

NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ A U.S. House subcommittee will call upon Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan to testify about his relationship with Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi. The Department of Justice may require Farrakhan to register as a foreign agent. [Page 1]

■ Rep. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) became the 10th Jew in the Senate after winning a special election to fill former Sen. Bob Packwood's seat. The National Jewish Democratic Council's new political action committee channeled more than \$20,000 in campaign contributions to Wyden. [Page 2]

■ Israeli President Ezer Weizman, meeting with Ethiopian Jewish leaders, said he understood their anger. Meanwhile, a leading Ethiopian activist announced his candidacy for the Knesset, just days after Ethiopian protesters clashed with police in Jerusalem.

■ Poland's foreign minister, in a letter to the World Jewish Congress, has called the Kielce pogrom of 1946 an "act of Polish anti-Semitism" and asked the Jewish community for forgiveness. The WJC termed the letter "an important development in Poland's confrontation with its history." [Page 4]

■ Israeli security forces arrested a Palestinian from the West Bank on suspicion of spying for Iran. The Israel Defense Force said the suspect provided Iran with maps on which he marked security installations and government offices. [Page 2]

■ Workers building a power plant about 140 miles west of Vienna reportedly unearthed what appears to be a mass grave of Holocaust victims, possibly Hungarian Jews. Austrian officials will investigate the site, which is near the Gunsirchen concentration camp.

■ Two South African Jewish groups criticized President Nelson Mandela for meeting with Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan. Mandela said he met with Farrakhan just as he would have met with any other leader who held "divergent" views. [Page 4]

House panel to ask Farrakhan to explain relations with Libya

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — When Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan returns from his African tour, he may find himself facing a U.S. Justice Department inquiry and a congressional subpoena.

The results of Farrakhan's meeting this week in Tripoli with Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi may violate the Foreign Agent Registration Act, which requires American citizens who work on behalf of a foreign government to register with the Justice Department.

"A letter is being drafted for him outlining his responsibility to register as a foreign agent if he engages in activities that are for propaganda purposes," said John Russell, a Justice Department spokesman.

In addition, Rep. Peter King (R-N.Y.), a fervent critic of Farrakhan and the Nation of Islam, said the international operations and human rights subcommittee would call upon Farrakhan to testify as early as next week to answer questions about his dealings with the Libyan leader.

"If he ignores us or says he is not coming, we will subpoena him," said King spokesman Dan Michaelis, adding, "We're going to get him here one way or another."

Gadhafi pledged \$1 billion to the Nation of Islam to increase the influence of American minorities in U.S. elections.

The two men agreed to "mobilize the oppressed minorities" — particularly blacks, Arabs, Muslims and American Indians — "to play a significant role in American political life," according to Libya's state-run JANA news agency.

The Anti-Defamation League called the alliance between Farrakhan and Gadhafi a "cynical covenant between two haters."

"Following the Million Man March last October, many believed that Minister Farrakhan was moving away from his extremism and his hatemongering," Abraham Foxman, the ADL's national director, said in a statement.

"His embrace of an avowed enemy of America and our democratic values, and a sponsor of international terrorism, shoots a torpedo into the notion that Louis Farrakhan is pursuing a course of moderation."

In a letter to Attorney General Janet Reno, Foxman urged the Justice Department to "proceed vigorously" with an investigation.

Instructed some blacks to 'destroy white America'

Farrakhan's ties to Gadhafi go back at least as far as 1985, when the Libyan leader delivered a major address at the Nation of Islam's Saviour's Day meeting, telling black members of the U.S. armed forces to "destroy white America."

He also expressed support for a separate black state within the United States.

In Tripoli, Farrakhan reportedly lavished praise on the Libyan leader, commending his work for the liberation of oppressed people, including African Americans in the United States.

He met with Gadhafi "for the sake of unifying Arabs, Muslims, blacks and oppressed communities in America to play a strong, significant role not only in the American elections, but in American foreign policy," Farrakhan was quoted as saying.

Gadhafi appeared pleased by his meeting with Farrakhan, according to JANA. "Our confrontation with America used to be like confronting a fortress from outside," Gadhafi told JANA. "Today we have found a loophole to enter the fortress and to confront it from within."

The donation to the Nation of Islam, Gadhafi reportedly said, will give blacks, Arabs, Muslims and American Indians political muscle, allowing them to "enter the election period as a card stronger than the Jewish card."

Farrakhan also paid a visit to the bombed-out remains of Gadhafi's house, which the U.S. targeted in a 1986 air raid in retaliation for Libya's alleged involvement in a bombing of a night club in Germany frequented by U.S. Marines. Gadhafi's 1-year-old daughter was killed in the attack.

Signing the visitors book, Farrakhan wrote, "I implore God to punish our enemies hundreds of times, just as they did to us and against you," JANA reported.

White House press secretary Mike McCurry said the meeting constituted yet another attempt by Gadhafi to "worm his way back into the good graces of the world," despite harboring two suspects in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland.

"Gadhafi has tried various schemes to evade his responsibilities in the international community," McCurry said, referring to the U.N. resolution demanding that the Libyan suspects be handed over. "He should quit trying to change the subject."

State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said he was "surprised" that Farrakhan did not bring up the case of Pan Am 103, adding that any American citizen who travels to Libya has "an ethical obligation" to raise the issue.

"If Mr. Farrakhan believes it's important to travel to Libya for his own purposes, it's certainly important for him, as an American citizen, to represent the families, the American families and the other families of the people who died" on Pan Am 103, Burns said.

In another sign that Farrakhan is gaining prominence in the United States, Burns indicated that State Department officials might ask him for a debriefing when he returns.

"We'll just have to see what he would like to do when he comes back," he said. □

Wyden election win in Oregon means return of Senate minyan

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — As Republicans and Democrats continue to spar over the political implications of Oregon's special election, Jews have focused on the return of a minyan to the Senate.

Rep. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.), the son of German Jewish refugees, became the 10th Jew in the Senate when he defeated Republican Gordon Smith in Tuesday's special election held to fill former Sen. Bob Packwood's seat.

Packwood resigned from the Senate last year to avoid facing an ethics committee's investigation into sexual misconduct and obstruction charges.

Jewish representation in the Senate dropped to nine members after Sen. Howard Metzenbaum (D-Ohio) retired before the 1994 elections.

Wyden won with 48 percent of the vote. Wyden's victory cuts the Republican majority in the Senate to 53-47.

As expected, Jewish Democrats hailed Wyden's election to Congress' upper body.

"It's nice to have a minyan in the Senate," said an ebullient Ira Forman, executive director of the National Jewish Democratic Council. "There was a clear ideological difference between the two candidates and we're proud and happy about Wyden's success."

Wyden, 46, became the first Democrat to represent Oregon in the Senate since John F. Kennedy was president. He also became the second Jewish senator in the state's history. Sen. Richard Lewis Neuberger was elected in January 1955 and served until his death in 1960.

The NJDC's political action committee led an effort to channel about \$34,000 to Wyden's cash-strapped campaign.

About 130 people donated money to Wyden through the council's PAC.

Other Jewish Democrats contributed at least another \$34,000 to the campaign, Forman said.

Steve Grossman, president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, congratulated Wyden on his election.

"Ron Wyden has been an active supporter of

U.S.-Israel issues in the House," Grossman said, adding that he "really understands our issues and we look forward to him being a vocal leader in the Senate."

Wyden, who will serve the remainder of Packwood's term, which expires in 1998, joins nine other Jewish Senators in the 104th Congress: Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.), Russell Feingold (D-Wis.), Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.), Herb Kohl (D-Wis.), Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.), Carl Levin (D-Mich.), Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.), Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) and Paul Wellstone (D-Minn.). □

Palestinian confesses to spying for Iran

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli security forces this week arrested a Palestinian from the West Bank on suspicion of spying for Iran.

Mohammed Rajab Salameh Mohammed, 44, was accused Wednesday of providing Iran with maps on which he marked security installations and government offices.

Mohammed, who is from the village of Beit Jala, near Bethlehem, has a doctorate in philosophy from Beirut University. He has also lived in Syria and Jordan.

Mohammed confessed that he was recruited a year ago to work for Iranian intelligence by the Iranian Embassy in Jordan, according to an Israel Defense Force statement.

In addition to spying in Israel, Mohammed said he had agreed to gather information in Jordan.

He was instructed to photograph different sites in Israel. The statement said his interrogation is continuing.

In August, an Israeli court charged an Iranian-born Israeli, Herzl Rad, with spying for Tehran. Proceedings against him are still under way. □

Panel: Israel has 'spiritual' rescue role

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The government committee on Israel-Diaspora relations declared this week in its first meeting that Israel still had a role in offering "spiritual" rescue to world Jewry.

After World War II, Israel provided a "physical" rescue for Jewish refugees from the Holocaust, said Rabbi Yehuda Amital, the minister without portfolio who heads the committee.

Today, Israel can help Diaspora Jews find answers to questions about their spiritual identity, the rabbi said.

Other committee members include: Yossi Beilin, minister without portfolio in the Prime Minister's Office; Ehud Barak, foreign minister; Yair Tzaban, absorption minister; Uzi Baram, tourism minister; Shulamit Aloni, communications minister; Shimon Shetreet, religious affairs minister; Avraham Burg, Jewish Agency chairman; and Ehud Olmert, mayor of Jerusalem. □

Soldier who shot up church sentenced

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A Tel Aviv court has sentenced a 22-year-old soldier to 4 1/2 years in prison for spraying a Roman Catholic church with gunfire.

The soldier fired dozens of bullets in May 1995 in St. Anthony's Church in Jaffa. No one was hurt, but the shooting set off two days of protests by Arab residents in the Arab and Jewish neighborhood.

The soldier said before his sentencing this week that he did not regret his actions.

Shortly after his arrest, he had said that Jews must "destroy symbols of idol worship." Days before the incident in Jaffa, he set a fire at the Gethsemane Church in Jerusalem, causing some damage. □

NEWS ANALYSIS**In wake of Palestinian vote,
Likud nears recognition of PLO***By Gil Sedan*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — As the world awaits Palestinian action on amending the Palestine National Covenant, sections of which call for the destruction of Israel, Jewish and Palestinian opponents of the peace process are re-evaluating their stances and adjusting to the new reality.

In the wake of the Jan. 20 Palestinian elections, key members of the opposition Likud Party say that if the covenant is changed, then it would be time to re-evaluate their entire posture toward Palestinian autonomy.

Likud leaders met Monday in Jerusalem to consider recognition of the Palestinian Authority under the leadership of Yasser Arafat, on the condition that the covenant is revoked.

Leading Likud figures, among them Knesset member Tzachi Hanegbi, spoke out in terms of "recognizing the new realities."

Tel Aviv Mayor Ronnie Milo urged his Likud Party to recognize the Palestine Liberation Organization itself, the way the Labor-led government did in 1993.

Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu now grudgingly concedes that if he is elected prime minister, he would talk with Arafat and the Palestinian Authority, and would not reverse the limited Palestinian autonomy that is already a fait accompli.

"As much as I oppose the agreement, it's facts on the ground," he told journalists attending the Sixth International Conference of the Jewish Media this week in Jerusalem.

"I won't initiate sending tanks in to send them out," he said, adding that his efforts would focus on retaining the more than 70 percent of territory in the West Bank not yet under Palestinian control.

He also said he would favor a Palestinian entity but would stop it "from expanding to a full-fledged state."

On the Palestinian side, there is movement toward the political center as well.

Rejectionists contact allies

Palestinian rejectionists, such as Nayef Hawatmeh of the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, expressed their readiness to come to the self-rule areas and take part in the historic meeting of the PNC to amend the covenant.

Rejectionists also said Wednesday that they were contacting their allies to ensure that the destruction of Israel remained in the covenant.

Maher al-Taher of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine said groups that oppose peace with Israel were thinking about boycotting the PNC meeting to prevent a quorum or attending the meeting and voting against a change in the covenant.

Some 167 of the 204 PNC members living outside the West Bank and Gaza Strip have already filed official requests with the Palestinian Authority asking to return to the territories.

The Israeli government said it would allow all members of the PNC, even those opposed to the peace accords and those with Jewish blood on their hands, to attend the council's sessions.

But the road to the political center, at least on the Palestinian side, may not be all that smooth.

Salim Za'anun, acting chairman of the PNC, in a provocative statement this week, put forth four conditions for convening the PNC.

They include: extending the Palestinian Authority

throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip; releasing 6,000 security prisoners from Israeli jails; giving Israeli permits to members of the PNC to return to the Gaza Strip and West Bank permanently; and electing representatives from the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to the PNC.

Za'anun's conditions indicated a willingness to meet the Israelis halfway, but at the same time, demand a high price in exchange.

But that price at present is too high for the Israelis to pay.

Meanwhile, Palestinian leaders are faced with the reality that no Israeli government could go to elections with the peace process in one bag and the Palestinian Covenant unamended still in another bag. One would have to be dumped. □

**Palestinians urged to tighten
security after IDF soldier killed***By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Internal Security Minister Moshe Shahal has called upon the Palestinian Authority to take stronger steps to crack down on militant Islamic fundamentalists.

"The Palestinian Authority is not doing enough to prevent terrorists," Shahal told Israel Radio.

"It must do more than get at the activists and those carrying out the attacks," he said, adding that it must also deal with the leadership of the fundamentalist movements.

Shahal's remarks came in the wake of Tuesday's slaying of an Israel Defense Force soldier at the Israeli-Palestinian liaison offices near the West Bank town of Jenin.

Israeli officials said they would complain to the Palestinian self-rule government about the attack.

The soldier who was stabbed to death in the attack was identified as Staff Sgt. Ehud Tal, 22, of Kibbutz Maoz Haim, near Beit Shean. He was to have completed his army service in two weeks.

The incident occurred when a 19-year-old Hamas activist, Mahmoud Sariyeh, who is from a refugee camp near Jenin, entered the liaison office. The office is used by joint security forces working in the Jenin autonomous area.

The IDF spokesman said Sariyeh set off a metal detector at the compound's public entrance and then was asked by Israeli security forces to remove his belt and jacket and pass through again.

The detector did not go off the second time, even though it was later discovered that Sariyeh was carrying two concealed knives.

He then entered one of the buildings where Tal was, and stabbed him repeatedly. Tal died of his injuries. Sariyeh was captured.

The IDF chief of staff, appearing Tuesday before the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, said the stabbing was a grave matter.

Earlier Tuesday, Palestinian police disarmed and briefly detained a Jewish settler as he was traveling through the Palestinian-controlled West Bank town of Ramallah to his home in the settlement Ofra.

The settler, Nissim Ezra, was held for about an hour and a half before being transferred to the Ramallah area liaison office. He was later released.

Settlers complained that the detention had violated the terms of the self-rule accord signed by Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization.

A senior Palestinian source apologized for the incident and said the Palestinian police involved had been arrested, Israel Radio reported. The police were members of the Palestinian anti-drug unit, and had suspected that the Israeli had drugs in his car, the source said. □

S. African Jewish groups flay meeting of Mandela, Farrakhan*By Suzanne Belling*

JOHANNESBURG (JTA) — Two South African Jewish groups have criticized President Nelson Mandela for meeting here with Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan as part of his African tour.

Farrakhan, an American black nationalist who is notorious for his anti-Semitic and racist comments, has referred to Jews as "bloodsuckers" and Judaism as a "gutter religion."

He said he was touring Africa to spread the message of the Million Man March he organized last year in the United States.

The march was a call for black men to take responsibility for their own lives and families, and to dedicate themselves to fighting the scourges of drugs, violence and unemployment.

The South African Jewish Board of Deputies said in a statement that it "would have preferred it if our esteemed president — who is the world symbol of reconciliation and nonracialism — would not have met with Minister Farrakhan."

The Board of Deputies also said it thought that Farrakhan would exploit the meeting with Mandela for "his own U.S. agenda" and would seek to use the president's good name "in an effort to add respectability to the cause he is espousing in the U.S. without in any way retracting his past inflammatory rhetoric."

Last week, Farrakhan was in Tripoli, where he secured a pledge from Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi to spend up to \$1 billion to increase the influence of American minorities in U.S. elections.

As a result of that visit, the U.S. Justice Department may require Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan to register as a lobbyist for Libya.

In a more strongly worded statement, the South African Union of Jewish Students said of the Sunday visit, "It is indeed a travesty that a leader who seeks to sow discord amongst various groupings and whose agenda is obviously contrary to the spirit of the new South Africa and its constitution, is welcomed by President Nelson Mandela, himself a symbol of the new dispensation."

The student group said in the statement that it did not dispute Farrakhan's right to visit the country but felt that it was "inappropriate for high-level government delegations to give credence to his unacceptable views by meeting him."

Hit out at South Africa's whites

The Board of Deputies, however, also acknowledged that Mandela lectured Farrakhan on tolerance.

The board said it was "comforted" that Mandela told the NOI leader that "it is imperative for all of us to promote religious tolerance and to reject any form of discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex or religious belief."

Mandela said he had agreed to meet with Farrakhan just as he would have consented to meet with any other leader who held "divergent" views.

"I have met with many other people whose views were diametrically opposed to mine," the president stated after the 40-minute meeting with Farrakhan at his Johannesburg residence.

During his visit, Farrakhan did not attack Jews, but hit out at South Africa's whites, saying that they had not sufficiently atoned for the sins of apartheid.

When asked on television about his past statements about American Jews exploiting blacks, Farrakhan did not deny that he has made those comments. He said Jews had

to atone for the condition of U.S. blacks and help in their upliftment.

Farrakhan also denied at a news conference that he was racist. "A black person cannot be racist," he said. "You need to have power before you can be a racist." □

Foreign minister of Poland apologizes for 1946 pogrom*By Alissa Kaplan*

NEW YORK (JTA) — The Polish foreign minister has asked the Jewish community for forgiveness for the Kielce pogrom of 1946, which was an "act of Polish anti-Semitism," according to a letter he wrote to the World Jewish Congress.

"The new democratic Poland deeply regrets and mourns all the injustice suffered by the Jewish people," Dariusz Rosati also said in the letter. "In 1996, we shall shed tears over the victims of the infamous Kielce pogrom, which was committed 50 years ago during the chaos of the Polish civil war."

Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, said, "This is an important development in Poland's confrontation with its history, leading to a more honest dialogue in Polish-Jewish relations."

Kielce, a southern Polish city that had a Jewish population of 24,000 at the outbreak of World War II, was virtually eliminated during the Holocaust. When the Soviet army captured Kielce in January 1945, only two Jews remained.

Polish anti-Semitism was intense in the mid-1940s, and rumors spread that masses of Jews would soon return to claim their former houses and belongings. It was also rumored that the blood libel, the false accusation that Jews murder Christian children and drain their blood for ritual use, was taking place.

In early July 1946, a mob attacked and massacred 42 Jews and wounded about 50 more.

The event, which touched off a mass Jewish migration from Central and Eastern European countries, ended the 1,000-year history of the Jews of Poland.

The foreign minister said in the letter, "For centuries, we have benefited from the contribution of the Jewish community living in Poland.

"They have enriched our economy, our culture and our social life."

He said his country was committed to "solving problems regarding restitution of former Jewish property in present-day Poland."

"We shall seek the just and proper solution to this important issue," Rosati said.

"To all those who wish to reclaim their Polish citizenship, we extend our friendship and we offer assistance." □

Bank of Israel to raise interest*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The Bank of Israel announced an increase in interest rates this week, drawing a negative reaction from industrialists and prompting a sharp drop on the Tel Aviv stock exchange.

Interest rates will go up by 0.3 percent Feb. 1, bringing the central bank's lending rate to 14 percent and the prime lending rate to 15 percent.

The bank said the move was necessary to keep 1996 inflation lower than 10 percent.

Industrialists, the Chamber of Commerce and the Histadrut labor federation were critical of the hike, saying that the rise would hamper the economy and worsen the balance of trade. □