

JORDAN'S PRIME MINISTER SAYS HIS COUNTRY WOULD PARTICIPATE IN A MIDEAST PEACE CONFERENCE

Statement Draws Mixed Reactions In Israel

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, May 4 (JTA) -- A statement by Jordan's Prime Minister Zeid Rifai Sunday night that his country would participate in an international conference for Middle East peace drew mixed reactions in Israel.

Sources close to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres welcomed it as "an obvious indication that significant progress has been made." But Premier Yitzhak Shamir dismissed Rifai's announcement as "nothing new." He said the Arab countries wanted an international conference because Israel's position at such a forum would be weak.

Some observers said Rifai's statement was the first official acknowledgement by Jordan that King Hussein and Peres have agreed, through American mediation, to guidelines for holding a peace conference.

Others noted that it was ambiguous and gave no indication that Jordan accepted Peres' stipulation that the conference would be only an "opening" framework for bilateral negotiations between Israel and Jordan and other parties to the Middle East conflict.

Peres To Present Plan To Inner Cabinet

It was reported, nevertheless, that Peres has informed Shamir in writing that he plans to present his proposals to the Inner Cabinet on Wednesday. The two men are scheduled to meet privately Tuesday. It was not certain whether Peres' position will be strengthened by the statement from Amman.

Rifai said there was no point in continuing efforts to convene a conference as long as the Israeli government is divided and cannot make up its mind, a reference to the ongoing dispute between the Labor and Likud coalition partners over the issue.

The Jordanian Prime Minister also denied reports that Hussein met in secret with Peres or any other Israeli leaders recently. He made clear that Jordan wants the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in the process, a condition unacceptable to Israel.

But Rifai said the PLO could participate only if it renounces terrorism and accepts United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which imply recognition of Israel's right to exist within secure borders.

ISRAEL MARKS ITS 39TH ANNIVERSARY

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 4 (JTA) -- Israel's 39th Independence Day Monday was sunny and warm. A relaxed, festive mood prevailed for hundreds of thousands of Israelis bent on getting to the beaches and picnic grounds. It was a day to ignore politics and enjoy the country's only secular holiday.

By midday, police were reporting all parking lots full at the seashore and camping grounds. The Golan Heights and Upper Galilee were

thronged with picnickers, undeterred by the several Katyusha rockets which exploded in the latter area during the night. They were fired from beyond the south Lebanon security zone and caused no casualties or damage.

Officially, the celebration began Monday night with the traditional kindling of 12 torches on Mt. Herzl in Jerusalem. The central one was lighted by Knesset Speaker Shlomo Hillel; the others by representatives of the arts -- music, theater, cinema, dance, sculpture, painting and architecture. Their symbolism was not lost on those who remembered the emphasis on military might of earlier Independence Days.

Another tradition was the annual International Bible Quiz for youth and the presentation of the Israel Prize, both held in Jerusalem and broadcast on radio and television.

Aircraft, civilian and military, were on display to the public at Ben Gurion Airport, where normal operation were closed down for several hours for an air show featuring high altitude acrobatics by prototypes of the new Lavi fighter plane and short takeoff-and-landing aircraft, all made in Israel.

The only political note was sounded by Premier Yitzhak Shamir, who used an hour-long interview on Israel Radio to urge continuation of the unity coalition government for the remaining 18 months of its tenure.

Nevertheless, he accused his Labor coalition partners of "running amok" in their haste to convene an international conference for Middle East peace. He said Likud would examine all aspects of the issue but would not be pressured into accepting "peace at any price."

There were strong political overtones in the widely advertised and subsidized marches by Likud and Gush Emunim activists in the West Bank. These were balanced, politically, by the 13th Hapoel Games, the international workers' Olympics, at the Ramat Gan stadium. About 1,300 athletes from abroad participated.

AUSTRIA TO SET UP PANEL TO PROBE WALDHEIM'S WARTIME ACTIVITIES

Waldheim To Take Legal Action In Response To Allegations Of Complicity In Nazi Atrocities

VIENNA, May 4 (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Alois Mock announced Monday that Austria will set up a commission of historians to investigate the wartime activities of President Kurt Waldheim.

Waldheim himself intends to take legal action in response to allegations of his complicity in Nazi persecutions and atrocities. The allegations were the basis of the U.S. Department of Justice's decision, announced a week ago, to bar Waldheim from entry into the United States.

It is "time to respond to these slanders through legal channels," Waldheim said on a radio interview Monday, but he did not specify what type of legal action he was considering.

Mock, who is Vice Chancellor and head of the conservative People's Party which ran Waldheim as its Presidential candidate last year, said the commission would be established after consultations with the President. He said it would

comprise Austrian historians but could include foreign scholars approved by Waldheim. Mock also said that the "White Book" Waldheim commissioned to set straight details of his war record has been completed. He said it and the documents used to incriminate Waldheim, which the Austrian government has requested from Washington, would be made widely available.

Waldheim, who served for 10 years as United Nations Secretary General, has admitted to falsifying his military service record in his official autobiography. He claimed he was discharged from the German army in 1941 for a disability when actually he served as an intelligence officer in the Balkans. He has vehemently denied any involvement in atrocities against civilians or resistance fighters. But documents discovered in the archives of the United Nations War Crimes Commission state otherwise.

Wiesenthal Welcomes Panel Proposal

Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal said Monday that he welcomed the idea that a panel of historians would investigate Waldheim's past but said it would have to be an international panel, not exclusively Austrian, if it was to have credibility.

Any conclusions the panel drew would have to be binding for both sides, said Wiesenthal, who previously said there appeared to be no concrete evidence to link Waldheim with war crimes. If Waldheim was shown to have been involved, he would have to resign, and if not, the United States would have to remove him from the so-called "Watch List" barring his entry as a private citizen, Wiesenthal said.

POLL INDICATES GENERAL LOSS OF CONFIDENCE IN LABOR-LIKUD COALITION By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 4 (JTA) -- The latest opinion poll, published Sunday, indicated a general loss of confidence in the Labor-Likud coalition government and a drop in the popularity of the leaders of both parties. If elections were held now, the voters would give neither party a decisive majority and the present stalemate in government would continue.

The poll, conducted by the Public Opinion Research Institute (PORI) among 1,200 Jewish voters between April 21-23, confirmed a trend of dissatisfaction with the government found by a poll taken in March by the Modiin Ezrachi organization, published April 21.

The Labor Party suffered less erosion than Likud. The poll indicated that 75.3 percent of those who voted for Labor in the 1984 Knesset elections would vote for it again. But Likud would be the choice of only 55.4 percent of those who voted for it three years ago.

Moreover, 11.5 percent of Likud voters would cast ballots for Labor in new elections but only 2.2 percent of Labor voters would cross over to Likud. In addition, 11.6 percent of Labor voters and 15.3 percent of Likud voters are "undecided" whom they would vote for.

The poll showed that Labor would win 40.1 percent of the vote if elections were held now, up from 37.1 percent in 1984, while Likud would win 24.9 percent, down from 31.9 percent.

The religious parties, with 14.6 percent of the vote in new elections, up from 11.4 in 1984, would again hold the balance of power should either party try to form a governing coalition, the latest poll showed.

It also showed a 23 point decline in popularity for Premier Yitzhak Shamir, the Likud leader, down to 36 percent approval from 59 percent in May 1986. Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, the Labor Party leader, had a 17 point drop in popularity, down to 62 percent from 79 percent a year ago.

KLARSFELD SAYS WALDHEIM MUST BE HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR HIS NAZI BACKGROUND By Judith Colp

WASHINGTON, May 4 (JTA) -- Nazi-hunter Beate Klarsfeld believes that when efforts are made to bring Nazi war criminals to justice, it is most important "to go after . . . those who gave the orders." But in the case of Austrian President Kurt Waldheim, there is "a moral responsibility" to hold him accountable for his Nazi background, Klarsfeld said in an interview on the ABC-TV "This Week With David Brinkley" program Sunday.

"Let's say just for public opinion, I think we have to take something, we have to learn something from what happened during the Second World War . . . So how can we admit that people, Kurt George Kiesinger of Germany, the former Chancellor, and Waldheim can represent states today?" Klarsfeld said.

The Austrian Charge d'Affaires, Christian Prosl, who also appeared on the program, contended that Waldheim was barred from entering the U.S. without being proved guilty of charges that he was involved in Nazi persecution and atrocities during World War II.

"What is not fair is to put somebody who is head of state of a friendly country on a list where the normal people and even The Washington Post, equals that to convicted criminals," Prosl said referring to the Justice Department's watch list of foreigners not admissible to the U.S.

"Mr. Waldheim was not a Nazi and he was not a war criminal," the Austrian official stated. He said Waldheim would soon "bring out a white paper to show exactly what he did during the war."

Mark O'Connor, the American attorney defending accused war criminal John Demjanjuk, now on trial in Jerusalem, was also interviewed. He questioned the fairness of the trial.

"We have the issue of three judges that have to put aside their Jewishness. They have to look at the issues objectively. They have to look at the narrow range of evidence which is available, in terms of the witness' memories after 45 years, and their identification of a questionable photo spread," O'Connor said.

A DISCORDANT NOTE IS STRUCK AT SOLIDARITY SUNDAY FOR SOVIET JEWRY By Susan Birnbaum and Margie Olster

NEW YORK, May 4 (JTA) -- For the first time in the history of Solidarity Sunday, a discordant note was struck Sunday when a recognized leader of a Soviet Jewry movement, Yosef Mendelevich, was denied permission to speak but took the microphone forcibly and insisted he be allowed to make a statement.

Mendelevich took the dramatic action in front of a crowd estimated at 200,000 who gathered at the Dag Hammarskjold Plaza across from the UN to hear speeches from local officials, religious leaders, President Reagan, Premier Yitzhak Shamir and Natan Sharansky.

Mendelevich has been living in Israel since 1981 following his release after 11 years in six Soviet prisons for his role in a desperate attempt to steal an airplane and escape to Israel via Sweden. Since arriving in Israel, Mendelevich, the chairman of the Soviet Jewry Education and Information Center in Jerusalem, has been one of the most outspoken leaders in the cause of Soviet Jewry.

He spoke out strongly in March following reports of an agreement made in Moscow between Morris Abram, chairman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCSJ), Edgar Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress, and Soviet officials. The unconfirmed agreement would permit up to 11,000 Soviet Jews to emigrate to Israel this year directly via Rumania.

Mendelevich, among other Soviet Jewry activists, blasted the suggestion by Abram that the Jackson-Vanik amendment, which links U.S. trade with the Soviet Union to Jewish emigration, be lifted when a sizable, but unspecified, number of Jews are permitted to emigrate.

Decries Compacency In Mainstream Organizations

On Sunday, Mendelevich decried compacency within the mainstream Soviet Jewry organizations -- the NCSJ and the Coalition to Free Soviet Jewry, which organizes the annual demonstration. The Coalition denied Mendelevich's request last week to be added to the roster of speakers. In fact, Mendelevich has not been invited to speak at the rally since 1981, the year of his release, when he was the featured speaker at Solidarity Sunday.

Taking the microphone from his long-time friend and former fellow prison inmate Natan Sharansky, Mendelevich introduced himself and said, "Nobody invited me here to speak, but I will speak." Alan Pesky, Coalition chairman, tried unsuccessfully to prevent Mendelevich from speaking.

He lashed out at the "false optimism" he claimed was engendered by statements made by Abram on his return from Moscow. Abram told the JTA Monday that he had only reported on his impressions of meetings with Soviet officials but never said agreements were made. Abram said he expected the Soviets to agree shortly to direct flights for Soviet Jews to Israel through Rumania. Abram also said he thought some 11,000 Jews would be permitted to emigrate within the year.

Abram's Reaction To The Incident

Abram told the JTA Monday that Mendelevich "forced himself on a platform for other people. Apparently he has no platform of his own." But Abram said he agreed with Sharansky and other activists on the fundamental principles: no relaxation or waiver of trade restrictions until "very substantial emigration" is seen.

Abram said he deliberately avoided putting figures or caps on the numbers necessary for a waiver. "Fifty-one thousand in 1979 shows what is possible in a year," he said. "Then there should be just a waiver. The Jackson-Vanik amendment should be imbedded in concrete."

In particular, Mendelevich urged Soviet Jewry activists to support a total ban on trade with the Soviet Union. He called for an end to American bank loans to the Soviets.

Abram called Mendelevich's position very extreme. "A ban on trade is something no one in the organized community has advocated. I frankly

do not know what Mendelevich is arguing for. It's not possible to have a total trade embargo, that's not within the realm of possibilities." Abram added that he believed Mendelevich represented a small number of people.

Pressure, Not Compromise

Rabbi Avi Weiss, national chairman of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, said, "It is outrageous that those who negotiate for Soviet Jewry at cocktail parties can speak at Solidarity Sunday while a Yosef Mendelevich, who spent 11 years in a Soviet prison, is denied that right. What would it take to speak, another 11 years in the Gulag? But Yosef was denied the right because he speaks the full truth, and believes in, as (Israeli Ambassador to the United Nations) Bin-yamin Netanyahu said Sunday at the rally, 'pressure, pressure, pressure' and not compromise, compromise, compromise which has lulled our community into complacency."

Conference organizers from the Coalition to Free Soviet Jewry told the JTA that time constraints mainly prevented Mendelevich from receiving an official time slot in the scheduled program.

"We had limited time and many people who would have liked to speak," said Pesky. "We made the judgement about who would be the most appropriate people to speak," he said.

Pesky said the appropriateness of the potential speakers was evaluated according to the objectives of the rally. "One of the main reasons for the rally is to draw attention to Soviet Jewry," Pesky said. "This is aided by prominent speakers. We had requests from many Congressmen and others," he said.

Says Sharansky Represented Former Refuseniks

Sharansky, the only former refusenik to address the rally, was chosen to represent former refuseniks in the program, Pesky said. Although some 10 former refuseniks sat on the stage with the dignitaries, including David Goldfarb, Vladimir Magaryk, and Leonid Slepak, none spoke from the podium. Instead, the march organizers introduced the Soviet Jews to reporters and arranged for interviews and media coverage of the plight of relatives left behind in the Soviet Union.

But Pesky said Mendelevich's political views had nothing to do with his exclusion from the program. "We are an organization that is not afraid to confront different sides of this issue."

Zeszy Schnur, Coalition executive director, added that the organizers had a tremendous amount of respect for Mendelevich, one of the Leningrad defendants, which alone is an "extraordinary reason for according him the respect he deserves."

Sunday evening, Mendelevich, sitting at the dinner table in the Riverdale, NY home of Rabbi Weiss, told the JTA why he felt impelled to speak.

Mendelevich said a demand for the release of 11,000 is only a small portion of tens of thousands who want to leave the Soviet Union. "We should ask for free emigration and nothing else," he said.

Mendelevich advocated government-legislated trade embargoes and sanctions similar to those imposed on South Africa. He urged businesses and activists to emulate their concerns for human rights in South Africa by extending them to the Soviets.

EFFORT UNDER WAY TO RESTORE A LANDMARK SYNAGOGUE IN BARBADOS

By Haviva Krasner

NEW YORK, May 4 (JTA) -- The American Jewish Congress is aiding the descendants of a group of Jews, who settled in Barbados after being expelled from Spain and Portugal during the Inquisitions, to collect funds to restore their landmark synagogue in Bridgetown, the island's capital. So far, more than \$75,000 has been collected in the United States alone, according to the AJCongress.

Paul Altman, a Bridgetown businessman and project coordinator, said the object of the restoration is "to preserve the Jewish heritage and a historical monument for all Barbadians and visitors. If nothing were done now, a part of our history would be lost forever."

The synagogue is actually the second building on the same site to house the Kaal Kodesh Nidhe Israel -- the Holy Scattered Congregation of Israel. The first building was constructed in 1654; thus the location is believed to be the oldest existing synagogue site in the New World.

The original tiny building lasted for almost 200 years, until it was flattened, along with much of the island, in the "killer hurricane" of 1831. The 90-member congregation, undeterred by the disaster, set out to raise funds to restore the place of worship. By 1833, they had erected a new synagogue on the original site.

However, 68 years later, the synagogue began to fall into disrepair. A massive failure of the sugar crop, the mainstay of the island economy, forced virtually all the Jewish families to leave. The building was left to moulder.

Attempts To Restore The Synagogue

Attempts were made to restore the synagogue, notably by Eustace Shilstone, a lawyer and a non-Jew. In 1929, he suggested that the old synagogue be preserved as a national memorial for the Jews of Barbados and for its historical and antiquarian significance. His plans failed to materialize.

In 1983, the government of Barbados acquired the structure and announced plans to tear it down and erect a new Supreme Court building on the site. Alarmed at the proposal, the Jewish community, which had been meeting in homes of members for services, decided to try to save the old building.

Upon request, the AJCongress agreed to serve as a central agency for contributions for the proposed restoration. They estimate that \$900,000-\$1,150,000 will be needed to successfully complete the project.

The synagogue is presently "in absolute shambles," the AJCongress reported. The windows have already been restored, and the roof is in the process of being restored, but there is a long way to go before the synagogue looks as identical as possible to the original building, which, according to the AJCongress, is the ultimate goal.

Besides the present condition of the synagogue, another major restoration problem is the disappearance of many of its artifacts. Some items were sold to museums and others were obtained by private collectors.

Despite these setbacks, Altman feels that "a properly restored synagogue will be maintained for the benefit of future generations."

HAVIVA KRASNER IS INTERN AT JTA

NEW YORK, May 4 (JTA) -- Haviva Krasner, a senior at the Ramaz Upper School, is a journalism intern at the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. The internship is part of her work-study senior project, which began last month and lasts until graduation in June. By combining attendance to a smaller number of classes with work at an outside job, the Ramaz administration attempts to provide students with experience at working in the "real world."

For her work-study project, Krasner, 18, chose an internship at JTA because of her interest in journalism, political issues as they affect the Jewish world, and ongoing developments in the Jewish community. She said she felt there is "a great deal of interesting news breaking in the Jewish world, and there are many controversial subjects to be covered."

Krasner has worked on her school newspaper, the "Ram Page," for the past four years and has been Editor-in-Chief during her senior year. After graduating in June, she will continue at JTA in its summer intern program covering all aspects of Jewish news.

BELLOW SAYS ISRAEL GOVERNMENT HELPED SPARK ANTI-SEMITISM IN U.S. FOR ITS INVOLVEMENT IN THE POLLARD SPY CASE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 4 (JTA) -- Saul Bellow, the American Nobel Laureate in Literature, holds the Israel government responsible for stoking anti-Semitism in the United States by its involvement in the Jonathan Pollard spy case.

He described Israel's use of Pollard, an American-Jewish civilian employee of the Navy serving a life sentence for spying for Israel, as "a piece of foolishness and recklessness" which did not take into consideration the impact on American Jews.

"If the Israel government had a natural interest in the American Jewish community, it should protect it from such pitfalls," Bellow told reporters in Haifa, where he attended a three-day international conference last week at Haifa University devoted to his literary work.

Anti-Semitism has been on the rise for some time in the U.S. and the Pollard affair is the kind of thing anti-Semites seize upon, Bellow said. "I think the American Jews are very sensitive to the question of dual allegiance, and it is probably wrong of Israel to press this question because it is one which is very often used by anti-Semites," he said.

Bellow, who was raised in an Orthodox home in the U.S., explained why he prefers to live there rather than in Israel. "I resent the rules of Orthodoxy and like to live in a land where I can't be reached by its long and fossilized arm," he said. He added that he discerned a danger of Israel becoming a theocratic state, "which is very objectionable."

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- Calling yerida "a disaster for the State," an organization has been formed here to fight against it by mobilizing public opinion and trying to correct the conditions that prompt Israelis to leave the country. "The Israeli Association to Stop Yerida" was founded at the initiative of Labor MK Avraham Katz-Or.