

**AS DEATH TOLL MOUNTS IN HEBRON,  
RABIN ADAMANT ON PEACE VENTURE**

By David Landau and Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Dec. 6 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is pressing ahead with the peace process despite mounting violence that has left five Israelis dead in less than a week.

Some 18 Israelis and 34 Palestinians have been killed since Israel and the PLO signed their accord on Sept. 13.

The death toll rose Monday, when an Israeli man and his 22-year-old son were shot dead, and three younger siblings wounded, in an ambush by Palestinian Arabs outside the West Bank town of Hebron.

Two other Israelis were reported injured Monday in a firebomb attack on a bus in the West Bank north of Jerusalem.

The two incidents occurred a day after a terrorist from the Gaza Strip forced his way onto an Israeli bus and opened fire on the passengers, killing one of them before being shot to death himself.

Rabin told reporters he was sure that the purpose of the killers was to kill the peace process.

"They have just one goal," he said, "to create a chain of events that will bring the negotiations to an end."

But the prime minister said he was equally sure that an agreement with the Palestine Liberation Organization on implementing autonomy in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho would be reached.

The prime minister said there is a tacit agreement between Israel and the PLO that a delay of two or three weeks will not hurt the overall implementation of the autonomy accord.

This would mark a reversal by the PLO, which as recently as last weekend pronounced it was opposed to any delay in the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Gaza and Jericho, which had been slated to begin Dec. 13.

**Calls For U.S. Intervention**

PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat was reported to have asked U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher during a meeting Monday in the Jordanian capital of Amman to intervene to ensure that Israeli forces begin the pullback on schedule.

The PLO was also reported to have called on the United States to intervene in the talks under way in Cairo to implement the autonomy accord, which were said to be at an impasse.

Likewise, Jordan's King Hussein was reported to have told Christopher in Amman on Monday that the United States should step up its role in the peace process and should pressure Israel to be more flexible in its negotiations.

But the American secretary of state was said to be reluctant to intervene unless he received a similar request from Jerusalem.

Christopher arrived in Amman after meeting in Damascus with Syrian President Hafez Assad. The secretary has been pressing Assad to resume peace talks with Israel, and all indications were that those talks would indeed reconvene at the end of January.

Returning to Jerusalem from his talks in

Damascus and Amman, Christopher took an opportunity Monday to condemn the recent spate of terrorist attacks against Israelis.

"This killing must stop. We must try to grasp this opportunity and not let the peace process be stopped," he said.

Monday's attack in Hebron was followed by violent demonstrations by Jewish settlers at the site and elsewhere in the West Bank.

The attack followed the killing Sunday of a Arab man by Jewish settlers in Hebron.

Seven settlers were arrested and ordered held in custody for that incident and the shooting of five other Arabs in Hebron last weekend.

The settlers said they were acting in self-defense and charged the government had abandoned them in pursuit of the peace process.

**Settlers' Plan Called 'Seditious'**

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres acknowledged Monday that the biggest sticking point in the Israeli-PLO talks on implementing Palestinian autonomy is security for the Jewish settlements, which are dispersed throughout the territories.

Addressing another sticking point, he told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that Israel would not give up control of border crossings between the West Bank and Jordan, and between Gaza and Egypt. But he did hold open the option of a Palestinian presence at some of the sensitive sites.

Members of the opposition Likud party are continuing to attack the agreement with the PLO, charging that it has triggered a rise in violence.

The opposition also attacked remarks made Sunday by Attorney General Michael Ben-Yair, who called the council representing the 130,000 settlers in the territories "seditious."

Ben-Yair made the comment in an opinion to Rabin on a new plan by the Council of Jewish Communities in Judea, Samaria and Gaza to set up a volunteer organization to defend the settlements. He had already ruled such a plan was illegal.

Peres stood by the attorney general's remarks, saying, "What he declares is the position of the government."

Meanwhile, the foreign minister may confer with Arafat later this week in Spain, during a meeting of UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization.

Earlier there had been talk that Rabin would meet with Arafat before the Dec. 13 deadline for the start of the Israeli troop withdrawal.

**ASSAD'S OFFER ON SYRIAN JEWS  
PROMPTS PLEASURE, SKEPTICISM**

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Dec. 6 (JTA) -- A Syrian pledge to grant exit visas to Syrian Jews is being greeted with pleasure but a good deal of skepticism by American Jewish groups.

Syrian President Hafez Assad has promised that the roughly 1,200 Jews remaining in Syria will be allowed to travel by the end of the month, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said after meeting with Assad in Damascus on Sunday.

Assad also agreed to allow a U.S. congress-

sional mission to investigate the fate of missing Israeli servicemen, including navigator Ron Arad.

In Israel, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin called the developments an important step forward and a hopeful sign.

The New York-based Council for the Rescue of Syrian Jews said in a statement that it was pleased by the promise that travel rights would be restored to Syrian Jews, but it is awaiting evidence that the promise will be put into action.

"Given numerous pledges previously made by Syrian authorities, however, the council's optimism concerning the announcement from Damascus is muted with considerable caution," said the statement.

After decades in which Syrian Jews were barred from traveling abroad unless they left behind family members to ensure their return, the Syrian government declared a policy of free travel in April 1992. Between April and October 1992, 2,500 Syrian Jews emigrated, most of them to Brooklyn.

But on the eve of the 1992 American presidential elections, Syrian officials stopped issuing visas en masse. Since then, at most a few visas have been issued each week.

Christopher raised the issue when he visited Damascus in February, and he received assurances at the time that Syria had not reversed its policy of free travel.

Daniel Pipes, an analyst with the Foreign Policy Research Institute in Philadelphia, predicted that Syria will indeed resume granting visas to Jews -- but not fully.

Just as the previous promise of free travel was only partly fulfilled, "this will be partially done," said Pipes. "He does it out in small amounts, no more."

Assad wants to keep open the options of both war and peace, Pipes said. Syria is maintaining close ties with "rogue" states such as Libya and Iran and is supporting radical terrorist groups.

#### **Assad Has Reneged On Promises**

At the same time, with the demise of its one-time patron, the Soviet Union, Syria is courting the West. Releasing Jews serves as an easy gesture of good will to the United States.

"From his point of view, it is much better than actually having free elections in Syria," said Pipes.

The activities of the American Jewish community, such as a rally held at the United Nations on Sunday, have been crucial in getting the issue of Syrian Jews on the American diplomatic agenda, Pipes said.

Rep. Eliot Engel (D-N.Y.), who organized a letter signed by 57 members of Congress asking Christopher to raise the issue of Syrian Jewry, said he was "just absolutely delighted that progress seems to have been made."

"However, when dealing with Assad, you need to temper your delight, because the man has promised things and reneged," he said.

Nonetheless, Engel is hopeful.

"At this juncture of the negotiations in the Middle East," Engel said, "I don't think Assad would want to publicly take a position and then renege, which would undermine whatever credibility he has."

Advocates of the missing Israeli soldiers were similarly mixed in their reviews of Assad's invitation of congressional investigators.

In a statement, Kent Schiner, international president of B'nai B'rith, urged immediate action on behalf of the missing soldiers.

"President Assad should use his influence and have them released now without a moment of further suffering," he said.

#### **MIA's Dog Tags Returned**

But Betty Ehrenberg, director of public affairs at the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, called the commitment to allow the investigators "a real coup for Secretary of State Christopher."

"We think it was time that Syrians did own up for some form of responsibility for the MIAs," she said.

Three Israelis -- Zachary Baumel, Zvi Feldman and Yehuda Katz -- were reportedly captured by Syrian forces. A total of seven Israeli soldiers are missing.

Christopher was scheduled to meet with the families of some of the soldiers Tuesday in Jerusalem.

The Israeli government believes that not all the soldiers are alive, but that some are being held by Iran, or by Iranian-backed forces in Lebanon.

Early last month, a top official of the Palestine Liberation Organization said that Arad was being held by the Syrians, and that Baumel, Feldman and Katz were dead and buried in a Syrian cemetery.

Israeli officials and families of some of the soldiers have dismissed those claims.

More recently, the PLO turned over Baumel's Israeli army dog tags to his family.

Ehrenberg said that, as far as she knew, this was the first Syrian acknowledgement of responsibility for the MIAs.

In Washington, one congressional aide said the details of any congressional investigation into the fate of the MIAs were unclear. He said the Foreign Affairs Committee, which had discussed the idea, was surprised that it was accepted by the Syrians.

"There are some who assume this is part of the quid pro quo" for American permission to Kuwait to sell Boeing 727 aircraft to Syria, said the aide.

The danger in that sale, the aide said, is not so much that the aircraft are useful and dangerous -- he described them as "rickety" -- but the sale could undermine American efforts to isolate Syria.

Among those efforts are congressional measures urging the European Parliament not to approve a proposed \$180 million aid package to Damascus.

*(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Cynthia Mann in Jerusalem.)*

#### **LAOS ESTABLISHES TIES WITH ISRAEL**

UNITED NATIONS, Dec. 6 (JTA) -- Laos has become the latest country to establish diplomatic ties with Israel.

In a ceremony here Monday, the Laotian ambassador to the United Nations, Alounkeo Kittikhoun, signed an agreement with his Israeli counterpart Gad Yaacobi.

The foreign minister of Laos plans to visit Israel early next year, and a delegation from Israel's Foreign Ministry will travel to Laos to investigate joint cooperation.

Israel now has ties with 133 countries.

## RELIEF IS SPELLED 'EX-COMMUNIST' AS FASCISTS ARE ROUTED IN ITALY

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Dec. 6 (JTA) -- The Jewish community here was visibly relieved as candidates supported by Italy's former Communist Party routed the neo-fascists in most municipal elections throughout the country.

"Grazie, Francesco," said a banner hanging from a window in Rome's Jewish quarter, referring to the mayoral victory of Francesco Rutelli, the candidate of the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS) -- the former Communist Party.

Rutelli defeated neo-fascist candidate Gianfranco Fini in the runoff vote, 53.1 percent to 46.9 percent.

A leftist candidate also won in the Adriatic city of Trieste.

Tullia Zevi, president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, expressed relief and called the rout of the neo-fascists "significant for all Europe."

She said the victory of what she described as the "center-left" had brought "satisfaction and relief."

"Any center-left coalition is better than the right," said Zevi.

The right, she said, is tainted and "reminiscent of fascism."

But she emphasized that the relief was tempered by the fact that the neo-fascists still had a strong showing.

A member of the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement (MSI) was elected mayor of the Adriatic seaport of Chieti.

In Rome, Naples and elsewhere, MSI members will form the core of the opposition.

There are about 15,000 Jews among the estimated 3 million Catholics in Rome.

## Jews Asked Voters To Reject Neo-Fascists

Sunday's runoff elections, for the mayors of 129 cities and towns, marked the first time since World War II that the Italian Jewish community had came out formally on behalf of particular candidates.

Jewish organizations threw their whole effort into rallies and appeals to voters to reject the neo-fascist candidates.

"The Union of Italian Jewish Communities expresses hope and faith that Italians, because of their diverse religious faiths and political positions, know well how to defend democracy and the Italian republic," said Zevi in a statement.

The first round of voting two weeks ago resulted in wins by neo-fascists and left-wing candidates.

Italians were registering their disgust with incumbent officials who have been charged with bribes and scandal over the past two years.

Sunday's leftist win was an 11th-hour rout of the neo-fascist MSI, which was founded in 1945 by sympathizers of the slain Benito Mussolini, the wartime fascist dictator.

In Naples, Alessandra Mussolini, Il Duce's 30-year-old granddaughter, lost the mayoral election to leftist candidate Antonio Bassolino by more than 9 percent of the vote.

The municipal elections confirmed the collapse of the traditional center parties, particularly the Christian Democrats and Socialists.

These parties have ruled Italy for the past 45 years but were discredited by the country's corruption scandal.

## NEO-NAZI FILM PROVOKES OUTCRY IN GERMANY AS 'PURE PROPAGANDA'

By Miriam Widman

BERLIN, Dec. 6 (JTA) -- A neo-Nazi film, supported with subsidies from several German state governments, has provoked a swarm of controversy here.

Viewers say director Winfried Bonengel allowed neo-Nazi Bela Althans to rave on about Auschwitz lies without any opposition.

A German newspaper reported Monday that Ignatz Bubis, head of the German Jewish community, plans to ask that criminal charges be brought against Althans and others over at least 10 passages in the film that he says violate German law.

The film has provoked and worried the Jewish community for weeks.

On Sunday, opponents of the film prevented it from opening in Hamburg.

The German state governments that helped finance the film -- Hesse, Hamburg, Brandenburg and Mecklenburg-Pomerania -- have asked that the film's distribution be stopped.

It is unclear why these governments helped underwrite the production of the 83-minute film, called "Profession: Neo-Nazi."

According to reports, in one scene Althans stands in a gas chamber in Auschwitz, while he maintains that all Jews who were at the camp survived and are now collecting money from the state.

Bubis, who called the film "pure Nazi propaganda," said the lies about Auschwitz and the film's call for a takeover of power by the Nazi Party violate Germany's Constitution.

## U.S. HOLOCAUST MUSEUM SO POPULAR, OFFICIALS SAY NOT TO COME JUST NOW

By Steven Weiss

WASHINGTON (JTA) -- Due to the overwhelming popularity of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in recent months, museum officials are encouraging future visitors not to come -- at least not yet.

An overload of visitors since the museum's opening in April has packed the exhibits and crowded the hallways of the newest federal museum, straining both its human and financial resources.

"We do invite everyone to visit -- but not right now," said Museum Director Jeshajahu Weinberg.

Nearly 750,000 visitors have toured the museum in its first seven months of operation, as many as were expected in the entire first year. The museum welcomes an average of 4,200 people daily.

According to a survey released by the museum, 94 percent of the museum's visitors enjoyed their experience. But 47 percent of the visitors polled thought the museum was too crowded.

Those polled included Jews, Catholics and Protestants. Ninety-five percent of both Jews and Catholics said they had enjoyed the museum, while 92 percent of Protestants approved.

In fact, the museum has drawn such large crowds that officials have been forced to hire more employees than initially planned, at a cost of about \$200,000 in unexpected salaries. The overcrowding has also resulted in wear and tear, which will require additional refurbishing.

## AN AGNOSTIC CAN BE BOOTED FROM BOY SCOUTS, COURT SAYS

By Steven Weiss

WASHINGTON, Dec. 6 (JTA) -- The Supreme Court this week let stand a lower court decision allowing the Boy Scouts of America to exclude applicants who claim to be agnostic.

Most Jewish groups have yet to take sides on the issue, which pits the right to associate with whom one pleases against the ban on discrimination.

Monday's ruling came in the case of a 10-year-old Illinois boy who would not recite the traditional Boy Scouts' oath.

The oath reads: "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the scout law."

Both the boy and his father were reported to be agnostic.

Mainstream Jewish groups said they were closely watching this case and others like it.

If the Boy Scouts may legally exclude agnostics, the group "could have the legal right to exclude Jews as well if it wanted to," said Marc Stern, co-director of legal affairs for the American Jewish Congress.

Stern noted that a case such as this involving an organization's right to exclude certain people has definite implications for Jewish groups, synagogues and day schools.

The National Jewish Committee on Scouting of the Boy Scouts of America has sided in favor of the boy's exclusion, arguing that the oath should continue to include the reference to God.

At the heart of the case was a federal law prohibiting privately owned places that serve the public from discriminating on the basis of race or religion, according to Stern.

The appellate court decided that the Boy Scouts organization was not considered a "place" and thus was not governed by the statute.

## 'JEWISH MOTHER' RETURNS, NOW PREPPED FOR THE 1990s

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) -- Dan Greenburg says he knows how to be a Jewish mother.

And as the author of a newly released, 30th anniversary edition of "How to Be a Jewish Mother," he has a right to claim expertise.

But Greenburg's publishers, Price Stern Sloan, don't know enough to realize that no good Jewish mother would serve the meal depicted in a photograph on the back of the book -- chicken soup with matzoh balls accompanied by a tall glass of milk.

And Greenburg himself has been busy recently with at least one project no Jewish mother would boast about -- a children's book about Santa Claus's childhood and adolescence.

The 30th anniversary version of "How To Be a Jewish Mother" includes the material that made it a hit a generation ago.

Chapters titled "Making Guilt Work" and "Taking on Everyone Else's Pain and Making It Your Own" sound familiar to anyone who has a Jewish mother.

The book has been updated for the 1990s.

"How To Be a Well-Informed Woman of the 1990s" includes tips on what to say about various topics during dinner-party conversation, from AIDS ("Listen, I remember when it was only a diet candy") to rap music ("Personally, this

sounds like a good idea, a little music when you are doing something like wrapping a birthday present or Chanukah present would be very nice").

Still, the new material will most likely elicit chuckles from readers who are old enough to have memories of their own Jewish mothers from the era when the first edition was published.

One new chapter, titled "Training The Jewish Prince," which reads like it was written in 1963, advises that Jewish mothers never allow their sons to do anything helpful.

"Make him feel that he is a prince and you are here to cater to his every need. When he grows up and gets married, his wife will be only too happy to carry on this tradition," he writes.

The author told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the chapter grew out of a recent visit to his mother and sister in Chicago.

"I got very clear messages from my mother that I am not to set the table, help prepare food or clear the table," said Greenburg, "while it was very clear my sister was supposed to do these things."

"It's not great training for the real world," he said.

In his view, being a Jewish father in the 1990s means mixing one part Jewish mother and one part Jewish prince.

"Since becoming a father, I've probably exceeded my mother" in neurotic parenting, he said.

"I make my son crazy about whether he's hot or cold, about whether he's finished everything on his plate," he said.

But "since I, the person who wrote the original book full of acidic wit and satire, have become what I was parodying," Greenburg said, "I have scant hope for anybody else."

## SCUTTLED 'VOICE OF PEACE' SHIP SAID TO IMPERIL FISHING WATERS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 6 (JTA) -- Fishermen at the port of Ashdod have complained that peace activist Abie Nathan sank his Voice of Peace floating radio station in an area that imperils fishing waters.

Israel's Environment Ministry said it would investigate to determine whether the ship, which Nathan sank Nov. 28, had been sunk at an authorized location.

When Nathan first announced that he would stop broadcasting because he could no longer afford to maintain the vessel at sea, he said he had obtained permission from the authorities to sink it off the Tel Aviv shore.

The approved site was opposite the site from which, for more than two decades, he had broadcast his mixture of peace slogans and music.

Nathan made a last-minute agreement with then Tel Aviv Mayor Shlomo Lahat not to sink the Voice of Peace, when Lahat said he had found a spot on the Tel Aviv shore where the ship could be beached and turned into a museum.

Nathan accordingly sailed the ship to Ashdod until suitable arrangements could be made but ultimately decided to lay the ship to rest "gracefully."

He reportedly also received no answers to official queries about where to sink the vessel. It is not known if permission to sink the ship included Ashdod or was confined to a certain spot off Tel Aviv.