

**NEWS AT A GLANCE**

■ Israeli officials in Washington said a signing agreement between Israel and the Palestinians would be postponed until next week. They said the two sides are close to an agreement on Hebron.

■ Israel reportedly refused Tehran's demand to return the man who hijacked an Iranian jet that landed on Israeli soil. Five of the passengers have also asked not to be returned to Iran. [Page 3]

■ Auschwitz survivor Hugo Prinz declared victory as Germany signed a \$2.1 million settlement granting reparations to 11 survivors. The settlement ended a 40-year-legal battle. [Page 4]

■ A federal judge in Cleveland upheld the U.S. citizenship of a former concentration camp guard. The judge said the Justice Department had failed to prove that George Lindert, 72, lied about his past when he entered the United States.

■ Fireworks are expected to fly at a House International Relations Committee hearing on the Middle East Peace process on Wednesday. Both proponents and opponents of the peace process are scheduled to appear, along with tapes of Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat calling for a "jihad" against Israel.

■ First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton addressed more than 1,100 women gathered in Washington at the United Jewish Appeal's National Women's Campaign Lion of Judah Conference. She praised those in attendance for sharing a commitment to bringing new respect and dignity to the "work and worth" of women and girls.

■ Israel will actively lobby for a seat in the Western regional group of nations during the 50th session of the U.N. General Assembly, which opened Tuesday, said Gad Yaacobi, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations.

■ An Israeli soldier was killed and four others wounded during fighting in southern Lebanon. Members of the Islamic fundamentalist Hezbollah movement shelled Israeli troops and detonated a roadside bomb, which caused the fatality.

**NEWS ANALYSIS****Debate over peace process intensifies among U.S. Jews**

By Cynthia Mann

NEW YORK (JTA) — Abraham Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League, recently announced that he had resigned from his Orthodox synagogue of more than 20 years to protest the rabbi's vitriolic attacks against the government of Israel for its efforts to make peace with the Arabs.

In an op-ed piece, Foxman said his rabbi accused Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of being a willful accomplice in the killings of Jews by Palestinian terrorists. He said the rabbi likened Rabin to those guilty of complicity during the Holocaust by serving on Judenrat councils.

"I can no longer pray in a synagogue with a spiritual leader who spouts such hate-filled rhetoric and who harbors such intolerance toward others who do not share his authoritarian" view, Foxman wrote in the piece published in *The Jewish Standard* of Teaneck, N.J.

Polarization among American Jews over the Israeli-Arab peace process appears to be at its height two years after the celebrated signing of the Declaration of Principles by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The war of words is expected to intensify when the signing of the next phase of the agreement triggers a withdrawal of Israeli troops from Palestinian centers in the West Bank as Palestinian self-rule is expanded.

"Both sides are preparing for a big fight," said one Israeli official here.

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators were working feverishly to conclude the agreement before Rosh Hashanah, but it appeared that goal would not be met.

"The security questions to be handled in the wake of the redeployment will be more important than the Gaza-Jericho agreement," which launched limited Palestinian self-rule, said Martin Raffel, associate executive vice chairman of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, which supports the process. "The signing will lead to reactions in Israel and will have an impact here," he added.

**Ad urges shift in donations**

The latest salvo from opponents of the peace process was fired in a recent full-page newspaper ad urging a shift in donations from Israel Bonds to the One Israel Fund/Yesha Heartland Campaign for settlers in the territories. The ad was paid for by the Teaneck, N.J.-based Friends of Yesha, which has many Orthodox supporters.

Many leaders say the ad's efforts to delegitimize the State of Israel, rather than its political policies, crosses a red line and attempts to sow unprecedented divisions among U.S. Jews.

The Orthodox Rabbinical Council of America responded with a statement reaffirming its support for Israel Bond appeals. And the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations sent a letter to some Jewish newspaper editors protesting the ad.

Concerned that some Orthodox synagogues might not hold the annual High Holiday appeal for Israel Bonds, Nathan Sharony, president of Israel Bonds said, "Every single community is important to us and even if one drops out, it is one too many."

Even the group One Israel Fund distanced itself from the ad.

"While we appreciate the efforts of our supporters, the ad didn't emanate from our office and does not represent our official policy," said Steven Orlow, president of the group.

"We don't feel it's our place to deny funding to Jews in need anywhere in the world," he said, "and we would hope the major philanthropies would behave the same way and extend generosity to the most endangered Jews in the world," those in the territories.

But Orlow and other opponents of what they refer to as the "so-called peace process" concede that the rhetoric from their camp is rising to an unprecedented pitch. They say it is born of frustration, fear and anger over the impact of concessions to the Arabs on the security of all of Israel as well

as that of the settlers. "We feel the process is a disaster of historic proportions with reverberations for generations to come," said Orlov.

The bitterness of the protest also springs from the "stifling by the current government of those who would like to voice their dissent in traditional ways — in the press, at demonstrations and at forums," he said.

Morton Klein, president of the Zionist Organization of America, said he believes that "Rabin is not answering Jews' real concern about giving land away."

"He ignores it," Klein said, "and many Jews are venting their extraordinary frustration and fear."

According to Rabbi Steven Pruzansky, leader of B'nai Yeshurun, the Teaneck, N.J., congregation from which Foxman resigned, "The rhetoric is not divisive, the policies are."

He declined to comment on Foxman's resignation.

The prospect of unrestrained rhetorical warfare among U.S. Jews has alarmed the Israeli government and other advocates of the peace process who, until recently, have dismissed the voices of dissent as a noisy nuisance. They now fear it could jeopardize U.S. legislation key to promoting peace, such as funding for the Palestinian Authority.

They also fear that the public divisiveness could do long-range harm to U.S. Jewish unity and to relations between Israel and American Jewry, whose traditionally united front on Capitol Hill on behalf of Israel has fractured.

"My big concern throughout has been whether this will impede U.S. efforts to support the peace process," Raffel said.

"So far, there has been no discernible backing away by Congress or the administration."

But there are no guarantees that this will not change, he said. "I keep my eye on that ball."

Ambassador Colette Avital, Israeli consul general in New York, said she believes that there has been an "escalation of rhetoric" by certain opposition groups "who will try to be even more vocal as the stakes rise," but that their numbers have not increased.

"I don't want to minimize them, though," Avital said, adding that the groups "do damage."

Avital charged that opponents have waged a "campaign of disinformation."

### **Pro-peace groups galvanized**

Their "half-truths and fabrications" have managed to dominate public discourse in recent months because the mainstream community has failed to respond, she said.

"The mainstream has thought about them as marginal, minimized them and not responded, and this has created erosion," Avital said. "What is lacking is an aggressive campaign" in support of the peace process.

That, by all accounts, is about to change as quiescent pro-peace groups start galvanizing, prompted in part by Israeli officials' urgings at several meetings called during the summer.

"There's a turnaround," said Thomas Smerling, executive director of Project Nishma, a group that supports the Israeli government's peace policies.

"The center never stirs until it's threatened. Now the opponents have gone from being a nuisance to a threat and the supporters are beginning to stir."

"There is a much greater awareness of the danger and insidiousness of the opposition which has no inhibitions," said Jonathan Jacoby, head of the Israel Policy Forum, another pro-Rabin government organization.

A number of American organizations are recognizing "they have to defend Israel's policies in a way they never had to before," he said.

Included in their arsenal will doubtless be a new American Jewish Committee survey that shows that a majority of American Jews — 68 percent — still supports Israel's handling of the peace process.

But the survey also will be used by opponents who already are highlighting the strong streak of skepticism toward the process it showed.

Seventy-one percent said they do not trust the PLO to "honor agreements and refrain from terrorism," 56 percent said they believe that "the goal of the Arabs is not the return of occupied territories, but rather the destruction of Israel" and 91 percent said that "the PLO is not doing enough to control terrorist activities against Israel."

For ZOA's Klein, most significant was the survey's finding that 63 percent of American Jews oppose U.S. aid to the Palestinians.

The survey shows a clear majority is "opposed to giving hundreds of millions of dollars to Arafat, who encourages terrorism by continuing his 'jihad via death' speeches and by praising terrorists as 'heroes' who is violating virtually all aspects of the accords and who is misappropriating funds donated from around the world."

Gary Rubin, executive director of Americans For Peace Now, said the high number opposing aid to the Palestinians partly reflects widespread sentiment against foreign aid. It also reflects the wording of the question, which did not indicate that the aid is linked to Israeli government policy, he said.

A long-term extension of the Middle East Peace Facilitation Act, the legislation governing U.S. aid to the Palestinian Authority, has been approved by a Senate subcommittee.

The measure is supported by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the pro-Israel lobby, and most Jewish groups.

Lobbying on both sides is in full swing as it moves toward action by the full Senate.

In a clear sign that the stakes are high for the Israeli government, it has dispatched a delegation of eight retired generals to speak to Jewish audiences about the peace process throughout the High Holiday period.

Meanwhile, the Conference of Presidents is being privately criticized by several of its pro-peace process member organizations for not doing enough to support Israeli government policies or to condemn the harsh tactics of the opposition.

It is a charge easily deflected by Malcolm Hoenlein, the group's executive vice chairman.

"We are consensus builders," Hoenlein said. "That doesn't mean we satisfy everyone on every position we take, but we've kept this community together."

"The community has to recognize its responsibility to stand behind the democratic government of Israel, but it has a right to express its concern about Israel's security in responsible ways," he said.

"There are differences and they will continue to grow," he added.

And even though "we have always allowed for diversity," he said, "we have to isolate those who engage in verbal aggression." □

### **WHO convenes meeting in Israel**

*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The World Health Organization convened its annual European session in Jerusalem this week, the first time such a gathering has taken place in Israel.

Representatives from some 50 countries, including Israel, are attending the Sept. 18-23 conference to discuss world health issues. □

## Jews' bicentennial on St. Thomas falls victim to Hurricane Marilyn

NEW YORK (JTA) — When Hurricane Marilyn whipped St. Thomas in the U.S. Virgin Islands over the weekend, one of its many victims was the local Jewish community's plans to launch its bicentennial celebration.

The celebration's inaugural event, a dedication of a new Jewish museum on Caribbean Jewish life, was postponed last Friday as the hurricane was ripping through the region.

Instead of a smooth kickoff of the yearlong birthday celebration, which took five years of planning, the 800-member Jewish community of St. Thomas will welcome the Jewish New Year by trying to salvage its institutions as well as its festivities.

The extent of the damage to the community's 200-year-old synagogue, the Hebrew Congregation, is unclear, according to the EHL Consulting Group, a Philadelphia firm that is handling public relations for the community's bicentennial.

In what he called "a special message to the members of Jewish communities throughout North America," the rabbi of Hebrew Congregation, Bradd Boxman, said, "Hopefully, we will all resume normal activity in relatively short order."

The rabbi, a native of Philadelphia, also said, "The entire Jewish community of the Caribbean, and especially the members of the Hebrew Congregation of St. Thomas, join me in asking you for your prayers and inviting you to visit us during the resumption of our bicentennial celebration."

Before the storm, internationally known scholars and artists, including Rabbi Harold Kushner, poet Maya Angelou and Nobel Prize winner Elie Wiesel, were scheduled to take part in the gala.

The Hebrew Congregation synagogue building is believed to be the oldest in continuous use under the U.S. flag.

According to the population census, Jews were on St. Thomas from the time of the completion of Fort Christian in 1671, the official beginning of St. Thomas.

The indiscriminate hurricane reportedly injured some 185 people, killing eight. About 80 percent of the houses on the island were either lost or damaged. □

## On two wings and some prayers, hijacked Muslims nestle in Israel

By Naomi Segal

OVDA AIR BASE, Israel (JTA) — Israel went where none of its Arab neighbors dared to go this week when it allowed a hijacked Iranian jet to land on Israeli soil.

But within hours of the arrival of the hijacked flight in southern Israel, the Iranian news agency IRNA was reportedly accusing the "terrorist hijackers and Israeli officials" of being involved in a "prearranged scheme with the knowledge of the Israelis."

At the same time, the government of Iran issued an appeal to U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali for the immediate return of the plane, crew and passengers — and for the extradition of the hijacker — of the flight that landed in what it described as "occupied Palestine."

By Tuesday evening, Israeli officials indicated that they were planning to return the plane and its 177 civilian passengers and crew to Iran as quickly as possible.

For air controllers at Ben-Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv, the hijack drama began Tuesday morning, when a Kish Air Boeing 707 on a flight from Teheran to the Persian Gulf island of Kish radioed a distress message.

The pilot indicated that the plane had been hijacked — he did not say by whom — and that he had been refused landing permission by Saudi Arabia and Jordan.

He added that his fuel was running dangerously low and that he thought that he would have to crash-land if Israel did not give its consent to land at Ben-Gurion.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, contacted at a session of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, forbade the plane to land at Ben-Gurion, fearing that it was filled with explosives and on a terror mission.

Instead, he instructed the Israeli air force to escort it to Ovda, a large military air base in the southern Negev that is also used as a civilian terminal, mainly for charter flights to Eilat.

"I did not want to be a partner or to bear responsibility for the crash of a plane full of passengers," Rabin later said.

An Israeli Hercules transport plane, carrying an army anti-terror team, touched down at Ovda immediately after the Iranian plane landed, with the crack unit ready to attack, if necessary.

But further radio contact with the cockpit soon established that beyond the hijacking itself, there was nothing sinister about the flight.

According to the Israel Defense Force chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Amnon Shahak, the hijacker was a flight attendant who was armed with a pistol and was "fed up with living in Iran."

The hijacker has reportedly sought political asylum in the United States.

He originally wanted the plane to fly to Europe, but the plane did not have enough fuel, according to sources at the air base here.

All the flight's passengers were transferred to the Ovda terminal, where they were offered lunch by air force personnel after they conducted Muslim prayers.

## Men on flight questioned

The male passengers, including the hijacker, were questioned by Israeli authorities.

Israel reportedly refused Tehran's demand on Tuesday that the hijacker be returned to Iran.

Five of the passengers have also asked not to be returned to Iran, according to reports.

An English teacher among the passengers who spoke to Israel Television voiced his thanks for Israel's "hospitality."

He made it clear, though, that the passengers — who had hardly dreamed that they would begin their vacation in Israel — were anxious to be getting back to their homeland.

Other passengers, among them women in black chadors, spoke freely with Persian- or Arabic-speaking journalists.

Some observers here speculated that Israel might wish to link the episode with its ongoing frustrations over Iran's failure to supply information on the whereabouts of captured airman Ron Arad.

Iran has long been suspected of direct involvement in the captivity of Arad, whose plane was downed over Lebanon in 1986 and who is believed to have been held by pro-Iranian groups there.

But the prime minister was plainly unwilling to treat the hijack episode as anything other than a chance incident that was to be handled — once security fears were allayed — on the basis of purely humanitarian considerations. □

(JTA correspondent David Landau in Jerusalem contributed to this report.)

## **A survivor claims victory as Germany grants reparations**

*By Matthew Dorf*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Holocaust survivor Hugo Princz has won his 40-year battle to win reparations from Germany.

Princz and 10 other Holocaust survivors will share a \$2.1 million settlement signed Tuesday in Germany and announced at a Capitol Hill ceremony.

Flanked by his wife, three senators and three congressmen, an emotional Princz, 72, declared victory.

“The settlement today can never bring back my parents and siblings, nor relieve my nightmares of the death camps or the physical pain I still suffer,” he said.

“But it will finally help correct a terrible injustice first committed against me over 50 years ago and compounded ever since as Germany continued to wage war against me.”

Princz, the only survivor believed to be knowingly imprisoned as an American in a death camp by the Germans, had repeatedly been denied reparations.

Germany had argued that Princz was not a “stateless refugee” after the war and therefore was not entitled to any compensation.

When the United States declared war against Germany, Princz and seven members of his family, all American citizens, were living in Slovakia, where they were turned over to the Nazis. Princz, who later spent three years in Auschwitz, is the only member of his immediate family to survive the Holocaust.

Liberated by U.S. forces at the end of the war, he was taken to a U.S. military hospital, bypassing the displaced persons camps. As a result, he was never registered as a Holocaust victim. When he immigrated to the United States soon after, he did not qualify as a “stateless refugee,” according to Germany.

### **Fell short in final hours**

This week's settlement comes after Princz's legal battle with Germany had fallen flat. In July 1994, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia Circuit, dismissed his suit, ruling that foreign governments could not be sued in American courts.

Princz then turned to U.S. lawmakers, where a bill to amend the law against suing foreign governments fell short last year in the final hours of the 103rd Congress.

At the same time, Princz initiated lawsuits against German companies he was forced to work for during the Holocaust, hoping that the companies would pressure their government to settle with him.

Of the other 10 survivors, who were not identified, one lives in Orlando, Fla., and three live in New Jersey.

The money will be divided based on time served in concentration camps, hardships incurred and injuries sustained.

Citing confidentiality agreements, attorneys and State Department officials would not say how much Princz would receive. In addition to the settlement from the German government, Princz will receive hundreds of thousands of dollars from the modern affiliates of four German companies.

In exchange for the settlement, Princz dropped a lawsuit against the companies seeking unspecified damages.

“The Torah says ‘justice, justice ye shall seek.’” Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) told reporters and Princz supporters gathered at the Capitol on Tuesday.

“Hugo Princz fought for justice justly. I view this on the eve of the High Holidays as a sign of good things to come.”

Echoing the sentiments of many gathered, Sen. Bill

Bradley (D-N.J.) said, “Today we honor Hugo Princz, not the settlement.”

Reminding the audience that he is leaving the Senate after this term, Bradley said, “When I look back to the things that I was a part of that made a difference, I will think of Hugo Princz.”

Other members of Congress in attendance at the ceremony were: Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) and Reps. Frank Pallone (D-N.J.), Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) and Bill McCollum (R-Fla.).

Princz, who in the past has criticized the American government for inaction, said he “feels differently now.”

President Clinton raised Princz's case with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl on at least two occasions and the State Department was instrumental in negotiating the settlement with the 11 Holocaust victims.

The settlement will stay open for about two years for any additional persons who suffered under the Nazis as American citizens. Anyone wishing to file a claim should contact the State Department Office of International Claims and Investment Disputes, Office of the Legal Adviser, Suite 203, South Building, 2430 E St. N.W., Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20037-2800. □

## **CJF-UJA merger proposal tabled for further discussion**

*By Cynthia Mann*

NEW YORK (JTA) — A proposed plan to merge the central American Jewish fund-raising organizations is being honed on the heels of last week's quarterly meeting of the Council of Jewish Federations in Detroit.

The plan calls for fusing into a new single entity the CJF, the United Jewish Appeal and the United Israel Appeal, the agencies that oversee a national \$725 million annual campaign for local American Jewish needs and for humanitarian projects in Israel and elsewhere overseas.

Discussion in Detroit focused, as expected, on the thorniest problems the plan poses, said Joel Tauber, UJA president and co-chairman of the committee formed to study restructuring the national agencies to make them more effective.

The problems include finding a formula to ensure that enough funding will flow to overseas projects at a time when federal cuts are poised to eviscerate local programs funded by federations.

Also at issue is the governance structure and how to ensure within it a balance between advocates of local programs and those representing overseas interests.

Subcommittees in these areas are continuing their work, while two new subcommittees are being formed, one to devise ways to increase the overall campaign and one to make the new organization's administration more efficient, Tauber said.

The merger proposal was drafted by the Committee to Study the National Structure, under the auspices of the CJF and UJA. The committee is scheduled to take up the plan again Oct. 19 in New York.

Sometime afterward, the plan is expected to be presented to federations across the country.

Ultimately it will have to be approved by the boards of the CJF, UJA, UIA and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, also known as the JDC, which supports humanitarian projects abroad.

The CJF is the association of Jewish community federations, which raise money in concert with the UJA.

Federations now decide how much money to keep at home and how much to allocate for overseas. That allocation is given to the UJA, which divides the money between the UIA and JDC, which co-own UJA. The JDC would remain independent under the proposed plan. □