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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 Landau

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 their 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 Matityahu Shmulevitz, 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 at 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 decisions facing the Administration." 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 spokesman reported Haig as having said that the PLO "includes many groups, some of them are terrorist organizations and openly avow terrorist acts."

Dyess was reminded that President Reagan, at his first press conference after his election November 4, had replied, "yes" when asked if the PLO is a terrorist organization. One reporter remarked that Haig's statement, as reported by Dyess,

differs from the Reagan statement. Dyess was asked then if this was a change of perspective by the Administration.

"No, absolutely not," Dyess replied. "I don't see any discrepancy there. I'll try to get a clarification. It would be unfortunate to see a difference." The Carter Administration's policy was not to recognize or negotiate with the PLO unless it accepted Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338. When Dyess was asked if the Carter Administration's policy is "constant or under review," he replied, "I don't want to comment. Anything I say can be misunderstood."

Asked about Reagan's campaign promises in support of Israel, Dyess said, "I'm sure any statements by the President were made seriously" and are "very important" to the purposes of the review. He noted that the Administration will take into consideration Reagan's campaign statements but added that it has "also a responsibility to take into account what has happened. There are many considerations."

Dyess was questioned about the statement made by the U.S. Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, John West, in a recent interview in which he was reported to have said that he feels "very strongly" about "our failure to even want to talk or listen to the PLO or to engage in any dialogue." West, a former Governor of South Carolina who has been in Saudi Arabia almost four years, said in the interview that U.S. policy toward the PLO "is very difficult to explain or justify to Saudi Arabia or other Arabs."

Asked if West was speaking for the Reagan Administration, Dyess replied, "No, no. West clearly was speaking personally and not for this Administration."

Meanwhile, in reports reaching here from Cairo, Egyptian Foreign Minister Kamal Hasan Ali today called for a dialogue between the PLO and the Reagan Administration. "The time has come for the PLO to start adopting peaceful methods to solve the Palestinian issue... and to start a dialogue with the American Administration," he was quoted as saying. A dialogue could lead to mutual recognition between the PLO and the new Administration, Ali said.

View of Saudi Arabia

Asked to comment on Saudi Arabia's King Khalid's statements to the Islamic summit meeting in Taif, Saudi Arabia, which included a call for all Islamic nations to unite in a holy war against Israel to recover Jerusalem, Dyess noted that "from press reports" the Khalid call would include money, men and even arms and that such statements had been made previously on other special Islamic occasions. "For our part," he said, the U.S. position is for all to avoid positions which "complicate" the search for a just and comprehensive peace in the Middle East.

Dyess was asked if the new Administration intended to have special ambassadors to the Middle East such as Sol Linowitz and Robert Strauss in the Carter Administration. He replied that "it would be premature" to say if special ambassadors would be continued.

AJCONGRESS ASKS FEDERAL AGENCIES TO RELEASE DOCUMENTS ON THE PLO

NEW YORK, Jan. 26 (JTA) -- The American Jewish Congress has asked the federal government to release all its unclassified 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 such affiliated organizations as Al Fatah, As Saika, 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 Asian 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 Department said in a press statement.

ITT Grinnell, a manufacturer of pipes, valves, fitting and steel transmission structures, was accused in a Department letter that "all of the transactions in connections 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 Nugent, the company's president.

The anti-Arab boycott laws, which help protect Americans 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 any country friendly to the U.S. to 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 Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 26 (JTA) -- Photographic enlargements of the bodies of five terrorists killed by Israeli forces in south Lebanon Dec. 25 have led senior 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 Israel vigorously denied the charges made by Dutch troops of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL). 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 UNIFIL commander, his deputy, Brig. Gen. Odegaard and the Israeli commander of the northern region, Gen. Avigdor 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 burn or mutilation.

Israel army sources said Odegaard 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 Tubridy, the Catholic chaplain. The 17-member Jewish cadet 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 Teh-

eran; Barry Rosen, 36, of Brooklyn, N.Y.; Jerry Plotkin, 45, of Sherman Oaks, Calif.; and Malcolm Kalp, 42, of Fairfax, Va.

Before leaving Wiesbaden, West Germany, Rosen, who had been the press attache at the U.S. Embassy in Teheran, said he had expected to be treated harshly as a Jew by the militants, but found no consistent anti-Semitic attitude. They allowed him to receive Passover food from home, but when they asked where his wife lived and he replied Brooklyn, "They said she should be in Tel Aviv and they called me a dirty Zionist," he was quoted as saying.

EGYPTIAN PARLIAMENTARIANS HAVE A CLEARER PICTURE OF ISRAEL AFTER THEIR WEEK'S VISIT THERE By Hugh Orgel

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. Mohammed Ahmed Abdallah, 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."

Dr. Mustafa Kamel Murad, leader of Egyptian opposition Liberal Party, said "I have now changed my views about Israel. I have a clearer picture about the points of view of the different political parties here. We had a picture before, but it was vague. Now this picture is clear -- that we all -- the big majority -- want peace, and even the extremists want peace but they are different in their view on how to obtain it."

The Egyptians were visibly moved during a visit to the Yad Veshem Holocaust Memorial last Friday. They said it gave them a deeper insight into Israel's stress on the need for security. Dr. Ferkhunda Hassan Youseff, the only woman in the group, remarked: "Now I understand, certainly Israeli acts and deeds that I didn't understand before."

During their week in Israel the Egyptian parliamentarians met with government and opposition leaders and visited Kibbutz Maagan Michael.

POLICE ACCUSED OF USING THREATS TO GET CONFESSIONS FROM SUSPECTS

JERUSALEM, Jan. 26 (JTA) -- The lawyer for the three sons of Druze Knesset member Jaber Muadi accused the police today of using threats and intimidation to extract admissions of guilt from his clients in the Jan. 12 murder of Bedouin Sheikh Hamad Abu Rabia. The Muadi brothers, said by police to be the prime suspects, were arrested shortly after the killing which paved the way for their father to assume the Knesset seat held by Abu Rabia.

In a letter to Police Inspector General Arye Ivrtzan, 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 Muadi claiming full responsibility for the crime was obtained under duress, pressure and insults. Muadi was accused by his questioners of assisting terrorists and Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasser Arafat, Tussia-Cohen said.

STRASBOURG (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.

NEW ARREST WARRANT FOR MENGELE

BONN, Jan. 26 (JTA) — The State Attorney's office in Frankfurt has issued a new warrant for the arrest of Josef Mengele, the chief doctor at Auschwitz 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 his 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 Czerwinski, 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 Czerwinski failed to attend his trial after more than 10 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. Czerwinski, who was a commander of the Lagischa camp in the Auschwitz complex, has been charged with the murders of at least eight inmates. Schmidt, a "blockfuhrer" in the same camp, is accused of collaborating in the killings.

COURT REJECTS JURY'S ACQUITTAL
VERDICT IN THE CASE OF A NEO-NAZI

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 rightwingers, 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 Hanneschlaeger, also was acquitted. Another sister is scheduled to face trial on similar charges in the near future.

JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS URGED TO
SPOTLIGHT CONDITION OF MENDELIVICH

NEW YORK, Jan. 26 (JTA) — Representatives of the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ) 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 Iosif Mendelevich who has been conducting a hunger strike for almost three months in the Perm labor camp in the Soviet Union.

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

They also said that a Passover Haggadah 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 Shifra Hoffman, member of the JIC's executive board, declared: "As we join in gratitude to God for the release of the hostages in Iran, we must simultaneously bring to world attention the plight of Iosif Mendelevich whose 'crime' 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 Iosif Mendelevich 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 Zionist (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 Zionist 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.

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