

**FEARING THEY WILL LOSE THEIR HOMES,  
GOLAN SETTLERS STAGE A HUNGER STRIKE**  
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, May 3 (JTA) -- As Israeli negotiators sat down in Washington last week to resume peace talks with the Arabs, five Jewish residents of the Golan Heights sat down in a park in Jerusalem and have not eaten since.

The four women and one man from the Golan have set up camp in the Menorah Garden here, where they have launched a hunger strike in protest of a policy they fear will end with their homes being taken away.

Living on water and juice only, the five, who are from religious settlements, adamantly oppose proposals that Israel hand back the Golan to Syria as part of a peace agreement.

"We intend to encourage the people to come out against the government's decision to quit the territories in the Golan," said Ada Ness, who has lived for the past 21 years in the Golan settlement of Ramat Magshimim.

She demanded that national elections be held before any crucial decisions are made by the government.

A similar view was voiced Sunday by Knesset member Avigdor Kahalani, who, despite the fact that he is from the ruling Labor Party, heads the political lobby against withdrawal from the Golan.

"If the people decide to leave the Golan, then we shall leave; but let the people decide," said Kahalani, a war hero who fought in the Golan against the Syrians.

Uri Zomer of the Nov settlement raised the specter that disagreement over the issue could lead to internal strife and violent struggles among Israelis. "No one can be responsible for the acts of his friend," he warned.

The statement was but a faint echo of much stronger statements made in the past few days by some Golan settlers in the wake of growing prospects that Israel would eventually evacuate Jewish settlements in the Golan.

**Threat Of Bloodshed**

One settler said explicitly that bloodshed would result from a government decision to withdraw from the strategic plateau.

"In an hour of trial, you will see that most of the people will struggle for their home, for the place in which they have spent half of their lives," Ze'ev Gruenfeld of Neveh Ativ said in a radio interview last weekend.

"It is the government's right to decide, and it is our right to try and stop such a decision," he said.

Other Golan leaders were more moderate in their statements.

"Talk about armed resistance against the Israel Defense Force is crazy," said Sami Bar-Lev, the mayor of Katzrin, the only town in the Golan, "but talk about withdrawing from the Golan is just as crazy."

Therefore, he concluded, "if the government carries out a withdrawal from the Golan, it should take into account the existence of hotheads."

Bar-Lev is confident, though, that the withdrawal will not materialize.

According to some reports, settlers in the

Golan are already hoarding arms to use to prevent a forced withdrawal.

The reports may well be exaggerated, but they reflect growing uncertainty, confusion and anger among the Golan settlers as a potential withdrawal becomes more likely.

The militant statements in the Golan triggered criticism by many in the government, who said the remarks were inciteful and inappropriate.

Labor Knesset member Haggai Merom suggested that the country's domestic intelligence agency, the Shin Bet, be sent to the Golan to "identify extremist elements among the settlers and press charges against them."

**Concern Over Palestinian Police Force**

Even Benjamin Netanyahu, chairman of the opposition Likud party, which opposes territorial compromise, condemned statements endorsing illegal action to prevent the return of the Golan to Syria.

"The opposition will have to stage an offensive and tough struggle against the return of the Golan and the establishment of a Palestinian state," he said, "but only within the law."

Jewish settlers in the West Bank have also come out in recent days against the government's handling of the peace process.

They have ridiculed in particular proposals by the government to approve a local Palestinian police force in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. The settlers fear such a police force might have authority over Jewish settlers.

In an effort to drum up support among the public, the settlers staged a dramatization Monday on the road from Jerusalem to the nearby West Bank settlement of Givat Ze'ev.

In the fake enactment, a van with Israelis was stopped by Israeli actors posing as armed Palestinian police officers.

The officers introduced themselves as serving in the "Palestine Police Force," with the registration number on their vehicle reading "PLO."

The police officers demanded the travelers' passports, to stress they were entering a foreign territory. "If there is no stamp of Palestine, you go back," cried one actor-policeman.

When the settler retorted that "this is Israel," the policeman answered back: "No, there is no Israel anymore."

Yehiel Leiter, a settler leader who helped organize the dramatization, said the now-fictional scenario may soon be a reality that settlers will have to face.

**SECOND GROUP OF DEPORTEES RETURNS**

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, May 3 (JTA) -- Crowds of jubilant Arabs in the administered territories welcomed home a second group of Palestinians deported from Israel years ago and allowed to return this week.

The celebrations for the 14 men returning Monday were much like those for the first 15 who arrived last Friday: Thousands of well-wishers, many waving Palestine Liberation Organization flags, chanted nationalist songs and danced with the returnees on their shoulders.

Israel has agreed to allow back a total of 30

Palestinians deported between 1967 and 1987 as a confidence-building measure with the Palestinians, who returned to the Middle East peace talks last week in Washington.

The last of the 30 men was expected to arrive in Israel on Tuesday.

Among those returning Monday was Rawhi al-Khatib, 85, who was mayor of East Jerusalem until Israel captured the Arab sector of the once-divided city from Jordan in the Six-Day War of 1967.

Israel deported Khatib in 1968, but he never relinquished his title and Palestinians still regard him as the legitimate mayor of Jerusalem.

# **LIKUDNIK QUILTS APPEARANCE IN PARIS WHEN PLO OFFICIAL IS ASKED TO STAY**

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, May 3 (JTA) -- An uproar erupted at a program organized by a Jewish student group here when one of the guest speakers, former Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy, stalked out because one of the other invited guests was a Palestine Liberation Organization official.

The meeting was further thrown into confusion when Knesset member Yael Dayan, another invited guest, was prevented from speaking by a faction of students opposed to the Labor Party member's dovish political views.

Levy, a senior member of Israel's hawkish Likud party, decided to leave the program, titled "Peace in the Middle East" and organized by the Union of Jewish Students in France, when he found out that Afif Safieh, the PLO's representative in London, was to appear at the meeting.

Among the other participants were Nawaf Massalha, an Arab member of the Labor Party who is deputy minister of health.

Levy objected to Safieh's presence and asked the Israeli Embassy in Paris to intervene and press the student union to disinvite the PLO representative.

The scene then became even more awkward and complicated.

The president of the students union, Simon Pinto, agreed to Levy's demand, and Safieh was asked to leave the premises.

But Dayan, an outspoken dove who has openly met with PLO officials, saw Safieh leaving and asked the organizers to allow him back to the VIP room.

With journalists from all of the major Israeli media outlets watching, the organizers agreed to lead Safieh back into the building.

At that point, Pinto arrived on the scene, and once again Safieh was asked to leave.

Dayan continued to back Safieh, asking her colleague Massalha if he saw any problem in Safieh's presence at the meeting.

The deputy minister answered, "Those silly things are over now," presumably referring to a now-overturned law that forbids contact between Israelis and PLO officials.

In the end, Safieh stayed and Levy left, saying he preferred not to appear at the meeting because of problems it would create within his party.

Dayan was later forced to leave herself by a faction of students who climbed on stage as she started to talk and toppled the table in front of her.

The students were members of Tagar, the French Betar youth group, affiliated with Levy's Likud party.

# **CABINET APPROVES A PLAN TO MAKE ISRAEL'S BANKS MORE COMPETITIVE**

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, May 3 (JTA) -- Israel's Cabinet has approved sweeping reforms to make the country's banking industry more competitive and to curtail the power that Israel's four major banks wield over the economy.

According to the new regulations, which are expected to win approval by the Knesset, the banks would be forced to cut their share of holdings in non-banking companies to a maximum of 25 percent and, in some cases, to sell off subsidiary banks.

The regulations also would bar pension and mutual funds from owning stock in the banks that manage them and would separate management of the pension funds from the parent banks.

The plan calls for the government to establish a trusteeship to hold its shares in each of the banks it owns to avoid their nationalization, which otherwise would occur next fall.

The government in effect took control and ownership of the banks following a \$7 billion bailout in the 1980s, a fiasco that lies at the heart of the current efforts to reform the system.

Israel's four major banks, which continue to be operated by their original owners, control 92 percent of Israeli banking assets. They are Bank Hapoalim, Bank Leumi, Israel Discount Bank and United Mizrahi Bank.

The reforms, announced last week by Finance Minister Avraham Shohat and Bank of Israel Governor Jacob Frenkel, are opposed by the banks, which claim the measures would hurt their international competitiveness and their ability to promote new investment.

By contrast, all of the Cabinet ministers supported the plan, with the exception of Economic Development Minister Shimon Shetreet, who said the proposed reforms do not go far enough.

Shetreet said the reforms are not bold enough and would still leave the banks in control of the capital markets. If the reforms are implemented, Israelis will "continue to be enslaved to the banks," the minister said.

Two minor amendments to the plan were made by the Cabinet. One of the amendments would require the finance minister to report to the Cabinet every six months on the pace of the reforms and the sale of the banks.

A second change would grant the finance minister the power to fire the banks' trustees.

# **WEIZMAN PLEDGES TO HONOR SHABBAT**

JERUSALEM, May 3 (JTA) -- President-elect Ezer Weizman has made his first two promises of how he will act in his new post: He will honor Shabbat by not driving on Saturdays and he will not travel abroad during his first year of office.

Weizman, who is to be sworn in next week as Israel's seventh president, made those commitments this week as he hosted a delegation from the Knesset at his mansion in the seaside town of Caesarea.

The Knesset delegation was visiting Weizman to officially invite him to the special Knesset ceremony May 13 during which the former air force commander will be sworn in as president.

Weizman's commitment not to drive on Shabbat drew warm praise from Orthodox members of Knesset.

# **NEWS ANALYSIS: NEW CJF GOVERNING SYSTEM SHOWS STRAINS OF REACHING CONSENSUS**

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, May 3 (JTA) -- Last week's first-ever meeting of the Council of Jewish Federations Board of Delegates highlighted the tensions that accompany a sprawling federation system undergoing change.

CJF, until now organized as a loose affiliation of independent Jewish community institutions, finds itself grappling increasingly with issues that span the continent.

To help address those issues, the CJF last November created the Board of Delegates as its governing body. The move was part of the trend toward what CJF calls "continental collective responsibility."

But the fragility of the communal commitment to such a continental, rather than local, orientation was evident at the board's first meeting, held April 26 in Washington.

It resulted in a modification in the way federations help finance the resettlement of immigrants to America from the former Soviet Union.

The modification decreases the amount federations which resettle few refugees pay to those which resettle many. It was passed by the Board of Delegates only because the largest federations, who will lose the most money from the change, decided not to strain the commitment of smaller federations to collective responsibility.

With the modification, the Board of Delegates was able to salvage the notion of collective responsibility and extend, for a fourth year, the program under which the costs of resettling Soviet Jews are shared by federations across the entire continent.

The creation of the Board of Delegates, with its system of proportional representation, was itself a step forward for the idea of collective responsibility.

It replaced what had been a board made up of representatives of as many of the 189 CJF federations as possible.

Under the new system, each federation has at least two delegates and a weighted number of votes according to a complex formula based on the number of people in its Jewish community and the number of dollars brought in by its annual fund-raising campaign.

## **Dispute Over Fair-Share Figure**

A similar "fair-share" formula allocates responsibility to each federation for a certain proportion of the roughly 40,000 Jewish refugees admitted to the United States annually.

But since the refugees are not directed to specific cities, but choose where to settle based on other factors -- such as where they have relatives -- federations that do not meet their quota pay a sum of money into a collective pot that is used to reimburse those that exceed their quota.

Until now, the sum has been \$1,000 per immigrant, a figure that amounts to less than the average amount actually spent by local federations for food, clothing, housing and language and vocational training for the new immigrants.

Grants from the federal government also help defray these costs.

At the meeting April 26, more than one delegate expressed concern over the per capita figure, saying that their federations were being

overcharged. These delegates, mostly from the smaller federations, offered an amendment to the resolution renewing the program, which would decrease the per capita sum to \$750.

When the proposal came up for a vote, it became clear the count would be close.

Some delegates feared the opposition to the \$1,000 figure was so great that without the \$750 modified sum, some federations might pull out of the program altogether.

At that point, New York and Los Angeles, two federations that receive a large percentage of the reimbursement dollars and hold many votes on the board, shifted their position in favor of the amendment, ensuring its passage.

Why would federations which stand to lose more than a million dollars under the new formula vote to approve it?

"We felt that the concept of collective responsibility is so critically important for the future of the American Jewish community," explained Stephen Solender, executive vice president of New York's federation.

## **Ensuring Collective Responsibility**

"Therefore, when we saw that some of the communities are in pain financially, and needed to lower the per capita, we decided to agree so that we can ensure that collective responsibility continues.

"Because ultimately that's the most important objective," said Solender. "We feel it's exceedingly important as we move forward, not just in working with refugees, but also with a number of other issues that will be on our agenda."

Similar tensions between the desire for consensus and the ideals of democracy were evident in the other issue before the Board of Delegates, which also involved Jews migrating from the former Soviet Union, this time to Israel.

The question involved loans to new immigrants to Israel, which are issued by a consortium of Israeli banks, administered by the Jewish Agency and guaranteed by the federations in North America.

Under the proposal, one of a series of Jewish Agency payments to a \$200 million reserve fund designed to cushion the federations from any default will be postponed from October 1993 to April 1994.

The measure was designed to reflect the nature of the Jewish Agency's cash flow. The agency collects most of its funds in the final months of the calendar year and so would be better able to make such a payment in the beginning months of the following year.

But because of an effort last year to gain consensus on the loan package, it is questionable whether the measure will ever take effect.

Supporters of the program agreed to a rule whereby any change in the program would have to be approved in writing by every participating federation.

## **ISRAELI TEACHERS STRIKE GOES ON**

JERUSALEM, May 3 (JTA) -- Israeli government officials met informally with representatives of one of the striking teachers unions over the weekend, but failed to produce an agreement to end the week-old strike that has kept 1 million children away from their studies.

Officials of the Finance and Education ministries failed even to persuade the unions to return to the official wage negotiations.

**THE DIASPORA LAG  
LOVERS OF ISRAEL LEARNING  
A NEW APPROACH TO LOBBYING**  
By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK (JTA) -- There's a gruff voice coming from Jerusalem these days, asking American Jews to understand that peace is no romantic dream, but rather the demand of realpolitik.

The voice is that of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, his government and his diplomats here in the United States.

It is coming to rouse American Jews from their inertia, from what has been dubbed the "Diaspora lag," which has many in this country still looking at Middle East affairs through the spectacles prescribed by 15 years of Likud government.

More than simply trying to explain the policies of the Rabin government, now nearly a year old, the voice is pushing American Jewry to realize that those policies have significant ramifications for pro-Israel activists in the United States.

Two linked ideas are at the core of this new message.

First, the changed world situation, most noticeably the collapse of the Soviet Union and the rise of Iranian-backed fundamentalism, means there is a possibility of Israel making common cause with Syria, its traditional enemy.

This could open the door for a full peace with all of Israel's neighbors, as well as with the Palestinians.

Second, that possibility of peace may not last forever. So making progress in the peace talks takes on tremendous urgency.

The call was heard when Foreign Minister Shimon Peres in February addressed the annual plenum of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, an umbrella group for more than 100 national and local Jewish organizations.

He said he had a favor to ask of the American Jewish community, which had so effectively worked for a strong U.S.-Israeli relationship and for the rescue of imperiled Jewish communities in places such as Ethiopia and the former Soviet Union.

Now, he said, it was time for American Jews to put the peace process on their lobbying agenda.

**Counteracting The 'Go-Slowniks'**

For those accustomed to the Likud government of Yitzhak Shamir, this came as quite a change.

The Shamir government, after all, had looked to American Jews to make its case to an American administration with which it had, at best, cool ties.

And the case went something like this: Peace was something that would take a lot of time to work out, would require face-to-face talks between Israel and its neighbors, and would not require the American government to bother itself with speeding the process along.

By contrast, Rabin has greeted with relief the Clinton administration's statement -- subsequent to the Peres speech in February -- that America would be a full partner in the peace process.

Pro-Israel activists supportive of the Labor approach toward peace worry that at similar junctures in the future, the position taken by

American Jews may be crucial to the peace process.

Those supporting the peace process must be heard as loudly in Washington as those who will tell the administration to "slow down, don't get too involved," said Tom Smerling, executive director of Project Nishma, a group formed to provide an American platform for Israeli generals who advocate trading land for peace.

Such "go-slowniks, or maybe-not-nowniks," said Smerling, are "basically people less fearful of the status quo than of the peace process moving forward. They're a combination of true Likudniks, and nervous Nellies who after 15 years of Likud are frightened of the peace process."

The official pro-Israel lobby, for its part, says its support for the peace process includes informing Americans about it, and pointing to it as a reason for maintaining current aid levels to Jerusalem.

But the official lobby plans to take a neutral issue on any contentious issues that may arise in the peace process, such as negotiating a withdrawal on the Golan Heights.

"We don't take positions on issues on which there is a diversity of opinion," explained Steven Grossman, president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

Territorial compromise is among those issues. At the recent AIPAC policy conference in Washington, many AIPAC activists were reluctant to applaud the Israeli government's negotiating stance.

By contrast, a speaker sharply critical of the Labor approach to the peace talks was warmly received.

**No Longer 'Unredeemable Opponents'**

For now, with the question of American involvement satisfactorily resolved and the peace process apparently back on track, Israel has a suggestion as to how pro-Israel lobbyists can next lend a hand.

"Make sure that -- within the context of peace -- there is assistance to the Arab world, to alleviate the social and economic conditions," such as unemployment and poverty, which spur on fundamentalism, said an official with the Israeli Embassy in Washington.

This approach is part and parcel of the idea, accepted by doves in the American Jewish community but perhaps slower to sink in elsewhere, that Israel has moved from an era of confrontation with its neighbors to one of negotiation and even cooperation.

And it highlights a new skill needed by American Jews: the ability to distinguish between one Arab country and the next when they can no longer all be lumped together as the enemy.

"Up until now, Syria and the Palestinians and the Saudis have been unredeemable opponents of the State of Israel," explained one longtime pro-Israel activist with an interest in the peace process.

"Today the Syrians, the Palestinians and the Saudis are involved in negotiations with Israel. Isn't this the best evidence of how things have changed? How American Jews can think their roles will remain the same with this unbelievable breakthrough is confusing to me.

"It's not that the Syrians have gone from being our foe to our friend, but they certainly have gone from being beyond redemption to being a legitimate negotiating partner," said the activist.