



JEWISH GROUPS LESS THAN SATISFIED WITH MOVE ON CROWN HEIGHTS INQUIRY

By Deborah Kalb and Steven Weiss

WASHINGTON, Jan. 25 (JTA) -- The Justice Department's decision to launch a federal investigation into aspects of the 1991 Crown Heights disturbances is being hailed by the Jewish community, but not without reservations.

While many Jewish leaders have long been pushing the Justice Department to pursue a federal investigation into civil rights violations committed during the Crown Heights riots, some expressed disappointment that the proposed investigation would not be broader in its scope.

Others criticized the Justice Department for not having made the move sooner.

It came Tuesday, when Attorney General Janet Reno wrote to Brooklyn District Attorney Charles Hynes, stating that the Justice Department was willing to empanel a federal grand jury to investigate the death of Yankel Rosenbaum.

Hynes held a news conference in New York on Tuesday afternoon to announce that he had accepted Reno's offer.

Rosenbaum, a Chasidic Jew, was killed in the three days of violence that rocked the Brooklyn neighborhood in August 1991.

"We are prepared to use a federal grand jury to continue the investigation into the killing of Yankel Rosenbaum," Reno wrote to Hynes, according to a copy of the letter obtained by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

"We would use the grand jury in the same manner we use all investigative grand juries: to find the truth and to determine if there is credible evidence to support a prosecution," she wrote.

Representatives of the New York Jewish community reacted with disappointment that the investigation would focus on only Rosenbaum and not the entire Crown Heights Jewish community.

Judah Gribetz, president of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, called Reno's decision "an important first step in the long overdue federal civil rights inquiry" into the Crown Heights riots.

Disappointed At 'Narrow Focus'

Gribetz's organization has corresponded for over a year with the Justice Department, urging a broad federal prosecution of the riots that would go beyond the Rosenbaum killing.

In a statement Tuesday, Gribetz noted that William Barr, who served as attorney general in the Bush administration, had mentioned the idea of a broader investigation in a Jan. 15, 1993 letter to Mary Jo White, the acting U.S. attorney for the Eastern District of New York.

David Zwiebel, general counsel for Agudath Israel, an organization that has been urging the Justice Department to embark on a broad investigation on federal civil disorder grounds, said he was "pleased there will be some meaningful federal investigation into the Rosenbaum murder."

But he added, "I continue to be disappointed by the narrow focus of the Justice Department."

"What's getting lost is the much larger focus on three days of uncontrolled riots," Zwiebel said.

Rabbi Joseph Spielman, chairman of the

Crown Heights Jewish Community Council, went further, calling Reno's letter "totally insufficient and totally disappointing."

"Reno is focusing only on Rosenbaum, not on the many others who were victimized for 80 hours," he said.

"While I wholeheartedly commend the Justice Department's decision, it is a job half done," Dov Hikind, a New York state assemblyman from Brooklyn, said in a statement.

"What about the civil rights of the entire Crown Heights Jewish community?" he asked.

'It's About Time'

Here in Washington, members of the New York congressional delegation had mixed reactions to the latest development in the long-running Crown Heights saga.

Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.) criticized the Justice Department for taking what he said was a long time to announce its decision to investigate.

"It's a tragedy that an outraged public had to struggle so long to get the Justice Department to do just the bare minimum in this case," the senator said in a statement.

But New York's other U.S. senator, Democrat Daniel Patrick Moynihan, argued that "although the Justice Department intends to limit the federal investigation simply to the murder of Yankel Rosenbaum, this is nevertheless a welcome step in the right direction."

Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) said he was "delighted to learn of Janet Reno's decision to empanel a grand jury in the case of Yankel Rosenbaum." But he added: "I only regret that it's taken over two years to get to this point."

"It's about time," echoed Rep. Nita Lowey (D-N.Y.). "After months of inaction, and at long last, the Justice Department is moving ahead to find the killers of Yankel Rosenbaum. This is good news for all of us who have been seeking justice in this case."

Rosenbaum was killed Aug. 19, 1991, in rioting that broke out after a 7-year-old black boy, Gavin Cato, was killed by a car driven by a Chasidic driver.

Rosenbaum, who had been visiting New York from Melbourne, Australia, to do research, was surrounded by a group of black teen-agers, some of whom were yelling, "Kill the Jew."

In her letter Tuesday, Reno told Hynes he had the option of proceeding with a state homicide investigation, but that if he preferred, the Justice Department would take over the investigation.

The Brooklyn district attorney decided to take Reno up on her offer of a federal investigation because he believed "a federal prosecution would represent the most effective prosecution," said Hynes's spokesperson.

"It's a major step forward," he said, that the "federal government has now decided to conduct a federal grand jury investigation."

Back in early September, Reno was expected to announce that she would not pursue a federal investigation of the riots, but she postponed her decision at the urging of Schumer and Hynes.

In late September, the U.S. Senate voted unanimously to urge the Justice Department to investigate the riots.

BLACK LEADERS DISTANCE THEMSELVES FROM ADDRESS BY AIDE TO FARRAKHAN

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Jan. 25 (JTA) -- The line between mainstream African American leaders and Louis Farrakhan grew sharper than ever this past week, as leaders of the black community denounced an anti-Semitic speech by an aide to the outspoken Nation of Islam leader.

The chorus of condemnation, including a strong statement by the Rev. Jesse Jackson, pleased Jewish groups. And it seems likely to heal wounds opened last September, when the head of the Congressional Black Caucus spoke of forming a new "covenant" with Farrakhan's group.

Members of the caucus had assured Jewish organizational leaders at the time that what was being discussed was only limited cooperation with the Black Muslim group. Now the head of the caucus, Rep. Kweisi Mfume (D-Md.), has joined in condemning Farrakhan's aide and challenged the Nation of Islam leader to disavow him.

Farrakhan has refused to do so.

The move by the black leadership to distance itself from Farrakhan represents a tactical victory for the Anti-Defamation League, which sponsored a full-page advertisement in The New York Times on Jan. 16 to draw attention to the speech by Khalid Abdul Muhammad, a spokesman for Farrakhan's Nation of Islam group.

In the speech, delivered at New Jersey's Kean College on Nov. 29 of last year, Muhammad called Jews "the bloodsuckers of the black nation," said they controlled the White House, the media and the Federal Reserve, and said they brought the Holocaust on themselves.

Once placed in the public arena on the eve of the Martin Luther King Jr. holiday, the remarks drew swift criticism from African American leaders, including the Rev. Jesse Jackson.

"I am appalled that any human being would stoop so low to make such violence-prone anti-Semitic statements," Benjamin Chavis Jr., executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said at a lecture delivered in Washington on the King holiday.

Speaking to the Philadelphia Baptist Ministers Conference, William Gray III, president of the United Negro College Fund, deplored the "tragic and anti-Semitic comments at Kean College" and said that anti-Semitism cannot be "justified as a response to repression."

Others condemning the speech included Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.) and the Rev. Al Sharpton, the black minister who is accused of helping fuel the August 1991 Crown Heights riots.

Jackson Calls It 'Sick And Misguided'

As for Jackson, who has been working to shore up his ties with the Jewish community, he called The New York Times last Friday to express his own condemnation of the speech as "racist, anti-Semitic, divisive, untrue and chilling."

"The madness of the speech is not in the tradition of our civil rights movement," Jackson was quoted as saying.

He described the reported applause given to the speech as "sick and misguided."

Jackson asked Farrakhan to distance himself from the speech.

"We urge that the minister address that forthrightly," Jackson said Monday, on the eve of a Farrakhan rally here that drew 10,000 people.

But Farrakhan, who repeatedly has positioned

himself as making amends with Jews without coming close to satisfying them as to his sincerity, added his own remarks to the stew Monday night.

"We know that the Jews are the most organized, rich and powerful people, not only in America, but the world," he reportedly said. "They're plotting against us even as we speak."

And in a clear rebuff of the calls to distance himself from the Kean College speech, Farrakhan reportedly said people were using Muhammad's words against him to "divide the house," and that Farrakhan's enemies "want to use some of our brothers, and some of our brothers are willing to be used" to curry favor.

ADL National Director Abraham Foxman, who had expressed hope on the eve of Farrakhan's speech that the minister would take the opportunity to renounce anti-Semitism, said afterward in a statement that Farrakhan's "bigotry and conspiratorial charges continue the grim and shameful pattern he has maintained for years."

Foxman added that ADL "is dismayed, but hardly shocked, at this ongoing display of hatred by a demagogue whose message deserves the strongest repudiation by all decent Americans."

PERES CONTESTS DEPUTY'S VIEWS ON CHARITY FROM DIASPORA JEWS

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, Jan. 25 (JTA) -- Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres distanced himself this week from controversial remarks made by his deputy, Yossi Beilin, who said recently that Israel does not need "charity" from Diaspora Jews.

In a conference call Monday with members of the American Jewish press, Peres said of Beilin's comments, "I don't share his view."

Deputy Foreign Minister Beilin's remarks, made in front of a gathering of the Women's International Zionist Organization, caused a commotion both in Israel and the Diaspora.

The remarks, and Peres's subsequent denial that he shares Beilin's attitude, came at a time when the Israeli government is trying to retain international Jewish support for its policies in the Middle East peace process.

Polls taken after last September's agreement between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization indicated an extremely high level of support among American Jews for the accord.

But there has been a sense here that support could slip as the months go by, mirroring a downward trend in Israeli support for the agreement in the past few months.

Beilin, known for being outspoken, told the Zionist women's group that Israel has a strong economy and does not need charity from Diaspora Jews.

Peres, for his part, said during Monday's conference call that Israel does have a strong economy, but that a lot of Israelis live below the poverty line.

He stressed what he called Israel's three "extra" expenses: "immigration, defense and peace."

"We appreciate very much" the participation and contribution of Diaspora Jews, he said.

The foreign minister also played down recent criticisms of Israeli policies by some Diaspora Jews, saying that overall, there is "such loyalty" between Israel and American Jews.

"We have to have a brotherly discussion if there is criticism," he said.

CLINTON'S NEW PICK FOR PENTAGON JOB SEEN AS A 'POSITIVE FORCE' FOR ISRAEL

By Deborah Kalb and Steven Weiss

WASHINGTON, Jan. 25 (JTA) -- Deputy Secretary of Defense William Perry, President Clinton's latest nominee to head the Pentagon, is viewed by various American Jewish leaders and Israeli officials as a solid professional who would make a good defense secretary.

While Perry does not have a high-profile image on Middle East issues and some observers here were not clear about his record on Israel, others praised Perry this week for his attitude toward the Jewish state.

Clinton chose Perry on Monday to replace outgoing Defense Secretary Les Aspin, after retired admiral Bobby Ray Inman, the president's first choice, pulled himself out of consideration last week.

Israeli officials here described Perry, 66, as professional, fair-minded and efficient on U.S.-Israeli issues.

One former high-ranking Pentagon official said Perry would bring to his new post a "positive force and a continuation of Aspin's positive attitudes" toward Israel.

Dov Zakheim, an adjunct scholar at the Heritage Foundation who served as a Pentagon deputy undersecretary during the Reagan administration, said Perry "in professional terms is certainly not anti-Israel by any stretch of the imagination."

Zakheim said Perry, a high-technology specialist, understands Israel's interest in U.S.-Israeli cooperation on defense and other matters.

Israeli officials said they had positive dealings with Perry this past year on the touchy issue of possible changes in how Israel buys its military equipment from the United States.

'A Capable Manager Within The Pentagon'

And the officials said that embassy and Israeli defense officials had also thought well of Perry during his previous stint at the Pentagon during the Carter administration.

Perry is "well-regarded as a capable manager within the Pentagon," said James Colbert, director of communications for the Jewish Institute for National Security Affairs.

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said he felt Perry would "carry out the policies of Les Aspin."

Aspin has long been viewed by Jewish organizations as a staunch supporter of Israel.

Inman, Clinton's previous nominee, had clashed with pro-Israel New York Times columnist William Safire over policies relating to Israel during the Reagan administration, when Inman was a high-ranking CIA official.

Among the reasons Inman gave for his decision to withdraw last week was what he considered unfair criticism from Safire and other columnists.

Perry, who holds a doctorate in mathematics, was sworn in as deputy secretary last March. He previously served as undersecretary of defense for research and engineering from 1977 to 1981.

He was also a professor at Stanford University's engineering school and held high positions in technology-related companies in California's Silicon Valley.

Perry is not expected to have trouble in upcoming Senate confirmation hearings.

NEW SETTLERS GROUP PLANS 130 SETTLEMENTS, ONE A DAY

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Jan. 25 (JTA) -- A recently formed Jewish settlers group planned this week to establish the first of 130 new settlements it intends to set up in the administered territories.

The leaders of the group, called Zu Artzeinu, or This Is Our Land, announced at a news conference Tuesday that the first settlement would be established to coincide with the holiday of Tu B'Shevat.

Joining the settlers at the news conference were the leaders of a new group of immigrants from the former Soviet Union established to protest the government's peace initiatives.

The leaders included several well-known former prisoners of Zion: Ida Nudel, Yosef Mendelovich and Yosef Begun.

"We were willing to be arrested for Zion in Russia. We are certainly willing to be arrested for Zion in Israel," they said in a statement.

The new settlements, to be named for victims of Arab terrorism, are intended to foil the government's plans to implement the Palestinian self-rule accord signed last September.

"Each one of these new communities will be a nail in the coffin of the Oslo accord," said David Romanoff, a spokesman for the group, referring to the secret agreement made in the Norwegian capital between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The group's leaders said they plan no violent confrontations with security forces who may try to evacuate the settlements. Instead, they said, they will opt for civil disobedience.

Romanoff said the new settlements will be positioned close to existing settlements, which will help sustain them. He said he also expected to draw support from thousands of citizens who live inside Israel's Green Line, the country's boundaries before the 1967 Six-Day War.

Romanoff said that Zu Artzeinu plans to create a new settlement every day, except for Fridays and Saturdays, until all 130 new communities are established.

The new settlements will effectively double the number of existing settlements in the territories.

The first settlement will be called Givat Lapid, in memory of Mordechai and Shalom Lapid, a father and son recently slain by Arab terrorists. It will be established close to Kiryat Arba, located near the West Bank city of Hebron.

TEACHERS STRIKE DEVASTATES SEMESTER

TEL AVIV, Jan. 25 (JTA) -- A strike by university faculty in Israel, now in its third week, is having a devastating impact, with some saying the entire semester may have to be canceled.

The countrywide strike, which has taken all university faculty members out of the classroom, is continuing without any signs of abatement.

The strike, which began Jan. 9 over wages, has brought to a halt the activities of all Israeli universities and research institutions.

Negotiations between the Finance and Education ministries and faculty representatives have led to no agreement.

Students say the current semester has been ruined. On Jan. 18, more than 1,000 students and faculty demonstrated before the Knesset, asking the government to meet the teachers' demands.

FOCUS ON ISSUES:
**INFUSION OF CASH TO HILLEL
AIMED AT ISSUES OF IDENTITY**

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK (JTA) -- Jewish federations across the country are being asked to back up their rhetoric on behalf of Jewish identity and continuity by paying their "fair share" of an expanded Hillel program on college campuses.

The Board of Delegates of the Council of Jewish Federations is being asked to approve an immediate infusion of \$850,000 to Hillel.

But this is only an interim measure.

Hillel and federation officials speak of major increases in the \$9 million in annual allocations that federations give to Hillel foundations and other campus programs.

Currently, \$22 million is spent each year, mostly by Hillel, for Jewish activities for the estimated 400,000 Jewish students on American college campuses.

That comes to \$50 per student, or "less than the cost of an athletic pass at a Big 10 university," in the words of the Interim Report of the CJF Task Force on Jewish University Student Services.

It was the report, issued earlier this month, that made the recommendation for immediate extra federation grants to Hillel, which the CJF board will vote on Feb. 1.

The interim report calls for a "significantly increased level of federation funding for campus activities" over the next five years and for adopting an "appropriate Equitable Collective Responsibility program for continental funding of campus services."

Details of those plans remain to be worked out and will be one of the topics of the continuing deliberations of the task force, which has been meeting since the autumn of 1992.

Richard Joel, executive director of B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, speaks of raising the organization's aggregate budget from \$20 million to \$35 million annually.

Only A Passive Part Of Their Identity

This sort of increase is necessary, according to Joel and the task force report, to turn the campus into a place that promotes Jewish identity.

Current campus programs, according to the report, meet most of the needs of students with strong Jewish identity and commitment -- a group estimated to number between 10 and 15 percent of Jewish students.

But for most Jewish students -- the report estimates 60 percent -- being Jewish is only a passive part of their identity.

"Our challenge is to take this passive level of identification and create an active desire to belong," says the report.

"With the funding levels we have, we've been able to do a fairly adequate job in serving people who come and say they want Jewish services," said Joel.

"What we have not been able to do with any constancy and consistency is what the rest of the community has had trouble doing, reaching out to people who do not come to us," he said.

The report and its proposals or outreach were welcomed by Rabbi Paul Saiger, Hillel director at the University of Rochester and president of the Association of Hillel and Jewish Campus Professionals.

He agreed with the report that the ability of

Hillel to reach students is hampered by questions of staffing and funds.

With, on average, only one Hillel staff member for every 2,000 Jewish students, "what frequently happens is the person is overwhelmed by the articulated needs of people coming to campus knowing what they want," said Saiger.

"So the vision of outreach only makes sense and can only be implemented if it is tied with the resources to reach beyond" the students with an active Jewish identity, he said.

Such outreach, as recommended by the task force report and carried out by Saiger and other Hillel professionals, involves running activities that are not religiously or culturally Jewish but are designed to bring together Jewish students.

The report calls on Hillels to implement this sort of openness for students without a strong Jewish identity and asks federations to make a stronger effort to reach out to students.

"From a federation viewpoint, we have not been a very welcoming place for students," said Michael Rukin, chairman of the task force.

In Process Of Major Restructuring

But whatever changes in attitudes are being asked of federations, the task force report makes clear that the real challenge will come in changing allocations and budgets.

Currently, between zero and 14 percent of local federation allocations go to college services, according to the report, with the national average being 3.4 percent. That amounts to only 1.4 percent of total funds raised by federation campaigns.

The new plan to make funding higher and more evenly distributed is expected to be drawn up by November.

At the same time, Hillel itself is in the process of major restructuring.

Founded in 1923 at the University of Illinois, Hillel was taken under the wing of B'nai B'rith, at the time America's largest Jewish service and fraternal organization.

Hillel was originally intended to help students looking for religious observance, kosher food and a sense of community.

In recent years, B'nai B'rith has seen a dramatic decline in membership.

It was consequently forced to decrease its contributions to Hillel by almost \$2 million, or 50 percent, over the past three years.

With B'nai B'rith playing a diminishing role, and with federation contributions -- mostly through local Hillel organizations -- playing a far larger role, the new realities are being reflected in a new governance structure.

The activities of B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations, Inc., are being transferred to a new corporate entity, the Foundation for Jewish Campus Life.

"It is expected and hoped that B'nai B'rith will continue to be supportive of Hillel, will continue to give the amount of financial support it has been giving, and will still be involved in governance," said Hillel's Joel.

In the meantime, Hillel is getting another source of outside funding, from the newly formed National Supporting Foundation, the Fund for Jewish Campus Life, chaired by Edgar Bronfman. It is expected to contribute more than \$3 million annually to Hillel and other campus programs.

The supporting foundation has committed to matching the \$850,000 being sought for Hillel's current projected deficit.