

VOL. 66 - 71st YEAR

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 1988

NO. 33

# **UNITY ON LATEST PEACE PROPOSALS ELUSIVE AS ISRAEL AWAITS SHULTZ**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 18 (JTA) -- With Secretary of State George Shultz's visit to the Middle East less than a week away, the Labor Party and Likud remain at loggerheads over how to advance the peace process.

The coalition partners have broken no ground in their weeks of discussion, and in fact seem more entrenched than ever in their respective positions.

Laborite Ezer Weizman, a minister without portfolio, said Thursday that the Cabinet must work out a unified Israeli position toward the latest American peace proposals before Shultz arrives here.

"We have to have an Israeli position, not a Shamir position and a Peres position. We are either a government, or two governments," Weizman said.

Premier Yitzhak Shamir, leader of the Likud bloc, vehemently opposes any sort of international forum as an umbrella for peace negotiations and rejects the American idea of speeding up the autonomy process for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and starting negotiations over the permanent status of the territories before the end of this year.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, the Labor Party leader, has welcomed the American initiative, though he objects to some of the ideas advanced by Washington. He strongly favors an international "opening" or "event" to launch direct negotiations between Israel and its Arab adversaries.

## **Parties Trade Accusations**

The latest Labor-Likud standoff occurred in the Knesset Wednesday. Ehud Olmert of Likud accused Peres of encouraging Foreign Ministry officials to claim wherever they go that the Likud wing of the government does not want peace, while those who support an international conference are for peace.

Peres replied that he and Shamir were obliged to work in conjunction on the issue, but Shamir was undercutting him. Shamir has made the same charges against Peres.

The foreign minister said the basis of all peace plans is United Nations Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which are an integral part of the Camp David accords. Shamir insists on sticking to the Camp David accords as the basis for all future negotiations.

Peres reminded him that the pertinent resolutions refer to "withdrawal from territories," which means territorial compromise, fiercely opposed by Likud. The resolutions also invoke the idea of an international conference, Peres claimed.

The foreign minister said he was in favor of territorial compromise in return for peace, "but not all the territories."

Likud responded that Peres' proposal to withdraw from the Gaza Strip is a "general surrender" and talk of concessions only encourages Arab unrest in the territories.

According to Likud, the Arabs accept the idea of "Gaza first," but would then demand the

Wadi Ara area in Israel where local youths, for the first time, joined West Bank stone-throwers last month.

Peres, addressing a meeting of the United Kibbutz Movement, said he suggested withdrawing from the Gaza Strip "not because I'm afraid of rocks and stones, but because I'm scared of the demographic statistics," which show a high Arab birth rate.

Shamir told the Jewish Agency Board of Governors on Thursday that he stood by his objections to an international conference and to any shortening of the autonomy timetable.

"Any attempt to force the pace and shorten the period would be detrimental to the very essence of the agreement," he said, referring to the Camp David accords.

He said he opposed an international conference "because its nature and composition will, we are convinced, be counterproductive and enable the Soviet Union to play a role in this region."

## **EBAN BACKS SHULTZ PEACE INITIATIVE DURING MEETING By Yitzhak Rabi**

NEW YORK, Feb. 18 (JTA) -- Abba Eban said he expressed support for U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz's new Mideast peace initiative during a meeting with him at the State Department on Wednesday.

Eban, chairman of the Knesset Security and Foreign Affairs Committee, said he also "told him that my attitude is shared by a large segment of Israeli society" and discussed the secretary's trip to the Mideast next week.

The Knesset leader said in a telephone interview Thursday that his 40-minute meeting Wednesday included Richard Murphy, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs, and Charles Hill, Shultz's executive assistant.

Shultz's proposals call for talks on limited autonomy for the Palestinians on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip with local elections held by the fall and negotiations on the final status of the territories to begin by the end of the year.

The negotiations would be based on President Reagan's 1982 initiative, which proposed that Israel give up most of the territories in return for peace. The Labor Party, to which Eban belongs, has accepted Shultz's basic formula, while the Likud of Premier Shamir rejects giving up any territory.

Nevertheless, Eban said that Shultz is "upbeat" about his new initiative. "He is very encouraged by the support he has been receiving from Congress, the president and from Jewish leaders," Eban said.

"Shultz is very determined to go ahead with his new proposals," Eban added.

The former Israeli foreign minister and ambassador to the United States described Shultz's new undertaking as "a ray of light" against the background of the daily disturbances and outburst of violence in the territories.

Eban, who arrived here Wednesday night, said he has met with various Jewish leaders and visited Jewish communities in America in the last few days.

"I can not recall a time when the Jews here were more upset than they are now in regard to the news from Israel. I found them to be in deep emotional crisis," he said.

Eban also spoke with pessimism about the situation in the territories. "Unfortunately I don't see an early end to what's happening. It is probably a matter for months or even more. Israel has undergone a major transformation since Dec. 9," he said, referring to the beginning of the Palestinian disturbances.

## PLO 'VOYAGE OF RETURN' POSTPONED INDEFINITELY

By Jean Cohen

ATHENS, Feb. 18 (JTA) -- The Palestine Liberation Organization has given up its attempt to send a shipload of Palestinian deportees on a "voyage of return" to Israel -- but only for the time being, a ranking PLO official stressed here Wednesday.

"Gentlemen, I would like to announce the postponement of the trip," Shiek Abdel Hamit Sayeh, president of the Palestinian National Council, the PLO's quasi-legislative body told reporters at a news conference here. He insisted the postponement, though indefinite, was not a cancellation.

Sayeh spoke two days after the Cypriot car ferry Sol Phryne, which the PLO had purchased for the voyage, was disabled by an underwater explosion in Limassol harbor, Cyprus, for which the PLO blamed Israeli agents.

Asked why none of the Arab countries that have merchant marines offered to provide the PLO with another ship, Sayeh said those countries are in a state of war with Israel and their vessel would be attacked when it reached Israeli waters.

Sayeh blamed postponement of the trip on "Israel's threats and terrorist methods." He thanked the journalists who showed up for the PLO's many news conferences here during the past two weeks. He effusively praised the Greek people, who he said demonstrated their solidarity with the Palestinian cause.

## ARBITERS STUDY TABA BY AIR, ON FOOT

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 18 (JTA) -- The half-square-mile Taba area on the Red Sea near Eilat was observed from the air and examined on the ground Thursday by the five-member international arbitration team that must decide whether it belongs to Israel or Egypt.

Israeli officials were confident after the three-day on-the-spot inspection that the arbiters will find in favor of Israel. Israel completed its return of Sinai to Egypt in 1982.

The panel consists of three international lawyers agreed to by Israel and Egypt plus an Israeli and an Egyptian appointed by their respective countries.

Panelists got their birds-eye view of Taba from a helicopter provided by the United Nations force that has been monitoring adherence to the terms of the Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty in Sinai since it was signed in 1979.

In addition, the arbiters, whose average age is in the 70s, spent a strenuous day scrambling up and down rocky hillsides.

They were trying to determine the site of old border markers that show exactly where the Palestine-Egypt border ran more than 80 years

ago, when the region was part of the sprawling Ottoman Empire; 40 years ago, when the State of Israel was founded; and 32 years ago, after Israel withdrew from its first invasion of Sinai in 1956.

Once nothing more than seaside sand dunes, Taba now boasts an Israeli luxury hotel, the Sonesta, and the Rafi Nelson vacation village for a less sedate clientele.

The arbiters are Pierre Bellet of France, Gunnar Lagergen of Sweden, Ruth Lapidot of Israel, Dietrich Schindler of Switzerland and Hamed Sultan of Egypt.

They have been attempting, with Bellet's personal involvement, to convince Egypt and Israel to reach a compromise agreement before the dispute goes to binding arbitration. The United States also has been trying to mediate a compromise.

If no agreement is reached, the panel will reconvene in Geneva on March 14 to hear oral arguments by both sides. A decision would be expected within 90 days.

## DEMJANJUK'S FAMILY REMOVED AS WAR CRIMES TRIAL ENDS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 18 (JTA) -- The final day of the year-long trial of accused war criminal John Demjanjuk was marked by an emotional outburst from the defendant's family Thursday.

Demjanjuk's wife, Vera, his daughter, Irene, and son, John Jr., were removed from the courtroom after rushing to the dais with anguished cries of "Liar, you are lying, shame on you, shame on you."

Their explosion was triggered by chief prosecutor Michael Shaked's implication that the defense had employed anti-Semites as investigators to collect evidence. Shaked was responding to the charge by chief defense counsel Paul Chumak on Wednesday that the trial was conducted unfairly and the state withheld evidence.

Shaked charged that the defense investigators, "some of whom not only were not acceptable" were also "disgusting" because of the "hate-filled" writings they had distributed around the world.

Chumak apologized to the court for his remark Wednesday likening the trial to the notorious Dreyfus affair in France some 90 years ago. Alfred Dreyfus, a French army captain, was convicted of treason on the basis of doctored evidence.

The defense attorney, a Canadian, said he had "innocently referred" to the Dreyfus case. "I meant no criticism or dishonor to this court" and "if there were such inferences that anyone could draw, then I apologize," he said.

But Chumak refused to retract his remark, as demanded by presiding Judge Dov Levin, who was infuriated by the comparison.

Demjanjuk's defense contends that the key document incriminating Demjanjuk, an German SS identification card issued to Ukrainian prisoners of war being trained as concentration camp guards, was a KGB forgery. The card was obtained from the Soviet Union.

Demjanjuk, 68, a Ukrainian-born retired automobile worker from Cleveland, Ohio, is accused of being the Treblinka death camp guard known as "Ivan the Terrible" who operated the gas chambers and brutalized Jews.

Levin said 10 days' notice would be given before the verdict is read.

## JEWISH AGENCY TO HAND ABSORPTION RESPONSIBILITY TO GOVERNMENT

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 18 (JTA) -- The Jewish Agency directorate agreed Wednesday to a proposal to transfer all responsibility for immigrant absorption to the government. The transfer is expected to be completed within the next three months.

The transfer, welcomed by Absorption Minister Yaacov Tsur as a "historic decision," was recommended last October by a committee set up by the Jewish Agency Board of Governors to propose ways to eliminate duplication between the agency's work and that of various government ministries.

A highlight of the committee's report was its criticism of the division of responsibility for absorption between the agency and the Absorption Ministry, a situation it said was both a wasteful use of resources and confusing to immigrants.

The duplication in absorption services has existed since 1952, when the Knesset passed the Law of Status, which determined the relationship of the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization to the Israeli government.

According to the law, amended in 1975, the Jewish Agency has been responsible for an immigrant's absorption needs, including housing and employment, for the first six months to a year, after which time the Ministry of Absorption takes over.

Critics of the division of responsibility include Simcha Dinitz, newly elected chairman of the World Zionist Organization-Jewish Agency Executive, and Mendel Kaplan, chairman of the Jewish Agency Board of Governors.

During a satellite television conference with American Jewish leaders earlier this month, Kaplan said that the transfer of the funding and operation of immigrant absorption centers from the Jewish Agency to the government would save the agency an estimated \$30 to \$40 million.

And in an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency during his recent U.S. visit, Dinitz said he was in favor of the transfer.

"The bottom line is whether it will be easier for the immigrant to be absorbed," he said. "We want to be sure that instead of reporting to two authorities the immigrant won't also be reporting to no authorities."

The transfer of responsibility will be overseen by a committee that includes Tsur, Dinitz, Kaplan and Finance Minister Moshe Nissim.

According to Kaplan, provisions will be made for the Jewish Agency to retain a monitoring function of absorption center facilities.

(New York correspondent Andrew Silow Carroll contributed to this report.)

## CABINET MEMBER BOUND FOR SOUTH AFRICA

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 18 (JTA) -- Cabinet Minister Yosef Shapira insisted before he left for South Africa on Thursday that his trip would not violate the government's decision last year to strictly limit its contacts with the Pretoria regime.

Shapira, a member of the National Religious Party who holds no portfolio, said his visit would be confined to the South African Jewish community and its purpose is to promote immigration to Israel, which is vital to the state.

He said he would not meet officially with

any member of the South African government, whose apartheid policies are anathema to Israel.

But Shapira admitted that he might have a chance meeting with officials attending events marking Israel's 40th anniversary.

## JEWISH COMMUNITY URGED TO BECOME MORE EDUCATED ABOUT AIDS CRISIS

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 18 (JTA) -- A senior official of the New York UJA-Federation urged leaders of Jewish community relations agencies this week "to be educated" and "have a public policy in place" to address the civil liberties issue and emotional implications of the AIDS epidemic.

"We are seven years too late devoting some time to the problem of AIDS in the Jewish community," said Dr. Jeffrey Solomon, executive director of the Domestic Affairs Division of the UJA-Federation.

He spoke at a forum on AIDS and the Jewish community relations field at the 44th plenary session of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council here.

"We have accepted misery to too great a degree," Solomon said, calling for better education to combat misinformation about AIDS.

He said federation day care centers and summer camps faced difficult choices between admitting children known to be infected with the AIDS virus and dealing with parents who feared that their own healthy children might contract the disease through ordinary contact.

"We have to be ready before a child sends in an application. We have to be educated, we have to have a policy in place," Solomon said.

He cited public opinion polls that found the highest percentage of the population misinformed about how the AIDS virus can be transmitted are people over age 50. He pointed out that "that age corresponds with the age of leadership in federations."

Solomon urged the delegates at the NJCRAC plenum, representing more than 100 communities throughout the country, to educate their own leadership in order to develop policies responsive to the needs of the AIDS victims.

He said the situation offers "a wonderful opportunity to work in intergroup relations" because the Jewish community and other minority communities share needs and goals on this common issue of concern.

Another speaker at the forum, Lois Waldman, co-director of the American Jewish Congress Commission on Law and Social Action, said, "The Jewish community, traditionally concerned with discrimination, must support the federal laws which prohibit discrimination against AIDS victims."

Waldman stressed the laws are necessary because "the sheer numbers of people infected by AIDS makes the traditional policy of isolating those with infectious diseases impractical."

According to Dr. Edward Gomperts, a specialist in hemophilia at the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles, about 50,000 AIDS cases have been reported nationally, and more than 1 million Americans are infected with the disease.

Waldman identified mandatory testing and screening and violations of confidentiality as issues of human rights concern. Some 35 states have laws prohibiting discrimination against the handicapped, but it is not clear whether they cover AIDS victims, she said.

## JEWISH PRESS SEEKS CONTEXT IN COVERING MIDDLE EAST CRISIS

By Andrew Silow Carroll

NEW YORK, Feb. 18 (JTA) -- Context, balance and history are the words used by editors of North American Jewish newspapers to describe their coverage of the Palestinian unrest in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

They said in interviews that they can be supportive of Israel while remaining true to journalistic standards of objectivity and fairness.

Their general approach is not to apologize for Israel or deny the severity of incidents, but to provide the context that they say is too often missing from the general media's Middle East reporting.

"We're trying to do whatever we can to give the Israelis' point of view," said Gary Rosenblatt, editor of the privately-owned Baltimore Jewish Times and Jewish News of Detroit. "We always walk a thin line between being an advocate and being a cheerleader, of being in support of Israel without losing our credibility. It's something we're always going to struggle to do."

Rosenblatt pointed to his editorial critical of the Israeli policy of beating suspected Palestinian rioters. But even as the editorial described the policy as "inhumane and indefensible," it took pains to describe the regional conflict, including the "callous and calculated disregard by the Arab states," that led to the Palestinian problem.

Marc Klein, editor and publisher of the Northern California Jewish Bulletin in San Francisco, had a similar answer. "As editor of a Jewish paper, my tone has to be different (than the mainstream press). We need to present a situation in its total context, its historical context, its emotional context," he said.

Klein added, however, that "Our responsibility is not to color stories, but put them in the best possible light. The news stories are all there for people to see. We're not hiding any facts."

### More Of An Advocate

The Canadian Jewish News of Toronto seems to take a stronger advocacy role. "Ninety-five percent of my coverage has been in the interest of Israel," said editor Maurice Lucow. "Five percent has been description of the rioting" provided by news services, including the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Updates on the rioting are relegated to the inside pages, he said, while his front-page stories have focused on the American government's role in reactivating the peace process or Israeli President Chaim Herzog's rebuttal to American Jewish leaders critical of the beatings policy.

Lucow said he would not be "comfortable" publishing an editorial critical of the beatings policy.

Like many editors, Lucow is critical of the general media's coverage of Israel since the riots began last Dec. 9. General newspaper and television coverage of the crisis has not only been overplayed in comparison to other strife, editors say, but in failing to treat the story as a dispute of at least 40 years has demonized the Israeli military.

Most Jewish weeklies have published editorials or news stories pointing out that the media work under few restrictions in Israel, and are able to obtain -- and eagerly broadcast -- dramatic footage of stone-throwing youths.

But according to Cynthia Dettelbach, editor

of the Cleveland Jewish News, "I don't think it is our role simply to be the antidote to what the 'other side' is saying. . . The media have been biased, but that is not carte blanche to say that Israel is always right. These issues are not black and white. There are gray areas. And it's not my job to whitewash the gray areas."

Yet some critics believe that Jewish newspapers, whose editors often answer directly to the local Jewish federation or a board of directors that overlaps with local fund-raising leadership, have no choice but to "whitewash" their coverage of Israeli and other Jewish news.

Probably the most outspoken critic has been Jerome Lippman, editor and publisher of the Long Island Jewish World and past-president of the American Jewish Press Association.

"A majority of Jewish newspapers are house organs (of the federations), and as a result it is a shock to most Jews to read (mainstream) dailies and find news that is not positive about the State of Israel or Judaism," he said.

According to Robert Cohn, editor of the St. Louis Jewish Light and current president of AJPA, half of North America's Jewish newspapers have affiliations with federations or other organizations. (The Cleveland, San Francisco and Toronto newspapers also accept local federation subsidies.) To debate whether such affiliation is best for Jewish journalism is "counterproductive," he said.

Cohn, whose own paper is a constituent agency of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis and has an autonomous board of directors, said the debate has shifted to how federations get involved in editorial policy -- especially in smaller communities where, according to Cohn, "editors feel weak editorially."

### Range Of Approach, Quality

Federation-run newspapers range from 12-page bulletins with limited national and international coverage to more comprehensive weeklies of 100 pages and more.

One of the latter is the Jewish Exponent, published by the Federation of Jewish Agencies of Greater Philadelphia. Its managing editor, Al Erlick, said his editorial pages represent the spectrum of Jewish opinion.

"Is there federation input? Certainly," said Erlick. "Just like there's input from any publisher. Is an editor ever a free agent? No, he's not." But, said Erlick, "I've never been told to print anything but the truth."

Robert Forman, federation executive vice president and publisher's representative of the Exponent, said he sees the Exponent as "a vehicle to help build the Jewish community."

According to Forman, the federation meets on a regular basis with the newspaper's editorial staff. And it does set limits on what can be printed in the paper.

Recently, the federation declined to sell advertising space in the Exponent for a petition signed by 240 Philadelphians critical of Israel's occupation of the territories.

According to Forman, the board does not approve any ad that "blatantly misrepresents" Israel or any other issue. However, a revised version was allowed to be published.

Yet, independent ownership is no more an indication of editorial quality or diversity of opinion than is federation sponsorship, most of the editors said. As Dettelbach of the Cleveland Jewish News put it, the papers publish "what I feel in my conscience is the right way to go."