

**PEACE TALKS RESUME IN WASHINGTON
UNDER A CLOUD OF PROTECTIVE SECRECY**

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24 (JTA) -- After four months, Israeli and Arab negotiators returned here for a new round of Middle East peace talks this week.

The talks are being conducted under a new format designed to shield participants from the media scrutiny that accompanied previous rounds of negotiations.

The latest round of talks that Israel is holding separately with Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians began Monday, with meetings held at undisclosed locations here.

Previous rounds were held at the State Department and featured media "stakeouts," where waiting reporters asked negotiators questions about the progress of the talks as the diplomats entered and left the building.

This time, there were no stakeouts, and only the heads of the various delegations were expected to participate in the talks, in contrast to previous rounds, which featured larger negotiating teams.

Separate negotiations between the Israelis and Palestinians being held in the Sinai border town of Taba unexpectedly adjourned for the week on Monday, after only one day of meetings.

Israeli sources said the two sides were hoping for a breakthrough next weekend, when Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres are scheduled to meet in the Swiss town of Davos. The two met last weekend in Oslo, Norway.

In Jerusalem, meanwhile, diplomatic efforts continued on yet another track when Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa held meetings Monday with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

The Egyptians have been acting as mediators between the Israelis and Palestinians.

In Washington, the decision to hold the talks in undisclosed locations was made in an effort to give all the sides room to negotiate new positions without having to disclose every step in the bargaining to the news media.

The Washington talks are "not secret, but we have felt that they would be most productive if the emphasis was on making progress and not just on making publicity," State Department spokeswoman Christine Shelly told reporters Monday.

The United States, which is serving as co-sponsor of the Middle East peace talks along with Russia, is not participating in the negotiations between Israel and its neighboring states. But U.S. officials have expressed their willingness to step in if there is a request for their assistance.

A Real Step Forward?

Foreign Minister Peres discussed the prospects for peace between Israel and Syria in a conference call Monday with members of the American Jewish press.

"If they will specify what is peace and normal relations, it will be an important step forward," Peres said of the Syrians.

Following the meeting between President

Clinton and Syrian President Hafez Assad last week in Geneva, attention has focused on the Israeli-Syrian track, which has been stalled for four months.

The Israelis have been waiting for the Syrians to define whether they seek merely a "cold peace" or a fuller peace that would include an exchange of ambassadors, open borders and free trade.

The Syrians, meanwhile, are waiting for the Israelis to specify their plans for withdrawing from the Golan Heights.

Administration officials and some political analysts believe the Clinton-Assad meeting represented a step forward in the Israeli-Syrian waiting game.

At a news conference after the meeting, Assad uttered the word "normal" in the context of possible future relations among Middle Eastern countries -- a word trumpeted by American officials as a positive gesture on the Syrian leader's part.

But the Americans took a more optimistic view of Assad's comment than the Israelis, who remained skeptical.

Yet in a briefing in Jerusalem to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Rabin spoke of signs of new flexibility in Syria's position on the nature of a peace accord with Israel.

The prime minister stressed, however, that Syria had not budged from its demand for a complete Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

During Monday's conference call, Peres said he did not think the recent death of Assad's eldest son, Bassel -- whom Assad was apparently grooming to take his place one day -- would affect the talks in Washington.

"It is not connected in any way with the negotiations," he said of Bassel Assad's death.

The foreign minister also said he believed the Israeli people would support their government's policies in a referendum concerning a possible Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights.

Rabin announced last week that he would hold a public referendum before embarking on any "major" withdrawal from the Golan.

Talks On Security Issues Suspended

Although the spotlight here in Washington seemed to be on the Israeli-Syrian track, Israeli negotiators were also meeting here with their Jordanian, Lebanese and Palestinian counterparts.

On the Jordanian negotiating track, regarded by many as less problematic than either the Syrian or Palestinian tracks, Peres said there were no "real obstacles to arrive at a full agreement and a full peace."

The Israeli and Palestinian delegation heads, meanwhile, are not duplicating the work already under discussion by Israeli and Palestinian negotiators in Taba.

Peres explained Monday that the Taba talks deal specifically with translating September's declaration of principles signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization "into a full agreement."

The talks in Washington are dealing with other issues, such as the nature of future Pales-

tinian elections and the structure of the Palestinian elected body, Peres said.

In Taba on Monday, the Israeli-PLO negotiations focused exclusively on issues of telecommunications and media.

The director-general of Israel's Communications Ministry, Shalom Wax, led Israeli officials in detailed and technical discussions with the Palestinians on the creation of Palestinian radio and television facilities.

The negotiators at Taba avoided discussing security issues -- apparently because both sides were aware that the meeting last weekend in Oslo between Arafat and Peres, while registering significant progress, had not yet achieved the breakthroughs needed for implementation of the accord.

Among the security issues that have delayed the start of implementation, scheduled to begin Dec. 13, is the question of who will control the border crossings between the Gaza Strip and Egypt and between the West Bank town of Jericho and Jordan.

In Jerusalem, Peres told reporters after meeting with the Egyptian foreign minister that he was hopeful progress could be made with Arafat.

They will meet Saturday night in Davos, Switzerland, where regional and world leaders will be attending an economic conference.

Before then, their aides will meet to draw up a paper setting out the points of agreement and dispute that emerged from the meetings in Oslo last weekend.

(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent David Landau in Jerusalem.)

KING HUSSEIN HOLDS MEETING HERE WITH 30 AMERICAN JEWISH LEADERS By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Jan. 24 (JTA) -- In yet another sign that relations between Jordan and the American Jewish community are slowly defrosting, Jordan's King Hussein held an unprecedented meeting here with 30 American Jewish leaders.

"The main significance of the meeting is that it happened at all," said Tom Smerling, executive director of Project Nishma, the group coordinating the event.

The Jewish leaders, from both religious and policy-oriented ends of the spectrum, participated in the approximately hour-long meeting with the king, including a question-and-answer session.

During the meeting, the king, who has met with American Jewish leaders in Amman, elaborated on remarks made last Friday by his brother Crown Prince Hassan in the Israeli paper Yediot Achronot about the shape of a possible future peace between Israel and Jordan.

"He described a warm peace, which is exactly what Israeli leaders want to hear," Smerling said.

The king discussed such future possibilities as the development of the Jordan Rift Valley as one economic unit; and a road connecting Israel, Egypt and other Arab countries that would run through the Israeli port of Eilat.

Jordanian spokesman Marwan Muasher said Monday that he thought the king was "very warmly received."

The meeting, with such a diverse group of participants, "was a first for him," Muasher said of the king. "We hope it will be the start of

more" such meetings in the future, Muasher added.

"This meeting was a move to stress the need for peace now and for future generations," Warren Eisenberg, director of B'nai B'rith's International Council, said in a statement.

"I thought it was important in a general way and disappointing on specifics," said Ismar Schorsch, chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary, who also took part.

Jordanians Requested Meeting

"It was a contribution to creating a climate in which the specific negotiations will move forward," Schorsch said.

He added, however, that the king "didn't respond very directly to questions" on the Arab boycott of Israel, Islamic fundamentalism, Iran or a future Jordanian-Palestinian confederation.

Hussein was accompanied by his wife, Queen Noor, and top Jordanian officials, including Prime Minister Salam al-Majali and Fayez Tarawneh, Jordan's ambassador to Washington.

The meeting, held at Washington's Four Seasons Hotel, comes at a time when other Jewish-Jordanian taboos are also crumbling.

Last week, a group of American Reform rabbis traveled to Jordan, the first official rabbinical group to do so.

And a few weeks ago, Project Nishma organized a dinner for American Jewish leaders featuring the Israeli and Jordanian ambassadors. The event began at the Israeli Embassy and moved on to the nearby Jordanian Embassy.

The Jordanians requested that Project Nishma set up the meeting with Hussein as an outgrowth of the earlier event.

Project Nishma focuses on education programs relating to the current Middle East peace process, which it supports.

FUEL DEAL BETWEEN ISRAEL, QATAR GETS IMPETUS AT A LONDON MEETING By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Jan. 24 (JTA) -- A natural gas deal in the works between Israel and the Persian Gulf state of Qatar reportedly got a push this week in a London meeting between officials from the two countries.

The agreement is seen here as an important sign that the Arab boycott has weakened as the peace process continues.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Energy Minister Moshe Shahal reportedly met Sunday night in London with Qatar's foreign minister and his advisers to advance the deal.

Neither Israeli minister would tell reporters about the meeting.

Under the plan, natural gas would be brought to Israel, some of which would replace coal and other fossil fuels now used to operate electricity plants, while the rest would be transported to Europe.

The deal had been expected to be concluded by late last year, but Israeli media coverage of it reportedly contributed to the delay. Asked Monday, Israel's Foreign Ministry would not even confirm Peres' attendance at the London meeting.

But one ministry source who requested anonymity said that such a deal represented direct contact between Israel and an Arab country and signifies that the Arab boycott is "disappearing."

"Who knows?" the source said. "Such a deal might be remembered as a historic turning point."

ANTI-SEMITIC ASSAULTS IN U.S. UP, BUT VANDALISM IS DOWN, ADL REPORTS

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Jan. 24 (JTA) -- The number of anti-Semitic assaults, threats and harassments in the United States reported to the Anti-Defamation League rose again last year, continuing an upward trend begun in 1985 that was interrupted only in 1992.

The 1,079 incidents reported in 1993 are more than triple the 306 reported eight years earlier and the most since ADL began tabulating such events in 1980.

But the year also saw the third straight decline in the number of reported incidents of anti-Semitic vandalism and graffiti. They totaled 788, according to the 1993 Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents released by ADL this week.

ADL explains these numbers as reflecting a greater vigilance toward anti-Semitic vandalism by Jews and the police, on the one hand, and a greater willingness by anti-Semites to indulge their hatred in daylight.

"There's been a dramatic increase in what we call 'in-your-face' anti-Semitism," said ADL National Director Abraham Foxman.

"This is more frightening, more confrontational, more devastating, and in terms of the trauma to the individual, the family and the community affected, much more significant than a swastika on the building," he said.

At the same time, the 1,079 reported anti-Semitic assaults and harassments, none of which involved fatality, is roughly the same as the number of American Jews killed in car accidents, assuming traffic fatalities are distributed evenly along religious and ethnic lines.

Nonetheless, Foxman believes the audit, which he calls the most significant barometer of anti-Semitism in this country, has an important message.

"I remember when we first came out with the report and somebody said, 'Big deal, in a country of 200 million people, there are 200 incidents,' " said Foxman.

'Troublesome And Disconcerting'

"Tell that to the people affected," he added. "What would be horrendous? How do you quantify it? I don't think there's a rampant epidemic, but it's there, in sufficient numbers to be troublesome and disconcerting.

"The fact it continues to rise is also a troubling element," he said.

It is unclear whether the increase reflects increased hatred or merely more thorough reporting of anti-Semitic attacks.

"We think it's a constant," said Foxman. "It's the same coefficient of non-reporting."

He believes that what is at play is an increasing tolerance of hatred in American society.

A similar explanation for the apparent contradiction between declining attitudes of anti-Semitism and the increasing number of anti-Semitic acts was offered by Jerome Chanes, co-director for domestic concerns of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

"Among those relatively few people who hold anti-Semitic attitudes or views or beliefs, there's been a greater propensity in recent years to act out their beliefs," said Chanes.

How people are acting out those beliefs, as reflected in the ADL survey, runs the gamut from a brick thrown through a window displaying a

family's Chanukah decorations in Billings, Mont., to a man yelling "Jew" at a mourner leaving a cemetery in Framingham, Mass.; from an anti-Semitic letter sent to a newly elected Denver City Council member to 25 cemetery desecrations, eight of them in Ohio.

The variety of incidents adds to the uncertainty surrounding the number: When hundreds of swastikas were painted on institutions and buildings in Washington, D.C. over two days, and when hundreds of anti-Semitic leaflets were delivered to Jews in Teaneck, N.J., each was counted as only one incident.

Still, certain trends seem clear.

The good news is that while neo-Nazi skin-heads were proven responsible for a dozen incidents in eight states, that represents a substantial decline from five years ago.

"They've become more of a target for law enforcement," said Foxman. He pointed out that eight of them were arrested for plotting to blow up a black church and assassinate black and Jewish leaders in Southern California.

But a clearly worrisome trend was the continued increase in incidents reported on campus. There were 122 such incidents reported on 81 campuses, up from 114 on 60 campuses last year and more than double the 1988 figures.

Parallels Hard Economic Times

These include high-profile anti-Semitism in the guise of academic discussion, such as speeches by Nation of Islam official Khalid Abdul Muhammad and advertisements placed in college newspapers by Holocaust denier Bradley Smith, as well as violent acts such as a brick thrown through the front window of the Hillel building at Michigan State University. Also reported were dozens of swastikas scrawled in campus lavatories, in elevators and on bulletin boards.

For the third year in a row, the number of incidents of vandalism against public property outnumbered those against synagogues and other Jewish institutions by more than 2 to 1. Interestingly, the volume of anti-Semitic vandalism -- the most public and most widely reported sort of incident -- has tracked a course over the 13 years that ADL has been issuing its audit rather similar to that of hard economic times.

The fewest reported incidents came in 1986, at the peak of the Reagan-era economic boom. It rose again starting in 1987, the year of the stock market crash, and peaked in 1990 at the height of the economic recession.

Foxman said that while historically the linkage between economic troubles and anti-Semitism is clear, "I'm not sure it's susceptible to such precise fluctuations. These were dips and recessions. I'll leave that to the sociologists."

The increased attention being paid to security by the Jewish community and the increasing chance of prosecution for vandals "probably accounts for the downturn more than anything else," he said.

And while two-thirds of the states now have laws increasing the penalties for hate crimes, "it's too early to correlate the impact," said Foxman. He observed that many of the incidents are not in themselves crimes.

Not surprisingly, reported incidents were highest in the states with the most Jews: 273 in New York, 234 in New Jersey, 195 in Florida, 191 in California and 189 in Massachusetts.

Nevada, North Carolina and Arkansas had no reported anti-Semitic incidents.

COLLABORATOR TOUVIER TO BE TRIED IN FRANCE FOR CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, Jan. 24 (JTA) -- French wartime collaborator Paul Touvier will go on trial for crimes against humanity on March 17 in the Versailles Court of Justice.

Touvier, 79, was the intelligence chief of the collaborationist Vichy regime's militia in Lyon during World War II. He was twice sentenced in absentia to death following the war.

But he managed to avoid arrest for 25 years by seeking refuge in French convents that showed sympathy to right-wing causes.

His Catholic supporters eventually succeeded in convincing then President Georges Pompidou to pardon him in the early 1970s.

Although kept secret, the pardon was discovered a few months later by former members of the French Resistance, and the case was given wide publicity in the media.

New charges were subsequently pressed against Touvier, who again returned to hiding.

Touvier was finally arrested in 1989 at a convent in Nice and jailed until 1991, when he was released because of reported bad health.

Touvier will now be tried on only one count: He admittedly picked seven Jewish hostages who were shot on June 29, 1944 in the southeastern town of Rillieux-la-Pape to avenge the murder of Philippe Henriot, the Vichy propaganda minister.

Families of other Jewish victims had sought to have Touvier brought up on additional charges, but the courts ruled that those charges would fall under the category of war crimes, which are covered by the statute of limitations.

Deported Jews From Unoccupied Areas

In March, Touvier will face charges of crimes against humanity, which do not fall under the statute of limitations.

Touvier is currently free on bail, but he must report his whereabouts to the police on a regular basis.

Touvier was the third French citizen charged with crimes against humanity.

The first was Maurice Papon, a senior official in the Vichy Interior Ministry who ordered the arrest and deportation of hundreds of Jews, including children, in the Bordeaux area.

By virtue of his actions, France became the only European country to arrest and deport Jews from areas that were not occupied by the Nazis.

French Nazi-hunter Serge Klarsfeld said the French judicial authorities are doing their best to delay the Papon case. "The judges are afraid to throw the case out of court, and at the same time they will not put Papon on trial," he said.

Papon was indicted over 12 years ago, but due to technicalities he was never brought to trial.

Papon later became head of the Paris police and served as a Cabinet minister under President Valery Giscard d'Estaing.

Another French citizen charged with crimes against humanity was Rene Bousquet, the Vichy chief of police. He ordered the infamous "Vel d'Hiver" roundup of Jews in Paris in 1942.p.

Bousquet was murdered last June by a non-Jewish man deemed mentally unbalanced by police authorities.

Gestapo police chief Klaus Barbie, a German, was sentenced in 1987 by a French court to life imprisonment for crimes against humanity. He died of cancer in a French prison in 1991.

SPIELBERG AND HIS 'SCHINDLER'S LIST' TAKE TOP HONORS AT GOLDEN GLOBE AWARDS

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 24 (JTA) -- In what is being considered a rosy augury for this spring's Academy Awards, Steven Spielberg's Holocaust epic, "Schindler's List" has taken top honors at the Golden Globe Awards for 1993's best dramatic film, director and screenplay.

It is now believed that the riveting film made about the true story of a scoundrel who saved 1,100 Jews from the Nazis may in fact break Spielberg's career-long failure to garner an Oscar as best director.

"Now I can breathe again," Spielberg said Saturday night after accepting the statuette for his direction of the haunting film about a Nazi businessman who saved Jews during the Holocaust by employing them in necessary and not-so-necessary war endeavors.

Spielberg told the 1,200-member audience that "Schindler's List" was "the experience of my motion picture career," as the audience rose in a standing ovation.

"It is so painful to remember and so easy to forget. Thank God, so many of you are remembering. This is dedicated to the survivors," he said.

Afterward, at a backstage news conference, Spielberg said, "I would trade three 'Jurassic Parks' "-- his recent record-breaking fantasy film about dinosaurs -- "for all the letters I've been getting since ('Schindler's List') opened.

'My Obligation' To Those Who Died

"This is much more important. I can always go out and make an adventure film," said Spielberg, whose phenomenally successful career has been built mostly on fantasies for young and old such as "E.T.," "Close Encounters of the Third Kind," the "Poltergeist" movies and the "Indiana Jones" trilogy.

When Spielberg was asked about the laughter the film provoked among rowdy high school students in Oakland, Calif., Spielberg told reporters, "A lot of kids are so desensitized to violence. Too many kids don't know what the word 'Holocaust' means."

Although commercially the most successful filmmaker in motion picture history, Spielberg had never won any of Hollywood's major film prizes.

With the 51st annual Golden Globe Awards, conferred by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, and general acclaim by critics, "Schindler's List" and Spielberg are the odds-on favorites to pick up Oscars at the March 21 Oscars.

Sharing in the "Schindler's List" honors were co-producer Branko Lustig, a Holocaust survivor, and screenwriter Steven Zaillian, whose work is based faithfully on the book by Australian writer Thomas Keneally.

Lustig, a survivor of Auschwitz, said that "during my stay in the concentration camp, every time somebody died and every time someone was hanged in front of us, they all said one thing: 'Don't forget us. If you survive, tell the world our story of how we died.'"

"I am very grateful" that this film fulfills "my obligation to all the people who died in the concentration camps," Spielberg said.

The youthful director and producer also paid tribute to Poldek Pfefferberg, one of the so-called "Schindler Jews," who in his postwar career as Beverly Hills businessman Leopold Page persisted until Schindler's story was shared with the world.