

**RAGE GREET'S MINISTERS' SUGGESTION
TO REMOVE THE SETTLERS FROM HEBRON**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 6 (JTA) -- A sizable number of Israeli Cabinet ministers favor the forcible dismantling of the Jewish settlements inside the West Bank city of Hebron.

They favor the measure because of fears there will be further violence in Hebron following the Feb. 25 murders of at least 40 Palestinians at the Tomb of the Patriarchs.

Israeli settlers and their political supporters reacted with rage at reports suggesting that seven out of nine ministers who spoke at the weekly Cabinet meeting Sunday are in favor of removing the approximately 400 settlers currently living among 70,000 Palestinians in Hebron.

A spokesman for the Hebron settlers, Noam Arnon, said a decision to dismantle the settlements was "inconceivable."

Rehavam Ze'evi, leader of the right-wing Moledet party, said it would spell "the end of Zionism."

West Bank settlement leaders said there would be a widescale campaign of civil disobedience if the government made any attempt to evict the Hebron settlers.

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid of the left-wing Meretz party said it was possible the decision would be taken at the Cabinet meeting next Sunday.

There are 42 Jewish families living in three closely guarded sites inside Hebron: Beit Hadassah, Tel Romeida and the Avraham Avinu Synagogue complex. And about 150 youngsters study at a yeshiva in the city.

Some of the residents are affiliated with the staunchly anti-Arab Kach and Kahane Chai movements, both of which were inspired by the late Rabbi Meir Kahane.

Residents are guarded by Israel Defense Force troops night and day.

One of the two ministers who opposed the eviction of the Hebron settlers, Agriculture Minister Yakov Tsur, said that he, like the majority of the ministers, was opposed in principle to any Jewish settlements in the heart of Hebron.

Evictions Will Send 'The Wrong Message'

But, he said, ordering the evictions now would send "the wrong message, a message of caving in" to the Palestinians.

The other minister at the weekly meeting who opposed the move, Economic Minister Shimon Sheetrit, said that evicting the settlers would fly in the face of the self-rule accord, which specifically put off the issue of settlements to a later time.

Several Cabinet ministers, especially those with dovish leanings, called for sterner action against anti-Arab extremists.

Over the weekend, the army announced that an unspecified number of anti-Arab extremists would no longer be called for reserve duty, adding that their army-issued weapons would soon be impounded.

**SECURITY FORCES, PALESTINIANS CLASH;
PLO HEWS TO DEMAND ON ARMED OBSERVERS**

By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, Mar. 6 (JTA) -- Violence continued over the weekend as Palestinians clashed with Israeli security forces in the territories and Arab youths took angrily to the streets in Jerusalem.

In the wake of the murders of some 40 Palestinian worshipers at a Hebron mosque, at least two Palestinians were killed after clashes in the Nablus area last Friday, military sources confirmed, while at least seven were wounded in separate incidents on Saturday.

In Washington, a Palestine Liberation Organization official, Nabil Sha'ath, held meetings last Thursday and Friday with State Department officials, including Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

One Palestinian official said late Friday that the Palestinians thought the meeting with Christopher "wasn't satisfactory."

A sticking point was the wording of a U.N. resolution currently under consideration that would condemn the Feb. 25 killings in Hebron.

A State Department official said late last Friday that the United States and the PLO had not come to any agreement on the resolution.

The Palestinians think the resolution should include mention of Jerusalem when referring to the territories, but the United States did not agree, according to a Palestinian official, who said Christopher and his aides "adhered to their declared position."

Daily Violence Continues

The State Department official said the United States had not agreed to anything outside the framework of the Israeli-Palestinian declaration of principles, which formed the basis of the self-rule accord signed last September in Washington.

The PLO has called for an armed international presence in the territories to protect Palestinians. Israel has maintained its willingness in principle to have an unarmed international presence in the territories, as covered in the declaration of principles.

As the diplomatic wrangling continues, however, violence has erupted almost daily in Israel and the territories in the aftermath of the killings at the Hebron mosque.

In the Gush Katif settlement in the Gaza Strip, two Israelis were stabbed in a greenhouse last Friday by three terrorists.

One of the Israelis, Yitzhak Cohen, suffered serious wounds, but he managed to shoot and kill one of the assailants and wound another.

On Saturday, hundreds of Arab youths began rioting outside the walls of the Old City following heated speeches by local PLO leaders at a rally in eastern Jerusalem.

Police responded with tear gas and rubber bullets, reportedly wounding 20 protesters.

In light of the heightened tensions, Israeli police took the unusual step last Friday of closing

the plaza in front of the Western Wall to Jewish worshipers for more than an hour.

Police were worried that, with thousands of Palestinians at prayer on the Temple Mount, there would be a repeat of the violence that took place the week before, when Arab youths threw stones at Jewish worshipers below after an Israeli settler sprayed Muslim worshipers at the Tomb of the Patriarchs with gunfire, killing at least 40.

This last Friday, thousands of Arab worshipers at the Temple Mount left the area without any major incident.

The decision by police to remove Jewish worshipers was sharply criticized by Jerusalem's mayor and others.

"We are very upset and frustrated by the unilateral decision of the police authorities to evacuate Jews from the Kotel (the Western Wall)," Mayor Ehud Olmert told Israel Radio on Sunday.

The Wall, Olmert said, is "the symbol of everything that characterizes Jewish life in this part of the world, the most important place." As such, he said, it is "the last place" Jews should be barred from as a security measure.

He said he would do everything in his power to prevent the closure of the plaza again.

Meanwhile, according to reports, the PLO Executive has decided to stick to its demands that the settlers in the territories be disarmed and an international armed presence be established in the territories as a condition of resuming the autonomy talks.

But Foreign Minister Shimon Peres has rejected the demand for an armed international presence.

"There is no assurance that foreign observers will add to security. On the contrary," he told Israel Television, "we may discover that foreign observers will become a target for Hamas," the Islamic fundamentalist movement staunchly opposed to the peace process.

(Contributing to this report was JTA correspondent Deborah Kalb in Washington.)

JEWS, PALESTINIANS HOLD JOINT RALLY IN A MASSIVE SUPPORT FOR PEACE ACCORD

By Michele Chabin

TEL AVIV, March 6 (JTA) -- In a show of solidarity, Jews and Palestinians from Israel and the territories rallied on Saturday night to demonstrate support for the peace process and to denounce the murders of Palestinian worshipers that took place in the West Bank town of Hebron.

Sponsored by Peace Now, the rally attracted an estimated 10,000 Jews, Christians, Muslims and Druze, many of whom had traveled by the busload to attend the demonstration.

Placards proclaiming "Dismantle the Settlements" and "There is a Mandate for Peace" were held aloft during the demonstration.

Following a moment of silence in memory of the murdered Palestinians, peace activists such as Dr. Ahmed Tibi, an Israeli Arab confidante of Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat, and Chanah Meron, an Israeli entertainer who lost her leg in a terrorist attack, spoke in favor of the peace accord and called for an end to violence by both Jews and Palestinians.

Across the street, several hundred right-wing demonstrators burned a Palestinian flag and

brandished placards depicting Arafat leading Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin by the nose.

A large police contingent equipped with riot gear formed a human barrier between the two groups of demonstrators, preventing clashes.

For the most part, a feeling of good will prevailed at the rally. Palestinians and Jews mingled before and after the speeches, and it was clear that many had come to the rally together.

"We're here to support the government," said Baruch Shifman, who attended the demonstration with his wife and 13-year-old daughter. "The country is undergoing a difficult period, and we have to show our support and solidarity."

Like many demonstrators, Shifman's wife, Judy, called on the government to remove all Jewish settlers from Hebron, where on Feb. 25 Dr. Baruch Goldstein, an American-born resident of Kiryat Arba, gunned down at least 40 Palestinians praying at the Tomb of the Patriarchs.

"It's about time we stopped fascist activities by right-wing settlers in the territories, especially in Hebron," Judy Shifman said.

Asked whether she is in favor of removing all Jewish settlements in the territories, Shifman shrugged her shoulders and said: "I'm not certain. I think that most settlers should leave, but we must let the peace process decide this question."

"After what happened in Hebron, I felt I had to do something to show the government how upset I am," said Gagu Eshet, an 18-year-old soldier from Tel Aviv.

Attending the rally with her friends, Eshet, wearing jeans and a Peace Now T-shirt, said: "We want to change the situation in the territories. People need to know that not all Israelis behave like that psychopath in Hebron."

'Overwhelmed By Grief'

Hanna Khoury, a Christian Arab from Jerusalem, said he was "very happy to see so many people working toward peace."

Holding a sign declaring "Peace Is the Way" in Hebrew, English and Arabic, he said, "Peace is going to happen, despite what happened in Hebron. Revenge, by Arabs or Jews, won't solve anything."

According to Khoury, "The majority of the Palestinians support the peace accord. It's a small majority, maybe 55 percent, but I'm convinced that most Palestinians desire peace."

While he conceded that the Hebron incident has hurt the peace talks, he said, "If the Israeli army begins to withdraw from the territories, I think the momentum will increase."

Ali Mosbah, a Muslim from Hebron, agreed that the Palestinian people back the peace plan, despite the murders at his local mosque.

"The people of Hebron aren't opposed to the peace process, although they are overwhelmed by grief," he said.

Pausing to gaze at the rally, Mosbah said, "There are too many Baruch Goldsteins, but not all Jews are the same. This rally is proof of that. I have Jewish friends. I'm not saying I can't live with Jews -- just not religious ones."

Hamzeh, a 23-year-old Muslim from eastern Jerusalem, admitted that "there are many people who would like to see the peace process die. I believe this is our only chance for peace, and we can't afford to lose it. I honestly think we won't get another opportunity."

CIVIL RIGHTS COMMISSION CENSURES FARRAKHAN AIDE

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, March 6 (JTA) -- The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights has become the latest group to condemn the now-infamous remarks of Nation of Islam official Khalid Abdul Muhammad.

The eight-member civil rights panel voted unanimously last Friday to condemn Muhammad's Nov. 29 speech at Kean College in New Jersey, in which the aide to Louis Farrakhan spewed remarks against Jews, gays, Catholics and white people in general.

Muhammad's speech was previously censured in both houses of Congress.

Commissioner Carl Anderson, who proposed the resolution, said in a statement that Muhammad's speech "is offensive, it is hateful, it is hurtful."

"But it is more than offensive or racist or hate speech," Anderson said. "It is speech which calls for murder and condones murder, which calls for genocide and condones genocide."

Anderson said he thought that the recent shooting of Chasidic Jewish students in New York "is an inescapable and inevitable consequence of the atmosphere of hate created by this speech and by others like it."

The commission's resolution used the same language to condemn Muhammad's remarks as the House of Representatives used last month.

At a high-profile news conference in Washington on Feb. 3, Farrakhan said he was disciplining Muhammad for the manner in which he spoke but not for what he called his "truths."

Muhammad has continued to make the same or similar remarks in speeches at other college campuses since then.

The Anti-Defamation League reported that about 1,000 blacks called out anti-Semitic remarks at a speech Muhammad gave at Howard University in Washington last month.

U.S. AND UKRAINE SIGN AGREEMENT TO PROTECT UKRAINIAN JEWISH SITES

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, March 6 (JTA) -- During Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk's visit here last week, the United States and Ukraine signed an agreement that would protect historic Jewish cemeteries and synagogues in Ukraine.

The agreement was a follow-up to a series of such promises which Kravchuk made to Jewish groups since Ukraine became an independent state after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

His promises to Jews, many of which have been realized in returning synagogues and trying to re-create a Jewish life in Ukraine, were strong conciliation following decades of mistrust and even hatred between many Ukrainians and Jews.

Secretary of State Warren Christopher and Ukrainian Foreign Minister Anatoliy Zlenko signed the accord, which also seeks to preserve other historic sites in Ukraine.

Rabbi Arthur Schneier of New York, who is chairman of the U.S. Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad, hailed the agreement, on which he had worked for nearly two years with Ukrainian officials.

Schneier, who is also founder of the Appeal

of Conscience Foundation, an ecumenical group promoting religious freedoms, was host to Kravchuk in his Manhattan synagogue when he first promised American Jewish leaders that Jewish life would be protected and encouraged in Ukraine.

Last week, Schneier issued a statement saying the agreement "has particular importance to the Jewish communities" of the United States and Ukraine, "for it helps to preserve Jewish cemeteries and synagogues that have been ravaged during the Nazi Holocaust and were neglected during the Communist era."

The agreement, signed Friday, called on each side to "take appropriate steps to protect and preserve the cultural heritage of all national, religious, or ethnic groups" who "reside or resided in its territory" and were victims of World War II.

The two countries also agreed to cooperate on drawing up lists of historic places including houses of worship, monuments, and cemeteries. The commission headed by Schneier was named as the U.S. executor of the accord.

Kravchuk, meanwhile, has announced that he will not seek another term as leader of Ukraine, as he feels incapable of righting the vast financial woes currently ravaging Ukraine.

RIGHT-WING PARTIES SEE GAIN IN LOCAL NETHERLANDS POLLS

By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, March 6 (JTA) -- Two right-wing parties have made unexpected gains in municipal elections held last week in Holland.

In elections for council seats held March 2 in some 650 municipalities nationwide, two extremist parties -- the Center Democrats and the Center Democrats 1986 -- successfully elected 77 candidates in 45 municipal races.

In Holland's previous municipal elections, the two parties won 11 council seats in eight local races.

The results sent a cautionary message to the two parties in the country's governing coalition -- the Christian Democrats and Labor -- which are facing parliamentary elections in early May.

If voting patterns in the municipal elections prevail in parliamentary voting, political observers here caution, the Christian Democrats and Labor each stand to lose about 15 of their seats in the 150-member lower chamber of Parliament.

The percentage of those who voted for the two right-wing parties was largest in Holland's four main cities -- Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht -- where the two parties received about 10 percent of the votes.

The two parties' success in the municipal elections is largely seen as a result of voter dissatisfaction with the coalition government's policies of sharply reduced budgets.

And, as in many countries in Europe and elsewhere, voters on the right seek to place blame on an influx of immigrants from poorer countries for economic downturns and lower overall living conditions.

The two nationalist parties are viewed as having one issue only, as reflected in their common slogan, "One's own country first, and the Netherlands for Netherlands only." They have not targeted the country's Jews, who form a tiny percentage of Holland's population of 15 million.

AMERICAN ORTHODOX JEWS EXPERIENCE 'COGNITIVE EXPLOSION' OVER PEACE TALKS

By Pamela Druckerman

NEW YORK (JTA) -- When Baruch Goldstein fired his automatic Galil rifle into a crowd of Muslim worshipers at a Hebron mosque, the shots reverberated in the American Orthodox community, underscoring the tensions running through a movement long supportive of Israel but newly skeptical of some of its recent policies.

Orthodox Zionists in the United States roundly condemned the act committed by Goldstein, himself an American-born Orthodox Jew, as morally and religiously reprehensible.

But some could not help but feel satisfied that the shooting accomplished in a single stroke what many in the movement have advocated for months: it brought the Middle East peace process, at least temporarily, to a screeching halt.

Some, of course, feared the opposite -- that the murders in Hebron could place the very settlements that Goldstein sought to defend at even greater risk of being handed over to the Palestinians in a show of good will by the Israeli government.

But no matter which way the chips fall, it is support of the settlements that has become the linchpin of the American Orthodox community's response to the peace process.

It is this movement, more than any other within the American Jewish community, that has become identified with the settlements in the territories. It supports the settlers financially; it undergirds their position with religious conviction; and sends its children to live among them.

And after years of dealing with like-minded, Likud-led Israeli governments, American Orthodox Jews are suddenly confronted with the stark choice of either supporting Israel or supporting the settlements, which in many cases include friends and family.

The struggle to reconcile this dilemma has led to what Rabbi Daniel Landes has called a "cognitive explosion."

Pressuring Israel For A Different Plan

Landes, national education director for the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center, said that in order to resolve this conflict, Orthodox communities are trying to pressure Israel into shaping a peace plan they can ultimately support.

In the meantime, they are also organizing efforts to support the roughly 140,000 Israelis living in the Gaza Strip and especially the West Bank, which many religious Jews refer to by its biblical names, Judea and Samaria.

Last month, Beth Jacob Synagogue in Beverly Hills hosted a meeting to raise funds for the Yesha Council, an organization which supports settlements in the West Bank and Gaza.

Rabbi Abner Weiss, the synagogue's spiritual leader, said that dissatisfaction with the direction of the peace process has led many in his congregation to decrease traditionally strong financial support to Israel and to refuse to buy Israel Bonds. And at a February rally in New York, 13 Orthodox synagogues "adopted" Jewish settlements, providing them with moral and financial assistance.

Fred Ehrman, honorary president of New York's Lincoln Square Synagogue, which par-

ticipated in the adoption program, said he hopes to use publicity generated by the rally to show "the strategic importance of the Jordan Valley for the security of Israel."

At a follow-up meeting, Rabbi Shlomo Riskin, founder of Lincoln Square and now chief rabbi of the West Bank town of Efrat, spoke of his idea of Israeli withdrawal from the territories. "I don't believe any settlement should be denied Israeli sovereignty unless that is the wish of the settlers," Riskin said.

He also tried to explain Goldstein's possible motive for attacking the Arabs in Hebron.

"There is a feeling of not being protected" among the settlers, he said. "It is an extremely incendiary situation."

Rabbi Pinchas Stolper, executive vice president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, said his organization is deeply concerned about implementation of the peace accord between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization, which calls for Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho.

"Our position is that the security and safety and development of the Jewish communities in Judea and Samaria must be protected and enhanced," Stolper said.

Many in the Orthodox leadership insist that expressions of solidarity with Jewish settlers do not constitute a political stance.

"There have been dreams of returning to Zion for 2,000 years," said Rabbi Moshe Gorelick, president of the Rabbinical Council of America. "Are these dreams political?"

Concern for the settlements also takes on a personal dimension among American Orthodox Jews, as about 15 percent of settlers are American-born, according to reports.

Differences Exist Among The Orthodox

Joyce Lempel, a member of Lincoln Square Synagogue who helped organize the "adoption" program, insisted that concern over the fate of the settlers is simply a human rights issue.

"Why can the Palestinian refugee problem be seen as a human rights problem but with Jews it's a political problem?" Lempel asked.

But Daniel Goldschmidt, a board member of Congregation Kehilat Jacob in New York, which also participated in the adoption program, said that members of his synagogue were not consulted on whether to participate in the rally.

He and others represent a backlash among Orthodox Jews who resent their movement associating itself so closely with that of the settlers, claiming the political views of the American Orthodox community are far from uniform.

"The effect of identifying the rally as being in solidarity with the settlers was that everyone would see this as solidarity for the political position of the settlers," Goldschmidt said.

He has helped organize an ad hoc coalition called Orthodox West Siders for Peace, to combat what he calls "the misperception of monolithic Orthodox opposition to the peace process."

Rabbi Shmuel Goldin of Congregation Aha-vath Torah in Englewood, N.J., describes the atmosphere among the Orthodox as "extremely polarized," with opponents of the peace process unfairly dominating talk. "There's a lot of willingness to wait and see that is being overwhelmed by the immediate reaction of 'no, no, no.'"