



## NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged to oppose "any legislation that will change the status quo" regarding Israel's legal recognition of conversions to Judaism performed outside the country. The pledge, sent in a letter to members of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, still leaves unanswered the future status of non-Orthodox conversions performed in Israel. The matter is slated for discussion this week in Seattle at the General Assembly of the Council of Jewish Federations, where Netanyahu is scheduled to appear.

■ A string of positive statements out of Syria and Israel cast new light on the possibility of the resumption of talks between the two countries. Both Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa were quoted as saying that they believed that negotiations could resume by the beginning of next year. [Page 3]

■ Sgt. Erez Yitzhak, 19, of Netanya, was killed and six other Israeli soldiers were wounded when a Hezbollah missile hit an Israeli tank in the southern Lebanon security zone. In a separate clash, three Israeli soldiers were hurt in the security zone after Hezbollah gunmen fired missiles at an Israeli outpost. [Page 3]

■ The mayor of Berlin said the German nation had utterly failed in its duty to protect its own citizens when Nazis ransacked Jewish shops and synagogues on Kristallnacht. Eberhard Diepgen, speaking at a ceremony marking the 58th anniversary of Kristallnacht, also said the state was no longer civilized when it allowed Germans to attack Germans.

■ Iran's deputy foreign minister promised that his country would help locate captured Israeli air navigator Ron Arad, who was shot down over Lebanon in 1986. Speaking in Paris, the minister said the matter was humanitarian, not political.

■ A former Kach activist was detained in the first of several arrests Israel said would be needed for the turnover of most of Hebron to the Palestinians. More than 8,000 Israelis gathered in Hebron to support the settlers there. [Page 2]

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

### Israeli principals glimpse pluralistic Jewish education

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) — Joyfully singing prayers of thanksgiving, some 40 third-graders clutch the new Bibles that their parents have given them.

As the children stand inside a large circle formed by their parents in the gym at Manhattan's Abraham Joshua Heschel School, the grown-ups bend down to say a few private words to their children.

In unison, they sing the prayer thanking God for bringing them to this blessed moment at which the kids will begin their formal study of Torah. There is hardly a dry eye in the room.

At the back of the gym, a group of visitors, principals of Jerusalem public schools, are deeply impressed by the sight of non-Orthodox families so happy and serious about their children's religious education.

"The way the parents and the rabbis talked with such emotion spoke to the people involved and made it more significant" than the way the comparable Chumash ceremony is held for second-graders in his school, said Dov Segal.

Segal is principal of the Aleph elementary public school, which is Orthodox, in Jerusalem's Ramot neighborhood.

He was visiting Heschel and other Jewish schools here as part of a delegation of 13 Jerusalem principals on a recent trip designed to demonstrate how Jewish education can inculcate religious values, pluralism and tolerance.

The seminar, titled "Jewish Education in a Pluralistic Society," was organized jointly by the American Jewish Committee and the Education Authority of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert joined the delegation during the first of its dozen days visiting schools and Jewish education experts in New York, New Jersey and Washington, D.C.

Participants also met with leaders of Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Judaism.

Teaching tolerance to devoutly religious people and imbuing positive religious values in people who lead secular lives has become increasingly important in Israel since an Orthodox Jew murdered Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin one year ago.

The assassination brought into painful relief the gulf separating the two populations.

### Segregated populations create demonized views

The system of public schools in Israel reflects the estrangement. There are separate schools for every segment of the population, from the fervently Orthodox to the secular.

The populations are segregated and, as a result, students tend to possess inaccurate and slightly demonized views of the other segments of the population, the principals said.

In Israel's Orthodox schools, students are often taught that there is only one way to be Jewish — their way.

And among secular Israelis who are now two and three generations removed from the meld of religious and communal identity that their grandparents knew in European and North African Jewish centers, there is Jewish illiteracy and resistance to the notion that Judaism as a religion might have something to offer them.

Although every secular school student is taught about three hours of Bible each week, it is transmitted as literature and history rather than as a sacred text with the potential to inspire holiness.

The central problem the trip was designed to address is the fact that in Israel, "secular education leaves people without any roots and religious education is very fundamentalist," said Meir Kraus, deputy director of Jerusalem's Education Authority.

"We haven't found the balance between universalism and particularism," he said.

The Israeli educators said they felt inspired by the integration of religious and secular identities evident in many of the classrooms they visited

here and wanted to try to weave some of it into their own schools in Jerusalem.

Two years ago, Israel's national Shenhar Commission concluded a four-year study of Jewish identity in Israeli schools.

One of the recommendations, to include Jewish religious education in secular schools, will be implemented next year, when the Torah portion of the week will be taught in Jerusalem's junior high schools, said Kraus of the Education Authority.

"There is always suspicion [in secular schools] that we are trying to make them" Orthodox, said Kraus, "but we just want to build common Jewish identity."

The challenge of implementing even this seemingly simple program was evident in the feelings of at least one of the principals, who dismissed the idea of teaching the portion of the week.

"I don't think it is the most important thing for my students to know," said Shula Carmel, principal of the secular Rene Cassin Junior High School. "Through history I teach them very important values, and I don't think I'll ruin the soul of some little child" by doing it that way.

She would like to see Israel introduce a religiously integrated school system, though she acknowledged that it is not likely to happen. "Being divided makes extremists on both sides," she said. "Judaism belongs to all of us."

Some principals of both religious and secular schools in Jerusalem are working to introduce that concept to their students.

Dov Singer, principal of Mevor Chaim Yeshiva, a fervently Orthodox boys high school, this year began bringing his students together with boys from a nearby secular school once a week to study Talmudic texts.

At the secular Beit Hinuch High School, 11th- and 12th-graders are required to study Talmud, according to the principal, Gideon Stachel.

"It is very rare to learn Talmud in a non-religious school," he said. "In the beginning there was some resistance, but if you are a Jew and an Israeli you must learn it because it is the basis for our culture."

A new school in Jerusalem is making coexistence a reality.

The school, Keshet, brings together equal numbers of rigorously religious and stringently secular students and teachers.

The students study some subjects together and others apart, said principal Ruth Lehavi, who is observant.

"We are not looking for a compromise between the two populations," she said of the 2-year-old school.

Only religious students participate in morning prayers and study Jewish law. Secular students will look at the same theme as religious students, but "in a different voice," she said.

For example, rather than studying the laws governing the observance of a particular holy day, the secular students are taught "the customs and the idea of the holiday," she said.

While Keshet is the only school of its kind in Israel, it may be an idea whose time has come.

Although it was difficult to attract religious students during the school's first year, Lehavi said, in the second year it received 10 times as many applications from religious students than the number of spaces available. □

## **Thousands gather in Hebron in support for Jewish settlers**

*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Thousands of Israelis thronged the West Bank town of Hebron over the weekend to show their support for the Jewish settlers there.

Police estimated that some 8,000 people, many of them members of religious youth movements and yeshiva students, spent the weekend in Hebron.

They came in a show of solidarity for the 450 Jewish settlers living in Hebron and to mark the weekly Torah portion, which records the patriarch Abraham's purchase of the land on which the Tomb of the Patriarchs sits.

Israeli soldiers clashed Saturday with Israeli and Palestinian demonstrators calling for the turnover of Hebron to Palestinian self-rule.

When police tried to disperse the demonstrators as they approached the Avraham Avinu enclave in Hebron's Jewish quarter, the protesters resisted.

Fourteen people were briefly detained, including four members of the Hadash Party, a leftist, predominantly Arab grouping that holds five Knesset seats.

Meanwhile, one Palestinian was killed and at least a dozen were wounded by Israeli soldiers during violent protests Sunday against Israeli plans to expropriate Arab-owned land for Jewish settlements near the West Bank town of Ramallah.

The violence was the most serious since the rioting in late September after the opening of a new tunnel entrance near Jerusalem's Temple Mount.

The unrest came as Israeli and Palestinian negotiators prepared to resume their discussions this week to implement the Israeli redeployment in Hebron.

President Clinton, in his first news conference since his re-election, called last Friday for the two sides to conclude an agreement for the redeployment.

"I think the first and most important thing we can do is to nail down the agreement on Hebron," Clinton said, adding that an agreement "will open the door to go on and fulfill all the other challenges that are there before us."

As negotiators planned this week to hash out the final details of the agreement, Israeli security officials continued their preparations for dealing with expected Jewish opposition to the redeployment.

### **Assassination threats against Netanyahu**

Public Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani said this week that the police were considering making preventive arrests of some 20 to 30 Jewish extremists from Hebron and nearby Kiryat Arba who security forces suspected would try to thwart the redeployment.

Kahalani tried to calm concerns that a Hebron redeployment would be fiercely opposed by Jewish extremists. "Most of the army has already left the city, and the Jewish residents will not feel the difference between the situation today and the one which will follow the redeployment," he told the Israeli daily Ma'ariv.

According to a police report made public last Friday, Israeli security officials are recommending increased protection for Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the wake of recent assassination threats against him linked to the redeployment.

The report said Hebron settlers had been stockpiling weapons, raising the concern that they would open fire on Palestinian police when they take up positions in most of Hebron.

The report also said the wives of activists Baruch Marzel and Noam Federman would set themselves on fire on the day of the redeployment.

Elisheva Federman denied the report, saying that it was unfounded. "I have children to take care of. I don't know where [the police] gets such ideas," she said.

On Sunday, her husband, a former member of the outlawed anti-Arab Kach movement, was placed under administrative detention for two months. □

## Levy visits Cairo in effort to ease Israel-Egypt tensions

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Foreign Minister David Levy traveled to Cairo last week in an effort to defuse recent Israeli-Egyptian tensions.

Despite the recent critical statements emanating from Cairo about the pace of the peace process, Levy described his meetings Nov. 7 with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak and Foreign Minister Amre Moussa as positive.

“Relations between Egypt and Israel are very important and peace between the two states can be a model for the rest of the parties,” Levy said at a joint news conference with Moussa, adding that the two sides had discussed ways to push the peace process forward.

Moussa, for his part, had an implied criticism of the Israeli stance in the ongoing negotiations with the Palestinians about implementing a turnover of most of Hebron to self-rule.

Peace “has to be balanced between the Israelis and the Palestinians, not to be imposed but to be agreed upon,” he said.

“Balance, agreement and fairness were the points stressed by the president,” Moussa said, describing the talks between Levy and Mubarak.

The talks between Israel and the Palestinians have been held up over disagreements on the security aspects of a long-delayed Israeli troop redeployment from most of Hebron. Each side has blamed the other for stalling on the agreement.

Levy’s visit just days before the start of this week’s scheduled opening in Cairo of the third annual Middle East-North African regional economic summit.

The climate for the conference was soured in recent weeks, after Egypt and other Arab states mounted sharp attacks against Israeli policy.

To protest the antagonistic climate, National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon announced last week that he would not attend the international meeting, which is expected to bring together representatives of some 85 countries.

In the final days before the summit opening, however, all sides appeared to be making efforts to ease tension.

Egyptian Ambassador to Israel Mohammed Basiouny said he expected the Israeli delegation to meet with Egyptian government officials while in Cairo.

Other Egyptian leaders, meanwhile, condemned a recent call by the Cairo chamber of commerce to boycott the Israeli delegates at the conference.

For his part, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called on leading Israeli industrialists to attend the conference.

Speaking at a seminar in Tel Aviv, Netanyahu said economic ties were a significant component of regional peace.

The Israeli government delegation to the Cairo conference will include the ministers of foreign affairs, finance, trade, agriculture, transportation and communications. □

## Hezbollah kills Israeli soldier in southern Lebanon fighting

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — One Israeli soldier was killed and six others wounded in two days of bloody clashes in southern Lebanon.

Sgt. Erez Yitzhak, 19, of Netanya, was killed

Saturday when his tank was hit by a missile during an attack launched by Hezbollah gunmen on an Israel Defense Force post in the western sector of the security zone.

Three other soldiers were wounded in the attack, one of them seriously.

On Sunday, three more soldiers were wounded, one of them seriously, under similar circumstances in the same area.

The soldiers were searching for the Hezbollah gunmen responsible for the previous day’s attack when their tank was struck by a missile.

Israeli air force jets Sunday bombed Hezbollah targets in the eastern sector of the security zone.

The fighting in Lebanon took place amid positive messages from Israel and Syria that their long-stalled negotiations would soon resume.

Over the weekend, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Syrian Foreign Minister Farouk al-Sharaa issued statements saying that the talks would resume by the beginning of 1997.

The talks were suspended in March after Syria failed to condemn a series of Hamas suicide bombings launched at the time in Israel.

Speaking on Saturday night in Jerusalem, Netanyahu said he believed that the talks could resume by January, if not sooner.

Israel will pursue peace “not only with the Palestinians, but with Syria,” he said in an address at the opening of the Jerusalem Business Conference.

“For this reason, I was very pleased to hear the declarations of the Syrian foreign minister,” the prime minister added.

Sharaa had said a day earlier that talks between Israel and Syria “would likely resume at the beginning of 1997.”

“We cannot say when and how the discussions will be resumed, but it is highly likely that the peace process will be accelerated in the beginning of next year,” Sharaa said after a meeting with his French counterpart, Herve de Charette.

The Syrian diplomat stressed that Damascus’ position had not changed and that talks must be based on the principle of land for peace. □

## Israeli premier enables ‘first driver’ to skip duty

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Most Israeli men are required to serve annual reserve duty — unless of course, they also happen to be the official driver for Israel’s first lady, Sara Netanyahu.

Israel Television reported that the driver, Ya’acov Azulai, was recently called up for reserve duty.

Shortly after, an official letter from the Prime Minister’s Office asked the Israel Defense Force to relieve him of his duties.

The IDF approved the decision, but sources told the television station that it was not the first time such a request had been made for Netanyahu’s driver.

Labor Knesset member Ra’anana Cohen cried foul over the disclosure, which comes against the backdrop of a decrease in motivation among Israeli reservists and active duty soldiers.

“Nowadays, you call up 400 people for reserve duty, and barely 20 show up. And here, the prime minister, instead of setting an example, makes sure to get the driver an exemption.”

The Prime Minister’s Office said in response that the request was for a postponement only and that Azulai would fulfill his reserve duties. □

**Senior Russian security aide may hold Israeli citizenship***By Lev Krichevsky*

MOSCOW (JTA) — A furor has erupted here over reports that one of Russia's top security officials has Israeli citizenship.

Two Moscow newspapers reported last week that Jewish business tycoon Boris Berezovsky received Israeli citizenship during a visit to the Jewish state three years ago. Berezovsky, who in the early 1990s made a fortune in the automobile business, was appointed deputy secretary of Russia's National Security Council three weeks ago.

His appointment came after Russian President Boris Yeltsin fired former National Security Chief Alexander Lebed and replaced him with Ivan Rybkin, former speaker of the Duma, the lower house of Parliament.

Berezovsky, 50, is also chairman of Russian public television, a post that makes him one of the most influential media figures here.

Unlike other wealthy Russian Jewish entrepreneurs, he has never been involved in organized Jewish life.

In the wake of the reports, Berezovsky denied that he had dual citizenship and said he would sue the newspapers for libel.

The decision to appoint Berezovsky to the security council prompted outrage from some members of the Russian Parliament, including Duma Speaker Gennady Seleznyov and liberal economist Grigory Yavlinsky. Many of his critics charged that Berezovsky had no previous experience as a politician and had been picked for the key post because of his influence in the corridors of power.

Russia's four leading television channels took Berezovsky's side. One popular television host called the two newspaper articles anti-Semitic.

Leading members of the Jewish community defended Berezovsky.

"Russian laws do not ban dual citizenship," said Mikhail Chlenov, president of the Va'ad, the Jewish confederation of Russia. "The fact of dual citizenship cannot serve as a ground for career limitations."

"I don't know if Berezovsky did receive Israeli citizenship," said Chlenov. But "this is a very typical situation" for Russian Jewish businesspeople, he added.

One Jewish businessman from Moscow who preferred to remain anonymous agreed with Chlenov.

"Most of my colleagues have obtained second passports, some of them for the sake of their business, others to take advantage of their dual citizenship in case of emergency."

He said it was "quite natural" for Jewish businessmen "to seek Israeli citizenship" to facilitate emigration in case the political situation deteriorated here.

One Jewish leader disagreed. "A political career, especially one in the National Security Council, implies that a person has only one passport." □

**Nazi hunter seeks measures to stop Papon escape attempt***By Lee Yanowitch*

PARIS (JTA) — Nazi hunter Serge Klarsfeld has asked French justice officials to take steps to prevent a former Cabinet minister who is charged with crimes against humanity from leaving the country to escape trial.

An appeals court ruled in September that Maurice Papon, 86, must face trial for ordering the deportation of 1,690 Jews, 223 of them children, to Nazi death camps when he was secretary general of the Bordeaux region's local government during Germany's wartime occupation of France.

Papon has appealed the ruling to the Supreme Court.

"I asked the public prosecutor to take away Papon's passport and put him under police control," Klarsfeld said. "He is old, he has money and if he leaves France, he can always say he is ill and cannot be extradited." Klarsfeld said he had made the request to the Justice Ministry on Oct. 25 and was still awaiting an answer.

Citing Papon's age and health problems, some observers believe that he will never set foot in the dock to face his accusers. Papon recently had heart surgery.

Klarsfeld said he was putting pressure on the Supreme Court to rule quickly on whether Papon should stand trial.

Papon has denied the charges against him, saying that he used his position in the Resistance to save Jews. Papon reportedly joined the Resistance movement near the end of 1943.

But lawyers for the families of his victims have documents signed by Papon that ordered the transfer of Jews to transit camps from which they were sent to Auschwitz.

After the liberation, Papon went on to an illustrious postwar career, serving as police chief of Paris between 1958 and 1967, then as budget minister in the French Cabinet during the 1970s.

Jewish groups, lawyers and former Resistance members have long felt that successive French governments were obstructing the judicial process, hoping that Papon would die before a trial took place that would recall a period many French people would rather forget. □

**Chirac reassures French Jews***By Lee Yanowitch*

PARIS (JTA) — French Jewish leaders emerged from a meeting with President Jacques Chirac with reassurances that Franco-Israeli relations were on a positive track.

The leaders requested the recent meeting to voice their concerns that Chirac's Middle East tour in late October had created a chill between France and Israel.

Chirac, who took a pro-Arab stance during his trip, called for the creation of a Palestinian state and said that Israel should return the Golan Heights to Syria, positions that have been rejected by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

The trip upset French Jews, who feared a repeat of the tense period in Franco-Israeli relations after President Charles de Gaulle imposed an anti-Israeli embargo after the 1967 Six-Day War.

Jean Kahn, president of the Consistoire, which tends to the religious needs of French Jews, quoted Chirac as telling the Jewish officials that he considered Netanyahu a "true personal friend."

Kahn said the French leader pledged that his "friendship for Israel would continue to exist." □

**Court clears way for Olmert trial***By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The Israeli High Court of Justice has cleared the way for the trial of Jerusalem Mayor and Knesset member Ehud Olmert, accused of fraud and misappropriation during his tenure as Likud Party treasurer during the 1988 elections.

The court last week rejected a petition filed by Olmert against the attorney general.

Olmert will be tried in Tel Aviv.

Earlier this year, the Knesset lifted Olmert's parliamentary immunity. □