



# Daily News Bulletin

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82<sup>nd</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### **Albright arrives in Jerusalem**

U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright left Egypt for Jerusalem on Thursday after Israeli and Palestinian negotiators failed to reach an agreement for implementing the long-delayed Wye accord. As Albright continues her five-day Middle East visit aimed at boosting peace in the region, Israel and the Palestinian Authority continue to disagree over the release of Palestinian prisoners.

### **Russian Jew to visit Iran**

Russian officials are backing the leader of the country's Jewish community over his desire to visit Iran before an expected trial of 13 Iranian Jews on charges of spying for Israel and the United States.

A spokesman for Russia's Foreign Ministry said Russian officials met with Iran's ambassador to Moscow, Mehdi Safari, regarding the upcoming visit of Vladimir Goussinsky, the president of the Russian Jewish Congress. Earlier this year, Goussinsky, a media mogul widely regarded as one of the most influential men in Moscow, called on Russia to intervene on behalf of the 13, who were arrested in March.

### **Sheinbein pleads guilty**

A U.S. teen-ager who fled to Israel and claimed Israeli citizenship after a 1997 murder in Maryland pled guilty to the crime in an Israeli court. Under the terms of Thursday's plea bargain, Samuel Sheinbein was sentenced to 24 years in prison and could be paroled after 16 years. U.S. prosecutors have criticized the plea, which they said gave Sheinbein much less time in jail than he would have received in the United States.

### **Israeli Arab arrested in murders**

Israeli police arrested an Israeli Arab on charges he murdered two Israeli hikers earlier this week. The arrest Wednesday of Abdullah Ighbaria, who has told investigators he set out to "murder Jews," came after a statement apparently issued by Hamas claimed responsibility for the killings.

Because of the Labor Day holiday in the United States, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Monday, Sept. 6.

## TRANSFORMING A COMMUNITY [Part 1 of a Series]

### **Today's adoptions force new thinking in Jewish community**

*By Debra Nussbaum Cohen*

NEW YORK (JTA) — Adoption — it's an ancient practice mentioned often in the Torah. But with modern developments, adoption is transforming the Jewish community.

A growing number of children from different ethnic backgrounds are becoming part of American Jewish families, some of whom are urging a re-evaluation of what it means to look — and be — Jewish.

Gay and lesbian couples seem to be adopting children more than ever before — and are increasingly open, during the process, about their sexual orientation.

More intermarried Jews are adopting, too. One-quarter of those contacting Stars of David, a national support group and information resource network for Jewish adoptive families, are interfaith couples, according to its officials.

As the number of adoptions increase, liberal Jews are increasingly seeking access to mikvahs, the ritual baths in which children are immersed as part of most conversions to Judaism.

And that, in part, is prompting a growing number of Conservative and Reform synagogues to build them.

Adoption has become an increasingly common fact of life in the Jewish community, and attitudes toward it have changed markedly in the last two decades.

What was once a process cloaked in near-secrecy is now a topic explored openly in the dozens of Jewish adoption support groups around North America.

Positive adoption stories are threaded throughout the Torah, though arrangements were generally informal, rather than legal.

Moses was rescued from death by the Pharaoh's family, raised as a non-Jew only to become the redeemer of his people from slavery.

Mordechai raised his niece, Esther, and the Talmud documents the positive views of adoption voiced by ancient rabbinic commentators.

But the contemporary reality isn't always as simple as the biblical stories sometimes seem, and modern attitudes do not always measure up to Jewish tradition's ideals.

According to Shelley Kapnek Rosenberg, an adoptive parent, the attitude at first is, "This is wonderful," that it's a mitzvah to adopt and to form a Jewish family. "Everybody is really thrilled for you.

"On the other hand there is a very subtle questioning, holding back, wondering if this child is as good, can you really love a child who isn't yours biologically," says Kapnek Rosenberg, author of the book, "Adoption and the Jewish Family: Contemporary Perspectives."

Experts say that Jews delay childbearing at least as much — and perhaps more — than other Americans.

Between 15 and 20 percent of American Jews are thought to face fertility problems. A growing number are choosing adoption.

No one knows exactly how many children have been adopted by American Jews, but the best estimates to date come from the 1990 National Jewish Population Study, which found that more than 3 percent of children in Jewish homes — some 60,000 individuals — had been adopted.

Thirteen percent of Jewish couples who were thinking of having children were

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Israelis leave bomb shelters

Life returned to normal Thursday for residents of northern Israel who had spent the night in bomb shelters out of concern that Katyusha attacks could land there after two Lebanese civilians were killed Wednesday. The IDF said two rockets or shells fired toward Israel fell short and landed in Lebanon.

### Telethon held for Turkish victims

Israel Television's Channel 1 conducted a six-hour telethon Thursday night to raise funds for victims of last month's earthquake in Turkey. The broadcast featured appearances by Israeli performers as well as interviews with Israeli survivors of the earthquake and members of the Israeli rescue and relief efforts.

### Hacker pleads not guilty

An Israeli computer hacker and three other friends pleaded not guilty to charges of illegally entering the computers of the Pentagon, NASA and American universities. But one of the five defendants in the case involving Ehud Tanenbaum, known as "The Analyzer," pleaded guilty to the charges and was expected to serve as a witness for the prosecution, Israel Radio said.

### Israeli town uses PR man

An Israeli town's use of a public relations consultant to draw attention to its battle against poverty and unemployment appears to be paying off. Demonstrations by residents received widespread media coverage recently, and Trade and Industry Minister Ran Cohen appointed an emergency team to investigate ways to assist the economically beleaguered town of Kiryat Malachi.

### NBA's Heat to blaze Israel

A National Basketball Association team is scheduled to play an exhibition game in Israel this fall. The Miami Heat will play Maccabi Tel Aviv on Oct. 11.



## Daily News Bulletin

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considering adoption, according to the study, and more than 165,000 Jewish couples had sought help with adoption.

Those numbers are now a decade old, and they are expected to increase when new data is compiled for the National Jewish Population Study 2000.

One-quarter of those adopted were born abroad, a percentage that experts say is rising. In each case, adoption — domestic or international; closed, in which birth and adoptive families don't meet, or open, in which they do have contact — is spiritually, psychologically and practically complex.

Most couples adopt only after years of painful and expensive battles against infertility. Many find that they encounter ambivalence — within themselves and from their families and communities.

For Jews in particular, it is often difficult "to let go of the biological dream," says Rabbi Simkha Weintraub, a couples therapist, rabbinic director of the New York Jewish Board of Family & Children's Services and father of two adopted children.

"Some people who are very secular and non-observant suddenly find themselves having the most cloistered and even chauvinistic ideas of what it is to be Jewish."

Yet while the road to adoption is mined with painful experiences, the result for most is joyful. Many find support and encouragement in their Jewish communities.

Rabbi Joseph Schonberger and his wife were living in Bangor, Maine, 10 years ago when they brought home from Honduras the eldest of their three adopted children.

"The whole community met us at the airport with balloons late at night," recalls Schonberger, a Conservative rabbi who now leads Temple El Emeth in Youngstown, Ohio. "They couldn't have been more supportive."

Others, however, encounter subtle questioning.

Says Kapnek Rosenberg: "In the Jewish community there's a subtle attitude of 'Does this child come from good stock?' There's a subtle undercurrent of wondering."

There is also a vague sense of tribal connection among Jews, leading some to try to find Jewish babies to adopt, though few are available. "It's an inherent bias among Jews. They like to stick with their own kind," says Susan Katz, a director of Stars of David.

Finding a baby to adopt is an arduous process. There are an estimated 40 couples for each white infant available domestically, which prompts many couples to go abroad to Russia, China or Latin America.

Jews sometimes encounter greater difficulties because foreign birth parents, given the choice of whom to place their baby with, often prefer Christians.

There is also some anti-Jewish bias at some domestic adoption agencies.

"There are a lot of Christian agencies which are not friendly toward Jews adopting and have religious restrictions, though Jews may not realize it" going into the process, says Schonberger.

The struggle to adopt is compounded by a lack of formal Jewish communal support, say some Jewish adoptive parents.

There are support groups for Jewish parents, and some Jewish family service organizations provide home studies, which are prerequisites for adoption.

But there is little financial support available and few Jewish agencies that help find children for placement. Each adoption costs an average of \$25,000, and hopeful parents-to-be often drain their savings accounts, borrow from relatives and take out second and third mortgages on their houses in their pursuit of a child.

"We're still paying our loans off," though the youngest of their two children was adopted four years ago, says Weintraub, who believes that if the Jewish community, which values children, "really wanted to help, it would at least provide interest-free loans" to aid with expenses.

Katz of Stars of David says that attitudes about adoption have changed dramatically since she brought home her oldest son, Michael, 25 years ago.

"In those days, there were no adoption support groups and certainly none that addressed the needs and concerns of Jews.

"It was really very painful to have no one to help us, and to be groping around blindly for what to do and to have no one to share the experience with," says Katz.

That led her to start the Chicago section of Stars of David, which now has 35 chapters around North America and responds to hundreds of inquiries a year.

All told, when it comes to how the Jewish community deals with adoption, says Kapnek Rosenberg, "we've come a long way but have a way to go." □

## JEWISH WORLD

### AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

## Germany continues its atonement by inviting Barak to the new Berlin

By Toby Axelrod

BERLIN (JTA) — Sixty years after the start of World War II, Germany's chancellor has announced that Israel's prime minister will be the first foreign leader to officially visit the rededicated capital of a reunified Germany.

The visit is planned for Sept. 21, one day after the end of Yom Kippur, the Jewish Day of Atonement.

German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder made the announcement Wednesday as part of a news conference marking the 60th anniversary of the German invasion of Poland, which triggered what he called "one of the most awful crimes of German history."

Schroeder, speaking for the first time from his temporary headquarters here, suggested that the invitation to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak was linked with a feeling of "responsibility to not forget our history, and also to not repress it."

Schroeder's invitation to Barak — which has been accepted, sources say — is a significant step for the administration that claims to represent Germany's postwar era. Increasingly, Germans want to lift the cloud of World War II from their conscience — and Schroeder, who at 55 is years younger than his predecessor, Helmut Kohl, has expressed a desire to look more to the future than the past.

Such sentiments have alarmed observers who fear Germany will lose its soul again as older leaders with a memory of the war are replaced. But Schroeder and his ministers have occasionally drawn links between the experiences of the past and the decisions of today, even when it seems politically dangerous to do so.

Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer shook up his pacifist Green Party when he invoked the slogan "Never Again Auschwitz" to justify German involvement in NATO's air strikes against Kosovo. In June the Parliament finally voted to create a national Holocaust memorial in Berlin, after more than 10 years of heated debate. And Michael Naumann, culture minister, has pledged to double the funds available for the preservation of sites and memorials related to Nazi war crimes.

In related news, German President Johannes Rau said Wednesday that compensation for Nazi-era slave laborers is a necessary element in future good relations between Poland and Germany. He made the comments to Alexander Kwasniewski, Poland's president, during commemorative ceremonies at the German-Polish border, where the first shots of World War II were fired.

Wednesday would have been the deadline for creation of a German industry compensation fund, and Kwasniewski has reportedly expressed deep disappointment that the goal was not met. Poles were among the many millions forced to work for German industry during the war. Talks on the fund are scheduled to resume in October.

The topic of reparations is often invoked by those Germans who say they are tired of paying for the sins of their grandparents. Such views may be linked in part to high unemployment in Germany — in some areas of the former East Germany more than 20 percent. Increasingly, it is popular to blame foreigners for taking jobs, although statistics show that they are not.

When it comes to blaming Jews, the Holocaust compensation theme often is invoked.

Standing with his Polish counterpart Wednesday, Rau called reparations an important element in "reconciliation and good neighborliness," and added that good relations could not be taken for granted.

Official relations today between the nations are warm, with Germany supporting Poland's bid for admission into the European Union, but a recent opinion poll showed that a quarter of Poles — predominantly the older generation — believe that reconciliation with Germany is not possible.

Meanwhile, Polish victims of the Sachsenhausen concentration camp near Berlin were honored with a plaque installed at the camp memorial Wednesday, and in Jerusalem, the German government placed a wreath in memory of all victims of the Holocaust at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial. □

### Russia vows crackdown

Russia has placed special controls on the activities of groups that subscribe to anti-Semitic views, Russian Prime Minister Vladimir Putin told a Russian Jewish leader.

In a brief meeting Wednesday, Putin told Zinovy Kogan that his government is determined to prevent anti-Semitic violence, according to Kogan. Putin's statement was his first on the issue of anti-Semitism in Russia since the former KGB spymaster assumed the post of prime minister last month.

### German bank denies charges

A German bank denied that it is withholding files relating to the Holocaust era. Deutsche Bank made the denial after Ed Fagan, a lawyer who represents Holocaust victims, said he had unearthed new documents that show several German banks had profited from Nazi-looted gold and slave labor.

Fagan said the documents came to light after a settlement was reached involving Bank Austria and its subsidiary, Creditanstalt, and would lead to a settlement with German banks that would make the \$1.2 billion settlement with Swiss banks "look like peanuts."

### Australian students protest

Some 200 students at a Jewish day school in Australia protested earlier this week the expulsion of 11 pupils who were suspended until 2001 over incidents involving marijuana. The protesters at Moriah College argue that the students need counseling and compassion instead of stigma.

### Jews blamed in bank scandal

A Russian Communist lawmaker accused the "Jewish banking mafia" of money-laundering for Russian organized crime in a scheme involving a U.S. bank.

In the article published by the nationalist paper *Zavtra*, or Tomorrow, Yuri Ivanov noted the Jewish-sounding names of those who have been linked to an alleged scheme to funnel more than \$15 billion out of Russia through the Bank of New York.

### Spielberg supports Yiddish site

A foundation headed by Steven Spielberg donated \$500,000 to help create a Web site that will document the history of New York's Yiddish theater. The money from the Righteous Persons Foundation will help set up Second Avenue Online, which will feature oral histories, manuscripts and musical scores. It will also house an interactive exhibit on Second Avenue, the home of Yiddish theater in New York in the early part of this century.

**NEWS ANALYSIS****Sabbath transport crisis highlights a fragile religious-secular marriage***By David Landau*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak has emerged unscathed from a potential crisis with the Orthodox partners in his government.

But no sooner had that crisis — prompted by plans for transporting parts of an electric power plant on the Sabbath — reached its end over the weekend, than Barak plunged into a new round of Cabinet quarrels over the more than \$1 billion in cuts he is proposing for the nation's budget.

Barak's success in navigating the crisis over the power plant has given him some breathing space, say sources close to him — as well as a strong injection of self-confidence for waging the budget battle. If he also succeeds on this front, he will immediately face further political challenges as he seeks to shepherd through the Knesset new peace moves with the Palestinians, and perhaps also with Syria.

Indeed, the still new but brash prime minister has a tight schedule of fights ahead. And as he faces these challenges, Barak is anxious to keep all of the seven parties represented in his leftist-Orthodox government together for as long as he possibly can.

The power plant affair was the first full-fledged crisis that the fledgling Barak government has faced. It involved the transportation of a series of components for a power plant from the factory where they are made, in the center of the country, to a power station in Ashkelon. In the past, the parts were transported on weekends, when roads are less crowded and can be closed by police with the least danger to the general public.

This arrangement had never before prompted strains in the always delicate balance between Orthodox and secular interests.

But this time, Eli Suissa, National Infrastructure Minister and a member of the fervently Orthodox Shas Party, demanded that the transportation of the components take place during the week to avoid any violation of the Sabbath by the workers and police escort involved in the operation.

Political insiders say Suissa knew as well as anyone that Orthodox officials have turned a blind eye to such operations for decades. But, as a close ally of fallen Shas political leader Aryeh Deri — who was sentenced in April to four years in jail on charges of bribe-taking, fraud and breach of the public trust — and as a longtime hard-liner on the land-for-peace issue, Suissa was said to be eager to undermine Shas' alliance with Barak.

Whatever the true origins of the affair, it quickly mushroomed into a threat to Barak's government. The fervently Orthodox United Torah Judaism bloc, which holds five of the 120 Knesset seats, said it would quit the coalition if the transportation went ahead last Friday night. Had Shas, which has 17 seats, and the National Religious Party, which has five, followed UTJ's lead, Barak could have found himself without a governing majority.

Granted, Barak could have remedied the situation by bringing the secularist Shinui Party into his government. The Orthodox parties know this — and are especially anxious to prevent it from happening, given Shinui's radically anti-Orthodox policies.

Barak could also have resumed his suspended coalition

negotiations with the Likud Party — as Orthodox political officials also know.

Ultimately, UTJ officials backed off their threatened defection, accepting a purported "effort to mitigate Sabbath desecration" by using non-Jews in the transportation of the power plant components — even though the media quickly disclosed that many Jewish workers and policemen were in fact still involved in the operation.

But Barak also backed down, appointing a panel of top officials under Cabinet Minister Rabbi Michael Melchior to consider ways to transport subsequent sections of the turbine on weekday nights.

Plainly, Barak is not anxious to lose the Orthodox wing of his Cabinet and to have to start coalition bargaining anew. He wants the Orthodox parties to stay in the government during the crucial months ahead, when he plans to negotiate a final-status agreement with the Palestinians — and perhaps, too, a wholesale withdrawal from the Golan Heights in the context of peace with Syria.

The rabbinical leaders of UTJ, Shas and the NRP are politically valuable allies when swathes of biblical land are to be traded for peace. To have the nation's Orthodox rabbis all lined up against his peace policy would make the going tough indeed for the premier, even if he could retain a workable Knesset majority. □

**World Jewish Congress troubled by pope's planned Saddam meeting***By Douglas Davis*

LONDON (JTA) — The World Jewish Congress finds it "deeply troubling" that the pope plans to meet Iraqi President Saddam Hussein in early December.

Pope John Paul II will visit Iraq for three days starting Dec. 2, in a trip that will include a helicopter visit to the town of Ur, the traditional birthplace of Abraham, some 200 miles south of Baghdad.

Elan Steinberg, WJC's executive director, said the pope's desire to visit Ur before the turn of the millennium has been known for some time. "There are questions as to the propriety of that," Steinberg said. But that is a "different dimension" from his meeting with Saddam Hussein, in defiance of U.N. sanctions.

"We at the WJC find this deeply troubling."

The pope has emphasized that the trip to Iraq is part of a millennial personal pilgrimage to biblical sites and that it will have no political significance beyond a message of peace. But observers believe the visit is bound to represent a significant diplomatic boost for Saddam, who has been treated as an international pariah for the past nine years.

The Chaldean Catholic patriarch, Raphael Bidawid, who represents some 80 percent of Iraq's 1 million-member Christian minority, has accused the United States and Israel of "trying hard to prevent the visit."

James Foley, a U.S. State Department spokesman, said last Friday there is concern the "regime in Iraq would attempt to manipulate the visit for political purposes." Foley said that while the United States sympathized with the pope's desire to make the pilgrimage, "Iraq remains a brutal dictatorship where torture and summary execution are commonplace." □

*(JTA staff writer Julia Goldman in New York contributed to this report.)*