

75th ANNIVERSARY YEAR

TUESDAY, AUGUST 18, 1992

VOL. 70, NO. 158

**GOP PLATFORM SUPPORTIVE OF ISRAEL,
BUT CONSERVATIVE ON SOCIAL ISSUES**By Cynthia Mann
States News Service

HOUSTON, Aug. 17 (JTA) -- Jewish Republican activists were lavish with their praise for the pro-Israel Middle East plank of the platform adopted at the Republican convention Monday.

But many said they are uncomfortable with the platform's conservative tone on social issues, from an unequivocal rejection of abortion rights to an endorsement of prayer in the public schools.

"This appears to be the strongest plank on the U.S.-Israel relationship ever written by a major political party," said Fred Zeidman of Houston.

"It makes this a tremendously exciting convention and gives us the ammunition to try to overcome any (negative) perceptions of the Bush administration with the reality of its accomplishments" that have benefited Israel.

Zeidman conceded that the conservative social agenda "troubles us a lot." But he said the platform, over which the White House has little control, should be separated from the administration's record.

Indeed, moderate Republican leaders have played down the significance of the platform, seen as a necessary political concession to the party's conservative wing. They say the platform will play a peripheral role in the effort to re-elect President Bush.

But some, like Rep. Bill Green (R-N.Y.), a convention delegate and a leading sponsor of abortion rights legislation in the House of Representatives, are worried about the impact of the conservatives' victory.

"The Republican National Committee reached the conclusion that a far-right platform worked in 1980, so why not try it again? But times have changed, and this is a mistake," said Green.

'Most Far-Right-Wing Platform' In Years

Like the Democratic plank on the Middle East, the Republican plank is a declaration of support for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship.

But, in keeping with the rest of the Republican platform, its Middle East plank is far longer and more detailed than the Democratic one, pledging continued U.S. aid to Israel, support for freedom of emigration to Israel and opposition to the establishment of an independent Palestinian state.

Republicans say there is more than length and detail that separates the two parties' statements. They claim their specifics attest to the strength of their commitment to Israel and the willingness to spell it out in plain language for all to see.

In their platform, "the Democrats are almost totally silent on every issue we care about," said George Klein, a prominent Jewish Republican leader who addressed a luncheon Tuesday sponsored by the National Jewish Coalition, a Republican group.

He called the GOP Middle East plank the strongest ever written.

But Democratic presidential nominee Bill Clinton dismissed the lengthy, pro-Israel language

in the platform as irrelevant given what the administration has actually done, and said, over the past four years.

"They can put all the words they want in their platform, and anybody who forgets their record deserves what they get," he said Monday afternoon in a conference call with reporters from Jewish newspapers.

Pointing to its support for constitutional amendments banning abortion and encouraging school prayer, the Arkansas governor called it "the most far-right-wing platform any party has offered in years."

While the Democrats made a point in their brief pro-Israel plank of painting the Bush administration as having a pro-Arab tilt in its brokerage of the Arab-Israel peace talks, the GOP plank pays extensive tribute to the policies of the Bush administration that it claims have enhanced Israel's security and well-being.

The Republican document lauds the "determined statesmanship" of Bush for transforming the prospects of peace in the region. It also congratulates him and outgoing Secretary of State James Baker for securing the recent agreement on loan guarantees to aid Israel's effort to absorb immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

'Large-Scale Security Assistance'

The platform also says that "without the leadership of President Bush, Iraq would today threaten world peace, the peace and security of the Middle East, and the very survival of Israel with a huge conventional army and nuclear weapons."

"Direct peace talks, on terms Israel rightly had sought for more than four decades, would not be a reality," it continues. "Soviet Jewish emigration likely would have been interrupted. The rescue of Ethiopian Jewry might not have happened, and the equation of Zionism to racism still would be a grotesque stain on the United Nations."

The plank calls the strategic importance of Israel to the United States "more important than ever" in the current volatile climate of the region, saying Israel is "our most reliable and capable ally in this part of the world."

It pledges continued "large-scale security assistance to Israel" and the maintenance of Israel's qualitative military advantage over any adversary.

Despite the strong document, party leaders, from the president on down, know it will be a challenge to win over a Jewish electorate still stung by the rigid posture the administration adopted on the loan guarantee package recently secured in principle by Israel.

A Jewish demonstration against Bush's Israel policies was staged Sunday outside the Astrodome, where the convention is taking place. And some Jewish Republicans gathered here expressed their deep sense of betrayal by the president on the loan guarantees.

The platform itself seems to acknowledge the need to mend fences with the Jewish community. There appears to be a veiled reference to the episode last September when Bush criticized the pro-Israel lobby on behalf of the loan guarantees.

The remarks aroused a furor in the Jewish

community that in some cases continues today, despite apologies and explanations offered by the president as recently as last week.

"This strategic (U.S.-Israeli) relationship, with its unique moral dimension, explains the understandable support Israel receives from millions of Americans who participate in our political process," the platform says.

Praise From AIPAC

Matthew Brooks, executive director of the National Jewish Coalition, says the Middle East plank reflects a "restatement of the administration's and this party's fundamental commitment to the U.S.-Israel relationship."

He said it is "far stronger than any statement the Democrats have made or can make because of the constituency problems they have in their party."

Tom Dine, executive director of the non-partisan American Israel Public Affairs Committee, which is as highly visible in Houston as it was at the Democratic convention in New York last month, also praised the plank.

In a prepared statement he called it a detailed, highly supportive document that "reflects the long-time support of the Republican Party toward the special U.S.-Israel relationship."

But some Republicans said they had to rationalize their support for the platform in light of its conservative social agenda, especially when it came to abortion rights, prayer in the schools and public funding for private and parochial education.

"On an individual basis, I don't like to see some of these things in the platform," said Nettie Becker, vice chair of the delegation from California and an AIPAC activist.

"But we made a decision that we couldn't have divisiveness over the social issues because we wouldn't be able to elect Bush."

"If we had a floor fight on abortion, we wouldn't win and it would be destructive," she said. "After the election, we can work within the party structure."

Brooks of the National Jewish Coalition acknowledged that some Jews may be troubled by the conservative postures adopted on the social issues, but he said it is important to note Jews are not monolithic in their views.

"Clearly there are members of the community that are pro-life and that do support educational vouchers to make private schools more affordable. And certainly there are those who would not be opposed to the concept of a moment of silence" in public schools.

(Contributing to this report was JTA staff writer Larry Yudelson in New York.)

UNFAZED BY REPUBLICAN RHETORIC, CLINTON PEDDLES STAND ON ISRAEL By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Aug. 17 (JTA) -- Republican efforts to woo Jewish voters with a staunchly pro-Israel platform and a White House deal with Israel on loan guarantees do not seem to faze Democratic presidential nominee Bill Clinton.

In a conference call with members of the American Jewish press, the Arkansas governor came out fighting when asked to respond to efforts under way at the Republican National Convention in Houston to pick up more Jewish votes.

"My response is that George Bush and Dan

Quayle can't hold a candle to the record Al Gore has made in the Senate as a friend of Israel," Clinton said, comparing the vice president to his own running mate.

He added: "I was standing up for Israel when George Bush was moaning that he was one poor little person in the White House being beleaguered by the 'vicious' Israeli lobby, AIPAC."

"And I was sticking up for Israel when the secretary of state was reported to have made brutally anti-Semitic remarks in talking about Israel, just a few months ago," said Clinton.

He was referring to Bush's remarks assailing supporters of Israel who had come to Washington lobbying for the loan guarantees, and to James Baker's rumored coarse dismissal of Jews because they "don't vote for us anyway" -- a remark the outgoing secretary denies ever making.

Avoids Specifics On F-15 Sale

In response to a reporter's question concerning the proposed sale of advanced F-15 fighter planes to Saudi Arabia, Clinton avoided discussing the specifics of the package.

"My position is that we can't do anything that undermines the qualitative military edge Israel enjoys in the Mideast," he said. "Any specific sale "would depend on the type of planes," he said, adding that he would discuss it with his advisers and "other parties who might be affected by it."

Clinton dismissed the concern that his focus on domestic affairs could endanger U.S. aid to Israel. "It's very much in our interest to remain engaged," he said.

"It's simply not an option for us to end all of our foreign aid."

The Democratic nominee was asked whether he could envision the use of American ground forces for humanitarian missions, for instance, to halt reported Serbian atrocities against civilians in the former Yugoslav republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina.

"I wouldn't rule it out," Clinton responded, "but I don't think it's appropriate to rule it in at this time. You have to take these issues as they come."

"I have shown a clear determination to try to make America a leader in the fight for human rights, to alleviate human misery and to alleviate violations of international law related to human rights issues, and will continue to do that," he said.

"And I have been very strong in (promoting American) activity in the crisis in Bosnia, and I will continue to do that," he added.

Would Consider Mideast Envoy

As he has done many times before, Clinton praised Bush and Baker for their role in getting the Middle East peace talks started.

But he criticized them for what followed that beginning, saying that all of the administration's "public comment concerning the Middle East from the time the peace talks started were directed against the Israeli position."

He said that when he met last week with Israel's new prime minister, Yitzhak Rabin, he told him he wanted to ensure the continuity of the peace process and pledged that if elected, he would "hit the ground running."

He said he would consider appointing a special envoy to the Middle East, "without committing myself to any specific person" at this time.

**ISRAELIS CONCERNED OVER REPORTS
BUSH CONSIDERING STRIKE ON IRAQ**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Aug. 17 (JTA) -- Israelis are following with a degree of concern reports from the United States that President Bush is considering military action against selected strategic targets in and around Baghdad to force Saddam Hussein to obey U.N. resolutions.

The worry revolves around whether the Iraqi ruler would respond to such U.S. action by launching Scud missiles against Israel.

Military and strategic experts here tend to downplay the risk, and no measures have been taken to warn the public to step up any anti-missile precautions.

They say that for Iraqi President Hussein, a Scud attack on Israel would not be cost-effective, and even counterproductive, as this time Israel would not hesitate to launch a sharp and effective retaliation.

The U.S. restraints that were in effect during the Persian Gulf War, which prevented Israel from retaliating for the barrage of Scud attacks it endured, are no longer in place.

A first Scud launched against Israel would draw an immediate and massive response by the Israeli air force and would include other unconventional methods, the experts suggest.

Reports that Bush was contemplating a military strike against Iraq were first reported Sunday by The New York Times, which said the action could occur as early as Monday.

While Bush and other senior administration officials strongly denied portions of the Times report, they did not rule out the use of military force against Iraq.

And on Monday, Bush was quoted in Indianapolis as saying that the United States has "strong responses" planned if Iraq continues to violate the terms of the U.N.-brokered cease-fire.

The Times story also reported that "the defenses of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait and Israel have been beefed up in recent weeks with deployments of Patriot missile batteries."

But a spokesman at the Israeli Consulate in New York denied knowledge of any such deployments in Israel. "As far as we know, we haven't received any new batteries in recent weeks," the spokesman said.

**JEWISH CHILDREN LEAVE SARAJEVO
AS ISRAEL PREPARES AID AIRLIFT**

By Malka Rabinowitz

NEW YORK, Aug. 17 (JTA) -- The last remaining Jewish children in Sarajevo were evacuated from the war-stricken city Sunday night and have arrived in Split, Croatia, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee reported here.

The removal of the children from the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina came as Israel announced it was loading an air force transport plane with 16 tons of medicines and other relief supplies for dispatch to the region Tuesday.

The evacuation convoy of 55 persons, mostly children, took a "complex route" to reach safety, traveling by bus and several private vehicles, said JDC spokesman Amir Shaviv.

He said the operation involved "delicate negotiations with a number of militias and forces maintaining roadblocks" along the complex 186-mile route.

On arrival, the youngsters were placed in

temporary shelters pending their transfer early this week to makeshift summer camps in the Split area.

Jewish Agency representatives are processing those whose families wish them to go on to Israel.

It is estimated that 400 adult Jews remain in Sarajevo. Those who wish to leave will be assisted by the JDC as part of its ongoing evacuation efforts in the war-torn area, the spokesman said.

Traveling aboard the Israeli air force aircraft, which will arrive first in the Croatian capital of Zagreb, will be Knesset member Yossi Sarid, coordinator of the Israeli relief effort.

Sarid, who failed in an attempt to reach Sarajevo last week, said he will seek permission to fly on to the Bosnian capital from Zagreb; if that is not possible, U.N. officials will be asked to transmit the supplies to their destination.

Supplies are about evenly divided between foodstuffs -- mainly oil, flour and long-life milk -- and medicine, medical supplies and blankets.

Israeli doctors and nurses will stay put for the time being. Israel has been informed that only food and medicine are required, rather than medical personnel.

Aid Also Planned For Somalia

In Geneva, meanwhile, Israeli Ambassador Yitzhak Lior said Israel was readying a fully equipped team of 10 doctors for Zagreb to administer aid to people in the war-stricken area.

Lior told a special meeting of the U.N. Human Rights Commission last Friday that an advance team had been sent to choose an appropriate site to station the medical unit, which would also be specially equipped to help amputees.

American Jewish organizations, meanwhile, have been pressing the U.S. government to do everything possible to halt the atrocities reportedly being perpetrated by the Serbs against Moslem and Croatian civilians in Bosnia.

The outpouring of concern was acknowledged by outgoing Secretary of State James Baker in a letter to Melvin Salberg, national chairman of the Anti-Defamation League, and Abraham Foxman, the agency's national director.

"Your deep humanitarian concern," Baker wrote, "once again demonstrates the ADL's unwavering stand against assaults on the fundamental rights of all human beings."

On another aid front, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said Monday that arrangements are also being made to collect and send relief supplies to Somalia, where famine and fighting is taking a daily toll of thousands of Somalis, young and old.

Somalia is an African Moslem nation that is a member of the Arab League and is formally in a state of war with Israel. It is not known whether the Somali authorities will be ready to accept aid from the Jewish state.

In New York, American Jewish Congress President Robert Lifton issued a statement saying that "our deep distress" over the "terrible human tragedies taking place in Bosnia must not distract us from speaking out just as forcefully and just as loudly over the horrific situation now existing in Somalia."

"Human suffering, wherever it occurs and whomever it touches, cries out for our attention and help," he said.

(Contributing to this report were JTA correspondents Hugh Orgel in Tel Aviv and Tamar Levy in Geneva.)

**KU KLUX KLAN ESTABLISHES
BRANCHES IN 3 GERMAN CITIES**

By David Kantor

BONN, Aug. 17 (JTA) -- The Ku Klux Klan has established branches in at least three German cities -- Berlin, Essen and Herford -- according to German Interior Minister Rudolf Seiters.

Seiters said last week that on May 26, police raided 30 houses and apartments where activists of the group were staying.

Klan activists in Germany are suspected of planning violent attacks against foreigners living in the country. He said that hostels for asylum-seekers are a major target, but Jewish communities in the country have also been put on alert.

Klan activities in the country have alarmed politicians because the group's ambitions apparently go beyond recruiting a few extremists in an isolated group.

"Their aim," a German official said, "is to establish a permanent line of communication and cooperation between America and Germany. They believe that this country is a good place to start a European base which could later spread both to the West and to the East."

Interior Minister Seiters said that the internal security service is still studying the confiscated written material. He said Bonn would seek Washington's cooperation in making it difficult for Klan activists to set foot in Germany.

Germany's laws on curbing neo-Nazi activities are far stricter than American laws. In Germany, it is illegal to display Nazi symbols, sing Nazi tunes or give the Nazi salute.

**NEO-NAZIS ARRESTED IN GERMANY
MARKING DEATH OF RUDOLF HESS**

By David Kantor

BONN, Aug. 17 (JTA) -- In what has become an annual ritual, 30 neo-Nazis were arrested Saturday in the German cities of Bayreuth and Wunsiedel as they marked the fifth anniversary of the death of Nazi leader Rudolf Hess.

Although the initial demonstrations took place in Bavaria, by Saturday evening they had spread to Rudolstadt, a town in the federal state of Thuringia, formerly part of East Germany.

Some 2,000 activists held an illegal rally there in which banners decrying Jews and foreigners were unfurled. Several youths wore illegal Nazi emblems on their clothes and gave the outlawed Nazi salute.

Police blocked roads to the small town and made arrests among the demonstrators, who were protesting what they claim was the murder of Hess in Berlin's Spandau prison five years ago.

While the wartime Allies who ran the prison have said all along that Hess committed suicide, neo-Nazis have spread the story that their idol was deliberately murdered.

Police made arrests in Bayreuth, the Bavarian town dedicated to a yearly performance of operas by Richard Wagner, the 19th-century anti-Semitic composer.

In a separate demonstration, opponents of the neo-Nazis protested their rally and tried to disrupt it. But a heavy police presence prevented physical contacts between the two groups.

In Wunsiedel, where Hess was buried, a dozen neo-Nazis attempted to stage a commemorative service at his tomb. But police, informed in advance, surrounded the cemetery and arrested anyone who sought access there.

**'ITALIAN WALLEMBERG' GIORGIO PERLASCA,
WHO SAVED HUNGARIAN JEWS, DEAD AT 82**

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Aug. 17 (JTA) -- Giorgio Perlasca, "the Italian Wallenberg" who masqueraded as the Spanish charge d'affaires in Budapest and saved at least 5,200 Hungarian Jews from deportation to Auschwitz during World War II, died Saturday in Padua at the age of 82.

Perlasca received honorary Israeli citizenship and was named "righteous among the nations" by the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial Museum five years ago. He received the first Medal of Remembrance from the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council in 1990.

Until those recognitions, the story of his wartime heroism had remained unacknowledged and virtually unknown.

Perlasca was an unlikely hero. His story was that of an ordinary businessman who was moved by circumstances to carry out extraordinary deeds and who sank back into obscurity after the war.

Until 1987, when his name came up at a Hungarian Holocaust survivors meeting in Berlin and his whereabouts were traced, no one but his drinking buddies in Padua knew about the wartime exploits of the bespectacled pensioner.

In the 1930s, Perlasca was a Fascist and an admirer of most of the policies of Italy's Fascist dictator Benito Mussolini.

He also served as a volunteer under Spain's Fascist General Francisco Franco in the Spanish Civil War, earning an award and a lasting link with Spain.

In March 1944, when the Nazis occupied Hungary, he was in Budapest as a traveling livestock trader and was trapped there.

In danger of arrest, as Italy had already surrendered to the Allies, Perlasca sought help from the neutral Spanish Embassy: on the basis of his old Spanish army citation, he was granted a Spanish passport and a new name -- Jorge, rather than Giorgio.

'Didn't Have Time To Be Afraid'

The Spanish ambassador then assigned Perlasca to a position at the embassy, in particular to coordinate activities aimed at saving Jews from deportation by issuing them phony Spanish identification documents and letters of protection.

In this role, he worked closely with Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg and representatives of other neutral countries, the Vatican and the International Red Cross.

His name appears alongside Wallenberg's on numerous documents.

"I wasn't scared because I didn't have time to be afraid," he recalled in a 1990 interview with *The Washington Post*.

"As far as I was concerned, I was sure of the rightness of what I was doing, and I was sure things would go well. Unfortunately, they didn't. I wanted to do more."

When the Spanish ambassador fled Budapest at the end of November 1944, Perlasca refused to leave and bluffed his way into being confirmed as chief Spanish representative in Hungary so he could continue his mission.

Perlasca ran the Spanish legation from Dec. 1, 1944 to Jan. 16, 1945, the day the Red Army entered that part of Budapest.

"Very few knew that he was an imposter, and those who knew kept the secret," it was reported in a recent Italian book.