



## NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ **The American Israel Public Affairs Committee opened its annual policy conference in Washington with its president calling for "productive diversity" among American Jews.** The opening came after the group's executive committee adopted a policy statement welcoming as an "important and positive step" the Palestine National Council's vote to remove the anti-Israel clauses from its charter.

■ **The United States and Israel signed an agreement that will help bolster the Jewish state's ability to defend itself against missile attacks.** Under the agreement, signed on the first day of Prime Minister Shimon Peres' visit to Washington, the U.S. military will share with Israel "real-time" missile launch warnings available from spy satellites.

■ **Blacks and Jews must unite to end racism and bigotry because neither group can do the job alone, the new president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People said in an appeal for support.** Kweisi Mfume, in remarks to the Anti-Defamation League, added that blacks and Jews have both suffered because of racism, bigotry and other forms of prejudice. [Page 3]

■ **Major booksellers across the United States were urged not to offer a book that is believed to have inspired last year's Oklahoma City bombing.** Jewish groups protested the decision of a mainstream publisher to issue "The Turner Diaries," a fictional work written by a neo-Nazi. [Page 3]

■ **A Catholic priest who helped save Jews during World War II is among the defenders of a French scholar who is at the center of a Holocaust-denial controversy.** The scholar is under judicial investigation and could face charges for minimizing the Holocaust in his book. [Page 2]

■ **Dozens of people arrested after the wave of suicide bombings in Israel were released as the self-rule government eased a crackdown on Hamas.** Palestinian officials said the decision came after a top Hamas political leader suggested the possibility of dialogue with the Palestinian Authority.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### Cease-fire deal in Lebanon falls short of lasting solution

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The agreement that brought an end to the fighting on the Israeli-Lebanese border reflects another one of the cruel ironies that seem to bespatter Middle Eastern history.

The military and diplomatic shock waves set in motion by the fighting, on the face of it, should have provided the opportunity for a much broader and more lasting settlement on the border.

But, in the end, the cease-fire agreement brokered by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher lacked the far-reaching terms necessary to bring permanent quiet.

The governments of Israel and Lebanon have said repeatedly that they support what could have been the basis for such an accord: the withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon and the reassertion of full Lebanese sovereignty and control throughout the area, right up to the border fence.

There is no reason to doubt the sincerity of Prime Minister Shimon Peres' commitment to the principle of withdrawal from Lebanon.

Indeed, it represents a consensus position in Israeli politics.

Israel has learned the hard way over the years — the 16-day Operation Grapes of Wrath was another such lesson — that there is no gain from any embroilment in Lebanon.

On the Lebanese side, there is certainly no reason to doubt that the government of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri, deeply committed to reconstructing his country after years of civil war, would like to extend its rule to the southern border.

Despite all the pronouncements from Jerusalem and Beirut, however, it appears that a lasting Israeli-Lebanese settlement, one involving the effective neutralization of Hezbollah as a fighting force, will have to wait for more favorable circumstances.

Instead, the cease-fire agreement, which called on Israel and Hezbollah to avoid targeting civilians but allowed each party to continue "exercising the right of self-defense," was little different from the understandings reached with the assistance of the United States in July 1993, when the last major flare-up occurred.

True, the latest accord calls for a "Monitoring Group" to keep track of violations and a "Consultative Group" to provide financial assistance for the reconstruction in Lebanon.

### Ground rules remain the same

But the overall shape of the ground rules for what is widely expected to be further Israeli-Hezbollah fighting in southern Lebanon remains the same.

Perhaps it was the imminence of Israel's May 29 elections that prevented the Peres government from exploring the possibility of a longer-term agreement with Lebanon.

Peres could hardly afford to be seen by the voter, or to be depicted by the opposition, as emerging from the military campaign with a withdrawal from Lebanon.

Syria, the true power in Lebanon, is also not interested at this point in a long-term pacification of the Israeli-Lebanese border.

Syrian President Hafez Assad realizes that the nagging, sporadic miniwar in southern Lebanon and, periodically, across the border represents for the Israeli public a weighty argument in favor of concluding a peace treaty with Syria.

There is little enthusiasm in Israel for the idea of handing the strategic Golan Heights back to Syria, even in the context of a full peace.

But the prospect of a quiet border stretching from the Golan across the Israeli-Lebanese frontier all the way to the sea considerably enhances the case among Israelis for conceding the Golan in an eventual land-for-peace deal.

Assad knows this all too well.

This being the strategic situation, the most that Peres and the top brass of the Israel Defense Force would say in their public statements after

Saturday's cease-fire were vague references to the Lebanese government's future "role" in the south.

Meanwhile, the conventional wisdom in Israel is that the test of the latest understanding will be whether Hezbollah fires Katyusha rockets at northern Israel between now and election day.

If Hezbollah does not, the Peres government will be able to claim that Operation Grapes of Wrath was a success and will be able to expect electoral dividends from it. If Hezbollah does fire, the Likud opposition will brand the operation a flop.

Indeed, Yitzhak Mordechai, a leading Likud candidate in the upcoming Knesset elections, said the new understandings add nothing to those reached in 1993.

"The cease-fire agreement won't stand the test of reality," said Mordechai, who recently retired as head of northern command. "It does not provide additional security for the residents of the north and certainly not for Israeli soldiers fighting in the security zone," he said.

For the time being, the IDF will keep up its constant vigil in southern Lebanon, where, according to most observers, the years-old miniwar with Hezbollah will continue.

For Peres, the way that Operations Grapes of Wrath ended means that his electoral fate is now, to a large degree, in the hands of not one, but two militant Islamic groups, each vehemently opposed to the peace process.

Hamas, responsible for the wave of four suicide bombings in February and March, has said repeatedly that it would strike again.

Only last week, in an incident that Israeli police officials said had all the markings of the earlier suicide bombings, a would-be suicide bomber blew himself up by mistake on the outskirts of Jerusalem.

An IDF uniform and a Koran found beside his shattered corpse gave ample hints of his ghoulish plans.

The explosive charge that detonated prematurely would have been powerful enough to tear another bus apart. Israel's closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which remains in place since it was imposed after the first of the suicide bombings, would probably not have stopped this bomber from getting to Israeli targets in downtown Jerusalem.

Peres says Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's security forces are clamping down hard on the fundamentalists. Nevertheless, some terror cells are clearly still intact.

Hezbollah demonstrated dramatically — and contemptuously — that it, too, is by no means done for, despite 16 days of IDF pounding.

At 3:58 a.m. Saturday, precisely two minutes before the cease-fire went into effect, Hezbollah lobbed a Katyusha that went straight through the roof of an apartment in Kiryat Shmona, causing extensive damage.

For Israelis, it is chilling to think that either of these fanatical fundamentalist organizations may yet be able to turn the tide of history by directly influencing the outcome of the Israeli elections.

With Israel's pollsters saying that only some 5 to 6 percentage points separate frontrunner Peres from Likud challenger Benjamin Netanyahu in the race for prime minister, this is a real possibility. □

## French scholar at center of Holocaust denial dispute

By Lee Yanowitch

PARIS (JTA) — A French philosopher who converted to Islam has been placed under judicial investigation after he was accused of minimizing the extent of the Holocaust in a book he wrote.

Roger Garaudy, 82, became the object of a probe by the French judiciary after he denied in his 1995 book "The Founding Myths of Israeli Politics" that 6 million Jews were killed in Nazi death camps.

Garaudy, a former Marxist who fought the Nazi occupation of France, also argued in his book that the Nazi slaughter of Jews could be called pogroms or even massacres, but that it did not rank as genocide or a holocaust.

The opening of a judicial probe is the first step toward a trial, but it falls just short of an indictment.

If found guilty on charges of contesting the truth of historical crimes against humanity, Garaudy faces up to a one-year imprisonment and a \$60,000 fine.

Pierre Guillaume, the director of *Vielle Taupe*, which published Garaudy's book, has also been targeted for possible charges.

Accusations against the two men were leveled by groups representing former deportees, veterans and Resistance members.

Garaudy, who was expelled from the French Communist Party in 1970, was born a Protestant, but later converted to Catholicism. In 1982, he converted to Islam.

He is one of about 30,000 French Catholics who have converted to Islam.

Garaudy chose as his lawyer Jacques Verges, who once defended Lyon Gestapo Chief Klaus Barbie and international terrorist Carlos the Jackal.

## Catholic priest provides surprise defense

The controversy over Garaudy's book erupted after a Roman Catholic priest who helped Jews escape Nazi-occupied France defended the author as an "honest man."

Abbe Pierre, who has devoted his life to helping the poor and who regularly tops opinion polls as France's best-loved public figure, praised Garaudy for questioning whether the figure of 6 million was accurate.

Pierre also said it was excessive to call the book a work of historical revisionism.

Pierre's support of Garaudy, a longtime friend, shocked his followers and dismayed members of human rights groups, some of whom had considered the 83-year-old priest a comrade in arms.

Monsignor Jacques Gaillot, a human rights activist whom the Vatican fired last year for his liberal views on birth control and AIDS, urged Pierre to retract his support for Garaudy.

"Abbe Pierre's immense popularity can make this a problem in many people's minds. It's not possible to be on the side of the poor and support negationism at the same time," Gaillot said.

Meanwhile, the mainstream anti-racist organization MRAP is seeking to take Garaudy to court on the additional charge of inciting racial hatred, which is punishable under French law by up to five years in jail.

And the International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism, known as LICRA, summoned Pierre, who has been an honorary member of the group for 20 years, to provide them with an explanation.

During his meeting with LICRA, Pierre sought to distance himself from Garaudy, stressing his "visceral" distaste for Holocaust denial. But some of his statements seemed certain to generate further controversy.

Pierre told LICRA officials that he had "no doubt that the concentration camps existed." But, he added, "it seems that there may have been some excesses in generalizing that gas chambers operated in all the camps."

Pierre further called for a debate between "researchers who diverge in their conclusions," which several critics saw as elevating Holocaust deniers to the same level as respectable historians. □

## Booksellers urged not to offer 'diaries' admired by extremists

By Heather Camlot

NEW YORK (JTA) — Jewish groups have joined a campaign to boycott the selling of a book that is believed to have inspired the Oklahoma City bombing.

The American Jewish Committee and the Simon Wiesenthal Center have contacted major booksellers across the nation, asking them not to offer "The Turner Diaries," a fictional work about gun control written by neo-Nazi William Pierce.

The Southern Poverty Law Center, an organization headed by Morris Dees that monitors and fights extremism, first raised concern about the book's publication and distribution.

The novel has been in circulation since it was completed in 1978. At that time, it was published by National Vanguard Books, an arm of the National Alliance, a neo-Nazi group. More than 185,000 copies were sold.

But it was inaccessible to the general public until Barricade Books decided to publish it. A spokeswoman for the publisher said the book was "in production" this week.

Calling the book a "bible" of the extreme right wing, Kenneth Stern, program specialist on anti-Semitism and extremism at the American Jewish Committee, said in an interview that the book promotes "a political agenda of making Hitler's dream come true."

In a letter to booksellers, Stern wrote, "The distribution of this book will help finance one of the main organizations for promoting hatred and violence against innocent Americans."

Pierce is a leader of the National Alliance, Stern said, adding that the neo-Nazi group also promotes the book.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center also is urging leading U.S. bookstore chains not to stock the "racist tract," the organization said in a statement.

"It is almost beyond belief that on the first anniversary of the Oklahoma City massacre, a mainstream publisher would announce publication of a book which depicts the destruction of a federal facility by a truck" carrying a bomb, "a book which was found among Timothy McVeigh's possessions following Oklahoma City," said Rabbi Abraham Cooper, the center's associate dean.

### 'Dreadful and bigoted book'

"The Turner Diaries" is believed to have inspired McVeigh, who is charged with blowing up the Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City on April 19, 1995.

The book also allegedly inspired The Order, a neo-Nazi group that took its name from the group in the book, to kill Jewish talk show host Alan Berg in 1985.

Barricade Books publisher Lyle Stuart has defended his decision to publish the novel by evoking the right to free speech.

But Cooper said, "The issue here is not censorship — Pierce's work has already impacted the McVeighs of the world — but of mainstream access and legitimacy to those promoting the Balkanization of America."

In an introduction to the novel, Stuart acknowledged that "The Turner Diaries" is a "dreadful" and "bigoted book."

To emphasize his point, he quotes Pierce, a former university professor, as saying: The book "offends almost everyone: Afro-Americans, feminists, gays and lesbians, liberals, communists, Mexicans, democrats, the FBI, egalitarians and Jews. Especially Jews: For it portrays them as incarnations of everything that is evil and destructive."

But explaining his decision to print the book,

Stuart said: "The majority — you and I — must always protect the right of the minority, even a minority of one, to express the most outrageous and offensive ideas."

"Only then is freedom of expression guaranteed," he wrote in his introduction.

In his letter to bookstores, Stern acknowledged their right to distribute the books, but asked them to "consider the ethical question" of supporting a neo-Nazi author and organization. □

## NAACP leader: Blacks, Jews must unite to combat bigotry

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Kweisi Mfume hopes that when the complete history of the 20th century is written, people will read about how America became a more tolerant nation because blacks and Jews resolved problems of the recent past and worked together to carve a new future.

In a message to the Jewish community, the new leader of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People said blacks and Jews must unite to end racism and bigotry.

"The NAACP cannot and should not go down this road alone," Mfume told about 300 leaders of the Anti-Defamation League last week in Washington. "The road toward racial reconciliation and nation-building is something that involves all of us."

"We ask that as we reach out to you, you reach back toward us."

Blacks and Jews, he said, must find new ways to deal with old problems, while replicating approaches that have worked before.

"But it also means being honest enough to recognize that where there are real and meaningful misunderstandings, that somehow or another we've got to agree to disagree, but to find in that disagreement an understanding of the other side," Mfume said.

Historically, Jews have been supportive of the NAACP — Jews joined with blacks to found the association — but have been alarmed by recent events.

Last year's Million Man March put a strain on black-Jewish relations when a host of mainstream black leaders agreed to share the stage with Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan, who has charged that Jews financed the slave trade and that Jews are "bloodsuckers" for not reinvesting in the black community, among other things.

Many in the NAACP leadership had expressed support for the march, though the group did not officially endorse it.

When Mfume, a former Democratic congressman from Maryland, took over the helm of the NAACP in February, Jewish groups hailed him as an important new partner capable of playing a healing role in black-Jewish relations.

It was Mfume, however, who first welcomed Farrakhan into the circle of Washington politics by forming a "compact" in 1993 between the Congressional Black Caucus and the Nation of Islam.

The caucus later distanced itself from the agreement.

Mfume's message resonated last week with ADL leaders, who gave him a standing ovation.

"This country needs a strong, dynamic, vibrant NAACP, and we are delighted and we are proud that you reached out to us in your first few months of leadership," said Abraham Foxman, national director of the ADL.

"We accept your challenge and your invitation for an open, dignified relationship." □

## Community pulls together after attack on Jewish center

By Lev Krichevsky

YAROSLAVL, Russia (JTA) — The bombing of a Jewish community center here has drawn sharp condemnations from local officials, including the regional police chief, who termed the attack a "crime against the state."

As police investigated the April 19 bombing of the center, Jews from the 2,500-member community gathered in larger numbers than usual for Shabbat services the day after the attack in a show of solidarity.

The explosion in Yaroslavl came during the same week that a Jewish center in Smolensk was robbed and daubed with anti-Semitic graffiti. An explosive charge equivalent to more than 2 pounds of TNT was used in the Yaroslavl attack, a police spokesman said.

Parts of the 80-year-old building housing the community center suffered serious damage as a result of the explosion, which caused no injuries.

"Dozens of people, many of them just neighbors, came to help us with cleaning up the place," said Inna Davidova, director of the Hesed Charitable Society and member of the community's executive board.

Davidova said she was surprised by the larger than usual turnout for services after the attack, with some people attending for the first time since the synagogue was reopened two years ago.

"People wanted to express their solidarity," Davidova said.

All 60 students of the center's Jewish Sunday school came to class that Sunday, said school director Nadezhda Nosova. She said no more than 40 children usually come to school each Sunday.

The chief rabbi of Russia, Adolph Shayeich, who visited Yaroslavl last week, spoke of the grave concerns such incidents raise within the Russian Jewish community.

"Today most Russian Jews are those who would prefer to stay here," said Shayeich. "But every such act emotionally disturbs the Jewish community."

Two Jewish families are leaving Yaroslavl each month, with most of them going to Israel.

Leaders of the community said they would not be surprised if this number soon increased.

The community center is located in a synagogue that was erected in 1916. In 1934, the building was confiscated by local Communist authorities. The Jewish community recovered the property in 1994.

Along with a synagogue, the center houses local organizations that serve the needs of the Jewish community in Yaroslavl, located about 130 miles northeast of Moscow.

### Act of hooliganism

The explosion, caused by a bomb planted outside the center, shattered all the windows in the building and in some neighboring houses. An office of the Hesed society and a room that served as the community library suffered the worst damage.

Investigators said they believed that the explosion was merely an act of hooliganism.

But community leader Isaac Davidov said he had asked the investigators not to ignore the fact that Yaroslavl has a community of several dozen Lebanese and Syrian college students.

Davidov said that even though he had no evidence, he believed that some of the students might have wanted to attack local Jews after the April 18 shelling by Israeli forces of a U.N. base in southern Lebanon in which at least 91 Lebanese refugees were killed.

Jewish leaders said the bombing had caused \$12,000 worth of damage.

Yaroslavl city administrators allocated \$2,000 to the community. The Russian Jewish Congress is expected to provide the remainder of funds needed to repair the building.

In Smolensk, a city of 400,000 located about 220 miles southwest of Moscow, robbers recently broke into the Jewish cultural center and painted a swastika and a Star of David, along with the words "beat the kikes" on the center's front door.

According to Dimitri Levant, chairman of the Smolensk Jewish cultural center, "There wasn't much in the office that robbers could take."

He added that they made off with a television set and some bottles of kosher wine that were left after Passover.

The Smolensk center, which occupies a few rooms on the ground floor of an apartment building, had opened a month before the incident took place.

Levant said the center had been working primarily as a charitable institution serving the 2,000-member Jewish community's needy.

The center also houses a Sunday school, community library, Jewish youth club and the local office of the Jewish Agency for Israel.

Levant said some citizens of Smolensk had been making more ultranationalist and anti-Semitic statements than in the past. □

## European nations see value in continued dialogue with Iran

By Joseph Kopel

LUXEMBOURG (JTA) — The foreign ministers of the European Union have decided to continue what they call their "critical dialogue" with Iran.

The decision comes in the wake of repeated American and Israeli calls to isolate Iran as a rogue state because of its support for terrorism.

At last week's meeting here, the 15 E.U. ministers, some of whose countries have trade links with Iran, agreed to continue the 3-year-old dialogue with the Islamic republic.

Defending their decision, the ministers repeated their long-held stance that this would be a more productive way for moderating Iranian policy than any ostracism of Tehran.

German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel told reporters after the April 22 meeting that no one at the meeting had spoken in favor of an end to the dialogue with Iran.

But his Irish counterpart, Gay Mitchell, was quoted as saying that not all the E.U. ministers were persuaded of the effectiveness of the policy. "We would like to see more results of this dialogue," Mitchell said.

According to Kinkel, the ministers would like to see Iran actively commit itself to the Middle East peace process, reduce its support for militant groups and recognize Palestinian autonomy under the leadership of Yasser Arafat. He also said the European Union would like to see Tehran act to stop Shi'ite Hezbollah militants from launching attacks against Israel from Lebanon.

At an informal meeting last month in Palermo, Italy, days after Hamas terrorists carried out a string of suicide bombings in Israel, the E.U. ministers hinted that they would reconsider their dialogue with Iran if it did not condemn all acts of terrorism.

Earlier this month, the European ministers sent a delegation to Tehran to discuss the issue with Iranian authorities. Iranian officials said at the time that they rejected terrorism. But they did not condemn the Hamas attacks. □