

**U.S. WINS PLAUDIT FROM PERES
FOR ITS ACTION AGAINST LIBYA**

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, April 1(JTA) -- Premier Shimon Peres of Israel had lavish praise for the United States' action against Libya in the Gulf of Sidra last month. At his first public appearance here Monday night following his arrival from Israel, he maintained that the U.S. action was "right, timely and the only way to meet the threat of a dangerous man," Libya's leader, Col. Muammar Qaddafi.

Peres addressed more than 250 top leaders of the United Jewish Appeal and UJA/Federation of New York at UJA/Federation headquarters. He referred to the challenge by the U.S. Sixth Fleet to Qaddafi's claim that the Gulf of Sidra is Libyan rather than international waters and the resulting exchange of missile fire which sank several Libyan gunboats and damaged shore installations.

Peres termed that "an action against international terrorism." He said that to have allowed Qaddafi to continue his terrorist activities with impunity would only have increased the danger. "It was a show of American responsibility" on behalf of freedom, the Israeli Premier said. He said that although many countries have not expressed support for the U.S. actions, they were nevertheless "relieved" by them.

Peres' brief remarks also focussed on Project Renewal, the partnership between American Jewry and Israel to rehabilitate depressed neighborhoods in Israel. He called it "a tremendous success...an outstanding success in human terms."

He said Project Renewal has become a model for study by other countries. But more efforts are needed to complete the project. "Go ahead with it," he told his audience, which responded with vigorous applause.

Peres also referred to Israel's economy, claiming that his government's economic measures to date have been a great success, especially in breaking the spiral of inflation which is down to 12 percent from a peak of 1,000 percent. He noted as well a clear reduction of Israel's balance of payments deficit and disclosed that for the first time this year, Israel has reached the point of no deficit in its national budget and in fact has a \$200 million surplus.

Peres stressed, however, that Israel still faces severe economic problems because of the burdens of defense and the cost of absorbing new immigrants. He called for continued cooperation between American Jews and Israel.

Peres had a 30-minute meeting with Mayor Edward Koch of New York at his suite in the Regency Hotel Monday night. He left for Washington Tuesday morning. (See P.3 for related stories from Washington.)

**RABIN RAPS THE U.S. FOR ADVISING
LAWMAKERS TO AVOID MIDEAST TRAVEL**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 1(JTA) -- Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin was sharply critical of the Reagan Administration Monday for cautioning travelling U.S. Congressmen to avoid the Middle East.

At the same time, however, he praised the U.S. initiatives against international terrorism, including the recent naval action in the Gulf of Sidra against Libya.

Rabin, addressing a luncheon meeting of the Foreign Press Association here, faulted the State Department advisory to members of Congress to "reassess" whether planned trips to the Middle East were necessary at this time in view of threats by Libyan leader Muammar Qaddafi that he would launch a wave a terrorism against Americans in the region.

Such advice was giving into terrorism, Rabin said. It should not be part of the policy of a country which seeks to be the spearhead in the fight against terrorism. At least two Senators, Gary Hart (D. Colo.) and Bennett Johnston (D. La), cancelled visits to the Middle East which were to include stopovers in Israel.

Says Israel is Relatively Free from Terrorism

Rabin emphasized in his remarks that Israel was freer from serious terrorist acts than many other countries. No Israeli Prime Minister has been assassinated, as was the Swedish Prime Minister, Olof Palme, last month.

There has been no major attack in the main streets of Tel Aviv, as has happened in Paris in the past few weeks. And no hotel or building housing a political convention in Israel has been bombed by terrorists, as happened with the Conservative Party in England, Rabin said.

Nevertheless, he conceded, Israel has a problem with terrorists. He said the number of incidents in Israel and the administered territories increased in recent months but the number of casualties has fallen.

He said much of the blame for terrorist activities from inside Lebanon could be laid to the competition between various guerrilla groups there and the growth of Islamic fundamentalism inspired by the Ayatollah Khomeini of Iran. Khomeini has succeeded in exporting his brand of fundamentalism to Lebanon alone. He failed to do so elsewhere in the Arab world where Shiite Moslems live, Rabin said.

Two Major Mideast Issues

Rabin said Israel continues to hope for peace in the region. The two major issues are how to strengthen the peace with Egypt and how to lay the groundwork for peace with Jordan. In the first instance, the top priority was to advance the normalization of relations with Cairo. He said a good start has been made in finding a compromise solution to the Taba border dispute.

On the eastern front, however, tricks and gimmicks by the U.S. or Israel itself would not bring about a dialogue with Jordan and the moderate Palestinians with whom Israel is ready to negotiate. He saw little chance of any peace talks with Syria. There is a potential threat of war from Damascus, he said, but this can be averted by awareness and preparedness. Syria alone, he stressed, is no military match for Israel.

Rabin had little patience with countries which criticize Israel's policies in the administered territories. What Israel is trying to do

in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, he said, is to improve the quality of life for their inhabitants and encourage them to run their own local affairs.

He wondered aloud why countries that have been critical of the quality of life in the territories did not contribute more to help raise living standards in the refugee camps supported by the United Nations and by investing in the recently established West Bank Industrial Committee.

HERZOG: 'ISRAEL HAS NO CONFLICT WITH THE USSR AND NO HATRED TOWARD IT'

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 1(JTA) -- President Chaim Herzog opened a two-month intensive campaign on behalf of Soviet Jewry here Monday by declaring that "The State of Israel has no conflict with the USSR and no hatred toward it."

He conceded, however, Israel's disappointment that the new Soviet government headed by Mikhail Gorbachev, which came to power last year has not eased the condition of Soviet Jews.

"We are not enemies of the USSR," Herzog asserted. "We are eternally grateful for its decisive role in the defeat of Nazi Germany, for its support of the establishment of the State of Israel and its vital aid in supplying defense weapons to the Israel Defense Force at the height of the War of Independence, at a time of almost total embargo on the part of the West."

He stressed that from Israel's standpoint the issue of Soviet Jewry "should not be related either to the inter-bloc (East-West) confrontation or to the solution of the Middle East conflict." But, he added, "Israel cannot compromise until every Soviet Jew wishing to immigrate to Israel or live as a Jew" in the Soviet Union is able to do so. It is therefore essential he declared, "to try every means -- both public and quiet -- in an effort to open the gates."

Hopes for a Crack in the Iron Wall

Herzog said Israel had hoped the new Soviet government would bring about "an opening, or at least a crack in the iron wall depriving Jews of the freedom to leave the Soviet Union and immigrate to Israel." But so far those expectations have not been fulfilled, he said.

The new campaign for Soviet Jewry is being coordinated here by the Public Council for Soviet Jewry. It comes at a time when the immigration of Anatoly Shcharansky, Eliyahu Essas and a few other well-known aliya activists may have generated the erroneous impression among Jews inside the USSR and their supporters abroad that conditions for Soviet Jews are improving.

David Yafit, chairman of the Public Council for Soviet Jewry's executive committee, said at the opening of the campaign at the Presidential residence that the two months of solidarity with Soviet Jews was necessary because the Kremlin's policy with respect to Jewish emigration during the year preceding the summit conference in Geneva last November had been "based on misinformation, deception and lies."

The goal of that policy, Yafit maintained, is to lull world public opinion and weaken the struggle for the release of Soviet Jews. The new campaign is intended to increase public awareness of this and not let people be led astray by Soviet promises and declarations.

Yafit appealed to President Herzog to intervene for the release of imprisoned Jewish

activist Yuli Edelstein who is currently hospitalized in Siberia after a serious accident. Yafit said that under Soviet law, a prisoner who is gravely ill may be set free.

A Blistering Attack by Herzog

Herzog devoted part of his address to a blistering attack on the Jerusalem Soviet Jewry Information Center, a rightwing, generally anti-establishment group headed by former "prisoner of Zion" Yosef Mendelevich. The group recently attacked Herzog for meeting with Meir Wilner, leader of the Hadash Communist Party, after the latter returned from the Soviet Communist Party Congress in Moscow to which he was invited as a delegate and honored guest.

Herzog angrily denied allegations by Mendelevich that he had been negotiating through Wilner for the possible reestablishment of diplomatic relations between Israel and the USSR. Herzog said he leaves that to the government and the Foreign Ministry. Addressing himself to the Jerusalem Information Center, he added, "You should have the good manners to treat a Jewish President the way you would treat a gentile president abroad."

JEWISH COMMUNITY PONDERING NEXT STEPS IN AIDING SOVIET JEWRY; NEW SOVIET ADVOCACY GROUP FORMED IN OHIO

CINCINNATI, April 1(JTA) -- Representative of midwestern Jewish communities gathered here Monday in the first in a series of regional conferences being held throughout the country to consider the continuing oppression of Soviet Jews in the wake of last year's "Geneva" summit, and to prepare for the American Jewish community's response when Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev comes to the United States later this year.

Among those speaking to the over 200 delegates representing 18 communities in seven states were former Soviet Jewish refusenik and religious leader Eliyahu Essas, who recently arrived in Israel from Moscow, and Ohio Governor Richard Celeste, who announced the formation of the Ohio Public Officials for Soviet Jewry, a new advocacy group.

The conference, whose theme was "To Summit II...and Beyond," was sponsored by the Jewish Community Relations Council of Cincinnati, the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC), and the National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCSJ). Similar conferences will be held in Detroit, Hartford, Baltimore and Houston in the next few weeks. A Western regional conference in California is also planned.

Essas, who helped spark a religious revival among Soviet Jews in recent years by acting as their unofficial rabbi said, "We have millions of Jews in the Soviet Union deprived of human rights, beginning with their right to learn their language and their religion. I helped teach Soviet Jews their language and their religion, and now they want to be in their homeland, Israel, as my family is now privileged to be."

Commenting on his release, and that of several other well-known refuseniks, including Anatoly Shcharansky, Essas said, "One can read between the lines and say these releases will continue, but it is only a signal that the Soviets are ready to have negotiations about this and that they are sensitive to public opinion." Essas, making his first visit to the United States,

arrived in Israel in late January. He and his family waited 14 years for an exit visa.

Determination of Elected Officials

In announcing the formation of the new Ohio Public Officials for Soviet Jewry, Governor Celeste said, "Formation of such a group shows the determination of elected officials, regardless of political party, to stand up in behalf of human rights around the world and to recognize the degree to which human rights are challenged every day in the Soviet Union."

The new coalition will involve elected officials of all levels in activities in behalf of Soviet Jews. Another member of the coalition, Ohio Secretary of State Sherrod Brown, who visited refuseniks in the Soviet Union last year, also spoke.

Conference chairperson Marilyn Krug of Cincinnati said, "If we believe the upcoming summit meeting provides a window of opportunity, we must prepare ourselves to take advantage of that opportunity through events like today's."

ANTI-SEMITIC ATTACK BY UNION MEMBERS AT A BUENOS AIRES RALLY

BUENOS AIRES, April 2(JTA).-- B'nai B'rith International Tuesday condemned an obscene anti-semitic attack by a massive gathering of union members in downtown buenos aires. The diatribes were triggered by a speech by Saul Ubaldini, Secretary-General of the General Confederation of Laborers (CGT). The Union had organized the gathering as part of its tactics during a general strike here.

Ubaldini attacked the Speaker of Argentina's Chamber of Deputies, Cesar Jaroslavsky, who is Jewish. According to Alfredo Neuburger, B'nai B'rith International's assistant director for South America, Ubaldini stated that Jaroslavsky deserved an "Oscar for the best Comedian." This comment touched off a series of anti-semitic chants.

Neuburger said that Ubaldini, fearing the loss of control over the crowd, declared that "the (Jewish) community has nothing to do with this. There are black sheep everywhere."

B'nai B'rith Argentina's Acting President, Elbio Svidler, repudiated the diatribes. "All of us solid democratic-committed people know that these attacks, unacceptable in a free and pluralistic society, are targeted against democracy itself," Svidler said.

He added that B'nai B'rith, committed to the struggle for human rights and opposed to any kind of discrimination and prejudice, "expects a clear and categoric denunciation from the entire political spectrum of the country, especially from those parties represented in the public rally, from human rights organizations, and all those committed to democratic principles."

"No one, no representative sector in the country may remain in indifferent silence."

BUSH ACCEPTS INVITATION FROM PERES TO VISIT ISRAEL THIS SPRING

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, April 1(JTA) -- Vice President George Bush has accepted an invitation from Israel Premier Shimon Peres to visit Israel this spring. The announcement was made by Peres to reporters after he met for more than an hour with Bush at the White House Tuesday, first privately

and then accompanied by American and Israeli officials.

Peres, who arrived in Washington Tuesday morning, was also scheduled to meet with Secretary of State George Shultz and then be the guest at a dinner in his honor at the Vice President's official residence Tuesday night. He will breakfast with Shultz Wednesday and visit the Pentagon before leaving for New York City.

Bush said he would not be visiting Israel on a trip to the Persian Gulf, announced Tuesday in which he will be going to Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Oman and North Yemen. But he hopes to make it to Israel in the "next two or three months."

"For us the earlier the better," Peres said. "We would like to see the Vice President in our country."

Peres, in his remarks to reporters, stressed the particularly good relations now between Israel and the U.S. "We don't have real problems in between our two countries," he said. "We see eye to eye on most of the issues and we enjoy an outstanding friendship which is very dear to our heart."

One issue on which Israel support the U.S. was the recent action taken by the U.S. Navy against Libya which Peres called "timely" and "right." He added: "Like on many occasions in the past, it was the United States that took the lead to protect the freedom of navigation, the freedom of transport and the security of innocent citizens."

The Premier said that until the recent U.S. action Qaddafi provided a "haven for terrorists and he was sure that nobody would even raise a finger of warning against him. Now he knows that if he spreads terror it may create some problems for his in his own country."

At the outset of his remarks, Peres said he had thanked Bush for "his role in helping us bring to Israel the Ethiopian Jewish people. It was a moving experience for us."

PERES EXERCISES BY RUNNING THE CABINET

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, April 1(JTA) -- Israeli Premier Shimon Peres does not apparently have the desire for exercise displayed by so many American governmental leaders. At a "photo opportunity" during his meeting with Vice President George Bush at the White House Tuesday, Bush was heard telling Peres about his tennis game. Bush asked Peres whether he plays tennis, and when the response was negative he asked the Premier if he jogs or does any other exercise since he looks so fit. "I run the Israeli Cabinet," Peres replied.

JERUSALEM, (JTA) -- The Knesset approved a 30.194 billion New Shekel (NS) state budget Monday night after a lackluster debate at which coalition discipline prevailed. Although many Labor and Likud MKs were as critical of the budget as opposition members, they voted for it. The absence of Premier Shimon Peres, who is presently visiting the U.S., did not detract from the impact of his warning that unless the coalition stood behind the budget, there would be no coalition.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**ISRAEL IS A REWARDING PLACE TO VISIT**

By Marlene Goldman

JERUSALEM, April 1(JTA) -- Most tourists see Israel only through their own eyes. They never consider the in-depth understanding possible with a third lens. That close-up view of Israeli society is available to college students in the summer program, Jerusalem Film Workshop, which uses a videocamera and film screenings to offer a different perspective of the Jewish State.

For three weeks during the summer, a small group of 18-25-year-olds enter the program, which is sponsored by the American Zionist Youth Foundation and the Youth and Hechalutz Department of the World Zionist Organization, to jointly produce their own video, and to study Israel through films and research at the Jerusalem Film Center located opposite Mt. Zion.

While knowledge of film-making is an advantage in the program, according to Amy Kronish, director of the summer program at the workshop, about half the 25 participants over the first two summers were not experienced.

'Not a Joy Trip'

"This is not a joy trip," said Yisrael Math, one of the participants in last summer's program. "The point is to be involved with production and to make a movie." Math, a 23-year-old student at Stockton State College in New Jersey, said that students in the program had only nine days--from July 9 to July 18 -- to shoot, write, edit, dub in narration and music, and collate the entire project. "We were terribly pressured for time to accomplish something good," he said.

During production, the group worked up to 16 hours a day on the video, with each student in a different role. According to Math, the group established a division of labor -- some worked on writing, some on shooting, some with graphics, some with sound and narration, and many cooperated with editing, all dedicated to beat the pending deadline.

Math, who is starting as a part-time video technician for his local Jewish community center in New Jersey, participated in the videotaping of the film. But he and the three other students involved in the video shooting had to surmount technical difficulties throughout the production. The four were very limited because they were confined to using just one videocamera, Math said. A second camera was supposed to come over with the group, he said, "but they didn't pay the tax for it and it came in a week after the project ended."

Sometimes the equipment would fail, Math explained, and the students would use the time preparing for interviews and writing the script, staying up as late as three o'clock in the morning.

Not only are the students busy creating their own video, but they must juggle their scarce time with attending numerous seminars and meeting leaders of Israel's film industry. Last year's group met with several top directors, including Uri Barbarash, who directed the critically acclaimed film "Beyond the Walls."

The agenda for this summer's program includes seminars on the influence of television on society, the problems of censorship, and documentary film-making and changes in that medium over the past almost 40 years in Israel. The agenda also includes workshops on script analysis and screening of feature and short-length films.

The Good, The Bad and The Awful

Looking back at last summer's project, Math said "it was really very good to be exposed" to all the nuances -- the good, the bad and the awful -- of film production and movie making. The topic selected for last summer's film, "The Chosen People - A Conflict Within," dealt with the differences and similarities between secular and religious Jews, what drew them together and what was keeping them apart.

The group "wanted to get a cross-section of people," hopefully to balance the religious and secular aspects of the Jewish nation and to present an objective portrayal of the unity and diversity of Jews. A modest objective, but one fraught with unexpected difficulties and complications -- comedic and dramatic.

One of the primary interviews featured Chaim Cohen, a former Chief Justice of Israel's Supreme court. Math recalled that Cohen was supposed to be their intermediary with religious individuals and groups. When the young filmmakers began the actual interview, their plans were forced to change.

"We had planned all religious questions for Chaim," Math said. "But when we began to interview him, he said, 'I used to be religious, until after World War II.'" The three students and Kronish had to revise the entire interview. Despite the mishap, Math believes the interview was a success. "He was a fantastic, direct speaker," he said. "There was not a single thing he could have said or done wrong in our eyes."

Many of the other interview attempts were not as pleasant, according to Math. On one of the first location shootings, all 11 students in the project went to Mea Shearim, the ultra-Orthodox section of Jerusalem. "We were attacked by five huge Hassidim," Math recalled. Some of the young women students were spat on and kicked while the young men were pummeled.

Math, who was holding a video camera, can still vividly picture the film being removed from the camera and being cut and wires from the camera dangling in every direction. "We were about to interview a Hassid when all of a sudden, bang, it was so fast, we were attacked from behind," Math recalled, wincing somewhat as he described the scene.

'They Laughed at Us'

A Gush Emunim member consented to an interview, but was not overly cooperative, Math said. "Every question we asked, she thought was slanderous. She thought we were biased toward the secular point of view." The students called several yeshivas for interviews, "but they laughed at us," Math said. "Only after the video was completed did Math discover that some of the religious youth hostels in the Old City would have granted interviews. As a result of their difficulties, Math said he felt that the film appeared to favor the secular point of view."

In the brief nine days of production, the students edited 30 or 40 hours of footage into a 12-minute and 42-second documentary showing the clash of ideas and mores between the religious and the secular in Israel. Each student was given a copy of the film for their own use.

After the project was complete, the film was screened to about 50 of the people involved in the entire production. "The kids were floored by the tremendous reception," Kronish said. The video is still evoking respect and approval in Math's home town.