

**DEMOCRATIC PARTY PLATFORM DRAFT
CALLED MOST PRO-ISRAEL IN MEMORY****By Cynthia Mann
States News Service**

WASHINGTON, June 15 (JTA) -- Democrats have drafted one of the strongest pro-Israel party platforms in recent memory, in a process free of the rancor that plagued the party four years ago.

The platform includes a plank affirming the "special" U.S.-Israel relationship, admonishing the Bush administration for not being an "honest broker" in the peace process, declaring Jerusalem to be the capital of Israel, condemning anti-Semitism and calling on the United States to assist the absorption of Jewish immigrants into Israel.

Insiders said the provisional plank represents the culmination of efforts by the Democratic Party to repair recent damage done to its ties to the Jewish community. That damage was sustained during bruising battles over calls for a Palestinian state before and during the party's 1988 convention.

The plank was approved by the platform subcommittee in Santa Fe last weekend. Staffers at the Democratic National Committee stressed Monday that it is a working document, subject to change before the final vote by the full committee, scheduled for June 27 in Washington.

But the language on Israel is unlikely to be substantively amended, said drafting committee members.

It is language that prompted lavish praise by Tom Dine, executive director of AIPAC, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

The plank is "outstanding," he said. It is "a credit to the multitude of Democrats who are friends of Israel, who have worked to ensure that this national platform and those passed at state conventions throughout the country reflect these traditional Democratic Party values."

Praise From Peace Now

The plank also won plaudits from Jonathan Jacoby, president of the more liberal Americans for Peace Now, who said diverse pro-Israel organizations had hoped to avoid intraparty conflict over Israel.

"It is certainly a document that most Democrats within Americans for Peace Now can support," Jacoby said of the plank.

For Steve Grossman, there is "no question" that the "stronger and more declarative plank reflects a lot of time and effort" to rebuild an understanding between Democrats and the Jewish community, following the party's unresponsiveness to Jewish concerns in 1988.

Grossman is the Massachusetts party chairman, a member of the platform drafting subcommittee and a national vice president of AIPAC.

He attributed a large part of the success to Democratic Party Chairman Ron Brown, "who worked hard to ensure that negative perceptions of '88 were gradually undone."

Grossman also credited the apparent Democratic presidential nominee, Gov. Bill Clinton.

"While George Bush may have walked away from that (special) relationship with Israel and the right of Jews to lobby on behalf of Israel,"

he said, "the Clinton administration will stand by the sentiments in the platform."

Grossman said that under the leadership of both Brown and Clinton, the party is a place where "American Jews can find the values and principles they are committed to," as reflected throughout the Santa Fe document.

The platform affirms a "special relationship" between the United States and Israel based on a common commitment to Democratic values and strategic goals, not unlike the platform language from 1988.

In a concession to historical developments, however, it adds that the end of the Cold War does not alter America's "deep interest" in that special relationship.

'Very Little Discord'

But there are parts of the plank that go much further than 1988. It declares the United States has the obligation to act as an "honest broker" in the Middle East peace process, and it chides the Bush administration for failing to fulfill that obligation.

It charges the administration has encouraged one side to believe it will "deliver unilateral concessions" from the other during the talks.

"Direct negotiations between Israel, her Arab neighbors and Palestinians, with no imposed solutions, is the only way to achieve enduring security for Israel and peace for all parties in the region," the tentative language reads.

Unlike the 1988 document, the new platform states unequivocally that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and should remain an undivided city. And it singles out anti-Semitism for condemnation, along with all other bigotry and racism.

The platform also calls on the United States to help Israel absorb Jews from the former Soviet Union. That is a clear reference to the Bush administration's refusal to guarantee \$10 billion in immigrant resettlement loans for Israel unless it stops building settlements in the administered territories.

Samuel Berger, foreign policy adviser to the Clinton campaign, said he was struck by the fact that at the platform deliberations in Santa Fe, "there was a great deal of unity and very little discord" over the Israel plank. It was "the dog that didn't bark," he said.

**ISRAEL MUST STOP NUCLEAR SPREAD
IN MIDEAST, SAYS AIR FORCE CHIEF
By Hugh Orgel**

TEL AVIV, June 15 (JTA) -- Israel must "create the greatest possible disruption, whether military or political, in order to prevent the introduction of nuclear weapons" in the Middle East, according to the Israeli air force commander, Maj. Gen. Herzl Bodinger.

Addressing military correspondents on the occasion of Air Force Day, he stressed that this is not the concern of Israel alone. "This is also the need of the world, for the use of such weapons (here) may even bring about a world war."

He said that Syria, Iraq and Iran all pose a threat to Israel by their missile, conventional and air force buildup.

Asked by Israel Television what he meant by

"disruption," Bodinger said: "I am talking about two different kinds of disruptions, in two channels -- international political action, and aggressive action, if needed."

If an intensive Iranian effort to develop nuclear weapons is not interrupted, the air force commander said, the Islamic nation could achieve nuclear capability by the end of the decade.

Bodinger also said Israel is doing everything possible to avoid friction with Syria. He noted that Israel and Syria have for years maintained a tacit agreement allowing Israeli warplanes to fly over Lebanon without Syrian response.

The Syrians "know very well that we have no hostile intentions against them, and implicitly agreed to these rules of the game," he said.

Bodinger said this tacit agreement also covered the bombing of Baalbek, in the Lebanese Bekaa valley, close to the Lebanese-Syrian border.

"We are free to act in Lebanon, even if at times our attacks are inaccurate and innocents are killed," he said.

"The alternative is to send ground forces into Lebanon. They would perform a substantially more thorough job, but at a cost we are unwilling to pay."

Discussing procurement developments, Bodinger disclosed that the air force will decide by next spring whether it prefers the General Dynamics advanced F-16 or the McDonnell Douglas F/A-18 Hornet as its jet of the future.

"We traditionally sign a new advanced jet deal every five years. This one will be worth \$2 billion, and we are therefore facing a crucial and serious decision."

He noted that if Israel had not been tied to U.S. military assistance, this country might possibly have looked also at the Soviet-built MiG-29.

The air force would commence test-flying the two U.S. models by next winter, and expects to submit to Israel's army chief of staff the best evaluation the air force can produce by next spring.

AUSTRALIAN JEWISH LEADERS STILL ANGRY AFTER MEETING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER
By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Australia, June 15 (JTA) -- Jewish community leaders made little progress in a tense, two-hour meeting with Australia's foreign minister that was convened following recent shifts in government policy that have outraged Australian Jews.

The foreign minister, Sen. Gareth Evans, told the Jewish delegation that he had strongly criticized Israel because he was "distressed" at the way in which Israeli leaders have been putting their country's "future at risk."

Australia's new tilt toward the Palestinians has brought the government under fire not only from the Jewish community but from government opposition leaders and the mainstream media.

Last month, Evans strongly condemned Israel's human rights record during a two-day visit to Israel.

Three days after Evans' remarks, Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating told a Jewish organization that "the Palestine Liberation Organization has played a more positive role in encouraging the peace process over the past six months."

The change in Australian Middle East policy has evolved since Keating replaced Bob Hawke as prime minister in December.

In his meeting with the Jewish leaders,

Evans also defended Australia's more friendly attitude toward Iran and Syria, as well as toward the PLO, on the grounds that his public pronouncements were made against a background of "years of adulatory statements about Israel and condemnation of the Arab states."

Evans said he wanted his anti-Israel statements to have an impact while in Israel, "even if only on the margins," the Jewish delegation members reported.

Although Evans, a member of the Australian Labor Party, had hoped to assist his colleagues in the Israeli Labor Party, Australian and Israeli observers believe he did more to help Likud.

Support For U.N. Resolution 194

Evans was also strongly criticized for echoing U.S. support for U.N. General Assembly Resolution 194, which calls for repatriating hundreds of thousands of Palestinian refugees who fled Israel when the state was established in 1948.

The U.S. State Department has since sought to modify or dilute its statements of support for that resolution.

But Evans said that Australia stands by its December 1948 support of this resolution and would not respond to criticism that subsequent U.N. resolutions and the current peace process have rendered this measure counterproductive.

Responding to criticism that he had placed all blame for the slow progress in the talks at Israel's feet, Evans said Israel is in control of any progress, since moderates are in the ascendancy in the Arab camp.

Responding to claims he has exhibited a total double standard, Evans acknowledged he looks to Israel for higher morals.

He also said he had criticized Iran's record on human rights but that this had not been reported in the media.

Leslie Caplan, president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, said serious differences exist with the foreign minister over analysis and response to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

Caplan was highly critical of the new warmth shown by the government to the PLO. He said he was amazed at how the government could characterize any signs of extremism as the work of PLO "mavericks" and at how the foreign minister seemed concerned only that PLO violence was giving the organization "a bad name."

Mark Leibler, president of the Zionist Federation of Australia, has invited Evans to deliver a major address to his group next month, to allow the Jewish community a further opportunity to present its concerns.

COST OF LIVING INDEX DIVES
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 15 (JTA) -- Israel's cost-of-living index took an exceptional dive during May, dropping by 0.4 percent, the Central Bureau of Statistics announced Monday.

It was one of the rare drops in the index in recent years, and the biggest decline in 23 years since a 0.6 percent drop in May 1969.

The biggest contributor to the decline was a 14 percent seasonal decline in the price of fruits and vegetables.

The average urban family of four persons now requires about \$1,800 a month to break even.

Monthly living cost figures for the first five months of 1992 forecast an annual inflationary rate of 12 to 14 percent.

**NEO-NAZISM IS FASHIONABLE
IN MODERN-DAY VENEZUELA**

By Victoria Verlichak

BUENOS AIRES, June 15 (JTA) -- Venezuela is seeing troublesome manifestations of neo-Nazi sentiment and activity as never before, according to the Latin American Jewish Congress.

A report published in the group's bulletin says that swift action by the Confederation of Jewish Associations of Venezuela succeeded in preventing a public meeting from taking place in the center of Caracas last month of a group using the swastika in pamphlets and propaganda.

The confederation petitioned the Venezuelan authorities to declare the gathering illegal and asked the political parties to do likewise. The Jewish group also asked the security establishment to investigate the neo-Nazis.

As a result of the pressure, almost nobody showed up for the gathering, except the police, who were there in full force.

But despite this success, the use and trivialization of Nazi symbols in Venezuela has become widespread.

Nuevo Mundo Israelita, the Venezuelan Jewish community newspaper, said that not only has it become fashionable to use Nazi symbols in clothing accessories, but many middle- and upper-class youngsters go dancing dressed in Nazi uniforms and concentration camp pajamas.

Some revisionist magazines and books have appeared, as well as Adolf Hitler's "Mein Kampf."

An almost non-existent ultra-right wing party advertised itself with a symbol much like a swastika while announcing its support for the French extremist politician Jean-Marie Le Pen.

**FAR-RIGHT PARTY IN GERMANY
RE-ELECTS SS MAN AS LEADER**

By David Kantor

BONN, June 15 (JTA) -- The far-right German Republican Party has re-elected Franz Schoenhuber, a former Waffen SS officer, as its leader for another term.

The group, which held its national convention in the Bavarian town of Dickeyburg, also said it is willing to compromise on various issues in order to be in a position to share power with other, bigger parties.

Schoenhuber was re-elected party leader last year, too, placing him in a stronger position to deal with internal opposition, which had managed to briefly oust him in 1990.

Schoenhuber, who drew a majority of more than 90 percent of this year's vote, told delegates that the party's major aim was to influence future policies in Bonn. To that end, he added, the group had to show flexibility and demonstrate pragmatic attitudes.

The Republican leader thus alluded to the possibility that his group would join a coalition with conservative and right-of-center parties sometime in the future.

But such a possibility has been strongly opposed within the Christian Democratic Union, the only potential candidate for such coalitions.

Last year, the Munich-based Republican Party was estimated to have 20,000 members countrywide. At the time, Schoenhuber promised to increase the membership.

In regional elections in April, the Republicans drew 10.9 percent of the popular vote in the federal state of Baden-Wurtemberg. This

qualified the extremist party for \$1.5 million in public funds.

The party, which had only 2,300 registered voters in Baden-Wurtemberg preceding the elections there, compiled 538,866 votes, rendering it the third-largest political faction in the southern German state.

On June 11, some 3,000 mostly leftist activists demonstrated against the Republicans, warning that the party is influenced by Nazi ideology.

**CATHOLICS AND JEWS GATHER IN KOLIN
TO RECALL DEPORTATIONS FROM BOHEMIA**

By Josef Klansky

PRAGUE, June 15 (JTA) -- Hundreds of local inhabitants and guests from abroad gathered Sunday in the Czechoslovak town of Kolin, about 25 miles east of Prague, to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the deportation of more than 2,200 Jews from the town and surrounding localities.

The gathering recalled the killings as well of the Czechs of Lidice, a town 12 miles west of Prague that the Nazis burned to the ground after killing its entire male population of 199 and deporting their wives and children on June 10, 1942.

Some 30 Jews were then taken from the Theresienstadt concentration camp and forced, at gunpoint, to bury the Lidice victims.

Three days after the killings and deportations from Lidice, the Nazis rounded up the Jewish population of Kolin and sent a transport to the East, where nearly all of these Jews perished.

The atrocities were committed in reprisal for the attack on May 27, 1942, of Reinhard Heydrich, Hitler's deputy protector for Bohemia and Moravia, who was one of the chief planners of the so-called Final Solution to the Jewish Problem in January 1942.

Heydrich, who died eight days after the attack, was killed by two Czech patriots who were parachuted into Nazi-occupied Czechoslovakia after a flight from Britain.

Among those who came to take part in the unveiling of a memorial plaque in Kolin's main square and participate in a service in its restored early Baroque synagogue were 13 survivors of the Kolin Jewish community, who now live in different countries.

The first Jewish service to be held here in decades was conducted by Rabbi Andrew Goldstein of London and Rabbi Brian Fox of Sydney.

The synagogue building, built between 1642 and 1696 and since the war used as a storehouse, will be the site of a Jewish museum.

The commemoration ceremony was attended by Israel's ambassador to Czechoslovakia, Yoel Sher; Catholic clergy; and members of Jewish congregations in London; Chicago; New Haven, Conn.; Tel Aviv; and Sydney, Australia.

The Jews from these cities are members of synagogues which now house Torah scrolls originally from the Kolin synagogue.

The mayor of Kolin, Jiri Buric, recalled in his address the 600-year history of the town's Jewish population and what their loss means to the community.

An essay contest among high school students was organized on the topic of the Holocaust. The four best writers were awarded Ernest Heller prizes, named after a Kolin Jew who escaped in the early 1940s to Palestine, joined the free Czechoslovak army and was killed in battle in the Carpathian Mountains fighting the Nazis to liberate Czechoslovakia.

**THE ISRAELI ELECTIONS:
FROM COMMUNISTS TO CAB DRIVERS,
ARRAY OF CHOICES AWAITS VOTERS**

[Part 1 of a Series]

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- A total of 25 political parties have been approved by the Central Elections Committee to run in Israel's June 23 elections for the 13th Knesset.

Each of these parties is designated by a code of one or more letters of the Hebrew alphabet. When voters go to the polls next week, they will pick the voting slip marked with the party of their choice, insert it into an envelope and then put the envelope into the ballot box.

Following is a brief description of each party running, listed in alphabetical order of their code letters:

LABOR UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF YITZHAK RABIN (Aleph Mem Tav): Currently Israel's chief opposition party, Labor requested that the party leader's name be listed on the ballot.

NATIONAL RELIGIOUS PARTY (Bet): Known in Hebrew by the acronym Mafdal, this party represents Israel's centrist Orthodox establishment.

UNITED TORAH JUDAISM PARTY (Gimmel): This list is an amalgam of two rival Orthodox parties in the outgoing Knesset, Agudat Yisrael and Degel HaTorah, plus Rabbi Yitzhak Peretz, the minister of absorption, who broke away from the third ultra-Orthodox party, Shas, in 1990 and has sat for the past two years as an independent.

NATIONAL MOVEMENT FOR DEMOCRACY AND ALIYAH (Dalet): This is a new immigrant party headed by former prisoner of Zion Yuli Kosharovsky.

PIKANTI (Dalet Peh-Sofit): This is a new and maverick party headed by sausage and salad manufacturer Moshe Badash. Badash is a nationally known figure due to his bitter battles against the income tax authorities and also because of the high-profile advertising of his food products in the media. He ran in the Likud primaries, was elected to an unrealistic slot and thereupon decided to form his own ticket.

DEMOCRATIC FRONT FOR PEACE AND EQUALITY (Vav): Otherwise known by the Hebrew acronym Hadash, this is the veteran Israeli Communist Party, made up chiefly of Arabs.

TZIPPOR (Zayyin Nun): The party's name means "bird" in Hebrew. It is a new list made up of naturalists whose platform is less than clear.

MOLEDET (Tet): This is the rightist party led by former army Gen. Rehavam Ze'evi, a minister without portfolio between 1990 and 1992 whose banner is the "transfer" of the Arabs from the administered territories to the surrounding Arab states.

HATIKVAH (Yod Dalet): This is a new dovish list focusing on social issues, led by veteran Knesset member Charlie Biton, who most recently sat in the legislature as an independent, with Orthodox feminist activist Leah Shakkdiel of Yeroham in the No. 2 slot.

THE TORAH AND THE LAND (Yod Zayyin): This new party, formed only last month, is headed by veteran settlement leader Rabbi Moshe Levinger of Kiryat Arba.

THE LAW OF NATURE PARTY (Yod Mem): A new list, still to disclose its particular message.

TALI, THE MOVEMENT FOR ISRAELI RENAISSANCE (Kaf Yod): Also new and with a vague, change-oriented message.

THE LIKUD (Mem Het Lamed): Israel's

governing party, headed by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

MERETZ, DEMOCRATIC ISRAEL (Mem Resh Tzaddi): This list amalgamates the Citizens Rights Movement (Ratz), Mapam and Shinui, three parties which all sat in the outgoing Knesset. The acronym MeReTz means "energy" in Hebrew.

ON WHEELS (Nun): This is a new taxi-drivers party.

THE MOVEMENT OF MORTGAGE SUFFERERS, HOMELESS AND ARMY VETERANS (Nun Dalet): A new grouping.

THE WOMEN'S PARTY (Nun Kaf): A new list headed by noted women's activist Ruth Resnick, who broke from Meretz after failing to be elected to a realistic slot on that list.

THE ARAB DEMOCRATIC PARTY (Ayin): This party holds one seat in the current Knesset, held by Abdel Wahab Darousha, who started his national political career in the Labor Party.

THE PROGRESSIVE LIST FOR PEACE (Peh): A nominally Arab-Jewish party led by Darousha's rival, Mohammed Miari.

TSOMET (Tzaddi-Sofit): Rafael Eitan's rightist party, which draws significant support from hard-line moshav members and even kibbutzniks.

YAD B'YAD, THE PARTY OF PENSIONERS, IMMIGRANTS AND SENIOR CITIZENS (Kuf): Led by former diplomat Abba Geffen, this is an amalgam of a former pensioners movement, which narrowly failed to win a Knesset seat in the November 1988 elections, and a group of Soviet immigrant activists.

GEULAT YISRAEL (Kuf Lamed): A new ultra-Orthodox list headed by Eliezer Mizrachi, who was elected to the 12th Knesset on the Agudat Yisrael ticket, broke from that party in 1990 and has since sat as an independent.

THE NEW LIBERAL PARTY (Kuf Nun-Sofit): Another new party, headed by Finance Minister Yitzhak Modai with Herzliya Mayor Eli Landau in the No. 2 spot. Both men are Likud members who have broken with their former party. The party stresses economic issues in its platform and calls for a plebiscite on the land-for-peace issue.

SHAS (Shin Samech): The Sephardic Orthodox party led by Interior Minister Arye Deri.

TEHIYA (Tav): A rightist party led by Professor Yuval Ne'eman, who was minister of science and technology from 1990 to 1992.

**LIKUD WILL TRY TO RESCIND
NEW ELECTORAL REFORM LAW**

JERUSALEM, June 15 (JTA) -- If returned to power, the Likud will seek to rescind a major electoral reform bill providing for direct election of the prime minister, the party said this week.

Likud Knesset members Eliahu Ben-Elissar and Dan Tichon told reporters their party would try "to persuade the public to renew its confidence in the present electoral system."

This is the first time Likud officials have publicly declared their party would support revocation of the measure, which was passed by the outgoing Knesset after years of lobbying by pro-reform groups.

The new law is to go into effect after next week's vote, that is, the elections for the 14th Knesset. It provides that future elections be held on a dual track: The voters will select a prime minister and, separately, a party of their choice.

Almost all Likud members voted against the reform measure, as did many members of smaller parties in the Knesset.