



SHAMIR ACKNOWLEDGES 'TENSION' WITH U.S. OVER PEACE PROCESS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Oct. 23 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir acknowledged Monday that Israel has "differences" with the United States over peace policy.

But the differences are "neither deep nor sharp" and can be overcome, Shamir told reporters after briefing the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on the situation.

Shamir conceded he had spoken to the Knesset members of "tension" in the U.S.-Israeli relationship, though he preferred to call it "an impression of tension" heightened by the intensive media coverage of U.S.-Israeli diplomacy.

"I don't feel it in my telephone conversations with the president," Shamir added.

His last publicly acknowledged telephone talk with President Bush was on Oct. 17. Shamir made the call shortly after he scathingly criticized American mediation efforts, in a talk to members of the Likud Knesset faction.

Shamir made clear to the Knesset panel Monday that he has no intention of postponing his scheduled visit to the United States next month in order to avoid possible U.S. pressure for concessions by Israel.

But in New York, there was speculation among Jewish leaders that Shamir might cancel the trip, if his differences with the Bush administration could not be resolved. (*See separate story.*)

Shamir's trip is officially to attend the annual General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations in Cincinnati. But he has an appointment to meet with President Bush at the White House on Nov. 15, and he is also scheduled to meet with Secretary of State James Baker.

Knesset sources said the prime minister sought to imbue his briefing with an atmosphere of conciliation and calm.

Laborites Could Vote Against Government

Shamir did not rise to the bait of polemics when Knesset member Yossi Sarid of the Citizens Rights Movement called him one of the last anachronistic icebergs in a climate of thaw.

The political community, nevertheless, is convinced that a coalition crisis is inevitable, given the sharp differences between Labor and Likud over negotiations with the Palestinians.

But observers are equally convinced that the storm will not break until Shamir returns from Washington.

Labor could have an opportunity to rock the coalition Tuesday, when the Knesset takes up three no-confidence motions from left-leaning factions.

The party gave its Knesset members freedom to vote their conscience on the measures, and there are some who would like the Labor faction to demonstratively fail to support the government. But that would only increase bitterness between the coalition partners.

In any event, the government is in no immediate danger. Some Laborites plan to absent themselves from the voting and others intend to support the government.

There will be no defections on the Likud side, and the motions are expected to be defeated with ease.

A similar wait-and-see atmosphere prevails in the Agudat Yisrael party, whose Executive resolved at a meeting Sunday night to make no specific recommendations to the party's governing Council of Sages whether to continue to participate in the coalition.

Agudah, like Labor, wants to see what emerges from Shamir's visit to Washington before deciding on the coalition's future.

JEWISH LEADERS DENY 'CRISIS' IN U.S. RELATIONS WITH ISRAEL

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Oct. 23 (JTA) -- The leaders of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations are trying to reassure the Jewish community that there is "no crisis" in U.S.-Israeli relations and that Israel's peace initiative is not in danger of falling apart.

This was the essence of the report made Monday to a closed-door consultation of the Conference of Presidents by Seymour Reich, its chairman, and Malcolm Hoenlein, its executive director, on a meeting they held with Secretary of State James Baker last week.

At the same time, there is speculation that unless Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and the Bush administration can resolve differences over Baker's proposals for Israeli-Palestinian talks, Shamir may not come to Washington as expected next month.

The Israeli prime minister would not want to engage in a face-to-face clash with either President Bush or American Jewish leaders, some of whom are known to be critical of the tough position he has adopted in recent weeks.

Reich and Hoenlein met with Baker at the State Department on Oct. 18, in the midst of a public dispute between Shamir and Baker. The State Department had criticized as "unhelpful" Shamir's statements the day before that the United States was trying to force Israel to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

In a telephone interview, Hoenlein denied that the Conference of Presidents had sought to meet with Baker in a crisis atmosphere. He said the session was part of the regular consultations held with Baker.

"We are concerned, of course," said Hoenlein. "But everybody understands the complexity of the issues."

Differences Within Jewish Community

Hoenlein said there is a "lot of distortion" of the positions on both sides. He rejected reports that Baker had threatened to wash his hands of Shamir's election proposal, claiming that there is no lessening of the U.S. commitment to the peace process.

Baker told the Jewish leaders that there is no stalemate, that there are opportunities for real progress, but that patience is required, Hoenlein reported.

The Jewish official conceded that there are serious differences between the Bush administration and Israel. But Israel's objections are not

"frivolous" since they are "life and death issues," Hoenlein said.

He said Israel and the United States continue to be in close contact. He pointed out that after the exchange of sharp public statements last week, Shamir spoke by telephone to both Bush and Baker, and Baker has talked with Arens several times since then.

Meanwhile, serious differences over the peace process are emerging in the American Jewish community, although most groups do not appear ready to go public yet, especially at a time when Israel's Labor Party appears to be muting its criticism of Shamir.

But Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, issued a statement last week accusing both Israel and the Palestinians of negativism.

"If the chance for peace that now exists is allowed to pass, if the transient, evanescent possibility of dialogue is not seized now, the result is likely to be far more terrible than the intifada," the Reform leader said.

Schindler urged Baker to continue his effort at "bridge-building," since "there never has been an Arab-Israel settlement without the active participation of the United States."

On the other side of the spectrum, Milton Shapiro, president of the Zionist Organization of America, wrote a letter to Baker, expressing support of Israeli opposition to direct or indirect recognition of the PLO.

Shapiro urged the Bush administration to "refrain from suggesting or implying that Israel should take steps which, directly or indirectly, compromise what it considers to be in its vital self-interests."

SUPREME COURT OVERTURNS BOOK BAN By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 23 (JTA) -- Freedom of speech got a major boost from Israel's High Court of Justice this week, when it ruled that the right to publish supersedes concerns for personal reputation.

The ruling, by Justice Aharon Barak, ended a year-long legal battle between journalist Arye Avneri and businessman-politician Avraham Shapira, a former Knesset member for the ultra-Orthodox Agudat Yisrael party.

Barak overturned a Tel Aviv District Court decision to ban publication of a book by Avneri, titled "The Masters," which purports to tell the story about Shapira.

The lower court had decided that Shapira would have to give his consent and was entitled to see a draft of the book prior to publication to scrutinize it for libel.

It had gone even further by demanding that Avneri submit the draft for the court to read.

But, said Barak in his 50-page ruling, "such a burden amounts to a sort of censorship which does not conform to the principles of freedom of speech."

He wrote that a "system of legal bans will jeopardize the functioning of the press, the literature and other forms of expression."

Moreover, Shapira, who owns the Carmel Carpet Corp., was ordered to pay the journalist \$2,500 for legal expenses.

Shapira may now appeal the judgment before a five-judge panel of the High Court. If he does not, the case will be returned to the district court, where it will be treated as a libel suit.

ARABS WHO FLED ISRAEL FOR LIBYA PREVENTED FROM RETURNING HOME By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Oct. 23 (JTA) -- Three Israeli Arab youths who immigrated to Libya several months ago want to come home but are having trouble because their passports were confiscated by the Libyan authorities.

The three young men are presently stranded in Cyprus. Mayor Moshe Peretz of Ramla promised their families he would try to cut through red tape to help them, Hadashot reported Monday.

The men come from the village of Jawarish, near Ramla, and are members of the large el-Jaroushi clan, from which the village takes its name.

The village was founded in the 1950s by agreement between the clan and Israeli security officials, with whom the el-Jaroushis always had a special relationship.

In 1974, young people began to leave the village to settle in Arab countries, where they thought there were job opportunities that could make them rich.

Libya, with its oil wealth, was a favored destination. But the three recent emigres were disappointed.

They told their families that they were arrested in Libya, interrogated, accused of being Zionist spies and expelled without their passports.

SOVIET-ISRAELI SCIENCE EXCHANGE SET By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Oct. 23 (JTA) -- Tel Aviv University and the University of Leningrad have agreed to cooperate in a specialized field of scientific research.

The agreement, announced here Monday, was signed at the end of a 12-day visit by two senior Soviet scientists, Professors Michael Bulanin and Gelb Denisov.

Both belong to the department of molecular spectroscopy at the University of Leningrad. They had expressed interest in an association with Tel Aviv University and got an invitation from its department of geophysics and planetary sciences.

The agreement provides for Israeli professors to come to Leningrad for joint experiments with the Soviet scientists.

The first will be Professors Yuri Meckler and Akiva Bar-Nun, who expect to leave soon for the Soviet Union.

The University of Leningrad is world famous for its work in molecular spectroscopy, which is the examination of optical images produced by molecules.

KNESSET SALUTES HEBREW LANGUAGE By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Oct. 23 (JTA) -- The Knesset began its winter session Monday with a festive salute to the Hebrew language.

It was in honor of "Hebrew Language Year," which is being celebrated in all Israeli schools.

"We don't fully appreciate the miracle we have lived through -- the revival of our ancient language," Education Minister Yitzhak Navon told the packed chamber.

The special session was attended by President Chaim Herzog, members of the Hebrew Language Academy and relatives of Eliezer Ben-Yehuda, the father of modern Hebrew.

GERMAN RIGHT-WING PARTY SUCCESS ACTIVATING FIGHT BY MAINSTREAM

By David Kantor

BONN, Oct. 23 (JTA) -- The latest electoral success of the far right-wing Republican Party appears to have galvanized mainstream politicians.

All of the major parties were vowing Monday to fight back against the extremists, whom many call neo-Nazi.

The ruling Christian Democratic Union reiterated its pledge never to form a coalition with the Republicans, who are led by a former Waffen SS officer, Franz Schoenhuber.

The nature of the party makes the results of Sunday's local elections in the federal state of Baden-Wurtemberg all the more disturbing.

The Republicans not only improved on their generally good performance in last month's North Rhine-Westphalia elections; they scored most heavily in the large cities, where the old established political parties are strongest.

The Republicans won 9.5 percent of the popular vote in Stuttgart; 6 percent in Karlsruhe; more than 10 percent in Mannheim; 12.5 percent in Pforzheim; 7.5 percent in Freiburg; and 7.2 percent in Ulm.

Those returns seem to reflect a successful switch of strategy by the Bavarian-based Republicans, whose original power base was among disaffected rural voters.

Still exploiting popular discontent, they have turned to the urban dwellers fearful of housing and job competition from foreigners, including ethnic German emigres from Eastern Europe and, most recently, East German refugees.

Although he has astutely avoided gutter anti-Semitism in his campaigns, Schoenhuber has been at odds with the West German Jewish community and particularly its feisty leader, Heinz Galinski.

Schoenhuber has stated publicly that the German Jews constitute "the fifth occupying power," the others being the United States, Britain, France and the Soviet Union.

ISRAEL DENIES IT ASKED U.S. GROUPS TO LOBBY AGAINST ARMENIAN MEMORIAL

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 23 (JTA) -- Both Israel and major American Jewish organizations are publicly shying away from a brewing controversy over a U.S. Senate resolution to establish a memorial day for Armenian victims of Turkish genocide said to have occurred more than 70 years ago.

But reports in the Israeli press indicate that, in pursuit of improved diplomatic relations with Turkey, Israel may have quietly asked influential American Jewish organizations to lobby against the measure.

The Senate Judiciary Committee adopted the resolution by a vote of 8-6 on Oct. 17. It calls for April 24, 1990, to be designated as a "National Day of Remembrance of the 75th Anniversary of the Armenian Genocide of 1915-1923." The resolution now goes to the full Senate.

Israeli Foreign Ministry officials have refused to confirm or deny news reports that Israel asked American Jewish groups to step in. But they have confirmed that the Israeli Embassy in Washington is "studying" the situation.

In response to the publicity, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir asserted here Monday that Israel

would not try to block the bill, which was introduced by Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.).

Israel's official position of non-involvement was echoed in New York by spokespersons for several major Jewish organizations active on Capitol Hill, including the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and a number of its constituents.

These groups denied that they had been asked by Israel to lobby on the issue.

Turkey Ready To Improve Ties

But the Israeli newspaper Ha'aretz reported Sunday that Turkey is ready to raise the level of diplomatic representation in Israel if Jewish organizations in the United States become active against an Armenian memorial day.

Ankara downgraded relations with Israel in 1981. The two countries presently are represented on the charge d'affaires level. Nevertheless, Turkey is the only Moslem country other than Egypt that has diplomatic relations with Israel.

The feeling among observers in Israel is that, despite official denials, Israeli officials are more sensitive to the desires of the Turkish government to block an Armenian memorial day in the United States than to those of the Armenian people to have one enacted.

Israel views Turkey as a possible bridge to the Moslem world. Last week, Turkey was the only Moslem country to vote with Israel in the annual Arab challenge to Israel's status in the United Nations.

But open support for the Turkish position could be embarrassing for Israel and the American Jewish community, in light of Jewish sensitivity to the subject of genocide and in view of the fact that Congress observes an annual memorial day for the Holocaust, of which Jews were the primary victims.

An editorial Sunday in the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot called Israel's reported attempts to appease the Turks "stupid."

"What has been inflicted upon the Armenians in 1915 certainly belongs in the category of genocide, a terrible tragedy which the Jewish people, more than any other people in the world, must be sensitive toward," the editorial said.

Administration Opposes Bill

But some officials at American Jewish organizations said privately that passage of the Dole resolution "would not be helpful" to either U.S.-Turkish relations or Israeli-Turkish relations.

The slaughter of Armenians living in Turkey took place from 1915 to 1923 when, according to the Armenian community, more than 1.5 million Armenians living in Turkey were said to have been massacred by Turks. But Turkey considers the charge of genocide to be libelous.

In Washington last week, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler told reporters that the Bush administration opposes the Dole resolution.

Tutwiler explained that although the administration "is sensitive to the tragic suffering" of the Armenians, "we are equally mindful of our close relationship and strong friendship with Turkey and of the differing views of how the terrible events of that period should properly be characterized."

(JTA staff writer Allison Kaplan in New York contributed to this report.)

JEWISH OLD-TIMERS RECALL QUAKES OF OTHER TIMES AND PLACES

By Peggy Isaak Gluck

Northern California Jewish Bulletin

SAN FRANCISCO, Oct. 23 (JTA) -- At 89, some of Helen Scozzafava's memories have faded, but one of them has stayed intact: what happened to her, her brothers and her sisters on April 18, 1906.

That memory rolled back last Tuesday as San Francisco was hit by another major earthquake.

In 1906, when the 8.3 quake occurred, Scozzafava was 5 years old.

"We were living on Fulton Street," recalled the current resident of the Jewish Home for the Aged in San Francisco, noting that her family, including six brothers and sisters, resided behind a furniture store.

During the early morning rumble, her mother "was going from the kitchen to the store." She was killed instantly. Her father, Adolph Kornfield, was injured seriously and taken to a local hospital, where he remained for quite some time.

Care of the children was taken over by a bachelor uncle who took Scozzafava, her sister Rose, and her three brothers (Harry, Sam and Martin, "who slept through the whole thing") to their aunt's house.

"My sister put us in a shirt -- that's all we had. Then we went by horse and buggy to my aunt's," recalled the spry nonagenarian.

Sadly, her great-aunt and uncle were unable to care for the five children, so, within a day, they were taken to the Pacific Hebrew Orphan Asylum, the Jewish orphanage in San Francisco.

Although the agency's building was damaged in the 1906 quake, it still took in scores of children who had met a fate like Scozzafava's.

Eleven Years At Orphanage

Scozzafava's father survived and returned to being a junk dealer, but it wasn't until years later that he was able to care for his children again. He did visit them quite frequently, however.

Scozzafava spent 11 years at the orphanage. "I had my education there, and went to services there." During that time, she attended Fremont Elementary School and then to High School of Commerce. She also attended services at Congregation Beth Israel on Geary Boulevard.

Scozzafava wasn't the only resident of the home to remember other quakes.

Edith Weigert was also at dinner Tuesday when the 7.0 earthquake struck at 5:04, but her memories took her back to a different earthquake, one in the "early 1940s."

It "was just as big," contended the 90-year-old.

After she and her late husband had fled Nazi Germany for La Paz, Bolivia, Weigert had become principal of a school, many of whose students were children of Jewish refugees from Central Europe.

She was sitting at the school's sandbox with the children, she recalled. "I told them, 'Don't move the box, I'm getting seasick.'"

What she actually was feeling wasn't the children's antics but what she called a terramoto (earthquake in Spanish).

Stanley Grant, meanwhile, reminisced about 1945, when he was living in Montpellier in southern France.

It was 2 p.m., he remembered, when he fell

from the couch to the floor as a quake rocked the region and knocked dishes out of kitchen cabinets.

Grant will always remember the date of last week's quake, because he wasn't just eating dinner with the other residents of the old age home, he was celebrating his 80th birthday.

"I felt the table shake. I held onto the table," he said.

There was no question that it was an earthquake, he added, so he held on real tight, not wanting to fall again, 44 years after his first tumble.

SUKKOT TOURISTS IN JERUSALEM PROVE FEAR OF INTIFADA IS OVER

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Oct. 23 (JTA) -- The Sukkot-Simchat Torah holiday just ended appears to have been the most successful for Jerusalem in the nearly two years since the Palestinian uprising began.

Although tourism figures and hotel occupancy rates for the holiday period are not yet available, there is a strong feeling in the hotel business and among shopkeepers and restaurateurs that the Jewish public in Israel and abroad has begun to take the intifada in stride.

They are coming to Jerusalem without the fear and hesitation so evident in the past two years.

Many overseas visitors joined the thousands of Israeli pilgrims and holiday-makers who poured into the city throughout the Hol Hamoed, the intermediate days of the festival.

Orthodox Jews were particularly prominent among the foreign tourists. They insisted on eating their meals in the outdoor sukkot despite blustery weather.

The Religious Affairs Ministry, local synagogues, yeshivot, musical groups and theaters have to be credited for the rich religious and cultural programs they laid on for the visitors.

But all was not quiet. Intifada-related incidents continued undiminished in the capital, especially the nightly arson against Jewish-owned vehicles and the rash of punctured tires.

There was a serious outburst of violence near the Old City on Oct. 16, right after Sukkot began.

On Monday, police massed near the Temple Mount to prevent a demonstration being held by Moslem worshipers from turning rowdy.

According to officials of the Wakf, the custodians of the Islamic shrines, the rally was to protest an attempt by Jewish zealots known as the Temple Mount Faithful to plant a rock on the Temple Mount, which they claimed was to be the cornerstone of the "Third Temple."

The attempt was easily thwarted by police. But the Wakf official said the demonstrators wanted "to show that the entire Mount, all 141 dunams of it, is ours, belongs to our mosques and holy places." A dunam equals one-quarter acre.

Religious Affairs Minister Zevulun Hammer called for forbearance on both sides.

He said that Israel behaved with greater consideration toward the Moslems "than any state on Earth would" with respect to the Temple Mount.

"We don't want a national conflict to become a religious conflict," he observed. "We don't want needlessly to provoke 800 million people."