



Daily News Bulletin

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81st Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Albright plans meeting

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright will meet with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat next week in New York. After a series of pessimistic statements from U.S. officials, Albright said the United States is "hopeful we will be able to move toward an agreement." Meanwhile, U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross extended his visit to Israel until Saturday to continue his negotiations with the two sides.

ADL argues against court order

The Anti-Defamation League argued before a California appellate court that it should not have to comply with a judge's order to turn over files it gathered on pro-Palestinian activists in the early 1990s.

The ADL is appealing a ruling from last September ordering it to share with 17 people records illegally gathered on the activists' activities.

Settler questioned in shooting

Israeli police are questioning a Jewish settler who turned himself in following the shootings of a group of Palestinian high school students in the West Bank town of Beituniya. One of the students was killed and another wounded.

Task force presses IRS

The U.S. Congressional Task Force Against Anti-Semitism urged the Internal Revenue Service to withdraw the tax-exempt status from a group that supports Holocaust revisionism. The group, the Legion for the Survival of Freedom, is the parent organization of the Institute for Historical Review, which has been identified as "the world's single most important outlet for Holocaust-denial propaganda."

Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.), a Holocaust survivor who chairs the task force, called it "an absolute outrage that taxpayers, and the tens of thousands of American Holocaust survivors in particular, should subsidize the production and distribution of materials that so outrageously mock the truth."

Because of Rosh Hashanah, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Tuesday, Sept. 22 and Wednesday Sept. 23.

FOCUS ON ISSUES

Jerusalem mall threatens to lure vendors from famed open-air market

By Avi Machlis

JERUSALEM (JTA) — In front of Haim Ohana's fish stand in the Mahane Yehuda open-air market here, a pre-Rosh Hashanah crowd of shoppers gathers as usual — even though a spanking new indoor mall has just opened down the block.

Ohana, 40, whose stand has been in Mahane Yehuda for 25 years, is not bothered by the new competition.

"We aren't threatened by it at all," he says, wearing a yellow shirt and fish-stained plastic apron as he fills another bag with some holiday carp.

"That's not Mahane Yehuda. Mahane Yehuda is natural, it comes from the soul. Can you believe they put fans in that place!"

The new \$40 million indoor mall already has 74 shops and can hold another 180 on its upper levels. It offers the convenience of shopping carts and parking, both of which are lacking in the outdoor market.

It also boasts tight security — an important asset considering that Mahane Yehuda has been a target for Palestinian terrorists.

The attempt to merge a traditional outdoor market with a contemporary indoor mall is the latest sign of a transformation of shopping habits as Israel evolves from an emerging to a developed economy.

During the past decade, supermarkets have popped up in Israeli neighborhoods, while makolot, or small corner stores, are quickly becoming extinct. And this can be expected to continue, with supermarket chains mulling the launch of massive expansion plans, which include the opening of special supermarkets targeting the fervently Orthodox and Arab populations. So far, there is only a sparse flow of shoppers in the new mall, and vendors admit it could take several months before they find out whether the idea has commercial potential.

Managers of the new mall insist that they do not intend to replace Mahane Yehuda's shuk, or market.

"We are not against the shuk," says Omer Karchi, administrative director of the mall. "We just want to attract more shoppers to the area."

But some stall owners in the new complex see a battle developing between the outdoor and indoor markets, and they think that the mall will eventually win.

"In time, people will move over to us," says Moshe Tsur, 58, who shut down his Mahane Yehuda stall to sell grapes, pineapples and mangos in the new center.

Tsur points to shoppers pushing their carts. "How much longer can people schlep heavy bags in their hands?" he asks.

Tsur promises that the new indoor market will preserve the atmosphere of the outdoor shuk — complete with vendors shouting each other down in public pricing duels, the free-market trademark of Mahane Yehuda. But a glance around the indoor market reveals some differences that Mahane Yehuda fans are likely to lament if mall culture eventually renders market culture extinct.

All of the 74 shops on the ground floor are framed with the same standard blue trim paint, compared to the Mahane Yehuda stalls of different shapes, colors and character. Aisles in the mall are perfectly straight, while Mahane Yehuda's alleys twist and turn in every direction.

Some indoor shops are clearly more upscale than what is to be found at the outdoor market, which caters to low-income shoppers. But much of the simplicity that

MIDEAST FOCUS

Officials warn of bombings

Hamas militants are planning large-scale bombing attacks against Israeli targets, military officials in Israel said. There are also reports that Hamas is planning to kidnap Israeli soldiers to retaliate for the Sept. 10 killings of two members of the group's military wing by Israeli troops. Hamas founder Sheikh Ahmed Yassin warned that those responsible for ordering the killings should fear for their lives.

Annual population report issued

Israel's population stands at an estimated 5,987,000 people, of which 4,753,000, or 79.4 percent, are Jews, the Central Bureau of Statistics said.

Israel's Muslim population totals 886,000, or 14.8 percent of the population; Christians, 128,000, or 2.1 percent; Druse 123,000, or 1.6 percent; and 123,000, or 2.1 percent, are without religious classification. The statistics are released each year on the eve of the Jewish New Year.

Arab League calls for pressure

The Arab League called for international pressure to force Israel to abide by its peace agreements with the Palestinians.

The league's ministers asked the United States, Britain, France, Russia and China to pressure the Jewish state to resume negotiations with the Palestinian Authority, sources at the two-day meeting in Cairo were quoted as saying. The 22-nation group also condemned Israel for changing the status of Jerusalem and the Golan Heights.

Israelis expected to travel

Some 200,000 Israelis, or 3.3 percent of the country's population, will travel abroad during the High Holidays, according to the country's association of travel agents. The most popular European vacation spots are Paris and London. New York and Orlando are the top American destinations.

characterizes Mahane Yehuda is nowhere to be found in the mall.

Ilan Siman-Tov, whose longtime family butcher shop from Mahane Yehuda has opened a second branch in the mall, is not trying to attract the same clientele indoors.

"Mahane Yehuda shoppers aren't going to come here," he says, his new shop sparkling and displaying shiny shelves of fine wines that would be difficult to find in Mahane Yehuda.

"They like the noise, the dirt and the balagan," or confusion, he adds. "Here the people are much more refined."

So far, confident Mahane Yehuda stall owners are actually welcoming the mall — which has provided desperately needed parking to the area.

"It's a great thing for us," says Yehuda Ezra, 52. "People are parking down there and walking up here to shop."

Ezra's family-run Adin Coffee stall has been open at Mahane Yehuda for 40 years. He invites shoppers to sniff and smell the rich odor of an array of coffees and oriental spices that permeates the air.

"Can you get that inside?" he asks proudly.

And not only does the new mall not offer the smells and tastes of Mahane Yehuda, says Ezra, but it cannot compete with the prices, since storeowners in the mall have higher overhead to pay for space and security.

He is convinced that the character of Mahane Yehuda will win out where the small corner stores did not.

Even though Ezra knows that more and more Israelis are buying in supermarkets, his prognosis for the new mall is grim.

"In two or three years, that mall is going to become one big wedding hall." □

WJC study: Jews in Israel will surpass U.S. community

By Mica Schneider

WASHINGTON (JTA) — More Jews could be living in Israel than in America in 10 years, according to a new World Jewish Congress study.

The annual pre-Rosh Hashanah survey of the world's 13.5 million Jews found that a growing rate of immigration to Israel and high assimilation rates among Diaspora Jews will cause Israel's population of about 4.9 million Jews to exceed America's, which has been the world's highest since World War II.

At the same time, according to the report, the alarmingly high assimilation rates among Diaspora Jews could cause its population to fall by half in a generation.

The study, conducted during the past three months, also found that reported cases of anti-Semitism worldwide are down.

Avi Becker, director of the Jerusalem-based Institute of the World Jewish Congress, said what he called Jewish success was "good for Jews, but bad for Judaism" because it can lead to assimilation.

Jews are residing in more than 100 countries, but outside of Israel, there has been no natural growth in most of these Jewish communities, the report said. Becker attributed the shrinking population to a rising divorce rate, an increased number of Jews who prefer to remain single and low birth rates.

Jewish communities in Canada and Brazil are growing as immigration there rises. Germany also has a large Jewish immigrant community, mostly from the former Soviet Union. More than half of the 71,000 Jews in Germany are immigrants.

Rapid growth worldwide has taken place only in the fervently Orthodox community, which has increased more than 20 percent during the past decade. Becker attributes this increase both to a high birth rate and the "return to religion" phenomenon in the West.

Some 1 million of the world's Jews are Orthodox, the report found.

America is home to more than 5.6 million Jews. French Jews make up the world's third-largest Jewish population with 600,000, according to the study.

More than 250 people and organizations contributed statistics to the study. Most of the data came from Jewish community records and academic studies. □



Daily News Bulletin

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JEWISH WORLD

Report: Soldiers stole Nazi gold

U.S. soldiers stole Nazi gold that had been looted from Holocaust victims, a German newspaper reported. The *Sueddeutsche Zeitung* cited a 1950 report by Bavarian police that advancing American troops located the gold near the end of the war and that it subsequently disappeared.

The troops arrested and questioned Nazi officers until they found the gold, which had been brought to a hiding place near Munich from the central bank in Berlin, the report said.

ADL files brief on terrorism

The Anti-Defamation League filed a friend-of-the-court brief urging a federal appeals court to uphold the constitutionality of 1996 anti-terrorism legislation.

The case reached the appeals stage after a federal judge in Los Angeles earlier this year rejected a lawsuit filed by humanitarian activists who argued that the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act is unconstitutional because it criminalizes fund raising for the "lawful and nonviolent activities" of foreign terrorist organizations. The ADL argued in its brief that "the knowing contribution of material support to foreign terrorist organizations is inextricably intertwined with violence."

HIAS urges Congress

The Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society urged members of Congress to budget an additional \$171 million in order to decrease the two-year backlog in processing citizenship applications. The call came at a rally of hundreds of Jewish refugees on the steps of Capitol Hill.

U.S. man loses citizenship

A U.S. judge revoked the citizenship of a former concentration camp guard who has been living in Connecticut.

Walter Berezowskyj admitted as part of an agreement with American officials that he lied on his application to immigrate to the United States about having been a guard at several labor camps where Jews were killed during the war. In return, the United States agreed that it would not attempt to deport the retired machine operator unless his medical condition improves.

Jewish Democrats raise funds

Jewish Democratic leaders held a Capitol Hill fund-raiser honoring the 21 Jewish Democratic members of the House of Representatives.

The National Jewish Democratic Council hosted some 200 activists who donated an estimated \$40,000 to their group.

New Conservative prayer book includes Judaism's foremothers

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) — Eight years after the Conservative movement approved the inclusion of Judaism's foremothers alongside the recitation of their husbands' names in worship, the change has now been incorporated into a prayer book.

But while the matriarchs — Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah — are included along with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the term "emoteinu," or our mothers, which includes them all, is not incorporated alongside "avoteinu," or our fathers.

The language in the new edition of Siddur Sim Shalom is "gender sensitive," but not "gender neutral," said Rabbi Leonard Cahan, chief editor of the prayer book, jointly published this week by the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism and the movement's Rabbinical Assembly.

The first revision of the siddur in 13 years also changes the language used for God. Instead of "Lord," "Father" and "King," the prayer book uses language its editors considered more neutral, such as "Sovereign" and "Guardian."

Some say that the changes made in the new edition are so minor that they are virtually irrelevant.

In fact, some Conservative congregations already include both the names of the biblical mothers and the word "emoteinu" in practice.

"That it took them so long to deal with this incredibly minor change of adding the matriarchs, which their own rules committee allowed, is preposterous," said liturgist Marcia Falk, who grew up in the Conservative movement but now identifies herself as non-denominational.

"Now to quibble over adding 'emoteinu' is an incredible denial of what people's experiences and needs are out there."

"The changes were so minuscule, why even bother? It belies a lack of serious confrontation with the tradition, with the religion. It's not a real wrestling and real grappling" with the meaning of prayer, said Falk, whose 1996 book, "The Book of Blessings: New Jewish Prayers for Daily Life, the Sabbath and the New Moon Festival," was a rewriting of the traditional liturgy.

Cahan said the editorial committee's decision was based on its understanding that "avoteinu" means "our ancestors," both male and female. "Those who advocate 'emoteinu' just don't understand Hebrew grammar," said Cahan, who is the spiritual leader of Congregation Har Shalom, in Potomac, Md.

Still others think that the changes were too radical.

Rabbi Jules Harlow, who edited the original Siddur Sim Shalom, which was published in 1985, wrote in the Winter 1997 edition of the journal *Conservative Judaism* that changing the wording of worship breaks the connection between the language of the Bible and the language of the prayer book, "a close connection which is a basic feature of Jewish liturgy."

Harlow was involved in the new edition for the first two years of the committee's work, but he resigned when he retired about five years ago and since then has distanced himself from the new edition.

Cahan acknowledged that after Harlow "left the committee, we made decisions more radical than some of the things he would have liked."

During the seven years that the editorial committee worked to re-translate the prayer book, its members referred to previously published Conservative prayer books as well as ones issued by the Reform, Reconstructionist and Orthodox movements.

"We wanted to try and do the kinds of things that will appeal to a very broad spectrum of the movement," he said. "Conservative Judaism has always been very much a coalition of traditionalists and much more radical liberals, but that spectrum has in recent years become somewhat broader."

What impact the new siddur will have on individual congregations is not clear.

It generally takes many years for any new liturgy to gain widespread use and buying several hundred new prayer books is an expensive proposition for any congregation.

Indeed, despite its now-archaic language, at least 300 of the roughly 820 affiliated Conservative synagogues are using a prayer book that was published in 1946. □

Swiss bank account panel under pressure to finish work

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — One month after Switzerland's two largest banks agreed to pay \$1.25 billion to settle Holocaust-era claims, a panel conducting a sweeping audit of Swiss banks is coming under pressure to wrap up its work.

So far, auditors have discovered just over \$50 million in dormant accounts belonging to Holocaust victims, but some sources say that amount could double by the time the process is complete.

Determining the value of those accounts is considered a critical part of the settlement reached last month between the banks and Holocaust survivors, which brings resolution to all Holocaust-era claims against Switzerland, with the exception of insurance claims.

As part of the settlement, the banks agreed to pay out all dormant accounts, deducting the amount from the \$1.25 billion sum.

But some Swiss bank officials complain that the process is not moving quickly enough and that as it drags on, they continue to foot the bill.

Paul Volcker, the former U.S. Federal Reserve chairman who is heading the panel adjudicating claims, has defended the exhaustive search, now in its second year, saying that as the panel continues its work, it undoubtedly will come up with more accounts.

"The process is complicated, and efforts are being made to speed it up," Volcker, who chairs the board of trustees of the Claims Resolution Foundation, said at an open meeting of the panel in New York last week.

Volcker also said that with the process well under way, he expects to resign from the panel soon.

Last year, the Volcker commission published the names of the holders of 5,570 bank accounts worth \$51.6 million. Since then, 9,500 claims have been filed against 2,377 of those accounts. About 3,300 of those have been accepted as valid, and the rest have undergone an initial assessment and review by independent arbitrators.

The work of matching up claimants to accounts, undertaken by more than 200 auditors from international accounting firms, has been complicated by the fact that claims have been received from 27 countries in 20 languages. And in many cases, there have been multiple claims against a single account.

Most of the claims, about 20 percent, have come from people in the United States, followed by residents of Germany, France, Israel and Argentina.

Although the banks so far have only paid out about 25 accounts, Volcker said the first large group of payments is expected in the next month or so.

Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress, said he was satisfied with the pace of the process.

"I think, given the circumstances, it was necessary that this process take time," he said.

"It's taken 50 years too long, but having begun the claims resolution tribunal some 14 months ago, I think [the delay] was unfortunate but necessary." □

Baltic Knesset convenes in Estonia on anti-Semitism

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — Jewish leaders of three Baltic states are expressing concern about anti-Semitism in Latvia and Lithuania.

The comments came during a recent three-day meeting of the Assembly of Jewish Communities of the Baltic States — a group known as the Baltic Knesset.

The annual session of the group, held in the Estonian capital of Tallinn, also focused on the restitution of Jewish property.

Leaders of the Jewish communities of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania said they were not satisfied with the way the authorities in the three countries have been dealing with anti-Semitism since these nations gained their independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

The discussion took place at about the same time that the mayor of the Lithuanian capital of Vilnius said in an interview that he would refrain from returning buildings in the city's historic center to the heirs of their previous Jewish owners.

Before World War II, about 40 percent of the city's population was Jewish. Vilnius, then known as Vilna, was dubbed the Jerusalem of Lithuania.

Meanwhile, the chairman of Lithuania's Parliament, Vytautas Landsbergis, said his country would work to preserve Jewish sites because Jews "gave Lithuania, Europe and the whole world a number of famous personalities," Lithuania's official news agency reported.

Landsbergis, the first president of Lithuania after the country became independent, told a visiting British official that local authorities have been asked to protect Jewish graveyards and sites associated with the Holocaust. □

Lewinsky family rabbi urges Clinton to repent

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — The senior rabbi of the congregation of Monica Lewinsky's family has urged President Clinton to do sincere teshuvah, or repentance.

Rabbi David Wolpe of Sinai Temple said that Clinton's lack of moral courage was the central issue in the Monica Lewinsky affair. "Teshuvah means taking responsibility for one's mistakes," he said.

Wolpe made his remarks Saturday, while commenting on the week's Torah portion and the upcoming High Holidays.

Monica's father and stepmother are currently members of the prominent Conservative congregation, and Monica attended the temple's religious school as a youngster.

No member of the Lewinsky family was present at the service and the youthful rabbi, widely known as an author and lecturer, made no mention of Monica Lewinsky personally.

Reviewing his Saturday comments in a phone interview, Wolpe said true repentance by the president would be a valuable lesson for the country and be good for his and the nation's souls. At the same time, Wolpe made it clear that he "was not enchanted with Clinton's pursuers." □