

RABIN SAYS PALESTINIANS IN JERUSALEM CAN VOTE IN ELECTIONS IN TERRITORIES
By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, June 10 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin has agreed to allow Palestinians living in eastern Jerusalem to vote, but not run, in proposed elections for a self-governing authority in the administered territories.

Rabin, who made the comment in the first interview ever given by an Israeli prime minister to a local Palestinian newspaper, also said Israel would allow members of the U.S. Congress to monitor the elections.

Those positions are a departure from the policy of the previous Likud government, which opposed any involvement of Palestinians from eastern Jerusalem in the peace process and objected to the idea of international supervision of elections in the territories.

Rabin's statements, published Thursday in the eastern Jerusalem paper Al Quds, prompted mixed reactions.

The editor of Al Quds praised the Israeli leader's remarks, but complained that he did not go far enough to satisfy Palestinian demands on human rights.

But Knesset members of the opposition Likud party blasted Rabin for going too far in his comments. They claimed his remarks had opened the door to the redivision of Jerusalem and the possibility of supervision of the elections by the United Nations.

Likud Knesset Member Eliyahu Ben-Elissar termed the remarks another Israeli concession to the Arabs that runs counter to the guidelines established before the October 1991 conference in Madrid that launched the current peace process.

A Message From Arafat?

But the Prime Minister's Office took pains to clarify that Rabin said only that the United States could monitor, not supervise, the elections. The office also insisted that allowing eastern Jerusalem residents to vote but not stand for election would not affect the city's unity.

Meanwhile, the spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation to the peace talks, Hanan Ashrawi, said Wednesday there was no danger of a Palestinian boycott at the next round of talks, scheduled to begin in Washington next week.

And Nimrod Novik, a close associate of Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, was in Cairo, where it was reported he had a meeting Wednesday with Osama el-Baz, foreign affairs adviser to Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

El-Baz reportedly had met the same day with Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasir Arafat.

A Foreign Ministry spokesman said Novik's visit to Cairo was strictly a business trip and had no political implications.

There was speculation in the press, however, that Novik exchanged a message with Arafat at Peres' request, using el-Baz as the go-between.

There has also been speculation that Peres and his Syrian counterpart will meet next week at the U.N. human rights conference in Vienna. But the Israeli foreign minister said Tuesday that such a meeting was not likely.

MORE THAN HALF ISRAELI FIRMS SURVEYED BROKE LAWS FOR PAYING ARABS LIKE JEWS
By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, June 10 (JTA) -- More than half of 75 Israeli companies surveyed by the national employment service have violated laws requiring Arab employees to be paid the same minimum wage as Jews and given certain social benefits.

More companies will be surveyed as part of a broad campaign being conducted by the employment service. The companies found to have been remiss have been fined and, in some cases, taken to court.

The campaign has been spurred in part by the closure imposed on the administered territories more than two months ago, which has led to a smaller number of Palestinian workers in Israel proper and more accurate knowledge of who these workers are.

The number of Palestinian workers from the territories entering Israel daily was estimated at about 110,000 before the closure. Now, 45,000 permits have been issued, though not all are being used.

"As long as Israel is responsible for the territories, we are responsible for the living and the working of the people there," said Labor and Welfare Minister Ora Namir.

"At the same time," she added, "the government of Israel cannot and (should not) invest money in the territories to create jobs for the people living there.

"We do not have enough money to do it for the Israelis and there is no question that it would be very difficult for us to do it" there, Namir said.

It will cost tens of billions of dollars to dramatically change the "terrible situation" in Gaza, she said.

The blow the closure has dealt to the economy in the West Bank and Gaza Strip has prompted Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to increase his pressure on European countries to invest money in the territories, rather than protest human rights violations committed there by Israeli soldiers.

JEWS JOIN WITH OTHER FAITH GROUPS IN URGING MORE ATTENTION TO POOR
By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, June 10 (JTA) -- Leaders of major American Jewish, Catholic and Protestant organizations came together this week to call for a grass-roots movement that would focus more attention on American social welfare problems.

The Synagogue Council of America, together with the National Council of the Churches of Christ and the U.S. Catholic Conference, sponsored a two-day seminar Tuesday and Wednesday titled "Seek the Common Good."

At the seminar, which marked one of the first large-scale joint efforts among the three religious groups since the civil rights movement of the 1960s, they put out a statement called the "Call to the Common Ground for the Common Good."

"The goal of the project," an accompanying

statement said, "is to articulate clearly and persuasively the moral basis for a renewed national debate concerning social welfare policy."

The three religious groups have been working together on the project for months.

They seek not only to reinvigorate the debate among their congregants on helping the poor, but also to encourage elected officials to formulate accompanying policy measures.

"We believe the social deficit is every bit as important as the fiscal deficit," the Rev. Joan Campbell, general secretary of the National Council of Churches, said at a news conference Wednesday.

Campbell said the religious community has worked hard to assist the poor and the vulnerable in American society, but that it alone could not solve the problems.

She said the poor need to become "empowered" to speak for themselves and that the religious community needs to continue speaking up to encourage the politicians to act.

"We are communities of faith" and "will be judged on how we take care of the most vulnerable in our society," said Monsignor Robert Lynch, general secretary of the U.S. Catholic Conference.

Rabbi Henry Michelman, executive vice president of the Synagogue Council, made the point that societal improvements often take place over a long period of time, and often these incremental changes are ignored.

"We are committed," Michelman said, "to see that this call gets translated and implemented in every community."

Also participating in the news conference with the three religious representatives was Benjamin Chavis, executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

Chavis said his organization supports the goals outlined by the religious groups. He said the country is at a "defining moment" and that it is important to ensure that the religious and civil rights communities work together.

RENO SPEAKS TO ADL LEADERSHIP ABOUT NEED FOR COMMUNICATION By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, June 10 (JTA) -- Americans must communicate more effectively with one another in order to overcome such problems as racism and bigotry, Attorney General Janet Reno told an Anti-Defamation League gathering here this week.

Reno said she was "as opposed as I can be, with every fiber, every bone in my body, to hate and to bigotry."

But, she said, she recognizes "that much of what has occurred in America in terms of tension and conflict has occurred because people won't communicate, because people won't talk things out, because they jump to conclusions, because they make snap judgments."

The former Dade County, Fla. state's attorney has been making the rounds of various conventions and meetings here, and has won a reputation both in Washington and around the country of being refreshingly honest.

Reno is these days clearly one of the most popular members of a somewhat beleaguered administration.

As in others of her recent speeches, Reno delivered a plea Thursday for greater communica-

tion and expressed her own willingness to pick up her phone and talk to people.

"I want to talk with America," the attorney general told ADL's 80th anniversary national commission meeting. "I want to work these issues out. And when I can't work them out against bigotry, I want to stand with you foursquare."

Reno said she hopes to take a "principled and thoughtful" approach to her job.

"I think the Department of Justice has an ultimate responsibility to see that the Constitution is enforced as vigorously as possible, particularly in terms of making our citizens free from bigotry, discrimination and hate," she told the audience.

A Plea From Bosnian Envoy

The attorney general, who is of Danish heritage, told of attending a 50th anniversary commemoration recently of the rescue of the Jews of Denmark.

As she sat next to an elderly man who had served in the Danish Resistance, Reno said, "it made me realize that every single person in this world can make a difference."

Reno, who received two standing ovations, was one of several guest speakers addressing the ADL gathering.

On Wednesday night, representatives from about 40 countries gathered for a session titled "The World United Against Anti-Semitism."

Muhamad Sacirbey, U.N. ambassador of Bosnia-Herzegovina, urged ADL to continue its work on behalf of the war-ravaged former Yugoslav republic, "not because of a persecuted minority, but because what is at stake are the principles of multiculturalism, pluralism, democracy, tolerance and secularism."

"These are the principles that will be under attack throughout Europe in the next few years," the ambassador continued.

Along with many other Jewish groups, ADL has been active in urging the United States to take a stronger stand to end atrocities being perpetrated mainly by Serbian forces against the Bosnian people.

Also Wednesday night, the ADL members heard from Edgar Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress, Israeli Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich and Andrei Kolosovskiy, Russian deputy chief of mission in Washington.

Senate Minority Leader Robert Dole (R-Kan.) and Labor Secretary Robert Reich were to give keynote addresses Thursday night.

Other topics scheduled to be discussed throughout the five-day conference included the influence of the religious right, Islamic fundamentalism and bigotry on campus.

HEBREW U. HONORS GEORGE SHULTZ

JERUSALEM, June 10 (JTA) -- Former U.S. Secretary of State George Shultz was being awarded an honorary doctorate by Hebrew University in recognition of his dedication to human rights and his efforts on behalf of Jewish refuseniks in the former Soviet Union.

The former statesman was also honored Thursday for his "counsel and support" for the Israeli economic recovery plan of the 1980s and helping to lay the foundations for the resumption of the Middle East peace process.

Shultz, who was given honorary citizenship of Jerusalem, was U.S. secretary of state from 1982 to 1989, treasury secretary from 1972 to 1974 and labor secretary from 1969 to 1970.

U.S. TEAM GOES TO ISRAEL TO DISCUSS BRIBE SCANDAL WITH JAILED EX-OFFICER By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 10 (JTA) -- A team of American investigators has arrived in Israel to question a former senior Israeli air force officer in connection with a bribery scandal involving U.S. defense contractors.

Col. Rami Dotan, former head of the Israeli air force's equipment division and at one time head of the air force's purchasing mission in the United States, is currently serving a 13-year prison sentence for accepting some \$12 million in bribes from U.S. aircraft manufacturers.

Other officers who worked with him are also serving various prison terms for their participation in the scam. Some of them were posted as Israeli air force liaison officers in some of the top aircraft and parts suppliers in the United States.

The American team is made of representatives of the FBI, the Justice and Defense departments, congressional committees and corporations whose agents allegedly offered the bribes.

In the questioning, which was to begin this week, the Americans aim to find out what Dotan and his accomplices did with the money and how they managed to launder such large sums and transfer them out of the country.

Among the corporations involved was General Electric, which admitted to its complicity and reportedly paid the U.S. government \$69 million to settle the case.

The U.S. authorities asked to question Dotan as his conviction was announced in 1990, but Israel refused, saying it feared such an interrogation might lead to the disclosure of details harmful to Israel's security.

But under heavy pressure, Israel has finally agreed to an indirect interrogation, in the presence of Israeli military censors.

ISRAEL'S SUPREME COURT REJECTS APPEALS OF TWO CONVICTED OF KILLING AMERICANS By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 10 (JTA) -- Israel's Supreme Court has rejected the appeals of two Israelis convicted of the 1987 "gun for hire" contract murder of a wealthy American couple near Los Angeles.

But the charge against one of them, Nadav Nakan, was reduced from murder to manslaughter.

Nakan and Yair Orr, both originally from Kibbutz Alonim in the Jezreel Valley, were convicted in 1991 of murdering Jack and Carmen Hively of Santa Barbara.

According to an indictment supplied by the California authorities, the two Israelis were paid to commit the murders by Charles Le Gros, the Hivelys' son-in-law.

Le Gros apparently wanted to get his hands on the large sum of money his wife would inherit when the Hivelys died.

Le Gros recruited Orr, who then brought in his childhood friend, Nakan, to help him.

The United States sought to extradite the two men and try them in America, but Israeli law forbids extradition if the suspects were Israeli citizens at the time of the crime.

Orr and Nakan were thus convicted of the crime in Tel Aviv District Court, with the help of evidence supplied by U.S. law-enforcement sources.

TOMBS IN A JEWISH CEMETERY DESECRATED IN HUNGARIAN TOWN KNOWN FOR SKINHEADS By Agnes Bohm

BUDAPEST, June 10 (JTA) -- Tombs in a Jewish cemetery were daubed with neo-Nazi slogans in a town in northeastern Hungary known for its right-wing skinhead movement.

Swastikas and slogans such as "Heil Hitler" and "Adolf" were painted on tombs, and others were damaged in Eger's Jewish cemetery.

According to reports in the Hungarian media, satanic slogans were also painted on tombs in the town's Catholic cemetery. However, television reports showed pictures of only the Jewish tombs.

Police declined to speculate on the identity of the vandals, refusing to make a connection between Eger's strong skinhead movement and the attack, which was believed to have taken place at midnight.

The vandalism of Jewish tombs is among the issues raised in play written by a Hungarian-born Jew, Gyorgy Tabori, and now being shown in Budapest.

The premier of the play "Jubilee" was held last week and has become a hit.

Tabori, in his 80s, first produced the play in 1983 in Bochum, Germany, on the 50th anniversary of Adolf Hitler's rise to power.

One of the play's messages was that skinheads and right-wing forces are alive and well in society -- and difficult to stop.

SEPHARDIC SYNAGOGUE IN AMSTERDAM IS REDEDICATED AFTER RESTORATION By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, June 10 (JTA) -- This city's 300-year-old Sephardic Esnoga -- the Ladino word for synagogue -- was rededicated this week after extensive restoration, in a ceremony attended by some 800 invited guests, including Prince Claus, the husband of Queen Beatrix of Holland.

The restoration took 2½ years and cost some \$5 million.

The Amsterdam Sephardic congregation, which today is the only Sephardic congregation still existing in the Netherlands, has only some 600 members. They were unable to raise the necessary funds by themselves.

The restoration was made possible by gifts from the Prince Bernhard Fund and other Dutch institutions.

The Society of Friends of the Esnoga enabled donors to adopt parts of the building ranging from roof tiles to portions of the walls and lamps.

The total sum for the restoration has yet to be collected.

The Esnoga was built in the 17th century to replace earlier, smaller Sephardic synagogues in Amsterdam.

In contrast to other Dutch synagogues, the Esnoga did not suffer during the World War II German occupation since it was declared a protected monument.

The building has also never been damaged by heating, since the building has never had any heating, nor electricity for that matter.

The Esnoga is still lit by candles. During the cold winter months, the congregation meets in a small annex.

At the rededication ceremony, Prince Claus unveiled a tablet showing the names of the more generous donors.

SEPARATED FAMILY OF FALASH MORA WAITS FOR REUNIFICATION IN ISRAEL By Michele Chabin

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia, June 10 (JTA) -- About three years ago, Amsalu Tayachew and his wife, Marie Takele, traveled from their small village in Gondar province to Addis Ababa to await the Operation Solomon airlift.

Marie was nine months pregnant when the Israeli Embassy discovered that she is a Falash Mora, a Jew whose ancestors converted to Christianity.

On the day of the airlift in May 1991, Amsalu, a Jew, flew to Israel without Marie and then one-month-old son Tijihun, confident that they would be allowed to join him in the near future.

Two years later, Marie is still in Addis, where she lives with her parents, who converted the family to Christianity many years ago, and her son, who is now a toddler.

Last month, Amsalu returned to Ethiopia to be with his family and to appeal to Israeli officials here to allow his wife and son to emigrate.

"I went to Israel two years ago," said Amsalu in Hebrew, "because someone told me that if I was a new immigrant living in Israel, my family would be allowed to follow. During this period, government officials assured me that something would be done. I'll remain in Addis until the authorities let us go to Israel as a family."

The Tayachews could be one of the lucky families who will meet the guidelines recently established by the Israeli government on Falash Mora. Under the guidelines, a Falash Mora still in Ethiopia whose spouse is in Israel will likely receive permission to move to Israel on the grounds of family reunification.

By the same token, the Falash Mora parents of an unmarried child living alone in Israel will probably be able to move to Israel under the Law of Entry. As such, they will be permanent residents, not citizens.

However, if they are in the process of returning to a Jewish lifestyle, they may be able to enter the country under the Law of Return.

"If it sounds confusing, you're right," said a member of the Interior Ministry team here to investigate the applications of 200 Falash Mora whose relatives are living in Israel.

'Doing The Best We Can'

"Take the family we met with this morning," said the official, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "There are two daughters living in Israel. One of them is single and under 21, so her Falash Mora parents are eligible to immigrate on the grounds of urgently needed family reunification.

"Under the Law of Return, the siblings of the girls living in Israel are eligible to immigrate because their grandparents were Jewish. Furthermore, the siblings' spouses, who are not Falash Mora but Christian, can also come under the Law of Return. In the end, we've approved 14 applications from this family, according to the new guidelines," the official said.

"There will be people who hear this story and say that the guidelines are too liberal, while others, especially those with relatives still living in Ethiopia, will say they are too strict. In the meantime," he said, "we're doing the best we can."

PEPSI NO LONGER KOSHER FOR SOME; OTHER RABBIS STILL SAYING UH-HUH By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, June 10 (JTA) -- Pepsi-Cola has lost its kashrut license from a fervently Orthodox rabbinic authority here, but the soft drink is still deemed kosher by two other Israeli rabbinic authorities.

The fervently Orthodox Eda Haredit kashrut authority last week decided to withdraw its kosher seal of approval because of the soft-drink company's "immodest" advertising campaigns and its sponsorship of Saturday night rock concerts.

The Saturday night concerts, the rabbis said, led youth to violate the Sabbath by traveling to the concert areas before sundown.

Pepsi has decided to give up the Eda Haredit license without much of a fight, claiming that the rabbinic authority was making unreasonable demands.

The company said that losing the license would not hurt its business.

Officials of Tempo, the soft drink's local distributor, met with Eda Haredit representatives in an effort to reverse the decision, but to no avail.

Tempo managing director Reuven Avital said this week that the meetings failed to make headway, despite the rabbinic authority's desire to reinstate the license.

Avital blamed the impasse on the company not backing down on its advertising campaign.

"We have our principles and we can't find an agreement, so we will lose their approval," he said. "Our differences can't be resolved."

Avital predicted there would be no impact on sales here.

He took pains to stress that the soft drink has kashrut licenses from two other religious authorities.

One is in Holon and one in Netanya, where the company's two plants are located.

He said people observing kashrut laws could still drink Pepsi because it is the only cola company that has opened its doors and disclosed its recipes to rabbinic authorities.

He also emphasized all three kashrut licenses remain on all the company's other products.

ISRAEL UNVEILS REMOTE DRONE TANK By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 10 (JTA) -- The Israeli army has unveiled a new remote-controlled drone tank that operates without a driver or crew.

The Israeli Defense Force's Ordnance and Equipment Corps showed off the new tank, named "Peleh," or "miracle" in Hebrew, to military correspondents this week.

The tank is currently being tested and used in training.

The army also demonstrated transportation vehicles which have been reinforced with special protective armor to counter the danger of roadside bombs and missiles.

Correspondents watched as a roadside bomb was detonated.

The blast took place near one of the newly designed personnel carriers.

None of the soldiers aboard was harmed.

However, the corps commander warned that no absolute protection against mines or missiles could ever be provided for thin-skinned, troop-carrying vehicles.