

FRENCH PRESIDENT URGES ARAFAT TO REVISE PLO'S 1964 CHARTER

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, May 2 (JTA) -- President Francois Mitterrand asked Yasir Arafat some blunt questions Tuesday and told him to bring the Palestine Liberation Organization's 1964 charter into line with his professed desire for peace with Israel.

The charter calls for the destruction of Israel by armed struggle.

The French president and the PLO chairman met for 90 minutes at the Elysee Palace shortly after Arafat arrived for a two-day visit, at the invitation of the government.

It was Arafat's first meeting with the chief of state of a major Western nation. Thousands of French Jews took part in angry protests, and more mass demonstrations are planned.

An official statement, read by palace spokesman Hubert Vedrine, said the president asked Arafat "to clear up" the contradiction between the language of the charter and his own proclamation in Geneva last December recognizing Israel's right to exist.

Arafat later told French television that the charter, known formally as the Palestine National Covenant, is null and void. "As for the charter, I believe there's an expression in French, 'C'est caduque,' (It's null and void)" Arafat was quoted as saying.

Mitterrand also probed PLO intentions in significant detail.

According to the spokesman, he wanted to know from Arafat how the PLO interprets the Palestinians' "right of return," what territorial boundaries the PLO envisages for a Palestinian state and what compensation it would demand for Arab property inside Israel.

Keeping Visit Low Key

Arafat has rarely if ever been pinned down on such items, especially by a leading world statesman.

Mitterrand apparently was honoring a pledge he made to CRIF, the Representative Council of French Jewish Institutions, to use his meeting with Arafat to clarify the PLO's position on a number of matters crucial to Israel's security.

The Elysee Palace gave no indication what, if any, reply on these points was given by the PLO chief.

The French president, who opened the door to international recognition and legitimacy for the PLO, is apparently asking Arafat to return the favor by making additional concessions and going beyond what he said in Geneva last year.

But Mitterrand has clearly been taken aback by the strong Jewish reaction against his invitation to Arafat.

The government is going out of its way to keep the visit low key.

The traditional French pomp and pageantry was missing when Arafat landed Tuesday at Orly Airport, where he was greeted by a junior minister at the Foreign Office.

There was no honor guard at the Elysee Palace, no military band, no red carpet.

Arafat was greeted by the chief of protocol and escorted to Mitterrand's office, where the

president waited at the door.

As Arafat's plane was landing Tuesday morning, Jewish shopkeepers on the Rue du Sentier, in Paris' garment district, sounded their fire and burglar alarms to "voice our anger."

Thousands were expected at a demonstration, called by CRIF Tuesday night outside the Rue Copernic synagogue, where four people were killed and six wounded in a terrorist attack in October 1980.

Three vigils were held Monday night at the sites of other terrorist attacks on Jews in recent years.

They were attended by militants who assailed the French president, much to the embarrassment of the organized community.

Young members of Betar, the right-wing Zionist youth movement, shouted "Mitterrand treason" and "Mitterrand-Arafat. Shame, shame."

But thousands of French Arabs, mainly Algerians, are expected to attend a counter-demonstration in support of Arafat's visit. They will call on Israel to open a direct dialogue with the PLO.

Several Jewish organizations, associated with the left-wing Mapam party or with the Peace Now movement, also support Arafat's visit. They plan a public demonstration Wednesday to welcome him.

PLO, IN LATEST DIPLOMATIC PLOY, ASKS TO SIGN GENEVA CONVENTIONS

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, May 2 (JTA) -- The Palestine Liberation Organization, in another ploy to advance the concept of Palestinian statehood, says it wants to sign the Geneva Conventions.

Nabil Ramlawi, the PLO representative to the United Nations in Geneva, informed the International Red Cross here that he will make the request of the Swiss Foreign Ministry when he visits the Swiss capital of Bern this week.

The Geneva Conventions, the international code of humanitarian law, are administered by the Swiss federal government. They have been ratified by 166 nations.

The PLO request poses a dilemma for the Swiss government. Switzerland has not recognized the Palestinian state proclaimed in Algiers last year by the Palestine National Council, the so-called Palestinian parliament-in-exile.

According to Swiss law, only a state with international boundaries can be recognized as such.

But a request to sign the Geneva Conventions may not be unilaterally dismissed. Switzerland is bound by the regulations to notify all 166 signatories, which will have six months to accept or reject the request.

To qualify, the requesting party must be recognized by a substantial number of nations and belong to a regional organization.

Though non-existent, the Palestinian state has been at least partially recognized by 90 governments and is a member of the Arab League.

Permission to sign the Geneva Conventions would be a significant step forward for the PLO in its campaign to promote the idea of Palestinian statehood by acquiring the rights and trappings of a sovereign state.

HEALTH AGENCY DIRECTOR CONCERNED ABOUT THREATENED CUTOFF OF FUNDS By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, May 2 (JTA) -- The director general of the World Health Organization warned Tuesday that a threatened cutoff of U.S. funds to the agency could imperil "the health of the people of the world."

Hiroshi Nakajima made the statement at a news conference following meetings here with State Department officials.

He was reacting to a statement issued Monday by Secretary of State James Baker, who said he would urge President Bush to cut off all funds to any U.N. agency that upgrades the observer status the Palestine Liberation Organization currently enjoys in U.N. bodies.

The PLO has asked the WHO to grant its declared state of Palestine full membership at the annual World Health Assembly, which convenes next week in Geneva.

A White House source said Tuesday that Baker's recommendation "is still a recommendation" and that Bush has not yet officially adopted that position. But he added, "We always take the recommendations of the secretary of state with great seriousness."

In Jerusalem, the Israeli Foreign Ministry welcomed Baker's statement and said Tuesday it hoped other nations would follow suit.

Several American Jewish groups, including the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, also praised the secretary's statement.

Majority Vote Needed

Nakajima spoke at the Pan American Health Organization building here, after meeting at the State Department with John Bolton, assistant secretary of state-designate for international organizations, and N. Shaw Smith, the acting assistant secretary.

Nakajima said he urged PLO leader Yasir Arafat, at a meeting on April 20, not to press the PLO application for membership, which was formally filed April 6.

The 42nd World Health Assembly is due to convene in Geneva on Monday, and any vote to consider the Palestinian state for membership would occur on Monday or Tuesday, Nakajima said.

The 166 member nations of the WHO will vote on the matter, if approved by the agenda-setting committee, said WHO spokeswoman Ann Kern. A majority vote is needed to approve the membership application.

If the United States withheld its voluntary contribution, WHO's planned \$120 million in outlays for the rest of 1989 would be cut to \$20 million, Nakajima said. That is because the United States would withhold about \$75 million for the 1990 fiscal year and \$25 million in arrears.

U.S. 'ALARMED' BY NEW UNREST By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, May 2 (JTA) -- The State Department said Tuesday it was "alarmed" by the number of deaths in the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the past two weeks.

"We are alarmed by the rising tide of violence and are shocked by the increasing human toll in the West Bank and Gaza," department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said.

State Department sources said the prepared text of her statement also said that the United States was "shocked" by the violence. It was not immediately clear why that word was omitted when she read the statement to reporters.

Tutwiler said that 20 Palestinians have died and some 200 others have been wounded in confrontations with the Israel Defense Force since April 17.

ISRAEL HAS FAILED IN ITS EFFORT TO CURB UPRISING, RABIN ADMITS By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, May 2 (JTA) -- Israel's policy of deporting Palestinian activists has not succeeded in curbing the uprising in the administered territories, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin admitted this week.

He also acknowledged that the Israel Defense Force to date has not achieved its goal of restoring calm in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

His remarks, made in an address to members of Kibbutz Hadati, the religious kibbutz movement, appeared to be the first public acknowledgment by government officials that Israel has failed in its efforts to thwart the so-called intifada, which will mark its 17th month next week.

Deportation orders are currently pending for 13 Palestinians, four of whom have already lost their appeals. But no deportations have been carried out so far this year.

Rabin did not say, however, that the defense establishment had abandoned deportation as a punitive measure.

Defense Ministry officials have long complained that legal obstacles undermined the effectiveness of deportations.

Deportees have the right of appeal, first to a military appeals board and, if that fails, to Israel's High Court of Justice.

Although both bodies have rarely, if ever, failed to uphold a deportation order, the appeals process is time-consuming. The long interval between issuing a deportation order and implementing it reduces its effectiveness, defense officials say.

Town Councils Not Functioning

"When you want to deport a certain personality, you cannot, and when you can, it is no longer worthwhile," one senior official told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

The IDF has not found a way to prevent rock-throwing attacks, which account for 85 percent of the violent incidents in the territories, Rabin said.

It has also failed to attain two of its most important goals: restoring general calm and ensuring "satisfactory functioning" of the Arab municipalities, the defense minister said.

Many local town councils resigned in the early days of the Palestinian uprising and replaced themselves with outlawed "popular committees" backed by the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The Israeli civil administration appointed new mayors, but most of them soon resigned because of threats to their security.

One of the few remaining in office, Mayor Hassan a-Tawil of El-Bireh, was the victim of arson at his home last week.

Rabin's frank comments were seen as an attempt to set the stage for general elections in the territories. He implied that was the only way to achieve minimal normalcy.

SOVIET JEWISH EMIGRATION IN APRIL WAS HIGHEST SINCE OCTOBER 1979
By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, May 2 (JTA) -- Jewish emigration from the Soviet Union continued to rise in April, reaching a level not seen since October 1979.

A total of 4,557 Soviet Jews emigrated, according to the National Conference on Soviet Jewry. This represents a 7.5 percent increase over March, when 4,240 Jews left.

In Washington, the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews provided identical figures.

The total number of Jews who left the Soviet Union in the first four months of this year is 14,018. If that trend continues for the rest of the year, Soviet Jewish emigration will exceed 42,000, more than twice the total for last year.

But the 1989 total through April is not yet equal to the level reached during the first four months of 1979, the benchmark year for Soviet Jewish emigration. Between January and April 1979, 16,273 Jews emigrated.

These numbers can be contrasted with 1966, the first year the Soviet Union allowed emigration, when 52 Jews were assisted by HIAS, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society.

Of the total who emigrated in April, 516, or 11.3 percent, went to Israel, according to Israeli government figures. Most of those going to Israel went via direct flights from Bucharest, Romania, rather than through Vienna, where HIAS processes emigrants.

Only 80 of the 4,121 Jews arriving in Vienna opted to go to Israel, according to HIAS. There were also 950 non-Jews who emigrated on Israeli visas and arrived in Vienna to register with other organizations aiding emigrants.

National Conference Chairwoman Shoshana Cardin welcomed the April increase, but tempered the optimism a bit by observing that "many long-term refuseniks remain."

"Therefore, we urge the Soviet authorities to resolve these cases as quickly as possible and to fulfill their commitment to codify Soviet emigration law, so that the capriciousness of the present system can be changed," she said.

SHARANSKY RAPS UJA CAMPAIGN, URGES CAUTION ON JACKSON-VANIK
By Andrew Silow Carroll

NEW YORK, May 2 (JTA) -- The United Jewish Appeal's effort to raise money on behalf of emigrating Soviet Jews is hurting efforts to attract more of the emigres to Israel, former prisoner of Zion Natan Sharansky charged here Monday night.

"I don't agree with the policy of leaders of the UJA" who are raising money for Soviet emigrants in the United States and giving "only a little part to Israel," he said, during a "Jewish Town Hall" meeting at the Sutton Place Synagogue here. Rather than raise money for Soviet Jews to settle in the United States, American Jews should do what they can to strengthen Israel's absorption capabilities, Sharansky said.

The UJA's "Passage to Freedom" campaign, launched in March, aims to raise \$75 million for the absorption of Soviet Jews in the United States and abroad. Although the UJA maintains that Israel will receive nearly 50 percent of the funds raised, Sharansky charged that Israel's percentage will be significantly lower than that.

Speaking with reporters after his public appearance, Sharansky called justifications for the Passage to Freedom campaign "absolutely false logic" that "only strengthens differences that exist" between Israel and the United States.

"We should concentrate our efforts on improving or changing the absorption system in Israel," he said. "As to those going to America, they must rely more on themselves and loans," versus grants, from the Jewish community.

Meeting With U.S. Trade Official

The range of services local federations provide to Soviet Jews, he said, "definitely influences them not to go" to Israel.

Sharansky was also critical of those Jewish groups that have said current emigration figures justify a waiver of U.S. trade sanctions against the Soviet Union contained in the Jackson-Vanik Amendment.

Sharansky said he would consider waiving provisions of the amendment if "the Soviet Union passes, as promised, legislation that gives freedom of emigration" without limitations.

If the Soviets abide by these changes for a year, he said, "then we can speak about waiving Jackson-Vanik for 18 months."

Sharansky, who heads the Soviet Jewry Zionist Forum in Israel, said he would meet with U.S. Trade Representative Carla Hills on Tuesday to express his views on the subject.

He said the Bush administration is awaiting word from Jewish groups on whether or not to waive provisions of Jackson-Vanik, but are not in a hurry "as long as Jews are not in a hurry to press on them."

Sharansky also said he supported efforts to improve Jewish religious and cultural life in the Soviet Union, but said the recent opening of a Jewish Cultural Center in Moscow was one example of "a public relations exercise without a real change in Moscow."

He criticized some American Jewish leaders, including Rabbi Arthur Schneier of Manhattan's Park East Synagogue, who may "unconsciously" help the Soviets' public relations efforts when they publicize their Jewish cultural activities in the Soviet Union.

"It doesn't mean I'm against little things," he said. "Hasidic people for tens of years were doing little mitzvot and doing it quietly. If others did this without making big publicity, it would be a very good thing."

Schneier is currently in the Soviet Union with a rabbinic delegation and could not be reached for comment.

SWASTIKAS SURFACE IN TURIN
By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, May 2 (JTA) -- Teen-age gangs who deface walls with swastikas and slogans extolling racism are a growing problem in Turin, an industrial city in northern Italy with an important Jewish community and many immigrants from Third World countries.

The youths also vandalize property, attack passersby and fight among themselves.

But according to sociologist Franco Garelli, interviewed in the Turin newspaper La Stampa, intolerance against minorities, whoever they are, is "the most dangerous sign of the new violence."

The racist graffiti are directed against Jews and immigrants. Typical are such slogans as "Racism is the most noble of sentiments."

**ARAFAT, AUSCHWITZ CONVENT CLOUD
COMMEMORATION OF HOLOCAUST DAY**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 2 (JTA) -- Yom Hashoah Day events Monday night and Tuesday were overshadowed this year by two current events that many Israelis saw linked to the Holocaust: Yasir Arafat's official visit to France and the ongoing controversy over the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz.

Government leaders and public figures underscored their dismay over French President Francois Mitterrand hosting the Palestine Liberation Organization leader on Holocaust Day.

"A very grave mistake," said Laborite Gad Ya'acobi, the minister of communications.

"This man Arafat follows in the tradition of the Nazis," Premier Yitzhak Shamir himself noted bitterly, in a speech Monday night to the fourth international congress of the Hadassah Medical Relief Association in Jerusalem.

The convent controversy was cited prominently at the central Holocaust memorial event at Yad Vashem on Monday night, and again at other services around the country Tuesday.

"We, the survivors of the ghettos, the concentration camps and the resistance, appeal to the Church to remove the shadow of the cross from Auschwitz," said Moshe Mills, chairman of the Council of Organizations of Former Partisans.

President Chaim Herzog, Shamir and other dignitaries present looked somber as the partisan leader recalled the Vatican's silence during the Holocaust years and argued that this imposed a particularly great obligation on the papacy now to remove the convent.

In an interview Friday in The Jerusalem Post, Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger of Paris, himself a Jewish-born Holocaust survivor, maintained that Catholic-Jewish agreements for the eventual transfer of the convent to a new site beyond the concentration camp grounds would be implemented.

But he implied that local Polish Catholic resistance to the move was still an obstacle.

In Jerusalem, the B'nai B'rith local representative this week cited the UNESCO convention forbidding the alteration of historic sites, and said that Jewish groups would have recourse to the international agreement in their campaign against the convent.

Special TV Documentary

One special commemoration in Israel was a television documentary featuring a visit to Poland by the brothers Naftali Lavie and Yisrael Lau.

Lavie is a former Israeli consul general in New York, now head of United Jewish Appeal in Israel, while his brother is chief rabbi of Tel Aviv and a potential candidate for chief rabbi of Israel.

They returned together, last winter, to their home town of Pyotrkov, where their father was rabbi, and to the railway terminal from where most of their family were transported to their deaths in Treblinka.

They recounted the astounding tale of how Naftali, in his early teens, managed to save the younger Yisrael throughout their tribulations in hiding and in various concentration camps.

For many younger viewers, the film was a devastating first-hand account, by relatively young and well-known Israeli personalities, of the tragedy of the Holocaust.

**WITH CEREMONY, SONG AND KADDISH,
U.S. ALSO REMEMBERS HOLOCAUST**

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, May 2 (JTA) -- President Bush said Tuesday that the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum being built in Washington will serve to teach future generations about the danger of allowing human rights to be jeopardized anywhere in the world.

"This building will testify more powerfully than any words the importance of protecting the freedom and dignity of all people," Bush said in a message to the ninth annual National Civic Commemoration of the Days of Remembrance in the rotunda of the U.S. Capitol.

Bush's message was read by Harvey Meyerhoff, chairman of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council. Leaders of the council met with Bush at the White House before the ceremony.

The rotunda was packed with Holocaust survivors, representatives of Jewish organizations, members of Congress and of the diplomatic corps, including Israeli Ambassador Moshe Arad.

The walls of the cavernous room echoed when the El Molei Rachamim was chanted by Metropolitan Opera tenor Misha Raitzin. The Kaddish was recited by Rabbi Pinchas Teitz of Elizabeth, N.J.

Members of Congress joined Holocaust survivors in lighting six candles in memory of the 6 million Jews murdered by the Nazis.

Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) said that the ceremony is a reminder of the millions killed by the Nazis, and of those who, while they survived, "carried with them throughout their remaining lives the permanent scars of the horrors they suffered."

Look Ahead In Hope

He said that "we remember -- not to look back in hate, but to look ahead in hope and in determination that this will never happen again."

Benjamin Meed, a Holocaust survivor and chairman of the Days of Remembrance Committee, expressed the gratitude of the survivors for the haven they found in the United States.

"America has been good to us and we have been good for America," Meed said. "We have served as messengers from man's darkest hours, the early warnings against present-day evils, and miraculously we have been filled not with hatred but with life, love and memory."

The U.S. Army Band and the color guard of the Third U.S. Infantry participated in the hour-long ceremony.

The council presented its annual Eisenhower Liberation Medal posthumously to Gen. Omar Bradley. In accepting the award, his daughter, Mrs. Benjamin Henry Dorsey, said that until he died, her father could not forget what he saw when he led the armies that liberated the death camps.

As for the museum, Meyerhoff said that construction will begin within a month and that the council has raised more than \$63 million of the \$147 million needed to build and equip the museum, all of it from private sources.

At a council meeting after the ceremony, it was announced that Kitty Dukakis, wife of Massachusetts Gov. Michael Dukakis, and former Maryland Gov. Harold Hughes, will be co-chairs of the Governors' Events, a project of Campaign to Remember, the fund-raising arm of the council. Dukakis served on the council from 1980 to 1987.