

**COURT CONVICTS VANUNU OF TREASON,
ESPIONAGE AND ASSISTING ENEMY**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 24 (JTA) -- Mordechai Vanunu, charged with providing a British newspaper two years ago with top secret data about Israel's nuclear weapons capability, was convicted of treason and espionage Thursday. His sentence will be pronounced Sunday.

The trial lasted more than a year in a Jerusalem district court closed to the press and public. But the three-judge panel reportedly took only a few minutes to reach a verdict.

Vanunu, 34, who once worked as a technician at Israel's nuclear facility in Dimona, was found guilty of treason, two counts of grave espionage, assisting the enemy in its war against Israel and damaging state security. Each offense carries a maximum penalty of life imprisonment.

Although the death penalty can also be applied, the prosecution is considered unlikely to request it.

Vanunu's lawyer, Avigdor Feldman, said he would probably appeal the verdict to Israel's Supreme Court. Speaking to reporters after the conviction was announced, he said the court had rejected all of the defense's legal arguments that related to the "very complex issues of nuclear weapons."

Feldman said Vanunu took the verdict calmly and was prepared to continue to fight for its reversal.

Vanunu's brother, Asher, 26, said the family had not expected Mordechai "to be released today," but had hoped he would be acquitted at least of the treason charge.

Vanunu provided detailed information and photographs of the Dimona plant to the Sunday Times of London in September 1986. A few days later he was reported missing.

Allegedly Kidnapped

According to his family, the defense and other sources, he was enticed to Rome on Sept. 30, 1986, by a woman working for Israeli intelligence. There he was kidnapped by agents of Mossad, Israel's secret service, drugged and brought to Israel, where he was held in solitary confinement for weeks before the Israeli authorities admitted he was in Israel.

The Israelis insisted he came to Israel voluntarily. During the early stages of his trial, while being taken to court in a police van, Vanunu flashed a message to reporters indicating he had been kidnapped.

From that time, he was allowed no chance to contact the news media. On his frequent trips from prison to the court, he was forced to wear a motorcycle helmet covering his face, and the windows of the police van were blacked out. All demands that he be tried in open court were rejected.

Vanunu has a checkered personal history. Born to a religious family of Moroccan Jewish origin, he turned to the extreme right wing as a youth, reportedly joining Rabbi Meir Kahane's Kach movement. Later he shifted to the far left and became a pacifist.

After ending his employment at Dimona, he

went to Australia, where he converted to the Anglican faith. When he was charged with espionage, his family initially disowned him. But later they rallied to his support.

During the course of his trial, Vanunu drew much sympathy worldwide. In Amsterdam Thursday, a Protestant clergyman, Johan Snoek, urged the Dutch public to send Vanunu postcards of sympathy. He referred to the accused as a "prisoner of conscience."

Last week, the Netherlands Council of Churches expressed concern over the treatment of Vanunu by the Israeli authorities. It asked Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek to convey the government's official concern to Israel.

According to some experts, the information from Vanunu published in the Sunday Times of London indicated that Israel has a stockpile of nuclear weapons and is capable of building as many as 10 atomic bombs a year. If true, this would rank the Jewish state sixth among the world's nuclear powers.

Israel has refused to sign the nuclear non-proliferation treaty, but has insisted it will not be the first country to introduce nuclear weapons to the Middle East.

(Amsterdam correspondent Henrietta Boas contributed to this report.)

**U.S., SOVIETS DISCUSS HUMAN RIGHTS,
BUT FAIL TO BRIDGE GAP ON MIDEAST**
By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, March 24 (JTA) -- Secretary of State George Shultz said Wednesday night that he and Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze disagreed sharply in two days of meetings on the structure of an international peace conference on the Middle East.

The United States views such a conference as ceremonial and leading to direct negotiations between the parties, Shultz told reporters after 12 hours of talks Wednesday with Shevardnadze.

But he said the Soviets view a conference as having authority to impose a solution. Such a conception "is really sharply different from ours," Shultz said.

The current U.S. Middle East peace initiative contains a provision for an international peace conference to be convened prior to the first round of direct negotiations between Arab countries and Israel. Under the U.S. formula, the five members of the United Nations Security Council would chair the conference, which could not impose solutions.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir opposes both an international peace conference that could impose solutions, as well as a purely ceremonial one, while Foreign Minister Shimon Peres supports a ceremonial conference, as contained in the U.S. plan.

Shamir said last week in Washington that Shultz had convinced him last fall to agree to an international conference chaired by the two superpowers, and said he would be willing to go to Moscow. But such a conference could not impose solutions.

Jordan reportedly rejected that idea, insisting on wider international involvement.

Shultz did not say how Soviet rejection of

the international peace conference provision affects the vitality of his initiative, but said he would return to the Middle East if there was "even a remote chance of being constructive. I don't have to have a high probability" of success, he added.

Asher Naim, information minister at the Israeli Embassy here, said Tuesday at the National Press Club that Shultz would return to the region within two weeks.

On human rights, Shultz said that topic "as always" was first on the agenda at his meeting with Shevardnadze, and was the principle subject at Shevardnadze's meeting with President Reagan Wednesday. During that meeting, Reagan announced that a summit will be held in Moscow May 29 to June 2.

A 'Roundtable' On Human Rights

A new forum for discussing human rights was initiated Thursday. From now on, in addition to the usual human rights discussions at high-level U.S.-Soviet meetings, a special "roundtable" will be convened.

The first such session met Thursday. The U.S. delegation was led by Richard Schifter, assistant secretary of state for human rights and humanitarian affairs. It reportedly focused on international human rights accords.

Shultz said that in his talks with Shevardnadze, he noted that the Soviet Union has permitted an increase in German and Armenian ethnic emigration, "but at the same time we expressed our concern that Jewish emigration seems to have reached a plateau."

He said Shevardnadze called for improvement in U.S. human rights policies. He said that racial discrimination still exists and that capital punishment for minors should be eliminated.

Shevardnadze, speaking through a translator at a news conference at the Soviet Embassy, termed the human rights discussions "increasingly constructive" and said "we have agreed that we should just continue an extremely critical manner of conversation on these matters, that we should abandon this accusatory and denouncing matter of talk on these questions."

He said the Politburo increasingly has been approving "legislation in the sphere of human rights and meeting the spiritual and material demands of people."

IDF ARRESTS UNDERGROUND MEMBERS AS TWO MORE DIE IN WEST BANK

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 24 (JTA) -- Israeli security forces have arrested the distributors of a leaflet calling for a general strike by Palestinians in the administered territories, Police Minister Haim Barlev announced Thursday.

He said the detainees, members of the Palestinian nationalist underground directing the unrest in the territories, are residents of the West Bank and East Jerusalem who allegedly support various terrorist organizations.

The leaflet, titled "Communique No. 11," ordered the strike Monday to mark the 20th anniversary of the Israel Defense Force incursion into Jordan to destroy a Palestine Liberation Organization base at the village of Karame. The strike did not materialize.

The Palestinian populace is regularly flooded with clandestine leaflets from the nationalist leadership instructing them where and when to

riot or carry out acts of civil disobedience.

Barlev said that all of the leaflets distributed in the territories so far are from different printing plants.

The commander of the Israel Defense Force in the Gaza Strip has ordered all printing plants in the area to obtain licenses and official approval to operate. It is the first such order issued by the Israeli military in many years. Failure to comply could result in closing the plants.

Two Dead In Balata

Meanwhile, a day of relative calm in the West Bank was shattered Thursday by a riot in the Balata refugee camp, near Nablus. Two Palestinians were shot dead by Israeli security forces.

Three border policemen and another Palestinian were injured in the incident, Israel Radio reported. A curfew was imposed on the camp. The violence reportedly erupted when camp residents attacked a border police patrol with stones and iron bars. The police opened fire in self-defense.

Earlier in the day, a resident of Idna village, in the Hebron area of the West Bank, was slightly injured resisting arrest. The IDF imposed a curfew on the village and arrested alleged "agitators."

In Kiryat Arba, a group known as the Committee for Road Safety, founded by Rabbi Meir Kahane's extremist Kach Party, denied Thursday that it was responsible for sabotaging fuel pumps Wednesday night at a gasoline station in the Etzion bloc settlements, south of Jerusalem.

A spokesman for the group denied it had threatened the station owner for selling gasoline to Arabs. The fuel pumps were damaged with a sharp instrument. The station has served many Arab customers this week, after the West Bank civil administration curtailed fuel supplies to Arab gasoline stations in the territory.

IDF ORDERED TO RETURN FILM OF SHOOTING By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 24 (JTA) -- Supreme Court Justice Aharon Barak ordered the security authorities Thursday to return "as soon as possible" film footage confiscated from foreign journalists last Sunday when Israel Defense Force reserve Sgt. Moshe Katz was shot to death near his guard post in Bethlehem.

He was the first IDF fatality since the Palestinian unrest began in the administered territories Dec. 9.

Barak permitted the security forces to develop the film, but they were under strict instructions not to damage it. Time and Newsweek magazines and the Reuters news agency had been urging return of the film by the end of the week.

ARAB PAPER CLOSED FOR A WEEK By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 24 (JTA) -- Premier Yitzhak Shamir ordered the closure Thursday for one week of the Arabic daily Al-Ittihad, Israel's only Arabic daily and an affiliate of the Rakah (Communist) Party. Shamir used his authority as acting interior minister.

The week-long closure means no Arabic daily will be published in Israel on March 30, Land Day, the anniversary of the confiscation of Arab land in the Galilee by the Israel Defense Force in 1976.

Land Day has been marked annually by Arab protests. Authorities fear more violence this year.

NEGOTIATE, SAYS BAR ILAN LETTER

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 24 (JTA) -- About 620 students and faculty members of Bar Ilan University presented a letter to President Chaim Herzog Thursday calling on the government to enter immediately into peace negotiations with Palestinian representatives.

Bar Ilan, a religiously oriented institution in Ramat Gan, is known to have right-wing nationalist elements. Student spokesman Aharon Samson said the signatories of the letter represented an unusual mix of Orthodox and secular Jewish students and faculty as well as Arabs.

"We want to show that in this university, also, there are people who are concerned by the present stalemate in any movement toward peace, both on our side and also on the part of the Arabs," Samson said. He said the signatories also protested the use of Israel Defense Force soldiers as riot police in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Samson added the hope the political bent of the student signatories ought to impress the government with the need to start peace talks with the Palestinians.

President Chaim Herzog accepted the letter without comment. He noted, however, that he has received appeals from people of various political and ideological views, which illustrated the many facets of the Israeli polity.

There have been strong peace movements among students and faculty at other leading universities, notably the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv University.

But at Tel-Aviv University, where the Labor Party won a resounding victory in the recent student council elections, several score students gathered Thursday to hear right-wing politicians denounce the Labor Party for supporting the new American peace initiative.

They carried placards calling for a firm stand against the peace package proposed by U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz and the idea of trading territory for peace.

Member of Knesset Uzi Landau of Likud urged rejection of the Shultz plan as a response to the Arab uprising in the administered territories. "The Arabs have found that unrest is a sharp and harmful weapon that splits the Jews of Israel. They won't give it up just because there is an international peace conference," he said.

Former IDF Chief of Staff Rafael Eitan, the rightwing Tzomet representative in the Knesset, faulted the government for not acting swiftly and firmly at the outset of the disturbances to end them quickly. "But it is still not too late," he said.

ISRAEL BOMBS TERRORIST FACILITIES

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 24 (JTA) -- Israel Air Force jets attacked terrorist targets in southern Lebanon Thursday for the second consecutive day and the fourth time this month.

Pilots reported direct hits on buildings used to store ammunition and equipment northeast of the Lebanese port city of Sidon. The bases and ammunition dumps were used by Abu Nidal's Fatah Revolutionary Council and other terrorist organizations, a military spokesman said.

Reports from Beirut said nine people were killed and five injured. Ten deaths were reported in the attack on the same area Wednesday.

ISRAEL LEGALIZES HOMOSEXUAL ACTIVITY

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 24 (JTA) -- The Knesset this week legalized homosexual activity between consenting adults, and raised to 20 years the maximum penalty for rape of either sex under aggravated circumstances.

The amendment to the penal code also bars publication of the name or identifying details of the victim of a sex attack, unless the victim gives permission, in court, for details to be published.

Homosexual activity was not previously included among the details of sexual crimes in the penal code. The new legislation is aimed at clarifying the government's policy.

Shulamit Aloni of the Citizens Rights Movement, who has been pressing for such legislation for the past 10 years and is herself an outspoken champion of women's rights, nevertheless had objections to the amendment as adopted.

She said the law is deficient because it presents women as objects and as passive participants in sexual activity, and does not consider that women may be responsible for rape.

The new law was welcomed, however, by the Jerusalem Post, which wrote Thursday, in an editorial headlined "Protecting Human Dignity," that the Knesset has "banished ancient prejudice and the denial of personal freedom from the civil law bearing on matters of sexual conduct."

EPA DECIDES TO BAR USE OF NAZI DATA

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, March 24 (JTA) -- The administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency decided this week to bar scientists from including data on World War II Nazi experiments in a forthcoming report on a deadly toxic gas, an EPA spokesman said Thursday.

The gas, known as phosgene, is used in manufacturing plastics and pesticides, the New York Times reported Monday. It had been deployed as a poisonous gas in World War I by the Germans, said John Kasper, the agency spokesman.

He said EPA Administrator Lee Thomas received a letter from agency scientists Monday questioning whether it was ethical to use data from Nazi doctors, and that Thomas decided later that day to exclude the information. Kasper said he could not recall any case where Nazi scientific data has been used in an EPA study.

ISRAEL SECOND IN SOCCER

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 24 (JTA) -- Israel's national soccer team came a step closer to qualifying for the Olympic Games in Seoul this summer when it trounced Taiwan 9-0 during the Four-nation Oceania Region play-offs in New Zealand this week.

But a 1-1 tie with New Zealand on Wednesday left Australia with enough points to knock Israel out of the running.

The only hope for Israel is if Australia loses badly to Taiwan in a game in Auckland this Sunday. That seems unlikely considering Taiwan's poor showing in the pre-Olympic matches so far.

After five games, Australia is in first place, Israel is in second, New Zealand in third and Taiwan last. Israel is playing in the Oceania Region because Arab pressure kept it from competing in the Middle East region matches.

JTA ASSISTANT EDITOR RESIGNS TO ASSUME POST IN MILWAUKEE

NEW YORK, March 24 (JTA) -- Andrew Muchin will be stepping down Friday from his position as assistant editor of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, a job he has held nearly two years.

Muchin, 30, has resigned to become editor of The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle, where he served as managing editor before joining JTA in August 1986.

JTA Editor Mark Joffe is restructuring the assistant editor job and expects to appoint a person to fill the position soon. Joffe, who worked closely with Muchin, praised the assistant editor's hard work and success at improving many of JTA's editorial products.

"Andy's conscientiousness, his thoroughness and his good humor have been valuable to our operation," said Joffe. "The staff and I personally will miss him a great deal."

Mark Seal, executive vice president of JTA, also had warm words for Muchin, saying that he had "increased the level of professionalism" at the agency.

"Andy substantially improved our feature service and made the Community News Reporter an indispensable and interesting publication," he said, referring to two of Muchin's major responsibilities.

William Lee Frost, president of JTA, observed that Muchin played "a very significant role in improving relations between the agency and the American Jewish press." He noted that JTA had profited tremendously from Muchin's experience working on a Jewish weekly and his awareness of the needs of client newspapers.

Muchin leaves the New York area next week and expects to begin work in Milwaukee in late April.

"I've learned a tremendous amount about journalism and the Jewish community here," he said. "I hope to apply that knowledge at my new job and in living my life. I also leave realizing how important JTA is to the general knowledge of the Jewish community."

AIPAC FOUNDER I.L. KENEN DEAD AT 83

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 24 (JTA) -- I.L. (Si) Kenen, the founder and former longtime executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC), died of a heart attack Wednesday at his home here. Funeral services and burial will be in Washington on Friday.

Kenen, who was 83, began his long career of lobbying in support of a Jewish state in 1943, when he was director of the American Emergency Committee on Zionist Affairs in New York. He was the Jewish Agency's information director at the United Nations in 1947 and 1948, and then in 1949, was a member of the first Israeli delegation to the United Nations.

Kenen moved to Washington in 1951 and established the American Zionist Committee to lobby Congress in support of Israel. Three years later the committee became AIPAC, the only official lobby for Israel in the United States.

Kenen had a wide range of friends in both parties in Congress and always tried to keep Israel out of partisan politics.

In 1951, the immediate goal of the lobbying effort was to seek \$150 million in assistance for

Israel. Despite State Department opposition to any aid to Israel for fear of alienating the Arab countries, Kenen was able to win approval for \$65 million.

When Kenen retired in 1974, U.S. aid to Israel totaled more than a \$1 billion.

In 1957, Kenen used a \$700 speaking honorarium to create the Near East Report, and was its longtime editor. He was editor emeritus of the weekly pro-Israel newsletter at the time of his death.

"Si Kenen was one of those Jewish leaders who dedicated his lifetime to the Jewish people," Thomas Dine, AIPAC's current executive director, said Thursday.

"He taught us that lobbying is an American responsibility and when done correctly, is respected by all. Si's vision led him from picking up the pieces of European Jewry to cementing the friendship between the United States and Israel."

Kenen was born in St. Stephen, New Brunswick, on March 7, 1905, to an Orthodox Jewish family. His father was an active Zionist who knew Theodor Herzl and other early Zionist leaders.

As a young man, Kenen was an actor in Toronto and then a newspaperman in Cleveland, where he became a founder of Local No.1 of the American Newspaper Guild in 1933.

In 1985, AIPAC marked Kenen's 80th birthday with the establishment of the Jewish National Fund's I.L. Kenen Forest in Israel.

LABOR PARTY RE-ELECTS PERES

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 24 (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Shimon Peres was re-elected unanimously as leader of the Labor Party and thus its candidate for prime minister in the next elections.

His re-election Thursday at a special session of the party's Central Committee was in fact a formality, as he was unopposed. Peres drew warm applause when he said in his acceptance speech that his election was "a mandate not for me the man, but for the political path I represent."

He dwelt on the burning need, as he saw it, to pursue the peace process. "Despite its painfulness... there is a solution," Peres declared. But "first the politicians must not dodge the issues or foist them on the army. They must tell the people the truth."

NRP NARROWLY BACKS ZEVULUN HAMMER

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 24 (JTA) -- The moderate wing of the National Religious Party won a narrow but significant victory late Wednesday night, when the party's central committee endorsed the Knesset candidacy of Religious Affairs Minister Zevulun Hammer, with 60.3 percent of the vote.

Party rules require that any member who has served two consecutive terms in the Knesset must be endorsed by 60 percent of the Central Committee before he can stand for re-election. Out of more than 900 votes cast, Hammer squeaked through by a margin of only two.

He was savagely opposed by the party's right wing, the hard-line Matzad faction led by Gush Emunim, the militant West Bank settlement movement, and Yosef Shapira, a minister without portfolio. They had mounted an intense campaign to paint Hammer as soft on the settlements and a supporter of Palestinian autonomy.