



NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ Sephardi rabbis from across North America met in New York to establish the first national Sephardi rabbinical organization. The Association of Sephardi Rabbis set as priorities the creation of a rabbinic court to deal with halachic issues facing Sephardi Jews and the establishment of an outreach program to counter assimilation among Sephardi youth.

■ Italy will seek the extradition of a Palestinian convicted of the 1985 Achille Lauro hijacking who was recaptured in Spain. The chief of the Italian police anti-terrorism division said the extradition request for Youssef Magied al-Molqi could take 45 days to process. [Page 2]

■ American Jewish Congress leaders expressed "frustration and disappointment" that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat is not doing enough to curb terror attacks against Israel. Arafat "didn't seem disposed to accept any responsibility on his part," AJCongress Executive Director Phil Baum said after meeting with Arafat. [Page 3]

■ Jordanian security forces arrested three Islamic fundamentalists suspected of planning suicide attacks against Israeli tourists visiting Jordan. A senior Jordanian security source said the three are still being questioned and that charges have yet to be filed. [Page 3]

■ Nathan Lewin is one of two finalists for nomination to a seat on the 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals. The attorney, best known in the Jewish world for advocating the right to display menorahs on public property, is even supported by longtime legal adversaries. [Page 2]

■ Sporadic exchanges of fire were reported in southern Lebanon over the weekend after the Israel Defense Force went on high alert for possible attacks in the tense region. Meanwhile, the IDF is continuing to investigate whether local residents of southern Lebanon helped Hezbollah gunmen carry out a series of recent attacks against Israel.

■ Maj. Gen. Danny Yatom was formally named the new head of Mossad at the weekly Cabinet meeting.

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

Russian Jewish teen-agers ponder identity, emigration

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — The lights are blinking and the music, a mix of popular Jewish tunes and hip-hop, is blasting.

It's a disco-style party for young Jews in Moscow at an unpretentious Soviet-era club.

The party is hosted by Hineini, a Reform congregation that attracts some 30 people to its weekly services.

But at Jewish festivals, some 100 to 300 young people gather to dance the night away.

Because Hineini does not have its own building, the congregation holds services and parties at the premises of the Auto Workers Union Club.

The party, held earlier this month to mark Purim, was an opportunity to hear young people discuss their feelings about Judaism, intermarriage and, for many, plans to emigrate as soon as possible.

"I come here every festival for two years already," says Sergei Gornin, 27, a manager at a pharmaceutical company.

"It helps me feel really Jewish when surrounded by so many Jews, like here."

Nastya Buzukina, a 15-year-old high school student, says she often goes to places where young Moscow Jews get together.

"Almost all my friends are Jewish, because I think Jews are better friends."

Vladislav Komisarchuk, 21, a student at the Russian Academy of Music who describes himself as half-Jewish, says that until recently, he paid little attention to his Jewish roots.

But now, he says, he is making friends with more Jews than before and his Jewish side "has become more meaningful" to him.

It comes as no surprise that many of those interviewed, who are often the children of intermarriage and who had almost no Jewish education while growing up, know little about Jewish tradition.

But just the same, more than a few of the young people felt an attraction to their Jewish roots.

"I always feel Jewish. To me it means being slightly different from others," says Lilya Raskina, a junior at the Russian University for Humanities. "It seems that Jews have a special way of life."

Yan, a 33-year-old businessman who would not give his last name, adds: "What makes Jews different is a certain way of thinking."

On the subject of intermarriage, many of those who were born to intermarried parents said they would not mind if their future spouse were not Jewish.

But to many of the young Jews, the ability to give their children a Jewish upbringing provided an important reason for not intermarrying.

"I'm certain that I will marry a Jew," says Raskina, explaining that children should not have to be torn between different identities.

Yan, the businessman, agrees: "I should avoid having my kids asking themselves questions about who they are."

'If they succeed, I'll leave Russia'

When the subject turns to more general future plans, it becomes clear that many of those gathered to celebrate Purim together see no future for themselves in Russia.

Some of the young people have already been to America, Israel or Europe; others have been trying to imagine life outside Russia.

But both groups are reasonably certain that they eventually will leave the country.

The upcoming Russian presidential elections, which may result in the Communist Party's return to power, have already provided many with a strong reason to emigrate.

Yan says he has already obtained his immigration papers to Germany — "Just in case."

Olga Kuznetsova, a 17-year-old student at the Moscow Linguistics University, says she is frightened that the Communists will regain power after

the June vote. "If they succeed, I'll leave Russia. It doesn't matter for what country."

Israel was a popular destination for some of the teen-agers attending the party.

Emma Isakharova, a 16-year-old student at the Moscow Jewish Teacher's College, says she would like to move to Israel next year after graduation.

"Last summer, I went to Israel and I liked the country very much."

Boris Bruskin, 15, a student at the Migdal Or Moscow Jewish School, says: "I've never been to Israel, but I feel this is my country. I guess life there is not easy. But still, Israel attracts me." □

Italy to ask Spain to extradite Achille Lauro hijacker who fled

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME (JTA) — Italy will seek the extradition of a Palestinian convicted of the 1985 Achille Lauro hijacking who was recaptured in Spain.

The chief of the Italian police anti-terrorism division said the Italian Justice Ministry was preparing an extradition request for Youssef Magied al-Molqi, adding that the request could take up to 45 days to process.

Police were also investigating several people as accomplices in Molqi's escape, according to Italian news agencies.

Molqi, 33, fled a church-run shelter in Italy on Feb. 28 while on a 12-day good-conduct leave from prison, where he was serving a 30-year sentence.

He was recaptured last Friday in the southern Spanish resort town of Estepona in a joint action by Italian anti-terrorist police and Spanish paramilitary Civil Guards.

"He was not armed and did not put up resistance," Italian police chief Fernando Masone told a news conference last Friday.

He added that Molqi was carrying a false Italian passport in the name of Mario La Rosa.

Molqi had been traced to Spain through a phone call he made March 16 to a female friend in the Tuscan town of Prato, near Florence.

He had been visiting the woman, Wanda Grassi, in the days before he disappeared from Rome's Rebibbia Prison, and her phone was under surveillance.

"Here we see, as never before, how women can be the ruination of men," Masone said.

Molqi was the ringleader of a four-man Palestinian commando team that hijacked the Achille Lauro off Port Said, Egypt, while it was on a Mediterranean cruise.

Molqi was convicted of shooting Leon Klinghoffer, a 69-year-old, wheelchair-bound American Jew, and then ordering his body thrown overboard.

Since he was jailed, Molqi had three previous good conduct leaves from prison, but had always returned without problem.

The Achille Lauro hijacking had strained relations between the United States and Italy, after the government of then-Italian Prime Minister Bettino Craxi allowed the man believed to have masterminded the affair, hardline senior Palestine Liberation Organization official Mohammed Abbas, to leave the country.

Of the four terrorists convicted in the hijacking, one was paroled in 1991.

In the same year, one other escaped during a prison furlough.

Molqi's escape last month angered the U.S. government and Jewish leaders, and embarrassed Italy.

The United States offered a \$2 million reward for Molqi's recapture and put pressure on Italy to use all its resources in the investigation.

In Washington, FBI Director Louis Freeh said FBI agents in Rome and Madrid had cooperated in the search.

Italian Prime Minister Lamberto Dini personally called U.S. Ambassador Reginald Bartholemew to tell him of Molqi's recapture.

By coincidence, Tullia Zevi, the president of Italy's Union of Jewish Communities, was at lunch at Bartholemew's residence when the call came.

"The room erupted in applause," she said. □

Potential court nominee gets backing from Jewish opponents

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Many of the same Jewish activists who have spent years facing off against Nathan Lewin are now backing the constitutional scholar in his quest to win President Clinton's nod for a seat on the influential 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals.

Lewin, best known in the Jewish world for his advocacy of the right to display menorahs on public property, has emerged as one of two finalists for the coveted seat on the court.

Lewin, the current director of the American section of the International Association of Jewish Lawyers and Jurists, also serves as the vice president of the National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs.

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, sent a letter to the White House backing Lewin for the post.

"Based on our number of years working with him, he would be qualified for the appellate bench," Foxman said in an interview.

American Jewish Congress officials also sent word of support to the White House.

"He's an effective advocate and a man of great integrity," said Mark Pelavin, Washington representative of the AJCongress.

Both Jewish groups, staunch supporters of church-state separation, have opposed Lewin in legal battles involving the display of menorahs and other religious symbols.

As Lewin's candidacy continues to gain momentum, Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) has stepped up efforts on behalf of his own choice for the post, Chester Straub. A former chairman of Moynihan's campaign committee, Straub now works alongside former New York Gov. Mario Cuomo at a Manhattan law firm.

The New York-based 2nd Circuit is widely seen as the next best assignment to the Supreme Court.

Both Ruth Bader Ginsberg and Stephen Breyer, the two Jewish justices on the Supreme Court, sat on the appeals court before Clinton picked them for the Supreme Court.

Lewin was not available for comment. □

Israel Museum gets Einstein paper

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Albert Einstein's first manuscript on relativity is being donated to the Israel Museum in Jerusalem.

The 72-page document was sold privately for an undisclosed sum to the Jacob E. Safra Philanthropic Foundation, which will donate the 1912 manuscript to the Israel Museum, Sotheby's Auction House said.

The manuscript went unsold in public bidding March 16, when the asking price was set between \$4 million and \$6 million.

The document is the earliest surviving paper on Einstein's theory of relativity. □

AJCongress leaders frustrated with Arafat's stance on terror*By Michele Chabin*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Leaders of the American Jewish Congress voiced their "frustration and disappointment" that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat is not doing enough to curb terror attacks against Israel.

In a meeting last Friday at Arafat's Gaza headquarters, the 15-member AJCongress contingent expressed their outrage over recent Hamas suicide bombing attacks in Israel and demanded that Arafat work harder to capture wanted terrorists.

But Arafat "didn't seem disposed to accept any responsibility on his part," AJCongress Executive Director Phil Baum said in an interview after the meeting.

Instead, Baum added, Arafat "seems ready to blame almost everyone else for the recent spate of terrorist activity."

The leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization "insisted that he is doing everything he can, that his jails are overflowing with terrorists," Baum said.

"He claimed that the primary source of terrorism is in Jordan, that the heads of the terrorist organizations are based there."

According to Baum, Arafat reiterated his oft-quoted claim that "the terrorists are supported by right-wing Jewish elements within Israel who are collaborating to stop the peace process and who also are supported by sources in the U.S."

The delegation, which included AJCongress President David Kahn and Honorary President Howard Squadron, warned Arafat "the patience of Israelis and of peace-loving people all over the world is running thin," Baum said.

"We told him that unless something effective is done to curb these activities, the peace process is gravely endangered," he said.

The group also called on Arafat to make the same condemnations of terrorist violence when addressing Palestinians as he does to English-speaking audiences.

The AJCongress leaders met with Arafat after holding a weeklong series of meetings in Israel with government officials, including Prime Minister Shimon Peres, to discuss the future course of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in the wake of the terror attacks. □

New Australian leadership offers Israel its sympathy*By Jeremy Jones*

SYDNEY, Australia (JTA) — In the weeks after its recent election, the Liberal-National Party government of Prime Minister John Howard has demonstrated its abhorrence of terrorism and its strong support of the Middle East peace process.

Howard, who has been publicly identified as a friend of Israel and the Jewish community for many years, said the first letter he wrote in his new post was to Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

The letter expressed his sympathy for the victims of recent Hamas terrorism and his backing of the peace process.

The new Australian leader also sent a message to be read in synagogues on the day he was sworn into office that reflected the same sentiments.

Alexander Downer, a former Liberal Party leader who is now foreign minister, instructed senior Department of Foreign Affairs officials to meet with the charge d'affaires at the Iranian Embassy in Canberra to convey "our concern at the Iranian approach to terrorism and to

seek from Iran an explicit and specific condemnation of the recent attacks in Israel."

Diane Shteinman, the president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, said in an interview, "The Jewish community will be pursuing with vigor the issues of terrorism and Australia's relationship with Iran." □

LaRouchites settle in defamation case*By Jeremy Jones*

SYDNEY, Australia (JTA) — The U.S.-based Lyndon LaRouche group has agreed to settle a defamation case initiated by a prominent member of the Melbourne Jewish community.

As part of the settlement, the extremist organization will pay legal costs and publish an apology to Michael Danby.

In 1993, the local LaRouchite group, Citizens Electoral Council, published a series of allegations against Danby, who at the time was the editor of the Australia/Israel Review. Danby also has been heavily involved with the Australian Labor Party.

In a document called "Is the Anti-Defamation Commission Spying on You?" the council made what were apparently false claims about Danby's activities in the Jewish and political communities.

Last month, two Australian federal parliamentarians joined Jewish community groups in a call for the government to investigate the activities of the Australian followers of LaRouche.

LaRouche's ideology combines anti-Semitism and bizarre conspiracy theories, such as the claim that Queen Elizabeth heads a drug-pushing ring and that former U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger was in the employ of the Soviet KGB. □

Court backs killer's life term*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's top court has rejected a request to reduce the sentence of an Israeli imprisoned for gunning down Palestinian laborers in 1990.

An attorney for Ami Popper had argued that his client's sentence should be lessened on the grounds of temporary insanity.

But the High Court of Justice rejected that request last week.

Popper, now 27, is serving seven life sentences for killing seven Palestinian workers with an assault rifle in May 1990, near the town of Rishon le-Zion, southeast of Tel Aviv. He wounded 10 others. □

Jordan arrests fundamentalists*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Jordanian security forces have arrested three Islamic fundamentalists who were suspected of planning suicide attacks against Israeli tourists visiting Jordan.

A senior Jordanian security source was quoted as saying that the three are still being questioned and that charges have yet to be filed.

Jordanian Prime Minister Abdul Karim al-Kabariti said in Parliament last week that Jordanian security forces had, in the past six months, thwarted "36 planned terrorist attacks aimed at rocking the Hashemite Kingdom's stability."

The admission marked the first confirmation by an Arab country that suicide attacks against Israel had been planned inside its borders, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz. □

Student newspaper editorial strains black-Jewish relations

By Lynne Meredith Cohn
Washington Jewish Week

WASHINGTON (JTA) — An editorial in Howard University's student newspaper has stirred black-Jewish tensions after more than a year of concerted efforts to repair relations between the black school and the Jewish community.

In its March 8 issue, The Hilltop newspaper lambasted the Anti-Defamation League for allegedly spying on black leaders, including the late Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

It also attacked the ADL for what the paper claimed was an attempt to disrupt former National Association for the Advancement of Colored People leader Benjamin Chavis' outreach to Nation of Islam head Louis Farrakhan.

The editorial, "Attacks on Black Leaders Make Anti-Defamation League an Unwanted Guest at Howard," also reprimanded African American Studies Department Chair Russell Adams for working with the ADL.

It called ADL Regional Director David Friedman a "pariah" when he was on campus at Adams' invitation.

While the editorial vilified the ADL, an accompanying cartoon represented the ADL as a devil walking around a building at the university.

Tension between the school and the Washington area's Jewish community arose early in 1994 after the ADL exposed in the national media anti-Semitic comments made by former Nation of Islam spokesman Khalid Abdul Muhammad.

In a Washington press conference which drew national attention, Farrakhan said he did not like the manner in which Muhammad gave the speech but agreed with the "essential truths" in it, Friedman recalled.

Muhammad subsequently spoke at Howard University and a black student leader, Malik Zulu Shabazz, "led the crowd in a chant of: 'Who has your leaders in a vice grip? The Jews! The Jews!'" Friedman said.

"The [past] president of Howard waited a week to make any comment," he added.

In April 1994, the university was the site for a conference on the "black Holocaust."

'Wall-to-wall hate fest'

Speakers included several leading black spokesmen known for their anti-Semitic views, including Steve Coakley, a former aide to the late Chicago Mayor Harold Washington; Tony Martin, a Wellesley University professor; and City College of New York Professor Leonard Jeffries.

The event was a "wall-to-wall hate fest," Friedman said.

The "black Holocaust" is the term Shabazz and others use for slavery in the United States and the pre-civil rights treatment of African Americans, the "real" holocaust for which Shabazz claims Jews were largely responsible.

The allegation of Jewish dominance of the slave trade is asserted in "The Secret Relationship," a book published by Farrakhan's Nation of Islam.

Howard officials condemned the conference, held teach-ins and began repairing relations with the Jewish community.

And, a new university president, Patrick Swygert, who had a long-standing relationship with the Jewish community, was hired.

The Hilltop's recent editorial said the ADL "has historically engaged in domestic spying" in the name of

monitoring racism and that it has "especially monitored and attacked black leadership," including King, and mounted "an enormous slander campaign" against Jesse Jackson during his 1994 presidential bid.

"The ADL threatened to persuade corporations to stop funding the NAACP to combat Dr. Benjamin Chavis' relentless pursuit to unite with" Farrakhan, it said. "For the past 11 years, the ADL has been in a bitter conflict with Farrakhan. The ADL has published volumes of slanderous literature against the popular black leader."

The editorial also found it "alarming" that Howard University officials "would allow such an organization to have input in our activities. African American Studies Chairman Russell Adams has worked closely with the ADL, and he should be held accountable."

In a letter to the editor in the March 15 edition of The Hilltop, Swygert criticized the editorial for impugning "an esteemed member of the faculty" and "demonizing" a group of "American citizens."

The college president took exception to "the words, the tone and the apparent purpose of the editorial and the cartoon."

But Swygert stated he would not "defend or advocate on behalf of the Anti-Defamation League. Howard University respects the right of anyone to take issue with the [ADL], its ideas, actions and positions."

He added that "disagreement with the ADL can be expressed without resorting to symbols and language that are offensive."

The ADL was disappointed with Swygert's position. In a letter to the college president, ADL National Director Abraham H. Foxman wondered "whether the bridges we have been trying to construct go only one way."

ADL's Friedman said, "An attack as outrageous as this demanded more than simply an expression of support for academic freedom."

David Gaither, The Hilltop's editorial page editor, wrote the editorial, but he said the topic was discussed, according to usual policy, among the newspaper's section editors. A personal encounter between Gaither and Friedman, on campus for the university's Charter Day, inspired the piece, Gaither said.

"I personally have knowledge that ADL has historically attacked black leadership," said Gaither, a NOI member. The editorial was not at all intended "as anything against the Jewish community," he said.

"It was solely against the Anti-Defamation League. The problem is that the two have been seen as synonymous, and they're not."

Although the tone of the editorial seemed to be a personal attack on Friedman, Gaither denied this intent. "He just happened to be seen on campus."

Gaither said NOI membership was "not the reason I wrote it. I wrote it because of truths." □

Third Way selects candidates

JERUSALEM (JTA) — In a meeting of its central committee, the Third Way has elected its list of candidates for the Knesset.

The top three positions on the party list were won last week by Avigdor Kahalani, Emanuel Zismann and Golan activist Yehuda Harel.

Kahalani and Zismann, both members of the Knesset, made headlines last year when they bolted from the Labor Party to join the Third Way, which espouses a centrist political stance.

After their departure from Labor, the 120-member Knesset had a razor-thin 61-member majority for the government's peace policies. □