



NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ **U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross will be traveling to Israel this weekend to meet with the Palestinian-Israeli committees dealing with issues outstanding from the 1995 Interim Agreement.** He will also discuss security issues, the proposed "timeout" on settlements, further redeployments of Israeli troops and the final-status talks.

■ **Israel transferred \$57 million it owed in tax revenues to the Palestinian Authority.** Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said the move was taken as a gesture of goodwill after last week's meeting with authority Chairman Yasser Arafat.

■ **Canada's ambassador to Israel, David Berger, returned to Israel.** Berger was recalled after the two Mossad agents captured in last month's botched assassination attempt on a Hamas leader in Jordan were found to have false Canadian passports.

■ **The Anti-Defamation League labeled as "disappointing and disturbing" a proclamation by Washington Mayor Marion Barry calling on all city residents to observe Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan's "Holy Day of Atonement."** Barry has granted all city employees a day off without pay. [Page 4]

■ **An Israeli Jew who killed a Palestinian on the Temple Mount in 1982 will soon be freed, according to a prison spokeswoman.** A parole board agreed to take eight years off of Alan Goodman's sentence after the U.S. immigrant agreed to leave Israel for the remaining years of his term.

■ **A leading German electronics firm is refusing to pay compensation to slave laborers who were forced to work for the company during World War II.** Hundreds of protesters demonstrated in support of compensation at Siemens' 150th anniversary earlier this week.

■ **Israel withdrew a team from a top international bridge competition in Tunisia because of security worries.** Tunisia would not let the Israeli women's team bring along a guard from the Shin Bet security service.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Results of Zionist elections trigger historic shift in power

By Cynthia Mann

NEW YORK (JTA) — The battle for religious rights in Israel has triggered a historic shift in the power balance in the World Zionist Organization, the entity which gave birth to modern Zionism 100 years ago.

Using religious pluralism as its rallying cry, the Reform movement's Zionist arm captured 47.7 percent of the vote in the elections for the 33rd Zionist Congress, which is slated for Jerusalem in December.

In doing so, it more than doubled its support since the last Congress in 1992.

The Conservative movement's Zionist branch also doubled its numbers in the world Jewish parliament, claiming 26 percent of the U.S. vote.

U.S. Jewry represents 29 percent of the congress.

In practical terms, the victory means that the Reform, along with the Conservative, will capture key leadership positions within the WZO establishment.

They will also wield significant influence over the \$400 million annual budget of the WZO's partner, the Jewish Agency for Israel.

At least half of that money is contributed through the United Jewish Appeal by U.S. Jews. Most of those who affiliate with a movement are Reform and Conservative.

Meanwhile, the showings of the classical Zionist organizations, including the U.S. affiliates of the Likud and Labor parties, were stunningly weak, prompting Reform Zionist leaders to declare that those groups had "sung their swan song."

The Reform leaders greeted their own victory with the proclamation of a new, "values-based Zionism," based on the "principle of mutual respect" between Israel and the Diaspora.

"The new Zionism will not allow the subjugation of our traditions and democratic heritage," Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch, executive director of the Association of Reform Zionists of America, and Philip Meltzer, its president, said in a statement. "Religious pluralism has been placed at the center of the concerns of American Jewry."

Rabbi Robert Golub, executive director of the Conservative's Mercaz, the movement's Zionist arm, echoed Hirsch's assessment.

'Not just the province of Israelis'

"American Jewry has spent the last 50 years building the state of Israel and the next 50 years we will be building and shaping the Jewish society of Israel, based on pluralism and tolerance."

"This is not just the province of Israelis," he continued. "It's a Jewish state and Israel must be prepared to listen to what the Diaspora is saying."

For its part, American Friends of Likud won just 1.9 percent of the vote despite pouring what were reported to be enormous sums into the election, including the cost of sending videotapes to more than 70,000 homes.

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert had personally campaigned for his party, trumpeting it as the best defender of Israel's security.

Likud's share was little more than the 1.5 percent garnered by a brand-new slate out of Baltimore called American Zionists for Unity and Tolerance. The new slate was headed by Shoshana Cardin, the chair of the United Israel Appeal.

Other results included:

- The Labor Zionist Movement, with 3.4 percent;
- The World Confederation of United Zionists, a coalition of classical Zionist parties, less than 1 percent;
- The Zionist Organization of America, headed by Morton Klein, 2.9 percent.

The elections drew nearly 150,000 registrants last spring, of whom roughly 111,000 voted by mail this fall in a contest between 10 slates.

The Reform sweep reflects ARZA's success in capitalizing during the registration process on mounting anger by many non-Orthodox U.S. Jews

over controversial conversion legislation pending in the Israeli Knesset.

That initiative, which would codify the de facto Orthodox monopoly over conversions performed in Israel, has come to be seen as a symbol of systemic delegitimation of non-Orthodox Judaism in Israel.

ARZA officials broadened the election far beyond the little-known WZO into a referendum on the rights and legitimacy of Reform Judaism and on the need for tolerance and diversity in the Jewish state.

And in the campaign, they emphasized the unusual opportunity they were offering American Jews to have a voice in internal Israeli affairs.

"We always saw the elections as a way to influence the wider discussion," Hirsch of ARZA said in an interview.

"And American Jews rendered their verdict in black and white," he said. "It was a vote of no confidence in the government policies on Israel-Diaspora affairs."

For Karen Rubinstein, the executive director of the American Zionist Movement, the umbrella Zionist organization that administered the elections, the outcome reflected "who had access, who had the ability to reach large numbers of Jews." It also showed which issues "caught the public imagination and resonated."

Golub of Mercaz said the overall election was a clear win for "the liberal, progressive forces representing the overwhelming majority of American Jewry and the American Zionist movement."

The relatively strong showing of the left-wing American Friends of Meretz, with 4.5 percent, appeared to buttress his claim.

The rabbi noted that it was also a vote for religious-based Zionism.

The Orthodox group, the Religious Zionist Movement, drew an impressive 10.8 percent. That means that the three main religious streams combined garnered roughly 85 percent of the vote.

The elections results have triggered a stepped-up, behind-the-scenes jockeying for positions and deals within the WZO and Jewish Agency, all of which will culminate at the Congress.

Already, Labor and Likud have made a deal to rotate the chairmanship of the WZO and Jewish Agency, currently held by Laborite Avraham Burg.

The deal calls for Burg to hold the post for the next two years, to be succeeded by an as-yet unnamed Likud member.

Hadassah delegates a major sticking point

But ARZA, with its new strength, must weigh in on the arrangement. It supports Burg but has indicated it would "reserve judgment" on a Likud candidate.

A major sticking point is how delegates will be assigned to Hadassah, a powerful member of the WZO that opted out of the elections.

Instead, it had requested 35 delegates based on its previous representation. Some powerful parties within the WZO executive have sought to reduce the overall size of the U.S. elected delegation of 145 by the number of delegates assigned to Hadassah.

But ARZA rejected that idea.

"It will be perceived as an attempt to steal the election," said ARZA's Hirsch. "It would be a naked power play that could bring down the American Zionist Movement."

In fact, the AZM also opposes such a move on constitutional grounds. The WZO constitution calls for the U.S. delegation to reflect 29 percent of the Congress' elected delegates, and Hadassah delegates would not be elected.

The rest of the Diaspora represents 33 percent of the Congress, while Israel is allocated 38 percent of the delegates.

The Jewish Agency budget is spent mostly on immigration and absorption as well as Jewish and Zionist education in the Diaspora.

If Reform has its way, it will step up the agency's support for progressive Jewish education and tolerance programs inside Israel.

An ideal platform for ARZA to pursue this agenda would be the chairmanship of the newly created Israel Department, which would oversee these programs with an estimated budget of \$60 million.

Current Jewish Agency funding for programs of the three religious streams and programs promoting tolerance and Jewish unity in Israel is \$17.5 million annually.

Meanwhile, officials with American Friends of Likud said they had no comment on the outcome.

Sources at a WZO executive meeting this week said a suggestion came from Likud quarters that the election process be referred to the WZO comptroller to determine whether it was fair.

That prompted Ehud Haviv, the comptroller, to issue an off-the-cuff preliminary oral report that was "positive."

Reached in Jerusalem, he said he told the executive that about three weeks ago he met with AZM election officials and their contractors, including the computer service counting the ballots.

He said that while his inquiry was not complete, he told the executive that "my initial impression was positive" regarding "the technicalities and legalities of the process." □

Argentina seeks to deflect criticism during Clinton visit

By Sergio Kiernan

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) — Appearances seem to be everything for the Argentine government.

Argentine President Carlos Menem was so concerned that his administration would be criticized for its inability to find those responsible for two terror bombings of Jewish targets earlier in the decade that he called Jewish leaders to the presidential palace Tuesday to seek from them assurances that they would not bring up the issue during a meeting with President Clinton.

Although details of the meeting with Menem were not disclosed, Jewish communal sources said they had acquiesced to Menem's request.

"We will not show ourselves to be bad Argentines, criticizing our country before Clinton," a source said.

Menem had wanted to prevent his government from being embarrassed over its continued inability to solve the March 17, 1992, bombing of the Israeli Embassy and the July 18, 1994, bombing of the Argentine Jewish Mutual Aid Association, also known as AMIA.

The attacks in Buenos Aires killed 115 people and left hundreds of wounded.

Instead of lashing out at their government, Argentine Jewish representatives said they planned to ask Clinton for information they believe is held by the FBI and CIA, but was never disclosed to Argentine investigators.

Their meeting with Menem took place two days before their scheduled meeting with Clinton, who is visiting Argentina as part of his trip this week to several South American countries.

In the past, Jewish leaders here and abroad have cited incompetence, corruption and anti-Semitism among security and government officials as causes for Argentina's inability to solve either case. □

States move against Swiss banks amid probe into dormant accounts

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — One week after New York City administered a major sanction against a Swiss bank by refusing to let it take part in a billion-dollar bond offering, California's treasurer announced that it had decided to halt the state's dealings with Swiss banks.

Both moves come in response to the way the banks have handled the Nazi gold issue and the search for dormant Jewish accounts from the Holocaust era.

A spokesman for California Treasurer Matt Fong said in a statement Tuesday that Fong "has asked the Swiss parent companies for full disclosure of the nature of dormant accounts and implemented a moratorium on investment activities with these firms until we have such disclosure."

Last week, New York City Comptroller Alan Hevesi said he would not let Union Bank of Switzerland participate in a letter of credit arrangement because he did not want to see the banking giant profit from expanded dealings with the city while its top officials remain unapologetic for the bank's response to the ongoing probe into Switzerland's wartime financial transactions.

Hevesi was among those who protested earlier this year when Union Bank fired a night watchman, Christoph Meili, who rescued Holocaust-era documents from the bank's shredder.

"We were faced with the decision of whether to go ahead and do business as usual or send a message to Union Bank of Switzerland," Hevesi, whose family included a number of Holocaust victims, was quoted as saying.

"We decided it would be sending the wrong message to accept the bid."

Union Bank was the lead bank in a consortium that had successfully bid on the letter of credit deal, under which banks are paid a fee for their guarantee of anticipated state and federal aid payments to the city.

Morgan Guaranty agreed to take the place of Union Bank, which would have received close to half of a \$1.3 million fee paid for the guarantee.

The State Department criticized New York City's decision, calling it "counterproductive."

"It is our view," State Department spokesman James Rubin said, "that rather than confrontation, cooperation is the best means to achieve the results we want."

Union Bank expressed dismay at the move.

"We're all deeply sorry and disappointed that Mr. Hevesi continues to feel obliged to perpetuate this story, particularly at a time when the Swiss banks, including UBS, are working so hard and making so much progress," Richard Capone, chief operating officer for the bank's Americas region, said in a statement.

Union Bank is one of the Swiss banks that has contributed millions of dollars to a special fund for Holocaust victims. "Mr. Hevesi's actions are taking on the characteristics of a vindictive and targeted campaign to single out and punish UBS," he said. □

Tiny American school to offer doctorate in Holocaust history

By Peter Ephross

NEW YORK (JTA) — A tiny university in central Massachusetts will soon become the first school in the United States offering a doctoral degree in Holocaust history.

Clark University in Worcester, Mass., plans to begin offering courses next fall for the degree.

The program is the latest in a series of steps that

Clark, which has a Jewish student population of 24 percent, has taken to establish itself as a pioneer in the field.

The process began two years ago, when the university hired Deborah Dwork to hold the Rose Chair in Holocaust Studies and Modern Jewish History and Culture.

But Dwork, who was then at Yale, wanted more than just a professorship — she told university officials that she wanted to create a center for Holocaust studies.

Within a few weeks, university President Richard Traina called her and began to discuss the idea in earnest.

The recently inaugurated Center for Holocaust Studies offers an undergraduate concentration in Holocaust and Genocide Studies.

Dwork, who is the center's director, said enrollments in these courses, which include "Comparative Genocide" and "Jewish Child Life in Nazi Europe," have attracted both Jewish and non-Jewish undergraduates, including students from Korea and Bangladesh who have experienced political repression first hand.

The center has also established a regular lecture series open to the public and a teacher-training program in the Holocaust for local schoolteachers.

The university is currently raising approximately \$20 million for the center and interviewing for a second endowed professorship in Holocaust history.

"The Holocaust is a defining, pivotal event not just in Jewish history, but world history and, therefore, should be part of the educational canon," said Dwork, who wrote "Children With a Star: Jewish Youth in Nazi Europe" and co-authored "Auschwitz: 1270 to the Present."

This is not the first time that Clark, which has approximately 2,700 students, has been an innovator in academia. Clark pioneered the fields of anthropology and psychology and, in more recent years, women's studies. Its small size, said Dwork, allows it to make innovations quicker than larger institutions.

A Holocaust studies professorship at Harvard University, for example, has been mired in disputes over whether the Holocaust should be treated as its own subject and over whom should hold the chair.

Some critics have argued that establishing courses and programs in Holocaust studies reduces modern Jewish history to a few years when Jews were victims, thereby neglecting the rich history that Jews created in Europe and elsewhere. The center comes at time when Holocaust courses have been proliferating across the country, which Dwork attributes to the fact that more than 50 years have passed since the event.

"The further we get from the event, the less we can rely on survivors," she said. "People say, 'Never forget,' but the fear is they won't ever know what it is they're supposed to remember." □

Jewish heart saves Arab girl

JERUSALEM (JTA) — While politicians attempt to hammer out differences, an Israeli-Arab reconciliation of a different sort took place recently at an Israeli hospital.

Doctors at Sheba Medical Center near Tel Aviv transplanted the heart of a Jewish boy killed in a road accident to a 3-year-old Arab girl.

Dr. Ya'acov Lavi, a surgeon at the hospital, said the girl, Reem al-Jaroushi of Ramle, had a heart three times normal size and would have had a limited life without the transplant. The boy, Yuval Kaveh, was killed when he was hit by a car while crossing the street with his bicycle days before his ninth birthday. "She's got a wonderful heart both from nature's standpoint and from an emotional standpoint," said Yuval's father, David.

The girl's mother, Amal, told Israel Radio that she was "very thankful" for the transplant. □

Economic sanctions against Russia urged amid growing links with Iran

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Jewish activists and members of Congress are urging the Clinton administration to impose economic sanctions against Russian government agencies and firms found to be helping Iran develop weapons of mass destruction.

Israeli officials estimate that with help from Russia, Tehran will have the ability to launch ballistic missiles equipped with chemical, biological and other warheads capable of reaching Israel and other states in the region within the next 18 months.

While Israeli officials and American Jewish organizations press for urgent action to prevent Iran from further developing its missile program, the Clinton administration remains concerned that too much pressure could jeopardize its relations with Russia.

"Russia has made clear that its policy is not to assist Iran's missile program," State Department spokesman James Rubin said last week. "We have now established a mechanism to pursue this with the Russians and are working hard to resolve the problem."

He declined to give further details, but said Clinton's special envoy Frank Wisner, who has been charged with pursuing the Russian-Iran problem, was expected to visit Moscow shortly.

Israel claims that Russian scientists and engineers helped develop the engine and guidance system of the Iranian missile now in development and that the Russian space agency provided wind tunnel testing for the rocket fuselage.

Last week, Russia's security service confirmed that Iran had attempted to seek Russian help in developing its missile technology, but said that all such attempts had been thwarted.

The House International Relations Committee, meanwhile, has adopted a non-binding resolution urging the Clinton administration to impose sanctions against "responsible Russian entities" found to be aiding Iran's efforts to develop weapons of mass destruction.

"Russia has already provided Iran with critical know-how and technological support," said Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.), chairman of the committee.

"We have but a few months to prevent the Iranians from achieving a quantum leap in their missile program," he said.

The committee is expected to take up tougher legislation later this month aimed at enforcing existing sanctions.

Calls to move beyond diplomatic channels

Meanwhile, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and other Jewish organizations are urging the administration to move beyond diplomatic channels — which they say have not yielded results — and impose sanctions against Russian companies helping Iran build missiles.

Jewish officials and some members of Congress have also proposed cutting a portion of Russia's foreign aid.

"Russian technology is the driving force behind Iran's missile program," AIPAC stated in an advertisement placed in Jewish newspapers last week.

"Now is the time," the ad continues, "for Congress and the administration to force Russian companies to choose between their deadly partnership with Iran or their future in the world marketplace."

AIPAC officials say they have made the issue their top priority.

The controversy comes amid reports that a second European oil company is in the process of finalizing a multibillion-dollar energy deal with Iran. The Washington Post reported this week that Shell, the British-Dutch energy conglomerate, is negotiating to build a \$2.5 billion gas pipeline across northern Iran.

The Shell project would carry natural gas from the former Soviet republic of Turkmenistan to Turkey and Western Europe and would be a breakthrough in efforts to export the vast resources of the Caspian Sea region, the Post said.

News of the deal follows an announcement last month that the French oil and gas company Total had joined Russian gas giant Gazprom and the Malaysian state oil company Petronas in a \$2 billion deal to develop an Iranian offshore gas field.

Both projects fly in the face of a 1996 U.S. law intended to curb investment that the United States believes would provide Iran with funds to promote terrorism or develop weapons of mass destruction, including a nuclear capability.

The Iran-Libya Sanctions Act provides for punitive trade measures against companies investing more than \$20 million a year in Iran's energy sector.

Faced with staunch opposition from the European Union, which opposes any attempt to apply U.S. law to foreign companies, the administration decided to defer sanctions against Total, pending negotiations with the European Union.

"These will be some of the largest energy projects under way on the planet at this time," a senior official of a pro-Israel organization said of the Total and Shell deals.

"The amount of money that they're investing is equal to the scale of Iran's nuclear program." □

D.C. mayor: Observe Farrakhan's 'day of atonement,' without pay

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The mayor of the nation's capital is coming under fire for calling on all residents of Washington, D.C., to observe Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan's "Holy Day of Atonement."

In addition to issuing a proclamation this week supporting Farrakhan, Marion Barry has granted all city employees a day off without pay.

This will enable them to heed Farrakhan's call to fast for 24 hours and stay home from work and school, Barry said.

Farrakhan's holiday on Thursday was timed to celebrate the anniversary of last year's Million Man March.

Farrakhan borrowed his idea of a day of atonement from Yom Kippur, he said when he announced the new holiday last year.

In a sharply worded statement, the Anti-Defamation League labeled Barry's proclamation "disappointing and disturbing."

ADL accused Barry of "sanctioning and legitimizing" the Nation of Islam.

Last year, local Jewish officials clashed with Barry after the mayor invited Nation of Islam representatives to sit on a religious council. In the end, the Jewish representatives resigned from the committee.

The District government was allowing all employees to take the day off without pay under a "liberal leave" policy.

But in an ironic twist, it was the Jewish community that observed Farrakhan's call, one Jewish official in Washington quipped. Because the Nation of Islam holiday fell on the first day of Sukkot, most Jewish organizations were closed. □