



Daily News Bulletin

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83rd Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Clinton returns to Camp David

President Clinton traveled to Camp David following his return from a three-day visit to Japan to attend the G-8 summit of leading industrial nations.

Clinton left the summit in Japan earlier than planned to return to the Camp David talks.

Meanwhile, National Religious Party leader Yitzhak Levy said Sunday that Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak is preparing to leave the summit without an agreement. [Page 3]

U.S. teens in Israeli accident

Nineteen American teen-agers were slightly injured when their bus was hit by an army truck that swerved from its lane near the town of Rosh Pina in northern Israel on Sunday.

The teens, who are from New York, New Jersey, California and Washington, D.C., are part of a summer youth tour sponsored by the Reform movement's North American Federation of Temple Youth. The director of the group's Israel programs, Rabbi David Forman, said the injuries were mostly "light scratches."

Cabinet warned about violence

Extreme right-wing Israelis could pose a threat to the lives of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, intelligence officials told Israel's Cabinet on Sunday.

There were also warnings that Palestinians may attack Jewish areas of Jerusalem.

New Phalcon deal surfaces

India is interested in buying two Phalcon advanced airborne warning systems from Israel for \$500 million, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

The report said Defense Ministry officials are concerned the United States may try to block the deal. Earlier this month, Israel gave in to heavy U.S. pressure and scrapped a deal to sell the system to China.

Smuggling ring tied to Hezbollah

The FBI arrested 18 people in Charlotte, N.C., for alleged involvement in a cigarette-smuggling ring that raised money for Hezbollah.

They were indicted last Friday on immigration violations, weapons offenses, money laundering and cigarette trafficking. Hezbollah denied it was involved with those arrested.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

In shift to the right, Russians seek a Netanyahu comeback

By Lev Gorodetsky

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The support of Israel's Russian community for Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, which helped propel Barak to victory in last year's elections, has dwindled significantly in recent months.

And in looking for a possible successor, Israel's largest immigrant community is apparently looking to someone believed ready to make a political comeback — former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Two main factors appear to have led Russian Israelis away from Barak: his ultimately unsuccessful compromise to keep the fervently Orthodox, or haredi, Shas Party in his coalition; and the perception that he is willing to give away too much to the Palestinians in peace negotiations.

Many of the roughly 1 million Russian Israelis see Shas not only as a religious party but also as a lobbyist for the Jewish state's second largest immigrant group — Moroccan Israelis.

Relations between Russian and Moroccan Israelis are tense. In addition to fighting for some of the same social service dollars, the Russians are generally secular, while the Moroccans are more traditional.

"The haredim hate the Russians. If you ask for the way, they tell you the wrong directions," claims Marina, a 52-year-old woman from Moscow who now lives in Jerusalem.

When Russians gave an estimated 55 to 60 percent of their vote to Barak in direct elections for prime minister in 1999, they did so partially because of his promise that he would curtail what Russians — like many others in Israel's secular community — see as the excessive power of the haredim.

But once in power, Barak, like other prime ministers before him, found that he had to negotiate with Shas, which, before it quit earlier this month, represented the second largest party in his coalition.

Larion Kaplan, 43, a schoolteacher from Ukraine now living in Jerusalem, said that she felt "fooled" by Barak when he made Shas his partner.

A recent poll appears to confirm the increasingly negative attitude toward Barak among immigrants from the former Soviet Union.

The poll, conducted earlier this month, found that only 23 percent of Israelis from the former Soviet Union have a favorable opinion of Barak, while 65 percent have an unfavorable opinion of him.

A similar poll conducted in May, commissioned by the same Philadelphia-based think tank, the Middle East Forum, found that 41 percent had a favorable view of Barak and 49 percent viewed him unfavorably.

The study of 500 immigrants had a margin of error of plus or minus 4.5 percent.

The poll also found that 65 percent said they did not trust Barak to make an agreement with the Palestinians that will protect Israel's security; 18 percent said they did.

Indeed, this finding appears to confirm another factor that has diminished Russian support for Barak — an ideology, imported from Russia, that views surrendering any land as a blow to national honor.

This attitude is a "legacy of Russia's imperial history. It is our unpreparedness to compromise, our unwillingness to surrender anything that has been conquered," said

MIDEAST FOCUS

Ministers: Jerusalem split coming

Israeli government ministers suggested the inevitability of Palestinian sovereignty in some parts of Jerusalem. Justice Minister Yossi Beilin said Arab villages in eastern Jerusalem are "not really ours," and would become part of the Palestinian state.

In Rome on Sunday, Pope John Paul II called on Israeli and Palestinian negotiators at the Camp David summit to make Jerusalem an international city. Such a status, the pope said, reiterating the Vatican's longtime stance, would "assure freedom of religion and worship" for all.

Meanwhile, Israeli sources speculate that at best a partial agreement will be reached at the summit. The sources, quoted by Israel Radio, put the odds at 60 to 40 against an agreement.

Clashes erupt in Hebron

Jewish settlers and Palestinians clashed Sunday near a Jewish area of Hebron.

Police stopped the confrontation, which erupted after Palestinians launched a demonstration in the area.

Minister meets hunger strikers

Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy met with Jewish settlers on a hunger strike at a tent near the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem.

Levy urged them to stop their fast, which they have vowed to continue until the end of the Camp David summit.

Tel Aviv plans mass transit link

The Tel Aviv municipality signed an agreement with Israel's Finance and Transportation ministries for building a mass transit system that will be part subway, part surface rail.

The first line, linking the suburbs of Bat Yam and Petach Tikva via Tel Aviv, is expected to be finished in seven years at a cost of \$1 billion.

Victor Brailovsky, a member of Knesset from the centrist Shinui Party.

As a result, many Russian Israelis perceive Barak's policy of making territorial concessions in exchange for peace as dangerous and unjustified.

"We have had the experience of living under a totalitarian regime, which makes us suspicious and distrustful of negotiations and unguaranteed agreements with undemocratic states," Natan Sharansky, who resigned from Barak's government on the eve of the Camp David summit, told JTA.

Many Russians, particularly those from Central Asia and the Caucasus Mountains — who have had firsthand experience with what they view as the Arab mind-set — think that the Arab world should be dealt with only with force because force is all that world understands.

A group called Professors for a Strong Israel, which has many Russian members, recently launched a hunger strike to protest the peace negotiations.

"The main source of the problems now is the weakness and anguish in Israeli society," said one of the strikers, Mikhail Golosovsky.

Indeed, Russian President Vladimir Putin's popularity with Russian Israelis stems from his willingness to use force in Chechnya.

During Russian presidential elections earlier this year, 60 to 70 percent of those who have dual citizenship and cast their ballots at the Russian Embassy polling stations in Israel voted for Putin.

The Russians' generally hawkish position is supported by the Russian-language media, which, observers, say, leans to the right.

In a move seen by many as politically motivated, the Israeli tabloid Yediot Achronot fired the right-leaning Edouard Kuznetsov last year as editor in chief of the influential and commercially successful Russian daily Vesty, which it owns.

Kuznetsov promptly obtained funding money from Ukrainian Jewish tycoon Vadim Rabinovitch and started another Russian-language newspaper.

The Russian shift to the right is reflected in Israel's Russian political parties.

Indeed, say observers, when Sharansky publicly criticized Barak and then left the government just before the summit, he did so with the knowledge that his Yisrael Ba'Aliyah Party, which has four seats in the current Knesset, is losing support to its chief rival, the Israel, Our Home Party.

That party is led by Netanyahu's former right-hand man, Avigdor Lieberman, who resigned in 1997 amid allegations that he used strong-arm tactics against Netanyahu's rivals in the Likud.

Democratic Choice, a leftist splinter from Sharansky's party, would receive no seats in new elections for the Knesset, according to recent polls.

Netanyahu, who resigned as leader of the Likud Party last year after Barak defeated him — and who could be indicted on charges that include abusing the public trust — appears to have overwhelming support among Russian Israelis.

Polls show that Russians, who have helped limit each prime minister since 1992 to only one term in office, would give Netanyahu 80 percent of the vote if elections were held for prime minister.

And that could happen.

"Bibi has decided to come back," an aide to Netanyahu told JTA. "He is only waiting for a good time." □

Poles honor Holocaust witness

ROME (JTA) — Polish Jews joined government and church officials at a memorial ceremony in Warsaw's Nozyk Synagogue for Jan Karski, the World War II Resistance hero who risked his life to bring eyewitness accounts of the Holocaust to the West.

Rabbi Chaskiel Besser, the New York-based director of Central European Programs at the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation, praised Karski's courage and integrity.

Karski, who died July 13 in Washington at the age of 86, had requested in his will that Besser say Kaddish over his grave.

A courier for Poland's underground Home Army, Karski witnessed the mass murder of Jews during World War II.

But when he reached the West, his stories were not believed. A top U.S. judge told him, "I am not saying you are lying, but I don't believe you." □



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JEWISH WORLD

Hillary: Israel's cause 'just'

Hillary Rodham Clinton expressed support for Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak during an appearance at a New York-area synagogue Saturday.

"We knew in our hearts that God has deemed" that Israel's cause is "just," said the New York senatorial candidate at the Hamptons Synagogue. Her Republican opponent, Rep. Rick Lazio, is scheduled to visit the synagogue next Saturday.

Argentina urged to cut Iran trade

The World Jewish Congress pressed Argentina to scale back its trade with Iran until it cooperates with an investigation of a 1994 attack on a Jewish center in Buenos Aires. Argentina, Israel and the United States suspect guerrillas backed by Iran were behind the car bombing, which killed 86 people.

U.S. failed to move on Eichmann

Hungary notified the United States in 1947 that Nazi war criminal Adolf Eichmann was in the American zone of Germany and requested his extradition, but U.S. authorities waited four years to respond, according to documents recently unearthed by the Simon Wiesenthal Center. Rabbi Marvin Hier, the center's founder, said it was "outrageous" that the United States sat on the information, adding that Eichmann could have been found years earlier had the United States acted sooner.

State Dept. marks Shabbat

The U.S. State Department observed the Jewish Sabbath at the Camp David summit — as least as far as its briefings were concerned.

"We'll treat Shabbat the way we did last weekend," State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said last Friday. "We'll give you the final update before sundown tonight and then we won't brief here again until Sunday morning."

Center to study roots of genocide

Scholars from around the world launched a genocide research institute dedicated to finding the cause of mass killings so that such crimes are not repeated. Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel will serve as one of the patrons of the Genocide Prevention Research Initiative, which will provide information to governments, politicians and individual groups as it researches the causes of genocide.

'Vini-der-Pu' now available

Christopher Robin and the other inhabitants of the Hundred-Acre Wood are now available in transliterated Yiddish. The Yiddish version of A.A. Milne's children's classic "Winnie-the-Pooh," titled "Vini-der-Pu," is the work of Yiddish scholar Leonard Wolf.

Barak tests public support for compromise on Jerusalem

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — As negotiators at Camp David try to find a formula for a lasting Middle East peace, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak is said to be sounding out public reaction to a possible compromise on Jerusalem.

The Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported Sunday that private surveys conducted for Barak indicated that a large majority of the Israeli public favors an agreement that would end the conflict with the Palestinians, even if it included granting them some sovereignty in eastern Jerusalem.

An opinion survey published in the daily Yediot Achronot over the weekend showed the opposite result. Jerusalem has emerged as the main sticking point in the Camp David talks — and, given such conflicting results, it is apparently just as difficult an issue for the polls to come to grips with.

While a U.S.-imposed news blackout on the substance of the talks continues, Barak briefed Israeli political figures on the status of the summit.

The two latest figures to hear from him were former members of his governing coalition, Yitzhak Levy of the National Religious Party and Natan Sharansky of the Yisrael Ba'Aliyah Party.

Both recently withdrew from the government to protest the Camp David summit, and both said it is unlikely an agreement will emerge from the talks.

Levy said it appeared Barak was preparing the ground to return to Israel without an agreement. Sharansky said Barak indicated he was open to a government with the opposition Likud Party if the summit fails. Sharansky, who supports such a government, said he would do what he could to help.

Clinton traveled to Camp David following his return Sunday from a three-day visit to Japan to attend the G-8 summit of leading industrial nations. Before departing Japan, Clinton said the two sides "have continued to make headway."

"Whether we get an agreement or not, they have tried. They have really been up there working," he said.

An aide to Barak told Israel Radio on Sunday that Clinton's return to the Camp David discussions would be critical to their outcome.

"If there will be a breakthrough, it will be made clear in a very short time," said one of Barak's media advisers, Eldar Yaniv.

Barak's spokesman, Gadi Baltiansky, said the fate of the summit would be clear within 24 hours of Clinton's return.

"It won't be a whole lot of time," he told Israel Army Radio. When Clinton returns to Camp David, "We will see if there's any point in staying here and going on with the talks or to pack the luggage and return home."

Since first gathering in Camp David on July 11, Israel and the Palestinians have been holding intense negotiations in a bid to come up with a final peace agreement.

Before going to the summit, Barak repeatedly stated that he would not budge from his stance that Jerusalem remain Israel's united, sovereign capital. For his part, Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat said he would not abandon his demand that the eastern half of the city be the capital of a future Palestinian state.

In recent days, there were reports indicating that Barak is willing to consider an American bridging proposal that would grant Israel and the Palestinians some sort of shared sovereignty over Arab neighborhoods in the capital, granting the Palestinian a form of administrative rule in the city.

Arafat was expected to respond to the proposal on Sunday.

Meanwhile, Barak denied that he is being pressed by senior ministers on his negotiating team to make compromises on Jerusalem.

Barak issued the statement Sunday after unnamed aides claimed that ministers Amnon Lipkin-Shahak and Shlomo Ben-Ami are pushing Barak to soften his stance on Jerusalem.

Barak's statement also indicated that he had "reprimanded" the aides for the "veiled criticism that was voiced toward the ministers." □

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD**Poles recognized for their work
in saving remains of Jewish past***By Ruth E. Gruber*

KRAKOW, Poland (JTA)—Katarzyna Bielawska organized local schoolchildren to clear up and fence the abandoned and overgrown Jewish cemetery in the small Polish town of Narewka.

Ewa Lesniewska created a unique exhibition of Judaica and Jewish history in the renovated former synagogue in the town of Leczna.

Krzysztof Guminski and his family found the lost manuscript of a diary written in the Lodz Ghetto during World War II, traced the author's daughter, preserved the manuscript and arranged for its publication.

Bielawska, Lesniewska and the Guminski family are Roman Catholic Poles who have dedicated parts of their lives to preserving and honoring Jewish heritage.

They, and four other people like them, were honored this summer by the Israeli Embassy and the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation at a ceremony held at the conclusion of Krakow's annual Festival of Jewish Culture.

It was the third year in a row that such awards were presented.

"It was great," Michael Traison, an American Jewish lawyer who spearheaded the effort to honor Poles involved in preserving Jewish heritage, said after the ceremony.

"Next year we will present certificates of recognition to eight more people," he said. "I am sure it makes a difference."

Traison, who lives in Detroit, has spent much time during the past decade in Poland on business.

He developed the idea of the awards to honor people he met during his trips around the country.

On such trips, he made it a point to visit the synagogues, abandoned cemeteries and old shtetls that remained as haunting stone witnesses to the rich Jewish heritage that was wiped out in the Holocaust.

"I've met many Poles who, at their own expense, endeavor to save the remains of the Jewish culture," Traison said at the time the first awards were presented, in 1998.

"Their efforts are not even rewarded with the words 'thank you.' Frequently these people don't know about each other. I wanted Jews to learn about them. I wanted somebody to tell them thank you."

During the past three years, awards have been presented to more than three dozen people throughout Poland.

The majority became involved by cleaning up and restoring some of the hundreds of Poland's abandoned, overgrown and sometimes vandalized Jewish cemeteries. Others wrote books on local Jewish history or retrieved tombstones from refuse dumps or sites where they had been used as building material.

Honoree Krzysztof Czyzewski established a foundation called Borderlands in the town of Sejny that is dedicated to promoting the cultures of various Central European minorities. The foundation is situated in a renovated synagogue and Jewish school, and fosters exhibits, seminars and even a klezmer band.

Some of the laureates encountered hostility from local people, had their motives questioned by foreigners or were harassed by police during the Communist era for their activities.

Polish Jewish writer Konstanty Gebert described the honorees as "rescuers of Atlantis," referring to the legendary island that sunk into the ocean.

"Listening to these rescuers of Atlantis," he wrote in the Polish Jewish monthly *Midrasz*, "one will notice no cheap sentimentality, no superficial fascination with Jewish exotica, no 'fiddler on the roof' syndrome. These people simply do what they think is right."

Jews lived in Poland for 1,000 years, and there were 3.5 million Jews in the country on the eve of World War II, making up about 10 percent of the population. Some 3 million were killed in the Shoah.

Poland's postwar Communist regime made Jewish history and culture virtually taboo. In 1968, the government launched an anti-Semitic campaign that forced most remaining Jews in Poland to leave the country.

Many of the Poles honored over the past three years for their efforts in preserving and honoring Jewish heritage began their work as a means of counteracting Communist denial — "filling in the blank spaces" in Communist history books. Their personal history is often wrapped up with the development of their interest in Jewish history.

Tomasz Wisniewski, for example, a journalist in Bialystok, was honored for his work in the first round of awards, in 1998.

Poland's martial law regime jailed Wisniewski in 1982 for his underground anti-Communist activities. He discovered his region's rich Jewish history when he came across a book on the Holocaust in the prison library.

Once out of prison, Wisniewski tried to learn more. He found no books about the Jews of Bialystok in the public library and nowhere to study Jewish history or Jewish subjects, so he began his own investigations.

Barred from many jobs because of his dissident politics, he managed to convince a local newspaper to let him publish brief articles about Bialystok's Jewish history.

He called these articles "Postcards From Atlantis," and wrote more than 100 of them.

"Without knowing much, I tried to tell the story of what before the war was practically a Jewish city," he said. "Soon, elderly people and even a few Jews began to seek me out at the news office. I talked with them for hours, I taped these conversations, I roamed through the city. They showed me the buildings of old prewar Jewish schools. At the same time, I read, read, read, all that I could get my hands on."

Like many other award recipients, Wisniewski said he felt an emotional obligation to carry out this work.

"The history of the Jews of Bialystok is not just history for me," he said. "It is also the present. The history of the Jews in Bialystok, and of Polish Jews in general, is a major part of Polish history."

Rediscovering Jewish history and culture, and reintegrating it as part of general Polish history, is a means, he said, toward creating a truly democratic post-Communist society.

"In Polish bookstores there are many, many books on Polish Jews now and there is a big, authentic interest in the history of the Jews," he said. "This makes me happy because it is as if the Polish Jews 'had returned' in a metaphorical sense to Poland. Today, though, the main scope is to unmask the many half-truths and prejudices that uselessly divide Jews and Poles." □