



## NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu faced a stormy session of the Likud Central Committee, where party hard-liners spoke out harshly against the premier's meeting with Yasser Arafat. [Page 3]

■ The Anti-Defamation League reached a settlement in a federal civil lawsuit that charged that the veteran Jewish defense agency had illegally spied on a dozen ethnic organizations and their members. [Page 4]

■ The Council of Jewish Federations is set to hold its quarterly meetings next week in Chicago. The sessions are expected to focus on a proposal for a new partnership between the CJF and the United Jewish Appeal, and on the impact of welfare reform on local federations.

■ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's trip to New York next week is slated to include a visit to the New York City grave of the late Lubavitcher rebbe. He is also scheduled as a featured speaker at the 40th anniversary dinner of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

■ Officials from countries that donate money to the Palestinian Authority gathered at the State Department to discuss ways to speed up contributions to Yasser Arafat's government.

■ Jewish groups hailed the conviction of three Islamic extremists for plotting to blow up 12 American commercial aircraft. Prosecutors said the planned series of attacks was intended, in part, to force the United States to halt its support of Israel.

■ U.S. Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) joined thousands at a ceremony in Budapest marking the reopening of the city's Dohany Street synagogue, the largest in Europe. Lantos, the only Holocaust survivor elected to Congress, became a Bar Mitzvah in the synagogue in 1941.

■ A French court is slated to rule Sept. 18 whether Maurice Papon, 85, a former minister, should stand trial on charges of crimes against humanity.

### ROSH HASHANAH INTERVIEW

## Premier affirms commitment to peace, religious status quo

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to act forcefully to stamp out violence and the threat of violence in Israeli society.

"I will simply not tolerate a climate of lawlessness, a climate of threat," the premier said this week in a pre-Rosh Hashanah interview with representatives of the American Jewish media.

He was referring to the current wave of anonymous threats against Israel's Chief Justice Aharon Barak and other Supreme Court justices.

The court's policy of "judicial activism" is at the center of a major political controversy in Israel and has been the subject of recent vitriolic criticism in fervently Orthodox newspapers.

In the wake of the controversy, some have warned against the potential for violence, comparing the current war of words to the climate that preceded the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in November.

But Netanyahu said it would be wrong to characterize Israel as "a violent society."

The divisions within Israel and within Jewry "are not stronger than the forces that unite us," said the prime minister, who is scheduled to come to the United States next week.

Netanyahu said during Monday's wide-ranging interview that contacts with the Palestinians were continuing and should lead to a meeting "this week or next" of the Joint Israeli-Palestinian Steering Committee, which oversees implementation of the self-rule accords.

The Israeli premier spoke to the Jewish journalists two days before he met at the Erez Crossing with Yasser Arafat for his first face-to-face encounter with the Palestinian leader since Netanyahu assumed office in June.

Wednesday's talks took place after top aides to Netanyahu and Arafat conducted marathon meetings earlier this week to reach understandings that would allow the two leaders to meet.

While the meeting did not result in specific agreements for moving the peace process forward, its primary significance lay in the fact that it took place.

When he was leader of the Likud opposition, Netanyahu frequently criticized his Labor predecessors for meeting with Arafat. And since his election in May, the prime minister has said he would meet with Arafat only if Israel's security depended on it.

Indeed, expectations earlier in the week that such a meeting was imminent gave rise to criticism of the prime minister from hard-liners inside his own Likud Party — among them former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir. Those criticisms sharply intensified after the meeting.

### 'We meant what we said'

In his meeting with the journalists, Netanyahu sought to deflect the criticism from his own party.

He reiterated that his election platform recognizes the Israeli-Palestinian accords, subject to considerations of security and reciprocity. That platform, he said, genuinely reflected his intentions during his election campaign and remained his policy now that he had won office.

"We meant what we said," Netanyahu said. "The Palestinians — and some of the Jews — have got to understand that."

When peace negotiations with the Palestinians resume, Netanyahu said, both sides will come to the table with lists of the other's alleged violations of the existing agreements.

The Israeli list, he said, will include concerns about Palestinian violations of Israeli sovereignty in Jerusalem; the Palestinians' failure, in the government's view, to abrogate fully the Palestine National Covenant and replace it with another document; and violations involving inflammatory rhetoric, such as Arafat's exhortations at the end of last week to Palestinians to hold a demonstrative mass prayer at the Al-Aksa Mosque in Jerusalem.

Netanyahu pointed out that Arafat's call had remained largely unanswered; only the regular total of some 20,000 worshipers showed up for

the Friday prayers. Nevertheless, for Arafat to have issued the call represented a violation of the self-rule accords, Netanyahu said.

On the controversial issue of Hebron, the premier said he proposed to carry out the redeployment agreement that was concluded between the Palestinians and Israel, with "necessary modifications."

Netanyahu's decision on Hebron, which is the last major Palestinian city still under Israeli control, is widely seen as an indication of his commitment to carry out the accords with the Palestinians.

In discussing Hebron on Monday, Netanyahu pointed out that the previous Labor government had failed to carry out the redeployment in Hebron on schedule — for security reasons.

An estimated 450 Jews — and some 100,000 Palestinians — live in the Hebron area.

Israel's interests in Hebron are twofold, the premier said: to ensure the "safety and well being" of the Jewish community there, and to ensure "control and access to the holy places."

Given that Hebron was "a junction of two of the most radical communities" of both Jews and Palestinians, he said, it was "in the Palestinian interest as well as in the Israeli interest" that security arrangements be put in place that would avert a violent conflagration.

Turning to issues of the "permanent-status" talks with the Palestinians, Netanyahu said he felt that there was "a much wider consensus in Israel" regarding the shape of a final settlement than was often thought.

Israelis who say they favor Palestinian independence nevertheless insist that a future Palestinian state must have no army, no capacity to affect control of Israeli air space, no capacity to drain Israel's water sources and no unfettered right to admit Palestinians who wish to return to the territory.

"Perhaps [the differences] are semantic," Netanyahu added.

"The government has got to get down to the delineation of what we call the autonomous entity."

In considering such an entity, he said, "Should it [include] the largely barren areas of Judea and Samaria?"

Israel, he added, had "security and other" interests in these areas.

On the Syrian track, the prime minister said the United States was "trying to facilitate the resumption" of the stalled peace talks, but so far Syria had "shown no interest." Netanyahu insisted that he would not undertake prior to renewed talks any commitment to withdraw Israeli forces from the Golan — just as Israel was not laying down any preconditions to Syria.

#### **Adherence to religious 'status quo'**

When the talks with Syria resume, Israel is expected to put forward its proposal to negotiate an Israeli withdrawal from southern Lebanon first and Syria, presumably, would put forward its demand that Israel withdraw from all the Golan.

Choosing his words carefully, Netanyahu said that while he was not prepared to say he would consider any withdrawal, "I am prepared to have discussions on the full range of matters."

On the attacks against the Supreme Court and the general exacerbation of religious-secular tensions in Israel, Netanyahu said his position was one of faithful adherence to the unwritten "status quo" accord that regulates state-synagogue relations.

This accord, which has traditionally given the Orthodox establishment control over religious affairs and institutions, has been in existence for 50 years, Netanyahu said, adding that he was not about to change it.

At the same time, changes have been "evolving slowly," he said, noting that "you can have films on Saturday in one part of a town and streets closed elsewhere, depending on demographic shifts."

Any attempt to force a "reordering" of society along new religious-secular lines was bound to lead to "extreme consequences," Netanyahu said, adding that he would oppose such moves.

The prime minister said it was legitimate to argue for or against the extent of the Supreme Court's powers vis-a-vis the Knesset — as long as such arguments were conducted "through legitimate means."

But he said he had given firm orders to Public Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani to act forcefully against threats of violence against the judges.

The prime minister sidestepped a question on whether he would oppose demands to change how Supreme Court justices are appointed.

The religious parties, and some voices on the secular right, have called for a new system in order to ensure a broader spectrum of ideological opinions on the bench. They maintain that the court's current composition is predominantly liberal and secular. □

#### **Hanegbi named acting justice minister**

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has appointed Health Minister Tzachi Hanegbi to serve as acting justice minister.

Hanegbi, who will retain the health portfolio, will assume the Cabinet position given up last month by Ya'acov Ne'eman.

Ne'eman resigned as justice minister after police launched an investigation of him for allegedly obstructing court proceedings relating to the case of Shas Knesset member Aryeh Deri. A former interior minister in the government of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, Deri resigned from his Cabinet post in 1993 after being indicted on charges of bribery, fraud and breach of public trust.

Netanyahu has said Ne'eman could return to head the Justice Ministry if the police investigation ends without an indictment. □

#### **Court keeps Bar Ilan Street open**

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's High Court of Justice has rejected a petition from the acting mayor of Jerusalem to close on the Sabbath and holidays a main thoroughfare that cuts through a religious neighborhood here.

The justices said there was no justification to rescind a recent decision of the court to keep Bar Ilan Street open on the Sabbath until an independent commission submitted its findings regarding the contentious issue.

The street has been the site of a number of recent and often violent confrontations between police and fervently Orthodox Jews, who view the presence of Sabbath traffic in their neighborhood as an affront to religious law. Secular Israelis regard Sabbath closures as an infringement of their rights. □

#### **Bedouins fail to halt planned move**

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's High Court of Justice has rejected a petition from a Bedouin tribe that opposed plans to move it from an encampment near Ma'aleh Adumim to allow development of the community.

The justices ruled this week that the Bedouins did not have any legal claim to the land on the outskirts of Jerusalem and that the alternative site offered them was habitable. □

**Netanyahu faces Likud ire,  
defends meeting with Arafat***By David Landau*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A day after meeting with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu offered sharp advice for critics within his own party.

The premier warned his Likud colleagues Thursday night that those who did not accept his peace policy should not have joined his government and need not stay in it now.

But Netanyahu's strong words to the Likud's Central Committee meeting in Tel Aviv failed to deter such hard-liners as Science Minister Ze'ev "Benny" Begin and Uzi Landau, chairman of the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, from speaking out harshly against the premier's meeting with Arafat.

National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon also delivered a speech critical of government policy, though he did not refer specifically to that controversial meeting.

Political commentators said that while Netanyahu was plainly in trouble with his party's right wing, his position as premier and party leader was not threatened.

Nevertheless, with Begin and Sharon teaming up against him despite their own bitter personal differences, and with the hard-line position plainly enjoying broad support among party activists, these observers predicted that the prime minister would face hard times with his Cabinet.

Begin recounted how Netanyahu had told him categorically, just four hours before the meeting with Arafat, that anyone opposed to the premier's policies had no place in his Cabinet.

"Don't, don't," Begin supporters shouted from the floor, fearing he was about to announce his resignation.

"Let me speak, don't worry," he replied, and then threw down a challenge to the prime minister.

"I wasn't born in government," Begin said.

"I wish to serve, to the best of my conscience, in the interests of our land, our people and the cities of our God."

Political commentators said this meant that Begin would not quit the Cabinet voluntarily, despite Netanyahu's suggestion.

**Premier launches spirited defense**

Begin, in effect, was challenging Netanyahu to fire him if he dared.

The prime minister looked grim as Landau, Sharon and then Begin accused him of acting contrary to party policy, of buckling to Palestinian and overseas pressures, and of leading the coalition to a risky and dangerous future.

Begin said the government's official policy guidelines spoke of negotiating with the Palestinian Authority only on condition that it fulfilled its commitments under prior agreements.

As an example, he cited what he viewed as the Palestinian leadership's failure to amend the Palestinian covenant.

"They have not done so, and in my assessment, they will not do so," Begin said.

The Palestine National Council held a meeting in April during which, it said, it had rescinded the anti-Israel clauses in its covenant.

But exactly what the PNC decided at that session has been a matter of sharp debate ever since.

Earlier in the Likud session, Netanyahu gave a spirited defense of his decision to meet Arafat — and also of his 80 days in power that preceded it.

He said Israel's security situation had been stabilized, that the Palestinian Authority had been forced to close three offices operating in Jerusalem and that the Palestinians had been told "in no uncertain terms" that the Netanyahu government intended to conduct very different policies from its predecessor with regard to settlements and to Israel's rights in the Land of Israel.

Once his government achieved its initial demands from the Palestinian Authority, said Netanyahu, the meeting with Arafat could take place and the commitment to re-embark on formal negotiations could be made.

He added that these same points had been made to Arafat when they met Wednesday.

Meeting the man he had long labeled a terrorist had not been easy, Netanyahu said.

"But leaders are elected not for the easy times, but for the hard times."

The meeting with Arafat accorded entirely with statements he made both before and after Israel's elections, Netanyahu said, adding, "Anyone who comes now with complaints should not have joined the coalition in the first place."

This declaration visibly shook even the prime minister's supporters among the ministers arranged on the dais.

Netanyahu continued with a vigorous restatement of his belief that a government, "like an army," must have one commander who sets out policy.

He reiterated his determined opposition to Palestinian statehood, and said most Israelis — even those who ostensibly accept Palestinian self-determination — agree with this basic position.

His goal in the permanent-status negotiations, he said, was a continued Palestinian autonomy.

Ending on a conciliatory note, Netanyahu pleaded with the Central Committee delegates for their support of his policies.

Sharon, in his speech, denied that the Palestinian offices in Jerusalem had indeed been closed down.

In fact, he said, they had merely been moved to Orient House, the Palestinians de facto headquarters in eastern Jerusalem, where they continued to operate.

Landau, meanwhile, blasted the new electoral system that went into effect this year and that, he said, had led to the Likud's decimation.

He mourned the fact that the party, which 14 years ago had 48 Knesset members, now had only 22.

"We don't have a party with a leader," Landau said, "but rather a man who owns a party." □

**French court to rule on Papon trial**

PARIS (JTA) — A French court is scheduled to rule later this month on whether a former government minister should stand trial on charges of crimes against humanity in connection with the deportation of Jews from France during World War II.

The court began hearings in March to decide whether Maurice Papon, 85, should be tried for his role in deporting 1,690 Jews, 223 of them children, to Nazi concentration camps between 1942 and 1944.

The court will render its decision Sept. 18, according to a news report.

Papon, who is accused of complicity in crimes against humanity as well as kidnapping, arbitrary arrests and persecution, was secretary general of the Bordeaux region's local government during Germany's wartime occupation of France.

Papon, whose wartime activities only became known to the public in 1981, served from 1958 to 1967 as Paris police chief and later as budget minister. □

## ADL to pay \$200,000 to settle suit alleging spying activities

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — The Anti-Defamation League has reached a settlement in a federal civil lawsuit that was initiated by a dozen ethnic organizations and that charged that the veteran Jewish defense agency had illegally spied on them and their members.

The settlement, expected to be approved by a federal judge in Los Angeles, appears to put to rest a series of charges and legal entanglements that have kept ADL officials on edge for the better part of 3 1/2 years.

The class action suit was filed almost three years ago by Arab American, black and American Indian groups and individuals. They alleged that the ADL had hired intelligence agents with close police ties as part of a private national intelligence operation that kept tabs on thousands of Americans.

During the course of the suit, and an earlier probe by the San Francisco district attorney, the ADL consistently denied any improper or illegal actions, a position reiterated in the settlement.

The ADL did agree, however, to pay \$175,000 toward the plaintiffs' legal fees and to establish a \$25,000 community relations fund for programs to "facilitate improved relations between and among Arab American, Jewish, African American and other minority communities in the United States."

ADL National Chairman David Strassler and National Director Abraham Foxman notified their leadership in a letter that they had agreed to the following points in the settlement:

- A court injunction prohibiting the ADL from obtaining any information from a government employee in California, when the ADL knows, or should know, that the employee is precluded by law from giving such information to the ADL.
- The ADL and the plaintiffs will review and remove certain "confidential" files in its California and New York offices. Peter Schey of the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law, representing the plaintiffs, said a mutually agreed upon referee would oversee the process.

### 'Fight against hatred'

Strassler and Foxman noted in their letter that "the settlement is an appropriate way to put an end to what has been a particularly draining litigation."

"We are extremely pleased that a fund will be set up to help foster better relations among those involved in the affair," they said. "This will allow us to do more of the kind of work we already do among members of different groups and will assist us in our fight against hatred, prejudice and bigotry."

Jerry Shapiro, ADL regional director in Los Angeles, expressed relief that the time and energy-consuming legal actions had been concluded and that he and his colleagues could concentrate fully on their "fact-finding and research in any lawful and constitutionally protected manner."

Barbara Bergen, regional ADL director in San Francisco, said that "the lawsuits gave us an opportunity to review our whole fact-finding methodology."

"To the extent that it required fine-tuning, we did that, but there has been no dramatic change," she added.

A spokeswoman in New York said there would be no additional comment from the national ADL office.

Schey expressed his satisfaction with the settlement and said he hoped that his client organizations and the ADL would join to fight skinheads and hate groups. The

settlement "is fair and addresses the important First Amendment issues of freedom of association and freedom of expression that were in the complaint," Schey said.

Don Bustany, spokesman for the Arab-American Anti-Discrimination Committee, the lead party in the suit, said that despite the settlement, the "ADL engaged in illegal spying and hasn't really atoned for it."

Events leading up to the civil suit began in April 1993, when police raided the ADL offices in San Francisco and Los Angeles, seizing hundreds of documents.

San Francisco District Attorney Arlo Smith had accused the ADL of conducting a national "spy network," but dropped all charges a few months later.

At the time, the ADL agreed to establish funds of up to \$75,000 to fight hate crimes and train the staff of Smith's office in ways to educate public school students about the evils of bigotry. □

(Natalie Weinstein of the Jewish Bulletin of Northern California contributed to this story.)

## Publication of 'Elders of Zion' in Croatia spurs special concern

By Alissa Kaplan

NEW YORK (JTA) — The publication in Croatia of "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion," a notorious anti-Semitic forgery, is particularly troubling to some because of that country's role in the Holocaust.

The surfacing of the "Protocols" anywhere is cause for concern, Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, said in a telephone interview here this week. But it is even more so in a country such as Croatia, which has a "history of compliance and complicity" in the deaths of Jews during World War II, he said.

The Croatian translation of the "Protocols" was published a week ago and a quarter of the initial 2,000-copy print run reportedly already has been sold. The tract, which contains a series of 24 lectures by the so-called "Elders" on plans and techniques for subjugating the world and establishing a Jewish state, first appeared in 1905 in Russia and was printed by the government press. Since that time, it has appeared around the world.

Foxman also said he was concerned by the appearance of the forgery in Croatia because of its head of state, nationalist Franjo Tudjman.

Last year, Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal accused Croatia of reviving ideas and icons from the fascist Ustashe regime that governed the country during World War II.

After the German invasion of Yugoslavia in April 1941, Croatia was organized as an independent state allied with Germany. During the next four years, Croats stripped the Jews of all their property and eventually killed most of them in local camps, including the infamous Jasenovac death camp.

Among other things, Tudjman wrote a book in 1989 minimizing the Holocaust. He apologized in 1994 for the work's anti-Semitic sections. Tudjman also was once quoted as saying that Jews are "selfish, crafty, unreliable, miserly and underhanded."

Foxman said he believed that Croatia has "laws which would enable the government" to take action against the appearance of the "Protocols." Foxman added, "It would be a good opportunity for Mr. Tudjman to assert that kind of leadership as soon as possible."

Slavko Goldstein, a prominent member of Croatia's small Jewish community, reportedly said that he could not accuse the publisher of anti-Semitism, but rather of recklessness and failure to explain the tract adequately in the preface.

Non-Jewish Croats also criticized the book's publication. □