

FEDERAL COURT IN FORT SMITH ACQUITS 13 WHITE SUPREMACISTS

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, April 7 (JTA) — Thirteen white supremacists on trial in Fort Smith, Ark., for seditious conspiracy were acquitted Thursday afternoon of all counts against them.

The defendants, all members of violently racist, anti-Semitic groups, had been on trial since Feb. 16 in a courthouse heavily guarded by federal marshals. The jury of 10 men and two women had been deliberating since Monday.

Another of the original 14 defendants, Robert Smalley, was acquitted March 17 by U.S. District Court Judge Morris Arnold because of insufficient evidence.

A principal defendant, Louis Beam, "ambassador at large" of the racist Aryan Nations and a fugitive until his apprehension last November in Mexico, said, "To hell with the government" upon hearing the verdict.

The trial was marked by warnings by Judge Arnold that he would have to call a mistrial if the prosecution continued to present "hearsay" evidence that went uncorroborated. He had several times asked the jury to ignore evidence because it was hearsay or repetitive.

The acquittals came despite testimony by key witnesses, who were members of the violently anti-Semitic groups, about a plot to overthrow the United States government.

Leonard Zeskind, research director of the Center for Democratic Renewal, which monitors right-wing extremist activity, said, "This is obviously a victory for the white supremacist movement, and it was made possible by the government not presenting the strongest case possible."

But government prosecuting attorneys said they were satisfied with the way they had presented their case.

Ten of the defendants, members of the "Christian Identity" movement, had been charged with 119 overt acts, including robbery, counterfeiting and attempting to murder federal officials.

They were identified as the "Rev." Richard Butler, so-called pastor of the Church of Jesus Christ-Christian of the Aryan Nations; Robert Miles, former Ku Klux Klansman and "pastor" of the Mountain Church Jesus Christ the Saviour in Cohoctah, Mich.; Beam; Andrew Barnhill; David Lane; Ardie McBearty; Bruce Carroll Pierce; Richard Scutari; Smalley; and Richard Snell.

Snell, who is serving a prison sentence for the 1984 murder of an Arkansas state trooper, and four others also had been charged with conspiring to kill federal Judge H. Franklin Waters and FBI special agent Jack Knox. The other four are Lambert Miller, David McGuire, William Wade and his son, Ivan Wade.

Waters and Knox were allegedly killed for their roles in the trial of an Arkansas couple who had been convicted of harboring Gordon Kahl, a fugitive member of the racist group Posse Comitatus, who had killed two federal marshals in North Dakota.

Many of the defendants acquitted Thursday are already serving lengthy prison sentences for related crimes.

SHAMIR VOWS REVENGE AT FUNERAL OF TEEN-AGER KILLED BY ARABS

JTA Staff Report

JERUSALEM, April 7 (JTA) — Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir met the angry cries of thousands of mourning settlers with impassioned rhetoric at the funeral Thursday of a 15-year-old Jewish girl stoned to death by Arabs in a violent encounter the day before.

"God will avenge her blood," vowed Shamir, echoing settlers from Eilon Moreh, who cried "revenge" and "expulsions" during the eulogy. "The blood of the whole nation is boiling."

Meanwhile, Israeli troops searching for suspects in the hills around Beita, the village where Tirza Porat was killed, shot and killed an Arab suspect. According to an army spokesperson, the suspect was shot after refusing repeated warnings to stop, and later died of his wounds.

Troops also arrested 15 residents of Beita and destroyed the houses of at least four people suspected of inciting the attack on the group of 16 Jewish teen-agers, who were hiking on a Passover holiday outing.

The village, near Nablus, remained under curfew Thursday.

In Washington, the State Department condemned Wednesday's incident, which also left two Arabs dead, shot by adults escorting the hikers.

"This tragedy underscores the urgent need for Palestinians and Israelis to pull back from confrontation, shun violence and look to the peace process to resolve differences," department spokeswoman Phyllis Oakley said.

"Acts of violence serve no one's interests and are bound to result in more tragedy."

Mourners from Eilon Moreh traveled to the funeral in a thousand-car procession, driving through Nablus under heavy security.

'Murderers Will Achieve Nothing'

They were met by an angry Shamir, who assured them that his resolve to hold on to the West Bank was not weakened by the first death of a Jewish civilian in the unrest that began four months ago.

"Every murderous deed unites the people of Israel and strengthens us and ties us to the land," said Shamir.

"These rioters, these murderers will achieve nothing," he added. "They lead their people to tragedies, to disaster."

Mourners responded with calls that Shamir dismiss Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Gen. Dan Shomron, the army chief of staff.

A leader of the settlers, Benny Katzover, said at the funeral, "The children of Israel must be free and safe to hike in any part of the Land of Israel." His remarks were possibly addressed at some Israeli critics who called the teen-agers' hike an act of provocation in an already tense area.

Katzover spent the previous night with dozens of other armed settlers at an encampment near the entrance to Beita. They vowed to build a new settlement on the site as a memorial to the dead girl.

By midday Thursday, the army continued to hold some 300 villagers for questioning. Sources

are expecting the army to announce stiff punishments for anyone harboring the fugitives suspected of inciting or taking part in Wednesday's incident.

It was also announced Thursday that troops in another village near Nablus had destroyed the house of the leader of a guerrilla gang responsible for five bomb incidents over the past year.

The West Bank gang was linked to the Al Fatah wing of the Palestine Liberation Organization, an army spokesperson said.

And in Hebron, deposed Mayor Mustapha Natshe said men driving cars with Israeli license plates entered the garage of his home and set fire to his car.

ABBA EBAN FAVORS ROLES FOR PLO AND SOVIETS IN PEACE TALKS

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, April 7 (JTA) — Abba Eban said Wednesday night that Israel should be willing to negotiate with the Palestine Liberation Organization, providing the PLO renounces terrorism and accepts a peaceful resolution of the Middle East conflict.

"I am willing to sit down and negotiate with my enemy," the Laborite Knesset member told an overflowing auditorium at the New School for Social Research here. "We want to negotiate with Palestinian representatives, with those who abjure terrorism and want peace," he said.

Eban, a former Israeli ambassador to the United Nations and the United States who chairs the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, came out strongly in favor of an international conference to open direct peace talks between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

Charging that "a scare campaign" against an international conference is under way "not only in Israel but in the U.S. itself," Eban said that in the last 40 years "Israel participated in five of them, and there is always a way out," if something does not work out.

'Extraordinary Safeguards'

Eban noted that the United States is offering "extraordinary safeguards" to Israel to participate in an international conference and has assured the Israeli government that the United States will walk out together with Israel from such a conference if Israel's interests are compromised.

As for Soviet participation in the conference, which some have opposed since the Soviet Union does not have diplomatic relations with Israel, Eban, asked: "How can you have peace without Soviet participation?"

He scoffed at the suggestion that Israel would be isolated at such a conference. "Israel and America together will not be isolated," he said.

Eban praised Secretary of State George Shultz's new peace initiative, claiming that it has filled "a vacuum" in the area as demonstrated by the continued unrest in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

"My only criticism is that it came too late," he said, noting that both Israel and the United States are gearing up for general elections this fall. "But later is better than never," he quipped.

"Anybody should want it not to fail," Eban said in reference to Shultz's initiative, warning that the coming year could be "a year of breakthrough or a tragic year."

Eban described the current situation facing Israel as being a "temporary dilemma" over the future of the territories and "a temporary anguish" over the daily violence and demonstrations in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

He said that Israel's rule over more than 1.5 million Palestinians in the territories has created a "crisis of structure" under which social harmony and peace cannot exist.

He said that he is "totally surprised that the unrest did not occur before" last Dec. 9, when the riots started.

Claiming that it is unjust and unrealistic for Israel to continue to rule over the Palestinian population, the Israeli lawmaker said that "sovereignty and territory must be shared" by both Jews and Palestinian Arabs in the Land of Israel.

LATEST POLL FINDS POPULARITY GAP CLOSING BETWEEN PERES AND SHAMIR

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 7 (JTA) — Foreign Minister Shimon Peres remains Israel's most popular choice for prime minister, but his Likud rival, incumbent Yitzhak Shamir, has managed to close the popularity gap considerably in recent months, according to a public opinion poll published Thursday in the daily Maariv.

Peres, who heads the Labor Party, was favored for the top post by 35.4 percent of Israelis, while Shamir polled 27.3 percent, according to the survey, which was conducted by the Modi'in Ezrachi Research Institute.

But Peres' popularity has dropped from 42.7 percent last November and 37.7 percent in January, while Shamir's has risen from 18 percent in November and 17 percent in January.

Ariel Sharon, a hawkish member of Likud's Herut wing, came in third for choice as premier, with 6.8 percent, and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin was favored by 5 percent.

Rabin, a Laborite, leads the preference for defense minister, though his standing has dropped to 42.5 percent in the latest poll, compared to 45.6 percent in January and 49.2 percent in November.

He is followed by Sharon, whose popularity has risen to 25.5 percent, compared to 20.2 percent in January and 16.4 percent in November.

Sharon, a former defense minister who now serves in the Cabinet as minister of commerce and industry, has advocated a tougher stance against the four-month-old unrest in the administered territories.

Finance Minister Moshe Nissim, whose tough fiscal policies have put him at odds with workers demanding higher wages, showed a surprising strength as top choice for that post, standing now at 57 percent, compared to 44.9 percent in January and 45.1 percent in November.

He is trailed by Yitzhak Modai, a former finance minister, who polled 13.1 percent in the latest survey.

What all this means really means will be decided by Israeli voters in November, when general elections are scheduled.

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**IAI URGING U.S. AIR FORCE
TO TEST RADAR-TRACKING DRONE**
By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, April 7 (JTA) -- Israel Aircraft Industries is urging the U.S. Air Force to test the Harpy, a new radar-tracking drone, for possible inclusion in the U.S. arsenal, knowledgeable sources said Wednesday.

The effort comes within a year after Congress required the Pentagon to buy \$38 million worth of Pioneer drones from Israel for use by the Navy.

A Capitol Hill source said the initial U.S. testing of six Pioneers has gone "remarkably well," with the possibility that an additional 40 drones could be deployed.

The six drones, which are unmanned remotely piloted vehicles, have been used by the U.S. Sixth Fleet off the coast of Lebanon, sources said.

The Harpy, which is propeller-driven, is currently in production. Israel is asking the Pentagon to test the Harpy at Eglin Air Force Base in Florida under the U.S. foreign weapons evaluation program.

The Harpy is designed to fly missions similar to that of the U.S. Seek Spinner, another drone, which may not receive funding in the next fiscal year.

Despite having spent \$125 million previously to develop the Seek Spinner, the Air Force did not seek funding for it for fiscal 1989, although the House Armed Services Committee last week approved a preliminary recommendation that \$65 million be spent on the drone in the coming year.

One of the sources said that the Boeing Military Airplane Co., which is offering the Seek Spinner, was behind the effort to fund this drone in 1989.

He added that Israel's Harpy is two to three years closer to being deployed than the Seek Spinner, and that the Air Force has determined that the Seek Spinner would be inferior to the Harpy.

**GROUP URGES SCRUTINY OF JACKSON,
BUT WARNS OF RACIAL POLARIZATION**
By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, April 7 (JTA) -- The American Jewish Congress welcomed Thursday the candidacy of Jesse Jackson for the presidency, claiming it "marks the coming of age of American democracy."

But the congress said that the fact that Jackson is black "does not and should not immunize" him from being searched and examined on his views, as was the case with other candidates from groups never previously represented in the White House, namely John Kennedy, the first Catholic president, and Geraldine Ferraro, the first woman to be nominated vice president.

Jackson is one of the major contenders for the Democratic presidential nomination. Many in the American Jewish community oppose Jackson, because of his support for the Palestine Liberation Organization and remarks he has made that have been construed as anti-Semitic.

Robert Lifton, AJCongress national president, said in a statement issued here that the danger "of racial polarization as a result of Jesse Jackson's candidacy and the reaction to the candidacy is real and disturbing."

Lifton said that in order to avoid potential

racial or religious conflict, "we call upon all Americans, first, to repudiate, sharply and unambiguously, anything that either directly or by implication disparages racial, religious or ethnic affiliation, or otherwise reflects a prejudiced attitude toward any racial, religious and ethnic group.

"And, second, to acknowledge publicly that differences of opinion, however acute or heated, are legitimate and appropriate in a democratic society."

Continuing, Lifton said that all candidates must be expected to receive scrutiny and "heated criticism" during the campaign. "Where such a criticism can be demonstrated to mask racism or bigotry, it must be sharply and immediately denounced," he said.

**WOMAN BORN IN BERGEN-BELSEN
AGAIN DENIED A REPARATIONS PENSION**
By David Kantor

BONN, April 7 (JTA) -- An Israeli woman born in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp has again been denied a pension as reparation for her suffering.

District Court judges in the town of Celle, site of the camp, ruled that Miriam Turgeman-Lewald, 44, could not be said to have lived in Germany since one cannot consider a concentration camp a "lasting residence."

Thus, as a "stateless" person, she is not eligible for a permanent pension above the equivalent of \$90 she received from the German authorities for every month she was in Bergen-Belsen.

Turgeman-Lewald is disabled and has been seriously ill.

The judgment followed what had been seen as positive developments in the 30-year-old case. Last week, a Bundestag member of the Social Democratic Party, Ernst Waltemathe, wrote a letter to his colleagues in the legislative body, drawing their attention to what he termed "this unique and unbelievable case."

Waltemathe sent a second letter to Finance Minister Gerhard Stoltenberg, asking him to find a way to compensate Turgeman-Lewald, despite previous rulings by the courts.

West German experts are pointing to Turgeman-Lewald's extraordinary survival, having been born in a concentration camp under supervision of a Jewish inmate in unsanitary conditions.

While pensions have been awarded to many survivors who became unfit to support themselves because of their physical and mental suffering under the Nazis, the German experts say that current reparations legislation does not cover Turgeman-Lewald's case. Their explanations make Waltemathe furious.

"It's a shame to discuss legal details and to deny reparations on absurd grounds in such an obvious case of persecution and suffering," he said this week. "It's our duty to find a prompt solution to this problem. No one can argue convincingly that Miriam is not eligible for a pension."

Waltemathe's activities plus the publication of the case in some German newspapers may bring about a resolution after all. Finance experts here are studying the possibility of using monies from a special \$180 million fund for "hard cases" of Nazi persecutees to compensate Turgeman-Lewald.

But nothing has been decided yet, and no one was able to say how much would be made available to Turgeman-Lewald -- or when.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
SOVIET JEWRY MOVEMENT DEBATES
WHETHER IT IS TIME FOR NEW APPROACH**
By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, April 7 (JTA) -- Soviet Jewry groups for the most part have lined up behind a decision made this week by the Coalition to Free Soviet Jews to postpone the traditional Solidarity Sunday rally in New York, in favor of alternative events. They stress that changes in the situation of Soviet Jews warrant a new approach and a new process of education.

But at least one group, the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, has questioned the coalitions' authority to postpone or cancel Solidarity Sunday, saying it "had taken the decision without consultation with its constituent organizations."

The coalition emphasized Wednesday that its decision to not hold the massive demonstration on its prearranged May 1 date is not a cancellation, but rather an indefinite postponement of the event to a more appropriate time.

"Somewhere down the road there will be another demonstration," said Zeszy Schnur, the group's executive director. "The time will come again when we will have to make another statement" like the one made Dec. 6 in Washington, when more than 200,000 demonstrated near the White House on the eve of President Reagan's third summit meeting with Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

"You don't hold a demonstration because you have nothing else to do. It should be part of an overall campaign," she said. "The demonstration on its own has not brought about the emigration of Soviet Jews. It's a cumulative effect."

The coalition, as well as the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, are planning a wider strategem to lead up to the fourth summit meeting between Reagan and Gorbachev, which is scheduled to take place in Moscow from May 29 to June 2.

Jerry Goodman, executive director of the NCSJ, said, "Today's response must reflect the fact that there are no more prisoners of Zion; that aliyah, while far below what is necessary, is also well above what it was two years ago; that many of the hard-core cases have been resolved favorably.

"But the fact that there are thousand of others, including many who are not high-profile cases, who are still waiting," he said, "shows the necessity. . . for ties to the new people who are beginning to develop in the Soviet Union within the void of those who have gone on aliyah."

Call For 'Global Strategy'

The coalition is calling its wider strategy a "global campaign," while the National Conference has begun the process for an "International Campaign for the Moscow Summit," to be orchestrated with constituent national member agencies and local affiliates.

However, there are different reactions within the National Conference to what is perceived to be the coalition's usurping of a turf that belongs to the NCSJ.

A spokesman for the NCSJ, Jerry Strober, said Tuesday that his group would support the coalition's local efforts, but that it alone was responsible for planning Soviet Jewry activities outside the New York area.

On Wednesday, Morris Abram, NCSJ chairman, sounded upset when he said, "What do they

mean by a global strategy? The coalition is not responsible for strategy. This is not an area in which they are concerned."

Goodman, however, did not want to encourage friction between the two groups, who have traditionally maintained a cooperative relationship.

Schnur also said she did not want to dwell on intergroup disagreements. She explained that the coalition "works with Greater New York, pieces of New Jersey and Washington, D.C., and because New York is a center of the business community, the Jewish community and the media, we obviously have a large mandate."

"The Soviet Jewry issue deals with many aspects," she said. "We try to advise and coordinate, but we don't presume to control" other people or groups.

Student Struggle Outraged

Rabbi Avi Weiss, national chairman of the Student Struggle, called the coalition's move to cancel the Solidarity Sunday march "an absolute outrage. . . a tragedy (and) an abdication of their responsibility to the Jewish community because of the funding that they receive from Federation."

Glenn Richter, SSSJ national coordinator, said, "Creative, smaller actions before the summit are welcomed, but are no substitute for a mass rally which President Reagan can point to as a mandate for a strong bargaining position on human rights."

The Union of Councils for Soviet Jewry, of which the SSSJ is a member, however, stood foursquare behind the coalition and the National Conference.

Micah Naftalin, UCSJ national director, said, "We support the decision, because Soviet Jewry has not benefited significantly from the first three summits, and it is incumbent upon the Soviet Jewry movement and all Americans to urge the administration to try to secure substantial increases in exit visas during the fourth and last summit."

Events Planned In Helsinki

The NCSJ international campaign will be highlighted by a series of events in Helsinki from May 25 to 29, just preceding the summit. The National Conference is including the European Jewish community as well as its American counterpart in these plans.

President Reagan is expected to be in the Finnish capital for about two days prior to his meeting with Gorbachev, and may make a statement on human rights.

Richard Maass, NCSJ's first chairman and recently named by Abram to chair the group's Moscow Summit Committee, said, "We want to make certain that the president carries the strong and clear impression of concern and commitment that brought over 200,000 people to our nation's capital last December prior to the opening of the Washington summit."

A major component of the international campaign will be Summit Action Day for Soviet Jewry, scheduled May 3 in Washington. Jewish leaders representing national agencies, local federations and community relations councils will attend briefings at the State Department and visit with members of Congress, officials of nongovernmental organizations and envoys of the nations that signed the Helsinki human rights accords.

Also planned during the summit are a community letter-writing campaign to the president and an international advertising campaign.