

**NEW ROUND OF PEACE TALKS BEGINS
WITH ISRAEL OFFERING NEW IDEAS****By Cynthia Mann**
States News Service

WASHINGTON, Oct. 21 (JTA) -- The seventh round of Middle East peace talks began here Wednesday amid reports that the Israelis would for the first time make explicit at the negotiating table their willingness to withdraw from at least part of the Golan Heights.

Israeli officials would not confirm those reports, but the negotiating delegation's spokesman did tell reporters Wednesday that Israel was offering a "new set of formulations that touch on the central issues."

The spokesman, Yossi Gal, said the document "could and should serve as a basis for dialogue."

The last round of talks ended with Syria demanding Israel's pledge for full withdrawal from the Golan in exchange for peace. Israel said it would not offer territorial concessions before hearing the Syrians spell out what sort of peace they were willing to offer in return.

Israel also has favored an interim agreement to test Syria's intentions before making irrevocable territorial concessions, an idea rejected by Syria.

The standoff prevented the issuing of a joint statement of principles that had been anticipated at the end of the last round of talks Sept. 4 and that might have paved the way for a detailed peace agreement.

Israel's reported willingness to go out on a limb early in this round could inject momentum into the process. While some observers feel the talks will remain in a holding pattern until the U.S. presidential elections Nov. 3, many say the parties cannot afford to waste the time.

They point to the fragile mandate of the Palestinian leadership and the increased popular unrest in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which some attribute to frustration with the slow pace of the talks.

'It's Time For Liftoff'

Gal made clear that Israel expects to see real progress in the new round of talks.

"We've come back with comprehensive instructions and a renewed mandate," he said. "We are not of the opinion that due to the elections, progress cannot be achieved."

Stressing that "time is of the essence," Gal said, "We've had ignition. It's now time for liftoff before all our fuel" is "consumed and we're left where we started."

U.S. officials met Wednesday morning with members of the Palestinian delegation reportedly to persuade them to drop their demand that Israel commit itself now to territorial concessions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Israel has refused to meet that demand, claiming such a commitment would apply only to talks set to begin three years from now on the final status of the administered territories.

The dispute has bogged down the current round of talks, which are supposed to lead to an agreement on an interim Palestinian self-governing authority.

U.S. officials reportedly urged the Palestini-

ans to defer their demands. They also reportedly pledged to maintain a high level of engagement in the peace process, holding out the possibility that White House Chief of Staff James Baker or another top official would make a trip to the region after the Nov. 3 presidential election.

The Palestinians returned to Washington this week after a brief layover in Paris, where they were to have met with French Foreign Minister Roland Dumas. But much to the French leader's chagrin, the Palestinians decided upon their arrival in Paris that they would rather rest in their hotel.

Meanwhile, the Israelis held talks Wednesday morning at the State Department with the Jordanians and the Lebanese, which have been assigned a lower profile than the talks with the Syrians and the Palestinians.

(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Michel Di Paz in Paris.)

**RABIN STRUGGLING, SO FAR IN VAIN,
TO END GOVERNMENT COALITION CRISIS****By David Landau**

JERUSALEM, Oct. 21 (JTA) -- Coalition jockeying in Israel intensified this week as Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin tried to end a crisis that threatens to bring down his Labor-led coalition just three months after it was formed.

After the Sukkot holiday break, Rabin again found himself trying to persuade his two coalition partners to pre-empt a threat posed by opposition motions of no confidence.

The motions attack statements made by Education Minister Shulamit Aloni on religious issues. They are to be debated in the Knesset on Nov. 2.

Shas, the Sephardic religious party, will vote against the government of which it is now a member, Rabin was told Tuesday night by the party's spiritual mentor, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef.

The prime minister reported this to Aloni and other leaders of the left-wing Meretz bloc the following day, describing the crisis as "very serious."

The Meretz leaders, Aloni among them, later told reporters Rabin had "neither demanded nor suggested" that Aloni give up the education and culture portfolio, as Shas is demanding.

But sources close to Rabin say the prime minister would indeed be gratified if Meretz agreed to switch Aloni and Amnon Rubinstein, presently the minister of energy.

As part of the deal, Meretz would receive a fourth Cabinet seat, Aloni would become deputy prime minister and would continue to head the culture side of the Ministry of Education and Culture, according to media reports.

Political sources say there is pressure on Aloni from within her own party to agree to this sort of compromise as a way of saving the government and with it the peace process.

Meretz's public position, reiterated Tuesday night, is that "any diminution of Minister Aloni's standing" will lead to the party's immediate secession from the government.

In theory, that formulation leaves the way open for a switch of portfolios that does not mean a "diminution" of Aloni's standing. But she

herself has reportedly said she will refuse to leave the education post and that if Rabin wants her out, he will have to fire her.

'Desecration Of God's Name'

Without Meretz and its 12 Knesset seats, Rabin cannot govern. Without Shas and its six parliamentary mandates, he retains an arithmetic majority, given the tacit support of the Arab parties; but he would find it politically impossible to make concessions to the Arab side in the peace talks with so thin a public mandate.

Rabin still hopes to broaden the coalition by co-opting the United Torah Judaism bloc, which has four Knesset seats and is itself a mini-coalition of two *haredi* (ferverently Orthodox) parties: Agudat Yisrael and Degel HaTorah.

Agudah rabbis are said to be divided over whether they would favor joining the government if Aloni were removed from Education. While some are in favor, they have in mind the opposition of the venerable Rabbi Eliezer Shach of Bnei Brak, who reportedly insists the *haredi* parties stay out of a government that has Meretz in it.

As Rabbi Yosef of Shas met with Rabin at his Jerusalem home Tuesday night, another member of the Shas Council of Sages called on Shach in Bnei Brak.

Sources close to Shach said Rabbi Shalom Cohen got short shrift from the 95-year-old head of the Ponevezh yeshiva, who said the continued presence of Shas in a government with Meretz was "a desecration of God's name."

ISRAEL STRIKES BACK AT HEZBOLLAH

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 21 (JTA) -- Israeli air force planes attacked bases of the pro-Iranian group Hezbollah in Lebanon on Wednesday in response to the recent escalation of assaults by the group in the Israeli-controlled border security zone.

The raid on Mashara village follows recent attacks by the Islamic fundamentalist force on Israeli and allied South Lebanese Army troops in southern Lebanon. On Tuesday, a land mine detonated under an Israeli tank, causing slight damage and no casualties.

All Israeli planes returned safely to base, according to the spokesman for the Israel Defense Force.

The outgoing chief of the IDF's Lebanese liaison unit warned this week that Hezbollah attacks on the 9-mile-deep Israeli security zone were likely to continue and even increase in the short term.

Brig. Gen. Micha Tamir said the extremist group had stepped up operations in the past two months after a break for the parliamentary elections in Lebanon in which it scored some success.

Tamir headed the Liaison Unit for two years. He is succeeded by Brig. Gen. Gabi Ashkenazi.

ISRAELI SOLDIERS SHOT IN HEBRON

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Oct. 21 (JTA) -- The Israeli army slapped a curfew on downtown Hebron on Wednesday after two soldiers were shot and wounded as their jeep drove through the southern part of the West Bank city.

In what is believed to have been a premeditated ambush, the jeep driver was hit several times in the chest.

He was later reported out of danger after

surgery at Hadassah-Hebrew University Medical Center in Jerusalem.

The other soldier, a female officer, sustained slight wounds and was expected to be discharged from the hospital by Thursday.

Sources said local Palestinians rescued the wounded soldiers from their overturned jeep and brought them to Alia Hospital in Hebron. From there the army transferred them to Jerusalem.

ISRAEL'S AMBASSADOR TO MOSCOW ENDS POSTING WITH WARM FAREWELL

By Alexander Lesser

MOSCOW, Oct. 18 (JTA) -- Israel's first envoy to Moscow since the 1967 Six-Day War got a warm farewell from Russian Jews at a gala event held here last Saturday evening.

Aryeh Levin, who will return to Israel in about two weeks as his tour of duty ends, spoke emotionally about the changes he witnessed in relations between Moscow and Jerusalem during his four-year stint.

In a speech to well-wishers who packed the Central House of Artists, he recalled his arrival, when "the Soviets treated me as the head of something called the Israeli Group of Diplomats," then operating under the aegis of the Dutch Embassy.

He remembered January 1991, when he was reclassified as consul-general, as the Israeli representation was upgraded, and last October, when "I finally became an ambassador."

Israel restored full diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union on Oct. 18, 1991. But before Levin could present his credentials to the head of state, the Soviet Union had ceased to exist, and Levin became ambassador to Russia.

Levin, 61, is a career diplomat born to Russian Jewish parents in Teheran, Iran. He previously served as Israel's U.N. representative in New York and was also an envoy in Africa and Iran.

Present at the dinner was Levin's wife, Aliza, who for the past four years has overseen the envoy's official receptions and dinners. Also in attendance was Israeli poet Yakov Gorland, who left his native Ukraine in 1921 at the age of 7, and well-known local Jewish artists, such as playwright Grigory Goren and comedian Zinoviy Gert.

Goren reflected on the reluctance of many Jews here to make aliyah, despite their deep emotional attachment to Israel. "Like some, I've applied for the permanent right to visit Israel frequently," the playwright said.

Levin is being replaced by a well-known Israeli, Gen. Haim Bar-Lev, who was Israel Defense Force chief of staff from 1968 to 1972 and commander of the Egyptian front during the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

His name is particularly associated with a line of defensive strongholds along the Suez Canal that was more heavily reinforced during his tenure as chief of staff.

The former Haim Zaslavsky, born in 1924 in Vienna, came to Palestine in 1939 and served in the Palmach between 1942 and 1948 and was commander of Israel's armored units on the Egyptian front during the War of Independence.

A Labor member of Knesset since 1977, he served in the coalition governments of the 1980s as Labor's secretary-general and as minister of police. He was an early endorser of Israel's Peace Now movement and has advocated territorial compromise.

FRENCH JEWS HELD BY GERMAN POLICE FOR PROTESTING AGAINST NEO-NAZIS

By David Kantor

BONN, Oct. 21 (JTA) -- German prosecutors are pressing charges against three French Jewish activists arrested Monday during a demonstration they staged in the city of Rostock.

A German court on Wednesday issued arrest warrants against the three, who were protesting the German government's failure to crack down on neo-Nazi violence and its plan to deport Gypsies to Romania.

They were charged with bodily injury, resisting arrest and the freeing of four of their fellow protesters who had been detained after a clash with police Monday.

Prosecutor Martin Slotty refused to release the identities of the three persons arrested.

But in Paris, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency learned that two of them are 19-year-old activists in the Zionist youth group Tagar, the youth arm of the Betar Zionist movement, and the third is a 35-year-old member of the Sons and Daughters of Jewish Deportees from France, a group founded by Paris lawyer Serge Klarsfeld.

Klarsfeld and his German-born wife, Beate, led the group of demonstrators, which chartered a bus from Paris to Rostock.

The Klarsfelds were among an initial group of 46 persons who were detained by Rostock police Monday. All but the three were released the following morning.

The French Jewish group chose Rostock for its protest because it has been the site of neo-Nazi attacks culminating in the torching of a hostel for asylum-seekers.

The group marched through one of Rostock's main streets which lead to the town municipality.

The demonstrators carried banners saying, "Germany, don't forget history" and "Formerly gassed, today deported," a reference to the plight of thousands of Gypsies who are to be expelled from the country starting Nov. 1.

Gypsies were victims, along with Jews, in the gas chambers.

Protesters Used Tear Gas

At the town hall, the protesters affixed a plaque to the building's front entrance condemning government laxness against neo-Nazis and Germany's intention to deport Gypsies.

The plaque was later removed.

The protesters also penetrated the building, shouting anti-Nazi slogans and calling on the authorities to take action against the anti-foreigner violence in the town. They refused to leave the building.

At that point, police were called in and arrested three demonstrators.

According to police, the demonstrators used tear gas and were "extremely violent." The French activists attacked a police car in which their three comrades were held. They allegedly sprayed tear gas on police and freed the three.

Eight members of the police were slightly injured in Monday's demonstration.

The French demonstrators then boarded their bus but were arrested a few minutes later by German riot police.

All the demonstrators, including some elderly Holocaust survivors, were held overnight in a sports hall. All but three were released the next morning.

In Paris, the European Jewish Congress has

asked the German authorities to release the three arrested on bail, "in order to defuse any further violence."

The Betar and Tagar groups have meanwhile called for a peaceful demonstration Thursday evening in front of the German Embassy in Paris.

(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Michel Di Paz in Paris.)

GERMANY LOOKS INTO BANNING A NUMBER OF NEO-NAZI GROUPS

By David Kantor

BONN, Oct. 21 (JTA) -- Germany's interior minister has ordered the federal office that monitors extremist political activities to examine the possibility of banning a number of neo-Nazi organizations.

The spokesman for Interior Minister Rudolf Seiters said here Monday that the examination would particularly look into groups that have been heavily involved in the recent wave of violence against foreigners.

Eckart Werthebach, the president of the monitoring office, called the Verfassungsschutz, has, meanwhile, publicly called for a ban on a number of such organizations.

This attitude, which represents a shift in the office's policy, was expressed in several interviews and appears geared to head off criticism by the Jewish community and other groups.

While refraining from naming the organizations to be banned, Werthebach said recent intelligence information suggests that more and more coordination took place among extremist neo-Nazi groups and the Republican Party.

The Republican Party, led by a former SS officer, is an established political party with representation in the European Parliament and in several German state parliaments.

Werthebach also said no decision has been made on whether the Republicans should be monitored by his office.

Such monitoring arouses concern among right-wing politicians, who fear that people who vote for the Republicans would be persuaded to switch their allegiance to more middle-of-the-road parties.

According to recent statistics, the number of clashes between far-right and far-left extremist groups in Germany has increased dramatically in the past year. More than 230 such violent clashes have been registered so far this year, Werthebach reported.

COURT GIVES NAZI SUSPENDED TERM

BONN, Oct. 21 (JTA) -- An unidentified, 83-year-old former member of the Nazi SA (storm-troopers) has been given a suspended sentence for complicity in the murder of a Jew that took place 54 years ago, on Kristallnacht.

The two-year suspended sentence was handed down last Friday by a court in Wolgast, a town in eastern Germany in the state of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern.

A jury found that the man was guilty of complicity in manslaughter in the death of a Jewish woman on the night of Nov. 9-10, 1938. The death occurred in the east Prussian town of Neidenburg.

The jury foreman, Karl Weber, explaining the sentence for the less severe crime of complicity in manslaughter, said the jury found the defendant had not participated actively in the murder.

THOUSANDS MOURN DEATH IN ISRAEL OF HEBREW UNIVERSITY'S PRESIDENT

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Oct. 21 (JTA) -- Israeli President Chaim Herzog led thousands of mourners at the funeral Tuesday of Hebrew University Yoram Ben-Porath, who was killed Sunday with his wife and small son in a road accident near Eilat.

Ben-Porath, 55; his wife, Yael, 42; and their 5-year-old son, Yali, were laid to rest at the Har Hamenuhot cemetery in Jerusalem.

Yoram Ben-Porath, a leading Israeli economist, was for the past two years the much-admired president of the Hebrew University as it experienced a period of economic retrenchment and recovery.

His wife was a lecturer in philosophy at the university and was completing studies for a law degree.

The family was on vacation when a truck slammed into the back of their small Peugeot. The accident occurred as the car was turning off the Eilat highway for the ancient copper mines at Timna, 12 miles from the Red Sea resort town.

The truck hit the car in the course of overtaking, at high speed, several other vehicles. The driver, a 21-year-old soldier, was remanded in custody by an Eilat magistrate pending the completion of police inquiries.

Herzog eulogized Ben-Porath as a "beloved and successful leader who represented the university with talent and with affection."

Referring to a heathen god of human sacrifice, the president bewailed the "Moloch" of road accidents in Israel, which he said carried off such good and innocent people as the Ben-Poraths.

Echoing Israeli public concern at the rate of road accidents in the country, Herzog cried, "How long?" as many of the mourners wept.

A particularly moving eulogy was delivered by a close friend, Professor Menachem Ya'ari, who dwelt on the engaging character of the Ben-Poraths' son and on the couple's devotion to him.

The Israeli-born Ben-Porath earned his bachelor's and master's degrees at the Hebrew University and his doctorate at Harvard. He was widely known for his research on surveys and random sampling.

He was named president of the university in 1990 after a long career with the university, including service as rector and as William Haber Professor of Economics.

He was president of the Israel Economic Association, director of the Maurice Falk Institute for Economic Research in Israel from 1979-84, and consultant to the Rand Corporation.

Ben-Porath is survived by two sons and a daughter from a previous marriage.

ISRAEL GIVES TOYS TO CRASH SURVIVORS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 21 (JTA) -- The Israeli Embassy in The Hague has distributed two tons of games and toys to the children of the two apartment buildings damaged by the Oct. 4 crash of an El Al cargo jet in an Amsterdam suburb.

The toys were donated by some 20 toy and game manufacturers, at the initiative of the manufacturing firm of Ordea in Kibbutz Malkiyya.

The crates of toys were flown to Amsterdam by El Al and distributed by embassy personnel at the beginning of the week.

HASIDIM FLOCK TO CROWN HEIGHTS FOR GLIMPSE OF RECOVERING REBBE

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Oct. 21 (JTA) -- Binoculars were the accessory of choice this holiday season in Brooklyn's Crown Heights section.

Followers of the Lubavitcher rebbe flocked to the huge central synagogue of the Hasidic movement, at 770 Eastern Parkway, with binoculars slung around their necks so they could get a close-up look at their beloved leader when he came into public view.

They were not disappointed.

On Rosh Hashanah, Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson made his first public appearance since he suffered a serious stroke in March, and he spent 90 minutes at a time in public on each of the holy days through Simchat Torah.

Watching their rebbe seated on a specially constructed balcony along one wall of the enormous room, observers said they saw a marked improvement in his energy and strength over the 23-day course of the holidays.

"Participating publicly was extremely exhilarating for him, as well as for the crowd and for people around the world," said Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, a top aide to the rebbe and the Hasidic movement's spokesman.

"It was therapeutic for the rebbe. He gets as much encouragement being able to see the people as they get from seeing him."

As news of his Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur appearances spread among Lubavitchers around the world, thousands made last-minute arrangements and flew in to see him for themselves during the last days of Sukkot.

Huge numbers of Lubavitcher Hasidim, as many as 10,000 by some estimates, crowded their way into the synagogue on the last two holy days, Shemini Atzeret and Simchat Torah, all jockeying furiously for a view of their rebbe.

Shouts Of 'King Messiah'

The women and girls hung over the edge of the two balconies along the long walls of the room, wedged tightly together, craning their necks for a glimpse of their spiritual leader.

Newcomers to the packed women's section were asked if they had seen the rebbe. If not, they were pushed to the front, where they could take in the view for a few moments before being shoved aside to make room for someone else.

Downstairs, the main floor was a sea of bearded faces shining with perspiration and ecstatic joy. The room was so crowded that when one lost his balance it began a domino effect around the room.

Dozens of knots of black-hatted men, four at a time, danced in tiny circles around the shul, celebrating the joy of the holiday they were sharing with their rebbe.

The dancing and singing and pushing and shoving got so intense that several men fainted and had to be carried outside to be revived.

At several points during the last festive days, thousands of men began singing "Melech ha-Mashiach," or "King Messiah."

Some in the crowd said the rebbe looked disapprovingly at the crowd when he heard the words. Others were not so sure.

"Let's face it, people feel that the rebbe is Mashiach," said one Lubavitcher, using the Hebrew word for Messiah. "This is their most heartfelt emotion."