

**FRENCH CONFRONT THEIR PAST
WITH CONVICTION OF TOUVIER**
By Michel Di Paz

VERSAILLES, France, April 20 (JTA) -- The conviction here this week of Nazi collaborator Paul Touvier signals that France may finally be ready to confront its wartime past.

Some 23 years ago, then French President Georges Pompidou pardoned Touvier on charges of committing war crimes with the explanation that France should bury the period of its history when the Vichy government supported the Nazi program for the extermination of the Jews.

But this week, concluding a trial that lasted little over a month, a jury took 5½ hours to reach the verdict that Touvier, 79, was guilty of crimes against humanity. He was given the maximum sentence of life imprisonment.

Nearly 50 years after committing the deeds for which he was tried, Touvier has become the first Frenchman to be convicted of crimes against humanity.

The verdict in the Touvier trial was greeted with relief by the French Jewish community.

Jean Kahn, head of CRIF, the umbrella organization representing French Jewry, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that he was "totally satisfied with the outcome of the trial. This was not the trial of Vichy, like some people have said, but the trial of one of the smaller wheels of the collaboration.

"Touvier was sentenced to the maximum penalty, and this is justice for what he did. Touvier was a faithful and a loyal ally of the Nazis," said Kahn.

Three other Frenchmen have been charged with crimes against humanity, but their cases never went to trial.

Rene Bousquet, Vichy's police chief between 1942 and 1944, was charged with the deportation of 2,000 Jewish children. But before he could stand trial, he was killed by a deranged gunman last June at the age of 82.

Jean Leguay, indicted in 1979 for organizing the first mass roundup of French Jews in 1942, died of natural causes in 1989 at the age of 79.

Papon 'More Important' Than Touvier

Maurice Papon, a senior official in wartime Bordeaux, has so far managed to evade trial with a series of legal maneuvers. Papon, who served as Paris police chief in the 1960s and was a Cabinet member in the 1970s, is now 83 and may never come before a court.

But Kahn said Papon should be brought to trial, because he was "much more important than Touvier." He pointed out that Papon ordered the deportation of hundreds of Jews from the Bordeaux region, "which was not even occupied by the German army."

"I do regret that there will be no Bousquet trial," he added, "because Bousquet was the one responsible for the arrest of Jews in France. I still cannot understand how Bousquet was so conveniently suppressed so close to his trial."

French Nazi-hunter Serge Klarsfeld expressed

bitterness at the current French government's handling of the Vichy period.

Noting that President Francois Mitterrand has remained lenient toward officials of the Vichy regime, Klarsfeld said, "Mitterrand has a different vision of Vichy than the one Jewish families have. We see in Vichy a government that decided to send the police after Jews all through France and who wrought havoc in our lives.

"The leniency of the French president is not a surprise for us. He has expressed it on various occasions, and we had to oppose it, as in the Bousquet case.

"Mitterrand joined the Vichy regime in 1942, a collaborationist and anti-Semitic regime. He left this regime to join the Resistance, but he'd rather have these years of the beginning of his career not mentioned anymore in the courts," said Klarsfeld.

The jury at the Versailles Court of Justice convicted Touvier on Tuesday night for his role in the assassination of seven Jewish hostages in Rillieux-la-Pape, located near Lyon in southeastern France, on June 29, 1944.

Help From The Catholic Church

Touvier was at the time the local head of the intelligence service of the militia, the 30,000-member collaborationist civilian armed force created by the Vichy regime.

The killings of the Jewish hostages were in reprisal for the murder the day before by the Resistance of Vichy Propaganda Minister Philippe Henriot.

After the liberation, Touvier was arrested and held at the Paris police headquarters from where he mysteriously escaped. Condemned twice to death in absentia for his numerous war crimes, he went into hiding.

It was discovered later that he was helped by numerous members of the Catholic Church in France, some of them belonging to the highest ranks of the Catholic hierarchy.

Because of the statute of limitations for war crimes -- a charge different from that of crimes against humanity, which has no statute of limitations -- Touvier reappeared in his hometown of Chambéry, located near Lyon, in 1970.

Touvier asked for a pardon from President Pompidou who, it was widely believed, despised the Resistance. Pompidou obliged in 1971.

Aware of the scandalous implications of his pardon, the French president requested that his decision not be printed in the official state publication where all laws and decrees are published.

In spite of that, a few months later, Pompidou's decision was discovered by a group of former Resistance members from the Lyon area.

The outrage was immediate, and Touvier was tracked down by a French reporter. Touvier's picture appeared in the large-circulation weekly L'Express, triggering a wave of protests against Pompidou's pardon.

At a news conference, instead of trying to defuse the scandal, Pompidou justified his action by saying that it was time for the French to cast

a veil over this period of history "when Frenchmen didn't like each other."

Touvier, in a letter to a Catholic priest, revealed that he was the one who had picked the seven Jewish hostages who were murdered in Rillieux-la-Pape.

The letter, which was published by the press, then prompted relatives of the victims to sue Touvier for crimes against humanity, a charge for which pardons do not apply.

Touvier went back into hiding in various convents and monasteries until he was discovered by the French police in a monastery near Nice in 1989.

Anti-Semitic Writings Were 'For Amusement'

During the five-week trial, the French media provided extensive coverage of the proceedings. As a result, the generations born after World War II discovered to what extent the government that ruled France from 1940 to 1945 was collaborationist and anti-Semitic.

Touvier, an obsessive anti-Semite, never retracted his opinions. In diaries discovered by the French police in 1989, Touvier wrote about television programs he watched in 1985 and 1988 that he described as "Jewish rubbish." In another journal entry, he referred to a television reporter as a "dirty Jewess."

In court, Touvier testified that he wrote those entries "for amusement."

The lawyers for the plaintiffs -- which included members of Jewish and Resistance organizations, and relatives of the Jews executed at Rillieux-la-Pape -- argued that Touvier had acted on direct orders from the Nazis.

Only one lawyer, Arno Klarsfeld, son of the French Nazi-hunter, took a different approach. He said that Touvier had acted on his own, picking Jewish hostages because he was an anti-Semite and not because he was ordered to do so by the German occupiers.

Had the court agreed with Klarsfeld's arguments, Touvier would have walked out free from the dock, since according to French law, the charge of crimes against humanity requires proof that the individual did not act on his own.

Instead, it must be shown that the individual was following orders of an Axis power, in this case Germany, bent on pursuing a "hegemonic" policy aimed at the annihilation of populations because of their race, religion or political beliefs.

The French courts have ruled that the Vichy government was not following such a policy, but was compelled by its Nazi occupier to take some actions against the Jews.

Touvier's lawyer, Jacques Tremolet de Villers, had pleaded for the acquittal of his client, because, he said, Touvier was guilty of war crimes and not of crimes against humanity.

Touvier, who was given the last word before the jury withdrew for deliberations, offered an expression of remorse. "I have never forgotten the victims of Rillieux. I think of them every day, every evening," he said.

But on Tuesday night, the jury of nine returned a verdict of guilty on all counts, without any extenuating circumstances, as the state prosecutor had requested.

The only person brought to trial in France before now for crimes against humanity was Klaus Barbie, the German Gestapo police chief in Lyon.

Barbie was sentenced to life imprisonment in 1987. He died in jail of cancer in 1991.

The French media reported the Touvier verdict and the reactions of the lawyers of the victims, who said they were now waiting for the trial of Papon.

Some extreme right-wing French weeklies, in articles published before the verdict was handed down, called Touvier the "French Schindler." This was an allusion to Touvier's line of defense, which was that if it had not been for his personal intervention, the Nazis would have had 100 Jewish hostages, not merely seven, shot in retaliation for Henriot's assassination.

After the trial, Touvier's lawyer announced he would appeal the sentence.

Under French law, an appeal can only be requested on procedural or specific legal grounds, not for reviewing facts presented during the trial.

When reporters asked Touvier's lawyer on what grounds he would seek an appeal, he replied, "We will find a reason."

ZHIRINOVSKY DENIES REPORTS THAT HIS FATHER WAS JEWISH

By Lisa Glazer

MOSCOW, April 20 (JTA) -- Back on Russian soil after a raucous trip to France, ultranationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy denounced reports that he is half-Jewish at a rambling news conference here.

He spurned documents discovered by the Associated Press in his birthplace, Almaty, Kazakhstan, describing them as a "forgery" and a "fabrication."

Public records published by the AP show that Zhirinovskiy's mother married a Jewish man named Volf Eidelshstein and that her son used the name Eidelshstein until he changed it to Zhirinovskiy when he was 18.

According to news reports, Zhirinovskiy's April 15 news conference was filled with anti-Semitic remarks and condemnations of "Zionists."

Last week, while Zhirinovskiy was on a visit to the French city of Strasbourg to address the Council of Europe, he lost his temper when about 100 Jewish students demonstrated against him in front of the Russian Consulate there.

Television cameras showed him grabbing small bushes from the consulate's garden and throwing them at the demonstrators. He reportedly also spat at the demonstrators and threatened to use a "nuclear gun" against them, though he did not make clear exactly what he had in mind.

Referring to that incident during the news conference, Zhirinovskiy said sarcastically, "A group of Jews in Strasbourg can attack any deputy of the Russian Parliament. That's possible, that's democracy. Full freedom for Jews in Strasbourg -- and Russian diplomats and deputies have to keep silent."

Zhirinovskiy also lashed out at the possibility that Russia would agree to an associate membership in NATO under the Partnership for Peace program. At the news conference, Zhirinovskiy referred to that program as a "vile document."

He also said that Russia should not join the Council of Europe -- whose members include 32 nations from Western, Central and Eastern Europe -- because it is a "pro-NATO, pro-Zionist, pro-American organization."

CONGRESSIONAL PANEL APPROVES MORE AID FOR PLO, BUT ONLY IF CONDITIONS ARE MET
By Steven Weiss

WASHINGTON, April 20 (JTA) -- Congress continued its efforts this week to move the Middle East peace process along, with the approval of measures allowing the Palestine Liberation Organization to receive U.S.-backed international aid.

With the backing of Jewish groups and some pro-Israel lawmakers, a House-Senate conference panel decided Tuesday to modify some restrictions on U.S. financial dealings with the PLO, thereby entitling the PLO to aid from organizations such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund.

But these modifications will not come without a price. They are contingent upon PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's renouncing of terrorism and working to end the Arab economic boycott of Israel.

Both Israel and the Clinton administration have pushed for increased economic assistance to the Palestinians since the historic Palestinian self-rule accord was signed in September.

The parties hope that economic aid will benefit the PLO in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho, where it is slated to establish self-rule as soon as negotiators agree on how to implement the accord.

The PLO's ties to terrorism in years past caused Congress to enact several laws restricting various U.S. activities related to the group.

For example, the PLO is barred from opening a diplomatic office in the United States by a 1990 law that closed PLO offices in Washington and New York.

And Congress has enacted several restrictions on U.S. contributions to international organizations that give aid to the PLO.

Panel Approves One-Year Funding Waiver

But on Tuesday, a congressional committee considering provisions of the State Department authorization bill for fiscal year 1995 approved a one-year waiver on some of the funding restrictions, thereby encouraging the receipt of increased aid by the PLO.

However, the waiver is contingent upon Arafat renouncing individual acts of terrorism, encouraging Arab countries to end the economic boycott of Israel and abiding by the commitments made in last fall's declaration of principles and related agreements.

Adoption of these conditions marked a victory for pro-Israel members of Congress who are still wary of the long-mistrusted PLO.

Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) sent a letter to some members of the committee Tuesday opposing any effort to ease the conditions by which the waiver is granted.

"This is a step in the right direction," a Schumer aide said about granting the waiver. "The concern is that Arafat doesn't always come through with what he says he will do."

Rep. Peter Deutsch (D-Fla.) agreed. He circulated a letter in Congress following the bombing in the Israeli town of Hadera last week, in which five Israelis were killed, criticizing Arafat for not coming out strongly enough against the attack.

"It is unclear whether the PLO has proven whether it is a partner in peace," Deutsch told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency on Wednesday.

In January, Congress granted a similar waiver of six months. The waiver agreed upon Tuesday would extend to July 1995.

ISRAEL AND PLO RESOLVE ISSUE OF WATER SUPPLY TO GAZA AND JERICHO
By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, April 20 (JTA) -- Israel's national water company, Mekorot, will continue to supply water to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho after the Palestinians assume authority there, negotiators meeting in Cairo announced this week.

The Palestinians agreed to pay for Mekorot's services and have also undertaken to cooperate in safeguarding precious water resources in the region.

The water issue was one of the most serious challenges facing the committee negotiating the transfer of civilian authority to Palestinians in the self-rule areas.

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators also agreed that Jewish settlements in the two areas will remain in place for the time being.

The negotiators reported that progress had also been made about electricity, currency and air transport in the autonomous regions.

They also said draft agreements on these and other civilian issues have been sent to Jerusalem and Palestine Liberation Organization headquarters in Tunis for approval.

The two sides report that some serious differences remain on other issues, including the number of Palestinian prisoners to be released by Israel as a goodwill gesture.

But by late Wednesday it appeared that there would be resolution of another issue holding up a final agreement -- the question of who would have legal jurisdiction over non-Palestinians in Gaza and Jericho.

The Israelis have been maintaining that their courts should have jurisdiction, while the PLO has argued that such a stance would undermine its autonomy.

But on Wednesday, after the chief Israeli negotiator, army Deputy Chief of Staff Gen. Amnon Shahak, returned to Cairo from consultations in Jerusalem, his Palestinian counterpart, Nabil Sha'ath, told reporters that a breakthrough on the jurisdictional issue was imminent.

In a separate development, Israel allowed six members of the PLO's mainstream al-Fatah wing to return to their homes in the territories on Wednesday.

An additional 13 members of Fatah were expected to return home before the week's end, and another 50 are scheduled to be allowed back within the next few weeks. The six returnees were wanted before they fled the territories.

Their welcome reception was considerably more muted than that given another group of returnees earlier this month, apparently because of the massive roundup of members of the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement undertaken this week by Israeli security forces.

According to Police Minister Moshe Shahal, 362 Hamas activists were rounded up in the territories on Tuesday.

JACKSON SAYS HIS ISRAEL TRIP HELPED PUSH MIDEAST PEACE PROCESS

By Stewart Ain
New York Jewish Week

NEW YORK, April 20 (JTA) -- The Rev. Jesse Jackson told Jewish leaders here this week that he was responsible for getting Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres back to the peace table and for convincing Arafat to condemn the Arab bombing in the Israeli town of Hadera.

But Israel's consul general in New York, Colette Avital, said that although Jackson was "very helpful" in convincing Arafat to condemn the terror attack, he was "overreaching" with respect to his role in the peace talks.

This week's meeting in Bucharest, Romania, between Arafat and Peres was "decided before Jackson arrived" in Israel, Avital said. "We can't say he was the one to get the negotiations back on track."

She pointed out that the PLO said it would return to the conference table after Israel agreed to admit foreign observers and not seek to block a U.N. Security Council resolution condemning the Feb. 25 slaughter in a Hebron mosque of 29 Palestinians by an Israeli settler.

But Avital stressed that Jackson was "instrumental" in convincing Arafat that a strong condemnation of Arab terrorist attacks was necessary.

"He was very helpful in terms of trying to get in touch with Arafat and speaking to him and telling him to be more forceful in condemning terrorism," said Avital.

She was reacting to Jackson's comments Tuesday to members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, and later to reporters, that he traveled to Israel last week "as an African American putting those two forces together," referring to Israel and the PLO.

Jackson told reporters after the meeting that he had urged the "primary parties to go back to the table and not let bureaucrats slow the process down."

Believes He Helped Speed Up Peace Process

He emphasized that he had been invited to Israel by both the government of Israel and the PLO and said he believes the contribution he made while there was to "help stimulate the process of the PLO and Israel getting back to the table, to help speed up the peace process."

Jackson maintained that the United States must become more of a player in the peace process. "We have been a bit too passive," he said.

Jackson said successful implementation of the Israeli-Palestinian accord will be a "bridge to the next stage. All parties are looking at whether this will work out. Can the PLO Arabs be trusted? Can Israel be trusted?" He said "bridges of trust" will enable "many things" to cross over.

Jackson noted the irony that "the PLO is closer to an agreement with Israel than it is with those who want to sabotage the process. There is now a new creative center of Palestinians and Israelis, and saboteurs and cynics and skeptics on both sides are the burdens of the peace process."

Regarding his talks with Arafat, Jackson said they discussed "sensitivities." He indicated that Arafat was unaware of the impact on Israelis of the suicide bomber who killed seven Israelis in Afula on April 6.

This was followed a week later by one in Hadera, which killed five Israelis. "I talked to him about why it is good and right to go on the moral offensive, to roundly condemn that which threatens the peace process, that which threatens his return to Jericho," said Jackson.

He said that just a day after speaking with Arafat, the suicide bomber in Hadera struck and Arafat "not only roundly condemned it quickly but called Prime Minister (Yitzhak) Rabin and wrote a letter to President Clinton, which he released to the public."

Although Arafat did not publicly condemn those who planned the attack, he decried the fact that it was targeted at "innocent people." He also rejected such attacks in a letter to Clinton and a call to Rabin.

Jackson denounced the Afula bombing, saying it was aimed at "people who were not at war with anybody. (They) were just blown away and burned up. In Hebron, people were on their knees praying when they were just blown away. Many of them died because they couldn't get from Hebron to the hospital because of the roadblocks. So there's enough pain to go around."

E.U. GIVING \$11.3 MILLION TO PALESTINIAN POLICE FORCE

By Joseph Kopel

LUXEMBOURG, April 20 (JTA) -- The European Union has announced it will contribute about \$11.3 million to help finance the creation of a Palestinian police force for the Gaza Strip and the West Bank city of Jericho.

The European Union's 12 foreign ministers, who met Tuesday in Luxembourg under the current E.U. leadership of Greece, said they had allocated this sum to the police force as part of the previously announced \$566 million, four-year aid package to the Palestinians.

The entire package is aimed at fostering Palestinian economic development in the territories. It was announced by the E.U. after the signing of the Israeli-Palestine Liberation Organization agreement in Washington that granted Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and Jericho.

The \$11.3 million allotment is aimed at "contributing actively and urgently to the creation of a Palestinian police force," according to a statement issued following Tuesday's meeting.

Several European foreign ministers have stressed the urgency of creating projects that directly help the Palestinians.

According to diplomatic sources, the European Union also said it would work with Arab countries to end their economic boycott of Israel, and with Israel on the future of the Israeli settlements in the territories, in order to further peace in the region.

The foreign ministers also approved E.U. participation in an "international presence" in the territories to protect the Palestinians and to observe future elections in the territories.

Financing and organizing the European participation will be decided when the 12 E.U. foreign ministers meet next.