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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

German Jewish leader buried

German President Johannes Rau led an official German delegation that attended the funeral of the head of Germany's Jewish community in Israel on Sunday.

Ignatz Bubis, who died Friday at 72 after a brief illness, said recently in an interview that he wanted to be buried in Israel when he died so neo-Nazis would not be able to desecrate his grave. [Page 1]

Israeli coalition crisis defused

A crisis in Israel's governing coalition was averted after religious parties agreed to stay in Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's government even though a 250-ton part for a power plant was transported over the Sabbath.

Barak and Public Security Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami have agreed to work toward a compromise to move the remaining parts during a weekday.

The Shas and United Torah Judaism parties had opposed moving the turbine cooler over Shabbat, but police said it would be the least disruptive time to other highway traffic. [Page 3]

Barak makes new proposal

Israel proposed delaying the last of three withdrawals from the West Bank called for under the Wye accord in exchange for accelerating other parts of the proposal.

Prime Minister Ehud Barak's plan, which includes a Palestinian seaport and a safe-passage route between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, came as Israeli and Palestinian negotiators meet in Gaza on Sunday in ongoing negotiations over a timetable for the next Israeli withdrawal from the West Bank.

Vandals desecrate L.A. shul

Vandals desecrated a synagogue in Los Angeles over the weekend, just days after white supremacist Buford O'Neal Furrow shot five victims at a Los Angeles Jewish community center.

Police said the attack on Temple Knesset Israel in Hollywood, which included a spray-painted swastika and the words "Jews die," appeared to be a copycat crime.

The temple's president said that as a result of the attack he plans to increase synagogue security for the upcoming High Holidays.

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

German Jewish leader is mourned as one who warned and reached out

By Toby Axelrod

BERLIN (JTA) — A man who witnessed the near destruction of German Jewry in the Holocaust, but survived to help preside over its renaissance died last Friday at the age of 72.

In keeping with his wishes, Ignatz Bubis, the outspoken and respected leader of Germany's Jewish community, was buried Sunday in Tel Aviv.

That he chose to be buried in Israel, rather than in Germany, illustrates a failure he said he felt toward the end of his life — the failure to convince his fellow Germans that they cannot escape their past, but bear a unique responsibility to be a light unto other nations in remembering and preventing another Holocaust.

Bubis' death came weeks after he said he would rather be buried in Israel than in Germany because he feared that his grave would be desecrated like that of his predecessor, Heinz Galinski.

On Sunday, his request was fulfilled in the Kiryat Shaul cemetery in Tel Aviv, where German President Johannes Rau and Israeli President Ezer Weizman led some 200 mourners at his funeral.

The Central Council of Jews in Germany reported that Bubis died at a hospital in his home city of Frankfurt.

The exact cause of death was not given, but Bubis had suffered a series of illnesses in recent months.

He is survived by his wife, Ida, and their daughter, Naomi Ann.

Across the nation, Bubis was mourned as a man who brought his own experience as a Holocaust survivor to bear on behalf of all minority groups in Germany.

Because he survived the Holocaust, part of Bubis' job was to warn his fellow Germans not to stray down the path of intolerance again. But he was also one of those eyewitnesses whose jobs have been increasingly replaced by memorial stones and museums.

Germans are marking with fanfare their metamorphosis into a phase when they're not branded by the crimes of their elders. They want to be considered a normal nation, even using the term "Never Again Auschwitz" as a slogan for their soldiers who joined the NATO forces in Kosovo.

When Bubis believed his fellow citizens had failed to learn from their tragic history, he blamed himself.

"I am ashamed for you," he said from a podium in Berlin in 1992 when neo-Nazis threw stones and tomatoes at Germans demonstrating against racism.

Jewish leaders in Germany and abroad and German politicians from across the political spectrum — some of whom had verbally sparred with Bubis — mourned his death.

Although Bubis, who was considered the conscience of the nation, recently expressed sadness about the gaps between Jews and non-Jews in Germany, Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder said Germany had lost someone who "helped to make it possible for fellow Jewish citizens to again see a future in Germany."

Today, through immigration of Jews from the former Soviet Union, Germany's Jewish community has more than doubled to 75,000 since Bubis took leadership of the German Jewish community in 1992.

"The death of Ignatz Bubis leaves a great gap that will be very hard to fill," said

MIDEAST FOCUS

Army to arrest stone-throwers

The Israeli army will begin arresting in the next few weeks Palestinian youths involved in stone-throwing in the West Bank.

In the past, parents of children involved in such incidents had to guarantee that their children would refrain from such activity. The source said several incidents in which Israeli civilians were injured by stones thrown by children prompted the policy change.

Settler threatens Peace Now

The mayor of a Jewish settlement on the West Bank threatened to "break the heads, the arms and the legs" of Peace Now activists if they returned to the West Bank to tour settlements.

Ron Nachman made his comments following a verbal confrontation Friday between Peace Now activists and residents of an enclave near the Jewish settlement of Itamar.

A Peace Now official said he would file a complaint against Nachman.

Barak worried about Iraq

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak is raising the growing Iraqi arms threat as a diplomatic and security priority, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

The paper cited intelligence assessments that Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein is trying to rebuild his arms program since U.N. weapons inspectors have left Iraq.

The Israeli army's chief of intelligence discussed the matter in recent discussions in Washington.

Israel behind in Y2K prep

Israeli government offices and state-owned utilities are behind schedule in preparing for the Y2K computer bug, according to the state comptroller.

In a report issued recently, the comptroller urged authorities to take the so-called millennium bug more seriously.

Andreas Nachama, the head of Berlin's Jewish community, in an interview with the Berliner Zeitung newspaper.

He said Bubis had warned with one hand and reached out with the other.

Newly appointed German President Johannes Rau called Bubis a fighter for democracy "who dedicated his life to making sure the shadow of German history would not extend over the future." He said Bubis was "a German patriot."

Bubis was known for being outspoken when he believed his fellow citizens needed to be criticized. Last year he took German writer Martin Walser, expressing an opinion held by many postwar Germans, to task for saying it was time to stop using the term "Auschwitz" as a whip against Germany.

Bubis, who was born in 1927 in Breslau — now Wroclaw, Poland, but then a part of Germany — lost his father and two siblings in the Holocaust. He was liberated from a labor camp in 1945 by the Russian army. He later settled in Frankfurt, where he became a successful, if sometimes controversial, real estate investor.

In 1985, Bubis and other members of the Frankfurt Jewish Community prevented the performance of a play called "Garbage, the City and Death," in which one character, "the rich Jew," was rumored to be modeled after Bubis.

Always active in Jewish communal life, Bubis said his goal as head of the Central Council was to focus on the problems of today. But, as the generations drifted into the future, he increasingly found himself grappling with issues of the past.

In what would be his last major interview, published last month in the newsweekly Stern, Bubis lamented that he had not helped close the gap between Jewish and non-Jewish Germans. Supporters and critics alike rushed to contradict him.

"All decent Germans carry his message in their hearts," wrote the journalist Volker Mueller. □

Clinton allows more refugees, but 'too little' for Jewish group

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The number of refugees allowed to enter the United States has increased for the first time in a decade.

President Clinton last week authorized the legal entry of up to 90,000 refugees during fiscal year 2000, up from 78,000 this year. The allocation includes slots for 20,000 from the former Soviet Union, down from 23,000 this year.

About 6,000 Jews are expected to arrive during the next fiscal year.

While the overall increase is primarily due to refugees from the war in Kosovo, those fleeing Africa and Afghanistan will receive more slots.

"We are pleased that the administration has reversed the decline in total admissions," said Leonard Glickman, the executive vice president of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society. "It has been a long time in coming," said Glickman, whose group oversees Jewish communal refugee programs.

Since the 1999 fiscal year began last October, more than 6,100 Jews have come to the United States, mostly from the former Soviet Union, according to Glickman.

While HIAS hailed Clinton's decision, the United Jewish Communities criticized the move as "too little."

"We are extremely disappointed that the refugee numbers are as low as they are, even as we applaud the administration's response on Kosovo," said Diana Aviv, vice president for public policy for the UJC, the umbrella fund-raising and social service organization of the Jewish community.

Aviv cited a 40 percent drop in refugees allowed to come to the United States during the last six years.

Now that Clinton has set the refugee ceiling, the Jewish community's focus has shifted to Capitol Hill, where Congress is expected to provide funding for refugee programs.

At the same time, HIAS and UJC will work to secure an extension of the Lautenberg Amendment, under which the historic persecution of Jews in the former Soviet Union is taken into account in the application process for refugee status. □



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JEWISH WORLD

Suspect targeted Jewish sites

A white supremacist who shot five people at a Jewish community center last week had scouted out three Los Angeles-area Jewish institutions as possible targets for an attack.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center and the University of Judaism were two of the targets, according to Rabbi Marvin Hier, the dean of the Wiesenthal Center. The Los Angeles Times has reported that the Skirball Cultural Center was the third site.

Moscow incident heightens fears

A device found near a Moscow synagogue Aug. 12 turned out not to be a bomb. But the incident, which came after a series of anti-Semitic attacks in Moscow this summer, heightened fears about safety among the city's Jewish community.

Meanwhile, residents living on the block where the Moscow Jewish orphanage is located recently asked that it be removed from their neighborhood because they fear it could be a target of an anti-Semitic attack.

Hillary pressed on Pollard

New York Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.) is appealing to Hillary Rodham Clinton to issue a public statement supporting the release of a U.S. citizen serving a life sentence for spying for Israel, according to the New York Jewish Week.

The call to support convicted spy Jonathan Pollard comes as a possible Senate race between Clinton and New York City Mayor Rudolph Giuliani heats up. Giuliani has repeatedly said he supports pardoning Pollard.

Shul dedicated in Russia

A new synagogue was dedicated last week in a Russian town that saw a dramatic increase in anti-Semitic incidents in 1998.

Local Jews, town officials and a group of American Jews participated in a consecration of the town's new synagogue, which came after an international campaign launched by San Francisco-area Jews to protect Borovich's 300 Jews from neo-Nazi activities.

The synagogue, named Beth Torah after its sister congregation in the Bay Area, also houses a Jewish social club with a library, a welfare organization and a human rights center.

Pentagon honors Spielberg

The Pentagon honored Steven Spielberg last week with the military's highest civilian award for his World War II film "Saving Private Ryan."

Spielberg said at the ceremony, during which he received the Medal for Distinguished Public Service, that "Saving Private Ryan" and "Schindler's List" are the two films that have given him pride.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Religious, secular turn 'turbine' into heavy-metal political battle

By Avi Machlis

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's religious-secular conflict has taken some odd twists and turns in the past, but nobody imagined that the first crisis of Israel's new government would be over 250 tons of equipment for an electrical generator.

For weeks, Israel Electric Corp., the state-owned power monopoly, has been waiting for five shipments of the equipment — called a reheater but popularly known as "the turbine" — from a factory in central Israel to a new power facility being built near Ashkelon on Israel's southern coast.

The problem is that the load is so big that the trucks hog three lanes as they crawl down the highway at less than five miles an hour through major intersections.

So the plan was to ship them on Shabbat, when traffic is lighter and any problem during the 16-hour trip could be easily cleared up before the Sunday rush hour.

Several months ago, the first such shipment went unnoticed.

But that was before the Infrastructure Ministry, which oversees the energy sector, was run by the fervently Orthodox Shas Party.

Enter Eli Suissa, the new Shas infrastructure minister, who said Thursday, "I do not think that if the government will decide to transport the equipment on Shabbat that anyone with a kippah on his head will continue to sit at the government table."

And with that, the government of Prime Minister Ehud Barak was plunged into a coalition crisis.

It all seemed a bit absurd, even to veterans of the religious-secular battlefield.

Yet for days before and after the Shas threat, the "turbine" topped the news.

The Supreme Court ruled the police should decide, radio talk shows could not get enough and, finally, Barak backed the Shabbat shipment.

According to status quo agreements, he said, unusually big cargoes such as these have been moved on Shabbat for 50 years.

A government crisis was averted on Sunday, though, because Barak agreed that a team would look into ways the other parts of the turbine could be moved on weekdays. However, Shas said that if the team decided future moves had to take place on Shabbat, the party would meet to consider its options.

Despite all the talk, neither the secular nor religious general public appeared to be getting too emotionally involved in the fate of the large pile of metal.

Perhaps, said Shlomo Benizri, the Shas health minister, the Israeli media was just latching onto the story for lack of other news during the quiet summer season.

But secular lawmakers continued to warn that the affair showed how an overconfident Shas, with 17 Knesset members and four ministers, could flex its muscle in new ways.

For Benizri of Shas, the issue was a sign of how intolerant secular Israeli society has become toward the Orthodox.

"This has gotten out of control," he told Israel Radio. "I am sure that if the Palestinian Authority or Christians asked not to move the equipment because of a holiday their request would have been respected. But today, because there is this terrible sensitivity in our society, everything the religious ask for is seen as religious coercion."

Naomi Chazan, a Knesset member from the liberal Meretz Party, said she hoped the affair would not set a precedent.

Shinui has repeatedly accused Meretz of "selling out" on its ideals by joining a government with Shas.

"It is not a question of selling out. If you think in those terms there will never be coexistence," Chazan says.

"If this situation is played correctly — and that requires a certain degree of goodwill on both sides — then maybe we will be able to find a real means of coexistence."

Meretz and Shas will have ample opportunities to find out. Israel Electric still has four more shipments to complete. □

Saudis continue volley of criticism leveled at Arafat in the Arab world

By Douglas Davis

LONDON (JTA) — As Israel and the Palestinians appear to be removing obstacles that have hindered their march to peace, moves to discredit Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat are intensifying in the Arab world.

Publicly snubbed by Kuwait and verbally abused by Syria in recent weeks, Arafat was the subject of a ferocious attack Sunday in the leading Saudi-owned newsweekly *al-Majalla*, published in London.

Middle East analysts believe that attempts are being orchestrated to undermine Arafat at home and abroad in order to stymie the Palestinian track and convince Israel to focus first on the Syria/Lebanon dimension of the negotiations.

In *al-Majalla*, which is regarded as the Saudis' flagship weekly, editor Abdelaziz Khamis denounced Arafat for selling out his people's rights to Israel and for subjecting them to undemocratic repressive rule. Significantly, Khamis also revisited Arafat's "political schizophrenia" in adopting a pro-Iraqi stance in the immediate aftermath of the August 1990 invasion of Kuwait, indicating that he has also not been forgiven by Saudi Arabia, the richest of the oil-rich Gulf states.

Khamis said that while the Islamic fundamentalist group Hamas was once hounded by Israel, it now finds itself under "vicious assault" by the Palestinian Authority, whose leaders are "enamored with monopolizing power and convinced that they, and they alone, are always right."

The Palestinian Authority has brought with it a style of political behavior it grew accustomed to in exile, he wrote.

"Instead of fulfilling the Palestinian dream of upholding pluralism and strengthening options for political participation, its repression has become a match for the regimes it emulates and copies," Khamis wrote.

"Because it felt that Hamas and other Palestinian Islamic movements were a popular threat to it, it embarked on a path of destroying them morally and militarily."

On Arafat's handling of the peace process, Khamis wrote, "I don't know what Arafat has left, after having conceded everything to Israel, especially after he agreed to delay implementation of the unfulfilled provisions of the Wye River agreement."

"In my opinion," he continued, "all he can do now is acknowledge what Hamas has been saying about him — that he is building a protectorate and not a state, that he is establishing nothing but a 'South Palestine Army' to emulate the South Lebanese Army, whose objective is to protect Israel and repress his compatriots."

Khamis said it was widely believed that the Palestinian Authority, under Arafat's leadership, would set an example to the Arabs of how to establish a just and civilized government.

"He has the means at his disposal and the Palestinian people boast that they have the highest proportion of educated and cultured people in the Arab world," Khamis wrote.

"But it appears that those who control the Palestinian Authority are merely soldiers who have been saturated with the spirit of repression and are capable of offering only what they have been accustomed to: the stifling of freedoms, closed-minded thinking and intolerance of differing views."

Arafat was previously humiliated at the funeral of Morocco's late King Hassan on July 25 when television cameras caught the Kuwaiti crown prince refusing his outstretched hand while accepting that of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak. □

Israeli justice minister to tackle rampant software piracy problem

By Julia Goldman

NEW YORK (JTA) — Israel is getting into hot water with the United States over the piracy of compact discs and computer software.

"Israel is allegedly a hub of piracy in our part of the world" and a "candidate to be the only country in the highest level" of a U.S. list of countries that are most active in copyright infringement, said Yossi Beilin, Israel's justice minister.

Beilin met in Washington on Aug. 12 with U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno to discuss possible U.S. sanctions for the rampant high-tech forgery.

Penalties could run to more than \$100 million if Israel does not pass new laws protecting copyrighted computer software and music from piracy, Beilin told reporters before his meetings in Washington.

"The dimensions are really frightening," Beilin said at a news conference in New York the day before his trip to Washington.

"It's a killer for the Israeli music industry and in relations between Israel and the United States," said Beilin, who was appointed to head Israel's Justice Ministry when Prime Minister Ehud Barak formed his Cabinet in July.

One high-tech insider told Israel Radio earlier this year that Israel's software industry generates an estimated \$2 billion a year, a large portion of which is exported to the United States. U.S. sanctions, the industry executive said, could spur the pullout of venture-capital investments in the industry in Israel.

In 1998, American companies sustained estimated losses of some \$170 million in pirated music alone, Israel Radio reported in February.

The illegal distribution of such forged materials in Israel parallels similar problems in Eastern Europe and Southeast Asia.

Israel has been creeping up America's list of countries that are most active in music and software piracy, Beilin told reporters. In 1994, Israel was ranked in the lowest level; it moved up one level in 1997 and another level in 1998. If Israel reaches the highest level, Beilin said, sanctions in the form of higher tariffs will ensue.

After nearly a year on the U.S. "priority watch list," Israel received a warning in February that it must crack down on the illegal activity.

American officials demanded that Israel pursue the issue through legislation, enforcement and tough punitive measures.

The deadline for Israeli action is December.

Beilin said Wednesday that in the last few weeks, he was successful in passing a first reading of a bill that would bring heavy punishment against people convicted of forging material.

A special police unit will be created to enforce the law, he said.

Israel's Justice Ministry is coordinating its efforts with the country's Ministry of Industry and Trade and the Public Security Ministry "to fight very hard" against piracy. "It's one of the issues that is high on my agenda," Beilin said. □