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**PEACE TALKS ARE PLODDING ALONG,  
BUT PROGRESS STILL SEEN POSSIBLE**  
By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, June 21 (JTA) -- Although the 10th round of Middle East peace talks has gotten off to a slow start, there is still hope of achieving progress.

"Nobody's closing the door on this round," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

He said that in previous rounds, there has been a lot of posturing in the first week of talks and discussions of substance thereafter.

The chances of success have been boosted by the Clinton administration's apparent decision to invest more heavily in the bilateral talks Israel has been conducting separately with Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians.

President Clinton's statement last Friday that he intends to take a more "direct role" in the talks is being seen as the type of stepped-up American involvement that could give the slow-paced talks a real push forward.

But observers say that until progress is made in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, the other "tracks" have little chance of moving forward.

With American help, the Israelis and Palestinians spent the first week of this round trying to reach agreement on a joint statement of principles. But that effort was hampered by disagreements over the issue of Jerusalem, a subject on which the two sides are far apart.

"The question of Jerusalem is emerging as a new roadblock issue," said Mark Rosenblum, political director of Americans for Peace Now.

While Jerusalem was supposed to be a subject discussed only at a later phase of negotiations, it has reared its head during this 10th round, because of Palestinian concerns.

**A 'Prescription For Stalling'**

The Palestinians fear that the current Israeli closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip will create "facts on the ground" that will permanently separate those territories from eastern Jerusalem, where much of the Palestinian leadership resides.

The Israelis, on the other hand, maintain that the issue of Jerusalem concerns the final status of disputed territory, which is supposed to be dealt with only after an interim autonomy arrangement has been implemented in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The Palestinians' insistence on discussing issues such as Jerusalem that "belong in the second phase" is a "prescription for stalling the talks," an Israeli official said.

American officials are trying to come up with a formula that will remove the Jerusalem issue from the table for the time being.

Meanwhile, the Israelis and Palestinians met in working groups last week dealing with autonomy, land and water issues, and human rights.

They made some progress on their discussions of the nature of the interlocking language between the various phases of their negotiations, observers said.

On the Syrian track, considered one of the

two most important, Israeli and Syrian negotiators continued to be bogged down over definitions of terms.

The Syrians have said they will offer "full peace" for "full withdrawal," but the Israelis are waiting for the Syrians to define what they mean by "full peace."

In addition, the two sides spent some time in the first week of the round discussing security issues.

Israeli Ambassador to Washington Itamar Rabinovich, who also serves as the head of the Israeli team negotiating with the Syrians, linked progress on this track to improvements in the U.S.-Syrian relationship.

"Before that is settled, I doubt if there will be much progress in our negotiations," he told a gathering of the American Jewish Press Association last week.

In fact, the American role is considered by most observers to be crucial.

They note that historically there have been no significant Middle East breakthroughs without correspondingly significant American investments of time and political capital. But this administration, they say, has yet to put itself on the line over this issue.

Because the Middle East is so volatile and changeable, they say, any progress must be achieved at a faster pace than that at which the talks are currently proceeding.

**Clinton Appointments Hailed**

Rabinovich said last week that if the talks do not yield some progress soon, it may be necessary to "start contemplating some fresh approaches" to the peace process, such as unilateral Israeli action.

But he said that at this point, it is "premature to discuss any changes" in the rules governing the talks.

The Clinton administration, for its part, seems to be pushing for something to happen this calendar year.

President Clinton and visiting Jordanian King Hussein both said last Friday that they were committed to achieving progress in 1993.

And the Egyptian ambassador to Washington, Ahmed Maher El Sayed, told the Jewish press association last week that he expects some form of agreement on most of the negotiating tracks before the end of the year.

The Clinton administration has signaled its seriousness about the process by naming Dennis Ross, a veteran member of the U.S. team dealing with the talks, to a newly created State Department post for coordinating the negotiations. Ross had been scheduled to return to academia in the near future.

And Clinton's nominee to serve as ambassador to Israel, Edward Djerejian, will stay on for a few months in his current position as assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, so that he can continue playing a key role in the peace talks.

"We are very pleased with the two nominations," an Israeli official said. "We see in them the implementation of the commitment of the administration to be a full partner in the peace talks."

## ORTHODOX RABBIS ADOPT RESOLUTION MAKING PRENUPTIAL PACTS MANDATORY

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, June 21 (JTA) -- After a decade of debate and negotiation, a leading group of Orthodox rabbis has approved steps designed to resolve the problem of people trapped in marriages because their spouses refuse to grant them a divorce.

Because under Jewish law it is the man who must issue the religious divorce, the trapped partner is nearly always the woman.

The Rabbinical Council of America, an organization of 1,000 Orthodox rabbis, unanimously approved a resolution requiring the use of prenuptial agreements in all marriage ceremonies. The resolution also called for synagogues to ostracize recalcitrant spouses.

The measure was welcomed by activists who work on behalf of agunot, women unable to obtain a Jewish divorce, or get, from their husbands. Still, they said, there is more work to be done before the problem is fully rectified by the rabbis.

Prenuptial agreements between Torah-observant spouses become useful as a motivating tool if the couple becomes estranged and the husband refuses to give his wife a Jewish divorce.

According to Rivka Haut, a founder and director of Agunah Inc., a Brooklyn-based organization which aids women unable to get divorces, there are hundreds, perhaps more than a thousand agunot in the United States.

In Israel, the number of agunot is estimated to be between 5,000 and 16,000.

Precise numbers are impossible to ascertain because the majority of rabbinical courts, or batei din, do not keep computerized records, and none will open their files to groups such as Agunah.

The steps taken by the RCA at its annual convention last week come after several years of fitful stops and starts, when prenuptial agreements deemed acceptable were distributed to RCA members and then quickly recalled after resistance was mounted from within the organization.

The RCA has so far approved one version of the agreement, developed by Rabbi Mordechai Willig. The RCA's religious court will approve agreements as they are submitted, and then those accepted will be distributed to the organization's member rabbis.

Willig's version makes the husband pay a weekly sum to his estranged wife so long as they are separated but not yet divorced according to Jewish law.

### Ensures Financial Support

The document has two parts. The first is designed to be an extension of the ketubah, or marriage contract. The engaged man and woman agree to a sum of money that the husband will pay for her support in the event that they separate and until they divorce.

The critical term in the agreement is "support" -- "in the manner of Jewish husbands who feed and support their wives loyally." This term was used rather than calling it a monetary fine, because the latter could call into question the validity of the husband's motivation for granting the divorce.

According to Jewish law, if rabbis later determined that the husband was under duress to grant a divorce, the get could be invalidated.

The payments agreed to by the engaged

couple are tied to the consumer price index. That way, even if they are married 20 years when they split up, for example, the \$100 per day agreed to two decades before would be worth the same amount.

The husband-to-be also waives his halachic right to his wife's earnings during the time they are separated.

However, the agreement is nullified if the wife refuses to appear before a beit din or to abide by its ruling.

The second part of the prenuptial agreement is an agreement by the spouses-to-be to adhere to the arbitration of a beit din.

The convention's resolution also calls for every RCA-led synagogue to impose sanctions on spouses who ignore the mandate of a beit din to appear before it in a divorce proceeding.

The sanctioned individual cannot be a synagogue member or be an official or employee of the shul. He cannot be called to the Torah, and will have his or her name announced monthly after Shabbat services, and published in the synagogue bulletin with a notice requesting members to limit their social and economic interaction with the ostracized individual.

The resolutions were finally passed by the RCA members, according to Rabbi Kenneth Brandner, chairman of the convention's resolutions committee, because "we realize the profound pain that agunot are subjected to and we are committed to finding solutions to this issue through creative structures which do not compromise the primacy of Jewish law."

## HOUSE PASSES BILL APPROPRIATING FOREIGN AID FOR ISRAEL AND RUSSIA

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, June 21 (JTA) -- The House of Representatives has passed a foreign aid appropriations bill for fiscal year 1994 that provides Israel with its annual installment of \$3 billion in U.S. aid.

The bill, adopted by a vote of 309-111 late last Thursday, also provides a combined total of \$2.5 billion in aid to Russia, another issue supported by much of the Jewish community.

The Russian aid represents a combination of supplemental funding for 1993 and regular funding for the 1994 fiscal year, which begins Oct. 1.

Foreign aid appropriated by the House for fiscal year 1994 totals nearly \$13 billion. The bill now goes to the Senate.

The appropriations vote followed by one day the adoption by the House of a foreign aid authorization bill. Authorization bills provide the legal authority and set the policies for spending money, while appropriations bills actually allocate the funding.

The House was scheduled to vote this week on another related bill, authorizing spending for the State Department.

## ISRAEL RETALIATES AGAINST HEZBOLLAH

TEL AVIV, June 21 (JTA) -- Israeli helicopter gunships raided Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon on Sunday night, after 20 Katyusha rockets were fired into Galilee during the afternoon.

Anti-aircraft fire was directed at the Israeli aircraft, but none was hit and all returned safely to base, according to the Israel Defense Force.

It was the fifth Israeli air force raid on terrorist targets in Lebanon so far this year.

## DELEGATES TO HUMAN RIGHTS PARLEY MAKE A PILGRIMAGE TO MAUTHAUSEN

By Marta S. Halpert

VIENNA, June 21 (JTA) -- Delegates from several human rights groups attending the U.N. World Conference on Human Rights here made a solemn pilgrimage to the Mauthausen concentration camp this week, in a trip arranged by B'nai B'rith International.

The delegates were escorted through Mauthausen, the most notorious death camp in Austria, by Peter Fischer, counselor at the Interior Ministry and director of the site since 1985.

Fischer said the Nazis sent Jews, Gypsies, homosexuals, political prisoners and prisoners of war from all over Europe to Mauthausen.

Harris Schoenberg, B'nai Brith's director of U.N. affairs, led a memorial service at a Jewish monument near a ravine where Jewish inmates were forced by Nazi SS guards to push one another off a cliff at a stone quarry at the edge of the camp.

"We came to this memorial to renew our vow that we will never give up the battle against bigotry, never be silent in the face of fanaticism," Schoenberg said.

Jewish officials said they thought the Monday visit to the camp by human rights activists was particularly relevant at this time, when the world was witnessing ethnic cleansing and other human rights atrocities in the former republics of Yugoslavia.

In Vienna, the U.N. human rights conference entered its second week, but there was criticism by some people and organizations that the conference would do little to halt human rights violations and that it was having little impact.

### Sharansky Laments World Apathy

Already last week, Nathan Sharansky, the former Soviet prisoner of Zion, lamented the world's apathy to human rights violations and the apparent lack of interest generated by the conference in the world media.

"I am almost depressed watching this conference on human rights," said Sharansky.

Sharansky, a guest of the World Jewish Congress, was referring to the fact that last week in a session of the U.N. conference, only two dozen delegates were listening to the speakers, while representatives of the non-government organizations were relegated to the cellar of the huge building, where they tried desperately to make their issues known.

"It is alarming how little impact a conference on human rights, which some 5,000 people attend and which took 25 years to materialize, has today, on the media and on the general public, even though the world is now in the process of creating a new order," Sharansky said.

In a four-hour seminar sponsored by the WJC, Sharansky reminded the audience that his fight was successful only because the free Western world linked economic aid to progress on human rights.

"Please, do it again for all those struggling for freedom and democracy," he said.

In an emotional appeal, Sharansky, who was in Soviet prison for nine years, exclaimed: "Do interfere in the republics of the former Soviet Union and anywhere else in cases of human rights violations -- because it helps us, it helps those afflicted and tortured."

## NAZI COLLABORATOR LEAVES U.S. AS HIS CITIZENSHIP IS REVOKED

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, June 21 (JTA) -- A Tennessee man whose U.S. citizenship was revoked for lying about his wartime past has left the country after agreeing not to contest Justice Department charges against him.

Jozsef Szendi, an admitted Hungarian Nazi collaborator, had his citizenship revoked last Friday in U.S. District Court in Cookeville, Tenn. Szendi left the United States sometime last week, before Friday's hearing.

Szendi admitted that he was subject to denaturalization in a settlement agreement with the Justice Department. He admitted serving in a special detachment of the Royal Hungarian Gendarmerie alongside the National Organization of Accountability, both pro-Nazi groups.

Justice Department officials could not comment on Szendi's destination.

There was no request for his extradition, but there is a warrant for his arrest in Hungary, said a Justice Department source.

The source said the Hungarian warrant relates to a book Szendi wrote, published in Budapest in 1991, in which he described his wartime activities with the Royal Hungarian Gendarmerie, a paramilitary organization which imprisoned and deported Jews; and the National Organization of Accountability, the security and intelligence operation of the Nazi-allied Arrow Cross.

The Justice Department alleged that the National Organization of Accountability was responsible for the assault, torture and killing of public officials, diplomats, political figures and unarmed Jewish civilians.

### Helped Deport Jews To Auschwitz

Szendi, 78, a retired janitor who lived in Cookeville, Tenn., is a native of Hungary. He failed to mention his wartime activities when he applied to immigrate to the United States in 1956 and when he sought U.S. citizenship in 1964.

The Justice Department, together with the U.S. Attorney's Office in Nashville, Tenn., filed a complaint on Sept. 9, 1992 to revoke Szendi's U.S. citizenship for lying about his wartime activities.

The complaint charged that Szendi voluntarily joined the Gendarmerie and National Organization of Accountability and personally transported Jews being deported from Hungary to Galicia -- then Poland and now Ukraine -- in 1941.

He went along on the convoy, guarding the Jews, he confessed to the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigation.

The Gendarmerie deported some 16,000 to 18,000 Hungarian Jews to Galicia, where the Nazi SS shot them to death.

The complaint also alleged that in 1944, as part of his activity in the Gendarmerie, Szendi participated in confining Hungarian Jews to ghettos and deporting them to the Auschwitz death camp in Nazi-occupied Poland, where most of them were murdered in the gas chambers.

Szendi was arrested after the war in Romania as a suspected war criminal. But he got away and returned to Hungary, where he served under two years in prison before making his way to the United States.

Szendi is the 45th person stripped of U.S. citizenship because of wartime activities and the 37th removed from this country.

## SURVEY FINDS JEWS LESS PREJUDICED TOWARD BLACKS THAN MOST AMERICANS

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) -- Jews are less likely than other non-black Americans to hold anti-black views, according to a poll commissioned by the Anti-Defamation League.

In contrast to whites, Asians and Latinos, Jews reject virtually all of the traditional negative stereotypes associated with blacks, the survey found.

By the survey's calculations, 29 percent of non-black Americans fall into the category of being "most prejudiced" against blacks.

Twenty-six percent fall into the middle category, and 45 percent merit inclusion in the "least prejudiced" category.

Jews, by comparison, are relatively free from prejudice.

Seventeen percent of Jews are among the "most prejudiced" Americans, a similar 23 percent are in the mid-level category, and a majority -- 60 percent -- are among the least prejudiced Americans.

The telephone poll of 1,600 Americans was conducted over several evenings in October and November 1992, by the Boston-based surveying firm of Marttila & Kiley.

The margin of error is plus or minus four percentage points.

The study was commissioned by ADL to be a companion to the national poll on public attitudes toward American Jews that it conducted in May 1992.

Both surveys revealed a high correlation between negative attitudes toward specific minority groups, such as blacks and Jews, and a general intolerance of all racial, ethnic, cultural and social diversity.

And, as the anti-Semitism poll revealed, those Americans who hold the most negative attitudes toward Jews are also among the most likely to harbor negative feelings toward blacks, immigrants, illegal aliens, homosexuals and women.

According to the new survey, Jews are also more likely than the public at large to be sensitive to discrimination against blacks.

For example, 63 percent of Jews surveyed reject the notion that blacks receive the same pay as whites for the same work, while just 40 percent of non-black Americans rejected the idea.

### Education Is 'The Only Antidote'

Another illustration is the finding that while a majority of non-black Americans -- 58 percent -- say that the judicial system generally treats blacks as fairly as whites of the same income and educational level, just 36 percent of Jews agreed.

More than half of all Jews -- 53 percent -- believe that a black person is more likely to receive the death penalty than a white would for committing the same crime. Just one-third of respondents from the non-black population -- 34 percent -- believes this to be true.

Jews are also more likely than non-black Americans to believe that a lack of good schools for black Americans limits their opportunities in the long run.

More than three out of four Jews -- 77 percent, compared with 59 percent of non-blacks -- say that public schools in predominantly black areas are inferior to schools in mainly white areas.

Of those Jews, 71 percent believe that this

seriously limits blacks' future opportunities. Only half of non-black respondents agreed.

The survey found that for the first time in four decades, young non-black adults are more prejudiced than their older counterparts.

The most prejudiced views are held by non-black Americans under age 30 and over age 50. The least prejudiced Americans are 30-49, the survey found.

Younger people may be more bigoted because "they lack some of the experiences that the baby boomers have had, they don't have the memory and consciousness" of the struggles endured during the heyday of the civil rights era, said Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League.

"The older generation assumes that the experiences and feelings they have would pass through the genes. But they don't, and we have to make up for it through teaching about it," said Foxman.

Education was found to be the most important factor in determining views on race. There was a high correlation between a lack of education and prejudice.

"Education continues to be the only antidote (to bigotry) we have," said Foxman.

## ISRAEL COURT POSTPONES A DECISION ON MANNING EXTRADITION CONDITIONS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 21 (JTA) -- Israel's High Court of Justice decided Sunday to postpone a decision on whether Robert Manning's extradition to the United States should be made conditional on an American guarantee that his religious needs will be met if he is sent to prison there.

Manning is due to be extradited to the United States to stand trial in connection with the 1980 murder of a California secretary, killed in the explosion of a booby-trapped parcel mailed to her employer.

The Israeli courts are still weighing an American request to extradite his wife, Rochelle, for the same crime.

It is not known yet when the court will issue its final decision on whether to condition Manning's extradition on American assurances.

Manning's lawyer, Yoram Gonen, told the court that even "the minimum level" of Jewish observance -- such as the right to eat kosher, wear a yarmulka and tzitzit (ritual fringes) and put on tefillin -- is frequently impossible to maintain in U.S. jails.

But the state attorney's representative pointed out that the extradition treaty does not allow for conditions to be attached, and Israel has never tried to impose such conditions for any other observant Jews.

She also said that the U.S. Department of Corrections was worried about allowing such conditions to be attached because it might be the start of a "slippery slope" -- today a prisoner needs kosher food, tomorrow he will need "a certain tobacco."

Finally, she said, if Manning's needs are not met in the United States, he can appeal to the American courts for redress.

But Justice Aharon Barak, one of the three judges hearing the case, pointed out that since the U.S. Supreme Court had ruled that a Jew had no right to wear a yarmulka in the Army, it is not clear the American courts would uphold such a right in prison.