

**IN A SURPRISE MOVE, ARAFAT ANNOUNCES HIS PLAN TO TRAVEL TO GAZA THIS WEEK**
By Dvora Getzler

JERUSALEM, June 29 (JTA) -- Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat was poised Wednesday for his first visit to the autonomous Palestinian entity in the Gaza Strip and possibly to the Jericho district in the West Bank as well.

Arafat had indicated his desire to begin his visit on Friday.

Avoiding a potentially explosive issue, Arafat apparently was not planning to include a visit to Jerusalem at this time.

Taken aback by Arafat's surprise announcement, which came after weeks of conflicting reports regarding the exact date of Arafat's visit, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin reportedly said the visit could begin Saturday.

The request to permit Arafat to visit was made Tuesday during a meeting between chief Palestinian negotiator Nabil Sha'ath and Gen. Danny Rothschild, coordinator of government activities in the territories.

Under the terms of the May 4 agreement signed between Israel and the PLO in Cairo, Arafat was required to give two weeks notice of any visit he planned to the self-rule areas.

But Yossi Sarid, the Israeli Cabinet minister who is chief negotiator in the latest talks with the Palestinians, said that Rabin can cut that advance-notice period at his discretion.

"It's a practical question," said Sarid. "Is two days notice enough for us to make the proper (security) arrangements?"

Sha'ath told Israel Radio on Tuesday that Arafat would arrive in Gaza from Egypt via the Rafah border crossing, adding that the visit would be "for three or four days" and would "most likely" also include a stopover in Jericho.

'I'm Going Back Home!'

According to Sha'ath, Arafat told him on the telephone: "I'm coming! I'm going back home!"

"Of course he's very excited," Sha'ath said.

Arafat was last in the West Bank in 1967 for a short period after the Six-Day War. His original plans called for him to visit Jericho first and establish a headquarters there.

Eight weeks have elapsed since Arafat and Rabin signed an agreement in Cairo to implement Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and Jericho. Arafat's absence from the autonomous areas has been cited as the key reason for delays in getting Palestinian autonomy up and running in some key areas.

Sha'ath said that after the visit, Arafat would return to Egypt and go from there to Paris for a planned meeting next week with Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

More than 100 people were expected to accompany Arafat, who will probably travel from Gaza to Jericho by helicopter, if indeed he decides to visit the West Bank seat of autonomy.

Israeli police, who were particularly concerned about right-wing demonstrations, immedi-

ately went into high gear to plan security for Arafat's visit.

The joint Israeli-Palestinian Liaison Committee, which will oversee security at the crossing points between Israel and the Palestinian autonomous areas, immediately held a session to begin making final arrangements for the visit.

Israel's right wing greeted the news of the visit with predictable fury.

"This is a national disgrace," said Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu. "It marks the nadir of the Rabin government's slide into degradation."

The Likud, National Religious Party and Tsomet are planning to introduce a measure of no-confidence in the government next week.

The Association of Settlers in Judea, Samaria and Gaza reacted by saying the visit will be "a desecration of the land and of our holy Sabbath."

The settlers group said it was establishing a central command to coordinate protest activities.

Extremist Israelis have repeatedly threatened to assassinate Arafat for his past acts of terrorism.

In Gaza, residents reacted to the news about Arafat's imminent arrival.

"They have booked all the hotels for Arafat's people and they are cleaning the streets in front of the hotels and the beach," a Gazan reporter said.

JEWISH GROUPS WELCOME ASSURANCES THAT AID WILL NOT OPEN JERUSALEM OFFICE
By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, June 29 (JTA) -- Jewish groups and members of Congress have welcomed assurances from the Agency for International Development that it will not locate an office to dispense aid to Palestinians from eastern Jerusalem.

In a June 24 meeting, AID Administrator Brian Atwood told members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee that eastern Jerusalem was not being considered as a site from which to distribute U.S. funds.

The State Department agency is responsible for dispensing up to \$78 million for infrastructure and other developmental assistance to the newly autonomous Gaza Strip and Jericho district.

"Since the final status of Jerusalem is being left until the end of the negotiations" between Israel and the Palestinians, "anything that might prejudice Jerusalem would not be beneficial," Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.) said in a telephone interview.

In last week's meeting, Engel told Atwood that "any expansion of AID activities in east Jerusalem would be unacceptable."

Atwood's pledge not to open an office in eastern Jerusalem came only days after members of Congress and Jewish groups had mobilized to against the possibility. Widespread rumors that the agency was considering such a move had circulated around Washington in recent weeks.

Neal Sher, executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, praised Atwood's pledge, calling it "the right policy."

"No action should be taken that would have

an adverse impact on Jerusalem's status as Israel's undivided capital and we will continue to work with Congress and the administration to ensure that any future actions adhere to this principle," Sher said.

"Atwood has acknowledged concerns raised about the dangers of opening an AID office in east Jerusalem, and has provided assurances that east Jerusalem is not under consideration for an office," said Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League. Foxman said he was "pleased" with Atwood's pledge.

Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.) said, "Atwood has assured us that AID has no plans to open an office in east Jerusalem. Doing so would have prejudged the status of the city, which is Israel's national capital."

NEWS ANALYSIS:

PRIME MINISTER COURTS YI'UD AND SHAS IN EFFORT TO EXPAND A TENUOUS MAJORITY
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, June 29 (JTA) -- Anxious to broaden its tenuous hold on a governing majority, the Labor Party has begun coalition talks with Yi'ud, a three-member faction that recently broke away from Rafael Eitan's Tsomet Party.

At the same time, an incident involving a radio interview on Shabbat demonstrated Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's continuing desire to woo Shas, the fervently religious Sephardic faction, back into his coalition.

Although the rightist opposition, led by the Likud, does not have the arithmetical potential of setting up an alternative government, the narrowness of the Rabin government's current parliamentary margin makes for constant tensions in ongoing Knesset business.

The talks with Yi'ud follow that party's decision, after long internal wrangling, to negotiate with Rabin and his ministers.

Yi'ud's leader, Knesset member Gonen Segev, has been offered the post of minister of energy -- a portfolio currently held by Labor's Moshe Shahal, who is also minister of police.

Yi'ud's Alex Goldfarb is to become a deputy minister if the talks succeed.

That "if" depends primarily on Yi'ud's third Knesset member, Esther Salmovitz, who put up a dogged fight within the party against joining the government and who still maintains that her hawkish positions on peace and security will eventually foil the negotiations with Labor.

Salmovitz, a deputy Knesset speaker, says she has managed to inject wording into Yi'ud's platform on these policy issues that will make it nearly impossible to reach agreement with Labor. She considers herself firmly a member of the "national camp," she says, and opposes the peace process that the current government has launched with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Rabin is said to be undeterred by Salmovitz's tough talk. Indeed he has signaled -- not for the first time -- that he would like to bring Tsomet itself into his government, and make party leader Rafael Eitan a minister.

The two men have a comradeship dating back to Palmach days, when they fought together in the pre-state Jewish underground.

Eitan for his part declared over the weekend that Tsomet, which now has five seats in the

Knesset, would enter coalition negotiations only alongside the National Religious Party, which has six seats.

On Labor's left flank, meanwhile, Meretz, with its 12 seats in the governing coalition, has reiterated its own determined opposition, on ideological grounds, to the entry into the coalition of either Tsomet or NRP.

Meretz, however, has given the go-ahead for talks with Yi'ud.

Political observers interpret Rabin's desultory wooing of Tsomet as designed mainly to bring pressure to bear on Shas, which has been sitting on the fence for more than six months, neither fully out of the coalition nor yet fully in it.

Labor-Shas negotiations were proceeding well during the spring, until a row over the wording of a new law on citizens' rights angered Shas' spiritual leader, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef.

Now, the Orthodox party is demanding that the so-called religious "status quo" -- to which Labor and Meretz are committed under the original Labor-Meretz-Shas coalition agreement -- be enshrined in legislation so as to protect it, in Shas' view, from erosion at the hands of the Supreme Court.

Meretz, while professing its continuing commitment to the status quo, has rejected the need to enact legislation on the subject.

A Rift Within Shas

Beyond the legalistic argument, however, some observers detect a rift within Shas, with Yosef pushing for reconciliation with the government, in the interests both of the peace process and of Shas' own concerns.

But Shas' political leader, Knesset member Aryeh Deri, is reluctant for Shas to move back into the government.

Deri, facing charges of fraud, has been barred by the High Court of Justice from holding Cabinet office pending a verdict in his case. Deri is apparently concerned that if Shas does return to the government, another of its Knesset members would hold the powerful Interior Ministry portfolio.

Rabin's keen desire to see Shas back within the coalition fold was amply illustrated this weekend when the prime minister agreed, under Yosef and Deri's urging, to forgo a live interview on Israel Radio that would have taken place on Saturday morning before a live audience.

The interview was to be part of a program marking the midway point in the present government's term of office. Yosef ruled the broadcast would be "chilul shabbat befarhessya," a public violation of the Shabbat. He threatened parliamentary retribution if Rabin went ahead with it.

Rabin decided to cancel the interview on Saturday morning, and instead prerecorded it at his Tel Aviv home on Friday night.

Ironically, that, too, involved a desecration of the Shabbat by the journalists and technicians involved in the interview. But Shas could look aside, since it was done in the privacy of Rabin's home and the program, when broadcast on Saturday morning, was not broadcast live.

Coalition chairman Eli Dayan, a Labor Party Knesset member, is meanwhile urging Rabin to pay one of his periodic personal visits to Yosef in the hope of finalizing a renewed coalition deal between the two parties.

HATE-CRIME STATISTICS DEMONSTRATE NEED FOR EDUCATION ON TOLERANCE, GROUPS SAY

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, June 29 (JTA) -- Armed with newly released hate-crime statistics for 1993, Jewish groups are prepared to press Congress and the Clinton administration to fund educational programs geared to reducing incidents of violence motivated by prejudice.

According to preliminary figures released simultaneously Tuesday in Germany by FBI Director Louis Freeh and at a Senate Judiciary subcommittee on the Constitution, there were 7,684 hate crimes committed in the United States last year, including 1,054 incidents targeting Jews.

According to observers, these figures confirm the need for educational programs to decrease violence by reducing prejudice.

"In order to address the problem of hate crimes, Congress must know the magnitude of the problem and can now begin to get at the root of the problem," said Mike Lieberman, counsel for the Anti-Defamation League's Washington office.

"Once you recognize that there are hate crimes, you can begin to teach kids not to engage in the acts at all," Lieberman said.

Through grant and educational programs spelled out in the education bill, known as the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, Congress is "taking the next step from the administrative task of reporting hate crimes to making the clear connection between reducing prejudice and preventing violence through education," Lieberman said.

In its version of the bill passed three months ago, the House of Representatives included model programs to combat prejudice and hate.

The Senate bill, which was expected to pass as early as this week, includes similar language.

Although the House version does not fund the grant and education programs, Education Secretary Richard Riley has voiced his support for the program and has indicated his department will find the resources to award grants to local educational and community groups to develop training programs and courses to fight prejudice.

Spielberg Testifies

Steven Spielberg, the award-winning director of "Schindler's List," testified in favor of the bill at the Senate hearing Tuesday.

"What's missing I believe is a moral force, a humane ability to tell the difference between right and wrong," said Spielberg, who asked the members of Congress to pressure states to teach tolerance courses in high schools.

According to the FBI report, hate crimes attacking Jews accounted for 89 percent of the 1,189 reported incidents based on religious bias in 1993.

Among other religious groups, 30 anti-Catholic, 25 anti-Protestant and 11 anti-Islamic incidents were reported by the 6,850 participating law enforcement agencies in 46 states and the District of Columbia.

Congress passed legislation in 1990 requiring the FBI to collect data on hate crimes.

Based on information from participating agencies, the FBI reported 4,558 incidents of hate crimes in 1991 and 7,442 in 1992.

Most of the incidents reported in 1993 -- 62

percent -- were motivated by racial bias. Eighteen percent were motivated by religious bias and 12 percent were based on bias against homosexuals.

Seventy percent of the reported offenses were crimes against people. These crimes included murders, rape, aggravated assault and intimidation, which was the most frequently reported hate crime at 35 percent of the total offenses, according to the report.

Neither Congress nor the FBI can require law enforcement agencies to compile the data. This year's 6,850 respondents cover only 56 percent of the U.S. population. Of the jurisdictions that sent data, many reported information spanning six months instead of the full year.

ADL officials say they are planning to meet with police chiefs around the country in an effort to persuade them to begin reporting or to make more complete reports of hate crimes to the FBI.

Meanwhile, Freeh met with German officials in Germany this week to discuss the growing concerns in both countries over hate crimes and racist violence.

Rabbi Abraham Cooper, the associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center said of the meeting, "We see this as an important step which shows the people of Europe a new level of concern and commitment on the part of the United States to combat hate crimes at home and abroad."

(Contributing to this report was JTA staff intern Michael Shapiro in Washington.)

ARISTIDE, IN PLEA FOR ACTION, COMPARES HAITIAN REFUGEES TO JEWS DURING 1930s

By Michael Shapiro

WASHINGTON, June 29 (JTA) -- Exiled Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, speaking to an American Jewish group here, compared the plight of Haitian refugees seeking haven in the United States today to that of European Jews seeking refuge during the 1930s.

He specifically recalled how in May 1939, some 900 Jews aboard the S.S. St. Louis tried desperately to escape the Holocaust, only to be turned away at every potential port of safety.

Aristide said that refugees who are returned to Haiti have faced violence and some have even been executed, adding to the over 5,000 people killed since the September 1991 coup in which he was ousted.

"The refugee crises will not end until democracy is restored to Haiti," Aristide said last week at the first annual Conscience of the Community Awards reception, sponsored by the Washington chapter of the American Jewish Congress.

"We must be just with our refugees. Given the escalating levels of violence and oppression, it would be immoral to ask people whose very lives are at risk to stay in Haiti," he said at the June 23 ceremony.

Although Aristide welcomed the increased pressures and embargo put on Haiti's military government by the United Nations and United States, he stressed the need for organized protests.

During World War II, according to Aristide, protests by Jewish groups helped push the world community to take action. "This same solidarity is needed for Haiti," he said. "We are sure this will hasten the day when true democracy can be restored."

MANDELA TAPS ANOTHER JEW FOR POST IN SOUTH AFRICAN UNITY GOVERNMENT

By Suzanne Belling

JOHANNESBURG, June 29 (JTA) -- Newly elected South African President Nelson Mandela has appointed to his Cabinet a longtime Jewish political activist who says he was inspired in part by the Jewish underground in pre-state Palestine.

Member of Parliament Ronnie Kasrils, former head of intelligence of the armed wing of the African National Congress, was appointed deputy minister of defense in South Africa's Government of National Unity.

Kasrils is the second Jew to be appointed to the new South African Cabinet. He joins Housing Minister Joe Slovo, with whom Kasrils was closely associated during the anti-apartheid struggle.

Both men also hold high office in the South African Communist Party, which as part of its ideology sought full human rights for all South Africans.

Kasrils, a controversial and flamboyant figure in South African politics, has been a member of the ANC since the 1960s. During that time, he took part in sabotage operations against the apartheid regime before escaping into exile.

Based in London, he operated throughout Africa and took part in the training of ANC soldiers in Cuba, the former East Germany and the Soviet Union prior to returning to South Africa.

He then served undercover before being granted immunity by the governing authorities.

Kasrils said in an interview that one source of inspiration while serving in the underground came from reading about the Jewish underground operating in Palestine during the years of the British mandate.

"We read those books about the Irgun, about Menachem Begin," Kasrils said. "It's one of those books we studied in the early 1960s in the (resistance) camps."

During Kasrils' period in hiding, police called him one of South Africa's most wanted men. The media dubbed him "the Red Pimpernel" because of his penchant for surfacing periodically to make statements to the news media.

Criticized In Synagogue For Being A Communist

Kasrils made headlines shortly before South Africa's first all-race elections, held in late April, when he was the Friday night guest of a Johannesburg rabbi and attended a service at a local synagogue.

He said he was disillusioned by the reaction of some congregants, who criticized the presence of "a Communist" at the synagogue.

Kasrils, who was born in the predominantly Jewish suburb of Yeoville in Johannesburg and had his Bar Mitzvah in the Yeoville Synagogue, comes from a strong Jewish background.

"My initial political consciousness in a sense stemmed from the (second world) war and from being Jewish, but that was coupled with the suffering of black people in this country.

"I was aware that there was a war going on and that Jews, particularly, were suffering in Europe," Kasrils recalled.

"I was bringing home questions about the Nazis," he said.

"My mother explained to me why the Jews

were being persecuted and I drew the analogy with the suffering of black people in this country and racism.

"My mother was not a political person, but she agreed that black people were being treated in an inhuman way -- and there was the parallel with anti-Semitism and the suffering of the Jews in Europe," he said.

"It is clear that I inherited what I can now identify as a Jewish humanist tradition," said Kasrils.

CHANCE DISCOVERY OF HIDDEN DOCUMENTS GIVES WOMAN GLIMPSE OF HER LOST FAMILY

By Ruth E. Gruber

KRAKOW, June 29 (JTA) -- The chance discovery of hidden documents detailing the life of an ordinary Jewish family in the Warsaw Ghetto has provided an Israeli woman with information about her murdered family for the first time in more than 50 years.

It has also given today's young Jews in Warsaw a sense of connection with the Jewish past of the city and their community.

The collection of letters, notebooks, photographs, and other material was discovered during renovation work on a building that now houses the Warsaw offices of the Ronald Lauder Foundation, which runs a number of Jewish educational programs throughout Poland.

Prior to World War II and the forced ghettoization of Warsaw's Jews, the building served as a Jewish medical clinic.

The retrieved documents were personal papers and memorabilia of the residents of two apartments that were in the building, the four-member Melchior family and a 20-year-old bachelor, Moses Dov Bursztyn.

After the discovery of the documents was made public in April, an Israeli woman, Sara Urbach, believing she was related to the Melchiors, contacted the Lauder Foundation.

And indeed she was.

"On June 14 I was in Israel and I brought to her copies of the photographs we had found -- and yes, they were pictures of her family," Rabbi Michael Schudrich, Poland director of the Lauder Foundation, said in an interview.

Elja Melchior, the father of the family, was Urbach's brother, Schudrich said.

Melchior had been an administrator at the Jewish clinic, while his wife Ruchla ran a little vegetable shop.

They had two teen-age children.

Urbach, who had managed to flee Poland in November 1939 at the age of 17, had lost all trace of her brother and other members of her family by 1941.

"It was very moving, but she contained her emotions as she looked at picture after picture," Schudrich said. "They were pictures from the 1920s, the 1930s.

"She recognized them all -- her mother, her brother, her niece. She even thought that she might be in one of the pictures.

"All these memories started coming back" to Urbach, he said.

"She had been looking and looking for traces of her family since the war. These are the only physical traces of her relatives," Schudrich said.