

SPAIN TO STRESS JEWISH CONTRIBUTION TO AMERICA'S DISCOVERY, SAYS MINISTER
By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, March 26 (JTA) -- A high-ranking Spanish government official said here Wednesday that his government plans to stress the contribution of Spanish Jews to the discovery of America in the course of the quincentennial celebrations of the event in 1992.

Luis Yanez, Spain's Secretary of State for International Cooperation, said at a special briefing with Israeli reporters and the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that he visited New York this week specifically to meet with Jewish organizational leaders.

He said that he discussed with leaders of the American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress and other organizations his government's plans to reinvoke the role of the Jews in the discovery of America by holding seminars, discussions and congresses and by publishing information on the issue.

"The response of the Jewish organizations was very positive," Yanez said in reply to a question. He said that he discussed with the American Jewish Committee the possibility of jointly sponsoring a major seminar, at a major university -- probably Columbia in New York City -- to commemorate the quincentennial celebrations.

More On Jews In General

The Spanish Minister, who is the president of the Spanish National Commission for the Quincentennial Celebrations of the Discovery of America by Christopher Columbus in 1492, said his government is interested in publicizing the role of Jews in general in the formation of modern Spain and its culture.

"For many years we experienced disinformation regarding the role of Jews in modern Spain," he asserted. He said, in reply to a question, that during the decades of Gen. Francisco Franco's rule in Spain, "Jews were considered enemies of Spain," and their contribution to the country was ignored.

Two years ago Spain established diplomatic relations with Israel. Israeli Education Minister Yitzhak Navon visited Madrid last February and met with, among other Spanish officials, Yanez. Navon, Yanez said, agreed to serve as the president of the Israeli Commission for the quincentennial celebrations.

"Navon invited me to visit Israel and I accepted. I will go to Israel later this year," Yanez said. He said that "this historic occasion" of the quincentennial celebrations is an opportunity to restore Israel's image in Spain and Latin America, an image that was distorted because of lack of diplomatic relations, and to put into proper perspective the meaningful contribution of Jews to Spain.

The Spanish official denied, in reply to a question, that his government seeks closer ties with American Jews to advance its interests in Washington. "No, this is not our purpose," he said.

CARTER SAYS SYRIA, JORDAN BOTH READY TO TALK PEACE WITH ISRAEL WITHIN INTERNATIONAL FRAMEWORK
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 26 (JTA) -- Former President Jimmy Carter arrived in Israel Thursday saying he was convinced that the leaders of Syria and Jordan would join direct peace talks with Israel held within the framework of an international peace conference.

Meeting with Vice Premier and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres shortly after reaching Jerusalem by the Allenby Bridge from Jordan, Carter said that President Hafez Assad of Syria understood that an international conference was the next stage toward direct negotiations.

He said that King Hussein of Jordan wanted to advance the peace process and held "flexible views," but was unable to move forward in the absence of an international forum. According to Carter, Assad regards Jordan as "a leading force in the peace process." Carter said that in his own view, Syria, too, has an important role in the process.

Carter's visit to Israel, his first since 1983, is the final leg of a tour that took him to Algeria, Egypt, Syria and Jordan. The former President stressed repeatedly here and in the Arab capitals that his visit was private and the views he expressed were his own. He made clear he is not representing the U.S.

He made several statements in the course of his journey on the need to include the Palestine Liberation Organization in an international conference.

Eighth Anniversary Of Treaty

Carter's arrival in Israel coincided with the eighth anniversary of the signing of the Israel-Egyptian peace treaty on March 26, 1979 at a White House ceremony. The signatories were then Israeli Premier Menachem Begin and the late President Anwar Sadat of Egypt. Carter engineered the treaty.

Carter asked for a meeting with Begin, who has been living in seclusion at his suburban Jerusalem home since he resigned from office in August 1983. According to Begin's spokesman, Yechiel Kadishai, the 73-year-old former Premier said "that he can't see him, that's all. He didn't give any reason." Begin and Carter last met during Carter's 1983 visit.

Carter told reporters Thursday that one of the lessons of Camp David, at which Egypt, Israel and the U.S. talked was that one should not stick to any single specific formula in pursuing peace and that it is time to advance to a new stage. He said that would seem to be an international conference.

He said his visit to Israel was to raise questions and float ideas for Israeli leaders, as a private citizen. He added that he had never succeeded in convincing Israelis "or anyone else" to do what they did not want to do.

Asked why the peace process had not advanced after Camp David, Carter said "Perhaps

there is more I could have done, but I don't think that in the last six years (the tenure of the Reagan Administration) it has been as high a priority as it has been with me, when it was almost an obsession."

Carter expressed hope nevertheless that the last two years of the Reagan Administration would see the Middle East peace process become a greater priority.

The Reagan Administration sharply criticized Carter for a remark before the American Chamber of Commerce in Cairo last week that there was "missing leadership" in Washington. "President Reagan has not been inclined to use negotiation and diplomacy as a means to achieve our nation's goals as have his Democratic and Republican predecessors. He's more inclined to exert America's military strength, either the actual use of it or the threat of it," Carter said.

Those remarks brought an angry response from White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater last Friday. He said the Administration was "deeply disappointed" that Carter would make such a statement on the "very delicate" Mideast peace process while in a foreign country. "It is not right to say we have not been pursuing the peace process in the Middle East," Fitzwater said.

State Department spokesman Charles Redman declared that "This Administration has remained actively involved in the peace process and is deeply committed to it."

Meets With Assad, Hussein

Carter met with Assad in Damascus for three-and-a-half hours Sunday, according to Syria's official news agency, Sana, discussing "issues relating to the international situation, the Middle East and Lebanon."

Carter arrived in Jordan Tuesday asserting that "As long as the parties stay flexible and listen to contrary views, the hope for a (international) conference is kept alive." He met with King Hussein and Crown Prince Hassan. Also, while in Amman, Carter called for the release of prisoners in Israel and hostages in Lebanon. "All those being held on both sides, unless being guilty of some crime, should be released," he said.

In Jerusalem Thursday, Carter said he had no word on any possible progress on the hostage issue in Lebanon. He expressed hope that with the deployment of Syrian armed forces in west Beirut, progress would be made toward the release of hostages.

SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRATION FIGURES
GLADDEN TWO JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

NEW YORK, March 26 (JTA) -- Two national Jewish organizations said Wednesday they were heartened by reports from Moscow that 400 Jews will have been allowed to leave the Soviet Union by the end of March, but stressed their reservations over whether this "welcome step" signified a meaningful change of policy or a gesture aimed at improving the Soviet image.

Alan Pesky, chairman of the Coalition to Free Soviet Jews, noted that since prominent refusenik Natan Sharansky was freed from prison and allowed to leave for Israel in February 1986, there have been a number of "heartening developments," such as the release from prison of Iosif Begun and the exit permission granted long-time refusenik David Goldfarb.

Nevertheless, Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev "has been able to reap a public relations

windfall while actually giving very little in return," Pesky said. Ruth Popkin, national president of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, also hailed the granting of exit visas to 400 Soviet Jews this month.

"We sincerely hope that this action reflects a significant change in the Soviet Union's long-standing policy of repression of its Jewish citizens and is more than an illusory and politically motivated ploy to improve its relations with the United States in the pursuit of its own ends," Popkin said. "Time, and the release of additional Soviet Jews, will tell," she added.

'Trumped-Up Charges'

Pesky noted that while only three Jews remain political prisoners in the USSR, "They are there on trumped-up charges, as were all Jewish prisoners held captive solely because of their desire to emigrate to Israel."

He said "the Soviet emigration policy has the effect of denying the right to emigrate to some 400,000 Jews" who have asked to leave for reasons other than family reunification, "including repatriation to Israel." Therefore, "mere numbers are not enough. There must be normalization of the Soviets' emigration procedures."

Popkin congratulated the new emigrants who will be reunited with family and friends in time for the Passover holidays next month. "We look forward to the time when all Soviet Jews will celebrate Passover in freedom," she said.

EITAN, ARENS TESTIFY BEFORE PANEL
PROBING POLLARD AFFAIR; CABINET
REMOVES OBSTACLE TO INVESTIGATION
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 26 (JTA) -- A Knesset panel investigating the government's handling of the Jonathan Pollard spy case heard key witnesses Wednesday as the Cabinet acted to remove the main obstacle holding up its own probe of the affair.

The intelligence subcommittee of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, which has conducted more than 100 hours of closed hearings since it started its investigation two weeks ago, heard testimony from one of the two most controversial figures in the case, Rafael Eitan, a former Mossad operative and former head of the Defense Ministry's scientific relations department. Another witness Wednesday was former Defense Minister Moshe Arens.

The subcommittee has scheduled its entire Thursday session to question Air Force Col. Aviem Sella. According to Pollard's confession, he was recruited and given espionage assignments by Sella and his spy unit, LEKEM, was headed by Eitan.

Controversial Promotions

The advancement of Sella's and Eitan's careers despite their alleged deep involvement with Pollard angered the U.S. and raised a storm of controversy in Israel and between Israel and American Jewish leaders. Sella was given command of Israel's second largest airbase and Eitan was appointed chairman of Israel Chemicals, the largest government-owned corporation.

While the Knesset subcommittee's secret hearings were raising media speculation that the top political echelons of the government will be badly tarnished by its findings, which was denied by committee leaders Abba Eban and Ehud Olmert,

the Cabinet agreed that testimony given to its own two-man committee of inquiry will not be conveyed to the U.S. Attorney General Yosef Harish was authorized to make that commitment in writing to David Libai, a lawyer representing three other key figures in the Pollard case. Libai had advised his clients not to testify on grounds of self-incrimination that could lead to prosecution in the U.S.

As a result, the Cabinet-sponsored investigation, conducted by Tel Aviv lawyer Yehoshua Rotenstreich and former Chief of Staff Gen. Zvi Tsur, was unable to start as scheduled last week.

The witnesses are Yosef Yagur, former Scientific Attache at the Israel Consulate General in New York; Ilan Ravid, former assistant to the Scientific Attache at the Israel Embassy in Washington; and Irit Erb, a former secretary at the Scientific Attache's office in Washington. The three left the U.S. when Pollard was arrested in 1985.

The Cabinet also decided to allow the witnesses to appeal to the Supreme Court if they believe the government is about to renege on its agreement.

PERES GUEST OF RADIO CALL-IN SHOW FOR CITIZENS OF ARAB STATES, WEST BANK

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 26 (JTA) -- Utilizing an international wireless telephone hook-up via West Germany, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres answered questions from callers in the Arab world for a half hour Thursday. Most of the questions related to Middle East peace.

The telephone exchange was arranged by the Arabic service of the state-owned Israel Radio in cooperation with a radio station in Bonn. Except for callers from Egypt, who used the newly installed direct-dialing, questions and answers were relayed through Bonn. Peres heard simultaneous translations and replied in English, which was translated into Arabic.

Calls from Syria, during a practice run Wednesday, were cut off abruptly and there were no Syrian calls Thursday. But there were calls from Lebanon, Jordan, Egypt and the West Bank. Peres was asked about an international conference for Middle East peace, the peace process with Egypt and the situation between Israel and Syria since Syrian armed forces occupied West Beirut earlier this month.

The Foreign Minister stressed that Israel wants peace, but apart from Egypt has found no Arab partners. He said Israel was ready to participate in preparations for an international conference or in talks with a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, but not with the Palestine Liberation Organization, which he said "preferred shooting to talking."

Earlier Thursday, Peres met with three Palestinian leaders, Hanna Seniora, editor of the East Jerusalem Arabic daily Al Fajr, Fayez Abu Rahman, a West Bank attorney, and Dr. Sa'ari Nusseibeh. He said his purpose was to hear their opinions on Israel-Palestinian relations and acquaint them with Israel's policies.

REPORT THAT U.S. ZIONIST YOUTH SPIED ON ISRAEL DENIED BY AUTHORITIES

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 26 (JTA) -- An American magazine report that the U.S. intelligence

community occasionally planted agents among American Jewish youth doing non-military volunteer work for the Israel Defense Force over the last 10 years was flatly denied here Thursday by "authoritative security elements."

The report, in The New Republic, noted that thousands of Jewish youth have done clean-up and maintenance work for one-month periods at IDF camps in a program called "Volunteer Israel" which began after the Yom Kippur War.

The magazine cited two well-placed sources in the American intelligence community who said the volunteers could have picked up pieces of information about Israel's military while performing menial chores.

The report followed by less than a week the assertion by Sen. David Durenberger (R. Minn.), former chairman of Senate Intelligence Committee, that in 1982 the CIA planted spies in the IDF. Israeli leaders and U.S. Secretary of Defense Caspar Weinberger have denied the allegation.

As for American volunteers acting as agents, the intelligence sources here noted that all of them were members of Zionist youth movements and their backgrounds were checked by the project officers overseas. Several volunteers were rejected because they lacked appropriate documents or were not well known, the sources said.

So far, about 3,500 youths have served in the volunteer project, most of them from the U.S.

SHAMIR: SEPARATE SOVIET JEWRY ISSUE FROM ISRAEL'S RELATIONS WITH USSR

TEL AVIV, March 26 (JTA) -- Premier Yitzhak Shamir said Thursday that the plight of Soviet Jews should be considered apart from Israel's policies toward the Soviet Union and must not be "held hostage" to Israeli negotiations with Moscow. Addressing representatives of the American Council for Soviet Jewry in Jerusalem, Shamir also complained that American Jews are not doing enough to persuade the U.S. to abolish refugee status for Jews leaving the USSR which makes it easy for them to go to the U.S. instead of Israel. Many U.S. Jewish organizations in fact disagree with Shamir on this issue.

PERES BLASTS WEST BANK 'BEDROOM' SETTLEMENTS; IMPLIES UNITY GOVERNMENT HAS NO JUSTIFICATION TO CONTINUE

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 26 (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Shimon Peres expressed sharp criticism of the Labor-Likud national unity government Wednesday and came down strongly on one side of an issue that could result in its dissolution.

Addressing the leadership of the National Religious Party, Peres spoke forcefully against Jewish settlements in the administered territories. There was no need for towns like Emmanuel and Ariel in the West Bank, he said, which serve as no more than bedroom communities.

He also charged that the unity government had no real political or social program, implying that he saw no justification for it to continue.

While he spoke, Likud's Deputy Premier and Housing Minister David Levy was dedicating the new West Bank settlement of Betar, just south of Jerusalem.

He did so in face of a protest demonstration by the Peace Now movement and a delegation from the development town of Sderot in the Negev.

SHARANSKY PROPOSES THAT THE WEST OFFER THE USSR QUID PRO QUO FOR EASING EMIGRATION RESTRICTIONS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 26 (JTA) -- Natan Sharansky proposed that the West offer the Soviet Union quid pro quo for easing emigration restrictions for Soviet Jews. For Jewish emigration of 10,000 a year, Moscow would be rewarded with a broadening of scientific and cultural ties.

If 50,000 Jews are allowed to leave a year, the U.S. should cancel the Jackson-Vanik amendment which links Jewish emigration to Most Favored Nation trade status for the USSR, Sharansky told some 1,500 North American immigrants at a meeting Sunday organized by the Association of American and Canadian Immigrants to Israel and the Soviet Jewry Education and Information Center.

The event, billed as "an evening with Natan Sharansky," coincided with the 10th anniversary of his arrest in Moscow, allegedly for spying for the United States. Sharansky, who came to Israel in February 1986 after nine years in the Soviet Gulag, said he thought it would be "dangerous precedent" for Israel to ask the United States to abolish special refugee status for Jews leaving the Soviet Union.

"I have no doubt that the best place for a Jew to live is in Israel, but I don't want anyone brought here against his will," Sharansky said. In this he is at odds with Premier Yitzhak Shamir and other Israeli leaders who have been urging the U.S. to abolish refugee status in order to make it more difficult for Soviet Jewish emigres to go to the U.S. instead of to Israel.

Sharansky also believes that direct flights from Moscow to Tel Aviv "are not an issue" or an answer to this problem. He said the Soviets have built it up as a bargaining device to extract concessions. It is an example of how Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev "fixes his own price," Sharansky said.

The Most Serious Problem

He also thought the new Soviet emigration regulations that took effect January 1 pose the most serious problem for Soviet Jews since they were forced in 1972 to pay for the free education they received in the USSR before leaving. The new regulations restrict family reunification to only the closest kin -- parents or siblings.

The new law automatically reduced the number of potential emigrants to a mere 30,000, Sharansky said. He criticized the Israel government for "taking several months" before it lodged a protest.

Sharansky said there was not necessarily a "direct linkage" between the possible resumption of diplomatic relations between Israel and the Soviet Union and relief for Soviet Jews. Renewed relations should be based on the understanding that "the problem of Soviet Jewry is Israel's problem," he said.

AVINERI RAPS SOUTH AFRICAN JEWRY

JERUSALEM, March 26 (JTA) -- A leading Israeli scholar and former diplomat delivered an unprecedented blast at South African Jewry here Tuesday. "They are part of the white power structure and benefit from it. There's nothing Israel owes people who are part of a racist regime," Prof. Shlomo Avineri declared at a

Hebrew University symposium on South Africa. Apparently referring to Israel's reluctance to follow the West in applying sanctions against the Pretoria regime because of possible repercussions for South African Jews, Avineri asserted that "South African Jews can take care of themselves very well and don't need Israel's support." Israel announced last week that it would phase out its military and other relationships with South Africa.

Avineri, who was Director General of the Israel Foreign Ministry in 1976-77 and is a world renowned authority on Marx and Hegel, raised a storm earlier this month when he accused American Jewish leaders of demonstrating a "galut" mentality in their response to the Jonathan Pollard spy case, "cringing" for fear of charges of dual loyalty.

Avineri, long a critic of Israel's relations with South Africa, urged Tuesday that the estimated 15,000 Israelis living in South Africa be stripped of their citizenship.

As for South African Jewry, he said "The major mistake of the Israeli government has been to not tell South Africa's 115,000 Jews: 'Get out-you have nothing to do there!'"

HESCHEL RECALLED AS A 'PROPHET' BY WIDOW OF SLAIN CIVIL RIGHTS LEADER

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 26 (JTA) -- Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, the late Jewish philosopher and civil rights activist, was recalled as a "prophet" by Coretta Scott King here Monday.

King, president of the Martin Luther King Jr. Federal Holiday Commission, spoke at a meeting of the commission of the "common ground of faith" between her late husband and Heschel, who was a professor at the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

She said it was good from time-to-time to be reminded that "people like Martin and Rabbi Heschel don't come around very often." She said the two men were friends and co-workers in the civil rights struggle.

Martin Luther King spoke to the Rabbinical Assembly of America, the Conservative rabbinic group, in March 1968, ten days before he was slain by an assassin in Memphis, Tennessee, and his widow recalled Heschel's introduction of her husband. "Martin Luther King Jr. is a voice, a vision and a way," Heschel said. "I call upon every Jew to hearken to his voice, to share his wisdom, to follow his way. The whole future of America will depend on the impact and influence of Dr. King."

The commission heard reports on the observance of the King holiday last January, including the activities of the American Jewish community, Israel and at the Israel Embassy here where Coretta Scott King was the guest of honor.

BEERSHEBA (JTA) -- A team of 30 athletes from the University of Warsaw will participate in the 19th International Student Sport Games, April 26 - May 3, hosted by Ben Gurion University. This marks the first appearance of a Polish team in the tournament which will include approximately 1,000 athletes from Brazil, Switzerland, Germany, England and Israel. Held annually, the games are organized by the Academic Sport Association in Tel Aviv.