

**AJCONGRESS SETS STUDY OF INEQUITIES
BETWEEN JEWISH AND ARAB ISRAELI CITIZENS**
By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Jan. 13 (JTA) -- The American Jewish Congress is launching a comprehensive study of the inequities between Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel, said Henry Siegman, the executive director.

Jews in Israel and Jews abroad until now "have been totally obsessed, and rightly so, with Palestinians on the other side of the (green) line," Siegman said this week during a visit here.

"Consequently, little attention has been given to the situation of Arabs inside Israel. (But) the time has come to do a study looking at the future of Israeli Arabs," he said.

Siegman called the issue "in some ways more complicated" than that of the future of Arabs in the territories.

"Many of us had the sense that as difficult as it was, some day someone would draw the line" between Israel and the territories, and "the Arabs would be on the other side."

"But Israeli Arabs are part of this country," said Siegman.

They must find a way to define themselves as viable citizens, while Israel has to find a way to deal with the population in a manner consistent with its democratic principles, he said.

The beginning of the peace process can help spur the re-examination of the Jewish-Arab Israeli relationship, Siegman said. Jewish Israelis have been unable to "relate normally" to Arab Israelis while their children are on the front lines fighting, he said.

About a dozen Israeli academic and policy experts, including Arabs, convened under the aegis of AJCongress and were "anxious to see such a project take off and to be a part of it," Siegman said.

The new project will be similar in scope to the study of policy options for the West Bank and Gaza that was executed for the AJCongress by the Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies in 1989.

But Siegman stressed the new undertaking will be less concerned with what he called "general principles," than with "practical policy" recommendations to narrow the gaps between Israeli Arabs and Jews.

"There have been many studies on the subject in many areas and yet there has not been much progress," Siegman said.

"One of the questions that will be asked is, 'Why not? What are the bottlenecks and how can they be (broken)?'"

"We hope (the study) will produce the definitive blueprint," he said.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:
ON ISRAEL'S LEFT, GROUPS DEBATING
THEIR ROLE IN AN ERA NEARING PEACE**
By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- The Women in Black are having a recruitment problem.

Since the Palestinian autonomy plan was announced Sept. 13, the organization, which has held weekly protests against the Israeli administration of the territories for the past six years,

has considerably shrunk.

Before the accord it had some 5,000 supporters in 31 chapters. These days, there are five chapters, and the group's weekly demonstrations attract only half as many women as they once did.

The problem is the peace process.

Now that the Israelis and Palestinians are sitting at the negotiating table, many of the country's peace organizations are examining what role, if any, they should play in the future.

Peace activists note, with a sense of bittersweet irony, that peace could render them obsolete.

Anat Hoffman, a founding member of Women in Black, acknowledged that "peace has struck us a blow. A wonderful blow, but a blow nonetheless."

As peace approaches, fewer women think "the arena is on the street," she said.

"For six years we have demanded that the government make a serious attempt at peace, and we feel that it is doing that. There has been a serious attempt to end the occupation and to put Israel on the track to peace," she said.

Still, Hoffman asserted, "We may be on the road, but we're not there yet. The Israeli public isn't 100 percent sure about the accord. People are leery, frightened.

'A False Sense Of Security'

"Continuing the occupation is familiar, and familiarity feels secure. But the occupation is a false sense of security. Peace is frightening because it is unfamiliar," she said.

Immediately after the peace accord was signed, group members decided to stop demonstrating on a weekly basis. The decision lasted one week. Then the euphoria surrounding the handshake between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat died and reality crept in.

"We decided to reconvene, because we realized our work is far from over," explained Hoffman, "Attaining peace will be a long process, not only with the Palestinians but with the Arab countries. It's not time to go home just yet."

Gavri Bargil, director of Peace Now, agreed.

"The peace process is at a very critical stage right now, and we have a lot of work ahead of us. We have to keep the fires burning," Bargil said.

Founded in 1978, following Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's historic visit to Jerusalem, Peace Now is by far the country's largest and most vocal organization on the left.

According to Bargil, "The role of Peace Now hasn't really changed -- it's the same role we've had for 15 years: to mobilize public opinion in favor of the peace process and to pressure policy-makers to go forward in the direction of peace."

These days, there is an optimism in the Peace Now camp. New members are joining the ranks, and old-timers feel vindicated after years of struggle against previous Israeli right-wing tenets.

Despite advances at the negotiating table-- or perhaps because of it -- Peace Now has stepped up its activities in recent months, organizing mass

demonstrations in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. "Now is the time for us to support (the government) on the street, so that (it) won't have any second thoughts and move backward," Bargil said.

"Still," he conceded with a laugh, "I hope we'll be the first organization to close, the day the conflict ends."

Ad Kan (an expression meaning "this far and no further") is an organization established by about 30 professors Tel Aviv University at the start of the intifada. It has also scaled down its activities. Members used to meet twice a month for a lecture or demonstration. Now, the group's members are questioning whether Ad Kan should continue to exist.

"We are very much in a state of flux," said Israel Gershoni, who helped found the organization six years ago.

"We met a couple of weeks ago to discuss the group's future, and some members thought we should disband. They said, 'We don't need Ad Kan anymore, because the government is doing our job.'

'Will Have To Rethink Our Agenda'

"The rest agreed that we will have to rethink our agenda if peace advances," he said.

Gershoni speculated that "if the peace process is a great success, if the Israel withdrawal proceeds and autonomy is implemented, I don't see a future for Ad Kan.

"If that happens, the activists will focus their work into other channels. But if things get more difficult in the coming months -- for example, if there is a rise in terrorism -- then we will certainly continue," Gershoni said.

In the meantime, Ad Kan has scheduled a lecture by a Palestinian professor from Bir Zeit University.

"Whatever happens, we have to keep the dialogue going," Gershoni said.

Dialogue is the *raison d'être* of the Palestinian Center for Rapprochement Between Peoples. Established in the spring of 1988, the group sponsors dialogues between Israelis and Palestinians, and between Palestinians and visitors from abroad.

Some 80 Palestinians and Israelis (about an equal number of each) attend bimonthly sessions at the center, in the West Bank village of Beit Sahur.

According to Ghassan Andoni, who heads the organization's board of directors, "Our group is not severely affected by the political phenomenon that come and go in the region.

"Our main problem has been one of access: closure of the territories and the need for travel permits. The Palestinians cannot always get to Israeli areas. We have been left with the Israelis who dare to come to Beit Sahur," Andoni said.

Asked whether the center has been affected by recent peace developments, Andoni replied, "The peace process seems to be unpopular among the Palestinians.

The level of differences among individual Palestinians (within the group) is clearly higher than it was three months ago.

"It's harder now, but not impossible. Our group survived the (Persian) Gulf War and the deportations because our members have no political attachments or commitments.

"Until now, everyone has been invited to come and visit, regardless of his position, to enhance the level of understanding," he said. "That will not change in the future."

COMMERCE SECRETARY HEADS TO MIDEAST TO PROMOTE DEVELOPMENT IN TERRITORIES

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Jan. 13 (JTA) -- Secretary of Commerce Ron Brown is heading for the Middle East this week with a full agenda that includes promoting development in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and fostering increased high-tech cooperation between the United States and Israel.

While on the Israel leg of his journey, Brown is expected to participate in a ceremony launching the U.S.-Israel Science and Technology Commission, a venture expected to involve the two countries in new joint technology projects.

"I think it's going to mean a lot to both countries to encourage the sharing of technology, the commercialization of technology, joint ventures between American and Israeli companies," Brown told reporters Thursday.

During his stay in Israel, Brown is also planning to meet with members of the group "Builders for Peace," who also are making their first trip to the region as an organization this week.

Headed by former California Rep. Mel Levine and Arab American leader James Zogby, the group consists of Jewish and Arab American businesspeople interested in investment in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

"With the coming of peace, the expectations of the people are great," Brown said of the Palestinians in the territories.

"They expect a significant change in their lives. That change is only going to come if there is economic development and economic opportunity and job creation.

"So those matters are very important. That's why we're going to the territories," Brown said.

Brown said he would encourage exports from the territories to the United States.

The secretary also plans to visit Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt.

He said that while in Saudi Arabia, he would push for progress on the dismantling of the Arab economic boycott of Israel.

"We want to do everything we can to help in breaking the boycott," he said.

NEW ENVOY TO ISRAEL STRESSES BONDS OF WASHINGTON, JERUSALEM

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Jan. 13 (JTA) -- Promising that the United States will do all it can to facilitate negotiations between Israel and Syria, the new U.S. ambassador to Israel presented his credentials Thursday to Israeli President Ezer Weizman.

Edward Djerejian will be the first ambassador to have served in both Syria and Israel.

His close ties to Syria are seen as an indication that progress in the Israeli-Syrian relationship is high on the agenda of President Clinton.

Djerejian has emphasized the strength of U.S.-Israel ties, saying, "The relationship is on a very solid footing, and what I hope to do during my mandate here in Israel as the American ambassador is to further this relationship and enhance the high level dialogue we have."

Djerejian, 54, was former assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs in both the Carter and Bush administrations.

He was also ambassador to Syria from 1988 to 1991, and deputy chief of the U.S. Mission to Jordan from 1981 to 1984.

FOCUS ON ISSUES:**JEWS TAKING NEW APPROACHES TO CONNECT FAITH AND HEALING**

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Jan. 12 (JTA) -- Explorations of the relationship between psyche, spirit and physical healing have become increasingly popular in recent years, and now the Jewish community is developing its own approach to the mind-body connection.

In synagogues around the country, special "healing" services are being conducted regularly and bikur cholim committees, which arrange visits to sick Jews, are being established.

The trend is propelled by Jews' search for spirituality, and by the quest for community and meaning often launched when someone faces a crisis, such as serious illness.

And while many of the popular publications on the mind-body connection are being written by Jews, these generally draw on Eastern spiritual traditions and ignore what Judaism has to say.

Complicating the effort to establish a Jewish vocabulary for spiritual healing is that the terminology is often understood as it is used by Christian fundamentalists, to mean a laying on of hands, or to mean a new-age syncretism of Eastern religious traditions and crystals.

Promulgating the Jewish healing concept are two young groups and a large handful of rabbis who are making a concerted effort to ensure that Jews dealing with illness know that Judaism has a rich trove of resources to offer.

"It's about retrieving traditions," said Rabbi Nancy Flam, West Coast director of the Jewish Healing Center.

"A lot of Jews have turned toward other traditions in times of crisis because the language of help has been more accessible.

"But it didn't seem like a people who have had so much suffering as we have wouldn't have resources to help ourselves," she said.

The Jewish Healing Center is a 3-year-old San Francisco-based group that holds healing services and spiritual support groups, trains rabbis, chaplains and health care workers, has a hospice care program and produces educational material.

The organization also is preparing a conference, "Refaeinu 1994: A Practicum on Healing and the Rabbinate," which 150 rabbis are expected to attend.

Bridging A Gap

One of the center's founders is Rabbi Rachel Cowan. She looked to Jewish sources while her husband, Paul, was dying of leukemia.

She discovered that the sources in Jewish texts were helpful, but that their content, as well as their language, needed translation.

"I realized the need to bridge a gap between the individual in pain and tradition, to create a modern sensibility," she said.

A complementary approach to the subject is promoted by the Coordinating Council on Bikur Cholim of Greater New York, which focuses on the Jewish tradition of visiting the sick.

The 7-year-old organization trains synagogue groups in the New York area to serve Jews who are ill or disabled or are elderly and lonely.

It is a commitment at which very traditional Jewish communities excel but many other congregations often do not, said Rabbi Isaac Trainin, the organization's executive vice president.

There recently has been a resurgence of interest in the practice, and he estimates that nationally there are between 400 and 500 synagogue bikur cholim groups.

The council issues an annual resource guide listing such programs across the United States and in 16 other countries.

It conducts an annual conference on issues relevant to the tradition, and holds five mini-conferences a year for coordinators of synagogue bikur cholim societies, rabbis, Jewish communal workers and health care professionals.

Topics for these forums range from AIDS to caring for retarded Jews to legal issues related to health care to Jewish healing.

Yet Jewish healing, its advocates admits, suffers from an image problem.

"People still have an image of things they have seen on religious television," said Peter Knobel, rabbi of Beth Emet/The Free Synagogue, a Reform congregation in Evanston, Ill., and leader of a Jewish healing service there.

"We're trying to figure out a better way of talking about it, to find new terminology," he said.

Jewish healing experts also make a distinction between the notion of spiritual healing as it is understood in popular culture and its meaning within a Jewish paradigm.

Much of the popular literature on the connection between mind and body "helps people feel empowered to mobilize their emotions and mind to have some impact on their physical health, creating unrealistic expectations that this will happen," said Cowan.

In the Jewish tradition, "healing is not curing, but making one strong and mobilizing one's resources to live with as much presence as possible in the face of an illness," she said.

Services of healing conducted by the Jewish Healing Center and by synagogues around the country are generally separate from the congregation's main worship service.

A Quiet, Meditative Mood

Participants suffer from a variety of diseases and grief, including cancer, AIDS, infertility and chronic illness. Some have recently had serious surgery or lost a loved one.

At Beth Emet, the Thursday night service begins with the lighting of a pair of candles and a guided meditation on the theme of light using biblical or kabalistic imagery. The mood of the monthly service is quiet and meditative.

It is followed by another meeting to explore Jewish resources designed specifically for people with chronic illnesses.

At Boston's largest Reform congregation, Temple Israel, the monthly healing service attracts participants from the eight hospitals that are within two blocks of the synagogue, according to Rabbi Elaine Zecher.

The service is publicized by hospital chaplains and social workers. People come "looking for spiritual solace," said Zecher.

In addition to a biweekly healing service, San Francisco's Jewish Healing Center offers three spiritual support groups, led by a rabbi and a social worker or clinical psychologist, for Jews with specific illnesses.

There are groups for people with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, and one for women with breast cancer. A group for people with family members living in nursing homes will be started shortly, said Flam.

AS BONDS CHIEF, ROSENNE TOPS \$1 BILLION MARK FOR THIRD YEAR

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Jan. 13 (JTA) -- After raising more than \$1 billion for Israel for the third year in a row, it shouldn't be a surprise that representatives of foreign governments have asked Meir Rosenne for advice.

Rosenne, is who returning to Israel this month after five years as chief executive officer of State of Israel Bonds, said the president of the Ukraine wanted help in setting up an effort to raise capital from the Ukrainian diaspora.

Other approaches have come from Hungary and Poland, Rosenne said in an interview.

In 1993, Israel Bonds sold \$1.068 billion worth of bonds, half in the United States and another 10 percent in Canada. This compares with \$753 million in 1989, the first year Rosenne, a former ambassador to Washington, held the post.

In the past five years, Rosenne has kept the organization's expenses to \$41 million, in part by closing 15 offices in the United States and laying off more than 200 people around the world.

Rosenne attributed sales growth to the desire of world Jewry to help Israel finance the needs of the half-million Jews from the former Soviet Union who have already arrived in Israel, and the hundreds of thousands more who are expected to come.

Under his direction, Israel Bonds issued new notes that appealed to American investors because of their relatively high rates at a time when general interest rates were plunging to their lowest level in decades.

One consequence was that some in Jerusalem began to ask about the value of the bonds and their cost, particularly as American loan guarantees made available up to \$10 billion in low-cost capital.

Political Risks

Rosenne retorted that as helpful as the loan guarantees are, there is a political risk to them.

He noted that the United States has indicated that it will withhold more than \$437 million from the \$2 billion in guarantees scheduled for this year, to reflect Israeli spending in the administered territories.

Still, the Israeli Finance Ministry, which determines what bonds are available for the organization to sell, was not willing to pay too high a price to break 1992's record sales of \$1.167 billion. This year the bonds organization was asked to sell only \$1 billion worth.

Rosenne also noted that the 2,500 fundraising functions the bonds organization sponsors each year in 26 countries serve a purpose in their own right, bringing Jews together "to hear reports about what is going on in Israel."

This side of the bonds was highlighted in a recent Knesset debate, when it was discovered that Knesset Member Gideon Patt had not been seen in the country for six weeks. It turned out that he had been speaking first for the Jewish National Fund in Australia, and later for Israel Bonds.

"These trips by Knesset members are not vacation tours, not at all," said Rosenne.

Speakers for Israel Bonds receive airfare and hotel accommodations, but not fees. In the United States, he said, government officials and other prominent speakers can easily earn \$50,000 for one speech.

NORWAY'S FOREIGN MINISTER, HOLST, DIES; MADE ISRAELI-PLO TALKS IN OSLO POSSIBLE

By Mitchell Danow

NEW YORK, Jan. 13 (JTA) -- Norwegian Foreign Minister Johan Holst, 56, a chief architect of the secret negotiations in Oslo that led to the Israeli-Palestinian accord, died Thursday in a Norwegian hospital.

The statesman suffered a stroke Dec. 16. Doctors said he had been suffering from exhaustion and had probably died of a second stroke.

Holst was responsible for organizing at least 13 rounds of the back-channel talks between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization during which the longtime archenemies hammered out a mutual recognition pact and self-rule accord.

After the clandestine talks were concluded in the Norwegian capital, Holst confessed that he had hardly slept during the weeks the negotiations took place.

Because of his strenuous efforts in the peace process, Holst was nominated this week for the 1994 Nobel Peace Prize.

In Jerusalem, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres praised Holst as the man who made the accord possible.

A Dedicated Statesman

Peres said, "Minister Holst was a statesman with a true commitment and dedication to peace who relentlessly worked to promote the political process in the Middle East with wisdom, dignity and untiring devotion."

"The people of Israel share with the people of Norway the great sense of grief and bereavement over the loss of a man who symbolized for so many the banner of peace and hope. We will continue to work unceasingly to fulfill his legacy," he said.

"This is a big loss," said PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in a message from Tunis. "We lost with his early departure one of the sincerest friends of the Palestinian people."

PLO officials said they would name a main road and a square after Holst in the West Bank town of Jericho, which along with the Gaza Strip will attain Palestinian self-rule under terms of the accord he helped broker.

Holst's wife, Marianne Heiberg, a Middle East scholar, had also played a role in the secret negotiations. The two were often credited with providing a warm, easygoing atmosphere in which the Israeli and Palestinian teams could get to know one another personally before settling down to the more difficult task of working out an accord.

On Sept. 10, Holst personally delivered to Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin a letter from Arafat in which the PLO chairman said the PLO "recognizes the right of Israel to exist in peace and security."

On that day, Rabin signed in Holst's presence a second letter saying the Jewish state regarded the PLO as "the representative of the Palestinian people."

The two letters formed the basis of the mutual recognition accord.

Holst, a former Norwegian defense minister, became foreign minister last April.

He was reportedly criticized for getting overly involved in details and for preferring behind-the-scenes diplomacy. But it was precisely this that made him particularly suited for the task.