

**EGYPTIAN MINISTER INTERVENES
TO BREAK DEADLOCK IN TABA TALKS**

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Nov. 4 (JTA) -- A one-day visit here by Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa has raised hopes that talks between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, suspended this week, will be resumed.

After meeting Thursday with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and military officials, Moussa declared his optimism that "things are going in the right direction on the Palestinian-Israeli track."

Moussa also said he had "definite hopes" for rapid results on other tracks, including that between Israel and Syria.

His comment fueled speculation that there is behind-the-scenes diplomatic movement between Jerusalem and Damascus.

The speculation was intensified when Peres, during an interview with Israel Television, coyly observed that additional progress in the peace process would soon be evident.

Newspapers here have been reporting that Peres held secret talks this week with leaders of an Arab state, either Jordan, Saudi Arabia or Tunisia.

The original purpose of Moussa's visit was to brief Israeli leaders on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak's recent meeting with Syrian President Hafez Assad.

Telegrams From Washington

When the Israeli-PLO talks on Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho were suspended this week, Moussa added that issue to his agenda when he met with Israeli leaders.

The suspension of the talks in Taba came after disputes arose over Israel's plans to withdraw its forces from Palestinian population centers in Gaza and to redeploy them to areas near the Jewish settlements in the area.

Nabil Sha'ath, head of the Palestinian delegation in Taba, said the agreement of principles that formed the basis of the self-rule accord called for Israel to withdraw its military forces and not merely to redeploy them.

Moussa met with Sha'ath in Cairo the day before he came to Jerusalem.

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat blamed Israel for the suspension, saying Israel was deviating from the declaration of principles.

Arafat reportedly received telegrams from President Clinton and Secretary of State Warren Christopher to continue the autonomy talks.

U.S. officials are also pressuring Israel to move ahead in its talks with Syria. They are said to think that Israel will achieve a breakthrough with Jordan only after talks with Syria resume.

In a separate development, Health Minister Haim Ramon told the Knesset he thinks the PLO will abide by its commitment to amend its covenant and abolish the anti-Israel clauses in it.

Ramon said he expected the PLO to convene the Palestine National Council -- the PLO's so-called parliament in exile -- next year and put the issue to a vote. At that time, said Ramon, he expected the relevant clauses to be repealed.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
TOURIST BOOM IN THE OLD CITY
BAROMETER OF PEACE BENEFITS**
By Michele Chabin and Larry Yudelson

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- The Old City's Arab market was one of the first venues to feel the effects of the intifada, or Palestinian uprising, at its onset in December 1987.

Nearly six years later, the Arab shuk is again a barometer of the political climate, as Israelis and Palestinians begin to work together to achieve peace.

Embracing most of the Old City, the shuk was a main tourist attraction until the start of the intifada. Then shopkeepers began a series of strikes in support of the uprising.

The action gained worldwide media attention, and served as a tool in the fight for Palestinian self-determination.

Yet while the strikes proved immensely effective from a political perspective, the financial results were catastrophic. Forced by conscience or threats from armed Palestinian youths to padlock their shops every afternoon and on full-strike days, Arab merchants lost millions of dollars in tourist sales.

Those tourists who did venture into the market risked being stoned or, on rare occasions, stabbed. Most Israelis stopped visiting the Old City altogether.

Now, just weeks after Israel and the Palestinians signed the Gaza-Jericho autonomy plan, the Arab market is showing signs of recovery.

The most obvious sign is the increased presence of tourists.

"There are definitely more people in the shuk, more tourists, and it's having a positive effect on business," Bahaei Barakat, an antiquities dealer, said as he sat on a stool outside his shop.

"Before the intifada, the tour guides would leave one day for shopping at the end of each tour, and they would usually bring their tourists to the shuk," Barakat said. "Once the intifada began, the guides began to take them shopping in Bethlehem or west Jerusalem instead."

'It's Safe To Visit The Shuk'

The scion of a family that owns several antiquities stores around the world, Barakat opened a shop in western Jerusalem when his shop in the shuk began to fail.

"We're still not making much money yet," he said, pointing to his empty store in the middle of a busy alley. "It will take awhile before people realize that the stores are open and that it's safe to visit the shuk."

Though business is not exactly booming for Majdi Shwiki, the owner of a booth selling T-shirts and various souvenirs, he too expressed optimism that business is on the rebound.

An affable man with a ready smile, Shwiki affirmed that more tourists began visiting the shuk in September, immediately after the peace agreement was signed in Washington.

One tangible result of the agreement has been the emergence of Palestinian T-shirts and key chains in stores throughout eastern Jerusalem and the territories.

Though Palestinian flags are still technically

outlawed by the Israeli government, this has not stopped shopkeepers from selling souvenirs with the Palestinian colors -- red, white, green and black. There are hand-sewn shirts in the design of the Palestinian flag and a flag key chain with the words "I Love Palestine."

"Things are much better since the peace proposal, and I'm not only talking about business," said Shwiki, gazing over at the Israeli border policeman sitting on a stool just outside the shop.

"During the past few weeks we've had a much better rapport with the soldiers, and they are treating us better as well," the merchant said.

"You see that soldier there? He went and got himself something to eat and he asked me if I wanted anything. He brought me a sandwich.

"Before, we had problems with the soldiers. They rounded up the teen-agers. Now, we talk, converse. We're in a test period right now, and I think that if we Palestinians want peace, we have to do something to help ourselves," Shwiki said.

'Really Feel The Difference'

"We really feel the difference," confirmed Haim, the policeman keeping watch outside Shwiki's shop.

"Until recently, the border police played more of a role as soldiers than as police. Now, the storekeepers offer us tea and something to eat, and there is less tension overall," he said.

"Another indicator that things are improving is the fact that Israelis are starting to walk through the shuk again after so many years," the policeman said.

One example was an Israeli who identified himself as Yair, who had brought a couple of German friends to the market.

"While I was never really afraid to go to the shuk," he said, "the thought that something bad could happen was at the back of my mind. My friends are visiting from overseas, so I thought it would be a good opportunity to show them around."

Reiner Kaiser of Berlin said he was enjoying the aromas and sights of the market's alleys, but that he "wouldn't have come without an Israeli. I would have waited awhile, to see what happens."

THOUGH ARAB BOYCOTT CONTINUES, U.S. SEES SOME POSITIVE SIGNALS

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Nov. 4 (JTA) -- The United States has not succeeded yet in dismantling the Arab economic boycott against Israel, but it sees some encouraging signs from countries that adhere to it.

Testifying Thursday on Capitol Hill, Secretary of State Warren Christopher said the recent decision by some boycotting countries not to attend a scheduled meeting in Damascus on the boycott demonstrated some "hesitation" on their part.

The secretary told the Senate Foreign Relations Committee that this "very interesting development" could indicate a "hesitation on the part of a number of the countries, especially in the (Persian) Gulf, with respect to the pursuance of the boycott."

It may signal that "they're not prepared to discuss any expansion of the boycott," he told the panel, in response to a boycott-related question from Sen. Harris Wofford (D-Pa.).

Ending the Arab boycott, which affects both Israel and companies doing business with the Jewish state, has become a pressing issue here, especially in the wake of the Israeli-Palestinian accord.

In a climate where both the Palestinians and Jordan are entering into economic relations with Israel, the boycott is viewed by U.S. officials as increasingly anachronistic.

Christopher said Thursday that while many Arab countries have not made "formal statements" indicating they will lift the boycott, many have been lifting the secondary and tertiary boycotts of companies doing business with Israel "in practice."

Echoing a theme stressed in recent days by the Clinton administration, Christopher said that the Palestinians, whom the boycott was initially supposed to help, would suffer from its continuation.

"One of the arguments that we're making, that I think is really hitting home," he said, "is the argument that the boycott at the present time is likely to hurt the Palestinians because of their joint activities with the Israelis."

On the other hand, as Sen. Wofford pointed out in his question, U.S. government figures show that Saudi Arabia's requests to U.S. companies for boycott-related information actually went up in recent months.

Christopher told the panel he was "impatient" with the continuation of the boycott.

In a related development, members of Congress introduced legislation Thursday urging the Arab League to lift the boycott, both the aspect affecting Israel and that affecting companies doing business with the Jewish state.

The resolution was introduced in the House of Representatives by Rep. Peter Deutsch (D-Fla.) and in the Senate by Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.).

The resolution says that the boycott has a negative impact on the Middle East peace process.

DOUBT CAST ON REPORTS THAT SYRIA HOLDS ARAB

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 4 (JTA) -- Top Israeli officials have doubts about a claim by a senior PLO intelligence official that Israeli air force navigator Ron Arad was being held by the Syrians.

Israel Defense Force and political sources expressed reservations Wednesday about that claim as well as about a second claim that three other Israeli soldiers -- Zachariya Baumel, Yehuda Katz and Zvi Feldman -- were dead and had been buried in a Damascus cemetery.

The claims regarding the missing soldiers were made Tuesday by Col. Nezair Amar, a member of the Palestine Liberation Organization delegation to the autonomy talks at the Sinai border town of Taba.

Amar made the claims during a break in the talks and later repeated them during an interview with the Israeli newspaper Ma'ariv.

A high-ranking IDF officer said Wednesday that there was a "great deal of doubt that the report is accurate."

But he added that the report was nevertheless being taken seriously and that further investigations would be carried out.

Arad was shot down near Saida, Lebanon, in October 1986.

WORLD PRAYER DAY DRAWS IRE WITH ITS FOCUS ON 'PALESTINE'

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Nov. 4 (JTA) -- On March 4, 1994, Christian women in tens of thousands of Protestant, Orthodox and Catholic churches all over the world will pray for "peace in Palestine."

Their prayers' wording has elicited objections from Jewish groups, whose efforts to have the organizers integrate more balance into the services were unsuccessful.

March 4 will mark the 107th annual World Day of Prayer.

On that day, Christian women in local churches from North America to India, from Estonia to Papua New Guinea, will gather together to recite prayers and readings compiled by Palestinian Christians.

Five thousand local church groups in the United States also are expected to participate.

Liturgy for the annual observance and celebration is written by ecumenical Christian groups of women. The task is rotated between countries and regions, each of which chooses the topic and liturgy, which are then distributed worldwide for World Prayer Day.

The service for the 1994 observance, designed by Palestinian Christian women, focuses on Palestinian suffering.

Objections were raised by the International Council of Christians and Jews and the American Jewish Committee, as well as others.

"They don't have to express love for the Jewish people, but there is no sense that the burdens of oppression fell on both Palestinians and Israelis," said Rabbi Lori Forman, inter-religious affairs program specialist at the American Jewish Committee.

"We're concerned that women will leave the services with no sense that there's been tragedy on both sides," she said.

The services' introductory reading says, "Our country, Palestine, was declared the State of Palestine in 1988 and recognized by over 100 members states of the United Nations."

"However, we have been suffering under occupation for almost three decades. For ourselves and our children, we seek a future where justice and freedom prevail and are the basis for attaining this Palestinian state."

'Lamentation But Not Accusation'

The next section of the service compares the pain of Palestinian mothers to that of the women who followed Jesus on the Via Dolorosa.

"Whether it is down the winding alleys of the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem or the streets of other occupied cities, mothers follow handcuffed sons and daughters trying to comfort them with their tears."

Children in Palestine "who have been denied their right to self-determination express their wish for a free homeland. In the process, many of them are imprisoned, tortured and killed," the study reads.

The service also includes "A Mother's Letter to Israeli Women and Mothers," by a Palestinian mother who wrote of being beaten by Israeli soldiers.

"By sending soldiers into Palestinian homes, the Israeli military authorities have put women into the front line of the struggle."

"Soldiers are not only in the streets of the villages, refugee camps and cities; they are break-

ing into our homes to beat, smash, humiliate and arrest. With or without reason, by day or by night," she wrote.

Last summer, when the prayers and readings were first put together, the women's seminar of the International Conference of Christians and Jews registered its objections with the International Committee for the World Day of Prayer.

The International Committee reviewed the concerns and decided not to change any of the language.

Instead, it sent out a "letter of affirmation" to the national committees coordinating efforts in individual countries.

"We felt that the service was not problematic, and that it is an authentic voice of Palestinian women," said Eileen King, executive director of the International Committee.

"It is lamentation but not accusation," she said.

Simkha Weintraub, a Conservative rabbi who works for Arab-Jewish coexistence and who is director of public affairs for the New Israel Fund, met with King several months ago after learning of the service's content.

"I wish the service had been changed," he said. "It was an opportunity to affirm the humanity of us all."

"It feels particularly tragic because women have been in the forefront of dialogue groups and the peacemaking effort," he said. "A great store of experience is not being utilized" on World Prayer Day, Weintraub said.

CHURCHES BACKED ANTI-SEMITISM IN WARTIME HUNGARY, STUDY SAYS

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, Nov. 4 (JTA) -- The churches of Hungary voted to support anti-Semitic laws at the outbreak of World War II, according to a new study that is sharply critical of the role played by church officials in Hungary during the Nazi era.

"The Synagogue and the Church," a study of anti-Semitism in Hungary, has just been released as the fifth in a series of booklets from the Ecumenical Study Center in Budapest.

The 74-page text -- written by representatives of the Catholic, Lutheran, Baptist and Reformed churches -- focuses on the biblical, theological and ecclesiastical roots of anti-Semitism, which the booklet calls "a special form of racial hatred, the alarming signs of which can be seen in the whole of Europe."

More than 500,000 Hungarian Jews perished in the Nazi death camps during World War II, the study says, adding that "sore wounds are torn open even today" if one raises the question of how Hungarian churches behaved during the period.

In 1938 and 1939, representatives of Hungarian churches voted -- "although with a bad conscience" -- in favor of laws discriminating against Hungarians of Jewish origin.

It was only after the occupation of Hungary by the Nazis, when the deportations and persecutions began, that church officials realized the consequences of their actions, according to the study.

Although Protestant and Catholic church leaders sometimes intervened successfully on behalf of threatened Jews, "viewed retrospectively, those steps often weigh too light on the scales of Christian faith," the study says.

GERMANY DEBATES VALUE OF 'HITLER' COMIC BOOK

By Miriam Widman

BERLIN (JTA) -- Hitler's invasion of Poland is depicted with swastika-painted Luftwaffe planes flying over an SS officer who is shooting a Polish civilian. Blood spurts out of his nose and his neck.

A few pages before, the Reichskristallnacht is featured in a cartoon of burning synagogues, broken glass and beaten and bleeding Jews.

With blood streaming out of his nose and mouth, a Jew cries to his Nazi tormentors: "What have I done? Please, let me go to my children, they are still in the burning house. I will give you what you want."

His Nazi tormentors shout back: "And we'll give you what you deserve."

This is Nazism, the comic book.

Written and designed by two people from the former West Germany and published by the country's largest comic book publisher, the book has been on the market here since 1989.

Since 1991, some 900 students and 36 teachers in both western and eastern Germany were involved in tests to determine if the comic was suitable for teaching high school students about the Third Reich.

"We had reservations ourselves," said Franz-Josef Payrhuber, who directed the trials for the Mainz-based Institute for Teachers Continuing Education. "But we were really surprised at how positively the book was accepted."

Cecilia Bongers, a teacher in Koblenz who was part of the trial, said she was "extremely skeptical" about using the Hitler comic. She thought the pictures were cruel and horrible and would turn students off from the subject.

She also thought the text, which uses many original citations from Hitler, was too tough.

"But my students didn't think that at all," she said.

However, she emphasized that the comic must be combined with other tools to properly teach the history of the Third Reich. Her class, for example, has visited Buchenwald and a synagogue and has spoken with older people in the community about the Hitler period.

Some financial aid for the book comes from the government's Center for Political Education.

'Could Be Misused By Radical Right'

A plan to distribute some 5,000 books and separate educational packets was halted, in part because of reservations from the Israeli Embassy.

Miryam Shomrat, the director of the Israeli Embassy in Bonn, said that at no time did she ask for the distribution of the material to be stopped.

"I had the feeling that the comic could be misused by radical right extremists," she said in an interview.

Shomrat also said she has trouble accepting comics as serious material for teachers.

"The reality element is lost under this method," she said.

She expressed her concerns to Rita Susmuth, president of the German Bundestag, or parliament, and asked if the book could be reviewed again. Susmuth passed the request to Gunter Reichert, president of the center. Shortly after that the distribution was stopped.

Tilman Ernst, who directed the project for the center, said the distribution was stopped "due to hefty criticism from within the center."

But he also acknowledged that the main criticisms from the center's vice president, Wolfgang Arnold, were not made public until after Shomrat's worries were known.

He said the distribution has been stopped only temporarily, and a group of politicians is to review the project in November. Objectionable parts could be removed or altered and the book could be sent out again, he said.

Jurgen Wilke, a member of an independent committee of experts that assisted the center in the project, said he and others had difficulty with the project's title: Tyranny and Democracy.

"This gives the wrong impression. There was no democracy at this time."

Solveig Weber, a spokeswoman for the Reading Foundation, said democracy was included in the title since the book and the learning material are designed to promote democracy. But she said the title could be changed.

The book has its supporters.

Chancellor Helmut Kohl and German President Richard von Weizsacker both have written letters of praise to Friedemann Bedurftig, the comic book's author. Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal has also come out in support of the effort.

Shomrat, of the Israeli Embassy, said she didn't want to contradict these views, but wanted to make her concerns known.

JUSTICE DEPARTMENT WON'T PURSUE DEPORTATION OF AILING WARTIME NAZI

By Leon Cohen

The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle

MILWAUKEE (JTA) -- The case of former SS guard Anton Baumann is closed, as far as the U.S. Justice Department is concerned.

The department will not order a medical examination for the resident of the Milwaukee suburb to determine if the 82-year-old Baumann is fit for deportation, The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle has learned.

"We have extensive medical records showing that he's quite ill and there's no reason to believe that he's going to get any better," department spokesman John Russell said in a recent telephone interview.

He said Baumann's records had been reviewed by "independent doctors." Baumann underwent coronary bypass surgery and suffers from a host of ailments, according to medical reports.

In July, a U.S. immigration judge ruled here that Baumann deserved to be deported but could remain because of poor health.

The judge said the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations, which prosecutes alleged Nazi war criminals living in the United States, could order medical examinations of Baumann beginning Oct. 1.

The Milwaukee Jewish Council for Community Relations would like such an examination.

"Without knowing how extensively the records were examined and by whom, we still think it appropriate to have an independent physician examine him," said David Feiss, chair of the council's Task Force on Anti-Semitism, Law and the Holocaust.

Feiss asked why the Justice Department would work to denaturalize Baumann and obtain a deportation order against him if it was not going to pursue the matter.

The task force voted Oct. 25 to draft a letter to OSI inquiring about efforts to have Baumann examined to verify his medical condition.