

# JTA daily news bulletin

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## ABORTION LAW AMENDMENT PASSED ON FIRST READING BY VOTE OF 58-53

By David Landau and Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- A controversial amendment to the abortion law passed its first reading in the Knesset today by a five-vote margin, giving the Aguda-Israel factions a substantial victory and thereby saving Premier Menachem Begin's coalition government. The vote was 58-53 with nine abstentions.

Coalition MKs, mainly of the Liberal Party, who had opposed the measure, leading to its defeat in a 54-54 tie vote when it was first submitted to the Knesset last month, observed party discipline this time. They did so after Begin declared the vote to be one of confidence in his government. The Aguda had threatened to withdraw its four MKs from the coalition unless the restrictive amendment was adopted. That would have left Begin with too slim a majority in the Knesset to govern for long.

Shlomo Lorincz, head of the tiny Aguda-Knesset faction, said after the vote that it was "a victory for common sense and Jewish morality." He hailed Begin for honoring his pledge to the Aguda that the amendment would be passed. The amendment eliminates clause five of the present abortion law which permitted abortions for socio-economic reasons -- meaning for mothers of poverty-level families with large numbers of children.

Likud Party wings had been lobbying vigorously for weeks to bring defectors into line on the issue. The prospect that the government would have to resign, if the amendment failed and the Aguda carried out its threat, apparently persuaded many coalition MKs to support it although their consciences dictated otherwise.

Some MKs Abstained Or Were Absent.

There was little doubt as to the outcome when the Knesset met today. Nevertheless, three members of the Democratic Movement -- Deputy Premier Yigael Yadin, Justice Minister Shmuel Tamir and MK Shlomo Eliahu -- voted against the amendment. Another Democratic Movement MK, Akiva Nof, absented himself. Unlike the Liberal Party, the Democratic Movement is not bound by coalition discipline in votes on religious issues.

Three other coalition MKs -- Hillel Seidel, Yosef Tamir and Yitzhak Yitzhaki, either abstained or were absent. Also absent were Geula Cohen and Moshe Shamir, who defected from Herut earlier this year and are now associated with the ultra-nationalist, right-wing Tehiya movement.

All Labor MKs opposed the amendment except Rabbi Menachem Hacohen who abstained, with the prior consent of Labor Party chairman, Shimon Peres. Had the vote been closer, Hacohen indicated that he would have voted against the government.

Although the government's victory preserved its 66-seat majority in the Knesset, Begin's coalition is still in trouble. Yosef Tamir, a veteran member of the Liberal Party, was expected to announce his resignation later today. Should he do so, it would confirm reports of a split in Liberal ranks. Several key members of the party are said

to be ready to quit and join the Shai faction as a first step toward the formation of a liberal-centrist front in opposition to the government.

## THE POPE AND ARAFAT REPORTED TO HAVE EXCHANGED SEVERAL LETTERS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- Pope John Paul II and Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat "have exchanged several letters" during the past year, "the National Catholic News Service reported from Rome.

According to the report, published on Dec. 13, Father Ibrahim Ayad, a Catholic priest who is one of Arafat's advisors, told a press conference at Rome's Cultural Center for Religious Information on Dec. 11 that "the Pope's last letter, dated four months ago, spoke of 'Palestinian rights' and of the difficulties of the situation in southern Lebanon."

The report said that "Father Ayad, a priest of the Latin Rite of Jerusalem who advises the PLO leader on international and religious problems, said he had several meetings at the Vatican Secretariat of State in the months following Arafat's receipt of the letter. He noted that the Holy See did not yet see its way clear to granting Arafat a Papal audience. The Bethlehem-born priest added that the PLO, too, would prefer to wait on concrete Papal action in favor of the Palestinian cause in the wake of Pope John Paul's call at the United Nations for their 'legitimate rights'."

## SOLAR ENERGY PLANT OPENED

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- Israel opened its first year-round solar energy plant on the Dead Sea yesterday. But advocates of nuclear power urged today that the country move in that direction as well because of the soaring price of oil.

Moshe Arens, chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, warned at a meeting at the Haifa Technion that time was running out for Israel to prepare the infrastructure and assemble the resources to build a nuclear power plant. Israel has the scientific know-how to build such a plant, he said. He noted that by next year Israel will probably be paying Egypt \$40 per barrel for Sinai oil, almost double the present price and still will not be able to fill all of its energy needs.

Prof. Shimon Ifrah, president of the Israel Nuclear Science Society, observed that it was paradoxical that oil-rich countries such as Libya and Iraq have built nuclear power plants while Israel has put a freeze on such projects.

But solar energy was the immediate focus of attention. The 150 kilowatt plant at Ein Boker on the Dead Sea was opened officially at ceremonies attended by Energy Minister Yitzhak Mordeai. It is a pilot plant with a limited output. But if the new technique on which it is based proves successful, a five megawatt power station will be built on the same site by late-1981 or early 1982 to be followed by a 20 megawatt plant.

Energy Ministry officials expressed confidence that the Dead Sea, where the sun shines almost continuously, can be made into a giant solar pond producing 2000 megawatts of electricity by the end of the century. This would amount to about 80 percent of Israel's present production.

The technology employed was developed in Israel. According to experts, it can be applied anywhere in the world where water, sun and salt are available and would generate power at a price competitive with fossil fuel or nuclear energy. The company operating the new plant is studying the possibility of constructing a similar solar pond electric station in California.

Modai said he hoped solar energy would solve Israel's energy problems, but time is of the essence, he said. He predicted that Israel will have to pay \$2 billion for oil in 1980.

#### ARGENTINE ZIONISTS LAUNCH PROGRAM TO COUNTER PLO PROPAGANDA

By Anatolio Landmann

BUENOS AIRES, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- The Argentine Zionist Organization has announced a program to counter propaganda by the Palestine Liberation Organization in Latin America. Marcos Kerenhoffer, president of the organization, told a meeting of the DAIA that it will publish a booklet exposing the blackmail and terrorist activities of the PLO and would screen a film on the PLO made abroad.

DAIA chairman Nehemias Resnizky pledged his organization's support for the Zionist initiative. But local spokesmen for Likud and the Independent Zionists, meanwhile, have accused the Jewish Youth Federation and the leftist Spanish-language Jewish weekly Nueva Presencia of confusing the situation about PLO propaganda by supporting the rights of the Palestinian people.

Youth Federation leaders rejected the charge. They said that while they favor Palestinian rights to self-determination, they are prepared to fight against the PLO unless the latter changes its attitude toward Israel. They noted that they are actively promoting aliya among Argentine Jewish youth and support other Zionist endeavors.

Resnizky, replying to questions, said the possibility of showing the NBC television production of "Holocaust" in Argentina has not yet been raised with the authorities.

#### ARAFAT TO VISIT ITALY IN 1980

By Lisa Palmieri-Billig

ROME, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- The representative of the Arab League in Rome announced here today at a press conference that Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasir Arafat will "almost certainly" come to Rome in the beginning of 1980.

Chesili Klibi, the Arab League's secretary general, is expected on an official visit to Italy in January, at which time the League plans to take a "series of initiatives" to persuade the Italian government to extend official recognition of the PLO and thereby "paving the way" for other European Economic Community nations to do the same, it was announced at the press conference. "There are no longer any obstacles to Arafat's visit," the League representative said, "with the exception of certain internal resistances within the Italian government and some problems of coordination between Italy and the European community." The left wing of the majority Christian Democratic Party, and the Socialist and Communist parties are among the major supporters of Arafat's visit. Their standing on this issue has been enhanced since they organized the PLO international conference in Rome last September.

#### RECOGNITION OF THE PLO DEBATED

GENEVA, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- Some 500 high school students between the ages of 16 and 18 met here for two days of discussions modeled on United Nations General Assembly debates. One of the lengthy debates was on a motion proposed by some "delegates" to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization as the only legal representative of the Palestinian people.

When the motion was rejected, the "delegates" supporting the motion stalked out in protest. Their anger did not last long. After a quick cigarette smoke, they returned quietly to the assembly hall. The assembly, in another action, declared itself in opposition to the policies of the Iranian government but expressed approval of having the Shah brought to trial.

The discussions, known as the Youth for the UN Forum, has taken place here for the past 25 years. It is financed by the Swiss National Council of UNESCO. The participants are from Swiss high schools, the International School and from France.

#### ISRAEL'S MAGEN DAVID ADOM REORGANIZED

DETROIT, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- Magen David Adom, Israel's counterpart of the Red Cross, was reorganized last week. Joseph Handleman, president of the American Red Magen David of Israel (ARMDI), and Benjamin Saxe, ARMDI executive vice president, reported here. Dr. Arie Harell was named by President Yitzhak Navon of Israel as president of Magen David Adom, they reported to leaders of the Michigan Chapter of ARMDI.

Born in Kiev, Russia, Harell immigrated to Israel in 1937 after completing medical studies at Berlin University. Since 1962, he has been head of the municipal governmental medical center, Tel Aviv-Yafo, and since 1977 served as chairman of the Association of Hospital Directors in Israel. From 1956 to 1958, Harell was Israel's envoy to Rumania, and from 1958 to 1962, he was Ambassador to the Soviet Union.

#### BROWN OPPOSED TO U.S. MIDEAST BASES

By Joseph Palakoff

WASHINGTON, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- Defense Secretary Harold Brown said yesterday that he was opposed to American bases in the Middle East as a means of helping U.S. allies and interests in the area. Appearing on the CBS television program "Face the Nation," Brown was questioned by a Pentagon reporter about the possibilities of the U.S. establishing military bases in the area, as has been suggested by Administration sources since the Iranian crisis began. The suggestions include the U.S. takeover of the air bases in Sinai that Israel will evacuate in 1981 and turn over to Egypt.

The reporter asked Brown: "If we do put bases in the Middle East, if we do concentrate forces there in any way, what countries, what are the likely candidate countries, and secondly, could a NATO of the Middle East develop out of this? Could we have some formal ties to Saudi Arabia, let's say, and other Middle East countries that are friendly to the U.S.?" According to the transcript of the broadcast, the Defense Secretary replied:

"I don't want to talk about bases in particular countries because I don't believe that American bases as such in that area are the right way to go. A number of those countries in the area themselves can maintain bases which in an emergency, in which they asked our help, we could then come in and use. Nor do I see formal alliances. I believe that the history of those alliances does not suggest that this

is the right way to go. I think we need to improve our relationships and our military cooperation with the moderate states in the area and there are a substantial number of those." Brown did not mention any country by name.

#### BUCKLEY, JACKSON CLASH OVER WHETHER THE U.S. SHOULD RECOGNIZE THE PLO

By William Saphire

NEW YORK, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- William Buckley, the conservative author and syndicated columnist, and Rev. Jesse Jackson, head of Operation PUSH, locked horns yesterday over the issue of whether the United States should recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization. Their debate, before faculty, students and guests at Hillsdale College, Hillsdale, Mich., was featured on the television program "Firing Line," televised here by Channel 13 of the Public Broadcasting System.

The subject was "Resolved, the United States Should Deny Recognition to the PLO." Buckley spoke in favor of that resolution. Jackson, who aroused a storm of controversy when he visited the Middle East and met with PLO chief Yasir Arafat following the resignation of the U.S. Ambassador to the UN, Andrew Young, was opposed.

Other participants in the debate, which will be concluded next Sunday, included Prof. Allen Weinstein, a professor of history at Smith College and Abdeen Jabara, chairman of the Palestine Human Rights Campaign.

#### Skeptical Of PLO Claims

Buckley, at the outset, expressed skepticism of the PLO's claim to represent "four million Palestinians," a figure he said that was supplied by Jackson, who are scattered among a dozen countries in the Middle East and elsewhere. He stressed that the PLO remains bound by its Charter, adopted in 1964 and revised in 1967, which holds that armed struggle is the only way to achieve Palestinian goals, that it is the overall strategy, not a tactical phase and that by the liberation of Palestine, the PLO refers to the entire State of Israel.

Buckley noted, in that connection, that the PLO Charter holds as "illegal" not only the 1947 Palestine partition resolution of the United Nations but the Palestine Mandate and the Balfour Declaration as well.

He also emphasized that the PLO is an umbrella organization covering 13 or 14 fedayeen groups that engage in international terrorism as a matter of policy. He noted that one of those groups, Dr. George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), has been linked by U.S. Air Force intelligence to terrorist groups active in 14 countries, not necessarily associated with the Middle East conflict.

#### Claims Whole Story Not Told

Jackson maintained that the American public is not told the "whole story" of the Middle East. He claimed that the PLO has offered a secular democratic state in Palestine, including Israel, in which Christians, Jews and Moslems could live in amity. Since this was rejected by Israel, the PLO is willing to compromise and accept a Palestinian state on the Gaza Strip and West Bank which comprise only 23 percent of the territory that was Palestine in 1948, Jackson said.

According to Jackson, the central strategy of the PLO is not terrorism but diplomacy. "The PLO does engage in terrorism and we deplore that,"

he said. "But it is just one dimension of their activity." The real power in the PLO is not the terrorists, he said, but the educated Palestinians, doctors, lawyers, businessmen and skilled workers who make valuable contributions to the countries in which they live.

To support his argument for U.S. recognition of the PLO, Jackson stated that the PLO is recognized by 116 nations while Israel is recognized by only 51; that the PLO enjoys observer status at the United Nations and that it is a full member of the Arab League. The U.S. must recognize its interests in the Middle East, he said. Jackson enumerated these as a secure Israel within recognized international boundaries, justice for the Palestinians, the territorial integrity of Lebanon and normal relations with the Arab world.

Another panelist, correspondent John Cooley of the Christian Science Monitor, suggested that it was anomalous for the U.S. to refuse to talk to the PLO without preconditions when many prominent Israelis have met with PLO officials in various countries in recent years. Buckley replied that he had no objection to "talking" to the PLO -- "I would talk to John Dillinger," he said -- but reminded Cooley that the subject of debate was "recognition" of the PLO by the U.S.

#### EXHIBITION DEVOTED TO ANSKI

By Henriette Baas

AMSTERDAM, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- The Amsterdam Jewish Historical Museum recently held an exhibition devoted to Anski, the now defunct Yiddish Cultural Society of Amsterdam, whose development and decline mirrors the successive waves of Jewish immigration into Holland and the assimilation of the younger generation.

Anski was the pen-name of the Yiddish poet S'polum Rabinowitz for whom the society was named when it was founded here in 1921 by Jewish emigres from Poland and other Eastern European countries. Many had been members of the Bund, a Socialist-oriented group that opposed both Orthodox Judaism and Zionism. They established Anski to preserve their Yiddish language and culture through lectures, theatrical performances and other activities.

Membership dwindled after a few years as a number of the founders either emigrated from Holland or became more integrated into Dutch society. But reinforcements arrived from Poland in 1929 and again after 1933. The society enjoyed its greatest growth just before the outbreak of World War II. But when the Soviet Union invaded Poland in 1939 and divided that country with Nazi Germany, Anski split. The Communist members approved the Soviet invasion. The Bundists were opposed and founded their own cultural organization, the Peretz Society.

Anski was re-established after the war when the influx of displaced persons into Holland increased its membership temporarily. But most of them soon left for the U.S. or Canada. Anski was carried on for a time by its original members. But as the older ones died and their children became assimilated, the society was finally abandoned. Material for the exhibit was provided by some of the surviving members.

PARIS (JTA) -- A giant Chanukah menorah was lit in Central Paris Sunday as a beacon of hope for Soviet Jewry and of protest against the Soviet Union's continuing anti-Jewish discrimination. Some 1500 people attended the ceremonies organized by the Council of major Jewish Organizations in France (CRIF) and the International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism (LICA)

## TWO ORTHODOX GROUPS DENOUNCE CALL FOR CHANGE IN HALACHA

NEW YORK, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- Two

Orthodox groups have angrily denounced a proposal by a leading Reform rabbi for a revolutionary change in Jewish law that would regard the child of a mixed marriage as Jewish if either parent was Jewish. The Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada assailed the suggestion by Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC) as "a hazard for the non-Jew, a hazard for the Jew and a hazard for all mankind."

The Agudath Israel of America issued a statement blasting Schindler and the entire Reform movement. It also took strong exception to a promise by Shimon Peres, chairman of the opposition Labor Party in Israel, to support "recognition of all streams of Judaism" in Israel when his party returns to power. Both Schindler and Peres spoke at the 55th biennial convention of the UAHC in Toronto last week.

Jewish tradition holds that only a child born of a Jewish mother is Jewish. Upholding this, the Union of Orthodox Rabbis said, in a statement, that "According to Torah and the tradition of ages which still exists today, a Jew is only a person born to a Jewish mother or a proselyte who has been converted with the exact procedure laid down in the authoritative codes of Judaism from ancient times down to the Shulchan Aruch -- Jewish code of laws."

The statement noted that "When a gentile is grafted into the Jewish community, the danger is two-fold, to the child and the Jewish community. On the other hand, the gentile is removed from his normal source of vitality and will suffer."

According to the statement, "All the good-will and broadmindedness in the world cannot change the actuality of a non-Jew into the actuality of a Jew. Furthermore, the non-Jew himself would not want to be such a convert because it is worthless unless it is maintained as Divinely ordained. Were all the rabbis in the world to convene and declare their 'recognition' of the Jewishness of an improperly converted proselyte or of a child born to a Jewish father alone, they could not make him a Jew."

### No Novelty In The Reform View

The Agudath Israel statement said that "Having long ago renounced the divinity of the Torah, there is no novelty in the Reform's attack on the traditional determinants of Jewish lineage. The Reform rabbinate has long overlooked the classical definition of Jews by officiating at intermarriages." It charged that "Halachic determinants are being rewritten to serve the whims of those Jews who choose to marry out of the fold; when the Jew and Torah law are on a collision course, it is the individual who must adjust and correct his actions and not our timeless tenets."

The Agudath Israel also claimed that "the Reform movement in this country and around the world is in a desperate state" and "the current attempts at resuscitation via Israel by threats to test Reform rabbis' rights in Israeli courts will fare no better than previous futile efforts in Israel and the U.S. History has shown that a Judaism not based on Halacha has no future."

The Agudath Israel accused Peres of "bartering Jewish survival and Jewish ideals for the dollars of the Reform-temple" by "promising to fulfill their desires in Israel."

### BLACK-JEWISH RELATIONS ASSESSED

NEW YORK, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- Reform Jews

cannot use the specter of Black anti-Semitism as a "pretext" for writing off the Black community, Albert Vorspan, vice president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), told the UAHC's 55th biennial convention in Toronto last week.

"Anti-Semitism must be condemned, whether it issues from an army general, a cross-burner, a Klansman, a PLO genocider or a Black extremist making media hay out of the firing of Andy Young," he declared.

"But for us Reform Jews that cannot be the end of the matter. If some Jews are prepared to write off the Black community, using the specter of Black anti-Semitism as the pretext for withdrawal, that cannot and must not be our response in the Reform Jewish community." Continuing, Vorspan told the 4000 delegates from the United States and Canada: "There is a commonality of interest, a shared vision of a better and more compassionate society that persists and that epitomizes the shared concerns that are still there to be nurtured."

New York State Senator Carl McCall, the ranking Black member of the New York Legislature, who was recently nominated to the post of Deputy U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations, said that cooperation between Blacks and Jews was "both a religious duty and a common expression of enlightened self-interest." The "theological mandate" for cooperation, he said, stemmed from a "shared faith in the God of Israel." There was also a "social and political mandate for cooperation," McCall added, "that derives from a shared experience with oppression, discrimination, prejudice and bigotry."

"In an age of demands for balanced budgets, tax cuts and spending reductions," he said, "our shared faith and our common experience require us to join in a cooperative and concerted effort in behalf of victims of unemployment and welfare dependency, the aged and infirm and the vast hordes of aimless youth whose dreams for the future have yet to be conceived."

### Unpublicized Black-Jewish Dialogues

Vorspan agreed that there was "a commonality of interest and a shared vision of a better and more compassionate society" that linked the two communities. He disclosed that Reform synagogues across the country were currently engaged in unpublicized dialogues with Black groups in "hundreds of communities" on such issues as public education, crime, jobs and housing.

On the national scene, he said, UAHC officials have mapped plans with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People "to promote a new and more mature, tougher, franker and more effective relationship between those Blacks and Jews who care about each other and who refuse to be driven out by the bigots, the demagogues and hard-liners in our respective communities."

AMSTERDAM (JTA) -- Eytan Rann has arrived in Holland as the new Israel Ambassador in The Hague. He succeeds Shlomo Argov who left Holland three months ago to become Israel Ambassador in London. Rann, who was born in Hungary in 1920 and came to Palestine in 1931, has been Israel Ambassador in Ivory Coast and in Japan.