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**KASHMIRI REBELS RELEASE ISRAELI  
TAKEN HOSTAGE IN NORTHERN INDIA**
**By Hugh Orgel**

TEL AVIV, July 3 (JTA) -- Moslem rebels in northern India have released a 22-year-old Israeli tourist held hostage for a week, it was reported here Wednesday from Srinagar, capital of Kashmir province.

Yair Yitzhaki, a resident of the Old City in Jerusalem, was handed over to U.N. representatives in Srinagar following an appeal from U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar, who is presently in Europe.

Israel's U.N. ambassador, Yoram Aridor, immediately expressed his gratitude "to all who assisted in this matter, including the U.N. secretary-general and his staff," said a spokeswoman at the Israeli mission in New York.

Yitzhaki was one of seven Israelis and a Dutch woman kidnapped off a houseboat on Lake Dal near Srinagar on June 26 by members of the extremist Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front.

One Israeli, Erez Cohen, was killed in a gun battle with their captors. His body was flown back to Israel on Sunday and buried Monday.

Three others were wounded but managed to escape and were hospitalized in Srinagar. Yitzhaki was expected to return home with them by the end of the week.

The rebels, whose violent tactics have emptied Kashmir of foreign visitors, want to separate the province from India or join it to neighboring Pakistan.

**PALESTINIANS FAIL TO WIN A PLEDGE  
FROM BAKER ON ENTITY IN TERRITORIES**

WASHINGTON, July 3 (JTA) -- Two Palestinians who met here Tuesday with Secretary of State James Baker apparently failed to win a commitment from him that the United States would press for a Palestinian entity in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

But during a news conference Wednesday the Palestinians would not say what Baker told them during the State Department meeting.

The Bush administration is officially on record against a Palestinian state.

The Palestinians also said they urged Baker to continue his efforts to bring about a Middle East peace conference. "We believe that the United States, as a power ready to use force in certain places," cannot abandon its responsibilities to seek peace, said one of the Palestinians, Faisal Hussein.

The other, Hanan Mikhail Ashrawi, warned that if the situation is allowed to drift, "it will degenerate into conditions of tremendous violence, tremendous hostility, tremendous bitterness."

At a news conference Monday, President Bush said the United States will continue the peace effort. But he said the time has come for "more progress," especially on the procedural details of a peace conference.

Bush warned both Israel and the Arab countries that if there is no progress, he will go before the American people and assess blame for the deadlock.

Ashrawi left no doubt that the Palestinians

believe it is Israel that is blocking progress. "It is not a sin of omission, it is a sin of commission," she said.

The two Palestinians issued a statement that they were designated by the Palestine Liberation Organization "to engage the U.S. administration in these talks." Both have been part of Palestinian delegations that met with Baker on his recent visits to Israel.

The United States broke off a formal dialogue with the PLO in Tunis over a year ago after the PLO refused to condemn an unsuccessful terrorist attack on a Tel Aviv beach in May 1990.

**IDF SOLDIER KILLED BY PLO FIGHTERS  
IN ATTACK ON SLOPES OF MOUNT HERMON**
**By Hugh Orgel**

TEL AVIV, July 3 (JTA) -- A 26-year-old Israel Defense Force reservist was killed Wednesday morning by Palestinian guerrillas who attacked an IDF position on the slopes of Mount Hermon, in the eastern sector of the security zone Israel patrols in southern Lebanon.

The attackers then fled toward Syrian lines.

The soldier was identified as Sgt. Maj. Ehud Ben-Mordechai, a married man with one son.

The Palestinians reportedly approached the Israeli outpost through Syrian positions in the Bekaa Valley of eastern Lebanon.

They launched a surprise attack with small arms and rockets. When Israeli soldiers returned the fire, they fled across the rocky terrain.

The fatality was the first suffered by the IDF since guerrilla and terrorist bands began retreating toward the southern Lebanon security zone last month under pressure from the advancing Lebanese regular army.

The Lebanese regulars, protected by Syria, are attempting to disarm all factional militias and terrorist gangs in southern Lebanon to restore the authority of the Beirut government after 16 years of civil war.

They have engaged in full-scale battles with heavily armed units of the Palestine Liberation Organization around Sidon near the western end of the security zone.

Mount Hermon is at the eastern end of the 6-mile-wide buffer zone that extends some 50 miles along the Israeli-Lebanese border.

**Government Forces Prevailing**

Israeli soldiers killed two more fighters in the western sector Tuesday and wounded a third, while suffering no casualties.

On Monday, an IDF patrol killed three members of the Shi'ite fundamentalist Hezbollah militia at the western end of the security zone. Two soldiers were wounded slightly in that encounter.

The Lebanese Defense Ministry in Beirut claimed Wednesday that government forces have prevailed against the PLO in fighting around the Ein Hilweh and Mich Mich refugee camps east of Sidon and neighboring villages.

But intermittent tank and artillery fire continued during the night and heavy exchanges erupted Wednesday morning, resulting in casualties on both sides, Israeli sources reported.

On Tuesday, the IDF chief of staff, Lt. Gen.

Ehud Barak, told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the IDF would continue to operate inside the security zone and north of it as required.

He said the IDF would also operate against Syrian forces if they attempt to extend their positions south of the unofficial "red line" separating them from the IDF.

### **ISRAELI AND U.S. OFFICIALS DRAFTING RESOLUTION TO REPEAL ZIONISM MEASURE** By Aliza Marcus

UNITED NATIONS, July 3 (JTA) -- Israeli and U.S. officials are in the process of drafting a resolution to repeal the infamous 1975 U.N. General Assembly resolution denigrating Zionism as a form of racism.

Israel's U.N. ambassador, Yoram Aridor, said a U.S.-prepared draft is being studied and there is hope that the resolution will finally be repealed in the upcoming General Assembly session.

The two countries are "working very closely" on preparing a draft that could be submitted this fall if its passage is assured by a "comfortable majority," Aridor said at a news conference here last week.

"When we have the final count, we will move forward," he said.

Although repeal of the resolution would "delete a shameful stain from the United Nations, it does not mean all the problems with the United Nations are solved," he warned.

Israel has long charged the United Nations with harboring an anti-Israel bias, and the Jewish state points specifically to Resolution 3379, which describes the Zionist movement as racist.

Many countries have called for the resolution's repeal. But until recently, few believed Israel could muster enough votes in the General Assembly to accomplish this.

With the collapse of Soviet domination over Eastern Europe two years ago, Israel was able to renew ties with a number of countries that originally supported the resolution. Eastern European leaders are now vocal supporters of the resolution's repeal, as are many South American countries.

Last year, there was hope the issue could have been brought up in the last General Assembly, but the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and a series of Security Council resolutions critical of Israel poisoned the atmosphere.

#### **A Question Of Timing**

Aridor said that Israel, the United States and some other supporters are studying the situation carefully to decide when and if the repeal resolution should be brought up during the next General Assembly.

Supporters of the measure's repeal point out that timing is very important. It would be a terrible blow if the General Assembly voted against repeal, which would in effect reaffirm the resolution.

Aridor, who is a vocal critic of the United Nations, called it a "biased, one-sided institution." He pointed out that although the Security Council frequently criticizes Israel, it never condemns the killing of Jews by Arabs.

"We know exactly what the United Nations stands for. Certainly, it doesn't stand for Israel," he said during the news conference.

When asked why Israel does not just totally ignore the United Nations if it is so anti-Israel,

Aridor said it is important that Israel respond to all charges.

"I suppose that although you can't bring positive victories, we can prevent sometimes worse decisions," he said.

Aridor reiterated the Israeli government view that the United Nations has no role to play in a Middle East peace process between Israel and the Arab countries.

Although the United States has suggested that Israel allow a U.N. observer with no powers to attend any peace negotiations, Israel has refused, believing that any U.N. involvement would set a dangerous precedent.

### **EGYPT DETAINS ISRAELI SCIENTISTS** By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, July 3 (JTA) -- Egyptian authorities have seized an Israeli yacht with 13 people on board who were charged with illegal entry into Egyptian territorial waters near Sharm el-Sheikh in southern Sinai.

The Eilat-registered vessel Solan carried a party of 12 marine biologists and botanists, led by Professor Yoel Kashman of Tel Aviv University.

They and its captain were escorted to A-Tor, the administrative capital of southern Sinai, where the scientists were also accused of illegal scuba diving and collecting marine specimens without a permit.

Israeli diplomats from the Cairo Embassy reportedly went to A-Tor to try to settle matters. Foreign Ministry sources said they hoped the detainees would be freed by the end of the day but the ship probably would be held, pending a court hearing.

Israeli sources suggested the incident stemmed from a "misunderstanding" or was the work of an overzealous local official.

The Egyptian Consulate in Eilat said it had no information about the seizure of an Israeli vessel.

### **AVI PAZNER NAMED ENVOY TO ITALY** By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, July 3 (JTA) -- Avi Pazner, for the last 10 years a close aide to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, has been named Israel's next ambassador to Italy.

He is said to have preferred France but was blocked in that ambition by Foreign Minister David Levy, who was reluctant to replace veteran Ambassador Ovadia Soffer with Shamir's man.

Pazner, 54, is currently Shamir's media spokesman and adviser.

A career diplomat, he joined the Foreign Ministry as a trainee and served at a number of posts in Africa and the United States. He became the Foreign Ministry's media spokesman 10 years ago when Shamir was foreign minister.

Pazner was originally slated to be ambassador to Austria, a post vacant since the election of Kurt Waldheim to the presidency in 1988. Because of Waldheim's Nazi past, Israel decided not to send an ambassador to Vienna as long as he is in office.

Shamir reportedly promised the Paris embassy to his aide but apparently could not override Levy.

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**REMINDER: The JTA Daily News Bulletin will not be published on Friday, July 5.**

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:  
BILL TO RESTORE RELIGIOUS GUARANTEES  
FACES FIGHT FROM ANTI-ABORTION GROUPS  
By Howard Rosenberg**

WASHINGTON, July 3 (JTA) -- A bill intended to make it tougher for states to enact laws that could infringe on religious liberties has run into opposition from anti-abortion groups.

The bill, introduced in the House of Representatives last week with broad support from Jewish groups, is intended to circumvent a U.S. Supreme Court ruling last year that said states no longer had to demonstrate a "compelling interest" before enacting laws that might bar certain religious practices.

Jewish groups fear the April 1990 ruling could permit states to outlaw such religious practices as the drinking of Sabbath wine by minors or the wearing of kippot by children in the public schools.

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1991, which is expected to be introduced in the Senate later this month, would again require states to show that laws impinging on religious freedom serve a necessary state interest.

Jewish groups consider the bill the most important religious liberty legislation ever to come before Congress.

When a similar bill was introduced in Congress last July, it immediately gained the support of a wide array of religious groups.

But now so-called pro-life groups are concerned that the "compelling state interest test" could be used to overturn state laws regulating abortion, on the grounds that they would violate a woman's religious right to have an abortion.

These opponents of the bill, which include the National Right to Life Committee, the U.S. Catholic Conference and key anti-abortion lawmakers, cite a 1979 decision by a federal district court judge in Brooklyn that struck down an anti-abortion law on religious liberty grounds.

**Abortion Exemption Opposed**

While the Catholic Conference is against any law that could invalidate legislation curbing abortion rights, it supports a legislative mechanism for guaranteeing that laws do not impose undue hardship on individual religious practices.

The conference is suggesting that the House bill be amended to exempt abortion laws from having to meet the "compelling interest" test.

But the bill's sponsor, Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.), recently argued that if such a provision were incorporated, the coalition that supports the proposed legislation would "come apart, and we wouldn't be able to pass the bill."

Neither the American Jewish Committee nor the American Jewish Congress expressed any interest in backing such a modification, even if it meant ensuring passage of the bill.

Mark Pelavin, AJCongress Washington representative, said he "can't think of anything more inconsistent with religious liberties" than to divide religious freedom guarantees that way.

Samuel Rabinove, legal director of the AJCommittee, said his a woman's desire to have an abortion for religious reasons is "a matter of religious belief and conviction" equal to other free-exercise interests that an individual has.

The House bill has 41 co-sponsors besides Solarz, 35 of whom are Democrats. The Senate bill will be introduced by Sens. Joseph Biden (D-Del.) and Orrin Hatch (R-Utah).

**U.N. LABOR PANEL SCORES ISRAEL  
FOR TREATMENT OF PALESTINIANS  
By Tamar Levy**

GENEVA, July 3 (JTA) -- Israel's treatment of Palestinian workers in the administered territories came under bitter attack during this year's International Labor Organization conference here.

The attack, led by Arab countries with dubious records concerning their own trade unions and workers' rights, occurred during a special session dealing with a report on workers in the administered territories.

Still, monitors of the conference said the attack was less heated than in years past, and they noted that Arab countries did not try to push through any resolutions censuring Israel.

But the special session itself was disturbing to many supporters of Israel, who believe Israel is being singled out for political reasons. The ILO conference was held from June 4 through June 27.

Rabbi Menachem Porush, the Israeli deputy minister of labor and social affairs, asked why Israel alone was the subject of discussion and said, "Are there no problems, no problems at all in other countries?"

The delegate from the Histadrut, Israel's labor federation, said the organization was trying to educate Palestinians in the administered territories about their rights and was willing to give them whatever help or information they needed.

"Instead of fighting the mosquitoes, let us dry up the marshes," the delegate, Yousfi Kara, said, quoting a proverb. "Let us drain the swamp of hostility and hatred," he added.

But most Arab delegates refused to address the topic of Palestinian workers' rights and instead chose to use the session as a way to argue against U.S. and Israeli policy in the region.

**'Israel Has Been Singled Out'**

"We clearly see that peace cannot possibly be achieved in Palestine, the land of peace, as long as Israel continues to pursue its aggressionist policy and as long as the United States does not bear pressure on Israel," said Farouk Kaddoumi of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

"The extent to which the Israeli occupation authorities flout international conventions and agreements is obvious," charged the Syrian delegate, whose country is considered one of the worst violators of human rights.

Since 1978, the report on the administered territories has been a regular addition to the ILO's annual study of trade union and workers' rights around the world.

In New York, Michael Perry, assistant director of the Jewish Labor Committee, said he was "greatly disturbed that Israel has been singled out for special criticism."

Perry, whose organization recently issued a report on trade union rights in Arab League countries, pointed out the virtual absence of such rights in the Arab world.

But despite the usual charges leveled against Israel, it emerged relatively unscathed this year.

"On the positive side, nothing official was passed and no resolution against Israel came out of the conference," said Perry, whose organization monitored the meeting.

In the past, important ILO business has been held up by Arab countries' insistence that the organization take up anti-Israel resolutions.

(JTA correspondent Aliza Marcus at the United Nations contributed to this report.)

## **JEWES BEGIN LEAVING SOVIET UNION UNDER NEW PASSPORT REGULATIONS**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, July 3 (JTA) -- The first Jews to leave the Soviet Union since new passport regulations went into effect Monday arrived in Budapest on Tuesday and were expected to be in Israel by Thursday.

According to reports from the Hungarian capital, the first flight of 95 reached the transit point there Tuesday and another 335 were due Wednesday en route to Israel.

It could not immediately be determined how many Soviet Jewish emigrants were arriving in the two other principal transit points: Warsaw and Bucharest, Romania.

The new Soviet emigration law that took effect July 1 allows anyone to leave the country, but only with a passport.

Israeli officials have expressed concern that the sudden massive demand for passports will overwhelm the Soviet bureaucracy, delaying the departure of Jews for Israel.

But top officials of OVIR, the Soviet emigration authority, have promised Israeli officials and American Jewish leaders that Jews who already have exit permits will get priority in receiving passports.

There are already reports that the OVIR office in Kiev is giving preference to those bound for Israel.

Nevertheless, anticipation of bureaucratic delays has resulted in a stampede of departures for Israel in recent weeks. About 8,000 Soviet Jews landed here last weekend alone, and more than 20,000 olim arrived during June, the biggest monthly number so far this year.

Israeli immigration authorities predict the June rush will mean much smaller numbers of arrivals this month, even if the anticipated passport delays do not materialize.

## **AUSTRALIAN JEWRY BATTLING ATTEMPT BY GROUP TO OUTLAW KOSHER SLAUGHTER**

By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Australia, July 3 (JTA) -- The Jewish community here is squaring off against an animal rights group that is trying to outlaw the practice of kosher slaughter.

Australian Jews are outraged at the initiative and the group's suggestion that kosher slaughter -- or shechita, as it is called in Hebrew -- is inhumane.

The Royal Society for Prevention of Cruelty to Animals has proposed to the Australian Law Reform Commission that the laws relating to the slaughter of animals for human consumption be made more stringent and without "exemptions."

The Law Reform Commission is receiving verbal and written comments until Aug. 1 on matters arising from possible clashes between Australian law and the needs and beliefs of citizens of varied racial and religious backgrounds.

According to David Butcher, spokesman for the anti-cruelty society, the Jewish method of killing animals needs to be changed to lessen the pain.

Rabbi Moshe Gutnick of the New South Wales Kashrut Authority said the Jewish method is not less humane but less likely to prolong suffering than the standard Australian slaughter, which uses electronic stunning.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry stated flatly that "shechita is not negotiable."

It argued that "the right to practice shechita should be allowed to continue, not only as an acknowledgement that it is in accord with the requirements of humaneness, but also as a manifestation of religious liberty."

Doron Ur, president of the Council of Western Australian Jewry, told its annual meeting in Perth that "Australian Jewry is preparing itself to combat a repeat performance of an assault on shechita."

"We have no concession to make even if not all of us practice our traditions," he said.

This issue repeats item for item a scenario that has been played in recent years in several European countries.

Jews in Sweden, who lost their bid for kosher meat but won a battle to continue the practice of kosher slaughter of fowl, went to the mat with the support of Jewish groups in the United States and elsewhere in Europe.

In Britain, the practice of shechita was retained after a drawn-out battle over the kind and position of pens in which animals are slaughtered under kosher laws.

## **CZECH OFFICIAL URGES GOVERNMENT TO RESTORE NAZI-PLUNDERED JUDAICA**

By Josef Klansky

PRAGUE, July 3 (JTA) -- An aide to the prime minister of the Czech republic of Czechoslovakia has urged the state to restore Jewish religious and cultural artifacts plundered by the Nazis to the communities from which they were stolen or their heirs.

Petr Prihoda, a spokesman for Prime Minister Petr Pithard, observed in an article Monday in the daily Lidove Noviny that nearly 200,000 items seized from Jewish households and synagogues are stored at the state-owned Jewish Museum in Prague, which was expropriated by the Communist authorities in the 1950s.

Most of these items were robbed from Jewish communities in Bohemia and Moravia, whose members died in the Holocaust. But a few survived and are still living in Czechoslovakia, Israel or some other country, said Prihoda.

According to the writer, the collection includes about 4,000 Torah mantles, 2,500 Torah curtains, 360 valences, 1,500 binders, 600 Torah shields, 200 silver crowns and 1,000 pointers.

There are 175,000 items in all, most originally from the 153 Czech Jewish communities annihilated by the Nazis, Prihoda wrote.

The problem of religious articles expropriated by the state under the former Communist regime is under consideration.

Prihoda recalled a session of the federal Parliament held in February at which two members, Klara Samkova and Rostislav Senjuk, objected to the return of religious relics to the Jewish community because of "the danger that moveable cultural treasures may be exported from the country."

Prihoda compared their attitude to that of a child who finds a toy shovel in the sand and refuses to return it to its owner.

He differentiated between memorabilia of historic value that are property of the museum and religious objects looted by the Nazis.

An Israeli organization meanwhile has demanded that Jewish religious objects not presently in use in Czechoslovakia be handed over to Israel.