

HISTORIC FLIGHT FROM MOSCOW BRINGS 46-MEMBER SOVIET CHESS TEAM TO ISRAEL

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 26 (JTA) — A Soviet commercial airliner landed at Ben-Gurion Airport last Thursday night carrying a 46-member Soviet chess team competing in the European chess championship tournament that opened in Haifa on Friday.

Though reportedly the first direct commercial flight from Moscow to Israel, it did not inaugurate regular air service between the two countries.

That is expected to begin in January, jointly by El Al, the Israeli national airline, and its Soviet counterpart, Aeroflot.

Some details still have to be settled between the two carriers. One is the fare.

Aeroflot reportedly wants to charge \$650 for a direct flight from Moscow or Leningrad to Tel Aviv. El Al wants a cheaper fare, as low as \$500.

The Soviet chess team is among 224 players from 26 countries participating in the match, which is taking place at the Dan Carmel Hotel. Also competing are teams from Poland, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria which, like the Soviet Union, have either limited or no diplomatic relations with Israel.

The absence of formal ties with Moscow may have been why the Aeroflot pilot, Capt. Oleg Agalov, flew his Tupelov-134 jet out of Israel shortly after landing.

He told Israeli reporters that some diplomatic problems did not allow him to stay in Israel overnight. He had to fly to Athens instead.

MOST AMERICAN JEWS SUPPORT ISRAEL'S PEACE POLICY, SHAMIR SAYS UPON RETURN

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 26 (JTA) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, returning Friday from his visit to the United States, claimed that most American Jews support his peace policies.

He was enthusiastically seconded in that view by Seymour Reich, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, who held a news conference in Jerusalem last Thursday.

Shamir told reporters at Ben-Gurion Airport that "the dissenters are a voluble minority."

He was referring to the 41 prominent American Jews who signed a letter to him asserting that there are "profound differences" in the American Jewish community over the policies he is pursuing.

The letter was presented to Shamir on Nov. 16, hours before he addressed the largest annual gathering of Jewish leaders in North America, the 58th General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations in Cincinnati.

Reich said "the overwhelming majority" of the American Jewish community backs Israel's policies.

He characterized Shamir's Nov. 15 talk at the White House with President Bush as "frank and warm," saying the president reaffirmed the strong alliance between the United States and Israel.

Also, according to Reich, the visit clarified

any doubts Bush may have had about the Israeli government's commitment to the peace process. He implied that the administration considers the next move up to the Palestinians.

Clarifying South Africa Policy

Reich maintained that Shamir's visit helped clear the air with respect to Israeli ties with South Africa, a matter of concern in Washington and in the American Jewish community.

He said that while Israel's commitment not to renew contracts with South Africa after they expire in 1992 may not satisfy those who demand an immediate break, Shamir's assurances had a positive effect.

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive director of the Conference of Presidents, cited in that connection the softening of a motion on the subject by the Congressional Black Caucus, which he said made it "more supportive" of Israel.

Shamir met with the caucus in a closed-door session on Nov. 16.

Reich told the news conference here that Bush had "shared his concern" with Shamir about alleged human rights violations by Israeli security forces in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In an Israel Television interview, Reich indicated some concern over the tardiness of responses by Israeli officials to allegations of human rights violations. He said Israel's friends abroad need fast, accurate information to ward off hostile attacks.

Reich also said the Conference of Presidents is carefully following events in East Germany. Although the conference has taken no official stand on the opening of the Berlin Wall and the rush toward liberalization, there is concern over talk of the reunification of Germany, he said.

He stressed that the level of U.S. assistance to Israel is "not being debated" in the context of a general easing of world tensions.

The United States would "never let Israel fall behind" and would "always make sure that Israel has sufficient defense forces," Reich said.

LIKUD HARD-LINERS CONFRONT SHAMIR UPON RETURN FROM VISIT TO AMERICA

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 26 (JTA) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir told the Cabinet on Sunday that his recent talks with President Bush and other top administration officials brought reassurances that the close ties between Israel and the United States would not be affected by differences the two countries may have over the peace process.

But the comity between Washington and Jerusalem apparently does not apply to relations within the Likud party.

Shamir, presiding at his first Cabinet session in more than two weeks, clashed with Industry and Commerce Minister Ariel Sharon, who has little use for Israel's peace plan or the way the prime minister is dealing with the Americans.

Sharon, who at various times has demanded annexation of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, insisted Sunday that the government decide now on the permanent status of the territories.

Shamir responded that he stands by the

Camp David formula of incremental peacemaking. He said Bush agreed that peace can only be achieved in stages and quoted the U.S. president as saying he did not want to deal with "bottom line" issues at this juncture.

Shamir added, without elaboration, that the Arabs, too, accept that approach.

Sharon is probably the most outspoken of a trio of Likud ministers who disapprove of Shamir's plans for Palestinian elections in the territories. They are supported by a recently formed bloc of about 14 Likud hard-line members of the Knesset.

Pledges From Bush And Baker

The proposed Palestinian elections are supposed to set in motion a process leading to limited autonomy in the territories and future negotiations over their final status.

But Sharon and his allies insist the plan would lead inevitably to a Palestinian state run by the Palestine Liberation Organization.

In fact, they contend, Israel is already dealing with the PLO indirectly through the United States, which has had a dialogue with the PLO for nearly a year.

Shamir insisted he had pledges from Bush and Secretary of State James Baker that Washington would not press Israel to negotiate with the PLO.

To emphasize the closeness of U.S.-Israeli ties, Shamir told the Cabinet he also had assurances from Defense Secretary Dick Cheney that the sudden easing of tensions between East and West would not adversely affect American military aid to Israel.

But Sharon pressed his attack on the prime minister.

He said Israel was being naive and disingenuous to pretend it was not dealing with the PLO.

According to Sharon, Egypt, which has offered to host an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue in Cairo, actually is the PLO's surrogate.

When Israel says it is waiting for Egypt's reply to Secretary Baker's five-point guidelines for the dialogue, "everyone knows" it is really waiting for the PLO, Sharon claimed.

ISRAELIS MEET PLO REPRESENTATIVES, BUT AVOID INTERACTING, AT CONCLAVE By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Nov. 26 (JTA) — Five Israelis, including one Knesset member, were on a panel with officials of the Palestine Liberation Organization, among others, at a meeting of the Socialist International's Council here last Thursday and Friday.

The Middle East was discussed, and nobody walked out.

The Israelis attending were Knesset member Nava Arad of the Labor Party and fellow Laborites Israel Gat and Abraham Hatzmari. Mapam, the United Workers Party of Israel, was represented by Arie Jaffe and Arie Shapir.

The spokesman for the PLO group was Khaled al-Hassan.

While the PLO representatives and the Israelis did not engage in conversation, Gat told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency later that the Labor Party's policy is not to leave when PLO delegates are around the same table and the Middle East is debated.

In fact, according to Gat, the PLO delegates spoke in moderate terms. They implied that peace

could have been achieved before, and certainly why not now, he said.

Other panel members were journalist Hanna Siniora, editor of the East Jerusalem Arabic daily Al-Fajr, and Fayeze Abu Rahme, a Palestinian lawyer from the Gaza Strip.

There also were delegations, for the first time, from Egypt, Tunis, Morocco and Pakistan.

No anti-Israel resolutions were raised.

In fact, Arad was elected vice president of the Women's Socialist International, representing the Middle East region. The group includes delegates from Lebanon, Egypt, Israel and Tunisia.

ISRAELI JETS STRIKE TERRORIST BASES IN SYRIAN-CONTROLLED PART OF LEBANON By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 26 (JTA) — Israeli air force jets raided Palestinian terrorist bases in Syrian-controlled eastern Lebanon twice in 24 hours over the weekend.

The targets, hit last Thursday and again on Saturday, were headquarters and staging areas of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, an extremist terrorist group headed by Ahmed Jabril.

During the Thursday raid, Israeli jets hit bases in the Bekaa Valley, northeast of Lake Karoun, which is well behind Syrian lines.

Saturday's targets were at Sultan Ya'acoub and Deir Zanoun, in the same region.

Observers suggested that the raids were intended to knock out the bases and to warn the Syrians not to allow Jabril to use territory under their protection to launch incursions against Israel.

Reports from Lebanon said one terrorist was killed and as many as six injured in Thursday's raid. One of the injured was the base commander who uses the nom de guerre Abu Murad, Lebanese sources said.

They said the raid was carried out by four F-4 Phantom fighter-bombers, each firing six air-to-ground rockets. All aircraft returned safely to their bases.

The attacks were the 14th and 15th Israeli air force raids on targets in Lebanon this year.

CHURCH REPORT ON THE INTIFADA ANGERS BRITISH JEWISH COMMUNITY London Jewish Chronicle

LONDON, Nov. 26 (JTA) — The Jewish community and its friends here are outraged by a strongly worded pro-Palestinian report, "Impressions of the Intifada," adopted unanimously by the British Council of Churches last week at a meeting of its Assembly.

The Britain-Israel Public Affairs Committee said the document was "lacking in objectivity, naive and ill-informed."

The Council for Christians and Jews asked for a meeting with the BCC's leadership.

Although there were "things to welcome in the report, there are a lot of points which we feel are biased, unbalanced and unhelpful to Jewish-Christian relations," said Canon Jim Richardson, director of the council.

The report was produced after a 10-day visit to Israel and the administered territories last March by a BCC delegation.

After adopting it, the BCC Assembly urged the government to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization and apply pressure on Israel.

SCHWAMMBERGER REPORTED IN COMA AFTER A POSSIBLE SUICIDE ATTEMPT By Susan Blinbaum

NEW YORK, Nov. 26 (JTA) -- Suspected Nazi war criminal Josef Schwammberger, being held in an Argentine prison pending extradition to West Germany, has been hospitalized in serious condition, following what may have been an attempt to take his own life.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles reported Friday that Schwammberger, 77, was comatose. The center, whose publicity about the case led to Schwammberger's arrest two years ago, called for an "immediate and full investigation" into the circumstances of what it described as an apparent suicide attempt.

Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the center, said Sunday he had learned from a Reuters reporter in Buenos Aires that Schwammberger went into a coma last Thursday, "just days after the attorney general submitted a 19-page document to the Supreme Court which favored the accused mass murderer's extradition to West Germany."

The federal judge ruling on his extradition told Cooper he "had not seen the medical tests, but could not rule out suicide," Cooper told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

However, Argentine sources told Rabbi Morton Rosenthal, director of the Latin American affairs for the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, only that Schwammberger had been admitted to a hospital in La Plata, Argentina, last week, in serious condition. The sources made no mention of suicide or coma.

Attorney General Favors Extradition

One of those sources was David Goldberg, president of the DAIA, the umbrella body of Argentine Jewry, with whom Rosenthal spoke on Sunday.

The DAIA, Wiesenthal Center and the ADL have been in communication with the Argentine attorney general, Oscar Roger, concerning the extradition proceedings against Schwammberger, who exhausted two appeals to stay his extradition.

Schwammberger lost on both appeals, and it was expected he would not win an appeal to the Supreme Court, said Rosenthal. The DAIA met several weeks ago with Roger "and received his assurances that the legal proceedings would take place without delay. And that was publicly announced in the papers," said Rosenthal.

Roger was recently appointed as attorney general by Argentine President Carlos Saul Menem. "We were relieved that the new attorney general had come down on the side of extradition," said Cooper.

Schwammberger is accused of the mass murders of Jews in several Polish towns, concentration camps and labor camps.

The Wiesenthal Center, which reported his presence in Argentina in 1966, placed Schwammberger as No. 5 on their "10 Most Wanted" Nazis list, which they announced at a news conference in Jerusalem in October 1987.

Less than a month later, on Nov. 13, 1987, Schwammberger was arrested in the province of Cordoba, in northern Argentina.

Schwammberger was arrested in Austria following World War II, but it is believed he escaped and got to Argentina in 1949 with the help of the Nazi network Odessa.

On Sunday, Rosenthal mused on the possi-

bility that a Nazi conspiracy was still operating to cheat the arm of justice.

"The question in my mind is whether it is a suicide" attempt, said Rosenthal. "Without proof, I see a pattern. Whenever one of these Nazis are about to be brought to trial, they die."

He cited Walter Kutschmann, who was arrested in Argentina in November 1985, on a special extradition request by West Germany. Kutschmann was an SS officer and Gestapo official in the Ukraine. He died in September 1986, during protracted extradition proceedings in Argentina.

Rosenthal also mentioned Walter Rauff, the Nazi SS colonel who died in captivity in Chile in May 1984, after a long campaign by Nazi-hunters, Israel and West Germany to ferret out the man responsible for mobile killing vans.

WEST GERMANY TO BUILD SUBS FOR USE BY THE ISRAELI NAVY By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 26 (JTA) -- West Germany is building two advanced submarines for the Israeli navy.

The diesel-powered Dolphin-class undersea craft will cost approximately \$600 million. The deal was approved by the ministerial defense committee in Bonn, headed by Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

The subs, part of Israel's naval expansion program, will be sold by the West German shipyard to the Engels Corp. in the United States, the Israeli navy's prime procurement contractor.

Engels is building three Sa'ar V-class missile boats for the navy. Along with the U-boats, they will bring the price tag to over \$1.2 billion.

Most of the money will come from Israel's annual U.S. military assistance grant of \$1.8 billion, which may be cut by \$25 million this fiscal year because of pressures to reduce the U.S. budget deficit.

The Israel Defense Force General Staff voted to suspend the submarine procurement indefinitely last spring because it exceeded Israel's defense budget.

The decision was overruled by Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, and the budget was subsequently supplemented by the needed amount.

PERESTROIKA IS IN TROUBLE, SAKHAROV WARNS SHARANSKY By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 26 (JTA) -- Perestroika is in danger, one of the Soviet Union's leading human rights advocates, Andrei Sakharov, has told a prominent Soviet Jewish activist in Israel.

Sakharov, a Nobel laureate and member of the Soviet parliament, passed the warning to Natan Sharansky in a telephone call from Moscow, the Jerusalem Post reported Sunday.

Sakharov phoned the former fellow prisoner of conscience Saturday night to cancel plans to attend a scientific conference at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot next month.

He said he could not come because a meeting of the Supreme Soviet "fateful" to the future of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's program of perestroika, or reconstruction, will be held at the same time as the scientific conference.

Sakharov warned that conservative elements working against Gorbachev are gaining power in the Soviet Union, the Post reported.

SALO BARON, DEAD AT 94, ACCLAIMED AS ERA'S GREATEST JEWISH HISTORIAN

NEW YORK, Nov. 26 (JTA) — Funeral services will be held here Monday for Professor Salo Wittmayer Baron, the author of a multi-volume history of the Jews, who was acclaimed by many as the greatest Jewish historian of the century.

Baron, who taught at Columbia University from 1930 until his retirement in 1963, died Saturday of congestive heart failure. He was 94.

In April 1961, Baron testified at the trial of Adolf Eichmann in Jerusalem about anti-Semitism and how the Nazis decimated European Jewry.

He cited as an example the city of his birth, Tarnow, now in Poland, where 20,000 Jews lived before World War II. At the end of the war, no more than 20 survived. Baron lost his mother and a sister in the Holocaust.

Baron was known throughout the academic world for his scholarship and erudition. He spoke 20 languages and could lecture in five.

His monumental work, "A Social and Religious History of the Jews" began as a lecture series and grew initially into a broad survey of Jewish history, three volumes of which were published in 1937.

Eventually, 18 volumes were published. He was working on a 19th at his death.

Baron was born in 1895, in Tarnow, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His family, wealthy, educated and of a prestigious rabbinic line, was part of the Galician Jewish aristocracy.

Baron was a precocious child, learning chess at the age of 3 and writing poetry in Hebrew at 12. As a young man, he pursued rabbinic studies and was ordained by the Jewish Theological Seminary in Vienna in 1920.

He also earned three doctorates from the University of Vienna: in philosophy, political science and law.

'Vast Knowledge' Of History

After teaching at the Jewish Teachers College in Vienna, he was invited to New York by Rabbi Stephen Wise in 1926 to teach at the Jewish Institute of Religion. He began to teach at Columbia in 1930.

In the 1920s, Baron had been invited to Breslau to take over the position of Professor Heinrich Graetz, who had already written a history of the Jews. He refused. Even then, he would not go to Germany.

Graetz highlighted the suffering of the Jewish people and their contributions to scholarship. Baron combined social and religious history.

"He was the most outstanding historian of our generation," Leon Feldman, professor of Hebrew studies at Rutgers University, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

"Baron combined a vast knowledge and perspective of Jewish and general history, indicating that Jews reacted and responded to their environment, and never lived in a vacuum," said Feldman, who edited two "jubilee volumes" of Baron's articles.

Baron was a founder of several institutions of Jewish interest, including the American Academy for Jewish Research, which he served as president until a few years ago.

With philosopher Morris Raphael Cohen, he founded in 1934 the Conference on Jewish Social Studies, which from 1939 published the Journal of Jewish Social Studies. Baron remained conference president and journal editor until his death.

GREEK DELEGATION TRAVELS TO ISRAEL IN ATTEMPT TO BATTLE IMAGE PROBLEM By Jean Cohen

ATHENS, Nov. 26 (JTA) — Greece has sent an unofficial goodwill mission to Israel, which includes two members of the newly elected Parliament, academicians, former ambassadors, mayors and other dignitaries.

They arrived Friday and will remain in Israel until Dec. 1.

One objective of the mission is to help change the unflattering image of Israel held by the Greek public through the mass media.

These opinion leaders will try to show "that Israel is not the black sheep of the Middle East, that it is advanced in medicine and technology, and not just warlike," said Moshe Gilboa, Israel's diplomatic representative here.

It is the second such mission organized by Gilboa, who holds the rank of ambassador although relations between Israel and Greece are only on the consular level.

Israel hopes the atmosphere will improve since the Nov. 5 elections, which followed an unsuccessful attempt by the conservative New Democratic Party to put together a government to replace the regime of ousted Socialist Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu.

The new all-party government includes conservatives, Communists, Socialists and others.

While the government is deeply enmeshed in domestic problems, it is considered likely to reappraise Greek policy in the Middle East, which was distinctly hostile to Israel under Papandreu.

But the new government does not plan to take any immediate action on the case of Mohammed Rashid, a Palestinian wanted in the United States to stand trial for a 1982 hijacking.

The new justice minister, Constantine Stamatias, was quoted by Western news agencies last week as saying that no action on a longstanding U.S. extradition request would likely be taken before next September.

ARCHAEOLOGISTS UNEARTH CHURCH IN NEGEV DATING BACK 1,500 YEARS By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 26 (JTA) — The remains of a Byzantine church dating from the fifth or sixth centuries C.E. have been discovered at the Be'er-Sham ruins in the Negev, the government has announced.

The find was made in the first season of diggings at the site, by a team headed by Yeshayahu Lender and Dan Gazit of the Antiquities Authority, a government agency.

A building was found with two chambers. One used for baptisms contains a marble-covered baptismal font.

But the most important discovery was the three inscriptions on the mosaic floor.

Two honor the priests and members of the local community.

The third, in Homeric-style Greek, mentions Heladius, the governor of Gerar, which was a province during the Byzantine period in what is now southern Israel.

The inscription says a battalion of the governor's horsemen helped build the structure.

The inscriptions are especially important to archaeologists, because they name the province and the governor, and credit cavalymen with erecting the church.