

DIASPORA LEADERS AGREE TO LAUNCH NEW DRIVE FOR SOVIET JEWS IN ISRAEL

By J.J. Goldberg
The New York Jewish Week

NEW YORK, Sept. 27 (JTA) -- The leaders of the major Diaspora organizations involved in providing funds for Israel have agreed to undertake a special campaign to help the Jewish state prepare for the massive wave of Soviet immigrants expected to arrive in the next few years.

The total sum to be raised will be "refined in the coming weeks" and presented to the Diaspora organizations for final approval sometime next month, according to a statement issued Tuesday by the Consulate General of Israel in New York.

Israeli Finance Minister Shimon Peres has asked the major Diaspora philanthropic bodies to mount a \$500 million campaign over the next five years.

His proposal is part of a \$3 billion Israeli master plan to create the housing, jobs and infrastructure needed to absorb a predicted 100,000 Soviet newcomers.

Beyond the Diaspora share, \$2 billion would come from the Israeli Treasury and the final \$500 million would be raised in commercial debt, for which Peres has requested U.S. government guarantees.

President Bush has been informed of the plan. He told Peres at a meeting here Monday that he would personally seek U.S. guarantees for the \$500 million in new debt the finance minister has proposed.

Peres made the appeal for Diaspora funds in a series of meetings here during the last two weeks with leaders of the national United Jewish Appeal, the United Israel Appeal, the Council of Jewish Federations and Keren Hayesod, which raises funds for Israel outside the United States.

Also participating in the meetings were the heads of the Jewish Agency for Israel, the philanthropies' main beneficiary.

Several American Reservations

The ambitious plan has received a mixed reception from Jewish leaders around the world.

Jewish philanthropies outside the United States immediately agreed to the appeal, according to Nessim Gaon of Geneva, president of Keren Hayesod's world board of trustees.

He said he expected the non-U.S. communities to take on about one-third of the total Diaspora goal, some \$33 million a year for five years.

But leaders of the U.S. philanthropic bodies have a number of reservations about the Peres plan, according to several ranking figures in the national UJA-Federation network, speaking on condition of anonymity.

Those concerns were not resolved at a meeting top worldwide Diaspora leaders held late Monday afternoon with Peres. But the leaders agreed, in principle, to mount a campaign, with the details to be hammered out in the coming weeks.

Some of the American leaders are said to be skeptical about Peres' figures, which, according to one source, include funding for such infrastruc-

ture items as highway improvements that "have nothing to do with the Russians."

Other leaders question the likelihood of large numbers of Soviet Jews settling in Israel, even if the Bush administration restricts the flow of refugees to the United States.

Another concern is the ongoing cost of resettling the Soviet Jews who continue to pour into this country. Federations across the United States are now in the midst of a special \$75 million campaign for Soviet resettlement, due to end Dec. 31.

The current Passage to Freedom drive divides its proceeds between Israeli and U.S. resettlement programs. Discussions with the Israelis are now focused on starting up the new campaign after Jan. 1, the sources said.

'We Need Them And They Need Us'

Peres appealed for U.S. Jewish support in a strongly worded speech last week to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

"Let me speak openly and clearly: You don't need them," Peres said, referring to the Soviet emigres.

"You are strong enough without them. We need them. They are the last great reserve of Jews who may come to Israel in this century. We need them and they need us -- more than they need you."

He added: "We expect that the same warmth shown traditionally by American Jewish leadership, when trying times came to our door, will happen again -- not to be stingy, not to be skeptical and to act again with great support."

The number of Soviet Jews headed for Israel is expected to jump dramatically after Oct. 1, when the U.S. government begins accepting applications for refugee visas only in Moscow, instead of Rome.

The procedural change will mean that Soviet Jews unwilling to brave the long waiting period to enter the visa section of the U.S. Consulate in Moscow will have no choice but to fly to Israel.

"A much larger number of Soviet Jews will enter Israel after Oct. 1," Mendel Kaplan, chairman of the Jewish Agency Board of Governors, said in an interview Monday.

"There will be an extremely large financial impact on the State of Israel. And we are going to appeal to the Jewish people to share the burden with Israel."

U.S. WILL NOT PRESSURE ISRAEL ON EGYPTIAN PLAN, SAYS BAKER

By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, Sept. 27 (JTA) -- The United States does not consider Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's 10-point plan an alternative to the Israeli peace initiative and therefore will not pressure Israel to accept it, a top State Department official said Wednesday.

Dennis Ross, director of the department's policy-planning staff, made that assertion during a briefing for reporters after Secretary of State James Baker met here with Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens.

"Mr. Baker made it clear that our view of

the Egyptian 10 points is that they are not a proposal, that they are not a plan, they are not an alternative to the government of Israel's election initiative," Ross said.

At the same time, Ross said the Bush administration is anxious to get the peace process moving. "We want to see a dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians begin," he said.

Preliminary negotiations between Israel and a Palestinian delegation are a key element of the Mubarak plan.

Arens and his Likud bloc have rejected the plan, in part because they believe no negotiations should take place until the Palestinians elect representatives in a referendum in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Labor Party has welcomed the Egyptian ideas as a legitimate starting point for talks.

Ross conveyed the impression that the United States would reserve judgment on the Egyptian ideas until after the Israeli Cabinet debates them at a meeting, now scheduled for next Wednesday.

Mubarak To Meet Arens, Peres

According to Ross, Arens was "reluctant to offer judgment on specific points" in his discussion with Baker. He said that Arens was "non-committal" because the Israeli government's position is not yet solidified.

"At the Cabinet meeting, the issue will be discussed, and maybe a decision will be made," Arens told reporters.

In Washington, the head of the Labor Party, Vice Premier Shimon Peres, said Wednesday that the differences between Labor and Likud over the 10-point plan would not cause the coalition government to collapse.

But he warned that the government will only survive if it is able to make a firm decision on the Egyptian proposal.

Arens and Baker met for over an hour in Baker's suite at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. The meeting was private, at Arens' request.

Arens emerged from the meeting saying he was confident the Americans view the Israeli peace plan as "the only initiative on the table."

"We didn't discuss any new formulas," he said, adding that the Israeli plan has "the full support of the American government."

Arens is to join Baker in a three-way meeting Thursday afternoon with Egyptian Foreign Minister Esmat Abdel Meguid. Also Thursday, Mubarak will meet separately with Arens and Peres.

(JTA correspondent David Friedman in Washington contributed to this report.)

ARENS SOLICITS SUPPORT OF ARABS AND OTHER NATIONS FOR PEACE PLAN By Allison Kaplan

UNITED NATIONS, Sept. 27 (JTA) -- Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens used the opportunity of his speech before the U.N. General Assembly on Wednesday to bring Israel's peace initiative directly before the leaders of the Arab nations and the rest of the world.

Arens asked the world leaders gathered here to support the peace plan, which calls for Palestinian elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, followed by peace negotiations between Israel and the elected Palestinians.

"There is no alternative way to move the Middle Eastern peace process forward," Arens stated. "Rejection of this initiative is synonymous

with rejecting progress towards peace."

"This is not the time to attempt to wring concessions from Israel that relate to the permanent settlement," the foreign minister said. "Our immediate objective must be to put an end to violence and get negotiations going."

Invites Dialogue With Arab Envoys

Arens told an audience of Jewish New Yorkers Monday evening that Israel has "not received a positive response" to the Israeli plan from the Arab world.

Egypt's failure to accept the Israeli peace plan is reflected in President Hosni Mubarak's refusal to meet with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Arens asserted during the Monday night forum, which was organized by the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York.

Mubarak has turned down invitations from Shamir to visit Jerusalem. Last week, the Egyptian president hosted Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the No. 2 Labor Party leader, in Cairo. He is to meet separately Thursday with Arens and Vice Premier Shimon Peres.

In his speech at the United Nations, Arens invited the Arab nations to join in a dialogue with Israel.

Listing by name the 20 Arab countries other than Egypt that belong to the United Nations, he urged them to "utilize the opportunity of being present at the United Nations General Assembly and meet with me to discuss how we can move from belligerency to peace."

The foreign minister also appealed to the Palestinians living in the territories to "desist from violent acts and help establish the conditions that will permit the holding of free democratic elections."

BREAKUP OF ISRAEL'S UNITY COALITION WOULD SET BACK PEACE, SAYS MUBARAK By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Sept. 27 (JTA) -- Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, here for talks with President Francois Mitterrand, said in a newspaper interview that he would hate to see the collapse of Israel's national unity government in Israel.

Mubarak, whose 10-point proposal to hold peace talks in Cairo between Palestinians and Israelis has deeply divided the Israeli government, told Le Figaro that an Israeli government crisis would "only delay the peace process."

The Egyptian president said he does not want to become involved in Israel's internal political affairs.

However, he warned that a government crisis in Israel "would demand new elections, a new government, the definition of a new policy and would represent a delay" in the peace process of "at least an additional year."

Mubarak is here en route to the United States, where he will address the United Nations General Assembly on Friday. While in New York, he is scheduled to meet with Israeli Vice Premier Shimon Peres and Foreign Minister Moshe Arens. He also will meet with President Bush in Washington.

The Egyptian leader said he does not want or expect American pressure on Israel to be more forthcoming. "It is a word which irritates," he said.

"No, what is needed is for the Americans to explain the situation to their Israeli friends and persuade them."

PLO OFFICIALS RECEIVE U.S. VISAS, BUT YASIR ARAFAT IS NOT AMONG THEM

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Sept. 27 (JTA) -- Nearly a dozen members of the Palestine Liberation Organization have been granted U.S. visas in order to attend this fall's U.N. General Assembly session, but Yasir Arafat is not among them, the State Department disclosed Wednesday.

Arafat reportedly has not yet decided whether to apply for a U.S. visa.

State Department deputy spokesman Richard Boucher said that "visas have been authorized for members of the PLO delegation to the U.N. General Assembly."

When asked what makes Arafat, the PLO chairman, any different from the PLO officials who were granted visas, Boucher replied, "He hasn't applied" for a visa yet.

The State Department will not say how it will respond if Arafat does apply for a visa.

The delegation authorized to come to New York includes Yasir Abed Rabbo, a member of the PLO's executive committee who has led the PLO delegation that has been meeting regularly with U.S. officials in Tunisia this year. Rabbo has attended previous General Assembly sessions.

"We have authorized these visas for a number of years, consistent with our international legal obligation as host country to the U.N. and following a full legal review of the applications," said Boucher.

The visas are good for the next three months. PLO members receiving them are restricted to traveling within a 25-mile radius of Columbus Circle in New York City, said a State Department visa expert.

ISRAELI PEACE ACTIVIST ABIE NATHAN CONVICTED FOR MEETINGS WITH ARAFAT

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Sept. 27 (JTA) -- Israeli peace activist Abie Nathan, who has held several meetings with Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat, was found guilty Wednesday of breaking an Israeli law that prohibits contacts with terrorists.

The Ramla Magistrates Court is to sentence Nathan on Tuesday. The maximum penalty for breaking the law against consorting with representatives of terrorist organizations is three years.

The state prosecution asked for the maximum sentence on the grounds that Nathan is a prominent and popular personality whose sentence should be seen as a deterrent against others who would do the same.

Nathan, who owns and operates the floating Voice of Peace radio ship off the Tel Aviv shore, has not expressed regret for his activities, the prosecution emphasized.

In fact, in an impassioned speech to the court, Nathan said he did not regret his four meetings with Arafat to date. His most recent meeting with the PLO chairman took place in Tunis a year ago.

Nathan said he had met with Arafat with the full knowledge that what he was doing was against the law, which he called "stupid." What is of paramount importance, he said, is the need to get an Israel-Palestinian dialogue going.

Nathan said that to achieve peace one should talk to one's enemies. He said he had not met

Arafat to negotiate with him but to tell him directly of Israel's desire for peace and its thoughts on how to achieve peace.

The peace advocate and global do-gooder declined any deal under which he might serve a sentence doing "communal work" and requested a speedy end to the trial "so that I can continue my peace efforts as soon as possible."

REVERSING DECISION, U.S. WILL FUND POPULAR HOLOCAUST EDUCATION PROGRAM

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Sept. 27 (JTA) -- The U.S. Department of Education announced this week that it will fund an innovative Holocaust education program for junior and senior high school students.

The announcement comes nine months after Education Secretary Lauro Cavazos rejected an appeal from Rep. Ted Weiss (D-N.Y.) and 65 other members of Congress to give \$70,000 to "Facing History and Ourselves," a program based in Brookline, Mass.

"We are absolutely delighted," said Margot Stern Strom, the program's executive director. She called the approval a "real statement by the Department of Education that (the program) is important."

The program, slated to receive \$59,367 from the U.S. government this year, with repeat grants likely in the following three years, had been opposed by right-wing reviewers in the department, as well as by groups such as Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum.

Schlaflly told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency last fall that the program constituted psychological manipulation of students and should not be taught without parental consent.

The Education Department evaluated the program positively in 1986, 1987 and 1988, but some reviewers said it did not adequately present the Nazi point of view.

Last September, when the "Facing History" program was denied funding for the 1989 fiscal year, the department gave as reason that it had eliminated five categories from which "Facing History" could have been funded.

Funds To Pay For Workshops

Lee Wickline, who manages the department's National Diffusion Network awards program, would not directly respond to allegations that the history category was eliminated last year as a way to avoid funding the Holocaust program.

But he said that the categories were eliminated after last year's departmental review of the Holocaust program, and not prior to the review.

He also said the official response last September was that there were "insufficient funds" for the program.

But rather than eliminating certain categories, the department could have elected to fund top programs in all categories, while not funding programs with lower ratings, he said.

"Facing History and Ourselves" is top-ranked among three civics, geography and history programs that are now slated to receive funds, he added. The other two programs to be funded are an "effective citizenship" course and one called "Project Reach."

Strom said the new funds will be used to hold 22 workshops for teachers, especially in states where the program has been unable to find foundations to help finance them.

ISRAELI AND SOVIET TRADE DELEGATIONS NEAR ACCORD ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Sept. 27 (JTA) -- Israel and the Soviet Union are negotiating an agreement providing for economic cooperation between the two countries, joint ventures and a steep increase in trade, according to trade representatives of the two countries, who are meeting here.

The heads of the two trade delegations on Tuesday signed the draft of a general framework on economic cooperation. The final agreement could be signed as early as Thursday.

Meanwhile, the Soviet delegation has accepted an invitation to pursue talks in Israel.

The trade negotiations here come on the heels of a Soviet invitation for Israeli Finance Minister Shimon Peres to visit Moscow for economic and political talks.

That invitation was personally extended to Peres in New York last week by Genrikh Borovikh, president of the Soviet Peace Committee and a member of the Permanent Committee on Foreign Relations of the Supreme Soviet.

Borovikh led a Soviet trade delegation to the United States, whose members met with Peres for an hour on Sept. 21. The meeting, something of a coup for Israel, was arranged by Nessim Gaon, Swiss businessman and president of the World Sephardi Federation, who sponsored the visit of the Soviet delegation to the United States.

Increasing Soviet-Israeli contacts on economic cooperation are being seen here as a sign of warming ties between the two countries. But diplomatic sources here say the improvement in ties will stop short of a restoration of full diplomatic relations until there is a breakthrough in the Middle East imbroglio.

Joint Chambers Of Commerce?

Nevertheless, Soviet business leaders reportedly have already arranged trade with Israeli industry through European intermediaries.

The draft agreement sketched out here is the first of its kind since the Soviet Union broke off diplomatic relations with Israel following the 1967 Six-Day War.

The agreement might also provide for the creation of an Israeli-Soviet Chamber of Commerce, with branches in Moscow and Tel Aviv.

That idea was discussed last year when Danny Gillerman, president of the Federation of Israeli Chambers of Commerce, visited Leningrad. He visited Moscow two months ago.

Gillerman met here with Vladimir Golario, vice president of the Soviet Federation of Chambers of Commerce. The negotiations also were attended by the Israeli Foreign Ministry's deputy director in charge of economic affairs, Yakov Cohen. The talks were due to continue Wednesday and Thursday.

Gillerman, a prominent Israeli businessman who has taken part in many international economic seminars and trade talks, said in an interview that he was optimistic that the agreement would be finalized and signed Thursday, when the meetings conclude.

He warned, however, that more talks might be necessary, and said the next round might be held in Tel Aviv in one or two months.

The Soviet-Israeli agreement stresses cooperation in agriculture, pharmaceutical production and technology, industrial know-how, citrus fruits, barter agreements and joint ventures.

RELATIONS BETWEEN POLAND AND JEWS TO IMPROVE, SAYS SOLIDARITY DEPUTY

NEW YORK, Sept. 27 (JTA) -- Poland's new democracy will set the stage for improving relations between Poland and the Jewish world, including Israel, a leading Solidarity member of the Polish parliament said Tuesday during a visit here.

Janusz Onyszkiewicz told members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations that full diplomatic relations between Poland and Israel should soon be restored.

He also called for the repeal of the 1975 U.N. General Assembly resolution equating Zionism with racism.

He cited the recent visit of an Israeli trade delegation to Poland as evidence that ties would soon be re-established between the two countries.

The declarations followed an emotional exchange with Jewish leaders, among them leaders of Holocaust survivor organizations.

Onyszkiewicz pledged his country's "new democracy will help eradicate certain ghosts of Poland's past, such as anti-Semitism."

The Jewish leaders questioned the newly elected deputy to the Sejm, as Poland's parliament is called, on the extent of anti-Semitism in Poland, the perception of Jews vis-a-vis the Holocaust and the recent offensive statements made by Cardinal Jozef Glemp regarding the convent at Auschwitz.

Reuben Gruenbaum, president of the National Council of Young Israel and a survivor of Auschwitz, spoke of how the Holocaust was being "Christianized and de-Judaized."

Not 'Rabid Anti-Semites'

Identifying himself as a witness, Gruenbaum described how "Poles willingly helped the Nazis demolish the small town where I was born. Those who were slaughtered in Auschwitz died not as Polish citizens but because they were Jews."

Onyszkiewicz, a leading figure in the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Sejm who was jailed twice by the Communists for human rights activism, conceded there were parts of his nation's past of which he would "not be proud."

But he denied that Poles are "rabid anti-Semites." The words were his and came in response to statements by conference members who referred to the long history of Polish anti-Semitism.

"Jews were part of Polish culture for 1,000 years," he said. "They lived side by side with us in one country and contributed much to its advancement."

Noting that Poland's new democracy is only three weeks old, Onyszkiewicz begged for time to address some of the issues posed by the American Jewish leaders.

The country's top priority now is the rebuilding of its shattered economy and government, he said.

"I believe anti-Semitism is on the way out. When we open our windows wide to the outside world, we'll let the fresh air in and clean it out for good," he said.

REMINDER: Because of the Rosh Hashanah holiday, JTA will not publish the Daily News Bulletin on Monday, Oct. 2.