

## **AFTER AN AX ATTACK IN HEBRON, FRESH WAVES OF JEWISH PROTEST**

By Cynthia Mann and David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- As Israeli and Palestine Liberation Organization officials were reconvening in Cairo for another round of negotiations, an attack Monday by two ax-wielding terrorists in the West Bank town of Hebron set off new waves of Jewish protest and more questions about PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat's ability to control violence in the territories.

The murder, also Monday, of a high-ranking PLO official in Lebanon has likewise prompted speculation that disorder within that organization could delay the implementation of the Palestinian self-rule accord, which is scheduled to be implemented next month.

A Jewish resident of Hebron, Avraham Zarbiv, was seriously wounded by two terrorists wielding axes as he was going to morning prayers at the Cave of the Patriarchs.

Despite serious blows to the head, Zarbiv managed to shoot and kill one of his assailants. The second attacker escaped with Zarbiv's gun.

Zarbiv was reported to have suffered serious head injuries.

Israeli security officials imposed a curfew on Hebron and declared it a closed military area.

Jewish settlers stoned Arab cars in response, injuring some of their occupants.

The Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, a radical faction opposed to the peace process, claimed responsibility for the attack. The name of the group was engraved on the ax of the dead terrorist.

In Cairo, the sixth round of talks between Israel and the PLO to discuss the implementation of Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho began with the parties expected to focus on resolving differences over the extent of Israel's military withdrawal from Gaza and Jericho, scheduled to begin Dec. 13.

### **Fatah Blames Abu Nidal For PLO Killing**

The talks will also focus on issues of economic cooperation between Israel and the Palestinians.

Multilateral talks on the environment, attended by about 40 countries, also convened Monday in Cairo.

Those negotiations, which are being boycotted by Syria and Lebanon, will include discussions about fighting desertification of the region; environmental awareness programs and anti-pollution projects.

Meanwhile in Lebanon, the top PLO official there was killed in a hail of bullets.

Moucin Shabaydah, 58, was killed when submachine-gun fire riddled his car during a high-speed chase through the streets of the southern port city of Sidon.

He was the second officer of Arafat's mainstream Al Fatah faction to be killed in Lebanon in a week, and the sixth -- according to Israel Radio -- since the Israel-PLO self-rule agreement was signed in Washington on Sept. 13.

While some Palestinians believed the attack was carried out by Israeli agents, sources within the Fatah organization said they thought followers

of rejectionist leader Abu Nidal killed Shabaydah in an effort to undermine the Israeli-PLO accord.

There was no official reaction in Jerusalem to the Sidon attack.

But just hours before word came through of that killing, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was on a visit to Washington, warned that "disorder" within the PLO could disrupt or delay the implementation of the agreement.

The attack in Hebron has provoked skepticism about Arafat's ability to prevent further terrorist acts by his followers.

Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Gur said Arafat's ability to quell terrorism is a test of his ability to implement the interim autonomy agreement with Israel.

"No doubt if Arafat and the PLO will not prove they can control their people," he told Israel Television, "they will have a big problem in implementing the agreement."

Israel, for its part, will continue to do "anything possible" to stop the terrorist attacks, Gur said. He called the settlers' violent protests against the ongoing terror campaign "absolutely unnecessary and forbidden."

Palestinian leader Faisal Husseini said that it is the PLO's policy to condemn any violence against Israelis or Palestinians. But he, too, warned against the settlers' violent protests.

"Either the (Israeli) army will take the responsibility and also protect the Palestinians from the settlers," he said, "or the Palestinians will start searching for a way to protect themselves."

Members of the opposition in Knesset voiced protest and concern over the latest terror acts.

### **Arafat 'Cannot Deliver The Goods'**

Likud Knesset member Uzi Landau said they were evidence that Arafat cannot "deliver the goods," and that the self-rule accord "was signed and carried out in a rash and reckless manner."

In a related development, Israel Meir Lau, Israel's chief Ashkenazic rabbi, said he is worried about the safety of the settlers. He told Israel Radio that after being regarded for years by the government as an asset, the settlers and their security concerns are no longer being taken into account by the Rabin government.

In a separate development, a new group calling itself the Black 13th of September Brigade reportedly claimed responsibility this week for the Oct. 29 abduction and murder of Jewish settler Chaim Mizrachi.

The announcement follows word from the Israeli government that Mizrachi's killers were not members of the rejectionist group Hamas but were, in fact, members of Arafat's Fatah.

The group calling itself Black 13th warned it would commit similar acts in the near future.

A group called Black September was responsible for the killing of 11 Israeli Olympic athletes in Munich in 1972. It was later determined that Black September was a code name for Fatah.

In a statement released to news agencies over the weekend, the group calling itself Black 13th of September Brigade said that the five youths arrested by Israeli authorities for Mizrachi's murder belonged to the group and that all of them were dissidents within Fatah.

# **RABIN GETS PROMISE FROM ASPIN FOR CONTINUED U.S. DEFENSE HELP** By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- During an important meeting at the Pentagon, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin succeeded in getting a commitment from Defense Secretary Les Aspin that the United States will continue to help Israel maintain its strong defense capability.

The meeting between Rabin and Aspin, which took place Monday, lasted about three hours and followed upon a similarly successful meeting last Friday between Rabin and President Clinton at the White House.

At this difficult time in the Middle East peace process, when Israelis are becoming increasingly nervous about the costs of peace, it was important for Rabin that he return home with a demonstration of tangible American support.

The United States reportedly offered to sell Rabin the advanced F-15E attack jet, which would contribute to modernizing the Israeli air force.

But Rabin's spokesman, Oded Ben Ami, had no comment when asked about the sale of the advanced fighter to Israel.

Rabin told reporters Monday that he hoped a decision would be made this week on the types of planes Israel could buy from the United States.

One factor governing Israel's decision is the cost of the various planes under consideration, including F-15s and F-16s.

Aspin told Rabin that the United States is committed to helping Israel maintain its qualitative edge and its strong defensive capability, a Pentagon spokesman said.

In addition, Aspin and Rabin discussed ways of cooperating on new systems that could help Israel defend itself against ballistic missiles and weapons of mass destruction.

Rabin also held meetings Monday with members of Congress and with the top members of the influential American Israel Public Affairs Committee, with which Rabin has sparred in the recent past.

AIPAC President Steve Grossman described their 45-minute meeting as "superb" and said the overall tone of Rabin's visit "couldn't have been more warm."

He also said that Rabin's visit has been extremely successful and that the prime minister had managed to further the already good relations between the United States and Israel.

"Whatever he could have done in the past 72 hours, he did, and he felt very good about it," Grossman said. "There's no question it was a very successful 72 hours for him, for Israel, and for the peace process."

## **JEWSH LEADER NAMED MINISTER IN CABINET OF MOROCCO'S MONARCH** By Susan Birnbaum and Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- The president of Morocco's Jewish Communities Council has been named minister of tourism, in a move seen as further proof of the North African country's commitment to peace in the Middle East.

Serge Berdugo, who last week was tapped to be the first Jewish Cabinet official in more than 35 years, is personally close to King Hassan II, who formally approved the appointment Nov. 11.

In July, Hassan awarded Berdugo the prestigious medal of the Order of the Throne.

Speaking by telephone from Casablanca,

Berdugo said his government post does not mean he will resign his post in the Jewish community.

"The prime minister said they are not incompatible," Berdugo told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

In fact, Berdugo has been active in promoting Jewish tourism to Morocco from America and Europe.

Other potential tourists are the hundreds of thousands of Jews of Moroccan origin and descent living in Israel.

For the past few years, those Jews have been able to travel to Morocco on their Israeli passports, needing only to say that their ancestors were Moroccan. Berdugo himself has been to Israel several times.

With the notable exception of Egypt, most Arab states bar tourists traveling on Israeli passports or those whose passports indicate they have spent time in Israel.

Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, said Berdugo's appointment is "a clear signal that Morocco, which has always been a bridge (between Israel and the Arab world), is indicating even more so that it wants to play that role."

Last month, a high-level Moroccan delegation took part in an economic conference in Jerusalem where members announced plans to participate in a multilateral peace company being launched by Israel's Koor conglomerate. Palestinian and Spanish investors will also be partners in the project named Salaam, or peace.

And this month, in apparent defiance of the Arab boycott of Israel, a Moroccan bank established economic ties with Israel's Bank Leumi.

As president of the 8,000-member Jewish community, Berdugo welcomed Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres when they visited Morocco in September, immediately after signing the declaration of principles with the Palestine Liberation Organization in Washington.

Berdugo said his appointment "sends a very strong signal that Morocco will always remain an open, tolerant country for all religions."

It is also, he said, "another signal for the Middle East. We are for peace, and we will accompany the peace."

"We cannot do everything all at one time," he said. "The peace process is built brick by brick."

And as for his new official duties, he said: "My role is to make this country -- the most beautiful country in the world -- a country whose culture, landscape, traditions, and very high-caliber people raise tourism to a privileged state."

## **CHRISTOPHER RETURNING TO MIDEAST** By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- Secretary of State Warren Christopher is planning to return to the Middle East soon to push for progress in the peace process, the State Department said this week.

The long-rumored trip is expected to take place in early December.

Christopher is expected to work with the Israelis and Palestinians as they attempt to implement the declaration of principles signed here in September.

In addition, he is expected to try to enable progress in the talks between Israel and Syria, which have been stalled for months.

## NEW BERLIN MEMORIAL TO WAR DEAD BOYCOTTED BY MOST JEWISH LEADERS

By Igal Avidan

BERLIN, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- A controversial new memorial to Germany's war dead was inaugurated here Sunday in the absence of Berlin's Jewish community leaders and with condemnation by many non-Jewish Germans as well.

The memorial, inscribed "for the victims of war and tyranny," has been roundly criticized for honoring perpetrators as well as victims of the Holocaust and for not mentioning Jews as victims.

In protest, the culture minister of Berlin stayed away, joining some 50 intellectuals and public figures who signed a statement saying the monument "can never be a place for remembering the victims of German fascism."

"Should it now be considered in Germany that those who voluntarily wore swastikas were the same as those who were forced to wear yellow stars with the word 'Jew'?" the statement asked.

The monument, on Unter den Linden, Berlin's premier thoroughfare, was dedicated by Chancellor Helmut Kohl and President Richard von Weizsacker.

The memorial, occupying one large room of a pre-existing building, is a statue of a grieving mother holding her son's lifeless body.

The memorial and its site were chosen by Kohl, who called it "a symbol of reunited Germany."

During the Nazi era, the site was a prison and monument to World War I victims.

The former East German government used the building, called the New Guardhouse, as a monument "to the victims of fascism and militarism."

The remains of both an unknown soldier and an unknown concentration camp victim are buried under the building.

Nov. 14 was chosen to inaugurate the memorial because it is Germany's National Day of Mourning.

At the same time that the memorial was being dedicated, police were arresting some 200 right-wing activists throughout the country who tried to stage rallies.

### 'Collapses Distinction Between Victims'

Although the leader of the Berlin Jewish community pointedly stayed away from the memorial's dedication, Ignatz Bubis, who is head of the entire German Jewish community, attended, after Kohl agreed to his demands for a plaque naming Nazi victims.

The plaque, which Kohl allowed to be erected outside the monument's entrance, contains a quotation from a 1985 speech by Weizsacker that named victims of the Nazis.

Weizsacker spoke out at that time when Kohl went ahead with his highly controversial plans to honor S.S. soldiers buried at the Bitburg cemetery.

Bubis, in his negotiations with Kohl over the contentious memorial, also secured the chancellor's support for the erection of Germany's first national memorial for the Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

Nevertheless, the Berlin Jewish community voted unanimously to boycott the memorial's dedication.

The head of the Berlin community, Jerzy Kanak, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "One

cannot remember the past without differentiating between the dead. The murder of the (European) Jews was unique."

Moische Waks, the head of the opposition in the Jewish community, said he had also supported a move to ask Bubis to boycott the event.

"Some of the German victims also exterminated Jews," Waks said. "Some of the fallen soldiers ran the death camps."

"This collapses the distinction between the victims of Auschwitz and their Nazi SS perpetrators," said Rabbi Daniel Landes, director of national education projects for the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

"It shows that Germany wants to close the book on the painful memory of the Holocaust by normalizing World War II to be a war like all of the other wars. It unleashed terror on its targets, the tens of millions of innocent Jews, Slavs, Russians, Poles, Gypsies and homosexuals," said Landes, who participated in the protest.

Many non-Jews also criticized the memorial, which they say pays tribute to both murderers and victims. Several hundred protesters greeted Kohl at the dedication with catcalls and whistles.

A preliminary protest of the memorial was held on Nov. 9, the 55th anniversary of the Kristallnacht pogrom. A group of 40 demonstrators chained themselves to the monument that night but were quickly removed by police.

One of those protesters, Jewish artist Gabriel Heinler, said, "It was especially hard to take it on such a date."

The Israeli consul general in Berlin, Mordechai Lowy, told JTA that once the memorial is included in the protocol for foreign guests to Berlin, Israeli diplomats will find it difficult to avoid.

"They would go there with stomach pains," he said.

## VANDALS TAKE OVER GREEK PROTEST AGAINST ALLEGED NEO-NAZI ATTACK

By Jean Cohen

ATHENS, Nov. 15 (JTA) -- A high-school students' demonstration here last week to protest an alleged neo-Nazi attack on a teen-age girl erupted into a rampage by youths who had no connection with the protest.

The marauding youths threw firebombs, smashed bank and shop windows and damaged cars in the center of the Greek capital.

After the vandals set a fire engine ablaze with Molotov cocktails, they hurled rocks and other objects at police and firefighters who tried to extinguish the blaze.

The violence brought traffic to a halt in the center of Athens.

Police said they had arrested two people in connection with the violent demonstration and were questioning them to determine whether other people had been involved.

The march had been called to protest an alleged attack said to have taken place last week against a 16-year-old schoolgirl.

The girl told police that four youths had pinned her down while a fifth etched a swastika on her forehead with a knife.

But a forensic surgeon cast doubt on her story, saying that the swastika had been etched not by a knife but by an object such as a needle or safety pin. He said the symbol was "fashioned with great precision" and that the girl must have been completely immobile while it was done.

## TRADE DEAL HOLDS DIFFERENT APPEAL FOR JEWS NORTH AND SOUTH OF BORDER

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Nov. 14 (JTA) -- The debate over the controversial North American Free Trade Agreement has revealed an interesting split between Jewish groups north and south of the U.S.-Mexican border.

The Jewish community here has been virtually silent on an issue that has been something of an obsession in the capital of late.

Traditionally, "Jewish groups have not taken a position on trade issues," said Bert Seidman, Washington representative for the Jewish Labor Committee, which seems to be the only major Jewish group actively involved in the NAFTA issue.

Like most U.S. labor groups, the Labor Committee opposes the accord.

But the situation in the small, close-knit Mexican Jewish community is very different.

Mexican Jews, many of whom are involved in business, are strong backers of the accord, which has support from various segments of Mexican society.

"Most Mexican Jews support NAFTA," Dina Siegel, the director of Tribuna Israelita, a human relations agency of the Mexican Jewish community, said in a telephone interview.

And the Mexicans have discussed it with their Jewish counterparts north of the border, some of whom have, in turn, passed on the Mexicans' concerns to U.S. officials.

Mexicans have recently come to appreciate the "importance of lobbying," said Judit Bokser-Liwerant, a political science professor in Mexico City who served as chief editor of a book on the Mexican Jewish community.

### NAFTA May Increase Mexico's Modernization

As a result, there has been a "governmental expectation" in Mexico that "the Jewish community may talk to American Jewry" to support NAFTA, Bokser-Liwerant said.

NAFTA, regarded as one of the most complex trade documents ever negotiated, would make Canada, the United States and Mexico into a giant, powerful free trade zone.

The United States and Canada already have such an arrangement, so the focus here has been on the effect of adding the less-developed country of Mexico to the mix.

The U.S. House of Representatives is expected to take up the issue Wednesday.

In meetings with Jews from the United States, the Mexican Jews have stressed the importance of the agreement to their community and to Mexico in general.

Jason Isaacson, Washington representative for the American Jewish Committee, said that on an AJCommittee mission to Mexico last February, NAFTA was the "No. 1 topic" in meetings held with Mexican Jewish leaders and the Mexican government including President Carlos Salinas de Gortari.

While AJCommittee has not actively lobbied the U.S. government on NAFTA, Isaacson said, the group's leaders have made an effort to pass along the views of the Mexican Jewish community to members of Congress and administration officials.

"It's not as though we go in and say what Mexican Jews think about NAFTA," Isaacson said. "But when the subject comes up, we express

sympathy with our sister community in Mexico."

Mexican Jews have supported NAFTA because they think it would increase economic modernization in their country.

With many Mexican Jews involved in business and industry, any "opening to new markets would benefit the Jewish community a lot," said Siegel of Tribuna Israelita.

In addition, while not all agree, some in the Mexican Jewish community think NAFTA would encourage further political modernization in Mexico, and thus would create a more tolerant atmosphere for minorities.

"In a pluralistic society, there would be more space" to legitimize "Jewish identity and Jewish belonging," said Bokser-Liwerant.

There is a close relation between "an open market and an open society," she said.

Mexican Jews also have said they would welcome the closer ties to the United States that the agreement would bring, in part because of the close ties between the United States and Israel.

If NAFTA fails, it is possible that a "nationalistic reaction" could emerge in Mexico that would not help the country move toward "diversity, pluralism, and tolerance," Bokser-Liwerant said.

The Jewish community of Mexico, centered in Mexico City, is estimated to number just 50,000, out of a population of some 88 million.

In addition to the Jewish community in Mexico, Jews from other parts of Latin America have said that if NAFTA does not pass, it will affect them badly.

### 'A Measure of American Intentions'

Jews from Chile and other South American countries have also expressed concern that if Congress rejects NAFTA, it will indicate that the United States is rejecting Latin America.

Warren Eisenberg, head of B'nai B'rith's International Council, said some Jews throughout Latin America see NAFTA's passage as "a measure of American intentions" on both trade issues and U.S. attention to the region in general.

There is concern among Jews of Latin America that if NAFTA is not passed, it will signal that "America is turning its back, and Japan will pick up the load," Eisenberg said.

The B'nai B'rith office here has not taken a position on NAFTA.

In fact, NAFTA has stirred barely a ripple among the major American Jewish groups. With the exception of the Jewish Labor Committee, almost none of them have taken a public position on the issue that is dominating political talk in the capital.

Labor Committee officials agree with most other labor groups that Americans would lose jobs to Mexico as a result of the agreement.

And the group is criticizing as inadequate the so-called NAFTA "side agreements" that address concerns such as Mexico's environmental problems.

But there is a special Jewish angle to their anti-NAFTA position, Labor Committee officials said.

"Anything that will disadvantage low-wage workers in the U.S. and Mexico," such as NAFTA, would contradict Jewish philosophy, Seidman said.

"The issues of dispute in NAFTA are Jewish issues," said the group's executive director, Michael Perry. "Social and economic justice, a quality environment, an economy that works, full employment policies."