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**FLIGHTS OF ETHIOPIAN OLIM RESUME
AMID UNCERTAINTY ABOUT THE FUTURE**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 24 (JTA) -- A planeload of 220 Ethiopian Jews landed in Israel on Friday, raising hope here that the unexplained interruption of emigration from that country in recent weeks has ended.

The olim were the first to arrive from Ethiopia since the beginning of the month. Jewish Agency officials expect another 600 to arrive before Passover, which begins this Friday evening.

The immigrants landed at 9 a.m. local time, having left Addis Ababa the previous day on a regularly scheduled Ethiopian flight to Rome. They transferred there to an El Al flight to Tel Aviv.

The latest arrivals included many children and elderly people decked out in their traditional white garb.

There were emotional reunions at the Ben-Gurion Airport. One passenger, a youth of 17, was reunited with his parents whom he had not seen for 10 years.

The immigrants were taken to an absorption center in Acre. Uri Gordon, head of the Jewish Agency's Immigration and Absorption Department, said several new centers would open in the next few months to accommodate Ethiopian olim.

In Washington, the State Department called the resumption of Ethiopian Jewish emigration a "positive development."

"We call upon the Ethiopian government to make it possible for all Ethiopian Jews who wish to emigrate to do so without further delay," Richard Boucher, the department's deputy spokesman, said Friday.

A mystery still surrounds the abrupt halt of Ethiopian aliyah around March 1 after weekly flights had brought about 2,000 Jews from Addis Ababa since the beginning of the year.

Israel's Broken 'Promises' Cited

The Ethiopian government is currently facing stiff military opposition from rebels forces seeking to wrest control of the country, and it was rumored the flights were originally halted as a way to pressure Israel into supplying Ethiopia with much-needed weapons and fuel. This was dismissed by both Israeli and Ethiopian officials.

Ethiopian officials insist that the regime of Ethiopian President Mengistu Haile Mariam regards Jewish emigration as a purely humanitarian undertaking to reunite families.

Israeli officials accepted the official Ethiopian explanation that "technical difficulties" were responsible for a temporary suspension of flights, but they did not elaborate.

An aide to Mengistu reiterated that overriding humanitarian considerations prevail. But in an Israeli army radio interview over the weekend, he accused Israel of reneging on certain "promises," which he did not specify.

Kassa Kabede, a senior aide to Mengistu who studied in Israel and speaks Hebrew, referred to "promises which Israel made in the past and has not honored."

He added, however, "We carry out the family reunion program on a purely humanitarian basis without any connection to anything else.

The position of the government of Ethiopia is that this will continue even if you (Israel) do not carry out your promises."

Kabede said reports that his government was trying to extract weapons from Israel were in themselves blackmail. He said he hopes "all this blackmail stops."

He blamed the interruption of aliyah on Jewish Agency officials, who he said had not filed the requisite forms properly. They filled out the forms in Addis Ababa indiscriminately without interviewing family members in Israel, he claimed.

Mengistu's aide flatly denied reports that the government has been drafting young Jews waiting to emigrate.

"We are a country of 50 million people, and we do not need these people for the army," he said. "We understand their desire to go to Israel and be reunited with their families." The estimated number of Jews remaining in Ethiopia ranges from 15,000 to over 18,000.

(JTA staff writer Aliza Marcus in New York contributed to this report.)

**ISRAEL ORDERS FOUR ARABS DEPORTED
IN WAKE OF NEW ROUND OF STABBINGS**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 24 (JTA) -- Israel, furious over another spate of random stabbings by Palestinians, ordered the deportation over the weekend of four terrorists from the Gaza Strip.

But more severe measures were demanded Sunday at the weekly Cabinet meeting. Hard-line ministers, though still in the minority, seemed to reflect the mounting anger, fear and frustration of average citizens.

The latest assaults occurred Saturday. Three people were wounded, none seriously. But their assailant turned out to be the killer of Mordechai (Motke) Reuchman, a 70-year-old furniture dealer from Hadera stabbed to death in his shop on March 21.

The assailant was identified as Fares Ahmad Barud, 30, a resident of Gaza who had been living illegally in the Israeli Arab town of Baka al-Gharbiya and was said to make a living dealing in old clothes.

His stabbing spree began Saturday with the knifing of Shidad Mahamid Anis, an Arab resident of Baka al-Gharbiya whom he mistook for a Yemenite Jew. He took a taxi to nearby Moshav Ganot-Hadar, where he attacked a middle-aged couple in their home.

Barud was apprehended by civilians while trying to escape in a car on the Hadera-Tel Aviv highway.

The police who booked him said he had no prior criminal record but that he confessed to murdering Reuchman and told them he was after Jews who had benefited from Arab land.

On Saturday night, Maj. Gen. Mattan Vilnai, commander of the southern region, ordered four residents of Gaza deported. He described them as hard-core terrorists involved in the Palestine Liberation Organization's Al Fatah wing.

The men were identified as Jamal Yassin Hassan Abu-Habal, 33; Muin Mohammad Mussalam, 31; Hashem Dahalan, 31; and Jamal Abu-Jidian, 33.

None of them has been linked to the recent

stabblings. Three were serving long prison terms for security offenses when they were released in 1985 in a controversial prisoner exchange with Ahmed Jabril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.

More Drastic Measures Urged

But a bloc of hard-line ministers called for more drastic measures than deportations.

Although Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir preferred to discuss the situation within the policy-making Inner Cabinet, whose deliberations are classified, Minister-Without-Portfolio Rehavam Ze'evi, head of the far-right-wing Moledet faction, insisted on airing the problem before the full Cabinet.

Ze'evi contended that curfews, deportations and temporary closures of the administered territories were the equivalent of treating cancer with aspirin. He demanded that 1.75 million Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza Strip be permanently barred from entering Israel.

He called for the deportation of all Arab "murderers and inciters" with their families, the closure of Palestinian newspapers in East Jerusalem and a review of the army's rules of engagement, apparently with a view to allowing harsher measures to quell Arab unrest.

He was backed in the Cabinet on Sunday by Agriculture Minister Rafael Eitan and Minister of Science and Energy Yuval Ne'eman, leaders respectively of the Tsomet and Tehiya parties, both to the right of Likud. They called for the death penalty for Arabs who kill Jews, the deportation of suspected terrorists with their families and the demolition of their homes.

Those measures were rejected by the Cabinet majority. So was a comparatively mild suggestion made by Police Minister Ronni Milo of Likud. He proposed barring entry into Israel proper to all young single Arabs from the administered territories. His rationale was that most of the assailants caught have been unmarried men.

But even such partial restrictions could lend strength to the concept of separation of the territories from Israel proper, which is unacceptable to those Israelis who regard the West Bank and Gaza Strip as indisputable parts of "Eretz Yisrael," the Land of Israel.

Israel faces another dilemma inasmuch as deportations are frowned on by the United States, its chief economic and political supporter.

U.S. Protest Anticipated

Much of the Cabinet session was taken up with arguments explaining and justifying the latest deportation orders, in anticipation of objections from Washington.

Avner Shaki, the minister of religious affairs, complained that American opposition is unfair. He maintained the Americans would take even tougher measures if faced with a similar situation.

The four deportees have recourse to appeal before a military appeals board and, if that fails, to the High Court of Justice.

The military board has never overturned a deportation order, and the High Court has reversed only one out of scores.

The last deportations occurred on Dec. 15, when four Moslem fundamentalist activists were expelled from the Gaza Strip. If the latest four are expelled, they will bring to 66 the number of Palestinians deported by Israel since the intifada began 39 months ago.

ARMED INTRUDERS FROM JORDAN KILLED IN SHOOT-OUT WITH IDF

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 24 (JTA) -- Two armed intruders from Jordan were killed Friday morning in a brief gun battle with an Israel Defense Force patrol in the northern Jordan Valley.

There were no Israeli casualties.

The incident, the sixth infiltration from Jordan this year and the second in less than two weeks, has senior IDF officers concerned that the Jordanian authorities are losing their ability to prevent incursions into Israel from their territory.

The two men armed with AK-47 assault rifles were spotted shortly after they breached the border near Moshav Mehola, south of Beit She'an. They were killed in an exchange of fire.

Both were described as about 20 years of age. No further identification was made public, and the Israeli authorities have not yet established which if any organization the gunmen belonged to.

They brought to eight the number of armed infiltrators from Jordan killed by the IDF this month.

Six men who entered from Jordan were gunned down March 11 in a running battle with Israeli soldiers near Kibbutz Tirat Zvi in the Beit She'an Valley.

NINE DEAD, OVER 100 INJURED DURING FIERCE STORMS IN ISRAEL

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 24 (JTA) -- Fierce wind and rainstorms sweeping Israel over the weekend took at least nine lives and caused injuries to nearly 100 people.

Most of the casualties were the result of road accidents and drownings. Damage to electricity and telephone lines and highways was estimated at millions of dollars.

The storm struck Friday after a week of mild, summerlike weather.

Six died in highway accidents Saturday and more than 90 were injured, 20 seriously, as vehicles skidded on rain-slick pavements.

A bus skidded out of control on the mountainous Acre-Safed road, injuring 51. It turned end-over-end twice before coming to rest on a hillside.

The first fatalities were three Bedouins in the Negev, who drowned Friday when flash floods suddenly filled what had been stone-dry riverbeds and gullies only seconds before.

Hundreds of soldiers, police and civilian volunteers spent hours searching wide areas of the northern Negev for the victims, aided by helicopters, jeeps and tracked vehicles.

The bodies of twin brothers were found at noon Sunday. But a 14-year-old Bedouin girl from a village near Beersheba was still missing Sunday evening.

The downpour dropped 2 inches of rain in the Tel Aviv area and nearly 5 inches in northern Israel in a 24-hour period. But it did little to relieve the drought conditions caused by three successive winters of abnormally light rain.

The level of Lake Kinneret rose 2.8 inches during the storm, adding millions of cubic meters of water to Israel's largest natural reservoir.

But the fresh-water lake is still about 7 feet below its normal level for this time of year. Experts say water rationing is inevitable.

WALESA VOWS TO FIGHT ANTI-SEMITISM, BLAMING HIMSELF PARTLY FOR REVIVAL**By Howard Rosenberg**

WASHINGTON, March 24 (JTA) -- Polish President Lech Walesa blamed himself last week for some of the increased anti-Jewish sentiment in Poland.

Walesa made the remark after meeting here with Polish-born Holocaust survivors, who told him they were surprised about the growth of anti-Semitism in a country of few Jews.

"The Polish nation and the Jewish nation cannot quarrel," Walesa said.

Speaking through a translator after the meeting, arranged by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, Walesa traced the recent revival of anti-Semitism in Poland to a remark he made last year during the country's presidential campaign.

Walesa had been asked during one of his rallies, "Aren't there too many Jews in the Polish government?"

He said he responded, " 'Sir, you know I am 100 percent Polish, leave me alone.' And look what I did. I indeed gave reason to thinking I am anti-Semitic myself."

At a ceremony last Thursday on the construction site of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, Walesa received strong applause from 200 guests when he said, "As long as I have something to say in Poland, I will not allow for anti-Semitism."

"A good Catholic cannot be anti-Semitic," Walesa told reporters afterward. "My religion tells me that the people of Israel are the chosen people, so how could I go against my God?"

Walesa announced, at the urging of the Holocaust museum, that he was creating a task force to combat anti-Semitism.

But Miles Lerman, chairman of the Holocaust council's international relations committee, said it would be "naïve on our part to believe that a decree of the president of the country will wipe it out."

Museum Presented With Artifacts

Lerman said he expects the Polish government "to condemn it, find it and find ways how to eliminate it."

He said the survivors had "shared their frustration and their surprise with the fact that in a Poland that is totally devoid of the Jews, that there is still anti-Semitism."

Samuel Goetz, another survivor from Poland, said he recommended to Walesa that he award presidential medals to some of those who helped save Polish Jews during the Holocaust, "so that the Polish population will become aware -- I mean the younger generation."

Walesa presented the museum with a tree stump from the outskirts of Warsaw, where Jews and others were executed between December 1939 and August 1943. He also presented a milk jug from the Warsaw Ghetto in which the historian Emanuel Ringelblum placed hundreds of documents depicting daily life there.

He said that at a later date, the Polish government will send the museum a gate from a Jewish cemetery at Tarnow, where thousands of Jews were shot amid the gravestones of their ancestors.

In return, Lerman presented Walesa with a huge book of photographs by Roman Vishniac that captured Jewish life in Eastern Europe on the eve of World War II.

ITALIAN LEADER LAUNCHES 'TRIALOGUE' INVOLVING JEWS, CHRISTIANS, MOSLEMS**By Debra Nussbaum Cohen**

NEW YORK, March 24 (JTA) -- Stressing the need for enhanced communication among religious faiths in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf war, Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti has announced the creation of a new international organization, called the Association for Trialogue, to involve Jewish, Christian and Moslem groups.

Its goal is "to reflect together on ways of bringing down the barriers" of "stereotyped ideas and erroneous perceptions," Andreotti told American Jewish leaders at a breakfast here Sunday sponsored by the American Jewish Committee.

He called on the Jewish leaders present to "help us to find and to maintain institutionalized channels for dialogue."

The new organization's first major activity is a conference scheduled to be held in Rome from July 21 to 24. It "will be attended by distinguished representatives of Jewish, Christian and Islamic culture, and outstanding representatives of the cultural, scientific and religious worlds of all the monotheistic communities in the Mediterranean and the Middle East," according to the prime minister.

The Association for Trialogue was formally founded March 10 in Andreotti's office in Rome, and is jointly chaired by the prime minister; Sir Leon Tamman, a Geneva-based Sephardic Jewish businessman; and Camelia Sadat, daughter of the late Anwar Sadat.

Raffaello Fella, a Libyan Jew, heads the executive committee. Tullia Zevi, president of the Italian Jewish communities, is a founding member.

In his remarks here, Andreotti said Israel must restart talks with the Palestinians. "It is dialogue which must prevail over the sound of weapons and violence, and the responsibility of reopening it lies primarily with Israel," he said.

"More than ever before, we must recognize that there can never be peace and security in the Middle East until the Palestinian problem has been solved and a solution has been found to the lawful aspirations of a people destined to live in peace alongside Israel," he said.

The Italian leader praised Israel for its restraint in the face of Iraqi Scud attacks and reiterated his commitment to Israel's security.

"The sound of the air-raid sirens warning the Israeli towns of the incoming Iraqi missiles penetrated into our homes and, I believe, spoke more eloquently than any other argument to strengthen our conviction of the need to guarantee security to a people that has lived for too many years already in a state of war with their neighbors."

At the same time, he spoke of "Israel's lost opportunities" to reach a settlement with the Palestinians, which, he said, "might have been at the root of the deep-seated sense of frustration" that led them to support Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

IT'S SUMMERTIME IN ISRAEL

TEL AVIV, March 24 (JTA) -- Israel went on summertime at midnight Saturday. Clocks were advanced one hour and will remain so until Aug. 31.

The changeover will increase the period of daylight as days grow longer in the Northern Hemisphere. Israeli time is now eight hours ahead of Eastern Standard Time in the United States.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:**JEWISH GROUPS FEAR SUPREME COURT COULD ERODE CHURCH-STATE SEPARATION**

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 24 (JTA) -- Concern is mounting in the organized Jewish community that the U.S. Supreme Court's decision to consider whether prayers mentioning God can be recited at public school graduation ceremonies could result in weakening constitutional guarantees of separation between church and state.

This is exactly the outcome the Bush administration appears to want, and it is why it filed a brief urging the court to take up an appeal by the Providence (R.I.) School Committee of two lower federal court rulings.

These rulings said that an invocation by a rabbi at the Nathan Bishop Middle School in Providence violated the establishment clause of the First Amendment, because by mentioning God it was an official endorsement of religion.

The high court agreed March 18 to hear the case, Lee vs. Weisman, next fall.

Legal experts at Jewish organizations fear the decision may signal the court's willingness to erase many of the boundaries that now exist between church and state.

If the court were to go along with the administration's thinking, it could mean there would be "nothing left of the establishment clause," said Marc Stern, legal director for the American Jewish Congress.

Samuel Rabinove, legal director for the American Jewish Committee, and Steven Freeman, his counterpart at the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, also expressed fear of an erosion of the establishment clause.

None of the legal experts believe the court would restore organized prayer to the schools.

But, Stern warned, it could mean that religious symbols could be allowed on public property seasonally or even permanently, and it could open the door to a re-examination of prohibitions on federal aid to parochial schools.

20-Year Precedent At Stake

The case centers around the 1971 Lemon vs. Kurtzman decision, which for 20 years has been the standard for deciding whether a policy or practice violated the establishment clause.

Lemon vs. Kurtzman sets a three-part test requiring proof that a policy or practice have "a secular purpose," that "its principal or primary effect must be one that neither advances nor inhibits religion" and that it does not foster an "excessive entanglement with religion."

In the Providence case, the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston found that the graduation prayer failed to meet the second part of the test, because it was an advancement of religion.

During the 1989 ceremony, Rabbi Leslie Gutterman of Temple Beth El in Providence thanked God "for the legacy of America where diversity is celebrated."

The suit against the school board was filed by Daniel Weisman, a professor of social work at Rhode Island College, whose daughter, Deborah, was one of the graduates. While his family is Jewish, Weisman maintained that non-Jewish students could have been offended by the prayer.

Three years earlier when his older daughter, Merith, graduated, Weisman complained to the superintendent because an invocation speaker thanked Jesus for the students' accomplishments.

Orthodox Jewish groups take a different view of the case than the secular Jewish organizations, although they maintain they strongly support the separation of church and state.

Legal experts for Agudath Israel of America and the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America find no problems with the Providence rabbi's prayers.

Orthodox More Flexible

William Rapfogel, executive director of the Orthodox Union's Institute for Public Affairs, said that while the Orthodox Union opposes prayer in public schools, "we think there can be some tolerance on occasions like graduations."

He said prayers such as the one the Providence rabbi offered are recited at many public school graduations, including some in New York.

But prayers at graduation ceremonies must show sensitivity for the audience, Rapfogel said. He said this could mean perhaps having a rabbi and a priest participate if the graduates include both Jews and Catholics.

Each case is different, and without this sensitivity it is "better not to do it," he said.

Rapfogel said the Providence school may not have exhibited this sensitivity in view of Weisman's complaint earlier about the Christian prayer at his older daughter's graduation.

David Zwiebel, Agudath Israel's director of government affairs, said the case could have a positive outcome if it led to a re-evaluation of government aid to religious schools. In this area, the establishment clause "has been interpreted too restrictively," Zwiebel said.

The Reagan administration had sought to convince the Supreme Court to be less restrictive on the establishment clause. The Bush administration apparently believes that in the Providence case, it has found the vehicle to accomplish this.

The Justice Department brief urging the Supreme Court to hear the case argued that Lemon vs. Kurtzman has been applied too rigidly. This has led to a "persistent tendency to invalidate practices with substantial historical sanctions," the brief said.

Stern of AJCongress, which has been involved in the Weisman case from the beginning, said the administration urged a hearing because of a "need to satisfy a narrow political consideration" and not "for the highest of motives."

"The administration has not been friendly to the view of at least the majority of Jewish organizations" on church-state issues, said Rabinove of AJCommittee.

Focus On New Justice

There is also a feeling that the court itself wants to change at least some of the restrictions on religion in governmental settings.

In the Providence case, all eyes will be on the newest justice, David Souter, who replaced Justice William Brennan, the court's most ardent defender of the First Amendment.

At his confirmation hearing last September, Souter said he would be reluctant to overturn a precedent. But questioned closely on Lemon vs. Kurtzman, he indicated he was aware of the difficulties in applying the three-part test.

"If I were to go to the court, I would not go with a personal agenda to foster" a re-examination of Lemon vs. Kurtzman, Souter said.

But he added, "Neither would I go in ignorance of the difficulty which has arisen in the administration of Kurtzman."