

**KILLING OF PREGNANT WOMAN LEADS TO HEIGHTENED TENSIONS IN ISRAEL**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- Terrorist attacks over the weekend, including one in which a pregnant Israeli woman was killed, have prompted heightened concerns here about the peace process and led to more calls for tighter security throughout Israel.

At the weekly Cabinet meeting Sunday, several ministers warned that if the Palestine Liberation Organization fails to bring down the level of terrorism, the entire peace process will come grinding to a halt.

On Friday night, a 30-year-old pregnant mother of two, Tzipporah Sasson, was shot and killed on the Trans-Samaria highway, a main thoroughfare in the West Bank.

Sasson, a resident of the West Bank town of Ariel, was laid to rest in Ashkelon on Sunday.

And on Monday, there was a shooting attack on an Israel Defense Force jeep traveling near the West Bank town of Ramallah. The attack prompted army and security forces to mount a large-scale search operation throughout the West Bank.

No one was injured in the attack on the jeep, but suspicion immediately arose that the perpetrators were the same terrorists who ambushed and killed Sasson.

The attack on Sasson triggered a wave of angry Jewish demonstrations throughout Israel on Saturday night.

A rowdy demonstration involving hundreds of settlers at a main intersection outside Petach Tikvah, located east of Tel Aviv, was broken up by police, who made several arrests.

The murder of Sasson also led settlers to set up roadblocks on key West Bank arteries early Monday morning.

**'If We Can't Travel Safely, They Won't'**

"If we can't travel safely, they won't travel either," settler leaders vowed, referring to the West Bank Arab population.

Police forensic experts have established conclusively that the weapon used in the Friday night murder of Sasson was used in three other recent attacks in the West Bank: on Dec. 6 in Hebron, when a father and son, Mordechai and Shalom Lapid, were shot as they waited by the roadside; on Dec. 22 near Ramallah, when two fervently Orthodox Jews, Meir Mendelovitz and Eliahu Levin, were shot from a passing car; and on Feb. 13, when Noam Cohen, a member of the Shin Bet, Israel's secret police, was killed, also in a shooting ambush.

In all these cases, the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement, a group bitterly opposed to the peace process, took responsibility for the shootings.

According to a printed flyer circulated in the Gaza Strip over the weekend, the ambush Friday night was intended as revenge for the shooting of Palestinian children in recent clashes between the IDF and Palestinians.

The flyer promised further revenge killings.

Meanwhile, in the ongoing Israeli-PLO negotiations, which resumed in Cairo on Monday after a weekend recess, the Palestinian side is reported to have proposed that its intelligence operatives be allowed to enter the Gaza Strip and Jericho area even before the formal handing over of these areas takes place.

The Palestinians reportedly explained to the Israeli side that this was necessary if the PLO was to take a firm hold of security in the two areas.

At Sunday's Cabinet meeting, the ministers were told that 23 Palestinians have been killed in the West Bank and Gaza by fellow Palestinians during the month of February alone.

Minister of Education Amnon Rubenstein referred to the situation in Gaza as a state of "murderous anarchy."

He and other ministers obliquely raised the idea of reimposing a total closure of the territories -- a move similar to the action taken last March following a wave of terrorist attacks inside Israel.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin declined to hold a full-scale discussion of the security situation during the Cabinet session, explaining that he preferred to hold the discussions within the smaller Ministerial Defense Committee.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres later said there would not be a closure of the territories. He indicated instead that there would be an increased number of IDF patrols on West Bank roads.

**IN COMPROMISE, LEKET IS NAMED ACTING CHAIRMAN OF JEWISH AGENCY**  
By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- After intense behind-the-scenes wrangling, the Jewish Agency's Board of Governors this week approved the appointment of Yehiel Leket as its acting chairman.

Leket, the 52-year-old head of the agency's Youth Aliyah department, immediately took over the duties and office of Simcha Dinitz, who took a leave of absence last week after being indicted. Dinitz was charged with aggravated fraud and abuse of public trust for the alleged misuse of Jewish Agency-issued credit cards.

Leket is to serve as the acting chairman until June 10, after which the board plans to elect a permanent chairman. Leket, however, must have the approval of Board Chairman Mendel Kaplan to be a candidate for the permanent post.

These are the conditions of a compromise reached after painstaking negotiation between Kaplan, representing the Diaspora fund-raisers, and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin who, as head of the Labor Party, backed Leket, a Laborite.

In an interview, Leket said he went along with the compromise to help heal the rifts between the fund-raisers and the Zionists, who are in conflict over the organization and future direction of the Agency. Leket said he is eager only to get the agency back to "business as usual."

The struggle over who should fill the post of chairman, even on a temporary basis, reflects the complicated organizational structure of the \$500-million-a-year agency, which is the primary recipient of money raised for Israel by the United Jewish Appeal.

The agency's structure reflects two separate balances of power. One mirrors Israeli politics, with the Labor Party, which Dinitz formerly represented in the Knesset, currently wielding more power than Likud.

The other is between leaders of the Diaspora fund-raising organizations that pay the bills, and the Israelis and their Diaspora Zionist allies, who have an equal say in setting policy. The Jewish Agency chairman and other senior officials are chosen by the Israeli and Diaspora Zionists of the World Zionist Organization, but must be ratified by the fund-raisers.

Many of the fund-raisers were against Leket's assumption of the temporary chairmanship. They feared he would use it as a springboard for the permanent post and they felt he did not qualify as the "man of stature" they want for the job.

Some preferred that Treasurer Hanan Ben-Yehuda remain in the temporary post until an election could be held for a more illustrious permanent chairman. The Agency's bylaws call for the treasurer to fill in automatically for an absent chairman.

But Ben-Yehuda is a member of the Likud Party and some stalwart Laborites were opposed to his holding the reins informally for even a few months. The Diaspora leaders then tried to press Leket into agreeing not to be a candidate for the permanent post, but he refused and was backed by the prime minister.

Insiders believe that the explicit veto power of Kaplan in the agreement allows him to save face with his fund-raiser constituents, who have been frustrated over the slow pace of the Dinitz case.

#### 'This Is A Compromise'

The investigation, of course, has been in the hands of the Israeli legal establishment. But Kaplan has been in the uncomfortable position of having to explain and defend the process to the Diaspora. He also had to explain why Dinitz did not resign sooner.

Perhaps inevitably, Kaplan has been seen as partly responsible for the failure of the Jewish Agency to take more decisive action on an affair that has done considerable damage to its image.

"I understood Mendel's situation and was ready to pay a public price to help him," said Leket, explaining his willingness to compromise.

"We've got a very fragile image" as a result of the Dinitz affair, said one fund-raising professional, although 1993 was still "the best cash year the Jewish Agency has had in years," he noted.

"Our American leadership has gotten a black eye on this," he said.

"As a matter of fair play, (the board) felt it couldn't move" on forcing Dinitz to resign, he added. As a result, some of the federations believed the board was dragging its feet. "Everyone felt frustrated," Leket said.

"This is a compromise," said UJA's executive vice president, Rabbi Brian Lurie, of the Leket

arrangement. "The fund-raisers would have preferred that an outstanding permanent person be appointed. An interim appointment is not something we would have desired. Unfortunately, it was not possible," given the timetables required for an election.

Leket, in a private interview on his first morning in Dinitz' office, agreed it would be best to have a permanent chairman at the helm. "Anyone concerned with the interest of the Jewish agency has to try to do his utmost to finish this period as soon as possible," he said.

But he disputed claims that he is not a suitable chairman because he is not internationally known, claiming he prefers a low-key style of consensus to making waves through headlines.

"It is easier to get a reputation by saying we should abolish the Jewish Agency" than by "being loyal to the institution," said Leket.

He refrained from going to the media, he noted, despite the public popularity he would have won, during some of the difficult reforms he instigated in the settlement division of the World Zionist Organization, which he headed between 1989 and 1992. Leket clearly wants the chance to run for the post in June, but denies he will be forced to campaign for it between now and then.

"If I campaigned, I would have no chance to get the consent" of Kaplan and the board, he said. The best campaign will be to reduce the tensions between the fund-raisers and the Israelis and to accomplish the work of the agency, he said.

#### Someone Who Knows What Changes Are Needed

He brings to the post 20 years of experience in public life, "leadership, expressed by bringing people together," and "courage to introduce reforms" through evolutionary, rather than revolutionary, means, he said.

"I believe that what the Jewish Agency needs today is someone who knows the business and how to run it, who knows what changes are needed," Leket said.

It does not need, he said, someone who thinks he is on the level of the prime minister. "A man who has a reputation from the past is not always the best one to contribute to the needs of tomorrow," he said.

"Leket is a real leader and he has proved it," said one member of the Labor Party's Central Committee and a leader of the Labor Zionist movement. "He has wisdom, strong convictions and the ability to fight for his ideas."

"He knows the Jewish world and the Jewish Agency and he has plans," he continued. "He will be able to stand up to Mendel (Kaplan), while a very important personality is only some kind of decoration completely in" Kaplan's hands.

Leket served as chairman of the World Labor Zionist Movement from 1982 to 1989, as secretary-general of the Labor Zionist Movement from 1978 to 1982 and secretary-general of the Young Leadership of the Israel Labor Party earlier. He also served briefly as a member of Knesset and headed an aliyah mission in North America.

Kaplan said he would decide in the coming months whether to approve Leket's candidacy but would not say how he would come to the decision.

Meanwhile, Kaplan told Rabin that Dinitz had made it clear he would not "stand in the way" of electing a permanent chairman in June.

## JEWISH LEADERS ARE RETHINKING APPROACH TO BLACK ANTI-SEMITISM

By Larry Yudelson

NEW ORLEANS, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- Jewish organizational leaders are beginning to rethink their approach to the issue of black anti-Semitism in the wake of recent clashes with the mainstream black community over Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan.

Their reappraisal became apparent during interviews and sessions held here this week as part of the annual plenum of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

Communal officials said it was becoming increasingly clear to them that calling on black leaders to condemn and distance themselves from Farrakhan may not be the most effective means to counter the effect of his anti-Semitism in the black community.

Such pressure itself becomes an issue in the black community, "an issue of blacks attacking their own on behest of whites," Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, said at a session here.

Saperstein, who has long maintained this position, added that black leaders who denounce anti-Semites in their community are seen as bowing to outsiders.

The black leaders thereby "undermine their credibility in segments like college campuses which we hope they would most influence. It's a Catch-22," he said.

Moreover, most African Americans do not see Farrakhan's anti-Semitic words as a real threat to the Jewish community, said Burton Siegel, associate executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Philadelphia.

These blacks wonder whether just ignoring Farrakhan might be a more effective Jewish response, added Siegel, who spoke at the same session as Saperstein.

These concerns over how to deal with anti-Semitism in the black community have come to the fore in recent weeks, as the Anti-Defamation League and other groups have had to deal with efforts by the mainstream black leadership to reach out to Farrakhan, even as Farrakhan's disavowals of anti-Semitism are repeatedly shown up as lip service.

Mindful of these concerns, the ADL chose in January to place a full-page advertisement in The New York Times to publicize anti-Semitic remarks made by Farrakhan aide Khalid Abdul Muhammad, rather than ask black leaders to condemn them.

### Spontaneous Revulsion And Condemnation

The result was spontaneous revulsion and condemnation by mainstream black leadership across the board and pressure on Farrakhan to renounce Muhammad.

After Farrakhan disciplined Muhammad at a Feb. 3 news conference, the NAACP accepted that renunciation, even though the Nation of Islam leader also affirmed the anti-Semitic "truths" spoken by his aide.

American Jewish groups were outraged at Farrakhan's press conference and the ADL and the American Jewish Committee criticized the NAACP's response.

The whole triangular relationship between

Farrakhan, mainstream black groups such as the NAACP and the Jewish community "is not a simple dance. It's a complex minuet," said Abraham Foxman, the ADL's national director.

So despite the fact that the NAACP re-extended its invitation to Farrakhan to join in an as-yet unscheduled black leadership summit, the ADL is not making a public fuss.

Instead, the Jewish civil rights group has decided to take the position that, in effect, whatever Farrakhan's place on the black civil rights group's dance card, the Jewish community's relationship with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is longer and stronger.

After all, two weeks after Farrakhan, in his Feb. 3 news conference, attacked the ADL as anti-black and anti-American, the NAACP initiated a meeting with the ADL to help smooth relations between the two groups.

The closed-door meeting ended with a news conference in which the two civil rights organizations refused to comment on whether their differences over Farrakhan were resolved.

To Foxman, the fact that the groups were evidently unable to agree about Farrakhan is not important.

"The significance of that meeting is when it happened," he said. It took place "two weeks after Farrakhan called the ADL anti-black and anti-American and warned, threatened other groups not to meet with the ADL."

The NAACP "meeting with us then, and putting in motion future meetings, I believe is very significant," said Foxman.

And while the ADL issued a statement saying it was "disappointed" with the NAACP's response to Farrakhan, Foxman seems to be resolutely looking on the positive side.

"We hope and believe contacts between black leadership and Minister Farrakhan on important issues will also include dialogue on issues of racism and anti-Semitism," said Foxman.

In its statement after Farrakhan's news conference, the NAACP said it looked forward "to concrete deeds in the future that would affirm his statements" that he is neither anti-Semitic nor racist.

### Condemning 'Bigoted And Racist Remarks'

The statement also called on white leaders "to vigorously condemn, now and in the future, bigoted and racist remarks as they are directed against African-American and Jewish-Americans by white politicians, academics, corporate leaders and various public figures in the same way that Black leaders have repudiated Mr. Khalid Muhammad's outrageous statements."

The NAACP's remarks reflect a perception among black leadership that the black community is being held to a higher standard by the Jewish community than are other groups, said Siegel, of the Philadelphia JCRC.

Black leaders feel that no matter how many times they condemn anti-Semitism, it is never seen as enough by some sections of the Jewish community, Siegel said.

Saperstein said there is a serious tactical question for the Jewish community, of "how not to legitimize and give attention to propagators of hate while not allowing bigotry to be sanctioned by silence."

## HAVEL JOINS JEWS TO PROTEST FAILURE OF BILL TO RETURN CONFISCATED PROPERTY

By Josef Klansky

PRAGUE, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- Czech President Vaclav Havel joined the local Jewish leadership in criticizing the failure of the Parliament last week to pass an amended bill that would have returned Jewish property confiscated under the country's Nazi and Communist regimes.

Jiri Danicek, chairman of the Czech Federation of Jewish Communities, attacked what he termed the "narrow political and party interests" of the Parliament for the bill's defeat.

And Havel, a strong supporter of restitution to Jews, reacted harshly to the bill's defeat.

"The return of property to Jewish communities is dragging on too long," he said. "I'm very disappointed by it. I would almost say indignant."

"It gives the impression that we don't want to achieve justice, and it even damages our good name in the world," said Havel.

The bill was voted down on Friday after most of the deputies supporting the bill left the assembly hall to protest the amended version, which they said changed the sense and intent of the original proposal.

The amendment -- submitted by Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus' Civic Democratic Party, the strongest party of the country's governing coalition -- stipulated that only the state, not local municipalities, would be obliged to return confiscated Jewish property.

Under the amended bill, Jews would receive monetary compensation from the state for confiscated property, but would not receive the property itself.

The bill left it to the discretion of town councils as to whether to return Jewish buildings or provide monetary compensation.

Following the exodus of representatives of three smaller coalition parties from the assembly hall, the measure was defeated by a 3-vote margin.

As a result, the fate of Jewish property -- including the collections of the Prague Jewish Museum -- remained unresolved.

Parliament members opposing the bill said they refused to support the amendment because they doubted the good will of its sponsors, charging they were insensitive to the concerns of the country's Jews.

### Anti-Semitism May Have Played A Role

While anti-Semitism may have played a role in the bill's defeat, another factor cited was that passage of the bill might have had an impact on similar restitution claims made by the country's churches.

A bill concerning the return of property taken away by the Communist regime from the country's churches -- particularly the huge estates of the Roman Catholic Church -- has been under discussion here for months.

Petr Cermak, executive vice chairman of the Civic Democratic Party, said after last week's defeat of the Jewish restitution bill that members of the country's Christian parties were more interested in returning church property than in tackling the question of restitution to the Jewish communities.

## BELGIAN JEWS EXPRESS OPPOSITION TO IDEA OF PARDONING COLLABORATORS

By Joseph Kopel

BRUSSELS, Feb. 21 (JTA) -- Reacting to the country's current political and moral debate on a sharply divisive issue, Belgium's Jewish community has expressed its opposition to the idea of providing amnesty to the thousands of Belgians who collaborated with the Nazis during World War II.

The Coordinating Committee for Belgian Jewish Organizations said in a statement that it stands in firm opposition to any general form of amnesty.

Providing amnesty to collaborators, the Jewish committee said, would mean that "there had been no offense."

The issue of amnesty was raised here recently after King Albert of Belgium, in a New Year's speech, recalled that his deceased brother, King Baudouin, had hinted in a 1990 speech at taking measures "that could contribute to reconciliation between all citizens."

The remark was interpreted by some as a new appeal for clemency for collaborators.

After World War II, some 242 Belgians were executed for collaborating with the Nazis.

The amnesty debate has created an ideological split over the years, dividing the Flemish and the French-speaking part of the country.

The Flemish Nationalist Movement has pressured the authorities over the years to grant amnesty to collaborators, but successive governments have never taken the step for fear that it would create a political crisis within the country's coalition government.

But this time, King Albert's speech was applauded by the head of the Flemish regional government, Luc van den Brande, and by Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene.

The prime minister recently announced in the Parliament that he will start discussions in the next few weeks "in order to come up with proposals" for granting amnesty.

### Amnesty Proposals Announced

Although Dehaene appeared to be determined to take time to study the issue, his party, the Christian Democrats, has already announced its proposals: Collaborators already sentenced to 20 years' imprisonment or less would get back their civil and political rights, taken from them because of their criminal status, while the files of those sentenced to more than 20 years would be examined on a case-by-case basis.

While almost all Flemish parties are in favor of such measures, French-speaking parties are split on the issue.

In an editorial published in the last issue of the Belgian Jewish magazine, *Regards*, David Susskind, chairman of the Jewish committee, wrote that "the entire Jewish community has suffered so much from the war that it cannot pardon or forget."

"The dozens of thousands of Jews who lived in Belgium, who were deported in order to be exterminated, those who were executed, those who had to be hidden, those who were denounced, those who were martyred and tortured, have met such sufferings that any hint of amnesty that would efface the crimes is profoundly revolting to us," Susskind wrote.