

**CLINTON, COURTING JEWISH VOTERS,  
EMPHASIZES COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL**

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, March 31 (JTA) -- With one week left before the New York Democratic primary, Arkansas Gov. Bill Clinton linked his own plight as victim of the killer tabloids with that of the State of Israel.

"If all you know about Israel is what this administration has said in the press, Israel wouldn't have high approval ratings either," he told a gathering sponsored by New York's Jewish Community Relations Council on Tuesday.

It was an approach well received by Jews who have increasingly felt the U.S.-Israeli relationship under attack by President Bush and Secretary of State James Baker.

At the JCRC gathering, as well as at earlier campaign stops at the Jewish Museum and in Brooklyn's Boro Park neighborhood, Clinton reached out to Jewish audiences as someone who cares about Israel, about the U.S.-Israeli relationship, and about domestic tensions in the United States, which he said result from Republicans practicing "the politics of division."

Noting Abraham Lincoln's statement that "a house divided against itself cannot stand," Clinton said, "We've been gripped by a politics that says, if the house is divided we can get re-elected, so what do we care?"

Clinton charged that the Bush administration "has broken the taboo against overt anti-Semitism," referring in particular to Baker's reported obscenities regarding Jews.

Clinton's approach may well resonate in a Jewish community which, following Bush's outburst against pro-Israel lobbyists last September, began to fear that Jews and Israel could provide Republicans with the same divisive ammunition as did black convict Willie Horton in 1988.

**Says Settlements Are One Obstacle**

In his longer addresses before Jewish audiences, Clinton has used this issue to introduce his economic stump speech. "In tough times, the differences begin to be seen as problems, not opportunities," he says.

Addressing the issue foremost on the minds of Israel supporters currently, Clinton noted his support for loan guarantees to help Israel absorb new immigrants.

He said that months ago he warned that "if we get into the business of linking the relocation of Soviet Jews to the peace process, we might well imperil both.

"And that's exactly what happened," he said. "If the U.S. is going to resolve the settlement issue by coercion, then what is left to be talked about?"

But at the same time, Clinton refused to accede to questioners who urged that he acknowledge Israeli settlements as legal, proper and not an obstacle to peace.

Instead, he stuck to his position that the settlements are an obstacle to peace, but only one of many. The Arabs have also imperiled the peace process in many ways, he said.

"Obviously, the settlements present an obstacle to peace," he said. But so does the Arab

boycott, the non-recognition of Israel, Arab militarization -- there are a thousand things I can say about the Arabs that present an obstacle to peace. The main point is that these things should be left to the peace process."

In a meeting with Jewish journalists Sunday night, he echoed a point frequently made by the Israeli government about the settlements.

"I'm not sure there would be a peace process if not for the settlements," he said.

Clinton did not promise to move the U.S. Embassy to Jerusalem. That has for many years been a heated issue in New York primaries, and both the Republican and Democratic party platforms have repeatedly promised such a move.

Instead, Clinton said, "Let's let the peace talks proceed," saying that moving the embassy now would not help the talks.

He added that he personally viewed Jerusalem as the capital of Israel and that the embassy belongs there, rather than Tel Aviv.

**'Probably The Best We Can Get'**

Similarly, in a statement released later Tuesday, Clinton affirmed his personal opposition to creation of an independent Palestinian state.

But he said that "the precise form which Palestinian rights should take" was among the issues on which the U.S. president should not take a position during the peace talks.

Clinton's failure to promise what his audience wanted to hear -- or to change his position after three or four speakers in a row lectured him on the settlements -- seemed to be met with understanding from the JCRC audience.

"I think people accept that candor," said William Rapfogel, executive director of the Institute of Public Affairs of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America.

George Applebaum, chairman of the board of directors of Israel Bonds, agreed.

"By not saying what would have brought out the applause of the crowd, I feel him to be more of a man of character and less of a demagogue," he said.

Toby Willig, spokeswoman for Emunah Women of America, while disappointed at his failure to endorse Israeli settlement policy, conceded that "he's probably the best we can get."

Clinton himself expressed a feeling shared widely in the Jewish community when he said, "Reagan was more instinctively pro-Israel than Bush was. It gave him a freedom of action that Bush doesn't have."

This approach allowed Clinton to focus less on how he would change the administration's formal policy than on how he would change the tone.

"It's self-serving for me to say, but I think the only way to improve relations is to change the president," Clinton said.

"I can't promise you that I will never take on any government Israel may have, but I can promise there are ways to disagree without calling into question our commitment to Israel.

"I don't want the nation of Israel to doubt that I would be a person who believes by instinct that the preservation of Israel is of fundamental importance to the U.S. and Bill Clinton as a human being," he said.

**NEWS ANALYSIS:**  
**RESIGNATION OF LIKUD'S TOP MODERATE**  
**UNLIKELY TO AFFECT THE PEACE PROCESS**  
 By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 31 (JTA) -- Though Foreign Minister David Levy's resignation would remove the government's most ardent and dogged advocate of the peace process from direct participation in it, the prospect has caused scarcely a ripple in diplomatic circles here.

Levy announced he is resigning from office, though not from the Likud, in a bitter speech Sunday to supporters in Herzliya, underlining his differences with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and grievances against the party leadership.

According to Israeli law, he must submit his letter of resignation at a Cabinet meeting and it takes effect 48 hours thereafter.

The next Cabinet session is on Sunday, which gives Levy and Shamir adequate time to patch up their quarrel. But that seemed increasingly unlikely as the week wore on.

Levy said Tuesday that if he could, he would submit his resignation earlier. He reiterated his intention to quit in an evening television interview in which he sharply criticized Shamir's attitude in their dispute.

Levy seems to have been angered by Shamir's reported comment Monday that his threat to quit the government was "a joke." If the prime minister feels that way, he either will not or cannot take the necessary steps to heal their rift, Levy said.

Bilateral peace talks between Israel and the Arabs are scheduled to resume in Washington on April 27. A subsequent round will be held in or near the Middle East, a venue Israel has sought since the peace talks opened in Madrid last October.

But diplomats and pundits seem certain that nothing of any substance will be accomplished before the Israeli parliamentary elections on June 23.

**Shamir Controls Peace Talks**

U.S. Ambassador William Harrop said as much, though with diplomatic finesse, when he spoke Tuesday of his sadness over Levy's imminent departure.

He praised the foreign minister's "statesmanlike" contributions. But he added that the peace process would continue unimpaired by Levy's absence because it reflects the collective will of the Israeli nation.

That may be one reason for the apparent lethargy over Levy's impending plans. Another may be that even with Levy in office, Shamir himself kept pretty much in charge of the bilateral phase of the peace talks.

His two top aides, Yossi Ben-Aharon, director of the Prime Minister's Office, and Elyakim Rubinstein, the Cabinet secretary, head the most important Israeli delegations.

Ben-Aharon leads the Israeli team negotiating with Syria, while Rubinstein heads negotiations with the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation.

Moreover, Israel's ambassador in Washington, Zalman Shoval, is known to be reporting directly to the prime minister, in addition to his official reports to the Foreign Ministry.

Likud Knesset member Reuven Rivlin, a Levy supporter, complained to the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee on Monday that

the envoy had not been reporting fully to the foreign minister.

Levy himself soft-pedaled the charge, though coalition and opposition members of the committee understood what was implied. The foreign minister, in fact, said in his Sunday speech and subsequently that he was resigning partly because his dispute with Shamir was affecting his implementation of policy.

It remains to be seen whether Shamir names anyone to replace Levy before the elections or temporarily assumes the Foreign Ministry portfolio himself.

Levy got some accolades Tuesday from Meretz, the new left-wing bloc in the Knesset, consisting of the Citizens Rights Movement, Mapam and the Center-Shinui Movement.

Yair Tsaban of Mapam and Yossi Sarid of the CRM, both members of the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, spoke at a foreign policy briefing Levy said would be his last.

They praised the foreign minister for his relative restraint and relative moderation in the councils of government.

Sarid warned that "the government without Levy will be even more adventurist and irresponsible."

**TALKS ON REGIONAL ISSUES SCHEDULED**  
 By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, March 31 (JTA) -- Talks aimed at tackling such Middle East regional issues as arms control, economic development and Palestinian refugees will resume in May in five countries, the State Department announced Tuesday.

The United States, which is co-sponsoring the talks with Russia, said it will host a working group on arms control and regional security May 11 to 13.

Brussels will be the site of talks on economic development on the same dates. Talks on sharing water resources will take place in Vienna from May 12 to 14.

The refugee situation will be discussed during talks in Ottawa from May 13 to 15. Tokyo will be host to talks on Middle East environmental issues during the week of May 18.

In addition, a steering committee will meet in Lisbon, in late May or early June, to examine the progress of the various talks, said Richard Boucher, the State Department deputy spokesman.

**HOUSE ADOPTS FOREIGN AID BILL**  
 By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, March 31 (JTA) -- The House of Representatives passed a bill Tuesday that would continue existing U.S. foreign aid levels for Israel and other countries for the next six months.

The bill, adopted by a vote of 275-131, would provide the Jewish state with the remaining \$1.5 billion of economic and military assistance it had anticipated for the 1992 fiscal year, which ends Sept. 30.

The Senate was to vote late Tuesday on the foreign aid bill, but action was postponed until Wednesday after some senators suggested adopting a non-binding resolution that would express support for providing Israel with loan guarantees.

President Bush has vowed to veto any foreign aid bill that provides loan guarantees for Israel without requiring the Jewish state to stop building housing in the administered territories.

## KING OF SPAIN PAYS TRIBUTE TO JEWS 500 YEARS AFTER EDICT OF EXPULSION

By Aliza Marcus

MADRID, March 31 (JTA) -- In a ceremony redolent of the pomp and flourish that befits royalty, King Juan Carlos of Spain and Queen Sofia righted a 15th-century wrong on Tuesday.

In the presence of Israeli President Chaim Herzog; his predecessor, Yitzhak Navon; and hundreds of others at Madrid's Beth Yaacov synagogue, the Spanish regents honored the Jews whose ancestors another Spanish royal couple expelled 500 years ago.

On March 31, 1492, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella signed the edict ordering Spain's 200,000 Jews to either convert to Catholicism or leave the country.

It was an act that profoundly affected not only Jewish history but the histories of Spain and the countries of Europe, Africa and the Americas, where the descendants of Spanish Jews live.

For Moises Bengio, who arrived in Spain from Morocco 30 years ago, Tuesday's ceremony brought tears of joy.

"I wish that my ancestors could come out of their graves and see the king in the synagogue," said Bengio, one of the participating cantors.

"I am filled with emotions that border on crying," the 68-year-old chazan said. "Twenty years ago we could never imagine this day would come. Even 30 years ago, we were barely tolerated," he said.

Dignitaries representing Spain's estimated 12,000 Jews and Jews worldwide attended the 90-minute ceremony. This is "a sacred hour," Salomon Gaon, the former Sephardic chief rabbi of the British Commonwealth, told the assemblage.

### First Visit To A Synagogue

The king, who was visiting a synagogue in Spain for the first time, was moved as Gaon cited things both he and Herzog had done as an example to all nations to live together in peace.

"This is the moment each of us must bow to God in the heavens, who in his grace made us witness to an act of reconciliation that finds its expression in the presence in this sanctuary of the king of Spain," Gaon said.

The king and the Israeli president were blessed by the Sephardic rabbi in Ladino, the language of old Spanish Jewry.

The ceremony in the 24-year-old synagogue started at 6 p.m. local time, when the king unveiled a plaque commemorating "a solemn act of re-encounter with Spanish Judaism."

The king, wearing a white yarmulka, and the queen, her hair partly covered by a lacy black kerchief in line with Jewish custom, sat on red velvet chairs on one side of the Torah Ark. President Herzog and his wife sat on the other side.

The king, speaking in Spanish, cited the many contributions Jews made to Medieval Spain and thanked those countries that gave haven to the Jews after the 1492 edict.

Some in the audience wept.

The king paid tribute to the "strength of spirit" of Spanish Jews, forced to leave because the state demanded "religious uniformity."

"We have known moments of splendor and of decadence," the king said. "We have lived through periods of great respect for political and ideological freedom, as well as periods of intolerance and persecution for political, ideological or religious reasons," he said.

"But what matters is not the accountability of our mistakes or our successes, but rather the will to project and analyze the past with a view to our future, the will to work together in the pursuit of a noble undertaking," the king said.

Juan Carlos did not, however, apologize for the expulsion edict, nor did the Jewish community expect him to.

### Apology Not In Order

"We don't think an apology is in order since you cannot blame Spain today for what happened," said Samuel Toledano, secretary-general of the Federation of Jewish Communities of Spain. "It has a highly symbolic significance that he comes to us, to our synagogue, to extend his welcome and sympathy."

An Israeli official attending the ceremony echoed Toledano's feelings, saying that if Jews started demanding that everyone apologize for things that happened in the past, "we'd never have time to get anything else done."

The ceremony, which was written about in Spanish newspapers days before it took place, was part of Sepharad '92, a series of events sponsored by the government and Jewish organizations to commemorate Jewish life in Spain.

The Jews now living in Spain arrived relatively recently. The majority came from Morocco in the 1950s and 1960s, when they began to feel nervous about their future in a Moslem country.

Thousands of others have since come from Latin America, many who came from Argentina during that country's tumultuous years of the "dirty war" of the 1970s and early 1980s.

Although Jews did not have full rights under Spanish dictator Francisco Franco, his death in 1975 began the slow process toward full recognition of Jewish and other religious minorities in the overwhelmingly Catholic country.

In 1978, the government approved a new constitution that guaranteed freedom of ideology, religion and worship and did much to equalize the status of religious minorities.

A few years later, the Jewish community started working on a set of accords that would assure them the freedom to practice Judaism freely. The accords were signed by the government in 1990, and are due to be ratified by Parliament this year.

The accords formalize various rights such as the religious observance of holidays in civil institutions, such as the armed forces, grant tax exemption for synagogues and give civil recognition to religious weddings.

### Few Problems With Anti-Semitism

Toledano and others said that despite Spain's past and the relative ignorance most Spaniards have about Jews, Spanish Jews do not face any strong anti-Semitism.

Nonetheless, a few hours before the commemoration ceremony, Spanish workers in orange jumpsuits could be seen frantically scraping off tiny posters of the Youth of the National Front, in which the group justified the expulsion, saying Spain "only did what other nations did before."

Israeli security men could be seen all around the synagogue before the event took place, while men with dogs checked under sewer gratings and garbage cans for bombs.

But Spanish Jewish leaders said the main problems their community faces are those faced by Jewish communities everywhere: mainly the issues of assimilation and intermarriage.

## HASIDIM HOLD VIGIL TO PROTEST MALL BEING PLANNED OVER HAMBURG CEMETERY

By Alexandra J. Wall

NEW YORK, March 31 (JTA) -- Some 10,000 Hasidim, mostly members of the Satmar community, held a prayer vigil in front of the German Consulate here Monday afternoon to protest plans by a German development firm to build a shopping mall on the site of a Jewish cemetery in Hamburg.

The Ottensen Cemetery has been a battleground for the development firm, Bull-Liedtke Company, and Jewish protesters since construction of the shopping mall was scheduled to commence in the beginning of March.

Carrying placards which read "German Government! Don't Throw Out 4,000 Jewish Dead From Their Graves," the all-male crowd stood for more than two hours in the rain, blocking rush-hour traffic on Manhattan's Park Avenue.

The vigil was sponsored by Athra Kadisha--the Society for the Preservation of Jewish Holy Sites -- and the Central Rabbinical Congress, a Satmar group.

"Germany has a responsibility to be sensitive to the Jewish people," New York state Attorney General Robert Abrams, a Democratic contender for the Senate, told the crowd. "Fifty years after the Holocaust we find that 4,000 Jewish graves are to be destroyed. We pray and plead with the German government not to allow another act of desecration to occur. We will not suffer anymore indignity."

Jeff Wiesenfeld, a representative of Sen. Alphonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.) addressed the crowd in Yiddish, as did most of the other speakers.

"This event clearly cuts across religious lines," he said. "If the German government does not honor our dead, we can only fear for how they will treat the living," he added.

### 'Special Responsibility' To Jews

Before the vigil, Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.) and representatives from the Satmar group were invited to meet with a representative from the German Consulate.

"He promised to transmit the message to the German government and we hope that they will listen," said Rabbi Hertz Frankel, chairman of Athra Kadisha and the Central Rabbinical Congress.

Although the Ottensen Cemetery has not been used as a burial ground since 1934, Athra Kadisha maintains that, in accordance with Jewish law, the remains of the 4,000 Jews buried there should not be disturbed.

After the Holocaust, surviving Jews who returned to Hamburg did not have the resources to take care of the cemetery, and therefore sold the site to the German government. More recently, members of the Hamburg Jewish community have said they regretted the decision.

"It is sad and shocking that the German authorities claim that the company controlling the cemetery is legally permitted to dig there, while completely ignoring the religious background of that sacred burial ground," said Frankel.

"Legal pretenses aside, the government of Germany has a special responsibility to the Jews," he said.

Similar rallies are being held around the world this week, including in Hamburg. Hasidic Jews from the United States, Israel and Europe have demonstrated at the cemetery several times in the past few weeks.

## TALKS ABOUT MIAs IN LEBANON PLACED IN HANDS OF LAWYERS

By Tamar Levy

GENEVA, March 31 (JTA) -- Negotiations over the liberation of hostages and prisoners of war held by radical elements in Lebanon apparently have been put in the hands of lawyers.

Amnon Zichroni, an Israeli attorney who has dealt with these matters before, is once again in charge for Israel. He has taken over the task after little headway was made in recent months by Uri Lubrani, the Israeli government's chief hostage negotiator in Lebanon, and U.N. emissary Giandomenico Picco.

Zichroni is in Geneva attending a meeting of non-governmental organizations on Palestine. He told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that he has met with senior Red Cross officials on the subject of Israeli hostages and soldiers listed as missing in action.

Faisal Abu Issa, president of the Organization of Arab Lawyers, is handling negotiations on the Arab side.

Abu Issa told JTA that Germany is also active in the hostage situation. He claimed that the Israeli army's recent incursions into southern Lebanon are hampering contacts.

Abu Issa, a Sudanese who now lives in Egypt, said he visited Lebanon two months ago and was encouraged on his mission by the president and prime minister.

## JEWISH SCIENTIFIC FORUM IN MOSCOW IS SPONSORED BY ISRAEL AND RUSSIA

By Sandy Wolofsky and Nurl Katz

MOSCOW, March 31 (JTA) -- A three-day conference aimed at acquainting Jewish scientists in the former Soviet Union with scientific and technological education in Israel opened here Tuesday under the auspices of Russia and Israel.

The gathering at Dom Druzbah (Friendship House), attended by more than 250 Russian Jews, was seen by some as a potential recruiting ground for Israel's scientific establishment.

This was initially denied, although Daniel Sperber, an Israeli delegate, nevertheless observed that many of those attending have already contemplated emigration.

He acknowledged that the conference can help "explain to them in advance how they should go about organizing their aliyah" and which industries in Israel "might be interested in their expertise."

According to Sasha Levine, second secretary at the Israeli Embassy here, the purpose is to "teach people about the organization of science and technology in Israel" and how to make contacts with the appropriate individuals involved.

Another goal is to set up channels of communication between Russian and Israeli scientists, aimed at eventually establishing joint technological projects.

The Israelis are stressing to their Russian hosts that while government agreements on cooperation in science and technology are expressions of good will, research, development and production requires people.

The conference, the third of its kind, is sponsored by Israel's Ministry of Science and Energy and the Foundation for Education and Culture in the Diaspora. It is supported by the Russian Academy of Science and the Ministry of Science, Higher Education and Technology.