECIAL INTERVIEW TEACHING JUDAISM IN CUBA By Rochelle Saidel

NEW YORK, Aug. 26 (JTA) -- Moses Asis is the only teacher of Hebrew and Judaism in Cuba today. Late last year he organized a course of Jewish studies, and 10 children currently meet with him every Sunday.

To encourage his voluntary educational work with Havana's Jewish youth, the Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education (CAJE) invited Asis to its recent meeting at University of Maryland. The trip was arranged by a network of American Jewish friends, who had met Asis while on trips to Cuba, beginning in 1978.

Ranging in age from 4 to 11, Asis's students learn Hebrew, the meaning of holidays, Jewish history and symbolism. Most of the children in his class had no previous involvement with the Jewish community, Asis told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency during his visit to New York. His youngest student is his own daughter.

Asis, who says his knowledge of Judaism is generally self-taught, learned Hebrew at the Zionist Union of Cuba, which existed until 1978. He continues his studies at the library of the Casa de la Comunidad Hebrea de Cuba, a Havana communal organization which also houses a synagogue and meeting rooms. The Cuban Jewish community of about 1000 has four other synagogues, all in Havana.

Credits The Lubavitch Movement

Asis credits the Lubavitch movement with convincing local Jewish parents to have their children study Judaism. In the past one-and-a-half years there have been three visits to Havana by a Chabad Lubavitch rabbi, he said. Other rabbis from the United States, Mexico and Canada have also visited the community, which does not have its own rabbi.

At the CAJE convention, Asis obtained materials on innovative teaching methods, and was able to share ideas with colleagues. He also led a workshop on Jewish life in Cuba.

Asis says he would like to be able to devote more time to teaching Jewish youth. Currently an information scientist with the Ministry of Agriculture, he has free time only on Sundays.

The son of a member of the Communist Party, Asis, 33, says he had no religious training at home. His interest in Judaism began with an intellectual interest in his roots, he said. His grandparents were Sephardic Jews who came to Cuba from Turkey at the beginning of this century.

JEWISH CADETS AT WEST POINT

WEST POINT, Aug. 26 (JTA) -- Twenty-two Jewish men and women are entering the United States Military Academy at West Point as members of the Class of 1990. This is the largest number of Jewish cadets to enter a single class since World War II.

At that time, from 1940 to 1945, there was an average of 100 Jewish cadets of a total number of 2,200 cadets each year. At present, there are 4,500 cadets. Of this total, there are 58 Jews, including the 22 of the Class of 1990, at West Point. This is also the highest number in decades.

A special welcoming ceremony for the new Jewish cadets was held last month at the West Point Jewish Chapel. Well-wishers, community members and representatives of the Jewish War Veterans were in attendance. Each new Jewish cadet was presented with an inscribed edition of the Siddur for Jewish Personnel in the Armed Forces.

The Class of 1990's Jewish members consists of 18 men and four women. The majority, 13, are from New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts. Four are from California, four from the South and one is from the Midwest.

"The Jewish Chapel greatly enhances the lives of the Jewish cadets and community at West Point," said Herbert Ames, president of the West Point Jewish Chapel Fund.

He noted, "There is normally a loss of roughly 20 to 30 percent of all cadets during their first year. This past year, not a single Jewish cadet departed. Parents tell us repeatedly, the Chapel helps their children, giving them the strength and courage to complete the difficult first year."

One of the original intentions of the Chapel, Ames said, "was to provide a religious home that serves to welcome members of the Jewish faith to West Point. The Chapel is cited as a significant factor for the growing number of Jewish cadets at West Point."

ISRAELI SCIENTIST VISITING CHINA

JERUSALEM, Aug. 26 (JTA) -- Prof. Yosef Singer, chairman of Israel Air Industries and president of the Haifa Technion, is visiting the people's Republic of China, Haaretz reported Tuesday. Singer, who is considered a senior scientist in the field of aeronautics, is in China on what was described as a "professional" visit.

He and his wife reportedly entered China on their Israeli passports. Singer was reported to be meeting with senior heads of the China Academy of Sciences and might have meetings with government officials.

Two other senior Technion scientists, Prof. Yaacov Epstein and his wife Prof. Shulamit Epstein, are also scheduled to visit China within the next few days.

NAZI ON TRIAL

BONN, Aug. 26 (JTA) -- A former SS guard, Otto Reidemann, 74, went on trial last week in West Berlin charged with the beating deaths of at least 20 prisoners, many of them Jews, at the Mauthausen-Gusen concentration camp in Austria.

The trial is expected to last until the end of this year. More than 15 witnesses are scheduled to give testimony. Reidemann is denying that he murdered prisoners under his jurisdiction. However, in preliminary questioning he admitted being involved in arguments which led him to beat inmates.