

# **SHAMIR SAYS U.S. WOULD NOT SEE TESTIMONY OF THREE WHO REFUSE TO APPEAR BEFORE POLLARD PANEL**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 22 (JTA) -- The three Israeli diplomats who refuse to appear before an independent Israeli commission investigating the Pollard affair can testify without fear of their remarks being turned over to the United States, Premier Yitzhak Shamir wrote to the trio's attorney Friday.

The three -- Irit Erb, Ilan Ravid and Yosef Yagur, all who formerly served in the U.S.-- have been advised by attorney David Libai not to testify before the Rotenstreich Commission for fear of self-incrimination which could lead to the U.S. criminal charges.

That decision has put in jeopardy the commission's investigation of Israel's role in Jonathan Pollard's espionage in the United States.

Shamir's message was written with the consent of Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Attorney General Yosef Harish. It followed a Friday meeting between Shamir and Peres, their first since their separate visits to the U.S. and Egypt, respectively, last month, which at the time threatened to end the unity government.

But in the shadow of the Pollard affair the pair seems to be cooperating more and to have agreed to advocate together the continuation of the commission's probe.

That position does not have universal support. Former Justice Minister Shmuel Tamir recommended in a radio interview Friday that a judicial commission of inquiry -- with more power than the current commission -- be appointed to investigate the affair.

Moreover, Minister Without Portfolio Ezer Weizman said he did not believe that Air Force Col. Aviem Sella, whom he knows well, acted on his own initiative in supervising Pollard, as Shamir, Peres and Rabin have insisted.

# **U.S. LEADERS HAIL ISRAEL'S DECISION TO REDUCE TIES WITH SOUTH AFRICA**

By Judith Colp

WASHINGTON, March 22 (JTA) -- The State Department and Congressional leaders have hailed Israel's decision not to sign military contracts with South Africa.

"We welcome this step as a positive development," said State Department spokesman Charles Redman, who said the United States had discussed this issue with Israel "on several occasions."

"It is a good move, not only in terms of what it means for Israel's relations with the rest of the world, but what it will mean for Black-Jewish relations in the United States," said Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on African Affairs.

Rep. Mickey Leland (D-Tex.), former chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus, praised the Israeli decision as a "real breakthrough" and said he hopes Israel will follow through in its move to reduce overall relations with South Africa, according to his spokesperson, Ellen Boyle.

Leland, who has met with Israeli leaders to discuss South Africa and who was telephoned Thursday by Israeli Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, said he hopes to travel to Israel soon for further talks.

Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-NY) said he hoped Israel's moves to reduce ties with South Africa will "defuse pressure in Congress that could jeopardize U.S. aid to Israel."

Irma Gertler, president of B'nai B'rith Women, said she hopes this positive move on the part of Israel will spark other nations such as Britain, France and Germany to also reject any future arms contracts with South Africa.

# **USSR SEEN SOFTENING ITS POSITION TOWARDS ISRAEL'S CONDITIONS FOR SOVIET ROLE IN MIDEAST PEACE TALKS**

TEL AVIV, March 22 (JTA) -- The Soviet Union may be softening its position toward Israel's conditions for Soviet participation in an international conference for Middle East peace. Jerusalem was informed of the latest Soviet views following a recent meeting between Mikhail Gorbachev and Prime Minister Bettino Craxi of Italy, Haaretz reported Sunday.

According to the report, Gorbachev said Soviet policy on the resumption of diplomatic relations with Israel would change once an international conference becomes a concrete possibility. He also reportedly said that Israel's conditions for such a conference would not constitute an impediment.

Haaretz said the issues of diplomatic relations and Jewish emigration from the USSR would be discussed at a meeting in New York this week between the Soviet Ambassador to the United Nations and Avraham Tamir, Director General of the Foreign Ministry.

# **LAVI SUPPORTERS UNDER FIRE**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 22 (JTA) -- A secret report by the State Comptroller several months ago warned that the Lavi fighter plane project could seriously impede the Israel Air Force because of its rapidly escalating costs, and sharply criticized the judgement and decision-making process of all involved with the Lavi, Haaretz reported Sunday.

According to the State Comptroller, the cost of developing the Lavi increased by 148 percent between 1980 and 1985 and the estimated production cost per unit soared by 108 percent in the same period.

The Comptroller's report charged the Israel Defense Force General Staff and the IDF Chief of Staff with failure to grasp "the whole picture" or to realize "the damage to the IDF's overall resources" financing the Lavi would cause.

Israel Air Force Commander Gen. Amos Lapidot was taken to task by the Comptroller for not giving serious consideration to the negative effects of the Lavi project on other Air Force projects and needs.

"From the military standpoint the decision to manufacture the Lavi binds the defense establish-

ment and restricts the flexibility of its decisions," the Comptroller stated according to Haaretz. The report seems to bear out American objections to the Lavi on a cost basis.

It recommends, as the Pentagon has done, that instead of going ahead with the Lavi, now being test-flown, Israel buy F-16C aircraft from the U.S. which are 33 percent cheaper.

The comptroller also recommended establishment of a body to monitor similar projects in the future.

#### ISRAELI LEADERS CAUTIOUS OVER REPORT OF U.S. SPY IN THE IDF By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 22 (JTA) -- Israeli officials reacted cautiously to reports from Washington Friday that the CIA had tried to operate a spy within the Israel Defense Force in 1982.

The report was headlined in Friday's Jerusalem Post.

It quotes Senator David Durenberger (R. Minn.) telling a group of some 100 Jewish activists in a meeting sponsored by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee in Palm Beach last Sunday that former CIA Director William Casey had authorized a covert operation against Israel long before the Pollard affair began.

Durenberger is the immediate past chairman of the Senate Intelligence Committee.

Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres told Israel Radio Friday there was no truth to the report, adding he understood IDF sources had earlier Friday said they had no information about the alleged spy, a "high-level Israeli officer in the IDF who had originally made aliya from the U.S." During the Lebanon war he reportedly was "bumped" by the IDF.

#### Knowledge Of The Affair Denied

Yossi Ben-Aharon, Director General of the Prime Minister's office, said he knew nothing of the affair, but added that he would not be surprised if something like that had happened.

"As we all know, spying is the business of all governments against all other governments--not against, but in favor of their own security. I'm not very surprised," Ben-Aharon said.

A similar denial was made Friday by Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, in an interview with a West German newspaper. He was answering a question arising from a statement allegedly made by convicted spy Jonathan Pollard that U.S. agents had been employed in Israel.

Morris Abram, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said here that he had no information on the report, but added: "If Sen. Durenberger's information -- which I know nothing about--were true, I am sure the Israeli government and officials will be just as understanding and forgiving as the government of the U.S., in the form of the President and all of his officials, have been in respect to this rogue operation by Mr. Pollard."

The Post report quoted Durenberger as having said that it was the CIA activity which had apparently led to Israel's decision to "run" Pollard in Washington.

(In Washington, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger denied Durenberger's allegation. Inter-

viewed on NBC's "Meet the Press" program Sunday, Weinberger said the Senator's statement was a damaging and very wrong statement" because it can be used to "justify further espionage." He denied that there was any American spy in the IDF.)

#### WJCONGRESS TO MAKE AVAILABLE INFORMATION ON NAZI WAR CRIMINALS AFTER UN REJECTS ISRAELI REQUEST

NEW YORK, March 22 (JTA) -- The World Jewish Congress has offered to make available from a "master list" in its possession, the names, vital statistics and criminal charges applying to any of the 40,000 individuals in the files of the United Nations War Crimes Commission which operated in London from 1943 to 1948.

WJC Secretary General Israel Singer made the offer here Friday, the day after UN Secretary General Javier Perez de Cuellar rejected a request by Israel for free access to the files of Nazi war criminals. The Secretary General explained his refusal on grounds that the nations which were members of the long defunct War Crimes Commission had objected to opening the files.

Sources here told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Thursday that 16 of the 17 member nations objected to Israel's request, including the U.S. and Britain. It was supported only by Australia.

Singer stated, "The names of every individual in the UN files is on a master list we have obtained and we will respond to all inquiries seeking information on these individuals." He said the WJC would confirm whether an individual is in the UN files and would specify the nature, place and date of crimes charged to the individual and the identity of material witnesses.

According to the WJC, it obtained its copy of the master list from the National Archives in Washington. Each member of the War Crimes Commission received a copy. The individual criminal files at the UN contain additional data and otherwise unobtainable information on the evidence against persons accused of war crimes, the WJC said.

It denounced the UN's rejection of Israel's request and said WJC affiliates in 70 countries would be asked to campaign to have their governments demand that the UN open the files.

Israel's Ambassador to the UN, Binyamin Netanyahu, met with de Cuellar last week to request access to the files. He also asked the Secretary General for permission to inspect an additional 2,000 files, which was granted. Netanyahu will discuss the matter publicly at a press conference on Tuesday.

\*\*\*

BONN (JTA) -- President Chaim Herzog of Israel will begin his visit to West Germany on April 6 at the site of the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp, which he helped liberate as an officer in the British army during the final stages of World War II. The Irish-born Herzog will be accompanied by President Richard von Weizsäcker of the Federal Republic throughout his four-day state visit. On the evening of April 6, Herzog will host a dinner for leaders of all political and social groups in West Germany.

**U.S. JEWISH LEADERS GIVE  
'FRIENDLY ADVICE' TO ISRAELIS  
IN ATMOSPHERE OF RESPECT**  
By Margie Olster

JERUSALEM, March 22 (JTA) -- Jonathan Pollard, "Irangate," South Africa and Soviet Jews are mentioned in one breath with few exceptions by every Israeli official who addresses members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations here on a week-long mission.

The "affairs" or "unfortunate incidents," as they are often called, have emerged as hot potatoes which few Israeli leaders want to touch for more than a moment or two.

The highly controversial issues were at the top of the Presidents' agenda upon their arrival here Tuesday to a barrage of media attention. By now, the American Jewish leaders have been thoroughly saturated with the party line on all these affairs. They heave small sighs of exasperation when a fresh Minister or government official begins his speech with, "Before I start, let me say a word or two on the Pollard affair."

As Foreign Minister Shimon Peres put it in his remarks Thursday to the Presidents, they are the burning issues of the day, but far from the most important issues in the larger picture of Israeli political life.

**Angry Exchange Of Criticisms**

Upon the arrival of the Presidents, tensions were already at near zenith levels with an angry exchange of criticisms between Prof. Shlomo Avineri and Morris Abram, chairman of the Presidents Conference.

Abram was criticized for saying something interpreted as Pollard got what he deserved in his life sentence for espionage. Avineri accused American Jews of "galut mentality." Not surprisingly, some conference members replied that they live in galut (Diaspora).

Upon arrival, Abram said, "What Mr. Pollard did was inexcusable. It offends all Americans." But what really upset the Presidents, and likewise the American government, was the promotion of the two Israelis castigated for leading the so-called "rogue operation" that recruited Pollard to spy.

Aviem Sella and Rafael Eitan are coming into their own as a separate affair in recent weeks. In no uncertain terms, Abram and the other Presidents let the Israelis know that they could not get away with this. Analogies to Oliver North's fall from grace and Admiral John Poin Dexter's voluntary resignation abound in the Presidents' friendly advice to Israeli officials.

Abram said in a press conference which opened the mission Tuesday that he is confident the Rotenstreich Commission, Israel's "Tower Commission" on the Pollard affair, and a separate Knesset committee will uncover mistakes and take corrective action.

**Honest Talk About Difficult Issues**

Premier Yitzhak Shamir has effectively avoided questions on the Pollard affair. Nevertheless, several of the Presidents said they felt Shamir had talked to them honestly about the various scandals. He didn't miss the opportunity Wednesday to reiterate his stand on Soviet Jews' refugee status in talking to the Presidents, although his remarks were met with consternation and concern.

Peres also acknowledged that mistakes were made. Shamir attempted to explain the Sella/Eitan affair with a quiet analogy.

"In America, there are thousands of talented people in the ranks of the bureaucracy. But in Israel, people with the experience and knowledge of men like Sella and Eitan are rare," he said.

"Irangate" has lain in the shadows of the Pollard affair this week. The Israeli leadership is anxious to give the impression that the U.S. Tower Commission report all but exonerated Israel from any blame in causing the whole affair. Ironically, Pollard has done a good deal to help the Israelis put "Irangate" in the past.

But underlying all this controversy is the mutual respect, admiration and support of the Israeli and American leaders expressed at each session.

**U.S. URGED NOT TO FEAR BACKLASH  
AS A RESULT OF THE POLLARD CASE**  
By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 22 (JTA) -- Sen. Daniel Inouye (D. Hawaii) urged American Jews not to fear a backlash against the Jewish community because an American Jew, Jonathan Pollard, was convicted for spying for Israel.

"I don't think there is any reason for you to be afraid or embarrassed," Inouye told the 175 persons attending the Mission to Washington of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations in America (OU), last Wednesday.

"If you show fear it gives courage and strength to your enemies," he stressed. "This is the time to show strength and not fear."

Inouye said that while he condemns Pollard's espionage, "with equal fervor I condemn those Americans who are using this to imply the concept of collective guilt."

The OU members, joined by members of two other Orthodox groups, the Rabbinical Council of America and AMIT Women, spent the day here being briefed by members of the Reagan Administration and the Israel Embassy, as well as individually meeting with various members of Congress.

At a luncheon on Capitol Hill, they heard from Inouye and about a dozen other Senators, who urged the need for them to demonstrate their support for Israel and the cause of Soviet Jewry.

The Jewish community is the chief supporter of Israel and "that is how it should be," Sen. John Danforth (R. Mo.) stressed. "If you don't support the State of Israel, if you don't do it in a very strong way, who's supposed to do that?"

Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D. NJ) and others said the Pollard case would not have a long-lasting effect. He said that the United States "depends" on Israel and the Jewish State "gives good value" to the U.S. for the aid it receives.

Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D. Md.), chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Subcommittee on the Near East and South Asia, said that the \$3 billion in U.S. aid for Israel is "protected." But he warned that there will be pressures to cut it because of domestic needs.

On the Soviet Jewry issue, Sen. Arlen Specter (R. Pa.) said he believed that if the U.S. and the Soviet Union reached an arms control agreement, more Soviet Jews will be allowed to be released. Lautenberg told the Orthodox leaders that he will seek again to get Senate approval, denied last year, for a bill allowing Orthodox Jews in the military to wear yarmulkes.

## FAMILIES DIVIDED AS SOME SOVIET JEWS EMIGRATE, OTHERS CANNOT

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, March 22 (JTA) -- A Soviet Jewish emigre with cancer who underwent a major operation here last week to save her life pleaded Friday for Soviet authorities to permit her brother and his family to leave the Soviet Union and reunite with her and her family here.

Seated in a wheelchair, fragile, pale, her tears streaming, Irene Grottel told a press conference at the New York University School of Medicine that she has not been able to see her brother, Zinoviy Ostrovsky of Leningrad, and his family since she immigrated to the U.S. 10 years ago.

"My brother has been refused exit visas nine times," Grottel said. She said that her father and sister immigrated to Israel a few years ago and that her father died there last year. "My brother wonders why his father does not call or write him, and we don't dare tell him that our father is no longer alive," she said.

Neither does her brother know about her serious illness, she said. "I am pleading with the Soviet government to let my brother reunite with me before it is too late. Let him reunite with the living, not with the dead," she said, her voice shaking with sadness and agony.

She said her brother can't get an exit visa because he allegedly holds "state secrets." He was an engineer, but for the last 11 years has worked as a porter, loading and unloading trucks in a Leningrad restaurant.

### Appeal For Reunification

About two dozens Soviet Jewish emigres whose family members are still refused permission to reunite with them also participated in the press conference. There was no indication how many Soviet Jewish families are affected. The emigres signed an appeal to New York Gov. Mario Cuomo, who is going to Moscow at the end of the month to intercede on their behalf with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

Vladimir Rabinovich, who brought to the press conference his seven-month-old daughter, appealed to the Soviet authorities to allow his father to reunite with him and his sister, who lives in Israel. He said that his father, Nahum Rabinovich of Zaporozhe in the Ukraine, is a former World War II combat pilot who also served later as a test pilot.

"My father is 64 years old. He never saw his grandchildren in Israel and the United States. He applied first for an exit visa in 1982, but his application has been rejected. Last month he applied again and his request was denied," Rabinovich said. He added that Soviet authorities told his father that he will not receive a security clearance until 1995.

Lev Blitshtein, who arrived here from Moscow three weeks ago after a 12-year battle to rejoin his wife and his family, said that the refusal of the Soviet authorities to allow the reunification of Jewish families has caused many personal tragedies. "Many got ill and many others died," he said.

The press conference was co-sponsored by the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, Project ARI (Action for Russian Immigrants), Oceanfront Council for Soviet Jewry, Bensonhurst Jewish Community House, and CASE (Committee for Absorption of Soviet Emigres).

## KARL LINNAS: A DEPORTATION DILEMMA

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, March 22 (JTA) -- Despite having been stripped of his citizenship and having been ordered deported from the United States, Karl Linnas still sits on U.S. soil. Because of several appeals to stay the sentence of deportation, and a certain amount of influence in Washington by those who resist his deportation to the Soviet Union, Linnas has not yet been flung from U.S. shores.

Linnas, 66, was convicted and sentenced to death in absentia by a Soviet court in 1961. He was charged in 1982 by the U.S. Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations (OSI) with lying about his wartime activities when he entered the U.S. in 1951, immigrating from Germany under the Displaced Persons Act of 1948. According to the charges filed by the OSI, Linnas joined a Nazi execution squad in 1941 in a Tartu, Estonia, concentration camp when Germany occupied Estonia, in order to execute "undesirables," mostly Jews. He is accused of commanding firing squads that killed men, women and children who were forced to kneel before mass graves, as well as personally shooting several camp inmates.

On December 1, 1986, the U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear Linnas's appeal against deportation to the USSR, a decision hailed by at least nine Jewish organizations. Today, these organizations, and very many others, are decidedly upset over the failure of the U.S. Justice system to provide for Linnas's speedy deportation.

The Jewish Community Relations Council of New York has sent a "Dear Colleague" letter to its 59 constituent organizations asking that they protest the continued presence in the U.S. of Linnas. The letter, urging Attorney General Edwin Meese to sign off on Linnas's deportation order, will be submitted to two Senators and two Congressmen.

Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, said of the failure to, until now, deport Linnas that "the whole thing is an abomination. We're waiting for the Attorney General to enforce the law, as we are in the case of (Austrian President Kurt) Waldheim, placing him on the watch list (of war criminals not welcome in the U.S.) We don't need to protect Nazis in this country. The Attorney General should send a clear message, 'Nazis are not welcome here.' The entire Jewish community is being challenged by these cases. Will they stand up in this moral struggle or will they allow those individuals who protect these heinous persons to prevail? We're not asking for a favor -- we're asking that the law be carried out."

Linnas's counsel, former U.S. Attorney General Ramsey Clark, has been successful in delaying the deportation of the wartime Nazi partly because of an amazing technicality: Linnas requested to be sent to "free Estonia," a country that no longer exists. He even asked the Estonian Consulate in New York to grant him refuge, a complete impossibility because, as a Consulate spokesperson said, "We are not here as a country; we are just an office."

The Estonian Consulate, whose presence dates back to before World War II, exists by the grace of the United States government, which does not recognize Soviet occupation of the Baltic countries. Nevertheless, Estonia, like Latvia and Lithuania, was incorporated into the USSR after World War II.