

**NEW SOVIET EMIGRATION REFORM LAW
MAY NOT GO FAR ENOUGH, GROUPS SAY****By David Friedman**

WASHINGTON, May 20 (JTA) -- Soviet Jewry advocacy groups are less than enthusiastic about the long-awaited emigration reform bill finally enacted Monday by the Soviet parliament.

They say it does not meet some longstanding concerns about the arbitrariness of Soviet emigration policy.

The Bush administration was more positive about the adoption of the law, but cautioned Monday that it had not yet seen the text of the legislation.

Both the White House and State Department said it was too soon to say whether the legislation meets President Bush's requirements for providing the Soviets with U.S. trade benefits long barred under the Jackson-Vanik Amendment.

The law, which codifies a number of emigration reforms already in place, was adopted 320-37, with 32 abstentions. Conservative hard-liners had blocked passage of the law three times last week.

Also adopted was the necessary implementation legislation. The step-by-step plans for implementing the law will be announced later.

But the law will not go into effect until Jan. 1, 1993, six months later than originally proposed.

The National Conference on Soviet Jewry issued a statement saying it would "reserve comment" on the new law, until it can be analyzed "to ascertain whether or not it addresses our concerns."

The group said it would "welcome all Soviet measures toward the fulfillment of that nation's human rights obligations" under the Helsinki Accords and other international documents.

But Pamela Cohen, president of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, said flatly that the new law "does not meet international standards."

A 'Major Step' Toward Reform

The State Department welcomed the law's enactment, though spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said the United States would have liked to see it implemented sooner.

"We have for almost two decades made the right of Soviet citizens to emigrate an important part of U.S.-Soviet relations," said Tutwiler. "We regard this as a major step to the overall prospect of reform in the Soviet Union and the fulfillment" of Soviet commitments under the Helsinki Accords.

"The very fact that procedures once subject to the arbitrary implications of unpublished regulations are now established in law, in our view, is a positive development," she said.

White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater called the law's adoption a "hopeful sign," but added: "We don't know if it has a lot of conditions in it or other problems."

The National Conference said the concerns it wants to see addressed by the new law include an elimination of emigration refusals based on alleged access to state secrets, military conscription or outstanding obligations to "poor relatives."

"We trust that the new legislation will fully address our concerns, especially in light of the fact that the Soviet Union will host the Septem-

ber 1991 Moscow Conference on the Human Dimension," the group said.

But Cohen of the Union of Councils, who recently saw a draft of the bill while in Moscow, said the law does not address these concerns.

As an example, she said there is no definition of secrecy or the areas deemed secret. Secrecy is increasingly being used to deny exit visas for arbitrary reasons, she said.

"As long as there is no independent judiciary and as long as individuals are still subject to the political interest of the state, human rights are always in question," she said.

The National Conference, however, said it was more interested in actual Soviet emigration practices than in the policies being codified in legislation.

"In the final analysis, it is Soviet performance that counts," the group said in its statement. It pledged to continue monitoring Jewish emigration "so that all who wish to exercise their basic human right to leave the USSR will be free to do so."

Cohen urged Bush not to waive Jackson-Vanik Amendment trade sanctions until the law is implemented and is shown to be working.

NEWS ANALYSIS:**MODA'I TURNABOUT ON ABSORPTION
A SIGN OF GROWING DESPERATION****By Charles Hoffman**

JERUSALEM, May 20 (JTA) -- Finance Minister Yitzhak Moda'i's dramatic announcement last week that the laissez-faire policy of "direct absorption" should be scrapped in favor of greater government intervention is a sign of his growing desperation over the impact Soviet aliyah is having on Israeli society.

In an attempt to meet the critical need for immigrant housing and jobs, the Finance Ministry reportedly has been secretly preparing a plan to build six new communities in the Negev, with housing and "industrial parks" for 400,000 people, most of them new immigrants.

The immigrants would be sent there by the government and employed in building their own housing and in other public service work, until the industrial parks are ready.

The finance minister gave no indication that there are any investors lined up to create what some see as an Israeli version of "Silicon Valley," made up mainly of high-tech industries.

Moda'i said the shift from direct absorption to what he called "planned absorption" would take two to three years.

The Finance Ministry plan has not been discussed by the ministerial committee on immigrant absorption, the body composed of government and Jewish Agency leaders that is supposed to make absorption policy. Moda'i has made a point of avoiding most meetings of this body.

The vast majority of the 250,000 immigrants who have come to Israel since the beginning of 1990 have followed the route of direct absorption: They received a "basket" of services and cash grants from the government during their first year and were supposed to find housing and jobs on their own.

The direct absorption policy was introduced

in 1988 for immigrants from "countries of distress," over a year before the mass aliyah began. The aim was to let immigrants decide for themselves where they wanted to live and work, instead of having these decisions made by government officials.

Because of the government's failure to plan adequately for the mass aliyah, which had been predicted by government experts on Soviet Jewry, the flood of immigrants has had a severe impact on the housing and job markets.

Plan Already Criticized

Apartment rentals have risen by 30 to 50 percent in many areas, forcing immigrant families to share living quarters with one or two other families and pushing young Israeli couples into make-shift tent camps. Some of the immigrants whose initial absorption grants have run out now find themselves without jobs and in tents.

Each month, thousands of new immigrants join the ranks of the unemployed, which has risen to the unprecedented level of more than 10 percent. The number of job-seekers at the State Employment Service rose from 124,000 in March to 140,000 in April.

The Moda'i plan is apparently intended to relieve some or most of the pressure from the job and housing markets by sending new immigrants to vast camps in the Negev. There, under government care, they would be given temporary housing and public works jobs.

Moda'i's announcement stirred up considerable initial criticism, especially from politicians of the opposition Labor Party.

Absorption Minister Yitzhak Peretz, an independent, dismissed the plan as irrelevant as long as there are no jobs to direct the immigrants to.

There has been no official reaction from Housing Minister Ariel Sharon, who chairs the ministerial absorption committee.

The cooperation of the Housing and Absorption ministries would be essential in implementing the shift from direct absorption to "planned absorption," as Moda'i calls it.

In New York, the chairman of the Jewish Agency Board of Governors, Mendel Kaplan, also expressed concern with the plan, saying he is opposed to greater government intervention in the absorption process. The agency works in partnership with the government to resettle immigrants.

(JTA staff writer Aliza Marcus in New York contributed to this report.)

SOME SOVIET JEWS TAKING ADVANTAGE OF GERMAN OPEN BORDER WITH POLAND By David Kantor

BONN, May 20 (JTA) -- The recent elimination of visa requirements between Poland and Germany could divert some of the increasing numbers of Soviet Jews who immigrate to Israel by way of Poland, according to newspaper and radio reports here.

The reports, quoting Polish sources, say most Soviet emigres board planes for Israel the day they reach Warsaw.

But the temptation is strong to slip across the border into Germany, now that visas are no longer required. Thousands of visitors are entering Germany each day from Poland.

The German authorities are trying to cope with the absorption of thousands of Soviet Jews who came here last summer. They took up an

invitation issued by what was formerly East Germany after it shook off Communist rule but before it united with West Germany.

Upon unification, the offer to accept any Jew who wanted to settle here was modified because of economic strains and protests by Israel.

Soviet Jews who came to Germany last year may stay. Most remained in Berlin but some were sent to smaller cities in former East Germany.

Jewish activists say most want to return to Berlin, where there is a sizeable established Jewish community.

Under the new rules, Soviet Jews who want to settle in Germany must apply for immigration visas at German consulates in the Soviet Union.

About 3,000 are said to have applied to date, but the German authorities have warned that the processing will be slow.

LECH WALESA IMPORES THE KNESSET TO FORGIVE POLAND FOR ANTI-SEMITISM By David Landau and Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, May 20 (JTA) -- In an impassioned plea before the Knesset, Lech Walesa begged Israel on Monday to forgive Poland for its centuries of anti-Semitism.

But Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who once said Poles imbibed anti-Semitism with their mother's milk, did not offer the visiting Polish president absolution.

He did say, however, that he thought the one-time Solidarity leader's plea was sincere, adding that under Walesa's leadership, "a new chapter was opened in the relations between the two peoples."

The union leader-turned-statesman addressed a special session of the Knesset on the first day of a four-day state visit to Israel. His speech was broadcast on radio and television.

"Here in Israel, the land of your culture and the land of your revival, I ask for your forgiveness," Walesa said.

He briefly reviewed the 1,000-year history of Jews in Poland. He said they mainly found "hospitality, tolerance and security" in his country, where they produced "great scientists and spiritual leaders."

But "some Poles did bad things" during the Holocaust, Walesa admitted, and more recently the Communist regime "caused a crooked mirror" to misrepresent Polish-Jewish relations.

It is only under democracy," he asserted, that Poland is home to "all its citizens, regardless of creed."

Shamir, who was born in the Polish village of Rozanow and went to school in nearby Bialystok, spoke of the "wicked phenomena of Jew-hatred," which he himself had witnessed as a young man.

Shamir said he hoped Walesa's visit would be "the harbinger of a new page in the relationship" between Poland and Israel "after decades of one-sided alienation."

He thanked Poland for the services it provides Soviet Jews immigrating to Israel and promised Israeli technological assistance and know-how to help Poland in its transition from a socialist to a free-market economy.

In their private talks, Shamir urged Walesa to close the Palestine Liberation Organization's office in Warsaw, which has embassy status. "The PLO is worse than the anti-Semites," he said.

Walesa promised Poland would not aid the "enemies of Israel" but did not mention the PLO.

THREE STABBED IN WEST JERUSALEM AS ISRAEL DEPORTS FOUR FROM GAZA

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, May 20 (JTA) -- A Palestinian from the West Bank was arrested for stabbing three Jews in Jerusalem on Friday as the Israeli authorities deported four Gaza Strip activists they hold responsible for such random violence.

Yasser Taysir Daoud, 21, of Beit Diko village, near Ramallah, is suspected of the stabbings, which occurred on a busy street in Jewish western Jerusalem. The victims were two men and a woman, none of them badly hurt.

But the knifing enraged Jews. Passers-by beat and kicked the suspect. An Orthodox Jew who tried to shoot him was arrested.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir was quoted as saying, "To my regret, the perpetrator was taken alive, and this hurts me very much."

The police said that unlike earlier stabbings done in a fit of rage, the suspect committed a premeditated act for which he was carefully trained and had collaborators.

A Jerusalem magistrate remanded him in custody for 15 days, pending formal charges.

The four deportees were expelled to Lebanon a week after the High Court of Justice rejected their appeal and upheld the military orders for deportation issued March 23.

The four men, described as hard-core activists in the Palestine Liberation Organization's Al Fatah wing, were not charged with a specific offense but with creating a climate for Arab violence against Jews.

The deportations were carried out only a few days after U.S. Secretary of State James Baker repeated to Israeli officials American opposition to that policy.

Jewish Shopkeeper Murdered

In Washington, State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said Monday that Baker raised the issue in his talks with Israeli leaders in Jerusalem on May 15 and 16.

"We continue to strongly oppose deportation as a violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention as it pertains to the treatment of inhabitants of the occupied territories," Tutwiler said.

"Israel's deportation of Palestinians at this time cannot contribute to the development of a peace process," she said.

At the United Nations in New York, Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar issued a statement expressing "deep regret" at the deportations, which he strongly deplored.

Israeli police, meanwhile, are trying to solve the murders of Omar Shahin, a broadcaster on Israel Radio's Arabic language service, and Reuven David, a Jewish shopkeeper in Petach Tikva.

Shahin, a 47-year-old Israeli Arab, was found dead in his East Jerusalem office Friday with bullet holes in his head and chest.

The police theorize that he may have been a victim of Arab terrorists who kill fellow Arabs whom they suspect of collaborating with Israelis.

On the other hand, he was known to have been popular in his social milieu and police therefore played down the possibility he was murdered for associating with Jews.

Members of Shahin's family say he may have been killed by Jewish extremists.

The police are convinced that the intifada motivated the murder of David, who was found dead in his Petach Tikva shop Sunday night.

MUBARAK CALLS SHAMIR 'UNREALISTIC,' BUT SAYS HE IS WILLING TO MEET HIM

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, May 20 (JTA) -- Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak has criticized Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's policies but is willing nonetheless to meet with him if it is "certain that the meeting would have concrete results."

He said he would be willing to go to Israel for the meeting.

Mubarak held a series of high-level discussions in Rome last week on the first leg of a tour which took him to Luxembourg and France over the weekend. He also was to visit Turkey, Syria and Libya.

The Egyptian president left on his trip to discuss Middle East peace prospects on May 16, the day U.S. Secretary of State James Baker ended his latest round of talks in Jerusalem.

Mubarak stressed that Baker's mission had his fullest support. But he said he has seen no signs from Israel that would raise hopes for a peace settlement.

After meeting with Italian Prime Minister Giulio Andreotti, Mubarak called Shamir's policies "unrealistic" and said Israel should accept the Palestine Liberation Organization as a negotiating partner.

In Luxembourg on Friday, Mubarak said he did not think Baker's mission had been a failure. "The problem of the Middle East is so complicated that it will not be solved in one or two trips," he said.

Mubarak met with the foreign minister of Luxembourg, Jacques Poos, who currently holds the rotating chairmanship of the European Community's Council of Ministers.

Poos spoke last Thursday at the monthly session of the European Parliament, the E.C.'s legislative body, in Strasbourg, France. He called on Israel for concessions on the issues of Palestinian representation at peace talks and the participation of the United Nations and the E.C. in them.

He said Shamir's recent statements ruling out territorial concessions "are not useful or opportune."

"The presence of the Palestine Liberation Organization as such is not on the agenda for the moment, but rejecting a PLO-affiliated Palestinian amounts to a refusal of dialogue," Poos said.

(JTA correspondent Yossi Lempkovicz in Brussels contributed to this report.)

HIGH-RANKING TERRORISTS KILLED IN ISRAELI AIR RAID NEAR TYRE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 20 (JTA) -- An Israeli air raid Saturday on a terrorist base near Tyre is believed to have killed several high-ranking terrorists, according to sources in Lebanon.

Eight were described as officials of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a terrorist organization headed by Nayef Hawatmeh. Four were senior officers of the pro-Syrian Amal militia.

They had assembled for a joint meeting of the two groups, the sources said.

The air attack put the Lebanese regular army on the alert and interfered with arrangements for a planned Lebanon peace parade, according to the Lebanese Defense Ministry in Beirut.

**MANISCHEWITZ FINED \$1 MILLION
FOR FIXING THE PRICE OF MATZAH**
By Ron Ostroff
The Baltimore Jewish Times

BALTIMORE, May 20 (JTA) -- The B. Manischewitz Company, which claims to be the largest matzah maker in the world, has been fined \$1 million for conspiring to fix the price of matzah over five Passover seasons from 1982 to 1986.

After being indicted by a federal grand jury in March 1990, the Jersey City, N.J., firm pleaded no contest to the charges that it conspired, with Horowitz Bros. & Margareten, and with Aron Streit Inc., to fix matzah prices.

In levying the fine last Friday, Judge Harold Ackerman of the U.S. District Court in Newark, N.J., said it is "warranted as the just deserts for Manischewitz conduct."

The hefty fine is to punish Manischewitz for the "serious and evil offense" it committed and to send a message to the business community that such "an egregious assault on a free, competitive society" will not be tolerated.

The fine in the criminal case comes shortly after the company agreed to a \$2,575,000 settlement of federal and California class-action lawsuits by consumers who claim they were harmed by the price-fixing. The proposed settlement still requires the approval of the judge in each case.

Once approved, the settlements will provide \$575,000 in cash and \$2 million in food to charitable organizations approved by the parties and the judges.

Court documents allege that sometime after July 1981, at a meeting at Ratner's kosher dairy restaurant on New York's lower East Side, Manischewitz's general sales manager asked top managers of Horowitz Bros. & Margareten if their company would adhere to Manischewitz's proposed price increases for Passover 1982.

Horowitz Bros. allegedly agreed that year and after subsequent meetings preceding Passover in 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986. Horowitz Bros. was purchased by Manischewitz in 1986.

The general sales manager allegedly had similar meetings in at least two of those years at a Jersey City motel with a sales manager for Aron Streit, Inc., who also agreed to the fixed price increases, court records say.

Company Did Not Cooperate

While the government did not indict the other firms, it did name the senior executives from all of the companies in its list of unindicted co-conspirators.

That list included Robert Starr, Manischewitz president; Stanley Bauman, Manischewitz sales manager; and Philip Goldberg, a former sales manager who is a company consultant.

It also named Harold Margareten, the great-grandson of Horowitz's founder, and his son, Jacob Margareten, as well as Jack Streit, co-owner of Aron Streit, and his son-in-law, Stanley Yagoda, a former Streit sales manager.

The government prosecutors said that Manischewitz did not cooperate with the investigation in any way and that they had to make "herculean" efforts to supply records and witnesses.

Starr said through a secretary that the company would have no comment.

Conservative rabbis, at their recent annual convention, overwhelmingly voted to summon Manischewitz and the other companies allegedly involved before a Din Torah, a rabbinic court, to

answer the charges and possibly pay reparations to the Jewish community.

The rabbis condemned the collusion between the matzah manufacturers, calling it "hillul ha-Shem" (desecration of God's name), as well as "an act of outright fraudulence clearly in violation of halachic principles and Jewish ethics."

But no formal action has yet been taken, according to Rabbi Joel Meyers, Rabbinical Assembly executive director, because the organization is in the process of reviewing court records and was waiting for the criminal trial to end.

But if Manischewitz refuses to appear before the rabbinical court, "it is possible that the Rabbinical Assembly could make a public campaign against them before next Passover," said Rabbi Mark Loeb, chairman of the Rabbinical Assembly resolutions committee.

"I personally wouldn't buy another Manischewitz product" until the company "respond(s) to the charges of defrauding the Jewish people," he said, adding: "I would urge other Jews to be equally selective."

The \$1 million fine Manischewitz faces is significant, considering that all sales of kosher-for-Passover foods total \$20 million a year and that the company reportedly earned a net income of just \$2.5 million in 1990.

Kohlberg & Co., a merchant banking firm, acquired Manischewitz in January for \$42.5 million. It is now a subsidiary of Mano Holdings, Inc.

In 1983, Manischewitz purchased rights to make matzah under the A. Goodman & Sons label. With its 1986 acquisition of Horowitz & Margareten, the company controls three of the four major matzah brands and 90 percent of the Passover matzah market.

(JTA staff writer Debra Nussbaum Cohen in New York contributed to this report.)

**SHOLOM COMAY, DEAD AT 53,
WAS AJCOMMITTEE PRESIDENT**
Pittsburgh Jewish Chronicle

PITTSBURGH, May 20 (JTA) -- A stunned Jewish community here is mourning the loss of Sholom Comay, national president of the American Jewish Committee, who died of a heart attack Saturday.

Comay, 53, had just been re-elected to his third one-year term as AJCommittee's 21st national president.

Comay, who served as Pittsburgh's first housing magistrate, was a lawyer and businessman active in a variety of civic causes.

He was chairman of the board at Action Industries, a manufacturer of promotional programs for the retail trades. Prior to that, he had been a partner in a local law firm.

According to grief-stricken colleagues, Comay brought intense concern, commitment and thoughtfulness to every endeavor he pursued.

He "had extraordinary gifts: strong leadership, universal compassion, clear vision of the future and total dedication to the welfare of the entire human family," said a statement issued by AJCommittee.

Comay served as chairman of the Pittsburgh United Jewish Federation's budget and allocation committee, as treasurer of the UJF and a member of its board.

He was a member of the President's Council of Brandeis University, where he earned his undergraduate degree before graduating from University of Pittsburgh Law School.