

**ARAFAT CONTACTED RABIN TO EXPRESS HIS SORROW OVER ATTACK IN HADERA**  
By Dvora Getzler

JERUSALEM, April 14 (JTA) -- Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat contacted Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin on the eve of Israeli Independence Day to express his sorrow over the bombing attack on a bus in Hadera on Wednesday morning.

The PLO leader told Rabin that he had immediately condemned the attack, in which five Israelis were killed, during a meeting of the Council of Europe in Strasbourg, France, where he had first learned of the incident.

Arafat reminded Rabin that the PLO had promptly condemned a suicide car bombing in the northern Israeli town of Afula a week earlier.

The PLO had issued a written statement criticizing the Afula attack, in which seven Israelis were killed, but Arafat himself was sharply rebuked by Israeli and American officials for not speaking out personally about the bombing.

The Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement, which is opposed to the PLO and the peace process, has claimed responsibility for both the Hadera and Afula attacks.

Prior to this week's incident in Hadera, Arafat wrote to President Clinton to protest the widespread criticism of his refusal to condemn the Afula attack.

In his letter to Clinton, he wrote that he "regretted and strongly rejected" terrorist actions against Israelis.

Such attacks, he wrote, are "directed against innocent people and claim to strike against the peace process and destroy it."

At a briefing Wednesday, State Department spokesman Mike McCurry was noncommittal with respect to whether the administration was satisfied with Arafat's reaction to the killings.

In Jordan, by contrast, Islamic militants were reportedly furious with Arafat for his condemnation this week of the Hadera bombing.

In the Jordanian capital of Amman, Hamas said on Thursday that the bombings in Afula and Hadera were but two of five attacks that it has vowed to carry out to avenge the Feb. 25 massacre in Hebron.

In that incident, an Israeli settler, Dr. Baruch Goldstein, opened fire on Palestinian worshippers at the Tomb of the Patriarchs, killing 29 people.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:****ADVANCES AND AMBIGUITIES MARK CLINTON'S POLICY ON JERUSALEM**

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, April 14 (JTA) -- The Clinton administration appears to have quietly changed previous American policy toward Jerusalem.

In a series of small but precedent-shattering moves, the administration has indicated that it has moved closer to the Israeli position that Jerusalem is one united city and the country's eternal capital.

It has done so while publicly denying any shift has occurred.

For its efforts, the Clinton administration has been condemned in the Arab world for accommodating Israel -- and been condemned by many in the Jewish community for not moving far enough.

In meetings with Jewish leaders last month, Clinton seemed to become the first sitting U.S. president to endorse Jerusalem as Israel's undivided capital, by saying he stood by his remarks on the topic from two years before.

Then, he had told Jewish leaders that "I recognize Jerusalem as an undivided city, the eternal capital of Israel, and I believe in the principle of moving our embassy to Jerusalem."

But then he was on the campaign trail, and for a presidential candidate, he was breaking no new ground.

**Breaking A Long-Standing Tradition**

"Every candidate has told us that," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

"This is the first time a president once elected had said it," said Hoenlein.

In February, the American ambassador to Israel broke long-standing tradition and crossed the unmarked 1967 border to address a group of visiting Jewish leaders. American officials had in the past demanded that groups meet them in the western part of Jerusalem, fearing that conducting official business in east Jerusalem would convey assent to Israel's annexation of the area after the 1967 Six-Day War.

In March, for the first time in nearly a decade, the United States demanded a paragraph-by-paragraph vote on a U.N. Security Council resolution, in order to abstain from a paragraph referring to Jerusalem as "occupied" territory.

The United States had several times in the past approved similar resolutions. This time, Ambassador Madeleine Albright said the resolution would have merited an outright veto had the offensive language been in the operative part of the resolution, rather than in the preamble.

The operative portion of the resolution, which the United States supported, condemned the February 25 massacre in Hebron and called for an international presence in that West Bank city.

Neither Clinton's assurances to American Jewish leaders, nor the Security Council abstention, nor the ambassador's talk in east Jerusalem, changes the fact that the American embassy remains in Tel Aviv.

That public denial of Jerusalem's status as Israel's capital is an outgrowth of international refusal to accept Israel's 1948 conquest of western Jerusalem, which the United Nations had voted should be internationalized.

Nor has the bottom line been modified: America believes the issue should be settled by negotiations, and that while America supports "a united Jerusalem, it doesn't say under Jewish sovereignty," as Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, explained.

Since 1948, negotiations over Jerusalem have seemed an unlikely prospect, and a safe place to assign a diplomatic hot potato which aroused strong emotions among both Jews and Arabs.

But now, say Foxman and other American Jewish leaders, the question of Jerusalem is taking on renewed importance since the city is formally on the agenda for "final-status" negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians, as agreed to in the declaration of principles signed by the two sides last fall.

#### 'It Makes A Big Difference'

Those final-status issues are scheduled to begin in the third year after Israeli withdrawal from Jericho and the Gaza Strip is concluded.

And in this context, the details of American policy "make a big difference," said Hoenlein.

"It makes a big difference in terms of what the demands of the Arabs will be, what their expectations are. It has a big effect on the Arab perception of the pressure they think they can bring to bear," said Hoenlein.

The Arab world was quick to see the nuances of the American abstention from the Security Council resolution and the statements to Jewish leaders as policy shifts.

After Israel Radio reported that Clinton had endorsed Jerusalem as Israel's eternal, undivided capital in one of his meetings with Jewish leaders, the Cairo paper Al-Ahram Al-Masati spoke out in alarm.

"If this statement is true," wrote the paper, "then it means there has been a radical change in the U.S. stand on the Jerusalem issue and it also represents a real catastrophe for all the Arab and Islamic countries and the (Palestine Liberation Organization) too."

The lower house of Jordan's parliament passed a measure March 22 condemning the U.S. abstention from the Security Council vote, saying it signaled a "clear change in the American stand."

And King Hussein of Jordan pointedly attacked PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat for insisting that Jerusalem be in the Security Council resolution and provoking the American abstention.

At the same time, the stealth policy shift by the United States -- if it is indeed that -- may also illustrate something about the diplomatic sensitivities concerning Jerusalem in general.

Because the administration has been stoutly denying there has been any change in its policy on Jerusalem.

When the American ambassador traveled to the Hyatt Hotel in east Jerusalem to address the Conference of Presidents in February, he explicitly denied that his precedent-shattering cross-town trip denoted a change in policy.

And while American Jewish leaders applauded Clinton and Vice President Al Gore for reaffirming their commitment to Jerusalem as Israel's eternal undivided capital, both Clinton and Gore refrained from using the words eternal, undivided or capital in their March meetings with Jewish leaders.

The meetings failed to provide a "sound bite" in which the American leaders could be directly quoted as saying that Jerusalem is Israel's capital. Both publicly and privately, Clinton would only say that "my position has not changed on that issue."

Asked whether there was a contradiction between Clinton simultaneously affirming his campaign position that Jerusalem is Israel's capital, and the classic State Department position that Jerusalem's status should be determined by negotiations, Richard LeBaron, a State Department spokesman, responded: "We don't find it useful to make statements publicly about that."

This ambiguity has itself long been American policy, according to former Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy, who served in the Reagan administration.

"Washington recognizes how volatile the issue is," Murphy told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "They try not to get drawn into talks about what is the American position."

"Ever since I followed the issue it was stated that the status of Jerusalem was to be settled in negotiations. Period. It was determined that to take one side or another was not going to be helpful for negotiations," said Murphy, who is now a senior fellow with the Council on Foreign Relations.

Murphy said he did not believe that Clinton's statements to Jewish groups last month constituted a policy change.

#### 'There's No Contradiction'

"If you ask Clinton, 'Do you believe the status of Jerusalem should be settled in negotiations?' he would say yes. There's no contradiction between saying that and saying it is the capital of Israel. You get caught up in follow-up questions, such as, 'can Jerusalem be a co-capital' " of both Israel and a Palestinian entity, said Murphy.

George Gruen, a visiting scholar at Columbia University's Middle East Institute, believes that Clinton has "in a sense been more supportive of the Israeli position."

But Gruen added that Clinton "has left open that big loophole that the final status should be negotiated. If the Israelis make concessions on Jerusalem, I don't think the Americans will go to arms against them."

Gruen sketched out American policy regarding Jerusalem in a study he wrote for the American Jewish Committee last year titled "Jerusalem and the Peace Process."

The United States, wrote Gruen, "has consistently maintained that the city of Jerusalem should remain physically unified, but that its final status must be determined by negotiation and should not be prejudiced through unilateral action on any side."

However, continued Gruen, "there has been far less consistency in American statements on such controversial issues as sovereignty over the city, whether or not Israel has the right to construct housing and move Jews into east Jerusalem, the role of east Jerusalem Palestinians in elections for an interim self-governing authority, and their participation as delegates in the peace negotiations."

For Foxman of the ADL, the president's words matter, even if they do not reflect any change in policy. "At this point, the issue is posturing," he said. "What all sides want to do is to build as much momentum on their sides."

There are "more atmospheric than reality," he added. "We know it's ambiguous, but it's an ambiguity we can live with," he said.

## OPENING OF SWISS WARTIME FILES REVEALS COUNTRY WAS NOT SO HOSPITABLE TO JEWS

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, April 14 (JTA) -- According to recently opened archives here, Switzerland was not as hospitable to Jews during World War II as has been widely assumed.

For years, Holocaust researchers in Israel have been seeking access to the Swiss federal archives in Bern, which contain some 46,000 files on Jews who sought refuge in neutral Switzerland during the war years.

But it was not until Swiss Secretary of State Jakob Kellenberger visited Israel in 1993 that Bern agreed to provide limited access to the files. His agreement was a limited gesture, however, since a 50-year embargo on the files' release was about to expire anyway.

Recent research on the files by historians chosen by the Israeli government has shown that Switzerland's record of accepting Jewish asylum-seekers during World War II may be more complicated than has been generally believed.

Israeli researchers, working alongside Swiss officials, have found that some 23,000 Jews were granted asylum in Switzerland during the war. Official Swiss figures show that 10,621 Jews were sent back over the border, but the latest studies indicate that the total was more likely in the range of 20,000 to 30,000.

Preliminary studies also indicate that Jews fleeing into Switzerland were often handed over personally by Swiss military police to the Nazis.

The official explanation was that such steps were taken in an effort to maintain good relations with neighboring Germany.

Many who succeeded in entering Switzerland were later expelled. On Aug. 13, 1942, Swiss Chief of Police Heinrich Rothmund gave the order to send back all non-political refugees over the age of 16 -- an order targeted at fleeing Jews.

### Some Files Refer To A 'Brief Passage'

To date, only 150 files from the massive archive have been thoroughly researched. Information in the files is often fragmentary, and some only refer to a Jew's brief "passage" on Swiss territory before being expelled. Some of the files show refugees having held as many as five identity cards.

The archives, which are considered a treasure-trove of information on that period of Swiss history, include identity papers, records of interrogations and reports by the Swiss authorities.

One particularly poignant file tells of a man identified only as Popowski, a Belgian national who crossed the Swiss frontier in July 1942.

"It was terrible," he wrote. "They wanted to send us back. The Germans awaited us at the other side of the Delemont frontier. Women were crying, children screaming -- we were about to be handed back when a Swiss customs official was revolted. "Tears in his eyes, he told officials from Bern: 'If you send back these people and their children, I warn you, I shall kill all of them first and you right after' -- and he meant it. We are alive thanks to him."

According to the files, even when Swiss authorities did accept refugees, they demanded that members of the small Jewish community in Switzerland "pay for their brothers."

"The behavior of the (Swiss) federal authorities was far from honorable toward the refugees," said Bernard Lavrie, coordinator of a Swiss-based organization that fights anti-Semitism.

"That is surely why the government took so long to grant access to their archives. The true story of Swiss politics during World War II has yet to be written," he said.

## AUSTRALIA REBUFFS PLO CAMPAIGN TO GAIN DIPLOMATIC STATUS THERE

By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Australia, April 14 (JTA) -- A long and intensive campaign by the Palestine Liberation Organization to gain full diplomatic status for its Australian office has been rebuffed.

The Australian government this week approved the use of the title "General Palestinian Delegation," but backed off from recognizing the office in the Australian capital of Canberra as representing the state of Palestine.

Senior government sources, along with PLO officials in Tunis, had claimed last month that an upgrade in the PLO's status was imminent.

But Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans has written to the PLO stating that the name change does not imply recognition of Palestine and that the PLO's representative will not receive diplomatic privileges.

Ali Kazak, the PLO's Australian representative, reacted angrily, claiming the government is "scared by the Israeli lobby."

Evans responded that "Australia's position, as often previously spelled out, is that we do not regard the conditions as having been satisfied to enable us to recognize Palestine as a sovereign state, or the PLO as the government of a state."

In a letter to Isi Leibler, president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Evans explained:

"The government's decision was made in the belief that renaming the PLO office in Canberra would be a helpful symbolic gesture of support for the peace process, in which the PLO continues to be engaged, despite the recent tragic setback of the Hebron massacre."

The Israeli Embassy in Canberra commented that the name change was just a "technicality."

## WEIZMAN TO ATTEND PRETORIA INAUGURAL

By Suzanne Belling

PRETORIA, South Africa, April 14 (JTA) -- Israeli President Ezer Weizman has accepted an invitation to attend the May 10 inauguration of the new South African president, who will be installed in office following this country's first democratic elections this coming Sunday.

Alon Liel, Israeli ambassador to South Africa, said Weizman will visit South Africa for two days and attend the inaugural ceremonies with many other heads of state and government, including Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

There is also a possibility that Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat may attend the inauguration.

This will be the first time an Israeli president has visited South Africa. Weizman knows the area well, as he trained as a Royal Air Force pilot in Zimbabwe, then Rhodesia, before serving as a pilot during Israel's War of Independence.

**DESPITE LUMPY FIELDS AND NO HELMETS, BASEBALL IN ISRAEL GAINS IN POPULARITY**  
 By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM, April 14 (JTA) -- After 15 years in the minor leagues of Israel's sports hierarchy, baseball and softball are finally getting some respect.

While Little League will probably never be as popular in Israel as soccer or basketball, more and more kids are showing up for batting practice than ever before.

And, though not quite as popular as its younger counterpart, adult softball is also gaining momentum.

Fifteen years ago, a bunch of North American immigrants here decided to get together once or twice a week and play a few leisurely games of softball in the park.

There were no sponsors, no budget and hardly any equipment.

Today, the Israel Softball Association, with a budget of about \$50,000, boasts 21 adult teams, which are sponsored by small businesses in the community. They compete according to a strict schedule, and travel around the country for "away games."

Little League baseball has proved even more popular. Established just six years ago, the Israel Association of Baseball has 70 teams, with more joining the ranks all the time. To date, there are no organized baseball games for the over-18 set.

Though many of the teams resemble the Bad News Bears -- at least until the kids, 90 percent of whom were born in Israel, learn the difference between a foul ball and a home run -- some are competing on the international level. Last year, Israel's Little League team placed third in the Maccabiah games.

Organizers attribute baseball's local success to a variety of factors. These include the Little League's strong Maccabiah finish and the fact that American baseball is finally getting some air time on Israeli television sets, thanks to the introduction of a cable sports channel a few years ago.

**Things Lots Better. But 'We're Still Short'**

A third factor is funding. Until two years ago, baseball received virtually no government funding, and nothing at all from the country's popular sports lottery. The Sport Toto, as it is known, distributes tens of millions of shekels to sports facilities and teams throughout Israel.

Until recently, the vast majority of that money went directly to soccer and basketball. Feeling disenfranchised, a group of "orphan" sports joined together and sued the Sport Toto. They won, and the baseball association was awarded an annual budget of \$125,000.

The remainder of the Little League budget of \$167,000 comes from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, corporate sponsors (often a pizzeria, insurance company or clothing store), and players' membership dues.

As important as the money is, say the organizers, it is just a drop in the proverbial bucket.

"Things are a lot better than they used to be, but we're still incredibly short of funds," said Arthur Lenk, chairman of the softball association and a baseball association board member.

"At least today we have enough money to buy some equipment, but there's still a need for decent playing fields and better equipment," he said.

Asked where additional funding might come from, Lenk said he'd like to find an overseas donor.

"We'd like to find someone in America who loves Israel and baseball, someone who would like to make quality baseball a reality in Israel."

In truth, the playing fields and equipment at both Little League and softball games are woefully inadequate, with the exception of a state-of-the-art field at Kibbutz Gezer, outside Jerusalem.

A recent Little League game for 8- to 10-year-olds would have made American baseball fans shudder.

The game was played on a patchy grass field with camel-like humps and lumps. Except for T-shirts provided by their sponsors, most of the players lacked basic equipment like helmets and cleats.

The kids -- both boys and girls -- didn't seem to mind, though. Having been born in Israel, most had never seen a real baseball diamond.

They didn't know that real baseball fields have baselines and pitching mounds.

Some didn't even know the most rudimentary rules of the game.

**'They've Improved A Lot In No Time'**

Despite this, they were in high spirits.

"You should have seen these kids a few weeks ago, at the beginning of the season," said one American-born mother, who had come to watch her daughter play third base.

"They didn't know how to bat or which hand to put a glove on. But they've improved a lot in no time."

Comparing Israeli Little League with that of its American counterpart, the mother said, "Unlike America, there's no cutthroat attitude.

"Parents don't yell if their kids make a mistake.

"In fact, everyone cheers everyone else on, regardless of the team they're playing on. We stress sportsmanship and fun," she said.

The same can be said of the adult softball players, who meet on Friday afternoons and some evenings (like the Little League, no games are played on Shabbat).

At a field behind the Jerusalem YMCA, players put fun before competition. Sweaters served as baselines, and balls lost in the knee-length weeds were ruled out of play.

"I really need to get out and play," said Joel Greenberg, a correspondent for The New York Times.

"It's a real break from my work -- a necessary change of gears," said Greenberg.

As hard as the players try to stick to a schedule, it isn't always easy.

Virtually all players must serve a month of reserve army duty, which takes them away from home, and softball, for weeks at a time.

The political situation can also affect play.

"I've been very, very busy since the Hebron massacre," said Greenberg, referring to the killing of at least 29 Muslim worshipers by a Jewish settler, Baruch Goldstein.

"I had to miss a game or two to cover the story," he said.