

**U.S. SAID TO BE PRODDING ISRAELI
FOR DETAILS OF ELECTIONS PLAN**
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 30 (JTA) -- The U.S. government is prodding Israeli leaders to furnish details of how it plans to implement Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's plan to hold Palestinian elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

In high-level meetings here over the weekend, U.S. diplomats reportedly told Israeli leaders that U.S. Secretary of State James Baker is anxious for Israel to clarify several points of the election plan.

These include who would be eligible to run, whether the elections would be area-wide or municipally based, whether East Jerusalem residents could vote and what linkage would connect the elections to a sustained peace process.

The apparent U.S. pressure comes as Israeli leaders are attempting to play down the significance of Palestinian moves to reject the elections plan.

Several ad hoc teams within the government have begun to flesh out elements of Shamir's peace initiative, which he presented to Baker and President Bush earlier this month in Washington.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin is due in Washington later this month, and he apparently will seek to move the dialogue forward, since he and Shamir are fairly closely aligned in supporting the elections scenario.

Rabin, in a weekend radio interview, urged the Israeli government to stress a political linkage between the elections and the second phase of the Shamir plan: negotiations over the final status of the territories. He said this could make the elections a palatable option for the Palestinians.

Likud Leaders Uneasy

Shamir and the Likud moderates have balked so far at any such explicit linkage. Hard-liners in the premier's party have not concealed their unhappiness over the entire elections idea.

Economics and Planning Minister Yitzhak Modai, for instance, charged that Shamir was leading Israel into a "situation from which it will be virtually impossible to extricate ourselves."

Rabin, a Laborite, is said to be more open to the U.S. demands for flexibility on several key points. Political observers say the defense minister is gently trying to bring Shamir and his close aides around to his positions.

Shamir has not yet appointed a special ministerial panel to formulate the specifics of the Israeli plan. But separate groups have already been formed in the Foreign Ministry and in the Prime Minister's office, under senior officials, to study various elements of the package.

In the Foreign Ministry, the key team working on the elections is headed by Foreign Minister Moshe Arens' close political aide, Salai Meridor, while teams dealing with two other elements of the Shamir plan, the reaffirmation of Camp David and refugee resettlement will convene under the director-general, Reuven Merhav.

Meanwhile, Israeli leaders have privately predicted that rejection of the elections proposal last week by West Bank Palestinians will not be their last word on the issue.

Shamir said he hoped that the elections initiative would still "enable us to advance toward resolving the conflict."

Rabin, for his part, in a hard-hitting radio interview, warned that there will be still tougher measures against the Palestinian uprising if the local populace in the territories refuses to cooperate with the elections initiative.

Rabin and other Israeli leaders have condemned the public rejection of the proposal by 80 local Palestinians last week as the product of intensive pressure and threats from the Palestine Liberation Organization.

A Coerced Rejection Statement?

But Ori Nir, writing Friday in the daily newspaper Ha'aretz, observed that several prominent Palestinians in the West Bank did not sign the statement, which was issued on Wednesday.

Missing are the signatures of important figures on the left wing, as well as those of such moderates as Bethlehem Mayor Elias Freij, East Jerusalem newspaper editor Hanna Seniora and Gaza lawyer Fayez Abu-Rahme.

Also missing are the names of supporters of the fundamentalist Islamic Resistance Movement.

Foreign Minister Arens was quoted Friday as saying that the Palestinian leaders' statement may have been signed under coercion. "We don't know if they issued their statement of their own free will," he told the newspaper Hadashot.

"We intend to make an effort to persuade them to retract their statement and to agree to the democratic process we are offering them," he said.

**FRENCH JEWS FEEL BETRAYED
BY INVITATION TO ARAFAT**
By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, April 30 (JTA) -- Anger is simmering among many of France's half million Jews over the official invitation extended to Yasir Arafat to visit France.

The Palestine Liberation Organization chief is due here Tuesday for a two-day stay and will be received by President Francois Mitterrand at the Elysee Palace, an honor usually reserved for visitors of the highest rank.

It is, without doubt, a major propaganda coup for the PLO. And it is all the more galling for French Jews, since Mitterrand generally has been regarded by them as Israel's best friend in France.

Now, they say, he is following in the footsteps of the late President Charles de Gaulle, who imposed an arms embargo against Israel in 1967 and publicly referred to Jews as "an elite people, self-assured and domineering."

Jews, who were staunch supporters of Mitterrand in his presidential races, feel betrayed.

Mutterings of "treason" could be heard in the cafes on the Rue du Sentier, the center of Paris' garment district, where Jews, mainly of North African origin, have taken over what is known as the "shmata business."

Jews of the Rue du Sentier are said to be more nationalistic and hot tempered when it comes to Israel than even the right wing of Israel's ruling Likud party.

They have made clear that, come what may, they intend to protest Arafat's visit, regardless of what the community leaders decide.

At 10 on Tuesday morning, when Arafat is due to land at Orly, the Jews of the garment district plan to switch on thousands of fire and burglar alarms so that "all Paris hears our voice of despair."

Still A 'True And Real Friend'?

Within the organized Jewish leadership there is not despair as much as anxiety. Most of the community's leaders, whether of the political left or right, still trust Mitterrand and consider him a "true and real friend."

Whether or not they agree, they understand his conviction that Israel must be saved from itself, that sooner or later it will have to talk to the Palestinians and the PLO.

But, bowing to pressure from the rank-and-file, six of France's mainstream Jewish personalities signed a letter to Mitterrand protesting Arafat's visit in angry and reproachful tones.

The signatories included Theo Klein, president of CRIF, the Representative Council of French Jewish Institutions, and the chief rabbi of France, Rabbi Joseph Sitruk.

The letter was published in the daily newspaper *Le Monde* even before it was delivered to the Elysee Palace.

A reply, received within two days, has not officially been released.

It is said to have been angry and bitter, stressing that the president could not accept the "exaggerated language" of the Jewish leaders or the doubts they expressed about his responsibility to decide France's foreign policy, which he is empowered by the constitution to do.

Is Honeymoon Over?

The president's letter, which both Klein and the Elysee Palace tried to keep secret, threw the community into panic. It seemed that, after an eight-year honeymoon, there was now a split between the regime and the Jewish community.

Various intermediaries worked for days trying to mend fences.

The fact that the community did not release Mitterrand's letter showed they hoped for a new, friendlier message from the palace.

It came last Thursday and was released at once. In it, the president paid tribute to the community, reasserted his friendship for Israel and referred to Israel's historic links with Jerusalem and the Holy Land.

Nevertheless, French Jews have had a bad shock. They realize that when they back the Israeli government's policies to the hilt, they risk total isolation.

Even the French opposition parties, which rarely miss a chance to criticize the government, have remained silent or openly backed Mitterrand's position on the Arafat visit.

The Jewish community is planning a demonstration Tuesday afternoon outside the Rue Copernic synagogue, where four people were killed in a terrorist attack in 1981. The demonstration will follow Arafat's meeting with Mitterrand.

But many fear it will be a far cry from the mass street demonstrations of eight years ago, when tens of thousands of French Jews and non-Jews marched through Paris to protest the terrorist attack.

As one veteran Jewish leader remarked bitterly, "The tide has now turned."

SHARANSKY REJECTED FOR U.N. POST; SHAMIR SAID TO FAVOR PARIS ENVOY
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 30 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has rejected proposals to name Soviet Jewry activist Natan Sharansky as Israel's ambassador to the United Nations.

His position became public knowledge over the weekend, after he discussed the matter with Foreign Minister Moshe Arens.

Arens, along with Deputy Foreign Minister Binyamin Netanyahu, Israel's former U.N. ambassador, had been urging Sharansky's appointment for months, despite the ex-refusenik's lack of formal diplomatic experience.

But Shamir apparently felt Sharansky's nomination would needlessly antagonize Moscow, *The Jerusalem Post* reported Sunday. Sharansky is an outspoken critic of the Soviet Union's immigration and human rights policies.

The prime minister is said to prefer a seasoned diplomat for the highly visible, prestigious post. He is reported to favor Ovadia Soffer, now Israel's ambassador to France. Soffer has been in Paris more than four years and before that was ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva.

But many ministry staff members favor another senior diplomat, Ya'acov Levin, for the U.N. post. Levin presently heads the Israeli consular mission in Moscow.

Before that, he served as deputy chief of mission at the United Nations in New York.

Olmert Favored For U.S. Post

Elsewhere on the diplomatic scene, it is reported that Likud Minister Ehud Olmert is Shamir's choice to be Israel's next ambassador to the United States.

Olmert, 46, holds no portfolio in the Cabinet, but is the minister responsible for Israel's Arab community.

He is considered close to the prime minister politically and personally, and had a role in shaping Shamir's proposals for Palestinian elections in the administered territories.

Olmert also is highly regarded by the prime minister for his proven ability to address Jewish and non-Jewish audiences in the United States.

But Olmert has let it be known he would be willing to go to Washington only if he can retain his rank as a Cabinet member.

There is no Israeli precedent for such a dual function, though it is not unknown in diplomatic annals.

For example, Lord Halifax, Britain's wartime ambassador to the United States, remained a member of Winston Churchill's Cabinet.

The Israeli incumbent in Washington is career diplomat Moshe Arad, who has been at that post less than two years. He was appointed while Shimon Peres, the Labor Party leader, was foreign minister.

PERES UNDERGOES MINOR SURGERY

JERUSALEM, April 30 (JTA) -- Vice Premier Shimon Peres underwent surgery Sunday at Tel Hashomer medical center.

The newspaper *Hadashot* reported that Peres was operated on for prostate problems.

Aides to the Labor Party leader said that the surgery was "relatively minor," and administered under a local anesthetic, but gave no other details. He is expected to be discharged midweek.

**ARAB MAYOR DECIDES TO STAY ON;
WAS ONE OF MANY WEEKEND VICTIMS**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 30 (JTA) -- The Israeli-appointed mayor of El-Birch, Hassan a-Tawil, agreed Sunday to remain in office, after resigning the day before.

Tawil, who was the target of an assassination attempt in the early days of the Palestinian uprising, quit after arsonists set his house afire in the West Bank town early Saturday morning.

He apparently has been under pressure to resign. But after a meeting with the head of the Israeli civil administration in Ramallah, Tawil withdrew his resignation and said he would "continue to serve the people."

The arson was one of several incidents of unrest during a weekend that also saw attempted sabotage in the center of Jerusalem, murder of Arabs who allegedly collaborate with the Israeli authorities and mounting tension between Jewish settlers and Palestinians in the West Bank.

A bomb exploded at a bus stop in Ramat Gan Sunday morning. No one was hurt.

An Arab resident of Nablus apparently suspected of collaboration was beaten to death Friday. There have been a number of similar incidents in recent weeks.

An Arab veterinarian, Dr. Ahmad Mashal, was seriously injured Friday morning when his car caught fire while he was trying to set a detonator to blow up the vehicle.

The incident occurred shortly after 8 a.m. in the Russian Compound, near Jerusalem police headquarters.

Passersby tried to pull the trapped driver free of the burning car until they saw a gasoline canister inside.

The car exploded and its occupant was rushed to a hospital, where he was identified as a resident of the Arab suburb of Shuafat. He was reported in critical condition.

Police detained Mashal's brother on suspicion he was associated with the aborted car-bomb attempt. He has denied connection with terrorist organizations.

Settler Arrested For Shooting

Haim Ben-Lulu, a 50-year-old Jewish resident of Kiryat Arba, was arrested Saturday night, suspected of having shot to death an Arab youth, Nader Da'ane, 16, during a stone-throwing incident Friday in Hebron.

The arrest drew angry protests from Jewish settlers, who insisted that Ben-Lulu had every right to fire his Uzi submachine gun in self-defense.

The matter was raised by Industry and Trade Minister Ariel Sharon at the weekly Cabinet meeting Sunday.

Sharon, a Likud hard-liner, wanted to know "how can the police detain the father of eight children, just because he defended his life?"

"Should we pass a law that would exempt parents of seven children and more from detention?" Police Minister Haim Bar-Lev, a Laborite, asked in reply.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin pointed out that the settlers are allowed to defend themselves, "but they should not take the law into their own hands."

He added, "The number of soldiers guarding the Jewish settlers in Hebron is larger than the number of settlers."

**UPRISING LEADERS DESIGNATE FRIDAY
AS DAY OF CLASHES WITH THE ARMY**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 30 (JTA) -- The leadership of the Palestinian uprising has called for a day of clashes with the Israeli armed forces on Friday, the last day of the Moslem holy month of Ramadan.

But in an unusual departure, the latest leaflet issued by the unified national leadership of the uprising sharply condemns Arab nations for their alleged failure to support the Palestinian struggle.

Leaflet No. 39, which was circulated Friday in the administered territories, denounces Arab regimes for maintaining "silence in view of the massacre by Israeli forces in the territories."

It also accuses them of mistreating their own and other Arab peoples. It singles out the Jordanian government for its tough suppression of popular protests against recent hikes in the prices of basic foodstuffs.

According to Ha'aretz, the leaflet is the first ever to refer to the internal affairs of Arab countries.

It also unequivocally rejects the Israeli proposal for elections in the territories and warns residents to "stop the attempts to express agreement with the Shamir plan."

Prayers And Boycotts

It contains a call for a "complete halt to (Palestinian) participation in meetings called by the (Israeli) civil administration and refusal to participate in political talks at collective meetings with commanders of the occupation."

Moslems are urged in the leaflet to respond to the appeals by the Supreme Moslem Council in East Jerusalem to attend prayers at the Temple Mount during Ramadan "in order to protect the holy sites of Islam."

They are urged to pray at the Al-Aksa mosque or at police and military checkpoints if they are stopped on the way to the mosque.

The leaflet exhorts residents of the territories to engage this Friday in "a special day of clashes with army forces as a sign of protest at the aggression against our holy places."

It contains another call to boycott fruits and vegetables from Israel and to refuse to market them. Residents of the territories who have jobs in Israel are urged to give them up and work instead in Arab plants in the territories.

IDF CONFISCATED I.D. CARDS ILLEGALLY
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 30 (JTA) -- The attorney general's office admitted to the High Court of Justice last week that Israeli soldiers have been acting illegally in confiscating identity cards from residents of the territories, in order to force them to pay taxes or erase protest slogans.

The attorney general's office told the justices that it would stop the practice.

The court took up the issue after the Association for Civil Rights in Israel filed a petition against the confiscation of the identity cards.

A representative for the attorney general said that orders against confiscating the cards had been issued in the past, but not followed.

The military advocate-general's office said it will issue orders, within two weeks, defining when it is permissible to confiscate identity cards.

**THOUSANDS GATHER TO BEGIN
COMMEMORATION OF YOM HASHOAH**
By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, April 30 (JTA) -- "Ben, do you remember me?" "Ben, where are the politicians seated?" "Ben, which way should the first candle be lighted?"

It seemed that nearly everyone who toiled to assemble Sunday's gathering of 5,000 Holocaust survivors and their children at Madison Square Garden here was ultimately depending on Benjamin Meed, the man who for the last 25 years has brought together Holocaust survivors to remember.

As the noise swelled inside the cavernous hall, Meed, who is president of the American Gathering/Federation of Jewish Holocaust Survivors and of the Warsaw Ghetto Resistance Organization, was answering every last-minute question.

As this was happening, the children's chorus from Park East Synagogue and the Yeshiva University Choir were getting ready to sing; children from the Yeshiva of Flatbush were assembling to march with candles; and the Shomrim, Jewish members of New York City's police force, were directing the coterie of political figures in attendance to their seats.

There were 32 women in black readying to light candles. Among them was Guta Trokenheim, who spent 22 months surviving in a grave with her daughter, who is now a grandmother in Israel.

There was petite Rose Goldman, whose father told her to flee the Lodz ghetto for the woods. She alone in her family survived, often by sharing her one daily potato with a mouse.

In the gathering sat Jonas Rosenberg, also of Lodz, and Auschwitz, formerly the "main mixer" of Levy's Jewish Rye. Rosenberg said he would "like to help Israel gain freedom . . . Something has to be done."

Ceremonies In Many Other Cities

The Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, which has worked with WAGRO for five years on the annual gathering, sent a letter to 70 rabbis in the greater New York area adjuring them to encourage their congregants to participate in commemorations of the Holocaust.

Meed, a retired export businessman, has worked on this project for the last eight years, increasing the numbers of attendees from 200 to 5,000 for the last few years in New York.

That is slightly less than the number that Madison Square Garden's Felt Forum accommodates. But on Sunday, the hall was almost totally filled, despite sunny skies outside and the festivities marking the bicentennial of George Washington's inauguration, which brought President Bush to New York.

Meed, who is also chairman of the Days of Remembrance Committee of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, noted that Sunday began the Days of Remembrance, which includes the official Yom Hashoah that is celebrated Tuesday in Israel.

Sunday there were services of remembrance in Boston, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Montreal and many other cities.

Tuesday, a commemoration will be held in Miami, at a Holocaust memorial whose roof is not yet in place.

Ceremonies also will be held Tuesday in Washington, in the Capitol Rotunda and on the Mall. Senators and survivors will light candles.

Memorial ceremonies will end Sunday in Skokie, Ill., at the monument erected in memory

of Holocaust victims by the Chicago suburb that is home to so many survivors.

About a million people will take part in all these ceremonies, said Meed. And they will speak of "solidarity with Israel," he said. He was the first of many Sunday who sounded that theme.

A People Who Remember

Among them was New York Mayor Edward Koch, who said he thought of this event as he stood next to Bush at the bicentennial festivities.

"I stood there and I thought, the security of Israel is so vital, and I'm not sure everyone remembers that," said Koch.

Seymour Reich, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organization and president of B'nai B'rith International, asked what if there had been an Israel during World War II? We must help her now, he said.

But the most plaintive call came in Yiddish, from a child survivor who is now the chief rabbi of Tel Aviv.

Israel Lau, who was leaving Sunday evening to visit the Jews of the Soviet Union, recalled surviving Buchenwald with his brother, Naftali Lavie, who became Israel's consul general in New York.

Lau remembers looking at line after line of women for their mother, who had not survived.

Now "I look for the memory," he said. "I speak of the memory of the Jewish people."

He added, "A people without a memory has no future."

**BIDS TO OUST ISRAEL, ADMIT PLO
CAUSING TROUBLE FOR U.N. BODIES**
By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, April 30 (JTA) -- As at least three Arab states plan seek to oust Israel from the International Telecommunications Union, a crisis is brewing over the Palestine Liberation Organization's demand for membership in the World Health Organization.

PLO chief Yasir Arafat, meeting here last week with Dr. Hiroshi Nakajima, director of the WHO, said the PLO will demand that its request for membership be placed on the agenda of the World Health Assembly, the WHO's governing body, when it convenes here May 8.

The PLO is seeking acceptance as a member state with full rights to participate in all WHO activities.

But if this is voted, as is possible considering the political makeup of the assembly, the WHO stands to lose the \$150 million the United States contributes to the U.N. health agency.

More than 50 U.S. senators have signed a letter to Secretary of State James Baker saying they would favor cutting off funds to the WHO or any other U.N. agencies that admit the PLO.

Nakajima is flying to Washington Monday to appeal for continued funding, even if the PLO is admitted.

At a news conference in Geneva over the weekend, he said Arafat warned him that if the PLO was not admitted to the WHO, it would seek to have Israel suspended from the ITU.

Meanwhile, the ITU's secretary-general, Richard Butler, confirmed to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency on Friday that Syria, Saudi Arabia and Qatar submitted a written proposal last November to exclude Israel from the organization.

It will be taken up in late May at the agency's general assembly in Nice, France.