

75th ANNIVERSARY YEAR**WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 1992****VOL. 70, NO. 87****L.A. JEWISH COMMUNITY ORGANIZES
RELIEF EFFORTS FOR RAVAGED CITY
By Tom Tugend**

LOS ANGELES, May 5 (JTA) -- The Jewish community swung into full action Tuesday to rush food and other urgent requirements to the mainly black areas of the city, stricken by last week's fires and rioting.

Mazon, a private Jewish agency dedicated to fighting hunger, contributed \$10,000 to the relief effort and was designated as the Jewish community's coordinator for feeding the homeless and hungry.

At the same time, philanthropist Mickey Weiss said that his longstanding charitable distribution facility at the city's wholesale produce market was starting to drop off fresh fruits and vegetables at five large black churches. He expects to provide 1.5 million pounds of free produce by the end of the month.

Mazon has put in a rush order for 20,000 plastic food bags, inscribed "Donated By The Los Angeles Jewish Community."

The plan for aiding the black, as well as Hispanic and Korean communities was put together Monday morning at an emergency meeting of the city's Jewish organizations, institutions and synagogues, and is being coordinated by the Jewish Federation Council's Community Relations Committee.

The CRC has set up a 24-hour information hotline, (213) 852-0500.

The latest reports on the riots' toll show: 58 dead, 2,383 injured, 5,808 reported fires, 11,656 arrests and damage estimated at \$717 million.

About 10 synagogues have become collection points for food and clothing, and many of the congregations are organizing volunteers to help sort, package and distribute food.

Medical supplies and assistance are to be provided through pharmaceutical firms and the Cedars-Sinai Medical Center.

Attorneys working through the Bet Tzedek legal agency have contacted black churches to offer free assistance to small business owners whose shops have been looted or destroyed.

Jewish Family Services is offering counseling to individuals, teachers and community groups.

K'hillat Keshet, an organization of Jews from ethnic minority groups, is advising Jewish organizations in their relations with the black, Hispanic and Asian communities.

A committee has been established for a long-range effort to analyze and alleviate the root causes of the riots.

Jewish agencies are also mobilizing support for passage of a measure to drastically reform the Los Angeles police department, which will be put to the voters June 2.

Involved in all the efforts are the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, Anti-Defamation League and Southern California Board of Rabbis.

Meanwhile, the Orthodox Union West Coast Region confirmed that it had appealed to the authorities for protection during the rioting last week.

"We contacted the (Los Angeles Police Department) Operations West Bureau and Valley

Bureau to inform them of our need for additional police protection over the course of Shabbat," the Orthodox Union reported in a memo to area rabbis and congregational leaders.

The organization provided the police with a detailed map of all its synagogues along with times of Sabbath services. It urged synagogues to start the Sabbath early on May 1 because of the curfew imposed on the city.

It also advised all synagogues to remove all Torah scrolls and silver ornaments from their sanctuaries, except one scroll for Sabbath use.

**LEVY SAYS HE EXPECTS ACCUSED SPIES
TO BE FREED SHORTLY FROM CAIRO JAIL
By Gil Sedan**

JERUSALEM, May 5 (JTA) -- An optimistic statement by Foreign Minister David Levy raised hopes that four Israelis detained in Egypt since February will soon be released.

Levy spoke to reporters Tuesday upon his return from Lagos, Nigeria, where he participated in ceremonies marking the renewal of diplomatic ties between his country and the African nation.

He referred hopefully to the case of David Ovitz, a furniture importer from Givatayim, and he indicated for the first time that the Egyptians might also free three Israeli Arabs arrested at about the same time as Ovitz. Until now it was believed that the Egyptians were likely to release Ovitz but keep the Arabs in custody.

Levy, who would not give any dates for a release, based his optimism on a letter he received from Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa, who promised to do his best to bring the affair to an early end.

He denied, however, that Israel was paying Egypt ransom for the prisoners.

Israeli journalists in Cairo had reported that the Israel Embassy there remitted certain fees necessary for their release.

The incident began early in February with the arrests of Fares Mussarti, an Arab from Ramla, his 21-year-old son Majid and 17-year-old daughter, Faya, who were traveling in Egypt, allegedly on false identification papers.

They were accused of spying, though it was never made clear for whom. Ovitz, who occasionally employed Fares Mussarti as an interpreter on his buying trips to Egypt, was also taken into custody.

Although the Egyptian authorities were silent, the Egyptian press said the Mussartis had confessed and that Faya implicated Ovitz.

But the latest reports from Cairo said the police now discounted her testimony because she had been caught in several lies.

The Egyptian authorities have hinted they were likely to release the Israelis, but no official move has been made yet.

What is needed for their release is a statement by the advocate general at the State Security Court that there is no longer any valid reason to hold them.

Israel Embassy officials in Cairo tried Monday to ascertain the Egyptians' intentions but got no reply.

"We can only hope," said Ronni Porat, the Israeli consul general in the Egyptian capital.

POLITICS DROWN OUT SIREN WAIL ON MEMORIAL DAY IN ISRAEL

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 5 (JTA) -- Memorial Day for Israel's war dead began Tuesday evening with the wail of sirens that signified the start of a 24-hour period of mourning.

But they may not have drowned out the political furor that erupted Monday when Israel Radio announced, with obvious surprise, that Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres were not on the list of officials who would deliver eulogies at military cemeteries this year.

The veteran Labor Party leaders, both former prime ministers, have roots in the military establishment. Each has served as defense minister, and Rabin was Israel Defense Force chief of staff at the time of the 1967 Six-Day War.

Their inclusion on the list of official Memorial Day speakers was therefore taken for granted. Their unexpected omission, though soon rectified, sent government leaders scurrying for cover against charges of political discrimination in an election year.

The campaign for the June 23 elections pits Labor, led by Rabin, against Likud, headed by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. Observers said the omission appeared to be an attempt by the Likud leadership to exclude opposition leaders from the limelight in the midst of the election campaign.

The Prime Minister's Office, the Secretariat of the Likud-controlled Knesset and the Likud-led Defense Ministry were each blaming the other Tuesday for the "unfortunate misunderstanding."

Each claimed it was sure the other had put Rabin and Peres on the speakers list.

Knesset Speaker Dov Shilansky publicly apologized for the "oversight."

Rabin, who returned from a short trip abroad Tuesday, said he agreed to speak Wednesday at ceremonies at the military cemetery in Upper Nazareth.

Peres was to address the ceremonies in Ra'anana. He was replacing Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz, the absorption minister who is also rabbi of Ra'anana.

Peretz withdrew his name after many bereaved families objected to a haredi -- strictly Orthodox -- leader eulogizing war dead when most haredi youths, claiming exemption as yeshiva students, do not perform the military service required of all Israeli citizens.

Memorial Day will honor the 17,418 Israeli men and women who died in defense of the country since the state was founded in 1948.

The 1-minute siren blast at 8 p.m. local time heralded the start of the solemn day on which cafes, movie houses and other places of entertainment are closed.

A memorial candle was lit by President Chaim Herzog at the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

Defense Minister Moshe Arens addressed a message of condolence to the relatives of Israeli war dead.

The Defense Ministry announced that its rehabilitation department has been caring for some 78,500 soldiers and veterans incapacitated by injuries since 1948.

A siren at 11 a.m. Wednesday will bring the nation to a halt for two minutes of silence in memory of the war dead.

It will herald the start of the main memorial service at the Mount Herzl Military Cemetery in Jerusalem and military cemeteries in some 40

towns and villages around the country.

At 8 p.m. Wednesday evening, Memorial Day will give way abruptly to festivities celebrating the 44th anniversary of Israel's independence that will last through Thursday.

This year, 12 Independence Day beacons will be lit to represent the 12 families in Israel who say they can trace their ancestry directly back to Jews expelled from Spain 500 years ago.

The expulsion from Spain in 1492, which is being observed by Sephardic Jews worldwide, was chosen as the theme of this year's Israel Independence Day observances though there is little to connect the two events.

MORE THAN A THIRD OF SARAJEVO JEWISH POPULATION IS EVACUATED

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, May 5 (JTA) -- More than a third of the Jewish population has been evacuated from Sarajevo, capital of the embattled republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, which has been the scene of intense fighting in recent weeks.

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency learned by telephone from the head of the Croatian Jewish community, Srdjan Matic, that 70 Jews were airlifted Friday from Sarajevo to Belgrade, the Yugoslav capital.

Matic has been reporting regularly to the JTA on the situation of Yugoslavia's 5,000-6,000 Jews. His calls are from Zagreb, the Croatian capital, which has been relatively quiet since a Serbian-led Yugoslavian army bombarded it last year.

Now Sarajevo, where the assassination of Austrian Archduke Ferdinand in June 1914 triggered the events leading to World War I, has become the battleground of Bosnia's war for independence.

More than 1,000 Jews lived there before the recent fighting.

"About 410 to 420 have left Sarajevo in three airlifts" to Belgrade, Matic reported.

He said as far as he knew, about 80 of them have gone on to Israel, "but most went on a temporary basis, not aliyah," he said.

He said that contrary to what was reported last week, none of the evacuees sought refuge in Hungary or Bulgaria. But about 20 Jews have come to Croatia and a dozen went to Slovenia.

Matic said he has not spoken to any of the new arrivals from Sarajevo and added that all telephone links with that city were cut on Saturday.

He said the Zagreb Jewish community marked Yom Hashoah, Holocaust Remembrance Day, last Thursday at the Holocaust memorial in the Jewish cemetery.

"The ceremony was very well attended," he said. Guests included the prime minister of Croatia, the Catholic bishop of Zagreb, and the heads of its Moslem and Serbian Orthodox Christian communities.

In a broadcast from Sarajevo last weekend, the BBC correspondent reported that many people took refuge from the gunfire in the Jewish community center in the center of town.

According to the correspondent, the director of the center appealed for safe conduct for the refugees to enable them to return to their homes.

Jewish historic sites in and around Sarajevo include a restored 16th-century synagogue housing a Jewish museum and a huge Moris-style synagogue built in 1902, which is still used.

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL CHARGES ABUSE AT PRISON CAMP IN SOUTHERN LEBANON

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, May 5 (JTA) -- Amnesty International has charged that human rights violations have occurred regularly in the South Lebanon Army's Khiam prison camp in the Israeli-controlled security zone in Southern Lebanon.

In a 53-page report released Monday, Amnesty recounted detailed claims of torture made by former prisoners at the camp, which was set up in early 1985 by the SLA with Israel's assistance and supervision.

Amnesty also condemned the camp for failing to allow inmates, who are generally held without charge or trial, to communicate with relatives or humanitarian agencies such as the International Committee of the Red Cross.

According to Amnesty, Israeli officers were directly involved in interrogating prisoners through 1988. Since then, says Amnesty, the Israeli role has been more limited.

Responding to the report, Israel disclaimed responsibility for the detention camp, which currently holds about 200 people.

"No Israeli personnel is stationed at this facility," said a statement released by the Defense Ministry, which added that inquiries should be addressed "to those responsible for its operation."

According to the Amnesty report, inquiries made to the SLA were not answered.

The report documents various forms of torture, including beatings, electric shocks to sensitive parts of the body, poor hygiene and deprivation of food and sleep.

One detainee reported that after several sessions of torture, "I was taken to the yard and was suspended from a pole by my shackles ... First they put a stone under my feet when they suspended me, but after two hours of standing like that they pulled the stone from underneath me and I hung for another 12 hours, standing only on my toes. My hands were hurting enormously."

The report also charged that prison officers tortured relatives of detainees who would not confess under direct torture.

One prisoner who had been repeatedly tortured said he was told by his interrogator, "I brought your mother here."

"And sure enough, she was in the next room," the detainee told Amnesty International after his release. "I heard her scream. She is 50 years old. They kept her for three months. I found out later, and they tortured her to put pressure on me. Eventually, when I heard her scream, I confessed to being a member" of a group, the name of which was omitted by Amnesty.

"We are not saying these are prisoners of conscience," said Amnesty spokesman Joshua Rubinstein. "Many of these people may be guilty of violent activity and if Israel brings them to trial, there may be legitimate grounds to hold them. If they are prisoners of war, or criminals, then bring them to trial and you won't hear from Amnesty International."

The report pointed out, however, that Israel and the SLA have said that release of the detainees is conditional on receiving information regarding missing Israeli and SLA soldiers.

"If they are held exclusively in order to compel others to release detainees or provide

information about missing persons, they are to be regarded as hostages, and as such should be released immediately and unconditionally," the report stated.

Amnesty itself has sought information from Syria and Amal militia concerning Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman and Yehuda Katz, three Israeli soldiers missing since 1982, and Ron Arad, an air force navigator shot down over Lebanon in 1986.

But the organization said the situation of the missing Israel Defense Force and SLA servicemen "can in no way justify the abuse of the human rights of the detainees held in Khiam."

Israel stated in its response that "to the best of our understanding," those detained "are not innocent persons who have been arbitrarily arrested."

Israel said that on the basis of its good relations with the SLA, it has "over the years been endeavouring to encourage, on an ongoing basis, the establishment of adequate conditions and humanitarian standards for the detainees at (the facility)."

"Israel is, however, not in a position to dictate to the SLA how to deal with threats and anger prevailing in this turbulent region of Lebanon."

Israel further claimed Israel claimed that prison camp's conditions were "at least as good as, or better than, those prevailing in other Lebanese detention facilities."

SHARANSKY DROPS FROM ELECTION RACE, SAYS HE CAN'T ASSEMBLE LIST IN TIME

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 5 (JTA) -- Natan Sharansky has dropped out of the election race almost as suddenly as he entered it two weeks ago.

The longtime refusenik and "prisoner of Zion" in the former Soviet Union admitted at a news conference Tuesday that he could not put together a cohesive list of candidates in time for the Knesset elections on June 23.

Sharansky created some political excitement when he announced in Yediot Achronot on April 20 that he hoped to lead a mixed slate of immigrants and veteran settlers that would make immigrant absorption the No. 1 national priority.

He publicly invited Israelis who had distinguished themselves in commerce, diplomacy or military service to join him and other olim to establish the new political party.

According to Sharansky, he was contacted by dozens of prospective political partners and held discussions with some of them.

But his announcement got a cold reception from most other immigrant leaders, and political observers gave it small chance to succeed.

Sharansky has since decided that there is not enough time before the elections to put together a list of people who have the necessary confidence in each other to conduct a political campaign together.

That kind of confidence can be built only through a long experience of cooperation, he told the news conference.

Sharansky said he would not formally support the Soviet immigrant party Da, led by another former long-term refusenik, Yuli Kosharovsky.

He explained that since he heads the activist Zionist Forum, some of whose members have cast their lot with other immigrant groupings, he did not want to seem to be taking sides.

Jews and Spaniards Come Together to Celebrate 'By My Spirit' Gala

By Judith Lew

TOLEDO, Spain, May 5 (JTA) -- For a moment there, Toledo thought its Jews had come back.

But the bustle of shopping, touring, praying, curious Sephardim in the legendary city was only a temporary sight brought about by the commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the expulsion of Spain's Jews.

The concert and spiritual gathering called "By My Spirit," which in its humble beginnings dreamed of 10,000 people streaming to Toledo, settled into a more intimate affair of 4,000 people, Jews and Spaniards, who despite the organizational havoc managed to retain the dreamy quality that originally propelled the idea.

Regular guests paid \$200, while gold-ticket holders shelled out \$1,000 (not including trip expenses) to listen to the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra, directed by Zubin Mehta, in the world premiere of the mournful Pasion Sefardi, written for the event by Israeli composer Noam Sheriff.

"'By My Spirit' was always the star event of the Fifth Centenary commemorations," said Manuel Sassot, the president of the Spanish government's Sepharad '92 committee.

"Though the ceremony in Madrid's synagogue last March 31 was the most symbolic, this is where contact is established between the Jewish and Spanish peoples," Sassot said.

More than 1,500 people flew in for the program -- the largest group was from France, with 800 people; 200 came from the United States, 100 from Israel, 60 from Belgium, 50 from Great Britain and smaller delegations from other countries.

The groups were scheduled to go on to Israel from here, to celebrate Israel's 44th anniversary in Jerusalem.

Organizers Michele Bokobza, Richard Katz and David Silver were taking care of logistical details up until the last minute, doing things like scrounging for chairs for the spiritual gathering as guests, many clad in tuxedos and long dresses, had to watch the ceremony camping out on blankets or standing.

Queen Sofia of Spain arrived by helicopter and sat in the only royal chair available in the open-air concert.

Actor Gregory Peck, scheduled to be one of the concert's hosts, cancelled 10 days before, and violinist Isaac Stern was unable to play because of an injury. Israeli violinist Gil Shaham played Mendelssohn's No. 2 Violin Concert, instead.

Nonetheless, Joseph Sitruk, chief rabbi of France, said, "This event is not an organization, it is a dream. And this improvisation is part of what allows the force of the spirit to live the moment."

Sitruk welcomed the Archbishop of Toledo and the Imam of Marbella as special guests, and two choirs -- of the Great Synagogues of Jerusalem and of Moscow -- interpreted Jewish songs and prayers.

Then the Hatikvah torch was lit and was used to light seven other torches handed to the ambassadors of the countries that received the exiled Jews 500 years ago: France, Greece, Bulgaria, Yugoslavia, Morocco, Turkey and Italy. These torches were taken to their respective countries, many of which held welcoming ceremonies.

The Concert hostess, actress Nuria Espert, who is the head of the Catalonia-Israel Friendship Association, said "As a Spaniard, it is a great pleasure for me to hear words of forgiveness, of future and of understanding, coming not from the offender but from the ones who suffered. Welcome back home."

Among the spectators were eight members of a religious order called the Communaute de Beatitude, who received some of the few free tickets, since they had vows of poverty and could not afford them.

"We were very happy to share this moment of peace with the people of Israel," Sister Genevieve said as the concert finished and, singing in Hebrew, she and other nuns greeted people with "Shalom and Lehitraot."

ANCIENT TOLEDANO FAMILY RECEIVES WELCOME AND APOLOGY IN SPAIN

By Judith Lew

TOLEDO, Spain, May 5 (JTA) -- Queen Sofia of Spain received a Ketubah chronicling the marriages of the Toledano family from the time Daniel Toledano, chief rabbi of Castille, left the land of his ancestors in 1492.

In turn, 20 members of the Toledano family each received the key to the city of Toledo with letters asking for forgiveness for the events that led to their exile.

Few names evoke the Sephardi legacy more than Toledano. And those bearing the name -- who gathered from Morocco, France, England, the United States, Israel and Switzerland -- had mixed feelings about the ceremony.

More than 2,000 people attended the emotional gathering, which was held in the Plaza de Zocodover, where Jews were burned during the Inquisition. Toledo Mayor Joaquin Sanchez Garrido welcomed the Toledanos back to their roots.

"When I received the key," said Rabbi Pinhas Toledano, head of the Sephardi Congress Beit-Din in London, "I felt bitterness and indignation. Why should we have been expelled when we contributed so much to the Spanish civilization?"

"But then I felt perhaps we should go and pray. I was very moved in the Transito synagogue. It was a dream to me that became a reality," he said.

Rabbi Michael Toledano, head of the Or Baruch yeshiva in Jerusalem, felt the key was "a symbol of the defiance of a people who had survived, maintained the faith and built a strong Israel."

Other Toledano family members who received the key included:

Jacques, a French businessman who financed and headed the delegation;

Boris, president of the Casablanca Jewish community;

Dany, president of the Toledano Association in Israel;

Ami, Israeli singer;

Shmuel, adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir on Arab affairs;

Ehud, of Tel Aviv University;

Sam, of the Spanish Federation of Jewish Communities;

Edward, British sculptor;

Prof. Henri Chaim, an expert in Islamic affairs from New York;

Ralph, manager of the Paris-based Karl Lagerfeld fashion house.