

**HAMAS LAUNCHES ATTACK ON SETTLERS  
FOLLOWING CONFRONTATION IN HEBRON**  
By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, May 17 (JTA) -- The Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement has claimed responsibility for an attack on Jewish settlers Tuesday that left two dead and a third seriously wounded.

The incident was the first terrorist attack on Israelis since Palestinian self-rule went into effect in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho.

And although it did not occur in either of those two areas, the attack threatened to upset the otherwise smooth transfer of authority that has taken place over the past week.

According to a spokesman for Hamas, which opposes the Israeli-Palestinian self-rule agreement, the attack was in retribution for the wounding of 19 Palestinians by Jewish settlers the day before in the West Bank town of Hebron. In that incident, Arab residents of Hebron clashed with a group of yeshiva students who had hiked there to mark the holiday of Shavuot.

Tuesday's killings occurred when members of the Izz a-Din al-Kassam brigade, the armed wing of Hamas, opened fire from a speeding car on a family of Israelis in a passing car.

The attack took place Tuesday morning near the settlement of Beit Haggai, on the road linking Beersheba and Kiryat Arba, a Jewish settlement on the outskirts of Hebron.

The fatalities have been identified as Margalit Shohat, 46, of Ma'alch Levana, the driver of the car, and her son-in-law Yair Rafael, 35, of Kiryat Arba, who was sitting next to her.

Shohat's daughter, Yael Na'ama, 21, who was sitting in the rear seat, was shot in the head and operated on at Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem.

**New Curfew Imposed On Hebron**

The three had been holidaying in the Gush Katif area of the Gaza Strip over the Shavuot weekend.

Lt. Gen. Ehud Barak, the Israel Defense Force chief of staff, rushed to the site of the attack and called on all who are licensed to carry weapons to do so and to help the army guard civilians in the territories.

The incident in Hebron occurred Monday, when a group of yeshiva students went to say prayers for the Shavuot holiday. Stones apparently were hurled at the yeshiva students as they reached the city's central square. The students opened fire, following which larger and angrier crowds of Palestinians appeared.

When the army arrived, it sought to control the crowd with tear gas and rubber bullets. But the yeshiva students apparently continued firing. Two of them were subsequently arrested and held for questioning.

Four of the wounded Palestinians were said to be seriously injured. Many of the injured were children.

The army later imposed a curfew on Hebron, which has been the site of ongoing violence and

tension following the Feb. 25 killing of at least 19 Palestinians by an Israeli settler.

During a Cabinet meeting Tuesday, Barak was criticized for permitting the yeshiva students to walk through the city. According to Israeli radio, several Cabinet ministers labeled the presence of the students there a "provocation."

Leading the assault on Barak were Environment Minister Yossi Sarid and Immigrant Absorption Minister Yair Tsaban, both members of the left-wing Meretz bloc.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin condemned the yeshiva students' hike and their firing at Palestinians in the ensuing clash as "quite unjustified."

**'The Price Israel Will Pay'**

But for Israel's opposition, the Hamas killing was but "the first installment of the price Israel will pay for giving up Jericho," as Rafael Eitan, leader of the right-wing Tsomet party, put it.

Tsaban sharply criticized the students' hike, whose goal was to visit the reputed graves of the biblical figures Ruth and Jesse, sites intimately associated with the Shavuot festival.

"If we carry on with this artificial worship of so-called ancient tombs, it's fresh graves that we're going to create here -- and that's got to be stopped," he said.

Replying to the criticism, Barak said the IDF had acted according to the guidelines it had received from the government, which permit Kiryat Arba residents to enter Hebron armed.

Tuesday's killings occurred the same day that the IDF officially handed over Gaza to the Palestine Liberation Organization.

In a brief ceremony in Gaza City, Zakaria al-Agha, a member of the Palestinian council that will govern Gaza, and IDF Maj. Gen. Dov Gazit signed a two-page document written in English that formally acknowledged the transfer.

The final IDF pullout from Gaza and the subsequent transfer of authority to the Palestinians was scheduled to take place Wednesday. Israel was initially prepared to complete its withdrawal Tuesday, but it apparently agreed to wait an extra day to give the Palestinians time to move their newly created police force into place.

*(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Hugh Orgel in Tel Aviv.)*

**REMARKS ATTRIBUTED TO ARAFAT  
COULD DERAIL THE PEACE PROCESS**  
By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, May 17 (JTA) -- A taped speech attributed to Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat has the potential to derail entirely the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians.

That is what Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told reporters Tuesday after meeting with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who was in the Middle East on his second attempt this month to restart the long-stalled Israeli-Syrian negotiations.

A tape of the speech, which Arafat report-

edly made in a South African mosque last week, was broadcast Tuesday on Israel Radio. It called upon the Arab world to enter upon a "jihad," or holy war, to gain control of Jerusalem.

"Jerusalem is not for the Palestinian people, it is for all the Muslim people," a voice sounding like Arafat's said. "Our main battle is Jerusalem."

The speech purportedly was made by Arafat during a visit last week to South Africa, where he attended the inauguration of President Nelson Mandela. The speech was made during a closed meeting in a mosque, but a tape of it was sent to Israel Radio by a local Jewish resident.

Rabin said that if Arafat had indeed made the speech, it "would put a question mark over the continuation of the peace process between us and the Palestinians."

The prime minister added that the comments, if they were Arafat's, would represent a "serious violation" of written agreements exchanged between Israel and the PLO that led the way to the signing of the self-rule accord last September in Washington.

The speech also included the claim that Arafat had received written assurances in a letter from Rabin that the status of Jerusalem would be open for discussion between Israel and the Palestinians within three years after the signing of the autonomy implementation accord this month in Cairo. Rabin denied that he had ever given Arafat such a letter.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said that he had been "horrified" by the speech. It would not pass unanswered, he vowed.

The foreign minister was scheduled to travel Wednesday to Oslo, where he was due to meet with Arafat. He said he would ask the PLO leader for a clarification of the remarks.

#### NEWS ANALYSIS:

#### SYRIA SHOWING SIGNS OF FLEXIBILITY AS CHRISTOPHER PUSHES FOR PROGRESS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 17 (JTA) -- Syria has now agreed to the principle of Israel withdrawing in stages from the Golan Heights.

But beyond that principle, all else in the long-deadlocked negotiations between the two countries remains in dispute.

Nevertheless, both sides and their American go-between, Secretary of State Warren Christopher, are cautiously pleased with what has been achieved this week, and all are anxious for the talks to continue.

As a result, Christopher decided Tuesday to return to Damascus for a third and unscheduled session with Syrian leaders this week.

This rough, composite picture of the status of the negotiations, based on Israeli and American sources, emerged during the secretary's meetings here Tuesday with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

Christopher also made time to visit the newly autonomous town of Jericho, where he met with Palestinian leaders and voiced his pleasure that the accord Israel signed with the Palestine Liberation Organization in Cairo two weeks ago is moving quickly toward full implementation.

Syria's agreement to a phased Israeli withdrawal from the Golan -- one that reportedly would take place over three years -- was pub-

lished last weekend in the government-sponsored Syrian press.

But according to those same reports, Syria is still demanding a prior commitment from Israel for a total withdrawal from the strategic plateau. And Syria has refused to embark on measures toward normalization until that withdrawal is completed.

At least as important as the specific details in these reports is the fact that the Syrian government is providing -- for the first time -- relatively upbeat press "leaks" during a round of shuttle diplomacy.

According to highly placed Israeli sources, the Syrians are clearly intent on creating a positive atmosphere surrounding Christopher's efforts. But it remains to be seen whether their purpose is merely to gratify the go-between or also to issue positive signals to the Israelis.

#### A Slow Inching Forward

Israel's ambassador to Washington, Itamar Rabinovich, head of the long-stalled bilateral negotiations with Syria, said Tuesday that Christopher had brought to Jerusalem a series of point-by-point Syrian responses to Israeli questions and requests for clarification.

While there was no breakthrough, there was a slow inching forward, the envoy said.

Christopher himself dismissed suggestions Tuesday that his shuttling and the failure to reconvene the bilateral talks in Washington represented "a regression" in the peace process.

The American secretary characterized the talks this week as "more fundamental than before," adding that they had entered "a new, substantive phase."

Observers in the region and in Washington have long pondered the nature of the symbiosis between the Syrian and Palestinian negotiating tracks in the peace negotiations.

Conventional wisdom has had it that progress on one track would spur progress on the other. According to this theory, the recent Israeli-PLO agreement can now serve as a catalyst on the Syrian track.

Perhaps paradoxically, though, the opposite may equally be true: Problems, or anticipated problems, on one track may fuel expectations of progress on the other.

But there is no contradiction here. The two arguments may underlie the present U.S. push for progress between Jerusalem and Damascus.

Having notched up a major success on the Palestinian track with the implementation of autonomy in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho, the Israeli government may now wish to move more slowly with the Palestinians and give autonomy more time to be tested.

The Americans and the Syrians may expect, at any rate, that this is Israel's game plan.

But the Rabin government, with peace as its main policy plank, cannot allow both peace tracks to proceed slowly. As a result, whether triggered by the success of the new autonomy agreement or by fears of imminent paralysis on the Palestinian track, new and powerful political momentum is now being channeled into the Syrian track.

Christopher was at pains as he set out on this week's shuttle to keep expectations muted. But he was equally anxious to signal that he intends to come back -- many more times.

## JEWISH GROUPS POSITIVE ON BREYER, BUT NOT MUCH KNOWN ABOUT HIS VIEWS

By Steven Weiss

WASHINGTON, May 17 (JTA) -- Jewish groups have reacted enthusiastically to President Clinton's nomination of Judge Stephen Breyer to the U.S. Supreme Court.

But while they have expressed satisfaction with Breyer's character and background, these organizations are uncertain about the judge's views on some major issues closely monitored by the Jewish community, including church-state separation.

Clinton announced his nomination of Breyer late last Friday, creating the possibility of two Jewish justices serving simultaneously on the Supreme Court -- a phenomenon that has not occurred in more than 50 years.

Jewish reaction to the nomination, however, focused more on Breyer's sterling judicial record. Breyer, 55, currently serves on the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Boston.

"Breyer has one of the best reputations (among judges) in America," said Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. "He is widely known as a brilliant and competent jurist."

"His reputation is superior," said Marc Stern, co-director of legal affairs for the American Jewish Congress. "He is generally very well-regarded."

"Breyer is terrific," said Steven Freeman, legal director of the Anti-Defamation League. "We would have been delighted had he been the choice last time."

Breyer was considered a finalist for the vacancy left by retiring Justice Byron White last year. But he ultimately lost out to Ruth Bader Ginsburg, whom Clinton nominated instead.

Breyer received strong support last year when his name surfaced as a strong candidate for the nomination, but he fell out of favor when it was discovered that he had failed to pay Social Security taxes on household help. He has since paid the overdue taxes.

### Regarded As A Moderate

If confirmed by the Senate, Breyer would fill the spot being vacated by longtime Justice Harry Blackmun, who is retiring this summer at the end of the current term.

By most accounts, though, Breyer would not carry on Blackmun's legacy as the most liberal justice currently sitting on the court. The Boston appeals court judge is regarded as a moderate, a fact that has already won him support from both conservative and liberal lawmakers.

Jewish groups like Breyer's reputation as a middle-of-the-road jurist and skilled coalition-builder. But they caution that there is little public knowledge of where the judge stands on such issues of importance to the Jewish community as church-state separation, freedom of religion, abortion rights and civil rights.

Jewish officials said they will have to wait for the Senate confirmation hearings to learn more about Breyer's philosophy.

According to Saperstein, Breyer is a strong proponent of abortion rights and religious rights.

He is likely an advocate of the separation of church and state, but his opinions in that regard

probably will not be fully known until after he is already on the bench, Saperstein said.

David Zwiebel, general counsel of the fervently Orthodox group Agudath Israel of America, likes the fact that Breyer is a moderate, but is unsure of the judge's lean on specific issues.

"No one decision stands out" that would give a clear indication of his philosophy, he said.

Samuel Rabinove, legal director of the American Jewish Committee, said he would want a justice to be liberal with respect to religious rights, respectful of First Amendment freedoms, including church-state separation, and supportive of abortion rights and civil rights laws.

### 'Takes Every Case Seriously'

Gary Katzmman, an associate deputy attorney general who clerked for Breyer on the Boston appeals court from 1980 to 1981, recalled Breyer as a serious and straightforward judge. "It's clear that he takes every case seriously. He is quite open-minded. He tries to give each of the parties a fair day" in court, Katzmman said.

Ginsburg became the first Jewish justice on the court in almost 25 years when she was confirmed last year.

Some experts at the time said Clinton was looking for a Jewish nominee in Ginsburg, since the court had been without a Jewish justice since Abe Fortas left the bench in 1969.

Other Jewish justices have been Louis Brandeis, Benjamin Cardozo, Felix Frankfurter and Arthur Goldberg.

Jewish observers were especially impressed with the selection of Breyer because, with Ginsburg already on the court, it was obvious that Clinton had not chosen Breyer on account of his religion.

Breyer's nomination is "a feather in Clinton's cap," said Zwiebel of Agudath Israel. The nomination sends the message that candidates for the court should be judged on their merit and not on their religion, he said.

"The nomination shows that competent people" can excel based on their qualifications "regardless of their religion," Saperstein said.

Breyer, who once clerked for Justice Goldberg, met Tuesday with several key senators. He is expected to be confirmed easily after next month's confirmation hearings.

## TEXAS FIRM FINED OVER BOYCOTT

WASHINGTON, May 17 (JTA) -- The U.S. Commerce Department has imposed a \$78,000 civil penalty against Gotco International, a Texas-based oil tool manufacturer, for allegedly complying with the Arab boycott against Israel.

The company agreed to pay the fine, \$38,000 of which was suspended by Commerce, while neither denying nor admitting the alleged violations. Commerce suspended the \$38,000 conditional on Gotco's compliance with the Export Administration Act. Failure to do so within three years would cause that amount of the fine to be reimposed.

The department alleged that the company violated U.S. anti-boycott laws 19 times, including 10 instances of refusing to do business with firms on the Arab League blacklist.

At the time, between 1988 and 1992, Gotco was involved with the Syrian Petroleum Co.

**Part 2 In A Series:****WARSAW JEWISH COMMUNITY REJUVENATED  
BY NEW INTEREST OF YOUNGER GENERATION**  
By Deborah Kalb

WARSAW (JTA) -- Friday night services at Warsaw's only functioning synagogue provide a revealing glimpse into the Polish capital's Jewish community.

One elderly Jew, dressed in black hat and long black coat, sways back and forth in prayer from his position toward the front of the renovated and freshly painted room.

Near him are several other older Jewish men, and a scattering of foreign visitors in Warsaw on business or as tourists.

Toward the back, a gathering of young men, clad in jeans and sweaters, sits together, absorbed in prayer. As the service ends, they leave together to celebrate kiddush in an adjoining building.

The groups of worshipers, reflective of the community here as a whole, are divided by a generation and by their own experience of Poland. The older group survived the horrors of the Holocaust that virtually wiped out the thriving prewar Warsaw Jewish community.

The younger worshipers, who grew up largely detached from or even unaware of their Judaism, are now at the forefront of a rebirth of Jewish life in this newly bustling city.

The number of worshipers on this particular recent Friday night is only several dozen, in a city that before World War II was home to 390,000 Jews and a centuries-old Jewish culture.

During the German occupation, the Nazis used this particular Warsaw synagogue as a stable.

Until recently, there was a sense that Polish Jewry was dying. The community's average age was about 70, and few saw any hope of a renewal of Jewish life in a country ravaged by war and communism.

**Exotic To Be Jewish**

"People of my generation are called young in Poland," said Daniel Grinberg, a 43-year-old Jewish historian in Warsaw.

But, especially in the few years since the fall of communism in Poland, some observers of the situation see hope in the new generation of Poles who are discovering their Jewish roots. These observers are assuming that strong leadership for a future Polish Jewish community will come from those now in their teens and 20s.

That generation "is the first real Jewish generation in Poland since the war with a chance to grow up with a normal Jewish identity," said Michael Schudrich, an American rabbi who lives in Warsaw.

Of course, anti-Semitism remains a persistent problem, even in the new post-communist Poland. But observers are becoming increasingly optimistic that some Jewish community will survive here.

Konstanty Gebert, 41, a Jewish journalist in Warsaw who was one of the first younger Jews to become involved in practicing Judaism, said that his own generation had no interest in Judaism at a crucial younger time in their lives.

But for the teen-agers and twentysomething Polish Jews, he said, "it's exciting, original, exotic to be Jewish."

Of a prewar population of about 3.5 million Polish Jews, an estimated 7,000 to 30,000 now live

here. After the war, some Jews returned to Poland, but many intermarried and many left during the 1968 anti-Semitic campaign supported by the Communist government then in power.

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee has provided a constant source of support for Poland's dwindling community of elderly Jews. Among other things, the JDC supports the distribution of tens of thousands of kosher meals and Jewish education programs.

And a relative newcomer to Poland, the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, has become an active player in the efforts to revive Poland's Jewish community, especially among the youth.

"The Lauder Foundation is the only (organization) putting its money with the living, not the dead," said Gebert.

The foundation's Warsaw office, located in a building next to the synagogue, has been headed for the past year and a half by the energetic Schudrich, 38, who first visited Poland in 1973.

"We were aware such (younger Jewish) people existed for many years," but there was no way to approach them, Schudrich said. "With the fall of communism, there has been an upheaval, both political and social."

**'Fatal Combination' Discouraged Jewish Life**

Many in the older generation have decided to tell their children of their Jewish roots. "Thousands of people have discovered their ethnic roots within the last 10 years, many in the last five years," Schudrich said.

He told a story of one young man who brought a small group of other high school students -- none Jewish -- to a Jewish event, where one in the group saw his uncle, praying.

The horrors people suffered during the war, compounded by communist repression, was a "fatal combination" for the Jewish community, he said. Schudrich said he feels that until the past year or two, there was no real Jewish community here, just the "official Jews" and the young "Jews of Polish ancestry" struggling to define themselves.

Now, however, he thinks the community has established its own identity.

The foundation has sponsored the first Jewish kindergarten in Poland in decades. Next fall, a Jewish elementary school is to open.

Two restaurants with Jewish themes have opened in Warsaw. One, the Menorah, open since 1991, serves kosher food. The second, the Eilat, is not kosher but is connected to the Polish-Israeli Friendship Society, which promotes good relations between the countries through cultural activities.

But there is still active debate in Warsaw about the future of Polish Jewry. "It's still an open question," said Gebert, the journalist.

"If we manage to produce something" stimulating, the community would become self-sufficient, Gebert said.

He added that five years ago, he would have said there was "no future" for Poland's Jewish community. "Today, there is a fighting chance."

Unlike its communist predecessor, this Polish government is actively seeking Jewish tourists, from the United States and from Israel. "Jewish Americans are an extremely important group for our aims in promoting tourism," a government official said. Last year, 140,000-150,000 Americans -- including Jews and Polish-Americans -- and 10,000-20,000 Israelis visited the country.