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RABIN SUGGESTS COALITION GOVERNMENT WITH TWO CABINET POSTS FOR LABOR

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 16 (JTA) -- Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin recommended Wednesday that the Labor Party join a broad-based coalition government led by Likud Premier Yitzhak Shamir, provided that certain conditions are met.

Rabin, a former prime minister and a powerful force in Labor, said his party would have to be given two of the four senior Cabinet posts in the new government.

Apart from prime minister, they are minister of defense, foreign minister and finance minister.

Shamir is said by many to prefer Rabin as defense minister to Ariel Sharon, his rival for leadership of Likud's dominant Herut faction.

Rabin said he thought Likud ought to keep the foreign ministry and give Labor the treasury. He said that such an arrangement would make it easier for the prime minister and the foreign minister to implement a practical approach to peacemaking.

According to Rabin, Likud favors direct talks under a superpower umbrella.

In addition to the top portfolios, Rabin said, Labor would have to have the same number of ministers as Likud in the new Cabinet.

There would also need to be a mechanism in the Inner Cabinet, the government's top policy-making body, to prevent either Likud or Labor from imposing its policies.

Shamir already has President Chaim Herzog's mandate to form a new government. It is based on the support of the four religious parties, whose 18 Knesset seats would give Likud and its right-wing allies a governing majority in the 120-member Knesset.

But Herzog made clear in his talk with Shamir Monday that he favored a more broadly based government, and Shamir appeared to agree it was desirable.

Rabin conceded that Labor could not insist on complete parity with Likud in the new government, but that it should demand equality and partnership.

In retrospect, Rabin said, it was a mistake for Labor not to have joined the Likud-led government of Premier Menachem Begin in 1981. He thought the Lebanon war might not have happened if that had been done.

AFTER REVIEW OF TEXT, ADMINISTRATION SAYS PNC DECLARATION IS INADEQUATE

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Nov. 16 (JTA) -- The State Department has reviewed the political statements issued at the end of the Palestine National Council's three-day meeting in Algiers and has found them inadequate.

Department spokesman Charles Redman said Wednesday that they neither meet the requirements of the Middle East peace process nor the conditions set by the United States before Washington will have any dealings with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The conditions are recognition of Israel's right to exist, acceptance of U.N. Security Coun-

cil Resolutions 242 and a renunciation of terrorism.

The Reagan administration had refused for the last two days any comment on the PNC's political statements until it could study the text, although it noted that there were positive elements.

"After reviewing the outcome of the Palestine National Council, there are signs that there are Palestinians who are trying to move the PLO in a constructive way," Redman said Wednesday. "That's encouraging and should continue."

But, he added, "based against the requirements of the negotiating process, more movement on key issues will be required."

Redman said that while "the reference to Resolutions 242 and 338 is an advance over previous efforts by the PNC . . . it is ambiguous both in its placement in the text and its meaning."

He said recognition of Israel's right to exist "must be clear and unambiguous."

Redman said the PNC statement rejecting terrorism "in accordance with United Nations resolutions" is a restatement of its previous positions, which allow the PLO to carry out acts against Israel which the United States and Israel consider terrorism.

"It is still performance that counts," Redman said. He indicated that one sign that disturbs the United States was the presence at the PNC meeting of Abul Abbas, who has been convicted in absentia by Italy of the murder of Leon Klinghoffer during the 1985 hijacking of the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro.

Phyllis Oakley, a State Department spokeswoman, said Monday that it was "extraordinary that a convicted murderer" would continue to serve on the PLO's executive committee.

While Washington finds the PNC statements inadequate, PLO leaders feel they have met U.S. requirements since they have agreed to negotiate with Israel within the context of an international conference.

"We are serious," Bassam Abu Sharif, the PLO's chief spokesman, said during an appearance on ABC-TV's "Nightline" Tuesday.

"We really want peace in the Middle East and are ready to negotiate. We are ready to sit down right now with (Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak) Shamir and (Ariel) Sharon and the rest of them."

Israeli leaders, who have also rejected the PNC statements, are still committed to negotiate with Palestinians, but have declared that the PLO will never be a negotiating partner.

JEWISH GROUPS DENOUNCE PNC, CALL MEETING 'SUSPICIOUS'

By Andrew Silow Carroll

NEW YORK, Nov. 16 (JTA) -- Reactions by major American Jewish groups to the Palestine National Council's deliberations in Algiers combine Israel's scorn and the U.S. State Department's position that the Palestine Liberation Organization has not gone far enough in changing its positions.

Morris Abram said Wednesday that he saw "nothing positive" in declarations by the council, often referred to as the PLO's parliament in exile.

Early Tuesday, PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat declared a Palestinian state and a PLO commitment to making U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 the basis for negotiating peace with Israel.

Adopted in 1967, Resolution 242 calls for Israeli withdrawal from Arab lands in exchange for peace and recognition of Israel's right to exist.

As chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Abram called a news conference to announce that American Jews are "deeply suspicious" of the PNC's deliberations.

According to a Conference of Presidents release, Abram met with or spoke to representatives of nearly all 46 of his umbrella organization's constituents.

He said they urged him to "speak out and make clear that the U.S. Jewish community is not deceived by the PLO public relations campaign."

Abram repeated to reporters the conditions he believes the PLO must meet for their pronouncements to have any meaning. They include renouncing terrorism, explicitly recognizing Israel and unequivocally accepting 242.

The PNC has so far only accepted 242 within a package of other U.N. Security Council and General Assembly resolutions relevant to Israel, including the 1975 "Zionism equals racism" resolution.

Until they accept those conditions, said Abram, the PLO has only "decided for propaganda use to create an impression of moderation on behalf of violence."

Seymour Reich, international president of B'nai B'rith, called its declaration of a Palestinian state "a triumph of style over substance."

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, criticized Arafat's calling for an international conference on the basis of 242.

Arafat has "long been willing to have a conference on this basis because so many U.N. resolutions, including the famous 'Zionism is racism' one, condemn Israel and question the Jewish state's legitimacy."

Among smaller groups, there is still much skepticism but also a hope that the PLO may have begun a process of change that should be encouraged.

"What we did not see is an unequivocal recognition of Israel or renunciation of violence," said Mark Gold, president of Americans for Progressive Israel.

"But what happened is a positive step and should be recognized as such. The PNC's moves are not a basis for negotiation, but they are a basis for a wider dialogue and we should encourage that."

GREECE WILL REPORTEDLY RECOGNIZE PALESTINIAN STATE AND ISRAEL

By Jean Cohen

ATHENS, Nov. 16 (JTA) -- The Greek government reportedly will extend de jure recognition to Israel and at the same time recognize the independent Palestinian state proclaimed Tuesday by Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasir Arafat in Algiers.

According to well-informed Foreign Ministry sources here, the dual recognitions will be announced next Monday in Brussels. The foreign ministers of the 12 European Community member states will be meeting there under the chairman-

ship of Greek Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias, who currently chairs the E.C. Council of Ministers.

Greece is the only E.C. country that does not have full diplomatic relations with Israel. While Israel is represented here by a diplomat of ambassadorial rank, his status is only that of diplomatic representative.

This puts Israel on the same level as the PLO, which has a diplomatic mission in Athens.

Greece, meanwhile, welcomed the "brave decision of the Palestine National Council to declare an independent Palestinian state."

It said the move at the PNC meeting was "within the context of United Nations decisions and the rules of international law."

Israel and many Western observers have found flaws in the PNC declaration.

Nevertheless, the Greek government believes the Algiers statement created "the conditions and the moral obligation on the part of the international community to correctly confront the Palestinian cause by convening an international conference without delay."

GERMANY WELCOMES PNC'S DECLARATION, BUT STOPS SHORT OF RECOGNITION

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Nov. 16 (JTA) -- East Germany gave a warm welcome to the proclamation of an independent Palestinian state, but stopped short of recognition.

The German Democratic Republic's official position was contained in a statement by its foreign minister, Wolfgang Meyer, and published by the East German Mission to the United Nations in Geneva.

East Germany, a Soviet bloc state, has no diplomatic relations with Israel.

According to Meyer, the decision by the Palestine National Council at its meeting in Algiers Tuesday "demonstrated the firm determination of the Palestinian people to struggle for the implementation of its legitimate rights."

BELGIAN FOREIGN MINISTER SAYS DECLARATION NO GUARANTEE OF PEACE

By Yossi Lempkowitz

BRUSSELS, Nov. 16 (JTA) -- The declaration of an independent Palestinian state has raised more questions than it answered on the future of Middle East diplomacy, according to a leading Western statesman here.

Foreign Minister Leo Tindemans of Belgium said the declaration at the Palestine National Council meeting in Algiers Tuesday "is a new political fact."

But, he added, "it is not statement that this proclamation will simplify the search for a solution to the Mideast conflict."

Tindemans affirmed that the European Community considers an international peace conference under United Nations auspices the only road to a settlement.

The E.C. has not yet formulated a position on the Palestinian declaration, nor has it reacted to the PNC's endorsement of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242 as the basis for peace talks.

A statement is expected at the meeting of the 12 E.C. foreign ministers here next Monday. The Council of Ministers is currently under the chairmanship of Greece, probably the member state most sympathetic to the Palestinian cause.

AMERICAN GROUPS TURN UP HEAT OVER PROMISES TO ULTRA-ORTHODOX

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, Nov. 16 (JTA) -- American Jewish leaders continued to express their opposition, displeasure and outright fury over Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's reported promise to the ultra-Orthodox parties to amend the Law of Return and redefine who is a Jew.

Shamir's pledge was part of the price he paid for the support of the religious parties, who won 18 Knesset seats between them in the Nov. 1 elections.

Their backing, which would give Likud and its allies a governing majority in the 120-member Knesset, was the basis on which President Chaim Herzog asked Shamir Monday to form a new coalition government.

The proposed amendment of the "Who Is a Jew" provision would change Israel's basic immigration law to deny automatic citizenship to persons converted to Judaism by Reform or Conservative rabbis.

According to the amended version, only conversions by Orthodox rabbis would be recognized in Israel.

Some of the statements issued by leaders of American Jewish organizations were the sharpest in recent memory in relation to Israel.

The American Jewish Congress, in condemning the Likud agreement with the religious bloc, called the political deal a "betrayal of Israel's partnership with Diaspora Jewry."

Robert Lifton, president of the AJCongress, and Henry Siegman, its executive director, warned in a joint statement Tuesday that the "deal" between Shamir and the religious parties "constitutes a betrayal of Israel's partnership with Diaspora Jewry no less than a betrayal of the principles on which Israel was founded."

'A Terrible Wound'

In an equally sharply worded statement, Seymour Reich, international president of B'nai B'rith, said:

"A change in the definition of 'Who Is a Jew' would inflict a terrible wound on Diaspora Jewry and in the end prove harmful to Israel's interest."

The United Synagogue of America, representing the Conservative Jewish laity in America, sent a telegram to Shamir protesting his position on "Who Is a Jew."

"We fear that the political question of 'Who Is a Jew' will tear the Jewish community apart. Israel must be for all Jews. The current Law of Return provides that recognition."

"Any change in the law will not only delegitimize large number of Jews, but will also tear Klal Yisrael asunder."

Peter Kalikow, the multi-millionaire publisher of the New York Post and a major purchaser of Israel Bonds, threatened to end his support of Israel if the amendment is adopted, according to the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot Tuesday.

"And I won't be the only one," he told the newspaper.

Meanwhile, two major Orthodox groups in America called on the religious parties in Israel to pursue the change in the Law of Return.

The calls for Orthodox unity came from the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada and Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, the Lubavitcher rebbe.

DIASPORA JEWS CALLED 'HYSTERICAL' AS AGUDA PRESSES 'WHO IS A JEW'

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 16 (JTA) -- The new head of the ultra-Orthodox Agudat Yisrael party has called Diaspora protests over impending "Who Is a Jew" legislation "hysterical."

Rabbi Moshe Zeév Feldman insisted in an interview Tuesday night that Jews in America and elsewhere "don't know what is being talked about. We are defending the Jewish people."

Feldman's remarks demonstrated the strong impact in political and diplomatic circles of mounting Diaspora pressure over the legislation, which would further delegitimize non-Orthodox Judaism in Israel.

Protests, especially from the powerful American Jewish leadership, are aimed at Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's agreement with the ultra-Orthodox parties.

Shamir has promised that the "Who Is a Jew" amendment to the Law of Return will be passed by the Knesset within weeks of a Likud-led government taking office.

The amendment would disqualify conversions to Judaism by non-Orthodox rabbis and deny such converts the right of automatic Israeli citizenship.

Some Likud politicians believe the storm will pass once the law is changed and recedes from memory. They note that the number of non-Orthodox converts desiring to become Israelis is minuscule.

But in the diplomatic service, there is a growing sense of alarm that a rift with Diaspora Jewry could grow to critical proportions.

The vast majority of affiliated Jews in the United States and other Western countries belong to the Reform or Conservative movements.

The amendment demanded by the religious parties here is seen as a denigration of those Jews who have always been in the forefront of financial, political and moral support of Israel.

Changing Law Is 'First Priority'

Feldman, who will head the Aguda's five-man faction in the new Knesset, led the party delegation that negotiated terms with Shamir for its participation in a Likud-led coalition.

Feldman reiterated Wednesday that the "Who Is a Jew" issue is the Aguda's "first priority," and the sine qua non for his party's participation in the government.

Feldman and others in the Orthodox bloc admit they also want to enforce Sabbath observances on Israel's largely secular population.

That agenda has not gone over well with many Israelis, and some have threatened bloodshed if there is any attempt at religious coercion.

Meanwhile, Aguda sources want reassurance of Shamir's commitments to their agenda even if Labor were to join a broad-based coalition with Likud.

At the moment, such a coalition does not seem likely. Labor Party ministers seemed dejected after a meeting with Shamir and his lieutenants Tuesday night.

According to the Laborites, one key issue is the makeup of the Inner Cabinet.

Labor wants its composition to continue to consist of five ministers of each party.

Other issues are agreement on policy guidelines and either the Foreign or Finance Ministry portfolios for Shimon Peres, the Labor Party chairman.

3,000 WORLDWIDE DELEGATES CONVERGE FOR GENERAL ASSEMBLY IN NEW ORLEANS

By Mark Joffe

NEW ORLEANS, Nov. 16 (JTA) — More than 3,000 Jews from communities across North America and places as far away as Prague and Pretoria streamed into this Mississippi Delta city Tuesday and Wednesday, for the largest annual gathering of Jewish leaders on the continent.

Federation leaders and philanthropists, rabbis and rabble rousers, students and scholars, Zionists and feminists — all arrived in the Cajun capital to participate in the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations, the closest thing North America gets to a Jewish continental congress.

By the end of five days of plenaries, forums, symposiums and workshops, they will have discussed issues as diverse as black-Jewish relations, challenges facing the Soviet Jewry movement, how to provide better services for Jews with disabilities, economic development in Israel and the implications of changes in the Jewish family structure.

But despite the panoply of programs to attend, resolutions to debate and budget requests to consider, the real business here, delegates say, is transacted in hotel lobbies and corridors, saunas and stairwells.

In what may be the CJF equivalent of the congressional cloakroom, delegates spend a good amount of time here milling about and bumping into friends, acquaintances and professional colleagues.

Pressing Their Cause

While the bulk of the conferees are leaders in Jewish federations from Albuquerque, N.M., to Youngstown, Ohio, there are also hundreds of representatives of North American Jewish organizations, Israeli associations and universities, Jewish newspapers, and communities in Latin America, Africa and Europe.

While the hotel lobbies are a hubbub of shmoozing and arguing reminiscent of an Arab bazaar, just a few paces away Jewish professionals intent on a career move are quietly interviewing with other federations and agencies.

There is no better marketplace of Jewish talent anywhere outside Israel. And if delegates do not have resumes and business cards to trade, it is ideas they are exchanging.

With the American and Israeli elections still fresh in everyone's mind, politics is a popular topic of conversation.

Waiting in line to register, one could pick up banter about Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's efforts to form a government, President-elect George Bush's nominees for Cabinet and top staff positions, and the Palestine National Council's declaration of independent statehood.

There is tremendous concern here about the prospect that Israel will amend its Law of Return to deny automatic citizenship to Jews converted by Reform or Conservative rabbis.

The subject does not appear on the General Assembly program formally until late Saturday afternoon, but it is bound to be raised in any one of a number of sessions dealing with Israel.

A late resolution on the subject was being drafted this week, and CJF sources said it was expected to be introduced at a plenary session Thursday morning, a day before all other resolutions will be considered.

VANDALS DESECRATE JEWISH CEMETERIES IN GERMAN KRISTALLNACHT BACKLASH

By David Kantor

BONN, Nov. 16 (JTA) — In the week following the 50th anniversary commemoration of Kristallnacht, an apparent backlash has resulted in an upsurge of anti-Semitic vandalism in West Germany.

The Jewish cemetery of Bad Buchau in Schwaben was desecrated and anti-Semitic graffiti appeared in Wiesbaden, capital of the federal state of Hesse. Similar incidents were reported throughout the country.

Anti-Jewish feeling was also heightened by the forced resignation last week of Bundestag President Philipp Jenninger.

Addressing a special session of Parliament on Nov. 10 dedicated to the memory of Kristallnacht, Jenninger delivered a speech widely interpreted as a justification of the Nazi regime.

Police in Bad Buchau said 17 gravestones were overturned and others were uprooted.

Swastikas and Nazi slogans were smeared on the stones, in a Jewish cemetery that dates back to the 16th century.

The town, in southern Germany, was the home of Albert Einstein's parents. A tablet on a house in Hofgarten Street reminds visitors that the eminent physicist was forced to flee his native Germany to avoid persecution.

In Wiesbaden, swastikas and Nazi slogans were smeared on a Jewish memorial near the former synagogue. The vandals evaded police who had been assigned to protect the site.

EX-NAZI APPEALS DEPORTATION

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Nov. 16 (JTA) — Accused Nazi collaborator Konrads Kalejs filed an appeal Monday with the U.S. Immigration Court in Chicago against a deportation order.

Kalejs is appealing a Nov. 1 decision by immigration Judge Anthony Petrone, who ruled that Kalejs be sent back to Australia, where he is a citizen.

Kalejs served as a company commander in the Aja's Kommando, a Nazi execution squad in Latvia during World War II, according to the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, which brought the case against Kalejs.

A native of Latvia, Kalejs now resides in Winnetka, Ill., and has a residence in St. Petersburg, Fla. He came to this country from Australia in 1959, concealing his wartime activities from U.S. immigration officials.

LIFE EXPECTANCY OF ISRAELIS HIGHER

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 16 (JTA) — Israelis are living longer.

According to figures in the new statistical yearbook to be published shortly, there has been a two-year increase in the life expectancy of Jews in Israel during the past decade.

The rate for non-Jews rose more sharply, though it still lags slightly below Jewish life expectancy.

In 1986, Jewish males in Israel had a statistical life expectancy of 73.2 years and Israeli Jewish women of 76.8 years.

In the non-Jewish population, life expectancy for men was 72.2 years and 75 years for women.