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## BEGIN TELLS INQUIRY PANEL THAT 'NONE OF US EVER IMAGINED' THE PHALANGISTS WOULD MASSACRE PEOPLE

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 8 (JTA) -- Premier Menachem Begin told the commission of inquiry into the Beirut massacre today that he did not know in advance that the Christian Phalangist forces were to be admitted to the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps as part of the Israel Defense Force's operation to seize west Beirut following the assassination of President-elect Bashir Gemayel on Tuesday, September 14.

Begin told the three-member panel that he only learned of this, along with the rest of the Cabinet, at a Cabinet meeting on Thursday evening, September 16, several hours after the Phalangists entered the camps. He conceded that there had been fears of revenge-killings by Christians of Moslems in the wake of Gemayel's assassination. But he insisted repeatedly that "none of us ever imagined" that the Phalangists would perpetrate a massacre. "It never crossed our minds," the Premier said.

He said no "red warning lights" had been kindled in his own mind, or in the minds of other ministers, when both Deputy Premier David Levy and Chief of Staff Gen. Rafael Eitan warned, during that Thursday evening Cabinet session, that the Phalangists might commit killings among the Palestinians. Therefore, there was no move by the Cabinet to withdraw the Phalangists from the camps, Begin said. On the contrary, the Cabinet in effect endorsed retroactively the decision to send them in.

The inquiry commission consists of Chief Justice Yitzhak Kahan, President of the Supreme Court; Supreme Court Justice Aharon Barak; and Gen. (res.) Yonah Efrat. Begin was the top ranking Israeli who has appeared before the panel since it began hearing testimony last month. Its first major witness was Defense Minister Ariel Sharon.

### Learned Of Massacre From BBC

Begin told the panel that he personally learned of the massacre from BBC radio broadcasts during the afternoon of Saturday, September 18 whereupon he telephoned the Chief of Staff for detailed information. He said he could not recall having conversed with Eitan on the subject on Friday morning. The commission said they had one piece of evidence to the effect that there had been such a conversation.

Begin gave evidence in open court for only 45 minutes, much less than had been expected. His testimony was broadcast live on Israel Radio. Local and foreign newsmen crowded into the hearings room at the Hebrew University campus to watch him, and, in an adjoining room, to listen to a simultaneous English translation.

Begin was flanked by his longtime top aide, Yehiel Kadishai, and Cabinet secretary Dan Meridor. He spoke in measured tones, sometimes hesitating before answering. It appeared that he had not made extensive preparations for his appearance before the commission. At one point, when part of the key Thursday night, September 16, Cabinet minutes were read out, he seemed plainly unfamiliar with it.

### Eitan Warned Of Revenge-Killings

The section in question cited Eitan's prediction of an "outburst of revenge" on the part of the Phalangists for Gemayel's assassination. The Phalangists had already killed several Druze that day, Eitan told the Cabinet.

According to the minutes of the Cabinet meeting, Eitan said: "I see it in their eyes ... what they're waiting for ... Amin (Gemayel Bashir's brother, who is now President of Lebanon) has already spoken of revenge and all of them are sharpening their blades ..." Begin asked the inquiry commission members where this was said and by whom. It was the first time those remarks by Eitan were made public.

Begin confirmed that he, Sharon and Eitan had decided late Tuesday night, September 14, once Bashir Gemayel's death was ascertained, to order the IDF to seize "key crossing points in Beirut." The Premier said he and Sharon were empowered to take such operative decisions in cases where there was no time to convene the full Cabinet. The IDF began moving into west Beirut before dawn on Wednesday, September 15.

The Premier stressed that the purpose of their entry had been to avoid a rampage of revenge by the Christians. Under close questioning he conceded that by "Christians" he included in this consideration the Phalangists.

This purpose, to avoid mayhem in west Beirut, had been publicly avowed by the IDF spokesman at the time as Israel's chief consideration. Sharon, in his testimony to the commission two weeks ago, maintained, however, that the chief motive had been to prevent residual Palestine Liberation Organization and leftist forces in west Beirut from seizing strongpoints in the confusion following Bashir's assassination, and establishing once again off-limit areas in the city.

### Begin Says He Was Not Informed

Begin was asked repeatedly whether the proposed role of the Phalangists in the IDF operation had been discussed with him between Tuesday night, September 14, when the original decision to seize west Beirut key points had been taken, and Thursday night, September 16, when the full cabinet learned of the entire operation, including the Phalangists' entry into the camps, and endorsed it.

Repeatedly Begin insisted that he had not been informed of the plans for the Phalangists to enter the camps. According to earlier testimony by Sharon and others these plans were made early Wednesday, September 15. "Nothing was said to me about the Phalangists. Nothing was said to me about the camps," Begin declared at one point in his testimony.

### 'It Did Not Cross Our Minds ...'

Begin: "We heard of it at the Cabinet on Thursday evening ..."

Barak: "You did not ask about (the Phalangists' role) in your many conversations with Sharon and Eitan?"

Begin: "No. It did not come up -- therefore I did not ask."

At that point, and repeatedly during his testimony, Begin insisted that "no one of us imagined ..."

It did not cross our minds, that the Phalangists would commit a slaughter ... We regarded them as disciplined fighting units."

Kahan, at that point, cited the minutes of a conversation between Begin and U.S. special envoy Morris Draper on Wednesday, September 15, in which Begin spoke of the danger of Christian revenge and bloodshed. Begin conceded that by "Christian" he had meant the Phalangists. He was asked by Barak whether in light of this "there was not room to wonder whether the Phalangists should be in the camps," during the Cabinet meeting on Thursday night, September 16.

Begin replied: "I can only repeat that no one thought the Phalangists in the camp would do anything other than fight the terrorists, which was their assignment. That was our assumption."

The three commission members returned constantly to the theme: had Begin known in advance that the Phalangists were being sent into the camps and why, once he did know, he did not stop them?

#### Persistent Cross-Examination

At one point Begin seemed almost ready to agree that he had known in advance. Kahan and Barak reminded him of a telephone conversation he had with Sharon, who was in Beirut, on Wednesday morning, September 15.

Barak: "Did (Sharon) say anything about the role of the Phalangists?"

Begin: "Their role was clear: to fight terrorists ..."

Barak: "According to what you are saying now, you knew on the Wednesday morning that the Phalangists were to fight?"

Begin: "If the Defense Minister told me -- then I definitely knew."

Barak: "No, he (Sharon) doesn't say he told you."

Begin: "Well, if he didn't tell me, then I didn't know."

The Premier said Sharon had been within his rights to omit informing the Premier of the plan involving the Phalangists because "He could rely" on a Cabinet decision, taken unanimously on June 15, resolving that Israel would urge both the official Lebanese army and the Lebanese Forces (Phalangists) to fight against the PLO in Beirut and unite their own capital. The Israeli Cabinet did not want IDF soldiers to lose life and limb in that battle.

#### Cabinet Decision Scrutinized

Efrat pointed out, at length, that the June 15 Cabinet decision's basic thrust had been that the IDF would not enter west Beirut; instead the Lebanese Forces would be encouraged to do so.

Now, however, Efrat went on, in the wake of Bashir's killing, the situation had radically altered. Israel had decided to send its army into west Beirut after all, and there were fears -- which Begin himself conceded did exist -- of a revenge-rampage by the Phalangists. Was there not therefore a "different context?" Efrat asked.

No, Begin replied. The context was west Beirut. The same consideration applied on September 16 as on June 15: To avoid loss of Israeli lives in the fight against the PLO ensconced in the west Beirut camps. Even in September, at the time of the IDF and Phalangist operation after the evacuation of the bulk of PLO forces from west Beirut -- there were still some 2,000

armed terrorists in the Sabra, Shatila and Fakphani refugee camps, Begin said, and they had to be ousted and disarmed.

#### Had Not Really Paid Attention

The Premier recalled that Deputy Premier David Levy had expressed "very serious fears" of Phalangist violence at the September 16 Cabinet meeting. But, Begin noted, neither Levy nor anyone else proposed that Levy's remarks be the subject of a Cabinet debate or vote, or that the Cabinet consider withdrawing the Phalangist forces from the refugee camps.

Questioned later by Kahan as to whether Levy's words had "generated particular attention on your part," the Premier said he had not really paid attention as he had been "preoccupied with the drafting of the Cabinet communique at that moment."

To Barak, the Premier stated firmly that neither the Mossad nor the Shin Bet, the two Israeli intelligence services that are directly subordinate to the Prime Minister, had ever warned him of the dangers inherent in using Phalangist forces against the Palestinians.

He sidestepped Barak's question as to whether he now thought that they "should have warned you." "I don't want to pass judgements about such serious matters ..." Begin said. He indicated that such matters are usually brought to his attention at the initiative of the intelligence agencies rather than as a response to his own initiatives.

He also carefully declined to fault Sharon or anyone else for not reporting or consulting with him between September 14 and September 16 on the plan to send the Phalangists into the camps. He repeated that Sharon was within his rights under the June 15 Cabinet decision.

#### ISRAEL WILL CONTINUE TO BUILD NEW SETTLEMENTS ON THE WEST BANK By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Nov. 8 (JTA) -- Premier Menachem Begin made it clear yesterday that his government will continue to plant new settlements on the West Bank and Gaza Strip regardless of objections from Washington and warnings by the opposition at home that such policy could jeopardize prospects for peace in the Middle East.

Begin addressed the issue at yesterday's Cabinet meeting in response to the sharp reaction by the State Department last week to Deputy Premier David Levy's announcement that five new settlements are to be built on the West Bank. Begin said there was nothing new in the announcement since his government is committed to establishing new settlements and he failed to understand why the U.S. saw fit to react as it did.

Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir agreed with Begin but several other ministers argued that settlement work should continue quietly without public statements about future plans. Levy, who is also Minister of Housing, explained yesterday that his statements were in line with earlier Cabinet decisions concerning settlements and that he saw nothing wrong in making them.

#### Plans For The Gaza Strip

Meanwhile, details were released today of plans by the World Zionist Organization's settlement department to settle some 10,000 more Jews in the Gaza Strip over the next five years. Slightly over 1,000 Jews presently live in the Gaza Strip which has an Arab population of 500,000. The WZO hopes to offset the Arab majority by establishing new settlements.

Matityahu Drobless, chairman of the settlement department, is presently in the U.S. trying to recruit American Jews to form the nucleus of the new Gaza Strip settlements. The WZO will present its plans to

the Cabinet for approval as soon as Drobless returns.

The Labor Party issued a warning today that continued settlement activity in areas densely populated by Arabs may jeopardize prospects for peace and worsen Israel's position abroad. The State Department charged last week that Levy's announcement of new settlement plans "raises questions about Israel's willingness to abide" by UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, the basis of the Camp David accords.

#### SOCIALISTS UNABLE TO AGREE ON A MIDDLE EAST DECLARATION

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Nov. 8 (JTA). -- The Socialist International wound up a three-day meeting in Basel unable to agree on a final declaration on the Middle East. It decided, however, to continue the discussion at its next conference, scheduled to be held in Sydney, Australia in April, 1983.

The Basel meeting, nevertheless, adopted a report prepared by former Prime Minister Mario Soares of Portugal which was considered balanced and likely to be the basis for the discussions in Australia next spring. The Soares report, which stemmed from visits by a Socialist International delegation to Israel, Lebanon, Jordan and Egypt last summer, was accepted by the Israeli delegation, headed by Labor Party chairman Shimon Peres, with minor modifications.

#### Elements In The Soares Report

The Soares report condemns all racist manifestations and hate-mongering in connection with the Middle East conflict; condemns the massacres in the Shatila and Sabra refugee camps in Beirut last September; and also condemns anti-Semitism and recent acts of terror against Jews and Jewish institutions. The Socialist International reaffirmed its solidarity with Israel's opposition Labor Party and Mapam, Labor's Alignment partner, and with the Labor Party of Lebanon.

It approved specifically the attitude of the Labor Party toward the Beirut massacres -- which was an immediate call for a commission of inquiry, initially resisted by Premier Menachem Begin's government -- and supported the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Lebanon. In that connection the report urged the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon.

The Soares report also calls for direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians and Jordan but does not mention the PLO. It urges the "right of determination" for the Palestinian people. The Israeli delegation would have preferred "right of existence."

A text proposed by the Lebanese delegation but not incorporated in the report called specifically for Israeli withdrawal from all Arab territories occupied since 1967 and for recognition of the PLO as the representatives of the Palestinian people, their right to self-determination and to form a Palestinian state. The Lebanese also suggested an international conference on the Middle East to be attended by all parties, including the PLO, the U.S. and the Soviet Union.

Peres, addressing the meeting, said President Reagan's peace initiative for the Middle East was acceptable to the opposition in Israel, to President Francois Mitterrand of France and to moderate Palestinian leaders as a basis for talks.

The PLO could not be a party to this because of its charter calling for the destruction of Israel, Peres said.

Peres said his Labor Party had supported Israel's invasion of Lebanon to root out the PLO which had become a "state within a state" and an "army within an army." But, he reminded the delegates, Labor had opposed Israel's entry into Beirut.

The Israeli delegates admitted that they had never encountered such harsh criticism leveled at Israel at previous meetings of the Socialist International, particularly from delegates who were always pro-Israel. Some of the sharpest critics were Prime Minister Olaf Palme of Sweden and Bettino Craxi of the Italian Socialist Party. Craxi stressed the dangers of "the crazy dream of the Begin government" for a "greater Israel" and urged backing for the Labor Party to replace the present Israeli regime.

#### Unfounded Rumors

The conference, held from November 2-4, opened amid rumors that it would call for the expulsion of Israel, that Peres would be forced to resign as a vice chairman of the Socialist International and that the Palestine Liberation Organization would be invited to the Sydney conference.

Those rumors, circulated by Jean Ziegler, a pro-Arab member of the Swiss Socialist Party, proved unfounded. Willy Brandt of West Germany, President of the Socialist International, said at a press conference that the question of expelling Israel was never raised.

He also denied Ziegler's contention that he had spoken by telephone to PLO chief Yasir Arafat to invite the PLO to Sydney. "I have never spoken on the phone with Arafat. The PLO will not be invited to Australia as even Arafat agrees, it is not a Socialist movement and there is no point inviting it," Brandt said.

#### BEGIN ASKS FOR MORE TIME ON 'WHO IS A JEW' ISSUE

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Nov. 8 (JTA). -- Premier Menachem Begin has asked the Agudat Israel to refrain for the time being from pressing for a Knesset vote on the controversial "Who is a Jew?" issue. The proposed amendment to the Law of Return failed to pass a preliminary test in parliament last summer.

Begin has committed himself to the Aguda to do all he can to assure adoption of the measure which would establish Orthodox criteria in law to determine who is a Jew. After last summer's failure, he told the chairman of the Aguda Knesset faction, Avraham Shapiro, to try again when a Knesset majority seems assured.

Shapiro apparently believes the time is ripe, since the Begin government now has a comfortable majority in the Knesset. But he was told by Begin to hold off because of the delicate political situation in the country and the strong opposition to the measure among non-Orthodox Jews in America.

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TEL AVIV (JTA). -- Seven Israeli soldiers went on trial before a military court Monday on charges of beating, assaulting and humiliating Arab residents of the West Bank last spring. The defendants included an officer with the rank of Major, three Sergeant-Majors -- the highest rank of non-commissioned officers -- and three enlisted men. The charges against them are based on depositions by several members of the Peace Now movement who were on reserve duty at the time. According to the charge sheets, four of the soldiers were accused of clubbing, kicking and punching Arab students who required hospitalization.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES CHANGES IN THE NEW CONGRESS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Nov. 8 (JTA) -- The new Congress that takes office in January is expected to see only one change in the Senate Foreign Relations Committee but at least 10 new faces in the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

However, these two important committees where much of the issues affecting Israel are discussed and voted upon are expected to continue their pro-Israel stances despite their chairmen, Sen. Charles Percy (R. Ill.) and Rep. Clement Zablocki (D. Wis.) who have often been critical of Israel and supportive of the Palestinians.

The Senate committee opening was caused by the decision of Sen. S. I. Hayakawa (R. Calif.) not to seek re-election. The three other committee members whose terms were up this year -- Sens. Richard Lugar (R. Ind.), Paul Sarbanes (D. Md.) and Edward Zorinsky (D. Neb.) all were re-elected.

Zorinsky, who is Jewish, and Lugar, voted for the sale of AWACS to Saudi Arabia last year, although Zorinsky first voted against it in the committee and then supported it in the final floor vote. But Sarbanes, a member of the Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs subcommittee, has been a staunch and important supporter of Israel in the Senate.

### Major Development In The House

In the House, the major development was the defeat of Rep. Paul Findley (R. Ill.), who has not only been critical of Israel but has been considered by some as the chief spokesman for the Palestine Liberation Organization in Congress. Findley was the ranking minority member of the Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East and used this position for frequent attacks on Israel.

Rep. Paul McCloskey (R. Calif.), another supporter of the PLO, did not seek re-election, but instead made an unsuccessful bid for the Republican nomination as candidate for governor of California. McCloskey has publicly attacked what he called the influence of American Jews on U.S. foreign policy. Last summer, he visited PLO chief Yasir Arafat in Beirut and emerged with a document in which he said Arafat recognized Israel which was later repudiated.

Incidentally, in a story in the Riyadh newspaper, Al-Jazirah, October 20, the Saudi Arabian newspaper's Washington bureau warned that Findley's defeat could have "serious consequences" for the Saudis, Palestinians and other Arabs.

"He (Findley) is a major stumbling block in the face of the Zionists and their supporters," the paper said, somewhat exaggerating the Illinois Congressman's influence. "But he is not the only one," the newspaper added. It listed the others as Percy and Zablocki.

### Several Of Israel's Supporters Gone

While Findley's defeat cheers supporters of Israel, the new House Foreign Affairs Committee will also be without several strong supporters of Israel. Among the Democrats, Rep. Jonathan Bingham of New York did not seek re-election because of reapportionment, and Rep. Bob Shamansky of Ohio was the only Jewish Congressman defeated in the November 2 elections.

On the Republican side, Rep. Edward Derwinski, a ranking minority member who

champions Israel, was defeated in the Republican primary in Illinois last spring. He has been appointed State Department Counselor by President Reagan. Rep. Robert Dornan made an unsuccessful primary bid for governor of California and Rep. Millicent Fenwick was defeated by Democrat Frank Lautenberg in the New Jersey Senate race.

On the more favorable side, Rep. Dante Fascell (D. Fla.), a leading supporter of Israel was re-elected after a tough contest and is the ranking Democrat with the retirement of L. H. Fountain of North Carolina, after Zablocki, the chairman. The ranking Republican member, Rep. William Broomfield of Michigan is also a friend of Israel.

The Jews on the House Foreign Affairs Committee are Reps. Benjamin Rosenthal and Stephen Solarz, both (D. NY); Howard Wolpe (D. Mich.), Samuel Gejdenson (D. Conn.), Tom Lantos (D. Calif.), and Benjamin Gilman (R. NY).

The three Democratic vacancies and the seven Republicans in the House committee and the one on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee are filled by the respective parties in each House. They are prestigious assignments and much sought after. Those who fill them will play an important role in Israel-U.S. relations and thus the appointments, come January, will be closely watched.

### NATPAC SAYS IT PLAYED EFFECTIVE ROLE IN THE NATIONAL ELECTIONS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Nov. 8 (JTA) -- Marvin Josephson, the New York businessman who founded the National Political Action Committee (NatPAC) to support pro-Israel candidates for Congress earlier this year, believes that "positive results" were achieved in the November 2 elections.

The election "shows we were able to be effective," Josephson told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. He said that in the 31 Senate races to which NatPAC made contributions, 28 of the candidates it supported won. In the House races, NatPAC contributed to 57 candidates who won and to 16 who lost. It made the full \$5,000 contribution allowed by law to each of the candidates it backed, Josephson said.

NatPAC was formed late last summer because of a belief that support for Israel was eroding in Congress. Its aim is to back candidates who believe that a strong Israel is in the best interests of U.S. foreign policy, Josephson said. He told the JTA that NatPAC will remain in existence for the 1984 elections when it hopes to be able to contribute to candidates in every Senate and House contest.

Meanwhile, Hyman Bookbinder, the American Jewish Committee's Washington representative, noted in a post-mortem on last Tuesday's elections that "there was a gratifying absence of anti-Semitism even though an unprecedented number of Jews ran for office in 1982." He said that the eight Jews in the next Senate and the 30 Jews in the next House "were not elected as Jews and they will not be serving as Jews. They will not constitute a Jewish bloc in Congress," Bookbinder said.

"What is gratifying is that Jews feel free to aspire to public office without undue concerns that their Jewishness will become a campaign issue, either pro or con," the AJCommittee official said. He predicted that "The next Congress will be at least as supportive of basic Israeli related issues as the present one."

Bookbinder, who presented his analysis at the AJCommittee's national executive council meeting, which was held over the weekend at the Beverly Hilton Hotel, also noted that the new right groups and their social issues suffered major setbacks in Tuesday's elections.