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**CABINET STUDIES TRAFFIC ACCIDENTS; DEATHS EXCEED RECORD PACE OF 1986**  
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, July 19 (JTA) -- The Cabinet devoted much of its weekly session Sunday to traffic accidents, which have taken a higher toll in lives and injuries this year than in the same period last year, the worst on record.

The issue is hardly political, but it is national in scope. The Cabinet discussion was led by Supreme Court Justice Dov Levin, who appeared before the Ministers in his capacity as head of the National Council for the Prevention of Road Accidents. He recited grim statistics.

In 1986, 415 people died in highway accidents and more than 21,000 were injured, 331 seriously. In the first six months of 1987, the highway death toll was 207, compared to 191 in the same period last year. About 1,873 people were injured, 200 more than in the same period of 1986.

In the first two weeks of July, 35 people were killed in 24 accidents and 131 were injured in 104 accidents. Only last week, 19 people died on the highways and 64 were seriously injured.

Levin said the situation must be dealt with by better driver training and strict enforcement of traffic regulations.

He suggested that highway safety be made a main subject in next year's school curriculum and that more police be assigned to deal with traffic.

Whoever does not know how to behave on the roads should not have the right to drive, Levin said.

In response, Premier Yitzhak Shamir decided to assign the problem to a ministerial committee on traffic safety which is to complete its deliberations within a month. Transport Minister Haim Corfu presented a five-year plan to improve highway transportation.

It would cost \$450 million. He asked for 25 million Shekels this year to repair dangerous roads.

Corfu said his ministry proposed to add 142 traffic policemen and to create a border traffic police force. He also suggested a special road program for drivers which would be on the air 24 hours a day.

**YUGOSLAVIA, HUNGARY CLOSER TO RENEWED TIES WITH ISRAEL, WJC LEADER REPORTS**  
By Margie Olster

NEW YORK, July 19 (JTA) -- Yugoslavia and Hungary have moved closer to renewing diplomatic ties with Israel, according to World Jewish Congress president Edgar Bronfman, who recently returned from meeting with the two East European nations' leaders.

During meetings with Bronfman July 14-15, Yugoslav President Lazar Mojsov and Foreign Minister Raif Dizdarevic said the country is considering renewing ties with Israel, reported Elan Steinberg, WJC executive director. Although Mojsov did not say a renewal of the ties broken in 1967 was imminent, Steinberg noted that Yugoslavia has begun to normalize relations with Israel and the world Jewish community.

Bronfman's visit received wide press coverage within Yugoslavia, which Steinberg saw as a significant positive sign in a Communist country. The warm reception was attributed in part to the enhanced image of Jews and Israel following revelations that Austrian President Kurt Waldheim ordered reprisals against both Yugoslav partisans and Jews while he served as an intelligence officer in German Army Group E during World War II.

Yugoslavia, a leader among non-aligned countries, has shown signs of reevaluating its longstanding pro-Arab policy in the Middle East, Steinberg said. Within the past four months, the Yugoslav press and parliament have openly criticized the one-sided Middle East policy.

Economic and commercial exchanges between Israel and Yugoslavia have also increased in recent months. Internally, Yugoslavia's tiny Jewish community of about 6,000 enjoys internal freedoms to cultivate religious and cultural life as well as relatively free emigration.

In Hungary, Bronfman met with Janos Kadar, the Communist Party Chief and leader of Hungary, and other top officials.

Bronfman reported that Hungary and Israel have advanced considerably toward renewing ties, also broken in 1967, along the lines of Poland's low-level exchange of diplomatic representatives with Israel, which commenced last year. Israeli officials have already met with their Hungarian counterparts to work out a similar agreement, Steinberg said.

Referring to other recent developments in East Europe-Israel relations, Steinberg said the WJC viewed the emigration of four Soviet Jews last week directly via Bucharest, Rumania, to Israel as "a feather on the part of Moscow." The rare flight followed the arrival in Jerusalem of a delegation of three Soviet officials ostensibly to check up on Soviet nationals and properties in Israel.

**RABIN HALTS BULLDOZERS SENT BY SHARON FOR WEST BANK SETTLEMENT**  
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, July 19 (JTA) -- Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin used his authority Sunday to turn back a convoy of bulldozers sent to level ground for a new settlement in the West Bank.

His action marked the latest round in the continuing struggle between Labor and Likud over new settlements in the administered territories. The bulldozers were sent to the site of the planned settlement by Herut Minister of Commerce and Industry Ariel Sharon.

Although Sharon apparently acted on his own initiative, he was aiming for swift implementation of Premier Yitzhak Shamir's promise to the Te-hiya Party over the weekend to allocate 50 million Shekels to expand Jewish settlements in the territories.

Laborites promptly announced that not one cent would be spent for that purpose without their agreement. The settlement in question--Avnei Hefetz, near Kalkilya -- was one of six approved under the Labor-Likud coalition agreement. But Defense Ministry sources said the

ground-breaking could not proceed until the settlement agency provided proof that it owned the land. So far, the sources said, no evidence has been presented, and in any case, Sharon's ministry is not "a settlement agency."

Shamir made his promise to Tehiya after it served an ultimatum that it would join Labor in voting to dissolve the Knesset and call early elections unless its demands were met for rapid expansion of Jewish settlements.

Tehiya did not react immediately to Rabin's action. The party's central bodies were scheduled to meet later Sunday to evaluate the situation. Meanwhile, its position is "wait and see."

Hadashot reported Sunday that Labor intends to refer the issue of the settlements budget to the 10-man Inner Cabinet (five Labor and five Likud) where, it hopes, it will be buried until after the next elections.

Labor Party Secretary General Uzi Baram was quoted as saying Labor "will not allow even one bit to be added to the settlement budget." He noted that "according to the coalition agreement, the issue must be decided by the Inner Cabinet" which is the government's top policy-making body.

"If Likud says that the settlement budget has not yet been fully used, we say that the education and health budgets also have not been fully put into effect, since all government budgets have been cut," Baram said.

#### THATCHER, REAGAN AGREE MIDEAST PEACE CONFERENCE SHOULDN'T FORCE A SOLUTION

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, July 19 (JTA) -- President Reagan and British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher agreed during a White House meeting Friday that an international conference on the Middle East would not be permitted to impose a solution or veto agreements reached between Israel and the Arab countries.

The two also agreed that only direct negotiations could bring about a settlement to the Arab-Israel conflict, Thatcher said in her departure statement on the south lawn of the White House after the two-hour meeting.

Thatcher met with Reagan during her one-day visit here after discussing the possibility of an international conference recently with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and King Hussein of Jordan.

Reagan, in bidding farewell to Thatcher, spoke only in general terms, noting that the two had "reviewed the general prospects for peace in the Middle East, including the proposals for an international conference and the conditions necessary for peace negotiations to be successful."

Thatcher was more specific, stressing that she was describing what the two had "formally endorsed."

"We agreed that direct negotiations between the parties are the only practical way to proceed," Thatcher explained. "We explored how an international conference might contribute to bring about such negotiations. Clearly it would not have the right to impose solutions or to veto agreements reached by the parties. We must continue to make progress in the peace process and commit ourselves to work for that."

While the U.S. has been advocating the need to consider if an international conference could lead to direct negotiations, Britain and the other members of the European Community have more directly urged such a conference. A senior Admin-

istration official told reporters that Britain and the U.S. were not engaged in a joint effort in the Mideast peace process, but that Reagan and Thatcher had explored how such a conference should be set up.

Thatcher stressed that both the U.S. and Britain are committed to seeking to take advantage of the "diversity of opportunity" that now exists to move the Mideast peace process forward.

"The countries of the region should not have to go on spending such enormous sums on defense rather than on their development," she said. "We must help them take the difficult steps necessary for peace."

A great portion of Friday's meeting was devoted to the Iran-Iraq war. Both Reagan and Thatcher expressed support for a United Nations Security Council resolution calling for a ceasefire.

"We believe that the United Nations Secretary General should personally undertake a mission to achieve that end," Reagan said. "If either or both the warring parties refuse the United Nations call for a cessation of the fighting, then an arms embargo should be bought to bear on those who reject the chance to end this bloody and senseless conflict."

#### ISRAELI ENVOY ARAD ARRIVES AS U.S. COMPLAINS ABOUT ENTRY INTO ISRAEL

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, July 19 (JTA) -- Moshe Arad, Israel's new Ambassador to the United States, arrived in Washington this week amidst the growing controversy over complaints by Palestinian and Black Americans that they have been experiencing difficulties in entering Israel.

State Department spokesman Charles Redman said Thursday that another expression of "serious concern" would be made to the Israel Embassy here Friday. However, the complaint was not to be made to Arad, since he does not officially take up his post until he presents his credentials to President Reagan sometime soon.

Arad, who comes to the U.S. from Mexico, where he was the Israeli envoy, paid a courtesy call Thursday on Richard Murphy, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs.

The 52-year-old career diplomat was appointed Ambassador after a six-month dispute between Premier Yitzhak Shamir and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres about who should replace Meir Rosenne, who ended his four-year tour of duty in Washington June 1.

#### 75 Complaints Reported

Redman said Thursday that about 40 Arab Americans and 35 Black Americans had complained that they were denied entry or had their passports confiscated this summer. Blacks have been turned away because of suspicion that they are Black Hebrews, according to Israeli spokesmen.

"We have continued to express our deep concern to Israel about discriminatory, arbitrary treatment of some American citizens," Redman said.

He said Israel has been asked for "assurances" that the problem will be "resolved promptly. The United States believes strongly that all American citizens are entitled to equal treatment under the laws of foreign countries regardless of race, religion, or ethnic background."

When he was asked whether the U.S. had ever complained to Arab countries, such as Saudi

Arabia, which bar American Jews, Redman said he didn't know. He also would not confirm reports that the U.S. is threatening to issue a travel advisory warning Palestinian and Black Americans that they might face harassment in going to Israel. The U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv and Consulate in Jerusalem have reportedly urged that the advisory be issued.

Redman, however, indicated that an official warning might not be necessary. "I think the problem has been publicized," he said. Redman noted that a similar problem last summer was cleared up after the U.S. complained.

#### U.S. CANCELS EXHIBIT AFTER CHINESE REFUSE 2 PORTRAITS, INCLUDING GOLDA'S By Judith Colp

WASHINGTON, July 19 (JTA) -- The United States has cancelled a National Portrait Gallery exhibition to China because the Chinese government refused to show portraits of former Israeli Premier Golda Meir and Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

The two portraits, a Chinese official explained in a letter last month to the National Portrait Gallery, "involve politically sensitive questions which are not only against the present policy of China but also involved in the relations with the third countries."

Although Chinese officials have refused to state their specific objection to the Meir portrait, it is believed to be based on their desire not to anger Arab countries. The objection to the MacArthur portrait apparently stems from his role as commander of U.S. forces in the Korean War.

The Chinese demands that the portraits be removed from the exhibit brought a stern protest Thursday from the United States Information Agency, which was sponsoring the exhibit as part of a cultural exchange between the U.S. and China.

"It is unacceptable to dictate which portraits shall be included. It is an affront to the American people and to the memory of Douglas MacArthur and Golda Meir. We had hoped that they would welcome the exhibit as a cultural rather than a political event; unhappily this has not occurred," the USIA statement read.

The exhibit was to focus on the changing style of American portraiture over the past 100 years, said Carolyn Carr, assistant director of collections at the National Portrait Gallery. The 51 portraits would have included such figures as Samuel Clemens, Thomas Edison, T.S. Eliot, George Gershwin and Henry James.

Carr said the Chinese voiced no objections to the portraits selected when the museum signed a contract for the exhibit last March. The exhibit was to have opened in Beijing in September and toured three cities.

#### 'Loving Portrait' Of Golda

The Meir portrait was painted by Raphael Soyer in 1975 when the former Premier, then age 77, was on a trip to the United States. A museum catalogue described Soyer as painting women "not for what they might symbolize but for what they really are. She (Meir) is a gentle, pensive, but still robust person and he writes that he was impressed by her strong, wise and kind face."

"It's basically a very loving portrait of an older woman. We thought it was a beautiful portrait," Carr said. The National Portrait Gallery exhibition is part of a cultural exchange agree-

ment between the U.S. and China signed in 1978. The first exchange, a display of paintings from the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, was almost cancelled because the Chinese objected to some abstract paintings after they had arrived in China. The U.S., however, refused to remove the works and the Chinese relented.

"We feel it's terribly regrettable. This was meant to be a cultural exchange and we were taking works of art, that was our concern, just to pick out the most representative works of American portraiture," said Carr.

#### POLL HAS SHAMIR, PERES EVEN; LABOR, LIKUD GAIN SUPPORT

TEL AVIV, July 19 (JTA) -- The latest opinion poll showed Premier Yitzhak Shamir and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres running neck-and-neck in popularity while their respective parties--Likud and Labor -- each picked up support among voters.

According to the poll, conducted by the Dahaf organization and published in Yediot Achronot Friday, Shamir was given a 63-35 percent approval rating, with Peres at 63-36 percent. The most popular politician, however, was Finance Minister Moshe Nissim, a Likud-Liberal with a 67-30 percent approval rating.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, a Laborite, had a favorable rating of 62-36 percent.

The standings of the two principal coalition partners improved. The poll indicated that if elections were held now, Labor would win 47 Knesset seats compared to 44 according to a poll taken last month, and Likud would increase from 37 to 40 seats. The Tehiya Party dropped in voter approval from eight to five seats. The National Religious Party was up from five to six and Rabbi Meir Kahane's Kach Party down from three to one Knesset mandate. Shinui dropped from four to two seats.

The standings of the other parties were unchanged since the June poll. But the idea of early elections lost ground. The latest poll showed that Labor would lose two Knesset seats to Likud if it were responsible for early elections. If Tehiya precipitated early elections it would lose one seat to Likud.

#### LIVING COSTS RISE SLIGHTLY WHILE HISTADRUT URGES 5-DAY WORK WEEK

TEL AVIV, July 19 (JTA) -- Israel's cost-of-living index rose by one percent in June, according to figures published by the Central Bureau of Statistics Wednesday. The increase, exceeding the expected rise of 0.5 percent, drew expressions of "restrained disappointment" from Treasury officials.

The index has risen by 8.5 percent in 1987. The June increase brought it to 177 compared to 100 in the base year, 1985.

The latest figures are likely to affect negotiations between the Treasury and Histadrut for higher wages for public employees. Spokesmen for the employers Association said they re-enforced their opposition to Histadrut proposals for wage hikes and a five-day work week.

Israelis presently work a six-day week. The employers said the economy could not stand a reduced work week.

**NEW JEWISH AGENDA PLANS MISSION  
TO NICARAGUA, REITERATES CALL FOR  
PLO TALKS, ENTERS SOVIET JEWRY FRAY**  
By Shloime Perel

LOS ANGELES, July 19 (JTA) -- New Jewish Agenda (NJA) decided at its biennial convention here last week to send a Benjamin Linder Brigade to Nicaragua in December to reopen the confiscated Managua synagogue as a Jewish cultural center.

Most of Nicaragua's tiny Jewish community fled the country when the Sandinista-led revolution ousted Gen. Anastasio Somoza-Debayle, the military dictator, in 1979.

Some Jewish organizations contend that the Jews were forced to leave and their property confiscated. Some also accept the Reagan Administration's linkage of the Sandinista government with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

But NJA, at meetings July 9-12 at the University of California at Los Angeles, took a far different view. Its task force on Central America said its "work has been especially significant in building support against aid to the Contras, building the Jewish sanctuary movement, supporting material aid projects for Nicaragua, El Salvador and Guatemala, challenging disinformation (especially the myth of anti-Semitism in Nicaragua) in the Jewish community and the public at large, and ensuring that Jews are proportionately represented in coalitions and other anti-intervention efforts."

Several mainstream Jewish organizations have cited evidence of anti-Semitism on the part of the Sandinistas and claim they collaborate with the PLO and Libya.

Many Issues

Criticism of Reagan Administration policies in Central America was just one of many controversial issues examined and debated by 500 members of the seven-year-old Jewish organization with positions to the left of the U.S. Jewish mainstream.

NJA's five national task forces presented strategy papers that will set the organization's course for the next two years. A key stratagem is to form alliances for political change.

For the first time, NJA took up the issue of Soviet Jewry. Delegates agreed that NJA must become active on behalf of rights in the Soviet Union, notwithstanding possible objections by a tiny minority of members who regard the USSR as a model society.

But the most controversial positions related to the Middle East. The Middle East strategy paper set out the principal political thrust of the NJA's work to influence American policy: support the participation of the PLO in the peace process as the internationally recognized representative of the Palestinian people; help negotiate an international peace conference under United Nations sponsorship with participation of Israel, the PLO, the neighboring Arab states, the U.S. and the Soviet Union; and to work for the reduction of arms supplies to the Middle East and demilitarization of the conflicts there.

The task force also called for religious freedom in Israel for Jews and non-Jews.

Gordie Pellman, co-chair of the Middle East task force, said "The reality of the PLO is that it

represents the great majority of Palestinians and we must recognize this." At the convention's Mideast workshop, a strong minority position was expressed that NJA has moved too far ahead of the Jewish community on this issue. But the overwhelming consensus was that Israel should seize the moment and negotiate with the PLO.

This was reinforced in a speech at the Mideast plenary by PLO member Afif Safieh, a former staff member at the office of PLO chief Yasir Arafat and currently a visiting professor at Harvard University.

"You can't make peace with people you never talk to," he said. "It is in the interests of Israel, the Jewish people and moral decency for Israel and the PLO to sit at a table with other Arab states and the superpowers and negotiate a settlement that would allow for the self-determination of both peoples. It's taken some convincing, but the majority of the Palestinian people are ready to compromise."

Latif Dori, a leader of the Mapam Party in Israel, agreed. "If we don't shake hands we'll end up shaking guns," he said. Dori is one of four Israelis who met with a PLO delegation in Rumania. They are currently on trial for violating a law forbidding Israeli citizens to have any contact with the PLO.

NJA resolutions on the Middle East condemned the Reagan Administration decisions to deport Palestinians and to close PLO offices in the U.S. The NJA restated its basic position on the Middle East -- support for the two-state Israel/Palestine option as the basis on which to negotiate the future status of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Feminist Strategy Backed

The feminist strategy paper proposed to develop and disseminate a feminist perspective on the Jewish family, including gay and lesbian families, and to become a progressive Jewish presence in the feminist movement. It proposed a new Jewish family work group to "function as a think tank for the development of a Jewish feminist analysis of perspectives on the Jewish family, produce articles, position papers and responses to developments on relevant issues in the Jewish communities."

The economic and social justice task force emphasized anti-apartheid and anti-racist work; opposition to the far right; support for more affordable social services for families with dependent children; job guarantees; and the formation of coalitions for low-income housing.

The disarmament task force stressed the need for educational work for disarmament, opposition to weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and opposition to Israeli participation in the Reagan Administration's Strategic Defense Initiative, popularly known as "Star Wars." It also proposed an end to nuclear testing and abolition of first strike weapons such as the Trident submarine.

The NJA was founded in Washington, D.C., in December 1980. It claims it is the only left-oriented Jewish organization that has grown since then. Its convention made clear that it stands by its original statement of purpose -- to provide a political and ideological "home" for Jews uncomfortable with the present Jewish community establishment.