

**CABINET VOTES TO RESUME TALKS WITH PLO
DESPITE TRAGIC END TO ABDUCTION ORDEAL**

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Oct. 16 (JTA) -- Despite the tragic conclusion to last week's attempt to free kidnapped Israeli soldier Cpl. Nachshon Waxman from his Hamas captors, the Israeli Cabinet has decided to persevere in its peace initiative with the Palestinians.

Following what was the worst crisis in Israeli-Palestinian dealings since the start of Palestinian self-rule in May, the Cabinet agreed Sunday to resume negotiations with the Palestinians and to lift a closure that had been imposed on the Gaza Strip last week.

Talks between Israeli and Palestine Liberation Organization negotiators over future Palestinian elections were scheduled to resume in Cairo on Tuesday.

The night before the Cabinet session, tens of thousands of Israelis attended the funeral of Waxman, who was killed by his Hamas captors during a commando raid launched by the Israel Defense Force last Friday evening.

The funeral marked the end to a weeklong ordeal that began with Waxman's kidnapping Oct. 9 and had gripped the entire nation.

The streets leading up to Jerusalem's Mount Herzl Military Cemetery flowed with people from all segments of society -- secular, religious and Waxman's fellow soldiers -- who came to pay their last respects.

Waxman, 19, had lived in Jerusalem's Ramot neighborhood. He was the third of five children of Yehuda and Esther Waxman, Orthodox emigrants from the United States.

Waxman's Father Backs Rabin

On Sunday, burial services were held in the military section of the Kiryat Shaul cemetery for Capt. Nir Poraz of Ramat Hasharon. Poraz was killed last Friday while leading the commando unit that tried to storm the West Bank safe house in which Waxman was being held.

Yehuda Waxman extended his condolences to Poraz's grieving family. "My heart is heavy knowing that Nir Poraz fell in the operation to save my son," he told Israel Radio. "This additional loss has shaken me terribly. I send my deepest condolences to his family. May they be strong."

When asked if he thought his son might still be alive had the government pursued contacts to negotiate with Hamas rather than storm the captors' hideout in the West Bank village of Bir Nabala, Waxman said, "Rabin is the one making the decisions. He used his judgment based on the information he had available."

With thousands attending the funeral, the 23-year-old Poraz was buried beside his father, Maoz, a pilot killed during the 1973 Yom Kippur War. Poraz was due to complete his military service in a few days.

Twelve other soldiers were wounded, one moderately and the others lightly, in last Friday's rescue attempt.

In addition, three members of Hamas were killed in the commando raid. They were identified as Salah Jadalla of Gaza, Taisir Natshe of Jerusalem and Abdel Kareem Bader of Al Ram in the West Bank. Two Hamas accomplices were captured.

At Sunday's weekly session, IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Ehud Barak briefed the Cabinet on the details of last Friday's operation.

After the Israeli government had maintained for most of last week that Waxman was being held in Gaza, it was only last Friday morning that Rabin was informed by the Shin Bet security service that the Israeli soldier was in Bir Nabala, some two miles from Waxman's home in Jerusalem.

The thrust of Israeli government consideration then reportedly switched from the option of accepting the Hamas demand to swap Waxman for Palestinian prisoners held by Israel, to the planning of a military assault.

The rescue attempt received wall-to-wall support from both government and opposition spokesmen. A few, however, expressed reservations that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had made this important decision alone.

Meanwhile, the Cabinet agreed to resume the negotiations with the PLO that had been suspended last week following the announcement of the kidnapping.

At the same time, the Cabinet called on PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat to take serious measures against terrorist elements in the areas under Palestinian control.

Opposition members who had supported the Rabin's decision to take action last Friday came out strongly against the move to end the closure of the Gaza Strip.

Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu said that as long as attacks are launched against Israelis within Israel's borders, an extended closure should be clamped down on Gaza and a fence built around the strip's perimeters.

Meanwhile in Gaza, tensions remained high between Palestinian police and Hamas activists in the wake of the widespread arrests of Hamas activists over the weekend. As a result, thousands of Hamas supporters staged demonstrations.

(JTA correspondent Hugh Orgel in Tel Aviv contributed to this report.)

**NEARING AGREEMENT WITH JORDAN,
RABIN AND PERES FLY TO AMMAN AGAIN**

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Oct. 16 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres made a surprise trip to Jordan on Sunday night for intensive talks aimed at closing the gaps that still divide the two countries.

Officials from both sides have been predicting that the two countries would sign a peace treaty before the end of the year, a move that would make Jordan the second Arab country to make peace with Israel.

Egypt and Israel signed a peace agreement in 1979.

During what was their second visit to Jordan in as many weeks, Rabin met privately with King

Hussein, while Peres held talks with Jordanian Prime Minister Abdul Salam al-Majali.

Among those accompanying Rabin and Peres was Elyakim Rubinstein, chief coordinator of the negotiations with Jordan.

Last week, Israeli and Jordanian negotiators ended another round of bilateral talks without reaching agreement on water rights and borders, the two major issues preventing the signing of a peace treaty. The bilateral negotiations were scheduled to resume this week.

In July, Rabin and Hussein signed the Washington Declaration, officially ending their 46-year state of hostilities and opening their borders to third-country nationals.

SOME PRAISE, BUT MORE ABHOR DECISION TO HONOR ARAFAT WITH NOBEL PEACE PRIZE
By Matthew Dorf and Jennifer Batog

WASHINGTON, Oct. 16 (JTA) -- Still reeling from the terror that hit Israel last week, Jewish activists reacted with strong, and sometimes mixed, emotions to the news that Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat would share the Nobel Peace Prize with Israel's Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres.

Although some in the organized Jewish community praised the awards, many said they were troubled by the Nobel committee's decision to honor Arafat.

Many Jewish leaders labeled it premature, while others felt Arafat simply did not deserve it. A minority of organizations praised the committee for its selection.

Ironically, last Friday's announcement in Oslo came just hours before 19-year-old Cpl. Nachshon Waxman, the Israeli soldier kidnapped by Hamas terrorists, was murdered during an explosive attempt to rescue him. One of his Israeli rescuers, Nir Poraz, and three Hamas terrorists also were killed during the failed rescue mission.

Immediately after the announcement, committee member Kare Kristiansen resigned in protest, as he had threatened to do.

Kristiansen, a conservative, pro-Israel former Norwegian government minister, said he did not object to Rabin and Peres receiving the award. But he called Arafat a former terrorist who is "tainted by violence and bloodshed."

The three leaders will share the \$950,000 prize, which will be presented, along with gold medals and diplomas, at a Dec. 10 ceremony in Oslo.

In Israel, reaction was muted because of the events surrounding Waxman's kidnapping.

In a statement read by a spokesman, Rabin congratulated his co-winners. However, he warned Arafat that the PLO faced a key test and that violence against Israel has to stop.

"If there will not be security, there will also not be peace," Rabin said. "Today the Palestinians face the moment of truth. If they do not defeat the enemies of peace, the enemies of peace will defeat them."

Foreign Minister Peres' surprise inclusion in the award was met with shouts of happiness at his office.

Early reports of the impending award did not mention Peres, who was credited with much of

the legwork that led to the signing of the Israeli-PLO peace accord in September 1993.

However, Peres himself was more restrained. He told reporters that fundamentalists had tried to "kidnap peace and destroy it."

Arafat, speaking during a visit to Egypt, said, "The prize is not for me. It is for my people who suffered a lot, people who have been able to achieve the peace of the brave."

Members of the opposition called on Rabin and Peres to boycott the prize because it also had been awarded to Arafat.

"The fact that the prize is given to the person who invented international terrorism," said Likud Party leader Benjamin Netanyahu, "turns the prize into a farce."

In the United States meanwhile, a minority of Jewish leaders supported the Nobel committee's decision. Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, said Arafat had "earned the award."

"The Nobel Peace Prize does not award sainthood, it awards an act or a series of acts," Foxman said.

Americans for Peace Now's executive director, Gary Rubin, said the prize is appropriate in "clearly marking a major step that deserves a major award."

'An Award Delivered In The Middle Of The Play'

Noting that "we are seeing an award being delivered in the middle of the play, and not at the final curtain," Rubin said, "It is a legitimate recognition of three leaders who reversed 100 years of warfare between two peoples."

However, other Jewish leaders traditionally supportive of Arafat's peace initiatives privately expressed concern that the award is premature, and questioned whether Arafat has shown enough resolve to combat terrorism and lead his people to democracy.

Others were more outspoken in their opposition. At the United Nations in New York, U.S. Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) joined representatives from the Simon Wiesenthal Center and Lisa Klinghoffer, whose father was killed aboard the Achille Lauro by PLO terrorists, to protest the award.

Schumer accused the Nobel committee of "jumping the gun."

"The Nobel prize committee should have considered Arafat's past, present and future," Schumer said. "His past has been abhorrent, his present is at best incomplete, and his future is unknown. Therefore he fails all three tests."

Morton Klein, president of the Zionist Organization of America, called the award "repugnant and revolting."

"Arafat has shown that he has not reformed himself of his brutal past," said Klein, who has spearheaded efforts to track PLO compliance with the peace accords and regularly publishes a list of violations. "This award was given prematurely."

Herbert Zweibon, chairman of Americans for a Safe Israel, said the Nobel committee had belittled the peace prize by awarding it to Arafat.

"The peace prize is no longer a symbol of peace, but a testimony that terrorism pays," he said.

Joining the fray, the Orthodox Union urged Rabin and Peres to refuse the award because of the "offensive addition of Yasser Arafat."

MOSCOW'S LARGEST SHUL IS TARGET OF SECOND ATTACK IN FOUR DAYS

By Lisa Glazer

MOSCOW, Oct. 16 (JTA) -- After nearly a year of relative calm, Moscow's largest synagogue was the target of a second attack in less than a week.

Seven shots from a BB gun were fired at Moscow's Choral Synagogue at about 11 p.m. on Oct. 12, coming four days after the Oct. 9 attempted bombing of the shul.

Four of the shots pierced the glass windows of the synagogue's vestibule.

In the Oct. 9 attack, a Molotov cocktail was hurled into the synagogue's entranceway but failed to explode. Synagogue staff members subsequently called the police, and a bomb squad arrived to retrieve the unexploded Molotov cocktail. Police have so far failed to locate anyone responsible for either of the attacks.

The two incidents correspond roughly with the beginning and end of a recent conference that brought 80 rabbis to Moscow from all over the world to discuss the future of Jewish life in the states of the former Soviet Union.

"There might be some connection," said Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt, chief rabbi of Moscow and spiritual leader of the Choral Synagogue.

"I also know the police were very concerned about the October memorial days (commemorating last year's fight for control of the Russian government, when Russian tanks fired on the Parliament). So it might be connected to that, or to the upheaval in the financial markets. Anything is possible," said Goldschmidt.

He said these attacks were the first since last November, when vandals threw stones that broke a number of windows at the synagogue.

HUNGARIAN JEWS DEDICATE NEW COMMUNITY CENTER IN BUDAPEST

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Oct. 16 (JTA) -- Exactly 50 years after Nazi forces took control of Budapest and Adolf Eichmann ordered 50,000 Hungarian Jews to march to Germany as slave laborers, a Jewish community center was festively inaugurated in Hungary's capital.

The rebuilt Balint Jewish Community Center of Budapest will serve as a social and educational center for Hungary's estimated 130,000 Jews.

It contains a library stocked with books and video and audio tapes, a teacher resource center linked by computer to universities all over the world and an arts and crafts center. The community center, with a 10-person staff, also provides counseling, support groups and social programs for Holocaust survivors and their families.

It is housed in a two-story stucco building which belonged to Budapest's Jewish community before World War II, when it was confiscated by the Nazi regime. It was recently returned to the Jews of the capital by the Hungarian government.

The building was refurbished with funding from the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and England's Central British Fund -- World Relief, among other groups.

"This is the first full-service Jewish community center since the Holocaust in the former Communist bloc," said Moshe Jahoda, the JDC's

representative in Hungary, in a telephone interview from Budapest.

An audience of some 300 people, including local residents and Hungarian, Israeli, American and British dignitaries, looked on as a Jewish children's choir sang "Sholom Aleichem" and students from the Anne Frank Jewish High School performed Jewish folk-dances.

According to JDC spokesperson Amir Shaviv, who attended the ceremony, Hungarian Minister of Welfare Pal Kovacs said at the inauguration that the country has "a past to remember. My government has apologized to the Jewish community for what happened here during the Holocaust.

"We believe that this center will do something (to combat) hatred and intolerance and we would like it to be an example copied all over Hungary," he said.

Also in attendance, Shaviv said in a telephone interview, were the U.S. and Israeli ambassadors to Hungary, Donald Blinken and Joel Alon.

While under communist rule, Hungary's Jewish community was estimated to number 80,000.

Since then, tens of thousands of Hungarians have acknowledged their Jewish heritage and begun to seek ties to organized Jewish life. The community is now thought to number 130,000 countrywide, with some 80,000 residing in the capital.

URINATING ON JEWISH GRAVES SPARKS PROTEST AND ACTION AGAINST BELGIAN

By Joseph Kopel

BRUSSELS, Oct. 16 (JTA) -- The Belgian Jewish community has decided to initiate legal action against an extreme right-wing politician who resigned his office within days of winning a municipal election.

Daniel Leskens resigned last Friday following the broadcast of a videotape showing him urinating on Jewish graves during a neo-Nazi gathering in Germany in February.

Leskens, a member of the far-right Belgian National Front, was elected Oct. 9 to serve on the city council of Anderlecht, a working class suburb of Brussels.

The incident follows last week's municipal elections, which were marked by large gains for far-right parties in the Flemish and French-speaking parts of Belgium.

Expressing concern over both the results of the Oct. 9 election and the Leskens affairs, Jewish communal leader David Susskind said, "This time we must quickly react, because the situation is beginning to look like the situation before World War II."

According to the report on Belgian public television, Leskens had participated at a gathering of former SS officers and Belgian neo-Nazis. Following a meal at which he told neo-Nazi jokes, he went to relieve himself on a grave at a nearby cemetery. The headstone of the grave bore a Hebrew inscription. Leskens was expelled from his party as a result of the incident.

The Coordinating Committee of Belgian Jewish Organizations, said in a statement that it had decided to lodge a complaint against Leskens for racism and for inciting racial hatred.

"Daring to soil Jewish graves is an unspeakable act," the group said. "We will no longer tolerate this."

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
RE-ELECTION BIDS OF JEWISH SENATORS
AMONG THE KEY RACES SPARKING INTEREST
By Matthew Dorf**

WASHINGTON, Oct. 16 (JTA) -- A number of key congressional races across the country are drawing considerable attention as well as financial assistance from Jewish activists concerned about the makeup of the next Congress.

In the Senate, where Democrats currently hold 23 of the 35 seats up for re-election, party control is up for grabs.

For the Republicans to wrest control, they need to pick up a total of seven seats, a feat Republicans acknowledge is unlikely, but not impossible.

Although the president's party traditionally suffers losses in midterm elections, a significant defeat for the Democrats this time around could pose major obstacles for President Clinton's agenda for the next two years.

Among the most vulnerable incumbents are two of 10 Jewish senators serving on Capitol Hill.

Both senators, Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) and Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), have been heavily supported by the Jewish community for their popular positions on foreign policy and domestic issues.

Feinstein is engaged in the political battle of her life, running in a virtual dead heat against challenger U.S. Rep Michael Huffington, a Texas millionaire who has spent over \$10 million of his own fortune on the campaign.

A member of the Senate Appropriations Committee, Feinstein also sits on the Foreign Operations Subcommittee, where the foreign aid package, including Israel's annual package of \$3 billion, originates.

The California race is one of a handful in which religion, and specifically Judaism, has been raised as an issue.

'Special Obligation' To Support Feinstein

Early in the campaign, Huffington attacked a fund-raising letter from a Feinstein supporter that targeted Jewish women for having a "special obligation" to support the senator in her election campaign because Huffington "represents everything that is antithetical to us as women and as Jews."

At the time, Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, joined the fray, protesting the fund-raising letter.

In a letter to Democratic activist Lynn Cutler, Foxman wrote: A "candidate's race, religion, sexual orientation, gender or ethnicity is irrelevant to a determination of whether he or she is qualified for public office."

In New Jersey, Lautenberg, a longtime Jewish philanthropist and one of Israel's staunchest allies in the Senate, is facing a tough challenge from Chuck Haytaian, speaker of the New Jersey State Assembly.

Like Feinstein, Lautenberg sits on the Senate Appropriations Committee and its Subcommittee on Foreign Operations.

Haytaian trails in most polls by double digit margins, but surveys show fewer than 35 percent of New Jersey voters want to return Lautenberg to the Senate.

Another of the "minyan" of Jewish senators,

Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio), is retiring from the Senate.

Metzenbaum's son-in-law, Joel Hyatt, is trailing Republican Mike DeWine in what observers are calling a toss-up.

In other races around the country, pro-Israel senators such as Jeff Bingamin (D-N.M.), Harris Wofford (D-Pa.) and Chuck Robb (D-Va.), are also in danger of losing re-election bids.

National attention is focused heavily on the Senate campaign in Virginia.

The race has pitted Robb, the incumbent, against Oliver North, who is notorious for his role in the Iran-Contra scandal.

North has garnered significant support, particularly among the religious right and among Republican leaders anxious to see their party gain control of the Senate.

One of a handful of races in which the religious right has played a significant role this election cycle, the Virginia race is currently too close to call.

Because of its prominence and publicity, the outcome of the battle for the Virginia senate seat could have significant implications for the growing power of the religious right, according to Jewish and other observers.

On the other side of the Capitol, the outlook for the House of Representatives, with its current 88-seat Democratic majority, is also uncertain.

With all 435 members running for re-election, most observers expect there will be more Republicans in the House next year.

Among the House races being closely watched by Jewish activists is one involving U.S. Rep. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.), who has emerged as a significant player on foreign aid.

Lowey is facing a stiff challenge from Republican Andrew Hartzell, an attorney. She is one of many Jewish House members facing tough re-election battles.

Another is U.S. Rep. Marjorie Margolies-Mezvinsky (D-Pa.), who is facing a difficult challenge from John Fox, a Jewish Republican whom she narrowly defeated in 1992.

Other Jewish candidates, including Sam Gjedenson (D-Conn.), Lynn Schenk (D-Calif.), Eric Fingerhut (D-Ohio) and Herb Klein (D-N.J.) are also in danger of losing in November.

Among the non-Jewish candidates who have been supported by Jewish activists because of their pro-Israel stances and because of their potential to rise in the congressional ranks include Constance Morella (R-Md.), Larry LaRocco (D-Idaho) and Scott Klug (R-Wisc.), all of whom are facing uncertainty at the polls.

Other tough races where Jewish PAC money is flowing to incumbents who sit on key committees include Martin Frost (D-Texas), Charles Taylor (R-N.C.) and Ronald Coleman (D-Texas).

COST OF LIVING RISES 1.1 PERCENT

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 16 (JTA) -- Israel's cost of living index rose by 1.1 percent during September, the Central Bureau of Statistics has announced.

It was the third consecutive month that the index registered a 1.1 percent monthly rise, confirming previous bureau predictions of a 14.5 percent annual inflation rate for the year.