



## NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ Officials released documents in New York showing that looted Nazi gold recovered by American troops after World War II included personal possessions and gold dental fillings of Holocaust victims. Other documents uncovered revealed lists of European Jews who held accounts in New York branches of Swiss banks during the war. [Page 4]

■ French President Jacques Chirac concluded a visit to Israel, after which he addressed the Palestinian legislative council in Ramallah. [Page 4]

■ The head of the Kiryat Arba council said Jewish settlers in the Hebron area would not allow themselves to be "sitting ducks" after the planned redeployment of Israeli troops in Hebron. The settlers were responding to an Arab man who told Israel Radio that Palestinians were stockpiling weapons.

■ Dozens of religious leaders, including many from Jewish organizations, joined U.S. Secretary of Labor Robert Reich for an initiative aimed at eradicating sweatshops in the American garment industry. Reich called on the leaders to use their pulpits to have a "dramatic and sustained effect."

■ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu phoned Labor Knesset member Yael Dayan to express his shock at the attack on her in Hebron. Dayan suffered second-degree burns on her chest when a religious Jew from Jerusalem threw a cup of hot tea on her outside the Tomb of the Patriarchs.

■ Turkish Jewish officials told an American Jewish group that their community is "not frightened, but watchful" for any erosion of democracy caused by the country's current pro-Islamist government. The visiting Americans were part of a National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council leadership mission to Israel and Turkey.

■ Israel's Ministry of Religious Affairs must re-evaluate its funding criteria so that it no longer discriminates against female yeshiva students, the High Court of Justice ruled.

## THE RACE FOR CONGRESS [Part 4]

### Close campaigns for the House train attention on Jewish issues

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Jewish Democrats say the battle for control of the House of Representatives boils down to a war against radical right candidates.

Their Republican counterparts say voters face a choice between fiscal conservatives and tax-and-spend liberals.

As is the case with almost everything in politics, the truth lies somewhere in the middle.

In contrast to the six-year terms of senators, all 435 House members face re-election every two years. In this critical election season, Republicans are hoping to stave off Democratic attempts to recapture control of the House of Representatives.

With a current 235 to 197 Republican majority, not counting two vacant seats and one independent, 18 seats need to change hands for the GOP to lose control.

Most congressional watchers give the Democrats and the Republicans an equal chance of taking control of the House.

In a test to the "all politics is local" rule, both parties have projected national issues onto the state races. The Democrats are painting the contest as a battle against Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich (R-Ga.) and Republicans are trying to make the election a referendum on President Clinton's ethics.

Caught in the middle are a handful of close races featuring charges of racism, anti-Semitism and other political firecrackers. Jewish observers are also tracking election battles focused on such issues as school prayer and U.S.-Israel relations.

### Church-state takes stage

Voters in a handful of races this year will choose between candidates who have radically different views on the separation of church and state.

Rep. Steve Stockman (R-Texas) has been under fire from many Jewish groups since he came to Congress in 1994. Stockman has defended his decision to speak on a 1995 radio show sponsored by the anti-Semitic Liberty Lobby and has told staffers that he would like them to participate in a Christian prayer service for his congressional office every morning.

Stockman also sponsored an unsuccessful bill that would define human life as beginning at conception and has been attacked for maintaining ties to militia groups.

Stockman is facing a stiff challenge from Nick Lampson in a district that was redrawn by court order.

Lampson has hit Stockman for his militia ties and his relationship with Larry Pratt, the chairman of Gun Owners of America. Pat Buchanan's ill-fated presidential campaign fired Pratt earlier this year after news accounts of Pratt's racist and anti-Semitic preachings.

Another one of the 73 Republican freshmen is facing questions about commitment to religious freedom.

Rep. Andrea Seastrand, the California lawmaker representing the Santa Barbara area, continues to draw fire for calling for an end to the separation of church and state.

At a 1994 campaign rally, Seastrand said, "We also as Christians have been hoodwinked into thinking there is a separation of church and state."

Seastrand has argued that news accounts of the speech to a church group took her statements out of context.

Walter Capps, the Democratic challenger who lost to Seastrand in 1994, is not focusing on church-state issues.

Instead, environmental issues and crime are playing a major role in the close contest.

Ohio voters are also focused on a race in which the Republican candidate strongly opposes government bans on endorsing religion.

Rep. Frank Cremeans has supported a local courthouse's battle to keep a cross on top of its building. Cremeans invited members of the

community to attend a "rally around the cross" and has promised to support legislation protecting religious symbols.

His Democratic challenger, Ted Strickland, the former lawmaker who was defeated by Cremeans in the 1994 Republican landslide, is seeking to return to Washington by running against the GOP agenda.

Meanwhile, in Arizona, Rep. J.D. Hayworth, also a freshman Republican, is battling to retain his seat from one of the country's largest districts.

Hayworth, a self-described champion of the conservative Republican agenda, has supported school prayer. A co-chair of the freshman class, Hayworth has faced the wrath of many Democratic lawmakers for his firebrand style.

His Democratic challenger, Steve Owens, whose wife and children are Jewish, has tried to paint Hayworth as a Gingrich foot soldier and to turn the race into a contest against the speaker.

In Gingrich's home state, Rep. Cynthia McKinney's (D-Ga.) battle for re-election has turned ugly.

John Mitnick, the Republican Jewish challenger, spent the early part of the campaign trying to paint McKinney as a supporter of Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan in an effort to win white and Jewish votes in the newly redistricted suburban Atlanta district.

Bitter at the U.S. Supreme Court decision that nullified McKinney's black-majority district and Mitnick's attacks, the congresswoman's father, a state representative, has called the challenger "a racist Jew."

McKinney's father continued to stir passions by falsely accusing Mitnick of taking more than \$100,000 in campaign contributions from the American Jewish Congress and the Anti-Defamation League. As tax-exempt nonprofits, the AJCongress and the ADL do not give campaign contributions. McKinney later said that he cited the two Jewish groups because of their support of a Supreme Court decision that led the state to redraw his daughter's congressional district.

McKinney, the first black woman elected to Congress from Georgia, is running in a radically redrawn district with a large white and Republican population.

For his part, Mitnick attacked McKinney for appearing on a stage with Farrakhan and voting against a House resolution that condemned hateful speech by a Nation of Islam deputy.

In recent weeks, McKinney has elevated her criticism of Farrakhan's anti-Semitism and racism. She also kicked her father off the campaign, denounced his comments and brought out some Jewish supporters who said she deserves credit for condemning her father and Farrakhan in the same sentence at a news conference.

#### **Israel a hot issue**

Republicans charge that her efforts are nothing more than political opportunism.

Not far from McKinney's district, one of the biggest long-shot races in the country pits Michael Coles, a second-generation Jewish immigrant, against Gingrich.

Coles, the millionaire owner of The Cookie Company, acknowledges his slim chances of election, but has forced Gingrich to spend time and money in the district to stave off his attacks.

In Texas, former Rep. Ron Paul, a Republican, is trying to return to the House after a 12-year absence. But Charles "Lefty" Morris hopes to stop him with Paul's own writings, including those about Israel.

The Ron Paul Investment Letter and the Ron Paul Survival Report contain numerous anti-Israel and racist articles from the past decade, Morris has charged.

In March 1987, Paul wrote, "It's time that Israel

stopped running American foreign policy and draining American taxpayers' wallets."

In 1992, Paul wrote of blacks in Washington, D.C., "I think that we can safely assume that 95 percent of the black males in that city are semi-criminal or entirely criminal." He added that opinion polls show that "only about 5 percent of blacks have sensible political opinions."

Paul, who ran as the Libertarian Party's presidential candidate in 1988, has defended his writings, arguing that they were taken out of context.

In Pennsylvania, meanwhile, Rep. Jon Fox, the only Jewish member of the 104th Congress' freshmen, is reaching out to the large Jewish population in his Philadelphia suburban district. As a member of the House International Relations Committee, he is touting his record of support for Israel.

Joseph Hoeffel, his Democratic challenger, has attacked Fox for a scoring a 100 percent rating from the Christian Coalition and has tried to paint him as a Gingrich Republican.

For his part, Fox is running as a fiscal conservative and has touted his support of welfare reform, health care reform and spending reform.

The National Jewish Democratic Council will distribute its first-ever voter guide, supporting Hoeffel in the district, which elected a Democrat in 1992. Local polls show Fox with a slight lead, but most observers say the seat could go either way.

While Fox is running on his pro-Israel record, other Jewish Republicans are hoping to lay the groundwork this year for a future defeat of Rep. David Bonior of Michigan, the third-ranking Democrat in the House.

Bonior has been dogged by criticism for staking out positions in the 1980s widely considered anti-Israel. Bonior supported legislation calling for a Palestinian state, opposed some U.S. aid for Israeli weapons and supported arms sales to Arab states that were opposed by the pro-Israel community.

Republicans and many pro-Israel PACs, who gave him no money this cycle, would like to see him defeated.

But that appears unlikely to happen this year. His opponent, Susy Heintz, the Republican state party chair, is trailing by at least eight points and is considered unlikely to win. □

#### **Shoah comparison irks Australian Jewish leader**

*By Jeremy Jones*

SYDNEY, Australia (JTA) — Australian Jewish leaders criticized a prominent opposition politician for comparing to the Holocaust the former Australian policy of removing Aboriginal children from their families.

Daryl Melham, the Australian Labor Party's spokesman on Aboriginal affairs, recently made the analogy during discussion on the government's treatment of Aborigines.

Diane Shteinman, president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, said in an interview that "the analogy is factually wrong, unhelpful and will confuse, in the public mind, genocide with other moral wrongs."

She also said, "Australian Jewry is in the forefront of public calls for social justice for indigenous Australians and we are unambiguous in our condemnation of the inhuman treatment of Aborigines and Islanders."

Sen. John Herron, minister for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Affairs, called Melham's comments part of a campaign against the government based on the "language of hate." Herron added that the past practice of removing Aboriginal children from their families was "appalling." □

## A YEAR AFTER RABIN'S DEATH [Part 2]

### Commemoration of slaying reflects divisions in Israel

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The bitter political divisions in Israel, highlighted so tragically by the assassination of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin one year ago, are blighting the nation's attempts to commemorate the murder.

The extent of the divisions was underscored by the Ministerial Committee on Symbols and Ceremonies, which announced this week that Oct. 24, the anniversary of the assassination on the Hebrew calendar, would not be declared a national day of mourning, like Yom HaShoah or Tisha B'Av.

The committee did decide, however, that there would be a state ceremony on the day of his death each year for at least 10 years.

The divisions were also to be seen in the actions of Rabin's widow, Leah, who expressly requested that neither President Ezer Weizman nor Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu eulogize the murdered leader at Thursday's state ceremony. The two were instead to speak immediately after, at a special session of the Knesset.

Even the date for holding the commemoration has created divisions. Rabin's own Labor Party has pointedly scheduled its own memorial event for Nov. 4, the anniversary of the assassination on the secular calendar.

And there are innumerable local and voluntary commemorative events, organized under all banners, each with its own approach.

The school system, moreover, on instructions from Education Minister Zevulun Hammer of the National Religious Party, was to devote the entire day Thursday to assemblies and classes on the killing, its meaning and implications, as well as to issues of democracy and the rule of law.

If the commemoration period passes without a worsening of the political strife that came to the fore when assassin Yigal Amir fired at the premier, that in itself will be a relief.

#### 'Look what this can lead to'

The anniversary, like the murder itself, is proving to be a catalyst of political polarization rather than an instrument or occasion of reconciliation.

Yaron Ezrahi, a professor of political science at the Hebrew University, grants that the immediate reaction to the killing was one of collective shock that created a moment of enhanced unity. "Everyone was united in the sentiment: Look what this can lead us to," Ezrahi says.

But soon this initial clinging together evaporated, says Ezrahi, and by the time Israel's national elections were held in May, many Israelis had come to regard the assassination as another link in the chain of terror events, which, for them, represent the peace process.

"For centuries, the Jews' 'secret weapon' had been their solidarity," says Ezrahi. "Regardless of the circumstances, they pulled together.

"Rabin's peace process with the Arabs was seen by many Israelis as threatening, indeed sacrificing, that underlying solidarity among the Jews. Ironically, his murder came to be seen in that same context.

"When the Chabad movement, three days before the election, plastered the country with posters pronouncing that 'Bibi is Good for the Jews,' this spoke to a very profound, atavistic yearning for that modicum of Jewish solidarity.

"Netanyahu's own slogan, 'A Safe Peace,' was also internalized to mean that there would be an ongoing

peace process — but it would be safe from the kind of internecine strife that the Rabin-Peres process had aroused within Jewish Israel."

That was the subliminal rationale that drew a large majority of Israel's Jews, in Ezrahi's view, to vote for Netanyahu.

The margin of Netanyahu's victory among Jewish voters was more than 10 percent — despite the arguments of Netanyahu's opponents that this would be to hand a victory to Rabin's assassin.

But Ezrahi believes that the deeper and longer-term effects of the assassination have yet to make themselves felt on Israeli society. He says national traumas such as the Holocaust, the 1973 Yom Kippur War and the Scud attacks during the 1991 Gulf War took many years until their true impact on Israeli society could be discerned by scholars.

He says that among secular Israelis, the assassination has already produced a discernible heightening of awareness of how fragile democracy can be — and how prone it is to dangers from within.

"Other, older democracies learned this lesson hundreds of years ago," Ezrahi adds.

Another leading academic, Nissan Rubin of Bar-Ilan University's sociology department, says many in the Orthodox community regard the killing of Rabin as something of "a miracle" — in that it saved Israel from his peace policy.

To these people, Netanyahu's election victory reinforces and vindicates their view of the assassination.

Beyond the core of such believers, says Rubin, who is himself Orthodox, there is a "broad periphery" of people who share that view — even though they do not articulate it.

Because of the fissure in Israeli society, he says, Rabin the man cannot grow into a national myth the way, for instance, that President Kennedy did in the United States. "Death, especially of leaders, usually plays a key role in the evolution of a nation's collective memory," says Rubin.

But in Rabin's case, he adds, this can only happen within that part of the nation that truly reveres his memory and identifies with what he stood for and what he died for.

"In a way, therefore, the commemoration of Rabin and of his death is itself the dividing line in Israeli society at this time," he says. □

### Court: Preserve Rabin evidence

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The suit Yitzhak Rabin wore on the night he was assassinated is to be given to a center to preserve the slain prime minister's memory.

The Israeli daily Ma'ariv ran a photo Monday of the dark suit, stained by blood from Rabin's fatal wounds, as well as his shirt, which has a bullet hole in it.

Until now, Rabin's clothing from that Nov. 4 night in Tel Aviv was being stored by the National Crime Squad in Petach Tikva.

Last week, the Tel Aviv District Court issued an order barring police from destroying the suit and other evidence from the case, which is standard practice once a murder case is closed.

Rabin's assassin, Yigal Amir, is serving a life sentence plus 11 years for the murder and other crimes.

The judge also ruled that the police should retain the Beretta pistol Amir used to shoot Rabin, the bullets removed from Rabin's body, the three spent shells found at the scene of the murder and the remaining bullets in the gun's chamber. The court said all the evidence should be transferred to the State Archives, until the Center for the Preservation of Rabin's Memory is established. □

**Research into Holocaust assets  
unearths constant revelations***By Alissa Kaplan*

NEW YORK (JTA) — At this rate, historians of the Nazi Holocaust will be busy for a long time.

Hundreds of people crowded this week into a midtown Manhattan office building to hear U.S. Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.) and Edgar Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress, present the latest round of findings about the fate of both Jewish and non-Jewish assets from the World War II era, particularly those that had been deposited in Swiss banks.

Switzerland is at the center of a controversy on the whereabouts of Nazi gold, among other charges.

The revelations that have come in recent months are based on documents uncovered from the U.S. National Archives as well as from archives overseas.

"History is being changed and revisited almost on a daily basis," said D'Amato, chairman of the Senate Banking Committee.

Jewish leaders say D'Amato has been instrumental in the effort to learn what actually happened to the assets deposited during the time of the Nazis.

At the gathering Wednesday, which brought together New York City and New York state politicians; heads of various Jewish organizations; and officials from the Israeli Consulate in New York, the following recent discoveries were presented:

- Hungary and the Czech Republic may have had deals with Switzerland similar to that of Poland. A secret deal between Poland and Switzerland allegedly enabled the Swiss to use Polish Jewish assets deposited in Swiss banks for safekeeping to compensate Swiss citizens. The assets of the Polish victims of the Holocaust is believed to have gone to Swiss nationals who owned property in Poland that was nationalized by the Communist government in Poland.

- Nazi gold recovered by American troops immediately after World War II at a salt mine at Merkers, Germany, appears to have included personal possessions and gold dental fillings of Holocaust victims. The items included silver Passover cups and candlestick holders, according to a copy of a U.S. Archives document.

- Norway appears to have auctioned off the property of 800 Holocaust victims in 1946. Jewish officials will meet with Norwegian leaders to discuss the issue next month. The current value of that property is \$80 million, said Bronfman, also the president of the World Jewish Restitution Organization.

Officials said investigations into the wartime activities of Holland, Belgium, France and Sweden would continue.

In addition, other newly uncovered documents reveal lists of European Jews who held accounts in New York branches of Swiss banks during the war. The lists provide the first hard evidence outside of Swiss banking records that the missing accounts existed.

"This isn't just about money," Bronfman said at Wednesday's gathering. "It's about justice and human rights."

The Jewish Community Relations Council of New York and the WJC co-sponsored the event. □

**French leader's visit to Israel,  
Ramallah marked by contrasts***By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — French President Jacques Chirac made significantly contrasting visits this week to Israel and to the Palestinian town of Ramallah.

The enthusiastic hero's welcome he received from

cheering crowds in the West Bank town contrasted sharply with the aura of tension that surrounded his visit in Jerusalem.

On Wednesday, Chirac became the first foreign head of state to address the Palestinian legislative council.

"A Palestinian state is not in any way a danger to the security of anyone," he said.

The French leader also said it was indeed the only way to ensure a peaceful future for both Israelis and Palestinians.

Chirac also sounded other themes that put him squarely at odds with the Netanyahu government.

"Changes on the ground in Jerusalem, like confiscation of land and demolishing houses, must stop," he said.

"There must be economic freedom in Palestine, which means putting an end to the closure" that the Jewish state imposed on Palestinian workers after a series of suicide attacks in Israel by the Islamic fundamentalist Hamas group earlier this year.

Chirac, who has stated that he wants Europe, France in particular, to serve as co-sponsors of the Middle East peace process, said he saluted the U.S. role in the peace process.

But he added that the process was "losing its breath" because of a loss of trust that the United States would act as an impartial mediator.

"I see the European and French role in building more trust," he said.

In Washington, the State Department announced Wednesday that it had sent letters to European foreign ministers politely thanking them for their efforts on behalf of the peace process, but asking them to let the United States continue in its role as sole mediator.

**Forced well-wishers away**

State Department officials said they had already received a response from French diplomats indicating that France planned to continue seeking a leading role as a broker of regional peace.

A day before traveling to Ramallah, Chirac got into an altercation with Israeli security guards during a visit to Jerusalem's Old City.

Chirac snapped angrily at the security guards, who forced Arab well-wishers away from him.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu later apologized at a joint news conference with Chirac for what he described as "perhaps excessive zeal in trying to protect a friend."

Netanyahu explained that Israel had adopted a high level of security arrangements for visiting foreign leaders since Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's assassination one year ago.

The French leader said he considered the matter closed.

Despite the apology, Netanyahu made it clear that he did not support granting France the greater role it seeks in the peace process.

"The solution between the parties has to be achieved by the parties themselves," he said at the news conference.

But Chirac stuck to his guns.

"If there is anything I can do to promote a better understanding between the different partners in this region, I will do it with all my heart," he said.

Chirac arrived in Israel after talks in Damascus with Syrian President Hafez Assad.

Chirac attended a brief session of the Knesset convened Tuesday in his honor.

However, the French leader did not address the Knesset. □