

**OFFICIALS MEET WITH HANAN ASHRAWI
IN EFFORT TO RESTART PEACE TALKS****By Deborah Kalb
States News Service**

WASHINGTON, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- Having thwarted, for now at least, a move to impose U.N. sanctions against Israel, the United States is directing its diplomatic efforts at persuading the Arabs to drop the deportation issue and return to the peace talks with Israel.

As part of those efforts, senior State Department officials met here Monday with Hanan Ashrawi, who has served as spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation to the negotiations even though she is not an official member of it.

The meetings took place as Israel's new ambassador to Washington, Itamar Rabinovich, arrived here Monday and presented his credentials at the State Department.

Rabinovich, the chief Israeli negotiator with the Syrians in the now-suspended peace talks, took over from former Ambassador Zalman Shoval at a time when Israel continues to face international pressure on the issue of the 415 Palestinians it deported to Lebanon in December.

In a compromise worked out with the United States, the Israelis have agreed to return 100 of the deportees to the administered territories almost immediately and shorten the terms of exile for the 300 or so others.

But the Palestinians have rejected the deal and say they are not returning to the peace talks until all of the deportees have been returned to the territories.

The United States is eager to resolve the issue before Secretary of State Warren Christopher travels to the region next week. The purpose of Christopher's trip is to get the peace talks back on track, a task which all sides agree is impossible until the deportation issue is resolved.

While State Department officials would not disclose details of the talks with Ashrawi, observers said the United States would now likely try to convince the Palestinians that it was in their best interests to resume talks with Israel.

U.S. Officials To Meet With Israeli Delegation

Ashrawi met Monday with Edward Djerejian, the U.S. assistant secretary of state for Near East and South Asian affairs; and his deputy, Daniel Kurtzer; and Martin Indyk, a National Security Council specialist on the Middle East.

She also was to meet with Samuel Lewis, director of the State Department's policy planning staff, and two other members of the staff who have been involved in the peace talks, Dennis Ross and Aaron Miller.

State Department officials were scheduled to meet later in the week with an Israeli delegation, led by Cabinet Secretary Elyakim Rubinstein, who heads the Israeli team negotiating with the Palestinians.

Ambassador Rabinovich met Monday with Deputy Secretary of State Clifton Wharton, in what an Israeli spokeswoman termed a "protocol" session, in which the new ambassador presented his credentials. She said the two men did not discuss the peace process or the deportation issue.

Meanwhile, the State Department is protesting Israel's handling of the arrests of three Palestinian Americans suspected of providing assistance and funds to the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement.

The Palestinian Americans have been detained without charges under Israeli emergency regulations inherited from the period of the British Mandate.

The U.S. position is "that if someone is suspected of having committed a crime, charges should be brought, access to legal counsel assured and a public trial held," State Department spokesman Joe Snyder said Monday.

The United States has protested in writing about "delays in consular access to the three American detainees," Snyder said at his daily briefing.

Family members of two of the detained Arab Americans claim they are innocent of involvement with Hamas.

At a news conference here last week, Amal Jarad, wife of detained Illinois resident Mohammed Jarad, said her husband was a "model citizen" who had never been arrested and had never broken the law.

She said he was carrying only \$100 dollars with him, not \$100,000 as the Israelis have charged.

Amal Jarad and officials of the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee raised the issue in meetings last week with Deputy Assistant Secretary Kurtzer, Sen. Paul Simon (D-Ill.) and representatives of Sen. Carol Moseley-Braun (D-Ill.) and Rep. Dan Rostenkowski (D-Ill.).

**IMMIGRATION FOR SOME FALASH MORA
APPROVED BY ISRAELI GOVERNMENT****By Gil Sedan**

JERUSALEM, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- After months of public debate and government deliberations, the Cabinet voted to back a plan that would allow the Falash Mora to immigrate here from Ethiopia as individuals, but not as Jews under the Law of Return.

The move would apparently block the chances for a mass immigration of the Falash Mora, Ethiopians whose ancestors were Jews who converted to Christianity.

Ethiopian Jewish groups in Israel have generally attacked the plan as not going far enough to bring the entire Falash Mora community to Israel.

Many Ethiopian Jews in Israel have relatives among the Falash Mora who remain in Africa. The group is variously estimated to number between 20,000 and 40,000.

Some 4,000 Falash Mora are now waiting in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia's capital, hoping to emigrate and settle in Israel. Thousands more live in rural areas.

Ethiopian immigrant groups here, who have staged demonstrations against the recommendation, demand that the entire sect be recognized as Jews. Under the Law of Return, any Jew has an automatic right of immigration to Israel.

As the Cabinet met Sunday to vote on the plan, scores of Ethiopians demonstrated outside Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's offices.

The plan approved by the Cabinet was the recommendation of a ministerial committee that studied the issue for months and proposed that immigration be approved on an individual basis using the guideline of family reunification.

Some of the Falash Mora would also be eligible to immigrate under the Law of Return if they have Jewish parents or grandparents, or if they have decided to return to Judaism.

The recommendations were approved by 15 ministers, with the enthusiastic support of Rabin.

Minister of Education Shulamit Aloni, Minister of Agriculture Ya'acov Tsur and Minister of Economic Development Shimon Shetreet all abstained from the vote.

Despite the general approval, some ministers criticized the plan because it would not include brothers and sisters within the rubric of family reunion.

Sibling relations had been excluded because it was feared that it would greatly expand the number of eligible Falash Mora, since there is a high occurrence of divorce and remarriage in the Ethiopian community.

Aloni reiterated her position that the Jewishness of the Falash Mora should be determined by rabbis of the Ethiopian community, not by veteran Israeli rabbis.

Now that the cabinet approved the recommendations, Israel was expected to begin negotiations with the government of Ethiopia to work out the procedure of allowing Falash Mora to emigrate to Israel.

Haim Divon, Israel's ambassador to Ethiopia, reported that the authorities in Ethiopia were still studying the recommendations of the committee and have not yet made any decisions about allowing the emigration of Falash Mora.

The Ethiopian government was reportedly pleased with the proposal to allow only selective emigration on the basis of family reunification rather than mass emigration.

RABIN SAYS NO REASON FOR BIAS AGAINST GAYS IN THE MILITARY

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has gone on record as saying he sees no reason why gays should be discriminated against in the army.

The comment from Rabin, who also holds the defense portfolio, came in response to the disclosure last week that a leading scientist working on a top-secret defense project was dropped because he acknowledged he was gay.

Professor Uzi Even, head of the chemistry department at Tel Aviv University, was ousted from a project he had worked on for 10 years on the grounds that his homosexuality was a security risk.

Even shocked lawmakers and the general public when he recounted last Tuesday to Knesset members in dry and somber tones how he was forced off the job. Even's testimony was later aired on television.

At a Cabinet meeting Sunday, Rabin promised that Even's case would be investigated with an eye toward reinstating him to his former position.

Even went public with his story at a special seminar dealing with gay and lesbian rights issues held at the Knesset at the initiative of Labor Knesset member Yael Dayan.

The seminar was held despite vociferous protests from Orthodox members of Parliament.

Two Cabinet ministers from the left-wing Meretz bloc, Amnon Rubinstein and Yossi Sarid, said they were particularly disturbed by Even's account and urged Rabin to take action.

Rabin made a special point in his brief discussion of the subject to commend a senior Israel Defense Force medical officer who is gay. Rabin noted that this officer's homosexuality had not stood in the way of his promotion or otherwise affected his career.

The Israeli army position stands in contrast to that of the U.S. military, which has been waging a fierce battle recently against a proposal by President Clinton to allow homosexuals to serve in the armed forces.

Rabin and senior officers conceded that homosexuality is a matter of concern in the army, mostly in connection with security clearance for sensitive duties.

But being gay was not necessarily an issue in drafting soldiers, they said.

Rubinstein said the government would be seen as signaling a positive attitude toward gays if it were to restore Even to his defense job and give him back his security clearance.

Even said he now expected the security authorities and the army to "show the same courage in admitting their error as I showed in coming forward and speaking out."

POWERFUL SENATOR VISITS ISRAEL WITHOUT GIVING BAD NEWS ON AID By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- When U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) arrived on a visit here this week, Israeli officials feared he would warn the government it could not expect to continue receiving \$3 billion in U.S. assistance each year.

Leahy, who chairs the powerful Senate Appropriations subcommittee on foreign operations, has made statements in the past about how he wants to reform America's nearly \$15 billion foreign aid program.

And with the new American president promising to focus "like a laser beam" on domestic priorities, Israeli officials apparently expected the worst.

But as it turned out, the U.S. lawmaker did not broach the delicate subject of cutting U.S. aid to Israel during his talks here Monday with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Finance Minister Avraham Shohat.

Instead, he focused on other issues, such as Israel's absorption of new immigrants and its use of U.S. aid.

Leahy expressed admiration for Israel's achievements in absorbing Jewish immigrants from all over the world.

The senator said he could not envision a similar process taking place in the United States.

A clearly relieved Shohat came out of his meeting with Leahy saying that Israel had in the Vermont Democrat "a great friend in the Senate."

At \$3 billion a year, Israel is America's largest recipient of aid.

Israel receives \$1.8 billion a year in military grants, most of which goes toward purchases of U.S. equipment, and \$1.2 billion of economic aid, much of which is used to pay back old debts.

Shohat said he totally opposed ideas raised by some Israeli politicians, including former Finance Minister Yitzhak Modai, that Israel gradually give up American aid at its own initiative.

GERMANY HAS INCREASE IN NEO-NAZI ATTACKS, BUT LESS SUPPORT FOR RIGHT

By David Kantor

BONN, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- The German Interior Ministry released figures last week showing that there has been a dramatic increase in the number of neo-Nazi attacks in the country.

But at the same time polls are also showing a marked decrease in support of right-wing extremist groups among the German public, according to a survey taken by one of Germany's leading public opinion research institutes.

In the figures released by the Interior Ministry, it was shown there were 77 desecrations of Jewish cemeteries or monuments in Germany last year, more than double the number for the previous year.

The Interior Ministry, which released this figure Monday, said special measures have been taken to protect Jewish objects which may be targeted for damage by right-wing extremists.

According to the ministry, some 41,400 neo-Nazi activists are known to police, of whom 6,400 have been defined as "militant."

But attacks against persons seem to be on the decline.

Since November, the number of attacks against foreigners has dropped considerably. In January, 70 such attacks were recorded, far less than the average for a typical month in 1992, when nearly 200 attacks occurred.

Some 90 per cent of attacks against foreigners last year were directed against asylum-seekers.

And more than 70 percent of these were perpetrated by youths. Only 2 percent of the known perpetrators are older than 30, the ministry said.

Interior Minister Rudolf Seiters said the number of violent racial incidents was 2,285 in 1992, up from 1,483 in 1991.

This represents an increase of 54 percent.

The statistics about right-wing extremism were gathered by the Cologne-based Federal Office for Internal Security.

17 Died Last Year In Attacks

They show that in 1992, 17 people lost their lives in attacks directly attributed to neo-Nazi groups. Seven of the dead were non-Germans.

The most notable increase in violent incidents has been registered in arson and bomb attacks. In 1992, 701 such attacks were registered, compared to 383 in 1991.

In another development, the interior minister of the state of North Rhine Westphalia, Herbert Schnoor, revealed that a trade union called the German Workers Association has been infiltrated and practically overtaken by the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party, or NPD.

Despite these figures, the poll conducted by Klaus Liepelt, a pollster for Infas, showed decreased support for right-wing groups.

Speaking Saturday in Saarbrücken, Liepelt said the new pattern manifested itself in a drastic decrease in support for the Republicans, an extremist, rightist party led by Franz Schönhuber, a former SS officer.

Three months ago, the polls gave the Republicans 10 per cent or so of the popular vote, far more than the 5 percent needed for a seat in the Bonn legislature.

But polls taken in recent days indicate that the Republicans would only get 3.5 to 4 per cent,

which would keep them out of the national Parliament.

The pollsters have concluded that many Germans have been irritated by the damage caused to their country's image after the wave of violent attacks against foreigners.

Many others have become genuinely concerned that neo-Nazis would make headway into center-stage politics and would change their lives for the worse.

These concerns have been manifested in dozens of vigils against neo-Nazism and anti-Semitism.

But in the past few days, some opinion leaders have begun to criticize the daily shows of concern for the foreigners.

A popular television entertainer, Thomas Gottschalk, who initiated some of the first vigils, said the demonstrations had become a matter of fashion and nothing more.

But former Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher, writing Sunday in the newspaper Welt am Sonntag, said the vigils were still important, because they showed that people are involved and want a say in running their affairs.

FRENCH HOLOCAUST-DENIER AGAIN SUSPENDED FROM JOB

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- A French Holocaust-denier whose attempt to return to his teaching job was blocked by protesting students has again been suspended by the school where he taught.

Bernard Notin was suspended indefinitely from teaching at Lyon III University in southeastern France, which had agreed to take him back on his job as an economics lecturer after three years of suspension.

Last week some 50 demonstrators, led by the French Union of Jewish Students, physically prevented the Holocaust-denier from entering the classroom.

Notin, who wrote an article in an academic journal denying the existence of gas chambers during the Holocaust, said after the decision to suspend him indefinitely that he never meant to deny the existence of gas chambers in the Nazi death camps.

But in an interview on French television a few days before he was blocked from entering the classroom, Notin said he stood by every single word he had written on the subject.

In his about-face a few hours after his latest suspension was made public, he told Agence France Presse, "I do not doubt at all the reality of the Jewish genocide and of the gas chambers."

But, he said, "I do condemn the extensive media attention to the genocide, leading to its becoming banal, and I criticize the indecent and permanent showing of the horrible though sometimes dubious methods."

He asked "those who may have been hurt by my writings to forgive me."

But in order to prevent any further clashes, Notin's superiors canceled his lecture.

Notin provoked a scandal in 1989 when it was discovered that he had published, in a journal of the French National Center for Scientific Research, a text denying the gas chambers' existence.

As punishment, he was suspended from teaching for three years but was to resume his lectures last month.

Notin was unavailable for comment.

FORMER OSI LAWYERS TESTIFY THEY HAD NO DOUBTS ABOUT DEMJANJUK

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, Feb. 8 (JTA) -- Two former U.S. Justice Department lawyers have defended their actions in an investigation into the handling of the case against John Demjanjuk, accused of being the brutal Treblinka guard known as "Ivan the Terrible."

Bruce Einhorn, one of the lawyers, testified here Friday that he knew of no documents that would have cast doubt on the identity of Demjanjuk.

One week earlier in Boston, Allan Ryan Jr., former head of the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, testified that his office did not withhold any exculpatory evidence in the case.

Both former prosecutors appeared in a court-ordered review of whether lawyers for the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations suppressed evidence that might have cleared Demjanjuk during a nine-year investigation leading to his extradition to Israel in 1986.

Demjanjuk, a 72-year-old retired Cleveland auto worker, has been convicted by an Israeli court of serving as a sadistic gas chamber operator known as "Ivan the Terrible" at the Treblinka death camp, where 900,000 Jews were killed during the war. The Israeli Supreme Court is reviewing Demjanjuk's appeal of his death sentence.

Demjanjuk's defense here and in Israel claims that not he, but a fellow Ukrainian named Ivan Marchenko, was the real Ivan the Terrible.

Last June, the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati, on its own initiative, ordered a probe on whether OSI prosecutors concealed documents that might have buttressed Demjanjuk's claim.

The court appointed U.S. District Judge Thomas Wiseman Jr., of Nashville, as a special master to oversee the investigation.

Between 1977 and 1986, the U.S. government made its case against Demjanjuk in three sequential phases, first denaturalization, then deportation, and finally extradition to Israel.

The primary charges and evidence against Demjanjuk were introduced in the first phase, and then formed the basis of the next two phases.

Lawyer On Stand For Three Hours

Einhorn, now a federal immigration judge, took the stand for three hours Friday. Although he was the OSI's lead attorney in the deportation phase, he said he had hardly any involvement with the earlier denaturalization proceedings, and therefore would not have been privy to evidence introduced at that time.

During questioning by his own attorney, Jeffrey Mausner, and Justice Department attorney Dana Biehl, Einhorn was asked whether he had known of any documents that could have cleared Demjanjuk. Einhorn replied, "Absolutely not."

To the question, "Did you have any doubts during he deportation hearings that Demjanjuk was Ivan the Terrible, who operated the gas chambers at Treblinka?" Einhorn responded, "None."

Einhorn is a Los Angeles lay leader of the Anti-Defamation League and heads its regional civil rights committee.

In more than four hours of questioning Jan. 29, Ryan, now an attorney for Harvard University, testified that the first time he saw a February

1980 memo from former OSI attorney George Parker to Walter Rockler, former director of the Nazi-hunting unit, and himself, was last October.

Ryan said the memo contained such statements as "even if we may be comforted as having the right man for the wrong act" and "even though we doubt that Ivan was at the gas chambers."

Ryan explained that he was certain he had not seen the memo before 1992 because, "I found the things said and the assumptions made so unacceptable that, had I seen it in 1980, I would have set Parker straight," he said, adding "you either have the right man for the right act or you have nothing."

Ryan also did not recall having a meeting in March 1980 with both Parker and Rockler. Parker testified last November and told the court that he quit his job in OSI after his co-workers and supervisors ignored his concerns that Demjanjuk was not Ivan the Terrible.

Memo Did Not Raise Doubts

Before Parker left the office in June 1980, Ryan said he had asked for a memo from Parker about his thoughts on the Demjanjuk case. The three-page memo did not raise the "slightest doubt on the case or the identity of John Demjanjuk," Ryan said.

Doubts about Demjanjuk's identity were bolstered in 1991, when the statements of 28 former guards at the Treblinka death camp were released by the former Soviet Union, indicating that Ivan Marchenko was Ivan the Terrible.

Ryan emphasized that it was always his policy that exculpatory evidence should be turned over to the defense, even if it had not been requested. "I always believed that this view was understood by the rest of OSI," he said. "But it is possible that this may not have been understood by all OSI attorneys."

The discovery policy was in question due to excerpts from interrogations of Pavel Leleko and Nikolay Malagon, former guards at Treblinka, which came to the attention of the Justice Department during the case of Fedor Fedorenko, another Nazi guard, in 1978. In these statements, both guards identified a man named Marchenko as the guard who operated the gas chambers.

According to the testimony of John Horrigan and Norman Moscovitz last month, the statements were not turned over to Demjanjuk's attorneys because the proceeding in which Demjanjuk was stripped of his citizenship was a civil action.

It therefore did not require the broad disclosure procedures that are required in criminal cases. Horrigan and Moscovitz were the two attorneys who handled the case against Demjanjuk that led to his deportation.

At the hearing here, Ryan said that he had not seen these documents until last summer.

Ryan defended both Moscovitz and Horrigan, emphasizing that they are "absolutely not lawyers who will cover up evidence.

"I am absolutely confident in Moscovitz's investigation and discovery requirements," Ryan said. "Nothing I saw in my office, then and now, leads me to think that we did not do anything that was not worthy of the Department of Justice," he added.

Friday's hearing was the last scheduled one in the inquiry before Wiseman is expected to hand in his report to the appeals court in early May.

(Contributing to this report was Roslyn Singer of the Jewish Advocate in Boston.)