

**MAINSTREAM JEWISH LEADERS CONFER WITH THE SYRIAN FOREIGN MINISTER**  
By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, Oct. 5 (JTA) -- In what could be seen as yet another attempt to jump start the stalled Syrian-Israeli peace negotiations, Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa met with American Jewish leaders on Capitol Hill on Wednesday.

In a session that began with members of Congress, and was later joined by Jewish leaders, participants questioned the minister on the peace process, the Arab boycott of Israel, terrorism and Syrian narcotics trafficking, according to Capitol Hill sources involved with the meeting.

The meeting left open the possibility that a delegation of congressional staffers would travel to Syria to investigate the whereabouts of Israeli MIAs, the sources said.

Sharaa, who addressed the U.N. General Assembly earlier this week, was scheduled to meet with President Bill Clinton on Friday and also with high level officials at the State Department.

Jewish leaders who attended the 45-minute session refused to comment immediately following the session, saying they preferred to wait until a coordinated response could be agreed upon.

This is not the first time Jewish activists met with a top Syrian official, but it is believed to be the first time that such a broad spectrum of mainstream Jewish leaders conferred with a leader from Damascus.

Earlier this year, delegations from Project Nishma and Americans for Peace Now met Syrian officials in Damascus. In addition, former leaders of American Jewish Congress met with Syrian President Hafez Assad in August.

**Meetings Come On Eve Of New Mideast Shuttle**

The meetings on Capitol Hill occurred just three days before Secretary of State Warren Christopher is scheduled to return to the Middle East for another round of shuttle diplomacy between Damascus and Jerusalem.

Israel and Syria have been deadlocked in negotiations for months. Syria is demanding a total Israeli withdrawal from the Golan Heights, as Sharaa reiterated in his U.N. speech on Monday.

The Israeli government has indicated some withdrawal from the Golan is possible, but only in stages and only in return for a full peace with Syria.

The Sharaa meeting was arranged by the chairman and ranking minority member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee, U.S. Reps. Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.) and Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.).

Reps. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) and Howard Berman (D-Calif.) also attended the session.

Jewish groups represented at the meeting were the Anti-Defamation League, Americans for Peace Now, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, the American Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee and Hadassah.

**NEWSMAKER PROFILE:****NEW UJA CHAIRMAN MAY HOLD KEY TO ATTRACTING FELLOW BABY BOOMERS**  
By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, Oct. 5 (JTA) -- If he were not part of the solution, Richard Pearlstone could personify the challenges faced by American Jewish philanthropy as it recruits the next generation of donors and leaders.

It is a generation with no firsthand memories of the events of the 1940s, when the Holocaust and the founding of the Jewish state seared a generation's Jewish consciousness; a generation accepted by American society, and eagerly sought by secular charities; and a generation moving out of the old centers of Jewish life, to Western and rural areas far from "Jewish neighborhoods."

It is a generation which Pearlstone -- born just weeks before the State of Israel, a longtime member of the boards of Baltimore's arts organizations, and a recent migrant to Aspen, Colo.--ably represents.

Luckily for the United Jewish Appeal, Pearlstone is on its side. Since May, he has been national chairman of the fund-raising organization, which, in conjunction with local Jewish federations, raised nearly \$700 million for Jews in Israel and elsewhere around the world last year.

His goal: "to position this organization to be relevant for the next two decades."

**'Time For A New Generation'**

"It's time for a new generation to assume leadership," he said in a recent interview. "Obviously, what makes us tick is different than what makes my parents or grandparents tick."

Highlighting the generational shift is the fact that Pearlstone's grandfather, Joseph Meyerhoff, served as UJA national chairman 30 years ago. Both of his parents held top leadership positions in the Baltimore Jewish federation, known as the Associated.

"What you have is a member of the baby boom generation, a generation that is a serious problem to UJA and federation, carrying on a family tradition and taking it to new heights," said one federation official who worked closely with Pearlstone in Baltimore.

"There is a message that the UJA is sending in electing a person of his age group at this moment," said Marvin Lender, a former UJA national chairman who first brought Pearlstone on to the UJA executive committee. "We recognize there is a transformation going on in the Jewish community."

While neither Lender, 53, nor his successor and Pearlstone's predecessor, Joel Tauber, 59, were much older than Pearlstone when they held his post, Pearlstone is the first to be born after World War II and be part of the vast baby boom generation.

Pearlstone recalls as a child looking through his grandfather's scrapbook, "which was basically a history of the State of Israel and his involvement for 45 years."

When he started working, making an annual

contribution to federation was just "a part of life."

But the initial thrust of his philanthropic activities was directed at Baltimore's artistic institutions. He was chairman of the local ballet and involved with the symphony orchestra.

"One day I got the call from my own community to help them. I ended up liking it. Eventually this became where I felt I could really make a difference at the end of the day," he said.

"There is way more personal satisfaction in doing stuff in the Jewish community than in the secular world. I'm helping my own people," he said.

One of the perhaps more surprising changes in the Jewish community that Pearlstone said his generation will be bringing is "a resurgence of Jewish education," as parents try to give their kids "Jewish roots."

#### 'We Must Be Concerned About Spirituality'

"I was raised like Ozzie and Harriet and 'Leave It To Beaver,' " said Pearlstone, referring to the television programs of his youth. "Our parents wanted us to be good Americans. Now some of us want our kids -- they're unquestionably Americans -- to be good Jews."

Addressing the UJA National Campaign Conference earlier this year, Pearlstone promised that these concerns would change UJA.

"We are still about raising money, but we must be concerned about the spirituality of the Jewish community," he said then. In the interview, Pearlstone explained that "the more I got into this work, the more I got into the spiritual side, the Jewish side."

In Baltimore, he was tutored a few days a week by a rabbi, studying Hebrew, Talmud and Jewish mysticism. He is continuing these studies in New York with CLAL, the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership, which is located in the UJA's Manhattan offices.

Pearlstone has brought this personal commitment to the regular UJA officers meetings, making a 20-minute study session the first agenda item at every meeting.

Pearlstone's commitment to Jewish education is evident in his own giving. After his father died, a portion of the family fund was taken to form the Jack Pearlstone Institute for Jewish Living.

The institute has sponsored educational programs for federation leadership and scholars-in-residence for the community. Its major focus in recent years has been promoting family education.

And since moving from Baltimore, with its rich Jewish life, to Aspen ("to spend more time with my family -- I don't want to lose them in this process of helping the Jewish world"), he has helped upgrade the Jewish education in his new home.

Pearlstone is confident that UJA can retool itself to attract his fellow baby boomers.

"We have a great product, a great fund-raising organization," he said. "We have to understand how our market changed, and change our pitch."

That requires walking "a fine line, since the oldest contributors are obviously the richest. But the next generation is the future."

And the new generation of donors wants "a different relationship with Israel. It may be more

personal; it may be more follow-the-dollars, or designated giving."

Such a shift is not just Pearlstone's revolution. UJA has increasingly been moving in this direction. This is evident in the themes being emphasized in its 1995 campaign, now under way.

Supplementing the traditional call to help bring Jews from the former Soviet Union to Israel, the campaign is highlighting the new Partnership 2000 program, which encourages a closer individual American-Israeli relationship. The campaign is also focusing on the way UJA and federation-funded programs promote Jewish identity and continuity in America.

And the result? "We've been off to a great start," said Pearlstone.

Initial returns from campaign events and missions with major donors are showing that individual donors are boosting their pledges from last year by around 10 percent.

It is unclear so far whether this reflects the success of UJA's new pitch, an improved economic climate, or the fact that this is the first year for some time that the annual UJA campaign was not supplemented by a special campaign, such as the recently concluded Operation Exodus.

Pearlstone heads Cross Keys Asset Management and Delta Properties, firms involved in real estate development, securities, money management -- "a variety of things."

But as head of UJA, Pearlstone has put most of his business dealings on hold. "This is what I'm really doing right now. I'm running a billion-dollar business, and I'm the chief salesman."

It is a job that is, by his estimate, one part organization meetings, one part solicitations and two parts travel to Israel, for both meetings and missions.

Lender, whose term as national chairman ended in 1992, said that when he has taken his children, who are in their 20s, along on recent missions, he always knew where to find them: with Pearlstone.

"My kids adore him and spend a lot of time with him on the mission," said Lender. "When I'm looking for my kids on a mission, I know they're following him wherever the hell he might be going, and I'm very pleased about that. He's kind of a Pied Piper."

#### **DO U.S. JEWS VISIT ISRAEL? NOT MOST!**

**By Hugh Orgel**

TEL AVIV, Oct. 5 (JTA) -- More than 70 percent of American Jews have never visited Israel, according to a Haifa University researcher.

In his study, based on statistics provided by various Jewish federations across the United States, researcher David Mittelburg also found that intermarriage was higher among young American Jews who have not visited Israel.

Mittelburg's study, which covered some 10,000 people, disclosed that in the 35-44 age group, only 19 percent had ever visited Israel.

Among those between the ages of 18-34, 30 percent had visited Israel; in the 45-and-above age group, the total rose to 44 percent.

The study showed that in the 18-34 age group intermarriage was as high as 62 percent among those who had never visited Israel, compared with 19 percent among those in the same age group who had traveled there at least once.

## HUNGARY APOLOGIZES TO JEWS FOR ITS ROLE IN WORLD WAR II

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Oct. 5 (JTA) -- The Hungarian government, through its foreign minister, has apologized to the Jewish people for its role in the Holocaust.

During World War II, Hungarian pro-Nazi fascists -- both in league with the Nazis and independently -- rounded up Jews and deported them to their deaths.

In meetings here this week with the World Jewish Congress and the Jewish Agency for Israel, Hungarian Foreign Minister Laszlo Kovacs also took steps toward a formal memorandum of understanding on restitution of Jewish property seized by the Nazis and the Communists.

Speaking on behalf of Hungarian Prime Minister Gyula Horn, Kovacs told the WJC on Tuesday: "It is self-deception if anyone shifts responsibility for the genocide in Hungary solely and exclusively to Nazi Germany."

The Jewish group described Kovacs' statement as "one of the most far-reaching by any of the former East European Nazi collaborationist governments."

Kovacs, who was in the United States for a scheduled address to the United Nations on Monday, also stressed Hungarian responsibility for anti-Jewish acts years before the Holocaust.

"The shutting out of society and even persecution of Jews of Hungarian citizenship did not begin on May 19, 1944, when the Germans occupied the country," said Kovacs.

"We should not forget about the murders committed by the White Terror Squads in 1919, (the quotas) in the 1920s and the shameful anti-Jewish laws, which meant a trumping of the law.

"Consequently it has to be stated unambiguously that history obliges us to apologize," he said.

### A Bold Break With The Past

Kovacs is a member of the Socialist Party, which was created by the reform wing of the former Communist Party and took control of Hungary in elections held last May. The Socialists ousted the previous center-right government, with which the Jewish community had many strong disagreements.

The new regime appears to be making a bold break with the past.

In an earlier meeting with the American Jewish Committee, Kovacs said that it is "of the utmost importance how Hungarian Jewry feels in Hungary, because it shows how democracy has developed in the country."

Last Friday, after meeting with the AJCommittee, Kovacs told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, "It is crucial for the Hungarian government to stop and protest against any appearance of anti-Semitism."

Leslie Keller, chairman of the WJC East European Commission and a leader of the Hungarian Jewish community, described Kovacs' statements as "extraordinary and marking a new, positive chapter in Hungarian-Jewish relations."

In a private meeting with WJC President Edgar Bronfman and afterward with the heads of the WJC and the Jewish Agency, the Hungarian foreign minister also discussed the restoration of

confiscated Jewish property. "We talked about substance, and a great deal of progress was made," said Elan Steinberg, WJC executive director.

This was in accordance with the accord the World Jewish Restitution Organization signed in April with Hungary for the return of confiscated property.

Hungary and Slovakia are the only former Communist countries in Eastern Europe to have entered such agreements with the Jewish community.

(JTA correspondent Agnes Bohm in Washington contributed to this report.)

## EUROPE MOVES CLOSER TO ISRAEL, APPROVING SCIENTIFIC ASSOCIATION

By Joseph Kopel

BRUSSELS, Oct. 5 (JTA) -- Israel will soon become the first non-European country to be associated with the European Union's research and development programs.

Meeting here last week, the 12 ministers in charge of research within the E.U. have decided to give the European Executive Commission, the E.U.'s executive body, a clear mandate to negotiate with Israel the specifics of a final accord, which is expected to be completed before the end of the year.

The new accord will complement a separate trade and cooperation pact that Israel and the E.U. are currently negotiating in order to update a 1975 agreement between Israel and what was then known as the Common Market.

In recent years, Israel has tried to elevate its trading status to gain better access to the European market.

Israel is currently suffering a \$5 billion trade deficit with the E.U., which is its main trading partner.

The E.U.'s 12 member nations decided to strengthen their relations with Israel after it signed the Palestinian self-rule accord last fall.

Some E.U. member states were not very enthusiastic about allowing Israel to participate in European research projects because they feared the effects Israeli competition would have on companies within their countries.

But the ministers were able to approve the move after two of the leading opponents, Britain and France, were convinced to lift their opposition.

The high level of Israeli scientific research was key to getting the move approved.

"The Israeli scientists are of an excellent level, but their only problem is the lack of financial means," said Volker Knorich, a German minister who chaired the Sept. 29 meeting of research ministers.

Germany currently holds the E.U. chairmanship.

The accord will allow Israeli scientists and companies to fully participate in 19 of the 20 specific research programs already launched by the E.U.

It will give Israel quick access to the results of European research programs, which cover such areas as industrial, naval and communications technologies, energy and agriculture.

The nuclear sector alone has been excluded from Israeli participation.

## LAUDER FOUNDATION INAUGURATES NEW JEWISH SCHOOLS IN WARSAW, PRAGUE

By Marta S. Halpert

VIENNA, Oct. 5 (JTA) -- In keeping with its goal of rekindling Jewish life in Eastern and Central Europe, the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation inaugurated two Jewish schools in Warsaw and Prague in September and broke ground for a new school campus in Budapest.

"Today we are beginning a job that never ends, because education has no end. It is my dream that what we undertake today will live on and on," Ronald Lauder said at the opening ceremonies for the new school in Warsaw.

The Lauder-Morasha School, which has 15 students in the first grade, is the first Jewish school to be established in Poland in a quarter-century; it is the first to open in Warsaw in 45 years. It joins schools sponsored by the foundation already established in Budapest and Vienna.

The school's director, American-born Helise Lieberman, said the school curriculum will offer the basic requirements of Polish primary schools and will meet the standards set by the Ministry of Education.

It will also, she said, include the teaching of Hebrew and English, as well as offer classes in Jewish tradition and culture. In addition, there will be classes in computers, music, fine arts, theater arts and sports, as well as numerous after-school activities.

### 'See That The Chain Of Faith Is Unbroken'

"Savaged by genocide and continuing repression, the Eastern European Jewish communities have only barely survived to see the changes of today," Lauder said at the opening in Warsaw. "But they have survived, and as renewal begins here and in Jewish communities across Eastern Europe, we must see to it that the chain of faith is unbroken."

Lauder attended the inauguration ceremonies in the three cities within a two-day period in early September.

The ceremonies were timed to coincide with the 55th anniversary of the start of World War II on Sept. 1, 1939. They were designed to show that the spark of Jewish life in Eastern and Central Europe still glowed, despite the Nazi efforts at eradicating all traces of the European Jewish community.

Lauder, a former U.S. ambassador to Austria, became deeply interested in his Jewish roots and in preserving Jewish religion and culture in Eastern and Central Europe during his posting to Vienna.

A day after attending the school's opening ceremonies in Warsaw, he traveled on to Prague, where the Lauder Foundation was opening a Jewish kindergarten -- 55 years after the forced shut-down of the city's Jewish school.

The Lauder kindergarten in Prague is located on the premises of a state-run kindergarten, where some 150 children ages 3 to 6 already attend morning classes.

Twelve children have enrolled so far in the Jewish kindergarten. While they will be supplied with kosher meals and will be taught about Jewish holidays and tradition, they are expected to take part in activities with the children in the state-run kindergarten.

"We can easily compare our 12 children with the 12 tribes in the Bible," said Zeno Dostal, president of the Prague Jewish community. "They would have gotten lost altogether, if we could not have offered any Jewish education to them."

Thirty-five thousand Jews lived in Prague at the outbreak of World War II. At least two-thirds of them perished in the war.

Dostal estimated that there are now between 5,000-7,000 Jews living in the Czech Republic.

"Today, the true victory belongs to us and our children. Just a few years ago, the foundation of a Jewish kindergarten like this, marked with cooperation and support from the government, would have been impossible," Lauder said.

Lauder arrived the same day in Budapest to break ground for the construction of a new campus for the Lauder Javne School in the Hungarian capital.

Established in 1990, the Lauder Javne Community School currently has three schools operating separately in Budapest -- a kindergarten, elementary school and high school.

The new campus, for which the Lauder Foundation has committed \$4,250,000 for construction costs, will permit the three schools to operate as one unit in one location.

The municipality of Budapest has provided a free 99-year lease on the five-acre site of the new campus, which is expected to open for the 1996-97 school year.

Some 500 children, ages 3-18, currently attend classes at the three schools. With the completion of the new campus, more than 600 students will be able to attend the school.

## CROWNED AS A BEAUTY: ISRAELI TEEN CAPTURES THE MISS EUROPE '94 TITLE

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Oct. 5 (JTA) -- When Lilach Ben-Simon returned to her high school this week, she found some 1,600 students, friends and Education Ministry officials waiting to greet her with bated breath.

For Ben-Simon was returning for her senior year with a new title -- Miss Europe 1994.

The green-eyed beauty from Ashdod, just weeks short of her 18th birthday, had won the beauty crown as one of 33 contestants at the European beauty contest in Istanbul on Saturday night.

Ben-Simon, who was previously crowned Miss Israel, was persuaded by her boyfriend to go for the jackpot and enter the Miss Europe contest.

Before moving to Ashdod, her family had lived for some 13 years at Kibbutz Mashavei Sadeh in the northern Negev. Her father, Uri, is a manpower manager at a steel factory in Kiryat Malachi, and her mother, Betty, was employed until recently by an American language institute.

Ben-Simon said that while she was thrilled when she was crowned, she was sorry her family was not with her. They stayed behind because her sister was due to give birth any day.

She said her worst day in Istanbul had been Yom Kippur, the first Day of Atonement she had spent alone and away from home. "When all the other girls went in for a festive lunch, I went up to my room and slept," she said.

Ben-Simon plans to study law after army service and be a fashion model as a hobby.