

HERZOG ASKS LIKUD AND LABOR TO CONSIDER UNITY COALITION

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 7 (JTA) — President Chaim Herzog has queried both Likud and Labor on the possibility of forming another unity coalition government, to effect electoral reforms, Labor Party sources said Monday.

The Labor sources said they welcomed the idea, but believe it is not practical because of Likud's reluctance to offend the small parties.

The small parties so far have managed to block all moves toward electoral reform. But united, with 79 Knesset seats between them, the two big blocs could easily override the small factions.

One often proposed reform is to raise the percentage of votes a party must win in order to gain entry into the 120-member Knesset. It now stands at 1 percent of the total votes cast.

Raising the threshold would eliminate many of the single-interest splinter factions that now must be bargained with in order to achieve a governing majority.

Whoever Herzog asks to form the next government is given 21 days to complete the task. He is entitled to one 21-day extension, after which the president may approach a different leader.

Herzog has begun informal consultations with every Knesset faction to hear its recommendations. His first meetings were with Likud and Labor representatives.

Religious Parties Undecided

But the chance of a Likud-led coalition with the religious parties, while still a possibility, is less certain than it appeared immediately after the elections last week.

The ultra-Orthodox Shas and Agudat Yisrael parties asked Herzog to postpone meeting with them because neither has decided yet whether to back Premier Yitzhak Shamir, the Likud leader, or Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who heads Labor.

Likud was somewhat relieved Monday when Gen. Rafael Eitan announced that he would suggest that Herzog turn to Shamir. Eitan heads the far right-wing Tsomet faction, which won two Knesset seats in the Nov. 1 elections.

Tsomet is closer ideologically to Likud than Labor, but Eitan reportedly had been considering an offer from Peres to become agriculture minister in a Labor-led Cabinet.

But Likud's relief was mitigated by the fact that Eitan, too, favors a national unity government, without the religious parties.

Moledet, another party of the extreme right, has announced its preference for a Shamir-led government.

Israel Radio reported that Shamir has offered the party's leader, retired Gen. Rehavam Zeevi, the sub-Cabinet post of deputy minister of education.

If true, this is likely to arouse opposition within Likud and in Degel HaTorah, a new religious party Likud is trying to woo as a coalition partner.

Zeevi campaigned on a single issue: the "transfer" — meaning expulsion — of Arabs from

the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

This is not a policy espoused by Likud and is hardly likely to win the approval of the dovishly inclined Degel HaTorah.

Shas Could Back Labor

Degel and Shas, which emerged from the elections as the largest of the four Orthodox parties, are both strongly influenced by the aged Rabbi Eliezer Schach of Bnei Brak.

Schach's principal objective is said to be the exclusion of Agudat Yisrael from the government. It is backed by his arch foe, Lubavitcher Rebbe Menachem Schneerson, who lives in Brooklyn.

It is not surprising then that Shas and Degel HaTorah have indicated they would like to see Labor in a broad government with Likud and several, but not all, of the Orthodox parties.

This gives Labor something of an edge in the ongoing jockeying. Likud would need the entire religious bloc in order to form a government.

Labor, in alignment with Shas and Degel, could attain a narrow on-paper majority, relying on the Communists and the Progressive List for Peace not to oppose them and hoping eventually to co-opt all or part of the National Religious Party.

CONSERVATIVE LEADERS CALL ON ISRAEL TO RESIST DEMANDS OF ORTHODOX BLOC

By Andrew Shlomo Carroll

NEW YORK, Nov. 7 (JTA) — Leaders of Judaism's Conservative movement decried the results of Israel's election Monday and called on the major parties to establish a government that would not have to accede to demands by the Orthodox political bloc.

"The elections have dramatically demonstrated the weakness of the present electoral system, which permits extremist parties, representing a small minority of the total population, to extort political, religious and financial concessions in exchange for their support of one of the major parties," the Council of Conservative Leaders said in a statement released here.

The statement was signed by the leaders of eight major Conservative organizations, including Dr. Ismar Schorsch, chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary; Rabbi Albert Lewis, president of the Rabbinical Assembly; and Franklin Kreutner, president of the United Synagogue of America.

The statement is a response to the strong showing in last Tuesday's election by Israel's Orthodox parties, which together won 18 seats in the 120-member Knesset.

Representing the balance of power between the rival Labor and Likud blocs, the religious parties are demanding that a law that would serve to delegitimize non-Orthodox Jewish denominations in Israel be adopted by a governing coalition.

The likeliest ally of the four religious parties that gained Knesset seats is Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's Likud bloc.

Despite Shamir's reassurances that he does not foresee "any decisive changes" in Israeli religious life, American Jews are worried that the next government will bow to the Orthodox pres-

sure to amend Israel's Law of Return to recognize only those conversions performed by an Orthodox rabbi.

'Rupture Of Unity' Feared

The Conservative leaders warned that measures adopted by a narrow coalition with the Orthodox parties "would inevitably lead to the deterioration of the quality of Israeli society and the rupture of its unity with the Diaspora."

They appealed to the leadership of Labor and Likud to resist the Orthodox pressure, and called for reforms of Israel's parliamentary electoral system to "deny the power of blackmail to one or more extremist groups."

The leaders' statement was the second Conservative statement this year condemning Israel's Orthodox bloc. In September, Schorsch accused the religious parties of repelling the majority of Israelis from religion and of blocking a peaceful settlement of the Palestinian issue by fostering a "messianic mind-set" among Israeli leaders.

In a telephone interview Monday, Schorsch said the movement feels justified in taking stands on Israeli politics when religious issues are in question.

The chancellor did not forecast what the movement's response would be to major changes in Israeli religious law. "We're not prepared to wait. It is before the coalition is formed that we have an optimum chance to affect the course of events. After the coalition is formed the die is cast."

Schorsch was scheduled to depart Monday night for Israel. He plans to speak before the annual convention of Masorti, the Conservative movement in Israel. He said he hopes to be able to speak to Shamir or Labor leader Shimon Peres to convey his concerns.

Also signing the Conservative statement were Stephen Peck, chairman of the JTS board; Evelyn Auerbach, president of the Women's League for Conservative Judaism; Dr. Jerome Agrest, president of the Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs; Neil Norry, president of the Foundation for Conservative Judaism in Israel; Simon Schwartz, president of Mercaz, the Conservative Zionist movement; and Marshall Wolke, president of the World Council of Synagogues.

SOLDIER KNIFED TO DEATH ON MOSHAV BY LABORER FROM THE WEST BANK

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Nov. 7 (JTA) — An Arab day-laborer fatally stabbed an Israeli reserve soldier and was himself shot to death Monday, in what may have been an altercation over money at Moshav Masua, in the Jordan Valley.

The soldier, Cpl. David Danieli, 28, of Ashkelon was slain by Hussein Abdullah Basharat, 21, from Tammoun village, near Nablus in the West Bank.

Danieli, a mathematics teacher on guard duty at Masua, was confronted by Basharat, who came to the moshav to claim money he said was owed him by a previous employer.

A dispute ensued during which Basharat knifed the soldier before he could reach for his Uzi submachine gun. The youth shouted "Allah Akhbar" (God is Great) during the act of killing.

A moshav member who witnessed the attack killed Basharat with an M-16 rifle.

The young Arab was well known by moshav

members who described him as a devout Moslem. It remained uncertain whether he came to Masua intending to kill or merely to claim money he thought was owed him.

SLA THWARTS THREE INFILTRATORS; IDF BOMBS TERROR BASE NEAR SIDON

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 7 (JTA) — The Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army claims it killed three Palestinian terrorists Sunday in what appeared to be a botched attempt to infiltrate Israel by sea.

In an apparently unrelated incident, Israeli helicopter gunships destroyed a boat rental shop Sunday afternoon, near the southern Lebanese port of Sidon.

The shop was suspected of links to the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Israel Defense Force said the helicopter target had been used as a weapons storage and a base for launching attacks on Israel.

Reports from Sidon said five people were wounded when four Israeli air force Cobra attack helicopters blasted the building and a nearby citrus grove with eight wire-guided rockets, shortly after 4 p.m. local time.

Lebanese police said the shopkeeper, Mahmoud Hijazi, was suspected of renting two motorboats to the PLO and selling them spare parts.

The police said the boats were used to smuggle arms to PLO fighters in the Rashidiya refugee camp, near Tyre, which has been attacked periodically by Amal, the mainstream Shiite militia.

In the infiltration incident, three armed terrorists dressed in wet suits landed from a rubber dinghy on a beach at the western end of the southern Lebanese security zone, about a half mile from the Israel border.

One of them was spotted by an SLA patrol while trying to fire a rocket-propelled grenade. He was killed.

The other two were killed after taking cover behind rocks, the SLA said. They were carrying two Kalashnikov assault rifles, ammunition and RPGs. There were no SLA casualties.

According to the SLA, the Palestinians apparently set out from a refugee camp near Sidon. They intended to land in Israel, but fell short of their goal because of faulty navigation.

No organization has claimed responsibility for the failed infiltration attempt.

ISRAELI ARAB VILLAGERS RIOT AS POLICE DESTROY THEIR HOMES

By Gil Sedan

TAIBA, Israel, Nov. 7 (JTA) — Police fired tear gas and wielded clubs to disperse rioting youths in this Israeli Arab village, where 15 illegally built houses were destroyed by bulldozers Monday.

Police reported four Taiba residents were injured, while local sources put the number of injured at 20. There were two arrests.

The demolition orders were issued by the Interior Ministry to enforce planning and construction laws.

Residents had constructed the buildings on agricultural land without permits, after the High Court of Justice twice rejected appeals by Taiba residents.

Taiba, near the Jewish city of Kfar Sava, has a population of about 25,000.

U.N. COMMITTEE ADOPTS RESOLUTION CALLING FOR END TO ISRAEL AID By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, Nov. 7 (JTA) — A United Nations committee has adopted a resolution requesting U.N. bodies not to extend any form of assistance to Israel and condemned the Jewish state for measures it has taken to quell the uprising in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The resolution was adopted Friday night by the General Assembly's Economic and Financial Committee, also known as the Second Committee.

The vote was 90-14 with 14 abstentions. Israel was joined in voting against the resolution by the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and most of the West European countries.

Other parts of the resolution called on the U.N. Centre for Human Settlements to supervise an assistance program for the Palestinian people, and to provide funds for 20 experts to prepare an adequate program in close cooperation with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The fund would require an extra appropriation of some \$127,000 by the United Nations.

The resolution and the bitter attacks against Israel in the course of the committee's debate were sharply criticized by the United States and Israel.

The American representative, Harry Cahill, complained that "at a time of healing and increasing understanding within the United Nations, we come to something as destructive and damaging as this document (the anti-Israeli resolution)."

Cahill noted that the United States is the largest single donor of economic assistance to the Palestinian people and that Washington earmarked \$15 million for that purpose for 1989.

The Israeli delegate, Yaacov Cohen, called the resolution "polemical and impractical," and said that Israel would not be willing to receive the experts referred to by the resolution.

Cohen suggested that the money to pay for those experts should be spent by the United Nations in disaster areas such as Bangladesh.

DISCOVERY OF WEAPONS AVERTS ATTACK ON FRANKFURT SYNAGOGUE By David Kantor

BONN, Nov. 7 (JTA) — A possible Arab terrorist attack on a Frankfurt synagogue during prayer services this Wednesday night, the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht, has been averted.

Police disclosed that a large cache of weapons and ammunition was seized last week in an apartment facing the synagogue on Baumweg Street.

Four Arabs were taken into custody. According to the police, they are members of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, a terrorist group headed by Ahmed Jabril.

Security sources said one of the Arabs entered West Germany from East Berlin. Earlier, he was in Damascus, where he met with Syrian intelligence agents and Jabril, the sources said.

The weapons found in the apartment included anti-tank missiles, which could penetrate the special concrete and armored glass structures fitted on some synagogues in West Germany as a routine safety precaution.

The newspaper Die Welt said the police are investigating the possibility that some of the weapons were intended for West German terrorists

who work with Palestinian groups.

But it appeared that an attack on the synagogue was planned to coincide with remembrance of Kristallnacht (the night of broken glass), the first organized pogrom in Nazi Germany, which occurred on the night of Nov. 9-10, 1938.

Frankfurt, home to the largest Jewish community in West Germany, is to be the center of the memorial events.

The main one, at the West End synagogue Nov. 9, will be attended by Richard von Weizsacker, president of the Federal Republic, and Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

It will be heavily protected. For that reason, police believe, the terrorists targeted the smaller, more vulnerable synagogue on Baumweg Street.

TWO GERMANY'S WAGE IMAGE BATTLE OVER WHO'S MORE SENSITIVE TO JEWS By David Kantor

BONN, Nov. 7 (JTA) — The East German news media have launched a propaganda campaign to depict the German Democratic Republic as more sensitive than West Germany to the suffering of Jews during the Nazi era.

They are trying to make that point as both Germanys prepared for a series of commemorative events marking the 50th anniversary of Kristallnacht, the first organized pogrom in the Third Reich, on the night of Nov. 9-10.

The East German press is hammering away at the alleged snub given Heinz Galinski, leader of West Germany's Jewish community, when he asked to address the Bundestag at a memorial session this week.

It was the subject of a long article in Neues Deutschland, the main Communist newspaper in East Germany, which dwelt on Galinski's charge of "insensitivity" levelled at the leadership of the Bundestag, which is the West German parliament.

East German Jewish leaders are cooperating in the campaign. Peter Kirchner, chairman of the Jewish community in East Berlin, said Sunday he was shocked by the Bundestag's failure to invite Galinski to speak.

Speech To Volkskammer

Kirchner said that in contrast, the leader of East Germany's Jewish community, Sigmund Roitstein, will deliver a speech to the Volkskammer, the East German parliament, at an upcoming session devoted to the Kristallnacht memorial.

Not mentioned was the fact, noted by Bundestag Chairman Philip Jenninger, that Galinski is to address a nationwide television memorial to be broadcast on the Kristallnacht anniversary. He will share honors with Richard von Weizsacker, the president of the Federal Republic, and Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

Kirchner said that in his opinion, East Germany acts more courageously than West Germany in coming to grips with the Nazi past.

That fits in with East German efforts to depict West Germany as a place where "veteran Nazis, heavily protected by police, were meeting regularly to promote their traditions."

Until recently, the GDR, unlike West Germany, refused to acknowledge any responsibility for Nazi crimes.

Whereas Bonn, since the 1950s, has paid out billions in reparations for Jewish material losses under the Nazis, East Germany only now is beginning to consider some token payment to Holocaust survivors.

COURT GIVES OKAY TO DEPORT EX-NAZI; THREE COMRADES FACING SAME FATE

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Nov. 7 (JTA) -- Deportation and denaturalization proceedings have been brought in several U.S. courts against four alleged former Nazis who served together in a Nazi killing unit in Latvia.

On Nov. 1, the U.S. Immigration Court in Chicago gave the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations an order of deportation against Konrad Kalejs, who allegedly served in the Arajs Kommando, a Latvian execution squad.

Judge Anthony Petrone issued a lengthy decision adjudging Kalejs deportable, based on proof submitted by OSI that he was an officer and a company commander of the Arajs Kommando in Riga.

Kalejs was reportedly also a commander of the guards at Salaspils, the largest concentration camp in all of Latvia, as well as the camp at Porkhov, in Russia.

OSI also has cases pending against three others who it says served with Kalejs in the Arajs Kommando. They are Edgars Inde of Minneapolis; Mikels Kirsteins, a resident of Syracuse; and Valdis Didrichsons, who lives in Seattle.

Court papers filed in federal district court in Minneapolis last Wednesday say Inde, 79, a long-time resident of Minneapolis, was hired by the U.S. Army's Military Labor Service in West Germany as a civilian guard in 1947 and worked for the American Army until 1949, when he immigrated to this country.

The denaturalization suit filed by OSI August 22 is the department's first step in trying to strip Inde of his citizenship. If successful, proceedings would begin to deport Inde from this country.

Major Victory

The OSI considers the Kalejs case one of its major victories. This is reportedly the first time a Latvian war crimes suspect has been defeated in a denaturalization or deportation trial, which could have profound implications for all other Arajs Kommando cases, a Justice Department source said.

Kalejs, who is 75 years old, lives in the Chicago suburb of Winnetka. He also has a residence in St. Petersburg, Fla.

Kalejs entered this country in 1959 from Australia, where he had become a citizen. He concealed from U.S. immigration officials his wartime activities.

Initial papers were filed against Kalejs on Nov. 30, 1984. His trial was held in Chicago this past summer.

Kalejs, who has until Nov. 14 to appeal the decision, has asked that if found deportable he be sent to Australia, where he remains a citizen.

The Arajs Kommando execution unit was headed by Viktors Arajs, who was found living in West Germany in the 1970s under an assumed name. In 1980, Arajs was convicted of mass murder and sentenced to life imprisonment.

Arajs, who died in prison last January, executed a sworn affidavit for Kalejs' use in which he insisted that Kalejs had not been in the Arajs Kommando.

However an OSI source said that several years earlier, when questioned by an OSI investigator in his West German jail cell, Arajs stated "without reservation" that Kalejs had indeed served in his unit.

JEWISH PLAY WITH ZIONIST THEME IS PERFORMED AT MOSCOW THEATER

By David Kantor

MOSCOW, Nov. 7 (JTA) -- Most of the audience was Jewish. Most of the performers were Russian. And while the dialogue was in Russian, it was liberally sprinkled with Yiddish phrases, and nearly all of the songs were sung in Hebrew.

The place was Moscow's Hermitage Theater. The play, staged there two weeks ago, was "Benjamin III's Trip to the Holy Land," based on a humorous tale by Mendele Mocher Sforim, the famed Jewish storyteller of 19th and early 20th century Russia.

According to Mikhail Levitin, chief director of the Hermitage Theater, and others, the performance was a breakthrough. It was the first time a Soviet theater was allowed to stage a play that symbolizes Jewish aspirations to go to Israel.

The theater was not under pressure by the authorities to renounce the play, though it contains a very strong Jewish national element, Levitin told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

The critics, in fact, hailed the performance as superb, and praised the actors and director alike for their excellent work.

"Today, in the age of perestroika (restructuring) and glasnost (openness), you cannot deal with Soviet culture but disregard Jewish culture," Levitin said.

"And Jewish culture inevitably implies dealing with the land of Israel and the people of Israel," he added.

Hebrew Words And Songs

Some of the Hebrew songs contained unabashed calls to go to Israel. The enthusiastic audience of several hundred was brought to tears when Russian actors uttered such Hebrew words as "Eretz Yisrael," "Har Zion," "Kever Rachel Imenu," "Ribono Shel Olam" and many more.

When the audience demanded an encore, the cast burst into a rousing "Heveinu Shalom Aleichem," joined by virtually everybody in the house.

Evgeny Gerchakov, the Russian-Jewish actor who played the title role of Benjamin, told the visiting Americans: "You don't believe it? Well it is true. This is perestroika. Each people has a homeland, and this piece tells us something about the homeland of the Jewish people."

For the first time in the history of the Hermitage, the theater program was printed in both Russian and Hebrew.

Most of the audience, obviously Jewish, had heard about it, either in the synagogue, by word of mouth or by accident.

Members of a group of United Jewish Appeal activists from Boston who happened to be in Moscow heard of the play from Jewish activists.

But Levitin and director Sergei Korovin said they planned to show the play to the general public.

"We believe its message is important for non-Jews too," they said.

A guest of honor at the Hermitage performance was Meron Gordon, head of an Israeli consular delegation that came to Moscow this summer, the first Israeli diplomatic mission at any level to visit the Soviet Union in 21 years.

Said Gordon: "Lately we have known so many 'firsts' in Soviet-Israeli relations. This has been another first, and certainly a very special one."