

**HOUSE PASSES FOREIGN AID BILL,  
MAINTAINING PACKAGE TO ISRAEL**

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, June 17 (JTA) -- The U.S. House of Representatives this week passed a foreign aid authorization bill for fiscal year 1994 that would provide Israel with its annual installment of \$3 billion in U.S. aid.

In addition, the Foreign Assistance Authorization Act would substantially boost aid to the former Soviet Union to \$903 million, another goal supported by many in the Jewish community.

The House passed the authorization bill by a voice vote Wednesday and was expected to pass legislation appropriating the money late Thursday afternoon.

The bill calls for \$9.3 billion in foreign assistance programs for fiscal year 1994, a decrease of more than \$600 million from current levels.

Authorization bills provide the legal authority and set the policies for spending money, and appropriations bills allocate the funding.

Wednesday's action marked the first time the House passed a foreign aid authorization bill since 1985. In recent years, legislators were unable to agree on language for an authorization bill and only appropriation bills were passed.

The House was also scheduled to vote on a bill authorizing funding for State Department programs.

No date has yet been set for the Senate to vote on its foreign aid legislation. Fiscal year 1994 begins Oct. 1.

The Jewish community has been actively involved in lobbying and educating members of Congress about foreign aid issues, and this week Jewish officials participated in a variety of events stressing the importance of foreign aid not only to recipients but to Americans.

Because of domestic economic concerns, foreign aid has not been a popular issue here this year, and there were some concerns that the aid to Russia, in particular, would be watered down.

**Jewish Groups Promote Aid To Russia**

Jewish organizations, including the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, have been active in a coalition of approximately 60 groups pushing for passage of the Russian aid legislation.

The coalition, including groups ranging from trade to agriculture organizations, joined Congressional leaders at a press conference on Capitol Hill on Tuesday to urge passage of the foreign aid legislation.

A statement released by the NCSJ on Tuesday said that aid to Russia was crucial to provide the democratic reform and stability needed for minorities, including Jews, to lead secure lives in the former Soviet countries.

B'nai B'rith distributed a letter Tuesday to members of Congress urging support for the economic assistance plan for Russia.

On Wednesday, an amendment was defeated in the House that would have cut the Russian aid by \$700 million.

In addition, on Thursday afternoon, during consideration of the appropriations bill, the House defeated an amendment that would have cut

another \$1.6 billion in supplemental 1993 money to Russia.

One Jewish leader who has been actively pushing for the Russian aid package was pleased at the results Thursday afternoon.

Mark Levin, executive director of the NCSJ, said the votes demonstrated the House's determination "to send a strong message to Yeltsin and the pro-democrats that the United States is committed to seeing the establishment of a democratic process and a free market economy take hold in Russia and the other newly independent states."

Aid to Russia was also made contingent on Russia's refraining from selling destabilizing conventional weapons to Iran, a clause strongly supported by Jewish groups.

**Concern About Aid To Israel**

There had also been some concern among Jewish groups that aid to Israel would be under attack, because Israel is the largest recipient of American foreign assistance.

The Clinton administration has strongly supported continuing Israel's and Egypt's current aid levels, at least for fiscal year 1994.

Egypt, the second-largest recipient, will continue receiving \$2.1 billion in U.S. aid.

In the appropriations bill passed Wednesday, provisions were made for Israel to spend \$475 million of its military assistance aid within Israel itself instead of in the United States, thus providing a boost to the Israeli economy.

In addition, Israel would receive its money earlier than many other aid recipients.

Also, the U.S. government would be prohibited from selling arms to countries complying with terms of the Arab boycott of Israel, following a one-year period after the enactment of the legislation.

Jewish groups, including the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, had organized efforts to rally support for aid to Israel.

AIPAC organized a satellite conference Wednesday night linking citizens around the country with Jewish leaders, including AIPAC President Steve Grossman; AIPAC Executive Director Thomas Dine; Larry Rubin, executive vice chair of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council; and Rep. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.).

The National Jewish Coalition, a group promoting Jewish Republican political activity, co-sponsored a briefing Tuesday by former Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick for Republican House freshmen on the importance of foreign aid.

On the Senate side, Jewish groups were among those testifying at a foreign aid hearing Tuesday.

Dine of AIPAC told the Senate Appropriations subcommittee on foreign operations Tuesday that a continuation of Israel's \$3 billion annual level of assistance from the United States was important to the success of the Middle East peace talks between Israel and its Arab neighbors.

Jerome Segal, president of the Jewish Peace Lobby, in his testimony to the same subcommittee, said more attention needed to be paid to programs promoting peace between Israelis and Palestinians.

Many other witnesses testified, including representatives of Arab American groups.

# WEIZMAN CALLS FOR DIRECT CONTACT BETWEEN TOP ISRAELIS AND ARABS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, June 17 (JTA) -- President Ezer Weizman has called for direct personal contact between the top Israeli and Arab leadership to push the peace process forward.

Speaking at a convention this week of the left-wing Mapam party, one of three factions making up the Meretz bloc, Weizman said he favored "mutual acquaintance -- quickly" between the leadership "of the two sides."

"Personal contact is vital," said Weizman, who befriended former Egyptian president Anwar Sadat when he served as Israel's defense minister during the Camp David peace negotiations.

"I am asked so often whether (Syrian President Hafez) Assad is like Sadat," Weizman said. "I have to say: I haven't met Assad. I haven't had the chance to explore his personality."

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin revealed last week that third-party efforts to arrange direct contacts between Syrian and Israeli leaders had been rebuffed by Damascus.

Weizman said he was deliberately not specifying which Arab leaders he intended to include in his call -- which was taken by some as a hint that he was referring as well to the Palestine Liberation Organization officials.

Rabin himself has rebuffed public calls from PLO Chairman Yasir Arafat to meet with him.

Weizman said he wanted to sound the note of "a realistic optimist, not a crazy optimist."

He said he firmly believed the peace process was marching inexorably forward.

At the same convention, Shulamit Aloni, Meretz leader and minister of communications, called explicitly for "direct negotiations between Israel and the PLO."

If it was acceptable for Israel's leaders to meet with the leaders of Arab states, she said, why was it not appropriate for them to meet with Arab leaders who were "fighting for that which we fought for and won -- independence."

## ISRAELIS DISMISS OUT OF HAND DEMANDS TO DISCUSS JERUSALEM

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 17 (JTA) -- Israeli leaders said here this week that Palestinian demands to discuss the status of Jerusalem in the Washington peace negotiations were "out of the question."

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres declared Thursday that Israeli sovereignty over a united Jerusalem was not subject to negotiation.

Efforts to come up with a joint Israeli-Palestinian declaration of principles for the peace talks were stymied in Washington this week, when Palestinians insisted on addressing the issue of Jerusalem in the statement.

Similar comments were made by Deputy Defense Minister Motta Gur.

"It is absolutely out of the question," said Gur in a radio interview.

Gur, who served as the commander of the Israeli army division which captured the Old City of Jerusalem during the 1967 Six-Day War, said that anyone raising the issue now would in effect cause the collapse of the peace negotiations.

"Jerusalem is sacred and very important to the Jewish people," he said, "although I realize that it is also important for other religions."

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, though, gave a more positive comment on the talks, playing down the "squeaks heard every now and then from that party or other in the negotiations."

Rabin said most of the parties to the talks have passed the point of no return in the negotiations.

Rabin also ridiculed the slogan of the hard-liners and Likud opposition that he had no popular mandate from the people to make territorial concessions.

Rabin said he doubted that Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu had a mandate to head the opposition, since Netanyahu did not lead the Likud in the last election campaign.

In reaction, Netanyahu retorted that Rabin was well aware of the fact that he did not receive a mandate from the electorate for a policy of withdrawal and that Rabin knew his Knesset majority relied on "Knesset members who support the Palestine Liberation Organization," referring to the Arab Knesset members.

Netanyahu, who is currently on a fund-raising visit in the United States, was quoted here by his spokesman.

Meanwhile, Likud figures such as Binyamin Begin and Eliahu Ben-Elissar said that the mention of Jerusalem in Washington at this round of talks was proof that the Likud was justified in criticizing the Labor-led government's handling of the negotiations with the Palestinians.

## DINITZ COMES UNDER RENEWED ATTACK ON EVE OF ANNUAL AGENCY MEETINGS

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, June 17 (JTA) -- Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the Jewish Agency and the World Zionist Organization, has come under renewed attack, as the two bodies are set to begin their annual meetings.

According to a report Thursday on army radio, some members of the Labor Party want Dinitz to resign or step down until a police inquiry into his charge-card activities is complete.

Dinitz is under investigation for the alleged misuse of a Jewish Agency credit card.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and other party leaders quickly denied the report, saying Dinitz enjoys the party's complete trust and support.

Rabin called on all factions within the party to stop what he said were unjustified attacks on Dinitz who, he noted, was democratically elected to represent the party as the head of the agency and the World Zionist Organization.

Nonetheless, in a radio interview following the news report, Labor Knesset member Haggai Merom said some in the party believe a successor should be readied in the event an indictment is brought.

He said the best candidate for the job is Labor Knesset member Avraham Burg, the popular head of the Knesset's Education Committee and a former adviser to then-Prime Minister Shimon Peres on Diaspora affairs.

Burg reportedly refused comment.

The suggestion of Dinitz's Agency demise undoubtedly was timed to precede the meeting of the Zionist General Council next week and the Jewish Agency Assembly the week after, when some believe the Jewish Agency Board of Governors will apply pressure on him.

Dinitz, meanwhile, refused comment on the matter.

# RIGHT-WING SETTLERS END PROTEST WITH MARCH TO EAST JERUSALEM

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 17 (JTA) -- Several thousand right-wing Jewish settlers and followers wrapped up a five-day protest Thursday against the government's peace policies by marching into the Arab areas of eastern Jerusalem in a show of their resolve not to support any territorial compromise.

A heavy police presence surrounded the estimated 3,000 marchers, as they left the Rose Garden, near the Knesset and opposite the Prime Minister's Office, where they have staged a sit-in strike since the beginning of the week.

The protesters angered police as they blocked traffic opposite the Prime Minister's Office before beginning their march.

A day earlier, the demonstrators had clashed with police during a rowdy protest against a statement made in the Knesset by Avraham Shohat, minister of finance.

Shohat said he would not encourage major investment in the Golan Heights at this time, leading the settlers to infer that the government was all but abandoning the Heights and planned to return them to Syria in a land-for-peace deal.

Shohat, responding to a question from hawkish Labor Knesset member Eli Goldschmidt, said his comment in the Golan was his only his "personal view."

Shohat said potential investors had considered plowing "hundreds of millions of shekels" into projects on the Golan, but he, "being honest and straightforward," had not felt able to encourage them to do so.

Thursday's march drew fewer demonstrators than hoped for by those on the political right.

Earlier in the day, scores of protesters came to the Mahane Yehuda open-air produce market--a traditional hard-line stronghold -- and tried to convince vendors and shoppers to join in the march.

However, reactions were mixed, with many saying the protest was worthless, since deals with the Arabs would be struck regardless of public reaction.

The central message of the weeklong demonstration has been that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin lacks the authority or popular mandate from the people to give up land under Israeli control to the Arabs.

"Rabin, you have no mandate," has become the mantra of the hard-line opposition.

Nissim Zvilli, Labor Party secretary-general, said Thursday that the government would not neglect "the streets and leave it to the Right."

Speaking at the Labor Party Central Committee, Zvilli said that the party would organize public events to promote the cause of peace.

"We pray that there will not be an anti-democratic outburst against democratic decisions," Zvilli said.

# COURT DISMISSES SUIT BY LE PEN FOR CALLING HIM 'HITLER'S SON'

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, June 17 (JTA) -- A French court has dismissed a slander suit brought by right-wing leader Jean-Marie Le Pen against Paul-Elie Levy, who called Le Pen "a spiritual son of Hitler, Mussolini and Petain."

Levy made the remark about the extremist

anti-foreigner political leader during a January 1992 demonstration in the eastern city of Nancy to protest Le Pen's presence there during a campaign for local elections.

Levy, a spokesman for CAFAR, an umbrella organization of more than 50 anti-racist and anti-fascist groups, was addressing a crowd of some 8,000 anti-Le Pen demonstrators.

Le Pen subsequently sued Levy for slander and asked for 100,000 francs (roughly \$20,000) in damages.

In a rather unusual decision, the court of Nancy stated that Levy had indeed slandered Le Pen, but that he had done so in good faith and thus did not deserve to be convicted of a crime.

Moreover, the court ordered Le Pen to pay for the trial's expenses, amounting to about \$1,000.

The court said that Levy's remark was made at a particular time and in such an atmosphere that "it is understandable that in order to convince his listeners, the speaker (Levy) thought he could resort to extreme language to denounce the language and political ideas of the plaintiff (Le Pen)."

The court noted that Levy did not intend to equate Le Pen with Hitler, but "to establish the existence of a spiritual link between the ideologies of (Hitler, Mussolini and Petain) and the political ideas of Le Pen."

"One must admit that apart from the violence of the language, Le Pen keeps with the ideas applied in their time (by Hitler, Mussolini and Petain) by dubious and uncertain intellectual links," the court concluded.

"This ambiguity is ascertained by the plaintiff's proven complicity toward the so-called revisionist thesis negating the criminal reality of the Nazi extermination camps, the anti-Semitic aspiration of many of his collaborators, of his diatribes and harangues" and "his relations with various individuals and groups cultivating in France or abroad an unhealthy nostalgia of the years 1933 to 1945, while their stigma remain indelible."

The court said Levy's declarations were outrageous but no more than Le Pen's in some circumstances.

Le Pen said he was "impatient to read the details of this fantastic decision, according to which the one who is insulted has to pay damages to the one insulting him."

Le Pen said he would appeal the court's decision.

# KOLLEK BOYCOTTS BRITISH RECEPTION

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 17 (JTA) -- Mayor Teddy Kollek has rejected an invitation to attend a reception here by the British Consulate to mark Queen Elizabeth's birthday because the British hold two separate receptions, one for Jews and one for Arabs.

Kollek charged that the arrangements by the British consul general smacked of "apartheid."

The British follow the practice of many other diplomatic missions in the capital, such as the French and Italians, who hold separate national festivities to avoid diplomatic embarrassments that could result in both Israelis and Palestinians attending the same party.

The American consul general, on the other hand, traditionally invites both Palestinians and Jews to the July 4 Independence Day celebration.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:****AMERICAN JEWS SEE SOME POLES CARE DURING TOUR OF POLISH JEWISH SITES**

By Ruth E. Gruber

KRAKOW, Poland (JTA) -- American Jews on an intensive study tour of Jewish historical sites in Poland this month called the weeklong trip "an eye-opener" that will influence some of them in their own Jewish-oriented activities back home.

The group visited synagogues, cemeteries and Jewish quarters in Warsaw, Krakow, Lublin, Zamosc and Tarnow, as well as in scattered former shtetls such as Szydlow, Pinczow and Gora Kalwaria, known to Jews as Gur, the seat of the Gerer Hasidic dynasty.

"The trip was an eye-opener on so many levels," said Roberta Brandes Gratz, a writer on urban affairs who is associated with the Eldridge St. Synagogue museum and project on the Lower East Side of New York.

"I leave with more questions, challenges and thoughts than I came with," Gratz said.

"We face some of the same preservation dilemmas at home -- how to treat (Jewish) history as well as preserve buildings," she said. "Preservation is a very recent issue with American Jewish communities."

The trip, organized by the Jewish Heritage Council of the New York-based World Monuments Fund, took 16 American Jews, mainly from Chicago, Memphis, Washington and the New York area, on an in-depth visit to a full range of Jewish sites in the areas of Poland most deeply associated with Jewish history.

**Group Led By Architectural Historians**

The group was led by two architectural historians, including New York University Professor Carol Herselle Krinsky, author of the book "Synagogues of Europe," and was treated to lectures by local Jewish leaders, scholars, politicians, historians, urban planners and preservationists.

The aim was to examine the ways in which Jewish culture is remembered and preserved in Poland half a century after the Holocaust, and the itinerary included sites that showed the best and worst examples of how these places are cared for today, when no Jews live in most of those towns.

Marcie Cohen, project director of the Jackson, Miss.-based Museum of the Southern Jewish Experience, said she had found "many parallels" with her own work in documenting Jewish life and history in the deep South of the United States.

"I had real similar feelings in finding communities here," she said.

The group found that historic synagogues in Tykocin, Krakow, Lancut and Leczna have been beautifully restored as Jewish museums, and the ruins of the synagogue in Tarnow, destroyed by the Nazis, are preserved as a striking memorial to the town's 45,000 victims of the Holocaust.

But the synagogues in Szydlow and Chmielnik were abandoned and partially ruined; the synagogue in Gur is a warehouse and the one in Kazimierz Dolny is a cinema.

Only in Krakow and Warsaw, among the cities visited, are there synagogues still used as houses of prayer.

Group members said they were surprised to learn the extent of involvement by local Polish authorities and individual Polish Catholics in

research on Jewish issues and the restoration and maintenance of Jewish sites.

They were also surprised to see so many traces of Jewish life still remain.

"It's fascinating how much of Polish Jewish culture is left," said Gratz. "There are traces everywhere." She said that in Tarnow, the town built a protective wall around the Jewish cemetery, and non-Jews have taken it upon themselves to conserve Jewish heritage.

"I was also fascinated by the Polish interest in Jewish culture," she said. "In every restaurant you go into, the musicians play music from 'Fiddler on the Roof.'"

In one restaurant where the group ate, she said, a group of Poles from another table got up and started dancing a sort of hora when the restaurant musician struck up such music.

Cohen of Jackson, Miss., explained that one of her particular interests in making the trip was to compare what remained of Jewish presence, in a country whose Jews were wiped out in the catastrophe of the Holocaust, with the deep South of the United States, where many once-flourishing Jewish communities were dying out through gradual population movements.

"In the U.S., I find there's more evidence. Here, in Poland, what's amazing is the absence of memory," Cohen said. "Such a complete job was done of annihilating a people that little evidence is left. My job in the South is to document the places there so that even in towns where there are no Jews, the memory will still be there," she said.

"When I came here, I saw how easy it is; that people are gone, and when they are gone, they're gone," she said.

This, she said, gave her a greater sense of urgency in her own work in the South.

"Here in Poland, I wanted to see the roots, to see the other end of what was played out in the States," she said. "It has been really helpful for me to see where they came from."

**Visitors Meet With Polish Jews**

In Warsaw and Krakow, the group met members of the small Jewish communities who still live in these cities and learned about their attempts to maintain a Jewish life.

There are only about 10,000 Jews today in Poland -- compared with nearly 3.5 million before the Holocaust.

"This, too, was an important tie with the South," Cohen said, "that you can live Jewish in places where people think no Jews live."

"People have lived Jewish and eked out Jewish lives in all sorts of places; it's a strong feeling," said Cohen.

The American Jews on the trip participated directly in a restoration project of the World Monuments Fund's Jewish Heritage Council, which is aimed at preserving an important Polish Jewish landmark in a way that will also serve surviving Polish Jews.

Each participant donated, as part of the tour's cost, a contribution toward the restoration of Krakow's historic Tempel Synagogue, the only intact 19th-century synagogue left standing in Poland.

The once-splendid house of worship, still owned by the Jewish community, is shabby and needs important structural work. But it is still used occasionally for services, and the group was able to pray there on Shabbat.