

**VA'AD MEMBERS MEET WITH PLO IN USSR  
TO DISCUSS SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRATION**

By Susan Birnbaum and Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, April 19 (JTA) -- Members of the Va'ad, the umbrella body of Soviet Jewish institutions, took part this week in a roundtable discussion with a Palestinian delegation that included Nabil Amro, the Palestine Liberation Organization's Moscow representative and Palestinian leader Faisal Husseini.

The seminar, which took place Monday in Moscow, focused on Soviet Jewish immigration to Israel. It was hosted by Al-Hiyat, a London Arabic-language newspaper, and held at Moscow's Hammer Center.

Va'ad leaders would not, however, attend a follow-up meeting with PLO members Thursday at the Soviet Foreign Ministry, because it was "inconsistent with the non-political character of the Va'ad to meet with a political PLO delegation," Va'ad Co-President Mikhail Chlenov told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency on Thursday, in a telephone interview from Moscow.

Chlenov said he felt Monday's discussion was intellectual, rather than political, and that the Palestinians there "were not representing themselves as members of the PLO, rather as representatives of the Palestinian people."

However, a PLO spokesman in New York said that Amro's presence at the seminar "reflected the point of view of the PLO."

Chlenov described the meeting as "useful." He said the Va'ad members told of their worry over the growing anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union and the lack of response from the government.

Chlenov pointed out that there was proof that Arab organizations had supported the anti-Semitic group Pamyat in a demonstration it staged in December at the site of the Jewish congress that met to form the Va'ad.

**U.S. Officials Present**

"We laid out our interests and our concerns not just before the Palestinians, but before the wide public that attended the session," Chlenov said. "We wanted to be understood, because we feel we are badly understood by the outside world."

The Va'ad representatives at the meeting Monday were Chlenov; Alexander Shmukler, president of B'nai B'rith in Moscow; and Vladimir Schapira, head of the Jewish Scientific Center.

Some Soviet Jews did participate in the Thursday meeting, though not under the auspices of the Va'ad, according to Chlenov. They included Tancred Galompolsky, editor of a Jewish newspaper, and Yuri Sokol, chairman of the Moscow Cultural Society.

Also present at Monday's meeting were members of the staff of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, the Egyptian ambassador to the Soviet Union and a Soviet Foreign Ministry official.

It could not immediately be determined if the presence of U.S. officials violated the Bush administration's policy of limiting contact with the PLO to the U.S. ambassador to Tunisia.

The Va'ad agreed to participate in Monday's discussion because the PLO delegation was in

Moscow specifically to exert pressure on the Soviet government to curtail Jewish immigration to Israel, according to Daniel Mariaschin, director of international affairs for B'nai B'rith International in Washington, who spoke with Shmukler.

**Husseini Urges Soviets To Cut Aliyah**

In the meeting, the Va'ad made clear its position that aliyah "is the national movement of the Soviet Jews, devoted to the repatriation of the Jewish people to their homeland," Shmukler told Mariaschin.

Shmukler told Mariaschin that during the roundtable discussion Monday, Husseini demanded that the Soviet Union curtail emigration to Israel.

He quoted Husseini as saying that Soviet Jewish emigration is "a mass movement to Israel," and that 700,000 Soviet Jews would arrive in the next four years.

Husseini also reportedly said that Soviet Jews have the right to emigrate, but not to Israel. He said they should go to the United States, Canada and Western Europe.

In Jerusalem, Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency Executives, was sharply critical of declarations Husseini made against aliyah.

"The truth is finally coming out that the opposition of the Arabs is not merely to the settlement of the olim in the territories, since the olim do not choose to settle there anyway, but rather to aliyah at large," he told senior officials of the Jewish Agency on Thursday.

There have been calls to put Husseini on trial in Israel for his statements against aliyah. Attorney General Yosef Harish on Wednesday informed Knesset member Geula Cohen of the right-wing Tehiya party that he was reviewing Husseini's statements for possible legal measures against him.

*(JTA correspondent Gil Sedan in Jerusalem contributed to this report.)*

**AGUDAH POLITICIAN TO SUPPORT LABOR,  
GIVING IT HOPE OF FORMING COALITION**  
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 19 (JTA) -- The political seesaw tilted sharply back toward Shimon Peres late Thursday, putting him once more within reach of forming a governing coalition led by the Labor Party.

His sudden change of fortune was brought about by Agudah Yisrael Knesset member Avraham Verdiger, whose equally sudden defection, along with colleague Eliezer Mizrahi, eight days earlier deprived Peres of what had seemed would be a guaranteed parliamentary majority.

Verdiger, reversing his earlier reversal, said Thursday he could now in good conscience support a Labor regime, in obedience to Agudah's Council of Torah Sages.

The ultra-Orthodox party's supreme authority, which cut a deal with Labor two weeks ago, had ordered its five-member Knesset faction to back Peres.

The refusal of Verdiger and Mizrahi to comply on ideological grounds, was unprecedented defiance.

Verdiger, having made his peace with the

sages, promised to try to influence Mizrahi to return to the fold, as well. That would assure Peres of the 61-vote Knesset majority he needs to establish a government.

Verdiger, who objects to Labor's willingness to consider territorial concessions as a way to peace, claimed to have gotten written assurances from Labor that his views will not be compromised and his freedom of conscience respected.

#### Likud Debating Deal With Liberals

The latest bombshell in Israel's mercurial political process exploded as Likud's Central Committee was engaged Thursday night in rancorous debate at the Binyanei Ha'uma convention center here.

The issue before Likud was whether to endorse an agreement its leadership signed with the Party for the Advancement of the Zionist-Liberal Ideals.

That renegade faction was established only a month ago by five former members of Likud's Liberal Party wing, led by the ex-minister for economics and planning, Yitzhak Moda'i.

One of their number, Avraham Sharir, recently offered himself to Labor, in exchange for a safe seat on its next elections list.

The others worked a similar deal with Likud's top brass, which included a guaranteed ministerial post for Moda'i, who a short while ago was one of the most scathing critics of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's peace diplomacy.

The deal shocked many of Likud's idealistic young guard and turned the stomachs of some hardened political veterans, leaving in doubt whether the Central Committee would ratify it.

#### **ISRAEL'S FOREIGN POLICY PARALYZED BY PROCEDURE TO FORM GOVERNMENT**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 19 (JTA) -- The uncertainty surrounding the formation of a government has completely paralyzed the workings of the Foreign Ministry and has harmed Israel's ties with many countries, according to a report Thursday in Yediot Aharonot.

The government crisis has held up the appointment of 17 heads of legations, among them ambassadors to the United States, Canada, the United Nations and France, as well as to countries that recently restored relations with Israel.

A senior Foreign Ministry source is quoted as saying that "many countries have suspended dialogue with Israel, while waiting for a government to be formed. Agreements which were supposed to be signed with some countries have not been signed."

Diplomatic contacts with the United States and the Soviet Union have been halted completely, Foreign Ministry sources say.

Soviet authorities are holding up discussions regarding the possibility of direct flights from Moscow to Israel in return for guarantees that the immigrants will not settle in the territories.

Foreign Minister Moshe Arens, who was scheduled to sign an agreement for the renewal of diplomatic relations with Bulgaria on Thursday, has postponed his visit there as a result of the political crisis.

One exception to the abeyance of diplomatic activity, however, was the presentation Thursday of the new Czech ambassador, Milos Pojar, to President Chaim Herzog. Czech President Vaclav Havel is to visit Israel next week.

#### **DOLE, UNDER FIRE FROM COLLEAGUES, WON'T TRY TO RESCIND JERUSALEM BILL**

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, April 19 (JTA) -- Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) on Thursday pulled back from his threat to have the Senate rescind a resolution recognizing Jerusalem as Israel's capital, contending "the less said about the substance of that issue, the better."

"It is too late to unscramble the egg of the Jerusalem issue. The damage is done," Dole told a near-empty Senate chamber during a period of routine morning business.

While Dole was speaking, House Republican leaders held a news conference on the other side of the U.S. Capitol to take issue with some of the minority leader's recent statements on aid to Israel, Jewish priorities and the status of Jerusalem, which, they said, are not mainstream views in the Republican Party.

In a letter Thursday, the Republican leaders criticized Dole for saying, among other things, that U.S. Jewish leaders had shown "selfishness" for refusing to "give one penny" of U.S. foreign aid to "anybody else" besides Israel.

"Such personal attacks send a negative message that does damage to our party," wrote House Minority Whip Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) and Reps. Duncan Hunter (R-Calif.), Vin Weber (R-Minn.) and Bill McCollum (R-Fla.).

At the news conference, Gingrich said he "respectfully disagrees" with Dole.

Weber said Dole made a "very serious gaffe" by implicitly questioning the loyalty of American Jews, whom he called "patriotic Americans who devote themselves to a variety of causes." He said he presumes that Dole's statement was "a slip of the tongue."

#### Dealing In 'Nonsense'

Dole did not comment on that criticism in his speech Thursday. Nor did he follow through on a statement made Sunday in Israel, in which he said he would speak on the Senate floor this week in favor of rescinding the resolution on Jerusalem.

The Senate adopted the resolution, sponsored by Sen. Daniel Moynihan (D-N.Y.), by voice vote on March 22. The House has yet to vote on a similar resolution, introduced by Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.), which has more than 100 co-sponsors.

Dole told the Senate on Thursday that the resolution came up several times during the trip he and four Senate colleagues took last week to five Middle East countries.

"Egypt's President (Hosni) Mubarak opened our meeting by raising the resolution," he said. "Jordan's King Hussein spent 20 to 30 minutes discussing it, and he gave me a letter on the subject."

"If the Arab leaders were looking for an excuse to avoid the broader peace process issue, (the resolution) gave it to them on a silver platter," Dole said.

"We call ourselves the greatest deliberative body in the world," the senator continued. "When you travel around the world, you find that some people still think we are. They take what we do and say seriously."

"And they despair, just as we should," he continued later, when they see that "what we really deal in is the nonsense of the Senate. I think we can do better. And I think we should start now," he said.

## OLD CITY SETTLERS WIN TEMPORARY STAY WHILE ACTIVISTS ORDER DEATH FOR SELLER

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 19 (JTA) -- The eviction of 150 Orthodox Jews from a building in the heart of the Old City's Christian Quarter was temporarily stayed Thursday, while intifada activists passed a death sentence against the man who allegedly leased it to them.

Supreme Court Justice Gavriel Bach issued the interim order restraining police from removing the settlers as they had been instructed to do earlier in the day by Attorney General Yosef Harish.

The order was requested by a Panamanian corporation that claims it took a 10-year lease on the building, known as St. John's Hospice, and that the Jewish settlers are its guests.

But it was seen as no more than a technicality inasmuch as a three-judge panel of the High Court of Justice was scheduled to hear an appeal against the eviction Friday morning.

The building is owned by the Greek Orthodox Church, which requested and received the Jerusalem District Court's order for eviction.

The alleged lessor was identified as an Armenian businessman, Mardiros Matossian, who the church says has no legal standing and is in fact himself a tenant.

The Unified Command of the Palestinian Uprising said Thursday that it had pronounced a death sentence on Matossian.

Armenian sources in East Jerusalem said he had already fled to Canada with the \$3.5 million he received for the building.

The settlers, about 20 families and 60 yeshiva students, occupied the premises on April 11.

The move, during the holy days preceding Easter, triggered angry protests by Christians around the world.

Church leaders in Jerusalem have since informed the government unofficially that they will shut down all holy places for a month to protest its failure to evict the settlers.

The Greek government has also demanded their eviction. But a spokesman for the new conservative regime in Athens said it would not affect its decision to establish full diplomatic ties with Israel.

In Washington, the State Department called Thursday for a speedy resolution of the situation.

"We believe that it would be in the best interest of reducing tension for this matter concluded as quickly as possible," said department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler.

## STATE DEPARTMENT CRITICIZES SHAMIR OVER SETTING UP OF NEW SETTLEMENTS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, April 19 (JTA) -- The Bush administration Thursday strongly criticized Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's government for using its caretaker status to start new settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"We have repeatedly urged the government of Israel to refrain from establishing more settlements or expanding existing settlements," said State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler.

"It would be disappointing that a leadership that was not prepared to go forward on peace would be prepared to take steps on settlements, which in our view make it more difficult to develop a meaningful peace process," she said.

Her remarks were a veiled reference to the refusal of Shamir and his Likud colleagues to agree to Secretary of State James Baker's proposals for an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue without certain guarantees.

It was Labor's demands that Likud agree to the talks that led to the collapse of the coalition government.

Tutwiler repeated the U.S. opposition to settlements as an obstacle to peace in the wake of a report Thursday in The Washington Post, which said that the Israeli government plans a crash program to break ground on four new settlements and install permanent housing for rabbinical students encamped in Nablus and Jews living in a trailer park near Hebron.

Shamir, who is also acting defense and finance ministers, has named Michael Dekel, one of Likud's most ardent advocates for settlements, to be in charge of settlements for the Defense Ministry during the interim period.

## ISRAELI JETS ATTACK AHMED JABRIL'S PFLP-GC TERROR BASE SOUTH OF BEIRUT

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 19 (JTA) -- The Israeli air force on Thursday attacked a Palestinian terrorist base six miles south of Beirut.

All aircraft returned safely to their bases following the raid, which was the 10th this year against terrorist installations in Lebanon.

A military spokesman identified the targets as installations of Ahmed Jabril's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command.

The bases were housed in caves near the hilltop village of Noueimeh, overlooking the town of Damour. They were reportedly used for training and as a jumping-off place for attacks against Israel and its allied South Lebanon Army.

Eyewitnesses said two aircraft made two passes over the target at a one-hour interval, firing 10 air-to-ground missiles which blew up the entrance to the caves. The first raid reportedly missed its intended target.

Lebanese sources said that two people were killed and two wounded, including one member of the PFLP-GC. Two buildings were reportedly damaged, in addition to the destroyed base.

## MOST ISRAELIS ACCEPT LAND FOR PEACE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 19 (JTA) -- A majority of Israelis favor some form of territorial compromise, according to the latest poll conducted by the Modi'in Ezrachi Research Institute.

But less than 4 percent of Israelis would give up the entire West Bank and East Jerusalem in return for a peace treaty, according to the poll, which was published Thursday.

Nearly 20 percent are willing to give up the entire West Bank, but not East Jerusalem, and 35 percent are willing to accept some territorial concessions.

Forty-two percent are against any territorial concessions whatsoever, even in return for a peace treaty.

In addition, 53 percent of those polled said they disapprove of the behavior of Shas in the Knesset no-confidence vote March 15.

It was the abstention from that vote of five members of Shas, the Sephardic religious party, that brought down the Likud-led government of Yitzhak Shamir.

**ISRAEL TO PURCHASE \$285 MILLION  
IN NEW ARMS FROM UNITED STATES**

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, April 19 (JTA) -- Israel will soon buy \$285 million in U.S. arms, including \$150 million worth of missile-carrying Apache helicopters to defend it against enemy tanks, an Israeli Embassy official said Wednesday.

Besides 18 AH-64 Apache attack helicopters, the sale would include 539 Hellfire missiles; 14 spare Hellfire launchers; 16 spare engines; support equipment; ammunition; and U.S. maintenance services.

On April 12, the St. Louis-based McDonnell Douglas Co., whose Mesa, Ariz., helicopter company makes the Apaches, announced the Israeli order and said it expects to begin delivery by the end of September. Israel would be the first foreign country allowed to buy the Apache.

The \$285 million package would be Israel's first new major purchase this year of U.S. weapons. The sale is to be paid for over several years with U.S. foreign aid dollars that Israel is required to spend in the United States.

It is not expected to be blocked by Congress or the Bush administration. The sale was mentioned in President Bush's 1990 "Javits Report," in which the administration tells Congress of any weapons sales likely to be proposed during the year.

On Jan. 29, the Army announced that it had proposed the sale, and called Israel "an important force for political stability and economic progress in the Middle East."

Formal notification to Congress would occur after Israeli acceptance of the letter of offer. Once that notification occurs, Congress then has 30 days to vote to block the sale. Otherwise, it becomes official automatically.

The Apache fits into Israel's defense philosophy "to buy fewer weapons but better weapons," a pro-Israel lobbyist said here.

Although the Apaches are expensive compared with other helicopters, "the overall cost for defense is lower" because "fewer (Apaches) do more," said another lobbyist.

Besides being more heavily armored than other helicopters, the Apache's head gun automatically turns as the pilot's head turns, one lobbyist said.

Israel plans to emulate the U.S. Army in deploying the Apaches with Hellfire missiles, a laser-guided air-to-ground missile made by Rockwell International Missile Systems Division of Duluth, Ga., and Martin Marietta Electronics and Missiles Group of Orlando, Fla.

**DIRECTOR OF WHO FEARS DOOM  
IF PLO ADMITTED TO AGENCY**

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, April 19 (JTA) -- The head of the World Health Organization fears the U.N. agency will be doomed if the Palestine Liberation Organization succeeds in gaining admission as a sovereign state.

In that event, the United States will end its financial contributions to the agency, which amounts to 25 percent of the WHO's budget.

The consequences for the WHO of a U.S. pullout from the agency would be "a plague worse than AIDS," Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, the WHO's director general, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in an interview here Thursday.

The vote on the PLO's application for membership will come up during the WHO's annual General Assembly, which opens in Geneva on May 7.

It was only by very difficult maneuvering that the issue was avoided at the last General Assembly in May 1989. The delegates voted by secret ballot to defer the PLO's application for one year. The U.S. Congress voted to withdraw U.S. funding if the PLO is granted membership.

"If the PLO succeeds, we might have to close our headquarters in Geneva, many people will lose their jobs and health services will be cut drastically," said Nakajima, who is a Japanese physician.

He pointed out that Palestinians caught in the intifada would be among those who suffer, because they can't afford health insurance and are clients of the WHO.

But Nakajima said he had no success trying to explain the situation to the PLO's allies.

"I told the Arab health ministers I met two weeks ago in Cairo what the results may be, and they are aware of the consequences," the WHO director said.

"But they do not take into consideration the financial state. Only the political decision interests them."

**50 STUDENTS HOLD SYMBOLIC SEDER  
OUTSIDE JONATHAN POLLARD'S PRISON**  
By Andrew Goldsmith

MARION, Ill., April 19 (JTA) -- More than 50 yeshiva students from New York and St. Louis held a symbolic seder outside the federal penitentiary here Thursday to call attention to the plight of convicted spy Jonathan Pollard, whom they charged the Jewish community was ignoring.

The students demanded that his case be reopened to full investigation as they munched matzah and drank grape juice in the shadows of the maximum security prison, which inmates have dubbed the "Alcatraz of the '90s."

About 25 students from Yeshiva University in New York flew to St. Louis, where they joined 30 others from Block Yeshiva High School on a four-hour bus ride to the federal prison.

They were accompanied by Rabbi Avraham Weiss, an activist from Riverdale, N.Y., who visits Pollard in prison every six weeks.

"We have come to raise the voice of moral conscience," said Weiss, who calls himself Pollard's "personal rabbi."

Pollard, a civilian intelligence analyst employed by the U.S. Navy, confessed in 1985 to spying for Israel. He is currently serving the fifth year of a life sentence.

His wife, Anne Henderson Pollard, has just completed two concurrent five-year sentences as a post-facto accomplice.

"The Jewish community has not responded to Jonathan Pollard's plight," said Joseph Bensmihen of Montreal, who attends Yeshiva University and is Canadian affairs director of the Justice for the Pollards organization.

"We believe Jonathan Pollard's unduly harsh punishment is a direct result of his religion, not of his crime," Bensmihen added.

The students charged that Pollard has been kept in solitary confinement since his incarceration and is allowed only one hour of daylight a day.

That was confirmed by Jack Crosley, executive assistant at the prison.