

SOVIETS DELAY EMIGRATION LAW AGAIN, BUT BUSH SAYS THAT 'MAY NOT BE BAD'

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, June 5 (JTA) -- The Bush administration did not seem to be ruffled by the Soviet legislature's decision this week to postpone action on a promised emigration reform law until September.

White House press secretary Marlin Fitzwater said President Bush told congressional leaders Tuesday the delay "may not be bad," because it would give Moscow "a little time to work on emigration issues" and to resolve the Lithuanian crisis before the new U.S.-Soviet trade agreement is presented to Congress for ratification.

When Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev signed the trade pact last Friday, the U.S. president stressed he would not send the agreement to Congress before the Supreme Soviet adopted promised legislation codifying the Kremlin's more liberal emigration policies of the last few years.

Bush also said adoption of the Soviet law is a condition for receiving most-favored-nation trade benefits barred under the 1975 Jackson-Vanik Amendment to the U.S. Trade Act.

Fitzwater reiterated Thursday that passage of the new law is the "one condition" that must be met before Bush sends the trade agreement to Congress.

But he said the president would be reluctant to send the pact to Congress as long as the Kremlin continues its economic sanctions against Lithuania. The Senate has said it will not ratify the agreement as long as Lithuania is being pressured to abandon its drive for independence.

Fitzwater revealed Tuesday that Bush agreed to the trade agreement only a half-hour before last Friday's ceremony at the White House at which several bilateral agreements were signed.

Soviet Jewry Group Dismayed

The Supreme Soviet had been expected to approve the emigration law before the summit, but just before the Washington meetings began, it was taken off the Soviet parliament's calendar.

At the first Bush-Gorbachev summit in Malta last December, Bush said he would sign a trade agreement at their next meeting if the new emigration rules became law.

But once the summit began last week, Gorbachev and his aides continually expressed irritation when asked about the new law. At the same time, Gorbachev made several public statements in which he appeared to be almost pleading for the trade agreement.

Fitzwater said Tuesday that Bush went along because he wanted to help Gorbachev's efforts to bring economic and political reform to the USSR.

The National Conference on Soviet Jewry expressed dismay at the Soviet legislature's decision to delay action on the bill, which was drafted as long ago as last year.

"We hope this is a temporary move, and we urge them to reconsider," said Mark Levin, the conference's associate executive director.

The decision is "even more disappointing in light of President Bush's decision to move forward on a trade agreement," said Levin. "This latest

development reinforces our view that in assessing Soviet emigration practice, performance is still the key factor."

In a related development, the National Conference reported Tuesday that 10,202 Soviet Jews arrived in Israel during May, slightly under last month's record high of 10,641.

That brings the total number of Soviet Jews who have arrived in Israel this year to 38,652. The comparable figure for the first five months of 1989 was 2,040, the conference's Soviet Jewry Research Bureau said.

HOUSE OF LORDS DEFEATS BRITISH WAR CRIMES BILL

London Jewish Chronicle

LONDON, June 5 (JTA) -- Differences between justice and retribution seem to have been at the heart of the conflict that ended with the resounding defeat early Tuesday morning of Britain's War Crimes Bill in the House of Lords.

The measure, adopted by the House of Commons on March 19 by an overwhelming 273-60 majority, was rejected 207-74 by the Lords, some of whom cited reasons varying from old age and the passage of time to the judicial question of the validity of retribution.

The legislation would have permitted British courts to prosecute alleged Nazi war criminals living in Britain. It is now dead, at least for this session of Parliament.

Rabbi Marvin Hier, dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Holocaust studies in Los Angeles, whose lists of alleged Nazi war criminals living in Britain initiated the inquiry, criticized the House of Lords for their defeat of the bill.

"It is kind of ironic that such an august body should decide that suspected Nazi war criminals are old and feeble-minded and cannot withstand the test of coming before the bar of justice because of their age," Hier said in New York, "and yet the House of Lords are of a similar age themselves but feel themselves competent to pass such legislation."

He said a judge is perfectly competent to decide whether the defendants could stand trial and that the Lords were usurping the judge's role.

Jewish View Of Justice Misconstrued

One of the bill's most impassioned supporters was Lord Immanuel Jakobovits, chief rabbi of Britain and the Commonwealth, who stressed that the proposed legislation had nothing to do with anti-Semitism. He said that many who spoke against it "are among the staunchest friends of the Jewish people."

But, he continued, "I am bound to add that so were some of those who were appeasers of the Nazis in the 1930s."

The chief rabbi also took issue with the disbelief that alleged war criminals could receive a fair trial at a time so far removed from their deeds. He said that view "cast an unwarranted slur on our judiciary" by prejudging the fairness of the system and those who administer it.

Lord Swaythling, a supporter of the bill, pointed out that it had been mistakenly implied that revenge was central to Judaism and that vengeance was prescribed in the Old Testament.

Making his first speech in the house, he said, "The Jewish faith is centered on the idea of justice, not revenge. Those who believe that an eye-for-an-eye means revenge have no knowledge or understanding of the basic tenets of Judaism."

"The phrase means only that justice demands equal treatment," he said. He suggested that trials of alleged war criminals would help to keep alive the awareness of the horrors of the past.

Lord Beloff, who said he lost family and friends in the Holocaust, maintained that the magnitude of the crimes involved made the notion of revenge "absurd."

But Lord Shawcross, a prosecutor at the Nuremberg war crimes trials after World War II, said retribution did not cease to be retribution by pasting the label "justice" on top of it.

He recalled that in 1948, public opinion had dictated that war crimes prosecutions should cease.

He said, "Indeed, the efforts of those like myself, who wanted to do more to punish those who had slaughtered the Jews, were not helped by various events in the meantime, including the activities of the Stern gang and the bombing of the King David Hotel."

Bill Could Be Resubmitted

Lord Hailsham, perhaps the Lords' most influential opponent to the bill, questioned the chief rabbi's belief that justice could be done to war crimes suspects at this late date. He cited numerous reversals of verdicts on appeal because of the defense's inability to put together a fair case due to "inordinate delay."

In London, Ephraim Zuroff, director of the Wiesenthal Center in Israel, said, "The feeling is that the bill still has strong support in the Cabinet. And there is a strong likelihood that it will be resubmitted in the House of Commons, based on the large majority in Commons."

"We're hopeful that it will be resubmitted, and we are calling the government to take whatever steps are necessary so that it will be resubmitted. Because every day that goes by until that bill is passed is only in favor of the perpetrators."

Zuroff, who made up the first list of Nazis in Britain sent to Parliament, said he is meeting with Home Office officials Thursday to discuss the various options available to the government and to submit new information on additional suspects who immigrated to England after World War II.

A NEW PUSH FOR ELECTORAL REFORM COULD DOG FORMATION OF GOVERNMENT By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 5 (JTA) -- The issue of electoral reform emerged this week as a possible 11th-hour barrier to the formation of a narrow Likud-led government by Prime Minister-designate Yitzhak Shamir.

Shamir has until midnight Thursday before his presidential mandate to put together a viable government expires. As of Monday, he claimed to have the support of at least 61 Knesset members, the minimum needed.

But Shamir was suddenly handed an ultimatum by Rafael Eitan, head of the right-wing Tsomet faction, demanding that the new government give all its members freedom to vote their conscience on an electoral reform bill.

Eitan insisted that Likud guarantee such a

bill would be brought to the Knesset for final reading within three months. He made clear that unless he received an explicit commitment, he would withhold his party's two Knesset votes from the new coalition, leaving Shamir without a majority.

The cause for reforming Israel's electoral system, which has gained strong support among the Israeli public in recent months, also received a powerful boost Tuesday from mainstream Jewish leaders and opinion-makers in the United States.

They sent President Chaim Herzog a letter urging Israeli leaders of "all parties" to implement a new electoral system without delay.

The problem for Shamir is that the religious parties whose votes he needs to form a government oppose electoral reform, because they stand to lose much of their political bargaining power.

During coalition talks Tuesday, Avraham Ravitz of the ultra-Orthodox Degel HaTorah party called Eitan's demands "unfair." He said Tsomet's ultimatum conflicts with the agreements Likud already has reached with the various ultra-Orthodox parties.

Those understandings are that electoral changes can be introduced only "after mutual consultation," meaning that the religious parties, in effect, would have veto power over them.

Likud Cabinet Ministers Moshe Nissim and Ehud Olmert conferred Tuesday with representatives of Degel HaTorah, Tsomet and the right-wing Tehiya party in an effort to find an acceptable compromise.

Broad Spectrum Of Jewish Leaders

The 50 American Jewish leaders who sent the letter to Herzog on Tuesday included the current chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and four past chairmen; rabbinic leaders of Reform, Conservative and Orthodox Jewry; and such major philanthropic names as Lester Crown, Alex Grass and Leslie Wexner.

Also signing were celebrities, such as former New York Mayor Ed Koch and violinist Isaac Stern, and such noted opinion-makers as Martin Peretz, Norman Podhoretz, Henry Rosovsky and Mortimer Zuckerman.

The signators, who represent a diversity of political and ideological viewpoints, strongly implied that they consider reform no longer just an internal Israeli problem but one of the entire Jewish people, because of their "deep concern for and attachment to the State of Israel."

They said they consider reform "long overdue" and "particularly needed at this time," because "it has become obvious that no government of Israel can today be formed under the current system, except through embarrassing trade-offs."

Theoretically, there is a Knesset majority for electoral changes. Four separate bills that call for direct election of the prime minister have passed their first reading. The various measures now repose with the Knesset Law Committee.

The two conditions necessary for their passage are speedy processing by the committee and freedom for Knesset members to vote according to their political consciences, instead of party guidelines.

Eitan was forced to deliver an ultimatum on that point, observers said, because he did not trust Likud to honor a commitment to bring about speedy reform once a government is formed if it risked losing the support of the religious bloc.

**U.S. COULD SUSPEND PLO DIALOGUE,
BUT DECISION AWAITS BAKER'S RETURN**
By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, June 5 (JTA) -- The Bush administration is still pondering whether to continue its dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization following last week's attempted raid on Israeli beaches by a PLO-affiliated terrorist group.

Both the White House and the State Department said Tuesday that the administration was still studying whether the PLO had violated its December 1988 pledge renouncing terrorism.

The raid was conducted by the Palestine Liberation Front, led by Mohammed (Abul) Abbas, a member of the PLO's executive committee and a close adviser to PLO leader Yasir Arafat.

Administration sources have indicated that no decision will be made before Secretary of State James Baker returns Saturday from Europe.

But Vice President Dan Quayle's chief of staff gave Jewish leaders strong reason Tuesday to believe that the dialogue with the PLO could be suspended, if not entirely discontinued.

Speaking in New York at a luncheon hosted by the Zionist Organization of America, William Kristol said he doubted Arafat would accede to U.S. requests to denounce the terrorist attack and expel Abbas from the PLO executive committee.

"Therefore, the present dialogue between the United States and the PLO could well be suspended," said Kristol.

Both the ZOA and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith sent letters to Baker this week urging the United States to disengage from the dialogue with the PLO.

"Anything less than the immediate abrogation of the dialogue would make a mockery of the original purpose behind the talks -- to encourage moderation, instead of violence, as a vehicle toward Middle East peace," wrote Burton Levinson, ADL's national chairman, and Abraham Foxman, its national director.

Klinghoffer Daughter Lobbies Senate

Two individuals who have written to Baker are Lisa and Ilse Klinghoffer, whose father, Leon Klinghoffer, was brutally murdered by Abbas' group in 1985 when it hijacked the cruise ship Achille Lauro. They believe Baker should have no trouble deciding whether to break off talks with the PLO.

Lisa Klinghoffer was in Washington on Tuesday lobbying senators to pressure the Bush administration to break off the dialogue with the PLO. Accompanying her was Mark Medin, assistant director of ADL's Washington office.

"I feel it is a sham," she said of Arafat's December 1988 renunciation of terrorism. "He just continued to do what he has always done."

"Arafat has never to this day disowned Abul Abbas," said Klinghoffer. "They are very close friends; they embrace each other in public."

She noted that Abbas has never shown remorse for the death of her father, who was in a wheelchair when he was thrown off the ship by members of the Palestine Liberation Front. When Abbas was asked about it at the 1988 Palestine National Council meeting, he joked, "Maybe he was trying to swim for it," Klinghoffer recalled.

She said that not only should Arafat renounce the attempted raid and expel Abbas from the PLO, but he should turn Abbas over to Italy, where he was indicted in absentia.

**TERRORIST ADMITS SEABORNE RAID
WAS TO 'WREAK HAVOC' ON TEL AVIV**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 5 (JTA) -- One of the leaders of the seaborne terrorists captured in an aborted attack on Israeli beaches last week painted a picture of mass murder and mayhem that would have occurred had any part of their plan succeeded.

Ahmed Mohammed Yusuf, code named Abu Ashash and identified as deputy commander of the mission, told Israel Radio in an interview Tuesday that their orders were to "wreak havoc" on Tel Aviv's beachfront hotels and surrounding residential areas, and to kill everyone in sight.

He also disclosed the close involvement of Libya's military authorities in planning and training for the speedboat attack on May 30, the Shavuot holiday.

It was carried out by the Palestine Liberation Front, a constituent group of the Palestine Liberation Organization headed by Mohammed (Abul) Abbas.

According to the captured terrorist, their instructions when they boarded their Libyan mother ship in Benghazi on Sunday, May 27, was to bombard the hotels with 107mm Katyusha rockets and 23mm cannon, and spray them with machine-gun fire.

After landing on the beach, their orders were to shoot anybody they found in the streets, enter the hotels and "clear them out completely, shooting everybody there -- men, women and children," Abu Ashash told the radio interviewer.

He said that his personal target was the Tel Aviv Sheraton Hotel.

The interview was arranged by the Israel Defense Force. Government sources acknowledged it was part of a drive to pressure the United States to cut off all contact with the PLO.

Seen Off By Abul Abbas

Abu Ashash, 28, said he and 20 fellow-terrorists trained for 18 months at a Libyan naval base under the command of Libyan marine commandos.

They were seen off on their mission by Abbas and by senior Libyan officers, he said. They were accompanied on the mother ship by the commander of the Libyan marine commando unit.

In the end, mechanical difficulties prevented all but two of the six fiberglass motorboats assigned to the attack from reaching Israeli shores.

The two hit beaches well north and south of Tel Aviv. One was intercepted by an Israeli missile boat and the raiders were captured without a shot being fired.

Israeli air and ground forces pinned down the other terrorists, who landed at Nitzanim beach between Ashkelon and Ashdod.

Four were killed and 12 survivors were captured.

Although the raid was aborted before the attackers could inflict casualties or damage, the IDF has been criticized for not responding sooner and for not clearing the beaches of holiday revelers as soon as terrorist activity was reported.

The IDF chief of staff, Gen. Dan Shmרון, who appeared before the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on Tuesday, described the IDF action as "successful, even though various 'holes in the net' came to light.

"These are being studied and will be corrected," he said.

**MARAUDING NEO-NAZIS CAUSE HARM,
PROPERTY DAMAGE IN BOTH BERLINS****By David Kantor**

BONN, June 5 (JTA) -- Rampaging neo-Nazis and other extreme right-wing youths have caused severe injuries and property damage in East and West Berlin in the last three days.

The targets so far have been mainly leftists and foreigners. But the police were attacked too. At least 10 police officers have been hospitalized.

At least 50 rioters have been arrested. Most were identified as Skinheads, shaven-headed youths who wear Nazi-like regalia and spout right-wing slogans.

The police chiefs of West and East Berlin met Monday to coordinate a strategy to deal with the mounting violence on both sides of what used to be the Berlin Wall.

The last remaining barriers that divide Berlin are due to come down on July 1. But the impending unification of the city and of the two Germanys appears to have given incentives to the most violence-prone elements on the far right.

Last weekend, about 100 neo-Nazis attacked apartments occupied by left-wing squatters in the Friedrichshain neighborhood of East Berlin.

Police arrested 30 suspects, including two West German extremists. Most were described as teen-age members of a local Skinhead gang.

In a separate incident Saturday evening, about 150 neo-Nazis raided a cultural center on Oranienburgerstrasse in East Berlin. The former main synagogue of Berlin -- now a burnt shell slated to become a museum -- as well as the main office of the East Berlin Jewish community stand on that street.

Five people were severely injured in Saturday's attack and had to be hospitalized.

According to police, some neo-Nazi youths hurled gasoline bombs. One victim may have permanently impaired vision, the police said.

On Monday, several police cars in East Berlin were overturned and set on fire. They gave as their motive frustration with the volkspolizei, or people's police.

The East German news agency, ADN, reported that 15 to 20 right-wing extremists attacked a house occupied by foreigners in the East German town of Gera on Sunday. Most of the attackers were Skinheads.

Stopped at the entrance to the building, they threw stones, smashing windows. Twelve were arrested for questioning.

A Jewish source in West Berlin said the heightened incidence of neo-Nazis represents an increased sense of frustration and isolation since the demise of the right-wing Republican party, with whom they otherwise might be associated.

GERMANS PROPOSE HOLOCAUST MEMORIAL**By David Kantor**

BONN, June 5 (JTA) -- A group of prominent Germans, including scholars and industrialists, have proposed erecting the first monument in Germany to the memory of Jews who perished in the Holocaust.

It would be located in the rebuilt heart of a united Berlin, on the site of the chancery from which Hitler ruled the Third Reich, according to the promoters, who outlined their plans in advertisements published Monday in leading newspapers of West and East Berlin.

The governing board of the group that

sponsored the advertisements consists of Marcus Biech of the Bosch Co.; Edzard Reuter, chief executive officer of Daimler-Benz; Professor Eberhard Jackel of Stuttgart, a historian; Peter Kirchner, leader of the East Berlin Jewish community; author Siegfried Lenz; and conductor Kurt Masur, who has been named to lead the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

The advertisement notes that nearly 50 years after more than 5 million Jews perished at the hands of the Nazis, no memorial to them has been erected to remind Germans of the most awful crime in their history.

The promoters propose that the memorial's design be included in a contest now under way among architects for the best plan to rebuild the area. The site is in the very heart of Berlin, where the last remnants of the Berlin Wall will soon be demolished.

The group has pledged to raise funds for the project if it is approved by the politicians in Berlin and both Germanys. It has already received tax-exempt status from a West Berlin court.

**INTERNATIONAL AUSCHWITZ COUNCIL
TO DISCUSS FUTURE OF FORMER CAMP****By Ruth E. Gruber**

WARSAW, June 5 (JTA) -- An international council will hold its first meeting this month to chart the future of the Auschwitz-Birkenau Museum at the site of the death camp, which more than any other has become a universal symbol of the Holocaust.

Its guidelines will be an extensive list of proposals formulated by Jewish intellectuals from nine countries who met in England last month.

One proposal would bar unilateral changes at the site of the camp without consultations.

It is clearly aimed against the repetition of such arbitrary acts as the establishment of a Carmelite convent on the Auschwitz grounds and the erection of religious symbols there.

Another proposal is that the museum's displays and monuments make clear that over 90 percent of the 1.6 million men, women and children who died at Auschwitz-Birkenau were Jews, and that except for Gypsies they were "the only people condemned to torture and death for the mere crime of existing."

But the proposals stress that the museum must acknowledge the "very large numbers" of non-Jewish victims and must recognize the camp's key role in the Nazi campaign to destroy Polish nationhood.

Stanislaw Krajewski, the Polish representative of the American Jewish Congress, who is a member of the new panel, reported that the Polish Ministry of Culture has just formed an Auschwitz Foundation to attract foreign donors to the Auschwitz Museum.

"So far, all maintenance and other costs have been covered by the Polish government," Krajewski said.

Foreign members of the international council for the Auschwitz Museum include Israel Gutman of Yad Vashem in Jerusalem, who is a Warsaw Ghetto survivor; Rabbi Michael Berenbaum, head of the program committee of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington; Professor Antony Polonsky of the London School of Economics, who is director of the Oxford Institute of Polish-Jewish Studies; Theo Klein, former president of CRIF, the council of French Jewish institutions; and Austrian scholar Herman Langebein.