

## POPE INSTRUCTS CARMELITE NUNS TO VACATE CONVENT AT AUSCHWITZ

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, April 14 (JTA) -- A group of Carmelite nuns has received instructions from Pope John Paul II to vacate their convent on the site of the Auschwitz death camp, and has agreed to do so, say sources close to the situation.

Tadeusz Rakoczy, the Catholic bishop who presides over the town of Oswiecim, where Auschwitz is located, read a letter of instruction the pope sent to the 14 nuns on Wednesday.

According to sources in Poland, the pope wrote: "By the will of the church, you are to move to another convent in Oswiecim.

"Each one of you is free to choose either to continue her life as a Carmelite nun in the same community or to go back to her convent of origin. This is undoubtedly a moment of trial for each one of you," wrote the pope.

According to Stanislaw Krajewski, the American Jewish Committee representative in Poland, Rakoczy said the nuns "received the letter with full obedience to the Holy Father's will."

And in New York, Elan Steinberg, a spokesman for the chairman of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, quoted Rakoczy as saying the nuns agreed to move "within a reasonable time."

A Vatican spokesman in Rome said that the letter, written in Polish, was not a direct order for the nuns to leave the convent "although it could be interpreted as such.

"It was a letter in which the Holy Father expressed his thinking at this moment," the spokesman said. "Before making their decision whether or not to leave the convent, the nuns had asked what was the thinking of the Holy Father on the situation."

In Paris, Jean Kahn, president of the European Jewish Congress, praised the pope's letter, saying it was "high time for the pope himself to take the initiative to give the only order able to convince the nuns to leave the premises. Delay after delay, this affair seemed to never end."

### Protests Called Off

Theo Klein, the chief Jewish representative at the 1986 and 1987 negotiations in Geneva with the Catholic Church over the convent at Auschwitz, said Wednesday that he "will be fully satisfied when the nuns leave the convent and return it to where it belongs" and "take away the cross they erected in front of the building."

These steps, taken by the very highest level of Catholic hierarchy, appear to remove all obstacles to the participation of Jewish groups in commemorations of the 50th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising, slated to be held Sunday and Monday in the Polish capital.

As a result, Rabbi Avi Weiss, president of Amcha, the Coalition for Jewish Concerns, cancelled a protest he had planned to hold at Auschwitz during the Warsaw commemoration.

However, the activist rabbi warned in a statement: "If the sisters do not leave the Auschwitz convent in one month, we will have no choice but to return to demonstrate."

Weiss and a small group of followers demon-

strated at the convent in July 1989, which led to physical confrontation between Weiss and supporters of the convent, and to a diplomatic imbroglio on an international scale over the matter.

Despite the apparently unequivocal instructions from the Vatican, there continue to be tensions in Poland over the planned relocation of the nuns to a convent nearby the death camp.

In the Polish daily *Zycie Warszawy*, Bishop Tadeusz Pieronek, vice secretary of the Polish Episcopate, or bishops conference, wrote Wednesday that the decision to move or not "is an expression of the nuns' sovereign will.

"Of course, in the Catholic Church there exists the concept of obedience, but the sisters have the right to make their own decision. What can be decided locally should not be decided higher," Pieronek wrote. "Legally, the abandoned convent will still be a convent for a hundred years -- that is the order's property."

According to Krajewski, Pieronek also said that international Jewish organizations exacerbate the problem, while the tiny Jewish community in Poland is cooperative.

*(Contributing to this report were JTA correspondent Michel Di Paz in Paris and JTA staff writer Debra Nussbaum Cohen in New York.)*

## NO FURTHER CONCESSIONS FROM ISRAEL BEFORE TALKS, RABIN TELLS MUBARAK

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, April 14 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin appears to have succeeded in resisting pressure to make further concessions to the Palestinians without torpedoing the prospects for a resumption of the Middle East peace talks next week.

Rabin and Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak emerged from a summit meeting Wednesday in the Egyptian city of Ismailia saying they were hopeful the Palestinians would return to the negotiating table as scheduled next Tuesday in Washington.

Mubarak had been expected to press Rabin to make further concessions on such issues as the return of some 400 Palestinians whom Israel deported to Lebanon four months ago.

But instead the two leaders apparently discussed "Arab expectations" of Israel, and the Egyptian leader appeared to accept Rabin's statement that no further concessions would be made until the peace talks resume.

The only sign of a new development in the Israeli position was Rabin's confirmation of recent media reports that Israel might accept Faisal Husseini as official head of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks.

But even on that issue, the prime minister said Israel would have nothing to say until it is sure the Palestinians want him to head the delegation. There have been reports of divisions in the Palestinian camp over this issue.

Husseini is currently chief adviser to the team, having been banned by the former Likud-led government from direct participation because he is a resident of eastern Jerusalem.

Mubarak reportedly discussed the issue when he met Tuesday with Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat and Husseini.

With the flurry of diplomatic activity, Mu-

barak has sought to demonstrate that his role, as the leader of the only Arab country at peace with Israel, is indispensable -- and therefore proof to Washington that its multibillion dollar aid package to Egypt is money well spent.

During the summit meeting Wednesday, the Egyptian leader also assured Rabin that Syrian President Hafez Assad is ready for a full and comprehensive peace. Repeating a phrase he used during his visit last week to Washington, Mubarak said Assad told him he is willing to give "everything for everything."

Rabin was less enthusiastic, saying he wanted to hear those words directly from Assad.

#### Egypt Sending Delegation To Israel

The proof of how successful the Egyptian mediation effort has been will come on Tuesday, when Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians are scheduled to return to Washington for a new round of peace negotiations with Israel.

Mubarak expressed "strong hope" Wednesday that the Palestinians would indeed show up. But he said a formal decision on Palestinian participation would not be made until Arab foreign ministers meet in Damascus this weekend.

In Washington, meanwhile, Assistant Secretary of State Edward Djerejian continued consultations Wednesday with representatives of the various parties to the peace talks.

In his comments on the possibility of Hussein heading the Palestinian delegation, Rabin emphasized that an Israeli agreement to this move would not amount to a departure from the guidelines negotiated before the first round of the Middle East peace talks opened in Madrid in October 1991.

The Likud-led Israeli government at the time had objected to the participation of Jerusalem residents in the Palestinian delegation, fearing that it would compromise Israel's stance that the status of a united Jerusalem under Israeli sovereignty is not negotiable.

Rabin said Wednesday that Israel would not be changing its position if it accepted Hussein, since the Palestinian leader also has a West Bank address.

In Washington, Israeli officials said accepting Hussein in the delegation should not be seen as a "sweetener" to encourage the Palestinians to return to the peace talks.

Instead, they suggested that Israel's primary motivation for accepting Hussein would be to bolster the delegation's authority in the eyes of the Palestinians, since Hussein is seen as a genuine West Bank leader. Israeli officials have complained that they are not sure the Palestinians they are negotiating with have the authority to speak for the Palestinian people.

Yet Rabin also said in Ismailia that he was waiting until the Palestinians themselves approved the idea. Recent newspaper reports here have said that Hussein's direct participation in the Palestinian delegation could be a source of friction between him and Dr. Haidar Abdel-Shafi, the current head of the team.

Abdel-Shafi reportedly has taken a more hard-line approach than Hussein toward the return of the Palestinians deported to Lebanon.

Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi, however, has played down any difficulties that could occur, saying the two leaders would be able to work out any differences and sit together in the same delegation.

Meanwhile, one other outgrowth of the

Ismailia talks Wednesday was Mubarak's announcement that a large Egyptian delegation of 100 agricultural experts, officials, business leaders and journalists would come to Israel at the beginning of next month, to attend the opening of the AgriTech exhibition.

Officials of Israel's Agriculture Ministry expressed delight with this development, saying the delegation is an expression of the strong relations between the two countries.

*(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Deborah Kalb of States News Service in Washington.)*

#### **ATTACK THAT KILLED THREE IN LEBANON MIGHT HAVE BEEN PREVENTED, IDF SAYS** **By Hugh Orgel**

TEL AVIV, April 14 (JTA) -- A mine explosion that killed three Israeli paratroopers and seriously wounded two others in southern Lebanon might have been prevented if the army unit involved had followed standard procedures, according to initial reports.

In the attack Tuesday, a 12-man foot patrol spotted the mine a few miles west of Metulla, inside the security zone in southern Lebanon.

The Iranian-backed Shi'ite Hezbollah organization has claimed responsibility for the bombing.

The patrol reportedly disobeyed standing orders, which direct soldiers to move out of the area slowly and summon a specialized sappers unit to defuse the devices, according to an account in the daily Ha'aretz newspaper.

The movement of one of the soldiers apparently set off the charge, detonating two or three other explosive devices in the immediate vicinity.

The Israel Defense Force chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Ehud Barak, visited the scene of the attack with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who also holds the defense portfolio, and the northern front commander, Maj. Gen. Yitzhak Mordechai.

Barak appeared to confirm media reports that the 12-man patrol may have acted in error.

"We will carry out a thorough study of the incident and draw all possible conclusions and lessons," Barak said.

Israeli army sources said attacks of this sort were anticipated and that Hezbollah was responsible for most of the 40 explosive devices planted in the zone since the beginning of the year.

All but two of the devices had been neutralized by sappers of the IDF or its allied South Lebanon Army without casualties.

The IDF said Hezbollah was trying to sabotage the peace process with its attacks.

In the two other mishaps in the region this year, five soldiers of the SLA and IDF were killed.

The soldiers killed in Tuesday's attack were identified by the IDF as platoon commander Capt. Elad (Ephraim) Ben-David of Ashkelon; his deputy and section commander, Lt. Moshe Barri of Rehovot; and Sgt. Peter Rappaport of Beersheba.

They were buried in the military sections of their local cemeteries Wednesday.

The two wounded soldiers, flown by helicopter to Haifa's Rambam Hospital after on-the-spot treatment by the unit's medical officer, were reported to be in serious but stable condition.

IDF and SLA artillery and tank gunners retaliated Tuesday and Wednesday with a heavy bombardment of suspected Hezbollah forces outside the zone and IDF helicopter gunships fired missiles at selected targets.

**THE DIASPORA LAG**  
**LABOR SUPPORTERS IN U.S. FACE TASK**  
**OF RE-EDUCATING JEWS ABOUT ISRAEL**

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK (JTA) -- For 15 years, most Israeli government officials insisted that land was too high a price to pay for peace.

Now Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin says the opposite and is staking his policies, and his government, on the principle of territorial compromise.

Is it any wonder that some American Jews are confused?

At a recent Jewish gathering in Washington, a woman overheard someone talking and approached a pro-Israel activist with concern.

"Who is this guy? What's this crap about land for peace, about territorial compromise? Why is he spouting that?" the woman asked, according to the activist, who requested anonymity.

The activist replied, "I believe that's what the prime minister is spouting."

"Oh. Does he agree with the prime minister?" she asked.

"Yes, yes he does," said the activist.

The woman calmed down.

But for Tom Smerling, the man whose remarks initially upset her, the incident serves as an example of the difficulty that segments of the American Jewish community are having in accepting the policies of the new Israeli government.

"Some people call it the time warp factor. Or Diaspora lag," said Smerling, who heads Project Nishma, a 5-year old Washington-based organization dedicated to promoting the idea that territorial compromise is in Israel's security interest.

**Problem Of 'Cognitive Dissonance'**

"There's this cognitive dissonance, and it's really kind of comical," said the activist who defended Smerling.

"Land for peace is still considered a heresy, but supporting the prime minister of Israel, and his position on territorial compromise, is OK somehow.

"In some people's mind, what Rabin is doing, and the land-for-peace formula, is separate and distinct," the activist said.

For Israeli officials, this disparity bespeaks the need for "re-educating" American Jews about the new government's policies and about what is best for Israel.

For Smerling and the leaders of other American Jewish groups who tried to rally the community around dovish positions when they were out of favor in Jerusalem, the Labor Party's present struggle to get its views across to the American Jewish community is bitter reassurance that they do not have to close up shop.

Now that Israel's peace camp is in power, it needs their support as much if not more than when it was in opposition, these leaders say.

Somebody has to help American Jews understand "that what they were taught was best for Israel by the government of Israel for a decade and a half is not necessarily best for Israel," said Jonathan Jacoby.

Jacoby headed Americans for Peace Now until recently, when Rabin's Labor Party tapped him to create an American organization to support the party's ideas.

While the nascent group's nature and function -- not to mention its name -- have yet to be

defined, the decision to put Jacoby on the payroll speaks to the perceived need in Jerusalem to do more to gain American Jewish support.

The "Diaspora lag" was visible most recently during the recent debate over whether to accept Americans for Peace Now into the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

APN's application to join the mainstream organization aroused strong opposition from the Zionist Organization of America and other groups.

**Takes Time To Absorb New Perspectives**

Opponents argued that the acceptance of APN would give the Jewish community's imprimatur to the group's policies, some of which, such as dialogue with the Palestine Liberation Organization, have long been anathema to the Israeli government.

But APN's supporters emphasized that the group's positions, while not fully accepted by Rabin and the government policy guidelines, reflect those of a third of Israel's Cabinet ministers and Israeli President-designate Ezer Weizman.

In fact, the Zionist Organization of America's views are far more outlandish from the perspective of the Rabin government.

Under the rubric of "Support for the Government of Israel," in late 1991 the ZOA endorsed the idea that "Jordan is Palestine" and supported the notion of "peace for peace," rather than territorial compromise.

Both concepts were recently mocked by Rabin in an address to the Conference of Presidents.

"There's still this notion that on the scale of one to 10, the people who are most pro-Israel are the people who say Israel shouldn't have to give up anything. But what kind of standard is that? Where would the prime minister of Israel fall on that standard?" said the pro-Israel activist who asked not to be identified.

Nonetheless, that standard seems to hold. APN escaped having its application sent back to committee by a narrow 21-17 vote. And the question of whether to vote yes or no was hotly debated within the leadership even of those organizations that ultimately joined the 27-10 majority that admitted APN.

Gail Pressberg, president of APN, is not surprised by the "Diaspora lag."

"I think it takes time for people to absorb new perspectives, different perspectives," she said. "The fear level still exists with a lot of people, that if people make concessions, will Israel's security be harmed?"

**A Need To Introduce Laborites**

Jacoby acknowledges that one important task facing him is introducing the new generation of Labor Party leaders to American Jews and the American public, who are more familiar with Likud politicians like Benjamin Netanyahu than with his Labor counterparts.

"Jews need to be taught, and in a serious fashion, about the intellectual underpinnings of the policies of the present government of Israel," said Jacoby.

"This is not simply a time for propaganda; there's no more room for propaganda. It's a time for seriously answering people's questions, taking into account their concerns," said Jacoby.

"And, I hope, showing them that what the prime minister and his government are trying to do is what is best for Israel," he added.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:****WHEN IT COMES TO BUYING VODKA, POLISH CONSUMERS DEMAND KOSHER**

By Ruth E. Gruber

WARSAW (JTA) -- Poland, where only a few thousand Jews live today, is seeing an explosion of kosher vodkas on the shelves of its liquor stores and menus of its cafes and restaurants.

Drinking kosher vodka has become fashionable, and a plethora of brands with names like Polnisskosher, Cymes, Travka, Dawid, Rebeka and Judyta have burst onto the market in the past five years. Some in the business say there are as many as 20 different brands in all.

"Customer after customer comes in and asks for kosher vodka," a Warsaw liquor store manager was quoted in the press as saying. "If there is no kosher vodka to be had, some clients even wander off into the night looking elsewhere for kosher vodka rather than buying another type."

"Kosher is equated with purity, quality," commented Stanislaw Krajewski, the Warsaw representative of the American Jewish Committee. "I've even recently seen mineral water labeled kosher on the market in Wroclaw!"

"Customers hope that they are drinking a better, healthier kind of alcohol, that they're not given synthetic rubbish, and that the materials used in production were of the highest quality," John Meyer, an expert from the Beth Din in Manchester, England, was quoted as telling the Warsaw Voice newspaper.

Meyer, said the Voice, was brought to the vodka distillery at Lancut, in southern Poland, to design production line changes that would convert the distillery to fully kosher production and enable it to get a certificate of kashrut.

He told the Voice that he did not know if all the vodkas labeled "kosher" and on sale in Poland actually were kosher.

"I can guarantee only the vodkas from Lancut," he was quoted as saying, adding that the Lancut distillery invested several hundred thousand dollars to implement changes enabling kosher production.

The first of the new wave of kosher vodkas, Polnisskosher, began production in 1988 under the inspiration of Warsaw-born Holocaust survivor Zygmunt Nissenbaum, as a division of the state company Polmos, which at that time held a monopoly on liquor production.

Nissenbaum, who lives in Germany, directs a family foundation aimed at preserving Poland's Jewish cultural heritage.

**Rival Claims By Two Rabbis**

The scramble for the kosher market -- both domestic and for export -- came with the post-Communist introduction of a free-market economy.

The Polmos monopoly was dismantled and a series of bitter lawsuits over production rights were initiated.

The new freedoms have also nourished a festering conflict over which rabbi is competent to grant the lucrative certificates of kashrut.

Recent tension has particularly swirled around rival claims by two rabbis for the title of chief rabbi of Poland: Rabbi Menachem Joskowitz, who was brought in from Israel by the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, and Rabbi Wawa Moreino, who claims to be chief rabbi of Poland and therefore all Eastern Europe. Moreino has even unsuccessfully tried to take his case to a New York court.

Both men are Holocaust survivors from Lodz

who returned part time to Poland in 1989 after living years abroad.

Joskowitz, a Gerer Hasid, went to Israel in 1947 and was brought back to Poland in May 1989 as rabbi of the only synagogue in Warsaw following talks between the Polish and Israeli religion ministers. He commutes back and forth between Warsaw and Jerusalem.

Moreino, who has lived permanently in the United States since 1973, says he was appointed chief rabbi of Poland in 1947 but removed from the position in 1955.

He has mounted a vitriolic campaign against Joskowitz, calling him an impostor and a cheat, and charging that kashrut certificates issued by Joskowitz are phoney.

Relations are so bad between the two men that disturbances have even taken place during synagogue services on Yom Kippur.

"I was once at shul and saw Moreino physically try to remove Joskowitz from the bimah," said one Warsaw Jew. "I'm almost afraid to take guests to synagogue now for fear of what they'll see."

**ARAB GROUP DEMANDS INVESTIGATIONS OF ADL AT LOCAL AND FEDERAL LEVELS**  
By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, April 14 (JTA) -- The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee is asking for local, federal and congressional investigations of the Anti-Defamation League, in the wake of charges that the veteran Jewish defense agency has maintained a national intelligence network to keep tabs on some 950 groups and 12,000 individuals.

Documents released in conjunction with police searches of ADL offices in San Francisco and Los Angeles indicate that among those surveyed are thousands of ADC members, said Albert Mokhiber, president of the Arab American group.

"The facts in this case far surpass even the greatest fears that we may have had about Israeli infiltration into American government, law enforcement and community activism," he said in a statement released in Washington.

"It is our sincere hope that Jewish American organizations will speak out against the ADL involvement and will join forces with us to put an end to these illegal and dangerous practices," Mokhiber said.

David Lehrer, ADL's regional director in Los Angeles, responded to the statement by saying: "We don't monitor groups or individuals on the basis of their race, religion or ethnicity. We do have every right to educate ourselves and the public about what critics of Israel say and write."

"We have done so for decades, and we will continue to do so," he said.

Adverse national publicity on ADL operations following the April 8 police searches of its West Coast offices has increased pressure on ADL officials to issue a comprehensive rebuttal to the charges, which so far have been left largely unanswered.

The agency has retained a New York public relations firm and is expected to go public with its position before the weekend.

In an editorial Wednesday, the Los Angeles Times questioned "whether the ADL might have crossed the clear line that separates gathering information on defamers and gathering information that possibly could be used to embarrass and even defame others."