

**U.S. AWAITING SHAMIR INITIATIVE,
BUSH TELLS U.S. JEWISH LEADERS**

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 9 (JTA) -- President Bush told Jewish leaders Thursday that he is waiting to hear the peace initiative Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir will bring with him to Washington in April before moving ahead on U.S. proposals for advancing the Middle East peace process.

"I think this administration is examining all possibilities," said Seymour Reich, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

He spoke to reporters after members of the Conference of Presidents and the National Jewish Coalition, a Republican group, met with Bush at the White House at Bush's request. Also participating in the meeting were Secretary of State James Baker and State Department and National Security Council officials.

Before the administration hears from Shamir, Bush and Baker will meet with Foreign Minister Moshe Arens on Monday. It will be the first high-level U.S.-Israeli meeting since the Bush administration took office and since the new government of national unity was formed in Israel.

Reich, who is also president of B'nai B'rith International, indicated support for the administration's go-slow approach. He said that while he is optimistic the meetings with Arens and Shamir will go well, "if anyone expects peace to break out the day after Shamir leaves Washington, they have to rethink this. Peace is not going to break out overnight. We need patience."

New Talks With PLO Planned

Reich said he does not expect the administration to put any pressure on Israel. Instead, Reich said there was a promise of consultations, not only with Israel but also with the American Jewish community, on the peace process and such things as strategic cooperation with Israel and any proposed arms sales to Arab countries.

The Jewish leader indicated that the administration would not press Israel on an international peace conference. He said that the administration believes such a conference "will not serve the process at this point," and that direct negotiations are the only way to bring about peace.

Reich also revealed that the administration is seeking to schedule a second formal meeting soon with the Palestine Liberation Organization. This was confirmed by State Department spokesman Charles Redman.

"I think we are satisfied with the administration's position with respect to the dialogue with the PLO," Reich said. "The administration has indicated that it will hold the PLO to its pledge against terrorism."

He said Baker said "terrorism would not be countenanced within Israel or outside Israel against military targets or civilian targets."

"It is clear that the United States is holding the PLO and Arafat responsible for the actions of all the constituent parts of the PLO," said Reich.

Reich said the Soviet Jewry issue was discussed, and Bush said that the administration will

continue to raise the issue with the Soviets as Baker did when he met with Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze in Vienna on Tuesday. He said Soviet officials were given a list of 2,600 names of Soviet Jews refused exit visas.

Bush opened the meeting expressing concern about the increase of anti-Semitism and racism in America, especially in recent election campaigns, Reich said.

The president asked whether the Jewish leaders thought it would be proper for him to speak out about it when it occurs in local campaigns. Reich said Bush was told that he should do so wherever it occurs, since he speaks as the "moral voice of the American people."

NEWS ANALYSIS:**IS THE PREMIER'S NEW TOUGH TALK
SABER-RATTLING OR STAGE-SETTING?**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 9 (JTA) -- A current spate of hard-line political statements from Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has given rise to intense speculation here as the premier and his aides prepare for their first encounter with the new U.S. administration early next month in Washington.

Does the premier intend to portray a tough, "no concessions" stand in his talks with President Bush and Secretary of State James Baker?

Or is his uncompromising rhetoric designed to cast any moderation he may offer in Washington in the most favorable possible light, when it is set against a prior backdrop of harsh public inflexibility?

Some examples of Shamir's tough talk:

* In an interview with The Washington Post last week, the Likud leader said Arafat would be imprisoned if he came to Israel to talk peace.

* In a weekend interview on British television, he noted that Labor's dovish elder statesman, Abba Eban, was "no longer in the Knesset, thank God."

* In a party speech Sunday, he blasted Peace Now as the most "marginal of marginal movements" and implied that Peace Now leaders who meet with Palestinians here and abroad are unpatriotic. In the same speech, he referred to the Palestinians as "a bother."

* In a meeting with European Parliament members Monday, he ruled out the idea of elections on the West Bank to produce an authoritative local leadership that could then negotiate with Israel.

This idea has been advanced publicly by Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Labor, and it is known to be supported by key figures in the Likud, among them Ministers Dan Meridor and Ehud Olmert.

Eager To Foster Positive Image

The premier's vituperative comments about Peace Now triggered a series of similar and even sharper remarks from other right-wing politicians.

This, in turn, has engendered a wave of outrage from the left.

A group of 21 Knesset members has written to Shamir urging him to withdraw his own statements and restrain his party colleagues, for fear

of fomenting the kind of public atmosphere in which Peace Now activist Emil Grunzweig was murdered during a 1983 demonstration against the Lebanon War.

Shamir's aides deny that there is a planned strategy of tough talk in advance of the Washington trip.

On the contrary, they say, Shamir is eager to project to the U.S. government and to American and Jewish public opinion an image of a leader looking for new avenues to peace.

This is certainly what a large number of Jewish leaders invited to the "Solidarity with Israel" conference in Jerusalem March 20 to 23 will be hoping to see.

The aides say his harsh condemnation of Peace Now came in an unpremeditated response to a lengthy question from a Herut Party activist, in order to allay internal party fears that he is too soft on the evolving dialogue between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Israeli peace camp.

Will Focus On Autonomy

According to these interpreters of the prime minister's intentions, Shamir's major concern at this time is to channel his forthcoming consultations with Washington toward the issue of Palestinian autonomy -- and away from issues pertaining to the final disposition of the territories.

Shamir will be saying to Bush and to Baker that there is no acceptable blueprint for a final solution. Instead, he will suggest the need to work toward an interim agreement, possibly based on Camp David, but injected with new and more "generous" terms on the part of the Israelis.

Israeli officials have been gratified to receive the signals emanating from the White House and State Department that the Bush team is by no means enamored of the Soviets' recent high-profile, high-intensity involvement in Middle East peacemaking, and certainly not with Moscow's consistent advocacy of an international peace conference.

At the same time, policymakers around Shamir are aware of the expectation, both in the United States and in other friendly countries, that the Israeli leader will produce "new ideas."

Shamir is treading a narrow path between the need to maintain such essentially favorable expectations and the need not to disappoint them.

By talking tough, and then coming through with new offers of Palestinian self-government, Shamir hopes to win, if not Palestinian-Arab agreement, then at least a sympathetic ear in Washington.

SHAMIR BLASTS JAFFEE CENTER FOR RESULTS OF PEACE STUDY By David Landau and Hugh Orgel

JERUSALEM, March 9 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and other Likud leaders lashed out at the director of a new study that hints at the eventual formation of a Palestinian state as a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Shamir accused Maj. Gen. Aharon Yariv, of the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies at Tel Aviv University, of "causing a weakening of Israel's position in the international arena and a strengthening of our enemies."

But Vice Premier Shimon Peres and other Labor leaders endorsed the main thrust of the research.

The controversy surrounds a report issued

here Wednesday by the prestigious think tank. It dismisses nearly all of the ideas for peace currently being floated in the Israeli public arena.

In their stead, the Jaffee Center suggests Israelis and Palestinians engage in an extended "confidence-building period" that may or may not end in the formation of a Palestinian state.

The center also suggests that the Israeli government's refusal to talk with the Palestinian Liberation Organization "does not appear to be sustainable over time."

On Thursday, Shamir's office issued a stinging statement accusing Yariv -- identified only as "a general" -- of gathering information only to back his team's preconceived notions. The statement was subsequently echoed by other Likud leaders and rightists.

Yariv is a former military chief of intelligence and Cabinet minister under Laborite Yitzhak Rabin.

'Fantasy' Thinking

Shamir said that the study's calls for eventual negotiations with Palestinians connected with the PLO "are fantasy."

Peres, however, welcomed the research, saying it fulfilled a real and urgent need for new thinking. "There are those among us who are short-sighted and stick blindly to their old opinions as though nothing has changed," he said.

Peres said the importance of the report lay in its analysis of current ideas, not its final recommendation. He reiterated his support of some type of Jordanian-Palestinian federation, even though the report found such an arrangement unpromising.

But Peres acknowledged that "in the absence of a Jordanian partner, we have to talk to the Palestinians as they are and as they are organized."

Reactions to the report have attracted extensive media coverage in Israel, at least briefly achieving the Jaffee Center's goal of prodding deep discussion of the alternatives facing the country.

The study's principal sponsor was the American Jewish Congress, which has tried to make clear that it endorses only its analysis of current ideas, not the center's own proposal.

But based on the reaction of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, a co-sponsor of the study, that was not made clear enough.

In a statement released in New York, the ADL said it was "distressed" that AJCongress did not in its publicity sufficiently distinguish the study from the conclusions.

BELGIUM TO ALLOW PLO CONTACT By Yossi Lempkowlcz

BRUSSELS, March 9 (JTA) -- Belgium will now allow its diplomats to accept official invitations from the Palestine Liberation Organization.

A Belgian Foreign Ministry official told reporters Wednesday that the move is designed "to ease contacts with the PLO and encourage moderation and readiness for dialogue."

But the official said it was not to be interpreted as recognition of the Palestinian state declared by representatives of the Palestine National Council at their meeting in Algiers last November.

Nor is the PLO's diplomatic status in Belgium being changed, the spokesman stressed. The PLO has only an information bureau in Brussels.

SOVIET JEWS MAY BECOME SCAPEGOATS IF REFORMS FAIL, EX-REFUSENIK WARNS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 9 (JTA) -- Jews will be made the scapegoats if the Soviet Union's attempts at economic reforms do not benefit the average Soviet citizen, a longtime refusenik who immigrated to Israel only last month warned Wednesday.

The economic improvements have not yet brought any tangible benefits to the Soviet people and their discontent could soon be directed against Jews, Roald (Alec) Zelichonok told the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews.

Zelichonok and his wife, Galina, both engineers from Leningrad, had first applied to emigrate in 1978, but had been denied repeatedly on grounds of possession of state secrets. A well-known Hebrew teacher, Zelichonok was sentenced in 1985 to three years in prison for "defamation of the Soviet state."

He was released along with other prisoners of conscience in March 1987, and was one of the refuseniks who met with President Reagan during his visit to Moscow in May 1988.

Speaking at the UCSJ's biannual congressional briefing on Soviet Jewry on Capitol Hill, Zelichonok said that the changes in human rights under Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev were "superficial" and were made to win economic benefits from the West.

"They need your money and because of that, they are trying to win your hearts," he said.

Zelichonok said that he and other Soviet Jews owe their freedom to pressure from the American people and the U.S. Congress. He said thousands of other Soviet Jews still want to leave. "Don't forget them," he urged.

"The Jackson-Vanik Amendment saved our lives in the past, and it is saving it now," he said.

Against Jackson-Vanik Waiver

Two members of Congress who participated in the briefing stressed that Congress will not consider a waiver of the amendment before the Soviet Union puts into law the changes it has promised in human rights practices.

These include measures modifying the rules barring emigration for those considered to possess state secrets and for those whose relatives refuse to issue required waivers of financial obligation.

Jackson-Vanik, which links U.S. most-favored-nation trade benefits for the Soviet Union with increased emigration, allows for an 18-month waiver if the president believes emigration has substantially increased. The American Jewish community is currently reviewing whether a waiver should be granted.

"It is still too early to consider a Jackson-Vanik waiver," Sen. Dennis DeConcini (D-Ariz.) said at the briefing. He and Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), the co-chairmen of the Commission on Security and Cooperation in Europe, were presented with the Union of Councils' Henry Jackson Leadership Award.

Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) agreed that "it would be premature to grant a waiver of Jackson-Vanik at this point."

But, arguing that "real" changes have been made in the Soviet Union, he said Congress could consider a "temporary waiver" of the Stevenson Amendment, which would allow the Soviets to obtain credits from the Export-Import Bank.

ARAB EDITOR PROTESTS CLOSING OF WEEKLY PAPER IN NAZARETH

By Gili Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 9 (JTA) -- The editor of an Arabic weekly published in Nazareth has protested the closure of his publication, charging that the authorities ordered it closed merely for political reasons.

Raja Agbariya, 36, a resident of the Israeli Arab town of Umm el-Fahm, summoned a news conference in Jerusalem on Thursday, following the decision of the interior ministry not to renew the license of his weekly, A-Raya.

The weekly was the organ of an extremist Palestinian movement, Abna el-Balad, or children of the country, which believes in establishing a secular state on the entire area of Greater Israel.

The Interior Ministry informed Agbariya last Friday that its license was revoked due to "connections" with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a rejectionist terrorist organization led by Dr. George Habash, a Communist who is of Christian Arab origin.

Agbariya denied this, saying there was no connection whatsoever with the PFLP. He challenged authorities to sue him if they had any evidence to support their charges.

Abna el-Balad is the most radical Palestinian group operating openly inside Israel. As such, the authorities have kept a close watch on the organization.

Agbariya himself was recently ordered to three-and-a-half months in jail, under an administrative arrest order, following his involvement in organizing a Palestinian demonstration in Umm-el-Fahm on Dec. 21.

Meanwhile, a curfew imposed Wednesday on the Arab village of Isawiya, near Jerusalem, continued Thursday. It was expected to last past the weekend.

RABIN SAYS U.N. FORCES SPARKED BORDER SQUABBLE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 9 (JTA) -- Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin blamed the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon Wednesday for recent tension between the Israel Defense Force and the international peacekeeping troops.

"There is a lack of understanding on the part of the Norwegian UNIFIL unit concerning its role," charged Rabin. "UNIFIL cannot interfere with the IDF's freedom of movement."

Rabin, on a visit to the region, was referring to an incident Tuesday in which UNIFIL troops blocked Israeli military vehicles from entering the village of Ebel e-Saki, where the Norwegian battalion has its headquarters.

Israeli troops used a Merkava tank to bulldoze their way through the roadblock. They later barred UNIFIL personnel from crossing the Lebanon-Israel border for 15 hours Tuesday and Wednesday.

The United Nations criticized the border closing Wednesday, saying that restricting the freedom of movement of the UNIFIL forces was an "unacceptable action."

In New York, a spokesman for Israel's U.N. mission responded to the U.N.'s criticism by saying disputes between Israel and UNIFIL troops should be resolved on the ground, between commanders, "and not by going to the press with accusations and name-calling."

'ARYAN WOODSTOCK' ENDS UP A BUST AS SKINHEADS JUST SING THE BLUES

By D.C. Elstein

Northern California Jewish Bulletin

SAN FRANCISCO, March 9 (JTA) — By most measurements, the "Aryan Woodstock" of white supremacists last Saturday in Napa was a bust. But the epithets shouted by neo-Nazi Skinheads from the hills of the wine country sent a chill through a Northern California Jewish community unused to such blatant anti-Semitism.

Jewish officials said it also underscored the need to maintain a constant effort against the rise of racism.

"This incident reminds us that hatred and bigotry remain a top priority for Jewish community relations. Our job is to continue to work to strengthen the democratic values which protect us," said Ephraim Margolin, chairman of the Bay Area's Jewish Community Relations Council.

The event originally was billed as a whites-only concert featuring "white power" bands with names like the Boot Boys.

But the event was reduced to a political gathering when organizers failed to obtain a concert permit -- a failing that Napa County Judge W. Scott Snowden took advantage of to ban live music from the proceedings.

Tom Metzger, leader of the southern California-based White Aryan Resistance, had called for white supremacist groups such as the American Front to flood the Napa Valley with up to 2,000 radicals, their hair cut short and their jackets boasting swastikas in symbolic unity.

By late Saturday morning, however, it was apparent that Woodstock had turned into nothing more than a verbal jam session.

Even generous estimates placed at fewer than 200 the number of Skinheads who had entered the undeveloped, 70-acre farm in the hills along Highway 12 south of Napa.

Remembering Max Yagur

Ironically, the farm was leased to the Skinheads by a Jewish physician who reportedly fled Nazi Germany.

Howard Lonsdale, an ear, nose and throat specialist in Vallejo, told reporters that he had been duped by the Skinheads into believing that the concert was being organized by environmentalists.

He said that he had allowed the meeting to proceed under threats from the neo-Nazis.

The neo-Nazis were far outnumbered by the more than 500 protesters who picketed along the roadside leading into the area. Some 200 police officers stood by to keep the peace, with another 250 on call who were never used.

Authorities defused the situation considerably by closing Highway 12, forcing protesters to walk as far as three miles to the entrance to the farm. And a light rain fell throughout the day, further dampening the spirits of Skinheads and protesters.

Except for a few passing skirmishes, there were no confrontations as the Skinheads stayed to themselves, for the most part out of sight. There were no arrests and only a few minor injuries.

The only Jewish political group to make an appearance was the Jewish Defense League, whose national leader, Irv Rubin, brought a handful of supporters.

But Rubin's aggressive approach was not shared by other Jewish officials. Said Margolin: "We will continue to fight bigotry with reason."

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:

RESEARCH REVEALS JEWISH OFFICERS AMONG KATYN MASSACRE VICTIMS

By James P. Rice

CHICAGO, March 9 (JTA) — At least 262 Jewish officers were among the over 4,000 Polish officers whom the current Polish government now states were massacred by the Soviet Union in World War II.

This was reported by Harvey Sarner of Chicago and London, an independent researcher, who is writing a book on Polish World War II General Wladyslaw Anders.

The Polish government recently reopened the issue on which their Soviet colleagues have thus far made no public comment.

When the Nazis discovered the victims of the Katyn massacre near Smolensk in 1943, they blamed the action on the Soviets, who in turn blamed the Nazis.

A major source of Sarner's information is a 1988 periodical, "Niepodleglosc" (Independence) of the Pilsudski Institute of London, dedicated to the most recent information on Polish history. It includes several chapters by Simon Shochet about Jews in the World War II Polish military.

Shochet explains that Jewish victims of Katyn were identified by documents found on the bodies and by comparison with records of the London Polish Officers Association.

There is no listing of religion, but Jews are also identified by typical Jewish names, together with occupations.

Jewish Katyn victims included a colonel, two majors, 173 lieutenants and sub-lieutenants, and other ranks. In civilian life many were doctors, pharmacists, lawyers and diplomats.

One of the Katyn Jewish victims was Mieczyslaw Birnbaum, newspaperman and writer, who served in the IVth Division of General L. Zeligowski. He was the recipient of the Cross "Virtuti Militari" (5th class), Cross of Valor, Gold Cross of Merit and the medal of "10th year of Polish Independence."

A prominent victim of the Soviets was Chief Rabbi Major Baruch Steinberg.

Testimony On Jewish Victims

In November 1939, shortly after the German and Russian invasions of Poland, Steinberg spoke to a Polish unit, also addressed by the chief Catholic and Lutheran chaplains.

All three were taken to Moscow, imprisoned, and subsequently deported by the Soviets to an "unknown destination."

Shochet refers to the "hearings before a Select U.S. Congress Committee on the Katyn Massacre" in 1952, where testimony was given about Jewish victims, apparently overlooked by most observers up to now.

The committee conducted extensive hearings in Washington, Chicago, London and Frankfurt.

It had not previously been widely known that significant numbers of Jews were among the Polish officer victims at Katyn.

In recent years, the Polish Jewish Former Combatants Association has participated in the annual ceremony at the Polish World War II monument in London, commemorating the Katyn tragedy.

Jews are represented by a Polish war veteran, Stanley Damazer, a layman, who recites the Kaddish at what was previously only a Catholic ceremony.