

**WITH PLO SEEKING U.S. ASSURANCES TOO,  
SHAMIR IS RECONSIDERING HIS DEMANDS**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 12 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir appears to be backing away from some of the assurances he had been seeking from the United States regarding U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's five-point proposal for an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

At the same time, the Palestine Liberation Organization is pressing the United States for assurances of its own that conflict with those sought by Israel, Cabinet ministers were informed Sunday.

That means the Bush administration will have to use adroit if not circumlocutory language in framing the assurances if it is to reconcile the positions of both sides.

Shamir, now scheduled to meet President Bush in Washington on Wednesday, had already backed off from his original demand that the five-point plan be modified to reflect Israeli concerns.

Last week, he persuaded the Inner Cabinet of senior ministers to accept Baker's five points, on the "understanding" that certain assurances would be forthcoming.

That may have been the price Shamir had to pay for the belated White House invitation announced Thursday evening, less than a week before the meeting.

The prime minister may now have gone even further. In weekend interviews with the news media, Shamir indicated that Israel would be satisfied with less than all six of the assurances he had requested.

Washington, in any event, has made clear it cannot satisfy all of them.

Shamir refused a request by Labor Party ministers Sunday for a full-scale foreign policy debate prior to his departure for the United States. He maintained there was nothing to talk about, since the government's position is clear.

**Not Bitter About Invitation Delay**

One assurance is that Israel would in no way find itself negotiating with the PLO, directly or indirectly.

In that connection, Israel wants an understanding that it need not talk to a Palestinian delegation of which it does not approve.

Furthermore, Israel insists that the dialogue must be confined to the procedures for holding Palestinian elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

But the Cabinet was told Sunday that the PLO is also seeking Washington's assurance that it will select the Palestinian delegation.

The PLO also wants the United States to reiterate its acceptance of the principle of land for peace, and it wants a free hand to raise any issue at the dialogue.

Observers are predicting that Shamir will face some tough talk in Washington.

Health Minister Ya'acov Tsur, a leading Laborite, warned of another pitfall. He observed that the historic developments in East Germany and other Soviet satellite states may very well divert American interest away from its current

efforts to help the conflicting parties in the Middle East engage in dialogue.

Shamir apparently was not offended by the long wait he had for Bush's invitation.

According to unconfirmed reports, a close aide advised him to show displeasure by not accepting. But the prime minister rejected such counsel.

In an Israel Television interview Sunday, Shamir said whether or not the invitation had been delayed was now "a thing of the past, and I am looking ahead."

He acknowledged differences with the United States, but said he did not expect a confrontation in his talks with Bush and other top officials Wednesday.

Sources close to him said he plans to recall with gratitude Bush's personal role, as vice president, in helping the Jewish exodus from Ethiopia in the winter of 1984-85.

Acknowledgment of that help is considered appropriate in light of Ethiopia's recent decision to re-establish diplomatic ties with Israel.

While in the United States, Shamir will address the 58th General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations in Cincinnati on Thursday. He will meet next week with Jewish leaders in New York.

**BRITAIN OPPOSES MITTERRAND PLAN  
TO CONVENE A EURO-ARAB DIALOGUE**  
By Yossif Lempkowicz

BRUSSELS, Nov. 12 (JTA) -- Britain has balked at a French plan to revive the moribund Euro-Arab dialogue.

The British foreign secretary, Sir Douglas Hurd, made clear his objections at a meeting of the 12 European Community foreign ministers here last week.

He referred specifically to French President Francois Mitterrand's proposal to convene a joint meeting of the E.C. foreign ministers with those of the 22 Arab League member states in Paris next month.

Mitterrand floated the idea last month at a session of the European Parliament in Strasbourg, France. The French hold the rotating chairmanship of the E.C. Council of Ministers through Dec. 31.

Mitterrand, who used the occasion to condemn Israel's behavior toward the Palestinians, said the Palestine Liberation Organization would participate.

But Hurd took issue with the participation of Syria and Libya, the two member states of the Arab League "suspected of sponsoring terrorism."

It was Britain who took the lead to isolate both regimes four years ago, when they were implicated in terrorist attacks in Europe.

The E.C., in fact, imposed limited diplomatic sanctions on Syria, such as a ban on ministerial visits to Damascus. But those measures have since been eased.

Most of the E.C. countries agree it is necessary to revive the Euro-Arab political dialogue, which has been stalled for some years.

But some, in addition to Britain, are said to believe the time is not ripe for a high-level meeting, such as is proposed by Mitterrand.

## PROSECUTORS CHARGE HAMAS LEADERS WITH PLOTTING MURDER OF SOLDIERS

By Hugh Orgel and Cathrine Gerson

TEL AVIV, Nov. 12 (JTA) -- Two Palestinians posing as Orthodox Jews abducted and murdered Israel Defense Force soldiers Avi Sasportas and Ilan Sa'adon earlier this year, the military prosecutor charged over the weekend.

He identified the pair as Mohammed Nasser, 28, and Mahmoud Mabhouh, 30, both former residents of the Jabalya refugee camp in the Gaza Strip.

Both use the title "sheik" and belong to Hamas, the Islamic fundamentalist organization active in the Gaza Strip, which is waging a "jihad" (holy war) against Israel within the framework of the intifada.

Although the two killers fled the country and reportedly found haven in Libya, the Israel Defense Force has in custody virtually the entire leadership of Hamas, including the men who recruited and instructed them for the murder operations.

In fact, some 200 Hamas members were arrested last May, including its leader, Sheikh Ahmad Yassin, who has been charged on 15 counts. Also in custody is Mohammad Yusuf Hassan Sharatah, whose job was to recruit willing assassins.

The arrests were made at about the time Sasportas' buried remains were discovered, not far from where he was abducted. No trace of Sa'adon has been found yet, but the IDF is convinced he met the same fate, at the hands of the same killers.

As the military prosecutor related, Sharatah was recruited personally by Yassin and made responsible for the military training of the "mujahedeen" in the Gaza Strip.

He was approached by Nasser and Mabhouh, who had plans to attack Jewish drivers delivering cooking gas cylinders from Israel to Gaza.

### Donned Garb Of Religious Jews

But the precautions taken by these drivers were too much for them to overcome, so they decided to kill lone soldiers who frequently hitch rides near military bases.

Sharatah provided the men with pistols, and they stole a Subaru car for the operation.

IDF personnel have long been alerted not to accept rides with suspicious-looking drivers. The two Hamas killers therefore put on yarmulkes and donned the traditional garb of religious Jews, the prosecutor said.

They picked up Sasportas at the Hodaya junction in southern Israel, near the Gaza Strip, on Feb. 16. He was on leave and seeking a ride home to Ashkelon.

According to the prosecutor's reconstruction of the crime, the car traveled a short distance when Nasser turned and fired at Sasportas, mortally wounding him in the head and chest.

They buried him near the Hodaya junction, only a few hundred yards from where they picked him up. His remains were not found until May 7.

The killers took the soldier's documents, his personal weapon and red beret to Sharatah as proof of their deed. They burned his clothing.

Sharatah, apparently pleased, approached his superiors for approval of another such mission, which was granted.

On May 3, Nasser and Mabhouh stole another Subaru, put on their kipot and picked up

Sa'adon, who was waiting for a ride to Ashkelon at the Masmiya junction. He presumably was murdered in much the same fashion.

Hamas was founded by the extremist Moslem Brotherhood shortly after the intifada began on Dec. 9, 1987. The group considers itself at war not only with Israel, but with all non-Moslems.

Hamas members in custody include the leaders of its intelligence agency, Al Majd, and its military branch, Al Mujahedun al-Falestiniyun.

## ARABS GEARING UP FOR ANNIVERSARY OF DECLARATION OF PALESTINIAN STATE

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Nov. 12 (JTA) -- Arabs in the West Bank and Gaza Strip are gearing up for the first anniversary of the Palestine National Council's proclamation of a Palestinian state in the territories.

The first anniversary of the declaration, made by Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat in Algiers, falls on Wednesday.

The Unified Command of the Palestinian uprising has declared the day a "national holiday." All Palestinian institutions and factories will be closed.

Leaflet No. 48, issued by the intifada leadership in the West Bank on Saturday, instructs Palestinians to mark the anniversary by raising Palestinian flags, marching, releasing balloons and shooting off fireworks Sunday, Monday and Tuesday.

The leaflet also calls for general strikes on Nov. 19, to protest against Israeli policy in the territories, and on Nov. 28, to protest U.N. decisions that allegedly ignore Palestinians' rights.

The leaflet makes no mention of the five-point U.S. proposal for an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, which has now been accepted by Israel. But it stresses that only the PLO can name the Palestinian delegates to any talks with Israel.

## MAJORITY OF ISRAELIS NOW CONSIDER TRANSFER OF ARABS A POSSIBLE ANSWER

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 12 (JTA) -- A majority of Israelis now favor the transfer of Palestinians out of the administered territories, unless the intifada can be brought to a peaceful end soon.

That solution would be considered by 52 percent of the public, according to a poll just conducted by the Hanoch Smith Research Institute.

That is the largest number of people to support the idea of population transfer since polls were first taken on the issue. Six months ago, only 38 percent of Israelis responding to a poll conducted by the same organization said they would consider the idea, Ha'aretz reported Sunday.

The latest sampling of 1,200 Israelis included kibbutz members, who tend to be dovish, and Jewish settlers in the territories, many of whom are hawkish.

Smith claimed the hardening of feelings reflects the cumulative effects of the Palestinian uprising as it nears the end of its second year and spills over from the territories into Israel proper.

He cited the wrecking of an Egged bus by a Palestinian last July 6, which cost 16 lives, and the occasional murders and stabbings of Jews in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

## WJC DELEGATION'S VISIT TO PRAGUE MAY PAVE WAY FOR TIES WITH ISRAEL

By Ruth E. Gruber

PRAGUE, Nov. 12 (JTA) -- Government officials and Jewish leaders here seem to agree that the prospects of Czechoslovakia restoring diplomatic relations with Israel after 22 years will be advanced by the first official visit to Prague this week of Edgar Bronfman, the internationally known industrialist and World Jewish Congress president.

While no immediate results are expected, at least one government official spoke of a possible "positive breakthrough" emerging from Bronfman's visit.

"I wouldn't like to give any unrealistic prognosis," Czechoslovak Foreign Ministry spokesman Lubomir Marsik told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in an interview. "All this depends on the results of Bronfman's visit."

WJC spokesman Laurent Moysé agreed. "Relations between Czechoslovakia and Israel will be one of the major points discussed," he said. "Maybe there could be good news, but it depends. There are a lot of conditions."

Bronfman arrived here Sunday with a delegation including WJC's secretary-general, Israel Singer, and its executive director, Elan Steinberg.

Though invited here by the local Jewish community, Bronfman also will have meetings with the country's top political leaders, including one Monday with Communist Party chief Milos Jakes and Prime Minister Ladislav Adamec.

### Hope For Commercial Ties

Foreign Ministry spokesman Marsik said Czechoslovakia wants to improve relations with Israel, and he implied that Prague attaches great importance to the Bronfman visit, as shown by the level of his talks.

"We can admit that this could be a positive breakthrough in mutual relations with Israel," he said. "This will depend on the contents and results of the visit."

"We hope the visit will bring some improvements in mutual contacts," he said. "There is of course desire on the part of Czechoslovakia to have greater relations with Israel."

Czechoslovakia severed diplomatic relations with Israel, as did all of the Communist bloc countries except Romania, after the Six-Day War in 1967. There has been a slight thaw between the countries in recent years, however, on the level of cultural relations.

Prague's Magic Lantern theater group, for example, has performed in Israel, and a major exhibition on Czechoslovak Jews is going to Jerusalem next year.

Some tourist links also have been established recently. Though limited, there are possibilities for Israeli tourists to come to Czechoslovakia.

Marsik said that initially, Czechoslovakia might be interested in expanding tourist links and commercial contacts with Israel, including the possibility of hiring Israeli construction firms to build new hotels here.

Moysé of the WJC said Czechoslovakia is "also interested in good relations with the United States, and Israel could be a step forward in this direction."

He said Bronfman also would be meeting with Czechoslovakia's foreign trade minister.

Bronfman has regularly visited other East European countries with Jewish populations,

including the Soviet Union. WJC meetings in Hungary may have been a forerunner of the full relations it re-established with Israel in September.

The Prague Jewish community has only about 1,000 registered members, yet the city is one of the most important sites of pre-Holocaust Jewish life in Europe.

### Some Tensions Within Community

Each year, 700,000 or more tourists come from all over to visit the State Jewish Museum, Europe's foremost collection of Judaica, which is housed in several ancient synagogues.

But the country's Jewish community, which numbers 5,000 to 6,000, finds itself in a delicate internal position at this time.

There has been tension within the tiny community recently, centering around accusations, particularly by a group of 25 young Jews, that the current Jewish leadership is too subordinate to the Communist regime and supportive of its hard-line policies.

The dispute came to a head last May, when the group sent a letter to the community's president, Frantisek Kraus, warning that Jewish life in Czechoslovakia "is in danger of extinction."

It urged greater possibilities for Hebrew and Jewish education, as well as better access to the archives of the State Jewish Museum.

It criticized Kraus and Bohumil Heller, president of the Council of Jewish Religious Communities in Bohemia and Moravia, for issuing statements supporting the regime's use of police against anti-government demonstrators.

Kraus and Heller, with whom Bronfman will be meeting, have also been criticized, since taking office in 1985, for issuing statements condemning policies of the Israeli government.

Czechoslovak authorities, highly supportive of the Arabs, have long played the "anti-Zionist" card against the Jewish community, and many Jews today are afraid of doing or saying anything that could label them a "Zionist."

### DEVICE DEVELOPED BY ISRAELI DOCTOR ELIMINATES NEED FOR TRACHEOTOMIES

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Nov. 12 (JTA) -- An Iraqi-born Israeli pediatrician has invented a light-weight artificial breathing device that some of his peers consider revolutionary in its ability to alleviate breathing disabilities without inserting a tube through the trachea.

The device, unveiled at the seventh International Exhibition on Medical Technology in Jerusalem, is called the Hayek Oscillator, after Dr. Zamir Hayek, who developed it.

It can be used for the short-term treatment of diseases congesting the lungs, such as pneumonia, cystic fibrosis, asthma, pulmonary shock and neuromuscular disease.

The armies of Israel, the United States and Britain have expressed interest in purchasing a number of units for the treatment of victims of chemical warfare.

The oscillator stimulates respiration with air pressure pumped in and out of a plastic chamber fitted around the patient's chest, creating a semi-vacuum. It enhances the natural clearing of fluids from the lungs by means of an attached electronically controlled air pump.

Hayek, 45, who received his medical degree from Tel Aviv University, specializes in diseases of newborns and infants.

### BEHIND THE HEADLINES:

#### **CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT IS TRAINING ITS OWN TO PERFORM THE BRIT MILAH**

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Nov. 12 (JTA) -- If a boy is born at twilight on Friday and one is not sure which is the eighth day, when should the brit milah, or ritual circumcision, be performed? And if a baby is born jaundiced, under what conditions do you postpone the ceremony?

With a copy of the Shulchan Aruch, or Jewish Code of Law, spread before him, Rabbi Joel Roth posed these questions recently to a group of 27 people, mainly physicians, who had chosen to become mohalim -- those who perform the brit milah.

They were taking part in an intensive six-day training program for mohalim conducted at the beginning of this month at the Jewish Theological Seminary, where Roth is professor of Talmud. The candidates received certification as mohalim at the end of the conference.

The program, said rabbis at JTS, was part of an all-out effort by the Conservative movement to become independent of other branches of Judaism, namely the Orthodox, who have often provided the services of mohalim to entire Jewish communities.

The Reform movement made a similar move in 1984, when it began training its own mohalim, at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

Whereas the Orthodox generally train mohalim by individual "precepts," or teachers, the Conservative movement decided to mount an organized drive to train mohalim, who were enlisted with the help of congregational rabbis in individual communities.

JTS focused on attracting physicians, in part to avoid malpractice problems, said Roth. A training program at Mount Sinai Hospital in New York ran into problems when it could not get malpractice insurance for trainees who were not physicians.

#### Two Women Participated

"Brit Kodesh: A Sacred Covenant" was sponsored by JTS and the Rabbinical Assembly, the organization of Conservative rabbis. Participants in the program came from across the United States, including two from Puerto Rico.

Many of the new mohalim will serve areas of the country where there are none at all, said Rabbi William Lebeau, a vice chancellor at JTS.

Lebeau was instrumental in planning the conference, along with Rabbi Elliot Salo Schoenberg of Needham, Mass., who represented the Rabbinical Assembly.

One problem the new infusion of Conservative mohalim may begin to address is the difficulty Jews living in remote areas have in finding someone to perform a brit milah when an Orthodox mohel will not travel on Shabbat.

That has sometimes been a problem for the greater Pittsburgh area, where, until now, there has been only mohel, said Dr. Mark Diamond, who has just become the second.

Among the group of JTS trainees were two women, both physicians. One of them, a gynecologist-obstetrician and clinical geneticist, is also the wife of a rabbi. The other, a family practitioner, is a recent convert to Judaism.

Both spoke of having received disparaging remarks about their intentions. Yet women are

permitted to perform the brit, according to halacha, or traditional Jewish law, even as interpreted by the Orthodox.

Even with certification of 27 new Conservative mohalim, their ranks in America are small. Until the conference, there were only between 15 to 20 Conservative mohalim in the country, said Roth, who is chairman of the Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards.

The Reform movement now has 64 certified mohalim, 20 of whose certification was completed this month at the biennial conference of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

#### Some Refused To Perform Ceremony

The numbers of certified Orthodox mohalim are not great, either. There are only an estimated 100 mohalim certified by the American B'rith Milah Board. There are also uncertified mohalim who practice, and some Hasidic groups, such as the Satmar, use their own mohalim, not those of the board.

Conservative and Reform mohalim are recognized by the B'rith Milah Board, according to Rabbi Eugene Cohen, the board's president, who welcomed the Conservative program.

Cohen, who is himself an Orthodox rabbi, also said he had not heard of cases in which an Orthodox mohel refused to perform a circumcision on a baby born of Conservative converts to Judaism. Yet that issue was raised several times during the training conference at JTS.

Dr. Kiva Shtull of Solon, Ohio, a suburb of Cleveland, said his father, a Conservative rabbi, had encountered enough difficulties with the three Orthodox mohalim in the area that he brought in a Conservative mohel from Pennsylvania to perform circumcisions on congregants' newborn boys.

Shtull recalled that one of the Orthodox mohalim refused to perform a circumcision on the son of one congregant, because he contested the conversion of the baby's grandmother.

The decision to train Conservative mohalim, said Roth at JTS, was less a reaction to such problems as it was part of a drive to become more independent.

It was also part of a larger plan to teach other Jewish arts to Conservative Jews, including training scribes and supervisors of kashrut, he emphasized.

#### Personal Devotion Required

Lebeau highlighted the personal devotion to Judaism displayed by each potential mohel, emphasizing the requirement that the mohel observe kashrut, Shabbat and regular prayer.

The classes at JTS ranged from detailed medical techniques to understanding the meaning of the brit milah in Jewish law, Kabbalah and biblical tradition. There were also sessions on the psychology of the brit, medical ethics and personal piety.

All of the candidates had already been performing circumcisions for many years. Opinions valuing ritual circumcision over medical were heard several times from the candidates.

During a video presentation of an actual brit, presented by Dr. Lawrence Veltman of Portland, Ore., candidates jumped up to offer advice on the procedure.

Schoenberg of the Rabbinical Assembly said those who choose to become mohalim "are committed Jews. They had a spiritual experience studying at the seminary. They will be role models to other Jews."