TRYING TO SET AN ELECTION DATE

JERUSALEM, Jan. 26 (JTA) — The Knesset's Legal Committee began consideration today of a government-initiated bill calling for elections to be held on July 7 but most observers expect an earlier date to emerge as a result of bargaining between coalition and opposition members. The bill passed its first reading in the Knesset last week.

According to well placed sources, the most likely date is June 30 or, alternatively, June 23, one week earlier. Majority opinion in the committee was said to favor an earlier date than that proposed in the bill. Opposition MKs are still talking of April or May elections but are expected to agree eventually to a date late in June. The National Religious Party, which holds the balance of votes in the committee, proposed the June date.

KNESSET UNIT APPROVES CONSTRUCTION OF THREE NEW WEST BANK SETTLEMENTS

By David Landa

JERUSALEM, Jan. 26 (JTA) — The Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee approved the construction of three new settlements on the West Bank today, overriding objections by Deputy Premier Yigael Yadin who argued that the settlements had no strategic value. In the case of one of the sites, known as Tekoa-B, three committee members of the opposition Labor Party joined the coalition majority in rejecting Yadin's appeal.

Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon, chairman of the Ministerial Settlement Committee, is expected to press ahead with the settlements now that he has a green light from the Knesset. Sharon has made no secret of his intention to plant as many settlements as possible on the West Bank before this spring's elections which could bring the Labor Party into power with a more moderate settlement policy.

Givon Squatters Remain On The Site

Fears that a Labor-led government might call a halt to many settlement projects prompted some 200 members of the Betar movement to take over Givon, a hilltop on the West Bank just north of Jerusalem, yesterday without authorization.

The squatters, reinforced today by 70 yeshiva students, were busy erecting tents and huts on the site. They were backed by Sharon although his action is illegal. They rejected demands by Housing Minister David Levy that they evacuate the hill where the Ministry plans to build a new town.

The settlers claim that by the time work begins, the elections will have been held with results that could mean shelving the plans. They warned that they would not leave peacefully unless they were offered a "concrete" alternative site to settle. The army has been ordered to protect the squatters, not to remove them.

Late this evening it was reported that the Givon settlers might be considering accepting an alternative government scheme for building their homes in the area. Their leaders negotiated through the afternoon with Mattityahu Shmueli, Director General of the Prime Minister's Office. It was not clear whether the deal would enable them to leave their cold and desolate hilltop before the frosty night sets in.

REAGAN ADMINISTRATION REVIEWING ENTIRE U.S. MIDEAST POLICY TOWARD ARAB-ISRAELI CONFLICT AND THE PLO

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Jan. 26 (JTA) — The Reagan Administration said today that it is reviewing "the entire policy" of the U.S. toward the Arab-Israeli conflict, including the issue of Jewish settlements on the West Bank and the attitude toward the Palestine Liberation Organization.

This disclosure was made by the State Department in response to questions as to whether the Reagan Administration was considering the announcement by the Israeli government in Jerusalem that it will build 10 more settlements on the West Bank in the next five months before Israel's parliamentary elections.

State Department spokesman William Dyess replied, without referring to the legality or illegality of the settlements, that "While we were aware of plans which were previously announced, we do not consider the carrying out of these plans to be helpful."

He added that "The new Administration is reviewing the entire policy to this vital region."

He said the State Department is "taking the lead" in this review but declined to say who is involved in it. He insisted that the review does not mean a change in U.S. policy.

Not An Agonizing Reappraisal ...

"It is wrong to infer that there will be or will not be changes," Dyess said. "I don't mean to imply it either way. It is not an agonizing reappraisal — something like that. That is not what is intended. What we are simply doing is to review the policy as it now exists to see whether or not we wish in all respects to continue the policy or whether or not in some respects we wish to change it." He observed that "the study should be expected as normal by any new Administration."

Dyess said the Administration will be undertaking reviews of other issues in other parts of the world and that the Middle East review is "not one of the more important."

He said that "In good time, all major issues and areas will be reviewed."

The policy reviews will be conducted "in the foreign policy establishment and will not be done in a hurried fashion," he said. The foreign policy establishment includes the State Department, the National Security Council at the White House, the Pentagon and the CIA.

Asked if the review would include the U.S. position toward the PLO, Dyess referred to Secretary of State Alexander Haig's statement to the Senate Foreign Relations Committee at his confirmation hearing that the PLO is "an umbrella organization." The State Department spokesmen reported Haig as having said that the PLO includes many groups, some of them terrorist organizations and openly armed terrorist acts.

Dyess went on to say that President Reagan, at his first press conference after his election Novem-ber 4, had replied, "Yes" when asked if the PLO is a terrorist organization. One reporter remarked that Haig's statement, as reported by Dyess,
NEW YORK, Jan. 26 (JTA) — The American Jewish Congress has asked the federal government to release all its uncataloged documents on the Palestine Liberation Organization and its personnel and supporters in this country.

In a sweeping Freedom of Information Act request made to more than 100 agencies of five Cabinet departments and the Central Intelligence Agency, the AJCongress stated that the release of the information was in the public interest because the PLO is an "avowed terrorist organization, and the nature and extent of its infiltration into American institutions are relevant to important issues of domestic and foreign policy."

In legal papers filed in support of the request, lawyers for the AJCongress point out that the PLO "engages in terrorist activities which are contrary to the interests and policies of the U.S., and that its chief purpose is to destroy the State of Israel." An analysis and dissemination of information on the PLO in the government's files will be useful in alerting the public to these threats, said Nathan Dershowitz, director of AJCongress' Commission on Law and Social Action.

The request seeks "all writings of any kind," including directives, memoranda, letters, reports, studies, pamphlets, handwritten notes and other agency records dating from 1968 and dealing with not only the PLO itself but also affiliated organizations as Al Fatah, As Saiaq, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine and Black September.

The documents sought are those pertaining to PLO assets and activities, its contributions and supporters, its personnel and any contacts it has had with U.S. officials.

The requests have been made of the Departments of State, Defense, Treasury, Justice, Commerce, and the FBI.

EGYPTIAN MAP OMITTS ISRAEL.
By David Friedman

NEW YORK, Jan. 26 (JTA) — "Egypt Welcomes the World," a map distributed by the Egyptian Tourist Office in midtown Manhattan proclaims. But Israel is not recognized as part of that world, at least not on that map.

An introductory note on the reverse side of the map, which lists tourism information in Egypt, proudly declares: "You have only to look at a map to realize what an important part Egypt plays in the travel world. For in order to reach most of the Middle East, African and East European countries it is necessary to pass through this wonderful country."

But when one turns to the other side for a look at the map, the southern part of Israel is shown but the word "Israel" does not appear. The map lists Gaza Strip towns and West Bank cities such as Bethlehem and Ramallah. They are labelled as being in "Palestine." The only Israeli city listed is Jerusalem which the Egyptians obviously consider part of "Palestine."

RHODE ISLAND FIRM FINED ON ARAB BOYCOTT CHARGES.
By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, Jan. 26 (JTA) — The ITT Grinnell Corporation of Providence, R.I., has agreed to pay a civil penalty of $50,500 for alleged violations of the reporting requirements of the U.S. anti-Arab boycott law, the Department of Commerce has disclosed.

The company "voluntarily advised" the Commerce Department of a total of 101 instances of late filing of boycott requests at three of its 185 facilities. After the matter came to the attention of company officials, the Commerce Department filed an administrative complaint.

ITT Grinnell, a manufacturer of valves, fittings and steel transmission structures, was accused in a Department letter that "all of the transactions in connection with which the 101 boycott requests were received involved the sale of goods between ITT,
Grinnell field offices in the U.S. and the Arabian American Oil Company (Aramco) in Saudi Arabia. The letter was addressed to Daniel N. Grinnell, president.

The anti-Arab boycott laws, which help protect American and American companies doing business with Israel from the Arab League's boycott of Israel, require that a U.S. person or company that receives any request to boycott a country friendly to the U.S. report that request to the Commerce Department. Between August 1978 and March 1980, Grinnell failed to report the 101 requests.

UN OFFICERS CONCEDE THEY WERE WRONG ON STORY OF ARAB MUTILATIONS

By Hugh Ormsby

TEL AVIV, Jan. 26 (JTA) -- Photographs of the bodies of five terrorists killed by Israeli forces in south Lebanon Dec. 25 have led some United Nations officers to admit they were wrong in accepting the allegations by some troops under their command that Israeli soldiers had mutilated the bodies.

UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim set up a commission of inquiry to look into the matter after the U.S. government expressed serious doubts that the Israeli forces were responsible for the alleged mutilations of the terrorists. The commission is known as the UNFOIL.

The evidence against Israel was a photograph of the bodies made three days after the incident with a telescopic lens at a distance of about one kilometer. It showed only three bodies and was taken to substantiate the charge that the other two bodies had been burned and mutilated with explosives.

The photograph was shown to Israeli officers at a meeting last Friday between Gen. Emmanuel Erskine, the UNFOIL commander, his deputy, Brig. Gen. Odeda and the Israeli commander of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon, Gen. Avigard Ben-Gal, accompanied by his aides. Ben-Gal asked for an immediate enlargement of the photo. When this was examined by the officers a short time later, all five bodies were visible, none showing signs of burns or mutilation.

Israel army sources said Odeda admitted he may have been too hasty in accepting the allegations of the Dutch troops without further investigation. But UN sources expressed surprise at the admission and said they would await the findings of the investigating commission.

ECUMENICAL SERVICES HELD FOR RETURNING HOSTAGES AND FAMILIES

By David Friedman

WEST POINT, N.Y., Jan. 26 (JTA) -- Ecumenical services were held this morning at the West Point Chapel for the returning hostages and their families who are having a private reunion at the military academy.

In the opening prayer, Rabbi Avraham Soltes, the Jewish chaplain at West Point, declared: "Grant them the patience and faith now that we are close by to reach out to them across gaps of unshared experience they will never fully understand, even as their hearts reached out to us across endless valleys of distance and fear, of silence and despair."

Soltes was joined in the prayers by the Rev. Richard Camp, Jr., the Protestant chaplain, and Father James Tschirly, the Catholic chaplain. The 17-member joint prayer choir joined in with the three other choirs at the academy, Protestant, Catholic and Evangelical, to sing at the service.

There are three Jews among the returning 52 Americans who were held for 444 days in Tehran by Barry Rosen, 36, of Brooklyn, N.Y.; Jerry Plotkin, 36, of Sherman Oaks, Calif.; and Malmcolm Kelp, 35, of Upper Montclair, N.J.

Before leaving Wiesbaden, West Germany, Rosen, who had been the press attache at the U.S. Embassy in Teheran, told the press he was happy and looking forward to returning home. "I think I was there for a good reason," he said. "I helped keep people from killing one another." Soltes called him a "dirty Zionist," he was quoted as saying.

EGYPTIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS HAVE A CLEARER PICTURE OF ISRAEL AFTER THEIR WEEKS VISIT THERE

By Hugh Ormsby

TEL AVIV, Jan. 26 (JTA) -- A 10-member Egyptian parliamentary delegation left for home yesterday after a week's visit to Israel, saying their talks and tours of the country had changed their minds about Israel. They said they now have a clearer picture of the various viewpoints within Israel.

Dr. Mustafa Kamal Murad, leader of the group, said before leaving that: "It is obvious and clear that normalization (of relations) is a fact, peace in the Middle East is a fact, peace between Israel and Egypt is a reality."

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POLICE ACCUSED OF Using Threats TO GET CONFESSIONS FROM SUSPECTS

JERUSALEM, Jan. 26 (JTA) -- The lawyer for the three sons of Druze Knesset member Jabber Muaddi accused the police today of using threats and intimidations to extract admissions of guilt from his clients in the Jan. 13 murder of Bedouin Sheik Hamad Abu Rabia. The Muaddi brothers, said by police to be the prime suspects, were arrested shortly after the killing which paved the way for the police to assume the Knesset seat held by Abu Rabia.

In a letter to a Police Inspector General Arko lvitz, defense attorney Shlomo Tussia-Cohen said the "unacceptable methods" employed by police interrogators included denying the accused access to a lawyer for more than a week after their arrest. He said the confession by Seif Muaddi claiming full responsibility for the crime was obtained under duress, pressure and insults. Muaddi was accused of assisting terrorists and the Liberation Organization chief Yair Ararat, Tussia-Cohen said.

STRAISBOURG (JTA) -- The Council of Europe rejected a Swedish Socialist resolution to dispatch a commission to Israel to investigate the prison system there and the respect for human rights. The vote Monday was overwhelmingly negative.

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NEW ARREST WARRANT FOR MENGELE

BONN, Jan. 26 (JTA) — The State Attorney's office in Frankfurt has issued a new warrant for former Nazi concentration camp doctor Josef Mengele, who is presently reported to be living in Uruguay. The warrant, which includes new evidence against the man who was called the "angel of death" by Auschwitz inmates, replaces a warrant issued in 1959.

Mengele is accused of having selected concentration camp inmates for the gas chamber and of performing brutal medical experiments upon them. Attorney General Hans-Eberhard Klein said the office felt it necessary to update the charges. The number of Jews and other prisoners sent to gas chambers by Mengele "cannot even be approximated," Klein said.

According to a recent report by Jacobo Timerman in the Israeli newspaper, Maariv, Mengele is now working for the government of Uruguay as an advisor on how to torture inmates, especially Jewish inmates, in the notorious "Freedom Prison," the main detention center for political prisoners in Uruguay. (See full story in the Jan. 14 issue of the Daily News Bulletin.)

TRIAL OF EX-NAZI HALTED

BONN, Jan. 26 (JTA) — A court in Frankfurt has decided to terminate further proceedings against Horst Czernyński, 58, a former SS official, the main defendant in a trial of war crimes that took place in Auschwitz. The proceedings against another defendant, Josef Schmidt, 58, will continue.

The decision was taken last Friday after Czernyński failed to attend his trial after more than 11 consecutive days due to an alleged heart attack. "A West German law requires continuity in such proceedings."

The trial has been dragging on since September 1977. Court officials travelled six times to Israel and to Poland, four times to the United States, France and Czechoslovakia, and one to Hungary and Austria where 250 witnesses were questioned. Czernyński, who was a commander of the Logishcha camp in the Auschwitz complex, has been charged with the murders of at least eight inmates. Schmidt, a "blockfuehner" in the same camp, is accused of collaborating in the killings.

JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS URGED TO SPOTLIGHT CONDITION OF MENDELEICH

NEW YORK, Jan. 26 (JTA) — Representatives of the Student Struggle Against Soviet Jewry (SSJ) and the Jewish Identity Center (JIC) have issued a joint statement calling upon Jewish organizations, particularly synagogues and yeshivas, to spotlight the critical condition of Prisoner of Conscience Josef Mendeleich who has been conducting a hunger strike for almost three months in the Perm labor camp in the Soviet Union.

An Orthodox Jew, Mendeleich recently related in a letter to his sister in Israel that he is "between life and death and was forced to work on the Sabbath as an iron cutter who had previously been able to avoid working additional hours during the week, the two groups reported.

They also said that a Passover Hagadah that had been gotten through to him from the outside, along with a few other items of religious comfort which sustained him through intolerable conditions of his long imprisonment, were recently confiscated along with his personal letters.

In the joint statement, Glen Richter, chairman of the SSSJ, and Shiffa Hoffman, member of the JIC's executive, say, "As we join in prayer to God for the release of the hostages in India, we must simultaneously bring to world attention the plight of Josef Mendeleich whose 'crim' of wanting to emigrate to his homeland, Israel, has made him a hostage of the oppressive Soviet regime for 10 years."

Richter and Hoffman urged all Jews as well as all people "for whom the concept of freedom is dear" to participate in the Yom Mendeleich Remembrance Day at the Isaiah Wall opposite the United Nations on Feb. 8.

EXHIBITION HIGHLIGHTS CONTRIBUTION OF AUSTRIAN JEWISH LABOR MOVEMENT

VIENNA, Jan. 26 (JTA) — The contribution of the Jewish labor movement in the fight for social justice and against militarism and racism between the two world wars is documented in a major exhibition on the Austrian labor movement during those years. The exhibition, which opened here last Thursday, is in honor of Chancellor Bruno Kreisky's 70th birthday.

Before 1914 only a small part of the Jewish population in Vienna was proletarian. Nevertheless, the Poale Zion (proletarian Zionists) organization was first organized in 1904. At the beginning of World War I, a large number of refugees from Galicia contributed to the rapid growth of the Poale Zion organization.

War, hunger and identification with the Bolshevik revolution in Russia in 1917 led to a radicalization of the group. A considerable number of Poale Zionists joined the newly founded Communist Party. The rest of the group continued to adhere to the program of Poale Zion till the beginning of fascism in Austria in 1934. Many Jewish workers were also members of the Social Democratic Party.

Between the two wars the Jewish population of Vienna numbered up to 200,000. The Jewish community had a varied cultural life, including newspapers, institutions and a Yiddish theater which flourished until the Nazis overran Austria.

VIENNA, Jan. 26 (JTA) — Friedrich Rainer, charged with neo-Nazi activity, was acquitted by a Klagenfurt court jury last week. However, the court decided that this was a mistake and suspended the verdict. The matter will be brought before the Supreme Court.

Rainer distributed leaflets propagating Nazi ideals and politics. The District Attorney asked the defendant whether he ever had doubts about the contents of the leaflets. Responding, Rainer said, "No. Everything is true. The horror stories about gas chambers are just propaganda made up by Zionists and Communists. History will bring out the whole truth."

The court room audience, mostly nationalists and rightwing, applauded Rainer's statement. Security measures were tight and several times the judge had to order the audience to remain silent during the proceedings. Rainer's sister, Erika Hannesschlaeger, also was acquitted. Another sister is scheduled to face trial on similar charges in the near future.

HAIFA (JTA) — An apparatus to distill brackish and saline water using solar energy has been developed by civil engineering Prof. Anthony Peronat of the Technion. The developers believe that the apparatus will be particularly useful in remote and locations, where it could produce potable water at very reasonable cost.