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**WASHINGTON PEACE TALKS POSTPONED  
AS SYRIA THREATENS TO BOYCOTT THEM**  
By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Oct. 17 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is playing down Syria's threat to boycott the peace talks in Washington.

But at the same time, he acknowledged Sunday that Israel's first priority at this point is to implement the self-rule accord signed with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Rabin's remarks came within hours of an announcement here that the United States would postpone the next round of bilateral peace talks, which had been scheduled to begin next week, until the end of November.

The prime minister, who spoke at Ben-Gurion Airport upon his return from a trip to the Far East, said he believed Israel and Syria should speak directly to each other outside the framework of the bilateral talks.

The accord that Israel signed with the PLO on Sept. 13 came as the result of back-channel talks that had been held in secret over the preceding several months in Oslo, Norway.

Rabin refused to respond to recent Syrian criticisms of the peace talks in Washington and of the secret manner in which Israel and the PLO reached their accord.

"I don't want to comment about threats or (attaching) conditions to the continuation of the peace negotiations," the prime minister said, adding that Israel is committed to the talks.

But, alluding to Israel's plans to start implementing the accord with the PLO, Rabin added, "I believe that from Israel's point of view, we have to prove in the coming months that once an agreement is signed, it is implemented. The purpose is not just to reach an agreement on paper."

During a visit to Cairo over the weekend, Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa said that Syria would not go to Washington "to participate in sterile and non-profitable talks."

"We will only go when the Israelis show they are serious about achieving results," Sharaa said after a 90-minute meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

**Stops In Jakarta, Singapore, Nairobi**

Sharaa said he told Mubarak that there had been no progress to date in the Washington talks.

In fact, diplomats from the region are said to believe that Israel and Syria are already holding secret talks in Europe, modeled on the secret talks in Oslo that bore fruit with the PLO.

Following his comments at the airport Sunday, Rabin proceeded to the weekly Israeli Cabinet meeting, where he briefed members on his trip to the Far East. He spoke about his five-day visit to China and surprise trips to Indonesia, Singapore and Kenya.

Rabin met with President Suharto of Indonesia, the largest Islamic state. Indonesia, which heads the Organization of Non-aligned States, does not have diplomatic relations with Israel.

Indonesian officials said the meeting with Rabin did not mean they were planning to establish relations with Israel, although they did say that the openness of the session clearly was new.

In the Indonesian capital of Jakarta, Rabin

said it was important to get the message across to the non-aligned nations about "the opportunities for cooperation with Israel."

"It is necessary to get international support for the peace process and bilateral support from these countries," he said.

In Singapore, Rabin met and discussed the PLO accord with regional leaders, who expressed the hope that the meeting with the Israeli leader would spur better relations between Israel and Muslim countries.

The prime minister also stopped in Nairobi for a 90-minute meeting.

**ISRAEL PREPARES TO FREE PRISONERS  
AS UNREST IN TERRITORIES CONTINUES**  
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Oct. 17 (JTA) -- At a time when unrest is continuing in the administered territories, Israeli authorities are stepping up preparations for the release of thousands of Palestinian prisoners as part of their negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

In a stark reminder that there is still much ground to cover on the road to peace, there were clashes between Israeli settlers and Palestinians in the West Bank town of Hebron over the weekend following the stabbing of an Israeli teacher on Friday by at least two attackers.

Also during the weekend, an activist in PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's Al Fatah faction was killed in the Gaza Strip.

Against this backdrop of violence, Israel is preparing a massive release of Palestinian security prisoners as a confidence-building measure meant to demonstrate some immediate positive results of the Israeli-PLO self-rule accord signed last month.

According to a report Sunday in the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot, Israel is planning an initial release of some 4,000 prisoners who have been sentenced up to five years in jail.

The newspaper reported that women, administrative detainees, minors as well as elderly and sick prisoners will be included in the first release of prisoners.

But Israel has no plans for the release of prisoners who have killed Israeli citizens or who are likely to become involved in future acts of violence against Jews.

The subject of the prisoner release was expected to be the focus of the next round of talks with the Palestinians scheduled for Wednesday in the Sinai border town of Taba.

The head of the Palestinian delegation to the Taba talks has meanwhile issued comments likely to stir the passions of Israeli settlers who fear that the self-rule accord will force them from their homes.

"The settlers are not welcome in Gaza, and the Israelis know that," Nabil Sha'ath, a senior adviser to Arafat, was quoted as saying. "They must leave. We will have to accept them now for a period of two years, but then they must go."

"We want a settlement accord similar to the Egyptian-Israeli model," he said. "The Israelis evacuated their settlements in Sinai as part of the peace agreement, but Israelis still come as tourists."

He said that the Israeli-PLO accord would

lead to a gradual Palestinian takeover of authority in the West Bank and Gaza, adding that "the Israelis understand that this is the beginning of a Palestinian state."

### **Israeli Teacher Wounded In Hebron**

Fears surrounding the outcome of the Israeli-PLO talks provided a backdrop when Palestinians and Jewish settlers clashed in Hebron late Friday and Saturday.

The confrontations followed the stabbing of Baruch Ben-Ya'acov, in Hebron on Friday evening.

Ben-Ya'acov, 31, an English teacher and the father of three, was stabbed in the neck from behind by at least two attackers as he was walking alone in the street.

Suffering from light wounds, he was rushed to the Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem.

The Damascus-based Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which opposes the Israeli-PLO accord, claimed responsibility for the attack.

In response to the attack, scores of settlers gathered to demand that Israeli security officials clamp a curfew on Hebron and that they impose tougher security measures within the city.

The gathering soon turned into a riot, with settlers turning over fruit stands in the local wholesale market and smashing windshields of cars owned by Arabs.

Local Arab residents responded by throwing stones.

Israeli soldiers interfered and imposed a curfew in the area.

But the riots resumed Saturday. A large contingent of the Israel Defense Force was needed to separate Israelis and Palestinians fighting in the narrow alleys of Hebron.

Soldiers had to fire warning shots in the air to break up the crowds.

In the Gaza Strip, the atmosphere of violence continued when a senior activist in Arafat's Fatah faction was shot and killed over the weekend by masked Palestinians.

The victim was Maher Ikhalil, 35, a barber living in Gaza City.

Arab sources said Sunday that the assailants drove up to his shop, called him outside and then shot him twice in the head.

### **U.S. URGED TO PRESS ARABS HARDER TO END THE BOYCOTT AGAINST ISRAEL By Deborah Kalb**

WASHINGTON, Oct. 17 (JTA) -- Pressure is building on the Clinton administration to step up efforts to end the longtime Arab economic boycott against Israel, which continues even as various Arab parties are entering into economic relationships with the Jewish state.

Assistant Secretary of State Edward Djerejian was bombarded with questions about the boycott last Friday when he testified before the Senate Foreign Relations Committee concerning the administration's Middle East policy.

Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D-Md.) called the boycott "an abominable anachronism," and his colleague, Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.), referred to Kuwait's continued observance of the boycott as "obscene."

Since 1946, before the founding of Israel, the Arab League has maintained a boycott against the Jewish state and companies doing business with it.

The boycott has cost Israel billions of

dollars in lost trade and also hurts U.S. companies doing business with Israel.

Since coming to office in January, the Clinton administration has taken a vigorous anti-boycott stand welcomed by the Jewish community.

But now that Israel has signed agreements and entered into economic discussions with both the Palestine Liberation Organization and Jordan, calls from both the administration and Congress to end the boycott have become even stronger.

And some in Congress are hesitant to pour money into the new hot cause of Palestinian economic development while the boycott is still in place.

"I think increasingly there's going to be a much stronger consensus developing in the Congress that this practice simply must come to an end," Sarbanes said of the boycott. "I mean, it absolutely contradicts everything else that is now taking place."

"And I can't believe that questions about the resources we should commit to development packages involving the Palestinians or other Arab countries" are not "increasingly going to have a spotlight placed upon them if we can't make some advances in this area," he said.

### **Christopher Meets With AIPAC**

Djerejian, who heads the State Department's Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, said the administration feels the boycott is "an anachronism completely out of step with recent developments in the peace process."

The administration has been busy reassuring members of the Jewish community that it is doing all it can to encourage Arab nations to end the boycott.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher, in a recent meeting with top officials of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, spoke strongly of the administration's anti-boycott efforts, according to AIPAC President Steve Grossman.

Grossman attended the Oct. 13 meeting, along with the group's acting executive director, Howard Kohr. The 40-minute meeting, Grossman said, was initiated by Christopher.

"He was very hard-hitting in his intention" and that of President Clinton "to secure movement on this issue," Grossman said.

At the Senate hearing, Djerejian cited progress on the so-called secondary and tertiary boycotts against companies doing business with Israel. Kuwait, he said, was one country making progress with those aspects of the boycott.

But in response to a question from Sarbanes, Djerejian acknowledged that the United States had heard that the Arab League may add more companies to its boycott list at its upcoming Oct. 24 meeting.

Meanwhile, on another topic of concern to the Jewish community, Grossman said that Christopher "was unequivocally clear that there were absolutely no allegations of Israel transferring U.S. technology to a third party, China."

Recent press reports that the CIA was accusing Israel of selling technology to China had raised a flurry of concern in the pro-Israel community here.

But the CIA report did not specify that Israel had sold any U.S. technology to China, which is forbidden under U.S.-Israeli agreements.

According to Grossman, Christopher made it clear in his meeting with AIPAC that the United States did not believe Israel had transferred any U.S. technology to China.

## SIXTH TEST OF ARROW MISSILE TERMED LESS THAN A SUCCESS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 17 (JTA) -- The sixth test firing of the Arrow anti-missile missile last week is being described as neither a success nor a total failure.

According to sources at Israel Aircraft Industries, which manufactures the anti-ballistic missile in partnership with the United States, the Arrow managed to intercept another missile that had been fired a few seconds earlier.

But its explosive charge failed to detonate and it did not destroy the first missile, which had been designed to simulate an incoming Scud.

"From this point of view, the test was thus not a success," said an IAI source.

A previous test of the Arrow had also resulted in a misfire, but there was no indication then what had gone wrong.

"But this time we know exactly what went wrong and what must be done" for the next and final round of the Arrow's pre-production tests, the source said.

Because of this new information, the source maintained that the latest test was therefore "not a complete failure."

But according to other sources here, the test can hardly be termed a success and is likely to provide ammunition to U.S. critics of the Arrow program.

Anti-ballistic missile designers in the United States, they say, use every indication of a less-than-complete success at each testing stage as a reason for trying to persuade the United States to abandon its funding of the Arrow project.

## ITALIAN PRESIDENT JOINS CEREMONY MARKING ITALIAN JEWS' DEPORTATION

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Oct. 17 (JTA) -- The presence of Italy's president lent particular significance this week to a ceremony commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Nazi deportation of Italian Jews.

Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro made the occasion Sunday even more meaningful by using it to launch an impassioned and unexpected warning against rising racism and nationalism in Europe -- and against divisive, regionalist politics in Italy.

Recalling the Nazi era and the hatreds directed against Jews and others, he said, "I am among those who think that all this can return, but I hope to die before becoming totally pessimistic."

He called for a return to the human values of truth, love, altruism and unity in order to overcome current negative tendencies, such as the move toward dividing people by their ethnic identity.

Though he did not mention them by name, his words were also clearly directed at Italy's Northern League Party and its supporters, which have won great support in prosperous northern Italy with calls to separate the region from the rest of the country.

Scalfaro spoke during an unscheduled address that concluded a solemn ceremony in the ornate theater of Carpi, a northern Italian town near Bologna.

It was the final event in a series of commemorations Sunday marking the beginning of the

Nazi deportation to death camps of about a quarter of Italy's pre-war Jewish community.

The president had not been scheduled to speak, but he said he could not simply sit in silence on such an occasion, and made his address without using notes.

The ceremonies, under the slogan "From memory, a responsibility for the future," were held at Carpi, which was the site of the Fossoli concentration camp.

## A 'Moral Debt' To The Victims

Fossoli was an internment camp for Allied POWs and Italian partisan resistance fighters. After the Nazi occupation of northern Italy in September 1943, it became a major staging camp for Jews on their way to Auschwitz and other death camps.

Among the 2,500 or more Jews who passed through Fossoli was Auschwitz survivor and author Primo Levi, who committed suicide in 1987.

The ceremonies at Fossoli were the national focus of a series of local commemorations in various Italian towns and cities marking the anniversary of the deportations, which began with the deportation of Jews from Merano, in the South Tyrol, in September 1943.

The Fossoli events included a brief interfaith religious service led by a rabbi, a Catholic bishop and a Protestant pastor, symbolizing the fact that Allied prisoners of war and Italian partisans were also held prisoner and deported to German concentration camps from Fossoli.

There was also a visit to the Monument and Museum to Racial and Political Deportees in downtown Carpi, where Scalfaro laid a wreath.

In an introductory speech, Carpi Mayor Claudio Bergianti said the town had recently drawn up an ambitious plan to turn the site of the Fossoli camp itself into a memorial and monument park.

"The city of Carpi has felt, since the first years after the war, the duty to carry out a moral debt toward the thousands of victims of the (Nazi) extermination: the debt of transmitting memory as a warning so that such barbarism does not repeat itself," he said.

The concluding ceremony included addresses by Tullia Zevi, president of the Union of Jewish Communities in Italy, and historian Carlo Ghisalbetti. Liliana Segre, an Auschwitz survivor, presented a dramatic personal testimony recalling her family members who perished in the Nazi camps.

The whole ceremony, said Zevi, "was very moving."

## SWASTIKAS SURFACE IN DUTCH VILLAGES

By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, Oct. 17 (JTA) -- Swastikas and racist slogans were daubed on tombstones in a Jewish cemetery and on several buildings in two villages south of Rotterdam over the weekend.

On Friday night, swastikas as well as racist slogans such as "Foreigners Out" were painted on several buildings in the villages of Neanvliet and Geervliet.

Tombstones in a small neighboring Jewish cemetery that is no longer in use were also defaced with swastikas and the Celtic cross, the signature of a small far-right group operating in Holland.

There are no Jews, and few foreign nationals, living in either village. Police are currently investigating the acts of vandalism.

# JTA DIRECTORS NAME MARK JOFFE EXECUTIVE EDITOR AND PUBLISHER By Mitchell Danow

NEW YORK, Oct. 17 (JTA) -- Mark Jonathan Joffe has been named executive editor and publisher of the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

The announcement was made by JTA President Marshall Weinberg following a meeting of the executive committee of the agency's board of directors.

For the past six years, Joffe, 33, has served as JTA's editor. In his new role, he will have overall responsibility for the agency's business as well as editorial operations.

Joffe replaces Mark Seal, who resigned earlier this month as the agency's executive vice president to become associate executive vice president of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society.

In his role as executive editor, Joffe will continue to direct the agency's daily reportage of news affecting Jews around the world.

Joffe's first priority as he assumes the new position will be to address the serious financial challenges facing the agency.

"Over the past few years, there has been a decline in allocations from Jewish community federations, and as a result our income base has eroded," said Joffe.

To offset some of these losses, JTA has raised the rates paid by newspapers subscribing to JTA's news and feature services.

But Joffe said that despite these increases, there will still be a gap in JTA's funding.

"While we hope to stem the decreases from the federations, we will have to look to other places for revenue," he said.

## 'Exciting Time' In Jewish News Business

Joffe said that national Jewish agencies will have to "shoulder more of the burden" associated with operating JTA.

"These organizations benefit enormously from JTA's service, in terms of both the information we provide and the publicity they receive," said Joffe. If they want the service to continue at the same level of quality, he said, they will have to help pay for it.

Although his responsibilities will be broadened as a result of the new appointment, Joffe says he will continue to be actively involved in the agency's editorial operations. But he added that some of the day-to-day operations will be handled by JTA's managing editor.

In addition, Joffe will soon be hiring a business manager to help manage the agency's finances.

Among some of his other goals, Joffe plans a redesign of JTA publications, which will be inaugurated early next year, following the installation of a new computer system.

He also plans to expand JTA's coverage of news from the newly independent states of the former Soviet Union.

Joffe described this as "a very exciting time to be in the Jewish news business," citing the fast pace of developments in the Middle East peace process and the current self-examination under way in the North American Jewish community as it attempts to define its future.

"I am looking forward to the new job ahead of me," said Joffe. "There are some daunting challenges, but I am optimistic that we will overcome our financial problems and continue to improve our editorial product."

# MANNING CONVICTED IN L.A., COULD FACE LIFE IN PRISON By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, Oct. 17 (JTA) -- Robert Manning, an American-born immigrant to Israel who was extradited here after extensive legal proceedings, has been convicted in a mail bomb killing dating back to 1980.

A federal jury rendered the guilty verdict on Oct. 14, after less than three hours of deliberation and exactly one month after the trial opened.

The 41-year old Manning, who showed no emotion as the verdict was read, could face a maximum term of life in prison when he is sentenced by U.S. District Judge Dickran Tevzorian on Jan. 3.

Richard Sherman, Manning's attorney, vowed to appeal the sentence to a higher court "within seconds after it is pronounced."

Manning was an early member of the Jewish Defense League in Los Angeles and was a resident of the West Bank settlement of Kiryat Arba following his immigration to Israel in 1973.

Manning fought and lost a protracted two-year legal battle in Israel to prevent his extradition to the United States.

U.S. Attorney Terree Bowers alluded to the extradition after the verdict, observing that a decision by Israeli courts to extradite is "very rare."

Although authorities here have linked Manning to a number of attacks against Arabs and former Nazis in the United States, the charges on which he was convicted had no ideological implications.

## Link To Attack Against Arab

According to testimony at the trial, Manning and his wife, Rochelle, were hired by a fellow JDL member, William Ross, to mail a booby-trapped device to the owner of a local computer firm with whom Ross had had a drawn-out business dispute.

The package was opened by the firm's secretary, Patricia Wilkerson, who was killed when the device exploded.

Manning did not take the stand during the trial.

Defense attorney Sherman expressed great disappointment at the verdict, which he claimed was based on circumstantial evidence.

Sherman said he particularly objected to the admission of evidence regarding an earlier misdemeanor conviction of Manning in the 1972 bombing of an Arab activist's home in Hollywood.

Rochelle Manning, 53, has already been indicted in the 1980 bombing death and remains in Kiryat Arba while appealing an Israeli Supreme Court order for her extradition.

She was tried in the same case in Los Angeles four years ago, but was released after the jury became deadlocked.

Following their immigration to Israel, the Mannings returned frequently to the United States. They hold dual American and Israeli citizenship and are the parents of two daughters.

Supporters of Robert Manning, particularly among Orthodox and nationalist groups, claim that the real reason U.S. authorities kept after him was to link Manning to a 1985 bombing that killed Arab American activist Alex Odeh.

But under the terms of Manning's extradition, he cannot be put on trial in the Odeh case.