

**IN FIRST U.S. ADDRESS, ZHIRINOVSKY TRIES TO DISPEL ANTI-SEMITIC IMAGE**

By David Miller

Northern California Jewish Bulletin

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 8 (JTA) -- In his first public appearance before an American audience, Russian ultranationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy tried to recast himself as a moderate politician whose controversial statements against Jews and other minorities have been misconstrued.

As hundreds of demonstrators rallied outside the downtown San Francisco hotel where he spoke Monday night, Zhirinovskiy repeatedly denied that he or his Liberal Democratic Party stands for extremism of any kind.

"We have no radical views of anything," he said. "We have only radical views of what should be done in this situation" to solve problems in Russia.

Zhirinovskiy, whose party shocked the world last December when it captured 23 percent of the vote in parliamentary elections, has been quoted as saying that he blames the Jews for the downfall of the Soviet state as well as for starting both world wars.

His much-maligned rhetoric also has included a pledge to "follow in Hitler's footsteps," as well as a desire to recapture former lands of the Soviet Union, creating a vast empire stretching from the Arctic Circle to the Indian Ocean.

Speaking in San Francisco on the eve of elections in this country, the ultranationalist leader made every attempt to disavow those statements.

Sounding like an American politician eager to soften his message, he rejected claims that he or his party promotes anti-Semitism. He blamed his bad reputation on inaccurate media reports.

'You In America Are Totally Misled'

"Anti-Semitism is not in the program of our party, but this is the real life in Russia," he said through an interpreter. "We are strongly opposed to it and we are struggling against it."

While toning down his remarks towards Jews and other groups, Zhirinovskiy reserved his harshest criticism for Russia's leaders, who he charged are leading the country into political and economic chaos.

"You in America are totally misled by supporting those in Russia who are on the verge of civil war," he said.

Presenting himself as Russia's last great hope, he promised to rid the country of corruption, reform its banking system and put its economy on track. However, he offered no specifics about how he would accomplish these goals.

While he was speaking, some 800 demonstrators -- including members of Jewish groups, members of the clergy, politicians and Russian emigres -- lined the block of New Montgomery Street outside the Sheraton Palace Hotel, waving signs and chanting slogans.

Rabbi Doug Kahn, executive director of the San Francisco Jewish Community Relations Council and a protest organizer, said after Zhirinovskiy's

speech that he was not surprised by the Russian politician's remarks.

"We were concerned from the outset that he would try to use his visit to the United States to try to project a reasonable, moderate image," Kahn said.

"We know based on documented proof that nothing could be further from the truth. He is a fascist, an anti-Semite, a racist, and now he is a liar."

Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), who also attended the protest, charged that Zhirinovskiy was trying to fool the American public.

"We can't let him have the last laugh and go back to Russia and say, 'I fooled them,'" she said.

Richard Sideman, a member of the executive committee of the board of governors of the American Jewish Committee, said Zhirinovskiy was not even directing his comments to his American audience.

"He was trying to create a dignified picture of an important statesman for Russia, and that is exactly what he did," said Sideman.

The World Affairs Council invited him to speak in San Francisco as part of its scheduled program of speakers, but not without drawing fire from community leaders.

David Fischer, the organization's president, said after Zhirinovskiy's talk that "this has been a difficult period for the council." However, he added, "I believe we have defended the principles of free speech."

Zhirinovskiy's visit to the United States was shrouded in controversy from the moment he applied for a visa more than a month ago. The U.S. State Department granted that request last week after considerable opposition from Jewish groups.

He is scheduled to address the United Nations Correspondents Association in New York on Wednesday.

(Natalie Weinstein of the Northern California Jewish Bulletin contributed to this report.)

RABIN AGREES TO EXTEND SELF-RULE AMID CONCERN OVER ARAFAT'S STATUS

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Nov. 8 (JTA) -- Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat this week agreed to extend Palestinian authority throughout the West Bank in four key areas of civilian affairs.

After conferring for two hours at the Erez crossing between the Gaza Strip and Israel on Tuesday, the two leaders agreed to give Palestinians in the West Bank control over welfare and tourism by Nov. 15. Responsibilities for health and taxation would be transferred by the end of November.

The Palestinians assumed control over education, the fifth area of the so-called "early empowerment" in the West Bank, at the start of the school year in September.

The meeting at Erez took place amid growing concern over Arafat's stature among Palestin-

ians, particularly in the wake of Israel's demands that the Palestinian Authority crack down on Islamic militants who carry out attacks against Israelis.

Before the meeting, senior Israeli officials reportedly advised Rabin to make concessions to Arafat, who has been criticized by growing numbers of Palestinians for making what they say are too many concessions to Israel with little in return to show for it.

"There is no doubt that his situation is not easy, and more and more problems are being heaped upon him," Environment Minister Yossi Sarid, who participated in the talks, told army radio.

The extension of early empowerment had been delayed because of a lack of promised funding from foreign donor nations. Rabin said at a joint news conference with Arafat that the promised funds would be available by the end of the month.

Rabin and Arafat also agreed to resume negotiations for further implementation of the Palestinian self-rule accord in two weeks.

Topping the negotiating agenda will be the twin issues of Palestinian elections and the concurrent withdrawal of Israeli troops from Arab population centers in the West Bank.

The two sides also agreed to further ease the closure that had been imposed on Gaza and the West Bank after an Oct. 19 bus bombing in Tel Aviv that killed 23 people.

More Palestinians To Get Work Permits

In response to Palestinian pressure, Israel agreed to issue work permits to an additional 10,000 Palestinian workers in construction and agriculture.

Some 8,000 permits were issued last week following a partial lifting of the closure on the territories.

Rabin said at the news conference that the upcoming negotiations would touch on some difficult issues, especially security in the West Bank after an Israeli troop withdrawal.

"It will be complex negotiations in which Israel will have to ensure all elements of security," Rabin said. "I can't say how many months the negotiations will take."

Arafat said he hoped the delays that have plagued implementation of the self-rule accord would be overcome.

"We hope in this atmosphere and in this attitude we will follow up accurately and honestly what we have agreed upon," he said.

Neither Rabin nor Arafat would disclose whether they talked about cracking down on the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement, which claimed responsibility for a series of recent terror attacks on Israelis, including the Tel Aviv bus bombing.

But Arafat told reporters, "We will work against any element that is trying to stop the peace process."

Arafat also said he supported the Oct. 26 Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty, adding the hope that agreements would soon be reached with Syria and Lebanon.

At the time of the treaty, Arafat had lashed out at the agreement, particularly for its recognition of Jordan's historic role as guardian of the Muslim holy sites in Jerusalem.

IN YET ANOTHER FIRST, JORDAN'S KING PLANS FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO ISRAEL

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, Nov. 8 (JTA) -- King Hussein is expected to make his first official visit to Israel later this week.

The Jordanian monarch and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin are scheduled to take part in a ceremony Thursday marking the opening of a northern border crossing between Israel and Jordan.

The crossing at the rebuilt Sheik Hussein Bridge, located south of the Sea of Galilee near Kibbutz Maoz Haim, is the second border crossing to be opened under the terms of the July 25 Washington Declaration, which officially brought to an end the 46-year state of war between the two countries.

The first crossing, located near the Red Sea cities of Eilat and Aqaba, was opened Aug. 8. Another crossing, the Allenby Bridge, links Jordan with the West Bank but is not considered an official border crossing.

Following the ceremony, Hussein is reportedly expected to visit Beit Gavriel, a guest house on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Several kibbutzim in the Bet She'an Valley said they also hoped to host the king.

On Tuesday, President Ezer Weizman officially signed the Oct. 26 Israeli-Jordanian peace treaty, which opened the way to diplomatic, economic and cultural exchanges between the two countries.

The Knesset approved the treaty on Oct. 25; the Israeli Cabinet and the lower house of the Jordanian Parliament gave their approval on Sunday.

Under Israeli law, Israel's president, not the prime minister, is required to put the final signature on ratified treaties.

Israel and Jordan are expected to open embassies in each other's countries before the end of the month.

SOLDIER SETS OFF ON JOY RIDE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Nov. 8 (JTA) -- A disgruntled army mechanic commandeered a tank from his training base near Ashdod on Sunday night and went for a 12-mile joy ride that ended when he swerved into a muddy ditch.

Sgt. Amit Nechemia, 19, of Yahud, had been on guard duty when he drove the tank off the base, setting off on a spree that drew large numbers of police and soldiers.

Nechemia drove the tank into the ditch after he hit a bus, lightly injuring nine people, including the driver.

After a standoff with police that lasted nearly four hours, Nechemia surrendered and is currently being held by military police.

Nechemia told police he had taken the tank to protest what he described as the "insulting behavior" of his senior officers in the repair and maintenance depot, who he said had humiliated and discriminated against him.

Maj. Gen. Ilan Biran, the commander of the central sector, appointed a commission of inquiry on Monday to look into the circumstances surrounding the incident.

SURVEY FINDS JEWISH EDUCATORS ARE COMMITTED, BUT NOT TRAINED FOR FIELD

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Nov. 8 (JTA) -- Finally, some good news about the state of Jewish education: Most teachers in Hebrew schools, day schools and Jewish preschools see their job as a career, even if they are only working part-time.

That is one finding of a study, conducted by the Council for Initiatives in Jewish Education, based on questionnaires filled out by more than 80 percent of the Jewish educators in Atlanta, Baltimore and Milwaukee.

The study also found, however, that only a small percentage of those teachers had any formal training as Jewish educators.

"This goes part of the way to explain why people's supplementary (Hebrew school) experience was the way it was," said Alan Hoffman, executive director of CIJE.

Taken together, Hoffman insists the twin findings "offer a huge opportunity for the Jewish community.

"You have teachers in classrooms for whom investment in their professional backgrounds, both as educators and as Jews, will have immediate payoff," he said.

Currently, according to the survey, day school teachers receive only a sixth the amount of continuing education as Wisconsin mandates for public school teachers.

Most of the supplementary school teachers have had little or no Jewish education since their Bar or Bat Mitzvah. And the majority of preschool educators had no more than one day a week of Jewish education as children.

In the three cities surveyed, discussion has already begun on what to do in light of the data. One emerging possibility is the creation of master's degree programs in Jewish education in communities which now lack them.

Such moves toward professionalizing Jewish education will be boosted by the survey, which dispels an image of Jewish educators as transient.

Less Than A Third Trained In Jewish Studies

The survey found that two-thirds of the educators had been teaching for more than five years. Even among part-time teachers, more than half consider Jewish education their profession. Only 7 percent are Israeli, dispelling another common myth about these educators.

But only 31 percent of the teachers had been trained in Jewish studies, and just more than half had professional education training. A third had training in neither field.

The 983 teachers surveyed, 84 percent of whom were women, were almost evenly divided between day school, supplementary school, and preschool teachers.

The survey was conducted by Adam Gamoran, professor of sociology and educational policy studies at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, and Ellen Goldring, professor of educational leadership and associate dean of Peabody College of Education, Vanderbilt University.

The survey was undertaken as part of CIJE's Lead Communities Project, which aimed to use the Jewish educational systems in the three communities as laboratories for revamping Jewish education. Hoffman believes that the results can

be generalized across North America, noting the similarity of the results in the different cities -- as well as their similarities to previous studies of Jewish teachers in Miami and Los Angeles.

Improving teacher training has been a central mandate for CIJE, which was created in 1990 as an outgrowth of the Commission on Jewish Education in North America.

Headed by Morton Mandel, a billionaire Cleveland industrialist and former president of the Council of Jewish Federations, the commission had warned in its final report of "a shortage of well-trained and dedicated educators for every phase of Jewish education."

The new survey will be officially released at the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations, being held in Denver next week.

Mandel, whose foundation largely funds CIJE, will present the survey along with the researchers and Israeli Education Minister Amnon Rubinstein.

CIJE officials hope that against the backdrop of continuing concerns over Jewish continuity in America, and the endorsement of that agenda by Israeli officials, the time has come for American Jews to turn their Jewish educational system around.

Rita Wiseman, principal of Baltimore's Beth Tfiloh Hebrew School, agrees that training makes a difference in the caliber of teachers.

One-Shot Workshops Not The Solution

"You can only impart as much knowledge as you have," said Wiseman, who taught Hebrew school for 25 years before becoming principal this year.

While supplementary school teachers are less likely to have general education training than their day school or preschool counterparts, nonetheless 41 percent have a university degree in education.

Sixty-two percent of preschool teachers, and 60 percent of day school educators, have a degree in education.

But if Jewish educators start off with a degree, they can expect little professional support for their continuing education.

The officials at CIJE say that one-shot workshops are not the solution.

"One has to target specific populations and think of systematic training that has norms and standards built into it," said Hoffman.

One finding that particularly disturbed the CIJE researchers was the clear gap in Jewish background among the preschool teachers.

Since Jewish preschool education is being hailed as a great way of getting parents involved in the Jewish community, the findings indicate that an opportunity is being squandered.

"Parents of young children will send their kids to Jewish settings not only because they're Jewish but because they have heard the best early childhood program happens to be in the synagogue down my street," explained Barry Holtz, senior education officer at CIJE.

But the goal of turning the Jewish preschools into a "holistic Jewish education" runs up against the fact that more than half the preschool educators had no Jewish education after age 13.

For Hoffman, this is one more reason for the Jewish community to take to heart the powerful lesson that "if one invests in teachers, that pays very high dividends."

NEWS ANALYSIS:

DESPITE ATTEMPTS TO IGNORE JERUSALEM, A SHOWDOWN APPEARS ALMOST INEVITABLE By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Nov. 8 (JTA) -- When Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat met on the Israeli-Gaza border this week, the two men seemed determined to squeeze the genie of Jerusalem back into its bottle.

The Rabin-Arafat meeting came after a weekend of diplomatic turbulence triggered by Turkish Prime Minister Tansu Ciller's visit Saturday to Orient House, the seat of Palestinian political activities in eastern Jerusalem.

Rabin and Arafat pointedly avoided the issue of the holy city, focusing instead on upcoming negotiations for the extension of the Palestinian self-rule accord to the entire West Bank.

In the original 1993 self-rule accord, the question of Jerusalem was deferred to the permanent-status talks, due to begin in 1996.

But the issue of Jerusalem periodically forces itself to the forefront of the peace agenda -- as it did this weekend -- invariably raising temperatures and tensions.

Despite Rabin and Arafat's attempt to ease the current round of tension by ignoring it, political observers on both sides suggest that the issue is not likely to fade away until the time for the permanent-status talks arrive.

As if to underscore this ominous prognosis, Faisal Husseini, the PLO's leading official in eastern Jerusalem, warned Israelis this week that if the Israeli government moved to close down Orient House, the entire peace process would grind to a halt.

Husseini's warning, which appeared in a newspaper interview, came in the wake of the Knesset's move Monday to enact legislation that would give the police the legal powers to close Orient House, or at least to prevent it from serving as the Palestinian Authority's quasi-foreign ministry, which is, in effect, its role today.

A Challenge To Israel's Sovereignty

Orient House, one of the grand old buildings of eastern Jerusalem, is owned by the Husseini family. It took on its current political role in 1992 when, in the wake of the Madrid Peace conference, the Palestinians designated it the headquarters of their negotiating team.

The move was clearly an implied challenge to Israel's claim of sole sovereignty over all of Jerusalem. But only Ariel Sharon among the ministers of the then-Likud government maintained that this challenge was unacceptable and that the government must close the building.

The Palestinian position regarding Jerusalem became wholly untenable, from Israel's perspective, following the signing of the Declaration of Principles for Palestinian self-rule in Washington in September 1993.

From that time, Israel formally recognized the PLO as the political representative of the Palestinian people. But by the same token, the accord limited that recognition and that representation to the confines of the Palestinian autonomous areas.

Under the terms of the accord, autonomy would come first to Jericho and Gaza, then to the

whole West Bank, but not to Jerusalem, which, according to Israel, is to remain solely Israel's sovereign territory, with special arrangements to be made for the Islamic holy places.

The Declaration of Principles specifically prevented the Palestinian self-government from conducting foreign policy and defense policy. For this reason, the PLO has retained its foreign ministry, under the leadership of Farouk Kadoumi, in Tunis.

Yet Husseini, who is a minister without portfolio in the Palestinian Authority, continues to insist, along with other Palestinian dignitaries, on hosting foreign diplomats and visiting officials at Orient House, thereby deliberately and demonstratively underscoring the Palestinians' claim to sovereign rights in Jerusalem.

For the Palestinians, Ciller's visit was their greatest coup so far: She was the first serving prime minister to have visited Orient House.

For Rabin, it was the last straw.

No sooner had the Turkish leader left Israeli soil than Rabin ordered his party leaders in the Knesset to push through the enabling legislation to allow the police to close Orient House.

The Likud opposition refused to back the bill, because it implies endorsement of the Declaration of Principles with the Palestinians, which Likud opposes. But Rabin won the support of one key Likud figure, Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert.

The bill passed its first vote by a comfortable margin Monday and is expected to move through the committee stage without difficulty.

A Showdown Could Affect Peace Process

Husseini, in his interview Tuesday with the Yediot Achronot newspaper, insisted that his activities at Orient House were conducted in his capacity as a leader of the Palestinian negotiating team, not as minister of the Palestinian Authority.

He maintained that the Ciller visit had not been a new departure, and, therefore, should not have prompted Rabin's legislative effort.

The stage is now set for a showdown, with potentially dramatic consequences for the peace process once the bill becomes law.

Will Rabin order Police Minister Moshe Shahal to have police surround the building and prevent further visits by foreign dignitaries? Will he order them to move in and shut the institution, a move that risks potential violence, with world media coverage, between Israeli police and the Palestinian security men who patrol Orient House and its environs?

The domestic political pressures pushing the prime minister toward a showdown are clear. Even the moderate Ha'aretz newspaper editorialized Monday that Rabin must prevent another "Ciller incident."

But the international complications would be great. Underscoring them Sunday was a visit to Husseini at Orient House by French Health Minister Simone Veil, a Jew who is a Holocaust survivor and a devoted friend of Israel. Veil clearly knew the sensitivity of her action.

The Israeli government, moreover, acting through the Foreign Ministry, consented to Veil's visit in advance.

Though apparently preparing for a showdown, the Israeli government wants the timing to be of its own choosing -- and the law to be firmly on its side.