

**SOME PROGRESS REPORTED ON RESTARTING ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN PEACE NEGOTIATIONS**
By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, March 22 (JTA) -- An Israeli team in Tunis has achieved some progress in its efforts to restart the Israeli-Palestinian peace talks.

The talks were derailed following the murder of at least 29 Muslims by an Israeli settler in Hebron last month.

Since then, the Palestine Liberation Organization has been demanding international protection for the Palestinians, the dismantling of Jewish settlements in Hebron and the disarming of settlers as prerequisites to resuming talks on Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank.

On Tuesday, the Israeli negotiators, headed by army Deputy Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. Amnon Shahak, returned home for consultations. They were expected to continue shortly to Cairo, where they would be joined by PLO officials.

Also taking part in the Tunis talks and expected to be in Cairo are Dennis Ross, the United States special envoy, and Norway's deputy foreign minister, Terje Roed Larsen.

Larsen was actively involved in the secret talks in Oslo that led to the declaration of principles signed by Israel and the PLO last September.

Larsen has presented plans to meet PLO demands for increased security for Palestinians living on the West Bank, particularly in Hebron.

Israel is reportedly prepared to accept an arrangement that would include joint patrols comprising an Israeli, a Palestinian and a foreign observer, with command of each such group being vested in the Israeli officer.

Also acceptable to Israel is a municipal police force in Hebron, again under Israeli control. This latter point has not been accepted by the Palestinians.

Nonetheless, PLO sources in Tunis echoed Israeli optimism Tuesday, suggesting that if all goes well, PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat and Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres would meet in Cairo on Friday.

The same sources said that Israel has agreed to transfer a few dozen families from Hebron to the nearby settlement of Kiryat Arba.

ARABS HINT AT MORE THAN ONE GUNMAN IN TESTIMONY BEFORE HEBRON COMMISSION
By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, March 22 (JTA) -- Appearing for the first time before the state commission investigating the Hebron massacre, a dozen Arab witnesses gave indication that there may have been more than one gunman.

They did not, however, report having seen two people firing.

Their appearance before the official state commission of inquiry marked the reversal of an earlier decision by Palestinians to boycott the hearings.

Throughout the panel's deliberations, a central question has been whether or not a Jewish settler, Dr. Baruch Goldstein, acted alone in killing at least 29 Muslim worshipers on Feb. 25.

The initial army investigation concluded that he had.

But last week two Israeli soldiers gave testimony that supported the possibility that Goldstein had an accomplice.

In this week's testimony, several Arab witnesses, some of whom had been wounded in the attack, reported shots coming from more than one direction. One witness mentioned grenades having been thrown.

The two Supreme Court justices on the panel conducted most of the questioning, relentlessly probing discrepancies between what was being said before them and other testimony taken immediately after the events by police and civil rights investigators.

The two judges were also obviously irritated by what they suspected as prior coordination of the witnesses' testimony.

A witness, asked point blank about it, denied that any coordination had occurred.

Nevertheless, the presence of the Palestinians and their readiness to testify freely through an interpreter seemed to represent a vote of confidence in the Israeli commission.

The commission is chaired by Chief Justice Meir Shamgar and includes another Supreme Court judge, an Arab District Court judge, an academic and a former army chief of staff.

Last week, officials with Hebron's Islamic religious council, or Wakf, ignored a summons to appear before the panel, apparently bowing to pressure from their more extreme colleagues in Jerusalem.

The presence of Tuesday's witnesses is seen as the direct outcome of an appeal to them by the Palestine Liberation Organization, anxious to cooperate in this matter.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:**AMERICAN VOTE IN U.N. HIGHLIGHTED DIFFERENCES BETWEEN U.S. JEWS, ISRAEL**

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, March 22 (JTA) -- As soon as the U.N. Security Council passed a resolution condemning the Hebron massacre, American Jewish groups rushed to condemn the United Nations for referring to Jerusalem as occupied territory.

And many deplored the failure of the United States to veto the resolution, even though it abstained -- in a highly unusual and demonstrative manner -- from the paragraph containing that reference and later voiced its strong objection to the language.

But the quick condemnations were only part of the story.

Before the vote, neither of the two most powerful Jewish voices in Washington -- that of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations -- pressed the administration for a veto.

Other groups did ask for a veto, including the U.S. Senate, which unanimously passed a resolution to that effect.

But this time the American Jewish leadership heeded the request of an important concerned party -- Israel. The Israeli government wanted the U.N. resolution to pass.

Israeli officials were grateful for the political gains achieved by the Senate measure, similar congressional letters and some pressure from American Jewish groups.

But they were also somewhat concerned that these measures might actually succeed in torpedoing the Security Council resolution.

The resolution's wording had been hammered out between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the United States with constant consultation with Israel. And for Israel, it was one of the smallest prices the PLO was demanding for returning to the negotiating table.

Talks between Israel and the PLO were abruptly cut off after a Jewish settler gunned down at least 29 Arabs in a Hebron mosque on Feb. 25.

"We want this resolution behind us so we can focus on the peace talks," said an Israeli official prior to the vote, expressing the official view.

The pressure on the White House "is all internal Jewish politics," said the official. "We were not encouraging them, we were not asking them to do so. Rabin didn't ask Clinton to veto the resolution."

More than anything else, the need for Israeli officials to tell American Jewish groups not to lobby for a veto -- and the desire of some groups, and many congressional supporters of Israel to fight for a veto anyway -- highlights the fact that American Jews are no longer just echoes of the Jerusalem side of the U.S.-Israel relationship.

Instead, they constitute a third point in what has become a triangular relationship.

Differing Priorities

And the differences that arose over the U.N. resolution reflected the differences between American Jewish and Israeli priorities.

For one thing, American Jews attach much greater significance to the power of words than do the Israelis.

For Israelis, the reaction to a U.N. condemnation has long been: "So what?" That was particularly true this time, when the offending language had been approved by the Security Council 15 months earlier, and this time was only in the preamble.

For American Jewish groups for whom the weapon of choice is the press release, however, words are much more important.

Also relevant was that while Israel had its eyes on how the PLO would respond, American Jewish groups had their eyes on the White House.

They were concerned that the Clinton administration not backtrack from previous promises about Jerusalem and the territories.

"Any diminution of the position articulated before by the president obviously will be seen with concern," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents, explaining the concern his group expressed to the administration prior to the U.N. vote.

Clinton had during his 1992 campaign attacked then-President Bush for approving objectionable language in Security Council resolutions. During last fall's General Assembly sessions, the United States voted against resolutions on the grounds that they included Jerusalem among the "occupied territories."

The flurry of Jewish activism in Washington last week may have also reflected the fissures between some in the organized American Jewish community and the Labor government in Israel. Some in the community here are concerned that Rabin's government is conceding too much to the Arabs in the peace talks.

And it foreshadowed conflicts that could arise in the event that Israel deviates from the position, restated by Rabin in Washington last week, that Jerusalem is Israel's eternal, undivided capital.

"When it comes to Jerusalem, there is a general consensus that world Jewry has the right to take positions," said Hoenlein.

Language Was The Smallest Problem

But as far as the Israelis were concerned, language referring to Jerusalem was the least of the problems in the lengthy consultations over the Security Council resolution.

Israel's first priority had been ensuring that the call for an international force to protect Palestinians was in keeping with the terms of the Israeli-PLO accord -- which called for an international presence -- and not the sort of armed peacekeeping troops favored by the Palestinians.

The other Israeli priority was to ensure that passage of the resolution would indeed bring the PLO back to the negotiating table.

But the PLO repeatedly refused to commit to resuming the talks, delaying the vote on the resolution for more than a week.

That gave time for American Jewish concern over the Jerusalem issue to percolate.

A move to call for a veto was voted down in AIPAC's executive committee, after the group was made aware of Israeli opposition to a veto.

The Conference of Presidents issued a statement saying it was "absolutely opposed" to the language referring to Jerusalem. But its absolute opposition did not extend to asking for a veto.

But the Zionist Organization of America and, at the 11th hour last Friday, the Anti-Defamation League, came out for a veto.

For the Israeli government and its American supporters, the congressional resolution was a good thing -- as long as the White House did not heed it.

Among some of those who supported the call for a veto, however, one could detect strong reservations as to the Israeli government's judgment on how to best advance the peace process.

So, after the vote, how do the Israelis view American Jewish involvement on the issue?

"I think they were concerned that American Jews were unable to grasp the difficulty of the choice, and that at least some American Jews were inclined to put symbolic action above the peace process," said one person familiar with Israeli thinking.

"But in the end they were pleased in the way the leadership of the Jewish community acted, which was by and large in accord with the way the government wanted."

RABIN ASKS POPE TO USE INFLUENCE TO HELP RESTART MIDEAST PEACE TALKS

By Ruth E. Gruber

VATICAN CITY, March 22 (JTA) -- When Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin met here last week with Pope John Paul II, he asked the pontiff to use the Vatican's influence with the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Arab states to get the Middle East peace process back on track.

Rabin's request during the March 17 Vatican visit marked a remarkable turnabout in relations between Jerusalem and the Holy See, who until recently had no formal relations. Israel has long been wary of the Vatican's pro-Palestinian leanings.

Rabin told reporters after the meeting that he had not asked the pope to initiate any specific diplomatic moves. But he said he believed the Vatican "can have a moral influence on many countries and many people" and thus put pressure on the Arabs to resume the negotiations.

Rabin also said that Israel would consider in principle withdrawal of troops from the Golan Heights if Israel's security was assured, and said Israel is considering further measures against both Jewish and Arab extremists in the wake of last month's massacre of at least 29 Palestinians at a Hebron mosque by an Israeli settler.

Rabin, en route back to Israel from Washington, met for half an hour with the pope at the Vatican -- a meeting Rabin had requested. It was the first such visit by an Israeli head of state since the Vatican and Israel signed an agreement Dec. 30 paving the way for full diplomatic ties.

Boosting Vatican Role In Peace Process

"Rabin informed the Holy Father about his talks in Washington and explained everything that was said there," Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro Valls said after the meeting. "But the main topic was to boost the role of the Holy See in the peace process," he said.

"It has to be studied, but everything is open," he said. "Certainly the Holy See's relations with the Arab countries could help."

Rabin's meeting with the pope coincided with a visit of the Vatican foreign minister, Monsignor Jean-Louis Tauran, to Tunisia and Libya, in which he met with PLO officials and local leaders.

Navarro said the timing of Tauran's trip was purely coincidental. "I would not say that this is a new initiative of the Holy See," but rather development of existing policy, Navarro said. "Tauran has traveled earlier" in Arab countries.

Navarro, who characterized Rabin's meeting with the pope as "very cordial," said both parties were firm about "doing whatever possible to further the peace process in the Middle East, in spite of the recent regrettable incidents and also the difficulty posed by those who in every way want to thwart it or make it fail."

He said Rabin "recognized and underlined the positive role that the Holy See is now playing in emphasizing the fundamental values of peace, justice and human rights, and the peaceful coexistence among peoples."

Rabin also renewed Israel's invitation for a papal visit Israel. No specific dates were given, but a Vatican spokesman said the pope accepted the invitation "with sincere hope that circumstances will permit him to make this desired visit."

ROBERT MANNING 'GRIEF-STRICKEN' WHEN TOLD OF WIFE'S DEATH IN ISRAEL

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, March 22 (JTA) -- Robert Manning, the militant American-Israeli recently sentenced here to life imprisonment for murder, was described as "distraught and grief-stricken" after being notified that his wife Rochelle had died in an Israeli prison, apparently of a heart attack.

Rabbi Zvi Block, a close friend and adviser, reported the response after visiting Manning in a federal detention center in Los Angeles, where he has begun serving his sentence.

Last October, Manning was convicted of complicity in the 1980 mail-bomb murder of a Los Angeles secretary.

Rochelle Manning, who was 54, was to have been tried here on the same charges in July. Shortly before her death, the Israeli High Court of Justice had rejected the last of a series of appeals to block her extradition to the United States.

Robert Manning, 43, was notified of his wife's death early Friday morning by prison authorities, who offered him medication and psychological counseling. Shortly afterward he was visited by his four sisters, all local residents.

Asks For Delayed Transfer To Say Kaddish

Manning has been awaiting transfer to a maximum-security prison in Florence, Colo., but has now asked for permission to remain here temporarily to observe the traditional seven days of mourning at the detention center.

He also faces the problem of how to say the Kaddish for his wife without a minyan, said Block.

Attorney Richard Sherman, who defended Robert Manning at his trial, said he had not filed a petition for Manning to return to Israel for his wife's funeral on Monday, because "there was absolutely no chance that he would be released."

In addition, Sherman said, Manning would have had to pay for the airfare and expenses, running up to \$30,000, for at least two federal marshals to accompany him to Israel.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Dean Dunlavey, who prosecuted the Manning case, concurred with Sherman's assessment.

Rochelle Manning was buried on Monday in the Old Cemetery in Hebron after a magistrate's court ruled that there should be no autopsy.

Police told the court there was no reason to suspect foul play in the woman's sudden death. Her family opposed an autopsy on religious grounds, the court was told.

Earlier on Monday it was reported that Manning's family wanted her to be buried alongside Dr. Baruch Goldstein, who last month gunned down 29 Palestinians at a Hebron mosque.

Goldstein has been laid temporarily to rest in the Meir Kahane park in Kiryat Arba, a settlement near Hebron.

Rochelle Manning, who along with her husband had been a follower of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane and an early member of his Jewish Defense League, was said by her fellow inmates at the Neve Tirza women's jail to have been in deep mourning for Goldstein, also a follower of Kahane.

(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Dvorah Getzler in Jerusalem.)

SPIELBERG SAYS 'REMEMBER HOLOCAUST' AS HE ACCEPTS AWARDS FOR 'SCHINDLER'

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, March 22 (JTA) -- Steven Spielberg made an emotional plea to not forget the Holocaust as he accepted one of the seven Academy Awards bestowed on his film, "Schindler's List."

There are 350,000 survivors alive, who can still bear witness to the Holocaust, said Spielberg, adding, "These are 350,000 experts who just want to be useful for the remainders of their lives. I implore all educators, do not let the Holocaust remain a footnote in history. Listen to the words, the echoes, the ghosts."

Spielberg also could not mask his satisfaction at finally winning the coveted Oscar, an award that had eluded him until now.

As expected, "Schindler's List," the powerful film about a German Nazi party member who saved 1,200 Jews during the Holocaust, dominated the 66th Academy Awards by taking the Oscars for best picture, director, adapted screenplay, art direction, cinematography, film editing and original musical score.

The triumph was sweet for the 46-year-old Spielberg, nominated as best director three times before without getting the nod. The point was not lost on Spielberg, who alluded to "the best drink of water after the longest drought in my life" in his acceptance remarks.

The evening's proceedings were made even sweeter, when Spielberg's "other" 1993 movie, the monster hit "Jurassic Park," won three Academy awards for visual effects, sound and sound-effects editing.

What little tension the three-hour show provided came early on, when "Schindler's List," after winning the evening's lead-off Oscar for art direction, had to wait for an hour to pick up the second prize for original musical score.

"Schindler's List" was nominated in 12 categories and some enthusiastic critics had predicted that the picture might take the whole lot, setting a new Hollywood record.

In his two brief acceptance speeches, one as director, the other as co-producer of the best picture, Spielberg paid tribute to Poldek Pfefferberg, one of the "Schindler Jews," who persuaded Thomas Keneally to write the book and Spielberg to make the movie. He also dedicated the film "to the 6 million who can't be watching among the 1 billion viewers tonight."

Even more dramatic were the acceptance remarks by the film's co-producer, Branko Lustig. "My number is A 3317," he said. "I am a Holocaust survivor. It is a long way from Auschwitz to this stage. I saw many people die and their last words were, 'Be a witness to my murder. Tell the world how I died. Remember.'"

"I hope I have fulfilled my obligation to the 6 million Jews killed in the Shoah and to other Nazi victims," Lustig said.

As an odd sidelight to the global acclaim for "Schindler's List," it was revealed Monday that the government of Malaysia has banned the film, partially on the grounds that it is too sympathetic to the Jews and too beastly to the Nazis.

In a letter to the film's international dis-

tributor, the Malaysian film censor noted that "the story of the film reflects the privilege and the virtues of a certain race only."

After describing scenes showing Nazi brutalities against Jews, the censor objected that "it seems the illustration is a propaganda with the purpose of asking for sympathy, as well as to tarnish the other (German) race."

A translated copy of the Malaysian letter was obtained by Neil Sandberg, director of the American Jewish Committee's Pacific Rim Institute, who sent a protest letter to Malaysian Ambassador Dato Abdul Majid Mohamed.

Sandberg asked for a reversal of the ban and said the suggestion that "Schindler's List" is "a self-serving propaganda picture seeking to gain sympathy for the Jews is a moral outrage."

Malaysia, a predominantly Muslim country, had a similar reaction in 1984, when Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic were planning to give a number of concerts in Malaysia.

The program was to include a work on Hebraic themes by Jewish composer Ernest Bloch. The Malaysian government asked that the piece be deleted. Instead, Mehta canceled the tour.

UJA YOUNG LEADERSHIP URGES U.S. TO SECURE RETURN OF ISRAELI MIAS

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, March 22 (JTA) -- In a demonstration of continued concern for the fate of Israeli soldiers missing in action, Jewish leaders presented a top Congressional official this week with a petition urging U.S. action to secure the return of the MIAs.

On Tuesday, a delegation from the United Jewish Appeal's Young Leadership Cabinet presented House Majority Leader Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.) with a petition urging the United States to "redouble its efforts to secure the return of the Israeli MIAs and POWs and to end the terrible suffering of their families."

The petition was signed by 2,600 delegates attending UJA's Ninth National Young Leadership Conference here this week.

A UJA statement said that Gephardt promised the group that he would take the petition to the State Department and urge the administration to push forward on the MIA issue.

The issue of the Israeli MIAs has come to the fore in recent months, as MIA family members have visited the United States and urged U.S. officials to play an active part in trying to ascertain the fates of the soldiers, some of whom have been missing for over a decade.

Israel views resolution of the MIA issue as an important part of the Mideast peace process.

The MIAs include Ron Arad, captured in Lebanon in 1986, and Zacharia Baumel, Avi Feldman and Yehuda Katz, who disappeared during a tank battle in Lebanon in 1982. Arad is believed to have the best chance of being alive.

The UJA petition said that the United States "must insist that the governments of Syria and Lebanon and the PLO (Palestine Liberation Organization) cooperate fully to provide all information relating to MIAs and POWs."

It also called on the United States to continue working with European, Mideastern and other governments, and the United Nations, to resolve the issue.