

CABINET VOTES TO SCRAP LAVI

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 30 (JTA) -- The controversial Lavi project came to an end Sunday, as the Cabinet decided, with a narrow 13 to 12 majority, to discontinue the project. The decision is effective immediately.

The tie between supporters and opponents of the Lavi was upset as Health Minister Shoshana Arbeli-Almoslino, in a last-minute development, bowed to pressures by the Labor Party and abstained. Minister-Without-Portfolio Moshe Arens, the main proponent of the Lavi, announced his intention to resign. He has not yet handed in his official letter of resignation.

In effect, the Cabinet adopted the compromise proposal of Vice Premier Shimon Peres to discontinue the Lavi project but at the same time allocate \$100 million to Israel Aircraft Industries (IAI) for the development of "future technologies," chiefly the manufacture of a jet fighter for the 21st century, referred to as the Lavi 2000.

IAI Workers Threaten Reprisals

Despite the Peres proposal, thousands of workers are expected to be laid off, as the \$7 billion project was discontinued. Hundreds of IAI workers who gathered outside the Prime Minister's office, waiting for the decision, reacted angrily and announced they would take "unusually hard steps" to force the government into a reversal of the decision.

As the workers council met in Lod to weigh its reaction, it considered several proposals, among them to take over Ben Gurion Airport runways and to halt all air traffic to and from Israel, to block traffic on central intersections of the country's roads, and to demonstrate in front of Labor Party headquarters in Tel Aviv.

The Cabinet decision to scrap the Lavi was passed en bloc by the Labor Ministers, with the exception of Arbeli-Almoslino, who abstained. The only Likud Minister who voted for the Peres proposal was Finance Minister Moshe Nissim, who said that being in charge of the economy, he could see no way to avoid the decision because of the need for economic recovery.

Arbeli-Almoslino, who until shortly before the decision had said she would vote for continuation of the project, blamed the Likud for the "grave it had dug for the project." Premier Yitzhak Shamir brought the proposal to vote after he succeeded in convincing Justice Minister Avraham Sharir to vote with the rest of the Likud Ministers -- even though he opposed the project's continuation.

Arbeli-Almoslino said she had been forced to abstain because the Likud turned the Lavi project into a matter of party politics. In consultations among Labor Ministers prior to the vote, Peres reportedly raised his voice in telling her not to torpedo the proposal. Visibly upset, she burst into tears after the vote. Arens, who in the past served as a senior engineer at IAI, said he decided to resign because he was not ready to bear the "collective responsibility following the Cabinet's decision."

Science and Technology Minister Gideon Patt ruled out the possibility of a coalition crisis as a result of Arens' possible resignation.

In an initial reaction to the Cabinet decision, Shaul Etzion, deputy secretary of the IAI workers union, described the decision as "catastrophic." He said he was certain that most of the Ministers who voted to stop the project "didn't really know what they are doing." He projected that as a result, some 5,000-6,000 workers will be laid off. He ridiculed Peres' suggestion to continue developing avionic technologies without the Lavi. "Israeli Aircraft Industries by its name is an industry, it is not just a research institution."

A last-minute boost for the Peres proposal was a weekend letter from the Reagan Administration strongly urging the project's termination. The letter reportedly implied that the U.S. would help Israel maintain a high level of technological research and development once the Lavi is scrapped.

In the letter, the U.S. offered to help Israel develop a research and development infrastructure in the defense industries. It also offered to continue helping Israel finance test flights of the Lavi prototype to develop avionic systems.

The 10-point paper, which was presented by U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering, said the U.S. undertook to increase to \$400 million aid which could be converted to Israeli currency, to allow for further technological developments by the Israeli industry.

JEWISH DELEGATION GATHERS IN ROME

By Lisa Palmieri-Billig and Edwin Eytan

ROME, Aug. 30 (JTA) -- A Jewish delegation arrived here over the weekend for historic meetings with high-ranking Vatican officials and, on Tuesday, a meeting with Pope John Paul II which is being touted as an unprecedented open dialogue instead of the traditional formal presentations followed by a papal response.

Tuesday's meeting is expected to be the first known instance in the Vatican's 2,000-year history that the Pontiff, the spiritual leader of close to 900 million Catholics and the head of a sovereign state, will take part in a free discussion based on give and take.

The discussion this week will also be the first in which the Vatican will delegate an official with political and diplomatic responsibility to such a meeting. Msgr. Luigi Gatti, a representative of the Vatican's political branch, will participate in the Vatican's delegation to the meetings.

Previously, the Jewish-Catholic dialogue which began in 1965 consisted of rare meetings between Jewish representatives and the Pope in which the Jews made formal presentations and an address and the Pope responded. Progress was noted by one Jewish delegate who recalled that not long ago, in historical terms, Jewish representatives had to kneel when received at the Vatican. But the Catholic-Jewish dialogue has come a long way as the 10-member delegation representing the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC) prepares to confer Monday with senior Vatican officials and Tuesday with Vatican Secretary of State Agostino

Cardinal Casaroli and later with the Pope at his summer residence in Castel Gandolfo.

Both sides have indicated they hope the meetings will, at the very least, defuse existing tensions and hopefully open a new chapter in Jewish-Catholic relations. Tuesday's meeting with the Pope is expected to result in a joint declaration condemning anti-Semitism, recalling the horrors of the Holocaust and paving the way for a new type of relationship. Both sides stressed privately that they want to avoid confrontations and recriminations.

Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, chairman of IJCIC, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "The meetings will not be a confrontation. What we want is to lessen existing tensions, resolve misunderstandings and explain our stand for the sake of better Catholic-Jewish Relations."

One member of the Jewish delegation, Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, American Jewish Committee director for international relations, said he received word from the Vatican last week that the Pope wanted the meeting to be informal, frank and honest with no formal presentations but an atmosphere of give and take.

First Point On The Agenda

The delegation decided Sunday on a four-point agenda for Monday's meeting which will encompass most of the Jewish grievances against the Vatican's latest steps and declarations but also provide for a better understanding in the future.

Waxman said the first point on the agenda will be the issue of recent revisionist tendencies within the Catholic Church which reached a climax with the Pope's meeting with Austrian President Kurt Waldheim last June. "The Waldheim case," said Waxman, "is symbolic of what we see as a dangerous trend. It signifies a certain forgetfulness of the past, a possible temptation to erase the monstrosity which was the Holocaust and to minimize the martyrdom of the Jewish people."

In the past, the Vatican had carefully tried to separate what it termed the religious from the political issues and formally, at least, tried to restrict its dialogue with the Jewish representatives to "moral, religious and theological issues."

The Vatican issued a press release Friday saying the working session Monday will focus on "fundamental topics of the interreligious dialogue between the Catholic Church and Jews." Some saw this as an attempt to confine the dialogue to religious issues to the exclusion of political topics like Vatican diplomatic relations with Israel, one of the four main topics on the Jewish delegation's agenda for the meetings.

The delegation's arrival in Rome was preceded by weeks of haggling over who would represent the Jewish community in the meetings. The delegation included two non-American representatives, Dr. Gerhart Riegner of Geneva, co-chairman of the World Jewish Congress Governing Board, and Geoffrey Wigoder of Israel representing the Israel Interfaith Committee.

Italian and West European Jewish leaders privately expressed deep disappointment for what they see as their exclusion from the meetings.

JERUSALEM WEATHERS ANOTHER WEEKEND By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Aug. 30 (JTA) -- Five hundred policemen and a large quantity of tear-gas en-

abled the city of Jerusalem to weather another stormy weekend relatively unscathed. Secularist leaders claimed success in that five film shows were screened at cinema clubs around the city.

Orthodox activists claimed success, too. They brought out thousands of demonstrators to the streets on Saturday afternoon to shout "Shabbos, Shabbos" at passing cars and at the massed phalanxes of police. Only at a few of these demonstrations were stones thrown -- and the police immediately moved in with powerful water-firing trucks and teargas canisters to quell the disturbances and keep the city's main traffic arteries open.

Only a handful of arrests were made -- among them a group of Kach activists seeking to incite violence in Mea Shearim on Friday night.

With the weekend now over, attention turns back to the political plane, where the Shas Party must decide whether to secede, as it has threatened, from mayor Teddy Kollek's municipal coalition. Shas Council of Sages was due to reach a decision by Monday. If all the religious parties pull out, Kollek would still have a bare majority to run the city, but the political move would inevitably exacerbate the tension in the streets.

Ambivalence In The Simmering Conflict

Most of the action on Saturday afternoon was in areas bordering the ultra-Orthodox residential areas. Thus the main road past the Sanhedria Quarter was blocked for some time. Cars on the road to Ramot were stoned as they passed Kiryat Zanz and Itri and the main road to Tel Aviv was briefly blocked near Givat Shaul.

The scene in the mixed area of old Katamon, in south Jerusalem, pointed up some of the ambivalence that accompany this simmering conflict.

The Beit Din of the Eda Haredit, the ultra-Orthodox community, had selected a main street in Katamon as one of the 15 sites for demonstrations Saturday afternoon and the local Yeshiva Erlau was intended to set the tone.

But the head of this yeshiva, Rabbi Yohanan Sofer, and his followers have evolved peaceable and friendly relations with the broader Katamon community and he was not anxious to disrupt these ties. At the same time he had to toe the line.

The upshot was that his students gathered on the sidewalk for precisely 15 minutes and shouted lustily, "Shabbos, Shabbos" at any passing car. On the stroke of the 16th minute the venerable rabbi came out and gave a signal, whereupon the shouting instantly ceased and all the demonstrators trooped off to their study hall. Katamon returned to its regular Saturday afternoon torpor.

U.S. TO RETURN ENVOY TO SYRIA, BUT WILL CONTINUE SANCTIONS

By Judith Colp

WASHINGTON, Aug. 30 (JTA) -- The State Department announced Friday that it will return the United States Ambassador to Damascus in "response to positive steps" Syria has taken against terrorism. U.S. envoy William Eagleton was recalled last October after Syria was implicated in the attempted bombing of an El Al plane in London in April 1986.

"Our information shows a decrease in levels of Syrian support for terrorist activities and some other groups," said State Department spokesperson Phyllis Oakley. "Syria has closed the Abu Nidal organization offices in Damascus and expelled all

known Abu Nidal organization personnel," she added. Oakley said the decision to return Eagleton was not related to the escape earlier this month of journalist Charles Glass from captors in Lebanon. "We've certainly expressed our appreciation for the efforts that the Syrians made on behalf of Glass," she explained. "I don't think we had ever spelled out our problems with Syria in terms of hostages, it was always in relationship to their support of terrorism."

Although Glass said that he escaped from his captors, Syria had sought his freedom during a time when its army controlled Beirut.

Despite the return of the envoy, economic sanctions imposed against Syria last November remain in effect. These included restrictions on U.S. exports, a ban on the selling of tickets in the U.S. for the Syrian national airline and a reduction in the staff at the U.S. Embassy in Damascus and the Syrian Embassy here.

Preconditions For Dropping Sanctions

The State Department said the shutting down of terrorist groups operating from Syrian-controlled territory in Lebanon, in addition to the closing of the Abu Nidal offices, were preconditions for dropping its sanctions.

Syria has been on the State Department's list of countries promoting terrorism since 1979 although it wasn't directly implicated in any terrorist activity until the trial last year of Nezar Hindawi, convicted of hijacking an El Al jet departing from London.

During the trial it was revealed that Hindawi traveled to London from Damascus with a Syrian passport, and had fled to the Syrian Embassy after the bomb plot was uncovered. There was also evidence that he had been assisted by Syrian intelligence sources. Syria denied the charges. At that time, Britain also broke off relations with Syria.

Oakley noted that the State Department continues to worry about the Syrian military presence in regions of Lebanon.

VICTOR BIENSTOCK, FORMER JTA EDITOR, DEAD AT 79

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Aug. 30 (JTA) -- Victor Bienstock, former editor of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, died Friday in Boca Raton, Fla., of a heart attack. He was 79 years old. Funeral services were held there Sunday.

Bienstock, one of the first war correspondents to write about the Nazi death camps in Europe, devoted his life to the cause of Jewish journalism as well as to the future of Jewish journalists. In what was probably the last article he wrote as a columnist for American Jewish newspapers, he described his career in journalism, and particularly Jewish journalism, of which this month would have marked the beginning of his 59th year.

Born May 21, 1908 in Hartford, Connecticut, Bienstock began his career as a cub reporter on The New York World. He wrote that his Jewishness clearly colored his outlook of general news. "I was always aware of the fact that, being Jewish, I could not detach myself personally and regard with complete objectivity developments affecting the Jewish wellbeing. I suspect that the heightened sensitivity to racism, religious bias and prejudice that lay in my Jewish subconscious made

me more alert to discrimination in all its forms against others wherever it was manifested."

Although his prior contacts with the Jewish world were limited, he said, "my sense of Jewish kinship flowered when I moonlighted to assist the staff at the Jewish Telegraphic Agency."

The year was 1929, and the occasion was the outbreak of Arab anti-Jewish riots in Palestine. Four years later, with the advent of Adolph Hitler to power in Germany, Bienstock by design became a totally Jewish journalist, resigning from The New York Herald Tribune, where he was editor of the Tribune news service; to become managing editor of the JTA in New York from 1933-35.

'Sense Of Jewishness... Never Left Me'

"My sense of Jewishness was something that never left me," he wrote. Even when he had worked on general news (he was a correspondent in London for the London Morning Post) he would go out evenings to search for Jewish news, to the point of near obsession.

From 1935-40, he worked in London as JTA's chief foreign service editor, where he met his wife, Rebecca Kosiner, who was the bookkeeper in the London office. They returned to New York in 1940, where he became chief foreign editor of the Overseas News Agency (ONA), the JTA subsidiary dealing in more general news about the Nazi-occupied countries.

In June 1944, working for the ONA, Bienstock accompanied the Allied Fifth Army in its liberation of southern France. After filing his stories, if he had no other leads for Jewish news, Bienstock would check out the tombstones in the local Jewish cemetery and then look for the survivors.

He wrote that he didn't believe in covering up news that might portray Jews in an unfavorable light. "Jews like everyone else, I believed, must be made aware of their sins and errors to be able to guard against them."

Between 1950-70, Bienstock was general manager, editor and vice president of JTA.

Continued To Write After Retirement

In 1970, after his retirement from JTA, he became executive editor of the New York Jewish Week, where he remained for three years until he retired to Florida. There, although technically retired, he continued to write. From 1975 until his death, he wrote an editorial page column for the Boca Raton Daily News.

He was also secretary of the American War Correspondents Association (AWCA) from 1944-52, as well as chairman of the AWCA Freedom-of-Press Committee, and a member of the National Press Club in Washington. In 1946, he received the U.S. War Department's Citation for his services as a war correspondent.

John Kayston, executive vice president emeritus of the JTA, recalled his years working with Bienstock: "Vic Bienstock and I worked together at JTA for almost half a century. During these turbulent years, the years of the Holocaust and the founding of the State of Israel, Vic Bienstock did a yeoman job for the Jewish community by advancing and improving the standards of Jewish journalism. He made a great contribution to JTA and thus to the entire Jewish community. Because of his journalistic skill, devotion and experience, JTA has over the years become one of Jewry's most effective instruments."

NEW BOOK EXPLORES HOLLYWOOD'S APPEASEMENT OF HITLER AND MUSSOLINI

NEW YORK, Aug. 30 (JTA) -- In their book "Hollywood Goes to War," published this month by the Free Press in New York City, Oberlin College Prof. Clayton Koppes and University of Missouri history Prof. Gregory Black explore a little-known and dark chapter in the history of the American film industry: Hollywood's appeasement of Hitler and Mussolini and its propaganda liaison with the Roosevelt Administration.

Koppes and Black detail the motion picture studios' unwillingness to speak out against anti-Semitism and fascism in the 1930's, their accession to the demands of Nazi Germany and fascist Italy, and their alliance with the Roosevelt Administration's propaganda agency, the Office of War Information (OWI), which succeeded in distorting Hollywood portrayals of American Blacks and the Allied and Axis powers during World War II.

Among the many revelations in the book are the following:

- * In the mid-1930's, when the Nazis demanded of the American motion picture studios that all "non-Aryan" studio employees in Germany be terminated, the studios, almost all of them run by Jewish executives in Hollywood, complied and fired Jewish workers on their business staffs and offices in Germany. The studios did this even though Hitler's Nuremberg Laws banned all films with Jewish actors and actresses, cutting the number of American films shown in Germany to just 20 per year.

- * In an effort to appease Mussolini, MGM changed the locale of Robert Sherwood's anti-war, anti-fascist "Idiot's Delight" (1939) with Clark Gable and Norma Shearer from Italy to an unnamed Esperanto-speaking Alpine nation.

The film industry's self-censorship bureau, the Hays Office, then had the chief of its Production Code Administration, Joseph Breen, carry a severely altered version of the script to Italy in order to obtain the official approval of Mussolini's government, which he succeeded in doing. By the time the film was completed however, new commercial restrictions made it unprofitable for Hollywood to distribute movies in Italy.

Censorship Baked By Economic Clout

- * Breen, who exercised great power in his censorship role, was virulently anti-Semitic as well as anti-Communist. In the 1930's, he pressured MGM into dropping its plan to film Sinclair Lewis' "It Can't Happen Here" even though the studio had already bought the rights from Lewis and had invested heavily in the production.

He also prevented the filming of Vincent Sheehan's "Personal History," an indictment of Hitler, because it would arouse "audience feeling against the present German regime, in the matter of its treatment of the Jews." Breen's censorship was backed by economic clout: banks usually insisted upon his office's approval before lending money for productions, and most films relied on bank financing.

- * OWI, the Roosevelt Administration's propaganda arm charged with furthering the American war effort through a liaison with the Hollywood studios, had hoped to work with Black leaders in order to improve Hollywood's portrayal of people of color. By war's end it became clear that the government's objectives and those of Black lead

ers were incompatible. The government was intent on depicting a unified America without internal dissension; the Blacks wanted a realistic, non-stereotyped portrayal of themselves and their unequal treatment at home. Of 100 Black appearances in wartime films, 75 perpetuated old stereotypes, 13 were neutral, and only 12 were positive, among them symbolic portrayals that were untrue: in "Bataan," for instance, Kenneth Spencer is part of an integrated battle group, and there were no integrated battle groups at this time.

"Repeatedly in the 1930's, Hollywood altered the kind of pictures it would make because of economic considerations," Koppes says. "It didn't make any explicitly anti-Nazi pictures until 1939, in large measure because it didn't want to lose its markets in Germany and Italy. Because there was no American movie market in the Soviet Union there were very few pictures about Russia, and those that were made could afford to be unfavorable. The studios didn't make films Breen disapproved of for fear of losing bank financing.

Another disturbing byproduct of the American film industry's involvement with propaganda was "the way in which images in movies changed very abruptly, depending on the political needs of the administration or on Hollywood's perception of its audience and its market," Koppes says. "There were wild swings in the portrayal of certain subjects, even though the reality of those subjects hadn't changed at all."

A prime example, according to Koppes, was Hollywood's treatment of the Soviet Union. Before 1941, American films were uniformly negative in their portrayal of the Soviets if they were portrayed at all. From 1942 to 1945 almost all movies concerning the Soviet Union were "positive, glowing accounts, the most notorious being 'Mission to Moscow,' in which Stalin's version of the purge trials are bought hook, line, and sinker, and Stalin emerges as an avuncular figure who is one step from being a democrat," Koppes says. After the war, Hollywood's treatment of the Soviets was, as it was before the war, almost uniformly negative until well into the 1950's.

The government, Koppes and Black conclude, allied itself with an oligopoly and reinforced that industry's concentration of power in molding images for the public -- images that served the short-term political goals of an administration in wartime, but not the long-term goals of a nation facing a changed world.

PHILADELPHIA, Aug. 30 (JTA) -- Profits from the sale of "Welcome" -- a new, glossy magazine devoted to Pope John Paul II's September visit to America -- will be used to help finance a traveling exhibition of Judaica from the Vatican Library, it was announced by Albert Wood, a spokesperson for the National Committee for the Vatican Judaica Exhibition. A number of U.S. Catholic charities will also benefit from sales of the publication. The Vatican Judaica Exhibition contains Jewish manuscripts produced between the 8th and 18th centuries. The works are on loan from the Vatican Library's collection of 800 Judaica manuscripts. A chapter in "Welcome" is devoted to the exhibition. The Pope is scheduled to bless the exhibition, which opened at the Miami Center for the Fine Arts on July 17, in Miami on Sept. 10.