

**PEACE TALKS OPEN IN WASHINGTON  
AMID LOWERED EXPECTATIONS****By Deborah Kalb**

WASHINGTON, June 15 (JTA) -- The 10th round of Middle East peace talks opened this week amid lowered expectations and a sense that while slow progress was possible, any quick breakthroughs were unlikely.

In contrast to the last round of talks in late April and early May, which were noteworthy both because the parties had not met for months, and because they represented the debut of the Clinton administration as "full partner" in the process, the start of this round Tuesday was more low-key.

In back-to-back news conferences following the opening sessions Tuesday morning, Palestinian and Israeli negotiators offered differing versions of the situation in the Middle East.

Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi said the negotiations were "progressively becoming more difficult with each round," because of conditions "on the ground" in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including the Israeli closure of the territories.

Israeli spokeswoman Ruth Yaron offered a more positive assessment of Middle East conditions, citing a recently completed round of multilateral talks that she said had shown progress, a statement by King Fahd of Saudi Arabia citing the importance of the peace process and the recent decision by Kuwait to no longer abide by the secondary economic boycott of Israel.

Meanwhile, in Vienna, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said that progress in this round would depend on the Arabs.

After meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, Christopher told Israel Television that progress would "require a good deal of movement from the other side, from the Palestinians and others.

"But I think we're going to have a good round," Christopher added.

He and Peres were in Vienna this week for the U.N. World Conference on Human Rights.

**2 Working Groups Set Up**

Yaron said that in the first meeting between the Israeli and Palestinian negotiators, the two sides agreed to set up two working groups. One, a continuation of a group set up in the last round, will deal with human rights issues.

The second will focus on the wording of a joint statement of principles, Yaron said. In the previous round, the United States had attempted unsuccessfully to get the Israelis and Palestinians to agree on a joint statement.

The declaration would lay out terms for Palestinian self-rule in the territories.

Yaron's remarks were in contrast to those of Ashrawi, who said that the Palestinians would rather focus on core issues of substance, rather than progress reports.

On the Israeli-Syrian track, Yaron said recent press reports quoting Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin saying that Israel would not give back the entire Golan Heights to Syria even in return for full peace were erroneous.

She said Rabin had been "misquoted."

The last round, the ninth in the series of bilateral negotiations between Israel and Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Palestinians, ended with expressions of regret that more had not been accomplished.

This 10th round was preceded by upbeat, optimistic statements emanating from Israel and Jordan. In another positive sign, the Arab parties appeared on time in Washington without making their participation in the talks an issue, in contrast to the previous round.

But Israeli Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich, who also serves as Israel's chief negotiator with the Syrians, said that he "wouldn't use the optimistic-pessimistic spectrum" to judge progress of the talks, because progress on the four negotiating tracks could occur at different speeds.

In an interview last week with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Rabinovich discussed the four negotiating tracks and the American role as self-proclaimed "full partner" in the peace process.

**U.S. May Provide 'Bridging Proposals'**

The Clinton administration has pledged to make the peace talks a high priority, and said it would step in to provide "bridging proposals" if the parties needed such assistance.

In fact, Rabinovich said Friday, the Americans have already done so on the Israeli-Palestinian track.

Toward the end of the last round, the Americans, in what appeared to be a last-ditch effort to salvage some sense of progress from what was becoming a rapidly deteriorating situation, attempted to get the Israelis and Palestinians to agree on a joint statement.

Rabinovich said it was possible that during this 10th round, a "mutually acceptable joint statement" could be agreed upon.

He said he hoped that "serious work could be done on this round."

Ashrawi said Tuesday that the Palestinians were engaging in talks with the U.S. government about American positions on such controversial issues as Jerusalem and Israeli settlements in the territories.

The answers the Palestinians were receiving from the Americans, she said, were "not very satisfactory," and more talks were taking place. She said she hoped the U.S. administration would be "evenhanded" during the negotiations, and not take sides.

Ashrawi said the Palestinians did not feel it was necessary to reach agreement on a joint statement with Israel that would serve as a progress report, but instead that the two sides should work on more substantive issues such as security and jurisdiction.

Regarding the Syrians, Rabinovich said he was "not prognosticating." The last round with the Syrians got mired in a debate over definitions of terms.

Rabinovich called the Syrian formula "full peace for full withdrawal" -- referring to an Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights in return for peace between the two countries -- a "gimmick."

The Israelis, who are seeking a peace with Syria complete with such manifestations as trade relations and exchanges of ambassadors, are

waiting for Syria to define what they mean by "full peace."

Meanwhile, the Syrians, who want Israel to withdraw fully from the Golan Heights, are waiting for the Israelis to define what type of withdrawal they are contemplating.

Rabinovich said that the Israelis feel locked in a "vicious cycle."

But, he said, in contrast to a year ago, the situation is "not so bad."

"A year ago, we would not have thought we would be poking holes in a Syrian gimmick based on the words 'full withdrawal, full peace,'" he said.

He said it was "premature" to discuss whether the United States would play a more direct role in the Israeli-Syrian talks during this round, but indicated that the United States could play such a role in the future to "finalize" a deal between the two parties.

Yaron said Tuesday that in their meeting that morning, the Israelis and the Syrians had begun discussing security issues.

In response to a question about what new proposals the Israelis might be bringing to this round of talks, Rabinovich said the Israelis had "brought several new ideas" over the last few rounds, and that it was "not wise to dilute" them by adding more.

While the Palestinian and Syrian tracks are viewed as higher-profile and thus receive most of the attention, the Lebanese and Jordanian tracks are also continuing.

There are no real problems on the Jordanian track, Rabinovich said. The two sides have been discussing a range of issues, and most observers agree that the only thing barring an agreement between the two sides is that the Jordanians do not want to move far beyond the other Arab parties.

Thus, any breakthrough with Jordan would have to wait for further progress on the Palestinian or Syrian tracks.

Rabinovich said he was disappointed with the lack of progress on the Lebanese track during the last round. Yaron said Tuesday that the Israelis hope that the two sides could achieve progress in establishing a military working group to deal with security issues.

# SETTLERS STAGE LARGE SIT-IN, CLAIMING RABIN HAS NO MANDATE ON CONCESSIONS

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 15 (JTA) -- As a new round of Middle East peace talks begins in Washington, a public debate has emerged here over the authority and mandate of the current government to make territorial concessions as part of a land-for-peace settlement.

"Rabin, you have no mandate" has become the motto of settlers and supporters who are staging a sit-in outside the Knesset and opposite the offices of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

In a show of strength, hundreds of protesters have set up tents, huts, telephone and fax lines, as well as improvised offices of the municipal and regional councils in the territories.

The encampment has sent a clear signal to Rabin and the Knesset that the protesters intend to stay where they are for a long time.

The demonstrators protested against territorial concessions at a rally Monday addressed by their old champion, the semi-retired former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir.

Shamir spoke of the "great fear that this government of calamity will surprise us" in the peace talks "and we shall suddenly find ourselves with borders which do away with our security."

Shamir's handling of the peace process, when he led the government at the head of the Likud party, has been commended by the present Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu for presenting a tough stance to the Arabs.

Netanyahu has complained bitterly that Rabin is giving away too much and not getting anything in return.

The demonstration by settlers at the Rose Garden has as its main message a claim that Rabin lacks authority from the people to give up land under Israeli control, particularly the Golan Heights.

A giant "Rabin, you have no mandate" was smeared overnight on the helicopter landing site near the Knesset, much to the dismay of the Knesset guards. Posters with the same slogan were placed all over the small park.

## Netanyahu Echoes Protestors

In a Knesset debate during another failed attempt to topple the coalition, Netanyahu echoed the protesters' message, warning Rabin against making concessions.

And so despite the lack of any indication in the peace talks that territorial concessions would take place in the near future, the issue has come to the forefront of public debate.

Yoel Markus, a respected columnist, suggested Tuesday in Ha'aretz that the settlers might be out in force now because they may be aware of secret behind-the-scene negotiations with the Arabs, which could bear fruit earlier than expected.

"It is not coincidence that the settlers are getting ready for a violent struggle and have already come out in demonstrations," wrote Markus.

It remains to be seen what kind of support the political right enjoys and whether it is powerful enough to influence the peace process and block the implementation of decisions once they are made.

A demonstration held here several months ago by leaders of all the opposition parties failed to attract the masses. It ended up as a relatively small rally and was seen as a weak show of force.

But in recent weeks, Rabin has lost public support for a variety of reasons and opinion polls are smiling at the new Likud leader, Netanyahu.

Emuna Yaron, a right-wing columnist, wrote this week in Ma'ariv that the "national camp" was stronger and more unified than ever. She warned the government not to underestimate the movement's strength and the weight of the 120,000 Jewish residents in the territories.

Speaking on behalf of the government this week in the Knesset, Health Minister Haim Ramon indicated that the government was not underestimating the settlers, particularly their disruptive capabilities.

He warned that by overemphasizing the slogan that the Rabin government had no mandate for territorial concessions, political leaders such as Netanyahu were delegitimizing the legally elected government of Israel.

"If the government has no mandate," said Ramon, "then people are led to believe that the government takes illegal action, and one must therefore act against it by all means, also illegal means."

## WORLD ANTI-SEMITISM REPORT SUBMITTED TO U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS CONFERENCE

NEW YORK, June 15 (JTA) -- An in-depth report on world anti-Semitism, including details on how anti-Semitism is being used by some Eastern European politicians to whip up support, has been submitted to the United Nations World Conference on Human Rights meeting this week in Vienna.

The 200-page report, submitted to the conference Tuesday by the World Jewish Congress, also noted that anti-Semitic publications are increasingly being disseminated throughout the world, according to the report, prepared by the WJC's London-based research office, the Institute of Jewish Affairs.

WJC officials were expected to present the report in a speech to conference delegates Thursday.

"Anti-Semitism World Report 1993," a country-by-country survey, found a "marked worsening of the anti-Semitic climate" which has been recorded since the beginning of the 1990s, when "anti-Semitism reached a post-Second World War high point."

The U.N. conference, which formally opened Monday and is being attended by over 160 state delegations from around the world, has brought attention to a number of issues.

Western countries in particular have sought to make clear that human rights standards are universal and not subject to cultural contexts, as some countries, notably from Asia and the Middle East, have argued.

### Christopher Cites Anti-Semitism In Speech

Jewish leaders said they welcomed an address at the conference by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher in which he specifically mentioned anti-Semitism among those human rights abuses not to be tolerated in any setting.

"Torture, rape, racism, anti-Semitism, arbitrary detention, ethnic cleansing and politically motivated disappearances -- none of these is tolerated by any faith, creed or culture that respects humanity," Christopher said in his speech Monday.

Christopher also named Natan Sharansky, the famed ex-Soviet Jewish dissident, as a human rights "hero."

In New York, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, representing 50 national groups, called on participants in the human rights conference to "address the real and pressing human rights issues confronting the world, including increasingly deadly ethnic conflicts, growing racism and anti-Semitism."

In a statement issued Tuesday, Lester Polack, chairman, and Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the conference, warned against "allowing the Vienna meeting to be hijacked for partisan political purposes."

"Too often in the past, gatherings convened on the subject of human rights violations have turned into Israel-bashing sessions," they said.

The anti-Semitism report submitted in Vienna spoke of the continued political use of anti-Semitism, particularly in Eastern Europe.

"Anti-Semitism is the common currency of politics in a number of Eastern European countries."

"In Hungary, Romania, Russia and Poland members of mainstream parties and some of those

parties themselves are anti-Semitic," the report said.

It also showed that residents of many Eastern European countries had a tendency to vastly overestimate the numbers of their Jewish population, which in most cases are tiny, having been decimated by the Nazis in the Holocaust.

In the United States, the survey presented something of a paradox: although anti-Semitic attitudes have decreased as measured by opinion polls, there has been an increase in anti-Semitic incidents.

The report gave as an explanation: "Among those relatively few who profess anti-Semitic attitudes, there has been in recent years a greater propensity to 'act out' their beliefs in various forms of expression."

## CANADA INVESTIGATING TIP INDICATING TOUVIER MAY BE HIDING IN QUEBEC

By Gil Kezwer

TORONTO, June 15 (JTA) -- Canada's Immigration Department is investigating a tip that Paul Touvier, the 78-year-old French Nazi collaborator who is scheduled to stand trial in France later this year for war crimes, may have fled from Paris to Quebec in late May.

Sol Littman, director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Canadian office, informed Immigration Minister Bernard Valcourt last week that the center's Paris office had received information that Touvier had left for Quebec.

Littman told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the information came from a French government source who was "well-informed and usually reliable."

Littman added, though, that "the information was not given to us as a certainty."

A French appeals court, overruling an earlier decision, decided earlier this month that Touvier, a police commander with the Vichy regime in Lyon, must stand trial for ordering the 1944 execution of seven Jewish hostages as a reprisal for the killing of a Vichy regime official.

However, Touvier was not placed under any travel restrictions and his lawyer denies he has left the country.

Jewish groups fear that Touvier may have gone into hiding, as he has in the past. In 1991, Touvier was discovered in a Catholic monastery in the south of France and became the first Frenchman to be charged with crimes against humanity.

Littman speculated that Touvier may be seeking refuge with friends of the late Count Jacques de Bernonville, who was Klaus Barbie's right-hand man.

Touvier also worked under Barbie, the German Gestapo chief in Lyon from 1942 until the city's liberation in 1944. Barbie was tried and convicted of war crimes in France in 1988.

De Bernonville slipped into Canada from the United States in 1946 dressed as a priest. He remained in Canada's French-speaking province of Quebec for five years, staying off deportation through the help of the Catholic Church, other powerful sectors of Quebec society and supporters in Ottawa's House of Commons.

In 1951, when it seemed de Bernonville was about to be extradited to France, Prime Minister Louis St. Laurent gave him warning and the Vichy collaborator escaped to Brazil.

Touvier eluded capture in his native France for 44 years by being sheltered in some 20 Catholic institutions, abbeys and monasteries.

## VISITING BLACKS SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE WITH ISRAELIS

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, June 15 (JTA) -- Black leaders visiting here from 12 American cities told Israelis last week that relations between Jewish and African Americans are historically close but complicated.

They also said their visit, sponsored by the Project Interchange program of the American Jewish Committee, had given them a "better set of tools" to take back to their communities, including a deeper understanding of the region, its players and some of the obstacles to peace-making.

The group spent most of the trip learning about the country through briefings, lectures and visits to various sites and programs.

The delegation of 13 included academicians, clergy, state legislators, a state Supreme Court judge, a physician and a banker.

But one evening was devoted to a reversal of roles in which they spoke to Israelis about the experience of being black in the United States today, about black-Jewish relations and about their impressions of Israel.

The event represented an effort by Michael Oren, director of the Jerusalem office of the AJCommittee, to "break the paradigm" of typical fact-finding missions by American groups.

It was an opportunity, he said, to enrich Israelis by giving them the benefit of the visitors' insight and experience.

### African American Community Not Monolithic

One visitor, Delores Kelley, a delegate from Baltimore to the Maryland General Assembly and a college English professor, stressed that the African American community is anything but monolithic.

Many African Americans, she said, "simply see Jews as more white people and (therefore) the oppressors," and there is tension and a feeling of "envy" of achievement and success that is proportionately greater than that of their community.

Others said some African Americans feel bitter and betrayed because after years of working closely in civil rights and other coalitions, they believe Jews have "abandoned" them in the process of assimilating.

But many, said Kelley, still feel a sense of commonality. Many share the Jewish vision of God, "the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob," and the "calling" to "repair the world, do justice and show mercy."

And many identify with the Jewish experience and history of suffering, persecution, exile and homeland, she said. "We also had wandering and are a diaspora people."

For this reason and because of the strong historic political coalitions between African Americans and Jews, segments of the African American community have been some of the staunchest supporters of U.S. aid to Israel, she said.

The Congressional Black Caucus is one example, she observed.

But for some, she noted, such support is difficult, given the paltry aid given to places like Black Africa, Haiti and the urban centers of America.

There also has been a trend during the intifada to identify with the Arabs in the territories, said Kelley, "based on the nightly news reports" from Israel that suggest "darker-colored

people are discriminated against (and) have no civil rights."

She said many African Americans who rely only on electronic media therefore retain a superficial "snapshot" impression of the situation here.

"Most of us on the trip knew of the complexity already, but this trip has reinforced it," she said.

"The trip has been an eye-opener," said Carl Dickerson, a Los Angeles businessman, who said he had learned more points of view than he had access to in the U.S. media.

"It has convinced me Israel has a lot at stake to see an immediate resolution of the problem," he said.

The African American community is concerned about the Middle East region and its peace process.

The community is informed about it as a result of "being bombarded by the news on a daily basis," said Earl Shinhoster of Decatur, Ga., who is Southeast regional director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People.

"But there is nothing like firsthand experience," he said.

"We are all visual people," said another member of the group, and television "can tell us what seems to be the truth.

"I can't say I'm going away optimistic," he continued, "but I can say what the Jewish people want is peace."

The group also discussed some of the gains made by African Americans in the past three decades in civil rights and economic and political achievement in the United States.

But they also said there is "a lot of making-up to do" for the setbacks during the Reagan-Bush years.

Shinhoster talked about the urgent need to combat poverty, crime, AIDS and other plagues ravaging the black community.

He said the biggest challenge is to preserve the community's threatened institutions, such as family and church, "that have brought us across and will carry us safely into the 21st century."

He said it is also critical for the community to transmit from one generation to the next its collective memory and experience of Africa, systematically "blotted out" during slavery.

### **COST OF LIVING INDEX SHOWS SURPRISINGLY SMALL INCREASE**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 15 (JTA) -- Israel's cost of living index rose by a low 0.3 percent during May, surprising economic experts who had foreseen an increase of about 1 percent.

The government's Central Bureau of Statistics released the figure Tuesday, pleasing Finance Minister Avraham Shohat, who has been forecasting an annual inflation rate of about 10 percent.

Since the beginning of the year, the cost of living has risen by 5.6 percent and at the present rate annual inflation would reach 13 to 14 percent. But the summer months usually produce low cost of living increases, so economists said Shohat's optimism may be justified.

During May, fruit and vegetable prices dropped by 6 percent, with smaller decreases for clothing and footwear.

Building and housing costs, though, rose during the month by 1 percent, partly due to shorter summer hours for construction workers.