

NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ **Donations to U.S. charities rose 5 percent last year over the previous year, according to the annual survey of The Chronicle of Philanthropy. The United Jewish Appeal ranked sixth in the survey of 400 non-profit organizations receiving the most private money. Last year, it was in fourth place.**

■ **Members of Congress called on Lithuania to extradite Jonas Stelmokas, a Lithuanian war criminal who was stripped of his U.S. citizenship but continues to live in a Philadelphia suburb. Activists rallied in Philadelphia to focus attention on Stelmokas, who served in a unit that helped Nazis round up and kill Jews.**

■ **Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat traveled to Europe, despite the lack of a breakthrough in the Israeli-Palestinian talks on a Hebron redeployment. [Page 4]**

■ **Israeli police detained a security guard for the West Bank Jewish settlement of Hadar Betar on suspicion that he caused the death of a 10-year-old Palestinian boy. [Page 4]**

■ **The European Union named Spain's ambassador to Israel as special envoy to the Middle East. In addition, Egyptian Foreign Minister Amre Moussa called on the European Union to persuade Israel that its policies are endangering peace Middle East peace. [Page 4]**

■ **The Paris city council halted the sale of apartments after accusations that some might have been seized from Jews deported to Nazi death camps in World War II. [Page 2]**

■ **France's National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen promoted the idea of a Christian Europe at a rally in Budapest marking the 40th anniversary of the doomed anti-Soviet uprising. [Page 2]**

■ **The Mauerbach Benefit Sale on behalf of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Austria is set to begin Tuesday in Vienna. Christie's is conducting the auction of some 1,000 art works that were confiscated during World War II.**

BEFORE THE VOTE IS COUNTED**Outreach to Jewish voters dips as polling gaps widen**

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — A lot can change in four years.

In 1992, candidate Bill Clinton actively courted Jewish voters across the country.

This time around, President Clinton — riding double-digit leads in most states and counting on polls that show that at least four out of every five voting American Jews will pull the lever for the Democratic ticket — is all but taking the Jewish vote for granted.

For his part, Republican presidential nominee Bob Dole never really got his Jewish outreach program off the ground and appears to have pretty much written off the Jewish voter.

“Both candidates are ignoring the Jewish vote,” said Ed Miller, a research director with the GOP-aligned Polling Company. “The Jewish vote is important on a state-by-state basis,” he said. But because “this election is not as close as past elections, the Jewish vote will play less of a role in the presidential election.”

If a close election means close attention to Jewish voters, that explains why the level of outreach to Jewish constituents by congressional candidates is a very different story.

Congressional candidates from both parties are counting on the Jewish vote to provide the margin of victory in several close House and Senate races.

There are nearly 6 million Jews in America, making up about 2.3 percent of the total U.S. population. But they represent a formidable voting bloc in certain states.

“The Jewish community can tip the balance in a number of states,” Martin Hochbaum, director of national affairs at the American Jewish Congress, said.

And it is not just votes that count.

“Jews contribute not only time volunteering for campaigns, but money as well,” said Hochbaum, whose organization plans to conduct exit polls to measure Jewish support for Clinton and Dole in 12 states plus the District of Columbia. Pollsters will also measure Jewish support in the race for New Jersey's Senate seat.

Jews added considerably to the coffers of candidates this election cycle.

Pro-Israel political action committees dispensed about \$700,000 to Democratic candidates.

In addition, Jewish Democrats contributed more than \$15 million in so-called “soft money” to the Democratic National Committee, said one fund-raiser on the condition that his name not be used.

Soft money is defined as contributions given directly to the parties, as opposed to specific candidates.

Jewish “soft money” contributions to the Republicans will top the \$10 million mark by Election Day, according to a Republican fund-raiser. Jewish PACs gave an estimated \$600,000 to Republican candidates.

No Jewish rallies this time around

The lack of Jewish outreach on the presidential level reflects a marked departure from the past, when presidential candidates often courted Jewish voters, particularly those in states with large Jewish populations.

In 1992, Clinton, a relative unknown in the Jewish community, held dozens of events that targeted Jewish voters. He convened numerous conference calls with Jewish reporters and sought attention from Jewish news organizations.

In the end, Jewish voters were credited with propelling him to victory in at least three states — Ohio, New Jersey and Georgia.

This time around, Clinton scheduled no Jewish rallies and refused numerous requests for interviews from Jewish media outlets.

The one exception seems to be in Florida, considered one of a handful of toss-up states.

With Jews estimated at more than 4.5 percent of the state's population, officials from the Clinton-Gore Jewish Outreach office have set up shop

in southern Florida for a series of "Get Out The Vote" rallies.

For its part, the Republican presidential ticket, running in Florida only a few points behind Clinton-Gore, is concentrating its efforts in northern Florida, known for its more conservative voters.

Like their counterparts in the north and west, the Sunshine State's Jewish voters are expected to overwhelmingly favor Clinton. Whether they can provide Clinton with a winning margin will only be known on Election Day.

If Clinton is taking the Jewish vote for granted, it appears that the Dole campaign is letting him.

Despite predictions from the Dole camp that the Republicans could not win crucial swing states, such as New Jersey and Illinois, without making inroads into the traditional Jewish support for the Democratic ticket, Dole has also refused numerous requests for interviews with Jewish media.

Dole did, however, address one Jewish audience this year. On Labor Day weekend, Dole spoke in Washington at the convention of B'nai B'rith.

"There would have been more attention to the Jewish community in particular if the election were closer," said Hochbaum, citing polls showing Clinton's commanding lead.

In addition, he said, "there is no single issue on the national agenda which has got Jewish attention."

In contrast to the little attention from the presidential campaigns, congressional candidates are actively courting and counting on Jewish votes in their quest for election.

Nowhere is this more evident than in New Jersey.

Reps. Robert Torricelli (D-N.J.) and Dick Zimmer (R-N.J.) are facing off for an open Senate seat to replace Bill Bradley, who is retiring. Zimmer, who is Jewish, has put Torricelli on the defensive for speaking to a group in 1993 that included Islamic extremists. Both campaigns say Jewish support is key to their election hopes.

The analysts agree.

"The Jewish vote will number about 10 percent of the voting population in New Jersey and will likely have an enormous impact on the Senate race," Hochbaum said.

Miller said, "The election is in the grasp of New Jersey's Jews."

In other states with sizable Jewish populations, Democrats have deployed a small army of activists to seek out Jewish support and votes.

The National Jewish Democratic Council hired nine field directors in eight states in an effort to reach voters in districts with close House and Senate contests. An additional 10 workers began this week to marshal votes in another two states.

In a very close, hotly contested race that can come down to a few thousand votes, the importance of a couple of thousand Jews is magnified, said Stephen Silberfarb, deputy executive director of the NJDC.

"You can't say that about every state," he said. "But where the Jews are, they matter." □

Book on Jewish ownership of Paris housing freezes sales

By Lee Yanowitch

PARIS (JTA) — The city council here has frozen the sale of city-owned apartments after accusations that some of them may have been seized from Jews during Germany's World War II occupation of France.

Suspicious were aroused after the release of a book, "Private Estate," by Brigitte Vital-Durand. The book says the city of Paris owns 150 buildings in the medieval Marais quarter and that some of those buildings

had belonged to Jews who were deported to Nazi concentration camps or fled persecution.

Many Jews still live in the Marais area.

CRIF, the umbrella group of French Jewish secular organizations, called for a detailed report establishing the history of each apartment as well as "the possible despoilment of Paris Jewish families under the collaborationist Vichy regime."

Deputy Mayor Jean-Francois Legaret said after a council meeting that all planned apartment sales had been suspended, including the sale of 10 apartments scheduled for this week, "until the history of each acquisition could be studied."

Earlier, he had said that of the buildings sold since June, none had "belonged to Jews" and that lists of property to be sold in the future "didn't include any, either."

Vital-Durand said there was no historical record of ownership of buildings and apartments sold by the city in recent months.

In her book, Vital-Durand says that in 1940, 25,000 people lived in the working class area of the Jewish quarter, but by the end of the war, arrests, evictions and deportations had shrunk the population to 5,000.

Embroiled in a series of scandals over posh low-rent city housing occupied by political cronies, including Prime Minister Alain Juppe, Mayor Jean Tiberi called on people to stop "demonizing the city to commercial and political ends."

"It would be immoral for the city to own property obtained in this way," he said. "There is certainly nothing for the city of Paris to blush about concerning its behavior during the war." Tiberi ordered the sale of a third of the city's 1,389 apartments after the scandal erupted. □

Anti-Semitism marks rally near Hungarian Parliament

By Agnes Bohm

BUDAPEST (JTA) — Demonstrators shouted anti-Semitic remarks during an ultrarightist rally held here this week to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the 1956 Hungarian uprising against Soviet rule.

Sunday's demonstration, during which some 25,000 people gathered outside the Parliament building, was far larger than the official government ceremony held last week to mark the doomed uprising.

Dozens of people shouted "bloody Jew" when a reporter asked some neo-Nazis in the crowd about their views and plans.

"Down with Peto," the crowd shouted several times during a speech by Istvan Csurka, the anti-Semitic leader of the ultrarightist Hungarian Justice and Life Party.

Ivao Peto, the leader of the liberal Alliance of Free Democrats, a member of the governing coalition, is derided by the ultraright as a symbol of Jewish liberal intellectuals.

Ultrarightists regard the alliance as the "Jewish party."

The Hungarian Justice and Life Party, which holds no parliamentary seats, is notoriously anti-Semitic and anti-Israel.

Among those addressing the crowd Sunday was the leader of France's right-wing National Front, Jean-Marie Le Pen, who emphasized the importance of a Christian Europe and spoke out against the European Union.

Le Pen, who is staunchly anti-immigrant, also called on Christian Europeans to unify themselves against "the African Islam intruders."

Hungarian neo-Nazis were also present at the rally.

According to some reports, police escorted their leader, Albert Szabo, from the demonstration. □

NEWS ANALYSIS**Israel warily eyeing Syria
as tensions rise and abate***By David Landau*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had some sober words for Syria this week.

“Nobody should be under any illusions that they can surprise us in any way,” he told reporters on the deck of a navy missile boat. “We see and we know everything that’s going on. We are taking all the necessary measures to defend ourselves. Our intentions are purely defensive. We have the ability to respond to any development.”

Speaking on Sunday, the eve of extensive Syrian military exercises around the Golan Heights, Netanyahu apparently wanted to signal Damascus that Israel is watchful and wary. The message came amid a flurry of rumors that Syria was preparing to attack Israel. Tensions exacerbated with reports — later denied by Israel — that Jerusalem had approved exploratory oil drills on the Golan.

Israel, including its military and intelligence establishments, has been surprised at the speed with which relations with Syria have degenerated into dangerous military tension in the months since the Netanyahu government came to power.

The tension has generated much speculation as to whether Syria might be considering military action to force the stalled political process forward.

In recent days, after a series of ominous Syrian troop movements in Lebanon and around the Golan, and after a no less ominous escalation of hostile rhetoric between the two countries, Netanyahu and Assad are both exercising caution. They are aware that the situation between their countries is much closer to armed conflagration than it has been for many years.

Netanyahu, for his part, has stopped publicly branding Syria a terrorist state and criticizing the Syrian style of autocratic government.

Signaled willingness to talk

Moreover, while not changing the substance of his position on the Golan Heights, the Israeli leader has signaled that he wants to resume the long-stalled peace negotiations with Damascus without laying down at the outset his previously stated flat refusal to withdraw from the Golan.

Netanyahu pointedly described as “positive” a diplomatic message from Assad that was transmitted by French President Jacques Chirac, who visited Jerusalem last week after meeting with Assad in Damascus.

Media reports say Netanyahu has indicated that he is ready to “take into account” the progress made in the Israeli-Syrian negotiations during the previous Labor government. That progress came in the form of oral, rather than written, understandings before the talks were broken off in March after Assad refused to condemn a series of Hamas terror attacks launched in Israel.

For his part, Assad has been signaling — through Chirac, through Edward Djerejian, the former U.S. ambassador to Israel, and through other international figures — that his military maneuvers are not intended as a prelude to hostilities, and that he, too, wants the talks to resume.

Nevertheless, Syrian government circles and the Damascus media continue to warn that in the absence of negotiations, the situation could — and, indeed, is likely — to deteriorate quickly into a military confrontation.

A clear indicator of the extent to which things have changed came last week when the Israel Defense Force general staff pressed the prime minister for increased

military spending. The general staff said it asked for more than \$1 billion in increased preparedness expenditures because war could no longer be put in the category “of low likelihood.”

Israeli experts say the change in the overall climate comes from Syrian President Hafez Assad’s realization that the current Israeli government, unlike its Labor-led predecessor, does not endorse the land-for-peace formula that underlay the drawn-out negotiations between the two countries during the previous four years.

Itamar Rabinovich, the recently retired Israeli ambassador to Washington and head of the Israeli delegation to those talks for much of that period, says Assad made a major blunder in failing to heed warnings that the Rabin-Peres government might fall.

It is now clear, from Israeli and Syrian sources, that Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin had indicated to President Clinton back in 1993 that if Syria were to offer full peace, Israel might be prepared to countenance a full withdrawal from the Golan. Rabin later said much the same thing publicly when he suggested that the extent of the Golan withdrawal would be proportional to the extent of the peace forged with Syria.

Israeli negotiators were apparently careful, though, to couch their equation in hypothetical terms.

Assad now insists that the talks, when and if they resume, begin from the point at which they broke off — with the hypothetical equation of the Golan in exchange for peace.

But Netanyahu, unencumbered by any binding pact signed by his predecessors, proposes a resumption “without preconditions” advanced by either side.

Israeli military analysts, assessing Syrian military thinking, say Damascus may be tempted to try launching a limited assault, perhaps on a defined swath of Golan territory. They say Syria may do this with the specific intention of involving the United States and the international community in immediately ending the fighting and getting negotiations restarted.

The logic would be similar to that which served Egypt’s President Anwar Sadat back in 1973, when, with Assad, he launched the Yom Kippur War. That war was launched with limited strategic aims and was intended as a means to jolt the dormant diplomatic process into frenetic action. Then, of course, the two Arab allies were aided by the element of total surprise.

Still could achieve surprise

This time, as the prime minister stressed, Israel, permanently traumatized by the 1973 experience, would not be caught napping.

Nevertheless, according to experts, Syria could still achieve a measure of tactical surprise, enabling perhaps the capture of a small area of land and the infliction of significant numbers of Israeli casualties.

Assad, it is believed, is prepared to sustain much larger casualties than Israel.

There is also concern about Syria’s known missile capacity. Haifa and its heavily populated industrial hinterland are within easy range of Syria’s store of missiles that were supplied over the years by Soviet, Iranian and North Korean sources. Even if, as is presumed, the Syrians confine themselves to conventional warheads — for fear of triggering an overwhelming Israeli response to any non-conventional strike — damage and casualties could be extensive.

For now, however, the caution being exercised by both sides appeared to be containing the tense situation, informed sources say.

While Israel will be watching closely, the threat of danger appears to have passed — for now. □

**Hebron agreement delayed
as Arafat departs the region***By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Prospects for an imminent resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations on Hebron dimmed once again this week after Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat left for a trip to Europe.

In a further signal that the talks were stalemated, U.S. Special Middle East Coordinator Dennis Ross said Monday that he would leave the region for consultations in Washington.

Last week, Ross announced that he was departing for Washington only to change his plans at the last minute, prompting speculation that an agreement would soon be reached for the long-delayed Israeli troop redeployment in Hebron.

Despite this week's clear setbacks, Israeli and Palestinian negotiators continued their contacts in an effort to conclude an agreement by next week.

The delay in the talks came at a time of heightened Israeli-Palestinian tensions.

Israeli officials, clearly annoyed, blamed Arafat for the delay in completing the talks.

"What are left is a small number of issues; you can count them on one hand," Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told reporters.

"The thing that's causing the delay at this moment is the absence of a decision or the absence of an order from the highest level on the Palestinian side."

Netanyahu spokesman Shai Bazak said, "We're mad at Arafat. He's apparently trying to stall."

In Washington, Israeli Ambassador Eliahu Ben-Elissar said Ross had asked Arafat to postpone his European trip.

But Arafat "decided nonetheless to go to Europe without finalizing the agreement," Ben-Elissar told a news conference.

He also said Netanyahu was planning to hold a meeting with Arafat at dawn Monday on the Israeli-Gazan border to conclude the agreement.

Three issues to be resolved

Israeli officials said only three main issues remained to be resolved: Israel's demand for the right to pursue suspected terrorists in self-rule areas; freedom of movement for Israeli troops in Arab sections of Hebron; and whether to open a main street that links the Jewish and Arab enclaves in the volatile West Bank town.

For their part, the Palestinians charged Israel with holding up the talks.

"I'm sorry to say that still the Israelis are putting new conditions every day," Arafat told reporters in Oslo, the first stop on his European tour.

Meanwhile, tensions heightened in the territories.

On Monday, Israeli police detained a security guard for the West Bank Jewish settlement of Hadar Betar on suspicion that he caused the death of a 10-year-old Palestinian boy.

According to eyewitnesses, the boy was one of a group of youths who had thrown stones Sunday at the car of Nahum Kurman, a resident of Efrat.

Kurman stopped his vehicle, chased the boy and kicked him in the head, Palestinian witnesses said.

Kurman denied that he ever touched the boy.

The boy was admitted unconscious to Hadassah Hospital at Ein Kerem, where he died Monday.

An autopsy revealed that the boy died from a brain hemorrhage caused by a sharp blow. But doctors did not rule out the possibility that the child had fallen on a boulder. □

**E.U. names Spanish diplomat
to serve as Middle East envoy***By Joseph Kopel*

LUXEMBOURG (JTA) — The European Union has named Spain's ambassador to Israel, Miguel Angel Moratinos, to serve as a special E.U. envoy to the Middle East.

The 15 E.U. foreign ministers gave Moratinos a mandate at Monday's meeting here to establish contacts with Israeli and Palestinian negotiators.

The ministers also want Moratinos to suggest possible E.U. initiatives for advancing the peace process, according to diplomatic sources.

The naming of a special Middle East envoy was part of a broader program backed by some E.U. members to increase European participation in the Middle East peace process.

France in particular has been urging its E.U. partners to play a greater role in peace efforts in the Middle East.

Before the naming of Moratinos to the new position, Foreign Minister Amre Moussa of Egypt called on the European Union ministers to persuade the Jewish state that "its policies are endangering peace in the Middle East." Moussa was here for discussions about increased E.U.-Egyptian cooperation.

He criticized the policies of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, saying that they will lead to "less security, less stability and therefore less prosperity for us all." □

IDF recruit fights being dis-tressed*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Spare me the army haircut.

This was the demand of an 18-year-old Israeli, who charged last week that the Israel Defense Force is practicing discrimination when it requires male recruits, but not their female counterparts, to cut their hair.

Not eager to part with the ponytail he sports, the Haifa resident brought his complaint to the High Court of Justice.

His charge of discrimination represents another challenge that the Israeli army, a traditional male bastion, has had to confront after allowing women to enter its combat units.

Explaining the basis for his suit, the petitioner said, "When the army requires males to cut their hair when they are inducted into the IDF, and [they] must keep a short haircut throughout their service — while this is not required of women — this represents sexual discrimination and a violation of civil rights."

"If women with long hair can meet the etiquette requirements of the army and function acceptably, so can men," the petitioner added. □

Bank of Israel cuts interest rates

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The Bank of Israel has announced a reduction of 0.3 percent in interest rates.

Israeli industrialists said the cut was too small.

The leading Israeli businessmen also criticized the Bank of Israel for lacking a comprehensive economic policy.

Meanwhile, Finance Minister Dan Meridor began efforts to convince coalition members to support the government's call for a cut of some \$1.6 billion from the 1997 budget.

The Knesset is scheduled to begin debating the budget this week. □