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**PERES JOINS JEWISH AGENCY FRAY  
WITH ATTACK ON DIASPORA LEADERS**  
By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Feb. 10 (JTA) -- With a sharp attack this week on the Diaspora Jewish fund-raising establishment, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres has joined the ongoing struggle for control over the Jewish Agency for Israel.

In doing so, he has sided the Israeli political parties and their allied Zionist movements against the Diaspora Jews who finance the budget of the Jewish Agency, the non-governmental organization that, among other tasks, brings immigrants to Israel and helps resettle them. In a statement issued this week, Peres charged that "the Zionist movement has reached a dead end by kowtowing to the fund-raisers" of the United Jewish Appeal.

He went on to blast the fund-raisers as "incapable of raising the funds required for immigrant absorption."

"Seventy percent of the funds raised are not transmitted to Israel," he claimed. "Yet the leaders of the fund-raising bodies demand a controlling voice over the leadership of the Jewish Agency, and the right to run Zionist affairs from overseas."

Peres further called on the leaders of the Zionist parties in Israel, which are represented in the Jewish Agency through the World Zionist Organization, to intervene in what was happening in the Jewish Agency.

The "process of de-Zionization" now engulfing the Jewish Agency, he said, is the result, in part, of the apathy shown by the Israeli public and politicians in the life and organization of the Jewish Diaspora.

The foreign minister's remarks escalated the long-running battle between the two camps that comprise the Jewish Agency: representatives of the WZO and representatives of the UJA and its counterparts worldwide.

Presently at issue, and mentioned by Peres in his statement, is the Diaspora fund-raisers' demand to eliminate two senior positions in the Jewish Agency as a cost-cutting measure.

**'At Stake Is The Proper Balance'**

Peres' remarks followed a private letter sent last week by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to veteran UJA leader Max Fisher, opposing the abrogation of these posts.

"What's at stake is the proper balance between Israel and the Diaspora, between fund-raisers and the Zionists," explained Seymour Reich, president of the new American Zionist Movement.

"Certainly the fund-raising establishment deserves a voice in the leadership in the Jewish Agency, but not a controlling voice," he said. "I think the fund-raisers have been too aggressive. It's time to pull back."

The fund-raisers, however, continue to defend their proposals in the face of the attack from Peres.

The Diaspora-Israel partnership embodied in the Jewish Agency requires "a level of confidence in our ability to both improve the Jewish Agency and enhance its credibility to attract greater financial resources," said Norman Lipoff.

Lipoff is chairman of the United Israel Appeal, the organizational bridge and financial conduit between UJA and the Jewish Agency.

He sits with Fisher on the evenly split six-member committee of fund-raisers and WZO leaders trying to resolve this and other outstanding disputes.

From Lipoff's perspective, the two posts, chairman of the Immigration and Absorption Department and chairman of the Youth Aliyah Department, duplicate the responsibilities of the director-generals of those departments.

In keeping with longstanding WZO practice, department chairmen are appointed on the basis of political affiliation. The Zionists see the move to eliminate the posts as an attempt to reduce their influence in the Jewish Agency, which receives the bulk of the hundreds of millions of dollars American Jews send to Israel each year through the UJA campaign and its special Operation Exodus drive to aid immigrant resettlement.

**Threatened To Flare Into 'World War'**

The committee of the six top leaders of the two factions began meeting after the conflict several months ago threatened to flare into "world war."

But in their most recent meeting two weeks ago, they were unable to reach an agreement on the dispute. And the statement from Peres indicates that the Zionists are once again pulling out their heaviest artillery.

For their part, the fund-raisers have let it be known that the contract which assigns the Jewish Agency as the recipient of UJA money raised for Israel will soon be up for renewal.

More than a week of Jewish Agency meetings begin in Jerusalem in Feb. 17, at which time both sides hope to resolve the issue.

When asked to speculate on the reason for Peres' decision to enter the fray, one American familiar with the issues pointed out that the foreign minister is politically close to the imperiled head of the Immigration and Absorption Department, Uri Gordon.

The American further suggested that the foreign minister's public criticism of the WZO for not standing up to the fund-raisers could reflect the fact that Simcha Diniz, chairman of the WZO and the Jewish Agency, is not aligned with Peres but with his Labor Party rival, Rabin.

Peres' comments regarding the small proportion of money passed on to Israel reflects a longstanding Israeli complaint. They say that all of the money raised by federations is raised in the name of Israel, but that too high a portion is kept by community federations to finance local needs and national Jewish agencies.

The UJA disputes Peres' 70 percent figure.

"According to our figures, over the past eight years, 46 percent of the net proceeds have been transmitted to Israel," said UJA spokesman Gerald Nagel.

That figure includes money transmitted to both the Jewish Agency and the much smaller programs run in Israel by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. But it excludes the additional 5 percent of net campaign proceeds the JDC spends aiding needy Jews around the world.

"From 1990 to 1992, \$1.3 billion was trans-

mitted to Israel, nearly \$400 million more than any other three-year period. So I'm really at a loss to explain what he's talking about," said Nagel.

One person familiar with the figures said that there is a grain of truth to the foreign minister's account -- if one excludes UJA's special Operation Exodus campaign. Then the amount of the federation campaigns that goes to the Jewish Agency alone is indeed down to roughly a third of the total.

But Nagel rejected the idea of ignoring the Operation Exodus money. "Those funds are all going to Israel, and it's very unclear how any of these people can separate them," he said.

"It's hard-earned money by American Jews and hard-raised money by the federations," he said.

Victor Gelb, a national vice chairman of the UJA and chairman of the United Israel Appeal's Jewish Agency committee, said that if American Jewry proves incapable of raising the funds required for immigrant absorption, "it won't be because of the lack of trying.

"If Mr. Peres has a better way of raising pledges and collecting cash, more power to him. I would think he has higher priorities as foreign minister.

However, added Gelb, "if he could spare any time speaking at special fund-raising events in the U.S. and Canada, I'm sure he would be most effective."

*(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent David Landau in Jerusalem.)*

#### JEWISH GROUPS WELCOME U.S. PLAN FOR BOSNIA By Deborah Kalb States News Service

WASHINGTON, Feb. 10 (JTA) -- Jewish groups, many of whom have been active in pushing for stronger U.S. action to help the people of Bosnia-Herzegovina, welcomed the new U.S. initiative to try to stop the fighting in the former Yugoslav republic.

The long-awaited Clinton administration plan, announced Wednesday, includes steps advocated by Jewish groups in past months, such as enforcement of a U.N.-imposed no-fly zone over Bosnia, creation of a war-crimes tribunal at the United Nations and the possible use of U.S. military power to enforce a future agreement.

However, some in the Jewish community continued to stress their concerns about the ongoing killing and rape in Bosnia, and the need for decisive U.S. action to end the human suffering.

Many Jews see parallels between the Nazi Holocaust, and the suffering of Bosnian Moslems under Serbian "ethnic cleansing" policies.

In recent months, Jewish organizations, often working in broad-based coalitions with Moslem, Christian and women's groups, have held news conferences and rallies and sent letters to U.S. officials in a concerted effort to draw attention to conditions in the former Yugoslavia.

Just this past Monday, a broad-based coalition of groups headed by the American Jewish Congress delivered a letter to Madeleine Albright, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, urging full funding of a U.N. commission to document war crimes, including rape, in Bosnia.

The coalition, consisting of about 40 religious, women's, ethnic, and relief groups, pushed

for Albright to "work with the United Nations to document and prosecute, under an international war crimes tribunal, cases of rape as a tactic of warfare" in the former Yugoslavia.

The members of the coalition wrote that they were "united in their horror at the reports of systematic rape and forced impregnation of women and girls, and we call in a single voice for immediate action to prosecute those responsible for these crimes against humanity."

The coalition noted in its letter that a commission to document war crimes has been established, but has yet to be funded.

Information from that commission could then be used as evidence in war crimes trials.

The letter also expressed the groups' concern that no women serve on the commission.

"We are concerned that without female representation on the commission, rape as a war crime with unique consequences may not be given proper consideration," the letter said.

Jewish groups responded positively for the most part to the new U.S. initiative, announced at the State Department by Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and expressed their hopes that the plan would boost U.S. involvement in resolving the Bosnian crisis.

"The combination of diplomatic, economic, and, if necessary, military means to end this bloodshed holds out the promise of progress toward a solution in this crisis," American Jewish Congress President Robert Lifton said in a statement. AJCongress is among the groups that have been active on the Bosnia issue in recent months.

"I'm encouraged by the prospect that the U.S. could be moving in the direction of contributing to the enforcement of a peace plan," said Jason Isaacson, director of government and international relations for the American Jewish Committee, another group that has called for tougher U.S. action.

"I hope today's announcement signals an American commitment to move in a more constructive direction," Isaacson added.

#### Concern Over Delay In 'Tough Steps'

Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, said he had a "mixed read" on the plan.

On the one hand, he said, the plan is a "major step in the right direction. The president laid the moral and strategic foundation for U.S. involvement in halting the killing."

But on the other hand, Saperstein was critical of the plan's "delays in taking some tough steps to save human lives," such as the use of force in securing civilian areas, until the negotiations proceed further.

Abraham Bayer, director of international concerns for the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, said he was "delighted" by the call for a war crimes tribunal.

Bayer said he hoped that "mass rapings would be included as a war crime," and that "an instrument would be created to bring these people to justice."

He added that Bosnia would be an issue at NJCRAC's annual plenum, to take place next week in Washington.

**Because of Presidents' Day, the JTA Daily News Bulletin will not be published Monday, Feb. 15.**

## RED CROSS DEPOT GOING UP AT SITE OF RAVENSBRUCK CAMP

By Igal Avidan

BERLIN, Feb. 10 (JTA) -- A dispute over the future of a building adjacent to the former Nazi concentration camp of Ravensbruck appears to have been resolved by a decision to place a German Red Cross depot, not a supermarket, at the site.

The decision to substitute the humanitarian aid facility was made to still the controversy and anger which erupted in July 1991 when plans for a supermarket were announced. The building was already under construction at the time.

Some 107,000 women were detained at the Ravensbruck labor camp between 1939 and 1945, and 90,000 of them died there. A memorial to the camp's victims has been placed at the site.

After the war, the site was used as a Soviet detention camp and is still being used by Russian troops as a military base. The soldiers are expected to leave by March.

A year ago, the state of Brandenburg bought the property next to the camp from the German food giant Tengelmann for about 10 million marks, or more than \$6 million. Tengelmann, which also owns the A&P supermarket chain, had slated the building to be part of a shopping center.

The building was constructed on a cobblestone road that was built by slave laborers from more than 20 countries incarcerated at Ravensbruck.

"A humane use" by the German Red Cross "is the best solution for the supermarket" building, said the memorial's director, Silgrid Jacobeit.

Among those who had complained about the market plans was Abraham Foxman, director of the Anti-Defamation League, who appealed directly to the prime minister of Brandenburg state to stop the implementation of the plan.

On Tuesday the ADL's Elliot Welles, director of the task force on Nazi war criminals, said, "We accept the solution as quite proper."

A spokesperson for the German Red Cross said the building will be used to store materials needed for disaster control.

Several former concentration camps in Germany, particularly in the former East Germany, have become the cause of controversy as developers seek to build on or next to them.

The German government has promised to contribute several million marks this year for building Holocaust memorials in the state of Brandenburg, including the one at Sachsenhausen, another former concentration camp.

## ANC DELEGATES WHO VISITED ISRAEL MAKE CRITICAL REMARKS ON RETURN

By Suzanne Belling

JOHANNESBURG (JTA) -- South African Jewish community leaders have expressed disappointment at statements issued by the African National Congress Youth League, which recently returned from an official visit to Israel at the invitation of the South African Union of Jewish Students.

The Youth League urged ANC president Nelson Mandela not to visit Israel until there was further progress in the peace talks.

The ANC delegation lauded Israel's achievements in developing the country, but noted that "this splendid and commendable fact of human determination to prosperity and growth is denied

its full space of further development and its right to exposure by the Israeli government's policy of oppression of the Palestinian people."

Reacting to the ANC comments in a joint statement, Mervyn Smith, national chairman of the South African Jewish Board of Deputies, and Abe Abrahamson, chairman of the South African Zionist Federation, said the remarks were harsh and one-sided.

"No recognition is given to Israel for being the only democracy in the Middle East," said Smith and Abrahamson.

They also pointed out that Israel is "actively committed to pursuing peace. The sentiments expressed are negative and do not recognize the complexities of the current Middle East situation."

The ANC delegation met with Israeli officials, visited industrial and agricultural projects and spoke with educators and intellectuals.

The trip was seen as part of a growing effort by Israel to improve its relations with South Africa's black majority and to the ANC, which has traditionally had close ties with Palestinian organizations.

South Africa's Jewish community has also been active in promoting good relations between itself and the ANC. Last month, leading Jewish businessmen held private talks with top ANC officials on the economic situation in South Africa.

## AUSTRALIA BARS ENTRY OF BRITISH HOLOCAUST-DENIER DAVID IRVING

By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Australia Feb. 10 (JTA) -- Australia's immigration minister has told a Jewish leader that British Holocaust-denier David Irving will not be issued a visa to enter Australia for a planned lecture and promotional tour.

The minister, Gerry Hand, told Laurie Rosenblum, the president of the Queensland Jewish Board of Deputies, that he had given careful consideration to the matter before making the decision.

The decision is one that rests with the immigration minister alone under the "Controversial Visitors" provisions of Australia's Migration Regulations. Irving has been expelled from several countries.

After the Australia/Israel Review revealed last November that Irving was intending to visit Australia, a broad public campaign began to bar his entry into this country.

Groups protesting Irving argued that the writer was not of good character and was likely to breach state-based anti-racism laws.

Their efforts were given impetus by the Canadian government decision to deport Irving and a German court's rejection of an appeal against a prior conviction, which resulted in an increased fine for Irving.

The Executive Council of Australian Jewry, the elected representative organization of the Australian Jewish community, has applauded the decision to exclude Irving.

Council President Isi Leibler said the decision "was a clear sign of the growing awareness in Australia of the dangers to society of showing 'tolerance to the intolerant.'"

Irving "has shown contempt for laws designed to protect all members of society from vilification and the inciting of contempt which could lead to violence," Leibler noted.

## 'RUSSIAN ROSS PEROT' COULD BE MOSCOW'S FIRST JEWISH MAYOR

By Alexander Lesser

MOSCOW (JTA) -- Moscow could soon have its first Jewish mayor.

Konstantin Natanovich Borovoi, founder of the Russian Commodities and Raw Materials Exchange and reputed to be one of Russia's wealthiest men, has thrown his hat into the ring for a mayoral election set for Feb. 28.

"I'm not Ross Perot," Borovoi told reporters at a news conference. "I'm not spending my own money on this."

But Borovoi sounded very much like the Texas billionaire in disavowing personal ambition.

"I don't want to be mayor," he said, "but I hate the Communists and I want to create here normal economic structures, normal political structures. That is the goal of my life."

It is just as well that Borovoi does not have his heart set on the mayor's office, because the elections may not take place next month after all.

Moscow's city government, like the Russian federal government, is plagued by a bitter struggle between the executive and legislative branches. The City Council voted to hold the election to test the political strength of Mayor Yuri Luzhkov.

But the city's public prosecutor ruled against the call for elections, after an appeal by Luzhkov. The matter is presently in the local courts.

If the election takes place, Borovoi will face Luzhkov and two other challengers. One of them is radical-reform economist Larisa Piyasheva, herself not Jewish but a strong supporter of reforms that have affected Jews, such as easing emigration restrictions. The other challenger is a city official.

Luzhkov himself was elected to the post of deputy mayor in June 1991, when Gavril Popov became the first popularly elected mayor in the city's history. That was the same election in which Boris Yeltsin became Russia's first popularly elected president.

Popov resigned in May 1992, protesting the council's obstruction of his reforms. Luzhkov then became mayor to fill out Popov's term, which expires in 1996.

But Luzhkov lacks Popov's "clean" reformer image. He has repeatedly been the subject of rumors of bribery and corruption, charges he has brusquely denied.

"Luzhkov is a person of the old generation," Borovoi said last week. "He will never be a good manager because he will not carry through on privatization."

### Jewish Candidate A Well-Known Businessman

Borovoi, 44, is one of the country's most well-known businessmen. Reputedly a multimillionaire, he has started more than 20 enterprises over the past six years, including the commodities exchange.

His patronymic of Natanovich, or "son of Natan," indicates that his father was Jewish, but he has not been publicly identified with Jewish causes. Privately, however, Borovoi has supported programs to aid the Jewish elderly hit by inflation.

He also showed his Jewish feelings in a highly publicized case here in December 1991, when he provided protection to the wife of a Jewish academician who was kidnapped and later murdered as part of ethnic violence in the Caucasus region of Checheniya.

## OLEH FROM FORMER USSR FOUND FROZEN TO DEATH

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 10 (JTA) -- A man found frozen to death last week in an abandoned warehouse in Rehovot has been identified as a senior engineer in the former Soviet Union's space program who immigrated to Israel two years ago.

The man, Viacheslav Gelbob, 32, had been unable to find work in his field once he came to Israel and was forced to accept odd jobs in the construction industry.

The tragic story, widely covered in the Israeli media, is seen as illustrating the plight of immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

Many of these immigrants are highly skilled but cannot find work, particularly in their previous field of expertise.

Gelbob apparently had taken to wandering about aimlessly, carrying a bag containing a few belongings and sleeping in strange locations.

His body was found by a soldier and police determined he had frozen to death about a day earlier.

According to a report in Ma'ariv, Gelbob told Israeli immigration officials that during his Soviet army service he worked in computer planning at an army installation where Scud missiles were built.

After his army service, Gelbob was a computer systems planner in Soviet space centers and was regarded as one of the country's experts in air conditioning for space vehicles.

Gelbob persuaded his wife, Raiza, a mathematician, to immigrate with him to Israel because of the poor economic outlook in the former Soviet Union.

Although his wife found a job as a math teacher in the Rehovot area, Gelbob was unable to find a job as an electronics engineer.

## ISRAELI CASINO PLANS ARE ROLLING

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 10 (JTA) -- Israel may have moved a step closer toward having its first gambling casino after Finance Minister Avraham Shohat told the Knesset last week that he favors changing the law to allow such gaming halls.

Shohat told Parliament that casinos would boost Israel's tourism, though he also noted sardonically: "I know a casino is not a beit midrash," or religious study hall.

Members of Israel's Orthodox religious parties spoke out against the idea, and it was decided that the issue should be studied in a Knesset committee.

Shohat said the southern seaside resort of Eilat would be unable to compete against neighboring Jordanian and Egyptian Red Sea resorts unless it offered gambling.

Shohat also mentioned that thousands of Israelis travel to Greece, Turkey, Egypt and even the United States specifically to enjoy gambling.

Under present Israeli law, organized gambling is illegal, except for certain lotto competitions and soccer pools that must be supervised.

Meanwhile, a group of seven leading hoteliers in Tiberias have written to New York millionaire Donald Trump, urging him to invest in a casino-and-hotel complex in their town.

Trump said in a weekend interview with the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot that he is considering investing in a casino in Israel.