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**SOVIETS READY TO UPGRADE RELATIONS
WITH ISRAEL, EZER WEIZMAN REPORTS**
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 10 (JTA) -- The Soviet Union has agreed to upgrade diplomatic relations with Israel just short of the ambassadorial level, Ezer Weizman announced Wednesday, after a two-hour meeting in Moscow with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze.

But his report was not confirmed by Soviet officials. And it was overshadowed by the Kremlin's announcement Wednesday that the Soviet Union would allow the Palestine Liberation Organization to set up an embassy in Moscow.

A statement issued by the Soviet Foreign Ministry and reported by the Soviet press agency Tass said the Kremlin had "given its consent to the reorganization" of the PLO mission in Moscow as the "embassy of the State of Palestine in the Soviet Union."

Political analysts said the Kremlin's decision to upgrade the PLO's diplomatic status had been expected and was likely timed to mute Arab criticism of Shevardnadze's meeting with Weizman.

The meeting at the Kremlin was the first time a visiting Israeli Cabinet minister was received at such a high level since the Soviet Union severed relations with Israel in the aftermath of the 1967 Six-Day War.

Weizman, who described his talks with Shevardnadze as "interesting," said the Soviet foreign minister indicated his government's willingness to upgrade diplomatic relations with Israel to the legation level. A legation is a diplomatic mission headed by a minister, one rank below ambassador.

Exclusion Of Official 'Shameful'

Weizman's announcement, if true, would appear to mark a major advance in the slow process of restoring full diplomatic ties.

But it was no personal triumph for the Israeli minister of science and development, who is fresh from a major confrontation with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

Weizman incurred the wrath of some officials here for agreeing, at the insistence of his Soviet hosts, to meet with Shevardnadze unaccompanied by the head of the Israeli consular mission in Moscow, Arye Levin.

Levin is Israel's senior diplomat in the Soviet capital, notwithstanding the low ranking of his mission in the hierarchy of diplomacy.

His exclusion from Shevardnadze's meeting with Weizman was viewed by some officials here as an intentional slight to Shamir and his Likud bloc, which controls the Foreign Ministry.

"Shameful," said one Foreign Ministry source. Others claimed that Weizman violated a solemn promise to the prime minister not to engage in diplomatic dialogues during his trip.

Weizman's response in an interview with Israel Radio was, "I did my best."

He said he tried hard to have Levin included in his invitation to the Kremlin. But faced with the alternative of abandoning the meeting with Shevardnadze, he chose to go ahead without Levin.

Weizman was accompanied by Eliahu Zem-

tzov, a distinguished Hebrew University professor who has close contacts with the Soviet Academy of Sciences, which sponsored Weizman's visit.

The controversy over his conduct in Moscow was compounded by the fact that Weizman, a Laborite, was forced to resign last week from the top policy-making Inner Cabinet, because of his alleged contacts with officials of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Shamir had, in fact, fired him from the government, but then allowed him to retain the science portfolio in the full Cabinet, in order to avert a Labor-Likud coalition crisis.

Shamir asserted in a speech Tuesday night that Weizman eventually would be drummed out of the government.

**CZECH DELEGATION ARRIVES IN ISRAEL
TO EXPLORE RESUMPTION OF RELATIONS**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 10 (JTA) -- A high-level delegation from Prague met Wednesday with Foreign Ministry officials to discuss an imminent resumption of diplomatic relations between Israel and Czechoslovakia, which the Czechs broke after the 1967 Six-Day War.

It could not immediately be confirmed whether Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens participated in the talks.

The delegation, representing the Foreign Ministry in Prague, also inspected the old Czech Embassy premises, vacant for more than 20 years.

The Czech officials reportedly contacted local contractors to discuss the embassy's renovation, which led some to believe that Czechoslovakia intends to reopen its embassy here as soon as relations are re-established.

Hungary, which also broke with Israel in 1967, resumed full diplomatic relations, at the ambassadorial level, on Sept. 18. But it did so after an 18-month period of representation on the consular level.

Poland and Israel currently retain interests sections in each other's countries, an even lower level of diplomatic relations.

But there is reason to believe the Czechs will bypass these intermediate stages and proceed directly to full diplomatic relations.

The Czech delegation's arrival coincided with the visit here of Hungarian Foreign Minister Gyula Horn, the first Eastern bloc foreign minister to visit Israel in more than 20 years.

Horn, who arrived Sunday, conferred Tuesday with 25 leading Israeli business leaders on how to improve economic ties between their countries.

The Hungarian official said his country's 1967 breach with Israel had been a mistake. He said Hungary thought at the time that such a step would spur peace negotiations in the Middle East. But it turned out to be one-sided.

"A one-sided policy can never be constructive," he said.

Horn told The Jerusalem Post that trade between the two countries could reach \$200 million annually by next year, a five-fold increase over the present level.

Trade between Israel and Hungary amounted to \$40 million last year, compared to \$9 million in 1988.

ISRAEL DEFERS ACTION ON PEACE TALKS UNTIL AFTER RABIN VISITS WASHINGTON

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 10 (JTA) -- The Inner Cabinet convened Wednesday to discuss the latest American peace proposals, but deferred policy decisions until after Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin's visit to Washington next week, informed sources said.

Rabin is to meet Jan. 17 and 18 with Vice President Dan Quayle, Secretary of State James Baker and Defense Secretary Dick Cheney.

He will also meet with American Jewish leaders in New York on Friday and is scheduled to address a dinner of the American Friends of Hebrew University in Los Angeles on Sunday.

The Inner Cabinet is the government's top policy-making body, consisting of six Likud and six Labor Party senior ministers.

Its discussion Wednesday was said to center on growing signs of American restiveness over the lack of progress toward implementing the Israeli peace initiative.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir declared that the U.S. peacemaking effort is paramount and there is "no role" now for the Soviet Union.

But Israel worries that the United States, its closest ally, may some day assert the right of the Palestine Liberation Organization to participate in the peace process.

Israel's persistent quest for assurances on that account has contributed to the delay in setting up an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue in Cairo, to be followed by Palestinian elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Baker Phones Foreign Ministers

The Israeli ministers are clearly disturbed by reports from Washington that the U.S. secretary of state is rapidly wearying of the delay.

Diplomatic sources quoted Baker as telling the visiting Norwegian foreign minister, Kjell Bondevik, on Monday that he would abandon his efforts in the Middle East if the stalemate continues.

When asked about that comment Wednesday, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said Baker "is prepared to stay engaged as long as the parties are determined to make progress."

She reported that Baker spoke by telephone to Egyptian Foreign Minister Esmat Abdel Meguid on Monday and to Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens on Wednesday. But she did not reveal the content of their discussions.

Meguid and Arens were to have met with Baker in Washington this month to arrange the Israeli-Palestinian talks in Cairo. But the meeting has been postponed, apparently because of outstanding differences on several issues, including the PLO's role.

Tutwiler told reporters earlier this week that it would be "absurd" to hold the foreign ministers meeting unless it was guaranteed to produce the intended results.

"We hope to see the same kind of impulse that will produce change in the Middle East, and we are prepared to do all we can to promote it," the spokeswoman said Wednesday.

"If this effort does fail, as has been speculated in some press, it certainly won't be due to a lack of effort or will on behalf of this president or this secretary of state," she added.

(JTA correspondent Howard Rosenberg in Washington contributed to this report.)

U.S. CUTS FUNDS TO FOOD AGENCY, CITING ITS BACKING OF THE PLO

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Jan. 10 (JTA) -- The United States has sharply cut its contribution to the U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization, in part because the organization adopted a resolution backing the Palestine Liberation Organization's aspirations for statehood.

The U.S. action came in response to a Nov. 29 vote of the FAO's governing General Conference, which was holding its biennial meetings in Rome.

The FAO body voted 96-2 to cooperate closely with the PLO in providing aid to Palestinian residents of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

But facing a U.S. threat to cut off funds, the General Conference stopped short of upgrading the PLO's representative status within the organization.

The United States and Israel were the only countries to vote against the resolution, while 14 countries abstained.

The United States officially signaled its displeasure with the FAO action, in a letter last week to Edouard Saouma, the FAO director general.

John Bolton, assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs, wrote that the United States would pay just \$18 million of its \$143 million in unpaid assessments, just enough to preserve its voting rights in the U.N. agency.

The United States' most recent budget assessment, for 1989, was \$61.4 million, more than 20 percent of the FAO's overall \$267.6 million budget that year.

Criticized Israeli Policies

Fran Westner, a spokeswoman for the State Department's Bureau of International Organization Affairs, said adoption of the FAO resolution was one of four reasons why the United States decided to withhold most of its 1989 assessment.

The other three reasons were that the FAO ignored concern from various countries that its budget was "excessive"; did not allow the North American bloc to seek election to a key FAO office; and did not heed U.S. calls for agency reform, she said.

Congress last year adopted a law that bars U.S. funding to any U.N. agency that "enhances" the PLO's membership status. But Westner said it did not apply in this case, because the resolution "didn't have to do with membership."

The resolution did say, however, that Israeli policies in the territories "impede the basic requirements for the development of the economy of the occupied Palestinian territory, including the agricultural sector."

It said that economic development projects should be undertaken in the West Bank and Gaza Strip "in close cooperation" with the PLO.

Following the Nov. 29 vote, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler remarked that the United States regards the U.N. Relief and Works Agency to be the appropriate means for providing "humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian people."

JTA will not publish a Daily News Bulletin on Monday, Jan. 15, in observance of the Martin Luther King national holiday in the United States.

ISRAELI ARMY GREETING INFLUX OF SOVIET JEWS WITH OPEN ARMS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Jan. 10 (JTA) -- While government and Jewish Agency officials agonize about how to pay for the absorption of the quarter-million Soviet Jewish immigrants expected to arrive in the next few years, the Israel Defense Force is gleefully preparing for the new infusion of manpower.

The IDF will make itself a part of the new immigrants' experience almost as soon as they land, according to plans announced this week.

Maj. Gen. Yitzhak Mordechai, head of the IDF Central Command, has urged career officers to take a personal interest in new immigrant families. He has appointed a special absorption team to his command.

The IDF plans to assign young women soldiers on active duty, many of whom speak Russian, to help teach Hebrew at absorption centers, where immigrants are housed during their first months in Israel.

Gadna, the paramilitary youth training organization, will send volunteers to "foster" immigrant families.

The IDF's chief education officer will organize tours of army camps for young emigres, to acquaint them with the surroundings before they are drafted into the rigors of basic training.

Each recruitment center will be staffed by a woman officer in charge of immigrants, who will help them through their processing. Special attention will be given to older draftees with families.

Military service is compulsory in Israel, but immigrants of draft age are usually given a two-year period of grace after their arrival before being pressed into uniform.

Dinitz To Confer With UJA Leaders

Immigrants up to age 24 must serve a full three-year stint in the IDF. Above that age, they are required to serve four months' active duty, after which they become reservists.

Recruits over age 34 are required to pass a two-month basic training course and are then discharged.

Brig. Gen. Yossi Lipman, deputy chief of the IDF's manpower division, said, "Our goal is that the immigrants' military service will serve their own interests, as well as the army's."

He noted that the Soviets "come from a country where there is another army, and the notion 'army' may cause unpleasant associations.

"Here we explain to them that it is their army. It is important that the IDF becomes a source of pride for them," Lipman said.

Absorption problems were discussed at a meeting Wednesday that included Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Vice Premier Shimon Peres and Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the Jewish Agency Executive.

Peres, who is finance minister, said that this year's state budget will include about 1 billion shekels (\$525 million) for immigrant absorption.

Plans call for the immediate construction of 6,000 housing units, and another 3,000 later, as needed.

Dinitz was to leave Thursday for the United States, where he plans to discuss the absorption situation with United Jewish Appeal leaders.

He is expected to ask them to double their contributions for absorption and to advance the transfer of other funds.

SERGE KLARSFELD TRAVELS TO SYRIA, TO PURSUE EXTRADITION OF BRUNNER

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Jan. 10 (JTA) -- Nazi-hunter Serge Klarsfeld is in Damascus, in a new attempt to prod the Syrians to deport Nazi war criminal Alois Brunner.

Klarsfeld was successful in obtaining a Syrian visa and in seeing some Syrian officials, but he was refused entry to the presidential palace Wednesday. Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, reported.

Steinberg spoke by phone with Klarsfeld's wife, Beate, who was in Paris, where they live.

She told Steinberg her husband is carrying a letter indicating precisely where Brunner is living. Damascus has repeatedly denied that Brunner, who sometimes uses the alias Georg Fischer, is in Syria.

Brunner, who has reportedly lived there for three decades, was secretary to Adolf Eichmann in Vienna in 1938, when Eichmann headed the Nazi Central Office for Jewish Questions.

Brunner later took charge of that office himself and eventually became commander at the Drancy concentration camp in France.

He is also believed responsible for deporting tens of thousand of Greek Jews from Salonika. It is estimated that Brunner is accountable for the deaths of 100,000 Jews.

The Klarsfelds first traced Brunner to Syria in 1982. Damascus has repeatedly rejected extradition requests from West Germany and France.

CHANCES OF CAIRO PEACE MARCH DIM

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Jan. 10 (JTA) -- The Egyptian government is reported to be less than enthusiastic about plans by Peace Now and Kibbutz Artzi, the kibbutz movement of Mapam, to hold a joint Arab-Israeli peace march in Cairo.

About 1,000 Israelis so far have shown interest in participating in the march, according to the organizers, who said they had originally expected to attract only a few dozen.

But chances that the march will take place are receding.

Reports from Cairo said that while the Egyptian authorities sympathize, they fear a mass march in conflict with official Israeli policy might harm rather than advance the peace process.

The Egyptians are also said to be concerned by the magnitude of the security measures that would be necessary to protect the marchers.

The Hebrew daily Yediot Achronot reported Wednesday that an alternative march could be held in El-Arish, a town in northern Sinai close to the Israeli border.

ISRAEL SHELLS TARGETS IN LEBANON

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 10 (JTA) -- Israeli artillery shelled terrorist installations Wednesday in the Syrian-controlled Bekaa Valley, north of the border security zone in southern Lebanon.

On Tuesday, salvos were fired intermittently throughout the day, in what military sources said were "routine activities" against terrorist organizations in Lebanon.

The targets were near Loussi, Sultan Ya'a-coub and Kamed a-Loz villages, about 20 miles north of the security zone.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:

FOR ONE JEWISH COUPLE, SOVIET UNION IS STILL A PLACE OF FEAR AND WAITING
By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Jan. 10 (JTA) -- The personal hatred of one KGB man stalks the lives of Vladimir and Karmela Raiz of Vilnius, still refuseniks after 17 years, says Karmela Raiz, who is in the United States on a tourist visa.

At a time when the KGB has been portrayed as a mollified bunch of swells who agree to free-for-all, call-in television interviews, Karmela Raiz says there has been no change, at least in one veneful operative.

A KGB major threatened the couple 13 years ago, said Karmela, when they refused to testify against Anatoly Shcharansky, who was on trial for being a spy for the CIA and Israel.

The Raizes were Jewish activists in Vilnius and often traveled to Moscow.

Every day at their Vilnius apartment, said Karmela, the KGB man would exhort Vladimir to talk. Rebuffed, he would detain the refusenik from morning to night. But Vladimir never gave in, his wife said.

In the age of glasnost and supposedly unrestricted emigration from the Soviet Union, the Raizes are a sad anachronism.

Officially, Vladimir, a mathematician who worked in biology, has been refused permission to emigrate because of his access to state secrets. But that explanation is a sham, Karmela maintains.

Karmela, a violinist with the Vilnius Symphony Orchestra, produced two official documents, translated into English, saying that his classified jobs should not deter him from emigrating.

False Promises From OVIR

The personnel director of the Soviet Academy of Sciences wrote to Vladimir on June 30, 1975, that "we have not been informed of any restrictions, vis-a-vis the academy, regarding your exit from the USSR."

"The Ministry of Radio of the USSR has nothing of complaint against your leaving for abroad for permanent residency," says another letter, dated May 24, 1989.

At least twice, the Raizes received false promises from the OVIR emigration bureau. Each time, they were told, "We made a mistake."

After Vladimir refused to testify in the Shcharansky trial, "the KGB man promised Vladimir that he will never leave the country as long as he is alive," Karmela said.

Their lives became hell, she said. "It was bad before, but from then on, it became terrible," she said, describing all manner of intimidation and arrest.

Within the last month, the KGB major was promoted to general, Karmela heard. She was told he still keeps the couple's file on his desk.

Although the KGB is no longer positioned outside their apartment, KGB officers have taken the apartment below them, she claimed.

An American friend who accompanied her to the interview said she had tried unsuccessfully over the years to contact the couple by telephone and through the mail. Despite signed receipts of delivery, very few packages got through, they both said.

During the couple's long ordeal, Vladimir learned Hebrew and began teaching it. He and his wife could observant Jews about six years ago,

and their devotion to Judaism has increased over the years.

While visiting the United States, Karmela has spoken with several members of Congress and has met with President Bush. He praised her last month during a White House Chanukah party.

Support From President Bush

"Let me assure you, we'll do all in our power to free your husband, and those like him," Bush said at the time. He said he raised the couple's case during his summit meeting with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in Malta.

Karmela does not blame her family's predicament on Gorbachev, whose positive effect on the Soviet Union she freely admits. "We support everything he is doing," she said.

Nevertheless, conditions for Jews are still frightening, possibly even more so, now that openness is a virtue.

The Raizes were particularly aware of frightening anti-Semitism in August, when they led groups of observant Jews in an adult summer camp outside of Moscow. They were warned of impending pogroms, particularly the last weekend of the month.

Even the government believed it, she said, because a government spokesman appeared on television in the city of Gomel, to warn Jewish citizens to stay in their homes.

Urgency filling her voice, she said, "People are afraid to live in the Soviet Union. It looks better, but it is terrible."

"We really need support today," she said, "because tomorrow may be too late."

DUTCH DIRECTOR AGAIN UNDER FIRE FOR PLAY WITH ANTI-SEMITIC TONE
By Henrietta Boas

AMSTERDAM, Jan. 10 (JTA) -- Johan Doesburg, the stage director whose production of a purportedly anti-Semitic play was halted by demonstrators in 1987, has had another production canceled because of an offensive remark about Jews.

This time his offense took place in program notes he wrote for a production of "Witch Hunt," a play about the persecution of people who are "different."

Doesburg wrote that the play was about "Jewish noise," explaining he meant "the noise Jews make."

The manager of the small theater in The Hague, where the 45-minute play was to be performed, asked him to delete the words.

Doesburg refused, insisting they were essential, whereupon the manager called off the performance.

Doesburg, a graduate of the Royal Theatrical Academy in Amsterdam, chose for his graduate thesis to produce a controversial work of the late West German playwright Rainer Werner Fassbinder called "Garbage, the City and Death."

The play was banned in West Germany on grounds of anti-Semitism. One of its chief characters, a slumlord, is identified only as the "rich Jew."

The production became a major controversy in Holland. Doesburg could find no theater in Amsterdam willing to mount a production of the play, so he went to Rotterdam instead.

The play closed before the curtain was raised because the stage was occupied by angry protesters, not all of them Jewish.