

MUBARAK SENDS ADVISER TO ISRAEL TO HELP GET PEACE TALKS ON TRACK

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, in an apparent effort to take a more active role in the Middle East peace process, sent his senior adviser, Osama el-Baz, to Israel on Sunday.

El-Baz met with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and reports said the two discussed issues ranging from a possible Rabin-Mubarak summit to further proposals to resolve the ongoing crisis of the Palestinians deported by Israel to Lebanon.

El-Baz's visit came three days after the United States and Russia announced they would co-sponsor the ninth round of the Middle East peace talks in April.

The deportation issue continues to present an obstacle to resuming the talks, although there are signs that a solution is in the works.

Israeli sources said that an undisclosed personal message el-Baz carried from Mubarak to Rabin did not deal with the deportation issue. However, reports from Cairo indicated the opposite, saying the Egyptians are pushing for a plan under which all of the deportees would be back by June.

The Egyptian plan calls for their return in three stages, all within the next three months and with most deportees returning to Israel before resumption of the talks.

According to the same sources in Egypt, Israel would also promise not to resort again to the use of deportations, and it would agree to accept back some deportees who had been expelled in the past.

Israel's position thus far has been that deportations are no longer a part of standard policy, but rather a deviation from the policy. However, Israel refuses to renounce deportations in principle.

There was no confirmation of an Israel Radio report that el-Baz discussed with Rabin a possible summit with Mubarak.

The two leaders met in Cairo half a year ago, shortly after Rabin assumed office.

New U.S. Plan On Deportees?

The el-Baz visit was arranged Saturday through telephone calls between Rabin, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Mohammed Basyouni, Egypt's ambassador to Israel. El-Baz was due to return to Egypt on Monday morning, after meeting Sunday night with Peres.

El-Baz's visit came in the wake of intensive consultations within the Palestinian political community over whether to join the peace talks.

The Palestinian delegation left all options open last week, following meetings with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher. The Palestine Liberation Organization leadership has also refrained from making its position clear.

Members of the Palestinian delegation were expected to leave this week for Tunis for face-to-face consultations with the PLO leadership.

Christopher, upon his return from abroad, said in Washington he was confident the Palestinians would join the peace talks.

"We also have, I think, a plan for the

solution or resolution of the deportees problem, which has kept them (the Palestinians) from the table," he said in a television interview.

At the end of his trip to the Middle East and Europe, Christopher had also talked about using Syrian help in getting the peace process back on track.

The secretary met for a second round of talks with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa in Brussels last week.

Speaking at a news conference at NATO headquarters, Christopher said he discussed with Sharaa the American invitation to Arabs and Israelis to resume the peace talks.

The Syrian minister announced his country would convene a meeting of Arab parties involved in the peace talks to discuss restarting the peace process and solving the deportees question.

"Syria keeps hope that a solution will be found to the problem of the deportees because it is in the interest of all parties to see all the deportees returned home in order to resume the peace talks," Sharaa told reporters.

"The peace process should be resumed in a positive atmosphere, in order to enable the negotiating parties to produce results," the Syrian minister stressed.

(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Joseph Kopel in Brussels.)

FLAP OVER DINITZ'S CREDIT CARD USE MAY DEEPEN STRAINS IN JEWISH AGENCY

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- Disclosures that Jewish Agency Chairman Simcha Dinitz improperly charged private expenses to his official credit card promise to further strain the agency's already tense Israel-Diaspora partnership.

The legal adviser to the Jewish Agency, the quasi-governmental body funded by Diaspora contributions, has ruled that there was no wrongful intent in Dinitz's actions, for which he subsequently reimbursed the agency more than \$20,000.

This view was accepted last week by Mendel Kaplan, chairman of the Jewish Agency Board of Governors, at the conclusion of its quarterly meeting in Israel.

But last Friday, two Israeli Knesset members, Limor Livnat of Likud and Eliezer Zandberg of Tsomet, filed complaints with the police and government legal adviser, asking that Dinitz be investigated for tax evasion related to the affair.

This scandal comes as Dinitz is caught between the two competing forces in the Jewish Agency: the Diaspora leaders who fund its budget and Israeli politicians active in the World Zionist Organization.

The two sides have been deadlocked for months over a demand by the American fund-raisers of the United Jewish Appeal that the Jewish Agency, which receives the bulk of the money UJA sends to Israel, eliminate the offices of two department heads.

The Americans say that the work of the department heads duplicate that of the departments' director-generals and are merely patronage plums that ultimately involve up to 20 subsidiary, politically linked positions.

The Israelis of the WZO have heatedly

protested the American intervention. In a stalling tactic agreed upon during the Board of Governors meeting, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin promised to recommend a resolution to the crisis after Passover.

Dinitz Expresses Regret

Dinitz's ability to resist the demands of the Americans has presumably been weakened by the scandal, which was the subject of a searing four-page report in the Friday magazine section of Yediot Achronot, Israel's largest-circulation newspaper.

For one thing, his would-be ally in the struggle, Rabin, may wish to steer clear of any scandal involving improper overseas expenditures, having lost the 1977 election over such an issue.

The scandal also appears to buttress the long-running reform efforts of the Americans in the Jewish Agency by illustrating the lack of oversight applied to the chairman's expenses.

For example, over a nearly five-year period, Dinitz reportedly charged \$6,694 worth of merchandise to a Syms retail credit card he had taken out, which used the New York office of the Jewish Agency as the billing address.

According to the Jewish Agency comptroller, when the bills arrived, they were paid by the New York office, and the expenditure was ultimately charged to the budget of his office, rather than being presented to him for reimbursement.

Dinitz says he told the New York office to forward the bills to him, saying in a statement, "I regret that I relied (on) the Jewish Agency administration, which was supposed to deal with this matter, instead of relying on myself."

At the same time, Dinitz's troubles seem to have drawn few tears from Israeli officials of the Jewish Agency who spoke to Yediot Achronot.

They blamed Dinitz for being too accommodating to the American "big shots" in what they saw as an effort to wrest the Jewish Agency from Israeli control.

He was more concerned with travel and perks, they told the paper, than with confronting the Diaspora leaders and in particular Kaplan of the Board of Governors.

Panel Recommends New Measures

Kaplan and Dinitz have themselves reportedly been long at odds precisely over Kaplan's reform efforts. A South African industrial magnate, Kaplan has been living in Jerusalem for most of the year, in effect turning what had been a lay, volunteer position into a full-time job.

For the record, Kaplan is accepting the findings that there was no wrongful intent involved.

At the Board of Governors meeting, he said that given this and the fact that Dinitz has repaid the money in question, with interest, the rebuke given by the Jewish Agency comptroller sufficed to close the matter, according to participants at the meeting.

But according to Yediot, Kaplan would not comment when asked how he would treat an employee of his factories who acted as Dinitz had.

An ad hoc committee of Americans and Israelis was set up to establish procedures to prevent such incidents in the future.

In their preliminary report, they called for, among other things, monthly travel reports from the senior Jewish Agency officials and a bar on issuing credit cards to individuals until a full review can be made.

AMERICAN JEWS AND ISRAELIS DISCUSS WHAT THEY CAN LEARN FROM EACH OTHER By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- American Jews can strengthen and preserve their Jewish identity by forging more meaningful ties to Israel, while Israelis can enrich their understanding of Jewish life by learning more about Diaspora Jews.

So suggested American and Israeli participants at a "town meeting" last Saturday night on Israel-Diaspora relations. It was organized by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations during its annual fact-finding mission here.

The discussion reflected a consensus that participants said had been absent in such cross-cultural exchanges in past years, as well as a new recognition that the Diaspora has something to offer Israel beyond financial and political support.

One Israeli participant, Mordechai Abraham, urged the American Jewish leaders to press the Israeli government for the study of Diaspora Jewry in the Israeli school curriculum, which now offers nothing on the subject. Such exposure would help teach Israelis important lessons about religious pluralism and tolerance, he said.

Shlomo Avineri, a political science professor at Hebrew University, and one of the panelists, said Israel is now only a cause around which American Jews mobilize and a country they visit. But he said Israel can and should play a crucial role in preserving Jewish meaning and continuity.

"If we think the relationship is important," he said, "we need to make the reality of Israel existentially present in the life of every Jewish family and person in the United States and the Diaspora."

He said he would like to see "every Jewish child" spend a year in Israel, and adults arrange a sabbatical here.

'A Warehouse Of Jewish Memories'

"It won't (create) a great, abstract messianic love for Israel," said Avineri, but it would make them "understand that life here has meaning and content that's different," and it would change their relationship to the country.

Avram Infeld, a panelist who is the director of Melitz, a center of Zionist and Jewish education here, said that while Israel is a "warehouse of Jewish memories" that can fortify Jewish identity in the Diaspora, Israelis also need more knowledge of Diaspora Jewry and Jewish tradition.

In Israeli schools, he said, students are taught that the plight of Diaspora Jews is limited to assimilation, anti-Semitism, or aliyah.

Bernice Balter, a panelist representing the Women's League for Conservative Judaism, agreed on the dearth of knowledge. "The tendency in Israel," she said, is to focus on "the awful things in the Diaspora" and ignore the successes.

She also highlighted sharp differences between the American and Israeli sources of Jewish identity. In the first case, it is Judaism, "where the synagogue is the supreme Jewish institution," while in the other, it is nationalism, she said.

"Living in Israel is all it takes to be Jewish," she said, adding that in Israel there is a deep disregard for religious pluralism because "they don't care much about Judaism."

Avineri challenged her argument, saying that the synagogue is "the portable homeland of the Jewish people in exile" and that "people living in their own culture don't need it."

**60 ROCKETS LOBBED INTO ISRAEL,
BUT NO CASUALTIES ARE REPORTED**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- Hezbollah forces in southern Lebanon fired more than 60 Katyusha rockets and mortar bombs into northern Israel and the Israeli-controlled south Lebanon security zone, but no casualties and only minor damage resulted from the weekend barrage.

Israeli forces and their allies, the South Lebanon Army, responded with a helicopter gunship attack on enemy rocket launcher sites and an intermittent artillery attack.

Army and government sources said their response to Hezbollah was restrained, because they did not want to escalate the tense situation. Hezbollah attacks have been stepped up during the last two weeks.

The series of Katyusha firings followed an attack last Friday by Israeli helicopters in which a one-story house used by Hezbollah members was destroyed. The house was vacant at the time.

Earlier on Friday, three SLA soldiers were wounded in an ambush by unidentified terrorists. In response, SLA gunners shelled the terrain north of the security zone. Hezbollah attacks continued Friday night and Saturday.

A tragedy was averted in the border kibbutz early Saturday when one of two Katyusha rockets shot at the kibbutz area was knocked off its path when it hit a tall eucalyptus tree near a school building being used by a group of students on an outing.

The blast awakened the youngsters but caused no damage to the building. Several farm vehicles were damaged and building windows broken.

All in all, some 60 rockets were fired from launchers north of the security zone from the vicinity of Yater, a Hezbollah stronghold. Some 24 landed in Israel's Galilee border and panhandle areas, while another 40 landed in the southern Lebanon security zone.

**KIRYAT ARBA SETTLERS AVENGE
DEATH OF GIRL IN CAR ACCIDENT**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- Jewish settlers from the West Bank town of Kiryat Arba carried out anti-Arab revenge attacks over the weekend after an 11-year-old Jewish girl died in a car accident blamed on Arab stone-throwers.

Police said it was a regular accident that caused the death of Hava Wachsberg, 11. But the girl's father insists he was forced to drive off the road after stones were thrown at the car.

The girl was flung out of the window and died two days later from her wounds.

Kiryat Arba residents rejected the police account, and scores of activists went through the Arab city of Hebron damaging property to avenge Hava's death.

In other violence, a Palestinian youth returning from Friday prayers on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem stabbed and lightly wounded a border police officer, Asad Atilah.

The officer was directing traffic near the Damascus Gate when the assailant emerged from the Old City's alleys and stabbed the officer in the back of his neck.

On Sunday, shots were fired at a passenger bus and at a pickup truck which passed by Al-Askar refugee camp in Nablus. No one was hurt.

**TURMOIL IN LIKUD PARTY GROWS
AS LEVY AND 'BIBI' TRADE CHARGES**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- The Likud party has been thrown into new turmoil following more name-calling and accusations traded between the two top contenders in the primary race for party leader, David Levy and Benjamin Netanyahu.

Levy has demanded that Netanyahu, who was deputy foreign minister under Levy in the last Likud-led government, drop out of the primary if his accusations that Levy had tried to blackmail him are proven false.

In a series of weekend media appearances, Levy promised to quit the race and public life altogether if the accusations are shown to be true.

Likud insiders said Sunday the upshot of this new flare-up could be the postponement of the party primary, set for the end of March, especially if a police investigation into Netanyahu's charges are not concluded until then.

The accusations stem from the political scandal known here as "Bibi-gate," in which Netanyahu, who is known widely by the nickname Bibi, charged that "a certain Likud figure, surrounded by Mafia-type criminals" was responsible for blackmailing him and his wife.

Netanyahu took the unusual step of going on television to tell the story of how his wife, Sarah, received an anonymous phone call demanding that unless he quit the Likud leadership race, evidence of his having conducted an extramarital affair with another woman would be made public.

Although Netanyahu did not accuse Levy by name of being behind the scheme, Netanyahu's aides confirmed he was referring to Levy.

Netanyahu said he had decided to confront the blackmail by admitting on television that he had indeed been conducting such an affair behind his wife's back, but that it was now over.

Levy Laggging In Opinion Polls

Levy, who is lagging well behind Netanyahu in the race according to opinion polls, chose this weekend to speak out more forcefully on the political scandal than he has since it broke nearly two months ago.

"If I was indeed behind this crime then I have no place in public life nor in our movement, regardless of any ambition I might harbor," he declared over the weekend in television and newspaper interviews.

But if, on the other hand, Netanyahu's charges against him prove baseless, then Netanyahu would have shown himself to have acted recklessly and impetuously, Levy said.

In that case, Netanyahu should not be considered as a prime ministerial candidate, Levy insisted. In Israel, the person who leads a given party list becomes that party's candidate for the prime minister's post.

Netanyahu declined to comment on the substance of Levy's attack but urged that the police be permitted to proceed with their inquiry without outside pressures being exerted.

Sources in the Netanyahu camp accused Levy of stepping up the tension surrounding the scandal because he feared the gap in the polls between himself and Netanyahu was unbridgeable.

According to one such poll, Netanyahu will take 50 percent of the Likud vote and Levy only 16. Also running are Knesset members Ze'ev "Benny" Begin and Moshe Katsav.

**UKRAINIAN WHO WAS IN SOVIET JAIL
MAY HAVE SEEN WALLENBERG IN 1956**
By Joseph Kopel

BRUSSELS, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- A Ukrainian woman who spent time in a Soviet prison camp has told the European Parliament she met another inmate in 1956 who may have been Raoul Wallenberg.

Wallenberg is the Swedish diplomat who saved thousands of Hungarian Jews during World War II before mysteriously disappearing in the Soviet Gulag in 1945. A string of reports of sightings over the years have kept alive the hope among some that he may still be alive.

The testimony of Natalia Schinkarenko, if true, would contradict claims by Soviet authorities, seemingly corroborated by files discovered in recent years, that Wallenberg died in 1947 in Moscow's infamous Lubyanka prison.

Schinkarenko, who is now 64, was detained in a prison camp near the formerly closed city of Gorky for "anti-Soviet propaganda."

In this camp, she said she met a man named "Raoulis Wallenbergis" during a visit by prisoners from another camp.

"The gray-haired man appeared to be ill," she told reporters at a news conference here. "He was playing piano in a choir and was singing in German," she said with great emotion. "After the 'show' ended, another member of the choir told me that the man was from Sweden and had worked at the embassy," she said.

Schinkarenko produced a photograph of the choir which has been scrutinized by specialists who find disturbing resemblances between Wallenbergis and Wallenberg.

The Ukrainian made the link between the two men several years later after reading articles on the Wallenberg case.

The news conference was organized by the Belgian Committee for Raoul Wallenberg, led by Simone Lucki, and the European People's Party, a group affiliated with the Christian Democrats in the European Parliament.

Lucki, a Brussels lawyer, has been working tirelessly for years to prove that Wallenberg is still alive, despite Soviet information to the contrary.

Last December, the European Parliament passed a resolution urging the Russian government to authorize examination of all files in connection with the Wallenberg case.

Meanwhile, Brussels University, with the support of Belgium's Foreign Affairs Ministry, has proposed that Wallenberg be granted the 1993 Nobel peace prize.

DUTCH COURT REJECTS NAZI'S REQUEST
By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- The higher district court in The Hague has rejected a petition from convicted Nazi collaborator Jacob Luitjens that he be released from prison pending a decision on his request for a pardon.

The court said Luitjens, who was extradited to Holland from Canada in November, has challenged his life sentence for collaboration, meted out in 1948, because he said it should be considered obsolete after 45 years.

The court ruled that until a decision on this is made, his request for a pardon cannot be considered and therefore Luitjens must remain in the Groningen prison, where he is being held.

**GERMAN WOMEN MARK THE TIME
NAZIS FREED JEWISH SPOUSES**
By Igal Avidan

BERLIN, Feb. 28 (JTA) -- Some 300 people gathered here Sunday to commemorate an event of 50 years ago when hundreds of non-Jewish women staged a weeklong, successful protest to get back their Jewish husbands and children, who had been arrested by the Nazis.

In a ceremony in front of the former detention center, the chairman of the Berlin Jewish community, Jerzy Kanal, spoke of one of the only examples of open courage and solidarity during the Holocaust that met with success.

One can learn from this uprising, said Kanal, that there is no reason to believe that resistance to the Nazis was impossible. He called for the erection of a Jewish center in the place where that detention center once stood.

Christine Bergmann, a senator from Berlin, spoke of "the powerless who overcame the powerful." This should be remembered now, she said, as racism and anti-Semitism once more rear their ugly heads in Germany.

"We should not walk away from extreme right tendencies in our society," she said.

Likewise, Cynthia Kahn, a leader of the women's Zionist organization WIZO, said strength and courage are as necessary today as before.

The crowd, including journalists, applauded a 92-year-old woman, Charlotte Israel, who was one of the surviving protesters of that time.

**SOUTH AFRICA GETS FIRST
CONSERVATIVE SYNAGOGUE**
By Suzanne Belling

JOHANNESBURG (JTA) -- South Africa's first and only Conservative synagogue opened in Johannesburg recently.

The shul, named Ohev Shalom, is led by an American Conservative rabbi, Dr. Nissim Wernick.

At present, about three-quarters of South African Jews belong to the Orthodox movement, with the remainder Reform, independent or unaffiliated.

The new synagogue is expected to draw flak from mainstream Jews because of Orthodoxy's historical hegemony over South African Jewry.

A nucleus of about 50 families created the new Conservative congregation.

Johannesburg's Jewish deputy mayor, Les Dishy, who takes over as the city's mayor on Monday, referred to the occasion as "historic."

Dishy stressed the need for Jewish unity, saying Jewish strength in the future lays in staying together, unfragmented.

He compared the Jewish religion to a tree, whose branches represent different congregations.

He made a "strong appeal" to "all in the congregation not only to maintain the ideals of humanism, justice and integrity that we are known for, but in these days of turmoil (to) do everything to bring about peace, harmony, love and understanding. Do this by way of prayer and by way of action."

Rabbi Wernick said many Jews lack a spiritual home and he hoped the new movement would help to answer this need.

"The synagogue must be the conscience of the community," he said. He stressed that the Jewish voice must be raised not only against anti-Semitism, but against genocide "by any other name, including ethnic cleansing."