

**ISRAEL AND PALESTINIANS LOCKED  
IN A TUG OF WAR OVER JERUSALEM**  
By Dvora Getzler

JERUSALEM, May 30 (JTA) -- The status of Jerusalem, a subject that is not supposed to be negotiated for another two years, is already the focus of a war of words.

In recent days, Palestinian leaders have accused Israel of seeking to limit their political activities in Jerusalem and of closing Palestinian institutions here. And they are vowing they will resist any attempt to curb their Jerusalem-based activities.

The Palestinians will fight any move to change the political status quo in Jerusalem, Palestinian leader Faisal Husseini said Monday at a news conference at Orient House, the Palestinian headquarters in eastern Jerusalem.

He added that Palestinian leaders would establish increasing numbers of institutions here.

Israel had fired the first shot in the struggle for Jerusalem, Husseini said, "in the hope that the world and we will forget about the closure of (eastern) Jerusalem" to Palestinians from the territories.

Husseini, long the leader of the mainstream Palestine Liberation Organization faction in the West Bank, was among those named by PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat to serve on the newly formed Palestinian National Authority, which will have overall responsibility for Palestinian affairs in the autonomous regions of Gaza and Jericho.

Husseini was not given a formal Cabinet position, but will instead function as a minister without portfolio with the special duty of negotiating Jerusalem's future status.

On Sunday, Israel reportedly asked the PLO to desist from creating any further autonomous institutions in Jerusalem.

It was also reported that the PLO had agreed to move the offices of its financial authority from the Intercontinental Hotel to the suburb of Beit Hanina, which lies outside the municipal jurisdiction of the capital.

**Hamas Holds Jericho Procession**

Israel wants all newly created Palestinian institutions to be set up in Jericho.

Israel also is seeking to ensure that the European Union and UNESCO, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, establish their planned liaison offices in Jericho, rather than Jerusalem.

In Jericho, meanwhile, the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement, which opposes the Israeli-PLO peace initiative, held a giant procession through the town Monday. In an effort to prevent confrontations, the Israel Defense Force sealed off the Jericho enclave to Israelis.

Hamas officials recently stated that the group will desist from attacking Palestinians suspected of collaborating with Israel in order to give the Palestinian police a chance to establish itself.

But discord between the PLO and militant Palestinian groups has erupted over the officials

Arafat has named to the 24-member Palestinian National Authority.

George Habash, leader of the Marxist Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, has claimed that the authority represents fewer than 12 percent of the Palestinian people and that only Arafat's close associates are represented in the body.

Critics cite Arafat's total control over the nominating process from the PLO's headquarters in Tunis.

Among these critics is former Palestinian spokeswoman Hanan Ashrawi, who in recent months has repeatedly attacked what she called Arafat's dictatorial style.

On Sunday, Ashrawi confirmed that she had rejected -- for the second time -- an offer from Arafat to serve on the authority.

She said she had been offered the position of minister of information. Last week, she rejected an offer to serve as Palestinian envoy to Washington.

According to news reports, Arafat had sent out feelers to both Hamas and the Popular Front with the goal of having these rejectionist groups represented in the governing authority.

Both groups reportedly turned him down.

**ISRAEL FREES PALESTINIAN PRISONERS  
UNDER TERMS OF MAY 4 CAIRO AGREEMENT**  
By Dvora Getzler

JERUSALEM, May 30 (JTA) -- Israel began freeing scores of Palestinian prisoners Monday and is expected to release many hundreds more in the coming days.

The release of Palestinian detainees and prisoners being held in Israeli jails for security offenses took place under the terms of the May 4 Cairo agreement for implementing limited Palestinian self-rule in the Gaza Strip and Jericho district.

One group of prisoners leaving the Ketziot Prison in the northern Negev, where most of the Palestinians are held, was met Monday at the Gaza border by Palestinian police officers, who threw candy and flowers at the new arrivals.

"We are so happy. The days of conquest are over," one Palestinian officer said.

Close to 2,000 Palestinian prisoners have already been released by Israel. But the freeing of some 700 other prisoners was held up after they refused to sign a document indicating their support of the peace process.

The Cairo agreement calls for the release of a total of 5,000 prisoners held by Israel.

Those due for release are not members of the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement, which staunchly opposes the Israeli-Palestinian peace initiative.

Most of those being released were reaching the end of their prison sentences. None has been found guilty of murder or of being involved in attacks against Israel Defense Force personnel.

Those who remain in Israeli custody after this week are expected to be freed within the next few weeks, according to security sources.

**RUSSIAN ENVOY VISITS ISRAEL,  
WILL PRESS SYRIA TO JOIN TALKS**

By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, May 30 (JTA) -- A delegation of Russians, Americans and representatives of several Arab states reportedly will travel to Damascus to try to persuade Syria to take part in the series of multilateral talks on Middle East regional issues that it has boycotted until now.

Plans for the mission emerged here Monday after a meeting between Russia's visiting Middle East envoy, Viktor Posavaliuk, and Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin.

In a meeting earlier with Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Posavaliuk conveyed a message from Russian President Boris Yeltsin affirming Russia's desire to be more closely associated with the peace process.

Russia is a co-sponsor of the multilateral talks, as well as the bilateral talks Israel has conducted with Syria, Lebanon, Jordan and the Palestinians.

The Russian reported to his hosts on his impressions of Syria and the newly autonomous district of Jericho in the West Bank, which he visited. The Palestinian police, he said, are determined to succeed in keeping exemplary law and order in the 24-square-mile autonomous zone.

Posavaliuk also said he is convinced that both Syrian President Hafez Assad and the Syrian people are interested in peace with Israel.

**IDF SOLDIER DEAD FROM FRIENDLY FIRE  
IN RESPONSE TO CELEBRATORY SHOOTING**  
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 30 (JTA) -- An Israeli army reservist was killed by friendly fire while on patrol near the Gaza Strip on Sunday night.

Sgt. Shlomo Shetreet, 25, of Givat Ada, was part of a six-member Israel Defense Force squad stationed near the Nahal Oz checkpoint between Gaza and Israel.

The squad was guarding some heavy earth-moving equipment being used to construct a new perimeter fence around the newly autonomous area.

The site was surrounded by a number of refugee camps from which residents frequently shoot off their weapons to mark celebrations.

Four members of the Israeli squad were resting while two others stood guard around midnight, when shots were heard.

Apparently believing they were the target of an attack, the guards opened fire. In the ensuing exchange of fire, Shetreet was shot in the head. He died instantly.

An initial IDF investigation, launched shortly after the incident took place, found no evidence that hostile forces had launched an attack on the squad.

The sentries' fire, investigators found, had set off an exchange of shots between the soldiers and one or more of the many armed Palestinians and Israeli settlers in the area.

Palestinian policemen in Gaza also investigated the shooting and found that no attack had been launched from their area.

The IDF is checking the bullets fired at the army squad in an effort to establish who fired off the initial rounds.

**BRITAIN LIFTING BAN  
ON ARMS SALES TO ISRAEL**

By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- The United Kingdom has lifted a 12-year-old ban on arms sales to Israel.

Reacting to the news late last week, Israeli Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin said Israel is "very gratified" with the British move.

He added that Britain's decision crowns "years of diplomatic effort" on Israel's part to lift the ban, which was imposed following the outbreak of the Lebanon War in June 1982.

"We have found it difficult to sell arms to Britain because of the embargo," Beilin said.

He explained that potential British purchasers had insisted that some of the weapons to be sold to them include British parts -- but the embargo had prevented Israel from acquiring the parts.

"We are presently competing for some important sales to the U.K., and I hope the lifting of the embargo will make it easier to win tenders," Beilin said.

British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd explained that the embargo had been lifted as a result of the Israeli-Palestinian peace initiative. He said the decision was finalized when Israel withdrew its forces from the Gaza Strip and West Bank town of Jericho in the course of implementing the Palestinian self-rule accord.

But according to Israel Radio, some observers are saying that the embargo was lifted because Britain's Conservative Party needs the Jewish vote in the elections to the European Parliament that are scheduled for June 9-12.

**KAHANE CHAI LEADER IS FREED  
FROM PRISON AFTER WINNING APPEAL**  
By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, May 30 (JTA) -- The leader of the ultranationalist Kahane Chai movement has been freed from prison after winning an appeal of his nine-month sentence.

On May 26, the Haifa District Court overturned the sentence of a magistrate's court and sentenced Binyamin Ze'ev Kahane, son of the late Rabbi Meir Kahane, to a four-month term of public service. He had been sentenced for attacking police while on his way to an anti-Arab demonstration three years ago.

The Kahane Chai movement, formed after the 1991 assassination of Rabbi Kahane, and the similar Kach organization were declared illegal in Israel in the aftermath of the Feb. 25 killings of at least 29 Palestinians at a Hebron mosque by a Jewish settler who was a follower of Kahane's.

Also freed last week was Eyal Noked, who was held under an administrative detention order since March, when the two groups were outlawed.

Noked continued throughout his imprisonment to claim that he had never been a member of Kach.

Both the younger Kahane and Noked protested what they termed "the government's arbitrary silencing of free speech."

Kahane vowed that he would "continue to work to save the people of Israel from catastrophe and from their wicked leaders and the judges, who in many cases come under that same rubric."

## AMID CHARGES OF A U.S. COVERUP, WALDHEIM ASKS CIA TO OPEN FILES

By Marta S. Halpert

VIENNA, May 30 (JTA) -- Former Austrian President Kurt Waldheim wants the CIA to make public its files on him, in the wake of new charges that the United States helped cover up his Nazi past.

"I support the publishing" of the CIA files, Waldheim told the Austrian daily Der Standard. "I have nothing against it."

Waldheim was reacting to recent allegations that he had cooperated with the CIA during the early 1960s and that as a result, the American authorities covered up his service in a German army unit linked to World War II atrocities.

In 1986, while Waldheim ran for president of Austria, the World Jewish Congress launched an inquiry into his wartime activities with the German army, or Wehrmacht, in the Balkans during World War II.

Despite the inquiry's conclusions, Waldheim was elected president in June of that year.

Waldheim, who had previously held the post of U.N. secretary-general for two terms, served his full six-year term as president but was isolated by the international community. During that period, he remained on the U.S. watch list barring people of questionable background from entering the United States.

Waldheim's background was again brought into question following a recent report in The New York Times, which disclosed confidential documents from the U.S. Embassy in Vienna between 1961 and 1968.

According to the report, nearly identical wording was found in cables sent to Washington when Waldheim was appointed Austria's U.N. ambassador in 1966 and again in 1968, when he took up his post as Austrian foreign minister.

In the cables, Waldheim was described as an "outstanding personality in the Austrian Foreign Ministry" and as "highly cooperative and helpful in supporting U.S. interests."

### CIA Found Nothing Unusual

The New York Times questioned why the United States had supported Waldheim's election for the post of U.N. secretary-general in 1971, even though his name could be found on a list of "suspicious people" dating back to 1948 in connection with his wartime duties in the Balkans.

The CIA carried out a security check on Waldheim in 1972 but found nothing unusual in his background. That fact is being taken as proof of his prior cooperation with the State Department.

Waldheim told Der Standard that the Times story was "a continuation of the defamation campaign" against him in a new guise.

"If I had a friendly attitude toward the USA, it does not mean that I was an agent, or spying," he said.

The former president added that nothing "more than a friendly attitude toward the USA could be filed about me, because there was no more to be said, as nothing exists of that sort."

In March, the Justice Department released a formerly secret report documenting previously leveled accusations that Waldheim participated in war crimes under the Nazi command during World War II.

The report, written in 1987, concludes that "Waldheim assisted or otherwise participated in persecution because of race, religion, national origin or political opinion."

The report also states that in memoranda contesting the attempt to bar him from the United States, Waldheim "offered explanations of historical events which are so completely inconsistent with documented facts as to smack of rank distortion."

Waldheim failed to rebut the case against him or otherwise demonstrate that he did not engage in activities he is accused of participating in, the report says.

It is not known why the Bush administration kept the report from the public eye. The WJC had long sought that the report be made public so that the story of Waldheim would be known.

The report states that, as a lieutenant in the German army between 1942 and 1945, Waldheim was involved in the deportation and deaths of nearly 3,000 Greek Jews.

It also says he played a part in the transfer of civilian prisoners to the SS for use as slave labor, the mass deportation of civilians to concentration and death camps, the utilization of anti-Semitic propaganda and the mistreatment and execution of Allied prisoners.

## YAD VASHEM CEREMONY FOR GAYS IS MARRED BY PROTEST, VIOLENCE

By Dvora Getzler

JERUSALEM, May 30 (JTA) -- Holocaust survivors and a visiting international group of gay men and lesbians clashed at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial here Monday as the gay community held a ceremony to honor homosexuals who perished under the Nazis.

Holocaust survivors greeted the group of about 100 gay activists with protest banners as they arrived at the memorial. But worse was to come inside the cavernous Hall of Remembrance after a Reform rabbi, himself gay, began reciting the Kaddish memorial prayer.

A bearded man with a heavy Russian accent screamed, "My grandfather was killed for refusing to have sexual relations with the camp commandant. You are desecrating this place, you homos!"

The gay group did its best to continue, reciting the Kaddish and singing Hannah Senesh's "Eli, Eli" poem, many of them in tears. Some were attacked by the protesters and had to be restrained by their friends from fighting back.

The ceremony marked the first time the Nazi persecution of homosexuals had been commemorated at Yad Vashem, and it had aroused controversy in the days leading up to it. A full-page advertisement placed in the Jerusalem Post last Friday by a group of 19 rabbis called the ceremony an "abomination" and threatened a boycott of the Holocaust memorial.

Monday's ceremony was sponsored by the Society for the Protection of Personal Rights, Israel's principal gay rights group, as the kickoff for a month of events for gay men and lesbians.

Many of the participants, here for the World Congress of Gay and Lesbian Jewish Organizations, were deeply upset by the reception they received at Yad Vashem.

A young delegate from England said bitterly: "This makes us feel very much at home in Israel!"

## 29 PERCENT OF OLIM ARE NON-JEWISH, ACCORDING TO NEW GOVERNMENT REPORT

By Dvora Getzler

JERUSALEM, May 30 (JTA) -- Twenty-nine percent of all immigrants to Israel this past year were not Jewish, the Interior Ministry revealed last week.

The figure surfaced at a May 25 meeting of the Knesset's Immigration and Absorption Committee, and prompted calls from the fervently Orthodox to repeal the Law of Return. The law grants immigration and citizenship rights to all Jews and their families.

Yair Tsaban, minister of immigrant absorption from the liberal Meretz party, defended the status quo, saying the non-Jewish immigrants were generally spouses of Jews and their immigration was a move against assimilation and loss.

The Law of Return is seen as symbolizing the Jewish character of the State of Israel.

It has also served as a lightning rod for the Orthodox parties in their effort to implement their vision of a Jewish state. For years, there were efforts to amend the law's definition of who is a Jew, to exclude non-Orthodox conversions.

Now, with the continuing mass immigration from the former Soviet Union and Ethiopia, attention has been focused on the clauses permitting anyone who is the grandchild of a Jew to be recognized as a Jew for the purposes of immigration and citizenship and extending those privileges to non-Jewish spouses.

In one case, a member of the Falash Mora group, Ethiopians whose ancestors converted from Judaism to Christianity, recently converted to Judaism and then immigrated with dozens of his family.

### Helping Those 'It Was Not Intended For'

For Rabbi Avraham Ravitz, from the fervently Orthodox Degel HaTorah party, the figures point to a need to repeal or radically reformulate the Law of Return. "It is clearly being used to help those it was not intended for," said Ravitz, "thousands, hundreds of thousands of non-Jews. They are exploiting us, and this is the only country the Jews have."

Ravitz pointed to what he termed "wholesale fraud" by immigrants passing themselves off as Jewish. In his opinion, the number of non-Jewish immigrants is far higher than 29 percent.

He said these immigrants do not yearn to be in Israel but are intent to leave their country, and Israel is virtually the only country available.

Some, he said, are downright anti-Semitic. Others, and not merely individuals but entire communities, continue to observe Christian festivals, he said.

But Tsaban implied that Ravitz was trying to revive the concept of "conversion according to halacha" (rabbinic law) in the section of the Law of Return which seeks to define Jews who were not born of Jewish mothers.

By letting the Jewish partner immigrate with the entire family, said Tsaban, the Law of Return enables them all to be part of the Jewish state.

"But above all," said Tsaban, "we have to remember the immense contribution to the life of our country that immigration makes."

In all, he said, more than 600,000 people had immigrated to Israel in the past four years.

## FORMER MUSSOLINI FIGHTER ELECTED TO HIGH POST IN ITALIAN GOVERNMENT

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, May 30 (JTA) -- The election to an influential post of an outspoken neo-fascist who fought for wartime dictator Benito Mussolini is likely to prompt more concern about neo-fascist influence in the new Italian government.

Last week, Mirko Tremaglia, 67, was elected chairman of the Foreign Affairs Commission of Italy's lower house of Parliament, the Chamber of Deputies, by members of the commission.

Tremaglia is a member of the neo-fascist Italian Social Movement, which was formed after World War II by supporters of Mussolini.

According to the biography of Tremaglia issued by Parliament, from 1943 to 1945 he fought for the Republic of Salo, Mussolini's puppet fascist state in German-occupied northern Italy. The Salo republic was established after the Allies liberated the southern parts of the country.

The Italian Social Movement is the core party of the right-wing National Alliance movement, which forms a key part of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's right-wing coalition.

The National Alliance is represented in the current government with five of the Cabinet's 25 ministers.

## THOUSANDS OF GERMANS OBSERVE ASYLUM TORCHING THAT KILLED 5

By Gil Sedan

BONN, May 30 (JTA) -- Thousands of Germans gathered over the weekend in the western city of Solingen to commemorate last year's arson attack by right-wing extremists that killed five Turkish women and girls.

"Violence does not begin with the throwing of inflammable objects, but with words which guide people to such acts," said Ignatz Bubis, chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

Bubis, who was one of the speakers at a mass rally held at Solingen's City Hall, appealed to Germany's leaders to take "energetic" measures against right-wing violence.

Ceremonies were held both Saturday and Sunday, under the motto "Together Against Racism and Fascism" and climaxed with an estimated 10,000 people holding hands in a chain which stretched from the site of the fatal attack to a memorial erected in memory of those killed.

Johannes Rau, the premier of the state of North Rhine-Westphalia, who ran unsuccessfully in the German presidential elections last week, was a key speaker at one of the rallies.

He urged the German people to show "civilian courage" in the face of rising right-wing nationalism.

The 16-year-old sister of two of the victims also addressed the crowd. "I've never felt hatred for you," Fadimeh Genc said.

The ceremonies were held under tight security arrangements. Police searched more than 15,000 cars entering the city for weapons in an effort to avoid possible clashes between anti-right demonstrators and rightist activists. Thirty passengers were prevented from entering the city.

Four German youths face trial for the deadly arson attack.