

ISRAEL PONDERS BUT SAYS LITTLE ON SYRIAN MOVE INTO BEIRUT

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 22 (JTA) -- Israel reacted cautiously Sunday to reports that Syria has deployed infantry and tanks in West Beirut at the invitation of a coalition of Moslem and Druze leaders, but over the objections of Lebanese President Amin Gemayel.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin briefed the Cabinet on the situation in closed session, convening as a Ministerial Security Committee, the deliberations of which are classified.

Rabin told reporters afterward that Israel would watch the situation closely and review its position only if circumstances required. He said that naturally Israel would prefer not to see Syrian troops in West Beirut.

Gemayel and other Lebanese Christian leaders spoke out Sunday against the Syrian presence. But there was no resistance as armor-led Syrian columns moved into the Lebanese capital from their bases in the Bekaa Valley in eastern Lebanon and from Khalde in the south.

According to reports here, Syria intends to deploy about 10,000 troops in West Beirut in an attempt to end the fierce battles in recent weeks between Moslems and Christians and between rival Moslem factions.

Observers here noted that the Syrian move completes a full circle begun in June 1982, when the Israel Defense Force invaded Lebanon and pushed to the outskirts of Beirut to oust Syrian and Palestine Liberation Organization forces.

Expect Continued 'Red Lines'

However, commentators presume that the unofficial but mutually agreed to "red lines" system that prevailed before 1982 would be re-established. Under their tacit agreement with Israel, Syrian forces did not penetrate to south Lebanon, close to the Israel border, and did not interfere with Israeli air reconnaissance over Lebanon.

The "red lines" evolved during Rabin's tenure as Prime Minister, before 1977, when the Syrians were invited into Lebanon by the Lebanese government to try to end the civil war. Israeli sources said Sunday that if the Syrians were to follow up their armor and infantry with new deployments of anti-aircraft missiles in Lebanon, a significant change of the strategic situation between Israel and Syria would occur.

'STATE OF WAR' IN TERRITORIES MARS HUMAN RIGHTS IN ISRAEL: STATE DEPT.

By Judith Colp

WASHINGTON, Feb. 22 (JTA) -- Human rights in Israel continues to be marked by a "state of war" within the occupied territories, according to a senior State Department official.

Richard Schifter, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, made his comments Thursday at a briefing on the State Department's 1986 "Country Reports on Human Rights Practices," presented annually to the Congress. The report assesses human rights

conditions in all countries that are members of the United Nations.

Shifter described Israel as a democratic state which, like other democratic states, has its "deficiencies and strengths."

Israel's "complex human rights situation in the occupied territories reflects the fact that, in the absence of a peace settlement, the territories remain under military administration and there is friction between occupation authorities and the Palestinian population," the report stated.

"Among the signs of friction are active resistance to the occupation, including episodes of violence, sometimes encouraged by outside extremist groups."

'Arises From Security Measures'

The Human Rights report noted that this friction "arises from security measures taken by Israel, advocacy of annexation or permanent control of the territories by some Israeli political figures, as well as the refusal of the main Palestinian organization to recognize Israel or to promote a negotiated peace."

However both Arab and Jewish residents suffered somewhat fewer violent acts in 1986 compared to 1985. The report said the Palestine Liberation Organization "factions and various PLO dissident groups claimed responsibility for nearly all violent acts against the IDF (Israel Defense Force), Israeli civilians, or Palestinians who disagreed with such groups. Most of the violence appears, however, to have been spontaneous and local."

Human rights abuses against Jews in other Middle East countries were less frequent than against other religious groups, although discrimination remains, according to the report.

In Syria, Freedom And Restrictions Noted

In Syria, the 3,000-4,000 Jews are allowed to practice their religion and "enjoy a relatively high standard of living, access to higher education and entrance into the professions," the report noted. But Syrian Jews are also bound by restrictions of foreign travel and religious training is prohibited.

In Iraq, where the Jewish community totals only 400, there is "no evidence of persecution," the report says.

In Morocco, Jews, with a population of 10,000, are prominent in the business and government, and operate schools and social institutions, according to the report. King Hassan II's meeting with then Premier Shimon Peres showed his support for a Jewish community abroad.

Tunisian Jews are permitted to practice their religion freely, according to the report, although during periods of tension synagogues and Jewish-owned shops have been attacked. But in 1985, after the raid on PLO headquarters, the government took "extraordinary measures to protect the Jewish community."

In the Yemen Arab Republic, there are no synagogues, but Jews are permitted to worship freely, according to the report. They are not permitted to communicate with Jews in Israel.

Ethiopian Jews suffer economic discrimination, the report stated, although "the stories of genocidal actions by Ethiopian authorities or of

highly brutal behavior toward Ethiopian Jews has not been substantiated by American visitors to the area."

In Egypt, the small Jewish community "appears to practice their faith without restriction or harassment."

In Argentina, which boasts the largest Jewish community in South America, occasional anti-Semitic incidents occur, the report said. Legislation providing penalties for racial, religious and other forms of discrimination has been passed by the executive branch and the House and is awaiting approval by the Senate.

In Hungary, with a Jewish population of 100,000, the first new synagogue since 1945 opened in June, the report states. But when a number of young people held informal meetings to discuss Jewish culture, "the sponsors were told to desist by the police," added the report.

Better In Czechoslovakia

Jews fare somewhat better in Czechoslovakia, where there are two Jewish community councils financially supported and controlled by the government, according to the report, as well as synagogues and a Jewish museum in Prague. However there are no Jewish schools.

In Rumania, whose government has permitted an active Jewish community, there were several anti-Semitic incidents last year, including demolition of a major synagogue by the government and "anti-Semitic overtones in two recent publications," noted the report. However, when fire damaged a synagogue, the government convicted and imprisoned four suspects.

Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union totaled 914, significantly lower than the 1,140 Jews permitted to leave in 1985. "The authorities have continued to attack Jewish consciousness through harassment and intimidation, the suppression of cultural activities, and the persecution of persons for teaching Hebrew. Soviet Jews have been subject to arrests, beatings, and vilification, as well as dismissal from work and illegal searches," the report stated.

In Iran, Jews are permitted to practice their religion, but they are discriminated against in employment and public accommodation, according to the report. "Jews are subject to travel restrictions which are not applied to members of other recognized religious groups," the report noted.

BOMB INJURES AT LEAST 17 IN OLD CITY; PLO CLAIMS RESPONSIBILITY

JERUSALEM, Feb. 22 (JTA) -- A bomb injured at least 17 people, including 12 border policemen, outside the Damascus Gate of the Old City Sunday. According to early reports, most of the wounds were not serious. Security forces detained 70 Arabs for questioning.

According to police, a bomb or a hand grenade was thrown into the street during a change in shifts between border police patrols. An investigation is being conducted. The Palestine Liberation Organization reportedly claimed responsibility. Security sources said the incident may have been linked to the anniversaries of two events that occurred 18 years ago.

One was the arson against the Al Aksa Mosque on the Temple Mount, an act for which a demented Australian national was convicted. The other was the founding of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a terrorist group

headed by Nayef Hawatmeh with connections to Syria.

According to Mayor Teddy Kollek of Jerusalem, however, the attack on the patrols was a "spillover" from the tension and unrest in the West Bank during the past two weeks. It was the most serious incident in the Old City since last October, when one Israeli was killed and 69 were wounded by grenades thrown at Israel Defense Force recruits and their families returning from swearing-in ceremonies at the Western Wall.

ECHOING SHAMIR, ISRAELI CABINET URGES U.S. TO DROP SPECIAL REFUGEE STATUS FOR SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRES

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 22 (JTA) -- The Israeli Cabinet Sunday called on the United States to abolish political refugee status for Jews leaving the Soviet Union on grounds that there can be no such status for any Jew since the founding of Israel.

The call, presented by Acting Premier Shimon Peres and adopted unanimously as a resolution of the government, was timed, according to observers, to coincide with meetings here this week of the Council of Jewish Federations (CJF) and the Jewish Agency Board of Governors. Both are key diaspora bodies whose funding efforts and political influence are critical in the struggle for Soviet Jews.

It also coincided with signs of possible dramatic new openness inside the Soviet Union, giving rise to hope here that the trickle of Jewish emigration in recent years may soon swell to substantial numbers. The release from prison Friday of long-time refusenik and dissident Iosif Begun has fueled those hopes.

The statement said, "The government of Israel believes that the status of refugee accorded today to Soviet Jewish emigrants whose declared destination is Israel should be abolished . . . From the day the State of Israel was established and its gates opened to all Jews, there is no more validity to the term Jewish refugee . . ."

Bolstered Shamir

The statement bolstered the efforts of Premier Yitzhak Shamir, currently visiting the United States, to persuade the U.S. Administration to no longer grant the special refugee status to Jewish emigres from the Soviet Union which enables them to go to the U.S. instead of to Israel. Shamir apparently made little headway in that regard in his talks with President Ronald Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz last week. The Administration stressed that the U.S. supports "freedom of choice."

The Cabinet addressed that argument, noting that its statement "does not imply any attempt to prevent any person from choosing where to live." But that decision ought to be made only after the immigrants have reached Israel, which is the destination on their exit documents from the Soviet Union, the Ministers said. Once in Israel, they could proceed elsewhere.

Nevertheless, the statement is expected to renew the long, often angry debate between Israelis and some sections of the American Jewish leadership who advocate not only freedom of choice, but the right of emigrants to choose their country of settlement without being required to go to Israel first.

AS NJCRAC RECOMMENDS, BARNSTORMING KAHANE DENOUNCED IN MOST U.S. JEWISH COMMUNITIES

By Andrew Muchin

NEW YORK, Feb. 22 (JTA) -- In almost every U.S. city that Member of Knesset Meir Kahane visits, the opposition from the organized Jewish community is so consistent that he may as well include it in his itinerary.

With few exceptions, the founder of the Jewish Defense League in the United States and Kach Party in Israel provokes denunciation by the local Jewish Community Relations Council (CRC), usually joined by the Jewish Federation, chapters of national Jewish organizations and sometimes the rabbinate.

They declare him to be some combination of extremist, violent, racist, demagogic, hate-mongering and anathema to Torah teachings.

In addition, the CRC and Federation generally refuse to meet with him, sometimes even locking their doors. He is generally not allowed a Jewish platform, speaking instead at hotels.

This united response is an avowed policy, according to Kenneth Bandler, director of public information and former Middle East specialist for the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC), an association of 11 national Jewish agencies and 113 CRCs.

"Our interest is to repudiate him as an outcast in American and Israeli societies," he explained to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "We are following the precedent set by Israeli leaders."

Policy Developed

In August of 1985, 12 national Jewish agencies and organizations drafted with the help of NJCRAC a statement of "abhorrence of (Kahane's) policies, goals and practices" -- namely, his opposition to democracy in Israel in favor of Torah law as he interprets it, his desire to expel the Israeli Arab population or at least rescind their right to vote and his attacks on all Jews who oppose him as not truly Jewish.

The agencies also expressed support for Israeli President Chaim Herzog's refusal to meet with Kahane following his election to Knesset in 1984, efforts in Israel to foster Arab-Jewish understanding and an anti-racism law aimed at muzzling Kahane.

This statement and the NJCRAC aims of isolating and dismissing Kahane have formed the basis for the CRC statements and activities.

Kahane does have his supporters, some who belong to his Kach International or Jewish Idea movements. They and Kahane generally attract from 60 to 300 people to his speeches by word of mouth and advance publicity.

Media Attracted To Him

The MK readily admits that media coverage is vital to his cause. Bandler observed that during Kahane's first visit to a community or first one after several years, he attracts both the general and Jewish media, often taking the reporters on a tour of the Jewish offices closed to him. The coverage tends to decrease during subsequent visits.

Jewish newspapers generally covered Kahane's recent speaking and fund-raising tour of the United States with a report of his speech and/or an interview, placed prominently. Some of the newspapers accepted advertisements of Ka-

hane's address and announced it in a small article.

Nevertheless, Kenneth Sidman, national director of Kach International, asserted that some of the Jewish press was playing hard to get. "I found that it's easier to approach the general media than it is to get the Jewish media," he said.

Bandler said he had no argument with the Jewish press covering Kahane as news, but he opposed acceptance of the ads as unnecessarily running counter to NJCRAC's goals.

Robert Cohn, president of the American Jewish Press Association and editor-in-chief of the St. Louis Jewish Light, estimated that about half of the Jewish newspapers refused ads for Kahane, primarily because of control exerted by federations or CRCs.

But Cohn contended that running a Kahane ad was okay if it fit usual standards of taste and if those seeking to place it were known.

He also provided a journalistic rationale for covering Kahane. "My informal advice to colleagues has been, 'Treat him as you would any newsworthy figure ... He's a significant person,'" he said.

Ambivalence Seen In Jewish Press

Bandler had another criticism of the Jewish press. He said he found "ambivalence on the parts of some of the newspapers regarding Kahane ... Editorials advocate that Kahane should be debated by Jewish leadership, or that Kahane should be given a Jewish facility to speak from." To do so, in Bandler's eyes, would be "giving (Kahane) legitimacy."

But to some communities, Kahane is legitimate. In Monsey, N.Y., for example, Bandler noted that Kahane recently spoke to 400 people in a synagogue. Sidman said the crowd exceeded 500.

Yet overall, Bandler sees a successfully united approach, and press reports support his view. "We effectively ostracized Kahane," he said.

"What I mean by that is he finds it almost impossible to speak from a Jewish podium when he visits the United States. The point is it's our view and the view of all of our member agencies that by allowing him to speak from a Jewish facility, it would in fact give him legitimacy."

Kahane Always Responds

At each stop, Kahane responds to the strategy. The Atlanta Jewish Times reported that Kahane said on January 29 that Jewish leaders refuse to debate him because "they know what I say is painfully right and they attempt to stifle debate."

Added Sidman, "He asks questions and points out contradictions that they have no answers for."

And Kahane claimed in a recent interview with The Jewish News of Detroit that wealthy Jews are supporting him.

Sidman likened the ostracism to censorship, but noted that hundreds of people attend the speeches. He claimed that Kach International has 7,000 dues-paying members in the United States. "We went in the span of two years from a half dozen chapters to 30 chapters around the country," he said.

Kahane has managed one meeting in the past 14 months with a member of the Jewish establishment. Arriving unannounced at the offices of the Federation of Jewish Agencies of Greater Philadelphia in January 1986, Kahane, with reporters in

tow, was met in the lobby by Federation executive vice president Robert Forman.

They spoke in private for less than 15 minutes in a first-floor annex. "There really wasn't much of a meeting," Forman told the JTA.

The executive said he was aware of the NJCRAC policy, but met with him anyway. "Since he was a Member of Knesset, he was owed that respect," he explained, and he didn't want to cause a scene by refusing.

Forman faced no public repercussions for the meeting, but didn't know if he would do it again. "I think we'd have to look at the needs of the situation," he said.

Who attends Kahane's speeches? Sidman pointed out that the nine rabbis of the Syrian Jewish community in New York attended a recent address.

The American Jewish News of the Twin Cities reported that no prominent local Jews attended on January 27. In some communities he attracts leaders of the community of Holocaust survivors.

In general, said Bandler, "We're talking about a very, very small part of the American Jewish community. I wouldn't say that everybody who's a supporter is on the fringe of the community, but they're not usually part of the organized community." Indeed, Kahane attempts in his speeches to unite the audience to follow him against the establishment.

The effort hasn't panned out, according to Bandler, who believes that opposition to Kahanism is one of the few issues "that have unanimity" among affiliated Jews.

The NJCRAC spokesman acknowledged that Kahane elicits a singular response from American Jewish leadership. "He's really an exception. He's beyond the Pale," said Bandler. "And again it's the same reaction that's in Israel. You have to look at both of them together."

SOVIETS RELEASE NEW ANTI-SEMITIC TOME; ACTIVISTS APPEAL TO GORBACHEV

NEW YORK, Feb. 22 (JTA) -- A group of Moscow and Leningrad Jewish activists has written to Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev expressing "feelings of alarm and concern" over a recently released book that appears to revive some of the most insidious canards of the infamous "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," it was reported here by the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ).

The 254-page book, "On the Class Essence of Zionism," was written by A.Z. Romanenko. Its 50,000 copies are twice the usual number for major tomes, the SSSJ said.

The activists pointed out that the book claims that "there was no Inquisition against Jews, no mass killings, but 'national liberation movements.'" According to the author, anti-Semitism is a reaction to Jewish expansionism and Jews are engaged in "constant efforts to gain control of the world."

Romanenko asserts that "Zionism is a dangerous enemy of the working masses" and claims that Zionists espouse "criminal theories" and "are steeped in a spirit of rabid hatred towards all mankind." He concludes that "Zionist ideologists combine propaganda for a fascist-type of unbridled territorial expansion with a policy of racist genocide and anti-Communist attacks and incantations."

The activists also pointed out that the book asserts that "the Jews themselves instigated

pogroms in Russia in the beginning of the century to start immigration to America, and, finally, as the culmination of their cunning, 'the Zionists did everything they could to set the fascists against the USSR'."

The activists also noted that the book, which is subtitled "A Historiographic Review of Literature," is a review of this sort of writing published in the USSR. "Judging by the bibliography, it consists of over 100 books released in several million copies. It means that millions have read and absorbed these falsehoods."

They called upon Gorbachev "to put an end to the anti-Semitic campaign in the press and hold responsible those who organized it. We also call upon you to consider the problem of refuseniks and to grant, under existing laws, all Jews who wish, the right to leave for their historic homeland Israel."

USSR AS BAD AS S. AFRICA: SHARANSKY

WASHINGTON, Feb. 22 (JTA) -- Natan Sharansky said Friday that human rights abuses in the Soviet Union are as important a "moral issue" as in South Africa.

He made his comments to the annual convention of the Conservative Political Action Conference at the Washington Hilton Hotel.

Sharansky, who was allowed to leave the Soviet Union a year ago, said his release as well as the recent release of other Soviet Jews "doesn't mean a change in the principles of the (Soviet) system. Did it make it easier for people to leave the Soviet Union? Did it make any liberalization? You really have to say no."

The former refusenik, who received a standing ovation from the 300 persons attending, criticized those who advocate economic sanctions against South Africa because of the apartheid system, but seek a closer relationship with the Soviet Union.

"It (human rights in the Soviet Union) is also an important moral issue. Why should we be satisfied with the release of one person when 400,000 Jews and many non-Jews are suffering and their elementary human rights are denied?" he said.

Sharansky was introduced by the Rev. Jerry Falwell, who described him as "an international figure for peace and liberty" who "stared the Soviet Union in the face and they blinked."

BRITISH LEADERS CANCEL SOVIET TRIP By Maurice Samuelson

LONDON, Feb. 22 (JTA) -- Three members of Parliament dropped their plans to fly to Moscow Friday to attend a reception at the British Embassy for Iosif Begun and other leading Jewish refuseniks. The Soviet authorities refused to grant them visas.

The three MPs are Lord James Douglas-Hamilton and Dame Peggy Fenner, Conservatives, and Laborite Greville Janner. All are members of the Parliamentary Committee for the Release of Soviet Jewry. They were informed by the Foreign Office that there would be problems over their admission. The reception, to be given by British Ambassador Sir Brian Cartledge Monday, will honor Begun, just released from Chistopol prison; Ida Nudel; Vladimir Slepak; Alexander Lerner; and Viktor Brailovsky.