

**BAKER FLIES FROM SYRIA TO ISRAEL  
IN HOPE OF FINALIZING PEACE TALKS****By David Landau and Gil Sedan**

JERUSALEM, Oct. 16 (JTA) -- U.S. Secretary of State James Baker arrived Wednesday evening in Israel and immediately set about the task of determining whether the Palestinians had come up with a delegation that Israel would find acceptable for peace talks, now scheduled to begin Oct. 29 with a conference in Lausanne, Switzerland.

Baker scheduled a late-night meeting at the U.S. Consulate in East Jerusalem with Palestinian leaders Faisal Hussein, Hanan Ashrawi and Zakaria al-Agha, with whom he met in Washington last week and in Amman, Jordan, on Tuesday.

Speculation was rife that the Palestinians had come up with a list of negotiators that would be acceptable to Israel. But one of those mentioned as a possible participant, Ziyad Abu-Ziyad, was quoted on Israeli army radio as saying no final list had been determined.

Israel has insisted that any Palestinians taking part in the proposed peace conference be part of a Jordanian-Palestinian delegation. It has also ruled out the participation of Palestine Liberation Organization members and residents of East Jerusalem.

Reports from Amman said Jordanian officials and PLO representatives had agreed that the delegation would be made up of equal numbers of Jordanians and Palestinians and would be headed by a representative from each side.

But it was not clear whether the Palestinians had dropped their demand that representatives from East Jerusalem be included in the delegation.

Abu-Ziyad warned that this issue could still be a stumbling bloc for the peace conference. But the solution to the problem could be provided by the Palestinian leader himself.

Abu-Ziyad lives in the Jerusalem suburb of Eizariya, which the Israelis consider part of the West Bank and the Palestinians regard as part of Jerusalem. Including him in the delegation could satisfy both sides' concerns.

**Extended Talks In Syria**

Baker arrived here somewhat later than expected from Damascus, after extending his talks there with Syrian President Hafez Assad.

At a news conference following some 12 hours of talks with Syrian officials, the secretary of state said, "We are still on course to hold a peace conference in the month of October."

Baker said his only disagreement with Assad was the timing of negotiations of such issues as the Middle East arms buildup and water, which are separate from the peace talks.

Last week a Middle East regional meeting on the region's scarce water problems, which was to have been held in Turkey in November, was postponed.

In Washington, Joyce Starr, a Middle East expert who heads the Global Water Summit Initiative, said the postponement was at the request of the U.S. government, which feared it might interfere with the peace process. The State Department would not confirm this.

Syria had said earlier that it would not attend the water conference if Israel took part.

At the Damascus news conference Wednesday, Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa said Syria was reluctant to agree to such regional talks because it considered Israel "intransigent."

"That's why we want to test Israeli intentions at the peace conference," he said.

But when asked if he would shake Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy's hand at the peace conference, Sharaa replied, "I would tell you frankly no, because this very hand is guilty" of depriving Palestinians of their rights.

**17 Points Of Assurance From U.S.**

In Washington, White House spokesman Marlin Fitzwater said it was possible that President Bush and Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev would attend the opening of the peace conference in Lausanne. The two presidents will send out the official invitations to the conference.

But he stressed no final decision has been made on whether the two presidents would attend.

After the opening ceremony, which sources in Geneva said could last four days, Israel would negotiate face to face with each of the Arab states involved, including the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

In Jerusalem, meanwhile, Foreign Minister Levy told Knesset members Tuesday that Washington has broadly satisfied Israel's request for assurances on the terms of the peace conference.

He made public 17 points in a U.S. letter of assurances to Israel which he said was satisfactory, although he said several of the points remained to be clarified.

Levy rebuked a reporter who asked later if Israel might balk at attending the conference if the clarifications were not forthcoming.

"Why do you ask such a question? I am confident that these remaining points will be ironed out during the secretary's visit here," the foreign minister said.

Baker was to meet Thursday with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and other ranking Israeli ministers. The American diplomat was to be joined here Thursday or Friday by the Soviet foreign minister, Boris Pankin, who was expected to reinforce U.S. pressure on Israel to drop its reservations over the peace conference.

There was hope that Pankin would offer the immediate restoration of full diplomatic relations between the Soviet Union and Israel as a sweetener. But reports surfaced midweek that the Soviets might delay re-establishing ties until the peace conference begins.

*(Contributing to this report were JTA correspondents David Friedman in Washington and Tamar Levy in Geneva.)*

**LEADER OF HAMAS GROUP SENTENCED  
TO LIFE IMPRISONMENT FOR TERROR****By Gil Sedan**

JERUSALEM, Oct. 16 (JTA) -- The founder and leader of the Islamic fundamentalist group Hamas was sentenced to life imprisonment plus 15 years Wednesday by a military court in Gaza, for assorted terrorist acts against Israel and the murder of Arabs suspected of collaboration.

Sheik Ahmed Yassin, a 56-year-old man who uses a wheelchair, admitted to the charges under

a plea-bargain agreement that absolved him of a role in the 1989 murder of Israel Defense Force soldiers Avi Sasportas and Ilan Sa'adon.

Yassin was convicted of founding the Islamic fundamentalist group in the Gaza Strip shortly after the start of the intifada in 1987. Under his leadership, Hamas, which means "zeal," swiftly grew into the most violent and uncompromising component of the Palestinian uprising.

Although the prosecution agreed not to hold Yassin personally responsible for the series of murders of suspected collaborators, it nevertheless pressed charges of possession of firearms and dissemination of inflammatory leaflets that led to the murders.

Yassin accepted the sentence calmly. A charismatic figure, he has continued to exert a profound influence on Gaza Strip residents even while in jail. At his bidding, the territory was paralyzed by a general strike Wednesday to protest his sentencing.

#### ARAB WORKER IS STABBED IN TEL AVIV AS SLAIN DRUSE CONTRACTOR IS BURIED By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 16 (JTA) -- A West Bank Palestinian guarding a Tel Aviv construction site was stabbed and severely wounded early Wednesday morning by unknown assailants, who stole his pistol and escaped.

Abdul Hakim Daoud, 27, of Kalkilya underwent surgery for multiple deep knife wounds at Tel Hashomer Hospital. He was reported in serious but stable condition.

The incident occurred before dawn in the city's Yad Eliahu neighborhood. Police combed the area and detained several Arabs employed at nearby construction sites.

They believe Daoud was attacked by Arabs. But they are not certain whether it was a politically motivated crime against a presumed Israel collaborator or a criminal act to steal the gun he was licensed to carry.

The passing taxi driver who brought him to the hospital told police the victim seemed to be quarreling with two men before he fell to the ground with knife wounds.

Daoud, regarded by his employers as a trustworthy Palestinian, has worked for some years at a private security company. He was permitted to carry firearms on and off duty.

The stabbing was the second major incident of Palestinian violence this week. On Tuesday, a Druse building contractor named Jamal Hasoon was shot to death when he stopped to pick up workers in the West Bank village of Zabuba.

Shortly after midnight Tuesday, the Israel Defense Force had to intervene to prevent scores of angry Druse from Hasoon's home village of Daliat al-Carmel from carrying out a violent retaliatory attack on Palestinian residents of Zabuba. Army officers persuaded the Druse to return to their cars and go home.

Hasoon, 32, was buried Wednesday in a massive funeral in his home village. Cabinet Minister Rehavam Ze'evi of the far-right Moledet party attended as a representative of the government. Ze'evi promised the mourners that Hasoon's murderers would be found.

Security forces meanwhile continued a massive hunt for two suspects in the shooting, both believed to be 17-year-old youths.

(JTA correspondent Gil Sedan in Jerusalem contributed to this report.)

#### BINYAMIN BEGIN CAUSES A STIR WITH PLAN TO RUN FOR PREMIER By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Oct. 16 (JTA) -- First-term Likud Knesset member Binyamin Begin surprised the public and politicians alike by announcing Tuesday night that he would be a candidate for prime minister whenever Yitzhak Shamir decides to retire.

His television statement sent shockwaves through the Likud bloc, where older, better-known politicians are engaged in a power struggle to succeed the incumbent.

Begin, the 48-year-old only son of former Prime Minister Menachem Begin, is acknowledged to be one of the most promising members of Likud's rising younger generation. But his bid for leadership of the party is considered premature.

The younger Begin, who holds a doctorate in geology, was elected to the Knesset in 1988 and has never held a Cabinet or even sub-Cabinet post, normally a prerequisite for advancement to the highest office.

Many observers linked Begin's announcement to the latest statement by Ariel Sharon, who, unlike Begin, indicated that he might challenge the 75-year-old Shamir in next year's elections.

Sharon's drive for the Likud leadership has split the party into competing camps.

Begin is openly hostile to the housing minister. He blames Sharon for misleading his father about plans for the invasion of Lebanon in 1982, when Sharon was defense minister. The invasion, which originally was planned to accomplish limited security objectives, ultimately embroiled Israel in its longest, costliest and most divisive war.

#### A Signal To Washington?

But the younger Begin's opposition to Sharon has not heartened other political foes of the outspoken hawk. In fact, they fear Begin's candidacy will further split the anti-Sharon camp.

At the moment, that camp consists of two factions, one led by Shamir and Defense Minister Moshe Arens, and the other led by Foreign Minister David Levy.

Until now, Begin belonged to the Shamir-Arens bloc. Arens' only comment about Begin's announcement was that he "has the right to run."

Begin denied that the timing of his bid has any significance. But some observers said he was signaling the United States that if Shamir wavers or steps down under U.S. pressure during this stage of the peace process, there are others in Likud of like mind, ready to take up his mantle.

Begin, in fact, has taken increasingly tough positions recently against what some right-wing circles in Israel perceive to be a lessening of Washington's concern for Israel's security.

Menachem Begin's name is associated with Israel's peace treaty with Egypt, for which he shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Egyptian President Anwar Sadat.

The older Begin took office in 1977, ending 30 years of Labor Party government in Israel. He resigned suddenly in 1984, in deep depression over the death of his wife, Aliza, and the unresolved issues of the Lebanon war.

Now 78 and in poor health, Menachem Begin has been a semi-recluse for the last eight years, though he is said to keep abreast of national and world politics through close associates, including his son.

**HEAD OF POLAND'S PARTY X  
ALLEGES JEWISH CONSPIRACY**  
By Gil Kezwer

TORONTO, Oct. 16 (JTA) -- Stanislaw Tyminski, the Toronto businessman who finished second to Lech Walesa in last December's Polish presidential elections, has claimed his efforts to field candidates in national elections were thwarted by a Jewish conspiracy financed from abroad.

Before boarding a Toronto-bound flight in Warsaw on Oct. 9, the 42-year-old emigre millionaire was quoted as telling the mass-circulation *Gazeta Wyborcza*, "I don't want to be in Poland, which will be turned into a Jewish colony by rigged elections, and that is why I am leaving."

The next day he told the *Toronto Globe and Mail*: "I'm not saying it's all Jews who are rigging the election, because it's a particular group centered around (former Prime Minister Tadeusz) Mazowiecki. But also you know they have wide connections, in the justice system, the legal system, the mass media and so on."

"They are getting a lot of funding from abroad, from the U.S. -- money, breaking the law and so on," he said.

Tyminski's Party X suffered a major setback this month when a court invalidated all but 44 of its candidates for the 460-seat lower house of parliament. The would-be lawmakers had forged the signatures of supporters, the court ruled.

The Polish expatriate was barred from running for a seat in the Sejm after the legislature passed an amendment mandating a five-year residency requirement for candidates. Tyminski left Poland in 1969 and returned only last year.

Jewish groups here have denounced Tyminski.

Canadian Jewish Congress spokesman David Satok called him a "charlatan" devoid of credibility, and said, "His remarks are ludicrous and outrageous."

University of Toronto Sovietologist Aurel Braun, a spokesman for B'nai Brith Canada, said: "This type of intolerance is a manifestation of an inadequate understanding of democratic institutions and process. It diverts people's attention from confronting monumental and urgent problems facing Poland and wastes their energy in a fruitless search for a scapegoat."

Sol Littman, director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Canadian office, called Tyminski's accusations appalling. "There's been a suspicion all along that Tyminski was coming from a radical right-wing, anti-Semitic venue, and this is the proof of it," he said.

**CHANGES MADE AT AUSCHWITZ MUSEUM,  
BUT OFFICIAL SAYS MORE MONEY NEEDED**  
By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Oct. 16 (JTA) -- Plans to update, restore and reorganize the museum and monuments at the site of the Auschwitz-Birkenau death camp complex are well under way but proceeding slowly because of lack of funds, according to a ranking museum official.

But the Polish government-run museum has already made major changes in approach, if not in physical structure, according to Franciszek Piper, director of the museum's historical department.

Since the end of Communist rule, the museum has been emphasizing that Jews were the primary victims at the Nazi death camp, Piper said in an interview here.

The Communists depicted Jews as but one of

many nationalities to die at Auschwitz, but that has been changed, he said.

"Despite the fact that they were citizens of various different countries, they were in Auschwitz because they were Jews," he said.

"Now, in all our publications, the proper data on the nationalities of the victims and the fact that most of the victims were Jews is presented," said Piper, who was in Rome this week for the opening of an exhibition on Auschwitz.

He said the acknowledgement of Auschwitz as primarily a Jewish tragedy began when an international commission to reorganize the museum was established after the fall of Communism in Poland two years ago.

Piper said an introductory film made by the Red Army has been changed to reflect the new emphasis, though not yet in all languages. "That is a technical problem," he said.

In the museum itself, "what we can change and are changing are the commentaries and interpretation that explain the items and photographs on display," he said.

But Piper said to "do everything that needs to be done, we need \$42 million."

Explaining that until now, the Polish government has been solely responsible for the museum's financing, Piper said he hoped private foundations and possibly other governments could help, considering the international dimensions of Auschwitz and the financial crisis affecting Poland.

**KAHANE SON ARRESTED IN SCUFFLE  
WITH LAWYERS FOR ACCUSED ASSASSIN**  
By Jackie Rothenberg

NEW YORK, Oct. 16 (JTA) -- The son of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane was arrested Tuesday during an altercation at a news conference held by attorneys defending the man accused of assassinating the Jewish Defense League founder and one-time Israeli Knesset member.

Binyamin Kahane, 25, who is also a rabbi, and 17-year-old Leon Kryzhanovsky, a Kahane supporter, were charged with harassment and disorderly conduct following the disruption.

Members of Kahane Chai, a militant group founded by the younger Kahane in his father's memory, disrupted the news conference when attorneys for El Sayyid Nosair said they had evidence exonerating their client.

When members of the group rushed the podium, a security guard hired by defense attorneys William Kunstler and Michael Warren drew a gun, according to a police account of the incident. No shots were fired.

Police said the security guard, whose name was not available, was licensed to carry a gun and that no charges were filed against him.

The room in which the defense attorneys held their news conference was booked in the name of the American Arab Relations Committee.

M.T. Mehdi, president of the committee, declined to characterize his organization as supportive of Nosair and said it hosted the news conference merely "to provide the opportunity for new evidence" to be brought forth.

Warren's office issued a statement saying that "profound discoveries" have been made pointing to his client's "indisputable innocence."

The attorneys presented their new evidence at a hearing Wednesday morning.

Meir Kahane was gunned down in a midtown Manhattan hotel last Nov. 5. Nosair is scheduled to go on trial here Nov. 4.

# **BEHIND THE HEADLINES: GERMAN AUTHORITIES RELUCTANT TO ADDRESS NEO-NAZI ATTACKS**

By David Kantor

BONN, Oct. 16 (JTA) -- Increasingly vicious attacks on foreigners by neo-Nazi gangs are fast becoming Germany's most serious internal problem, but the authorities have so far taken little concrete action to address it.

While the Jewish community has been largely spared until now, a classic case of cemetery desecration occurred near Berlin last week.

But the most violent of the recent incidents took place last Saturday night in Immenstadt, Bavaria, where young arsonists burned down a building housing asylum-seekers from several countries. Five of the occupants were injured, three seriously.

Police said they arrested three young right-wing extremists.

At about the same time, neo-Nazi and Skinhead gangs were attacking refugees, guest workers and other foreigners in towns in the federal states of Brandenburg, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern and Saxony-Anhalt, all in what was formerly East Germany.

In the western German port city of Hamburg, long considered a bastion of tolerance, Germans brawled with patrons of a restaurant frequented by foreigners. About 70 Turks were attacked.

Police broke up the fistfights before serious injuries were inflicted.

Jewish institutions have not been hit to date. Nevertheless, police protection has been increased around synagogues and communal centers.

## **Jewish Cemetery Desecrated**

But neo-Nazis managed to overturn tombstones and smear them with swastikas and anti-Semitic slogans at a cemetery in Strausberg, east of Berlin, early on the morning of Oct. 10 and got away undetected.

Interior Minister Alwin Ziel of Brandenburg said 36 neo-Nazi Skinheads have been arrested in the region surrounding Berlin in the past three weeks, while 138 other right-wing extremists are under investigation in the southern district of Dresden.

But the violence continues. Two Skinheads smashed windows at a home for asylum-seekers in Rangsdorf, south of Berlin, and threatened arriving police.

Skinheads bombarded a refugee reception center in Luebben with stones and spray-painted it with anti-foreigner slogans.

According to police, there have been about 500 attacks this year on Africans, Asians and Eastern Europeans who have applied for asylum in Germany.

Jewish activists in Berlin warned last week-end that, if allowed to continue, these attacks will have grave implications for the emerging political culture in newly united Germany.

But the response of the authorities so far has been to restrict the number of refugees allowed into the country, which critics say amounts to the appeasement of violent racists.

Another example of appeasement occurred in the former East German town of Hoyerswerda in Saxony, where foreigners were shunted out of town after neo-Nazis attacked them and burned their hostel earlier this month.

The incident was especially revealing because local citizens cheered the neo-Nazis and jeered police trying to restrain them.

While politicians in Bonn have spoken out against the wave of violence, there was no early, clearcut condemnation by top government officials, critics charge.

## **Housing Foreigners In Camps**

On the other hand, the government has published statistics indicating that the nation spends \$4 billion a year to house and feed refugees. Such reports exacerbate xenophobic tendencies.

Another suggested approach, which has shocked many Germans, is to house the foreigners in a network of camps to keep them out of sight and out of trouble while their resident status is being determined.

The idea was agreed to by the major political parties. Only the opposition Greens protested, warning that the camps would amount to ghettos for foreigners, who would be deprived of contact with the German population.

Other critics of the idea said the camps would be a throwback to the dark days of Stalinist rule in East Germany, when so-called guest workers were housed at abandoned military bases or in heavily guarded barracks on the edge of towns.

Meanwhile, Bernd Wagner, Bonn's top official assigned to gather intelligence about the neo-Nazi gangs, estimated last week that there are 10,000 to 15,000 individuals in eastern Germany ready to resort to violence to advance their extremist views.

He said that at least 50 well-organized neo-Nazis could be found in almost any town in the newly formed federal states in former East German territory. Their groups are well structured and maintain contact with similar groups nationwide.

Wagner denied the popular conception that most neo-Nazi youths are unemployed or frustrated for lack of "socialization." Investigations have shown that the extremists come mostly from "good homes," live with their parents and enjoy a relatively high standard of living and social status.

According to Wagner's profile, the average neo-Nazi activist is 25. But most of them were recruited as young as ages 13 to 15.

## **Independent From The West**

In eastern Germany, Wagner reported, a strong self-consciousness and self-confidence has emerged among the neo-Nazi activists. They are also independent, claiming that they had to fight for their cause under more difficult conditions than their western German counterparts.

"They no longer want to be instructed by veteran neo-Nazis from the West," Wagner said. "They have established their own system of political education and claim better methods to fight what they consider the major danger to Germany -- the influx of foreigners from European and especially non-European countries."

If Wagner's analysis is correct, it may be difficult for veteran neo-Nazis in the West, such as Gerhard Frey, to consolidate a national movement.

The 58-year-old Frey leads the extreme right-wing German People's Union, which won seats in the Bremen city-state legislature last month by polling more than 5 percent of the popular vote.