

**RABIN REAFFIRMS JERUSALEM'S STATUS  
IN PASSIONATE SPEECH TO AIPAC MEETING**  
By Deborah Kalb

WASHINGTON, March 15 (JTA) -- At a time when the controversial issue of Jerusalem's future status is once again coming to the fore, Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told a convention of pro-Israel activists that "Jerusalem will remain united under Israel's sovereignty."

The prime minister's words were almost drowned out by a sea of applause from the approximately 2,000 participants gathered Tuesday for the closing session of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's 35th annual policy conference.

Rabin, who received a warm welcome from the AIPAC participants, began his passionate address by evoking an image of Jerusalem, which included both personal and political reflections on the meaning of the Israeli capital.

"Jerusalem is a city of peace, a city that yearns for peace and the city from which the word of peace will go forth, notwithstanding any United Nations resolution," Rabin said.

The issue of Jerusalem, more than any other topic raised at the convention, seemed to evoke the most passion from the participants, more than half of whom were students.

Under the terms of last year's Israeli-Palestinian accord, Jerusalem was considered a final-status issue, discussion of which would be postponed until the third year of a five-year interim period.

But AIPAC's convention came at a time when Jerusalem has once again emerged as a sticking point, this time at the United Nations, where there has been a dispute over whether a resolution condemning the killings of Palestinian worshipers by a Jewish settler should include a reference to Jerusalem as occupied territory.

The United States had reportedly been ready to accept the presence of such language under a compromise formula, in order to encourage Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat to return to the peace talks.

The PLO had broken off talks with Israel after a Jewish settler killed at least 29 Arabs at a mosque in Hebron on Feb. 25.

**Compromising On U.N. Resolution**

The compromise would allow the United States to support the overall resolution, which calls for greater security for Palestinians, while abstaining on the language that refers to Jerusalem as occupied territory.

A meeting Monday in Tunis between Arafat and U.S. peace talks coordinator Dennis Ross to try to coax the Palestinians back to the table ended in stalemate, with no progress reported.

During his address to the AIPAC conference Tuesday, Rabin spoke of the slayings in Hebron, saying it "has shamed the Jewish people and Zionism." But he also spoke of "the murderous bloody acts of terrorist fanatics who shot Jewish worshipers who stood in prayer in the synagogues of Istanbul, Paris, Amsterdam and Rome.

"The same denunciation should have been expressed by the Arab parties; however, most remained silent," he said.

Rabin said that there would be no compromise from Israel on security issues in Israel, inside and outside the Green Line.

"The feeling of loss and sorrow in the wake of the Hebron tragedy will not change our fundamental positions regarding the security of the State of Israel and its citizens, including the Jewish residents in Judea, Samaria and the Gaza Strip," Rabin said to a round of applause.

"We have no intention of compromising on any security matters," the prime minister continued. "No bullet, no knife, no Molotov cocktail, no stone, will undermine our commitment to peace and security."

Rabin said he thought the Israelis and Palestinians were "near the conclusion of the Gaza-Jericho stage in the negotiations for peace. We already see the finish line."

He also spoke of hopes for progress on the other negotiating tracks with Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon.

"Our negotiations with Syria have been serious. I called on (Syrian President Hafez) Assad, and call upon him once again, to walk an extra mile in order to meet us on the road for peace," Rabin said.

**'Cherish Your Judaism'**

The prime minister praised AIPAC, calling it "the spearhead of the special relations between Washington and Jerusalem."

He also spoke of the importance of Jewish tradition in the United States.

"My message to you and through you, to all the Jewish homes in America, is, 'cherish your Judaism and strengthen it,' " the prime minister said. "We are so few in the world and each one of you represents the hope of our people."

After his address to the AIPAC conference, Rabin headed for meetings at the State Department with Secretary of State Warren Christopher, and at the Pentagon with Defense Secretary William Perry.

Rabin, who last visited Washington in November, was scheduled to meet with President Clinton at the White House on Wednesday.

Rabin's address ended a three-day AIPAC conference that also featured remarks by Vice President Al Gore, House Minority Whip Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.), Sens. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa) and Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.), Israeli Ambassador to Washington Itamar Rabinovich, and Egyptian Ambassador to Washington Ahmed Maher El-Sayed, among others.

Speakers addressed both the promise emanating from last September's Israeli-PLO accord, as well as the problems ensuing from the killings in Hebron.

The conference also featured the first address from new AIPAC Executive Director Neal Sher, who previously headed the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations.

Sher told the audience that he considered his new position "the pinnacle of my life's work.

It is the logical extension of my background and experience."

The conference participants also spent time lobbying their senators and representatives on foreign aid and other issues.

The issue of Jerusalem, while only one of many topics under discussion in the massive Sheraton Hotel ballroom, seemed to loom over all the other issues, including foreign aid and the peace process.

At a meeting Sunday at the White House with President Clinton, Sher and AIPAC President Steve Grossman told Clinton that AIPAC strongly opposed any formulation equating Jerusalem with occupied territory, and that AIPAC believed that Jerusalem is the eternal and undivided capital of Israel.

Grossman said the two AIPAC leaders reminded Clinton of his own previous statements, and of the wording of the 1992 Democratic Party platform, which are in agreement with the AIPAC position. Clinton responded that that policy was still correct, according to Grossman.

AIPAC did not take the option of urging a U.S. veto of the proposed U.N. resolution.

Some boos rang out in the room Sunday night as Grossman responded to a question about AIPAC's tactics on this issue.

Both Sunday night and at a press briefing Tuesday morning, Grossman said that AIPAC's executive committee had debated the issue and decided against urging a veto, choosing instead to voice opposition to the proposed language with administration officials and members of Congress.

"The members felt this was the most appropriate way" to express their feelings, Grossman told reporters Tuesday.

#### **IDF BRASS MEETS WITH HEBRON ARABS**

By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, March 15 (JTA) -- In a move clearly intended to defuse some of the tension that has been at boiling point since an Israeli settler slaughtered at least 29 Arabs in Hebron last month, senior commanders of the Israel Defense Force have met with Arab leaders in that West Bank city.

In the meeting, which took place Tuesday, the Arab leaders aired their fears and grievances, many of which revolve around the curfew that has remained in place since the killings.

Palestinians are seething with anger as they are forced to remain indoors for lengthy periods, and have often exploded in rage in the couple of hours set aside to allow them to go outside to do necessary shopping for household needs, such as food.

Other meetings aimed at mutual understanding have taken place, as well.

In the Knesset, Labor Party doves hosted four Gaza Strip leaders of the Palestine Liberation Organization, all of whom have been imprisoned by the authorities for terrorism.

The PLO leaders declared their belief in the peace process and their support for it.

In their discussion with the Knesset members, they called for the dismantling of Jewish settlements in Gaza.

Rafael Eitan, leader of the Tsomet opposition party, called the meeting a "shameful crawling to the PLO."

#### **ARAB ISRAELIS WHO VISITED ASSAD MEET WITH COOL RECEPTION AT HOME**

By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, March 15 (JTA) -- After being warmly greeted in Damascus, the head of a delegation of Israeli Arabs who paid a visit to Syrian President Hafez Assad received a decidedly cool reception on his return home.

The 57-man delegation's four-day trip made history as the first Israeli mission to travel officially to Syria.

But Knesset member Abdel Wahab Darawshe of the Arab Democratic Party raised hackles back home in comments going far beyond expressing sympathy on the death of Assad's son in a traffic accident a few weeks ago.

"Would that the position of Arabs in Israel resembled the position of the Jews in Syria," Darawshe said to journalists in Damascus. He extolled Syria, under its "very popular and beloved leader," Assad, as "a stronghold of liberty."

And if Darawshe offended Israeli Jews, he did no better with other Israeli Arab political leaders. The council of heads of Arab municipalities was furious with him for claiming in Syria that he represented Palestinian Arabs, when, as they saw it, he and his fellow-travelers were self-appointed and represented only themselves in the trip to Syria.

An indirect telephone hook-up enabled members of the delegation and an Israel Radio journalist accompanying them to report on every stage of their visit. They were given the red-carpet treatment and allowed full freedom of movement.

One delegation member used the visit to be reunited with his brother from whom he has been separated since Israel's War of Independence in 1948.

#### **ISRAEL APPOINTS ENVOY TO U.S. LATINO COMMUNITY**

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, March 15 (JTA) -- The Latino community in the United States, which has been growing steadily in demographic and political strength, now has its own Israeli envoy.

He is Avraham Setton, who recently visited southern Florida and Los Angeles to inform his new constituency about the Middle East peace process and to meet with Hispanic leaders and the Spanish-language media.

In part, said Setton, he hopes that the Latino community in this country will serve as a bridge for Israel to the countries of Latin America.

But the community is of considerable importance in its own right, he added. Latinos, mainly from Mexico, Central America, Cuba and Puerto Rico, now make up 9 percent of the U.S. population, or roughly 22.5 million people. The percentage is expected to rise to 13 percent by the beginning of the next century.

Setton said he found an intense interest in Israel on the part of the Hispanic media in Florida and California, based on the biblical link to Christianity, a general interest in foreign countries and Israel's specific expertise in immigrant absorption, language instruction and health care.

## LUBAVITCH CAMP OUT NEAR HOSPITAL TO PRAY FOR THEIR REBBE'S RECOVERY

By Pamela Druckerman

NEW YORK, March 15 (JTA) -- Chesky Malamud flew home to New York from Paris but has only been to his parents' Crown Heights apartment long enough to take a shower.

The 20-year-old Malamud, who was sent as a Lubavitch emissary to France, is not in town for a family visit.

He is spending his nights at the old Stuyvesant High School in lower Manhattan, across the street from the Beth Israel Medical Center, where Rabbi Menachem Schneerson, spiritual leader of the Lubavitch Chasidic sect, lies in an intensive care unit.

"He's my life," Malamud said of the 91-year old Lubavitcher rebbe.

In their black coats and wide-brimmed fedoras, Malamud and others who have gathered to be near their ailing leader cut striking figures against the green metal lockers at the public high school building, where the overflow of visitors to nearby Beth Israel have set up their base.

As Schneerson struggles to recover from the massive stroke he suffered March 10 -- his second in the last two years -- the Lubavitchers are busy doing what they do best: maintaining their spiritual focus in the midst of less-than-idyllic surroundings. Just as they have organized Chabad outreach programs in unlikely settings from Uruguay to Tunisia, the movement has transformed the two-block area from First Avenue to Gramercy Park in front of Beth Israel into Lubavitch country.

Meals and sleeping accommodations, as well as daily prayer services and Torah readings, are arranged by organizers working around the clock.

While the heavily guarded seventh floor of the hospital is off-limits to all but an inner circle of aids, downstairs in the hospital's chapel or outside on the cordoned-off streets, supporters have camped out behind police barricades to pray and pass the time as they wait to bring the rebbe home.

### Wedding Was Moved To Be Near Rebbe

Rabbi Avraham Lider, an overheated Israeli with beads of sweat bristling through his reddish beard, is stage manager to the ground operation, issuing commands in Yiddish, English and Hebrew to clusters of black-hatted foot soldiers, on hand to manage the hundreds of devotees who come to pray for the rebbe's recovery.

Lider speaks proudly of this past Shabbat, when Lubavitch operatives managed to house and feed an estimated 700 well-wishers who came to the hospital, all according to strict observance of Jewish law. On Sunday, a Lubavitch wedding was moved from Crown Heights to Gramercy Park in order to be close to the rebbe.

In an interview this week, Lider was focused on the immediate logistical operation and did not want to talk about the rebbe's condition. "Don't ask me about the seventh floor," he said.

Even in the hospital lobby, animated young women who have stopped in after work to pray for the rebbe pass out outreach literature to unaffiliated Jews.

In the auditorium of the old Stuyvesant High School building, which is no longer used by the

school, young men pace the aisles with battered prayerbooks, nosh on kosher pizza or doze off on folding hardwood chairs.

Under banners urging on high school athletic teams, the Lubavitchers have moved in a holy ark to house the Torah scrolls used during Shabbat and weekday prayers.

Seventeen-year-old Yaakov Munitz has been hanging out in the auditorium reciting Psalm 92, in honor of the rebbe's being in his 92nd year. The young yeshiva student -- whose family was sent to Pittsburgh as Lubavitch emissaries -- explains his devotion to the rebbe with clear-headed deliberation.

"We have to get out of this galus, um, exile" he said, translating from the Orthodox vernacular into the language understood by outsiders, and referring to the biblical notion that the Jewish people will be led by the Messiah from their current state of exile.

Like many who have gathered to be near the rebbe, Munitz is not happy that Schneerson may be suffering but he is certain that a recovery, and then the rebbe's revelation as the Messiah, is imminent.

"There's no way that anything could happen" to the rebbe, Munitz said. "I have no doubt."

"The rebbe is our father, for all practical purposes," explained Crown Heights Community Council Chairman Rabbi Joseph Spielman, in an interview following the rebbe's stroke Thursday.

But if fear and sadness is the expected response to the suffering of an ailing parent, the mood among followers gathered at the hospital this week was decidedly upbeat. And as the rebbe's prognosis improved, so did their spirits.

Eager to accommodate the rebbe, Beth Israel has set up a 24-hour hot line giving daily updates on the rebbe's condition. And Lubavitch spokesman Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky has been filing periodic statements on the rebbe's condition direct from the hospital's public affairs department.

Karen Zipern, the hospital's public affairs director, who described herself as a Reform Jew, said she has been impressed with the Lubavitch leadership's calm handling of the crisis, and with the outpourings of support and respect from the Lubavitch community.

And Zipern said she has started to learn about Chasidic philosophy. "To see all the devotion the rebbe brings out, makes you think twice -- maybe there is something to this after all."

### U.S. ASKED TO BAR GERMAN RIGHTIST

LOS ANGELES, March 15 (JTA) -- The Simon Wiesenthal Center has asked the U.S. Department of Justice to permanently bar Franz Schonhuber, leader of Germany's far-right Republican Party, from entering this country by putting his name on the U.S. "watch list."

Schonhuber, a former member of Hitler's elite Waffen SS, claimed he had been invited to speak next month before New York's prestigious Council on Foreign Relations. A senior official of the council denied that any such invitation had been extended, according to Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Wiesenthal Center.

Last week, the leaders of all German mainstream political parties refused to appear with Schonhuber in a televised debate.

**TOURISM IN ISRAEL OFF ONLY SLIGHTLY FOR PASSOVER DESPITE HEBRON SLAYINGS**  
By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM, March 15 (JTA) -- Israel's hotels will be full to overflowing during the upcoming Passover/Easter season, despite the slayings in Hebron last month, according to a tourism publication here.

According to a survey conducted by Travel News, a popular publication among those who work in Israel's tourism industry, the Hebron incident, in which a Jewish settler killed 29 Arabs, has had only a slight impact on holiday tourism.

In an article entitled "Incoming Tourism Has Not Been Hurt," the newsletter stated that "very few tourists have canceled their trip in the wake of the massacre."

Some individuals and groups have pulled out, including Christian pilgrims who had planned to spend Easter in the Holy Land, the article noted. And it added that there could be "some last-minute cancellations" if the security situation worsens.

"Some tourists who have made reservations are waiting to see what happens," the article said.

The fact that the tragedy has not resulted in a spate of cancellations has delighted tourism officials here, who had feared that tourists would stay away during the lucrative holiday season, much as they did before and during the January 1991 Persian Gulf War.

According to a Ministry of Tourism spokesman, Passover, which this year begins on March 26, and Easter, which this year falls on April 3, traditionally draw large numbers of visitors. Of the 1.9 million people who visited Israel last year, nearly 275,000 planned their trips to coincide with Passover and Easter, according to the ministry.

**'Reservations Are Looking Good'**

"So far, Pesach reservations are looking very good," said Fiona Semberg, spokeswoman for the King David Hotel in Jerusalem. "There have been a few cancellations, but we can't say they are definitely due to what happened in Hebron. We just hope and pray that nothing will happen to affect the situation tomorrow."

She noted, however, "that a large percentage of our guests come back year after year, and that many come during Pesach to visit their family living in Israel. They're not the kind of people who are likely to cancel, regardless of the security situation."

"We are very pleased at the low number of cancellations," agreed Sara Fitterman, owner of the Ambassador Travel Agency in Jerusalem. "As far as we can tell, Passover visits haven't been overly affected by the tragedy. In Jerusalem, at least 85 percent of the hotel rooms are booked. We expect 100 percent occupancy by Pesach."

While holiday reservations remain steady, Fitterman expressed concern over the long term. "There has been a slowdown in the number of reservations for May and June, and a few cancellations, mostly among Jewish groups and individuals from the United States and France.

"I have the feeling that many potential tourists are taking a wait-and-see attitude," she said.

**ISRAELI THEATER OWNERS INVITE TEENS, TEACHERS TO 'SCHINDLER'**  
By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM, March 15 (JTA) -- The Globus Group, a film production and distribution company best known for its blood-and-guts action flicks, took a more serious turn last week when it began inviting local teen-agers to watch Steven Spielberg's film "Schindler's List" in many of its 30 movie theaters.

Under a new project co-sponsored by Globus Group and the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial, thousands of Israeli students will have the opportunity to see the acclaimed film as part of their studies.

Globus had no connection to the film, which was produced by Spielberg's Amblin Entertainment and distributed by Universal Pictures.

According to the arrangement, which is being finalized with the Ministry of Education, Globus will open its theaters to high-school students and teachers several mornings a week.

Yad Vashem, which already runs an extensive Holocaust education program in cooperation with the school system, is preparing materials about the film and the events that inspired it.

Released here at the beginning of March, "Schindler's List" recounts the story of Oskar Schindler, a German industrialist who saved the lives of 1,100 Jews during the Holocaust.

**An Excellent Teaching Tool**

In 1973, Yad Vashem recognized Schindler as a Righteous Gentile. He is buried in Jerusalem, in the Christian cemetery on the Mount of Olives.

Though educators and Holocaust experts here view "Schindler's List" as an excellent teaching tool, they stress that it is just one of many in the arsenal of Holocaust education.

On average, Israeli high-school students spend several weeks studying the Holocaust. The curriculum includes the study of Holocaust films and literature, as well as field trips and discussions with Holocaust survivors.

In addition, about 1,000 Israeli teens travel to Poland to participate in the March of the Living, a semi-annual gathering in which Jewish youths from around the world visit concentration camps and towns and villages once inhabited by Jews.

Despite the high quality of Holocaust education in Israeli schools, "there is always more that can be learned," said Yad Vashem spokeswoman Billie Laniado.

"Even among Israelis, there are young people who are not close to the subject," she said. "They are not survivors; they are not even children of survivors."

"A film like this, which offers a very authentic view of the Holocaust, has a lot of educational value," Laniado said.

Laniado noted that "the subject of the Righteous Among the Nations teaches an important lesson.

True, she said, "Schindler's List" is a movie, "and it provides an optimistic view at times, but this makes the film easier to watch."

It is this optimism, she said, "that will ultimately draw people to the theater. What's the good of a Holocaust film if people can't bring themselves to see it?"