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**A NEW ROUND OF TALKS IN OSLO
FAILS TO BREAK IMPASSE OVER PACT**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Dec. 19 (JTA) -- Top-level Israeli and Palestine Liberation Organization officials met over the weekend in Oslo, Norway, in an attempt to break the impasse that has stalled implementation of the self-rule accord and brought officials here to say a meeting planned for next week between Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat may have to be postponed.

But Rabin told reporters pointedly that the "decision-makers are not in Oslo."

The prime minister noted that any agreements reached in Oslo would have to be referred for a final decision to Jerusalem and Tunis, site of the PLO headquarters.

The talks in the Norwegian capital, which convened Saturday under a blanket of secrecy, followed similar negotiations held in Paris the day before and appeared to have not borne fruit.

By Sunday evening, after negotiators had completed their second day of talks in Oslo, Israel Television reported there had as yet been "no breakthrough."

But the negotiators tried to be optimistic by agreeing to meet again within several days for consultations.

The talks were a repeat of the secret negotiations held earlier in the year in Oslo between Israeli and PLO negotiators that led to the Palestinian self-rule accord signed in Washington in September and were led, as before, by Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Ahmed Khoury, finance manager of the PLO.

Trying To Ensure A Successful Summit

Despite pessimistic reports, Rabin told reporters Sunday he was "trying through contacts in Oslo and elsewhere" to ensure that another summit meeting between himself and Arafat would end successfully.

A meeting between the two leaders held in Cairo on Dec. 12 -- the eve of the deadline for beginning the implementation of the accord -- ended without agreement on several key issues, chief among which were the boundaries of PLO rule over the West Bank town of Jericho.

Arafat and Rabin agreed to meet again within 10 days, in hopes that implementation of the pact could begin. But according to Israel Radio, senior Israeli officials have said Rabin and Arafat will not meet this week because the impasse has not yet been broken.

Other Israeli representatives currently in Oslo include Minister of Environment Yossi Sarid, Israel Defense Force chief of staff Amnon Shahak, Foreign Ministry Director-General Uri Savir and the ministry's legal adviser, Yoel Zinger.

Rabin's admonition that the decision-makers were not in Oslo was echoed by Hanan Ashrawi, Palestinian spokesperson until last week.

"The serious decision-makers are in Tunis and Jerusalem," she told Israel Television.

In a separate development Sunday, Israel began releasing scores of the 197 Palestinian deportees who were allowed to return from southern Lebanon at the end of last week and had

been held in custody since then. Members of the Islamic fundamentalist groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad, they were part of a group of 415 Palestinians deported from the territories a year ago following a wave of attacks on Israelis.

In Gaza, their arrival was scheduled for after 9 p.m., when the curfew takes effect.

**GOREN ADVISES SOLDIERS TO REFUSE
ARMY ORDERS TO UPROOT SETTLEMENTS**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Dec. 19 (JTA) -- Shlomo Goren, a former Israeli chief rabbi and chief military chaplain, has advised Israeli soldiers to refuse to obey any orders to participate in military operations to evacuate Jewish settlements from the administered areas.

Goren's suggestion came in a pamphlet he wrote on behalf of the Rabbinical Committee of Jewish Settlements in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip.

He outlined his thoughts in an Israel Radio interview on Sunday and was immediately denounced by many government leaders.

Deputy Defense Minister Mordechai Gur said Goren's view is "totally unacceptable."

"The spiritual world view of a single person should not be allowed to determine positions in a democratic society. The majority must prevail," said Gur, who was in command of the Jerusalem area in the Six-Day War in 1967 when the Israel Defense Force captured the Old City.

Goren, then the IDF's chief chaplain, had raced to the Western Wall to blow the shofar, even before the shooting stopped.

In the pamphlet and in his radio interview, Goren said the government had no authority to rule on the status of the settlements as it depends for its majority on the votes of Arab Knesset members.

Goren cited medieval rabbinical authorities as the basis for his religious injunction.

In any conflict between civil and religious law, Goren said, the religious takes precedence over the secular law.

Asked whether he was inciting rebellion, Goren said: "For us, our first call is to obey the laws of Moses. Any other orders which contradict the Law of Moses -- the Law of the Bible -- this is a rebellion against the Law of Moses, against the Torah and the laws of our religion.

"For us there is not any kind of rebellion if it is based on obeying the Laws of Moses."

Other rabbis and spokesmen for the opposition Likud party have so far remained silent on Goren's remarks.

But one rabbi said privately that the number of rabbis in Israel who value territory over human lives is marginal.

A spokesman for the Chief Rabbi's Office said only that "no situation should reach the point of civil war."

Ministers Uzi Bar-Am and Binyamin Ben-Eliezer also accused Goren of fomenting rebellion by urging soldiers to refuse to obey orders.

A Tel Aviv lawyer, Aharon Shlanger, appealed to the police to investigate Goren's breach of the law by instructing soldiers to revolt against formal orders.

**ISRAELI EDUCATION OFFICIAL BLASTS
'PROPAGANDA' IN RELIGIOUS SCHOOLS**
By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Dec. 19 (JTA) -- Deputy Education Minister Micha Goldman has attacked Israel's government-run religious schools for what appears to be a campaign against the government's policies in the peace process.

Goldman also said the kind of anti-Arab propaganda that he has seen on the schools' bulletin boards reminds him of the propaganda against Jews that has been a traditional feature of schools in Arab countries.

"Lately we have seen the phenomenon spreading, especially in religious schools, of a campaign against the peace process and the Israeli government, especially against the prime minister," said Arik Kaplan, Goldman's senior adviser.

Goldman, who made his remarks Dec. 15 while touring Rehovot, believes "we should have a decent argument" on the merits of the government's policies, said Kaplan.

But Goldman believes "we have to fight any attempt to use the educational system paid for and belonging to the government as a base of activism against elected institutions" and officials, his adviser said.

The Education Ministry oversees two school systems, one secular and one religious.

Matityahu Dagan, the head of religious education, rebutted Goldman's allegations that there was any systemic effort to attack government policies.

"I deny all the accusations," he said.

Dagan said he was checking into the matter, but he also said "it was a mistake on his part to generalize about 800 schools from one or two."

"I hope our office would encourage our students (who are) behaving bravely and going to class as usual even with all the difficulties and fears, especially those from (Judea and Samaria)," Dagan said, referring to the West Bank.

There are some psychological problems for the students posed by the Israel-PLO accord "that we have no response to yet," said Dagan.

He said his office is devising programs to help students cope with and defuse the tension.

**PALESTINIAN DEATH TOLL RISES
IN TERRITORIES FOR THIRD YEAR**
By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Dec. 19 (JTA) -- The number of Palestinians killed by Israeli security forces in the territories has increased during each of the past three years, according to the Israeli human rights organization B'Tselem.

From Dec. 8, 1992, to Dec. 8 of this year -- the sixth year of the Palestinian uprising, or intifada -- 165 Palestinians were killed by members of Israel's security forces.

The total is up from 121 in the previous year, and 97 in the year before that. It is lower, however, than the death tolls during the first two years of the intifada, from December 1987 to December 1989. There were 284 Palestinian deaths in the first year of the uprising and 300 in the second.

B'Tselem also reported that between Sept. 13 of this year, when the Israeli-Palestine Liberation Organization self-rule accord was signed, and Dec. 8, there were 36 Israeli and Palestinian deaths in the territories. Killings of Palestinians by other Palestinians were down this year from last.

**LUBAVITCHER REBBE GETS TOME
OBTAINED IN MOSCOW BY AL GORE**
By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Dec. 19 (JTA) -- After years of legal battles and political intercessions, a revered volume from a large library confiscated before the Russian Revolution has been returned to the Lubavitcher Chasidim.

The book -- a 90-year-old copy of the "Tanya" presented to the rebbe's predecessor, Rabbi Yosef Yitzhok Schneersohn, by his students before he became rebbe -- was obtained by Vice President Al Gore especially for the ailing 92-year-old rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, in Brooklyn.

The "Tanya," which means "teaching," was written nearly 200 years ago and is the basic philosophy of the Lubavitchers.

Gore received the gold-embossed, printed copy last Thursday from Russian Culture Minister Yevgeny Sidorov, after considerable intervention by President Clinton, Gore and the U.S. Senate, said Rabbi Boruch Shlomo Cunin.

Cunin, who got the book from Gore in Moscow, delivered it last Friday to the rebbe, who generally does not receive visitors since he suffered a debilitating stroke two years ago.

Veronica Irina, an attorney who is also the rector of Maimonides University, the first Jewish state university in Russia, was among the group present at the book's delivery to the rebbe. It was she "who the rebbe put in charge of the full strategy to receive the books," Cunin said.

The Russian Supreme Court ruled in 1991 that the 12,000 books of the seized library be returned to the Lubavitchers, but the decision was not followed.

Subject Of Discussion At Two Summits

Virtually the entire U.S. government, from the president down, has pressed the Russians relentlessly on the Lubavitcher library. It has, in fact, been a subject of discussion at two summit meetings between Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin.

Cunin, who lives in Los Angeles but spends most of his time in Moscow, has spent the past 13 years seeking return of the collection of the books at the rebbe's behest.

Gore, who had been visiting Moscow as part of a trip to the former Soviet Union, used the occasion of receiving the religious tome to predict that the disputed collection will be returned to the Lubavitchers.

The vice president described the relinquishing of this book as "a wonderful humanitarian gesture."

Gore made the comment after the librarian at the Russian State Library -- formerly the Lenin Library -- allowed him to pore over several old books at the library's Museum of Religious History.

Gore has been involved in the matter of the library since he was a senator from Tennessee and was approached about the matter in the Senate hallway by Cunin's sons, all of whom are rabbis.

Cunin described Gore as "a very special, warm human being" who "had tears in his eyes when he gave me the book."

Cunin said U.S. Ambassador Thomas Pickering discussed the matter with the Russians "until 3 in the morning" last Thursday. "Then we got to the nuclear discussions," Cunin quoted Pickering.

CLINTON TO SET PERSONAL EXAMPLE OF TOLERANCE TO FIGHT HATE CRIMES

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Dec. 19 (JTA) -- During a round-table discussion last week with a small group of reporters from religious news services, President Clinton said he was trying to set a personal example of tolerance in order to combat hate crimes and prejudice in this country.

"I think I should set an example to try to talk about these things," the president said.

He said he wants "to promote respect and diversity," in response to a question from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Clinton invited nine reporters from religious news services to join him at the White House last Friday morning for a wide-ranging discussion on crime, religion and the state of society.

The meeting, held around the large oval table in the Cabinet Room, lasted 45 minutes.

Wearing a tie decorated with children's drawings of snowmen, stockings and candles, Clinton spoke seriously about his efforts to involve the religious community in fighting crime and societal problems in the United States.

Crime has become a crucial issue around the country in the wake of a series of violent incidents -- including the massacre of passengers on a commuter train and the abduction and killing of a 12-year-old California girl -- and a growing sense of national unease.

Jewish Leaders Praised Clinton

Last month, Clinton delivered a well-received address on the crime issue at the Memphis church where the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. preached his last sermon.

In response to Clinton's address, a group of religious leaders that included Jews wrote to the president, praising him for his speech and offering to work with him to combat crime.

The Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism and its director, Rabbi David Saperstein, played a key role in coordinating the Dec. 15 letter.

"The eloquence of your speech in Memphis at Mason Temple Church of God in Christ and your call to the religious community to play a central role in ameliorating this crisis deeply moved and challenged us all," the several dozen religious leaders wrote.

At the White House session with the religious reporters, Clinton referred to hate crimes legislation now pending in Congress.

The legislation, backed by many Jewish groups, would increase federal penalties for crimes committed because of the victim's race, religion, nationality, gender or sexual orientation.

The hate crimes legislation -- and some other bills currently awaiting consideration by a joint House-Senate conference committee -- has been criticized by some as being symbolic and not having much practical effect.

"I think that the practical impact of it will be to encourage hate crimes to be prosecuted more vigorously at the local level, where they should be," the president said.

"There are people who have religious views that you can't even imagine," Clinton said.

"But if they share your civic values, that is, if they honor family and work, and they don't break the law, and they respect other people," he said, "then they can learn and bridge those differences."

JEWISH LEADERS JOIN U.S. OFFICIALS TO BID ROMANIA TO QUASH ANTI-SEMITISM

By Steven Weiss

WASHINGTON, Dec. 19 (JTA) -- Jewish leaders joined the Clinton administration and members of Congress on the diplomatic road this week, urging the Romanian government to quell the surge of anti-Semitic activity in Romania.

B'nai B'rith leaders met with Romanian Foreign Minister Teodor Melescanu last Thursday at the State Department to express their outrage at the recent dedications of statues and roads to a former Romanian dictator.

The dictator, Ion Antonescu, was a Nazi collaborator who was executed as a war criminal in 1946. During Antonescu's rule, from 1940 to 1944, more than 250,000 Jews died in Romanian-controlled territory.

The recent dedication of a statue to Antonescu near Bucharest drew harsh criticism from Jewish groups, who charged that the Romanian government had not adequately spoken out against the display.

Jewish groups were most disturbed by the involvement of members of the local Romanian police in financing the statue, and the fact that a member of the Romanian Cabinet attended the dedication ceremony.

According to State Department sources, Melescanu met last Thursday with Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who urged the government of Romania to "clearly condemn political groups attempting to revive extreme nationalism or anti-Semitism."

Daniel Mariaschin, director of B'nai B'rith's international, governmental and Israel affairs department, and George Spectre, the department's associate director, met with the foreign minister and other Romanian leaders the same day.

Romania Received Most-Favored-Nation Status

Following the meeting, Spectre told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that Melescanu said the Romanian government is doing what it can to combat anti-Semitism and might pursue legal action against those responsible for the recently erected statue.

Spectre also noted that Melescanu said government workers have been warned that they "can't participate in something that the government disapproves of -- even as a private citizen."

But the foreign minister also emphasized the difficulty in controlling such activity in Romania because the country is struggling to become increasingly open and democratized, and because most Romanians celebrate Antonescu as an anti-Communist who joined Adolf Hitler in invading the Soviet Union, Spectre said.

The memorial's dedication on Oct. 22 came one day after Congress voted to grant most-favored-nation status to Romania, thereby giving the country certain trade privileges.

Spectre said that B'nai B'rith, which long supported the trade status for Romania, will be watching the human rights situation there closely.

If anti-Semitic activity continues "without government action, then we will be forced to reassess our position across the board on Romania," he said, emphasizing that he did not mean it as a threat against the Romanian government.

Such a policy reassessment, he said, would include a review of B'nai B'rith's support for most-favored-nation status.

50 YEARS LATER, FILES IN ATTIC DOCUMENT ITALY'S FASCIST LAWS

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Dec. 19 (JTA) -- More than 2,600 files documenting how fascist Italy's anti-Semitic laws were applied to individual citizens before and during World War II have been recovered after lying hidden for more than 50 years in an attic.

The discovery of the documents in the northern Italian town of Merano was made by Federico Steinhaus, the president of the 50-member Jewish community of Merano, and was announced at the end of last week in Rome.

At the same time, it was announced that the files would be turned over to Italy's Central State Archives, which already houses thousands of similar documents.

Several documents in the newly discovered trove reflected efforts by the fascists to ascertain the racial status of Umberto Saba, one of Italy's most important 20th century poets. Saba was the pen name of Umberto Poli.

"The name Umberto Saba does not appear in the local birth registry," one document stated. "From the inquiries carried out at the local Jewish community, it appears from the birth register that a certain Umberto Poli, born in Trieste March 3, 1883, of Ugo Abramo Poli and Rachele Coen, could, according to the rabbi of the community, be identified with the individual in question."

Files Were Directed To Mussolini

Documents attempting to ascertain whether an individual was to be considered Jewish were addressed personally to dictator Benito Mussolini, so that he himself could make the decision.

These involved particularly complicated cases involving generations of mixed marriages and conversions -- both to Judaism and to Christianity -- and politically sensitive cases.

One of these cases involved the sister of a former prime minister who tried to be declared non-Jewish.

"From the documents produced, it is revealed that the individual is daughter of a father of the Italian nationality (Tuscan) belonging to the Jewish race and of a mother of English nationality," the file stated.

The file also noted that the woman had enrolled in the membership lists of the Rome Jewish community, but that she had also converted to Protestant Christianity.

Everything points to her being of the "Jewish race," the file concluded.

"Bearing in mind, however, the repercussions that such a decision could have, particularly regarding her late brother, this case is being brought to your attention, Duce (or Leader, as Mussolini was known), for the decisions you think should be adopted," a letter in the file stated.

"These documents are part of the patrimony of memory," said Tullia Zevi, president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities. "We must preserve the memory of such realities. They are a warning for the youth of today."

Written in bureaucratic language on official forms, the documents include appeals by people who hoped to escape persecution because they were children of mixed marriages or had converted to Christianity.

The documents also included materials that tracked how the laws were applied against individuals, requests to examine the Jewish background

of specific people, and orders to intern in concentration camps foreign Jews who had been found in Italy.

The documents came to light when an elderly Merano man who ran a moving company told Steinhaus last year that he had come across eight wooden chests filled with documents "relating to Jews" in the attic of his firm's building. The documents were subsequently turned over to the Jewish community.

"He doesn't remember how they got there," Steinhaus said. "Either he can't remember or he doesn't want to remember."

The documents included files on 2,600 individuals prepared by the General Directorate for Demography and Race of the Italian Interior Ministry, known as the "Demorazza."

The directorate was set up in July 1938 to coordinate a policy of racial discrimination for all the branches of the Italian government. The directorate carried out a census of Italy's 42,000 Jews, then oversaw the application of anti-Semitic laws put into effect later that year.

In March 1944, the directorate's functions were transferred to the General Inspectorate for Race of the so-called Republic of Salò, founded in the north of Italy by hard-core fascists after most of Italy was liberated by the Allies.

"The documents of the 'Demorazza' constitute the most faithful testimony to the daily, concrete application of the racial laws on the part of the fascist regime," the Union of Italian Jewish Communities said in a statement.

Earlier this month, neo-Fascist candidates were defeated in hard-fought electoral battles for the mayoralty of Rome and Naples, but neo-Fascists won the mayoral races in several smaller cities in south-central Italy.

MIAMI FREIGHT FIRM CHARGED FOR ANTI-BOYCOTT VIOLATIONS

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Dec. 19 (JTA) -- The U.S. Commerce Department has charged another American company, Stair Cargo Services, with violating U.S. anti-boycott laws.

The company allegedly committed two violations of the Export Administration Act relating to the Arab economic boycott of Israel.

Stair Cargo Services is a Miami-based subsidiary of Intertrans Corp., a freight forwarder based in Dallas.

In 1988, in response to a request from Kuwait, the company is alleged to have provided Kuwait with the name of a supplier of goods, and is further alleged to have not reported its receipt of the boycott-related request to the U.S. government, as required by law.

As the Middle East peace process continues and Israel enters economic relationships with Jordan and the Palestinians, the U.S. government has grown more impatient with the Arab League's continuation of the boycott, which has been in place since before the founding of Israel in 1948.

The boycott affects both Israel and U.S. companies doing business with Israel.

An administrative law judge will decide whether Stair Cargo violated the boycott provisions, and the company could be fined up to \$20,000 if found guilty.

Earlier this month, the Commerce Department's Office of Antiboycott Compliance said it had imposed a total of \$6,805,450 in penalties in fiscal year 1993.