



MOOD AT PEACE TALKS MORE SOBER AS PARTIES GRAPPLE WITH THE GAPS

By Cynthia Mann
States News Service

WASHINGTON, Sept. 1 (JTA) -- The upbeat rhetoric that characterized the resumption of the Middle East peace talks here last week has given way to a more cautious tone as negotiators grapple, day after day, with conflicts that defy easy resolution.

With the sessions scheduled to break for the Labor Day weekend, it seems the Israelis have gained the most ground with the Syrian delegation and are confronting the biggest obstacles with the Palestinians. The talks with the Lebanese, meanwhile, have been complicated by the divisive elections in Lebanon.

In a positive new development, Syria this week presented a paper to the Israelis outlining its posture on the Golan Heights. While it retains Syria's insistence on full Israeli withdrawal, it partially "takes into account" the Israeli point of view, according to a senior Israeli official here.

The official, who asked not to be named, refused to disclose details of the Syrian paper but said he hoped that "gaps" between the two sides could be narrowed before the head of the team, Itamar Rabinovich, returned this weekend to Jerusalem for consultations.

He also said he was hopeful the two sides would finalize the text of an agreement by the end of this monthlong round of talks. "That would be a big step forward," he said.

The official appeared encouraged by the talks, which he described as being conducted in a "businesslike atmosphere," in contrast to previous rounds, which he called "acrimonious" and "preoccupied with symbols, such as whether sides shook hands and drank coffee together."

He said the Israeli strategy has been to "dismantle the problems" that have plagued the talks and stalled progress since their inception last October in Madrid.

The two sides, he said, are trying to translate into progress at the peace table a conceptual agreement on a peaceful resolution of the conflict, a mutuality of security and a desire to reach a comprehensive peace in the region.

'Let's Start Talking Business'

Meanwhile, the Israeli-Palestinian talks on forming an interim self-governing Palestinian authority have not yet met the high hopes raised at the start of this round.

Early this week, the Palestinians reported they had reached a "deadlock" in efforts to find common ground with the Israelis.

The Israelis conceded frustration but refused to say the talks had reached an impasse. "We're not desperate, God forbid," said Elyakim Rubinstein, head of the Israeli negotiating team. "We are sure that ways can be found to deal with this frustration."

"We feel the frustration, but I wouldn't call it a deadlock," Yossi Gal, spokesman for the Israeli delegation, said Monday. He implored "our Palestinian friends" to put the negative rhetoric aside and get down to serious negotiations.

"Let's start talking business and not fail our

people," he said. "In negotiations, nobody gets everything they want."

By late Tuesday, the Israelis said the tone of the talks had become more "businesslike" and less rhetorical.

The Palestinians had from the start praised the change in the tone of the Israeli delegation and the "symbolic gestures" made by the new Labor-led government to build confidence.

But they said they were very disappointed the new and promising rhetoric had not been matched in deed during the negotiations, calling the Israeli proposal for self-government a "non-starter."

The Palestinians have proposed the election of a legislature in the territories, which Israel finds unacceptable.

The Israelis have offered a plan for the Palestinian election of an administrative council with authority over certain spheres of daily life in the territories.

The Palestinians claim this idea has merely been recycled from the proposals advanced by the previous hard-line Likud government and is unacceptable.

Disagreement Over Agenda

They have pointedly observed that the Israeli team has retained Rubinstein, a top aide to former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, as its chief negotiator.

"Sometimes it's good to change drivers when you change cars," remarked Nabil Sha'ath, a senior Palestine Liberation Organization official who is here for the talks.

The Palestinians also have protested the Israeli proposal's failure to address alleged human rights abuses, existing legal structures in the territories, the question of Jerusalem, and Palestinian land and water rights.

For their part, the Israelis have said they are willing to establish official working groups to address some of these issues -- excluding Jerusalem -- as long as the working groups deal "with the main issues at hand," which is the self-governing authority.

The Israelis appeared to signal there is room to move on their proposal. "What we offer is neither the Bible nor the Koran," said Gal.

Meanwhile, delegates to the Israeli-Jordanian talks are still trying to reach an agreement on an agenda for the negotiations. That agenda is expected to include discussion of territorial borders, security, water, refugees and commerce.

And progress in the Israeli-Lebanese sessions has been impeded by divisive elections back in Lebanon, although the Israelis reported an improved tone in the talks on Tuesday.

Uri Lubrani, co-chairman of the Israeli team negotiating with the Lebanese, would only say following Tuesday's session it had been a good and "very practical meeting" during which "we continued to thrash out outstanding problems."

The Lebanese are reportedly insisting that Israel agree to withdraw its troops from the southern part of the country before there is any talk of a peace accord.

The United States reportedly has urged the Lebanese to pay more attention to Israel's security needs.

ARAB MAYORS STAGE PROTEST OVER UNFULFILLED PROMISES

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 1 (JTA) -- Claiming the government has failed to fulfill budgetary pledges to Israel's Arab sector, Arab mayors have mounted a sit-in demonstration outside the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem.

At the same time, together with striking municipal workers, they have in effect extended the summer vacation of 300,000 Arab school-children by keeping classrooms closed as a gesture of protest.

But they have so far refrained from using their most effective weapon: withdrawing parliamentary loyalty from Yitzhak Rabin's government.

Paradoxically, this latest showdown between the government and the leaders of Israel's Arab population comes at a time when the Arabs hold unprecedented political power.

The narrow-based government coalition commands a bare majority of 62 votes in the 120-seat Knesset and relies for a more comfortable margin in blocking the opposition on the five votes of Arab parties: three from Hadash (Communist) and two from the Arab Democratic Party.

Three more Arabs are Knesset members for Labor and Meretz.

The Arabs may be caught in a bind. A vote against the coalition might be too effective; the only alternative is a return of the right-wing government.

Thus, they can draw their parliamentary gun. They might even aim it at the government. But they would probably think long and hard before pulling the trigger.

Rejected Interim Payment

Arabs within Israel proper are distinguished from the Palestinians in the administered territories in enjoying full political rights. They are full-fledged Israeli citizens who are entitled to vote and to sit in the Knesset; some even serve in the army.

Also unlike their brethren in the territories, their demands are focused not on political issues but on "civil equality," a code phrase for increased budgets. Their request is for more than \$63 million to cover development budgets in Arab towns and villages.

To back up their demands, Arab mayors have raised a tent at the Rose Garden opposite the Prime Minister's Office and say they will stay there until the government honors budgetary commitments made by the previous Likud government.

They have rejected an offer of an interim payment of more than \$25 million, pending review of their needs.

The two Arab parties in the Knesset pledged their support to the government after Labor undertook, in writing, to meet their demands regarding the peace process and "equal rights" for the Arab population.

The Arabs seem satisfied so far with the peace process, which is now centered on a round of negotiations in Washington. But demands for increased funding are facing the same difficulties as before.

Newly appointed Finance Minister Avraham Shohat is insisting on a tight budget.

The Arab mayors promised this week that they would not fold up their protest tent until their demands are met. They are planning a mass demonstration at the same site next Sunday.

EMIGRATION FROM EX-SOVIET UNION WAS UP IN AUGUST, REVERSING TREND

By Michele Chabla

JERUSALEM, Sept. 1 (JTA) -- Jewish emigration from the republics of the former Soviet Union was up in August, indicating that the downward trend registered earlier this year may finally have reversed itself.

A total of 5,009 emigres from the republics arrived in Israel during August, representing a 2.8 percent increase over July. And another 4,684 arrived in the United States, the highest number for any single month this year.

The August figure for the United States, reported by the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society in New York, brings immigration to date for the 1992 fiscal year to 40,797 -- well ahead of last year. As many as 6,000 more may arrive before the fiscal year ends Sept. 30.

Emigration is up partly because of unrest in several regions of the former Soviet Union.

About 450 Jews from strife-ridden Moldova immigrated to Israel in August. More than 700 Moldovan Jews have arrived here since late July, and 200 more were expected in the next week.

There has also been an upsurge of aliyah lately from the Central Asian republics of the former Soviet Union. Some 800 Jews from these predominantly Moslem republics made their way to Israel last month.

The fighting in what was once Yugoslavia has also boosted aliyah. Last month, 100 Jews arrived from the region, bringing the total to 600. Another 200 Yugoslav children have been placed in Youth Aliyah villages.

Overall, 6,366 people immigrated to Israel in August, bringing the aliyah total for the year to 46,250. The August figure was actually a 3.1 percent decrease from the total for July, but still way ahead of the 4,812 figure for June.

'Beginning Of Disillusionment'

While aliyah experts are encouraged by the latest figures, they caution it is too early to start talking about a recovery.

"There has been a small increase in the past two months, and I expect it to continue through September," said Baruch Gur, who heads the Jewish Agency department dealing with the Soviet successor states.

"Summer is traditionally the time when people come on aliyah. School is out and the weather is better," he explained. "Beyond that, we are seeing a small rise in the number of Jews coming from small places: certain remote areas in Russia, small towns in the Ukraine."

Gur credited the increase, especially in the Moslem republics, to a number of things. "Better outreach and Jewish education are certainly factors, and so are the economic difficulties over there," he said.

"People are starting to realize that things don't seem to be working out in the republics. I sense the beginning of disillusionment with the economic and political situation."

Uri Gordon, who heads the Jewish Agency's Immigration and Absorption Department, remarked that while Israel is doing everything in its power to assist Jews from distressed countries, "I would be equally happy to welcome Jews from Los Angeles."

"Israel should be seen as a place to come to out of choice, not just as a refuge from strife," he said.

**ANTI-SEMITIC INCIDENTS IN FRANCE
RAISE WORRY OF LINK TO GERMANY**

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, Sept. 1 (JTA) -- Three anti-Semitic incidents reported in France this week are raising concern that the upsurge of neo-Nazi incidents in Germany may be spilling across the border.

The synagogue of Saint-Avoid, in eastern France, was the target of an arson attack. A 23-year-old local man, described by police as "an outcast," broke into the premises Monday night and set ablaze the Ark and the Torah scrolls, also burning prayerbooks and the synagogue's front benches.

Less than half an hour after the fire broke out, police arrested the young man, who readily admitted he was the arsonist.

"I hate Jews and capitalists," he reportedly told the policemen.

Mahdi Hacene, the region's highest civil administrator, immediately came to the synagogue at 3 a.m. to assess the damage.

In another incident in eastern France, almost 200 graves at the old Jewish cemetery of Herrlisheim, in Alsace, were vandalized. Some 193 headstones were overturned and about 50 broken, probably with iron bars. None of the graves was opened.

According to local police, the desecration was probably perpetrated by a group, not an individual, because most of the headstones were too heavy to be overturned by a single person.

No graffiti or other inscriptions were found in the cemetery. The Herrlisheim cemetery is almost out of use and is not open to the public. The visitors must ask for the key at the local town hall or at the cemetery keeper's.

The vandals knew they did not risk being caught red-handed.

Condemned By French Officials

Once the desecration was discovered, numerous high-ranking French officials visited the cemetery.

The chairman of the regional assembly, Jean-Jacques Weber, said that "the size of the damages rules out that this was just some stupid game and substantiates the idea that this was done out of anti-Semitic hatred."

Pierre Dreyfus, the local representative of CRIF, the representative body of French Jewish organizations, asked, "When will those profaners leave the dead rest in peace? The culprits must be arrested, justice must be done," Dreyfus said.

In another incident, three Skinheads were caught Saturday night in Paris in the French capital's garment center, a largely Jewish business area. The shaven-headed youths were posting anti-Semitic pamphlets claiming that "Hitler was right."

According to the police, the pamphlets, while written in French, were probably printed in the United States. The three will be brought to court in coming days.

Jean Kahn, president of CRIF, said, "One cannot but draw a parallel with the racist events of Rostock," Germany.

The latest anti-Semitic incidents in France were condemned Tuesday by French anti-racist organizations.

And the leaders of the Jewish community of Alsace decided to demonstrate Sunday near the Herrlisheim cemetery. French officials of the region already announced they would participate.

**COURT REJECTS DEMJANJUK REQUEST
TO ORDER U.S. RETURN IF ACQUITTED**

By Jamie Kaha

The American Israelite

CINCINNATI, Sept. 1 (JTA) -- Lawyers for convicted Nazi war criminal John Demjanjuk have lost their bid for a court ruling allowing him to return to the United States if his conviction is overturned by Israel's High Court of Justice.

Demjanjuk, sentenced to death in Israel as the notorious Treblinka death camp guard "Ivan the Terrible," is currently awaiting a decision on his appeal to Israel's High Court of Justice.

The three-judge U.S. Court of Appeals for the 6th Circuit said Monday that such an order appeared "premature" in the absence of any indication by Israel that it intended to release Demjanjuk soon.

In asking for the order on Aug. 20, Demjanjuk's lawyers said he might be deported to a third country if and when the Israelis release him.

Demjanjuk, a retired Cleveland-area auto-worker, was extradited to Israel in 1986 after being stripped of his U.S. citizenship for lying about his wartime past. He claims he is a victim of mistaken identity.

In a separate filing, the appeals court denied a request by Justice Department lawyers to revise what they said was a misstatement of their position in the text of an earlier court order.

That order named U.S. Judge Thomas Wiseman Jr. to investigate the department's conduct when it sought to extradite Demjanjuk in 1985.

While counsel might not have used the words in the precise context of the court order, it "reflects our understanding and interpretation of the arguments" made orally by the government, said the ruling.

The phrase pertains to the collection of evidence related to the case.

ITALIAN RIGHTIST PLANS NEW PARTY

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Sept. 1 (JTA) -- Right-wing Italian politician Roberto Gremmo plans to found a new political party next month, whose platform will be avowedly racist and inspired by the French National Front, according to news reports.

The party, to be called the League of Popular Salvation, is to be founded Oct. 3 in Venice.

Its aim, Gremmo was quoted by the Milan daily Corriere della Sera, will be "to expel (non-Western) invaders, whether they are here legally or not."

The party symbol, he was quoted as saying, will be the Statue of Liberty, to be used as an example of a paradox.

"The Americans put immigrants in quarantine on Ellis Island, right in front of the Statue of Liberty. Not like us, where everyone can enter."

Gremmo, 41, denies he is racist but admits that Jean Le Pen's National Front inspired him to found his own party.

He was quoted as saying he expected to gain a following of at least 1 million people, "those who want to expel the (non-Western) immigrants because they bring drugs, leprosy and AIDS."

Italy's fourth-largest political party is the Northern League, which demands regional autonomy for northern Italy. Its views have also included stands against both southern Italians and non-Western immigrants, but not as overtly as Gremmo's policies appear to be.

RUSSIAN ANTI-SEMITE REFUSES TO QUIT POSITION AT U.S. ACADEMY OF SCIENCES

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Sept. 1 (JTA) -- Jews and academics have expressed dismay and consternation at a Russian anti-Semite's refusal to resign his position as a foreign associate of the U.S. National Academy of Sciences.

But the protesters seem to have no legal recourse to force Igor Shafarevich, who heads the mathematical institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences, to quit his American post.

Responding to a written request to consider stepping down, Shafarevich sent a letter to the U.S. academy acknowledging he has criticized in writing Jewish groups and Jewish nationalism in Russia.

He said this did not constitute anti-Semitism, however, and refused to give up his position with the U.S. academy.

He said that resigning his membership, which he has held since 1974, would validate the accusation of anti-Semitism contained in the letter to him signed by Frank Press, president of the National Academy of Sciences, and James Wynngaarden, its foreign secretary.

Replying to Shafarevich's refusal to resign, the National Academy issued a statement saying the organization "stands by its earlier letter" to the mathematician.

Press said he would take no further action against Shafarevich because the academy has no rules to govern this situation.

In fact, the academy could not even ask Shafarevich to resign but only to consider the move.

"We would be pleased if he would resign. But we cannot force him to do so," Press said in the statement.

Institute Discriminates Against Jews

In their letter to Shafarevich, Press and Wynngaarden pointed out that the Steklov Institute, Russia's premier mathematical institution, which he heads, discriminates against Jews.

They also wrote of their "strong aversion" to Shafarevich's anti-Semitic writings, which are highlighted in a 120-page book titled "Russophobia," published in the early 1980s, and a paper, "Russophobia 10 Years Later."

Dr. Lawrence Shepp, an American mathematician who translated "Russophobia" into English in 1989, said he did so to "wake people up."

Shepp said Shafarevich "was asked to consider resigning in view of the fact that his views are so out of line with the views of people in the academy, in the United States and in view of the anti-Semitic and discriminatory nature of his speeches and books since 1980."

This past February, Shepp wrote a letter, together with 20 other mathematicians of the academy, urging Press "not to give any support to the Steklov Mathematical Institute because of their continuing anti-Semitic practices."

Dorothy Hirsch, director of the Committee for Concerned Scientists in New York, said, "We are in favor of keeping close and helping these (Russian or other foreign) scientists, but we don't want to see academic money going to perpetuate anti-Semitism, for example, at Steklov."

Shafarevich's theme in "Russophobia" is that "small people" are undermining the larger populace.

"The nucleus of Russophobic small people is composed of Jews," he wrote.

These "small people represented by the Russian intelligentsia, in collaboration with the small people of former ghetto dwellers, united and created the power which diverted the Russian people from its historic course and brought it to its present crisis," Shafarevich wrote.

News of his writings was reported from Moscow by The Washington Post in April 1990.

"No essay has drawn more attention among the Soviet intelligentsia," wrote the Post's David Remnick.

Remnick wrote that other prestigious Soviet journals "regularly run articles and letters that many Jews here believe echo the resentful themes of 'Russophobia.'"

Speaking to the Post, Shafarevich denied being an anti-Semite, saying the accusation was the result of Jewish "persecution mania."

The Anti-Defamation League has been following his case. "His writing was adopted and used by Pamyat and other extremist groups to make their case," said Myrna Shinbaum, an ADL spokeswoman and Soviet expert.

"We would hope that his peers would isolate him," she said of the foreign scientific community.

The leaders of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews wrote a letter to Press expressing "our highest praise for your unprecedented action against Igor Shafarevich."

"As an intellectual opinion leader, and a foremost Russian anti-Semitic xenophobic, his voice is inimical to the fragile causes of human rights, freedom and democracy," wrote Pamela Cohen, UCSJ president, and Micah Naftalin, national director.

ZIMBABWE PRESIDENT APOLOGIZES FOR CALLING JEWS HARD-HEARTED

By Suzanne Belling

JOHANNESBURG, Sept. 1 (JTA) -- The president of Zimbabwe, Robert Mugabe, has apologized to the Central African Jewish Board of Deputies for his recent remark calling Jews "hard-hearted."

Mugabe issued the apology in the Zimbabwe capital of Harare at a meeting with a three-member delegation from the board, led by its vice president, Stanley Harris.

The apology made headline news on Zimbabwe television, following an outcry from Jews and non-Jews alike when the remark was first reported.

The delegation expressed satisfaction with the meeting, saying Mugabe's handling of the situation was in keeping with his friendly attitude to Jews over the past 12 years.

"The matter is now closed," said Harris.

Mugabe had made his controversial remark while criticizing white farmers in a drought-stricken area for not letting poor people graze their cattle there.

He had said, "These people are now behaving like Jews, hard-hearted Jews."

Mugabe reiterated his previous explanation that he had been referring to West Bank settlers -- particularly during the previous government of Likud's Yitzhak Shamir.

Mugabe sent good wishes to the new premier, Yitzhak Rabin, saying that under the Labor Party there is a better chance for peace in the Middle East.