



## NEWS AT A GLANCE

- **Israeli soldiers posing as Palestinians arrested a number of Arab protesters in the West Bank town of Hebron.** The arrests came in the wake of several days of violent demonstrations. Israel's defense minister told the U.S. and Egyptian ambassadors to Israel that Israel expects the Palestinian Authority to deal firmly with unrest in the territories. [Page 3]
- **Three members of an elite Palestinian security force were sentenced to death for the fatal beating of a Palestinian.** Ten Palestinians have been sentenced to death in the past three years, but none has been executed.
- **A Palestinian reportedly is in the custody of the Palestinian Authority on suspicion of selling land to Jews.** The man was arrested last month in a village that is under Israeli security control.
- **A senior Iranian cleric called for the death of those responsible for a poster depicting the Islamic prophet Mohammed as a pig.** "All those elements involved in carrying out this offense are condemned to death and Muslims are duty-bound to punish them for their deeds," he said.
- **The United States government is asking Arab countries to reconsider their planned boycott of November's Middle East summit in Qatar.** Several countries, including Saudi Arabia, have stated they would not attend the conference because of Israel's recent policies.
- **A Hungarian neo-Nazi leader was found guilty of inciting racial hatred.** The man received a one-year sentence for saying, "Hungary will soon be handed over to the caftan-robed and kippah-wearing Zionists" in a speech last year.
- **The American Jewish Committee opened an office in Berlin.** The group said that among the first items on its agenda will be to get reparations for Holocaust survivors living in Eastern Europe.
- **The Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum chose architect Moshe Safdie to expand and renovate the Tel Aviv museum.** The cost of the work is expected to be \$20 million.

### AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

#### **Berlin Jewry envisions change with election of new chairman**

By Deidre Berger

FRANKFURT (JTA) — For the first time since World War II, Berlin's Jewish community will be led by a member of the postwar generation.

German Jewish leaders hope that the generational change will revitalize the Berlin Jewish community, the largest in Germany, and accelerate the integration of Russian Jews. Last week, the Berlin Jewish community parliament elected 46-year-old Andreas Nachama to be its new director. He will replace 76-year-old Jerzy Kanal, who is retiring.

The more than 10,000 members of Berlin's Jewish community elect a new parliament every four years, which in turn elects a five-member board of directors and a chairman. The new chairman of the parliament is Hermann Simon, director of the Centrum Judaicum, a research institute and museum in Berlin.

Nachama is the director of Berlin's Topography of Terror Foundation, which sponsors a permanent exhibition on the crimes of the Gestapo.

The historian, who specializes in Jewish cultural affairs, received nationwide attention several years ago for a blockbuster exhibition he planned and organized in Berlin called "Patterns of Jewish Life."

Ten years ago, Nachama conceived of and organized the "Jewish Cultural Days," which has become a popular annual event in Berlin presenting films, discussions, music and theater on different aspects of Jewish life.

Nachama is the son of the Berlin Jewish community's longtime cantor, Estrongo Nachama, one of the best-known cantors in Europe.

The new community head says the top priority for the new parliament is to improve the integration of Russian Jews, who now make up more than half the community members. Since the fall of the Berlin Wall, more than 30,000 Russian Jews have moved to Germany.

In a recent newspaper interview here with the nationally distributed Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung, Nachama said it is important to attract more immigrants into community work and to make the established community aware of their needs.

#### **No Russian Jews elected**

In the recent parliamentary elections, none of the Russian Jewish candidates who moved to Berlin in the last decade was elected.

During the campaign, some of those candidates charged that the previous parliament had displayed little or no interest in drawing the Russian Jews into the community.

But before he can focus on new tasks, Nachama will have to settle personal rivalries and restore credibility to the Jewish parliament. The previous board of directors had rejected charges of misuse of community funds and questionable dealings in real estate transactions carried out by members of the parliament and their family members.

The publicity in the German press had weakened the power of the board of directors in the public perception, bringing the community's affairs to a virtual standstill. The former parliament members involved in the charges did not run for re-election.

"Nachama is a good choice as someone who can try and bring community affairs back to normal," according to Micha Gutmann, the former executive director of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

He said Nachama's most immediate goal must be to quiet down the scandals that have surrounded the community and rebuild its political influence.

One area of conflict has been the community's unclear position regarding a Jewish museum the city of Berlin plans to open next year.

City officials last week fired the Israeli director of the museum, Amnon Barzel, to force a strong focus on local Jewish history.

In contrast, Barzel favored an international approach that features

exhibitions dealing with contemporary Jewish life. The newly elected leaders of the Jewish community were furious with Berlin's move and have threatened to stop cooperation with the city if it does not reinstate Barzel.

Other pressing problems include community finances. The city of Berlin, which is in a financial crisis, is slashing numerous budget expenditures, including those to Jewish institutions.

For instance, the city recently announced it would no longer subsidize the popular Jewish adult education programs run by the community. □

### **Post-Communist Russia denies some Jews permission to leave**

*By Lev Krichevsky*

MOSCOW (JTA) — Six years after the collapse of communism when Jews around the world stopped chanting "Let My People Go," there are still refuseniks in Russia.

According to the Moscow-based Russian-American Bureau on Human Rights, a monitoring group and an affiliate of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, about 60 Russian Jews have been denied permission to emigrate on the grounds that they have had access to state secrets.

Russians have to obtain a permit from local authorities in order to emigrate.

During Soviet times, Jews and others were regularly refused permission; in most cases today, these permits are issued almost automatically. However, permits are still being denied for some who have either been in the military or worked in a "sensitive" industry.

Rudolf Masarsky once worked as an engineer at a nuclear submarine plant in St. Petersburg. Four years ago, he left his job and applied for emigration.

Masarsky's petition was denied. Recently, the Federal Security Service, known as the FSB, a successor to the KGB, extended the denial until 1999.

Indeed, officials told him it is unlikely he would ever be allowed to leave the country, Masarsky said.

For a number of years, Masarsky had access to classified information.

After he left his job with the submarine plant, this information was made public. However, the FSB insisted the information was improperly declassified.

Masarsky has filed complaints with local and federal courts, but he still has not been allowed to reunite with his family abroad.

A few years ago, Russia established an independent commission to deal with refuseniks. Some experts say, however, that the commission has no power to resolve emigration problems.

"Theoretically, there is this commission on issues of state secrecy, but the FSB still has the final word," said Yuriy Schmidt, a St. Petersburg lawyer.

Undeniably, life has gotten easier for refuseniks since the fall of communism. Unlike Soviet refuseniks, these would-be emigres can travel abroad — some even enjoy access to electronic mail.

But they still cannot leave permanently.

"We don't want to say this is a return to the bad old days," said UCSJ President Yosef Abramowitz, who was here on a recent mission.

"But these four dozen Jewish refusenik families are looking for the West to support them."

The UCSJ delegation raised some of the 60 cases with Russian officials during its visit to the former Soviet Union this week.

It made progress in at least one case.

Isaak Kaufman, 73, was a prominent military researcher in the small Siberian town of Biysk. Now Kaufman is half-blind and his wife suffers from severe

diabetes. The family applied for emigration five years ago and was refused.

The Kaufman case is moving in a positive direction, Abramowitz said.

Another case that the UCSJ group discussed with the Russian authorities is that of Russian ecologist Alexander Nikitin.

Charging him with "treason" for "divulging state secrets," the FSB held Nikitin, a former navy officer, without trial for 10 months last year.

Nikitin is alleged to have committed espionage while helping a Norwegian ecological group collect information on Russian nuclear security in the Arctic.

Although Nikitin is not technically a refusenik, his status still has implications for the fate of human rights in post-Communist Russia.

"Nikitin isn't Jewish," Abramowitz said. "But his case is a litmus test about who is in charge in Russia. Is it the remnants of the KGB, or is it the democrats?" □

### **Vatican offers to host talks between Israel, Palestinians**

*By Ruth E. Gruber*

ROME (JTA) — Pope John Paul II has sent letters to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat expressing his "deep worry" over the deadlock in the peace process.

The letters, urging the two leaders to overcome obstacles and resume dialogue, were sent June 16, but the Vatican released their text only recently.

In them, the pope expressed his concern at the standstill in negotiations and said that the Vatican would be willing to host Israeli and Palestinian delegations to resume the talks "with good will."

Israeli-Palestinian negotiations were suspended in March, after Israel began building a new Jewish neighborhood in southeastern Jerusalem and a Palestinian suicide bomber killed three Israelis at a Tel Aviv cafe.

Chief Vatican spokesman Joaquin Navarro-Valls told reporters that the pope "wanted to stimulate the leaders to make a serious effort to get the process going again."

In his letter to Netanyahu, the pope said, "The Israeli and Palestinian peoples are already shouldering a burden of suffering which is too heavy. "This burden must not be increased; instead it deserves the utmost commitment to finding the paths of necessary and courageous compromises."

Finding these paths would earn Netanyahu humanity's gratitude, he wrote.

In his letter to Arafat, the pope described a "de facto interruption of dialogue."

"My fear is that if this situation continues it will become increasingly difficult to revive the quest for the trust that is essential to every negotiation."

He said the painful lessons of the past must not prove "vain and useless."

In neither of the letters did the pope refer to current causes of the stalemate in the peace negotiations.

He also did not mention his often-stated desire to visit the Holy Land before the year 2000.

But he did stress that peace in the region was particularly important now as millions of faithful from the three monotheistic religions that hold Jerusalem as a holy city — Judaism, Christianity and Islam — would want to visit the region in the years leading up to the millennium.

"Especially for this reason there should be peace, so that the meaning of the approaching Great Jubilee of the year 2000 may be complete," he said in his letter to Arafat. □

## Israelis go undercover to arrest Palestinian protesters in Hebron

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Masked Israeli undercover units took Palestinian demonstrators in Hebron by surprise this week when they began arresting stone-throwers after first mingling with them.

News reports said that least seven rioters were detained by undercover troops and that the demonstrations died down following the arrests.

Israeli security forces have stepped up their operations in the West Bank town since Tuesday, when two Israeli soldiers were wounded in a pipe bomb explosion. One of the soldiers remains in serious condition.

The latest wave of violence in Hebron was unleashed after the appearance in the city of leaflets depicting the Muslim prophet Mohammed as a pig.

A 25-year-old Israeli woman, Tatyana Suskin of Jerusalem, was charged Thursday with distributing the leaflets. The prosecutor has asked that she be held in custody until the end of legal proceedings against her.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, who condemned the leaflets, has accused the Palestinian Authority of being behind the recent violence in Hebron. Speaking to reporters before talks with the European Union's Middle East envoy, Miguel Angel Moratinos, Netanyahu said Israel cannot accept violence while running a peace process.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai summoned the U.S. and Egyptian ambassadors to Israel and told them that the government expects the self-rule authority to deal firmly with the unrest.

Also in Hebron on Thursday, a member of a Hamas terrorist cell convicted of the kidnapping and murder of Israeli soldier Sharon Edri, and the murder of 11 other Israelis, escaped from a Palestinian jail, local media reported.

Ibrahim Gheinimat had been detained, along with four other members of the terrorist cell from the Tsurif village near Hebron, by Israeli and Palestinian forces. A sixth member of the cell carried out a suicide bombing at a Tel Aviv cafe in March, killing three Israeli women.

The Palestinian Authority informed Israel of the breakout. □

## Survivors organization presses Germany to pay for health care

By Rebecca Phillips

NEW YORK (JTA) — An organization for children of Holocaust survivors is pressing the German government to compensate survivors for their health care costs.

The initiative comes in the wake of revelations that Germany has been paying war disability pensions to more than a million of its World War II veterans, including non-German veterans of the SS.

The German government should "treat its victims as well as it treats its own veterans — the perpetrators," New York attorney Menachem Rosensaft said in an interview. Rosensaft, founding chairman of the International Network of Children of Jewish Holocaust Survivors, recently launched a campaign to encourage the German government to create an insurance fund to cover the medical expenses of all Holocaust survivors.

Rep. Carolyn Maloney (D-N.Y.) plans to introduce a resolution in Congress that would call for the creation of such a fund, according to a spokeswoman.

"The victims of the Holocaust have suffered irreparably at the hands of the German government," said Rosensaft.

Rosensaft is primarily concerned with those survivors who are unable to afford necessary health care. A prime example is his own mother.

Rosensaft's mother suffered untreated malaria and hepatitis while she was interned at Bergen-Belsen. As a result, she has developed severe cirrhosis of the liver.

Rosensaft and his wife are able to pay for the portion of his mother's health care not covered by Medicare. Many survivors, however, cannot afford the health care they need.

Rosensaft said his mother's condition made him "realize the scope of the problem."

According to Rosensaft, there are "tens of thousands of survivors across the U.S." whose failing health care is a result of their Holocaust experiences.

A spokesman for the German Embassy in Washington said that survivors already can submit their medical bills to the German government and be compensated for a certain percentage if they prove that their condition stems directly from the Holocaust.

Ulf Hanel, the embassy's consul general, said that the German government follows a "complicated procedure" to determine the compensation percentage based on the survivor's condition and age.

Reparations for "physical injury and damage to health" are part of Germany's series of compensation laws, dating back to the 1956 Federal Law for the Compensation of the Victims of National Socialist Persecution.

### Germany should cover 'all health care costs'

Rosensaft, however, believes Germany should compensate survivors for all health care costs even if a person's condition is not directly linked to a concentration camp experience.

"Any survivor's state of health has to be a result of the Holocaust," he said, referring to both the physical and psychological torment that survivors endured.

Rosensaft wants the German fund to pay health care reparations to survivors in the United States whose expenses are not covered by Medicare and to survivors living in the former Soviet Union and other former Communist countries in Eastern Europe. Survivors living in Israel are of less concern because Israeli citizens receive comprehensive health coverage, he said.

Rosensaft wrote letters in May to President Clinton and members of Congress to inform them of the issue and encourage them to contact the German government so that Germany will "understand that this is an issue which the American government views with tremendous concern."

Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.), a Holocaust survivor, is writing a letter to German Chancellor Helmut Kohl that will be circulated in the House of Representatives to obtain signatures. With the letter, Lantos hopes to let the German government "know that this issue is important to Congress," said Bob King, the congressman's chief of staff.

King said that Lantos believes it is "outrageous that the Germans are providing the ex-Waffen SS members with disability pensions and not providing health care for the people who suffered."

He said that it is hard to predict the impact that the congressional initiatives will have on the German government at this time, especially because Germany is currently facing hard economic times.

Rosensaft, who was born in a displaced persons camp, is more concerned about the humanitarian aspects of his campaign than he is in financial compensation.

He explained that he is primarily seeking a change in attitude from the German government — a change from ignoring its role in the deteriorating health conditions of Holocaust victims to acknowledging it. "It's a matter of justice, not a matter of money," he said. □

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES****Israeli-Turkish relations solid despite political crisis in Ankara***By Gil Sedan*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli-Turkish relations are expected to remain solid, as a secularist government regained control this week over the powerful Muslim country.

Mesut Yilmaz was named prime minister Monday after he formed a coalition of his Motherland Party and two smaller parties. Later this month, Parliament is expected to approve the coalition, which replaced an Islamic-led government that had ruled Turkey for nearly a year.

Israeli-Turkish military cooperation will continue, Avi Elpeleg, Israel's ambassador to Turkey, said in an interview. "Not because of special love for Israel, not because of ideology, but because of sheer interests."

Common strategic interests, notably a shared concern about Syria's sponsorship of terrorism, are at the heart of the two countries' bond.

Under the government of Prime Minister Necmettin Erbakan, who resigned last month, Israeli-Turkish ties not only survived; the relationship actually grew significantly.

Erbakan, the first Islamic leader to rule modern Turkey, had long opposed his country's close ties to the West, and he sought to shift foreign policy priorities toward other Muslim countries in the region.

But he could not withstand the pressures of Turkey's secularist military, which forced him to step down after less than a year in office.

A recent article in the Muslim press in Turkey claimed that Erbakan's Welfare Party actually pushed Turkey toward a closer alliance with Israel, according to Amikam Nahmani of the Begin-Sadat Strategic Studies Institute at Bar-Ilan University.

Their attempts to pull Turkey away from Western Europe and the United States turned Israel into Turkey's strongest ally, the article said.

It is generally believed, however, that the military's potent influence in Turkish politics assured Ankara's evolving ties to the Jewish state, relations that in the past year were sharply denounced by the Arab world.

**Islamist moderated stance as premier**

As premier, Erbakan moderated his opposition to Turkey's military pact with Israel, which was signed in February 1996, the first such agreement the Jewish state ever reached with an Islamic country.

Few details of the agreement have been revealed, except that it allowed each country to use the other's air space for pilot training, reciprocal ship visits and sending delegations to military academies. Joint army and naval exercises were envisioned for the future.

Last August, Israel and Turkey signed a second military pact, an agreement for defense industry cooperation. Among other things, the accord allows Israel to modify Turkish Phantom jets.

Senior Turkish military officials, including Defense Minister Turhan Tayan and Chief of Staff Gen. Ismail Haki Karadai, visited Israel during Erbakan's rule.

And Erbakan hosted Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy in April.

In addition to strengthened military relations, economic ties between the two countries have flourished. Trade jumped from \$100 million in 1991 to \$500 million last year, and is expected to reach a record \$2 billion by the year 2000.

While Israeli-Turkish ties seem secure, the political scene in Ankara has been much less stable.

Erbakan submitted his resignation to President Suleyman Demirel, believing that he would ask the Islamic leader's partner, Foreign Minister Tansu Ciller of the secularist True Path Party, to form a new coalition.

But Demirel assigned the job to Yilmaz, a former prime minister and bitter rival of both Ciller and Erbakan.

Formation of the new coalition led by Yilmaz squashed any hopes Erbakan held that early elections would be called — an understanding he and Ciller had if she had been asked to assemble a new government.

But there was widespread opposition to early elections because it is assumed that the Welfare Party would gain more than the 158 seats it holds in Parliament.

"I have no doubt that if elections take place now, the Islamists would win 30 percent of the votes," said Nahmani of Bar-Ilan University.

Meanwhile, Turkey's 26,000 Jews were quietly pleased with the latest political developments.

"Certainly there was a sigh of relief when Erbakan resigned," said one observer. "But it was a very quiet sigh." □

**Wave of arson sweeps across northern Germany in past month***By Deidre Berger*

FRANKFURT (JTA) — A wave of mysterious church burnings has swept across northern Germany in the past month.

In the most recent attack last week, the culprits set a room in the community center of a church in the town of Lubeck on fire. They also scrawled three swastikas on a wall of the church complex as well as graffiti threatening the church's pastor.

Police estimated tens of thousands of dollars in property damage.

The attack on the St. Augustinus Church in Lubeck was the sixth incident in northern Germany since late May.

Last week, unknown culprits smeared swastikas and graffiti on the office door of the well-known novelist Gunther Grass, who lives in Lubeck.

The synagogue in Lubeck also has been hit by two arson attacks, the only attacks against a synagogue in Germany since unification.

The targeted church is currently offering asylum to an Algerian family the German government has threatened to deport.

The church asylum movement has gained momentum over the past few years. Four years ago, Germany tightened political asylum regulations, making it easier for the government to deport asylum-seekers.

One of the reasons politicians cited for changing the asylum law was to reduce the number of refugees coming into the country in order to defuse the wave of xenophobia and right-wing extremism that surged in Germany after unification.

Hundreds of residents of Lubeck recently staged protest marches to demonstrate against right-wing violence.

So far, police have arrested suspects in two of the cases. Investigators say they are not aware of a connection between the suspects and organized far right-wing groups, but have not ruled out political motivations in the attacks.

A fire at a refugee shelter in Lubeck last year that killed 10 people also remains unsolved. A court there recently cleared a former resident of the home of charges that he set the fire, ruling there was no convincing evidence for the conviction of the Lebanese-born suspect.

The trial attracted widespread attention because of charges by the defense that police had systematically overlooked or destroyed evidence that could implicate four young men with sympathies for right-wing extremists. □