



NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ The Reform movement's lay leadership overwhelmingly rejected a resolution that would have rescinded a 23-year-old rabbinic policy against officiation at interfaith weddings. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, meeting in Los Angeles, also heard an impassioned speech from Rabbi Eric Yoffie, the group's president, on the movement's campaign to expand its presence in Israel.

■ Israel's governing coalition decided to introduce Knesset legislation that would affirm the Chief Rabbinate's control over all conversions to Judaism in Israel. The measure would not affect conversions performed by non-Orthodox rabbis outside the Jewish state.

■ Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai defended the government's decision to give subsidies to Jewish settlements in the West Bank. Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat said the move was "a declaration of war." [Page 2]

■ The Palestinian Authority will not extradite to Israel suspects arrested in the Beit El drive-by shooting, according to the head of the Palestinian security service. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine claimed responsibility for the attack, which resulted in two deaths. [Page 2]

■ Israeli planes attacked Hezbollah positions in the southern Lebanon security zone. The attacks came a day after Hezbollah gunmen ambushed an Israeli patrol in southern Lebanon, slightly wounding two soldiers. [Page 3]

■ The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society will help resettle more than 100 Kurdish refugees in the United States. Some 25 years ago, the Kurdish community helped Jews to flee Iraq.

■ The American Technion Society received a \$30 million commitment to establish the world's first comprehensive school for international management of technology-based companies. The school, to be named for William Davidson, chief executive officer of Guardian Industries, will be established at the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology in Haifa.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Israeli Arab scholars propose to alter Jewish state's identity

By Gil Sedan

TEL AVIV (JTA) — The packed hall at Tel Aviv University was not quite ready for the offensive.

Professor Sa'id Zeidani, a young, amiable-looking gentleman, went up to the podium during a recent two-day symposium on Israeli Arab identity and launched a full-scale invective.

His message: It is time for Israel's Arabs to enjoy full, equal rights as full, equal partners in the State of Israel.

"We have entered the post-Zionist era," he said. "One must talk of a uniform Israeli identity."

The idea is not new. Nor was it the first time Zeidani spoke about it.

What was novel was the magnitude and manner in which it was being presented.

No longer was it a theoretical idea to be discussed on an academic level, no longer a thought whispered in closed rooms.

Instead, it was presented as a straightforward demand, one to be placed loud and clear on the Israeli national agenda.

The demand portends a debate — about the long-term status of Israel's Arab citizens — that is likely to heat up after the conclusion of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

A conference of Israeli Arab political leaders and activists held during the weekend in Nazareth concluded with a resolution calling for recognition of the country's Arab citizens as equals in a state in which Jews would not have extra privileges.

The audience at the Tel Aviv symposium, mostly Middle East scholars with a pronounced interest in the problems of the Arab minority in Israel, moved uncomfortably in their seats as Zeidani spoke.

Zeidani, born in the village of Tamra near Haifa and educated at Israeli universities, is now the dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at Bir Zeit University in the West Bank.

The mostly Jewish audience was torn between the desire to listen with academic politeness to the provocative presentation and the feeling that a prominent Israeli Arab citizen was tearing apart the fundamental idea of Israel as a Jewish state.

A counteroffensive was inevitable. Professor Yehoshua Porat, one of Israel's most senior Middle East experts, challenged the sincerity of Zeidan's desire for "equal partnership" with Israel's Jews. Porat spoke of the "growing identification of Israel's Arabs with the Palestinian people."

Referring to the position of Dr. Ahmed Tibi, an Israeli citizen, as special adviser to Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat, he said, "There is no other example in the world in which an ethnic minority identifies so clearly with the other party. Therefore, the demand to create a state 'of all its citizens' amounts to creating a binational state."

Calls for independent Arab council

Zeidani has in the past presented a detailed plan for territorial autonomy for Israeli Arabs in the Galilee and in the country's central region, known as the "Triangle," the two regions where most of the Arab population in Israel lives. The plan, based on the Swiss canton system, would create areas within Israel in which the Arab population would enjoy wide-ranging autonomy.

Zeidani's colleague at Bir Zeit University, Azmi Beshara, an Israeli Arab from Nazareth, went a step further at the conference.

He called for an independent Arab representative council that would represent Israel's 835,000 Arabs in dealings with the national authorities.

Beshara ran on a ticket of "cultural autonomy" in the May elections and won a seat in the current Knesset.

The issue of Israel as a state "of all its citizens," in contrast to its definition as a Jewish state, as suggested by some of Israel's Arab leaders already has sounded alarm bells in Jerusalem.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, during a recent series of talks with European leaders, warned them that granting the Palestinians in the

territories full sovereignty would "entail similar demands by the Arabs in the Galilee."

The very mention of Israel's Arab population in this context was an expression of no-confidence by Israel's premier in his Arab citizens — and prompted two Arab Knesset members to accuse Netanyahu of slander.

True, there is no love lost between Netanyahu and the Arab population: A full 95 percent of them voted against Netanyahu in the May elections.

But ever since the establishment of the state, despite occasional confrontations, Israel's Arabs have never presented a security or political problem.

Indeed, Israeli security officials have stated that 99.9 percent of Israel's Arabs have never been involved in any anti-Israel activities.

Professor Sammy Smoocha of the University of Haifa, who for the past 20 years has tracked the attitudes toward Israel among the country's Arab population, discussed some of his survey findings at the symposium.

Two years ago, he surveyed a group of Israeli Arabs, asking them whether they thought that Israel had the right to exist as a Zionist state. Thirty-five percent of the respondents responded negatively, down from the 57 percent who answered no in a similar survey in 1980.

In the latest survey, Smoocha also asked two groups of Arab and Jewish interviewees: "Do you agree to the statement that Israel should continue to exist as a Jewish Zionist state, whereas its Arab population would enjoy full democratic rights, would receive their proportional share in the state budget and would enjoy cultural autonomy?"

Sixty-six percent of the Israeli Arabs replied positively. Some 70 percent of the country's Jews also agreed with the statement.

In other words, Smoocha said on a hopeful note, there appears to be a national consensus, both among Arabs and Jews, for a framework for Jewish-Arab coexistence within the borders of Israel.

Smoocha's most recent survey was conducted during a successful period of the peace process. A similar survey, held in the shadow of the current impasse in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, might produce different results.

Despite the ups and downs of the peace process, Israeli Arabs still suffer from a deep sense of discrimination. Last week, for example, a group of Arab mayors initiated a sit-in under a protest tent they erected in front of the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem. The protest continued this week.

They claimed that the government had not honored the budget allocations that had been promised to Israel's Arab municipalities by the previous government. The group also planned to meet with ambassadors in Israel to "bring the plight of Israel's Arabs to the knowledge of world public opinion," said Hussein Suleiman, spokesman for the Committee of Arab Mayors. □

Israel firm on financing expansion of settlements

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli government officials this week defended a Cabinet decision to give special tax breaks and other financial benefits to Jewish settlements in the West Bank.

The officials also dismissed Palestinian warnings of renewed confrontations over the issue.

"We are not seeking a confrontation with the Palestinians," said Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who met Sunday with Jewish settlement leaders.

"We are aware of the threats, but they will not

deter us," he added. "We have said again and again that the settlements in Judea, Samaria and Gaza are deserving of support."

Mordechai's comments came in the wake of last Friday's Cabinet decision to grant level "A" status to the Jewish settlements, the same status accorded development towns and border communities.

The status will provide settlements with a series of financial benefits, including subsidies for housing, education and investments. Such subsidies had been discontinued by the previous Labor government.

The Netanyahu Cabinet decision not only drew criticism from the Palestinian leadership, but also from the United States and the European Union, which said Israel's government was adding more friction to already-tense Israeli-Palestinian relations.

Mordechai dismissed Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat's criticism over the weekend of the Cabinet decision as a "declaration of war" by Israel.

The Cabinet move came in response to last week's terrorist attack on a car carrying an Israeli family near Beit El. The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine claimed responsibility for the attack, after which the perpetrators fled to nearby Ramallah.

Palestinian officials complained Sunday that Israel had tightened the closure it had imposed on the Ramallah area in the wake of the shooting. Israel closed off secondary roads and dirt roads leading from the self-rule enclave. Sunday's move came in the wake of reports that Palestinians were using them to avoid Israeli roadblocks.

Mordechai, who on Sunday visited the family of Ita Tzur, 42, and her son, Ephraim, 12, who were killed in the attack, demanded that the Palestinian Authority hand over the terrorists responsible for the shooting.

But the head of all Palestinian security forces in the West Bank, Jibril Rajoub, said this week that the Palestinian Authority had no intention of handing over the suspects. Under the terms of the self-rule accords, suspected terrorists can be tried and punished within the self-rule areas.

Observers have noted that the Palestinian Authority consistently avoided extraditing terror suspects to Israel, fearing that the move would completely undermine its credibility among the Palestinian people.

But critics charge that the sentences imposed on convicted terrorists are merely token actions, adding that more than a few convicts have wound up with positions on the Palestinian security forces.

'You can find an excuse for everything'

While Cabinet members emphasized that no decision was made to establish new Jewish settlements, the move was interpreted by Palestinians as another step toward changing facts on the ground in the territories.

Ahmed Karia, the speaker of the Palestinian legislative council, warned in an Israel Television interview that the council had called on Palestinians to "prepare for confrontation" against the Israeli government decision.

Senior Israeli security officials also warned that the government decision could spark new violence in the territories.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the remarks of Karia, also known as Abu Alaa, made it clear that the Palestinians were seeking an excuse to heat up the atmosphere. "You can find an excuse for everything," Netanyahu told Israel Television.

Meanwhile, Jewish settlement leaders had a mixed reaction to the Cabinet decision.

They said it should have been made six months ago, adding that the criteria for the new "A" status might apply to less than half of the settlements. □

East Bay federation donors can earmark campaign gifts

By Teresa Strasser

Jewish Bulletin of Northern California

SAN FRANCISCO (JTA) — From \$5 checks to big money donations, Jewish communities have been handling their philanthropic dollars in much the same way since Jewish community federations opened their doors almost a century ago.

It's a concept known as centralized giving.

A donor writes a check and a federation decides how to spend it — what percentages should go toward education, refugee resettlement and other social services.

It has been the "sacred cow of giving," said Ami Nahshon, executive vice president of the Jewish Community Federation of the Greater East Bay, located in Oakland, Calif.

His federation is not slaughtering the sacred cow but merely offering another breed.

Following in the footsteps of charities nationally, the East Bay federation will enable local donors to specify how they want their gifts spent.

"People are looking to be able to see, touch, feel, taste in a very direct way the benefits of their philanthropy," Nahshon said.

For the 1997 campaign, donors will be urged to give first to the general fund.

They will then have the option of giving to four specialized funds focusing on social justice, education, Israel and spiritual renewal.

The federation hopes to earn \$1.5 million this campaign year for the specialized funds.

"It's a wonderful opportunity to give to something you're interested in," said campaign Chairwoman Ruth Reffkin, a financial planner. "Our goal is to empower people to feel they have more of a voice in how their gift is allocated. We want to give some additional options."

Another choice: Donors contributing a minimum of \$10,000 can "actually design a project, follow it and help it along," Reffkin said.

Nationally, federation campaigns have been roughly flat for the last five years. In the East Bay area, fund raising saw a drop from \$2.8 million in 1995 to \$2.7 million in 1996.

Nahshon hopes that the federation's plan will encourage new donors and motivate regular contributors to give more by aligning the agency's philosophy with the overall trend in national philanthropy.

He calls the recent bent toward specific giving a "social trend."

"It's part of the same trend that now sees people being less trustful of government, less inclined to trust central organizations," he said.

The old model "was based on the ethic that Jews pay a voluntary tax," he said.

"An internal sense of obligation drove that kind of giving. Today, that sense of obligation is eroding."

While the federation is appealing to donors' needs to have a more direct connection to their good deeds, leaders are stressing that donations to the overall campaign are still crucial to maintaining services. □

Fighting erupts in Lebanon after rockets hit Jewish state

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Fighting erupted in southern Lebanon over the weekend after rockets were fired across the border into northern Israel.

On Saturday, Hezbollah gunmen ambushed an

Israeli convoy in the eastern sector of the security zone. The unit included the head of the Israel Defense Force liaison unit in southern Lebanon, Brig. Gen. Eli Amitai.

Amitai was lightly wounded from shrapnel.

Another member of the unit was also lightly wounded.

The forces in the convoy immediately returned fire, killing one of the gunmen.

In subsequent searches in the area on Sunday, IDF forces came upon a wounded Hezbollah gunman and killed him.

Also Sunday, Israeli jets rocketed Hezbollah targets in southern Lebanon. The IDF spokesman said all planes returned safely to base.

In another development, Israel submitted a complaint to the five-nation group monitoring a cease-fire in southern Lebanon to protest last Friday night's Katyusha rocket attack launched from southern Lebanon into the western Galilee.

The attack, which caused no injuries or property damage, was the first rocket assault on the Jewish state since April, when the United States brokered a cease-fire.

The agreement called on Israel and Hezbollah not to launch attacks from or target civilian areas on either side of the border.

Hezbollah leaders denied involvement in the rocket attack.

IDF officers said Palestinian groups operating in the coastal area, from where the rockets were launched, could be responsible.

Israeli officials said that attack was launched from an area under Lebanese control, adding that it was an outright violation of the April cease-fire. □

Israel, Turkey plan joint study

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Turkey has always been a popular vacation destination for Israelis.

Now, they can go there to study.

Israeli students in the Middle East studies program at Ben-Gurion University of the Negev will be able to spend a semester at Bosphorus University in Turkey on a program jointly developed by the faculties at both institutions.

More than 40 students will visit archaeological sites and hear lectures from professors from both of the universities. □

Police uncover forgery ring

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli police have uncovered a forgery ring that produced and sold fake diplomatic passports for African states.

Among the suspected members of the ring was a 31-year-old Herzliya resident.

A police search of his house turned up fake documents, stamps and passports.

Police believe that the ring sold the passports for thousands of dollars to Israelis. □

Russian immigrant held for spying

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli security forces disclosed this week the arrest of a Russian immigrant on suspicion of spying.

Anatoly Gender, a 49-year-old electrical engineer, was charged at the Tel Aviv District Court with spying and having contact with a foreign agent.

He is suspected of passing classified information to the Soviet Union, and later to Russia, over the past 15 years in exchange for tens of thousands of dollars. □

Nixon White House probed tax records of Jewish ally*By Joe Berkofsky**Jewish Bulletin of Northern California*

SAN FRANCISCO (JTA) — In addition to targeting wealthy Jewish Democrats for IRS audits, the Nixon White House secretly investigated tax records of a key Jewish Republican slated to run the Nixon re-election campaign's outreach to Jews.

The White House's target in 1971 was Lawrence Goldberg, then a leading Rhode Island Republican and Jewish activist.

Goldberg, 65, says that even now he feels "anger" about the illegal probe of his tax returns and the questioning of his loyalty. "No one is more outraged than I am. Why should they do it to me? I was there to help them," said Goldberg, a real estate investor who now lives in California.

Prompted by new revelations that Nixon used the IRS to target Jewish opponents, Goldberg spoke out this week about his former boss for the first time.

"I have always felt badly about the people in the [re-election] campaign. We were lied to and we were used," Goldberg said. "I felt victimized. I felt anger and disappointment, which continues to this day."

Whether Nixon was personally involved with the IRS probe is unknown.

Goldberg first learned he was a White House target in 1974, during House Judiciary Committee hearings on whether to impeach Nixon. He was, therefore, not surprised to learn of the recent revelations that Nixon ordered a top aide to have the IRS "go after" Jews at a time when the White House used the IRS for its own purposes.

Newly released White House tapes show that in September 1971 meetings with domestic adviser John Ehrlichman and Chief of Staff H.R. Haldeman, Nixon urged IRS investigations of wealthy Jews who contributed to 1968 Democratic presidential candidate Hubert Humphrey and former Maine Sen. Edmund Muskie, who was the Democratic presidential front-runner, the San Francisco Examiner reported.

But Jewish Democrats were not Nixon's only targets. That same year, the White House went after at least one Jewish Republican: Goldberg, who was then a successful Rhode Island manufacturer, Jewish community leader, GOP activist and staunch Nixon supporter.

'Wanted background information'

At the time, Goldberg was being recommended by millionaire Republican contributor and veteran GOP leader Max Fisher to co-chair the Jewish Voter Group, an arm of the Committee to Re-elect the President. As a "formality," Goldberg met with Attorney General John Mitchell, who headed what was known as CREEP.

But Goldberg also recalled that he was never asked for credentials or references. What he did not know in 1971 was that the White House did not need the information because it was secretly investigating him. In a White House memo dated Sept. 22, 1971, John "Jack" Caulfield, head of security for the president's office, drafted a background list that detailed Goldberg's considerable Republican track record and called him "wealthy."

Caulfield later told the House committee that White House counsel John Dean "wanted background information on Mr. Goldberg."

The memo went on to say that Goldberg was active in the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith — he chaired the ADL's New England regional board and was on its national committee — and that in January of that year he and two other ADL members appeared at a Soviet

dance group performance in Boston to "express dissatisfaction with Soviet repression of Jewish civil rights."

Goldberg and other ADL members distributed leaflets at Soviet cultural events in an effort to enact U.S. trade legislation pressuring the Soviet Union into allowing Jewish emigration.

In the same memo, which surfaced in the 1974 House impeachment probe, Caulfield wrote that in a summer 1969 meeting of Rhode Island Republican officials, Goldberg "made strong comments vis-a-vis U.S. policy toward Israel in the Mideast."

Goldberg, an ardent Zionist who had also chaired a Jewish Community Relations Council in Rhode Island, had delivered a speech opposing a Mideast peace plan by then-Secretary of State William Rogers that Goldberg believed was "an effort to impose" a settlement on Israel.

Caulfield's memo, gleaned from comments by Goldberg's friend, Rhode Island U.S. Marshal Donald Wyatt, to whom Caulfield was sent by another Goldberg friend, then-Nixon special assistant and now television pundit John McLaughlin, concluded with a warning:

"Inasmuch as Goldberg is scheduled to function in the Jewish area, consideration should be given to a potential question of loyalty with respect to the aims and purposes" of CREEP's Jewish Voter Group.

Goldberg shook his head at the memory.

"They questioned my loyalty," he said, adding, "I was very loyal to the Nixon campaign."

The Jewish Voter Group, which worked to convince centrist Jewish Democrats to vote for Nixon, ended up winning 36 percent of the Jewish vote for Nixon's re-election in 1972.

In addition, on Oct. 6, 1971, Caulfield delivered a memo to Dean, along with a list of Goldberg's charitable contributions, totaling some \$7,000, which the White House had covertly obtained from IRS Assistant Commissioner Vernon Acree. "As you can see," Caulfield wrote to Dean, "it postures an extremely heavy involvement in Jewish organizational activity."

'Motivated more by paranoia'

Caulfield added: "I don't wish to raise this issue again. However, in my judgment, the attorney general should be discreetly made aware in this regard."

Caulfield initially told the House committee that the IRS check was only to see whether Goldberg was "financially sound." But under further questioning, he acknowledged that the IRS tax records were a "piece of intelligence information that [CREEP] should be made aware of."

After Nixon was re-elected, Goldberg — a self-described "liberal Republican" and product of a "left-wing" Rhode Island family — joined the White House as senior adviser to White House counsel James Lynn. Less than two years later, the White House's secret targeting of Goldberg became part of an impeachment article the House committee was preparing against Nixon as an example of White House abuse of power. Nixon resigned in August 1974.

Goldberg went on to work for President Ford, became a vice president of Brandeis University, then worked for Ronald Reagan. He later led the American Gathering of Holocaust Survivors in Washington before becoming a consultant.

Today, Goldberg, still a loyal Republican, remains convinced that the Nixon White House's violation of his civil rights and similar misdeeds were motivated more by paranoia and knee-jerk reactions than outright anti-Semitism. "There were a lot of naive, stupid judgments — it comes out more than anti-Semitism," he said. "It was more stupid than nasty." □