



Daily News Bulletin

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81st Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli foreign minister resigns

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu pledged he would stay in power despite the resignation of Foreign Minister David Levy.

Levy, who heads the Geshar faction, said he was "fed up" over a lack of spending on social services in the proposed 1998 budget.

Netanyahu said he hoped Levy would reverse his decision, which has 48 hours to take effect.

The resignation leaves Netanyahu with a one-vote majority in the Knesset. [Page 4]

Tombstones defaced in Argentina

Buenos Aires' new civilian police chief is blaming policemen for two late December desecrations at Jewish cemeteries near the capital that destroyed nearly 90 tombstones.

Luis Lugones, a lawyer who was recently appointed to reform the capital's notoriously corrupt police force, said the point of the attacks was to "cause chaos and instability in the force." [Page 4]

Sheik warns of Jewish attacks

A Muslim sheik told worshippers Friday at Jerusalem's Al-Aksa Mosque to guard against attacks from Jewish extremists.

The comments at the beginning of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan came after the recent arrests of two Jewish extremists who allegedly planned to throw a pig onto the Temple Mount, where the mosque is located.

Iranian against U.S. dialogue

Iran's spiritual leader said the Islamic republic would not participate in a dialogue with the United States.

Ayatollah Ali Khamenei's remarks in a sermon marking the beginning of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan came after a series of moderate remarks made by Iran's newly elected president, Mohammed Khatami.

This edition marks a new design of JTA's DAILY NEWS BULLETIN. The DNB now includes more news briefs and is printed on standard letter-size paper, making it easier to receive by fax. We hope you enjoy the new look!

FOCUS ON ISSUES

Nascent movement seeks 'new role' for today's man

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) — Move over, Iron John — and make way for Rabbi Seymour Rosenbloom.

Rosenbloom is one of the people adding a Jewish twist to the Robert Bly-Sam Keen school of male spiritual bonding, made famous earlier this decade when their best-selling books spawned conferences and support groups for those wanting to explore the meaning of manhood at the end of the 20th century.

Many men today are still trying to figure out their role in an era when the traditional tasks assigned to them have been radically changed by feminism.

Jewish men, no less than any others, feel "a kind of bewilderment," said Rosenbloom, a Conservative rabbi from Elkins Park, Pa., who is leading a retreat for Jewish men in early February.

Like a handful of other rabbis around the country, Rosenbloom has been sponsoring Jewish men's groups in his area during the past couple of years.

"We're looking for a different definition of masculinity, to find a new male role that gives us more freedom, more ability to be creative and to be ourselves," said the 53-year-old spiritual leader of Congregation Adath Jeshurun.

But instead of pounding the tribal drums, as participants in the Bly-Keen retreats did while they explored ancient myths of manhood, Rosenbloom's Jewish men will do their bonding around — what else? — prayer and study.

"My ancestors were not beating on drums, they were studying Torah," said Rabbi Charles Simon, executive director of the Conservative movement's Federation of Jewish Men's Clubs, which is promoting the retreat.

"The synagogue and Jewish study can be the way we respond" to the current interest in men's groups.

Rosenbloom's retreat, billed as the "First Jewish Men's Gathering," will be held Feb. 7 and 8 outside of Philadelphia. The rabbi is leading the event with Gerald Evans, an ordained Baptist minister and therapist who founded and directs the Men's Resource Center in Philadelphia.

Men will measure their own experiences against Torah's patriarchal narratives, particularly the archetypal father-and-son story of Isaac and Jacob, which contains both conflicts and blessings, Rosenbloom said.

Participants will also explore ritual — including tallit and tefillin, and the traditional blessing of wives and children at the Shabbat dinner table — as a way to enhance their own spirituality.

The nascent Jewish men's movement both draws from the past and taps into today's new realities.

During the past couple of decades, men have gathered together to discuss their feelings. Their examination of the "self" and relationships is rooted in the feminist encounter groups of the 1970s.

The New Age secular men's groups began to put a 1990s spin on it early in the decade.

And, like those building the popular evangelical Christian Promise Keepers' movement, founders of the Jewish men's movement say they are concerned about men feeling marginalized within their religious community.

Indeed, the movement is very much a response to this increasing sense of alienation felt by men, say those involved.

It is also seen as a way to draw in younger men, particularly in Reform and

MIDEAST FOCUS

Tensions erupt in Hebron

Some 30 Jewish settlers temporarily moved into empty buildings in the West Bank town of Hebron to protest Palestinian violence in the city's Jewish quarter.

Israeli security forces later asked the settlers to leave the site, and most did so voluntarily. The settlers said the action was intended to draw attention to what they view as inadequate security measures for them, and called for Israeli soldiers to be stationed in the city's casbah, which abuts the Jewish area.

On Friday, two pipe bombs were thrown at a kindergarten in the Avraham Avinu complex. No one was hurt, but the action sparked clashes between the city's Jewish and Palestinian residents.

Shas woos Arab lawmakers

The fervently Orthodox Shas Party is wooing Arab members of the Israeli Knesset to vote for a controversial conversion bill, according to an Israeli newspaper.

Israeli Arab and Shas sources cited by Ha'aretz both confirmed that secret contacts were being held.

The Arab sources said that in exchange for the Arab legislators' support for or abstention from the bill, which would codify the Orthodox monopoly over Jewish conversions in Israel, Shas would support legislation that would benefit the Israeli Arab community.

The reported talks come as an interdenominational committee nears a Jan. 31 deadline to propose a solution to the crisis over conversions.

Terror victim in critical condition

An Israeli woman wounded in a terrorist attack in the West Bank last week remains in critical condition.

The shooting of Yael Mebar took place in an area under Israeli security control — the gunmen are believed to have fled to areas under Palestinian control.

Conservative congregations, and increase membership in the men's clubs.

Until relatively recently, the synagogue was — quite literally — the sanctuary of men. Although women still constitute only a small percentage of rabbis, cantors, synagogue presidents and other lay leaders, they are more visible than ever before.

This phenomenon has led many men to cede their traditional roles as involved congregants. This is happening, observers say, in part because of resentment, in part because there are others to share the responsibility.

"With egalitarianism, the synagogue is increasingly becoming more feminized," said Rosenbloom. "Men are ceding the playing field to the women."

"Whereas once men had the field all to themselves by right, now they're not so willing to compete for it," he said.

Rabbi Kerry Olitzky, national dean of adult Jewish learning and living at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, travels to many Reform temples in the course of his work.

"Men are vanishing from the synagogue," said Olitzky, whose book "New Psalms for Jewish Men," will be published next year by the Jewish Publication Society.

Rabbi Moshe Edelman, director of leadership development for the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, said that even 25 years ago, he "feared that the men were going to be emasculated from Judaism." Today, he said, "men are not necessarily disappearing from the pews, but they spend less time there."

Some Jewish feminists are concerned about where the new Jewish men's movement could lead.

"Women have finally achieved a place in synagogue life, and now the men are whining they're being left out," said Francine Klagsbrun, a member of the Conservative movement commission that made the decision to ordain women more than a decade ago.

"What women have been looking for is real partnership with the men in Jewish life, not a competition. There's legitimacy that men want to bond and explore family, health and work issues, but there's something that makes me nervous about this," she said.

"I hope it doesn't again become a way to push women out. I hope it doesn't turn into an angry, subtle anti-woman thing, and it could. That's what they, and we, have to watch out for."

Rosenbloom rejected that possibility.

Unlike the Promise Keepers, who "seem to be wanting to recreate the good old days, only better, we're not coming at it that way," he said.

"We don't want to turn back the clock. We don't want to negate any of the gains women have made."

"We want to reflect on what it means to be a Jewish man today, how it has changed from when we were growing up, how stereotypes have changed and how we fit in today in an egalitarian world." □

Probe clears Bank of Canada of laundering looted Nazi gold

By Bram Eisenthal

MONTREAL (JTA) — A professor's research has cleared the Bank of Canada of suspicion that it laundered gold looted by the Nazis.

The bank launched the investigation in July after a U.S. intelligence document was released indicating that the central banks of Switzerland and Portugal used the Bank of Canada to exchange and transfer looted gold that they had purchased from the German central bank.

Canadian Jewish groups, which had demanded the inquiry, praised the report's findings. "No gold held in Canada physically left the country until after the war," said Irving Abella, a past president of the Canadian Jewish Congress.

Professor Duncan McDowall, who was appointed by the bank to investigate the charges, found that "Canada played a major role in the earmarking of foreign gold for safekeeping at the Bank of Canada" during the war.

"For many nations that had fallen under German occupation, this cache of safe gold was the ultimate guarantee of national survival," wrote McDowall, who teaches at Canada's Carleton University. □



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JEWISH WORLD

Call for apology in Switzerland

Some Swiss Jewish leaders called for an apology from a Jewish official for comparing the country's new president with former Austrian president and alleged war criminal Kurt Waldheim.

World Jewish Congress Vice President Kalman Sultanik made the comparison following Flavio Cotti's remarks that criticism of Switzerland's role in looting Nazi gold was limited to a few geographic areas, especially New York.

Cotti also said he thought that Swiss resentment at international criticism of their country's behavior during the war was justified.

Cotti took office Jan. 1.

Conservative Jews get \$5 million

A New York foundation donated \$5 million to the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism's campaign to establish an education and youth campus in Jerusalem.

The campus will house, among other programs, a yeshiva and a center that will teach religious tolerance.

The grant from the Fuchsberg Family Foundation comes amid the Conservative movement's campaign to raise \$18 million for the facility.

'Anne Frank' to show in Vienna

The Vienna State Opera will perform "The Diary of Anne Frank" on May 5.

The performance, which will take place on a newly created holiday to commemorate the victims of Nazism in Austria, is widely seen as a symbolic gesture of atonement.

Once operas in the Third Reich were stripped of music by Jewish composers, they were highly subsidized by the Nazis.

"We cannot make good for what happened, but we can do something good," the opera's director, Ioan Holender, was quoted as saying.

Jewish funeral director jailed

The director of a Jewish mortuary in Los Angeles was sentenced to two years in prison after he pleaded no contest to charges of forgery and grand theft.

As a result of the incident, the Chevra Kadisha Mortuary has been temporarily closed — a hearing has been set for Jan. 26 to determine whether it will be allowed to reopen.

Muslims re-erect crescent

Muslim groups erected a new star and crescent near the White House.

The Islamic symbols, publicly displayed near a menorah and the national Christmas tree for the first time, had been defaced with a swastika.

FOCUS ON ISSUES

Racist incident still haunts Jewish fraternity at Indiana

By Brian Bunn

Jewish Student Press Service

BLOOMINGTON, Ind. (JTA) — This has not been a good year for fraternities.

They were already suffering from a poor reputation as seedbeds of underage drinking and date rape. In the past year, several incidents of hazing have taken the lives of students, including one at the usually tame Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

One year shy of its 50th anniversary at Indiana University and its 100th anniversary nationally, the Jewish fraternity Zeta Beta Tau has been hit with a scandal that threatens to linger for years to come. On Oct. 15 police caught a group of Indiana University students with a street sign stolen during a ZBT-sponsored scavenger hunt.

The actions of ZBT — which has been expelled from the university as a result of the incident — have forced the university community to reflect on the nature of multiculturalism and tolerance while spurring debate among students about speech codes and the First Amendment.

Although hazing was the official focus of the investigation, many students claimed that race, not hazing, was the real issue. The fact that it took place in a Jewish fraternity merely added to the controversy.

The scavenger hunt paled in comparison to other fraternities that were suspended following incidents of pledge-beating and near-lethal levels of alcohol intake.

ZBT's expulsion came after two weeks of debate that divided the campus, often along racial lines. The controversial scavenger hunt list contained racially and culturally insensitive material, including items such as "any funny-looking Mexican"; "any midget (black midget super extra credit)"; "pictures of two chicks making out (less clothes, more credit)."

The incident prompted an investigation into what Richard McKaig, dean of students, classified as "classic a case of hazing as you can get."

The day of the incident, the national office of ZBT launched an internal investigation. Two days later, it expelled guilty members, suspended the I.U. chapter and announced mandatory community service and diversity training workshops for all members regardless of their culpability.

On campus, the fraternity held several meetings with offended groups.

It also agreed to accept the expulsion without appeal. Members spent an entire weekend drafting "Operation Prove ZBT," a document that details ZBT's regret and acknowledges full responsibility for the incident.

It also lists actions taken by the fraternity to punish the offending members.

ZBT chapter president Jason Nierman, a junior, said many members of the fraternity were appalled by the scavenger hunt, which was conducted, he added, without the knowledge or approval of most ZBT members.

For many of the offended organizations, however, Nierman's words and the fraternity's campaign to apologize were insufficient.

In an open letter to Dean McKaig, a student coalition — a group of student activists whose goal is to "promote cross-cultural awareness," — called on the dean to immediately expel the fraternity and to "publicly apologize for allowing such bigotry."

Some students agreed that the actions of ZBT were sufficiently offensive for the fraternity to be expelled. But while most condemned the content of the scavenger hunt list, there was mixed reaction to the punishment.

While ZBT should be punished for hazing, they asserted, the fraternity should not be punished for espousing unpopular viewpoints.

Some members of the Jewish community fear a backlash. A number of articles on the incident emphasized the fact that ZBT is a predominantly Jewish fraternity.

"I would hope that one Jewish organization would not reflect badly on all Jewish organizations," said I.U.'s Hillel Center Rabbi Sue Shifron.

"If it was a predominantly Christian organization, it wouldn't reflect badly on the entire Christian community." □

(Brian Bunn is an undergraduate at Indiana University.)

Netanyahu insists coalition will survive Levy resignation

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The resignation of Israel's foreign minister has cast uncertainty over the future of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government.

But Netanyahu says he will hang on even as the departure of David Levy and his Geshar faction leaves the premier's coalition government with a thin 61-59 majority.

"The coalition is stable, there is a strong sense of responsibility among its members," Netanyahu said at a news conference just hours after Levy announced his resignation Sunday.

Levy, who had threatened repeatedly over the past year to step down, said that he was "fed up" with the way the government was operating.

Levy singled out the government's social policy, which he said clashed with his own outlook.

He also criticized the Cabinet's handling of peace negotiations, warning that "stonewalling" by the government could backfire to a point where a settlement with the Palestinians would be imposed upon Israel.

"There comes a time when one must stand up and make a clear, unequivocal statement," said Levy. "I am fed up, and no longer consider myself part of this government."

Netanyahu stressed at his news conference, without directly referring to Levy's accusations, that the government had made social investment and development a priority.

Sources of funding had been found for the additional social spending Levy was seeking, "to prove that my promises are not just on paper alone," Netanyahu said.

But in announcing his resignation, Levy said he had rejected a pledge for additional social spending because it had come too late.

Netanyahu put off a scheduled vote in the Knesset on the budget last week in the hope of securing support from Geshar.

As a result, the government missed a Dec. 31 deadline to pass the state budget. By law, it receives a three-month extension to pass the budget.

If the legislation is not passed by March 31, the government falls.

Despite intensive contacts between officials at the prime minister's office, the Finance Ministry and Geshar faction, efforts to resolve the matter failed.

The prime minister said he would present the budget to the Knesset on Monday for adoption and would then turn his attention to Cabinet approval of a plan for a further redeployment from the West Bank.

Netanyahu pointed out that previous Israeli governments had operated with only a one-vote majority in the Knesset and that he was confident his coalition would continue at least through 2000, the scheduled date for the next national elections — a response to calls in recent days by two of his ministers for early elections.

But given the opposition within the Cabinet to any further transfer of West Bank lands to the Palestinians, it appeared unlikely that Netanyahu would be able to secure approval for a further redeployment before he meets with President Clinton in Washington on Jan. 20.

The Clinton administration was assessing, in the wake of

Levy's resignation, whether a planned trip to the region by U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross would go ahead this week.

At Sunday's Cabinet meeting, Netanyahu denied reports that he had conveyed any figures or pledges to U.S. officials regarding the scope of a further redeployment. Netanyahu noted that American officials had also denied reports of such promises.

Netanyahu told his ministers Sunday that the Cabinet would discuss and decide the positions which he will present to Clinton.

Clinton also is slated to meet with Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat on Jan. 22.

Levy, the third minister to resign from Netanyahu's 19-month-old government, strongly denied speculation that he made his decision after the Labor Party promised him a position of influence in another government.

"If there are new elections, Geshar will run as an independent party," he said.

Netanyahu voiced hope that Levy would reconsider his resignation, which by law does not take effect for 48 hours.

The opposition Meretz faction, saying it was now clear that coalition members doubted the government, submitted a motion to dissolve the Knesset and hold new elections. □

Argentine official blames police for attacks on Jewish cemeteries

By Sergio Kiernan

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) — Buenos Aires' new civilian police chief is blaming policemen for two recent desecrations of tombstones at Jewish cemeteries near here.

On Dec. 24, 66 tombs at the La Tablada cemetery were destroyed.

Exactly one week later, 22 tombstones were destroyed at a Jewish cemetery located in a suburb of Buenos Aires.

Luis Lugones, a lawyer who was recently appointed to reform the capital's notoriously corrupt police force, said the point of the attacks was to "cause chaos and instability in the force."

"The attackers will be found and punished," he said.

The president of the Argentine Jewish umbrella organization DAIA, Ruben Beraja, agreed with Lugones.

"We believe that former policemen or people hired by policemen carried out both attacks against our cemeteries," Beraja said.

Members of Buenos Aires' police force have been suspected of involvement in the 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center, which killed 86 people. But no suspects have been charged and the crime remains unsolved.

After years of investigation of corruption, the province's governor took a number of steps in early December to reform the force, including the dismissal of 300 precinct lieutenants.

The newspaper Pagina 12 recently quoted a former lieutenant announcing "reprisals" to protest the changes in the force.

"Former cops will not lay down. They shall hit. They will rob banks and attack Jews," the unnamed lieutenant told the paper.

A police source said in an interview that the group, the Buenos Aires Movement, is directed by some of the former lieutenants.

"They are out now, but they have friends still in the force that will protect them, that will look the other way," the source said.

Argentine Jewish groups are planning to stage a protest at the La Tablada cemetery Jan. 11. □