



NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ **L'Oreal agreed to pay \$1.4 million in a settlement reached with the Commerce Department regarding charges that it complied with the Arab boycott of Israel.** The international cosmetics giant did not admit any guilt when it reached the settlement. [Page 1]

■ **Palestinian police arrested some 30 members of the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement in the Gaza Strip.** The arrests came as Palestinian security officials were searching for Yehiya Ayash, a Hamas militant believed to be the mastermind behind several suicide bombings in Israel. [Page 3]

■ **Israel's statute of limitations on criminal acts precludes any investigation of allegations that Israeli soldiers executed Egyptian prisoners of war,** Attorney General Michael Ben-Yair said. Charges by historians and former officers that Israeli troops killed Egyptian POWs during the 1956 Sinai Campaign and the 1967 Six-Day War have created a storm of controversy in recent weeks. [Page 3]

■ **Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert warned that eastern Jerusalem would eventually come under Palestinian jurisdiction if Arab residents there are allowed to take part in the upcoming Palestinian elections.** Issues surrounding the holding of elections are among the points of dispute in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

■ **American neo-Nazi Gary Lauck applied for political asylum in Denmark after an extradition request by Germany was upheld by the Danish Supreme Court.** The extradition of Lauck, who faces charges tied to distributing anti-Semitic propaganda in Germany, will most likely be delayed, but not thwarted, a World Jewish Congress official said.

■ **The Greek Jewish community announced that it would join thousands of others seeking German reparations for suffering that occurred during the Nazi occupation of Greece.** The wave of court cases in Greece is expected to be initiated in September, with the possibility of total damages reaching \$35 billion. [Page 3]

L'Oreal to pay \$1.4 million in connection with Arab boycott

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — In a clear sign that the United States will continue to enforce laws banning compliance with the Arab boycott of Israel, the Commerce Department has levied the second largest fine since enforcement began more than 25 years ago.

American affiliates of L'Oreal agreed to pay \$1.4 million to settle an investigation of the international cosmetics giant. As is customary in such settlements, the firms did not admit complying with the boycott.

The investigation should remind the exporting community that the Arab boycott of Israel "is not yet consigned to history," said John Despres, assistant secretary of commerce for export enforcement.

Anti-boycott laws "will continue to be enforced vigorously until the boycott is completely ended and U.S. law has been changed accordingly," he said.

The Commerce Department had charged L'Oreal affiliates in the United States with supplying information about their commercial relations in Israel to L'Oreal's Paris headquarters in the late 1980s to assist the firm in dealing with Arab boycott authorities.

The settlement announced Tuesday was based on three documents containing 144 alleged violations.

According to the settlement, Parbel of Florida will pay \$1,387,000; Cosmair Inc. will pay \$9,000; and Bruce Mishkin, associate corporate counsel for Cosmair and the former vice president of Helena Rubinstein, will pay \$50,400. All are affiliates of L'Oreal.

Lawyers maintain company's innocence

The charges against L'Oreal and its affiliates were among the most significant ever made by the Commerce Department, Despres said.

"The allegations are very serious, extensive and numerous. The magnitude of the violation is reflected by the size of the payments being made," Despres said.

Only Baxter International, which paid more than \$6 million in fines in 1993, has paid more to the Commerce Department.

L'Oreal's attorneys maintain that the company and its affiliates are innocent.

"This is a settlement of contested charges. We deny that there was any violation of the law," said Stanley Marcuss, an attorney representing L'Oreal.

Jewish organizations were quick to praise the Commerce Department.

"Furnishing information is a serious allegation. The lifeblood of the boycott is built around information received," said Jess Hordes, Washington director of the Anti-Defamation League. "The Commerce Department did a good job in enforcing U.S. anti-boycott laws."

Although praising the Commerce Department for its investigation of the case, American Jewish Congress officials noted that L'Oreal has substantially increased its investments in Israel.

"L'Oreal has demonstrated within the past year a complete abandonment of its former policies by developing a very large economic program in Israel," said Will Maslow, former editor of the now defunct AJCongress newsletter, Boycott Report.

One member of Congress who has been outspoken on the boycott welcomed the settlement.

"The Arab economic boycott is not only illegal, it is immoral, and any company that supports it must be brought to justice," said Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), who chairs the Congressional Task Force to End the Boycott.

While L'Oreal officials maintain their affiliates did nothing wrong, company officials acknowledged that L'Oreal should not have sent letters in the late 1980s to the boycott office in Damascus detailing the company's involvement with Israel.

In a letter to ADL National Director Abraham Foxman, L'Oreal's chairman apologized for its past relationship with the boycott office in Damascus. "An international company like L'Oreal should have refused to

place itself in such an unacceptable position and should not have replied to boycott inquiries," L'Oreal Chairman Lindsay Owen-Jones wrote.

"I am sorry such correspondence was ever sent. I also want to inform you that I have taken measures to assure that such action will not happen again." □

American students in Israel not deterred by U.S. warning

By Avi V. Stieglitz

NEW YORK (JTA) — The suicide bus bombing in Jerusalem last week has not deterred the hundreds of American students who will be studying abroad in Israel this year.

Nor is a warning by the U.S. State Department against riding public transportation in Israel keeping most of the visiting Americans away from buses.

If anything, "the shock and outrage" felt after the attack "has made people decide that they wouldn't cancel," said Geoffrey Weill, who does public relations for the Israeli Tourism Ministry's office here.

The majority of the students who will be studying in Israel this year were already in the country at the time, he said.

At Tel Aviv University, it was surprising how few students "were afraid for their own safety," said Jan Stott, director of the overseas program.

And there was almost no reaction from parents "in contrast to the invasion of Kuwait" by Iraq in 1990, she added.

"There were maybe two or three phone calls from parents out of 170 American students," Stott said.

The State Department issued a warning last week to American citizens traveling in Israel as well as U.S. diplomatic officials stationed there to "avoid use of public transportation, especially buses and bus stops."

The advisory was issued after the Aug. 21 bombing of a bus in Jerusalem, in which an American teacher, Joan Davenny, was among those killed.

A similar warning had been issued after the April 9 terrorist attack on a bus in the Gaza Strip, which killed American college student Alisa Flatow and seven Israeli soldiers.

Although there were Hebrew University students injured in last week's bus bombing, students leaving the program was never an issue.

"There was not a single case of a student wanting to return," said Moshe Margolin, assistant director of Hebrew University's Office of Academic Affairs here.

The university opened its phone lines for overseas students to call their parents and let them know they were safe.

"It allayed the fears of parents because they knew that their kid was OK," Margolin added.

The result was that there were fewer than two dozen phone calls from parents to the overseas office in New York the next day.

The parents were mainly "worried about students riding on public transportation to classes," Margolin said.

The university has since contracted for private busing to transport students from their dormitories in western Jerusalem to their classes on Mount Scopus, Margolin said.

The administration has also set up counseling for any student who needs it, Margolin added.

Despite the attack, "the ulpan classes were never interrupted" and attendance by the 475 Americans remained steady, said Margolin.

A group of students have boycotted the private bus service, continuing to take the public Egged buses to

school in a sign of solidarity with the local residents, Margolin said.

For other visiting Americans, such as Seth Limmer, a rabbinic student at the Hebrew Union College in Jerusalem, heightened concern about safety has caused them to stop using public transportation temporarily.

Limmer's decision was partially made in deference to his parents in the United States, who were nervous about him using public buses.

"I don't like that I entered into the fear mentality, but there is an element of practicality," Limmer said.

However, Limmer recognizes that his personal safety is not guaranteed.

"What happens in buses can happen in the street or supermarket or anywhere," he said. "Anything can happen at any time."

Rivka Kornreich, the administrative assistant at the Yeshivat Keren B'Yavneh office in New York, said there were no concerns directed to her office by parents. "The fact that the yeshiva is in the north of the country may have something to do with that," she added. □

Harry Wu criticizes Israel for military ties to Beijing

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Chinese American human rights activist Harry Wu criticized Israel's military ties to China, calling on the government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin to stop "dealing with evil."

Wu, expelled from China last week after he was sentenced to 15 years in prison on charges of espionage, told Israel Radio that Israeli military officials were working hand-in-hand with the Chinese.

"I know that Israeli military experts right now in China are working very hard with Chinese military," he said in the interview, broadcast in Israel on Sunday.

"This is a very bad decision," he added.

Wu said Israel should withhold its support for Beijing, which he likened to the fascist regime of Nazi Germany.

"If the Israeli people are really concerned about concentration camps, concerned about the Nazi fascists, they have to apply the same principles to China," said Wu, who accused the Chinese government of applying concentration camp techniques to its dissidents.

An Israeli Foreign Ministry official said Wu was overstating the extent of Israeli military assistance to Beijing.

"I am surprised at his attack," the official said. "It's not like the Chinese regime is depending on Israel and would crumble if it withdrew its support."

Israel and China established diplomatic relations in January 1992.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres visited there in May 1993, and Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin made a stop there during a Far East tour in October of that year.

Israel has repeatedly been charged with selling sensitive U.S. military technology to China.

Rabin vigorously denied the charge during a meeting with Defense Secretary William Perry when the allegation last surfaced in January.

In 1993, an extensive investigation conducted in Washington vindicated Israel of charges that it had sold Patriot missiles to China.

Wu, 58, was arrested in June while trying to enter China to document human rights abuses at prison labor camps.

It was his fifth trip to China since 1991. He spent 19 years in the labor camps before coming to the United States in 1985. □

Israeli tip leads Palestinians to arrest Hamas members in Gaza

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Palestinian police have arrested some 30 Hamas activists in the southern Gaza Strip, according to Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat.

Arafat announced the arrests after a meeting Tuesday with Israeli Tourism Minister Uzi Baram in Gaza.

Palestinian officials said one of those arrested in the overnight sweep was just hours away from leaving for a suicide bombing mission in Tel Aviv.

"He had explosives and had shaved his beard," PLO official Sufayn Abu Zaide told Israel Television, adding that the Hamas member had "arranged to travel to the central bus station in Tel Aviv." Zaide also said, "He planned to blow himself up there at 3 a.m." on Tuesday.

The arrests, which resulted in part from intelligence information provided by Israel, came as Palestinian security officials were searching for Yehiya Ayash, according to Israeli sources. Ayash, known as "The Engineer" for his expertise with explosives, is a Hamas militant believed to be the mastermind behind several suicide bombings in Israel perpetrated by Hamas. Israel Radio quoted a Palestinian source who said the search for Ayash continues.

The announcement of the arrests by the Palestinian police came days after Israeli security officials disclosed that they had infiltrated Hamas cells in the West Bank and had arrested dozens of Hamas operatives there and in eastern Jerusalem. The arrests were described by Israeli officials as dealing a severe blow to Hamas' terror operations against Israeli soldiers and civilians.

Meanwhile, Israel on Tuesday eased the closure it had imposed last week on the self-rule enclave of Jericho in the West Bank, allowing women, children and men older than 35 to leave. The partial lifting of the closure came after hundreds of Jericho residents rioted Monday at an army roadblock at one of the entrances to the city.

Demonstrators burned an Israeli flag and hurled stones at Israeli border police, injuring three of them.

Israel sealed off Jericho from the rest of the West Bank on Aug. 23, after Palestinian officials arrested two members of the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas movement who had fled there. They were believed to have helped plan the Aug. 21 suicide bombing of a bus in Jerusalem.

Israeli security sources said Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had imposed the closure to pressure the Palestinian Authority to hand over the two Hamas members, who were tried and sentenced to jail terms by a Palestinian military court in Gaza. But by Sunday, some Cabinet members, including Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, conceded that the Palestinian Authority was not obligated to surrender them under the terms of the self-rule accord.

U.S. Middle East peace envoy Dennis Ross held separate talks Tuesday with Peres and Arafat in an effort to achieve progress in the ongoing negotiations for extending self-rule in the West Bank.

Both Ross and Peres predicted that the completed accord would be signed in Washington in mid-September. Ross also said the Clinton administration is planning two major conferences to help raise \$100 million in aid for the Palestinian Authority, according to Israel Radio. □

Israel's attorney general rejects query into POW killings

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's attorney general has determined that too much time has elapsed to allow for the prosecution of Israeli soldiers who may have been

involved in the alleged execution of Egyptian prisoners of war.

Michael Ben-Yair, in a statement issued this week by the Justice Ministry, called the alleged killings of Egyptian POWs during the 1956 Sinai Campaign and the 1967 Six-Day War "unlawful and intolerable."

But Israel's 20-year statute of limitations for criminal acts had expired, the attorney general added.

"As a result, there is no legal possibility of bringing to trial anyone involved in incidents that took place almost 40 years ago, or 28 years ago," Ben-Yair said in the statement.

In a letter to Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, Ben-Yair said he had reached the decision after reviewing appeals he had received from public figures and citizens calling for an investigation into the incidents from both wars.

The controversy over the fate of Egyptian POWs surfaced earlier this month, when several Israeli veterans and historians came forward with claims that they had witnessed or participated in the killings during the 1956 and 1967 wars.

This week, an Israeli historian claimed that some 200 Israeli POWs had been killed by Egyptian troops during the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

The disclosures regarding the 1956 and 1967 wars prompted Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to call on Israel to investigate and prosecute those soldiers responsible for killing Egyptian POWs.

Mubarak, interviewed on Israeli television, said the investigations could prevent a crisis between the two countries.

He also said he was ready to look into reports that Egyptian soldiers had killed Israeli POWs. "I am prepared to investigate the reports about the murder of Israeli soldiers," he said. □

Greek Jews seek reparations from Germany for WWII period

By Alissa Kaplan

NEW YORK (JTA) — The Greek Jewish community has joined thousands of other Greeks seeking German reparations for suffering that occurred during the Nazi occupation.

The wave of court cases in Greece is expected to be initiated in September.

Total damages claimed reportedly could reach \$35 billion.

"There is no family in our community that does not have one or more Nazi victims," Andreas Sefiha, head of the Jewish community in the northern port city of Salonika, reportedly said Monday.

About 450 of the 1,500 Jews in Salonika had already sued in Greek courts seeking damages from Germany, Sefiha added.

The Jewish population in prewar Greece was about 77,000. More than 60,000 Greek Jews were killed during World War II.

Most of the 60,000 killed had been deported to Auschwitz.

Today, less than 5,000 Jews live there.

The new court action initiative is headed by the governors of Athens and Viotia, the World Jewish Congress said.

Yannis Stamoulis, the governor of the Viotia prefecture, has said the relatives of the 130,000 Greeks executed, 300,000 who starved to death and the owners of 125,000 houses destroyed would be eligible for reparations.

Some 2,500 people have applied for reparations in Viotia alone. □

Modern-day golem-maker sculpts in Hungary's capital

By Ruth E. Gruber

BUDAPEST (JTA) — Levente Thury is a golem-maker.

For more than 15 years, the Budapest ceramist has sculpted representations of the golem, the clay, servantlike creature brought to life by a spell or incantation. The golem, Hebrew for "something shapeless," has been a compelling figure in Jewish mysticism since the Middle Ages.

The most famous golem of Jewish legend is connected to Rabbi Judah Loew ben Bezalel in the 16th century in Prague. Loew, who died in 1609, created the golem to serve him and to protect the Prague Jewish community. As in other versions of the golem legend, the artificial clay man ran amok, forcing Loew to deactivate him.

Even today, legend has it that Loew's golem lies in the attic of Prague's famous Old-New Synagogue.

Thury is among those artists inspired by such tales.

Over the years, the golem legend has fascinated artists of many media because of the implications of the myth: technology spiraling out of control, the foiled attempt to compete with God, the failure to manipulate the universe.

Thury's golems do not resemble the robotlike representations that are sold in Prague today of the artificial being said to have been created by Loew.

Each one of Thury's thousands of golems is a different interpretation of the legend.

"I would like to make things that are a mixture of spiritual and material," he said in an interview. "That is the most important meaning of the golem."

"The body of the golem is material: clay, stone and earth — the oldest materials," said Thury, whose piercing dark eyes look out from under a thatch of prematurely white hair.

"The message, the amulet, the spell" that brings the golem to life is the spirit, he added.

Hand grasps armless torso

His golems range in height from shorter than an inch to larger than life.

Except for tiny figurines, which he said he often gives to friends as talismans, he rarely sculpts an entire figure. Instead, his golems are compositions of faces, heads and other body parts.

All the parts are distorted to some extent, as if their emergence from the clay was halted before it was finished.

A hand grasps an armless torso. A baby's features form a beautiful face on one side of a partially modeled head. In some pieces, tiny golem figures emerge from larger, partial forms.

The expressions on the faces are serene but soulless. The eyes are unseeing.

There is no explicit violence in the compositions, but the elements of Thury's work are arranged in ways that can be eerie and disturbing — as well as highly sensual.

Thury, who maintains a studio in an alcove of the living room of his Budapest apartment, said, "I make the surfaces a little bit raw — raw human bodies, details of bodies. I don't want to make a complete human body. I prefer to make parts."

"They aren't human people, but remembrances of the body," he added. "They have no soul, no wish. The owner, the maker, has to give a soul to them, give direction, like a computer program."

Sometimes Thury includes wood, metal or other nonceramic elements in the works.

"Golems of the Beginning" consists of three distorted sections of a body that, if put together, would almost form a full figure.

Strips of wood penetrate each sculpture, forming shelves. A bottle of wine is placed on one shelf; a feather on another.

Thury, whose mother was Jewish and whose father was Christian, said his interest in golems was partially inspired by his family history. Most of his Jewish relatives died in the Holocaust.

"One of the reasons that I got interested in the idea of the golem is the fact that according to family tradition, my mother's family was related to Rabbi Loew," he said.

"Not only that," he added, "an ancestor of my father's was granted nobility by Emperor Rudolf II, who was a friend of Rabbi Loew's." Thury has the actual decree of the ennoblement in his possession.

Rudolf, who ruled from 1576 to 1612, was interested in astrology, alchemy and the arts, and he is known to have met at least once with Rabbi Loew.

Thury's golems have been exhibited in Hungary and elsewhere in Europe as well as in the United States.

Last year, his work won first prize in Hungary's Holocaust in Art competition. This year, the works are being shown in Prague.

In 1988, his golems were shown as part of a large exhibition at New York's Jewish Museum. □

South African leader urges Jews to have role in growth

By Suzanne Belling

JOHANNESBURG(JTA) — The executive deputy president of South Africa has said his country opposes anti-Semitism and racism, supports the Middle East peace process and wants to maintain good relations with Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

Thabo Mbeki also called on the Jewish community to share its skills, knowledge and other resources as South Africa evolves. He urged Jews to make a contribution to the government's Reconstruction and Development Program.

Mbeki made the remarks before about 1,000 people here at the South African Jewish Board of Deputies' 38th national biennial congress. The board represents South African Jewry.

The theme of the congress, held Aug. 19, was "South African Jewry in a New Democracy."

"We are now in a new phase of our history and, on behalf of President Nelson Mandela and our government, I ask all of you to open your hearts and minds to the new vision of a South Africa that is seeking to secure a better life for all its citizens, as well as to play a significant role in the development of our subcontinent and in the international sphere," Mbeki said.

He added that this "new" South Africa had to guard against the "re-emergence of anti-Semitism or racism of any kind."

Mervyn Smith, the Jewish board's newly elected president, said the board had largely succeeded in recent years to interact with all South Africans participating in the building of a democratic country.

The organized response of the Jewish community to the Reconstruction and Development Program is "up and running" under the name "Tikkun," the Hebrew word for "repair," he said.

A dinner in honor of philanthropist Mendel Kaplan, who recently stepped down as chairman of the South African board after eight years in office, was held after the conference. □