

VOL. 69 - 74th YEAR

THURSDAY, APRIL 11, 1991

NO. 69

**EMIGRATION OF JEWS FROM ALBANIA
SAID TO BE SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED**

By Aliza Marcus

NEW YORK, April 10 (JTA) -- The entire Jewish population of Albania, numbering some 300 families, has been successfully moved out of the country under a semi-secret exodus arranged by the Albanian and Israeli governments, according to reports Wednesday evening from Israel.

Most of the families -- an estimated 400 people -- are already in Israel, but 37 Albanian Jews are in Italy awaiting transfer to the United States under the family reunification program, according to officials involved in the emigration.

The exodus started close to three months ago, just as Albania, Eastern Europe's last Stalinist regime, began tentative moves toward a more open and democratic system.

The tiny Balkan country, with a population of 3.3 million, has been one of the most closed in the region. Until recently, few people were allowed in, and even fewer were allowed out.

Israel Radio reported that the emigration was conducted with the help of the Jewish Agency, which finances immigration to Israel, and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which aids Jewish communities around the world.

According to one official closely connected with the emigration, the Joint has maintained contact with the Albanian Jewish community over the past several years, sending them matzot and kosher wine for Passover.

Before an Albanian Jewish family was allowed to emigrate, the Albanian government required that one family member travel to nearby Rome or Athens and collect Israeli visas for the entire family, officials close to the emigration operation said.

The families then traveled from Tirana, the Albanian capital, to either Rome or Athens, where they were flown to Israel, officials said.

The announcement of the successful end to "Operation Flying Carpet," as the exodus was called, comes as the Albanian and Israeli governments are discussing establishing diplomatic relations, according to Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress.

The two countries, which never had diplomatic relations, are expected to make a formal announcement shortly, said Steinberg.

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

**NEWS ANALYSIS:
BY AGREEING TO REGIONAL CONFERENCE,
ISRAEL HAS REGAINED THE HIGH GROUND**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 10 (JTA) -- Israel seemed to have reclaimed the diplomatic high ground this week, as the Arabs gave a cool reception to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's proposed regional peace conference, which Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir endorsed Tuesday.

Egypt, by contrast, gave a tepid response to the plan, and Syria flatly rejected it.

For the time being, Israeli diplomats can enjoy the rare spectacle of watching the Arabs, not themselves, get prodded by the Americans to

give a positive response to proposals for advancing the peace process.

The Israeli attitude is that they have provided Baker with the "merchandise," and it is up to the Arabs to buy it.

But Egypt and Syria, recent combat partners of the United States in the war to oust Iraq from Kuwait, remain wedded to the idea of an international conference hosted by the five permanent members of the U.N. Security Council, a scenario abhorrent to Israel.

Baker arrived in the Egyptian capital Wednesday from Jerusalem with Israel's agreement in principle for a regional conference, to be convened jointly by the United States and the Soviet Union.

The timing, locale, composition and agenda of the conference have not been determined.

But Israel and the United States appear to have reached an understanding that the conference would be a one-time event with no authority to impose solutions.

Its purpose would be to serve as a ceremonial curtain raiser for direct negotiations Israel would hold separately with the Arab states and the Palestinians, the so-called "two-track" approach to peace.

But Baker, who said he was satisfied by the progress achieved with the Israelis, encountered stumbling blocks as soon as he landed in Cairo.

The first Egyptian reaction was that a regional conference would be a "waste of time."

Syrian Position Uncompromising

Shortly after Baker's plane landed, the Egyptian foreign minister, Esmat Abdel-Meguid, told reporters, "We are still waiting for details about this conference and the countries that will take part in it."

"We support the international peace conference and back holding it under the umbrella of the United Nations after good preparations," Meguid said.

The reaction from Syria, next stop on Baker's Middle East junket, was uncompromising.

Damascus accused Israel of trying to sabotage Baker's mission. It said it would accept nothing less than a U.N. Security Council resolution mandating an international conference under U.N. auspices and Israel's prompt withdrawal from all "occupied Arab lands."

The Israelis were not surprised by the Syrian position. But Justice Minister Dan Meridor said it was hard to believe that Egypt, of all countries, "would make things more difficult rather than easier."

Egypt is the only Arab state to have a peace treaty with Israel and full diplomatic relations with the Jewish state.

Israel and the United States, meanwhile, are reported to see eye to eye on the exclusion of the Palestine Liberation Organization from the peace process. Neither the PLO nor its representatives would take part in the talks.

But the Americans and Israelis were believed to have worked out a formula that would allow the participation of Palestinian residents of East Jerusalem in a delegation of representatives from the administered territories.

That would open the door to Faisal Hussein

of East Jerusalem, the senior Palestinian political figure in the area, whom the Israelis describe as an agent of the PLO.

Baker has assured Israel, however, that there would be no American dialogue with the PLO nor would Israel be forced into such dialogue.

No Use Of Word 'Autonomy'

Israel and the United States were also said to agree that the negotiations would be conducted along the lines adopted at the Camp David conference in 1978. But Israel would refrain from using the term "autonomy" in connection with the territories, because it is unpalatable to the Palestinians.

The East Jerusalem Arabic daily Al-Fajr reported Wednesday that Baker proposed a three-year transitional period of "self-government" to the six Palestinian dignitaries he met with on Tuesday.

That would be followed by implementation of U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, which call for the return of Arab land and for Arab recognition of Israel. Resolving the sharply different interpretations of 242 by Israel and the Palestinians presumably would be left to the negotiations.

Baker had a second meeting with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir on Wednesday before leaving for Cairo. No details were released.

He reportedly got assurances that the massive building plans in the West Bank announced by Housing Minister Ariel Sharon would not be implemented, because they need to be approved by the entire government.

The secretary of state paid a farewell call on President Chaim Herzog, whom he visited after arriving in Israel on Monday evening.

Israel, meanwhile, went ahead with a "confidence-building" gesture urged by Baker to help create a climate conducive to peace talks.

Some 240 Palestinian security detainees were released from prison, the first of nearly 1,200 Defense Minister Moshe Arens ordered freed on the occasion of Id al-Fitr, a Moslem festival next week marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan.

Palestinians cynics remarked that the gesture had less to do with Id al-Fitr than "Id al-Baker."

E.C. BACKING U.S. EFFORTS FOR MIDDLE EAST PEACE

By Yossi Lempkiewicz

LUXEMBOURG, April 10 (JTA) -- The European Community has thrown its support behind the latest U.S. efforts to achieve peace between Israel and its Arab neighbors and the Palestinians.

The leaders of the 12 member states, attending a summit meeting here Monday, wished success to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, who on Tuesday conferred in Jerusalem with Israeli leaders and then continued on to Cairo and Damascus.

Baker scored points with the Israelis, when they announced their readiness to engage in a regional peace conference with Arab states, the United States and Soviet Union.

But Arab leaders were less sanguine, expressing displeasure with the fact that the proposed conference would be regional and not fully international.

Baker has promised to inform E.C. leaders of the results of his latest Middle East trip.

The E.C., long eager to pursue an independ-

ent policy in the Middle East, seems to be taking its cues from U.S. leadership since the Persian Gulf war. It no longer insists that an international conference under U.N. auspices is the only route to peace in the region.

This puts the E.C. in tune with the latest Israeli proposals.

The E.C. was especially supportive of Baker's call for "confidence-building" measures on both sides to establish a climate for "one or several peace conferences."

Contacts With PLO Still Possible

On the other hand, the Europeans still support self-determination for the Palestinians, including the possibility of a Palestinian state.

The E.C. position veers from the Israeli and the American stance, in that there still stands a chance that the E.C. will resume its contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The E.C. ended its high-level contacts with the PLO after PLO chief Yasir Arafat threw in his lot with Saddam Hussein during the Persian Gulf crisis. But diplomatic sources here said E.C. ties with the PLO might be resumed.

According to the sources, French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas might meet with Arafat during his next visit to Tunis.

However, an unofficial text put out by the E.C. makes no mention of a PLO role in the peace process.

Prime Minister Jacques Santer of Luxembourg, the country presently holding the rotating chairmanship of the E.C., flies to Washington on Thursday to meet with President Bush.

Middle East developments will probably be discussed.

According to one E.C. official, "The European Community appears to lag behind Washington. What counts is to find a solution and, if there is one, the Community has to play its economic card to help the economic development of the Mideast-Mediterranean area."

The E.C. summit was held on an informal basis to discuss the situation in the region following the Persian Gulf war, and no formal statement was issued at the conclusion of the five-hour meeting Monday night.

Land For Peace Stressed

But according to the unofficial text, obtained by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, the E.C. leaders asked the foreign ministers to continue their consultations with all parties involved in the conflict.

"As an important actor, the E.C. must be associated" with peace efforts in the Middle East, the text said.

It stressed that international legality is "indivisible" and that a peace settlement must be based on U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, "according to the principle of territories in exchange for peace."

The document added that "a dialogue must be engaged between all parties involved on the basis of two principles: Israel's right to secure and recognized frontiers and the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination.

"Each party must be able to determine its own representation, and no solution must be turned down, including the creation of a Palestinian state," the E.C. leaders said.

They recalled their firm commitment to "the respect of human rights and the improvement of living conditions in the occupied territories."

SURVEY FINDS ONE-THIRD OF U.S. JEWS DO NOT IDENTIFY AS SUCH RELIGIOUSLY

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, April 10 (JTA) -- Only two-thirds of Americans who say their ethnic background is Jewish identify themselves religiously as Jews, according to a national survey on religious identification published this week.

Fully 6 percent of those who say their ethnic origin is Jewish say they are now Protestant. Another 5 percent call themselves Catholic, and 1 percent identify themselves as Christian without specifying a denomination.

The remaining 22 percent of those identifying themselves as ethnic Jews say they now either have no religion or link themselves to another, non-Christian faith.

"We underestimate the number of Jews who simply opt to go to church," said Jack Wertheimer, associate professor of history at the Jewish Theological Seminary, when asked to comment on the findings.

"This is a phenomenon which has been under-reported," he said. "We've paid more attention to cults, but a far larger population of Jews is joining mainstream churches, whether Protestant, Evangelical or Catholic."

The 12 percent of ethnic Jews in the poll who said they are now Christian religiously is "startling," said Wertheimer. "It's not evident that people in the past would admit to that."

He suggested the large figure may in part be explained by the rising rate of intermarriage, since "some Jews identify with the religion of their non-Jewish spouses."

The survey, commissioned by the Graduate School of the City University of New York, polled 113,000 households in the continental United States over a 13-month period ending last April.

It found that Jews comprise 1.8 percent of the U.S. adult population. Extrapolating this to the total population, including children, there would now be 4.3 million Jews in the United States, said Barry Kosmin, director of the study.

That is substantially fewer than the 5.5 million American Jews estimated by the Council of Jewish Federations in its 1990 National Jewish Population Survey, which Kosmin also conducted.

Cultural Jews Vs. Jews By Religion

The difference is that the CJF figure included Jews identifying themselves as secular, whereas the CUNY research included only those who identify themselves as Jews religiously.

"Many Jews identify themselves as Jews culturally, or historically, or nationally," said Kosmin. Since this survey included only those who describe themselves as Jews religiously, "this is a narrower population."

Kosmin is a senior researcher at the CUNY Graduate Center. He directed the study in cooperation with Seymour Lachman, the university's dean for community development.

Kosmin also serves as director of research for CJF and as director of the North American Jewish Data Bank, which is a joint project of CJF and CUNY. The CUNY survey, however, was conducted by Kosmin independently of CJF or the North American Jewish Data Bank.

The data for the survey were collected by ICR Survey Research Group of Media, Pa.

The overwhelming majority of Americans, 87 percent, identify themselves as Christian, the survey found. Sixty percent of Americans identify

themselves as Protestant and another 26 percent say they are Roman Catholic. The rest say they are Christian, but do not specify a denomination.

Moslems account for 0.5 percent of the U.S. population. Forty percent of the country's 1.4 million Moslems are black, though less than 2 percent of the total black population is Moslem.

According to the survey, Jews are the most urban and the most educated religious group in the country.

Nearly all Jews, 96 percent, live in metropolitan areas. The next most urban religious group, Catholics, counts 85 percent of its population in metropolitan areas.

Highest Percentage Of Democrats

Baptists, the most rural of the religious groups, are, with Jews, the most Democratic in their political affiliation.

Forty-three percent of Jews identify themselves as Democrats, and 22 percent as Republicans. The remaining third say they are independents and others.

The same percentage of Baptists, 43 percent, are Democrats, and 27 percent are Republicans.

"There would probably be more Democrats if we had counted secular Jews," said Kosmin.

The most educated groups, in terms of the proportion of college graduates, are Jews, Hindus and Episcopalians, in that order.

About 56 percent of Jews are married, and 26 percent are single. Nine percent are divorced, 1 percent separated and 8 percent widowed.

The number of divorced Jews is not that different from the number among Catholics, 8 percent, or the number in mainstream Protestant denominations, which ranges from 8 to 9 percent depending on the group.

The average number of people in a Jewish household is 2.7, far fewer than the average number in Mormon homes, 3.8, but much closer to the national median of about 2.9 people in each American home, according to Kosmin.

The study found 2.2 percent of whites and 0.3 percent of blacks say they are Jews.

The states with the largest Jewish populations, according to the survey, are New York, which is 6.9 percent Jewish; New Jersey, 4.3 percent; Florida, 3.6 percent; Massachusetts, 3.5 percent; and Maryland, 2.8 percent.

ISRAEL WILL TRY UTMOST TO AID KURDS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 10 (JTA) -- Israel will do its utmost to extend humanitarian aid to the Kurds in Iraq, Foreign Minister David Levy told the Knesset on Monday.

The Israeli parliament met for a special recess session to discuss the genocide of the Kurdish people.

The Kurds are being pursued in flight and killed by troops loyal to Saddam Hussein. They are also dying from poor sanitation, and a lack of food and shelter.

Knesset Speaker Dov Shilansky, opening the session, charged that the world kept silent during the genocide of the Jews and is keeping silent today as well.

Levy urged the nations of the world not to stand aside and allow the tragedy to continue.

He ridiculed the fact that the multinational force which conquered Saddam Hussein and liberated Kuwait is now standing by idly. Only danger to oil wells moves the world, he charged.

**CONCERN MOUNTS IN AUSTRALIA
WAR CRIMINALS WON'T BE TRIED**

By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Australia, April 10 (JTA) -- Although there are said to be hundreds of war criminals living in Australia, speculation was rife this week that the government may soon abandon its efforts to bring them to justice.

Concern mounted following the surprise resignation of Robert Greenwood as head of the Justice Ministry's Special Investigations Unit, set up to trace and bring charges against Nazi war criminals who have found haven in Australia.

The unit was set up under recent legislation that permits Australian courts to try alleged war criminals for offenses committed abroad.

The constitutionality of the law has been challenged in the High Court. Greenwood's announcement that he is returning to private practice as a barrister was all the more surprising in that it was made only days before the High Court is scheduled to hand down its decision.

Greenwood's contract would not have expired for three months.

He has been replaced as unit director by his former deputy, Graham Blewitt. Blewitt denied that either the court challenge or criticism of the unit's performance was responsible for Greenwood's resignation.

The Australian media have accused the investigations unit of failing to bring charges against any significant number of war crime suspects.

The opposition in Parliament has charged that the \$10.5 million spent so far has produced "no real result."

Blewitt said in a radio interview that there are hundreds of war criminals living in Australia. But investigating them is very complicated, and evidence is not readily available, he said.

So far, 11 cases await a decision by the government whether or not to prosecute.

In New Zealand, meanwhile, Attorney General Paul East said four of eight people whom the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center alleged to be war criminals have been cleared following inquiries.

**YOM HASHOAH INCLUDES THANKS
FOR SPARING JEWS FROM HUSSEIN**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 10 (JTA) -- Israeli observance of Holocaust Remembrance Day, or Yom Hashoah, began Wednesday evening.

This year, the memorial included thanks to God for sparing the Jews of Israel from the Scud missiles of Saddam Hussein.

Among the torchbearers at a ceremony held at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem was Supreme Court Justice Aharon Barak.

Barak, who was a child during the extermination of Kovno ghetto in Lithuania, was one of the few children to survive an action in which several thousand children were rounded up and killed over a period of two days.

The Yad Vashem ceremony was attended by President Chaim Herzog and by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

Shamir, who thanked God for sparing the Jews another Holocaust, compared Saddam Hussein to Hitler, calling the Iraqi leader "that loyal student of Hitler and oppressor of Jews."

"With God's help, he failed," Shamir said.

The date chosen for the observances of the memorial day is the date, according to the Jewish calendar, on which the Warsaw ghetto uprising was crushed in 1943. But the ceremony also marked the 50th anniversary of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union, which occurred June 22, 1941 and was known as Operation Barbarossa.

The ceremony also marked the 50th anniversary of the German invasion of Greece and Yugoslavia and the deportation of Jews from Bukovina and Bessarabia in Romania to the Ukraine.

**LEADER OF GREEK JEWRY DEAD AT 77,
WAS SURVIVOR OF WARTIME OCCUPATION**

By Jean Cohen

ATHENS, April 10 (JTA) -- Joseph Lovinger, president of the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece for 24 years, died of cancer Tuesday in Athens. He was reportedly 77.

Lovinger, who is credited with raising the profile of the organized Jewish community here, was often outspoken on Jewish issues.

During a January 1989 visit to World Jewish Congress headquarters in New York, he called for world ostracism of the Greek justice minister, who had described as a hero a Palestinian he refused to extradite to stand trial for the October 1982 terrorist attack on Rome's main synagogue.

A vice president of the European Jewish Congress, Lovinger also spoke out against Kurt Waldheim, the Austrian president who served in a German army unit during World War II that, among other things, deported Jews from the Greek island of Rhodes and the city of Salonika to Auschwitz.

A native of Vac, Hungary, a city about 20 miles north of Budapest, Lovinger left for Athens in 1933, "because I was a pessimist," he told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in an interview two years ago.

"I thought if Hitler was staying six months, he was staying six years," he recalled, adding, "I was right."

Before the war, Lovinger was active in the Jewish Assistance Organization, which helped Jewish refugees from Europe who came to Greece and joined the illegal immigration to Palestine.

During the Italian occupation, he was active in the Athens Jewish community, serving as first assistant to Rabbi Eliya Barzilai, who helped Jews escape into the mountains with the cooperation of Greek neighbors and the Greek Orthodox Church.

He and his wife, the former Herta Gross, escaped with the help of local Greeks after they were rounded up by the Nazis in March 1944.

They traveled via the underground to Turkey, Syria, Lebanon and finally Haifa. They remained in Palestine from June 1944 until the end of the war, when they returned to Athens.

Lovinger then went back to Hungary, where he found his family alive in Budapest. He later worked as foreign correspondent for three Hungarian newspapers.

After the war, Lovinger was owner of a pharmaceutical firm in Athens. He also served as president of the local B'nai B'rith lodge.

In December 1988, Lovinger was elected to another three-year term as head of the Central Board of Jewish Communities, a 12-member group representing the fewer than 5,000 Jews who remain in Greece out of a prewar population of 70,000.

(JTA staff writer Susan Birnbaum in New York contributed to this story.)