



Daily News Bulletin

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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Bombs go off near Moscow shuls

No one was injured in two bomb attacks that exploded near Moscow's two largest synagogues Saturday night.

The attacks did not appear to target the synagogues themselves, according to Russian officials, but Jewish leaders were quoted as saying the attacks were aimed at the synagogues and that only increased security prevented more damage and injuries. One of the shuls, the Marina Roscha synagogue, has already been damaged by bombs several times earlier this decade.

Barak calls on rival to bow out

Israeli prime ministerial candidate Ehud Barak called on his Center Party rival, Yitzhak Mordechai, to withdraw from the race and support him.

Barak has been trying to consolidate political support after some weekend opinion polls showed him running in a virtual dead heat with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in the May 17 vote, but beating the premier by 8 percentage points if a runoff election is held June 1. Meanwhile, Mordechai told a news conference Sunday that he intends to stay in the race.

Insurance campaign launched

California's top officials launched a campaign to force European insurance companies to settle Holocaust-era claims against the firms by survivors and their heirs.

The state's insurance commissioner outlined several measures against the firms during a news conference last Friday, including the possible shutdown of the California operations of those insurers who refuse to pay the claims. [Page 3]

Jewish coalition to aid refugees

The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee reconvened a coalition of 40 Jewish religious and social service organizations in a fund-raising effort for Kosovar refugees.

"We cannot stand idly by," reads a full-page ad placed in last Friday's New York Times by the coalition, which had joined together earlier in the decade to address crises in Bosnia and Rwanda. In the past three weeks, the JDC has collected more than \$2 million from some 12,000 individual donors.

FOCUS ON ISSUES

Collaboration is 'name of game' in world of Jewish philanthropy

By Julia Goldman

CHICAGO (JTA) — Rachel Davis came to the Windy City with a vision and left three days later with a potential partner.

The mother of four from Houston wanted to set up a national system for extracurricular activities for Jewish day school students like her oldest son, a high school senior, who must sit out secular debate and basketball tournaments that often require participation on Shabbat.

With the backing of her family foundation, Davis had some of the resources to start such a project locally. But sitting at her lunch table at the ninth annual conference of the Jewish Funders Network, Davis met a like-minded philanthropist from Florida.

The two began discussions on pooling funds and finding additional partners and academic sponsors to develop the idea on a national scale.

"Collaboration," said Davis, "is the name of the game."

Indeed, collaboration was the theme of last week's conference, "Even Moses Couldn't Do It Alone." More than 250 private foundation leaders, as well as federation professionals and non-profit organization representatives, met for three days in Chicago to discuss the benefits of working together to "achieve the ultimate goal of making the world a better place," in the words of the conference brochure.

The potential for private foundations to foster such improvement is beyond doubt.

Thousands of private foundations pump millions of dollars into Jewish and other causes each year, but much of the buzzing business of Jewish philanthropy occurs in a vacuum. A recent study by the San Francisco-based Institute for Jewish & Community Research identified approximately 3,500 foundations that gave to "something Jewish" in 1996. The Jewish Funders Network now puts the number at about 5,500. There are about 40,000 family foundations altogether, the study says — a number that is expected to explode in the next two decades during the anticipated intergenerational transfer of an estimated \$15 trillion.

Five years ago, 20 of the largest Jewish foundations generated some \$220 million in annual grant-making from billions in assets, says the study, which predicted an increase to more than \$300 million in 1999.

Its findings — based on regional discussions with foundation principals and professionals, interviews and a mail survey — indicated that for all of their philanthropic activity, Jewish foundations have few guides for building partnerships, for determining communal needs and for learning about programs, institutions and ideas to support.

"In an age when information is processed so quickly, and the world turns on information, for those making decisions about billions of dollars in philanthropy to say they don't have information they need" to make knowledgeable decisions possibly hampers their ability to effectively help Jewish causes, Gary Tobin, a demographer and the institute's president, said in a telephone interview.

Tobin's study points to the need for a national system for collecting and disseminating information that is vital for enlightened philanthropy, but stops short of recommending who should take on the responsibility.

So last week, Charles Bronfman — the Seagram company co-chair whose Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies helped fund the Tobin study — made that motion.

In his capacity as the recently elected chairman of the board of the newly formed United Jewish Communities, Bronfman took the podium at the Jewish Funders Network

MIDEAST FOCUS

Premier blames police for leaks

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu blamed police on Sunday for leaking a decision to recommend that criminal charges be brought against his foreign minister, Ariel Sharon.

Netanyahu was quoted as saying during the weekly Cabinet meeting that the disclosure, coming in the midst of the election campaign, was politically motivated. Police are probing allegations that in 1997 Sharon promised favors to an associate in exchange for altering his testimony in a libel suit that Sharon had brought against an Israeli newspaper.

Sharon, who denies any wrongdoing, has called on the state prosecutor to make a decision before the May 17 election on whether to serve an indictment.

Barak embarrassed by supporter

Political rivals accused Israeli prime ministerial candidate Ehud Barak of ethnic discrimination Sunday, after an Israeli entertainer referred to Likud voters as "riff-raff" at a gathering in support of the Labor leader.

Barak called the remark "utter nonsense" and demanded a public apology from the actress, Tiki Dayan. He also accused political foes of trying to seize upon the incident in order to divert public attention from his campaign's real issues.

Herzl relative faced aliyah battle

A relative of the founder of modern Zionism was almost denied permission to make aliyah because she could not prove she is a Jew, an official with the Jewish Agency for Israel said last week.

Mira Popovic, 90, whose grandfather was a cousin of Theodor Herzl, was questioned for one month by Israeli immigration officials in Budapest, where she had fled to escape the NATO bombing of her home in Belgrade. Popovic, who was allowed to immigrate last week, will join her grandson, Dan, who already lives in Israel.

meeting here to "talk a little tachlis" — or nitty-gritty.

His proposal: the creation of a "joint center for Jewish philanthropy."

"Why don't we get together and do this," he suggested, "so that we can consider ourselves — family foundations, the Funders Network and the United Jewish Communities — real partners in an enterprise that is much bigger than any of us and so important to the future of all of us."

That enterprise, broadly put, is tikkun olam, the Jewish concept of repairing the world that is the motivation for much of the philanthropy supported by members of the Jewish Funders Network. Founded in 1990, the network originally provided a meeting ground for a small group of private funders interested in supporting progressive causes, such as Arab-Jewish dialogue, Jewish women's history projects, innovative Jewish and interdenominational education, and environmental conservation in Israel.

The network also created an open forum for swapping ideas on new initiatives and sharing the concerns that accompany being wealthy, Jewish and part of a philanthropically inclined family. Today, the group has ballooned to include a reported 600 members, including such mega-funders as the Nathan Cummings Family Foundation and the Arie and Ida Crown Memorial Foundation — alongside hundreds of other, relatively smaller family and community foundations. Membership requires that funders give a minimum of \$25,000 in grants annually — to Jewish or non-Jewish causes.

The network puts out a regular newsletter and maintains a Web site to apprise funders of projects and issues. The main locus of information exchange is the network's annual conference, where funders and professionals can gain essential grant-making skills and discuss their particular concerns in sessions such as addressing community expectations and family tradition, and leveraging women's power in philanthropy.

Other conference discussions explore issues common to contemporary Jewish communal debates: funding services to seniors, partnerships with Israel, health and spirituality, and Jewish education through the arts and culture.

But with a staff of only three people in New York, the network has a limited capacity as a national clearinghouse for Jewish philanthropy.

Enter the United Jewish Communities — formed last month from the merger of the United Jewish Appeal, the Council of Jewish Federations and the United Israel Appeal.

These three organizations have since 1948 provided social services for millions of people worldwide and generated over \$100 billion in 1999 dollars — making them, in Bronfman's estimation, the "most successful philanthropic system ever in the history of the world." With its broad-based structure, the United Jewish Communities could provide the joint national center with the benefits of its resources and personnel, he said.

Bronfman presented the idea as brand-new, but the "creation of a technical assistance and training center for Jewish family foundations supporting the new entity's mission" is clearly spelled out in the documents guiding the UJA-CJF-UJA merger.

Many of the conference participants are already significant donors and volunteer leaders in the national system of UJA and local federations. Moreover, a significant number have set up foundations and endowments through their local federations, taking advantage of the federated system's resources while maintaining programmatic control.

But some donors prefer charitable giving outside the Jewish communal establishment because it enables them to be innovative and take risks while simultaneously using their names to trumpet their causes. Michael Rukin, the immediate past president of Boston's Combined Jewish Philanthropies and a board member of the Jewish Funders Network, sees his collective and independent philanthropy as "complementary."

The Michael B. Rukin Charitable Foundation, he said, enables him, together with his family, to engage in "hands-on" philanthropy that follows their interests in such areas as Jewish education, technology and Arab-Israeli economic development.

Several conference participants surveyed said they would need more information before they signed on to Bronfman's proposal. Some said they wanted to be sure that they could maintain the independent spirit that has informed their philanthropy.

But Bronfman's proposal has positive implications for the Jewish Funders Network, according to David Fishman, one of its founders.

"It says we're a very important part of the Jewish philanthropic world," he said.

The group's executive director, Evan Mendelson, echoed this conviction. Because of the network's growth and ability to attract larger family foundations, the United Jewish Communities now "see a need for us." □



Daily News Bulletin

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JEWISH WORLD

Survey planned of U.S. Jews

The United Jewish Communities is sponsoring a survey aimed at identifying the social and demographic characteristics of the American Jewish population.

The National Jewish Population Survey 2000, planned to be conducted next year, will involve a sample of some 5,000 adults, with a summary of basic findings planned to be released by mid-2001.

The United Jewish Communities was formed recently from the merger of the United Jewish Appeal, the Council of Jewish Federations and the United Israel Appeal.

Former Klan leader defeated

Former Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke was defeated in his bid for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives.

According to unofficial returns, Duke, who in a recent book called for an Aryan revolution, finished third, with 19 percent of the vote, in an open primary for the Louisiana seat.

The top two vote-getters will face each other in a runoff vote for the seat, which was left open when Republican Rep. Bob Livingston resigned earlier this year after admitting to an extramarital affair.

Guilty plea in theme park case

A former U.S. State Department employee pleaded guilty on April 29 to a conflict-of-interest charge for urging another State Department official to support a Jordanian-Israeli theme park.

Matthew Lorin, who had a financial interest in the park, paid a \$20,000 fine and is scheduled to be sentenced July 7.

Neo-Nazis march in German town

About 350 neo-Nazis marched Saturday through the center of a small German town near Hamburg.

The demonstrators reportedly arrived in Ahrensburg in five buses and carried Nazi flags and banners attacking foreigners.

'Jewish Jordan' may transfer

A high school basketball star known as the "Jewish Jordan" is considering transferring out of his yeshiva.

The possible move by Tamir Goodman comes after board members at his school, the Talmudical Academy in Baltimore, were reportedly upset over the amount of attention that basketball is receiving at the school as a result of Goodman's exploits.

The University of Maryland said earlier this year it would consider not playing games on Shabbat after Goodman enrolls there, which he plans to do in the fall of 2000.

California pressures insurers to settle Holocaust-era claims

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — California's top officials, legislators and private organizations are throwing their collective weight behind a series of measures aimed at pressuring European insurance companies into settling claims from the Holocaust era.

The charge is being led by Gov. Gray Davis and state Insurance Commissioner Chuck Quackenbush.

Speaking at a news conference Friday, the two men pledged, in Davis's words, to "begin a sacred pilgrimage to bring healing and hope to those victimized not once, but twice.

"We will do everything possible to seek justice for Holocaust victims, survivors and their families."

At the conference, held in the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Davis also warned insurance companies "to pay now or we guarantee you will pay more later."

State Sen. Tom Hayden handed Quackenbush a petition calling for the suspension of 64 insurance companies practicing in California that have failed to honor Holocaust-era claims.

To enlist public support, Davis announced the formation of the California Holocaust Insurance Settlement Alliance, consisting of 25 organizations and individuals.

Quackenbush announced the creation of a Web site — www.insurance.ca.gov — and a toll-free phone line — (888) 234-4636 — to help potential claimants.

Quackenbush's office is placing ads in some 30 general and Jewish newspapers in California, each ending with the line, "It's about restitution, it's about justice and it's about time."

The California insurance department will mail restitution application forms to Holocaust survivors and their families throughout the state.

The effort is intended primarily for the estimated 20,000 Holocaust survivors in California, but information is also available to the other 120,000-140,000 survivors throughout the United States. It is believed that there are up to 860,000 survivors worldwide.

In a series of hearings hosted by U.S. insurance commissioners last year, numerous witnesses charged that the European insurers have been stalling for 50 years to avoid payment on policies taken out by Jews in prewar years.

Based on its research into the unpaid policies, the World Jewish Congress has put their value at between \$2 billion and \$2.5 billion in today's currency — 10 times their value in postwar dollars.

Recently enacted state laws have empowered California courts to deal with claims against European insurance companies doing business in the state and for officials to withdraw the licenses of uncooperative companies.

Currently, subsidiaries of six major insurance companies are collecting billions of dollars in premiums in California, Hayden said.

They are: Assicurazioni Generali of Italy; Germany's leading insurer, Allianz Holding, France's AXA Group; and the Winterthur, Zurich and Basel insurance firms in Switzerland.

Quackenbush said he is hopeful that the California actions will encourage the six companies, plus 13 others operating in California, to reach a fair and speedy settlement.

"When they feel the heat, they'll see the light," he said.

Implicitly, Hayden said in an interview, some of the pressure is also directed at the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims, which meets this week in London under former U.S. Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger.

Hayden said both Eagleburger and Undersecretary of State Stuart Eizenstat, the Clinton administration's point man on Holocaust reparation issues, have opposed action by individual states against European insurance companies.

But Hayden maintains that only the threat of losing lucrative business in California and other states will persuade the firms to settle the claims. □

FOCUS ON ISSUES**Jewish political conservatism:
An old tradition or growing trend?***By Daniel Kurtzman*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — When Murray Friedman tells people he's writing a book about the history of American Jewish conservatism, it usually elicits a predictable gibe: must be a short book.

That the Jewish community has long been among the most liberal segments of American society remains an incontrovertible fact. But it has not been uniformly so, and an increasingly outspoken number of Jewish conservatives are trying to underscore that point. Even as the vast majority of Jews continue to vote heavily Democratic, they assert that there is a strong current of conservatism tugging at American Jews.

"There's a clear-cut movement of Jews to the right — intellectually, politically and socially," said Friedman, director of the Feinstein Center for American Jewish History at Temple University and director of the American Jewish Committee's Philadelphia chapter.

Although there may not be a lot of concrete data to back up that claim, Jewish conservatives say there continue to be misperceptions about Jewish political attitudes.

"There is a mistaken understanding that Jews are liberals and always have been," said Elliot Abrams, president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center and a former assistant secretary of state in the Reagan administration. "The history of the American Jewish community is actually a history of equal amounts of conservatism and liberalism."

Little is known, however, about the history of American Jewish conservatism, which is why the Feinstein center and the Jewish studies department at American University recently convened a two-day conference to explore its historical and religious roots, the first such conference of its kind.

"Political conservatism actually does draw from a wellspring of Jewish political philosophy, law and historical experience," Jonathan Sarna, a professor of American Jewish history and chairman of the department of Near Eastern and Judaic studies at Brandeis University, told the gathering of historians and activists at American University last week.

While Jews were central to the formation of American political liberalism, Jewish conservatives remained largely isolated and unorganized for most of the 20th century.

They gained an important voice as *Commentary* magazine, published by the American Jewish Committee, transformed in the late 1960s into a neo-conservative journal. But it wasn't until the 1970s and 1980s that Jewish conservatives gained wider attention, particularly when many served in the Reagan administration.

Recent years have seen the ascendancy of a cadre of young conservative Jewish intellectuals and activists working in Washington think tanks, the media, academia, and as lobbyists and grassroots political organizers.

Matt Brooks, who serves as executive director of both the Republican-aligned National Jewish Coalition and a conservative think tank affiliated with it, the Jewish Policy Center, said an increasing number of Jews are turning toward the conservative message as it becomes "more and more difficult, if not impossible,

to intellectually defend the welfare state as it has previously existed in this country."

As what he called a "more compassionate" model of conservatism has evolved, he added, "that has been very attractive to a larger and larger segment of the Jewish community." Others are a bit more equivocal about the trend toward conservatism.

"The returns are not in," Abrams said. "What is growing is the view that knee-jerk liberalism is not particularly Jewish, that at least it's legitimate for Jews to be found on all sides of issues."

For his part, Friedman said that although he sees a clear movement of Jews to the right, that movement has been counteracted by the community's "very strong fears of the Christian right, and what they see as threats to the separation of church and state."

There are enduring fears, he added, "of conservatism as a sort of handmaiden of the right or even of fascism and totalitarianism — fears that Jews will be christianized by the emergence of the Christian right as a continuing political force in American life."

Most Jewish activists and opinion leaders, meanwhile, dispute assertions that there has been a shift in the community's political attitudes.

"There's really no hard evidence that the American Jewish community has become more conservative in recent decades, and most evidence points in the other direction," said Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, who was invited to the conference to present a liberal Jewish view.

"The only statistic that you can prove," he added, "is that if you ask Jews are they more conservative, they will say they are, but it is not represented by what they believe or by how they vote."

Indeed, there is little in recent election statistics that suggests a change in Jewish political leanings.

Nearly 80 percent of American Jews backed President Clinton in the last two presidential elections, while nationally three out of every four Jews have voted for Democratic candidates in congressional elections through the 1990s.

And of the 34-strong Jewish delegation in Congress, only two are Republicans, one in the House and one in the Senate.

Some Jewish conservatives, however, say there is evidence of a shift in recent local elections.

They cite the mayoral races in New York City and Los Angeles, where Republican Mayors Rudolph Giuliani and Richard Riordan have both twice received large majorities of the Jewish vote. They also point to a 25 percent increase in Jewish support for New Jersey Gov. Christine Todd Whitman that helped boost her to re-election in 1997. At the same time, they also cite recent surveys of American Jews on issues such as school vouchers and the death penalty that they say indicate a more conservative bent than election returns would suggest.

Few dispute that the Jewish conservative movement has grown in recent years, buttressed in part by the Republican takeover of Congress in 1994. But most remain unconvinced that the movement has significantly altered the basic shape of Jewish political attitudes.

"Whatever gains Jewish conservatives may have made in recent years," wrote J.J. Goldberg, an author and newspaper columnist, in "Jewish Power," his 1996 book, "the overall profile of the Jewish community — Jewish voters, Jewish officeholders, most Jewish social activism, and majority opinion on the Jewish street — remains overwhelmingly Democratic and liberal." □