

VOL. 69 - 74th YEAR

FRIDAY, MAY 24, 1991

NO. 99

**BAKER REMARKS DRAW IRE FROM ISRAEL  
AND SENATORS, BUT BACKING FROM BUSH  
By Gil Sedan**

JERUSALEM, May 23 (JTA) -- Israeli officials have responded angrily to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's sharp criticism of the Jewish state's settlement policy in the West Bank.

Yossi Ben-Aharon, director general of the Prime Minister's Office, charged Thursday that Baker has his priorities wrong.

The settlements have nothing to do with the peace process at this time, he said. They will become a factor only once direct negotiations between Israel and the Arab states begin, he said.

But in Washington, President Bush said Thursday afternoon that he was backing the secretary "100 percent."

"I strongly support what he said, and I strongly support what he is trying to do," Bush told reporters on the White House driveway.

Baker, appearing Wednesday before the House Appropriations subcommittee on foreign operations in Washington, said he did not think there was "any bigger obstacle to peace" than Jewish settlement activity in the West Bank, which "continues not only unabated but at an enhanced pace.

"And nothing has made my job of trying to find Arab and Palestinian partners for Israel more difficult than being greeted by a new settlement every time I arrive," Baker said, referring to his recent peace mission to the Middle East.

Although the Bush administration has long stated that settlements in the Israeli-administered territories are an obstacle to peace, this is the first time a senior U.S. official has described the settlements as the leading stumbling block.

Bush addressed the issue in milder terms at a news conference Thursday morning in the White House Rose Garden, stressing it was not the administration's intention to apply pressure on Israel or anyone.

**Bush Not 'Totally Pessimistic'**

In reply to questions, he said Baker had merely "reiterated the longstanding policy of the United States," so there is nothing "particularly new" in what the secretary said.

But Bush said he understood Baker's "concern and perhaps frustration" about the Jewish settlements. The issue "has been and will continue to be a difficult problem for us," Bush said.

"However," he added, "Israel is moving in some ways that I will not discuss with you, and so I have no reason to be totally pessimistic."

Baker defended his remarks in an appearance Thursday before the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on foreign operations. But he sought to appear more even-handed.

He said pointing out that Israeli settlements are obstacles to peace does not preclude any other obstacles as being equally obtrusive.

But Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) said Baker's statements Wednesday and Thursday "mean one and the same thing."

The secretary was raked over the coals by three Republican supporters of Israel: Sens. Alfonse D'Amato of New York, Robert Kasten of Wisconsin and Arlen Specter of Pennsylvania.

D'Amato told Baker his remarks did a "dis-service to your efforts" for Middle East peace.

In Jerusalem, Baker's unusually strong criticism of Israel aroused the ire of right-wing politicians for whom the settlements are an ideological imperative.

Housing Minister Ariel Sharon, regarded as the government official most directly responsible for the accelerated settlement drive, castigated Baker for blaming the settlements, instead of Syrian intransigence, for thwarting his mission.

Sharon claimed the real menace to peace in the region is the Syrian-Lebanese "brotherhood pact" signed Wednesday in Damascus, which, Israelis charge, amounts to the annexation of Lebanon by Syria.

Rehavim Ze'evi, a minister without portfolio who represents the far right-wing Moledet party, also denounced Baker's remarks.

Geula Cohen of Tehiya defended the settlements as the embodiment of Zionist fulfillment.

But not all Israelis agree. Shimon Peres, leader of the opposition Labor Party, urged a freeze of settlement activity while peace efforts are under way.

He cited as precedent the three-month settlement freeze in effect during the 1978 Camp David talks, when a Likud government, headed by Menachem Begin, was in power in Jerusalem.

In New York, American Jewish organizations from across the political spectrum issued statements criticizing Baker's remarks. While only some of them actually backed Israel's settlement policy, all were in agreement that the refusal of the Arab states so far to negotiate with Israel is a much bigger obstacle to Middle East peace.

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

**CHENEY WILL VISIT ISRAEL NEXT WEEK,  
BUT NOT TO FOLLOW UP ON BAKER TALKS  
By David Friedman**

WASHINGTON, May 23 (JTA) -- Defense Secretary Dick Cheney will visit Israel for three days starting May 29, the Pentagon announced Thursday.

Cheney will meet with Israeli President Chaim Herzog, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Defense Minister Moshe Arens.

The visit to Israel is part of a 10-day trip by Cheney, which starts Monday in Paris with talks with French President Francois Mitterrand and the new French prime minister, Edith Cresson. Cheney will attend a NATO meeting in Brussels before going to Jerusalem.

After Israel, Cheney will spend five days in Cairo for talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Defense Minister Mohammed Tantawi.

Pentagon officials stressed that Cheney's visit to Israel and Egypt is not a follow-up to Secretary of State James Baker's recent trip to the Middle East.

Cheney, who will be making his first visit to Israel as defense secretary, announced plans for the trip May 2 at a news conference just before he spoke to the American Jewish Committee's annual meeting in New York. Since then he has visited the Persian Gulf states.

Pentagon officials said the talks in Israel

and Egypt would cover bilateral, regional and strategic matters. But there is some speculation that Cheney will be sounding out France and the two Middle East countries on the Bush administration's plans for controlling nuclear, biological and chemical arms in the Middle East.

The administration so far has refused to confirm reports that it would ask Israel not to produce nuclear weapons and the Arab countries to get rid of their chemical weapons.

The proposal also would reportedly require a ban in the Middle East of all ballistic missiles with a range of more than 90 miles.

#### **NEWS ANALYSIS:**

#### **'BROTHERHOOD PACT' IS SEEN BY ISRAEL AS VIRTUAL SYRIAN TAKEOVER OF LEBANON** By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 23 (JTA) -- Israel has asked the United States to convey a warning to the Syrian government that it will not tolerate changes in the military status quo in Lebanon as a result of the Syrian-Lebanese "brotherhood pact" signed in Damascus on Wednesday.

Israeli officials consider the accord a virtual takeover of Lebanon by Syria, with some calling it tantamount to annexation.

But the message sent via Washington was to caution President Hafez Assad not to exercise his new control in a way that would cross the metaphorical "red line" that has kept the two nations from clashing in Lebanon in recent years.

The most serious infringement would be the southward movement of Syrian troops toward the Israeli border, which Israel would not permit.

Otherwise, Israel will measure Syria's intentions by the extent to which it allows terrorist groups to operate from southern Lebanon.

The prevailing atmosphere reported in southern Lebanon was one of "acute tension."

Palestinian guerrilla groups and two Shi'ite groups, the pro-Syrian Amal militia and the pro-Iranian Hezbollah or Party of God, were said to be bracing for a pre-emptive Israeli military strike in response to the Damascus agreement.

But there were no signs of the massive Israeli military buildup in the southern Lebanon security zone or along Israeli-Lebanese border that had been reported by foreign news media.

Israeli officials have denied anything more than a heightened alert in response to events in Lebanon: Officers of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon confirm there have been no unusual Israeli military preparations in the region.

#### **Assad May Proceed Cautiously**

Israeli experts acknowledge Syria won a diplomatic victory by subjugating Lebanon. But one expert on Syria, Hebrew University Professor Moshe Maoz, believes Assad will proceed cautiously.

"I think Syria's aim is not to swallow Lebanon because they tried to do that in 1976 and had problems digesting it," Maoz said.

He was referring to the entry of Syrian troops into Lebanon, at the nominal request of the Arab League, to try to end the civil war that had broken out between Moslems and Christians.

"I think that Assad has now become more clever, more realistic. His control will be indirect," Maoz predicted.

According to other experts, the "brotherhood pact" contains no timetable for the withdrawal of Syrian troops from Lebanon and thereby legitimizes their presence.

It weakens calls for the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon and turns the country into a Syrian protectorate, these experts say.

They point to the growing weakness in the Christian camp, which has refrained from confronting Syria. The Lebanese president who signed the pact, Elias Hwari, is Christian. But he owes his position entirely to the Syrians.

According to some Israeli analysts, the feeble response from the once militant Christian community stems from a lack of support abroad and Syria's improved image in the West, including the United States, which appreciates its participation in the recent war against Iraq.

#### **Israeli-Syrian Coordination**

The daily Yediot Achronot, in a long analysis of the Syrian-Lebanese pact, said it may have "affected Israel's prestige among its supporters in Lebanon" but "did not substantially change the security situation along the northern border."

"Moreover, the claim that increased Syrian involvement in Lebanon provides Israel with more security is not groundless," the paper observed.

It said there has been a longstanding covert agreement between Israel and Syria, dating from 1976, when Syrian troops entered Lebanon "with the blessings of the then prime minister (of Israel), Yitzhak Rabin."

The understanding was broken briefly when Israel invaded Lebanon in 1982 and clashed with Syrian forces.

Thereafter, "Israel obtained Syria's covert agreement to its operations in the security zone while Syria obtained covert Israeli agreement to its operations in the rest of Lebanon," Yediot Achronot said.

"Damascus and Jerusalem alike have created a murky picture of their relations in Lebanon. But the truth is there are more points of assent between Syria and Israel regarding Lebanon than points of dissent," the newspaper claimed.

"Although the Syrians wish Israel could be rooted out of the security zone, they will shed no tears if Israel remains there, because that provides more legitimacy than yesterday's agreement to the continued presence of Syrian forces in Lebanon," the paper said.

#### **SECURITY COUNCIL ASKED TO CONVENE ON RECENT EXPULSION OF PALESTINIANS** By Aliza Marcus

UNITED NATIONS, May 23 (JTA) -- Israel soon may find itself under attack again from the Security Council, if it accepts a request for a formal meeting on Israel's recent deportation of four Palestinians from the Gaza Strip.

The 15-member council was holding informal consultations Thursday on the deportations, but they were not expected to reach a decision by the end of the day.

Israel's deportation on May 18 of the four Palestinians immediately drew the criticism of both the United States and U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar.

Israeli officials have said that the four, who were flown to the Israel-controlled security zone in southern Lebanon, were senior members of a terrorist organization and had been jailed numerous times for violent acts.

The Palestine Liberation Organization's U.N. observer has sent a letter to Perez de Cuellar asking that Israel "ensure the safe and immediate return of all those expelled Palestinians."

## DESPITE TRADITIONALIST DEFECTION, CANTORS GROUP ADMITS WOMEN MEMBERS

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, May 21 (JTA) -- After three years of often divisive debate and the formation of a splinter group of cantors unhappy with what it sees as the group's liberal bent, the Conservative movement's Cantors Assembly inducted its first women members this month.

Fourteen women were welcomed into the professional organization at its 44th annual convention by Cantor Samuel Rosenbaum, the group's executive vice president, who said in his address, "We finally took courage into our own hands and decided to admit qualified women."

"We could no longer have a part in the duplicity of recruiting women to study for the cantorate, encouraging them in their studies, providing them with scholarship assistance, helping them with repertoire and advice, and then admit the men and bar the door to the women," he said.

The convention was held May 5 to 9 in Los Angeles. Nineteen male cantors also were inducted into the assembly.

The Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary has been awarding the diploma of chazzan to women since 1987, two years after it ordained its first woman rabbi. And the Reform movement has ordained women cantors since 1975.

But the Orthodox do not permit women to serve as cantors or rabbis.

A splinter group of "traditional" Conservative cantors was started at the initiative of four Toronto cantors, who found themselves at odds with the direction the Cantors Assembly and the entire Conservative movement has been taking.

### 'Moving Dramatically To The Left'

The decision of the Cantors Assembly to admit women brought the more traditional cantors' dissatisfaction to a head, according to Cantor A. Eliezer Kirshblum, one of the leaders of the new group, which has adopted the working name of the International Federation of Traditional Cantors.

But "there were other disenchantments over the years," he said, citing the "tendency of the organization to move dramatically to the left."

"Many of their legal decisions reflect a loose, liberal definition that puts them more closely aligned to the Reform movement than what was intended by founders of the Conservative movement," he asserted.

"Many of us think there will be an amalgamation" of the Conservative and Reform cantors groups at some point in the future.

The new group had planned its first convention for early May, but because the dates conflicted with the Cantors Assembly gathering, and one of the more traditional cantors was to speak at the assembly gathering, the new organization's meeting was postponed until Oct. 13. It is scheduled to take place in Toronto.

Seventy five cantors have registered to attend the first convention, according to Kirshblum, and he expects another 50 to sign up now that the date has been postponed.

Any attempts by the newly elected Cantors Assembly president, Cantor Nathan Lam of Los Angeles, to accommodate the more traditional rabbis "will fail," Kirshblum said. "You can't be treife and kosher at the same time," he said.

The new organization plans to offer its

members the same services offered by the Cantors Assembly: seminars, placement assistance, pension arrangements and insurance benefits.

It may be able to accomplish that through affiliation with the Union For Traditional Judaism, the Mt. Vernon, N.Y.-based rabbinic and educational organization which split off from the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1984 and founded its own seminary last year.

### 70 Or 80 Cantors Have Joined

Some 70 or 80 cantors are members of the union at present, according to Rabbi Ronald Price, its executive vice president. They obtain benefits through the union's Cantorial Services Committee, co-chaired by Toronto's Cantor Kirshblum.

Informal discussions between the union and the nascent cantors group have already taken place, though no official alliance has been formed.

Still, the union's Cantorial Services Committee is "happy to provide them with services immediately," Price said.

Though the schism between liberal and more traditional elements within Conservative Jewry is not new, the splintering of the cantors group "may be the final step in dividing" the Conservative movement, said Price.

Two members of the 450-member Cantors Assembly resigned over the decision to admit women, and Kirshblum, who was on the group's executive committee but resigned the post. For the moment, however, he remains a member of the assembly.

About the development of the alternative group, Rosenbaum of the Cantors Assembly would only say: "Our organization covers the gamut from liberal, mainline to conservative, and so far, there's been room for everybody."

While the divisive issue of admitting women has been settled, participation in the professional organization is just beginning for the 14 women who were inducted.

They received a gracious and "very menschlik" reception at the convention, according to Cantor Marla Rosenfeld Barugel of Congregation B'nai Israel in Rumson, N.J.

### 'Cannot Long Masquerade As Men'

Membership in the assembly gives the newly admitted cantors "a feeling of professional support, a group in which to share ideas," she said.

The assembly's effort to create a welcoming environment for the women at the convention, by asking them to lead services, read Torah, and sing during workshops, was appreciated by the new cantors, Rosenfeld Barugel said, who viewed it as "a statement that 'We're trying to make up for all of these years.'"

The assembly is also commissioning the first Conservative cantorial music for soprano and alto voices, rather than simply requiring the women to make do with music written for male voices and transposed into their range.

"The women cannot long exist trying to masquerade as men," acknowledged the assembly's Rosenbaum, who advocated admitting women to the organization.

"Our bylaws permitted women all the time, but we were too blind to see it," he said of the three years of debate within the organization's membership before a legal review of the bylaws revealed that women were not barred.

**REMINDER:** The JTA Daily News Bulletin will not be published on Monday, May 27.

## ETHIOPIAN JEWS REPORTED SAFE AS REBELS APPROACH ADDIS ABABA

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, May 23 (JTA) -- The future of an estimated 18,000 Jews waiting in Addis Ababa to immigrate to Israel may be decided when Ethiopian government officials meet with rebel leaders in London on Monday to discuss a cease fire, sources here say.

The rebels, said to be about 19 miles from the capital, have rejected a cease-fire offer by the interim government but are delaying their entry into the city to avoid bloodshed, reports from Ethiopia said Thursday.

Israeli circles expressed hope that Addis Ababa does not fall before Monday's meeting.

But for the time being, all seems well with the Jews in the Ethiopian capital and the handful of Israelis there with them, the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot reported Thursday.

Concern was expressed for their safety after Ethiopian President Mengistu Haile Mariam resigned Tuesday and fled the country.

Israeli journalists reporting from Addis Ababa said the city was tense but quiet except for occasional gunfire. The shooting was by armed citizens testing their rifles in case of a clash with the rebels, the reports said.

Yediot Achronot reported that foreigners were leaving by a massive airlift that has put a strain on airline offices and embassies.

## NEW PROVISION IN CIVIL RIGHTS BILL UNLIKELY TO ALTER JEWISH POSITIONS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, May 23 (JTA) -- Democratic leaders of the House of Representatives have decided to amend proposed civil rights legislation to state specifically that minority hiring quotas are illegal.

But that is not expected to change any minds among proponents and opponents of the legislation in the Jewish community.

Nor has it seemed to change any minds in Congress and at the White House, where a spokesman said President Bush still considers it "a quota bill." Bush vetoed a similar bill last year, contending it would result in quotas.

Making comments difficult is that no one has actually seen the revised bill, nor are they expected to see it before next week, when it will be introduced in the House.

Representatives of the only two major Jewish organizations to oppose the legislation, Agudath Israel of America and the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, both stressed Thursday that they want to see the specific language.

William Rapfogel, executive director of the Orthodox Union's Institute for Public Affairs, said his organization "will take a very good look at the bill," since the "nuance" of the actual language is important. "A little change of words can make a major difference," he said.

Rapfogel said that when the Orthodox Union announced its opposition to the bill earlier this month, it stressed it wants to work with Congress and the administration in bringing about civil rights legislation that will not result in quotas.

But David Zwiebel, Agudath Israel's general counsel, said that while he, too, wants to study the specific language, he believes it will be "extraordinarily difficult" to come up with legis-

lation in which employers would not institute quotas to prevent a costly lawsuit.

Zwiebel explained that if an employer has to be conscious of the percentage of each group in his work force, as compared with the percentage of that group in the general population, quotas will be introduced.

But Michael Lieberman, associate director of the Washington office of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, said the league welcomes the more explicit language on quotas in the revised bill.

Lieberman noted that the ADL and most other major Jewish organizations had insisted that the original bill was not a quota bill.

"We welcome changes that have been made further clarifying that it will not be a quota bill," he said.

## Would Ban Race-Norming Practice

Jewish groups have pointed out that if an employer introduces quotas as a protection from a lawsuit, the employer could face legal action for having quotas.

The civil rights bill is aimed at circumventing five 1989 Supreme Court decisions that make it more difficult for people to prove they are victims of job discrimination.

The bill also would allow persons discriminated against because of their sex, religion or national origin to sue for compensatory and punitive damages. Such damages are now only allowed for victims of racial discrimination.

When the bill was introduced in the House in January as its first piece of legislation, supporters emphasized that the chief beneficiary of the new law would be women. But the changes made this week also put a \$150,000 limit on what women could receive in damages.

"We are certainly disappointed that the compromise has put a cap on punitive damages," said Sammie Moshenberg, Washington representative of the National Council of Jewish Women.

But the women's group remains in support of the bill, Moshenberg said, along with most major American Jewish organizations.

Lieberman said the ADL also was pleased that the revised law would ban "race-norming."

This is a system where the aptitude test scores for job applicants are ranked on the basis of race or ethnic origin, rather than on the entire applicant pool.

Race-norming was introduced by the Reagan administration when minorities complained that the tests were unfair. But Lieberman said that outlawing the practice would encourage employers to develop tests that are fair.

## MAN FINED FOR CIRCULATING 'PROTOCOLS'

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, May 23 (JTA) -- A founding member of Jean-Marie Le Pen's extreme right-wing National Front was fined the equivalent of \$1,700 for reprinting and circulating a notorious anti-Semitic libel, "The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion."

Christian Ricard, 61, was found guilty by the court of justice in the southern French town of Rodez.

The "Protocols," a forgery purporting to expose a Jewish plot to rule the world, was written in Paris for the czarist secret police about 100 years ago. Its circulation in France is a criminal offense.