

**ISRAELI NEGOTIATORS RETURN TO U.S.
WITH LITTLE HOPE OF BREAKTHROUGH**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 6 (JTA) -- The Israeli delegation to the bilateral peace talks flew back to Washington on Sunday, with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin hitching a ride aboard their air force jet for his official visit to Italy.

Israeli officials were careful to dampen any speculation of a major breakthrough in the eighth round of the peace talks, which was to begin Monday.

The Palestinians, for their part, announced they were sending a symbolically reduced delegation of just four negotiators and two advisers as their way of protesting the lack of progress made so far.

Speaking to reporters before his departure, Rabin expressed confidence that the other Arab delegations would be in the U.S. capital in full strength and that agreement with some, if not all of them, would come during the next year.

This remark in itself appeared to some observers to reinforce the common wisdom that no substantive progress is likely before President-elect Bill Clinton's team takes over in Washington on Jan. 20.

Indeed, Rabin spoke of a "sort of hiatus" pending the Clinton inauguration, though he attributed this view to the Arab side.

Israeli negotiators Elyakim Rubinstein, who heads the talks with Jordan and the Palestinians, and Itamar Rabinovich, who heads the team negotiating with Syria, have both said that as far as they are concerned, the talks should move forward regardless of the change in U.S. administrations.

Neturei Karta Member En Route

Nevertheless, the accepted view here and in Washington is that the talks will naturally mark time pending the new administration's taking hold of the reins of power.

The Arabs have not concealed their hope and expectation that the Clinton team will exert more direct and intense pressure on Israel than did the Bush administration.

The Israelis, for their part, are encouraged by statements and signals indicating that Clinton will abide by the guidelines originally laid down when this peace process began in Madrid 13 months ago, which themselves were based on the 1978 Camp David accords.

Also heading for Washington on Sunday, though by commercial airliner, was Rabbi Moshe Hirsh, self-proclaimed foreign minister of the anti-Zionist Neturei Karta sect of Mea Shearim.

Hirsh has been in past rounds an accredited member of the Palestinian advisory team under Faisal Husseini and Hanan Ashrawi.

In a pre-departure news release, Hirsh complained that "the Zionist prime minister recently verbally attacked our beloved chairman, Yasir Arafat," of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

"Mr. Rabin! Be honest," Hirsh said. "You fear a Palestine state since it would render you" "politically neutered, just as your state neutered the World Zionist Organization."

**RABIN EXPANDING SIZE OF CABINET
TO GIVE MERETZ BLOC ANOTHER POST**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 6 (JTA) -- Yossi Sarid of the left-wing Meretz bloc will be joining the Cabinet in an expansion of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's government.

But the move to quell a contentious coalition by adding Cabinet posts gave the prime minister new grief Sunday, as he departed for a weeklong trip to Italy and Britain.

At Ben-Gurion Airport, Rabin fended off public criticism of his plan to add Sarid and two other ministers to his Cabinet by blaming Meretz, one of his two coalition partners, for the increase.

But even before the prime minister's air force jet was airborne, Meretz hit back, accusing Rabin and his Labor Party of grabbing all the government goodies for themselves.

"We owe it to our voters to exercise the degree of influence on policy-making to which our size entitles us; we cannot give up our due," said Energy and Science Minister Amnon Rubinstein.

Current coalition tensions had seemed resolved last Friday, when Rabin met with the three Meretz ministers and Sarid, who chairs the party's parliamentary caucus. He promised to bring Sarid into his Cabinet as soon as he returned from Europe.

Rabin said he would meet with Sarid and discuss what portfolio he was to receive. Political observers assume the new Cabinet member will get the Science Ministry, at present held by Rubinstein.

Seats For Shas And Labor, Too

But the meeting Friday triggered a public outcry when sources close to Rabin let it be known that he plans, in fact, to appoint three new ministers: one from Meretz, one from Labor and one from his other coalition partner, the rigorously Orthodox Shas party.

The intention, presumably, is to give the important labor and welfare portfolio to the Labor Party, now that it seems clear that the United Torah Judaism bloc will not be joining the coalition. Rabin had held onto the post himself, reserving it for a future coalition partner.

Likewise, the religious affairs portfolio, also held in reserve, will probably go to Shas, though there is opposition within Labor to giving this portfolio to the fervently Orthodox party.

Knesset Member Tzahi Hanegbi of the opposition Likud bloc flayed the prime minister for swelling the Cabinet further, in effect making every other lawmaker in the coalition either a minister or deputy minister.

"This is a national record," Hanegbi asserted sarcastically.

His criticism was echoed by much of the press, which pointed to the high cost of running ministers' offices, cars, phones and staffs.

At his airport news conference, Rabin said the "growth in the size of the Cabinet" was the fault of Meretz, which had demanded an additional minister as the price for staying in the coalition government.

Meretz hit back fast, arguing that Labor had

overstepped its "quota" when the Cabinet was formed in July by giving itself an excess of positions: 13 ministerial posts instead of 11, six deputy minister posts instead of three, and most of the Knesset committee chairmanships to boot.

Sarid's appointment, said Meretz, would merely correct an imbalance that need not trigger a new Labor appointment.

Rabin's departure from the country presumably will bring a few days respite in this mini-crisis. When he returns at the end of the week, the premier will have to make his choices and face the music over his rulings.

FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF INTIFADA REQUIRING BEEFED-UP SECURITY

By Lisa Clayton

JERUSALEM, Dec. 5 (JTA) -- Israel is beefing up security forces in Jerusalem and the territories amid weekend disturbances on the eve of the fifth anniversary of the outbreak of the Palestinian uprising known as the intifada.

At the same time, settlements on the northern border have reacted angrily to a planned cutback in army guard duty in the wake of military budget cuts.

In the Gaza Strip, Israeli troops on Sunday shot at rock-throwers in the town of Khan Yunis and killed 17-year-old Issam Barbah. Thirteen others were injured, including a 3-year-old child.

In inter-Arab violence, a masked man shot and killed a suspected collaborator in Khan Yunis.

Stepped-up security measures were announced after incidents Saturday injured four Israelis and gutted government offices.

The Israelis were injured when their cars were stoned in the predominantly Arab eastern section of the city. Seven other Israeli cars were torched.

An arson attack gutted the offices of the vehicle licensing bureau in Jerusalem. But a greater disaster was averted when police removed two gas canisters placed at the scene to magnify the scope of damage.

Police used tear gas to disperse demonstrators waving flags of the Palestine Liberation Organization in the Old City of Jerusalem, some of whom were masked and carrying axes.

Similarly, eight people were arrested during disturbances at a protest march in Gaza.

The Israeli police chief said stepped-up security measures would provide enhanced protection during the anniversary of the intifada and the upcoming Chanukah and Christmas holidays.

Helicopters will join increased ground patrols in monitoring crossing points into Israel from the territories, said Police Inspector General Ya'acov Ternor.

He also called on the public to report any suspicious objects to the police.

A spokesman for Israelis in the north called on Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to maintain army guard strength at border settlements. Rabin also holds the defense portfolio.

Metulla Mayor Yossi Goldberg, who heads the Forum of Border Settlements, said, "We are entitled to live like every other citizen in the country."

Settlement leaders said they lacked the manpower to replace soldiers now standing guard over their communities.

The army will continue to supply guards to small settlements with limited manpower, an army spokesman said.

RUNAWAY GIRL RETURNS HOME WITH ASSISTANCE FROM ARAB

By Lisa Clayton

JERUSALEM, Dec. 6 (JTA) -- A 10-year-old Jewish girl who ran away from home in Ra'anana returned to her family after being urged to do so by an Arab man who sheltered her.

Dorit Cedarbaum, who fled her home after a fight with her older brother, had found refuge with the Arab guard of a building site.

He eventually persuaded her to telephone home.

"At first I was afraid of the Arab, but as soon as he gave me a glass of water, I knew that he wouldn't hurt me. I always knew that there were good Arabs, too," Cedarbaum told a reporter for the Israeli daily Ma'ariv.

Within two hours of fleeing home last Thursday night, Cedarbaum was cold and tired. When she saw a light in a hut just off the road, she went in and encountered 30-year-old Abed al-Latif from Umm el-Fahm.

Cedarbaum persuaded Latif to let her stay. Early Friday morning he took her to the nearest bus stop, gave her 10 shekels and four telephone tokens and put her on a bus to Ra'anana.

He told her to call her mother as soon as she got off the bus.

By 6 a.m., Cedarbaum was back home. It was only on the way to the police station with her mother to report that she had come back that she heard the radio reports about her disappearance.

"Only then did I realize that the whole town was looking for me. If I'd known what was going to happen, I wouldn't have run away," she said.

On Sunday morning, Latif received a citation from the mayor of Ra'anana for his help.

RABIN MAKING TRIP TO ROME TO DISCUSS RACISM IN EUROPE

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Dec. 6 (JTA) -- Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin arrived in Rome on Sunday for a two-day official visit, during which he planned to discuss the rise of racism and anti-Semitism in Europe with Italian leaders and members of the Italian Jewish community.

The first item on his crowded agenda was a ceremony, hosted by Foreign Minister Emilio Colombo, in honor of four Italians who helped Jews immigrate clandestinely to Palestine after World War II.

In addition to talks with Colombo and Jewish community leaders, Rabin was scheduled to meet with President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro, Prime Minister Giuliano Amato, Defense Minister Salvatore Ando and other political leaders.

He was to lay a wreath at the Fosse Ardeatine, the Ardeatine Pits, in memory of the 335 Romans including 73 Jews executed there by the Nazis on March 24, 1944 in reprisal for a partisan attack.

While in Rome, Rabin and his wife planned to take in some culture, with a gala concert at the opera Monday night and a visit Tuesday to ancient Roman ruins before his departure for London.

The Israeli Embassy said the visit, one of the few foreign trips since Rabin's election last summer, "will contribute another important element in the development of good bilateral relations."

LITHUANIA CANCELING PARDONS OF SIX WORLD WAR II CRIMINALS

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Dec. 6 (JTA) -- Responding to an outcry from Jewish groups, the Lithuanian government has reversed the rehabilitation of six former prisoners who collaborated with the Nazis during the Holocaust, the Simon Wiesenthal Center reported.

The six names were submitted last year by the Wiesenthal Center and other Jewish groups to Lithuanian officials after it was made known that Vilnius had embarked on a project to reverse prison sentences meted out by the Soviet Communist government.

The Lithuanian government had proceeded with the pardons in its first birth pangs as an independent country shaking off the legal and penal encumbrances of Soviet rule.

Some 35,000 Lithuanians convicted of war crimes by the Soviet regime were exonerated of any wrongdoing by the democratically elected Lithuanian government.

Information about the reversal of pardons for six of those individuals was given to Efraim Zuroff, director of the Wiesenthal Center's Israeli office, by the new Lithuanian president, Algirdas Brazauskis.

Zuroff was in Lithuania on behalf of Knesset Speaker Shevach Weiss, himself a Holocaust survivor, to arrange an upcoming visit by an Israeli delegation that is to negotiate the terms of a joint Lithuanian-Israeli commission of inquiry.

A commission to review the rehabilitations was agreed upon last year by then-President Vytautas Landsbergis.

He told American Jewish communal leaders at the time that his government was working to determine which cases should not have been rehabilitated in the mass amnesty.

Landsbergis' party, Sajudis, was defeated in the recent Lithuanian elections and he now heads the opposition.

Saw KGB Files In Estonia

At the meeting with Zuroff, Brazauskis, a former Communist who broke with Moscow early on, indicated that his government is willing to play an active role in the investigation of Nazi war criminals.

But he said Vilnius has been noncommittal about his specific complaints regarding the reluctance of Lithuanian nationals to testify against Lithuanian war criminals living abroad.

Zuroff also visited Estonia and met with Prime Minister Mart Laar, who indicated that his government would participate in efforts to investigate and prosecute Nazi collaborators in cases in which sufficient evidence could be found.

At his request, Zuroff was granted access to the former KGB archives and was able to examine the files of suspected Nazi war criminal Evald Mikson, who lives in Iceland under the name Edward Hinriksson.

Mikson is alleged to have been a Gestapo investigator at the Tartu concentration camp who carried out executions near the camp.

In October, the Icelandic government recommended that no action be taken in the Mikson case. Zuroff said the Icelandic judicial commission that examined Mikson's background failed to sufficiently look into it.

He maintained that it "made no effort to

ask the governments of Estonia and Sweden for the pertinent documentation."

Zuroff said the KGB files "contain numerous witness statements regarding Mikson's participation in murder (which) should finally convince the Icelandic government to prosecute him."

GERMANS PLEDGE BIGGER FIGHT AGAINST THE NEO-NAZI VIOLENCE

By David Kantor

BONN, Dec. 6 (JTA) -- The German government pledged better national coordination in fighting the spread of neo-Nazi violence as police in Bavaria prevented a right-wing extremist rally.

The government over the weekend promised better intelligence gathering on neo-Nazi groups and enhanced exchanges of information about them with Germany's federal states.

The efforts will be coordinated at the ministerial level by Friedrich Bohl, an official in the chancellery of Helmut Kohl.

Government spokesman Dieter Vogel said Bonn also will undertake education efforts to combat political violence.

Vogel spoke Saturday as large police contingents confiscated banners with neo-Nazi symbols and blocked major roads to Passau to prevent a neo-Nazi march in the Bavarian town.

The turbulence generated by a mounting wave of extremism was reflected in Berlin, where several people were injured in a march against neo-Nazism that turned violent. Demonstrators attacked the police, saying they protect neo-Nazi vandals.

Thousands of Turks marched Saturday in Bonn and Berlin to protest neo-Nazi violence, which last month resulted in the deaths of three ethnic Turks in an arson attack. They laid a wreath to victims of neo-Nazism outside the Interior Ministry, which is in charge of internal security.

In Munich, more than 300,000 Germans held a street vigil Sunday to protest against attacks on foreigners by right-wing gangs.

Police said they will ban planned demonstrations by neo-Nazi groups Jan. 31 and Feb. 27 in Berlin to mark the anniversaries of Hitler's seizure of power and the Nazi burning of the Reichstag, respectively.

High-level concern was expressed last week over the ramifications of months of racist violence by extremist gangs against foreigners and Jewish memorials.

President Richard von Weizsacker said he had twice telephoned Israeli President Chaim Herzog to express dismay over the ongoing wave of neo-Nazi violence.

He told Israeli journalists in Frankfurt that Germany would protect Jewish life in the country and safeguard non-Germans living in the country.

"Jews in Germany have nothing to fear," said the president. "The huge majority of Germans and, of course, the government at all levels, share their concerns and support effective action to put an end to racist and anti-Semitic violence."

The president spoke after addressing a ceremony commemorating the 75th anniversary of the establishment of the central office of the Jewish community.

Chancellor Kohl told diplomatic heads of missions in Bonn he is ashamed of the attacks against foreigners and said his government would make every effort to put an end to the violence.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
JEWS AND RUSSIAN COSSACKS ALIKE
MAKE PRESENCE FELT AT CONGRESS**
By Alexander Lesser

MOSCOW, Dec. 6 (JTA) -- Among the 987 lawmakers who showed up in subzero temperatures here last week for the Russian Congress of People's Deputies were more than a dozen Jewish delegates.

According to the Russian Gazette, the official organ of the gathering, Jews are the fourth largest ethnic group represented at the Congress, which has turned into a major showdown between Boris Yeltsin's reformist government and opposition forces.

The largest of the ethnic groups represented, of course, is the Russians, with 828 deputies. After them comes ethnic Ukrainians, with 48; Tatars, with 28; and Jews, with 16, or about 1.5 percent of the total. By comparison, Jews make up 0.5 percent of the population in the republics of the former Soviet Union, according to official statistics.

But statistics aren't everything. Many of the main players in the drama at the Congress are Jewish, at least according to Jewish law, though most are assimilated into Russian culture and not observant.

Chief among them is Prime Minister Yegor Gaidar, whose mother is Jewish, as was his mother's mother.

On the other side of the political fence is Russian Vice President Alexander Rutskoi, a leader in the centrist opposition Civic Union, whose mother also was Jewish. Rutskoi made no secret of that on his visit to Israel last spring.

The other main Civic Union leader, Arkady Volsky, is believed by many Jews here to be Jewish, although he has made no statements about it.

Also in the anti-Yeltsin camp are Yuri Gekht, leader of the Union of Producers faction, and Vasili Lipitsky, leader of the People's Party of Free Russia, both probably having some Jewish parentage, judging by their names.

Among pro-Yeltsin deputies are Mikhail Schneider, a leader in the Democratic Russia movement, and Anatoly Shabad, a deputy from Moscow who is a leader in the Radical Democrat faction.

Yeltsin Is 100 Percent Russian

Also on the side of reform is Konstantin Natanovich Borovoi, one of Russia's best-known businessmen, who heads the Party of Economic Freedom.

And finally there is Galina Starovoitova, a prominent pro-Yeltsinite whose husband is Jewish and who has strongly supported measures against anti-Semitism.

Yeltsin himself appears to be 100 percent Russian. But then again, the Russian president's wife, Nina Yosefovna, has a name that is typically Jewish.

There is no doubt, though, that Yeltsin's archrival, Congress Speaker Ruslan Khasbulatov, is not Jewish because he is an ethnic Chechen from the Caucasus. The Chechens are a Moslem people.

Israel surfaced in the debate on Russia's future when Speaker Khasbulatov contrasted the American free enterprise model with the more regulated economic model of Scandinavia and, yes, Israel. Khasbulatov favored the latter.

Prime Minister Gaidar, addressing the Con-

gress on its second day, derided Khasbulatov's approach as simplistic, saying that Russia's problems can't be solved by picking abstract models from foreign countries.

"The problems are much more complex," said Gaidar.

But he went on to say that Russia's foreign economic policy should move away from barter deals toward arrangements with countries that can pay hard currency for Russian goods, such as America, Europe, Japan, Korea and, yes, Israel.

By the third day of the Congress, the Cossacks were back. The fierce warriors from the southern Russian steppe, famous for pogroms against the Jews during Czarist times, were all over the Kremlin, smoking, chatting and even helping to guard the palace.

How they got into the Kremlin was not clear, and not everyone was happy to see them. One deputy marched up to three uniformed Cossacks and demanded: "Is this a real uniform?"

When the Cossacks kept silent, the deputy said, "You're just ordinary citizens. You have no right to come in here and turn this into a parade."

Jewish Deputy Gets In Scuffle

A huge, black-bearded Cossack in traditional wool cap and long coat, with bullet belts across the chest, was seen at the main entrance to the Great Kremlin Palace.

"What's he doing here?" one of the real security guards was asked. "He's helping us," said the guard, smiling. How? "He keeps us awake," came the answer.

"I'm not afraid of Cossacks in the Kremlin, but I'm not sure I'd want to meet one on the street," said Shabad of the Radical Democrat faction.

As it turned out, Shabad had more to fear from his fellow deputies. When a fight broke out after an argument over whether a pivotal vote on amendments to the constitution should be secret, Shabad got shoved and almost lost his glasses.

Russian television shots of the scuffle were transmitted to the Western media and flashed around the world, making the Jewish Moscow deputy instantly famous.

Apart from the fight, the other highlight of the third day was a furor that erupted after political cartoons lambasting the far-right appeared in the vestibule outside the Congress hall.

One showed Sergei Baburin dancing in women's clothes before a seated Saddam Hussein, a reference to the right-wing Russian Unity faction leader's recent visit to Iraq. Many right-wingers were red-faced, but Baburin, who claimed he did not see the cartoon, took it in stride.

"I hope the copy wasn't worse than the original," he told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Baburin added that his visit to Iraq does not mean he is against good relations between Russia and Israel.

"I'm for good relations with all the countries of the Arab world," he said.

When the Congress turned its attention last week to debating key resolutions on economic reform and constitutional amendments, one deputy complained about the hard-line Communist demonstrators loitering near the hotel where he and many out-of-town lawmakers were staying.

"I'm tired of being called 'prostitute,' 'kike' and so on," he said.