

RABIN COMPLAINS DOVISH MINISTERS ARE UNDERMINING BARGAINING STANCE

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 5 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has voiced concern that Israel's negotiating stance in the Washington peace talks is being undermined by statements made at home by some of his more dovish Cabinet ministers.

Speaking on Wednesday at a special Cabinet session devoted to the peace process, Rabin did not name any specific ministers. But his comments were interpreted as referring to his longtime rival, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, among others.

At an earlier Cabinet meeting Sunday, Peres spoke forcefully in favor of a bold Israeli approach to peacemaking, saying that the weeks ahead are "crucial."

Reports said Peres spoke in favor of full withdrawal from the Golan Heights in exchange for peace with Syria and also proposed that Israel seriously consider whether or not to establish for the first time direct contact with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Peres later denied both reports.

The increasingly open debate among Cabinet ministers about the peace process came as the negotiations in Washington reached the end of their second week. Officials in Washington and Arab capitals confirmed Wednesday that the Arab parties had agreed to extend the current round of talks into a third week.

Rabin's plea to his ministers did not put an end to the dovish pronouncements by the left wing of his party and Cabinet.

Tourism Minister Uzi Baram, a former secretary-general of Rabin's Labor Party, pointedly praised the PLO's role in getting the long-stalled peace talks back on track in Washington. His remarks were seen as implying that Israel should hold direct talks with the Tunis-based PLO.

In comments to reporters after Wednesday's meeting, Baram said he favors a total Israeli withdrawal from the Golan in return for full peace with Syria, along the lines of the peace with Egypt, in which all of Sinai was returned.

'Shleimiel-Like' Negotiating

At Sunday's Cabinet meeting, another important Labor figure, Police Minister Moshe Shahal, also spoke openly of a full peace for full withdrawal scenario on the Golan Heights.

But Rabin's more cautious positions have been backed by others in his party, such as Economic Development Minister Shimon Shetreet and by one of Labor's key coalition partners, the Shas party.

Interior Minister Arye Deri, who heads the Orthodox Sephardic party, said Wednesday that the ministers in Jerusalem, by their public utterances, were pulling the rug from under the negotiating team in Washington, which had come to the talks under careful instructions from Rabin.

The result was that Israel was conducting the negotiations "shleimiel-like."

If the ministers could not contain themselves, Deri advised, there should be no further Cabinet debate on the peace process, and Rabin should run the negotiations alone.

Deri also said Shas would demand a referendum or new elections before any agreement were signed regarding the Golan, the West Bank or the Gaza Strip.

It was not clear whether Deri's statement referred only to agreements involving territorial concession or also to the envisioned interim Palestinian autonomy agreement.

Shetreet, in remarks to reporters, held fast to the traditional Labor Party line of supporting territorial compromise on the Golan Heights, but not a full withdrawal to the 1967 pre-war borders.

Shetreet, a professor of law at the Hebrew University, said that position is consistent with the true meaning of U.N. Security Council Resolution 242, which lies at the basis of the peace negotiations.

U.S. MAKING \$14 MILLION AVAILABLE FOR DEVELOPMENT IN THE TERRITORIES

By Deborah Kalb

States News Service

WASHINGTON, May 5 (JTA) -- In what appears to be another effort to bolster the standing of the Palestinian delegation currently negotiating here with Israel, the United States has announced it will make up to \$14 million available for job creation programs and other projects in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In announcing the aid Tuesday, the State Department said it was "encouraged by the resumption of the bilateral negotiations" and believes the aid package "will help promote progress in these talks."

The announcement is seen here as the latest attempt to provide the Palestinian negotiators with concrete dividends for returning to Washington, in order to strengthen them against rejectionists at home, such as the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement.

The announcement came as the Palestinians and other Arab parties to the peace talks agreed to continue this round of negotiations with Israel for at least another week.

The Israeli-Palestinian talks appeared finally to be making progress this week, as the negotiators tackled some substantive issues including the interim agreement for Palestinian self-government, water and land rights, and humanitarian affairs.

Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi, in a fairly upbeat briefing for reporters Wednesday, said that the talks had reached a "very difficult phase" because the negotiators were now dealing with some "critical and central" issues that would take time and persistence.

Later in the day, though, Ashrawi was quoted as saying that the Palestinians were disappointed with the discussions that had taken place on human rights concerns in the territories and that the Palestinians would not participate in further talks on the issue until next week.

The U.S. assistance program for the Palestinians will be funded by the Agency for International Development and "will reflect priorities identified by Palestinians," the State Department said in a statement.

The program is intended to promote job creation on projects including road construction, sewage treatment facilities and schools.

"Our goal," the statement said, "is to begin to alleviate current economic problems and to create infrastructure on which the long-term economic future of the territories can be built."

The United States is encouraging other countries to begin similar aid programs in the context of the peace process.

In Rome, where the multilateral working group on Middle East economic development held meetings this week, there were indications that additional aid could be expected from the European Community and separately from Spain and Italy.

RABIN UNDER PRESSURE TO REASSIGN CONTROVERSIAL EDUCATION MINISTER

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 5 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has promised his coalition partners in the Shas party to "examine" Education Minister Shulamit Aloni's latest controversial utterance, with a view to considering a Cabinet reshuffle.

Sources in the fervently Orthodox Sephardic party say the promise was made during a lengthy meeting earlier this week between Rabin and Shas' spiritual leader, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef.

Aloni outraged many Israelis, secular as well as Orthodox, by criticizing the prime minister for reciting the "Shema Yisrael" prayer at the end of a speech he gave in Warsaw last month to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising.

Rabin noted that the words had been on the lips of countless Jews as they went to their deaths in the Holocaust. Aloni, head of the left-wing Meretz bloc, Labor's other coalition partner, criticized this recitation as a reflection of "fatalism."

Political observers believe the prime minister's "examination" -- for which a timetable apparently has not been set -- will enable Shas Knesset members to stay away from the parliament when it considers a no-confidence motion scheduled for Monday.

The absence of the six Shas members will, in effect, enable the present Labor-Meretz-Shas coalition to survive, whereas a vote against the government would inevitably mean Shas' secession.

Shas' absence will not mean a victory for the opposition, because the Arab parties, though not part of the coalition, are expected to provide enough votes to preserve the government's majority.

Shas sources insist the "examination" will not merely mean a smoothing over of the affair. They say Aloni's remarks on the Shema was the last straw as far as their party is concerned.

Shas insiders say they are holding Rabin to a commitment he made, following an earlier controversy surrounding another of Aloni's anti-religion statements, that he would remove any minister who offends the sensibilities of other coalition partners.

The Shas sources say Aloni's transfer to another Cabinet portfolio also could clear the way for the other fervently Orthodox party, the United Torah Judaism Front, to join the coalition. The rabbis of United Torah have forbidden any coalition with Rabin unless and until Aloni is removed as education minister.

In fact, it is United Torah that submitted next week's no-confidence motion -- in order to embarrass Shas but also in order to put pressure on Rabin to move Aloni.

IMMIGRANTS STAGE MASS PROTEST OVER UNEMPLOYMENT AND HOUSING

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, May 5 (JTA) -- More than 10,000 recent immigrants from the republics of the former Soviet Union demonstrated here this week to protest government inaction in solving problems they face in employment and housing.

The immigrants, who massed Tuesday outside the Prime Minister's Office, said the government's mishandling of immigrant absorption is discouraging Jews in the former Soviet Union from coming.

The demonstration, which newspapers said was the largest protest by immigrants in the country's history, came as the government released its monthly aliyah figures, which showed a drop from the previous month.

Preliminary figures indicate there were 4,801 immigrants to Israel in April, including 4,060 from the former Soviet republics. About 350 more from the republics are believed to have immigrated, but have not yet been included in the official tally due to a bureaucratic delay.

Even with the added 350, the total would be substantially lower than March's figure of 6,120.

Jewish Agency spokesman Yehuda Weinraub said the numbers were down last month for "technical reasons," such as flight postponements because of the Passover holiday, and were expected to rise again this month.

In New York, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society said some 3,379 Jews from the ex-Soviet republics arrive in the United States last month under the government's refugee program, up from 2,979 in March.

'Acts As If Olim Don't Exist'

Here in Jerusalem, protesting immigrants complained bitterly Tuesday about high rates of unemployment, difficulties in finding housing and a general government outlook that they say neglects their needs.

The immigrants called for more investment to develop industry and allow immigrants to work in the high-technology fields for which many are trained.

"This government acts as if olim don't exist in this country," said one newcomer, using the Hebrew word for immigrants. This is why "about 10,000 olim are here to say 'no more.'"

The government defended itself by pointing to the slight drop in unemployment among immigrants during the past two years and new mortgage programs that have been implemented to ease the housing problem.

Absorption Minister Yair Tsaban came out to address the protesters, who jeered him as he promised more government action. Adding to the immigrants' gripes, it was reported this week that more than half of recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union who have entered the Israeli army complain of an "insulting attitude" on the part of their commanding officers.

The army unit that conducted the survey said that the complaints stem from a lack of knowledge on both sides and insensitivity on the part of the officers.

As the government tries to respond to the immigrants' needs, the Jewish Agency is working to bring more Jews to Israel.

The agency announced this week that it was organizing direct flights to Israel from the northern Caucasian region of the former Soviet Union because of the rise in ethnic tension there.

JEWISH GROUPS RAISE INITIAL CONCERN ABOUT JUSTICE DEPARTMENT APPOINTMENT

By Deborah Kalb
States News Service

WASHINGTON, May 5 (JTA) -- Jewish organizations have raised initial concerns about the nomination of Lani Guinier to head the Justice Department's civil rights division.

Guinier, a law professor at the University of Pennsylvania, has espoused controversial positions in her academic writings on such civil rights issues as use of the Voting Rights Act.

She has argued for a form of proportional representation, a concept suggesting that minority groups are entitled to political representation in numbers equal to their proportion in the population.

The Jewish community traditionally has opposed this concept, in part because it could be used to limit the representation of Jews.

"The Jewish community would have, or does have, serious questions about any plan that suggests that any group is entitled to representation in numbers equal to their proportion of the population," said Jerome Chanes, co-director for domestic concerns of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

Representatives of Jewish groups, including NJCRAC, are hoping to meet with Guinier to discuss their concerns, and until such a meeting takes place, most are reserving judgment about whether to oppose her confirmation.

Chanes said that NJCRAC, an umbrella group representing more than 100 national and community relations agencies has planned a consultation next Tuesday to explore the Jewish community's stance on the proportional representation issue.

"We would look forward to exploring these questions with Lani Guinier," he added.

Steven Freeman, director of the Anti-Defamation League's legal affairs department, said Wednesday that his organization had some "concerns" about Guinier's position on the Voting Rights Act and on proportional representation, but that ADL had not yet taken a position on her nomination.

He declined to offer further specifics about the group's concerns, saying that it would not be fair to the nominee. But he also said ADL was in agreement with Guinier that there should be some changes in the way the Voting Rights Act has been implemented.

'An Ally On Many Issues'

Freeman said he "would like to hear her say where she is now on some of these issues" and what she would do as assistant attorney general.

"We recognize," he said, "that this is a professor writing in academic journals and this might not" represent what she would do in her job.

The American Jewish Congress also expressed concern. In a statement released to The New York Times, but apparently not to other media organizations, the group said Guinier's advocacy of certain positions relating to the Voting Rights Act and proportional representation "raises substantial questions about how she would approach the obligations of the office to which she has been nominated."

The Times said the AJCongress statement also called for close questioning of Guinier by the Senate Judiciary Committee during her confirmation hearings. If AJCongress was not satisfied

with her views, the story said, it would not support her confirmation.

Lois Waldman, co-director of the AJCongress legal department, said Wednesday that her organization stood by the statement in the Times but would withhold further comment until it had a chance to meet with Guinier. She said she was "not at liberty" to elaborate further about the group's concerns.

Richard Foltin, legislative director and counsel of the American Jewish Committee, said Wednesday that his agency had not taken a position on Guinier's nomination.

"It is our understanding that she would like to meet with members of the Jewish community, and we would look forward to it," he said.

Foltin pointed out that the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund, where Guinier used to work, "has been an ally on many issues" and that AJCommittee has talked to Guinier on a variety of occasions in the past.

Guinier, a graduate of Yale Law School, has worked on voting rights issues for many years. She first worked in the Justice Department's civil rights division in the late 1970s, where she helped reorganize the voting rights section.

From 1981-1988, she served as assistant counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. A Justice Department statement said that in that position, she "played an important role as an outside adviser to Congress in its consideration of the Voting Rights Act amendments of 1982."

FRENCH CITIZENSHIP IS GRANTED TO PLO REPRESENTATIVE IN PARIS

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, May 5 (JTA) -- A controversy has erupted here over the granting of French citizenship to the Palestine Liberation Organization's representative to France.

Jean-Pierre Pierre-Bloch, a member of the French Parliament, said he was "scandalized to learn" that "a leading representative of a terrorist organization, the PLO, namely Ibrahim Souss, was granted French citizenship."

Souss, 50, a Palestinian Christian born in Jerusalem, has spent the past 25 years in France. He became the "delegate general of Palestine in France" in 1978 following the assassination of his predecessor, Ezzedine Kallak, by gunmen belonging to Abu Nidal's terrorist organization.

Reports in January said Souss had received death threats.

The current uproar over Souss began after an official French publication, the Journal Officiel, reported that he had been granted French citizenship.

Pierre-Bloch asked the minister of justice, Pierre Mehaignerie, to rescind this decision, which, he said, "lowers France to the level of a 'banana republic.'"

Pierre-Bloch said he intended to ask the speaker of Parliament to open an investigation to find out "how this shameful naturalization was performed."

Pierre-Bloch is a member of the new conservative majority and a vice president of LICRA, the Paris-based International League against Anti-Semitism and Racism.

The French Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the fact that Souss was now a French citizen did not interfere with his being a diplomat representing a foreign organization.

WRITER IRVING HOWE, DEAD AT 72, CHRONICLED LIVES OF IMMIGRANTS

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, May 5 (JTA) -- Irving Howe, the eminent Jewish writer and editor who chronicled Jewish immigrant life and championed left-wing and workers' causes, died of heart failure Wednesday in New York.

Howe, who was 72, had been ailing for some time, said longtime friend Gus Tyler, the assistant president of the Ladies Garment Workers Union and a columnist for the Forward newspaper. He had undergone bypass surgery last year.

Howe, who authored "World of Our Fathers" and wrote "How We Lived" -- both with Kenneth Libo -- was editor of Dissent magazine, chairman of the Democratic Socialists of America and a frequent critic and op-ed writer.

"World of Our Fathers," a social and cultural history of the Eastern European Jewish experience in America, won the National Book Award in 1976 and became a best-seller.

Howe was a product of Yiddish life on the streets of New York and brought that sensibility to everything he wrote and did. Most of all, his colleagues pointed to his contribution as someone who brought Yiddish literature to the mainstream. And he was a man who never forgot where he came from.

Howe was "a very sophisticated man and master of the English language who wrote English in the 'mammeloschen' (mother tongue)," said Tyler, who knew Howe since the 1930s.

"What I liked about Irving through all the years was that although he was a master of the English language, he carefully avoided all pomp and circumstance. He did not use his literary skills to show off the big words that he knew.

"He wrote as if he was speaking to his grandmother. To me that's a great virtue," said Tyler. "He always communicated very simply and to the point -- no pretence, no cant.

"If I were to draw a cartoon it would be Irving speaking to a simple person in the shtetl and trying to explain the complexities of the world."

Taught 'Importance Of Being A Good Jew'

Libo, who knew Howe for 30 years, first met him as a graduate student at the City University of New York.

"In a Henry James seminar he asked for volunteers for a new book he was just starting, and I raised my hand and entered into a very long, rich and valuable relationship," Libo recalled.

"I think the most important thing that I learned from Irving was the importance of being a good Jew. And I would say that he certainly set a magnificent example for this in many ways.

"He was a person who was a walking definition of what it means to be a mensch," said Libo. "And what he did was to reconcile, magnificently, Judaism and America, just as magnificently as, in my view, Maimonides reconciled Aristotle with Sephardic Judaism."

Born on New York's Lower East Side on June 11, 1920, Howe was the son of Jewish immigrants from Ukraine.

A graduate of the City College of New York, he taught at Brandeis and Stanford universities and was professor emeritus of English at the City University Graduate Center.

Howe was involved in the Jewish Labor

Committee and wrote about the significance of the Jewish labor movement in America.

Norman Podhoretz, editor of Commentary magazine and a longtime intellectual opponent of Howe's, first met him in 1954, when Podhoretz was in the army at Fort Devens, Mass., and Howe was teaching at Brandeis, in Waltham, Mass.

'We Had Our Ups And Downs'

Podhoretz called Howe and the latter invited him over. The two formed a heated, never boring relationship in which they sparred politically and even did not speak for perhaps 10 years.

"We had our ups and downs," said Podhoretz.

"He was of course instrumental in getting some of the classics of Yiddish literature into English and also helped to spread the knowledge and fame of Yiddish literature through his critical writings, through the anthologies he edited."

Podhoretz said Howe's "most significant contribution was in the sponsoring, spread and elucidation of Yiddish literature."

No funeral was planned for Howe, but a memorial service would be held sometime in the near future, said Jo-Anne Mort, a colleague of Howe's who is communications director of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union and a member of the editorial board of Dissent.

Howe, said Mort, "was a monumental figure who had a passionate commitment to democratic socialism and obviously came out of a Jewish tradition that had both beliefs at its core."

ISRAELIS MARK ARAD'S 35 BIRTHDAY, WITH NO SIGN OF THE MISSING AIRMAN

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, May 5 (JTA) -- Hundred of Israelis celebrated the 35th birthday of missing air force navigator Ron Arad on Wednesday, but the question on everyone's mind was whether Arad himself was celebrating it.

Arad bailed out from his fighter plane over Lebanon in 1986 and was believed to have been held by pro-Iranian troops in Lebanon. The last time any message was received that he was alive was in October 1987.

There have been sporadic reports that he was transferred to captivity in Iran.

Those attending the celebration at the Tel Aviv Museum vowed to continue celebrating, as long as there is hope he is still alive and could come home.

The birthday celebration, without the birthday boy, has become a tradition, initiated by Arad's friends in the Boy Scouts movement.

Chen Arad, Ron's brother, told reporters the family continued to hear rumors that Ron was still alive, but it had no substantial support for that information.

"It is an unhappy experience, especially when you see a little girl who comes to the birthday of her father and doesn't know her father," said the brother.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin sent his greetings to the ceremony, promising that Israel would do its utmost to return Arad to his family.

"I pray with you that Ron's next birthday -- and even before that -- will be celebrated together with him," the prime minister wrote.

Hundreds of Boy Scouts from throughout the country attended the ceremony, conducted as if it were a celebration with the celebrant, complete with a huge cake with 35 candles.