

**RABIN, PERES AND ARAFAT SHARE PEACE PRIZE AS THEY DISCUSS FUTURE AUTONOMY**  
By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, July 6 (JTA) -- Meeting for the first time since they signed the Cairo agreement for implementing Palestinian self-rule in early May, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat held discussion here this week regarding the next phase of Palestinian autonomy.

"We are committed to the major steps on which we decided and to make all efforts to bring an end to the hundred-year conflict of Palestinians, the Jewish community and Israel," Rabin, with Peres standing at his side, told a news conference after meeting with Arafat on Wednesday.

The three were in Paris to receive a peace prize from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. Arafat arrived directly from his historic visit this week to the newly autonomous regions of the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho.

During their meeting, they agreed to form three committees that would deal with separate aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian peace initiative.

The first committee will discuss issues left unresolved in the implementation of self-rule in Gaza and Jericho. The size of the Jericho area and the release of Palestinians still held in Israeli jails will be among some of the topics discussed.

The second committee will focus on issues of so-called "early empowerment," the transfer to Palestinian authority throughout the West Bank of such civil affairs as taxation, health, education, agriculture and tourism.

**Arafat Pledges Free Elections**

The third committee will discuss the issue of refugees displaced as a result of the 1967 Six-Day War. Jordanian and Egyptian officials will join the Israelis and Palestinians for these discussions.

At a news conference held separately from that at which Rabin spoke, Arafat repeated his pledge to hold "free, honest and democratic elections as quickly as possible" in the territories.

Arafat did not give a precise date for the elections, which were called for under the terms of the declaration of principles signed last September in Washington. But PLO officials have recently said the elections for a Palestinian governing authority would be held in October.

But in an interview published Wednesday in the Israeli daily Ha'aretz, Rabin said the Palestinians may not be ready to hold elections at that time unless local municipal elections are held beforehand.

Rabin, Peres and Arafat arrived in Paris to accept UNESCO's Felix Houphouet-Boigny Peace Prize for the self-rule accord signed on the White House lawn last September. The prize is named in honor of the late president of the Ivory Coast.

In his speech at the UNESCO ceremony, Rabin said, "We are going along slowly and

cautiously, one step at a time, because the enemies of peace are even more numerous than we imagined.

"Extremists on both sides are lying in wait for us, and we -- Israelis and Palestinians alike -- must not fail," Rabin said.

At his news conference, Yasir Arafat praised both parties for their "positive" and "constructive" meeting.

Following the UNESCO award ceremony, Rabin and Peres met with French President Francois Mitterrand.

Arafat met with the French president separately and reportedly asked for France's help in securing funds pledged by Western donor countries to support the fledgling Palestinian autonomy.

Arafat told the UNESCO gathering that Palestinian officials had so far received only \$250 million in promised aid.

"If the Palestinian economy doesn't pick up and isn't helped to do so, the whole peace process will disintegrate," Arafat warned.

In the Ha'aretz interview, Rabin said the newly established Palestinian governing authority should start collecting taxes to help cover expenses for basic services.

"If Arafat doesn't start collecting taxes, I don't know where he'll have money to finance the police or development programs," said Rabin.

**HEAVY SHELLING BY HEZBOLLAH LEAVES ONE ISRAELI SOLDIER DEAD, ONE WOUNDED**  
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, July 6 (JTA) -- An Israel Defense Force soldier was killed and another wounded in southern Lebanon on Monday when their unit came under heavy shelling by the Islamic fundamentalist Hezbollah movement.

Staff Sgt. Avichai Danoch, 19, was buried in his hometown of Ashkelon on Tuesday.

A total of eight outposts were attacked in what IDF sources described as the fiercest Hezbollah attack in more than eight months.

Israeli warplanes attacked Hezbollah targets north of the security zone following the barrage of shelling.

Prime Minister and Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin visited on Tuesday the scene of the exchange of fire as well as the spot where two IDF soldiers were electrocuted on Sunday, when they accidentally made contact with a low electric power cable while traveling in an armored personnel carrier.

Sgt. Eran Heduia, 18, and Cpl. Amikam Rothman, 19, were traveling in an armored personnel carrier in the security zone when Heduia stood up and apparently raised his hand and came in contact with a high tension cable strung over the track. He was killed instantly.

In trying to pull Heduia down, Rothman was also electrocuted.

Heduia was buried Monday afternoon in the military section of the cemetery in Holon, near Tel Aviv.

Rothman was buried the same day in the Mt. Herzl military cemetery in Jerusalem.

## SENATE'S VOTE ON BOSNIAN ARMS EMBARGO ENRAGES ACTIVIST JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS

By Michael Shapiro

WASHINGTON, July 4 (JTA) -- Jewish groups that have pushed for the lifting of the United Nations arms embargo against Bosnia expressed outrage over the Senate's failure last Friday to pass an amendment calling for an end to the embargo.

"The Senators who voted today to maintain the U.S. arms embargo against the Bosnian Muslims have tragically chosen to uphold President Clinton's bankrupt Bosnia policy," American Jewish Congress President David Kahn said.

"Rather than striking out against the callous strategy of denying the Bosnian Muslims the right to defend themselves, the Senate has voted to uphold the illegal and invalid arms embargo," he said.

The amendment calling for a unilateral lifting of the embargo by the United States, which was co-sponsored by Sens. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) and Bob Dole (R-Kan.), was defeated by a 50-50 vote.

According to Senate rules, Vice President Al Gore did not have to vote, thereby ensuring the tie meant a defeat for the measure.

The Clinton administration had launched a massive campaign last week to persuade senators from voting for the measure.

While the Lieberman-Dole amendment failed, a measure introduced by Armed Services Committee Chairman Sam Nunn (D-Ga) and John Warner (R-Va.), passed by a vote of 52-48.

### Scenarios For Ending The Embargo

The Nunn-Warner amendment called for the United States to "work with the NATO member nations and the other permanent members of the U.N. Security Council" to bring about a peaceful settlement of the conflict in Bosnia.

That amendment allows for three possible situations where the Bosnia arms embargo could be lifted.

As part of a comprehensive peace settlement, the embargo should be lifted to allow the Bosnian government the "inherent right of a sovereign state to self-defense," the amendment said.

A partial lifting of the arms embargo should be implemented if the Bosnian Serbs attack "safe areas" while the peace proposal is being considered, according to the amendment.

In the amendment's third scenario, if the Serbs "do not respond constructively to the peace negotiations" and the U.N. Security Council fails to pass a resolution terminating the arms embargo on Bosnia, the president, with the consultation of Congress, will decide if the embargo should be unilaterally terminated by the United States.

George Spectre, associate director of international governmental and Israel affairs for B'nai B'rith International, said that the Senate vote does not reflect the will of the American people, who have indicated in polls that they believe the Muslims must have arms to defend themselves against Serbian aggression.

American Jewish Committee's director of European affairs, Andrew Baker, said his group was "disappointed" with the Senate vote.

"It is important to send a clear message from Washington that our country is prepared to

intervene here, to take a more active and direct role," Baker said.

He said that last month's 244-178 vote in the House of Representatives to unilaterally lift the embargo "sends a message that there is support in the U.S." for a lifting of the embargo.

## JEWISH GROUPS HAIL COURT DECISIONS LIMITING SCOPE OF VOTING RIGHTS ACT

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, July 4 (JTA) -- Jewish groups have hailed two Supreme Court decisions that were widely seen as limiting the ability of the Voting Rights Act to apply to districts created to increase minority representation in government.

In the first decision, the court, in a 7-2 ruling on the final day of its term last Thursday, overturned a court-ordered redistricting of the Florida House of Representatives. And in a 5-4 split, the court also overturned a court-ordered change to expand a Georgia county commission.

The decisions were widely seen as limiting the scope of the Voting Rights Act, which passed Congress in 1965 and was amended in 1982.

Armed with 1990 census data, advocates of redistricting have increasingly sought to change legislative maps around the country to increase minority representation.

"Although discrimination and deliberate denial of voting opportunity are evils that justify a remedy, the notion that each racial and ethnic group in America has a right to electoral success in a prescribed number of seats in government is contrary to the fundamental principles of our Constitution and the Voting Rights Act," said Anti-Defamation League National Chairman David Strassler and National Director Abraham Foxman in a joint statement issued following the court's ruling.

The ADL and American Jewish Congress filed friend-of-the-court briefs in the Florida case.

The court ruled in that case that once a minority group achieves representation proportional to its local population, there should be no move to further increase representation.

"Today's decision, we believe, provides a solid basis for applying the Voting Rights Act, and one which we hope will put to rest the sharp controversies which have dogged the act in recent years," the AJC said in a statement.

In the Florida case, Chief Justice William Rehnquist, Justices Harry Blackmun, John Paul Stevens, Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg joined Justice David Souter in the majority. Justice Anthony Kennedy joined in part of the decision.

Justice Clarence Thomas, who dissented with Justice Antonin Scalia, wrote that the court has in the past "given credence to the view that race defines political interest" that "should be repugnant to any nation that strives for the ideal of a color-blind Constitution."

In the Georgia case, the U.S. Court of Appeals in Atlanta had ruled that Bleckley County must change its system of government to ensure minority representation by increasing the number of county commissioners from one to five.

The Supreme Court overturned the decision, ruling that the Voting Rights Act did not permit judgments on the number of representatives in local, state or federal government.

## VATICAN DISPLAYS DEAD SEA SCROLLS IN FIRST ISRAELI EXHIBIT AT HOLY SEE

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, July 6 (JTA) -- An exhibit of the Dead Sea Scrolls went on display last week at the Vatican, marking the first time the scrolls have been exhibited in Europe, and the first time that an official Israeli exhibition has been shown at the Vatican.

The exhibit in the ornate Vatican Library opened last Thursday, just two weeks after Israel and the Vatican formalized full diplomatic relations and ushered in a new era of relations between the Jewish state and the Holy See.

Pope John Paul II last week formally named Archbishop Andrea Cordero Lanza di Montezemolo as the Vatican's first ambassador to Israel.

"No one can deny that this exhibition is connected with the new climate," Amir Drori, director of the Israel Antiquities Authority, said at the exhibit's opening.

The exhibit, which has been traveling, will remain on display here until Oct. 2.

Included in the exhibit are fragments of a dozen 2,000-year-old manuscripts discovered at Qumran on the Dead Sea in the late 1940s and early 1950s. Hundreds of scrolls have been found in the caves of Qumran since the first was discovered by chance by a Bedouin shepherd in 1947.

Written on leather in Hebrew, Greek and Aramaic, the scrolls are the earliest known biblical manuscripts. They include portions of all the Five Books of Moses as well as writings by the Essenes sect.

Nearly 100 archeological artifacts associated with the scrolls, including cups, pitchers, sandals, combs and lamps, are also displayed in the exhibit, along with photographs of the excavation sites and interactive video presentations on the history of the scrolls.

In addition, the Vatican is displaying several pieces from its own priceless collection of more than 800 Hebrew manuscripts dating from the ninth to the 17th centuries.

Drori said that, given the new relations between the Vatican and Israel, he planned to explore the possibility of the Vatican exhibiting some of those manuscripts in Israel.

The head of the Vatican library, Father Leonard Boyle, said he would be willing to send some of the Vatican treasures to Israel, but only as part of a temporary exhibition.

He stressed, however, that the manuscripts in the Vatican collection, which include handwritten texts by Maimonides and other famous scholars, would never permanently leave the Vatican or be turned over to Israel.

"Whenever did they belong to Israel?" he asked. "Most of these were written in Spain, Germany, Italy. They never were in Israel. The fact that the State of Israel is there now does not mean that the State of Israel ever owned these."

## ITALIAN JEWS WARN AGAINST MEETINGS WITH RIGHT-WING ITALIAN POLITICIANS

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, July 6 (JTA) -- Calling for vigilance against right-wing extremism and neo-fascism in Italy, officials of the Italian Jewish community

say international Jewish organizations should bear in mind local Jewish opinion before meeting with right-wing Italian politicians.

The call came in a two-page resolution passed unanimously Tuesday by the Congress of the Union of Jewish Communities in Italy, the official policy-making body representing Italy's 35,000 Jews.

The resolution called for vigilance to insure that "there not be any compromise or yielding of the values of democracy, pluralism and freedom that are at the basis of our civilization."

"We want (international Jewish organizations) to consult us and to see things in context," Tullia Zevi, president of the union, said in an interview.

"They must not allow themselves to be used as propaganda platforms," she said. "They must realize that whatever contact they have will be thoroughly utilized (by the far right) as a full endorsement of their ideology and policy."

The resolution was passed in the wake of recent electoral successes by the neo-fascist-led National Alliance and the inclusion of five National Alliance ministers in Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's 25-member cabinet.

Following the general election at the end of March, Italy was swept by public debate over the role of fascism in the country's history and its legacy for the present.

Congress delegates expressed concern that Gianfranco Fini, leader of the National Alliance, was invited to a Fourth of July celebration held at the U.S. ambassador's residence this week.

It marked the first time that a leader of the Italian Social Movement -- which forms the neo-fascist core of the National Alliance -- was invited to the celebration.

Fini is planning a trip to the United States later this year, and delegates expressed concern that he might meet with Jewish groups in the United States and use such meetings to legitimize his position.

"The Congress notes with concern that Italy is the first country in the European Union in which forces that have their roots in fascism, or do not renounce (fascism), or consider anti-fascist prejudice to be irrelevant, have entered and form part of the (parliamentary) majority and the government," the resolution said.

The three-day congress was given wide coverage in the Italian media.

Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro opened the meetings on Sunday with a speech underlining the importance of Jewish culture in Italian life.

## SWISS OPEN OFFICE IN JERICHO

GENEVA, July 6 (JTA) -- The Swiss government has opened a liaison office in the Palestinian city of Jericho.

The office, believed to be the first opened by any country in this autonomous West Bank town, is directed by a former International Red Cross delegate, Annik Tonti.

The Swiss have allocated \$40 million over a five-year period to help the Palestinian autonomy, with amounts earmarked for administration, education, rehabilitation of former prisoners, to bring in foreign experts and to promote democracy.

Meanwhile, the Palestine Liberation Organization is opening an office in Bern.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:****PROGRESSIVE JUDAISM MAKES HEADWAY  
THROUGHOUT THE FORMER SOVIET UNION**

By Lisa Glazer

MOSCOW, July 6 (JTA) -- Just five years ago, there was only one congregation of Progressive Jews in the Soviet Union, a close-knit group of Muscovites who quietly taught themselves Hebrew, lit candles on Shabbat, celebrated holidays and called themselves Hineini.

Today that congregation is still going strong -- and it has been joined by 26 other Progressive congregations in places throughout the former Soviet Union such as St. Petersburg, Omsk, Perm, Volgograd, Kiev, Minsk, Tallinn, Riga and Almaty, formerly known as Alma-Ata.

The dramatic burst of activity highlights how Progressive Judaism is taking off here, even with only one full-time Progressive rabbi in all of the former Soviet states.

"In terms of numbers, the former Soviet Union has a relatively high percentage of the Jews in the world," said Donald Day, president of the World Union for Progressive Judaism, an umbrella organization for Reform, Liberal and Progressive synagogues around the world.

"We think there's a tremendous opportunity to develop congregations and bring Jews there closer to religion," Day said during a recent visit here.

"People are fascinated by this new approach and we're only limited by the amount of outreach we can do," said Rabbi Ariel Stone, who left her job at Temple Israel of Greater Miami 10 months ago to become the spiritual leader of Congregation HaTikvah in the Ukrainian city of Kiev.

"I get phone calls from people I've never met and towns I've never been to," Stone said. "People are asking: 'Can you come here and teach us about Progressive Judaism?' It's very exciting."

The new congregations in the former Soviet Union are the result of work by the WUPJ, which set up shop in Moscow just a few years ago and currently devotes an annual budget of \$500,000 to the region.

**Training New Leaders**

Since the group's establishment, it has run scores of seminars, summer camps and holiday celebrations -- often overseen by visiting rabbis from England, Israel and the United States -- introducing Reform Judaism to the land of Stalin's ghost.

According to Sergei Gusev, who oversees the WUPJ office here, many of the people who attended these events went back to their hometowns and established congregations.

Then the question arose: Who would be their spiritual leader?

The WUPJ recently devised an answer by setting up a two-year training institute in Moscow to provide the basics of a Progressive Jewish education for the fledgling leaders of the new congregations.

The first class of 11 students from Russia, Belarus and Ukraine just completed their initial year of studies.

When they finish their training next year they are expected to go back to their communities to work as lay Jewish leaders or to continue their studies at institutions like the Leo Baeck

College in London, which already has a few rabbis-in-training from the former Soviet Union.

"Everything we are doing here has one goal: to help the congregations," explained Gusev. "We have a group of students, and when they are finished they will work for the World Union."

For the students, all of them in their early 20s and 30s, most of them raised with little or no Jewish education, the program offers new opportunities and a major shift of focus in their lives.

"I want to become a rabbi," said Ina Pavlova, a 27-year-old from Kiev who used to teach Russian literature. "I know it's very difficult and I will have to study again, but this is what I want."

Alla Bachrach, a former nurse from the central Russian city of Perm, added, "For me, this program is a chance to learn about Judaism because I didn't know anything about it. I never dreamed of becoming a rabbi but it is still very interesting to get a Jewish education."

For the past year, the students have been living in a dorm and studying Jewish history and philosophy at Moscow Jewish University. Next year, they will alternate between studying in Moscow and working in their home cities.

The students say that Progressive Judaism seems to strike a deep chord here because it makes Judaism accessible for people raised with almost no understanding of their tradition.

Zinovy Kogan, who started the Hineini congregation in Moscow during the refusenik era and only later became affiliated with the Reform movement, said that Progressive Judaism's emphasis on equality between men and women is a drawing point.

And, said Menachem Leibovic, the Jerusalem-based executive director of WUPJ's program in the newly independent states, "We believe in developing rabbis from Russia."

**RUSSIAN SECURITY FORCES NAB NEO-NAZIS  
WHO AIMED TO TORCH 'SCHINDLER' CINEMAS**  
By Lisa Glazer

MOSCOW, July 6 (JTA) -- Security forces here recently arrested members of a gang of Russian neo-Nazis who aimed to burn down Moscow cinemas screening "Schindler's List," the Oscar-winning film about a German Nazi industrialist who saved 1,100 Jews during the Holocaust.

The gang, which called itself Werewolf, also planned a terror campaign against "those belonging to other ideologies -- democrats, Communists and Jews," according to a document seized by the Russian Federal Counterintelligence Service.

Alexander Zdanovich, a spokesman for the counterintelligence service, said security agents confiscated a large number of arms from the commercial firm where the gang secretly operated.

He added that the gang's leader, who oversaw security for the firm, had an office decorated with portraits of Adolf Hitler, Nazi emblems and swastikas.

Werewolf was the code name for a secret Nazi operation to help top officers go underground at the end of World War II.

"Schindler's List" was meant to open in Russia last month with a personal visit from producer/director Steven Spielberg. However, the premiere was postponed when Spielberg canceled his visit because of other work commitments.