

NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ Syria announced it is prepared to accept the presence of surveillance stations on the Golan Heights after an Israeli withdrawal from the area — provided they are not manned by Israeli personnel. The Syrian announcement, seen as a significant step forward, came just hours before the Clinton administration's special Middle East coordinator, Dennis Ross, began a shuttle visit to Jerusalem and Damascus.

■ Canadian Prime Minister Jean Chretien joined more than 2,000 mourners at the funeral of Saidye Rosner Bronfman, the mother of one of the most renowned Jewish families in the Diaspora and considered by many to be the matriarch of Canadian Jewry. She died in Montreal of natural causes at the age of 98.

■ Jewish communal leader Kalman Sultanik criticized Polish President Lech Walesa for failing to condemn his priest's anti-Semitic comments. In a speech he delivered after receiving a prestigious award from the Polish government in Warsaw, Sultanik urged Walesa to go beyond a general condemnation of anti-Semitism and to directly censure the priest, Father Henryk Jankowski, for his remarks.

■ Jewish activists appeared in full force to stake their claim in the debate over a religious equality amendment. The activity coincided with an official congressional field hearing on the issue in New York City.

■ Participants at a landmark three-day conference held in Prague debated strategies for charting the future of European Jewry. The conference drew 200 Jewish community leaders, policy-makers and scholars from 25 countries all over Europe, the United States and Israel. [Page 4]

■ More than 60 graves in the Jewish section of a southern Australian cemetery were damaged, officials said. Damage to the cemetery, located in the city of Adelaide, was estimated at \$62,000. Prime Minister Paul Keating, in a statement, called the attack "vicious, stupid and shameful." [Page 2]

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**A changed Argentine Jewry faces bombing anniversary**

By Sergio Kiernan

BUENOS AIRES, July 10 (JTA) — In a sad and nervous mood, the Argentine Jewish community is preparing to mark the first anniversary of the bombing that destroyed the main building of AMIA, the Argentine Jewish Mutual-Aid Association.

On July 18, 1994, a powerful bomb destroyed the 6-story building on Pasteur Street, in downtown Buenos Aires, killing 86 people and wounding at least 300.

To mark the incident, Jewish community authorities will unveil a memorial monument at La Tablada cemetery, the largest Jewish cemetery in South America, on July 16.

The memorial will stand by other monuments in the cemetery commemorating Holocaust victims and fighters of the Warsaw Ghetto.

On the anniversary itself, there will be three main events. At 9:50 a.m., the exact time of the explosion a year ago, a ceremony will remember the victims at the site on Pasteur Street.

At 6 p.m., there will be a demonstration at a nearby square. All major Jewish organizations and groups as well as most Argentine political parties are calling on "all Argentines to attend and demand that justice be done."

Later that evening there will be a memorial service at the Liberty Street Synagogue, the largest in Buenos Aires.

Besides these main events, there will be dozens others, because most Jewish community groups in the country are planning some form of commemoration.

But as the commemorations approach, Argentine Jews cannot hide a sense of despair and helplessness that after one year, the investigation has yielded only four arrests and no conclusive explanation of the bombing.

Reports of other arrests have been unconfirmed.

President Carlos Menem's government has so far failed to get beyond accusing second-hand car dealer Carlos Alberto Telleldin of providing the van used as a car bomb, and arresting two of his business partners as alleged accomplices. And these arrests occurred only recently.

Although Argentina denounced Iran as being behind the bombing and downgraded its diplomatic representation in Teheran, Menem's government has not sustained the charges with any evidence.

The recent arrest of seven Lebanese nationals and a Brazilian citizen in Ciudad del Este, a notorious smuggling point in eastern Paraguay, has also not yielded any new information.

Paraguayan authorities have spent the last seven months considering Argentina's petition to extradite the eight suspects for interrogation.

Argentine Judge Roberto Marquevich accuses the Lebanese and the Brazilians of being linked to a neo-Nazi cell in Buenos Aires.

Marquevich has said there is evidence of "possible links between this cell and the AMIA bombing," but refused to discuss details.

The AMIA bombing was the worst attack in history against the 230,000-strong Argentine Jewish community.

Jewish life in Argentina has changed

In the wake of the attack, Jewish institutions, synagogues and schools have set up tight security systems to prevent future bombings.

The buildings are marked by Belfast-style anti-car bomb concrete fences, closed circuit TV cameras and private security personnel.

And behind bullet-proof windows and reinforced concrete walls, Jewish life in Argentina has changed.

The possibility of a third bombing in Buenos Aires — after the 1992 destruction of the Israeli Embassy and the 1994 bombing of AMIA — makes Jews feel that their open and integrated way of life also fell victim to the bombs.

"It used to be that you did not feel different from other Argentines," said an Argentine Jewish woman, speaking on condition of anonymity.

"Most people still don't treat you any different on a personal level. But as a community, Jews are perceived by many as a potential problem,"

she said. "People don't want to live near a Jewish institution, and we have metal detectors at my daughter's school. It is all very sad."

Most Jews here agree they do not feel threatened by fellow Argentines, and security measures are limited to community buildings, not private homes.

And there has not been an upsurge of anti-Semitic acts during the past year.

But on the whole, Argentine Jews do not appear to trust their government to solve the case and capture the bombers.

"The important issue is not to prove if Iran was or wasn't behind the bombing," said Horacio Lutzky, the news director of Alef Network, the first Jewish cable TV station in Argentina, and former editor of Nueva Sion magazine.

"What really matters is to find the local connection, those who provided intelligence, safe houses and support for the bombers," he said.

"I think they are former security agents that worked for Argentina's military dictators in the '70s and early '80s," he said, adding, "They are torturers and fascists who keep up very good contacts in the police and security agencies. And, you know, fascists don't go after fascists."

Ruben Beraja, president of DAIA, the umbrella Jewish political organization, has so far not been openly critical of the government's handling of the case.

But Beraja also appears to be growing increasingly impatient.

In the past year, Beraja publicly spoke of "the importance of having our institutions doing their work, investigating and finding the culprits."

Beraja consistently refused to support those who hinted about the complicity of police and security agencies in the bombing.

"I know there are anti-Semites and people with Nazi sympathies in their ranks," he said recently, "but I think there are many other decent and law-abiding policemen and agents who want to solve the case."

But in a recent news conference, Beraja hinted at a change in his position.

"We were told that there will be major breakthroughs in the coming two or three months," he said to an assembly of foreign and Argentine journalists.

"If that time goes by without further developments, we will denounce the situation here and abroad," he warned. □

Australian prime minister condemns attack on cemetery

By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Australia, July 10 (JTA) — Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating has strongly condemned the vandalism of a Jewish cemetery in Adelaide, South Australia.

More than 60 graves were desecrated at the West Terrace Cemetery in a brazen daylight attack that took place last Friday.

The cemetery includes graves that date back to the 1840s.

Keating called the act an "affront to the community" and said the perpetrators had "no place in a tolerant society."

Nick Bolkus, a senator and the federal immigration minister, labeled those responsible "cowardly" and "mindless."

"This act of racial hatred and aggression should be condemned by all," he said.

The Jewish community in South Australia is

experiencing "shock, horror and anguish," said Norman Schueler, president of the Jewish Community of South Australia.

South Australian government officials said they would meet this week with the Jewish community and the police to discuss restoration of graves and security at the cemetery.

Isi Leibler, president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, said the attack was "the most despicable crime against Australia's Jewish community in memory."

"An attack of this sort is more than an assault on the gravestones, on the families who are directly touched by this villainy and on the Jewish community — it is an attack on Australian values of democracy, tolerance and decency," Leibler added.

Adelaide is the base for a number of small neo-Nazi and anti-Semitic organizations.

Members of the Jewish community and human rights workers have reported harassment and attacks on their property in recent months.

Authorities have no suspects as of yet, but the prime minister and religious leaders, among others, have expressed the view that the attack probably was the work of a racist fringe group.

A major rally is set to take place July 16 in Adelaide. It will involve Jewish, political and church leaders from across Australia. □

Tasmanian synagogue marks 150th anniversary with a 'twist'

By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Australia, July 10 (JTA) — Australia's oldest continually functioning synagogue has marked its 150th anniversary.

One of the Hobart Synagogue's attendants, Ikey Solomon, who was deported to Australia for his criminal activity, reportedly was the model for the villainous Jewish character "Fagin" in Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist*.

In the novel, written from 1837 to 1838, Fagin is a corrupter of youth and receiver of stolen goods.

A series of lectures, concerts and debates were scheduled in connection with the anniversary of the Tasmanian synagogue.

Religious leaders from Melbourne and Sydney conducted services for one of the world's most isolated Jewish communities, perhaps the only Jewish community in the world that can blame its shrinking population on reforms to Great Britain's penal code, which stopped Jewish convicts from coming to Tasmania.

The Tasmanian Jewish community has been consistently small, reaching close to 500 people late last century.

The number then dropped to a handful, but rose to 250 as a result of post-World War II immigration.

Today, the Hobart Synagogue conducts both Orthodox and Reform services.

The synagogue, which opened in June 1845, still contains the "penal" pews for convicts, who were sent to Australia as punishment. The pews are separate from seating for free settlers.

Soon after the synagogue opened, the government ordered that "all prisoners of the Jewish persuasion" had to attend synagogue on Shabbat.

At the time, religious leaders wrote to the chief rabbi of London, asking whether a convict could be included as a member of a minyan and be called to read from the Torah.

Both the donor of the land for the synagogue and the building's architect were convicts who remained in Australia after completing their sentences. □

Proposed tax credit unlikely to plug gaps left by budget cuts

By Jennifer Batog

WASHINGTON (JTA) — A tax cut proposal designed to help charities plug the gaps created by massive federal budget cuts is winning little enthusiasm among officials of Jewish social service agencies.

The measure, known as "The Choice in Welfare Tax Credit Bill," would give taxpayers a dollar-for-dollar tax credit up to \$100 for individuals and \$200 for joint filers when they donate to a qualified charity.

It is being spearheaded by Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) and Reps. Jim Kolbe (R-Ariz.) and Joe Knollenberg (R-Mich.).

Officials of Jewish charities welcomed the legislation but said it was not likely to ease the burden government funding cuts would place on private charities.

"If the federal government can suggest ways to increase contributions, that would be fine, but I don't think taking government money away and replacing it with charitable donations will work," said William Rapfogel, executive director of the Metropolitan New York Coordinating Council on Jewish Poverty.

A network of 25 local agencies, Met Council assists the poor in housing, entitlements and other aid.

Although the tax credit could increase donations, it does not specify what charities the money goes to, Rapfogel said. Nor does it take into account the difference in cost of living between the states.

"It may increase donations, but there's no needs assessment here," he said. "There's no suggestion that this will target donations to particular areas," which may need it most.

Also, only charities that work with those who make 150 percent or less of the poverty line and spend 30 percent or less of their revenue on administrative costs will qualify as tax credits, possibly excluding some Jewish groups, said Rapfogel.

Another Jewish official expressing skepticism is Martin Wenick, executive vice president of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, which assists Jewish refugees and immigrants.

"I'm not convinced that this in and of itself is sufficient to stimulate large sums of private dollars that would replace the loss of federal funds," he said. "I think this would be a mere dot on the horizon in terms of assistance" to charities.

Although encouraging people to donate to charities is positive, Wenick said he did not think the bill would have a major impact on fund raising.

A tax credit is money subtracted from what a taxpayer owes the government, while a tax deduction comes out of a taxpayer's adjusted income. Only taxpayers who owe the government money will be eligible for the tax credit.

No congressional hearings have been scheduled on the measure. □

Britain's supporters of Israel welcome new foreign secretary

By Bernard Josephs
London Jewish Chronicle

LONDON, July 10 (JTA) — Parliamentary supporters of Israel were among those who have welcomed the appointment of Malcolm Rifkind as Britain's new foreign secretary.

Rifkind, who succeeds Douglas Hurd, became the first Jew to hold the post since Lord Rufus Daniel Isaacs, in Ramsay MacDonald's national government of 1931.

Rifkind, a member of Parliament for Edinburgh Pentlands, has been defense secretary for three years.

He had been widely touted to succeed Hurd after Prime Minister John Major's recent leadership victory over challenger John Redwood.

Rifkind's appointment, applauded in Parliament and Whitehall, was seen as a reflection of changing attitudes within the Foreign Office, which was traditionally regarded as predominantly Arabist in outlook.

It was also seen as a reflection of the altered political atmosphere in the Middle East.

Stuart Polak, director of the Conservative Friends of Israel, said his organization was "absolutely delighted" with Rifkind's appointment.

The group, associated with Major's Conservative Party, also expressed satisfaction at the transfer of Jeremy Hanley, party chairman, to the Foreign Office where, as minister of state, he will assume responsibility for the Middle East. Hanley's predecessor, Douglas Hogg, has been moved to the Office of Agriculture.

A spokesman for the all-party Britain-Israel Parliamentary Group said both Rifkind and Hanley had a "long record of solid support" for Israel.

Rifkind — a strongly identified Jew who views his Judaism as "supremely irrelevant" to his political duties — spoke very much like a foreign secretary-in-waiting when addressing a Britain-Israel Chamber of Commerce lunch just hours before his promotion was announced.

He told the chamber that Britain would strongly support the Middle East peace process and voiced his approval of last year's lifting of Britain's arms embargo against Israel. He pledged that there would be "no political constraint" on the trading of defense equipment between the two countries.

The only other Jewish member of Major's Cabinet, Michael Howard — who had been mentioned as another contender for the foreign secretary's job — retained his post as home secretary. □

Jewish hero of rugby team brushes off 'Jew boy' remark

By Suzanne Belling

JOHANNESBURG (JTA) — Joel Stransky, the hero in South Africa's victory over New Zealand in the recent rugby World Cup final, has shrugged off suggestions that his coach was anti-Semitic in referring to him after the match as the "Jew boy."

The fly-half, who kicked all of his team's points, said his coach, Kitch Christie, "often uses 'Jew boy' as a term of endearment, because he and I are very, very close."

Stransky, a restaurateur and a former South African Maccabi Sportsman of the Year, also is known as the "minyan man" because he is the 10th Jew to play for the Springboks.

In South Africa, a belief exists — especially among rugby-mad Afrikaners, who are often heard chanting "Go, Jood (Jew), go" during matches — that having a Jew on the team is good luck.

Stransky called such a belief a myth, saying: "They say it, but they don't really believe it. I am not superstitious and I don't believe in omens. A player is not picked because he is Jewish, but because he is the best man."

South African Jews joined in nationwide celebrations of the historic World Cup victory over the New Zealand All Blacks, named for the color of their shirts.

But because the match was played on a Saturday, most observant Jews were forced to watch video recordings after Shabbat ended. □

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD
European Jewry takes stock
at a time of dramatic changes

By Ruth E. Gruber

PRAGUE, July 10 (JTA) — Charting the future of European Jewry.

It is a monumental task, as evidenced by a recent landmark conference here, during which participants debated strategies for allowing European Jews to take their place as a "third pillar" in the Jewish world — alongside Israel and the American Jewish community.

"The challenges are dramatic," David Lewis, president of the London-based European Council of Jewish Communities, said at the July 2 opening of the conference.

"We have to take stock, to make plans," he said.

The three-day conference was held 50 years after the Holocaust decimated the Jewish population of Europe, and just more than five years after the fall of communism redrew the map of the continent and freed Eastern European Jews from oppression.

The conference was sponsored by the European Council, the London-based Institute of Jewish Affairs, the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

It drew 200 Jewish community leaders, policy-makers and scholars from 25 countries across Europe, the United States and Israel.

Participants included Orthodox and secular Jews, rabbis and lay people.

They represented Jewish organizations as well as individual Jewish communities, ranging from the large, well-organized communities in the United Kingdom and France, to the newly emerging Jewish communities that have resurrected themselves in former Communist countries during the past five years.

The organizers stressed that the title of the conference, "Planning for the Future of European Jewry," reflected "an assertion that Jews in Europe can take the future into their own hands, an attitude inconceivable before 1989."

Indeed, the conference was held in a city whose post-Communist transformation symbolizes the dramatic transformations that have taken place with the end of the Cold War.

Jews are an 'internationalizing influence'

Czech Republic President Vaclav Havel, who met with participants, emphasized the importance of Jewish input for Europe and expressed optimism about the future.

"The Jewish Diaspora survived everything it met within its history, and it met many bad things," he said.

"So I believe that Jews will continue to live a life of their own and that new generations will emerge," Havel said.

Jews, he noted, have been an inseparable part of Europe for centuries.

They were an "internationalizing influence" — living in many states, but at the same time preserving their own identity.

This example provided by European Jewry, the president added, can help in the overall process of unifying Europe.

Debate during the conference focused on both the definition and identification of problems and challenges as well as on suggestions for taking practical action.

"The new situation in Europe presents both great opportunities and dangers for Jewish communities," Peter Levy, chairman of the Institute of Jewish Affairs, told the conference.

"There is an urgent need for more coordinated

response, to seek common solutions to common problems," he said.

Michael Friedman, a member of the presidium of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, said, "We have to be aware that the next years will be more difficult than the last ones."

"We have to define our goals. The problems around us present a danger but also a chance for Jewish life," he said.

Key topics of discussion at the conference included:

- How to define Jewish — and even European — identity, and how to define just what constitutes a Jewish community;
- Relations between Diaspora communities and Israel, between various communities within the worldwide Diaspora and between established Western European communities and the newly emerging or reconstituted communities in Eastern Europe;
- The issue of intermarriage — running at a rate of approximately 50 percent in Europe — and how to deal with non-Jewish partners and the children of mixed marriages;
- How to attract Jews to the Jewish community and Jewish organizations;
- Anti-Semitism and interfaith activities.

Not unlike an issue engaging American Jewry was the question of Jewish identity in an increasingly secularized world.

Indeed, at the conference here, this issue underlay debate on pragmatic policy issues.

"The problem we are facing at this conference is how to transform Jews in Europe into European Jews," said Dominique Moisi, head of the Paris-based French Institute of Foreign Relations.

Moisi was the keynote speaker.

"For the first time in Jewish history, we are Jews because we have so chosen; Jewish identity is purely voluntary," said Jean-Jacques Wahl of the Paris-based Alliance Israelite Universelle.

Speakers repeatedly stressed that with Jewish identity now being a voluntary act, Jewish communities must use what speakers defined as a "market approach" in "selling" the attractions of affiliation.

"Everyone now in the voluntary Jewish community joins for different reasons," said Yechiel Bar Chaim of the Joint.

"We've lost the idea of a homogenous Jewish community. People come in and out," he said.

"But the portrait of the flexible, open Jewish community has its problems," he added, questioning whether an approach based on the voluntary participation of members of the community would prove to be sufficient. □

Iraq developed biological weapons

By Jennifer Batog

WASHINGTON, July 10 (JTA) — Iraq has admitted that it was developing biological warfare for offensive purposes before the Persian Gulf War.

Iraq said it would disclose all aspects of its program by the end of this month and that all the weapons have since been destroyed.

The Clinton administration said the admission was not enough to justify lifting economic sanctions the United Nations has imposed on the rogue nation.

"They haven't done nearly enough to warrant the lifting of the sanctions by the U.N. and certainly, the U.S. will adhere to that position," State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said at a briefing here. □