

World Beat

El Al Starts Flights to Prague

TEL AVIV (JTA) — El Al inaugurated weekly flights between Tel Aviv and Prague on March 23. The service is being conducted jointly with CSA, the Czech national airline.

El Al now has regular flights to Budapest, Warsaw and Berlin, in addition to its long-established services to Western Europe and North America.

Weekly flights to Moscow were begun on Jan. 23, but the Soviet authorities limit them to business travel. Jews immigrating to Israel from the Soviet Union cannot fly directly from Moscow but must change planes at an Eastern European capital.

The Ministry of Tourism disclosed, meanwhile, that tourist hotel bookings were down 75 percent in January 1991 compared to January 1990, a falloff attributed to the Persian Gulf war.

By the same token, hotel bookings by Israelis soared 60 percent in Jerusalem and Eilat, where residents of the Greater Tel Aviv area fled to escape Iraqi Scud missile attacks in January.

High Influx of Soviet Immigrants Could Drain Agriculture Production

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The mass influx of immigrants from the Soviet Union will generate a demand for agricultural products two and a half times above the level it would have reached in five years without the immigration.

But there is a negative side to the rapid population increase, according to Immanuel Dlayahu, director of planning in the Ministry's Joint Agricultural Planning and Development Authority, who spoke at a recent conference of Hebrew University agronomists. He referred to the extra demands on Israel's already overtaxed water resources, which could work to the detriment of agriculture as a whole. Dlayahu said that if the problem of insufficient water resources could be solved, there could be a great flourishing of agricultural production and profits.

The conference was opened by former Prime Minister Shimon

Peres, chairman of the Labor Party, who said that if war were to break out between Israel and its Arab neighbors, it would be over water, not territory.

Neo-Nazi Group Proposes that AT&T Stop Providing Products to Israel

NEW YORK (JTA) — The National Alliance, a neo-Nazi group that owns 100 shares of stock in the American Telephone & Telegraph Co., has called on AT&T to stop providing products and services to Israel.

In a shareholder proposal put forward in a proxy statement, the National Alliance calls upon the phone company to "phase out all sales of AT&T products and services to the State of Israel and to Israeli businesses" because "sales of AT&T products and services to the State of Israel and to Israeli businesses may contribute toward violations of the human rights of Palestinians."

The AT&T proxy statement was made public in advance of the company's annual shareholders meeting, scheduled to be held April 17 in Chicago.

The National Alliance's supporting statement in the proxy cites a report enumerating Israeli abuses of Palestinian human rights, published by the Swedish Save the Children organization.

The author of that report, Anne Nixon, objected to the National Alliance's use of her figures in the proxy statement.

AT&T's directors recommend against the proposal and noted that the National Alliance's "professed concern for human rights lacks credibility and is even misleading, given the consistent anti-Semitic bias in the proponent's literature and public statements.

"Clearly, the proponent is using the proxy process not to attempt to advance human rights, but to achieve anti-Semitic goals."

Melvin Salberg, national chairman of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, praised AT&T's recommendation in a letter to Robert Allen, chairman of AT&T's Board of Directors.

Israel Now has World's Largest Military Force Per Capita

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — Israel, whose defense spending per capita is the highest in the world, may now also have the largest military force in proportion to its population.

Until recently, Iraq had 53 soldiers on active duty for every 1,000 residents, the highest proportion in the world, followed by Israel with 42.6, according to a chart published by the Los Angeles Times.

With the destruction of much of Iraq's armed forces, Israel now appears to top the list, followed by North Korea, Syria and Cuba. The United States ranks 20th, with 9.3 troops on active duty per 1,000 population.

As for military spending, Israel ranks No. 1, laying out \$1,373.91 per inhabitant in 1990-91. Second is the United States, with \$1,165.13 per capita. Other high spenders include Saudi Arabia in third place, the United Kingdom in fifth (\$589.24 per capita), Syria in 12th, and Egypt in 15th place (\$116.42 per capita).

The Times based its figures on data from the International Institute for Strategic Studies and the 1990 World Almanac.

Japan Makes a Gesture to Israel

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Japan has sent a message of sympathy to Israeli victims of Iraqi missile attacks and has promised to improve its relations with Israel now that the war in the Persian Gulf has ended.

The message was delivered by Japanese Deputy Foreign Minister Hisashi Owada, who was on a brief official visit to Jerusalem, a rare occurrence given the cool relations between the two countries.

The visit came at a time when officials here feel slighted by Tokyo's failure to include Israel on a list of countries affected by the war to which it plans to offer substantial financial aid.

The Japanese official explained the aid was for developing countries and that Israel is regarded as a developed country and therefore not entitled to it.

Foreign Minister David Levy told his guest that Israel expects an end to Japanese compliance, on both the governmental and private levels, with the Arab economic boycott against Israel.

In part because of Japan's heavy dependence on Arab oil, Tokyo has been reluctant to

challenge the Arab boycott. As a result, several leading Japanese corporations, including major car manufacturers, refuse to sell their products to Israel.

A Schwarzkopf by Another Name

TEL AVIV (JTA) — The Schwarzkopf residence in Israel was severely damaged by a Scud missile, and the family is temporarily being housed in a local hotel.

But it was not the by now world-famous Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of the coalition forces in the Persian Gulf, who was bombed out.

Meir and Hannah Schwarzkopf, of the Orthodox township of Bnei Brak near Tel Aviv, had been spending a four-day break in Eilat to rest from the missile attacks on the Greater Tel Aviv area when they were informed by neighbors by phone that their apartment had been hit and badly damaged.

They have since been housed in a local hotel.

Meir Schwarzkopf arrived in Israel in 1944 from Poland, where his entire family had been wiped out by the Nazis.

"As far as I know, we are not related in any manner. But I would feel honored if we were," he said.

Religious Minister Says Pope's Visit Should Include Recognition of Israel

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A possible visit by Pope Paul to Jerusalem should be accompanied by the Vatican's recognition of Israel, said Avner Shaki, minister of religious affairs, in reaction to the announcement that the Pope wishes to visit Jerusalem.

Shaki, of the National Religious Party, emphasized the Pope's intention to "pray in the holy city" could only take place "in united Jerusalem." The Pope made his comment in an address to the Vatican.

Shaki said that a visit by the Pope, accompanied by a recognition of the State of Israel, could contribute to peace efforts and serve as a "message to all the Arab states."

The Pope should recognize that Jerusalem is indivisible, Shaki said. While it would always serve as a center for three religions, it should be recognized as Israel's sovereign capital, he said.

Catholic sources in Jerusalem said that the Vatican has recognized Israel de facto for years, but has refrained from establishing formal relations so as not to alienate the Arab countries.

Recent Vatican statements about Israel have seemed warmer than previous remarks but emphasize, nonetheless, that Vatican recognition of Israel is tied to resolution of the Palestinian problem.

E.C. to Aid Israel/Palestinians

BRUSSELS (JTA) — The European Community has agreed to a \$300 million package to compensate Israel and the Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for their economic losses arising from the Persian Gulf war.

The 12 E.C. foreign ministers approved a \$210 million loan to Israel and a \$90 million grant to the Palestinians.

Lord Jakobovits is First Jew To be Awarded Templeton Prize

NEW YORK (JTA) — Immanuel Jakobovits, chief rabbi of Great Britain and the Commonwealth, has been awarded the 1991 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, marking the first time that the prize has been given to a Jew in the award's 19-year history.

Great Britain's Prince Philip will present the prize to the outgoing chief rabbi at a private ceremony at Buckingham Palace on May 7. Public ceremonies honoring Jakobovits will take place in Toronto on May 27 and in Vancouver, Canada, on May 29.

The award, announced at the United Nations Church Center, is being granted as Lord Jakobovits retires from his post after a career that spanned five decades. It carries with it a stipend of 410,000 pounds sterling, the equivalent of about \$800,000.

F.Y.I.

"Jerusalem On Line," the only weekly TV show produced in Israel for Americans, may be seen on the following outlet in the Charlotte area: ATC (NJT), Channel 32 on Sundays at 1 p.m.



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