

**NEWS AT A GLANCE**

■ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said construction of a Jewish housing project in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Ras al-Amud was inappropriate. Dr. Irving Moskowitz, an American philanthropist who purchased the land and obtained municipal permits to build there, said he was determined to go ahead with the project. [Page 2]

■ Israeli undercover security agents dressed as Arabs kidnapped an Islamic Jihad terrorist from the Palestinian self-rule town of Tulkarm. The man was wanted after he escaped from an Israeli prison last August.

■ The spokesman for the Swiss Bankers Association, responding to reports that the names of Nazis are on the list of dormant World War II-era bank accounts, said the banking commission will investigate any questionable account before making payments. The list of some 1,750 names was published last week in newspapers around the world.

■ An Israeli poll showed that nearly one-third of West Bank settlers believe the peace process will fail and the Israeli army will reoccupy Palestinian self-rule areas. The poll, which was conducted by the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies, surveyed over 500 settlers.

■ A third member of the Australian delegation to the Maccabiah Games died of injuries sustained in the bridge collapse at the opening ceremony of the games. Elizabeth Sawicki, 47, died after developing an infection from swallowing polluted water from the Yarkon River.

■ The Czech government agreed to pay \$580,000 to settle claims on gold and jewels that were taken from Slovak Jews during World War II and deposited in the Czech National Bank. The money will go to a Jewish foundation and will be used for charitable purposes.

■ Israel received approval to market a version of its Uzi rifle in the United States after a 10-year ban. The new Uzi fires only single rounds and reportedly cannot be converted to an automatic weapon.

**AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD****Jewish museum main attraction in Austrian town with few Jews**

By Ruth E. Gruber

HOHENEMS, Austria (JTA) — “There are a handful of Jews living in Vorarlberg,” said 83-year-old retired businessman Erik Welsch. “But I’m probably the only one who will be buried here — and therefore stay here permanently.”

Vorarlberg is the small region at the far western tip of Austria near the Swiss border and Lake Constance. Jews have lived in the region since the 17th century.

Today, besides Welsch, a Vienna-born Jew who moved to the region 40 years ago, the few Jews who live among Vorarlberg’s 300,000 people include one or two Israelis married to local people, and others who are living there temporarily for business reasons.

There is no organized Jewish community — the nearest functioning synagogue in Austria is nearly 120 miles away in Innsbruck.

The small town of Hohenems — population 15,000 — was once home to Vorarlberg’s largest Jewish community. But most Jews moved away from Hohenems to bigger towns after 1860, and by 1938 fewer than 20 still lived there.

Hohenems’ synagogue was turned into a fire station in the 1950s.

Since 1991, however, Hohenems has had a Jewish museum — a Jewish museum set up by non-Jewish civic authorities. Today, it is the town’s leading tourist attraction, drawing more than 10,000 visitors a year.

The Hohenems museum is one of three Jewish museums in Austria — the others are in Vienna and in Eisenstadt — and is one of dozens of Jewish museums and exhibitions in towns in Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic and elsewhere in Central Europe where there is no longer a Jewish population.

One of the few Jews who lives in Vorarlberg is the museum’s director, 27-year-old Esther Haber, from Vienna.

She occasionally feels lonely in her job — but believes that it is important to convey Jewish history and culture to people who have no knowledge of Jews.

“I get tired of explaining everything,” she said. “I know it’s necessary. But it’s hard sometimes, especially here, where there’s no Jewish community to back me up.”

**‘To document and to memorialize’**

Hohenems’ city fathers, led by then-Mayor Otto Amann and local historians, founded a Jewish Museum Association in 1986 and opened the museum in April 1991 in the former Jewish quarter in the center of town — in a villa which had belonged to a wealthy family of local Jewish industrialists.

“To my mind, it shouldn’t be called a Jewish museum, but a Museum of the History of Hohenems’ Jews,” said Welsch, who as the only Jew living in Vorarlberg when plans for the museum were drawn up formed part of its founding committee. He now serves on the museum board.

Welsch said the museum’s main goal is educating youth. “When youngsters are taught about Jews in their youth, they won’t fall victim so easily to primitive attitudes,” he said.

The last Jewish owner of the villa had sold the building in 1936, and was murdered in 1942 in the Terezin ghetto.

“In creating the museum, we wanted both to document and to memorialize our fellow Jewish citizens,” Amann, a devoutly religious Roman Catholic farmer, said in an interview.

Despite the dedication of Amann and other city officials, at first the museum was not universally welcomed — some did not want to be reminded of Austria’s past under Nazi annexation.

But “it has been a tremendous success, and there are no problems now,” said Welsch. “It has made Hohenems well-known internationally and has also helped to improve the idea people here have about Jews.”

At its peak in the 19th century, the Jewish community in Hohenems numbered 500 of the town’s 4,000 people. The town had two main streets —

known as Jewish Street and Christian Street. Local Jews were merchants, craftsmen and industrialists — and one local Jewish son was the 19th-century liturgical composer Salomon Sulzer.

The museum documents all these phases of local Jewish history and also deals with the post-war period, when the town was a center for displaced persons.

There are also audio presentations about the local Yiddish dialect and the music of Salomon Sulzer, and reminiscences by Jews who lived in the town before and after the war. The museum's founding director was not Jewish. Haber took up the post last year.

Haber has definite priorities of what she wants to depict in a Jewish museum in a town without Jews.

"For me, it's important to find a good mixture," she said. "You have to talk about the historical side, again and again. But here, where there is no Jewish community, it's important to show people that Jewish life is not dead, that it's really alive.

"People here don't know a lot about Jews and Judaism," she said. "They are very interested in religion, and I think we might include more in the museum about the Jewish religion."

To this end, the museum sponsors concerts, exhibitions, seminars and other programs throughout the year — even a course in Yiddish which draws more than a dozen students. A reading room displays current Jewish newspapers from Austria, Germany and Switzerland, and there is a reference library open to the public.

The museum can also be visited at its Web site: <http://www.vol.at/jmh> □

## **Premier, Jerusalem officials at odds over building project**

*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The timing for building a new Jewish neighborhood in eastern Jerusalem is not "fortuitous."

This was the description that aides to Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu gave to the new project in the predominantly Arab Ras al-Amud neighborhood in Jerusalem, a move that Palestinian officials threatened could lead to violence.

Netanyahu this week pledged to block the start any time soon of the project, and he was quick to convey via an aide to Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat that he did not intend to move ahead with construction.

Netanyahu was responding to the disclosure that Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert had authorized building permits for the construction of some 70 housing units on a plot of land purchased by American philanthropist Dr. Irving Moskowitz.

While stressing that the government was firmly committed to building in Jerusalem, Netanyahu said at Sunday's weekly Cabinet meeting that the project's timing was inappropriate.

The Palestinians broke off negotiations in mid-March after Israel began construction of a new Jewish neighborhood at Har Homa in southeastern Jerusalem.

Palestinian leaders warned over the weekend that construction in Ras al-Amud would effectively end the peace process.

Netanyahu admitted that the project was legal, but he directed Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein to examine what authority the government had to stop the project.

Netanyahu said during Sunday's Cabinet session that decisions to build in Jerusalem must be taken by the government in an orderly fashion.

Moskowitz, a Miami-based millionaire business-

man, gave strong backing to the opening of a new entrance to an archaeological tunnel near the Temple Mount.

The move sparked three days of Palestinian rioting last September in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Fifteen Israelis and 61 Palestinians were killed in the violence.

He also has invested in real estate at Har Homa and financed a yeshiva on the Mount of Olives.

Moskowitz said this week that he was determined to build in Ras al-Amud, brushing off remarks by Olmert and the Prime Minister's Office that the developer would not go ahead with the project immediately.

Moskowitz said any governmental decision to stop him was "racist."

"I bought this land with my own money, and any discussion of whether I can build there or not is ridiculous," Moskowitz told Israel Army Radio.

"It's not a political question. It's a question of a person's right to build on his property. To deny it because I am Jewish and the Arabs oppose this, is racist."

Palestinian official Nabil Sha'ath welcomed Netanyahu's position on the matter, but said it was not enough.

Sha'ath, who serves as the Palestinian Authority's planning minister, said that the Israeli government must translate its declarations into a move to cancel the project altogether.

Meanwhile, Israeli officials were quoted Sunday as saying that the United States was working on a new initiative to restart Israeli-Palestinian negotiations.

The Palestinian information minister, Yasser Abed Rabbo, said this week that the Clinton administration had still not come up with a cohesive plan for restarting the talks. □

## **Israeli maritime students hunt for sunken 1946 immigrant ship**

*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Recent graduates of an Israeli maritime high school have found a novel way to commemorate 100 years of Zionism.

In a project merging their nautical training with an event in Zionist history, graduates of the Mevo'ot Yam maritime school in Michmoret set sail last week for a small Greek island near Rhodes.

They hope to locate the wreckage of the Rafiah, a boat which in 1946 was carrying more than 800 illegal Jewish immigrants from Hungary, Romania and Bulgaria to British mandated Palestine, when it sunk in a storm.

Some 800 survivors were rescued and taken to internment camps in Cyprus. Thirty people were never found. The bodies of eight drowning victims were transferred to Israel in the 1972.

"We looked for a way to connect 100 years of Zionism with the four years of nautical education," said one of the participants, Shalom Gutman. "We hope to bring back some historical artifacts. We will erect a monument there for the victims of the sinking."

Since little documentation was available on the sinking, students spent the year piecing together the history of the incident through the stories of survivors with whom they met.

"We put together the pieces of the puzzle to find where the ship is," Gutman said. One of the survivors who worked with the students throughout the year is accompanying them on the journey.

"Shlomo Reichman was born a few days before the Rafiah sank. When it happened, he was thrown into the water, wrapped in blankets like a parcel," Gutman said. "He hopes to somehow learn what happened there, who caught him and saved him, and how he got to Israel." □

## Neo-Nazis claim to penetrate high echelons of Russian power

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — They wear black shirts and berets and greet each other with the stiff-armed salute and a battle cry "Slava Rossii," or Glory to Russia.

Their symbol is a swastika combined with a cross, which they claim is a traditional Russian symbol.

They are the members of Russian National Unity, or RNE, the country's most prominent ultra-nationalist group.

And their claim that they have penetrated high echelons of power has generated front-page news.

The RNE branch in the Causasus city of Stavropol claims about 2,000 followers, who, according to a recent report in the Moscow newspaper *Izvestiya*, are ready to start "cleaning Holy Russia of all the filth" if called upon to do so by the group's leader, Alexander Barkashov.

"We have a huge number of supporters. Our people are everywhere," the head of the Stavropol branch of the RNE, Andrey Dudinov, told *Izvestiya*.

Dudinov said that RNE supporters can be found in the region's administration, in the Federal Security Service, the successor to the KGB, in the police departments and in the army.

The RNE members "do not advertise themselves, but they are doing useful and important work," Dudinov added.

Founded in 1990, the paramilitary Russian National Unity group claims to have 25,000 members, though independent observers estimate that membership is much lower.

Last year, the Panorama Information Expert Group, an independent monitoring organization, published a volume titled "Political Extremism in Russia," the first-ever detailed study of 47 ultra-nationalist, neo-Nazi and radical leftist groups active in Russia, as well as dozens of extremist publications.

### Approximately 5,000 followers

The study estimated that RNE has no more than 5,000 followers.

While the RNE's numbers are disputed, Maxim Balutenko of Panorama, who co-authored the book's chapter on RNE, agrees with the group's claims that it maintains positive relations with local authorities, army, police and state security officials.

"While power structures in the provinces often suffer from a lack of funds, RNE is ready to offer its services to the police and the army," Balutenko said.

"Police and military might not share the group's ideology, but in many cases they turn a blind eye to the ideology."

The RNE generally keeps a low profile and has not participated in most federal and local elections.

The group's activists, who spend much of their time in military training, organize paramilitary clubs where they prepare teen-agers for military service.

This summer, for example, about 700 young men will attend two RNE-sponsored camps in the Stavropol area.

A two- to three-year military service is obligatory for men in Russia.

The RNE-sponsored "military-patriotic" clubs and summer camps keep hundreds of teen-agers out of the streets and train youth for the military, according to Balutenko.

In an interview last year, Barkashov, the group's leader, said that when a significant portion of Russians accepts the ultra-nationalist ideology and the party based

on this ideology becomes big enough, the "national forces will seize the power through elections or other means."

Experts agree that the RNE, although small, is one of the best-organized groups among Russia's ultra-nationalists.

Now that Russians are witnessing widespread economic and social crisis in the country, the RNE wants to impose "Russian order," according to a recent article in *Izvestiya*.

The RNE publishes a 12-page tabloid newspaper, *Russkii Poryadok*, or Russian Order, that is printed in five Russian cities across Russia and can be purchased openly across the country.

In places like Stavropol, the RNE is popular with local military officers and military school students. According to the *Izvestiya* report, the RNE is especially popular with soldiers and officers who were in the war in Chechnya.

Among other things, RNE has been calling for a ban on interracial marriages.

Those who do not like the new "Russian order" will have to move to other countries, according to the RNE's plans.

Ultra-nationalists also offer their "solution" to the "Jewish question" in Russia.

In an interview with *Izvestiya*, one of the active members of the RNE Stavropol branch said that those Jews who would be "loyal to Russia" will continue a "normal life" under the "Russian order."

"But the majority will leave anyway for America and Israel.

"So nothing terrible is going to happen." □

## City of Nuremberg honors arms manufacturer for Nazis

By Deidre Berger

FRANKFURT (JTA) — The city of Nuremberg's decision to honor a major arms manufacturer for the Nazis has spurred demonstrations and clashes.

At a recent ceremony at the Nuremberg Parliament, the city's conservative government praised 90-year-old Karl Diehl for his business accomplishments and for his generous sponsorship of projects aimed at rebuilding the city.

Five members of the liberal Green Party walked out of the ceremony to protest naming Diehl an honorary citizen of Nuremberg.

Outside the Parliament, demonstrators clashed with supporters of Diehl.

Diehl's firm employed slave laborers and concentration camp inmates to maintain arms production for the Nazis, the German left-wing newspaper *Die Tageszeitung* recently reported.

A center of Nazi activities, Nuremberg was almost completely destroyed by Allied bombing raids during the war.

Members of the worker's council at Diehl's company, which currently employs about 4,000 people, praised him for his continuing commitment to secure jobs in a region with high unemployment.

The Green Party said it was inappropriate for the city, which has tried to establish itself as a center for peace and human rights, to honor an arms manufacturer for the Third Reich.

At the ceremony in his honor, Diehl made no comment about his company's wartime practices.

But his company issued a brief statement saying that Nazi officials forced the company to employ slave labor and concentration camp inmates during the war, adding that the firm bore no responsibility for such practices. □

## Clinton names Martin Indyk to key State Department post

By Michael Shapiro  
*Washington Jewish Week*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — In a long anticipated move, President Clinton has tapped Martin Indyk, the first Jewish U.S. ambassador to Israel, to serve in the State Department's top Middle East policy-making position.

Supporters and opponents alike say Indyk, who served as the National Security Council's senior director for Middle East affairs before taking the ambassadorship two-and-a-half-years ago, should face little opposition in being confirmed by the Senate as the first Jewish assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern affairs.

Indyk worked at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the pro-Israel lobby, in the early 1980s before founding the Washington Institute for Near East Policy.

He is described by observers as someone who is extremely knowledgeable in Middle East issues and has developed good relations with parties involved on both sides of the Israeli-Arab dispute.

While serving as executive director of the institute, a think tank started to counter the perceived pro-Arab bias at the State Department and other Washington think tanks, Indyk became an influential voice on Middle East issues and briefed top government officials, including Presidents Bush and Clinton on several occasions.

The nomination of Indyk, 46, who was born in London, raised in Australia, and became a United States citizen in 1993, has been actively opposed so far by only one American Jewish group.

Since Indyk's name surfaced as the leading candidate for the job several months ago, Morton Klein, president of the Zionist Organization of America, has waged a campaign against him.

Klein has charged that Indyk has interfered in Israel's internal political affairs, pressured the Israeli government to make concessions to the Palestinians, holds a pro-Arab bias and has made a string of "insulting, demeaning and patronizing statements about Israel."

Indyk has also drawn criticism from Uzi Landau, the chairman of the Israeli Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, for allegedly "pressuring members of the government" and "interfering in Israel's internal political affairs."

### **Oslo accords have 'broken down'**

In a March 15 speech, according to the Israeli daily *Ha'aretz*, Landau said that Indyk "needs to be reminded that he is not the British High Commissioner," a reference to Herbert Samuel, a Jew, who held the position during the 1920s and was seen as often siding with the Arabs.

In a recent interview with *The Jerusalem Post*, Indyk addressed the issue of his involvement.

"There is a tendency in Israel to look toward the U.S. to solve your problems," he said.

Israeli government officials "say let's call in the ambassador to deal with this problem, or to get approval for what we are going to do, or make sure that the U.S. supports us before we act in a particular sphere. I think this is an unhealthy situation."

In a May 18 statement that drew criticism from ZOA and some concern in AIPAC's biweekly newsletter, "Near East Report," Indyk discussed the deadlock in the peace process.

"The core bargain of Oslo has broken down," Indyk said referring to the Israeli-Palestinian accords that were first created in 1993.

"Israelis were promised security; Palestinians were promised self-government and a credible pathway to

negotiating their rights in a final-status agreement," he said.

"Terrorism, on the one side, and unilateral actions which have created the impression that the final-status issues are being pre-empted on the other, have combined to break this trust on which the partnership for peace is based."

Klein said Indyk's statement "suggested a moral equivalence between Arab terrorism and legal, peaceful Israeli housing construction."

Klein was making a reference to Har Homa, a Jewish neighborhood being built in southeastern Jerusalem which has been opposed by the Palestinians.

"Near East Report," in its June 2 issue, highlighted Indyk's comment in a box on page two under the headline "U.S. Statements Display Faulty Moral Equivalence." The unsigned article said Indyk's comments did not "live up" to Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's standard that there is no moral equivalence with terrorism.

While AIPAC expressed concern regarding Indyk's statement, it is "confident he will carry out his new responsibilities and represent the president's policies in the most professional manner," said an AIPAC official.

Klein, who said other Jewish leaders opposed to Indyk are reluctant to fight his nomination because they believe it is a losing cause, plans to visit senators to express "our great concern that Martin Indyk is an unfair arbiter of the Oslo Accords."

Jonathan Jacoby, executive vice president of the Israel Policy Forum, a group that supports a strong American role in the peace process, said that Indyk, as an American diplomat, will support the interests of the United States, but he is "also a lover of Israel."

Jacoby said it is wrong to think that Indyk "would act in a way that is detrimental to Israel's interests."

Some Arab Americans have also expressed concerns — although for other reasons — with Indyk's nomination.

Khalil Jahshan, president of the National Association of Arab Americans, said Arab Americans are concerned that a position normally given to a career diplomat has been offered to someone whose career was spent "working on behalf" of pro-Israel issues.

He described the nomination as a "political appointment" to "satisfy the American Jewish community."

Despite his group's opposition to Indyk's nomination, Jahshan said he will not actively fight the nomination on Capitol Hill because Indyk's confirmation is "iron-clad."

Democratic and Republican sources on Capitol Hill said they have not seen any real opposition to Indyk's nomination.

"Absent some really damaging information, I think Martin would be confirmed," said one Democratic Senate staffer. □

## Israel destroys smugglers' tunnel

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli security forces this week blew up a tunnel allegedly used to smuggle goods and weapons between Egypt and the Gaza Strip.

The tunnel, which was about 165 feet long and 28 inches wide, was believed to be part of a network of tunnels that smugglers had dug beneath the border town of Rafah.

It was the fourth such tunnel that Israeli security forces have destroyed recently.

Since 1993, Egypt and Israel have found and destroyed at least 13 tunnel openings in the area. □