



Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 78, No. 170

Friday, September 8, 2000

83rd Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Arafat: I won't bend on Jerusalem

Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat reportedly told President Clinton that he would not bend on his demands for Palestinian sovereignty over all of eastern Jerusalem.

The White House said peace efforts would continue, but both Israeli and Palestinian officials said time is running out for achieving a final peace accord.

Khatami slams outcry on 'Iran 10'

Iranian President Mohammad Khatami described as disproportionate the international outcry to the conviction of 10 Iranian Jews on charges of spying for Israel.

Khatami, speaking to reporters Wednesday after his speech at the United Nations, also said his government would not intervene in the appeals for the 10 being considered by Iran's judiciary.

But he did say he hopes the appeals "will be approached with the utmost justice" and "that nobody will be convicted beyond their actual guilt."

\$18 million to go to synagogues

A new philanthropy announced it would spend \$18 million during the next five years to help revitalize North American synagogues.

STAR announced its plans at the end of a daylong "summit" in Chicago, where about 150 Jewish leaders discussed synagogue needs.

The funds will go for challenge grants, consultants, interdenominational gatherings and Internet-based professional development for rabbis.

Bill on statehood introduced

Two senators introduced legislation urging the United States not to recognize a unilaterally declared Palestinian state.

Sen. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Sen. Richard Lugar (R-Ind.) said Wednesday the declaration would be harmful to Israeli-Palestinian negotiations and said the United States should pressure its allies not to recognize or support such a move.

A similar bill has already been introduced in the House of Representatives.

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.) and Senate Minority Leader Tom Daschle (D-N.Dak.) sent a letter to President Clinton signed by several senators opposing such a move.

FOCUS ON ISSUES

Russians thrive, Ethiopians struggle in search for Israeli high-tech dream

By Peter Ephross

HAIFA (JTA) — Dmitry Model and Hailu Mulugeta have a lot in common.

Both immigrated to Israel as teen-agers in 1995. Both are bright and articulate. And both are students at the Technion — Israel Institute of Technology, one of Israel's most prestigious universities.

But Model comes from Russia and Mulugeta comes from Ethiopia — and as a result, their experiences at the Haifa-based school are much different.

Model, a 20-year-old studying electrical engineering, sees in the halls hundreds of faces from the former Soviet Union who share his culture and language.

"At a party, we want to speak Russian. If there are Israelis, we have to speak Hebrew. But if there are all Russians there, we don't have to," he says. By contrast, Mulugeta is one of the few Ethiopian Israelis at the Technion, and his isolation appears to have made its way into his head — even though he tries to use it to his advantage.

"When a professor writes a formula and he gets to the point where it's just calculation and he says it's 'black work,' " using the Israeli slang for simple labor, "I feel I have to work harder," says Mulugeta, who is studying mechanical engineering.

Russian and Ethiopian immigrants are Israel's most celebrated population influxes during the past three decades — and those at the Technion are among the best and brightest. But while students from the former Soviet Union have managed to carve out their own space at Israel's training ground for its booming high-tech economy, Ethiopian students remain an anomaly — despite the Technion's best efforts.

What's true at the Technion is true in the rest of Israeli society as well.

About 90 percent of Ethiopian Israelis live below the country's poverty line, according to Micha Feldmann, an Israeli consultant on Ethiopian Israeli issues.

Unemployment rates are high and those able to find work often toil in manual labor and low-paying jobs, Feldmann says.

The fear, of course, is the possibility of creating a permanent Ethiopian underclass.

While Russian Israelis have also struggled, 30 percent of academics and 75 percent of scientists from the former Soviet Union are working in their fields, according to a 1995 Israeli government survey. The massive Russian immigration has been an "unbelievable success," says Chaim Chesler, treasurer for the Jewish Agency for Israel.

The percentage of Russian students at the Technion — 600 out of 11,000 — is lower than their proportion of Israel's overall population, but "when you tell an Israeli-born student that there are only 600 Russian students, they don't believe it," says Pauline Pine, a student who immigrated to Israel in 1996 from Russia's Ural Mountains.

As you go up the academic ladder, the numbers increase.

Of 56 tenured professors in the mathematics department, 10 are from the former Soviet Union, according to Avi Berman, a professor of mathematics at the Technion. Eight of the 22 doctoral students are from the former Soviet Union, as are 46 out of 84 students in a recent sophomore algebra class.

By contrast, there are only about 10 Ethiopian students at the Technion.

"If you had 50 or 60 Ethiopian students, and you'd see them in every corridor, it would make a difference," says Natan Assefa, a 30-year-old Ethiopian student who is graduating from the Technion this year.

The issue is not solely about counting faces: Russian Israelis have created their own culture. Walk along the corridors of the Technion and the influence of immigrants from

MIDEAST FOCUS

Shas wants presidential apology

Israel's fervently Orthodox Shas Party demanded that President Moshe Katsav apologize for criticizing recent remarks by the party's spiritual leader.

The demand came after Katsav said Rabbi Ovadia Yosef's comment that the 6 million who died in the Holocaust were the souls of reincarnated sinners was akin to concluding God acts illogically or irrationally.

Shas officials close to Yosef said they considered Katsav's statements a betrayal of those who elected him — a reference to the widely held view that backing from Shas enabled Katsav to beat former Prime Minister Shimon Peres when the Knesset held a secret ballot for the presidency in July.

Police charged with beatings

Three Israeli border police were arraigned in an Israeli court Wednesday on suspicion of severely beating Palestinians at a checkpoint near Jerusalem.

The Palestinians claim the officers assaulted them after stopping them and asking to see identification papers.

Israeli guns taken at Olympics

Australian officials confiscated bulletproof vests and holsters from Israeli security agents when the Israeli team entered the Olympic Village in Sydney, Australia, for the upcoming Summer Olympic Games.

Last weekend's incident followed months of discussions about security at the games, which begin Sept. 15.

Syria paper: Shoah a hoax

The English-language Syria Times newspaper published an article denying the Holocaust took place and claiming it to be a "myth" invented by Jews.

This week's article claimed that Israelis who held senior posts in the newly created Jewish state had collaborated with the Nazis.



Daily News Bulletin

Shoshana S. Cardin, President
Mark J. Jaffe, Executive Editor and Publisher
Lisa Hostein, Editor
Howard Levy, 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.

the former Soviet Union is palpable. Russian-language handbills advertise movies, and snippets of Russian conversation can be heard in the hallways.

Students from the former Soviet Union tend to stick together and create their own subculture. Russian Israelis say they study together and socialize together, which perturbs some Israeli-born students who are turned off by what they perceive as clannishness and snobbery.

"When I see a group of Russians speaking Russian, I sometimes go up to them and say, 'Stop speaking Russian, you're in Israel now,'" says Ido Rotem, a student in civil engineering.

Even Mulugeta uses the Russian he learned in his introductory Hebrew classes to help him fit in with his fellow immigrant students. "Everywhere I go, I try to speak Russian. It's better than Hebrew sometimes," he says.

The reasons for the discrepancy between Russian and Ethiopian students' experiences are many — including vastly different cultural legacies.

Ethiopian Israelis, members of a community numbering about 70,000, come from a traditional society that valued family and community more than technical education.

But "even if you want to be a plumber, you have to know how to use the equipment," says consultant Feldmann.

The few students who have succeeded seem to know that. Both Mulugeta and Assefa spend some of their free time helping their siblings with their homework.

Money is another factor. With so many impoverished Ethiopians, families are unable to contribute to their children's living expenses at university. Russian Israelis hail from a society known for its skilled scientists and engineers.

Discrimination is another factor, says Assefa, who has worked part-time at one of Intel's semiconductor facilities in Israel for the past few years.

Israeli students "ask me if I am an Ethiopian. They are surprised that I am," he says, adding that Israelis believe that Ethiopians are "not smart enough for the Technion."

Both sets of immigrants must acclimate to another language and culture, and the Technion, like other schools in Israel, has instituted a number of policies to help them.

Immigrants are allowed to delay their military services until after they earn their degrees. The Technion also operates several programs for new immigrants, including a yearlong preparatory program and free tutorial sessions and counseling.

Students from the former Soviet Union receive three-year exemptions from tuition, which usually cover a year in the preparatory program and two years of classes; Ethiopian students receive free tuition and a stipend that covers some of their living expenses for all their years of study. "You have to invest a lot of money and time," says Sara Katzir, the head of the Technion's student support center.

So far, the Technion's efforts appear to have been insufficient.

The number of Ethiopian students at Israel's other universities, which offer more classes in the humanities and social sciences than the Technion, is greater. But while these students are obtaining skills to help their communities, they are not being trained for high-paying technical jobs.

"The society needs Ethiopian physicists and Ethiopian mathematicians and Ethiopian computer scientists. The thing is not to lower the standards, but to give them more support," says Berman, the Technion professor.

The Technion is trying to do just that. In conjunction with the Jewish Agency for Israel, the UJA-Federation of Greater New York and the Israeli firm Koor, the school has launched a program that attempts to help Ethiopian students.

The program offers mathematics courses to Ethiopian 10th-graders, with the goal of helping them pass the necessary matriculation exams after graduation. All of the students who began the program — 60 in all — completed the course last year.

With money from the International Fellowship of Christians and Jews, the program will be expanded this year to include ninth- and 11th-graders as well, says Feldmann.

If and when the program will yield results is unknown. But Berman is confident that the school's efforts will eventually pay off.

"If we do the right things now, I don't expect problems in the next generation," he says. □

(JTA staff writer Peter Ephross recently traveled to Russia and Israel on a trip sponsored by the American Society for Technion — Israel Institute of Technology.)

JEWISH WORLD

Auschwitz disco in jeopardy

The Polish government called for closing a disco located near the site of the Auschwitz death camp. But the government said it could not order the disco's closure because it is privately owned. Jewish groups protested the recent opening of the dance hall, located in a former tannery where slave laborers died.

In August, authorities in the town of Oswiecim consented to the disco, saying the building was outside a zone where activities that could be offensive to the memory of concentration camp victims are prohibited.

Station to broadcast prayers

A West Virginia radio station plans to broadcast prayers during local high school football games.

WRVC is making the move as a way of circumventing a recent Supreme Court ruling barring public schools from sponsoring prayers at the games.

Lazio: Clinton may free Pollard

President Clinton may announce clemency for a former U.S. Navy intelligence agent serving a life sentence for spying for Israel, in order to help his wife's candidacy for a U.S. Senate seat from New York, charged her opponent. Rep. Rick Lazio (R-N.Y.) told the New York Post that such an "October surprise" freeing Jonathan Pollard would be a way of trying to win over Jewish voters for Hillary Rodham Clinton.

Group lauds Christian efforts

Jews should recognize the efforts made by Christians to confront their past treatment of Jews and Judaism, according to an interfaith group.

The Baltimore-based Institute for Christian and Jewish Studies, which plans to release a public statement signed by dozens of rabbis and Jewish leaders to this effect this weekend, also says Jews need to re-evaluate how they perceive Christianity.

Rabbinical school goes West

What is believed to be the only nondenominational rabbinical school in the United States opened a second campus this week.

The Academy for Jewish Religion, which has ordained 150 rabbis and cantors since it was founded in New York in 1956, has enrolled 20 students at its Los Angeles campus.

Letter bomb defused in Brazil

Brazilian police defused a letter bomb sent to a gay rights group in Sao Paulo as part of what is being seen as a neo-Nazi terror campaign. Earlier, a similar package was sent to a human rights campaigner. Both parcels had a scrawled image of a swastika and bore the return address of the city's Israelite Foundation.

Officials said the return address was a clear hoax.

Bosnian Jewish leader champions panel to heal nation's war wounds

By Jeremy Breningstall

SARAJEVO, Bosnia (JTA) — The leader of the Jewish community here is spearheading an effort to help the nation recover from its devastating civil war.

"The war in Bosnia was finished with the Dayton Peace Accord," Jakob Finci said, referring to the December 1995 agreement that effectively partitioned Bosnia along Serb, Muslim and Croat ethnic lines.

"The war was finished without a winner, and maybe it is fair to say we have three losing parties.

"And the three of them have started to write their own histories pretending they won the war. [If we are] teaching our children different histories, we can expect nothing else than a new war in 20 or 30 years."

During Bosnia's civil war, which lasted from 1992 through 1995, an estimated 210,000 civilians were killed and 2 million displaced.

The planned Truth and Reconciliation Commission — modeled on a similarly named panel in South Africa — has received support from more than 100 nongovernmental organizations within Bosnia, Finci said.

Privately, all three members of Bosnia's rotating presidency have indicated they will support the commission, said Neil Kritz, director of the Rule of Law program at the Institute of Peace in Washington, which has been involved in generating discussion about the new panel.

The commission still must gain the formal support of Bosnia's political parties, something Jewish leader Finci said he is hoping to achieve during this fall's national elections.

Candidates running for office in the Nov. 11 voting will be asked if they support the panel, Finci said.

The proposed commission would be different from South Africa's in several fundamental ways, Finci said.

South Africa's commission was set up to investigate atrocities committed by the apartheid government and by nonapartheid forces between 1960 and 1994 and to foster reconciliation among South Africans.

The subsequent report, based on the testimony of more than 17,500 people, made recommendations about which human rights violators should be prosecuted, which victims should be compensated and granted amnesty to witnesses that cooperated.

In the case of Bosnia, the International Criminal Tribunal at The Hague was set up to prosecute war crimes, Finci said.

The new panel "will not interfere at all with the commission in The Hague," Finci said.

Instead of recommending prosecution or restitution, the Bosnian commission will focus on allowing ordinary people an opportunity to express guilt or anger lingering from the war and making recommendations to avoid ethnic violence in the future, Finci said.

"I think this will be some kind of psychotherapy for all the people that survived the war in Bosnia," Finci said.

The commission could make recommendations about monuments or memorial days, as well as about political, education and religious reforms, Kritz said.

The commission's estimated \$12 million to \$15 million operating costs would have to be funded through the assistance of the international community, Finci said.

Finci said he and the other proponents of the truth commission are hoping to find a Nobel Peace Prize laureate or former national leader to serve as the commission's chair.

The remainder of the commission's staff would include representatives of the country's various ethnic groups, Finci said.

"Sometimes the question is can you find these people that are acceptable to everyone," Finci said. "And my usual answer is if there are not 10 or 15 people in this country who are trusted by everyone, there is no reason for this country to exist." □

THE 2000 OLYMPIC GAMES**Ukrainian immigrant ready to swim to gold for the U.S.***By Peter Ephross*

NEW YORK (JTA) — Millions of immigrants have flocked to the United States looking for streets paved with gold.

Lenny Krayzelburg, who came to the United States from Odessa, Ukraine, in 1988 is searching for gold as well — but in a pool at Sydney, Australia's Olympic Games.

Several Jewish athletes from the former Soviet Union are competing for Israel in this year's Games, which begin Sept. 15, but the one competing for the United States — Krayzelburg — appears to be the one most likely to win.

As an immigrant, Krayzelburg, who now lives in Southern California, says he faces pressure beyond the opponents he faces in his competitions.

"Your parents make a lifetime change. They had a pretty stable life back in Russia. We were financially well off. Here they make their life change for the betterment of their kid," Krayzelburg, 24, told JTA shortly before leaving for Sydney on Sunday.

"You as a child want to become successful so that that was the right decision, that it was right for them to leave. It's definitely an extra incentive," said Krayzelburg, who will compete in the 100- and 200-meter backstroke.

Working out his problems in the pool is something he was conditioned to do in the Soviet Union, where he was identified as a possible world-class athlete before he was 10.

This identification entitled him to attend a school with 44 other swimmers who went to classes and swam together for 12 hours a day.

"A lot of who I am today is what I learned back in Russia — the work ethic, the commitment. I attribute a lot of my success to what I learned" in the former Soviet Union," he said.

Even though he is swimming for the United States, Krayzelburg, described by The New York Times as "movie-star handsome," knows a lot of his friends and family in Odessa will be following his races with special interest.

By Soviet standards, Krayzelburg's family was affluent. His army-sponsored school gave him vouchers for free meals, and the family lived in a three-bedroom apartment. And after Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev loosened economic restrictions, Krayzelburg's father, Oleg, opened a small, private business.

But the possibility that Krayzelburg might have to serve in the army when he turned 18 — the Soviet Union was then engaged in a war against Afghanistan — and anti-Semitism in that part of the world motivated his parents to emigrate.

But after Krayzelburg immigrated to the United States, he faced a number of pitfalls, both in and out of the pool.

Finding a pool that would allow him to train was one problem. Learning English was another.

"When you don't speak the language, your hands are tied. It probably took me about four years to speak with people," he said.

Krayzelburg's family struggled financially, and in order to make money to help out his family, he worked as a lifeguard at the Westside Jewish Community Center in Los Angeles.

Despite these difficulties, Krayzelburg eventually shined in the water. He won the 1994 California state junior championships in

the 100- and 200-meter backstroke, setting a national junior college record in the backstroke.

He finished fifth in the Olympics in the 200-meter backstroke at the 1996 Olympic trials, and owns the world record in both the 100 and 200.

He also earned a degree in finance from the University of Southern California.

Krayzelburg, who has a reputation as one of the hardest trainers on the U.S. team, tries to deal with the pressure he faces by enjoying himself in the pool.

"I've kind of already proven myself. I just try to go out and swim well — and that puts a smile on my face," he said. □

THE 2000 OLYMPIC GAMES**Israelis look to immigrants to score big at the Olympics***By Avi Machlis*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Athletes from the former Soviet Union have transformed Israel's Olympics sports scene.

About one-third of the Israeli team in the upcoming Olympic Games in Sydney, Australia — and five of the six strongest Israeli contenders — are originally from the former Soviet Union.

The team, which departed Sunday night for Sydney, includes top favorites Michael Kalganov, a kayaker who holds two gold medals in world championship competitions in 1998 and 1999, and Alex Averbach, a pole vaulter who won the bronze in the 1999 World Athletics Championships.

The Sydney Games will run from Sept. 15-Oct. 1.

Israel has only taken three medals in previous Olympics — a silver and bronze in 1992 for judo, and a bronze in windsurfing in 1996.

The immigrants brought the training methods and dedication that they learned in the punishing climate of the Soviet sports machine.

"The Russians brought their training techniques, and a discipline and seriousness that we did not have in Israel before," said Golan Hazani, Olympic sports correspondent for Yediot Achronot, Israel's biggest daily newspaper.

Ronen Hillel, spokesman for Israel's Olympic committee, agrees: "Immigrants have made a very important contribution in coaching and training. They have brought high-level coaching techniques that lifted our athletes to new levels."

The Olympics will also offer a unique opportunity to accelerate Israel's acceptance of Soviet emigres.

Although many native Israelis harbor negative stereotypes about these immigrants, nobody doubts that when they don blue-and-white on the Olympic field or medal stand, Israelis will cheer with no qualms.

Still, immigrant athletes in Israel have found themselves under a scrutiny about their identity that veteran Israelis would not likely face.

In a news conference last week, after declaring he was shooting for the gold medal, pole-vaulter Averbach was asked whether he has learned the words to Hatikvah, Israel's national anthem.

"When I win the gold at Sydney," he said, "you'll hear how I can sing." □