

VOL. 68 - 73rd YEAR
FRIDAY, APRIL 6, 1990
NO. 67

ARAFAT, BUOYED BY CARTER MEETING, INVITES PERES TO PARIS RENDEZVOUS

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, April 5 (JTA) -- Yasir Arafat, considerably buoyed by his meetings with former President Jimmy Carter, on Thursday invited Israel's Prime Minister-designate Shimon Peres to meet with him in Paris "at the earliest" possible moment, to prepare the ground for an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement.

The Palestine Liberation Organization chairman, whom Carter praised for his efforts toward Mideast peace, said he was ready to meet at any time with Peres or any other Israeli government leader -- a proposition highly unlikely, since contacts with the PLO are banned by Israeli law.

The Labor Party leader is expected to present a new coalition government to the Knesset for a vote of confidence this Sunday.

Carter and Arafat met with French President Francois Mitterrand for 45 minutes at the Elysee Palace on Wednesday. They had a two-hour bilateral session later at the Crillon Hotel, where Arafat was staying.

As he left the hotel, Carter said, "Arafat was doing all he could to promote the peace process."

He said he met with the PLO leader in order to advance progress toward a comprehensive and lasting peace agreement.

Meets As Private Citizen

Carter arrived in Paris on Wednesday afternoon from a two-week fact-finding tour of the Middle East at the behest of President Bush.

He told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that he met with Arafat "as a private citizen and university professor."

Carter lectures at Emory University in Atlanta on national and international affairs. The university is the site of the Carter Library and Policy Center, where he has hosted conferences on the Middle East that included PLO members.

Carter has met with PLO members previously, also stressing his university, not governmental, position.

On Thursday, Carter was accompanied at the meeting by his wife Rosalynn.

An ebullient Arafat told a radio interviewer that his proposed meeting with Peres could take place at the Elysee Palace at Mitterrand's initiative.

The French president was the first Western chief of state to formally receive the PLO leader when he came to Paris last May at the French government's invitation.

President Carter, though ex-officio, is the highest-ranking American personality to meet with Arafat.

Palestinian officials here said jubilantly that Arafat's meeting with the architect of the Camp David accords gave the PLO and its leader a "new international stature and prestige."

It also came "at an hour of need," because Palestinian extremists charge that Arafat "sold out" to America without getting tangible results, the officials told the French media.

On the other hand, the relative weakness of the Jewish community's reaction to Arafat's high-

level meetings was viewed by the Palestinians as a sign the Jews are, to a degree, resigned to the situation.

About 100 Jewish demonstrators shouted anti-PLO slogans and tussled with counterdemonstrators and riot police outside the Crillon on Wednesday night. There were no injuries or arrests. The police said the demonstrations were smaller and quieter than during Arafat's visit in May.

The Israeli ambassador to France, Ovadia Soffer, charged that Arafat put on "a cosmetic charm campaign without in any way changing his terrorist principles."

Arafat indicated at a news conference here Wednesday night that the Palestinians are deeply concerned with what he called the massive immigration by Soviet Jews to Israel.

He said Palestinians did not oppose free emigration from the Soviet Union, but claimed Soviet Jews were forced to go to Israel. He said that, according to official Israeli figures, 300,000 Soviet Jews per year are expected.

"By the end of the century, in 10 years from now, there will be another 3 million Jews in Israel. There will be a second Israel with which we shall have to cope," Arafat said.

He appealed to the nations of the world to open their gates to Soviet Jewish emigration. "Let Russian Jews freely choose where they want to go and let them enjoy the right to return to the Soviet Union if they so desire," the PLO chief said.

Arafat left for Rome on Thursday, where he was scheduled to be received by Pope John Paul II at the Vatican on Friday.

PERES' MAJORITY BECOMES SHAKIER AS SHAMIR WOOS SHARIR AND SHINUI By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 5 (JTA) -- The paper-thin parliamentary majority that Labor Party leader Shimon Peres claimed to have mustered Wednesday appeared to be disintegrating Thursday.

But the prime minister-designate stood firm on his request to call the Knesset out of recess for a vote of confidence in a new Labor-led government.

Rumors abounded Thursday night that Avraham Sharir, a Likud defector said to have cast his lot with Peres, has had second thoughts. Labor also stood to lose the support of left-wing factions being courted by Likud.

Knesset Speaker Dov Shilansky of Likud postponed a decision Thursday on Peres' request to convene the Knesset this Sunday. Shilansky, who sought a legal opinion from Attorney General Yosef Harish, insisted he needed to consult as well with Yitzhak Shamir of Likud, the caretaker prime minister.

Although the Likud leader probably will raise no objections, a party spokesman said, there is no guarantee the Knesset will meet Sunday.

Most observers agree the longer the delay, the poorer are Peres' chances to put together a government before his mandate expires on Wednesday.

The Knesset has been split 60-60 between the two major parties and their respective sup-

porters. The vote of Sharir or any member pried loose from the Likud bloc would tip the balance in favor of Labor.

But Likud is making strenuous efforts to win back the five breakaway members, including Sharir, who formed a separate Knesset faction last month.

Sharir's continued silence as to his intentions is ominous for Labor, especially since he has an appointment with Shamir scheduled for Friday.

Labor has not received assurances of support from Shinui, Mapam and the Citizens Rights Movement, left-wing and centrist factions it has long taken for granted. They object to serving in a government that depends on Likud renegades for its majority.

Shinui, in the forefront of mounting clamor for electoral reform, says it would prefer a Labor-Likud interim government to enact legislation within three months for the direct election of the prime minister and at least half the Knesset's members.

Likud reportedly has agreed to the idea, in order to convince Shinui to withhold support for a Labor-led government.

Peres, who addressed the Shinui leadership Thursday, said Likud wasn't sincere about electoral reform. "All they are trying to do is hold up the peace process," he said.

LITHUANIAN JEWS CAUTIOUS ON REPUBLIC'S INDEPENDENCE

By Richard Rubin

NEW YORK, April 5 (JTA) -- Lithuanian Jews are cautiously supportive of the Soviet republic's declaration of independence, according to members of an American Jewish group that returned from there this week.

The majority of Lithuanian Jews view independence as better for them than Soviet rule, said Dr. Barnett Zumoff, who spent four days in the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius as part of an eight-person cultural mission to the Soviet Union.

"They would prefer independence," said Zumoff, a member of the Committee for the Revitalization of Yiddish and Yiddish Culture in the Soviet Union, which organized the mission. "I don't think they love the Lithuanians more. They just love the Russians less."

Some Jews have been active in the independence movement, such as Emmanuel Singer, the director of the Jewish cultural center in Vilnius and a deputy to Parliament representing Sajudis, the Lithuanian National Front.

Most Jews felt the Lithuanian community was friendly and cooperative toward them, Zumoff said, although many added that the Lithuanians were playing their "Jewish card" to seek international Jewish support for independence and to appear tolerant toward their minorities.

But some Lithuanian Jews, he added, expressed concern that "if and when independence occurs, the Lithuanians would revert to their wartime colors," when Lithuanians often collaborated with the Germans.

Of a prewar population of 350,000 Jews in what is now Lithuania, only 12,000, mostly elderly Jews remain.

"You can't make peace with this," said Joel Litewka, a member of the cultural mission and a Holocaust survivor from Poland. "Everybody remembers what the Lithuanians did. From this point of view, you have to be against independence."

"But the Jews think an independent Lithuania will be democratic, free," he said.

"None of them had good answers," Zumoff said. "Why they stayed, I don't know."

While most Lithuanian Jews support independence, they are also alarmed by the growing level of open anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union.

"In the long term, they think there is no place for them in Lithuania," Zumoff said.

The study of Yiddish language and culture has become popular among Soviet Jews, including those in Lithuania, although nowhere near as much as the study of Hebrew, Zumoff said.

"They're both burgeoning now," he said. "The Hebrew as a matter of preparing for aliyah, the Yiddish as a return to roots."

ETHIOPIAN JEWRY STILL IN DANGER AS CIVIL WAR RAGES IN PROVINCES

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, April 5 (JTA) -- The 15,000 to 20,000 Jews still left in Ethiopia are in grave danger because of the ongoing civil war raging in the northern part of the country, activists for Ethiopian Jewry warned Tuesday.

"The Jewish community has never been in worse condition," said Barbara Ribakove Gordon, executive director of the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry.

"Thousands are trapped in Gondar, where civil war has been intense," she said. Gondar, the province where most Jews live, has been cut off from outside relief workers because of the intensity of rebel activity there.

Concerned that the civil war and an impending famine may kill as many as 5 million people in the provinces of Eritrea, Tigre, Wello and Gondar, 86 members of the Congressional Caucus for Ethiopian Jewry have signed a letter to Secretary of State James Baker urging diplomatic action to prevent millions dying from starvation, and to help bring about an end to the civil war.

William Recant, executive director of the American Association for Ethiopian Jews, said that government troops and rebel forces "hopscootch through the Jewish villages and as a result, there is no firm authority structure in place."

This has allowed non-Jews to rampage through the Jewish villages, Recant said. "There have been reports of 25 murders this past year, and reports of looting and crops being stolen."

The plight of Ethiopian Jewry can only be solved when there is a cease-fire and a political settlement of the various conflicts in Ethiopia, said Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.), a co-chairman of the Congressional Caucus and the author of the letter sent to Baker on Monday.

"Only then will conditions be established that will enable Ethiopia's proud Jewish community to be reunited with their families in Israel," Solarz said.

The letter, signed by 16 senators and 70 members of the House, said that "it is clear that this situation requires immediate attention at the highest diplomatic levels to keep millions of Ethiopians from dying."

Even if the war ends, Recant said, this will be the last generation of Jews in Ethiopia. The Jewish community is no longer "a viable community" since it is made up now mostly of women, children and the elderly, he said.

Gordon noted the Jewish communities are also disappearing because "a tremendous number of Jews had to flee their villages from attacks."

**ADL CHALLENGES STATE DEPARTMENT,
CALLS REPORT 'SELECTIVE AND DISTORTED'**
By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, April 5 (JTA) -- Has the Palestine Liberation Organization lived up to its 1988 promise to renounce terrorism?

In its first status report on the PLO earlier this month, the U.S. State Department answered that question in the affirmative, concluding that the PLO has "adhered to its commitment" to give up terrorism.

But the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, in its own just-released report, claims that the State Department report was "selective and distorted" in its analysis of whether the PLO has complied with terms for continued dialogue with the United States.

It was PLO leader Yasir Arafat's pledge in Geneva to renounce terrorism, along with his recognition of Israel and acceptance of two U.N. Security Council Resolutions, which resulted in the initiation of the PLO-U.S. dialogue in December 1988.

A key difference in the view of the ADL and the State Department stems from the fact that the PLO, as an umbrella organization, represents all of its constituent groups. These groups include factions such as the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

PLO Held Accountable

The ADL report, titled "PLO Terrorism 1989-90: Violating the Terms of the U.S.-PLO Dialogue," claims that at the start of the U.S.-PLO dialogue, the U.S. government strongly stated that Arafat and the PLO would be held accountable for the behavior of all these factions.

Even after Arafat's declaration in Geneva, the DFLP and the PFLP, which reject many of Arafat's political stands, continued terrorist activity, and have acknowledged responsibility for attempts to infiltrate Israel and carry out attacks against civilian targets.

But when the State Department came out with its report, it did not hold the PLO directly responsible for these acts, noting that there was "no evidence that these actions were authorized or approved by the PLO Executive Committee or Arafat personally."

The ADL points to about 12 attacks involving hand grenades and Molotov cocktails, which Israeli authorities traced to Arafat's Fatah branch of the PLO. These attacks went unmentioned in the State Department report.

"There have been some allegations that the PLO has been responsible for certain acts, but we have not been able to corroborate this," a State Department official said.

The official also said that "an act of terrorism on the part of the PLO and by the leadership of the PLO would result in a re-evaluation of the dialogue and possible termination of the dialogue."

This was stronger language than that used in the report or by Secretary of State James Baker in a letter to Rep. Mel Levine (D-Calif.) In the letter, and in the report itself, there was no mention of any danger of a termination of the dialogue if the PLO is linked to terrorism.

Secretary of State James Baker affirmed only in the letter to Levine that any involvement by PLO groups in terrorist activity would "raise questions" about the 1988 PLO commitment.

**N.Y. MAYOR DINKINS DEFENDS
JACKSON, MANDELA AND TUTU**
By Elena Neuman

NEW YORK, April 5 (JTA) -- New York Mayor David Dinkins defended Jesse Jackson, Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu, while at the same time criticizing Israel for its relations with South Africa, in a speech he delivered on black-Jewish relations Tuesday night.

"There has never been an absolute consensus between our two communities," Dinkins said. "What we have had is a remarkable degree of agreement on the ends we seek, if not always the means by which we would arrive at those ends."

The mayor was addressing a select crowd of prominent Jewish and black community leaders, who were assembled at Hebrew Union College to view a new photo documentary exhibit, "Blacks and Jews: the American Experience, 1654-1989."

While Dinkins made reference to the "historic alliance" between black and Jewish Americans -- including the 1909 formation of the NAACP, the civil rights cases of the 1940s and '50s, the '60s marches and the deaths of Schwerner, Chaney and Goodman -- he also addressed some of the black positions and issues that have been sore points in the black-Jewish relationship.

The issue of Jesse Jackson's attitudes and various public statements about Jews has been of particular concern to Jews nationwide.

While Dinkins admitted that Jewish apprehension over Jackson's "Hymietown" remarks "is understandable," he said that the black politician had "humbled himself" at the 1984 Democratic National Convention.

"It is not productive to continue to raise issues for which Rev. Jackson has apologized," the mayor said.

Upset Jewish Community

Dinkins also defended South African black leaders Nelson Mandela and Bishop Desmond Tutu, both of whom recently upset the American Jewish community by equating the struggles of the Palestinians and black South Africans.

Mandela, shortly after his release from prison, made a public appearance with Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat.

"It is legitimate for Jews to be concerned about those comments, and to seek a dialogue on this and other issues," Dinkins said. "But displeasure with the comments can be expressed in a way that will not lead to any interpretation that the Jewish community is displeased with the anti-apartheid struggle."

Dinkins noted African-American dismay over Israel's past relations with South Africa, saying Israel cut its military ties to the apartheid regime only after objections were raised in the United States.

"Israel can be a true 'light unto the nations' and lead the fight against apartheid by imposing full sanctions and divestment," Dinkins said.

At this point in the program, a note was passed to Paul Steinberg, HUC vice president and dean of faculty, from HUC President Dr. Alfred Gottschalk. It was announced afterward that the college would be awarding Mandela an honorary degree and would like Dinkins to sponsor it.

According to Dinkins aide Herb Block, the honoring of Mandela was unexpected. "I don't know for sure whether they decided on the spur of the moment or not, but it was definitely a surprise."

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
EXIT PERMITS ARE EASY TO COME BY,
BUT LEAVING USSR STILL A CHALLENGE**

By Mark Joffe

MOSCOW (JTA) -- This year, Israeli consular officials here expect to issue more than 300,000 entry visas to Soviet Jews wishing to make aliyah.

But only about half of them will make it to the Promised Land before the year's end.

That's still an enormous number, compared to past years, when the vast majority of Jews leaving the Soviet Union chose destinations other than Israel as their new homes. But it is significantly less than the total potential aliyah.

The reason for the gap essentially boils down to this new reality: While it is easier than ever before to obtain permission to emigrate, it is harder than ever to leave the country.

It is difficult, if not impossible, to get a visa to come to the United States as a refugee any time in the near future, unless one has immediate family already living in America.

Officials at the American Embassy here estimate that they have distributed half-a-million applications to Soviet citizens since Oct. 1, 200,000 of which have been returned to the embassy and forwarded to Washington for processing.

But since the current quota on refugees from the Soviet Union stands at 50,000 per year, most of these applicants face a long wait.

They could come to the United States as "parolees." But most Soviet Jews reject this option, since it means foregoing U.S. financial assistance and the right to become an American citizen.

(There are bills presently before Congress to enable parolees the opportunity to become citizens, and there is no opposition to the various measures.)

Expect Long Delays

Most Jews eager to leave the Soviet Union understandably have chosen to make aliyah. But while they will not encounter any Israeli quota, they can expect long delays in leaving the country.

The first step in the process is to apply for an official invitation from Israel.

To do that, one must go to the old Israeli Embassy building, where Israeli consular officials, operating under the auspices of the Dutch Embassy, which handles Israeli interests, assist with the paperwork.

A stunning 2,500 to 3,000 Soviet Jews are visiting the Israeli mission each day to apply for invitations or to pick up entry visas once they have received permission to emigrate.

Miraculously, they are being assisted the same day by a consular staff that numbers merely six. But how long the consular staff will be able to handle that workload is in doubt.

"We are on the brink of physical endurance," says Meron Gordon, deputy head of the Israeli delegation.

The Soviet authorities, he says, have refused to allow Israel to increase either the size of the staff or the size of its cramped facilities.

Dependents of staff members are not allowed in the country, meaning that consular officials regularly return home for family visits.

Currently, it takes four to six weeks from the time of application to receive an invitation from Israel. Then, Soviet Jews must apply at

OVIR, the Soviet emigration agency, for permission to leave the country.

That process may take as little as a month or more than six months, depending on the workload of the agency's local offices in various cities.

At the moment, Gordon says, the Soviet authorities are "giving almost every person who asks a permit to get out."

In fact, some 99 percent of Jews currently applying to leave the Soviet Union are receiving permission, according to Martin Wenick, executive director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry.

The problem is that a number of bureaucratic technicalities cause substantial delays in the departure of those who have received permission to emigrate.

Among the latest popular hurdles is clearing the customs inspection that is required before potential emigrants can bring their belongings out of the country.

Possessions Important Commodities

Since emigrants are not permitted to take money out of the Soviet Union, their possessions become important commodities in the first months of their new lives in Israel.

But there is now often a six-month delay in receiving an appointment from a customs inspector, according to Wenick of the National Conference.

However, the "most dramatic problem" for Jews leaving the Soviet Union is finding transportation out of the country, says Vladimir Dashevsky, a Moscow Jewish activist, who says he is "on the threshold" of his own aliyah.

Soviet Jews now seeking tickets for commercial flights out of the country can expect to wait until after the start of 1991.

"It is almost impossible to get an airplane ticket," says Gordon of the Israeli consular staff.

El Al Israel Airlines has made arrangements for special charter flights from various Eastern European "transit points," but the Soviet Union will still not permit El Al to land on its soil.

Israeli officials say that nearly 1,000 Soviet Jews a day could be flown to Israel if El Al were allowed to make direct flights from Moscow to Tel Aviv.

Of course, problems like transportation and customs inspections are mere fantasies for the 200 or so Jewish families who have been refused permission to emigrate, some for many years.

And the "list is now growing, rather than shrinking," according to Wenick.

ISRAEL RAIDS TERROR BASES IN LEBANON

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 5 (JTA) -- Israeli aircraft raided terrorist installations in southern Lebanon for the ninth time this year Wednesday and returned safely to their bases, a military spokesman announced.

The pilots reported direct hits on targets south of Sidon, according to the spokesman.

The Israeli announcement said air force "planes" carried out the attack.

But reports from Beirut said three Israeli helicopter gunships strafed an installation at the Rashidieh refugee camp south of Sidon, belonging to the Lebanese Communist Party.

Beirut said seven guerrillas were killed. One report said the fatalities were "children."