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**PERES CLAIMS HE'S FORMED GOVERNMENT, BUT WON'T REVEAL SOURCE OF SUPPORT**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 4 (JTA) -- An aura of mystery and tension hung over the Labor Party's announcement Wednesday evening that it had succeeded in forming a new coalition government.

Labor Party leader Shimon Peres formally notified President Chaim Herzog and asked Knesset Speaker Dov Shilansky to call the 120-member legislative body out of recess this Sunday for a vote of confidence.

Peres' formal notification was delivered to Herzog at 6:30 p.m. local time by Dahlia Goren, secretary of Labor's Knesset faction. A copy went to Shilansky, who said he would consult with Attorney General Yosef Harish about convening the Knesset and would make a decision Thursday.

But apart from those brief announcements, no hint was given of where Labor found the votes needed to break the 60-60 Knesset deadlock that has prevailed since the Likud-Labor unity government collapsed under Labor's no-confidence motion March 15.

Peres and his colleagues were especially tight-lipped. Observers had the impression that the situation is volatile and nothing definite can be known before the Knesset convenes.

Pundits, meanwhile, focused on five former members of Likud's Liberal Party wing who defected last month to form a separate Knesset faction.

Their leader, Yitzhak Moda'i, and his colleague, Avraham Sharir, were reported to have cast their lot with Labor. The three others reportedly decided to return to the Likud fold.

Moda'i has been engaged in intensive negotiations in recent days with Peres and separately with Likud leader Yitzhak Shamir.

**Number Of Defectors Unclear**

Political observers do not rule out the possibility that other Knesset members associated with the Likud-led bloc may have secretly switched their support to a Labor-led government.

"I have said there is a majority; more than that I will not say," Peres told reporters in Tel Aviv. He said negotiations were continuing and that he hoped "to broaden the base of support."

He refused to say which Knesset member joined the 60 already committed to Labor. "How do you know that it is an individual?" Peres asked.

Haim Ramon, chairman of the Labor Party's Knesset faction, was equally non-committal. He predicted that a majority of the Knesset would vote confidence in the new government and hoped it would be "larger than we now assess," but he would not elaborate.

Ramon spoke of "an atmosphere of pressure and threats" surrounding possible wavering Knesset members and implied that was the reason for caution.

Some newspapers reported Wednesday that Sharir, one of the Likud members said to have transferred his allegiance to Labor, would be escorted to the Knesset for the confidence vote by police guard.

According to speculation, Sharir was offered

the Transport Ministry by Peres and Moda'i was promised the Finance Ministry, a portfolio he held when Peres was prime minister in the Labor-Likud coalition government of 1984.

But if Peres indeed secured his majority by enticing Likud defectors, he may well lose the support of one of the small leftist factions traditionally aligned to Labor.

Amon Rubinstein of the Center-Shinui Movement declared Wednesday night that Peres "can definitely not count on our two votes for a government based on a deserter."

Rubinstein, a law professor who once served as minister of communications, said the idea of building a majority by courting renegades "destroys the fabric of our democracy."

Rubinstein and a growing body of political and public opinion seem now to favor the creation of a temporary Labor-Likud unity regime for the single purpose of enacting drastic electoral reforms and calling new elections.

Peres received his mandate from Herzog to try to form a new government on March 20. The 21-day period allowed to accomplish the task expires on April 11.

**POPE'S PLAN TO MEET WITH ARAFAT ON FRIDAY RANKLES JEWISH GROUPS**  
By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, April 4 (JTA) -- A meeting to take place Friday between Pope John Paul II and Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat has already provoked anger and protest among Jewish groups here.

"Such a meeting raises the most profound concerns within the Jewish community worldwide and constitutes a serious setback to the cause of mutual understanding and respect," the main Jewish group dealing with the Vatican said in a letter of protest to Archbishop Edward Cassidy, president of the Vatican's Commission on Religious Relations With the Jews.

The letter was signed by Seymour Reich, who chairs IJCIC, the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations. The umbrella group represents B'nai B'rith International, the Synagogue Council of America, the World Jewish Congress and the Israel Interfaith Center.

The meeting, which will be the pope's third with Arafat, is viewed as "compromising the moral stature of the pope," Reich said in the letter.

The PLO remains "a terrorist organization that has not yet rescinded its covenant calling for the destruction of Israel -- that has tried to block Soviet Jews from coming to Israel -- and has threatened those countries whose airlines are cooperating in the airlift of Soviet Jewish to Israel," Reich contended in a statement accompanying the letter.

IJCIC leaders are particularly miffed that they were not informed of the meeting from the Vatican and instead learned about it from reports in the news media.

After the pope's controversial meeting with Austrian President Kurt Waldheim in June 1987, the Vatican agreed to cooperate with the Jewish leaders to avoid such surprises and misunderstandings.

The Vatican's failure this time to give advance warning of the Arafat meeting is viewed by IJCIC "as not only substantively harmful to the cause of dialogue, but wholly inconsistent with the agreed-upon procedural mechanism designed to avoid such tensions," the group said in its letter.

#### Contacts With Vatican Planned

The strain over the Arafat visit comes just as Catholic-Jewish wounds were healing over the presence of a group of Carmelite nuns on the grounds of the former Auschwitz death camp. Construction has begun on an interfaith prayer and education center away from the camp, where the nuns will be relocated.

With that issue resolved, IJCIC had been planning two meetings with the Vatican in the autumn, including its first full-scale consultation with the Commission on Religious Relations With the Jews since 1985.

On March 18, the pope held an audience with a delegation from the American Jewish Committee, the first Jewish group to meet with him since the convent flap.

"Clearly, the papal audience for the American Jewish Committee was a setup to blind-side us with the Arafat meeting," said Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress.

But Rabbi A. James Rudin, AJCommittee's director of interreligious affairs, said he "refused to accept" Steinberg's suggestion. On the contrary, Rudin said that he was glad his delegation got the chance to meet with the pope before his meeting with Arafat.

"I think it would have been worse if he met with Arafat and we had not met with him March 18 and stressed the need for full Vatican-Israel relations," Rudin said.

The Vatican has never recognized or had diplomatic relations with the Jewish state.

#### Demonstration At U.N. Scheduled

Rudin said that the content of the Arafat meeting would be more pivotal than the fact that the encounter was taking place. He said the meeting itself is difficult to protest when so many nations, including the U.S. government, now speak to the PLO.

But he said he hoped it would be made clear that the meeting is "a pastoral visit only and not taken as accepting politics or methods of the PLO."

Rudin added that the pope should reiterate to the PLO leader what he had told the AJCommittee delegation and other Jewish groups: that he believes Israel is a legitimate "member of the international family of nations."

A coalition of student groups, organized by the North American Jewish Students Network, plans to protest the pope's meeting with Arafat in a demonstration Thursday in front of the Vatican mission to the United Nations.

Jacob Davidson, president of the North American Jewish Students Network, said that he had requested a meeting with a Vatican representative to register his protest personally, but had been turned down.

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Because of the Passover holiday, JTA will not publish the Daily News Bulletin on Tuesday and Wednesday, April 10 and 11. Chag sameach to our readers!

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#### **ARAFAT ARRIVES IN PARIS FOR SESSION WITH JIMMY CARTER AND FRENCH LEADER**

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, April 4 (JTA) -- Yasir Arafat arrived here from Tunis on Wednesday for meetings with French officials and former U.S. President Jimmy Carter.

French President Francois Mitterrand announced unexpectedly Wednesday afternoon that he planned to join Carter and the Palestine Liberation Organization leader late Wednesday evening for an overall review of the Middle East peace process.

Carter, who has been on a fact-finding tour of the Middle East on behalf of President Bush, now becomes the highest-ranking American personality with whom Arafat has met.

Mitterrand formally received Arafat in Paris last May, the first Western chief of state to do so.

PLO circles in Paris are hailing the meeting as a major diplomatic breakthrough, symbolic of the international recognition the PLO now enjoys.

Jewish groups here, angry about the meeting, staged protests outside Arafat's hotel.

Mitterrand announced his plans shortly after Carter and Arafat landed at different airports.

They were scheduled to meet at Carter's hotel suite and later drive to the Elysee Palace to dine with Mitterrand.

Dinner was scheduled for a late hour to accommodate Arafat, who is observing the Moslem fast of Ramadan and cannot eat before sundown.

Arafat landed in Paris sporting khaki fatigues, his traditional kaffiyeh and a broad smile. He was greeted by the full Arab diplomatic corps, including the Egyptian ambassador, and a representative of the French government.

#### Betar Stages Small Protest

Security arrangements were described as "normal" by the authorities. Uniformed police and security guards were far fewer in number than on Arafat's last visit 11 months ago.

The PLO chief's first official meeting Wednesday was with the French foreign minister, Roland Dumas, apparently to prepare for his sessions with Carter and Mitterrand in the evening.

When Arafat came to Paris in May 1989, thousands demonstrated to protest his visit, and press and television newscasts reflected the public's displeasure.

This time the presence of the PLO chief and his high-level meetings are being treated almost routinely.

Fewer than a dozen Jewish demonstrators stood outside his hotel. The French branch of Betar, the militant Zionist youth group, said it planned a demonstration outside Carter's hotel in the evening.

Jean Kahn, president of CRIF, the Representative Council of French Jewish Organizations, asked for a meeting with Carter to express French Jewry's unhappiness over his meeting with Arafat.

But Carter apparently will not be able to receive a CRIF delegation because of his short time in Paris.

Arafat is scheduled to leave Thursday for Rome for a two-day visit at the invitation of the Italian government.

His agenda includes a meeting with Pope John Paul II and government leaders.

**BUSH HAILS 'MODERN EXODUS' FROM USSR AT WHITE HOUSE CEREMONY FOR PASSOVER**  
By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, April 4 (JTA) -- Calling Passover the "festival of freedom," President Bush pledged Wednesday that the United States would continue to support the "modern exodus" of Jews from the Soviet Union.

"We will continue to do everything necessary to make it possible for Soviet Jews to get to Israel, including continuing to press for direct and indirect flights," Bush said at a White House ceremony.

"We are glad that so many will celebrate the seder in Israel, and we're going to keep working so that many more can join them."

Bush's remarks were part of his Passover message, which he signed surrounded by Ze'ev and Karmela Raiz, Soviet Jews who recently immigrated to Israel after almost 18 years of refusal, and Natasha Stonov, who is visiting the United States on behalf of her husband, Leonid, who has been denied an exit visa for 11 years because of his alleged access to state secrets.

Ze'ev Raiz, who formerly went by the name Vladimir, expressed his gratitude for the efforts of Bush and others in the United States, adding that without their help, he and other refuseniks would not have been allowed to leave.

He said the support for Soviet Jews by the United States is a "distinguished page in the Haggadah that is now being written."

Karmela Raiz told reporters later that four months ago, she had come to the United States and found support for her efforts to persuade the Soviets to allow her husband to emigrate. She said Natasha Stonov was now here on a similar mission.

**Can't 'Forget Those Left Behind'**

Raiz said the greatest thing the United States, as a democracy, can do is to aid freedom.

"You can't appreciate it as we do, since you always were free, and we are free only now," she said.

During his remarks, Bush turned to the Raizes and said, "May you and your children enjoy many years of happiness together in your new home in Israel."

Bush said that 15,000 Soviet Jews have emigrated to Israel this year and praised the changes in the Soviet Union that have allowed this to happen.

"But, we must not -- and I can assure you we will not -- forget those who are left behind," he added.

Bush then turned to Stonov and expressed "regret that another Passover is here with Leonid still in the Soviet Union." He asked her to take back to Moscow "a message to Leonid and all others who still await freedom: They are not forgotten."

While presidents have issued Passover statements every year, this is the first ceremony in memory held at the White House to mark the event.

Among those present were Vice President Dan Quayle, Secretary of State James Baker, White House Chief of Staff John Sununu and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft.

Attending from Congress were Sens. Christopher Bond (R-Mo.) and Gordon Humphrey (R-Vt.) and Reps. Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.) and Jack Buechner (R-Mo.).

**QUAYLE RAPS ZIONISM RESOLUTION AT SPECIAL SEDER FOR SOVIET JEWS**  
By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, April 4 (JTA) -- Vice President Dan Quayle said Tuesday evening that the 1975 U.N. resolution equating Zionism with racism is a modern-day version of the Christian blood libel.

He spoke at a unique congressional seder for Soviet Jews, featuring a satellite hookup with mock sederim in Israel and the Soviet Union.

Sponsored by the United Jewish Appeal and the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, the seder was designed to promote Operation Exodus, the special UJA campaign being conducted to help finance the resettlement of Soviet Jews in Israel.

UJA's rabbinic cabinet wrote a gender-neutral Passover Hagaddah -- that included the word glasnost -- especially for the three-hour seder, which was attended by 500 people at the Departmental Auditorium, a federal assembly hall.

A primary purpose of the hookup, which took place at 3 a.m. and 4 a.m. local time in Israel and Moscow, was to symbolically reunite the Uspensky refusenik family in Moscow and Israel. The central refusenik at the Moscow seder was Irina Voronkevich, a botany professor and the Uspensky family matriarch, who is not Jewish.

The hookup allowed Voronkevich to see her 1-year-old great-granddaughter in Israel for the first time. The Uspenskys emigrated from the Soviet Union to Israel last year.

Marvin Lender, UJA national chairman-elect, told the crowd that \$109 million of the \$420 million goal for Operation Exodus has been raised so far.

Shoshana Cardin, chairwoman of NCSJ, spoke of the emerging anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. She also lit the holiday candles.

**Extols Toleration And Freedom**

Quayle sat at the head of the seder table, accompanied by his wife, Marilyn; daughter, Corinne; and Gordon Zacks, a member of the National Jewish Coalition's steering committee.

The seder was led by the multilingual actor Theodore Bikel, who helped with the translations.

In his speech, interrupted many times by applause, Quayle said, "As a Christian, I am here this evening to affirm my solidarity with the historic struggle of the Jewish people for freedom."

"Though the huge majority of the American people are committed to toleration and to freedom for all races and creeds, there are some, unfortunately, who don't share our commitment."

He referred to "the likes of David Duke in the Republican Party, who we reject," and "the likes of Gus Savage in the Democratic Party, whom they should reject."

Duke is a white-supremacist who serves in the Louisiana state legislature. Savage, a Democratic congressman from Illinois, has made strong attacks against Jews and Israel in recent weeks.

In the olden days around Passover, Quayle said, "Jewish communities throughout Europe were accused of using the blood of Christian children to bake their matzah. This obscene charge is known in history as the blood libel. And it was often the prelude to executions and pogroms."

"We would all like to believe that the grotesque days of blood libel are behind us," but they are not, said Quayle, referring to the 1975 U.N. resolution. "This is a modern version of the blood libel," he said.

## HOUSE APPROVES LOAN GUARANTEES, EXTRA \$35 MILLION FOR SOVIET JEWS

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, April 4 (JTA) -- The House of Representatives on Tuesday approved \$400 million in investment guarantees to provide housing loans for newly arrived Soviet emigres in Israel.

The \$400 million was contained in a \$2.4 billion supplemental appropriations bill for this fiscal year, which began Oct. 1. President Bush requested the bill, which also includes emergency aid for Nicaragua and Panama.

The bill, which was approved 362-59, also contains \$35 million to help Jewish groups bring Soviet Jews to the United States or resettle them in Israel.

The \$35 million is part of a larger \$75 million figure the House approved mainly to meet a shortfall in the U.S. worldwide refugee budget for this fiscal year.

Of the \$35 million, \$30 million would go to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. Those groups assist Soviet Jews seeking entry to the United States.

Also as part of the bill, the House approved \$5 million for the United Israel Appeal, which distributes funds raised by the United Jewish Appeal. Those funds were needed not because of underfunding of the U.S. refugee program, but out of recognition that larger numbers of Soviet Jews are going to Israel.

UIA had previously received nearly \$25 million for resettling Soviet Jews in Israel proper this year.

Mark Talisman, director of the Washington Action Office of the Council of Jewish Federations, hailed the House action. He predicted that the Senate would take up both measures before it adjourns next week for Easter and Passover.

The House bill was sponsored by Rep. David Obey (D-Wis.). A similar Senate version is sponsored by Sens. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Robert Kasten (R-Wis.).

Rep. Gus Savage (D-Ill.), who made anti-Semitic remarks after he won his primary reelection campaign late last month, tried unsuccessfully to strip the \$400 million and the \$75 million from the bill.

Savage noted that Israel received nearly \$3 billion in U.S. aid this year, while 45 nations in sub-Saharan Africa received about \$30 million.

The House voted 418-2 to retain the \$75 million, and on voice vote decided to retain the \$400 million in loan guarantees. Only Rep. George Crockett (D-Mich.), who is retiring, sided with Savage on the roll-call vote.

## HOUSE ADOPTS SENATE VERSION OF BILL REQUIRING U.S. TO RECORD HATE CRIMES

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, April 4 (JTA) -- A bill requiring the U.S. Justice Department to compile data on crimes motivated by hate was adopted by the House of Representatives on Wednesday by a vote of 402-18.

The Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith immediately hailed the adoption of the Hate Crimes Statistics Act and urged President Bush "to promptly sign this much-needed legislation."

The House, which had passed a hate-crimes statistics bill last year, adopted the version

approved by the Senate in February.

The decision not to iron out differences in the two bills in a Senate-House conference session was made by House sponsors of the legislation in order to avoid any further delays, according to Michael Lieberman, associate director of ADL's Washington office.

The bill had been held up in the Senate since last summer because of Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.), who objected to the inclusion of homosexuals as hate-crime victims. The Senate eventually approved the bill by a vote of 92-4.

The Senate version, adopted by the House on Wednesday, uses the term "sexual orientation" instead of homosexuals, as in the original House bill. It also contains an amendment stating that nothing in the act can be construed as trying to "promote or encourage homosexuality."

Bush is expected to sign the bill soon, since it has the support of the Justice Department. Once this happens, "the attorney general will begin a process through which officials will be in a better position to document and prosecute hate crimes, which appear to have risen dramatically in recent years," said Burton Levinson, ADL's national chairman.

## GERMANY ALLOWS NEO-NAZI CONVENTION

By David Kantor

BONN, April 4 (JTA) -- A court in the West German city of Aachen has overruled authorities in the nearby town of Stolberg, who refused to rent a municipal hall to the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party for its national convention April 21-22.

The town, which is near the Belgian border, cited the imminent danger of clashes between NPD delegates and anti-Nazi protesters. But the court declared the ban illegal.

The extreme right-wing NPD, which numbers many Nazi veterans among its members, is barred from West Berlin by the Allied Powers. It is free to operate in the Federal Republic, but has declined in popularity, after some successes in local and regional elections in the 1970s.

The NPD has been overshadowed on the far right by the Munich-based Republican Party, headed by a former Waffen SS officer, Franz Schoenhuber. The Republicans, likewise, have shown substantially poorer at the polls this year since German unification became a likelihood.

## TWO JEWISH GOVERNORS WON'T RUN AGAIN

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, April 4 (JTA) -- Madeleine Kunin, the first Jew and first woman to serve as governor of Vermont, has announced that she will not run for a fourth two-year term.

Kunin, a 56-year-old Democrat, made the announcement Tuesday in Montpelier, the state capital.

She was born in Switzerland and came to the United States in 1940 with her widowed mother and older brother. Before entering politics, she worked as a reporter for a Burlington newspaper and in television.

The only other Jew presently serving as governor, Neal Goldschmidt, also has announced he will not seek re-election, after serving one four-year term as Oregon's chief executive. He formerly served as mayor of Portland and as secretary of transportation in the Carter administration.