

### ISRAELI PLANE FLIES TO USSR ON MEDICAL ASSISTANCE MISSION

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 27 (JTA) -- An El Al Boeing 757 took off from Ben-Gurion Airport shortly after noon Tuesday, landed in Soviet Armenia and returned to Israel before midnight, making what is believed to be the first direct flight to the Soviet Union by Israel's national airline.

It was not a commercial flight, but a humanitarian mission organized by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

The aircraft arrived back in Israel late Tuesday evening carrying 71 victims of the earthquake that devastated Soviet Armenia last December.

They include patients, many of them children, who were treated by an Israeli medical relief team dispatched at the time of the disaster to Yerevan, the Armenian capital, where the plane landed Tuesday.

The Soviet patients will receive artificial limbs and further treatment at the Sheba Hospital in Tel Hashomer and the Rambam Hospital in Haifa, before returning home.

Aryeh Cooperstock, director of JDC's international development program, said the Soviets originally had planned to fly the patients to Switzerland.

But JDC prevailed on them to accept "international Jewish humanitarian aid" and the use of Israeli air transportation, said Cooperstock, who headed a JDC delegation aboard the chartered jet.

He said the Soviets were appreciative of the medical assistance Israel rendered immediately after the earthquake.

### Carrying Tons Of Clothing

The plane flown to the Soviet Union on Tuesday carried several tons of clothing purchased by the JDC to be distributed in Armenia, where relief is still needed.

During their visit to Israel, the patients are being accompanied by two Armenian doctors and four nurses, who will observe the treatment.

Preparations were under way Tuesday at the two Israeli hospitals to receive the patients. Armenian-speaking volunteers will assist the staff.

The pilot of the chartered plane, Capt. Avner Slepak, said prior to taking off from Ben-Gurion that this would be his first trip to the Soviet Union.

The Israeli rescue team that initially treated the earthquake victims last December flew to Switzerland, where it was picked up by a Soviet aircraft.

Likewise, Israeli army medics who flew to the Soviet Union on June 8 to help treat victims of the Trans-Siberian Railway disaster took an Israeli air force transport plane to Cyprus, where a Soviet plane picked them up.

While Tuesday's flight is believed to be the first by Israel's national carrier, it is not the first to fly to the Soviet Union from Israel.

Last November, Jewish Agency officials flew from Israel to Moscow aboard a private jet. In December, a Soviet airliner that had been hijacked to Israel was allowed to take off from Ben-Gurion Airport for its return trip home.

### SHAMIR REPORTEDLY PLANNING TALKS WITH PALESTINIANS IN TERRITORIES

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 27 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir will open talks with leading Palestinian figures from the West Bank and Gaza Strip immediately after the Likud Central Committee convenes in Tel Aviv on July 5, Ma'ariv reported Tuesday.

Shamir's purpose is to promote his peace initiative, which calls for, among other things, Palestinian elections in the territories.

The Palestinians reportedly will be represented by prominent activists of a variety of affiliations, including Al Fatah, the fighting arm of the Palestine Liberation Organization headed by Yasir Arafat.

Yossi Ben-Aharon, director general of the Prime Minister's Office, confirmed that preparations for the talks are under way and said they may start by the end of next week, Ma'ariv reported.

The newspaper quoted Ben-Aharon as saying, "The prime minister will have to find time to deal with the matter in an intensive way in order to promote the process and the elections initiative."

The Likud Central Committee, consisting of nearly 2,000 members, was called into session to discuss Shamir's peace plan, which is opposed by powerful elements in the party.

Shamir maintains that inasmuch as the plan has been approved by the Cabinet and the Knesset, the party forum can neither reject nor alter it.

### Green Light For Alternative Plan

According to Ma'ariv, technical preparations for Shamir's meetings with the Palestinians have been entrusted to Shmuel Goren, coordinator of government activities in the administered territories.

The newspaper said the talks would be conducted in strictest secrecy to facilitate frankness on both sides and to protect the Palestinian participants from pressure by those who represent other points of view.

It will be made clear to the Palestinians in advance that they will be meeting with the prime minister, Ma'ariv said.

This is to demonstrate that Israel respects them and to avoid situations that have arisen in the past, when the Palestinian side was humiliated because it was summoned to talks without being told whom it was meeting.

Meanwhile, Ha'aretz reported Tuesday that the defense establishment has decided to allow Assad Saftawi to go to Egypt.

Saftawi, a prominent Palestinian in the Gaza Strip, has an 11-point peace plan of his own, which he wants to present to PLO officials in Cairo.

He met with Goren on Monday at the office of Brig. Gen. Aryeh Shifman, head of the Gaza Strip civil administration, and was told he can make the trip, provided he does not engage in subversive activities.

He was instructed not to meet with element hostile to Israel.

**POLL FINDS U.S. SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL STABLE BUT LOWER THAN TWO YEARS AGO**  
By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, June 27 (JTA) -- American public support for Israel has held steady in the past year, despite the continuation of the Palestinian uprising, according to a poll commissioned by the American Jewish Committee.

But American support for Israel remains considerably lower than it was before the uprising began on Dec. 9, 1987.

The poll contains "good news" about the stabilization of attitudes, but also shows that "the uprising has taken its toll," said Ira Silverman, AJCommittee's executive vice president.

He spoke Tuesday at a news conference announcing the results of the survey, which was conducted in April. The Roper Organization has conducted the poll for AJCommittee since 1984, in order to "take the temperature of the American public" on issues concerning Israel and American Jewry said Silverman.

In the latest survey, a representative sample of approximately 2,000 Americans was questioned on its attitudes toward both Israel and American Jews.

The poll found that 36 percent of Americans side with Israel in the Middle East conflict, while 13 percent sympathize more with the Arab nations. In April 1988, by comparison, 37 percent favored Israel and 11 percent favored the Arabs.

The remainder in each case said they did not sympathize with either side, sympathized equally with both sides or did not know.

Sympathy for Israel was considerably higher in June 1986, when an AJCommittee poll found that 53 percent of respondents sided more with the Jewish state.

**Wariness Of Talks With PLO**

The latest poll also shows that a plurality of Americans, 42 percent, still believe Israel is correct in its refusal to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization. Only 32 percent said that position is wrong, a slight increase over the 27 percent of Americans who felt that way a year ago, before Yasir Arafat recognized Israel's right to exist.

But far fewer blacks than whites approve of Israel's refusal to talk with the PLO. In this year's poll, 25 percent of black respondents said that refusal was right, compared to 44 percent of whites surveyed.

Black Americans are also less apt to regard Israel as a reliable ally, the poll found. In most other issues regarding Israel and American Jewry, however, there were no significant differences between the responses of blacks and whites polled.

Among the poll's other significant findings:

- Forty-four percent said they considered Israel a reliable ally. A higher percentage said that Canada, West Germany and France were reliable allies, but fewer said that Egypt, Jordan, and Syria were.

- Respondents were divided over Israel's response to the uprising. Thirty percent said it has been too harsh, and 28 percent described it as "about right." A mere 8 percent said the Israeli response was too lenient.

- There appeared to be confusion over the appropriate solution to the conflict. Over half of the respondents, 56 percent, said they did not prefer any one solution.

Thirteen percent said Israel should return the administered territories to Jordan, 10 percent supported the retention of Israeli military control and local self-rule for Palestinians.

Only 9 percent said they favored the establishment of an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank and Gaza.

In questions on American Jewry, a plurality of 43 percent disagreed with the statement that American Jews are more loyal to Israel than the United States.

Only a very small number of respondents, 8 percent, felt the Jews had "too much power."

**POLICE SAY SETTLERS DELIBERATELY SHOT AND KILLED WEST BANK ARAB**  
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 27 (JTA) -- Police said Tuesday that they have "conclusive evidence" that a Jewish settler deliberately shot a Palestinian to death in Bani Zeit village in the West Bank last Friday.

Meir Berg, a Hebrew University employee who lives in Pesagot, near Ramallah in the West Bank, is in custody for the murder of Aziz Khamis Arar, 22, of Bani Zeit.

Also being held is Ariel Begun, a yeshiva student from Beit El settlement and the son of former Soviet Jewish refusenik Dov Begun, who immigrated to Israel.

Begun is accused of firing on houses in the Arab village and causing property damage. Both Berg and Begun carried M-16 rifles.

The two were among 11 settlers arrested Friday after a hike that ended in a clash with Arab stone-throwers and the death of Arar.

The police said on-site evidence gathered by the criminal investigation department, plus the eyewitness account of a minor who was a member of the hiking party, conclusively refuted the settlers' story that they opened fire only after they were stoned by Arab villagers and had their lives threatened.

Of the 11 arrested, four were released over the weekend and the other five are expected to be released shortly.

**3 KNESSET MEMBERS FACE PROBE**  
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 27 (JTA) -- An exceptional order by Attorney General Yosef Harish to interrogate three Knesset members about their meetings with Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat was applauded by the right-wing Tuesday and denounced by the left.

The Knesset members are Communist party members Meir Wilner and Tawfik Zayyad, and Abd-el Wahab Darousha of the Arab Democratic Party. Zayyad and Darousha are Arabs.

In addition, the attorney general plans to question Tamar Guzsansky, a leader of the Communist Party, about her meetings with various PLO representatives.

Israeli law forbids citizens from any form of contact with members of terrorist organizations, a category the government insists includes the PLO, despite Arafat's renunciation of terrorism in Algiers last year.

Harish's order came as Israeli peace activist Abie Nathan went on trial in a Ramla magistrate's court for violation of the law. Nathan, a private citizen, freely admitted having several meetings with Arafat and other PLO figures.

## E.C. WELCOMES ELECTION PLAN, BUT INSISTS ON ROLE FOR PLO

By David Kantor

MADRID, June 27 (JTA) -- The leaders of the 12 European Community member states said here Tuesday that they welcomed with "interest" Israel's peace initiative, but insisted that the Palestine Liberation Organization must participate in Middle East peace negotiations.

The policy statement, the first by the E.C. heads of state and government since their Venice Declaration of June 1980, was released at the end of a two-day summit conference.

It affirms, in fact, that the Venice Declaration remains the basis of European policy in the Middle East. That declaration recognized the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people, including self-determination.

But whereas the Venice document called for the PLO to be "associated" with the peace process, the document issued here demands its full participation.

Diplomatic sources said the change is an acknowledgment of the moderation shown by PLO leader Yasir Arafat.

The Middle East text was adopted as an annex to a political declaration on various issues.

It could not have come as anything but a disappointment to Israel, particularly after the strenuous lobbying by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Foreign Minister Moshe Arens in European capitals in recent weeks.

The two politicians had urged abandonment of the idea of an international conference in favor of the Israeli plan.

While the E.C. leaders gave qualified approval to the Israeli plan, they maintained that an international conference under U.N. auspices remains by far the better way to achieve peace in the region.

"Irritation" is expressed with Israel for its reluctance to accept the conference scenario.

Mark Eyskens, the new foreign minister of Belgium, told a news conference that the Europeans had expressed their anger over that issue.

## Welcome Palestinian Elections

While the European leaders welcomed the suggestion of Palestinian elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, they said the elections should be held in the context of a process aimed at a comprehensive, just and lasting settlement.

It should take place in the administered territories -- including East Jerusalem -- with adequate guarantees that it will be free and fair.

Moreover, the election process should not exclude any other solutions to the conflict, the E.C. leaders said.

The declaration calls on Israel to implement the provisions of the Fourth Geneva Convention on the protection of civilian populations in time of war, and to end repressive measures against the Palestinian population.

It appeals in particular for Israel to reopen Palestinian schools in the territories, which it shut down for security reasons.

The statement was issued only three days before Spain relinquishes the rotating chairmanship of the E.C. Council of Ministers to France on July 1.

French President Francois Mitterand is, if anything, even more devoted than most of his colleagues to the concept of an international conference.

## CCAR PUTS OFF A DECISION ON ADMISSION OF GAY RABBIS

By Don Canaan

The American Israelite

CINCINNATI, June 27 (JTA) -- After prolonged deliberation at the six-day centennial convention of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the issue of whether gay men and lesbians should be allowed to serve as Reform rabbis remained in the closet.

The CCAR's ad hoc committee on homosexuality, which has been studying the matter for three years, produced a report on the convention's final day.

But to the surprise of some delegates, it agreed unanimously not to introduce a resolution on homosexual ordination, according to the committee chairman, Rabbi Selig Salkowitz.

The committee did, however, recommend a process of dialogue and education for members and congregants. "This is not the time for parliamentary resolutions but for sensitive and considered study," Salkowitz said.

He said the committee's primary disagreement was over "the nature of homosexuality" -- whether it is a genetic or acquired trait, "and therefore a matter of personal choice."

Another question was the sanctity of homosexual marriages. "We struggled with the question of the reaction of Klal Yisrael," Salkowitz said.

"Would a support resolution be seen as a further wedge between Reform and non-Reform Judaism?" he asked.

## Concern Over Schism

"We should be concerned about the total Jewish community and not become a schism outside the mainstream of American Jewry," Salkowitz added.

Rabbi Yoel Kahn, spiritual leader of Sha'ar Zahav congregation in San Francisco, asked whether the Jewish community can affirm "the place of the homosexual Jew in the synagogue and the Jewish people."

Kahn, whose 425-member congregation maintains an outreach effort to gay men and lesbians, asked, "If the goal of Jewish life is to live in 'kedushah' (holiness), can we sanctify and bless homosexual relationships without compromising the integrity of our tradition?"

Leonard Kravitz, a professor of Midrash at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, the Reform seminary, said, "The notion of homosexual marriage is not just something which has just come up. It is discussed in the tradition. It is mentioned in the Midrash."

He quoted Rabbi Walter Jacob, chairman of the CCAR's Responsa Committee, as saying that Reform rabbis cannot officiate at the "marriage" of two homosexuals because "none of the elements of kedushah normally associated with marriage can be invoked for this relationship."

But HUC has "decided that homosexuality per se is no longer grounds for non-acceptance into the rabbinic program," Kravitz said.

HUC President Alfred Gottschalk disputed that interpretation at a later discussion group.

"Sexual orientation is one of a set of factors that are taken into consideration upon admission," he said.

"We do not admit homosexuals. We don't admit heterosexuals. We try to admit individuals on the basis of a total profile," he said, "and that is the college's policy."

## JEWISH GROUPS SPLIT OVER PROVISIONS OF CHILD-CARE BILL PASSED BY SENATE

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, June 27 (JTA) -- Orthodox Jewish groups are pleased with landmark child-care legislation adopted by the U.S. Senate last Friday.

But a number of other Jewish groups are concerned about provisions in the bill that allow federal funds to go to day-care programs operated by religious institutions.

The bill, which must pass the House of Representatives and be signed by President Bush before it becomes law, would provide funds for parents to send children, up to age 13, to day-care programs before or after the school day.

A provision added to the bill a few weeks ago would allow those funds to go to day-care programs run by sectarian institutions, such as synagogues, Hebrew day schools and yeshivot.

Agudath Israel of America and Torah Umesorah, the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools, welcomed the Senate's approval of the legislative package.

But several other Jewish groups fear that allowing federal funds to go to sectarian institutions would be tantamount to government endorsement of religion.

Groups that oppose the funding provision include the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith Women, Council of Jewish Federations, Na'amat Women, National Council of Jewish Women and Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Those groups are hoping that the House approves stricter language that would seek to prevent the appearance of government entanglement with religion. Differences in the two child-care bills would then be ironed out by a House-Senate conference committee.

### Change Was Made To Win Support

It is not clear whether Bush would sign the child-care bill as approved by the Senate. The president favored a Republican alternative to the bill passed Friday that would have reimbursed parents through tax credits. But the Senate defeated that proposal.

The bill passed Friday would provide \$1.2 billion in federal funds to be distributed annually to parents in the form of vouchers issued by state governments.

Jewish groups critical of the Senate bill had been largely supportive of it until the change on funding of sectarian institutions was made.

The non-Orthodox Jewish groups also oppose two other provisions in the Senate bill:

- One that would allow sectarian day-care providers to give preference in hiring to workers whose religious views are most compatible to the sponsoring facility.

- Another that would allow sectarian providers to give preference in admissions policies to children of parents who have a "pre-existing relationship" to the facility, such as membership in a synagogue sponsoring a day-care program.

In past cases involving the use of federal funds for sectarian educational purposes, the Supreme Court has upheld some uses and struck down others.

Sammie Moshenberg, director of NCJW's Washington office, called the constitutionality of such use of federal funds "up for grabs."

While Moshenberg sees no difference in

constitutionality of whether such funds go through parents or not, David Zwiebel, general counsel and director of government relations at Agudath Israel, made such a distinction.

Funds going directly from governments to sectarian programs, and not through parents, would raise "difficult questions," Zwiebel argued.

### Reform Schools Favor Aid

One Jewish group caught in the middle of the child-care debate was Conservative Judaism's 65-member Solomon Schechter Day School Association. It initially supported the Ford-Durenberger Amendment, through its membership in the Council for American Public Education, representing mainly parochial schools.

Robert Abramson, director of the education department at the United Synagogue of America, which oversees the Schechter association, said it initially "misread the implications of the amendment," and had to inform the Senate otherwise. He said his group has traditionally opposed federal aid to sectarian education programs.

By contrast, the Council of Reform Day Schools backs federal aid to sectarian child-care programs, said Erwin Shlachter, its president.

Shlachter, headmaster of the Rodeph Shalom School on New York's West Side, said the 15-member group believed that allowing federal aid to go exclusively to non-sectarian child-care programs "impinges on the right of people to practice their religion."

### SWEDEN WILL CONTINUE TO ALLOW THE KOSHER SLAUGHTER OF POULTRY

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, June 27 (JTA) -- Sweden will continue to allow the kosher slaughter of poultry, which was to have been banned there beginning Saturday.

The Swedish government decision was reported to the European Jewish Congress, the European branch of the World Jewish Congress, by Jan-Erik Levy, executive director of the Jewish community of Stockholm. He thanked the group for its help in the matter.

Concerned that a ban on shehita, or ritual slaughter, would limit the supply of kosher food to Sweden's estimated 16,000 Jews, Jewish organizations in Europe, Canada and North America intervened this spring to try to stop the ban from going into effect.

North American groups that contacted Swedish authorities on the matter include B'nai Brith Canada, the Rabbinical Council of America, Agudath Israel of America and the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, which supervises shehita in the United States.

Sweden first outlawed kosher slaughter of all animals in 1937, contending the practice was inhumane. European slaughterhouses generally follow the practice of stunning animals, in the belief that it imposes less suffering.

The 1937 law contained an exception allowing the kosher slaughter of poultry. But last September, the regulation was extended to include a ban on the slaughter of fowl.

Following complaints from Jewish groups in Sweden and abroad, the government agreed to wait until March to put the ban into effect.

In March, after several American Jewish organizations met with the Swedish consul in New York, the government again postponed the moratorium, this time until after June 30.