



NEWS AT A GLANCE

- **The Senate passed legislation making it easier for federal authorities to investigate and prosecute attacks against churches and other houses of worship.** Jewish groups hailed the measure as they continued efforts to raise funds to rebuild churches targeted by arsonists.
- **The Clinton administration adopted new regulations making federal loans available to small businesses that sell religious products or provide services that encourage religious beliefs and values.** [Page 3]
- **The war against terrorism topped the agenda at the G-7 summit in Lyon, France.** President Clinton called for an international effort to fight terror.
- **Israel's chief rabbis agreed to seek a solution to the controversy about burials for immigrants from the former Soviet Union.** [Page 4]
- **The United Israel Office, including representatives from the United Jewish Appeal, the Council of Jewish Federations and the United Israel Appeal, met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and expressed the desire to work with the new government.** The group also requested that the gains of non-Orthodox religious movements not be set back under the new government. Netanyahu made no commitments on the matter, sources present said.
- **The Jewish Agency for Israel's Board of Governors authorized the agency's chairman and treasurer to take the steps necessary to register as a corporation a new Israeli appeal, which will raise funds in Israel for the Jewish Agency.**
- **Israeli sports took a leap forward as Connecticut College basketball star Doron Sheffer became the first sabra to be drafted by the NBA.** The 24-year-old Ramat HaSharon native was picked in the second round by the Los Angeles Clippers.
- **Jewish settlers in Gaza blocked the road between the Netzarim settlement and the coast, preventing Palestinian vehicles from using the route.**

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD **Purposeful party reflects new face of Hungarian Jewry**

By Ruth E. Gruber

BUDAPEST (JTA) — In the wooded hills of Budapest's Buda district above the Danube, Hungarian professionals mingle at a garden party.

To the outsider, nothing distinguishes the relaxed, happy crowd from any other.

But the party has a purpose. In addition to simply enjoying their sunny Sunday afternoon, the partygoers were supporting the \$4.5 million campus of the city's Lauder Javne Jewish Community School, the first new Jewish school to be built in this part of Europe since the Holocaust.

The party took place on the sprawling grounds of the school, which includes a 12,000-book library and a synagogue.

The new campus, financed by the N.Y.-based Ronald S. Lauder Foundation on a site donated by the Budapest municipality, opened in February.

Guests at the party included the parents and friends of the 600 students — from kindergartners to high-schoolers — who attend classes here.

In a country where self-help and fund raising were unknown concepts under communism, the guests seemed content to pay for drinks and snacks as their contribution to their children's school activities and Jewish education.

"These were happy Jews," said one man who attended the party. "Well off, integrated in society. Not by any means sick, elderly Holocaust survivors."

The guests, the school, the party and even the fund raising represent an emerging new face of Hungarian Jewry.

What has surfaced is a confident Jewish identification and community involvement that did not exist under communism and that is still very much in the process of evolution half a dozen years after communism's collapse.

"For most of the past 50 years in Hungary, there was just one, strong, centralized Jewish organization," Israel Sela, the director of the Hungarian office of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, said in an interview.

Sela was referring to the official Jewish religious community or "kehillah," which was virtually the only Jewish organization permitted to operate during the Communist years and most of whose members were elderly.

"Today, there are dozens of Jewish groups of all kinds," Sela said. "Things are beginning to become normal. What is needed now, though, is outreach in order to involve the unaffiliated, develop new leaders and prepare for the future."

From Zionist groups to club for gay Jews

Numbers alone make Hungary's Jewish future look brighter than in other former Communist countries.

There are about 3,500 Jews in the Czech Republic and some 5,000 in Bulgaria, for example.

But between 80,000 and 130,000 Jews live in Hungary, making it the third largest Jewish population in Europe and the largest in Eastern and Central Europe, outside the former Soviet Union.

Since the fall of communism, as in other post-Communist states, there has been a mushrooming in Jewish life here.

The Lauder Javne school is one of three Jewish schools in Budapest — the three have a total of about 1,200 students — and there has been a proliferation of non-religious Jewish organizations ranging from Zionist youth groups to a club for gay Jews.

Hundreds of Jewish children attend the JDC-Lauder Foundation Jewish summer camp at Szarvas, in southern Hungary, and Jewish communities have organized themselves in several provincial towns where no formal community existed after World War II.

But the numbers are somewhat misleading, despite this explosive Jewish revival. The majority of Hungary's Jews still have no affiliation with any sort of Jewish organization or activity.

Only about 6,000 Jews, most of them elderly, officially belong to the

Jewish religious community. Most new Jewish clubs and organizations have only a few dozen or, sometimes, a few hundred members.

And only about 20,000 Jews at most are estimated to have even tenuous contact with any sort of Jewish institution.

Chabad, for instance, which is believed to have the largest Jewish mailing list in Hungary, sends its monthly newsletter to 14,000 people.

Jews active in community work warn that the momentum of revival may be endangered unless new and younger leaders are prepared to get involved.

Most Jews in Hungary today "repudiate the idea of their being designated as Jews," Gabor Szanto, editor of the Jewish magazine *Szombat*, recently wrote. The magazine, which is published 10 times a year, has a circulation of 2,000.

"Highly qualified, intellectual Jews keep their distance from the official Jewish community," he said. "None of the existing organizations has managed to attract in significant numbers members of the 18 to 50 age group in the past seven years of democracy."

Against this background, organizations such as the JDC and institutions such as the Lauder Javne school have made lay community development and outreach a new priority.

The teaching of religious traditions continues to be important, but many new outreach initiatives are aimed at instilling Jewish awareness and identity — as well as creating a sense of community involvement and responsibility.

The JDC, which for years has been the mainstay of elderly Holocaust survivors in Hungary with its extensive social welfare programs, has begun putting more emphasis on leadership training and outreach involving younger Jews.

"We are trying to help community members eventually take over the responsibility for their own continuity," Sela said. "We are only at the beginning. You have to educate and motivate people."

Sela added, "It is a process. It doesn't happen in one day."

'Synagogues are quite empty'

JDC-sponsored activities now range from "how to" seminars on fund raising to Jewish teacher and social worker training to organizations such as a Jewish business club, which helps scores of adult professionals network with economists, officials and even foreign commercial attaches.

The Balint Jewish Community Center, which opened in downtown Budapest in 1994 with the support of the JDC, the Doron Foundation, ORT and Britain's World Jewish Relief, has taken over a key role in reaching out to the non-affiliated community and becoming a focal point of Jewish life outside the synagogue.

"The synagogues are quite empty, but a lot of people who never go to synagogue still hold a Jewish identity inside themselves and want to learn," said 16-year-old Flora, who comes from an assimilated family but attended Jewish summer camp and is active in a Zionist youth group that has about 100 members.

"I haven't become religious, but I am interested, and I think that if you are Jewish you should know what it is about," she said.

The Balint Center, the first full-service JCC to open in Eastern Europe since the Holocaust, hosts a wide variety of programs, classes and events and has a mailing list of more than 5,000.

"The Balint Center is a Jewish house — a Jewish home — that doesn't identify with any single Jewish

organization or movement," said one staff member. "Everyone is welcome here."

The aim is to attract religious and unaffiliated Jews alike to a Jewish environment with no strings attached. Balint center events, for example, are listed in mainstream Budapest event guides.

"I have friends who went to the Balint center because there was a concert on," said 17-year-old Anna. "Then they found out that it was a Jewish center, and they saw the other programs, and started going, first to check them out, then just to go."

The Lauder school, scene of the summer garden party, aims to create a Jewish community around the school and its Jewish activities, encouraging parents to become involved. Parents are welcome to stay on campus for coffee and conversation after dropping their children off in the morning.

And even though the school does not have a strictly religious orientation, *Kabalat Shabbat* services are held in the school's own synagogue each Friday as a further means of creating a communal Jewish spirit among students and their families. □

Anti-Semitic overtones emerge at ceremony for Polish workers

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME (JTA) — Anti-Semitic overtones emerged at a ceremony this week in Warsaw commemorating the 20th anniversary of worker protests in 1976 that sowed the seeds for the Solidarity trade union movement four years later.

The Tuesday ceremony, which included a Mass celebrated by Polish Cardinal Jozef Glemp, was held at the Ursus tractor factory to recall the June 25, 1976, strikes and violent clashes between workers and police at Ursus and in the city of Radom.

At least four people were killed and scores were injured in the clashes, which protested work conditions and price hikes. Many workers were jailed.

The 1976 protests led to the formation of KOR, the Committee for the Defense of Workers' Rights, which developed into Communist Poland's most important dissident group.

KOR initially was made up mainly of intellectuals, some of whom were of Jewish origin, including Adam Michnik. KOR members worked closely with Lech Walesa and other worker leaders to help found the Solidarity movement in 1980.

Stanislaw Krajewski, the American Jewish Committee consultant in Warsaw, said in a telephone interview that only a few former KOR members were invited to Tuesday's ceremony. Those who were invited, he said, are today part of the political right wing.

During the ceremony, Zygmunt Wrzodak, the current head of the Solidarity Union chapter at Ursus and who is known for his extreme right, anti-Semitic views, used anti-Semitic invective to criticize liberal KOR intellectuals and their activities in the 1970s.

"Frustrated atheists" used the Ursus and Radom events for "their own non-Polish goals," he said.

"[Jacek] Kuron, Michnik and comrades fixed on their hatred of Poland, played cynically on our misfortunes," he said, adding, "They wanted to buy into our Polish Catholic worker circles in order to get power ... together with their ideological brethren, the Communists."

Krajewski said, "Wrzodak's words have a very clear anti-Semitic meaning, recognizable to everyone in Poland. In KOR there were many assimilated Jews. They all worked closely with others, and their views, actions, risks, prison terms never differed." □

New SBA regulations allow loans for religious businesses*By Daniel Kurtzman*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The Clinton administration has adopted new regulations making federal loans available to small businesses that sell religious products or provide services that encourage religious beliefs and values.

Previous regulations prohibited the U.S. Small Business Administration from guaranteeing loans to any businesses promoting religious objectives or engaged in the expression or distribution of any religious ideas, opinions and values.

Although legal experts say such loans can probably pass constitutional muster, some Jewish groups expressed concern about potential implications for the separation of church and state.

Marc Stern, co-director of the legal department of the American Jewish Congress, said that "every time there's a move" toward government subsidization of religion, "there's an erosion of the notion of separation."

He said, however, that in this particular case, the courts would probably find that "the government's primary purpose was encouraging small business, not religion."

Others saw the move as a potential benefit for Jewish business owners. Abba Cohen, director and counsel of Agudath Israel's Washington Office, said the regulations are "business-oriented" and are "far removed from the notion of endorsing religion or propagating religious views." He added, "I think it's a positive development. It brings greater acceptability to the notion of religion not only in our public life but in our everyday life."

The new guidelines reflect President Clinton's concerns about the increased "secularization" of society and continue the administration's efforts to promote religious freedom, said Philip Lader, SBA's administrator.

In November 1993, Clinton signed the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which makes it harder for government to infringe upon the free exercise of religion.

Lader said the SBA's new regulations were also crafted to reduce the burden of regulations on small U.S. businesses and to expand their access to capital. Under the new policy, businesses would only be disqualified from obtaining a loan if they were "principally" engaged in promoting or indoctrinating religion or religious beliefs. Businesses already seeking loans under the new guidelines include religious bookstores, a religious software developer and a radio station featuring religious programming.

"If they are selling religious books, that does not make them ineligible" for an SBA loan, said Ronald Matzner, SBA's associate deputy general counsel. "But if they are engaged in teaching or counseling or indoctrinating religion, if they were having religion classes at night in the back room, that is something that our offices would have to take a look at on a case by case basis."

The new regulations could assist Jews looking to go into a small business. Matzner said, for example, that his wife once flirted with opening up a shop to sell tallitot, or Jewish prayer shawls. Under the SBA's old guidelines, Matzner said, she would have been ineligible for a loan, even though she had no intention to "propagate religion or indoctrinate anyone." □

German psychologist offers payment to Czech survivors*By Kathleen Knox*

PRAGUE (JTA) — A German psychologist has met with Jewish community representatives in a one-man mission to offer some compensation to Czech victims of Nazism.

Thomas Thun offered to pay what he termed a "symbolic pension" of about \$70 a month to a Czech Holocaust survivor.

The offer came during meetings with members of the Federation of Jewish Communities and the Terezin Initiative, which represents victims of the Holocaust.

The federation's executive director, Tomas Kraus, said Thun's gesture was "welcome and appreciated," but he insisted that compensation come from the German government, not private individuals.

The donation will probably go toward a Holocaust and World War II memorial fund instead, Kraus said.

The governments in Bonn and Prague are now working on a Czech-German declaration that, among other issues, should resolve the question of compensation for Holocaust victims.

Kraus said some 1,500 survivors of the Holocaust live in the Czech Republic.

Thun, whose father's family was expelled from Czechoslovakia in 1946, said he made his gesture after hearing a "rough exchange" on the radio between the Czech ambassador to Germany and a Sudeten German expelled from Czechoslovakia after World War II, and after watching a television program in which a Catholic priest urged Czechs and Germans to exchange apologies and "to start taking action."

Thun said many Germans watching his story on German television will be surprised to learn that Czech victims of the Holocaust — unlike their neighbors in Poland — are still waiting to be compensated by the German government. "Quite a lot of Germans still don't know that," said Thun, who was also scheduled to meet with President Vaclav Havel this week. "Maybe now more people will offer" to give similar donations, he added. □

Departing air force chief warns of Arab missile power*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's outgoing air force commander has said the chances for war breaking out in the near future are small — but Israel's existence would be in danger if one did.

At a news conference last week marking the end of his assignment, Herzl Bodinger said most of Israel's Arab neighbors possessed technologically advanced weapons, which significantly heightened the risks for Israel in the event of a war. "Most of the Arab countries which neighbor Israel possess long-range missiles," he said June 20. "Such missiles can hit any spot in Israel."

Bodinger also reflected on Operation Grapes of Wrath, Israel's military action against Hezbollah in April, which was launched after the fundamentalist movement sent several series of Katyusha rockets into northern Israel.

Bodinger said the operation had done little to change the situation in southern Lebanon. Hezbollah continued to operate from the same places it had before the military action, he added. While the militant Shi'ite group was no longer rocketing communities in northern Israel, Bodinger said, it remained to be seen whether the U.S.-brokered cease-fire that brought an end to attacks on civilian targets by both sides would hold.

During Operation Grapes of Wrath, Israeli air force jets made precision strikes against Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon as well as in Beirut. Negotiation efforts to reach a truce were spurred by the Israeli shelling of a U.N. base in Kfar Kana, close to Hezbollah launching sites. At least 91 Lebanese civilians were killed at the base.

The group set up to monitor the cease-fire — with representatives from Israel, Lebanon, Syria, France and the United States — met last week in Washington. □

Israel seeks world pressure on states backing terrorists*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called this week for international pressure on states that sponsor terrorist organizations.

"We must continue the battle against terrorism, and the countries behind them," Netanyahu said Thursday.

"Anyone who wanted to be a partner to peace, and considers himself part of it, must take part in the struggle against terrorists, and must put political and economic pressure on those countries which give them shelter and support." Condemnation of terror, he said, "is not only in words, but in deeds."

Netanyahu's remarks at the graduation ceremony for a pilots' course appeared to be directed at Syria. He implied that the United States and other countries should exert pressure on Damascus to end its support of terrorism.

He spoke a day after a terrorist attack in Saudi Arabia left at least 19 Americans dead, and an ambush in the Jordan Valley took the lives of three Israeli soldiers.

A group calling itself the "Fatah-Intifada," believed to be based in Syria, claimed responsibility for the attack on the Israelis, Israel Radio reported. Other reports said the attack was carried out by members of the Palestine National Liberation Organization, also based in Damascus.

After the attack, Netanyahu accused Syria of becoming a base for Middle East terror — remarks that drew sharp reaction from Damascus. Official press Thursday accused Netanyahu of "emulating Hitler" and supporting terror. The daily Tishreen wrote that Netanyahu was "violating the basis of peace" by continuing a policy of Jewish settlements, ignoring American principles of land-for-peace and continuing the occupation of Arab land.

Meanwhile, a senior Palestinian official, Farouk Kaddoumi, on Thursday called on the United States to pressure Israel to accept the land-for-peace principle.

Kaddoumi, who is regarded as Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat's foreign minister, has long opposed the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords and, unlike other senior Palestine Liberation Organization officials, has not come to the self-rule areas.

Kaddoumi said statements by American mediators have proved that they are not impartial in the negotiations.

Speaking in Cairo this week, U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher said the land-for-peace principle might have to undergo some "adjustments."

Meanwhile, the investigation was continuing into Wednesday's ambush of an Israeli patrol, near the Jordan River north of Jericho, in which three Israeli soldiers were killed and two others wounded.

The head of central command, Maj. Gen. Uzi Dayan, met with Jordanian officers as the two sides continued to coordinate search efforts.

Dayan said initial findings indicated that the terrorists had infiltrated from Jordan and laid their ambush.

The inquiry was also looking into questions regarding the Israeli soldiers' response to the ambush. □

Rabbis agree to resolve issue of immigrant burials*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's chief rabbis agreed this week to seek a solution to the controversy about burials for immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

Many of the immigrants are not considered Jewish by the Orthodox rabbinate and burial societies.

The chief rabbis promised to set up a committee to look into the matter in depth after meeting Wednesday with

members of Yisrael Ba'Aliyah, the new immigrants' rights party. The party, headed by former Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky, won seven seats in the Knesset and is a partner in the Likud-led government.

While burial is perhaps the most sensitive issue for the immigrants, Yisrael Ba'Aliyah members raised other concerns with the chief rabbis. The party wants an improvement in the level of religious services offered to immigrants, including sending representatives from Israel's rabbinic courts to the former Soviet Union.

In addition, Yisrael Ba'Aliyah asked the rabbis to ensure that Russian-speaking aides are accessible in the offices of local rabbis and religious councils and that a national network of courses in Jewish studies be established for immigrants. □

E.U. leaders urge resumption of Arab-Israeli peace process*By Joseph Kopel*

FLORENCE (JTA) — The European Union has called on Israel and its Arab neighbors to resume peace negotiations on a variety of issues, including the future of Jerusalem.

The 15-member union met here last weekend — Italy now holds the presidency — in its first meeting since Benjamin Netanyahu was elected Israel's premier.

The meeting also occurred as Arab leaders met in Cairo to discuss strategy in light of Netanyahu's victory.

After the meeting, the European heads of state and government issued a joint statement spelling out what they see as the basis for any agreement in the Middle East.

"The key principles — self determination for the Palestinians, with all that it implies, and land for peace — are essential to the achievement of a just, comprehensive and durable peace," the statement said.

By including the phrase "with all that it implies" in the statement, the Europeans are a small step closer toward advocating a Palestinian state, E.U. sources said.

Peace in the Mideast is an issue "of fundamental interest for the European Union" and the peace process is the "only way" leading to security and peace for Israel, the Palestinians and nearby countries, the statement said.

The E.U. encouraged all parties "to re-engage themselves in the peace process, to respect and implement fully all the agreements already reached and to resume negotiations as soon as possible on the basis of the principles already accepted by all parties under the Madrid and Oslo frameworks," referring to the 1991 peace conference in the Spain and the 1993 Israeli-Palestinian accords.

These principles, the leaders added, "cover all the issues on which the parties have agreed to negotiate, including Jerusalem, noting its importance for the parties and the international community, not least the need to respect the established rights of religious institutions."

In the statement, the union also urged Israel, Syria and Lebanon to open negotiations and called on the Jewish state to lift its closure of the territories.

Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi, who hosted the E.U. summit, said, "We are waiting for the Israeli government to put into practice its policy before taking a stance on the changes in Israel."

Referring to the Arabs and the Israelis, French President Jacques Chirac said, "Rather than questioning each other's motives, every energy should be directed towards pursuing the peace process that has been started."

In addition, the E.U. reaffirmed its condemnation of all acts of terrorism. The union reportedly agreed on a draft convention on extradition designed to help avoid situations in which suspected terrorists wanted in one E.U. country can be set free in another. □