



## NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ World Jewish Congress leaders meeting in Oslo expressed disappointment with remarks by Norway's prime minister regarding restitution for the Jews. At the same time, Paul Volcker expressed hope that the issue of unclaimed Jewish assets in Swiss banks would be resolved by mid-1988. [Page 3]

■ The Palestinian Authority sent Israel a letter urging it to halt immediately all settlement activity or risk "confrontation and disaster." [Page 2]

■ A senior Palestinian official told a London magazine that some suicide bombings against Israel were justified. Farouk Kaddoumi said such attacks were warranted to protest Israeli settlements.

■ Israel's High Court of Justice upheld a law banning the import of non-kosher meat and other food products into Israel. [Page 1]

■ Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma, on an official visit to Israel, assured the Jewish state that his country has no military deals with Iran. Kuchma, who met with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, is scheduled to sign cooperation agreements in the areas of justice, the environment and customs.

■ A Canadian software company temporarily halted sales of its top-selling Corel Draw computer program in Germany because it includes four banned Nazi images. Corel Corp. will remove three drawings of Adolf Hitler and one swastika symbol for future versions of its software.

■ The conservative mayor of Dreux, France, beat a far-right candidate in a Sunday runoff, dealing a setback to the increasingly influential National Front. The setback came after the National Front mayor of Toulon sparked a controversy by refusing to allow the city's book fair to honor Jewish author Marek Halter.

Because of Thanksgiving, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Friday, Nov. 29.

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

### Interfaith unions spawn growing commercial market

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) — Holiday cards for interfaith couples are flying off the countertop at Perrin & Treggett Booksellers, a Denville, N.J., store devoted to gay and lesbian and self-help titles.

One features a drawing of a house with a Christmas wreath on the front door and a Chanukah menorah blazing in the window.

Another says "Merry Christmas" over the face of Santa Claus on the front, and opens to a rabbi wearing a yarmulka and tallit under the wish for a "Happy Chanukah."

"As soon as people see this line, they grab them," proprietor Bill Glazener said of the cards celebrating both Chanukah and Christmas, which he is selling this season for the first time. Some of the cards are for gay couples, others are not.

Interfaith holiday cards are also selling well at card-and-gift stores, department stores and stationery stores across the country.

While cards designed for the large and growing market of Jews married to Christians have been around for several years, the companies that sell them are expanding rapidly to meet the demand. And the biggest greeting card companies are getting into the act.

Recycled Paper Greetings, a \$100 million company based in Chicago, has a card with a face on the front that is half-Santa, half-Chasidic rabbi. Inside it says "Merry Chanukah."

Thirty of the company's 700 winter holiday cards are devoted to celebrating both Christmas and Chanukah.

"There is strong acceptance by consumers nationally for these types of cards," said company spokesman Bill White. "I can't say exactly how many of them we sell, but they sell above average, and we're selling a lot of them."

Beyond the cards, a wellspring of new products and services is bubbling up to meet the needs of this burgeoning market — from a bi-monthly newsletter, to children's books, to tours of Israel designed specifically for interfaith families.

On the market there is even a certificate designed to imitate a ketubah, the contract of marriage required by Jewish law, and a Christmas stocking woven in blue and white, adorned with a Jewish star.

### A market certain to grow

The market for interfaith family-targeted products certainly exists — and is sure to grow.

About 1 million American households are today composed of a Jew married to a non-Jew, according to sociologist Egon Mayer.

These couples have about 1.3 million children, said Mayer, director of the Jewish Outreach Institute, which he described as an independent educational organization trying to promote Jewish continuity among the intermarried.

The spawning of this cottage industry is being welcomed by Jews married to Christians, and by Christians married to Jews. But among people concerned with encouraging in-marriage, the phenomenon is not a welcome one. "These kinds of things make me furious," said Rabbi Jerome Epstein, executive vice president of the Conservative movement's congregational arm.

Products such as these "attempt to bridge over differences and blend where there is no authenticity in blending," said Epstein, whose movement's position has been to focus on encouraging the non-Jewish partner in intermarriages to convert to Judaism. "People distort both religions when they try to blend them."

Partners in interfaith couples disagree. Interfaith families are "now feeling accepted enough to manifest in a public way their decision for themselves and their kids," said Joan Hawxhurst, a Methodist married to a Jew. Hawxhurst founded the bimonthly journal *Dovetail* in 1992 when she searched for books and periodicals "that respected me and my partner and the decisions we made together" and did not find much that satisfied her.

"There was a gaping void in resources that balanced the perspectives

of both partners in an interfaith family," she said, so she founded Dovetail, which now has about 1,000 subscribers.

In May, her company published "Interfaith Wedding Ceremonies," a compilation of marriage rituals used by interfaith couples.

It includes information on locating clergy who will officiate at an interfaith union and tips for making unhappy family members comfortable.

Hawxhurst has sold 4,000 copies by mail order.

More recently, Hawxhurst has published "Bubbe and Gram: My Two Grandmothers," the story of a girl who learns about matzah balls, Moses and Shabbat candles from her Jewish grandmother, and the Lord's Prayer and the nativity story from her Christian grandma.

Hers is one of many recent books aimed at the children of intermarriages.

The entrepreneurs who have created products for this population say they are doing more than selling cards or books. They say they are providing an important emotional resource for people who otherwise often feel quite alienated from both the Jewish and Christian communities.

"I get poignant calls from people, couples who have already made the decision to get married, and they feel so alone, as if they can't find anyone to help them do what they are bound and determined to do," Hawxhurst said.

Philip Okrend, who, with his wife, runs MixedBlessings, a greeting-card company that began six years ago and now sells more than 200,000 cards a year, said, "What we're doing is positive because there are so many interfaith couples and they appreciate what we're doing."

"We're not trying to dilute religion, but to enhance it. We're trying to make interfaith families feel good, that there's something for them," said Okrend, who, like his wife, is Jewish.

Their book "Blintzes for Blitzen" has sold 3,500 copies in the couple of months it has been out, he said.

Okrend, like other people providing these products, disagreed with the notion that they in some way promote intermarriage by creating an increasingly comfortable environment for interfaith families.

"Our products absolutely do not encourage intermarriage," he said. Intermarriage is now "just an obvious fact of life, and we're trying to celebrate that with what we do."

But for those trying to promote conversion, these products are not so innocuous. "We ought to make things more comfortable for people to convert and this kind of thing, in my mind, does just the opposite," the Conservative movement's Epstein said.

There is also some interesting — and as yet undefined — cultural quirk that is leading to these products being created by and for Jews and the people they marry, when interfaith marriage is a widespread American phenomenon, said sociologist Mayer. After all, Mayer said, "you don't see any Hispanic-Mormon toys." □

## Palestinian protest in Gaza delays resumption of talks

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli and Palestinian negotiators were set this week to resume discussions on Hebron in an atmosphere made tense by what Israel said was a Palestinian provocation.

On Sunday, hundreds of Palestinian motorists blocked an intersection approaching the isolated Jewish settlement of Netzarim in the Gaza Strip.

Palestinians said the move was to protest travel

restrictions, imposed by Israel after an Arab suicide bomber on a bicycle killed himself and three Israelis near the settlement in 1994. Israel has prohibited Palestinians from using the road near the settlement.

The head of the Israel Defense Force southern command, Maj. Gen. Shlomo Yanai, said that in contacts with Palestinian police, it became clear that Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat had given the order to block the road, to protest the travel restrictions.

The intersection was reopened to traffic Monday, and IDF reinforcements were stationed around the area in what Yanai said was intended as a clear message to Palestinians not to try to repeat the previous day's protest.

The Israeli-Palestinian talks on implementing a redeployment of Israeli forces in Hebron, now in their eighth week, have narrowed to resolving Israel's demand that its forces maintain the right to pursue suspected Arab terrorists in areas of Hebron that are to be transferred to Palestinian control.

The talks had been scheduled to resume Sunday evening, but were canceled because of the incident at Netzarim, said Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Netanyahu said he told Arafat in a telephone conversation that the incident was "a Palestinian attempt to heat up the strip" near Netzarim, and was an indication of the Palestinians' "lack of desire to conclude the negotiations."

On recent reports that his government has approved plans to build new settlements on the Golan Heights, Netanyahu said there were no plans for new construction, but the policy to allow the growth of existing settlements still held for the Golan as it does for the West Bank and Gaza.

His remarks came after the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot reported on the planned construction of some 900 housing units in three new Golan settlements.

Meanwhile, the Palestinian Authority sent a letter to Israel this week urging an immediate halt to all settlement activity to avoid "confrontation and disaster."

Under the agreements signed by the Palestinians and the previous Labor government, the future of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were to be determined in final-status negotiations. □

## Israel's High Court upholds ban on import of non-kosher foods

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's High Court of Justice has upheld a law banning the importation of pork and other non-kosher foods.

Monday's ruling does not affect the production or consumption of non-kosher food products inside the Jewish state. The court rejected the petition of the Mitreal Meat company, which had asked the court to disqualify the 1994 law on the grounds that it violated legislation on human rights and freedom of enterprise.

Chief Justice Aharon Barak noted that the ban affected the freedom of enterprise in only a limited way, because the company could still import kosher meat.

Barak also said the ban did not limit Israelis' ability to purchase and eat non-kosher food.

One of the petitioners, Eyal Ehrlich, told Israel Radio, "The Supreme Court is supposed to be a dam that protects Israeli society from anti-democratic waves, waves that harm human rights."

"The dam is not doing its job," he added.

Dedi Zucker, a Knesset member from the left-wing Meretz Party, said the ruling was proof that attacks on the court's liberalism by members of the fervently Orthodox community were unfounded. □

## Remarks of Norwegian official fall short of WJC expectations

By David Landau

OSLO (JTA) — The prime minister of Norway told Jewish leaders here this week that his government “shares your concern” over “the fate of property of the victims of the Holocaust.”

Prime Minister Thorbjorn Jagland delivered the keynote address Monday night as the World Jewish Congress executive meeting formally opened in the Norwegian capital.

The congress, which has been in the forefront of ongoing efforts to obtain restitution of property plundered in the Holocaust, chose to convene in Oslo in recognition of Norway’s position in this matter.

But the prime minister’s statement was less specific than had been hoped. It left many WJC delegates disappointed.

Jagland spoke of “allegations” that had “surfaced in the press” regarding “the fate of Jewish property confiscated by the Quisling Nazi government in Norway.”

He noted that the government had undertaken an independent inquiry, whose results were expected by March.

“We want all the facts on the table. When we receive the report we will consider appropriate follow-up measures and submit our proposals to Parliament,” Jagland said.

“We have cooperated closely with the Jewish community in Norway,” he said, adding, “I can assure you that we will continue to do so after the inquiry has been completed.”

Jagland devoted the bulk of his speech to reviewing Norway’s role in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

“The time has come to show on the ground what was agreed on paper,” he said.

WJC leaders had hoped for a formal public commitment from Norway to pay compensation for the property lost by the country’s approximately 1,800 Jews, 700 of whom were slaughtered at Auschwitz.

Edgar Bronfman, president of the WJC, told the WJC executive earlier Monday that Norway had “undertaken” to provide restitution “at today’s values.”

### Three accounting firms

Bronfman said the Norwegian position was “a great moral precedent” that strengthened the WJC’s hand in dealing with other Western European nations.

Bronfman cited Holland, Belgium and France as three countries with very substantial Jewish communities before the Holocaust that have not made restitution for properties lost.

But according to WJC officials, Norway has come under diplomatic pressure from other European countries to soften its commitment to pay restitution for Holocaust property lost in Norway.

Meanwhile, Paul Volcker, who heads the international commission set up to investigate claims against Swiss banks, told the Oslo gathering that he hoped for results by mid-1998.

Volcker, a past chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve, flew late Monday from Oslo to London to hold his first meeting with representatives of the three major accounting firms that have been appointed to carry out the investigation.

Volcker told the WJC delegates that the process would involve:

- Collecting background information from people still living on prewar and wartime Jewish deposits in Swiss banks.

- Piloting audits at a number of large and small Swiss banks. These should be concluded by mid-1997.

- Conducting audits of all Swiss banks “to the extent we feel it necessary.”

Volcker stressed his understanding that the Jewish people want finality.

He said he would proceed along this mandate unless he heard otherwise and stressed the need for cooperation from both the Swiss governments and banks and from Jewish organizations.

Some observers took his remarks as an expression of concern over reports this weekend that WJC officials, among them Greville Janner of the United Kingdom and Israel Singer, WJC secretary general, have been negotiating an interim settlement with the Swiss banks.

Ronald Lauder, treasurer of the WJC, urged his fellow delegates not to attack the Swiss bankers personally.

The more they were attacked, he said, the less cooperative they become. Bronfman, too, distinguished between the behavior of Swiss bankers during the Holocaust and that of their successors today.

“While all Swiss must take some responsibility, we can’t expect them to feel guilty,” he said of today’s bankers.

While no restitution monies have actually materialized, there is already informal talk among Jewish leaders assembled here as to how it would be allocated were it to materialize.

Benjamin Meed, president of the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, made an impassioned plea to other delegates to put needy survivors at the top of the list of priorities.

Jewish Agency for Israel leaders, including Chairman Avraham Burg, angrily denied speculation that they are eyeing the putative restitution monies as a welcomed resource with which to meet the agency’s mounting deficit.

They and other world Jewish leaders speak of Diaspora Jewish education as the best and worthiest beneficiary of heirless assets of Holocaust victims. □

## Pope beatifies two priests who opposed Nazi regime

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME (JTA) — Pope John Paul II has beatified two Austrian priests who were killed during World War II because of their opposition to the Nazis.

In Sunday’s ceremony at the Vatican, the pope said Otto Neururer and Jakob Gapp had been martyred because they refused “to worship the [Nazi] beast and its image.”

“Between Christianity and the pagan ideology of National Socialism there could be no compromise,” he said.

Beatification is a step toward sainthood.

Neururer, a priest in the Tyrolean town of Goetzens, located near Innsbruck, was tortured to death at Buchenwald on May 30, 1940.

He had been sent to Dachau and Buchenwald after advising a young woman not to marry a divorced man who was also a friend of the local Nazi chief.

Gapp, an outspoken anti-Nazi priest who was also from the Tyrol, opposed the Nazi annexation of Austria in 1938 and escaped from Austria in 1939.

Eventually arrested by the Gestapo in France, he was beheaded in August 1943 in Berlin.

This was the second time this year that the pope paid this honor to clergy who had opposed the Third Reich.

During a June trip to Germany, the pope beatified two German priests killed because of their anti-Nazi activities. □

## Russian Jewish Congress opens St. Petersburg branch

By Rachel Katz

ST. PETERSBURG (JTA) — The Russian Jewish Congress has created a branch here to boost the development of the local Jewish community.

"By creating a branch in this city with such a large Jewish community, we are showing that by uniting our strength, we can help reach the goal of a renaissance," Russian Chief Rabbi Adolf Shayeveich told the opening conference of the local branch.

Among those attending the session were more than 150 members of the Jewish community, including representatives from the St. Petersburg Jewish Association, the Hillel student organization and local charity organizations.

Also attending were Rabbi Mendel Pewzner, St. Petersburg's chief rabbi, and Galina Starovoitova, a Jewish deputy in the state Duma, or lower house of Parliament.

During the opening session, Mikhail Milashvili, a prominent local businessman, was elected the branch's first president.

"After decades without religious life, a lot of problems have arisen," Milashvili said. "We can't solve these problems if we don't have a strong community."

He expressed the hope that the local branch would address both communal interests as well as broader political and civic issues.

An estimated 100,000 Jews live in St. Petersburg.

Although Jews dominated many aspects of the city's life during the Soviet era, particularly in the arts, their Jewishness was often an obstacle to educational and career advancement.

Vladimir Goussinsky, president of the RJC, the parent body of the St. Petersburg section, said the congress should encourage those who are still afraid to acknowledge their Jewish identity to overcome their fears.

Rather than listening to urgings by the older generation to tread quietly in Russian society, Goussinsky added, younger Jews should be proud of who they are and contribute openly to the country's development.

Goussinsky became president of the RJC when the organization was founded in January with the financial backing of some of Russia's most prominent Jewish bankers and businessmen. □

## AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

### Jewish institute in Romania serves as community's heartbeat

By Ruth E. Gruber

CLUJ-NAPOCA, Romania (JTA) — Moshe Carmilly-Weinberger recalls his first postwar visit to this Romanian city in 1988.

"I came back, and I was looking for my body — the Jewish community, the Jewish choir, the Jewish high schools, teachers, students," he recalled, peering through thick glasses from under a thatch of snow-white hair.

Carmilly-Weinberger was the last rabbi of Cluj before the Holocaust. Today a spry 88-year-old, he was a professor at Yeshiva University for decades until 1975.

On that first trip back in 1988, when Romania was still ruled by Communist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu, Carmilly-Weinberger found a dwindling community of a few hundred, mostly elderly Jews. It was a pale shadow of a community that had numbered about 16,000 before the war.

The body he sought no longer existed.

But two years later, after the fall of the Ceausescu regime, Carmilly-Weinberger helped found an Institute for Hebrew and Jewish History at the Babes Bolyai University

in Cluj, a city of 300,000 in central Romania that was once the capital of Transylvania. "I wanted to have a living memorial for Transylvanian Jewry," he said during a recent visit back to attend an international conference sponsored by the institute.

"I don't believe that a plaque on the wall or a sculpture is the best way to immortalize the tragedy of the Jewish people. The Jewish way is to spread Judaism.

"I said it is possible to plant a flower amid the ruins," he added.

"It will grow and be a memorial, and it will bring the non-Jewish world closer to the Jewish world. The tragedy is that we don't know each other."

The institute, part of the university's history and philosophy department, is the only such university Jewish studies program in Romania. It offers courses in Hebrew and various aspects of Jewish and Israeli history.

Most, if not all, of the 480 registrants are not Jewish, and only about a quarter of them finish the courses.

"But even if we speak of 120 students, that's very impressive," said David Barat, an Israeli who has been teaching Hebrew and other subjects at the institute for two years.

"Most students don't want academic credit," he said. "Most just come because it is attractive to them. The main attraction is real, pure intellectual curiosity, and a mystery accompanying the Hebrew language."

There is still a small Jewish community in Cluj, which, supported by the Federation of Romanian Jewish Communities and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, maintains a kosher lunchroom, a clinic and other religious and social welfare services.

But in many ways, the university institute has taken over the public, albeit secular, Jewish role in the city. While several large synagogue buildings in Cluj still stand, the only functioning synagogue today is a small prayer room in a nondescript apartment building. On one recent Friday night, the congregation consisted of exactly 10 men.

### Promotion of 'real-Semitism'

In addition to courses, the Institute for Hebrew and Jewish History sponsors research work, exhibits, publications and other projects aimed at promoting public knowledge about Jews, Judaism and Jewish culture.

In many ways, these activities fulfill what Nicolae Cajal, the president of the Romanian Federation of Jewish Communities, has called the promotion of "real-Semitism," that is, countering potential anti-Semitism through the dissemination of information and other educational initiatives.

"It's a very good opportunity for people to get to know Judaism," Michael Lotem, first secretary of the Israeli Embassy in Bucharest, said of the Institute and its activities. "It's direct contact — you go, see, get information. That can help."

Lotem was in Cluj this fall at a ceremony held at the university to award the Righteous Among Nations recognition to an elderly Cluj woman, Anna Pal, who had saved a Jewish child during World War II.

The ceremony took place during the sixth annual international conference sponsored by the institute. Both events were covered in the local media.

At the conference, "The Haskalah and its Impact on Jewish Life in Romania," Jewish and non-Jewish scholars — mostly from Romania, but also from Hungary, Israel and the United States — presented papers.

"After six years here I can look back with great satisfaction," said Carmilly-Weinberger, who has attended each of the conferences. "I see that this will spread knowledge of Judaism and will be an eternal lamp in memorial to the community that was lost," he said. □