



# Daily News Bulletin

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81<sup>st</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Israel downplays U.N. vote

Israel downplayed the significance of a U.N. move to enhance the status of the Palestinians at the world body. Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, called the resolution's passage by a vote of 124-4 an "empty success" for the Palestinians. The Palestinians called it a "small victory" and said they looked forward to full-state status in the future.

### Report: France to recognize state

French leaders plan to recognize a Palestinian state if one is declared at the end of the interim agreement period between Israel and the Palestinians, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz. Citing senior sources in Paris, Ha'aretz said French President Jacques Chirac and Prime Minister Lionel Jospin have agreed to recognize Palestinian statehood in May 1999.

### CCAR fires off letter to premier

The Reform movement's Central Conference of American Rabbis sent Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu a sharply worded letter "demanding" that his government remove proposed conversion legislation from the Knesset agenda. The CCAR, which has 1,700 members, also called on the premier to withdraw his recent accusation that Reform rabbis perform "quickie conversions."

### Ethiopians protest in Jerusalem

Some 2,500 Ethiopian immigrants to Israel clashed with police during a demonstration in front of the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem.

Leaders of the demonstrators claimed that 15,000 Jews remain in Ethiopia, but that the government of Israel is acting as though all Ethiopian Jews have already emigrated.

### Key ministers: It's high time

Two Israeli Cabinet members said it was time for Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to break the impasse in the Middle East peace process.

In separate statements, Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and the country's trade minister, Natan Sharansky, said Netanyahu must decide in the coming days on an American plan under which Israel would withdraw from a further 13 percent of the West Bank.

## Israel downplays U.N. decision to upgrade status of Palestinians

By Julia Goldman

UNITED NATIONS (JTA) — Israel is downplaying the significance of a resolution passed this week in the U.N. General Assembly that gives Palestinians additional rights in the world body.

Speaking after less than an hour of discussion and a 124-4 vote on Tuesday, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, Dore Gold, called the resolution's passage an "empty success" for the Palestinians.

For their part, the Palestinians called it a "small victory" and said they looked forward to full-state status in the future.

The Arab-sponsored resolution grants the Palestinians the right to participate in the General Assembly's general debate and the right to co-sponsor draft resolutions and decisions on Palestinian and Middle East issues, among other privileges.

But the Palestinians are excluded from the right to vote or to put forward candidates for U.N. committees.

In an original draft of the resolution, which was brought before — and deferred by — the General Assembly seven months ago, the Palestinians had pushed for an upgraded status closer to statehood.

Gold credited pressure from the United States and the European Union — which he said Israel considers a friend despite its support for the resolution — in curtailing some of the Palestinians' demands.

Gold stressed that the Palestinian retains its status as an observer mission, which was first granted to the Palestine Liberation Organization in 1974.

The PLO's status was changed in 1988 when the General Assembly voted to designate the PLO as "Palestine."

"There has been a change in small technicalities," Gold said in a brief interview after the vote, "and that's all."

Among the rights the Palestinians had sought but did not get was the right to sponsor draft resolutions.

In the resolution that was approved, they are only allowed to co-sponsor such measures, and only on topics relating to the Middle East.

In addition, any such measure can only be voted upon at the request of a member state.

In Jerusalem, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said of the U.N. resolution: "They achieved certain improvements, which are far from what they had wanted."

The United States, the Marshall Islands and Micronesia joined Israel in opposing the resolution.

Ten countries abstained from voting.

In perhaps the most colorful appeal before the vote, the representative of Swaziland, who abstained on the resolution, appealed to the General Assembly to encourage renewed negotiation rather than a U.N. resolution "to ensure that peace prevails in the Middle East."

Speaking with sympathy about the Palestinians, Moses Dlamini said, "When all the doors are locked, you try to go through the roof, through the window.

"But what happens when you go through the window? You break your bones, you break your head."

In their statements delivered before the vote, both the United States and Israel

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Albright calls for patience

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright said she has had "intensive phone calls" during the last 48 hours with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and asked for "patience" as she works to move the peace process forward. In an interview on CNN's "Larry King Live," Albright declined to offer an opinion on Israeli President Ezer Weizman's recent call for early elections.

### Mayor criticizes Jerusalem plan

The mayor of a large West Bank settlement criticized a recently approved Israeli plan that would strengthen ties between his settlement and Jerusalem.

Benny Kashriel, the mayor of Ma'aleh Adumim, was quoted as saying the residents of his settlement "have no desire to be part of Jerusalem." The plan, which would, among other things, place eight West Bank settlements under Jerusalem's municipal control, has come under international criticism.

### High court hears draft appeals

Israel's High Court of Justice concluded hearing appeals for fervently Orthodox yeshiva students to be drafted into the country's armed forces.

One justice questioned whether the court should decide the issue, noting that a bill calling for the drafting of yeshiva students was pending in the Knesset.

### Turkish minister visits Israel

Turkey's foreign minister said his country has "no intention of sacrificing" its relations with Israel because of pressure from Arab states.

Ismail Cem is on an official state visit to Israel, a move reflecting the deepening ties between the two countries.

During his stay, Cem visited the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial, thereby adding a political dimension to a relationship built so far on military accords.



## Daily News Bulletin

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stressed that the Palestinian effort at the U.N. threatened to undermine the bilateral basis of the Arab-Israeli peace process.

In his remarks, Gold pointed to the preamble of the resolution as a misrepresentation of previous U.N. resolutions, particularly the 1947 recommendation to partition Palestine into Jewish and Arab states.

He said, "It is ironic that at that time every Arab state, including Palestinian leadership opposed Resolution 181," which called for the partition.

During Tuesday's session, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, Bill Richardson, told the assembly delegates that "supporting unilateral gestures, which will raise suspicion and mistrust between negotiating partners, will not take us closer to our goal."

He warned that supporting the "flawed proposal" would overturn "decades of practice and precedent in the General Assembly" by encouraging other non-members and observers to pursue claims for enhanced status.

The Palestinian observer himself, responding to the vote, revealed greater aspirations.

After two false starts at addressing the assembly in Arabic — in which he said "raise" and then "enhance" — Nasser al-Kidwa switched to English to thank supporters for their decision to "upgrade" his mission's status.

He called Tuesday's vote a "small victory" and said he hoped the General Assembly would accept Palestine as a member state as early as the General Assembly's 53rd session, which opens in the fall.

"That shall be the big victory," he said.

Some member states who voted in favor of the resolution, including Canada and Australia, stressed that their support had no bearing on the issue of Palestinian statehood, which they said must be determined in negotiations, as was indicated in the Oslo accords.

Speaking on behalf of the European Union, Austria's ambassador to the United Nations, Ernst Sucharipa, said in a telephone interview that, rather than making a political statement, the resolution represents a "practical accommodation of the necessities of daily work of an observer delegation in the United Nations." □

## Israeli hoopster in limbo because of NBA lockout

By Peter Ephross

NEW YORK (JTA) — An Israeli point guard's dreams of playing in the NBA have been put on hold by a labor dispute.

Oded Katash opted out of his contract with the Israeli team Maccabi Tel Aviv this week in the hopes of signing with the New York Knicks.

If his dream comes true, Katash would become the first Israeli to make it in U.S. professional basketball.

The Knicks reportedly expressed interest in the 6-foot-4-inch star after a workout last week, but are prevented from making any player moves because of the dispute between NBA players and owners.

As a result of the dispute, the league's owners locked out the players on July 1.

A spokeswoman for the Knicks said the lockout prevented her from commenting on Katash or any other player moves.

Katash's departure leaves Maccabi Tel Aviv without one of its star players.

He was one of the few players who scored more than 20 points a game in the European League last season.

Katash has also worked out with the Detroit Pistons and the Los Angeles Clippers, two teams that had worse records than the Knicks last season.

But the Knicks have been plagued by weak play at the point guard position during the last few seasons.

Several Israeli players have had tryouts with teams in the NBA, which has seen an increasing number of foreign players in recent years, but none has played in the regular season. □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Palestinian official invited

The Palestinian representative in Brussels was granted a first-ever invitation to take part in July 21 ceremonies marking Belgium's independence day.

A Belgian Foreign Ministry official described the decision to have the Palestinian official join accredited foreign ambassadors as an indication of Belgium's support for the Middle East peace process.

### AMIA ceremony planned

The Jewish Community Relations Council of New York is sponsoring a memorial service to mark the fourth anniversary of the July 1994 bombing of the Argentine Jewish Mutual Aid Association, or AMIA.

The July 20 gathering, to be held outside the Argentine Consulate in New York, will call on Argentina to apprehend those responsible for the bombing in Buenos Aires that left 86 dead and hundreds wounded.

### Croatian probe sought

The director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Jerusalem office asked the Croatian government to investigate the man who served as commandant of the country's Nazi puppet regime in Dubrovnik in 1941.

Efraim Zuroff presented Croatian officials with documents regarding Ivo Rojnica's role in the deportation of civilians from Dubrovnik and the confiscation of their property.

Zuroff also presented documentation regarding Dinko Sakic, who awaits trial in Croatia on war crimes charges for his activities as commandant of the Jasenovac concentration camp, where an estimated 500,000 Jews, Serbs and Gypsies died during the war.

### Czech editor apologizes

The editor of an extreme-nationalist Czech newspaper apologized "to everyone he ever offended" following the electoral defeat of his Republican Party.

The Federation of Czech Jewish Communities recently brought a lawsuit against Josef Krejsa's newspaper, accusing it of propagating anti-Semitism. Krejsa lost his immunity from such charges when he lost his seat in Parliament last month.

### L.A. shul rescued

Los Angeles' Breed Street Shul was saved from oblivion by the City Council, which voted unanimously to acquire the 75-year-old synagogue and turn it over to the Jewish Historical Society of Southern California within a year.

When the shul was founded in 1923, with movie mogul Louis B. Mayer as its first president, it was the religious center of Boyle Heights, which was known as "the Lower East Side of Los Angeles" and was home at the time to 90,000 Jews.

## French Jews urge government to press Syria to extradite Nazi

By Lee Yanowitch

PARIS (JTA) — French Jewish leaders are outraged that Syrian President Hafez Assad's visit next week coincides with the anniversary of a World War II roundup of French Jews.

On July 16-17, Assad is scheduled to meet with French President Jacques Chirac. Assad is accused of sheltering Alois Brunner, the last leading Nazi still believed to be on the loose — and one who played a central role in the deportation of Jews from France. The scheduled meeting would come 56 years after Vichy police forced 13,000 French Jews into the Vel d'Hiv stadium before deporting them to Auschwitz.

Late President Francois Mitterrand made the anniversary of the arrests a national memorial day. CRIF, France's umbrella group for secular Jewish organizations, said in a statement that Assad's visit was an "unfortunate coincidence" because a notorious Nazi war criminal "has been living peacefully in Syria for a number of years."

CRIF officials called on Chirac to request Brunner's extradition even before Assad set foot in France "so that he can finally be tried in France for crimes against humanity."

But it is unlikely that Chirac will heed the call because he has been fostering closer ties with the Arab world and such a request could upset relations with Syria.

During a 1996 trip to the Middle East, Chirac said he brought up the case of Brunner with Assad after pressure from Jewish groups in France.

Brunner, an Austrian citizen, served during World War II as personal secretary to Adolf Eichmann, Hitler's chief aide. The person whom Eichmann once described as his "best man" orchestrated the deaths of some 128,000 Jews from Austria, Greece, France and Slovakia during the war years.

Brunner was commander of the infamous Drancy transit camp outside Paris, where some 62,000 of the 76,000 Jews deported from France were detained before being sent to Auschwitz. Brunner disappeared at the end of the war, but resurfaced in the 1950s and 1960s in Egypt. He then moved to Syria, where he trained the secret police.

Brunner was condemned to death in absentia by two French courts in 1954.

Nazi-hunters Serge and Beate Klarsfeld have led an often-spectacular campaign for several years to win Brunner's extradition.

As far back as 1992, diplomats in Syria maintained that Brunner was dead.

According to various reports, Brunner has been spotted in recent years in Brazil, Argentina, Chile and Cambodia.

If Brunner is alive, he would be 86. □

## Monty Green, Briton who fought for Israel's independence, is dead

By Douglas Davis

LONDON (JTA) — Monty Green, the last surviving major general from Israel's 1948 War of Independence, has died at the age of 84.

Born in the East End of London in 1914, Green was managing the family tobacco business in India when World War II began. He joined the Indian Army and held the rank of lieutenant colonel when he was selected to attend a course at the British Staff College in Haifa.

In late 1947, the Haganah, the precursor to the Israel Defense Force, asked Green to help create the structural organization that would transform the underground Jewish defense movement into a full-fledged, conventional army. Green moved to Tel Aviv.

When the state was established in May 1948 and Israel was attacked by its Arab neighbors, Green was invited to join the general staff of the Israel Defense Force at the rank of major general. Green was seriously wounded in an Egyptian bombing raid on Ramat Gan in June 1948 and, after the War of Independence, he returned to Britain.

Green was a frequent visitor to Israel during the past 50 years. He had returned to London from a visit just 10 days before he suffered a fatal stroke last weekend. □

## Moscow mayor participates in bombed shul's rededication

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — Moscow Mayor Yuri Luzhkov joined hundreds of the city's Jews this week 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.

The highlight of Monday night's ceremony was delivering a handwritten Torah scroll dedicated to the rebuilt synagogue.

Hundreds of local Jews joined a singing and dancing procession that accompanied the scroll from a nearby club, where the scroll was completed, to the synagogue.

The Marina Roscha bombing occurred May 13, just minutes after some 70 children and their teachers had left the three-story synagogue building after celebrating the Jewish holiday of Lag B'Omer.

Two workers at a nearby construction site of a Jewish community center were lightly injured by the blast.

The bomb, equivalent to more than a pound of TNT, partially destroyed two floors of the building, causing some \$100,000 worth of damage.

Two previous attacks on the synagogue occurred in 1993 and 1996.

No one has been arrested in connection with any of the attacks.

In the latest incident, Jewish graves were damaged and anti-Semitic graffiti appeared at a cemetery run by the Lubavitch synagogue in Malakhovka, a small town near Russia's capital that had a sizable Jewish population for a half-century — between the 1920s and the 1970s.

The cemetery, the oldest functioning Jewish cemetery in the Moscow area, has been vandalized many times — the last time in September, when vandals damaged 18 tombstones.

Lazar called such acts of vandalism at the cemetery "typical."

"These are youngsters who just have fun breaking Jewish graves," he said, adding that such acts can not be compared with the attacks on the synagogue.

The Federal Security Service, the successor to the KGB, has not made any progress in its investigation of the May 13 synagogue bombing, according to Lazar, who visited the agency earlier this week.

But some of the theories advanced appear to betray the investigators' own prejudices.

A longtime Jewish activist was called to the agency's headquarters, where he was told that investigators were not ruling out the possibility of Jewish involvement in the bombing.

Lev Gorodetzky, a veteran local Hebrew instructor and a founder of the Betar Zionist youth movement in the Russian capital, was told by investigators that Betar could have committed the crime because it was an "extremist organization."

Lazar said such accusations were absolutely groundless — a point underscored by the fact that Betar ceased to exist in Russia several years ago. □

## European gathering assesses rights of minorities in Ukraine

By Lev Krichevsky

KIEV, Ukraine (JTA) — A recent international symposium here focused on the fate of minorities in Ukraine.

The three-day meeting, "The State of National Minorities and the Evolution of Democratization in Central and Eastern European Countries," drew dozens of community leaders and intellectuals from across Europe and Israel.

The situation for minorities in Ukraine is not the worst in Europe, said Serge Cwajgenbaum, the secretary-general of the European Jewish Congress, one of the co-sponsors of the conference.

"Nonetheless, many prejudices toward certain minorities do exist in Ukraine, and the situation requires constant monitoring," he said.

The conference here was an effort to call the attention of Ukrainian officials to the problem of anti-Semitism, racism and xenophobia.

Seven years after the breakup of the Soviet Union and the end of state-sponsored anti-Semitism, Ukraine is much safer than it once was for its Jewish community, officials here say.

An estimated 60 percent of Ukraine's Jews died during the Holocaust.

Somewhere between 500,000 and 600,000 Jews now live in this country of 52 million.

"The climate is quite favorable for Jews," said Leonid Finberg, head of the Institute for Jewish Studies in Kiev.

"Jewish issues, Israel are constantly in the news and are receiving a highly favorable coverage in the mainstream media," he said.

The leader of Ukraine's largest Jewish group agreed that in spite of popular anti-Semitism and the existence of several anti-Semitic newspapers, the climate for Jews has improved in recent years.

"It's impossible to compare the anti-Semitism of the state with popular anti-Semitism," said Vadim Rabinovich, one of Ukraine's most influential businessmen.

Rabinovich is also the president of the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress, an umbrella group created last year.

But conference participants pointed out that some of the other minorities living in the former Soviet republic are experiencing more difficulties.

According to a public opinion survey by the Ukrainian Institute of Sociology, more than one-half of Ukrainians do not want to allow Gypsies as Ukrainian citizens.

Government officials and Jewish leaders at the symposium said Ukraine needs to revive its economy as a first step in dealing with cases of abuse of minorities' rights.

"Anti-Semitism and ethnic non-tolerance are direct consequences of social and economic crisis and poverty," said Grigory Surkis, a leading businessman and vice-president of the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress.

In addition to the European congress, the event was co-organized by the Paris-based European Center for Research and Action on Racism and Anti-Semitism, and the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress. □