

SHAMIR TELLS BUSH ISRAEL OPPOSES ANY U.N. ROLE AT PEACE CONFERENCE

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, June 6 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir reportedly has written a letter to President Bush saying that Israel will not agree to a U.N. role in the Middle East peace conference that the United States has been trying for months to arrange.

Quoting sources in Washington, Israel's army radio station reported late Thursday evening that Shamir turned down Bush's request that Israel consider allowing the United Nations to participate in such a conference as an observer.

There was no immediate confirmation or denial from the Prime Minister's Office or the Foreign Ministry.

In Washington, Israeli Embassy sources confirmed that Shamir had sent a letter to Bush. They said the letter renewed Israel's commitment to the peace process and stressed the need for face-to-face, bilateral negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

Shamir's letter was a response to one Bush sent last weekend to the prime minister asking for Israeli flexibility on the procedural obstacles to convening the peace conference. Similar letters were sent to the leaders of Syria, Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia.

Those obstacles are whether the United Nations should have an active role in the conference, which Syria insists on and Israel opposes, and whether the conference should adjourn once direct talks begin, as Israel insists, or reconvene periodically, as Syria has demanded.

Bush apparently sought to bridge the gap by suggesting that the United Nations have an informal, observer role and that the conference reconvene periodically, with the consent of all parties to the negotiations.

Syria Said To Soften Position

The Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported Thursday that Syria had softened its position and accepted this compromise. The paper said that would leave it entirely up to Israel whether a peace conference would be convened.

But Israeli Economics and Planning Minister David Magen was quoted on Israel Radio as saying that he would be surprised if Syrian President Hafez Assad had given Bush a positive response to his request for flexibility.

And knowledgeable sources said the Syrian government had not yet responded to Bush's letter.

Earlier Thursday, Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy said a peace conference could be convened within three or four weeks, if Syria withdrew its conditions for participating.

Levy was said to be urging that the Israeli government be more flexible on the procedural issues. But it was unclear what role, if any, he had in drafting Shamir's reply to Bush.

The mass-circulation tabloid Yediot Achronot reported Thursday that Shamir and Levy are currently at odds.

Levy returned Thursday from Paris, where he reached agreement with European Community foreign ministers on European participation in the

proposed peace conference, which Israel had previously opposed.

The Europeans, Levy explained at an airport news conference, are ready to funnel billions of dollars in economic aid to the Israeli-administered territories and could hardly remain "mere bankers" without a diplomatic role.

But he insisted that the European presence at the conference would give the E.C. no right or opportunity to "interfere" in the substantive negotiations between Israel and its Arab partners.

Levy also emphasized that his agreement to allow the E.C. to appoint a permanent representative to the administered territories stipulates "a humanitarian presence only," not a political mission to the Palestinians. He pointed out that the E.C. representative would be stationed in Israel proper.

According to Levy, his agreement with the E.C. was approved by Shamir. But it is still subject to ratification by the Cabinet, which Levy hopes to secure this Sunday. Although opposition from Ariel Sharon and other hard-liners is anticipated, the agreement is expected to win majority approval.

GOVERNMENT-FUNDED VANS RULED OK IN PAROCHIAL-SCHOOL PARKING LOTS

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, June 6 (JTA) -- A federal appeals court, in a 2-1 decision, has upheld Missouri's practice of allowing government-funded vans to provide remedial education in parochial school parking lots.

In a friend-of-the-court brief filed in the case of Pulido vs. Cavazos, the American Jewish Congress had argued to the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals that placing the vans on school property violated the First Amendment's establishment clause, which bars government endorsement of religion.

Most American Jewish organizations have traditionally opposed any government support of religious institutions, citing the constitutionally mandated wall separating church and state.

The National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs, however, an organization of volunteer lawyers and social scientists representing the observant Jewish community on issues of public concern, welcomed the May 21 ruling.

Earlier, the U.S. District Court in Missouri had upheld the parking of such vans on public streets off parochial school property, but barred them from school grounds.

Writing for the majority in the court of appeals decision, Judge John Gibson reasoned that a parochial school parking lot is "physically and educationally separate from the functions of the parochial school, and religiously neutral."

In Missouri, Gibson wrote, the vans "do not contain or exhibit any religious symbols. Only secular subjects, remedial reading and mathematics, are taught in the units."

In a dissent, Judge Arlen Beam wrote, "It is clear that the Supreme Court finds no location on church grounds acceptable."

Beam was referring to *Wolman vs. Walter*, the 1977 case in which the U.S. Supreme Court held that a parochial school's remedial services

could be provided only at a "neutral site off the premises of the non-public school."

Despite the uncertain constitutionality of vans in parking lots, the Supreme Court has explicitly barred such services from being offered in parochial school buildings -- most recently in *Aguilar vs. Felton*, a 1985 case.

The National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs, known as COLPA, has expressed its hope that the Supreme Court will agree to hear the Pulido case. A ruling by the Supreme Court affirming the appellate court's decision would make it easier for yeshiva students to gain access to remedial services.

AJCongress is ambivalent about having the case reach the high court, anticipating a lack of resolve by that court to strictly interpret the establishment clause.

AJCongress is also concerned that the current court could decide to overturn *Aguilar*.

Instead, AJCongress plans to file a brief supporting a petition to have Pulido reheard by the circuit court.

Dennis Rapps, COLPA's executive director, estimated that hundreds of yeshiva students currently do not take part in remedial programs because the programs are not conveniently located and because there is a "stigma" attached to them by fellow students.

"Parents don't want their kids to go if they have to leave the building," he said.

"I don't know what the big deal is," Stern countered. He added that even if the programs were offered in the parochial school, there would be a stigma attached.

"Kids are cruel," he said.

New York City bars the vans from parochial school property and mandates that they be parked at least one block away from the school.

AJCongress would not object to the vans being placed immediately outside school grounds, Stern said.

Remedial education grants were first provided to parochial schools in 1965 under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, one of the milestones of President Lyndon Johnson's "Great Society."

The program permitted the funding of remedial education programs for schools that cannot afford to pay for such services. Many yeshivas are "in the red" and cannot pay for such services on their own, Rapps said.

AJCongress's Commission on Law and Social Action did not take a formal position on a related 3-0 ruling by the Missouri appeals court, which held that a disproportionate amount of the federal grant money for remedial programs could go to parochial schools.

Stern said his commission was leaning toward deeming such an arrangement constitutional, given the added expenses parochial schools incur because they cannot use their own buildings.

VICE PRESIDENT VISITS AUSCHWITZ, IS GIVEN ARTIFACTS FOR U.S. MUSEUM
By Aliza Marcus

NEW YORK, June 6 (JTA) -- Vice President Dan Quayle paid a visit Thursday to the site of the Auschwitz death camp in Poland and was visibly moved by the experience.

Miles Lerman, an Auschwitz survivor who accompanied Quayle on the visit, quoted him as saying, "It is a day which I will remember for the rest of my life."

During the afternoon visit, the museum at Auschwitz formally presented Quayle with 10 suitcases from inmates sent to the death camp from all over Europe.

The suitcases will become part of the permanent exhibition at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum being built in Washington, said Lerman, who is chairman of the international relations committee of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council.

"The suitcases are symbolic of the deceit, of the deviousness of the Germans," Lerman said in a telephone interview from Warsaw.

"They made people believe that they were resettling them in labor camps, without realizing that the minute they got off (the trains), they were immediately sorted out and 90 percent went to the gas chambers," he said.

Quayle, who was in Poland as part of a five-nation tour of Eastern Europe, was accompanied by his wife and two of their children during the visit to the complex, where an estimated 1.6 million Jews were murdered.

Lerman said the Quayles were overcome at the sight of the piles of baby shoes and socks belonging to the children killed at Auschwitz.

Quayle's visit coincided with a trip to Poland made by Pope John Paul II. The pope angered Jewish leaders in Europe and the United States on Tuesday by comparing the widespread use of abortion to the genocide of the Holocaust.

A Vatican spokesman traveling with the pontiff in Poland was quoted Thursday as saying there was nothing wrong with the comparison.

ABIE NATHAN ENDS HUNGER STRIKE
By Hugh Orgel and Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 6 (JTA) -- Wan and haggard after 40 days without food, peace activist Abie Nathan called off his hunger strike Thursday "out of respect" for President Chaim Herzog and because he believes he has made his point.

He was invited to the presidential residence, where Herzog appealed to him for 10 minutes to stop endangering his life.

Nathan, who recently marked his 64th birthday, lost nearly 50 pounds during his self-imposed ordeal.

He had subsisted since April on eight pints of water a day with some fruit juice. He had been confined to bed in recent days, almost too weak to move.

Nathan's campaign, on which he spent some \$86,000, was aimed at repealing the law banning Israelis from having contact with representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Although efforts in that direction by his small bloc of supporters in the Knesset predictably failed, Nathan, his voice hoarse, claimed his fast had made the public aware of the "stupidity" of the law.

But his argument that Israel must talk to its enemies if it is to make peace with them has failed to change official policy.

Nathan served four months in jail last year for meeting with PLO chief Yasir Arafat in Tunis, and faces another jail sentence for another Arafat meeting.

Nathan was in fact indicted last month, in the middle of his fast. His trial is scheduled for September.

He ended his fast by accepting a bowl of soup offered him by Herzog. He will return to solid food only gradually, under medical supervision.

ARGENTINE JEWRY ALARMED AT DRIVE TO REGISTER A NAZI POLITICAL PARTY

BUENOS AIRES, June 6 (JTA) -- The Jewish community here has expressed alarm at an escalating campaign to establish a neo-Nazi party in Argentina.

On Monday, a federal judge here quashed a neo-Nazi group's request to register itself as the Workers' Nationalist Socialist Party and use the swastika as its symbol, the Latin American Jewish Congress reported.

Judge Maria Servini de Cubria turned down the bid by the Workers' Nationalist Party to add the word "Socialist" to its name, which would more closely approximate the name of Adolf Hitler's National Socialist German Workers Party.

Hitler's party, too, changed its name from what originally was called the German Workers Party.

Argentine Jewry was shocked to hear of the official bid by the neo-Nazi group, which is led by Alejandro Biondini, a veteran right-wing extremist who has unabashedly threatened Jews in public.

Biondini told the influential magazine Noticias, in an interview published Sunday, that he will assemble followers on June 21 in front of the National Congress to swear allegiance to an Argentine flag with a swastika in its center.

The DAIA, the representative body of Argentine Jewish organizations, issued a statement expressing "its forceful repudiation and condemnation of the publicized attempt to organize in our country a Nazi party, whose emblem, the crossed swastika, is the sinister symbol of degradation and death."

Veneration For Hitler

Argentine society, "which is moving forward in its consolidation of democracy, does not deserve the insult of this crazy initiative," the statement said.

Biondini has claimed that David Goldberg, president of the DAIA, in fact governs Argentina.

In 1988, Biondini led chants of "Death to traitors, cowards and Jews!" at a gathering of some 200 extreme-right-wing demonstrators in Buenos Aires. At that time, Biondini's group was called the National Alert, reminiscent of the cry "Germany, awake!"

The Workers Nationalist Party uses the theme "One Nation, One People, One Leader" and a symbol that looks like a crossed number 7, which, on its side, closely mirrors the swastika.

On the group's letterhead, that symbol is on top. At the bottom is an actual Nazi swastika. Biondini argues that the swastika is "a thousand-year-old solar symbol" that has been unjustly defamed. He wore it in his lapel recently, on a popular political television program, where he spoke of his veneration for Hitler.

The program host was visibly taken aback and left the stage, leaving Biondini alone with the cameras, the Latin American Jewish Congress said.

The congress said that Buenos Aires is now "accustomed to having on its main pedestrian thoroughfare, Florida Street, the presence of stands of neo-Nazi groups."

The Argentine daily newspaper Clarin ran an article Monday describing the ascendancy of neo-Nazis in the country and the burgeoning phenomenon of Holocaust revisionism.

Clarin identified these "native nationalists," who are grouped into four factions, as the Na-

tional Workers Party of Biondini, the National Constitutional Party of Alberto Asseff, the Argentine Nationalist Confederation of Walter Beveraggi Allende and the National Socialist Movement of Federico Rivanera Carles.

Carles' movement supports an Institute for Investigation of the Jewish Question. Literature published by that group was found in possession of neo-Nazis arrested last month for vandalism at a Jewish cemetery near Buenos Aires.

The Argentine Jewish community, and the government as well, were shaken by the destruction of 110 gravestones at the cemetery. The interior minister launched an initiative to incorporate the DAIA into a permanent commission to monitor anti-Semitic events.

Interior Minister Julio Mera Figueroa, who attended a rally at the cemetery following the desecration, referred to a papal encyclical that censures the persecution of the Jewish people.

ISRAEL SEEKS TO RETURN TO GERMANY USELESS GAS ANTIDOTES GIVEN AS GIFT By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 6 (JTA) -- Israel is seeking a graceful way to return poison gas antidote sent as a gift by Germany during the Persian Gulf War which may have been useless, the Israeli daily Hadashot reported Thursday.

An Israeli Defense Ministry delegation now visiting Germany is discussing the matter with German officials, the newspaper said, quoting defense establishment sources.

Israel would like to give back the thousands of atropine syringes that came with the gas masks and protective clothing sent by Germany.

It turned out later that the syringes were part of old stock which the German Defense Ministry wanted to dispose of. The atropine, which is supposed to be injected immediately on exposure to poison gas, was no longer effective.

It is not known whether any of those syringes were contained in the protective kits distributed to the Israeli population.

According to Hadashot, the protective clothing from Germany was also obsolete.

NIXON BLAMED JEWS FOR ANTI-WAR ACTIVITY By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, June 6 (JTA) -- When Richard Nixon was faced with massive demonstrations against the Vietnam War while in the White House, his first reaction was to blame the Jews.

The former president's May 5, 1971 remarks can be heard on the latest set of Nixon tapes to be made available to the public. The tapes were released by the National Archives this week.

On the tapes, Nixon speculated to H.R. Haldeman, his chief of staff, that the anti-war demonstrations were inspired by Jews.

"Aren't the Chicago Seven all Jews?" Nixon said, referring to the anti-war activists on trial in Chicago for seeking to disrupt the 1968 Democratic National Convention.

"Davis's a Jew, you know," Nixon said.

Haldeman replied that he didn't believe that Angela Davis, a black radical, was Jewish.

"Hoffman, Hoffman's a Jew," Nixon said. Haldeman replied "Abbie Hoffman, and that's so."

After the two went over the names of the other members of the Chicago Seven, Nixon concluded: "About half of these are Jews."

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
A DECADE AFTER AIDS FIRST APPEARED,
IT HAS DROPPED OFF THE JEWISH AGENDA**
By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, June 6 (JTA) -- One decade ago this week, when a mysterious new disease was first reported to have incapacitated five gay men in Los Angeles, the American Jewish community knew little about what would later come to be called acquired immune deficiency syndrome.

Today, the Jewish community knows a whole lot more about the deadly disease, but, according to one leading Jewish AIDS activist, it could be doing much more to help people touched by it.

While AIDS has been on the communal agenda for the last five or six years, it has never been a priority, says Andrew Rose, a social worker who set up the first AIDS program in the country sponsored by a Jewish federation.

And now, he said sadly in an interview this week, it has been relegated to the bottom of the list of communal concerns.

"The Jewish community's attention has shifted so much to Soviet Jewish immigration, in terms of funds and everything else. The issues that are not strong priorities really fall off in times like this," he said.

"In the past year or so, the response has slowed down," Rose said. "People feel overwhelmed by it, they are tired of hearing about it and want it to go away. And the white middle class feels less and less directly affected by it as it becomes more of an inner-city epidemic.

"There is a pulling back from a response that was never adequate, never generous, to begin with," he said.

While that impacts the thousands of Jewish people with AIDS in this country, Rose said, the lack of Jewish programs is even more of a problem for their families.

'No Longer Just Mourning People'

People with AIDS can turn to AIDS service organizations for support. But it is their parents, siblings and other loved ones who suffer the most without the support of the Jewish community, Rose said.

The stigma of AIDS has not significantly diminished in 10 years, and many Jews continue to think it is not a problem that affects them, he pointed out.

"Even in 1991, and this is unbelievable to me, there are many Jewish communities which believe that this has not happened to them," he said. "That reflects the level of denial, and of the really sad stories which never get told because people feel too stigmatized to tell them.

"The biological families of people with AIDS feel the social and emotional costs of disclosing the truth are too high, too much for them in the midst of their pain," he said.

Now that people with AIDS are surviving longer, with the help of new treatments, "there is more need for people to have their spirits strengthened by everyone, including the Jewish community," Rose said.

"It's no longer just mourning people who we've lost and preparing people to die," he said. "It's sustaining people in life, and that can be, and has been, one of the strongest and best aspects of the Jewish community."

There is little hard data available about how many Jews have AIDS or are infected with HIV, the virus that causes the chronic immune de-

ficiency, since public health statistics do not include information about religion.

But extrapolating from what information is available, some 4,500 Jews are believed to have been diagnosed with AIDS to date, and 2,500 to 3,000 American Jews are believed to have died of complications from the disease.

Jewish Awareness Began In 1985

The overwhelming majority of Jewish people with AIDS are gay or bisexual men, Rose said, though there are some Jewish women and children with AIDS as well.

Rose first heard about AIDS while he was studying for a double masters degree in Jewish communal service and social work from Hebrew Union College and the University of Southern California in Los Angeles.

Rose, now 37, went to work for Jewish Family Services in Los Angeles after finishing his studies, and in 1985, began working at AIDS Project Los Angeles, a service, education and advocacy organization.

It was the same month that the real cause of Rock Hudson's death became public, Rose recalled, a watershed month in which many more people became aware of the disease, and the fear level rose substantially.

It was also the summer that the Jewish community first went on record about AIDS, when the Reform movement's Union of American Hebrew Congregations passed a resolution at its biennial convention calling for outreach to people with AIDS and their families, and for raising the level of AIDS education.

"Some rabbis began to talk about AIDS from the pulpit, and in some of the cities that were hardest hit by HIV, there were some stirrings of a response," Rose remembered. "A little later, some of the youth organizations began looking at this as an important issue to educate teen-agers about, about safe sex and condoms.

"Before then," he said, "there had been only some response from the predominantly gay and lesbian congregations and havurot."

In December 1986, Rose went to work at San Francisco Family and Children's Services, as director of its AIDS project, the Jewish community's first full-time and comprehensive AIDS program anywhere in the country.

Funding Problems For National Project

It was not until 1987 that a wider range of Jewish organizations began dealing with the reality that AIDS was not someone else's problem, according to Rose.

At the end of 1989, after moving from San Francisco to Baltimore, Rose tried to revive the National Jewish AIDS Project, which had been started in 1986 but immediately ran into problems because of a lack of funding.

For a year and a half, he has worked at raising the money needed to sustain the project, a national clearinghouse of information about AIDS and the Jewish community for legislators, educators, synagogues and other groups.

But Rose has been able to raise only about \$40,000 of the \$100,000 needed annually to keep its doors open full time, and has recently had to take another job, unable, any longer, to run the project without getting paid.

Rose now works as a social worker with the Baltimore City Health Department. He is now spending his workweek helping mainly black people with AIDS, rather than Jews.