



# Daily News Bulletin

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81<sup>st</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### **Albright gives mixed assessment**

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said there had been "some progress" as a result of U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross' shuttle to the Middle East. Albright also told reporters at the White House, "There is a level of frustration both here and in the Middle East because the stalemate has gone on."

### **Abzug dies at 77**

Former U.S. Rep. Bella Abzug died at 77 of complications following heart surgery. A feminist who fought for civil rights and against the Vietnam War, Abzug was the first Jewish woman to be elected to Congress. [Page 3]

### **Arafat visits Frank museum**

Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat visited the Anne Frank Museum in Amsterdam.

"This story is not to be repeated for our children or their children," Arafat said after the visit, referring to Palestinian and Israeli youths.

### **Nelson sentenced in slaying**

Lemrick Nelson was sentenced to 19 ½ years in a federal prison. He was convicted one year ago on federal charges related to the fatal stabbing of Yankel Rosenbaum during the 1991 riots in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, N.Y. [Page 4]

### **Blair may spend night in Gaza**

British Prime Minister Tony Blair is considering spending a night in the Gaza Strip to match his night in Jerusalem when he visits Israel next month to mark Israel's 50th anniversary. A report in the Guardian newspaper said the proposed overnight stay in Gaza would represent "an unprecedented gesture of British support for an independent Palestinian state."

### **UIA votes to join partnership**

The United Israel Appeal board of directors voted unanimously to join the Council of Jewish Federations/United Jewish Appeal partnership. The process will begin in mid-May, under the condition that UIA representatives will be treated as equal members of the partnership. In addition, the UIA board will maintain independence and have a role in the new system. The UIA is the conduit for funds from the United Jewish Appeal to the Jewish Agency for Israel.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### **Israel awaits next U.S. move after Ross mission collapses**

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Things are not as bad as they look, the Israeli government insisted after an American envoy's latest round of shuttle diplomacy failed to move the Israeli-Palestinian peace process forward.

It is "a dramatization" to speak of a crisis or confrontation in the U.S.-Israel relationship, the prime minister's foreign policy adviser, Uzi Arad, said at the conclusion of U.S. Special Middle East Coordinator Dennis Ross' four-day shuttle.

There had indeed been differences of opinion, Arad conceded, but the series of talks with Ross had been "business-like" and the Americans understood Israel's security concerns.

A senior Israeli policy-maker, briefing reporters Monday night, sought to assure them that, despite the present impasse, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu was still moving the country toward a second further redeployment from the West Bank.

Behind the facade of business as usual, however, there was some trepidation in Israeli government circles this week as to how Washington would respond to Ross returning empty-handed from what had been widely advertised as a last-ditch attempt to save the faltering peace process.

U.S. officials have expressed in recent days the possibility that Washington may decide to withdraw altogether from the frustrating and unsuccessful Israeli-Palestinian mediation effort.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright delivered this apocalyptic scenario in a conference call last Friday with American Jewish leaders. Plainly, her purpose was to influence the unfolding Ross mission.

And her words struck home — in banner headlines Sunday in Israel's newspapers.

No one in the Netanyahu government, not even the hardest-line ministers who advised the premier to reject out of hand Washington's proposal, can regard with equanimity the prospect of America publicly turning its back on the peace process — with all the loss of face for Washington that this would mean.

A worse scenario still, from the Netanyahu government's perspective, is another response that is now under active consideration in the White House — a public presentation of the American formula as a formal U.S. initiative.

This would mean, unless there is a sudden change of heart in Jerusalem, that the Clinton administration would be knowingly courting a confrontation with Israel.

Netanyahu, who has spent several weeks attempting to prevent U.S. officials from going public with their proposal, was quoted Monday as warning that such a move would result in the "explosion" of the peace process.

It would mean, moreover, that Washington is prepared to point an accusatory finger at Jerusalem as the recalcitrant party — since the Palestinian Authority has already indicated its acceptance, albeit grudging, of the American terms while Israel continues to reject them.

Arad claimed on Tuesday that Netanyahu's talks with Ross had not "gone into detail" about the specifics of the envisaged further redeployment.

Yet even though the reported U.S. plan has not been publicly presented, every newspaper reader in Israel — and the United States — is now intimately familiar with its terms.

It calls for a pullback by the Israeli army from an additional 13.1 percent of the

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Evangelicals issue pledge

Representatives of some 50 Christian evangelical organizations active in Israel agreed not to conduct, encourage or support missionary activities there.

As a result, an Israeli lawmaker said he would drop his sponsorship of an anti-proselytizing bill that has been the target of protests from Christian groups around the world. Labor Knesset member Nissim Zvilli also said he would attempt to get fervently Orthodox groups who have lobbied for the bill's passage to acknowledge the declaration from the evangelicals.

### Premier to march at Auschwitz

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu will take part in an annual march at the former Auschwitz death camp, according to his aides.

The March of the Living, which commemorates those who perished at Auschwitz, takes place each year on Holocaust Remembrance Day, which falls this year on April 23.

### Freij buried in Bethlehem

Elias Freij was buried Tuesday in Bethlehem, the West Bank town where he served as mayor for 23 years. Freij, 80, was a political moderate who had developed good relations with both Jordanian and Israeli officials, as well as with Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat. He held the tourism portfolio in the Palestinian Authority until last year, when he stepped down due to failing health.

### Centenarian makes aliyah

A 102-year-old woman from New York City became the oldest American immigrant to Israel when she bowed to her daughter's wishes and moved to the Jewish state.

Belle Goldstein arrived in Israel on Monday after bidding goodbye to her older brother in New York. Goldstein was born in 1896, more than a year before the First Zionist Congress was convened in Switzerland.

West Bank in stages during a 12-week period. The pullback is referred to as the second redeployment even though the first, offered last year by Israel, was rejected by the Palestinian Authority as too paltry and never implemented.

During the phased redeployment contemplated by the Clinton administration, the Palestinian Authority would have to prove its commitment to already-signed agreements: drafting a version of the Palestinian Covenant that no longer calls for the destruction of the Jewish state, tightening security controls against terror and enhancing security cooperation with Israel.

Ross is also understood to have broached the idea of U.S.-Israeli-Palestinian monitoring of the second further redeployment and also of preparations for the third further redeployment that is called for in the 1995 Interim Agreement.

Netanyahu has repeatedly called for forgoing the third further redeployment and instead moving directly into the final-status negotiations. The Palestinian side, eager to have as much of the West Bank under its control before the start of the final-status talks, has demanded that the third redeployment be carried out as prescribed.

Netanyahu has reportedly balked at the idea of America's refereeing the Israeli-Palestinian debate on whether, when and how a third further redeployment is to be carried out.

The Palestinians, ever distrustful of the Netanyahu government, are comfortable with the prospect of intensive American participation in the negotiations.

While Netanyahu's office was doing its best to avert the gathering storm clouds, politicians on both sides of the Knesset were busily anticipating their advent.

The Labor Party called for the Knesset, which has already recessed for the Passover holiday, to reconvene for an urgent debate on the situation.

Earlier this week, Labor leader Ehud Barak had said that if Netanyahu decided to face down his Cabinet hard-liners and agree to the American proposal, Labor would stand by him with the votes needed to counterbalance right-wing defections in a no-confidence vote.

But with Netanyahu having apparently decided to side with his hard-liners, Labor and its ideological partner, Meretz, are now warning that the government must be brought down before it leads the country to ruin.

The indignation is somewhat compromised, however, by renewed talk of a national unity government under Netanyahu.

Chief among the Labor advocates of this course is former Prime Minister Shimon Peres, the architect of the Oslo accords. Peres' argument, in essence, is that Netanyahu would move forward with the peace process if he could, but he is constrained from doing so by hard-liners in his coalition.

One of these hard-liners, Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon, stayed away from Netanyahu's fourth, make-or-break meeting with Ross on Monday evening, claiming he was "not a party to the evolving accord" with the Americans.

That rumored accord reportedly entailed Israel's agreeing to an 11 percent second redeployment and to American participation in negotiations on a third one.

Peres' standing is enhanced, in the eyes of the public, by the very fact that he is no longer — ostensibly — in the heart of the fray.

On the face of it, if there were a unity government, Peres would not be a senior member of it, since he is no longer head of Labor.

But seasoned political observers suggest that this may not reflect the full picture.

They point to Peres' consistently high ratings in opinion polls, and surmise that if there were a strong movement to create a unity government, that momentum could quickly bring Peres back to center stage as a key minister under Netanyahu.

This is not the first time since the May 1996 election that Peres and the people around him have launched a unity balloon.

In the past, however, Netanyahu gave little indication that he himself might consider it in his interests to join such an initiative. For one thing, it would presumably mean a rupture with his popular defense minister, Yitzhak Mordechai, whose job would probably go to Barak.

But now, say some political observers, with the Israel-U.S. relationship appearing less rosy than the prime minister's aides bravely maintain, Netanyahu may be giving the unity idea some new thought. □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Bella Abzug remembered as 'tikkun olam incarnate'

By Rebecca Segall

#### Britain to report on accounts

The British government is expected to release a report Friday on the fate of Holocaust victims' bank accounts seized by Britain during World War II.

The report covers some 25,000 accounts with a current value of \$500 million. The government is expected to uphold its long-standing stance of not compensating survivors for those assets.

#### Swedish bank to disburse funds

A Swedish bank announced that it plans to begin disbursing money from dormant World War II-era bank accounts within the next few months.

An official with Handelsbanken was quoted as saying that about 15 of 75 account holders would receive the payments and that the majority were Norwegian businessmen who had accounts in Sweden during the war. The announcement came after a government commission investigating Jewish property said it had identified about \$925,000 in Swedish bank accounts unclaimed since the end of the war.

#### Visitors center approved

A Polish developer reportedly won approval for a visitors center near the former Auschwitz death camp.

The developer had dropped earlier plans for a mini-mall across from the camp site after Jewish officials and Holocaust survivors said it would desecrate the memory of the 1.5 million people who died at Auschwitz. The planned visitors center will house fast-food restaurants, a post office, bank and a bookstore devoted to the history of Auschwitz.

#### Callers weigh in on blood libel

Some 46 percent of the callers to a Russian television station said they believed that Jews commit ritual murders. The television anchor who posed the question during a nationwide broadcast said he was shocked by the high level of anti-Semitism among the 3,500 viewers who phoned in. The anchor, Andrei Cherkizov, is himself Jewish.

#### All-star broadcast planned

An all-star roster of Hollywood celebrities is slated to appear next month at California's Shrine Auditorium to celebrate Israel's jubilee. Among the stars that will be performing April 14 are singers Natalie Cole, Jessye Norman, Stevie Wonder and Harry Connick Jr., and actors Richard Dreyfuss, Arnold Schwarzenegger and Noah Wyle.

The event will be broadcast the following evening in the United States and Canada, and will air later in Israel and some 50 other countries. "To Life!" will be viewed by an estimated 500 million people around the world.

NEW YORK (JTA) — "It is the passing of an era," Ira Forman, executive director of the National Jewish Democratic Council, said upon hearing of the death of Bella Abzug, the first Jewish woman elected to Congress.

She "was a spitfire," said Forman, who worked with the Democratic lawmaker from New York when he was a staffer for one of the congressional committees on which she served.

"A lot of tough old pols on the Hill were scared of her. If she believed in something, she would go to the mat for it," said Forman.

Many sad voices filled with passion this week as they remembered Abzug — for her devotion to feminist causes, her raspy voice and her wide-brimmed hats.

Most of all, "she was a force in the universe, a tikkun olam incarnate," author and Jewish feminist Letty Cottin Pogrebin said, using the Hebrew term for "fixing the world."

"She had a tough outside, and a sweet, sweet inside, like so many Jews. She was the quintessential fighter."

Abzug, 77, died Tuesday after complications following heart surgery in her hometown, New York City.

Abzug, who served in Congress from 1971 to 1977, made unsuccessful bids for the U.S. Senate and the mayoralty of New York City.

Abzug was born to Russian Jewish immigrants.

She became a Zionist at the age of 12, collecting money and giving speeches for Zionist causes at subway stops.

Pogrebin and many others recalled Abzug's commitment to fighting anti-Zionist rhetoric and policy when it emerged at United Nations conferences for women during recent decades.

"Abzug fought when she could have retreated into the feminist crowd, but she stood up as a Jew," she said.

Friends and colleagues cite story after story demonstrating Abzug's passion, fire, commitment to women's issues and loyalty to Israel.

In the early 1980s, Shirley Joseph, then the policy coordinator of the Jewish federation of Buffalo, remembers how astonished she felt when Abzug — the over-obligated legislator — agreed to take time out to speak to a group of students about feminist and Zionist issues.

"She has done more for Jewish women and all women on both the local and international levels than any other I know," said Joseph, who chaired the Jewish caucus at the U.N. women's conference in Beijing in 1995.

Already suffering from illness and confined to a wheelchair, Abzug attended that conference as a member of the Jewish caucus.

"The most interesting thing about Bella Abzug," said Hyman Bookbinder, the veteran Jewish activist in Washington, was that "while she was extreme on the left, she never lost her commitment to the Jewish community."

Indeed, besides supporting pro-Israel legislation, Abzug was a member of Hadassah and B'nai B'rith.

She also studied at the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary in New York for a period of time.

Since she was an outspoken feminist, however, many tended to disregard her commitment, and instead ridiculed her strength.

She often said descriptions of her would have been dramatically different if she were not a woman — "courageous" instead of "abrasive," "forceful" instead of "strident."

"There are those who say I'm impatient, impetuous, uppity, rude, profane, brash, or overbearing," she wrote in her 1972 book "Bella!"

"Whether I'm any of those things, or all of them, you can decide for yourself. But whatever I am — and this ought to be made very clear at the outset — I am a very serious woman." □

## Crown Heights sentence still leaves void for family

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) — For the family of Yankel Rosenbaum and the Jews of Crown Heights, the sentencing of Lemrick Nelson to 19 ½ years in a federal prison isn't a conclusive end to the saga they have endured.

The judge in the case tacked on an extra five years of probation for Nelson after he completes his sentence, out of concern that he will continue to be a menace after he is released.

Nelson's sentence was announced Tuesday in a small Federal District Court in downtown Brooklyn, N.Y. The courtroom was jammed with his African American supporters on one side, and members of the Jewish community on the other.

His conviction for violating Rosenbaum's civil rights came in February 1997, nearly five years after he was acquitted on criminal charges. Nelson's act was "one of blind, baseless bigotry and putrid violent hate," said Fay Rosenbaum, the victim's mother, as she addressed the court before his sentence was pronounced.

She and her husband, Max, traveled to the United States from Australia this week for the first time since the younger of her two children was murdered in 1991 on the streets of the neighborhood where he had come to continue his research on the Holocaust.

Rosenbaum was 29 when he was killed on the first of three nights of rioting in the neighborhood populated almost exclusively by blacks and Chasidic Jews.

"This is no closure," Jacob Goldstein, a Lubavitcher and chairman of Community Board 9, which encompasses Crown Heights, said in a telephone interview, moments after the sentence was pronounced.

"As far as we're concerned, there were more than 20 other thugs involved in that pack, and the feds seem to be saying that they got us one or two, and that's all they're willing to do.

"The investigation is dead, but until the other thugs are caught, we won't feel like it's over."

Charles Price, also involved in Rosenbaum's murder, has been found guilty of violating his civil rights, but no date has been set for his sentencing.

At the start of Tuesday's court session, Judge David Trager denied a request by Nelson's attorneys to set aside the indictment — he had earlier denied their requests that he recuse himself because he is Jewish and has close ties to the New York Jewish community.

Trager was appointed to the bench by a committee convened by U.S. Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) and headed by Judah Gribetz, who now serves as president of the New York Jewish Community Relations Council.

It's been nearly seven years since crowds of blacks rampaged through the streets of the Brooklyn neighborhood for three days, enraged by the death of a young boy who was hit by a Chasidic-driven car.

It was a hot summer night in August, 1991, when Nelson, then 16, and some 20 other people surrounded Rosenbaum after coming from the spot, seven blocks away, where Gavin Cato had just been killed.

Nelson and others spotted Yankel Rosenbaum on the street, according to court papers. One of them shouted, "There's a Jew, get the Jew," and they chased him across the street and attacked him.

During the melee, Nelson stabbed Rosenbaum and fled, leaving him bleeding in the street. Police caught up with Nelson a block later and found a bloody knife in his pocket.

In the hospital, the mortally wounded Rosenbaum identified Nelson as the person who had stabbed him. The Australian died the next morning.

Shortly thereafter, Nelson admitted to police that he had committed the stabbing, according to the documents.

He was charged in New York state court as an adult with second-degree murder.

Nevertheless, after a six-week trial, Nelson was acquitted in October 1992. The jurors joined him in a celebratory dinner that night at a restaurant.

The dead man's brother viewed that as a challenge, rather than the conclusion to his effort to find justice.

Norman Rosenbaum made at least five dozen trips from his home and family in Australia — where he works as an attorney and professor of law — to the United States, where he pressed federal officials to pursue an investigation and to have Nelson charged with violating his younger brother's civil rights.

Rosenbaum and others, including U.S. Sen. Alfonse D'Amato (R-N.Y.) lobbied hard for Nelson to be tried as an adult. Trager ruled in their favor, a decision that was upheld despite legal challenges by Nelson's lawyers.

Meanwhile, the City of New York is negotiating a financial settlement with representatives of the Crown Heights Jewish community, who filed a class-action lawsuit against the city for failing to protect Jewish residents during the riots.

Mayor Rudolph Giuliani said last week he would apologize for the city's handling of the racial rioting as part of the settlement.

The city's top officials were derelict in their duty to protect all of their residents, according to the Lubavitch community and according to a 1993 report put out by state officials after an exhaustive investigation into the rioting that took place on the streets of one Brooklyn neighborhood, but echoed around the world. □

## Cooperation on West Bank probe

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The Palestinian Authority has transferred the remains of a car that blew up earlier this week in the West Bank to Israeli police.

Israeli security officials believe the two people killed in the blast near Ramallah were Hamas terrorists who were preparing a bomb that would be used in an attack against Israel.

Israeli police are investigating whether the car was being booby-trapped or being used to transport a bomb into Israel.

There have been recent warnings from Israeli intelligence officials that Hamas members are planning to carry out a massive attack in Israel, possibly with a car bombing involving large amounts of explosives.

Palestinian Authority officials told their Israeli counterparts that it was possible the blast was carried out by common criminals, not terrorists.

Palestinian security sources quoted by the Israeli daily Ha'aretz said one of the two people killed in the blast was a security official who entered a house adjacent to where the blast occurred to look for casualties — and that he was fatally injured when the roof collapsed. □