



# Daily News Bulletin

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82<sup>nd</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Final-status talks launched

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### Red Cross may include Israel

The International Red Cross is considering granting membership to Israel's Magen David Adom.

At an international assembly in Geneva last week, American Red Cross officials urged the inclusion of the Israeli humanitarian organization.

### Pope thought Nazis might win

A newly discovered document may help explain why Pope Pius XII did not condemn the Holocaust. The U.S. envoy to the Vatican, Harold Tittmann, wrote in the document that a highly placed Vatican official said the pope did not believe the Allies "were in a position to win" the war.

The document was discovered by Richard Chesnoff, author of the new book "Pack of Thieves." The document is excerpted in this week's edition of U.S. News & World Report.

The magazine's article also states that a soon-to-be-released Argentine government report confirms that the Vatican was active in seeking Latin American visas for fleeing Nazis.

### Russia seeks slave compensation

Russia is reportedly calling on Germany to pay some \$2.7 billion to compensate Nazi-era slave laborers.

Russia has taken part in settlement talks since March, but only now has presented its claim.

### Museum may have looted art

A North Carolina museum is at the center of a dispute over a 16th-century painting that may have been looted by the Nazis.

Two elderly Austrian sisters say the painting by Lucas Cranach the Elder was stolen from their family. Estimated to be worth \$750,000, "Madonna and Child in a Landscape" is now held by the North Carolina Museum of Art after changing hands at least three times since the end of World War II.

## TEN YEARS AFTER THE WALL

### German Jewish life arises anew from dustbins of communism, Nazism

By Toby Axelrod

BERLIN (JTA) — Inna Orlowski sits at an outdoor cafe near the Jewish high school here, sipping a cappuccino. Bicyclists pass, sending long shadows across the cobblestone street.

It is a long way from Russia's Ural Mountains, where Orlowski, 20, with close-cropped blond curls and a ready smile, was born — and a long way from Israel, where she wants to be. Across town, Inna Slavskaja, 44, a Yiddish singer from Birobidzhan, smokes another cigarette. Her husband, Igor, died three years ago, and she is raising their son, Genja, now 11, alone.

"I see myself as Jewish," says Slavskaja, a small, dark-haired woman with sad eyes. But Genja, though born in Ukraine, feels like a German.

In the evening, Lyonia, an engineer from Lithuania, sits in a grocery store and watches his wife, Marina, a slightly plump woman with dyed-blond hair, count the pfennigs of another drunkard making a small purchase. Lyonia, 53, a short man with glasses and a receding hairline, had wanted to emigrate to America. For now, the two, who requested that their last names not be published, live in Germany.

These people are among the tens of thousands of Jews who, instead of going to Israel, caught the wave of freedom that swept the former Soviet Union after the fall of communism and rode it into the land they always associated with Hitler and death camps. In the last decade of the century, their arrival has dramatically changed the Jewish landscape of Germany, more than doubling its Jewish population and making Germany the only country in Europe whose Jewish population is significantly growing.

In fact, since 1990, Germany's official Jewish population has risen from 35,000 to 75,000, nearly a fifth of its prewar level.

With Germany settling its immigrants on a per-state quota basis, new Jewish communities are being established virtually overnight in towns and cities where no Jews have lived since World War II. In some cities, like Munich, Berlin and Frankfurt, the Jewish population has soared.

"I believe in the year 2004 we will have 100,000 Jews in Germany, making one of the largest Jewish communities in Europe," said Michel Friedman, a Frankfurt attorney and member of the board of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

There are now nearly 12,000 Jews in Berlin alone, a tiny minority in this city of 3.8 million inhabitants — but Berlin now has a Jewish community larger than that of Milan, Italy, and many other major European cities.

"The immigrants brought back life into a community that was in danger of being very over-aged, to put it lightly," said Nicola Galliner, director of Jewish adult education programming in Berlin. "We have two Jewish junior high schools and one high school in Berlin, and none of these schools would have been possible without these immigrants."

Pushed to leave the former Soviet Union because of economic hardship, anti-Semitism or fears for the future in chaotic new conditions, all have personal reasons for choosing Germany over Israel, where hundreds of thousands of other ex-Soviet Jews have immigrated since 1990. These reasons include Germany's liberal policy in accepting ex-Soviet Jews, not to mention a desire by many to live in a country that is both a solid democracy and a firm member of the European Union.

"It's very difficult to get to America, you can't get into England," said a Berlin

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Barak, Arafat arrive in Paris

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat arrived separately in Paris for talks with foreign leaders attending a meeting of Socialists and Social Democrats from 139 nations.

The two leaders have not scheduled direct talks but will have the opportunity to meet on several occasions, including Tuesday, when they follow one another in addressing the Socialist International. The gathering is expected to provide the two with the opportunity to engage in behind-the-scenes diplomacy.

### Disabled end sit-down strike

Disabled Israelis ended a 37-day sit-down strike at the Finance Ministry in Jerusalem after the prime minister and finance minister agreed to increase their stipends over the next two years. Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's initial declaration that he was "not moved by tears" gave way under pressure to fulfill a campaign pledge to help the disadvantaged.

### Women to become reservists

The Israeli army plans to call up women for reserve duty. Israel Radio reported Monday that the new policy would initially apply to women serving in the air force, intelligence and home front command.

Women usually do not serve as reservists, with the exception of soldiers in anti-aircraft units, who can be called up until the age of 27, unless they are pregnant or have children.

### Cruelest month in Lebanon

October was the most violent month in 17 years for Israel and its allies in southern Lebanon, according to a U.N. official. Militants attacked Israeli troops and the South Lebanon Army 280 times last month, said U.N. spokesman Timur Goksel. U.N. sources told Reuters that the rise in attacks indicates competition between rival Muslim groups Amal and Hezbollah.

Jewish activist who asked to remain anonymous. "Germany has the highest standard of living in Europe. It's Germany or Israel, and if you are desperate you will go anywhere."

The Slavskajas, for example, left Ukraine in 1991, after learning that their son's playground had radioactive sand in it, probably from Chernobyl.

"I knew Germany took Jewish families," said Inna Slavskaja, who had cousins in Berlin. "We came with two suitcases."

Germany's open door for Jews is no accident. It is connected with responsibility for the Holocaust. After the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991, Germany established a liberal immigration policy for Jews. They are eligible for housing, financial aid, language instruction and help in finding work.

They may also become German citizens more quickly than usual, a right usually extended only to immigrants from ethnic German families.

The influx has presented major challenges as well as rewards.

How does the established Jewish community integrate a largely non-religious population? And how does Germany justify its liberal policy toward Jewish immigration when more than 4 million Germans are unemployed and when Israel wants these Jewish immigrants for itself?

To be sure, Germany's Jewish newcomers often have little connection to the Holy Land and little more than a piece of paper certifying their Jewishness.

Raised in the Communist tradition of atheism, they usually have more cultural than religious bonds to Judaism.

But the Hebrew stamp on one's passport — once associated with discrimination — is now virtually a ticket out of a world whose poverty and growing xenophobia outweigh the advantages of free speech and free enterprise.

Newcomers need to learn German, and to find homes and jobs. Jewish leaders would like them to show an interest in religion, and not just to use Judaism as a ticket for social help. For some, the process has produced resounding success.

"In Frankfurt we have had an unbelievable infusion of oxygen into Jewish life with these former Soviet Jews," Friedman said. "They are creative, a lot of them are artists, and the younger generation is very quickly integrated."

But many who work with new immigrants express frustration and even cynicism.

"After 10 years, people here still make their Passover seders in Russian," said Judith Kessler, who has been handling immigration issues for the Jewish community in Berlin since 1990, coordinating language classes, vocational training and social clubs, and publishing a German-Russian Jewish magazine.

"We have done something wrong," said Kessler, who herself came to Germany from Poland in 1972. "We took them by the hand and served them in their own language." And Andy Steiman, who until recently was acting rabbi for the former East German state of Mecklenburg, dismissed the idea of a real "Jewish revival." It's just numbers, he said.

He told of a young couple who met because of a Passover seder, which they attended because it means a free meal. "When they got married," he said, "they didn't want to have a chupah because they think it is antiquated. And when they had a baby boy, they didn't want to have him circumcised because they claimed it is a human right not to be harmed bodily."

Ironically, some of the new immigrants who most want to be involved Jewishly are, as children of Jewish fathers and gentile mothers, not considered Jewish according to halachah, or Jewish law, and thus, according to community regulations, unable to take part in all official communal activities.

"It's a big problem," said Kessler. "They say, rightly, 'In Russia we were Jews, and here we are Russian. Why will no one have us?'"

But some, she said, are getting "closer to Judaism" in a variety of ways. Some, for example, are taking conversion classes, with some men even being circumcised. Others are immersing themselves in a cultural rather than religious Jewish orientation.

Inna Slavskaja's Yiddish cabaret performances attract good-sized crowds around Germany, mostly non-Jewish. Her identity is more cultural than religious. But her son is talking about a Bar Mitzvah. "I have nothing against it," she said. "It will take a lot of practice, but I am happy." □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Rehab starts at Auschwitz shul

A ceremony marked the start of renovations at the only remaining synagogue near the site of the Auschwitz death camp.

Monday's event, attended by several Holocaust survivors, coincided with the 61st anniversary of Kristallnacht, the Nov. 9-10 pogrom in Germany and Austria.

The decaying Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue is the last of a dozen that served more than 7,000 Jews in the area before World War II.

### Emissaries visit rebbe's grave

Some 1,800 Lubavitch emissaries from around the world prayed at the gravesite in New York of the late Lubavitcher rebbe.

Sunday's visit to the grave of Menachem Mendel Schneerson was part of the emissaries' annual conference in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn.

"You don't have to be a big Chasid to feel something special here. You feel you aren't lonely," said Rabbi Noah Gansburg, who is stationed in Sao Paulo, Brazil.

### Shoah-teaching center planned

The Reform movement's Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion is establishing a new center to train teachers about the Holocaust.

The Center on the Holocaust, to be located at the seminary's flagship campus in Cincinnati, will also host academic conferences and be a repository for educational material on the Shoah.

### Belgian extremists banned

City officials in a Belgian city banned a meeting by an extreme right-wing party that would have coincided with the Nov. 9 anniversary of Kristallnacht.

A spokeswoman for the mayor's office in Ghent said the meeting of the Flemish Bloc was canceled because of public safety concerns.

The anti-immigrant party won 9.9 percent of the vote in Belgium's general elections in June.

### Judaism hits a home run

A Jewish outfielder is making his religion a central factor in his baseball career.

Shawn Green "told us he wanted to play in a major U.S. city with a large Jewish population," said Gord Ash, the general manager for Green's current team, the Toronto Blue Jays.

Green, who was reportedly set to be traded to the Los Angeles Dodgers, was quoted earlier this year as saying he wanted to have a Bar Mitzvah.

Green made the American League All-Star team this past season.

## Israelis, Palestinians launch talks under a spotlight and tight deadline

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli and Palestinian negotiators have launched talks aimed at achieving a final peace agreement.

The final-status talks, which began Monday — nearly four years later than originally envisioned in the 1993 Oslo accord — took place amid the all-too-familiar landscape of a terror attack that occurred a day earlier.

Meeting in the West Bank town of Ramallah, chief Israeli negotiator Oded Eran and his Palestinian counterpart, Yasser Abed Rabbo, shook hands for the cameras before sitting down to discuss mostly procedural issues facing them as they try to reach a framework for a final accord by February.

The meeting lasted less than two hours, but negotiators later said they planned to meet again Thursday and hold several sessions each week to meet the February deadline.

There were opening ceremonies for the talks in 1996 as well as some six weeks ago, but Monday's session represented the first time the two sides had actually gotten down to formal business.

Along with creating an outline for an agreement within little more than 100 days, the two sides have also committed themselves to signing a final agreement by September.

Outside the Ramallah hotel where Monday's talks were held, a small group of Jewish protesters held signs that read, "Don't Abandon 200,000 Israeli Citizens," referring to Jewish settlers in the West Bank.

At a news conference after the meeting, Abed Rabbo described "settlement activities" as the main obstacle to achieving a final peace.

The meeting came one day after more than 30 Israelis were wounded, most of them lightly, in three pipe-bomb explosions in the coastal city of Netanya.

Israeli Public Security Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami said Monday investigators were examining the possibility the attack was linked to the anniversary of the October 1995 assassination in Malta of Fathi Shakaki, the leader of Islamic Jihad, which opposes the Oslo peace process.

No group claimed responsibility for the three pipe bombs that exploded Sunday. A fourth pipe bomb did not detonate.

Israeli and Palestinian officials blamed the attack on Islamic militants seeking to derail the peace process.

The Israeli Cabinet was meeting to approve the next withdrawal from the West Bank when the attack occurred.

The next day in Ramallah, negotiators for the two sides were upbeat despite the difficult issues confronting them — including the final status of Jerusalem, Jewish settlements, Palestinian refugees, borders and water rights.

"We recognize the enormity of the problems," Eran said at the news conference. "But we commit ourselves, without reservations, to holding these negotiations as partners, to maintaining a dialogue based on mutual respect."

Abed Rabbo described the atmosphere of the first session as "very frank, very constructive and very open."

"It's a historic moment, and we believe through continuous and extensive work" the two sides will "accomplish a framework agreement for final status on the 15th of February."

During the meeting, the sides exchanged vastly differing policy positions.

The Palestinians seek an independent Palestinian state with eastern Jerusalem as its capital, demand an end to Jewish settlements and the right of return for Palestinian refugees. They also expect that the talks will be based on U.N. resolutions 242 and 338, which were reached in 1967 and 1973 and established the land-for-peace principle.

Israel has maintained that Jerusalem is the eternal, undivided capital, that there will not be a return to the pre-1967 borders, that it will maintain Jewish settlement blocs in the West Bank and that no foreign army will deploy west of the Jordan River. □

## NEWS ANALYSIS

**Are fences good neighbors for Israelis and Palestinians?***By Gil Sedan*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — This week's bomb explosions in Netanya have given new life to the controversial idea of creating a physical separation between Israelis and Palestinians.

Deeming it the best way to protect against terror attacks, numerous officials in successive Israeli governments have suggested erecting a fence along the border between Israel and the West Bank.

While some Israelis view the idea against the backdrop of security concerns, Palestinians, despite their eagerness to proclaim their political independence, say separation would be tantamount to economic strangulation.

In one of the rare occasions when they agree with the Palestinians, Jewish settlers in the West Bank also oppose the idea, saying it will forever cut them off from the Jewish state. The proposal came up again Sunday, within hours after the explosions.

"I think we must move forward and view the separation as a central objective when we reach a final agreement with the Palestinians," said Communications Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer.

Three weeks ago, anticipating the start of the final-status negotiations, Prime Minister Ehud Barak pulled the separation idea out of the political deep freeze.

"A fence should set a border between the Palestinian entity and the State of Israel," Barak said at the time.

He made a point of adding: "The fence will not be hostile and should allow for cooperation."

Barak explained that he was bringing up the separation idea at the start of the final-status talks in order to provide a "technical solution" that could be "translated" into practical terms during the negotiations.

The idea of separation is as old as the Israeli administration of the West Bank. It goes back to the 1967 Six-Day War, when then-Defense Minister Moshe Dayan called for opening borders between Israel and the territories. The idea, which carried the day, ran contrary to the stiff opposition led by then-Finance Minister Pinchas Sapir, who called for separation.

In his comments three weeks ago, Barak was reviving the separation proposal put forward by then-Public Security Minister Moshe Shahal in 1996, following a series of devastating terror attacks in which suicide bombers killed 59 Israelis and wounded some 220 others.

The Shahal proposal called for erecting a fence along Israel's approximately 190-mile future border with the West Bank, similar to the fence along its border with the Gaza Strip.

It also called for some 15 to 18 checkpoints along the border, with similar arrangements to be made around Jerusalem.

To avoid infiltration, border patrol units, thermal detection devices and reconnaissance planes would be employed to prevent any unauthorized crossings.

The fence would cost a projected \$300 million.

Three years ago, a delegation of senior Israeli police officials visited the border between the United States and Mexico to learn from the American experience.

Despite the difficulties that U.S. immigration officials encounter, the Israelis came back with the conclusion Israel could at least equal what the United States is doing along a border that is 10 times longer. The separation concept is problematic for Israeli supporters of a "Greater Israel" because it would mean that Israel has accepted the 1967 borders.

This reason is why former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his government would not follow the separation concept of the previous Labor administration.

"I foresee a settlement in which there are two living entities that are integrated with one another," he said, dismissing the separation idea.

However, following a number of terrorist attacks against Israel, Netanyahu changed his mind. He instructed the defense establishment to prepare blueprints for a physical separation and to impose stricter limitations on the entry of Palestinians into Israel.

This possibility is what the Palestinians fear most.

"The present economic conditions in the Palestinian Authority are worse than during the Israeli occupation, and most Palestinians fear that things will get worse," Hisham Awartani, head of the economics department at Najah University in Nablus, said last week during a lecture in Jerusalem.

Awartani cautioned against taking the separation idea too far.

"If they want to separate and cooperate, why not," he said. "But if they mean economic divorce, it is suicide."

In addition to creating "economic suicide" for Palestinians, separation would create a major security problem for Israel, he warned.

"You cannot have hungry neighbors," he said.

But some Israeli experts claim that the economic argument is invalid.

Dan Shueftan of Haifa University writes in his soon-to-be-published book, "The Necessity of Separation," that any improvement in the standard of living in the territories would not necessarily diminish the level of Palestinian violence against Israel.

Shueftan quoted figures showing that Palestinian violence increased even in those years when the Palestinian economy was showing a marked improvement over earlier years.

Shueftan further argued that Palestinian radicals are not economically motivated.

Because a quick solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict is not in sight, he concluded, Israel must adopt a strategy of total separation.

Was this what Premier Ehud Barak meant when he spoke recently of separation?

Barak did not elaborate on the issue, which generated suspicions that he was not quite sure what exactly he had in mind.

Perhaps more clues will come from him as the final-status talks proceed. □

**'Farmbelt Fuhrer' arrested**

NEW YORK (JTA) — A neo-Nazi deported by Germany to the United States earlier this year after serving time in European prisons for spreading anti-Semitic and racist literature was arrested in Nebraska for illegally trying to obtain a gun permit.

Gary Lauck, who lied on a gun permit application about his four years in prison, has argued in court that his German conviction should not be held against him in the United States, where his right to distribute the material would be protected. □