

## ZIONISTS DISMAYED OVER RABIN PLAN TO ELIMINATE JEWISH AGENCY POSTS

By Cynthia Mann

KFAR BLUM, Israel, June 23 (JTA) -- Zionists from around the world gathered this week in the Galilee, where they heatedly pledged to resist what they see as a drive by the Diaspora fund-raising establishment to curtail their power in the Jewish Agency for Israel.

Some charged there is not only a growing ideological gap between the two sides but personal enmity toward the Zionists on the part of the Diaspora leaders who raise money for the Jewish Agency.

Nevertheless, most of the 400 delegates to the annual meeting of the Zionist General Council, a legislative arm of the World Zionist Congress, appeared resigned to a recommendation by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin calling for an eventual restructuring of the Jewish Agency.

That restructuring could change the carefully orchestrated partnership that, more than anything, defines the relationship between the World Zionist Organization and the Diaspora fund-raisers.

American Zionist delegates, meanwhile, are calling for greater representation in a proposed expansion of the Jewish Agency Board of Governors.

For many months, leaders of the United Israel Appeal and Keren Hayesod, which raise money for the Jewish Agency, have sought to abolish the WZO-appointed heads of the various Jewish Agency departments. These chairmen set policy, which is then implemented by the departments' professional director-generals.

The critics claim the chairmanships are political patronage jobs that are wasteful and inefficient. The Zionists maintain the appointments are a reflection of democratic leadership and Zionist ideology critical to the proper operation of the Jewish Agency.

While only two jobs are now at stake, many see the issue as emblematic of the growing gap between the two sides. Indeed, the Zionists have responded to the initiative as a frontal assault on Zionism itself.

### Attempt To Gain 'Upper Hand'

They also believe it reflects a fundamental misunderstanding of the Israeli political system. The Jewish Agency, they argue, needs politically powerful representatives who can work with the immigrant absorption minister and other top government leaders in a way professionals cannot.

The impasse over this and other questions plaguing the Jewish Agency's administration resulted in the formation of a "committee of six" charged with reconciling the differences between the Zionists and the fund-raisers. The committee was split evenly to give each side three representatives.

But unable to reach agreement on the department heads issue, the committee took the unusual step of going to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin for mediation.

Rabin's recommendation, presented Tuesday to the Zionist General Council by Jewish Agency and WZO Chairman Simcha Dinitz, called for maintaining the status quo, but only temporarily.

Rabin said that, "in light of recent changes in the Jewish world" and in the interest of efficiency, "a different structure" should be devised through negotiations that will be brought to the next Zionist Congress in four years.

Until then, said Rabin, current department heads should serve according to the existing constitution.

The recommendation was greeted with grave reservations by the Zionist Council, with many delegates attacking the Diaspora fund-raisers for provoking the controversy.

"This is (another) attempt by the fund-raisers to have the upper hand," said a representative from the Mapam party. "This is a political struggle."

"Our partners do not understand the sense of the Zionist movement," said Uri Gordon, chairman of the Jewish Agency's Immigration and Absorption Department, one of the jobs at stake in the dispute.

The Diaspora leaders do not recognize, he said, that the elected leaders "enhance" the Jewish Agency and that without them, it is weaker. "If they want status and recognition (for the Jewish Agency), they need department heads."

But Gordon said he would not go against the prime minister, whose recommendation, he said, produced no winners and no losers. He agreed that the problem has to be solved "once and for all" so the Jewish Agency can move on to more important matters.

### Board Of Governors To Grow

"This is the most sensitive item, loaded with emotions," said Shlomo Gravitz, head of the Youth and Hechalutz Department of the WZO.

The conflict could never successfully be resolved by the committee of six because it represents a fundamental "ideological gap," Gravitz said, between "our partners (who) do not regard Israel as the center of Jewish life."

New York, he said, is threatening to eclipse Israel in importance for the fund-raisers, whose demand for the abolition of department heads, he claimed, signals a broader campaign against the Zionist movement.

They "don't respect the representatives of the Zionist movement in general and the Israeli representatives in particular," he said.

He took the fund-raisers to task for withholding their required approval "in a brutal way" of the appointments of the two department heads in question who, as a result, are serving only at the discretion of Dinitz.

"We want a partnership, not dictates," he said.

The committee of six also endorsed the expansion of the Jewish Agency's Board of Governors from 74 to 120, with a formula that was challenged by American Zionist leaders.

The formula calls for adding 23 representatives from the fund-raising side and 23 from among the Zionists, with three or four of these to come from outside Israel.

Such meager representation from Diaspora Zionists was decried by Seymour Reich, president of the American Zionist Movement, who said it seemed to indicate a "disparagement of Zionists outside Israel."

## **EFFORTS TO ENFORCE BLOCKADE OF IRAQ THREATEN TO SHUT DOWN PORT OF EILAT**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 23 (JTA) -- Stepped-up efforts to enforce the international blockade of Iraq threaten to shut down Eilat's port, Israeli officials are complaining.

Inspectors from the allied forces have lately been stopping ships entering the Gulf of Eilat, to prevent the supply of goods to Iraq via the Jordanian port of Aqaba, located a dozen miles across the gulf from Eilat.

Cargo ships seeking to avoid the delays have stopped using the port of Eilat, reaching Israel instead via the Suez Canal and one of the country's Mediterranean ports.

Not one cargo ship has arrived at Eilat during the past month, and the port is now in danger of being closed down due to lack of use.

In an incident Wednesday, an Israeli container ship bound for Eilat was actually prevented from entering the gulf by American and French helicopters and ships taking part in the United Nations-backed blockade.

At the beginning of the Persian Gulf War, Aqaba was the main transit point where goods destined for Iraq were off-loaded and transported by road across Jordan to the Iraqi border.

In order to cut off this supply route, allied forces instituted sea searches at the southern approach to the gulf, where vessels from the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean turn northward.

But Israeli officials have protested that it is foolish for the allied forces to search Israeli-bound ships since it is inconceivable that goods would be unloaded in Eilat and trucked across land to Iraq, an archenemy of Israel that fired missiles against Tel Aviv during the Gulf War.

Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, Gad Yaacobi, sent a letter this week to his U.S. counterpart, Madeleine Albright, protesting the blockade's search policies.

"The inspections have created lengthy delays which have caused excessive losses to the Israeli shipping company Zim and have effectively served to choke off the port of Eilat," Yaacobi wrote.

"It should be noted that the functioning of the port of Eilat is a national interest of the State of Israel," he continued.

### **No Contraband Ever Found**

The ship turned back Wednesday was the Zim Tokyo container vessel.

According to Matti Morgenstern, managing director of the Zim line, the ship's master informed him that he had been halted by U.N. helicopters hovering above his vessel.

After a close aerial investigation, the ship master was asked if he was bound for Eilat. When he answered in the affirmative, the ship was ordered to turn around and proceed via the Suez Canal to a Mediterranean port.

The company decided to direct the vessel to Israel's Ashdod port via the Suez Canal.

The problem was that the ship's cargo of containers was stacked more than three tiers high, making it difficult for U.N. inspectors to carry out their check. But shipowners say that stacking less than three containers makes the voyage uneconomical.

Morgenstern said that some 200 vessels have been halted and turned back in recent months.

Israel has suggested that a list of Zim ships be drawn up in advance and be exempted from

the inspections, but that proposal has so far been rejected.

Israel has proposed alternatively that allied inspectors board the vessels at the entrance to the gulf and complete their inspections during the trip to Eilat, to save time.

Inspectors could even be based in Eilat to inspect the cargoes upon their arrival. But these suggestions have been rejected too.

No contraband goods have ever been found aboard Eilat-bound vessels, but the searches go on anyway.

As a result of the delays and orders to turn back, it is proving cheaper and faster to continue sailing on to Israel via the Suez Canal.

## **SOUTH AFRICA-ISRAEL TIES ROCKED BY CHARGES OF ENVOYS' SMUGGLING**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 23 (JTA) -- The usually friendly relations between Israel and South Africa suffered a blow this week when South Africa accused two Israeli diplomats of smuggling foreign currency out of the country on behalf of South African Jews.

Hundreds of thousands of South African rands were reportedly deposited in the bank accounts of reserve Brig. Hagai Regev, head of the Defense Ministry delegation to South Africa, and embassy officer Aharon Dagan.

Regev left South Africa several months ago and Dagan was allowed to leave Tuesday, after posting 1,000,000 rand (about \$250,000) as bail.

South Africa filed an official complaint with Israel that its diplomats were using their diplomatic immunity to smuggle foreign currency.

But sources here said the two men had acted on their own initiative and that the state had nothing to do with it.

Foreign currency regulations in South Africa are particularly strict, and the authorities are becoming even more sensitive to foreign currency smuggling as the time for the transition to power sharing with the black majority draws closer.

Ironically, Israel is the only country to which the South Africans have permitted the transfer of foreign currency, albeit at limited sums.

According to a report Wednesday in the Israeli daily newspaper Yediot Achronot, \$143,000 was found in Regev's private Johannesburg bank account and \$285,000 was found in Dagan's account.

Both deposits were reportedly the money of local Jews who wanted to smuggle it out of the country.

A third Israeli, Dov Lavie, a Jewish Agency emissary, was detained last week on similar charges. He was released after the disputed money was confiscated.

South Africa submitted its official complaint to Alon Liel, Israel's ambassador to South Africa. Liel reportedly assured the South Africans that measures would be taken against the emissaries, stressing that they had acted at their own initiative.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Wednesday that an investigation would be launched into the matter.

If the two had violated South African laws, said Rabin, measures would be taken. He did not elaborate.

Regev served as Rabin's military secretary when Rabin was defense minister.

## ISRAELI'S VISIT TO UKRAINE MARRED BY MISUNDERSTANDING OVER A SPEECH

By Jed Sunden

KIEV, Ukraine, June 23 (JTA) -- An interpreter's mistake in translating a speech by Shevach Weiss, speaker of Israel's Knesset, has prompted a protest by 18 members of Parliament here and marred an otherwise successful state visit by the Ukrainian-born Holocaust survivor.

Weiss' speech, which he delivered in Hebrew in the Ukrainian Parliament last week, reflected on the common history of Jews and Ukrainians and, while condemning those who collaborated with Nazis, rejected the notion of collective guilt.

But the Ukrainian translation, prepared by the Israeli Embassy in Kiev and read out loud, changed the meaning of the speech into an indictment of all Ukrainians for collaboration with the Nazis.

The phrase in question spoke of Israel's and Jewry's ambivalent relationship toward the Ukrainians, who, like some other peoples, "in part went over to the Germans" and "willingly served their machines of destruction."

The words "in part" were accidentally omitted in the Ukrainian translation and triggered the controversy. Though the Israeli Embassy later reissued a corrected version of the speech, the damage was already done.

The next day, 18 deputies from the Parliament printed and circulated an official protest of the speech and its accusation of collaboration.

The letter not only highlighted the heroic actions of such figures as Metropolitan Sheptytskovo of the Orthodox Church, who saved hundreds of Jewish lives in Lvov during the war, but also accused the Jewish police of collaboration with the Nazis.

### Highest Israeli Official To Visit Ukraine

Yet in other respects, Weiss' visit was a success. Weiss became the highest Israeli official to visit Ukraine and, following on the heels of Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk's visit to Israel earlier this year, the trip marked a new level of friendship between the two countries.

Though the Soviet Union broke off diplomatic relations with Israel in 1967, Ukraine began official contact with Israel shortly after it gained independence with the Soviet Union's collapse.

Weiss, who was invited here by the speaker of the Ukrainian Parliament, met with Kravchuk, Prime Minister Leonid Kutchma and other leaders of the Ukrainian government.

After visiting Kiev and participating in wreath-laying ceremonies at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier and at Babi Yar, the sight of the mass murder of Jews, Weiss traveled to Lvov (now known as Lviv) and Borislav, the western Ukrainian city where he was born.

In Borislav, Weiss met with the granddaughter of the Ukrainian woman who helped him during the war and returned to the cellar where he lived in hiding from the Nazis for two years.

The Western Ukrainian region became an especially bloody battlefield during World War II, and only a small percentage of the Jewish population managed to survive the war.

Part of Poland before the war, the region was conquered by the Red Army in September 1939. After the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union in June 1941, the Germans occupied the area until the Red Army reconquered the region and annexed it in 1945.

During the war, a Ukrainian partisan army, the UPA, emerged and fought for Ukrainian independence.

Under the Soviet regime, the UPA members were routinely denounced as collaborators with the Germans.

In recent years, historians have re-examined the role of the UPA, and many Ukrainians view them as nationalist heroes who resisted Soviet rule.

During the war, approximately 1 million Jews died in the area of modern-day Ukraine.

While Weiss was in Lviv meeting with the Jewish community, a group of Ukrainians staged a demonstration in support of John Demjanjuk, the Ukrainian-born American convicted in Israel for being the infamous Nazi war criminal "Ivan the Terrible."

An Israeli court has sentenced Demjanjuk to death, and the Israeli Supreme Court is currently reviewing his appeal. The demonstration, described by an embassy official as "small but noisy," remained peaceful.

Despite the Demjanjuk demonstration and the unrelated protest by members of Parliament, Ehud Eitam, the charge d'affaires of the Israeli Embassy here, said, "It was a very good trip, very interesting since it was so closely related to the personal experience of Mr. Weiss.

"It brought the relations between the two countries to another level," Eitam said.

### **PRAVDA ISSUES APOLOGY FOR ANTI-SEMITIC ARTICLE By Kenneth Dancyger**

NEW YORK, June 23 (JTA) -- The Russian newspaper Pravda has published an official apology last week for an anti-Semitic article that was printed in its pages in early May, the World Jewish Congress reported.

Editors ran a retraction last week on Page 2 of statements made in the May 5 article that charged that Jews engage in ritual murders, a trumped-up charge that often led to pogroms in czarist Russia.

The article also linked the murders of three Russian Orthodox priests to the long-standing efforts by American members of the Lubavitch movement to gain the release of their religious texts held at the Lenin Library in Moscow.

The apology was published by the editors in reaction to a letter to the editor, signed by Leonid Goldin, which said the article, "discredits the socialist movement, which has entered a difficult period.

"How can you provoke a further round of suspicions and witch hunts?" Goldin asked.

The editors acknowledged that "L. Goldin is right.

"Untested, unjustified statements occurred in the article 'Satan's Tribe' through the author's fault," they wrote.

The editors then wrote that they "offered their apologies to the readers."

They added, "At the same time, we think it is necessary to underline that our newspaper, as before, stands on positions of internationalism and is opposed to inciting hatred."

Both the U.S. State Department and the Russian government have condemned the article.

The Russian Foreign Ministry has also issued a full retraction of the article, according to Mark Levin, executive director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry.

**EDITOR URGES '60s-STYLE ACTIVISM TO STOP THE BLOODSHED IN BOSNIA**

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, June 23 (JTA) -- Michael Lerner, the editor of Tikkun magazine, has called for the techniques used two decades ago by protesters opposed to American intervention in Vietnam to be used now on behalf of encouraging American intervention in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

Speaking at a teach-in on Bosnia last week in Manhattan, Lerner urged the use of U.S. military force to impose a cease-fire on the region.

In addition to saving lives, such force would send the message that "there will be a price to pay for anyone who indulges in genocide," said Lerner. "Not sending that message is to send a message that there is no price for genocide."

Lerner said he believed the Clinton administration would have acted forcefully, had it received a positive response from trial balloons floated in the spring.

Instead, "with the exception of some Jewish people such as Elie Wiesel, and some Jewish organizations, there was not a resounding response."

An official with the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, which represented the Jewish community on the issue at the White House and elsewhere, agreed with this assessment of the Jewish role in a subsequent interview.

"We've seen that on an organizational level, it's the Jews virtually alone on this issue," said Kenneth Bandler, NJCRAC's director of public information. "The Catholics and the Protestants have all been silent."

At the teach-in, the Tikkun editor said that while a majority of Americans did not favor U.S. intervention alone, polls showed wide support for an international effort in Bosnia.

That, he said, implied that the crucial swing group, which was blocking American action, was people, like himself, who had opposed "imperialist" intervention in the past.

The key, he said, was to convince this group that American involvement in Bosnia would be "one of the rare cases where intervention would be for a moral reason."

**First Genocide Televised**

To build support for American intervention, "let's focus on the fact that there are tens of millions of people who in principle agree with us, but those people are not mobilized. Their sense of passivity is a critical thing to overcome," he said.

"We have to start agitating, doing the kind of things that happened in the early stage of the anti-war movement in the '60s, where people went into businesses, into shopping malls, and the message went from the level of 'there are people who are upset' to the level of 'we're so upset we want to do something and won't simply let this activity continue.'"

Among others speaking at the teach-in was Robert Jay Lifton, author of "The Nazi Doctors," who compared the slaughter in Bosnia to previous genocides.

Like previous instances, among them that of the Nazis, the Serbs, he said, are motivated by an enormous historical trauma which finds its response in a "revitalizing ideology, with extreme nationalism put forward in a mystical direction."

What make the situation in Bosnia different than what has come before, however, is that

"this is the first genocide that has been televised and made available to the entire world through the media.

"The Nazis went to some pain to keep their mass murders secret. The same has been true of most other mass murder actions. Here there's no possibility of secrecy.

"That changes everything. Now, as you see the genocide, all of you share horror, rage, discomfort, guilt and shame. Finally, you say, 'turn the damn thing off, I can't stand it.'

"If we do nothing, we are bystanders. We are in this genocide. We are there. If we fail to act, we take on considerable guilt and responsibility for the genocide," he said.

**COURT DECISION NOT TO TAKE CASE BRINGS PRAYER BACK TO GRADUATIONS**

By Lisa Mann

WASHINGTON, June 23 (JTA) -- Public schools across the country have interpreted the Supreme Court's decision earlier this month not to review a school prayer case as a "green light" to again permit prayers at graduation ceremonies.

To the dismay of Jewish groups that believe in maintaining strict separation between church and state, school districts around the country have begun issuing new guidelines allowing student-led prayers at graduation ceremonies.

Their moves come in the wake of a June 7 decision by the high court not to hear a Texas case called Jones vs. Clear Creek Independent School District.

In declining to review the case, the justices let stand a lower court decision affirming the district's constitutional right to allow students to recite prayers during graduation ceremonies.

But because the high court did not rule on the case itself, its decision sets no precedent and is only binding on schools under the lower court's jurisdiction.

Many public schools had stopped allowing prayers of any kind at their commencement exercises after the high court ruled last year that a rabbinic invocation at one such ceremony in Rhode Island was a violation of the First Amendment clause barring government establishment of religion.

But in the aftermath of the June 7 decision, many now feel free to do so, as long as the prayers are initiated and led by students, rather than clergy.

Here in Washington, for example, the superintendent of public schools, Franklin Smith, issued a June 14 memorandum setting forth specific procedures to be followed before prayer is approved, including a majority vote by the graduating senior class.

The American Jewish Committee promptly sent a letter to Smith arguing that "allowing student-led prayers as part of graduation ceremonies at public schools constitutes a dangerous entanglement between religion and government and thus violates the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution."

According to Jeffrey Weintraub, AJCommittee's Washington area director, having the senior class vote on prayer violates "the whole principle of protecting minority groups from majority coercion."

Weintraub and others in the Jewish community are urging school districts not to allow such prayers until the Supreme Court settles this issue once and for all.