

**CLINTON AND RABIN ADDRESS U.S. JEWS
TO MARK ANNIVERSARY OF PEACE ACCORD**

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Sept. 12 (JTA) -- The amiable relations between President Clinton and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin were manifest in a satellite teleconference held Monday to mark the first anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Principles between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The agreement, signed on the White House lawn on Sept. 13, 1993, granted self-rule to the Palestinians for the first time and paved the way for a year of warming relations between Israel and all its Arab neighbors.

The teleconference gave American Jews from New York, Washington and 70 other communities around the country the opportunity to ask Rabin questions and to describe to him their efforts over the past year on behalf of the peace process.

A 76-page booklet highlighting the American Jewish community's "activities in support of Israel's search for peace" was released before the joint appearance by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, which sponsored the satellite broadcast.

"With each step in the peace process, individual communities, local and national organizations, synagogues and youth groups have been energized to do more and indeed are continuing to do so," said Lynn Lyss, chair of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

"Our community's activism has encouraged the Clinton administration and Congress to make continuing the peace process one of the key priorities for our foreign policy," she said.

Those listening to the broadcast, which was moderated by Marvin Kalb, professor of press and public policy at Harvard and Georgetown universities, heard of the efforts of Jewish students at Yale University and members of the Montana region of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

'Thanks For The Remarkable Year'

Representatives of the American-Israel Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Metropolitan Chicago and the Los Angeles Jewish Community Relations Council also described what they have done to support the peace process.

Clinton, who recorded his remarks earlier, wished the Jewish community "Shanah Tovah," with "thanks for the remarkable year we have just lived and optimism for the year ahead.

"What a year it has been," he said, "a dawn of a new era in the Middle East, of conciliation and hope."

Clinton singled out the King of Morocco, who this month established diplomatic ties with Israel, as he saluted Arab leaders "for standing up to the naysayers and embracing change."

The "small steps" of normalization this past year between Israel and the Arab world pave the way "for greater steps to come," said Clinton.

He added that "we have a right to expect

that participants in the peace process live up to their commitments," and urged the dismantling of the Arab boycott of Israel.

Noting the terrorist attacks this summer against Jews in Argentina, Panama and England, Clinton urged the American Jewish community nonetheless to "continue its support for peace and the peace process.

"I pledge we will do our part to ensure that it is a lasting and secure peace," said the president.

Clinton also reiterated his admiration for Rabin, extending him "an open invitation to visit the White House, because every time you come here, we seem to move a step closer to lasting peace in the Middle East."

For his part, Rabin joined in the mutual admiration, praising Clinton as "a staunch supporter of Israel," ready to assist in advancing the peace process while realizing that "Israel has to remain strong for the sake of the achievement of peace."

Rabin outlined the strategic goal of peace, as a means to foil "the ugly wave of Islamic fundamentalist terrorist movements."

A comprehensive peace, he said, will change the region and remove the social difficulties in which the terror groups flourish.

Already, said Rabin, the peace process has brought Israel concrete benefits. "We increased our exports last year by 18 percent," he said, "and 80 percent of that" is with countries with which Israel had no prior trade relations.

Rabin lambasted the Palestinians for failing to make a sufficient effort to squelch terrorism.

If a "real effort" is not made, "we will have to consider certain aspects in the going forward" of the Declaration of Principles, he said.

In contrast, Rabin's remarks concerning Syria were positive.

"I believe there are signs of slight improvements" in Syria's attitudes toward peace, he said. He mentioned the state-run Syrian television's broadcast of the Israeli-Jordanian peace ceremonies in Washington and Aqaba, and Syrian President Hafez Assad's speech last weekend before the Syrian Parliament.

Nonetheless, he said, gaps remain between Israel and Syria on the depth of any withdrawal from the Golan Heights, on how long the withdrawal would take, on an interim testing period and on security arrangements.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:**ONE YEAR LATER, GAZAN JEWS AND ARABS
AGREE LIFE HAS CHANGED FOR THE WORSE**
By Michele Chabin

GAZA STRIP, Sept. 12 (JTA) -- A year after Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat sealed the Declaration of Principles with a handshake on the White House lawn, many Arab and Jewish residents here say that life has changed for the worse.

In Gaza City and in the teeming refugee camps where many of the strip's 900,000 Arabs

live in utter squalor, people sip sweet tea and denounce the agreement.

Equally unkind words can be heard within the 17 Jewish settlements of Gaza, where settlers say they are under siege.

There have been some obvious changes in the Palestinian autonomous region of Gaza, which is no longer under the control of the Israel Defense Force, and in the Jewish settlements, which now boast more protection from the army than ever before.

But both Jews and Arabs warn that appearances can be deceiving.

In the streets of Gaza City, hundreds of young men sweep the streets and paint over the graffiti left over from the six-year-long uprising against Israeli rule. After years of curfews and other restrictions imposed by the Israeli authorities during the intifada, Palestinians are now free to walk along the beach at night and to visit restaurants and nightclubs.

Although many Palestinians still profess hate for what they continue to term "the Israeli occupation," and bemoan the fact that they still do not have a state of their own, much of their anger seems to have been redirected toward Yasser Arafat and his government.

Their top complaints are the economy and the high rate of unemployment since the introduction of autonomy, followed by doubts over Arafat's ability to rule.

Several Palestinians interviewed recently said they believed that elections would not take place in December or anytime soon after, ostensibly because Arafat fears losing his stronghold if elections are held.

Some See Better Days Ahead

Although they seem to be in the minority, some Gazans believe that the new self-rule begun in Gaza and Jericho will lead to better things, including an eventual Palestinian state.

Though there is the sense that life is freer since the army redeployed its forces outside the autonomous region in mid-May, many Gazans complain that real freedom eludes them.

"There is nothing new. Things may even be worse than they were before autonomy," says Hisham Agra, 21, from the Jabalya refugee camp near Gaza City.

"The Israelis aren't patrolling the towns and cities, but they are at the checkpoints," he adds. "The soldiers can still make life very difficult for anyone wanting to leave the strip."

The Jabalya camp, home to 65,000 refugees, is a filthy, overcrowded slum where raw sewage sometimes flows down the streets. Most residents live in buildings on the verge of collapse. Some of the ramshackle dwellings are shored up with tin or sheet metal.

The Agras, an extended family of 19, live in five bare rooms -- a somewhat luxurious apartment by Jabalya standards. Refugees from the 1948 War of Independence, they dream of a life that no longer exists.

Sitting on a mattress on the floor -- the family has no real furniture -- Hisham Agra says that "since the agreement, Israel has reduced the number of Palestinian workers it will allow into Israel.

"This has made our financial situation even worse than it was before," he says. "Even work-

ers who had permits before the agreement have had trouble getting them renewed."

Adnan Abu-Hassan, editor of a newspaper published by the Islamic Jihad, a fundamentalist group opposed to the self-rule accord and Arafat's leadership, believes that the agreement is doomed to fail.

"This agreement was a big mistake," Abu-Hassan asserts at a meeting in Gaza City. "People are suffering from the economic situation, the unemployment. The people running the government used to be soldiers. They know nothing about building a government."

The editor does not mince words about the Islamic Jihad's goals.

"We must destroy this agreement," he says. "It will not lead us to any kind of independence.

"Our aim is open conflict," Abu-Hassan says.

"We must resist Israel's continuing occupation in Gaza, through armed struggle, through rallies and strikes," he says, indicating that in his mind, occupation continues as long as Israelis -- soldiers and civilians -- exist anywhere in Gaza.

In response to such sentiment, Diab Nemer Allouh, media director of the PLO, said that "this is a democracy and anyone can voice ideas and be against the agreement.

'All Must Obey The Law'

"However, no one from the opposition can take the law into his own hands," the PLO official said. "All of us must obey the law."

For their part, Jewish settlers in Gaza contend that the PLO says a lot, but actually does very little to end violence perpetrated by the Islamic Jihad, Hamas and other extremist groups.

Datya Herskovitz, spokeswoman for the Jewish settlements in Gaza, says that Jewish Gazans "feel much more vulnerable than they used to.

"Before the implementation of autonomy, the army could go after terrorists," she says. "Now, if someone shoots at an Israeli car on the road, he can run into the autonomous area and the army can't do anything."

Citing official Israeli figures, Herskovitz notes that 68 Israelis have been killed by Palestinians in Israel and the territories over the past 12 months.

"That's double the number from the same period last year," she says. "It used to be a matter of stone-throwing. Now it's a matter of guns."

Anita Toker, a resident of the religious agricultural settlement of Netzer Hazani, says that she and her family "are not even considering leaving. This is our home, and it has been for 18 years."

Toker, who oversees the settlement's greenhouses, says that "peace seems further and further away all the time. Before, when we drove on the road, we were threatened by rocks. Now we're shot at with guns."

Though the roads are less secure, Toker says, "we go on with our lives as before. We're definitely not thinking of leaving.

"My great-grandparents fled Europe. My grandparents fled Poland. My parents fled Germany. I can't see solving one refugee problem by turning us into refugees," she says.

GUBERNATORIAL CANDIDATE IN BRAZIL IS THE VICTIM OF ANTI-SEMITIC ATTACKS

By Rochelle Saidel

CURITIBA, Brazil, Sept. 12 (JTA) -- A Jewish candidate for governor of the Brazilian state of Parana has become the target of anti-Semitic attacks.

Vandals sprayed anti-Jewish slogans on the wall of the Jewish cemetery and on 15 billboards advertising the candidacy of Jaime Lerner last week.

Lerner, who is leading in his race for governor of Parana, is the former mayor of Curitiba, capital of this southern state.

Under his leadership, the city earned a reputation as the most progressive and livable big city in Brazil.

The graffiti called Lerner "Jew and anti-Christ."

In addition to being targeted by graffiti, Lerner was also labeled "anti-Christian" on radio and television.

Vincent Goulart, an evangelical minister who is running for state deputy in the same elections, said during a political broadcast that Lerner could be compared with historic figures who had been against God and were therefore "punished." Among those he mentioned were Lenin and Hitler.

The president of the Brazilian Evangelical Center, Pastor Gilberto Estevao later condemned Goulart's remarks, and said Goulart does not represent the Order of Evangelical Ministers in Brazil.

"In truth," Estevao said, "the Jews are our ancestors in our faith. The God of the Jews and of the Christians is the same, as shown in the Scriptures."

Lerner used his broadcasting time to say: "Contrary to the hateful and discriminatory words of my adversaries, contrary to those who try to transform the holy Bible into an electoral leaflet, I want to respond with calmness, with my belief in humanist ideals, and with faith in God common to all of us."

Lerner's opponent in the gubernatorial race, Alvaro Dias, had earlier addressed the electorate as "Christian people in my state of Parana." However, his campaign spokesperson told local newspapers that he condemned the anti-Semitic graffiti.

Lerner said he considered the graffiti against him "stupid and perverted," and that there is no place for religion in the electoral race.

AS BELGIUM MARKS ITS LIBERATION. PRIME MINISTER SPEAKS OUT ON RACISM

By Joseph Kopel

BRUSSELS, Sept. 12 (JTA) -- Belgian Prime Minister Jean-Luc Dehaene has called on his government to take "concrete measures" to prevent and to suppress racist behavior.

Speaking last week at ceremonies marking the 50th anniversary of the liberation of Belgium from Nazi occupation, Dehaene said it is the duty of citizens to mobilize against racism and xenophobia.

The ceremony, attended by several hundred members of the Jewish community, was one of several commemorations organized last week throughout Belgium to celebrate the liberation of

the country by British, Polish, American and Canadian soldiers.

Several Belgian and foreign personalities--including members of the government -- were also present at the ceremony, which took place at the National Memorial dedicated to the Jews who were deported to Nazi death camps.

The monument bears the name of the 24,052 names of Jewish victims who were deported from Belgium and died in concentration camps.

Only 1,025 Jews from Belgium survived the Holocaust. More than 5,000 children were deported and gassed at Auschwitz. The Nazis also destroyed all the Jewish communal institutions in Belgium.

In his Sept. 4 speech, Dehaene recalled the fact that the Jewish people were the ones who "most suffered during World War II and the National Socialist barbarism."

"One-third of the Jewish people disappeared in the framework of the 'Final Solution,' " he said. "Men and women, old people and children were assassinated for the sole reason that they were Jews."

The Belgian prime minister also paid tribute to the non-Jewish Belgians who saved the lives of Jews by hiding them until the end of the war.

Former Israeli President Chaim Herzog was also present at the ceremony as the head of an Israeli delegation that also included members of the Jewish Brigade. Herzog served in the British army during World War II. As a member of a unit of the Guards Armored Division, he participated in the campaign that led to the liberation of Brussels.

ISRAEL NAMES WOMAN ENVOY TO RUSSIA

By Lisa Glazer

MOSCOW, Sept. 12 (JTA) -- Aliza Shenhar, the rector of the University of Haifa, has been named as Israel's next ambassador to Russia, according to Yirmiyahu Shiran, the press attache at the Israeli Embassy here.

Shenhar's appointment was made by Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres. She will fill the post left vacant by Haim Bar-Lev, who died of a heart attack in May. Shenhar, 51, a literature professor with a specialty in folklore, is a political appointee with no diplomatic background.

She speaks English, Hebrew and German, but she does not speak Russian. However, she is currently undergoing intensive language training in Russian, according to Shiran.

Her date of arrival in Moscow is not yet known.

ANOTHER ISRAELI ELECTED TO U.N. POST

By Larry Yudelson

UNITED NATIONS, Sept. 12 (JTA) -- For the third time in a year, an Israeli has been elected to a United Nations post. David Kretzmer, a Hebrew University professor who is director of the school's Center for Human Rights, was elected to serve on the U.N. Human Rights Committee.

"As meaningful as the vote itself is the new atmosphere in Israel-U.N. relations that the vote symbolizes," said Gad Ya'acobi, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations.

Kretzmer was one of approximately 30 candidates competing for nine open seats on the 18-member committee.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
READING JEWISH LITERATURE IN RUSSIA
NO LONGER REQUIRES ACTS OF ESPIONAGE**
By Lisa Glazer

KISHINEV, Moldova, Sept. 12 (JTA) -- Not long ago, reading and receiving Jewish books in the Soviet Union required an elaborate exercise in espionage.

Refuseniks would make clandestine contacts overseas, visitors would smuggle in the prohibited texts, and finally, in a secret spot, the dangerous and precious literature would be handed over.

Today, all that is required is a quick trip to the local library.

In a stunning turnaround, there are now more than 80 libraries throughout the former Soviet Union that have all or part of their collections devoted to Jewish books. Yiddish poetry, Russian-language Talmuds, Hebrew literature and stacks of information about modern-day Israel fill the bookshelves.

To celebrate this achievement and compare notes for the future, about 70 librarians from these institutions gathered here recently for the first Jewish library conference for the entire former Soviet Union.

The conference was sponsored by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which has put library development near the top of its agenda for reviving Jewish communities in the former Soviet Union.

"Jews here read a lot and we figured this was a very effective way of reaching them," explained Sara Bogen, who oversees the JDC's library program in the former Soviet Union.

She estimated that the JDC has provided about 250,000 books for libraries here. The philanthropy offers a basic collection of 600 Jewish books, and it also has developed special collections of children's books and academic literature.

Still, encouraging people to read Jewish books is only one of the goals of JDC's library program, Bogen said. In the best of circumstances, libraries can turn into Jewish centers offering meeting places for Yiddish clubs, pensioners groups, theater performances and poetry readings.

In some cities they also serve as a place of worship. In Kiev, for example, the Reform congregation does not have a synagogue, so it holds its weekly Shabbat services in the reading room of one of the city's Jewish libraries.

This transformation from a place of quiet to a place of community occurs with the help of the library staff, Bogen said.

"If they are friendly and talk to people, show interest, then people start talking," she said. "If you go to the periphery, there are very few social and cultural opportunities, because things have become very expensive and people don't go out the way they used to. Libraries can really become a viable place for this social and cultural life, especially for older people."

This ambitious vision for Jewish libraries was welcomed by the conference participants, who came from Siberia, the Caucasus, Moscow, St. Petersburg, Ukraine and elsewhere.

During the conference, participants heard lectures on topics such as Hebrew literature; Jewish holidays and traditions; working with children and school libraries; and the overall situation of Jews in the former Soviet Union.

And beyond the formal meetings were countless informal networking sessions, where the librarians exchanged information, ideas and telephone numbers.

"I traveled the whole country to meet with my colleagues, and it's wonderful to know they have the same and other problems," said Lena Yeigel, a district librarian from Birobidjan who oversees a Jewish collection that acquires only a handful of new books every year.

"I wanted to find out how to compile new books for the library," Yeigel said. "It's a real question. Now I know how to get books from the Joint and other organizations."

"The most useful thing has been talking with other people," added Ludmilla Rogova, who works in a school library with a Jewish books collection in Nalchik, a city in Caucasus region.

"We heard about new poetry and literature we hadn't known about. This is a tool for working with children, who every day have a growing interest in Jewish studies."

**YIDDISH CONFERENCE RETURNS KIEV
TO EAST EUROPE MAP OF JEWISH CULTURE**
By Lisa Glazer

KIEV, Ukraine, Sept. 12 (JTA) -- About 150 scholars and writers from Ukraine, Russia, other European countries, Israel and the United States recently took part in an international Yiddish conference here.

The conference, held during the last days of August, returned Kiev to the map of Yiddish-speaking cities following a gap of more than 60 years, during which the Communists erased traces of Jewish culture and the Nazis eradicated Jews.

"In Ukraine we have a rich Yiddish culture," said Leonid Finberg, one of the organizers of the seventh World Conference for Yiddish.

"For about 60 years we haven't had the opportunity to work in this field. Only in the last few years could we achieve this," Finberg said. He was referring to the demise of the Soviet Union and the efforts by Ukrainian officials to enable Jewish life to flourish here again.

The conference was sponsored by the World Council for Yiddish and Jewish Culture, headquartered in Israel; the International Committee for the Promotion of Jewish Studies in Eastern Europe; the International Solomon University; and the Jewish Studies Association of Ukraine.

Other sponsors were the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the Association of Jewish Communities and Organizations in Ukraine and the Rich Foundation, according to Finberg.

PLAQUE TO DEPORTEES DEFACED
By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, Sept. 12 (JTA) -- Swastikas and other Nazis slogans were daubed by unknown vandals on a monument at the site of the former Vught concentration camp, in the south of Holland, one day after it was unveiled last week.

The defacements, in white paint, were found the morning of Sept. 7, less than 24 hours after the monument was erected. They were immediately removed and a second gathering was held that afternoon to honor the 2,800 men, mostly resistance members, who in the autumn of 1944 were taken from there to Sachsenhausen, in Germany.