

## LEVESQUE DISGUSTED BY HIS PARTY'S INVITATION TO PLO OFFICIALS TO ATTEND ITS CONCLAVE AS OBSERVERS But Quebec Leader Equivocates On PLO

By Michael Solomon

MONTREAL, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Rene Levesque of Quebec expressed disgust today that the Parti Quebecois which he heads invited two Palestine Liberation Organization officials to attend its convention here last weekend as observers. "The invitation is nothing else but kindergarten internationalism," Levesque told a press conference in Quebec City this morning. He indicated it was a gesture by the party's radical majority to discredit him.

But Levesque was equivocal on the nature of the PLO when he appeared on a television interview last Saturday night. Asked by the host, Pierre Nadeau, if he was aware that the PLO is a terrorist organization, the Prime Minister replied: "There is an element of terror in the PLO. But let us not forget that the State of Israel itself was born out of terrorism."

Levesque called his press conference today to dissociate himself from "any innuendos" arising from the convention. He repeated his threat to resign from the Parti Quebecois where he is presently embroiled in a struggle with radical secessionists who, he said, want to circumvent the democratic process.

### First Invitation To PLO Representatives

The invitations to Edmon Omran, attached to the PLO's information bureau in Ottawa, and Abdullah Abdullah, another PLO spokesman, were the first from any political party in North America to PLO representatives. Omran said "the PLO receives its greatest support in Canada from Quebecers who share with it a fight for national identity ... When we were presented to the delegates the reception we received was so tremendous that we felt that the Quebecois are really behind us."

Levesque noted at his press conference that the convention also gave a "standing ovation" to Jacques Rose, a convicted Canadian terrorist free on parole. He and his brother, Paul Rose, still in prison, received life sentences for the assassination of the Liberal Party Quebec Minister Pierre Laporte in 1970.

Sylvain Simard, vice president of the Parti Quebecois, said after the convention that the invitation to the PLO did not signify direct support for the Palestinian cause. "Invitations were sent to all the progressive parties in the world, including the Israeli Labor Party," Simard said.

The Parti Quebecois and the Quebec government have never taken an official position on the issue of a Palestinian homeland. Levesque, before coming to power, had advocated creation of a homeland for the Palestinian people. The Federal government does not recognize the PLO. Its information bureau in Ottawa is technically part of the Arab League's information office there.

## PLO OFFICIAL SEEKS ECUADORIAN SUPPORT

By Jaime Reibel

QUITO, Ecuador, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- Issam Besseiso, the Palestine Liberation Organization representative for the Andean region of South America, has requested authorization from the Ecuadorian National House of Representatives to open a PLO office in Quito as the first step towards recognition of a "Palestinian state."

Besseiso, who is based in Lima, Peru, where the PLO is not accorded diplomatic status, met last week with the Legislative Commission on International Affairs in Quito. The Commission's president, Alejandro Carrion, declared, in reference to commonly accepted international principles of co-existence "shared by the Ecuadorian and Palestinian peoples," that "there will be a concrete response to each one of the petitions presented."

The groundwork for the PLO approach to the Ecuadorian government was laid last May. Gil Barragan, then Vice President of the Ecuadorian House of Representatives and leader of the Congressional delegation that toured the Middle East following the Ecuadorian-Peruvian border flare-up of January, was reported to have stated, in an interview with the Kuwaiti News Agency, that Ecuador supported the Palestinian cause.

When questioned whether Ecuador would permit the PLO to open an office, to represent its interests, in Quito, the legislator explained: "The Parliament will support that question if it's approved by the Minister of Foreign Relations."

### Role Of Ecuador

Ecuador, the smallest member of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), has made a strong overture for support to the Arab nations in 1981. Informed sources in Quito maintain that this move is motivated by the need for an expanded market for its goods, credit with which to finance its burgeoning internal development and diplomatic backing in its unresolved territorial dispute with Peru.

Traditionally close Israeli-Ecuadorian relations may cool noticeably if Ecuador recognizes the legitimacy of the PLO. In the past Israel has aided Ecuador in a number of fields, including irrigation, transportation, agricultural and rural development and military training. Ecuatoriana, the Ecuadorian national airline, flies Boeing 727 jets sold and still serviced by the Israelis.

## CHEYSSON: THERE WILL BE NO MORE EUROPEAN INITIATIVES IN THE MIDEAST

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- French Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson's 24-hour visit to Israel ended today with his Israeli hosts immensely satisfied that the long era of "misunderstandings" and cold relations between the two countries has ended although France and Israel still remain worlds apart on Middle East political issues, mainly resolution of the Palestinian problem.

The Israelis were especially gratified by Cheysson's unqualified pledge that there would be no more "European initiatives" in the region, indicating that

as far as France was concerned, the European Economic Community's Venice declaration of June, 1980 is dead.

Facing reporters at a joint press conference with Cheysson just before the French diplomat boarded his plane at Ben Gurion Airport, Israeli Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir declared that "the word 'misunderstanding' can now be erased from our common vocabulary." He said Cheysson's visit had borne out Israel's hopes that it would open a new era of dialogue and mutual understanding.

Cheysson observed that the "abnormal" situation that had prevailed in the past with almost no dialogue between France and Israel, is now over. Shamir said he and the French minister had reached "a large measure of identical outlook and agreement," and even on those points where there was disagreement their conversations had proceeded in an atmosphere of understanding.

Above all, said Shamir, Israel was pleased to note Cheysson's repeated assurances that there would be no more "European initiatives in the affairs of our region." There was also agreement on the central role of the Camp David process, Shamir added.

#### Bilateral Relations Discussed

The two Ministers held more than five hours of formal talks during Cheysson's brief stay. Israeli sources said today's working session was focused on bilateral ties. Both men pledged to strengthen trade relations, encourage more French investments in Israel and to revive the long dormant Joint Economic Council. They also agreed to expand cultural relations, the sources said.

Shamir acknowledged the differences over a solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict. Cheysson had remarked, during an official dinner that the Palestinians had a right to a homeland and sovereignty. Shamir repeated at the press conference today Israel's view that the Palestinians already had a "homeland" -- Jordan -- and that the problem was not sovereignty but the 1.2 million Palestinians on the West Bank and Gaza Strip who live unwillingly under Israeli rule.

According to Israeli sources, Cheysson told Shamir at their meetings that while he appreciates the Israelis' presentation of their views, he believed that the Israel-Arab conflict has now become the Palestinian problem which must be solved. In a radio interview earlier today, Cheysson observed that Israel, as a state in the region, "should be sensitive to the rights of other peoples in the region."

#### Minister Does Not Mention PLO

But in discussing the areas where the two countries differ sharply, the French Foreign Minister couched his remarks in warm, friendly tones. At no time in his public addresses did he mention the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Venice declaration's insistence that the PLO must be associated with the Middle East peace process was one reason for its absolute rejection by Israel.

The Israelis were delighted, therefore, when Cheysson, speaking at last night's dinner, dismissed the notion of further European initiatives. As long as the present government is in office in Paris there would be no such initiative, he said.

Cheysson also pledged that if Israel were ever attacked, France would stand by her. He noted that in Europe there had been long-standing conflicts between France and Britain or between France and Germany, eventually resolved by mutual cooperation. He hoped that in the Middle East too, dialogue, moderation and mutual recognition would be the path to a settlement.

Cheysson further pleased his hosts when, in the course of their working sessions, he spoke of the need for Israel to negotiate with the "states" of the region, implying that the PLO was not on an equal footing in this respect. He agreed with Shamir that the peace process must continue. But he did not agree with his glowing account of progress in the autonomy talks with Egypt.

Shamir asked Cheysson to tell President Francois Mitterrand that the Israeli government and people were preparing an especially warm welcome for him when he makes his state visit here Feb. 10. The date was set during Cheysson's visit. It will be the first visit to Israel by a French chief of state.

#### UAHC LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN OF 'OUTREACH' AIMED AT CONVERSION

BOSTON, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- The Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), representing 750 Reform synagogues in the United States and Canada, launched today a campaign of "outreach" aimed at "spreading the message of Judaism" to non-Jewish partners in mixed marriages, to the children of such marriages and "to persons of no religious preference." The action was taken at the UAHC 56th biennial convention attended by some 4,000 delegates here. The five-day conclave ended today.

Rabbi Alexander Schindler, UAHC president, hailed the action of the convention, which adopted a series of recommendations offered by a joint task force of the UAHC and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the association of Reform rabbis, headed by David Belin, a Des Moines lawyer, and Rabbi Max Shapiro of Minneapolis, Minn.

The task force was formed following an address by Schindler to the UAHC board of trustees in December, 1978, calling on Reform congregations to become "champions of Judaism," by taking "affirmative action to make Judaism available to those within our midst and to the unchurched across America."

Following the vote, Schindler said today that the UAHC would move promptly in three main areas to implement the task force recommendations to:

1. welcome recent converts -- so-called "Jews by Choice" -- into Jewish communal life;
2. encourage non-Jewish spouses in mixed-marriages to become involved in synagogue activities, and raise their children as Jews; and
3. organize reading rooms and to provide educational materials, including books, pamphlets, video tapes and films, to make information about Judaism available to "all those who have a spiritual hunger."

#### Description Of 'Target Audiences'

An out-reach program guide, just published by the UAHC, gives a description of the "target audience" for such a program to attract non-Jews.

It cites those individuals who are not members of any religious group and who see themselves as having fallen away from the religion into which they were born.

"We do not envision a 'missionary' campaign of knocking on doors or doing any aggressive solicitation," the UAHC program guide states. "We are not trying to win people away from their religions, nor are we offering the one true path to salvation."

"We are rather envisioning an effort geared toward teaching what Judaism is and letting the public know that Judaism welcomes those who embrace it."

The program guide was written by Lydia Kukoff, program consultant to the task force, and herself a "Jew by choice," who converted to Judaism 20 years ago. Mrs. Kukoff is the author of a new book just published by the UAHC, "Choosing Judaism," and the producer of a 30-minute video tape in which recent converts to Judaism explain their reasons for converting and describe their experiences as new Jews. The video tape will be made available to member synagogues of the UAHC.

Programs for recent converts and for non-Jewish spouses in interfaith marriages have been undertaken by Reform synagogues on an experimental basis within the past year with growing success, according to Mrs. Kukoff.

#### HABIB RETURNING FROM MIDEAST TRIP; MEASURE OF HIS SUCCESS IS UNCLEAR

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- U.S. special envoy Philip Habib is returning home from Beirut, the State Department announced today. It remained unclear, however, whether Habib met with any success on this, his fourth and latest visit to the Middle East since May to help ease the Israeli-Syrian missile issue in Lebanon.

State Department spokesman Dean Fischer said there could be no assessment of Habib's trip until the envoy reports to Secretary of State Alexander Haig and to President Reagan. Fischer said that while Habib's mission is continuing, it will be up to Reagan to decide if he returns to the region. The State Department spokesman would say only that Habib had completed his current round of visits to Mideastern countries -- Lebanon, Syria, Israel, Jordan and Saudi Arabia.

Although Fischer would not confirm this, Habib is expected to report to Haig in Europe before returning to Washington. The Secretary of State leaves for Brussels tonight to attend a meeting of the North Atlantic Council.

Fischer said that Haig will be discussing the "pace" of the autonomy talks between Israel and Egypt when he visits those countries next week. He is scheduled to go to Israel next Sunday. He will make an airport stop in Egypt on Dec. 19, on his way back to the U.S. after visiting Turkey, Pakistan and India. He will also stop over in Morocco.

Fischer noted that Haig told Shimon Peres, leader of Israel's opposition Labor Party at a meeting here yesterday, that he will speak about the pace of the autonomy talks with Israeli and Egyptian officials before the end of the year. Peres urged the U.S. to upgrade its representation at the talks by appointing a special envoy to them as did the Carter Administration. Fischer said the Reagan Administration has maintained that it would assess the level of U.S. participation in the talks as they continue.

#### HOFFBERGER URGES U.S. JEWS TO BE 'ON THE CUTTING EDGE' OF IMPORTANT ISSUES FACING AMERICAN SOCIETY

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- Jerold Hoffberger, chairman of the United Israel Appeal (UIA) urged American Jews today "to speak out and be on the cutting edge of any important issue" facing American society.

"Neither we nor Israel will be served by silence," Hoffberger warned in a speech during the annual luncheon of the UIA at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel here. He said American Jews should fight anti-Semitism and its ramifications in this country. Hoffberger said that the Jewish community should not hesitate to speak out on issues it deems important because of fear of an anti-Jewish backlash. He recalled, in that connection, that American Jews were warned not to oppose the sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia on the ground that their opposition might increase anti-Semitism.

Hoffberger also warned against the "growth of the political right" and "new conservatism" in America, charging that they pose a threat to the entire American society. He said that by "speaking out" the Jewish leadership also enhances "our campaign" in the Jewish communities, because "we raise the conscience of our people."

#### Work Of UIA Reviewed

Irving Kessler, executive vice chairman of the UIA, reviewed the work of the organization. He stated that the UIA's "arrangements to meet budgetary demands in light of limited cash flow are timely and expert-minimizing finance costs in a period of staggering interest rates."

He disclosed that "in recent days, consultations with the State Department to coordinate efforts to save Ethiopian Jews have added another item to the UIA agenda."

Declaring that Project Renewal to rehabilitate deteriorated neighborhoods in Israel "is succeeding," Kessler said that of the \$80 million allocated by the UIA for the project, \$24 million was used so far.

#### TROUBLE IN THE GAZA STRIP

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- The Military Governor of the Gaza Strip today sealed off the area from local and foreign reporters, preventing them from attending a press conference called by the Gaza municipality and to cover events in the town of Rafah where a local youth was killed and three other teenagers were injured in a clash with soldiers yesterday.

The Gaza press conference had been called to explain the background to a general strike there, now in its fourth day. The work stoppage, including the closing of all shops and institutions in the town, is a protest against Defense Minister Ariel Sharon's plans to split the military and civilian sectors of the Military Government. Local residents say this is really aimed at perpetuating Israeli control over the area, even in the guise of local autonomy.

Israeli soldiers went around in Gaza today, welding shut a number of shops which had closed their doors, as punishment for the strike which Israeli officials say was called by pro-Palestine Liberation Organization elements.

Tension has been high throughout the Gaza Strip during the strike, but especially so in Rafah, through which town the old-new international border will run when Israel completes its withdrawal from Sinai next April. Prior to 1967, the border just skirted the town limits, but extensive building since then has brought the built-up town limits well across the old border.

In a demonstration by youths there yesterday, soldiers surrounded by a mob of demonstrators who pelted them with stones, opened fire to escape. The soldiers said they fired into the air, and their commanders said they obeyed all instructions on how to behave under such circumstances. But one 16-year-old demonstrator was killed, three other teenagers were injured, and an Israeli soldier was wounded in the clash.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES NRP FACING ITS WORST INTERNAL CRISIS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- The National Religious Party (NRP), with six Knesset seats the largest partner in Premier Menachem Begin's Likud-led coalition government, is facing its worst internal crisis in years. The party's two main factions -- Lamifne, led by Interior Minister Yosef Burg, and the Young Guard, headed by Education Minister Zevulun Hammer -- are each threatening a "power struggle to the bitter end."

The latest confrontation between the frequently warring factions was touched off when Burg, who also holds the portfolio of Religious Affairs Minister, fired the director general of that ministry, Gedalia Shreiber, last week. Shreiber was appointed to his post by the former Religious Affairs Minister, Aharon Abu-Hatzeira who quit the NRP shortly before the Knesset elections last June and formed his own faction, Tami.

Shreiber considers Burg his personal and political enemy. When the present Cabinet was formed, the Young Guard agreed to have Burg take over the Religious Affairs Ministry on condition that he retain Shreiber. Burg was forced to agree at the time but he never concealed his desire to install his own man, Rabbi Moshe Salomon, a member of his Lamifne faction.

The Young Guard apparently wants to protect Shreiber's job in order to retain the loyalty of at least some members of still another NRP faction, the Likud Utemura which Abu-Hatzeira headed before his defection.

### Ready For A Showdown

Burg argues that it is the right of every Cabinet minister to appoint his own director general. But he has been challenged on that point by rivals in the NRP. At the request of Hammer, the Cabinet Sunday deferred approval of Shreiber's dismissal for one week. The Young Guard, meanwhile, has appealed on Shreiber's behalf to the "party supreme court," the body that adjudicates disputes within the NRP. Their argument is that Burg reneged on his pledge to retain Shreiber. Burg warned that he would not tolerate party interference in his ministerial functions.

More significantly, Burg now says he is ready once and for all for a showdown with Hammer in the party's Central Committee. This means that he and Hammer will stand for the office of Religious Affairs Minister. Should Burg lose, his primacy and that of Lamifne in the NRP would be at an end.

Burg's top political organizer, Rafael Ben-Natan, says he is confident that the Young Guard will suffer a crushing defeat in an all-out contest of strength within the party. But whichever faction wins, the NRP would face a serious schism and possible secession by the loser.

### RABBI DISPUTES TIMERMAN'S CLAIM ABOUT THE SITUATION IN ARGENTINA

BOSTON, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- A leading Brazilian rabbi has disputed Jacobo Timerman's claim that anti-Semitism in Argentina is comparable to that in pre-war Germany, calling it "an exaggeration that has already destroyed his credibility."

Rabbi Henry Sobel of Congregação Israelita Paulista in Sao Paulo told a meeting of the World Union for Progressive Judaism (WUPJ) Sunday that while there were "serious anti-Semitic trends in Argentina, the Jews are free to leave

the country whenever they wish and to take all their property with them. The fact that relatively few have done so speaks for itself."

The WUPJ, which is the international branch of Reform Judaism, met here in conjunction with the biennial assemblies of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods.

Calling Timerman "a self-proclaimed Zionist who never participated in Argentinian Jewish life," Sobel accused Timerman of "applying his rediscovered ardor for Jewishness retroactively for the purpose of self-promotion." He said Timerman was "an embarrassment to Argentinian Jews in particular and to Latin American Jewry in general."

While the basic issue, according to Sobel, is "the blatant violation of human rights in Latin America," the most serious threat facing Latin American Jewry is "not from outside but from within -- the danger of inner erosion, disintegration and assimilation."

### Praises Work Of Reform Judaism

The Sao Paulo rabbi praised WUPJ president Gerald Daniel for his successful effort earlier this year in founding the new Federation of Latin-American Liberal Congregations, composed of synagogues in Argentina, Brazil and Chile.

Sobel predicted that the new Federation would have "a positive impact on the growth of Reform Judaism in this most important part of the world, home to some 750,000 Jews." He urged the WUPJ to train and dispatch rabbis and Jewish educators to Latin America, asserting that American Jewish organizations had neglected South America for too long.

### BEGIN MAY BE DISCHARGED FROM HOSPITAL NEXT WEEK

JERUSALEM, Dec. 8 (JTA) -- Premier Menachem Begin may be discharged from the hospital during next week, according to a close aide. The aide, citing the Premier's doctors, said Begin hopefully would be able to chair Cabinet meetings as of next Sunday at his home.

He said Begin was steadily progressing and was now no longer in such agonizing pain as he had been during the first week after his hip fracture and operation Nov. 26.

But for the moment, Deputy Premier Simcha Ehrlich is still serving as acting Premier with Begin himself resting at Hadassah Hospital. Begin transferred power to Ehrlich last Monday, three days after the operation, when he found the pain and discomfort too much for him to be able to function as Premier.

The transfer was formally ratified by the Cabinet (at the Attorney General's behest) only last Sunday, a procedure that has drawn some press criticism. But the Begin aide said that in practice all the Ministers had been informed of the handover of power the previous Monday afternoon and Tuesday morning.

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BONN (JTA) -- Harry Tabor, who is considered the "father" of Israel's solar energy program, is among the scientists from the United States, Israel and France who will share this year's Alfred Krupp von Bohlen and Halbach Prize for Energy Research, it was announced by the Krupp Foundation in Essen. The recipients of the DM 500,000 prize, in addition to Tabor, are Daryl Chapin, Calvin Fuller and Gerald Pearson, all of the United States; and Felix Trombe of France. All were cited for their "outstanding services" in the research and development of solar energy.