

**RABIN: ISRAEL WILL DO ITS UTMOST
TO SECURE RELEASE OF AIR FORCE
FLYER HELD PRISONER IN LEBANON**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 9 (JTA) -- Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Israel would do its utmost to secure the release "alive and well" of an Israel Air Force flyer held prisoner in Lebanon. But he refused to comment to reporters on a proposal said to have been made by Nebih Berri, leader of the Shiite Amal militia, to include the flyer in a swap for 400 Palestinian prisoners held by Israel and by the Israel-backed South Lebanon Army (SLA).

Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told reporters Monday that Israel would not yield to the demands of a terrorist group for the release of the 400 prisoners in exchange for the lives of four hostages -- three Americans and an Indian national -- kidnapped in west Beirut on January 24.

A group calling itself the Islamic Jihad (Holy War) for the Liberation of Palestine has threatened to kill the hostages in 24 hours unless Israel complied. "Nobody has approached Israel and Israel will not take any initiative on that issue. If anyone has an offer to make, let him approach Israel in an orderly manner," Peres said, adding that Israel does not accept ultimatums.

Severe Political Repercussions

The reported offer by Berri to exchange the flyer, an Israel Air Force navigator captured by Amal after his plane was shot down over Lebanon last October, raised speculation here and abroad that a deal could be made whereby the hostages and the flyer would be released for the jailed Palestinians without Israel or the U.S. seeming to surrender to terrorist demands.

But the release of 400 convicted Palestinians would certainly have severe political repercussions in Israel. The exchange of 1,150 Palestinian and Shiite prisoners, many convicted terrorists, for three Israeli soldiers in 1985, raised a public outcry. The government has all but acknowledged it was a mistake and indicated it would not be repeated. Israeli officials insist there has been no pressure whatever from the U.S. for Israel to deal with the kidnappers of the Americans, all faculty members of the University College in Moslem west Beirut.

But Davar reported from Washington Monday that secret negotiations have been underway for the past few days between the U.S. and "countries in the Mideast" in an effort to free the hostages.

**POC SAYS HE WAS SURPRISED BY HIS
RELEASE FROM A SOVIET LABOR CAMP**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 9 (JTA) -- Prisoner of Conscience Roald (Alex) Zelichonok was surprised by his release from a labor camp in Kazakhstan over the weekend. "Now my problem is to leave here and make my way to Israel," he told Voice of Israel Radio by telephone from Leningrad Monday in what he said was his first conversation in Hebrew in two years.

Zelichonok, 50, an electrical engineer, clandestine teacher of Hebrew and a refusenik since 1978 was one of 42 political prisoners unexpectedly freed from Soviet prisons and labor camps by decree of the Supreme Soviet. He had served half of a three-year sentence imposed in August 1985 for "defamation of the Soviet State and social system."

He said he had not known until four days ago of his impending release, and was set free within three hours after the orders came from Moscow, according to regulations. He thanked the government of Israel, the Jewish people and other friends who had helped his wife, Galina, and encouraged him.

Touches On A Vexing Problem

Zelichonok touched on a controversy that has long bedeviled Soviet Jewry activists when he denounced as a "disgrace" the fact that a fellow POC, Yuri Tarnapolsky, who was released recently, preferred to immigrate to the United States instead of to Israel. "This is unbearable, this really hurts," Zelichonok said.

He said his strongest wish now is to go to Israel, but if he cannot get an exit visa he would continue to teach Hebrew in the USSR.

The Absorption Ministry, meanwhile, has prepared a master plan for the mass absorption of Soviet Jews, based on an estimated 10,000 immigrants a year. Its projected cost is \$221 million. According to the Ministry, some 241,000 Jews have left the Soviet Union since 1971. Of that number, 159,000 immigrated to Israel and 82,000 went elsewhere.

**KIRKPATRICK SEES HOPE FOR REFUSENIKS
IN THE NEW SOVIET 'GLASNOST' POLICY**

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Feb. 9 (JTA) -- Jeane Kirkpatrick, the former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, just returned from Moscow, said at a press conference here that the new Soviet openness ("glasnost") gives new hope for separated spouses, refuseniks and others who want to emigrate from the USSR. She mentioned by name several prominent Jewish refuseniks.

Kirkpatrick, whose militant anti-Communism was a hallmark of her tenure at the UN, visited the Soviet Union last week as part of a private delegation that included two former U.S. Secretaries of State, Henry Kissinger and Cyrus Vance. They had a three-hour meeting with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev. She said she was hopeful that the Soviet leadership will give serious reconsideration to the problem of refuseniks denied the right to emigrate, denied religious expression, and, in some cases, imprisoned and suffering malnutrition and lacking desperately needed medical care.

In that connection, she cited the case of Iosif Begun, a Prisoner of Conscience who was imprisoned for teaching Hebrew and confined to a punishment cell for wearing a yarmulke; and Yuli Edelstein, who, with a broken pelvis, lacked minimum medical care, as a result of which he will suffer a lifelong disability.

Kirkpatrick also referred to Chena Golworth, 55, whom she described as a private citizen of no political consequence, who is alone and without employment in Moscow. The former UN envoy expressed hope that Golworth will soon be allowed to join her two daughters and grandchildren in Israel.

Later, addressing a session of the 43-member United Nations Human Rights Commission here, Kirkpatrick said she heard from high level Soviet officials some extremely interesting accounts of changes planned and changes already underway inside the USSR. She said they spoke of new thinking, of democratization, though they add of course, democratization Soviet style, within a one party system.

"We hope they travel this road to its end," Kirkpatrick said, adding, "We can assure them, from our own experience and our study of history, that economic development and prosperity are reliable by-products of the move to democratization."

ISRAEL RECEIVES THREE ADVANCED U.S. FIGHTER BOMBERS, THE FIRST OF 75 SUCH AIRCRAFT ORDERED BY ISRAEL By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 9 (JTA) -- Three Advanced F-16C fighter bombers flown by American pilots, landed at an airbase "somewhere in Israel" Monday after a flight from Texas. They are the latest additions to the Israel Air Force and the first of 75 such aircraft ordered by Israel at a cost of \$3 billion.

A welcoming group at the air base was headed by Premier Yitzhak Shamir, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Air Force Commander Gen. Amos Lapidot and other senior officers. Shamir said these planes and those to follow will make an "important contribution to defending Israel's goals."

Their sale to Israel, the only country apart from the U.S. to have the F-16C, was an expression of the firm bonds of friendship between Israel and the U.S., Shamir said. He added, "The U.S. knows that we are in the forefront of the defense of democracy in this part of the world."

The F-16C, manufactured by General Dynamics, is an improved version of the F-16A and F-16B which have been in the Israel Air Force since 1980 and already tested in combat, including clashes with Syrian MIGs.

More Advanced And Powerful

The F-16C, called the "Fighting Falcon," is a single-seater plane. It and its two seat counterpart, the F-16D which is among the 75 to be delivered to Israel, are powered by General Electric F110 engines which are more powerful than the Pratt and Whitney F100 engines which propel the F-16A and B.

The new planes have better electric and electronic systems and carry a heavier load of bombs and missiles. The manufacturer has incorporated highly sophisticated equipment developed in Israel, including air frame, a computer memory and advanced radar.

The aircraft are priced at about \$40 million each and are considered a rival to the Lavi, Israel's second generation fighter plane designed and built by Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI). The U.S. has been urging Israel to abandon the Lavi project on grounds of excessive costs and the advanced F-16s have been proposed by the Pen-

tagon as an alternative. The Lavi prototype had its first test flights last month.

Lapidot said, after accepting the three F-16Cs, that the Air Force would go ahead with its preparations to absorb the Lavi but would continue to fly the F-16s. He said he personally thought that the Israel Air Force should have both a locally produced plane and imported aircraft.

JEWISH GROUPS PROTEST ELECTION OF A PLO SUPPORTER TO A LIBERAL PARTY PARLIAMENTARY POST By Michael Solomon

MONTREAL, Feb. 9 (JTA) -- Four of the largest Jewish organizations in Canada have issued a strong joint protest against the election of Marcel Proudhon, a self-proclaimed supporter of the Palestine Liberation Organization, to the office of chairman of the Parliamentary caucus of the opposition Liberal Party in Ottawa.

The statement last Thursday by the Canadian-Israel Committee, B'nai B'rith Canada, the Canadian Jewish Congress and the Canadian Zionist Federation said they were "disturbed and concerned" by the election.

It described Proudhon, a member of Parliament from the St. Dennis district of Montreal, as a person "who has befriended and publicly supported the PLO over many years" and "a man whose views are at odds with his party's stated policies on the Arab-Israel conflict and the PLO."

Former Prime Minister John Turner, leader of the Liberal Party which has a large Jewish constituency, said he respected the democratic process which elected Proudhon to his high position in the party. Nevertheless, he added, Proudhon will have to adjust his views to those of the majority in Parliament.

Proudhon has visited PLO headquarters in various parts of the Middle East. He boasts of his personal friendship with PLO chief Yasir Arafat and has called for the creation of a Palestinian state.

SOLON WARNS AGAINST SCHOOL PRAYERS By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 9 (JTA) --Rep. Barney Frank (D. Mass.) warned Monday that those who are seeking a return of prayers in the school want the United States to be not just a Christian nation, but one that officially espouses their type of Christianity.

"The distinguishing thing about America is not that we have minorities, it is that we have no majorities," he told some 300 persons attending a meeting of B'nai B'rith International commissions at the Mayflower Hotel.

"We are not fighting, as Jewish Americans, for the right of Jews to dissent without being picked on," Frank stressed.

He explained that as a Jew he does not want to be part of a "fully recognized protected minority because that is an unequal situation. I want to be like everyone else."

Frank criticized President Reagan's State of the Union statement that Congress should end "the expulsion of God from America's classrooms."

The Massachusetts Congressman said it was "nonsense" to say that either God or prayer had been expelled from the public schools. "How do you forbid someone to pray?" he asked.

Frank said there were "infinite" opportunities for children to say prayers during the school day if they wanted to. He said that those who want officially organized prayers in the school "don't think that every family gives enough religious instruction to their kids."

Instead, he charged, they want the schools to use their "coercive mechanism" to "inculcate more religion than you have at home."

Frank also warned against the effort to have a constitutional convention in order to adopt an amendment to the Constitution requiring the federal government to have a balanced budget. He said such a convention could not be limited to the budget and could impair the protection now in the Bill of Rights, including the separation of church and state.

Frank stressed that Blacks provide a "great deal of support" in upholding the separation of church and state. He noted that while they are statistically important in many of the religious groups seeking to break down the barrier, they "understand what it means to be a minority."

He added that Blacks in Congress back Israel 90 percent of the time and next to Jewish Congressmen have the best record against providing arms to Saudi Arabia.

ISRAEL AND GREECE SIGN A COOPERATIVE TOURISM PROGRAM By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, Feb. 9 (JTA) -- Israel and Greece announced Monday the start of an unprecedented cooperative tourism program to attract more American tourists to Israel and Greece.

"We are very excited about this historic venture, which will link not only the world's oldest civilizations, but also two of the most exciting vacation destinations in the world," Simos Dimas of the Greek National Tourist Organization declared in a joint press conference here with Moshe Shoshani, Israel's Commissioner for Tourism for North America.

According to the two officials, the Greece-Israel program will promote U.S. tourism to both countries. It will encourage tour operators currently active in this market to expand their services and induce those not selling such combination packages to enter the market. The two countries have allocated \$200,000 each for a joint advertising campaign that will implement the program.

Last November, Greece and Israel signed an agreement on tourism. As part of the agreement, which was signed by Israel's Tourism Minister Avraham Sharir, and his Greek counterpart Takis Roumeliotis, it was decided that the two countries will cooperate on a program to promote U.S. tourism to both countries.

There was a sharp decline in tourism from the U.S. to Israel and Greece last year. Shoshani said that only 250,000 American tourists came to Israel in 1986, compared with 430,000 in 1985. Dimas said that about 230,000 American tourists visited Greece in 1986 compared with 460,000 in 1986.

The joint Israel-Greece tour program offers five days in Greece and five days in Israel with flights from New York to Athens to Tel Aviv and back to New York.

Both officials said they hope that the program will be for the benefit of both countries and that it will lead to a meaningful increase in the number of American tourists.

"We are confident," Shoshani concluded, "that this landmark effort between our countries will serve not only to stimulate travel from the United States, but ultimately to create better understanding between nations."

VIOLENCE IN THE WEST BANK

JERUSALEM, Feb. 9 (JTA) -- Nine Palestinian youths were wounded by Israeli security forces during violent demonstrations that erupted at the Balata refugee camp and A-Najah University in Nablus Monday.

An Israeli border policeman was slightly injured by rocks hurled at his patrol car at Balata, near Nablus. Military sources said two demonstrators there were hit by live ammunition and one by rubber bullets. Six students were wounded at A-Najah.

A curfew was clamped on the refugee camp where rocks and bottles were thrown at Israeli soldiers and Palestinian flags were raised. Military sources said rubber bullets failed to quell the demonstration. The order to open fire with rifles was given after the demonstrators disregarded orders to disperse and "endangered the lives of the soldiers," the sources said.

BANK LEUMI OFFICIAL RESIGNS

TEL AVIV, Feb. 9 (JTA) -- Mordechai Einhorn, who was named executive managing director of the Bank Leumi six months ago, resigned Sunday and acknowledged that he did so under pressure from the bank's employees.

They demanded he be ousted or resign in exchange for their cooperation with the bank's new Board of Directors. Einhorn told the Board members at the start of a meeting Sunday that he understood their sentiments and preferred not to be the cause of continuing unrest at Israel's largest bank. No successor has been named.

Bank Leumi has undergone a complete change of management since the disclosure last month of the excessive severance pay and pension awarded to its former chairman and chief executive officer, Ernst Japhet, when he resigned last spring. Japhet was forced to leave because of his involvement in the 1983 bank shares manipulation scandal.

Einhorn took over part of Japhet's duties. Israel Radio quoted an unnamed director of the bank as saying employee complaints had a "degree of legitimacy" because Einhorn was among those who "skipped off the cream while demanding cutbacks in salaries."

SEXISM COMBATTED IN NURSERY SCHOOLS

JERUSALEM, Feb. 9 (JTA) -- On the premise that sexist attitudes are inculcated at an early age, the Education Ministry has banned story books from nursery schools which depict girls as weaker than boys, passive, and dependent on boys to rescue them from difficulties.

Haaretz reported that a Ministry directive has advised nursery school teachers not to tell tearful boys that they are crying "like girls." According to Shimshon Shoshani, Director General of the Education Ministry, "girls in all stages of education achieve less than boys and the reasons are educational and social, not biological."

BEHIND THE HEADLINES QUESTIONABLE VIEWS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 9 (JTA) -- Two recently expressed views by Israeli leaders -- that the danger of war with Syria has diminished and that a victory by Iran over Iraq would be a preferable outcome of the Persian Gulf war from Israel's standpoint -- were challenged over the weekend by Israeli experts on military and political factors in the Middle East.

Zeev Schiff, the widely respected military analyst of Haaretz, suggested Sunday that statements by Premier Yitzhak Shamir and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin that war with Syria is more theoretical than likely at this time, may be over-optimistic.

Prof. Moshe Maoz, an expert on Syria and other Arab countries, maintained in a weekend Israel Radio interview from Boston, where he is engaged in research at Harvard University, that a victorious Iran would pose a greater danger for Israel than Iraq.

And Dr. Amazia Bar-Am, a leading authority on Iraq, thought Israel should put out peace-feelers toward Baghdad through some third party.

Syria's Military Capabilities

Schiff noted that Rabin saw significance in the fact that Syria recently put a large number of its tanks and artillery into storage, a move forced by the country's precarious economy.

"However, it would be an exaggeration to say that the storage of several hundred tanks and guns testifies to significant changes in Syria's military capability or to a turn-about in Damascus' national security conception," Schiff wrote.

He noted that Syria has more than 4,000 tanks so that moth-balling a few hundred does not change its offensive capability. He pointed out that the Israel Defense Force also puts in storage reserve tanks and other equipment.

Moreover, Syria's retrenchment is only on the ground, which demands caution in drawing hasty conclusions. "If the reductions were generated in the air force as well and were accompanied by the dismantling of a few combat corps and the grounding of planes, the matter would take on greater significance," Schiff wrote. He advised Israel to wait until the next stage in the Syrian army's reduction process before deciding how the IDF should act.

Maoz said in his radio interview that Syrian cuts have been in quantity, not quality. He noted Syria's strategic weapons such as the Soviet-supplied SS-21 and SS-23 missiles, and chemical warheads.

Syria may not be ready to embark on a general war but it might try for a limited action, such as wresting part of the Golan Heights back from Israel and then seeking an in-place ceasefire, Maoz said.

Consequence Of An Iranian Victory

With respect to the Gulf war, Maoz warned that an Iranian victory would be followed by an increase in the influence of Moslem fundamentalism throughout the Middle East, endangering not only Israel but the stability of the Arab states.

He said the preferred outcome would be a stalemate which would lock Iranian and Iraqi forces in place and unavailable for outside adventures for years to come.

Bar-Am, the authority on Iraq, said that country is at the weakest point in its history. "And while they remain anti-Israel and anti-Zionist, they are pragmatic. So you have here an ideological commitment (Iran) as opposed to political, economic and military strength" (Iraq), he said.

"I am not sure they (the Iraqis) will moderate much, but I think there is a good chance that they will be willing to negotiate with us over certain issues. I don't expect peace agreements but I would expect some kind of understanding that would be useful for both sides," Bar-Am said.

The professor, who lectures at Haifa University and Hebrew University, added, "It's worth trying, through mediators. If we don't succeed, we haven't lost anything."

NO PROGRESS ON NATIONAL BUDGET

JERUSALEM, Feb. 9 (JTA) -- No progress has been reported Friday in the negotiations between the Labor Alignment and Likud over the proposed 33 billion Shekel (\$23.8 billion) national budget.

Labor's initial demand to allocate 266 million Shekels (\$193 million) as a long-term loan to rescue the United Kibbutz Movement triggered demands from other sectors. Agudat Israel and Shas seek allocation of 30 million Shekels (\$22 million) to yeshivas affiliated with each party and West Bank settlers are asking for an immediate allocation of 47.5 million Shekels (\$35 million) and an unspecified sum later.

Treasury officials warned that if these demands are met, the budget framework, which has not yet been approved, will be torn apart.

Likud has claimed that additional outlays for yeshivas and settlements could come from budget reserves and thus not lead to excessive spending. But Treasury officials claim that earmarking reserves, rather than keeping them for unexpected needs, would be equivalent to increasing the budget.

Last year's budget was 33 billion Shekels (\$20.9 billion).

NO IMMEDIATE LEGAL ACTION AGAINST EIGHT RABBIS

JERUSALEM, Feb. 9 (JTA) -- Attorney General Yosef Harish will not take immediate legal action against eight leading rabbis who questioned the authority of the High Court of Justice to rule on religious conversion.

Instead, following high-level consultations at the Justice Ministry, Harish decided last week to ask for the intervention of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Harish was expected to ask Minister of Religious Affairs Zevulun Hammer to decide whether to take disciplinary action against the rabbis or issue an order that would prevent similar petitions in the future.

If his measures are determined to be insufficient, the prosecution could still take action against the rabbis, according to sources at the Justice Ministry.

The eight rabbis, heads of religious courts, signed a petition saying they would not accept the authority of the High Court to rule on matters of conversion to Judaism, following its recent ruling to register Reform convert Shoshana Miller as Jewish.