

**CHRISTOPHER WINDS DOWN MIDEAST MISSION  
WITH DISCUSSIONS OF FUNDING FOR THE PLO**  
By Cynthia Mann

JERUSALEM, July 21 (JTA) -- U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher told Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat that he would do what he could to speed up funding from international donors to the newly autonomous areas of Gaza and Jericho.

Meeting with Arafat in Gaza on Thursday during his regional diplomatic mission, Christopher was responding to Arafat's appeals that the self-rule areas are in a severe financial crisis.

However, Christopher stressed to Arafat that the PLO must establish proper accountability mechanisms before any funds are delivered.

The donor nations, worried about the PLO's secretive manner of handling money in the past, have been seeking strict financial controls.

Christopher was also in Tel Aviv on Thursday to brief Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and other Israeli leaders on his trip earlier this week to Syria. He was scheduled to return on Friday to Damascus to meet with President Hafez Assad and try to advance the deadlocked talks between Syria and Israel.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres flew Thursday to Cairo, where he briefed Egyptian officials on the progress in talks between Israel and Jordan. He also used the meetings to explore ways to spur on the regional peace process.

Talks with Jordan culminated Wednesday in an unprecedented public meeting in a Jordanian Dead Sea resort between Peres, Christopher and Jordanian Prime Minister Abdul Salam al-Majali.

Negotiators continued the talks there on Thursday on economics, trade and civil aviation.

Joint projects being proposed for the development of the Jordan Rift Valley include building a Dead Sea-Red Sea canal and a Israeli-Jordanian road linking Eilat and Aqaba.

However groundbreaking, these talks merely set the stage for next week's summit in Washington between Jordan's King Hussein and Rabin.

**AMERICAN JEWISH GROUPS FACE CHALLENGE  
IN FIGURING OUT HOW TO SUPPORT PEACE**  
By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, July 21 (JTA) -- While some American Jewish groups are coming under fire for doing too little to support the peace process, those who do wish to promote it actively face a challenge: They are entering uncharted territory.

"Our role has been transformed from explaining why there hasn't been an active peace process, to figuring out how we can be useful to Israel as it moves through an active peace process," said Martin Raffel, director of the Israel Task Force of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council. "It raises some new questions that we address as we go along."

The various mainstream Jewish organizations are dealing with the challenge in a variety of ways.

One approach has been to disseminate information about why Israel is taking the steps it is taking, and what those steps are.

At the center of this activity has been the Peace Process Task Force of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. The task force has hosted Israel's chief negotiators in the peace process to brief the leaders of Jewish organizations about the process. And it has circulated information and acted as a clearinghouse for the information produced by member groups.

The Anti-Defamation League has released a 120-page booklet on the peace process, including the status of the bilateral and multilateral talks, copies of the Israeli-Palestinian agreements, and a listing of Israeli-Arab joint ventures.

The American Jewish Committee issued a two-page statement on the peace process last month, applauding Israel for its "bold pursuit" of peace, while noting the risks Israel is taking.

The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism has encouraged its member congregations to "dialogue" on the peace process, said Rabbi Jerome Epstein, the group's executive vice president.

**'Dialogue Provides Better Understanding'**

"There are a lot of people who are wary about the peace process, and they want to feel they have an opportunity to express themselves. Dialogue doesn't convince anybody, but it provides better understanding," he said.

NJCRC, an umbrella body for 117 local and 13 national groups, has organized a speakers bureau to provide local communities with people who can explain the peace process.

NJCRC has also been playing a role in one of the highest-profile efforts supporting the peace process: Builders for Peace.

This organization of Arab and Jewish Americans was formed by Vice President Al Gore last September, immediately following the signing of the declaration of principles between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Its goal is to promote economic development in the autonomous Palestinian areas, and it has begun lining up potential investors and helping identify and resolve obstacles to investment.

Builders for Peace will be sponsoring a visit of Palestinian business executives to America in the fall, and NJCRC will help the visitors arrange meetings with local American Jewish communities.

NJCRC is also looking ahead to September, and working to organize celebrations and commemorations for the first anniversary of the signing of the declaration of principles.

The Union of American Hebrew Congregations will be urging the social action chairs of its Reform synagogues to take part or organize such celebrations.

Last week, Israeli Ambassador Itamar Rabinovich and the leadership of the Conference of Presidents met to begin planning such anniversary commemorations as well.

In the realm of symbolism, the American

Zionist Movement broke ground in April by meeting at the United Nations with a representative of the PLO and other Arab diplomats.

Even the United Jewish Appeal has joined in the act. It issued a full-page advertisement in The New York Times at the time of the signing last fall, and has spoken of a "peace component" to some of its programs supporting Israel-Arab coexistence.

Douglas Kahn, executive director of San Francisco's Jewish Community Relations Council, believes the accord between Israel and the PLO is an opportunity that the Jewish community can profit from.

His group, he said, is undertaking "greater efforts to reach out to members of the Jewish community who had been alienated by previous Israeli government policies toward the Palestinians, and increased efforts to normalize relations with members of the local Palestinian American community."

#### **BEHIND THE HEADLINES:**

**JEWS ADOPT WAIT-AND-SEE APPROACH  
IN WAKE OF UKRAINE, BELARUS ELECTIONS**  
By Lisa Glazer

MOSCOW, July 21 (JTA) -- As the newly elected presidents of the Ukraine and Belarus switch from the hyperbole of the campaign trail to the harsh realities of elected office, Jewish community leaders are expressing a wait-and-see attitude toward their new government chiefs.

The leaders are hoping for a continuation of the recent trend toward open and friendly relations between the government and the Jewish communities in both countries.

However, since Jewish topics did not play a role in either campaign, they say the new presidents' actions will have to be closely scrutinized.

Ukraine's new president, Leonid Kuchma, a former director of the world's largest nuclear-missile factory, was inaugurated Tuesday.

Alexander Lukashenko, a fiery populist with little political track record, was sworn in Thursday as the president of Belarus.

In Ukraine, Chief Rabbi Ya'akov Bleich said that under the leadership of the newly independent state's first president, Leonid Kravchuk, official anti-Semitism virtually disappeared.

After decades of repression during the Soviet era, Ukrainian Jews are now free to become involved in religious or cultural life or to emigrate to Israel.

In Ukraine, the Jewish community of about half a million is currently home to more than 50 Jewish congregations and nearly 20 Jewish schools.

"Kravchuk had a very positive relationship with the Jews, and we hope this will continue with Kuchma," Bleich said.

He noted that one member of Kuchma's campaign staff visited him a day after the July 10 election to hear about Jewish concerns and to invite him to join the Humanitarian Alliance, a non-governmental organization that will be advising the new president on health, education, welfare and religious policy.

"The only thing that rings some bells is that Kuchma said he would like to restructure some of the structures that deal with religion," said Bleich.

"We'll have to see how this will affect the Jews. He's said he wants to change the freedom-of-religion law to make it more democratic," he said, but added: "The road to hell can be paved with good intentions."

Bleich said the Jewish community has been invited to send a representative to the commission revising the laws on religion.

Experts here said that the general issues propelling the Ukrainian presidential campaign -- the failing economy and relations with Russia -- could have an impact on the Jewish community.

Kuchma's moderate, pro-market approach is helpful for the Jewish community, they said, as are renewed connections with Russia, which Kuchma has supported. Many Ukrainian Jews speak Russian and not Ukrainian.

"None of the candidates running in the elections spoke about Jews and Jewish problems, but we think Kuchma will implement tolerant policies," said Leonid Feinberg, director of a social science research center run by the Ukraine's Association of Jewish Organizations and Communities.

The situation in Belarus is less clear -- and potentially less rosy for the small Jewish community of about 150,000.

#### **'The Land That Time Forgot'**

The newly independent state of 10 million has been labeled "the land that time forgot" because much of life remains as it was during the period of Soviet domination. Economic reforms are proceeding slowly, and a Lenin statue still stands in the capital's central square.

Meanwhile, Belarus is in the midst of a huge economic crisis as inflation gallops along at about 50 percent a month.

Economic woes are frequently cited as the reason that Lukashenko, 39, won more than 80 percent of the July 10 vote, beating Conservative Prime Minister Vyacheslav Kebich, 59, to become the first elected president of Belarus.

A former collective farm boss who came into the spotlight with an anti-corruption campaign, Lukashenko has promised to halt the republic's fledgling privatization program.

Lukashenko has been compared to Russian ultra-nationalist Vladimir Zhirinovskiy because of his populist style and his promises of resolute action against his enemies. But Jewish leaders say that so far the comparison is unfair.

"He is a populist, but of no specific color; an unknown personality who rode the wave of discontent to get into power," said Binyamin Meltzer, the vice president of the Association of Jewish Communities in Belarus.

"By no means can he be called a Zhirinovskiy," added Yitzchok Wolpin, the chief rabbi of Belarus. "But his positions are very unclear. He's been making statements left and right. We really don't know who we're dealing with."

Wolpin said that under Kebich's rule, the Jewish community has been able to begin rebuilding after suffering near-devastation during Soviet times. There are now 14 congregations in Belarus, all but two of them established in the last few years.

Wolpin said he had a very good relationship with the prime minister and several ministers in the Cabinet, but that so far, he has not been sought out by the president-elect's staff.

## AFSI TOUTING RUSSIAN LETTER IN OPPOSING AMERICAN GOLAN ROLE

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, July 21 (JTA) -- In an unusual twist, Americans for a Safe Israel has been touting a recent letter written by an archnationalist and allegedly anti-Semitic Russian parliamentarian opposing an American peacekeeping role in any Israeli-Syrian accord.

The letter revolves around the issue that has emerged as the central lobbying issue by opponents of the Israeli government in Washington and, now, it would seem, in Moscow: the possible stationing of American troops on the Golan Heights in the event a peace accord is reached between Israel and Syria.

According to AFSI, the objections of Nikolai Lysenko, described by the Jewish organization as "an outspoken conservative" Russian parliamentarian, stem from his "Russian nationalism."

Lysenko led 51 members of the Russian Parliament in writing to Russia's foreign minister on the issue, according to AFSI.

What AFSI did not mention, however, is that Lysenko's brand of Russian nationalism has some Jews distinctly worried.

According to Leonid Stonov of the Union of Councils, an organization which monitors anti-Semitism in the former Soviet Union, Lysenko has called for Jews to be thrown out of Russian political and economic life.

In an article appearing in what Stonov described as an "extremely fascist and anti-Semitic" magazine, Lysenko warned that assimilated Jews and half-Jews are working to rule the Russian people, as part of a Masonic-Zionist conspiracy linked to American imperialism.

Herbert Zweibon, president of AFSI, said he did not know what prompted Lysenko to weigh in on the issue.

"Look, the word is out. Around the world, people are aware that there's either an agreement or a pending agreement," said Zweibon.

### BEHIND THE HEADLINES:

#### SLOVAKIAN COMMUNITY OUSTS RABBI FOR GETTING ENTANGLED IN POLITICS

By Ruth E. Gruber

BRATISLAVA, Slovakia, July 21 (JTA) -- Rabbi Lazar Kleinman, the rabbi of Kosice, in eastern Slovakia, has been fired from his position after the leadership of the Slovak Jewish Federation said he was engaging in activities they thought inconsistent with his rabbinical position.

Kleinman is fighting the dismissal in court and refuses to leave the apartment allocated to him by the Jewish community, according to Fero Alexander, executive chairman of the Union of Jewish Religious Communities in Slovakia.

"Kleinman was released from his position by the Union of Jewish Communities and his work permit as rabbi was stopped as of June 30, 1994," Alexander said in an interview.

Kleinman was fired in the spring. Charging that his dismissal was not carried out according to Slovak law, he has brought a suit against the Slovak Jewish Union.

Alexander, speaking from his office in Bratislava, said Kleinman had engaged in activities that were "harming" the Kosice Jewish com-

munity, including involvement in local politics and other activities "that a rabbi shouldn't do."

Jewish sources said Kleinman made many political contacts, including with right-wing nationalist parties. He angered many Jews by making political statements in public to the effect that there was no anti-Semitism in Slovakia.

In addition, Kleinman became involved in intense and bitter personal conflicts within the Kosice Jewish community, which erupted soon after he took up his post two years ago.

Alexander said the "last straw" came when Kleinman became a consultant to the East Slovakia Steel Works and announced that a committee had been formed in the Jewish community to help the steel works.

"This was not true," Alexander said. He said the Jewish community had opposed the idea and "rejected" the rabbi's activities.

Kleinman, who was born in Romania, studied in Israel and became an Australian citizen. He took up the post of rabbi in Kosice in August 1992, coming from a rabbinical post in Helsinki, Finland.

He was invited to take the position by the local Kosice Jewish community, despite some rabbinical opposition to the choice expressed from outside the community.

At the time, Kleinman was the only rabbi in Slovakia, and his arrival was hailed as a major event in the revitalization of Jewish life in the country.

Kosice, the most important Jewish community in eastern Slovakia, has about 900 to 1,000 Jews. A rabbi was also installed in Bratislava, the Slovak capital, in the spring of 1993.

On his arrival, Kleinman began what has been described as a "dynamic" program of public works for the community, including the renovation of the prayer house and mikveh, the start-up of a Jewish kindergarten and various youth clubs, and the modernization of kosher meat processing.

"Kleinman came as a religious person," Alexander said, but then he became controversial. "He was full of energy, which was nice, but it had its bad sides."

Alexander said conflicts, on both a personal and policy level, erupted between Kleinman and the community lay leadership soon after the rabbi took up his post.

In an interview in October 1992, two months after arriving in Kosice, Kleinman was candid about having already alienated many of the older members of the congregation by essentially cutting them out of his plans to revitalize the community.

### BOEING PAYS VICTIMS OF EL AL CRASH

By Henriette Boas

AMSTERDAM, July 21 (JTA) -- The Boeing company has reached settlements with 547 people who lived in apartments here destroyed by an El Al cargo plane crash in October 1992.

Boeing was the manufacturer of the plane. Some 1,300 claims were filed in connection with the crash, which occurred shortly after takeoff and claimed the lives of 47 people.

The amounts of the awards were not made public, according to the terms of the settlements. But reports here said claimants received at least \$10,000, and in some cases substantially more.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:  
JEWISH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL WONDERS:  
WHERE ARE BERLIN'S TEEN-AGE STUDENTS?**  
By Miriam Widman

BERLIN, July 21 (JTA) -- One year after the first postwar Jewish high school in Germany opened here, school officials admit they are having a hard time attracting Jewish pupils.

Of the 27 students in the first high school class, some two-thirds were Jewish. But only one-third of the incoming class of 25 students are Jewish, and principal Uwe Mull admits that Jewish students are hesitant about coming to the new school.

A key problem, Mull said in a recent interview, is that prominent Jews in the community have chosen not to send their children to the new high school, and this has been detrimental to the school's efforts to attract Jewish pupils.

"When a prominent board member (of Berlin's Jewish community), a director at one of the other Jewish schools and a religious teacher decide not to send their children to the high school, it's very difficult to work against such an advertisement," Mull said.

Officials in the Jewish community did not return phone calls.

Jewish parents here tend to send their children to one of the community's elementary schools, but have taken a wait-and-see approach about the 1-year-old high school.

"I did not want to send my kid to another experiment," said one parent.

Mull acknowledged that a new school must first establish itself, but expressed disappointment with the reaction of the community.

In a recent interview, retired Rabbi Ernst Stein said the lack of interest in the Jewish high school is symptomatic of the Jewish community's lack of interest in things religious.

"Everything that Rabbi Stein said is true," Mull said.

Expressing optimism that in the long run the school will gain acceptance, he said that the school has garnered strong political support from the city government.

Officials at the high school have not yet decided just what its religious orientation will be. Mull favors a school that has a Jewish tradition but remains open to non-Jews.

The Jewish high school is located smack in the center of the city's former Jewish neighborhood in what was formerly East Berlin. It is an area where Jewish culture is on the rise.

The school itself was a Knabe, or boys school, before the war. Hitler closed it in 1942 and turned it into a deportation center.

But the high school's historic location is actually working against it. Most of the city's Jewish population lives in the western part of the once-divided city, and many western parents are skeptical of a school in the east.

**FRENCH STUDENTS DEMAND TRIAL FOR PAPON**  
By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, July 21 (JTA) -- Demanding a speedy trial for possibly the last Frenchman accused of crimes against humanity during World War II, the Union of French Jewish Students demonstrated recently in front of the home of Maurice Papon.

Papon, 83, was secretary-general of the prefecture of Bordeaux under the collaborationist Vichy government until the liberation of the city in August 1944.

Although Bordeaux, which is in southwestern France, was at the time not occupied by Nazi troops, Papon was allegedly responsible for the deportation of 1,690 Jews from the region to Nazi death camps.

Papon, who was Paris police chief in the 1960s and a Cabinet member in the 1970s, has managed to evade trial with several legal maneuvers.

The student protesters staged a similar demonstration in front of Papon's house a few months ago.

At the time, they underscored their demand that Papon be brought to trial by reading aloud the names of the Jews he allegedly arrested and deported.

**PARTNER OF GAY OFFICER SUES IDF**  
By Dvora Getzler

JERUSALEM, July 21 (JTA) -- In a case that could have a major impact on gay rights here, the homosexual partner of an army colonel who died of cancer is suing the Israel Defense Force for a survivor's pension.

In a Tel Aviv court last week, the IDF stated that it did not recognize the claim of Adir Steiner that he lived as the partner of the late Col. Doron Maisel, adding that Steiner had no rights as a member of Maisel's family.

Citing letters Maisel had written before his death, Steiner, in turn, claimed that the IDF knew that he and Maisel had lived together for the last eight years of Maisel's life.

Steiner further argued that when he accompanied Maisel abroad for cancer treatments, the IDF gave Steiner the same security check as would have been given to a wife accompanying her officer husband.

No verdict has yet been handed down.

**FRENCH JEWISH LEADER NAMED TO POST**  
By Michel Di Paz

PARIS, July 21 (JTA) -- The French government has appointed Jean Kahn, the leader of the European Jewish Congress, as the French representative to the newly created European Consultative Commission on racism and xenophobia.

The appointment of Kahn, who is also head of CRIF, the umbrella of France's Jewish organizations, was announced by French Minister for European Affairs Alain Lamassoure.

The member states of the European Union ratified the creation of the new anti-racism commission, at the suggestion of France and Germany, during the latest E.U. summit, which was held June 24-25 on the Greek island of Corfu.

Each member of the E.U. -- including the four newest members, Austria, Finland, Norway and Sweden -- will have one representative on the new commission, which is charged with assessing national and community policies in the struggle against racism and xenophobia.

The chairman of the commission will be elected in the coming weeks, according to German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel. Germany currently holds the E.U. presidency.