

PRESIDENT SAYS HE'S 'NOT SURE' SHAMIR IS COMING TO WASHINGTON

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Nov. 7 (JTA) -- President Bush appeared to suggest Tuesday that Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir will have, to be even more forthcoming on U.S. proposals for an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue if he wants a White House meeting next week.

Shamir had been expected to meet with Bush on Nov. 15, the day before he addresses the annual General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations in Cincinnati.

But when Bush was asked at a White House news conference if he will meet with Shamir, the president responded that he was "not sure" that Shamir is coming to Washington. He added that he "certainly is willing to consider it."

The Israeli Embassy here has not yet received confirmation from Jerusalem that Shamir is coming to Washington, said Ruth Yaron, the embassy spokeswoman.

Bush did praise Shamir for making a "real effort to work out support" for Secretary of State James Baker's five-point proposal aimed at an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue in Cairo.

But then the president added a caveat: "I would like to feel that a meeting would be held and then it would be constructive," he said. "We'd have something positive to talk about."

U.S. BLOCKS SECURITY COUNCIL MEASURE DEPLORING ISRAELI ACTION IN BEIT SAHUR By Allison Kaplan

UNITED NATIONS, Nov. 7 (JTA) -- Calling the resolution "one-sided" and "unbalanced," the United States vetoed a Security Council measure Tuesday that would have criticized Israel's treatment of a West Bank village whose residents refused to pay taxes.

That all of the remaining 14 countries on the Security Council voted in favor of the resolution illustrated that Israel's recent tentative steps toward negotiating with the Palestinians have so far failed to win the Jewish state any additional support in the United Nations forum.

Tuesday's measure focused on Israel's response to a tax strike by the village of Beit Sahur. In a tax-collection operation that took place from Sept. 20 to Oct. 31, Israeli authorities confiscated approximately \$1.5 million in cash and property from the 320 residents who had not paid taxes.

During the operation, the town was cut off from most visitors, curfews were imposed and telephone lines were cut.

On the final day of October, the Israel Defense Force ended its crackdown on the town and asserted that it had accomplished its goal there.

The Arab bloc requested the Security Council meeting, in order to consider a resolution declaring that the council "strongly deplores" actions by Israel in the West Bank, including "the siege of towns, the ransacking of the homes of inhabitants" and "the confiscation of their property and valuables."

The measure, which was debated for two

days, would have called on Israel to return the seized property and also would have requested "on-site monitoring of the present situation in the Palestinian territory" by the U.N. secretary-general.

Throughout the day Monday, Security Council members sat silently as Israel was repeatedly chastised by Arab representatives, not only in regard to Beit Sahur, but for its overall policies in the administered territories and its refusal to heed previous Security Council resolutions.

PLO Allowed To Address Council

Zehdi Terzi, head of the Palestine Liberation Organization's U.N. observer mission, was invited to participate in the debate, over the objections of the United States.

Terzi argued that the people of Beit Sahur had been forced to fund their own occupation and that "taxation without liberation is tyranny."

He followed with a long list of charges of Israeli wrongdoing in the administered territories, including the unjustified killing and imprisonment of Palestinian residents.

Israeli Ambassador Johanan Bein, in his speech, countered Terzi's charges with graphic descriptions of inter-Palestinian violence and criticized the fact that mention of Arab-on-Arab clashes in the territories had been omitted from the resolution under consideration.

While the resolution "purports to express concern about the Palestinians," Bein said, it "ignores completely the premeditated and cold-blooded murder of 150 Palestinians at the hands of the PLO."

Instead, he contended, the resolution "directs all its fury on entirely legal measures, such as tax collection."

Under international law, Bein said, Israel is entitled to collect taxes in Beit Sahur, and furthermore, "the taxes levied in the territories are used solely to finance the provision of services for the Palestinian residents of Judea, Samaria and Gaza, such as health, education and welfare."

Against 'One-Sided Resolutions'

In an explanation of the U.S. veto, Ambassador Thomas Pickering said that "one-sided resolutions," such as the Beit Sahur measure, and the debates that accompany them "exacerbate tensions and distract the parties from the critical issues that need to be addressed in the region."

Tuesday's measure was the third Security Council resolution in the past year condemning Israel that the United States has vetoed.

But the United States abstained from, and thereby allowed the Security Council to pass, resolutions this summer criticizing Israel for deporting Palestinians from the territories.

Recognizing this, Pickering said that the United States has "accepted passage of resolutions on these issues when they have met the tests of balance and fairness."

Ironically, one of the sponsors of the draft resolution condemning Israel was the nation of Ethiopia, which, on the same day the debate began, restored full diplomatic ties with the Jewish state that it severed in 1967. The other sponsors were Algeria, Colombia, Malaysia, Nepal, Senegal and Yugoslavia.

**MASS JEWISH EXODUS FROM ETHIOPIA
UNLIKELY FOR NOW, OFFICIALS SAY**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 7 (JTA) -- Officials of the Israeli government and the Jewish Agency for Israel have put a damper on expectations that the immigration of Ethiopian Jews will flow swiftly now that Ethiopia has re-established diplomatic relations with Israel.

Uri Gordon, head of the agency's Immigration and Absorption Department, warned Tuesday that the euphoria that swept the Ethiopian community here following the announcement in Addis Ababa last weekend may be premature.

That feeling could turn to bitter disappointment when it becomes clear that the process of bringing the estimated 15,000 to 18,000 Jews in Ethiopia to Israel will take time, Gordon said.

He observed that the profound longing of Ethiopian Jews here for reunification with family members left behind has created tension within their community.

Expectations of speedy reunions were heightened by an unconfirmed report in the International Herald Tribune this week that the Swedish Embassy in Addis Ababa was issuing visas to Ethiopian Jews to facilitate their departure.

Hopes also were boosted by a statement made Monday by a high-ranking Ethiopian official in Jerusalem that "family reunion" is a principle accepted by his government.

The speaker was Kessa Kebede, a member of the Ethiopian Central Committee and a relative and senior adviser of the Ethiopian president, Col. Mengistu Haile Mariam.

Many Jews Reported Homeless

But Gordon emphasized that reunification will take a long time. He said there are no plans for an airlift, such as the one employed in Operation Moses, the clandestine effort that brought more than 10,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel in the winter of 1984-85.

In New York, the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry also expressed doubt that there would be an imminent surge in immigration of Ethiopian Jews to Israel. It said an agreement on the subject between the two governments would likely require lengthy negotiation.

The conference also pointed out that most of the Jews remaining in Ethiopia are living in areas controlled by anti-government rebel forces, such as the Tigre People's Liberation Front. Many Jews in those areas are currently homeless refugees, wandering from village to village in search of food and security, the group said.

Jonathan Giesberg, president of the conference, urged the world Jewish community to extend financial and medical assistance to Ethiopian Jews who have been driven from their homes. "It would be a tragedy indeed if Jews who could have been helped to survive die in what may be the last months before they can go home to Israel," he said in a statement.

Gordon of the Jewish Agency said that while all statements on the subject should be framed with caution, there is no reason not to talk publicly about the plans and prospects of absorbing a new influx of Ethiopian Jews when they do arrive.

He said he is, in fact, anxious for this aspect to be aired at every level, so that practical arrangements can be made for a smooth absorption process.

Jewish Agency officials stress that the Ethiopian newcomers will be housed at first in absorption centers, which have been largely eliminated in favor of "direct absorption" for immigrants from other countries.

Jews from Ethiopia often require an initial period of close assistance to familiarize themselves with life in Israel.

Attempt To Court 'Jewish Lobby'

Kebede was remarkably frank at his joint news conference here Monday with Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu.

He said his country's decision to re-establish diplomatic ties with Israel, which it broke at the time of the Yom Kippur War 16 years ago, was related to Israel's "strong and close connections with the Jewish lobby in the United States."

"We see possibilities in this," said Kebede, who studied at the Hebrew University in the 1960s and speaks Hebrew fluently.

His remarks confirmed the view of Africa experts who ascribe Mengistu's move to a desire for Western aid against the Eritrean and Tigrean insurgencies, which have plunged Ethiopia into two civil wars.

Kebede denied knowledge of a New York Times story that Israeli military aides are already advising the Ethiopian armed forces.

Israeli Foreign Ministry sources also denied the report.

Netanyahu, however, confirmed that an Israeli diplomatic team would leave for Addis Ababa shortly, to prepare for the reopening of the Israeli Embassy there.

TRIAL OF TANKER CAPTAIN POSTPONED

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 7 (JTA) -- The trial of an Israeli tanker captain accused of spilling oil in the Gulf of Suez opened Tuesday in an Egyptian maritime court at E-Tur, but was promptly postponed until Dec. 5.

The judge said he needed time to study the many documents generated by the investigation.

The tanker Nyuta was arrested by the Egyptian authorities on Oct. 21. It was released last Friday on President Hosni Mubarak's orders.

But the vessel and crew remained at the East Zaid Bay oil port, waiting for its master, Capt. Zvi Yosef, to resume command. The Egyptian authorities placed Yosef in custody of the Israeli Embassy in Cairo over the weekend.

Israeli officials are trying to arrange for him to return to Eilat with his ship, on the strength of guarantees that he will appear in the Egyptian court next month.

2 ISRAELI SOLDIERS KILLED IN ARIZONA

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 7 (JTA) -- Two Israeli soldiers were killed and two others were injured in an accident at a joint Israel Defense Force-U.S. Army weapons development test in Arizona on Monday, the IDF announced here.

One of the injured soldiers sustained medium injuries, and the other was only slightly hurt, the IDF said Tuesday. The IDF and the U.S. Army are jointly investigating the accident, a military spokesman said.

Israel Radio said the weapon being tested was a jointly produced Howitzer, which exploded during the test.

LIKUD MAY FORFEIT ELECTORAL REFORM TO MEET DEMANDS OF ORTHODOX PARTY

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 7 (JTA) -- A reported promise by the Likud bloc to oppose electoral reform and human rights bills in the Knesset, in order to assuage ultra-Orthodox concerns, has outraged its chief coalition partner, the Labor Party, as well as the left-wing opposition.

The pledge is part of a package of concessions that Likud seems willing to make to keep the Agudat Yisrael party from leaving the governing coalition.

Likud is determined to prevent the Agudah from joining a new, narrowly based government, headed by the Labor Party.

Aware of this, the Agudah's governing Council of Sages had ordered the party to quit the government if its demands were not met in two weeks.

Two Likud ministers, Moshe Nissim and Ronni Milo, have been negotiating with Agudah politicians since the ultimatum was given. They seem ready to abandon electoral reform and human rights, and to accede to the Agudah's religious demands.

Those include more generous subsidies for Orthodox schools, tighter enforcement of Sabbath observance and the elimination of "lewd" advertisements that offend the pious.

But there is still no final word from the Agudah's political and spiritual leaders whether indeed Likud's concessions are sufficient to keep the party in the government.

Up until now, electoral reform has been as strongly supported by Likud as it has been by Labor, though fiercely opposed by smaller parties such as the Agudah.

Labor Will Push For Reform

Labor Knesset members announced they would introduce the reform legislation as a private members bill. They said it would be identical to the measure drafted recently by a committee of Likud and Labor ministers.

The committee was created under the terms of the Likud-Labor coalition agreement of December 1988, on which the present unity government is based.

It recommended that part of the next Knesset be elected on a regional basis and part under the old system of proportional representation.

The idea is to create a measure of personal contact between legislators and their constituents, which is lacking under the proportional representation system.

Israeli voters now cast ballots for party lists, not individuals. The candidates on the list are selected internally by each party.

Whether or not they get a Knesset seat is determined by the order in which their names appear on the ballot and the percentage of the popular vote their party wins.

This system, which has prevailed since the state was founded, has prevented any single party from accumulating an absolute governing majority. Israel has always been governed by coalitions beset with political and ideological differences.

Moreover, the system has given inordinate political clout to the religious parties, which collectively rarely win more than 15 percent of the vote.

But they are able to dictate terms to the government, since neither Labor nor Likud has

ever amassed enough popular votes to govern without them.

Still another reform measure recommended by the Likud-Labor committee was to raise the number of votes required by a party to enter the Knesset. Since it would automatically eliminate the many splinter factions on both left and right, it is opposed by most of them.

But while Likud recognizes the urgent need for such reforms, it seems more concerned in the short run to appease the Agudah. The reason is the shaky condition of its coalition with Labor, which could break up soon because of profound differences over the peace process.

AUTHORS CLAIM WALLENBERG FAMILY ASSISTED NAZIS IN BANKING DEALS

By Henrietta Boas

AMSTERDAM, Nov. 7 (JTA) -- Two Dutch historians have published a book charging that the family of Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg collaborated with the Nazis during World War II, including the purchase of assets seized from Jews.

According to the authors, Gerard Aalders and Cees Wiebes, Wallenberg's arrest and subsequent disappearance may have been an act of revenge by the Russians for his family's extensive economic ties with the Nazi regime in Germany.

Their theory was the subject of television broadcasts in Holland and Sweden on Sunday night, to mark the publication in both countries of their book, "Business At Any Price -- The Wallenbergs."

The book, the culmination of 10 years of research, discusses the transactions of the Enskilda Bank owned by Raoul's distant relatives, Jakob and Marcus Wallenberg, two brothers.

The bank allegedly made large-scale purchases of debentures and shares in certain American enterprises, which Jews in Holland and elsewhere in Nazi-occupied Europe had been forced to hand over.

The bank knew full well that this was stolen property, the authors charge.

Financed Atom Bomb Research

To "cover" themselves, the bankers asked for a "bona fide" declaration that the assets were owned by the seller before May 10, 1940, the date of the German invasion of Holland.

The Enskilda Bank helped the Nazis in other ways, the authors claim, by assuming "pseudo-ownership" of foreign subsidiaries of I.G. Farben and Bosch, which were vital to the German war effort, to prevent their confiscation by the Allies.

They charge that the Swedish bank also financed Nazi research for an atomic bomb.

The authors say their research was prompted by the chance reading of an article in a Swedish journal by a Professor Gunnar Carlsson, who urged an investigation of the Wallenbergs' activities during the war, when Sweden was neutral.

Carlsson, who appeared on the television broadcast, did not believe the matter would ever be fully aired because the "vested interests," namely bankers, diplomats and politicians, were too powerful.

Raoul Wallenberg nevertheless remains acclaimed for his humanitarianism and courage.

Arrested by the Red Army when it entered Budapest in 1945, Wallenberg is credited with saving tens of thousands of Hungarian Jews from deportation by giving them the protection of the Swedish mission.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:

**JEWISH TV CELEBRITY IS A FAVORITE
IN BRAZILIAN ELECTIONS NEXT WEEK**
By Eliezer Strauch

SAO PAULO, Brazil, Nov. 7 (JTA) -- When citizens in Brazil, the world's largest Catholic country, go to the polls next Wednesday to choose their first freely elected president in 30 years, they will find a Jew among the candidates with the brightest chances of winning the contest.

Media tycoon and TV entertainer Silvio Santos, 54, the son of Sephardic Jews from Greece, announced his decision to run for Brazil's highest office only two weeks before the polls open.

Santos, whose real name is Senor Abravanel, enjoys wide popularity as a media personality and holds a good chance of placing himself well ahead of about two dozen other competitors for the same office. His sudden candidacy has thrown a monkey wrench into the electoral trends forecast up till now by public opinion surveys.

It is estimated that Santos' growing favoritism among working-class voters will provide him with enough votes to make runoff elections, which will take place in December if none of the candidates wins an absolute majority next week.

Santos, a self-made man who started as a street peddler and magician, and rose to become an incredibly successful TV personality, is the son of a former Jewish dockworker from Salonika who immigrated to Brazil at the turn of the century.

Father Spoke Yiddish And Ladino

The late Moises Abravanel was, in his days, a well-known figure around the port of Rio de Janeiro, who eked out a living working as an interpreter and tourist guide. He was fluent in about a dozen languages, including Yiddish, which he spoke as freely as Ladino, the language spoken in the Abravanel's Sephardic household.

The youngest of Abravanel's four sons and daughters became a hit among poor people, maids and hard-luck laborers, who every Sunday packed the theater hall in the outskirts of Sao Paulo where he ran a weekly, 12-hour TV program whose chief attraction was the profuse distribution of sizable prizes to contestants from the audience.

Unlike other media stars in Brazil, who were mostly opposed to the oppressive military regime that ran the country at the time, Santos curried favor with the army brass, a practice that eventually won him one of the most coveted political plums: the operation of a TV network.

SBT, the network founded 10 years ago by Santos, is now Brazil's second largest.

As a presidential candidate, Santos has so far not shown much concern with winning the Jewish vote, as he concentrates his campaign on winning a more sizable share of the vote.

He declares himself proud of his Jewish heritage, but keeps very loose ties with Judaism. He married a practicing Catholic in a civil ceremony, and little is known about the upbringing of the couple's six children.

In an interview with the Jewish magazine Shalom, Santos said that he never goes to synagogue, but does fast on Yom Kippur "to keep God appeased."

In fact, the Jewish community of Brazil, with its estimated 200,000 members, has little numerical weight in an electorate of 86 million registered voters. It pales by comparison with the community of Arab immigrants and descendants,

thought to number about 2 million strong.

Yet Jews are seen as potentially influential on public opinion because of the key positions held by members of the community in all fields of life, notably in the media, business, industry and academic life.

Candidates Court Jewish Vote

An indication of the respect in which candidates hold the Jewish community is the fact that all of them, except two of the left-wing candidates agreed to appear at the Hebraica Club in Sao Paulo, to answer questions on matters of specific Jewish interest.

One of the candidates who had a frank discussion with Jewish voters at Hebraica was Communist candidate Roberto Freire, who surprised the audience with his moderate opinions on the Middle East conflict.

Another participant was Fernando Collor de Mello, now the front-runner in the opinion polls.

In front of an enthusiastic Jewish audience, Collor de Mello went as far as claiming a remote Jewish ancestry and stating that if he is elected, he will never recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization or a Palestinian state.

But later, under pressure from the Arab lobby, which claims to speak on behalf of hundreds of thousands of voters, Collor de Mello withdrew his earlier statements, claiming he had been misquoted by the press.

All candidates presented their views on the Middle East in a series of interviews with the Shalom monthly. All adopted a cautious stance and spoke vaguely of their concern for peace in the Middle East, without taking sides on matters such as the PLO and a Palestinian state.

The sole exception was Freire, the Communist, who proposed a demilitarized Palestinian state to be created alongside Israel, on the basis of proper security arrangements.

A Privileged Community

In Brazil, one cannot speak of a unified Jewish vote, since most members of the community take various and sometimes contradictory stands on most political issues.

Anti-Semitism in the classic sense is almost unknown to Brazilians, who pride themselves on being the greatest interracial democracy in the world, with 140 million inhabitants who represent a wide cross section of ethnic groups that emigrated from all corners of the planet.

Although Brazil is in the grip of hyperinflation that approaches 50 percent monthly Jews belonging to the middle class are still mostly well-to-do and feel somehow protected from economic woes.

Social gaps are dramatically striking in Brazil, but most Jews are on the more privileged side of society, with cases of poverty almost unknown in the community.

The sole "Jewish issue" to pop up during the electoral campaign concerns the publication of a series of books aimed at denying and distorting the true facts of the Holocaust. The books have surfaced in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, which harbors a large community of former pro-Nazi Germans, including some suspected war criminals.

Although the Jewish Federation in Rio Grande do Sul has requested that the publishing house and its books be outlawed, most candidates, including Santos, have reacted cautiously, claiming that such action would involve difficult questions concerning free speech and other civil rights.