

**POSSIBLE GOVERNMENT CRISIS, SOVIET  
JEWRY WERE SHAMIR'S FOCUS ON  
LAST TWO DAYS OF U.S. VISIT**  
By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- Premier Yitzhak Shamir wound up his official visit to the U.S. Tuesday with summations of the major issues of concern to Israel and world Jewry that engaged him during the past 10 days here, and the possible government crisis facing him when he returns home Wednesday.

His last 48 hours in the country were packed with literally end-to-end meetings with national and local Jewish community leaders, Jewish youth, educators and religious leaders. He addressed himself repeatedly to the subject of Soviet Jews who immigrate to the United States rather than to Israel. And, mainly in response to the persistent questions of reporters, he spoke frankly of the serious rift between himself and Vice Premier/ Foreign Minister Shimon Peres over an international peace conference for the Middle East to which Shamir is adamantly opposed.

He hinted, on more than one occasion, that if not resolved, that issue may well bring down the Labor-Likud unity coalition government.

**Busy As Speaker**

Shamir spoke before the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations here Monday afternoon. On Monday night he addressed 1,500 young leaders of the New York Jewish community at Hunter College.

He described to both audiences his meetings in Washington last week with President Reagan and other top Administration officials, and spoke in glowing terms of the state of U.S.-Israel relations. It is "great, close and very friendly," Shamir declared.

He disclosed that he told Reagan at their White House meeting that, contrary to some reports, the U.S. has not lost prestige in the Middle East and is still the most important factor in that region.

"The Arabs know that without the U.S. nothing could be achieved in the Middle East," the Premier declared. He said he assured the President that the U.S. enjoys the confidence of Israel and most of the Arab nations. "I think that the Administration accepted my approach and my assessment" of the Middle East situation, Shamir told his audiences in New York.

He acknowledged that the Administration takes a different view on an international conference, but said he found many reservations in official Washington toward such a forum in which the Soviet Union would most likely participate. He stressed that in his opinion there is only one way to achieve peace for the Middle East -- direct negotiations. "The U.S. will go for an international peace conference as a way of bringing about direct talks between the parties," Shamir said.

**Divisive Issue**

The issue has divided the Israeli government. Peres advocates Israel's participation in such a conclave. In a briefing for Israeli journalists

Tuesday, Shamir indirectly accused the Foreign Minister of violating government guidelines.

"There have been and there are different opinions between the two parties (Labor and Likud) which make up the government," Shamir said. "In order to overcome that problem, we have basic guidelines of the unity government. If there are crises in the government, it is because someone is not adhering to the guidelines."

He said he knew of Peres' visit to Cairo, beginning Wednesday, to meet with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak. They will doubtless discuss an international peace conference, which they agreed to at their last meeting in Alexandria in September.

But nobody can impose a position that is not accepted by the Cabinet and the Knesset, Shamir declared. He indicated that if a crisis arises and is not solved, there is a possibility of new elections in Israel.

**Spoke To Activists, Leaders**

Shamir also spoke to Soviet Jewry activists and other community leaders here Tuesday. He is reported to have said that Soviet Jews who leave the USSR with visas for Israel but go instead to the U.S. "deceive" not only the Soviet government but the Israeli government. He said the Soviets have indicated they are thus reluctant to increase Jewish emigration. He said he had pressed the Administration in Washington to stop granting the special refugee status to Soviet Jewish immigrants which enables them to come to the U.S. instead of Israel.

The meeting was closed to the press. But several Jewish leaders who attended said afterwards that they disagreed with Shamir's approach to the issue.

At a meeting with 70 Jewish educators here Tuesday, Shamir observed that only 50 percent of American Jewish school-age children receive any kind of a Jewish education. "Jewish education makes a difference in the future of the Jewish people," he said. "The only way to save our people is by providing them with a Jewish education."

Shamir warned that the lack of Jewish education "is a cultural disaster. We are going to lose more Jews because of it than we lost in the Holocaust." He cited intermarriage, assimilation and the influence of other religions and cults on many Jews as possible consequences.

**Invitation To Move**

Shamir urged American Jews to come to Israel on aliya. He called specifically on Reform and Conservative Jews who complain of discrimination in Israel to live in Israel. There they can influence the decisions of the Knesset and government and participate in Israel's political life, he noted.

Shamir was scheduled to meet late Tuesday afternoon with leaders of Reform, Conservative and Orthodox Judaism to discuss such issues as "Who is a Jew?" and the Law of Return.

Later in the evening he was to address businessmen at a meeting of the New York Economic Club. He will leave on his return flight to Israel sometime after midnight.

## EEC MINISTERS BACK INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MIDDLE EAST PEACE

By Yossi Lempkowitz

BRUSSELS, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- An international conference for Middle East peace was endorsed in principle Monday by the 12 member-states of the European Economic Community. It was the first formal statement of support for such a conference by the EEC Foreign Ministers, meeting here under the chairmanship of Belgian Foreign Minister Leo Tindemans, current president of the EEC Council of Ministers.

The statement did not address the form or composition of such a conference, but suggested it be held under United Nations auspices with the participation of the parties concerned and any other parties that could make a positive contribution to peace in the Middle East and the region's economic and social development.

Tindemans disclosed that he received a message from the Soviet Union last week outlining its position on an international conference. He did not divulge the contents, but said he would convey the EEC's position verbally to the Soviet Ambassador in Brussels.

The EEC statement said an international conference should provide a suitable framework for the necessary negotiations between the disputing parties and that it was prepared to contribute, both as an international body and as individual states, to bringing closer the positions of the parties concerned.

## 'IVAN' WITNESS, UNDER HEATED QUESTIONING, RECOUNTS HORRORS OF TREBLINKA

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- A former inmate of Treblinka recited ghastly details of mass murder at the death camp under sharp cross examination Tuesday in the trial here of accused war criminal John Demjanjuk.

Pinhas Epstein, who electrified the court Monday when he pointed to Demjanjuk as the brutal camp guard known as "Ivan the Terrible," continued his key prosecution testimony under relentless questioning by Demjanjuk's American attorney, Mark O'Connor.

The defense contends that the Ukrainian-born Demjanjuk is a victim of mistaken identity. Its strategy is to demonstrate the fallibility of witnesses' memories more than 40 years after the events.

But Epstein did not falter when questioned about details of the camp's structure, the people in charge of the extermination process and such minutiae as where the laundry was hung.

He described the mass graves into which bodies were dumped. Chlorine powder was poured on the corpses to hasten their disintegration. "The powder sank down, causing blood to burst from the ground. Then they added more bodies and more powder," the witness said.

Epstein, who was brought to Treblinka at the age of 17, spoke of "the man in the white coat," known to inmates only as Erwin, who stood at the edge of the mass grave and ordered the killing of those victims not yet dead.

"When a wounded person was brought to the edge of the grave, Erwin used to order him to crouch on his hands and knees, naked at the edge of the pit. Then he would signal a Ukrainian guard to come over and shoot the victim through his head," Epstein said.

The trial, now in its second week before a three-judge panel of the Jerusalem District Court, has been marked increasingly by emotional outbursts from spectators, many of them Holocaust survivors. At a recess Tuesday, several survivors hurled oaths at the defendant's son, John Demjanjuk Jr. and against Ukrainians who were involved in the murder of their families. Police intervened to restore order.

Demjanjuk, 66, a retired automobile worker from Cleveland, Ohio, is the first suspected Nazi war criminal extradited to Israel and the first to be tried here since Adolf Eichmann 25 years ago. He is charged with several counts of war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes against Jews. If convicted he faces the death penalty. The trial is expected to last for three months.

At the end of Tuesday's session, the court thanked Epstein for the restrained and dignified manner in which he related the terrible events at Treblinka. On Wednesday, another Treblinka survivor, Eliahu Rosenberg, will take the stand.

## SYRIAN INTERVENTION IN BEIRUT WORRIES ISRAEL, BUT NO MILITARY RESPONSE SEEN

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- The intervention into Beirut this week of a substantial Syrian army force has put Israel on the alert, but so far there appears to be no intention to interfere.

The Syrian move was discussed at a meeting of the Inner Cabinet Tuesday, and the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee was briefed by Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin on the latest developments.

The Inner Cabinet, composed of 10 senior Ministers -- five Labor and five Likud -- convened under the chairmanship of Vice Premier Shimon Peres. A statement issued later said that while Israel objects to the expansion of Syria's involvement in Lebanon, it plans no action at this time, but will watch the situation carefully and will make sure the security of its northern borders will not be compromised.

Rabin said there is nothing that requires Israel to reach any decision now. Speaking to reporters after briefing the Knesset committee, he said there would be no "red line" drawn by Israel with respect to Syrian movements.

"Our position is clear. We are opposed to the expansion and deepening of the Syrian military involvement in Lebanon, that is, Beirut. We follow, by means of intelligence, everything happening in Lebanon. We reserve the right to act in case the direct interests of the State of Israel are harmed," Rabin said.

## Keeping Close Watch

The Israel Defense Force meanwhile is keeping a close watch on the situation. Military analysts said if the Syrians do not make any unexpected moves in Lebanon they pose no danger to Israel.

It was noted here Tuesday that the Syrians have not deployed surface-to-air missiles in their new positions and there are no signs of any troop movements south toward the Israel border.

According to Israeli sources, Syria's motive in moving troops into West Beirut was not simply to restore law and order, but to use the intercommunal strife to its advantage. President Hafez Assad has reportedly allocated most of the Syrian force stationed in Lebanon to the West Beirut operation.

## SHAMIR'S U.S. AGENDA ALSO INCLUDED YORDIM, SOVIET JEWS, JEWISH UNITY

By Andrew Muchlin

NEW YORK, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- The business of government was not Israeli Premier Yitzhak Shamir's only reason for visiting the United States this week and last. He also came with Jewish concerns.

And as of Monday morning, when he met with a dozen editors of the Jewish press at the Regency Hotel here, Shamir said he had found willing listeners to his worries about Israelis and Soviet Jews going to live in the United States and the various branches of Judaism going at each other. "Since the last year I have tried to concentrate my efforts on Jewish problems," he explained.

The Premier said he offered to 1,200 "yordim" (Israeli emigrants) he spoke to Sunday in Encino, Calif., the services of the Absorption Ministry to help them find jobs and housing in Israel and cope with personal problems.

"It was a start of a campaign," he said. "It will not be the only meeting." He asserted that he hoped yordim could establish ongoing contact with Israeli consulates, which are working with the Jewish Agency.

Several hundred thousand Israelis are thought to live outside Israel. "We would like to get them back -- if not the parents, then the children," Shamir said.

He contended that living outside Israel was most painful for the children, who are uprooted from their native language and culture. Moreover, he claimed that many of the yordim of all ages would have a better lifestyle in Israel, as they're not doing so well financially in the United States and since the Israeli economy is on the rebound.

He admitted that Israelis, even the leaders, used to feel "a kind of contempt" toward the yordim. "We never spoke directly with them. Now we have determined that it's useless to ignore them."

### Soviet Refugee Status

The Premier also reiterated his and his government's desire to have the United States stop granting refugee status to Soviet Jewish emigrants. That would mean all emigres would go directly to Israel, as their visas indicate. Shamir made this point publicly in Washington last week, and the Cabinet echoed him on Sunday.

About 80 percent of the most recent emigres have come first to the United States and stayed, he said. To allow this to continue undermines Israeli efforts on their behalf, according to Shamir. He said the Soviet government has "partially accepted" Israel's ongoing contention that Jews have no ethnic place in the USSR and instead belong in Israel.

Finally, the Premier said he was concerned about "the problem of the Law of Return and, as it is defined in Israel and here, 'Who is a Jew?'" The law allows all Jews citizenship in Israel; however, certain religious elements have sought to amend the law to define Jewishness religiously. The issue becomes especially volatile when focussed on non-Orthodox converts to Judaism.

Shamir recently appointed a ministerial committee, which he chairs, to examine solutions to the issue, and he said he would meet Tuesday with leaders of American Conservative, Orthodox

and Reform Judaism and invite them to make suggestions to the committee.

In response to questions, the Premier downplayed the differences between himself and the Reagan Administration on the prospect of an international conference to discuss peace in the Middle East.

He claimed that Administration officials have suggested the conference as only a possibility, and have not applied pressure. "They are very far from being enthusiastic about such a conference," he said.

He didn't indicate if his disagreement over the conference with Foreign Minister Shimon Peres could rupture the Labor-Likud government, as he did later Monday to another group of journalists (see February 24 Bulletin).

As for the Lavi, Israel's fighter plane that the Pentagon wants to discontinue because of cost estimates that exceed Israel's, Shamir said, "I think we will find another solution together with the American government."

The editors thanked Shamir for being the first Israeli Premier to hold an exclusive meeting with editors of the American Jewish press.

## SOCIALIST-ZIONIST PIONEER BURIED

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- Funeral services were held Monday for Meir Yaari, co-founder of the Mapam Party and the Socialist-Zionist Hashomer Hatzair youth and kibbutz movement. He was buried in Kibbutz Merhaviva, where he died Saturday at the age of 90.

Yaari was regarded as one of the founders of the Jewish State. He served in every Knesset from the first in 1948 until his retirement from political life in 1973. His burial was attended by hundreds of mourners, including President Chaim Herzog, Vice Premier Shimon Peres, Knesset Speaker Shlomo Hillel and Cabinet Ministers and Knesset members of many parties.

At his request, no prayers were recited at the graveside. A eulogy was delivered by Mapam veteran Yaacov Hazan, who with Yaari was co-founder of the party in Vienna before World War I. He vowed that Yaari's comrades would continue on the political and pioneering path laid down by him.

Peres, speaking for the government, said the country would never forget Yaari the man and the mark he left on Israel. Before the funeral, Yaari's coffin lay in state in the main hall of Histadrut headquarters here. Thousands of people filed past to pay their last respects.

Born in Galicia in 1897, Yaari served as an officer in the Austrian army. He studied under Sigmund Freud and attended the Agricultural Institute in Vienna before immigrating to Palestine in 1923.

Friends and associates of Yaari described him Sunday as doctrinaire in his philosophical and political beliefs, but while he would not tolerate deviations from Mapam's teachings, he himself spearheaded change in his party's leftist orientation. Most notable was his break with Moscow, when he became disillusioned with Soviet attitudes toward Israel, Zionism and Jews.

Another anguished change, mirrored in his voluminous correspondence, was his abandonment of his early aspirations for a bi-national, Jewish-Arab State in Palestine.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES: GRASSROOTS PEACE ACTIVISTS SPEAK OUT

By Margie Olster  
(First of two parts)

NEW YORK, Feb. 24 (JTA) -- Some 200 leading Palestinian representatives and activists from American Arab and Jewish and Israeli Jewish peace camps met in a rare, grassroots dialogue here Sunday.

The dialogue, sponsored by American Friends of Peace Now, heard Palestinians and Israeli Zionists call for mutual recognition of the Palestinians' right to self-determination and Israel's right to security, an end to violence, and territorial compromise.

While some participants said direct negotiations for peace was the preferred method, most welcomed any opportunity for dialogue including an international peace conference.

The first half of the conference was devoted to presenting the long and short term views of peace and the obstacles. Prof. Galia Golan, a consultant to the Israeli Foreign Ministry and leading expert on the Soviet Union and a leader of Peace Now, and Avishai Margalit, a Hebrew University professor of political philosophy, presented the Zionist perspective.

The Palestinian points of view were offered by Hanna Seniora, one of two people accepted by both the PLO and Israel to represent the Palestinians in talks with the United States and editor of Al-Fajr, the Arabic daily widely read in the territories; and Jack Yousef Khazmo, a Palestinian author and publisher/editor of Al-Bayader Assiyasi, a weekly Arabic newspaper.

### Lack Of Comprehensive Talks Assailed

Seniora said the Middle East peace process has largely failed because of attempts to make individual agreements in place of a comprehensive peace treaty in which the PLO, Syria, Jordan and Israel all would be included.

President Ronald Reagan's failure to endorse a preparatory committee for an international peace conference is another obstacle to negotiations, Seniora said.

But Israeli and Jordanian tacit control of the vital matters of daily life in the territories presents perhaps the biggest threat to any negotiated peace settlement, according to Seniora. "This harsh occupational policy prevents the Palestinian voice from being heard," Seniora said. "We won't accept the perpetuation of two masters over us."

Seniora also discussed dissension and factionalization within the Palestinian movement, a subject usually reserved for private forums. The Palestinian leaders are "working to reunite the inner Palestinian house," Seniora said.

### Khazmo Blames Israel

Khazmo also catalogued the obstacles to an immediate peace. On the top of his list was Israel's lack of peace initiatives toward Palestinians coupled with Israel's occupation of the territories. He cited deportations, administrative detentions, house arrests, closure of Palestinian newspapers, censorship, closure of universities and expropriation of lands as policies which alienate Palestinians and catalyze the radicalization of Palestinian youth. "Everybody is losing hope" in the West Bank, Khazmo said.

The U.S. Administration presents a second obstacle to peace in the Middle East by providing financial aid to Israel without any conditions to

promote the peace process, Khazmo said. He also criticized the U.S. for refusing to recognize the PLO or the Palestinians' right to self-determination.

The third obstacle, as Khazmo saw it, comes from the Arab camp, where the extremists "are looking at the peace activists and laughing," he said.

### Golan Focuses On Agreement

Golan also addressed these issues, focussing on areas of agreement. "The major obstacles that we are facing are years and years of hostility, mutual distrust and fear on the part of both peoples that has created stereotypes nurtured and cultivated by both sides," she said.

The continued occupation has led to the radicalization on both sides and "is corroding our values," she said.

"The only alternative today I believe is partition -- acceptance of the fact that there are two peoples with two claims to the land, two national identities, histories, two peoples . . . deserving their own rights and protection," Golan said.

Any settlement must address Israel's security needs and her right to exist, Golan said, as only this will mobilize support within Israel for a settlement. On the other side, the Palestinians' rights to self-determination must also be recognized, he said.

The Jordanians are not an appropriate partner in any peace settlement because the Palestinians see the PLO as their leadership, Golan said.

Golan suggested strengthening the moderates on both sides to demonstrate there are willing partners to peace negotiations. "The only alternative we are facing today is one of mutual destruction," she said.

### Egyptian Involvement Recommended

Margalit said he agreed with the view of MK Ezer Weizman (Labor) that "the road to peace goes through Cairo." He recommended making the peace with Egypt more appealing to Israelis and to Palestinians and said Mubarak is a key figure because he is on good terms with the Palestinians.

Margalit supported a confederation of Jordan, Israel and a Palestinian "entity" in the territories as a solution to the conflict. But the process must begin by talking to each other, he said. "Dialogue is necessary to destroy the dehumanization of the conflict" in which Israelis are racists and Palestinians are terrorists, he said.

When asked to offer a concrete vision of a peaceful settlement, both Seniora and Khazmo pointed to an independent Palestinian state in the West Bank. Seniora said, "The Palestinians have realized the need for a political option to lead to a solution."

Golan said her model of peace was only: no threat of war and no fear. She said she would be happy if both parties would "sign on the dotted line that we are going to stop fighting each other."

Following the presentations, Seniora told the JTA he believes the grassroots peace movement can have an effect. "In the absence of formal initiatives for peace in various governments, these kinds of meetings help keep the glimmer of hope going among various parties," he said.

Next: Suggestions on how American citizens can promote Mideast peace.