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**IDF SOLDIER KILLED, 2 WOUNDED,
IN AMBUSH OF CONVOY IN LEBANON**
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, May 28 (JTA) -- An Israel Defense Force soldier was killed and two others were wounded when their convoy was ambushed in the southern Lebanon security zone Wednesday night.

The ambush occurred near Arnoun village on the northern edge of the zone, not far from the Israeli town of Metulla in Upper Galilee.

Staff Sgt. Yisrael Ma'atouf, 21, from Moshav Gimzo, near Lod, was killed by light weapons fire and a rocket-propelled grenade.

The wounded are Sgt. Maj. Haim Manis, a tank-transport driver, and Cpl. Tamir Mazari. They were evacuated by helicopter to Rambam Hospital in Haifa.

Two groups have claimed credit for the ambush. One is the Syrian Nationalist Party, a militia of pro-Syrian Palestinian socialists. The other is George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

According to the IDF, the ambush party was hidden in a house at the side of a road frequently taken by convoys. IDF tanks promptly pounded the building to rubble, burying three guerrillas inside.

The incident was unconnected to the recent sequence of attacks in the zone by the pro-Iranian Hezbollah and retaliation by the Israeli air force and artillery, the IDF said.

Nevertheless, after the ambush, Israeli artillery laid down a heavy barrage on Lebanese villages north of the security zone known to be occupied by Hezbollah.

Meanwhile, one Hezbollah guerrilla was killed and another was wounded in an encounter with a patrol of the Israeli-allied South Lebanon Army in the security zone Thursday.

**NEWS ANALYSIS:
VIOLENCE WILL LIKELY AFFECT ELECTIONS,
BUT MAY NOT CAUSE SHIFT TO THE RIGHT**
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, May 28 (JTA) -- Suddenly, the focus of Israel's election campaign has shifted from verbal violence and some mild pushing and shoving at political rallies to terrorist killings and waves of ugly racial violence that have come in their wake.

But if anything is a measure of the openness and complexity of the current political situation less than a month before the national elections, it is the fact that the recent murders have so far not produced a rightward lurch in public opinion.

There was widespread rioting by Jews and chants of "death to the Arabs," burning of Arab crops and attacks on their villages, following the murders by Gaza Strip Arabs of 15-year-old Helena Rapp outside her home in Bat Yam on Sunday and of Rabbi Shimon Biran, 32, of Kfar Darom in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday.

A similar incident just three days before the 1988 elections became the key factor in the "return home" of tens of thousands of Likud supporters, according to many analysts.

In that case, Rachel Weiss, a Jerusalem

woman, and her two children were killed by Arab terrorists on a bus in Jericho.

This time, pundits are saying, the effects of the tense security situation are more complex.

The government, meaning mainly the Likud, is widely being held responsible, in this case for not doing enough. In many cases, voters say they will forsake Likud in favor of far-right parties.

But -- and this is the new element -- there are many people out on the streets, in shops, on buses, overheard saying openly that they will vote for Yitzhak Rabin, the Labor leader, rather than Yitzhak Shamir, precisely because of the "security situation."

While Shamir and Likud are known for their political hard line, Rabin is remembered as a very tough defense minister in the last Likud-Labor unity government, who fought the intifada with no holds barred.

If pro-Rabin sentiments being heard do represent a trend, it will prove a dramatic vindication of the Labor Party's decision to replace its longtime leader, Shimon Peres, and replace him with Rabin.

150 Rioters Arrested

Meanwhile, police in Bat Yam used tear gas and water cannon to subdue more than 3,000 Jewish rioters Wednesday night. Over 150 rioters were arrested, including those police described as "criminal elements" from outside the community.

Two policemen were injured by bricks and bottles hurled from the streets and rooftops. The rioters converged on the town's main intersection in what seemed to be a well-coordinated maneuver and refused to obey police orders to disperse.

A march and demonstration were scheduled for Thursday in Bat Yam. Ze'ev Rapp, father of the murdered schoolgirl, appealed to his friends and neighbors to keep it peaceful.

In the Gaza Strip, Jewish settlers from Kfar Darom and neighboring communities continued to set fire to Arab cultivated fields and greenhouses Thursday and uprooted trees in Arab-planted orchards.

They attempted to drive a tractor into a U.N.-supported Palestinian school.

During the night, settlers planted three mobile homes on Arab land, which they said would be the nucleus of a new settlement, to be named in memory of Rabbi Biran.

The Israel Defense Force made no move to stop them and did not interfere when the settlers brought a bulldozer to level the ground. At dawn, however, the IDF simply towed the mobile homes away.

Campaigning For The Center

The murdered Kfar Darom rabbi, meanwhile, was buried Thursday, leaving his wife, Michal, and four children, ages 8 months to 7 years. Biran was born in London and came to Israel with his parents in 1970.

He had planned to study medicine but switched to rabbinical studies and was ordained in 1986. He worked at the local Torah and Land Yeshiva, which applies the Torah's commandments concerning agriculture to current agricultural concerns.

While the events of recent days doubtlessly

will impinge on the political process, Rabin is making a determined effort to place himself in the center of the political spectrum, believed to be most representative of the national consensus.

His latest campaign advertisement, published Wednesday, shows him flanked by Shamir on the right and by Yossi Sarid, of the leftist Meretz faction, on the left.

The message is that Rabin stands equidistant from both extremes.

This drew angry responses from Meretz, which sees itself as a natural partner of Labor in a new coalition government. There was some grumbling among Labor doves. One of them, Yossi Beilin, sent Sarid a telegram saying the offending advertisement represented "the opinion of a marginal minority" in the Labor Party.

It seemed to signal Rabin's preference for another unity government with Likud to a coalition with the leftist bloc.

Nevertheless, seasoned observers say Rabin's campaign tactics before the elections need not necessarily shape his preferences if he wins. He may believe that by distancing himself from Meretz he can woo former Likud voters.

(JTA correspondent Hugh Orgel in Tel Aviv contributed to this report.)

STRATEGISTS PONDER HOW JEWISH VOTE WOULD BE AFFECTED BY PEROT CANDIDACY By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, May 28 (JTA) -- When this presidential election year began, it seemed the Democrats would be able to count on winning overwhelming support from Jewish voters.

There was President Bush's drop in approval ratings, the economic downturn and the administration's tough stand linking loan guarantees for Israel to a cessation of settlement activity in the West Bank.

It did not seem to matter who the Democratic nominee would turn out to be. The overwhelming sentiment in the Jewish community was: Anyone is better than Bush.

But that was before Ross Perot's expected third-party candidacy for the White House took off, albeit unofficially.

Democratic and Republican Jewish activists, who have been working for months to build up Jewish support for their respective parties' likely nominees, are now trying to figure out from which party, if either, will there be a greater defection of Jews to Perot, assuming he decides to run.

Perot has said he will run for the presidency if he gets on all 50 state ballots. As of this week, Perot was on eight state ballots: California, Delaware, Kentucky, Maine, New Jersey, Tennessee, Texas and Utah.

The would-be candidate is "definitely not behind schedule" in his attempt to secure a place on all 50 state ballots, an aide said from campaign headquarters in Dallas.

Perot's biggest obstacle is in New York, where the campaign law would have to be changed to accommodate his candidacy.

Democratic Jewish activists had hoped that the marked drop in Bush's level of Jewish support since the last election would help reverse his slim 1988 victories in various key states.

Democratic political consultant Mark Siegel, who supports Bill Clinton, the likely Democratic nominee, said that if the election were held today, the Arkansas governor would probably

receive 75 percent of the Jewish vote, with Perot getting 15 percent and Bush 10 percent.

But Matthew Brooks, executive director of the National Jewish Coalition, which will support Bush once he becomes the Republican nominee, said that if the election were held today, Clinton would get 45 percent of the Jewish vote, Perot 38 percent and Bush 17 percent.

Significant Falloff For Bush

But Siegel and Brooks do agree in one respect: that Bush will experience a significant falloff from his 30 to 35 percent share of the Jewish vote in 1988.

Brooks predicted that Bush's Jewish base of 17 percent would include large numbers of the youngest Jewish voters, as well as religiously observant Jews.

Siegel countered that since religious Jewish voters are generally the most hard-line of Jews when it comes to supporting Israel, they would be most disenchanted by Bush's tough talk last September about being "one lonely guy" against "thousands of lobbyists" seeking loan guarantees for Israel.

Brooks believes Perot's candidacy will cut deeply into Clinton's base of Jewish support. He cited what he called a strong protest vote against Clinton by Jewish voters who backed former Sen. Paul Tsongas of Massachusetts in some of this year's Democratic primary contests.

Brooks also said there are many similarities between Clinton and Perot on specific issues of Jewish concern. Both men, for instance, support a woman's right to have an abortion.

Brooks drew a parallel between the strong Jewish Tsongas vote and the substantial Jewish support that then Rep. John Anderson (R-Ill.) received in 1980, when he ran as a third-party candidate against incumbent President Jimmy Carter and his ultimately successful challenger, Ronald Reagan.

Anderson received close to 20 percent of the Jewish vote, compared to 6 percent of the overall vote.

But Siegel said that Anderson's success among Jews was due to their anger at Carter's support for a Palestinian homeland and their fear about Reagan's conservative views on social issues. Carter and Reagan each received around 40 percent of the Jewish vote in 1980.

No Hostility Toward Clinton

While the Anderson vote was made up largely of "Democratic Carter protest voters who couldn't vote for Reagan," no similar hostility exists between Jews and Clinton, Siegel argued.

"The Democratic base in presidential elections is 75 percent unless there is an extraordinary circumstance like there was in 1980," he said.

But Brooks argued that Jews who voted for Tsongas were sending a message that "they don't like Bill Clinton and they want an alternative. Perot is now filling that vacuum."

If there is one factor that would make Perot seem inclined toward a reasonably strong pro-Israel policy, it is that his top campaign adviser, Morton Meyerson, is a Jew who has been active in numerous Jewish causes, said Siegel.

"Sure Perot is going to say all the appropriate things," Siegel said. But "if by some chance he became president, it would be reassuring that someone close, like Morton Meyerson, was there with him."

BEHIND THE HEADLINES: STRENGTHENING JEWISH LIFE EMERGING AS THE TOP PRIORITY IN EX-SOVIET UNION

By Mark Joffe

ODESSA, Ukraine (JTA) -- Reviving Jewish culture has displaced emigration as the top communal priority for Jewish activists in the former Soviet Union, according to a Russian demographer who has been studying the community for the last three years.

"The Jewish movement's priorities have changed," Professor Vladimir Shapiro said in a recent interview here. "The center of interest has shifted toward reconstructing community life."

Shapiro, who is president of the Jewish Research Center in Moscow, has been surveying Jewish community leaders from the various republics since they first gathered together in December 1989 at the founding congress of the Vaad, the confederation of Jewish institutions and communities in the former Soviet Union.

The 300 delegates who attended the Vaad's third congress here in mid-May were each asked to fill out a detailed questionnaire soliciting their opinions on a range of Jewish issues and information about their Jewish involvement.

The results of those surveys are still being tabulated and analyzed. But Shapiro was able to report findings of a similar survey he conducted in April at the founding congress of Russia's own Vaad in Nizhni Novgorod, formerly Gorky.

The most striking finding, Shapiro said, was that while facilitating emigration and combatting anti-Semitism were listed as the most urgent national priorities by delegates to the first two Soviet Vaad congresses, those attending the Russian Vaad congress listed aiding the Jewish cultural and national revival as the top priority.

The Russian Jewish leaders were asked to gauge the urgency and importance of each of 10 goals. While 78 percent rated "revival of Jewish tradition, culture and community life" as a top priority, only 37 percent gave the same rating to "supporting aliyah and absorption in Israel."

Doing charity work was seen as the second most important goal, with 70 percent of the Jewish leaders rating it as a top priority. Promoting Jewish education came in third, with 66 percent rating it as a top priority.

"Broadening contacts with Israel and world Jewry" came in next, with a 57 percent rating, followed by the need to secure human rights and combat anti-Semitism, which 54 percent saw as a top priority.

43 Percent Don't Want To Emigrate

The shift in communal priorities can also be seen, Shapiro said, by looking at the responses to a survey question that asked how foreign Jewish organizations should be spending their money in the Soviet successor states.

Half of the respondents said outside Jewish groups should divide their money equally between supporting emigration and the "reconstruction of Jewish life." But 35 percent said more money should be spent on revitalizing Jewish life, while only 9 percent said more money should be spent on promoting emigration.

Respondents to the Russian Vaad survey also seemed less eager to emigrate than participants in the previous surveys. Forty-two percent said they were not planning to emigrate and 1 percent said they would not leave under any circumstances.

Those planning to emigrate were, for the

most part, unsure when they would do so. While 13 percent of all respondents said they would leave within two or three years, only 5 percent said they had begun the application process. A sizable 35 percent said they intend to emigrate but do not know when.

Shapiro, whose research center is affiliated with the Russian Academy of Sciences, also asked delegates to the Russian Vaad congress a number of questions about their level of Jewish religious observance.

More than half the respondents said they observe Shabbat at least sometimes, with 39 percent saying they light Sabbath candles occasionally and another 8 percent saying they do so regularly.

While very few keep kosher, half said they attend synagogue at least sometimes, and another 13 percent said they do so regularly.

What was perhaps the most striking finding was the high level of holiday observance. A majority of respondents said they always observe the holidays of Rosh Hashanah, Chanukah, Purim and Passover. And smaller pluralities said they always observe other major holidays, such as Yom Kippur and Simchat Torah.

Pesach was the most widely observed holiday, with 71 percent saying they celebrate it always, and another 22 percent saying they celebrate it sometimes.

The second most popular holiday was Purim, where the numbers were 67 percent and 27 percent, respectively. Then came Chanukah, with 63 percent saying they observe it always and 26 percent saying they do so sometimes.

While Shapiro was quick to point out that these numbers represent the practices of the Jewish leadership, rather than the Jewish population as a whole, they provide an interesting glimpse into how the rebirth of Jewish life in the former Soviet empire is taking shape.

ISRAEL RESIGNED TO LESS ALIYAH AT THIS TIME FROM FORMER USSR

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, May 26 (JTA) -- Israel is resigned to diminished aliyah from the former Soviet Union at the present time.

Although the Jewish Agency will continue to try to increase the number of immigrants, it has learned to live with the fact that for the time being, many Jews in the former Soviet republics have decided to stay put, Simcha Dinitz told the World Zionist Organization Executive at its weekly session here Tuesday.

Dinitz, who chairs the WZO and Jewish Agency Executives, said that in light of the situation, efforts to improve the quality of Jewish education in the republics will be stepped up.

He said the Jewish Agency recently conducted seminars for 400 teachers in Moscow; Minsk, Belarus; Riga, Latvia; Kishinev, Moldova; Kharkov, Ukraine; and Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

Bill Levin, head of the WZO's Youth and Hechalutz Department, told the Executive that the department will operate 21 summer camps in the former Soviet republics, from Vilnius, Lithuania, in the west to Birobidjan, Siberia, in the east.

He said a record 6,700 youths are expected to participate.

Dinitz announced that the number of direct flights to Israel from the former Soviet republics will reach 10 this month with the inauguration of air service from Vilnius and Tbilisi, Georgia.

REMAINING JEWS ARE LEAVING ETHIOPIA WITHOUT THE FANFARE OF A YEAR AGO

By Larry Yudelson

NEW YORK, May 28 (JTA) -- Every week for several months now, 150 Jews have boarded commercial flights from Ethiopia and, with neither fanfare nor secrecy, made their way to Israel.

Roughly 4,000 Jews were left behind after Operation Solomon, the massive airlift of Ethiopian Jews that took place May 25, 1991. The departure of these Jews is expected to be completed by the end of the rainy season in September.

This latest exodus lacks the drama of Operation Solomon, when 14,087 Jews were brought to Israel in a steady stream of military transports and El Al jumbo jets, while the Ethiopian civil war parted like the Red Sea in the time of Moses.

But this final phase of the 2,500-year saga of Ethiopian Jewry is also blessedly free of the chaos and uncertainty that led up to that airlift. Thousands of Jews had congregated in the Ethiopian capital of Addis Ababa awaiting departure on the on-again-off-again flights that eventually led to the emigration of about 5,000 Jews between March 1990 and May 1991.

That emigration was repeatedly stalled by the now-deposed government of Mengistu Haile Mariam in an effort to extract weapons from the Israeli government in exchange for Ethiopian Jews. Israel refused to accede to such a deal.

The current coalition government has placed no obstacles to Jewish emigration, according to representatives of Jewish groups facilitating the departures. In contrast to conditions under Mengistu's military regime, Jewish visitors are now able to travel freely around the country.

It has not hurt that the approximately \$35 million deposited in Ethiopian government bank accounts by the Israelis to encourage Mengistu to release the Jews was withdrawn by the new government.

Some of the Jews who are coming out now were unable to leave last year because they had been drafted into Mengistu's army.

But most are from the remote Kwara region, in the western part of Gondar province, where most of the Jews had lived. Heavy fighting continued there as late as November.

110-Year-Old Woman Carried On Mule

For most Jews in Kwara, a walk of several days is required to reach the nearest dirt road. Once at the road, they are picked up by trucks and taken to a place called Teda, where the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, the organization funded by the United Jewish Appeal, maintains a camp where the Jews are given food, clothing and medical care.

"One woman who was 110 years old came in. She had been carried on a mule for three weeks," recalled Gideon Taylor, who spent three months at the Teda camp for the JDC.

At its peak, the Teda camp was cooking half a ton of teff, a kind of wheat, every day.

Unlike those who waited at the JDC compound in Addis Ababa before Operation Solomon, the Jews in Teda are not uncertain about their fate. Each week, buses depart on the three-day ride to Addis Ababa, where commercial flights take them to Israel.

"They perceive the journey in biblical terms," said Taylor. "They baked kita, a kind of matzah, before they set off on the journey."

The JDC maintains a camp in Addis Ababa,

where it feeds 3,000 converts who gathered there prior to Operation Solomon. The converts, known as Ferris Mora, say they left Judaism by force and want to go to Israel, where many of them have relatives.

The Ferris Mora, estimated to number from 15,000 to over 70,000, seem to have converted 20 to 100 years ago. Their fate is a religious and political morass that has yet to be resolved.

Last month Barbara Ribakove Gordon, executive director of the North American Conference on Ethiopian Jewry, returned to Ethiopia's Gondar province, which had been the center of the country's Jewish population, to see the villages the Jews had abandoned on their trek to Israel.

"They're ghost towns. There's nobody there," said Gordon.

One Empty Hut After Another

"When we used to go to Waleka village, near Gondar City, all the women would rush to get out their pottery, they'd form a row to sell it to us.

"Now it's one empty tukel, or hut, after another. There are maybe three or four families living in Waleka; they're not Jewish. There's a non-Jewish family living in the Waleka synagogue.

"It's very strange. We're very glad, thank God, what we want to have happened has happened -- they've gone to Israel, they're reunited with their families.

"Yet when you walk to a place that represented a Jewish world, and it's over, you get this strange sense of loss that you didn't expect," Gordon said.

For the Ethiopians, the exodus of the Jews left holes in the economy. Certain crafts, such as metalworking, were Jewish professions, considered low caste by others, or perhaps touched by black magic.

One Jewish activist recently in Ethiopia was quick to add, however, that the remaining Ethiopians are not resentful of the departed Jews; they understand the wish of Jews to go to Israel.

Gordon said that when she visited Gondar, she heard there was still a Jew doing metalwork in the market. She went looking for him.

He wasn't a Jew, "but I was taught by Jews," he told Gordon proudly, "so people know it's good work."

POLISH JEW, CATHOLIC GET KOSINSKY AWARD

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, May 28 (JTA) -- A Polish Jew and a Catholic were recipients of the Kosinski Jewish Heritage Award, named for the late Polish-Jewish writer, Jerzy Kosinski.

The \$2,500 award, which honors "dedication and devotion to the cause of preserving the Jewish presence in Poland," was presented Monday in Warsaw to Stanislaw Krajewski and Rev. Waldemar Chrostowski, co-chairmen of the Polish Council of Christians and Jews, an affiliate of the International Council of Christians and Jews.

Krajewski is a mathematician and an observant Jew. Chrostowski is a professor at the Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw. Both belong to the Polish-Israeli Friendship Society and the International Council of the Auschwitz Museum and Memorial.

Krajewski, who says he did not know he was Jewish until he was an adult, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency by phone from Warsaw that he has encountered philo-Semitism more often than anti-Semitism among his fellow Poles.