

International Dateline

Three Israeli Journalists Offer Differing Views On Mideast Issues

NEW YORK — Three veteran correspondents for Israeli publications took part in a forum on the Middle East and what emerged were three differing views on the peace process and Israel's future.

The meeting, sponsored by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, featured David Makovsky, Middle East correspondent for U.S. News and World Report and the Jerusalem Post; Avinoam Bar-Yosef, American bureau chief for Ma'ariv, and Akiva Eldar, U.S. bureau chief for Ha'aretz. The forum was moderated by Mortimer B. Zuckerman, editor-in-chief of U. S. News and World Report and publisher of the New York Daily News.

Mr. Makovsky, acknowledging that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is in trouble, noted that his policies would prove beneficial in the long run but are politically costly to him in the short term. He said Mr. Rabin's aims are Middle East peace, economic prosperity and a more democratic political system "which will turn out to be major achievements, yet the polls show that if an election were held today, he would lose."

Mr. Bar-Yosef, who described himself as "non-political," said he was not optimistic about a quick settlement between Israel and Syria. He cited a recent meeting between President Assad and Senator Hank Brown (R-Col.) who reported that the Syrian leader had indicated he would not sign an agreement with Israel until the Jewish State had accepted Arab demands regarding Jerusalem and agreed to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty.

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He added that Assad had made it clear to Senator Brown that the Golan Heights was not the critical issue it has been widely heralded to be, since it had no real "topographical advantage" for Syria.

Mr. Eldar, the third participant, suggested that Israel and the U.S. had been unrealistic in expecting Yasir Arafat to disarm Hamas and the Islamic Jihad and establish a Western-style democracy. He said the tragic bombing in Oklahoma City "Proves that we have a lot of meshuganas around," in the United States and in Israel, but he predicted that "terrorism will not change Israel's attitude toward peace, just as Oklahoma will not change American attitudes toward individual rights," Mr. Eldar added: "Some problems don't have a solution. Terrorism is one of them."

President Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin Attend The 36th AIPAC



photo by Lee Stahlsworth

President Clinton addresses over 2,500 pro-Israel activists at the 36th Annual Policy Conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). The session marked the first appearance by a U.S. President at AIPAC's annual gathering and the first joint appearance by the two leaders before a private audience.

Numbers Don't Count: JDC in Algeria

After more than half a century of assistance to Jews in Algeria, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) recently closed its Algiers office. However, it continues to provide financial aid to seven elderly Jews enabling them to live out their lives in dignity.

JDC's involvement in Algeria shows its commitment not to abandon a Jewish community no matter how small it has become. When JDC began working in Algeria in 1941 under the Vichy regime, Algeria was home to approximately 125,000 Jews out of a total population of 7,250,000.

The Jews of Algeria were able to meet their own emergency needs until October 1940 when the local Jewish Refugee Committee was forced to appeal to JDC. During World War II and the early post-war years, JDC's relief efforts focused on distributions to the needy, support for local medical institutions, and recreational services in summer camps for children.

In 1949 JDC set up a tent colony just outside Algiers and another transient center in a refurbished hotel in the capital for Israel-bound refugees from Morocco, Tunisia, and southern Algeria. JDC rushed in clothing from Europe and opened an emergency clinic for the treatment of contagious eye (trachoma), scalp (favus) and other diseases.

In subsequent years JDC activities included a feeding program, grants to an Algiers dispensary, support for education, vocational training, youth activities, and small cash relief assistance. After Algeria became independent in 1962,



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many Jews left for France and Israel. The local Jewish community organizations collapsed. JDC then created the Jewish social welfare organization CASI to run its assistance program. Emergency programs were instituted in the larger cities, caring for the sick, elderly, and handicapped people left stranded by the exodus.

In Algiers, CASI concentrated its efforts on the upkeep of a canteen and shelter. Throughout the country regular cash disbursements and matzoth distribution for the Pesach holidays took place. JDC also secured free United States government-supported food supplies through the intermediary of the Catholic Relief Services and international voluntary agencies.

JDC maintains a strong relationship with the Catholic order of The Little Sisters of the Poor, who care for the health needs of the remaining assistees, who all have the necessary papers in case they need to leave.

Witnesses To Executions In Byelorussia During World War II Are Being Sought By The Anti-Defamation League

New York, NY...Witnesses with direct knowledge of executions by the German SS and gendarmerie in Novogrodek, Byelorussia—now the Republic of Belarus—during December 1941 to February 1943 are being sought by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL).

Elliot Welles, Director of the ADL Nazi War Criminals Task Force, said their search is in response to a request from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police's War Crimes and Special Investigations Section (RCMP). The unit investigates Canadian residents who may have been involved in war

crimes or crimes against humanity during World War II.

Those with specific information should contact: Elliot Welles, Director, ADL Task Force on Nazi War Criminals, 823 United Nations Plaza, New York, NY 10017, telephone (212) 885-7769. The RCMP requests that you call collect at 613-990-8467 and ask for investigator Corporal Ken LaVoie, or write to: Commanding Officer, A Division, Royal Canadian Mounted Police, 155 McArthur Ave, Vanier, Ontario, Canada, K1A0R4, Att: War Crimes and Special Investigation Section.