

**ARAFAT OFFER TO VISIT JERUSALEM
VIEWED BY SHAMIR AS 'TRICKERY'**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 13 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir had little but contempt Monday for Yasir Arafat's declaration that he is ready to go to Jerusalem, with Arab world consent, to talk peace.

"Trickery" and "public relations stunt" were some of the epithets used by Shamir to dismiss the Palestine Liberation Organization chairman's statements, which were made in a weekend interview with the Italian newspaper La Repubblica.

Shamir issued his reaction during a tour of northern villages a day before Tuesday's second round of municipal elections. A runoff is required where no mayoral candidate achieved at least 40 percent of the vote in the first round of elections on Feb. 28.

Shamir said it was not serious to compare Arafat's latest proclamation to the late Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem in November 1977. "Sadat intended peace," Shamir explained, "while this man, this chief murderer, intends not peace but deception."

Shamir referred to the current spate of attempted border infiltrations from Lebanon as evidence of the Palestinian terror group's determination to thwart any advance toward a negotiated solution.

He said that as hard as the terrorists try to infiltrate, the Israel Defense Force will try even harder and with greater perseverance to keep them out.

**ARENS AND BAKER AGREE ON NEED
TO REDUCE TENSIONS IN TERRITORIES**

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 13 (JTA) -- Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens indicated Monday that the United States and Israel share "common ground" on the need to ease tensions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

But after meeting with Secretary of State James Baker for nearly two hours, Arens gave no hint of Israel's attitude toward proposals that Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization both make concessions to bring this about.

Arens stressed that Israel wants to reduce tensions, but he pointed out that it is "not easy" to do this.

Baker told reporters that he and Arens "considered various reinforcing and reciprocal steps which might be taken to defuse the tension" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

But he did not give any details on the U.S. proposals, which reportedly ask Israel to release some of the Palestinians arrested during the 15-month-old uprising and reopen schools in the territories.

In turn, the PLO reportedly will be asked to bring about an end of violent demonstrations in the territories and to block attempts by some of its member factions to infiltrate Israel from southern Lebanon.

The request to the PLO will be made by Robert Pelletreau, the U.S. ambassador in Tunisia, at the next formal U.S.-PLO meeting, which State

Department spokesman Charles Redman said Monday will take place in the next few weeks.

Arens' meeting with Baker was the first since new governments were elected in the United States and Israel. Baker said he was renewing an acquaintance that goes back to when Arens was the Israeli ambassador to Washington and Baker was President Reagan's chief of staff.

Meetings With Bush And Quayle

The State Department visit by Arens was followed by separate meetings at the White House with President Bush, Vice President Dan Quayle and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft.

Bush and Arens met for 30 minutes. Afterward, Arens said the two "didn't arrive at any finalized positions," leaving that instead to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who will be meeting with Bush in early April.

Baker said his meeting with Arens focused on the Middle East peace process and how the two countries can work together to bring about direct negotiations.

"President Bush and I are firmly committed to continuing the historic United States-Israeli partnership and to do all we can to assure Israel's security and economic well-being."

He said this is because Israel is "not only a friend, but an ally." Israel, he added, "must feel secure if we are going to make progress toward peace in the Middle East."

Arens said the meeting helped build "a basis of understanding between us on how we can proceed."

The Bush administration had advertised the meeting as part of the process it needs for formulating its policy on the Middle East. Baker said that both Bush and he are "looking forward" to meeting with Shamir when he comes to Washington.

The Arens visit is laying the groundwork for Shamir, who is expected to bring his own peace initiative to Washington. The Shamir plan is believed to be a new version of the Camp David Accords, which call for negotiations for Palestinian autonomy, to be followed after several years by talks on the final status of the territories.

The Bush administration also seems to support this gradual approach. Baker's proposals for concessions by Israel and the PLO are in line with the perceived effort by the Bush administration to convince the PLO to allow Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to negotiate with Israel.

**PALESTINIAN AND ISRAELI ACTIVISTS
SCOFF AT LATEST U.S. PEACE IDEAS**

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, March 13 (JTA) -- Both Israelis and Palestinians participating in the three-day "Road to Peace" conference at Columbia University scoffed Monday at what they see as the Bush administration's "double standard" in urging a moratorium on violence in the Israeli-administered territories.

Representatives of the Palestine Liberation Organization and Peace Now called the Bush administration's plans to ask Israel and the PLO to take specific steps to defuse tensions in the

administered territories demeaning and unfair to the Palestinians.

They were responding to reports that the Bush administration plans to ask the PLO to halt the violent demonstrations and distribution of anti-Israel literature in the territories. In turn, the United States will ask Israel to release some of the Palestinians detained in Israeli prison camps and to reopen schools in the territories.

The plan was leaked to the news media over the weekend, prior to Israeli Foreign Minister Moshe Arens' discussions Monday with President Bush and Secretary of State James Baker.

Nabil Shaath, chairman of the Palestine National Council's political committee, said the American requests set a "double standard" that allows Israel to continue repression and unfairly burdens the Palestinians by preventing them from responding to this repression.

Warning On 'Right Of Return'

Israeli Peace Now activist Tzaly Reshef called the U.S. tension-reducing recommendations "insulting to the Palestinians."

But he warned that Israel would never accept any peace plan that grants Palestinians in the territories the right to return to lands inside pre-1967 Israel.

"The right of return of Palestinians to Jaffa and Haifa is totally unacceptable to us," he said.

Knesset member Yossi Sarid of Israel's dovish Citizens Rights Movement was equally firm in that regard. "No Israeli -- nobody -- is going to accept the right of return. No Shamir and no Sarid," he said, referring to Israel's hawkish prime minister.

But Sarid endorsed and called for the expansion of the U.S.-PLO dialogue. He also urged the holding of elections in the territories under "international supervision."

The highlight of Monday morning's session was expected to be the appearance of Faisal al-Husseini, director of the Arab Studies Center in Jerusalem, who has spent most of the past year in an Israeli prison for his political activities.

But Husseini, in the end, is soft-spoken and less than fluent in English. He was the only member of a panel of PLO members, prominent Palestinian scholars and left-wing Israelis to rely totally on a written text.

In quiet but determined words, Husseini's rejection of the proposed American truce in the territories was unmitigated.

"The intifada did not take place because we wanted schools to reopen or prisoners to be released," he said. "It took place because we wanted our 21 years of occupation to be over."

How Palestinians View Israel

Rather than insist on an end to the unrest, "the American government must upgrade its dialogue with the PLO and take every step to end the (Israeli) occupation."

For this, "America must stop sending tear gas" and other forms of aid to Israel that will prove lethal to the Palestinians, Husseini said.

Afif Safieh, director of the PLO mission to the Netherlands and one-time political science instructor at Harvard, was at times flippant and at times serious.

Among Palestinians, he said, there are two schools of thought about Israel, the kinder of them being that "Israel is a democracy -- for the Jews."

Noting that Palestinians have frequently been

called the "Jews of the Middle East" because they have no home, he said, "We never dreamt of making the Israelis the Palestinians of the Middle East. We are against genocide."

Endorsing the idea of peaceful coexistence, Safieh said that "for us, the two-state solution is an acceptable solution that can be made durable."

Are the words being spoken in New York at this conference being discussed in the halls of the Knesset?

Hanna Siniora, editor of Al-Fajr, the Palestinian newspaper that co-sponsored the conference, said he believes "it is being heard every day in Jerusalem."

LIKUD KNOCKS LABOR MINISTERS OVER DIVISIVE POLITICAL STATEMENTS By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 13 (JTA) -- Likud Knesset members sharply attacked Labor Cabinet ministers Monday for what they believed to be inflammatory political statements, amid renewed speculation that Labor might try to form an alternative coalition with the religious parties.

Two Labor ministers were specifically singled out for acrimony during a meeting of the Likud Knesset caucus: Energy Minister Moshe Shahal and Communications Minister Gad Ya'acobi.

Last week, Shahal presented his own proposals for a settlement with the Palestinians, while Ya'acobi published his own estimates of the economic costs of the Palestinian uprising.

The Likud Executive demanded that Labor ministers limit themselves to dealing solely with the affairs of their respective ministries and to put an end to "irresponsible political declarations which cause damage to the state," as Sara Doron, Likud caucus whip, put it.

The caucus urged Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to call the Laborites to order, because their behavior would cause disrespect for the Knesset and the government.

The attack was an indication that despite Likud's dominance of the present national unity government, there are fears within the party of the kinds of dual-track diplomacy that characterized the previous coalition government.

Vice Premier Shimon Peres, for instance, recently said that if Shamir and Foreign Minister Moshe Arens failed to achieve progress in their talks in Washington, Labor would come up with plans of its own.

According to Yediot Achronot on Monday, the Likud has further reason to be suspicious of Labor.

The paper's reliable political reporter, Shlomo Nakkidimon, wrote that Rabbi Yaacov Arye Alter, the son of the Ger rebbe, left Sunday on a secret mission to New York's Lubavitcher rebbe following negotiations between Labor, the Agudat Yisrael party and Lubavitch leaders in Israel.

The purpose of the mission, according to Nakkidimon, was to work out a new version of the controversial "Who Is a Jew" amendment, which would allow Labor to stage a "parliamentary coup" and form a new ruling coalition.

Religious leaders are still bitter that Likud backed out on promises to pass the amendment to the Law of Return.

If the Lubavitcher rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, agrees to a new proposal, wrote Yediot, other religious parties might follow suit and create a dynamic that could shake up the government.

THREE KILLED IN SECOND ATTEMPT TO ATTACK ISRAEL IN TWO DAYS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 13 (JTA) -- Three more terrorists were killed in another encounter with Israel Defense Force troops in the southern Lebanon security zone Sunday, bringing to five the number killed over the weekend trying to infiltrate Israel.

Twenty terrorists have been killed in encounters inside and just north of the security zone during the past month alone. A total of 30 have been killed there this year. Not one has managed to cross the Israeli border.

The three killed Sunday night were spotted by an IDF patrol near Meis el-Jabal, in the central sector of the zone, about a half mile from Kibbutz Manara.

The gang was said to have been on its way to attack a village inside Israel.

A general security alert was ordered in Israeli villages near the border, and the residents were kept informed of the progress of the chase. But nobody was ordered to take shelter.

The three killed were members of a group calling itself the Palestine Liberation Front-Talaat Yacub faction, which had claimed responsibility for previous infiltration attempts recently. Yacub's group in the past has been known as the Palestine Popular Struggle Front.

Jabril Group Takes Credit

Meanwhile, the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command has claimed responsibility for an infiltration attempt on Saturday, in which the IDF killed two terrorists. The radical faction, led by Ahmed Jabril, is opposed to Yasir Arafat's leadership of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The two terrorists, who were killed north of Hasbaya on Saturday night, have been identified as a Palestinian and a Lebanese. In an announcement made in the Lebanese Druse town of Rashaya, Jabril's group acknowledged the two were "killed while on a mission to attack a target in Palestine."

The statement said the abortive raid was planned "in retaliation for the submissive policies" of Arafat.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin pointed out Sunday that the recent increase in the number of terrorist attacks against the IDF and the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army follows a halt in fighting between the Shiite Amal militia and the extremist Hezbollah, or Party of God, which is backed by Iran.

"They have stopped attacking each other inside Lebanon, and now have more time and energy to attack us," he said.

Rabin noted that Israel's war in Lebanon, known in Israel as Operation Peace for Galilee, had failed to wipe out Palestinian terrorism. He said that during the past year, there have been more attempted terrorist attacks against Israel than there had been in the year before the start of the Lebanon war in 1982.

Addressing an election rally before Tuesday's municipal runoff elections, Rabin disclosed that 48 IDF soldiers had been killed defending Israeli citizens since the army set up the security zone and withdrew most of its forces from Lebanon in 1985.

But since then, no Israeli civilians have been killed by action from across the border.

HIAS LEERY OF U.S. OFFER TO RAISE SOVIET REFUGEE QUOTA BY 6,000 SLOTS

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, March 13 (JTA) -- The United States is making a one-time offer to increase the refugee quota for Soviet Jews, Armenians and Pentecostals by 6,000 slots.

But because of the strings attached, the main private agency helping Soviet Jews come to the United States is lukewarm about the offer.

In negotiations between the executive branch and Congress in September, the State Department said it had enough funds to resettle 84,000 refugees worldwide for the fiscal year beginning last Oct. 1. But the Department of Health and Human Services said it had enough money to cover resettlement costs for 90,000 refugees.

Sheppy Abramowitz, the State Department's refugee affairs spokeswoman, attributed the quirk to different refugee ceilings approved by various congressional committees.

The State Department wants to make the additional 6,000 slots available to Soviet emigrants. But it is seeking assurances from private groups that they will bear the State Department portion of the costs.

The department covers the refugees' transportation, processing and initial resettlement costs. Health and Human Services takes care of long-term resettlement costs, such as Medicaid.

Three groups in particular will have the first crack at using the 6,000 slots, Abramowitz said: the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, which helps Soviet Jews; World Relief, which helps Soviet Pentecostals; and Tolstoy, which helps Armenians.

Karl Zukerman, executive vice president of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, said Monday that the State Department has approached his group for months about the idea.

HIAS told the government it is "very interested but not prepared to make any commitments" until U.S. refugee funds are made available to all Soviet Jews who want to enter the United States as refugees, Zukerman said.

Officials of both Jewish organizations and the U.S. government believe the number of Jews allowed to leave the Soviet Union this year will far exceed the U.S. refugee quota for the USSR.

"If we have to get 30,000 Jews into the United States, we are not going to commit to deal with 6,000 unless we know that for the rest of them" there is enough money, Zukerman said.

Until an "overall deal" is made, HIAS's response to the plan was "No, thank you," said Zukerman.

HIAS is awaiting reaction on Capitol Hill to a bill introduced March 1 in the Senate that would double the U.S. refugee ceiling for Soviets this fiscal year from 25,000 to 50,000 and provide an additional \$100 million.

MOSQUES SEARCHED FOR MISSING SOLDIER

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 13 (JTA) -- Army and police forces have combed dozens of mosques in the Gaza Strip during the past three days in the hope of locating Sgt. Avi Sasportas, who disappeared without a trace a month ago.

The mosque search operation, which has not yet yielded any results, was launched after authorities received intelligence information that either the soldier or his body was being held captive in the basement of one of the mosques.

RIGHT-WING POLITICAL PARTIES CONTINUE TO GAIN IN WEST GERMANY

By David Kantor

BONN, March 13 (JTA) -- Political parties from the far right made substantial gains in West German municipal elections on Sunday, calling up charges of anti-Semitism as well as xenophobia.

In Frankfurt and in municipal elections throughout the state of Hesse, voters veered away from the ruling Christian Democratic Union of Chancellor Helmut Kohl, registering votes instead for a neo-Nazi party.

The National Democratic Party, or NPD, garnered 6.6 percent of the popular vote in the Frankfurt municipal elections and will thus be represented in the city's parliament.

The NPD's election victory prompted the ecological, left-wing Green Party to accuse the CDU of staging an "anti-Semitic" campaign. It referred to a CDU advertisement which featured one of its leaders, Daniel Cohn-Bendit, also known as "Danny the Red," trying to burst into the town hall violently.

"You should know to whom you are opening the door," said the ad.

The CDU rejected the Greens' accusation as ridiculous and noted that many of the Green's activists have displayed anti-Zionist and anti-Jewish biases.

In the federal state of Hesse, the NPD also succeeded in mobilizing sizable popular support for its program of expelling foreigners from the country.

Sunday's gain by the NPD in Frankfurt, Germany's financial heart, fifth-largest city and home to West Germany's second largest Jewish community, is similar to the dramatic success in Berlin of another neo-Nazi group, the Republicans, who the government described as extreme right rather than neo-Nazi.

At the end of January, the Republicans, headed by a former SS officer outspokenly proud of his Nazi past, received nearly 8 percent of the popular vote in West Berlin and thus gained 11 seats in the 128-seat local legislature.

Moreover, these two successive extreme right-wing gains come after still another neo-Nazi group, the German People's Union, or DVU, won representation last year in the Bremen federal state's parliament.

West German establishment parties have until now failed to come forward with an idea of how to stop the neo-Nazis' gains.

NATIONAL FRONT LOSES SOME GROUND, BUT NOT INFLUENCE, IN CITY RACES

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, March 13 (JTA) -- Jean-Marie Le Pen's extreme right-wing National Front lost ground in the first round of municipal elections here Sunday. But the party proved it remains a staying force in French political life.

In Paris' 20th District, in which Le Pen himself ran, he scored over 15 percent of the vote. In the eastern French city of Mulhouse, his candidates scored 21.1. They scored 20.3 percent in Toulon and around 10 percent in major cities such as Marseille, Strasbourg and Lyon.

The National Front lost more than 10 percent of its strength since the last presidential or parliamentary elections. But it presented candidates only in the larger cities, and even there, voters are generally influenced by local personali-

ties and local issues.

It holds the balance, however, in several key races in next Sunday's runoff elections, in which candidates who won at least 10 percent of the vote in the first round will compete.

Both components of the center-right, the Gaullist Rally for the Republic and the liberal Union for French Democracy, have announced that in spite of Le Pen's offer, they will refuse to negotiate an alliance with his candidates.

Le Pen called the center-right's decision "suicidal" and said that if it refuses to negotiate with him, all National Front candidates eligible to run next Sunday will do so, giving in most instances victory to the candidates of the left.

BUSH PLEDGES PERSONAL COMMITMENT TO AID STRANDED ETHIOPIAN JEWS

By Jon Greene
Washington Jewish Week

WASHINGTON, March 13 (JTA) -- President Bush gave Ethiopian Jewry leaders his personal commitment to help an estimated 17,000 Jews hoping to leave Ethiopia for Israel, according to Rachamim Elazar, chairman of the National Association of Ethiopian Jews in Israel.

In the first meeting between a U.S. president and an Ethiopian Jew, Bush told Elazar on Monday that he would consider a variety of political efforts to assist the Jews in leaving.

"I reminded him of his personal involvement in Operation Moses," said Elazar. "That work has not been finished. I urged him to seek ways that he could get the other Ethiopian Jews out."

"He gave us his word that he is willing to do something about it," Elazar said.

Bush previously met with Ethiopian Jews during a trip to Israel when he was vice president, but this is his first meeting with Ethiopian Jewry leaders in the White House.

"We were delighted by the president's concern for Jews remaining in Ethiopia," said Jon Cohen, special representative of the American Association for Ethiopian Jewry, who attended the Oval Office meeting with Bush.

HOLOCAUST SURVIVOR WHO THREW ACID IN LAWYER'S FACE FOUND GUILTY

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 13 (JTA) -- A 70-year-old Holocaust survivor, charged with hurling acid in the face of the chief council of Nazi war criminal John "Ivan the Terrible" Demjanjuk, was found guilty Monday.

On Dec. 1, during the funeral at Sanhedria Cemetery of former district court Judge Dov Eitan -- who was also a member of the Demjanjuk defense team -- Yisrael Yehezkel approached defense counsel Yoram Sheftel and spilled a 30 percent concentrated acid in his face.

Sheftel was rushed to the hospital, where doctors treated damage to one eye.

An innocent bystander, Edna Shabtai, was also treated for slight injuries.

During the court sessions, Yehezkel refused to express regret over the attack. On the contrary, he declared that he was proud he had taken the action.

He did express regret, however, over the fact that he had also hurt the bystander.

Yehezkel faces a maximum sentence of 20 years in jail.