

**ISRAEL HAS NO COMMENT ON LINK TO ASSASSINATION OF PLO LEADER**

By David Landau (Jerusalem) and Edwin Eytan (Paris)

April 17 (JTA) -- Israel is maintaining official silence over the commando-style assassination of the Palestine Liberation Organization's No. 2 man, Khalil al-Wazir.

Palestinians, much of the Arab world and some Western commentators, including Israelis, believe Israel was involved in the deed, which occurred early Saturday morning, at Wazir's villa in a residential suburb of Tunis.

Israeli officials have not concealed their satisfaction that an arch-terrorist was eliminated. But the matter was barely touched upon at the Cabinet meeting Sunday, and the ministers uniformly refused to discuss it with reporters afterward.

Wazir, 53, headed Al Fatah, the PLO's terrorist arm, since its inception in the 1960s. He was second in command to PLO chief Yasir Arafat and was considered his most likely successor.

Wazir was best known by his nom de guerre, Abu Jihad, which means father of war -- an epithet few would disagree with. He is believed to have masterminded numerous terrorist operations, including a bus ambush in the Negev on March 7, in which three Israelis were killed, and a similar-style attack along Israel's coastal road in 1978, in which 35 Israelis died.

Israel also insists he is behind the four month-old Palestinian uprising in the administered territories.

**Mossad Suspected**

While the popular view in Israel is that Abu Jihad was "terminated" by Mossad, Israel's secret service, one leading expert on terrorism believes the assassination was ordered by Arafat himself.

According to Dr. Ariel Merari of Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies, the PLO chief and his deputy have been at odds for some time. The operation in Tunis was "very different" from the Israel Defense Force's slaying of three ranking PLO leaders in Beirut some years ago, Merari noted.

Other observers here and abroad disagree. They say the organization and precision of the assassination bore all the earmarks of a Mossad operation.

Merari and other commentators agree, however, that Abu Jihad's removal will have severe repercussions for Al Fatah and the entire PLO, because of his key position in the PLO structure. It was one of the rare cases where a single individual was indispensable to the organization, they said.

They believe that while the immediate aftermath of the slaying has been an intensified wave of violence in the territories, the long-term results may actually be a relative pacification.

Zeev Schiff, military correspondent of Ha-aretz, suggested Sunday that since the killing is widely attributed to Israel, it should bolster Israel's deterrent posture and credibility in the eyes of its Arab enemies. But Schiff warned that Israel will have to brace itself for Palestinian attempts at retribution at home and abroad.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Police Minister Haim Barlev reported to the Cabinet Sunday on the fierce escalation of violence that greeted the news of Abu Jihad's assassination. The official figure of Palestinians killed over the weekend is 10. Palestinian sources said the IDF killed as many as 15 in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Calam prevailed in Tunis after the killing. Small police units patrolled near synagogues in the Jewish quarter during Sabbath services. But there have been no anti-Jewish demonstrations.

One Tunisian Jew told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in Paris that "most Jews stay at home. We all try to avoid trouble as no one can predict how the street might eventually react."

There are about 3,000 Jews in Tunisia. Most are elderly and live in Tunis and in Djerba.

**Nationwide Hunt For Assassin**

Meanwhile, the Tunisian authorities launched a nationwide hunt for the killers. But officials there conceded privately that it was pointless. The commando team that carried out the assassination appeared to have entered the country and escaped by sea.

Tunisian and PLO sources said that close to 40 persons were involved in the incident, at least one of them a woman. The police said they found the vehicles used by the commandos -- two minibuses and a Peugeot car -- abandoned on an isolated beach some 30 miles north of Tunis. They had been rented under false names.

As police reconstructed events, the main body of commandos was picked up by waiting operatives in the early hours of Saturday morning and driven to Sidi Bou, the quiet residential suburb where Abu Jihad lived with his family in a luxurious two-story villa. Their neighbors were diplomats and professionals.

Police said the attackers first killed a Tunisian driver and two Palestinian bodyguards. They burst into the villa and climbed to the second floor.

Abu Jihad emerged from his study apparently after hearing gun shots. His assailants pumped 68 bullets into his body with submachine guns and pistols equipped with silencers. He died minutes after he was admitted to a hospital.

**Family Witnessed Attack**

His wife and their two children, a girl of 14 and a 2-year-old boy, saw the shooting but were not harmed. The commandos had disconnected the villa's telephone lines, including a direct line to the local police.

According to Palestinian sources, the villa was surrounded by 30 back-up commandos while the shooting took place. The entire group was landed and escaped with the aid of the Israeli navy, they said.

According to reports leaked from Sunday's Cabinet meeting in Jerusalem, one minister asked what happened in Tunis and was told by Premier Yitzhak Shamir, "We heard about it on the radio."

Gad Yaacobi, minister for economic planning, reportedly remarked, "What is clear is that Abu Jihad has returned his soul to the creator." With that, the Cabinet moved on to other business.

## TERRITORIES EXPLODE WITH VIOLENCE IN AFTERMATH OF ASSASSINATION

By Gil Sedan

GAZA, April 17 (JTA) -- The West Bank and Gaza Strip exploded with new violence this weekend following the assassination in Tunis early Saturday morning of Khalil al-Wazir, second in command of the Palestine Liberation Organization and leader of Al Fatah, its military branch.

Wazir also was known as Abu Jihad (father of war) and symbolized for Palestinians their armed struggle against Israel. Rightly or wrongly, they are convinced he was gunned down in a carefully planned and executed Israeli commando raid.

News of his death triggered the bloodiest weekend since the Palestinian uprising began in the territories more than four months ago. There were reports of Palestinian youths clashing fiercely with the Israel Defense Force in all parts of the territories.

At least 10 and as many as 15 Palestinians were reported killed and scores wounded by Israeli security forces on Saturday and Sunday. Details were sketchy because many localities were declared closed military zones, barred to the news media.

The IDF clamped curfews on 15 refugee camps in the West Bank; on Nablus, the largest Arab city in the territory, with a population of 100,000; and on the town of Anabta, near Tul-karm. In the Gaza Strip, the town of Abasan and five refugee camps were under curfew.

The mourning was most intense here in Gaza, where Wazir, who was born in Ramla in 1936, grew up and where members of his family still live. The city was darkened by palls of thick, black smoke rising from thousands of burning tires. Black flags and Palestinians flags were raised on many buildings here. Most Palestinians stayed home from work. Hundreds paid condolence calls at the home of the Wazir family.

Nationalist circles declared a three-day general strike in the territories and special tents were set up to accommodate throngs of mourners.

### May Reignite Uprising

The consensus in Gaza was that the killing would reignite the Arab uprising, which had seemed in recent days to be running out of steam. A ranking IDF officer remarked only last week that the general populace was showing signs of exhaustion.

The death of Abu Jihad also was a blow to Palestinian national pride, reawakened last Nov. 25, when a lone Palestinian terrorist successfully attacked an IDF base in northern Israel, killing six soldiers and wounding seven before he was killed.

Israeli authorities admit that incident gave impetus to the Arab uprising, which began two weeks later, on Dec. 9. The Israelis also insist that Abu Jihad was the mastermind of the uprising and of the most serious terrorist act of the year -- an attack on a bus near Dimona in the Negev on March 7, in which two Israeli women and a man were killed.

Although Israel has not reacted officially to the assassination in Tunisia, the Israeli press seemed to share the Palestinian view that it was the work of Mossad, Israel's secret service.

Analysts writing in local newspapers Sunday stressed that Israel had ample motivation to eliminate Abu Jihad. First, there was deterrence.

Israel proved once again that it could harm Palestinians and other Arab foes thousands of miles away. Cases cited were the 1976 rescue of Israelis aboard a hijacked airliner in Entebbe, Uganda, and the 1981 bombing raid that destroyed an Iraqi nuclear facility near Baghdad.

A second motivation was to boost national morale after four months of Palestinian challenge to the IDF.

A third was to send a message to the Palestinian nationalist movement that Israel was prepared for total war against it. According to that scenario, Israeli leaders have concluded that anything is now permissible in reaction to the uprising and continued terrorist activities.

### A New Stage Of War

If it is ever proven that Israel was behind the assassination of Wazir, one of the most popular figures among Palestinians, a new stage will have been reached in Israel's war against Palestinian terrorism.

Israeli analysts agreed Sunday that the military command of the uprising was knocked off balance by Wazir's death. But there is little doubt he will be replaced soon, by someone equally ruthless and determined.

Yediot Achronot mentioned two possible candidates Sunday: Mohammad Afanne, also known as Abul Muatassim, who is chief of Al Fatah operations, and Abu Faris, described as one of the more daring PLO commanders.

## U.S. VETOES SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION AGAINST DEPORTATIONS

UNITED NATIONS, April 17 (JTA) -- The United States, for the third time this year, vetoed a Security Council resolution critical of Israel on Friday.

The resolution, supported by the other 14 members of the council, demanded that Israel allow the return of eight Palestinian activists deported from the West Bank and Gaza Strip to Lebanon on April 11.

The resolution also condemned Israel's use of live ammunition against Palestinian rioters and called on Israel to abide by the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, which protects the rights of inhabitants of occupied territories. Israel claims the convention does not apply to the territories it administers.

The U.S. delegate, Herbert Okun, criticized the resolution as "redundant and inappropriate," as well as one-sided. "Its broad and sweeping condemnation of Israel contains not a scintilla of balance," the American envoy charged.

Earlier this year, the United States vetoed two resolutions critical of Israel's handling of Palestinian unrest. But it supported a resolution in January protesting Israel's expulsion of four Palestinians from the West Bank on Jan. 13.

Of the five permanent members of the Security Council, the British delegate, John Birch, bore down hardest on Israel. He said, "World opinion has been shocked and disgusted by the widespread suffering of the civilian population" in the territories.

The Soviet delegate was uncharacteristically mild in his speech. Aleksandr Belonogov stressed the "balance of interests of all parties concerned, both Arabs, including the Palestinian people, as well as Israel." His remarks seemed to reflect the conciliatory tone toward Israel adopted recently by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev.

**VERDICT IN WAR-CRIMES TRIAL  
OF DEMJANJUK EXPECTED MONDAY**  
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 17 (JTA) -- Accused war criminal John Demjanjuk is about to face his moment of truth.

A three-judge panel is scheduled to announce in Jerusalem district court Monday whether the Ukrainian-born retired automobile worker is, on the basis of the evidence presented, the Treblinka death camp guard known as "Ivan the Terrible," who operated the gas chambers where some 800,000 Jews perished.

If his identity is found to have been established beyond reasonable doubt, Demjanjuk could face the death penalty. If not, he will be free to join his wife, Vera, and their three children, who have attended the year-long trial.

Israeli law provides the death penalty for only two specific crimes. The Nazi and Nazi Collaborators Law of 1950 calls for capital punishment for the perpetrators of crimes against the Jewish people, war crimes and crimes against humanity. Only one person has been executed under the law, Adolf Eichmann, who was hanged here in 1962.

The death penalty, though provided under the "Law Against Terrorism," has never been invoked.

If the 67-year-old Demjanjuk is found to be "Ivan the Terrible," he will not be sentenced immediately. The prosecution and defense will be allowed time to argue the penalty. Once sentence is passed, the defense will have 45 days to appeal. In the case of a death sentence, appeal is mandatory and the fate of the accused will be in the hands of Israel's Supreme Court.

Demjanjuk, who lived in Cleveland, Ohio, before he was stripped of his American citizenship in 1985, is the first accused war criminal extradited to Israel for trial. The court held 106 sessions on the case, during which the prosecution presented 21 witnesses and the defense introduced 31.

Although Demjanjuk was identified in court by Treblinka survivors, the case may hinge on the authenticity of a key document obtained from the Soviet Union -- an SS identification card issued to captured Red Army soldiers who volunteered for training as death camp guards. Defense experts insisted a card bearing Demjanjuk's photograph was a forgery.

**FARRAKHAN SPEAKS AT PENN  
AS JEWISH STUDENTS PROTEST**  
By Steve Feldman  
Jewish Exponent

PHILADELPHIA, April 17 (JTA) -- As Jewish students at the University of Pennsylvania marked Yom Hashoah last Wednesday, Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan told a large, overwhelmingly black audience in another building on campus that "a deal was struck with Hitler in the Third Reich that Jews would be brought out of Germany and settled in Palestine."

Farrakhan then compared those Jews' treatment of the Palestinians to the way European settlers treated American Indians.

An hour before Farrakhan's scheduled 7 p.m. speech, more than 1,000 Jewish students rallied across the street from the auditorium where he was to speak, carrying signs with such slogans as "Unity yes, hatred no" and "Farrakhan promotes

hatred." A police estimate of the crowd ranged from 1,000 to 1,200 protesters.

Addressing the tiny percentage of Jews in his audience, Farrakhan said, "I would like to see you live in peace, but when you try to fulfill the vision given in the Bible without the Messiah, you run into problems."

"Now I believe in the Torah," he continued, "but the way I read the Torah -- maybe we have a theological disagreement -- but the way I read the Torah, the Jewish nation was to wait for the Messiah."

The controversial leader said that since "Jews do not believe that Jesus of Nazareth of 2,000 years ago was in fact the Messiah, and the Jews are still awaiting that Messiah," there can be no State of Israel.

"God will give the Messiah to you and he will give you the promised land," the Farrakhan said. "Theodor Herzl was not the Messiah. Golda Meir was not the Messiah."

He also said that after World War II, the Palestinians greeted Jews who settled in what was then Palestine with open arms "even as the Indians opened their arms to the whites who came over, but as the whites who came had another design, the Jews who went to Palestine also had another design."

**Blames Jews For Slavery**

Earlier in his more-than-two-hour speech, Farrakhan appeared to blame Jews for instituting black slavery in America. "We did not come over on the Mayflower, or the Nina, the Pinta or the Santa Maria, we were in the holds of ships," he told the mainly black audience.

"Some Jews owned some of the ships that brought us over. I did not read this in some anti-Semitic book, I read it in the Jewish Encyclopedia," he said, drawing loud cheers.

Adopting a Yiddish inflection, he then mimicked imaginary Jews as saying, "Those darkies from Africa, they're not even human."

Returning to his normal voice, Farrakhan continued, "So I will not obey the law that God has given through Moses: a life for a life, an eye for an eye; I'll just make these (people) subhuman and say: 'I won't have to pay anything for what I do to them since they're animals.'"

Farrakhan began his talk by telling the nearly 2,000 people in the audience that the controversy of his visit "was not created by me, but by others about me. I did not come here tonight to incite violence, nor have I ever."

At the 45-minute-long protest rally, leaders of the Penn Community Against Farrakhan spoke and read letters of support from U.S. Sen. John Heinz (R-Pa.), columnist Chuck Stone and the Black-Jewish Coalition of Greater Philadelphia.

**COST OF LIVING UP IN FIRST QUARTER**  
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 17 (JTA) -- Israel's inflation rate is both higher and lower, according to figures released by the Central Bureau of Statistics.

It ran at an annual rate of 17 percent during the first three months of 1988, well above the 12 percent targeted by the Treasury. The March hike was 1.6 percent, also higher than anticipated.

The good news is inflation was down in the 1987-88 fiscal year, which ended in March. It stood at 15.7 percent, down from 23 percent.

## IN WARSAW, THOUSANDS OF JEWS GATHER FOR COMMEMORATION OF GHETTO UPRISING

By Milton Jacoby

WARSAW, April 17 (JTA) -- All of Warsaw seems to be preparing for the main events commemorating the 45th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising, scheduled for Monday and Tuesday.

Thousands of Jews from 35 countries have been gathering here to participate in the commemorative rites, which began on April 14. It is by far the largest convocation in the history of the ceremonies, which began shortly after World War II and are held every five years.

This time round, the accent is on youth. Last Thursday, 2,000 children from 35 countries joined in a "march for the living," from the chambers of horror at Auschwitz to the death camp of Birkenau, a distance of three miles. Almost half of the participants were from the United States and Israel.

Waving blue-and-white flags and wearing Windbreakers with Stars of David designed by artist Yaacov Agam, they were an endless sea of blue. At the end of their haunting journey, between the crematoria of Birkenau, they were addressed by former Israeli President Yitzhak Navon, now minister of culture and education; Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the World Zionist Organization-Jewish Agency Executive; and Benjamin Netanyahu, who recently resigned from his post as Israel's ambassador to the United Nations.

Avraham Sharir, who serves as Israel's ministers of tourism and justice, brought a stone and some earth from the Mount of Olives in Jerusalem as a symbolic offering.

From the blowing of the shofar to the "El Mole Rachamim," the ceremony was a touching affirmation of life at this place of death.

For Navon and Dinitz, this marks their first visit to Poland. Dinitz pointed out that this is the first such high-level Israeli delegation to Poland. He praised the current Polish regime for marking the battle against Nazism and fascism through its Warsaw Ghetto remembrances.

### Concern Over PLO

The Palestine Liberation Organization has cast somewhat of a shadow over the ceremonies. According to Navon, the terrorist organization protested the observances some weeks ago to the organizing committee. Authorities are on alert for any PLO-inspired incidents during the next few days.

On Saturday, the Jewish state theater was to present a dramatic spectacle for Jewish delegates entitled "Songs About the Murdered Nation." Medallions were to be conferred on a group of Poles for their aid to Jews during the Nazi occupation.

On Sunday, an international youth quiz on Jewish martyrdom was scheduled at Congress Hall. Twelve finalists, selected from 32 semifinalists, were to compete in the first contest of its kind ever to be held in Poland.

On Monday morning, a two-day round of events climaxing this extraordinary assembly of world Jewry is scheduled to begin. According to Zbigniew Unger, director of the Orbis Congress Bureau managing the crowded schedule, at least 6,000 people will be on hand for a solemn memorial observance at the Umschlagplatz, where the Nazis put 300,000 Jews on trains bound for Treblinka and other death camps.

## POLITICIANS, CROWDS TURN OUT FOR SUNNY 'SALUTE TO ISRAEL'

By Andrew Silow Carroll

NEW YORK, April 17 (JTA) -- Bright sunshine, a gaggle of politicians and thousands of onlookers greeted New York's "Salute to Israel Parade" on Sunday.

One of the largest celebrations of its kind in the United States, the generally incident-free parade boded well for hundreds of similar events being planned around the country to mark Israel's 40th anniversary. There were no counterdemonstrations and few sour notes struck among the estimated 40,000 marchers.

Groups taking part were as disparate in their styles as Israel's Tzofim scout troops, who wore identical khaki outfits and marched in tight formation, and the American Sephardi Federation, whose float was a riot of loud music and louder costumes. More than 100 groups and schools took part, and most seemed to lend uncomplicated enthusiasm to the day's theme: "40 and Forever."

But there was a more defiant tone heard among onlookers and at least one politician, Rep. James Scheuer (D-N.Y.), who said that Israel "doesn't need supporters who only support her in the hour of victory."

In a short address to the crowd at the 68th Street reviewing stand, Scheuer acknowledged the day's headlines, which included news that Israeli troops had slain 10 to 15 more Palestinians during riots in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

Scheuer called the Israeli actions "necessary but unpleasant steps" needed to maintain the country's security and survival. He labeled Israel's critics "sunshine supporters."

Among the Democratic presidential candidates vying in Tuesday's Democratic primary in New York, Tennessee Sen. Albert Gore and Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis briefly took part in the parade. Gore's short greeting was followed by a two-block march arm-in-arm with New York Mayor Edward Koch.

Koch has endorsed Gore in the primaries and has recorded a radio spot in which he urges voters, "Don't waste your vote by being negative. Be positive and vote for Al Gore."

The line is a reference to a belief among some Jewish voters that a vote for Gore would be to the benefit of the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who is running a close second to Dukakis in the race for the Democratic presidential nomination.

Opposition to Jackson is considerable among Jewish voters, who object to a number of statements and positions the candidate has taken on the Middle East and other issues. Still, when a few dozen marchers from the militant Jewish Defense Organization chanted "Jesse Jackson go to hell," few in the reviewing stands picked up the refrain or applauded.

### BORDER DISPUTE GOES TO JURISTS

GENEVA, April 17 (JTA) -- An array of boundary disputes between Israel and Egypt was placed in the hands of an international arbitration panel here Friday.

The panel has 90 days to prepare its report, but could render a verdict sooner.

It will determine the ownership of 14 localities along the Israeli-Sinai border, the most important of which is Taba, a half-acre beach resort on the Red Sea, near the Israeli city of Eilat.