

**JEWISH OPPOSITION TO FARRAKHAN SEEMS TO UNITE BLACKS GATHERED FOR MEETING**

By Arthur J. Magida

Baltimore Jewish Times

BALTIMORE, June 15 (JTA) -- There was a silent, unstated subtext to the black leadership summit convened in Baltimore this week by the NAACP: The tensions and suspicions between blacks and Jews emanating from Minister Louis Farrakhan's presence at the top-level conclave.

The word "Jew" was never mentioned, but a string of veiled references to Jewish opposition pervaded every public session of the summit.

According to several delegates to the closed-door sessions, such allusions also dominated some of the private sessions as well.

The intensity -- and the importance -- which the black leaders attached to Jewish criticism of Farrakhan's participation at the summit was apparent at their last news conference, held on Tuesday evening.

Benjamin Chavis Jr., executive director of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, briefly announced that the 100-member summit had established three working committees to address broad goals for African Americans -- economic development, youth and community empowerment, and moral and spiritual renewal.

He then firmly stated, "Never again will we allow any external forces to dictate to the African American community who we will meet with. The life-and-death issues of our people are crucially important to us. We have locked arms and the circle will not be broken."

A few minutes later, as Farrakhan stood directly on his left and as members of the Nation of Islam's paramilitary security force, the Fruit of Islam, ringed the NAACP's campus in northwest Baltimore, Chavis referred to "threats" that had required summit organizers to "secure this compound. We did not let that intimidation and threats stop us."

**Victory Over 'Certain Forces'**

Presumably, Chavis was referring to protests from Jewish organizations, although these had been scheduled only for Sunday outside the NAACP's headquarters and for Monday outside the World Trade Center in downtown Baltimore, where Mayor Kurt Schmoke hosted a breakfast for summit participants.

Chavis declared "victory" over "certain forces that did not want us to meet here" and reiterated several times that black leaders spoke with a "united" voice.

In doing so, Chavis presented an image of black leaders who had vanquished external foes and, partly by doing so, had been given a focal point around which to coalesce in their battle against the problems plaguing the black community.

Chavis was the only summit participant who spoke at the news conference, although about 50 summit participants stood behind or alongside him.

The outcome of the summit dismayed Jewish

leaders, some of whom had hoped that, at a minimum, the conference would censure all bigotry and hate, regardless of its source.

"They set up a straw man," said Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League. "Instead of the real issues facing them, they set up the Jews as the unifying force."

"This is sad and pathetic. This says to me they couldn't agree on anything of substance," said Foxman. "The reason they got together was because their community is in crisis. The best they could do was to say they will meet again," which Chavis said summit members would do during the third week in August in Baltimore.

Arthur Abramson, executive director of the Baltimore Jewish Council, said, "It's initially too soon to assess what the summit does to black-Jewish relations. Nothing I've learned so far about its outcome helps black-Jewish relations any."

"If the theme that's offered is the one stated a number of times by Minister Farrakhan -- that his community's problems are due to 'enemies' out there -- then clearly the summit will have been largely still-born, at least in alleviating the plight of African Americans," he said.

Yet, neither Foxman nor Abramson was ready to foreclose future dialogue or working relationships with black leaders or black organizations, even those who had participated in the summit.

In a statement issued last Friday, the ADL affirmed that it "remains committed to working with the NAACP and other organizations toward a society free of prejudice and racism." Foxman further elaborated to the Baltimore Jewish Times that blacks and Jews "can together help resolve racism that plagues both the black and Jewish worlds."

**Farrakhan's Presence Was A Magnet**

Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles, said that although Chavis "has done an enormous disservice" to African Americans, "we have to engage in dialogue with blacks: They're our neighbors. But we'd be fools to close our eyes to the fact that a lot of black leaders are afraid to take on Farrakhan."

Throughout the two-and-a-half-day summit, which began Sunday, Farrakhan's presence -- and the heat swirling around it -- was a magnet for both the press and other conference leaders.

At a nationally televised town meeting on Monday, the Rev. Al Sharpton, the black leader from New York, suggested that no one attending the summit had been compromised by Farrakhan's participation.

During World War II, he said, President Franklin Roosevelt and Soviet leader Joseph Stalin had been allies because "their worlds were in crisis. But Roosevelt did not become a communist."

Repeatedly, African Americans' crisis was upheld as the final standard that would determine black leaders' allies. When asked at the town meeting about the criticism he had received when

he entered into a "sacred covenant" with the Nation of Islam last fall as head of the Congressional Black Caucus, Rep. Kweisi Mfume (D-Md.) said, "When I reached out, I was called many things -- an anti-Semite, a hate-monger.

"We agree that anti-Semitism is wrong, that homophobia is wrong," Mfume said. "I was responding to pain (that blacks suffer). We want to build a bridge over troubled waters."

Sunday's protest against Farrakhan's involvement at the summit highlighted Jewish ire at the Nation of Islam leader. It also underscored the irony that such external threats are one of the few glues that can bring together a divided Jewish community.

Organized by Michael Lerner, editor of *Tikkun*, the New York-based Jewish progressive magazine, the rally attracted about 65 protesters, including Michael Meyers, formerly an assistant director of the NAACP and now executive director of the New York Civil Rights Coalition.

"The founders of the NAACP are turning over in their graves," said Meyers about the nation's oldest civil rights organization embracing Farrakhan.

In mid-afternoon, the protesters were joined by Avi Weiss, the right-wing Riverdale, N.Y., rabbi who heads Amcha: The Coalition for Jewish Concerns. He carried a placard reading: "Shame On The NAACP For Embracing A Racist."

For much of the protest, Lerner was heckled by Irv Rubin, national chairman of the Jewish Defense League who chanted, "Michael Lerner is a left-wing, self-hating Jew," Rubin said -- "and a three-dollar phoney. He doesn't represent Jews. He represents Arabs."

Rubin said he had flown in from Los Angeles to convince Jews at the rally that Farrakhan was softening his views on Jews.

On Monday morning, Weiss led about 25 supporters in a protest outside the World Trade Center in downtown Baltimore. As he walked by the protesters, the Rev. Jesse Jackson shook Weiss' hand and said, "Thank you for coming."

Later in the day, Jackson said it was possible to have disagreement without confrontation.

*(Contributing to this report were editor Michael Davis and assistant editor Alan Feiler.)*

#### U.S. OFFICIAL CONFIRMS POSSIBILITY OF U.S. TROOPS SERVING ON THE GOLAN

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, June 15 (JTA) -- The United States would consider sending peacekeeping troops to the Golan Heights if Syria and Israel request their presence as part of any future peace accord.

"If both parties wish the United States to be part of security arrangements on the Golan within an international context, we would consider such an action," Robert Pelletreau, assistant secretary of state for Near East affairs, told the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East at a hearing on Tuesday.

"It would be premature at this point to say specifically that United States forces might be stationed on the Golan," Pelletreau said.

But, he added, "there is an expectation by both the parties" of a U.S. presence on the Golan in the event of a peace agreement.

Pelletreau's remarks came one week after some right-wing Jewish groups joined forces with

Christian Zionists in an effort to derail any potential Israeli-Syrian peace agreement that would involve Israeli withdrawal from the Golan.

The group, calling itself the Coalition for a Secure U.S.-Israel Friendship, was pushing an amendment on Capitol Hill last week that would impose burdensome restrictions on U.S. peacekeeping operations on the Golan.

Although unsuccessful in getting their amendment introduced through the Senate Armed Services Committee last week, the coalition says it hopes to find a senator to introduce the measure during floor debate on the defense authorization bill later this summer.

The coalition, which includes such groups as Americans for a Safe Israel, Jewish War Veterans and the Christians' Israel Public Action Campaign, sponsored a full-page advertisement in *The New York Times* last week.

The ad, intended to encourage public opposition to U.S. forces on the Golan, showed a photograph of the mutilated body of an American soldier in Somalia.

Responding to Pelletreau's remarks this week, AFSI Executive Director Herbert Zweibon reiterated his opposition to sending any troops to the Golan.

Such action "would send a dangerous message to the citizens of Israel that our troops on the Golan guarantee there would be no attack," Zweibon said. "That is simply not true."

Tom Smerling, executive director of Project Nishma, a Jewish group that supports the current peace process, criticized the coalition for its approach.

"The whole issue of American troops on the Golan is a Trojan Horse for people opposed to a deal with Syria.

"It's premature and it's disingenuous," Smerling said. "Instead of debating the merits of compromise with the Golan they are trying to make an end run around the Israeli government."

Also during his testimony, Pelletreau responded to a question about Jerusalem in the wake of recent statements by Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat that Jerusalem will be the capital of a future "Palestine."

Echoing President Clinton's comments after a March meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, the assistant secretary of state said the status of Jerusalem "will only be decided between Israel and the Palestinians in the final status talks," which are slated to begin within two years.

#### IDF FIRED ON IN HEBRON

By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, June 15 (JTA) -- Militant Palestinians fired on an Israel Defense Force vehicle and on a car belonging to the Shin Bet internal security service in the West Bank town of Hebron on Tuesday.

An Israeli soldier was slightly injured in the attack, which was launched by members of the Izz a-Din al-Kassam, the armed wing of the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement.

The incident took place at a time when Israel was initiating measures to ease tensions in Hebron, which has been a hotbed of unrest since the Feb. 25 massacre of at least 29 Palestinians at a local mosque by an Israeli settler.

**KNESSET PASSES LANDMARK HEALTH PLAN THAT PROVIDES COVERAGE TO ALL CITIZENS**  
By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, June 15 (JTA) -- Following 22 hours of deliberations, the Knesset on Wednesday passed into law a national health insurance plan that will insure all Israeli citizens.

The Knesset voted 68 to 0, with 27 abstentions from the Likud benches.

Amir Peretz, chairman of the Knesset committee that steered through the law, described the new health legislation as "the bill of rights of the Israeli citizen."

The national health insurance law, which has been decades in the making, has not been without its share of controversy.

A strong backer of health reform, Chaim Ramon stepped down as health minister in late January when the Cabinet rejected an original form of the bill.

The Cabinet at that time had not wanted to break the link between the Histadrut trade union federation and the Kupat Holim Clalit, or General Sick Fund, the country's largest health maintenance organization, which currently insures some 70 percent of the Israeli population.

But Ramon then left the Labor Party to run for the post of secretary general of the Histadrut. When he won that nationwide election, he succeeded in ousting the Labor Party from its traditional control of the federation.

Wednesday's Knesset vote, which provided a second victory for Ramon, will break Histadrut's hold over the country's health services, a hold it has enjoyed since pre-State days.

That control often forced large segments of the population to retain union membership in order to gain health insurance.

The linkage between Histadrut and Kupat Holim also led to a situation in which the government was forced to subsidize trade union health care without being able to exercise control over how monies were spent.

That state of affairs came to a crisis in recent days, when Kupat Holim was reported on the verge of bankruptcy.

The government, in turn, found itself caught between its responsibility to see that millions of Israelis were not left without health services and a reluctance to bail out the fund.

**RABIN SAYS PRISONERS WON'T BE FREED IF PALESTINIANS TRY COLLABORATORS**  
By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, June 15 (JTA) -- Touring areas near the autonomous Jericho district in the West Bank this week, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin indicated that Israel might hold up the release of Palestinian prisoners if the Palestinian authorities decide to prosecute suspected collaborators with Israel.

Speaking to reporters during a tour of the Jordan Valley area on Tuesday, Rabin stated that arrests of Palestinians suspected of collaborating with Israel represented a clear violation of the May 4 Cairo agreement for implementing Palestinian self-rule in Jericho and the Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian police are said to have rounded up some 70 suspected collaborators in the month since the start of autonomy in Gaza and

Jericho. Earlier in the week a senior official in the provisional Palestinian government reportedly said that anyone convicted of collaborating with Israel would be subject to the death penalty.

Commenting on the report, Rabin said that the imposition of the death penalty was the Palestinians' decision.

But he added that the arrest and punishment of collaborators stood in direct opposition to the terms of the Cairo agreement.

And he hinted broadly that any such action would have a negative impact on the future release of Palestinians currently in Israeli jails.

Preparations were meanwhile under way in Gaza and Jericho to receive several hundred prisoners whom Israel will be releasing soon.

Last week, the release of 287 prisoners whose homes were in West Bank areas not under Palestinian autonomy resulted in a dispute over an Israeli demand that the prisoners remain in the Jericho district until the end of their prison terms.

Palestinian police officials initially balked at the demand, and two top security officers were summoned to Palestine Liberation Organization headquarters in Tunis to discuss the issue.

But this week, according to a report on Israel Radio, the Palestinians were apparently complying with the Israeli demand.

During a tour of military installations close to the Jericho autonomous area, Rabin met with Palestinian police for the first time since the start of self-rule a month ago.

He later expressed satisfaction with the level of cooperation between the Israel Defense Force and the Palestinian police.

"It works, but it's all in the earliest possible stages. Things are being worked out as they happen.

"Meanwhile, the will to find solutions to problems is there. Time will test the ability of the other side to carry out all it has undertaken to do," said Rabin.

**NON-ORTHODOX MOVEMENTS WIN VICTORY**  
By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, June 15 (JTA) -- The High Court of Justice ruled this week that the Ministry of Religious Affairs must allocate grants to the Reform and Conservative movements in Israel.

The ruling came down Tuesday following a petition filed before the court by the two movements alleging that they suffered discrimination at the hands of the Religious Affairs Ministry, which they said has provided grants only to Orthodox organizations.

At stake in the ruling were sums in excess of some \$300,000, which must now be distributed to the Conservative and Reform movements.

The Reform and Conservative movements run thriving congregations in different parts of the country and organize training programs for rabbis from abroad, who often must study in Israel before qualifying for leadership positions.

Rabbi Ehud Bandel, a spokesman for the Conservative movement, described the court ruling as "a big step forward in the direction of religious pluralism in Israel, especially at a time when (the Sephardic Orthodox party) Shas is trying to anchor the discriminatory status quo in religious matters in legislation."

**SIX MONTHS AFTER HISTORIC AGREEMENT,  
ISRAEL AND VATICAN TO EXCHANGE ENVOYS**  
By Dvora Getzler

JERUSALEM, June 15 (JTA) -- Six months after Israel and the Vatican agreed to establish full diplomatic relations, the two states announced this week they would exchange ambassadors in the near future.

Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said he and Vatican envoy Archbishop Andrea Cordero de Montezemolo had signed the agreement to exchange ambassadors on Tuesday.

The two sides had signed a mutual recognition agreement on Dec. 30, but had delayed establishing full diplomatic ties until final details were worked out.

Shmuel Hadas and Montezemolo, special envoys for Israel and the Vatican, respectively, since the signing of the accord, will serve as acting ambassadors until formal appointments are made, according to Beilin.

Beilin said the Holy See would now play an active role in all negotiations concerning the future of the holy sites in Jerusalem.

The establishment of full ties between the two states ended a process of negotiations that began in 1992, when Israel and the Vatican created a bilateral commission for normalizing relations.

The Vatican's embassy in Israel is expected to be set up in Jaffa, while the Israeli Embassy will be in Rome.

Edgar Bronfman, chairman of the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, expressed satisfaction over the formalization of relations.

"This achievement marks a turning point in the relations of the Jewish people and the Catholic Church and is the culmination of an effort some 46 years in the making to effect better relations between Catholics and Jews," he said.

"We look forward to further advancement of good relations between the Jews and the Vatican in our common struggle against anti-Semitism, hatred, bigotry all over the world and for the achievement of human rights for all without regard to race, creed or religious belief."

**FACTIOUS ITALIAN PARLIAMENT SPEAKER  
HOLDS MEETING WITH ROME'S CHIEF RABBI**  
By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, June 15 (JTA) -- Irene Pivetti, the speaker of Italy's Chamber of Deputies who has been accused of being anti-Semitic, has met with Rome Chief Rabbi Elio Toaff in an ongoing effort to improve her image.

Pivetti, who met with Toaff on Tuesday, also met recently with Israeli Ambassador Avi Pazner.

A communique issued by Pivetti's office following her half-hour meeting with Toaff described the get-together as "very cordial."

"We offered to collaborate on the common problems of the faithful in Italy, and hope that today's meeting will be the first in a long series of encounters," Toaff told reporters.

The rabbi said the talks dealt with problems encountered by various religions in Italy.

"It was easy to find common ground," he said.

Sources in the Jewish community said the

controversy over Pivetti's past statements that were perceived as anti-Semitic did not arise during the meeting.

The 31-year-old Pivetti, a staunchly conservative Roman Catholic, became speaker of the Chamber of Deputies in April and has since faced sharp criticism for attitudes seen as anti-Semitic, anti-feminist and in opposition to interfaith dialogue.

Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin raised the issue last week when he criticized Italy for including Cabinet ministers from the National Alliance, whose core party is the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement.

The Israeli ambassador to Italy, Avi Pazner, met last week with Italian Foreign Minister Antonio Martino and explained to him the concerns raised in Israel by the inclusion of National Alliance ministers in the Italian government.

Officials of the two countries stressed that the two states maintain warm links despite the neo-fascist presence in the Italian government.

**JAPANESE PUBLISHER RECALLS NEW BOOK  
WHICH EXTOLS HITLER'S ELECTION METHODS**  
By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, June 15 (JTA) -- In the face of substantial international criticism, a Japanese publisher has recalled a book released last week that extols Adolf Hitler's political methods.

The publisher of the book, "Hitler Election Strategy: A Bible for Certain Victory in Modern Elections," also said he is retiring.

Eiichi Niimura, the publisher, told The New York Times, "I am 76 years old. This incident has made me think my judgment has declined."

He said he had been asked to recall the book by its author, Yoshio Ogai, a public relations official of Japan's largest political party, the Liberal Democrats.

In the book, the author describes Hitler's manner of concentrating power as "very important teachings," but does not deal with Hitler's policies toward Jews or the fact that Hitler was a dictator.

Neil Sandler, director of the Pacific Rim Institute of the American Jewish Committee in Los Angeles, said the book's recall "indicates that Japan is becoming increasingly sensitive to American and world opinion."

He said publication of the book "was an outrageous action and indicated extraordinary insensitivity on the part of the (Liberal Democratic Party) official and the publisher.

"At this point, we would like to see a clear and unequivocal apology from the author of the book," he said.

Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, also in Los Angeles, termed the recall "a very important development.

"The main concern about a book like this is who wrote it and published it. In Japan, very little happens by accident," Cooper said.

The Wiesenthal Center is currently showing an exhibit on the Holocaust in Japan, and it has drawn tens of thousands of viewers, Cooper said.

"You have a tremendous curiosity about that era" in Japan, Cooper said.

But he questioned "who is going to be educating the public? All 3,000 copies of the book were sold out at the major Tokyo bookstores."