



NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu telephoned President Clinton to express his condolences for Saturday's terror bombing in Atlanta. Netanyahu said that "Israel would help in any way it can in the war against terrorism," according to his office.

■ Argentine President Carlos Menem presented Jewish officials with a copy of a decree that calls for the payment of \$12 million in reparations for the bombing of the Jewish community's headquarters. The July 18, 1994, attack on the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires remains unsolved.

■ The Senate passed a \$12.2 billion foreign aid bill in a 93-7 vote. The measure restores about \$300 million cut by the House of Representatives and gives \$3 billion to Israel and \$2.1 billion to Egypt.

■ Security forces continued to search Bethlehem and Hebron for the Palestinian terrorists believed to have killed three members of an Israeli family near Beit Shemesh. [Page 2]

■ The Democratic Party defused a potential controversy with Jewish supporters by declaring that it would not cooperate with the Nation of Islam on voter registration. [Page 3]

■ Some 150,000 fervently Orthodox Jews demonstrated in Jerusalem in support of the closure of Bar Ilan Street, a main thoroughfare that cuts through religious neighborhoods. Two police officers were slightly hurt in the protest.

■ The families of two Palestinian hijackers killed by Shin Bet officials 12 years ago demanded compensation and asked that all security service officials involved in the incident be brought to Gaza to stand trial. [Page 4]

■ The U.S. special Middle East coordinator, Dennis Ross, received assurances from Israeli leaders that the new government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is continuing to study the redeployment of Israeli troops from most of the West Bank town of Hebron. [Page 2]

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Clinton's refusal to pardon Pollard enrages spy's backers

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — When Seymour Reich asked President Clinton to release Jonathan Pollard from jail, little did he know that the White House spokesman had just announced that the convicted spy would not gain executive clemency.

Reich, former chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, was one of about 45 Jewish leaders in a meeting with Clinton last Friday when, unbeknown to them, the announcement came down that the American Jew found guilty of spying for Israel would not be granted freedom.

In what many of those in attendance denounced as a "travesty," Clinton did not tell the Conference of Presidents of his decision.

Members of the Conference of Presidents learned of the president's decision when a reporter from the Jewish Telegraphic Agency asked Clinton about it as he left the private meeting with the Jewish leaders.

The president did not respond to two requests to make a comment. "I am dumbfounded that he would do this to us," said Reich, who once led the organized Jewish communal effort to win Pollard's release. "It is as if he is trying to give the world a signal that he would not pander to the Jewish community."

Jewish officials who have long called for Pollard's release condemned Clinton's decision to deny clemency to the former U.S. Navy civilian intelligence analyst who was arrested in 1985 outside the Israeli Embassy here.

Pollard pleaded guilty in 1986 to stealing secrets for the Israeli government.

In 1987, he was sentenced to life imprisonment.

White House spokesman Mike McCurry did not mince words when announcing the president's decision.

"The enormity of Mr. Pollard's offenses, his lack of remorse, the damage done to our national security, the need for general deterrence and the continuing threat to national security that he posed made the original life sentence imposed by the court warranted," McCurry said.

Clinton also refused to shorten Pollard's sentence, McCurry said, because doing so at this time "is unwarranted and would disserve the goal of deterrence."

'His strength is limited'

Esther Pollard, in a telephone interview from Jerusalem, called the denial of clemency "plain wrong" and said her husband's incarceration "has to end now."

"He has had it," said Esther Pollard, who began a hunger strike Sunday to call attention to her husband's plight. "His strength is limited. We can't go on."

Clinton's decision to deny clemency formalized White House policy announced in March.

White House Chief of Staff Leon Panetta told a caller to CNN's Larry King Live talk show at the time that the president believed that a pardon is not "justified."

Clinton has now formally denied Pollard clemency two times, the first coming in March 1994.

President Bush refused to commute Pollard's sentence before leaving office.

Some Jewish officials recalled that Clinton in 1994 rejected Pollard's appeal one day before meeting with the Conference of Presidents.

"It is as if the president has gone out of his way to act when he meets with the leaders of the Jewish community," Reich said.

Contradicting McCurry, who told reporters that it was his understanding the president was going to notify the Jewish leaders of his decision, White House aides later said that Clinton never planned to tell the Conference of Presidents.

Leaders of the Conference of Presidents took a diplomatic tone after

the Clinton meeting while protesting the president's snub. "He should have told us," said Malcolm Hoenlein, the group's executive vice chairman.

Members of Congress who have supported Pollard's quest to gain release from jail were swift to condemn Clinton's decision.

"Pollard's case is truly a miscarriage of justice," said Rep. Jon Fox (R-Pa.).

"While there is no excuse for his conduct, the life sentence given to Pollard was clearly disproportionate to his crime. Out of friendship and respect for our Israeli ally as well as a sense of fundamental fairness, we should release Pollard now."

"He has already paid the price for his crime," Fox added.

Fox and Rep. Peter Deutsch (D-Fla.) had teamed up last year to sign a letter to Clinton demanding Pollard's release.

During the weekend, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu released a statement saying that Israel "regrets the decision."

Netanyahu, as well as predecessors Shimon Peres and Yitzhak Rabin, had raised Pollard's fate during meetings with Clinton.

Earlier this year, the Peres government granted Pollard Israeli citizenship, a move the convicted spy had hoped would bolster his chances for release.

Pollard's closest supporters have long maintained that his sentence was unjust.

"Jonathan Pollard has always been a convenient tool in the hands of those who want to discredit Israel as a reliable ally," Esther Pollard said.

With his decision, she said, "Mr. Clinton abdicated his constitutional responsibility to remain above the fray of vested interests" conspiring to keep her husband in prison.

Rabbi Avi Weiss, Pollard's rabbi and president of the Coalition for Jewish Concerns-AMCHA, decried Clinton's denial as unjust and pledged to make the Pollard case an issue in the presidential election campaign.

"We vow that wherever the president will go, he will hear from those who are convinced that he has acquiesced to a grave injustice," Weiss said in a statement.

In a telephone interview, Weiss said he had spoken to Pollard after Clinton's decision but refused to disclose what was said, calling it a "private conversation."

Pollard was eligible for parole after completing 10 years of his sentence late last year.

But the date for a meeting of the parole board was delayed several times.

Pollard apparently decided to forego the parole path while the White House mulled his clemency request.

Without endorsing a future application for parole, McCurry pointedly told reporters that this option remains available. □

(JTA staff writer Cynthia Mann in New York contributed to this report.)

Israel thinks terrorists fled to self-rule areas after killings

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Security forces were continuing to conduct a widespread search in the West Bank towns of Bethlehem and Hebron for the Palestinian terrorists believed to have carried out last week's drive-by shooting in which three members of an Israeli family were killed.

Two of the victims, Uri Munk, 53, and his son Ze'ev, 30, were buried Sunday in their hometown of Mevo Betar, located in the Judean Hills.

Ze'ev Munk's wife of less than two months,

Rachel, 24, was also killed in the attack. She was buried Saturday night.

Uri Munk's wife, Eliza, who was also in the car, was not injured but was treated for shock.

The two couples were traveling past Beit Shemesh about 1:15 a.m. last Friday when gunmen in what was believed to be a Subaru passed their car and opened fire with an automatic weapon, riddling the car with bullets.

The attackers are believed to have fled to the West Bank, which was soon placed under a full closure by the Israeli government.

An army spokesman said Sunday that the closure on the West Bank would be lifted the next day.

The attack took place near Moshav Tirosh, located west of Beit Shemesh, at a spot a little more than a mile from the site of a similar attack last month in which an Israeli couple, Yaron and Efrat Unger, were killed.

Touring the site of the latest attack, Public Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani said Israeli security forces believed that a Hebron-based cell of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine had carried out both attacks.

Kahalani met with local residents, who reiterated their demands for better security measures in the area, where roads are isolated and dark.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu called on the Palestinian Authority to clamp down on all terror groups.

Netanyahu raised the terror issue during a meeting last Friday with U.S. envoy Dennis Ross, who was in Israel as part of a Middle East shuttle to assess possibilities for advancing the peace process.

The prime minister asked Ross to convey his demand when he met later in the Gaza Strip with Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat. Netanyahu also asked Ross to pass on Israel's demand that the Palestinian Authority cease its political activities in eastern Jerusalem.

Ross also met with Foreign Minister David Levy and Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who said the Israeli government was readying its position regarding the redeployment of troops from most of Hebron.

The redeployment, Mordechai said, was being studied "with an emphasis on the security of the Jewish residents of the city."

A flashpoint for repeated violence, Hebron has about 450 Jewish settlers living among some 100,000 Palestinians.

Under the terms of the Interim Agreement signed in September in Washington, the redeployment was to be carried out in March. It was postponed in the wake of a series of Hamas terror attacks against Israel in late February and early March.

Issues of trust

Netanyahu's willingness to carry out the redeployment is seen by Palestinian officials as a key indicator of his willingness to adhere to the accords signed by the previous Labor-led government.

The issue of trust between the two sides came to a head Sunday, when Palestinian border police stationed at the West Bank town of Ramallah fired on an Israeli border police jeep.

The commander of Israeli forces in the West Bank came to investigate and called for the suspension of the Palestinian police involved in the incident. Palestinian officials said the shots were mistakenly fired in the air.

Last week in the West Bank town of Kalkilya, an Israeli girl was lightly wounded in the head when a Palestinian police officer fired at her family's car.

The policeman said he thought that the car was suspicious and ordered it to stop. He opened fire when it did not. The girl's father, who was driving, said he did not see the policeman. □

Democratic Party rebuts claim it may collaborate with Farrakhan

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The Democratic Party has defused a situation that threatened to sour relations with Jewish supporters by declaring that it will not cooperate with the Nation of Islam on voter registration.

The Democratic National Committee drew criticism from Jewish groups and Republicans in response to a news report on the possibility of collaboration between the committee and the Nation of Islam for a drive to register voters for the November election. The committee, however, called the account inaccurate.

In a letter to the Anti-Defamation League, Sen. Christopher Dodd (D-Conn.), DNC general chairman, said the Nation of Islam had not asked anyone at the committee to cooperate in its voter registration drive.

He also said federal election law prohibited the committee from taking part in a drive with a tax-exempt, religious group such as the Nation of Islam.

Nation of Islam leader Louis "Farrakhan has used language of malice and division," Dodd wrote. "The Democratic Party, and our country, stand for just the opposite: community, understanding and respect for the differences among our people. The DNC therefore cannot and will not work with any organization led by him, or anyone else who espouses hatred and bigotry."

The controversy stemmed from comments made at a June news conference announcing the voter registration drive. The Associated Press quoted Leonard Mohammed, Farrakhan's chief of staff, as saying, "Our efforts to engage in this kind of activity must be encouraged by the Democratic Party."

Denounce and distance

Rep. Peter King (R-N.Y.), one of Farrakhan's loudest critics, immediately called on the committee to denounce and distance itself from Farrakhan.

Amy Weiss Tobe, DNC press secretary, then reportedly said that the DNC was not working with Farrakhan. But she declined to rule out cooperation with the Nation of Islam.

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations responded to the DNC with a letter of protest, as did King, Republican National Committee Chairman Haley Barbour and the Catholic League.

The ADL asked Dodd to clarify the DNC's position, and last week welcomed his response. "While the goal of voter registration drives is laudable, we are pleased the DNC has rejected the possibility of cooperation with the Nation of Islam, an organization with a long and well-documented history of racism, anti-Semitism and bigotry," said Abraham Foxman, ADL national director.

The Conference of Presidents also commended the committee's decision, but King and other Republicans were less forgiving. After initially raising concerns in June, King only last week received a letter from DNC National Chairman Donald Fowler disavowing any collaboration with the Nation of Islam.

Fowler said the Democratic Party was "hesitant to denounce any group that wishes to participate constructively in the political process," but added that Farrakhan's racist speech and divisiveness "make it impossible for us to endorse the Nation of Islam's activities."

King criticized Fowler for "reluctantly, half-heartedly and belatedly" responding to the concerns and accused him of "shameful indifference to Farrakhan's bigotry."

Tobe of the DNC said, "This is all Congressman King making something out of nothing." □

New book on Jewish surnames details those with Polish roots

By Bill Gladstone

TORONTO (JTA) — What's in a name — or, more precisely, a Jewish surname?

No one, it seems, has ever been able to answer that question with as much scientific, linguistic and historical precision as Alexander Beider, a 32-year-old Moscow-born statistician who immigrated to Paris about 1990.

Upon its publication in 1993, Beider's massive "Dictionary of Jewish Surnames From the Russian Empire," which supplies derivations for some 50,000 Jewish surnames, was hailed in genealogical circles as one of the most important books ever printed about Jewish names.

"The first and most important principle I developed for my etymological research is that names must be studied near the places where they originated," Beider said. "In other words, one should document in what region a name appears for the first time. Geographic distribution is crucial for etymology; it's the basis for all other investigations."

This month marks the release of Beider's long-awaited companion volume, "A Dictionary of Jewish Surnames From the Kingdom of Poland," which adheres rigorously to this geographic principle.

The 540-page book contains a listing of some 33,000 Polish Jewish surnames culled from original archival sources, indicating, if known, where each name appeared at the beginning of the 20th century.

The book's scholarly introduction illuminates many aspects of the hitherto dark process of how Jews acquired their family names.

For example, Jews in many Polish provinces were compelled to register their surnames about 1821 and those who did not comply by 1824 were assigned names that were often less desirable, if not ridiculous or rude.

A Yiddish suffix

Jews clearly were not thinking of their genealogically minded descendants in this period, because married sons living in their own homes in Galicia and elsewhere often took names unlike those assumed by their fathers.

In addition, Beider has some knowledge of eight languages, which allows him, for instance, to identify a German spelling change in a surname derived from a Polish noun with a Yiddish suffix.

The name Szmek, he said, comes from the Yiddish for a "pinch" of snuff, the name Portnoj or Portnoy arises from the Russian word for "tailor" and Pasternak is Polish for "parsnip."

Further, Kotler is Yiddish for "kettle maker"; Kirszenblat comes from the German "leaf of the cherry tree"; Perlmutter, from the German for "mother of pearl"; Walfisz or Wallfish, from the German for "whale."

A name with a Russian or Ukrainian ending elicits the suggestion that the bearer might have migrated west from the Russian Empire.

As if compiling two mammoth surname dictionaries in his spare time was not taxing enough, Beider issued between their publication a smaller volume on Czech Jewish surnames from Prague.

When asked whether he would next focus his attention on surnames from Romania, Hungary, the Sephardi world or elsewhere, Beider looks momentarily perplexed. "I haven't yet decided," he says with a sigh. "Right now, I'm taking a break."

But those in genealogical circles say it is only a matter of time before Beider returns to his etymological pursuits, helping Jews around the world understand the derivations of their names. □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Canadian grandmother reveals her role in rescue of Syrian Jews

By Bill Gladstone

TORONTO (JTA) — Since the mid-1970s, thousands of Syrian Jews hoping to escape a repressive regime have discovered that, when all else failed, a mysterious angel known to them only as "Mrs. Judy" could help them and their families reach freedom.

Judy Feld Carr of Toronto, the recipient of an award of merit in June from Haifa University, recently broke 23 years of silence to acknowledge that she has helped more than 2,500 Jews leave Syria since the early 1970s.

"There was nothing ever said publicly about this work because I didn't want to jeopardize anybody's chances of leaving the country or the work I was doing or my own security," she said during the course of a series of interviews about her efforts on behalf of Syrian Jewry.

A 57-year-old grandmother and musicologist, Feld Carr has been the focus of intense coverage by the Israeli media since she received the prestigious award, which was last given out years ago to the late Prime Minister Menachem Begin.

Now that the estimated 130 Jews who remain in Syria are free to leave, Feld Carr feels that the story about her efforts may safely be told.

Hearing in 1972 that a dozen Syrian Jews were killed by an exploding land mine while trying to escape to Turkey, Feld Carr and her late husband, Dr. Ronald Feld, established a committee at their Toronto synagogue, Beth Tzedek, to aid the 6,000 Jews then in Syria. After much effort, they eventually succeeded in contacting some Syrian Jews by telephone and then by telegram.

At the request of a rabbi in Damascus, they began sending books, religious objects and money. Even after her husband died suddenly in 1973, leaving behind a 33-year-old widow with three children, Feld Carr continued her secretive mission, aware that Syria's isolated Jews had already come to rely upon her as a trusted Western contact.

Bribes to let Jews leave

As donations quietly poured into the Dr. Ronald Feld Fund for Jews in Arab Lands — it would eventually top \$1 million — Feld Carr set out upon the delicate task of "buying Jews."

Gradually, she built up an underground network of Syrian government officials, lawyers and judges willing to accept "baksheesh," or bribes, to let Jews leave. All money sent to the country had to go through numerous secondary channels to prevent it from being traced.

"At first we worked clandestinely with people who tried to smuggle Jews over the mountains from Syria to Lebanon, and later from Syria to Turkey," she said.

Beginning by rescuing people one by one, she gradually advanced to redeeming whole families and groups at a time.

"By the time they found me, they had tried everything else to get out. I was their last resort," she said.

"They had to find me, but they didn't know my last name and they couldn't write me a letter or telephone. They had to go through the Syrian Jewish underground."

Syria's Jews were forbidden to emigrate until 1992, when the gates to freedom opened briefly and then shut for two more years. But during the years the restrictions were in place, Feld Carr helped them acquire temporary passports, usually valid for only a few weeks or months.

With passports and return airline tickets in hand, Syria's Jews were permitted to "visit" the United States, Canada and sometimes France. Most of them subsequently

stayed in the United States. Some, feeling more comfortable in the Middle East, went to Israel.

After she married Donald Carr in 1977, becoming a mother to three more children, Feld Carr found that her house had become a stopover point for scores of Syrian Jews in transit.

A few of those she helped know nothing of their benefactress. But many others have claimed that she did nothing less than save their lives.

Feld Carr also helped improve the living conditions of many Jews still in Syria, sometimes with the discreet assistance of Canadian diplomats.

Feld Carr spoke during the interviews about the case of the Suede brothers, Eli and Salim, who were imprisoned and tortured for 4 1/2 years in Damascus without charges or a trial. She said she fought hard "for every bar of soap, for every shower" and other basic amenities for the brothers.

After contacting the U.N. Committee on Disappearance, she helped to secure their release from prison in 1992 and their exit visas in 1994.

Attending the wedding of one of their daughters in New York, she was invited to stand beneath the wedding canopy, where the mother of the bride took off her own corsage and pinned it on Feld Carr.

"Without you, we wouldn't be having this wedding," said the woman. "You are the mother."

Another Suede daughter was married last month in Israel and Feld Carr attended the ceremony.

"People were coming up to me that I had never seen before and saying, 'Mrs. Judy, you don't know me, but you took my father out, you took my sister out and you took me out.' When I arrived, they announced, 'Mrs. Judy is here,' and the whole place stood up."

For her part, Feld Carr said all she has ever wanted in return for her efforts are photos of those she has rescued. She wants to show them to her grandchildren.

In addition to the award from Haifa University, she has a letter she received last year from Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, in which he thanked her "for 23 years of hard and dangerous work, during which you devoted your life to the Jewish community of Syria."

"This is the pinnacle of my Zionist life," said Feld Carr. "I will be forever grateful for this recognition by the Jewish state." □

Terrorists' families seek compensation

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The families of two Palestinian hijackers killed by Shin Bet officials 12 years ago have asked for compensation and demanded that all officials from Israel's security service who were involved in the incident be brought to the Gaza Strip to stand trial.

The demands come after a top Israeli security official, in a newspaper interview given on the eve of his retirement, admitted to killing two Palestinian terrorists after their capture in 1984.

In April 1984, four Palestinians hijacked an Egged bus, threatening to kill the passengers.

During a rescue raid, two of the terrorists and one passenger were killed.

Ehud Yatom admitted in the newspaper interview that after security forces apprehended the two Palestinians who had hijacked the No. 300 bus, he was ordered by the head of the Shin Bet to kill them.

Yatom admitted to beating the terrorists severely before bashing their heads with a rock.

At the time, the Shin Bet attempted to cover up the incident, but intense media coverage led to a public controversy and an inquiry. □