

NEO-NAZI YOUTHS MARCH IN LEIPZIG AS PARLIAMENT BANS EXTREMIST PARTY

By David Kantor

BONN, Feb. 6 (JTA) -- Hundreds of neo-Nazi youths marched through Leipzig on Monday night in the most blatant public expression of anti-Jewish sentiments ever to occur in East Germany.

Waving Nazi-like symbols, they shouted "kick out the Jews" and "to hell with the Jews," damaged property and engaged in fights with onlookers infuriated by their conduct.

Only hours before, East Germany's parliament, the Volkskammer, decided unanimously to ban West Germany's extreme right-wing Republican Party from participating in the East German elections, scheduled for March 18.

Both developments illustrated some of the problems arising from East Germany's sudden transformation from a totalitarian society into one bent on democratic reforms, including freedom of speech.

A member of the Leipzig Jewish community said in a telephone interview Tuesday that most of the young toughs were Skinheads, youths who sport shaven heads, wear Nazi-like regalia and often engage in gang violence.

Only about 70 Jews live in Leipzig, and there are no more than 700 people registered as Jews in all of East Germany.

The Leipzig community member claimed the march was not aimed specifically at Jews, but against foreigners in general.

"We have had such things all along, but now with the new freedom, it's beginning to surface," he said. "It's not new, it's just coming into the open."

Ban Approved By Governing Body

Reporters who witnessed the march said the extremists smashed the windows of a cafe and defied police orders to disperse. He said they were joined by a few dozen Skinheads from West Germany.

Leipzig has been the scene of mass pro-democracy rallies every Monday evening for more than two months.

The demonstrations are closely watched by local and foreign observers to gauge the popular mood prevailing in the German Democratic Republic.

The young right-wing extremists have joined the protests in an attempt to draw attention to their cause, say local sources.

The ban on the Republican Party was formally adopted Monday by the Roundtable, a forum of Hans Modrow's Communist-led government and the newly emergent opposition groups.

The ban means that the Munich-based Republicans, the most successful of the several reputedly neo-Nazi parties in West Germany, cannot recruit voters in East Germany or take part next month in its first free elections.

Franz Schoenhuber, the former Waffen SS officer who heads the Republicans, declared Monday night that his party would fight the ban, which he claimed is illegal.

According to Schoenhuber, the Volkskammer had no right to take the action, because it has never been legitimized by the people.

VISITOR SAYS SHEVARDNAZDE PLEDGED HIS GOVERNMENT WOULD PROTECT JEWS

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Feb. 6 (JTA) -- Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze has promised his government will protect its Jewish citizens against anti-Semitic violence, according to a member of the New York City Council who says he met with the Kremlin official last week.

The Soviet government "will not tolerate pogroms" against Jews, Shevardnadze is said to have told City Councilman Noah Dear of Brooklyn during a private meeting at the Foreign Ministry in Moscow on Jan. 31.

"We will do everything in our power to protect the Jewish community," Dear quoted the foreign minister as saying.

Shevardnadze's remarks appear to be the highest-level government response so far to the series of anti-Semitic threats that have triggered panic among Jews in the Soviet Union.

Dear said Shevardnadze gave him his word that the Soviet government would apply existing legislation to protect Jews.

"There are laws on the books presently to punish people who express these type of threats, and we will use these laws," the councilman quoted him as saying.

The foreign minister's remarks were made through an interpreter, said Dear. He said the meeting had been arranged by the Foreign Ministry.

"They thought it was appropriate for me to meet with him on the issue" of anti-Semitism, said Dear.

He said he was accompanied at the meeting by a New York philanthropist, Samuel Domb, who traveled on to Warsaw and London, and therefore was unavailable for comment.

Rabbi Deluged With Phone Calls

Dear said he met Jan. 30 with Rabbi Adolph Shayevitch of Moscow's Choral Synagogue, whom he found "almost crying" over the "hundreds of phone calls" he gets every day from frightened people.

Dear said he also discussed with Shevardnadze the status of individual refuseniks, people who have been denied permission to emigrate. Among those he raised were the cases of Vladimir Raiz and Vladimir Dashevsky.

He was told Dashevsky's case would be resolved by emigration reforms that the Supreme Soviet is expected to enact soon. He said Raiz's case would be resolved, too.

Dear said Dashevsky and other Jewish activists recently received phone calls warning them to stop their Hebrew teaching and Jewish activities.

Dashevsky, who expects to visit New York on a tourist visa next month, cannot emigrate because of an in-law's refusal to sign a waiver of financial responsibility.

Raiz has not visited the United States, but his wife, Karmela, is now here on a tourist visa. She told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency last month that Soviet authorities had gone on the air in August in the city of Gomel to warn Jews to remain home to avert a threatened pogrom.

An official action against anti-Semitism was

taken last week in another city, but Jewish activists criticized the fact that such an announcement was only made by the Communist Party of Odessa, which has remained largely free of the spate of threats made recently in many other cities.

The Odessa Communist Party Committee reportedly organized a special commission against anti-Semitism, a move reported on the television news and by the Communist Party daily newspaper Pravda.

Refuseniks have told Soviet Jewry activists in the United States that the Soviet press has begun a "big campaign against anti-Semitism," publishing "a lot of articles" about "Jewish people, Jewish scientists, about some people who emigrated to the United States and now create an economic bridge between the Soviet Union and America."

Dear is a chairman of the Joint Committee to Preserve Soviet Jewish Heritage, which is made up of American Jewish investors in the Soviet Union.

CONSTRUCTION TO BEGIN SOON ON CENTER WHERE CARMELITE NUNS WILL BE RELOCATED By Ruth E. Gruber

WARSAW, Feb. 6 (JTA) -- A Polish bishop active in Catholic-Jewish dialogue assured a group of visiting American rabbis Monday that the dispute over the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz is on the way to a satisfactory resolution.

Bishop Henryk Muszynski, chairman of the Polish Episcopate's Commission for Dialogue With the Jews, said construction would begin soon on an interfaith center in which nuns from the Auschwitz convent would be relocated.

He said he hoped the new home for the nuns would be the first part of the center to be built.

Muszynski met with the 30-member United Jewish Appeal rabbinic mission touring Eastern Europe, which arrived in Warsaw on Monday morning and was to leave for Budapest on Wednesday.

He was accompanied by a leading Solidarity member of Parliament, Janusz Onyszkiewicz, who said the Solidarity-led government is looking forward to close relations with Israel.

The bishop tried to explain why it is taking so long to relocate the nuns. They were supposed to have moved off the Auschwitz grounds in February 1989, according to an agreement reached two years earlier in Geneva by a group of European cardinals and Jewish leaders.

"Activities to build (the interfaith center) will start as soon as possible in the spring," he said.

A joint committee of church and government leaders is forming in Krakow specifically to promote its construction, the bishop added.

As of now, he said, "the nuns are still in the convent."

Muszynski explained that "it's very hard to expect them to move from one provisional place to another, and in Krakow, there is no other place for them to move."

Krakow is the nearest large city to Auschwitz and the seat of the Catholic archdiocese.

"We have to do everything possible to start building the center," the bishop said.

He stressed, however, that the problem is not only building the center and moving the nuns there, but changing the attitude of the Polish people on the subject.

"There's a very strong opposition in Poland against moving the nuns," Muszynski confided. "We need time to prepare Polish public opinion."

"We have had 45 years of our history now without contact with the Jews. Dialogue is very difficult," he said. "We have to explain everything from the very beginning."

Muszynski explained that to Poles, establishing the convent at Auschwitz meant placing a religious symbol at a place of martyrdom that the Communist authorities tried to "banalize" and "atheize" in a way abhorrent to the deeply religious Poles.

Auschwitz Museum To Be Renovated

"It wasn't appropriation," he said. "But it's important to put some sign of religion there. The majority of people died there, I'm sure, with prayers."

Parliament member Onyszkiewicz said the government, too, "would like to see the convent issue solved, as was agreed in Geneva, by moving the nuns."

But he agreed the issue is complicated by the grass-roots attitude of Poles.

Onyszkiewicz underscored the desire of Poland's first non-Communist government in achieving reconciliation with the Jewish people. He acknowledged that there is much in Poland's past, particularly during World War II, that Poles could not be proud of.

At the same time, he stressed that for centuries Jews have been an integral part of Poland, with a major impact on the country's history and development that should never be forgotten.

Muszynski also told the UJA mission that plans are under way for an extensive renovation of the museum at Auschwitz, which until now "has been a museum of nationalism and Communist propaganda."

Major changes will stress more clearly the Jewish experience "in that terrible place," he said.

A special government commission working on the transformation should be ready with a comprehensive plan by this spring, according to the government newspaper Rzeczpospolita.

Some work has already begun and construction of the interfaith center for information, meetings and prayer will start "in the coming weeks," the paper said.

Changes Already Happening

It added that the commission has resolved that the future of the Auschwitz museum "will be considered in consultation with Jewish organizations."

The commission was created late last year by Culture Minister Izabella Cywinska, under the auspices of Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki. Poland's first non-Communist prime minister in over four decades.

Stanislaw Krajewski, a consultant to the American Jewish Congress who is active in Polish-Jewish affairs and Jewish-Catholic dialogue, said there are already some changes at the museum.

"Much more mention is now made of the Jewish presence at Auschwitz," he said. Also, the museum will remove references to "4 million" victims there.

"This is not a true figure," Krajewski said. "There is no way to know exactly how many people died at Auschwitz. It is probably 1.5 to 2 million -- 90 percent of whom were Jews."

**EGYPT APPREHENDS SUSPECTS
AS ISRAEL BURIES ITS DEAD**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Feb. 6 (JTA) -- Six of the nine Israelis killed in a terrorist attack on a tour bus in Egypt on Sunday were buried in cemeteries throughout Israel on Tuesday, and funeral services for the other three will be held Wednesday.

The Egyptian authorities, meanwhile, announced that two or three suspects have been arrested and will be charged with the machine gun and grenade assault that also took two Egyptian lives and wounded 19 Israelis.

One of the suspects is a former Palestinian resident of the border town of Rafah, who acquired Egyptian citizenship several years ago, reports from Cairo said.

The reports said a manhunt was under way for another suspect, described as a Palestinian with a Jordanian passport. The passport was found in the white Peugeot car used by the assailants, which the Egyptian authorities recovered Monday.

The attack is believed to have been carried out by right-wing Islamic fundamentalists with the intention of harming both Israel and Egypt.

The suspect from Rafah was reported to be a member of such a group, the Islamic Jihad.

Eighteen of the wounded bus passengers remained hospitalized Tuesday, and five or six were being treated for minor injuries.

The rest had light bullet or shrapnel wounds in their arms and legs. Three passengers were uninjured.

A number of the wounded have spouses who were killed in the attack, and the hospitals have assigned social workers to help them through their grief.

Relatives Kept Waiting

Relatives of the victims, meanwhile, complained bitterly of their treatment at Ben-Gurion Airport.

They were summoned there Monday to be told the condition of the wounded and at which hospitals they were being treated, and to receive the bodies of the dead, which were flown from Cairo in an Israel air force Hercules transport plane Monday.

But airport authorities and the Israel Defense Force kept them waiting behind plate glass windows and barbed wire.

When the transport plane landed, relatives who surged onto the tarmac were forcibly restrained by police, they said.

In Washington, B'nai B'rith International condemned the attack, and mourned the death of one of its members, Ze'ev Shifman, who had been a member of the International Council of B'nai B'rith.

In Cairo, meanwhile, Egyptian authorities assailed the local tour operator for failing to inform them of the trip.

Advance notification is required to allow the Tourism Ministry's security police to arrange for guards on the bus during the trip from the Egyptian border to Cairo.

Israeli tour operators said armed guards were provided in the past but discontinued several months ago.

One of the Egyptian dead was described as a security guard. It appears likely now that armed guards will ride all tour buses from Israel and will be posted at Egyptian hotels where Israelis stay.

**SHAMIR AND SHARON AGREE TO
HOLD LIKUD MEETING ON MONDAY**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 6 (JTA) -- The Likud Central Committee will meet next Monday for its trial of strength between Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and his hard-line opponents led by Minister of Industry and Trade Ariel Sharon.

This was agreed Tuesday between the two chief protagonists at a private meeting in the Prime Minister's office; but it was the only agreement they reached.

On the substance of the policy differences between them, the two men and their followers remained firmly entrenched and as resolute as before to face off against each other.

The new date for the meeting of the 3,000-member body follows a postponement caused by the terrorist attack in Egypt on Sunday night against a busload of Israeli tourists. The Central Committee was to have met Wednesday.

Observers here assume that a projected meeting between U.S. Secretary of State James Baker and the Foreign Ministers of Israel and Egypt would now also be postponed. It had been tentatively set for this coming Sunday in Geneva.

Political logic dictates that the crucial decision be taken by the Likud before Israeli Minister Moshe Arens resumes the negotiating process with his two counterparts.

Hard-line leader Ariel Sharon curtly dismissed a report in Ha'aretz on Tuesday that said Shamir had quietly asked Baker to defer his presentation to Israel of a final draft regarding the American position on Israeli-Palestinian talks and Palestinian elections in the territories.

Supports East Jerusalem Representatives

The reports said Shamir knew that the U.S. statement would not satisfy all of Israel's requirements. For instance, it is expected to reaffirm Washington's support for the participation of East Jerusalemites and one-time deportees in the Palestinian delegation to the projected dialogue.

For that reason, Ha'aretz wrote, Shamir wanted to defer of the American move until after the Central Committee had given him a ringing vote of confidence.

Sharon insisted that such linkage was petty and irrelevant. What was important, he said, was that the Likud Central Committee tell the Americans and the world "the position of the leading political force in Israel" on these issues.

The dissident bloc led by Sharon, Deputy Premier David Levy and Minister of Economics and Planning Yitzhak Modai was embarrassed, however, by media reports Tuesday of an unofficial poll commissioned on their behalf among Central Committee members. It showed more than 30 percent support the inclusion of deportees and East Jerusalemites among the negotiators.

Sharon said he neither knew who had commissioned the poll nor had he seen the results, and could not imagine that Likud activists would support a position that inherently compromised Israeli sovereignty over the whole of Jerusalem.

Some pundits in Jerusalem attributed the various news reports cited above to Labor party sources close to party chairman Shimon Peres.

Their reasoning is that anything tending to strengthen the Likud hard-liners would naturally increase the chances of the downfall of the unity government and the subsequent creation of a narrow-based government under Peres.

**DEMJANJUK FAMILY REQUEST
DENIED BY FEDERAL JUDGE**

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Feb. 6 (JTA) -- The family of convicted Nazi war criminal John Demjanjuk received a setback recently in its attempt to appeal his death sentence.

On Jan. 26, Judge Louis Oberdorfer of the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia denied a request by Demjanjuk's son-in-law that the Justice Department produce documents that led to the ex-Cleveland autoworker's denaturalization in 1981.

The documents were interviews conducted by attorneys from the department's Office of Special Investigations with five witnesses who implicated Demjanjuk in various war crimes.

Demjanjuk, who was extradited to Israel in 1986, was sentenced to death there on April 25, 1988. He had been convicted a week earlier of being "Ivan the Terrible," the man who operated the gas chambers at Treblinka, where an estimated 900,000 Jews died.

In April 1987, Oberdorfer had upheld a Freedom of Information Act request by Edward Nishnic, Demjanjuk's son-in-law. Oberdorfer required OSI to provide an index to all of its documents on the Demjanjuk case.

Oberdorfer rejected the latest FOIA suit by saying Nishnic "did not meet the burden of providing some evidence that relevant documents exist" that were not listed in the 1987 OSI index.

Oberdorfer rejected Nishnic's three main allegations of inconsistencies in OSI's handling of the case, all involving differing statements made by OSI attorneys.

Six-Month Delay in Appeal

In November, Yoram Sheftel, Demjanjuk's Israeli attorney, obtained a six-month delay from Israel's Supreme Court, which had planned to hear the appeal of Demjanjuk's death sentence.

The delay was granted in light of the updated FOIA case in Washington, as well as an investigation by the Justice Department's Office of Professional Responsibility into OSI's handling of the case.

The appeal, now scheduled for May, could be delayed further because of the ongoing, 5-month-old OPR investigation.

Reacting to Oberdorfer's ruling, John Demjanjuk Jr. had no comment, except to say, "We are still in the process of deciding what we are exactly going to do. Certainly there are many avenues that can be taken at this point."

Except for citing the OPR investigation, Demjanjuk refused to provide any additional avenues.

Neal Sher, director of OSI, said Oberdorfer's latest ruling "speaks for itself. It sustains our position."

One central issue in the OPR investigation is whether OSI threw out two documents requested by Demjanjuk in violation of Oberdorfer's 1987 FOIA ruling.

Rep. James Traficant Jr. (D-Ohio) last summer accused OSI of trashing them.

Traficant aides showed the Jewish Telegraphic Agency original copies of the documents, which were 1979 OSI interviews with former Nazi prison guard Otto Horn in West Berlin. One of the documents, written by OSI historian George Garand, was not made part of the record in Israel.

A well-placed Justice Department official familiar with OSI's handling of the case denied that it trashed the documents to avoid listing them in the index, saying it does not throw out original documents.

**ONTARIO COURT UPHOLDS
CONVICTION OF ZUNDEL**

By Ben Kayfetz

TORONTO, Feb. 6 (JTA) -- The Ontario Court of Appeals unanimously upheld the 1988 conviction of neo-Nazi pamphleteer Ernst Zundel on Tuesday and sharply reprimanded his lawyer.

The three-judge panel found no merit in Zundel's appeal, which claimed he was being punished for holding certain political views.

It found "irresponsible and reprehensible" the charge by defense attorney Douglas Christie that the judge who presided at Zundel's trial was personally biased against him.

Zundel, who operated a print shop in Toronto, was the center of a massive neo-Nazi propaganda ring that circulated hate material worldwide.

He was the subject of a complaint by the Bundestag, the West German parliament, for sending neo-Nazi material to the Federal Republic, where it is outlawed.

Zundel was twice convicted of violating the "false news" section of Canada's criminal code, for distributing the pamphlet "Did Six Million Really Die?" a tract that questioned the authenticity of the Holocaust.

His first conviction was reversed on a technicality. His second, in May 1988, drew a nine-month prison sentence.

Zundel was released on bail pending the verdict of the court of appeals. If he carries the appeal to Canada's Supreme Court, he will need to apply for new bail.

**GERMAN COMPANIES STILL PRODUCE
POISON GAS AT LIBYAN PLANTS**

By David Kantor

BONN, Feb. 6 (JTA) -- West German companies are still helping Libya produce poison gas despite the public scandal two years ago that supposedly put an end to it, the news weekly Der Spiegel reported.

The magazine said the ongoing collaboration has been confirmed by the BND, West Germany's intelligence agency based in Munich.

But it is at sites other than the plant at Rabta, south of Tripoli, which was exposed late in 1988 as a producer of chemical weapons using German material, equipment and technology, Der Spiegel said.

The Immhausen Chemical Co. in Bavaria was implicated and its owner and chairman, Jurgen Immhausen, was taken into custody.

But the Rabta plant nevertheless continues to function, and is still a closed military area, the report said.

A spokesman for the opposition Green Party noted that more than a year after Immhausen's arrest, no formal indictment has been issued.

The Bonn authorities have said they lack conclusive evidence of wrongdoing by German firms.

But the government has been forced to admit it had prior information about Immhausen's and other companies' heavy involvement in the production of poison gas by Libya.