



**SUMMIT MEETING WITH SYRIA  
URGED BY CABINET MINISTERS**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Sept. 30 (JTA) -- Israeli Cabinet ministers are now pushing for a summit meeting between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Syrian President Hafez Assad.

The ministers feel such a meeting is "absolutely vital," Health Minister Haim Ramon told reporters Wednesday following a five-hour Cabinet session.

The ministers, who met Wednesday rather than last Sunday because of Rosh Hashanah, heard reports from the heads of Israel's various negotiating teams at the Middle East peace talks in Washington.

The negotiating teams returned to Israel last week at the conclusion of four weeks of bilateral talks with Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians.

Briefing the ministers were Itamar Rabinovich, Elyakim Rubinstein and Yosef Hadass, the heads of the teams negotiating respectively with Syria, Jordan and the Palestinians, and Lebanon.

"I don't think there will be progress toward a psychological and practical breakthrough in the absence of such a summit," Ramon said. "The prime minister himself has spoken publicly of the need for top-level contacts."

Other Cabinet sources said Israel needs authoritative word from Syria on how Damascus views the "nature of the peace" and on issues of security. Given the centralization of the regime in Syria, that word has to come from Assad himself, Israeli officials maintain.

Israel's negotiator with the Syrians in the previous Likud government criticized the Cabinet for publicly angling for a summit with Syria.

Speaking to Israel Radio, Yossi Ben-Aharon, who was dropped by Rabin from the negotiating team and is now retired from the civil service, said a summit could be effective only if desired by both sides.

**Syrian Remarks Get Mixed Reaction**

There has been mixed reactions here to statements made by Syria over the past few days in public and in private. While those close to Rabin have voiced pessimism, figures close to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres have reacted more optimistically.

Some officials stressed the hard-line nature of the address delivered at the U.N. General Assembly on Monday by Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa.

But others saw a basic change in attitude, reflected in Sharaa's statement supporting a "full peace" with Israel, which has been elaborated by some Syrian policy-makers to include normal diplomatic, commercial and cultural relations with Israel.

Israel's unusually high-profile summit overture may be aimed at the Bush administration as well as at the Syrians, according to some political commentators here.

They say Rabin believes a summit involving himself, Assad and President Bush -- which is probably the only type of face-to-face meeting with the Israeli leader that Assad would consider

-- could dramatically benefit the electoral standing of the U.S. president.

In publicly calling for such a summit, therefore, Rabin may in effect be challenging Assad to do his bit to help Bush too -- or be seen as ducking an opportunity to help the president.

If no summit takes place because of Syria's refusal, and Bush is re-elected nevertheless, Israel stands to benefit in the attitude of a grateful president.

In the event of a win in November by Democratic nominee Bill Clinton, Israel's summit overture would be seen as a bold peacemaking move aimed solely at the Arab side without reference to internal American electoral politics.

**HEZBOLLAH MOUNTS HEAVY ATTACK  
ON ISRAELI ZONE IN SOUTH LEBANON**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Sept. 30 (JTA) -- Southern Lebanon remained tense after heavy fighting over the Rosh Hashanah holiday between well-trained forces of the Iranian-backed Hezbollah and Israeli-supported troops left at least nine dead.

The violence began early Tuesday, when hundreds of Hezbollah fighters launched a large-scale bombardment of a dozen positions controlled by the Israeli-backed South Lebanon Army in what security sources said was "one of the fiercest days of fighting" the area has seen in many months.

Fire was directed at the northern edge of the border security zone from Nabatiya, in the east, to the coast.

Hezbollah gunmen pushing their way to SLA lines surrounded a checkpoint of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon near Barasheet and opened fire when they were refused permission to pass.

Their fire killed an Irish member of the multinational force and wounded another.

The fighting also claimed the lives of two SLA soldiers, at least two Lebanese civilians and four Hezbollah gunmen.

An SLA position near Rashaf beat back a frontal attack by a force of about 20 Hezbollah gunmen, who moved in behind supporting fire rained down by Katyusha rockets, mortars, anti-aircraft guns, Sager anti-tank missiles and machine guns.

The SLA post commander and another soldier were killed and four more wounded in the attack. The remainder of the 14-member contingent counterattacked and pursued fleeing Hezbollah men even before the arrival of reinforcements from the SLA and the Israel Defense Force.

Their conduct was lauded by the head of the IDF's Northern Command and by the commander of the SLA.

The attackers left behind rifles, anti-tank rockets, dozens of hand grenades, mines and explosive devices.

The attack culminated two weeks of Hezbollah activity which came after an extended period of quiet during which the fundamentalist group was busy seeking support in the Lebanese elections.

Those who believed the Hezbollah would follow up the elections by grandiose actions

designed to demonstrate its undiminished vigor proved to be right, analyst Emanuel Rosen wrote Wednesday in the Israeli daily Ma'ariv.

SLA and IDF gunners launched a counter-bombardment of suspected terrorist targets north of the zone. Lebanese police said the four hours of shelling killed a 45-year-old woman and an 80-year-old man, and wounded 11 civilians.

#### More Attacks Anticipated

A UNIFIL spokesman said dozens of "armed elements" from the north tried to force their way through UNIFIL checkpoints staffed by Nepalese and Irish soldiers.

They opened fire at the Irish troops, who refused to let them pass, wounding one soldier, who was evacuated to the headquarters of the U.N. buffer troops at Nakoura. He was reported out of danger by nightfall.

Corp. Peter Ward, a 31-year-old father of four on his third tour of duty with UNIFIL, was hit in the chest when the gunmen opened fire at an armored personnel carrier in which he served as machine-gunner.

He died at the scene as reinforcements were summoned from the nearby Irish battalion headquarters.

He was the 33rd Irishman killed and the 187th death in the 6,000-strong UNIFIL contingent since its arrival in southern Lebanon in 1978.

The Hezbollah has failed in every one of its operations over the past two weeks, although it did display some variety and sophistication of attack, according to Rosen of Ma'ariv.

The ground attack took place at a "soft and vulnerable underbelly of the security zone" north of Zarit, where less than 2 1/2 miles separate the Israeli and security zone borders. A similar attack occurred there last year.

Three terrorists were killed, and three more apparently were wounded. If indeed there were 20 originally, then 14 managed to escape.

This is an accomplishment of sorts for the Hezbollah, although the bottom line is its failure to capture the outpost -- or even to take SLA prisoners, said Rosen.

He added that until the harsh Lebanese winter begins, "we can anticipate a number of weeks of energetic activity by the Hezbollah, although there is no doubt that recent failures have somewhat dampened their appetite to renew activity in the security zone."

#### **IDF SOLDIER KILLS ARAB MAN OUT TO ATTACK HIM WITH AN AX**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 30 (JTA) -- An Israeli army officer stationed in a northern Jerusalem suburb shot to death an Arab who had been about to strike him with an ax and a knife.

The incident occurred Wednesday at a bus stop on the main road leading north from the Jewish neighborhood of Neveh Ya'acov. The officer, a lieutenant who had just returned to his base after the holiday, suddenly noticed an Arab approaching him with an ax in one hand and a knife in the other, yelling "Allahu akhbar" (God is great).

The two began to wrestle. As the attacker moved to lower the ax, the soldier took a few steps back, pulled his gun and fired seven or eight shots at the assailant, according to his own testimony. The assailant died on the spot.

The officer's testimony was supported by an Israel Defense Force sergeant who was an eyewitness to the incident.

The officer's name was not released, nor was that of the dead terrorist, on whose body a volume of the Koran was found.

Police Inspector-General Ya'acov Turner, who arrived on the scene shortly thereafter, praised the young officer for his fast reaction.

Last week, a similar incident ended with the death of a border policeman, Avinoam Peretz, 26, at the hands of an Arab terrorist who attacked the policeman at close range.

The deployment of security forces has been stepped up in sensitive areas of Jerusalem, particularly during the High Holidays, which have been traditionally chosen by terrorist organizations for attacks on Jews.

#### **BLACK HEBREWS GET TEMPORARY STATUS** By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 27 (JTA) -- The Israeli government has decided to grant temporary residence status to the community of Black Hebrews, in an attempt to resolve a longstanding dispute.

Interior Minister Arye Deri said last week that the status of temporary resident will be offered to members of the sect, most of whom now live without legal authorization in the Negev town of Dimona.

Israel's High Court of Justice issued a ruling six years ago ordering the deportation of 45 members of the sect for overstaying visas.

The Black Hebrews are a Chicago-based sect claiming to be descended from one of the lost tribes of Israel in Africa. They have been in Israel 23 years.

In 1972, the High Court of Justice ruled that the sect members were not Jews and therefore not eligible for automatic Israeli citizenship.

The government hesitated to expel them, however, for fear of harming relations between Jewish and black communities in the United States, as well as Israeli ties with black African countries.

The community has accumulated debts to the municipal authorities amounting to hundreds of thousands of dollars. News reports said the U.S. government has promised the community a grant of \$1 million to establish community institutions.

#### **YOUTH TO VISIT MOROCCO, SPAIN**

JERUSALEM, Sept. 30 (JTA) -- A delegation of almost 500 Israeli youths will embark on a tour of Spain and Morocco for the culmination of events commemorating the 500th anniversary of the deportation of the Jews from Spain.

It will be the first organized visit of Israeli youths to an Arab country except for Egypt, and is intended to explore the roots of North African Jewry.

Some 50,000 Jews found shelter in Morocco after their expulsion from Spain in 1492. The Israelis will follow their steps from Toledo and Cordoba in Spain down to Casablanca, Fez, Marrakech and Rabat in Morocco.

The tour received the blessings of both the previous education minister, Zevulun Hammer, and his successor in office, Shulamit Aloni.

During the visit, the students will spend some hours helping to rebuild the Jewish cemetery of Marrakech. A mass rally at the cemetery will mark the end of the anniversary events.

## CELEBRATION OF V-2 ROCKET CANCELED AFTER PROTESTS IN GERMANY, BRITAIN

By David Kantor

BONN, Sept. 30 (JTA) -- A celebration of the German aerospace industry to mark the 50th anniversary of the successful launching of the V-2 missile, a Nazi project, has been canceled in the wake of sharp protests here and in Britain.

The ceremony was due to take place Oct. 3, under the auspices of Erich Riedl, a junior minister of economics.

Under pressure from his Cabinet colleagues, particularly Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, Riedl announced he was withdrawing his participation at the ceremony.

Earlier, the conservative Bavarian politician had vehemently defended the planned celebration.

The V-2 missile was developed by the Nazis to hit Britain and other targets. Over the years, some 50,000 slave laborers from various concentration camps, many of them Jews, had been forced to work in the production of the deadly weapon.

The ceremony was due to take place in the Baltic town of Peenemunde, where the rocket was developed.

The research and production for the Nazi missile program was moved in 1942 from Peenemunde to an underground site attached to the Dora-Nordhausen labor camp, after the Allies bombarded Peenemunde in an effort to disrupt the missile's production.

The V-2 missiles, whose development was headed by Wernher von Braun and Arthur Rudolph, were used against targets in Britain and in Holland. At that time, the V-2 was considered to be the most sophisticated weapon of its kind.

After the war, the U.S. government brought von Braun and Rudolph to the United States to develop its own space program.

### 'We Have Enough Problems Abroad'

Chancellor Helmut Kohl's spokesman, Dieter Vogel, said Monday that Kohl had not known in advance about the planned participation of Riedl at the ceremony.

"Had he known about the participation, he would certainly have opposed it," Vogel remarked.

Foreign Minister Kinkel told German television, "We have enough problems abroad with right-wing extremists and the like. We certainly do not need such ceremonies."

Protests against the planned celebrations were held both in Germany and Britain.

More than 2,700 people in London died in V-2 attacks in 1944 and 1945, and another 6,500 were wounded, The New York Times reported.

The organizers of the celebrations said they were celebrating "the first step into space," not the weapon.

At a news conference called Monday to announce the event's cancellation, the head of the German Aerospace Trade Association, the event's prime sponsor, said the celebrations had become "the subject of political discussions" which did not justify "scientific facts."

Bjorn Engholm, the chairman of the opposition Social Democratic Party, said the event's organizers displayed a terrible lack of sensitivity.

In related remarks, the opposition leader called for a special conference of all interior ministers of the 16 German federal states to discuss the most effective ways to counter the increasing terror of neo-Nazi activists.

## KOHL CRITICIZES NEO-NAZI ATTACKS IN ROSH HASHANAH MESSAGE TO JEWS

By David Kantor

BONN, Sept. 30 (JTA) -- In a Rosh Hashanah message to the Jewish community, Chancellor Helmut Kohl sharply criticized the ongoing neo-Nazi attacks on foreigners seeking asylum in Germany. Referring to the persecution of the Jews in the Third Reich, Kohl said, "Historical comparisons are being made once again, and we must take them seriously."

His message last Friday came as the leader of the Jewish community here criticized the mild sentences handed down on right-wing extremists convicted of attacking foreigners.

Ignaz Bubis, chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, said the new federal states of eastern Germany had acted ineffectively to curb neo-Nazi attacks on asylum-seekers and other foreigners.

To reinforce the lessons of the past, the council plans to lobby for the creation in Berlin of a central memorial to the Jewish victims of the Nazis, he told reporters in Berlin.

Meanwhile, in Braunschweig, Lower Saxony, authorities have uncovered large quantities of arms in an investigation of neo-Nazi terror organizations, the German magazine Bild said.

A "death list" containing the names of 200 prominent individuals was also found in a search of dozens of houses, said the report.

Right-wing violence is likely to increase dramatically in the near future, the German internal security service BKA warned last week. Neo-Nazis have been recruiting new members at an accelerating pace, the chief of the agency said in an interview.

He said 59 percent of the violent attacks against foreigners occurred in eastern Germany.

In his message to the Jewish community, Kohl said that only "a very small number" of those seeking asylum in Germany are eligible for protection under its law. He urged joint European action to help victims of political persecution.

He also praised the Israeli government of Yitzhak Rabin for "improving the climate for negotiations" in the Middle East and offered Bonn's help in multilateral peace negotiations.

### RECOVERING REBBE ATTENDS SERVICES

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Sept. 30 (JTA) -- The Lubavitcher rebbe, recovering slowly from a serious stroke suffered in March, made his longest public appearance to date in order to pray with his followers on Rosh Hashanah.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson spent just over an hour the first day of Rosh Hashanah, and about 90 minutes the second day, with thousands of Lubavitchers who packed into the Hasidic movement's headquarter synagogue at 770 Eastern Parkway in Brooklyn's Crown Heights section.

He prayed from a specially constructed enclosed balcony overlooking the floor of the sanctuary and was present for the Torah reading and the blowing of the shofar on both days.

According to sources at Lubavitcher headquarters, the news of the rebbe's appearance spread "like wildfire" throughout the world. And since shortly after the holiday ended Tuesday night, thousands of people reportedly have called to hear the details of the 90-year-old rebbe's appearance for themselves.

## **ETHIOPIAN IMMIGRANTS IN ASHDOD FINALLY GET OWN HOUSE OF WORSHIP**

By Michele Chabin

ASHDOD, Israel (JTA) -- Ethiopian immigrants here had reason to celebrate when the synagogue they have long awaited officially opened last week.

The synagogue, which is being funded by the Jewish Agency for Israel and the local municipality, was established to meet the special needs of the Ethiopian Jewish community.

Inaugurated just a week before Rosh Hashanah, the shul -- housed in an elementary school classroom -- already has several hundred worshipers from the nearby Pladot absorption center. It was at their insistence, in fact, that the synagogue was established in the first place.

Until last week, the immigrants had two choices for worship: the cramped absorption center, which does not have a Torah, or a local Sephardic synagogue, whose prayer service is unrecognizable to the immigrants.

"The Ethiopian service is very different from both the Ashkenazi and Sephardi tefillah, so the immigrants feel uncomfortable in those settings," explained Yossi Harel, a Jewish Agency official who helped set up the synagogue.

"Another source of frustration is the fact that their holy language is Geez, not Hebrew. We are trying to bridge the gap between the Ethiopian and Israeli communities, but it will take time," he said.

Both the immigrants and government officials hope that the new synagogue will act as that bridge. Though there are at least 20 places of worship for Ethiopian Jews throughout the country, most of which are in absorption centers, the Ashdod synagogue is the first to combine elements of both cultures.

In an attempt to join the old and the new, services are being led by Kes Avraham, an aged and respected leader of the Ethiopian community, and his son Shmuel, 37, a graduate of an Israeli yeshiva.

### **Keeping Community 'Glued Together'**

Though some of the logistics have yet to be worked out, the plan is to begin Shabbat prayers in Geez, with commentary in Amharic, the Ethiopian spoken language. About halfway through the service, Rabbi Shmuel will lead an Israeli-oriented service in Hebrew.

"By combining the two, everyone is satisfied," said Shmuel, who arrived here 12 years ago. "The elders are able to pray in the way they are accustomed, and the young, who are more familiar with the modern Israeli service, are also catered to. The community is glued together, not divided."

The special ties that bind the Ethiopian immigrants together were very much in evidence last week, during the synagogue inauguration.

Hundreds of olim, dressed in traditional white robes, were joined by several neighbors and government officials as they marched from the absorption center to a nearby school.

On the way, they danced with a Torah scroll that once belonged to a now-extinct Jewish community in Romania. They also carried two holy books from Ethiopia, one more than 400 years old.

Once in the newly painted classroom, the men sat on one side, the women on the other. The children seemed to be everywhere -- grabbing pieces of honey cake and apples dipped in honey.

Together, they placed both the Torah and holy books in the wooden ark, then inaugurated the synagogue with prayers in Hebrew and Geez.

"This is great," remarked one Ethiopian teen-ager, eating a strip of honeyed apple. "My family has lived in Ashdod for eight years, and we finally have a place to pray."

### **'A Very Happy Day For Us'**

In the swell of emotion, no one seemed prouder than Kes Avraham, dressed in a blue satin robe fringed with gold.

"This is a very happy day for us," said the kes, whose eyes sparkled beneath his white turban. "In Ethiopia, I had my own synagogue. I dreamed that one day I would have a synagogue here in Israel."

At a time when the Ethiopian community's leaders are demanding the right to perform religious functions, such as weddings and divorces, starting a new synagogue is especially meaningful, he said.

"There is friction between the rabbinate and the kessim, but I think this can be resolved," he said. "I am personally in favor of taking a course in Oral Law, if that is what is required."

He was referring to the Israeli Chief Rabbinate's insistence that the Ethiopian kessim, or spiritual leaders, undergo training in the Talmud, which is completely foreign to the Ethiopian Jewish religious tradition.

As he spoke, the kes grasped an object in his right hand that looked like a golden horse's tail. Asked about its function, he replied that it symbolized power. Then his face broke out into a big, wrinkly smile as he added: "It is also a very good fly swatter."

## **ISRAEL ESTABLISHES COMMITTEE TO STUDY STATUS OF FERRIS MORA**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Sept. 30 (JTA) -- Ethiopian leaders here are pleased by the decision of the Israeli Cabinet to study the problem of the Ferris Mora, the Ethiopian Christian sect who claim Jewish origin and seek to immigrate to Israel.

On Wednesday, the Cabinet established a high-level committee to deal with the issue and report back within a month.

The committee includes the ministers of justice, interior, religion and foreign affairs, as well as the chairman of the Jewish Agency. It is to be chaired by Absorption Minister Yair Tsaban.

It is empowered to create a body of experts to examine in depth the origins of the sect, its Jewish status and the possibilities of aliyah.

Relatives of the Ferris Mora have been demonstrating in Jerusalem against an earlier Cabinet decision to admit just 100 members of the sect, most of whom live alone in Ethiopia and have close relatives in Israel.

Thousands of members of the sect have collected in Addis Ababa in recent months in the hope of making their way to Israel. They have left their villages for the capital despite the reluctance of the Israeli government to recognize their Jewishness and despite strong objections to their emigration by the Ethiopian government.

A government-appointed fact-finding team visited Ethiopia earlier this year and registered opposition to the mass aliyah of the sect. The team suggested that a lengthy "returning to Judaism" program be administered in Ethiopia by Israeli emissaries over a period of years.