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**STATE DEPT. UNDER FIRE FOR BARRING  
ENVOY FROM CONFERENCE IN JERUSALEM**By Deborah Kalb  
States News Service

WASHINGTON, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- American Jewish groups have strongly protested the State Department's refusal to allow a U.S. ambassador to address an international legal conference in Jerusalem this week.

Morris Abram, who serves as ambassador to U.N. agencies in Geneva, was barred from addressing the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, because it is convening this week at the Hyatt Hotel, which is situated on land that was not part of Israeli Jerusalem prior to 1967.

The issue goes right to the heart of U.S. policy on Jerusalem, which has often been a point of contention between various U.S. administrations and the American Jewish community.

The United States never recognized Israel's annexation of East Jerusalem following the Six-Day War of 1967. While Washington believes the city should remain united, it has said the final status should be determined in negotiations between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations issued a statement Monday saying it was "distressed and dismayed" by the State Department's action against Abram, who is a former chairman of the umbrella group.

It said the reason given, that the hotel lies in East Jerusalem, is "inexplicable and unacceptable."

Arguing that the move "violates longstanding U.S. policy that Jerusalem remain an undivided city," the group said the administration "appears to be prejudging the status of Jerusalem, which the U.S. has insisted should be the subject of discussion at the Arab-Israeli negotiating table."

But a State Department official maintained Monday that the decision to bar Abram from speaking should not be viewed as a change in U.S. policy.

"We are following our standard policy," the official told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "Our policy on Jerusalem hasn't changed. Nothing should be inferred from this incident."

**'A Repugnant Policy'**

The official said that according to current U.S. policy, government officials of Abram's rank are asked to refrain from any activities in East Jerusalem.

But in its statement, the Conference of Presidents pointed out that President Bush had visited holy sites in East Jerusalem when he was vice president, as had former Vice President Walter Mondale and other high-level U.S. officials.

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the conference, said he had raised the issue with top officials at the State Department. "To us, this is a repugnant policy," he said.

The Anti-Defamation League, meanwhile, has sent a letter to Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger seeking clarification of the U.S. policy.

In the letter, ADL's national director, Abraham Foxman, said it was his group's understand-

ing that the U.S. policy prohibiting American officials from attending Israeli government functions in East Jerusalem was "restricted to government-sponsored events."

"The current incident appears to take this policy to a new level in that it forbids American officials from attending events in East Jerusalem which are sponsored by private international organizations."

The State Department move was also sharply protested by the Jewish lawyers and jurists group, which called it an "insult to the many distinguished guests attending the convention from numerous countries."

Abram was to have given the keynote address of the association's ninth conference, which opened in Jerusalem on Monday night. In his place, the keynote address was delivered by Judge Richard Goldstone of South Africa.

In a letter of protest to the State Department, the association pointed out that the Hyatt is actually located on Mount Scopus, which had been an Israeli-held enclave before 1967.

It acknowledged that a small part of the hotel grounds was situated on what had once been no-man's land. But that small part "consists of the hotel's tennis courts, plainly not the location of the convention," the letter said.

In addition, the letter noted that the State Department had issued its last-minute prohibition after earlier endorsing Abram's attendance at the convention.

Some observers in Israel believe the State Department's decision, though ostensibly a reflection of policy on Jerusalem, was in fact a signal of U.S. displeasure over Israel's Dec. 17 expulsion of 415 Moslem fundamentalists from the administered territories.

But Hoenlein of the Conference of Presidents said he felt the incident was "not related to the deportation issue."

*(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent David Landau in Jerusalem.)*

**ISRAELI ARABS BACKING DEPORTEES  
AT THE RISK OF FURTHER ALIENATION**  
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Israel's 700,000 Arab citizens are continuing to show support for the 415 Palestinians expelled by Israel from the administered territories -- at the risk of further alienating themselves from the Jewish population.

Their demonstrations of solidarity came as Lebanon announced it would not allow a U.N. envoy to travel through its territory to visit the deportees at their encampment on a strip of land between Israeli and Lebanese army checkpoints.

The Beirut government said U.N. Undersecretary-General James Jonah would have to reach the deportees through Israeli lines.

Jonah met Monday in East Jerusalem with Palestinian leaders Faisal Husseini and Hanan Ashrawi, who called on him to press Israel to allow humanitarian aid to reach the deportees.

The Israeli Cabinet voted last Friday to bar the Red Cross and other relief agencies from sending food and medicine to the deportees through its border security zone in southern

Lebanon, saying the Palestinians were now Lebanon's responsibility.

Lebanon has similarly refused, insisting that its territory cannot become a dumping ground for Israeli's undesirables.

The U.N. envoy, who was sent here at the request of the U.N. Security Council, also met Monday with families of the deportees and joined a rally on their behalf in the West Bank town of Ramallah.

Israeli Arab leaders made a futile effort Monday to transmit food, medical supplies, clothes and heaters to the deportees in Lebanon, in defiance of the Israeli Cabinet's decision.

The Arab delegation was stopped at the border by Israeli police and instead staged a demonstrative noon prayer at the border crossing. At an improvised news conference, Arab officials pledged to continue efforts on behalf of the deportees.

Just as the issue of the deportees has blurred longstanding differences between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement, to which many of the deportees belong, so it has softened divergences between Israeli Arabs and Palestinian residents of the administered territories.

"The issue is not Hamas," said Tarek Abdul Hai, mayor of Tira, an Arab town north of Kfar Sava. "The issue is transfer" of Arabs out of the country. Israeli Arabs fear that they, too, could become subject to deportation, he said.

#### **Knesset Member Under Fire**

The most dramatic expression of Israeli Arab discontent was voiced last week by an Arab Knesset member at a rally in Gaza. Hashem Mahmud of the formerly Communist Hadash party urged Palestinians to step up the intifada by "all possible means."

The call, documented by Israel Television, stirred anger among Jewish Knesset members, who said it was tantamount to incitement to armed revolt against Israel. They urged that the Knesset member's parliamentary immunity be waived.

The Knesset House Committee could not reach a decision after several hours of discussion Monday, although it appeared most of its members, including coalition representatives, supported a removal of his immunity.

Opposition Knesset members charged that the committee chairman, Haggai Merom of Labor, deliberately stretched out deliberations so that Hadash would vote with the government when the state budget came up for a vote later in the week.

Mahmid, for his part, refused to retract his statement, except for saying he did not mean to encourage residents of the territories to use force in the intifada.

Attorney General Yosef Harish launched an investigation against Mahmud for allegedly violating a law banning terror activity when he spoke in Gaza. If Mahmud's Knesset immunity is removed and he is found guilty of encouraging terrorism, he could face up to five years in jail.

The sense of alienation between Israeli Arabs and Jews was reinforced in a violent parliamentary exchange Monday involving another member of the Hadash party and the leader of the right-wing Moledet party.

Parliamentary ushers tussled with Tawfik Ziad but failed to remove him from the rostrum as he exchanged heated epithets with Rehavam Ze'evi of Moledet. Ziad stepped down only with

the persuasion of fellow Arab members after a recess was called.

Frustration among Israeli Arabs was expressed by a general strike last week and a demonstration earlier this week outside the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem.

At the political level, Arab unhappiness was expressed in a decision by the five members of the two Arab parties -- Hadash and the Arab Democratic Party -- to withdraw their tacit parliamentary support of the government.

Neither party is a member of the coalition, but both have supported the government to help form an anti-Likud bloc. Both parties maintained that support until the deportations took place.

The decision to withdraw it has no immediate dramatic implication for the government, which enjoys a majority of 62 in the 120-member Knesset, without the support of the Arab parties.

But the move does not bode well for efforts to strengthen Arab-Jewish relations in Israel.

#### **SYRIAN ENVOY TELLS JACKSON JEWS ARE STILL FREE TO LEAVE By Larry Yudelson**

NEW YORK, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Syria's ambassador to the United States has told the Rev. Jesse Jackson that Syrian Jews remain free to leave the country, despite reports that no new travel visas have been issued for the past few months.

In a letter to Jackson, Ambassador Walid al-Moualem stated that "the Syrian government's decision of April 1992 to allow Syrian Jews to travel still stands."

The Dec. 22 letter was sent a day after Jackson met with the ambassador, in an effort to reverse the apparent halt in visas being given to Syrian Jews.

Activists for the Syrian Jewish community say that no new visas have been issued to Jews since October, although those already holding visas have been allowed to travel abroad unhindered.

Syria first began issuing the visas in April, when the government put aside a decades-old policy of holding its 4,000 Jews hostage. Since then, 2,600 Jews have used their visas, generally traveling to Brooklyn's large Syrian community.

Roughly 1,400 Jews remain in Syria, of whom 400 do not intend to leave.

The ambassador's denial of a change in policy is consistent with statements made to American and Israeli officials who had raised their concern over the visa halt to Syrian officials in Damascus and in Washington.

Some observers say that the Syrian refusal to acknowledge any policy reversal will make it easier for them to change their policy once again. They believe the Syrians are holding up the Jewish visas in an effort to extract further diplomatic gains from the incoming Clinton administration.

Jackson's representation to the Syrians, made at the behest of Isi Leibler, co-chairman of the World Jewish Congress, comes as the civil rights leader and shadow senator from the District of Columbia pursues a hectic schedule of bridge-building with the Jewish community.

**Because of the New Year's Day holiday, the JTA Daily News Bulletin will not be published Friday, Jan. 1.**

## HAREDIM STAGE MASSIVE PROTEST AT ANCIENT JERUSALEM GRAVESITE

By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Some 25,000 fervently Orthodox Jews staged a primarily peaceful demonstration this week to protest the city's plans to destroy ancient burial caves in order to build a road that will alleviate traffic from the northern suburbs.

During the two-hour rally, which took place Monday in the French Hill neighborhood where the caves were discovered two months ago, the demonstrators recited psalms and prayers which, they said, would help to safeguard the caves and those buried in them 2,000 years ago.

Buses brought men and teen-age boys, most clad in black hats and long dark coats, from all over the country. There were almost no women and children in attendance, perhaps because of the threat of violence.

Over the past two months, haredi demonstrators opposed to the Israel Antiquities Authority's excavations of the caves have clashed with the police on several occasions. Those few women who did show up were told to stand at the back of the crowd.

Both the demonstrators and the 300 police on duty shivered in the unseasonably cold afternoon air as one speaker after another addressed the crowd in Hebrew or Yiddish.

One rabbi declared, "We must maintain our vigil. We cannot eat or drink as long as this threat looms before us. No one must be allowed to disturb a burial site."

### Chief Rabbi Hinders Compromise

Recently, Jerusalem Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Kolitz ruled that the caves could not be destroyed and the remains could not be removed. His position left the conflict unresolved and the two sides with few compromise options.

There were many harsh words against city officials and the Antiquities Authority, which carries out legally mandated digs at sites targeted for building or road construction. It was during road construction work that builders stumbled on the burial caves from the Second Temple period.

One large poster featured photographs of two of the archaeologists involved in the dig, calling them "the cursed archaeologists responsible for desecrating Jewish graves."

Another photo, depicting an Orthodox rioter clashing with a policeman, carried the words, "A demonstrator is beaten by 'Israeli' police with murderous cruelty." The word 'Israeli' was placed in quotes because many of the haredim do not recognize the state of Israel.

The only violent incident occurred at the start of the demonstration, when a few religious teen-agers scuffled with a handful of university students carrying placards supporting excavations. The teen-agers tore up the placards, and one demonstrator threw a large piece of wood that hit a student in the head. She was not injured.

After police broke up the fight, they ordered the university students to leave the site. From the sidelines, Yali Daniel said, "I'm very angry that we were the ones told to back off. The police are supposed to protect us, not just the haredim."

Daniel was equally critical of the demonstrators. "I came here today to protest the haredim's attempts to force religion down our throats.

That's what this whole burial cave controversy is all about. I'm Jewish, too, and I believe in God. I have rights as well."

Watching the sea of black hats from her window, Chana, a resident of French Hill, could only shake her head and wonder at the controversy. "I don't believe in the haredi way of life. They don't serve in the army, for one thing.

"But maybe they're right in this instance. I don't know. Perhaps the road can be built a few meters away, where the graves won't be disturbed. It's worth looking into, isn't it?"

## CZECHOSLOVAK JEWS UNEASY ABOUT BREAKUP OF COUNTRY

By Josef Klansky

PRAGUE, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- Czechoslovak Jews are uneasy about the breakup of the country this week into Czech and Slovak republics. But cooperation between the two communities is expected to continue.

Older members of the community look back with nostalgia at the 1920s and early 1930s, when the Czechoslovakia headed by Tomas Masaryk was the most democratic country in the region and a good place for Jews to live.

After bleak decades of Nazi persecution and Communist rule, a small Jewish community welcomed the accession of Vaclav Havel in the early 1990s as president of a country once again the most democratic and tolerant in the region.

The Jan. 1 split of the 75-year-old federation now has Jews concerned about independent Slovakia, where politics are tinged with nationalist militancy and anti-Semitism is fomented by periodicals like the weekly Zmena.

Nevertheless, most Slovak Jews are determined to stay, convinced that even such unpredictable leaders as Slovak Prime Minister Vladimir Meciar recognize the country needs Western aid and will need the good will of Western leaders to get it.

After 40 years of communism, including more than two decades of Soviet occupation, Jewish membership in each of the two communities does not exceed 3,000. Several thousand more people of Jewish origin are not registered with the communities and take only a minimal or no part at all in Jewish life.

Even before the peaceful division of the country, the two communities existed as separate entities without formal ties. Strong cooperation between them seems likely to continue. Czech Jews have already helped Slovak Jews who wish to relocate find jobs and housing.

Each community is only a tiny minority in the newly independent states. The Czech republic, with its capital in Prague, has over 10 million inhabitants.

Slovakia, whose capital is Bratislava, has half that number. Unlike other parts of former Communist Europe, the divorce between the two ethnic groups is taking place without bloodshed.

Old-timers in the Jewish community view the breakup of the federation with sadness. They recall that Masaryk was the first-ever head of state to visit Jewish settlements in what was then Palestine.

That period came to a tragic end in 1938, when Czechoslovakia was abandoned to its fate at Munich. Only a few thousand Jews survived the Nazi Holocaust of a prewar population of 255,000 -- 118,000 in the Czech lands and 137,000 in Slovakia.

# **BEHIND THE HEADLINES: SPOTLIGHT TURNS TO CLAL'S CONCERNS AS COMMUNITY FOCUSES ON CONTINUITY**

[Part 1 Of A Series]

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Dec. 28 (JTA) -- When 3,000 Jewish communal activists gathered here recently to discuss the national Jewish agenda, they interrupted their hectic schedule of sessions and workshops one day to pull their chairs into circles, sit in groups of 10 or 15 and discuss a passage from the Book of Deuteronomy.

It was a striking recognition by the organized Jewish community that Jewish texts and tradition may provide the best weapon against assimilation and its threat to Jewish continuity.

And for the people at CLAL, the National Jewish Center of Learning and Leadership, who helped organized the session for the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations, it was a vindication of their belief that the Jewish communal enterprise needs a sense of purpose and meaning that can only come from Jewish learning.

"Here we were doing all this work for the Jews, and we really were so ignorant," recalls Peggy Tishman, a leader of New York's UJA-Federation.

Tishman was among those who, nearly a decade ago, instigated CLAL's first class for communal lay leadership, and has been studying with CLAL ever since.

CLAL currently runs such classes in dozens of communities; the CJF session was just a taste.

In the wake of the 1990 National Jewish Population Study, which sparked concern over the staggering rate of assimilation, the CLAL agenda of Jewish renewal is being increasingly accepted and embraced by the broader community.

## **Cardin Personifies Community's Shift**

The issue of Jewish continuity was, in fact, the theme of this year's G.A. And Shoshana Cardin, who gave a keynote address on the subject, herself personifies the shift of communal attention and resources toward issues of identity and away from philanthropy and politics.

Cardin was recently installed as CLAL's chairman after serving as chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations and the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, where she focused on the Jewish political agenda. She is also a past president of the Council of Jewish Federations.

Cardin says she now plans to discuss the issues that cannot be addressed by a check or a letter to the White House.

"I'd like to help people get in touch with their Jewishness," she says.

"We have to enable people to feel comfortable in expressing spirituality. I think we have minimized that level from a federation perspective. Now we must help the synagogue and religious communities join with the federation communities, and bring a spiritual component to ourselves as individuals."

Her presence lends CLAL the same respectability long held by the Soviet Jewry movement and the pro-Israel lobby.

With its concerns pushed to the front of the Jewish agenda, the organization is being increasingly called upon by the community to provide both learning and leadership.

It is helping federations and their agencies rethink their missions.

It is venturing out to the college campus and to the synagogue.

And it has received grants to help Jewish professionals rethink their roles, and their relationships to the community.

"We are a service bureau for the rest of the Jewish community," says Alan Bayer, CLAL's executive vice president.

As such, it is now looking for contracts from outside federation agencies wanting their programs and for major grants to finance its budget.

"We have shifted nuance from being ideologically driven to going where the biggest hunger is," says Bayer.

The hunger now is for answers, or at least discussion, of precisely those broad philosophic questions that have motivated CLAL's founder, Rabbi Irving Greenberg, and the CLAL faculty.

## **'It Wasn't Boring At All'**

The effects that the CLAL approach can have, even on those who are committed members of the Jewish philanthropic community, can be seen in Peggy Tishman.

It took CLAL to teach her that "you didn't have to hate Jewish learning, if it was taught the right way. It wasn't boring at all," she says.

Even more, "I didn't know it would be any fun to be Jewish. No one had ever told me," says Tishman.

David Nelson, a senior teaching fellow at CLAL, explains the phenomenon.

"There's a transformation that takes place when people have the opportunity to personally involve themselves with an ancient text, with the ancient and contemporary ideas that are in it," he says.

"It's an excitement unparalleled by anything else that happens in a Jewish leader's role."

Besides the excitement, CLAL uses the text to drive home one of the organization's central philosophies: that the work being done by Jews through institutions like federations, community centers and boards of family services can be as reflective of the ancient covenant between the Jewish people and God as is worship in synagogues.

"I personally believe that God is at the center of the system, at the center of life," says Greenberg.

"One of our jobs is to help people discover that, because contemporary life has secularized them so much that it's almost like they're tone deaf to it. It's a talent we have to restore to the Jewish community."

These ideas were at the core of a recent retreat for federation professionals led by CLAL.

## **Task Is To Articulate A Mission**

"The task now is to clearly articulate a mission for the Jewish people that Jews can share," David Elcott, CLAL's program director, recalls telling the retreat, noting that "most young people today don't have a knee-jerk reflex of being Jews."

"Then we talked about the role of the Jewish professional in America, how it's a very complex role. The first rabbi wasn't ordained in this country until just a hundred years ago. They can't really be authorities, they have to be facilitators."

"The (Jewish Community Center) won't have a kosher kitchen just because the rabbi tells them to," he said at the retreat.