

JTA daily news bulletin

Contents copyright. Reproduction only by previous arrangement.

Published by Jewish Telegraphic Agency / 165 West 48th Street / New York, New York 10036

Vol. XII - 66th Year

Monday, February 14, 1983

No. 31

**Weekend Developments:
POLITICAL LEADERS MAPPING
POSITIONS FOLLOWING INQUIRY
PANEL'S REPORT AND SHARON'S
RESIGNATION AS DEFENSE MINISTER**
By Gil Sedan (Jerusalem) and Hugh Orgel (Tel Aviv)

Feb. 13 (JTA) — The leaders of most political parties were meeting today to hammer out their positions following the publication of the commission of inquiry report and the reorganization of the Cabinet in the aftermath of Ariel Sharon's resignation as Defense Minister but remaining in the Cabinet as Minister-Without-Portfolio.

Premier Menachem Begin will take over the defense portfolio until a successor to Sharon is named. It was indicated over the weekend that Moshe Arens, Israel's Ambassador to the United States, will be named Defense Minister. (Related stories, pages 2 and 4.)

The parties comprising the Likud coalition, including the National Religious Party, appeared receptive today to the idea of widening the government's base of support by establishing a national unity coalition.

Peres Willing To Discuss With Begin

Labor Party leader Shimon Peres refrained from any immediate comment on such a broad coalition. However, he said that he would accept an invitation from Begin to meet with him to discuss ways of reducing "verbal violence" between opposing political parties and between the different social groupings in the country.

But Peres made it clear that he would not initiate any meeting with Begin, even though he had asked for meetings with the Premier during the fighting in Lebanon "but only to express our opinion during certain phases." The Labor Party chief said it was up to the Premier to invite the leader of the opposition to inform him of developments, not the other way around.

Some Labor Party members said that Peres should refuse to meet Begin to discuss either verbal or physical violence, such as the grenade attack on the Peace Now demonstration last Thursday which left one person dead and nine wounded. (See separate story, P. 3) To hold such a meeting would be to admit that both Likud and Labor bore equal responsibility for violence, whereas the violence had actually been initiated by the Likud, opponents of a Peres-Begin meeting said.

Consequences Of Sharon's Resignation

Meanwhile, the meaning of Sharon's resignation as Defense Minister, but not from the Cabinet, and its political consequences within Israel and in Israel's relations with Washington, continued to be a source of speculation and analysis over the weekend. Sharon decided to resign Friday morning, some 12 hours after the Cabinet voted 16-1 Thursday night to accept the report and the recommendations of the commission of inquiry. The one opposing vote was Sharon's. The panel had recommended that Sharon

resign or, if he refused to do so, to be dismissed by Begin.

Sharon's resignation goes into effect tomorrow. At the beginning of next week he will meet with officers of the general staff to bid them farewell and will hold a similar meeting with the staff of the Defense Ministry.

Sharon's resignation came as a surprise, since he had made it clear both before and after the Cabinet session last Thursday that he would not resign, regardless of the Cabinet's decision about the inquiry commission's report. His resignation, therefore, was seen as an attempt to stay in the government and fight from within for a leading portfolio. There was some speculation that he might be named to deal with the settlements on the West Bank and Gaza Strip. But Begin has remained mum on Sharon's future position in the Cabinet.

Sharon's resignation also galvanized supporters of former Defense Minister Ezer Weizman into starting consultations regarding his possible comeback. They appealed to Begin to invite his former Defense Minister for a meeting to try to clear the air between them. Weizman left the Cabinet after his relations with Begin soured in 1980.

Sharon Rejects 'Indirect Responsibility'

An ebullient Sharon made his first public appearance, several hours after he announced his resignation, at a meeting of the Israel Bar Association in Tel Aviv. He was clearly buoyed by the standing ovation he received and joked with his supporters in the audience.

He told the meeting that the main reason he opposed accepting the inquiry commission's report was its reference to Israel's "indirect responsibility" for the massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila camps in west Beirut. "This is completely untrue," Sharon declared. "Israel bears no responsibility, either direct or indirect, for what happened there. But it will be used by our enemies and brand us with a mark of Cain for many years to come."

Legal Experts Differ On Resignation

In spite of the decisive 16-1 vote by the Cabinet to accept the inquiry panel's report and recommendations and Sharon's own announcement of resignation, confusion followed Sharon's decision. Justice Minister Moshe Nissim said he understood that the resignation meant quitting the Cabinet altogether. Energy Minister Yitzhak Moda'i, who described himself as a close friend of Sharon, said he, too, understood that Sharon would not want to remain in the Cabinet after being deprived of his defense portfolio.

Legal experts explained on Friday that Sharon's resignation was not officially a resignation. They pointed out that resignation from the ministry meant by law resignation from the Cabinet. According to Article 17 of Israel's Basic Law, the Cabinet as a whole decides on the reshuffling of portfolios, not any minister nor even the Prime Minister.

KNESSET TO ACT ON DECISION BY THE CABINET TO TRANSFER DEFENSE PORTFOLIO TO BEGIN

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- Ariel Sharon will cease to be Defense Minister tomorrow if the Knesset, as expected, approves the Cabinet's decision today to transfer the portfolio to Premier Menachem Begin. The Premier made it clear at the meeting that his tenure would be brief and temporary. He intends to name Moshe Arens, Israel's Ambassador to Washington, a former leading Likud-Herut Knesset member, to the defense post.

The Cabinet's decision followed directly from its resolution Thursday night to adopt the inquiry commission's recommendations, central among which was Sharon's removal from the defense post. Attorney General Yitzhak Zamir gave his opinion to the ministers today that by leaving defense, Sharon would be fully complying with the commission's recommendation, even though he is to stay on as a minister.

This opinion is challenged by several academic lawyers on legal grounds of interpretation, and also by the opposition parties on political as well as legal grounds.

Confident Of Knesset Approval

But political observers predict with confidence that the Cabinet's decision will obtain Knesset approval. One potential Likud rebel, former minister Yitzhak Bernan, has already let it be known that he would endorse the move if the attorney general approved it from a legal-interpretational standpoint.

The same applies to National Religious Party dove Avraham Melamed. A third coalition maverick, Dror Zeigerman (Likud-Liberal) will probably not support the government's decision -- but his defection alone is not enough to endanger the government's majority.

The government will also face -- and probably weather -- two non-confidence motions this week, presented by the Hadash (Communists) and by Shinui. Labor is still debating within itself as to the tactical advisability of presenting a non-confidence motion.

Before today's Cabinet session, Sharon delivered a curt letter to Begin, informing Begin of his decision to "honor the Cabinet's decision to remove the defense portfolio from my hands." Sharon added in the letter that he has no intentions of resigning from the Cabinet.

Dissatisfaction Among Cabinet Ministers

Cabinet sources said the atmosphere was strained. They noted that on Thursday night Sharon had said he would not sit in the Cabinet any more, and had made nasty comments to and about a number of his colleagues.

Some of them took the opportunity today of indulging in some sarcasm themselves at the sight of Sharon going back on his "boycott" so quickly.

Behind the scenes -- but not at the Cabinet table -- there was also dissatisfaction among some of the ministers at the fact that Sharon had not been gotten rid of altogether. But he is being given powerful support from Tehiya and from ultra-rightists in Herut, and there is a clear danger that if he were to be forced out of the Cabinet altogether the government would lose its coalition majority.

Sharon's spokesman Uri Dan was cited saying today: "Some people didn't want him as Chief of Staff -- and they got him as Minister of Defense. Now some don't want him as Minister of Defense -- and they will get him back in the future as Prime Minister."

This evening Begin met alone with Sharon to discuss the handover of the defense post. He also received, separately, Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan, who will complete his term of service in April. The inquiry commission was sharply critical of Eitan for his failure to have ordered the immediate removal of the Phalangist forces from the Shatila and Sabra camps upon his arrival in Beirut on Friday, September 17.

Begin also met with military intelligence chief Gen. Yehoshua Saguy, who was blasted by the panel for "breach of duty incumbent on the director of military intelligence," and ordered that he be relieved of his post. Israel Radio said Saguy emerged red-eyed from his meeting with the Premier. The intention, it is understood, is to find Saguy another post within the Israel Defense Force.

Brig. Gen. Amos Yaron, the immediate commander of Israeli forces in Beirut, also castigated by the inquiry panel, will also be offered a senior IDF post that is not a field command. The commission recommended in his case that he not be given a field command for at least three years for his failure to act on the night of September 16 when initial reports of over 300 dead civilians filtered out of the camps and reached him.

NAVON: STOP USING EPITHETS TO DESCRIBE POLITICAL OPPONENTS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- President Yitzhak Navon has called for an immediate halt to the use of such phrases as "traitor," "PLO supporter," and "stabbing the nation in the back," when describing political opponents. "We must remember that we are one people, with one common destiny, and if, God forbid, our existence should be in danger, we are all in the same boat," he said in a television interview Friday.

Navon also praised the government for setting up the judicial commission of inquiry into the massacre of Palestinians in the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps and expressed the view that the Israel Defense Force could accept criticism and emerge stronger in the process.

"Army officers may be criticized," Navon said, "but criticism does not erase their service, their dedication, their praiseworthy deeds. Rather, it deals with certain behavior over two or three days. The army's strength has not been harmed, and there is no reason for fear that officers will not want to take upon themselves positions of command."

Speaking to officers today, Navon said: "The State of Israel will prosper and strengthen, if it is built on a high moral level. The IDF in the Lebanon war restrained itself, soldiers had sacrificed themselves, and there was a lot of hesitation -- otherwise the war would not have lasted long ... Because there was the will to avert hurting civilians, and because of the desire to allow the political negotiations to achieve the utmost."

In praising the government for setting up the commission, Navon said, "We were obliged to hold this inquiry, for ourselves, for our heritage, for our basic concepts of the sanctity of human life."

Meanwhile, it was learned that in a segment edited out of the television interview on Friday, Navon mentioned the possibility of a "national unity government," involving both Labor and Likud. "It may be unlikely to form such a government, but the leaders of both camps should meet to discuss the ideas," Navon said.

POLICE INTENSIFY PROBE OF GRENADE ATTACK AGAINST PEACE NOW GROUP

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- Police intensified their investigation this weekend of the grenade attack on a group of Peace Now demonstrators opposite the Prime Minister's office last Thursday night while the Cabinet was meeting to accept the full report and recommendations of the commission of inquiry into the Beirut massacre. One man was killed and nine others injured.

The man killed in the attack, which reports today said was well planned and coordinated by an "unknown group," was identified as Emil Grunzweig, a 33-year-old immigrant from Czechoslovakia and mathematics teacher at the Van Leer Institute in Jerusalem. Thousands attended his funeral Friday.

Five others were hospitalized, including Avraham Burg, son of Interior Minister Yosef Burg, a leading Peace Now activist. One demonstrator, Yehoshua Shkedi, a 26-year-old student, was seriously wounded and operated on for eight hours by doctors at the Hadassah Medical Center. He was reported in stable condition. Three others remained hospitalized today with minor injuries.

Events Leading To The Attack

Meanwhile, police this weekend attempted to piece together the events leading to the attack. Authorities found the safety catch of the Israeli-made grenade and the cardboard wrapping in which it was stored. The grenade was hidden in a hollow electricity pole which was lying in the area of the demonstrators.

The remains of the grenade were found on a hill across the street from the Premier's office, some 300 meters northeast of the building. The hill served the pro-government demonstrators whereas the Peace Now group demonstrated at the foot of the hill closer to the street. According to eye-witnesses, a shout was heard "Now," and then the explosion followed.

This is one of the indications which have led police to the assumption that the attack was not a one-man initiative, but rather the work of several people. A special investigation team has been established and is now trying to locate an unidentified man who was threatening the demonstrators and others who did likewise.

According to one witness to the attack, a tall unidentified man followed the Peace Now demonstrators on their way from downtown Jerusalem to the Premier's office, threatening the demonstrators that this was "their last day." At one stage, this man told Grunzweig: "I will pee on your grave -- you will pay for the death of my brother in Lebanon." According to this eye-witness, the man held a suspicious object in his hand.

The news director of Maariv said on Friday he received a telephone call from a man who identified himself as a lecturer at the Hebrew University and said he had been the person who gave the order to throw the grenade. Maariv reported that the man, who sounded quiet, controlled and articulate, said the target of the grenade was Gen. (res.) Matti Peled who last month met with PLO chief Yasser Arafat, but in his absence from the demonstration, the grenade was aimed at Avraham Burg.

Police also interrogated Rabbi Meir Kahane, leader of the ultra-nationalist Kach movement, and said he was asked to supply the names of his followers who participated in the pro-government demonstration. Kahane denied any responsibility for the attack, con-

demned such "crimes," but said that the Peace Now movement and other leftist movements should be fought because they stab the nation "in the heart and in the back."

Claims Police Were Lax In Protecting Demonstrators

Labor Alignment MK Yair Tzabon meanwhile demanded that Interior Minister Burg order an investigation of the conduct of the police during the fatal Peace Now demonstration. He argued that evidence pointed to the fact that police may not have done enough to protect the demonstrators. Tzabon accused the police of acting leniently toward the antagonistic bystanders who threatened the demonstrators.

At Grunzweig's funeral Friday, angry shouts erupted from the crowd when Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi Shlomo Goren sought to speak. The shouts, directed at him and against Premier Menachem Begin, were halted at the expressed wish of the family. The only eulogy delivered was a by a fellow professor, Yehuda Elkana, of the Van Leer Institute.

Deputy Premier David Levy, who represented the Cabinet at the funeral, told reporters that attacks as that which occurred during the Peace Now demonstration should be "rooted out. Everybody has the right to express his own opinions." Many Knesset members joined with the hundreds of Peace Now members and sympathizers at the funeral.

Meanwhile, across the street from the Prime Minister's office, Peace Now members are maintaining a round-the-clock vigil for seven days at the spot where the grenade took the life of Grunzweig.

BARBIE MOVED TO ANOTHER PRISON

PARIS, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- Nazi war criminal Klaus Barbie, now awaiting trial in France for "crimes against humanity" committed while he headed a Gestapo unit in Lyon from 1942 to 1944, was yesterday moved to a new prison in the center of the city.

Police said he was moved from Montluc prison, where he detained thousands of Jews and local resistance fighters while he headed the Gestapo, to another prison for security reasons. In his new prison cell, at the St. Joseph House for Detention, he will be in a separate wing, away from other prisoners.

While a reportedly unrepentant Barbie languished in his cell, French television broadcast today an interview he gave to two Bolivian reporters while on his way from La Paz to France last week. The Bolivian reporters said Barbie started out from La Paz calm and self-confident. "He thought at the time that he was being taken to West Germany," reporter Carlos Soria said. "He became agitated and despondent, however, when he landed in French Guyana and first learned that he was being taken back to France."

The Bolivian reporters said Barbie showed no remorse during his flight, but anger and exasperation. Several times he muttered, "The vanquished are doomed. If Germany had won the war my case would no longer exist."

Barbie, who had lived for close to 30 years in Bolivia under the name of Klaus Altmann, was twice sentenced in France to death in absentia for his war crimes. He now risks life imprisonment if found guilty. His war-time crimes earned Barbie the name of "the butcher of Lyon."

ARENS REFUSES TO CONFIRM THAT HE HAS BEEN OFFERED DEFENSE POST

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- Israeli Ambassador Moshe Arens, who is expected to be named to succeed Ariel Sharon as Defense Minister, refused to publicly confirm today that he has been offered the post.

Arens, appearing on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press," said that as a "civil servant" he could not comment on his political future. But he indicated indirectly that reports that he would not serve in the Cabinet if Sharon remains as Minister Without-Portfolio were untrue.

"If you looked at Israel's history ... I think you will find no precedent in the past for a man who has been asked to join the Cabinet by the Prime Minister saying his joining the Cabinet is conditional on somebody else not being there," Arens said. He added that it would thus not be "appropriate" for anyone to make such a condition.

The Israeli envoy stressed that decisions by the Cabinet are made through a "collective process" that needs a majority vote first by the Cabinet and then by the Knesset. He said policy is not established by any one member of the Cabinet.

Says U.S.-Israel Friendship Remains Strong

Arens, who took up his ambassadorial post a year ago after serving as chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, said that his 12 months in the United States has "reinforced" that the "fundamental basis of friendship and alliance between Israel and the United States is very strong and will continue to be strong." He said those in Israel and the U.S. who are in positions to influence these ties should work toward "strengthening these bonds."

The envoy conceded that Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger rejected the "framework" for an agreement worked out between the U.S. and Israel for the exchange of weapons and technological information Israel had learned during its operation in Lebanon. But he noted that such an agreement was approved after the 1967 Six-Day War and the 1973 Yom Kippur War and "We will have such an agreement again."

The lessons and technological information derived from the Lebanese operation are important to the U.S. and the West, Arens said. He denied that the Israeli conditions were "too tough" as claimed by Weinberger in vetoing the agreement. Arens said the Israeli conditions were aimed at ensuring that there is a "minimum risk" that the information fall into Soviet hands through "some inadvertent" manner.

Arens denied reports that after President Reagan proposed his September 1 peace initiative, he recommended that Israel agree to Reagan's request for a freeze on settlement activity on the West Bank. He said that the Jewish settlements contain less than three percent of the population of Judea and Samaria and that cannot be an obstacle to peace. He noted that during the 19 years that King Hussein of Jordan ruled the West Bank, there were no settlements and Hussein still refused to negotiate with Israel.

The "pattern" for establishing peace was established by Israeli Premier Menachem Begin and the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat, "direct face-to-face talks without pre-conditions," Arens

stressed. "That's what it takes to produce peace in the Middle East."

But Arens said that peace as he sees it means "Jews and Arabs living together," including in Judea and Samaria. He said Israel could never accept the position of Jordan that no Jews can live on the West Bank. He noted that before 1948, there were Jewish settlements there but after the War of Independence, Jordan destroyed all the Jewish settlements on the West Bank as well as the Jewish quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem. He noted that even today Jordan doesn't allow Jews to live in its territory.

The Situation In Lebanon

On Lebanon, Arens said negotiations are now being carried out in "very good spirits." But he said these negotiations are very "difficult and complicated" and urged "a good dose of patience."

He said there was no use for the U.S. and Israel trying to criticize each other over events in Lebanon since both had the same objectives there. These are that "Lebanon is not again the base of terrorist activity against Israel and that Lebanon again becomes an independent free country," Arens said. He added it would be "a terrible mistake" for the Israeli army to leave Lebanon and then find the PLO has returned. He said this would result in the end of Lebanon and the end of stability in the area.

However, Arens stressed that in the "final analysis" an agreement in Lebanon depends on "Syria being ready to leave Lebanon. That's not at all clear at the present time."

Bush Stresses Need For Troops Withdrawing

Vice President George Bush also discussed Lebanon in an interview on CBS-TV's "Face the Nation" program. Stressing that Israel is "a strategic ally," Bush said that the present U.S.-Israel differences will improve with the withdrawal of all foreign forces from Lebanon. "We want those forces out," Bush said. "That means Syrians ... PLO fighters ... Israelis." He said he believes Begin realizes the "urgency" for accomplishing this.

Bush said the withdrawal of all foreign forces is necessary for "Lebanon to be Lebanon ... reconstituted, free, controlling its own destiny." He said once this is accomplished, attention can be turned to seeking a "solution to the age old Palestinian question."

Bush refused to say whether the U.S. has agreed to send in more marines to Lebanon as has been reported. He said the U.S. is working with other countries in an effort to do what is necessary to solve the situation in Lebanon.

WOMAN DIES OF HER INJURIES

JERUSALEM, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- A 22-year-old woman who was hit by a rock two weeks ago near the West Bank village of Dahariya died yesterday at Hadassah Medical Center. Esther Ohana of Beit Shean was a passenger in a military vehicle when a rock thrown through the windshield hit her in the head. She was rushed to the hospital where she underwent brain surgery, but the doctors could not save her. Dahariya village, on the Beersheba-Hebron highway, has been under curfew for the past two weeks.

There will be no Bulletin dated February 21, Washington's Birthday, a postal holiday.