

**PERES CALL FOR END OF BOYCOTT
GETS IMMEDIATE ARAB REJECTION**

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Sept. 26 (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Shimon Peres is determined to use the accord with the Palestine Liberation Organization as a catalyst to dissolving the state of war between Israel and the Arab countries with which it does not have a direct dispute.

But the initial reaction from Arab states to this proposal and the foreign minister's call for ending the economic boycott against Israel has been negative.

Syria has taken the line that the Arab political and economic boycotts cannot be eased until Israel withdraws completely from all Arab lands, including Jerusalem.

This position has been echoed by Persian Gulf officials and newspapers, as well as by the Jordanian press.

And PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat reportedly has refused to say that the Arab economic boycott against Israel should be lifted.

In a weekend interview with Israel Television, Peres said, "I think we need to make a supreme effort to at least end the state of war, and of course get rid of the boycott. The end of the boycott should be an outgrowth of the end of the state of war."

The foreign minister made the comments hours before he left for New York, where he was due to give a speech Tuesday before the U.N. General Assembly and meet with no fewer than 40 other foreign ministers. These include representatives of some Arab and Muslim countries he will meet for the first time.

But Peres implied there would be no secret dealings with Syrian or other representatives.

Gulf States Not Ready Yet

The foreign minister said ending the state of war with Israel would be a "confidence-building measure" during the peace process.

Meanwhile, Israel Radio reported that the secretary-general of the Gulf Cooperation Council said it is premature to consider normalized relations with Israel.

The radio also reported that the government-owned press in Damascus has called for a tightening of the boycott, which, it said, could only be lifted after the full restoration of Palestinian rights and the return of Arab land.

Syria, whose negotiations with Israel over the future of the Golan Heights have been effectively placed on the sideline by the PLO accord, has given only the barest of approval to the agreement.

A commentary Sunday on Damascus Radio referred directly to Peres' call for ending the state of war and the boycott, saying that his "provocative statement proved Israel wants everything in return for nothing."

And the government newspaper Tishreen editorialized: "Arabs are requested to tighten rather than abolish the boycott against Israel because two years of talks on the Middle East in Washington produced nothing, due to Israeli rejection of the basis of just and comprehensive peace."

**FOREIGN AID BILL CLEARS SENATE,
AND PRO-ISRAEL FORCES ARE PLEASED**

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Sept. 26 (JTA) -- When the 1994 foreign aid appropriations bill cleared the Senate last week by a comfortable margin, one could almost hear a collective sigh of relief from the pro-Israel community.

The \$12.5 billion bill, containing \$3 billion in U.S. aid to Israel, passed late last Thursday afternoon by a vote of 88-10.

The bill also provides \$2.5 billion in aid to Russia, \$2.1 billion for Egypt, and \$25 million for the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Pro-Israel activists had been concerned that with the political climate here more favorable to domestic than to foreign aid, Israel's funding might be in danger.

But the bill retains the \$1.8 billion in military aid and \$1.2 billion in economic aid that Israel has been receiving from the United States since the mid-1980s. And Israel remains the largest recipient of U.S. foreign aid.

In the wake of the historic Israeli-Palestinian agreement signed Sept. 13 at the White House, the bill modifies some restrictions on U.S. financial dealings with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

There had been restrictions on U.S. contributions to international organizations that fund the PLO, but the Senate voted to waive some of these restrictions temporarily provided the PLO abides by its recent commitment to recognize Israel and renounce violence.

In addition, the bill includes language prohibiting assistance to terrorist countries, and it criticizes the Arab economic boycott against Israel.

The American-Israel Public Affairs Committee, the most powerful pro-Israel lobbying group, was pleased by the outcome of the vote.

"This most supportive vote in recent history signals a commitment to maintaining Israel's security and seeing the peace process through these difficult waters," an AIPAC spokesperson said Friday.

Last year's vote was 87-12.

The bill now heads for a conference committee with the House of Representatives, which passed its foreign aid legislation in June.

**ISRAELI BLACKSMITH MURDERED
IN REMINDER TERROR CONTINUES**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 26 (JTA) -- Israel has received a painful reminder that terror will persist despite the historic accord reached with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

On the eve of Yom Kippur last Friday, the stabbed body of Yigal Vaknin, 22, was found in an orchard near Moshav Batzra, in the Sharon Valley.

Attached to the body was a note in Arabic saying the murder was in revenge for the killing of activists of Hamas, the Muslim fundamentalist organization that violently rejects the PLO's agreement with Israel.

A Hamas spokesman later claimed credit for

the murder, which he said was carried out to prove to Israel and the PLO that the Palestinian uprising, known as the intifada, would continue and even escalate.

Another terrorist attack was prevented Sunday when a Muslim fundamentalist blew himself up while preparing a car bomb in the Gaza Strip.

Cabinet ministers were briefed on this latest escalation in terrorist attacks at their weekly meeting Sunday.

But they were told by representatives of the security forces that the internal security situation has by and large improved in recent weeks, and that the PLO was not involved in any hostile activities.

Vaknin, a blacksmith and a tractor driver who completed his army service four months ago, was discovered last Friday by his girlfriend, who worried after not hearing from him since the previous Wednesday. According to the coroner's report, he had been killed last Thursday morning, after struggling with his attackers.

A year ago, a local farmer, Avraham Kinsler, 84, was murdered under similar circumstances in a nearby orchard. His murderer turned out to be a young resident of Khan Yunis, in the Gaza Strip, who was sentenced last November to life imprisonment.

HUNDREDS REGISTER FOR PLO POLICE BEING FORMED FOR GAZA AND JERICHO By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 26 (JTA) -- Hundreds of Palestinians have applied to join the new Palestinian police force that is to be established in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho.

Registration took place over the weekend at 11 recruitment offices set up by the Palestine Liberation Organization throughout the territories, with most of the applicants reportedly members of Al Fatah, the PLO faction led by Yasser Arafat.

Under the terms of the landmark Israeli-PLO agreement signed Sept. 13 in Washington, the Palestinians were authorized to begin building a police force immediately after the signing. The core of the force was to come from PLO fighters from outside Gaza and Jericho.

According to Palestinian sources, most of the volunteers will be turned down, as the intention is to make the core of the force from the Palestine Liberation Army, whose men have trained for years in various Arab countries.

Registration fees were set at one Jordanian dinar, almost \$2, to prove the serious intention of the candidate. Among the questions on the questionnaires candidates filled out was, "Will you obey the rule of law or your conscience?"

The questionnaires will be passed on to a screening committee at the PLO headquarters in Tunis, which will select the 14,000-strong Palestinian police force, to be divided between Gaza and Jericho.

On Sunday, the Ma'ariv newspaper, quoting French sources, reported that the PLO has already begun secret preparations to organize two intelligence bodies, one for local purposes, similar to the FBI or the Israeli Shin Bet domestic security service, and the second, for foreign intelligence activities, to be built on the model of the CIA and the Mossad.

The internal security service will comprise members of the prestigious Force 17 commando units of the Fatah organization. Its commander

reportedly will be Abul Tayeb, the former commander of Force 17.

Abul Tayeb was reportedly instructed to set up a force of 1,000 to 1,500, whose main task would be to protect the heads of the Palestinian self-rule authority in Gaza and Jericho.

Radwan Abu-Ayyash, a Palestinian journalist from Ramallah, announced over the weekend that the PLO would build its own radio and television station in eastern Jerusalem at an investment of \$50 million.

In an interview with the Jordanian newspaper A-Dustour, Abu-Ayyash said the Palestinians were expecting European economic aid to finance the project.

Meanwhile, Palestinians in Jordan are scheduled soon to complete a police-training program, while 24 Gazans are expected to begin training soon at the police school in Cairo.

Leading the group from Gaza is Ibrahim Mohana, a former officer in the Israeli-controlled Gaza police force until the intifada broke out in 1987.

Mohana reportedly was named recently by Arafat to be the commander in chief of the new Palestinian police force in Gaza.

ABIE NATHAN WILL PULL THE PLUG ON VOICE OF PEACE RADIO STATION By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Sept. 26 (JTA) -- Israeli radio listeners may come to rue the pact between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Longtime peace activist Abie Nathan, citing mounting debts as well as the fulfillment of his dream of peace, has announced that his Voice of Peace radio station will fall silent on Oct. 1.

Since 1973, Nathan has broadcast a mixture of pro-peace news and popular music in English, Hebrew and Arabic from a World War II-era ship anchored just outside Israel's territorial waters.

Israel made no efforts to silence Nathan's technically illegal station, which polls at times rated the most popular in the country.

Nathan, 66, began his one-man campaign for peace in 1970, when he flew his private, single-seater plane to Egypt to try to make peace with former President Anwar Sadat. He twice served prison sentences for illegal meetings with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Nathan says the main motives for stopping his broadcasts are economics and safety.

For some years he has been supporting his floating station by accepting commercials. He has made enough money not only to operate the vessel but also to pay for his many worldwide pro-peace and anti-poverty causes, which include helping the victims of natural disasters.

But his revenues have fallen to the point where he says he dreads another winter, when lack of adequate maintenance endangers the vessel.

Nathan says the only piece of equipment he will take ashore with him will be the vessel's steering wheel, which he plans to use as the centerpiece for the decoration of the new cafe-restaurant he plans to open.

The sinking of the Voice of Peace will leave Channel 7 as the only pirate radio station broadcasting toward Israel. Launched a few years back by the Gush Emunim settlers movement, Channel 7 is a mixture of Hebrew music, religious programming and a political perspective 180 degrees away from Nathan's.

MILAN ARCHBISHOP TO VISIT ISRAEL AS VATICAN-ISRAELI TIES ACCELERATE

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Sept. 26 (JTA) -- The archbishop of Milan, Cardinal Carlo Maria Martini, intends to travel to Jerusalem in February as a step toward deepening dialogue between Catholics and Jews.

Martini, considered by some to be a potential successor to Pope John Paul II, made his intention known last week at the end of a four-day international interfaith conference in Milan.

The conference, sponsored by the Catholic organization San Egidio, grouped more than 300 religious leaders of a number of faiths from around the world.

Jewish participants included Israel's Ashkenazic chief rabbi, Yisrael Meir Lau, who met with the pope at the papal summer residence near Rome on Sept. 21.

While the subject of the Vatican's ties with Israel were not broached in Lau's meeting with the pope, the encounter is being viewed as a psychological -- if not concrete -- step toward the eventual establishment of full diplomatic relations.

The actual negotiations concerning the political relations between Israel and the Vatican are being handled by a bilateral commission set up last year. Israeli Ambassador to Italy Avi Pazner was quoted by the Italian media as saying the commission had made "notable progress" in its negotiations.

According to Italian sources, the church has stepped backed from its position on one of the thorniest issues: the status of Jerusalem.

The church is no longer demanding that Jerusalem be placed under international jurisdiction, according to the sources. Instead it simply wants "international guarantees" of unhindered access to Christian and Muslim holy places.

The two other points about which the church is seeking clarification are its juridical status in Israel and the position of ecumenical bodies in Israel.

Still, despite the insistence of Israeli and Vatican officials that only spiritual, rather than political, issues were discussed by the pope and Lau, it was clear from the Vatican's statement after the meeting that political issues -- particularly the Middle East peace process -- underlay the encounter.

'A Step Forward'

"In these days, so particularly important and delicate for peace in the Holy Land and the Middle East, after long and painful conflicts, the meeting takes on a special significance and was an occasion to reiterate the overcoming of historic incomprehensions, even serious ones, and to invoke together the gift of fraternity among the peoples who are heirs to the faith of Abraham," the statement said, using phrasing that appeared also to include Muslims.

"This meeting, of a religious nature, was also a propitious moment to offer the political leaders of the region all the necessary moral support for the courage of peace in justice and security," the statement said.

Meanwhile, in an interview last week with the Rome daily La Repubblica, the Catholic patriarch of Jerusalem, Michel Sabbah, described the meeting between the rabbi and the pope as "a step forward in the continuation of dialogue."

Sabbah, a Palestinian, said that while the

church was not waiting for approval from Arab countries before formalizing full relations with Israel, the recent agreement between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel opens the door to action.

"The position of the church concerns a question of justice vis-a-vis the Palestinian people which has not yet been resolved," said Sabbah.

He added: "Now, however, a new period is opening; everyone has agreed to carry out justice not through violence but through peace."

CLINTON HEALTH CARE REFORM PLAN GETS INITIAL THUMBS UP FROM JEWS

By Deborah Kalb and Steven Weiss

WASHINGTON, Sept. 26 (JTA) -- Jewish groups are giving initially favorable reviews to President Clinton's long-awaited plan to reform the nation's health care system.

But many in the Jewish community say they are waiting to take an official position on the plan until they have a chance to study it in greater detail.

Clinton's plan, announced in a nationwide television address Sept. 22, is viewed by many Jewish leaders as a good first step in making sense of the complicated health care debate now engulfing the country.

They say they support Clinton's effort to establish universal health care coverage in America, which would guarantee health care for the unemployed and those with pre-existing medical conditions.

Jewish groups are particularly pleased by the plan's coverage of some prescription drugs and some long-term care, both of which would benefit the elderly.

That is because the Jewish community is among the oldest ethnic groups in the country, with a mean age of 44 compared to a mean age of 33 for the American population as a whole.

Groups such as Agudath Israel of America, which represent fervently Orthodox Jews, who tend to have a high birthrate, praised the plan's coverage of prenatal and postnatal care.

Other groups praised the plan, but would like it to go even further.

The American Jewish Congress, for instance, called the plan "an excellent basis for the vital national debate on health care," but said it would like the plan to be modified to include comprehensive mental health care, long-term care and dental benefits.

The National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, an umbrella group representing national and local Jewish organizations, adopted its own set of principles on national health care this past June.

NJCRC's plan calls for a national health care plan with comprehensive care and a choice of health care providers.

The group's associate executive vice chair, Diana Aviv, said NJCRC plans to hold a meeting Oct. 11 to discuss Clinton's plan in greater depth.

She said that her own initial response to the plan was positive, for the most part. "He's gone a long way to meet" the concerns raised in the NJCRC plan, she said.

But she added that it was too soon to tell what would eventually result from Clinton's proposals, which face formidable obstacles in Congress.

The president is expected to submit his plan formally to Congress within a few weeks.

COURT RULES AUSTRALIA ERRED IN DENYING VISA TO REVISIONIST

SYDNEY, Australia, Sept. 26 (JTA) -- The Federal Court of Australia has ruled that former Immigration Minister Gerry Hand erred in refusing to grant British Holocaust-denier David Irving an entry visa for a planned visit here last March.

The full bench of the Federal Court upheld Irving's appeal against an earlier finding by one of the court's justices that the minister had acted correctly in denying a visa.

The minister had determined that a visit by Irving to Australia would be disruptive to the community.

The full bench has directed Hand's successor, Sen. Nick Bolkus, to reconsider the decision in light of existing law.

Bolkus was overseas at the time of the latest decision, and his office said he would consider the situation upon his return.

A representative of the minister noted that he still had the option to appeal the finding to the Australian High Court and would make a decision on whether this was appropriate after analyzing the Federal Court's 100-page judgment.

Prior to the judgment, Irving had indicated that he would appeal to the High Court if he had lost at this stage and has now been reported as stating that he will take the government to the High Court if it does not overturn the ban.

Irving's supporters in Australia have expressed "absolute delight" at the decision. The controversial writer's agent in Australia, Murray Pope of the fringe publishing company Veritas, described the decision on Irving as "most productive."

Jewish organizations were among the groups opposing Irving's visit. They cited his reported relationship with anti-Jewish extremist groups, a criminal conviction in Germany, the possibility his presence in Australia would encourage anti-Jewish activity and the potential illegality under various state laws of Irving's Holocaust revisionism.

CANADA ORDERED TO PAY FEES OF ACCUSED NAZI WAR CRIMINAL

By Gil Kezwer

TORONTO, Sept. 26 (JTA) -- Canada's Supreme Court has ordered the government to pay thousands of dollars in legal costs to a man it prosecuted for Nazi war crimes before dropping the case against him.

The Sept. 23 ruling upheld a March 1992 decision by a lower court ordering the government to pay \$151,000 (Canadian) in legal costs incurred by Michael Pawlowski.

Pawlowski, 75, a retired carpenter from Renfrew, Ontario, was charged Dec. 15, 1989 with eight counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity in connection with the 1942 deaths of 410 Jews and 80 Poles in the Minsk region of Nazi-occupied White Russia (today Belarus), where he allegedly served as a local policeman.

The Justice Department stayed his prosecution March 13, 1992, following the death of a key witness and a crippling ruling against a government bid to send a commission to the former Soviet Union to gather and videotape testimony from elderly witnesses unable to come to Canada to testify.

It was the third unsuccessful prosecution under war crimes legislation enacted by Canada's Parliament in 1987.

KNESSET PANEL'S VOTE SETS WAY TO LIFT SHAS LEADER'S IMMUNITY

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Sept. 26 (JTA) -- The process of removing the parliamentary immunity of former Interior Minister Aryeh Deri got under way Sunday, with a vote by the Knesset House Committee paving the way for a full Knesset vote on the matter in two weeks.

Deri, who heads the fervently Orthodox Shas party, requested the removal of his immunity so he can stand trial on charges of bribery and fraud. He said he believes he will get a fair hearing only in a court of law.

In the committee discussion, the former minister reportedly spoke of new evidence that would prove his innocence.

Deri resigned his post as interior minister Sept. 12 after the High Court of Justice ruled that holding a Cabinet post was inconsistent with the charges leveled against him.

Outgoing Attorney General Yosef Harish, meanwhile, sought to defend the integrity of his indictment against Deri. He has been charged by Shas party members of persecuting the former minister because he is a leader of the Sephardic party, a charge Harish labeled "an outrage."

Allegations surfaced last week that lifting Deri's immunity was somehow connected to the government's intensive campaign to win Shas' support for the accord with the Palestine Liberation Organization, but this was sharply denied by House Committee Chairman Hagai Meir.

After days of tense uncertainty, Shas members abstained in last week's vote on the controversial accord, which was billed as a show of confidence in the government.

Nonetheless, negotiations were to begin this week to re-establish the party's footing within the governing coalition.

Shas agreed to abstain in the vote on the agreement, reportedly in exchange for the Labor Party's promise to investigate charges of persecution and discrimination in the Deri case.

NOT ONLY GOD RECEIVED YOM KIPPUR CALLS FOR AID

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Sept. 26 (JTA) -- How many would be born? How many would faint while fasting? And how many would fall from their bicycles?

It was not for mortals to know before hand, but on Yom Kippur, it's the job of Magen David Adom, Israel's paramedic and first aid society, to deal with the medical emergencies after they happen.

Final statistics for the holiest day of the year: 1,314 calls for aid.

There were 124 cases of fainting during the fasts. Seventy-four children injured while riding their bicycles, skates or skate-boards in the empty streets. And 29 people injured in 14 traffic accidents, caused mainly by the seduction of speeding along roadways empty of traffic.

Ambulances were summoned by 78 pregnant women, with four infants entering the Book of Life courtesy of paramedics or drivers before arriving at the maternity wards.

One of the women who gave birth in an ambulance had delivered her first baby in the same ambulance with the help of the same driver two years ago.