

**AS ISRAEL INCHES CLOSER TO JORDAN,
RABIN CONFRONTS POLITICAL TROUBLES****By David Landau**

JERUSALEM, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- As Israel and Jordan reportedly moved closer to a peace treaty this week, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin lashed out at Labor Party rebels who oppose his peace moves with Syria.

Rabin and Jordan's King Hussein met Thursday at the king's palace in Aqaba Thursday in advance of further high-level meetings between the two sides in Washington, Israel Television reported.

According to Israeli media reports, Israel and Jordan have agreed on border demarcations, one of the outstanding issues to be resolved between the two neighbors. Israeli officials are reportedly proposing that Israel and Jordan sign a peace treaty before resolving the other outstanding issue of water rights.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres is scheduled to meet with Jordan's Crown Prince Hassan in New York on Sunday to prepare for their three-way meeting with President Clinton on Monday.

Speaking to reporters Thursday, Rabin declined to venture a date for the signing of a peace treaty with Jordan. But he hinted that reports of an agreement coming within weeks were essentially correct.

Political sources say the prime minister hopes to move forward quickly on the Jordanian and Palestinian tracks before reaching his moment of truth with Labor Party rebels over the Golan issue.

Speaking to reporters at Labor headquarters in Tel Aviv earlier on Thursday, Rabin expressed confidence that the Labor Party rebels who oppose any withdrawal from the Golan will eventually accept party discipline rather than thwart the government's efforts to negotiate a peace with Syria.

Hunger Strike Ends

His remarks came after six Labor Knesset members, led by Avigdor Kahalani, introduced a bill that would require a 65 percent majority of the Knesset -- or 78 of the body's 120 members -- to approve any annulment of the Golan Law.

That law, passed in 1981, effectively annexed the Golan Heights to Israel.

The six Laborites' bill also states that in the event of a public referendum over an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan, a majority of 65 percent of the electorate would have to approve the measure. Damascus has been demanding a full Israeli withdrawal from the Golan in return for establishing a full peace with Jerusalem.

Rabin sharply criticized the six rebels' legislative initiative, saying that such restrictive clauses were unheard of in other democratic countries -- whether in parliamentary provisions or in rules for a referendum.

At the historic fortress site of Gamla on the Golan, meanwhile, hunger strikers ended a 19-day fast, claiming they had accomplished their goal of drawing national attention to the Golan issue.

**PRIME MINISTER SPARKS CONTROVERSY
OVER SUPPORT FOR 'SEAM' SETTLEMENT****By Hugh Orgel**

TEL AVIV, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told the Cabinet this week that he is in favor of freeing up public land for construction of a Jewish settlement that straddles the West Bank near Jerusalem.

Rabin's decision elicited criticisms from a member of his Cabinet, who said Rabin would be breaking previous promises not to build settlements in the territories.

In 1992, Rabin froze construction on 10,000 housing units in the territories in order to win loan guarantees totaling some \$10 billion from the Bush administration.

Rabin reportedly told the Cabinet this week that construction of the Alfei Menashe settlement would not violate his promises to former President George Bush to freeze all settlement construction, since the issue at hand was private rather than government-subsidized construction.

But Communications Minister Shulamit Aloni objected to the decision, saying this would violate the freeze and that Israel had no right to expand existing settlements by freeing up public land.

She told reporters after the Cabinet session that Rabin informed his ministers that he had previously told Presidents Bush and Clinton that he could not stop people who already had contracts from engaging in some private building of settlements.

"But this is something different," said Aloni, "because we are talking about land that does not belong to Israel."

Housing Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer defended Rabin's decision, saying that building housing in unspecified "seam" settlements near the Green Line, or pre-1967 border, should be considered.

Agriculture Minister Ya'acov Tsur also backed Rabin, saying, "I think we should do it, but only minimally, in areas such as those around Jerusalem."

"I would not go much beyond that, except in the areas around the 'seam,'" Tsur said, referring to an area approximately 100 yards across the Green Line.

**DESPITE ATTEMPTS TO THWART IT,
SWISS VOTERS APPROVE ANTI-RACIST ACT****By Tamar Levy**

GENEVA, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- After months of anticipation, Swiss voters narrowly have approved legislation that will make it a crime to discriminate against ethnic groups or incite racial hatred.

Final results from the Sept. 25 referendum indicated that 54.6 percent of those voting approved the legislation, while 45.4 percent voted against it. Approximately 45 percent of eligible Swiss voters turned out for the referendum.

Swiss legislators passed the law in June 1993, but a drive by right-wing groups succeeded in putting the measure to a popular vote.

The law was based on a 1965 U.N. resolution

on racial discrimination that has already been ratified by more than 130 countries.

The law forbids public attempts to incite racial hatred or discrimination and also makes it a crime to issue public denials of the Holocaust. As a result, Holocaust deniers and neo-Nazi groups will no longer be able to hold public meetings or distribute their literature in Switzerland.

Prior to the law's approval, French neo-Nazis confronted by anti-racist laws in their own country had traveled to Switzerland to promote their views.

The Jewish community, as well as the Swiss government, had pushed hard for a favorable vote in the referendum.

Claire Lucetta, secretary of the Swiss League to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, said in an interview that the high numbers of "no" votes had dampened her pleasure over the final results.

But Swiss Foreign Minister Flavio Cotti said it was the "yes" votes that were most important for the Swiss image abroad.

Rolf Bloch, president of the Swiss Jewish community, estimated at 19,000, offered a similar viewpoint, saying, "I am happy and relieved by the result. As in football, it is the result that counts."

ACTIVISTS PROTEST AGAINST AWARD PRESENTED TO PRESIDENT OF ARGENTINA

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- Crying "Shame, shame," and "Why weren't you with the families in Buenos Aires?" Rabbi Avi Weiss disrupted a gathering of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation on Monday because it was honoring Argentina's President Carlos Menem.

Weiss was protesting the presentation of the World Statesman Award to Menem in light of Argentina's failure to apprehend the terrorists who bombed the Jewish community building in Buenos Aires on July 18 and the Israeli Embassy there two years earlier. Weiss and a colleague from his Coalition of Concern-Amcha lay huddled together on the floor of the Grand Ballroom of the Hotel Pierre.

After allowing them to speak to the media, police arrested Weiss and David Kalb, and took them to the 20th police precinct, where they were charged with criminal trespassing and resisting arrest. They were ordered to appear in court on Oct. 24.

Weiss, who in the days following this summer's blast flew to Buenos Aires to meet with Menem and members of the Argentine Cabinet, told reporters about the families of those who died in the bombing and his concern that Argentina's border is so easily breached.

Rabbi Arthur Schneier, president and founder of the ecumenical group Appeal of Conscience, decried Weiss's actions.

"Anyone should be free to demonstrate, but the few should not terrorize the others in the world," he said. "We are all in the same boat."

Noting that his organization had nominated Menem for the award months before the July bombing in Buenos Aires, Schneier said he is "satisfied that the Argentine government has brought in the CIA, the FBI, the Mossad and the

French Secret Service, and is doing everything it can to bring the terrorists to justice."

Menem, who had met with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations earlier Monday morning, told a reporter that Argentina is "in the midst of the investigation," into the terrorist attack, which killed 99 people and wounded nearly 200.

In his speech at the luncheon, Menem made only limited reference to the bombing, saying, "This abhorrent act was an attack on the Argentine people as a whole."

"I wish to reiterate the strong commitment of the Argentine government to fully investigate this act and to find and punish those responsible."

IN LATEST INDICATION OF NEW RELATIONS, ARAB PAPER PRINTS DEFENSE OF THE TALMUD

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- In the latest indication of changing Jewish-Arab relations, a prominent Arab newspaper has published a defense of the Talmud.

The defense, written by Rabbi Daniel Landes of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, was a response to an earlier assault on the Talmud in the Arabic publication Al-Hayat.

Calling the newspaper's decision to print his response a "tremendous opening," Landes said, "As far as we know this is the first time that a Jew has not only been allowed to respond but to speak for the Jewish faith."

Al-Hayat published its two-article assault on the Talmud, and on Jewish values, in June. The articles described the Talmud as "the governing criteria for Jewish life" since the seventh century and attributed many reputed slurs against Gentiles to permission granted in the Talmud.

Written by Abdul al-Wahb al-Masiri, an Egyptian scholar and philosopher, the article claimed, for example, that "cemeteries of Gentiles are not sacred and cannot defile a Cohen, while Jews are considered pure in both life and death."

"The Talmud preaches two different sets of moral values, one for Jews and the other for Gentiles," al-Masiri wrote.

Landes, director of educational projects at the Wiesenthal Center and a specialist in Talmudic ethics, wrote and submitted his rebuttal in English.

He said he believed his article was translated well, except that the publication chose to delete his references to the Koran.

Pipes described Al-Hayat, which is financed with Saudi money and published in London to allow for press freedom, as "probably the single most important, most prestigious paper in the Arab-speaking world today."

He said the newspaper's publication of the rabbi's response takes into account "the sensibility of Jews, and that has just not been part of the public debate in decades."

Landes said that this new chapter in Arab-Jewish relations "does not mean that the struggle is won. This, I believe, is equivalent to the early rebuttals of Christian anti-Semitism that finally found their way into Christian journals in the early part of the 20th century in America."

"We are far behind," he said, "but this is a tremendous beginning."

CAMP'S DECISION TO CENSOR MAGAZINE ILLUSTRATES RIFT AMONG CONSERVATIVES

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- Canada's Conservative Jews have long been discomfited by the willingness of their colleagues south of the border to ordain women. And recently, some refused to be good campers about it.

The Canadian arm of the Conservative movement's camp system refused to distribute the Summer 1994 issue of "Ramah -- the Magazine" because it included an article about female camp alumnae who now serve as Conservative rabbis and cantors.

The magazine's former editor, Lori Forman, has charged that the Conservative movement's leadership in New York did not sufficiently push the Canadians to send out the issue because it was afraid of losing the funding the Canadians provide to the Jewish Theological Seminary.

This was disputed by a seminary spokesman.

According to the director of Camp Ramah in Canada, camp officials refused to distribute the issue because they felt that the article on clergywomen represented American, rather than Canadian, Conservative values, said Rabbi Mitch Cohen, director of the camp.

"Anything having to do with women's rights in the movement is very, very sensitive here," said Cohen. "But this has less to do with women's rights than with American control over Canadian values.

"Camp Ramah in Canada still has a form of religious practice which is not completely egalitarian," Cohen said. "That form of religious practice still needs to be respected, and is not by many people in our movement."

The Committee on Jewish Law and Standards, which serves as the official interpreter of halacha for the Conservative movement, decided in 1983 to allow the ordination of women as rabbis.

Most Conservative Shuls Not Egalitarian

But the Conservative movement in Canada remains far more conservative than its American counterpart. Most Canadian Conservative congregations are not egalitarian, and only one, in Halifax, Nova Scotia, has hired a female rabbi, compared to dozens in the United States.

According to Forman, the Canadians feared the article about clergywomen would be "bad publicity" and could drive away the 75 campers from Orthodox homes who attended the camp.

But, said Forman, herself a Conservative rabbi who spent eight summers of her youth attending Ramah camps, more than half the campers at the Camp Ramah in Canada are Americans from Detroit, Cleveland and Pittsburgh, whose egalitarian practices should be respected.

Forman has since left the magazine, as scheduled, to become interreligious program consultant at the American Jewish Committee.

The Ramah system includes seven camps -- six in the United States and one in Canada -- which serve about 4,000 campers a year.

Camp Ramah Canada, located two hours north of Toronto in Utterson, Ontario, employs a modified form of egalitarianism in its worship service. Accordign to Cohen, girls are permitted the honor of being called up to the Torah but are not counted toward a minyan.

The controversy over the magazine has been simmering since the spring, when Forman distributed magazine proofs to Ramah officials.

Citing opposition to the article about the clergywomen, leaders of Canada's camp refused to send Forman the mailing labels for the magazine.

Forman and 46 other female rabbis and cantors sent a letter to Rabbi Ismar Schorsch, the chancellor of the Jewish Theological Seminary and head of the Leadership Council of Conservative Judaism, and asked him to intervene.

By June, according to Forman, Canadian rabbis were threatening to withhold money from JTS if the magazine was distributed in Canada. Schorsch and Sheldon Dorph, national Ramah director, went to Canada to make sure funding was not cut off, she said.

"Canada has threatened over and over to leave the movement" over the issue of ordaining women, she said, "and the seminary is trying very hard not to lose them for fund-raising reasons."

According to JTS spokesman Shammai Engelmayer, "The Canadian office has a right to distribute magazines as they see fit. Not everyone in Canada agrees with egalitarianism, and there was a feeling that the article could be seen as a slap in the face to those who don't feel that way.

"Fund raising did not enter into it," Engelmayer said. "We don't want to see one part of the movement breaking away over an ideological issue when the movement prides itself -- and has historically been -- pluralistic."

Forman believes that while Canada's Conservative congregations are entitled to disagree with the ordination of women, censoring the fact that women are ordained within the movement contradicts the pluralism which Conservative Judaism ostensibly values.

Forman said she was distressed, but not surprised by the leadership's refusal to intervene.

The movement's leaders "don't want to celebrate" the role of women as rabbis and cantors, she charged.

Engelmayer described that charge as "absurd on its face."

"We had a whole conference here last year celebrating the 10th anniversary of women in the rabbinate," he said.

Forman said that while the magazine ultimately was not distributed, she and her colleagues succeeded in raising "a lot of consciousness" over the issue of women rabbis and cantors.

FRENCH JEWISH LEADER APPOINTED TO POST

PARIS, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- Jean Kahn, the president of the European Jewish Congress as well as the French Jewish umbrella body CRIF, has been appointed chairman of a European Union panel to monitor racism.

Kahn's appointment as chairman of the European Consultative Commission on Racism and Xenophobia was announced recently by German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel, who now holds the rotating presidency of the European Union.

The 12 member states of the E.U. ratified the creation of the new anti-racism commission during the last E.U. summit, which was held in June on the Greek island of Corfu.

Kahn was named French representative to the panel in July in his capacity as leader of the EJCongress.

ALGERIAN MUSLIM FUNDAMENTALIST SAYS HE WAS TOLD TO HIT MOROCCO SYNAGOGUE

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- An Algerian Muslim fundamentalist arrested in Morocco for the killing of Spanish tourists has confessed he had been instructed to attack a synagogue in Casablanca, according to a report by the Moroccan news agency MAP.

Hamel Marzouk said he decided not to attack the synagogue because it was so heavily guarded, and instead shot up tombs in a Jewish cemetery, according to the report, which was monitored by the European Jewish Congress.

No day or time of the cemetery attack was reported.

Elan Steinberg, director of the World Jewish Congress said he had no other confirmation of such an incident.

He said the arrest appears to be tied to the Islamic fundamentalist movement "that has ripped Algeria," and not to Morocco's recently established ties with Israel.

Marzouk had been arrested in connection with the Aug. 24 attack on the Atlas Hotel in Marrakech, Morocco, in which two Spanish tourists were killed in a shooting incident.

Marzouk confessed to the plan to attack the synagogue during the course of his interrogation, according to the report. Marzouk said he was instructed to attack the synagogue by Abedelila Ziad, a Moroccan resident of France, the report said.

RABBI GLASER DEAD OF CANCER; WAS A LEADER OF REFORM MOVEMENT

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Sept. 29 (JTA) -- Funeral services were held at Congregation Rodeph Shalom here last Sunday for Rabbi Joseph Glaser, a leader of the Reform movement who died Sept. 21 of lung cancer. He died at the age of 69 at his home in the New York suburb of Scarsdale.

Glaser was the executive vice president emeritus of the Reform movement's rabbinic organization, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, a post he held since 1971.

He also had served in posts with the movement's teaching arm, the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, where he had been a registrar and teacher at the Los Angeles branch.

Glaser was on the executive committees of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the Reform movement's congregational arm, and the Synagogue Council of America.

He was also a member of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, for many years heading its Scopes Committee, which determines the conference's tasks and limitations.

"In that position he was one of the most fervent defenders of Israel," said Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the UAHC.

Glaser also was a founding board member of the American Jewish World Service, a humanitarian organization which helps impoverished non-Jews improve their living standards.

He also served other humanitarian groups, dealing with California migrant workers, American Indians, Tibetan exiles and Israelis.

At the time of his death, Glaser was chairman of Religion in American Life, a non-sectarian group among whose goals is the strengthening of the nation's faith in God.

Born in Boston, Glaser was raised there and in Rochester, N.Y. He served in the U.S. Army, serving in the infantry in Europe during World War II, where he was wounded twice.

Glaser held degrees from both secular and religious institutes of higher education, earning a bachelor's degree from the University of California in 1948 as well as bachelor's and master's degrees from HUC.

He also received a law degree from the California State University at San Francisco in 1951.

Glaser was ordained a rabbi by HUC in 1956. For the next three years, he served as rabbi at Temple Beth Torah in Ventura, Calif.

From 1959 to 1971, he was the San Francisco regional director of the UAHC.

Glaser held central roles in many key positions taken by the CCAR. Among them was its 1990 decision not to bar any candidate for membership because of sexual orientation.

Defended Patrilineal Descent Controversy

He also was a defender of the Reform movement's controversial 1983 resolution on patrilineal descent, which said that Judaism can be passed on to a child of a Jewish father and a non-Jewish mother.

In an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in April 1983, Glaser said the resolution had been widely misinterpreted. He said the resolution did not seek to restore patrilineal transmission of Jewish identity but proposed that the child of a mixed marriage be considered Jewish with the consent and cooperation of both parents.

He said the child was to be presumed to be of Jewish descent, and that this presumption would be validated "through appropriate and timely public and formal acts of identification with the Jewish people."

Another controversial issue Glaser had to deal with was the role of non-Jewish spouses in Reform synagogues.

In an interview last October concerning the role of non-Jews in Jewish religious practice, Glaser said, "There's a certain hypocrisy involved in having someone lead rituals which are limited to membership in the Jewish people, like an aliyah" to read the Torah.

"I am concerned that we are giving a message when we involve a non-Jew in the sacred rituals of Judaism that 'what's the point of converting or marrying a Jew, for that matter?'" he said.

In an encomium, the Reform movement's American Conference of Cantors called Glaser a "beloved rabbi of rabbis" and "treasured leader of Reform Judaism."

Schindler recalled Glaser as "a staunch defender of the rabbinate," "profoundly devoted to Israel," and "someone who was very much interested in the camping movement."

"When all is said and done, the camps are the most effective instruments for the transmission of Judaism at our command," Schindler said. "The struggle for Jewish continuity has lost one of its leaders."