

75th ANNIVERSARY YEAR**MONDAY, APRIL 6, 1992****VOL. 70, NO. 66****LEVY WITHDRAWS HIS RESIGNATION
AFTER WINNING MAJOR CONCESSIONS**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 5 (JTA) -- David Levy, having scored a stunning victory in a political poker game with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, withdrew his resignation Sunday, only hours before he was to have submitted it to the Cabinet.

At a triumphant noon news conference, he read out the long list of concessions Shamir had made in order to keep Levy and his faction firmly within the Likud camp for the June 23 elections.

Levy did his about-face exactly a week after telling supporters that he was quitting as foreign minister and deputy premier in the Likud government because his differences with Shamir and the party leadership had become irreconcilable.

But now, having been guaranteed the No. 2 spot in the Likud hierarchy and key positions for his allies in the top ranks of party, government and national institutions, Levy vowed to "heal the wounds" and work hard for victory at the polls.

"The agreement meets with my full satisfaction," an ebullient Levy told reporters.

Shamir, who only a week earlier was calling Levy's resignation threat a "joke," reportedly admitted to ministerial colleagues that he signed an agreement acceding to virtually all of Levy's demands because he feared the damage his departure could do the party with elections less than three months off.

Political observers questioned, however, whether Likud's internal political crisis is indeed over.

While Shamir apparently has satisfied Levy, he disgruntled other Likud leaders, notably Defense Minister Moshe Arens, one of his closest associates and allies.

Second Spot Promised To Levy

Arens accused Shamir on Sunday of "cracking" under Levy's pressure.

He wondered aloud whether the worst damage had not already been inflicted by Levy's long, embittered March 29 speech to supporters in Herzliya, in which he enumerated his grievances against Shamir and accused party leaders of slights he hinted might have stemmed from anti-Sephardic bias.

Arens has cause to be embittered in turn. Although the Likud Central Committee slotted him second after Shamir when it selected the party's election slate on March 1-2, Levy, who fell to the fourth spot, would rank above him in a new Likud government.

Shamir promised in writing that Levy would retain the offices of foreign minister and deputy premier in any government, "whatever its composition," in which Likud is a central partner.

This means that in the event of another unity government with the Labor Party, Shamir and Levy -- not Shamir and Arens -- would occupy two of the four top ministerial posts: premier, defense, foreign affairs and finance.

The basis of Levy's claims on Shamir was the 32 percent support he received in the Central Committee when he challenged the prime minister for party leadership in February.

Shamir scored a comfortable victory with 46

percent. His only other challenger, Housing Minister Ariel Sharon, received 21 percent. Yet when the Central Committee chose the Likud election slate, Levy found himself a notch below Sharon and Arens.

Moreover, most Levy supporters were excluded from the safest spots on the election slate and denied key party positions.

Levy publicly accused the Likud leadership of discrimination. He attributed his poor showing to collusion between the Shamir-Arens camp and the Sharon camp.

Implicit in Levy's disaffection was the possibility that the Moroccan-born foreign minister would establish a political party of his own to compete in the elections. In the closely contested election now shaping up, the loss of two or three seats to a new party could spell defeat for Likud.

A Seat On Jewish Agency Body

Health Minister Ehud Olmert, a close confidant of Shamir's, tried to put the best face on the surrender to Levy. He admitted that the prime minister had made far-reaching concessions, but suggested it was Levy who blinked first.

"Responsibility and sagacity prevailed at the last second over temper and petulance," Olmert said Sunday.

Meanwhile, a beaming Levy read out the terms of the agreement to the news media.

In addition to being guaranteed one of the four top portfolios in any Cabinet, Levy would have the right to select one additional minister from among the Likud faction "identified with him."

Levy's camp was guaranteed "due representation" on Knesset committees, including committee chairmanships. It would have the power to appoint one member of the Jewish Agency Executive. Levy, along with Police Minister Ronni Milo, will recommend the composition of the Likud delegation to the World Zionist Congress this summer.

In addition, Levy got Shamir to promise to exert his influence to have the outgoing Knesset pass the so-called "Norwegian Law."

The measure would require everyone appointed to the Cabinet to resign their Knesset seat, making way for the next person on the party list.

Several Levy men, relegated to the bottom of the Likud list, would stand a better chance of entering the Knesset. But political observers doubt Likud can muster enough votes to pass the bill.

Levy pledged at his news conference to devote all his efforts and energy to the election campaign against Labor, which he acknowledged would be "tough."

**AS U.N. CONDEMNS ISRAEL FOR UNREST,
PALESTINIAN ASSASSINATIONS CONTINUE**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 5 (JTA) -- Seething with anger over the latest condemnation by the U.N. Security Council, Israeli authorities have again turned the spotlight on Palestinian violence against Palestinians.

It is a point often made that more Palestinians are killed by other Palestinians than by

Israeli armed forces. But it seemed especially pertinent this weekend after the Security Council rapped Israel for the deaths last week of four Palestinians in Rafah, a town on the southern edge of the Gaza Strip.

Intifada activists murdered 23 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip last month alone, most of them suspected of collaboration with the Israeli authorities. Nine of the murders occurred during the last week of March, security sources said.

The most brutal murders were at the Sheikh Radwan mosque in Gaza, where three local Arabs were executed in front of hundreds of worshippers for alleged collaboration.

The killings occurred at 7 a.m. local time Friday. As the faithful gathered for the Id el-Fitr prayers marking the end of the Moslem holy month of Ramadan, a group of masked youths entered the mosque, assaulted their victims and fled.

The dead were identified as Abdul Hakim Gandour and Nahar Mahmoud Yassin, both 24 and from Gaza, and Ali Abed Mussa, 25, from the Jabalya refugee camp near Gaza.

A statement unanimously approved by the 15 Security Council members was read early Saturday by Simbanenduku Mumbengegwe of Zimbabwe, who is this month's president of the U.N. body.

It said they were "gravely concerned by the continued deterioration of the situation in the Gaza Strip" and asked U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to intervene to improve the conditions of Palestinians in the Israeli-administered territories.

The statement once again urged Israel to comply with the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which protects civilian populations in occupied territories. Israel claims the convention does not apply to the territories it captured in 1967, though it says it abides by its humanitarian provisions.

Israel's U.N. Mission responded to the condemnation by accusing the Security Council of ignoring the fact that Israeli troops were attacked with grenades and gasoline bombs before they opened fire in Rafah.

The curfew imposed on Rafah was lifted Sunday.

Security forces also announced Sunday the arrest of seven Palestinians in the West Bank wanted for attacking fellow Arabs suspected of collaboration.

Three of the detainees were identified as members of the Black Panthers, a gang active in the Jenin area.

INTIFADA LEADERSHIP EASES LIMITS ON BUSINESS ACTIVITY IN TERRITORIES

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 5 (JTA) -- The leadership of the intifada has officially eased restrictions on commercial activity in the administered territories and East Jerusalem, which have been hurting Palestinians more than Israelis.

The Unified National Command of the 4-year-old struggle circulated leaflets last Friday with the new directives, which also curtail general strikes.

Israeli security sources said it was less a demonstration of flexibility than acknowledgment of the de facto situation.

The restrictions were imposed on everyday commerce to make the point that there can be no

business as usual so long as there is a Palestinian uprising.

But for the last two years at least, most of the curbs have been ignored by merchants trying to earn a living and by consumers who have to feed their families.

From now on, shops and businesses, which had been under orders to close at 1 p.m. daily, may remain open until 3 p.m. in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, and 5 p.m. in East Jerusalem.

General strike days will be reduced to a minimum.

The changes stipulate that Palestinians killed by Israeli security forces will henceforth be honored with a partial general strike starting at 11 a.m. instead of a full day's shutdown.

The boycott of Israeli produce has also been partially lifted. Fruits and vegetables not grown in the territories may now be bought in Israel.

ISRAELI SOLDIERS WALK OFF BASE TO PROTEST ROUTINE CAMP DUTIES

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 5 (JTA) -- Sixteen Israeli soldiers who had just returned from nine months of duty in the Gaza Strip walked off the job last Thursday to protest their grievances and were declared absent without leave.

The men, who voluntarily returned to their base Sunday morning for a disciplinary hearing, were sentenced by a panel of officers to between 25 and 28 days in the stockade.

But their action received wide attention in the news media. The men had been in Rafah, at the southern edge of the Gaza Strip, where some of the worst rioting of the past year occurred last week.

All are veteran soldiers, reportedly with good service records, who belong to a company formed especially to serve in the administered territories.

They complained that despite their training and skills, they had to perform many routine camp duties in addition to their day and night operational patrols.

They told reporters that after trying without success to have senior officers hear their grievances, they decided to go AWOL. They reportedly expressed regret to their brigade commander before the hearings.

But the men may have made their point. An army spokesman said Sunday that a senior officer would take "a closer look" at "all aspects of the affair."

ISRAELI FILM WEEK PLAYS PRAGUE

By Josef Klansky

PRAGUE, April 5 (JTA) -- The first-ever Israeli Film Week in Czechoslovakia was opened on April 2 by Czech Minister of Culture Milan Uhde and Israeli Ambassador Yoel Sher in one of the largest cinemas in the center of Prague.

Among those attending was Czech Deputy Prime Minister Milan Lukes, outstanding representatives of Czech arts and culture, and Israeli film director Eli Cohen, whose "The Summer of Aviya" was screened at the festival opening.

This picture, which deals with the problem of Holocaust survivors and their children in Israeli society of the 1950s, received an award at the International Film Festival in Berlin in 1989. The Prague filmgoing public greeted the movie with applause.

U.S. SAYS ACTION ON ISRAELI WARNINGS COULD HAVE AVERTED DEATHS FROM SCUDS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 5 (JTA) -- The U.S. State Department's inspector general has concluded that the American military might have averted the deaths of 27 soldiers in Saudi Arabia last year had it acted sooner on Israeli warnings about defects in the Patriot anti-missile missiles, the Israeli daily Ma'ariv reported Friday.

The soldiers were killed and 98 others were injured when an Iraqi Scud missile slammed into a U.S. barracks in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, on Feb. 25, 1991, during the Persian Gulf War. They were the only significant casualties attributable to the Scuds, which the Iraqis launched against Israel and Saudi Arabia during the brief conflict.

Israel, supplied with Patriots for its defense, provided updated information to the United States about flaws in the weapon's computer program.

Ma'ariv referred to a report by the inspector general, Sherman Funk, on problems in the Patriot program that caused the system to fail and made possible the deaths in Dhahran.

According to Ma'ariv, the report says Israel revealed to the United States that the Patriot computer program showed a tendency to malfunction after eight hours of continuous operation. The battery that failed at Dhahran had been working for 100 hours beforehand.

On Feb. 11, 1991, two weeks before the fatal attack, Israel suggested corrective measures which the U.S. military began to implement, but at such a slow pace that the information did not reach Dhahran until Feb. 26, a day too late.

ISRAELI AMBASSADOR TO ROME HAS AUDIENCE WITH THE POPE

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, April 5 (JTA) -- Israel's ambassador to Italy, Avi Pazner, told Pope John Paul II in an audience last Friday that he hopes the Vatican will soon establish diplomatic relations with Israel.

Though the Vatican seems in recent months to have warmed up to the idea of establishing ties with the Jewish state, there were no indications from Friday's meeting that the Holy See is any closer to doing so.

The Vatican's deputy spokesman, Monsignor Piero Pennacchini, called the meeting a "courtesy visit" and said it was "very cordial."

The spokesman stressed, however, that "a visit to the pope by new ambassadors in Italy is normal practice." Pazner, former media spokesman for Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, took up his post in Rome last December.

He reportedly used his meeting with the pontiff to explain Israel's point of view on the current Middle East peace dialogue and to express hope that relations between Israel and the Vatican might be "normalized" within its context.

The Vatican has never formally recognized Israel, citing differences over the status of Jerusalem as a major reason. But there have been recent hints of change.

Cardinal John O'Connor, the archbishop of New York, told a group of Jewish leaders there last week that he sensed "a reaching out" from the Holy See to Israel.

According to O'Connor, who visited Israel in December, the Vatican is increasingly interested in establishing diplomatic ties with the Jewish state and is looking for reciprocal signs.

A 'MEMORY TRAIN' LEAVES PARIS FOR AUSCHWITZ 50 YEARS LATER

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, April 5 (JTA) -- A "Memory Train" left Paris for Auschwitz early Sunday with 750 people aboard making a pilgrimage back into time.

They are mainly members of the postwar generation, including some teen-agers, determined that the Holocaust will be remembered by the future builders of Europe.

The trip was organized by French Nazi-hunter Serge Klarsfeld. The train departed on the 50th anniversary of the first deportation of Jews from France. It was to arrive 25 hours later in Oswiecim, the city in southeastern Poland nearest the death camp site.

A plaque will be affixed to the spot where the deportees were unloaded and the notorious Dr. Josef Mengele decided who would go directly to the gas chambers and who would be used as slave labor.

The first cattlecars with Jews left Paris on April 5, 1942. From then until 1944, the trains left regularly. Close to 80,000 Jews were deported from France, including 11,000 children, some under 6 years old. Fewer than 2,500 survived.

The Jews were rounded up for the Gestapo by French gendarmes, who guarded them while they waited to be put into the boxcars.

One of the main staging areas was not some remote spot but the populous Paris suburb of Drancy, where Jews from all over France were herded into a camp commanded by an SS officer, Alois Brunner.

Brunner escaped justice after the war and lives in Syria under the protection of the Damascus government.

On the return trip to Paris, the Memory Train will stop at Strasbourg in eastern France, seat of the European Parliament. The pilgrims will march to the Parliament with the message that the future of Europe cannot be divorced from its past.

MOSLEMS APOLOGIZE TO DUTCH JEWS

By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, April 5 (JTA) -- The umbrella organization of Moslems from Morocco and Suriname has apologized to the Dutch Jewish community for a March 27 demonstration in which 300 Moslems marched on the Israeli Embassy in The Hague.

Crying "Death to Israel," they carried portraits of the late Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini of Iran.

The organization said the demonstrators by no means represent the 450,000 Moslems now living in Holland.

The instigators of the demonstration are believed to be Turkish fundamentalists who two years ago staged a rally in The Hague against Salman Rushdie, the Indian-born British author put under death sentence by Iran for allegedly blaspheming Islam in his book "The Satanic Verses."

Interior Minister Ina Dales, criticized for not condemning the anti-Israel demonstration, said that because it had an international background, it fell within the Foreign Ministry's ambit.

Jewish groups wrote to Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek questioning the right of a foreign country like Iran to incite against a friendly state, Israel, in the Netherlands.

SPAIN APPROVES PROPOSED ACCORD GIVING JUDAISM OFFICIAL STATUS

By Judith Lew

MADRID, April 5 (JTA) -- The Spanish government has given a major boost to a historic accord that would grant the 12,000-member Jewish community of Spain a status almost identical to that of the Roman Catholic Church.

The accord, which was drawn up two years ago and signed a few days before the 500th anniversary of the edict expelling Spain's Jews, was approved last Friday by the government's Council of Ministers.

Two other agreements, with the 300,000-strong Moslem community and Spain's 250,000 Protestants, were reviewed at the same time.

The accords' conversion into legislation, expected before the summer months, has been described by the daily *El Pais* as "the end of a situation of religious intolerance in this country."

Catholicism has remained Spain's sole recognized creed since King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella unified the country under one religion after ordering the expulsion of the Jews and Moslems five centuries ago.

The Inquisition, which was abolished only in 1834, punished any deviance from the faith. A 19th-century traveler like Englishman George Borrow risked fines and imprisonment for trying to hand out Protestant Bibles.

Spain evaded the modern age during Gen. Francisco Franco's dictatorship from 1939 until his death in 1975. The 1978 Constitution guaranteed freedom of worship, but only the Catholic Church was able to receive donations from official tax forms or temporary government financing, through an agreement with the Vatican.

In the new accord, the Jewish community will be granted tax-exempt status on real estate and other holdings, member donations will be tax deductible, religious marriages performed by rabbis will be considered valid as civil marriages, and Jewish education will be available in public schools to pupils who request it.

Orthodox Would Retain Authority

Some people are wary of the accord because the government provides the Federation of Jewish Communities -- an umbrella organization for the communities, most of which consider themselves Orthodox -- the sole power over kashrut, selection and certification of rabbis, education and every other aspect of Jewish life in Spain.

According to Samuel Toledano, head of the federation, the accords would not necessarily shut out other groups that in the future might want to incorporate into the federation. But he said he would try to prevent the creation of another community in a city where one already exists.

"If we were more numerous, then there would be no problem," he said. "But another community, say in Madrid, which, though the largest, only has 3,000 people, would weaken the establishment. It would be difficult to determine who would be in charge of the school or burials."

Some 12,000 people -- hailing mostly from Morocco -- belong to Spain's 12 Jewish communities. But there are an estimated 3,000 to 12,000 disenfranchised Jews, from Argentina and other nations of Latin America, who have not been able to fit into the communities.

Last week, just as King Juan Carlos spoke on reconciliation of the Sephardi communities and the Spanish crown, a group of young Argentine

Jews from a newly formed association called Hebraica, rented a building to organize activities for themselves and their children.

Although the group has billed itself as a cultural entity, if it is successful enough, it could become a gathering point for the Jews who cannot find common ground with the established community's Orthodox ritual.

An alternative synagogue is not spoken about for fear of alienating the community, but it has not been ruled out in private.

"It would be chaotic if there were more than one spokesman for the Jewish community when it comes to dealing with the government," Toledano said. "Whatever problems we might have we will have to iron out between ourselves."

BILL WOULD INCREASE PENALTIES FOR CRIMES MOTIVATED BY HATE

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, April 5 (JTA) -- In an effort to stem the alarming increase in hate crimes, a bill has been introduced in Congress to allow federal judges to increase the penalties for those found guilty of this type of crime.

Known as the Hate Crime Sentencing Enhancement Act of 1992, the bill was introduced in by Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.).

A hate crime is defined as one "in which the defendant's conduct was motivated by hatred, bias or prejudice based on the actual or perceived race, color, religion, national origin, ethnicity, gender, or sexual orientation of another individual or group of individuals."

At a news conference last week led by Simon and Schumer, and attended by members of police organizations, members of various groups reported on the sharp increase in hate crimes.

Jess Hordes, director of the Washington office of the Anti-Defamation League, said that the ADL's annual report for 1991 listed more than 1,600 anti-Semitic incidents, the highest number since the organization began keeping statistics.

There was a striking increase in anti-Semitic incidents on college campuses, he added.

A total of 1,822 incidents of anti-gay violence, ranging from harassment to homicide, were documented last year in five major metropolitan areas, said Kevin Berrill of the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force Policy Institute.

Increased attacks against Asian-Americans, largely a result of "Japan bashing," were reported by Sonya Chung of the Japanese American Citizens League and Daphne Kwok of the Organization of Chinese Americans.

Simon and Schumer were also co-sponsors of the 1990 Hate Crimes Statistic Act, which requires the Justice Department to keep records of the number of hate crimes.

There is now a need to go a step further than just keeping track of statistics, Simon said.

Schumer said a message must be sent that "if you commit a bias crime, you're going to pay for it and pay for it hard on the federal level."

The ADL's Hordes said that 46 states and the District of Columbia have laws dealing with hate violence, including two dozen penalty-enhancement provisions.

"We believe increasing penalties for federal crimes motivated by prejudice will have a deterrent impact, and send the message to both perpetrators and victims that society will not tolerate these odious crimes," Hordes said.