



Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 76, No. 121

Tuesday, July 7, 1998

81st Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Jewish boycott urged

A right-wing party in Switzerland called for an immediate boycott of "American and Jewish goods, restaurants and travel destinations." The request prompted a criminal investigation of Rudolf Keller, the president of the Swiss Democratic Party, who called for the boycott.

Meanwhile, shareholders in Credit Suisse, one of the Swiss banks that failed to reach a settlement with representatives of survivors over claims stemming from the Holocaust-era before a July 1 deadline, said they plan to file a lawsuit against New York City and New York State.

New York officials said they would impose sanctions on the banks on Sept. 1 if an agreement is not reached by that date. [Page 3]

FBI clears U.S. Army engineer

The FBI cleared a Detroit-area U.S. Army engineer who had been suspected of sharing classified U.S. military information with Israeli army officers.

After a routine polygraph test in February 1997, the FBI accused David Tenenbaum of passing classified information on the Patriot missiles, light-armor systems and the Bradley tank.

Despite a court affidavit claiming that police had seized classified information from Tenenbaum's home, U.S. attorneys told newspapers over the weekend that this was not true.

U.N. to debate Palestinian issue

The U.N. General Assembly is scheduled to debate Tuesday a proposal to upgrade the status of the Palestinians at the world body. The U.S. State Department has urged U.N. member nations to oppose such a move.

L.A. Jews surveyed

The Jews of Los Angeles intermarry less than American Jews in general, their synagogue membership has risen in the last 20 years and the overwhelming majority remain with the same spouse for a lifetime.

The findings were based on a study conducted by the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles. One-third of the city's 519,000 Jews belong to synagogues, compared to only one-quarter in 1979, when the last survey was conducted.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Gaza standoff highlights dangers, tensions in peace process impasse

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A recent standoff between Israeli and Palestinian armed forces in the Gaza Strip has highlighted the dangers resulting from the prolonged impasse in the peace process.

The incident also provoked a new round of infighting between Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and some of his key ministers, whose inability to agree on policy issues has contributed to the impasse.

The standoff began July 2, when Israeli troops prevented a convoy of Palestinian vehicles from traveling along a main road in Gaza.

Palestinian authorities responded by closing access roads throughout the area, a move that left Jewish settlements there under a virtual blockade.

A compromise was reached in the pre-dawn hours of July 3 under which Israel permitted the convoy to proceed on what was said to be a one-time basis and the Palestinians lifted their blockade of the access roads leading to the settlements.

Discussions continued this week between high-level Israeli and Palestinian security officials with the goal of defining a long-term solution to the dispute and preventing such confrontations in the future. But tensions in recent days were not confined to Gaza. On Sunday, suspected Jewish militants torched four Palestinian produce stalls in the West Bank town of Hebron.

Israeli police were investigating whether there was any connection between the incident and an attack last Friday, when Jews on horseback allegedly damaged Palestinian cars in Hebron by whipping them with chains as they rode past. Two Jewish teen-agers have been arrested in connection with that incident.

While the attacks in Hebron were the latest to erupt in the often volatile West Bank town, the Gaza incident was potentially far more dangerous.

At the height of that standoff, Palestinian police took up positions behind hastily assembled barricades while Israeli forces moved armored personnel carriers to the area.

The two sides, separated only by a matter of yards, trained their rifles on each other. Officials on both sides later said the incident could quickly have deteriorated into a shootout that could have provoked widespread violence. They said the fragile state of the peace process provided the immediate backdrop for the tense situation on the ground.

Observers in Israel added that the rupture in relations between Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat, caused by the 16-month deadlock in negotiations, had apparently made it impossible for the two to get on the phone and defuse the situation. Beyond this, the observers added, Netanyahu was apparently unable or reluctant to call upon the U.S. Middle East peacemaking team to intervene diplomatically and help ease the situation.

In the past, this would have been the natural, almost instinctive reaction by Israel in a crisis of this kind. But Netanyahu's continued rejection of an American proposal that calls on Israel to turn over an additional 13 percent of the West Bank as part of a plan to breathe life back into the peace process has severely strained U.S.-Israel relations.

The ailing peace process prompted three Arab leaders — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak, Jordan's King Hussein and Arafat — to convene in Cairo on Sunday. While the three men demanded that Israel immediately cancel its recently announced plans to

MIDEAST FOCUS

Hebron stalls torched

Produce stalls in Hebron were torched in the latest instance of increased tensions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Israeli police are investigating whether there is any connection between the incident and an attack last Friday, when Jewish horsemen allegedly chain-whipped cars in Hebron. Two Jewish teen-agers have been arrested in connection with that incident.

Jewish pluralism group launched

The mayor of Tel Aviv launched a new group seeking to prevent what it sees as religious coercion by Israel's fervently Orthodox community. Roni Milo is co-chairman — along with Avraham Burg, chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel — of the Public Committee in Support of Freedom of Religion in Israel.

Arab summit postponed

Plans to convene a full Arab summit to discuss the stalled Middle East peace process were indefinitely postponed. The announcement came after Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat, who supported the summit, met with President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt and King Hussein of Jordan in Cairo. The three demanded that Israel "annul immediately" its recently approved plan to expand Jerusalem's boundaries. Mubarak said an Arab summit would be held only if current peace process initiatives fail.

Sharansky visits Central Asia

An Israeli delegation led by Trade Minister Natan Sharansky concluded its five-day tour of three Central Asian states. Sharansky, who earlier this year was appointed to oversee Israeli relations with former Soviet states, made stops in Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan to boost trade and economic cooperation with the three former Soviet republics. During the past few years, Israel has exported farm produce worth \$1 billion to Kazakhstan alone.



Daily News Bulletin

Caryn Rosen Adelman, *President*
 Mark J. Jaffe, *Executive Editor and Publisher*
 Lisa Hostein, *Editor*
 Kenneth Bandler, *Managing Editor*
 Lenore A. Silverstein, *Business Manager*

JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at www.jta.org.
 © JTA Reproduction only by previous arrangement.

extend the Jerusalem municipality's jurisdiction, Mubarak and Hussein rejected Arafat's call for an Arab summit. Mubarak said a summit should be convened only if the U.S. initiative fails.

If Israel's difficulties with the Arabs and the Americans were not enough, Netanyahu faced yet more attacks from within his own Cabinet — and from the opposition, which forced the Knesset back from recess to discuss the stalemated peace process. The premier's approach to crisis management triggered another round of internal feuding regarding the issue of the his own credibility.

Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon angered and embarrassed Netanyahu during Sunday's weekly Cabinet meeting by directly questioning the premier's veracity.

During the meeting, Netanyahu told his ministers that the deal eventually worked out to end the Gaza standoff had received his approval. He went on to praise the army for ending the incident without violence.

"That's not what you told me on the phone," Sharon interrupted. "You said you did not approve of it and nor did the defense minister."

The prime minister said something about that having been a private conversation, but the damage was already done: His verbal clash with Sharon quickly became headline news. Sources in the Prime Minister's Office said Netanyahu resented the way Sharon had deliberately betrayed a confidence and made the prime minister look duplicitous during the Cabinet session.

Nor did the infighting end there. Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai, who was at the premier's residence in Jerusalem late into the night of July 2 as attempts were made to defuse the Gaza standoff, weighed in this week, through sources close to him, with some anger of his own.

He and the prime minister had indeed approved the deal that ended the standoff, Mordechai insisted.

What, then, was this attempt by Netanyahu to backtrack in the face of criticism from hard-liners on the far right?

He was referring specifically to Sharon and ministers representing the National Religious Party, who had expressed reservations about the decision to allow the Palestinian convoy to use the disputed road.

The sparring match involving top government officials rekindled comment and speculation about the rocky Netanyahu-Mordechai relationship and about the prime minister's ability to make decisions under pressure — and stick to them. □

Toronto police to investigate Nation of Islam chapter head

By Bill Gladstone

TORONTO (JTA) — A Nation of Islam activist has become the focus of a police probe just weeks after the American-based group opened its first Canadian mosque here.

Don Muhammad, head of the black Muslim group's Toronto chapter, reportedly made verbal attacks against both gays and Jews in a recent article in *Now*, a weekly entertainment publication. Muhammad allegedly accused the gay community of "threatening to wipe out the black community" and he claimed that Jews "have long been involved in financing wars of nations in order to enrich themselves."

He also allegedly made remarks questioning how many Jews died in the Holocaust.

Toronto police launched an investigation into the incident that was launched after police received a complaint from the Canadian Jewish Congress. "Spouting hatred of others is unacceptable," said Keith Landy, chairman of the Ontario branch of the CJC.

Moshe Ronen, the national president of CJC, called upon church leaders across Canada to reject the anti-Semitic and hateful rhetoric of the Nation of Islam. In his letter to these leaders, Ronen wrote, "We hope that your faith community will reject the anti-integrationist separatism which the NOI has embarked on. This approach tears down bridges of understanding and tolerance that we together have so carefully built."

Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan has spoken twice in Toronto in the last two years. On both occasions he attracted audiences numbering more than 10,000. □

JEWISH WORLD

Moscow shul rededicated

The mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, joined hundreds of the city's Jews at the rededication of a synagogue that was bombed in May. The Marina Roscha Synagogue has been renovated with funds provided by the city of Moscow, local businessmen, foreign communities and hundreds of ordinary Muscovites who were "eager to help with their \$2 or \$3," according to Berel Lazar, the Lubavitch synagogue's rabbi.

Graffiti blankets community

Racist graffiti targeting Jews, blacks and gays blanketed a neighborhood near Virginia Beach, Va., over the Independence Day holiday weekend. Vandals spray-painted swastikas and slurs on homes, cars and fences. Residents of the Salem Lakes neighborhood worked together to clean up the mess. The FBI is reportedly assisting in the investigation.

Trial of Palestinians begins

The trial of two Palestinians charged with plotting to plant bombs in New York City's subway system began in a Brooklyn, N.Y., federal court. Police arrested Ghazi Ibrahim Abu Maizar and Lafi Khalil after a shootout in their Brooklyn apartment last year in which the two were wounded. Police reportedly found anti-American and anti-Israeli literature along with bomb-making accouterments in the men's apartment.

Farrakhan arrives in Libya

Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan arrived in Libya to join in Islamic prayers led by Libyan strongman Muammar Gadhafi. Farrakhan has been a frequent visitor to Libya over the objections of the U.S. government.

Athletes' deaths commemorated

Members of Australia's Jewish community packed into Sydney's Central Synagogue for a memorial service to mark the anniversary of the death of four Australian athletes during last summer's Maccabiah Games.

Meanwhile, leaders of the Australian Jewish community in Israel last week repeated their call for a full Knesset inquiry into the circumstances surrounding the collapse of the bridge leading into the Ramat Gan stadium during the Games' opening ceremony.

Famed quarterback dies

Football Hall of Fame quarterback Sid Luckman died at the age of 81. A Brooklyn native and a graduate of Columbia University, Luckman led the Chicago Bears to four championships and five conference titles in his 12 seasons in the National Football League. He was named the NFL's Most Valuable Player in 1943.

Swiss party calls for boycott of Jewish, American concerns

By Fredy Rom

ZURICH (JTA) — A right-wing party in Switzerland has called for an immediate boycott of "American and Jewish goods, restaurants and travel destinations."

The call by the Swiss Democratic Party came in the wake of a decision last week by U.S. public finance officials to lift a moratorium on sanctions against Switzerland's leading commercial banks after negotiations to settle claims over Holocaust-era bank deposits reached an impasse.

Israel's ambassador to Switzerland, Yitzhak Mayer, lambasted the boycott call, describing it as more than an "inexcusable verbal escalation."

The call harkens back to the "broken windows of Jewish shops" that took place when the Nazis rose to power and that were the "prologue to the tragedy of the Holocaust," Mayer said. "Who can say what echoes this call will have" among the Swiss public, Mayer added.

At the request of a local Jew, Zurich police launched a criminal investigation of the president of the Swiss Democrats, Rudolf Keller, who called for the boycott.

The Swiss Democrats are a relatively small party, but they are represented in the Swiss Parliament.

Swiss President Flavio Cotti refused to condemn the boycott call as anti-Semitic, saying only that boycotts were a poor way to resolve the ongoing dispute regarding Holocaust-era assets. "Boycotts are the wrong way to solve problems. It does not make any difference if such calls come from the United States or Switzerland," Cotti said.

Thomas Lyssy, vice president of the Federation of Jewish Communities in Switzerland, charged that Cotti had "again missed the opportunity to condemn very clearly the anti-Semitism in this country."

He added that the boycott call against Jewish businesses represented a violation of Swiss laws and that the Jewish community had expected "stronger words" from Cotti to condemn it. An adviser to Cotti who wanted to remain anonymous admitted Sunday that a "much stronger text" lashing out at the boycott call had been recommended to Cotti, but that he had rejected it.

Meanwhile, shareholders in Credit Suisse, one of the Swiss banks that failed to reach a settlement with representatives of survivors over Holocaust-era claims before a July 1 deadline, said they plan to file a lawsuit against New York City and New York State. New York officials said last week said they would impose sanctions on the banks on Sept. 1 if a settlement of Holocaust-era claims is not reached by then. □

Jewish general dies at 51

MOSCOW (JTA) — Lev Rokhlin, a Russian Jewish general who emerged as a hero during the war in Chechnya and who later became known as a bitter critic of President Boris Yeltsin, has been shot dead.

Police said the wife of Rokhlin, 51, confessed to the crime, which reportedly occurred while the general was sleeping.

According to some reports, Rokhlin's wife has been suffering from depression.

Rokhlin, one of the few Jews to reach the top of the Russian military, quickly rose through the ranks during and after the Soviet war in Afghanistan, which took place during the late 1970s and early 1980s. In 1993, he became the head of Russia's 8th Army — the only Jew to reach such a rank in Russia since World War II.

During the war in Chechnya, Rokhlin was credited with taking the southern Russian breakaway region's capital of Grozny in January 1995.

Frustrated with the bloodshed, he left the army a few weeks later. He then refused to accept a medal for leading the Grozny offensive, saying he saw nothing glorious in "fighting a war on my own land." Following his retirement, Rokhlin was elected to the Russian Parliament. During the past two years, Rokhlin has consistently criticized Yeltsin for the war in Chechnya and for low morale in the military. More recently, he had been moving closer with radicals in the Parliament. □

New study finds genetic link between breast, ovarian cancers

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) — A new study has found that women who develop breast cancer because of a particular genetic mutation are 10 times more likely to also develop ovarian cancer than are breast cancer victims without the DNA defect.

The genetic mutations that can lead to breast cancer are more frequently found among Jewish women of Ashkenazi descent than among the general population.

The benefit of the new information, according to an executive at the genetic testing laboratory that underwrote the study, is that women who know they have a hereditary link to breast cancer can be carefully screened for indications of ovarian cancer.

Ovarian cancer is particularly deadly and difficult to detect in its early stages.

An estimated 10 percent of breast-cancer cases are believed to be linked to heredity.

The causes of the other 90 percent are thought to be environmental, related to exposure to certain hormones and linked to diet and exercise.

Among American women in general, very few — just 2 percent — develop breast cancer before age 50.

But between one-third and one-half of all women with a genetic mutation — Jews and non-Jews — will develop the disease before she turns 50.

By age 70, about 12 percent of women without the mutation, and between 56 and 87 percent of women with the mutation, get breast cancer, recent studies have shown.

A small percentage of women with the genetic mutation that predisposes them to get breast cancer — 10 percent — are Jews of Ashkenazi descent, meaning their ancestors came from Central or Eastern Europe.

But since Jews account for just about 2 percent of the American population, this disproportionate finding prompted alarm when the cancer-causing mutations on BRCA1 and BRCA2 were first identified about two years ago.

The purpose of the latest study was to find out which features of family history best predict mutations BRCA1 and BRCA2.

Determining the risk of ovarian cancer was not the study's primary purpose, but the link quickly became apparent from the data, according to Dr. Tom Frank, medical director for Myriad Genetic Laboratories.

Myriad spent some \$570,000 to conduct the analysis involved in the study.

Based in Salt Lake City, Utah, Myriad is the only company that currently offers the examination for breast-cancer mutations commercially.

The connection between the genetic mutations and ovarian cancer was discovered by researchers from a dozen of the country's leading medical institutions — including the Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research in New York and the Anderson Cancer Center in Houston — that worked in conjunction with Myriad on the project.

The study examined 238 women with breast or ovarian cancer, or both, whose family histories showed a strong likelihood of genetic mutation.

Researchers found that women who had breast cancer but no

genetic mutation developed ovarian cancer at the rate of under 2 in 1,000 women in the general population, which is about the same rate as that of women who have never had breast cancer, Frank said.

But with a genetic mutation, the incidence of ovarian cancer rose to over a 1 in 100 chance.

About 186,000 American women are diagnosed with breast cancer each year, and 44,000 women will die of the disease in the same period.

By contrast, some 26,000 women are diagnosed with ovarian cancer each year — and half that number, 13,000, will die of the disease each year.

Dale Mintz, national director of health education for Hadasah, which has increasingly focused its attention on women's health issues, was interested in news of the study, but questioned the source of the findings.

"I'd rather see large studies done by a university or the National Cancer Institute because Myriad has a self-interest, and I'd rather see them done where they are pure science," she said.

It costs an individual, or her insurance company, \$2,400 for the Utah-based company to do a full sequencing of the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genes.

A search for mutations at the three points where they are most often found among Ashkenazi Jews costs \$450, Frank said.

Frank acknowledged "we do have self-interest," which is why he said his company cooperated with medical institutions.

"Anybody else doing this analysis using our methods would come up with exactly the same conclusions," he said.

Mintz of Hadassah also expressed concern about potential discrimination by insurance companies against women who have found certain genetic mutations.

Frank said in the two years since Myriad began offering the breast cancer genetic testing, "I don't think there's a single report of a woman who had that test whose insurance was lost or who had her premium rates raised."

But Mintz said there was reason for long-term concern.

If women do get tested and later become victims of the disease, "the insurance companies can say that they won't pay for the surgical removal of cancerous breasts or ovaries" because the disease is considered a pre-existing condition, she said.

"It has not happened but the fear is there because there is no law yet preventing discrimination," said Mintz, whose group is among those advocating for legislation to avoid such pitfalls. □

Holocaust film sweeps awards

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME (JTA) — "La Vita e' Bella," a tragicomic movie largely set in a Nazi death camp, this week swept the David of Donatello awards, the Italian film industry's version of the Academy Awards.

"La Vita e' Bella" ("Life Is Beautiful"), starring, directed and co-written by comedian Roberto Benigni, tells the story of a Jewish father's desperate attempts to shield his small son from the horrors of the camp.

Among the honors bestowed on it Sunday, the movie won the prize for best film.

In addition, Benigni won for best director, best actor in a leading role and, with his co-writer, best screenplay. □