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**PLO STILL PRESSING FOR A VOTE  
ON ADMISSION TO HEALTH BODY**

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, May 8 (JTA) -- The annual meeting of the World Health Assembly opened in an atmosphere of crisis here Monday as last-minute efforts were made to induce the Palestine Liberation Organization to withdraw its bid for full membership in the World Health Organization, with all the rights of a sovereign state.

Given the political makeup of the 166-nation assembly, the WHO's governing body, the PLO's chances are good.

But if it is admitted, the U.N. agency will lose the \$73.8 million American contribution to its fiscal 1990 budget, as the Bush administration made clear last week. That would be a crippling blow.

American and other Western diplomats have pleaded around the clock with Asian and African delegations, warning that they would be the principal victims of a shortfall of WHO funds.

The organization has intensive care programs in dozens of Third World countries, where it fights infectious diseases, including AIDS, provides vaccines and serums, and trains doctors and nurses in public health.

But most of the 92 countries that have recognized the Palestinian state proclaimed by the PLO last year have refused so far to reconsider their decision to vote to admit the PLO. According to Western diplomats, they prefer a political victory to the benefits provided by the WHO.

The PLO has rejected attempts to strike a compromise. It is pressing ahead for a vote, which is now expected to take place Wednesday.

**11th-Hour Appeal Rejected**

Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, the Japanese physician who is director general of the WHO, disclosed that his 11th-hour appeal to Yasir Arafat, at a meeting in Tunis over the weekend, was in vain.

According to senior sources in the organization, the WHO is offering the PLO a quid pro quo. It promises to send field hospitals and medical teams to the West Bank and Gaza Strip, where hundreds of people have been wounded in the course of the Palestinian uprising and thousands are reported to lack adequate medical assistance.

Under the plan, the medical teams would be funded by the WHO and operated by the Swiss-based International Committee of the Red Cross.

According to the WHO sources, the PLO seems tempted, but remains reluctant to give in. On the one hand, it feels it needs a political victory here to balance Arafat's recent conciliatory moves toward Israel.

At the same time, PLO officials are not convinced the Israeli authorities would permit the Red Cross to operate unhampered in the territories on the scale envisaged.

The United States also is not backing down. Health and Human Services Secretary Louis Sullivan told Israeli Health Minister Ya'acov Tsur here that the U.S. government is adamant about cutting off funds to the WHO if it grants the PLO full membership.

(JTA correspondent Edwin Eytan in Paris contributed to this report.)

**U.S. APPLAUDS PLO REJECTION  
OF IRANIAN CALL FOR MURDER**

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, May 8 (JTA) -- The State Department on Monday welcomed Yasir Arafat's condemnation of an Iranian official's call last week to kill five Americans or other Westerners for every Palestinian killed by Israeli soldiers.

The Palestine Liberation Organization leader was quoted Sunday in Tunis as saying that he totally rejects statements made Friday by Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani.

A PLO spokesperson also was quoted Sunday as saying that the organization had rejected "this poisoned advice to the Palestinian people to commit international terrorism against innocent people."

"We welcome the statements" by Arafat and his spokespersons critical of Rafsanjani, State Department deputy spokesman Richard Boucher said Monday. "They accord with the PLO's renunciation of terrorism and our understanding that it would denounce terrorism wherever it occurred."

"We call on all members of the international community to denounce Rafsanjani's statements and to take action to isolate Iran until it is ready to act responsibly," Boucher added.

On Friday, the State Department warned that the United States would hold the Iranian leadership responsible if anyone responds to Rafsanjani's call.

**SHARON DEMANDS HERUT SHOWDOWN  
OVER SHAMIR'S PLAN FOR ELECTIONS**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 8 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir faces an imminent showdown within his own Herut party over his proposals for Palestinian elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Industry and Trade Minister Ariel Sharon, the most outspoken opponent of the plan, announced Monday that he would convene "within 10 days" the Herut Central Committee, which he chairs, to debate the matter.

The elections are the cornerstone of the peace plan Israel has presented to the United States. The idea is for Palestinians in the territories to elect representatives with whom Israel would negotiate an interim autonomy arrangement.

But Sharon, calling the plan "a major calamity," claims it would lead to the creation of a Palestinian state "and to the partition of Jerusalem."

Political observers say that if Shamir and his closest ally, Foreign Minister Moshe Arens, are unable to head off the Central Committee session, they will face a fierce battle between Herut hardliners and the relatively moderate elements in the party.

A key figure is Housing Minister David Levy, who is a deputy premier. While usually moderate in Herut affairs, he has spoken out against aspects of Shamir's plan.

But political observers say that even if Levy backs Sharon, Shamir will still command a sizable majority in the Central Committee, whose membership exceeds 2,000.

**POLICE DISPERSE UNRULY CROWD  
GATHERED FOR SOLDIER'S FUNERAL**  
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 8 (JTA) -- Police in Ashdod were out in force Monday to curb rioting by Jewish youths, following the funeral of Sgt. Avi Sasportas, presumably kidnapped and murdered by Arabs.

The violence was triggered by the discovery Sunday of the 21-year-old paratrooper's remains. He was found in a shallow grave near the Gaza Strip, not far from where he was last seen Feb. 16 trying to hitch a ride home on weekend leave.

The discovery was made in the course of a search for another soldier, Ilan Sa'adon, who was last seen hitching a ride to Ashkelon on May 3.

Eight Arab laborers were reportedly attacked and beaten Sunday afternoon and evening by roving bands of youths shouting "death to Arabs."

Police used smoke grenades to disperse other angry mobs.

At the funeral Monday, Rabbi Meir Kahane of the extremist Kach party was on hand to incite and inflame passions.

Afterwards, more than 50 youths hurled stones at passing Arab cars. An attempt to block the main highway to Gaza was promptly thwarted by police.

Thousands of people attended the funeral of Sasportas. An honor guard of paratroop sergeants surrounded the grave as a military chaplain led services.

Sasportas' mother, weeping at the fresh grave, found the strength to thank the thousands who had joined in the search for her son.

Gen. Dan Shomron, the Israel Defense Force chief of staff, said Monday that in virtually all such cases in the past, the assailants were ultimately caught and punished. This time will be no different, he promised.

**TERRITORIES PUT UNDER CURFEW  
FOR TWO DAYS OF ISRAELI HOLIDAYS**  
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, May 8 (JTA) -- An estimated 1 million Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were under curfew Monday night and are likely to remain so for at least two more days.

A general curfew was imposed on the entire Gaza Strip "until further notice," and the territory was sealed off from Israel.

Similar measures were taken in the West Bank. No blanket curfew was imposed, but curfews were in force in Nablus, Tulkarm, Jenin and nearby refugee camps.

All Palestinian residents, including laborers with jobs in Israel, were forbidden to cross the "Green Line" into Israel from Monday through Wednesday night.

The Israel Defense Force acted to prevent an escalation of violence while Israelis observe Memorial Day for fallen soldiers Tuesday and Independence Day on Wednesday.

The leadership of the Palestinian uprising, meanwhile, declared Tuesday and Wednesday days of general strike to mark the start of the 18th month of the intifada.

On Saturday, three Arabs were killed and at least 77 wounded in clashes with Israeli security forces in the Gaza Strip.

Arab sources put the wounded as high as 400, a figure the IDF on Monday called ridiculous.

A senior officer attributed what he called an inflated casualty rate to the fact that the wounded receive generous compensation from the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The IDF said it checked Gaza hospitals thoroughly and counted no more than 77 wounded.

But Arab sources said not all wounded were taken to hospitals. Some preferred to be treated at home because they feared the Israelis might arrest them in the hospitals, the sources said.

**PERES AGAINST SHAMIR'S PICK  
FOR NEXT AMBASSADOR TO U.S.**  
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 8 (JTA) -- Vice Premier Shimon Peres is expected to block the appointment of Ehud Olmert, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's choice to be Israel's ambassador to the United States.

Peres' opposition to Olmert, a Likud minister without portfolio, was disclosed as the Labor Party leader returned to work after undergoing minor surgery last week.

The Likud-Labor coalition agreement gives the leaders of both parties veto power over diplomatic appointments.

Peres is said to be still angry over Olmert's biting attacks against Labor during the 1988 Knesset election campaign.

He also has full confidence in the incumbent ambassador, career diplomat Moshe Arad, who has been in Washington less than two years. Arad was appointed when Peres was foreign minister in the previous Likud-Labor government.

Shamir approved of him at the time and still has confidence in Arad. But he and Foreign Minister Moshe Arens would like to see Olmert, a Likud loyalist, in Israel's most important diplomatic post.

Olmert himself raised obstacles. He made his acceptance of the posting conditional on his retention of his Cabinet rank.

There is no precedent for that in Israeli history. Attorney General Yosef Harish has been asked for a legal opinion on the matter.

**WOMEN PRAY AT WALL, WITHOUT INCIDENT**  
By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, May 8 (JTA) -- A group of women succeeded in conducting prayer services Friday at the Western Wall, without being assaulted or harassed by the ultra-Orthodox, as has occurred in previous attempts.

The group, which calls itself the Women's Kotel Tefillah, recited the prayers for Rosh Hodesh, the new month.

They went to the Wall despite appeals by Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek and Religious Affairs Minister Zevulun Hammer to change their plans to avoid incidents.

Their worship was virtually undisturbed. A man who tried to break into the women's section was stopped by police.

In past months, the women have been harassed by ultra-Orthodox men and women at the Wall, who cursed them, threw chairs and bottles at them and, in one case, reportedly bit them.

After their prayers Friday, the women went to the Horva Synagogue in the Old City, which they found locked in anticipation of their visit.

They held a short session at a nearby archaeological site, where a church of the Byzantine period once stood.

**FEDERATIONS TAKING DIFFERENT PATHS  
IN 'PASSAGE TO FREEDOM' CAMPAIGN**  
By Andrew Silow Carroll

NEW YORK, May 8 (JTA) -- Jewish federations across the United States have so far raised \$19 million, or 25 percent, of the \$75 million the United Jewish Appeal hopes to collect in its "Passage to Freedom" campaign for Soviet Jewry, UJA officials announced Monday.

According to Marvin Lender, the New Haven, Conn., investor who chairs the campaign, the pace of giving so far exceeds that of UJA's last "emergency" campaign, the 1984-85 "Operation Moses" drive on behalf of Ethiopian Jews.

In addition, said Lender, no American Jewish community has declined to take part in the campaign, which was launched in March to help pay for the resettlement of thousands of Soviet Jews in the United States and Israel.

But despite Lender's optimistic assessment, made during a nationwide telephone conference call with Jewish editors and reporters Monday, there is evidence of a divergence between how the UJA and the local federations view the sometimes controversial campaign.

For UJA's part, officials would prefer that all monies raised by the local communities be forwarded to the UJA. A monitoring committee will then divide the proceeds, allocating approximately half to impacted Jewish communities in the United States on a per capita basis and half to Israel and the overseas agencies involved in resettling Soviet Jews.

For example, the Jewish federations of New York and the North Shore communities of Massachusetts have agreed to forward 100 percent of the funds raised in their special campaigns to UJA. Both communities are among the seven expecting the largest proportional influx of Soviet Jews.

Such an arrangement was designed to protect UJA's traditional role as an organization that raises money on behalf of Israel, while meeting the federations' separate need for resettlement funds. Some 40,000 Soviet Jews are expected to leave the Soviet Union this year, with 90 percent headed for the United States.

**San Francisco To Retain Funds**

But some of the more than 200 local federations are charting a different course. In San Francisco, another of the "impacted seven," the federation will use all the money it raises to resettle Soviet Jews locally, and cannot assure the UJA that there will be any money left over for overseas use.

"We're not sending our money to New York," Rabbi Brian Lurie, the federation's executive director, told the Northern California Jewish Bulletin. "We're taking care of our own need, which is disproportionate."

A third example of how local federations are participating is found in Bergen County, N.J., where the board of the United Jewish Community announced it would hold onto 50 percent of the funds for local needs and then remit the balance to the UJA. If Bergen should have any funds left over from the local portion, they will be distributed to federations among the "impacted seven."

Asked Monday about these divergent paths, Lender said he had only one understanding: "that all money will be forwarded to the UJA, and we'll deal with the dollars based on the ground rules set up by the CJF monitoring committee."

The Council of Jewish Federations, the umbrella organization of local community funds, staffs the multi-agency Monitoring and Accountability Committee that is overseeing the allocations process.

According to UJA President Stanley Horowitz, who took part in Monday's conference call, CJF called on all the federated communities to participate in the campaign according to the "national plan."

"If San Francisco deviates from that national plan," Horowitz said, "they and the CJF will be in touch with one another."

In the meantime, UJA will continue to include the money pledged to the San Francisco campaign -- to date \$1.1 million -- in its tally of funds raised in the national campaign.

The "Passage to Freedom" campaign has been controversial since its inception. Despite enormous local needs -- San Francisco estimates it will need \$2.7 million to resettle 1,500 additional Soviet Jews -- American Jews have voiced ambivalence about raising money for Soviet Jews who have opted not to settle in Israel.

Different approaches to "Passage to Freedom," especially if other cities follow San Francisco's lead, will make final accounting difficult and may threaten UJA's pledge to ensure a sizable allocation to the Jewish Agency for the absorption of Soviet Jews in Israel.

**VANIK URGES ONE-YEAR WAIVER  
OF AMENDMENT HE CO-AUTHORED**  
By Michael Solomon

MONTREAL, May 8 (JTA) -- The co-author of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment called here Monday on Jews to support a one-year waiver of provisions of the statute that deny U.S. trade benefits to the Soviet Union because of its emigration policies.

Former U.S. Rep. Charles Vanik (D-Ohio), addressing a luncheon session of the World Jewish Congress Executive, stressed that "the waiver will not pass without the consent and support of the Jewish community of America."

"The Congress waits for Jewish support in favor of it and so does the president," he said. He added, "The Jewish community of the Soviet Union will be first to profit from a waiver."

Vanik, who with the late Sen. Henry Jackson (D-Wash.) drafted the amendment 14 years ago, at a time of severe restrictions on emigration from the Soviet Union, made clear he does not want it abolished.

"The original Jackson-Vanik Amendment is not repealable in this century," he said. But he said he favors a one-year waiver "unencumbered by conditions."

The WJC Executive session is being held here in conjunction with the 22nd plenary assembly of the Canadian Jewish Congress, which is the representative body of Canadian Jewry. The sessions opened at the Queen Elizabeth Hotel Sunday and continue through Tuesday.

Addressing a joint session Sunday night, WJC President Edgar Bronfman predicted that 40,000 Soviet Jews will emigrate this year and 80,000 in 1990.

He announced that the WJC has "decided to hold our next Executive meeting in Moscow."

Bronfman also disclosed that the WJC is "now having discussions with East Germany and Czechoslovakia and will soon open a WJC office in Budapest."

# ISRAEL'S MEMORIAL DAY BEGINS WITH SIRENS AND INSPIRATION

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 8 (JTA) -- Sirens sounded all over Israel at 8 p.m. on Monday, ushering in Memorial Day, a solemn 24-hour observance that will be followed Wednesday by the festivities marking the 41st anniversary of independence.

As usual, the nation's leaders urged the populace to draw inspiration from those who died in battle.

According to official figures released this week, Israel lost 16,740 soldiers and other security personnel to enemy action in the four decades of its existence. Almost 52,000 have been disabled.

Addressing bereaved families, Cabinet ministers and ranking military officers sought to inspire and comfort. Israelis were asked to "persevere resolutely in the ongoing fight for survival and security."

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, speaking at the Yad Lebanon Israel Defense Force Memorial, declared, "In the 41st year of our independence, we must still fight -- even in Jerusalem, our capital.

"Arab terrorism has reached new peaks of violence and murder," said Shamir, "and the struggle along the northern border continues to take a precious toll."

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin assured grieving parents of fallen soldiers that Israel "takes perhaps greater care than any state on earth" when it comes to risking the lives of its fighting men.

"Here in the military cemeteries," he added, "all political arguments cease, and we are united."

Sirens were to sound again at 11 a.m. on Tuesday to mark the solemn day.

# TEHIYA WANTS SINGER EXCLUDED FROM YOM HA'ATZMAUT CEREMONY

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, May 8 (JTA) -- Popular singer Chava Alberstein has become the Jane Fonda of Israel.

The right-wing party Tehiya is furious that the dovish vocalist has been chosen to be one of the torch lighters in the traditional ceremony opening Israel Independence Day festivities Tuesday night. Members of the party held a demonstration Sunday on Mount Herzl to protest her participation.

Knesset Speaker Dov Shilansky of Likud said he would include her in the ceremonies, but "with a heavy heart."

Alberstein's left-leaning political views first came to light about two years ago. Last year, she was criticized for supporting a plan by the Palestine Liberation Organization to sail a boatload of Palestinian deportees from Greece to Israel. The plan was aborted when the ferry chartered by the PLO was damaged by saboteurs in Cyprus.

A Jewish settler from the West Bank told Israel Radio on Sunday that "a woman who tried to express sympathy with enemies and murderers" cannot represent him.

But Alberstein has her supporters. Knesset member Dedi Zucker of the Citizens Rights Movement called her "a major cultural symbol and institution" in Israeli society who is "trying to express her Zionism in the humanistic way supported by a large portion of this society."

# GAMBLING OFF COAST OF EILAT HITS JACKPOT, DESPITE ACCIDENT

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, May 8 (JTA) -- Egyptian-owned gambling ships are earning as much as a million dollars a day in Israeli waters, and their number is increasing, despite a bad accident Sunday in the Gulf of Eilat.

Two launches carrying gamblers to a floating casino off Eilat collided, hurling five people into the water. All were rescued, though one was badly injured.

The mishap did not deter the Israeli authorities from allowing the Egyptian company to position another gambling ship, the Sea Princess, in the Mediterranean.

The Transport Ministry gave the green light. Starting next week, the ship will cruise back and forth between Tel Aviv and Ashdod while its passengers play games of chance.

Ezra Tisona, who manages the casino, said the vessel has been outfitted with every luxury and can carry 600 people.

At a meeting last week, Tisona assured Interior Ministry and police officials that the Sea Princess will be operated to the same standards as the floating casinos off Eilat.

Six gambling ships are currently operating off Eilat and two more are being readied for what has proven to be a lucrative business.

The cost of outfitting a vessel for gambling is about \$1 million, which is usually recouped in a week.

During the Passover holidays, the estimated income of each Eilat ship was \$1 million a day.

The Treasury would like a share. Avraham Tsarfati, a senior income tax official, said his office is looking for ways to tax the ships, even though they are registered in Egypt.

"The land of registration is of no importance, since the source of income is Israeli," Tsarfati said.

But not all officials are pleased with the gambling activity. At a meeting Sunday of the Eilat City Council, the Interior Ministry, the police and the Treasury were criticized for allowing it.

One council member, Sima Namir, said several Eilat families were "ruined" by the gambling ships.

Their presence siphons off money that Israeli and foreign visitors might have spent in Eilat, which lives off tourism.

# LIKUD NAMES HISTADRUT CANDIDATE

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, May 8 (JTA) -- Likud, confident it can make a strong showing in next fall's Histadrut elections, nominated Yaacov Shamai on Sunday night to be its candidate for secretary-general of Israel's trade union federation, which has been dominated by Labor since its inception nearly 70 years ago.

Foreign Minister Moshe Arens, chairman of the Likud Secretariat, claimed the public understands that the Labor Party "has strangled the economy" with its policies. He said he was sure Likud can win.

Labor may also be challenged for the first time by an ultra-Orthodox party. The Shas leadership voted unanimously last week to ask its governing Council of Torah Sages for permission to participate in the Histadrut elections.