

**BACKGROUND REPORT  
DATE FOR ISRAELI ELECTIONS IS  
SUBJECT OF INTENSE BARGAINING  
BETWEEN THE VARIOUS PARTIES**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 25 (JTA) — The Labor Alignment's decisive victory for its early elections bill in the Knesset last Thursday night has set the stage for intense bargaining between the various parties over just how soon the elections will be held. Labor hopes the issue will be settled quickly.

The bill adopted by the Knesset by a 61-58 margin — a severe defeat for Likud — favors elections in late May or early June. Officially, the date will be set while the measure is in committee prior to the required three readings before the Knesset plenum. It is being processed by the Law and Constitution Committee, chaired by Likud Liberal Eli Kulas.

In actuality, the election date will be decided in behind-the-scenes negotiations between Labor and Likud, with input from the smaller parties. On Friday, Labor Party chairman Shimon Peres publicly asked Likud leaders for a meeting on this matter. Peres also telephoned former President Yitzhak Navon, presently visiting the United States, to inform him officially of the Knesset vote.

**Decision May Be Worked Out This Week**

Peres reportedly told Navon he expected a decision on the election date to be worked out this coming week. He is said to be anxious to have Navon return to active politics and participate as a Laborite in the upcoming campaign. Peres also reportedly told the former President that he had heard an offer from Likud—before the Knesset vote — to hold elections next September 10. He said he rejected it.

But political pundits say this does not mean he will continue to reject it if the date is pressed by Likud in the bargaining process. Indeed, an early September date is considered most likely by the political community here. Labor opted for May or June in order to humble Likud on the Knesset floor when it became apparent that an early election bill would be passed, observers said.

But having achieved that satisfaction, Labor is not likely to alienate potential coalition partners such as the National Religious Party by insisting on a spring election which the NRP, in its current disarray, has good grounds to oppose. Although Labor hopes for an election victory of landslide proportions that would enable it to govern without a coalition, the history of Israeli politics makes such an outcome highly unlikely.

According to political observers, the elections will be held this spring or next fall. To have them in July or August is out of the question because so many middle class families — potential Labor supporters — vacation abroad in those months.

Labor wants as short a campaign as possible to take advantage of widespread dissatisfaction with the deteriorating economy and the unstable situation in Lebanon, issues on which the Likud government is

most vulnerable. Likud, for obvious reasons, wants to postpone facing the voters until the economy shows some improvement.

Labor leaders are trying to persuade the NRP or at least the Aguda Israel Party, that an early poll is to their advantage because of the emergence of a new religious faction which might siphon away the votes of religious Sephardim.

This is the Shass Party, which did surprisingly well in Jerusalem's municipal elections last November and may seek representation in the next Knesset. Shass is discreetly backed by the former Sephardic Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef and its rise, according to some observers, was one of the reasons that prompted Tami Party leader Aharon Abu-Hatzeira to part company with Likud and press for early elections.

Tami has reason to fear the emergence of a new Sephardic faction and apparently wants to consolidate a position in the next Knesset before it can make serious inroads among Tami's Sephardic supporters.

On the other hand, the two Knesset dissenters who made possible Labor's victory last Thursday — Likud Liberal Yitzhak Berman and independent Mordechai Ben-Porat—both favor fall elections. Their voices could be important in settling the issue. But political observers note that in the super-heated pre-election atmosphere that has engulfed Israel, positions can be changed even when they are a matter of public record.

**SHAMIR SAYS ISRAEL-EGYPTIAN  
RELATIONS COULD BE VASTLY IMPROVED**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 25 (JTA) — Israeli-Egyptian relations, five years after the two countries signed their peace treaty, could be vastly improved, Premier Yitzhak Shamir reportedly told U.S. special envoy Donald Rumsfeld at a meeting here Friday.

Rumsfeld flew to Jerusalem directly from Cairo where he had met with President Hosni Mubarak. Shamir, who briefed the Cabinet today on his discussions with the American envoy, is said to have stressed Israel's dissatisfaction with the "cold peace" with Egypt. He spoke on the eve of the fifth anniversary of the treaty which was signed in Washington on March 26, 1979.

Government sources stressed, however, that the crucial military provisions of the treaty were, in the main, scrupulously observed by both sides. The problem is the freeze in normalization of relations which progressed initially but then stalled and has been virtually suspended since Egypt recalled its Ambassador from Tel Aviv when Israel invaded Lebanon in June, 1982.

The failure of the Egyptians to return their envoy and the various conditions demanded by Mubarak before doing so, has rankled the Israelis. Nevertheless, government sources conceded that even the limited type of peace with Egypt that exists today would have been a highly desirable dream a decade ago.

**ARENS DISPUTES REMARKS ATTRIBUTED  
TO HIM IN THE NEW YORK TIMES**

NEW YORK, March 25 (JTA) — A sharp dispute has

developed between Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens and writer Lucinda Franks over remarks she attributed to Arens in a New York Times Sunday Magazine article, published today, which Arens insists he never made.

According to Franks, Arens called U.S. Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger "a prime candidate for psychoanalysis" and suggested that he had "hang-ups" over the fact that he had a Jewish grandfather.

Arens, who saw a copy of the article shortly before its publication, was quoted today by Times' Jerusalem correspondent David Shipler as saying, "I would have been insane to say these things, even if I thought them. And I don't think them."

Shipler reported that Arens telephoned Weinberger yesterday to assure him that he had never made the statements reported by Frank. Arens' spokesman Nachman Shai, and later Arens himself, called the Times' Jerusalem bureau to discuss portions of Franks' article.

Denying the attributions, he declared, "I have a great deal of respect for him (Weinberger) and the way he does his job. There has been a great deal of improvement in Israeli-American relations and Caspar Weinberger played a crucial role in that improvement," Shipler reported from Jerusalem today.

Arens also denied vigorously that he had offered to return disputed territory to Egypt if the Egyptian Defense Minister would meet with him, as reported by Franks. "This was never my opinion, never my position. This is totally misconstrued," Arens said.

#### Writer Standing By Her Attributions

But Franks, a former reporter for The New York Times, who won a Pulitzer Prize in 1971 as a reporter for United Press International for a five-part series on the radical Weatherman group, is standing by her attributions. Shipler reported that she told him in a telephone interview from New York that her notes confirm what Arens said. Her husband, Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau, who accompanied her at her meeting with Arens in Jerusalem last December, offered further corroboration, Shipler reported.

Arens' alleged remarks about Weinberger referred to the time the Defense Secretary visited Israel and was accompanied by Arens, then Israel's Ambassador to Washington, to the Yad Vashem, the Holocaust memorial.

According to Franks, Arens told her that Weinberger "has a lot of hang-ups about his Jewishness. When we went into the hall where all the names of the concentration camps are etched in stone, we told him that since his grandfather was Jewish, he would be considered a Jew according to the Nazi racial laws. We watched his face for a reaction and there was none."

Arens told Shipler, "These are just outrageous... Nobody was idiotic enough there to tell him that this (the Nazi laws) would have any reference to him. It is ridiculous." According to Franks, Arens made the remarks while driving with her and Morgenthau from a Christmas Eve ceremony at Bethlehem.

Morgenthau confirmed her account, asserting that "I heard him say it. I was sitting in the car with him. I was surprised that he said it. But he did say it, there's no doubt about that... He never said anything about its being on background."

Confronted with Morgenthau's confirmation, Arens told Shipler, "I'm telling you it's outrageous. Absolutely wrong," the Times correspondent reported.

Arens also denied Franks' assertion that he had told her that Labor Party leader Shimon Peres was "worse than he appeared." Shipler reported that the Defense Minister insisted, "I never thought that and therefore I never said it." Franks conceded later that this quotation was in error. She said that according to her notes, what Arens said was that Peres was one of the few politicians "who appears worse than he is," Shipler reported. Edward Klein, editor of the Times Magazine, attributed this error to an "editing transposition" but said that "in all other respects I stand behind her story."

According to Franks' article, the offer to return disputed territory to Egypt was made by Arens' aide, Shai. Shai told Shipler that Franks had misunderstood Israel's position on the issue and that he had never told her Israel would give up the territory if the Egyptian Defense Minister would agree to meet Arens.

#### U.S. HAS LOW KEYED REACTION TO REPORTS THE USSR PLANS TO REPLACE ISRAELI-DESTROYED IRAQI NUKE REACTOR

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 25 (JTA) -- The United States appears to be taking a wait-and-see attitude about reports that the Soviet Union planned to supply Iraq with a nuclear reactor to replace the one destroyed by an Israeli air raid on June 7, 1981.

"We understand that the contemplated project merely involves a very preliminary feasibility and siting study for the possible future construction of a nuclear power reactor by the Soviet Union for the generation of electricity in Iraq," State Department deputy spokesman Alan Romberg said Friday.

Romberg noted there was no contract as yet for the actual supplying of the reactor. He said if an agreement was reached, it would be eight to 10 years before the reactor could be operational.

However, Romberg stressed that it was "significant that both the Soviet Union and Iraq are parties to the nuclear non-proliferation treaty under which they are committed to placing international safeguards inspections on any power reactors exported to Iraq as well as all other nuclear facilities in that country."

Romberg said that these safeguards must be approved by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) in Vienna on whose Board of Governors the United States is a permanent member. He added that the USSR "adheres to international nuclear supplier guidelines which require it to assure the peaceful purpose of its nuclear exports through application of safeguards and other measures."

Israel justified its raid on the ground that the French supplied Iraqi reactor was intended to produce atomic weapons and would have been operational soon, after which it could not have been bombed without exposing Baghdad to massive radiation fallout. The raid resulted in serious differences between the Reagan Administration and Israel, with the United States holding up shipments of F-16 aircraft.

At the same time, testimony in Congress charged that the IAEA inspections did not adequately safeguard against nuclear reactors being used for non-peaceful purposes.

#### ISRAEL DENIES SELLING ARMS TO IRAN DURING THE LAST THREE YEARS

BONN, March 25 (JTA) -- Israel denied that it has

sold arms to Iran during the last three years, a direct refutation of West German press reports last week, believed inspired by government sources here, that Israel was an important supplier of weapons to Iran and plans to sell that country 200 anti-tank guns this summer.

The denial was made by an Israeli spokesman during a meeting between the pro-Israel West German publisher, Axel Springer and Premier Yitzhak Shamir in Jerusalem. It was widely published in Springer's mass circulation dailies yesterday. The denial covered only the last three years. The spokesman did not say that Israel never sold arms to Iran or whether it intends to in the future.

The appearance of reports in leading West German dailies last week about Israeli-Iranian arms deals were viewed as an attempt by Chancellor Helmut Kohl's government to gain public support for the planned German arms sales to Saudi Arabia. Government sources argue that one reason for the controversial arms deal is that the Saudis are menaced by Iran.

Kohl has charged on one occasion that Israeli arms shipments to Iran were prolonging that country's war with Iraq, and it was therefore urgent for Bonn to supply arms to the moderate, pro-Western countries in the region. (By David Kantor)

#### ISRAELI INFANT WHO HAS LIVER CANCER IS IN THE U.S. FOR AN OPERATION

Parents Appeal For Help In Getting Suitable Donor

NEW YORK, March 25 (JTA) — Chaya Cohen, 19 months old, of Netanya, has cancer of the liver and the baby's parents, Israel and Nurit Cohen, are appealing for help in getting a suitable donor, it was announced by Rabbi Chaim Zelikovitz of Long Beach, Long Island, who along with a number of rabbis and doctors in Long Beach and the New York metropolitan area have established the Baby Chaya Fund to defray costs for the operation and to find a suitable donor. Liver transplants are not done in Israel.

The baby and her father arrived in New York over the weekend and are staying at the home of Zelikovitz. Her mother is scheduled to arrive in New York tomorrow. They will then fly to the University of Minnesota Hospital in Minneapolis for an operation. Chaya was referred by Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem after all attempts at treatment in Israel were unsuccessful and where no suitable donor could be found, Zelikovitz said.

The rabbi and his wife, Yetta, became involved in the case because her brother, Rabbi Israel Meyer Wise of Jerusalem, arranged for Chaya's trip to the U.S. and for her admission to the hospital in Minneapolis.

According to Zelikovitz, a medical report from Hadassah Hospital stated: "The option of a liver transplant was raised as a possible way of curing this child with unresectable, chemotherapy-resistant hepatoblastoma (liver cancer)."

The University of Minnesota Hospital said that if the baby qualifies for the operation, a guarantee of \$170,000 will have to be raised for her. Zelikovitz said that those who wish to help should get in contact with the Baby Chaya Fund, 31 East Penn Street, Long Beach, N.Y. 11561.

**JAILED HEAD OF NEO-NAZI GROUP CHARGED WITH MURDER OF JEWISH PUBLISHER AND HIS COMPANION**  
By David Kantor

BONN, March 25 (JTA) — Karl-Heinz Hoff-

mann, the jailed head of the outlawed neo-Nazi group which had masqueraded as a sports club, has been charged in Nuremberg with the 1980 murder of the Jewish publisher Shlomo Levin and his German friend, Frida Poeschke.

According to an indictment filed last week by state prosecutors, Hoffmann, 46, is also charged with recruiting youths to fight alongside the Palestine Liberation Organization in Lebanon, the use of intimidation, production of forged currency, threats against local law enforcement officials, inflicting bodily harm and possession and use of firearms.

The indictment stopped short of charging Hoffmann with organizing a terrorist association, something seriously considered by the state prosecutors. A German Supreme Court ruling in 1982 said that Hoffmann's alleged activities in Lebanon in a PLO training camp and his attempts to establish a terrorist association could not be included in the indictment because they were outside West German jurisdiction.

Hoffmann has been imprisoned since July, 1981 for his neo-Nazi activities, including offenses perpetrated abroad. He was accused of trying to establish the same sort of paramilitary group which was banned by the Interior Ministry in January, 1980, in other countries.

But the main charge against Hoffmann is the murder of Levin, who was 69 years old when his bullet-riddled body was found at his Erlangen home on December 19, 1980. Police also discovered the slain body of his 57-year-old companion, Poeschke. Levin had returned from Israel to his native Germany in the 1950's.

According to reports, he had told people that he served as a close associate of then Defense Minister Moshe Dayan during the siege of Jerusalem in 1948. But though this claim was denied by people who knew Dayan at the time, it contributed to the extraordinary public attention which was given to the murder at the time. Levin may well have been the victim of his own assertions, as the rightwing terrorists apparently believed he was a prominent personality in Israel.

#### ISRAEL, EGYPT GIVEN HIGH MARKS FOR ADHERENCE TO PEACE TREATY

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 25 (JTA) — The outgoing and incoming commanders of the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) which monitors the military aspects of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty in Sinai, have given both countries high marks for their adherence to the treaty's terms.

Lt. Gen. Fredrik Bull-Hansen, who has served as MFO commander since October, 1981 and has just been appointed Norway's Defense Minister, agreed with his successor and fellow Norwegian, Lt. Gen. Egil Ingebrigtsen, that Israel and Egypt are cooperating "excellently" to ensure the peace in Sinai.

Bull-Hansen told reporters last Thursday that the "sincere desire for peace of both parties" was one of the primary reasons for the MFO's success. Only minor violations of the peace agreement have been noted, he said. He added that most of the 10 nations that have contributed personnel to the MFO have agreed to renew their participation.

Ingebrigtsen is a veteran of United Nations forces, having served with UNTSO (UN Truce Supervision Organization) which was set up under the 1948 armistice agreements.

## SPECIAL TO THE JTA THE SCOPE OF MITTERRAND'S U.S. VISIT

By Marc Tanenbaum

(Editor's note: Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, director of international relations for the American Jewish Committee, has just returned from a mission to France.)

NEW YORK, March 25 (JTA) — The current visit of President Francois Mitterrand of France to the United States is primarily devoted to strengthening Franco-American relations, but clearly has vital implications for Israel, Soviet Jewry and American Jewry.

That conclusion results from a high-level mission to France, shortly before Mitterrand's visit to the U.S., where he held talks last week with President Reagan and other Administration officials, by American Jewish Committee leaders.

The Committee leaders met with Mitterrand, Foreign Minister Claude Cheysson, Gaullist Mayor of Paris Jacques Chirac, and six other Cabinet ministers. Meetings were also held with the U.S. Ambassador to France, Evan Galbraith; Israel's Ambassador, Ovadia Soffer; the U.S. delegation to UNESCO; French Jewish leaders; and several leading French journalists.

### Two Central Themes Emerged

Throughout all our conversations with Mitterrand and his two impressive Jewish aides, Jacques Attali and Charles Salzmann, as well as with other key French government officials, two central themes emerged:

\* France shares fundamental democratic values with the United States and therefore is committed to upholding human rights and constitutional democracies.

\* France perceives the Soviet Union as a major threat to free societies and to human rights, and must therefore be resisted.

While the image of France in many circles is that of a jaded colonial power, our experiences persuaded us that France today must be taken seriously as a "mini-superpower" that has global interests in virtually every part of the world. Defense experts report that next to the U.S. and the Soviet Union, France has the largest military force, nuclear capacity, and naval fleets spread over critical areas of the world.

Therefore, France must be viewed as a vital ally of the U.S., and its foreign policy can be crucial for the interests of Israel in the Middle East, the European community, Africa, and Latin America.

### 'Double-Track' Foreign Course

Under Cheysson, with whom we met for more than an hour in an intense review of foreign policy, it became clear that France is pursuing an assertive "double-track" foreign course. France supports the U.S. in vigorous resistance to Soviet expansionism. At the same time, France is seeking to open a dialogue with the Soviet Union and is widening its commercial ties with the USSR and its allies.

During our talks with Cheysson, Attali and Salzmann, Howard Friedman, AJCommittee president, expressed appreciation for France's championing the cause of individual Soviet Jewish refuseniks, but pressed France to become more vigorous in supporting the broader cause of Soviet Jewish emigration.

We got a commitment from these French officials that they would press the cause of Soviet Jewry in their widening dialogue with Soviet authorities.

Significantly, we were promised that the French Embassy in Moscow would become more actively involved in arranging direct contact with Soviet Jewish refuseniks as does the U.S. Embassy in Moscow.

### Role Of Israel In France's Foreign Policy

On the Mideast, France also follows a "double-track" policy. Mitterrand is portrayed as the foremost friend of Israel, noting that he has been to Israel 17 times, and is the first French President to make an official visit to the Jewish State. While Cheysson firmly stated that "Israel is the cornerstone of France's policy in the Middle East," he specializes in maintaining good relations with the Arab states and the PLO's Yasir Arafat.

Cheysson told us that while he has met with Arafat, he wanted us to know that it is French policy that Mitterrand will not receive Arafat until he recognizes Israel's legitimacy and gives up the PLO's campaign of terrorism.

Attali, the brilliant young Algerian Jew who is the closest foreign policy advisor to Mitterrand, told us: "The Arabs consider France — which has a long history of involvement in the Arab world — the only go-between them and Israel, even though they know we are completely with Israel." He added that France's relations with the Arab world would be "an asset to Israel and to Middle East peace."

French authorities said that was especially important now that the U.S. has lost credibility in the Arab world since withdrawing its military forces precipitously from Lebanon. (French troops began pulling out of Beirut today. The U.S., British and Italian troops in the multinational force pulled out last month after Moslem militiamen overran west Beirut.)

Salzmann said that "the change of mind among Arab leaders toward Israel during the past three years has been amazing. Moderate Arabs are ready to recognize and live in peace with Israel, provided certain things are done for the Palestinians."

Attali said "they know that Israel is a fact and part of their security. Arab countries know that they will not be able to live in a destroyed Middle East. The dream of a polyethnic Lebanon has become a nightmare for them. They are now moving in a good direction."

### France's Role In Africa

In Africa, France today is a major economic and political force and that, too, has implications for America and especially for Israel. There are now some 300,000 French people in 20 predominantly French-speaking countries in West and Central Africa.

The AJCommittee delegation said that Americans and American Jews feel strongly about the importance of reestablishing diplomatic relations between Israel and the African nations, and urged France to use its good offices to encourage that development. Attali and other foreign service officials indicated that they regarded this as an important issue and would pursue its implementation.

The AJCommittee leaders expressed their profound concern over the pattern of attacks on Israel and Jews at the United Nations, UNESCO and other international agencies. They pointed out that while the U.S. has courageously responded to these attacks, France and Western powers have generally sat by passively.

The delegation insisted that France must stand by the side of the U.S., together with other Western powers in combatting these vile incitements of anti-Semitism, anti-Zionism, and vulgar bigotry.