

**AMID VIOLENCE IN TERRITORIES,
AN INCREASE IN THE CALL TO ARMS**

By Cynthia Mann and David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 29 (JTA) -- As violence in the Gaza Strip intensifies, Israel's police commissioner has made the controversial suggestion that Israelis carry weapons.

Police Commissioner Rafi Peled recommended that Israeli civilians carry weapons in dangerous areas when no security forces are nearby.

He made the suggestion Monday at an awards ceremony honoring civilians who had thwarted attempted terrorist attacks.

Another contentious suggestion has surfaced in the Knesset, where a member last week called for Jews to shoot Palestinian policemen once a Palestinian police force is established in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho.

Under the terms of the self-rule accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, which was signed in Washington in September, a Palestinian police force is scheduled to begin taking responsibility for Gaza and Jericho on Dec. 13.

Moledet party leader Rehavam Ze'evi said last week in a Knesset debate on security that he would open fire at any armed Palestinian policeman who stopped him in the territories.

"Should I be stopped for identification or any other reason by one of these armed and uniformed Fatah people, I will shoot him in self-defense before he identifies me and decides to do the same to me," he said.

"I expect any Jew in similar circumstances to act as I do," Ze'evi said.

His comments led the Knesset committee to discuss whether to limit Ze'evi's parliamentary immunity and restrict his freedom of movement in the territories.

Labor Party Knesset member Yael Dayan said she had filed a police complaint against Ze'evi, according to an Israel Radio report.

The continuing violence led Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to warn at a meeting of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the war against terrorism will not abate, despite the ongoing talks with the PLO in Cairo for implementing the self-rule accord.

More Prisoner Releases

Rabin also indicated that Israel would release Palestinian prisoners, but only in return for information about Israelis missing in action.

Although Israel released more than 600 prisoners in October, PLO negotiators are demanding the release of what they say are an additional 10,000 prisoners still in Israeli jails.

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid said gradual releases would occur in the near future but it was too early to discuss precise numbers or dates.

Members of the opposition reacted to the violence by bringing a no-confidence motion against the government on Monday.

It was the 34th effort by the opposition to topple the Labor-led government since it took office in the summer of 1992.

But the governing coalition shrugged off the motion by a 48-38 vote, with three abstentions.

The fervently religious Shas party and

United Torah Judaism bloc abstained, giving the governing parties and their Arab allies a solid majority.

The Knesset debate centered on the violence in the territories and on the government's agreement -- under the terms of the self-rule accord -- for the creation of a strong Palestinian police force in Gaza and Jericho.

Health Minister Haim Ramon, speaking for the government during the debate, called on Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu to join the government in supporting the self-rule accord -- on the clear understanding that if it does not work well, the Israeli-PLO agreement will effectively be voided.

The Israeli public's support for the accord has eroded as unrest in the territories continues.

Palestinian support has also been affected, as outright public protests appear to be spreading.

During the funeral Monday for Ahmed Abu al-Reesh, a member of the Fatah Hawks, thousands of Palestinians joined the funeral procession, many shouting slogans of protest.

Reesh was killed Sunday in the Gaza Strip town of Khan Yunis by an undercover Israeli unit as he stood with other members of the Hawks group, which does not support the PLO's accord with Israel.

Once a fugitive, Reesh had turned himself in two weeks ago and was released by the Israeli army. Reesh reportedly had been a bystander at a shootout between Israeli security forces and two wanted men who subsequently fled the scene.

Members of the Fatah Hawks opened fire at an Israeli army base in Khan Yunis, saying that they were resuming attacks against Israelis in retaliation for the killing of Reesh.

Also Monday, the Israel Defense Force captured a leader of the Fatah Hawks, which led Palestinian leaders to call for a three-day strike.

**AFTER 28 YEARS, CHANGING OF THE GUARD
AS OLMERT TAKES THE HELM IN JERUSALEM**
By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Nov. 29 (JTA) -- The torch of municipal leadership was officially passed Monday night as the new Likud party mayor, Ehud Olmert, gave his inaugural speech before the first meeting of the new City Council.

He paid tribute to the man he defeated, Teddy Kollek, who used the opportunity to resign from the City Council, as was expected.

The bulk of Olmert's speech was devoted to the centrality of Jerusalem in the history and spiritual life of the Jews.

And that centrality, he warned, is immutable.

"Peaceful relations between us and our neighbors will not take place unless they recognize our deep attachment as a nation to Jerusalem," Olmert said.

While the "desires and needs of the other side" must be understood, he said, "it will be not be possible to reach true peace at the price of concessions on the most basic core, the deepest and most essential element of the contents of our national existence."

A political solution with the Palestinians can "in no way be based on any denial of Jewish sovereignty on all Jerusalem," he declared.

Olmert emphasized that the city must cul-

tivate relations based on respect, tolerance and consideration for its non-Jewish residents.

He also was careful to stress that despite the Election Eve deal he made with the ardently Orthodox, the city's pluralistic character will be maintained.

"There is no danger that any group in the population will determine the lifestyle of the entire public against its will," he said.

"But there is a real chance that for the first time, there will be true partnership in the running of the city by various parties, yes, even those who are called religious and ultra-Orthodox," the mayor said.

President Ezer Weizman began the Council meeting with blessings and praise for the "new generation" of leadership signified by Olmert's takeover.

Olmert then read a letter from Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who is in Europe, who pledged his government's support for the new city government.

After the election, Rabin had expressed deep disappointment at Kollek's loss and blamed himself for pressing 82-year-old Kollek to run again, despite his wish to retire.

Kollek, for his part, bid farewell to the City Council. He recited the accomplishments of his tenure of nearly three decades, and expressed his fervent wish the city would remain unified and peaceful.

NATHAN SINKS VOICE OF PEACE SHIP AS PLO TIES AND PERSONAL DEBT CREST

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 29 (JTA) -- After 21 years of broadcasting messages of peace, Abie Nathan's Voice of Peace floating radio station has found a place of rest at the bottom of the sea.

Nathan sank his ship at dusk Sunday off the coast of Ashdod.

In tears, Nathan stood on the deck of a small tugboat circling the ship after he had allowed water to flood the ship's hull.

It took two hours before the ship disappeared under the waves. Before it sank, the last visible sign of the ship was the word "Peace" on the bow.

"It is the saddest day in my life," Nathan said afterward.

He had signed off the radio station on Oct. 1 with a four-hour emotional monologue in which he reviewed his peace and humanitarian activities.

For the past 21 years "from somewhere in the Mediterranean," Nathan had broadcast a 24-hour-a-day mixture of popular music and pro-peace messages.

On Oct. 1, Nathan announced his intent to sink the ship, citing mounting debts as well as the fulfillment of his dream of peace following the historic signing of the Palestinian self-rule accord in Washington on Sept. 13.

In October, several Israeli politicians, including Environment Minister Yossi Sarid and then Tel Aviv Mayor Shlomo Lahat, appealed to Nathan to beach the Voice of Peace off the coast of Tel Aviv, where it would be turned into a floating peace museum.

But Nathan said Sunday that he had received no further word about the plan for a museum and that he had decided to go ahead with the burial at sea.

"She's become very old," he said, "and it's time to lay her to rest gracefully."

ARCHAEOLOGISTS DIG UP JERICHO AREA AMID ACCUSATIONS ISRAEL LOOTS FINDS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 29 (JTA) -- An intense sweep by Israeli archaeologists in the region of Jericho has prompted strong accusations by Palestinians and some Israeli archaeologists that the Jewish state is trying to deplete the Dead Sea area of all remains before the Palestine Liberation Organization establishes self-rule in the area.

The Israel Antiquities Authority, claiming the massive digs were previously planned, has fanned out over a score of sites in the area where the Dead Sea Scrolls were found 46 years ago.

However, the massive archaeological sweep appears to be clearly linked with the approaching time when at least part of the area will pass into the hands of Palestinian authorities.

Opponents of the activity have accused the Antiquities Authority of organizing the more than 20 archeological teams to prevent any possible indications of early Holy Land Jewish settlement from falling into non-Jewish hands.

Hundreds of Israeli archaeologists equipped with metal detectors, aluminum ladders and rappelling equipment for scaling cliffs have already unearthed a treasure trove of important material, including papyrus documents in Hebrew dating back to the time of the Bar-Kochba revolt, between 132 and 135 C.E.

The most important find so far has been a complete 5,000-year-old skeleton.

The skeleton of a man, found lying in a fetal position, is that of a warrior, according to the bow and arrows lying at his side. Fragments of his uniform were wrapped about his bones.

Any remains found in the region will most likely be hotly contested, as the Dead Sea Scrolls have long been.

Israel is a signator to the Hague Convention of 1954, which stipulates that an occupying power must protect antiquities found in the conquered territory and may not remove them.

But the Hague accord also stipulates that cultural property is part of a people's history. The question that will no doubt be raised is, whose history?

IDF GUNSHIPS HIT BASES IN LEBANON

TEL AVIV, Nov. 29 (JTA) -- At least three members of the rejectionist Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine were reportedly injured Sunday when two Israeli helicopter gunships fired missiles at a terrorist base near the Lebanese port of Sidon.

The terrorists were encamped on the outskirts of the Ain Hilweh refugee camp near the southern Lebanese city.

The DFLP, led by Nayef Hawatmeh, is an offshoot of the Palestine Liberation Organization that strongly opposes the Israeli-PLO accord.

DFLP members had been involved in attacks against troops of the Israel Defense Force and its allied South Lebanon Army in the border security zone on the previous day.

According to reports from Lebanon, the Israeli fighter helicopters had approached at a low altitude from the sea and scored direct hits on their targets.

The targets appear to have been a building housing the DFLP and a nearby office used by George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, another strongly rejectionist group.

SUPREME COURT AGREES TO CONSIDER RULING ON CHASIDIC SCHOOL DISTRICT

By Steven Weiss

WASHINGTON, Nov. 29 (JTA) -- The Supreme Court has agreed to decide the fate of a New York school district set up for disabled Chasidic children that has been called unconstitutional.

The high court said Monday that it would review a July decision by the New York Court of Appeals. The appeals court had ruled that the state legislature's formation of the district was unconstitutional because it violates the separation between church and state.

"Now there is the chance that the Supreme Court will restore for the handicapped children the services that they are entitled to," said David Zwiebel, general counsel of the fervently Orthodox Agudath Israel.

But the case may have broader significance than aid to a New York school district.

It may provide an opportunity for the court to re-examine the legal standard it has used for over two decades to decide how far the government may go in accommodating religious needs without breaching the constitutional divide between church and state.

Formed by the New York State Legislature in 1989, the school district provides services to emotionally and physically disabled children in the Orange County village of Kiryas Joel, where most of the residents are Satmar Chasidim.

Nearly all of the 220 students attending the school, which opened in 1990, are Chasidic.

The legislature acted in response to Chasidic parents who believed they could not send their disabled children to religious schools in the area because of inadequate facilities, or to public schools because of religious and cultural differences.

The lawsuit was originally brought by two taxpayers.

'A Good-Faith Effort'

The appeals court ruled in July, in *Grumet vs. Board of Education of the Kiryas Joel School District*, that the formation of the school district "inescapably conveys a message of governmental endorsement of religion."

The school district argued that no such message was sent because the subject matter taught at the school is entirely secular.

New York state joined the school district in appealing the case to the Supreme Court.

Gov. Mario Cuomo said Monday in New York that "when I signed the legislation in 1989 creating this special school district, I did so because I believed it was a good-faith effort to solve a unique problem of providing secular education for special needs children."

"I'm pleased that the Supreme Court has taken the case," said Nathan Lewin, attorney for the school district.

"State laws should not be invalidated because they in some indirect way assist in religious practice," he said.

Lewin said the Supreme Court signaled in July it was interested in the matter when it allowed the district to continue operating during the appeal process.

Several mainstream Jewish organizations disagreed with the Orthodox community and had applauded the lower court's decision as strengthening the separation of church and state.

HISTADRUT WARNS OF STRIKE AND SETS IMMEDIATE SANCTIONS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 29 (JTA) -- Histadrut, Israel's massive trade union federation, has hung a double sword of Damocles over the country.

Citing ongoing job disputes and the government's failure to address salary increase demands, on Sunday the powerful trade federation gave two week's warning for a general strike unless the government engages in long-promised negotiations.

At the same time, however, the trade federation let it be known that it was in fact about to impose sanctions and launch sporadic strikes this week.

This Thursday, 100,000 workers at 20 of the largest government-owned companies are expected to walk off their jobs.

These workers declared a work dispute 10 days ago and have not had their demands addressed.

The strikes and sanctions would no doubt cripple the country.

Companies that would be affected include El Al, the Bezek Telephone Corp., Israel Aircraft Industries, Israel Chemicals, Oil Refineries, Dead Sea Works, Rafael -- the government-owned weapons-production corporation -- and the railway, airport and port authorities.

Senior Histadrut officials said the general strike would probably be unnecessary, as the government would have to bow to the pressure of the earlier major work stoppages.

Histadrut Secretary-General Haim Haberfeld said Sunday that there had been no contacts between Treasury officials and the Histadrut for two weeks.

He said the government and the trade union federation had reached impasses over the most critical economic issues.

These include the national health-insurance law, pension funds, wage erosion, the government's privatization policy and the "creeping introduction" of personal contracts into union shops.

RABIN OFFERS SHAS DEAL ON MEAT

JERUSALEM, Nov. 29 (JTA) -- Meat moved back on the front burner as Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin cooked up a plan to keep his government's majority.

To shore up Rabin's coalition, on Sunday the Cabinet approved legislation that will give the government a monopoly on Israel's meat production.

Rabin viewed the measure as a means of bringing the fervently religious Shas party back into the coalition -- a step that would significantly strengthen the government's majority.

The Cabinet had previously sought to privatize the country's meat production, but the High Court of Justice recently ruled that once the importation of meat was private, an earlier ban on the import of non-kosher meat could no longer stand. By retaining the government monopoly on meat production, the ban on non-kosher meat can be maintained.

Rabin and his Labor party lieutenants are hoping that this measure will persuade the Shas party to return to the coalition fold.

Shas recently withdrew from the coalition after charges of financial misconduct were brought against two of its leaders.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:

FROM BAGELS TO KOSHER CHICKEN, THINGS JEWISH ARE THE RAGE IN BERLIN

By Miriam Widman

BERLIN (JTA) -- Fifty years after Adolf Hitler nearly wiped out Germany's Jewish community, there's been a spurt of growth of things Jewish here, with openings of everything from kosher restaurants to a Jewish art gallery.

A revival of Jewish culture is taking place in this city's old Jewish neighborhood, the Scheunenviertel.

So extensive is the activity that, in a city where the only thing the average citizen knows about Jews is that they were victims of the Holocaust, Jewish places are very much in fashion in some quarters.

"You could say it's sort of chic," said Nikolai Sluzki, an artist born in St. Petersburg, Russia, who operates the Jewish art gallery.

"There's a certain part of the intelligentsia that always wants to try something new," he observed.

Sluzki's gallery features artists from the former Soviet Union, and his visitors are a mixture of Jewish and non-Jewish Germans and tourists.

The tourists come mostly from Canada, the United States and Australia.

Sluzki's gallery is on the Oranienburger Strasse, a main street in the city's Jewish neighborhood and home to the spectacular dome-topped synagogue that once was the crowning glory of the Berlin Jewish community. The synagogue is now being renovated.

Next to the synagogue is Cafe Oren, an Israeli-style cafe operated by Joachannan Bergel, a 44-year-old machine engineer who became a wildly successful restaurateur with the cafe's opening early last year.

Jews and non-Jews and quite a few tourists gather here to munch on falafel and humus and drink Israeli wine.

Bergel has been in Berlin for more than 20 years, and as he says, he "just got stuck here" after his application to the city's renowned film school was rejected.

Band-Aid That Won't Stick?

He started the cafe at the suggestion of Heinz Galinski, the deceased former leader of the German and Berlin Jewish communities.

Around the corner is the equally good but much more sedate Beth Cafe, run by the Jewish community of the former East Germany.

The cafe boasts bagels. It is reportedly the only place in the city where you can find the American-Jewish treats.

Just off the same street is a kosher food store, where homesick North Americans can buy Empire chickens and Manischewitz gefilte fish.

Added to the places where you can fill your stomach with goodies that answer to a higher authority are the numerous places to feast on Jewish history and religion.

Adult education is offered in both the eastern and western parts of town, with materials available at a very good Jewish bookstore near the famous Kurfurstendamm shopping street.

The city supports a Jewish elementary school and a recently opened high school, and has at least a half-dozen synagogues.

This is in a city where only about 10,000 of the town's nearly 4 million residents are Jewish

and where most people do not have the foggiest notion of what it means to be a Jew.

At the opening of the Jewish adult education classes in eastern Berlin, Peter Gay, a Yale University professor who was born here and forced to leave in 1939, said, "If you're pessimistic, you can view the opening (of this school) as a Band-Aid that won't stick."

"Lots of people are conscious of the concentration camps and they know about German anti-Semitism. And many know about famous German Jews, like Einstein. But few Germans are conscious of how Jews lived -- they only know them as victims," said Gay, a biographer of Sigmund Freud.

Yet despite the packed lectures, restaurants and classes, leaders of the Jewish community here emphasize that their efforts to build the community are not made for tourists or the few well-minded gentile Germans.

Roman Skoblo, a member of the board of the Berlin Jewish community, said Jewish leaders here are primarily trying to bring things Jewish back to the Jews.

They also have the goal of teaching the some 6,000 immigrants from the former Soviet Union what it is to be Jewish. "We have a lot of work to do to make Jews Jews," Skoblo said.

It also wants to reach out to non-registered Jews and get those who are registered to be more involved.

To the outside world, Germany's Jewish leaders would like to have their pariah status removed. Long criticized for living in the land that nearly destroyed them, Germany's Jews are often on the defensive.

While kosher restaurants and Jewish art galleries bring a sense of normality to the community, acceptance takes some time.

"Maybe we'll be successful with the next generation or the generation after that," Skoblo said.

ISRAELI PAPER HADASHOT SHUTS DOWN

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 29 (JTA) -- After months of rumors that it was suffering deep financial problems, the Israeli afternoon tabloid Hadashot has folded.

The daily newspaper's 40 editorial staff members and managers learned by telephone early Monday that they need not report for work, as the paper had just published its last issue.

The paper's present losses are said to exceed \$30 million.

Hadashot, which means news, was established 10 years ago by the Ha'aretz publishing company, which publishes the prestigious Ha'aretz daily broadsheet newspaper and several weekly publications.

The tabloid, established by publisher Amos Schocken, had been positioned to compete with the popular Yediot Achronot and Ma'ariv afternoon newspapers.

But its youthful staff and dovish slant failed to attract a substantial segment of the public, and its circulation peaked at about 30,000.

"We did not succeed in increasing circulation, and it did not seem justified to us to employ talented journalists on a newspaper that the marketplace did not appreciate," said Schocken.

In fact, the paper reportedly was losing money from the day it put out its first edition a decade ago.