

SOME JEWISH GROUPS URGING FREEZE ON SETTLEMENTS IN THE TERRITORIES

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- An increasing number of American Jewish leaders and organizations, mainly on the political left, are publicly urging Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir to announce a freeze on building and expanding settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The latest to do so is Project Nishma, an organization of some 100 influential Jewish leaders that aims to educate the public about Israel's security needs and the peace process.

A statement issued late Wednesday by Project Nishma's 10-member executive board urged a temporary freeze "in the interest of larger national goals: immigrant absorption, a stronger economy and progress toward security and peace."

The statement said that Shamir should announce the freeze and "state that the moratorium will be extended if Arab states and the Palestinians respond with reciprocal actions and commence good faith bilateral negotiations."

Project Nishma said that if Shamir introduces a moratorium, "the prime minister can count on the enthusiastic support of the vast majority of Israelis and Diaspora Jews."

Project Nishma's board includes a former chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Theodore Mann; two former chairpersons of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, Jacqueline Levine and Michael Pelavin; and a former president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, Edward Sanders, who also served as White House liaison to the Jewish community in the Carter administration.

Israel Will Have To Choose

On Thursday, some 50 members of Americans for Peace Now fanned out on Capitol Hill to urge members of Congress to speak out in support of a settlement freeze while backing Israel's request for U.S. guarantees covering \$10 billion in immigrant resettlement loans.

The Peace Now group also sponsored a panel discussion Thursday, during which the group's Israeli spokeswoman, Hebrew University Professor Galia Golan, pointed out that recent polls show that the overwhelming majority of Israelis, including Likud voters, support a freeze on settlements.

She said that the opposition to settlement-building is motivated less by ideology than by anger at the funds being used in the territories when the rest of Israel is suffering economically.

That Jewish leaders are beginning to speak out publicly, not just privately, can be seen in a recent article by Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, in which he stressed that Israel must face the present reality in the United States.

"To think that the administration and the president, who has always taken personally Israel's continuing settlements, will not use this unique moment to exert their influence is to fool oneself," he wrote.

Foxman said Israel will have to choose whether the loan guarantees are more important than the current settlement policy.

SHAMIR URGES MORE SETTLEMENTS, BUT CONSTRUCTION IS SLOWING DOWN

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir called Thursday for "maintaining the enthusiastic intensity" of settlement-building in the administered territories and said the settlements would soon prove a means for Israel to "attain our political goals."

Herut party settlement activists present at the session with the premier told reporters that in practice, the government appears to be slowing down on new settlement-building, focusing instead on the expansion of existing settlements.

Haim Abudraham, head of the Herut settlement movement, was quoted as saying that for diplomatic reasons, the government seems to be adopting this distinction.

The subject of settlements was also a matter of contention between Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy and Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa, who met with reporters after their bilateral meeting Thursday at the United Nations.

Moussa appealed to the Israelis to put a halt to settlement-building in the West Bank, which he called illegal "in letter and spirit."

Earlier this week, in a speech to the General Assembly, Moussa had said that continued construction in the administered territories jeopardizes the peace process.

When asked whether Israel would consider a moratorium on settlement-building in exchange for an end to the Arab economic boycott against the Jewish state, Levy replied: "We do not tie the two issues together."

Moussa interjected some levity into his response when asked whether it was a "cold peace" that existed between the two nations. He responded by saying that he hadn't heard there was a link between peace and the weather.

Both leaders spoke optimistically about the proposed Middle East peace conference.

(JTA correspondent Jackie Rothenberg at the United Nations contributed to this report.)

U.S. JEWISH ATTITUDES TOWARD ISRAEL HAVE SHIFTED TO RIGHT SINCE GULF WAR

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- American Jewish attitudes toward Israel's security needs and the Middle East peace process have shifted noticeably to the right in the aftermath of the Persian Gulf War, according to the results of a study released Thursday by the American Jewish Committee.

While American Jews still seem to have more positive views about dovish Israeli leaders than hawkish ones, they are more wary of the Palestine Liberation Organization, less inclined to support territorial compromise and more in favor of expanding Jewish settlements in the West Bank, the study found.

The study was conducted by sociologist Steven Cohen for AJCommittee's Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations. He analyzed the results of a survey sent by mail in July and August to a cross-section of 1,159 Jewish respondents nationwide.

The survey is the seventh in a series of

studies on American Jewish opinion that the AJCommittee institute has conducted since 1983.

Comparing the data from this summer's survey with the last one, taken two years ago, Cohen found that Jewish responses to several of the same questions had hardened.

For instance, the share of respondents agreeing that the PLO is "determined to destroy Israel" increased from 62 percent in 1989 to 83 percent this summer. Two years ago, 30 percent of respondents said they were "not sure" how to respond to that question; this year, only 13 percent could not make up their minds.

Similarly, while 38 percent of respondents in the 1989 survey agreed, and 30 percent disagreed, that Israel should exchange territory in the West Bank and Gaza Strip for "credible guarantees" of peace from the Arabs, this year the margin shrank to a bare plurality of 35 percent in favor and 34 percent opposed.

Moreover, slightly more American Jews now favor expansion of Jewish settlements in the West Bank than those opposing it. Whereas 35 percent opposed expansion in 1989 and 25 percent favored it, the latest poll puts the margin at 30 percent in favor to 29 percent against.

Arabs Seen As 'More Threatening'

Concern that Israel's continued administration of the territories is eroding the Jewish state's democratic and humanitarian character has also diminished.

While 30 percent of American Jews surveyed expressed that concern in 1988, after the Palestinian uprising had begun and was featured prominently in the news headlines, the number decreased to 26 percent a year later and fell to a mere 14 percent this summer, in the aftermath of the Gulf war.

This year's survey asked a number of questions specifically designed to gauge the war's impact on Jewish public opinion. When asked, nearly a quarter of the respondents, 24 percent, said the war had changed their opinions regarding "Israel's political and security situation."

Of those whose minds were changed, 11 percent said they were more hawkish regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict, while 4 percent said they were more dovish.

Thirteen percent said they were less in favor of Israel making compromises with the Arabs, while 8 percent said they were more in favor.

The responses, according to sociologist Cohen, indicate that "in the world of public opinion, moderation begets moderation, and extremism begets extremism.

"In July 1991, American Jews were perceiving the Arab world as much more threatening than they'd seen it before," Cohen said during a news conference called to announce his findings.

"Heightened threat and vulnerability are accompanied by more hard-line attitudes; diminished threat and diminished vulnerability, even if only hypothetical, generate a greater willingness to support Israeli compromise," he said.

Despite the hardening attitudes, a plurality of 41 percent of American Jews surveyed this year said the United States should continue to urge Israel to adopt a more flexible stance toward the Arabs. Thirty-seven percent said the United States should not, and 22 percent were not sure.

But a full 80 percent of the respondents said they were opposed to threats to reduce U.S. foreign aid to Israel unless the Jewish state adopts a more flexible stance toward the Arabs,

and 54 percent said Washington should stop criticizing Israel for expanding West Bank settlements.

When asked, 34 percent said they think President Bush is "generally friendly" toward Israel, 41 percent rated him "mixed or neutral," 15 percent called him "generally unfriendly" and 10 percent had no impression.

Over Half Never Visited Israel

Among the poll's other interesting findings:

- * A whopping 63 percent of respondents said they had never been to Israel.

- * Only 26 percent said they consider themselves Zionists.

- * Seven percent defined themselves as Orthodox, 38 percent as Conservative, 31 percent as Reform, 1 percent as Reconstructionist and 23 percent as "just Jewish."

- * Sixty percent identified themselves as Democrats, 16 percent as Republicans, 21 percent as independents, and 4 percent were unsure.

- * Just under half (49 percent) agreed that the recent immigration of Soviet and Ethiopian Jews to Israel "has made me feel a special responsibility to contribute to charities that help settle Jews in Israel." Thirty percent disagreed with that statement and 21 percent were not sure.

- * Forty-five percent said they were unfamiliar with the Jonathan Pollard spy case. Of the 55 percent who were familiar, 29 percent said his life sentence was too harsh, compared to 9 percent who said it was not. Twenty-two percent said American Jewish groups ought to campaign to reduce his sentence, while 13 percent disagreed.

IRAN AND SYRIA JOINING FORCES TO MANUFACTURE SCUD MISSILES

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- Iran is about to join Syria in a joint venture to manufacture surface-to-surface Scud missiles in Syria, according to Ha'aretz's military correspondent, Ze'ev Schiff, who attributed his information to reliable American sources.

If correct, it would be the first time Iran worked with an Arab country to produce a weapons system, Schiff reported Tuesday.

Syria has been making significant efforts to increase its surface-to-surface missile strength as a result of lessons taught by the Persian Gulf War, Schiff wrote.

After the war, Damascus signed an agreement with North Korea to acquire the more accurate Scud-C missiles, which exceed the range of standard Scuds by nearly 125 miles. The first shipment of new Scuds reached Syria from North Korea early last summer, and the second is due in the next few days, Schiff reported.

He said the deal differs from Syria's past missile contracts with the Soviet Union, because North Korea is committed to setting up a missile production plant in Syria.

Iran, in the midst of a long-term project to improve its military strength, is prepared to invest in the Syrian plant to assure itself of a steady supply of surface-to-surface missiles, Schiff said. He said that in the past, Syria tried to acquire from China M-9 missiles with a range of 300 to 370 miles.

The United States tried to prevent the deal, and the Chinese claimed the M-9s were still in the developmental stage. But knowledgeable circles believe the negotiations between China and Syria are in the final stages, Schiff wrote.

**NEO-NAZI PARTY DOES WELL AT POLLS,
AS VIOLENCE MARS UNIFICATION FESTS****By David Kantor**

BONN, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- The unexpected electoral success of a neo-Nazi party in Sunday's local elections has added to the deep concern felt throughout the country over the escalation of right-wing violence against immigrants and other foreign refugees.

The German Peoples Union, or DVU, headed by anti-Semitic publisher Gerhard Frey, polled 6.3 percent of the popular vote in Bremen, enough to win its first seats in the legislature of that northern German city-state.

Frey is editor and publisher of the Munich-based National Zeitung, which has been largely dedicated to attempts to prove the Holocaust never occurred.

Neo-Nazi and extreme right-wing fringe parties have flourished briefly in past local elections, only to fade from the political scene. The Republican Party, led by a former Nazi SS officer, was a recent example.

But the DVU's showing in Bremen has political observers troubled, because it can be linked to the influx of refugees, many from the Third World, an issue that has polarized Germans since their country was unified a year ago.

Some commentators have likened the wave of violence against foreigners to the hatred of Jews that flared when the Third Reich was formed.

Rita Sussmuth, speaker of the Bundestag, Germany's lower house of Parliament, said Thursday that these attacks "reawaken fears" that "are nourished by our past."

Jewish Security Beefed Up

Although Jewish institutions have not been targeted by the right-wing extremists, police in many cities have beefed up the protection of synagogues and other Jewish communal buildings.

At least 30,000 asylum-seeking refugees entered Germany last month and, according to government estimates, immigration for the whole year may reach 200,000.

Significantly, much if not most of the violence against foreigners has occurred in former East Germany.

Last weekend alone, neo-Nazi and Skinhead youths attacked hostels and other buildings housing foreigners in 20 German towns.

A hostel for foreigners was attacked Monday in Bad Honnef, just southwest of Bonn. It was repeatedly hit by lead balls Monday, but no injuries were reported.

Quarters occupied by foreigners were set on fire in the town of Herford, southwest of Hanover. In Recklinghausen, near Dortmund, police arrested 15 people between the ages of 14 and 19 for violence against Asian and African refugees.

Two men were arrested in Hagen, south of Dortmund, suspected of attempting to murder asylum-seekers.

The attacks generally appear to be in response to a perception that guest workers and immigrants from Asia, Africa, the Soviet Union and elsewhere in Eastern Europe are taking jobs, housing and government subsidies away from native Germans.

Right-wing and neo-Nazi parties play on those fears to arouse dormant racism.

The federal government is upset by the phenomenon. The response of Chancellor Helmut Kohl has been to lobby for a constitutional

amendment limiting the present blanket right to asylum in Germany.

Kohl warns that the situation could get worse unless the major political parties agree on ways to halt the flood of immigrants.

**SLOVAK JEWS KEEPING LOW PROFILE
AS NATIONALIST SENTIMENT RAGES****By Josef Klansky**

PRAGUE, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- Jews in the Slovak half of Czechoslovakia seem to have become uneasy bystanders at best and sometimes victims in the escalating battle between increasingly provocative Slovak separatists and federal authorities determined to hold the country together.

The strident voices of the separatists, calling for dismemberment of the state, which only recently emerged from 40 years of Communist rule, has been accompanied by anti-Semitic graffiti and desecrations of Jewish cemeteries.

While it is pleased by President Vaclav Havel's unequivocal condemnation of anti-Semitic utterances and cemetery vandalism, the Slovak Jewish community seems most anxious to keep a low profile at this time.

Havel used his weekly television address Sunday to call on the former Slovak prime minister, Vladimir Meciar, to speak out against anti-Semitism and fascism and to condemn the anti-Jewish slogans on the walls of Slovak towns.

Havel observed that while Meciar had no qualms about attacking Czech and Slovak politicians who do not share his extreme nationalist views, he has been reticent about racist outrages and vandalism in Slovakia.

The Czechoslovak president also spoke out against the prevailing nostalgia for the Nazi puppet state of Slovakia that existed from 1939 to 1945.

It was the only instance in history of an independent Slovakia and owed its existence to Adolf Hitler, who selected a pro-Nazi Catholic priest, Jozef Tiso, to be its leader. Tiso, eventually executed as a war criminal, dutifully slaughtered and deported Slovakia's Jews.

Best To 'Act With Restraint'

Havel reminded Slovakia's politicians that Tiso's state was one of Hitler's defeated allies.

But he called repeatedly for a referendum on the issue of Slovak sovereignty. Slovak politicians and political parties aiming for the dismemberment of the republic oppose a popular vote because they fear a majority of the population rejects their adventurism.

Robert Kardos, director of Slovakia's Union of Jewish Religious Communities, said that while fascist and anti-Semitic slogans are often shouted at demonstrations for Slovak independence, the leader of the separatist Slovak National Party, Jozef Prokes, apologized in the press for the cemetery desecrations.

In addition, one of the most radical leaders of the nationalist party, Mayor Jan Slota of Zilina, has assured local Jewish leaders that he repudiates anti-Semitism.

Jews in Slovakia, nevertheless, feel uncomfortable in the prevailing political atmosphere.

"We are being criticized by some people for not being more outspoken. But together with the president of the Union of Jewish Communities, Juraj Reich, we believe that in the present turmoil, one would be well advised to act with restraint," Kardos said.

**YUGOSLAV JEWS REJECT OFFER
TO BE EVACUATED FROM STRIFE**
By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- Despite Yugoslavia's raging civil war, Jews in the breakaway republic of Croatia are rejecting offers to be evacuated.

Although the fighting and accompanying tensions have disrupted their spiritual and communal life, and threatened bodily harm and property damage, Jews in Croatia are going to stick it out, according to Srdjan Matic, executive vice president of the Jewish Community in Zagreb, the Croatian capital.

"This kind of mass evacuation is completely unrealistic," Matic told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency by telephone Tuesday.

The offer to evacuate Yugoslavia's estimated 6,000 Jews to Israel was made last month by the Jewish Agency for Israel.

Particularly steadfast are the Jews of Osijek, a Croatian town especially hard-hit by the fighting. Matic reported that the Jews in Osijek are no different than their countrymen, saying, "This is our city. We will stay here and share the fate with our neighbors."

About 200 Jews live in and around Osijek, a town whose Jews were massacred during the Holocaust. Matic said that the Jewish community leadership knows of no Jews who have been killed or injured to date.

Some Jewish families in the area of Osijek have joined thousands of non-Jews fleeing the war zone into neighboring Hungary, said Matic. But the number of Croatian Jews departing for Israel is lower than usual, he said.

There are about 2,000 Jews in the republic, which has seceded from Yugoslavia and is fighting for independence. The 1,200 Jews who live in Zagreb have suffered severe hardship.

Air Raids On Yom Kippur

"This situation is very difficult," Matic said. "We could not hold religious services on Yom Kippur and Sukkot in Zagreb because of air raids. Some of the worst raids were on Yom Kippur itself. Our people spent the night in their cellars."

The Jewish community center in Osijek suffered serious damage from federal army artillery bombardments, he said.

Jewish homes and other private property have also sustained considerable damage from the fighting, he said. "Today, we are trying to call all the localities where Jews live to find out what damage has been done."

The civil war has severed most contact between the Croatian Jewish community and other Jewish communities in Yugoslavia, particularly with the Federation of Jewish Communities, which is headquartered in the national capital, Belgrade.

In fact, it is too dangerous to hold community meetings in Belgrade. The community's official meetings have been relocated out of the country, to Vienna.

According to Matic, the international Jewish community can help in two ways. One would be with emergency relief and, eventually, help with the reconstruction of damaged property.

The second way would be to actively work to end the civil war, Matic said.

"Personally, I think the war cannot be stopped without a strong military intervention from abroad," he said. "The Jewish community can raise its voices to support this. Diplomatic intervention has not done anything."

**DIRECT FLIGHT FROM MOSCOW LANDS
IN TEL AVIV AMID RECRIMINATIONS**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- Israel's long-standing request for direct immigrant flights from Moscow to Tel Aviv was finally realized Wednesday, without fanfare and in an atmosphere of recrimination over the performance of the new air carrier created for the task.

Moreover, it appeared that direct flights are not all that essential to Soviet aliyah, according to sources at El Al, the Israeli national airline, which had no part in what is being called "The Aerolicht Fiasco."

Aerolicht is a new joint venture between the Soviet state airline Aeroflot and Ya'acov Nimrodi, an Israeli businessman. Its inaugural flight from Moscow was due Tuesday at Ben-Gurion Airport with 300 to 400 immigrants, whom the news media and assorted VIPs were waiting to greet.

It failed to arrive, having returned to Moscow after Turkey refused to grant the plane passage through its airspace.

Moreover, the plane carried only eight olim. They finally landed Wednesday at Ben-Gurion on Aerolicht's second flight, which was primarily a cargo run.

Airport Authority sources said the plane flew via Greek airspace. Aerolicht's Israeli agent, Menachem Laufer, claimed the Turks had changed their mind and allowed the plane through.

Laufer suggested that Tuesday's flight was turned back because of Arab pressure on Ankara.

But Jewish Agency officials blamed Nimrodi. In his haste to reap monopoly benefits before independent Soviet republics organize airlines of their own, he launched his service without proper coordination with the Jewish Agency and the Israeli Foreign Ministry, they charged.

**PRICELESS JUDAICA STOLEN
FROM JOHANNESBURG MUSEUM**

NEW YORK, Oct. 3 (JTA) -- The World Jewish Congress has sounded an international alert to antiques dealers, pawnbrokers and the general public to be on the lookout for priceless items stolen from the Jewish Museum in Johannesburg last weekend.

They include irreplaceable religious artifacts rescued from Nazi Germany during World War II, the WJC reported here Thursday.

The WJC was informed of the theft by Seymour Kopelowitz, national director of the South African Board of Jewish Deputies, which operates the museum.

He said the thieves broke in and smashed glass display cases. Employees coming to work discovered the theft.

The WJC called on dealers and the public to contact the police if they are offered anything which might have come from the museum.

The items include silver crowns and breastplates used to adorn the Torah scrolls, antique silver spice boxes, pointers and candelabras used on Chanukah, and antique handwritten marriage contracts, one of them signed in Italy in 1750.

"The collection represents all facets of our Jewish heritage and, in purely educational terms, can never be compensated for," Kopelowitz said.

The WJC, describing the loss as tragic, observed that the rare collection had been built up over many years and was priceless because of the many unique items it contained.