



# Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 79, No. 64

Tuesday, April 3, 2001

84th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Mubarak presses for U.S. effort

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak urged President Bush to use "maximum efforts" to help end the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and bring the two sides back to the negotiating table.

Bush, who hosted Mubarak at the White House on Monday, denied taking a passive role in Middle East peacemaking, saying his administration has been "very engaged," mostly through telephone conversations with regional leaders. [Page 4]

### Israeli killed in West Bank battle

An Israeli reserve soldier was killed during a firefight with Palestinian gunmen near an Israeli army outpost in the West Bank on Sunday night.

Staff Sgt. Ya'acov Krenchel, 23, was seriously wounded in the gunfight and evacuated under fire. He later died of his injuries.

On Monday, heavy fighting erupted between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian gunmen in the West Bank city of Bethlehem.

Israel said the fighting began when Palestinians fired at Israeli soldiers guarding Rachel's Tomb on the city's outskirts.

### Helicopters target Gaza militant

A leading Islamic Jihad militant was killed after Israeli helicopters fired missiles at his car in the Gaza Strip.

Israeli officials told Army Radio that Muhammed Abdel Al, 26, had taken part in numerous terror attacks against Israelis during the last several years.

Palestinian officials have accused Israel of assassinating at least 20 Palestinian activists since the conflict erupted last September.

Israel has said it targets Palestinians who plan or carry out attacks against its soldiers and citizens.

### Survey may reduce interviews

The sponsor of a large-scale study of American Jews may have to significantly reduce the total number of "core Jews" interviewed from 4,500 to 3,100, due to difficulty finding enough willing subjects.

Although a 31 percent cut from the original plan, the sample of 3,100 already interviewed is still 1,000 more people than were interviewed for the 1990 version of the National Jewish Population Survey. [Page 2]

## Jewish, Latino politicians face off in election for Los Angeles mayor

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — When voters here cast their ballots for mayor in next week's primary, they will have the chance of electing to the office the first Jew, the first Latino, the first woman, the first gay man or veteran City Councilman Joel Wachs, the first Jewish gay candidate.

There are 15 candidates on the April 10 ballot, but only six are considered serious contenders. In a reflection of the city's diversity, two — Wachs and businessman Steve Soboroff — are Jewish; former state Assembly speaker Antonio Villaraigosa and U.S. Democratic Rep. Xavier Becerra are Latinos; and two — City Attorney James Hahn and state Comptroller Kathleen Connell — are Anglos.

With no candidate expected to get a majority in the crowded primary, the two top vote-getters likely will compete in a June 5 runoff. All are veteran politicians except Soboroff, who has never run for public office and is trying to use that to his advantage.

"A Problem Solver, Not a Politician" read Soboroff's bumper stickers, campaign literature and TV commercials.

Soboroff, 52, has made a great deal of money as a commercial developer of shopping centers, malls and retail chain stores. His wealth reputedly stands at \$10 million, though he told JTA in an interview that the figure is lower. He has committed \$687,000 out of his own pocket to his campaign, supplementing \$2.9 million in outside contributions.

Soboroff will need all that and more, mainly for television commercials, by primary day. If he makes the June 5 runoff, he will have to spend at least another \$3 million, according to political analysts. Not to worry, though.

"I'll spend whatever it takes to become mayor," Soboroff said.

There have been some 40 debates among the six candidates so far. The debates largely have been devoted to issues rather than personal attacks, except for some bitter exchanges between Soboroff and Wachs, whose mutual dislike is palpable.

The front-runner at this stage is City Attorney Hahn, with Villaraigosa fast closing in, followed by Soboroff. The only Republican in the race, Soboroff is counting on the support of white voters, especially among conservative middle-class residents of the populous San Fernando Valley.

There are no assurances that Soboroff will attract most Jewish voters. A vast majority are Democrats, and although the mayoral race is supposedly nonpartisan, they may vote for a more liberal contender.

On the other hand, Jews who prefer to vote for one of their own probably will back Wachs, who is a veteran of 30 years of city politics and enjoys a considerably higher profile in the Jewish community than does Soboroff. Wachs, who is among the more conservative of the candidates, had been expected to be one of the strongest candidates but in fact is far back in the field, according to polls.

No one is billing the contest for runner-up — and a spot in the runoff — as a Latino-Jewish confrontation, but the possibility of such a face-off points to the emerging political realities of America's second largest metropolis.

A generation ago, Jews played a substantial role in Los Angeles politics as financial backers and campaign strategists, but they shunned the limelight and few ran for elected office. The situation has changed drastically: Jewish politicians today are omnipresent in Los Angeles and in California as a whole.

The area of Sherman Oaks is illustrative. Close to the boundary between the Los Angeles basin and the San Fernando Valley, Sherman Oaks is part of the L.A.

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Palestinian steals soldier's gun

A Palestinian assaulted a female Israeli soldier and stole her weapon in Jerusalem's Talpiot neighborhood Monday morning.

The Palestinian reportedly hit the soldier over the head with an iron bar, slightly wounding her. The rifle was later recovered, and police arrested a number of Palestinians for questioning.

### Israeli held for kibbutz murder

An Israeli Jew was arrested on suspicion of killing a kibbutz security officer in a plot to rob an armory and sell dozens of assault rifles to the Palestinians.

Israeli media identified the suspect as Jean Elraz, 42, from Kiryat Ata in northern Israel. He was arrested for allegedly murdering Yitzhak Kvatatz, whose body was found March 19, the same day that 60 automatic rifles were discovered missing from the armory of Kibbutz Manara.

### Palestinian commander arrested

The commander of Palestinian sea forces was arrested by Israel at the Allenby Crossing from Jordan into the West Bank on Sunday night. Israel's Army Radio reported that Gen. Issam Bilidi is suspected of involvement in terrorist activities.

### Egypt, Jordan have peace plan

Israel's Hadash Party called for a special session of the Knesset during its spring recess to discuss a reported Egyptian-Jordanian initiative aimed at ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Members of the Arab party who met in Ramallah with Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat said his response to the initiative was favorable.

According to reports, the initiative is based on three principles: an end to violence and restoration of security; implementation of previously signed agreements; and the immediate resumption of political negotiations.

municipality and has a strong, but not predominant, Jewish presence. Counting from lowest to highest office, a Sherman Oaks resident could have a Jewish city councilman, county supervisor, state assemblyman, U.S. congressman and two U.S. senators.

The Jewish political domination is not as pronounced in other districts of the city. Relative to their proportion of the population, however, Jews are over-represented in Angeleno politics, particularly given the demographic changes of the last decade.

Latinos, primarily of Mexican descent, have become the single largest ethnic group in Los Angeles, making up 42.5 percent of the city's almost 3.9 million inhabitants. Jews, whose numbers are stable, represent about 10 percent.

Jews still lead all other groups in voter participation and financial donations, but Latinos, until now relatively dormant on the political scene, are beginning to flex their muscle. The current mayoral election, especially the Soboroff-Villaraigosa contest, is an omen of things to come as a new generation of Los Angeles-born Latinos demands its share of the political pie.

So far, the political competition between Jews and Latinos has been muted and nonconfrontational, and leaders in both communities are working to keep it that way. One sign is the increasing number of programs Jewish organizations direct toward Latinos, hoping to create bonds similar to those that linked Jews and blacks during the civil rights struggle.

Villaraigosa enjoys considerable support in the Jewish community. Two of the wealthiest and most influential Jews in Los Angeles — developer Eli Broad and television mogul Haim Saban — are among his prominent backers. □

## Jewish population survey shrinks as subjects decline to participate

By Julie Wiener

NEW YORK (JTA) — The sponsor of a large-scale study of American Jews may have to significantly reduce the total number of “core Jews” interviewed, due to difficulty finding enough willing subjects.

Unless the United Jewish Communities is able to raise \$600,000 for a massive phone campaign in the next few weeks, the National Jewish Population Survey 2000 may be based on only the 3,100 interviews it has conducted since August 2000 — not the 4,500 originally envisioned — a drop of 31 percent.

Researchers also are interviewing approximately 500 additional people who have Jewish roots but no longer identify themselves as Jewish.

Though less grand than the original plan, the sample of 3,100 is still a thousand more people than were interviewed for the 1990 version of the study, and triple the sample size of many Gallup polls.

UJC officials and researchers insist that the \$5 million study will be useful even if it is limited to the 3,100 core Jews who already have responded. However, researchers say the smaller sample size will make it harder to study sub-populations within the Jewish community, such as college students, the elderly or those living in rural areas.

Based on 40-minute telephone interviews with Jews across the country, the National Jewish Population Survey 2000 is an effort to get a broad snapshot of American Jews. It seeks information ranging from intermarriage rates to philanthropic habits to religious attitudes and observance.

Results of the study will be released this fall and are expected to influence funding and policy decisions of Jewish organizations for the next decade.

Even before interviews began last August, researchers worried that it would be difficult to find enough Jews willing to be interviewed.

The difficulties stemmed from the wide dispersion of Jews throughout the country, the fact that Jews represent a small percentage of the overall American population and a widespread fatigue with telemarketers and telephone pollsters.

In December, UJC officials told JTA they were behind schedule and that the “slamdown rate” had been higher than anticipated — even after they began offering interviewees \$25. For every successfully completed interview, 1,500 households were dialed, said Ira Sheskin, a University of Miami geography professor who is a member of a committee of researchers assisting with the study. □



## Daily News Bulletin

Shoshana S. Cardin, *President*

Mark J. Joffe, *Executive Editor and Publisher*

Lisa Hostein, *Editor*

Michael S. Arnold, *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](http://www.jta.org).  
© JTA Reproduction only by previous arrangement.

## JEWISH WORLD

### ARTS & CULTURE

## The history of American Jewry to be broadcast on public television

By Peter Ephross

NEW YORK (JTA) — A Jewish mother reacts to the news that her daughter has married a non-Jew: "My spirit was for some time so depressed that it was a pain for me to speak or see anyone. My house has been my prison ever since."

Sound like a contemporary lament?

Perhaps, but these words come from colonial America in a letter written by Abigail Franks about her daughter's marriage to a prominent French Huguenot.

The tale of Franks' timeless worries is just one of many in a two-part documentary, "They Came For Good: A History of the Jews in the United States," which will be aired on U.S. public television stations during the next few months.

The film traces the first 200-plus years of Jewish life in the New World from 1654 — when 23 Brazilian Jewish refugees landed in Dutch New Amsterdam in what is present-day New York — to 1880, the beginning of the massive Eastern European Jewish immigration.

Amram Nowak, the documentary's producer and director, is currently at work on the next installments in his series, which will bring the story of U.S. Jewry to the present day.

The documentary — which uses a mixture of scholars and actors speaking in the voices of historical characters — frames American Jewish history as a struggle to maintain "identity while assimilating into a welcoming culture," as narrator Mason Adams says at the beginning of the first part.

That idea stands as the framing device for the American Jewish experience, Nowak says, a tension that he believes has not been fully resolved.

"Will there be a Jewish community outside of the strictly Orthodox 50 years from now? It's a big question that nobody can answer," says Nowak, who made the film along with his wife, Manya Starr, who died before the project was completed.

Of course, the American Jewish experience is more complex than one of a struggle for preservation against assimilation. As the film itself makes clear, anti-Semitism also played a role. New Amsterdam Lord Mayor Peter Stuyvesant initially refused those pioneering Jews — whom he called a "deceitful race" that wanted "to infect" the colony — permission to remain on the land. Stuyvesant's superiors in Holland overruled him.

Even then, Jews had to care for their own sick and needy and were not at first allowed to own property.

The documentary highlights the Jewish experience in the major events in American history — the American Revolution, the westward expansion and the Civil War. The film's strength stems from the fact that its story is told through the lives of individual Jews, both well and little known.

Most people have heard of Levi Strauss, the Jewish peddler who made a fortune during the Gold Rush by making riveted denim pants, and some may know about Haym Solomon, the Jewish financier who helped fund the Revolutionary War. Fewer probably have learned about Judah Benjamin, who served in the Confederate Cabinet during the Civil War, or Rebecca Gratz, the Philadelphia philanthropist who created the Hebrew Sunday School Society in the middle of the 19th century.

But those who know of Mordechai Noah, who established a rather unsuccessful Jewish colony in upstate New York in the 1820s, should count themselves among a chosen few.

What will be new to many viewers was also new to Nowak. A yeshiva student as a child who grew up in a Zionist household in the Bronx, Nowak says he knew his Torah, but little about the early history of American Jewry.

For example, he knew little about the development of the Reform movement in the middle of the 19th century. And he was surprised to find that Sephardi Jews were the Jewish elite until the arrival of large numbers of German Jews in the 19th century.

"Sephardi was just a vague word to me," he says.

Now, Nowak says, all that has changed. "I got, if not my Ph.D., at least my master's, in my five years of work on the project." □

### Vandals strike at Maryland shul

A Reconstructionist synagogue in suburban Maryland was vandalized over the weekend, right before members of the Adat Shalom Congregation celebrated the opening of their new shul.

Vandals sprayed three swastikas and the words "Go Home" on the pavement near the parking lot of the Bethesda temple. Police were able to remove most of the graffiti before the temple's dedication ceremony.

### Looted art auctioned in London

A collection of artwork restituted through the efforts of the World Jewish Congress fetched just over \$500,000, more than twice the pre-sale estimate, at a Sotheby's auction in London on March 29.

The 54 works on paper by Austrian artist Max Klinger from the Gustav and Clara Stein Kirstein Collection were part of the first group of Nazi-looted art to be returned through the WJC's Commission for Art Recovery.

### ADL official going to Cambridge

An Anti-Defamation League official was named the first Hugo Gryn Fellow in Religious Tolerance at the Center for Jewish-Christian Relations in Cambridge, England.

Rabbi Leon Klenicki, the ADL's director of inter-faith affairs in New York, will hold the post from September to December. The center describes the fellowship as "the first academic position dedicated to the study of religious tolerance."

### Groups seek special seder prayer

The Jewish Agency for Israel and the World Zionist Organization are calling on Jews around the world to set aside a seat at the seder table and say a prayer for Israelis missing since the 1982 Lebanon War and for four Israelis kidnapped by Hezbollah forces last October. A suggested prayer is available at <http://www.jafi.org.il/prayer/index.htm>.

### Czech teens face police probe

Two 15-year-old Czechs are being investigated by police for allegedly greeting each other in the halls of their school and elsewhere with fascist salutes. If put on trial, the boys could be sentenced to up to 30 months in prison for promoting fascism.

### Cuban legislator blasts Israel

The president of Cuba's Parliament called for the withdrawal of Israeli troops from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Speaking in Havana at a meeting of legislators from around the world, Ricardo Alarcon also said Israel "should take the necessary measures to stop the brutal repression of the Palestinian people."

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES****Jewish groups give Mubarak frosty reception in Washington***By Matthew E. Berger*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak may be the first Arab leader invited to George W. Bush's White House, but American Jewish leaders are making sure his visit is no honeymoon.

While Mubarak will try to convince U.S. officials this week that Egypt should be allowed a larger role in Middle East peace efforts, he faces sharp criticism from some Jewish leaders who say Egyptian policies and behavior do little to advance peace in the region, and often hinder it.

Mubarak's visit comes days after the Anti-Defamation League released a report blasting the rampant anti-Semitism in Egypt's state-controlled media, including fierce attacks on Jews and Judaism and cartoon figures with distorted Jewish features that critics say would not have been out of place in Nazi Germany.

"These caricatures are as ugly as they were in the '30s," ADL National Director Abraham Foxman said. "We are calling for President Mubarak to speak out."

Foxman recently called for \$100 million in U.S. aid to Egypt — of an annual total of roughly \$2 billion — to be held in escrow until its government condemns such anti-Semitic practices.

At the same time as Mubarak refuses to set foot in Israel — he has not visited the Jewish state in his two decades as president except to attend Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin's funeral — the Egyptian establishment takes pains to squelch the few voices advocating normalization with Israel.

The provocations range from the petty — such as refusing to fly the Israeli flag during Israeli-Palestinian peace talks in Taba last winter — to the egregious, such as last week's article in the government daily Al-Akbar supporting the age-old slander that Jews add Gentile blood to their Passover matzahs.

In addition, Israeli officials in recent years have warned of Egypt's massive military buildup and its army exercises based on scenarios of war against Israel.

Executives from the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations decided to boycott a Wednesday luncheon in Mubarak's honor that will be hosted by Arab and Jewish groups.

"This is not the occasion to honor him," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents. "It's time for a serious dialogue with him."

Hoenlein said he was concerned the event would allow Mubarak to say he met with Jewish leaders, without having to face tough questioning on Mideast violence and Egyptian anti-Semitism.

Event organizers will question Mubarak in a closed-door session before the speech, the spokesman said.

As the first Arab country to sign a formal peace treaty with Israel and as a relative moderate in the Arab world, Egypt long has been considered a key U.S. ally. Mubarak has cultivated the relationship, visiting Washington every year since he took office after the death of Anwar Sadat in 1981.

Mubarak is seeking to use that status, as well as his influence as a close adviser to Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, to carve out a bigger role for Egypt in Mideast peace efforts.

A senior White House official said Bush on Monday encouraged Mubarak to use his influence in the region to improve the

situation and urge a reduction of violence, which Mubarak pledged to do.

At the same time, Egypt also wants the United States to take a more forceful stance in breaking the Israeli-Palestinian impasse.

Bush on Monday denied that his administration is less involved in Mideast peace efforts than was President Clinton's. The White House official said Bush is consulting with key regional parties about ways to move forward in negotiations once violence subsides.

"It's important for us to build strong relationships with countries such as Egypt and Jordan, and other countries in the Middle East who have got a stake in peace," Bush said after meeting with Mubarak. "But we will remain very actively engaged. And, hopefully, there will be positive results."

Mubarak is considered the strongest diplomatic influence on Arafat.

As violence in the region continues, however, Mubarak is subtly distancing itself from the Palestinians and trying to be more helpful on the international front, said Daniel Pipes, director of the Middle East Forum.

Mubarak's "role has shifted," Pipes said. "When the prospect is one of war and not peace, they have woken up to the real dangers."

Egypt attempted to exert itself in the Middle East peace process during the Clinton administration, but some are not convinced the country still has as much influence in the region as it once did.

"Mubarak has been influential in a limited tactical sense," said David Wurmser, director of Middle East studies at the American Enterprise Institute. "But broadly, Egypt has been unable to shift policy in the region for a long time."

Egypt long has sought to maintain a delicate balance, keeping Israel at arm's length — and sometimes, critics say, even obstructing other countries' peace efforts in order to guard Egyptian primacy as an American ally — while not allowing Palestinian-Israeli violence to engulf the whole Mideast.

Now, however, American Jewish leaders and lawmakers are demonstrating their frustration with Egypt.

Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.), the ranking minority member of the House International Relations Committee, said last week that aid to Egypt should be shifted from a military to an economic basis because Egypt faces no real military threat.

Lantos said last month that he was not advocating a cut in funds to Egypt, but that having two-thirds of Egypt's aid package go to military uses was "no longer appropriate under present circumstances."

"The people of Egypt deserve our help, and what they need is economic help, not high-tech weaponry," Lantos said at the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's policy conference.

In an interview in The Washington Post on Sunday, Mubarak argued for the military aid.

"You never know what's going to happen in this part of the world," he said.

Patrick Clawson, research director for the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, said Mubarak may ultimately "pay a price domestically" for U.S. assistance.

Some experts say that U.S. pressure on Mubarak could bring results. If he does come out against Palestinian policies, for example, it may be easiest for Mubarak to tell domestic critics that his stance is a result of unbearable pressure placed on him by the United States, including the threat of aid restrictions. □