JERUSALEM, July 25 (JTA) -- Senior officials of Israel's Likud bloc are lobbying their right-wing coalition partners not to bolt the government over Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's apparent intention to accept U.S. proposals for convening peace talks with the Arabs.

Shamir has been assured he will receive support from the opposition Labor Party in the event that the right-wing parties decide to leave the government, as they have threatened.

But the Likud would rather maintain a coalition whose natural allies on the right than be forced to enter another national unity government with the more dovish Labor Party.

Likud officials focused Thursday on Tehiya, whose three-member Knesset faction has already recommended secession to the party's secretariat.

They contend that to participate in the peace conference the United States is trying to organize would lead inevitably to yielding territory. Tehiya advocates annexing territories as a prerequisite.

Likud officials deny that participating in a peace conference means eventually giving up land. Leaving the government now would be premature, they say, even if their fears are credible.

Likud officials pointed out that Shamir has neither deviated from his basic terms nor given the United States a final reply. In any event, they say, the only issue now on the agenda is direct, unconditional talks with Syria, which are within the guidelines adopted by the government.

Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i, in further assurances Thursday, the Americans have not yet supplied Israel with information on their "entire peace package," so Israel is under no pressure to respond, he said. He added that no one would think of abandoning the Golan Heights "under any condition or any circumstances."

Tehiya leader Yuval Ne'eman, who sits in the Cabinet but not in the Knesset, has apparently been persuaded. He said Thursday he is convinced that "reportedly obtained in the government's position are false and therefore there is no need to quit."

But the head of Tehiya's Knesset delegation, Geula Cohen, said Wednesday she was certain the party would leave the coalition.

Even if Tehiya and other right-wing parties defect, Likud can count on the Labor Party.

"We will support the Likud in the 1991 peace process, just as we did in 1977," party Chairman Shimon Peres said Thursday. In 1977, Menachem Begin's Likud government began the peace process with Egypt.

Peres denied rumors that Labor was offering to revive the national unity government, which flourished last year in a dispute over negotiations with the Palestinians.

The rumor started with Tourism Minister Gideon Patt, who said a ranking Laborite -- not Peres -- had broached the idea with him. He said he turned it down because it was Labor that broke the previous unity coalition. Political pundits say, however, that if the right-wing parties leave the government, Likud may have no choice but to renew its uneasy ties with Labor.

JERUSALEM, July 25 (JTA) -- Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat has suspended talks with Jordan on the composition of a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation to negotiate with Israel, according to reports Thursday from Tunis.

As a result, the Palestinian political community in East Jerusalem, the West Bank and Gaza Strip has been unable to decide on a position with respect to their participation in the regional peace conference the United States is trying to arrange.

The PLO's executive committee was meeting Thursday in Tunis on precisely that issue. Attending the meeting were leaders of the rejectionist camp, which opposes any Palestinian participation in the peace process.

Arafat, who heads Al Fatah, the PLO's largest and strongest faction, is bitter over what he considers to be a U.S. surrender to Israel's demands, the reports from Tunis said.

Arafat wants the PLO to choose who will represent the Palestinians in any peace negotiations.

Israel insists on the right to decide who will not represent them.

The Israelis want to exclude residents of East Jerusalem, any Palestinians living outside the West Bank and Gaza Strip and anyone connected with the PLO.

According to Arafat, the Americans have yielded to Israel's position.

He described Dennis Ross, head of the State Department's policy planning staff and a close adviser to Secretary of State James Baker, as a "more Likudnik than Likud."

Arafat quoted Faisal al-Husayni last week, "You are defeated. You have lost your strategic depth in Iraq, and therefore your demands should be modest."

Arafat charged in a Radio Monte Carlo interview aired Wednesday that the U.S. plan "ignores the Palestinian people's rights and completely leaves out the question of East Jerusalem."

According to observers here, no authentic Palestinian delegation from the territories will negotiate with the Israelis without the PLO's blessings.

An idea floated to solve the problem is to have a former resident of East Jerusalem be a part of the Palestinian delegation, someone like the Jordanian minister of justice, Tayyir Kan'an, for example.

Palestinian representation will be the focus of talks when Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy visits Cairo next week.

He headed the semi-official Egyptian daily Al Ahram, in an interview to be published shortly, that he hopes to return to Jerusalem with an invitation in hand for Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to meet Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

The absence of such invitation has rankled Shamir ever since he became prime minister.
PALESTINIAN SEEK EUROPEAN BACKING FOR STANCE ON REPRESENTATION AT TALKS
By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, July 25 (JTA) -- The Palestinians seem to be seeking the backing of the European Community to a diplomatic dispute with Israel over representation at the regional peace conference the United States is trying to organize.

Palestinian activist Faisal Husseini, who has conferred frequently with Secretary of State James Baker in recent weeks, seemed encouraged after a meeting here Wednesday night with French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas.

France, which wields considerable influence in the 12-nation E.C., seems supportive of the Palestinians right to select their own delegates, including a representative from East Jerusalem.

That issue seems at the moment the most serious obstacle blocking the American scenario.

In Washington, President Bush urged the Palestinians on Thursday to "do everything possible" to let peace talks materialize.

Israel has repeatedly made clear it will not accept a Palestinian delegation that includes any resident of East Jerusalem, anyone connected with the Palestine Liberation Organization or anyone residing outside the West Bank or Gaza Strip.

But according to Husseini, an East Jerusalem resident who holds no official rank but has met with Baker on every one of the secretary's five trips to Jerusalem since March, East Jerusalem is the "red line" for the Palestinians.

"No delegation can join the negotiations without representation from East Jerusalem," Husseini said. "Should we accept the non-representation of East Jerusalem, it would mean that the future of East Jerusalem would be decided before any negotiations," he asserted.

"I am not saying that there is a deadlock with James Baker. I believe there is a point that must be clarified," Husseini added.

According to French sources, Baker asked Dumas to try to convince the Palestinians not to torpedo the peace talks.

But Dumas emerged from the meeting with Husseini saying, "It is up to the Palestinians to designate their own representatives."

He explained that "if one wishes to talk with representatives of the occupied territories, one cannot exclude part of those territories."

"It is then logical to conceive a Palestinian representation from East Jerusalem within the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation," he said.

"I bear in mind that the Jerusalem issue cannot be treated right away," Dumas added. "This discussion should be held at a later stage."

The foreign minister observed that while in substance one could admit the right to examine the composition of a delegation, a right of veto would not be "logical."

Dumas will attend a meeting of the 12 E.C. foreign ministers Monday in Brussels, where the Middle East will probably still be on the agenda.

Husseini was accompanied at his meeting here by the PLO Paris representative, Ibrahim Souss. He and Nabil Shaat, a diplomatic adviser to PLO leader Yasar Arafat, have been invited by Swedish Foreign Minister Sven Andersson to a meeting in Stockholm on Friday.

Husseini said that like the Israelis, the Palestinians want Jerusalem to remain a unified city, "but in a way no one will be under the other. We don't want a peace in Jerusalem like a horse under its rider," he said.

He said that if the substance of the peace talks is going to be "vague and ambiguous," the "representation will have to be very clear, and in these circumstances, no one can represent the Palestinians except the separate Palestinian delegation headed by the PLO."

However, Husseini said the Palestinians could "show flexibility" in the composition of their delegation, provided they are "addressed as a people and not as inhabitants of a certain place or as a minority."

IRAQ ADMITS HAVING SUPERCANS, DESIGNED BY THE LATE GERALD BULL
By Gil Keever

TORONTO, July 25 (JTA) -- Iraq, responding to a United Nations deadline to declare its worth in nuclear arms, admitted Thursday it was building supercans capable of firing chemical, biological or nuclear weapons a distance of 1,000 miles.

The guns, whose payloads would be able to reach Tel Aviv and Teheran, were designed by Canadian arms experts and dealer Gerald Bull, who was assassinated outside his Brussels home in March 1990, a time when giant pipes apparently destined to form parts of the guns were beginning to turn up in European ports.

Iraqi President Saddam Hussein had claimed the pipes were for Iraq's petrochemical industry.

The disclosure about the supercans, in a document delivered to U.N. officials July 18, is the latest admission by Baghdad of the existence of weapons it had earlier denied having.

But Iraq did not fully disclose its nuclear potential, and the U.N. allies have therefore not completely ruled out using force against Iraq to elicit that information, the British ambassador to the United Nations said there Thursday.

Under the terms of the April 3 Gulf War cease-fire agreement, Iraq was to disclose and destroy its weapons of mass destruction.

The most recent report, a "missile book" which was given to Associated Press by a Western diplomat, reveals that Iraq had "tested" a 14-inch supergun with a 170-foot barrel. The report also admits that Iraq has steel tubes which were intended to form part of an even more massive 40-inch supergun. If completed, the cannon would have been the largest artillery piece in the world.

Other parts of the gun barrel, labeled "petroleum pipes," were impounded by British Customs agents on April 11, 1990. The parts had been manufactured by Sheffield Forgemasters, a British firm reportedly unaware of their true purpose.

According to William Lowther's "Arms and the Man: Dr. Gerald Bull, Iraq and the Supercans," British Customs were likely informed about the barrel sections by M16, the British intelligence agency, which had gotten its information from the Mossad, Israel's foreign security agency.

The weapons were the life dream of Bull, a ballistics pioneer who had a two-decades-long relationship with the U.S. Department of Defense. A temperamental genius, Bull served four-and-a-half months in an American federal prison in the 1980s for violating the Arms Control Export Act by selling his technology to South Africa.

He subsequently closed his Space Research Corporation complex straddling the Vermont-Quebec border and moved to Belgium, where he entered the shadowy world of arms dealers. Israel was among the first of his clients, buying his advanced 6.2-inch howitzer and 30,000 of his heavy artillery shells.
PLIGHT OF REFUSENIKS LIKELY TO BE A MINOR ISSUE AT SUMMIT IN MOSCOW
By Gregory Liss

MOSCOW, July 25 (JTA) -- The liberalization of Soviet emigration policy in recent years has relegated the plight of Jewish "refuseniks" to a minor issue on the agenda of summit talks taking place here next week between President Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

That is in sharp contrast to the summits of the late 1970s and 1980s, Soviet Foreign Ministry spokesman Vitaly Churkin pointed out at a news briefing here Wednesday.

He recalled how during previous summits, the American side continually raised individual cases of Jews and members of other ethnic groups denied permission to leave the country.

Next week's summit, delayed since February, will be highlighted by the signing of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty, which cuts the size of the two nations' strategic missile arsenals, and by a U.S.-Soviet agreement to cooperate on regional issues, including the Middle East.

With thousands of Jews leaving the Soviet Union each week, the refusenik problem has all but disappeared, Churkin said.

But not according to some organizations in the United States that have been active for decades on behalf of Soviet Jewry.

The Union of Councils for Soviet Jews estimates that there are at least 550 Jewish families in the Soviet Union who have been denied permission to emigrate, and it is urging Bush to present its list of long-term refuseniks to Gorbachev during next week's summit.

The National Conference on Soviet Jewry is also presenting a list of some 500 refusenik cases to the Bush administration. The group's chairman, Shoshana Cardin, is heading a delegation of leaders who will discuss the summit at a White House meeting Friday with Bush's national security adviser, Brent Scowcroft.

Numbers Down Dramatically

The delegation will also ask the administration to raise a number of issues relating to the well-being of Jews in the Soviet Union, including recent anti-Semitism, bureaucratic delays in processing refugees coming to the United States and concerns about new emigration regulations.

While the National Conference remains concerned about unresolved refusenik cases, as well as a series of new refusals that have occurred recently, Martin Wensick, the group's executive director, emphasizes that the number of long-term refusenik cases has "come down dramatically. It is a low number," he said.

Myrna Shinbaum, director of the Anti-Defamation League's Soviet Jewry Project, said she did not think the number of refuseniks was very high, but admitted, "I just don't track that anymore."

But Lynn Singer, executive director of the Long Island Committee for Soviet Jewry, which is affiliated with the Union of Councils, said that "in Leningrad, in particular, we seem to be getting new refuseniks every week or so."

In Washington, a State Department official said that although "some progress is being made in the cases we are hearing about, new cases are being brought up."

But here in Moscow, Churkin of the Foreign Ministry shrugged off the refusenik problem.

"Maybe occasionally some case comes up, but I recall at one time that was what talks between foreign ministers started with. This is no longer the case," he said.

"It is now handled routinely, at a working level, and comes up only very occasionally in our relations," he said.

Churkin pointed to the emigration law passed by the Supreme Soviet in May, which enshrines the right to travel abroad and emigrate.

Huge Waves Of Travelers

"One could expect that with tens of thousands of Jews wanting to emigrate, from time to time a case would arise requiring examination, and that someone would be refused permission on some grounds," he said.

"This is always present, but it is not prominent in our discussions with the Americans."

The new law effectively legitimized the freer movement across borders in recent years. Approximately 400,000 Soviet citizens emigrated last year -- mostly Jews, Armenians and ethnic Germans -- and 3.7 million took trips abroad.

The liberalized measures were fiercely opposed in the Soviet parliament by a motley group of conservaties and deputies representing workers, who said they were too costly. Concern about how consular and customs services would cope with huge waves of travelers delayed implementation of some of the provisions until 1993.

But one of the spinoffs of the legislation was an end to the automatic stripping of Soviet citizenship for those going to Israel.

That means, however, that would-be Jewish emigrants have to follow the same complicated process as other Soviet citizens. Jewish organizations blame that requirement for slowing down the numbers leaving for Israel.

The Union of Councils sees the new emigration law aggravating the problem. Its assistant director, Kim Lamberty, spent several months in Moscow at the union's bureau, whose very existence is a sign of how far things have come.

David Leopold, a Cleveland attorney who spent four months at the union's Moscow bureau, said the figure of 550 refusenik families "is a working number," and the actual number is probably higher.

A Sticky Problem

Leopold expects the new emigration regulations that take effect in January 1993 to present many problems, particularly with regard to the definition of state secrecy.

"The issue is not really which terms they use, but how they define it," he said.

Leopold, along with former refusenik Leonid Stonov, presented an alternative form of the bill to the Supreme Soviet, but it was rejected.

"The point is that the legislation provides for a five-year restriction or five-year refusal. It appears to place no cap on the amount of time an individual can be refused, but provides a loophole that a commission can extend it."

Moreover, a sticky problem exists in the new law regarding men of draft age, 16 to 27.

Leopold said that those in that age group, or those liable for army reserve call-up, "cannot leave the country without permission of their district military supervisor."

In its letter to Bush, the Union of Councils urged the president to "convey the disappointment of the United States and the international community with the new emigration law."

(JTA staff writer Susan Birnbaum in New York contributed to this report.)
YIDDISH WRITER BASHEVIS SINGER
DEAD IN MIAMI AT THE AGE OF 87
By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, July 25 (JTA) -- Isaac Bashevis Singer, winner of the 1978 Nobel Prize for Litera-
ture who died Wednesday night in a nursing home in Miami, was remembered for the salty blend of realism and mysticism that permeated the pages of his Yiddish prose.

He put the world of Eastern European Jewry, both religious and profane, on the world's literary map, most popularly through the films adapted from his novels, "The Magician of Lublin," "Yentl" and "Enemies: A Love Story."

His fascination with the denizens of New York cafeterias resulted in a critically acclaimed made-for-television Public Broadcasting Service drama, "The Cafeteria."

He was known for his vegetarian diet, which he adopted aboard the non-kosher ship that brought him to America and never abandoned.

For years following his arrival in America, Singer wrote stories for the Yiddish daily For-
verts (Forward), laden with sex and strange, other-worldly characters.

"A lot of Yiddish readers did not like these kind of stories," recalled Joseph Motek, managing editor of the Forverts. "A lot of readers even sent in protest letters about why these stories are printed."

At first, Singer did not write under his own name, and his short stories and literary essays appeared under a variety of pen names, including D. Segel and Y. Warshawsky.

Many, many writers, when they wrote not poetry or novels, preferred not to write under their own names," Motek said.

Singer's stories -- and name -- appeared in later years in The New Yorker, bringing him world attention and, ultimately, the Nobel Prize.

HE DISDAINED LITERATURE

Fellow-Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel worked with Singer on the Forverts in the 1950s and '60s. "I used to go home with him on the subway.

He sometimes used a self-deprecating humor, and that was his charm," he said.

"I think he wanted to lead a double life," Wiesel reflected, "living among Polish Jewry at the same time that he lived in modern America."

Wiesel also remembered another duality in Singer's life. "He disdained literature but he lived as a writer," said Wiesel.

Singer's evocations of the shetl were among the last literary glimmers of a lost world. "We write about them, as we cannot resurrect anything. We can be writers, not magicians," he said in 1984.

He began his career writing in Hebrew, then chose Yiddish in an effort to reach a larger audience.

Singer, who was 87 at the time of his death, wrote virtually all his novels and stories in Yiddish.

After coming to America in 1935, he wrote about exotic Jewish characters on Manhattan's Upper West Side, in cafes in Buenos Aires and Tel Aviv and in Yiddish literary clubs in Paris.

His first English translator was writer Saul Bellow, who himself went on, in 1976, to win the Nobel Prize for Literature.

Singer was the last surviving sibling of a family of three outstanding writers, and a younger brother, Moshe, the only one to follow in the father's footsteps and become a rabbi.


A Dybbuk Proofreader

There was, too, a nearly unknown older sister, Esther Kreitman. Kreitman's autobiogra-
phical novel, "Deborah," published in England, told the story of a woman in an Orthodox Jewish home with no room for women aspiring to anything other than an arranged marriage.

It is believed that the heroine of Singer's "Yentl, the Yeshiva Boy" was modeled after her sister.

So woebegotten was Kreitman, wrote Singer, that even his dedication to her in "The Seance" was gobbled up by a proofreader's dybbuk, who changed Hinde Esther to "Minda Esther."

Singer once read from one of his stories about a dybbuk proofreader who mischievously transposed his words from a love story to a typesetter across town who was printing a tabloid article about a murder.

Asked by reporters if he had seen the demons and dybubks he so loved to write about, he would say he had "never met a single demon in New York."

But, "Singer, in his own funny way, would always knock on the door before he went into the house. He always wanted to let the demons know that he was coming in," recalled Singer's long-
time secretary and frequent translator, Devorah Menashe Telushkin.

There was a very deep, deep part of him that believed in it," she said.

Singer was born July 14, 1904, in Radzymin, near Warsaw.

His father, Pinchos Menachem, was a devoutly Orthodox rabbi, and his mother, Bathsheba, was the daughter of the rabbi of Bilgoraj. She was highly educated at a time when meaningful education for women was frowned upon.

Bathsheba, immersed in the rabbinical world of her husband, later denied her own independent inclinations and schooled her female first-born.

Her sons fared better in her eyes. Singer adopted his mother's maiden name, Bashevis, as his middle name.

A Terrible Strain

In Warsaw, the Singer family settled on Krochmalna Street, where Reb Singer held sway in a traditional rabbinic court, which Bashevis Singer captured in his memoir, "In My Father's Court."

Singer's last book, "Scum," was published only this spring, but had been serialized in 1967 in the Forverts.

Singer's works were published in Polish, but he declined to visit there, saying it wold be a "terrible strain to see Poland without my people."

Singer's first wife, Runya, a devoted communist, would not accompany him to America. She took their child, Israel, to Russia. On Thursday, the son, Israel Zamir, who lives in Tel Aviv, was en route to New York for his father's funeral.

Their relationship is known to have been strained.

Singer is survived by Alma, his second wife for some 50 years.

The funeral will be held in New York on Sunday, where Singer lived for more than 50 years.