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## DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

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### RABIN TRIES TO CLARIFY 'RULES' FOR RESUMPTION OF PEACE TALKS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 5 (JTA) -- A week of acrimony between Israeli and Palestinian negotiators appeared to be ending as the two sides neared agreement on a formula that would enable them to return to the peace table, according to informed sources here.

But Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, in public statements Wednesday, carefully stopped short of announcing a resumption of talks.

"I believe that once we will clarify the rules of the negotiations, what is the status of the papers in Cairo, the understanding in Cairo, we will resume negotiations," Rabin told reporters.

Rabin added, moreover, that if the PLO persisted in renouncing the understandings reached in Cairo, Israel would not consider itself bound by those understandings and would review its own positions.

A decision on resuming the talks would likely be made by the end of the week, Rabin said.

The talks had come to an abrupt halt following last week's negotiations in Cairo, where, according to Israeli negotiators, an agreement for implementing the self-rule accord had been reached.

The Palestine Liberation Organization, however, had said there had been no agreement, only an Israeli position paper to break the impasse.

#### Jordanian Anger With Arafat

The negotiations had reached an impasse over several security issues, particularly who would control the borders between the Gaza Strip and Egypt and between the West Bank town of Jericho and Jordan.

The formula by which the two sides would set aside their latest crisis is understood to contain a reference to the Cairo discussions as the "basis" for resumed negotiations, thereby avoiding the issue of whether the Palestinians accepted the terms reached in those discussions.

The reconciliation was achieved as a result of messages transmitted back and forth by phone and fax between Peres in Jerusalem and the PLO leadership in Tunis.

In a related development, Uri Savir, director general of the Israeli Foreign Ministry, met with Jordanian officials in a bid to mollify King Hussein's anger with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat over alleged foot-dragging by the PLO.

On Saturday, the king attacked Arafat and warned that if he persisted in refusing to sign a Jordanian-PLO cooperation accord, Jordan would proceed on its own in the peace process.

In Tunis, Arafat is facing another challenge: A delegation of more than 100 prominent Palestinians from the West Bank and Gaza have flown there to protest what was called Arafat's autocratic style and to demand greater democracy within the organization.

The delegation was led by Dr. Haidar Abdel-Shafi, a prominent Gaza physician who was the former head of the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks in their initial stages.

### BOMBS TARGET NEW YORK OFFICES OF AMERICAN JEWISH PEACE GROUPS

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Jan. 5 (JTA) -- In an escalation of American Jewish opposition to Israel's peace accord with the Palestine Liberation Organization, bombs were left early Wednesday outside the Manhattan buildings that house the offices of Americans for Peace Now and the New Israel Fund.

Both organizations have long supported compromise with the Palestinians and have been virulently attacked by American Jews on the other end of the political spectrum.

The bomb outside the APN office was discovered by a building security guard, who called police. A half-hour later, an unknown caller notified police of the second bomb.

A police robot successfully defused the first device, but the bomb in front of the New Israel Fund exploded. It caused no damage, according to a police spokesman.

The spokesman said both bombs were low-level explosives in thermos-type containers, which were capable of causing serious injury or property damage. Both had timing devices.

According to the police, both bombs had handwritten notes that criticized the Israeli government for being too liberal. The notes were signed by multiple organizations, which the police would not identify.

According to one source, a note said that "the civil war has begun."

The incidents are being investigated by the FBI's Joint Terrorism Task Force and the New York City Police Department.

A spokesman for the Israeli Consulate in New York denounced the attack.

"The Israeli Consulate vehemently condemns acts of violence or intimidation aimed at derailing the peace process. We remain confident that U.S. authorities will do their utmost to identify and prosecute the culprits to the fullest extent of the law," said the spokesman.

"The Israeli government will continue its efforts to achieve peace undeterred by such acts," he said.

### JEWISH LEADERS TELL CLINTON TO BE WARY OF SYRIA'S PLEDGES

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Jan. 5 (JTA) -- The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations is calling on the Clinton administration not to "accept empty promises" from Syria at the coming meeting between Syrian President Hafez Assad and President Clinton.

Lester Pollack, chairman of the umbrella organization, said this week that the conference is hopeful progress can be made on the Israeli-Syrian negotiating track, but that the United States should not accept statements by Assad as evidence of any breakthrough.

Pollack, backing up his cautious stance with the Syrians, pointed to the recent promises by Assad to issue exit visas to Syrian Jews by Dec. 31.

"To date, this process has not been ful-

filled," Pollack said, noting that only 350 visas have so far been issued -- and none to entire families.

There are about 1,350 Jews now living in Syria.

Pollack and Malcolm Hoenlein, the organization's vice chairman, spoke at a news conference after a series of meetings with Israeli leaders.

The United States has taken a low profile in the negotiations between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, and the conference leaders said they hoped the same principle would be applied to the talks with Syria.

"The message has to be very clear to Assad that the address for (negotiations) has to be Jerusalem and not Washington," said Hoenlein. "There can't be an end-run around Israel."

"We've been assured that the U.S. role will not change," he added.

Meanwhile, the two said that during their visit they reported to Israeli officials on organizational efforts coordinated by the conference to educate the American Jewish community about the peace process, about which Hoenlein conceded there is "not a lot of awareness."

They also said they reassured the Israeli leadership that there is a consensus of support for the process, despite concerns about violence and terrorism.

"There are a lot of rumors" in Israel about the attitudes of the American Jewish community, said Hoenlein, "but there is a difference between opposition and concern."

"The euphoric period is over and people are looking pragmatically at the achievability" of the agreement, Pollack said.

Hoenlein said the Israeli government showed "great understanding of the need to keep American Jews informed" and a "real sensitivity to the need to do even more" than it has done.

#### **WITHOUT ACTION BY CLINTON, PLO CANNOT OPEN U.S. OFFICE**

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Jan. 5 (JTA) -- Adding to the complications surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian declaration of principles, the Clinton administration has not yet given permission for the Palestine Liberation Organization to open its office here.

After the Israelis and the PLO signed their historic agreement on Sept. 13, the administration encouraged a somewhat wary Congress to lift certain restrictions on U.S. dealings with the PLO.

Members of Congress, many of whom were concerned about longtime PLO ties to terrorism, passed legislation that would temporarily waive some restrictions, including those relating to opening a PLO office here.

But President Clinton, who has final authority over the approval of the waiver, has not yet signed it.

"Legislative restrictions on PLO activities in the United States remain in effect," a Jan. 3 State Department statement said. "Opening of a PLO office is contingent on the presidential waiver."

A White House spokesman said Wednesday that the legislation had reached the White House, but that Clinton had yet to act upon it.

Sources in the Jewish community said this week they had not heard of any problems holding up presidential action.

A top Arab American official said he was concerned by the delay.

"It is a failure on our (the United States') part to honor the spirit of what happened Sept. 13," said James Zogby, president of the Arab American Institute. "It should have been done months ago."

Zogby said he was not certain of the reason for the delay.

The Palestinians had previously maintained an office here, which the U.S. government ordered closed in 1987 because of U.S. concerns about PLO connections to terrorism.

High-profile Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi had been expected to take the position as the PLO's Washington representative, but she recently announced that she would pursue human rights work in the territories.

#### **GIANT PRAYER MEETING AT WALL UNITES MANY ORTHODOX FACTIONS**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 5 (JTA) -- A massive prayer meeting held at the Western Wall this week by thousands of Orthodox Israelis has focused attention on the possible evolution of an alliance between the haredi, or fervently Orthodox, community and the religious Zionists of the National Religious Party.

Estimates put the crowd, which gathered Monday to protest the government's peace initiative, at more than 20,000, though the event's organizers claimed that far more turned out.

Among the moving forces behind the event were rabbis from the haredi Bnei Brak yeshivot and rabbis associated with the religious-Zionist Bnei Akiva yeshivot.

The participants included both the "black hats" of the ardently Orthodox and the "knitted yarmulkes" of the so-called modern Orthodox.

The nominal purpose of the gathering was to pray for an alleviation of the deteriorating "security situation" following a recent string of terrorist killings.

Although the event was confined to the reading of psalms and prayers, the message that emerged was that the Orthodox community opposes Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's peace policy.

The funerals of three members of the haredi community who died in recent terror incidents on the West Bank have brought into focus the widespread disenchantment of many Orthodox with the peace process -- a dissatisfaction that may be more widespread than in Israel as a whole.

Moreover, the fact that many Diaspora Orthodox communities are openly uncomfortable with the Palestinian self-rule accord signed last September has provided added weight to the naysayers within Israel's Orthodox communities.

This trend, however, is by no means universal among Israel's growing and powerful Orthodox population.

The fervently Orthodox Shas party, for example, was until recently a member of the governing coalition. And even after withdrawing from the coalition, it has carefully sidestepped direct opposition to the government.

Indeed, some observers link the political ambivalence among some sectors of the Orthodox community to the fact that the three leading haredi Ashkenazic rabbis -- including Rabbi Eliezer Schach, the spiritual leader of the Degel HaTorah Party -- refused to sign the public letter calling for Monday's prayer event.

# FIRE AT SYNAGOGUE IN MOSCOW MAY HAVE BEEN CAUSED BY ARSON By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Jan. 5 (JTA) -- There are new indications, though no hard proof, that arson may have been the cause of last week's devastating fire at the Marina Roscha Synagogue in Moscow.

But leaders of the synagogue, which is run by the Chabad movement of Lubavitcher Chasidim, apparently have chosen not to press for an investigation.

That decision reportedly was made after Moscow city authorities hinted that if an inquiry were requested, they would withdraw their offer to facilitate the rebuilding of the synagogue by cutting through the municipal bureaucratic red tape.

Rabbi Berel Lazar of the Marina Roscha Synagogue is said to have signed a waiver Wednesday with the municipal authorities, forfeiting a right to request an official investigation into the fire's cause.

He reportedly did so a day after telling the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in a telephone interview from Moscow that "more and more evidence is coming through that this was not an electrical fire," as initially had been suggested.

Despite the synagogue's move, the National Conference on Soviet Jewry issued a statement Wednesday calling on Moscow authorities to "immediately launch a comprehensive investigation into the causes of the Marina Roscha fire."

The conference, which is an umbrella group representing establishment organizations concerned with the fate of Russian Jewry, also urged that the Moscow authorities "provide protection for the Russian capital's Jewish institutions."

The request was to be sent to the Moscow mayor's office and would also be raised with government and embassy officials.

The National Conference registered particular concern because this was the second fire at a Jewish institution in two weeks. An earlier blaze of unknown origin damaged another Chabad institution, a recently opened school in downtown Moscow.

## Jews 'Are Understandably Jittery'

Richard Wexler, chairman of the National Conference, said, "It is important that the Marina Roscha fire be understood in the context of increasing occurrence of anti-Semitic incidents in Russia in the past year, as well as the strong electoral showing in December of the ultranationalist forces led by Vladimir Zhirinovsky."

Rabbi Lazar, in a telephone call from Moscow, acknowledged that the synagogue had received threatening phone calls and that an ax, anti-Semitic graffiti and the slogan "Death to the Jews" were found nearby.

In San Francisco, the Bay Area Council for Soviet Jews also learned of evidence of arson through telephone conversations with synagogue members and other Moscow Jews.

The council's executive director, David Waksberg, told JTA: "It's very important that these kinds of incidents be investigated and resolved, because Jews right now, given this time in Russian history, are understandably jittery. There is a great deal of anxiety of anti-Semitism."

Waksberg, who is also vice president of another umbrella group dealing with Russian Jewry, the Union of Councils, said it is important

that action be taken if it turns out that there was an "anti-Semitic cause" to the fire.

Neglecting to do so "sends a message to the perpetrators, a message that already is very strong in Russia, that there are little or no consequences to those who perpetrate hate crimes against Jews and other minorities," he said.

While there was initial speculation that the fire may have been caused by faulty electrical wiring, Rabbi Lazar told JTA on Tuesday that "the firefighters said they never saw an electrical fire burn this way.

"It didn't start from inside," he said. "If it had started from the kitchen, the fire would not have been so strong."

There were also suspicions that arson may have been perpetrated without anti-Semitic intent.

One safe in the synagogue office was found opened, and burnt, and was missing the equivalent of \$450. Vodka and wine were also missing. Another safe was not opened and was untouched by fire, Lazar said.

Another factor to consider was that the synagogue had recently dismissed two employees for stealing.

A synagogue watchman who normally spends the night at the shul had been home sick that night.

Rabbi Lazar also said that another Lubavitch shul, the Polyakov Synagogue, received a telephone call about the time of the fire asking if it were true there had been a fire there also.

When the answer was negative, said Lazar, the person who answered the telephone was told, "Don't worry -- your time will come."

Lazar appealed to world Jewry to help rebuild the synagogue.

## LONDON POLICE INVESTIGATE VANDALISM AT JEWISH CEMETERY

By Lee Levitt  
London Jewish Chronicle

LONDON, Jan. 5 (JTA) -- London police are investigating two anti-Semitic acts of vandalism that have taken place within a month at an East London Jewish cemetery.

In the latest incident, vandals broke into the East Ham cemetery Monday evening and spray-painted Nazi slogans on its inside walls and a swastika and anti-Semitic obscenities on three graves of Jews who died in World War II.

"Nazis rule" and "Hitler 6 million, Jews 1" were painted in 2-foot-high green letters on the walls near the sanctuary.

Jonathan Lew, chief executive of the United Synagogue, the Orthodox Jewish umbrella body which owns the cemetery, described the attack as a copycat of last month's desecration.

"It is a matter of extreme regret that vandals and hooligans desecrate places of rest, especially where there are war graves," he said.

Mike Whine, director of security for the Board of Deputies of British Jews, the secular umbrella body of Jews, said: "We have discussed security with all the Jewish burial societies, but it is their responsibility to implement whatever they feel is necessary."

Last month, vandals desecrated five graves at the cemetery, including those of three men who died while serving in the armed forces during World War II.

No perpetrator was found.

A police spokesman said he did not think it was the work of an organized neo-Nazi group.

**ICELAND ASKED TO PUBLISH FINDINGS ON ESTONIAN NAZI**  
By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Jan. 5 (JTA) -- The Simon Wiesenthal Center has called upon the government of Iceland to publish its findings on the wartime activities of alleged Estonian Nazi war criminal Evald Mikson, who lived in Iceland for decades.

Mikson died Dec. 27 in a hospital outside the Icelandic capital of Reykjavik at the age of 82.

Mikson, who called himself by the Icelandic name Edvald Hinriksson, headed a vigilante squad in Estonia in the summer of 1941 and later served as deputy chief of recruitment and intelligence for the Estonian criminal police in Tallinn, the Estonian capital, under the Nazis, diplomatic sources said.

Turned out by Sweden, where he had sought refuge, Mikson found prosperity and respect as an entrepreneur in Iceland, where he owned a popular sauna and was the father of two sons who were popular sports figures.

He lived for decades untouched by scandal until about two years ago, when the Wiesenthal Center began pressuring the Icelandic government to prosecute him.

In May, Iceland's public prosecutor asked a professor of penal law to assist with the matter, but Mikson was never prosecuted.

Efraim Zuroff, director of the Wiesenthal Center's Israel office, said there were three charges against Mikson dealing with his alleged involvement in organizing fascist vigilante squads, the Omikaitse, in Estonia and the killing of Jews held in concentration camps and prisons in Estonia.

Mikson was allegedly involved in the deportation of eight stateless Jews from Finland to Auschwitz through Estonia.

**Peres Asked Iceland To Prosecute**

The information is available in Finnish government records and in a book by Finnish Holocaust historian Hannu Rautkallio.

Zuroff wrote to Iceland's prime minister, David Oddsson, and the justice minister, Thorsteinn Pallsson, to request that the country's current investigation of Mikson be completed and publicized.

The investigation was initiated after the center brought attention to the case and Israel followed up by requesting that Mikson be tried for war crimes.

In August, 85 members of the Knesset, acting on an initiative by the Los Angeles-based Wiesenthal Center, signed a letter to Iceland's prime minister urging the country to try Mikson.

The letter was presented a week before Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres paid a state visit to Iceland. The Icelandic premier appeared on Icelandic television to say the matter would be dealt with by the judicial authorities.

A diplomatic source who requested anonymity said Peres had indeed taken up the issue with Icelandic leaders but said that Iceland's hands were tied because the country of 250,000 was not a party to any international treaties regarding the prosecution or extradition of war criminals.

Zuroff acknowledged that the request for a posthumous inquiry was "unconventional. But because of Mikson's popularity in Iceland, we're afraid he will be honored posthumously and this is terrible," he said.

**MAYOR SUPPORTS DAY MARKING JEWS' DEPORTATION FROM ROME**  
By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Jan. 5 (JTA) -- Rome's newly elected mayor favors making Oct. 16, the anniversary of the 1943 Nazi deportation of Jews from Rome, a national day of remembrance and commemoration.

Francesco Rutelli of the left-leaning Green Party, who recently defeated a neo-fascist candidate for mayor, said he would be the proposal's "ambassador."

But he stressed that schools and educators also had a role to play in teaching young people the tragic lessons of the past.

Rutelli made his comments in a front-page article in Wednesday's edition of the Rome daily *Il Messaggero*, in response to an open letter from a member of the Jewish community published in the same paper.

The letter to the mayor was written by Ricardo Levi, who called for the government to declare the anniversary of the deportations a day to further "tolerance among communities and respect for the life and dignity of people" as it recalls the victims of anti-Semitism.

The mayor wrote, "It is true that the history of Rome is marked by the wound opened 50 years ago on Oct. 16 by the Nazis with the deportation of the Jews to the concentration camps.

"It is a wound inflicted not only on an ancient segment of the city, the Jewish community, but on all Romans," he wrote.

Older people, he said, still remember the day, "but it is up to us to transmit the memory to the younger generations."

"It is not their fault (that they know little about this)," Rutelli wrote. But it is therefore necessary, he wrote, to forge strong links with schoolchildren "so that this Day of Memory does not simply become yet another ritual celebration."

**IMMIGRANTS FROM EX-SOVIET UNION FEEL LIKE OUTSIDERS, SURVEY SHOWS**  
By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Jan. 5 (JTA) -- Most new immigrants from the former Soviet Union feel like outsiders in Israeli society, according to a new survey.

The survey, conducted by a research firm for the Jewish Agency, questioned almost 800 adults, half of whom came to Israel in 1991 and half in 1992.

Eighty-two percent of the immigrants said they would like to feel that they are part of Israeli society, but only 8 percent report feeling this way. Sixty percent said they feel like outsiders.

Most of those who reported feeling integrated into Israeli society were those who spoke Hebrew or were students.

The immigrants said they mixed socially almost exclusively with other immigrants from their countries of origin.

A full 77 percent of the 1992 arrivals reported they had never or very seldom mixed socially with veteran Israelis. That number dropped to 61 percent among those who came the year before.

Absorption Minister Yair Tsaban said he was planning to launch an initiative this spring that would address the problem and "renew the spirit of absorption in society."