



PLO LEADER SAYS HE IS READY TO START TALKS WITH ISRAEL

PARIS, Aug. 14 (JTA) -- The No. 2 man in the Palestine Liberation Organization says he is ready to start discussions with Israel, which it "naturally" recognizes.

Salah Khalaf, known by his nom de guerre, Abu Iyad, said in an interview published Sunday in Paris that he was ready to recognize Israel on the basis of United Nations Resolution 181, with mutual recognition between Arab and Jewish states called for by a new Palestinian provisional government that would be "wholly different from the actual PLO's national covenant."

Resolution 181, passed by the General Assembly in 1947, partitioned Palestine into two states, Jewish and Arab. It has been the foundation of discord between Arabs and Jews for the last 41 years.

The PLO national covenant does not recognize Israel.

Abu Iyad is next in command to PLO leader Yasir Arafat in the PLO's guerrilla wing, Al Fatah, since the murder in April of Khalil al-Wazir, known as Abu Jihad.

In an interview with the Paris weekly Le Journal du Dimanche, Abu Iyad said it was probable that the "intifada" -- the Palestinian uprising -- prompted Jordan's King Hussein to make his declaration July 31 that he was withdrawing his support from the West Bank.

The intifada, said Abu Iyad, "has widely contributed to demolish all the economic, political structures that King Hussein has tried to set up for quite a certain amount of years."

He said, in reply to a question, that Hussein had made his declaration out of fear the intifada would spread to Jordan.

Abu Iyad said he did not feel "abandoned" by Hussein but, "to the contrary, I find his declaration very good. It brought him closer to us."

A Provisional Government

Asked if the PLO will now "form a government in exile," he replied, "We do not think of a government in exile, but of a provisional government. That's why we are going to convene the Palestine National Council at the end of the month."

Algeria has agreed to host a special session of the 500-member Palestine National Council, regarded by the PLO as its parliament in exile.

PLO leaders are now convening at their headquarters in Tunis to draft a blueprint for a Palestinian state in exile, which Israel has repeatedly said it would oppose.

Questioned to which borders the Palestine council would agree, Abu Iyad replied, "this Palestinian state will refer to the Resolution 181 of the United Nations," that is, the 1947 vote that partitioned Palestine.

Asked to clarify his stand, because this would mean "to bring Israel back to its 1948 borders," Abu Iyad responded, "I didn't say one has to agree upon the borders mentioned in Resolution 181. I said one has to refer, to refer to them, since Resolution 181 is the only one establishing the agreement of the United Nations

for the creation of two states. Even the United States had not refused then."

The U.N. partition plan of Nov. 29, 1947, unleashed the fury of the Arabs.

But reminded that in 1947, "you, the Palestinians, were the ones who did refuse, today, do you have the intention to recognize the state of Israel?"

"Naturally," replied Abu Iyad, "since the resolution 181 refers expressly to the creation of an Israeli state."

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Different Political Program

Asked to confirm that the "PLO's project in the Middle East would not be to go back to the 1947 propositions," Abu Iyad answered, "Yes, for it is the only decision taken by the United Nations that gives us the right to create a Palestinian state provided with a provisional government, established in its legitimacy, and whose political program would be wholly different from the actual PLO's national covenant."

Abu Iyad said he believes the intifada "can last on and on. I think it is going to last till the independence."

He said he was optimistic, and believed that there has been change. "I am ready to start that dialogue with Israel. It's bizarre, for 25 years, the Arabs have refused to talks about peace with Israel, and now, it is Israel who says no.

"I think the Israelis should not fear to accept the creation of a Palestinian state. The problem is not anymore to keep a geographic space to protect its frontiers.

"We all have missiles. And missiles don't have to be close or far away to be efficient. Peace can resolve all the problems."

In Jerusalem, sources at the Foreign Ministry estimated Sunday that the PLO would seek to reach maximum international approval for a provisional Palestinian government.

Israel TV on Sunday quoted sources at the Premier's Office who said that one should take into account an effort by the PLO to bring itself closer to the middle of the political arena.

But these sources doused water on any eventuality of rapprochement by saying, "There is nothing we can do about it, because in any case, we will not hold negotiations with the PLO."

JDL SUPPORTER ARRESTED IN MURDER-FOR-PROFIT SCHEME
By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, Aug. 14 (JTA) -- The missing motive in the mail-bomb murder allegedly carried out by a Kiryat Arba couple has been supplied in the arrest here of a wealthy supporter of the Jewish Defense League.

William Ross, a 51-year-old real estate broker, has been accused by federal authorities in a murder-for-profit scheme over a bitter real estate dispute.

To carry out the scheme, Ross allegedly enlisted the help of two fellow JDL members, Robert Steven Manning and his wife, Rochelle.

The Mannings, who hold dual U.S. and Israeli citizenship, immigrated to Israel in 1973. Both of them are residents of Kiryat Arba, one of the most militant Jewish settlements on the West

Bank.

Mrs. Manning, 48, was arrested in June at the Los Angeles airport as she arrived by plane from Israel with her two children. Robert Manning, 36, remains a fugitive in Israel and U.S. authorities say that they are seeking his extradition.

In the case now pending, political or ideological motives played no part, according to Assistant U.S. Attorney Nancy Wieben Stock, the government prosecutor. She said that her case rests on the following points:

* In 1980, Ross and his brother Arthur were involved in a protracted dispute over a house with Brenda Crouthamel, who with her husband owned the Prowest computer marketing firm.

* On July 17, 1980, a bomb disguised as an "invention" was mailed to Crouthamel, the same day that the Ross brothers were told they would have to give depositions in the lawsuit stemming from the house dispute.

* On arrival, the bomb was plugged into an electric outlet, as per accompanying instructions, by Patricia Wilkerson, a secretary at the computer firm. The 35-year-old mother of two was killed instantly.

Fingerprints Found

* The fingerprints of Robert Manning were found on the wrapper of the mail bomb and those of Mrs. Manning on the enclosed letter, U.S. postal authorities allege.

* The Ross brothers and the Mannings joined the JDL group in Los Angeles at about the same time in 1971 and became close friends.

William Ross, whose worth three years ago was put at \$1.5 million, was a major financial supporter of the JDL. The Los Angeles Times quoted Irv Rubin, executive director of the JDL, as saying that "He (Ross) would come to demonstrations and support us."

However, prosecutor Stock was at some pains to point out that the Wilkerson bombing "was not committed at the request or with the knowledge or consent of the Jewish Defense League."

Ross was arrested without incident at his Hollywood home on suspicion of arranging the bombing and aiding and abetting. He is being held without bail after Stock charged that several potential witnesses in the case had been threatened by unknown persons.

Stock said that Ross "told a government witness that if Rochelle Manning hadn't been so stupid as to fly back to the United States from Israel, this never would have happened and he (Ross) would be in the clear."

Ross' attorney responded that his client was innocent of the bombing charges and had not been involved in the intimidation of witnesses.

The trial date for Mrs. Manning has been postponed to Nov. 1 to allow for the possible indictment of additional defendants.

FINANCE MINISTRY SIGNS TWO-YEAR PACT WITH HISTADRUT REPRESENTATIVES

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 14 (JTA) -- The long, drawn-out negotiations on a new public-sector wage and employment agreement ended in success Friday, when a two-year pact was signed by Finance Ministry and Histadrut representatives.

The accord, already agreed upon, calls for an 11 percent pay hike over the next two years.

The fresh element in the new contract was agreement on a five-day, 42-and-a-half-hour work week to replace the present six-day, 45-hour week.

The agreement to a long-sought reduced work week had been worked out in principle last Monday between Finance Minister Moshe Nissim and Histadrut Secretary-General Yisrael Kessar.

But the accord was followed by days of discord over when the new hours would take effect, and which government corporations would be exempt from paying the raises.

Histadrut, the trades union federation, agreed to do away with the shorter hours worked in summer in order to equalize the number of hours worked each week throughout the year.

It was decided to hammer out the reduction in hours worked in two stages. Beginning in January, public-sector workers' hours will be reduced to 43-and-a-half hours per week, and will be reduced to the agreed-upon 42-and-a-half hours on April 1.

The extra day off will probably be taken on Fridays, which are already a half day in Israel. An exception will be made in the banks, which prefer to close Sundays in accordance with banks worldwide.

The leaders of the three unions of professionals -- engineers, technicians and the union of social science and humanities graduates -- refused to sign the accord, saying the clauses in the agreement concerning government industrial corporations were unacceptable.

POLL FINDS JEWISH ISRAELIS FAVOR TRANSFER OF ARABS

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Aug. 14 (JTA) -- Jewish Israelis appear to have broken through a long-held taboo by indicating that they believe in the transfer of Arabs from the Israeli-administered territories.

According to the results of a poll published in The Jerusalem Post Friday, 49 percent of Jewish Israeli adults believe that transfer of the Arab population of the Israeli-administered territories would allow the democratic and Jewish nature of Israel to be maintained.

Of that 49 percent, nearly two out of three said they intended to vote for the Likud party over Labor.

This most recent poll was conducted in late June as part of a continuing survey by the Israeli Institute of Applied Social Research and Communication Institute of the Hebrew University. The results indicate that the subject of transferring Arabs from the administered territories is no longer taboo. According to a front-page article in Friday's Jerusalem Post, the word "transfer" was virtually unmentionable until a few months ago.

The timing of the change in the willingness of Israelis to even consider the subject of transfer seems to run parallel with the Palestinian uprising.

The respondents were not asked directly if they favor transfer, but "if the territories remain under Israeli rule, what should be done to preserve the democratic character of the state?"

Of those asked, 21 percent were in favor of "giving rights to Arabs," 49 percent favored causing "Arabs to leave (transfer)," 28 percent favored the alternative to "relinquish territories," and 3 percent did not think that democratic character was important.

REVERENT OR REVOLTING? JEWISH CRITICS REVIEW "TEMPTATION"

By Andrew Silow Carroll

NEW YORK, Aug. 14 (JTA) -- Behold, the movie.

Defying calls for a boycott by Christian fundamentalists and dodging picketers in Los Angeles, New York and seven other North American cities, filmgoers, including many Jewish leaders, were finally able to judge for themselves the merits -- artistic or religious -- of "The Last Temptation of Christ."

Packed houses greeted the film's first showings on Friday, as did generally favorable reviews in the major media. Protests of director Martin Scorsese's film peaked the day before, when 10,000 protesters marched on Universal Pictures headquarters in Los Angeles to denounce what they felt is a blasphemous portrayal of the life of Jesus.

The anti-Semitic content of the protests was muted during the film's first weekend. Earlier in the month-long campaign against the film's release, protests warning of a "backlash against Jews" were directed at chairman Lew Wasserman and other Jewish principals in the MCA conglomerate, which owns Universal.

Prominent Jews -- professional critics and others -- who saw the film were unanimous in denouncing the anti-Semitic tone of the protests.

But when discussing the film itself and its controversial content, unanimity was dropped in favor of a spirited discussion of what the film means to art, religion, and the centuries-old debate between Judaism and Christianity.

Praise for Scorsese

The film earned the admiration of Annette Insdorf, Professor and Director of Film Studies at Columbia University, and the author of two books on cinema. Insdorf praised both Scorsese's movie-making and the film's message for filmgoers.

"I must admit that I can understand why certain Christians have been nervous," said Insdorf. She referred to the 30-minute finale of the film, in which a crucified Jesus, portrayed by Willem Dafoe, imagines marrying Mary Magdalene (Barbara Hershey) and raising a family.

Said Insdorf: "Perhaps if I were a Christian mother I would not want my children to see that section of the film for fear it might confuse them about a sacred being.

"Nevertheless, I found the first two hours such a compelling affirmation of faith that if I were a Christian, I would be saying 'What a celebration of us!'"

A second professional filmgoer, critic Michael Medved, rejects the film on both artistic and religious grounds.

"I am offended by the movie in two ways," said Medved, co-host of the "Sneak Previews" program on the Lifetime cable network and public television.

"First, as a movie critic, because this terrible movie is about as pleasant as three hours in a dentist's chair.

"But I am also offended as a Jew because of the total lack of sensitivity to religion in general, and Christianity in particular."

The film, he said, "is a direct, unmistakable assault on the foundations of Christian belief."

For Medved, an observant Jew, a number of scenes which show Jesus in conflict with his fellow Jews "recycle a lot of anti-Semitic canards

that have appeared in some films of the past."

"The religion of Israel is portrayed as a primitive pagan cult -- bloody, brutal and benighted," said Medved.

Furthermore, Medved was disturbed by the "Arabic" flavor with which ancient Judea is depicted. The movie was filmed in Morocco, and Peter Gabriel's score relies heavily on Arabic musical instrumentation and textures.

"I wonder if that sort of portrayal was dictated by the exigencies of the politics of the moment," said Medved.

'Least Jewish' Jesus

While not a professional film critic, Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum brought to the movie his experience as chairman of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations. In portraying the human side of Jesus, said Tanenbaum, Scorsese takes "a radical departure from a reverent Christian understanding of (Jesus') asceticism."

Tanenbaum, the international affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, also found what he called "some strong traces of the classic anti-Jewish elements found in traditional passion plays."

Tanenbaum compared "Temptation" to other films about Jesus and called it "the least Jewish of any life of Jesus I've ever seen."

Organizational heads who viewed the film preferred reserving artistic judgment of the film's artistic merits.

However, Seymour Reich, international president of B'nai B'rith, noted in a statement that the movie "was made in good faith by Christians who did not intend to mock religion, and who sincerely profess reverence for Christianity and Christian theology."

Because the film has found support among the "highest levels of the Christian clergy in this country" -- it was praised by some liberal Catholic and Protestant ministers for portraying Christ's human side -- "there is no justification for the attempts of censorship and infringement of free speech," said Reich.

Troubling Questions

Despite its relatively peaceful opening, however, "The Last Temptation of Christ" has raised troubling questions about the relation of artistic license to religious sensitivity.

Film critic Medved, while denouncing the anti-Semitic flavor of early protests, nonetheless found it "disgusting" that Wasserman, MCA president Sidney Scheinberg and Universal chairman Tom Pollack, all Jews, "were so insensitive to Christian sensibilities."

According to Medved, the film "shows the depth of Hollywood's insensitivity to religion in general."

In response, one national Jewish leader called Friday for a conference that would include representatives of the film industry and the Christian and Jewish faiths.

The purpose, according to Rabbi A. James Rudin, interreligious affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, would be to defuse the tensions aroused by the film.

Said Rudin: "We need a roundtable of mutual respect -- not to stifle the creative talent of artist nor to silence the very valid concerns of religious groups, but to break down the stereotypes and caricatures that have emerged this summer."

**MAX FISHER TELLS JEWS
TO JOIN REPUBLICAN PARTY**

By David Friedman

NEW ORLEANS, Aug. 15 (JTA) -- Max Fisher, the dean of Jewish Republicans, made a personal appeal to American Jews from the podium of the Republican National Convention Monday to end their traditional support for Democratic presidential candidates.

"I say to you, my fellow American Jews, come join with me, and with this great (Republican) political party which shares your values, and which has labored steadily to earn your trust," Fisher said.

"The Republican Party's interests are your interests, its goals are your goals."

Fisher, honorary chairman of the National Jewish Republican Coalition, was one of several representatives of ethnic groups who addressed the opening session of the convention.

They were there to urge the members of their communities to vote for Vice President George Bush for president this November.

Fisher said that during his 40 years as an active Republican, he has watched the GOP become "an inclusive party" and "reach out to American Jews in many ways"

"At the same time, I have seen the Democratic Party -- the party of so many of our immigrant forbears -- move away from the needs and concerns of American Jews," the Detroit industrialist and philanthropist declared.

He attacked the platform adopted by the Democrats in Atlanta last month for not condemning anti-Semitism or the U.N. resolution equating Zionism with racism, and for not supporting Soviet Jewry or rejecting a Palestinian state.

"The Republican Party will not support an independent Palestinian state because it is wrong," Fisher said. "Wrong not only for Israel, but also wrong for America."

He said the Reagan administration has supported Israel because of "shared strategic interests. For Republicans, commitment to Israel is not a numbers game, it is a pillar of American foreign policy."

**AUTO EXEC 'NO LONGER WITH COMPANY'
AFTER ALLEGATIONS OF ANTI-SEMITISM**

By Andrew Silow Carroll

NEW YORK, Aug. 15 (JTA) -- The eastern regional manager of Hyundai Motor America, accused in separate lawsuits of making anti-Semitic remarks and discriminating against a Jewish auto dealer, "is no longer with the company," according to a spokesman for the Korean-based auto maker.

The spokesman declined further comment about Edward Gormley, who headed the regional office in Cranbury, N.J., because of the pending litigation.

In a federal suit filed in U.S. District Court in Queens, N.Y., Tom Nemet, who operates an import car dealership in Jamaica, N.Y., charged that he was denied a Hyundai franchise because he was Jewish.

The charges were based on a deposition by Susan Tetley, a Hyundai employee whose own lawsuit, filed in New Jersey State Superior Court, alleges Gormley made anti-Semitic comments and tried to limit the number of Jews receiving Hyundai dealerships.

Hyundai denied the charges, saying that 20 percent of its eastern region dealers are Jewish, and said Nemet was denied his request for a dealership because of "sound business principles."

A spokesman for the company acknowledged, however, that Gormley had received a letter of reprimand in September 1987 for anti-Semitic remarks directed toward Tetley.

Gormley has also denied the charges, telling the Newark (N.J.) Star Ledger, "This whole thing is a farce."

Letters written in support of Gormley have appeared in the Automotive News, an industry publication. According to one Jewish dealer, Paul Singer of Paragon Hyundai in Long Island City, N.Y., "Religion has never entered in any issue. Gormley has always been a fair person and a man of his word."

In a telephone interview, Singer said he and a number of other Jewish dealers will take out an advertisement in the Automotive News "expressing our dissatisfaction with these allegations against the company."

According to Tetley's deposition, however, Singer had written the company in late 1985, objecting that a dealership awarded to Nemet would be too close to his own.

Singer denied he wrote such a letter. "My philosophy is not to tell factories where to put dealerships," he said.

**PEACE ACTIVIST ABIE NATHAN
REPORTEDLY MET WITH PLO**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 15 (JTA) -- Sources in Jerusalem were quoted Monday in Haaretz as saying that peace activist Abie Nathan met in Tunis with Abu Mazem, one of the advisers to Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat.

Nathan's alleged flight to Tunis, now headquarters of the PLO, was discussed briefly at Sunday's daily meeting of top Foreign Ministry staff, but the Ministry refrained from issuing any kind of official statement.

An Israeli law provides up to three years' imprisonment for "an Israeli citizen or resident who knowingly, and without authorization, has contact in Israel or abroad with a person who fills a function in the executive council or other similar body in a terrorist organization, or who serves as an official representative of a terrorist organization."

Nathan declined to deny or confirm that he had indeed visited Tunisia. He has denied reports that he met with Arafat.

In June, four Israelis were convicted for having met with PLO representatives in Romania in November 1986.

Sources in Jerusalem believe that the attorney general will have no choice but to recommend a police investigation, in light of that precedent.

Davar reported that Tehiya party member Avi Farhan has already submitted a complaint to the police against Nathan.

Israel radio correspondent Shimon Shiffer reported from Washington yesterday that Nathan had actually met with Arafat.

Shiffer reported that Nathan left the office of a high-ranking official in Washington, although it is not clear how he deduced from this that Nathan had met with Arafat.

Nathan is owner of a boat called "Peace Ship," which broadcasts music and peace slogans.

