

SURPRISE MOVE BY LABOR PLUNGES COALITION TALKS INTO DISARRAY

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 30 (JTA) -- The Labor Party's leadership bureau, in a stunning upset, voted 61-57 Wednesday against joining Likud in a broad-based coalition government.

The outcome of the secret ballot was a surprise, because, with a single exception, every Labor minister in the outgoing unity government had argued in favor of continuing negotiations with Likud.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, the party leader, and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin were among the strongest advocates of a new coalition with Likud.

The only sitting minister opposed was Ezer Weizman, who holds no portfolio in the present Cabinet. But powerful circles within Labor, led by the party's secretary-general, Uzi Baram, argued forcefully that Labor's role should be that of a strong opposition.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's office announced after the vote that the prime minister would now push for a swift coalition agreement with the ultra-Orthodox and right-wing parties.

The Labor vote came two days after Peres and Rabin met with Shamir to discuss terms for a broad-based government. One condition rejected by the Laborites Wednesday was a commitment to serve a full four years in a Likud-led government.

Shamir took the initiative to woo Peres and Rabin this week, apparently because of widespread preference for a broad-based government over a Likud-led narrow coalition with the ultra-Orthodox and right-wing parties.

Religious Parties Pulling Back

But the majority of Laborites seem to believe they can extract better terms from Likud. Two of the religious parties, Degel HaTorah and Agudat Yisrael, appear to have had second thoughts about aligning with Likud.

The leadership bureau's unexpected vote indicated that Labor not only will assume the opposition role in the Knesset, but that it has begun the process of replacing the present party leadership. The vote Wednesday was seen as a blow to Peres' standing within the party.

Israel's internal politics were best described late Wednesday as in a state of flux.

As details of the Labor leadership's meeting emerged, and the religious parties seemed increasingly unwilling to cast their lot with Likud, a variety of new scenarios emerged.

Yossi Beilin, a close confidant of Peres and political director general of the Foreign Ministry, suggested that Labor ought to try to form a narrow coalition with the ultra-Orthodox Agudat Yisrael and Shas parties.

A Likud team was to meet with Shas representatives later Wednesday.

But Agudat Yisrael appeared to be wavering. After a seven-hour meeting of its Council of Sages Tuesday night, Agudah Knesset members renewed their contacts with Labor.

Rabin accused them Wednesday of "using Labor to squeeze Likud," but the Agudah members assured him they were in earnest.

Earlier, the two-man Degel HaTorah Knesset faction announced its support for a broad coalition and specifically rejected a narrow government with Shamir.

Labor May Block Shamir

Political observers predict an effort to put together a Labor-Orthodox-Communist bloc in the Knesset to stymie Shamir's efforts to form a narrow government.

Although a joint effort by the religious parties and the extreme left seems far-fetched, some of the Agudah sages favor that option, because they fear Likud's hard-line policies on defense and the administered territories.

The right wing of Agudah, which favors Likud's policies, remains closely allied with the Chabad Hasidic movement. Their overriding interest is passage of the "Who Is a Jew" amendment to the Law of Return, which would disqualify non-Orthodox converts for Israeli citizenship.

But they strongly doubt that Likud and its allies can muster the necessary votes, in the face of unprecedented Diaspora sentiment against the amendment.

Likud has promised the amendment in the past. But many of its own people defected when the bill came up for a vote. The Agudah right wing believes it stands a chance in the Knesset only if several Laborites support it. But for tactical reasons, they have refrained from pressing Labor for a commitment.

Veteran Agudah Knesset member Menahem Porush said Wednesday night that his party's executive committee would meet Thursday "to decide how to translate the sages' latest instructions into concrete action."

He refused to say whether the Council of Sages favors an alliance with Labor.

U.N. VOTES 152-2 TO DEPLORE AMERICAN MOVE AGAINST ARAFAT

By Yitzhak Rabi

UNITED NATIONS, Nov. 30 (JTA) -- The General Assembly called on the United States Wednesday evening to reverse its decision to deny a visa to Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat, which would enable him to address the United Nations in New York.

The appeal to Washington was part of a resolution overwhelmingly adopted by the General Assembly. The vote was 151 in favor, with only the United States and Israel voting against. The United Kingdom cast the sole abstention.

The resolution "deplored" the U.S. refusal to grant Arafat an entry visa, declaring that the move was in violation of the Headquarters Agreement between the United States and the United Nations.

Unless Washington reverses its decision, something that is widely viewed as unlikely, the General Assembly will meet again Thursday evening or Friday to vote on a resolution to switch the debate on the Palestinian question to Geneva, where Arafat would be able to participate in the debate.

The resolution adopted Wednesday night appeals to the Reagan administration "to reconsider and reverse its decision."

The annual debate on the Palestinian question, originally scheduled to open here Thursday, was deferred. According to U.N. sources, it will take place in Geneva from Dec. 13 to 15.

Diplomats and observers here said that the United States, and indirectly Israel, has suffered a diplomatic defeat, in view of the overwhelming majority of countries who opposed the American ban on Arafat. The assembly is expected now to vote overwhelmingly in favor of moving the debate to Geneva.

Secretary of State George Shultz has already said that the United States will not reverse its decision. Washington refused a visa to Arafat on the grounds that "PLO elements have engaged in terrorism against Americans and others" and that Arafat himself "knows of, condones and lends support to such acts."

FIREBOMBS STRIKE AMERICAN CONSULATE IN EAST JERUSALEM
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Nov. 30 (JTA) -- Two fire-bombs exploded in the courtyard of the American Consulate in East Jerusalem Wednesday evening, without causing injuries or damage.

The gasoline bombs reportedly hit the consulate building and then landed in the courtyard, where they burned themselves out.

The assault is believed connected to the U.S. State Department's refusal to grant an entry visa to Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasir Arafat to address the U.N. General Assembly in New York.

No further details on the incident were immediately available.

The United States maintains consular offices in both West and East Jerusalem.

The West Jerusalem office houses administrative facilities. The East Jerusalem office for years has served as an unofficial mission to the West Bank, concentrating on Arab affairs.

The U.S. Embassy is located in Tel Aviv.

MORE THAN HALF THE SENATE THANKS SHULTZ FOR MOVE TO BAR ARAFAT
By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Nov. 30 (JTA) -- More than half the Senate has signed a letter to Secretary of State George Shultz praising him for his decision to bar Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat from entering the United States.

"We strongly commend you for the courage you showed in articulating this issue," the senators said in the letter. It was drafted by Sens. Charles Grassley (R-Iowa) and Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.).

The letter said the senators "are extremely pleased" by Shultz's action, which prevented Arafat from addressing the U.N. General Assembly in New York. "Once again, we commend your actions and applaud the firm and steady hand with which you have ably steered the State Department."

A spokesman for Grassley said the letter is being signed by more than the 51 senators who signed a letter to Shultz earlier this month. Also drafted by Grassley and DeConcini, that letter urged that Arafat not be allowed into the country "until he and the PLO renounce terrorism as a tool of foreign policy."

The new letter was still being circulated late

Wednesday for additional signatures, before being delivered to Shultz.

The letter was one of the few words of praise Shultz has received for his action, which has been condemned by most of the European allies.

"I think it was the right decision; I stick by it," Shultz said at a State Department ceremony Tuesday.

Shultz said he was not surprised by the criticism, but his decision was made because of "our concern about terrorism."

"I am afraid that it is too easy for people to forget what an important problem that is and what a threat it is to civilized society," Shultz said. "If we have made the point that we really care and are concerned, that's good."

Shultz said that even without Arafat, other PLO representatives could still make their case in a debate on the Palestinian issue at the General Assembly in New York. "We have no problems with that. We want to hear what they have to say," he said.

But the General Assembly, which has postponed the debate, is considering moving it to Geneva, so Arafat can address it.

GENEVA READY AND EAGER TO HOST U.N. CONCLAVE ON PALESTINE QUESTION
By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Nov. 30 (JTA) -- Geneva is prepared to do what New York won't do -- host the U.N. General Assembly's annual Palestinian debate, with Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat as keynote speaker.

The Swiss believe it is good politics, as well as good business for local hotels in the slack season.

A spokesman for the Foreign Ministry said here Wednesday that Switzerland was ready to grant Arafat a visa and to host the General Assembly debate.

The U.S. State Department has refused to grant an entry visa to Arafat to address the General Assembly in New York, on grounds that his association with terrorism makes him a security risk.

The American action has been almost universally condemned by its Western European allies, Arab, Third World and Communist bloc countries.

That virtually assures an overwhelming vote to switch the General Assembly session from New York to Geneva, if Washington does not relent.

Despite the short notice of the change in venue, there are no logistical problems expected here. The session would be held in the huge assembly hall where the yearly conferences of the World Health Organization and International Labor Organization convene.

The U.N. headquarters here can quickly supply the necessary secretarial help, interpreters and security personnel for a full-fledged session of the General Assembly.

There are also adequate accommodations for more than 1,000 delegates. In fact, Geneva hotels, with a high vacancy rate, would welcome them.

The Swiss have put one restriction on the meeting. It must not take place between Christmas and New Year, when the police are on vacation.

The Swiss intend to ask for the help of the police from other cantons as well as the help of the army to guard the U.N. buildings and its surroundings.

**STOP GIVING TO ULTRA-ORTHODOX,
CONSERVATIVE LEADERS DECLARE**

By Andrew Silow Carroll

NEW YORK, Nov. 30 (JTA) -- Leaders of Conservative Judaism called on their members Wednesday to stop contributing to ultra-Orthodox groups that support changing Israel's Law of Return.

The Council of Conservative Leaders, chaired by Dr. Ismar Schorsch, chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, said in a statement Wednesday that the Lubavitch Hasidic movement, led by Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, is the main group advocating amending the Law of Return.

However, a message sent to members Wednesday does not refer to the Lubavitch movement by name.

The proposed amendment says that only conversions performed by Orthodox rabbis will be considered valid in Israel. Non-Orthodox converts would not qualify for Israeli citizenship. Conservative and other non-Orthodox Jews consider the amendment an assault on their legitimacy.

Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, a spokesman for Lubavitch movement, said Wednesday afternoon that the Conservative leaders' statement is "shameful and a dangerous blow to Judaism and humanity.

"It is blatantly immoral and unethical to deprive the tens of thousands of needy material and spiritual beneficiaries of the Lubavitch movement, which maintains open doors and outreach programs for all Jews."

The Lubavitch gain considerable financial support for their educational and outreach activities from non-Orthodox sources, including Conservative Jews, as the Conservative leaders acknowledged in their statement.

The Conservative leaders urged their constituents to maintain their political and philanthropic support of Israel through the United Jewish Appeal, and to redouble their financial support of Conservative institutions in Israel.

Conservative Judaism is the largest American Jewish religious movement, claiming 36 percent of the country's 5.8 million Jews. The Reform movement represents 30 percent, the Orthodox 10 percent. The rest are unaffiliated.

The Reform movement has made no formal appeal that contributions to supporters of the so-called "Who Is a Jew" amendment be curtailed.

But according to Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, "there will be very few Reform Jews who will contribute to those who read us out of the fold."

**DIASPORA LOBBYISTS LEAVE ISRAEL
AS FEDERATION MISSIONS ARRIVE**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Nov. 30 (JTA) -- Leaders of Diaspora Jewry conceded Wednesday that they failed to get the divisive "Who Is a Jew" issue removed from Israel's political agenda.

But the heads of 25 major American Jewish organizations who came here Monday for that purpose were convinced that their intervention improved chances that the proposed amendment to the Law of Return would be defeated in the Knesset.

Rabbi Daniel Syme, vice president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, a Reform group, said Wednesday night that he did

not believe many Labor or Likud members of the Knesset favored a change in the law.

The amendment would deny automatic Israeli citizenship to persons converted by non-Orthodox rabbis.

The American Jews spent most of their time lobbying Knesset members. They could not convince all of them that "Who Is a Jew" is a religious issue that should not be decided in a political body.

But they believe their mission was a success anyway. Syme said on the eve of their return home, "The chances have been immeasurably enhanced that the bill will fail."

More Missions Planned

Meanwhile, representatives of Jewish federations across the United States and Canada are organizing local delegations to lobby Israeli officials on the issue, according to the Council of Jewish Federations in New York.

On Wednesday, representatives of eight major federations arrived in Israel for meetings Thursday with Israeli leaders. The cities being represented are New York, Los Angeles, Washington, Miami, Chicago, Toronto, Montreal and Metrowest, N.J.

A second mission will leave on Sunday, representing Philadelphia; Boston; Bergen County, N.J.; Minneapolis; Palm Beach, Fla.; Buffalo, N.Y.; and Phoenix.

Next Tuesday, federations across the United States are being asked to send representatives to a meeting in Washington with Moshe Arad, Israel's ambassador to the United States.

And on Dec. 8, Canadian federations will hold a similar meeting in Ottawa with Israel's ambassador to Canada, Yisrael Gur-Aryeh.

**THOUSANDS RALLY AGAINST ARMY
EXEMPTIONS FOR YESHIVA STUDENTS**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 30 (JTA) -- High-ranking reserve officers in the Israel Defense Force and disabled war veterans addressed a mass rally here Tuesday night protesting the exemption of yeshiva students from compulsory military service.

The theme of their speeches was that anyone claiming benefits from a democratic society must fulfill its obligations.

The rally drew between 25,000 and 30,000 Israelis, according to Mayor Shlomo Lehat of Tel Aviv, an IDF reserve general who was one of the organizers. Others estimated the crowd at 19,000 to 20,000, approximately the number of yeshiva students currently exempted from the draft.

Speakers at the rally warned that rabbis who avoided military service because of their yeshiva studies should not be made ministers in a government that might be required to decide questions of war and peace.

An IDF veteran who lost an arm in combat told the crowd that he volunteered for reserve duty despite his disability. "If I can do my duty and serve with one arm, yeshiva students can certainly serve," he said.

The yeshiva students got a chance Tuesday to explain their point of view.

Four of them, interviewed on Israel Radio, maintained that "over 18 hours a day studying the Talmud, Gemara and other religious tracts is more important to the defense and security of the Jewish state than any army or arms-bearing soldier."

**HEARING OF DEMJANJUK APPEAL
POSTPONED UNTIL MAY 1989
By Gil Sedan**

JERUSALEM, Nov. 30 (JTA) -- Israel's High Court of Justice will not hear John Demjanjuk's appeal of his war crimes conviction and death sentence until next May.

The court was supposed to begin hearing the case Monday. But its president, Justice Meir Shamgar, agreed Wednesday to postpone the hearing until May 4, 1989, at the request of Demjanjuk's defense attorney, Yoram Sheftel.

Sheftel must find a replacement for the late Dov Eitan, a member of the defense team who committed suicide Tuesday by jumping from the 15th floor of an office building in downtown Jerusalem.

Eitan, a respected former Jerusalem district court judge and former military court president, was an important asset for the defense.

He offered to help Demjanjuk's appeal when the Ukrainian-born former U.S. citizen was sentenced to death last May, a week after he was found guilty of crimes against humanity, crimes against the Jewish people, war crimes and murder.

Demjanjuk was identified at his trial as the Treblinka death camp guard known as "Ivan the Terrible," who operated the gas chambers, where some 800,000 Jews perished.

The defense claims he is a victim of mistaken identity.

Eitan's suicide could not be explained by his friends and associates. It is not known whether it had any connection with the Demjanjuk case.

**SETTLERS DEMAND MORE PROTECTION
AS ONE IS CONVICTED OF SHOOTING
By Gil Sedan**

JERUSALEM, Nov. 30 (JTA) -- Angry Jewish settlers from the West Bank are challenging assertions by the government and the Israel Defense Force that the territories are relatively calm.

The settlers, including two reserve brigadier generals, claimed at a news conference here Wednesday that the security situation is worsening.

They demanded that the government take severe measures to crush the Palestinian uprising. They would forbid agitators from working in Israel and deport rock-throwers.

The settlers also demanded the death penalty for extreme acts of terrorism, and permission for soldiers to open fire on stone-throwers.

Meanwhile, the legal system moved in different directions in the cases of two West Bank settlers accused of killing Arabs.

A Jerusalem district court found Yisrael Zeev of Shiloh guilty of manslaughter Wednesday in the shooting death of shepherd Jawdat Abdullah Awad, during an argument over grazing rights.

But the State Attorney's Office on Tuesday rejected a police recommendation to prosecute Gush Emunim activist Rabbi Moshe Levinger of Hebron for causing the death of a local shopkeeper and wounding another Arab, after his car was stoned Sept. 30.

The State Attorney's Office said there was insufficient evidence to try Levinger.

In addition to manslaughter, Zeev was convicted of causing bodily harm to a second Arab shepherd who was wounded during the altercation earlier this year.

The court found him "criminally negligent," but rejected charges that he killed intentionally when he opened fire in the direction of the shepherds while trying to disperse their flocks.

**IDF PATROL KILLS INFILTRATOR
IN SOUTH LEBANON BORDER ZONE
By Hugh Orgel**

TEL AVIV, Nov. 30 (JTA) -- An Israel Defense Force patrol killed a member of the Shiite Amal militia Tuesday night in the southern Lebanon security zone.

He was the second infiltrator killed by the IDF since Sunday. Eight have been killed and three wounded and captured in the zone this month.

In the latest incident, Israeli soldiers opened fire on two infiltrators near Barashit village, killing one while the other fled.

Two Kalachnikov assault rifles were found near the dead man, along with a rocket-propelled grenade launcher and grenades. Papers on the body identified him as a member of Amal.

The IDF and the Israel-backed South Lebanon Army jointly patrol the security zone to interdict terrorists attempting to infiltrate Israel.

According to the IDF, 46 Palestinian terrorist gangs have been encountered in the zone during the past three years.

**AMID ICY WEATHER, HOT CONTROVERSY,
VIENNA ERECTS MONUMENT AGAINST WAR
By Reinhard Engel**

VIENNA, Nov. 30 (JTA) -- A giant monument symbolizing hatred of war and fascism was unveiled in Vienna's historic Inner City last week, in icy weather amid heated controversy.

About 2,000 persons braved frigid temperatures, among them Chancellor Franz Vranitzky, Mayor Helmut Zilk of Vienna and several other prominent members of the ruling Socialist Party.

But their coalition partners, the conservative People's Party, was notably absent. The conservatives ordered their dignitaries not to attend.

One could only guess whether this was only because the sculptor, Alfred Hrdliczka, once belonged to the Communist Party, or because the conservatives, the party of President Kurt Waldheim, were uneasy about such a reminder of the past in the center of old Vienna.

The work fills almost the entire square of the Inner City, behind the Opera House. It consists of four sections.

The first is "Door to Violence," hewn in marble and granite. Then a bronze figure depicts a Jew forced to clean the cobblestones of Vienna. A third section is a marble statue titled "Orpheus Entering Hades," the realm of the dead.

A fourth column is engraved with quotations from Austria's Declaration of Independence of April 1945.

The location of the monument was opposed by many who live in the Inner City and by the conservatives.

They argued that under the square are the remains of several hundred people killed in one of the last U.S. air raids on Vienna in March 1945. After the war, the municipality decreed that no house could be built on the site.

But defenders of the monument said this is only a pretext to isolate reminders of the Nazi era on the fringes of the city, where they would not be noticed by many visitors and tourists.