

PERES OPTING FOR COMPROMISE ON LAVI

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Aug. 26 (JTA) -- Vice Premier Shimon Peres, who has sided in recent weeks with the continuation of the controversial Lavi warplane project, is now trying to persuade his Ministerial colleagues to accept a compromise based on a Lavi 2000 warplane plan for the 21st Century.

Peres met Wednesday with Premier Yitzhak Shamir, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Finance Minister Moshe Nissim to further his proposal, in advance of a still-unscheduled deciding vote in the full Cabinet. Rabin and Nissim have been the strongest advocates of stopping the Lavi project at once, for economic reasons.

Peres' plan calls for the Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI), and the myriad smaller contractors involved in the Lavi project, to become involved instead in the development and production of a new generation F-16.

The U.S. Defense Department proposed such Israeli involvement in 1986, in the course of its ongoing efforts to persuade Israeli policymakers to forgo the Lavi. Washington feels the Lavi is too costly for Israel to undertake without seriously prejudicing other vital defense needs. Pentagon officials, and Israeli Air Force experts, believe the present generation F-16 can fulfill the needs designed to be covered by the Lavi.

Nature Of Peres' Plan

Peres' plan would assume U.S. consent to convert to Shekels and use in Israel a further \$100 million of the U.S. military aid package (\$1.8 billion annually) for the Lavi-2000 project. Washington has indicated in the past that it would agree to this.

In effect, the Lavi 2000 idea would mean Israeli participation in American plans for an ATF or Advanced Tactical Fighter, viewed by U.S. planners as the leap forward soon imminent in warplane design and technology.

By referring to Lavi 2000, Peres apparently hopes to woo some of the Ministers who have backed continuation of the present Lavi project. Peres himself has become convinced, during weeks of intense consultations with Defense and Finance Ministry officials, that the present project is not viable without a massive increase of the tax burden on the Israeli public.

Inside sources say Peres' new scheme is backed by his longtime friend Al Schwimmer, who founded IAI, but is opposed by the IAI's present management led by director-general Moshe Keret.

SPECIAL TO THE JTA

IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS A MEETING

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Aug. 26 (JTA) -- Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, executive vice president of the Rabbinical Assembly of the Conservative movement, said he was originally assumed to be a participant at the conclave between the Pope and Jewish representatives being held next week, in his capacity as chairman of the American Section of the World Jewish Congress.

However, because of a certain lack of organization, or possibly too much organization, by Jewish groups intent on joining the entourage, the makeup of the group has been so transformed from its original simple conception that Kelman will not be going. He explained the reason for his decision, as well as the background to the original decision to hold the meeting, to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Wednesday.

Kelman said that when the original controversy arose over the meeting in June between the Pope and Austrian President Kurt Waldheim, he appeared on ABC-TV's "Nightline" with John Cardinal O'Connor of New York to discuss the issue.

In response to a question from host Ted Koppel whether Jewish representatives should still go to Miami to meet with the Pope -- a meeting which Kelman described as "ceremonial" -- Kelman responded that "most Jewish organizations would find it difficult to go to Miami for a ceremonial meeting, but would find a 'substantive' meeting with the Pope beneficial."

Kelman told the JTA the venue was never mentioned. It could have been "anywhere that would be convenient for both parties," he said. Rome was not mentioned then.

A few days after his "Nightline" appearance, he continued, when Agostino Cardinal Casaroli, Vatican Secretary of State, was in New York, he met with four rabbis. This meeting, Kelman said, was arranged by the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, which suggested that it would be "helpful" if Casaroli would meet them.

Four Subjects Were Discussed

Kelman was present at that meeting at the Apostolic Mission to the United Nations in his capacity as chairman of the American Section of the WJC. Present along with him were Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman, now president of the Synagogue Council of America and at the time president of the Rabbinical Council of America; Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, director of international relations for the American Jewish Committee; and Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, chairperson of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC).

At that meeting, four subjects were discussed: the meeting between Waldheim and the Pope; the issue of Vatican recognition of Israel; the Church's role during the Holocaust; and the current tendency to minimize the uniqueness of Jewish suffering during the Holocaust. Kelman said the bulk of the discussion centered on the issues of Waldheim and Vatican recognition of Israel. Kelman described the meeting as "very candid, friendly but straightforward," with "no rhetoric, no minced words."

He said he proposed at that meeting that, "What I would like to see emerge from such a meeting with the Pope would be a process leading to the issuance of a Papal encyclical dealing with these questions. It would have tremendous impact as a formal Church teaching." Kelman said that Casaroli's response was that "It takes time" to prepare an encyclical.

Shortly thereafter, Kelman said, a message was received from Johannes Cardinal Willebrands,

president of the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, saying that the Pope would be willing to meet with Jewish representatives, but that there should be two meetings, a preliminary one between Willebrands and his associates and the Jewish representatives in which the agenda and participating parties would be outlined, and a meeting with the Pope the following day.

'A Kind Of Assumption'

Kelman said it "was never made clear who would meet with Willebrands and the Pope. There was a kind of assumption that the four who had met with Casaroli -- and perhaps some others-- would meet with the Pope."

It was then decided, Kelman said, to send a preliminary working task force to Rome to prepare for the meetings with Vatican officials and the Pope. This would be Tanenbaum and Michael Wischograd, an expert on Christian-Jewish relations for the AJCongress.

"Because most of the Vatican staff was on vacation," Kelman said, "that meeting never took place. So a lot of these discussions have taken place by telephone informally. In the course of the discussions that followed, a number of Jewish groups thought they should be included."

It was agreed that an Israeli and a European Jewish representative be included, Kelman said, and "everyone agreed." Geoffrey Wigoder of Jerusalem, chairman of the Israeli Interfaith Committee, would represent the Israeli component of IJCIC, the organization of Jewish groups which received the Vatican invitation. It was also agreed that Gerhart Riegner, cochairman of the WJC governing board, should be invited. "Then," said Kelman, "the question arose of who else."

Kelman said he has decided not to go, because "there are more than enough people to adequately represent the Jewish community."

The delegation going to Rome includes Waxman, Klaperman, Tanenbaum, Riegner, Wigoder; Seymour Reich, president of B'nai B'rith International; Rabbi Leon Klenicki, director of interfaith affairs for the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith; Henry Siegman, executive director of the American Jewish Congress; Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations; and Gunther Lawrence, who will accompany them as delegation spokesman.

Kelman said of the group, "I wish them well, and pray that the meetings will be a further milestone in improving Catholic-Jewish relations."

ANOTHER TENSION-FILLED SABBATH IS SHAPING UP FOR JERUSALEM

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Aug. 26 (JTA) -- A Jerusalem commercial-cinema plans five film screenings next Friday night, and Orthodox circles in the city plan major demonstrations, in what is shaping up as another tension-filled Shabbat for the capital city.

The Orthodox, heartened by their solid showing at a Western Wall prayer meeting on Monday, are also moving on the political plane: the Council of Torah Sages of the Shas Party Wednesday ordered its politicians to secede from Mayor Teddy Kollek's municipal coalition next week unless the Shabbat dispute is satisfactorily resolved. The commercial cinema, Orion, intends to offer lectures at the start of each showing,

thereby abiding, in its view, by a municipal by-law provision permitting cultural events on the Sabbath while forbidding regular commercial film screenings. The Orion would presumably sell club membership tickets before the Sabbath begins.

In addition to this latest venture, the four non-commercial cinema clubs that screened films (accompanied by lectures) last Friday night have all announced their intention to do so again this weekend.

These are Beit Agron in the city center, the Cinematheque, the Tsavta Theater, and Beit Yitzhaki, a cultural center in the German Colony district of south Jerusalem. The organizers are backed -- led as some observers say -- by political activists from Mapam, Civil Rights Movement, and other leftwing and liberal parties in the capital.

The Gravity Of The Situation

The Shas spiritual leaders ordered their politicians to meet with Kollek urgently and "explain to him the gravity of the situation."

Thus far, Shas and its rival ultra-Orthodox party, Agudat Yisrael, are working together in the "battle over the sanctity of the sacred city." Shas's top mentor, former Sephardic Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, stood alongside Rabbis Shalom Eliashiv and Shlomo Zalman Auerbach, two leading Aguda-affiliated rabbis, at the Monday evening prayer-demonstration at the Wall.

The high point at that event was the advent, unexpected, of the venerable Rabbi of Gur, Rabbi Simcha Bunim Alter, who is close to 90 and has not been seen in public for many months. His car was immediately mobbed by young followers. But his attendance gave the demonstration a huge fillip -- which was necessary in view of its failure to attain the turn-out which the organizers hoped for.

Although the Aguda newspaper Hamodia spoke of 50,000 people, more objective estimates put the real number at less than half. Nevertheless, all observers agreed it was an impressive show of solidarity, solemn and well-organized.

The vast congregation chanted prayers and selected Psalms from a specially-printed order of service, and shofar-blowers rounded off the proceedings with vigorous blasts -- ushering in the month of repentance, Elul, whose new moon rose that night.

Significantly, there was a smattering of knitted kippot among the black-hatted throng--showing some solidarity between the more modern Orthodox elements in the city and the ultra-Orthodox (Haredi) community on the Shabbat issue.

MOVE TO CURB AIDS IN ISRAEL

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 26 (JTA) -- Israeli prostitutes will be required to undergo blood tests for AIDS every six months and will be liable to arrest if caught without an "AIDS-free" certificate, Health Minister Shoshana Arbeli-Almosino announced Tuesday.

She was addressing a meeting of top-level health officials and representatives of the police, the IDF, the Magen David Adom, kibbutz movements and of the Labor and Education Ministries, called to discuss the disease.

Aware of the problems of introducing special legislation at this time, the Health Ministry is declaring AIDS to be a "dangerous communicable

disease" and adding it to the existing list of diseases for which persons suspected of defined diseases may be "removed, isolated or arrested and sent for laboratory tests" under existing regulations.

The present list includes typhus, smallpox, cholera, yellow fever, and malaria.

There are estimated to be between 2,000 and 10,000 male and female prostitutes active in Israel.

Of the total of 45 people found to have AIDS in Israel, 35 have died. Half of them were infected abroad. Another 237 persons have been found to carry AIDS antibodies in their blood.

Of 4,000 convicts in Israeli prisons tested for AIDS, 30 have been found to have AIDS antibodies, but not the disease itself. Most were drug addicts.

The IDF chief medical officer has rejected a Health Ministry proposal that the army check all soldiers for AIDS. Brig. Gen. Dr. Yehuda Danon said that if there were reason to check all soldiers, the entire civilian population should be checked. He said that of 250,000 soldiers who had donated blood last year, only 11 were found to have AIDS antibodies.

ACCORD REACHED AT SOLTAM PLANT

TEL AVIV, Aug. 25 (JTA) -- The agreement reached between the Histadrut and Soltam workers who had barricaded themselves in the Yokneam plant and which enabled them to free the Koor and Soltam management personnel after holding them hostage for some 38 hours calls for the continued employment of 300-400 of the 1,300 workers on civilian projects. The factory has a large backlog stock of military equipment because it did not cease production when orders declined.

The other 700-800 employees who had been working on military hardware will have to choose one of the options open to them: generous severance pay for those retiring or taking early retirement; using up full-pay accumulated leave (up to six months for some of the workers); taking reduced pay leave, with 75 percent of the usual leave pay; or opting for a four-day week retraining program with five day's pay and a 30 percent premium.

U.S. OFFICIAL SAYS OPPOSITION TO BORK IS BASED ON 'MISINFORMATION'

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Aug. 26 (JTA) -- Deputy Attorney General Arnold Burns told a group of rabbis Wednesday that opposition within the Jewish community and elsewhere to Judge Robert Bork is based on "misinformation" about President Reagan's nominee to the vacant seat on the U.S. Supreme Court.

A "false" image of Bork has been presented by "some people, who want to achieve political goals of their own," wholly unrelated to the nomination, Burns said at a luncheon for 28 Orthodox, Conservative and Reform rabbis from 13 states, sponsored by the National Jewish Coalition. The luncheon was part of a day-long series of briefings for the rabbis by members of the Administration.

Burns, the second highest ranking official in the Justice Department and a member of the National Jewish Coalition, said a "fictional" Bork has been portrayed who is an extremist, opposed to civil rights, labor unions and women's rights,

among other things. He said the "real" Bork believes that "a judge's views on what is a desirable matter of policy has no place in a judge's decision," that decisions must be based on interpretation of the U.S. Constitution and what Congress had in mind when it passed a particular law.

He noted that in his five years on the U.S. Court of Appeals in Washington, Bork has participated in over 400 majority opinions, none of which were reversed by the Supreme Court.

Burns did not mention church-state issues during his talk, but when he was asked later by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency about Bork's opinions in this area of concern to the Jewish community, Burns said he did not know Bork's views since he had never ruled on this issue on the Court of Appeals.

But Burns added that he was "confident" that on this issue, as on others, Bork's decisions will be based on his interpretation of the Constitution and not on ideology. "Bork has demonstrated that he has an open mind," he stressed.

When a rabbi asked about Bork's views on abortion, Burns replied that it was "wholly irrelevant" to his nomination to the Supreme Court. He said Bork has said he is "bound by decided cases" and accepts *Roe v. Wade* which legalized abortions. However, he conceded that if a new abortion case came to the Supreme Court the decision could be reversed.

While most of the briefings Wednesday was closed to the press, Burns speech was open, apparently in an effort to counter the growing opposition to the Bork nomination in the Jewish community. Public opposition has already been expressed by the Jewish War Veterans, the American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith Women, the National Council of Jewish Women, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the New Jewish Agenda.

At the luncheon Richard Fox, chairman of the National Jewish Coalition, noted that it was "unique" to have the participation and exchange of views from rabbis representing all movements in Judaism. "It ought to happen on a regular basis," he said.

Fox said that the National Coalition, through its participation in Reagan's election, has had an "impact" on the Administration's policy in matters of Jewish concern. "We believe we've made a difference," he said. "I believe it's an important difference."

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- Security forces Wednesday sealed up houses in the West Bank belonging to two Palestinians who face trial next week accused of stabbing and wounding an Israeli Jew last December in Jerusalem, military sources said.

TEL AVIV (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Shimon Peres has appealed to King Hussein of Jordan to take a "dramatic step" to allay Israel's fears over a Middle East peace conference, Maariv reported Wednesday. It said that Peres asked Hussein to influence Israeli public opinion by indicating he would hold direct talks with Israel within the framework of a United Nations-sponsored conference. Peres reportedly said the message passed orally to Hussein through a foreign intermediary.

IRANIAN EMBASSY IN BRAZIL IS CIRCULATING "PROTOCOLS OF ZION"

NEW YORK, Aug. 26 (JTA) -- The Iranian Embassy in Brazil has been circulating a reprint of the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," the notorious anti-Semitic hoax, on paper bearing the Embassy's imprint, the American Jewish Committee reported here Wednesday.

The Committee noted that the distribution of the "Protocols" has prompted a series of articles in the Sao Paulo daily, Folha de Sao Paulo, the first of which appeared on July 4, headlined "Iranian Embassy Publishes Anti-Semitic Work in Brazil." This anti-Jewish Iranian campaign is described in a report of the AJC's International Relations Department, prepared by Jacobo Kovadloff, AJC director of South American Affairs.

The article, the AJC stated, discussed the history of the "Protocols," from their mid-nineteenth century origin until the present day, focusing on recent local developments.

Interviewed by Folha, Francisco Morena de Carvalho, a young Jewish physician and leader of the Friends of Peace Now Movement, commented that "the reappearance of the 'Protocols' in Brazil coincides with the current need for scapegoating." Also quoted was "Geraldo," a member of a Nazi-oriented Sao Paulo group, who declared that the "Protocols" were still valid today.

Iranian Defends Dissemination Of 'Protocols'

In response to a query by the newspaper, the Iranian Embassy confirmed the publication of the "Protocols," and Israel's Ambassador to Brazil, Itzhak Sarfaty, was said to be preparing a protest for submission to Brazil's Foreign Office.

In another article, Folha quoted Mouhmd Emtiaz, Iranian Charge d'Affaires and Acting Ambassador in Brazil, as saying that no racism of any kind was involved in the "Protocols." He added that he was "perplexed" at the possibility of having its publication banned in Brazil since "this is a part of history, and the dissemination of history cannot be forbidden."

The newspaper also quoted Jose Knopflich, president of the Jewish Federation of Sao Paulo, as declaring that the dissemination of the "Protocols" and the sentencing of Klaus Barbie were not simply a coincidence, that anti-fascist groups used the Barbie indictment to spread anti-Semitism. Knopflich asserted that organizations representing the Jewish community of Brazil were always on the alert for anti-Semitic literature.

Benno Milnitsky, president of the Jewish Confederation of Brazil, said there was no need to prove the racist or anti-Semitic nature of the "Protocols" because its forgery has been established in several parts of the world. He said the Jewish community would "avail itself of every legal means" against the dissemination of such material as the "Protocols."

Kovadloff recalled that on a trip to South America in 1984, he and Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, the Committee's director of international relations, had met with Dr. Vivaldo Barbosa, Secretary of Justice of the State of Rio, and with Dr. Arthur de Castilho Neto, Secretary General of the Ministry of Justice in Brasilia, and that both officials declared: "We will not allow bigotry to spill over from the Middle East conflict into Brazil."

Existing legislation, the two officials explained, enable them to take appropriate action to suppress the distribution of anti-Semitic material.

HEART TRANSPLANT OPERATION PERFORMED IN HADASSAH HOSPITAL

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Aug. 26 (JTA) -- Ovadia Masri, 50, of Beersheba, was pronounced "stable but still not out of danger" by doctors at Hadassah Hospital Wednesday afternoon after undergoing a heart-transplant operation during the night.

It was the first such surgery performed in Israel in 20 years. Two operations done by Prof. Maurice Levy of Tel Aviv in the late 1960's both failed.

Wednesday's operation comes a year after the Health Ministry awarded Hadassah a licence to perform heart transplants. Since then, the Jerusalem Medical Center has trained a team of doctors and nurses and has awaited the right circumstances in which to perform the operation.

Masri, with a chronic heart disease, has been waiting -- along with other potential recipients -- with even greater avidness for these circumstances to materialize.

They did so on Tuesday when a young man (not identified) died at Hadassah after earlier telling doctors that he agreed to his heart being transplanted. The operation began at midnight and went on until dawn, with the team led by South African-born Hadassah cardiologist Prof. Joseph Bolman.

The Hospital Rabbi and the chief rabbinate were kept informed, according to Hadassah spokesmen, and all halachic requirements were fulfilled.

Medical sources believed that if this operation succeeds others would quickly follow at Hadassah, and subsequently at other Israeli hospitals.

NO YELLOW WARNING SIGN FOR THIS TRAFFIC HAZARD

NEW YORK, Aug. 26 (JTA) -- New York State Police have told a group of devout Jews to cease tying up traffic on the New York State Thruway.

The Jewish Press reports that on Thursday evening, August 6, approximately 65 cars parked on the north side of the toll plaza near Harriman, NY -- about an hour's drive from New York City. The drivers got out to "daven mincha" (worship the evening prayers).

Their action caused a major traffic jam with cars swerving in all directions. After prayers, police told the Press that many of the worshippers remained to socialize. They blocked the telephones, and some even crossed into oncoming traffic to use other phones. Children also were reportedly wandering unsupervised.

The police ask that those wishing to stop for prayer use the nearby Sloatsburg Service Area, which contains adequate parking facilities, washrooms and telephones. Police will not permit parking at the toll area.

JEL AVIV (JTA) -- The West Bank terror squad, whose recent detention was announced by the security services Tuesday, had been organized by the PLO, Fatah and the Islamic Jihad group in Amman. Its members had been recruited and trained separately in Jordan, Iraq, Syria, Algeria and Pakistan, according to security sources.