



Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 78, No. 113

Friday, June 16, 2000

83rd Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Tycoon attacks gov't from jail

Russian Jewish media tycoon Vladimir Goussinsky wrote in a note from jail that his arrest was the work of a government that fears a free press and is moving toward a dictatorship.

Russia's leaders are seeking "a return to the totalitarian past, complete with gulags," he said.

The handwritten note was read Thursday by his lawyer outside the jail where Goussinsky has been held since his arrest Tuesday.

Meanwhile, speaking in Berlin, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Goussinsky's arrest was "probably an excessive measure," but repeated that he cannot influence the decisions of Russian state prosecutors.

Valery Nikolayev, chief investigator in the case, said he would file charges of fraud and embezzlement against Goussinsky on Friday.

Arafat bemoans state of talks

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak "lacks a desire to work with us in order to achieve a comprehensive lasting peace," Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat charged after meeting with President Clinton at the White House. [Page 2]

UJC pledges to Birthright

The umbrella organization of North America's Jewish federations announced it will become a full partner in Birthright Israel and pledged \$52.5 million to the program over the next five years.

The United Jewish Communities joins the Israeli government, which has pledged \$70 million, and 14 philanthropists, who have also pledged a total of \$70 million, in supporting the program that sends Jewish young adults on free 10-day trips to Israel.

SLA leader accuses Hezbollah

Hezbollah is engaging in "a form of ethnic cleansing" against former allies of Israel who remained in Lebanon after the Israeli troop withdrawal, according to the former deputy commander of the South Lebanon Army.

Hezbollah is "oppressing and trying to empty the villages" of southern Lebanon, Col. Sharbel Barakat said Thursday at a meeting in New York.

He also countered reports that SLA morale had collapsed and its members gave up the fight against Hezbollah when Israel withdrew its troops last month.

The post-Bar Mitzvah dropout: Study confirms a dismal record

By Julie Wiener

NEW YORK (JTA) — Elliot Maltz had a Bar Mitzvah two years ago, but says his Hebrew school experience was "really boring" and "discouraged me from future practice."

Maltz, a West Hartford, Conn., 15-year-old who spends most of his free time playing sports, says being Jewish is important to him, but "since I cannot really see its positive effects, it does not make me excited."

Engaging Jewish Teens Part 1 of a Series

It has become a truism for many American Jews that the Bar Mitzvah is more a farewell ritual than a welcoming ceremony. But now, amid national efforts in renaissance and outreach, Jewish organizations are looking for ways to reach the Elliot Maltzes.

What is at stake, say educators, is keeping teens in the community and showing them how Judaism can make their lives meaningful at an age many believe is key in cementing lifetime values and behavioral patterns.

Adolescence is "a stage of life in which young people are beginning to make really important decisions for themselves and create their own affiliations," said Robert Sherman, executive director of San Francisco's Bureau of Jewish Education, which ranks outreach to teens as one of its top three priorities. The other two are family education and professional development for Jewish educators.

The challenges in engaging teens are significant, with Jewish involvement — at least for non-Orthodox teens — dropping steadily throughout the high school years.

A recent study of 1,300 Jewish teens and their parents in Massachusetts — one of the only studies looking at a cross section of teens, not just those who are active in Jewish life — confirmed that Jewish involvement steadily drops after the Bar Mitzvah.

According to the study, 86 percent of Jewish seventh graders participate in Jewish activities, compared with 56 percent of 12th graders.

The study, conducted by Brandeis University, defines Jewish participation broadly — from participating in a youth group to attending a Jewish summer camp to using a Jewish community center at least once a year.

Although focused on one state, the study, say researchers, likely reflects the experience of most non-Orthodox Jewish teens in America.

Some of the key findings of the Brandeis University study, which has not yet been published, include:

- The drop in Jewish involvement is simultaneous with increasing amounts of time spent on homework and part-time jobs;
- Girls are more likely than boys to express interest in going on Israel experience programs, and they participate at higher rates in formal Jewish education;
- Most report they did not enjoy Hebrew school as much as regular school. (The majority of participants in the study, like most Reform and Conservative Jews, attended congregational schools rather than day schools.) Approximately 25 percent said they never enjoyed being in Jewish school, and approximately 30 percent said they seldom enjoyed it, although the majority said they sometimes, often or always enjoyed regular school;
- Parental opinion strongly affects teens' attitudes on intermarriage: 73 percent of teens whose parents say marrying Jewish is not important also believe this is not

MIDEAST FOCUS

Troops fire at U.N. peacekeepers

Israeli troops fired over the heads of U.N. peacekeepers at the Lebanese border, forcing a suspension of U.N. efforts to verify that Israel had withdrawn completely from Lebanon. Asked for an explanation, Israeli officials said they would investigate.

Unity idea floated to help peace

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak said he would be willing to lead a national unity government, but only if it provides a broad consensus for his political objectives. Barak's comments came after Foreign Minister David Levy backed the idea, saying it is necessary in light of difficulties in negotiations with the Palestinians.

Plan could end Shas funding feud

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak proposed transferring oversight of the Shas educational system from the Education Ministry to another ministry. The idea could provide a way to resolve the crisis between Barak and the fervently Orthodox Shas Party over funding for its financially troubled school system.

Such a move would remove responsibility for the network from Education Minister Yossi Sarid, the leader of the secular Meretz Party, whom Shas blames for the crisis.

Meanwhile, a poll sponsored by Israel Radio indicated that Shas could lose up to six of its 17 Knesset seats if elections were held soon.

According to the poll, 56.6 percent of the public is opposed to holding new elections now.

ESPN comes to Israel

The U.S.-based sports network ESPN is launching a 24-hour sports station in Israel. ESPN's programming in Israel will feature international events such as qualifying matches for soccer's World Cup, as well as baseball, football, college basketball and hockey games from North America.



Daily News Bulletin

Shoshana S. Cardin, *President*

Mark J. Jaffe, *Executive Editor and Publisher*

Lisa Hostein, *Editor*

Howard Lovy, *Managing Editor*

Lenore A. Silverstein, *Business Manager*

JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at www.jta.org.
© JTA Reproduction only by previous arrangement.

important, while 78 percent of teens whose parents say marrying Jewish is very important believe it is somewhat or very important to marry someone Jewish;

• The Holocaust, anti-Semitism and "being ethical" are the most important aspects of being Jewish, say teens, while volunteering for Jewish organizations, observing Jewish law and contributing to Jewish organizations rank the lowest in importance. Israel ranked somewhere in the middle.

"There's no question that the data we have is depressing. We have lost one-third of the population before age 13 and another large chunk by the time they graduate high school," Len Saxe, one of the researchers in the study and director of Brandeis University's Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies, told the North American Association of Jewish Youth Professionals after presenting the findings at the group's recent conference.

Jewish teens are hardly being lost to the streets, however, with most reporting they spend a lot of time on schoolwork, part-time jobs and other activities perceived as helping them to get into college, said Saxe.

"These kids are highly motivated and success oriented," he said. "After B'nai Mitzvah, their job is to be successful in school and they work hard at it. Also, they take jobs that earn money and obviously this takes away from involvement in other things."

However, he said, the findings also point to ways the Jewish community might better reach teens, mainly by creating part-time jobs for them in Jewish organizations and selling the importance of Jewish involvement to their parents, who — according to the study — do influence their children's attitudes.

According to Rabbi Art Vernon, the staff person responsible for teens at the Jewish Education Service of North America, Saxe's research shows that Jewish programs have to be more sophisticated nowadays than in the past to appeal to teens.

"Kids are sophisticated consumers. They shop for what they want, like everyone else in America, and content is important," he said. □

Silence surrounds D.C. peace talks, and what little is said is not hopeful

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The White House is staying silent about what transpired at Thursday's meeting between President Clinton and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat here.

Before the meeting, Clinton would not comment on either the June 23 scheduled Israeli withdrawal from more of the West Bank or the Sept. 13 Palestinian-declared deadline for statehood.

"If we're going to make peace, we're going to have to deal with the difficult issues, and the less we say now the better, I think," he said.

After the two leaders met in the Oval Office for nearly three hours — twice as long as had been scheduled — Arafat told reporters the discussion was "very fruitful" but did not give any specifics.

Reports from negotiating teams at the Bolling and Andrews Air Force bases have not been optimistic. Clinton said Wednesday that the Israelis and Palestinians "still had work to do" before a three-way summit with the United States could take place.

P.J. Crowley, spokesman for the White House National Security Council said the process is "a marathon" and that time is not on the side of either Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak or Arafat. Negotiations between the Israeli and Palestinian teams broke off briefly Wednesday because of the Palestinians' ongoing displeasure over a delay in the Israeli withdrawal and Israel's reluctance to release Palestinian prisoners. Barak did make a goodwill gesture later, signaling he would release three Palestinian prisoners.

Arafat called the gesture "insulting" and said Barak lacked the desire to work toward a comprehensive peace.

"At this difficult time, and faced with the obstacles we are facing in the negotiations, we really do need the assistance and help of President Clinton," Arafat said before leaving to have lunch with U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright.

Clinton spoke with Barak for 40 minutes Wednesday night. □

JEWISH WORLD

Hadassah pulling out of AZM

A coalition of American Zionist organizations has lost one of its largest members.

Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, which has 300,000 members and is best known for its hospitals in Israel, is pulling out of the American Zionist Movement.

Hadassah leaders declined to elaborate on the reasons, saying only that the AZM "no longer serves the best interests of Hadassah's Zionist goals or the future of American Zionism" and that Hadassah will still participate in the World Zionist Organization.

Anti-Semitism at Moscow rally

Anti-Semitic signs could be seen among the hundreds of people who attended a Communist-organized demonstration in Moscow protesting the economic policies of President Vladimir Putin.

Posters reading, "Down With the Jewish Counter-revolution" and "Jail the Oligarchs Goussinsky and Berezovsky," a reference to two tycoons with Jewish roots, were among the posters at the rally.

Paris museum to focus on Vichy

A new wing of a Paris museum focuses on France's collaborationist Vichy regime.

The permanent exhibition, reflecting the nation's growing willingness to confront its wartime past, will be inaugurated Sunday by President Jacques Chirac.

It is housed in a wing of Les Invalides army museum.

Fund to restore Jewish sites

The French government set aside nearly \$100,000 for a Czech-based fund that restores Jewish heritage sites in the Czech Republic.

The Zecher Foundation Fund will use the money to complete the reconstruction of two synagogues.

Dutch banks up their offer

Dutch banks and the Amsterdam stock exchange offered more than \$132 million to settle claims that they helped the Nazis steal bank accounts and stocks from Jews, according to Reuters.

The amount is more than five times what they initially offered the local Jewish community.

Jewish tour cycles away

Seven Jewish cyclists of varying ages and backgrounds pedaled away from Seattle, launching a cross-country bike ride to draw attention to Jewish teachings on environmentalism.

The bikers, organized by a New York-based group called Hazon, plan to ride the entire summer, cycling 3,800 miles from Seattle to the nation's capital.

Germany arrests former Nazi officer for slave laborer's murder in Terezin

By Magnus Bennett

PRAGUE (JTA) — A former Nazi SS officer is behind bars in Germany on suspicion of murdering a Jewish slave laborer in September 1943.

Anton Malloth, 88, was arrested May 25, but prosecutors in the German state of Bavaria did not release details until Wednesday after inquiries by JTA regarding his whereabouts.

Malloth, who has been living in a nursing home on the outskirts of Munich for the past decade, is alleged to have shot dead a laborer in Terezin who hid a cauliflower under his jacket during harvest time.

More than 30,000 Jews died at the Czech transit camp, also known by its German name of Theresienstadt.

Czech prosecutors have been trying to decide whether to charge Malloth, but that may not be necessary if he stands trial in Germany.

Last October, a person claiming to have witnessed the murder testified against Malloth in Prague.

Malloth was sentenced to death in absentia by a Czech court in 1948 for killing prisoners at Terezin, but the country's Communist authorities later quashed the sentence.

Malloth fled Czechoslovakia at the war's end.

After that, he lived in Italy until authorities there expelled him to Germany in 1988, according to news reports.

Authorities in the German state of Bavaria then granted him citizenship.

German prosecutors have examined allegations against Malloth relating to Terezin on three previous occasions without bringing charges.

Jewish leaders and victims' relatives in the Czech Republic welcomed news of Malloth's arrest.

"This is a very positive development," said Tomas Kraus, executive director of the Czech Federation of Jewish Communities. "But we will have to see what impact this will have."

The news was also welcomed by Peter Finkelgruen, who said his grandfather was beaten to death by Malloth in December 1942.

Speaking from his home in Germany, Finkelgruen, who wrote a book about Malloth in 1992 called "German House," said he was "surprised and satisfied" at the arrest.

The move by German prosecutors came shortly after their Czech counterparts, who have also been examining Malloth's case, expressed little optimism that Malloth would ever be brought to justice.

Hours before Malloth's arrest became public, Czech Regional Prosecutor Jan Jakovec said it would be at least October before a decision would be reached in the Czech Republic on whether to prosecute Malloth.

Jakovec, who was unaware of Malloth's arrest, said: "It would be a great success if Malloth were to be actually accused. There would be some satisfaction, even only if Malloth were to read in the newspapers that he is to be prosecuted in the Czech Republic."

Jakovec added that there are only four active cases left in the Czech Republic involving guards who served at Terezin and that only Malloth's case had anything approaching sufficient evidence.

Also speaking before news of the arrest broke, the director of the Terezin Memorial, Jan Munk, expressed disappointment at the length of time it had taken to get Malloth into a courtroom.

"Any punishment would only be symbolic now," he said. "He cannot be executed or anything like that, and he is nearly 90."

Just the same, Munk added, "It is important for people to know until the last moment of their lives that anybody can be prosecuted if he does something like Malloth did." □

Jewish leaders welcome Argentina's plea for forgiveness

By Nicolas Penchaszadeh

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Argentine President Fernando de la Rúa this week reiterated his plea for forgiveness in the name of his country for harboring Nazi criminals after War World II.

On his first official visit to the United States since taking office last December, de la Rúa asked for forgiveness during a meeting Tuesday with American Jewish community leaders at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Many of Hitler's followers, including such war criminals as Adolf Eichmann and Dr. Josef Mengele, found a safe haven in Argentina after World War II.

"I want to ask for pardon, in the name of the country, for the Nazis who hid among us," he said. "In today's world, I think one must examine the past so it cannot be repeated ever again."

De la Rúa traveled to the United States accompanied by Argentine Jewish community leaders and with Holocaust survivors living in Argentina.

The president visited the Holocaust museum with his wife and his entire entourage, including Cabinet members, public officials and business leaders.

De la Rúa said he was very impressed by the museum.

"The memory of the dead will assure life," de la Rúa said after the visit.

"Strengthening the memory of the Holocaust will allow us to strengthen justice and help us prevent these horrors from reoccurring," he said.

The executive director of the World Jewish Congress welcomed the Argentine president's statement.

"What's important is that in this case, symbolism is substance. Argentina, like other countries, has to deal with its past not because anyone today is guilty, but because it has a historic responsibility," said Elan Steinberg, who along with Edgar Bronfman, chair of the Presidential Advisory Commission on Holocaust Assets in the United States, met with de la Rúa on Monday.

The WJC leader noted that de la Rúa had offered the aid of his country's Holocaust commission to the commission Bronfman chairs as the latter grapples with the U.S. role in the Nazi era.

Daniel Mariaschin, executive vice president of B'nai B'rith, said after meeting with the Argentine president, "We welcome de la Rúa's request for forgiveness in the name of Argentina for the actions of some that allowed the entry of Nazi war criminals after World War II."

De la Rúa also apologized that Argentina did not do enough to aid Jews in their attempts to escape war-torn Europe, but also mentioned the work of some diplomats who gave special visas to escapees.

De la Rúa has made several gestures toward Holocaust survivors since taking office.

On his first trip abroad as president, he traveled to an international gathering on the Holocaust held in Sweden.

Recently, he had lunch with a group of Holocaust survivors and awarded them presidential medals.

During his meeting with the Jewish community leaders, de la Rúa announced that he will continue funding a special commission investigating the impact of Nazism on Argentine society that was

created by his predecessor, Carlos Menem.

He also pointed to the recently created task force made up of security agencies that will help in the investigations of the bombings of the Israeli Embassy, in 1992, and the AMIA Jewish Community Center, in 1994.

More than 100 people died in the attacks. □

(Washington Jewish Week News Editor Paul Amann contributed to this report.)

Chagall paintings float away in burglary at L.A. art gallery

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — A skillful thief with apparently precise tastes has stolen two of Marc Chagall's paintings with Jewish themes from a Beverly Hills art gallery.

The two paintings, with a combined value of over \$500,000, were taken in a meticulously planned and executed heist from the Timothy Yarger Fine Art Gallery on posh Rodeo Drive.

Chagall completed both paintings — "Moises et les Table de la Loi" (Moses and the Tablets of the Law) and "Le Juif a la Thora" (The Jewish Man at the Torah) — around 1981, four years before his death, said gallery owner Yarger.

The paintings, which came from Chagall's personal collection, were purchased directly from his estate, said Yarger.

However, a third Chagall painting that was hanging between the other two, this one showing a Parisian scene with flowers was left untouched, as were even more valuable paintings by Picasso, Renoir and Miro in the same room.

"All signs point to a theft-to-order," he said. "It wasn't just a random burglary."

The break-in was discovered May 29 by construction workers on an adjoining project, who noticed that someone had sawed a hole through the gallery's rear fire door, and notified police.

By climbing through the hole, the thief apparently circumvented an alarm system, as well as inside motion detectors and surveillance cameras.

"One burglar, or burglars, came in, went upstairs, came right to this location, took the paintings and disturbed nothing else," said Yarger.

Yarger waited almost a week before making the theft public to give police and insurance investigators a clear track without interference from the media.

But now, Yarger said in an interview Sunday, he and police are circulating photos of the two paintings in the hope that they will be recognized as stolen if the thief tries to sell them to an auction house, gallery or museum.

It is more likely, however, that the paintings will be kept behind closed doors for decades or generations. □

Exhibit focuses on Jewish life

NEW YORK (JTA) — Photographs of Jewish life in New York's Lower East Side during the 1930s form part of a new exhibit of artist Ben Shahn's work at the Phillips Museum in Washington.

The exhibit, which includes photographs produced from a recently discovered roll of film, runs through August 27. □