



# Daily News Bulletin

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81<sup>st</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Weizman calls for new elections

Israeli President Ezer Weizman again called for early elections.

Weizman, who reached a temporary truce with Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu after recently issuing a similar call, said he was "not in a good mood" over the continued deadlock in the negotiations with the Palestinians.

Weizman added that the Israeli public ought to be given the opportunity to have its say in the peace process. [Page 3]

### Iran: Missiles are defensive

Iranian newspapers said a medium-range missile successfully tested last week was needed for defensive purposes. The comments came after the Tehran government confirmed the test, which was first detected by a U.S. spy satellite. The missile has the ability to strike targets in Israel, Saudi Arabia and most of Turkey.

Meanwhile, U.S. Vice President Al Gore said the United States was worried about an Iranian rocket test, but added that Russia was taking steps to prevent exports of missile technology to Iran.

Gore's comments came during a brief visit to Russia, where he met with Prime Minister Sergei Kiriyenko.

### Croatia seeks second extradition

Croatia's Justice Ministry said it would seek the extradition of the wife of a Croatian concentration camp commander on the grounds that she also participated in wartime atrocities.

Esperanza Sakic was arrested last Friday by Argentine officials.

Her husband, Dinko, who was the commander of the Jasenovac camp between 1942 and 1944, was extradited to Croatia in June.

### Crosses appear at Auschwitz

Polish Catholics erected more than 50 crosses near the Auschwitz death camp.

The crosses, which were reportedly put up by a Catholic workers group as part of a campaign, are standing near a 22-foot crucifix set up years ago to commemorate a visit by Pope John Paul II. Jewish groups have been seeking to remove all Christian symbols from areas surrounding the camp.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### Likud, Fatah youth leaders engage in dialogue for peace

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Samer Sinijlawi and Uri Aloni have come a long way.

Less than 10 years ago, at the height of the intifada — the Palestinian uprising against Israel — Sinijlawi was throwing stones and organizing Palestinian demonstrations.

Aloni, serving in the Israel Defense Force, was firing rubber bullets and chasing protesters through the streets.

Now they are engaged in a different sort of struggle, this one in the pursuit of mutual understanding.

Together with a handful of other Israeli and Palestinian youth leaders, Sinijlawi and Aloni have begun a dialogue — an unlikely meeting of one-time protesters and soldiers, prisoners and jailers, striving to break loose from the bonds of the past.

The idea originated with the Israelis and Palestinians themselves, who sought out American help in facilitating the dialogue last year through the U.S. Embassy in Israel.

While some Israeli and Palestinian youth have met before, this effort marks the first sustained dialogue between youth leaders of Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's conservative Likud Party and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat's Fatah.

And unlike other programs that bring Israeli and Arab teen-agers together, the dozen or so participants — ranging from their mid-20s to their mid-30s — stand on the brink of assuming positions of political leadership on both sides of the Israeli-Palestinian divide.

Some are considering running for the Israeli Knesset or Palestinian legislative council.

Calling themselves "the enemies of yesterday and the leaders of tomorrow," eight Likud and Fatah youth leaders traveled this month to the United States together on a trip sponsored by the American Council of Young Political Leaders and the United States Information Agency.

A two-week swing through Washington, D.C., Chicago, Boston and New York included meetings with members of Congress, administration officials, mayors and other local officials, as well as American Arab and Jewish leaders. The participants got a taste of American democracy, while bringing an important message of hope to policymakers.

"Sometimes political change needs a generation change," says Sinijlawi, 26, the international chairman of the youth wing of Fatah.

"That's why young leaders, both from Israel and Palestine, are able to communicate better than the old generation. We look more toward the future, we are not prisoners of the past," he said.

Sinijlawi, who, like several of the Palestinian participants, spent four years in an Israeli prison for organizing demonstrations during the intifada, punctuated that fact by addressing an Orthodox Jewish congregation in Chicago. He wore a yarmulka in what he felt was a sign of respect to the congregation.

The dialogue started last November in Cyprus with eight representatives on each side.

At first the discussions were emotionally charged, touching on some of the most divisive issues separating the two peoples. But the participants emerged from the

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Settlement building increases

Israel doubled its apartment-building in settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip during the first quarter of 1998, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics. Israel built 730 apartment units during the first three months of this year, as opposed to 310 units built during the same period in 1997, the bureau said.

Israeli officials said the construction reflected natural growth in already-existing settlements.

Meanwhile, a new Gallup poll shows that most Israelis support the transfer of 13 percent of the West Bank to Palestinian rule as outlined in a U.S. initiative to advance the stalled peace process.

The poll found that 59 percent of the 560 respondents backed a 13 percent withdrawal, while 32 percent opposed it.

### Satellite images banned

The U.S. government banned American companies from taking certain high-resolution satellite images of Israel, according to State Department officials.

They said Israel feared the high-resolution pictures could fall into the hands of its enemies. Israel is the only country involved in the ban on pictures taken by new "1-meter" resolution cameras, which have the ability to identify from space objects as small as a box of rifles.

### Rabin aide to be arraigned

A top aide to the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is expected to be arraigned on charges of influence peddling while serving as director-general of the Prime Minister's Office from 1993 to 1995.

Meanwhile, a man described as a key witness in the case against Shimon Sheves said he would refuse to testify.

The witness, stockbroker Moshe Stern, said he has been Sheves' friend for 37 years and would not do anything that might harm him.

Mediterranean island having made important connections on a human level — mutual respect, even friendships. They now talk frequently on the phone and some have met one another's families.

Despite the common ground they have discovered, neither the Israelis nor the Palestinians have illusions about the path they have embarked on.

"I know we're going to disagree," says Liat Ravner, 25, the chair of Likud's Young Generation Forum.

"We're going to have the same problems with Jerusalem, for example, but we're going to sit at the table like friends, not like people who didn't know each other before, not like enemies," she said.

What is remarkable about the dialogue is that the two sides, holding such diametrically opposed views, have been able to narrow the gap between them without moving away from their principles.

"We didn't change our ideology," says Aloni, 36, who less than five years ago was organizing demonstrations against the Oslo accords.

"We didn't change our minds and our point of view. We just tried to learn more about each other," he said.

Aloni, the former head of the youth wing of Likud and a former adviser to Netanyahu, has a mantra he frequently invokes: "If I know you, I can't hate you."

"There's not a single person here who's participating who feels they're betraying their beliefs or their party's beliefs by participating," says Jay Footlik, President Clinton's former liaison to the Jewish community, who has been helping to facilitate the dialogue on behalf of the American Council of Young Political Leaders.

Nevertheless, both the Israelis and Palestinians have had to contend with considerable opposition at home.

Although Israeli and Palestinian leaders, including Arafat and Danny Naveh, Netanyahu's Cabinet secretary, have expressed support for what the youth leaders are doing, that feeling is not widely shared in their communities.

Ravner says some of her friends have told her that she's "stupid" and have called her a "crazy Arab" or "Fatah youth."

The new head of Likud youth has gone further, threatening in a letter to cut off ties with the U.S. Embassy in Israel if it did not call off the recent trip to the United States.

The Palestinians, meanwhile, have been denounced as collaborators by some in their community, while Palestinian extremists have issued leaflets threatening the participants.

"We're not doing this dialogue at ease," Sinijlawi says. "We're taking very high political and individual risks."

Amid continuing criticism and trying political conditions, the group is seeking to widen its circle in coming months and hold additional dialogues alternating between Palestinian and Israeli cities. A follow-up trip to Turkey is in the works for the fall.

"Both of us have a responsibility and have homework," says Rawan Abou Yosef, 27, who works for a minister in Arafat's government. "They should go back to their community and tell them about us, and we should go back to our community and tell them about them."

"We're not devils, we're not enemies anymore. We're just human beings, and any human being can disagree with anyone."

Just how far they have come was evident toward the end of a long day of meetings in Washington, when the delegation was waiting in a conference room in the U.S. Capitol for House Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-Texas) to arrive.

One of the Israelis, as a joke, decided to stand in for the congressman and commence the meeting.

Sinijlawi, impersonating one of his Israeli counterparts to the amusement of everyone in the room, put a yarmulka on his head and declared in Hebrew: "We don't want to implement the agreement. Mr. Netanyahu is great."

The banter went on and eventually quieted down, at which point one of the Israelis suggested a song: "Yerushalayim Shel Zahav" — "Jerusalem of Gold."

"Isn't it a song that can work for both of us?" Ravner asked Sinijlawi. As the Israelis sang a few verses, Sinijlawi concentrated on the lyrics and after a moment he turned to Ravner and said, "You know what, it's a good song." □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Officials call for widened boycott

Five top state and city finance officials asked other U.S. cities and states to join a boycott of Swiss banks for failing to settle Holocaust-era claims.

The comptrollers or treasurers of New York City, and the states of New York, California, New Jersey and Pennsylvania sent a letter to their counterparts in 800 cities and states urging them to join in implementing a series of economic sanctions they began earlier this month.

### German firm refuses to pay

One of Germany's largest construction companies said it refused to compensate slave workers from World War II who helped build an airstrip for the company. Officials from Zueblin said the company was not liable because the laborers had worked for the Nazi SS. Volkswagen announced earlier this month it would create a fund to handle the claims of former slave workers.

### Premier briefs Conference

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu told Jewish organizational leaders that Israel is "closer to achieving a deal now than we've ever been before."

Netanyahu briefed the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations about the latest developments in the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations. Netanyahu, calling for greater flexibility from the Palestinian side, reiterated Israel's demand that the Palestinians finish the process of amending their covenant.

### Persecution bill postponed

The Senate Foreign Relations Committee postponed indefinitely consideration of legislation aimed at fighting religious persecution abroad.

The measure was brought down when several Republicans, concerned about alienating diplomatic friends and economic partners, planned to join the Democrats in rejecting the legislation. The bill would compel the government to publish a list of offending countries and would allow the president responses ranging from mild diplomatic protest to strict economic sanctions. The House of Representatives approved a different version of the bill in May by a huge majority.

### Gold documents said to be lost

German archival officials concluded that important documents concerning gold stolen from Jews by the Nazis were lost by the mid-1970s. An official close to the investigation said, however, that archivists have not given up hope of finding the lost documents. A German government report was commissioned last year as part of international efforts to shed more light on the Nazis' wartime gold trade.

## Pressure builds on peace talks as Knesset prepares for recess

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's politicians are gearing up for the last and hottest week of the summer Knesset session.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's aim is to reach the week's end with his coalition intact.

The opposition has a different goal: to win a no-confidence vote slated for Monday, or at least to win a preliminary vote on a bill scheduled to be introduced Wednesday calling for early elections.

If the bill passes on Wednesday, it will be subject to another vote after the Knesset's three-month summer recess.

The start of the summer recess on Thursday has created increased pressure on Netanyahu to reach an agreement with the Palestinians on a further redeployment from the West Bank.

The premier, who has promised to present any such agreement to the Knesset for approval, faces threats from the Third Way Party to secede from the governing coalition if no action is taken before Wednesday.

Further complicating the choices facing the premier, right-wing members of his coalition have threatened to bolt the coalition if he gives away what they view as too much in any deal with the Palestinian Authority.

Meanwhile, Israel's president, Ezer Weizman, has again called for early elections.

Weizman, who reached a temporary truce with Netanyahu after recently issuing a similar call, said he was "not in a good mood" over the continued deadlock in the negotiations with the Palestinians.

He added that the Israeli public ought to be given the opportunity to have its say in the peace process.

Agriculture Minister Rafael Eitan and Science Minister Silvan Shalom criticized the president's remarks.

Eitan said such political interference by a president was unprecedented.

Shalom said it was "hardly coincidental" that Weizman had spoken in favor of early elections just days before a Knesset vote on that very issue.

In the midst of these domestic pressures, Israel put forward new proposals in an attempt to jump-start the stalled negotiations, according to Palestinian sources.

The sources, who would not get into specifics, made the comments Sunday after a secret meeting the night before between Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Mordechai and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat's deputy, Mahmoud Abbas.

Abbas is often referred to by his nom de guerre, Abu Mazen.

The two reportedly agreed that talks between small teams from the two sides would resume Monday after having been suspended for several days.

Meanwhile, Syrian President Hafez Assad traveled to Egypt for a three-hour meeting with President Hosni Mubarak. The two leaders reportedly discussed a European proposal for a new multinational conference aimed at advancing the peace process. □

## Report: U.S. accuses Israel

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The United States reportedly accused Israel of selling radar technology to India in violation of U.S. and international law.

In a harshly worded letter to Israel, the United States accused Israel of violating the Missile Technology Control Regime by selling radar technology associated with the joint Israeli-American Arrow-2 anti-missile system, according to the London-based Foreign Report newsletter.

The United States said generous funding for the Arrow project prevents Israel from exporting any of its components without prior approval from Washington.

But Israel has argued that the technology at issue was developed independent of the Arrow project and is not subject to U.S. restrictions. □

## NEWS ANALYSIS

**Holocaust memorial proposal enters German election debate**

By Deidre Berger

BERLIN (JTA) — The debate about a proposed Holocaust memorial in Berlin has suddenly become a hot topic in Germany's election campaign.

The latest controversy, which extends a public debate that has raged off and on for about a decade, comes as a decision on the final design was expected — and could now cause a further setback to those plans. Politicians from both of Germany's major political parties called for a moratorium on the debate until after the elections, which are scheduled for Sept. 27.

The current round in the public debate was touched off last week, when a man who is slated to become the government's top cultural authority if the Social Democratic Party wins the elections, as polls now predict they will, said he opposed the memorial.

Michael Naumann, who is currently head of a German-owned publishing company in New York, told reporters he doubted that an aesthetically elegant memorial could reflect the true horror of the Holocaust.

Existing memorial sites at former concentration camps are much more likely than a memorial to spark horror and reflection, Naumann told a German newspaper.

Naumann apologized late last week on German television for a remark he made in which he compared the current plan for the monument with the architectural plans of the Nazis.

Advocates of the monument, including German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, maintain that a large and prominent Holocaust monument — the proposed site is the size of several large football fields — in the center of Berlin is an important reminder of the past and a guarantor of German democracy. The Parliament is scheduled to move to the German capital from Bonn next year.

Supporters also say Germany should commemorate the singular atrocity of the Nazis in a central location.

Detractors, including the head of Naumann's party, Gerhard Schroeder, claim that former Nazi concentration camps in Germany such as Buchenwald and Sachsenhausen are the appropriate locations to reflect on the Holocaust. A large central memorial, they fear, will become a routine stop for visiting politicians that will trivialize historical memory.

German Jewish leaders, who in the past have said they welcomed the monument, have chosen to stay out of the current controversy. The Jewish community has expressed little enthusiasm about current plans for the monument, but leaders have said it is better for a mediocre design to be built than for Germany to back down from building it.

Privately, many leading Jewish leaders and intellectuals have said they would prefer a museum or improvements of memorial sites at concentration camps to a monument.

The idea for the memorial was launched nearly a decade ago by a private initiative. Together with the federal government and the city of Berlin, the group opened a competition for the design that attracted hundreds of entries.

The winning design in that competition was an enormous tilting slab of stone inscribed with the names of all Holocaust victims. Many Jewish leaders objected that the lists would contain

many identical or similar names which could dehumanize the memory of the victims. Furthermore, historians pointed out that many victims' names remain unknown.

In a second round of competition, invitations were sent to about two dozen renowned architects and sculptors. Four winning designs were selected, including a field of jagged and unevenly sized stone slabs designed by American architect Peter Eisenmann and sculptor Richard Serra, who later withdrew from the project.

Kohl is reported to favor Eisenmann's design. However, it must also be approved by the private committee that launched the project and by the city of Berlin.

The new round of controversy is endangering the project's shaky consensus. The mayor of Berlin, Richard Diepgen, has spoken out for months against the memorial. Growing opposition among leading German intellectuals such as the novelist Gunter Grass could further derail the monument.

Many commentators in Germany have said that the discussion surrounding the project is more valuable than the monument itself. The debate has forced politicians and opinion-makers to reflect on how Germany can best remember and commemorate the Holocaust.

Kohl, who is given little chance of winning re-election, may give a go-ahead before he leaves office. Still, opposition within the Berlin city government to the design favored by Kohl may prevent the chancellor from doing so. And if Schroeder is voted into office, the project is unlikely to be realized in the foreseeable future. □

(JTA correspondent Daniel Dagan in Bonn contributed to this report.)

**Israeli bishop protests play based on account in Genesis**

By Douglas Davis

LONDON (JTA) — The tensions from the Middle East surfaced at a London-based theatrical production last week when the Anglican bishop of Jerusalem stormed out of a play by a Christian drama group based on the theme of reconciliation.

Riah Abu el-Assal walked out of the play "Wrestling With Angels" and threatened to return home to protest the supposed political references in the production, which had been specially written by the Riding Lights Theater Company.

Assal was among an audience of 800 Anglican bishops from around the world who have gathered in London for the church's once-in-a-decade Lambeth Conference.

The play was based on the account in Genesis of Jacob's struggle with an angel, which resulted in God renaming Jacob Israel. What riled Assal was the depiction of a scene from Ezekiel where two sticks, representing the biblical kingdoms of Israel and Judah, were joined together with references to Judea and Samaria.

"The least I can say about this is that I was greatly disturbed," Assal said later. "If it was done intentionally, it was a catastrophe. Judah in political terms stands for the West Bank, the occupied West Bank."

Assal withdrew his threat to return home when the Archbishop of Canterbury, George Carey, offered him an apology and prayed with him to calm him down. "I can understand him feeling that the drama did not express the pain of Palestinian Christians. He wanted to share that with me. I was able to listen to him and reassure him that there was nothing intentional in that," he said. □