

GENERAL ASSEMBLY AGAIN DELAYS VOTE, APPEARING TO DOOM-RESOLUTION ON PLO
By Allison Kaplan

UNITED NATIONS, Dec. 4. (JTA) -- A scheduled vote in the General Assembly on a resolution that would upgrade the Palestine Liberation Organization's status here to that of an observer state has been postponed for the second time.

But the latest move would appear only to delay the death of the measure, which diplomats here now believe to be inevitable.

U.N. General Assembly President Joseph Garba announced Monday afternoon that the Arab-sponsored resolution, which had been due for votes last Friday and then on Monday, would now be put off two additional days.

U.S. and Israeli officials said the postponements indicate that the resolution's backers were not able to muster sufficient support in the face of staunch opposition from the United States.

The officials expect that when the resolution is again brought to the floor, any action on it will be indefinitely postponed. They do not expect the resolution to surface again before the next General Assembly convenes in September 1990.

The resolution, which was sponsored by 16 Arab states and introduced on the General Assembly floor by Kuwait, states that the PLO observer mission "shall be construed within the United Nations as the State of Palestine."

The PLO observer mission is presently referred to as "Palestine."

The U.S. stand against the resolution was coupled with a threat to cut off funding to the U.N. budget if the measure were to pass.

Three Other Resolutions Pass

The State Department declared last week that it would withhold its U.N. dues, which makes up 25 percent of the international body's total budget, should the PLO's status be elevated.

Western European countries, as well as the Soviet Union, are said to have joined the United States and Israel in pressuring the Arab bloc against pushing for a vote on the measure.

In addition, non-aligned nations that generally vote with the PLO were said to have been reluctant to lend their support to the resolution, apparently because of the threatened cutoff of U.S. funds.

There is speculation here that if the resolution elevating the PLO is indefinitely postponed or withdrawn, there may be some move to try to give the PLO at least the semblance of a victory.

Israeli officials said the Palestine observer mission's placement in the General Assembly hall may be moved closer to that of the observer states and the non-governmental organizations, a more prestigious position than its current seat.

The General Assembly did take action on three anti-Israel resolutions Monday afternoon. The measures had been introduced during last week's debate on "the situation in the Middle East."

The first, adopted 109-18, calls for Israel's withdrawal from all "occupied territories," reaffirms the Palestinians' right to a state and calls for an international peace conference.

The United States requested a separate vote

on one paragraph of the measure, which condemned U.S.-Israeli cooperation. It was adopted, but by a vote of 63-35, with 47 abstentions, a far smaller margin than the tally on the resolution as a whole.

The other two resolutions were both adopted by overwhelming margins. The second resolution, which passed 84-22, with 49 abstentions, condemns Israeli "occupation" of the Golan Heights and calls on all member states to cease all dealings with Israel.

The third declares Israel's jurisdiction over Jerusalem to be illegal and condemns those countries whose diplomatic missions are located there. That measure was approved 147-2, with only eight countries abstaining.

HOPES FADE FOR ELECTIONS PLAN, AS PLO INSISTS ON ROLE IN TALKS
By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4. (JTA) -- The high hopes of realizing Israel's plans for Palestinian elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip seem to be dwindling as winter approaches.

That is because the United States and Egypt have been unable to convince the Palestine Liberation Organization to step back and let the Palestinians in the territories name their own delegation for preliminary negotiations with Israel.

The PLO delivered a memorandum last Friday to the U.S. ambassador in Tunis, Robert Pelletreau, insisting that "no Palestinian delegation will come to the negotiating table without being named and announced by the PLO."

The memo expressed "regret that the American response, from the beginning, ignores any role for the PLO in forming its (Palestinian) delegation to the dialogue" with Israel.

At the State Department, deputy spokesman Richard Boucher said Monday that Hakam Balawi, the PLO representative in Tunis, described the memorandum as unofficial when he delivered it.

In Israel, aides to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir expressed indifference to the PLO memo. "We are not interested in what the PLO says. We are only interested in Egypt's response, and that has not yet reached Washington," said one official in the Prime Minister's Office.

Boucher said the United States is "looking forward to an official Egyptian reply" to Secretary of State James Baker's five-point proposal for Israel-Egyptian negotiations.

Designed To 'Annihilate' PLO

After some public arm-twisting by Baker, Israel's Inner Cabinet accepted Baker's proposal with certain "assumptions," including that the Israeli-Palestinian dialogue be limited to setting up the proposed elections and that the PLO be excluded from any part in the process.

There has not been as much arm-twisting of Egypt, at least in public. But the State Department has said that it would not address Egypt's request for clarification on the five points until it accepts the proposal.

Egypt has not moved forward, presumably because it has not been able to convince the PLO to allow Cairo to name the Palestinian representatives itself.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has proposed a delegation that includes representatives from the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and at least two Palestinians living outside the territories.

Boucher reiterated Monday that "we have never sought and we are not now seeking a PLO response to the five points."

The State Department has maintained that its talks with the PLO in Tunis have been aimed at convincing the PLO not to block Palestinians in the territories from participating in the negotiations.

However, in the territories itself, the leadership of the Palestinian uprising, or intifada, issued a communique Sunday calling Baker's plan part of a series of proposals designed to "annihilate" the PLO.

Soviet Role Called 'Constructive'

Meanwhile, there was some indication that President Bush may have asked Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev in Malta over the weekend for Soviet help in bringing about the Israeli-Palestinian talks.

Gorbachev reported during a concluding news conference Sunday that he and the U.S. president had discussed the Middle East thoroughly.

"It seems to me we do have an understanding between us that we must do our very best, independently and together, to promote a solution to this problem," he was quoted as saying.

Bush said that "it doesn't require joint initiatives to solve the Middle East questions." But he said the Soviet Union "is playing a constructive role" in the Middle East in Lebanon and "in West Bank questions."

He added that the United States has not always felt that the Soviet role was constructive.

Under Gorbachev, the Soviets have been urging both the PLO and the Syrians to seek a political solution to the Middle East conflict.

(JTA correspondent Gil Sedan in Jerusalem contributed to this report.)

PERES COURTING RELIGIOUS PARTIES IN HOPE OF CREATING 'PEACE FRONT'

By Gil Sedan and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, Dec. 4 (JTA) -- Labor Party leader Shimon Peres has announced that he will try to create a "peace front" with the religious parties in the Likud-led coalition government.

Peres, who is vice premier and finance minister, did not indicate which parties he had in mind when he made his proposal Sunday to the Labor Party's dovish Mashov faction.

But Peres is said to feel an affinity with the ultra-Orthodox Shas and Degel HaTorah parties, which, like Labor, support territorial compromise in principle.

"Labor has two alternatives for the future," Peres told his party colleagues, "to go with the Likud, and then be dragged behind the positions of the Likud, or to return to the old partnership with the religious parties."

The Labor Party leader said he is not talking about leaving the national unity government or creating an alternative, narrow-based coalition. For now, he said, he only wants to create a majority within the government for peace.

But Likud officials promptly accused Peres of trying to undermine the coalition with his overtures to the religious parties.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir said he would not allow that to happen. He predicted that Peres

would fail in his courtship of the religious politicians.

Many observers are convinced that, in any case, the present government will founder soon on the peace issue. Both major parties seem to prefer trying to form a narrowly based coalition government to new elections.

Promise To Preserve Status Quo

During Labor's 30-year tenure in power, which ended with the Likud election victory in 1977, its coalition governments always included one or two religious parties.

Peres maintains he is now only trying to restore the traditional partnership between Labor and the religious bloc. He observed that Israel's system of proportional representation requires the parties to enter into pre-election alliances.

Likud has seen its once solid partnership with the ultra-Orthodox factions erode recently.

The Agudat Yisrael party left the coalition last month, accusing Likud of renegeing on promises it had made when establishing the coalition a year ago.

All of the religious parties are demanding that Likud kill pending legislation for electoral reform and the creation of a constitutional court. If adopted, the bills could drastically change the structure of Israeli politics.

Electoral reform would eliminate the minor parties. A constitutional court could end ultra-Orthodox domination of religious life and family matters in Israel.

Both measures enjoy strong support by Labor and Likud members of the Knesset. But either party would probably be willing to scuttle them to gain political advantage.

Peres has already promised his party's potential religious partners that the status quo on religious issues would be maintained by a new Labor-led government.

STRIKE PARALYZES THE TERRITORIES AS IDF PREPARES FOR ANNIVERSARY

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 4 (JTA) -- A general strike paralyzed the West Bank and Gaza Strip on Monday, as the Israel Defense Force sent heavy reinforcements into the territories to prepare for trouble on Dec. 9, the second anniversary of the start of the intifada.

The shutdown was total. No shops or businesses were open anywhere, and Arab workers employed in Israel stayed away from their jobs.

The strike was called by the leadership of the Palestinian uprising, or intifada, to protest the IDF's destruction of the Black Panthers, a gang in Nablus alleged to have murdered at least 15 Arabs suspected of collaborating with the Israeli authorities.

The gang leader and four of his deputies were gunned down by the IDF in the Nablus casbah last Friday. Two others were wounded and three were captured. Scores of suspects were rounded up in house-to-house searches and thrown in jail over the weekend.

The IDF claimed it struck a major blow against the intifada. But the violence continued.

A 10-year-old Arab girl was killed in the Gaza Strip on Sunday, when students leaving their school in the Shati refugee camp clashed with IDF troops. A military spokesman said a preliminary investigation showed that the girl participated in the disturbance.

OHIO MAN SUSPECTED OF SS SERVICE IS STRIPPED OF U.S. CITIZENSHIP

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Dec. 4 (JTA) -- A former Ohio businessman, accused by the U.S. government of having served in the Death's Head Battalion of the Nazi Waffen SS, was stripped of his U.S. citizenship last week, after failing to respond to charges filed in federal court.

U.S. District Court Judge John Pratt issued a default judgment Nov. 27, ordering Jakob Frank Denzinger, 65, of Akron, Ohio, denaturalized.

The Justice Department believes that Denzinger is now living in West Germany, a department source said Monday.

The source added that there is no particular action the West German government could take against Denzinger, since its statute of limitations has expired for all Nazi crimes but murder.

Denzinger is alleged to have actively engaged in persecution while serving from May 1943 to April 1945 as a guard at various concentration camps, including Mauthausen in Austria, Plaszow and Auschwitz in Poland, and Oranienburg and Buchenwald in Germany.

The allegations were contained in a complaint filed in August by the local U.S. Attorney's Office and the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, which seeks to denaturalize and deport Nazi war criminals living in the United States.

OSI maintains Denzinger willfully concealed his SS service from the Immigration and Naturalization Service in obtaining citizenship in 1972.

Denzinger was born in Croatia, Yugoslavia. He entered the United States on Oct. 30, 1956, after having received a visa two months earlier from the U.S. Consulate in Frankfurt, West Germany, the Justice Department said.

RIGHT-WING EXTREMIST WINS SEAT IN FRANCE'S NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Dec. 4 (JTA) -- Jean-Marie Le Pen's extreme right-wing National Front won a seat in the National Assembly in one runoff election Sunday and came close to winning a seat in another.

National Front candidate Marie-France Stirbois gained an overwhelming victory in Dreux, a city of about 14,000 just west of Paris. She scored with 61 percent of the vote against a de facto coalition of all other parties lined up to beat her.

In Marseille, France's second largest city, the National Front's Marie-Claude Roussel came within less than 1,200 votes of beating the center-right opponent, a respected medical doctor and professor at the Marseilles medical school.

The first round of the two special elections were held on Nov. 26. Since no candidate received an absolute majority, runoff contests were held a week later.

They were closely watched by political observers as an indication of how political currents are running in France.

Stirbois, who did very well in the first round was virtually assured of victory in the runoff.

Dreux, in any event, is a stronghold of right-wing voters susceptible to the National Front's appeals to racism and xenophobia. The town has a large population of foreign immigrant

workers, mainly from North Africa, who have been Le Pen's main target in recent years.

Le Pen, meanwhile, has appealed to the Supreme Court to order new elections in Marseille. The right-wing leader contends that Prime Minister Michel Rocard violated the law by electioneering before the polls closed, urging Socialists to back the center-right candidate.

JEWS IN EAST GERMANY WIN SUPPORT FROM NATION'S NEWLY FORMED PARTIES

By David Kantor

BONN, Dec. 4 (JTA) -- East Germany's newly founded Green Party has urged the authorities to return property confiscated from the Jews by the Nazis before and during World War II.

The left-wing, environmentalist Greens emphasized last week that the Jews' property had never been returned to its owners despite the anti-fascist rhetoric spouted by the old Communist leadership.

The demand comes amid the most revolutionary changes in the German Democratic Republic, whose entire Communist leadership resigned Sunday.

Even before this, the changes in East Germany, culminating in the crumbling of the Berlin Wall, convinced the country's tiny Jewish community it was time to assert itself.

For one thing, the East German Jewish community, or Gemeinde, demanded that the authorities tell the truth about anti-Semitic incidents that have taken place in the country.

The Jewish community has also asked that textbooks used in schools tell the story of the Stalinist persecution of the Jews in the early years of East German history.

Meanwhile, the East Germans, strengthened by the promise of a multi-party system, are concerned about attempts by right-wing parties in West Germany to form a union with what they believe are like-minded parties in the East.

Right-Wing Overtures Rebuffed

An East German party called the National Democrats has already strongly rebuffed offers of unity made last week by two right-wing parties in West Germany.

In East Berlin, the chairman of the National Democrats, Gunter Hartman, said Saturday that his group has become alarmed by attempts by the West German National Democratic Party and the Republican Party to seek a partnership.

"We have nothing to do with those West German parties, which we consider very dangerous," Hartman averred. "No one should confuse the East German National Democrats with the extreme right-wing party of the same name which operates in West Germany," he made clear.

The Republicans last week announced a program for the reunification of Germany and said they had already established a base of support in the eastern part of the unified country.

The West German National Democrats likewise maintained that they had thousands of followers in East Germany.

The East German government last week announced that it would not allow West German neo-Nazi leaders to enter the country, let alone launch political activities.

The statement affirming this specifically mentioned Franz Schoenhuber, the former SS colonel who is founder of the Republicans, now the largest right-wing party in West Germany.

ISRAEL TO SELL PRODUCE TO SOVIETS, WILL SOON DOUBLE EXPORTS TO POLAND

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 4 (JTA) -- The Soviet Union and Poland are shaping up as serious markets for Israeli exports.

Agriculture Minister Avraham Katz-Oz returned from Moscow Sunday night, after signing a series of agreements with Soviet officials, including a deal for Israeli agricultural products to be shipped this winter.

Vice Premier Shimon Peres, who returned from a visit to Poland last week, told the Cabinet on Sunday that the Poles want to improve trade with Israel in the fields of telecommunications, aviation, medical technology and tourism.

They are willing to sign a host of economic and trade agreements, said Peres, who serves as finance minister. He predicted bilateral trade with Poland would quickly rise to \$50 million, double its current level.

Katz-Oz was the first Israeli Cabinet minister to visit the Soviet Union since the Kremlin broke diplomatic relations with Israel during the 1967 Six-Day War.

He told reporters that Agrexco, the agricultural marketing board, will send an initial shipment of 90,000 tons of Israeli fruit and vegetables, valued at \$30 million, to the Soviet Union.

The produce will be carried in Soviet ships and cargo aircraft that will call in Israel. Moscow will pay in U.S. dollars.

In addition to providing the goods for export, Israel agreed to assist the Soviets in water planning, cotton production and the establishment of dairies and chicken farms.

Youth Exchange Set

Katz-Oz and his delegation also reached an accord on youth exchanges with the Soviet Union. Under the agreement, 1,000 children from each country will participate in reciprocal visits.

The Soviet youth delegation coming to Israel will include 50 teen-agers from the Chernobyl region, the scene of a major nuclear plant disaster in April 1986. They will undergo medical tests.

Meanwhile, a delegation of El Al's top management left for Moscow on Monday to conclude talks with the Soviet airline Aeroflot on joint service between the two countries.

The El Al group, headed by the airline's director general, Rafi Har-Lev, expects to reach final agreements with the Soviets on a starting date for the service and on the fares for flights between Moscow or Leningrad and Tel Aviv.

Peres, briefing the Cabinet on his three-day visit in Poland, said the Poles would like Israelis to invest in their country, but are even more interested in investments by Jews in the Diaspora.

SOVIETS WIN CHESS MATCH IN ISRAEL

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 4 (JTA) -- The Soviet Union was victorious in the European chess team championship tournament, which ended Sunday night at the Dan Carmel Hotel in Haifa.

Competing in the event were 84 chess masters on 28 teams, representing 27 countries or regions. The Russians led with 36 points, followed by Yugoslavia, with 33 points, and West Germany, with 31.5 points.

The two Israeli teams finished ninth and 14th, with 29.5 and 27.5 points respectively.

RARE HAGGADAH TO REMAIN IN CUSTODY UNTIL COURT DETERMINES ITS OWNERSHIP

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Dec. 4 (JTA) -- A Geneva court ruled last week that the famous Wolf Haggadah will remain in custody of the examining magistrate here, pending the outcome of a three-way legal battle to establish its ownership.

That was the decision sought at this stage by the World Jewish Congress, according to Gerhard Riegner, co-chairman of the WJC Governing Board, who lives in Geneva.

The organization is representing the Jewish communities of East and West Berlin as the rightful owners.

The other claimants are the Polish Ministry of Culture, which claims the haggadah was stolen from Warsaw in 1984; and the haggadah's putative owner, identified as a Canadian Jew named Hecht, who put the rare item up for auction in Geneva.

But the WJC and its clients appear to have won the latest round.

Riegner quoted the ruling by the Tribunal of First Instance here to the effect "that the claim to property made by claimant (the two Berlin Jewish communities and the WJC) is the most likely and that no other party can offer a more likely claim."

The ruling allows the WJC 90 days to introduce principal court action before the competent tribunal, Riegner explained in a letter to Elan Steinberg and Israel Singer, respectively the executive director and secretary-general of the WJC in New York.

The letter was made available to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in New York by Steinberg. Riegner spoke to the JTA in Geneva.

The haggadah, written in French and dating back to the 13th or 14th centuries, is valued at between \$1 million and \$1.5 million.

Canadian Accused Of Theft

It was to have gone on the block at the Habsburg and Feldman firm's Judaica auction in June. But the haggadah was withdrawn from the auction at the last minute because of the conflicting claims of ownership.

The haggadah had been part of an outstanding collection of Judaica owned by a German Jew, Albert Wolf, who died in 1907 at the age of 66. He left the haggadah to the Berlin Jewish community. It became part of the Jewish Kunstmuseum in Berlin.

Wolf's collection was confiscated by the Nazis in 1938. Part was transported to the town of Glatz in Silesia, which was then part of Germany but is now Glodzko in Poland, where it was found by the Russians in 1944.

The Polish government brought it back to the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw. There it stayed for 40 years, where it was appraised by a Judaica scholar, Professor Arthur Eisenbach, at the request of the Polish authorities.

How the haggadah was removed from Poland is not known.

The Canadian claiming ownership insists he has no knowledge that it was stolen. But Riegner has accused Hecht of the theft.

The Polish authorities are seeking Swiss assistance for legal action against him.

Philippe Grumbach, a Jewish lawyer here who represents the WJC, said the case may continue for years. It is even possible the Geneva court will declare itself not competent to rule, he said.