

**AS KIDNAPPING ORDEAL GRIPS NATION,
PALESTINIANS DETAIN MEMBERS OF HAMAS**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 13 (JTA) -- Reacting to pressure from Israel and the United States for the return of kidnapped Israeli soldier Cpl. Nachshon Waxman, Palestinian police have detained at least 200 members of the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement, the group that claimed responsibility for the kidnapping.

Some 9,000 Palestinian police reportedly participated in the sweep that began Wednesday night in an effort to resolve the worst crisis to date in Israel's relations with the Palestinian Authority.

When Waxman's abduction was announced Tuesday, Israel promptly broke off its negotiations with the Palestinians and sealed off the Gaza Strip.

Dr. Ahmed Tibi, a senior adviser to Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat, is reportedly holding indirect negotiations with Hamas through the International Red Cross and other diplomats, to secure Waxman's release.

Tibi told reporters as he left a briefing session with Arafat in Gaza on Thursday evening that "recent developments in the past hour or so" indicate that Waxman is still alive and well.

He said he could not reveal with whom he was negotiating, or where Waxman was being held.

Meeting with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in Jerusalem on Thursday, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher backed Rabin's decision to suspend negotiations with the Palestinians.

"Hamas is fighting a desperate rear-guard action" to torpedo the Israeli-Palestinian peace initiative, Christopher said.

Rabin reportedly told Christopher that Arafat is facing a fundamental choice between continuing the peace process or allowing Hamas, Arafat's leading rival in Palestinian affairs, to thwart the uneasy peace.

Meanwhile, the Waxman family attended a prayer meeting for the safety of their son that was held at the Western Wall in Jerusalem on Thursday evening. An estimated 30,000 people attended the prayer meeting in Jerusalem, which was held simultaneously with other gatherings held in towns and villages throughout the country.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
JEWS APPROACH ELECTION '94
WITH NO REAL 'DEFINING' ISSUES**
By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, Oct. 13 (JTA) -- Set against the backdrop of a historic year of peacemaking in the Middle East and the strongest U.S.-Israel relationship in recent memory, next month's congressional elections are focusing Jewish interest on local races and domestic issues.

For the first time in years, many analysts are suggesting that this is an election season with no defining Jewish issues.

For the pro-Israel community, in particular, "this election is not a real grabber," according to

Morris Amitay, an officer of Washington PAC, a pro-Israel political action committee, and a former executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

"With peace breaking out in the Middle East, an administration friendly to Israel and no problems with foreign aid, this is not one of the more exciting cycles," Amitay said.

Without the traditional Jewish concerns over Israel's security, Jewish attention is focused along with the rest of the nation on domestic issues such as the economy, crime and health care.

At the same time, however, many Jews are keeping a close watch on the growing political strength of the religious right, with issues such as school prayer and abortion rights high on the Jewish domestic agenda.

With Democratic control over the Senate in jeopardy and significant Republican gains in the House all but assured, Jews across the political spectrum have remained active, despite a decline in campaign contributions.

Officials from major pro-Israel political action committees estimate contributions are down about 20 percent this year.

"Jewish fundraising has always been predicated on crises," said Chuck Brooks, executive director of the National PAC.

Brooks attributed the slower pace of donations to a national environment of "political negativism." He also said that the Jewish community as a whole is re-evaluating its activism in light of a changing Middle East.

Among the largest of the pro-Israel PACs, NatPAC expects to give over \$250,000 to candidates this election cycle, Brooks said. Federal law allows candidates to accept up to \$5,000 from an individual PAC for the primary and \$5,000 for the general election.

High Turnover Poses New Challenges

Although some stalwart friends of Israel are retiring from Congress and others are in jeopardy of losing election bids, Jewish activists, encouraged by their success in pushing their agenda in the 103rd Congress, are confident that their influence will continue.

When 124 new members were elected to Congress in 1992, many in the Jewish community had feared that the U.S.-Israel relationship, in general, and foreign aid, in particular, were in jeopardy.

These fears proved unfounded, however, as the foreign aid package, including \$3 billion to Israel, passed Congress this year with record support and new allies. Although Israel's interests appear to be on solid ground on Capitol Hill, Jewish activists are not complacent.

The continuing high turnover expected in Congress is posing new challenges to Jewish groups such as AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobby which sees as one of its primary missions the education of members of Congress on issues related to Israel and the Middle East.

By 1996, more than 50 percent of Congress will have been elected in the 1990s.

AIPAC plans to redouble its education ef-

forts this season to continue developing relationships with members of Congress, according to an AIPAC spokeswoman, who added that officials across the country have already met with nearly every candidate running for Congress this year.

The November election "will dramatically redefine Congress," the spokeswoman, Toby Dershowitz, said. "Our community is, and must continue to be, energized and positioned to ensure the new Congress, including its many new leaders, is well-educated on key U.S.-Israel issues on the legislative agenda."

In addition to foreign aid, pro-Israel activists are focused on monitoring arms sales to the Middle East, expanding U.S.-Israel cooperation and promoting the peace process.

On the domestic front, with Democratic losses almost certain and some even predicting a Republican takeover in the Senate, Jewish Republican and Democratic activists are facing off over what each perceive as the best course for the country.

Matthew Brooks, executive director of the National Jewish Coalition, a Republican organization, said, "A large segment of the Jewish population feels that the programs of the Democratic Party don't address their concerns."

Jews Traditionally Back Democrats

Brooks predicted that Republican candidates will "do very well" at attracting Jewish support "precisely because they have viable working solutions."

Not surprisingly, Steve Gutow, Brooks' counterpart at the National Jewish Democratic Council, disagreed.

"The apocalyptic predictions for Democratic candidates I've heard before, and the demise of the party I've heard before, but President Clinton has been reasonably steadfast to his set of goals, and the economy is good," Gutow said.

Traditionally, a large majority of Jews has supported Democratic candidates both financially and at the polls.

Marcia Balonick, executive director of the Joint Action Committee for Political Affairs, a multi-issue Jewish PAC, said her group overwhelmingly directs campaign contributions to Democratic candidates.

Although the major litmus test for contributions remains a candidate's support for Israel, domestic concerns such as reproductive rights and the religious right stand high on the group's agenda, she said.

Beyond the PACS, most Jewish organizations are prevented from taking positions on candidates and political parties because of their non-profit status with the Internal Revenue Service.

But they, too, are closely watching the races.

Most Jewish organizations in Washington tend to have a liberal bent and have been relatively pleased with the Clinton administration's social policy agenda.

Since Clinton's election, Jewish groups have lauded the administration's push for gay rights, reproductive rights, the Family Medical Leave Act and health care reform.

With the next Congress virtually certain to include more politically conservative members, some are fearing tough battles ahead on church-state and other social issues.

Mark Pelavin, American Jewish Congress' Washington representative, predicted that a more Republican and conservative Congress threatens those in the organized Jewish community who have opposed school prayer and fought for reproductive rights, health care and welfare reform.

"Many of the victories that we have had, especially on social issues, have been quite narrow, and we have not had significant support of Republicans," Pelavin said. "This will be a very long two years for those who care about these issues if those being elected support different approaches to social problems."

Religious Right A Concern

Another concern among many Jewish activists is the growing power of the religious right.

"The strength of the religious right should be of deep concern to Jewish voters," Gutow said, referring specifically to its "attack on pluralism and civil rights."

But not everyone agrees.

A group of conservative Jews have joined forces with the Christian right in an effort to woo the American Jewish community into the conservative camp.

The group, Toward Tradition, argues that the religious right does not pose a threat to American Jews, and instead is a natural ally.

Founder and chairman of the group, Rabbi Daniel Lapin, embraces the religious right's message as a way to return to a value-driven society.

Some Jewish Republicans also are arguing that the religious right does not pose a threat to Jewish interests.

"Some candidates might be enjoying support of religious conservatives much in the same way others enjoy support from the Jewish community," said the activist, who requested anonymity.

The activist cautioned that shunning candidates is not the solution.

"We're not going to agree with the evangelical community on every issue," he said.

But Jewish involvement with that community is important, he added, because "it will ensure that you'll have a seat at the table to make your case."

While the Orthodox community has also found common cause with the religious right in certain areas such as school vouchers, "that does not mean that we pledge our eternal loyalty," according to Betty Ehrenberg, director of the Institute for Public Affairs of the Orthodox Union of Jewish Congregations of America.

"We try to work together, but the Orthodox Union is vigilant that there are many aspects of the religious right's agenda that we will fight," she said.

Ehrenberg cited her group's opposition to the religious right's campaign to bring Christian prayer into the public schools and to promote a Christian nation.

Whether opposed to or supportive of such efforts by the religious right, Jewish groups recognize that this election season has solidified the movement's presence on the national political scene.

Whatever its ultimate success, the rise of the religious right is one more phenomenon, along with a guaranteed high turnover in the 104th Congress, that is sure to change the political landscape.

BILL TO HELP SURVIVOR WIN REPARATIONS DIES IN CONGRESS AT END OF ITS SESSION

By Caren Benjamin
Washington Jewish Week

WASHINGTON, Oct. 13 (JTA) -- An 11th-hour compromise in the House of Representatives almost helped Holocaust survivor Hugo Princz earn his elusive goal: obtaining compensation from Germany for his suffering during World War II.

But after passing the House in a voice vote, the bill that would have allowed Princz to sue the German for reparations failed to make it to the Senate before Congress ended its session.

The bill was a last-ditch effort by the 71-year-old Princz, who has been denied reparations by Germany because of his status as a U.S. citizen during World War II.

Born in Slovakia to a naturalized American father, his status did not protect him from being sent to Nazi concentration camps, where most of his family perished.

Rescued by American soldiers at the end of the war and sent to a U.S. Army hospital, he bypassed Allied displaced persons camps and was thus not registered as a Holocaust victim. Germany later rejected his claims because, as a U.S. citizen, he was not considered a stateless refugee.

Princz's battle for reparations began in court. Standing in his way is the Foreign Sovereign Immunities Act of 1976, which limits the rights of U.S. citizens to bring suit against foreign governments.

A federal court judge ruled that Princz, a resident of Highland Park, N.J., can sue Germany, but the German government successfully appealed the decision.

Then supporters tried another route. Teaming up with victims of torture, specifically U.S. citizens who had been held hostage by terrorists in Arab countries, a movement began in Congress to amend the act.

Opposition From State Department

The amended version, introduced by Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) and Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), when reconciled in conference, allowed U.S. citizens who are subjected to torture, genocide or extrajudicial killing abroad to sue the responsible governments.

The bill's supporters had hoped to get the legislation onto the floor of both houses of Congress before the fall recess but ran into opposition from the State Department and from some members of Congress.

Since the beginning of the debate, the State Department has expressed concern over diplomatic implications of amending the act, contending that such a move could open the door for other countries to mirror the law and allow frivolous suits against the United States.

Nonetheless, Bill Marks, Princz's attorney, felt assured the bill would have had the necessary votes to pass.

The hitch was, it was the end of the session when "you essentially need unanimous consent to bring something up."

One of the holdouts was Rep. Bill McCollum (R-Fla.), who said in a statement: "Simply stated, the risks that other nations will greatly expand their exception to the doctrine of foreign sovereign immunity should (the bill) become law are

greater than the benefit to the few individuals who would be helped by it."

Proponents made a deal. Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.) introduced a new version of the bill that narrowed the scope so that it only addressed Princz's case.

The narrow version limited the right to sue to the victims of genocidal acts during World War II. They may sue only "the predecessor states of the Federal Republic of Germany" or "any territories or areas occupied or otherwise controlled by those states" during World War II.

The bill made clear, Frank said, that it applied "only to past events." McCollum got on board. Supporters -- including Schumer, Rep. Howard Berman (D-Calif.) and Rep. Frank Pallone (D-N.J.) -- spoke to the State Department, which agreed not to block the narrowly constructed bill. Passage in the House was unanimous.

But the bill never made it to the Senate floor, most likely because of procedural rather than substantive issues, asserted Marks, Princz's attorney. There simply was no time.

There was, however, some opposition to the broader bill from the Senate, notably from Sen. Strom Thurmond (R-S.C.). Few were willing to speculate what happened to the narrow bill there.

There is, however, another session. And one after that. And so on. "Germany needs to understand," Marks said, "that this bill is on an express train for passage. It only got derailed for a minute. It is going to pass."

NEO-NAZI LEADER FACING NEW CHARGES AFTER JEWISH LEADER FILES A COMPLAINT

By Gil Sedan

BONN, Oct. 13 (JTA) -- After being convicted earlier this year on Holocaust-denial charges, the chairman of the extreme right-wing National Democratic Party now has been charged with inciting racial hatred.

In June, neo-Nazi leader Gunter Deckert received a one-year suspended sentence and a moderate fine for voicing the so-called "Auschwitz lie" at a public rally and for making derogatory remarks about Jews.

The light sentence imposed by the state court of Mannheim was widely criticized in Germany, and legal authorities eventually suspended the presiding judge in the case.

This week, the state prosecution in Frankfurt announced that new legal measures would be taken against Deckert, who was the subject of a complaint issued by Michael Friedman, a member of the presidium of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

Friedman complained that Deckert had sent him a letter in which he demanded that Friedman leave Germany.

In a separate development, neo-Nazi skinheads in the eastern German city of Potsdam this week badly injured a woman who stood up to them in an attempted robbery.

Last weekend in Berlin, a group of some 20 skinheads attacked foreigners riding in a streetcar, seriously wounding some of them.

The incident prompted Dieter Heckelmann, interior minister for the city of Berlin, to suggest the deployment of additional security forces on Berlin trolleys to combat the growing phenomenon of neo-Nazi brutality.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES:

ISRAELIS AND PALESTINIANS LINK ARMS TO AID FIVE WOUNDED YOUTHS OF BOSNIA By Michele Chabin

BEIT JALA, West Bank, Oct. 13 (JTA) -- Can Israelis and Palestinians really work together in peace and understanding?

A unique joint project, which is helping five wounded Bosnian children get back on their feet, furnishes proof that people on both sides can put aside their differences for the good of others.

The project was initially conceived by the Jewish community of Sarajevo, which first brought the plight of the young Muslim children to the attention of international aid workers.

Now the project has begun to heal wounds between Israelis and Palestinians as well.

The participants have worked together in the past -- sending shipments of food and medicine to Bosnia in cooperation with the World Conference on Religion and Peace.

But the latest venture marks the first time that Israelis and Palestinians have provided joint humanitarian aid on their own soil.

The project, which has been a year in the making, is helping to rehabilitate five youths -- ages 10 to 17 -- all of whom sustained serious injuries during the war that has rocked their nation.

Four of the youth are amputees; one girl is partially paralyzed after sustaining a back injury.

Unable to receive the care they needed in the war-devastated Bosnian capital of Sarajevo, the children and their mothers were evacuated by French U.N. peacekeeping forces.

The fathers were forced to stay behind, since no men of army age are permitted to leave Bosnia-Herzegovina.

From War-Weary To A Fine Recovery

Upon their arrival in Israel earlier this year, the group settled into a guest house at Neveh Shalom, a mixed community of Israeli Arabs and Jews located west of Jerusalem.

The children were transported each day at the Sheba Hospital at the Tel Hashomer government medical center in Ramat Gan, where they received extensive medical treatment and, ultimately, prostheses to replace arms or legs.

The second stage of their recovery is now taking place at the Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation, a state-of-the art rehabilitation center located in Beit Jala, a predominantly Christian Arab town in the West Bank, not far from Jerusalem.

Too disabled and war-weary to indulge in games and laughter just weeks ago, the children are clearly making a fine recovery.

Fitted with prostheses, they are now well enough to tour the West Bank and Jerusalem.

The program's first priority is to heal the children's physical wounds through physiotherapy.

But the Israeli and Palestinian professionals are also concerned with the youths' emotional well-being.

Edmund Shehadeh, director of the rehabilitation center, said the children "are suffering many problems as a result of their years in a war zone.

"At first, they were extremely fearful, distrustful, and wouldn't cooperate," he said.

"They suffer from sleeping problems and

become frightened at loud noises. They also hide and store food, probably because they went hungry in Sarajevo," he said.

All of the children are receiving psychological counseling, Shehadeh added.

Yoel Weinberg, Israel coordinator of the World Conference on Religion and Peace, noted that "although the kids seem very happy to be out of Sarajevo, they are anxious to return home to their fathers and siblings.

"In a way, it's very difficult," he said. "They and their mothers are so relieved to be out of the fighting, and they feel guilty for leaving others behind.

"After being in peaceful surroundings, it won't be easy for them to return home," Weinberg said.

Both Weinberg and Shehadeh stress that part of the healing process has been through example.

"One of our goals," Shehadeh said, "is to show the children that people who were once enemies can live in peace.

"These are Bosnian children, I am Greek Orthodox. Yoel is a religious Jew.

"People from two different religions are working to help people of another religion," said Shehadeh. "We need to teach by example, not just through preaching."

As for relations between Israelis and Palestinians, Shehadeh said, "I am a great believer in the peace process.

"But I want to see a peace that promotes equal rights," he said.

"I hope that this project is showing Palestinians that in any one given community or population, there are good people and bad people," Shehadeh added.

By cooperating, he said, "our two peoples can get to know and understand each other.

"By helping other people of war, the Palestinians are learning that there are other people in the world who are suffering," he said.

"There is a lesson here," he added. "There are other people even more miserable than we are."

ISRAELI POLICE JOINING HAITI FORCE; TRAINING IN PUERTO RICO FOR THE MISSION By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 13 (JTA) -- A 30-member Israeli police contingent left here last week to join an international peacekeeping force whose goal is to restore law and order in Haiti.

The 28 men and two women who volunteered to assist in the restoration of stability in the Caribbean island nation left Israel on Oct. 6.

The group left two days after the High Court of Justice ruled that sending an Israeli police force on an overseas mission did not contravene the country's laws.

The Israeli Cabinet gave its approval to the mission a week earlier.

The Israeli police contingent arrived at New York's Kennedy Airport on the evening of Oct. 6 and traveled from there to Puerto Rico.

There, they were to undergo training before being dispatched to Haiti.

Rabin authorized the contingent on Sept. 11, after President Clinton telephoned for Israeli assistance in the multinational effort to help restore democratic rule in Haiti.