

**ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN TALKS PROCEED
DESPITE BRUTAL TERRORIST ATTACKS**
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 11 (JTA) -- Israelis and Palestinians stepped up negotiations on a number of issues this week despite the bitterness and rage felt here in the wake of an upsurge of terrorist attacks.

On Sunday, a day after the brutal murder of two Israeli hikers in the Judean Desert, Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin flew to Tunis, where he was to lead the Israeli delegation to a new round of multilateral talks on the issue of Palestinian refugees.

On Monday, Police Minister Moshe Shahal and Palestinian leader Faisal Husseini met here to discuss ways to allow Palestinians from the administered territories access to Jerusalem.

And later this week, Israelis and Palestinians were scheduled to meet in Cairo and the Sinai border town of Taba to discuss the implementation of the self-rule accord signed last month in Washington by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

It was a difficult and tense situation. On the one hand, political leaders were moving fast to implement the Palestinian autonomy agreement.

On the other hand, Palestinian radicals were doing their utmost to teach Israel in the harshest and most painful way that negotiations do not mean an end to terrorism.

The double murder on Saturday of two hikers was particularly painful because it took place at a time when Israel and the Palestinians were negotiating on several fronts and also because it took place in Jerusalem's backyard.

Wadi Kelt, the site of the gruesome murders, is located near the West Bank town of Jericho. It is one of the most impressive spots in the Judean Desert, about a 20-minute drive from Jerusalem. For years it has been a popular hiking area, particularly for Jerusalemites, but also for other visitors from throughout the country.

Dror Forer, 25, and his friend Eran Bachar, 23, were brutally murdered as they were swimming in a natural pool.

Five attackers stabbed the two young Israelis, fired shots at one of them, and then cut their throats and bashed in their skulls with stones.

Other hikers witnessed the attack from atop a ridge but were unable to help.

Fundamentalists Take Credit

The murderers fled the scene in two cars they had stolen from a nearby parking lot. One car was later found in Jericho, but no suspects were found immediately.

The Islamic Jihad fundamentalist movement took responsibility for the savage attack.

The murder took place just a few hours after the Israeli navy managed to foil another terrorist attack -- this one from the sea.

A lone man riding a jet ski off the coast near the Israeli-Lebanese border was picked up by Israeli radar and night-vision equipment early Saturday morning.

The land-based operators warned an Israeli gunboat patrolling the coast. The gunboat gave

chase and opened fire on the terrorist after firing warning shots.

The attacker was hit and blown out of the water scooter. The scooter sped on another 30 yards before coming to a stop. It was later found to be carrying Kalachnikov rifles, pistols, hand grenades, knives and ammunition.

The small, very fast, low-profile jet ski was the first of its type ever used by a terrorist organization.

The Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a group hotly opposed to the Israeli-PLO accord, later claimed responsibility for the operation.

The seaborne attempt came 36 hours after Islamic Jihad guerrillas slightly wounded an Israel Defense Force soldier north of Israel's border with Lebanon.

Two other IDF soldiers were lightly wounded Sunday morning when their patrol was ambushed in the security zone.

Iran Inflaming Situation

The latest incidents -- particularly the Wadi Kelt murders -- increased fears here that there would be additional terrorist attacks by opponents of the peace process.

Israeli officials blamed Iran for inflaming the situation in the territories and in southern Lebanon, in an effort to jeopardize the peace talks.

The Wadi Kelt attack heightened security concerns among residents of Jewish settlements in the Jordan Valley.

On Monday, Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Gur visited the settlement of Na'ama, located north of Jericho, and assured the residents that no Jewish settlement would have to live under the "flag of the PLO" or, for that matter, under the flag of "any Arab country."

Gur, a retired general, stressed that even after Palestinian self-rule goes into effect, Israel will be responsible for the security of the Jewish settlers in the Jordan Valley.

Despite the ongoing terrorist attacks, negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians are continuing.

Deputy Foreign Minister Beilin, before leaving for Tunis to discuss the Palestinian refugee situation, made it clear that Israel would not agree to Palestinian demands that the multilateral working group discuss the right of return for all Palestinian refugees, including those who fled in 1948.

Under the terms of the Israeli-PLO accord, the future of the 1948 refugees will not be addressed until the final-stage negotiations on the permanent status of the territories, which are scheduled to begin no later than December 1995.

Israel already allows at least 2,000 Palestinians to return to the territories each year, but the Palestinians want to expand that number greatly.

Beilin arrived in Tunis just as the PLO's Central Council was debating whether to approve the accord with Israel. The 107-member council is the steering committee for the larger Palestine National Council, the so-called Palestinian parliament-in-exile.

For the first time ever, Israeli reporters were allowed to attend the council's proceedings, which have usually been held behind closed doors.

SOCCER MATCH NETS DUAL WINS FOR PLO -- BOTH ON FIELD AND OFF

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 11 (JTA) -- Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip chalked up dual victories Friday in a sports match in Jericho that was as much about nationalism as it was about soccer.

Responding to an invitation from the Variety Club of France to the "State of Palestine," the Palestine Liberation Organization fielded a local soccer team against a French team that included such famous French veteran players such as Michel Platini and Alain Giresse.

The Palestinian team, playing under the flag of the PLO, beat France by a score of 1-0.

The game took on added significance in light of the PLO's struggle to achieve world recognition of its claim to establish an independent state of Palestine. Last month, Israel and the PLO signed a mutual recognition pact.

It took ushers more than a half-hour to clear the field of fans who surged across the playing area before the players, dressed in the PLO colors, could kick off.

Spectators said the French lost their game against the Palestinians, in the presence of some 10,000 enthusiastic admirers, largely because of the field.

The rough, sandy terrain is a mud bath in winter and a dust bowl in summer. By halftime, players had churned the dust into a thick fog that obscured the other side of the field.

The Frenchmen said they found it difficult to play a proper game in such a rough makeshift pitch.

In Herzliya on Saturday, the same French team beat the Veterans of Israel team by a 6-2 score.

The French said they thought they had beaten the Israeli side because the Israeli players were considerably older than their own team members.

The secretary of the Israel Football Association, Ya'acov Arel, said later that the association officially opposed the match. Arel was concerned that the game against the Palestinians was legitimizing the creation of a Palestinian national team playing for a recognized independent state that does not exist.

PERES OPENS THE WINTER SESSION OF KNESSET WITH PLEDGE OF PEACE

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Oct. 11 (JTA) -- Foreign Minister Shimon Peres opened the winter session of the Knesset with a pledge that the government would persevere in the peace process despite recent terrorist attacks.

Peres opened the Knesset session Monday in the absence of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was on a five-day trip to China.

Rabin had been criticized by members of opposition parties for assigning the Knesset a lower priority than the China trip. Rabin countered by saying that the Chinese had refused to reschedule the trip.

Earlier on Monday, Peres reportedly talked in the most favorable terms to the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee about the plans for cooperation with Jordan that were discussed during his meeting in Washington on Oct. 1 with Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan.

ISRAEL AND CHINA REACH PACTS ON FLIGHTS, ECONOMIC VENTURES

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Oct. 11 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's historic trip to China, intended to strengthen diplomatic ties and to enhance China's role in the Middle East, has already yielded several joint economic agreements.

Rabin's five-day visit, the first ever by an Israeli prime minister, included a meeting on Monday with Chinese Premier Li Peng. The trip comes a month after a visit to China by Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat.

Rabin flew to Beijing on Saturday night aboard a special Israeli air force jet. He was scheduled to hold talks with government leaders and to discuss the latest advances in the regional peace talks at Shanghai University before returning home on Friday.

Rabin was expected to press China not to sell arms to Iran. But a Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said the question did not arise during Rabin's private meeting with Li, which focused on the Israel-PLO peace accord.

The spokesman, according to Israel Radio, defended what he called China's "principled arms exports," which he said were made solely for the self-defense of the countries involved. He further defended China's arms exports, saying they "contributed to regional stability."

During the meeting, Rabin reportedly briefed Li on the danger of Islamic fundamentalist groups that have vowed to derail the peace process.

The Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman said Li viewed the Israeli-PLO accord signed last month in Washington as a breakthrough. Li had told Rabin that his country would do what it could to support the Middle East peace process, but that its role was limited.

Joint Potash Plant Planned

Rabin's visit included an official welcoming ceremony in Tiananmen Square that featured a 19-gun salute and the playing of the two countries' national anthems. Rabin's trip was also scheduled to include a visit to the Great Wall.

On Monday, Israel and China signed a series of bilateral commercial agreements intended to strengthen ties between the two countries.

The first agreement signed by Rabin after his meeting with the Chinese premier was an aviation pact that made formal the present arrangement under which El Al, for the past 14 months, has been flying weekly charter flights between Beijing and Ben-Gurion Airport in Israel.

Air China is soon to start its own charter flights between the two countries.

Under the agreement, El Al will be able to fly to other cities in China in addition to Beijing. El Al will also be able to use Beijing as a stop-over point for flights to other destinations in the Far East, such as Tokyo and Bangkok, Thailand.

Under the terms of a second agreement, the Israeli government-owned Dead Sea Industries will establish a potash plant in China.

The \$470 million plant will be built in the Shansi province on the Chinese border with Tibet. The Chinese government will hold a two-thirds interest in the jointly sponsored project.

About 50 employees of Dead Sea Industries will be stationed in China during the planning and construction phases of the plant.

(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Hugh Orgel in Tel Aviv.)

**DEFENSE RESTS IN ROBERT MANNING CASE,
BUT DEFENDANT PRAYS TO 'BE BACK SOON'**
By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 11 (JTA) -- The defense has rested its case in the monthlong trial of Robert Manning, the Los Angeles-born Israeli charged in connection with a 1980 mail-bomb killing.

The case is scheduled to go to the jury Wednesday afternoon, following final arguments by the defense and prosecution. Court observers believe that the jury of eight men and four women will deliver an early verdict, perhaps as soon as Friday.

Manning, 41, a resident of the West Bank settlement of Kiryat Arba, was flown to Los Angeles in July after losing a two-year legal battle to prevent his extradition from Israel.

The case became somewhat of a cause celebre in Israel, where Orthodox and nationalist groups bitterly protested turning a Jew over to foreign authorities.

Manning is accused of mailing a booby-trapped device to a Manhattan Beach, Calif., computer company in 1980. The device instantly killed the firm's secretary, Patricia Wilkerson, when she followed written instructions to plug the device into an electric outlet.

If found guilty, Manning could be sentenced to life in prison.

Last week, the defense rested its case without calling Manning to the stand to testify on his own behalf.

After announcing the decision, defense attorney Richard Sherman briefly questioned Manning in a step described as "unusual" by U.S. District Judge Dickran Tevzrian.

"Is the decision (not to testify) made of your own free will?" asked Sherman, to which Manning answered "yes."

"I have not coerced you to make this decision?" the lawyer continued, and his client answered "no."

The tall, heavyset Manning, who wore a beard when he arrived from Israel, appeared in court cleanshaven and wearing a large black yarmulka and seemed to be in good spirits. Asked whether he had any message for his family and friends in Israel, Manning said, "I'm praying that I'll be back soon."

Fund Set Up Following Ads In Jewish Papers

Rabbi Zvi Block, dean of the Aish HaTorah Institute here and a close friend of Manning's, said Manning had talked to his wife, Rochelle, by phone and they had "urged each other to be strong."

Rochelle Manning, 53, and the couple's two daughters are still in Kiryat Arba, but the Israeli Supreme Court ordered on Aug. 16 that she be extradited to the United States to face charges that she participated in the alleged crime with her husband.

Her lawyer has appealed to Israeli Justice Minister David Libai not to put the extradition order into force. Rochelle Manning was previously tried in Los Angeles on the same charges, but the jury deadlocked on a verdict in January 1989.

The Mannings were early members of the Jewish Defense League in Los Angeles. They immigrated to Israel in 1973, but they frequently returned to the United States since then. Both hold dual American and Israeli citizenship.

Block said that a defense fund had been

established for Robert Manning through advertisements in Jewish newspapers and through appeals to friends and relatives to raise an estimated \$50,000 for legal and expert-witness costs.

At the beginning of the trial, Sherman and Block protested that Manning was not receiving full kosher meals at a federal detention facility, despite judge's orders, and that he was subsisting on raw vegetables and cereal.

Block said pita bread had recently been added to Manning's diet but that the dispute had "been put on a back burner" to concentrate on the trial itself.

Some 10 relatives of Manning's have been the only regular spectators at the trial, which has attracted almost no media coverage.

**CONSERVATIVES LAUNCH DRIVE
TO WOO JEWS FROM LIBERALISM**
By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON (JTA) -- A group of prominent, politically conservative Jewish intellectuals has launched a campaign to woo American Jews away from their traditionally liberal beliefs.

The conservative thinkers made their pitch last week at the first public event of the Jewish Policy Center, a new Washington think tank that aims to be the major voice of Jewish political conservatism.

While the conservatives admitted they were aware that most American Jews seem inextricably wedded to political liberalism, they argued that conservatism is actually more in line with Jewish tradition.

The Oct. 4 kickoff event was a panel discussion modeled on television's "McLaughlin Group."

Although the pace was slower and more intellectually thoughtful than that of the often-frenzied John McLaughlin and his journalistic cohorts, the group managed to debate a number of topics ranging from school prayer to the recent Israeli-Palestinian accord.

The panel, which included writers Midge Decter, Irving Kristol and Norman Podhoretz, disagreed on some issues, although the majority of the panelists considered the Sept. 13 agreement dangerous and ill-advised.

But they all agreed on the need for more Jews to adopt what they loosely defined as conservative political beliefs, combined with Jewish values.

Panel members argued that some liberal tenets cherished by the bulk of the organized Jewish community, such as the removal of any hint of religion from the public schools, are outdated remnants of an earlier era and are no longer relevant to today's American Jews.

And they criticized liberals for quickly embracing the Israeli-Palestinian accord and for being swept up in related euphoric hopes. Such euphoria, they argued, historically often led to problems for Jews.

Other panelists were Rabbis Samuel Dresner and Joshua Haberman, and scholars Marshall Breger, Murray Friedman and Ruth Wisse. The event attracted about 50 interested observers.

The panelists serve on the Jewish Policy Center's first board of trustees. The center has existed for almost a decade as an affiliate of the National Jewish Coalition, a Jewish Republican group. But in response to increased interest in conservative issues during the 1992 election campaign, the coalition decided to turn the center into a more high-profile think tank.

FEUD BETWEEN FRENCH JEWISH GROUPS HAS SEPHARDI-ASHKENAZI UNDERCURRENT

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, Oct. 11 (JTA) -- A feud has erupted between two leading figures of the Jewish community in France that includes Sephardic-Ashkenazic undercurrents and arguments over affiliations.

At the core of the dispute is the question of who will represent French Jewry on a variety of issues. Pitted against each other are Jean Kahn, head of CRIF, the umbrella political body representing French Jewry, and Jean-Pierre Bansard, president of the Consistoire Central, the organization caring for the community's religious needs.

Six years ago, the Consistoire removed itself from CRIF because of a dispute about affiliation with the World Jewish Congress, which is seen as an American-dominated group.

CRIF, an acronym that stands for Representative Committee of Jewish Institutions in France, is a member of the European Jewish Congress and its parent body, the WJC. Kahn is president of both CRIF and EJC.

Bansard was elected to head the Consistoire last year and promised to rejoin the WJC. But he did not take the promised step.

He has made no secret of his displeasure with the way CRIF is run, describing it to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency as "a one-man operation."

There are an estimated 700,000 Jews living in France.

Bansard earlier this year proposed a kind of triumvirate to represent the French Jewish community. It would include himself, Kahn and the head of Fonds Social Juif Unifié, the largest Jewish charity and Jewish lay organization.

But Kahn called the suggestion "totally unworkable and unethical."

"The president of CRIF is democratically elected for three years by the General Assembly, in which the Consistoire Central has six seats, meaning six voices. If they do not fill them, it is a great pity, but it is their decision," said Kahn.

"The Jewish community in France must speak in one voice, and the president of the Consistoire Central must respect the rules enacted long before he came to head this institution," he said.

French Media Take Note Of The Bickering

Decades ago, there were few interorganizational rivalries because, for most of the time, the heads of the three organizations belonged to the same family, the Rothschilds.

Since Bansard was elected to the Consistoire, he has been outspoken on various political issues, and his statements have infuriated Kahn.

Bansard said he would be willing to rejoin CRIF, "but under one and only one condition, that I keep my freedom of speech."

The clash between the two leaders erupted when a French weekly newsmagazine, L'Evenement du Jeudi, published a long story on how the mutual recognition pact between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization had its origins in the strong desire of Sephardic Jews for peace.

The article spoke of the reluctance of Ashkenazic Jews, at least in France, to see any agreement reached with the PLO. The article, by a Jewish reporter, was critical of Kahn, who is Ashkenazic, and laudatory of Bansard, a Sephardi.

What really set matters on a collision course

was the fact that the anti-Kahn article was written by a journalist working for Radio Shalom, a Jewish radio station broadcast from Paris. The fact that Bansard was about to acquire a large chunk of shares of Radio Shalom induced some to think the article was inspired by Bansard himself.

The Bansard-Kahn dispute received wider coverage when the respected Paris daily Le Monde published an article about "the crisis within Jewish institutions."

As a result, all French Jewish leaders made declarations geared to maintain unity within the community and condemning the attempt of L'Evenement du Jeudi to divide French Jews along Ashkenazic and Sephardic lines.

Before the High Holidays, Bansard invited the leaders of the major French Jewish organizations for an informal lunch in order to establish greater cooperation among the groups.

Michel Zaoui, president of the Federation of Jewish Associations in France, wrote to Bansard: "I'm sorry to turn down your invitation."

"Our community is longing more than ever for unity and I particularly regret that the Consistoire Central hasn't reintegrated (within) CRIF as it promised to," Zaoui wrote.

BOSTON JCRC ASKS WASHINGTON TO PREVENT DEATHS IN ARMENIA

By Steven Weiss

WASHINGTON (JTA) -- Fearing that thousands of Armenians could die this winter from starvation and cold, representatives from the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Boston have called upon the U.S. government to assist in ending the economic blockade of Armenia.

The blockade was created by Azerbaijan, with whom the Armenians are engaged in a bloody civil war over the Armenian enclave of Nagorno-Karabakh, which sits within Azeri borders.

Azerbaijan has prohibited the import of crucial food and fuel supplies from reaching hungry Armenians.

Most of those familiar with the situation in the region agree that if the Armenians are forced to endure another winter without adequate food and heat, thousands will die.

The Armenian-Jewish Dialogue of the Boston JCRC arrived in Washington last week calling on the U.S. administration to appoint neighboring Turkey as the region's unofficial peace broker, said George Bachrach, Dialogue co-chair.

Bachrach said that a call from Washington to Ankara could start the peace process rolling.

The Turks and the Armenians are historic bitter adversaries, with roots in the religious differences between the Armenians, an Eastern Orthodox Christian group, and the Turks, who are Muslim. The Azeris are a Turkic, Muslim group.

The area was divided up by the late Soviet autocrat Josef Stalin, who inserted an Armenian area inside an Azeri region in an attempt to deflect ethnic rivalries. It backfired horribly.

The Boston JCRC met with several members of Congress and with a State Department expert on Armenia.

The Jewish community became involved in the effort at the request of the large Armenian community in Boston, according to Barbara Gaffin, the JCRC's associate director.

"We want to see our government get more involved" in ensuring that the people of Armenia survive this winter, she said.