

**BAKER LANDS IN ISRAEL AMID TALK OF STEPPED-UP PRESSURE FROM U.S.**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 18 (JTA) -- U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, in Israel for the third time in six weeks, got down to business almost immediately after landing Thursday evening at Ben-Gurion Airport.

He had his first informal meeting with Foreign Minister David Levy in their car driving to Jerusalem.

Baker, who was last in Jerusalem only eight days earlier, is pressing hard for a breakthrough before the "window of opportunity" for Middle East peace slams shut.

He was to hold talks Friday with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Levy and Defense Minister Moshe Arens. He was scheduled to meet Saturday with the same group of local Palestinian leaders he saw on his two previous visits.

Levy told reporters at the airport before Baker's arrival that he hoped the secretary would be bringing "good tidings" from the Arab world.

After leaving Israel last week, Baker visited Cairo and Damascus. He will be visiting Arab capitals on this trip as well.

The foreign minister said he thought chances were good that a regional peace conference could be held, though there were still pitfalls to be negotiated.

He welcomed a statement by the Egyptian minister of state for foreign affairs, Boutros Ghali, indicating that Egypt supports the conference format.

**Palestinian Leaders Suspicious**

Shamir, in an Independence Day interview Thursday on Israel Radio, said he was confident Baker and the Bush administration do not intend to pressure Israel, because that would be counter-productive.

Reporters traveling with the secretary said his aides were stressing Baker's comment earlier this week to the effect that progress toward peace in the Middle East would come only as a result of the United States and other countries "pressing" for it.

Israeli officials are concerned with what they see as signs the United States is backing away from positions it had previously agreed to.

They say Baker is prepared to accept an active European role in the regional conference, although Israel is opposed to it.

Israeli officials also fear that Washington has been influenced by Syrian President Hafez Assad to renege on its understanding with Israel that the regional conference would adjourn permanently after serving as the ceremonial opening for bilateral talks between Israel and the Arabs.

The Palestinian leadership also seems suspicious of the conference. Before agreeing firmly to meet Baker on Saturday at the U.S. Consulate in East Jerusalem, they submitted a questionnaire to Consul General Phillip Wilcox.

The Palestinians want to know the nature of the proposed regional conference and what exactly is meant by the interim period of self-government Israel has proposed for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

**BAKER WILL TRY TO PERSUADE ISRAELIS TO LET E.C. PLAY PEACE CONFERENCE ROLE**

By Yossi Lempkowicz

BRUSSELS, April 18 (JTA) -- U.S. Secretary of State James Baker now says he wants the European Community to be "associated with" the proposed Middle East regional peace conference.

Baker was expected to try to sell the idea to Israeli leaders during meetings with them Friday in Jerusalem.

The secretary announced his position on a European role after meeting Wednesday evening in Luxembourg with the 12 E.C. foreign ministers. Afterward he left for Israel, the first stop on his latest Middle East junket, which will include visits to several Arab countries, as well.

Baker explained that he used the term "associated" because "it covers a wide range of possibilities."

But one possibility, an Israeli offer to the Europeans of "observer status" at the conference, has been rejected by the E.C. leaders.

According to well-informed sources, Baker has proposed that the European Community co-sponsor the regional peace conference, along with the United States and the Soviet Union. E.C. sources said Baker would try to persuade Israel that Europe could be helpful at the conference.

The sources quoted him as saying he would tell the Israelis that "Europe can contribute to advance the Mideast peace process and should be involved in it."

Israel has always been suspicious of a European role because of what it perceives as a "pro-Palestinian" position in the E.C. The offer of "observer status," which Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir made to European leaders in London earlier this week, was a concession.

In Israel's view, the regional conference can be no more than a brief, ceremonial opener for parallel direct talks between Israel and the Arab states and Israelis and Palestinians.

Nevertheless, "the European Community wants to be an integral part of an eventual Mideast peace conference," the prime minister of Luxembourg, Jacques Santer, told the European Parliament this week in Strasbourg, France.

"It can bring an important contribution to the peace process," he said.

Luxembourg currently holds the rotating chairmanship of the E.C. Council of Ministers.

**GROUP OF AMERICAN JEWS CHARGES SHAMIR DOESN'T TRULY WANT PEACE**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 18 (JTA) -- A group of prominent American Jews, who believe their views "truly represent the majority views of American Jews," charged here this week that the government of Israel is not really interested in peace.

The group wound up a five-day visit Wednesday expressing concern that the talks between Israeli leaders and U.S. Secretary of State James Baker were getting nowhere, and they blamed the government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

Theodore Mann, a former chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, told the Jewish Telegraphic

Agency that whereas Palestinian leader Faisal Hussein is "as moderate a Palestinian as one is likely to find," Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Arens does not seem to change his views on the conflict.

Their fact-finding mission was sponsored by Project Nishma, a Jewish educational project that supports the views of Israel's Council for Peace and Security.

The council is composed of retired Israel Defense Force senior officers who maintain that Israel's security needs can be fully satisfied without continuing to rule over more than a million Palestinians.

"We believe our views truly represent the majority views of American Jews," Mann said. "We expressed concern that the present 'window of opportunity' may not remain open much longer," he added, recalling the group's meeting with Arens.

"Window of opportunity" is a favorite metaphor of the Bush administration to describe the situation in the Middle East since the Persian Gulf war.

Mann said his group came to Israel under the impression that it was heading toward peace. "Maybe we are wrong; perhaps things are going on between Shamir and Baker that we don't know about," Mann said.

But he was not hopeful.

"It is clear to me that this government is no more interested this year in withdrawal (from the administered territories) than it was last year," Mann said.

He warned that in the event of a political stalemate in the Middle East, the United States would exert pressure on Israel and on the other parties to the conflict, "because without such pressure, peace would be difficult to achieve."

In addition to Mann, the group of 14 included such leaders as Hyman Bookbinder, former Washington representative of the American Jewish Committee; Esther Leah Ritz, past president of JWB and of the Milwaukee Jewish Federation; and three past national chairs of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council: Michael Pelavin of Flint, Mich.; Jacqueline Levine of MetroWest, N.J.; and Jordan Band of Cleveland.

#### SETTLERS STAGE A TRIUMPHAL HIKE STAKING JEWISH CLAIM TO WEST BANK

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 18 (JTA) -- An estimated 7,000 Jewish settlers were shepherded by the army Thursday around a five-mile circular route in the West Bank in what was officially billed as a hike to observe Israel's Independence Day.

But to the hikers, most of them activists in the Gush Emunim settlement movement, it was a triumphal march in celebration of the clandestine erection this week of a new West Bank Jewish settlement called Revava.

The establishment of Revava overnight Monday was advanced from original plans to inaugurate the settlement on Independence Day.

The march was scaled down and reduced to the status of hike when the Israel Defense Force complained it could not spare the troops and equipment needed to protect the much bigger parade originally organized by the Gush Emunim.

The IDF was also under pressure from opposition factions in the Knesset to ban the event altogether, since its policy precludes political demonstrations in the territories.

But the settlers' clout with Israel's right-wing government prevailed.

Gush Emunim agreed to certain ground rules, however. There were no official signs directing people to any site. There were no political posters and no water canteens along the way to create the impression the event was organized.

The route of the settlers, some of whom carried firearms, was from Karnei Shomron to Ma'aleh Shomron, southwest of Nablus. Police and IDF officers saw to it that none of the hikers approached Revava, which consists for the time being of a collection of mobile homes, inhabited by about 40 people.

Both the settlement and the march were intended as gestures of defiance to the United States, which regards Jewish settlements in the territories as an "obstacle to peace."

Only hours after the hike ended, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker arrived for his third round of talks with Israeli leaders in six weeks.

#### ISRAELIS HINT AT JOINT EFFORTS WITH JORDAN TO STOP INFILTRATORS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 18 (JTA) -- Israeli leaders hinted Thursday of possible "joint efforts" with Jordan to curb terrorist incursions into Israel from Jordanian soil.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Defense Minister Moshe Arens spoke to that effect as the Israel Defense Force threw the full weight of its resources into a massive search for terrorists who may be lurking in the Beit She'an area.

A 32-year-old kibbutz farmer, Gideon Ezra, was killed at Kibbutz Neveh Ur on Wednesday morning by an armed intruder from Jordan, who wounded three other kibbutz members before he was cornered and killed by the IDF.

The shooting occurred less than a mile from the Jordanian border, where an Israeli soldier was critically wounded by an infiltrator Monday night.

That marauder was also killed in a brief exchange of fire with the IDF. But security sources fear others may still be at large.

However, initial reports that a second terrorist had been present on Wednesday and was being sought were denied by the IDF.

The sweeping search began Wednesday and continued through the night into Thursday while Israelis celebrated the state's 43rd anniversary.

Israel television showed lines of soldiers a few yards apart combing literally every inch of the fields, orchards and underbrush in the region, inspecting every tree, rock and tussock of grass.

Settlers in the area have been advised by the IDF to be vigilant at all times and to carry weapons when they work their fields.

Arens told reporters Thursday that the IDF was reconsidering its defense tactics in the Beit She'an area because of the rising incidence of armed infiltration from Jordan. Wednesday's incursion was the ninth so far this year.

Arens said the Jordanian authorities were well aware that Israel holds them responsible for preventing hostile acts from their territory.

He hinted that "parallel actions" might be taken by the two countries.

Shamir said in an Independence Day television interview that even though King Hussein seems to have lost a measure of control in his own kingdom, "joint efforts" would have to be undertaken by Israel and Jordan to end the hostile activities.

**REFUGEE QUOTA MAY RISE NEXT YEAR  
BY NUMBER OF SLOTS UNUSED IN 1991**  
By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, April 18 (JTA) -- Congress took the first step Thursday to allow, if necessary, tens of thousands of Soviet Jews to enter the United States next year if they are unable to do so this year.

The move, backed by the State Department, is being considered because it now appears likely that far fewer Soviet Jews will be able to immigrate here this fiscal year than allowed under the U.S. ceiling of 50,000 Soviet refugees.

By the end of April, the seventh month of the fiscal year, the Soviet government will have issued only a projected 18,200 exit visas to refugees bound for the United States.

The OVIR emigration agency would have to greatly accelerate the distribution of exit visas to reach the 50,000 target by Sept. 30, when the fiscal year ends.

Moreover, of the visas that have been issued, fewer than 12,000 have gone to Jews, compared with 6,000 issued to Pentecostal Christians. Jews were originally expected to account for 40,000 of the 50,000 available "refugee slots."

Princeton Lyman, director of the State Department's Bureau of Refugee Programs, told the House of Representatives Ad Hoc Task Force on Soviet Refugees on Tuesday that he was "deeply sympathetic" to the prospect of transferring Soviet refugee slots from one year to the next, as long as the necessary funds for bringing the refugees here was included in the transfer.

Lyman left later in the day for the Soviet Union to seek a bilateral emigration accord as an interim step while conservatives in the Supreme Soviet stymie a vote on a sweeping emigration reform bill.

"They're negotiating pretty heavily," said Mark Talisman, director of the Washington Action Office of the Council of Jewish Federations. The group plans to meet with Lyman when he returns next week.

**Soviet Visa Delays Blamed**

To ensure that any unused Soviet refugee slots from this year are not permanently lost, congressional committees have begun the process of voting to allow a transfer to occur.

The House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on international operations voted Thursday to approve the transfer as part of a joint State Department authorization bill for the 1992 and 1993 fiscal years.

But Talisman said that such a maneuver will not be needed with the budget of the Health and Human Services Department, which funds a matching grant program to help federations pay the refugees' domestic resettlement costs. Such funding automatically rolls over to the next year if it is not used, Talisman explained.

Chris Gersten, director of the department's Office of Refugee Resettlement, told the task force his office last year awarded about \$55 million in grants to private agencies, \$49 million of which went to the Council of Jewish Federations alone, for distribution to the various federations.

For this fiscal year, Congress has appropriated \$39 million for the HHS program.

The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society attributed some of the delays in Soviet emigration to technical problems between the U.S. government and

the agency in Moscow that arranges transportation for the refugees to the United States.

But the major reason for delays, HIAS President Ben Zion Leuchter told the House task force Tuesday, is that OVIR has "increased the time that it takes to get an exit visa, often beyond the time that the U.S. program calculated as necessary to turn the cases around."

**A Mostly Empty Planeload**

As a result, the flow of emigres is erratic. Last weekend, for instance, migration officials arranged a flight to carry 216 emigres from Moscow to New York's Kennedy International Airport.

But only 71 of the Soviet refugees showed up, apparently because of Soviet processing problems. The plane flew to New York with 145 empty seats at a time when thousands of Soviet Jews are clamoring to leave.

Talisman said that Secretary of State James Baker, in a meeting last month with Soviet Foreign Minister Alexander Bessmertnykh, made a "major issue" of the "unevenness of the application of OVIR processing."

Baker complained that the Soviets were not granting exit visas expeditiously to approved U.S. refugees who did not meet a strict definition of having immediate family here.

Ironically, Jews had an easier time getting out of the Soviet Union under a system the State Department, with Jewish communal support, scrapped in October 1989. Under that system, Soviet Jews seeking entry to the United States, as well as those wanting to go to Israel, all obtained Israeli entry visas.

The Soviets, whose emigration policy is most liberal when it comes to repatriation of Jews to Israel or ethnic Germans to Germany, distributed the visas fairly routinely to those nationalities.

Under that system, Soviet Jews seeking to immigrate to the United States would arrive in Vienna and "drop out" of their plans to make aliyah, traveling instead to the U.S. refugee processing center in Rome.

The system was abandoned because the Soviets were letting Jews out at a faster rate than the U.S. refugee ceiling would accommodate, creating an enormous backlog in Rome. Jewish organizations had to pay to house the Soviet Jews while they waited in Rome, sometimes for six months or longer.

**\$75 Million For Refugees In Israel**

The policy also was scrapped on the premise that the Soviets would modify their emigration policy to allow Jews and others to immigrate to the country of their choice.

But Karl Zukerman, HIAS executive vice president, said that the conservatives' growing power in the Soviet government, which was not foreseen at the time of U.S. processing shift, has blocked such a change in policy.

Zukerman, however, said he would not want to return to the old system, in part because of the massive financial costs any backlog in Rome would impose on the American Jewish community.

In another development Thursday, the House international operations subcommittee also approved \$75 million in funding to help resettle refugees in Israel.

The United Israel Appeal will administer the money, which is double last year's funding level and is also a marked increase over the \$40 million that President Bush requested for the program in his 1992 budget.

**BULGARIAN CEMETERY VANDALIZED,  
BUT ANTI-SEMITISM NOT A MOTIVE**

SOFIA, Bulgaria, April 18 (JTA) -- The Jewish community of Bulgaria said Wednesday that vandals who damaged the Jewish section of the old cemetery in the city of Ruse on Monday night appear not to have been motivated by anti-Semitism or nationalism.

A statement released by Eddie Schwartz, president of Shalom, the Organization of Jews in Bulgaria, said the community was satisfied with conclusions reached by the police. The investigation was monitored by the organization's local branch in Ruse, a city of 185,000 on the Danube River at the border with Romania.

The statement said the community was also satisfied with the reactions of various public and state institutions that denounced the desecration and of public opinion in general.

The report to the Interior Ministry by the local police commander, Lt. Col. A. Stefanov, said inspection of the damage indicated that the Jewish section had been hit because it is closest to the eastern edge of the cemetery, which borders a field with no visible fence.

"We have the impression that the tombstones were damaged at random because they are arranged in rows, and the closest two rows to the end had the most damage," the police report said.

According to the report, 25 out of 65 grave-stones were damaged.

The report concluded that the desecration was the kind of isolated incident "which, alas, happens periodically.

"There is no ground to consider that this is an act which has a nationalistic or party background, because there is similar damage to tombstones in other (non-Jewish) parts of the cemetery," the police report said.

A statement by Shalom on Monday described "many broken monuments. They erased names and dates and stole marble sculptures."

It called for a government response to match the strong pro-Jewish response in France, including that of high government figures, when unknown vandals desecrated the ancient Jewish cemetery in Carpentras, France, in May 1990.

In reporting the cemetery vandalism, the Jewish community noted other recent anti-Semitic activity in Bulgaria, including graffiti on the Albert Einstein School in Sofia and publication of an anti-Semitic book, "The World Conspiracy."

**FRENCH REVISIONIST IS FINED**

PARIS, April 18 (JTA) -- A French court on Thursday imposed a fine and a suspended sentence on French university Professor Robert Faurisson for denying the Holocaust.

But then it denounced the very law under which he was found guilty of a misdemeanor.

The Paris Court of Justice further astounded observers by offering a gratuitous critique of the Nuremberg war crimes court.

Faurisson was convicted under a law passed last year that makes it a misdemeanor to publicly contest the reality of an established crime against humanity.

He was the first person tried under the statute. But Faurisson used the court Thursday to propagate the very falsehoods for which he had just been convicted and fined the equivalent of \$20,000.

Possibly encouraged by the court's observa-

tion that the new law "limits freedom of speech and of opinion," he repeated from the dock his allegation that the Holocaust was a hoax devised by the Jews and the State of Israel to "milk" the German people.

Faurisson has been pushing that line for 10 years. Last September, he published it in the far right-wing monthly *Le Choc du Mois* (Shock of the Month), a magazine linked to Jean-Marie Le Pen's extreme rightist National Front.

He was sued under the new law by 11 groups of war veterans and former deportees.

**MILITANT JDO LEADER IS OUT ON BAIL  
PENDING APPEAL OF ASSAULT CONVICTION**  
By Aliza Marcus

NEW YORK, April 18 (JTA) -- The leader of the militant Jewish Defense Organization, Mordechai Levy, has been released from jail on \$35,000 bail, pending appeal of his conviction on an assault charge stemming from a shooting incident two years ago in New York's Greenwich Village section.

Levy, sentenced April 11 in Manhattan Supreme Court to one-and-a-half to four-and-a-half years in prison, was arrested in August 1989 after opening fire on a former associate from his apartment window.

Bail conditions include that his passport remain revoked and he report once a week through his attorney to the District Attorney's Office, said a spokeswoman for the Manhattan district attorney.

Levy, who is featured on JDO handouts clenching a gun, formed the group in 1985 after deciding that the Jewish Defense League, founded by Rabbi Meir Kahane, was not militant enough.

Kahane, who moved to Israel and spent a year as a member of the Knesset before his party was outlawed under anti-racist legislation, was murdered here last fall.

Levy's shooting incident apparently stemmed from the split between the JDO and JDL. The JDO leader claimed he opened fire in self-defense when threatened by Irv Rubin, who took over JDL after Kahane moved to Israel in 1985.

When Levy started shooting, after Rubin allegedly threw rocks at his apartment window, a wayward bullet injured a mechanic sitting in a van parked nearby.

Levy, who is in his late 20s, was tried on three counts of attempted murder, one count of first-degree assault, one count of attempted first-degree assault and one count of reckless endangerment, according to the D.A.'s Office.

Alan Schwartz, director of research at the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, said the JDO "has long advocated the use of arms" and added that the "vast majority of the community" of American Jews repudiates such behavior.

**FRENCH GREEN LEADER SUSPENDED**

PARIS, April 18 (JTA) -- France's Green Party has suspended an official who denounced "Israel and the Zionist lobby" as responsible for the Persian Gulf war.

Jean Briere, 58, spokesman for the ecology-oriented political faction, was temporarily removed for making what many of his colleagues considered blatantly racist and anti-Semitic statements.

Briere, who represents the Greens in Lyon, faces possible expulsion from the party at its upcoming regional meeting.