

**2 LIKUD FACTIONS CLAIM VICTORY  
AS SHARON THREATENS TO RESIGN**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and his principal rival, Ariel Sharon, both claimed victory for mutually exclusive policies at a climactic meeting of the Likud Central Committee, which ended Monday night in near pandemonium.

Sharon, who is minister of industry and trade, added to the drama by announcing from the dais that he was quitting the government, because he could not abide Shamir's peace policies.

At stake at the meeting was the course Shamir and his supporters propose to follow in bringing about Palestinian elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, leading to negotiations over Palestinian self-rule in the territories.

The entire concept is fiercely opposed by Sharon, who has the support of two other powerful Likud ministers, David Levy and Yitzhak Moda'i, as well as like-minded Knesset members.

The party's rank and file, represented by some 2,600 Central Committee members, was supposed to approve one side or the other.

But the show of hands after Shamir delivered a programmatic policy speech of 42 minutes' duration may or may not have been an endorsement by the majority.

"I ask you and require you to give your support to the policy I have enunciated," Shamir declared.

"Do you support ending the intifada forthwith? Please raise your hands," was Sharon's emotional pitch.

There was a forest of hands, but it was impossible to tell for whom they were raised, since both ministers spoke simultaneously over different microphones.

**Shamir Less Categorical**

Sharon remained on the platform after Shamir and his supporters left the meeting hall behind a flying wedge of security guards and shouts of "Coward!" from hard-liners.

Shamir's rivals claimed that the premier had, in fact, "snatched the vote" and run, because, if anything, the vote was for the hard-line platform enunciated by Sharon.

The spectacle, which took place at the Tel Aviv Fair Grounds, was broadcast live by Israel Radio and the army radio station. It was taped for later television broadcast in Israel and throughout the world.

Political observers agreed that no matter who won the debate, the party suffered a massive public embarrassment.

While Sharon's question about ending the intifada was rhetorical, his others were clearly calculated to cripple Shamir's policies.

"Do you support barring East Jerusalemites from participating in the Palestinian delegation? Raise your hands. Do you support barring deportees from participating? Raise your hands," Sharon intoned.

Shamir had been less categorical on those key issues in his speech. Especially noticeable was his omission of an unequivocal veto on including Palestinians deported from Israel in preliminary

Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, as the Arabs have insisted.

Shamir said a prime minister and a government need a certain amount of room for maneuver in the conduct of their foreign policy, and this should be understood by the Central Committee members.

Most of the delegates remained in the hall after Shamir and his entourage left, a fact hard-line observers called an expression of widespread disagreement with the prime minister's tactics.

**Resignation Not Formal Yet**

The session continued for about 20 minutes, with Sharon, Levy and right-wing Knesset member Tzahi Hanegbi exhorting the delegates. The proceedings finally were brought to an end with the warring camps each pledging to continue the battle in the days and weeks ahead.

Sharon tendered his resignation at the start of the session. In response, his supporters chanted in unison, "Don't quit, Arik," the former Israel Defense Force general's nickname.

Sharon responded, "I heard you, I heard you."

Shamir said later that he would respond after he receives the resignation letter.

Political observers doubt that Sharon will make his resignation formal at this time. But if he does, Shamir has indicated he will accept it. A minister's resignation becomes effective 48 hours after it is formally submitted.

After the session, Shamir said he hoped "that the Likud is not weakened by this special situation, but indeed that it emerges strengthened."

But many observers spoke of an imminent split that could rend the movement permanently into two separate groups.

Shamir vowed that he would "very soon" convene the various smaller policy-making bodies of Likud, apparently to try for the unity that eluded Likud on Monday.

Meanwhile, Labor Party ministers were locked in a policy conference late Monday night.

The doves pushed again for the party to break with Likud and try to form a narrow government with the religious factions.

Labor hard-liners, led by Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, argued that the peace diplomacy can still best be served by preserving the present government. According to Rabin, it would be "irresponsible" for Labor to quit the unity government "hastily."

**RUMORS OF POGROMS ARE GROUNDLESS,  
KGB SAYS IN RARE PUBLIC STATEMENT**  
By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- The Soviet government, traditionally silent on the issue of anti-Semitism, has taken the extraordinary step of issuing a statement saying that no "concrete evidence" exists to support rumors of upcoming pogroms in Moscow.

The statement, issued by the KGB and carried by the Soviet news agency Tass, also chides the news media for assisting in the spread of such rumors.

"Rumors about pogroms rouse people and

exacerbate the situation," said the statement, a copy of which was sent to the World Jewish Congress by Soviet officials.

"The only information that the state security bodies have been receiving are the rumors themselves, reports of them by the mass media and requests by individual citizens for explanations about one rumor or another," the statement said.

While the KGB dismissed the rumors, it also said it is "monitoring the situation" and pledged to "take the necessary measures if the tension escalates."

The security agency called on the media to report the rumors in a more balanced manner, "because appeals to violence on one occasion provoke appeals for violence on other occasions."

In New York, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry cautiously welcomed the statement, but said that deep concern still exists among Jews in Moscow and other Soviet cities.

"If indeed, official sources in the Soviet Union are condemning anti-Semitism and warning against overt anti-Jewish behavior, that is a positive development," said Jerry Strober, an NCSJ spokesman.

But he said the National Conference is still awaiting a statement by Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev condemning anti-Semitism.

#### SECURITY COUNCIL EXPECTED TO MEET ON THE RESETTLEMENT OF SOVIET JEWS By Allison Kaplan

UNITED NATIONS, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- Acting on a request from the Soviet Union, the Security Council is expected to convene this week to discuss the resettlement of Soviet Jews in Israel's administered territories.

Soviet envoy Alexander Belonogov conveyed the request Monday in a letter to the Security Council's current president, Ricardo Alarcon de Quesada of Cuba.

Preliminary consultations on the Soviet Jewry issue began Monday with meetings between Alarcon de Quesada and representatives of the United States and Soviet Union, sources here said.

In addition, Alarcon de Quesada met Monday evening with Ephraim Dowek, deputy permanent representative to the Israeli mission to the United Nations.

Yuval Rotem, a spokesman for the Israeli mission here, said the Soviet initiative is the result of pressure from the Arab world.

Rotem contended that the Arab states do not object only to resettling the Soviet Jews in the West Bank. "They want to see aliyah from the Soviet Union stopped," he said.

The U.N. move appears to be part of a diplomatic initiative launched by Arab states to link the massive wave of Soviet aliyah with the question of continued Israeli administration of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The resolution that will eventually go before the Security Council is not expected to address the general question of the right of Soviet Jews to immigrate to Israel, according to Israeli sources. Instead, it is expected to focus specifically on their settlement on the West Bank.

It was unclear to observers here whether or not the United States would veto the expected resolution if it was brought to a vote.

On the one hand, the United States repeatedly has stated that the resettlement of Soviet

Jews in the West Bank would be an obstacle to peace.

But Secretary of State James Baker, during his visit to Moscow last weekend, rejected a Soviet proposal that the two nations jointly condemn any resettlement of Soviet Jews in the territories.

Baker said it would not be "productive for us to join together in a condemnation of a strong and important ally of the United States."

A parallel effort to raise the issue of Soviet Jewish emigration is reportedly under way at the U.N. Human Rights Commission, which is currently in session in Geneva.

Sources here said that a draft resolution is being circulated in Geneva that also addresses the issue of Soviet Jewish resettlement in Israel.

#### ISRAELI CABINET HEARS UPBEAT REPORT ON FINANCING OF ABSORPTION EFFORT By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 11 (JTA) -- Prospects look good for a \$400 million U.S. loan to help Israel absorb the new influx of immigrants from the Soviet Union, Finance Minister Shimon Peres told the Cabinet on Sunday.

But money is not the only problem. The Interior Ministry, controlled by the ultra-Orthodox Shas party, is refusing to register immigrants from the Soviet Union whose Jewish identity is called into question by Orthodox rabbis.

The ministry insists their identities must be checked to prevent aliens from obtaining immigrant certificates.

A television report over the weekend featured several newly arrived immigrants who complained that they suffered in the Soviet Union for being Jews, while in Israel they are made to suffer because their Jewishness is doubted.

A number of ministers stressed the need to find a way to help immigrants avoid the unpleasantness of having to prove they are Jews.

Peres, meanwhile, said the economic resources available for immigrant absorption now amount to about \$1.4 billion. There is \$900 million for the purpose in the state budget and \$500 million from the Jewish Agency, reflecting contributions by Diaspora Jewry. The American loan would be in addition.

David Levy, the minister of construction and housing, said 3,000 contracts for apartment buildings have been signed, and another 20,000 are awaiting Knesset approval of their budgets.

#### Hints Of New Emigration

Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz, the minister of interior, urged that the new immigrants be settled in the North and the South, in order to increase the Jewish population of Galilee and to end the underpopulation of the Negev.

Communications Minister Gad Ya'acobi urged that everything be done to speed up the immigration of Soviet Jews, because "the earth is burning" under their feet.

Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu disclosed, meanwhile, that Israel is currently making efforts to arrange the emigration of Jews from three countries geographically close to Israel where they are in distress.

Speaking last Friday in Haifa, Netanyahu did not name the countries. He said, however, that "there have been (positive) developments in contacts with three countries around us, and I predict that we will soon see results."

## 10 BLACK MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE URGE FOREIGN AID REALLOCATION

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- Ten black members of Congress are urging their colleagues in the House of Representatives to cut U.S. foreign aid to Israel and five other countries in order to provide more funds for Africa and the Caribbean.

"We believe that U.S. aid should be reallocated because the current distribution is unfair, inequitable and indefensible, and does not serve U.S. interests," the lawmakers said in a "Dear Colleague" letter circulated last week.

The letter was signed by the lawmakers individually and not as part of the 24-member Congressional Black Caucus, which traditionally has supported aid for Israel.

A spokesman for Rep. Ronald Dellums (D-Calif.), who initiated the letter along with Rep. George Crockett (D-Mich.), said it is not aimed at pitting various ethnic groups against each other. The purpose is to stress the need for a more equitable distribution of funds, he said.

The letter was triggered by a suggestion by Senate Majority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) that 5 percent be cut from Israel, Egypt, the Philippines, Turkey and Pakistan to help fund aid to emerging democracies in Eastern Europe and Panama.

The 10 members of Congress added El Salvador to the list and noted that these countries received nearly 70 percent of all U.S. aid.

"In sharp contrast, Africa, the world's poorest region is always at the bottom end of the aid spectrum, receiving less than 6 percent of total U.S. foreign assistance," the lawmakers said. They added that the Caribbean countries receive less than 2 percent of U.S. aid.

### No Mention Of Earmarking

The letter points out that under the current aid budget, "every Israeli would receive \$700 in U.S. aid, while every African would receive just a little more than \$1.

"How can that be justified when Israeli per capita income is \$4,990 and African per capita income is only \$683?" it asks.

The Bush administration has proposed \$14 million in aid to Africa for the 1991 fiscal year, down from \$99 million this year.

Jewish leaders have proposed increasing the total foreign aid budget, rather than cutting the \$3 billion in economic and military aid Israel has received in the last several years.

The lawmakers did not mention a major point of Dole's proposal: giving President Bush more flexibility in distributing foreign aid by ending congressional earmarking, in which most foreign aid is specifically assigned to a country.

The administration supports Dole's call for flexibility, without endorsing specific proposals on cutting aid to any country.

In an interview last week with reporters from the Jewish media, Ron Brown, chairman of the Democratic National Committee, said he supports the current level of aid to Israel and is opposed to ending earmarking.

Signing the letter were Reps. Dellums, Crockett, William Clay (D-Mo.), Mervyn Dymally (D-Calif.), Augustus Hawkins (D-Calif.), Charles Hayes (D-Ill.), Donald Payne (D-N.J.), Gus Savage (D-Ill.), Alan Wheat (D-Mo.) and Delegate Walter Fauntroy (D-D.C.).

## AUSTRIA TO PAY \$25 MILLION MORE IN SUPPORT OF HOLOCAUST SURVIVORS

By Reinhard Engel

VIENNA, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- The Austrian government is expected to soon ratify legislation that will pay \$25 million over a five-year period to Jewish institutions for the elderly and handicapped in Israel, the United States, Austria and other countries.

The expected legislation complements legislation passed Jan. 1, which awarded at least \$165 million in social security benefits to Holocaust survivors who were born in Austria before 1930, eight years prior to the Anschluss.

Both laws, although written in language devoid of the words "reparations" or "compensation," have been heralded as the first recognition by Austria of its responsibility for the victims and survivors of Nazi anti-Semitism.

The new legislation, expected to be formalized "at an early Cabinet meeting," according to a spokesman for the Austrian Finance Ministry, marks an end to two years of negotiations between the Vienna government and the Committee for Jewish Claims on Austria.

In New York, Dr. Israel Miller, president of the committee, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the new legislation enables Jewish institutions as well as individuals to benefit.

"The extension of social insurance pensions to new groups and the commitment of funds for social care projects benefitting the frail, elderly former Austrian Jews is a great achievement 52 years after the Anschluss," Miller said.

Miller explained that the beneficiaries of the new law will include older age groups, including Jews born between March 13, 1924, and May 9, 1930, who until now were excluded from benefits.

In addition, current recipients of small pensions will be able to apply for increases.

### WJC Scoffs At Amount

The official Austrian position since World War II had been that since Austria was the first victim of Nazi aggression, the successor state to the Third Reich was liable to pay compensation for atrocities committed on Austrian soil.

But West Germany specifically excluded Austrian persecutees when it agreed to pay reparations to Israel and to Jewish victims of Nazi persecution in 1952.

The Austrian position came under increasing attack by historians in recent years and the government's attitude began to change.

Chancellor Franz Vranitzky, leader of the Socialist Party, reopened talks with the Claims Committee in 1985 when he was finance minister.

Some Jewish leaders feel that the relatively small pension and institutional allotments, compared with West Germany's reparation payments of more than \$38 billion, are merely a publicity play on the part of the Austrian government to bolster its sagging world image.

"It's a macabre joke," said Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress. "If this is meant as reparations, than the figures are an insult to the memories of the victims and survivors of the Holocaust."

In Vienna, the *Illustrierte Neue Welt*, a Jewish monthly founded by Theodor Herzl more than 90 years ago, observed, "The mask of Austria as a victim should have come off much earlier for the good of its own reflection in the mirror."

## WORLD JEWRY REACTS WITH ELATION TO THE FREEDING OF NELSON MANDELA

JOHANNESBURG, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- The South African Jewish Board of Deputies hailed the release of Nelson Mandela on Monday, in a statement echoed by other Jewish spokesmen worldwide.

The board wished Mandela well and congratulated South African President F.W. de Klerk for his decision to free the African National Congress leader, who became a symbol of the anti-apartheid movement during his 27 years in prison.

"It earnestly hopes Mr. Mandela will use his considerable political experience and wisdom for creating a suitable climate for reconciliation and negotiation, which would be to the benefit of all peoples of South Africa regardless of race, color or creed," the Jewish Board of Deputies said.

In Jerusalem, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir made clear Monday that his country's policy of limiting its contacts with South Africa would not change because of Mandela's release.

"I do not think that we need change our policy when it is still unclear what the situation will be tomorrow," Shamir told Israel Television.

In Toronto, B'nai Brith Canada congratulated the South African regime on Mandela's release.

"It is an overdue but nevertheless bold decision," Frank Dimant, B'nai Brith Canada's executive vice president, said in a statement. "We hope his freedom heralds the fastest possible end to all forms of apartheid."

In New York, Seymour Reich, who was in South Africa only last week for meetings with the president and other political leaders, said, "President de Klerk was true to his word."

"Now the irrevocable process for achieving racial harmony and representative government in South Africa has begun," said Reich, who is international president of B'nai Brith.

Sholom Comay, president of the American Jewish Committee, declared that "freeing Nelson Mandela is a giant step on the road to a more just world."

Lenore Feldman, president of the National Council of Jewish Women, observed, "While this is a momentous step forward and we applaud President de Klerk's efforts, apartheid still oppresses the people of South Africa and must be dismantled."

NCJW urged the South African government to lift the state of emergency and release all political prisoners. It supported a continuation of economic sanctions against South Africa until apartheid is abolished.

## CUBAN OFFICIAL OFFERS TO HELP ISLAND'S TINY JEWISH COMMUNITY

By Ben Kayfetz

TORONTO, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- The Cuban government is prepared to help the Caribbean nation's tiny Jewish community survive, according to an official of the Canadian Jewish Congress who visited Havana recently.

Edmond Yehuda Lipsitz, executive director of the CJC Ontario region, met in Havana with Jose Felipe Carneado, director of the Department of Religious Affairs in Fidel Castro's Communist regime.

They agreed that the first priority is to get a spiritual leader for Cuban Jews, who number roughly 700 in a population of about 10 million, Lipsitz reported here.

He said a demographic survey by a Havana Jew, Moises Asiz, found that 92 percent of Jewish married couples in Cuba are mixed marriages.

That is a consequence of the mass exodus of Cuban Jews when the Communist regime took over in 1959. But without authoritative leadership, the remaining Jewish community will soon disappear, Lipsitz said.

He said there are Spanish-speaking candidates for the position of rabbi. The main problem is housing for the rabbi or rabbinical couple in a city where housing is in very short supply.

Carneado thought the government could be helpful, provided the amount of rent could be agreed to.

The second problem is kosher food. The CJC and the Chabad Lubavitch movement provide Cuban Jews with matzah and other Passover foods every year. The Appeal of Conscience Foundation also has provided Passover food in the past.

Carneado suggested that a kosher restaurant or hotel might be opened in Cuba by private or communal interests. He said his government would welcome and cooperate in such a venture.

Havana had a highly rated kosher restaurant in the pre-revolution era called "Moishe Pipik" on Acosta Street in the old Jewish section. It was a tourist landmark as famous as "Sloppy Joe's."

Finally, there is the problem of brit milah, Lipsitz reported. With no resident mohel on the island, Jewish boys are not circumcised.

Lipsitz said he discussed various proposals with Carneado, including sending Cuban Jewish physicians to Canada for training as mohelim. He said Carneado expressed willingness to cooperate in such a plan by making travel possible.

## NEW LEADER OF URUGUAY TO SPUR DRIVE TO REPEAL U.N. RESOLUTION

NEW YORK, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- Uruguay will mobilize Latin American countries in a drive to repeal the 1975 U.N. resolution equating Zionism with racism, its president-elect, Dr. Luis Alberto Lacalle, told Jewish leaders here last week.

Lacalle, who is visiting the United States, had an hour-long meeting with 20 national Jewish leaders at World Jewish Congress headquarters. He was accompanied by leaders of Uruguay's Jewish community.

Lacalle, who said he has always held the Jewish people in highest regard, said he plans to break with tradition by inviting the senior rabbi in Montevideo to join the Roman Catholic archbishop at his inauguration in the city's cathedral on March 1.

He stressed that close ties with Israel would continue to be the hallmark of Uruguay's foreign policy under his administration.

One indication of those close relations occurred in December, when Israeli President Chaim Herzog paid a visit to Montevideo, becoming the first Israeli head of state to travel to the South American country.

Evelyn Sommers, U.S. president of the Women's International Zionist Organization, asked Lacalle whether, in view of the close relations, Uruguay would recruit other Latin American countries to try to eliminate the Zionism-racism resolution.

He replied that in Uruguay, "the efforts against this resolution were originated by me."

He said his country would therefore take the lead in a repeal drive. "I will instruct our foreign minister to do so," he said.