

**KNESSET APPROVES ACCORD WITH PLO,
IN MAJOR BOOST TO RABIN GOVERNMENT**
By Cynthia Mann and Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 23 (JTA) -- The Knesset's approval of the historic Israeli-Palestinian accord on self-rule in the administered territories is being seen here as a vote of confidence in the government, as well as a mandate to pursue the peace process.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin made a similar assertion himself shortly after the Knesset vote, which took place Thursday.

After over 30 hours of emotionally charged debate, the Knesset approved by a vote of 61-50 the accord signed last week in Washington by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The vote of the 120-member Knesset included eight abstentions, with one member absent from the balloting.

Five of the abstentions and the one absentee were members of the ardently religious Shas party, whose spiritual leader, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, had instructed them not to vote against the "possibility of peace."

Although Benjamin Netanyahu, leader of the opposition Likud party, had called on his party to stand firm against the accord, three Likud Knesset members broke ranks and abstained: Ronnie Milo, Meir Sheerit and Assad Assad. Their action prompted calls by some Likud politicians that they be ousted from the party.

Rabin said after the vote that he was satisfied with the margin of victory and that it gave the government the confidence it needs to begin implementing the agreement.

He also made it clear that he still considered Shas a part of the governing coalition, despite its failure to endorse the accord. Shas has threatened to pull out of the government but has not yet done so.

Rabin criticized Likud, saying it had failed to show the same "attitude" that Labor had demonstrated when ratifying the 1978 accord with Egypt, when it was in the opposition and the prime minister was Menachem Begin of Likud.

Although that earlier vote had involved some painful decisions, said Rabin, "we said we would not be an obstacle to peace."

Others In Likud Afraid To Abstain

Likud Knesset member Eliyahu Ben-Elissar, former chairman of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, warned that Thursday's vote had in effect created a Palestinian state. He told Israel Radio it was a victory for the PLO and a defeat for Israel.

But Sheerit of Likud said there were many in the party who wanted to vote for the agreement but did not do so for fear of political repercussions from within the party.

He warned that Likud would have to move away from the right and toward the center or risk losing its constituency.

The vote came following a fiery exchange of insults and accusations between Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, who was the last to speak before the vote was taken, and opponents of the agreement, who repeatedly interrupted him.

Peres' fellow Labor Party members were

brought to their feet in protest when Knesset member Uzi Landau of Likud went up to the foreign minister at the podium and began pointing his finger at Peres in anger.

Before Peres spoke, former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir accused the government of weakening the country by returning it to its pre-1967 borders.

Former Foreign Minister David Levy said the government was leading the nation to bankruptcy by relinquishing its essential strategic assets.

Following the vote, Police Minister Moshe Shahal said the government would proceed quickly to implement the agreement.

PLO Official Welcomes The Vote

In Tunis, Yasser Abed Rabbo, head of the PLO's information department, termed the Knesset vote a "positive step."

During a telephone interview with Israel's army radio, Rabbo expressed confidence that the percentage of Israelis supporting the accord was higher than the margin of victory achieved in the Knesset.

West Bank settlers disappointed with the outcome of the Knesset vote began a new round of demonstrations in the territories Thursday.

Settlers groups tried to fence off state-owned land near Beit El in northern Judea, and later in the day near Kiryat Arba in the south, to demonstrate their resolve to maintain Jewish sovereignty in the territories.

But the army soon evacuated the settlers in both incidents. At the Beit El confrontation, the army resorted to force to evacuate the settlers. In one incident, women soldiers were brought in to physically remove women settlers.

At the Kiryat Arba confrontation, the army detained 10 settlers, among them the local mayor, Zvi Katzover.

The results of a poll published Thursday indicate that a large majority of Palestinians in the territories support the Israeli-PLO accord.

The poll, sponsored by CNN and France 2 television and conducted among more than 1,500 Palestinians living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, found that 68.6 percent support the agreement, while 27.8 percent voiced their opposition.

The poll also revealed that support for militant Islamic groups opposed to the accord is declining.

**UJA LEADERS GO TO ISRAEL TO TELL RABIN
HE HAS THEIR FULL SUPPORT ON PEACE PACT**
By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Sept. 23 (JTA) -- Top leaders of the United Jewish Appeal told Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin at a meeting this week that the American Jewish community stands behind him in the dramatic developments in the peace process.

Rabin, in turn, gave them a message to take back to American Jews. He said Israel remains in need of them, despite a strong economy and bright prospects for peace.

Indeed, he said that Israel's improved economy and security will create a climate that will accelerate the expected aliyah from the former Soviet Union, making the UJA campaign vital.

At a news conference Thursday, the delega-

tion members made clear they were pleased to receive this message from Rabin.

Rabin's mandate enhances the legitimacy and urgency of a campaign now engaged in the difficult task of raising funds for an Israel no longer perceived as besieged, vulnerable or in crisis.

The UJA delegation requested the meeting with Rabin on Wednesday, and arrived the following day for an 18-hour visit.

The catalyst for the request, the delegation said, was the ceremony at the White House on Sept. 13 during which Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization signed an accord on self-rule in the territories.

"We were very touched and moved by what we saw," said Marvin Lender, UJA national president, who was on the White House lawn for the ceremony.

Also at the Washington ceremony were Joel Tauber, UJA national chairman, and Brian Lurie, executive vice president, who joined Lender at the news conference here.

After the ceremony, said Lender, the UJA leadership met and established a consensus that "we of UJA had to be a part of what was going on in Israel vis-a-vis the peace process."

Lurie told the Israeli press that at the signing ceremony the notion that the Israeli prime minister was "prime minister of all the Jewish people was more keenly felt" than "at any other time that I remember."

Jewish Dollars 'Needed Now'

Lender said the two items on the agenda at the meeting with Rabin were how Diaspora Jews could participate "on this momentous occasion" and "what UJA could do."

The prime minister echoed the feelings of the delegation, said Tauber, that the economic and security benefits of prospective peace would accelerate the expected aliyah of 500,000 more Jews from the former Soviet Union.

Because of that, said Tauber, Rabin urged UJA to complete by June the \$1.2 billion Operation Exodus campaign designed to underwrite the resettlement of immigrants. The campaign has so far raised more than of \$800 million.

It is an important message for Jews to hear, he said, so they know "their dollars are needed now," that "what's happening here requires the support of the world Jewish community."

Indeed, that is one of the reasons Israel has taken the "risk for peace," he said. "They know they have the support" of that community.

The prime minister reinforced the message displayed in a full-page UJA advertisement in The New York Times this week, said Lurie, which connected the breakthrough in the peace process to the opportunity to help Israel.

The theme is new for UJA, Tauber said. "It's campaigning on positives, rather than fears."

"It's not tzedakah," or charity, anymore, said Lurie. Rather, the issue "is Jewish peoplehood," a "dynamic connection" between the Diaspora and Israel.

In response to questions by the Israeli press, the leaders took pains to explain that they hesitate to express opinions on Israeli political affairs because they do not live in Israel and do not face the immediate consequences of difficult political decisions. Their visit, they stressed, was therefore not political but one of solidarity.

"We are struggling to find a way," said Lender, to be closer to Israelis. "This is an opportunity" to demonstrate that effort, he said.

EGYPT EXPECTS PROGRESS SOON IN ISRAELI-SYRIAN NEGOTIATIONS

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Sept. 23 (JTA) -- Egypt hopes there will be progress "very soon" on the long-stalled Israeli-Syrian negotiating track, visiting Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa said here this week.

"I'm sure that with the American role and with the help given by all the parties concerned, there will be progress," Moussa said Thursday.

As the first Arab country to make peace with Israel, Egypt has been playing an important role in facilitating the Middle East peace process.

Now that the historic Israeli-Palestinian accord has been signed, the spotlight has been shifting to the Israeli-Syrian negotiating track, which has been stalemated for months over definitions of peace and withdrawal.

Syrian President Hafez Assad made a rare trip to Egypt on Wednesday to discuss the peace process with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

When asked Thursday morning if he had "good news" to report about the Mubarak-Assad meeting, Moussa replied, "I certainly have." He would not elaborate.

State Department spokesman Mike McCurry said in a statement later Thursday that Moussa briefed Secretary of State Warren Christopher on the Mubarak-Assad discussions, which "confirmed Syria's commitment to moving ahead with the peace process and to working closely with the United States."

Moussa was also meeting this week with other high-ranking administration officials and members of Congress. His meeting with Christopher, which lasted 45 minutes, included discussion of the implementation of the Israeli-Palestinian agreement.

Christopher praised the Egyptian role in the peace process, calling it a "great contribution."

The secretary plans to meet with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa here Oct. 5.

ISRAEL GETS 24 APACHE HELICOPTERS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Sept. 23 (JTA) -- The United States has presented Israel with a gift of 24 Apache assault helicopters, according to an exclusive report in the Israeli daily Ma'ariv.

The report was based on an interview granted the paper by the Israel Defense Force chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Ehud Barak, and was accompanied with a photograph of the arrival of one of the helicopters.

The paper said the Apaches were promised Israel by former President Bush shortly before last November's U.S. presidential elections and that they were delivered on Sept. 13 -- the day Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization signed their historic accord at the White House.

In Washington, a Pentagon spokesman confirmed Thursday that 24 Apaches had been given to Israel.

But he could not confirm that the delivery had taken place Sept. 13, nor could he confirm the 24 helicopters had all been delivered at once.

He said that the delivery of the Apaches had nothing to do with the peace initiative between Israel and the PLO.

With the new shipment, the Israeli air force now has two squadrons of Apaches, regarded as among the best assault helicopters in the world.

ADMINISTRATION PRESSING CONGRESS TO LIFT U.S. RESTRICTIONS AGAINST PLO
By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Sept. 23 (JTA) -- In an effort to help implement the historic Israeli-Palestinian agreement signed last week, the Clinton administration has been urging Congress to modify restrictions on certain American dealings with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

And during consideration of a foreign aid appropriations bill this week, the Senate voted to lift some restrictions on U.S. financial dealings with the PLO.

The administration believes the restrictions could hamper the PLO's ability to participate in the next stage of the Israeli-PLO accord.

Because of the PLO's longtime ties to terrorism, Congress has enacted a series of laws over the years barring various activities related to the PLO.

For example, the PLO would like to reopen its office here, but is barred from doing so by a 1990 law that ordered the closure of PLO offices in Washington and New York.

There have also been restrictions on U.S. contributions to international organizations that fund the PLO.

But on Wednesday and Thursday, as the Senate considered its 1994 foreign aid appropriations bill, it voted to waive temporarily some of those funding restrictions, provided the PLO abides by its recent commitment to recognize Israel and renounce violence.

The Senate passed the appropriations bill late Thursday afternoon, by a vote of 88-10. The bill includes Israel's annual \$3 billion package of U.S. economic and military aid.

Statutes Are 'Quite Antiquated'

Now that Israel and the PLO have signed an agreement for limited Palestinian self-rule, beginning in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho, the administration thinks that practical changes are in order.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher this week called on Congress to amend "statutes that inhibit dealing with the PLO and are really quite antiquated at the present time."

Key administration officials dealing with the peace process have been holding meetings on Capitol Hill this week, making their case that there must be changes in U.S. law for the peace process to succeed.

Long wary of the PLO, many members of Congress are approaching the lifting of PLO-related restrictions with caution. Although they want the peace process to succeed, many on the Hill do not welcome the idea of major changes in PLO-related legislation.

While not officially recognizing the PLO, the Clinton administration announced earlier this month, prior to the Sept. 13 signing ceremony, that it was renewing a dialogue with the organization that had been broken off in 1990.

The administration has also organized an international donors' conference slated for Oct. 1 that is designed to provide the Palestinians with \$3 billion in aid to lift Gaza and the West Bank out of their dire economic straits.

The administration plans to contribute \$250 million to assist the Palestinians.

Efforts to assist the Palestinians are backed by Israel and by leaders in the pro-Israel community.

RUSSIAN JEWS GIVE YELTSIN THEIR UNQUALIFIED SUPPORT
By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Sept. 23 (JTA) -- Russia's central Jewish organization is firmly supporting President Boris Yeltsin in the constitutional crisis that has pitted him against Russia's hardline Parliament.

On Tuesday, Yeltsin dissolved Parliament and called for new elections. The move was resisted by the Russian Parliament but accepted by most of the rest of the Russian government and military, as well as by the world community, including the United States.

The Parliament, which claimed that Yeltsin forfeited his post by his decree, elected Vice President Alexander Rutskoi to serve in his stead. The last parliamentary elections were held prior to Russian independence.

Meeting Wednesday, the Russian Vaad, the country's federation of Jewish organizations and communities, took its place squarely in the Yeltsin camp.

In its statement, the Vaad said that Russia's future is being determined by the present confrontation.

"In this situation the leadership of the Jewish community of the country finds it impossible to remain on the sidelines," it said.

"We express our support to President Yeltsin and the Russian government, considering that stability, order, economical and political unity of the state, the protection of human rights of the citizens and safety of democracy in Russia are impossible under the conditions that had existed till now."

The future that Russian Jews prefer is that favored by Yeltsin, who envisions a rapid transition to a Western-style democracy and economy.

The Vaad said the opposition to Yeltsin "has united all the reactionary forces of the country from fascists to Stalinists."

"Today, just as in August 1991, the country is divided into two camps. Above one of them -- the flag of the new Russia. Above the other -- the red banners of the past and the yellow-red-black flag" of the ultra-nationalist, and often anti-Semitic, Pamyat movement.

"We choose the first one," the Vaad said.

By supporting Yeltsin, the Vaad has violated a law passed Wednesday by Parliament criminalizing support for the president. But with both the interior and defense ministries pledging allegiance to Yeltsin at midweek, enforcement of the rogue Parliament's measures seemed unlikely.

HOUSE PASSES HATE CRIMES BILL

WASHINGTON, Sept. 21 (JTA) -- Legislation that would increase the penalties imposed for hate crimes received a major boost Tuesday, as the House of Representatives easily passed the Hate Crimes Sentencing Enhancement Act.

The bill, long supported by Jewish organizations, would give federal judges the ability to impose longer prison terms for criminals motivated by a victim's race, religion, nationality, gender or sexual orientation.

"The number of hate crimes keeps going up, and that's why we've got to give law enforcement better tools to fight back," said Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), who sponsored the bill.

The bill now goes to the Senate, which defeated a similar bill introduced last year.

AMERICAN FUND-RAISERS TO REVIEW RELATIONSHIP WITH JEWISH AGENCY

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Sept. 23 (JTA) -- The future of the Jewish Agency as the primary recipient of United Jewish Appeal fund-raising campaigns for Israel has been officially opened up for discussion.

The decision not to renew automatically the five-year contract binding the UJA campaign to the Jewish Agency reflects repeated tensions between the fund-raising community and the Jewish Agency, most recently concerning the charges of financial improprieties surrounding Jewish Agency Chairman Simcha Dinitz.

"It's not the intent of leadership to change the agreement," said Max Fisher, the Jewish Agency's founding chairman and the dean of the American fund-raisers. "But at least take a look at what the Jewish Agency is doing."

Fisher spoke Wednesday at a board meeting of the United Israel Appeal, the conduit by which UJA money goes to Israel.

The UIA's contract, which names the Jewish Agency as its exclusive agent in Israel and sets up the terms by which the UIA oversees the Jewish Agency budget, expires at the end of 1994.

Under the contract, if the UIA did not serve notice now, the contract would be automatically renewed for another five years.

UJA money also goes to the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, serving Jewish communities around the world. The JDC and the UIA are in the midst of renegotiating the formula which apportions UJA revenue between them.

With the future of the Jewish Agency-UJA connection now open, the stage is set for those opposed to the situation to make their case. Some critics of the Jewish Agency, including some local federation officials, have argued that American Jewish philanthropy in Israel might best be realized through other means.

Despite the differences they may have had with the Jewish Agency on the Dinitz issue and other matters, the leadership of the fund-raising organizations is prepared to defend the Jewish Agency.

A 'Therapeutic' Move

The UIA's executive committee, convening the night before the broader board meeting, affirmed its "intention to retain the Jewish Agency for Israel as our exclusive agent in Israel."

The UJA leadership, as well as that of the Council of Jewish Federations, signed on to the statement.

Nonetheless, the resolution to open the contract was passed unanimously, out of a sense that discussion of the issue would be "therapeutic," in the words of one board member from San Francisco.

"In supporting the work of the Jewish Agency, it's important people feel they're not muzzled from discussing it in free and open debate," said Paul Berger, one of the UIA representatives on the Jewish Agency board.

At the same time, by opening up the relationship, the UIA is also refusing to sheathe its most potent weapon in its ongoing disputes with its partner in the Jewish Agency, the World Zionist Organization.

A six-member committee representing the UIA and the WZO has been negotiating a resolution to a number of disputes, among them the

elimination of the politically linked heads of Jewish Agency departments.

In these deliberations, the unspoken ultimate weapon at the disposal of the American fund-raisers was the possibility of cutting off funds to the Jewish Agency.

WOMAN WHO HELPED SAVE 1,200 JEWS FROM NAZIS IS HONORED IN ARGENTINA

By Victoria Verlichak

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) -- An 85-year-old woman who helped save 1,200 Jews from their deaths in Poland during World War II has been honored here by Israel's ambassador to Argentina.

At a recognition ceremony last week attended by hundreds of people at the Marc Chagall Cultural Center, Itzhak Aviron, the recently appointed Israeli ambassador, presented a medal in the name of Israel's Yad Vashem Institute to Emilie Schindler for her courageous actions during the war.

"Thank you for remembering me. I did what I could," said the fragile Schindler, tears welling in her eyes when she received the medal.

Schindler, a German Catholic who has been living in Argentina since 1949, was honored here for her courage during World War II when, together with her late husband, Oskar, she managed to save 1,200 Jews from almost certain death in Nazi-occupied Poland.

The Schindlers' heroism is the subject of a soon-to-be-released movie, "Schindler's List," directed by Steven Spielberg.

During the war, the couple had operated a metal factory in Krakow, Poland, at which Jews recruited from concentration camps served as a cheap source of labor.

After witnessing Nazi executions of Jewish children, the Schindlers devoted themselves to rescuing Jews from deportation and death in Auschwitz.

Toward the end of the war, when the German authorities ordered the Schindlers out of Krakow because it was about to fall to the Russians, the couple made a list of 1,200 Jews whom they described as indispensable workers and took them along when the plant was relocated out of harm's way.

Following the war, the couple settled in Argentina in 1949, with the help of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Emilie Schindler still lives 40 miles from Buenos Aires in the house purchased for her by the B'nai B'rith in 1965, eight years after her husband's death.

Moshe Beisky, a former Israeli Supreme Court judge, sent a moving statement that was read during the recognition ceremony. "I'm sorry I can't be in Buenos Aires to offer my testimony," wrote Beisky. "I'm one of those who survived thanks to the salvation endeavors of the Schindlers."

"To date I preserve the image of Mrs. Schindler, who day after day carried heavy pots full of potage cooked by herself with goods obtained by her at risk in the black market," he wrote. "She looked after and pampered many living skeletons weighing 35 kilos (77 pounds) each."

"A Talmud sentence engraved in Emilie's medal reads: 'Saving one human life is like saving the whole world.'" Beisky noted. "The Schindlers saved 1,200 souls. May they receive the recognition of Yad Vashem, the Jewish people and all those they saved."