

**ISRAEL URGES SYRIAN INTERVENTION
AMID ESCALATING VIOLENCE IN LEBANON**

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- In the wake of escalating violence in southern Lebanon this week, Israeli officials are urging Syria to prevent attacks on Israeli forces.

Education Minister Amnon Rubinstein said Monday that Syria, which has more than 30,000 troops in Lebanon, could control the escalation of tensions in southern Lebanon if it wanted to.

"The fact that Syria does not prevent these attacks is not very encouraging," he told Israel Radio.

"The general assumption is that Syria uses south Lebanon as a way to force Israel to make concessions. I don't think this is an effective weapon.

"A much more effective (way) would be to the contrary: to come to terms with Israeli public opinion, to stop these attacks, and to sit down and talk business," Rubinstein said.

Rubinstein's remarks followed a series of attacks on Israeli forces by the Islamic fundamentalist Hezbollah movement in southern Lebanon this week.

On Sunday, Hezbollah ambushed a routine Israeli patrol in the eastern sector of the security zone, killing one Israeli officer and wounding seven soldiers.

Lt. Ariel Ovadia, the 20-year-old officer killed in Sunday's ambush, was laid to rest here Monday. Four of the attackers were killed in an ensuing clash.

Also on Monday, two more Israeli soldiers in southern Lebanon were wounded when their vehicle drove over a land mine.

One of the soldiers' feet was amputated. The second soldier was lightly wounded. Military sources said the incident occurred when the soldiers were searching the area where the previous day's attack had taken place.

State Dept. Official Visits Lebanon

However, Israel Television reported that the explosion was not connected to Sunday's ambush and that the mine apparently was laid during the 1970s.

Likud Knesset member David Levy, reacting to the recent attacks, demanded that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who is currently on a five-day visit to the Far East, cut short his trip and return home.

Levy told Israel Radio that it was time for Israel to change the rules of the game and take a strong, aggressive approach in the security zone.

Meanwhile, a high-ranking U.S. State Department official visited Lebanon last Friday in an effort to seek improved ties that could include the lifting of a 1987 travel ban for Americans to Lebanon.

Robert Pelletreau Jr., assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern Affairs, met with Lebanese President Elias Hrawi and other government leaders. It was the first visit to Lebanon by an American official in a year.

According to local media reports, the United States wants Hrawi's government to put a stop to the Hezbollah movement's activities in southern Lebanon as part of a package of measures aimed at securing better ties with the United States.

**U.N. DECLARATION ON TERRORISM
REJECTS MEANS-TO-AN-END ARGUMENT**

By Larry Yudelson

UNITED NATIONS, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- Terrorists can no longer find ideological sanction from the United Nations.

Calling terrorist actions "in any circumstances unjustifiable," the U.N. General Assembly has adopted a Declaration on Measures to Eliminate International Terrorism.

While short of concrete measures, the document was hailed as "a major measure" by Harris Schoenberg, director of U.N. affairs for B'nai B'rith. "Until the end of the Cold War, discussion of terrorism was dominated by the argument that the right end -- such as self determination -- justifies terrorism," said Schoenberg.

"This document is not only a statement on terrorism, but is virtually free of that contention," he said. Schoenberg noted that nations who supported terrorism two decades ago are now suffering its effects.

The idea for the resolution came from Algeria, which is battling Muslim fundamentalists.

The working group which drafted the resolution was chaired by Argentina, where 99 people were killed when a bomb demolished the Jewish community's offices in July.

In the declaration issued last Friday, the General Assembly expressed its "unequivocal condemnation" of terrorism. It also said that states "must refrain from organizing, instigating, assisting or participating in terrorist acts," and urged states to take "resolute measures" for "the speedy and final elimination of international terrorism."

The declaration said that "considerations of a political, philosophical, ideological, racial, ethnic, religious or any other nature" cannot justify "criminal acts intended or calculated to provoke a state of terror in the general public, a group of persons or particular persons for political purposes."

But while Schoenberg and other Jewish observers welcomed the declaration, they said the U.N. still has a long way to go.

Schoenberg expressed disappointment that when the Security Council recently reviewed its sanctions against Libya, imposed for that country's failure to surrender the alleged bombers of Pan Am flight 103, it failed to strengthen them.

And Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, noted that the General Assembly did not take up an Argentine proposal to lift diplomatic immunity for diplomats who are suspected of smuggling explosives to terrorists in diplomatic pouches.

"It's better than what we've had before," said Steinberg of the declaration, "but certainly not good enough."

OSI MOVES TO REVOKE CITIZENSHIP OF TWO ALLEGED LITHUANIAN NAZIS

WASHINGTON, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- The U.S. Justice Department is seeking to revoke the citizenship of two former Lithuanian nationals who allegedly participated in Nazi-sponsored acts during World War II.

The first complaint was filed Dec. 7 in U.S. District Court in Cleveland against Algimantas Dailide of Brecksville, Ohio. The complaint alleges that the 73-year-old real estate agent served in the Nazi-sponsored Lithuanian security police in Vilnius, Lithuania, during World War II.

The second complaint was filed Dec. 9 in U.S. District Court in Chicago, alleging that Wiatscheslaw (Chester) Rydlinskis, a resident of Bloomingdale, Ill., served as a Nazi concentration camp guard and guard dog handler in the SS Death's Head Battalion during World War II.

Both cases were filed jointly by the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations and the U.S. Attorney's Office in each city.

Rydlinskis, born in Lithuania in 1924, allegedly joined the Waffen (armed) SS in 1941 and served in the SS Death's Head Battalion at the Auschwitz and Buchenwald concentration camps from 1941 to 1945.

The complaint against Rydlinskis, a retired draftsman, charges that while at the Laura sub-camp of Buchenwald, the defendant also guarded the camp's inmates to prevent their escape as they were evacuated in cattle cars and by forced march toward the Dachau death camp in late March 1945.

Many prisoners died during the evacuation due to the harsh conditions, including inadequate food and water and abuse by guards.

According to the complaint, Rydlinskis was arrested by British military forces and held as a war crimes suspect, then was transferred to U.S. custody in Allied-controlled Germany, where he was held for almost two years.

Help Comes From Lithuanian Government

U.S. officials have not disclosed why he was released.

The complaint charges that Rydlinskis obtained a U.S. immigrant visa in Germany in 1956 by concealing his wartime activities and his arrest and detention by British and American military forces.

The complaint against Dailide alleges that he took part in the Nazi-allied Saugumas, or security police, in Vilnius province.

The Saugumas was a subordinate component of the German Security Police and Security Service.

The Saugumas aided the occupying Nazi forces in arresting, detaining and turning over for execution Jews caught outside their barbed-wire ghettos or those who were trying to escape.

The complaint also charges that Dailide concealed his wartime activities when applying to immigrate to the United States in 1949.

The Dailide case is the latest in a series of Nazi war criminal cases made possible with the help of Lithuanian records.

The Lithuanian government has recently made available World War II records to Justice Department investigators.

In September, OSI initiated action against

two other men accused of war crimes in Lithuania.

One of the cases is against Aleksandras Lileikis of Norwood, Mass., who is accused of having been the chief of the Saugumas for the entire Vilnius province and thus Dailide's boss. His case is moving through the courts.

RABIN AND ARAFAT CONTINUE DEBATE OVER TIMING OF WITHDRAWAL, ELECTIONS

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- Israeli and Palestinian leaders are continuing their debate over how to proceed with the next phase of negotiations.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is once again suggesting that Israeli troops might remain in the West Bank while the Palestinians hold their elections.

Rabin raised the possibility on Monday while speaking to reporters aboard a flight to the Far East. He said that security problems which would be created by the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the West Bank could prolong current Israeli-Palestinian negotiations regarding the timing of Palestinian elections.

According to the Palestinian self-rule accord signed last year, Israel is supposed to withdraw its troops from the West Bank prior to the holding of Palestinian elections.

In Stockholm, Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat rejected Rabin's proposal out of hand.

"I am astonished because no one can accept to carry on an election in the presence of the occupying power," he said at a news conference.

Arafat was in Stockholm on Monday for a meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres at which they discussed the thorny issue of the Israeli troop withdrawals.

They were unable to reach a breakthrough during discussions a day earlier in Oslo, where the two, along with Rabin, received the Nobel Peace prize.

U.S. PURSUES IDEA OF MIDEAST BANK

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- In an effort to find new funding sources to foster peace in the Middle East, the United States has renewed its push for the creation of a regional development bank.

Capitalizing on momentum from October's economic summit in Casablanca, the Clinton administration will invite 20 countries to Washington in early January for talks aimed at setting the framework for a Middle East Development Bank, administration officials say.

While Arab states and Israel are committed to pursuing the idea of such a bank, planners ran into problems when questions arose over who would fund the venture.

When representatives convene in Washington on Jan. 10, ministers plan to discuss not only funding and management issues but also new ways to funnel aid and encourage investment in the region.

Israeli officials have avidly supported the bank as a way to show citizens throughout the Middle East the fruits of peace.

WIESEL REJECTS COMPARISONS BETWEEN BOSNIA AND HOLOCAUST

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- Nobel Peace Prize laureate Elie Wiesel said this week that the continuing war in Bosnia is a defeat for the United Nations.

But, he added, he would not equate the suffering in Bosnia to the Holocaust of the Jews during World War II.

Since the beginning of the war in Bosnia, Wiesel said, "I have opposed such a comparison" between the Bosnian suffering and the Holocaust.

"I don't think it is right, because it is improper or downright false," he said in an interview published Sunday in the Rome daily *La Repubblica*.

"The Holocaust was a historic tragedy and nothing can be compared to it," he said. "What is happening in the former Yugoslavia is already serious enough that it shouldn't be described in an exaggerated way."

He reiterated his call to convene a summit in the Bosnian capital of Sarajevo that would include President Clinton, Russian President Boris Yeltsin and the leaders of all the former Yugoslavian states.

"They should repeat what Jimmy Carter said to Anwar Sadat and Menachem Begin at Camp David: You won't leave here until a solution is found," he said.

Wiesel had harsh words about the United Nations.

"The United Nations has been defeated," he said. "It is the first great failure for the organization that unites the countries of the world."

"In Bosnia, it behaved in a deplorable way which cannot fail to be recorded in history," he said. "Certainly, the U.N. will say that the fault was of the great powers. It will seek to unload onto them the responsibility, but this doesn't lessen the guilt."

Despite the harsh assessment, Wiesel himself admitted that he did not know what steps should be taken to end the more than two years of fighting in Bosnia.

DEBATING ISRAEL-DIASPORA RELATIONS: TWO APPROACHES FACE OFF AT B.B. FORUM
By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Dec. 12 (JTA) -- Differing prescriptions for strengthening the faltering ties between Israel and the Diaspora have made fiery adversaries of Yossi Beilin, deputy foreign minister, and Yehiel Leket, acting chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel.

But at a recent forum sponsored by the B'nai B'rith World Center, the two former sparring partners sounded surprisingly conciliatory.

At the forum, "Expectations and Fulfillment in the Israel-Diaspora Equation," both Beilin and Leket stressed the need to respond to the problems of assimilation and intermarriage that threaten Diaspora ties to Judaism and Israel.

And both agreed that a new, more balanced Israel-Diaspora partnership has to be devised to address common Jewish challenges in the face of changing politics, economics and demographics.

But the two have radically different formulas for structuring that new partnership.

Beilin repeated his standard call to abolish the World Zionist Organization because he believes it is an anachronism. And he said the Jewish Agency should be replaced with a more democratic organization whose centerpiece focuses on free trips to Israel for Diaspora youth to help curb assimilation and instill Jewish pride.

He said the WZO, which consists of Diaspora Zionist organizations and representatives of Israel's political parties, has no ideological *raison d'être*, since the Zionist movement is made up of people who "support Israel and like Israel" but have no intention of "fulfilling the Zionist dream and making aliyah."

The Jewish Agency, he said, "is not a democratic organization and does not reflect a real picture (of) the Jewish world today."

Beilin's much-touted plan is to replace the Jewish Agency with a new organization he has tagged Beit Yisrael, which he says would be based on a Jewish census in which "every Jew will be counted and will count."

Its principal purpose would be to strengthen Jewish identity and stop the trend toward assimilation.

Since universal Jewish education is not feasible, he said, he has proposed fully subsidized visits to Israel for Diaspora youth.

He believes the money to fund the trips should come from funds now dedicated to Jewish Agency activities in Israel such as social welfare, which should be the sole responsibility of Israelis, he said.

Israel's Future Depends On Diaspora Jews

For his part, Leket agreed that there is an urgent need for reforms that would broaden the base of participation in organized Jewish life.

But he believes that the Jewish Agency and WZO are the best -- indeed the only -- existing framework for a viable Israeli-Diaspora partnership and that they are strong enough to sustain the necessary reforms.

Though Leket in the past has labeled Beilin's plan "ridiculous" and "impractical," the Jewish Agency official said he would support any new democratic organization that would attract unaffiliated Jews.

He also said Zionist ideology has a critical role to play in combating the increasing failure of Israelis to identify with Jews of the Diaspora.

While "the future of the Diaspora as a Jewish people isn't guaranteed without Israel," he said, the future of Israel, as a Jewish country, "is not guaranteed without the Diaspora."

He also said he believes the Israel experience for Diaspora youth should be a major part of any effort to stem assimilation. And, though he said he does not believe Beilin's plan would be effective, he is not opposed to trying it as a pilot program.

Leket stressed, however, that bringing youth to Israel is not enough.

"We must bring them to an attractive Israel," he said. "The Diaspora shares the responsibility for making Israel attractive" and rich in Jewish culture and creativity.

He also said the Jewish Agency and WZO are deliberating how to expand their partnership beyond Zionist political parties and the Diaspora fund-raising establishment now represented.

**JEWISH FEMINISM IN THE '90s:
EXPLOSION IN WOMEN'S LEARNING
REVOLUTIONIZING ORTHODOX JUDAISM**

[Part 3 Of A Series]

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) -- A quiet revolution is changing the face of Orthodox Judaism -- an explosion of women studying Jewish texts long forbidden to them.

Some of them have become so learned that they are beginning to interpret Jewish law and serve in roles previously filled only by rabbis.

Just a few years ago, only men would be invited to hear well-known rabbis speak in Orthodox neighborhoods like the Flatbush section of Brooklyn. Today an increasing number of women attend these lectures.

A small number of extremely learned women even teach men. A handful of notable women throughout Jewish history received advanced educations from their fathers and were regarded as so learned that the Jews of their communities turned to them for religious decisions.

But never before has there been an organized, structured effort to offer Orthodox women the same comprehensive training that men receive in preparation for their ordination as rabbis.

Whether or not learned women will ever be recognized in the Orthodox community as rabbis is highly controversial.

But the training of women as halachic arbiters, or interpreters of Jewish law -- the primary role of Orthodox rabbis -- is already under way.

In Israel, women are also being trained as advocates for other women in Jewish courts, where divorces are settled by a panel of judges without legal representation for the parties involved. Women have often felt at a disadvantage during these proceedings because they have not had the education in Jewish law to argue their cases or even understand the discourse.

In North America, the best known educational institution offering women advanced study of Judaism's classical texts is Drisha, located on Manhattan's Upper West Side.

Women Learn Torah Full-Time

One recent morning three pairs of modestly dressed women in their 20s sat scattered around a large, well-lit room lined with crowded bookcases at Drisha, deeply immersed in the study of the Talmud tractate before them.

It was a typical chavruta, or paired Talmud study, for the Drisha scholars, each of whom is devoting between one and three years to full-time Torah study.

The women who study for at least three years and pass a series of examinations will be certified by Drisha as sufficiently knowledgeable to answer questions on matters of Jewish law in the areas of kashrut, niddah (the laws regulating sexuality) and Shabbat.

These advanced Drisha scholars are the elite of the 500 women who take at least one course at the institute each year.

Three women's yeshivas in Jerusalem are considering instituting similar certification courses and are training women at the same level. And a small number of women are studying privately

with rabbis in Jerusalem and receiving the same education as a man preparing for the rabbinate.

While only a few women are being trained at levels that are considered controversial, the study of Judaism's classical texts by women at all levels has become a widespread phenomenon that has gained acceptance in the centrist Orthodox world.

One indicator of just how women's study is accepted is the fact that the Spring 1994 issue of Tradition, the journal of the centrist Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America, is devoted to a symposium on the topic of women's education. Most of the articles enthusiastically endorse it.

"This level of learning is in some ways a miracle," said author and Orthodox feminist Blu Greenberg. "No one would have imagined even a decade ago the extent to which learning has galloped along in the Orthodox world or the rabbinic support for it."

The creation of Orthodox women's prayer groups around the world is another result of the explosion of interest in women's learning. Only a few Orthodox rabbis have approved of them.

Participants stress that a women's tefillah group does not constitute a minyan, which consists of 10 men and is required in traditional Judaism in order to say certain prayers.

Similarity To Minyan Raises Questions

But those who object say the groups are so similar to a traditional minyan that participants are indeed violating prohibitions against women making up such quorums.

The lack of rabbinic support has not stopped the proliferation of women's tefillah groups. One member said this has resulted in women depending on themselves for legal questions.

"In the tefillah movement we are looking less to rabbis and are figuring out the halachot (laws) involved by ourselves, creating new rituals and even writing new prayers. This is happening without rabbinic approval," said Rivka Haut, a co-founder of the Women's Tefillah Network, a loose confederation of about 25 such groups.

Shelley List, who lives in Baltimore, is writing a prayer based on the classical structure for women to say after childbirth.

On their first visit to shul after giving birth, women have traditionally recited a blessing thanking God for delivering them from danger. But List's prayer is specific to childbirth.

A prayer for agunot, or the women whose husbands refuse to grant them a Jewish divorce, was recently composed by women who are lobbying rabbis to change Jewish law to help them.

Bat Mitzvah, the ceremony marking a girl's passage into adulthood, has become the norm, despite the fact that it was virtually unheard of in the Orthodox world just 20 years ago.

Some say that the learning trend will result in the acceptance of women as rabbis in the Orthodox world in the very near future.

Others disagree. "There is a lot of negativism in the Orthodox world" associated with the concept of women as rabbis or halachic arbiters, said Karen Bacon, dean of Yeshiva University's Stern College for Women, an Orthodox institution.

Said Greenberg, "Learning is the road to ordination, and you can't close the last gate of the path. I used to say it would happen within my lifetime. Now I believe it will happen by the year 2000."