



## NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu postponed his trip to Eastern Europe to find a way to evict the Jewish families who moved into the Arab neighborhood of Ras al-Amud in eastern Jerusalem this week.

■ Chief Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat said the Palestinian Authority held Israel responsible for the settlers' move. He added that if the settlers were not evicted, "an explosion" was possible.

■ The Jewish National Fund of America approved plans to cut \$5.1 million from its budget and pledged to send 70 percent of the money it raises to Israel. The cuts involve closing five offices and eliminating 32 full-time posts. [Page 4]

■ A group of Conservative rabbis and their supporters are threatening to boycott the Dan Hotel chain in Israel on the grounds that the chain is insensitive to non-Orthodox Jews. The threat follows the refusal of the Dan Pearl Hotel in Jerusalem to permit the Conservative movement to use the hotel's mikvah.

■ Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) has appealed to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu not to export modified versions of the Uzi and Galil military-style assault weapons to the United States. Last month, the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms granted the Israel Military Industries permission to export the weapons. [Page 3]

■ An immigration court in Chicago ordered the deportation to Lithuania of an Illinois man. Juozas Naujalis was accused of lying about his role in Nazi atrocities. [Page 3]

■ Swiss officials and the media criticized Jewish officials for not attending a planned meeting in Bern. The meeting was scheduled to approve the distribution of some \$10.4 million to Holocaust survivors. [Page 4]

■ New York State opened a Holocaust Processing Claims Office. The New York City office will assist individuals trying to recover assets deposited in Swiss banks between 1933 and 1945.

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

### Evangelical Christians dig deep, raise vast sums for Jewish causes

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) — Carolyn and Fritz Brandt, who live in an Arkansas hamlet nestled among the Ozarks, have donated about \$50,000 during the last three years to the United Jewish Appeal.

What makes their gift unusual is that they are people of modest means — they cashed in retirement savings to make their gifts — and they are not Jewish.

They are evangelical Christians.

And they aren't alone. A growing number of evangelicals, including a high-profile pastor in Texas, are making significant contributions to UJA and other Jewish causes. The Brandts made their contribution through the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, a Chicago-based organization that raises money from evangelicals to help fund the emigration to Israel of Jews from the former Soviet Union.

This year, the International Fellowship expects to contribute \$5 million to UJA from 60,000 individual donors, nearly double the \$2.7 million it gave in 1996, according to its founder, Orthodox Rabbi Yechiel Eckstein of Chicago, and UJA sources.

The money the group raises is given directly to a local Jewish federation, in this case the Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago, and then passed on to UJA. Its gift makes the International Fellowship the Chicago federation's largest single contributor, according to Jeffrey Cohen, the United Fund's vice president in charge of the fund-raising campaign.

And while people of many faiths and ethnic groups give to the Chicago federation, no other single religious group makes a donation as large as the evangelicals, Cohen said. Unlike most donations to Jewish federations, which are divided between local and overseas needs without input from the giver, the Christian contributions are donor-directed — given specifically to underwrite the cost of aliyah of Jews from the former Soviet Union.

### 'We all worship the same God'

They do it to be a blessing to the Jewish people, they say, to fulfill the Jewish and Christian biblical prophecies that they regard as part of God's plan, which include the migration of Jews to Israel. "Studying the Bible, we know that the time of redemption is near for the Jewish people, and we want to be part of helping them," Carolyn Brandt said in an interview from her office in Bellavista, Ark., where she works as a real estate agent.

"The Jews, outside of us Christians, are the only ones who worship the living and true God. Even though the Bible says that the messiah is Jesus, and they think it will be someone else, it's OK," Brandt said.

"We all worship the same God, and I know that they are special in his sight."

At a time when the pool of Jewish donors is shrinking, the evangelical population seems like a potentially new market for Jewish charities to tap.

Yet leaders of Jewish charities are uncomfortable about accepting money from Christians who are motivated by theological concepts that have been used at times to harm Jews.

Many, though not all, of the same evangelicals giving money to Jewish groups also fund the work of the "messianic" groups that aggressively try to convert Jews to believe in Jesus.

Are evangelical Christians "a growth market?" asked Shimon Pepper, UJA's assistant vice president in charge of campaign operations. "Could be, but our leadership has been ambivalent.

"They've instructed me not to be proactive."

According to Bernie Moscovitz, UJA's executive vice president, "Some of our leadership think it is perfectly all right to accept money from people even if their motivation is not identical to our own, and others think it's better for Jews to take care of themselves.

"Our position is that we say, 'thank you' for what they are doing," and that is all, Moscovitz said.

One organization that raises money from evangelical Christians to help transport Jewish children to Israel from areas affected by the Chernobyl

nuclear explosion used to give that money to the Chabad-Lubavitch organization, which has focused its attention on the youth affected since the reactor there blew up in 1986.

But when an Israeli anti-missionary organization accused the Cedar Springs, Mich.-based Blossoming Rose ministry of being associated with proselytizers, Chabad said it felt forced to sever the connection.

That was two years ago. Since then, UJA has been accepting the funds — \$25,000 this year.

Rev. John Hagee, pastor of the San Antonio, Texas Cornerstone Church, which has 17,000 members, donated \$550,000 to UJA earlier this year through the Houston Jewish federation.

Hagee has been raising money for Jewish causes in Israel since 1981, when he organized a rally to honor Israel after the country bombed a nuclear reactor in Baghdad, Iraq, and was excoriated in the American media for doing so.

"I felt Israel had done humanity a service," said the pastor.

Hagee filled a local convention center with more than 3,000 people, and through a "free will offering" that night raised about \$10,000. It was donated to Hadassah.

Then several months ago, he heard about Operation Exodus, the effort to rescue and resettle Jews from the former Soviet Union in Israel.

Though UJA retired the Operation Exodus campaign among Jews two years ago, it continues to be discussed in the Christian community.

Hagee recorded a single, 30-minute television show about Operation Exodus and as soon as it was broadcast recently, Hagee said, "the phones melted off the wall."

Within a few days, his viewers had donated more than half a million dollars.

Hagee takes hundreds of Christians to Israel every other year and expects to fill a plane to its 500-seat capacity next year.

And he has sold more than 100,000 tallitot, or Jewish prayer shawls, to evangelical Christians through his television and radio shows. Some evangelicals — though a small minority — wear the tallitot in worship every week, Hagee said.

Hagee and his church do not missionize Jews, he said, nor do they have any connection at all with the "messianic" Jews who claim to be Jewish even though they believe that Jesus was the messiah.

"The Jewish people had the word of God before we even knew it existed," Hagee said in a telephone interview.

Hagee is unusual among evangelical Christians in his belief that Jews do not need to believe in Jesus to be blessed by God.

"Gentiles come to God through Jesus Christ because that's the only way we can get there," Hagee said, "but there are some Jewish people who have a relationship with God by divine election." □

## **Florida postal workers denied time off for the High Holidays**

*By Faygie Levy*

NEW YORK (JTA) — A battle over freedom of religion is brewing in southern Florida, where at least four Jewish post office employees have been denied time off for the High Holidays.

Now the employees of the U.S. Postal Service in Coral Springs, Fla., are struggling to figure out how they will observe Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.

It's like "something out of history books you read about," said Sid Gradman, a postal carrier and 10-year employee of the office.

There is "no compassion for Jewish holidays," he said.

The problem stems from a postal regulation, which states that no more than six people can take a day off at the same time.

Of the nearly 100 people in the office, at least eight are Jewish.

According to Karen Schultz, spokeswoman for the South Florida District Postal Service, six people have already asked — and received — those days off.

Yom Kippur is even more of a problem than Rosh Hashanah, since most of the people who were granted Oct. 11 off are non-Jews who want to extend their Columbus Day weekend.

According to Schultz, the Jewish employees waited too long to request the time off. She said that in order to ensure time off, a request must be made 60 days in advance.

But employees said that in the past, requests for time off for the holidays had always been granted no matter when they were requested.

They said the problem has arisen only since the arrival of new management last year.

The time off "was always a given," said Dan Rosner, a 12-year veteran of the Coral Springs office.

Joan Peppard, the Anti-Defamation League's southern states' counsel, said that if the rule about 60 days notification had not been practiced in the past, then the "post office had a duty to inform people" that the rule was now being enforced. The ADL, which was contacted by Rosner, has begun an investigation into the allegations.

But even if every Jewish employee had requested the time off in August, there would still be Jewish employees who would be refused the time off, because there are more Jewish employees than vacation slots.

"They want us to fight each other for time off," Gradman said.

According to Gradman, he was told that if he took off, "You'll be AWOL," and he would have to face the repercussions.

For his part, Michael Winograd, associate director of the ADL regional office, said there are "lots of creative ways to ensure employees observe religious holidays."

Gradman said he hopes his bosses will come around and give them the time off. If not, he said, "I will call in sick." His co-worker Rosner said, "I am taking off, and in doing so I will face suspension or dismissal.

"I am ashamed I have to go through this horrible, miserable experience," he added. □

## **German army: Bar extremists**

*By Deidre Berger*

FRANKFURT (JTA) — The German army wants to stop drafting recruits who have been sentenced for extremist activities.

Officials have confirmed they are examining how to collect the criminal records of potential draftees. German law currently prevents government ministries from obtaining this type of information.

The country's Defense Ministry recently reported that right-wing incidents involving army soldiers rose from 46 in 1996 to 80 in the first eight months of this year.

One of the most violent incidents was a racially motivated attack last March in the northern German city of Detmold. In addition, five army soldiers were convicted in June of seriously injuring one Italian and two Turks. One man was sentenced to 14 months in prison, and the other four were given suspended sentences.

Officials found right-wing propaganda in the homes of three of the convicted soldiers. □

**Sen. Feinstein battling Israel on plan to export Uzi weapons***By Matthew Dorf*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — James Guelff died three years ago when a sniper shot him with an Israeli-made Uzi assault pistol during a fierce firefight in downtown San Francisco.

It was for Guelff, a local police officer, that Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) led the battle in Congress to ban assault weapons.

Jack Berman was also shot dead with an assault weapon in San Francisco. It was for Berman, the president of the American Jewish Congress' San Francisco region, that the group did all it could to support the ban.

Now Feinstein is waging another battle over assault weapons — this time with the Israeli government. The AJCongress appears ready to support her.

Last month, the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms granted the Israeli government-owned Israel Military Industries permission to export modified versions of the Uzi and Galil military-style assault weapons to the United States.

Feinstein was furious.

"I had hoped that the values of Israel were above shipping weapons of war to the streets of America," Feinstein said in a telephone interview this week.

"I was absolutely shocked to see that an official Israeli company would be willing to export tens of thousands of Uzis and Galils to this country."

Feinstein was head of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors in late 1978 when then-Mayor George Moscone was assassinated in his city hall office by another member of the board. Feinstein, who later became mayor, has been a staunch gun-control advocate ever since.

**Violation of the 'spirit of the law'**

The Israelis modified the guns "just enough" from their original design to fall outside the technical definition of assault weapons banned under U.S. law, said Feinstein.

"Technically, they are legal but this certainly violates the spirit of the law and I believe impacts the national security."

Feinstein has written to Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to seek his "personal intervention to stop this transfer of arms to the streets of America."

"I find it sadly ironic that even as American military equipment and assistance travels to Israel intended to preserve peace and save lives, an Israeli weapons manufacturer is preparing to sell military-style assault weapons in the United States that are designed not to protect, but to kill," Feinstein wrote.

An Israeli official in Washington said that Netanyahu was drafting a response.

"I would emphasize that, of course, we share Senator Feinstein's sorrow over every victim of a misuse of a weapon. Of course, we're not happy when Israeli weapons are used for an illegal cause," said the official, who asked not to be identified.

"Any selling of weapons or arms are only done according to the law in Israel and the U.S.," he stressed.

As for Feinstein's charge that she hoped Israel was above shipping the weapons, the official said, "There's always the question of values when you speak of shipping arms and weapons, and I'm sure that will be addressed in the prime minister's response."

President Clinton told Feinstein this week that he would look into the issue, she said. In addition, California's senior senator has asked her colleagues to sign a letter to Clinton urging him to issue an executive order banning the weapons.

So far, Feinstein has received a mixed reaction to her call for American Jewish groups to "weigh in with the Israeli government."

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs, which has a delegation in Israel this week, said that it was planning to raise the issue during a meeting Wednesday with the Prime Minister's Office.

"JCPA has a position strongly favoring gun control," Lawrence Rubin, JCPA's executive vice chairman, said when reached in Jerusalem.

Phil Baum, executive director of AJCongress, said, "As an organization that supports gun control and supports a ban on assault weapons, we would be supportive."

"This is a cardinal issue of ours and a keystone of our program. At first blush, I would support everything that Feinstein wrote," he said.

Feinstein sent her letter to 18 Jewish groups, including the National Jewish Democratic Council, which has supported the assault weapons ban.

"These are weapons that we do not need on our streets," said Stephen Silberfarb, deputy director at NJDC.

"The Israeli company should be urged to rethink this before they embark on the sale."

Indicative of the sensitivity the arms export has aroused, many other Jewish groups that received the letter refused to comment, saying they had to study the issue.

For now, only one was critical of Feinstein. Matt Brooks, executive director of the National Jewish Coalition, a Republican group, criticized the senator for "using her power to pressure a sovereign nation's actions."

"It's a dangerous precedent for an American elected official to get involved in issues such as this. The reaction would be quite different if members of the Knesset sent a letter to the U.S. asking that Smith & Wesson and Colt do not export their products," said Brooks.

Brooks said Feinstein should take up the matter with ATF if she has a problem.

An ATF spokesman said that the permit for import was issued earlier this summer and that he had no comment on Feinstein's effort.

An official at the Washington office of Israel Military Industries said the staff was unavailable for comment. □

**Illinois man ordered deported for lying about wartime record**

NEW YORK (JTA) — The U.S. Department of Justice has won a deportation order against an Illinois man accused of participating in a Nazi-sponsored mobile killing unit during World War II.

U.S. Immigration Judge O. John Brahos in Chicago found that Juozas Naujalis, 77, was a member of the 2nd Lithuanian Battalion that murdered thousands of civilians, predominantly Jews, in both Lithuania and neighboring Belarus.

In hearings on the case held earlier this year, former battalion members recounted how they forcibly assembled the victims and drove them to wooded areas, where they shot them.

During the month of October 1941 alone, battalion members massacred thousands of civilians in Belarus.

The court found that Naujalis, a former machinist, lied about his wartime activities when he immigrated to the United States from Germany in 1949. He never applied for citizenship.

Whether Lithuania will prosecute Naujalis is unknown.

In June, Kazys Ciurinskas, an Indiana man who was a member of the same battalion, had his citizenship revoked. □

## New imbroglio erupts after Jews fail to show at Swiss meetings

By Mitchell Danow

NEW YORK (JTA) — Another storm has developed between Jewish organizations and the Swiss government.

The brouhaha erupted after 12 officials of the World Jewish Restitution Organization were absent from meetings scheduled for Monday in Bern.

Jewish leaders gave advance notice last week that they would be unable to attend the meetings, but the Swiss government, joined by the Swiss media, lashed out at the absences.

The seven-member executive board of the Swiss Holocaust Memorial Fund, as well as the fund's 18-member advisory council, had been slated to meet in the Swiss capital to approve the distribution of 15 million Swiss francs — some \$10.4 million at current exchange rates — to Holocaust survivors.

The fund's officers were also planning to approve the distribution of 2 million Swiss francs — about \$1.4 million — to non-Jewish Holocaust survivors, including gays, Catholics and Gypsies.

But no action was taken after the three Jewish members of the board and the nine members of the council did not attend the meetings.

Rolf Bloch, the president of the Swiss Jewish community who also chairs the executive board, said two of the board members were absent because of illness.

The remaining absences, he added, were not the result of "any controversy with Switzerland."

Indeed, one source familiar with the workings of the WJRO said some of the absences were due to differences among Jewish leaders over how some of the funds would be allocated.

The Swiss government attacked the absences, saying they would cause a delay in the distribution of payments.

### Absences 'defy comprehension'

"These absences defy comprehension since the date for today's meeting was set by mutual agreement," the Swiss Federal Council, the nation's Cabinet, said in a statement issued Monday.

"As a result, necessary help to thousands of elderly victims in need will unfortunately be further delayed."

The Federal Council called on the WJRO to present its proposals by Sept. 25.

Swiss newspapers pounced on the absences in their Tuesday editions, with one questioning the seriousness of Jewish leaders about helping Holocaust victims.

Another newspaper suggested that the Swiss government kick the WJRO out of the fund's decision-making processes.

The WJRO is headed by World Jewish Congress President Edgar Bronfman and includes the Jewish Agency for Israel and other international Jewish groups.

The organization has previously locked horns with the Swiss government after spearheading international efforts during the past two years to get the Swiss to confront their wartime past.

Switzerland's three largest banks created the Holocaust Memorial Fund earlier this year amid allegations that the banks hoarded the wealth of Holocaust victims.

The fund now stands at about \$116 million; additional pledges already made by private companies and the Swiss National Bank would bring the total to some \$200 million.

At a meeting last week in New York, the WJRO decided to recommend initial payments from the fund of

about \$1,000 each to Jews living in former Soviet bloc countries — the so-called double victims who suffered under both Nazism and Communism and never received reparations from the German government. The payments were supposed to get final approval in Bern this week.

The WJRO also decided last week to set up a special commission to investigate what happened to billions of dollars worth of art looted by the Nazis. Ronald Lauder, chairman of the Museum of Modern Art in New York and WJRO treasurer, was appointed to head the effort.

WJRO officials said they have evidence that 55,000 works of art stolen by the Nazis in France, many belonging to Jews, were not returned to their owners after the war.

Of those pieces, about 14,000 were sold at public auction after the war. □

(JTA correspondent Daniel Kurtzman in Washington contributed to this report.)

## JNF to slash its operations, send more earnings to Israel

By Cynthia Mann

NEW YORK (JTA) — The Jewish National Fund of America has approved plans to cut \$5.1 million from its budget and has pledged to send 70 percent of the money it raises annually to Israel by the year 2001.

The planned cuts involve closing five regional offices and eliminating 32 full-time posts.

The administrative committee of the Zionist philanthropy — known best for planting trees in Israel — approved the initiatives Tuesday.

The moves were recommended by a national task force appointed earlier this year to reassess the group's priorities and examine its finances and structure.

The appointment was made after an audit last year revealed fiscal mismanagement in the organization and the fact that only 21 percent of the funds raised were actually being transferred to Israel.

As part of an effort to restore credibility and stature to JNF, Ronald Lauder, a philanthropist and former ambassador to Austria, was named president.

Lauder, who had called on the committee to endorse the recommendations, said in a statement Tuesday, "Mistakes were made that have blemished the organization's reputation and impacted on its effectiveness in meeting its primary objective: sending funds to reclaim land, plant trees, conserve water and connect people in the United States to the land of Israel."

JNF's campaign totaled more than \$30 million in fiscal 1996, but will show a decline in the coming fiscal year, officials say. Former United Jewish Appeal official Russell Robinson assumed the post of JNF executive vice president earlier this month.

Details of the cuts, including which offices would be closed, were not immediately available. □

## Morocco balks at tennis in Israel

NEW YORK (JTA) — Morocco forfeited its Davis Cup tennis match against Israel over the weekend because it refused to send its athletes to compete in the Jewish state.

Moroccan officials said they made the move for security reasons. But the action by a country considered one of Israel's closest friends in the Arab world was widely interpreted as a protest against the policies of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and a reflection of the increased tension in the Middle East.

Morocco forfeited the match after the International Tennis Federation rejected requests to move the match from the Ramat Aviv tennis center to a neutral site. □