

SHAMIR, RETURNING FROM BUDAPEST, SAYS HE EXPECTS NORMALIZATION SOON

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Sept. 15 (JTA) -- Premier Yitzhak Shamir said Thursday night that he expected full normalization of diplomatic relations with Hungary "soon," but he could not say when.

Shamir spoke to reporters on his return from a two-day visit to Budapest. Although it was billed as a "private" visit, it included meetings with Prime Minister Karoly Grosz and Foreign Minister Peter Varkonyi.

Citing Grosz's high standing among the Soviet bloc leaders, Shamir said the Hungarian premier would be a source of information for them about Israel's positions on various matters.

"Hungarian Premier Grosz will tell (Soviet leader Mikhail) Gorbachev and others," Shamir said, referring to positions he had articulated in Budapest. He observed pointedly that the Kremlin was "no longer putting out daily dogmatism" in its official references to Israel and the Middle East.

Shamir predicted the expansion and acceleration of trade and tourism between Hungary and Israel, saying their political differences would not stand in the way of improved bilateral relations.

As for future diplomatic ties, the premier expects them, but the Hungarians have not set a time frame.

At the moment, Israel and Hungary maintain interest sections in Budapest and Tel Aviv respectively, the lowest level of diplomatic contact between countries.

Shamir did not explicitly confirm reports that a direct air link would soon be established between Budapest and Tel Aviv. But he noted that 30,000 Israeli tourists visited Hungary last year.

Earlier, in a telephone interview with Israeli army radio from Budapest, Shamir disclosed that he had committed himself to sending teachers from Israel to the 80,000-strong Jewish community in Hungary, and to assisting the community in enhancing its cultural life.

He said the Hungarian authorities raised no objections.

Political Prize For Shamir

Political observers here are intrigued by the thought processes in Budapest -- and presumably in Moscow -- behind the invitation to Shamir.

It can hardly have escaped the notice of the Communist leadership that the visit will boost Shamir's image as a statesman of moderation and wide international recognition during the final month of Israel's fiercely fought election campaign.

The Labor Party, for its part, must deduce, or at least ponder the thought, that there is sympathy in Budapest for Shamir and his Likud bloc.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, the Labor Party leader presently in London for talks with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, noted somewhat lamely that he had been invited to Budapest two months ago.

But the timing of Shamir's trip, just 46 days before the Knesset elections, cannot help but be seen here as a diplomatic coup for Likud.

FORMER ISRAELI JUDGE JOINS DEMJANJUK DEFENSE TEAM

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Sept. 15 (JTA) -- Dov Eitan, a controversial former district court judge, has joined the defense team of convicted Nazi war criminal John "Ivan the Terrible" Demjanjuk.

He did so at the invitation of Demjanjuk's Israeli defense lawyer, Yoram Sheftel.

Eitan will presumably participate in the appeal against Demjanjuk's death sentence, which will be heard by the Israeli Supreme Court in December.

Demjanjuk was convicted of war crimes by a Jerusalem district court last April 18. He was given the death sentence a week later.

He was identified as the Treblinka death camp guard known as "Ivan the Terrible" who operated the gas chambers where some 800,000 Jews perished.

Judge Eitan resigned from the district court in 1983 after running afoul of the authorities over his public advocacy of Israel's withdrawal from captured territories.

Eitan subsequently angered then-Justice Minister Moshe Nissim by saying in court that he would "burn down the Israel Broadcasting Authority building."

He made the remark while hearing a complaint by the broadcast authority that a Jerusalem man slapped a clerk at the authority's licensing department.

SOLDIERS AND CIVILIANS ARRESTED IN DRAFT-DODGING RING RELEASED

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Sept. 15 (JTA) -- Israel Defense Force Chief of Staff Dan Shomron has accused the news media of exaggerating the scope of a draft-dodging ring operated by IDF personnel in collusion with civilians.

All soldiers and civilians detained for questioning in the scandal have been released from custody, but they could still be subject to arrest for further questioning as the investigation progresses.

According to media reports last week, hundreds of people allegedly paid bribes of \$1,000 to \$10,000 for certificates exempting them from regular army service or reserve call-up, both mandatory in Israel.

But Shomron played down the dimensions of the affair, saying only five recruits are known to have bribed their way out of army service.

No more than a dozen or so soldiers had bribed a small number of IDF officers and non-commissioned officers to cancel or postpone call-ups for reserve duty, according to Shomron.

All of the officers and non-commissioned officers involved have been suspended from their duties.

An exception was an officer with the rank of lieutenant colonel, who was restored to normal duties in his unit after one day in custody.

Shomron stressed however that even the small numbers involved are sufficient to force the IDF to re-examine its procedures and make sure such activities do not recur.

200 KURDISH ORPHANS FROM IRAQ TO LEAVE TURKEY FOR ISRAEL

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Sept. 15 (JTA) -- Israel, in a humanitarian gesture, will admit more than 200 Kurdish orphans from Iraq who are presently refugees in eastern Turkey.

The Foreign Ministry already has instructed the Israeli Mission in Ankara to determine the most practical means of transferring the group as quickly as possible.

The plans were announced here over the weekend, after Foreign Minister Shimon Peres obtained Premier Yitzhak Shamir's approval of the project.

The Kurds have long been a persecuted minority in Iraq. They came under fierce attack by the Iraqi army immediately after the cease-fire in the Persian Gulf war, allegedly with chemical weapons. Large numbers fled to Turkey.

The youngsters will be educated at Youth Aliyah facilities run by the World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency for Israel. Presumably they will not be brought up as Jews or converted to Judaism.

The Israeli gesture is reminiscent of events in 1977, when Menachem Begin, shortly after becoming premier, accepted about 200 Vietnamese "boat people" as refugees in Israel.

Many have since made comfortable lives in Israel, chiefly in the Oriental restaurant business.

CLASHES IN GAZA AND NABLUS LEAVE ONE ARAB DEAD, THREE WOUNDED

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 15 (JTA) -- The latest clashes between Arabs and security forces resulted in the death of a 10-year-old Palestinian boy in Gaza Wednesday and injuries to three other Palestinians in Nablus on Thursday.

At the same time, tension continued to rise between Jewish and Arab residents of Acre in Israel proper.

The Israel Defense Force is investigating the Gaza incident. According to an IDF announcement Thursday, the youngster, identified as Rami Khalil Abu Samra, was hit by bullets after an IDF patrol was attacked with a gasoline bomb in a Gaza street.

Military sources said the Molotov cocktail struck an IDF officer in the leg and exploded near him without causing injuries. The officer fired his weapon in the direction of the attackers.

The boy's body was found later at the site of the shooting. The IDF report did not make clear whether the victim was identified as the perpetrator of the firebomb attack.

The violence in Nablus -- confined to the casbah, the old part of town -- stemmed from clashes between Israeli troops and stone-throwers. The troops shot and wounded three Palestinians.

Jewish merchants in the old part of Acre complained Thursday that the windows of their businesses were smeared with dirt and drawings of the Palestinian flag.

Some reported anonymous telephone threats demanding they leave the old city. One Arab has been detained on suspicion.

Once peaceful relations between Jews and Arabs plummeted following the brutal beating of a Jewish businessman earlier this month.

Police reacted forcefully, and several Arabs were arrested.

Riot squads were deployed in the city, which angered the Arab residents, who felt the police reaction was disproportionate.

The Arabs held a general strike in protest last week, while Jewish and Arab leaders called for mutual restraint.

Israeli authorities say the problems in Acre are isolated.

ISRAEL REFUSES TO APOLOGIZE FOR 1948 ASSASSINATION

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Sept. 15 (JTA) -- Israel has refused to offer an apology demanded by Sweden for the 1948 assassination of U.N. mediator Count Folke Bernadotte, a Swedish diplomat, by members of the underground Stern Gang.

Israel apologized for the killing immediately after it occurred 40 years ago.

But Sweden insists a second apology is due because a former member of the Stern Gang, Yehoshua Zeitler, admitted to the crime in an interview published in Yediot Achronot last weekend.

The Israeli ambassador, Moshe Erell, was summoned to the Foreign Ministry in Stockholm Wednesday to receive the demand.

Israel promptly rejected it on grounds that no new evidence has come to light since 1948 to warrant another apology.

The Yediot Achronot article reported what has been generally known over the years, that the Stern Gang -- known by the acronym Lehi -- ordered the murder of Bernadotte.

The motivation was his alleged plans to internationalize Jerusalem and award the Arabs large areas of Palestine that Israeli forces had captured in the 1948 War of Independence.

Zeitler said four people carried out the assassination, but that Premier Yitzhak Shamir, then one of the leaders of the Stern Gang, was not directly implicated in the act.

A former Lehi theoretician, Yisrael Eldar (Sheib) claims, however, that Shamir was in fact one of four men responsible for planning assassinations.

But Eldar could not confirm that Shamir attended the specific meeting at which Bernadotte's murder was ordered.

Shamir was one of the triumvirate that headed the Stern Gang after British soldiers killed its founder, Avraham Stern, in 1942.

ISRAELI BOXERS REINSTATED

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Sept. 15 (JTA) -- The International Boxing Federation lifted its suspension of three Israeli boxers Thursday, allowing them to compete in the Summer Olympic Games which begins its two-week run in Seoul, South Korea, on Saturday.

The boxers had been barred for touring South Africa last June, in violation of the international sports boycott of the apartheid state.

As a result, the Israel Boxing Federation was expelled from the international group.

The boxers nevertheless went to Seoul as members of the Israeli Olympic team.

They were reinstated after the Israeli federation explained to the international authorities that the boxing trio already has been disciplined for participating in South African tournaments secretly, and in defiance of explicit orders.

AMERICANS STILL SUPPORT ISRAEL, BUT POLLS SHOW SYMPATHY FOR ARABS

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, Sept. 15 (JTA) -- While Americans continue to maintain "a bedrock" of support toward Israel, there is nevertheless an increasing sympathy for the Palestinians, according to the heads of three national polling organizations.

The three organizations, which conducted surveys in recent months on American attitudes toward Israel in view of the Palestinian uprising, said here Wednesday that the American public would like to see the United States and the parties to the conflict open negotiations for a settlement.

The three pollsters spoke at a discussion panel sponsored by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Representatives of the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, which commissioned the surveys, also participated in the discussion.

John Marttila, of the Boston public opinion firm Marttila and Kiley, who conducted a poll last April for the AJCongress, said that Israel's relations with the United States are "strong and secure" and that Israel is considered by the American public as an ally.

Nevertheless, his survey found that higher-educated and upper-income Americans are more critical of Israel's policies, and, while sympathetic to Israel, they also favor a Palestinian homeland.

The AJCongress' major finding was that despite the continued violence and clashes in the territories, American support for Israel has grown between Dec. 9, 1988, when the uprising began, and April.

Furthermore, it showed that Americans by a large margin are more sympathetic to Israel than to either the Palestinians or the Arab states.

Douglas Schoen, from Penn and Schoen Associates, which conducted a survey for the ADL last January, and David Singer, director of the AJCommittee's Information and Research Services Department, who commissioned a poll from the Roper Organization last March, shared the view that basically the American public "as a group" supports Israel.

Well Educated Are Sympathetic

But Singer sharply disagreed with the contention that the more educated, or the American elite, tend to be less sympathetic to Israel.

The major finding of the AJCommittee poll was that American sympathy for Israel has declined since the beginning of the Palestinian uprising.

Schoen, whose poll for the ADL showed that there had been little erosion of support for Israel among Americans by the end of January, noted that while Israel is considered an ally, the Palestine Liberation Organization "has an extraordinary negative rating."

According to Schoen, most Americans are against the establishment of a Palestinian state.

Robert Lifton, president of the AJCongress, suggested that Americans who support a Palestinian state are not necessarily against Israel.

Marc Tanenbaum, the AJCommittee's director of international affairs, said that "against the background of all these surveys, it is virtually a miracle that there is still such strong support for Israel."

ISRAEL SEEKING DIPLOMATIC IMMUNITY FOR MILITARY PROCUREMENT OFFICE

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Sept. 15 (JTA) -- The Israeli government has asked the Reagan administration to extend diplomatic immunity to 45 members of its military procurement mission in New York, Israeli and U.S. officials confirmed Thursday.

Diplomatic immunity for the procurement staff, first requested in 1986, would allow them to operate "without any interference, as do all other diplomats here," said Yosef Gal, spokesman for the Israeli Embassy in Washington.

Currently, Israeli diplomats at the embassy in Washington enjoy immunity, but the privilege has not been extended to officials at the procurement mission.

The mission, an arm of the Israeli Defense Ministry, negotiates contracts with U.S. defense firms seeking a share of the \$1.8 billion in annual U.S. military aid to Israel.

The mission has been cited in a number of U.S. government probes, including a 1986 case in which eight officials were subpoenaed for allegedly exporting materials for cluster bombs without U.S. permission.

If the 45 staff members were granted "consular immunity," they would be protected from U.S. prosecutors for activities directly related to their official functions. Immunity would include protection against U.S. prosecution if they were to export U.S. military technology illegally.

Gal predicted Thursday that Israel would "get a satisfactory resolution" of the request shortly. But a State Department source would not give any timetable.

One obstacle has been administration objections to granting immunity to foreign nationals based outside Washington. Gal said there would be "no problem" were the office located in Washington as part of the Israeli Embassy.

The State Department source said that "the Israeli mission is just unique." Besides having a large office outside Washington, "I do not know of another case where it is separate from an embassy," the source added.

Another stumbling block, Israeli and U.S. sources said, is the number of officials to be granted immunity. At one point, Israel asked that all 250 employees of the mission be granted immunity. The Washington Post reported Monday.

Gal said that the 45 people mentioned in the request represent the "shlichim" (emissaries), or Israeli defense professionals, while the other 200 or so are support personnel.

COST OF LIVING UP 0.8 PERCENT

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Sept. 15 (JTA) -- The cost-of-living index rose by 0.8 percent in August, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported Thursday.

The increase fell short of the 1 percent rise in consumer prices that would have triggered cost-of-living allowances payable under the national wage agreements.

A 1 percent rise last month would have raised the cost of living 7 percent in the period since the last payments were made.

The aggregate rise in consumer prices since the beginning of the year has been 9.5 percent, according to the statistics bureau.

This represents an annual inflation rate of 15 percent.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES: SIMCHA DINITZ SHARES HIS DREAM OF AN ENGLISH UNIVERSITY IN ISRAEL By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Sept. 15 (JTA) -- An Israeli university teaching in English. Simcha Dinitz has nurtured this idea as his own private dream for years -- ever since he served as Israel's ambassador to Washington in the late 1970s.

Now, as chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel, he has the authority, the prestige and the resources to try and implement it. And as he told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, he has already set about it with vigor.

The universities of Tel Aviv and Beersheba have responded to his initial feelers with enthusiasm, he said in a Rosh Hashanah interview.

The Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where Dinitz served as vice president for five years until his election as chairman of the World Zionist Organization-Jewish Agency Executive earlier this year, is more stuffy and conservative.

But he believes they, too, will see "that this is a great idea" and indeed that the new university should be housed in the Hebrew University's Givat Ram campus in West Jerusalem. Since most of Hebrew University has moved over the past two decades to its campus on Mount Scopus, in East Jerusalem, the Givat Ram location is only sparsely inhabited.

Dinitz said that two internationally known scholars are working on blueprints.

He himself proposes to get the ball rolling immediately after the High Holidays by convening a top-level confabulation of representatives from the government, WZO, Council for Higher Education and individual universities.

Nobel Laureates

If the Hebrew University's buildings are made available, he said, the envisioned university should be self-supporting, with students paying some \$5,000 a year in tuition. This is a great deal more than the average in Israeli universities, Dinitz noted, but much less than the average private American university charges.

Dinitz would like to see two or three famed Jewish Nobel laureates attached to the teaching staff during the first year to give the unique institution a dramatic and prestigious start.

The university would strive for excellence, awarding degrees -- first bachelor's and, soon after, master's -- recognized and respected the world over.

Dinitz regards the project as the embodiment of what he believes must be the twin foci of Zionist effort at the end of the 20th century: Jewish education and some experience in Israel for as many young people in the Diaspora as possible.

With the language barrier removed, Dinitz reasons, Jewish youngsters could live and study here not merely for summer courses or one-year programs, but for a full university cycle.

"And they'd be learning Hebrew naturally, as part of living here. There would be friendships and marriages, and a great deal of eventual aliyah," he said.

But all the students, regardless of where they eventually settle, would carry with them through life a profound and sustained Jewish-Israeli learning experience.

For Dinitz, this same philosophy molds his approach to Soviet Jewry at this time of change

and evolution in the Soviet Union as a whole, and for the Jewish community there in particular.

"I have never been afraid of changing my views," he said when asked if his stress on Jewish education and culture inside the Soviet Union today vindicates the late Nahum Goldmann's approach to Soviet Jewry 20 to 30 years ago.

'Archaic' Debate On Aliyah

"We have to ask ourselves why there is so high a dropout rate, why there is so much alienation," Dinitz stressed.

The answer, he said, throughout the Diaspora and all the more so in the Soviet Union after 70 years of communism, is to be found in cultural and spiritual emptiness and ignorance.

The hoary Zionist debate between aliyah, on the one hand, and building up Diaspora communities, on the other, is "archaic and irrelevant," Dinitz asserted.

The two goals are in no way contradictory, but rather support and sustain each other. Zionism must be predicated on strong communities where knowledge of Jewish heritage and culture is widespread.

Dinitz, refreshingly frank and realistic, readily conceded that current Diaspora experience has shown that Jewishly well-educated Jews-on-the-move, from South Africa for instance, choose destinations other than Israel.

That proves, he said, not that education does not matter, "but that Jewish education is necessary but is not sufficient" to imbue young people with Zionist goals and values.

In addition, if aliyah from the free world is to grow, there has to be "a positive pull from Israel," Dinitz said. This applies both to concrete matters of jobs and housing, and also to the less tangible but nevertheless vital area of "vision and drama."

'Ongoing Historic Drama'

"I always speak to people abroad of Israel as an ongoing historic Jewish drama, and I challenge them: Don't be a passive spectator. Come and participate actively in building a new society where a Jew can live Jewishly to the full."

Dinitz recalled that "Zionism was always a minority movement." He does not delude himself into thinking or talking of instant large-scale aliyah.

But he believes that the demographic proportions between Israel and the Diaspora can and will still change significantly in Israel's favor in the foreseeable future.

As for Soviet Jewish emigration, Dinitz said he now favors direct flights via Romania, since "two parallel channels exist" for Jews leaving the USSR. They can apply to unite with their families in the United States and elsewhere, or they can apply to go to Israel.

Dinitz wants them "to exercise that free choice" while still in Russia, and not use "the Israeli visa as though it were a mere travel document to anywhere."

He insists that in practice, today, the Soviet authorities do not distinguish between the two channels. In other words, he said, it is as easy to apply and leave for the West as for Israel.

That is why "my position is supported by most American Jewish leaders," Dinitz said. The minority still opposing that position, he said, are "self-interest groups for whom processing immigrants in Vienna is itself a veritable raison d'etre."