

NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ **Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu named a new finance minister to replace Dan Meridor.** The appointment of Ya'acov Ne'eman was seen as a concession to Foreign Minister David Levy, who had opposed the accession of National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon to the post. [Page 3]

■ **Hezbollah gunmen fired Katyushas into northern Israel.** The rockets followed the death of an Israeli soldier at the hands of Hezbollah in the southern Lebanon security zone Sunday. In retaliation, Israel attacked guerrilla targets. [Page 2]

■ **Switzerland's Holocaust memorial fund soon will make a first payment of some \$12 million to help needy victims in Eastern Europe.** Of those funds, \$2 million will go to non-Jewish survivors, said Rolf Bloch, the chairman of the fund.

■ **A woman left the Israeli air force complaining of sexual harassment.** The woman, who was training to be an air force pilot, complained that men in her course burned her notebook after she received better grades than them.

■ **An Israeli military court sentenced an Islamic militant to 46 consecutive life terms for three suicide bombings in 1996 that killed 46 people.**

■ **A Hamas terrorist turned himself into Palestinian authorities in the West Bank town of Hebron four days after breaking out of jail.** The man, one of several captured after a March bombing in Tel Aviv that killed three people, reportedly returned to prison on his own accord.

■ **Thousands of Iranians chanted "Death to America" and "Death to Israel" in front of a U.N. office in Tehran on Sunday.** The protest was in response to posters displayed last week in the West Bank that depicted the Islamic prophet Mohammed as a pig stomping on the Koran.

■ **A memorial park named for Raoul Wallenberg was dedicated in Budapest.** The park honors the Swedish diplomat who saved thousands of Jewish lives during the Holocaust.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**Clouded by smoke: Jews lack consensus on tobacco issues**

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) — The Jewish community's views on tobacco are less clear than the lungs of children before they take their first, secret puff of a cigarette.

While Jewish institutions have almost universally banned smoking on their premises, there are two arenas in which Jewish policy is at times clouded by dissent: philanthropy and Jewish law.

Several recent, highly publicized developments have put the tobacco issue on the international agenda.

Last month, American public health advocates and government agencies reached a proposed \$360 billion settlement with tobacco companies.

The companies agreed to unprecedented restrictions on the marketing and sale of cigarettes in exchange for sharp limits on their liability in lawsuits.

The agreement, which has its share of critics, still needs approval from government officials, including Congress.

In Israel, the Health Ministry announced plans to file a \$7.9 billion lawsuit in Israeli court against local and foreign tobacco manufacturers.

The Israeli announcement also came after Israel's Sephardic spiritual adviser, Ovadia Yosef, reiterated his view that smoking transgresses Jewish law — a view shared by many, but not all Orthodox Jews.

But the Jewish community's tensions on the issue are most clearly illuminated in the realm of philanthropy.

A dispute has arisen at least twice in recent years over honoring people who are involved in the tobacco business by making them president of an organization.

In the most recent incident, two of the most influential philanthropic Jewish families in New York recently fought it out over the presidency of the UJA-Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York.

When James Tisch, a member of a wealthy family that has made much of its fortune from the sale of cigarettes, was nominated to become president of the organization, the Everett anti-smoking machine went into high gear.

Henry and Edith Everett, major supporters of many Jewish and non-Jewish causes, sit on the boards of the New York UJA-Federation, the Jewish Community Centers Association and the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, among others.

Long active in the anti-smoking movement, they led a visible — and ultimately unsuccessful — effort to prevent Tisch's election.

Campaign a repeat effort

Tisch is president of the Loews Corporation, which owns the Lorillard Tobacco Company, manufacturer of Newport, Kent and other popular brands of cigarettes.

Newport was the third most popular brand named by children between 12 and 18 who smoke, according to a survey by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control.

The Everetts' campaign was, in many respects, a repeat of their 1990 effort to prevent Lester Pollack, a New York investment banker and Loews Corporation director, from becoming president of the Jewish Community Centers Association, then known as the Jewish Welfare Board.

Pollack, who later became chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, has since resigned from the board of Loews.

Citing "morality, ethics and Jewish law against self-destruction," the Everetts wrote to UJA-Federation that "it would be repugnant for a cigarette executive (pusher) to be cast as the chairman and role model of a Jewish federation."

Tisch won the election anyway. At the time, the federation received just a handful of phone calls from unhappy donors, according to Gail Hyman, UJA-Federation spokeswoman.

It is not "our place or any other charitable institution's place to

decide who can or cannot become involved philanthropically," Hyman said.

"What about people who have made their money in industries which spew pollutants into the air everyday?" she asked.

"Where do you draw the line?"

Tisch did not return several phone messages seeking comment.

When shifting from the realm of philanthropy to religion, the arguments grow even more complex and, at times, even contradictory.

No one actually endorses smoking, but some Orthodox interpreters of Jewish law say that it cannot be prohibited.

Judaism's Reform and Conservative movements cite biblical and rabbinic injunctions against injuring oneself and others — through second-hand smoke — to back their positions deeming smoking contrary to Jewish law.

"Smoking so manifestly contradicts the commandment to guard your life that it's a sin," Leonard Fein, head of the Reform movement's Commission on Social Action, said in a voice roughened by decades of inhaling cigarette smoke.

"That makes me a sinner," he admitted, adding that quitting is "very actively on my agenda now."

Although the Reconstructionist movement hasn't issued a formal position, its rabbinical college is in the process of ratifying a "responsible investments" policy that would bar it from directly owning tobacco company stocks, according to David Teutsch, the seminary's president.

Patterns of smoking in the Jewish community have not been formally studied, as they have among African-Americans and other ethnic minorities.

But rates are closely linked to educational achievement.

Since Jews are among the most highly educated of American populations, there would presumably be a low level of tobacco addiction, said sources at Jewish organizations and the Campaign for Tobacco-Free Kids.

Among Jews, as among white Americans in general, smoking has become less prevalent than it was in years past.

Smoking popular among some Orthodox

Yet it remains noticeably popular in some segments of the Orthodox community — both in the United States and Israel, said Orthodox sources.

"Throw a stone outside a yeshiva and you'll hit a smoker," said one employee of the Orthodox Union.

At the same time, one of the first things Dr. Mandell Ganchrow did when he became O.U. president in 1995 was to ban smoking in its offices.

When it comes to smoking, views among Orthodox interpreters of Jewish law, whose opinions on everything from kashrut to sex govern the lives of their followers, have been far from uniform.

While some high-profile Orthodox rabbis have prohibited smoking, other halachic decisors say that they cannot.

Tel Aviv's chief Sephardic rabbi, David Halevy, has gone so far as to say that even offering a cigarette to another person is forbidden by Jewish law.

In contrast, one of the most influential contemporary Orthodox rabbis was unable to deem smoking a sin.

The late Rabbi Moshe Feinstein wrote in 1971 that while he opposed smoking, he could not ban it outright because "the chance of an individual becoming sick from smoking is slim and the chance of lung cancer is even slimmer."

Though more is known today about the dangers of smoking, Feinstein's opinion is still widely cited to justify the right of people to smoke.

Rabbi J. David Bleich, an interpreter of Jewish law and professor of Talmud at Yeshiva University's rabbinical school, said that he cannot deem smoking a transgression of Jewish law because he has not yet seen scientific evidence that smokers run a greater-than-50-percent risk of dying from tobacco-related disease.

"Not everything foolish is forbidden" by Jewish law, said Bleich, who also relies on the halachic principle that "God protects fools," which is understood to mean that people who smoke because they can't help themselves or don't know better are not considered sinners.

Yet even in circles most resistant to change, there has been progress.

At a fervently Orthodox yeshiva in Passaic, N.J., no student — regardless of how brilliant a potential Talmudist he may be — is admitted if he smokes.

When Joseph Ginsberg, a New York Orthodox entrepreneur, studied at Jerusalem's Mir yeshiva in the 1970s, the students would flick the ashes from their cigarettes on to the floor of the study hall.

"By the end of the afternoon it was pretty disgusting" on that floor, said Ginsberg, a smoker himself.

When one of the few non-smokers in the yeshiva bought ashtrays for the study hall, the yeshiva's head demanded that they be removed.

"In the original Mir [yeshiva] in Poland we didn't have ashtrays, and we're not going to have them here," he recalled saying.

Today, Mir's study hall, like those in other Orthodox yeshivot, is smoke-free. □

Katyusha rockets slam Israel as violence in Lebanon heats up

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — One year after Israel launched an offensive into Lebanon to quell Hezbollah rocket attacks across the border, the missiles are back.

A series of Katyusha rockets slammed into northern Israel late Sunday night, following intense fighting between Israeli forces and Hezbollah guerrilla positions in South Lebanon.

Israeli sources said no injuries or damages were caused by the rocket attacks.

In April 1996, Israel launched a 16-day offensive into Lebanon to stop the Islamic militant group from its rocket attacks on Israeli settlements along the northern border.

Under a U.S.-brokered agreement in the wake of the offensive, the sides agreed to keep civilians and civilian areas out of the cycle of violence in South Lebanon.

A five-nation committee made up of representatives from the United States, France, Syria, Lebanon and Israel was set up to monitor adherence to the settlement and field complaints.

But the committee has not been able to stem the violence, which has escalated in recent weeks.

Sunday's fierce fighting followed a clash in Israel's security zone during which Hezbollah gunmen opened fire at close range on Israeli paratroopers operating in the area.

Maj. Nadav Milo, 24, of Kibbutz Sde Eliyahu, was killed in the fighting. He was laid to rest on Monday.

Israeli forces responded with fighter planes and helicopters, which targeted suspected Hezbollah sites.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai said Monday that there is a continuing war in Lebanon, and that the Israeli soldiers stationed there are the only buffer between northern Israeli settlements and Hezbollah attacks. □

Bowing to pressure, Netanyahu bypasses Sharon for finance post

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Ariel Sharon has lost — at least for now.

In a move aimed at ending a drawn-out coalition crisis, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu bypassed the veteran Likud hawk to name Ya'acov Ne'eman as the new finance minister.

It appears that the move has saved Netanyahu's government from imminent collapse, but the premier is still faced with the daunting task of restoring confidence in his leadership.

Ever since the finance position was vacated last month by Netanyahu rival Dan Meridor — in a dispute over foreign currency reforms — Sharon, the national infrastructure minister, had been seen as the leading contender for the job.

But Foreign Minister David Levy, already irate over his belief that the prime minister was excluding him from political decision-making, balked at the prospects of Sharon taking over the influential portfolio and becoming a member of the "kitchen cabinet," which sets peace policy.

Levy threatened to quit if his leading role in the peacemaking efforts was not ensured by the prime minister and demanded that the kitchen cabinet be disbanded on the premise that it sowed discord among the ministers who were not members.

If Levy had walked, taking his colleagues with him, Netanyahu would have been left with a razor-slim majority in the Knesset.

After a series of meetings with Levy, Netanyahu bowed to the pressure and agreed to abolish the inner forum.

However, in a gesture to Sharon, the Prime Minister's Office said Netanyahu would still consult "from time to time" on important matters with senior ministers — Levy, Sharon and Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai.

Ne'eman served as justice minister for two months until last summer, when he stepped down amid a criminal investigation into allegations of perjury and obstruction of justice.

Ne'eman was acquitted by a court in May. However, his reinstatement to his old job was blocked by his replacement as justice minister, Tzachi Hanegbi, who refused to step aside.

Netanyahu held consultations Monday to finalize the Cabinet shuffle. He still had to pick a minister for the science portfolio, vacated by Ze'ev "Benny" Begin in January in protest over the Israeli troop withdrawal from most of the West Bank town of Hebron.

Netanyahu met with the two Likud Knesset members vying for the post, Michael Eitan and Silvan Shalom, to try to find a workable solution.

As soon as he finalized the appointments, Netanyahu was expected to present them to the Knesset for approval. □

Court in Israel rules children can sue their father for neglect

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — In an unprecedented ruling, an Israeli district court has ruled that children can sue their parents for physical and emotional damage sustained from neglect.

The Tel Aviv court decision came in a civil case filed by two brothers and a sister against their father.

The siblings maintained that they were emotionally

disabled after their father sent them to institutions when they were very young after the suicide of their mother.

The siblings charged that their father, Yitzhak Amin, did not provide them with the basic needs and the minimal physical and emotional support that children require.

They said that they were banned from their father's house after he remarried in 1969.

The three told the court that when they tried to visit their father while on vacation from the institutions, he chased them away.

Amin said that the institutions provided the children with all their physical needs and that their complaint was that they were not loved.

He said this can be addressed only through psychological help and could not be quantified in a damages suit.

After consulting with the attorney general, the judge ruled that there is no legal obstacle to children's claims against their parents. □

Israeli civil rights group decries official neglect of Arab citizens

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — An Israeli civil rights group has charged that the Jewish state continues to neglect the needs of its Arab citizens.

In its annual report, the Association for Civil Rights in Israel said that unequal treatment of Israeli Arabs remained one of the primary civil rights violations.

The association said that while Arabs make up 17 percent of Israel's population, they receive only 2 percent of its services. "There was a major cut in budgets across the board this year," ACRI President Ruth Gavison told a Jerusalem news conference.

"It's easier to cut allocations to groups that are weak, and the group that's weakest in our community is the Arabs."

The most serious areas of discrimination were in housing and education, the report said. It called on Israel to adopt affirmative action measures to "narrow the gaps."

The report also criticized treatment of the foreign labor force, which it said had been brought in to reduce the number of Palestinians working in Israel. Some 200,000 foreign workers are in Israel.

It also commented on the friction between Jewish religious and non-observant populations, saying that a proposed bill that would set in law the Orthodox monopoly on conversions in Israel would infringe on religious freedom.

A government-appointed committee began work this week to seek a solution to the divisive conversion issue.

In its evaluation of the General Security Service, the report questioned what it said was the continued use of irregular interrogation methods, including sleep deprivation and exposure to extreme temperatures.

Some 250 Palestinians are being held without trial under administrative detention orders, according to the report. □

Jordanians nabbed for anti-Semitism

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Jordanian police this week arrested a graphic designer who had posted a "no Israelis" sign in his window.

It was the second arrest in as many days of a Jordanian for posting what was termed an anti-Semitic message. The previous day, a shopkeeper was detained for several hours for having a sign in his supermarket stating "No dogs. No Jews." □

Survivors come back to Leipzig to honor contributions of Jews*By Eve Rosenzweig Kugler*

LEIPZIG (JTA) — The word “Shalom” has many meanings in Hebrew.

In this case its meaning was, at best, bittersweet.

Printed in large Hebrew letters on blue-and-white placards that were displayed throughout Leipzig, Germany, during the first week in June, the word trumpeted the city’s commemoration of the 150th anniversary of its Jewish community.

Among the highlights of the weeklong event were a memorial service at the city’s synagogue, a concert of Jewish music, the opening of an exhibit on the 150-year history of Leipzig’s Jews and talks by survivors at high schools — where the Holocaust is part of the curriculum.

Speaking at a service in the Keil Street Synagogue, the only Jewish house of worship in Leipzig not burned down by the Nazis during Kristallnacht, Leipzig Mayor Hinrich Lehmann-Grube said, “We remember the worst time of our history.”

Citing the prominent role Jews had played in Leipzig’s history, Lehmann-Grube said he hoped that the city’s Jewish community would increase. Approximately 180 Jews currently live in Leipzig.

The synagogue, spared because it was located in an apartment building that housed non-Jewish families, was renovated by the city in 1993.

Though Jews traded at Leipzig’s market as early as the 12th century, they were not permitted to reside in the city until 1845. In 1933, when Hitler came to power, Leipzig had a thriving Jewish community of 14,000.

American troops who liberated the city in the spring of 1945 located a mere 24 Jews.

The Leipzig Synagogue Choir, which performed Yiddish and Hebrew music at the concert that took place during the week, also participated in the Keil Street Synagogue services.

The group is composed entirely of non-Jews. In its 25 years of existence, it has traveled to New York, Jerusalem, Paris and Odessa.

Eighty Holocaust survivors from Leipzig, now in their 60s, 70s and 80s, attended the event as guests of the city. They came from Israel, the United States, Great Britain, South Africa and three South American nations.

For most, it was their first visit to their birthplace since the end of World War II.

High on their agenda was locating their former homes and seeing schools, streets, stores and parks that have long lived only in their memories. Many of the buildings they remember, of course, no longer exist.

The survivors said they harbored no anger at the city’s current residents. Israeli Josef Levy told the teenagers they were not to blame, but added that he could not forgive their great-grandparents.

Realizing that the survivors were their age during World War II, the young people wanted to know how they experienced the Nazi era.

One asked, “Were you afraid when you went outside?” □

Russian president battles Parliament over trophy art*By Lev Krichevsky*

MOSCOW (JTA) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has rejected a controversial “trophy art” bill for a third time.

The bill, which was overwhelmingly approved by the Russian Parliament, claims Russia’s ownership of

artworks taken by Soviet troops from Nazi Germany at the end of World War II.

Yeltsin vetoed the bill in February, and legislators in both houses of Parliament voted to override the veto. Yeltsin, claiming procedural errors in the voting, refused to sign the bill and sent it back to the legislature.

Lawmakers refused to vote again on the law and returned it to Yeltsin.

According to presidential spokesman Sergey Yastrzhembsky, Yeltsin sent the legislation back to the Communist-dominated Parliament again this week, citing the same objections.

At the end of the war, the Soviet Union dispatched special teams to collect thousands of paintings and rare books, as well as archival material that included manuscripts and photographs, from the defeated Nazis.

Some of the so-called “trophy art” belonged to Germany, but some had been looted by Hitler’s troops from countries overrun by the Nazis.

The trophy art is significant to the Jewish community outside of Russia because some of the looted works may originally have been taken from their Jewish owners by the Nazis.

In its present form, the bill states that any nation demanding the return of artworks taken by the Soviet army must first send a formal request to be approved by the Russian Parliament.

The bill has angered Germany, Russia’s biggest creditor, which has long sought to recover the 200,000 pieces of art valued at some \$65 billion.

In 1990, Germany and the Soviet Union signed a friendship treaty that included provisions for the mutual restitution of war plunder. □

Russia rededicates monument devoted to World War II victims*By Lev Krichevsky*

MOSCOW (JTA) — A monument to the Russian victims of Nazi genocide reopened this week on the 56th anniversary of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union.

The monument, which bears a Hebrew inscription, is located at Poklonnaya Gora, the state complex in Moscow that honors Russia’s sacrifices in World War II.

Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov presided over Sunday’s ceremony.

The monument, the Tragedy of the Peoples, by the Georgian-born sculptor Zurab Tsereteli, was reported to have been originally commissioned by Israel under the name the Tragedy of the Jewish People.

The sculptor abandoned the original idea and the monument was unveiled last year at the entrance to the park dedicated to the remembrance of what Russians call the Great Patriotic War.

The monument was later moved to a more secluded place inside the park because many Muscovites, including the mayor, found it too depressing.

The monument depicts people falling into a mass grave.

It is encircled by small tombstone-shaped obelisks that bear memorial inscriptions in the languages of various Soviet nationalities, including Jews.

An estimated 27 million Soviet soldiers and civilians, including 2 million Soviet Jews, were killed during World War II.

A new synagogue at Poklonnaya Gora is expected to be completed in September to honor Jewish victims of the Holocaust.

The memorial complex already includes a Russian Orthodox Church.

Construction of a mosque is under way. □