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**PERES SET TO VISIT SOVIET UNION  
WITH BUSINESS LEADERS IN JANUARY**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- Vice Premier Shimon Peres will begin his planned visit to the Soviet Union on Jan. 2, the Labor Party newspaper Davar reported Sunday.

Peres, who is also finance minister, will be the highest-ranking Israeli leader ever to visit the Soviet Union.

According to Davar, he will be accompanied, in addition to his ministerial entourage, by a group of internationally renowned Jewish business leaders and industrialists from several countries, who may have some advice on perestroika.

Davar named Armand Hammer of the United States, who heads Occidental Petroleum; British media tycoon Robert Maxwell; Israeli Far East trader Saul Eisenberg; and Nessim Gaon of Geneva, who, in addition to having wide-ranging business interests, heads the World Sephardi Federation.

All have been described as billionaires by the news media.

Peres' political adviser, Dr. Nimrod Novik, and his spokesman, Avi Gil, left for Moscow on Sunday to make advance arrangements for the visit.

The scheduling had been in doubt because of Peres' recent illness. He was hospitalized for a week in October with an acute infection of the urinary tract.

He then collapsed, reportedly of fatigue, on the final day of a historic visit to Poland late last month.

Another factor has been the state of flux of Soviet politics.

Peres is expected to meet with President Mikhail Gorbachev and other top Soviet policymakers, although no official schedule has been announced yet.

**New Commercial Ties Sought**

Israeli sources hope for major progress in bilateral commercial links.

A step was made in that direction by Israel's minister of agriculture, Avraham Katz-Oz, who returned from a visit to Moscow on Dec. 3 with a series of agreements, including one for the export of Israeli agricultural produce to the Soviet Union.

Katz-Oz was the first Israeli Cabinet minister to visit the Soviet Union since the Kremlin severed diplomatic relations with Israel at the time of the Six-Day War in 1967.

Because of the absence of relations, his invitation came from the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

Israeli officials also hope Peres' trip will hasten the opening of direct flights between Moscow and Tel Aviv.

Agreements have been reached by the two national carriers, El Al and Aeroflot, but they must still be ratified by their respective governments.

Israelis expect the flow of Jewish immigrants from the Soviet Union to increase appreciably once there are direct air links between the two countries.

**JEWS THE WORLD OVER MOURN DEATH  
OF HUMAN RIGHTS CHAMPION SAKHAROV**

By Adam Dickter

NEW YORK, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- Andrei Sakharov, a rare voice for human rights in the Soviet Union, will be sorely missed by the world Jewish community, which noted his passing with sadness.

Sakharov, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate and nuclear physicist who died of a heart attack on Dec. 14, was once described by Soviet Jewish activist Natan Sharansky as "the conscience of the Soviet Union."

"I think he himself, through his efforts and influence, really changed the whole atmosphere of the Soviet Union, not just now, but 20 and 25 years ago," Sharansky said on Israel Radio shortly after hearing the news of Sakharov's death.

A founder of the Helsinki human rights monitoring group, Sakharov, 68, was remembered fondly this week by Soviet Jewry advocacy groups, such as the National Conference on Soviet Jewry.

The conference referred to him in a statement as a "beacon of freedom" and "a steadfast champion of human rights."

In 1968, he attacked the Soviet leadership for "backsliding into anti-Semitism" and characterized the bureaucracy in the "highest elite of the land" of acting "in the spirit of Stalinist anti-Semitism."

According to the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, or NJCRAC, Sakharov stood outside Soviet courtrooms in 1970 and 1971 to protest the sentencing of aliyah activists who attempted to steal an airplane and flee the country.

"They have only one aim," said Sakharov. "To go to Israel, which is their right."

**Supported Right Of Aliyah**

In 1975, Sakharov, considered the father of the Soviet hydrogen bomb, published a statement on "Freedom of Choosing One's Country of Residence."

In it, he praised the U.S. Congress' adoption of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the U.S. Trade Act, which first linked the Soviets' trade status to the level of free emigration.

Sakharov wrote that the amendment "continued the best democratic and humane traditions of the American people" and rejected "the assertions of the critics" that it was "interference into the domestic affairs of the USSR."

In the same document, Sakharov referred to aliyah, or Jewish immigration to Israel, as "a phenomenon of general human importance and important in principle in the thousands-year-old tragic history of the Jewish people."

"I understand and respect the national feelings of the Jews who go to build and defend their newly acquired homeland," he wrote.

Sakharov, who spent several years of internal exile in the "closed" Soviet city of Gorky, openly supported the Jewish state and publicly defended Israel's right to exist within secure and recognized borders, while urging an equitable solution to the Palestinian problem.

In 1975, he warned the United Nations against sanctioning anti-Semitism, while the world

body was considering its infamous resolution equating Zionism with racism.

"If this resolution is adopted," he said, "it can only contribute to anti-Semitic tendencies in other countries by giving them the appearance of international legality."

Harry Lipkin, a senior physicist at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel, told the Jerusalem Post he had corresponded with Sakharov since 1980, when he discovered that he and Sakharov were doing nearly identical work on elementary particles in Israel and the USSR.

Around the time of the October 1973 Yom Kippur War, Lipkin recalled, Sakharov's Moscow apartment was broken into by masked Arabs who cut his telephone lines and threatened his family because of his public support of Israel.

#### 'A Paragon Among Men'

After the break-in, Sakharov reportedly received a postcard with the message: "Black September always remembers its 'friends.'"

Lipkin recently invited Sakharov to attend the Weizmann Forum on Science and Government, held in Israel last week, but was told that the Soviet scientist felt his presence was needed in Moscow because of recent developments in the Soviet Union.

Sakharov was a member of the Congress of People's Deputies, the supreme legislative body that convenes twice a year.

Sakharov continued his crusade for human rights even on his last day alive, when he lectured Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, during a session of the congress, on the need for greater pluralism in and full democratization of Soviet life.

"It's not often that a gallant champion of human rights challenges the government of a superpower and becomes a giant on the world stage," Seymour Reich, president of B'nai B'rith International and chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said in a statement.

"Andrei Sakharov was such a paragon among men," he added.

"Jews owe Andrei Sakharov a special debt," David Harris, Washington representative of the American Jewish Committee, wrote in a personal remembrance.

"Not only has he fought indefatigably for peace and human rights, but he has been outspoken on behalf of Soviet Jewish emigration, Jewish prisoners of conscience, and a safe and secure Israel," he added.

Sakharov's lifelong commitment to human rights was recognized in 1984 by the Simon Wiesenthal Center, which presented him, in absentia, with its Humanitarian Award.

The Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry called Sakharov "a truly righteous gentile who fulfilled the dictum of our sages: 'When men do not act as men, strive to do so.'"

B'nai Brith Canada leaders described him as a "symbol of freedom."

The Appeal of Conscience Foundation called Sakharov's death "an irreparable loss to the Soviet people and the cause of liberty everywhere."

Several organizations expressed condolences to Sakharov's widow, Dr. Yelena Bonner, a human rights activist of Jewish origin who shared his ideals.

*(JTA correspondent Hugh Orgel in Tel Aviv contributed to this report.)*

#### **SHARANSKY REFUSED VISA TO ATTEND SAKHAROV FUNERAL, JEWISH GATHERING** By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- Natan Sharansky, the Soviet Jewish activist who was finally allowed to leave the Soviet Union in a 1986 spy swap, has been refused a visa to return there for a visit, the Soviet Jewish Zionist Forum disclosed Sunday.

Sharansky, who heads the forum, planned to lead a 10-member delegation to the founding conference of the Congress of Jewish Organizations and Communities in the USSR, a historic event being held in Moscow from Monday to Thursday of this week.

Sharansky also had planned to attend the funeral Monday of Nobel laureate Andrei Sakharov, the most famous Soviet dissident and human rights advocate, who died suddenly on Dec. 14, at the age of 68.

Entry visas were apparently granted other members of the Zionist Forum, whose names rank with Sharansky as longtime refuseniks and activists for Soviet Jewry. They include Yosef Begun, Vladimir Slepak and Yuri Shtern.

In New York, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry reported another visa refusal Sunday, which it deplored.

The organization is sending a delegation to Moscow to attend the Soviet Jewish conference, as well as Sakharov's funeral. The group departed Saturday evening.

But no visa was received in time for Constance Smukler of Philadelphia, an NCSJ vice chairwoman and longtime Soviet Jewry activist. However, she had received a visa to travel to the Soviet Union in October.

Martin Wenick, the organization's executive director, expressed regret at the apparent denial. He charged that "the Soviet authorities' action at this time indicates that remnants of their old thinking still exists."

Visas were granted to Wenick, NCSJ Chairwoman Shoshana Cardin, Founding Chairman Richard Maass, Vice Chairman Joseph Sternstein and activist Marvin Verman.

Wenick pointed out that the Jewish conference is the first such event in Russia since before the Bolshevik Revolution.

It will be attended by hundreds of Jews from all parts of the Soviet Union, and numerous guests from abroad, to chart the future of the world's third largest Jewish community.

Sharansky served nine years of a 30-year sentence for allegedly spying for the United States. He was freed in February 1986 as part of an East-West spy exchange, and went immediately to Israel.

#### **INFLATION RUNNING AT 20 PERCENT** By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- A 1.3 percent increase last month in Israel's cost-of-living index brought the consumer price index to 148.3 on a 1987 baseline of 100, the Central Bureau of Statistics reported Sunday.

Inflation is currently running at an annual rate of 20 percent. The rate for the full year will not be known until the December price index is published on Jan. 15.

But according to the new statistics, an average family now needs a monthly income of \$1,500 for a standard basket of goods and services.

# ISRAELI AIRMAN SHOT DOWN IN 1986 NOW THOUGHT TO BE IN IRANIAN HANDS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- An Israeli air force navigator shot down over southern Lebanon in 1986 is reportedly in Iranian custody and could figure in a hostage swap.

Capt. Ron Arad, 31, is one of three missing servicemen for whom the Israelis could exchange Sheikh Abdul Karim Obeid, a Shi'ite fundamentalist cleric seized from his home in southern Lebanon in late July by Israeli commandos.

News that Arad was being held by Iranian authorities, but not necessarily inside Iran, was reported Friday in Paris by Arad's wife, who was there attending an international symposium on human rights in Arab countries sponsored by President Francois Mitterrand.

Tamar Arad, 28, said Israeli authorities informed her that her husband was alive and that they were doing everything possible to get him released. The information was confirmed by Israeli officials in Paris.

But the International Red Cross has been denied access to Arad, and that probably is why the Israelis refused access to Obeid, the airman's wife said.

Obeid is spiritual mentor of the Organization of the Oppressed on Earth, a radical Shi'ite terrorist group believed to be affiliated with the pro-Iranian Hezbollah, or Party of God.

Tamar Arad said she had only one letter from her husband since his Israeli air force Phantom jet was shot down on Oct. 16, 1986.

The plane's pilot was rescued by an air force helicopter, but Arad fell into the hands of the mainstream Shi'ite militia Amal, headed by Nabih Berri. He was later transferred to an extremist Shi'ite faction and reportedly has since been handed over to the Iranians.

The two other Israeli servicemen who might figure in a hostage trade are Israel Defense Force soldiers Joseph Fink and Rahamim Alsheikh, both captured in 1986.

# PALESTINIANS WARNED BY HAMAS NOT TO NEGOTIATE WITH ISRAEL

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- The Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement is using threats and intimidation to wrest leadership of the intifada from Yasir Arafat's Al Fatah wing of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Leaflet No. 51, titled "Victory or Death," warns that anyone who engages in the political process with Israel "will be regarded a traitor."

The leaflet attacks U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's five-point proposal for an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, claiming it is intended only to crush the uprising.

The leaflet also, for the first time, attacks the Egyptian role in the peace process, warning Arab countries not to be drawn into "the Camp David circle."

Hamas, an organization of Moslem fundamentalists, is the PLO's most serious rival in the territories.

In a challenge to the secular PLO, Hamas urged the public to raise Palestinian flags with religious slogans on Jan. 1, the anniversary of the founding Al Fatah.

The purpose is to demonstrate the "Moslem character" of the uprising, Hamas said.

# SHAMIR AIDE OFF TO WASHINGTON FOR TALKS ABOUT CAIRO DIALOGUE

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- Cabinet Secretary Elyakim Rubinstein flew Sunday to Washington, for meetings officials here deemed would be crucial to the proposed Israeli-Palestinian dialogue in Cairo.

According to knowledgeable sources, Rubinstein, who is close to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, will be testing the waters surrounding U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's five-point proposal for the dialogue, which both Israel and Egypt have accepted, contingent upon certain "assumptions."

If he is satisfied Israel's interests are served, Foreign Minister Moshe Arens will probably go to Washington next month for talks with Baker and Egyptian Foreign Minister Esmat Abdel Meguid to make arrangements for the dialogue.

But if Rubinstein returns dissatisfied, there will be a strong move within Shamir's Likud bloc to call a halt to the diplomatic process before that tripartite session can take place, political observers said.

The Cabinet secretary will examine with ranking State Department officials the tenability of Israel's "assumptions," which it linked to its acceptance of Baker's proposals, and their compatibility with the assurances believed to have been given by the United States to Egypt -- and, by way of Cairo, to the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Israel has not been shown a text of Washington's assurances to Egypt and is wary that this document may contain express or implied concessions or references to the PLO.

One focus of Rubinstein's talks is expected to be the composition of the Palestinian delegation to the proposed Cairo dialogue.

The Prime Minister's Office denied reports over the weekend that Shamir and Arens were ready to include certain Palestinians deported from the administered territories who would be readmitted and have their resident status restored.

# FRENCH PREMIER ARRIVES IN ISRAEL, WILL MEET WITH RECUPERATING SHAMIR

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Michel Rocard of France arrived here Sunday evening on a brief visit to Israel, which, though ostensibly private, includes a crowded schedule of meetings with the country's top leaders.

He was met at the airport by Deputy Premier David Levy, driven directly to see Vice Premier Shimon Peres and then taken to the prime minister's residence in Jerusalem for dinner with Yitzhak Shamir.

Shamir was discharged Sunday from Hadasah-Hebrew University Hospital in Ein Kerem, after undergoing a hernia operation last week.

Rocard was scheduled to visit the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial and Museum on Monday morning, and meet later with President Chaim Herzog.

Later, he is to participate in the event that brought him to Israel: the naming of a street in Jaffa for the late French Prime Minister Pierre Mendes-France, who was Jewish.

Rocard is expected to confer with Foreign Minister Moshe Arens and with prominent Palestinians before winding up his visit.

# WEST GERMANY WON'T PROSECUTE SS MAN EXTRADITED FROM ITALY

By David Kantor

BONN, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- A West German journalist has accused a federal prosecutor of refusing to arrest an extradited former SS officer who was seen to murder the journalist's grandfather at the Theresienstadt concentration camp in Czechoslovakia.

According to Peter Finkelgruen, his grandfather, Martin Finkelgruen, was beaten to death by Anton Malloth on Dec. 10, 1942, in the so-called "kleine festung" of Theresienstadt.

Finkelgruen told a news conference in Cologne on Friday that on June 6, he presented the written testimony of an eyewitness, Josef Kleger of Prague, to Klaus Schacht of the Dortmund-based National Office for the Prosecution of Nazi Criminals.

But Schacht refused to issue an arrest warrant.

Malloth, now 77, was born in Bohemia, joined the SS and made it his career.

He was sentenced in absentia to death by a Prague court in 1948, but evaded capture, settling in 1957 in Italy, where he was granted citizenship three years later.

He lived undisturbed in Merano, a resort in the German-speaking Tyrol, until Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal tracked him down.

Malloth was extradited to West Germany last year. Prosecutor Schacht visited him at a hospital, but he refused to talk.

Schacht, who claimed there was insufficient evidence to start proceedings, told a television interviewer last year that Malloth could no longer be prosecuted because of the statute of limitations on crimes of beating and torture.

Finkelgruen disagrees. He said Friday that eyewitness testimony should be enough and accused the prosecutor of lacking the will to press the case.

# WHITE SUPREMACIST DAVID DUKE SUFFERS SETBACK IN SENATE BID

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- White supremacist David Duke suffered a bruising defeat in Louisiana state Republican caucuses Dec. 9, but political observers are still not giving up on his chances of winning a seat in the U.S. Senate.

Duke, who is trying to win the seat now held by Democrat L. Bennett Johnston, began the first official test in his candidacy very unsteadily, garnering only 27 delegates out of a total of 545 selected at GOP caucuses throughout Louisiana.

Not one of Duke's delegates from his own district of Metairie was elected. The former imperial wizard of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan represents Metairie in the state legislature.

There are 12 to 15 delegates available from Duke's district to attend the Republican state convention, which will take place Jan. 13. The convention will officially endorse a Republican candidate.

"This is a major defeat for him," said Elizabeth Rickey, a member of the Louisiana State Republican Central Committee and of the Louisiana Coalition Against Racism and Nazism.

However, "he's going to run anyway, regardless of the endorsement process," said Rickey. "This sets him back, but I wouldn't count him out," she emphasized.

The delegates whom Duke was able to attract come from the areas of Shreveport, in northern Louisiana; New Orleans, "which was a surprise," said Rickey; and some from the southeast corner of the state.

He also drew delegates from the area north of New Orleans, known as the Florida parishes, a group of counties that "are very, very conservative, long a Klan stronghold," said Rickey.

She explained that there are still 500 or so delegates who are "automatic, and no one has an idea who they'll support at the state Republican convention" in January.

Official delegates include any elected official in the state. Some 660 delegates to the convention are elected GOP officials, and "it is not known at this time who they will support. They have not been polled," she explained.

Close to 1,200 delegates are expected to attend the convention.

# SOME FEAR LE PEN WILL BENEFIT BY STANDING TRIAL FOR RACISM

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Dec. 17 (JTA) -- There is growing concern in Jewish circles here that right-wing extremist Jean-Marie Le Pen could be strengthened politically by his trial for anti-Semitic hate-mongering, because he may well be acquitted.

He would then become a martyr, a spokesman for the International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism said Friday. He said Le Pen faces a single count of racist libel, which the court might consider insufficient to condemn him.

The Parliament of Europe voted overwhelmingly on Dec. 11 to suspend Le Pen's immunity as a deputy, so that he could be brought to trial, most likely in February.

But the withdrawal of immunity applies only to the charge that he slandered the civil service minister, Michel Durafour, by making a pun on the last syllable of his surname that appeared to mock the crematoria used by the Nazis.

The court may not consider that serious enough grounds for conviction, the league's spokesman said, in which case Le Pen and his National Front party would only benefit.

The party did unexpectedly well in recent special elections, where it ran racist, xenophobic campaigns aimed against Arab immigrants.

# Decries Jewish 'Dictatorship'

Le Pen, who has publicly claimed the Holocaust never occurred, is already playing the martyr. He told a radio interviewer here, "It seems as if there are certain citizens with more rights than others, and the difference between them is based on their attitude to the Jews."

He denied he is anti-Semitic, but added, "I refuse to accept the dictatorship of certain extreme-left Jewish extremists."

During a television debate on Dec. 5, Le Pen badgered a Jewish Cabinet minister, Lionel Stoleru, about alleged dual loyalty by repeatedly asking if he held Israeli as well as French citizenship.

For Le Pen to be tried on additional counts would require another vote by the European Parliament to suspend his immunity.

That is not likely to happen. Although the Dec. 11 vote was 178-91, many deputies, including some of Le Pen's most bitter foes, are reluctant to deprive a member of parliamentary immunity because of the precedent it would set.