



## NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ President Clinton was expected to announce that he was cutting off all trade and investment by U.S. firms with Iran. The announcement was expected to be made at a World Jewish Congress dinner. Earlier, Clinton spoke at ceremonies marking Holocaust Remembrance Day at Madison Square Garden. Clinton said the Holocaust "redefined our understanding of the human capacity for evil."

■ The Mormon Church agreed to stop posthumously baptizing Jews. The agreement comes after an estimated 380,000 Jewish Holocaust victims and countless other Jews were baptized. [Page 3]

■ The Israeli Cabinet approved plans for the expropriation of Arab-owned land for building Jewish neighborhoods in eastern Jerusalem. The decision came amid vows from the Palestine Liberation Organization that it would step up its fight in the world arena against the planned expropriations.

■ A senior delegation from South Korea arrived in Israel for talks about the perceived threat both countries face from North Korea. The meeting came in the wake of recent reports that North Korea has sold Iran Nodong missiles, which were developed from the Scud missile and are capable of reaching Israel if fired from Iran.

■ Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said he would be bringing "new ideas" regarding the ongoing peace negotiations with Syria when he meets with President Clinton in Washington. The prime minister said he hoped that a peace deal with Damascus could be worked out within a year, and a national referendum on the matter held before Israel's 1996 elections.

■ The U.S. State Department reported an upsurge in attacks by Islamic extremist groups in 1994. But overall, international terrorist attacks were at their lowest levels in 23 years. "Terrorist attacks and violence instigated by Palestinians continued at a high level in 1994," according to the Patterns of Global Terrorism Report, which was sent to Congress.

## FIFTY YEARS AFTER THE HORROR (Part 1)

### European Jews shed the past to bring forth a brighter future

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, April 30 (JTA) — For the battered remnant of European Jewry that survived the Holocaust, the post-World War II future was neither easy nor assured.

Of Europe's prewar Jewish population of 9 million — half of world Jewry at the time — 6 million were annihilated.

Most of the survivors had lost family, friends, homes, possessions, jobs and health.

In parts of Europe, the synagogues, cemeteries, yeshivas, books, Torah scrolls and ritual objects that had formed the physical nexus of centuries-old European Jewish culture had been destroyed or desecrated.

"There is no life on the face of this desert," wrote Jewish author Jacob Pat after visiting Warsaw, once home to more than 300,000 Jews, right after the end of the war.

"I see no man, no bird, no cat or dog on this vast stretch of land. Only the spirit of God blows freely over the graveyard of the Jewish people," he wrote.

Today, half a century after the Holocaust and five years after the collapse of communism broke down the barriers that divided East and West for more than four decades, Jewish communities flourish in almost all European countries.

About 4 million Jews live in Europe, less than half the prewar European Jewish population.

The end of communism and the institution of religious freedom has prompted a renaissance of Jewish life in communities large and small throughout Eastern and Central Europe.

Amid the uncertainty that followed the war's destruction, such a renaissance was unthinkable.

### Communities faced decades of rebuilding

Anti-Semitism still ran deep in a number of countries devastated by the war.

From France to Poland, from the Netherlands to the Soviet Union, local citizens who had collaborated with the Nazis abounded.

Western nations, including the United States and Canada, at least initially, had restrictive immigration policies.

Hundreds of thousands of European Jewish survivors eventually immigrated to the new State of Israel, as well as to the United States and other countries outside Europe.

But hundreds of thousands chose or were forced to remain in Europe after the war's conclusion.

For them, the following decades involved years of rebuilding.

And for the Jews who lived in the half of Europe that soon fell under the control of oppressive, often anti-Semitic, Communist regimes, simply surviving as Jews was considered a triumph.

Today, France has Central Europe's largest Jewish community, with an estimated 550,000 to 600,000 Jews, more than three times the number at the end of World War II.

France's large Jewish population is the result of the tens of thousands of Jews from Eastern and Central Europe who immigrated to France after the war, and to the more than 200,000 Jews who moved to France from North Africa in the 1950s and 1960s.

This influx changed the character of the community so much that by 1970, more than half of French Jews were Sephardim.

Russia alone has some 400,000 Jews, depleted in recent years by mass immigration to Israel.

But Jewish life is burgeoning in Russia and elsewhere in the former Soviet Union.

There are organized Jewish communities in almost every European country, and Jewish life runs the gamut from Chasidic and Orthodox to Liberal and secular.

The rebirth of Jewish life is evidenced by the many Jewish schools,

clubs and radio stations as well as by the publication of scores of Jewish newspapers and periodicals.

Jews take an active part in mainstream public life as well.

For example, Britain's Defense Minister Malcolm Rifkind is Jewish; Rabbi Tamas Raj was elected to the Hungarian Parliament; and Tullia Zevi, president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, and Nobel Prize-winning scientist Rita Levi-Montalcini are two of Italy's most honored women.

In his book, "A Chosen People: The Resurrection of European Jewry," Mark Kurlansky describes Jewish rebirth in Europe as "the story of brave and tenacious people who have rebuilt their lives in the face of incomprehensible horror and refused to be pushed out of their homes by bigots."

Today, he wrote, "it can be said with some confidence that European Jewry will continue, that the remaining Jews of Europe will not all move to the United States or Israel, as had often been suggested."

Indeed, most European Jews feel that they are a part of Europe and feel increasingly that their future is linked to the future of Europe.

Still, after surviving Nazism and communism, Jews now face other dangers: Jews and Jewish institutions have been targets of Arab terrorist attacks in France, Italy, Belgium, England and elsewhere.

In Rome and many other European cities, heavy police security still stands guard at the main synagogues and other Jewish sites.

#### **European Jewry 'waking up from a big slumber'**

But aside from lingering anti-Semitism, many of the problems and challenges facing European Jews are problems and challenges that face all Europeans.

These challenges include such developments as the rise of nationalism and right-wing extremism; the integration of Eastern and Western Europe in the post-Cold War era; the development of a new, more open Europe; and social problems involving the elderly, the poor and the homeless.

Franco Pavoncello, a political scientist and vice president of Rome's Jewish community, said the collapse of communism and end of the Cold War was important in fostering a stronger European identity among Jews.

"Jews felt the same fate as [other] Europeans," he said.

"The energies are freed. They are waking up from a big slumber, asking what is our meaning here.

"In a way, this movement toward greater European integration signals a new development of European Jewry, a new European vision that didn't exist for 50 years," he said.

European Jews "start to think in common terms," Pavoncello added. "We are moving beyond the shock of the fact that the only thing that made Jews European is Auschwitz."

At the same time that they are thinking more like other Europeans, Jews across the continent are continuing to build their Jewish lives.

During the past few years, Jewish organizations have arranged conferences and seminars and initiated programs aimed at linking individual European Jewish communities to help them confront their common needs and problems.

Among these, for example, is a Europeanwide union of Jewish students, and associations of Jewish communities on a regional basis sponsored by the European Council of Jewish Communities.

One such association, founded in 1993, brings together leaders of Jewish communities from Mediterranean

countries — from France and Italy to Greece and Morocco — to discuss common issues of importance and to promote events such as international Jewish singles get-togethers and workshops for lay leaders, teachers and youth leaders.

Another similar association groups Jewish communities from seven cities in Central European countries.

A major pan-European conference, "Planning for the Future of European Jewry," will be held in early July in Prague.

The conference will focus on such issues as racism and anti-Semitism, religious and cultural identity and relations with other minority communities.

"Nothing that happens in Jewish communities in Europe can be separated from what is happening in Europe as a whole," Anthony Lerman, executive director of the London-based Institute of Jewish Affairs, said in a telephone interview.

The institute is sponsoring the conference along with the American Jewish Committee, the European Council of Jewish Communities and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

It will be held under the auspices of the secretary-general of the Council of Europe.

Lerman said that looking toward the future must go beyond concerns of Jewish continuity and related questions of intermarriage, issues that plague European Jewry as much as they do American Jews.

These may be important, he said, but "you have to look more broadly than just Jewish continuity, to develop ideas for strategies for development."

One increasingly important challenge as European Jews plot their own future in Europe, Lerman said, involves changing relations between European Jewry and Israel.

"It is quite a natural development," Lerman said. "Israel is developing as a state with its own interests that don't always fit with the European Jewish community's."

It is not a question of weaker ties with Israel, Lerman said, "but reconsidered ties."

"European Jewish communities need greater concentration on European problems," Lerman said.

Pavoncello of Rome's Jewish community agreed. "In a way, Israel is becoming an old message," he said.

"For the young generations of Jews, you can't keep talking about Israel. Their problems are the problems of Europeans, not Israelis. If you don't give them answers, they will leave the Jewish community.

"Everyone feels the need to know what Jewish contribution to Europe can be. We're Jews," he said. "We have a place in Israel. But what about Jews as part of the European nation?" □

#### **Suicide-bomb attempt foiled**

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, April 30 (JTA) — A suicide-bomb attempt near Netanya was foiled last week by agents of Shin Bet, Israel's domestic intelligence service, Israel security forces said.

Zacharia Zakrana, from the village of Kabatiya in the West Bank, had planned to strap explosives to his body and blow himself up at a hitchhiking station at the entrance to the city.

He was arrested a day before the planned attack.

Two other members of the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas group, also from Kabatiya, were arrested on suspicion of having planned the attack.

Zakrana had volunteered to carry out the attack to prove that he did not collaborate with Israeli authorities, news reports said. □

## Mormons vow to end practice of baptizing Holocaust victims

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, April 30 (JTA) — After six months of negotiations with a Jewish Holocaust survivors group, the Mormon Church has agreed to stop posthumously baptizing Jews.

A senior official of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as the Mormon Church is officially known, and Ernest Michel, chairman of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, were scheduled to sign an agreement to that effect this week.

An estimated 380,000 Jewish Holocaust victims and countless other Jews have been posthumously baptized as Mormons and have been included in the church's database of 200 million baptized people.

The policy of the Mormon Church directs its 9 million members to research their own ancestry and to have their forebears baptized so that the whole family can be reunited, after death, in heaven.

"Mormon baptism is required of every person if they are to be in the presence of God with their family members," according to Elder Monte Brough, executive director of the church's Family History Department and one of the top officials of the Presidency of Seventy, one of the church's highest bodies.

Brough said the practice of collecting the names of prominent people, celebrities and Holocaust victims "is counter to the policy of the church, but some have gone and done it anyway."

"Some members of our church felt deep compassion for victims of the Holocaust," he said in a telephone interview from Salt Lake City, explaining why they had them baptized.

Brough said Mormon officials first learned of the baptisms of Jewish Holocaust victims in 1991 and directed their church members to stop the practice. But there "were some submissions after that date," he said.

### Lists of Jews killed by Nazis

It turned out that nine Mormons in four countries — Holland, France, Germany and Israel — had obtained book-length lists of Jews killed by the Nazis. The lists had been published by the European governments and by Yad Vashem in Israel, according to Brough.

These Mormons then baptized, by proxy, each murdered Jew that was listed.

The baptisms were performed at the church's temples by having an individual, who is immersed in water, stand in for each dead person who is being baptized.

Gary Mokotoff, president of the Association of Jewish Genealogical Studies, is believed to be the first Jew to discover that the Mormons were baptizing deceased Jews. Although he first brought the baptisms of murdered Jews to the attention of the Mormons in 1992, he only got polite letters promising that "they were looking into it," he said.

It was only when Michel discovered that his own mother, father, grandmother and best childhood friend, all from Mannheim, Germany, had been posthumously baptized, that the matter was resolved.

"I was hurt that my parents, who were killed as Jews in Auschwitz, were being listed as members of the Mormon faith. I could not accept it. I would have done anything to change it," Michel said last week in an interview in his office at New York's UJA-Federation, where he served as executive vice president from 1970 to 1979.

After initial correspondence with the president of the Mormon Church and Sen. Orrin Hatch (R.-Utah), who

is Mormon, Michel met with Brough and other Mormon officials Jan. 6 in Hatch's Washington office.

Michel said he was prepared to sue the Mormon church for invasion of privacy, but was surprised when the church leaders turned out to be "as warm and friendly as you could imagine."

"Brough said, 'We made a mistake, we want to make amends and we did not realize that we were offending survivors,'" Michel said. "There were never any disagreements about the substance of what they were to do."

In a twist of fate, the agreement's signing comes one week after the 50th anniversary of Michel's escape from the Nazis. He fled a death march out of Berga, a subcamp of Buchenwald, into the surrounding woods.

As part of the agreement, the Mormons will delete from their genealogical database information about all known Jewish Holocaust victims who are not the ancestors of living church members. The database, the International Genealogical Index, is regarded by experts as the most extensive single genealogical resource in the world.

It contains names, birthdates, birthplaces and death dates, but not information about religion or ethnicity, so it is impossible to know precisely how many are Jews, beyond those already established as Holocaust victims.

### Notorious Nazis baptized by Mormons

The index also contains the names of several of the Nazi regime's most notorious leaders who were baptized by Mormons.

According to data from the index provided by Michel, Adolf Eichmann was baptized in September 1991. Joseph Goebbels was baptized in January 1990. Heinrich Himmler was baptized in May 1990 and Hermann Goering in March 1991. Hitler, however, was apparently not baptized.

"We would try and control the baptism of any person like Hitler, who would be considered an evil person and would not be an officially approved candidate for baptism," said Brough. Perhaps the others "had a descendant who felt that the ordinances of baptism would be helpful," he said.

The effort to expunge the names of Holocaust victims was initiated in January, even before the final details of the agreement were worked out, and will take about another year to complete, Brough said.

The church is writing the software that will remove the victims' names from its records, he said, adding that the effort is being undertaken at "a substantial cost."

Michel estimated the cost to the church at "several million dollars." The agreement Michel and Brough were slated to sign Wednesday also contains provisions requiring the Mormons to:

- Provide a list of all Jewish Holocaust victims whose names are to be removed from the International Genealogical Index to the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors; the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Commission; the N.Y. Holocaust Memorial Commission; the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Los Angeles; and Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial, located in Jerusalem;

- Reaffirm the policy and issue a directive to all officials and members of the church to discontinue any future baptisms of deceased Jews;

- Confirm this policy in all relevant literature produced by the church;

- Remove from the International Genealogical Index in the future the names of all deceased Jews who are so identified if they are known to be improperly included.

Brough said of the agreement: "There was never any intent to offend the Jewish people. We consider ourselves deep friends of the Jewish people." □

## IDF investigates reports of death of Islamic militant

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, April 30 (JTA) — The Israel Defense Force is investigating reports that an Islamic militant died after being interrogated by Israeli security agents.

Abed A-Samed Harizat, 30, was detained by Israeli security forces April 21.

He died in the intensive care unit of Jerusalem's Hadassah Hospital on April 25, after he was brought there unconscious and in serious condition, a hospital spokeswoman said.

Harizat's brother, Abdallah, claimed that he had been beaten to death.

He also said his brother had been a religious man, but did not have ties to the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement, Israel Radio reported.

According to some media reports, Harizat was a known supporter of Hamas and had been arrested by Israeli security officials in the past.

Senior Israeli security sources were quoted by Israel Radio as saying that Harizat ran a squad responsible for a number of fatal attacks on Jewish settlers near the West Bank town of Hebron.

The Justice Ministry's unit in charge of investigating police actions has started looking into the circumstances of Harizat's death.

The ministry announced last week that an autopsy would be carried out on Harizat.

His family agreed to the move after the State of Israel allowed them to be represented by a pathologist from Scotland.

On Sunday, after the autopsy was performed, the Scottish pathologist, Dr. Derrick Pounder, said Harizat had been tortured to death.

The pathologist said the injuries Harizat suffered could not have been caused by any other means, such as a fall.

The doctor said he and two Israelis, who also took part in the autopsy, had agreed that Harizat suffered several hard blows to the head, which caused the fatal brain injuries.

In the wake of an interim report on the circumstances surrounding Harizat's death, the head of Shin Bet, Israel's domestic intelligence service, transferred one of the agency's interrogators to a different post.

According to the interim report, the agent who was transferred may not have followed the correct procedures for questioning.

### Standards set for interrogation

The incident drew attention to questions surrounding the interrogation methods used by Israel's security agents.

In 1988, the Landau Commission set standards for interrogation of suspects believed to have committed security crimes.

In such cases, the commission allowed for the use of "moderate physical pressure."

The commission also granted authority to a special ministerial committee headed by the prime minister to ease restrictions on the use of moderate physical and psychological pressure in situations where there is suspicion of a terror attack being carried out.

Environment Minister Yossi Sarid, who sits on the ministerial committee monitoring Shin Bet, said there would be no coverup if the full findings of the investigation into Harizat's death show that he was tortured.

"When we have the full report on what happened

in his investigation, we will have to decide whether someone took extra measures that are unlawful," he told reporters after the weekly Cabinet meeting Sunday.

"If that is the case, he will be brought to trial," Sarid added.

Security sources defended the need for certain interrogation procedures.

Without the procedures, the sources said, they could not have identified Harizat as a squad leader for Hamas.

They also said interrogations, as allowed by the Landau Commission, made it possible for security forces to locate Islamic Jihad and Hamas terrorists in recent weeks.

Some West Bank Palestinians held strikes in response to the charges by human rights organizations and relatives of Harizat that he was tortured to death.

Meanwhile, Israeli security forces last week detained 14 Palestinian activists in Hebron.

The activists were suspected of carrying out 10 suicide bombings against Israelis between 1993 and 1994, an army spokesperson said.

Security sources said the Islamic cell was planning several bomb attacks inside Israel as well as inside the territories.

In a separate development, Israel Television reported last week that security forces had detained seven members of the Palestinian security service in the West Bank town of Hebron.

Under the terms of the self-rule accord, the operations of Palestinian security forces are restricted to the autonomous areas of the Gaza Strip and West Bank Jericho enclave. □

## Professor sparks controversy with comparison to Hitler Youth

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, April 30 (JTA) — A Hebrew University professor who compared the children of Jewish settlers to Hitler Youth has prompted calls from the right-wing for his dismissal.

In an interview with the weekly newspaper Yerushalayim, Professor Moshe Zimmerman said he saw strong similarities between the two groups.

"There is a whole sector of Israeli society, that without hesitation I would call a copy of the Nazis," he said.

"Look at the children of Hebron: They are exactly like Hitler Youth.

"They are brainwashed from age zero that Arabs are bad and about anti-Semitism, making them paranoid and racist — just like the Hitler Youth."

Zimmerman later said that some of his comments were distorted in the published interview.

But he nonetheless held firm to his conviction that there are certain parallels between the settlers and Nazis, including racism.

Likud Knesset member Ron Nahman called on Education Minister Amnon Rubinstein to dismiss Zimmerman immediately.

Nahman also called on the State Attorney's Office to bring criminal charges against the professor for incitement.

"The professor's remarks are a filthy stain on the Hebrew University, and anyone who expresses such opinions should have no place in the Israeli education system," said Nahman.

Israel Television reported that settlers councils in the West Bank town of Hebron and in nearby Kiryat Arba are preparing to bring charges against Zimmerman. □