

**PALESTINIANS SAY TALKS STALLED
AS RABIN CALLS FOR 'SOLID NERVES'**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 2 (JTA) -- The Palestinians are saying that the Cairo talks for implementing the self-refugee accord are deadlocked, but Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, on a whirlwind tour of European capitals, is insisting that he will press forward with the peace process.

After a two-day meeting of its leadership in Tunis, the Palestine Liberation Organization issued a statement Thursday calling for the co-sponsors of the peace process, the United States and Russia, to get involved in the negotiations.

The negotiations "have reached an impasse which threatens the credibility of the peace process," the statement said, adding that the United States and Russia should intervene to "guarantee the implementation of the agreement."

Despite the PLO's criticism of the talks' progress, chief Palestinian negotiator Nabil Sha'ath said the negotiations would continue as planned next week.

The issues that have plagued the Cairo talks include control of the border crossings near the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho, the boundaries of Jericho that will come under Palestinian authority, and guarantees for the security of Israeli settlements in the two regions.

Rabin, who was in Bonn on Thursday, denied rumors that he had secretly agreed with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat to postpone the Dec. 13 deadline for starting the implementation of the accord.

"I am not aware of any such agreement," he said, adding that instead of speculating about a postponement, the two parties should focus their efforts on concluding the negotiations on schedule.

Meanwhile, Death Toll Mounts

The statement marked a departure for Rabin, who earlier in the week had said that the deadline was not "engraved in stone."

During his stay in Bonn, Rabin met with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

The German leader promised his country's support for Israel's request to upgrade its status to associate member of the E.C.

That meeting was one of several Rabin had with members of Common Market nations.

In Brussels, Rabin said the negotiations had reached a delicate stage.

"We are in a very sensitive period where the two parties must have solid nerves to achieve their objectives and overcome the obstacles," he said.

Rabin was scheduled for a brief stopover in London before returning to Israel on Friday, when he will begin preparing for the visit to the Middle East next week by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

While the talks in Cairo proceed, the death toll caused by groups opposed to the peace process continues to mount.

On Wednesday, gunmen with the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement opened fire on a car stalled by the side of the road, killing a 24-year-old kindergarten teacher, Shalva Uzana, and

critically wounding another occupant of the car, 19-year-old Yitzhak Weinstock.

On Thursday, Weinstock died, causing Jewish settlers to hold demonstrations and set up roadblocks throughout the West Bank.

Earlier this week, demonstrations by Palestinians in Gaza had led to clashes with Israeli police -- the most violent since the self-refugee accord was signed in Washington in September.

(Contributing to this report were JTA correspondents Gil Sedan in Bonn and Joseph Kopel in Brussels.)

**AT THE U.N., NEW OUTCOME SEEN
IN ANNUAL DEBATE ON 'PALESTINE'**

By Larry Yudelson

UNITED NATIONS, Dec. 2 (JTA) -- The General Assembly wrapped up its annual debate on "the question of Palestine" and the situation in the Middle East this week, with Israeli officials optimistic that the world body will soon approve a resolution lauding the peace process and the accord Israel signed with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

This would ratify a dramatic shift in Israel's relationship with the world organization, which repeatedly condemned Israel's peace agreement with Egypt.

Addressing the General Assembly, Israeli Ambassador Gad Yaacobi called on the United Nations and the world community to support the peace process through aid and investment in the region.

They should assist the Palestinians "by helping improve social and economic conditions, by improving the infrastructure, expanding education and health centers, and by creating jobs that put more people to work," he said Wednesday.

Praising U.N. agencies for "doing excellent work in the territories," he called on them to do more.

Yaacobi also raised the issue of the four Israeli soldiers who are missing in action and called for an end to the Arab boycott of Israel.

In other addresses, PLO foreign affairs spokesman Farouk Kaddoumi asked the United Nations to reaffirm the right of Palestinian refugees to return or receive compensation.

Kaddoumi, who opposed the peace accord within the PLO, called on the General Assembly to "affirm the principled stand of the international community on these fundamental issues with the same vigor with which it supports the Middle East peace process and its recent positive development."

Syria accused Israel of "an unprecedented disinformation campaign to convince the international public opinion that the conflict in the Middle East is over and that peace is now prevailing in the region."

But the Syrian rhetoric did not faze Israeli diplomats. "There were no surprises in the debate," said one. "Whoever is supportive of the peace process was supportive."

The diplomat said he expected a "very big majority" will endorse the resolution supporting the peace accord, which was introduced Tuesday by the United States and Russia, the two sponsors of the peace talks launched in Madrid in 1991.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES: ISRAELI LEFT, NOW IN POWER, WANTS VOICE FOR OPPOSITION

By Bram D. Eisenthal and Larry Yudelson

MONTREAL (JTA) -- For years, opponents of the Israeli government have been frustrated because they were denied a hearing at American Jewish communal forums.

During the years of the Likud government, Labor Party politicians and groups such as Peace Now often sought the opportunity to take their case to events such as the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations, whose packed schedule features hundreds of speakers at dozens of sessions.

With the Labor Party now in power, Likud and other parties on the Israeli right are in the opposition, struggling to get their opinions heard.

Perhaps surprisingly, their longtime ideological opponents on the left remain allies in the call for open debate on Israeli politics in America.

And to prove it, at the recently concluded CJF General Assembly here, the newly empowered speakers on the left handed over the microphone on more than one occasion to opposing voices on the right.

Likud leaders, including the party's chairman, Benjamin Netanyahu, had sought to address the gathering formally, but were turned down, as Labor leaders had been in years past.

But at more than one discussion on Israeli-Diaspora relations -- a central topic on the G.A. agenda -- the refusal to permit the opposition to speak was attacked as an obstacle to those relations.

For Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin -- who before assuming his post with the election of the present government in 1992 was a frequent visitor to the United States on behalf of Peace Now -- the issue of debating Israeli policy was, and remains, central to a real relationship between Israel and the Diaspora.

"If there is something to me which indicates the barriers between us, it is this automatic support of what the Israeli government does," Beilin said at a forum on the Middle East peace process.

Healthier Organization With Debates

"I have not been very impressed by the usual answer which is given to me (when I speak to Jews here): 'Don't bother us, it is up to you.'"

"I think that we have to put an end to this policy, which was put in place by David Ben-Gurion, maybe," he said, referring to Israel's first prime minister, a strong critic of the Diaspora.

"I'm telling you, it is your business," continued Beilin. "We won the elections just for this moment. And we encourage you to have a real dialogue with us."

That invitation was taken up by two members of the audience, who questioned the policies of both Israel and the CJF.

"I feel very lonely up here," said Gail Winston of Chicago, "because the G.A. did not invite anybody from the opposition to speak from the podium in terms of dealing with the issues."

"Therefore, there's very few of us here who have the guts to put up and do what I want to do in my couple of seconds" in explaining the opposition position.

Winston took particular issue with the government's plans for West Bank settlers, illustrating her point with a map of Israel.

Her remarks prompted boos from some members and several interruptions by the newly elected CJF president, Maynard Wishner, who is also from Chicago.

Later, Wishner reiterated official CJF policy regarding giving groups and individuals opposed to government policy a platform at the annual event.

"The G.A. has traditionally and historically invited members of the government of Israel. When a request was made (for opposition speakers), we offered to facilitate a room arrangement, the possibility of a meeting that would be publicized, to have people attend and discuss this issue."

"But the policy of the CJF over the years," he said, "has been to have the spokesmen of the government of Israel be the formal presenters and there was no discriminatory application of the policy."

Nonetheless, members of Americans for Peace Now, including its past national co-chairman, Gerald Babis, insisted that CJF policy was wrong and, in this case, Winston was right.

"It is not right for a person like myself that stood outside of the umbrella and got rained on now to put Gail outside of the umbrella to get rained on," he said.

"We would be a healthier organization if there were debates, if there were discussions, if there were openness."

"Then whatever we're going to do, we're going to do," he said.

"But for God's sake, we're not children, and we all love the State (of Israel) and want the best for it. And we must hear all the voices."

"If not here, where, and if not now, when?" he said.

To judge by the applause, most of those at the G.A. session agreed.

MEMBERS OF RUSSIAN CIRCUS DENY RUMORS OF 'DEFECTION'

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 2 (JTA) -- The Russian National Circus, performing in Israel, has denied local reports that its members are planning to remain in Israel.

The management and performers of the Moscow-based circus, which was giving performances in Beersheba this week, appeared angered as they answered questions about their plans.

"It's a different Russia today. You don't have to defect as you had to in the past."

"Today, we are all free to come and go as we wish," a spokesman for the group said.

Circus director Andrei Yufin, 50, referring to the fact that his father is Jewish, said: "That doesn't mean I came to Israel to defect or stay here, as reported so sensationally in the press."

"We came here on business," Yufin said. "It's possible that some of the 100 performers want to stay, or even to take out citizenship, but as far as I know, no one has yet made such a decision."

Bear-trainer Viktor Kodravchi, 42, a circus performer for 32 years, said: "We came to Israel for a series of performances, and when they are over we may stay on here briefly to help with the Academy for Circus Arts being planned here."

He noted, though, that several circus members were thinking of staying in Israel to help establish the local academy because the salary would be far higher than the approximately \$60 a month they earn in Russia.

GROUPS SEEK LAW TO ACCOMMODATE RELIGIOUS BELIEFS IN THE WORKPLACE

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Dec. 2 (JTA) -- Jewish groups are now taking the fight for religious liberties directly to the workplace.

Some of the same groups that united to push the landmark Religious Freedom Restoration Act through Congress are joining again to fight for so-called religious accommodation legislation.

The issue refers to the extent to which an employer accommodates an employee's religious needs and is important to those who are religiously observant.

For example, Jews celebrate their Sabbath and holidays on days that are different from the majority of Americans and therefore need to negotiate time off with their employers.

And observant Jews, Muslims and others may wear clothing or head coverings that may clash with a workplace dress code.

For many years, the federal government's Equal Employment Opportunity Commission has adhered to a set of guidelines deemed satisfactory by Jewish organizations.

The guidelines, which cover workplaces employing 15 people or more, allow a certain amount of flexibility in accommodating observant employees.

But the EEOC is now proposing to change its standard to conform to a Supreme Court ruling, and this proposed change is setting off alarm bells in the Jewish community.

Religious groups have worked with Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.) on legislation that would codify the current EEOC policies, which are supported by Jewish groups.

"This is the private sector version of the Religious Freedom Restoration Act," a Nadler aide said Wednesday. "We want to give the law the EEOC is charged with enforcing more teeth."

The Religious Freedom Restoration Act sets limits on government infringement on religious practices, while the Nadler legislation would deal with the workplace.

1964 Civil Rights Act Under Scrutiny

Sources say that the EEOC is likely to institute its new guidelines before Nadler's bill makes its way through Congress, thus setting the stage for another battle on religious freedom.

The Nadler bill, also backed by Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), has long been in the works. It is scheduled to be introduced when Congress returns in January.

Jewish groups, including the American Jewish Congress, American Jewish Committee, Anti-Defamation League, Agudath Israel of America and Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, recently wrote to the EEOC, urging either a delay in the adoption of new guidelines, or a change in the proposed language to allow observant workers more flexibility.

The EEOC is still reviewing those comments, commission spokeswoman Ester Cosby said Wednesday.

All this commotion is taking place because the commission has now decided to act upon a 1986 Supreme Court decision, *Ansonia Board of Education vs. Philbrook*.

Under the guidelines that the EEOC is proposing to change, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 had been interpreted to mean that if there was more than one way of accommodating the employ-

ee's religious needs without imposing a hardship on the employer, the method less burdensome to the employee should be selected.

This current method is acceptable to the Jewish community.

But the Philbrook decision interpreted the Civil Rights Act to mean that an employer need only offer an employee a "reasonable" accommodation.

That is not necessarily the one preferred by the employee, a fact that concerns Jewish groups.

In addition, the courts have interpreted the Civil Rights Act to make it easier for the employer to claim "undue hardship" and avoid accommodating a worker's religious beliefs.

"The Supreme Court has so weakened the laws," said the Nadler aide, "that the employer has no obligation to protect you."

CZECH COURT ACQUITS PUBLISHER OF 'PROTOCOLS OF ELDERS OF ZION'

By Josef Klansky

PRAGUE, Dec. 2 (JTA) -- Less than a week after a Moscow judge ruled that the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion" is a forgery and its publication an anti-Semitic act, a Prague court has acquitted a man who published a Czech translation of the work, saying no proof was presented that the man sought to promote anti-Semitism.

Miroslav Gabriel, a geologist by profession and the father-in-law of a Palestinian Arab, had been charged more than a year ago for disseminating hate literature, a crime punishable by a sentence of eight to 10 years in prison.

Gabriel pleaded not guilty to the charge, claiming he had published the pamphlet for commercial reasons only and had not intended to harm or insult anybody.

Explaining its verdict, the court said Monday that it had not found any proof of the defendant's direct or indirect intention to commit the offense with which he was charged.

The judge who rendered the acquittal had also terminated similar proceedings against Gabriel last December without hearing the case at all.

The judge agreed to the latest hearing only after being ordered to do so by the Superior City Court of Prague.

The notorious "Protocols," which charge the Jewish people with a conspiracy to undermine Christian civilization, was written at the turn of the century by czarist secret police agents, who in turn plagiarized most of the text from an anti-Semitic tract published in France.

The Moscow court's ruling against publishing the work was the first in the country where the tract originated.

In an editorial appearing Wednesday in the Prague daily *Lidove Noviny*, columnist Jiri Hanak compared the "Protocols" to the rails that led to the Auschwitz gas chambers.

Hanak pointed out that the 5,000 copies of the tract published by Gabriel exceeded the total number of Jews currently living in the Czech Republic.

"This confirms the known fact that anti-Semitism does not need Jews, only hatred and evil," Hanak wrote.

The state prosecutor, who brought the original charges against Gabriel, has already announced that he will appeal the verdict.

In the meantime, the confiscated copies of the tract Gabriel published will remain in the hands of the Czech police.

FOCUS ON ISSUES:

JEWISH COMMUNITY FAILING TO RECOGNIZE CHANGE IN NATURE OF FAMILY, EXPERTS SAY

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK (JTA) -- Here's the plan: Take all the parents juggling two careers and raising a family, put them on the boards of synagogues, federations and community centers, and tell them the future of Jewish life is in their hands.

If it sounds crazy, it is.

But that is exactly what is happening, delegates to the recent General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations were told.

Despite two decades of change in the structure of the American family, the Jewish community sticks to organizational patterns of a generation ago, Rela Geffen, coordinator for programs in Jewish communal studies at Gratz College in Philadelphia, and Barry Kosmin, CJF's research director, said in two separate sessions at the CJF gathering.

The theme of the gathering, which brought thousands of Jews from North America to Montreal for several days in mid-November, was "Jewish Community Through Diversity." And one of the messages of Geffen and Kosmin was that the Jewish community has failed to understand the demographic diversity of its members.

The Jewish community is continuing to pile burdens on the increasingly overworked, and decreasingly common, so-called traditional family, even as it neglects groups with time and energy to spare, such as unmarried and childless adults and couples with grown children.

Only a minority of Jewish households have children at home, said Geffen. The most common household type is one person living alone, followed by two adults without children.

The 1990 National Jewish Population Study found only 14 percent of the households surveyed consisted of two married Jews with children.

"We have the largest proportion of any ethnic group who live on their own," said Kosmin. But the Jewish organizations, he said, remain "traditional and very family-oriented" in outlook.

"Most things are done in couples. The Jewish community considers it very hard to sell an individual ticket to anything," he said.

"The cadre of adult single Jews under 35 is particularly important for Jewish institutional life," said Geffen, and yet it is "abandoned."

Looking For A Connection

But it is precisely the adults, straight out of college, who are looking for connection, frequently seeking to meet other young Jews, and to be taken seriously by the community for the skills and time they can contribute.

This group has the fewest proportion of their closest friends who are Jewish, said Kosmin.

And this is the age when people marry. The median age of Jewish women getting married today is 26; that for Jewish men is 28.

"These people are not in Jewish social networks as much as in other points of their lives," said Kosmin.

In large measure, he said, the Jewish community's attitude is to blame, because it does not try to reach out to them, even though they're at a crucial stage, when they have money to spend and are defining who they are by how they spend it. They can be skiers, travelers, artists, Jews -- or all of them.

That decision, Kosmin said, "is affected by

their peer group, and they will then find a mate who is compatible with that lifestyle. If you're a skier, you'll marry a skier."

"There's a tremendous need for Jewish -- what we might call artificial -- ties," he said.

The Jewish community "everybody thinks about don't exist anymore. The family ties don't exist, the old Jewish neighborhoods are gone.

"If they want to be social animals, they've got to make decisions," he said. "But we have to provide answers."

Some answers are being offered by a Montreal program, ProMontreal.

Launched two years ago with a three-year allocation of \$1 million, the initiative aims to keep the Jewish youth in the community.

"Young people are not only staying, but many who have left are returning," said Stanley Plotnick, co-chair of the program. (The threat in Montreal is less assimilation than the exodus of English-speakers from Quebec province.)

The ProMontreal programs include a free placement agency, which last year found jobs for 150 young graduates and counseled 350 others; a language and cultural committee to help people feel comfortable in English and French; and a social committee, made up of a consortium of 10 Jewish youth groups, which brought together 1,500 people to its last event.

Should Support Dual-Career Families

But the ProMontreal program went beyond setting up a program for the youth, to getting them involved in the broader community.

"Virtually every agency in the community, every committee in the community, involves representation of 18-to-24- and 24-to-40-year-olds," said Plotnick. "We want our young people in the community."

Said Geffen: "Employed single women, and men, of all ages need to think the Jewish community thinks of them as adults. Everyone has to find a way to be part of the mishpacha (family), whether in a household, or across households, or in a synagogue."

At the same time that the community needs to do more for the majority of households without children living at home, it should be doing more for those who are raising children, said Geffen.

"Agency, organization and synagogue leadership cannot be based on parents of young and school-aged children. They should not feel guilty for not going to meetings.

"Singles, empty-nesters and young seniors would be better" candidates for leadership, she said.

"The rhetoric of community should be supportive of dual-career people, particularly women. They should be told how excellent they're doing."

Rather than making them feel guilty when they do not make gefilte fish by hand like their grandmother did, she said, "we also have to tell them that takeout is OK for a Shabbat meal. You and your spouse don't have to personally bake the challah, or even be the one to buy it.

"The community should encourage and support Jewish fathers, but expect, rather than be surprised, when they decline to come to events and meetings in evenings."

Geffen acknowledged that "these kinds of social changes require enormous investments in time and resources."

But, she said, "nothing less than a revolutionary response based on a great vision will be adequate."