

AS WALL CRUMBLES, E. BERLIN'S JEWS SET TO MEET WITH WEST BERLINERS

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Nov. 14 (JTA) -- As a direct outgrowth of the opening of the Berlin Wall last week, a group of some 30 members of the Jewish community of East Berlin will pay an historic visit Wednesday to their counterparts in West Berlin.

The group was invited by the mayor of West Berlin, Walter Momper, according to Dr. Peter Kirchner, the head of the Jewish community of East Berlin.

In a telephone conversation with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, the 54-year-old Kirchner, who has been head of East Berlin Jewry for 18 years, said the group will make a sightseeing tour of West Berlin and its Jewish institutions.

The events of the last week, including the destruction of the Berlin Wall as a barrier between the two people, have created an unprecedented opportunity for the East German Jewish community to be connected with West German Jewry, Kirchner said.

"We have had contact in the last 10 years with Jewish communities in other European communities," said Kirchner, who attributed the ties to membership in the World Jewish Congress and particularly the European Jewish Congress.

Poor Contact With West Germany

"We have good contact with Jewish communities in England and Czechoslovakia, Poland and Romania. But with the other part of Germany, it has been very bad," Kirchner said, speaking in a mixture of English and German.

There now seem to be opportunities to redress the matter, according to Kirchner, a neurologist who himself has traveled to West Berlin to participate in seminars on the psychological effects on survivors of the Holocaust.

Kirchner said he had attended a medical board meeting last week "about psychiatric problems of survivors, when the wall was opened. When I came back to the wall, there were many people."

Kirchner was able to provide exact figures for the number of Jews living in East Berlin and other Jewish communities, as well as estimates of Jews who are not officially affiliated with the Jewish community.

According to Kirchner, there are only 203 Jews registered with the Jewish community in East Berlin, with an estimated 200 more in the rest of East Germany.

However, he estimated that there are about 3,000 Jews living in East Berlin, most of them Communists who are not involved in Jewish activities. He estimated another 2,000 live in the rest of the German Democratic Republic.

A growing number of the children and grandchildren of these people have been presenting themselves to the Jewish community, expressing a desire to identify and participate as Jews, Kirchner said.

Kirchner said that while most of the Jews are Germans who returned there after the war, there are also some who came from the United States and Britain.

"Most are Communists who came back after the war to rebuild a new German state, the GDR," said Kirchner. He said there were "more than 200 people from Jewish families where the grandparents left before the war."

"In the last year, the children and grandchildren of these persons come to this community to see what it's like. We have met with them," he said, as recently as this past Saturday.

He said he felt "no fear at this time, but we think about what will be in the future."

While conceding that "there has been no great anti-Semitism in the past year," Kirchner did cite the desecration of the wall of the Jewish cemetery, which he said was reported in the newspaper, a heartening sign since such incidents were not publicly mentioned in the past.

Kirchner said the Jews were wary of the growth of the Republican Party in West Berlin, a neo-Nazi group led by a former member of the SS, and feared that the group would spread to the East with the opening of the wall.

However, he said he believes the East German government "will also be in the future an anti-fascist government, with no anti-Semitism and neo-fascism in our country, I hope."

Jews will also most likely remain where they live in East Germany, according to Kirchner.

"Only some went to West Germany, some to Israel," said Kirchner, speaking about the past year, when only two young people visited Israel.

"I think that in the future, most will remain in East Germany, in East Berlin. But they can go to visit Israel; that is new. To see the Holy Land and new countries."

ONE SOLDIER KILLED, ANOTHER WOUNDED WHEN JEEP IS AMBUSHED IN GAZA STRIP

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 14 (JTA) -- An Israel Defense Force reservist was killed Monday evening and another soldier critically wounded when their jeep was ambushed in the Gaza Strip.

IDF sources said they were the first military casualties from firearms since the intifada began in the Gaza Strip almost two years ago.

The victim, 43-year-old Yisrael Trachtenboim of Afula, was buried there Tuesday morning.

In retaliation for the attack, IDF troops demolished a building at the side of the road where the ambush was set up, near Gaza City. They also blew up a stone wall and established an Israeli outpost by flying the Israeli flag at the site.

The army placed an immediate curfew around the area, and the entire Gaza Strip was declared a closed military zone while troops searched for the perpetrators.

Despite the curfew, about 100 Palestinians, including men, women and children, danced in the streets of Gaza City and sang nationalist songs. Israeli soldiers dispersed them with tear gas and what some witnesses said was live ammunition.

The attack occurred on the eve of an announcement by Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin that leaders of the Palestinian uprising had ordered the use of "hot weapons" on Nov. 15, the first anniversary of the declaration of an independent Palestinian state.

Until now, attacks on Israeli military vehicles have been carried out with stones or gasoline bombs.

Military sources saw a coincidence between the escalation to firearms and celebration of the proclamation of independence by the Palestine National Council in Algiers last year.

However, the PNC is a forum of the Palestine Liberation Organization headed by Yasir Arafat. Hamas, an Islamic fundamentalist group which seeks an Islamic state, claimed credit for the attack, in a telephone call to Israel Radio's Arabic service.

Hamas is the chief rival of the secular PLO for leadership of the intifada in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The IDF reported only this week that 200 Hamas activists, including its top leadership, have been in custody since May.

Some observers say a contributing factor to Monday's ambush may have been the success of Islamic fundamentalists in the Jordanian parliamentary elections last week, the first in 22 years.

Military sources said the attackers had waited until the jeep passed and opened fire from the rear with Kalachnikov assault rifles. Twenty shell casings were found at the site.

The IDF said travel regulations would be tightened in the Gaza Strip. Military vehicles have been ordered to travel in pairs.

The jeep that was hit Monday was returning to its base after escorting other vehicles.

Trachtenboim, on reserve duty, was married and the father of three children, including a daughter who is a soldier in the IDF.

RABIN ORDERS IDF TO ACT 'AGGRESSIVE' ON ANNIVERSARY OF PLO DECLARATION By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, Nov. 14 (JTA) -- Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin told a Knesset panel Tuesday that the Israel Defense Force has orders to "act aggressively" against any illegal incidents that may occur on the first anniversary of the proclamation of an "independent Palestinian state" Nov. 15.

It was not clear whether that would apply to non-violent acts of defiance. Rabin said no express instructions to open fire were issued.

Rabin made his remarks before the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Security Committee. He said that leaders of the intifada had issued instructions to activists to use "hot weapons" on the anniversary, and also called for festive marching and dancing in the streets, in leaflets distributed in the West Bank Saturday.

An open instruction to use firearms would be a tacit admission that the present methods of the intifada had failed, Rabin said.

Military observers Tuesday saw possible ties between those orders and the ambush Monday in the Gaza Strip of an IDF jeep, in which one soldier was killed and another seriously injured.

Despite conjectures that the attack was tied to the PLO anniversary, it was noted that credit for the attack was made by Hamas, the Islamic fundamentalist group that is vying with the PLO for control of the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Rabin vowed that Israel would capture and punish the killers. He also said that any Arabs who had helped in the ambush would suffer, too.

The defense minister said that activists had opened fire in the past in Nablus and Gaza, but yesterday's attack was the first firearm ambush

on a main road.

Ma'ariv noted Tuesday that supporters of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the Gaza Strip have succeeded until now in enforcing PLO leader Yasir Arafat's order not to use firearms in the territories.

Contrasts With West Bank

This contrasts with the West Bank, where soldier Moshe Katz was shot and killed one year ago in Bethlehem. Also, reserve officer Yitzhak Revah was killed this year in a clash with an armed squad in the area of Mount Hebron.

Al Hamishmar quoted an IDF spokesman saying that since the beginning of the intifada, 520 Arabs, 11 Israeli civilians and seven IDF soldiers have been killed in the territories.

During this period in the West Bank, 5,697 Arabs, 712 Israeli civilians and 942 soldiers were injured; 161 homes were demolished and 70 sealed; and 37 residents were expelled.

In the Gaza Strip, 627 soldiers, 66 Israeli civilians and 2,896 Arabs were wounded; 83 homes demolished and 46 sealed; and 21 residents expelled.

After addressing the Foreign Affairs and Security Committee, Rabin told reporters that the IDF and other security elements would be deployed in force in the territories, to prevent any disturbances that might occur in connection with Wednesday's anniversary.

He said he was purposely letting the residents know of the military buildup so that they could not complain they were caught unaware.

So far, residents of the territories have ignored warnings by the Israeli authorities.

Nationalistic music blares from loudspeakers in West Bank towns and drivers have been leaning on their horns. Children hand out flowers and balloons.

The walls of houses are decorated with portraits of Arafat and his slain deputy, Abu Jihad, believed to have been the victim of an Israeli assassination squad when he was gunned down at his home in Tunis in April 1988.

Moreover, about 100 Palestinians took to the streets of Gaza City on Tuesday, dancing and singing nationalist songs, despite a curfew which the IDF clamped on the Gaza Strip following the killing of (Res.) Col. Yisrael Trachtenboim.

Violence also continued. According to Arab sources, IDF troops shot and wounded seven Palestinians Monday night and Tuesday.

(JTA correspondent Hugh Orgel in Tel Aviv contributed to this report.)

REPORT THAT NETANYA RABBINATE IS FORCING SOVIETS TO REMARRY By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 14 (JTA) -- The Chief Rabbinate of Netanyahu is forcing married Soviet immigrants to be remarried in a religious ceremony, according to Soviet immigrants living at the Ben-Yehuda Absorption Center there.

In a story Tuesday in Ma'ariv, one of the Soviet immigrants who was asked to remarry said that rabbinate officials came to interrogate him and his wife about their Jewishness and their marriages.

When he told them that they were Jewish, but had no marriage certificate, the rabbi told him he would have to marry according to Jewish law. Though the immigrant did not wish to do so, he was persuaded by his friends.

HISTADRUT VOTE STRENGTHENS PERES, ENHANCING CHANCE OF LABOR GOVERNMENT

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 14 (JTA) -- Labor's solid showing Monday in the Histadrut election coupled with Likud's less-than-expected gains have strengthened Vice Premier Shimon Peres and enhanced the prospect of a narrow-based government under his leadership to replace Labor's troubled coalition with Likud.

Emerging with 55 percent of the vote, Labor consolidating its grip on the giant trade union federation, perhaps the most important institution in Israel after the government.

With almost all the returns in, Likud had won 27 percent of the vote, well short of the one-third it had sought.

The leftist Mapam received 9 percent, and the Citizens Rights Movements and Jewish-Arab list 4 percent each.

Those parties are likely candidates for a coalition with Labor in Histadrut and possibly in a new government.

But political observers consider most important the deals Yisrael Kessar, Histadrut's Laborite secretary-general, struck with the ultra-Orthodox Shas and Degel Hatorah parties to gain their members' votes.

Kessar had himself photographed in advance of the elections with Ovadia Yosef, the former Sephardic chief rabbi of Israel, who is Shas's spiritual mentor.

It was considered a shrewd move. On the one hand, it weakened elements in Labor that have always been wary of alliances with the fickle religious parties.

At the same time, it strengthened prospects for a Labor-Orthodox partnership on the national level.

The success of such an alliance would depend on developments in the diplomatic arena, such as the proposed Israeli-Palestinian dialogue and the Israeli election plan for the West Bank and Gaza Strip breaking down over objections from Likud.

Talks In Washington

That aspect of the complex Israeli political situation will become clearer this week, after Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's diplomatic talks in Washington, including a meeting with President George Bush at the White House on Wednesday.

Israeli political observers unanimously agree that it is now impossible for Shamir to use the Histadrut election results as he had hoped, to demonstrate to the administration that the Israeli public is firmly behind his foreign policy positions.

At all his appearances during the Histadrut election campaign, Shamir insisted the vote would be more a referendum on national policy issues than trade union matters.

Shamir had hoped to show that his party made significant inroads in what has always been a bastion of Labor strength.

This he failed to accomplish, although the Likud vote was a substantial improvement over the 22 percent it garnered in the last Histadrut elections in 1985.

Adding to Shamir's headaches was the high profile discord over policy within Likud that commentators pointed to as a reason for its indifferent performance.

But Shamir, who left for the United States

late Monday night, put on a brave face.

He insisted he was "not disappointed" by the Histadrut results and that in fact, his party achieved a victory by scoring higher than it had four years ago despite the fact that Likud was "fighting on turf that is unfamiliar to us."

According to Shamir, the increase in the order of 25 percent was further evidence of a continuing national swing toward Likud.

But Kessar and other Labor leaders contend that the results mean the steady slippage toward the right in recent years has been halted.

The Histadrut vote was in fact Labor's most hopeful electoral achievement in years.

"This shows what Labor can do when the whole party works together" declared Vice Premier Shimon Peres, the Labor Party leader.

BELGIAN SOCIALISTS URGE GOVERNMENT TO OFFER 'POSITIVE GESTURE' TO PLO

By Yossi Lempkowitz

BRUSSELS, Nov. 14 (JTA) -- The Belgian Socialist Party has again called on the Belgian government to make a "positive gesture toward the PLO" by upgrading the level of the Palestine Liberation Organization's diplomatic representation in Belgium.

Since the 1970s, the PLO has had a liaison and information office in Brussels, which enjoys a kind of diplomatic status.

In a communique, the French-speaking Socialist Party mentioned the fact that countries like France, Italy and Japan have already upgraded the PLO's diplomatic representation.

The Socialist Party stressed that the prospect of a dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians "makes it urgent for Belgium to take a concrete initiative in order to encourage within the Palestinian movement the most open and moderate tendency led by Yasir Arafat."

HAIFA MUSEUM OFFERING REWARD FOR STOLEN JAPANESE MINIATURES

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 14 (JTA) -- Museum authorities in Haifa are offering a \$5,000 award for information leading to the recovery of a collection of Japanese miniature art objects, which were stolen early Monday morning from the municipality's Museum of Japanese Art on Mount Carmel.

The collection, which was uninsured, is reportedly valued at \$300,000.

The thieves did not touch paintings on the walls, but cleared out all the small objects on display in glass showcases.

Police believe the thieves were either lovers of Japanese art or people working under their instructions.

A special watch has been posted at ports and airports, and Interpol has been requested to provide international cooperation in tracking down the art thieves.

The Haifa municipality has been criticized for allegedly sloppy security provisions at the museum, where extensive construction work is in progress.

A private security guard employed by the museum was on duty in a nearby room, but reportedly failed to hear or see anything.

Many of the art miniatures stolen, dating from 1615 to 1869, were small enough to have been concealed in a clenched hand.

SHOAH SURVIVORS WATCH EAST GERMANY AND CONFRONT MEMORY OF HOLOCAUST

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Nov. 14 (JTA) -- Jewish survivors of Nazi Europe, who last week viewed scenes of Germans exulting in freedom at the Berlin Wall, are now being forced to once again confront their feelings about the Holocaust, and, most particularly, Germany.

With the Berlin Wall literally crumbling before the television viewers' eyes, the possibility of a reunification of Germany is touching a still-exposed nerve of many survivors, and in many instances, wounds that have not closed.

While in private several Jews said that "The division of Germany was the best thing that ever happened to it," others say they are pained by the favorable attention given to the Germans, in contrast with the deaf ear the world turned toward the Jews in the Holocaust.

At the annual dinner of the American Society for Yad Vashem on Sunday, several Holocaust survivors spoke in interviews of their strong desires for retribution.

Paul Shmeltzer, a survivor who lost all his family, said, "I wish they could stay wherever they were. I see them coming in as refugees and I remember they were taking us out to hide, and to kill."

"I wish we would not live to see that they be united," said his wife, Susan.

Said Isidore Haliczer, "They're coming to freedom, and there's a certain resentment, of course."

Rae Kushner spoke of her friend, another survivor, who "was crying all night" after seeing Germans suddenly singing "Deutschland, Deutschland uber alles."

"Watching With Deep Interest"

The keynote speaker at the dinner was Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.). "We watch with deep interest what is happening with the two Germans," he said. "And while we love so much the democratic process, we view this with somewhat of a chill, and concern."

The remark prompted applause.

The dinner's award recipient, David Chase, a survivor who lost everyone but one sister, said privately that he did think about "God forbid, what Germany has done in the past," but said he also was happy to see German families reunited.

Chase advocated "our optimistic feeling that Germany will never again allow another Hitler, and that human rights will always be respected."

His sister, Helen Covensky, admitted feeling "deeply envious" that the world cared about the German refugees. But, "I wish those young people well. They are not my enemies."

Several people spoke of encountering good intentions among the youth of both West and East Germany.

Aviva Kempner, producer of the film "Partisans of Vilna" and also Covensky's daughter, said, "I trust the young Germans I've met."

Israeli novelist Nava Semel, a child of survivors who has written about the Holocaust, visited both Germanys, once five years ago and again a year-and-a-half ago. She noted a marked improvement in the more recent visit.

Five years ago, she said, "you could hear from the East German side that they were not Nazis, because they were the communists, the anti-fascists."

But on Semel's second trip, it was different. "People told us of anti-Semitism in East Germany," she said.

Also on that trip, she said, "We heard something that was new to our ears, the acknowledgment by East Germans that Israel is the state of Holocaust survivors."

In Israel, the German drama has been dominating the news. In a television interview Sunday, Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir admitted it presented "a serious problem" for Israel. "We, the Jewish people, have what to say," he said, without elaborating.

In a separate TV interview, Vice Premier Shimon Peres refused to be drawn into the question of whether Israel would favor eventual German reunification.

Widespread Concern

Although many Jews do not feel that a Nazi Germany could be resurrected, there is still widespread concern over the political and economic developments occurring in Germany now.

Many fear a further strengthening of right-wing parties caused by an increased demand for jobs and housing by East German refugees.

Lucy Dawidowicz, author of "The War Against the Jews," said in a telephone interview, "history is not predictable," but "Germany is no longer Nazi Germany. There has been a 40-year history of an extraordinary experiment in democratic Germany."

She added, "If there is a threat to Jewish survival today, it doesn't come from Germany; it focuses on Israel and the Arab threat to Israel's existence."

Dr. Gerhart Riegner, who as secretary-general of the World Jewish Congress during the war tried to warn the Americans of what was happening to the Jews, praised young Germans now.

Riegner, now co-chairman of the Governing Body of the WJC, also suggested that a strong West Germany had to be maintained by the European Community, "so that even if there comes a confederation with East Germany, this cannot upset the balance."

Norbert Wollheim, an Auschwitz survivor from Berlin, said in a phone interview that he has seen "a lot of young German people who are outraged at the behavior of their parents' generation."

"The Right To Freedom"

Wollheim, who is treasurer of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, said, "Any human being should have the right to freedom," adding that "the euphoria is understandable but not justified. Walls are not foreign to us. Germans were the originators of walls around people."

From the Bronx, Rabbi Herschel Schacter, who was the first Jewish chaplain to enter Buchenwald, said, "I think that the peace and stability of the world would be better served if Germany were not reunited and built into the kind of power that it was on the eve of the Second World War."

Ben Meed, president of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, said, "What is happening now is scary to us survivors, because we are afraid that the united voices could again be the united voices of some revisionists, repeating."

(JTA correspondent David Landau in Jerusalem contributed to this report.)