

**JDC EVACUATES 350 FROM SARAJEVO
IN A HARROWING 22-HOUR BUS TRIP**

By Michele Chabin

SPLIT, Croatia, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- "You see these two suitcases?" asked Vahiva Biscevic, sitting on a crowded bus traveling from Sarajevo to this city on the Adriatic coast. "This is all I have to show for 70 years of my life."

Biscevic, a dignified woman with sad eyes, was one of the 350 Jewish, Moslem, Serbian and Croatian refugees the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee managed to evacuate Saturday from the war-ravaged capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

The evacuation, a sometimes-harrowing 22-hour bus trip through territory claimed by warring ethnic factions, left the refugees and those who assisted them numb with exhaustion.

The saga began in Sarajevo at 7 a.m. Saturday morning, with the arrival of two trucks loaded with vital food and medicines, plus five empty buses, from the nearby town of Kiseljak. A sixth bus, from a Croatian relief organization, joined the convoy.

Securing permission for the vehicles' entry -- and even more so for their exit -- was no easy task, according to members of the JDC and the Sarajevo Jewish community, who worked together on the operation.

"We needed permission from all sides of the conflict, at the highest level," said Jakob Finci, president of the Jewish Humanitarian Society. "Getting the OK took months, and we were in a hurry. Winter has arrived, and it will kill many people in Sarajevo," he said.

The evacuation from Sarajevo, the eighth such mission by the JDC, took on a dramatic character right from the start.

Despite a supposed cease-fire that took effect within the city limits last Thursday, 10 mortar shells exploded an hour before the vehicles arrived.

At 9 a.m., volunteers at Sarajevo's Jewish Community Center unloaded the food and medicine in the trucks, which was to be distributed on a non-sectarian basis to those in need.

'Only Occasional Sniper Fire'

Then, at 10:00 a.m., just as the busloads of refugees were preparing to depart the beleaguered city, Bosnian soldiers came on the scene. Before they would allow the convoy to leave, they said, the Jewish community must get written permission from either the Bosnian president or the Defense Ministry.

"Despite all the permissions we had received, we were very concerned that we would not get the people out," admitted Dragen Danon, an ex-member of the Sarajevo Jewish community.

After several hours of frantic phone calls to government officials, the convoy was allowed to leave.

By wartime standards, the 16-mile trek from Sarajevo to Kiseljak went very smoothly. "We heard only occasional sniper fire and one mortar landed 100 meters away from us," said Finci. "For residents of Sarajevo, that represents a peaceful day."

Upon reaching Kiseljak, the refugees pur-

chased oranges and bananas -- the first fruit most had seen in seven months.

But the tension that was beginning to melt away returned a couple of hours later, as five of the six buses could not navigate Bosnia's steep mountain passes. Snow hugged the road as temperatures plummeted to well below freezing.

The door of one bus was torn off as it attempted a sharp turn, trapping the other buses on the narrow precipice. People stood shivering in the pitch darkness as workers, and then the Bosnian police, tried to free the bus. Four hours later, they succeeded.

Throughout Saturday night, the convoy was stopped at Bosnian, Moslem and Croatian checkpoints. Through the misted windows, one could see former villages reduced to rubble. Buildings and bridges were damaged or destroyed; plastic sheeting took the place of glass windowpanes.

'Dream Of Returning To Sarajevo'

While most of the terrain through which the convoy passed has been calm for months, a few stretches were risky. In the wee hours of Sunday morning, the buses had to cross a dam in plain sight of Serbian snipers. Realizing the risk, the bus drivers sped across the dam, then across bumpy dirt roads potholed from mortar blasts.

Exhausted by the tension earlier in the day, many of the evacuees slept, oblivious to the potential danger outside the window.

Others tried to lighten the mood with a funny story or anecdote. During an especially uncomfortable part of the trip, Eli Eliezri, the JDC field operator, dismantled a bulletproof vest he had worn in Sarajevo to reveal a dozen bars of Swiss chocolate.

Even so, the time passed slowly -- no more so than at the Croatian border, where every passenger was examined for typhus, which had been spotted in Sarajevo. The checkups took two long hours at a time when the refugees were at the end of their rope.

Once in Croatia, people's moods became brighter. The excitement built as the local police took the lead and escorted the convoy into Split. Onlookers waved as the lead bus moved forward, sporting the blue and white flag of the JDC.

Dozens of people waited expectantly for the refugees to disembark. Some had come to meet family; others simply hoped to hear news of home.

There were, indeed, some tearful embraces, but in the end, most of the evacuees were alone. They milled around, pale and weary, searching for a face that was not there.

"We are all so tired," said Mira, who stood beside her two daughters, Tina, 22, and Milana, 25. Pointing to Tina, who stood on crutches, she said, "First my daughter must have surgery to repair leg muscles injured by a mortar blast. What will happen after that is anyone's guess."

The Jewish Agency for Israel immediately took charge of the Jewish evacuees, while other groups took responsibility for the Moslems, Serbs and Croats. Some of the Jews will go to Israel. Most will not.

Biscevic will go to Switzerland, where she has family, to start over. "But I still dream of returning to Sarajevo one day," she said.

She is not alone.

**PERES MEETS WITH MUBARAK IN CAIRO,
IN ATTEMPT TO ACCELERATE PEACE TALKS**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo on Sunday, in an attempt to break the logjam in Israeli peace talks with the Palestinians.

But there was little immediate indication of whether they had made any progress.

Israeli diplomats have complained that divisions among the Palestinians have prevented them from responding boldly to Israel's offer of speedy elections in the territories, followed by implementation of an autonomy arrangement.

The Palestinians, in turn, have complained that the Israeli Labor government's proposals are little different from those of the previous hard-line Likud regime. They want Israel to make a commitment to eventual territorial compromise before they agree to any proposals about interim self-rule.

Egypt, as the only Arab country that has relations with Israel, is trying to bridge the gap.

The meeting Sunday was officially a reciprocal visit to that paid to Israel a month ago by Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa. But it took place shortly after Egyptian officials met with Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat.

Mubarak was expected to transmit a message from Arafat calling on Israel to negotiate directly with his organization, Egyptian sources said. Arafat wanted Israel to know that progress would not occur in the peace talks unless Jerusalem abandoned its refusal to meet with the PLO.

But Israeli officials have reiterated that there will be no change in Jerusalem's policy of refusing direct or indirect contacts with the PLO, which it still regards as a terrorist group.

Peres' visit coincided with violence in the administered territories, triggered by the fourth anniversary of the Palestine National Council's decision to declare an independent state.

In and around Jerusalem's Old City, police used rubber bullets and tear gas to disperse rioters, injuring a tourist in the process.

In the marketplace of the West Bank town of Kalkilya, an Israeli army officer was stabbed Saturday by a 23-year-old woman. The attacker, who was apprehended, said that the "Prophet Mohammed appeared in my dream, and ordered me to avenge Palestinian victims."

A Palestinian terrorist on his way to Jerusalem was hospitalized at the Hadassah Medical Center in Jerusalem on Saturday after a bomb exploded in his hands. A second man escaped.

**TALKS IN OTTAWA ON REFUGEES
MAKE ONLY INCREMENTAL PROGRESS**
By Bram D. Eisenthal

OTTAWA, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- Last week's multilateral peace talks here on the Middle East refugee problem were far from a raging success, according to Canadian officials.

But the talks did achieve something of a breakthrough in getting Israel for the first time to discuss the refugee problem with Palestinian negotiators.

All in all, some 38 delegations participated in the talks, including the United Nations. But Syria and Lebanon were no-shows.

Israel had refused to attend an earlier

session of the multilateral working group on refugees here last May and had threatened to pull its delegation out this time around.

The Israelis objected to the inclusion of Mohammad Hallaj, by his own admission a member of the Palestine National Council, as head of the Palestinian delegation. The PNC is the Palestine Liberation Organization's so-called parliament-in-exile, and Israeli officials have refused to sanction PLO involvement in the peace talks.

But the Israeli delegation acquiesced after it was announced that Hallaj's membership in the PNC had in fact "lapsed" late last year.

The talks began in earnest last Thursday and focused on seven themes, according to Marc Perron, head of the Canadian delegation, who chaired both rounds of talks here as well as the opening organizational meeting in Moscow last January.

He said the parties reached "substantial agreement" on how to proceed with the first three issues: refugee-related data bases, human resource development, and vocational training and job creation.

Discussions on the fourth theme, family reunification, made little headway.

"Despite a long and serious debate, the parties were unable to reach consensus," said Perron.

Time constraints apparently prevented the parties from continuing discussion on the other themes and "it was agreed to continue discussion of all seven themes at the next meeting of the working group," he said.

The next round of talks is slated to take place in Norway early next year.

Despite the limited progress, Perron did not feel last week's talks were a waste.

"We should not lose sight of what we have achieved," he said. "For the first time in many years, key regional parties sat down together to talk about refugees displaced by the Arab-Israeli conflict."

"We met, we talked and we will talk again," he said. "Optimists by nature, we Canadians would consider this a beginning, not an end."

The Israeli Embassy in Ottawa did not release a statement following Thursday's session and later refused to comment on the talks.

But Robert Ritter, national executive director of the Canada-Israel Committee, was optimistic.

"It is our hope that the working group, with Israel's full participation, can now concentrate on the real task of finding the means for ameliorating the suffering of refugees throughout the Middle East," he said.

ISRAEL SCALES BACK LEBANON FORCE
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- Israel began scaling back its forces in the southern Lebanon security zone as calm returned to the northern border after a hail of Katyusha rocket attacks last week.

Israelis on the northern border enjoyed a quiet weekend with both Jerusalem and pro-Iranian Hezbollah guerrillas in Lebanon apparently intent on reducing tensions.

Analysts said the exchanges last week could be viewed as an attempt by both Israel and Hezbollah to test the tacit rules of the game, under which both sides agree to limit actions to the 9-mile-deep Israeli-controlled buffer zone in southern Lebanon.

GERMANY EARMARKS \$6 MILLION FOR RESTORATION OF AUSCHWITZ

By David Kantor

BONN, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- The German government will provide Poland with \$6 million for long-overdue restoration work at the site of the former Auschwitz death camp.

The decision was announced last Friday on the heels of a unanimous resolution by the German parliament calling on the government to fund preservation of sites commemorating victims of the Nazis.

The Bundestag specifically cited the need to maintain the Auschwitz death camp in Poland, where over 1.5 million Jews perished at the hands of the Nazis.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman said \$1.6 million of the 1993 federal budget has already been earmarked for the restoration of Auschwitz. The remainder will be transferred to Poland in annual installments through 1996.

The legislative body also cited the need to maintain memorial sites commemorating victims of Communist dictatorship in the former East Germany. Some Nazi facilities, including the Buchenwald concentration camp, were used by the Communists to persecute their opponents.

Analysts believe the recent wave of neo-Nazi violence prompted an alarmed political leadership to put forward the Bundestag resolution.

More than 100,000 Germans joined in Bonn on Sunday to protest right-wing violence against foreigners.

A similar demonstration in Berlin last Sunday attracted 350,000 people but was marred by anarchists, who threw eggs and heckled government speakers, such as Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

These demonstrations are in line with a call by the Bundestag to manifest the will of a large majority of Germans to live in peace with the non-German population.

Meanwhile, the Interior Committee of the legislature heard testimony last week on the involvement of German army soldiers in neo-Nazi violence.

The Defense Ministry knows of 24 such cases, a spokesman said.

One soldier is serving a five-year sentence for manslaughter in a special facility for youth offenders. Two other soldiers were arrested on manslaughter charges.

POPE CALLS ON GERMAN CATHOLICS TO COMBAT RACISM, ANTI-SEMITISM

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- In the face of mounting xenophobia in Germany, Pope John Paul II has launched a strong appeal to German Catholics to combat racism and to defend Jews from anti-Semitism.

In an 11-page speech Saturday to bishops from the former East Germany, the pope called racism and anti-Semitism "violations of human rights."

"Dear brothers," he said, "you must work wholeheartedly to impede the racist nationalist tendencies which are spreading, above all among young people, and which endanger the image of Germany."

He warned that the "indifference and apathy" of Christians in the face of racist violence is no less dangerous than the violence itself.

"In this regard," he said, "I want to urge

you to work in a particular way to protect your fellow Jewish citizens. The violation of synagogues and the attacks on commemorative monuments which, given their painful history, are of great importance to the Jews, can never be tolerated."

He said, "You should thus work so that your Jewish fellow citizens do not become discouraged, and that they remain in your homeland, which is also theirs."

The pope said it is not enough to "warn against these violations of human rights," but stressed that the "dangerous motivations" behind them must be condemned.

These, he said, include the economic crisis, unemployment, and the continuation from the Communist era of an atheist and materialist mentality.

Commentators in Rome said the pope's speech was extremely important within the framework of the ongoing improvement in Jewish-Catholic relations, as well as in the Vatican's view of contemporary events.

"It is witness to the concern with which the Holy See views the situation in the countries of Eastern Europe, countries in which the economic crisis and the abandonment of religious practice are significantly linked," wrote Sandro Berrettoni in the Italian daily La Stampa.

The pope's support for the Jews came on the eve of the publication of the Catholic Church's new catechism, which includes a denunciation of the Holocaust and a definitive rejection of the description of Jews as "Christ-killers."

It also came only two days after the pontiff met with World Jewish Congress President Edgar Bronfman, during a regular session of a joint Jewish-Vatican commission on Jewish-Catholic dialogue.

GERMAN POLICE PREVENT NEO-NAZIS FROM DEMONSTRATING AT SS GRAVES

By David Kantor

BONN, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- A heavy police presence managed Sunday to prevent some 2,000 neo-Nazis from demonstrating at the military cemetery of Halbe, south of Berlin, where 40,000 soldiers, many of them from SS units, are buried.

Twelve neo-Nazis were arrested and dozens of weapons confiscated.

This followed a demonstration Saturday in Bonn, where 100,000 people marched to protest right-wing attacks on foreigners.

Local police in the state of Brandenburg were backed up by federal riot police units and a border guard unit to counter the neo-Nazis.

Much of the town of Halbe was blocked to regular traffic as police checked identification documents, looking for neo-Nazi activists from various countries.

Some 500 neo-Nazis attempted to demonstrate in the nearby town of Koernigs. But there again they were stopped by large numbers of police, who warned them to disperse before breaking into their ranks.

In the northern city of Hamburg, 19 neo-Nazis were arrested Sunday near a war memorial. They carried Nazi banners, a violation of German law, to mark a national day of mourning for the victims of wars and violence.

That occasion was otherwise observed peacefully in several state ceremonies, at which high-ranking officials issued sharp warnings against the continued neo-Nazi attacks on foreigners.

HOLOCAUST-DENIER DAVID IRVING FORCIBLY DEPORTED FROM CANADA

By Gil Kezwer

TORONTO, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- In a move hailed by Jewish groups, Canada has deported Holocaust-denier David Irving, who defied a ban on entering the country and then refused to leave when ordered to do so.

Irving, a darling of the neo-Nazi movement, was handcuffed by Canadian immigration officials on Friday and put aboard the first available flight to his native Britain.

His forceful ejection from Canada followed a ruling by an immigration adjudicator in Niagara Falls, Ontario, that Irving had failed to comply with an earlier ruling ordering him to leave the country within 48 hours.

Irving was first arrested in Victoria, British Columbia, at the end of October, after ignoring a ban on entering the country. He later tried to cross into the United States at Niagara Falls but was turned back by U.S. officials and arrested on the Canadian side of the border.

Irving called the deportation ruling a "travesty," saying he would seek a judicial review.

His deportation ended a two-week speaking tour in which Irving was in and out of custody. Despite his various arrests, he managed to address groups throughout the country.

Observers and law-enforcement officials point to Irving's presence and speeches as a source of trouble.

Police in Kitchener, Ontario, called suspicious a fire there Nov. 7 that caused extensive damage to the home of an anti-Nazi activist who had just demonstrated against Irving.

David Littman, director of the Canadian office of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, said Irving stirs up neo-Nazis wherever he goes. "Just last month, he was the chief organizer and sponsor of a meeting of leading international fascists in London," he said.

Barred By Germany, Austria, Italy

Canada is one of a growing list of countries that have effectively barred Irving, a former mainstream historian who has turned his career over to trying to prove that the Holocaust did not occur. Irving claims the gas chambers at Auschwitz were added after World War II as a tourist attraction.

He has been barred from Germany, where last May a court convicted him of defaming the dead by claiming the Holocaust has been greatly exaggerated. He is also persona non grata in Austria and Italy.

Canada's deportation order means Irving may not return to this country without special ministerial permit, a request very rarely granted to deportees.

Irving previously spoke throughout Canada in 1986, 1989 and 1990.

Irving's deportation pleased Jewish groups, particularly the Canadian Jewish Congress, which led the Jewish community's campaign against allowing Irving entry into Canada.

Bernie Farber, a spokesman for the CJC, commended the Immigration Department "for putting together a rock-solid case, proving David Irving is everything everyone has always said about him, that he's a fraud and a liar. We hope this puts an end to his Holocaust-denial career."

Similarly, B'nai Brith Canada's League for Human Rights applauded Irving's deportation.

IN NOSTALGIC ADDRESS, HERZOG SAYS ENSURING CONTINUITY IS TOP PRIORITY

By Lainie Blum-Cogan

NEW YORK, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- In a speech resonant with sweet nostalgia and optimism for the future, Israeli President Chaim Herzog urged American Jewish federation leaders gathered here last week to place the subject of Jewish continuity at the top of their agenda.

Herzog addressed the 61st General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations at an international plenary held last Thursday evening in Radio City Music Hall. The event capped a day of forums and workshops dedicated to the Jewish continuity issue.

Herzog said that Jewish education must be the first priority of the organized Jewish community both in Israel and the Diaspora. He urged the leadership to work hard to "stem the tide of assimilation," saying that "your future and our future depend on it."

One of the "great challenges of the Jewish people," he said, is the "preservation of our unique spiritual and cultural heritage."

Herzog opened his address with a "sincere and heartfelt" greeting to President-elect Bill Clinton, with the hope that he "will continue to develop and expand the special relationship" between the United States and Israel.

He quickly added a note of gratitude to President Bush for his "major role" in the Middle East peace process and wished the outgoing president and his wife the best of luck.

Herzog, who will retire from office in May after serving 10 years as Israel's sixth president, talked of the "oneness of the Jewish people" he felt during his numerous visits to the world's Jewish communities.

Update On Campaigns

He shared emotional reminiscences of his visits to Jewish communities in such far-flung places as Fiji, Singapore, Czechoslovakia, Zaire, Holland and Argentina.

As president, Herzog made the first visit by an Israeli chief of state to Germany. During that trip, he visited several concentration camp sites and "swore in the name of the Jewish people never to forget and never to forgive."

Herzog's face shone with pride and optimism when he reflected on the changes that have taken place in the world since he assumed office.

In 1983, he said, the concepts of perestroika and glasnost were "unknown and unheard of." It is an "irony of history," he said, that the Soviet Union, which had been the world's champion of anti-Israel sentiment, dissolved itself only after recognizing the legitimacy of the Jewish state.

Also speaking at the Radio City event were Joel Tauber, national chairman of the United Jewish Appeal, and Dr. Gerald Halbert, president of the United Israel Appeal of Canada, who gave reports on their respective fund-raising campaigns.

Although there "does not exist in Canada an ideal climate for fund raising," said Halbert, UIA-Canada has collected over \$100 million in pledges for Operation Exodus and is reporting an increase in 1993 pledges. Operation Exodus is the campaign to finance the absorption of immigrants in Israel.

American contributions to UJA's Operation Exodus campaign total \$770 million to date, according to Tauber. The target sum for the campaign is \$1 billion, which Tauber said he would like to complete by the end of 1993.