

NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ **Israeli security forces arrested a man believed responsible for Tuesday's stabbing of a Jewish family in a West Bank settlement.** Israel Radio reported that the stabbings might have been motivated by the alleged killer's desire to prove he was not an Israeli informer. [Page 3]

■ **The U.S. Department of Education issued guidelines on religious activity permitted in the public schools.** In an effort to silence critics who charge that the initiative would lead to more religious activity, the guidelines included a letter detailing actions not permitted under the Constitution. [Page 2]

■ **Danish officials extradited American neo-Nazi Gary Lauck to Germany to face charges relating to racist activity.** Lauck could be sentenced to five years in jail if convicted of the charges lodged against him. [Page 4]

■ **Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin will travel to Russia and Ukraine next week for three days of talks that will include discussions of a Russian nuclear deal with Iran.** Israel is concerned about Russian plans to sell nuclear fuel to a state that "supports methodical violence," according to an Israeli Foreign Ministry spokesman.

■ **Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat met at the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Taba.** The timing and extent of an Israeli redeployment in the West Bank town of Hebron was expected to top the agenda. [Page 4]

■ **Israel's Interior Ministry announced plans to monitor the movements of Jordanian tourists visiting Israel.** The move came after reports that thousands of Jordanians who had entered Israel on tourist visas were remaining in the Jewish state illegally. [Page 2]

■ **Jewish, Christian and Islamic religious leaders attended a two-day interfaith conference in Jerusalem in an effort to find spiritual solutions to strife there.** Speakers said Jerusalem could become a model for the rest of the world for religious and political cooperation.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**Jewish women meet with Arabs in spirit of cooperation in Beijing**

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) — For the first time in the history of United Nations women's conferences, tension between Muslims and Jews, Palestinians and Israelis, has not overshadowed the rest of the gathering at the Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing.

In fact, there has been more cooperation and dialogue between Jews and Palestinians than Jewish delegates expected, some said in telephone interviews from Beijing.

The U.N. conference began Sept. 4 and will run through Sept. 15, while a larger gathering of representatives from nongovernmental organizations, or NGOs, ran Aug. 30 to Sept. 8.

Although the Chinese government has been harassing delegates, Jewish attendees said that they were left alone.

The first time Jewish delegates gathered in their own caucus, on the opening day of the NGO forum, two Palestinian women, both Israeli citizens, joined the 80 Jewish women.

"That never would have happened in the past. People were excited that they were there because it was the first indication that it was going to be a different kind of conference," said Jessica Lieberman, assistant director for international concerns at the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, and an organizer of the caucus.

"Jews and Palestinians are talking to each other about working together in Israel on Jerusalem Link," a group that works on issues surrounding the peace process, said Lieberman.

Shunning was 'exception, not the rule'

Reva Price, a lobbyist for B'nai B'rith International, said she had "really good conversations with women from all over the Arab world while wearing my Jewish Women's Caucus button and Jewish star necklace."

"I've had great conversations with women from Tunisia and had a great debate with a Kuwaiti woman over reproductive rights. We had great discussions with Jordanian women. Some at the Arab tent didn't want to talk to us, but that's the exception, not the rule," said Price.

She and others cited movement in the Middle East peace process as the foundation for the relatively comfortable dynamic between Arab and Jewish delegates.

Although there was criticism of Israel at some of the 300 workshops held each day at the NGO forum in Huairou, a town 30 miles north of Beijing, "it certainly isn't the issue it was before," said Marlene Post, national president of Hadassah.

"We were prepared to defend Israel on a variety of issues but the rhetoric has been limited," she said.

In one workshop in which Israel was attacked the moderator repeatedly urged the Palestinian panelist to "have civility here" and succeeded in preventing the rhetoric from exploding into the torrent that fueled the anger at earlier conferences, said Price.

"There have been negative things said about almost every country, including the U.S.," said Price. "This is a dramatically different atmosphere" from past conferences.

In addition, "the Palestinian women aren't a united front" with a coordinated strategy for enlisting other Arab and Muslim delegates' help to consistently attack Israel, as they did at each of the previous three conferences, said Price.

Anti-Semitism permeated the air in Mexico City in 1975, where Zionism was equated with racism for the first time in any international forum, as well as in 1980 in Copenhagen and 1985 in Nairobi, said representatives of Jewish groups who had attended those gatherings.

Jewish delegates gathered to caucus several times in Huairou and Beijing during the NGO forum, Lieberman said.

Some 80 Jewish women from North America, Israel, Europe, South America, South Africa and Australia met on the opening day of the conference to introduce themselves to each other and talk about the issues

they consider a priority at the conference. Topics they raised include youth, aging and health care, Lieberman said.

Jewish delegates met again two days later to report on what they had heard at workshops, and later were joined by 15 Jewish residents of the Chinese capital — all of them American and European expatriates who are in the business community — who hosted Shabbat services and dinner for members of the caucus.

On Tuesday, a smaller group of Jewish delegates to the NGO forum and the official government conference met to discuss what had transpired in the workshops about the Middle East.

“People who had been at Nairobi said they didn’t think it was anything like it was in the past,” said Lieberman.

Jewish attendees, who may total as many as 200, according to delegates, are a tiny fraction of the estimated 40,000 people attending one or both of the international gatherings.

But Jewish women have particular experience and expertise to contribute to the women at the conference, the majority of whom are from developing nations, said Beth Wohlgelernter, Hadassah’s executive director.

“We have a lot of experience organizing at the grass-roots level and on issues of education and health care,” she said.

And though unanimously greeted with relief by the Jewish delegates, the shift from the extreme stress of being the focus of international conflict at past conferences requires a shift in internal focus, they said.

“There are so many other issues out there that we’re no longer that interesting,” said Hadassah’s Post.

“Do we miss the spotlight? No, no,” she said, laughing.

Naomi Chazan, a member of Israel’s Knesset and part of that country’s delegation to the U.N. conference, told Jewish delegates that what is happening in Beijing between Jewish, Israeli, Palestinian and Muslim women “is a revolution.”

“We have to get used to not being in the center of attention,” she said. □

Education department issues guidelines on religious activity

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The Department of Education has issued long-awaited guidelines detailing the types of religious activity permitted in public school classrooms.

The guidelines, sent recently to more than 15,000 public school superintendents across the country, include a cover letter from Secretary of Education Richard Riley that spells out forms of religious expression that are prohibited.

By issuing the cover letter with the guidelines, the Clinton administration has silenced critics in the Jewish community who charged that President Clinton, in announcing the guidelines earlier this year, had in essence opened the door for illegal religious expression in public schools.

A cover letter from Riley accompanying the guidelines is “fully responsive to our concerns,” said Marc Stern, co-director of the legal department of American Jewish Congress and the primary author of the guidelines on which Clinton’s directives were based.

In his cover letter, Riley wrote that schools may not endorse religious activity or doctrine or coerce participation in religious activity. The right of religious expression in school does not include the right to have a “captive audience” or to compel students to participate.

“School officials should not permit student religious speech to turn into religious harassment aimed at a student or a small group of students,” Riley wrote, adding that there is no right “to make repeated invitations to other students to participate in religious activity in the face of a request to stop.”

In order to ensure that his letter receives equal weight as the guidelines, Riley began the guidelines on the same page as the cover letter.

“People will have to file them together. It was a very clever move,” Stern said.

According to the guidelines, students can: pray during the school day, wear religious attire, express religious beliefs in assignments, make religious or anti-religious remarks in a classroom discussion as long as they are relevant to the topic at hand, meet in religious clubs as long as the school permits noncurricular activities during nonschool hours, and distribute literature under the same rules that apply to nonreligious handouts.

School officials may not structure or administer rules to discriminate against religious activity or speech and cannot encourage or discourage student participation in religious activities, according to the guidelines.

In explaining the guidelines in a recent roundtable with reporters, Riley said, “Religious freedom does not mean that one person can coerce another or that the state or the teacher can coerce or preach a particular religion.”

“We hope this will end some of the confusion and will be a catalyst for people to come together to talk about what is and is not permitted,” Riley told the reporters.

In meetings with the administration, the AJCongress and the Anti-Defamation League had expressed concerns that the guidelines announced by Clinton were “one-sided” because they told school officials what type of religious activity they must allow.

Prohibited activity was in the original guidelines, “but was not in neon lights,” Stern said.

“There are some who wanted that and the Riley statement gives them that.”

Intended to head off religious right activists pushing for a religious equality amendment, the guidelines have slowed if not stopped the push for a constitutional amendment in Congress.

“A lot of the political engine has been removed” for school-prayer advocates, Stern said. “Whether that thwarts a school-prayer amendment is too early to be seen. I’m not prepared to write them off yet.”

For the moment, efforts to introduce a religious equality amendment in Congress have stalled as religious right activists squabble over proposed language. □

Reports of lingering tourists from Jordan spur new monitors

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Concerned about reports that Jordanian tourists are staying in Israel illegally, Israel’s Interior Ministry has announced plans to monitor the tourists’ movements.

Thousands of Jordanians who had entered Israel on tourist visas since Israel and Jordan signed their peace treaty in October were staying in Israel illegally, living with family members and working in the territories and in the Galilee, Israel Radio reported recently.

In response to the reports, an Interior Ministry spokesman said Israeli travel agencies would now be required to submit detailed tour itineraries that include the number of people in each group.

The tours from Jordan would also be required to leave the Jewish state with the same number of people who entered. □

Israeli forces arrest suspect in West Bank settlement attack

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli security forces have arrested the person believed responsible for Tuesday's stabbing of a Jewish family in the West Bank.

The assailant was identified Wednesday as Hamdallah Abdel Hadi Abdel Aziz, 20, a resident of an Arab village near the settlement of Ma'aleh Michmas, which is north of Jerusalem and near the West Bank town of Ramallah.

"He had a criminal background and recently began a process of becoming more religious. He went to the mosque daily," the Israel Defense Force said Wednesday.

"Fingerprints were found linking him to the attack," the IDF added.

Aziz is believed responsible for the stabbing death of British immigrant Daniel Frei, 28, and the wounding of his wife, Mara, 29, in an early morning attack. The couple's 18-month-old daughter, Rachel, was sleeping in the house at the time of the attack and was unharmed.

Doctors at Hadassah Hospital in Ein Kerem said Wednesday that Mara Frei's condition had significantly improved. She was moved from the intensive care unit after undergoing surgery for wounds to the chest and abdomen. She was reported to be fully conscious and breathing on her own.

Frei, who was three months pregnant, lost the pregnancy as a result of the attack.

Israel's Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau visited her at the hospital Wednesday and offered prayers for a speedy recovery.

Israel Radio, citing security sources, reported that Aziz was arrested at his West Bank home on Tuesday night after the Shin Bet, Israel's internal security service, had gathered information about him.

Security forces said he was believed to have collaborated in the past with Israeli authorities. Interrogators were still investigating the motive for the attack.

Israel Radio reported that the stabbings might have been motivated by the alleged killer's desire to prove he was not an Israeli informer.

On Tuesday, an anonymous caller phoned a news agency in Jerusalem and claimed responsibility for the attack in the name of George Habash's Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Chicago community in shock over attack on native daughter

By Todd Winer

Chicago Jewish News

CHICAGO (JTA) — Mara Harris Frei and her family were preparing to leave for her native Chicago to celebrate Rosh Hashanah when terrorists struck their West Bank home this week, killing her husband, Daniel, and her unborn child.

Frei, who had just turned 29 and was three months pregnant, was seriously wounded when terrorists broke into her home in the settlement of Ma'aleh Michmas, about 12 miles north of Jerusalem, and stabbed the couple while they were in bed early Monday morning. Their 18-month-old daughter, Rachel, was unharmed.

On Wednesday, Israeli authorities arrested a Palestinian suspected of carrying out the stabbing.

Those who knew Mara at school, as a leader for the B'nei Akiva youth movement or as a counselor at Camp Moshava in Wisconsin, described her as a committed Zionist whose goal for many years had been to live in

Israel. The Ida Crown Jewish Academy graduate summed up her dreams in her high school yearbook in 1984. Her ambition, she wrote, was "to tear up my two-way ticket to Israel after using it one way."

She made aliyah in October 1991.

Camp Moshava director Rabbi Moshe Kushner expressed shock and disbelief at the terrorist attack. He said he remembers how Mara once discussed her camp salary, saying she was setting it aside so she could travel to Israel.

"Living in Israel was her primary goal. And she fulfilled her dreams," Kushner said.

Longtime friend Donna Atkin said Mara and Daniel recently moved into their home, having lived in temporary quarters at the settlement for some time.

Ma'aleh Michmas overlooks the Judean Hills and is home to some 110 families, including a number of former Chicagoans.

"She's a very strong person. Even after something like this, I don't think she'll come back [to Chicago]," Atkin said. "She was always so into Israel and Zionism."

"I'd joke with her that she lived in a bad neighborhood," Atkin said, referring to the West Bank settlement. "She'd say I was crazy."

News of the attack quickly spread in the West Rogers Park neighborhood that Mara was about to revisit, reaching some there even before news reports broadcast the details.

The Freis' next door neighbors at Ma'aleh Michmas are Jeff and Marsha Schneiderman, both Chicagoans, who telephoned home just hours after the attack.

According to information Rochelle Schneiderman received from her son Jeff, the couple was attacked as they slept.

Daniel apparently struggled with the terrorists, allowing Mara to escape and run to the Schneidermans' home.

'They killed him in bed'

"She ran out of her house to my son's home about 2 a.m.," Rochelle Schneiderman said, her voice cracking.

"She was stabbed in her chest and side. Jeff ran to the house and the minute he saw Daniel, he knew he was dead. They killed him in bed," she said.

She said her son's family is looking after the Freis' daughter.

Rochelle Schneiderman said her son and daughter-in-law called late Monday night and asked her to inform Mara's family. "It was the hardest thing I've ever had to do. To tell a mother her daughter was stabbed by an Arab terrorist. It was horrible."

Schneiderman said Mara underwent nearly four hours of surgery. She suffered a punctured lung in the attack and apparently went into premature labor after the surgery and lost the baby. Doctors at Hadassah Hospital in Ein Kerem upgraded her condition from serious to moderate on Wednesday.

Her husband, who came to Israel from England, was buried Tuesday evening in Jerusalem.

"We always felt our children were safe," Schneiderman said. "But I can't feel that way anymore. I've lost my innocence. I'm afraid for my children. It could have been anybody there. It's so terribly shocking. How could anyone do such a thing?"

The Freis were planning to stay in Chicago until after Rosh Hashanah, and Mara's mother, Miriam Harris, a public school teacher, was preparing for the visit.

Instead, she sits at her widowed daughter's side at Hadassah. And a portable crib and buggy, which Harris got for her Israeli granddaughter, sit empty in her West Rogers Park living room. □

Israel benefits as Congress enhances defense spending

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Israel is one of the beneficiaries of Republican plans to beef up America's defense budget.

With defense one of the few areas in which Congress has moved to increase rather than decrease spending, lawmakers in both the House and the Senate have approved hundreds of millions of dollars for U.S.-Israel cooperative military programs.

Two Defense Department funding bills making their way through Congress include more than \$35 million for the Arrow anti-missile missile. Congress has also agreed to spend tens of millions of dollars on the Hunter unmanned aerial vehicle and more than \$38 million on the "Popeye" missile.

An additional \$14 million is slated to be spent on upgraded armor for tanks. Under the proposal, Israel would also benefit from a pool of \$6 million set aside for cooperative international counterterrorism programs.

The programs are included in the Senate's \$243 billion Defense Department appropriations bill as well as in its \$265 billion Defense Department authorization bill. The appropriations bill, which actually spends the money, passed the Senate on Tuesday night in a 62-35 vote.

The authorization bill, which sets spending limits, passed the Senate on Wednesday 64-34.

The House has passed similar Defense Department spending bills with similar provisions designated for such cooperative programs. The measures will now go to a House and Senate conference committee to hammer out any differences. Congress will then send the legislation to President Clinton, who is expected to sign. □

Denmark extradites neo-Nazi to face charges in Germany

NEW YORK (JTA) — Danish officials have extradited American neo-Nazi Gary Lauck to Germany to face charges related to racist activity.

Lauck, 41, who was arrested near Copenhagen on March 20 at the request of German authorities, faces five years in jail in Germany if convicted on the charges — which include racial incitement and the distribution of illegal propaganda and Nazi symbols.

He was transferred to German custody after the Danish Supreme Court upheld the extradition order and after Danish authorities turned down during the past week two separate attempts by Lauck to receive political asylum and humanitarian asylum in Denmark. A German prosecutor said Lauck arrived Wednesday in Hamburg, where he was transferred to a custodial prison.

Lauck, of Lincoln, Neb., heads the National Socialist German Workers' Party-Foreign Organization, named after Adolf Hitler's original Nazi party.

According to German investigators, Lauck and his publishing empire, taking advantage of American free-speech laws, have been distributing neo-Nazi literature and paraphernalia in Germany for more than 20 years. □

Peres and Arafat meet again in effort to resolve differences

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Dogged problems in the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian negotiations have led to repeated changes in the date that a signing ceremony will take place in Washington for the completed interim phase agreement.

In an effort to clear up the logjam, Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Palestine Liberation Organization leader Yasser Arafat met Wednesday at the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Taba for a session that was expected to run late into the night.

The two sides have been working intensively to complete the agreement on expanding Palestinian self-rule in the West Bank. But the talks have been deadlocked on a number of issues, including the release of Palestinian security prisoners and security arrangements in the West Bank town of Hebron.

Shortly before leaving the Gaza Strip for the meeting with Peres, Arafat said he hoped that solutions could be found for all outstanding problems, including Hebron — which promised to top the agenda at Taba.

The next phase of Palestinian self-rule calls for an Israeli army redeployment from all Palestinian population centers in the West Bank.

But Hebron, the only West Bank city with a Jewish settler population, has proven one of the most difficult issues in the negotiations. Israel has agreed to a partial withdrawal from the city, but it insists that some of its soldiers remain to protect the 400 settlers who live among Hebron's 80,000 Palestinians.

The Palestinians are willing to accept a phased Israeli withdrawal from Hebron, but they are insisting that it ultimately be a complete withdrawal.

More than a year behind schedule

"There will be a certain degree of evacuation from places we hold in Hebron," Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin told Israel Television on Wednesday. But he added that Israeli troops would remain in control of areas deemed necessary for the protection of settlers in Hebron and in the nearby settlement of Kiryat Arba.

Peres also flatly rejected the Palestinian calls for a complete Israeli withdrawal from Hebron.

"The Palestinians are not in a position to dictate," he told Israel Radio on Tuesday. "We, who have power to dictate, are looking for a discussion and not dictation."

Implementation of the interim phase agreement is more than a year behind schedule. A major factor has been Israeli security concerns in the wake of a series of terror attacks against Israelis by Islamic fundamentalist groups opposed to the peace process.

Arafat spokesman Nabil Abu Irdeineh was quoted by news reports as saying he hoped that an agreement could be signed by Sept. 18, the latest target date set by the two sides for a signing ceremony in Washington.

As Peres and Arafat prepared to meet in Taba, a group of 13 Likud members, headed by party leader Benjamin Netanyahu, toured Hebron on Wednesday.

They met with Jewish settlers, who repeated their opposition to any security arrangements that would require a partial redeployment of Israeli troops and the stationing of Palestinian police in Hebron.

"We did not come back to this holy city to be under the regime of a terrorist organization," Hebron settler leader Noam Arnon told Israel Radio.

"No matter how they are dressing, in uniform or not," he added, "they are terrorists."

Netanyahu lashed out at Peres' meeting with Arafat. "Mr. Arafat has been quoted again as preaching a jihad, fighting to the last Palestinian child," he said. "These are hardly the words of a man of peace."

Meanwhile, in a show of opposition to the Jewish presence in Hebron, four Muslim officials moved their offices from the city's outskirts to the contested center.

They said they were following orders from Arafat in order to "protect the city from turning it into a Jewish area." □