

**VOL. 67 - 72nd YEAR**
**WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 4, 1989**
**NO. 2**

# **U.S. CONFIRMS MEETING WITH PLO, BUT SAYS NO OTHER SESSIONS SET**

**By Howard Rosenberg**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3 (JTA) -- The United States said Tuesday that its meeting with the Palestine Liberation Organization over the weekend was initiated by a low-level PLO official who "asked to come and introduce himself."

"There are no other meetings planned at this time," State Department spokesman Charles Redman said Tuesday. Redman had said before the initial U.S. contact with the PLO on Dec. 16 that no other meetings were likely before President-elect George Bush's inauguration on Jan. 20.

A State Department source Tuesday dismissed reports from Madrid that a PLO official will be meeting with the United States later this week. "That's wrong," the source said.

U.S. Ambassador to Tunisia Robert Pelletreau, the sole U.S. official authorized to speak with the PLO, did meet over the weekend for 45 minutes with Hakam Balaoui, the PLO's representative in Tunis, Redman said.

Pelletreau used the occasion to say the United States "would welcome any information the PLO is able to develop" on the terrorist downing of Pan American World Airways Flight 103 on Dec. 21, Redman said.

Pelletreau told Balaoui that finding the perpetrators of the bombing is a "high priority for the United States," he added.

Redman refused to discuss other details of the meeting, except to say the agenda was much smaller than that at the Dec. 16 meeting.

Redman added that he will not divulge any information provided by the PLO to the United States, citing the need for investigators to work on a "confidential basis."

## **KNESSET REJECTS TALKS WITH PLO, OPPOSES SEPARATE PALESTINIAN STATE**

**By Gil Sedan**

JERUSALEM, Jan. 3 (JTA) -- The Knesset issued a statement Tuesday ruling out the Palestine Liberation Organization as a negotiating partner and affirming Israel's rejection of a Palestinian state.

The statement, which wound up a session on political matters, including the PLO's recent peace offensive, had wide support from Likud, Labor, Agudat Yisrael and the National Religious Party.

But some Labor doves and members of leftist opposition parties accused the government of not wanting peace.

Divisions in the Knesset deepened when 32 right-wing members signed a letter urging the law enforcement agencies to prevent four of their colleagues from going to a meeting in Paris that will be attended by PLO representatives.

The Knesset statement, adopted by a substantial majority, made clear that politicians here believe the PLO still aims at Israel's destruction, American opinions to the contrary notwithstanding.

It stated that Israel is prepared to negotiate with Palestinian representatives who recognize Israel, reject terrorism and accept U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338.

The United States maintained that the PLO met precisely those conditions when it decided last month to open a dialogue with the PLO.

The Knesset insisted, however, that "the PLO, which is based on the Palestinian Covenant, and any other organization which negates the existence of Israel and the national existence of the Jewish people, or which exercises terrorism, cannot be partners to negotiations."

## **Jordanian-Palestinian Framework**

According to the Knesset statement, "Israel will insist that the solution of the Palestinian problem be within a Jordanian-Palestinian framework."

"Israel negates the establishment of an additional separate Palestinian state in the territory between Israel and the Jordan River," the statement said.

Foreign Minister Moshe Arens told the Knesset on Tuesday he believes 1989 will be a year of progress in the peace process. He said Israel is preparing a series of proposals to advance the process.

Arens said at a reception here for foreign ambassadors that Israel is considering a number of peace initiatives, none of which has yet passed through the decision-making channels.

The right-wing members' letter, addressed by 32 Knesset members to the minister of police, the minister of justice and the attorney general, refers to a trip planned by Ora Namir and Arieh Eliav of Labor, and Shulamit Aloni and Yossi Sarid of the Citizens Rights Movement.

It urges the authorities to bar their departure from the country on grounds that the law forbids Israelis from having contact with the PLO.

Eliav told reporters Tuesday that the Paris meeting would not violate that ban.

He said the four Knesset members do not intend to negotiate with the PLO, only to participate in an international conference that would also be attended by Palestinians, including PLO representatives.

Three other Laborites, Knesset member Haim Ramon, former Knesset member Abba Eban and Haim Zadok, reportedly are considering an invitation to a conference in The Hague that will be attended by two members of the Palestine National Council, Edward Said and Walid Khalidi.

The conference is titled "The Palestinian-Israeli Problem From a European Point of View."

## **U.S. SAYS IT'S 'GRAVELY CONCERNED' ABOUT ISRAEL'S DEPORTATION POLICY**

**By Howard Rosenberg**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 3 (JTA) -- The United States on Tuesday said it was "gravely concerned" about Israel's deportation Sunday of 15 Palestinians from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

"We have repeatedly voiced our opposition to the expulsion of Palestinians from the occupied territories," State Department spokesman Charles Redman said.

Instead of enhancing the Jewish state's security, he said, deportations "enhance Palestinian resentment and add to tensions."

The State Department has taken special

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interest in the plight of the Palestinians, who Israeli Embassy spokesman Yossi Gal said were involved in "inciting, leading and directing violent disturbances in the territories."

In August, after Israel initially ordered the deportations, Thomas Pickering, the U.S. ambassador to Israel, discussed their cases with top Israeli leaders while U.S. Deputy Secretary of State John Whitehead met with Oded Eran, acting Israeli ambassador to the United States.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin told Pickering that the deportations would be carried out after the Palestinians had the opportunity to appeal to Israel's High Court of Justice.

Redman said Tuesday that the United States will continue to press its position as it has done previously. But a department source was unaware of any planned meeting between U.S. and Israeli officials on the matter.

### 'Unacceptable Practice'

"As a strong friend of Israel, we are now gravely concerned about these most recent expulsions," Redman said. "Deportations are an unacceptable practice under the Fourth Geneva Convention."

A State Department official explained that the fourth protocol of the Geneva Convention of 1949 "does not permit forced exile as a form of punishment."

Gal said Israel differs with the United States in interpreting the treaty, which governs the conduct of an occupying power. "We maintain that it is legal" under the treaty to deport Palestinians, he said.

Redman called on Israel to afford "full and public judicial process" to those accused of criminal acts. Such a process would allow Palestinians to "defend themselves against any charges," he added.

Gal retorted that all were "given enough time to appeal" to the High Court of Justice. They first petitioned the advisory committee of the central and southern commands of the Israel Defense Force and filed appeals with the court Aug. 17. But they have since withdrawn the appeals, Gal said.

The High Court has never overturned an IDF deportation order.

Redman said Palestinians found guilty under Israeli law "should be punished appropriately." The State Department source said acceptable forms of punishment would be imprisonment or fines.

### **INFILTRATION ATTEMPTS FROM LEBANON MORE THAN DOUBLED DURING LAST YEAR** **By Hugh Orgel**

TEL AVIV, Jan. 3 (JTA) -- Terrorist attempts to infiltrate Israel from Lebanon more than doubled last year. Israeli sources link the rise to the intifada.

There were 24 infiltration attempts in 1988, compared with 10 in 1987, a senior defense source disclosed Tuesday. All were foiled by the Israel Defense Force.

Another seven to eight infiltrations were prevented by the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon.

At the same time, there was a 67 percent drop in the number of Katyusha rocket attacks on Israel from Lebanon last year.

The source said this pattern of terrorist

activity "unquestionably" was intended as a show of solidarity with the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Five of the infiltration attempts were made by Al Fatah, the military arm of the Palestine Liberation Organization headed by Yasir Arafat. The most recent was on Nov. 27, two weeks before Arafat issued a statement in Geneva renouncing terrorism.

Several infiltration attempts were made from Egypt last year, but these involved smugglers rather than terrorists, military sources said.

### **SLA COMMANDER IS OUT OF HOSPITAL, WILL RETURN TO POST AFTER RECOVERY** **By Hugh Orgel**

TEL AVIV, Jan. 3 (JTA) -- Gen. Antoine Lahad, commander of the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army, is on the way to recovery from an assassination attempt two months ago.

But Lebanese terrorist groups are demanding the release of his would-be killer, Suat Bshara, a 21-year-old friend of the Lahad family. She was arrested after shooting the general Nov. 7, at his home in the southern Lebanese town of Marjayoun.

The SLA patrols the southern Lebanon security zone jointly with the Israel Defense Force.

Lahad, 61, was discharged Monday from Rambam Hospital in Haifa and is convalescing at the Dan Carmel Hotel on Mount Carmel.

Bshara, a ballet teacher, belongs to the Lebanese Communist Party, which reportedly ordered the assassination.

She fired a small-caliber pistol at Lahad when he entered the family living room, where she had been visiting with his wife. A single bullet entered his upper right arm and chest, causing serious vascular damage and bleeding.

Bshara is to be tried by an Israeli military tribunal. Terrorists are threatening retaliation if she is punished.

Lahad, meanwhile, must report regularly to the hospital for further treatment. He has a speaking problem, because prolonged use of a breathing apparatus weakened his throat muscles.

But his doctors say he will be able to resume command of the SLA after a period of recuperation and therapy.

### **MORE ANTI-ISRAEL ATTACKS FORECAST** **By Hugh Orgel**

TEL AVIV, Jan. 3 (JTA) -- Reliable military sources in Beirut have announced that an escalation in Palestinian and pro-Iranian terrorist activity against Israel is expected in Lebanon within the next two months, Maariv reported Monday.

The Israeli newspaper was quoting Radio Monte Carlo, a station in Monaco owned by Arabs with excellent connections throughout the Arab world.

The report said several terrorist factions presently based in Tyre and Sidon, on the southern Lebanese coast, and in the Bekaa valley, in eastern Lebanon, are getting assistance from Syria and Iran to mount attacks on Israel.

According to Radio Monte Carlo, the purpose of the escalation is to hurt the Palestine Liberation Organization because of Yasir Arafat's renunciation of terrorism and recognition of Israel in Geneva last month.

## LABOR PARTY MINISTERS BALKING AT BUDGET CUTS PROPOSED BY PERES

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 3 (JTA) -- Senior Labor Party ministers are refusing to go along with the hefty budget cuts proposed by their party leader, Finance Minister Shimon Peres.

Education Minister Yitzhak Navon said Tuesday he would vote against Peres' economic program in the Cabinet because it would mean severe cutbacks for the school system.

Navon, a deputy prime minister and former president of Israel, ranks third in the Labor Party hierarchy.

He told reporters during a break in ministerial meetings on the budget that "the intention is to abolish free high schooling -- however they try to dress it up."

Labor's No. 2 man, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, made clear on Monday that he would not agree to proposed cuts in the defense budget, which he estimated would come to between 450 million and 600 million shekels. He called them "dangerous and unacceptable."

Health Minister Ya'acov Tsur, another prominent Laborite, is also balking.

This means Peres could face a rebellion in his own party when his economic program goes before the Cabinet for approval Thursday.

He also faces serious problems with the Histadrut labor federation and many individual unions. They have not assented to his reduction of the cost-of-living increments payable to Israeli wage-earners to compensate for the 13.5 percent devaluation of the shekel since Peres took office two weeks ago.

The devaluation, which amounts to a reduction of real wages, coincided with a sudden rise in prices as Peres slashed government subsidies for a wide range of products and services.

His goal is to reduce the national budget by 1 billion shekels. Peres and his aides are meeting with other government officials and key Knesset members in the hope of reaching a compromise by Thursday.

## ACCORD REACHED ON SOVIET CEMETERIES, ALLOWING ACCESS AND PRESERVATION

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Jan. 3 (JTA) -- A major breakthrough for the preservation and enhancement of Jewish life in the Soviet Union has been reached in an agreement between American and Soviet committees.

The historical agreement, announced last week by New York City Councilman Noah Dear, permits access to Jewish cemeteries and Jewish historical and religious texts; provides for the preservation and maintenance of Jewish grave sites; provides for separate Jewish burial grounds; and offers cooperation to locate, maintain and provide access to Jewish books.

The agreement was reached between the Soviet Committee to Support the Preservation of Jewish Historical Monuments and the Joint Committee for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in the Soviet Union, a loose confederation of Orthodox Jewish groups here.

The Joint Committee is co-chaired by Dear; Albert Reichmann, a Toronto-based businessman; and Julius Berman, a New York attorney who is a former chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

The Soviet committee is chaired by Konstantin Kharchev, minister of religion of the Soviet Union.

It is co-chaired by Nikolai Kolesnik, chairman of the Council of Religious Affairs of the Ukrainian Council of Ministers; Yuri Reshetov, deputy head of the Department of Humanitarian and Cultural Affairs of the Soviet Foreign Ministry; Moscow Chief Rabbi Adolf Shayeivitch; and Samuel Ziv, law professor and former co-chairman of the Anti-Zionist Committee of the Soviet Public.

During a November visit of the Soviet group to New York, Ziv declared publicly and in writing that the Anti-Zionist Committee was being disbanded.

In a separate development, the World Jewish Congress has accepted a request by Shayeivitch to meet with him in Moscow during its next visit there.

Shayeivitch wrote a letter, on WJC Congress stationery, to WJC President Edgar Bronfman Jan. 1 stating "unequivocally" that he is "not a member of the Anti-Zionist Committee and that the committee was dismantled."

Shayeivitch also reiterated his regret "that such a committee existed in the past," and said he had never participated in anti-Jewish or anti-Israel acts.

Shayeivitch has long been considered a pariah in the Jewish community because of his employment by the Soviet state, his association with the KGB, and for the fact he was a member of the Anti-Zionist Committee.

Shayeivitch is in Israel for his first time, as part of an unprecedented official Soviet Jewish religious delegation visiting the Jewish state.

## JEWISH AGENCY TO TRY TO CONVINCE EMIGRES IN ITALY TO MAKE ALIYAH

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Jan. 3 (JTA) -- The Jewish Agency said Sunday it would send a special emissary to Italy shortly to try to convince Soviet Jews in transit centers there to come to Israel.

But some Soviet Jewry activists here do not think much of the idea.

Jewish emigres from the USSR have been having prolonged waits in Italy to obtain refugee status in order to enter the United States.

The reason is that the number of refugee slots allocated by Congress failed to keep pace with the accelerated departure of Jews and other emigrants from the Soviet Union last year.

As a result, U.S. immigration officials in Rome have denied refugee status to at least 179 Jews since last September. Hundreds of others are said to be waiting.

Jerusalem claims some 300 Jews are presently stranded in Rome and could be persuaded to come to Israel if, after reapplying for refugee status, they still cannot gain entry to the United States.

According to Uri Gordon, head of the agency's aliyah department, several families have already made arrangements to come to Israel.

But Soviet Jewry activists here oppose the Jewish Agency's plans, the Jerusalem Post reported. They say the Soviet Jews will regard the agency's emissary as a "vulture that has come to pick over the remains of the noshim (dropouts)."

The Public Council for Soviet Jewry predicts that between 30,000 and 40,000 Jews will be allowed to leave the Soviet Union in 1989.

## GROUPS TAKING SIDES ON COURT CASE INVOLVING PUBLIC DISPLAY OF MENORAH

By William Saphire

NEW YORK, Jan. 3 (JTA) -- American Jewish organizations are getting involved on both sides of the first case to come before the U.S. Supreme Court that examines the display of a Jewish religious symbol on public property.

The high court will probably hear oral arguments in the case during the spring session, according to Samuel Rabinove, legal director of the American Jewish Committee.

Arguments in the case almost certainly will be heard before the court recesses for the summer, he told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

The plaintiffs in the original case, the American Civil Liberties Union and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, are asking the Supreme Court to affirm a U.S. Court of Appeals decision barring public displays of a Christmas nativity scene and a Chanukah menorah on government property in Pittsburgh during the holiday season.

Friend-of-the-court briefs in support of the plaintiffs have been filed jointly by the American Jewish Committee and the National Council of Churches, as well as by the American Jewish Congress on behalf of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council and itself.

The Supreme Court in recent years has dealt with complaints against the display of a nativity scene or creche on public property, but never a menorah or other Jewish religious symbol.

The menorah in question belongs to the Chabad-Lubavitch organization, a Hasidic movement. The creche is the property of the Holy Name Society, a Roman Catholic organization.

Both are seeking to overturn the lower court ruling.

Nathan Lewin, a Washington attorney, is representing Chabad. Lewin is a vice president of the National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs, widely known as COLPA.

### Suit Brought By Moslem

COLPA informed JTA it, too, has filed a friend-of-the-court brief on behalf of several national Orthodox Jewish organizations in support of the Chabad position.

The ADL, co-counsel with the ACLU in the case of *ACLU v. County of Allegheny* (Pa.), represents Malik Tunador, a Moslem.

He testified that as an Allegheny County taxpayer, he felt excluded by the erection of a menorah on the steps of the Pittsburgh City-County Building and the annual placement of a creche in the Allegheny County Courthouse.

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit in Philadelphia ruled last March 15 that the establishment clause of the U.S. Constitution's First Amendment prohibits the display of religious symbols in or near buildings that house government offices.

The Supreme Court agreed four months ago to hear the case.

Donald Mintz, chairman of ADL's Civil Rights Committee, pointed out that "religious symbols at these locations communicate the message that the represented faiths are endorsed or approved by the state."

He said the message violates the establishment clause "because it diminishes the political stature of those who do not adhere to the represented religion."

Rabinove said the "constitutional principle of separation of religion and government means the government should not become involved with religions unless there is a religious need that cannot otherwise be met," such as chaplains for the armed forces.

"There is no religious need to place sacred symbols of any faith in government buildings," he stressed.

But Rabinove recalled that in two previous cases, the Supreme Court decided against plaintiffs and upheld the display of a creche on public property.

One, in 1984, involved a creche in Pawtucket, R.I., that was city property. The court was influenced by the fact that it was part of a larger Christmas display that contained holiday artifacts which carried no religious message.

The other case, the display of a creche on public park land in Scarsdale, N.Y., was decided in 1985 on freedom of speech grounds.

In the present case, Chabad argued that government has a responsibility to counterbalance "the overwhelming Christian message delivered by municipal displays that feature Christmas trees."

But the AJCongress brief rejects this reasoning, saying that the Christmas tree is a secular rather than a religious symbol and therefore not bound by the strict rules placed on religious arrays.

The brief also argues that by highlighting the symbols of the Christian and Jewish faiths, "other religious groups without a December holiday would be discriminated against."

## SINGLE DONOR PROVIDES ORGANS FOR HEART AND LIVER TRANSPLANTS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 3 (JTA) -- A record of sorts may have been set at Israeli hospitals Monday night, when a single donor provided a heart and liver for transplant surgery.

The donor, an unnamed Austrian tourist, was fatally injured in a traffic accident. His family agreed to donate his organs to save lives.

Yehezkel Drucker, 49, of Ramat Gan, was reported Tuesday morning to be recovering satisfactorily at Hadassah University Hospital in Ein Kerem, following a successful heart transplant.

The liver transplant was performed on Maurice Athlizada, 50, of Moshav Magdiel. He was reported in critical condition Tuesday night at Beilinson Hospital in Petach Tikva, after a 13-hour operation.

Athlizada, the father of three young children, suffered complications and was taken directly from the operating theater to an intensive-care unit.

Liver transplants are among the most complicated and dangerous to perform. Only two have been done previously in Israel, both at Rambam Hospital in Haifa. Both failed.

The surgeon in those cases was American-trained Dr. Yigal Kamm, who had performed liver transplants in the United States. He returned to practice there because of the lack of liver donors in Israel.

The operation was the first of its kind at Beilinson since the Health Ministry licensed it to do liver transplants several months ago.

The outlook is much better for Drucker, a father of two. He received the heart transplant after a week under treatment at the Hadassah-Ein Kerem intensive-care unit.