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**NEW CABINET POSTS ANNOUNCED
IN MOVE ENDING COALITION CRISIS**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 31 (JTA) -- Israel's Labor government has managed to overcome its latest and most serious coalition crisis by reshuffling Cabinet posts in order to satisfy its feuding junior partners.

On Monday, following a long day of last-minute negotiations, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin presented the Knesset with a new allocation of Cabinet portfolios agreed upon as a solution to the crisis.

The government's move triggered a mini-storm in the Knesset, with the Likud-led opposition demanding a debate of the parliament's confidence in the government, despite the fact that several Arab Knesset members were absent on account of the Moslem Feast of the Sacrifice.

The new Cabinet arrangements are meant to resolve the long-simmering rivalry between the Orthodox Shas party and the secular Meretz bloc, both of them coalition partners with Labor.

Shas' primary demand has been to remove Meretz leader Shulamit Aloni from the Education and Culture Ministry. The party contends that Aloni's frequent outbursts on religious matters, which have offended the Orthodox, are inappropriate for an official in that post.

Under the deal presented Monday, Aloni becomes minister of communications and minister of science, and also retains most of the responsibility for the Department of Culture within the Ministry of Education and Culture.

Aloni thereby retains control of the Israel Broadcasting Authority, but, in a concession to Shas, responsibility for Israel's Channel 2 television station is to be transferred to Economic Planning Minister Shimon Shetreet of Labor, who formerly also held the science post that Aloni has inherited.

Aloni's Meretz colleague Amnon Rubinstein replaces her as minister of education and culture, even though Aloni will handle most of the culture functions. Shas was determined that Aloni be stripped of her former title.

Shas Blasted For 'Surrender'

Labor's Moshe Shahal, until now minister of police and minister of communications, loses communications to Aloni, but becomes minister of energy, taking this portfolio from Rubinstein.

Finally, Meretz gains a second minister on the Cabinet Defense Committee -- Absorption Minister Yair Tsaban will join Aloni -- and a representative on the Cabinet's Secret Services Committee: Environment Minister Yossi Sarid.

Sarid said ruefully Sunday night, following a special Cabinet meeting convened to formalize the deal, that this solution was probably available weeks ago. "But it is apparently in the nature of such crises that they are not resolved as quickly as they should be," he said.

Sarid said he and his colleagues felt foolish for having had to devote time and energy to this issue for so long, when other, much more important questions faced the government.

Shas leader Aryeh Deri, who is minister of interior, said his party had "sought nothing for

itself." It had only demanded Aloni's removal from the sensitive education and culture post.

Shas nevertheless came in for a blasting Monday from its rival Orthodox party, the United Torah Judaism Front. Yated Ne'eman, the newspaper of the Degel HaTorah wing of that party, ran a banner headline asserting that Shas' "disgusting surrender" had paved the way to a solution of the Cabinet crisis.

Shas had hoped Aloni's removal from the Education and Culture Ministry could pave the way for United Torah to join the coalition. But this has not come about, at least not yet.

Some political observers predict, nevertheless, that if the Rabin coalition settles down and demonstrates stability, those factions within United Torah and Labor that favor the Orthodox party's addition to the coalition will soon resume their discreet contacts.

**200 LIBYAN MOSLEMS GO TO ISRAEL
ON UNIQUE RELIGIOUS PILGRIMAGE**
By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, May 31 (JTA) -- Roughly 200 Libyan Moslems arrived here Monday on a pilgrimage to Islamic holy sites, an unprecedented trip by citizens of a country that has repeatedly declared itself to be an implacable foe of Israel.

The trip has raised hopes that relations between the two countries, formally at war, will improve.

The pilgrims entered Jerusalem during the Moslem observance of Id al-Adha, the three-day Feast of the Sacrifice.

Tourism Minister Uzi Baram greeted the Libyans at the border crossing into Israel from Egypt, after they had driven thousands of miles across the desert from Libya.

The group's five-day trip is being sponsored by Ziara International, a company owned by Israeli businessman Ya'acov Nimrodi.

Nimrodi worked to organize the visit following the recent and startling declaration by Libyan President Moammar Gadhafi, known for his hostility to Israel and the West and his support of terrorist groups, that he would allow such a pilgrimage to occur.

Gadhafi also pledged recently to invite Jewish leaders, including some from Israel, to a major interfaith conference in his country and to implement a law compensating Italians and Jews who left their property behind in Libya when they fled or were expelled from the country after the 1967 Six-Day War.

Gadhafi's foreign minister has reportedly indicated that Libya is ready to recognize and make peace with Israel.

These stunning reversals are being seen here as a signal by Gadhafi to the West, particularly the United States, that he wants to improve relations and ease the isolation caused by his refusal to extradite the suspects in the 1988 bombing of Pan American Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland.

They are also being seen as consistent with the trend toward a de facto recognition of Israel as part of the Middle East region.

One of the pilgrims said the group decided to come to Israel because its plans to travel to

Mecca were foiled by Saudi Arabian restrictions on Libyans wanting to make the journey.

Nimrodi said he believed it would be the first of many such pilgrimages, while Baram cautioned it was too soon to tell.

A Positive But Cautious Response

Raffaello Fellah, president of the World Association of Jews from Libya, also helped arrange the visit and was in Jerusalem to meet the Moslem pilgrims.

"I am very pleased that Col. Gadhafi has followed through on his intention, which he disclosed to me during our two-hour meeting last February, to permit citizens of his country to visit Moslem holy places in Jerusalem," he said.

"Col. Gadhafi made a number of other statements to me indicating an evolution in his thinking and an apparent desire to seek reconciliation with the West. How should the Jewish world respond? With caution obviously, but in a positive way," Fellah said.

In New York, Seymour Reich, president of the American Zionist Movement, said Libya's move was welcome, but stressed that the true test of Gadhafi's intentions is whether or not he is willing to extradite to the United States the two Libyans accused of the Pan Am terrorist bombing.

SETTLERS AND PALESTINIANS CLASH IN HEBRON OVER SOLDIER'S MURDER

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, May 31 (JTA) -- Jewish settlers and Palestinians clashed in Hebron throughout the weekend as tension remained high following the brutal murder of an Israeli soldier outside the West Bank city's Tomb of the Patriarchs.

Erez Shmuel, who was combining his military service with study at a yeshiva in the adjacent Jewish settlement of Kiryat Arba, was walking alone on his way to Friday evening prayers at the tomb when he was ambushed by an Arab attacker.

Shmuel was stabbed 20 times all over his body in an alley leading to the tomb and died shortly thereafter. His assailant fled the scene.

The killing, coming after a relatively long period of quiet in Hebron, set off a chain of violent clashes, with angry Jewish settlers attacking Arabs and damaging Arab property.

The army clamped a curfew over the entire town, forcing some 200,000 residents to spend the first day of the Moslem Id al-Adha feast behind closed doors.

As settlers returned from Shmuel's funeral, they reportedly came under a stone-throwing attack and responded with gunshots, first in the air and then toward houses inhabited by Arabs.

Two women in their 50s and a 4-year-old boy were reportedly injured by glass splinters.

Although settlers said they acted in self-defense, on Monday the army filed an official complaint with the police, charging three Jewish settlers from Hebron and Kiryat Arba with stone-throwing at Arab houses.

One of them was accused of using his rifle and was being kept in custody, while the other two were released on bail.

Settlers also clashed Sunday night with soldiers who prevented them from entering the Tomb of the Patriarchs during unauthorized hours.

The army was particularly concerned that a large Jewish presence at the tomb, which also serves Moslem worshippers, would cause further violence, particularly on the Moslem holiday.

BODIES OBTAINED FROM LEBANON NOT ISRAELIS, PATHOLOGISTS SAY

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 31 (JTA) -- Israeli pathologists have determined that two corpses claimed by Lebanon's Shi'ite Amal militia to be Israeli soldiers are not the remains of the missing men.

The Israeli medical examiners conducted their tests following inconclusive examinations of the bodies by pathologists of the International Red Cross.

Amal had offered the bodies in the hope of exchanging them for the release of Shi'ite women prisoners held by Israel and its allied South Lebanon Army.

Amal leader Nabih Berri, after years of disclaiming knowledge of any Israelis missing in action, last month announced that his organization held two bodies and would allow the International Red Cross to examine them if the IDF and SLA freed all Lebanese women held in their prisons.

Israel rejected the demand. Military officials noted that when Arab countries or organizations had returned bodies to Israel in the past as part of prisoner exchanges, the bodies had often proved not to be the remains of Israelis.

But after the SLA released five women, Berri agreed to the Red Cross inspecting the bodies on condition that Israel and the SLA promise to effect the general release.

Israel again refused any deal, but the Amal permission was granted anyway.

Israeli pathologists carried out a minute comparison of the Red Cross findings against physical details known about the missing men, including genetic matching, dental cross-checking and examinations of skeletal deformations and accident markings.

The IDF announced last week that the examinations and comparisons proved beyond any doubt that the remains inspected by the Red Cross were not those of the missing Israelis.

IDF INVESTIGATING ARMY DEATHS FROM GAMES OF RUSSIAN ROULETTE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 31 (JTA) -- A third Israeli soldier in 10 days has been found shot dead during a game of Russian roulette, prompting the Israel Defense Force to launch an investigation into why this deadly diversion has taken off among its soldiers.

The latest victim, Elias Alimi, a 20-year-old Christian Arab from Nazareth, was a member of the elite Givati Brigade and had been attending a medical corps class for unit paramedics.

Alimi, who played the suicidal game in the guardroom at a base near Ramallah, was found dead Saturday morning.

The deadly game has been increasingly practiced in recent years, and the IDF has been unable to deal with the phenomenon. Parents of soldiers are circulating petitions insisting that the army put a halt to the practice.

In another recent incident, soldier Guy Melihi was killed last Thursday evening playing the game while posted as a guard at the West Bank settlement of Hadar Beitur.

On May 20, Ofer Arieli, a paramedic with a paratroop unit involved in a "friendly fire" incident in which four soldiers were killed, died during a game of Russian roulette at his base near Lebanon shortly after the killings.

CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT GRAPPLING WITH POLICY ON RABBIS WHO ARE GAY

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, May 31 (JTA) -- Having decided last year not to allow the rabbinic ordination of homosexuals, the Conservative movement is now grappling with a related issue: what to do about practicing rabbis who announce they are gay.

The issue has been raised by Howard Handler, an openly gay Conservative rabbi who began searching for a pulpit after his contract at a Manhattan congregation was not renewed.

Handler's professional fate is currently in the hands of the Rabbinical Assembly of America, whose executive council will discuss the matter at a meeting later this month.

It is the latest of a series of issues relating to the status of homosexuals in Conservative Judaism that has gripped and divided the movement's rabbinate.

Responding, in part, to the divisiveness that the debate over these issues has caused, the R.A. is now taking steps to enable rabbis with vociferously opposing viewpoints about essential elements of the movement's ideology to reconcile with one another, or at least communicate with less venom than they have been in recent months.

Handler went public about his sexual orientation during the April 25 national gay and lesbian rights march in Washington, when he told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that he intends to "be a test case" for the movement.

Conservative Judaism's present policy is not to accept into rabbinical school or to ordain sexually active homosexuals, a policy that was implemented after extensive debate last year within the movement's Committee on Jewish Law and Standards.

The primary halachic opinion accepted by the law committee is that homosexual sex is forbidden by Jewish law, but that if a gay man or lesbian abstains from sex, he or she is not violating the stricture.

The question of how to deal with an already-ordained rabbi who engages in homosexual activity was not explicitly addressed during last year's debate.

It has come up now because Handler was recently fired by his congregation, the Conservative Synagogue of Fifth Avenue. He says his contract was not renewed because he is openly gay. The congregation's officers say it is because he is not competent.

Contradictory Positions Accepted

After being let go, Handler submitted his resume to the Rabbinical Assembly's placement committee and asked that it be circulated to congregations looking for rabbis, so that he could find another pulpit.

The placement committee, unsure of the movement's policy in this case, is refusing to circulate his resume pending a decision.

That decision may be made at the next meeting of the R.A. executive council meeting, slated for June 15. The 25-member council will hear a report on the law committee's May 19 deliberations on the issue of placing already-ordained gay and lesbian rabbis.

At that law committee meeting, two contradictory rabbinic responsa were accepted: one authored by the law committee's chairman, Rabbi Kassel Abelson, which stated that the placement committee should not assist a gay or lesbian

rabbi, and one authored by Rabbi Arnold Goodman, which said that since the issue was not covered in earlier deliberations about homosexuality, the placement committee should help Handler find work.

Goodman is also chairing the Rabbinical Assembly's Committee on Human Sexuality, which grew out of last year's debate on the place of homosexuals in the movement.

Thirteen law committee members voted to accept Abelson's position, and seven voted for Goodman's, giving them both more than the six votes needed to make rabbinic responsa accepted policies of the law committee.

While the R.A. executive council may make a decision on Handler's case at the June 15 session, it may refer the case back to committee or choose some other route altogether, leaving Handler's case up in the air.

Handler, of course, is hoping that they decide to help him find a new pulpit as a Conservative rabbi.

"If they don't let me apply, I'll lose everything I wanted in terms of a career. I like teaching and preaching and counseling. If I can't, there's no place for me in the Conservative movement," he told JTA.

When asked if he would consider being the rabbi of a gay and lesbian synagogue, he said, "I want to work in an average Conservative synagogue -- with families, straight people and gay people."

Attempt To Heal The Wounds

He was approached by Rabbi Joel Meyers, the Rabbinical Assembly's executive vice president, about looking for a chaplaincy or teaching position.

But Handler said he is not interested in chaplaincy work, adding: "I don't think any Jewish school will hire me. No one wants a gay teacher in a Jewish school."

In case he loses his bid to be supported by the Rabbinical Assembly, Handler is preparing a safety net: He recently received his real estate license and may go to work for a real estate agency in New York's Greenwich Village.

Debate over the homosexuality issue has been heated and at times vituperative. The clash has shed light on other friction within the Conservative movement, particularly on the difference of opinion over where the final source of religious authority lies, with individual rabbis or with the law committee.

In order to heal some of the wounds suffered in the course of the fighting, R.A. President Gerald Zelizer is initiating a two-pronged approach.

This Thursday, he will host a meeting of three or four R.A. member rabbis and two experts in conflict resolution: a specialist in legal resolution and a specialist in group dynamics.

He and Meyers have also asked the presidents of all 20 regions of the R.A. to each hold a "yom iyun," or study day, in which papers from both sides of the authority issue and representing all points of view on the homosexuality issue will be discussed by local rabbis.

"I'm trying to get colleagues to speak to each other and to lower the temperature" of the debate, Zelizer told JTA. "Both sides are eager and anxious to participate in this. There is a consensus that this would be beneficial. I'm not sure how successful it will be, but I want to give it our best shot."

**STEVEN SPIELBERG FILMS IN ISRAEL,
REUNITING 'SCHINDLER'S CHILDREN'**
By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM, May 31 (JTA) -- Fifty years after a German businessman saved them from death in a Nazi concentration camp, 125 Holocaust survivors gathered here last week to participate in the filming of the final scene of a Steven Spielberg movie about the remarkable story.

The movie, called "Schindler's List" and adapted from the book by Thomas Keneally, recounts the story of Oskar Schindler, a wealthy Catholic industrialist who singlehandedly saved the lives of 1,100 Jews.

Many of the 125 survivors who gathered here May 27 had not seen one another since the end of the war, and the reunions were filled with tears and laughter.

Perhaps the most emotional moment was when they embraced Schindler's wife, Emily, who was flown in from Germany to participate in the filming.

Twenty-five of the survivors were flown to Israel at Spielberg's expense, and the chance to appear in the film proved both exciting and heart-wrenching.

Spielberg filmed the survivors visiting Schindler's grave in the Christian cemetery on Mount Zion. Schindler asked to be buried in Israel in 1973, when the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial declared him a "righteous gentile." He died a year later.

"There are no words to describe how I feel," said Edith Wertheim, who now lives in Fort Lee, N.J. "In the filming at the cemetery, we stood by the grave of the man who risked everything and spent every penny he had to save our lives."

Wiping a tear from her cheek, she smiled sadly and said, "I'm sorry, but I get very sentimental. I cry all the time, ever since the war. Only my brother survived. Everyone else in my family perished."

Trip Brought Back Memories

Taking his wife's hand in his, Sam Wertheim continued, "For many years we held back our feelings and tried to forget our past. But this trip brought back the memories. It's bittersweet. The memories are horrible, but it feels good to pay honor to the person who saved us."

The shoot in Jerusalem followed months of filming in Krakow, Poland, the city where Schindler managed to save the large number of Jews.

Born in Germany, Schindler, a member of the Nazi Party, moved to occupied Krakow in the early 1940s to launch a business. There, the vibrant Jewish community of nearly 70,000 was being systematically wiped out. Most of Krakow's Jews were either shot or sent to concentration camps. Only 5,000 survived the Holocaust.

Seeing Nazi brutality face to face for the first time, Schindler and his wife secretly denounced the Nazis and vowed to protect as many Jews as humanly possible.

In a daring move, Schindler built a factory-camp to employ Jews. When the Nazis wanted to send these employees to concentration camps, Schindler swore they were vital to his industry and had to remain at the factory.

This action put the Schindlers in grave danger but ultimately saved over a thousand lives.

Known as "Schindler's Children," the survivors are now in their 70s and 80s.

**GERMAN PRESIDENT TELLS GATHERING
HOLOCAUST COULD NOT HAPPEN AGAIN**
By Deborah Kalb
States News Service

WASHINGTON (JTA) -- German President Richard von Weizsacker, after visiting the new U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, told a group of Germans and Jews last week that the Holocaust was "the single most horrid crime of the century."

Von Weizsacker, who also discussed present-day xenophobia in his country, said that today's Germans would stand up to violence and racism. (He spoke before a weekend arson incident in Germany, attributed to neo-Nazis, that left five Turkish immigrants dead.)

Speaking May 23 at a B'nai B'rith-sponsored lecture, the German president called the Holocaust "mechanized murder, aimed at the annihilation of a whole people, and committed in the name of a civilized nation: Germany."

He said that these thoughts were brought back to him "an hour ago when I visited the U.S. Holocaust Memorial."

In his remarks to the gathering of approximately 200 people, von Weizsacker said that the current situation in his country is quite different from that of the 1930s.

"We are not living in the '30s," von Weizsacker said. "At that time, the democrats' weakness allowed the Nazis to gain power. Today our society stands up against violence and racism. They will not gain ground."

**POVERTY RATE AMONG ISRAELI CHILDREN,
ESPECIALLY IMMIGRANTS, IS UP SHARPLY**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, May 31 (JTA) -- The number of poverty-stricken children in Israel rose last year by a sharp 40 percent, according to a report by the National Council for Child Welfare. Some 114,000 children were raised last year by families whose only income was minimum welfare payments, according to official figures released by the National Insurance Institute.

In 1990, only 79,000 children came from poverty-stricken families.

The sharp rise in the number of poor children was explained by the fact that too many immigrants have remained jobless. Some 26,000 of the poverty-stricken children are new immigrants.

About 25 percent of all immigrant children belong to families whose only earnings are the minimum income provided by the state, compared to 7 percent of the total population who receive welfare.

Particularly hard-hit are immigrants from the Moslem republics of the former Soviet Union, where dire economic difficulties have caused malnutrition and even hunger among the children, according to the Child Welfare Council.

Dozens of these children are subsisting on only margarine sandwiches and lack warm meals and other food of nutritious value.

At the same time, children do not receive appropriate medical care because their parents cannot pay medical insurance, and others cannot join school activities such as trips out of town, because the parents cannot afford them.

Yitzhak Kadman, director-general of the council, urged the government to come up with an immediate emergency plan to cope with the problem of poverty among Israeli children.