

**STRAINS IN THE PALESTINIAN CAMP
GIVE NEW PUSH TO TALKS WITH PLO**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 9 (JTA) -- The serious strains that have emerged this week in relations between Palestinian leaders in the administered territories and Palestine Liberation Organization officials in Tunis have given new momentum to those forces here advocating direct talks between Israel and the PLO.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres has been among the most vocal of top Israeli officials on this possibility, indicating over the weekend that Israel would talk with whomever was the most moderate among the Palestinians.

When asked Monday specifically about direct talks with the PLO, he did not discount the possibility, answering, "Everything in its due course."

Echoing Peres' views, Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin hinted at the possible need to negotiate directly with the PLO under certain circumstances.

Similar views were expressed Monday by Labor Knesset member Ephraim Sneh, who is considered close to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

However, Rabin himself is known to oppose strongly any inclusion of the PLO in the peace process. He was quoted as telling a group of American Jewish leaders in a conference call Monday that the Israeli government will continue to negotiate only with Palestinian representatives from the territories.

"We are not negotiating with the PLO, even if we are not preventing contact with them," he told members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

In separate remarks Monday, the prime minister said that the tensions that emerged this week between three senior members of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks and the PLO leadership in Tunis are "a Palestinian problem."

"It is not our business what is the composition of the Palestinian delegation, as long as it is composed of residents of the territories," he said, making clear his intention to continue excluding PLO involvement.

Resignations Withdrawn?

The three members of the delegation -- Faisal Hussein, Hanan Ashrawi and Saeb Erekat -- were reported Monday to have submitted their resignations to the PLO leadership in Tunis and then withdrawn them. Other reports said they had merely offered to resign but had not actually done so.

According to some reports, the dispute focused on a decision last week by PLO leader Yasir Arafat that the Palestinians should offer certain concessions to U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher on a U.S.-drafted declaration of principles for the peace talks.

The Palestinian delegation had considered the American draft too pro-Israel, and for the past month had staunchly refused to present any Palestinian-scripted amendments to it.

Indeed, Arafat's decision to provide a written response to the American draft conflicted with a PLO executive committee decision reached

July 3 clearly stating that the Palestinians would not respond to the U.S. proposals.

Foreign Minister Peres said Monday that despite the crisis within the Palestinian ranks, substantial progress had been made in the peace negotiations with the Palestinians.

Speaking to reporters during a tour of Jerusalem's Old City, Peres said the crisis occurred because negotiations were getting closer to final decisions.

The closer the negotiating process comes to completion, he said, the more differences there will be.

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid of the dovish Meretz bloc was less hopeful about the developments in the Palestinian camp.

He warned that the continuous weakening of the PLO and its representatives in the administered territories would jeopardize the peace process and would create a political vacuum that would be filled by Hamas, the Islamic Resistance Movement in the territories.

Sarid himself has been the subject of reports that he met in late July with Nabil Sha'ath, a close adviser to Arafat. He refused comment on the subject in several interviews over the weekend, but the report was confirmed Sunday by Mahmoud Abbas, a senior PLO official.

Rabin confirmed in his conference call with the American Jewish leaders that he had been informed in advance of the Sarid meeting. But he said that the environment minister was acting on his own initiative and did not represent the Israeli government at the meeting.

**RABIN DEFENDS PEACE POLICIES
AND IDF OPERATION IN LEBANON**

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Aug. 9 (JTA) -- The Likud has no moral authority to condemn the Labor government's plans to trade land for peace on the Golan Heights after it gave up Sinai for a peace treaty with Egypt, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told American Jewish leaders this week.

He also said that Israel's recent military operation in Lebanon had achieved his twin aims of showing that Israel is willing to take risks to defend its security interests and that there is nothing to be gained by terrorism against Israel.

He praised the United States for brokering a cease-fire in Lebanon and said no peace agreements can be reached without U.S. mediation.

He also stressed that the status of a united Jerusalem under Jewish sovereignty is not negotiable.

Rabin made the remarks in a speech to members of the United Jewish Appeal's Prime Minister's Mission, a trip for top contributors who arrived here Sunday.

To be eligible for the trip, contributors had to make a minimum donation of \$100,000 to UJA's annual campaign along with an additional donation for the organization's Operation Exodus campaign, which helps resettle immigrants in Israel.

The prime minister made similar remarks Monday in a 45-minute telephone conference call with members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Despite reports that portions of American

Jewry are disaffected by the Rabin government's peace policies, his speech to UJA defending those policies was warmly received.

The peace process is complex, Rabin said, in part because of the precedent set in the peace treaty with Egypt, where "we had to return the last square inch of Egyptian soil the Egyptians demanded."

No Peace Without Compromise

"What we are trying now is at least not to repeat the price of peace in territories that we paid for peace with Egypt. It's not so simple," Rabin said, "once the precedent was established."

"Those who couldn't save one square inch from Sinai," he said, referring to his Likud critics, "what moral right do they have now" to claim peace can be achieved without giving anything on the Golan Heights?

"The idea of achieving peace without giving up territory is a fallacy," he said, angrily. "Total nonsense."

The government is ready for compromise on the Golan Heights, he continued, but "I will not negotiate the depth of the withdrawal before I know what kind of peace we are getting in return. Will it be a peace the man on the street will call a peace?"

Rabin also defended the government's decision to stop spending money on Jewish settlements in the administered territories and implicitly criticized the settlers there for protesting the change in policy.

He said he would like the money to be spent instead on settlements along the Lebanese border, whose residents he called "the civilian heroes in Israel."

"They are not crying, they are not shouting, they are not demonstrating. They stand firm there, even if they have to be in shelters or security rooms for seven days," he said.

"This is the kind of population that I, as an Israeli, am proud of," Rabin said. "This is what used to be the good Israel, the real Israel."

OPPOSING RABIN POLICIES IN TALKS, SETTLERS STAGE MOCK ARAB RETURN

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 9 (JTA) -- West Bank settlers and their right-wing supporters staged a mock return of "Palestinian refugees" to Israel this week to simulate what they say would occur if the Rabin administration continues on what they see as a concessionary policy in the ongoing peace talks.

Jews costumed in long robes and full Arab headgear, with some women carrying bundles on their heads, sailed a boat along the Tel Aviv shoreline Sunday and were met by similarly garbed "relatives" waiting on shore in Jaffa to greet them with a shower of rice and candy.

The demonstration was part of a high-visibility campaign to highlight their growing irritation with the current coalition government.

Yehiel Leiter, a spokesman for the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza, said it was designed to show what would happen under Rabin's policies.

With funds reportedly donated by American and other foreign donors, the settlers council hired the boat to sail from the Tel Aviv Marina to Jaffa Port.

Some 100 passengers, many of them waving Palestine Liberation Organization flags, came

ashore under what they scornfully termed an "Arab right of return."

The boat also flew PLO flags and displayed signs in Arabic and English that read, "Welcome Arafat, Liberator of Palestine" and "Return to Greater Palestine."

Police were on hand when the settlers landed at Jaffa to question them about the PLO flags and the chanting of the PLO slogan, "With Blood and Fire We Have Redeemed Palestine."

The police "welcome" was part of the orchestrated reception, to imitate how Arabs are commonly detained and placed under administrative detention for displaying PLO flags.

The first of these demonstrations was held earlier this spring when a group of settlers, dressed as Palestinian police officers, stopped and harassed a Jewish family on a main road. That event was designed to highlight what would happen if a Palestinian police force were established and allowed to operate in an area of Palestinian autonomy.

"Their scare tactics just won't work with the vast majority," one spectator remarked. "They are as transparent as the traditional Arab garb they dressed up in."

CONTROVERSY OVER JEWISHNESS OF DEAD SOLDIER PROMPTS BILL

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Aug. 9 (JTA) -- A Knesset member has introduced legislation that would require the Israel Defense Force to bury all soldiers who die in the line of duty in military cemeteries as long as they enlisted as Jews.

The issue, a source of tension between secular and religious parties in Israel's coalition government, heated up after the interment of a soldier who was not Jewish according to traditional religious law.

The move was made Sunday by Knesset member Naomi Chazan of the secularist Meretz bloc. It followed the burial the same day of Sgt. Lev Pesahov, a recent immigrant from Russia who was shot to death in a terrorist attack on an army checkpoint last week.

Because his mother is not Jewish, Pesahov was buried at the fringe of the military cemetery in Beit She'an.

The military rabbinate first refused to bury Pesahov at all in the military cemetery. But it later agreed to inter him at the edge of the cemetery, far away from the other graves.

Education Minister Amnon Rubinstein, also of Meretz, termed the burial a "disgrace." He said he would demand that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin issue the necessary instructions so that such an incident is not repeated.

Knesset member Avraham Ravitz of the fervently Orthodox Degel HaTorah faction said he saw nothing wrong with the way the soldier was buried as he was not, he said, technically Jewish.

Rabbi Menachem Porush, also of Degel HaTorah, contended that although Pesahov should be appreciated for having fallen for the country, "people who are Jewish would not want a non-Jew to be buried next to them."

A similar debate erupted in early July, when Olga Chaikov, a Soviet immigrant, was killed when terrorists attacked a bus in Jerusalem.

She was ordered buried in a special cemetery section reserved for "questionable Jews" after officials of the chevra kadisha, or burial society, consulted Jerusalem Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Koltitz.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT APPEALS RULING ON DEMJANJUK'S RETURN

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Aug. 9 (JTA) -- The U.S. Justice Department has appealed a federal appeals court's ruling that John Demjanjuk must be allowed to return to the United States in the wake of his acquittal in Israel of war crimes charges.

On Monday, the appellate section of the Justice Department's Criminal Division asked the 14 judges of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati for an "en banc" review of a ruling last week by a three-judge panel of the court.

The smaller panel's Aug. 3 ruling came after only 10 minutes of deliberation.

The 73-year-old retired Cleveland autoworker was found guilty in April 1988 by an Israeli court of being the brutal Treblinka guard known as "Ivan the Terrible" and was sentenced to death.

On July 29, Israel's Supreme Court overturned the sentence on the grounds that there were reasonable doubts that Demjanjuk and "Ivan" were the same man.

The court ruled at the time not to try Demjanjuk on other charges.

It has since received three petitions asking that he be tried on other charges.

The Israeli high court is scheduled to hear arguments about a possible retrial this Wednesday.

In Washington, the Justice Department's petition was hailed by Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), chairman of the House Judiciary subcommittee on crime and criminal justice, and by Rep. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.). Both of them last week had urged Attorney General Janet Reno to appeal the Cincinnati court's decision.

In a statement, Schumer called the department's effort to block Demjanjuk's return "legally and morally correct."

"The fact that an Israeli court ruled that it cannot be proved Demjanjuk was a particular guard at the Treblinka death camp should not affect the fact that he was a Nazi death camp guard elsewhere," said Schumer.

Substantial proof has been provided that Demjanjuk was trained at the Trawniki camp for SS guards and served at the Sobibor, Flossenburg and Regensburg camps.

Acquittal Had 'A Damaging Effect'

"Today's action sends a strong signal that former Nazis are not welcome in the United States," Lowey said in a statement of her own.

Meanwhile, the World Jewish Congress office in Israel filed a petition with the Israeli Supreme Court against deporting Demjanjuk and called for his trial as a Nazi guard at Sobibor.

Avi Beker, executive director of the WJC office in Israel, said the latest petition marked a "turning point" because it was filed by an umbrella organization representing more than 80 communities worldwide.

The WJC petition, filed Monday, is based on the premise "that the failure to prosecute Demjanjuk here is a breach of international law," Beker said in Israel.

He said he had been flooded with calls from Jewish leaders and Holocaust survivors in different communities who said the acquittal had been perceived as a vindication of Demjanjuk.

"This has had quite a damaging effect," said Beker. "It is major blow to the (status) of Nazi crimes as crimes against humanity."

In addition, the WJC issued a statement claiming that Demjanjuk's lawyers withheld evidence from the Israeli Supreme Court.

WJC said that the testimony of a Ukrainian woman who had identified Demjanjuk as a Treblinka guard was never turned over to the Israeli high court.

The testimony of Melaniia Nezdiiymonha was taken by Demjanjuk's son in Ukraine in 1991, WJC said. Nezdiiymonha worked in the Treblinka kitchen in 1943.

WJC's petition was signed by Matityahu Drobles, chairman of the Israeli Executive of the WJC.

In addition, a friend-of-the-court brief to the WJC petition was presented by Professor Irwin Cotler of McGill University in Montreal, in his capacity as president of Interamicus, a human rights organization.

Harvard law Professor Alan Dershowitz and Washington lawyer Nathan Lewin were legal advisers to the WJC on the petition, which was submitted through the office of Israeli attorney Yehuda Raveh.

The WJC petition was the third to be filed in the case. Two other petitions were filed by the right-wing Kach movement and by survivors of Sobibor in conjunction with the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Cynthia Mann in Jerusalem.)

SUPPORTERS OF JONATHAN POLLARD TAKE THEIR CASE TO CAPITOL HILL

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Aug. 9 (JTA) -- Supporters of clemency for convicted spy Jonathan Pollard have mounted a campaign to attract backers on Capitol Hill.

Pollard's sister, Carol Pollard, held a briefing last week on Capitol Hill, attended by several members of Congress and several dozen congressional staff members, during which she urged support for a commutation of her brother's life sentence.

Also present in the audience was Capitol Hill expert Thomas Dine, the former executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, who is working with Pollard's supporters.

Pollard, a former civilian Navy intelligence analyst, was convicted in 1986 of espionage for Israel and is currently in the eighth year of a life sentence.

His supporters feel his punishment is excessive and have filed a petition asking the administration to review the controversial case and grant him clemency.

The Aug. 3 briefing was organized by four Pollard supporters in the House of Representatives: Reps. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), Gary Ackerman (D-N.Y.), Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.) and Peter King (R-N.Y.).

An aide to Schumer said that the congressman had discussed the Pollard case in a recent meeting with Attorney General Janet Reno, and that she had told him the department was taking a look at the issue.

Carol Pollard argued at the briefing that her brother's sentence was "disproportionate in the extreme to others who spied for allies, or even enemies, of the United States."

Commuting Jonathan Pollard's sentence, she said, would close an "unhealed wound" between the United States and Israel.

GERMANY'S FIRST JEWISH SCHOOL SINCE HOLOCAUST OPENS IN BERLIN

By Miriam Widman

BERLIN, Aug. 9 (JTA) -- Maxim Medovoj turned his tiny head toward the fifth camera team closing in on him.

The diminutive 13-year-old Russian immigrant looked lost amid the flood of lights, cameras and microphones that hovered around him. But after four interviews, with another half-dozen to go, the seventh-grader was fielding the sometimes ridiculous questions like a pro.

The first day of school at Germany's first postwar Jewish high school turned out to be a major media event, with no less than 11 camera teams and 70 reporters covering the opening last Friday.

"This is an absurd abnormality," said Roman Sklobo, a member of the Berlin Jewish community's board of directors in charge of youth and education. "You have journalists hunting down students."

Staring into three radio microphones, the leader of Berlin's Jewish community, Jerzy Kanal, described the school's opening as "a historic and important" event.

The school, in eastern Berlin, is in the city's old Jewish neighborhood, the Scheunenviertel. It is located in a building that had been a Jewish school since 1906.

Hitler closed it in 1942 and turned it into a deportation center.

Kanal said the establishment of the high school is a natural extension of the Jewish community's educational facilities. In 1986, the community opened an elementary school in then-West Berlin. Students who were part of the initial first-grade class then are now ready for high school.

But opening day was anything but natural, with journalists outnumbering the 24 seventh-graders by three to one.

As much as community leaders here try to fit in, Germany's history gives things Jewish here an odd form of popularity, especially among the local media and some left-leaning intellectuals.

Jewish Things Are Chic

In certain circles, things Jewish are simply chic.

A kosher-style restaurant located next to the Oranienburgerstrasse Synagogue, a majestic dome-topped structure that is being renovated, is constantly full.

Most of its clientele could not tell the difference between matzoh balls and kreplach. A strictly kosher restaurant is around the corner, next to eastern Berlin's Jewish Community Center.

Diagonally across the street from that is a kosher food store where you can buy Manischewitz gefilte fish and frozen Empire chickens imported from the United States. This in a city of 3.6 million, of whom 9,500 belong to the Jewish community.

The tiny Jewish minority has affected enrollment at the school. About one-third of the students are not Jewish and another third are like Maxim, immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

Of the 11 teachers, only three are Jewish. They teach Hebrew, religion and music. The school's director, Uwe Mull, is also not Jewish.

"We tried to find Jewish teachers, but it is very difficult," said Sklobo from the community's board of directors. Additionally, German laws

don't readily grant teaching certification for teachers trained abroad, and that has made it difficult to import teachers from Israel.

Other Jewish communities in Germany operate nursery and elementary schools and there is a college for Hebrew studies in Heidelberg.

The schools, like the Jewish high school in Berlin, are supported by the Jewish communities and local governments, but they still run deficits.

Like the Jewish high school in Berlin, these institutions are obliged to take non-Jewish students to fill their ranks.

"We had a bad experience with the east Berlin schools and so we decided to come here," said Richard Vosz, whose son Richard, 12, is one of the non-Jewish students at the school. "We wanted a school where the teachers are not as concerned with losing their jobs as they are with instruction," said the eastern Berlin union leader.

Vosz, who works for the civil servants union, has been to Israel twice, and that was a factor in deciding to send his son to the Jewish high school.

"We don't expect any problems here. On the contrary, I imagine that the atmosphere here will be much more exciting than in a regular public school," he said.

16 FALASH MORA ARRIVE IN ISRAEL, BUT ETHIOPIA SAID TO BE UNHAPPY

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Aug. 9 (JTA) -- Sixteen members of the Falash Mora community in Ethiopia arrived in Israel on Monday morning to emotional reunions with family members some had not seen in years.

They are the first part of a group of Falash Mora, Ethiopians whose ancestors converted from Judaism to Christianity, to be admitted to Israel on humanitarian grounds, under the Law of Entry, rather than as Jews under the Law of Return.

Their arrival comes amid reports of increasing irritation by the Ethiopian government over alleged interference by Israeli and Jewish organizations on the question of the Falash Mora.

Tens of thousands of Falash Mora are said to be waiting to immigrate to Israel, posing a problem for Israeli officials who must determine their legal status here.

A ministerial committee decided earlier this year to admit only those Falash Mora who have immediate family in Israel. The 16 comprise the first part of this group of 129.

Absorption Minister Yair Tzaban said this week that the government is doing all it can to expedite the process of bringing other Falash Mora determined eligible to enter Israel.

The 16 headed to absorption centers near Haifa to begin their settlement.

Meanwhile, Israel's ambassador to Ethiopia, Haim Divon, has reported to the Foreign Ministry that the Ethiopian government is increasingly angry and frustrated over the efforts to address the fate of the Falash Mora by Israeli and Jewish organizations.

The Ethiopian government last month expelled a team of the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry and an Israeli rabbi, Menachem Waldman, who were teaching Judaism to the group.

Divon specifically cited as inflammatory the activity of Waldman. He charged that the rabbi had failed to gain approval from the Ethiopian government, which considers such activity illegal.