



# Daily News Bulletin

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81<sup>st</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Clinton won't give up

President Clinton canceled a critical Democratic fund-raising trip to California to bring Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat together for more talks at the Middle East peace summit outside Washington.

Senior U.S. officials said Clinton, who has invested considerable prestige and more than 40 hours at the summit, will not accept failure. Jordan's King Hussein joined the talks to help press the sides toward agreement.

Meanwhile, Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon lived up to his promise not to shake Yasser Arafat's hand at the summit. Sharon, who has refused to change his belief that Arafat is a terrorist with blood on his hands, ignored Arafat when the Palestinian leader stood and saluted him at their first encounter at the talks.

An adviser to Arafat, Dr. Ahmed Tibi, described Sharon's snub as "superfluous and petty."

### Terrorist admits to rabbi's murder

The Palestinian who carried out Monday's grenade attack in Beersheba admitted that he was also responsible for the August stabbing murder of Rabbi Shlomo Ra'anani in the Tel Rumeida section of Hebron.

A 29-year-old resident of Hebron and father of five, Salem Rajab Sarsour also admitted to carrying out a grenade attack on Israeli troops patrolling the West Bank town on Yom Kippur.

Israeli Public Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani said Sarsour was a member of Hamas, adding that he had not carried out the Beersheba attack by himself. [Page 3]

### Schroeder pledges joint fund

Germany's new center-left government pledged to set up a foundation to compensate Nazi slave laborers. Chancellor-elect Gerhard Schroeder said there are no concrete plans yet for the fund, but "we've already started thinking about" working with German firms to deal with compensation.

Outgoing German Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who transfers power to Schroeder next week, had ruled out government participation in such funds, saying Germany had already paid billions of dollars in compensation. [Page 4]

## ELECTIONS '98

### Small Jewish vote may decide outcome in close Senate races

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Sen. Alfonse D'Amato wanted to lend his voice to a media event calling on the Palestinian Authority to extradite to the United States suspects in terror attacks that killed American citizens.

But there was one condition: Organizers must scrap plans to invite the New York Republican incumbent's opponent.

Rep. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) was never invited to the Sept. 8 event, and D'Amato scored another victory in his aggressive campaign to one-up his Jewish challenger in the Jewish community.

A senator muscling his opponent out of the way is a common sight in political campaigns.

What's unusual are the efforts that both D'Amato and Schumer have exerted to score points with Jewish voters, who represent an estimated 9 percent of New York's voting population.

The three-term incumbent has sought to wrap himself in the support of survivors of the Holocaust.

This unprecedented strategy has elevated the tensions between D'Amato and Schumer in what has become one of the closest and most expensive Senate races in the country.

In states where there are tight races — New York and California, in particular — how a candidate's message fares in the Jewish community could mean the difference between delivering a concession speech on election night or basking in cheers at a victory celebration.

At stake on Nov. 3 are 34 Senate seats, including 4 of the 10 Jewish members of Congress' upper house.

Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) and Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) are heavy favorites to win reelection.

Polls show Sen. Russell Feingold (D-Wisc.) and Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.) running in dead heats with their challengers.

In Georgia, Michael Coles, a Jewish Democratic businessman, is battling to unseat Republican Sen. Paul Coverdell.

While the Jewish vote is not likely to play a determinative role in Wisconsin or Georgia, school vouchers and prayer in schools are among the issues dividing the candidates.

How Jewish candidates fare across the country is likely to determine whether the Republicans, who currently hold a 55-45 majority in the Senate, can achieve their goal of a filibuster-proof majority of 60 seats.

For more than two years, D'Amato and Schumer have campaigned for Jewish support in what has become a heavyweight battle to represent New York state in the Senate.

Statewide contests in New York historically hinge on how New York City's population votes compared with upstate residents.

D'Amato has always received high marks from the pro-Israel community, but Democratic candidates usually score well in the city.

And Schumer has a sterling reputation as a supporter of Israel and has also authored many pro-Israel measures during his tenure in the House. In 1992, some 60

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Knesset finds loophole

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu does not have to leave the Middle East summit near Washington in order to open the Knesset session in Jerusalem.

Lawmakers reached a compromise to postpone the premier's scheduled state-of-the-state speech, which is required under Knesset rules at the start of each legislative year.

Labor and Likud Party legislators invoked a constitutional clause to request "faction consultations," delaying the prime minister's scheduled address by one week.

### Settler lobby returns home

Leaders of Israel's settler movement said the representatives they had sent to lobby Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu during the Middle East peace summit near Washington are returning to the Jewish state.

Settler leader Aharon Domb said the timetable of the summit did not allow for any meaningful meeting with the prime minister and the representatives could more effectively raise objections to any further redeployments back home.

### Legislators hurl insults

Right-wing and Arab legislators in Israel hurled insults at each other as the Knesset began its fall session with a fresh, heated round of parliamentary fireworks.

Knesset member Azmi Beshara of the leftist Hadash Party was ejected from a meeting of the Interior Committee after he called legislator Binyamin Alon of the right-wing Moledet Party a demagogue and a Nazi.

Alon drew Beshara's ire for defending a police officer who was testifying before the committee on recent clashes between security forces and residents of the Israeli Arab town of Umm el-Fahm.



## Daily News Bulletin

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percent of Jewish voters chose D'Amato's Democratic rival. While his share of the Jewish vote that year is considered good for a Republican in New York, D'Amato labored to win more Jewish supporters.

With the help of Jewish leader Edgar Bronfman, D'Amato emerged as the champion of Holocaust survivors in their legal wrangling with Switzerland and other European countries whose central banks and leading companies profited from the Holocaust.

D'Amato, the chairman of the Senate Banking Committee, has tried to make the most of his high-profile campaign for Holocaust survivors.

In fact, he has aired what is believed to be the first campaign commercial featuring Holocaust footage.

D'Amato's quest came to a head Sunday when, flanked by two Holocaust survivors and with a rabbi leading a campaign rally, the incumbent criticized Schumer for missing House votes related to the hunt for Holocaust victims' assets in the United States and one that made the Capitol rotunda available for an annual Holocaust commemoration.

Bringing a major theme of his campaign to Jewish issues — that Schumer has missed too many votes — D'Amato said at the rally, "I'm proud to have been there fighting every day, making a difference for justice for those who have been stonewalled."

The rally was vintage D'Amato.

Schumer "does not care," D'Amato said.

"He's not there on the battlefields because he was too busy" pursuing his political career, D'Amato charged, standing in front of the Holocaust memorial near the United Nations on Manhattan's East Side.

Schumer responded quickly and strongly.

"I think it's a shame that Al D'Amato would stoop to using the Holocaust for political purposes," Schumer said. "My record on the Holocaust, on Jewish issues, is second to none."

On the other coast, Holocaust activism has not become a divisive campaign issue because both candidates have been speaking out on the issue for much of the past year, local political activists say.

As one of only a handful of senators to attend all of the Senate Banking Committee's hearings on Holocaust-era claims, Boxer played a key role in the issue. Her opponent, State Treasurer Matt Fong, also has been outspoken on Holocaust-related issues, having threatened earlier this year to cut off California's dealings with Swiss banks.

Unlike their counterparts in New York, California's Jewish voters, who represent some 3 percent of the electorate, are not being asked to choose their senator on the basis of Holocaust issues.

Voters and candidates in the nation's most populous state have focused on abortion, gun control and tax cuts.

Fong has also tried to make Boxer's support for President Clinton in the wake of the sex scandal a major campaign issue in the race.

Elsewhere, in the two races in which issues of paramount importance to Jewish activists are playing out — Wisconsin and Georgia — there are probably not enough Jewish voters to make a difference.

In Wisconsin, Feingold is in a tight race against Republican Rep. Mark Neumann. Feingold, who has gained national recognition by sponsoring the main campaign finance reform bill, has scored points by playing up Neumann's support for a school prayer constitutional amendment and for vouchers.

But the state's 28,500-strong Jewish community, representing about one-half of 1 percent of Wisconsin's population, would only come into play if the race were decided by the slimmest of margins.

In Georgia, Sen. Coverdell, a Republican and author of some of the most visible private and parochial school funding programs in the last Congress, is expected to easily defeat his Democratic opponent, Michael Coles.

Coles is the Jewish cookie king who founded the Great American Cookie Company. □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Polish government disappointed

Poland said it was disappointed that a Polish court had refused to let it take over an area near the site of the Auschwitz death camp where hundreds of crosses have recently been erected. The government is considering whether to appeal the decision on the crosses, which have been set up by fundamentalist Catholic activists who want to commemorate a massacre of Poles during World War II.

### House backs Shoah resolution

The U.S. House of Representatives unanimously approved a resolution expressing support for administration efforts to identify Holocaust-era assets and urging the restitution of individual and communal property.

The resolution was introduced by Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.), a Holocaust survivor, who said the United States "has set the example for other countries in dealing with the issue of Holocaust restitution."

### Poll: Slim majority for vouchers

A new public opinion poll shows a bare majority of Americans oppose school vouchers. A survey conducted by the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies found that 50 percent of the population opposes a voucher system where parents would get money from government to send their children to the public, private or parochial school of their choice, while 42 percent support the idea.

The survey had a margin of error of 3.5 percentage points.

### Farrakhan criticizes Clinton team

Louis Farrakhan questioned whether the Clinton administration's Middle East policy is clouded by Jews who advise the president. Speaking at a news conference at the National Press Club in Washington, the Nation of Islam leader said "every Jewish person that is around the president is a dual citizen of Israel and the United States of America."

He mentioned by name National Security Adviser Sandy Berger, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin and outgoing presidential adviser Rahm Emanuel, none of whom are citizens of Israel.

### Rabbi to remain in Uzbekistan

A Lubavitch rabbi in Uzbekistan who had been threatened with expulsion will be allowed to stay in the former Soviet republic until the end of the year.

Intervention by a Lubavitch rabbi in the United States, Levi Shemtov, with the Uzbek ambassador to the United States led to the arrangement for Abba David Gurevitch. Uzbek officials had previously said they would expel Gurevitch at the end of this week.

## Beersheba terrorist admits to other attacks on Israelis

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The Palestinian who carried out Monday's grenade attack in Beersheba has admitted that he murdered a Hebron rabbi and was involved in other terrorist activities.

Salem Rajab Sarsour, a 29-year-old resident of Hebron and father of five, was apprehended by bystanders after throwing two hand grenades during the morning rush hour at Beersheba's central bus station. Sixty-six people were wounded in the attack.

Sarsour disclosed during his interrogation by Israeli police that he was also responsible for the August stabbing murder of Rabbi Shlomo Ra'anani in the Tel Rumeida section of Hebron and for a grenade attack on Israeli troops patrolling the divided West Bank town on Yom Kippur.

Public Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani said Sarsour was a member of Hamas, adding that he had not carried out the Beersheba attack by himself.

Palestinian security officials maintained Monday that Sarsour had acted alone.

The military wing of Hamas, Izz a-Din al-Kassam, issued a statement Tuesday in which it claimed responsibility for the Beersheba attack.

Israeli security forces, who remain on a heightened alert for any additional Hamas assaults, are investigating whether Sarsour was behind any other terrorist incidents.

Settler leader Aharon Domb claimed that Israeli security forces had asked their Palestinian counterparts several months ago to detain Sarsour for suspected involvement in Hamas activities. Domb maintained that the Palestinian Authority failed even to question Sarsour.

Within hours of Monday's attack, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu issued a statement from the site of the summit in eastern Maryland that he would continue with the talks despite the attack.

But Israeli negotiators hammered away at the security issue, saying the grenade attack underscored what they had been maintaining for months — that there could be no agreement without a Palestinian commitment to crack down on terror.

Meanwhile, Palestinian security officials in the self-rule areas said their investigation indicated that Sarsour was an agent for Israeli security and that he had carried out this week's grenade attack to dispel any doubts his Hamas comrades may have had about his loyalties. □

## Russia may charge lawmaker

MOSCOW (JTA) — A Communist lawmaker who recently uttered several anti-Semitic comments appears to be in hot water.

Russian state prosecutors said they are considering bringing criminal charges against Gen. Albert Makashov, a member of the Russian Parliament's lower house, according to the newspaper Izvestia. And leaders of the Russian Communist Party promised to expel Makashov, a hard-line member of the party.

Makashov made his first controversial comment in early October, when he said in a television interview that "it is time to expel all Yids out of Russia."

At recent mass rallies in Moscow and the Central Russian town of Samara, Makashov said Jews are to blame for the current economic crisis in Russia and that if he had to die he would take along a "dozen Yids."

Several Jewish and liberal lawmakers protested Makashov's anti-Semitic remarks, and Russian Justice Minister Pavel Krashenninnikov accused Makashov and three other participants in the Communist-sponsored rallies of "inciting ethnic hatred and calling for a forceful change of the constitutional regime."

On Tuesday, his ministry officially demanded that the Prosecutor's Office launch a criminal investigation.

Some observers called this a landmark move because authorities generally do not react to such verbal attacks. □

## New German chancellor pledges to help compensate slave laborers

By Deidre Berger

FRANKFURT (JTA) — In a reversal of the previous government's policy, Germany's new center-left coalition has pledged to help establish a fund to compensate Nazi-era slave laborers.

Chancellor-elect Gerhard Schroeder said Tuesday that there are no concrete plans yet for the fund, but "we've already started thinking about" working with German firms to deal with compensation.

Outgoing Chancellor Helmut Kohl, who transfers power to Schroeder next week, had ruled out government participation in such a fund, saying Germany had already paid billions of dollars in compensation.

Schroeder's announcement came as increasing numbers of German companies are being named in class-action lawsuits filed in the United States by former slave laborers and face the possibility of similar suits in Germany.

Schroeder acknowledged that firms which employed forced labor under the Third Reich have a "moral duty to fulfill." But he added that the companies have a "need for protection against legal action that we have to guarantee."

Volkswagen and the electronics firm Siemens recently issued separate announcements of plans to establish their own funds to compensate former slave workers.

German firms have until very recently repeated what has been their standard argument: The German government is responsible for such payments because it is the legal successor to the Nazi regime.

But growing international interest — sparked by the controversies in Switzerland about Nazi gold and the dormant bank accounts of Holocaust victims — has focused attention on other unresolved compensation issues.

After the war, a handful of German firms made one-time compensation payments to former Jewish slave laborers. But the sums involved were small and millions of Eastern Europeans were never compensated.

The announcement by Schroeder's incoming government coincided with a three-day conference held in Frankfurt at which nearly 100 former workers at forced-labor plants owned by pre-World War II industrial giant I.G. Farben gathered to tell their stories of survival.

For many, it was their first reunion in more than half a century.

The mostly Jewish survivors now live in countries scattered around the world, including the United States, France, Israel and Germany.

The conference was held at the former headquarters of I.G. Farben, the chemical company that produced the deadly gas used at the Nazi extermination camps to kill millions of victims.

An estimated 30,000 slave laborers at the firm's plant located near the Auschwitz death camp died due to inhumane working and living conditions.

Survivors attending the conference planned to visit neighborhood schools to tell their experiences to young Germans.

At Tuesday's opening ceremonies, survivor Sig Halbreich, who now lives in Los Angeles, said the survivors were entrusted with the responsibility of keeping alive the memory of Jewish and

non-Jewish victims of the Nazi era.

Halbreich, who helped organize the conference, said the meeting was being held at a time "when Holocaust denial has become a virtual industry, and when far too many young people — including, shockingly, many young Jews — are desperately ignorant about the Shoah and its relevance to their lives today." □

## Legal troubles against Le Pen threaten his hold on far-right party

By Lee Yanowitch

PARIS (JTA) — Legal troubles and a party power struggle are threatening to break the hold that Jean-Marie Le Pen has on the extreme-right National Front that he founded more than quarter of a century ago.

Already having difficulties with the French justice system, the pugnacious leader of the xenophobic party, which regularly wins 15 percent of the national vote, faces charges in Germany for trivializing the Holocaust.

German prosecutors are seeking to put Le Pen, known for his anti-Semitic remarks, on trial for reiterating in Munich last December his often-repeated comment that the murder of 6 million Jews was a "mere detail" of World War II history, an offense punishable in Germany by up to five years in prison and a heavy fine.

The statement has already earned him stiff fines in France.

Earlier this month, the European Parliament — of which Le Pen is a member — voted by an overwhelming majority to lift his immunity, opening the way for such a trial to take place in Germany.

Meanwhile, Le Pen is still awaiting a French appeals court decision on whether to uphold a two-year ban on his serving in public office because of an assault he made on a Socialist Party politician who ran against his daughter Caroline during France's 1997 parliamentary elections.

Video taken at the scene of the incident showed Le Pen tussling with the Socialist incumbent, Annette Peulvast, who subsequently defeated Le Pen's daughter.

If the appeals court decides to maintain the ban when it issues its ruling next month, Le Pen will be unable to lead his party's list in next June's elections to the European Parliament, which serves as the European Union's legislative body.

This would likely add fuel to an ongoing clash over Le Pen's future leadership of the Front.

Le Pen, 70, has already announced his plans to have his wife, Jany, lead the party list if his appeal is rejected. Other Front officials have chosen a similar course in the past, having their spouses run in their stead after they have been banned from seeking office.

But the party's No. 2 official, Bruno Megret, has stated that leading the party list should become his role if the appeal goes against Le Pen, saying that to put Jany Le Pen at the top of the ticket was "a bad idea."

He later backed down, but the damage was done: Megret had made the first public challenge to Le Pen's leadership since he created the movement in 1972.

Political commentators have said Le Pen's legal predicaments are unlikely to dissuade voters from supporting him, although they could prompt more challenges from within the party. □