



**On The Eve Of The Labor Party Convention:
PLATFORM PLANKS ON RELIGIOUS
ISSUES ARE DRASTICALLY TONED DOWN**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 8 (JTA) -- With a coalition crisis looming which could dissolve the Labor-Likud unity government and force Labor to seek alliances with the religious factions in order to continue to govern, the Party -- on the eve of its convention, opening in Jerusalem Tuesday night -- has drastically toned down platform planks calling for religious pluralism in Israel and repeal of religious-inspired measures many Israelis consider oppressive. (Related coalition crisis story, P.2.)

The revision of the platform on the issue of the State and religion was forced by Premier Shimon Peres who reportedly asked members of the subcommittee who drafted it, "Do you want to stick to your principles and sit in the opposition? Or would you rather phrase your principles in general terms and stay in the government?"

The original draft, reflecting the Labor Party stance when it was in the opposition, was defeated by a 44-27 vote in the convention preparations committee.

One article angrily rejected by Peres because it would alienate the Orthodox factions stated that "The Labor Party regards all the trends in Judaism as of equal standing" and would resort "if necessary to legislation" to uphold that principle.

Deletions From Original Draft

The revised version merely states that the Party would act to strengthen the unity of the Jewish people "through recognition of the religious pluralism" in Judaism. There is no mention of legislation.

Another article expunged from the draft pledged the party to act "if necessary through legislation" to solve problems of a personal nature which are under the jurisdiction of religious courts. Instead, the platform says the Labor Party will abide by the status quo regarding the authority of the religious courts on marital law.

Also deleted from the original draft are articles that called for reversal of measures introduced during the tenure of the ninth Knesset -- the Likud administration of Premier Menachem Begin.

These included the abolition of national service for religious young women; abrogation of abortion rights; and severe restrictions on autopsies. In addition, the new draft platform omits past Labor commitments to allow rabbis "of all trends" to register marriages.

Liberal circles in the party believe that apart from fudging on principles, Peres' position is simply wrong in political terms. According to Haim Zadok, chairman of the platform subcommittee, when it comes to coalition negotiations with the religious parties, the wording of the platform is irrelevant. Other Laborites pointed to recent public opinion polls which showed wide support among the electorate for easing restrictive measures imposed by the religious establishment.

**BLACK-JEWISH COALITION IS A
'TWO-WAY STREET,' BLACK LAWMAKER SAYS**
By Judith Kohn

WASHINGTON, April 8 (JTA) -- A coalition is "a two-way street," and the Jewish-Black coalition in America can be bolstered through increased support from American Jews on issues important to the Black community.

This was the message of Mickey Leland (D. Texas), chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, who addressed the 27th Annual Public Policy Conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC) Monday. He spoke at a luncheon dedicated to the theme of building coalitions.

"I don't help Israel because I want you to help us. I would help Israel whether you help me or not," Leland said, stressing that his appeal was not a question of "quid pro quo."

Recalling the active role played by many Jews in the civil rights movement of the 1960s, Leland urged greater Jewish input in the remaining battles that concern American Blacks. "I find it comforting to know that the majority of the Jewish members of Congress support us to the hilt on almost every social program that we fight for," he said.

But he called on Jewish individuals and groups to play a larger role, by contacting those members of Congress "who don't understand our plight necessarily, who don't have the empathy that you have for our plight."

Israel And South Africa

The former student militant who has visited Israel several times -- once touring on a bicycle -- and who sponsors a summer program there for Black and Hispanic American youth, also called on the Jewish State to end its dealings with South Africa.

"I'm not one who stands as a Black leader in this country to say that Israel ought to be condemned because it's doing business with South Africa," he said, adding that some African nations and the United States itself also maintain trade relations with that country. "But allow me to create the dialogue inside Israel that will bring about a campaign against apartheid."

Here at home, the foundations for a strong Black-Jewish coalition may well have been strengthened, Leland suggested, by the anti-Semitic "hate mongering" of the Black Muslim leader Louis Farrakhan, and the tensions it caused between the Black and Jewish communities.

"We can't be responsible for Minister Farrakhan any more than you can be responsible for Rabbi (Meir) Kahane," the extremist Jewish leader who emigrated to Israel from the U.S. But the positive outcome of the tensions over Farrakhan's emergence, he said, was that it reinvigorated a Black-Jewish dialogue that had remained dormant for many years.

Growing GOP Support For Israel

Also addressing the luncheon was Vin Weber (R. Minn.), Assistant Minority Whip for the Midwest States and a consistently pro-Israel leader

among the New Right. He maintained that support for Israel is no longer to be found exclusively in the Democratic liberal camp as was once the case.

"Within the Republican Party, there's always been some support, but mainly there's been opposition -- specifically, in aid to Israel," Weber observed, attributing this to the party's fiscal conservatism and the isolationist trend that used to characterize its orientation to foreign affairs.

But the pattern is changing, he stressed, as the party's deep concern for national security interests and the struggle against Communism leads it increasingly to realize the importance of supporting the Jewish State in every way. Weber noted that more and more legislators "from my side of the aisle" have also been "willing to oppose arms sales to states hostile to Israel's existence."

Weber said that despite differences on other issues close to the heart of many, particularly the evangelical, conservatives--such as school prayer -- the coalition for support of Israel must be broadened to take into account these new trends, focussing exclusively on "what can potentially unite us."

"The end result of all of this is a stronger coalition, not one that begins to shift away from liberals, but broadened to include more members of both parties," he concluded.

Prospect Of A New Coalition Crisis: PERES INTENDS TO FIRE MODAI

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 8 (JTA) -- The prospect of a new Labor-Likud coalition crisis escalated Tuesday when Premier Shimon Peres told the opening session of the Labor Party convention here that he intends to dismiss Finance Minister Yitzhak Modai.

He told the 3,000 delegates and visitors at the Binyanei Haooama, which included Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir and other Likud ministers among the invited guests, that he considers remarks by Modai in newspaper interviews over the weekend to have been a premeditated and unpardonable attack on government policy. As quoted by the press they were disparaging to the Premier personally.

Peres reportedly informed Shamir two days ago of his intention to fire Modai, a Likud Liberal, and Shamir retorted that if he did, the unity coalition which has governed Israel for 19 months would be dissolved. Under the coalition agreement, the Prime Minister of one party cannot dismiss a Minister of the other party without the consent of the other party's leader. Israeli law empowers the Premier to sack any Minister.

If Peres follows through with his threat he would be on firm legal ground but would have violated the coalition agreement. Shamir said in a radio interview Tuesday that there was indeed a crisis but he hoped it would eventually be resolved. Peres has indicated he will dismiss Modai at next Sunday's Cabinet session if Modai does not resign first, and has demanded that Likud support his decision.

Recalls An Earlier Warning

Modai declared categorically Monday night that he has no intention of quitting and Likud is backing him. Peres, in his speech to the convention, recalled the warning he delivered to the Cabinet last November after he was attacked

publicly by Minister of Commerce and Industry Ariel Sharon. Sharon issued an apology but Peres made it clear that uncollegial behavior by any Minister in the future would lead to his dismissal even if the coalition was endangered.

He said Modai had been warned over some foreign policy criticisms recently. He said his remarks published over the weekend were not a slip of the tongue but a deliberate attack on government policy. Economic recovery depends on a "real partnership ... mutual confidence ... and not the overweening pride of any individual," Peres said.

Modai was quoted as calling Peres "a flying Prime Minister," an implied criticism of his four-day visit to the U.S. last week and earlier trips abroad and trips planned in the future. He maintained that Peres had little to do with the successes of the economic austerity program.

5 INJURED IN BUS ATTACK

JERUSALEM, April 8 (JTA) -- Five persons were injured when a bus was attacked with an explosive device in Anatot, an Arab suburb within the Jerusalem city limits, Tuesday evening. The bus, an Egged No. 25, was enroute from the center of the city to Neve Yaacov, an outlying suburb.

Earlier Tuesday, a soldier was slightly injured by a bomb explosion in the center of Afula, the ninth terrorist bombing in that Jezreel Valley town in the past two months. The soldier was treated at a first aid station and sent home.

An explosive device detonated in the Haifa port area Tuesday causing no casualties or damage. It was the 10th blast in six months in the same area.

MORE DOCUMENTS ON WALDHEIM'S PAST

By Kevin Freeman

NEW YORK, April 8 (JTA) -- Documents released Monday by the World Jewish Congress have "a shattering effect" on assertions by Austrian Presidential candidate Kurt Waldheim that he had no knowledge of the war-time deportation of Greek Jews to Nazi concentration camps.

The documents, discovered in the National Archives in Washington, include two secret Nazi reports for the intelligence section of the high command of Army Group E. Evidence released by the WJC last week showed that Waldheim was an intelligence officer of senior rank in this section, giving morning and evening briefings to the Chief of the General Staff of Army Group E.

The WJC, in releasing the documents, noted that Waldheim, the United Nations Secretary General from 1972-1981, had written in a letter to WJC president Edgard Bronfman March 7 that he had "never been informed" about the deportation of Greek Jews.

Documents 'Belle His Claim Of Ignorance'

"The discovery of these documents has a shattering effect on Waldheim's assertions," the WJC said. "They belie his claim of ignorance of Jewish deportations by demonstrating that reports on the deportations were specifically directed to his very intelligence department."

The first document, dated July 15, 1944, contains a paragraph with an underlined heading, "deportation of Jews." Referring to the islands of Rhodes and Crete in Greece, the document speaks

of the "deportation of Jews of non-Turkish nationality from all areas under the command," by the end of July 1944.

The second document, dated August 11, 1944, refers to the same regions of Greece. It notes that "the evacuation of the Jews from the area under command" was received by the local Greeks and Italians there "with mixed feelings."

The report added that "in some cases the Germans were characterized as barbarians" by the Italians and Greeks.

Waldheim has vehemently denied the allegations of his past war-time activities. He has also denied WJC charges based on documents, that he had joined Nazi groups, or that he was cited for merit, as other documents allege, in the 1942 campaign that has come to be known as the Kozara massacres of thousands of Yugoslavs.

AIPAC OFFICIAL ASSERTS THAT U.S.-ISRAELI RELATIONS HAVE ENTERED A 'REVOLUTIONARY ERA'

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, April 8 (JTA) -- Thomas Dine, executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, declared Sunday night that relations between the United States and Israel are now "excellent" and have entered a "revolutionary era."

Israel is no longer treated as a "hindrance" to U.S. relations with the Arabs, but as "an ally, not just a friend, an asset rather than a liability, a mature and capable partner, not some vassal state," Dine told the same 2,000 persons attending AIPAC's 27th annual policy conference at the Washington Hilton Hotel.

He said this "revolution has only just begun" and this is why AIPAC decided not to oppose President Reagan's proposal to sell \$354 million in missiles to Saudi Arabia although AIPAC had successfully opposed proposed arms sales to Jordan and the Saudis last year. "This package to Saudi Arabia involves a variety of missiles about which we are of course not particularly happy, and our very strong instinct was to fight it, especially because of Saudi Arabia's abominable record," Dine said.

Consensus Not To Confront The Administration

But he said in evaluating the proposal, "We found that there was a consensus among defense experts associated with all factions and all schools of thought that this particular package would have questionable impact on the security of Israel."

Dine said there was a "remarkable consensus" among major American Jewish organizations, including the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, not to "confront the Administration's policy in this particular case." Kenneth Bialkin, Presidents Conference chairman, who spoke earlier in the day, also stressed his support of this policy.

"We are an activist organization, and deciding not to fight does not come easily to us," Dine said. "But I believe we are obliged to act not out of impulse, but out of a careful assessment of all the factors in the situation."

Dine added that "no army should allow itself to be drawn into battles that are outside its vital interests, and no army should fight when the costs of war are greater than any possible gains from victory." In describing the revolutionary era

of U.S.-Israeli relations, Dine said it included strategic cooperation, economics and diplomacy.

New Constituency of Support For Israel

"In the process, a whole new constituency of support for Israel is being built in precisely the area where we are weakest—among government officials in the State, Defense and Treasury departments, in the CIA, in science, trade, agriculture and other agencies," Dine noted.

"These are the people responsible for proposing policy and for implementing it. In a crisis these anonymous officials will play a vital role. And they are now learning, through personal experience, the value of Israel to the United States."

Dine quoted Secretary of State George Shultz as saying that strategic cooperation is designed "to build institutional arrangements so that eight years from now, if there is a Secretary of State who is not positive about Israel, he will not be able to overcome the bureaucratic relationship between Israel and the U.S. that we have established."

The theme of the three-day conference is "People Make the Difference in Policy and Politics" and AIPAC president Robert Asher warned against complacency. He noted that complacency and lethargy allowed two followers of extremist Lyndon LaRouche to win the nominations in the Democratic primaries in his home state of Illinois.

Need No Apology For Advocacy Of Israel

Bialkin stressed that the lobbying that AIPAC and its members do is in the American tradition. "As Americans we offer no apology, only pride, in our advocacy of Israel's welfare," he said.

To those who complain about the influence of the Jewish community, Bialkin urged them to enter the public debate. "Come in and argue with us and then we'll see whose arguments obtain the greatest influence with the American people and the American public and I'm sure we'll not come in second," he said.

Bialkin also said that he was pleased that some 500 college students were attending the AIPAC conference. He said this should be an answer to "those who worry about the future of our people."

ARTUKOVIC TO GO ON TRIAL IN ZAGREB

PARIS, April 8 (JTA) -- Andrija Artukovic, the alleged Nazi war criminal extradited to Yugoslavia from the U.S. in February, will go on trial in Zagreb next Monday, it was announced Tuesday in Belgrade. Artukovic, 86, is accused of murdering thousands of Serbs, Jews, Gypsies and others when he was Interior Minister of the Nazi puppet state of Croatia during World War II. His trial is expected to last until the end of the month.

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PHILADELPHIA (JTA) -- A Tax Court judge here has ruled that a Rabbi cannot deduct the costs of his son's Bar Mitzvah reception as a business expense even though the entire congregation was invited.

The Judge ruled that Rabbi Arnold Feldman's \$4,096 in reception costs were not deductible because the Bar Mitzvah was a personal celebration unrelated to the conduct of his profession.

PESACH'KE BURSTEIN DEAD AT 89

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, April 8 (JTA) -- Services were held here Tuesday for Pesach'ke Burstein, a giant of the Yiddish theater who died Sunday at Lenox Hill Hospital, following a short illness. He would have been 90 years old on April 15.

Known throughout the world as the "Vilner Komiker," Burstein, together with his wife, Lillian Lux, played to packed houses in America, Canada, Israel, throughout South America, as well as South Africa and Europe. They had their own theater companies in Buenos Aires and in Israel. They were married in 1940 in Uruguay, but had been partners in the theater since 1938.

"I don't think there is a Yiddish actor alive (except, maybe, in Rumania) who did not star with or play with him," Lux told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Burstein was born in Warsaw in 1896 to Mordechai Burstein and the former Rivka Stollak. He arrived, prophetically, "erev Pesach," his name already chosen, as his mother was washing the floor for the holiday. His father promptly put the two of them to bed. ("As his mother washed the floor, Pesach fell out," said Lux.)

The Beginning Of A Career

At the age of five, Pesach and his family moved to Berdiansk, a town in the Crimea. He became a singer in the synagogue choir. At the age of 14, Burstein ran away from his religious home, joining a wandering Yiddish theater.

Following inauspicious box office receipts, Burstein wrote to his father, asking him for money to come home. His father wired him 50 Rubles, but the company manager intercepted the money without telling Burstein about it. Using the funds to continue on their way, Burstein sadly traveled on with the troupe. He never saw his father again.

He saw his mother one more time, in Warsaw, where he was wanted for conscription by the Polish army during World War I. His mother brought money to take him to a doctor, where he was given a powder that made him anemic for 24 hours, enough for him to fail the physical. Following the "cure," Burstein and his acting colleagues continued on their way to the Yiddish centers of Eastern Europe, where he was becoming a matinee idol.

Once more he found himself in deep trouble, as the sundry armies passed through the same territory every few weeks. On a return to Warsaw, his sisters rented a room for him. Unbeknownst to them, the same lodgings had just been occupied by a Russian soldier away without leave. Burstein, of course, was arrested as the soldier. On his person, not yet found, was a bogus Russian passport his mother had bought him.

Sending the building janitor the few blocks to his sisters' apartment to alert them to his arrest, Burstein "accompanied" the Russian soldiers to their headquarters. Feigning cramps, he ran to the bathroom, where he destroyed the passport, which ironically, says Lux, would have saved him from further trouble.

Burstein told the officers the truth, explaining his life story in the various languages he knew. The Russians looked at each other and decided he was a spy, finding it otherwise incomprehensible that he could speak so many languages. They immediately beat him up, dragged

him to the train station, and shipped him off to the front. There, he was befriended by a young Pole, and they escaped together, jumping out the window and made their way to Warsaw.

A Success On Broadway

Having survived the war, his fame increased, and in 1923 the legendary Yiddish actor-producer Boris Thomashevsky sent for him, bringing him directly to Broadway. It was Thomashevsky who dubbed him "Pesach'ke." Burstein played the Nora Hayes Theatre upstairs with fabled Yiddish actor Rudolph Schildkraut, while Al Jolson played the downstairs theater.

During his very first appearance, says Lux, the manager of the foreign-language department of Columbia Records was in the audience. The man came backstage and made an appointment for the multi-talented Burstein for the very next day, when he signed him to a 20-year contract. During those 20 years, Burstein recorded 300 songs for the company. He recorded "Sonny Boy" in Yiddish on the same day as Jolson, using the same studio and the same orchestra.

Besides being a song-and-dance man, Burstein also wrote "couplets" -- as a "cupletiste" he wrote songs himself and performed. And he was outstanding in comic roles. In 1927, he became a member of the Yiddish Actors' Union.

In the years following his performances for Thomashevsky, Burstein founded his own theatrical companies in the Brownsville section of Brooklyn, and The Bronx, both thriving centers of Yiddish life and theater. His credits included the Hopkinson, Liberty, McKinley and Prospect theaters. Between 1928-29, Burstein played Philadelphia.

In 1945, Lux gave birth to twins, Michael and Susan, who grew up in the theater. Susan continued acting until her marriage. Mike Burstyn (his theatrical name) went on to become an internationally known stage and screen actor, playing "Kuni Leml" in Israeli films and performing throughout the world in eight languages, including a three-year stint on Dutch television, where his parents performed several times.

The Bursteins emigrated to Israel in 1954, where they kept their home base for 20 years. Dual citizens, they always moved between the twin poles of Tel Aviv and New York, continuing their international appearances. On Burstein's 80th birthday, celebrations were held at the Mann Auditorium in Tel Aviv.

In Europe, Burstein was known as the Jewish Maurice Chevalier. At a meeting between the two of them, they exchanged canes. Until he died Burstein used the silver cane with "M.C." engraved that he received from Chevalier.

Burstein remained active till the end. Only last week, he was scheduled to appear as a presenter at the Goldy Awards, of which he had been a recipient last year. It was on that day that he was taken to the hospital. His son Mike acted as master of ceremonies for the first half of the program and then left for the hospital amid the hearty well wishes of his colleagues.

He had been due to give a concert April 22, "erev Pesach," at the Hebrew Home for the Aged in The Bronx. Last Friday, he was notified that he was to receive the Manger Prize in Israel in June, a prize established following the fame given the play "The Megillah of Itzik Manger" which Burstein and his family made famous the world over wherever Yiddish theater lovers are.