

NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ The president of the Argentine Jewish umbrella group DAIA called on the government to promptly step up efforts to apprehend Nazi officials still at large in Argentina. [Page 3]

■ Likud sources denied that Science Minister Ze'ev "Benny" Begin would resign from the Cabinet when the government held official contacts with the Palestinians. Begin assailed Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu for authorizing a meeting between the premier's adviser, Dore Gold, and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. [Page 4]

■ Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu met this week with members of the two Arab parties in the Knesset, who urged his government to resume negotiations with the Palestinians. The Arab legislators pressed Netanyahu to meet with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

■ Italy promised to pursue the Palestinian convicted of masterminding the 1985 hijacking of the Achille Lauro cruise ship, said a daughter of Leon Klinghoffer, an American Jew who was killed in the attack. Mohammed Abbas still remains at large, though he surfaced in the Gaza Strip in April.

■ Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu plans to raise the issue of captured Israeli airman Ron Arad, who was shot down over Lebanon in 1986, and other missing Israeli servicemen in his talks next week with President Clinton.

■ Labor Party officials said their examination of ballots cast in May's Israeli elections revealed at least 15,000 allegedly fraudulent votes. The Jerusalem District Court is to consider a Labor petition claiming widespread election fraud. [Page 2]

■ Austria's far-right Freedom Party, headed by Jorg Haider, has won more fans since December's general elections, replacing the conservative People's Party as the country's second most popular grouping, according to a new poll. Meanwhile, B'nai B'rith said it launched legal proceedings against Haider, accusing him of reviving Nazism.

NEWS ANALYSIS**Turkey's Islamic premier unlikely to harm Israeli ties**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Turkey's budding alliance with Israel, having survived sharp criticism from the Arab world, is about to face a new challenge — this time from the premier's office in Istanbul.

Necmettin Erbakan, leader of the Islamist Welfare Party and a vocal critic of the Turkish-Israeli partnership, is slated to become the new Turkish prime minister, after reaching a coalition agreement with former Premier Tansu Ciller, leader of the True Path Party.

The announcement last Friday of the agreement appeared to bring to an end nearly seven months of political instability since the Welfare Party won 158 of the 550 seats — more than any other party — in the Turkish Parliament in December's elections.

The new coalition still must pass one more hurdle — a vote of confidence by Parliament. Some True Path members were threatening to oppose the partnership with the pro-Islamic group.

But observers believe that the Islamic leader, having joined with a secularist party that was responsible for the upgrading of ties to the Jewish state, will moderate his views once he is in office.

Maintenance of Turkey's Western orientation, in fact, appears to be safeguarded by the coalition agreement itself.

Erbakan and Ciller are expected to rotate the premiership, with Erbakan taking the post first. The allocation of Cabinet posts leaves Ciller's True Path party in control of the Foreign and Defense ministries.

As foreign minister and deputy premier, Ciller would not allow a deterioration of relations with Israel, Sami Kohen, a senior columnist and editor at the Milliyet newspaper, said in a telephone interview.

Erbakan undoubtedly would try to strengthen relations with the Arab world and even Iran, said Kohen, who added that one should not expect immediate changes in Turkey's foreign policy, however.

Efraim Inbar of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University said in an interview that he was not concerned about Erbakan's rise to power.

He said the army, which is still the major power in Turkey and the driving force behind the special relations with Israel, would watch Erbakan's coalition closely.

Kohen ruled out a possible army attempt to foil the new coalition.

The latest turn in Turkey's domestic politics came barely a week after an Arab summit in Cairo called on Istanbul to reconsider the military pact it signed in February with the Jewish state.

The criticism reflected in particular the deep concerns Syria holds about two militarily powerful neighbors that are viewed in Damascus as enemies.

Only two weeks before the Cairo summit, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Saudi Arabia's Crown Prince Abdullah and Syrian President Hafez Assad, meeting in Damascus, had called on Turkey to re-evaluate its pact with Israel.

But Turkey has shown no sign that it would heed the concerns voiced by Arab leaders.

Turkey shares Israel's view of Damascus

A day after the summit ended, Yasar Yakis, Turkey's ambassador to Egypt, warned Syria that his country might expand its partnership with Israel if Damascus did not stop "exporting terrorism."

Turkey has shared Israel's views of Damascus as an active sponsor of terrorist organizations.

While Israel has charged Damascus with allowing radical Palestinian groups to operate from there and with giving support to the fundamentalist Hezbollah's activities in southern Lebanon, Turkey has charged Syria with providing a safe haven for Kurdish terrorists operating in eastern Turkey.

Syria's support for the Kurds is seen in Turkey as a sort of retaliation for a series of dams Turkey is building on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers to provide hydroelectric power and irrigation. The two rivers are important

water sources for Syria as well as Iraq, and construction of the dams has caused a diversion of much of the water.

Not only do Israel and Turkey share common enemies. They have a common, valuable friend in the United States.

Turkey, with a population of 63 million, regards itself as a European power.

It is a veteran member of NATO, with the second largest army after the United States, and is continuing to seek membership in the European Union.

Its Western orientation made the partnership with Israel only natural.

The military accord between Israel and Turkey was the first such agreement the Jewish state ever reached with an Islamic country. Few of the agreement's details have been revealed, except that it allowed each country to use the other's air space for pilot training, reciprocal ship visits and sending delegations to military academies. Joint army and naval exercises were envisaged.

Still, the very agreement between these two major non-Arab powers in the Middle East amounts to a major strategic development in the region and a significant event in the evolution of Turkish-Israeli relations.

Although Turkey was the first Muslim country to establish diplomatic relations with Israel back in 1949, it was only after the 1993 Israeli-Palestinian accords that Turkey sent its first ambassador to Israel.

David Granit, who was Israel's ambassador to Turkey from 1993 to 1995, recalled in a recent symposium at Bar-Ilan University in Ramat-Gan how the former foreign minister of Turkey postponed his visit to Israel three times. He came in November 1993, two months after Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization signed the Declaration of Principles, which has provided the framework for their peace talks.

The flow of Turkish visitors to Israel has continued since, with Ciller herself coming last October.

The Arab-Israel peace process gave Turkey the green light to formalize its relationship with Israel. With the signing of the military pact, Turkey has lost all inhibitions about deepening ties with the Jewish state.

In addition to their strategic ties, the two countries have growing economic relations.

Israeli tourism to Turkey has increased more than seven times in the past four years, from 50,000 in 1992 to 380,000 last year.

Trade between the two countries last year reached a record of \$450 million.

The two countries hope that a free trade agreement will boost their bilateral trade to \$1 billion a year.

But in one area, Israel's hopes have so far been dashed. Israel wanted to sign a long-term agreement — of some 20 to 30 years — on buying water from Turkey. The Turks refused, saying that even though their water resources were abundant for now, they would need it for their own purposes in the future.

Meanwhile, the 25,000-strong Jewish community in Turkey is not worried, said veteran Turkish journalist Kohen. The Jews, like the rest of the Turkish population, share the "wait and see" approach.

"Remember," said Kohen, "this is a coalition government, not an all-out Welfare government." □

Labor Party officials examine election ballots to prove fraud

by Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Labor Party officials said this week that they were finding more discrepancies in ballots cast in May's Israeli elections.

Labor Party officials were continuing to

cross-check ballot counts with voter rosters. The counting was part of a petition that the Labor Party brought before the Jerusalem District Court claiming widespread election fraud as well as challenging the outcome of the national elections.

Working amid heavy police guard in party offices in Holon, Labor Party members for the past two weeks have been comparing voter rosters with the actual number of votes cast in polling places.

With 1,600 ballot boxes counted, about 20 percent of the total, 15,000 discrepancies have been found. In other words, more ballots were counted by the Central Election Committee per ballot box than the number of eligible voters in certain areas.

That figure is half the total number of votes by which Benjamin Netanyahu defeated Shimon Peres in the election for prime minister.

Among the boxes checked were those from fervently Orthodox districts in Jerusalem and in Bnei Brak, where Labor officials suspected instances of stuffing ballots.

One poll observer from the right-wing Moledet Party told the Israeli newspaper Yediot Achronot that at the station where he was working during the elections, "rumors started spreading that Peres was winning, and the word went out to start stuffing the ballot boxes with slips" for Netanyahu.

"I don't know anyone who hesitated," the poll observer added.

Labor Knesset member Raanan Cohen said the ballot counting could only compare the number of eligible voters with the number of ballots cast per polling station.

"It's impossible to see for whom the [extra] votes were cast," he reportedly said.

Cohen added, however, that if the counting determined that 60,000 votes were stuffed, it would be reason to call for new elections for both prime minister and the Knesset.

Moledet Knesset member Rehavam Ze'evi added his support Sunday to the Labor Party's election fraud petition.

But it was rejected because he had submitted the petition after the deadline. □

Repeal of election law proposed

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Three lawmakers have asked the Knesset to revoke the law for the direct election of the prime minister.

Labor Knesset members Moshe Shahal and Yossi Beilin and Likud Knesset member Uzi Landau last week submitted bills.

The three parliamentarians said the law gives smaller political parties exaggerated power in the Knesset.

In the May elections, Israelis directly voted for prime minister for the first time, casting separate ballots for political parties in the Knesset race.

As a result, smaller parties were able to increase their representation in the Parliament, while both the Labor and Likud parties saw their representation drop significantly.

The bills propose that the head of the party that wins the most votes automatically be chosen prime minister.

Landau, who is expected to be the head of the key Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, said he consulted Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu before deciding to submit the bill.

All three legislators have in the past opposed the direct election law. □

Argentine Jewish leader urges government to arrest ex-Nazis*By Sergio Kiernan*

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) — The president of the Argentine Jewish umbrella group DAIA has called on the government to step up efforts to identify and arrest Nazi officials still at large in Argentina.

Ruben Beraja said DAIA approached the Argentine government with the idea of creating an institute to hunt Nazis after U.S. journalists in 1994 found former SS Capt. Erich Priebke, now on trial in Italy on war crimes charges, living in the city of Bariloche.

Last year, the Argentine Congress passed a law mandating the creation of an institute to research the presence of Nazi refugees here.

But the law has yet to be implemented.

"The world sees Argentina as a passive country, ready to be a haven for Nazis," Beraja said in an interview.

"We look like a country stirred only by press exposes, a country that would act only when journalists find Nazis like Erich Priebke."

Beraja added that Argentina should investigate the presence of Nazi officials "not only for the sake of those already dead, but to determine if there are still Nazis still at large in our country."

"Our land should not be a refuge for those repudiated by mankind, for those whose crimes are horrid," he said.

After World War II, Argentina became one of the world's principal sanctuaries for Nazi war criminals, including Adolf Eichmann.

Earlier in June, the director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center for Europe and Latin America said up to 17 wanted war criminals might still be alive and at large in Argentina.

In a recent interview with an Argentine newspaper, Director Shimon Samuels said he had surrendered "again and again" a list of Nazi officials living here to "three interior ministers of the Carlos Menem administration."

Argentine officials have taken no action to find and extradite those on the list.

Bormann passport

Beraja also said the creation of the institute was important in the wake of reports that a Uruguayan passport belonging to German Nazi official Martin Bormann surfaced in Bariloche.

The passport, bearing the name of Richard Bauer, widely believed to be an alias used by Bormann, indicated that he might have died in Argentina in 1975.

The reports have kindled interest in the whereabouts of German Nazis living in South America.

In a related development, a Bariloche newspaper published last Friday the story of Maria Elena Keller-Keller, a Chilean woman who says she is Bormann's adopted daughter.

Researchers have said Juan Keller-Keller was one of the names Bormann used in South America.

According to the woman, who is 49 years old, the man who adopted her vanished in 1960.

Researchers here continue to try to make sense of all the information that has appeared as of late.

"We are confused because every lead and allegation has a nugget of truth of some material evidence," one researcher said.

"But we cannot assume that Bormann was everywhere at the same time.

"We are beginning to think that people are confusing other Nazi officials with Bormann. It might very

well be that all these Germans identified as Bormann are other war criminals."

Meanwhile, a former Nazi intelligence agent who denounced the presence of Priebke in Argentina revealed that a "pro-Priebke group" is threatening his life.

In 1994, Reinhardt Koops, who uses the alias Juan Maler, told an ABC television crew that Priebke was alive and living in Bariloche.

"The Americans asked me if I was an SS member," Koops said.

"I answered, 'You want to meet a real SS? Go see Priebke.'"

After ABC aired an interview with Priebke in which he recounted his role in the 1944 Ardeatine Caves massacre outside Rome, Italy asked for his extradition from Argentina.

In late 1995, Priebke was sent to Rome to be tried for his part in the massacre, in which 335 Italian civilians, some 75 of them Jews, were killed.

After the extradition, Koops, 82, kept a low profile.

He hid at his daughter's hotel in Bariloche as well as on a small rural property he owns in the southern part of Chile.

But he said he began to receive threatening letters in German that were signed by "Canaris' people."

Adm. Wilhelm Canaris was the Third Reich's military intelligence director and a participant in the June 1944 conspiracy to kill Hitler.

Koops reportedly was one of the admiral's subordinates.

Koops was called "a gypsy traitor" in the letters, which also threatened to "liquidate" him if "Priebke has to spend the rest of his days in an Italian prison."

The fourth and last letter said Koops would be "thrown to the cold waters of the Azul River" so that he could "swim all the way to Chile."

Koops said he is "scared, but not too much, because I am old and have cancer."

Koops told local journalists that he had met Priebke only after arriving in Bariloche in 1951.

The former intelligence agent also said he had left Germany in 1948 via Austria with a "perfectly legitimate German passport."

"I am not wanted in any country, and I only changed my name from Koops to Maler because Argentina had declared war on Germany and diplomatic relations had not been restored yet," he also said.

According to the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Koops' record is not so clean.

Still raises money

After the war, Koops worked as an aide to Bishop Alois Hudal, who organized the escape of war criminals from Allied-controlled territories to South America, said Sergio Widder, the Wiesenthal Center representative in Argentina.

"Koops was in charge of issuing passports," said Widder, who described Hudal's operation as part of the "ratline," the organization that smuggled hundreds of Nazi officials out of Europe.

And according to a 1994 report by the center, Koops still raises funds for neo-Nazi groups.

In 1992 and 1993, the center successfully had a researcher infiltrate several German neo-Nazi organizations.

Posing as the editor of *The Right Way*, a non-existent Nazi magazine, Israeli researcher Yaron Svoray met with several neo-Nazi organizers in Europe.

They eventually directed him to travel to Bariloche to meet Koops, who, thinking he was talking to a comrade, revealed that during the war he had been active in "cleaning" Albania of Jews and other minorities. □

Australian aid agency sorry about commenting on Israel*By Jeremy Jones*

SYDNEY, Australia (JTA) — Australia's largest overseas aid agency, AUSTCARE, has formally apologized to the Jewish community for issuing a news release during the cross-border fighting between Israel and the fundamentalist Hezbollah group that moved outside its humanitarian agenda.

The AUSTCARE program coordinator recently said that Australian leaders should "use their diplomatic efforts to push for an immediate cease-fire" in southern Lebanon and for "the withdrawal of Israel from the area."

Israel recently made massive retaliatory raids against the Islamic fundamentalist group Hezbollah in southern Lebanon. On April 18, during the cross-border fighting, Israel shelled a U.N. refugee camp, killing at least 91 Lebanese civilians.

Diane Shteinman, head of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, wrote to protest the "prejudiced perspective" of the agency statement, saying that "it indicates either a lack of understanding of the Arab-Israeli conflict or the adoption of a standpoint clearly antagonistic towards only one of the many parties to a complex situation."

AUSTCARE's national director, Eric Ellem, agreed that the statement in question "could be construed as a political statement" and apologized for the "omission" of any "call on the Hezbollah to cease its attacks" on Israel.

He added that "AUSTCARE is appreciative of the support" it receives from the Federation of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies and from the Jewish people.

"I want to assure you and your council that the motivation for the press release and appeal was based on humanitarian reasons and was not intended to be an attack on the Israel government," Ellem said. "I apologize for the misunderstanding."

Major aid agencies affiliated with AUSTCARE include the National Council of Churches and the Federation of Australian Jewish Welfare Societies. AUSTCARE officially represents the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees on a number of matters. □

Begin criticizes Netanyahu for contacting Palestinians*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has clashed with a Cabinet minister who claimed that the new premier was too left-wing.

The incident fueled media speculation that Science Minister Ze'ev "Benny" Begin, a member of the premier's Likud Party, would resign from his post when the government held official contacts with the Palestinians.

Begin's criticism of the premier came after Netanyahu's foreign policy adviser, Dore Gold, met secretly last week with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat.

On Sunday, the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot reported that Begin planned to leave the government as soon as official talks with the Palestinians took place.

But Likud sources this week denied rumors that Begin planned to step down from the Cabinet over the government's contacts. Begin criticized the Gaza Strip meeting between Gold and Arafat, the first meeting between the Palestinian leader and an official representative of the new government. At last Friday's Cabinet meeting, Begin said he was not happy that the ministers had not been consulted before the Arafat meeting was held.

Begin added that the government's guidelines allowed for contact with the Palestinian Authority, but only if the Palestinians meet their commitments under the peace

agreements with Israel. Recently, questions have been raised about whether the Palestinians have combated terrorism in a manner that complies with the accords.

Netanyahu reportedly replied that the dialogue was in accordance with the guidelines and that if Begin had objections, he should have considered them before joining the government. Begin kept silent on the matter Sunday.

Likud officials in the Prime Minister's Office said Begin and Netanyahu had patched things up. □

Stolen Judaica returns to Budapest*By Agnes Bohm*

BUDAPEST (JTA) — The last two pieces of Judaica stolen from the Budapest Jewish Museum in December 1993 have been returned.

The 17th-century seder bowls were recently handed over to the museum's director in the southern Hungarian town of Szeged, near the Romanian border, Gusztav Zoltai, executive director of the Hungarian Jewish community, said in an interview. The two objects were broken into several pieces and need to be repaired, Zoltai added.

The bowls were among more than 200 pieces of Judaica stolen from the museum in December 1993. In the summer of 1994, Hungarian police — with the help of Interpol — found 203 of the stolen religious objects in a small village near the Romanian capital of Bucharest.

Another 31 pieces were recovered in April 1995 in Romania. Those pieces were also returned to Hungary.

Hungarian police said they were seeking the extradition from Germany of one of the suspects, who holds German and Romanian citizenship. But they were doubtful about securing the extradition from Austria of a second suspect who is a citizen in Austria and Romania. The whereabouts of two other suspects are unknown. □

Israel hit by office supply thefts*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A wave of thefts from Israeli warehouses has led wholesale distributors of office supplies to suspect that an organized group is smuggling the goods out of Israel to the Palestinian Authority and Arab states.

In recent weeks, seven warehouses in the center of the country were robbed of an estimated \$1 million worth of goods.

Insurance companies have tried to trace the goods on the Israeli market with no success.

In all cases, only imported products and those with English lettering on them were stolen, leading investigators to believe that they are being smuggled outside Israel. □

Daddy called up for reserve duty*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Cellular phones and fast food chains have become staples on some Israeli army bases. Is day care next?

An army lieutenant reported to reserve duty recently with his uniform, weapon, blankets and diapers.

Unable to get a postponement of his reserve duty, Uri Yankovich, 42, arrived at his base with his 5-year-old twins and 4-year-old son. He had tried to put off the compulsory service by a few days because his wife, a scientist, had to attend a conference.

When the army refused his request, he packed up his kids and brought them with him.

After a bit of flurry and several journalists' inquiries at the Israel Defense Force spokesman's office, Yankovich was sent home. □