

ALONI CALLS FOR RUBINSTEIN'S OUSTER AS LEAD NEGOTIATOR WITH PALESTINIANS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Aug. 5 (JTA) -- Education Minister and Meretz leader Shulamit Aloni called on Tuesday for the replacement of Cabinet Secretary Elyakim Rubinstein as head of Israel's negotiating team in the bilateral peace talks with the Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

Aloni charged that Rubinstein was involved, "at the behest of the (Shamir) government, in the deliberate double-crossing of the United States regarding the settlement issue" from 1990 to 1992.

Aloni made her demand on the eve of Rubinstein's departure for the United States as a senior member of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's entourage. Rabin is scheduled to leave Israel on Thursday night for his talks with President Bush in Maine next week.

Rubinstein told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that he had no comment on Aloni's statements and that he was barred from commenting because he is "a civil servant."

Rubinstein, originally a protege of the late Moshe Dayan, served as Cabinet secretary and as head of the negotiating team under the previous, Likud-led, government. He has been asked to stay on in both capacities by Rabin.

His reappointment as Cabinet secretary is for three months, but there have been hints from Rabin that he may stay on beyond that period as head of the negotiating team.

Rubinstein's Presence Would Send Wrong Signal

On Tuesday, Rubinstein chaired a meeting of chief negotiators -- the first meeting in which Professor Itamar Rabinovich, a leading Arabist and rector of Tel Aviv University, took part in his new capacity as head of the team negotiating with the Syrians.

Rabinovich was brought in by the new government this week to replace Yosef Ben-Aharon, a former top aide to Yitzhak Shamir.

Aloni voiced her demand for Rubinstein's removal during a briefing for Israeli reporters. She said she respected Rubinstein's intellectual qualities and had no doubt that he "would serve the (new) government with the utmost loyalty."

But his continued presence as a negotiator was "a psychological fact" that would send the wrong signals to the Palestinians, she said.

Aloni expressed criticism and reservations over various aspects of governmental policy, but said the "real debates" within the government would only be held after Rabin's return from the United States.

She stressed that her political bloc, Meretz, which is pivotal in the coalition, would "not threaten to quit every other day." But she emphasized that it would strongly state its positions and fight for them.

Among Meretz's positions, she said, are the following: including Faisal Husseini and other East Jerusalemites in the Palestinian negotiating team; including diaspora Palestinians who may be members of Palestine Liberation Organization groups, in the multilateral talks; and supporting the Palestinians' right to conduct direct negotiations

with international bodies such as the European Community.

The more mainstream Labor Party disagrees with Meretz on all these issues.

In a separate charge, Aloni told reporters that she has strong objections to the methods used by the Israel Defense Force's undercover units, which have killed some 30 suspected Palestinian terrorists this year. Her objections, she said, were based on "moral" considerations.

She claimed that open-fire directives handed down to young soldiers by their commanders were unclear.

"I feel terrible to know that kids the age of 18 to 19 are those who have to give the verdict and execute, to decide that somebody should be killed, or shot, and to do it," she said, adding, "It's wrong."

Army officials say the undercover units have orders to shoot at a suspect's legs unless the soldier's life is in danger.

But human-rights groups charge the units with pursuing a shoot-to-kill policy when targeting Arab suspects.

An undercover soldier died Monday of wounds received in a shootout two days earlier with a Palestinian fugitive in the Gaza Strip town of Khan Yunis. The Palestinian was shot dead during Saturday's clash.

The incident has renewed the debate over the methods employed by the undercover units, whose members often dress as Arabs when pursuing Palestinian suspects.

"I have a moral problem," Aloni said of their tactics, adding that she would rather have "more units there and not do it the way it's done."

STUDENT RESIDENTS OF ORTHODOX YESHIVA TOLD TO LEAVE BUILDINGS IN OLD CITY

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 5 (JTA) -- Following its offensive against Jewish settlements in the administered territories, the new Rabin government has targeted Jewish strongholds in the heart of the Moslem Quarter of the Old City of Jerusalem.

Police Minister Moshe Shahal announced Tuesday that students of the Ateret Cohanim Yeshiva in the Moslem Quarter are residing there unlawfully.

The yeshiva had taken over two buildings in the quarter two years ago, after the buildings had been confiscated from their Arab owners "for security purposes." With the help of the Housing Ministry, the yeshiva students and their families had then taken up residence in the buildings.

In making the announcement, Shahal said that as long as the buildings were not being occupied by their original owners, they could only be used by Israeli security forces.

Therefore, suggested Shahal, the buildings' Jewish tenants should remove themselves from the premises.

Knesset Member Hanan Porat of the National Religious Party reacted strongly, saying that the government was following the lead of Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek, who "missed no opportunity to narrow the steps of the Jewish residents in the Old City."

**IDF SOLDIERS CHARGED WITH NEGLIGENCE
AFTER RAID ON HEBRON HEADQUARTERS**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 5 (JTA) -- Six Israel Defense Force soldiers, three of them officers, were found guilty of negligence in the wake of a daring raid by Arab terrorists last weekend into Israel's Civil Administration headquarters in Hebron.

The terrorists set afire two army vehicles and smeared nationalist slogans on the walls before managing to escape undetected and unhurt.

Two IDF soldiers were injured during efforts to extinguish the fire.

The attack on the headquarters in Hebron was the latest in a series of incidents that reflected a lack of discipline among IDF soldiers.

One such case resulted in tragedy when a member of one of the crack commando units that work undercover in the administered territories accidentally killed a fellow soldier during an operation.

This latest instance of poor discipline prompted the military command in the West Bank to take punitive action.

The six soldiers charged with negligence -- two lieutenants, one second lieutenant, one sergeant and two reserve soldiers -- were sentenced to military jail for a period of 21 to 70 days.

The attack was especially disturbing in light of the fact that the military headquarters in Hebron are strategically located on top of a hill overlooking the town, well protected by a surrounding fence.

According to the army's investigation, several Arab terrorists, probably members of the Hamas Moslem fundamentalist movement, arrived at the perimeter of the headquarters early Saturday morning.

They cut through a fence at the military garage and entered the garage area. They had brought with them containers of gasoline and boxes of contact glue.

They spilled the flammable materials on two jeeps, set them afire, smeared nationalist slogans and took off. It was only then that the soldiers on duty awoke and extinguished the fire, preventing further damage.

Army sources said it was lucky that the terrorists had not taken advantage of the disorder in the army camp following the attack and opened fire on the soldiers.

**REFUGEES ARRIVE IN ISRAEL
FROM WAR-TORN MOLDOVA**
By Michele Chabin and Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 5 (JTA) -- Several hundred refugees from the battle zones of Moldova are due to arrive in Israel this month, as part of a special rescue operation by the Jewish Agency.

Jewish Agency Chairman Dinitz told the Knesset Immigration and Absorption Committee that 100 Moldovan Jews are expected to arrive this Thursday.

There are approximately 40,000 Jews currently residing in the former Soviet republic, some 70 percent of whom have begun aliyah proceedings.

About 150 have come since the outbreak of fighting there in May.

Of the 600 to 700 Jews now in the capital city of Kishinev, 350 are expected to arrive within the next week or two. The remainder,

Dinitz said, are expected to immigrate by the end of the month.

An additional 1,400 Jews have found refuge in Odessa, Ukraine. Of these, "significant numbers destined for Israel are being moved to Kishinev, where their papers can be processed and they can be moved to Israel within a few weeks," said a spokesman for the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

The spokesman said that in the last several weeks, "the JDC has continued its ongoing support for the refugees and has responded to calls for help in special situations."

Meanwhile, Dinitz, in his address to the Knesset, expressed deep concern over the fate of the Jewish community of Yugoslavia in the wake of the intensifying civil war there.

A group of 60 Jews, whose children arrived here unescorted in the earlier stages of the war, was expected to arrive here within the next few days, to meet with their children and to explore aliyah possibilities.

(JTA staff writer Susan Birnbaum in New York contributed to this report.)

**DAVID LEVY TOUTED AS POSSIBLE
CANDIDATE FOR ISRAELI PRESIDENCY**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 5 (JTA) -- Senior Likud activists have launched a campaign to nominate former Foreign Minister David Levy as the party's candidate for the presidency, once President Chaim Herzog concludes his term of office next year.

In an interesting twist, the group backing Levy is headed by Yisrael Katz, a former aide of Ariel Sharon, a political rival of Levy's. The group sent letters last week proposing the idea to members of Likud's Central Committee.

Levy himself has not officially reacted to the proposal, but the fact that heads of his camp, such as Yavneh Mayor Yehuda Brus, described Levy as the right candidate for the job, was interpreted as an indication that he would not say no.

According to the Levy lobby, he was the right person for the job because he symbolized a national consensus, as a man who can bridge communal gaps. Levy is a Sephardic Jew in a leadership circle dominated by Ashkenazim and is considered a member of Likud's more dovish camp.

Levy's supporters argue that their candidate could enjoy the support of Labor, the religious parties and even the Arab parties and Meretz. They recalled that Herzog, a member of Labor's more hawkish camp, was elected to office in 1983 years ago thanks to the support of the right.

Another surprising candidacy that is reportedly being considered is that of Brig. Gen. (Res.) Nahman Shai, who is being proposed as Labor's candidate for mayor of Jerusalem, once Teddy Kollek retires.

Shai won fame serving as army spokesman during the Persian Gulf War.

Kollek himself is not too happy with the idea. He said that although he holds Shai in esteem, he believes that his candidacy should be considered only after Shai acquires several years of municipal experience.

Kollek's own candidate is Amos Mar-Haim, the present deputy mayor.

The Likud is considering running former Health Minister Ehud Olmert as its candidate for the mayoralty.

ISRAEL'S FIRST FEMALE RABBI ASKS 'WHY NOT?' INSTEAD OF 'WHY?'

by Ellie Kaunfer

JERUSALEM, Aug. 5 (JTA) -- Naamah Kelman seemed destined to marry a rabbi, not become one.

Although she grew up in a family of rabbis, Kelman thought until recently that becoming a rabbi in Israel was not a career option for her.

But on July 23, at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Jerusalem, Naamah Kelman became Rabbi Naamah Kelman, making her the first female rabbi to be ordained in Israel.

"I'm fulfilling a professional and personal dream," she said. "It's overwhelmingly fulfilling -- and also tiring."

Fulfilling the dream did not come easily for the 37-year-old New York native. Kelman, who attended an Orthodox Jewish high school, did not grow up in an environment that encouraged women to become rabbis.

Her father, the late Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, executive vice president of the Conservative branch's Rabbinical Assembly for 38 years, steered his daughter toward Jewish education. But he taught her that the closest she would ever get to becoming a rabbi was marrying one.

Kelman said she was first introduced to Jewish feminism as a freshman at Northwestern University. "I was very much influenced by my Hillel rabbi," said Kelman, who is now the mother of three children.

The rabbi encouraged me to go to the first Jewish Feminist Conference in 1973, gave me my first aliyah (call to the Torah), and persuaded me to lead services," she said.

Conservatives Turned Her Down

But despite her college activism, Kelman had no plans to become a rabbi when she moved to Israel in the late 1970s. She said she first seriously considered the idea in 1985, after Amy Eilberg became the first Conservative female rabbi in America.

Kelman, who was then working at a community center in Jerusalem, decided to apply to both the Conservative and the Reform rabbinical programs in Israel in 1986. But the Conservative movement in Israel had decided not to ordain women (and still does not). Kelman was accepted at HUC in Jerusalem.

"I was very disappointed when I was rejected by the Israeli Conservative movement," Kelman said. "But I felt that the important battle is to change Israeli society's view, not fight my own institution."

So Kelman affiliated herself with the Reform movement. Kelman did not consider the switch a major break from tradition, however.

"It was not a big deal," Kelman said. "The Israeli Reform movement is different than the one in the United States. Services are in Hebrew, there are more classical Jewish texts, and people keep kosher."

Kelman was not the first in her family to switch from Conservative to Reform. In 1985, her brother, Rabbi Levi Weiman-Kelman, founded Kol Haneshama, a "Neo-Hasidic" Reform synagogue in Jerusalem. Membership has since grown to 300 families, consisting mostly of American olim.

Kelman is now a member of her brother's synagogue. For now, she will continue her full-time work as a teacher and educational adviser at

the North American Federation of Temple Youth in Israel, a Reform youth group. But Kelman hopes some day to have a pulpit of her own.

"Right now it is not practical," she said. "It will take Israeli society some time to adjust to a woman leading services."

Indeed, Kelman has already received negative feedback from Orthodox Israelis. Less than a week after Kelman was ordained, a letter to the editor objecting to female rabbis appeared in Kol Ha-Ir, a weekly paper in Jerusalem.

In addition, a talk show host on a religious radio station emphasized that Kelman was a "rabbi" rather than a "rav," which Kelman said implied that her ordination was not legitimate.

On the other hand, Kelman said she has received much positive feedback from Israelis who are not Orthodox. "More and more they are accepting the Israeli Progressive Movement and its decision to ordain women rabbis," she said. "There is a changing political environment, and their acceptance is definitely related to the switch in the wind."

Indeed, the Conservative movement in Israel, which refused to accept Kelman in its rabbinical program seven years ago, will vote on the issue of ordaining women next month.

"There is a consensus to ordain women now," said Amy Lederhendler, chairperson of the Committee on the Status of Women in the Israeli Conservative Movement.

In the meantime, Kelman said that she and the other graduating female rabbis -- a second woman, Maya Leibowicz, will be ordained at HUC next month -- will try to make things easier for women who are considering entering the rabbinate in Israel.

"More and more women are asking 'why not?' instead of 'why?' when they think about becoming a rabbi," she said. "It just goes to show that if you persevere, you succeed."

JEWISH GROUPS HOLD RALLY NEAR U.N. TO CALL FOR INTERVENTION IN BOSNIA

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Aug. 5 (JTA) -- The Anti-Defamation League and the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors held a "call to action" on Wednesday in front of the Holocaust memorial wall near the United Nations to press for U.S. and U.N. intervention in war-torn Bosnia-Herzegovina.

About 200 people from 18 Jewish organizations participated, holding aloft placards that read "Never Again" and "Stop the Atrocities."

"Mankind is divided into three groups: the murderers, the victims and the bystanders," said Benjamin Meed, president of the American Gathering. "Murderers can only act if the bystander permits him to."

Meanwhile, inside the United Nations, representatives of several Jewish groups met with Ambassador Alec Watson, deputy U.S. representative to the international body, to express their concern over the U.S. government's inaction in putting an end to the Serbian atrocities.

Watson reportedly did not tell the Jewish representatives, who were there under the umbrella of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organization, that the United States was taking any particular course of action.

He did say, according to those who attended, that the United States and the United Nations are continuing their investigations into the matter.

THE JEWS OF CENTRAL ASIA:

**AGONIES OF WAR IN NAGORNO-KARABAKH
BOLSTER ALIYAH AMONG AZERBAIJANI JEWRY
[Part 4 Of A Series]**

By Gil Sedan

BAKU, Azerbaijan (JTA) -- Here in the capital of Azerbaijan one can smell the odors of the Levant, one can feel its charms. Baku is a beautifully situated city, lying on the slopes of a mountain overlooking the Caspian Sea.

It could be a haven for tourists, but instead it is a haven for war refugees.

On a recent visit to the Jewish communities of Central Asia in the wake of communism's collapse, there is evidence everywhere of the war between Christian Armenians and Moslem Azerbaijanis in nearby Nagorno-Karabakh.

The fallout caused by the collapse of the Soviet Union has turned this into a city of question marks. As it has throughout history, the volatility here has led to an unsettled feeling among the Jewish community -- and has bolstered aliyah.

Repercussions from the war in Nagorno-Karabakh, an Armenian enclave within Azerbaijan, reach all the way to the office of Lyova Baradani, the emissary of the Jewish Agency in Azerbaijan.

Every day he meets families in need of immediate help. Many want to go to Israel as soon as possible because their sons have received draft orders to go to the front.

The 35,000 Jews who live in Baku -- a city of 1.8 million -- are a worried community. Had it not been for the war, they would have thought twice before making aliyah. Even now they hesitate, torn between their links to the land and their fears for the future.

More Than 1,000 Aliyah Applications

Baradani says that last month he received more than 1,000 applications for aliyah. People are gathering up the exit visas that they had stashed away for possible future use. They feel the time has finally come.

So far this year, some 4,000 Jews have left Azerbaijan for Israel, compared to 6,000 in 1991. Now, Baradani expects that aliyah will again pick up momentum.

The war has made Baku a city of contrasts. The broad, green boulevards along the coastline hum with the sounds of happy children. Lovers sit holding hands on benches. Teen-agers play pool on tables set up along the promenades.

But the suburbs of Baku are meanwhile filling up with refugees from the battle front. The military cemetery overlooking the bay of Baku is always busy.

The new regime of President Abulfaz Elcibei, who succeeded the Communist old-timers in democratic elections held last April, has taken strict security measures. Every few hundred yards armed guards search cars for hidden weapons.

A resident of Baku said he was going to the front next week. "Who needs this war anyway?" he asked. He was unable to understand why, after decades of quiet, the Christian Armenians could no longer live peacefully within the Moslem territory of Azerbaijan.

Azerbaijan is facing harsh economic realities. The country produces more than 11 million tons of oil annually, but the outdated pumps hardly cover their operation costs.

Some workers have not received their sala-

ries for months because plants have stopped manufacturing goods. In the past, Russia was the principal purchaser of Azerbaijani exports. But now the situation in Russia is considered even worse than here. Here, at least, the food stands are not empty.

Many here believe the war may easily get out of control. Turkey supports Azerbaijan, which is ethnically Turkic; Christian Armenia enjoys the support of the West, and, more importantly, of Russia. Militant elements within Turkey are pushing for Turkish intervention on the side of the Azerbaijanis. But so far they are a minority.

"We want to do our fighting alone," said Niyazi Ebragimov, press adviser to the president. "We are not seeking Turkey's help. We want no escalation."

Sabir Casanli, deputy to the Sheikh Al Islam in the Caucasus -- the most senior religious authority in the region -- told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the war could easily develop into a religious conflict between Christians and Moslems.

"Our greatest effort is not to give it the color of a religious war, because we would not like it to spread to other regions," he said.

But if the Armenians push too far, Casanli warned, "we may call for a Jihad, a holy war against the heathens."

The war has produced its share of fallen Jewish soldiers. Albert Agaronov was 24 when he lost his life on top of his tank in Nagorno-Karabakh.

He won a posthumous medal for his bravery. But that provided little consolation to his parents, Agaron, 68, and Leah, 66, and to their 10 other children.

"He was a patriot of Azerbaijan," said the father. "He used to say: 'I am Jewish, but I am fighting for my country.'" The mother then added bitterly that the government had offered no help after Albert's death, "only words."

But the Agaronovs will not make aliyah. Neither they nor their children expressed any interest in moving to Israel. They are too rooted to the soil of Azerbaijan. They have no desire to make the difficult transition.

GERMAN NEO-NAZIS NUMBER 40,000

By David Kantor

BONN, Aug. 5 (JTA) -- A report prepared by the German government puts the number of individuals organized in neo-Nazi groups in Germany at 40,000 and warns against an increased tendency by right-wing extremists to resort to violence.

The report, written in answer to a parliamentary question of the opposition Social Democratic Party, concludes that the frequent targets of right-wing violence are asylum-seekers, foreigners from Eastern European countries, blacks, left-wing activists, gays, prostitutes and Soviet soldiers.

No mention was made of Jews as a target.

Based on data gathered by the internal security service affiliated with the German Interior Ministry, the report stated that neo-Nazis in this country are organized into 76 groups. Some 4,200 militant skinheads have been counted.

The German government has meanwhile made available 20 million marks -- some \$13.5 million -- for a special campaign to explain the dangers of right-wing extremism and to warn against aggression and violence, the report said.