

VOL. 69 - 74th YEAR
TUESDAY, MAY 14, 1991
NO. 92

BAKER AND SOVIET WAX OPTIMISTIC DESPITE APPARENT LACK OF PROGRESS

By Gil Sedan

CAIRO, May 13 (JTA) -- The busy paths of James Baker and Alexander Bessmertnykh crossed for the second time in less than a month Monday in the offices of Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak at Cairo's Ittihadya Palace.

The two traveling diplomats, who last met April 25 in the Soviet Caucasus, and the Egyptian chief of state smiled happily.

But judging from the substance of their remarks to the news media, their apparent good humor had less to do with progress toward Middle East peace than with the tasty lunch laid out by the presidential chef and the fact that the palace air conditioner was working in the scorching 99-degree heat.

There was no drama. No breakthrough. Only the cautious optimism every diplomat wears like a badge.

At the end of the working lunch, the Soviet foreign minister, usually quite talkative, left the palace without a word to reporters.

Baker appeared on the palace veranda with Egyptian Foreign Minister Esmat Abdel-Meguid at his side. Mubarak, as usual, stayed in the wings for this part of the show.

The American secretary of state summed up what he said were the two major obstacles to a Middle East peace conference:

- * The differences between Israel and Syria over U.N. involvement in the conference.
- * The nature of the conference, whether it would be a one-time event, as the Israelis insist, or an ongoing forum, favored by the Arabs and the Soviets.

The question of Palestinian participation remains unresolved, Baker reported.

With respect to the first stumbling block, he acknowledged "significant differences" between the Syrians and Israelis, an understatement considering he got nowhere in a six-hour meeting Sunday with President Hafez Assad in Damascus.

Soviet To Meet With Arafat

Baker was to visit Jordan on Tuesday and fly to Jerusalem later in the day for his fourth round of talks with Israeli leaders.

His Soviet counterpart left Cairo on Monday for Saudi Arabia. Officials of the Palestine Liberation Organization said he would meet PLO chief Yasir Arafat at the Soviet Embassy in Geneva on Tuesday.

Baker intoned the standard note of optimism. There are "far more issues with respect to which there is agreement, than there are issues with respect to which there is no agreement," he said.

He did not estimate their relative weights but said he would continue his efforts to narrow the gap between them.

Baker, repeating a statement which has become the leitmotif of his mission, observed that "nobody can impose peace on the parties. They've got to want it."

Abdel-Meguid told reporters, "There are still some problems but we don't consider them insurmountable. We think the United States is very serious in its efforts, and we will continue to

work hand-in-hand until we see a peace conference start."

But Cairo seems to be taking a passive role at this juncture, being content to play host to the two superpowers and give them its blessing.

Foreign Minister Abdel-Meguid is expected to leave office after he is elected secretary-general of the League of Arab States on Wednesday. Mubarak leaves for Europe on Thursday to discuss ways to repay Egypt's huge foreign debt.

The Egyptian line has been: Let the big guys try to deliver the goods. And if they fail, the blame will certainly fall on the shoulders of Israel.

That attitude was expressed by a cartoon Sunday in the weekly Rose el-Yussuf.

It shows the Israeli prime minister, Yitzhak Shamir, offering the Arab world "land for peace." His right hand holds a knife and the other points at the piece of land he is willing to offer: a graveyard.

U.N. SECRETARY-GENERAL CRITICIZES NOTORIOUS 1975 RESOLUTION ON ZIONISM

By Aliza Marcus

UNITED NATIONS, May 13 (JTA) -- Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar on Monday strongly criticized the 1975 U.N. General Assembly resolution denigrating Zionism as a form of racism but said the United Nations still has to play a role in the Middle East peace process.

Speaking to reporters as he entered the U.N. building, Perez de Cuellar said his position had always been that the resolution "was a wrong and unfair interpretation of what Zionism is."

Officials at the Israeli Mission to the United Nations said they believed it was the first time the secretary-general had publicly condemned the resolution, which Israel is trying to have rescinded.

Perez de Cuellar also said "it would be wrong" to exclude Syria from peace negotiations, according to a transcript of his remarks provided by the Israeli Mission.

"I think it would be wrong to exclude any Arab country, particularly a country which is so important in the context of the Near East situation," he said when asked about Syria's participation.

Syria has demanded that the United Nations play a role in Middle East negotiations, something Israel categorically rejects because of the world body's perceived hostility toward the Jewish state.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, on his fourth swing through the Middle East in two months, tried unsuccessfully over the weekend to persuade Syria to soften its position. There are unconfirmed reports that Baker is now considering arranging a peace conference without Syrian participation to circumvent the problem.

Harris Schoenberg, director of U.N. affairs for B'nai B'rith International, said the secretary-general's statement on the Zionism resolution "takes on particular significance at this time" with Baker in the Middle East.

He said the United Nations wants to play a role in the peace process and knows that the Zionism resolution is an obstacle. He interpreted the secretary-general's statement as a "confi-

dence-building measure" and a signal that "the U.N. itself is interested in seeking the repeal" of the resolution.

Schoenberg also reported that U.S. and Israeli government officials dealing with U.N. affairs met in Washington a few weeks ago and decided to press for a vote to repeal the 1975 resolution during the next General Assembly session this fall.

The officials included John Bolton, U.S. assistant secretary of state for international organization affairs; his Israeli counterpart, Jochanan Bein; and Yoram Aridor, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations.

In his remarks on the resolution, Perez de Cuellar compared the Jews with the Basques in Spain or the Kurds, and said that demands for statehood should not be mixed up with racism.

"Zionism was first of all the need of the Jewish people to preserve their identity and at the same time to try and get a state for their nation," the secretary-general said.

"You cannot say that trying to get a territory for your nation is racism. For instance, the Kurds or the Basques in Spain are not racists. These are two different things which should not be mixed up," he said.

GULF STATES PRESSED BY THE E.C. TO RELAX BOYCOTT AGAINST ISRAEL By Yossi Lempkowicz

BRUSSELS, May 13 (JTA) -- The Persian Gulf states may be willing to consider breaking their economic boycott against Israel, but not until peace talks with the Jewish state begin, according to European Community leaders.

The foreign ministers of the 12 E.C. states raised the boycott issue during trade talks in Luxembourg over the weekend with the six member states of the Gulf Cooperation Council.

The Gulf states' responses were cautious, according to Jacques Poos, the foreign minister of Luxembourg, who currently holds the rotating chairmanship of the E.C. Council of Ministers.

"They are waiting for an opening from Israel, but they are not opposed to the principle of reconsidering the boycott measures once the peace process has started," he told reporters Sunday.

"They said the Arab side had already made a lot of concessions," Poos added.

The Gulf Cooperation Council consists of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Oman, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, all major oil producers.

The E.C. ministers' talks with them preceded a scheduled meeting in Brussels on Tuesday with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy to discuss a European role in the Middle East peace conference the United States is trying to arrange.

Poos said the Gulf states were backing Secretary of State James Baker's initiative. The foreign minister of Qatar, the current chairman of the cooperation council, told the Europeans that the member states were willing to participate in a Middle East peace conference as an observer.

A statement issued in Luxembourg said they would also participate "in any meetings that will include the countries of the region to discuss issues pertaining to arms control and destruction of all weapons of mass destruction, water resources and protection of the environment."

The United States called that statement a "breakthrough," but Israel dismissed it, insisting that every Arab country technically in a state of

war with Israel must participate fully in peace talks with it.

Levy will meet the 12 E.C. foreign ministers in the framework of the annual session of the E.C.-Israel Cooperation Council, a body that oversees the trade and cooperation agreements Israel has signed with the Europeans.

According to diplomatic sources, their talks will be mainly about an E.C. role in the proposed peace conference, which would be co-sponsored by the United States and the Soviet Union.

MAZDA SAYS REPORTS IT WILL SELL CARS TO ISRAEL ARE 'PREMATURE' By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, May 13 (JTA) -- When it comes to selling cars in Israel, Mazda has apparently decided to take a back seat to Toyota and Nissan.

Both Toyota Motor Corp. and Nissan Motor Corp. have announced in recent weeks that they are ready to begin selling cars to the Jewish state, after years of refusing to do so.

But Mazda says news reports that it has agreed to do the same are "premature."

Al Goldberg, a Mazda Motor Corp. spokesman in Los Angeles, said Monday that the Hiroshima-based company is only "studying" the idea. "We've not made a final decision," he said.

The Kyodo News Service, quoting industry sources, reported that Mazda would be selling the cars to Israel this year.

And Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, said Mazda officials told him last Friday that the company would sell 2,000 to 3,000 cars in Israel during 1991.

"I don't know whether they're going to" actually sell the cars in Israel, Steinberg said. "I can only say that they've told me so."

"Mazda has been conducting an economic study to determine the feasibility of marketing its products in Israel," the company said in a statement read by Goldberg.

"As has been the case in similar situations when it considers a new market, Mazda's final decision and announcement of a plan will be made only after the completion of negotiations regarding the establishment of a satisfactory distributor and dealer body."

"Our decision will be based on economic merit only," the company said, "without regard to boycott considerations."

That is consistent with statements made by other Japanese companies that have refused to do business in Israel. They deny they are complying with the Arab League economic boycott of Israel and usually say that Israel is too small a market to invest in.

But Toyota and Nissan have apparently decided that the size of the Israeli market is now worth the bother. Nissan would reportedly sell 4,000 to 5,000 cars in Israel.

And Toyota plans to sell 5,000 four-door Corollas in Israel during 1992, according to Tim Andree, manager for external affairs at Toyota's North American headquarters.

Andree said that since the company's announcement, Toyota has received "absolutely no comments whatsoever" from the Damascus-based Arab Central Boycott Office or Arab governments.

"I don't think we're concerned in any way" about a backlash, he said. "We expect to do business where it's profitable for us, and we've identified the Israeli market" as such, he said.

**SOVIETS DEBATE EMIGRATION BILL,
BUT POSTPONE A FINAL VOTE ON IT**

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, May 13 (JTA) -- After two days of debate, the Soviet parliament again postponed a vote Monday on a long-promised bill that would institutionalize recent reforms in Soviet emigration policy.

A vote is now expected later this week, possibly Thursday, according to reports from Moscow.

According to officials from Soviet Jewry advocacy groups here who were in touch with observers in Moscow, a vote in favor of the bill took place Monday but fell short of the quorum needed to adopt legislation.

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev has pressed for the law for two years, because until it is adopted, the Soviet Union cannot get the credits and trade benefits it needs to aid its beleaguered economy.

President Bush has said that until the law is enacted, he will not ask Congress to ratify a trade pact he signed last spring with Gorbachev.

Bush has also made adoption of the law a condition for waiving the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the U.S. Trade Act of 1974. The amendment links emigration reform with trade benefits.

The president granted a partial waiver of Jackson-Vanik sanctions last year, allowing the Soviet Union to get \$1 billion in credits to buy agricultural products needed to prevent starvation over the winter.

The Soviets are now requesting another \$1.5 billion in credits for agricultural products. Bush indicated last week he would like to help Gorbachev because of the Soviet leader's contributions to freedom in Eastern Europe and his support for the U.S.-led effort to drive Iraq out of Kuwait.

Soviet hard-liners have blocked passage of the emigration bill because of fears that it will cost too much to implement and lead to a "brain drain" of talent from the Soviet Union.

The bill not only makes it easier to emigrate but also to travel abroad. However, if the law is adopted, it will not go into effect until July 1992.

**NEW AUSTRALIAN IMMIGRATION LAW
COULD ALLOW IN MORE SOVIET JEWS**

By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Australia, May 13 (JTA) -- One thousand Jews, many of them from the Soviet Union, could be allowed to immigrate to Australia in the next year under recent changes in Australia's immigration laws.

The Australian immigration minister, Gerry Hand, said the new program will "admit certain people who did not meet (traditional) criteria but were nevertheless considered by the government to be in special need."

This includes relatives of Jews who have already immigrated to Australia, according to Immigration Department sources. Kurdish refugees are also likely to benefit from the changes.

The change in policy is thought to be the fulfillment of campaign pledges made by Prime Minister Bob Hawke to the Executive Council of Australian Jewry before last year's national elections.

Hawke wrote at the time, "We are prepared to seek to make provisions within our immigration guidelines to permit a limited humanitarian family reunion program, which would allow Soviet Jews

to join their relatives already settled in Australia over a defined period."

Leslie Caplan, president of the Australian Jewish organization, said that the Jewish community welcomes the policy as it applies to Jews and to humanitarian immigration in general.

An Immigration Department official attacked speculation that up to 12,000 Jews, mostly from the Soviet Union, would come to Australia in each of the next eight years as "confused nonsense."

However, as no final decisions have been made regarding the source countries for the newly eligible immigrants, the official said, it is not unreasonable to plan for about 1,000 Soviet Jews to arrive.

**ISRAEL COMPLAINS TO THE WHO
OF FALSE DATA ON TERRITORIES**

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, May 13 (JTA) -- An Israeli official has accused the Geneva-based World Health Organization of distorting reports about the health conditions of Palestinians in the administered territories.

Dr. Yitzhak Sever, the public health coordinator of Israel's Health Ministry, told a news conference here last Friday that it was absolutely untrue that health conditions in the territories have deteriorated either as a result of the intifada or the Persian Gulf War.

Israel has in fact continued to implement planned projects in face of those events, including the expansion of hospital services in the territories and the construction of a new psychiatric hospital, Sever said.

He specifically denied a report by the WHO's director general, Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima.

Israel is attending the annual General Assembly of the WHO, which opened here May 6.

Asked why Israel has refused to allow health experts to visit the territories since 1986, the Health Ministry official said the reports by those experts, once they returned to Geneva from Israel or the territories, were distorted versions of what they had told Israeli authorities before they left.

Sever said that in the three years since the Palestinian uprising began and during the Gulf war, health services continued to function without interruption, as did hospitals, clinics and training programs for medical personnel.

He said the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian refugees continued to provide services in 19 refugee camps and that cooperation between Israel and UNRWA continued throughout the Gulf crisis.

Israel's annual budget for medical services in the territories is about \$27 million, Sever said.

Earlier, the head of the Israeli delegation, Health Minister Ehud Olmert, made clear that health services in the territories are up to the standards prescribed by the WHO and are under the constant supervision of his ministry.

The annual report provided by the Israeli delegation showed marked improvements in health services over past years.

Meanwhile, the Palestine Liberation Organization's latest bid for admission to the WHO was ignored at the Geneva meeting.

Unlike in previous years, the PLO's request to have its representative appointed to the WHO did not even make the agenda of the admissions committee, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported.

(JTA correspondent Hugh Orgel in Tel Aviv contributed to this report.)

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:**ONE YEAR AFTER CARPENTRAS OUTRAGE, CEMETERY DESECRATION IS FORGOTTEN**

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, May 13 (JTA) -- The hideous desecration of the Jewish cemetery in the southern French town of Carpentras remains as much a mystery today as it was a year ago when the deed was done during the night of May 10-11, by parties still unknown.

And Carpentras wants to forget. No one there will talk about it, including the small Jewish community, which still uses the 13th-century burial ground.

On the anniversary, Freddy Haddad, a physician who heads the local Jewish community, did not answer his telephone. The mayor of Carpentras was on vacation. There was no commemoration of the act of racist vandalism that drew shudders of revulsion from people of all faiths around the globe.

Two Jewish women of the town entered the cemetery a day after it was assaulted. They found 34 gravestones overturned.

Two coffins had been exhumed. One was broken open. The corpse it contained of an 84-year-old man buried two weeks earlier had been skewered on the point of a white umbrella.

A large Star of David, ripped off another gravestone, was placed on the corpse's stomach. A plaque taken from another tombstone engraved with the words "Souvenir from the neighbors," was put on the genitals.

There were no graffiti, no symbols, no clues to help the police.

A force of 100 detectives sent from Paris to investigate the crime returned empty-handed. Although hundreds of suspects were detained for questioning, no leads were established.

Perpetrators Never Found

Then Interior Minister Pierre Joxe, who is now minister of defense, figured the perpetrators had to be members of Jean-Marie Le Pen's extreme right-wing National Front, a racist party with anti-Semitic tendencies.

On May 14, 1990, hundreds of thousands of people marched through the streets of Paris to protest the desecration. In an unprecedented demonstration of solidarity, President Francois Mitterrand joined the marchers.

Jewish militants from Paris' garment center carried an effigy of Le Pen with a sign saying "Carpentras -- It's Me."

There followed a period when, in the words of sociologist Paul Yonnet, Le Pen and his National Front were "demonized."

But the most exhaustive police investigation in years failed to link the extremists with the Carpentras crime. The police turned their attention to satanic cults and other marginal groups, to no avail.

On the first anniversary of Carpentras, no politician wants to talk about it, except Le Pen, who has donned a mantle of injured innocence.

He and a group of supporters went to the Elysee Palace gates to hand the guard an open letter for President Mitterrand.

"You know the truth" about the desecration, Le Pen wrote. "You know that the National Front is innocent. You ought then to publicly atone for the injustice done to its members and voters, all victims of the moral damage inflicted upon them because of you and your government."

POLISH CHURCH NO LONGER URGING END TO CHURCH-STATE SEPARATION

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, May 13 (JTA) -- Poland's Roman Catholic primate and bishops have done an about-face on their recent controversial demand to do away with the country's official separation of church and state.

The bishops' push to make Catholicism, in effect, the state religion had caused some concern among American Jewish observers of the Eastern European scene, not only for what it might have meant for Poland's tiny minority of fewer than 10,000 Jews, but also because it might have prompted other Eastern European nations to follow suit.

The bishops stated May 2 that they "proclaim themselves in favor of both the autonomy of state and church, and of their cooperation in the service of the same human person."

And in a sermon broadcast nationally Sunday night to Poland's 38 million citizens, over 95 percent of whom are Catholic, Cardinal Jozef Glemp said, "The church and state stand on different levels, should be independent from each other, but somehow bound to cooperate for the benefit of man. If such autonomy is called separation, that is acceptable."

"We're glad that they've issued this statement, and that Glemp has announced this," said George Spectre, director of political education at B'nai B'rith International. "Maintaining the separation reflects the will of the Polish people themselves."

But Spectre said B'nai B'rith is seeking further clarification from the church as to what "the benefit of man" means.

ANTI-SEMITIC ARTICLE PUBLISHED IN POPULAR HONG KONG NEWSPAPER

By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Australia, May 13 (JTA) -- A viciously anti-Semitic article originally published in the mass-circulation Hong Kong Daily News was condemned by the Australian Chinese Daily, a locally published Chinese-language newspaper that reprinted it.

The newspaper's administrative manager, Charles Ng, said the article was not typical of the Hong Kong Daily News and said the paper would publish a clear and unequivocal dissociation.

Robert Klarnet, public affairs director of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies, said Australia's Chinese community, estimated to number over 200,000, had a history of friendly relations with Australian Jewry.

Publication of the article was "an aberration," Klarnet told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

The author, who used the pseudonym "Ah Wei" (Mask), posed the question, "Why did Hitler kill the Jews?" and answered that "Jews have been cursed by God," the Jews "sold out Jesus" and "Jewish people know how to make profits" better than anyone else.

"Everywhere they go they make money and fleece people," the anonymous author claimed.

The author insisted, "I am definitely not inciting racial hatred. It is just that those heartless, rich, cruel and ruthless warmongers, selfish and avaricious people exist on this planet and unitedly extort from and harm weak peoples. This is a disaster for humanity."