

**SETTLERS FORM COMMITTEE TO BACK
13 ACCUSED IN REFUGEE CAMP ATTACK**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 15 (JTA) -- West Bank settlers have organized a public committee of solidarity with 13 settlers from Hebron accused of an armed attack on the Daheisha refugee camp near Bethlehem the night of June 6.

They are lashing back at the almost universal expressions of outrage over the event, particularly by the Israel Defense Force and Lt. Gen. Amram Mitzna, commander of the central sector.

Seven of the 13 suspects were released on bail last Friday. Six of them staged a sit-down strike outside of Jerusalem Police headquarters Monday demanding the release of the men still in custody. The latter reportedly accused the police of fabricating evidence.

Jewish leaders in Hebron have charged the police with "brutality."

The solidarity committee is composed of some of the most hardline elements among the settlers and their supporters. They include Rabbi Moshe Levinger of Hebron; lawyer Elyakim Haetzni, who defended members of a Jewish terrorist underground several years ago; writer Naomi Frankel; Meir Ben-Gur; Zeev Freedman, a convicted Jewish terrorist since released from prison; Noam Arnon, spokesman of the Gush Emunim; Tzvi Katzover; and two members of Rabbi Meir Kahane's Kach movement.

Several leaders of Kiryat Arba, the Jewish township adjacent to Hebron, met with Mitzna Monday. They said later that while they had full confidence in the general, they abhorred his criticism of the raid on Daheisha. Mitzna called it the most "despicable" act ever perpetrated by Jews in the administered territories.

Other hardliners insisted that the security situation in the territories is not satisfactory. Arnon told Davar that the left wing was taking over the army.

About 200 people attended a talk by Kahane at the Kiryat Arba youth center over the weekend. Kahane reportedly referred to Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin as a "murderer" and suggested that to become a hero in Israel "one should plant bombs at Daheisha."

**COURT'S KAHANE DECISION EXPECTED
SOON, BUT HE MAY SETTLE FIRST**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 15 (JTA) -- The Supreme Court decided Sunday to consider an appeal by Kach Party leader Rabbi Meir Kahane against the removal of most of his parliamentary privileges by Knesset Speaker Shlomo Hillel last week for refusing to take the required oath of allegiance to the State.

Kahane has sworn to uphold only the laws of the Torah. Attorney General Yosef Harish had urged the high court to reject his appeal on grounds that the law permits no deviation from the text of the oath.

But the justices instead questioned Hillel's authority to deny Kahane entry to the plenary-

chamber and his right to vote and participate in Knesset deliberations. They said they would announce a ruling within the next few days unless the matter is settled out of court.

All Knesset members are required to take the oath of allegiance when a new Knesset is convened. Kahane was asked last week to repeat his oath because he had testified before a U.S. court in a citizenship hearing that he had never sworn allegiance to a foreign state.

When the present Knesset took office in 1984, Kahane was sworn in by Yosef Burg of the National Religious Party who administered the oath, despite the fact that he deviated from the standard text.

SOVIETS GIVE VISAS TO EDELSHTEINS

NEW YORK, June 15 (JTA) -- Yuli Edelshtein, an important figure in the unofficial Jewish education movement in the Soviet Union, has been granted an exit visa for Israel, the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry (SSSJ) reported Monday. Edelshtein's wife Tatyana and daughter Yulia, 12, have also been given permission to leave.

The SSSJ received word of the Edelshteins' visas during phone conversations with Moscow refuseniks Monday morning. Edelshtein, 29, served two-and-a-half years of a three-year sentence in Soviet labor camps on drug charges that were fabricated, according to SSSJ. In January 1986, Edelshtein suffered severe injuries when he fell 14 feet from a ladder in a labor camp in Siberia. He was hospitalized with a shattered pelvic bone and ruptured urethra.

Edelshtein was released last May because of poor health. Before his imprisonment, Edelshtein was a professor of English in Moscow. He was also a major teacher of Judaism and Hebrew in the underground Jewish education movement.

**DESPITE DWINDLING SUPPORT AT HOME,
PERES PRESSING ON WITH PROPOSAL
FOR MIDEAST PEACE CONFERENCE**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 15 (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Shimon Peres is tenaciously pressing his initiative for an international conference for Middle East peace, although many observers here consider it moribund if not yet dead and even some of his Labor Party colleagues have had second thoughts.

Peres' proposed scenario has put him and Labor on a collision course with Premier Yitzhak Shamir and Likud.

Peres' strategy continues to be to force the break-up of the unity coalition government and put the issue before the public. So far, Labor has not been able to muster the requisite number of votes to dissolve the Knesset and call early elections.

Another course, a national referendum on the peace conference issue, was flatly rejected by Shamir, and legal experts within the Labor Party doubt it is practical. The latter point out it is questionable that the results of a referendum would be legally binding.

Peres is reverting to a tactic he employed earlier in the year -- to gain the support of American and Western European leaders for an international conference in hope that their influence would turn the tide at home.

Israeli Issue Says Rabin

But Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin said during a visit to France over the weekend that the dispute over an international conference must be resolved in Israel before it is thrown into the international arena. Peres refuses to wait.

He is reportedly scheduled to visit Britain, France and West Germany next week. He hopes to advance his ideas at meetings with Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, President Francois Mitterrand and Chancellor Helmut Kohl, respectively. He is seeking their support for a conference which would include the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, with one major precondition -- that the Soviet Union re-establish diplomatic relations with Israel and allow free emigration for Soviet Jews.

Shamir warned Sunday that Peres is not authorized to speak for the Israel government on an international conference. He has issued the same warning on previous Peres trips abroad. When Peres was in Washington in April seeking Administration support, Shamir informed the U.S. Ambassador in Tel Aviv that the government was opposed to an international forum and there was no national consensus on the issue.

Peres attacked Likud in a speech to a Labor Zionist forum over the weekend. "They went into the Lebanon war without a national consensus and now they want a consensus without peace," he said. He vowed that "the campaign for peace will continue and will eventually be put to the people for a decision."

Peres said on an Army Radio interview Saturday that if there is no progress toward peace this year, there will be none until 1989, because next year is an election year in both Israel and the U.S.

Talking With Visitors, Too

Meanwhile, Peres is raising the issue with visiting diplomats. He will discuss it with The Netherlands Foreign Minister, Hans Van Der Broek, who was expected to arrive in Israel Sunday. Marrack Goulding, Undersecretary General of the United Nations for Political Affairs, arrived here Saturday night to begin a Mideast tour to sound out the various regimes in the region on the possibility of convening a preparatory committee to help set up an international conference.

Meanwhile in New York, Yossi Beilin, Political Director General of the Foreign Ministry and a close associate of Peres, met with former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger to discuss the issue. Kissinger went on record last month against the idea. Beilin apparently is trying to repair the damage caused to Peres' initiative by Kissinger's comments.

RETRIAL PROMISED FOR NEO-NAZI ZUNDEL
By Ben Kayfetz

TORONTO, June 15 (JTA) -- Ontario Attorney General Ian Scott has promised a swift retrial for neo-Nazi propagandist Ernst Zundel, whose 1985 conviction for spreading false propaganda was overturned by the Ontario Court of Appeals earlier this year on technical grounds. Scott made his announcement after Canada's

Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal by the Ontario government against the reversal.

Scott said Zundel will be tried again for the same offense. He received a 15-month prison sentence for violating a section of the Criminal Code which bars spreading "false news." German-born Zundel, 48, was found guilty of publishing and distributing booklets denying the Holocaust occurred.

Free on bail pending the outcome of his appeal, Zundel won a victory when a five-judge panel quashed his conviction because of alleged irregularities in jury selection and introduction of certain evidence.

Scott acknowledged that he faced a painful choice after the Supreme Court's refusal to hear his appeal. A new trial will expose the public and Holocaust survivors to an agonizing emotional experience and provide Zundel with a platform. But dropping the case would allow the Nazi to claim he was vindicated.

David Satok, vice president of the Canadian Jewish Congress, said Scott made the right decision. He pledged the CJC would do whatever it can to help the Ontario government in the new trial.

B'nai B'rith Canada, at its 24th annual convention in Kiamesha Lake, N.Y., commended the Ontario government for its decision to retry Zundel and urged that the court serve judicial notice at the outset of the new trial that would establish the Holocaust as an historical and documented fact.

Scott told reporters, it "will, of course, be up to you, the people who are the press, to determine to what extent Zundel will be given publicity."

WEST VULNERABLE TO OIL CUTBACKS
FROM MIDEAST, ADL REPORT WARNS

NEW YORK, June 15 (JTA) -- Unlike Western nations, the oil-producing countries appear to have learned from recent oil-price fluctuations, according to the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, meaning the West may face in the 1990's "extreme vulnerability to supply cutoff -- or cutbacks -- from the Middle East."

In the report on "The Changing Oil Situation" made public at ADL's National Commission meeting here, ADL warned that the U.S. remains "in a serious bind on the oil front" and that "the Arabs and their OPEC allies seem on their way to a dominant position in the world oil trade and appear to have learned some lessons from their past greed and mistakes."

Abraham Foxman, ADL's associate national director and head of its International Affairs Division, said that with oil prices rising again and a market decrease in energy conservation and the search for new forms of alternative energy methods, "the future of American oil security does not appear to be encouraging."

Foxman said the "shrewder" Saudis "seem to be seeking to set the price level for their oil more precisely -- to maximize revenues, but at a low enough price level to stimulate U.S. and Western oil consumption while preventing a revival of U.S. and Western oil production."

According to the ADL study, developments in the world oil market since 1985 have resulted in the following:

* U.S. domestic production has decreased by 540,000 barrels a day, about 6 percent.

* An increase in U.S. oil consumption by 650,000 barrels a day, about 4 percent.

* A net loss for the U.S. in decreased production and increased consumption of 1.19 million barrels of oil a day.

* U.S. imports of crude oil and refined petroleum products from all sources abroad have correspondingly increased by 1.12 million barrels a day -- 22 percent.

* U.S. imports in January 1987 were 37.7 percent of total U.S. consumption, up from 32.2 percent in 1985.

* Sixty-four percent of the increase in U.S. oil imports has been coming from the Arab OPEC countries -- more than 700,000 barrels a day--almost all of it from Saudi Arabia.

* The Saudis were supplying in January 1987 an average of 873,000 barrels a day -- an increase of 420 percent above the 1985 U.S. average of 168 thousand barrels.

The study noted that the worsening U.S. oil position followed a five-year period marked by massive American efforts toward energy efficiency and conservation that led to the decline of OPEC and its leader, Saudi Arabia. American oil dependence and vulnerability peaked in the 1977 period when U.S. consumption averaged 18.6 million barrels a day and total U.S. oil imports and crude and refined petroleum products averaged 8.5 million barrels a day or 45.7 percent of U.S. consumption.

ETHIOPIAN JEWS ARE 'FULL-FLEDGED' JEWS, SAY CONSERVATIVE RABBIS

NEW YORK, June 15 (JTA) -- The Law Committee of the Rabbinical Assembly has adopted a position paper attesting that Ethiopian Jews are authentic, "full fledged" members of the Jewish community whose status must be recognized by the Chief Rabbinate of Israel, where 15,000-18,000 Jews of Ethiopian origin now live.

Rabbi Kassel Abelson, president of the Rabbinical Assembly, the rabbinical organization of Conservative Judaism, called for an "end by Israel's Chief Rabbis to their objection to the admission of Ethiopian Jews on halachic grounds."

He referred specifically to the Chief Rabbinate's requirement that many Ethiopian Jews, known as Beta Israel, must undergo ritual immersion before the Rabbinate will validate their marriages.

Rabbi Steven Saltzman of Greensboro, N.C., author of the position paper, noted that Ethiopian Jews "were a distinctly identifiable group who have been living in Ethiopia, isolated from the rest of the Jewish world for many centuries."

Despite their physical isolation they have remained steadfast to their faith and traditions, observing the Sabbath, the dietary laws, the laws of family purity, holidays and daily prayer. "They believe in the God of our ancestors and they look to the land of Israel as the land of redemption," Saltzman said.

"It is unconscionable to place obstacles in the path of Ethiopian Jews by placing extrahalachic requirements on them," said Rabbi Akiba Lubow, secretary of the Law Committee.

MORE DOUBTS ON LAVI PROJECT

TEL AVIV, June 15 (JTA) -- The government was sharply criticized for its handling of the Lavi fighter plane project at a meeting of the National

Planning Committee Friday. The panel, which is affiliated with the Ministry of Economic Planning and Coordination, was told by Economic Planning Minister Gad Yaacobi that he has serious doubts about the Lavi, although until two months ago he believed the project should continue.

He said the Inner Cabinet, the government's top policy-making body, had erred in its decisions on the Lavi. All of the uncertainties and negative data were known six years ago when the project was begun, yet more money was poured into the development of Israel's second-generation jet fighter, he said.

Prof. Eitan Berglass, deputy chairman of the Bank of Israel, called the Lavi "one of the gravest mistakes in Israel's economy." He said the project, was neither understood nor agreed to by the public. The government is unable to make decisions unless it receives uniform and balanced data from the budget department, the Treasury and from the Defense establishment.

The latter recently expressed lack of confidence in the project, and the Finance Ministry is strongly opposed, mainly because of the escalation of costs far beyond original estimates.

Berglass said there was no point looking for culprits now. The time has come "to examine what to do at the second stage of the mistake," he said. Yaacobi said despite his misgivings he is still open to persuasion.

Two prototypes of the Lavi have been built by Israel Aircraft Industries and are being flight-tested. (By Hugh Orgel)

SHAMIR WELCOMED IN TOGO

TEL AVIV, June 15 (JTA) -- Premier Yitzhak Shamir arrived in Togo Monday on his first visit to that West African country since it announced on June 9 that it will re-establish diplomatic relations with Israel, broken during the Yom Kippur War in 1973.

Telephone reports by journalists accompanying the Prime Minister said he was greeted by a large crowd at Lome airport, including children who sang Hebrew songs and shouted, "Shalom Shamir."

Before his departure Sunday night in an Israel Air Force Boeing 707, Shamir said he would meet with President Gnassingbe Eyadema of Togo and members of his government "to determine the scope and nature of the relations we have renewed. From there, I'll move on to other African states."

Shamir will visit Liberia and Cameroon, both of whom have restored their diplomatic ties with Israel. "These relations are developing in a satisfactory manner," Shamir said, adding that "during this trip we will perhaps also be able to do something toward expanding our ties" in the rest of Africa.

He noted that he was accompanied on his trip by Israeli businessmen. "The governments of these nations are greatly interested in business ties with Jewish businessmen throughout the world in order to develop their countries," Shamir said.

In addition to Togo, Liberia and Cameroon, Israel now has diplomatic relations with Zaire and Ivory Coast. But 24 other Black African states have yet to restore relations with Israel. Davar quoted "reliable sources in Jerusalem" Monday as saying Mauritius, an island nation in the Indian Ocean close to Africa, will be the next to resume relations with Israel.

AFTER SISTER CITIES CONFERENCE: DEBATE CONTINUES ON TACTICS FOR TALKING HUMAN RIGHTS WITH SOVIETS

By Kent Swigard
The Jewish Transcript

SEATTLE, June 15 (JTA) -- Emotions remain strained and the debate continues three weeks after about 300 people rallied in support of Soviet Jewry at a U.S.-Soviet Sister Cities conference here.

At issue was whether human rights should have been placed on the agenda of a forum about Soviet business and trade relations that attracted the mayors of five Soviet cities among its 100 participants.

The Soviets flatly said, "no," maintaining there is "no Jewish problem in the Soviet Union."

Conference chair Rosanne Royer, wife of Seattle Mayor Charles Royer, admitted that human rights for Jews and others is a problem in the Soviet Union, but maintained it was a mistake to forcefully confront the Soviets on the issue at the conference.

She argued the best way to promote human rights in the Soviet Union is low key, behind-the-scenes efforts.

"Nonsense," retorted Judy Balint, president of Seattle Action for Soviet Jewry. "The Soviets respond to one thing only -- public pressure. Without it, 350,000 Jews would never have gotten out of the Soviet Union over the past 20 years. What's more, without further pressure, the more than 400,000 Soviet Jews who have expressed a desire to leave the Soviet Union are going to remain trapped."

Rally Well Attended, Well Covered

The May 21 rally drew more than 300 participants to the site of the three-day conference at the downtown Sheraton Hotel, including members of the Seattle Peace and Freedom Coalition, a group representing Poles, Latvians, Afghans, Estonians, Cambodians, Lithuanians and other oppressed groups.

The Seattle news media gave as much coverage to the human rights concerns of the demonstrators and their supporters as to the conference itself. That angered conference chair Royer.

"I've been to the Soviet Union and I support the human rights issue," she said. "But when non-Jews like me come along to help, it's not a good idea to slap them in the face. It discourages other non-Jews from working on the cause."

"Specifically, I don't appreciate being labeled as the one who kept human rights off the agenda. I didn't have the authority. The agenda was in the hands of the sponsoring Sister Cities International organization." Nevertheless, Royer acknowledged that she agreed with the agenda decision on grounds that human rights "is a political issue."

"Frankly, I had no problems with the demonstration itself," she said. "But I don't think the best way to get results from the Soviets is to make conditions intended to force the issue onto the agenda. Better to support the Sister Cities program, get in the door, start exchanges between our cities and then, through low-key channels, attempt to make inroads on human rights."

Balint disagreed. "We've been trying for 13 years to make low-key progress on human rights with our sister city (of Tashkent) and you want to know what we've achieved? Absolutely nothing," she said. "Out of the goodness of their

hearts, the Soviets are never going to give us a thing."

"Human rights may not have made it onto the agenda at this conference," she continued, "but you can bet the Soviets got the message."

Balint scoffed at the notion that human rights should not have been discussed. "If you're going to deal with the Soviets, you had better come to the realization that everything the Soviets do, including their participation in this conference, is political," she said.

"You're fooling yourself if you think the Soviets are interested in people-to-people exchanges and grassroots understanding. They came here with one idea in mind -- to forward their political objectives."

'Bittersweet' Rally

Rabbi Anson Laytner, director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Seattle's Community Relations Council, described the rally as a "bittersweet event ... In the end, it's not enough to have a well-attended rally and lots of news coverage. What we want is some movement by the Soviets on the issue of human rights."

In an attempt to lure the Soviets into a discussion on the issue during the conference, Rep. John Miller (R. Wash.) asserted that improved trade relations between the United States and the Soviet Union depend on how much the Soviets improve their record on religious liberty and the right to emigrate.

The Soviets, however, responded with indignation. "Such an approach is tantamount to interfering into the affairs of the Soviet Union," said Soviet delegate Vladimir Chibirev. "And that is unacceptable to us."

Valentine Simonenko, mayor of Odessa, described rally participants as "annoying as a mosquito."

LIBYAN JEWS MEET TO REMIND WORLD

NEW YORK, June 15 (JTA) -- More than 300 Jews of Libyan origin met at a two-day convention here last week to remind the world of the "forgotten refugee problem" in the Middle East--the nearly one million Jews forced to flee Arab countries, including 40,000 from Libya.

It marked the 20th anniversary of the forced departure from Libya of the country's 5,000 remaining Jews in the wake of the 1967 Six-Day War, ending a 2,000-year Jewish presence in that North African country.

The convention was organized by Raffaello Fellah, president of the Rome-based Association of Libyan Jews, and the American Jewish Committee's international relations department. It was sponsored by the Association of Jews from Libya, the Cultural Center of Libyan Jews in Israel, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and the AJCommittee.

Ambassador Alan Keyes, Assistant Secretary of State for International Organization Affairs, was keynote speaker at the convention opening. "Even though there are those who believe that they have extinguished a community of free souls in Libya, it is clear from this gathering that there is no meaning to extinction," he declared.

Fellah told the convention, "We came to assert our roots and our rights." Those, he said, include the Libyan government's commitment of July 21, 1970 to compensate Libyan Jews within 15 years for properties nationalized in their absence, he said.