



## NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ **Palestinian and Israeli forces clashed in the West Bank in the worst such violence since the Palestinian uprising.** At least three Palestinians were killed and at least 10 Israeli soldiers were wounded. Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai spoke by phone to Yasser Arafat, and both officials pledged to work to contain the violence. [Page 1]

■ **The House of Representatives voted 305-123 to approve immigration legislation that would ban federal programs to legal immigrants and impose new hurdles for people seeking asylum in the United States.** [Page 3]

■ **Switzerland promised to pay approximately \$400,000 to AMCHA, an Israeli organization that provides support services to Holocaust survivors and their families.** [Page 4]

■ **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's "Lebanon First" strategy could have been called "Isolate Syria,"** Robert Pelletreau, U.S. assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs, told a House committee. The apparent critique of the Netanyahu government came during testimony before the House International Relations Committee.

■ **Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan postponed a visit to Israel that was scheduled for next month.** A palace official denied Israeli media reports that Hassan did not want Jordan to be viewed as the only Arab state with close ties to the Netanyahu government.

■ **Turkish Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller told the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations that the West must give Turkey more support or it could fall prey to extremist influences.** [Page 2]

■ **The House of Representatives approved a resolution calling on U.S. federal agencies to release information on war crimes suspects, including Kurt Waldheim, former U.N. secretary-general and former president of Austria.** The non-binding resolution was a blow to supporters who had sought to force the U.S. government to open its archives.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### Escalating violence in West Bank sparks fears of a new intifada

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Fears of a new intifada rocked the region this week amid the fiercest Israeli-Palestinian violence in years.

Wednesday's violence, which left at least three Palestinians dead and at least 10 Israeli soldiers wounded, came against a backdrop of worsening relations between Israel and the Arab world.

The day's clashes in Ramallah, along with other demonstrations throughout the West Bank and in eastern Jerusalem, were prompted by Israel's opening Monday of an ancient tunnel located near the Temple Mount in Jerusalem's Old City.

But the larger issue, in Palestinian eyes, was what they viewed as Israel's attempt to increase its control over Jerusalem.

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat said he could not accept the "Judaization" of eastern Jerusalem.

There is no more contentious issue for the Israelis and the Palestinians than Jerusalem. The great divide was reaffirmed by the divergent reaction to the tunnel opening.

While Arafat maintained that the tunnel offended the sacredness of the Muslim shrines in Jerusalem, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the tunnel enabled Israelis to "touch the bedrock of our heritage."

The sharp divisions over Jerusalem, and the resulting violence, left the future of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process in doubt.

"Make a note of this date," one seasoned Israeli commentator said Wednesday in an interview. "This is the day when the intifada resumed."

In addition to the deaths, as many as 300 Palestinians were wounded, most of them from tear gas and rubber bullets fired by the Israeli troops.

At the height of the incident, Israeli soldiers and Palestinian police were engaged in an intensive firefight.

The violence began as a protest by students. Arafat had called for a nationwide protest strike and for street demonstrations Wednesday against the opening of the tunnel.

Channel Two Television attributed the Ramallah violence to Hamas-affiliated students at nearby Bir Zeit University, saying that they had instigated the clashes between demonstrators and soldiers.

Hamas members who had infiltrated the Palestinian police were the first to open fire on Israel Defense Force troops, according to Channel Two.

IDF Chief of Staff Lt. Gen. Amnon Shahak said initial inquiries indicated that Palestinian police officers had begun the firefight.

### Both sides working to restore a modicum of quiet

Beyond Ramallah, disturbances occurred across the West Bank and eastern Jerusalem. A large Palestinian demonstration went off with relatively little violence in eastern Jerusalem, though the mufti of the city, Ikram a-Sabri, was injured by a flying bottle as Palestinian protesters clashed with policemen near the Damascus Gate.

As the violence abated somewhat, ministers and senior security officials on both sides were working frantically to restore a modicum of quiet and cooperation. Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and Arafat spoke by phone Wednesday night and pledged to work to contain the escalating violence in the West Bank. The Israel Defense Force, meanwhile, was significantly reinforcing its troop deployments in the West Bank.

Arafat's deputy, Mahmoud Abbas, who is also known as Abu-Mazen, urged both sides to restore calm. "We don't want to go back to the intifada," he said.

Netanyahu, in Paris on an official visit, accused the Palestinian Authority of instigating the rioting as a means of pressuring Israel.

"There are clear orders for strikes and for demonstrations," the premier told Israeli reporters in Paris.

Netanyahu denied that the tunnel impinged in any way on the Islamic holy sites located on the Temple Mount, site of the Dome of the Rock and the Al-Aksa Mosque.

Netanyahu said repeatedly that the decision to clear the tunnel of

rubble and open it to visitors was made by the previous Rabin-Peres government.

Arafat, looking grim and shaken as he met with reporters in Gaza, charged the Israeli government with "escalation against our people, who are protesting against the breaking of the agreements."

To protest the tunnel's opening, and the ensuing violence, Arafat canceled a meeting of the Israeli-Palestinian steering committee that had been planned for Thursday.

The opening of the tunnel took place Monday night amid intensive security measures. The tunnel extends along the Western Wall for some 800 yards, opening at its southern end into the large Herodian arched halls abutting the Western Wall plaza. The tunnel is believed to be a largely natural underground crevice, used in Solomonian and Herodian times to bring water to the Temple Mount.

Israel had opened the southern end of the tunnel in 1987. Former Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek said Wednesday that Israel's previous government had postponed opening the northern end out of concern that it would spark a Palestinian uproar. The timing is "simply not smart," he said, echoing the view of Labor opposition figures.

Labor leader Shimon Peres told Channel One Television that "we are on the brink of something very bad." He said his government had hoped that the Palestinians would not object to the opening of the northern end of the tunnel, in return for Israel not objecting to the Palestinians using the area known as "Solomon's Stables" under the Temple Mount for prayers.

But he said he would have consulted with the Palestinian Authority before going ahead with the opening.

The tunnel also sparked criticisms throughout the Arab world. Leaders called for an urgent meeting of the Arab League to consider Israel's action in Jerusalem.

The United States avoided taking sides on the issue. U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns advised the two sides to negotiate on existing differences and not to raise "new issues."

Wednesday's violence came against a background of worsening relations this week between Israel and its Arab neighbors:

- Crown Prince Hassan of Jordan postponed a planned visit to Israel that would have been an important symbol of the peace between the two countries.
- Qatar and other Persian Gulf states recently said that they were deliberately slowing the process of normalization with Israel, pending progress in the peace process with the Palestinians and with Syria.
- Military tensions with Syria in Lebanon and on the Golan, which rose to worrying levels last week, have not yet entirely eased.

Some Israeli analysts said the rage in the Palestinian Authority and the broader Arab world stemmed not only from the tunnel episode, but from a recent message from Netanyahu's office to Arafat.

The message, in effect, said Israel was not planning to go ahead with steps called for in the self-rule accords signed by the Palestinians and the previous government, including the "safe passage" arrangements for Palestinians traveling between Gaza and the West Bank and additional redeployments in the West Bank. □

## Rhetorical exchanges sour Israeli-Egyptian relations

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy has publicly called on Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to rein in officials who have insulted Israeli leaders.

A series of insulting comments by Egyptian

officials and media has soured relations between the two countries in recent days.

Levy spoke after calling in the Egyptian ambassador, Mohammed Basiouny, to protest a series of hostile statements about Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu. Deputy Foreign Minister Adel a-Safti, for example, suggested that Netanyahu needed a psychiatrist to take care of what Safti described as the prime minister's "pathological" concern about Israeli security.

Levy conceded to reporters that some recent remarks on the Israeli side, including ones by Netanyahu, may have been "superfluous," but he said they in no way excused the Egyptian barrage.

Referring to Egypt's threats, voiced by Foreign Minister Amre Moussa, to postpone or cancel the Cairo regional economic conference scheduled for next month, Netanyahu said this was "to cut off his nose to spite his face." It subsequently emerged that noses are particularly sensitive in Egyptian language and culture, and that the premier's remark had not gone over well at all.

One leading Egyptian newspaper retorted that Netanyahu could cut off his own ears as well as nose. □

## Turkish foreign minister appeals to West for help with moderation

By Cynthia Mann

NEW YORK (JTA) — Turkish Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller has reassured Jewish leaders that Turkey would continue to steer a moderate democratic course and honor its agreements with Israel.

But Ciller, the former prime minister and leader of the secular True Path Party, said Turkey might not be able to resist extremist pressures unless the West did more to show its support and help it cope with debt sustained during the Persian Gulf War.

Ciller spoke to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations amid a climate of concern over the recent election of Necmettin Erbakan, leader of the Islamist Welfare Party, as prime minister.

Erbakan had been a vocal critic of the growing cooperation between Turkey and Israel and has recently made overtures to both Iraq and Iran. A \$23 billion gas deal with Iran particularly sparked the ire of Washington.

But Ciller, who is also the deputy premier and supported the deal, told reporters after the closed meeting that Turkey remains steadfast in its adherence to Western and democratic values. And she said that under a power-sharing arrangement with Erbakan, any change in policy requires her signoff.

Meanwhile, she reiterated Turkey's belief that Iran supports the Kurdistan Workers Party, which Turkey fights as a terrorist movement, and said Iran therefore "can't be considered a dependable friend."

She said Turkey also remains worried about "linkage" between Iran and Syria with a corridor through Iraq that could pose a danger to it as well as to Israel. Turkey treats Syria as an active sponsor of terrorists.

Turkey has been seeking to establish a security zone in northern Iraq to prevent attacks by the Kurdish group in southeast Turkey.

Meanwhile, Ciller said the European Union's continuing refusal to admit Turkey sends a dangerous signal to the Turkish people that they are not accepted by the West because they are not Christian.

She also complained that the West has not helped the Turkish economy recover after the \$27 billion debt incurred during the Persian Gulf crisis.

Ciller was scheduled to meet with Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy on Thursday to talk about defense, water and energy projects. □

## Jewish groups push for bill on workplace discrimination

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — When the 105th Congress opens in January, legislation to prevent religious discrimination in the workplace will be high on the Jewish community's agenda.

Legislation aimed at forcing employers to accommodate their employees' religious needs was introduced in both houses this month. But it stood little chance as the 104th Congress prepared to adjourn this week.

The measure's supporters, including just about every leading Jewish group, said they wanted to introduce it now in hopes of making it a campaign issue and giving the legislation a jump-start in the next Congress.

"No American should ever have to choose between their job and the right to practice their religion," said Rep. Jerrold Nadler (D-N.Y.), who sponsored the bill in the House and plans to introduce it again in the next Congress. "The law should strike a reasonable balance between legitimate business considerations and the rights of employees."

Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.), who introduced the Workplace Religious Freedom Act in the Senate, said, "We need to make sure people have the right to worship without the fear of being fired." Current law requires employers to "reasonably accommodate" the needs of religious employees unless it causes the employer "undue hardship." But it does not define undue hardship, according to proponents of the new legislation.

The courts have interpreted undue hardship broadly, resulting in several rulings giving employers a high degree of latitude in deciding whether to accommodate the religious practices of their employees.

The proposed new standard, based on similar language in the federal law protecting the handicapped against job discrimination, would require employers to prove a "significant difficulty or expense" if they decided not to accommodate a worker's religious needs.

### 'Possible to adjust work hours'

"In many instances, it is possible to adjust work hours to allow an individual to observe the Sabbath or other religious obligation," Nadler said.

"Similarly, a yarmulke, a turban, a head scarf or other religious article rarely interferes with job performance. In these cases, religious observance must not be allowed to become a pretext for limiting employment opportunities."

Nadler introduced a similar workplace discrimination bill in 1994 at the end of the 103rd Congress, but no action was taken. The issue was relegated to the back burner during the current Congress.

"There's been so much going on in this Congress that it's been hard to get people to focus on this one particular issue," said Richard Foltin, legislative director and counsel of the American Jewish Committee and chairman of a coalition of some 25 religious and civil liberties groups that have joined in support of the legislation.

Jewish activists said they intend to make a concerted push for the legislation, regardless of the makeup of the new Congress.

"For any of a number of reasons, including the demands of the Jewish religious calendar and issues of dress, not to mention traditional anti-Semitism born of their obvious Jewishness, Orthodox Jews are often unassured of job security and passed over in hiring and job promotions," said David Zwiebel, general counsel and director of government affairs for Agudath Israel. □

## From Yom Kippur to Capitol Hill: Jewish lawmakers dash to work

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — A last-minute scheduling change for the final-drafting session of immigration reform legislation forced two Jewish members of Congress to dash to the airport as Yom Kippur concluded.

California Democrats Sen. Dianne Feinstein and Rep. Howard Berman hopped red-eye flights back to Washington in order to make a Tuesday morning conference committee meeting, where members of Congress put the final touches on the controversial immigration bill.

House Republican leaders changed the session from the afternoon to the morning, drawing fire from some Jewish members of the committee.

"That certainly showed a lack of consideration on their part," Berman said through a spokeswoman.

Their dash proved to be in vain as GOP lawmakers, who set the rules for the committee, did not allow Democrats to offer any amendments to their proposal.

The measure, which passed the House on Wednesday in a vote of 305-123, has angered many Jewish groups for its ban on federal programs to legal immigrants and its imposition of new hurdles for people seeking asylum to enter the United States.

The measure also steps up the enforcement of laws requiring relatives to take more financial responsibility for new immigrant family members they are sponsoring.

Feinstein, who supports the bill's efforts to combat illegal immigration, was the only Democrat to sign the conference committee's report.

The Senate is expected to take up the measure later this week. Immigrant advocates plan to push for amendments to the bill that would soften the blow for legal immigrants. □

## Smithsonian Institution to show activist's unconventional kipah

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — Scott Svonkin will shortly send his yarmulka to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. — and thereby hangs a tale.

Before Svonkin headed for the Democratic Convention in Chicago, his brother Craig handpainted two leather yarmulkas and presented them to him.

One was brightly colored and carried the inscription "Clinton '96." The other, more subdued, was decorated with "Clinton," flanked by a donkey and a Star of David.

The yarmulkas created quite a stir at the convention and Scott was busy posing for press photographers and fending off would-be buyers. In a quiet moment, two gentlemen approached Svonkin and identified themselves as historians working for the Smithsonian. Part of their job, explained one, was to attend both the Republican and Democratic conventions every four years and collect off-beat examples of political Americana.

The Smithsonian reps were greatly taken with the yarmulkas, one vowing that he had never seen anything so lovely. Could they have one for display at the Smithsonian? □

Now back home in Los Angeles, Svonkin is about to send the more colorful yarmulka to Washington, while rejecting a similar request from the Chicago Historical Society.

Svonkin, 31, works as national manager for sales training with a health insurance company, and splits his free time between Jewish and Democratic causes. His mother, Paula, runs a kosher catering enterprise. □

## U.S. records show Nazi gold sits in Federal Reserve Bank

By Stewart Ain

New York Jewish Week

NEW YORK (JTA) — Millions of dollars in gold bars looted by the Nazis — possibly including gold fillings pulled from the corpses of Jews murdered in the Holocaust — are sitting in the Federal Reserve Bank of New York vaults, according to recently declassified documents.

"It totals millions of dollars. Whether it's tens of millions we don't know," said Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress.

The revelation that Nazi gold is sitting in New York comes at a time when pressure has been building on Switzerland to make a full accounting and restitution of gold and other property in accounts opened by Jews and other Nazi victims who were murdered in the Holocaust.

A recently established six-member commission composed of Swiss bankers and Jewish groups is overseeing independent auditors who are reviewing Swiss bank accounts.

The gold bullion in Manhattan is the "smallest part of the story," said Israel Singer, chairman of the World Jewish Restitution Organization.

The gold bars, some perhaps with the Nazi swastika emblazoned on them, have been sitting on the bedrock of Manhattan Island — 50 feet below sea level — at 33 Liberty St. for 50 years.

The gold stored in the vault is owned by foreign central banks and international financial organizations. Barton Sotnick, a spokesman for the Federal Reserve Bank, said he could not comment on the ownership or amount of gold in the vault.

"Just as you wouldn't want to announce how much is in your checking account, it's not our place to say how much is here," he said.

But the recently declassified documents from the U.S. State Department revealed that the Nazi gold here was shipped from Europe to both London and New York. It included the tons of gold found at the Merkers salt mine in Germany, where the Nazis kept the largest collection of gold they looted from the central banks of countries they occupied.

Their existence in Manhattan became public after government documents stored at the U.S. National Archives in Washington were recently declassified at the request of the Senate Banking Committee and the WJRO, according to Singer.

### 'Melted down gold'

The first hint that the gold bars may contain gold fillings pulled from the mouths of Jewish Holocaust victims was found in a July 1946 letter from an American diplomat to U.S. Secretary of State George Marshall. The diplomat asked that 8,307 gold bars recovered from the Merkers mine be analyzed to determine whether they "represent melted down gold teeth fillings."

Singer said he did not know whether the bars were ever tested but that if the gold was smelted without being cleaned of all amalgams, it would be possible to determine whether gold fillings are in the bars.

"A wedding band uses a different kind of amalgam than dental gold, so you can tell if a gold bar is made from monetary or dental or jewelry gold," he said.

The documents revealed that the gold found in the Merkers mine was redistributed along with other looted Nazi gold valued at \$2.7 billion at today's prices.

All but \$100 million was sent to the banks of 10 European countries — primarily to France, Holland and Belgium — by the Tripartite Commission for the Restitu-

tion of Monetary Gold. The commission, created in 1946, consisted of officials from the U.S., Britain and France.

The gold was moved to the Bank of England's London vaults, and a smaller amount went to the Federal Reserve Bank of New York. □

## Quebec nationalist threatens Jews who oppose separatists

By Bram D. Eisenthal

MONTREAL (JTA) — The leader of a Quebec nationalist group has warned the province's Jews that they will face "confrontations" in an independent Quebec if they continue to campaign against separation.

"If there is trouble after Quebec becomes independent, nationalists will remember who was against them," said Raymond Villeneuve, leader of the National Liberation Movement of Quebec.

Villeneuve made his threatening remarks Monday, as Jews observed Yom Kippur.

The comments come against the backdrop of a passionate debate among Quebecers about the Canadian province's future.

The controversy has grown in the months since separatists narrowly lost a referendum in October. At the time, then-Premier Jacques Parizeau blamed the loss on the "ethnic vote," a remark that led to his resignation.

Villeneuve charged that "the major groups fighting separation like Alliance Quebec and the Equality Party were founded by Jews." He lashed out specifically at Howard Galganov, a Montreal Jew and advertising executive who has emerged recently as a leader in the campaign against separatism.

Earlier this month, Galganov led a busload of supporters to Washington and New York to explain to American politicians and members of the business community how Quebec's political uncertainty has affected its economy.

"With the latest escapades of Galganov, it is enough. We have to denounce their inexplicable and incomprehensible hostility toward our people and their right to self-determination," Villeneuve wrote in last Friday's issue of his monthly newsletter, *La Tempete*, which has a circulation of 250.

Villeneuve faxed copies of the newsletter to the media last week to inform people that separatists "have had it" with the Anglophone community's resistance to the nationalist dream.

He also targeted other prominent Jews in Quebec, including Robert Libman, founder and former member of the Equality Party and former member of Quebec's National Assembly, and internationally renowned author Mordechai Richler.

The newsletter called them "Ashkenazi Jews who have played a leading role in opposing the independence movement."

Villeneuve, as a founding member of the terrorist group Quebec Liberation Front, served 12 years in prison for planting a bomb in Montreal that killed a security guard. The terrorist group was founded in the early 1960s to seek Quebec independence. In 1970, the group kidnapped and murdered Quebec Cabinet Minister Pierre Laporte.

The National Liberation Movement of Quebec was founded last year.

On Tuesday, B'nai Brith Canada, together with two other groups, the Black Coalition of Quebec and the Center for Research Action Race Relations, called on Quebec Premier Lucien Bouchard to bring about legislation to outlaw public incitement to hatred, contempt or discrimination against minority groups. □