

75th ANNIVERSARY YEAR**THURSDAY, APRIL 23, 1992****VOL. 70, NO. 78****DUKE'S DECISION TO DROP CANDIDACY
SEEN AS REPUDIATION OF HIS BIGOTRY**

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, April 22 (JTA) -- David Duke's decision to drop out of the race for the presidency has been welcomed in the Jewish community as a sign that the American people have rejected his message of anti-Semitism and bigotry.

But Jewish leaders cautioned that although Duke failed to win many votes in the Republican primaries in which he ran, the community must remain vigilant against others carrying the same message of bigotry.

Duke, a former Ku Klux Klan leader and neo-Nazi from Louisiana, announced Wednesday at the National Press Club here that his "quest is over" for the Republican nomination. He also ruled out running as an independent or third party candidate.

"Basically we're pleased that Duke is withdrawing," said Jess Hordes, director of the Anti-Defamation League's Washington office. "It reflects the lack of support he has received from the American people, who have rejected his message of hate."

Matthew Brooks, executive director of the National Jewish Coalition, a Republican organization, concurred.

The low vote for Duke was a "total refutation of David Duke's message of anti-Semitism, hatred, racism and bigotry," he said. "People voted against David Duke, the message, and David Duke, the messenger."

'A Symbol Of What Is Wrong'

But Brooks warned that this does not mean that the threat of Duke's message to the Jewish community "is going to go away."

Brooks' opposite number, Steve Gutow, executive director of the National Jewish Democratic Council, agreed.

"David Duke is a symbol of what is wrong in this country, a symbol of the divisions in this country," Gutow said. "His exit from the presidential race has to be a good sign."

But Gutow stressed there is a continuous undercurrent of anti-Semitism and other forces of racism in the United States, "and we have to be vigilant and fight against it all the time."

While Duke did not have the money and presence to convert his message of hatred into a national movement, there will always be others who will try, Gutow said.

"I don't think we can ever allow the David Dukes of this world to go unanswered," he said.

Many, in fact, attribute Duke's poor showing to the candidacy of the more popular conservative columnist Patrick Buchanan, whose "America First" rhetoric appeals to the same constituency of disaffected voters that Duke has drawn on in the past.

Buchanan, who has made disparaging remarks about Jews and come to the defense of accused Nazi war criminals, remains in the race as a Republican candidate, though few give him a chance of beating President Bush for the nomination.

Duke, 41, has been repudiated by the Republican National Committee ever since he won a

seat in the Louisiana state legislature as a Republican after losing a bid for the U.S. Senate.

Last year, he made an unsuccessful run for the Louisiana governorship, in which he received a majority of white and Republican votes, but lost because of the large black turnout.

**ITALIANS EAGER TO SERVE AS HOSTS
FOR FUTURE ROUND OF BILATERAL TALKS**

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, April 22 (JTA) -- Italian authorities have expressed delight that Rome has been chosen as the site of the sixth round of Arab-Israeli peace talks.

No date has been set, but they are expected to be held sometime in July.

The U.S. State Department announced the change of venue Tuesday in Washington where the fifth round is scheduled to open next Monday.

Some here see the choice of Rome as the recognition of Italy's long-sought role as a leader in Mediterranean affairs and a mediator of regional conflicts.

Foreign Minister Gianni De Michelis told reporters here that he had informed U.S. Secretary of State James Baker that "we were ready to host the talks."

Actually, Rome is a compromise choice. From the outset of their bilateral dialogues with Syrians, Lebanese, Jordanians and Palestinians, the Israelis have been urging a shift to the Middle East, or a country close to the region.

The Arabs were perfectly content to stay in Washington.

Baker asked all of the parties to suggest a site. Rome was chosen because it appeared on everybody's list.

"We've said from the beginning that Rome could be an excellent site because it is midway between the first choices of both sides," said Nemer Hammad, the Palestine Liberation Organization's representative in Italy.

Israel initially opposed Rome because it perceived Italian foreign policy to be tilted toward the Arabs.

"But lately, we have had the feeling that our concerns, specifically our security concerns, have been taken note of in Rome," Israeli Embassy spokesman Raphael Gamzou told reporters.

De Michaelis said "Italy has developed a constructive policy toward Israel to restore the balance the Israelis seemed to think was lacking."

At the same time, he noted that Italy has retained close relations with the Arab countries and the Palestinians, and continues "a dialogue that was not interrupted even during the (Persian) Gulf war."

Italian commentators noted that De Michaelis has good personal relations with Israel's foreign minister, David Levy, which has contributed to improved relations between the countries. De Michaelis visited Israel last year.

He stressed that Italy has actively supported the Arab-Israeli peace talks from the beginning. "The choice of Rome pleases us because it confirms the value of all the hard work we have done in recent months," he said.

But he cautioned that "our role should not be overvalued."

COUPLE CHALLENGE ARMY VERSION OF WEST BANK SHOOTING INCIDENT

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 22 (JTA) -- An Israeli couple have disputed the army's version of an incident in the West Bank this week in which soldiers shot and wounded two masked Palestinians.

The Israel Defense Force says the pair were wounded only after ignoring verbal warnings and warning shots fired into the air.

But Aviva and David Elimelech of Moshav Luzit insist the soldiers, dressed as civilians, shot the Arabs without warning while they were painting nationalist slogans on a wall.

The Elimelechs say they witnessed the incident Monday from the home of Arab friends with whom they were spending the day in Dura village, in the Hebron hills.

Their testimony is one of the rare instances in which Israeli civilians have publicly challenged the veracity of the IDF.

If true, it would substantiate repeated claims by Palestinians that IDF soldiers are increasingly shooting suspects rather than arresting them.

The army, while standing by its denial, has appointed an officer to investigate the incident.

The Elimelechs charge, moreover, that they themselves were roughed up and verbally abused by the soldiers, who belong to an undercover unit.

They told reporters they were having dinner on the terrace when three young masked men carrying buckets of paint came to smear graffiti on a wall.

Within minutes, a car with blue West Bank license plates drove up, and its occupants, without warning, fired several rounds at the masked men, hitting one in the stomach and another in the shoulder.

The Jewish couple said they thought at first that Arabs were shooting Arabs, a frequent occurrence in the administered territories.

But as the armed men approached with drawn weapons, it became apparent they were soldiers disguised as civilians, the Elimelechs said.

The Elimelechs said they shouted at the soldiers: "Stop shooting, we are Jews." But the soldiers advanced, ordering the couple into the house while "using dirty language."

According to the Elimelechs, the soldiers entered the house, fired up the staircase, struck the Jewish woman, who is four months pregnant, and beat up the Arab hosts.

"I told them that they are cold-blooded murderers, and I would not keep quiet," David Elimelech said. "Their battalion commander arrived at the scene and swore at me," he added.

The IDF claims its unit spotted the masked men painting nationalist slogans and ordered them to cease. When they ignored the order, shots were fired into the air. Only when they continued to disobey did the soldiers open fire, an IDF spokesman said.

But David Elimelech insists his version of the incident is true.

"If the army spokesman had courage, he would go into the territories and check what is really happening there," he said.

Elimelech, who describes himself as politically on the right, says he did military service in the territories in 1982 and it is "high time someone exposed the truth there."

The couple said that since making their accusations against the soldiers public, they have

received many threats and members of their own moshav refuse to speak to them.

The incident highlights the problems Israel is having coping with the escalating violence in the territories in recent months. IDF soldiers have engaged in an increasing number of clashes with intifada activists, while Palestinians continue to kill other Palestinians suspected of being informers.

On Wednesday, unidentified men murdered Dr. Ahmad Steti, a health service official with the Civil Administration in Jenin. He was stabbed to death as he entered his office in the West Bank city, apparently because he collaborated with the Israeli authorities. Steti had been attacked and wounded once before.

ISRAELI SOLDIER WOUNDED IN LEBANON

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 22 (JTA) -- An Israel Defense Force soldier was severely wounded in the leg by fragments of a mortar round that exploded near his Golani Brigade patrol in the southern Lebanon security zone Tuesday.

The patrol was passing the ruins of a Crusaders' stronghold known as Beaufort Castle, near the Galilee panhandle, when it was targeted by Hezbollah gunmen north of the zone.

The wounded soldier was identified as Yaniv Levy of Kibbutz Sdot Yam. He was reported in serious condition at Rambam Hospital in Haifa.

The IDF and its allied South Lebanon Army retaliated with heavy artillery barrages aimed at Hezbollah-occupied villages in southern Lebanon. Two houses in Roumain village, north of Nabatiya, blew up when direct hits were scored, detonating ammunition dumps concealed inside, reports from Lebanon said.

At least two Hezbollah guerrillas were killed. Local reports said Hezbollah men were seen dragging the bodies from the ruins and searching for others.

Reports from Lebanon said the Lebanese and Syrian governments are pressuring the radical pro-Iranian Hezbollah to stop attacking Israeli targets for fear that Israel will be goaded into large-scale reprisals.

BRITISH TOURIST DROWNS IN ISRAEL

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 22 (JTA) -- A British tourist drowned Tuesday after falling off a rowboat in a turbulent stretch of the upper Jordan River.

The victim, identified as Clive Max Heller, 45, of London, and his son were on an organized outing under the leadership of a presumably experienced river guide.

Their boat encountered rapids caused by the excessive flow of water from Lake Kinneret into the Jordan following a winter of abnormal rainfall that raised the level of the lake.

Heller reportedly stood up in the boat and toppled over, hitting his head on a submerged rock before being washed away.

His body was discovered Wednesday, wedged between rocks near Kibbutz Kfar Hanassi, a mile downstream. His son was treated for shock.

Police are investigating whether the outing was organized by an experienced, licensed company or a fly-by-night outfit taking advantage of the heavy influx of tourists for the Passover and Easter holidays.

SOVIET IMMIGRANT MUSICIANS BARRED FROM JERUSALEM OPEN-AIR FESTIVAL

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 22 (JTA) -- Absorption Minister Yitzhak Peretz is under fire for barring the appearance of a dozen former Soviet immigrant performers at an open air festival in Jerusalem on Tuesday evening because their pop music would offend members of the strictly Orthodox haredi community.

Jewish Agency Chairman Simcha Dinitz denounced Peretz's censorship as "discrimination" that had "no parallel in the civilized world."

Shulamit Aloni, leader of the new left-wing Meretz bloc, called the minister a "primitive." New immigrants, joined by native Israelis, demonstrated against the absorption minister, who is haredi. One of their signs read: "No jobs, no homes and now no culture."

Peretz, who stands to score points with his religious constituents in the upcoming Knesset elections, defended his decision. He said that inasmuch as the street festival was open to the public, he was concerned that haredim and other Orthodox Jews attending should not be exposed to rock music, jazz and women singers.

According to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz, the banned performance included selections from the George Gershwin operetta "Porgy and Bess," and Russian and Israeli folk songs sung by a male baritone. A medley of Gypsy tunes performed by a female singer was also on the program.

At the urging of Aloni, the immigrant artists were brought to a nearby theater, where a capacity audience gave them rousing cheers.

They were also invited to participate in the prestigious Israel Festival next week. Festival Director Yossi Telgan said the invitations were his way of protesting the minister's decision, which has triggered a storm of controversy.

The haredim argued that they are entitled to concessions at public events because their religious way of life limits their choice of entertainment while secular Israelis have a limitless choice.

They attended the open-air festival in unusually large numbers after Peretz announced the ban.

Political observers said that whatever the minister's original motives, the episode gave him useful pre-election exposure.

Peretz, who holds a Knesset seat as an independent, says his plans are uncertain. He insists he will run for re-election on June 23 but will not return to the haredi Shas party, which he quit two years ago.

RUSSIA ACCREDITS JEWISH AGENCY

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 22 (JTA) -- The Russian government has extended full accreditation to the Jewish Agency, giving it the status of an independent organization that can operate freely and legally throughout Russia, the agency announced here Wednesday.

The new status was conferred on the basis of an agreement reached between Jewish Agency Chairman Simcha Dinitz and Russian Vice President Alexander Rutskoi in Moscow last week. It was formalized at ceremonies in Moscow attended by Russian senior officials, including the deputy minister of justice, and representatives of the Jewish Agency's delegation in Russia.

Until now, the Jewish Agency had no legal

standing in Russia and had to operate through intermediaries.

In practical terms, accreditation means simpler procedures to negotiate contracts with local bodies for the transportation of immigrants and their luggage to Israel.

IN MOSCOW, A SEDER IS A SEDER, AND YOU CAN CHOOSE YOUR STYLE

By Sandy Wolofsky and Nuri Katz

MOSCOW, April 22 (JTA) -- Passover was celebrated in Moscow last weekend much as it was anywhere in the world.

What for generations had been a clandestine gathering held in laborious secrecy for fear of reprisals by a police state is now as open and commonplace as in Montreal or Toledo, Tel Aviv or New York.

It was celebrated in different ways by different groups, from the rigidly Orthodox Lubavitch Hasidim to the liberal Reconstructionist movement. All have "shlichim" (emissaries) active throughout the former Soviet Union to teach Jews long isolated from Judaism what Passover is all about.

Each group marked the holiday in its own way.

Some Jews meticulously searched out and burned their last piece of chametz last Friday to make sure their homes were absolutely "kosher l'Pesach."

Others disregarded that ceremony but recited the seder ritual. Some simply partook of a good meal without religious trappings.

But for most Russian Jews, the seder, whether a religious or secular experience, was the first opportunity to hear the traditional Passover tunes and read the story of the Exodus from Egypt.

The fact that seders are taken for granted testifies to the vastness of the changes that have transformed this land in barely two years.

Julia Polekhova remembers not too long ago, when every precaution was taken to avoid suspicion that a seder was being held.

Guests would arrive separately over a two-hour span. The invitees were only those who could be trusted implicitly. If the noise level rose after a few drinks, word was sent out to inquisitive neighbors that a birthday was being celebrated.

When the U.S. Embassy held its seders in past years, the invitees mostly were refuseniks. At this year's seder at the residence of U.S. Ambassador Robert Strauss were many former refuseniks, such as Leonid Stonov, who now works in Chicago for the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews.

And the Israeli Embassy held its own seder for expatriates and diplomats, here from Israel to visit or work, for whom "Next year in Jerusalem" was an accomplished fact.

The complete freedom is on one level a bit disappointing. A visitor had hoped to feel a sense of relief among Jews no longer worrying about the KGB or social ostracism; the exhilaration of conducting a religious event without fear of retribution.

Instead, the only unique aspect of Pesach here was its ordinariness.

Asked if they felt anything "special," seder celebrants shrugged their shoulders. For them, the past is just that, and freedom is now taken for granted.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
SOVIET NEWCOMERS POSE CHALLENGE
FOR ISRAEL'S FAMILY PLANNING CLINICS**
By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- One of the many quiet stories about the ways in which the massive immigration from the republics of the former Soviet Union is impacting Israel is its effect on the country's family planning organizations.

Two non-governmental agencies, the Tel Aviv-based Israel Family Planning Association and Shiloh, in Jerusalem, do much of the outreach and educational work.

The Israel Family Planning Association provides professional education for doctors and has six Open Door information offices nationwide.

The Open Door offices primarily serve teenagers, counseling them and directing them to the appropriate health-care providers.

Shiloh, which operates more like Planned Parenthood in the United States, provides clinical services as well.

Adapting to the needs of immigrants from Russia and the other former Soviet republics involves much more than simply translating existing birth control literature and providing staff members who can speak their language.

The long-term goal is the complete re-education of the immigrants, for whom abortion has been the birth control method of choice.

"One hundred percent of Soviet women are estimated to have abortions," according to Judith Abrahami-Einat, executive director of the Israel Family Planning Association.

In fact, women in the former Soviet Union have an average of two or three abortions. By contrast, the statistical average in Israel is half an abortion over a woman's fertile years, said Dr. Eitan Sabatello, director of the demographic division of Israel's Central Bureau of Statistics.

Mistrust Of Contraceptives

"There is a social and psychological acceptance of abortion among Soviets. It is seen as a routine and inevitable procedure," Abrahami-Einat explained.

The Soviet medical establishment has convinced women that abortion is the safest method of birth control because its overall medical approach favors treatment over prevention, she said.

Withdrawal and the rhythm method are the two most popular forms of birth control practiced in the former Soviet republics. Condoms are unpopular and difficult to find.

Birth control pills and intrauterine devices are not only scarce in the republics, they are as rudimentary and dangerous as what was available in the West 20 years ago.

"Soviet women's fear of those methods, in many cases, was legitimate," said Joanne Zack-Pakes, director of Shiloh.

Changing their resistance to contraceptives is expected to take time.

"No change in attitude can be expected in less than three years, and even after living here 10 or 12 years, there is still an enormous gap between their family planning practices and others," said Abrahami-Einat.

Some shift in attitudes toward alternatives to abortion has been seen among Soviet immigrants who came to Israel in the 1970s, but they still seek abortions at a dramatically higher rate than other Israelis.

The trend is visible even among women who

were born in the Soviet Union but raised in Israel.

In 1988, the latest year for which figures are available, women in their 20s who were born in the Soviet Union were 50 percent more likely to have abortions than other Israeli women of the same age.

Married Women Not Eligible

When a woman wants to have an abortion in Israel, she must apply for approval from one of 27 committees around the country.

There are four sets of circumstances in which the law allows a woman an abortion: if she is under 18 or over 40; if the pregnancy is the result of rape or incest; if it is extramarital; or if the pregnancy is a threat to the woman's health.

Women who are healthy, married and between the ages of 18 and 40 are not permitted to elect abortion under current Israeli law. And most of the new immigrants who become pregnant are healthy married women in that age range.

A concern voiced by family planning professionals is that women from the former Soviet Union will seek illegal abortions from immigrant doctors, many of whom are not licensed.

So far, that fear does not seem to have been borne out. There are an estimated 5,000 illegal abortions in Israel each year, according to Sabatello of the Central Bureau of Statistics, but there is no firm indication to date that immigrants from the former Soviet Union are raising the number substantially.

The reality is that most women who apply to the committees are approved. According to the 1991 Statistical Abstract of Israel, there were 19,121 applications for abortions in 1990, of which 17,020 were approved.

It is too early to tell if Israel's abortion rate has increased since Soviet Jews began arriving here in large numbers at the end of 1989.

If Jews from Russia and the other republics continue to come to Israel in large numbers, Sabatello projects that the peak number of abortion applications will come in 1995, when "we may reach 10,000 more."

Shiloh began a Russian Project last July to serve the new immigrants. The full-time education director, half-time counselor and part-time gynecologist working on the project all speak Russian, and two are recent immigrants themselves.

Other Concerns Besides Fertility

They reach the new immigrants by advertising in Russian-language newspapers, setting up information booths at the hotels where Russians are housed and making presentations on birth control at the Hebrew-language ulpan classes.

Shiloh has had 150 Russian clients since the project began. Half have come for contraception, and half because they suspect they are pregnant. A third of those women turned out to be pregnant, and all opted for abortions.

Clients typically visit the clinic five to seven times for counseling and examinations.

Clinics should not only educate immigrants about alternative birth control methods, they should make contraceptives available to them for free or at very low cost, Sabatello said.

"Most Soviet women want a small number of children," she said. "But we shouldn't forget that at the early stage of absorption, the women have problems other than fertility concerns. They may prefer to buy milk rather than birth control pills."