

ARAFAT SAID TO HAVE URGED AL FATAH TO 'OPEN FIRE' ON JEWISH IMMIGRANTS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 29 (JTA) -- A report that Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat has ordered his men to "open fire" on Jews immigrating to Israel has aroused anger here and renewed calls for direct flights of Jews from the Soviet Union.

Ma'ariv on Sunday cited a report in the Lebanese weekly Al-Muharrar that quoted instructions Arafat reportedly gave at a meeting in Baghdad with senior officers of Al Fatah, the largest and most moderate of the PLO's military factions. He threatened to jail anyone who failed to obey.

According to Al-Muharrar, Arafat declared, "I want to say clearly: Open fire on the new Jewish immigrants."

"I want you to shoot, on the ground or in the air, at every immigrant who thinks our land is a playground and that immigration to it is a holiday or a picnic," the PLO leader was reported to have said.

"Today I give you my instructions to use violence against the immigrants. I will jail whoever refuses to do this," Arafat threatened according to the report.

His alleged declaration of war on Jews immigrating to Israel made no distinction as to where they come from. By far the largest number of immigrants arriving in recent months have come from the Soviet Union, most of them flying by way of Bucharest or Budapest.

In New York, the Greater New York Coalition for Soviet Jewry responded to the news of Arafat's threat by renewing its call for direct flights from Moscow to Tel Aviv.

Its chairman, Rabbi Haskel Lookstein, said direct flights "represent the most effective way to deal with Arafat's latest threat to resume terrorist activities."

Direct flights seemed imminent last fall, when Israel's national airline, El Al, and the Soviet airline Aeroflot signed an agreement for joint service.

But the Soviet authorities still have failed to ratify it, in face of Arab complaints that Soviet Jews will be settled in the West Bank to displace the Palestinian population.

HAVEL OFFERS PRAGUE AS TRANSIT POINT IF SOVIETS DON'T SETTLE IN TERRITORIES

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 29 (JTA) -- President Vaclav Havel of Czechoslovakia has offered to have his country serve as a transit point for Soviet Jews immigrating to Israel.

But he insisted he would have to have "guarantees" that the newcomers would not be settled in the administered territories.

Havel referred to that and other subjects as he ended a three-day official visit here Friday, the first to Israel by an Eastern European head of state.

While he proposed no specific mediating role for Czechoslovakia in the Middle East conflict, he indicated in comments to the media that his

country would like to serve the cause of peace in an evenhanded manner.

He said the new Czechoslovakia, founded on the quest for peace and human rights, was inevitably disturbed when those goals were not attained in other regions of the world.

Havel recommended that Israel accept U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's formula for an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

It has been rejected by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's Likud government. But Havel said his discussions with Israeli leaders and Palestinians led him to believe that Baker's plan could serve as a basis for peace.

He said his "hair stood on end" when he heard Iraqi President Saddam Hussein recently threaten to destroy "half of Israel" with chemical weapons.

Havel met with Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat when Arafat visited Prague recently and apparently plans to see him again.

He told reporters his trip to Israel taught him a great deal and he would be much better informed next time he meets Arafat.

Herzog Accepts Invitation

Havel disclosed that President Chaim Herzog has accepted his invitation to visit Czechoslovakia.

He signed a number of bilateral accords, including a student exchange program between the Hebrew University in Jerusalem and Charles University in Prague.

In a wide-ranging television interview here, Havel dismissed manifestations of anti-Semitism in his country as marginal.

He said he has never been able to understand anti-Semitism and maintained that it was never as strong in Czechoslovakia as elsewhere in central Europe.

He said the most moving and memorable event of his visit was his tour of the Yad Vashem Holocaust memorial in Jerusalem.

Havel reiterated his support for German unification, despite his country's bitter experience as a victim of German aggression. He said the German people had the right to achieve unification and, in fact, the process was inexorable.

But there must be ironclad guarantees that Germany will remain a democracy, Havel said.

"There is no need to fear a country of 100 million people if it is a democracy, whereas a dictatorship of 1 million people is dangerous," he said.

BUSH MAY NOT WAIVE TRADE SANCTIONS DURING SUMMIT MEETING WITH GORBACHEV

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, April 29 (JTA) -- It appears increasingly doubtful that President Bush will waive trade sanctions against the Soviet Union during his upcoming summit meeting here with Mikhail Gorbachev, though the two leaders may sign a trade agreement.

The hitch is the Soviet Union's delay in enacting a major emigration reform law pending in the Supreme Soviet.

The Bush administration on Friday reiterated

that the Soviets must enact and implement the legislation before the United States lifts restrictions on U.S.-Soviet trade spelled out in the 1975 Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the U.S. Trade Act.

"There has to be codification and implementation of an emigration law that meets international standards," said Richard Boucher, the State Department's deputy spokesman.

Jackson-Vanik denies most-favored-nation trade benefits to the Soviet Union, among them lower U.S. tariffs on Soviet exports to the United States. The 1975 amendment conditions the granting of MFN status to Communist countries on their having liberal emigration policies that satisfy the United States.

To meet Jackson-Vanik standards, the Soviets last year drafted an emigration reform bill that would standardize procedures for considering applications of those seeking to leave the country.

Trade Pact Near Completion

The sweeping emigration law, which would allow Soviet Jews and others to immigrate to the country of their choice, has passed its first reading in the Supreme Soviet, the parliamentary body of the Soviet legislature.

But it has yet to be read a second time in the Supreme Soviet, which would be a vote of final approval.

Mark Levin, associate executive director of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, said U.S. officials have told him the Soviet congress plans to act on the bill around May 22.

That leaves little time if the Soviets want to gain a presidential waiver of Jackson-Vanik during the Bush-Gorbachev summit meeting, which runs from May 30 to June 3.

Bush suggested the spring summit as a target date for relaxing U.S. trade sanctions when he and Gorbachev met off the coast of Malta in November.

A State Department expert on the Soviet Union said Bush is still hoping to sign the trade agreement at the summit, but that the president has not expressed a similar deadline for waiving Jackson-Vanik sanctions.

There is "a strong implication that he would want to waive it about that time, but again he has not explicitly said it," said the expert, who spoke on condition of anonymity.

But even if Bush waives Jackson-Vanik, the trade accord will not take effect at the summit, because it requires congressional ratification.

U.S. and Soviet negotiators holding talks in Paris were reported late last week to be close to completing a trade agreement. Deputy U.S. Trade Representative Julius Katz was quoted as predicting the pact would be signed at the summit.

Waiver Could Be Reversed

A State Department official said Friday that three or four trade issues are yet to be resolved, but added, "They are not deal busters. They are fairly manageable points." He refused to say what the issues were.

After completion of a trade agreement and approval of the Soviet emigration law, "the president, as he has said he would, would waive the Jackson-Vanik requirements," deputy spokesman Boucher said. Bush has said he would invoke his authority to issue a one-year waiver of the amendment's sanctions.

After the first year, Congress would review the waiver annually and could vote at any time to revoke it.

David Harris, Washington representative of the American Jewish Committee, said the waiver is "not an irreversible process. In theory, it permits reconsideration at a later date if Soviet performance changes."

The National Conference on Soviet Jewry, an umbrella group of 47 Jewish organizations, said last June it would support a presidential waiver if Bush received "appropriate assurances" from Soviet authorities in four key areas, including Soviet easing of restrictions on those with alleged access to "state secrets" and "poor relatives" blocked from emigrating by family members needing their financial support.

The Soviet draft law on emigration reform addresses both restrictions.

Harris of AJCommittee and Levin of the National Conference noted that the umbrella group's position does not require "faithful implementation" or even passage of a sweeping emigration reform law. It merely requires the president to be satisfied that such changes will be made.

Conceivably, the National Conference could react positively to the waiver even if there were only a one-week implementation period of the reform law before the summit, with Bush saying he had received the appropriate assurances.

By contrast, the other major Soviet Jewry umbrella group, the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, opposes a waiver until the emigration reforms are shown to be working.

"The bottom line for us has been performance," said Levin of the National Conference. He said the organization's executive board will discuss its stance at a meeting on May 22 and 23.

PROTEST LEADER 'DANNY THE RED' SAYS GERMANY SHOULD ADMIT SOVIET JEWS By David Kantor

BONN, April 29 (JTA) -- Daniel Cohn-Bendit, veteran social provocateur and firebrand in European politics, is now calling on the West German government to begin allowing Soviet Jews to immigrate here.

Cohn-Bendit, known as "Danny the Red" since his prominent left-wing involvement in French university demonstrations in 1968, is now a member of the Frankfurt City Council. In that capacity, he has called on Bonn to grant Soviet Jews the same benefits accorded ethnic Germans who come here from the Soviet Union and elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

Cohn-Bendit, a French-born German Jew, was expelled from France in 1968 for leading a student revolt. That and his outstanding red hair earned him the "Danny the Red" sobriquet.

Since that time, he has changed political colors and is now a member of the ecologically oriented Green Party.

While describing himself as fiercely anti-Zionist, he is deeply concerned that Soviet Jews face mounting anti-Semitism in their homeland, and insists that Bonn offer them a refuge.

Germany now has the opportunity to prove that its much-touted "special responsibility" toward the Jews is not just lip service, he said.

In recent years, about 5,000 Soviet Jews have settled in West Germany, after receiving official recognition as "ethnic Germans." Some individuals obtained it with forged documents.

Persons recognized as "ethnic Germans" qualify for generous absorption benefits, including cheap housing, automatic citizenship and free language courses.

**SHAMIR, GIVEN TURN TO FORM COALITION,
SAYS HE WOULD NOT ACCEPT BAKER PLAN**
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 29 (JTA) -- Acting Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir appears to have put the peace process he launched a year ago on hold.

He made clear he is not prepared to hold talks with Palestinians at this time and that any new Likud-led government he succeeds in forming would reject U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's peace formula.

Shamir on Friday received a 21-day mandate from President Chaim Herzog to try to form a governing coalition. It was a task Labor Party leader Shimon Peres acknowledged failing when he relinquished his mandate to Herzog last Thursday, after 36 days of fruitless efforts.

Shamir expressed his hard-line views on the peace process in a prerecorded Independence Day radio interview to be broadcast Monday. Excerpts from the interview were reported Sunday.

The prime minister said his new government would not respond positively to Baker's suggestion for an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, to be held in Cairo at the invitation of Egypt.

The purpose of such a meeting would be to set the ground rules for the Palestinian elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the highly touted core of the peace plan Shamir announced with fanfare last spring.

Shamir maintains his plan did not provide for any dialogue and that negotiations were to take place after elections, not beforehand. He acknowledged there probably would need to be "some sort of meeting, sometime" with Palestinians, but it need not be in Cairo and it need not be now.

Shamir's earlier rejection of Baker's plan led to the toppling of his Likud-Labor unity coalition government on March 15.

Rejects Rabin Plan For Unity Coalition

But now that Labor has missed its chance to replace the fallen regime, Shamir is writing off a new unity government.

He slammed the door over the weekend on a proposal by the Labor Party's No. 2 official, Yitzhak Rabin, to establish a new Labor-Likud alliance of six months' duration for the sole purpose of enacting electoral reforms, to be followed by new elections.

The former defense minister, who hopes to replace Peres as Labor Party leader, believes the laws should be amended to allow for the direct election of the prime minister, freeing him from complicated, demeaning and self-defeating coalition politics.

Shamir and his Likud bloc say they are not interested in a new alliance with Labor. Their intention is to form a narrow-based government with the support of a majority of the Knesset's 120 members.

That could be accomplished if the ultra-Orthodox Agudat Yisrael party breaks its once firm coalition agreement with Labor, giving Likud a total of 66 votes it can count upon.

There were strong signs last week that Agudah would split with Labor once Peres turned in his mandate, but its adherence to Likud remained problematic.

Without Agudah, Likud claims to have 61 Knesset votes, the minimum it needs to set up a government.

The deciding vote belongs to Likud renegade

Avraham Sharir, who sold himself to Labor for a "safe seat," only to desert back to Likud once Labor's failure to form a government became apparent.

Likud is also working hard on a potential Labor defector, Efraim Gur, a 17-year immigrant from Soviet Georgia who lives in Ashdod, an immigrant town with strong right-wing leanings.

Gur has indicated he would feel more at home with Likud than Labor, especially since Likud is said to have offered him a ministerial or deputy ministerial office.

The law gives Shamir 21 days to form a government and a 21-day extension if he needs it. The arithmetic at the moment seems to favor his chances.

His majority would depend on getting all five votes of the National Religious Party. But one of its Knesset members, Yigal Bibi, declared Sunday that the party's consistent position has been to back a broad unity government or to call new elections.

**JNF SAYS IT DID NOT PROVIDE MONEY
TO LEASE CHRISTIAN QUARTER BUILDING**
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 29 (JTA) -- The Jewish National Fund of Israel has made clear it played no role in the Israeli government's clandestine financing of the move by Jewish religious activists into the Old City's Christian Quarter on April 11.

JNF "is not involved in any way, shape or form. Not a single penny of JNF money is involved," a spokesman for the land acquisition and reclamation agency declared.

The spokesman referred to reports naming a JNF subsidiary, the Himnutah Co., as an instrument used by the government to secretly funnel funds to a Panamanian dummy corporation, SBS.

SBS was set up to acquire the lease to the building, known as St. John's Hospice, into which 150 Orthodox Jews moved during the holy days preceding Easter. The move and especially its timing brought a flood of criticism on Israel from abroad and sharply polarized opinion at home.

Himnutah admitted that it acted "as a trustee on behalf of the government," meaning that it held the funds in question, ostensibly without knowing to what use they would be put.

"Himnutah was not involved in any way with the entrance of the tenants into the building, nor with the timing of such entrance," the JNF spokesman said.

IDF CLASSIFIED INFO MONITORED IN HEBRON
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 29 (JTA) -- Internal communications broadcast by the Israel Defense Force, including classified material, can be picked up by civilians in the Hebron area who tune in to Israel Television's Channel 2.

A reporter for a Jerusalem weekly said he taped highly classified messages last week while sitting in the home of an Arab.

Among them was a report by a senior IDF officer on the midair collision of two air force helicopters, which killed seven crew members, on the night of April 22. The internal broadcast occurred three hours before the military censor cleared the information for public broadcast.

Another classified communication taped by the reporter had to do with the number of prisoners currently in detention centers.

SURVIVORS OF 1939 ST. LOUIS VOYAGE SAY JEWS FLEEING USSR DESERVE REFUGE

By Elena Neuman

NEW YORK, April 29 (JTA) -- Fifty-one years after they were denied entry into the United States and turned back to Europe, survivors of the St. Louis gathered Sunday to offer their moral support to Soviet Jews now seeking refuge.

Susan Schleger, Dr. Hans Fisher and Liane Reif-Lehrer held a small rally at the Isaiah Wall opposite the United Nations to warn that American failure to support Israel could leave Soviet Jews to a similar fate they themselves suffered in 1939.

"We were not wanted. We were abandoned by the world," said Schleger, a 68-year-old survivor now residing in New York. "We must now try our utmost to get the Soviet Jews out. It's not fair to ask the Russians to let the Jews out and then not to do anything about it."

The gray and threatening sky did not diminish the symbolic impact of the setting. The survivors stood beneath a prayer shawl rescued from the Holocaust with the prophet Isaiah's famous words etched into the wall in the background: "Nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war anymore."

On what is now called "the Voyage of the Damned," the St. Louis embarked from Hamburg in May 1939, with a human cargo of 1,128 Jews fleeing Nazi Germany. Bound originally for Cuba, the ill-fated ship was denied entry into any port on this side of the Atlantic, including a U.S. port in Miami.

With no place to land, the ship was forced back to Europe, where the passengers were received according to an international agreement signed by England, Holland, Belgium and France.

After most of Europe, with the exception of England, was overrun by the Nazis, few of those refugees survived the war years.

'Need To Be Given A Haven'

The 75 who did survive met last year in Miami for their 50th reunion. Only then did some of them decide to become vocal on behalf of the Soviet Jews now fleeing rising popular anti-Semitism in their homeland.

"I spent a lot of my life trying to forget about all this," said Reif-Lehrer, a scientist from Boston, who was a small child at the time of the voyage. She is now writing a book about her and other St. Louis survivors' stories.

"It's hard to compare" the flight from Nazi Germany and the Soviet exodus now taking place, she said. "But I feel that where people are being hassled or persecuted, Jews or otherwise, they need to be given a haven."

"As open and violent anti-Semitism begins to reappear in parts of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe," said Fisher, a professor at Rutgers University, "Israel becomes the only haven for hundreds of thousands of Jews."

ISRAEL'S JEWISH POPULATION INCREASING

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, April 29 (JTA) -- Boosted by an upsurge in immigration, Israel's Jewish population grew by 2.2 percent in the past year, compared to 1.2 percent the year before, according to figures released by the Central Bureau of Statistics on the eve of Independence Day.

As Israel prepares to observe its 42nd anniversary of independence on Monday, the country's Jewish population is put at 3,755,000, or 81.6 percent of the total population of 4.6 million.

About 49,000 immigrants arrived in Israel during the last 12 months, compared to 14,500 in the previous 12 months.

AS ISRAEL REMEMBERS ITS WAR DEAD, JEWISH TEEN-AGERS CELEBRATE REBIRTH

By Cathrine Gerson

JERUSALEM, April 29 (JTA) -- The same 3,000 Jewish teen-agers who re-enacted a death march from Auschwitz to Birkenau a week ago gave new life to an Israeli hilltop on Sunday, planting the March of the Living Forest near Jerusalem.

The teen-agers, from 36 nations around the globe, spread over a hill near Moshav Neveh Ilan, their costumes painting the area blue and white.

Clasping a sapling with one hand and a friend with the other, they stood in silence for two minutes while sirens wailed all over the country, calling a halt to all activity at 11 a.m., in honor of Israel's fallen soldiers.

The significance of the ceremony was not lost on the youth fresh from the gray Jewish past of Poland to the vivid present of Israel.

The vast difference between the two worlds was further underlined for them by the chairman of the Jewish National Fund of Israel, Moshe Rivlin. He told the teen-agers about the changes since Israel's independence in 1948.

He mentioned, for one thing, that 42 years ago, Jerusalem was cut off from the rest of the country. There was only a single road to Jerusalem, under fire by the enemy, who made it "a road full of death.

"But now," Rivlin said, "there are 11 roads leading to Jerusalem, the road of life."

Talking to the youths during the ceremony, it was clear that their experiences of the last 10 days left a strong impression.

Important That Jews 'Stick Together'

Although they studied the Holocaust before leaving for Poland, their journey has given them much more than would have been possible from only reading books.

Just before planting his sapling, Scott Schneider, 18, from Harrisburg, Pa., told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that he joined the "March of the Living" to "experience the death of our people back in Poland and experience the life of the people in Israel."

He said he wanted to learn more about the Holocaust, to understand why it happened and what had happened.

Although this visit to Israel is not his first, he said he experienced something different this time.

"I was really excited that when I got off the plane here in Israel, I kissed the ground," Schneider said. "The feeling of life here is just amazing."

Another participant, 16-year-old Leora Salzhauer from Orangeburg, N.Y., said her experiences over the last two weeks have made her decide she wants to live in Israel.

"I joined the 'March of the Living' because I thought it would be a wonderful experience," she said. "I wanted to learn more about the Jewish fate during the Holocaust, to know how important it is that we Jews stick together."