



# Daily News Bulletin

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82<sup>nd</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Synagogue leader among victims

The president of an Atlanta synagogue was among the victims of Mark Barton, a stock market day trader who killed nine people during a July 29 shooting rampage at two local brokerage firms. Charles Allen Tenenbaum, 48, was planning his first trip to Israel next year, according to his synagogue's rabbi.

### Demjanjuk files new motion

Alleged Nazi death camp guard John Demjanjuk filed a motion to dismiss the U.S. government's latest attempt to strip him of his citizenship.

Demjanjuk claimed last Friday that the denaturalization proceeding amounted to double jeopardy since he had already faced a similar action. After being stripped of his U.S. citizenship in 1981, Demjanjuk was extradited to Israel in 1986 to stand trial for crimes against humanity.

Demjanjuk spent five years on death row before the Israeli Supreme Court determined that there was reasonable doubt that he was the notorious guard known as "Ivan the Terrible" who operated a gas chamber at Treblinka in 1942-1943.

### Palestinians press Barak on Wye

The Palestinian Authority called on Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak to begin implementing the Wye agreement within three weeks.

"It is not feasible to renegotiate signed peace deals. On the contrary, this would push the situation toward a crisis," the self-rule government said Saturday after its weekly Cabinet meeting. Meanwhile, a joint Israeli-Palestinian steering committee convened to discuss implementation of the Wye accord.

### New nominee for terror panel

Jewish and Arab groups welcomed House Democratic leader Richard Gephardt's decision last Friday to appoint Juliette Kayyem to a congressional commission on terrorism.

Kayyem, an Arab American, has worked in the civil rights division of the U.S. Justice Department on a variety of issues associated with U.S. anti-terrorism laws. She will fill a position originally given to Salam Al-Marayati, an Arab American leader whom Jewish groups accused of condoning terrorism against Israel. In a move that infuriated Arab and Muslim leaders, Gephardt withdrew Al-Marayati's appointment.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### Radical Muslim groups hampered by internal disputes, peace climate

By Douglas Davis

LONDON (JTA) — If ideologies were tradable commodities, panic orders would be going out to sell Islamic radicalism.

As Middle East leaders contemplate the political landscape — after the Israeli elections and before the start of the U.S. presidential campaign — they detect a small window of opportunity to surge ahead with peace talks.

And Islamic extremist movements — for the moment, at least — are being perceived as part of the problem rather than the solution.

Thus, when Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat met recently at the Erez crossing between the Gaza Strip and Israel, their encounter focused on the single most important issue in the peace-making business: security.

Among aides who attended the meeting were Danny Yatom, former Mossad director and now Barak's chief of staff, and Arafat's intelligence chief, Mohammed Dahlan.

Yatom outlined the latest Israeli intelligence assessment of Hamas; Dahlan confirmed its accuracy.

At least some of Yatom's analysis was based on data derived from an intercepted message between Tehran-based Hamas military leader Imad al-Alami and Hamas military leaders in the territories.

Both Yatom and Dahlan agreed that Hamas is deeply divided between the advocates of "violence now," led by the external leadership of Hamas, Alami and the Amman-based Hamas political bureau chief Khaled Mashaal, and the advocates of "prudence now," representing the internal leadership, led by Hamas founder Sheik Ahmed Yassin.

Deep as the divisions are, however, sources do not expect the dispute to split the Islamic group, which is also riven by accusations of embezzlement and internal corruption.

Quite simply, they say, the message reaching the West Bank and Gaza from their Iranian patrons is "moderation."

Other pressures are also bearing down on the Islamic radicals: Hamas is feeling the heat in Jordan, where its political base appears to be increasingly shaky, while Iran has served notice on Hezbollah that it must prepare to disarm and join Lebanon's political mainstream.

Jordan, which has in the past used its patronage of Hamas as a lever against Arafat, was recently reported to be cracking down on the movement as a prelude to a complete shutdown of its activities in the kingdom.

Jordanian sources say the government is expected to end the organization's "political presence" within a matter of days, ostensibly because it suspects that Hamas is becoming deeply involved "in the Jordan arena" — but also, no doubt, as a gesture to Barak.

The main targets of the crackdown are understood to be Mashaal, the most senior Hamas political official in Jordan — and the subject of a botched Mossad assassination bid last year — and Hamas spokesman Mohammed Nazzal.

According to the sources, the Jordanian authorities are concerned that the Amman-based political leadership of Hamas is threatening the Muslim Brotherhood in

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Knesset votes to expand Cabinet

Israel's Knesset passed an amendment enabling Prime Minister Ehud Barak to expand his Cabinet.

Barak wanted to expand his government from 18 to 24 ministers to get broad backing for his peace moves.

### More Kwara Jews arrive in Israel

The July 29 arrival of 82 Jews from Ethiopia's Kwara region marks the end of the most recent Israeli government effort to repatriate Ethiopian Jews.

Over 1,300 Ethiopian Jews have arrived in Israel since the end of June, when pressure from American Jews and the Jewish Agency for Israel resulted in stepped-up efforts to bring to Israel those Ethiopian Jews left behind in previous emigration operations. According to Jewish Agency officials, approximately 500 more Jews remain in Kwara and will be evacuated in the fall after the end of the rainy season.

### Arafat meets with rejectionists

Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat is trying to unite hard-line Palestinian groups behind the peace process before final-status talks begin with Israel.

Arafat met Sunday in Cairo with representatives from the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, which suspended ties with Arafat after he signed the first Oslo accord with Israel in 1993. Arafat is expected to meet in the coming weeks with other Palestinian groups opposed to the Oslo process.

### Assad wanted to avoid Israelis

Syrian President Hafez Assad skipped last week's funeral of Morocco's King Hassan II to avoid "hand-shakes by coincidence" with Israeli leaders, according to the Syrian state-run Al-Thawra newspaper.

By not going to Morocco, Assad thwarted artificial encounters that are far from the "practical basis for peace," the paper added Saturday.



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Jordan, another Islamist group militantly opposed to Israel's existence.

First steps aimed at inhibiting the activities of the organization have included rounding up several key Hamas activists and pulling others in for questioning.

The crackdown was apparently triggered by the mysterious emergence of a statement — signed "Hamas Cadres in Amman" — which was circulated recently in the Jordanian capital.

The statement contained a scathing attack on Hamas' political bureau, which it accused of attempting to take over Jordan's Muslim Brotherhood, of conspiring against the internal Hamas leadership, particularly Yassin.

The statement also accused the Hamas "clique" in Jordan of using dirty tricks in its bid to seize control of the Brotherhood.

These tricks included leaks to the media about internal disputes, bogus statements in the name of Brotherhood officials designed to embarrass the leadership, and attempts to incite members of the Brotherhood against their executive bureau.

The Hamas leadership has declined to comment on this attack, but the sources confirm that Brotherhood leaders recently took steps to sever their organizational ties with Hamas.

In Tehran, meanwhile, Iranian authorities have told Hezbollah spiritual leader Hassan Nasrallah that the countdown to the movement's demilitarization is already under way.

A recent cover story in the respected Arabic-language al-Majalla quoted senior sources close to the Iranian government as saying Nasrallah was told that Hezbollah must start preparing for a purely political role after Israel leaves Lebanon.

The London-based, Saudi-owned newsweekly said a close aide to Iranian President Mohammad Khatami had told the Hezbollah leader that Tehran and Damascus will assist the movement's transition from an ideological militia to a conventional party that is integrated into Lebanese political life.

Khatami is reported to have already started reducing arms supplies to Hezbollah and funding for its military operations.

Instead, he has increased financial aid to Hezbollah's educational, cultural and welfare programs, which form the foundations of the movement's political support.

Still quoting its Iranian sources, al-Majalla reported that Syrian officials are now closely scrutinizing Iranian arms shipments passing through Damascus en route to Lebanon.

It also noted that Syrian officials have recently blocked the transfer of heavy weapons and rockets to Hezbollah.

In a separate interview with the newsweekly, Hezbollah's political bureau head Mohammad Ra'ad, hinted that his movement would not impede any decisions taken by Beirut and Damascus in negotiations with Israel.

But he cautioned that the mere start of negotiations between Israel and Syria will not be enough to persuade Hezbollah to halt its military campaign against Israeli forces in south Lebanon.

"The resumption of negotiations does not necessarily mean that agreements are ready for signing," said Ra'ad, a member of the Lebanese Parliament.

"Indeed, resistance operations against the Zionist occupation need to be continued and escalated," he said.

"Experience has shown that they have been effective in undermining and weakening the enemy."

While maintaining Hezbollah's deliberately ambiguous line about its posture in the event of an Israeli pullout from southern Lebanon, Ra'ad indicated that the movement would act pragmatically.

When Israel withdraws from Lebanon, "Hezbollah will consider its operational methods in light of changes and developments.

"There is no need to pre-empt things now," he added. "Hezbollah will act in accordance with its assessment of the interests of Lebanon and the Lebanese — and of the special relationship with Syria."

All signs indicate that, with peace in the air, the Islamic radicals are being squeezed and their sources of logistical support are drying up. Just the same, however, all bets are off if the revived peace talks falter.

## JEWISH WORLD

### Clinton Yom Kippur move lauded

U.S. Jewish leaders applauded President Clinton's decision not to address the opening ceremony of the U.N. General Assembly because it falls on Yom Kippur.

"The president acted in consonance with America's highest ideals, which call for respect of all our citizens and their beliefs," the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations said.

### Bush sued over voucher program

A teachers union sued Florida Gov. Jeb Bush in an attempt to overturn a newly approved statewide school voucher program.

The lawsuit, filed by the Florida Education Association/United and the American Federation of Teachers, is the second legal challenge to the Florida program, which allows parents to use tax dollars to send their children to private or religious schools. Some Jewish groups favor the voucher concept, while others oppose it on constitutional grounds.

### Documents prove U.S. inaction

The U.S. State Department failed to act after it was warned in 1940 that Hitler had authorized the extermination of thousands of physically and mentally ill Germans, according to documents found by the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center.

Had the United States protested, "it would have startled Hitler and upset his policies," according to the center's founder, Rabbi Marvin Hier. "It may have given Hitler second thoughts about his 'Final Solution' against the Jews."

### British gallery faces Nazi claim

London's Tate Gallery is facing a claim for a \$300,000 painting from the children of a Jewish banker shot to death by the Nazis in 1937.

Three siblings, who fled to England from Dusseldorf soon after their father's death, say that "View of Hampton Court Palace," by Dutch master Jan Griffier the Elder, was owned by their father.

### Slave fund may not meet deadline

Germany's top negotiator on a fund to compensate Nazi-era slave laborers said a Sept. 1 target date for reaching a settlement would not be met.

Otto Graf Lambsdorff, who was appointed last week to represent the German government in the talks, said agreement on the terms of the fund is still a long way off.

But U.S. Deputy Treasury Secretary Stuart Eizenstat said he is hopeful that "most of the key principles" will be resolved by Sept. 1, a deadline that coincides with the 60th anniversary of the start of World War II.

## More fears raised as Russian mayor backs anti-Semitic, nationalist group

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — The Communist mayor of a southern Russian city has backed Russia's largest ultranationalist organization, giving credence to the group's claims that it has supporters in high places.

Stavropol Mayor Mikhail Kuzmin voiced his support for the Russian National Unity group in a meeting last month with Russia's interior minister, Vladimir Rushailo, according to a published transcript of the meeting in Vremya-MN, a leading Moscow daily. Kuzmin added that he did not see any difference between being a member of the Communist Party and Russian National Unity.

Last month, Russian National Unity held a conference in Stavropol, attended by some 250 activists, that was sanctioned by the local government, according to press reports.

During the past several years, Jewish groups and human-rights watchers have voiced concern over a surge in grass-roots anti-Semitism and interethnic tensions in southern Russia.

Stavropol, a city of 200,000 that is the hometown of former Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, is known as one of the group's strongholds.

The group's members wear black military-style uniforms, greet each other with a stiff-armed salute and wear armbands that have a swastika combined with a cross, which they claim is a traditional Russian symbol.

Founded in 1990, the group claims to have 50,000 to 100,000 members, though observers believe this number is greatly exaggerated. The group is making plans to run in parliamentary elections slated for December, as well as in some local elections, according to Vremya-MN.

Russian authorities have expressed concern about local officials allowing groups espousing ethnic hatred to run in the elections, yet little has been done to halt these groups' activities.

Last month, Russia's advisory Security Council reiterated that the country should adopt a law to combat political and religious extremism before the December elections, but most observers say that such a law has no chance of passing the Communist-dominated Russian Parliament. □

(JTA staff writer Peter Ephross in New York contributed to this report.)

## Tycoon to run for 'Jewish' seat

MOSCOW (JTA) — A Russian business tycoon who proudly displays his Jewish roots yet is disavowed by Jewish leaders may seek a parliamentary seat from a "Jewish region" of Russia.

Boris Berezovsky, who is believed to have converted to Orthodox Christianity a few years ago, is one of the wealthiest men in Russia and is seen by many in the country as the archetype of the influential, powerful Jew.

According to Russian media reports, the invitation to run for a parliamentary seat representing Birobidzhan in elections scheduled for December came from the Organization of Entrepreneurs for Economic Development in the Jewish Autonomous Region.

The area in the Russian Far East, which Stalin dubbed a Jewish Autonomous Region in 1934 as an alternative to Zionism, now only has a few thousand Jews out of a total population of 200,000. In recent years, Birobidzhan has provided the largest proportion of immigrants to Israel among Russia's Jewish communities.

Meanwhile, some Jewish officials, including Moscow's chief rabbi, Pinchas Goldschmidt, are insisting that the media should avoid associating the magnate with the Jewish community.

"He is not a Jew, nor has he been a member of the community or ever supported Jewish life in Russia," Goldschmidt said. □

## Russian fringe lauds ex-premier after an anti-Semitic statement

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — A remark by Russia's former prime minister is winning him adulation from the country's anti-Semites — and criticism from Jews and the mainstream media.

The controversy surrounding Viktor Chernomyrdin is creating worries that the Jewish card may be played in Russia's upcoming parliamentary elections.

In this week's edition of *Zavtra*, Russia's largest ultranationalist newspaper, Chernomyrdin received praise from some of Russia's most prominent anti-Semites: Communist lawmaker Albert Makashov; the leader of the Pamyat movement, Dmitri Vasilyev; and the publisher of the *Black Hundreds* newspaper, Alexander Shtilmark.

Chernomyrdin, who is now president of Gazprom, Russia's gas monopoly, responded last week to a high-profile media war between Boris Berezovsky and Russian Jewish Congress President Vladimir Goussinsky, by saying, "Two Jews have clashed, and now the whole country has to watch this farce."

"At last, Chernomyrdin's instinctive peasant feelings have come out, and he openly delivered a rebuke to the Jewish rich," *Zavtra*, which is known for denying the Holocaust, quoted Makashov as saying.

After Chernomyrdin made his remark, Russia's leading business daily, *Kommersant*, wrote that it indicated a looming "anti-Semitic epidemic" in advance of the parliamentary elections, which are scheduled for December.

Moscow's chief rabbi, Pinchas Goldschmidt, predicts that the Jewish factor is going to become even more prominent as the elections draw near.

"The media war is part of the election campaign in which the Jewish issue is going to figure prominently regardless of whether we want it or not," he said.

Goldschmidt added that the Jewish community is worried not only by the remark made by Chernomyrdin, who had not previously made public anti-Semitic comments, but by the fact that the former prime minister has not retracted his words.

Chernomyrdin's remark confirms that many Russians possess deep-seated anti-Jewish prejudices as a result of decades of Soviet-era anti-Semitism, according to one expert.

Most individuals who grew up in a country that practiced undeclared state anti-Semitism believe in some popular ultranationalist stereotypes, said Alexander Asmolov, a professor of psychology at Moscow State University. □

## Shas halts turbine transport in the latest Shabbat war battle

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Pressure from fervently Orthodox members of Prime Minister Ehud Barak's government has prompted Israel's electric company to cancel the scheduled transport of a massive turbine over the Sabbath.

The issue became political when, in the heat of the negotiations to reschedule the move, Shas Party members said its legisla-

tors would find it hard to back a proposal to expand the government in the face of such a blatant violation of the Sabbath.

Noting that the 250-ton transformer could be moved at only 3 miles an hour, police had said transferring the turbine over the weekend would cause the least disruption to drivers.

Knesset member Yosef "Tommy" Lapid, leader of the secular rights Shinui Party, said the incident was proof that Shas ministers were not interested in the public good, but only in upholding Jewish religious law.

In a related development, fervently Orthodox and secular demonstrators clashed during weekend protests in Jerusalem over the closure of two roads on the Sabbath.

The flash point for this latest confrontation is Jerusalem's Ethiopia Street, where secular residents live adjacent to the fervently Orthodox Mea She'arim neighborhood.

The High Court of Justice last week issued an interim ruling to keep the street open on the Sabbath until it rules on a petition against a municipal order to close it to traffic.

During the clashes on Saturday, fervently Orthodox protesters heckled drivers.

They also threw eggs and tomatoes at secular residents. □

## Italian Jews protest attempt to ally with French extremists

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME (JTA) — Italian Jewish leaders are protesting an attempt by Italy's Radical Party to forge an alliance in the European Parliament with France's far-right National Front.

The strongest protest came from Bruno Zevi, a prominent Jewish architect and the honorary president of the Radicals, who lambasted the party leadership during the party's convention here over the weekend.

"I am a Jew, and I speak as a Jew," he said. "I speak in the name of 40,000 Italian Jews, of whom 12,000 are Roman: Together with neo-Nazis, never!"

The Radical Party is a tiny but influential political force in Italy that is known for its support of civil rights.

The xenophobic National Front is led by Jean-Marie Le Pen, who has made repeated anti-Semitic statements and has referred to the Holocaust as a "mere detail" of history.

Radical Party leaders had sought to link their deputies in the Strasbourg-based European Parliament with those of the National Front and other small parties that operate outside of major parliamentary groups in order to have more clout. They insisted that such relationships would be for administrative or "technical" purposes rather than because of political agreement.

Several Jewish leaders also sharply condemned the initiative.

Tullia Zevi, the wife of Bruno Zevi and the past president of Italy's Jewish community, told reporters that the Radicals should be ashamed of attempting such a move.

"Parties such as that of Le Pen are racist, xenophobic and anti-Semitic," she said. "They deny the Holocaust and are indifferent to 'ethnic cleansing.'"

Despite the controversy in Rome, a ruling against all "technical groupings" that was made by a committee of the European Parliament, which is the European Union's legislative body, made it unlikely that the alliance will be established. □