

**NEWS AT A GLANCE**

■ **Palestinian police reportedly arrested 20 suspects in connection with the shooting attack near the Jewish settlement of Beit El. As the yeshiva student killed in the attack was buried, Israeli security forces said they expected the closure imposed on the territories to be tightened until the May 29 elections.**

■ **The state Legislature of Illinois passed legislation that would make it a criminal offense to support terrorist activity. The legislation, advocated by the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago, now awaits the governor's signature.**

■ **The U.S. Supreme Court refused to hear an appeal to a federal court's decision that the cross-bearing seal of Edmond, Okla., was unconstitutional.**

■ **The Pittsburgh chapter of the Zionist Organization of America split over the national president's vocal criticism of aspects of the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords. [Page 3]**

■ **The five nations charged with monitoring last month's cease-fire in Lebanon resumed talks in Washington to hammer out details of its function.**

■ **Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres said security forces had thwarted dozens of terrorist attacks, the details of which have not been published. During a campaign stop, Peres blamed "external forces" for trying to influence Israeli elections and hurt the peace process.**

■ **The premier of the Australian state of Victoria was forced to apologize for linking a federal senator to the Nazi Party of Germany. The senator has said for many years that as a German boy living in Poland during the Nazi occupation, he was automatically enrolled in a division of Hitler Youth.**

■ **An Italian store manager reportedly agreed to study 12 books on Jewish culture to avoid prosecution on charges of racial harassment. The settlement was reached after a French Jew complained that the manager of a supermarket in Venice had made anti-Semitic remarks during a business meeting.**

**Feelings over capital's future intensified by Jerusalem Day**

By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM (JTA) — As Israelis celebrate Jerusalem Day this week with marches and festivals, questions about the city's future have never seemed more relevant.

Last week, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators held their first session of the final-status negotiations, which deal with the future of Jerusalem and other key issues.

With those negotiations slated to get fully under way after Israel's May 29 national elections, many people are wondering — and worrying — whether the city will one day be redivided.

Jerusalem is an intense city where, even at the best of times, religious fervor and nationalistic aspirations occasionally boil over.

But recent reports from Israeli officials that terrorists are planning attacks to coincide with the elections have turned Jerusalem into a pressure cooker.

Months after suicide bombers targeted a Jerusalem bus line in two separate incidents, claiming the lives of 45 victims, many Israelis are still reluctant to visit the city.

And even though Jerusalemites themselves are conducting their lives as usual, many do so in fear.

"I'm afraid every time I have to board a bus, but what choice do I have?" said Miriam Cohen, a student.

"The government is warning that there will be more terrorism prior to the elections, and that Jerusalem could well be a target," she said.

"A lot of people are afraid, but neither terrorism nor the peace process will force us to give up Jerusalem."

Judging from opinion polls, Cohen's steadfast attachment to Jerusalem is shared by most Israelis.

Said pollster Rafi Smith, "The vast majority of Israelis, between 80 and 90 percent — perhaps more — want Jerusalem to remain the undivided capital of Israel."

Since the 1967 Six-Day War, when Israel reunited the city with the capture of eastern Jerusalem, "Israelis have believed that the city should remain united."

**Evident open-mindedness**

Still, Smith said, "in the past year or two, since the peace process led to a change of atmosphere, I've gotten the feeling that people are more open-minded to new thoughts and solutions about the city's final status.

"Some can imagine East Jerusalem as international, while others imagine the entire city in Israeli hands but giving some autonomy to the Palestinians."

This "open-mindedness" was evident in a recent survey conducted by the Israel-Palestine Center for Research and Information, a joint Israeli-Palestinian public policy think tank.

Of the Israeli Jews polled, 28 percent said they were ready to accept a solution that would ensure Israeli sovereignty over western Jerusalem and Israeli communities in eastern Jerusalem, but that would grant Palestinian sovereignty over the rest of eastern Jerusalem.

In a parallel study conducted by the center, 90.8 percent of Palestinians polled rejected exclusive Israeli sovereignty over all of Jerusalem.

Given five possible scenarios — ranging from internationalization of the entire city to Israeli sovereignty over Jews in both parts of the city — the majority of the Palestinians polled wanted a return to the June 4, 1967, border. Such a plan would enable Israel to control the western portions of the city, and the Palestinians the eastern.

Keith Molkner, director of the center's legal department, said, "A sixth option, total Palestinian control over the entire city, was not included in the survey because the majority would probably have chosen it for more emotional reasons."

"This is not a viable scenario, so we left the question out," he said.

Ahmed, a 34-year-old cook who asked that his last name not be used, opts for a pragmatic approach that would put aside emotional concerns. "Of

course, most Palestinians would like full control over the city," he said. "But it's a waste of energy to dream about something that cannot be.

"If we are to get anything at all, we will have to be practical and compromise. For us, having sovereignty over East Jerusalem represents a compromise."

Steve Kamiler, a videographer who emigrated from the United States eight years ago, does not believe that Israelis would allow their government to change Jerusalem's status.

"I believe that the Labor government may indeed make overtures to the Palestinians, proposing increased autonomy or 'government status' over East Jerusalem, creating in effect a divided city.

"When push comes to shove, though, the population at large will make too much of a ruckus to let this happen," he said.

Yigal Ya'akov, a fruit vendor, is not prepared to surrender an inch of Jerusalem to the Palestinians.

"They don't deserve it. They've already gotten enough territory from the peace process," he said.

Like many Jerusalemites, educator Levi Lauer fears that the issue of Jerusalem's future could prove the ultimate, perhaps insurmountable stumbling block on the road to real peace with the Palestinians.

"My concern is that Jerusalem must be a place where Jews can live safely. At the same time, we must find a way to accommodate the reasonable needs of the non-Jewish population of the city," he said.

For Lauer, guarantees of a "durable peace" would lead him to "compromise Jewish control over some part of the city."

Despite deep concerns for Jerusalem's future, Lauer stressed that Israel must at least "give the negotiations a shot."

Quoting a famous hockey player, Lauer says with a smile: "Wayne Gretzky once said you miss 100 percent of the shots you don't take." □

### **Israel arrests terrorist trained by Islamic Jihad group in Syria**

*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli security forces have averted a possible terrorist attack with the arrest of a Palestinian who was trained by a militant Islamic group based in Syria to carry out terror attacks in the Jewish state.

Details of last week's arrest of Salim Muhammed Abdel Banah were released Monday by Jerusalem police.

Banah, a Palestinian carrying a Jordanian passport, was apprehended by the Shin Bet, Israel's domestic security service, in conjunction with Jerusalem police, according to reports.

Banah had recently spent time in Damascus, where he made contact with the militant Islamic Jihad group and was trained to carry out attacks, he told interrogators.

He was instructed by his operatives to enter Israel as a tourist, then plan terror attacks in populated areas.

Banah's arrest follows last week's disclosure that Israeli security forces had uncovered a terror cell operating in eastern Jerusalem.

Israeli security forces revealed that they had arrested 11 Hamas members suspected of helping the terrorists responsible for the Feb. 25 and March 3 attacks on two No. 18 buses in Jerusalem as well as the Feb. 25 attack at a hitchhiking post in Ashkelon.

The three suicide bombings left 46 innocent people dead. A fourth suicide bombing March 4 in Tel Aviv claimed the lives of 13 victims. Hamas claimed responsibility for that attack.

The 11 suspects were arrested shortly after the attacks, but the police refused to release details until now.

The suspects acknowledged during questioning that they were recruited a year ago in Gaza and underwent training by the military arm of the fundamentalist Hamas movement.

Five of those arrested had been instructed by Hamas in Gaza to deliver explosive devices to the three suicide bombers.

A few days before the attacks, the five transported the explosive devices and the suicide bombers through roadblocks to Jerusalem, where they hid in homes and mosques until they carried out the attacks.

On the mornings of the two attacks in Jerusalem, the suicide bombers, with the explosive devices hidden in small bags, were driven to Jaffa Road and dropped off at the bus stop in front of City Hall, where they boarded the No. 18 buses.

Another member of the group drove a suicide bomber to the Ashkelon Junction, where he exploded the bomb that was hidden on his body.

The other six suspects were accused of membership in Hamas, and of activities in the Jerusalem area that included throwing rocks and firebombs, blocking roads, writing slogans on walls and participating in illegal demonstrations. □

### **PNC action on charter still matter of debate**

*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Senior government officials and opposition leaders have continued to clash over the meaning of last month's Palestine National Council vote to amend its charter.

In the latest round of the dispute, Foreign Minister Ehud Barak clashed with Likud Knesset member Ze'ev "Benny" Begin at a parliamentary committee meeting Monday over whether the PNC had amended the charter's anti-Israel clauses.

Barak maintained that the English translation of the PNC's April 24 decision to amend the charter was identical to the Arabic text.

But Begin charged that the Arab version states that the clauses dealing with the destruction of Israel are to be canceled at a future date, and not that they have been canceled. Right-wing Israeli and American Jewish groups have said the PNC failed to fulfill Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's commitment to Israel to change the charter because it decided to refer the drafting of a new charter to a legal committee.

Meanwhile, 10 members of the U.S. Congress sent a four-page letter to Secretary of State Warren Christopher expressing "considerable confusion" over the PNC vote.

The letter, initiated by Sens. Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.) and Jon Kyl (R-Ariz.), said the members "are inclined to believe that a final decision on revoking the estimated 28 articles which question Israel's right to exist and/or call for armed struggle has been once again put off for a future date."

Because the PNC set no firm date for redrafting the charter, said the signers of the letter, they are threatening to discontinue U.S. aid to the Palestinian Authority. Congress had imposed a May 7 deadline on the PNC to amend the charter.

Millions of dollars in aid are still being held up by Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.), chairman of the House International Relations Committee and one of the signatories of the letter, which was released last Friday. □

*(JTA Washington bureau chief Matthew Dorf contributed to this report.)*

**Pittsburgh members of ZOA secede from national group***By Cynthia Mann*

NEW YORK (JTA) — The Pittsburgh chapter of the Zionist Organization of America appears to have fractured over the national president's vocal criticism of the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords.

The executive committee recently voted to dissociate from the ZOA and establish the Zionist Organization of Pittsburgh.

In a letter to members, the local president, Dr. Harry Palkovitz, said that since the election of the current national leadership, "a great disparity" had emerged over the appropriate role of an American Zionist organization.

The local organization was committed to "support the duly elected government of Israel," especially in matters of "safety and security," he wrote. "Our national leadership has chosen to disagree with some of Israel's stands, which has made us very uncomfortable, especially in our advocacy role with our elected officials in Washington and with the embassy of Israel."

This, said Palkovitz, "was the major barrier between the two groups."

The decision in Pittsburgh mirrors a similar break by the Baltimore chapter two years ago, which reflected a sea change in the national body.

The ZOA has markedly stepped up its profile, especially on Capitol Hill, under the stewardship of its president, Morton Klein, who was elected in 1993. While Klein's activism has garnered new supporters for ZOA, it has drawn fire from critics who say it worked at times against the interests of Israel's Labor-led government.

Palkovitz said in his letter that the split came after "our endeavor to bridge a major gap in philosophy between the two levels proved fruitless, despite all meetings and discussions."

Said the group's executive director, Connie Schwartz: "People were very saddened" by the action, "but we felt we had no choice. We had reached an impasse."

One member who voted against the break, Lou Weiss, was angered by the move.

"A group of dissidents hijacked the organization," he said. "They just happened to be officers."

For his part, Klein was undaunted. He dismissed both cities' moves as "personal and political" and said he was "resented from day one" because he was an outsider.

**Questions of legality**

Klein also raised questions about the legality of the secession and criticized the group's failure to allow the full Pittsburgh membership to vote on the matter. He also said there is already a slate in place by those prepared to challenge the move at a Pittsburgh convention May 28.

Weiss concurred. "There are two factions," he said. "One will continue to support" the national ZOA.

Klein, who has been an outspoken critic on parts of the Labor government's peace policies, contended that his fight has been only to ensure that Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat comply with requirements in the accords to fight terrorism in order to receive the U.S. aid he has been promised. "Every major Jewish organization supports this link," he said. If the Palestinians "are not complying, we should use the money as leverage. If they don't fight terrorism, we won't have peace."

Weiss defended Klein's leadership. "Love him or hate him — and I love him — Mort Klein is the best thing that happened to ZOA — no ifs, ands or buts about it," Weiss said. "He raised the profile of an organization on the skids." Klein, he said, does not take "stands against

the government of Israel," but he forces the Palestinians to comply with the accords in some instances "where the Israeli Labor government turns a blind eye." This rankles people, he said.

In an apparent effort to counter any negative publicity triggered by the Pittsburgh move, the ZOA announced last week the establishment of seven new districts, proclaiming that its "national revival" has "continued in full force during the past year."

There are disparate accounts of the Pittsburgh chapter's membership numbers. Schwartz said there are 1,600 dues-paying members, while Klein contends that the membership figure is 370. □

**Dismissed House historian threatening to sue Gingrich***By Daniel Kurtzman*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Christina Jeffrey will not give up the fight.

The former House of Representatives historian who was branded as an anti-Semite and Nazi sympathizer in January 1995 has threatened to sue House Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) for defamation and breach of contract if he does not agree to fully resolve her case.

Gingrich handpicked Jeffrey to serve as House historian last year, but quickly dismissed her after learning that, as a consultant for the Education Department in 1986, she criticized a junior high school Holocaust course for not presenting "the Nazi point of view."

Disclosure of the review caused an immediate uproar, with the media and some members of Congress portraying Jeffrey as sympathetic to Nazism.

Jeffrey apologized for her comments and said she was misunderstood.

Jeffrey said in an interview this week that she would launch a lawsuit against Gingrich if the speaker did not agree to a settlement.

Jeffrey has been asking for financial restitution, estimating that her family lost more than \$30,000 when it had to relocate from Atlanta to Washington, then back to Atlanta.

She also wants the congressional record set straight, preferably through a House resolution exonerating her of all charges of racism and anti-Semitism.

"I don't think he cares," Jeffrey said of Gingrich. "I've been telling him that" filing a lawsuit "is what he's forcing me to do."

A Gingrich spokesman declined to comment.

An associate professor at Kennesaw State College in Marietta, Ga., Jeffrey, 47, has spent the past 16 months trying to clear her name.

"These remarks have given rise to great misunderstanding, and I deeply regret this," Jeffrey said last year of her 1986 Holocaust curriculum review. "Nothing in my personal or professional life has ever grieved me so much as the false characterization of me as racist and anti-Semitic."

In August, Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, came to Jeffrey's defense, saying that she was unfairly stigmatized and mislabeled anti-Semitic.

In November, after considerable prodding by Jeffrey, Gingrich held a news conference to address Jeffrey's concerns. "I think she does deserve some vindication," Gingrich told reporters at the time. "She has shown tremendous courage, tremendous persistence in working to clear her name." While accepting "full responsibility as speaker" for the way Jeffrey was treated, Gingrich blamed the media for the "feeding frenzy" surrounding Jeffrey's dismissal. □

**STILL ON THE SIDELINES [Part 2]  
How immigrants cast ballots  
may determine election results**

By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM (JTA) — On Israel's election day, Luda, a waitress at a Jerusalem cafe, will cast her vote for Yisrael Ba'Aliyah, Natan Sharansky's new immigrant rights party.

Luda, who agreed to be interviewed provided that her real name was not used, was trained as a nurse.

But she will probably have to wait tables for the foreseeable future.

"In order to get a nursing license in Israel, I have to improve my Hebrew. I'm working on it, but it's a slow process," she says.

"In the meantime, I can't work in my profession, and it's frustrating. Waitressing doesn't pay enough to buy an apartment, so my husband and I are just making do at the moment. Israel is an expensive place, and the government isn't doing enough to help. Hopefully, if the immigrant party gets elected, things will be easier for all of us."

Come May 29, the 400,000-plus eligible voters among the more than 600,000 olim who arrived from the former Soviet Union since 1989 will be taking such bread-and-butter issues with them to the ballot box.

For the first time, Israelis will vote directly for prime minister in addition to voting for the party of their choice in the separate balloting to fill the 120 Knesset seats.

In the race for premier — opinion polls show Prime Minister Shimon Peres narrowly ahead of his opponent, Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu — the immigrants from the former Soviet Union could well be the deciding factor.

Aware of this fact, the larger political parties are working hard to woo the immigrants, whether they be newcomers or veteran Israelis. Many of the parties have a "Russian" desk churning out Russian-language advertising, brochures and news releases on everything from the job market to mortgages for new immigrants.

At this stage, it is impossible to predict whether the effort will pay off in either the vote for prime minister or the Knesset balloting.

**'Mr. Security'**

In the race for parliamentary representation, recent opinion polls indicate that Sharansky's party will likely garner three or four Knesset seats. One of these could conceivably go to Achadut Yisrael, a new party headed by another immigrant, Ephraim Gur.

But, given their size as a voting bloc, the immigrants from the former Soviet Union have the ability to elect another six or seven Knesset members.

It remains debatable whether Peres' Labor Party, which 60 percent of the immigrants supported in the 1992 election, will get most of those remaining seats.

In addition to their pocketbook concerns, the immigrants are extremely security conscious, especially after a disproportionate number of them were injured or killed in recent terrorist attacks.

But while Netanyahu is running on the "Mr. Security" ticket, Peres' recent decision to order the 16-day Operation Grapes of Wrath in Lebanon could steal some of Netanyahu's thunder.

Political observers say it is difficult to know how the immigrants will vote.

"No one can really predict the numbers," says Chemi Shalev, political correspondent for the Israeli daily Ma'ariv. He believes that Sharansky's party could play a crucial role in forging the next governing coalition.

"Who Sharansky aligns himself with will depend on the outcome of the elections. He has no justification to side with the opposition because he needs to influence government, to get improvements for immigrants. Being in the opposition would be a waste of time."

Of those immigrants polled by the Tazpit Research Institute in late April, 36 percent said they would support Sharansky's party, while 24 percent favored Likud and 20 percent favored Labor. The remainder said they would support smaller parties. In the race for prime minister, 60 percent indicated that they would vote for Peres.

"The Russians want respect, some recognition, appreciation for the contributions they are making to Israeli society, and they aren't getting this recognition," says Tazpit pollster Aharon Fein.

Although Sharansky's initial support came from newer, unemployed immigrants, Fein says, "in the past several months even veteran immigrants feel that a small party may be able to accomplish more than having one or two representatives in a larger party."

A decade after making aliyah, Sharansky, a Soviet Jewish activist, says he decided to throw his hat into the political ring last year because he felt that political change could not be accomplished from the sidelines.

As co-founder of the Zionist Forum, an advocacy group for Russian immigrants, "I tried to work in non-political ways," he says. "Gradually, it became clear that I was coming to the limit of what could be achieved through non-political activities."

The government, he charges, "has formulated no strategic plan for bringing and absorbing potential olim."

Although Yisrael Ba'Aliyah is expected to get most of its support from immigrants, its agenda is not limited to the needs of olim. Included in the party's platform are calls for a liberalized, free-market economy, improved education, more affordable housing, and a greater emphasis on human rights and the environment. The platform also calls for a referendum on the continuation of the peace process.

The party opposes the establishment of a Palestinian state, but supports Palestinian autonomy and territorial compromise on the Golan Heights.

While many immigrants will no doubt put their faith in Sharansky, many others will not.

"I won't be voting for Sharansky because the concept of an ethnic party is like a party for pregnant women," says Lev Elbert, who immigrated nine years ago.

"After nine months, you no longer need the party because you are no longer pregnant." □

**E.U. to aid Palestinian schools**

By Joseph Kopel

BRUSSELS (JTA) — The European Commission has approved a grant of \$18.5 million to the Palestinian Authority.

The money is intended to fund in part the operating budgets of Palestinian universities and colleges in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

It also will ensure that more than 30,000 students can continue full-time study for the rest of this year, said a spokesman for the European Union's executive body.

In 1994 and 1995, financial aid granted by the 15-member European Union for the development of the West Bank and Gaza totaled some \$200 million, making the Europeans the largest donors to the Palestinian Authority.

In a separate development, Lebanese Prime Minister Rafik Hariri made an appeal Monday in a meeting here with E.U. leaders for European financial aid to rebuild Lebanon. He said Lebanon needed about \$1 billion a year over five years to fix roads and to rebuild hospitals and government buildings. □