

KNESSET APPROVES NEW GOVERNMENT; MORE CABINET PORTFOLIOS NAMED By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 22 (JTA) -- The Knesset overwhelmingly approved the new Labor-Likud coalition government presented to it Thursday by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

The lopsided 84-19 vote of confidence was not surprising inasmuch as the new 26-member Cabinet, the largest in Israel's history, exceeds by one the number of parliament members left in the opposition.

At least two of the four religious parties are participating in the new government. But the parties of the left and right wings will not join the coalition.

The government made its debut seven weeks after Knesset elections that failed to give any single party a governing majority.

It was a festive occasion of congratulations and no small relief that the agonizing process of coalition-building was successfully finished.

The long Knesset debate wound up with the traditional ceremony at the presidential residence, where all of the ministers posed at a photo session.

President Chaim Herzog did not hide his satisfaction with the broad government. It was his dramatic and unprecedented intervention two weeks ago that prevailed on Likud and Labor to resume their coalition negotiations, which had been given up as a lost cause.

"This broad government represents the will of the majority of the people, which seeks unity and tolerance," Herzog declared in a toast to Shamir.

He praised the prime minister for his doggedness and ability to "understand the needs of the people."

Two Posts For Shas

Shamir responded by hailing Herzog's contribution to the establishment of the new government.

The Cabinet includes 12 Likud and 12 Labor ministers. Only 11 in each party were named Thursday. The 12th slots may go to Eliahu Ben-Elissar of Likud and Ora Namir of Labor. If so, Namir would be the only woman in the Cabinet.

In addition, the ultra-Orthodox Shas party holds two Cabinet portfolios: the Interior Ministry, traditionally reserved for the religious bloc, and the Ministry of Immigration and Absorption, which Labor held in the outgoing government.

They are filled by Aryeh Deri and Yitzhak Peretz respectively.

The Religious Affairs Ministry also remains open. It could go to either Zevulun Hammer or Avner Shaki, both of the National Religious Party.

There are relatively few new faces in the Cabinet, and most are on the Likud side.

A new portfolio, minister of environmental protection affairs, was created. It was assigned to Ronni Milo of Likud, one of the newcomers.

The two other Likud newcomers are Dan Meridor, who will be minister of justice, and Ehud Olmert, who will have no portfolio.

Two new ministers were named so far in Labor ranks. Avraham Katz-Oz is minister of

agriculture and Raphael Edri is a minister without portfolio.

The major change in Labor is the shift of Simon Peres from foreign minister to finance minister. He retains the rank of vice premier. The new foreign minister is Moshe Arens of Likud, who held no portfolio in the previous Cabinet.

Two Portfolios For Shamir

Laborite Yitzhak Rabin stays on as defense minister and Yitzhak Navon of Labor continues as minister of education and culture. He will continue to hold the rank of deputy prime minister.

Haim Bar-Lev will continue as police minister; Moshe Shahal will continue as minister of energy and infrastructure; and Mordechai Gur will continue to hold no portfolio.

Ezer Weizman, who held no portfolio in the previous government, is now minister of science and development. Gad Yaacobi, formerly minister of economics and planning, is the new communications minister.

Yaacov Tsur, who was minister of absorption and immigration, is the new health minister. He replaces Shoshana Arbeli-Almoslino, who was not named to the Cabinet.

Likud is headed by Shamir who, in addition to being prime minister, will hold the labor and social affairs portfolio. Moshe Katsav, who held that post in the outgoing government, has been named transport minister, replacing Haim Corfu, who is not in the new Cabinet.

David Levy will continue to hold the rank of deputy prime minister and will retain the housing and construction portfolio. Ariel Sharon stays on as commerce and industry minister.

Yitzhak Moda'i, who was finance minister in the outgoing government, is the new minister of economics and planning. Gideon Patt replaces Avraham Sharir as tourism minister. And Moshe Nissim, who served as justice minister, will now have no portfolio.

JEWS AMONG VICTIMS OF PAN AM CRASH; SEVERAL MISSED FLIGHT AND ARE SAFE By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Dec. 22 (JTA) -- Joseph Miller, treasurer of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, is not coming home from London.

Nor will his business associate, Jerry Weston, or Alex Lowenstein, Theodora Cohen, or Amy Shapiro, Syracuse University exchange students in London coming home for the holiday break.

Or Michael Bernstein, assistant deputy director at the Office of Special Investigations, who was returning from Vienna, where he was working on deportation of Nazi criminals.

They were among the 258 passengers and crew aboard Pan Am Flight 103 who were blown out of the sky over Scotland on Wednesday.

The names of two Israelis appeared on a passenger list released Wednesday by Pan American World Airways. They were D. Brownerbeer and D. Dornstein.

Nobody aboard the airliner survived.

Forty kosher meals were ordered for that flight, according to Rabbi Pinchas Stolper, executive vice president of the Orthodox Union.

The Jewish death toll could easily be higher than 40, since there were likely Jewish passengers who did not order kosher meals.

Stolper said he had spoken three times with British Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovitz, as well as to the rabbi of Gateshead, near the Scottish border, and the dayan of Glasgow, who sent men from their hevrei kadisha (burial societies) to try to retrieve Jewish bodies.

Stolper said they were also "working through the Senate, State Department and British government in order to achieve the release of bodies."

At Least Three From Syracuse

The reason for the intensive effort to claim Jewish bodies for immediate burial is that "the British government is concerned it was a terror attack, is conducting an inquest and is speaking of a long period of delay, and that's just untenable in Jewish law," said Stolper.

"Those families cannot sit shiva, cannot begin the official mourning period and are placed in a situation of suspended animation," he said.

Miller, 56, a resident of Woodmere, N.Y., was a founding member of the board of directors of Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women. He had four children, who all attended Yeshiva.

For 25 years a senior partner in the Manhattan accounting firm of Miller-Ellin and Co., Miller flew to London on Tuesday night to attend a business meeting Wednesday that lasted no more than four hours, after which he turned around to come home.

Miller, who also chaired the board of S&S Industries, a Manhattan clothing manufacturing firm, traveled with the company's executive vice president, Jerry Weston, who also died in the air disaster. Weston, 45, of Baldwin, N.Y., leaves a wife and two teen-age sons.

At Syracuse University in upstate New York, where 36 of its students had been passengers on the plane, Rabbi Charles Sherman of Temple Adath Yeshurun took part in an ecumenical service Wednesday night and held a Jewish memorial service Thursday afternoon.

The school would not release a list of the victims' names. But the rabbi said he had confirmed the deaths of Lowenstein, Cohen and Shapiro.

Sherman, citing reports that a terrorist bomb may have been responsible for the plane crash, said, "There's a sense of anger here within the community that this whole terrorism thing plays out this way."

Several Switched Flights

But miraculously, the news was not all tragic. There was, for some, a "miracle" Wednesday, according to Isaac Abraham, a spokesman for the Hasidic community in Brooklyn's Williamsburg neighborhood.

Abraham was asked Wednesday to check into the whereabouts of 15 Jews who were supposed to be on Flight 103. Of these, seven Hasidim had inexplicably decided at the last minute to change their flights, he said.

Five of them were already back home in Brooklyn's Boro Park neighborhood, unbeknownst to people inquiring about them.

In Monsey, N.Y., a representative of the Vishnitz Hasidic community also reported that members of that group had for some unknown reason switched to a different flight.

"A miracle happened here," said Abraham.

"The people who switched didn't know why they switched. Then, the previous Pan Am flight had a three-hour delay, and so people took that plane, instead."

One Jew from Williamsburg, Jacob Gold, arrived too late at London's Heathrow Airport to board Flight 103 and pulled his sister and son from the flight. He instead flew to New York on a British Airways flight that arrived only about an hour later.

Abraham, who went to Kennedy International Airport in New York on Wednesday night with another community representative, Solomon Schnitzler, reported that he was still inquiring into the status of "a yeshiva bocher, but I don't know his name yet."

STATE DEPARTMENT QUOTES PHONE THREAT BY ABU NIDAL TERRORIST ORGANIZATION By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Dec. 22 (JTA) -- The State Department would not confirm Thursday that sabotage was the cause of the downing of Pan American Flight 103 in Scotland, but said an anonymous call Dec. 5 predicted the bombing of a U.S.-bound Pan Am jet within two weeks by the Abu Nidal Organization.

Department spokeswoman Phyllis Oakley said a call was made to the U.S. Embassy in Helsinki, Finland, warning that "sometime within the next two weeks there would be a bombing attempt against a Pan American aircraft flying from Frankfurt to the U.S."

"According to the caller, an unidentified person in Helsinki would unwittingly take the device to Frankfurt and eventually onto the U.S.-bound flight," she said.

The State Department notified the Federal Aviation Administration immediately, which notified airplane companies Dec. 7, Oakley said. U.S. embassies in Europe and elsewhere were also notified, she added.

"The possibility of sabotage has not been ruled out," she said, but "any attempt at this time to draw a linkage between this incident and the specific threat is premature."

In a telephone call to United Press International's London bureau Thursday morning, Guardians of the Islamic Revolution claimed credit for the crash, Oakley said. She added:

"The name Guardians of the Islamic Revolution has been used to claim responsibility for several attacks in Europe, two incidents in London in 1987 and against Iranian dissidents opposed to the regime of Ayatollah Khomeini."

"A similar-sounding name, Guardians of Islam, claimed responsibility for the hijacking of a July 31, 1984 Air France flight," Oakley added.

The State Department's report on terrorism in 1987 said the Abu Nidal group had carried out 90 terrorist attacks since 1974 in 20 countries, killing or injuring almost 900 people. Among its targets have been moderate Palestinians and the Palestine Liberation Organization, the report said.

The Abu Nidal group split from the PLO in 1974. Its major targets have included the Rome and Vienna airports in December 1985, the Neve Shalom synagogue in Istanbul and Pan Am Flight 73 in Karachi, Pakistan, in September 1986.

Because of the postal holiday, JTA will not publish a Daily News Bulletin on Monday, Dec. 26.

GROUP CONCERNED U.S. WILL LET SOVIETS OFF HOOK ON HUMAN RIGHTS

By Andrew Silow Carroll

NEW YORK, Dec. 22 (JTA) -- For years the Reagan administration has come down hard on the Soviets for their human rights record, saying their mistreatment of political prisoners and restrictions on emigration had created mistrust and hurt prospects for arms control.

But now that the administration may be on the verge of signing a key document acknowledging improvement in those areas, a major Soviet Jewry group is charging that the Soviets are being let off easy.

Next month, U.S. officials in Vienna could sign a document concluding East-West talks on human rights and security issues.

The talks are a review of the Helsinki accords signed in 1975 by 35 nations, including the Soviet Union. The accords, known officially as the Final Act on the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, mandated respect for human rights.

Compliance with the accords is reviewed regularly at a series of follow-up conferences. The United States has refused to begin new talks with the Soviets on cutting conventional arms in Europe until the follow-up process is completed to its satisfaction.

The latest conference, which has dragged on for over two years, is scheduled to reconvene in Vienna on Jan. 6.

The end of the follow-up process is near, because U.S. State Department officials say Moscow is close to meeting their demand that all of those they have identified as political prisoners be released. The Soviets have also agreed to review disputed cases.

150 Refusenik Cases Abandoned

The administration now says it is prepared to begin the arms talks, if Moscow allows the emigration of 150 to 200 Soviet Jews who have long sought permission.

The Union of Councils for Soviet Jews says that is not enough. According to the Washington-based umbrella group, the compromise would abandon 150 other long-term refusenik families.

"As recently as Oct. 20, 1988, President Reagan wrote to us, promising that 'the calendar will not hold us hostage to an unacceptable agreement,'" in Vienna, Pamela Cohen, national president of the council, said in a statement released Thursday. "What happened to those promises?" she asked.

Cohen also said the United States is abandoning demands that the Soviets institutionalize reforms that would abolish the system of arbitrary refusals.

For their part, U.S. officials quoted in The New York Times said their demand would cover Soviet Jews who have been denied permission to emigrate for more than 10 years.

Another official said the United States expects the Soviets to allow other refuseniks to leave after the Vienna meeting. The official referred to Mikhail Gorbachev's speech to the United Nations earlier this month, during which the Soviet leader promised that emigration problems were "being dealt with in a humane spirit."

In that speech, Gorbachev repeated his insistence that the next CSCE-sponsored conference on human rights, scheduled for 1991, be held in Moscow.

VATICAN OFFICIAL A NO-SHOW ON AUSCHWITZ CONVENT DISCUSSION

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Dec. 22 (JTA) -- Jewish representatives who met this week with Vatican delegates to discuss removal of a convent from Auschwitz now think it highly likely the Catholics are backing out of an agreement signed last year to remove the convent.

As a result, members of the World Jewish Congress reaffirmed Wednesday a resolution not to partake in a conference on anti-Semitism scheduled for February, unless the Vatican ensures that the convent at Auschwitz is removed to a site outside the camp.

Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, chairman of the American Section of the WJCongress, emphasized Wednesday the failure of Johannes Cardinal Willebrands, Vatican secretary of state for religious relations with the Jews, to appear Tuesday in Paris for a meeting with Jewish officials to discuss the issue.

Not knowing the reason for the prelate's absence, members of the WJCongress said that it looked "very unlikely" that the convent would be removed by the Feb. 22 deadline.

Professor Leon Feldman, American representative of the International Jewish Committee for Interfaith Consultations, reported from Paris Tuesday that the talks on removing the convent had not materialized.

Vatican delegates signed an agreement Feb. 23, 1987, in Geneva to create a Catholic center "for information, education, meeting and prayer to be established outside the Auschwitz-Birkenau camp grounds."

The signed agreement further stipulated that "there will be no permanent Catholic place of prayer on the site."

Signatories included the cardinals of Brussels -- home of the Carmelite order of nuns now living in the Auschwitz convent -- Lyon, Paris, Krakow and four other high Catholic representatives.

"I take this as a very serious breach," said Kelman.

The conclave between Catholic and Jewish delegates has been scheduled to take place in Zurich Feb. 20 through 24, conditional on the convent's removal. The gathering was to be the beginning of work on a document on the history of anti-Semitism and the Church.

"I told you not to run to the goyim," yelled Rabbi Zvi Zakheim, a member of the WJCongress attending Wednesday's meeting here.

He was using the admission of probable failure to show the futility of holding dialogues on theology with the Christians, a position taken by many Orthodox Jews.

JERICHO BUS VICTIM DIES IN LONDON

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 22 (JTA) -- David Delarosa, 19, a soldier who tried vainly to rescue a woman and children from a firebombed bus near Jericho on Oct. 30, died in London Thursday.

He had sustained serious injuries to his heart and lungs from smoke inhalation. Only a heart and lung transplant might have saved his life, and he was flown to London for that purpose a week ago. He succumbed waiting for a donor.

Delarosa was the fourth victim of what was easily the worst terrorist act this year.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES: PLO HAS TUMULTUOUS HISTORY AND AN UNCERTAIN FUTURE

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Dec. 22 (JTA) -- "The PLO is all of us," said a young Lebanese Palestinian in New York. "It is me, it is the guy I buy cigarettes from, it is people just like you."

This characterization, which came as a response to why Israeli fighter jets hit civilian targets in retaliatory raids against the Palestine Liberation Organization, took place the summer before the Palestinian uprising shook the Israeli-administered territories.

The explanation was a new and frank depiction of a group long reviled by Israelis and most Jews as a terrorist organization.

The picture of an all-pervasive organization contrasts sharply with its tumultuous history, which began unremarkably on June 1, 1964.

Credit for creation of the PLO is often given to the late Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, who convened the Cairo summit meeting in January 1964.

In the beginning, extremist Palestinian groups did not align with the PLO because of its domination by the Arab League.

The PLO National Covenant was written in May 1964. Article 15, in an English translation furnished by the Palestine Research Center, reads: "The liberation of Palestine, from an Arab viewpoint, is a national duty and it attempts to repel the Zionist and imperialist aggression against the Arab homeland, and aims at the elimination of Zionism in Palestine."

Headquarters In West Bank

Mohammed Yasar Arafat, born in Cairo 59 years ago, raised there and in Jerusalem, did not take up the mantle of the PLO until 1969.

He and other PLO leaders spent much of the 1950s in Kuwait, where they honed their underground activities. Their organization was then known as Al Fatah, but it was little then beside talk of Palestinian liberation and a magazine.

After the Six-Day War of 1967, Arafat returned to the West Bank to establish a resistance movement. Within four months he left for Jordan. He has never since laid foot on the land he wishes to be a Palestinian state.

Arafat -- also called Abu Amar, "father of the movement" -- established a headquarters in the Karameh refugee camp, together with Khalil al-Wazir, who took the nom de guerre Abu Jihad. Their group perpetrated hit-and-run attacks on Israel. One, supported by Jordanian soldiers, killed 28 Israeli soldiers.

Abu Jihad, who became the PLO's No. 2 leader, was gunned down in his home in Tunis in April 1988, apparently by Israeli commando troops.

In Jordan, other branches of the PLO heralded their messages: the Marxist Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, led by Nayef Hawatmeh, and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, led by Dr. George Habash.

In September 1970, Jordan's army moved against the PLO in the bloody routing known as Black September. The PLO left for Lebanon and dug in there. Lebanese resented their presence.

In August 1982, the Arafat and 11,000 PLO troops were evicted from that entrenchment by the invading Israelis. The ousted PLO fighters dispersed, making headquarters in Tunis.

In May 1983, 9,000 PLO troops who had

remained behind, mostly in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley, revolted, claiming Arafat's policy was too moderate. Arafat cut off food, fuel and money to the rebels. Abu Jihad blamed Libyan strongman Moammar Gadhafi for inciting the rebellion.

In December, Syrian-backed rebels pushed Arafat out of Tripoli, Lebanon, a last stronghold.

Split Into Factions

By 1984, the PLO had splintered into a number of factions opposed to Arafat's leadership. Supported by Syria and grouped together as the Palestine National Salvation Front, they include:

- Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, led by Capt. Ahmed Jabril, a former Syrian army captain.

- National Alliance, led by Saed (Abu) Musa and his Fatah Uprising, composed of dissidents from Arafat's Fatah.

- As Saika, Palestinian branch of the Baath party of Syria, led by Issam al-Qadi, with approximately 1,000 members in Lebanon and Syria.

- Popular Struggle Front, a small pro-Syrian group led by Samir Goshieh.

- Palestine Popular Struggle Front, led by Talaat Yacub, a contingent of about 200 members in eastern and southern Lebanon.

- Democratic Alliance, with ties to South Yemen and Algeria. This originally included Habash's and Hawatmeh's groups, which rejoined the PLO in 1987.

Other independent Palestinian liberation groupings, believed to receive support from outside states, include:

- Fatah Revolutionary Council, infamously known as the Abu Nidal group. It is widely reported to be supported by Libya and Syria.

Abu Nidal, whose real name is Sabry al-Banna, broke from Arafat in 1974. Sporadic reports claim Abu Nidal dead. But the group is believed responsible for numerous incidents, including an attack on an Istanbul synagogue in 1986 that left 22 dead.

Incidents Since Cairo Declaration

- The faction of the Palestine Liberation Front headed by Mohammed (Abul) Abbas. His group was responsible for the attack on the Italian cruise ship Achille Lauro, in which American Jew Leon Klinghoffer was killed. Abbas is a member of the Palestine National Council. At its meeting last month in Algiers, he joked about Klinghoffer's murder.

Arafat renounced terrorism outside Israel in his now famous Cairo Declaration of 1985. His Fatah wing of the PLO subsequently claimed credit for two bloody acts, both inside Israel: the 1986 attack on Israeli military cadets at a graduation ceremony at the Western Wall, which killed one soldier, and the hijacking of a bus this past year en route to Israel's nuclear facility in Dimona. Three died in that ambush.

At its meeting in Algiers last month, the PNC, which serves as the PLO's legislative body, formally renounced terrorism. Ironically, the man who beseeched the body to renounce terrorism and implicitly recognize Israel was Abu Iyad, former head of Black September, which masterminded the 1972 attack at the Munich Olympics.

The PLO, as usually referred to, is largely synonymous with Al Fatah, its mainstream military branch. Its elite commando Force 17 has claimed responsibility for several terror attacks on Israelis in recent years, including the killing of three Israelis aboard a yacht in Larnaca, Cyprus.