

**Back To The Drawing Board:
CONFLICT OVER RELIGIOUS PORTFOLIO
BLOCKS PRESENTATION OF UNITY GOV'T.
By David Landau**

JERUSALEM, Sept. 12 (JTA)—An intense conflict over the religious affairs portfolio in the new government prevented Premier-designate Shimon Peres from presenting his national unity government to the Knesset today, as had been scheduled. The 11th hour setback created the possibility that a narrow-based government would have to be established after all.

This development followed an entire night of backroom interparty negotiations involving Labor, Likud and the two religious parties, Shas and the National Religious Party. Both of the religious parties, NRP with four Knesset seats and Shas with four seats, insist that for them the religious portfolio is "ultimate." The problem is that Labor pledged its support to the NRP on this issue while Likud—especially Ariel Sharon—pledged its support to Shas.

The drama came to a head during the night when Yosef Burg of the NRP informed Peres that his party would be prepared to join a narrow-based government if Likud adhered to its position on the religious post. The NRP has traditionally held the Religious Affairs Ministry. Shas, a recently formed rightwing religious party, claims that it should have that portfolio because it lacks parliamentary experience to hold any other post.

Background Of Dramatic Turnabout

The dramatic turnabout in events followed Sharon's stern declaration on television last night that Likud must stick to its commitment to Shas even if this delayed the creation of a unity government. Sharon also insisted that a delay was necessary, citing unresolved disputes with Labor over Jewish settlements in the administered territories and over peace terms for talks with Jordan.

Political observers saw Sharon's insistent loyalty to Shas as another attempt by the controversial former Defense Minister to weaken Shamir, with a view toward ultimately winning the leadership of Herut. This view was given credence, following Sharon's, and that of Deputy Premier David Levy's opposition to Shamir's recommended slate of Herut ministers in the unity government during a stormy meeting of the Herut Central Committee last night.

Sharon's opposition to the slate, which was approved nevertheless, was sparked by the fact that Shamir failed to restore Herut secretariat chairman Yoram Aridor to the ministerial rank of Finance Minister, a post he resigned last October. Sharon, incensed over this decision, mounted the rostrum to urge a secret vote in the name of democracy. He demanded that all Herut ministers, except Shamir, should be accepted by secret ballot.

Sharon was supported by Levy, but opposed by Shamir, Defense Minister Moshe Arens and MK Ronnie Milo. Sharon's challenge, boasted by Levy, was seen as a direct—and unexpected—challenge to Shamir's authority.

In his television appearance later at night, Sharon insisted, as he had at the Herut Central

Committee meeting, that if the outstanding issues between Likud and Labor were not resolved to Likud's satisfaction, the presentation of the unity government to the Knesset for approval should be postponed for a few days, even into next week.

Sharon insisted that several settlements in central Samaria decided on by the outgoing government must be endorsed by the incoming unity government and built during the coming year, "not like Shimon Peres says." This latter reference was apparently to Peres' recent public assertions that the building of future settlements will be circumscribed.

Time Is Of The Essence

The suggestion by Sharon that a unity government could be postponed for a few days jarred Laborites, since Peres' second 21-day mandate to form a government ends Sunday. Should he fail by then, President Chaim Herzog would assign that task to someone else. However, Labor is determined to prevent this.

In effect, this means that tomorrow is Peres' last chance to present a government (since the Knesset rarely meets on Friday or Sunday).

And this time—unlike at earlier stages of the six-week negotiations—Labor finds itself obtaining the crucial and pivotal support of the NRP. The NRP leaders told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today they would not countenance a postponement into next week but would give their votes to a Labor-led government if this was what had to be presented to the Knesset tomorrow. "We still want unity," the NRP leaders said, "but we see the religious ministry as vital."

The NRP argues that Shas, heavily influenced by Aguda Sage Rabbi Eliezer Schach, is a non-Zionist party and thus should not be entrusted with the Religious Ministry, the embodiment of religious-Zionism.

Possibility Of A Labor Majority

Aharon Abu Hatzzeira, leader of Tami and its sole Knesset member, indicated today that if the NRP swung behind Labor he might do so too. And in Labor, there were also hopes of winning over Mar'asha, with two Knesset seats. If these developments materialize, Labor could be assured of a majority in the 120-member parliament, given the additional likelihood that the evolving Mapam-Citizens Rights Movement-Yossi Sarid bloc with a total of 10 seats, and the four Communist and two Progressive List for Peace MKs would not vote with Likud against Labor in the new government.

HILLEL ELECTED NEW KNESSET SPEAKER

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Sept. 12 (JTA)—Shlomo Hillel, a veteran Labor Knesset member, was today elected Speaker of the 11th Knesset by a vote of 60-45. He was supported by the entire Labor camp—Shinui, Yahad, Citizens Rights Movement plus the National Religious Party and the Progressive List for Peace. His opponent, Likud's Meir Cohen-Avidon, secured only his own party's support and that of Shas and Kach. Tehiya and the Communist Party abstained. Till the last moment, Likud was casting about for a

more popular candidate. They proposed NRP's Zevulun Hammer -- but this aroused opposition from Ariel Sharon on the grounds that Hammer had been hostile to him in the aftermath of the Sabra and Shatila massacres. Tehiya, too, said it would not back Hammer.

The plenary vote was postponed twice while Likud conducted frantic last-minute maneuvers. But eventually the Knesset was called to order by acting Speaker Abba Eban -- and Hillel coasted home.

In his first address from the Speaker's seat, Hillel stressed the need to protect democracy from "marginal but strident threats within" and the need to preserve and enhance the dignity and prestige of the Knesset itself. He appealed in this respect "to educators and to the media."

Hillel plainly benefitted from the ongoing behind-the-scenes maneuvering concerning the formation of a government: NRP's support for him was a clear signal from that party that it was ready to throw in its lot with Labor unless Likud relented over the Religions Ministry.

IDF SOLDIER DIES OF HIS WOUNDS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Sept. 12 (JTA) -- An Israel Defense Force reserve Lt. Col., Yair Zinner, 30, who was wounded in South Lebanon two days ago died of his wounds today. Israel Radio said his death brought IDF casualties in Lebanon since the war began in June, 1982, to 594 dead and nearly 4,000 wounded. Zinner of Rishon Le Zion was wounded when the jeep in which he was travelling hit a mine.

In other developments, an IDF patrol last night wounded a resident of a Shiite village near Tyre when they opened fire on a group of men who failed to halt when ordered to do so. The men, reportedly acting in a suspicious manner, were discovered during a routine patrol through the narrow streets of the village.

Light arms fire was directed at a South Lebanon Army patrol in Jabba village north of Nabatiya yesterday, but there were no casualties. It was the third such attack in the past 48 hours.

WEST BANK COMMUNIST OFFICIAL PLACED UNDER HOUSE ARREST

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 12 (JTA) -- George Hazboun, a leader of the Communist Party in the West Bank, was restricted Monday to his home town in Bethlehem for a period of six months. Hazboun was told that the reason for the action was his membership in a "secret organization."

Formerly Deputy Mayor of Bethlehem, Hazboun now serves as Deputy President of the Executive Committee of the Vocational Unions in the West Bank, a position regarded as highly influential politically in the absence of political parties in the West Bank.

Several weeks ago, Shmuel Goren, government coordinator of affairs in the administered territories, said action would be taken against political figures in the territories who were trying to revive nationalist bodies such as the now outlawed National Guidance Committee, which was the most influential and senior nationalist Palestinian body in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Although the atmosphere in the territories has been unusually quiet for several months, there is tense anticipation of political unrest toward the

beginning of next week, the second anniversary of the Sabra and Shatila massacres.

EGYPT REFUSES TO DISAVOW CAMP DAVID

JERUSALEM, Sept. 12 (JTA) -- Egypt has refused to associate itself with a final communique issued yesterday by non-aligned states which denounced the Israeli-Egyptian Camp David peace accords and Israeli and American "provocations" off the coast of Libya, according to reports received here from Valletta, Malta, where the two-day conference was held.

A senior Egyptian delegate also rejected an amendment submitted by Syria, declaring that the attending Ministers "highly appreciated" the nullification of the 1983 Lebanon-Israel agreement and "condemned all similar agreements conducive to partial or separate solutions" to the Middle East "crisis." President Amin Gemayel of Lebanon dropped the accord under Syrian pressures.

Nine Mediterranean countries and the PLO attended the meeting, at which the amendment was approved by the other delegations.

The final communique called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories and self-determination for the Palestinian Arabs and declared that Israel "had intensified its expansionist and aggressive policies" since the Camp David agreement.

THATCHER GIVES TWO JEWS

SENIOR POLITICAL APPOINTMENTS

By Maurice Samuelson

LONDON, Sept. 12 (JTA) -- Two British Jews, David Young and Stanley Clinton Davis, have been given senior political appointments by Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher.

Young, a 52-year-old lawyer, has been made a Cabinet minister with responsibility for tackling unemployment, regarded as the country's main economic and political problem. Young, who is not a member of Parliament, will become a member of the House of Lords. He has spent the past three years as head of the Manpower Services Commission, the country's main job creation agency.

Previously, he was deeply involved in Jewish communal work as chairman of British ORT. His 50-year-old brother, Stuart, former treasurer of the Joint Israel Appeal, is chairman of the British Broadcasting Corporation. Both were born in Finchley, Thatcher's North London constituency.

Young, whose official title will be Minister-Without-Portfolio, will be the fourth British Jew in Thatcher's Cabinet. The others, who are on the periphery of the community, are Sir Keith Joseph, Education Secretary; Nigel Lawson, Chancellor of the Exchequer; and Leon Brittan, Home Secretary.

All share Thatcher's views about the need to revive the British economy by enlarging the private sector and limiting the public sector.

The Prime Minister also nominated Davis, a 55-year-old lawyer who was a junior trade minister in the last Labor government, as one of the two British members of the Commission of the European Economic Community.

A member of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, Davis has long been an active supporter of the Labor Zionist movement. He lost his Parliamentary seat during the 1983 general election due to the elimination of his North London constituency in boundary changes.

SPECIAL TO THE JTA IT'S TIME FOR 'MAMME LOSHEN'

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Sept. 12 (JTA) -- A Tunisian-born Jew, whose native language was Arabic and for whom Yiddish was as familiar as Eskimoan to an Orthodox Jew, has become mad about the language.

Benny Cohen, a Paris engineering consultant, has published a French-Yiddish dictionary and is now trying to market an audio-oral teaching method which consists of two thick books and 25 recorded tapes, which teach not only the language but also Yiddish songs, literature and even jokes, in short, "everything you want or you should know about the language of your forefathers," he said in an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Cohen, 35, is determined that something must be done to save the language from extinction before it is too late and said that "if the Ashkenazim will not do it, I shall, even if I must do it single-handed." Cohen was struck with this idea, his family says this obsession, after he saw the TV film "Holocaust."

"Seeing the Nazis burn Yiddish books made me realize how important it was to save the language," he said. "As I started to look around, it seemed to me that the Nazis had partially won: fewer and fewer people spoke Yiddish or even seemed to care about what will happen to it. The sons of first-generation immigrants from Poland or Lithuania, whose parents used to speak Yiddish at home, had become so assimilated that they had not only forgotten the language but moreover did not care."

Started Three Years Ago

Cohen, who heads a prosperous engineering consultancy firm, started on his Yiddish career three years ago with the publication of 2,000 copies of the first Yiddish-French dictionary, "Two meshugene Yiddien," and Cohen smiles, delighted to have used the Yiddish words, "had written the dictionary but not a single Jewish institution, no communal organization, simply no one wanted to publish it. They had heard that I was just as meshuge as they were about Yiddish and came to see me."

Cohen had the manuscript checked at the Sorbonne University Yiddish Department. They found it near perfect. A few months later, the book was out although Cohen knew then already that he could not hope to sell more than a few hundred copies at the most.

Sought Best Experts In The Field

The dictionary's relative commercial failure served to convince Cohen that more Jews have to learn Yiddish before they can hope to use a dictionary. He looked around for the best experts in the field: a professor from the University of Buenos Aires, a woman who teaches Yiddish at the Sorbonne, as well as photographers and illustrators.

The result was a method which consists of 25 recorded tapes, two textbooks of about 300 pages each and six slides per lesson. The method, adapted to English, Spanish and Hebrew besides its original French, takes two years to learn "if everything goes alright" but is practically certain to turn an average student into a fluent Yiddishist who would not only know the language but also be able to sing a song or two and even crack a "witz" when necessary. The method, which sells in the U.S. for \$235, does obviously not guarantee a Yiddish "neshume" nor a Sholem Aleichem-like wit.

Since his method has come out, Cohen has become a sort of pilgrim, taking it and trying to sell it wherever "people should speak Yiddish."

The French Chief Rabbi, Rene Sirat, a North African-born Jew, has given his blessing, and Simone Veil has written back to say that "the renaissance of Yiddish is a victory over the attempt to destroy Jews." But neither of them has taken advantage to learn the language.

In the U.S., dozens of personalities have written to Cohen congratulating him for his efforts. Paradoxically, however, the only people who have agreed to act as unpaid agents there are, according to Cohen, Moroccan-born Sheila Nash who wants to learn Yiddish so she can share in her husband's East European heritage, and Tunisian-born Moishe Cohen "who got the virus in his turn." Nash resides in New York City and Cohen in Miami.

Benny Cohen says in spite of all the "tzuris" in getting his work greater visibility and distributed he is more determined than ever in his quest to have Jews relearn Yiddish.

HISTORIC MISSION COMBINES TWO 'FIRSTS'

NEW YORK, Sept. 12 (JTA) -- For the first time in Jerusalem's history, a section of that city will be named for an American. On Sunday, September 16, a portion of suburban Gilo will become Kiryat Jack Weiler. "The dedication of Kiryat Weiler is historic: Never before in Jerusalem has an American been so honored by the City of Jerusalem," said Teddy Kollek, the city's mayor.

This dedication is part of a visit of 120 American Jewish leaders to Spain and Israel. It is the largest group of American Jewish leaders to visit Spain, a country that has no formal diplomatic ties with Israel. The mission is organized by the UJA-Federation Campaign of Greater New York.

Weiler, a New York real-estate man and philanthropist, has spent the past 40 years in service to Jews throughout the world. During this time, he has shied away from general publicity and permanent recognition of his work. Now that he has turned 80, he is permitting his leadership to be publicly recognized.

The section of Jerusalem that will become Kiryat Weiler currently houses 3,000 people and covers 64.5 acres. Its population is expected to increase to 5,000. Kiryat Weiler is nestled in the southern ridges of Jerusalem and is part of the suburb Gilo. The ceremony will be attended by Kollek and officials of the Israeli government, as well as by the American Jewish leaders.

During the visit in Spain, the American group hopes to strengthen ties with the Spanish Jewish community and encourage relations between Israel and Spain. Spain's Jewish population now numbers 12,000; it has been estimated to have been as high as 400,000 in medieval Spain. This mission, the Rosenwald Invitational Mission III, is named for William Rosenwald, one of the three founders of the United Jewish Appeal.

TEL AVIV (JTA) -- Just under half of the public -- 48.4 percent -- think the members of the Jewish underground in prison awaiting trial should receive "normal" treatment in their detention, but 38.5 percent believe their treatment should be preferential and better than that accorded other prisoners. Just under 10 percent thought they should receive harsher treatment, according to a public opinion poll by the Modi'in Ezrachi Organization.

SPECIAL INTERVIEW FIGHT CONTINUES FOR THE RIGHTS OF SOVIET JEWS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Sept. 12 (JTA) — Lynn Singer ended three years as president of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews (UCSJ) yesterday asserting that she was "not discouraged" but "angrier" about the Soviet clampdown of Jewish emigration and the increasing anti-Semitism and harassment of Jews in the USSR.

"We are watching a regression in Soviet behavior that is approaching a reStalinization," she said in an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency during the UCSJ's annual meeting at the Capital Hilton Hotel here.

Singer of East Meadow, Long Island, blamed the deteriorating situation for Soviet Jews on "lack of specific leadership" in the Soviet Union. This situation has reflected down to the lower levels of leadership who struck out against the weakest target, the Jewish community, she said.

But Singer also believes that the situation may also be a result of the "lack of discussion" between the United States and the Soviet Union.

The UCSJ has always sought to make the U.S. government aware of the abuses against Jews carried out by the Soviet government. Singer will continue as liaison to the government as well as chairperson of the UCSJ's advisory board and as a member of the Secretariat of the International Parliamentary Group of Human Rights in the Soviet Union which seeks to get other Western countries to join in with the U.S. on behalf of Soviet Jews.

UCSJ Members Shocked By Report

Singer shocked UCSJ members attending the meeting from across the country when she revealed that the latest tactic of the Soviet government is to claim that American tourists are bringing opium and other drugs to the USSR for Jews to "sniff on Shabbat."

She received a promise from Elliott Abrams, Assistant Secretary of State for Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs, who was present, that he would disclose this to Secretary of State George Shultz so that he can bring it up when he meets with Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei Gromyko at the United Nations in New York September 26.

Singer told the JTA that she hopes that whoever is elected President, the U.S. government will continue to raise these human rights issues with the Soviet Union.

The latest canard is part of the Soviet Union's continuing effort to frighten Jews and other Soviet citizens from meeting with tourists, Singer said. "We know that Soviet Jews want to meet with Westerners, Jews and non-Jews," she stressed.

Singer said that the UCSJ will continue to encourage Americans to visit the Soviet Union and meet with Jews there. But she stressed that they should go there informed and suggested one way of doing it is read some of the books by American journalists who have worked in Moscow. "No one should go to the Soviet Union with blinders on," she said.

"Even now, when we all know of the grave situation facing our movement, grassroots advocacy is still our best weapon in the struggle with repression and anti-Semitism," Singer said in her address to the UCSJ meeting.

"Our councils and members have undertaken campaigns on behalf of key refuseniks and against the frightening destruction of Jewish identity attempted by the Kremlin. We have prevented show trials and awakened the conscience of individuals and governments. While much remains to be done, let us remember that our work has made possible the survival of two-and-a-half million Jews. It is an accomplishment that proves the value of what individuals can achieve in defending human freedom."

Singer rejected the view in some quarters that American Jewry's support for the Soviet Union Jewish movement has slackened. She proudly told the JTA that the UCSJ has grown from a half dozen councils 15 years ago to "twice that," 36 councils now and to more than 50,000 individual members.

The UCSJ's goal of "freedom of Soviet Jews" will still be a long struggle, Singer acknowledged. She said as the Soviets become harsher they seek to satisfy the West with "a little," allowing one family to emigrate or giving someone a lesser sentence. "We are not satisfied with little," she declared.

Singer said the UCSJ will continue to work for the "repatriation" of all Jews who want to go to Israel, the reunification of families and eventually free emigration.

Singer was succeeded as president by Morey Schapira, of San Francisco, head of the Bay Area Council for Soviet Jews. Schapira, like Singer, has been an activist with the UCSJ since its founding.

REAGAN'S ROSH HASHANAH MESSAGE

WASHINGTON, Sept. 12 (JTA) — The following is President Reagan's Rosh Hashanah message:

The year 5745 of the Jewish calendar is about to be ushered in with the soul-stirring blast of the shofar. And while the ram's horn is traditionally meant to summon Jews to prayer and reflection, its message echoes beyond the walls of Jewish places of worship and affects others as well.

Nancy and I hear its call and are reminded by it that so much in our American heritage is drawn from the religious values enunciated during the Jewish High Holy Days. The liturgy of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur emphasizes both the moral obligations men have to their Maker and the ethical responsibilities we owe to our fellows.

Fundamentally, America stands for the same principles. Indeed, these values have been derived in large part from the Jewish tradition which is thereby inextricably linked to our American spiritual heritage.

The ties between the Jewish and American traditions run deep and are related in no small way to the special relationship that exists between the United States and Israel — a relationship based on the common spiritual and ethical values encompassed in the shofar's call to prayer.

At this time of introspection and renewal, we extend our very best wishes that your prayers will be fulfilled. We share your hopes that during the coming year world understanding and peace will triumph over prejudice and violence so that we may say with the Prophet Isaiah, "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall men learn war anymore."