



## NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ Organizers of Sunday's Madison Square Garden rally in support of Israel and "the pursuit of peace" announced that Deputy Knesset Speaker Ovadia Eli, a member of the Likud Party, would "be present and introduced" at the rally. The announcement, however, apparently did not change the minds of those peace process critics boycotting or threatening to boycott the event because no opposition members were included in the program.

■ Confessed assassin Yigal Amir was brought before a Tel Aviv court to hear the charges against him in the slaying of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. The judge ordered the trial to begin Dec. 19. [Page 3]

■ Hundreds of students from the Jewish Theological Seminary are planning to protest the presence of House Speaker Newt Gingrich as the keynote speaker at a JTS dinner Monday. Rabbis, Jewish politicians, writers and representatives from local unions are expected to join the demonstration outside the Pierre Hotel.

■ Israeli helicopters targeted suspected guerrilla positions in southern Lebanon after an Israeli soldier was killed in a clash with fundamentalist gunmen in the central sector of the security zone. Six other Israeli soldiers were wounded in the day's heavy fighting. [Page 2]

■ Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres visited King Hussein in Jordan for a meeting that focused on the regional peace process. Peres said he wanted to see the king to "compare notes" before Peres travels to Washington next week to meet with President Clinton.

■ An Argentine prosecutor reportedly said there was evidence linking a band of recently arrested soldiers to the 1994 bombing of the Jewish headquarters in Buenos Aires.

■ Israel said it would release about 1,000 Palestinian prisoners by the end of the month. Israel released some 1,000 prisoners in September after it reached an accord with the Palestinians for extending autonomy in the West Bank.

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

### Council on Foreign Relations aids Hamas, says terror expert

By Cynthia Mann

NEW YORK (JTA) — Terrorism expert Steven Emerson is accusing the Council on Foreign Relations of "legitimizing the militant Palestinian Hamas organization" by publishing a newsletter called the Muslim Politics Report.

Emerson, whose documentary "Jihad in America" aired on PBS last year, has called on council President Leslie Gelb to sever the council's connection to the newsletter and return the Ford Foundation funding it receives for it. In a series of detailed letters to Gelb outlining his concerns, Emerson said the newsletter's views "are one and the same as Hamas and other violent militant Islamic organizations."

Emerson's charges come at a time of increased focus on the links between Middle East terrorist organizations and groups based in the United States.

In an effort to crack down on international terrorism, President Clinton has recently called for a ban on fund raising in the United States for such groups.

Musa Abu Marzook, a Hamas leader who lived in Virginia, was arrested in July and is being held in New York, pending a hearing to consider Israel's request to extradite him.

At the same time, an Islamic scholar — Ramadan Abdallah Shallah — recently left his teaching post at the University of South Florida to become head of the militant Islamic Jihad, based in Damascus, Syria.

In his letters to Gelb beginning in August, Emerson has focused on the Council on American Islamic Relations, or CAIR, a group based in Washington, D.C., that he asserts is a Hamas front.

A report by CAIR on anti-Muslim bias in the United States was given extensive coverage in the summer issue of the Muslim Politics Report, which is published occasionally as a project of the Council on Foreign Relations.

The council is a private research organization that studies American foreign policy issues.

Emerson is not alone in his concern. Daniel Pipes, editor of the Middle East Quarterly, has also written to Gelb on the matter.

CAIR, as "an organization clearly associated with a gang of violent terrorists, is not something you wish to have any institutional connection to whatsoever," he wrote. "To do so is to place nothing less than the council's reputation in jeopardy."

### Council says it is not a censor

Gelb, for his part, has indicated that he sees the argument as an academic one. In a letter to Emerson dated Sept. 26, Gelb said he always has regarded Muslim radicalism "as a danger to the U.S. and to our friends and [I] support serious efforts to combat them."

"But," Gelb continued, "the council is in the business of public education, and I am not, as president of this institution, in the business of censoring knowledge of issues."

He said the Muslim Politics project, which sponsors the newsletter, "is working hard to involve Muslims of diverse affiliations and identities from around the world as well as policy-makers, scholars and commentators from this country with widely differing perspectives."

He also pointed to the newsletter's disclaimer, which states: "All statements of fact and expressions of opinion in the Muslim Politics Report are the sole responsibility of the individual author."

The council, the disclaimer notes, "is a home to many views, advocate of none."

Gelb said in a brief interview last week that Emerson should take his concerns directly to James Piscatori, editor of the newsletter, and he would step in only "if things went beyond the pale."

The council invited Emerson to meet with Piscatori, who is a well-known Islamic scholar, and Ethan Kapstein, the council's director of studies.

Emerson this week said he reluctantly would accept the invitation.

Emerson's concern initially was focused on the summer issue of the

newsletter, which featured a two-page article on the CAIR study.

The article, "A Rush To Judgment: The CAIR Special Report on Anti-Muslim Bias, Harassment and Violence Following the Oklahoma City Bombing," documented anti-Muslim incidents of harassment in the immediate aftermath of the April bombing.

It included a reference to Emerson's initial reaction to the bombing: "This (the bombing) was done with the intent to inflict as many casualties as possible. That is a Middle Eastern trait."

Emerson has lambasted the CAIR report, which he charges is filled with fabrications and delegitimizes the critics of Islamic extremists by painting them as critics of mainstream Islam.

In his August letter to Gelb, he said the statement CAIR attributed to him was deliberately incomplete and aimed at unfairly presenting him as racist.

"That the council allowed itself to circulate this slanderous comment is nothing short of scandalous," Emerson wrote.

But most of the seven-page, single-spaced letter was devoted to proving what he calls the CAIR link to Hamas and criticizing the council for giving CAIR space in the newsletter.

"The issue is not of free speech," wrote Emerson, "but of whether in fact the council is promoting the ulterior militant agenda of a front group."

No one at CAIR was available to comment on the charges.

For its part, CAIR was a vocal critic of Emerson's film, "Jihad in America," calling it in a news release "nothing but fiery rhetoric, unsupported allegations and spurious juxtapositions to build a case against the Muslim community in America."

In his letter to Emerson, Gelb said, "We have no information on whether CAIR is a Hamas front group, as you suggest. But even if it were shown to be associated with Hamas, it would not mean that we should avoid hearing what it had to say."

Emerson likened Gelb's written response to the stance of the University of South Florida.

"The reputation of the University of South Florida has been deeply sullied because of its repeated refusal to listen to public warnings" about the Islamic Jihad connection to the university through various front groups, said Emerson in a November letter to Gelb, referring to the activities of Shallah while he was at the school.

#### **Charges of a 'deceptive veneer'**

"The university engaged first in a policy of denial; it subsequently found refuge in the claim of 'academic freedom.' It now has been forced to acknowledge that it never heeded any of the warnings."

"I am writing to you now," Emerson wrote, "because an outfit now supported by the Council on Foreign Relations functions similarly under the same deceptive veneer."

In the same letter, Emerson launched a much broader assault on the newsletter, essentially calling it a vehicle for Hamas and other militant Islamic organizations.

Emerson noted for the first time that Piscatori wrote the introduction to the CAIR study. Piscatori signed it as chairman of the international politics department at the University of Wales, and did not refer to his association with the council.

Piscatori referred questions to Kapstein of the council.

"There is no relationship between CAIR and the newsletter as far as I'm aware," said Kapstein, who defended Piscatori as a "world-renowned scholar."

When asked whether he believed that the newsletter had a responsibility to know whether it was inadvertently providing a platform for an extremist group, Kapstein said, "We are not an intelligence agency, and we are not a detective bureau and we don't do a background search" on the contributors who write for the newsletter.

The Anti-Defamation League was noncommittal when pressed on CAIR and the Muslim Politics Report.

"At this point, we don't have enough information to comment on the matter," said Ken Jacobson, director of the ADL's international affairs division.

For Pipes, at issue is the debate over fundamentalist Islam.

"Piscatori is one of the group who sees it as a benign phenomenon. He thinks we should have dialogue," Pipes said.

Piscatori's camp "draws distinctions between moderates and extremists."

"From my point of view, they are working together," said Pipes. "This is a radical utopian movement whose key is the readiness to use force," said Pipes. "We in the West, and Israel as well, are an impediment to the achievement of [its] goals." □

#### **Fighting resumes in Lebanon amid renewed U.S. peace efforts**

*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli helicopters targeted suspected guerrilla positions in southern Lebanon on Wednesday after an Israeli soldier was killed during clashes with fundamentalist gunmen in the central sector of the security zone.

Six other Israeli soldiers were wounded in the day's heavy fighting, which came amid renewed American efforts to restart the long-sidetracked negotiations between Israel and Syria.

Two Islamic fundamentalist movements, Amal and Hezbollah, were involved in the clashes, Israel Television reported.

The first clash occurred early Wednesday morning, when an Israeli paratrooper patrol operating in the central sector of the security zone encountered a guerrilla unit.

In the ensuing firefight, Sgt. Eran Sabag, 20, of Beer Ya'acov, was killed. Two officers were moderately wounded and another soldier was lightly hurt.

Four guerrillas were reportedly killed in the exchange.

A few hours later, three Israeli soldiers were lightly wounded when guerrillas fired missiles at an Israeli position in the eastern sector of the security zone.

The fighting took place as U.S. Middle East peace envoy Dennis Ross briefed Israeli leaders on his talks a day earlier in Damascus with Syrian President Hafez Assad.

Ross said he had the impression that Israel and Syria were "serious" about wanting to resume peace negotiations, which were halted by Syria in late June.

But at the same time, there were no indications that any breakthrough had been reached.

Foreign Minister Ehud Barak said the chances of a resumption of negotiations with Syria would become clear only after Prime Minister Shimon Peres met next week in Washington with President Clinton.

Peres, who is expected to address Congress during his stay in Washington, has reportedly formulated a position paper on resuming talks with Syria.

Among the paper's main points: a summit meeting between Peres and Assad; parallel discussions on the key issues of security arrangements, troop redeployments and normalization of relations; and raising the level of talks to include ministers. □

## Groups push for status quo amid calls for immigration reform

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Legislation that would dramatically reduce the number of legal immigrants admitted into the United States continues to make its way through Congress, prompting fears among many American Jews that they may never be reunited with family members who remain overseas.

The immigration reform efforts come amid a continuing wave of anti-immigration sentiment, with many predicting that the issue will play a major role in next year's presidential campaign.

Activists acknowledge that stringent immigration reform legislation is probably a foregone conclusion, but they remain optimistic that improvements can be made in the bills.

"Our goal is to get it as close to current law as possible because we don't believe current law is a problem," said Diana Aviv, director of the Council of Jewish Federation's Washington Action Office, which is leading the Jewish community's coordinated response to immigration reform.

Last week, a bill reducing legal immigration from the current level of 675,000 to 525,000 moved closer to a Senate vote when the Senate Judiciary immigration subcommittee voted 5-2 to send it to the full committee. The bill, authored by Sen. Alan Simpson (R-Wyo.), would allow entry to 450,000 relatives of U.S. citizens. Another 75,000 immigrants would be allowed entry to fill jobs.

In addition, the measure would bar adult children and siblings of U.S. citizens from entering the country under their relatives' sponsorship and make it more difficult for adult children to reunite with their parents.

A similar bill awaiting a vote on the House floor would cut the annual immigration total to 595,000 by 2001. Although less restrictive on family immigration than the Senate version, the House bill would place a cap on admissions for refugees at 50,000 annually, representing a 55 percent reduction in the current number of refugees allowed in each year.

That provision evokes for many Jews memories of the S.S. St. Louis and strikes at the core of Jewish concerns over immigration reform. The ship carried Jewish refugees from Nazi Europe, was turned away from American shores and sent back to Europe.

The overwhelming majority of Jews who immigrate to the United States each year from the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe enter the country as refugees.

Nearly 30,000 Jews are expected to come to the United States from the former Soviet Union in 1995 alone, constituting nearly 25 percent of all refugees.

### Onerous restrictions

Both reform bills await numerous amendments before floor votes and before a final bill is hashed out in a conference committee.

In coming weeks, Jewish groups will work to eliminate the refugee cap in the House bill and to mitigate the Senate bill's more onerous restrictions on family immigration.

Both bills would make family reunification more difficult by eliminating four of five visa preference categories for: adult unmarried sons and daughters of U.S. citizens; adult unmarried sons and daughters of legal permanent residents; married sons and daughters of citizens; and brothers and sisters of citizens.

Eliminating these preferences will cut off 70,000 visas per year for family members attempting to reunite, affecting nearly 3 million American families now petition-

ing for immigrant visas, according to the CJF. The Senate bill goes even further in restricting family immigration.

In its current form, the Senate bill would only allow entry to parents older than 65 who have at least half of their children living in the United States. Moreover, applicants must show proof of health insurance before a visa can be issued — a restriction criticized by some as a Catch-22 because primary and long-term care is often unavailable to those residing outside the United States.

The CJF predicts that the preconditions contained in the Senate bill will likely lead to a 75 percent cutback in admissions for parents of U.S. citizens.

Advocates of immigration reform say that at a time when money is tight, the United States must take care of its own first. Simpson, speaking before the vote in the Senate Judiciary immigration subcommittee, said, "The American people want immigration reduced." Many immigrants, Simpson said, come to the United States simply to gain welfare and other public benefits.

Critics, meanwhile, argue that the reform proposals are an overreaction. Immigrants, they assert, contribute \$25 billion to \$30 billion more in taxes than they consume in benefits.

Moreover, they say Congress has already addressed the issue of abuses of public benefits in its welfare reform legislation, recently approved by both houses. "We've been making the case that this is a double whammy and unnecessary," Aviv said of the reform measures.

Another point of contention is Simpson's decision to join the legislation affecting legal immigration with legislation on illegal immigration. The merging of the bills, activists argue, confuses two distinct issues.

Although Jewish activists believe that there is room for movement in the reform legislation, most acknowledge that they cannot envision the House or Senate bills improving to the point where they could support them. □

## Lawyer for confessed killer: 'Hard to assess' how to plead

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A lawyer for the confessed assassin of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said this week that he had not yet decided how his client would plead to the charges against him.

"At this stage, it is hard for me to assess," said Mordecai Offri, one of two lawyers defending Yigal Amir. "I must study the evidence."

Amir was brought before a Tel Aviv court Wednesday to hear the charges against him. The judge ordered the trial to begin Dec. 19. The court also ordered Amir to be held in detention until the end of the legal proceedings against him. Three judges will hear the case. Israel has no jury system.

Amir, 25, smiled at his father and sister as the charges were read in the courtroom. He was indicted a day earlier on charges that included premeditated murder. He faces life imprisonment if convicted.

Amir has confessed to the killing and expressed no remorse for his actions.

Yonatan Ray Goldberg, the second lawyer representing Amir, lives in the West Bank settlement of Emanuel. He moved from Houston to Israel seven years ago. Amir is a "good man, not like the man portrayed in the media," he told reporters at the courtroom.

Amir was also named in a separate indictment charging him, his brother Hagai and friend Dror Adani with conspiring to kill Rabin and with planning attacks on Arabs. Several weapons offenses were also listed.

The court ordered Hagai Amir and Adani held in detention until Jan. 7. □

## Policy center brings together conservative Jews, Christians

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Emphasizing shared values and the desire to create a more civil, "moral society," a coalition of conservative Jews and Christians has formed a new Washington public policy center.

"Our goal is to transcend and heal divisions, those between Jews and Christians, Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives, and to seize those shared values in public policies that are unfortunately being ignored and shunned because of the polarization marking our differences," said Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein, founder and president of the new Center for Judeo-Christian Values in America.

Building on the 13-year-old International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, which has focused primarily on support for Israel, the new organization will make policy recommendations primarily on domestic issues.

At a news conference announcing the center this week, Sens. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) and Dan Coats (R-Ind.), who will serve as co-chairmen of the organization, both stressed a need to find common religious ground in order to establish moral standards and a greater sense of personal accountability in society.

"When we do not respect and build on the religious impulse that is shared so broadly in this country, we are depriving ourselves of one of the great sources of strength and unity and morality that we have," said Lieberman, an Orthodox Jew.

Eckstein in the past has played a key diplomatic role between Jews and conservative Christians. Last year, when the Anti-Defamation League released a report that accused evangelical and fundamentalist Christian leaders of "intolerance" and using "a rhetoric of fear, suspicion and even hatred" in their efforts to gain political clout, Eckstein was instrumental in bringing both sides together to declare a truce and agree to tone down their rhetoric.

"We believe there is far more that unites us as Jews and Christians than divides us," said Ralph Reed, executive director of the Christian Coalition, who will serve on the center's advisory board, along with William Bennett, former secretary of education, and others.

Eckstein has organized a largely conservative coalition in support of the center, but maintains it does not have a conservative agenda. "I don't think bringing greater morality into society should be defined as a conservative agenda," he said. To broaden its coalition, however, the center will try to identify and bring aboard liberal-leaning Jewish leaders who "might be more willing to take a more conservative stance on certain issues," he said.

The center's director, Chris Gersten, said the office would open early next year.

Specific policy proposals have not yet been put forth, though the center's leadership said it sees as a starting point Coats' "Project For American Renewal," a 19-bill initiative on ways the government can strengthen families and communities via tax credits and grants. □

## Jewish schools and shuls suffer due to Paris strike

By Lee Yanowitch

PARIS (JTA) — As a public transit strike grips the French capital for a second week, the city's Jewish schools and synagogues are feeling the effects of the shutdown.

"We are functioning with about 20 percent fewer students," said Benjamin Touati, director of the Lucien de Hirsch School, a Jewish institution. "Those who live in the suburbs just can't come. The others hitchhike, or they come on bicycles and roller skates."

Touati said that during the strike he is closing the school three hours earlier than usual to allow students and teachers time to make their way home.

The strike — brought on by worker discontent with the government's budget-cutting austerity plans and welfare reforms — brought buses, the Metro and most rail lines to a standstill, leaving the capital reeling from record traffic jams. To help people cope with the traffic nightmare, the government has hired private buses to transport up to 100,000 suburban commuters to work each day and has started up a free river-bus service on the Seine.

"I'm working with only half of my teachers," said Rabbi David Mamou of Synagogue Bethel.

He noted that the situation for students attending evening classes was "catastrophic."

"On Tuesday night, I had only three students when there should be 15," said Mamou. "For Talmud Torah on Sunday, I usually have 40 kids. There were less than 30."

In recent days, electricity, postal and telephone workers have joined the strike, which is starting to spill over into the private sector. Dock workers, truckers, teachers and employees of Air France and Air Inter were expected to stop work this week, when mass demonstrations were scheduled in major towns and cities in France.

Shopkeepers, kosher butchers and restaurant owners in the Marais, Paris' famous Jewish quarter, said their businesses have been severely hurt by the stoppage.

Jacob Gomplevicz, owner of Bazaar Suzanne, a store selling menorahs and other religious articles, said his sales had slipped 50 percent in the last 10 days. "It's just before the holidays, so normally we should be very busy. But no one's on the street. Everyone is staying home," Gomplevicz said, adding that merchandise he had ordered from Israel had not arrived because of freight backups.

Paris Mayor Jean Tiberi, circumventing strict labor laws, has allowed shops to open Sunday to help business.

Jo Goldenberg, owner of Goldenberg's restaurant, a popular tourist spot, said the strike has slashed the number of his customers by half. "It reminds me of '36, when there were strikes," he said. "They didn't just last 15 days, they lasted much longer, and weakened the country so badly, we lost the war." □

## Reports: Rabin's granddaughter receives \$1 million in book deal

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Noa Ben-Artzi, the granddaughter of Yitzhak Rabin who gave a heart-rending eulogy at his funeral, has reportedly received a \$1 million advance for a book on her relationship with the slain Israeli prime minister.

Ben-Artzi, 18, who will write under the name Noa Rabin, will include a call for Middle East peace in her 200-page book, it was reported.

According to accounts from New York, Alfred A. Knopf purchased distribution rights from the French publishing house Robert Laffont, which initiated the project.

The Rabin family denied reports that Ben-Artzi had signed a contract or received \$1 million, the Israeli daily Ma'ariv reported. "She heard about the proposal. But today is the 30th day since her grandfather's murder," the paper quoted the family as saying Tuesday. "It is not a day to even relate to such inquiries."

The book deal was confirmed by Marek Halter, a French writer and friend of the Rabin family, who said he would work with Ben-Artzi on the book, to be published this spring. "I have known Noa for many years," he said. "We went with my publisher to Israel to talk about [the idea for a book] with Noa, and the family accepted." □