



## NEWS AT A GLANCE

### Merger plan faces test as federation leaders convene

By Cynthia Mann

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■ Israel's Ethiopian community expressed outrage over reports that the country's blood banks had for years been accepting their donations, but throwing out the blood for fear that it was contaminated with the virus that causes AIDS. "We are blood brothers with the Israelis but our blood is thrown in the garbage because we are black," said an Ethiopian community leader. [Page 3]

■ Estonian police have destroyed 600 Estonian-language copies of the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," a well-known anti-Semitic tract. An Estonian publisher printed 1,000 copies in 1993 and more than 400 were sold.

■ Opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu said the Likud Party would never cede the Golan Heights if it came to power and denied sending secret messages to Syria saying that he was ready for a land-for-peace deal. [Page 3]

■ Israel granted citizenship to Jonathan Pollard, the American Jew serving a life sentence in the United States for spying in the Jewish state. Pollard, who has served 10 years in federal prisons, hopes that the citizenship will improve the chances for early release. [Page 2]

■ The Young Jewish Leadership PAC made its first-ever contribution, in the amount of \$1,000, to Gordon Smith of Oregon, who is the Republican contender for former Sen. Bob Packwood's vacant seat. The new pro-Israel PAC claims 50 politically conservative Jewish members.

■ Americans for A Safe Israel teamed up with the Christians' Israel Public Action Campaign to lobby Congress to convene hearings on U.S. policy in the Middle East. The organizations are opposed to Israel's peace policies.

NEW YORK (JTA) — A plan to merge the central American Jewish fund-raising organizations is facing a critical test and hinging on a proposed guarantee that Israel will not get short shrift when money gets allocated.

Architects of the plan hope to win support for a three-year guaranteed flow of money to Israel and elsewhere overseas, which they have termed the "linchpin" of the plan.

But this guarantee will be a hard sell when the plan is aired in detail for the first time before the leadership of the nation's local Jewish federations at meetings this weekend in Fort Lauderdale, Fla.

The plan's success or failure may well set the course for how large sums of American Jewish money are raised and distributed as the millennium approaches.

No formal vote is slated for Florida, planners said. They hope that at least five or six major federations will commit themselves to the proposal to build momentum for broader support.

But it is unclear whether that commitment will be secured by the Council of Jewish Federations' 1996 Leadership Institute this weekend.

"We're presenting a plan that's coherent and that deserves support," said Charles "Corky" Goodman, a co-chairman of the committee that has worked for two years on the restructuring effort.

But it could be "blown out of the water," which would mean that "it's back to the drawing board," said Goodman, sounding dispirited.

As it is, he said, "the time and effort consumed" by the restructuring committee "has deflected from what should be our principal concern — working with our donors and raising the resources to do what needs to be done."

The overarching plan calls for the consolidation of the Council of Jewish Federations, the United Jewish Appeal and the United Israel Appeal, the agencies that oversee a \$725 million national fund-raising campaign annually for local Jewish needs and humanitarian projects in Israel and elsewhere abroad.

The proposed reforms aim to invigorate flat fund-raising campaigns and improve the efficiency and accountability of the central Jewish philanthropic structure.

"If this whole thing doesn't provide more impetus to develop more resources, it's a failure," said Goodman, who is also the chairman of the Board of Governors of the Jewish Agency for Israel.

The Jewish Agency is the principal recipient in Israel of UJA funds and is suffering a budget crisis caused, in part, by sluggish Diaspora campaigns.

### 'There is a hungerness for reform'

For his part, Joel Tauber, president of the UJA and the other committee co-chairman, was more upbeat about the plan and played down the drama of Florida.

The "make-or-break" period will come "in the 60 days after Florida," he said.

"The main objective there is to discuss the vision, where the Jewish community is headed," he said. "Once people understand the mission of the new entity," the details will be filled in.

Tauber stressed that the meetings would be only "to get the information out. There will be no votes."

He said feedback would be more systematically sought in the weeks after the meeting in individual and regional consultations with federations.

"We want to get them to participate," he said.

The committee's mission is widely supported in principle by federations, which recognize that the current structure is outmoded and needs to change to keep pace with the rapidly changing needs and priorities of the Jewish world.

"There is a tremendous eagerness to get into the issues and a hunger" for reform, said Jacob Solomon, executive vice president of the Greater Miami Jewish Federation.

He said he hoped for serious deliberations in Florida, but that it would be "a mistake" to think that the recommendations would be endorsed at this point.

"These are complicated issues which require time and consensus-building."

The planners' thorniest challenge has been to find a way to ensure that the new consolidated entity provides sufficient money for Israel and Jewish projects elsewhere overseas at a time when there is so much competition for funds at home.

Local federations across the country run their fund-raising campaigns in concert with the UJA, but they have zealously protected their autonomy when it comes to deciding how to divide the campaign money between local needs and overseas needs.

The money federations ultimately allocate overseas goes to the UJA for distribution to both the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, for humanitarian projects abroad, and to the UIA, which funnels it to the Jewish Agency.

The portion of allocations to Israel has been dropping in recent years, to less than 40 percent in some communities.

Left alone, the federations would be unlikely to reverse this trend. They are now girding for federal budget cuts that could leave gaping holes in some of their local social service agencies.

And they are guarding their resources for efforts to promote and preserve Jewish continuity at home.

It is precisely this downward trend in overseas allocations that has alarmed the UIA and the JDC in particular, and has sparked the call for a temporary guarantee, without which the current plan clearly would not fly.

According to confidential documents of the restructuring committee, "Our collective system by and large is providing less than the required dollars for all purposes, and organizations like JDC and UIA, which technically own the UJA and are organized solely for the purpose of overseas need, cannot be expected to ignore their fundamental responsibilities.

"They will not vote to end the UJA as we know it without transitional guarantees."

#### **'Has to be a comfort level'**

Such a guarantee, therefore, will "enable them to vote in favor of a transformational new entity," said the document. The guarantee is designed to produce a minimum of \$310 million annually, a sum that is based on the 1994 cash collection of the UJA, excluding special campaigns.

"We will make the best effort to have every community sign on that they will give us the same cash as '94, but the entity will go forward if 90 percent of the dollars are guaranteed," Tauber said.

Shoshana Cardin, chair of the UIA, said such safeguards are needed.

"JDC and UIA are being asked to give up ownership of UJA, and that's a very serious decision," she said.

For the plan to go forward, she said, "there has to be a comfort level" that overseas needs "will be considered in as important a light as domestic needs."

She said she was concerned that "the overseas allocation is not considered the bank" to be tapped when federations are strapped for money.

But Cardin said she was not sure that the federations would "buy" the guarantee.

They will, she said, only "if the people coming to Florida go back as 'shlichim' (emissaries) to their communities motivated and knowledgeable about Jewish responsibility and engage seriously in looking at the longer run."

For Barry Shrage, president of Combined Jewish

Philanthropies of Greater Boston, "there is a real need to create a fix for the system" and "the notion of a merger is a positive move."

But at this historic juncture for the Jewish people, Shrage continued, "it's hard to give away power to make decisions" even for a three-year period.

"The world may be moving too rapidly to sustain that," he said.

"Especially in these times, federations are going to look for and need some flexibility," he said. For example, he said, "we can't prejudge how communities will meet the need" for serious Jewish learning and engagement that is awakening throughout the country.

For his part, Solomon of Florida sees both positions.

"It is important for open-minded people to understand that what's being requested is not political in nature and not intended to be opportunistic," he said of the guarantee.

"On the other side of the coin," he continued, "I don't know any community which doesn't recognize the validity of overseas needs, especially for rescue and resettlement. The problem is how federations can cope with enormous pressures of the government cutbacks and the Jewish continuity agenda. It really has to be thought through."

Also likely to be the subject of intense discussion in Florida is whether the proposed governance plan for the new entity allows for equitable representation by all parties to the merger. The proposal calls for an assembly of up to 600 representatives and a board of between 100 to 125 members.

Federations, said Tauber, would be able to elect 50 percent of the representatives on the two bodies. □

#### **Israel grants citizenship to convicted spy Pollard**

*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel has granted citizenship to Jonathan Pollard, the American Jew serving a life sentence in the United States for spying for Israel.

Interior Minister Haim Ramon presented the papers to Pollard's lawyers in a brief ceremony Wednesday here.

The gesture was an official stamp to the decision made last fall by Ramon's predecessor, Ehud Barak. That decision reversed an earlier rejection.

Pollard now has both U.S. and Israeli citizenship.

Pollard's lawyers said they hoped to present their client with the documents in coming days.

Pollard, who has served 10 years in federal prisons, hopes that the citizenship will improve the chances for early release.

Lawyer Larry Dub said Pollard's parole file was already at the White House, waiting to be reviewed.

In March 1992, President Clinton denied Pollard's request for a sentence reduction "based on the grave nature of his offense."

Israel was doing all it could to secure Pollard's release from jail, Ramon said.

During his last trip to Washington in September, Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said he hoped that Pollard would be freed and allowed to go to Israel. But the president turned down a request for clemency.

A Justice Department spokesman said in November that Israeli citizenship would not affect any application Pollard makes for parole or clemency.

Pollard, who was arrested outside the Israeli Embassy in Washington in 1985, provided Israel with satellite photographs of Arab countries while he worked as a U.S. Navy intelligence analyst. □

## Peres calls vow to create Palestinian state a 'dream'

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres has said Palestinian vows to create an independent state are "a dream."

Peres' comments came after he met Wednesday night with Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat. Speaking to Egyptian journalists earlier in Gaza, Arafat said a Palestinian state could come into being within a year and a half, if negotiations were conducted intensively.

The two leaders, meeting at the Erez crossing along the Israel-Gaza border, discussed the results of Saturday's Palestinian elections, a Palestinian demand for additional prisoner releases and Israel's insistence that the Palestine National Covenant be amended.

The meeting came a day after Arafat, in an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in Gaza, said he would not commit himself to revoking or amending those sections of the covenant calling for the destruction of Israel.

Peres' meeting with Arafat was the first time the two leaders came face-to-face since the PLO leader won the presidency of the Palestinian Council on Saturday.

After Saturday's elections, Peres said he would permit all members of the Palestine National Council, even those opposed to the peace accords and those with Jewish blood on their hands, to return to the West Bank and Gaza to participate in a meeting of the PNC in order to change the covenant.

According to the peace accords, the amendment of the charter must occur no later than two months after the inauguration of the new Palestinian government. All the 88 newly elected members of the Palestinian Council will become members of the PNC.

One of the PNC's current members is Nayef Hawatmeh of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

He was behind the 1974 massacre in Ma'alot in northern Israel in which 21 schoolchildren were killed.

Peres told reporters Wednesday that it did not matter whether Hawatmeh stayed in Damascus, where he is based, or came to the self-rule areas.

### Will follow Rabin's policy

However, in a statement to reporters in the Syrian capital, Hawatmeh said he wanted to return, but not under the conditions set by Israel.

"We are ready, leadership and members, to return home. But that should not be under the conditions set by Peres," he said.

Israeli officials have made clear their expectation that the PNC will be convened to take action to amend or abrogate the covenant, and also have cautioned that the peace process will be stopped if the PNC fails to do so.

Israel Radio, quoting Palestinian sources, said contacts were already under way in preparation for the permanent-status negotiations scheduled to begin in May.

On the agenda of these talks will be some of the most difficult issues that have yet to be resolved, including the status of Jerusalem, Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, borders and the political status of the Palestinians.

Meanwhile, Peres said Wednesday that in the permanent arrangement, Israel would insist that Ma'aleh Adumim, a Jewish city in the West Bank near Jerusalem, remain under Israeli law.

Peres said he would follow the policy set by his predecessor, the late Yitzhak Rabin, on the matter. □

## America asks Israel and Syria to compromise to reach peace

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Another round of negotiations between Israel and Syria got under way this week amid calls from the American mediators for both sides to begin making compromises necessary for settlement.

Israel seemed open to the American appeal, which was issued by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said, "The United States hopes for very serious, productive and comprehensive discussions on all the issues that are currently separating Syria and Israel."

The new round of talks started Wednesday at the Wye Plantation in eastern Maryland. The current talks, which include military experts from both sides, were expected to focus on security. Water, normalization of ties and economic matters were also expected to come up.

Israeli Foreign Minister Ehud Barak reportedly told Christopher and U.S. Defense Secretary William Perry, that Israel may be willing to drop its demand for ground-based early-warning stations on the Golan Heights. However, Barak stressed that such a concession would be dependent upon a full security package designed to prevent a Syrian surprise attack, even if Israel withdrew from the Golan.

In Damascus, the mood was generally optimistic about the resumption of talks, with the head of the Syrian news agency calling the negotiations a "golden chance" for peace. Syria also urged the Jewish state to withdraw from the Golan Heights.

In Jerusalem, Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu said his party, if it came to power, would never cede the Golan Heights. He also denied claims that he had secret contacts with Syria, calling them a "big bluff."

The charge emerged from an Israel Radio report on an exchange that reportedly took place between Prime Minister Shimon Peres and Netanyahu during a closed-door session of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. Peres reportedly accused Netanyahu of being afraid to talk about the Golan because of the elections, but being ready to withdraw from the region.

Netanyahu responded that Israel has the Golan not only for security, but for the flourishing settlements, developing industry, tourism and water.

The talks, under the direction of U.S. Middle East peace envoy Dennis Ross, were expected to last through the middle of next week, and were to be followed by a shuttle to the region by Christopher. □

## Israel throws out Ethiopian blood

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's Ethiopian community was enraged this week after media reports that the country's blood banks had for years been accepting their donations, but throwing out the blood for fear that it was contaminated with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

"We are blood brothers with the Israelis but our blood is thrown in the garbage because we are black," said Adiso Masala, the head of an Ethiopian immigrants organization. He also called the policy "pure racism."

The head of the country's central blood bank, Amnon Ben-David, confirmed that the bank had destroyed nearly all the blood from Ethiopian donors, even though no tests on the donations were performed.

Health Minister Ephraim Sneh said the rate of HIV among Ethiopians was 50 times higher than in the general population.

But Masala said of the 60,000 Ethiopians in Israel, some 300 were infected with HIV. □

## Money from German loan to fund Arab-Israeli projects

By Daniel Dagan

BONN (JTA) — Israel and Germany have decided that a long-term development loan dating back to 1966 will instead be used as aid for Arab-Israeli projects.

The move came when representatives of the two countries met here Monday.

Until the beginning of this year, Israel received money from Germany as an annual development loan.

The Germans recently said that they could no longer make the loan because Israel no longer is a "developing country."

The two sides then agreed to use the funds for joint Arab-Israeli projects.

Industrial parks, an airport between Aqaba and Eilat and a waste water purification plant in Jerusalem were among the projects discussed.

However, if there is not enough time to agree on specific projects for 1996, the rest of the money will go to Israel in the form of a loan.

Also, the question remains open of who will decide how to use the annual aid in the future.

The Israelis want to have a say, arguing that the money came from a fund originally set up for political reasons.

That problem was to be resolved Thursday, when Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres of Israel meets with German Chancellor Helmut Kohl.

In Munich, Kohl will receive the B'nai B'rith President's Medal for Humanitarianism.

Peres will also meet with Finance Minister Theodor Waigel and Defense Minister Volker Ruhe. □

## German presence on Golan pledged

By Daniel Dagan

BONN (JTA) — Government sources here reportedly have said Germany would be willing to send troops to serve in an international peacekeeping force on the Golan Heights.

But the Bonn sources also said that in order for German troops to be sent, both Israel and Syria would have to request the troops and the move would have to be approved by the United States and the allied European nations.

German Defense Minister Volker Rube has been studying the possibility of a German peacekeeping mission in the Middle East.

Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres reportedly will ask German Chancellor Helmut Kohl that, if needed, Germany be part of the Golan Heights peacekeeping force.

Peres visited Germany last year in his capacity as foreign minister, and publicly said he would welcome German participation in international forces in the area. □

## Jordan to join Mediterranean forum

By Joseph Kopel

BRUSSELS (JTA) — Jordan has decided to take part in NATO's Mediterranean forum on security issues, an official of the 16-member alliance said this week.

The decision by the Hashemite kingdom to join the forum was discussed when Crown Prince Hassan met with NATO Secretary General Javier Solana at the alliance's headquarters, outside Brussels.

Jordan has become the only addition to the forum since five countries — Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritania and Israel — joined the initiative soon after it was launched in December 1994 at a NATO meeting here.

The goal of the forum is to contribute to the security and stability of the Mediterranean basin.

While in Brussels, the crown prince also met with European Commission President Jacques Santer and other E.C. officials.

Talks between the European Union and Jordan on an association agreement are still under way. □

## Army disperses West Bank rioters

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli soldiers fired rubber bullets and used tear gas to disperse rioting Palestinians near a road construction site in the West Bank.

Two Palestinians were reportedly wounded.

The incident occurred Wednesday when residents of the village Habla, south of Kalkilya, tried to prevent Israeli army bulldozers from clearing a road and building a security fence around the nearby Jewish settlement of Matan.

The work continued after the demonstrators were dispersed.

Kalkilya came under Palestinian rule at the end of last year as part of the redeployment of Israeli forces in the West Bank. □

## El Al to pair up with Continental

By Michael Gelbwasser

The Jewish Advocate

BOSTON (JTA) — El Al is ending its "direct" flights from Boston to Israel, but that may actually be good news for local residents.

For the last nine years, El Al has offered one to two weekly flights from Boston's Logan International Airport.

The flights were called "direct," but passengers actually flew in shuttle planes to New York's Kennedy International Airport or Newark Airport in New Jersey, and then connected with El Al's Tel Aviv-bound flights there.

That arrangement will end in April.

Under an agreement reached between El Al and Continental airlines, Continental will fly El Al's Israel-bound passengers from Logan to Kennedy or Newark.

After April, Bostonians will be able to fly El Al to Israel six days a week — El Al does not fly on the Sabbath. Under the current arrangement, El Al offers from Boston only one flight per week from November to March and two flights per week from April to October.

"People will have the choice of leaving almost every day of the week," said Sheryl Stein, El Al's advertising and public relations manager.

Ticket prices will not change with the new schedule, even though economics drove the switch.

Yair Cohen, New England regional manager for El Al, said the airlines has been averaging 12 to 20 passengers per flight on the shuttle from Boston. Its planes can carry 120 to 140 people. "We didn't have the support of the Jewish community on our direct flight," Cohen said. □

## Regional war on cancer discussed

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Medical experts from Israel, Jordan, Egypt, Turkey, Cyprus and the Palestinian autonomous regions met this week at Beit Gabriel on the Sea of Galilee to discuss regional cooperation in the battle against cancer.

Joint treatment centers and the sharing of technology were among the proposals. □