

**U.S. IS COMMITTED TO PEACE,  
GORE TELLS AIPAC CONFERENCE**

By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, March 13 (JTA) -- Addressing the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, Vice President Al Gore said the Clinton administration was doing "everything we possibly can" to ensure the success of the Middle East peace process, despite the problems ensuing from last month's murders at a Hebron mosque.

Gore, viewed as a staunch supporter of Israel, addressed about 2,000 enthusiastic participants Sunday at the first session of AIPAC's 35th annual policy conference.

"It would be a heartbreaking irony if in Hebron, whose very name derives from the Hebrew word for friend," hopes for a future peace in the Middle East "could be dashed by one enemy of peace," Gore said.

President Clinton "knows that we cannot lose the momentum that we have developed," Gore said.

"He knows we cannot lose the sense of direction that we have had," the vice president said.

As Gore addressed the pro-Israel activists, AIPAC's president, Steve Grossman, and new executive director, Neal Sher, were meeting at the White House with Clinton.

Grossman, who addressed the group later in the afternoon, said he and Sher had discussed with Clinton the touchy issue of the status of Jerusalem.

The issue of Jerusalem has once again emerged as a sticking point, this time at the United Nations, where there is a dispute about whether a resolution condemning the killings of Palestinian worshipers by a Jewish settler should include a reference to Jerusalem as occupied territory.

**AIPAC Rejects Reference To Jerusalem**

AIPAC objects to such a formulation, Grossman said, adding that AIPAC views Jerusalem as the eternal and undivided capital of Israel and the Jewish people.

Previous statements by Clinton and the wording of the 1992 Democratic Party platform are in agreement with those views, he said.

Grossman said he reminded Clinton at the meeting of these previous statements and said Clinton responded that this policy was still the correct one.

The timing of the 20-minute meeting with the president -- coming as Gore was addressing the AIPAC conference -- was a coincidence, Grossman later told reporters.

Gore, in his remarks, also commented on the issue of Jerusalem.

"I want to assure you at this critical moment that the president and I have not forgotten the meaning of Jerusalem," he said.

The vice president said the administration was actively involved in the process of drafting the U.N. resolution.

"If this resolution can be developed in the

right spirit, it may allow both parties to rejoin each other at the negotiating table and to resume the process which Hebron threatens to destroy," Gore said.

"Badly handled, on the other hand, this resolution can even more deeply signify the division between the parties, and create a new and formidable obstacle to negotiations, at the worst possible moment," he added.

On the issue of the peace process, Gore said the president "cannot impose a solution and will not, on Israel or on the Palestinians."

The parties must agree between themselves, he said.

Gore also said the administration hoped for progress in the negotiations between Israel and Jordan, Lebanon and Syria.

He said the administration welcomed Syrian President Hafez Assad's recent comments about future normal relations with Israel.

"But Syria needs to do more. It must engage the government and people of Israel in the only kind of dialogue that can establish the basis for lasting peace and security, one that involves both the words and the deeds of peace," Gore said.

Gore offered a plea to the AIPAC activists to continue supporting the peace process.

"We do need those of you in this room to lend your support to this process, as you have been doing," he said.

Also addressing the participants at the AIPAC conference was House Minority Whip Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), who also got a warm reception.

Gingrich, who offered strongly pro-Israel remarks, praised AIPAC for its work, saying that with the lobby's help, last year's vote on foreign aid was "the best vote ever" in Congress.

"You are literally the only grass-roots organization in this country" working on foreign aid issues, Gingrich told the participants.

"If you were not here, I believe that overnight, support for our involvement" in Israel and around the world would collapse, he said.

Both Gore and Gingrich spoke out against the longtime Arab economic boycott of Israel and of companies doing business with Israel. Ending the boycott has been a high priority for the U.S. government in recent months.

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is scheduled to address the AIPAC conference Tuesday.

**ISRAEL BANS KACH, KAHANE CHAI  
CITING THEM AS TERRORIST GROUPS**

By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, March 13 (JTA) -- Using regulations that previously had been used only against Palestinians, the Israeli government has banned the Kach and Kahane Chai political parties.

The Israeli Cabinet, which voted unanimously on the measure during its weekly session Sunday, outlawed the two groups, declaring them terrorist organizations.

In related developments, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said Sunday that the government

saw itself as having sole and full responsibility for the security of the entire population of Israel and the territories, without distinction between Jew and Palestinian.

And in a similar vein, the Israel Defense Force issued what it termed a clarification of its open-fire instructions.

Under the terms of the new instructions, Israeli soldiers were clearly told to take all measures -- including opening fire -- against anyone, including settlers, who fires at others in a situation that is clearly not self-defense.

Rabin's statement and the IDF clarification came on the heels of the furor caused throughout the country when the commander of the border police in Hebron last week told the commission investigating the Feb. 25 killings that Israeli soldiers had standing orders never to fire upon Jews.

In outlawing the two Jewish groups, the Cabinet employed a decades-old law that had been aimed at Palestinian terror groups.

Kach and Kahane Chai owe their ideology to the fiercely anti-Arab teachings of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, who was assassinated in New York in 1990.

Immediately after the Cabinet decision, representatives of Kach said they would appeal the ban in the courts, but in the meantime they indicated they would suspend all activities.

The Cabinet's decision was based on evidence, submitted by Israeli security services and police, that implicates the two groups in a series of unsolved murders of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The government ban extends to all groups associated with the two organizations and to any that may spring up in response to the ban if the new groups share the same violent anti-Arab tendencies.

As part of the government measure, anyone supporting the two groups either verbally or with financial assistance will be subject to imprisonment.

Justice Minister David Libai said the government had taken the measures only after there had been very serious consideration of the implications of the action upon Israeli democracy.

While the opposition parties' reaction to the ban was generally muted, Likud leader Binyamin Netanyahu thought a six-month ban should have been imposed initially.

National Religious Party leader Zevulun Hammer and Tsomet's Rafael Eitan both said the government should have taken action against individuals rather than organizations.

#### **SUDDEN PLO HINTS OF NEW PEACE TALKS SEEM LINKED TO BAN ON ANTI-ARAB GROUPS** By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 13 (JTA) -- Within hours of the Israeli Cabinet's decision to outlaw the militantly anti-Arab Kach and Kahane Chai groups, Palestinian sources in Tunis and Jerusalem were reportedly predicting that the suspended Israeli-Palestine Liberation Organization peace talks would resume March 21.

Government officials in the capital reacted with cautious surprise to the announcement from PLO officials.

They had received no word, they said, either

from the Palestinians or from the United States, that the Washington talks would get under way again on that date.

Meanwhile, Israeli political sources said there had been no discussion during Sunday's weekly Cabinet meeting about the proposal to forcibly evict Jewish settlers living inside the city of Hebron.

The week before, seven Cabinet ministers spoke out in favor of rejecting the Hebron settlers.

The sources indicated that any further discussion of the subject might prevent the fervently religious Shas party from rejoining the government coalition.

Last week, Shas officials announced they would rejoin the coalition under the terms of an arrangement with the government that would ban the importation of non-kosher meat.

The peace negotiations had been suspended by the PLO in the wake of the Feb. 25 killings of Palestinian worshippers by an Israeli settler at a Hebron mosque.

The Palestinian announcement that the talks would soon resume was reportedly conditioned on the passage of a satisfactory resolution by the U.N. Security Council condemning the Feb. 25 killings.

But the juxtaposition of the announcement to the Israeli Cabinet's decision to outlaw Kach and Kahane Chai was not thought to be coincidental.

The Cabinet, in taking this draconian step against the two groups, was signaling to the Palestinians its desire to learn the lesson of the Hebron murders.

And the Palestinian side -- although stressing in its official reactions that the step, while welcome, was inadequate -- is apparently anxious to indicate that it does not want to see the peace process die as a result of the hiatus in the talks.

Behind-the-scenes discussions were still proceeding on the eventual wording of the U.N. Security Council resolution condemning the Hebron attack.

#### **ISRAEL DECLINES RUSSIAN HELP IN REVIVING THE PEACE TALKS** By Dvora Getzler

JERUSALEM, March 13 (JTA) -- Israel is not interested in Russian intervention to help restart its suspended negotiations with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

This was the message Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Foreign Minister Shimon Peres gave to Russian Foreign Minister Andrei Kozyrev during his surprise visit to Israel on Friday.

Kozyrev, who was en route to a meeting with PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat in Tunis, made no proposals of his own during his brief stay in Israel.

Nor did Kozyrev reiterate the urging of his deputy, made a week earlier, that a second round of Madrid talks be convened to help get Israel and the PLO back to the negotiating table. Israel has sharply rejected the suggestion.

Kozyrev reassured his hosts that while Russia favored an international presence in the territories, his country did not favor the armed international force that the PLO has called for to protect Palestinians in the territories.

## U.N. HUMAN RIGHTS PANEL CONDEMNS ANTI-SEMITISM IN A HISTORIC VOTE

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, March 13 (JTA) -- For the first time in its 50-year history, the U.N. Human Rights Commission has passed a measure condemning anti-Semitism.

The resolution was adopted March 9 in Geneva, where the 53-member panel meets, following its submission by the Turkish government. It was passed by a show of hands.

It was the first time since the United Nations was founded -- and after most of Europe's Jews had been killed by the Nazis -- that a U.N. body had singled out hatred of Jews as an evil.

The commission noted that "racism, racial discrimination, anti-Semitism, xenophobia and related intolerance, as well as acts of racial violence, persist and are even growing in magnitude, continually assuming new forms."

Advocacy for the measure was a cooperative venture of the Turkish and U.S. governments, with strong ongoing encouragement from Jewish groups.

The resolution specifically includes anti-Semitism "among other forms of racism, racial discrimination, xenophobia and related intolerance" and makes reference to it both in its preamble and in its operative paragraphs.

The resolution also condemns discrimination against Arabs, Muslims and blacks.

The bill is called L14, Rev. 1.

"L14, Rev. 1 isn't much of a name, but it represents a dramatic change" in United Nations history, B'nai B'rith International said in a statement.

B'nai B'rith President Kent Schiner called the resolution "a blow to the neo-Nazis and the hatemongers of this world who try to spread their venomous hate."

### Victory For Cause Of Human Rights

The U.S. State Department called the measure's passage an important achievement, the "result of a long-concerted effort waged by the United States with the support of a number of other governments."

Edgar Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress, called the measure "a victory not only for the Jewish people but for all who seek to advance the universal cause of human rights."

The WJC was represented at the rights panel by Morris Abram, who is head of the WJC's U.N. Watch Program in Geneva and who was previously U.N. ambassador to the United Nations in Geneva, following his term as chairman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry.

In 1975, Abram proposed a similar resolution when he was a representative of the U.S. delegation to the same rights panel. The rights panel's investigator of racism is now required to look into and report on incidents of anti-Semitism and related intolerances, Abram explained.

Condemnation of anti-Semitism, which was inserted into both the preamble and the general text, was included in a general resolution condemning all forms of racism, including discrimination against blacks, Arabs and Muslims.

The panel also unanimously condemned the violations against civilians in Bosnia-Herzegovina.

## POLLING DATE PITTS FRENCH RABBI AGAINST STATE INTERIOR MINISTER

By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, March 13 (JTA) -- In a situation highlighting the tension between religious belief and national rights, France's chief rabbi and the country's interior minister are at loggerheads over the timing of municipal elections, which fall on the first day of Passover.

After Interior Minister Charles Pasqua refused to accommodate religious Jews, who cannot vote on a religious holiday, Chief Rabbi Joseph Sitruk issued a call in the Jewish weekly La Tribune Juive that French Jews should not vote in the March 27 elections.

"We had sought a special arrangement," Sitruk announced in the newspaper. "But if the date cannot be changed, then it is regrettably my duty to call on Jews to not vote on this particularly important day of the Jewish calendar."

Sitruk had previously asked Pasqua if observant Jews could vote by mail or be exempt from signing attendance sheets at the polls.

But Pasqua, a staunch secularist, said this was not possible.

"There is no state religion in France, where freedom of worship is absolute, but we cannot make exceptions," Pasqua stated.

Sitruk subsequently called on French Jews to refrain from voting.

### Aides Say Rabbi Was Misunderstood

A similar situation recently surfaced in Italy, where general elections had been scheduled for the same day. The Italian government later decided to extend voting by a day to respect the needs of the country's small Jewish community.

Pasqua said he understood the stance of French Orthodox Jews, but nonetheless was firm.

The French interior minister has recently been attempting to limit the influence of fundamentalism among the country's Muslim community, and apparently wished to be consistent.

CRIF, the umbrella body representing French Jewry, refused to comment about Sitruk's request.

"We do not comment on the declarations of France's chief rabbi," said Jacqueline Keller, director of CRIF. But sources close to CRIF made it clear the rabbi's declaration was an embarrassment.

His aides said he was misunderstood.

"He acted because he is very attached to the republican duties: Jews must vote and he himself never misses a poll. This time, because the date of the vote will make it impossible for Orthodox Jews to accomplish their duty, the chief rabbi tried to find a solution," another rabbi said.

Sitruk's statement also prompted an angry answer in the influential newspaper Le Monde.

"In spite of the chief rabbi, I'll vote on March 27," wrote Guy Konopnicki, a Jewish writer and a former Communist leader.

"This day, as a Jew, I'll observe the feast of Pesach. According to the tradition, I'll tell my children about slavery in Egypt. 'We were slaves in the land of Egypt,' says the Haggadah," he wrote.

He said he would add: "In the Republic of France we are" free, which "should incite the chief rabbi to be more prudent when he calls upon us not to accomplish our civic duty."

## ISRAELI ANTI-SMOKING LAW WOULD CLEAR AIR IN WORKPLACE

By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM, March 13 (JTA) -- It has taken a full decade, but anti-smoking activists have succeeded in limiting smoking in the Israeli workplace.

Workers wishing to light a cigarette will have to do so in designated smoking areas, under legislation passed last month by the Knesset Labor and Social Affairs Committee.

An amendment to the groundbreaking 1984 law that bans smoking in certain public places, the regulation will limit smoking to specified rooms and lounges in the country's 60,000 places of employment.

The new regulation, which has been in the works for three years, will take effect 90 days after the health minister signs it. Just when that will be remains unclear, since Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the acting health minister, is less than enthusiastic about the measure.

Lighting a cigarette during an interview about the legislation, Rabin, a chain smoker, asserted: "I am the health minister. I can decide not to sign the change if I don't want to."

Supporters of the amendment, which include Knesset members, the Israel Cancer Association, the Society for the Prevention of Smoking and the Association for Americans and Canadians in Israel, say they are confident that Rabin will sign it in the near future.

"Momentum is on our side," said Miri Ziv, director of the Israel Cancer Association.

"The fact that the amendment has come this far is due to a greater understanding among Israelis of the threat smoking poses to people's health," she said.

Israelis are smoking significantly less than they did a decade ago, according to the association. In the 1980s, about 42 percent of the population smoked. That figure dropped to 30 or 31 percent in 1993.

### Credit '84 Anti-Smoking Law For Changes

In a survey conducted jointly by the Ministry of Health and the cancer association in December, 90 percent of those interviewed supported restrictions on smoking in the workplace.

Of the smokers who were surveyed, 86 percent said they favored a separate smoking area because it would rid them of complaints from non-smokers.

Activists credit the 1984 anti-smoking law, which prohibits smoking in such public places as buses and theaters, for getting the ball rolling. An amendment enacted in 1987 added pharmacies and supermarkets to the list.

"Ten years ago, you couldn't get on a bus or go to a movie without choking from the smoke," said Natan Barson, a retiree who is active in the AACI's tobacco-control committee.

"Now, if someone is smoking on a bus, other passengers ask him to put it out. Usually, the person complies," he said.

"Those of us who fought for the original law have been happily surprised by the results," Barson said.

Though the proportion of smokers has decreased in the past decade, some 5,000 smokers died from cancer, cardiovascular disease and

respiratory ailments last year. In addition, 800 non-smokers died from illnesses resulting from secondhand smoke, the cancer association said.

"The amendment should save a lot of lives, provided it is enforced," said Ziv.

"Without enforcement, any anti-smoking legislation is useless.

"The Cancer Association has plenty of prestige but no legal power to enforce the law."

Whereas smoking is no longer tolerated on public transportation and in theaters, "it remains a real problem in restaurants," Ziv said.

According to the law, any restaurant with more than 20 tables must reserve a section for non-smokers. Violators are subject to a \$60 fine.

"Many restaurant owners ignore the law, and the various municipalities don't enforce it," she said. "But there is a simple solution. The municipalities shouldn't renew the license of any restaurant that breaks the law."

The AACI's anti-smoking committee has come up with another solution. Before dining in a restaurant, members call to reserve a table -- provided there is a non-smoking section.

"We make it clear to the owner that if his restaurant doesn't have such a section, we're going to dine elsewhere," said Barson.

"Some of the owners have gotten the message and set up non-smoking areas," he said. "It makes good business sense."

Yoram Lass, a member of Knesset who is also a physician, has started another round in the war against smoking. He has proposed a private member's bill that would ban tobacco advertising in the print media.

Since the 1984 law prohibits such advertising on both Israeli television and radio, cigarette companies have relied on newspapers, magazines and billboards to sell their products.

He concedes that the bill, which is in its preliminary stage, has little hope of passing in its current form.

"There is a strong tobacco lobby that will block any measure designed to stop cigarette companies from advertising in the print media," he said. "The newspapers are just as eager for the business."

Lass said he introduced the bill because advertisements tend to target the younger generation.

"They try to make smoking look glamorous and grown-up," he said. "Nine out of 10 cases of lung cancer are caused by smoking. Preventative medicine is always the best medicine."

## RACIAL INCIDENTS RISE IN NETHERLANDS

By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, March 13 (JTA) -- Three times as many racist incidents were reported in 1993 as were reported in 1992, the Dutch government reported.

The government's central criminal investigation department also noted that there is no evidence of any organization behind the incidents.

Nor has any connection with extreme right-wing parties in Holland been shown, the department said.

Thirty percent of the incidents reported were threatening letters and phone calls. Some 40 percent involved fights or verbal attacks.

A total of 612 incidents were reported.