



## NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ **Israeli Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu said he would continue peace negotiations with Syria and final-status talks with the Palestinians.** His remarks came as Syria announced that it would host a meeting tomorrow for the leaders of Egypt and Saudi Arabia to discuss the effect of the Israeli elections on the peace process. [Page 4]

■ **Aides to incoming Likud Premier Benjamin Netanyahu said he would travel to Washington at the end of the month.** They denied, however, that a June 25 meeting with President Clinton had been set. Jordan's King Hussein is expected to meet with President Clinton next week. [Page 4]

■ **The House of Representatives postponed consideration of the foreign aid bill until Tuesday.** The \$11.9 billion measure, which includes cuts of more than \$450 million, retains current levels of aid to Israel, Egypt and the Palestinian Authority.

■ **Israeli security forces shot and killed two Palestinians in separate incidents, one in eastern Jerusalem and the other in the Gaza Strip.** [Page 2]

■ **Major League Baseball's executive council condemned recent controversial comments by Cincinnati Reds owner Marge Schott and said it intended to make a decision about her future soon.** Schott's remarks include positive sentiments about Adolf Hitler.

■ **Hezbollah gunmen detonated a roadside bomb near an Israeli patrol in the eastern sector of the southern Lebanon security zone and opened fire on a South Lebanon Army post in the western sector.** No one was hurt in the blast. The incidents came one day after Hezbollah killed an SLA soldier in a roadside explosion.

■ **The American ice cream manufacturer Ben and Jerry's is reportedly planning to open a production center in Israel that will serve as a distributing point for its products to all of Europe.** The company already operates 14 stores and 600 distribution points in Israel.

## Russian Jews fear for future if Communist wins presidency

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — The possibility of a return to communism continues to worry Russian Jews.

As the June 16 date for the Russian presidential elections approaches, many are expressing fear for the future of the country's Jewish community if the Communist challenger Gennady Zyuganov should win.

Pinchas Goldschmidt, the chief rabbi of Moscow, said the Jewish community is concerned because of the uncertainty surrounding Zyuganov's intentions. Goldschmidt questioned whether Zyuganov would allow Jewish emigration to continue freely, adding that it was also uncertain "what he thinks about equal rights toward minorities."

"Is Zyuganov a Social Democrat," Goldschmidt said, "or a Stalinist?"

Alexander Osovtsov, executive vice president of the Russian Jewish Congress, said a Zyuganov victory would have significant negative repercussions for the Jewish community. He added that at least some of the uncertainty about what Zyuganov's policies would be if he were elected had to do with the structure of the Communist Party itself.

"The Communist Party is not a monolithic unit," he said. "It includes four groups that would pursue four different policies."

"If the Communists make a comeback, the life of the country's Jews would be deeply influenced" by the relative strengths of these forces within the Kremlin.

Jewish businessmen, along with many others in Russia's financial and business community, reacted last week with a mixture of skepticism and outright hostility to Zyuganov's freshly published economic program.

They sharply criticized his economic blueprint, especially its plans to close the Russian market to imports, to take more direct control of the oil and gas industries, and to increase social and military spending at the risk of fueling inflation.

Mark Philippov, marketing director of a Moscow construction company, predicted that a Communist victory would have immediate and sharply negative economic consequences, including "a drastic drop in imports, more capital flight, price hikes and less foreign investment."

A Jewish analyst at the Russian Credit Bank who asked not to be identified said the Communists' economic plans were a threat to business, but he considered the program mere pre-election propaganda.

"I'm sure the Communists are bluffing," the analyst said. "If they were not able for 70 years to do much of what they talk about in their new program, it's hard to believe they would be more successful this time."

### Support to community threatened

Roman Spector, acting president of Va'ad, the Jewish Federation of Russia, said that if the Communists' economic blueprint were implemented, it could spell the end of the financial support Russian Jewish organizations recently started receiving from wealthy members of the community.

That support came mainly from a group of Russian Jewish bankers who had amassed fortunes in the period of reforms initiated during the presidency of Boris Yeltsin, Spector said.

But if the Communists took power, they would nationalize the banks, drying up a major source of help for the community, he added.

Recent polls indicate that Yeltsin would win 35 percent of the vote, while Zyuganov would gain 24 percent. But because of the large number of other candidates in the presidential election, a runoff will be held July 7 if, as expected, no candidate captures more than 50 percent of the first vote.

In a head-to-head battle in the runoff, Yeltsin could capture as much as 46 percent of the vote compared with Zyuganov's 30 percent, according to the latest polls. But Zyuganov's anti-Semitic comments detract from any comfort Russian Jews could take from the uncertain polling data.

"What would you expect from a politician who is seriously talking about 'international Jewish capital,'" said Ilya Zhivotovsky, a 24-year-old Hebrew instructor at a Jewish day school in Moscow.

With his strong nationalist bent, Zyuganov is fond of blaming

Western powers for most of Russia's economic ills. But during a recent campaign stop in central Russia, he also made reference to "ethnic and religious separatist movements" supported by the West that he said share in the blame for the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Local Jewish leaders also note that Zyuganov is surrounded by many people who harbor even stronger anti-Semitic sentiments than he does.

Late last month, the transcript of a recently held Communist leadership plenum that had been closed to the media was made public.

A Moscow daily quoted one of the participants giving a rambling anti-Semitic speech.

"Lies have always been and still remain the weapon used by Zionists," the participant was quoted as saying. "Who rules over us? I mean [who are they] by their ethnic origin?"

"In all structures of power, there are ethnic and religious aliens. Today, it's about time not to fear [them] and treat them the way they treat us."

Spector of the Va'ad said, "I don't think that if Zyuganov should win, he will start with anti-Semitism, but no one could guarantee the Communists won't end with it."

Osovtsov of the Russian Jewish Congress was more pessimistic, saying that the Communists would inevitably move toward the state-sponsored anti-Semitism of the Soviet era.

"In the event of a Communist comeback, Jewish emigration will increase sharply within days," he added.

But even though Zyuganov's potential policies are unclear, his party platform contains a reference to stopping the "outflow of intellectuals" from Russia — an apparent reference to the more than 600,000 Jews who have left the former Soviet Union since 1989.

The chief rabbi of Russia, Adolph Shayevich, said that if Zyuganov wins the presidential election, no religious denomination would receive any support from the state.

He added that he felt no optimism whatever for the future of the Russian Jewish community under Communist rule. □

## Priebke provides statement on massacre to Rome tribunal

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME (JTA) — Former SS Capt. Erich Priebke, on trial for his role in the 1944 massacre of 335 Italian civilians, has admitted to a Rome military court that he took part in the killings, but said he faced death if he refused orders.

Priebke, 82, made the declaration in a four-page, handwritten statement he submitted Monday to the court, where he has been on trial since May 8.

He took the stand Monday for two minutes to say that he preferred to submit the written statement rather than testify in open court.

Priebke feared that if he testified, he would be booed and heckled by spectators, his lawyer said.

Seventy-five Jews were among the victims of the Ardeatine Caves massacre, considered Italy's worst World War II atrocity.

Priebke has admitted in the past to drawing up a list of victims, checking it off at the caves and personally shooting two people.

In the statement, whose text was released Monday evening, Priebke said he and other officers had protested the March 24 massacre, which was ordered in reprisal for a partisan attack the day before in which 33 German soldiers were killed.

"We all protested, but [SS Cmdr. Herbert] Kappler

said that the order came directly from Hitler and we had to carry it out. He said anyone who refused would be sent before an SS court martial," Priebke wrote.

Priebke also wrote, "I declare that I never approved that which was done to the Jews and I have always thanked God that I never had to do anything against them."

He also denied that he took part in beatings and interrogations at Gestapo headquarters in Rome.

The Italian news agency ANSA said Monday that a recently declassified document drafted in 1945 by the American wartime Office of Strategic Services named Priebke along with six other people as having "tortured and killed" partisans and political prisoners at Rome's Gestapo headquarters.

Recent revelations made by Priebke have led Italian judges to seek another former SS officer for his alleged role in the Ardeatine Caves massacre.

Investigators want to question former SS Maj. Karl Hass, who they believe also took part in the mass murder.

After Priebke gave an interview to an Italian magazine last month, it was discovered that Hass, now in his 80s, has been living near Milan.

In the interview last month, Priebke said he had met with Hass in Rome in 1978.

"Despite an arrest warrant issued in 1946, he never left Italy," Priebke was quoted as saying. □

## Israelis kill 2 Palestinians

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli border police shot and killed a Palestinian and moderately wounded his brother Thursday morning in eastern Jerusalem.

The two men and a third Arab had gone outside a building after they heard noises and thought someone was trying to break into their car.

When they came outside, the border police unit saw them and, suspecting the three were armed, opened fire.

It was later found that none of the three had weapons.

Israel Television reported that the police unit was in the area as part of its efforts to apprehend suspected Hamas terrorists.

The incident was being investigated by the Justice Ministry.

Meanwhile, in Gaza, Israeli soldiers shot and killed a Palestinian they believed was running toward their outpost with an explosive device. They opened fire after the Palestinian ignored their orders to stop.

Palestinian police said the youth was mentally ill and was not carrying any explosive or weapon. □

## Israel eases West Bank closure

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel further eased the 14-week closure of the territories this week, doubling the number of Palestinians allowed to work in Israel to about 22,000.

The army announced Wednesday that married Palestinians age 35 and older would be allowed to apply for permits to work in Israel.

Some 10,000 Palestinians in the West Bank and 10,000 in the Gaza Strip are eligible. The army also said 350 merchants would be allowed to receive entry permits.

The closure was imposed at the end of February in response to suicide bombings by Islamic militants.

Israel had slightly eased the closure after the May 29 elections, allowing 10,000 workers into Israel. □

## NEWS ANALYSIS

**Stunned by Netanyahu victory,  
Arabs mixed about the future**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 6 (JTA) — Ali Jiddah spoke slowly in perfect Hebrew, careful that every word of his message would be accurately recorded.

"If we do not get what we want, there will be another intifada," he said, standing at the Jaffa Gate, just inside the walls of Jerusalem's Old City.

"But not the kind of '87," he said, referring to the Palestinian uprising that rocked the region. "It will be a different sort of intifada, much more violent, much more painful. Many mothers will cry."

Jiddah radiated the confidence of a terrorist who had nothing to lose. A member of the Damascus-based Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine who had served years in Israeli prisons for his terrorist activities, Jiddah appeared ready once again for combat.

Last week's election of Benjamin Netanyahu as Israel's next prime minister provided Jiddah and others who had consistently rejected the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords with ample reason to continue believing that those accords were a sham.

"Most of the Israelis do not want peace," he said, ignoring the fact that most Israelis who voted for Likud were not against peace, but against the way outgoing Prime Minister Shimon Peres was handling peace negotiations.

While leaders of the Palestinian Authority took a more diplomatic tone, Jiddah's comments reflected the sour mood found among many Palestinians in the wake of Israel's elections.

There seemed a general sense that the political gains over the past three years would erode with Netanyahu's rise to power.

Those concerns were echoed by some Arab leaders, who expressed fear that a Likud government would not continue to vigorously pursue peace in the region.

Like Jiddah, the Hamas fundamentalist movement took a strident and threatening tone. "We told you so," said a pamphlet distributed by Hamas.

"After weeks of expectations, the Zionists have chosen their new leaders and have proven how wrong were those who have gambled on possible changes in the Zionist society toward peace and coexistence," said the pamphlet, aimed as much at Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat as the Israelis.

**'Merely an election facade'**

Mahmoud Zahar, a Hamas leader in the Gaza Strip, warned that if Netanyahu halts the peace process, "this will end in a new wave of violence not only by Hamas, but by every Palestinian, including the people who support the peace process."

But some Palestinians remained optimistic.

"Bibi will speak to Arafat," Khalil Bassa, 22, a vendor at a small souvenir shop near Gethsemane in eastern Jerusalem, said, using Netanyahu's nickname. "All his anti-Arab comments were merely an election facade."

"They will talk, because America will tell them to. America is Israel's mother, Israel's father — and grandmother, too."

But the Arabic media remained skeptical, citing the huge issues at stake: the final-status negotiations, which will address the future of Jerusalem, Palestinian refugees, final borders and Jewish settlements; the fate of Orient House, the Palestinian headquarters in eastern Jerusalem that the Likud has vowed to shut down; and the issue of most immediate concern, the redeployment of Israeli forces in Hebron.

In the wider Arab world, there were clear concerns about the peace process.

The most optimistic comments came from King Hussein of Jordan, who told the Israeli daily Ma'ariv, "The peace process has its own dynamics and it is irreversible."

But after their meeting Monday in Cairo, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Syrian President Hafez Assad were pessimistic. "Initially, we have no feeling that events are going in a positive direction," Assad said at a joint news conference.

By Wednesday, after meeting with Arafat and Hussein in Aqaba, Jordan, Mubarak had softened his stance, saying he "had a feeling" the Netanyahu government would honor the accords Israel has already reached with the Palestinians.

Political observers believe that Egypt is hoping to use the change of government in Israel, and the potential threat to the peace process, as a tool to rally the Arab world behind Cairo.

Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa, adopting the posture of a spokesman for the entire region, this week reiterated the Egyptian position that without a Palestinian state, there would be no peace in the Middle East.

At the Aqaba meeting, Hussein sought to assuage Palestinian concerns that Jordan would seek to make the Palestinian autonomous areas part of a confederation with the Hashemite Kingdom.

"We won't impose ourselves" on the Palestinians, Hussein said. "They are the ones to decide" their future in the final-status negotiations with Israel.

Arafat, who was reportedly shocked by Netanyahu's victory, initially said he would respect the choice of the Israeli voters. But on Monday, speaking at Oxford University, Arafat demanded that the prime minister-elect stick to the accords.

He specifically called on Netanyahu to abide by the agreement to redeploy its troops in Hebron.

**Political orphan**

During the past few years, Arafat and Peres had become dependent on each other for the peace process to proceed. And now, with Peres' election defeat, Arafat finds himself, at least temporarily, in the position of a political orphan. But last Friday, Netanyahu made an initial effort to reach out to Arafat, if only through intermediaries.

Netanyahu authorized Dore Gold, an analyst at Tel Aviv University's Jaffee Center for Strategic Studies who is serving as an adviser to the prime minister-elect, to contact Arafat's second-in-command, Mahmoud Abbas, also known as Abu-Mazen, and assure the Palestinian Authority that contacts would be opened once the new government was formed.

Danny Rubinstein, a Palestinian affairs analyst, wrote in the Israeli daily Ha'aretz that Netanyahu would have to depend on Arafat as much as Peres did.

If Israel fails to fulfill its commitment to redeploy its forces in Hebron, said Rubinstein, if it closes down Orient House, if it does not release security prisoners, Arafat could counterattack on a number of fronts.

Arafat could stop all anti-terror cooperation with Israel, Rubinstein said, adding that Arafat could also give a green light to the resumption of the intifada and work toward the worsening of relations between Israel and the wider Arab world.

Netanyahu "must be a full partner of Arafat, even if he or his friends do not like it," Rubinstein said.

"Because the alternative is a violent struggle, and perhaps war, which will return full Israeli government in Gaza and the West Bank, which means an end to the peace process."

□

## Premier-elect juggling demands of Arab world, coalition partners

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Prime Minister-elect Benjamin Netanyahu is juggling.

As he reaches out to potential coalition partners to form the next Israeli government, he is also reaching out to the Arab world.

On Thursday, he said he believed he could continue peace negotiations with Syria, without getting stalled over the issue of the Golan Heights.

"I think there are additional ways to advance confidence-building between Syria and Israel and alleviate the tension and existing situation of hostility ahead of full peace and a peace treaty," Netanyahu told reporters in Haifa.

Netanyahu has previously said he believes Israel and Syria could try to pursue sub-agreements on such areas as water and economic arrangements.

The Likud leader, who opposes returning the Golan Heights to Syria, said no one should question his intention to conduct negotiations with Damascus.

"We have already had talks. We started at [the 1991] Madrid peace conference and we made it clear to Assad that we will remain on the Golan Heights."

Syria has called on Israel to resume peace negotiations, which were suspended by the outgoing government following a series of suicide bombings by Islamic militants in February and March.

This weekend, Syrian President Hafez Assad is to host Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah to discuss the future of the peace process in the wake of the Israeli political shake-up.

Officials in Jordan said King Hussein would travel to Washington next week to meet with President Bill Clinton. The officials said the trip was "personal" and had been planned prior to the elections.

Meanwhile, American officials said Netanyahu would travel to Washington at the end of the month.

Aides to the new prime minister denied Israeli media reports that the visit had been set for June 25, pending formation of the new government.

Efforts to form that government continued on Thursday, as members of the Likud's negotiating team met with representatives from the religious parties and the centrist Third Way Party.

Legislation on the religious status quo is shaping up to be one of the toughest issues the Likud will have to tackle.

The religious parties have presented a list of stringent demands — giving the Orthodox establishment more influence over daily life — which the Likud must balance against its other potential coalition partners, which are secular.

The religious parties' request to limit the creation of secular cemeteries, for example, is a sore point for the immigrant-rights party, Yisrael Ba'Aliyah, which supports their construction.

Netanyahu remained tight-lipped about the nature of his government, saying only that he would try to meet the interests of all sectors of the population. □

## French priest to end self-exile after backing Holocaust denier

By Lee Yanowitch

PARIS (JTA) — A Roman Catholic priest who left France after an uproar over his public support for an author who questioned the extent of the Holocaust plans to return to live out the rest of his days in France.

Abbe Pierre, who is regularly voted France's most popular figure, sparked controversy in April when he defended his long-time friend Roger Garaudy, whose book, "The Founding Myths of Israeli Politics," cast doubt on whether 6 million Jews died in Nazi death camps.

The 83-year-old bearded cleric, who helped Jews escape Nazi-occupied France during World War II, fled to Italy last month after being expelled from a human rights organization and castigated by friends.

The French Catholic Church told him to keep quiet.

Pierre's spokesman Louis-Alcime Lorin told the daily France Soir that the priest was simply on vacation.

"Abbe Pierre has left all of his belongings in Normandy.

"He will be back in Paris on September 9. He has chosen to live out the rest of his days in his country," Lorin said.

During a three-week stay in a monastery in Padua, Italy, the priest had told journalists he would live out the rest of his life there.

However, he stopped in France on May 30 before traveling on to the Swiss mountain resort of Zermatt for a rest.

Pierre, who has denounced any attempt to "play down the atrocious reality" of the genocide of the Jews, was quoted by the Italian newspaper Corriere della Sera last week as saying that an "international Zionist lobby" was responsible for the row.

"If the French Church intervened to censure me it did so only in response to the chorus of pressure from the media, inspired by an international Zionist lobby. I am convinced of that," he was quoted as saying. □

## Austria enables heirs to benefit from restitution

By Alissa Kaplan

NEW YORK (JTA) — The Austrian Fund for Victims of National Socialism has decided that payments from the fund could be inherited if claimants die before receiving their benefits.

The fund's supervisory committee said an application for the fund must have been filed before the claimant's death in order for the money to be inherited.

"It's very important to get the claim in," Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, said in an interview Monday.

The secretary general of the fund said she expected all the funds to be distributed in three to four years.

The fund was created in June 1995 by the Austrian Parliament as a gesture toward victims of the Nazi regime in connection with the 50th anniversary of the re-establishment of the republic.

Steinberg said the decision about inheriting funds set Austria apart from most other countries involved in World War II restitution for Jews.

As of May 22, 3,280 claimants had received payments of \$7,000 each, for a total payment of about \$23 million.

About 1,205 payments went to recipients in the United States.

The fund has data on 22,000 potential recipients, more than 8,000 of them from the United States.

Applicants can contact their local Austrian Consulate or the Austrian Consulate in New York, Attn: Irith Jawetz, 31 E. 69th St., New York, N.Y. 10021. The phone number is (212) 737-6400.

Applications also can be sent to: Dr. Heinz Fischer, President of the Austrian Nationalrat, Parliament, A-1017, Vienna, Austria. □