



## NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denied media reports that he had rejected a U.S.-brokered document aimed at strengthening security cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Netanyahu reportedly objected to wording in the document that suggests Israel is involved in terrorism against Palestinians. [Page 4]

■ The lawyer for "Carlos the Jackal" said he would appeal a life sentence given to the international terrorist for murdering two French intelligence agents in 1975. Carlos, whose real name is Ilich Ramirez Sanchez, is also suspected of having taken part in the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre and the 1976 Entebbe hostage crisis.

■ The head of the Reform movement in America urged the Zionist movement to focus its efforts on synagogues in the United States, which he called the true power base of American Jewry. Speaking to the 33rd Zionist Congress in Jerusalem, Rabbi Eric Yoffie said synagogues, not the fund-raising establishment, represent the future of American Jewry. [Page 3]

■ U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross is slated to go to Israel and Palestinian-controlled territories the first week of January. Ross is expected to lay the groundwork for separate meetings that President Clinton plans to hold later in the month in Washington with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat.

■ The three largest Swiss banks agreed to pay up to \$10 million to locate needy Holocaust survivors who may be eligible to receive payments from Switzerland's Holocaust Memorial Fund. After many delays, payments from the fund, to which the banks have contributed some \$69 million of the approximately \$200 million total, began last month.

■ The war-crimes trial of former Vichy official Maurice Papon was suspended until Jan. 5 due to the defendant's poor health. Before the suspension, evidence suggesting Papon was involved in the roundup of Jews was introduced.

### ISRAEL TURNS 50

## America launches events to celebrate Israel's jubilee

By Susan Jacobs

NEW YORK (JTA) — While Israeli officials have yet to decide how to celebrate Israel's jubilee, America launched its own festivities this week.

The first night of Chanukah Tuesday marked the official kickoff of Israel's 50th anniversary, as leaders of dozens of countries lit menorahs in their respective capital cities.

In Jerusalem, Israeli President Ezer Weizman lit a menorah at his official residence.

President Clinton lit the first Chanukah candle in an Oval Office ceremony Tuesday with students from a local Jewish day school.

The celebration in the United States is designed to "get people to understand the history of the State of Israel and to celebrate the joy that it's 50," said Arlene Kausman, co-chair of the Israel at 50 Anniversary Committee.

The committee, a joint effort of the United Jewish Appeal and the Council of Jewish Federations, is helping communities across the country schedule activities by informing them of what's available, she said.

Most of the U.S.-based events are cultural, involving tours by Israeli performers and artists, but some educational programs are also being planned.

In Israel, the majority of events have not yet been scheduled because of an array of budgetary and bureaucratic problems.

Jubilee planners in Israel have indicated they may scale back events planned in the Diaspora and delay events in Israel until April 30, Israel's Independence Day.

Planning for Israel's 50th anniversary in the United States has also had its share of trouble, where concern about religious pluralism in the Jewish state and the stalled peace process may account for the unexpectedly small number of events planned nationally.

In August, actor Billy Crystal and other Hollywood celebrities indicated that they would not appear at a gala celebration next year in Los Angeles because of the controversy about religious pluralism.

### Philadelphia to host first major jubilee event

Despite such divisions, American Jewry should be coming together "to celebrate 50 years of a miracle," said Constance Smukler, co-chair of Israel 50, a non-profit group that is organizing more than 100 events in Philadelphia.

"Who would have thought that 50 years ago the country would have such accomplishments in medicine and science and bring in hundreds of thousands of Soviet and Ethiopian Jews?"

Philadelphia will host the first major Israel jubilee event in the country.

The event is slated for Jan. 24, when the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and the Philadelphia Orchestra are scheduled to perform a special concert called "Hear, O Israel" at a city sports arena that can seat 18,000 people.

The program, a joint effort by City Hall, the local Jewish federation and Israeli Consulate, will tell Israel's history in music and narration, with the participation of actors Leonard Nimoy and Richard Dreyfuss.

Part of the evening's profits will be used to fund other events being planned for Philadelphia through June, Smukler said.

The UJA plans to provide a live satellite hookup for communities across the country to view the concert.

UJA and CJF staffers, who are still collecting information about planned activities in communities across the country, remain upbeat that other cities will emulate Philadelphia.

"The Jewish world and the State of Israel can't afford to miss this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," said Ron Friedman, director of Israel at 50 for UJA.

"This is a celebration of Diaspora Jewry and of Israel."

The Los Angeles event, which Crystal and others have declined to attend, will be shown as a CBS television special, "America and its Friends

Salute Israel" on April 15. The program is expected to be the highlight of jubilee events in Los Angeles.

The event is being produced by Don Mischer and Gil Cates.

Mischer produced the 1996 Olympic Games opening ceremonies show, and Cates has produced seven Academy Award shows and more than 25 films.

The UJA-CJF anniversary committee is also sponsoring four traveling exhibits on themes related to Israel:

- A mural depicting scenes from Israel's War of Independence, created by Israeli artist Avner Moriah. "Against the Odds" also includes a series of 10 smaller paintings showing the sequence of the war. After its U.S. tour, the exhibit will be displayed in the Ammunition Hill War Memorial Museum in Israel.

- "The People of Israel at 50," a contemporary photo display by Zion Ozeri that depicts images of Israel's modern citizens.

- Photos taken by members of the Palmach, the strike force of the Haganah.

- 50 years of partnership between the UJA, the Jewish Agency for Israel and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Locally, Jewish community relations councils are also planning cultural and education events.

Israel's 50th birthday provides "opportunities to plan substantive programs for relations between the U.S. and Israel," said Martin Raffel, associate executive vice chairman of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the former National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

While the JCPA has been encouraging local Jewish community relations councils to sponsor events within the Jewish community, Raffel said, "We have a special responsibility for outreach with the non-Jewish community."

The community relations council of the Jewish Federation of Central New Jersey, for example, has been sending trained volunteers to local schools to present "Hello Israel," a 90-minute program about Israel's culture and history.

The program, which was developed 20 years ago by the National Council of Jewish Women, aims to educate youths that "Israel is a living, vibrant country," said Eleanor Rubin, chair of the Central New Jersey CRC and national chair of Hello Israel.

Rubin said the program was recently well received at a predominantly Hispanic and African American school in Elizabeth, N.J.

The JCPA is planning to hold a Beit Midrash program — an interactive study session — to mark Israel's jubilee at its annual meeting in February in Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Jewish college students who will be attending the JCPA convention as part of the annual meeting of the Hillel: the Foundation for Jewish Campus Life will engage in discussions with community relations leaders who personally remember events in 1948, or who reached maturity at the time of the 1967 Six-Day War.

The three generations will share their perspectives in small groups, utilizing both ancient and modern texts about Israel. □

## At candlelighting, Clinton vows kids with his Chanukah know-how

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — "This is a chaotic game," President Clinton declared as the dreidels spun out of control on his desk.

Surrounded by 14 students from a local Jewish day school — and as many dreidels — the commander in chief tried his hand at the age-old game Tuesday during a menorah lighting in the Oval Office celebrating the first night of Chanukah.

Looking at the pile of chocolate gelt, Clinton told the youngsters: "Nobody can take everything. No matter what the game says, you have to split it."

Clinton was among several dozen world leaders who lit candles at sundown in their respective countries, kicking off the holiday — and a yearlong celebration of Israel's 50th anniversary.

The children gathered with Clinton around a menorah given to him by Mayrim Baram, an Israeli whose son died in the 1973 Yom Kippur War.

Baram crafted the ornate, silver-and-gold menorah as a tribute to Clinton's efforts to promote peace in the Middle East.

"I know that your teachers and rabbis have instilled in you the values of compassion, justice and tolerance," Clinton told the students from Adas Israel Synagogue's Jewish day school in Washington.

"If you have courage to follow those values, you can be the Maccabees of our times."

The children sang the blessing over the candles, then broke out into a lively rendition of Peter, Paul and Mary's "Light One Candle."

One of their teachers, Marilyn Fine, said they chose the song because it has "a message that we think is every bit as American as it is Jewish."

The fourth-, fifth- and sixth-grade children, many of whose families altered their vacation plans so they could take part in the ceremony, were visibly ecstatic, even giddy, as they stood alongside the president.

## Clinton hosts children for first time

Eleven-year-old Danny Lew, who lit the candles, said afterward that he was not sure why he was given the honor.

"It might have been because I'm president of the student council at my school or it might have been because my father works here," Danny Lew said, referring to Jack Lew, deputy director of the Office of Management and Budget.

The younger Lew had to improvise when one of his teachers, perhaps overwhelmed by her surroundings, accidentally lit the first candle instead of the shamas, or lead candle.

Hana Lieberman, the 9-year-old daughter of Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.), said she was impressed by how Clinton "knew everything about Chanukah."

"It seemed he had played dreidel before," she added.

Indeed, it wasn't the first time Clinton hosted local children at the White House to celebrate the holiday.

But this time around, nobody's hair caught on fire as it did in 1994, when Clinton had to pat out a flame that singed the curls of a very embarrassed young girl.

Meanwhile, in brief remarks to reporters, Clinton said he was hopeful about the prospects for advancing the peace process between Israel and the Palestinians and between Israel and Syria next year.

"I think the openness is there, and I think that people are sobered by the consequences of the absence of a viable peace process," Clinton said.

The President added that his optimism was based in part on Palestinian progress on security issues and in part on Israel's discussions of pulling back troops from the West Bank.

"Maybe it's just the holiday season, but I'm feeling pretty upbeat about it," he said. □

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

### Reform leader leads call for a redefining of Zionism

By Mark J. Joffe

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The leader of Reform Judaism in America exhorted the Zionist movement this week to rethink its target audience and focus its energies on synagogue congregants, rather than continuing to rely on the Jewish fund-raising establishment in the United States.

While Jewish federations are "elite organizations by definition," it is "the synagogue that is the grass roots of American Jewish life," Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, told delegates taking part here in the 33rd Zionist Congress.

Yoffie's call, delivered at a session Wednesday devoted to "new challenges" facing the Zionist movement, was one of many urging a redefinition of Zionism as the movement enters its second century.

Indeed, the sheer number of passionate — and, at times, anguished — speeches devoted to this subject during the three-day gathering of Jews from around the world suggested that, 50 years after the establishment of the State of Israel, the Zionist movement is grappling with an existential crisis.

Many participants went as far as to suggest that this 33rd Zionist Congress would be the last to ever take place.

They pointed to the fact that the World Zionist Organization is a financial and organizational skeleton of the major institution it once was.

#### Confidence in the future of Zionism

But longtime Zionist activists such as Bernice Tannenbaum, a former chairwoman of the WZO's American Section, said they were confident that there would be many more such congresses in the future.

"If they didn't have it, they'd have to invent it," she remarked in an interview Tuesday on the floor of the convention hall.

Salai Meridor, who was elected to succeed Avraham Burg as chairman of the WZO Executive and Jewish Agency for Israel, beginning two years from now, said, "I'm quite sure there will be a Zionist movement after the year 2000."

But many here openly questioned what kind of movement that would be, and some recommended rethinking the definition of Zionism at a time when Israel continues to rank second behind the United States in numbers of Jews.

Burg, a leading member of Israel's opposition Labor Party, issued a manifesto Tuesday calling for a new form of Zionism based on the "centrality of Israel" to the Jewish people, rather than on the "negation of the Diaspora."

He observed that for the first time in decades, "we are seeing a revival of spiritual Zionism" — a Zionism that sees Israel not just as a haven from persecution but as a source of religious and cultural inspiration for the Jewish people.

Yoffie of the Reform movement also spoke of a new "spiritual Zionism and religious Zionism."

There have always been "many Zionisms," Yoffie said, and for the last 50 years, the focus has been on political Zionism.

But that can "no longer completely dominate our agenda," he said.

Zionism should be dedicated to "strengthening the Jewish people no matter where they are, he added.

"The State of Israel exists not to replace Judaism,

but to enrich Judaism," he said. "Zionism must commit itself to Judaism."

The best way to do that, he said, is to reach out to synagogue members, as opposed to the federation leadership that has increasingly taken control of the WZO and Jewish Agency.

Yoffie commended federation leaders as "an impressive group of men and women" who "stand proudly as Jews" and have been "enormously successful" in raising money for the Zionist enterprise.

But he said that the Zionist movement has "paid a heavy price" for ceding leadership to the fund-raising establishment.

The federations are "no longer the closed aristocracy" they once were, he said.

But they still exclude "the capable Jew who can only afford to give \$100."

"We must insist on the broad-based involvement of Jews in the United States," he said. And it is in the synagogue world where the "masses of Jewish people can be found."

The synagogue, he said, is the "only vehicle that can reach the masses and turn them on to the Zionist enterprise."

Dr. Conrad Giles, president of the Council of Jewish Federations, responded by telephone from his home in Detroit to Yoffie's remarks, saying, "I don't believe that any single movement, whether it's federation or congregational, can appropriately lay claim to being the 'correct address' of American Jewry.

"I would hope that we in North America could forge a continuing alliance between the federations and the religious streams because only by so doing are we truly going to be serving the Jewish people," Giles said.

For his part, Rabbi Norman Lamm, a modern Orthodox leader who is president of Yeshiva University, said in an address Wednesday that too much weight was being given within the Zionist enterprise to the Reform and Conservative movements.

#### Concern about Reform's dominance

Indeed, the Reform movement, having won the largest bloc of votes in the Zionist elections that took place during the summer in the United States, dominated this congress and appears well positioned to exert its influence on the WZO and Jewish Agency during the next four years — or until another congress convenes.

Lamm expressed concern about the impact that Reform's dominance would have on the quest for Jewish unity.

He suggested that the Reform movement's continuing push for recognition in Israel would be a divisive force in the Zionist movement.

As it turned out, preserving Jewish unity emerged here as the most urgent — if not the most important — task of the Zionist movement at the moment.

Speaker after speaker, regardless of party or political affiliation, sounded the alarm about the need to bridge differences and unite as one Jewish people.

The urgency comes as a committee in Israel, seeking to resolve seemingly unsolvable issues surrounding the recognition of non-Orthodox conversions and marriages in Israel, faces a Jan. 31 deadline.

"Nothing is more important than preserving the unity of the Jewish people," said Meridor of the governing Likud Party.

"We must find a way to act responsibly and preserve unity."

Similarly, Ehud Barak, leader of the Labor Party, said in an address Wednesday, "We need a strong Israel, and that means one Jewish people." □

## Premier claims security accord with Palestinians is incomplete

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu moved Wednesday to head off a new rift with the defense establishment, declaring that he had full confidence in the abilities of the Israeli military echelon.

Netanyahu's remarks came on the heels of reports that he had rejected a memorandum on security issues between Israel and the Palestinians.

The prime minister denied the reports, saying that the defense establishment had not yet completed its work on the document, and that reports of a rejection were not true.

Israeli media reported this week that Netanyahu, Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, Foreign Minister David Levy and National Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon had been angered by the wording of the document, which had been drawn up last week by Israeli and Palestinian security officials and the CIA.

According to reports, Netanyahu and the other ministers took issue with the references to "reciprocity" in security cooperation and efforts to fight terror — leaving open an interpretation that Israel is also somehow involved in terrorism toward the Palestinians.

The document also did not refer specifically to Israel's demand that the Palestinian Authority hand over wanted terrorists living in the autonomous areas.

Security officials sharply recoiled at the criticisms.

In the face of the public debate, Netanyahu stressed Wednesday that the work on the document was not complete, and that the intent of the whole process was to bring the Palestinians to honor their commitments.

Palestinian officials said they would not agree to any changes in the document. □

## Israelis mark Chanukah with attempt to break world record

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel marked the beginning of Chanukah on Tuesday evening amid efforts to take holiday traditions to new heights.

Among the menorahs lit in ceremonies around the country was a 60-foot-tall version constructed by the Lubavitch movement outside Latrun, which is near Jerusalem.

Lubavitch officials claimed that the menorah, built with metal pipes, was the world's tallest.

They said cranes would be used to light it during the eight nights of the festival.

In the northern town of Afula, staff from the Movenpick chain of restaurants tried to create the world's highest pyramid of sufganiot, the jelly doughnuts traditionally eaten during the holiday.

More than 6,000 doughnuts were expected to go into the pyramid, which organizers hoped would break the current Guinness world record of 5,000 doughnuts set in 1993 by a New York bakery.

Organizers said that once the pyramid was dismantled, the doughnuts would be distributed to soldiers serving along Israel's northern border and to children living in the northern town of Kiryat Shmona.

More traditional candle-lighting ceremonies were also held around the country.

President Ezer Weizman lit a menorah at an official ceremony in his residence in Jerusalem, marking an unofficial start to the country's 50th anniversary celebrations. □

## Chanukah ceremonies at Vatican, Arch of Titus are full of symbolism

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME (JTA) — Chanukah was ushered in in Rome this year with two unprecedented menorah-lighting ceremonies — one at the Vatican and one at the ancient Roman arch that is the symbol of the Jewish Diaspora.

After Rome's Chief Rabbi Elio Toaff chanted the blessings, Italian President Oscar Luigi Scalfaro lit the first candle of a huge menorah set up underneath the Arch of Titus in the Roman Forum, near the Colosseum.

The arch was built to celebrate the Roman victory over the Jews and the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem in 70 C.E. On its inner side it has a carving showing the menorah from the Temple being carried by Jews brought to Rome as slaves.

That carving is one of the most infamous images in Jewish history — so much so that for centuries Jews would not walk through the arch. The menorah as shown, however, was the basis for the one that became the symbol of the State of Israel.

"This evening, a circle closes," said Israel's ambassador to Italy, Yehudah Millo. "We are here at the arch not as slaves but as representatives of the independent, free State of Israel."

The ceremony at the arch, organized by the Israeli Embassy in conjunction with Italian authorities, was an hourlong extravaganza that marked not only the beginning of Chanukah, but also kicked off celebrations that will take place during the coming year to mark the 50th anniversary of Israel. Italy's political elite took part in the ceremony, which drew a crowd of hundreds, most of them members of the 15,000-strong Roman Jewish community.

### First Chanukah candle lit at Vatican

Two hours earlier, just after sunset, Vatican, Israeli and Italian Jewish representatives lit a 2-foot-high silver menorah, on loan from the Rome Jewish Museum, in the Vatican garden.

The lighting, the first time that a Chanukah candle was kindled at the Vatican, also was aimed at celebrating the 50th anniversary of Israel's founding.

The ceremony took place next to an olive tree that was planted there in 1995 to mark the first anniversary of diplomatic ties between the Vatican and Israel.

The Vatican delegation was led by Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy, president of the Pontifical Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, who lit the candle as the personal representative of Pope John Paul II.

Cassidy praised the development of Jewish-Catholic relations since the historic Nostra Aestate declaration of 1965. "It is because of our common heritage and values as faith communities that we have come together here this evening," he said before lighting the candle.

"There is much darkness in the world in which we live," he said, expressing the hope that light and peace would prevail.

Aharon Lopez, Israel's ambassador to the Holy See, said the ceremony symbolizes "the portent of the normalization of our mutual relations" and also represents "an important chapter in the historic process of reconciliation between the Jews and the Catholic Church."

The past anti-Semitism of the Catholic Church, as well as the Vatican's role during the Holocaust era, has long been a subject of controversy. The latest development came earlier this month, when the Vatican denied it had stored money and gold for Croatian fascists after World War II.

A Vatican spokesman rejected calls for the Holy See to open its archives from that period. □