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84th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel buries bomb victims

Funerals were held Sunday for two Israeli soldiers killed last Friday by a suicide bomb attack in the Gaza Strip.

Sgt. Ophir Kit, 19, of Jerusalem, and Sgt. Aviv Izak, 19, of Kfar Saba, were killed when they responded to a call to help a jeep with Israeli license plates that supposedly was stuck in the sand.

As they approached the jeep, the bomber inside set off his explosives.

The Palestinian Authority dismissed the incident as an Israeli army training accident, but Hamas later claimed responsibility for the attack.

Blast kills Fatah militant

A Fatah militant was killed in an explosion Sunday when he lifted the telephone receiver at a public telephone in the West Bank city of Nablus.

Palestinian officials immediately blamed Israel for slaying 26-year-old Osama Jawabri.

Israeli officials declined to comment about the incident.

The Al-Aksa Brigades, an armed group linked to Fatah, said in a statement that Jawabri was one of its members.

The group has claimed responsibility for attacks on Israelis, including recent ambushes that killed several Israeli settlers on West Bank roads.

A senior Israeli official accused Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat of ignoring an Israeli demand to arrest terrorists.

If Arafat continues to refuse the request, "Israel will have to invoke its right of self-defense," the official told Reuters on Sunday.

The comments appeared to hold out the possibility that Israel may resume targeting Islamic militants — if they hadn't already done so with Jawabri.

ADL: Editorials are pro-Israel

An overwhelming number of the largest daily newspapers in the United States support Israel and criticize the Palestinian Authority on their editorial pages, according to a survey carried out by the Anti-Defamation League.

As a follow-up to a December 2000 survey, the ADL based its latest findings on more than 50 editorials from major U.S. newspapers between May 22 and June 18.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Israeli military experts cautious after Syrian troops leave Beirut

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli experts are downplaying Syria's surprise decision to pull its soldiers out of Beirut, but say it could mean that Lebanon's army will soon take greater control over the country.

One year after Israel withdrew its troops from southern Lebanon, there now are no Syrian soldiers in the Lebanese capital, the first time since 1976. Yet Israeli experts cautioned that this still was only a partial move.

Syria still deploys some 15,000 soldiers in the hills east of Beirut and in Lebanon's Bekaa Valley on the border with Syria, said Eyal Zisser, an expert on Syria at Tel Aviv University's Middle East Studies Department.

Onn Winkler, who teaches at Haifa University, likewise questioned the significance of Syria's Beirut withdrawal.

"I don't see them leaving Lebanon in the near future," Winkler said. "They may lower their profile," but Lebanese Prime Minister "Rafik Hariri must still coordinate every strategic move with the Syrians."

Winkler added that Syria continues to maintain its political influence in Lebanon through its allies in the Lebanese Parliament, government and army.

Although Israeli military experts shared the view that the Syrian troop redeployment did not change Syria's overall control of Lebanon, the move did mark a certain change in Syrian politics, they said.

Syrian President Bashar Assad "wants to appease the Lebanese opposition," said Professor Keis Firo of Haifa University. "He also wants to create a more positive atmosphere in Europe on the eve of his scheduled visits to France and Germany" this week.

Syria's withdrawal from Beirut followed a long Maronite Christian campaign against the presence of Syrian troops on Lebanese soil.

Spearheading the campaign was Nasrallah Sfeir, patriarch of the Maronite church, who was one of the first to dare speak out publicly against the Syrians.

Lebanese Christians make up some 35 percent of that nation's population.

Assad initially rejected their demand, but when the powerful Druse leader Walid Jumblatt also called to re-evaluate the Syrian role in Lebanon, Assad understood that Syria's days in Beirut were numbered.

The Syrian troop redeployment is "actually a tactical move, and it is too early to tell whether it is a sign of weakness or self-confidence" on Assad's part, Zisser told JTA.

Of perhaps greatest importance to Israel, the Syrian withdrawal from Beirut may signal a more significant role for the Lebanese army. Ever since Israeli troops withdrew from southern Lebanon, Israel — joined by the United Nations — has called on the Lebanese government to take control over security in the region.

Hariri's government has a vested economic interest in keeping the region quiet, but it has refrained so far from confronting Hezbollah, which retains control over southern Lebanon and has staged a number of cross-border attacks on Israel.

Beirut is still waiting for a green light from Damascus to disarm Hezbollah, the only militia in Lebanon that has yet to lay down its arms.

Assad has shown no sign that he wants to disarm Hezbollah. Indeed, he has maintained the policy of his late father, Hafez Assad, who consistently supported Hezbollah's anti-Israel activities — perhaps to pressure Israel to return the Golan Heights to Syria. Earlier this year, after Hezbollah fired on Israeli forces, Israel attacked

MIDEAST FOCUS

Sharon wants pressure on Arafat

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said he plans to use his visit to Washington this week to urge U.S. officials to pressure Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat to fulfill the U.S.-mediated cease-fire. Reports in Israel said the United States is anxious to begin a cooling-off period in order to renew diplomatic negotiations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

Sharon met Sunday with British Prime Minister Tony Blair during a refueling stopover in Britain en route to the United States.

British officials rejected reports in Israel that Blair did not want to meet with Sharon because of a BBC television program aired last week in which some lawyers said Sharon could be indicted on war crimes charges in connection with the massacre of Palestinian civilians by Christian militiamen during the 1982 Lebanon War.

Firebomb thrown at school bus

Palestinians threw a firebomb at an Israeli school bus traveling on a West Bank road.

In another incident Sunday, an Israeli vehicle was fired upon near the West Bank city of Jenin. There were no injuries in either incident.

Israel thwarts attacks

Israeli troops thwarted a terrorist attack last Friday night when they intercepted a group of armed Palestinians trying to cross into Israel from the Gaza Strip.

The troops opened fire, killing one of the Palestinians and capturing two others.

In another development, the head of Israeli intelligence said over the weekend that Israel had thwarted an attempt by Saudi terrorist Osama Bin Laden to carry out an attack inside Israel.

Maj. Gen. Amos Malka said in a television interview that Bin Laden's followers were likely to try to carry out future attacks against the Jewish state.

Syrian radar installations in Lebanon. Some military analysts believe Bashar Assad removed his troops from Beirut to keep them out of harm's way, should Israel order further attacks on Syrian forces in retaliation for future Hezbollah attacks.

The Beirut redeployment may be a defensive action on Bashar's part, but it remains unclear whether he may yet adopt a dovish stance toward the Jewish state.

Winkler said it is still "too early to tell" whether Assad will pursue peace with Israel — a move that would distance him from the policy of his father, who forced Israeli negotiators to accede to virtually all of his territorial demands but still couldn't bring himself to sign on the dotted line.

"I still don't know how to read young President Assad," Winkler said. "I don't know whether he is like his father or whether he may yet turn out to be another Anwar Sadat," the Egyptian leader who signed a peace accord with Israel in 1979.

The redeployment of Syrian forces from Beirut began June 14. Three days later, the Syrians turned over to the Lebanese army 18 strategic positions and large bases in the capital.

There was no change in the deployment of other Syrian forces on Lebanese soil, however. In other words, Syria lowered its military profile in its "sister" country — a term Syria uses to justify its military presence in Lebanon — but its overall presence remained the same.

Pressure for a Syrian pullout grew steadily after Israel's May 2000 withdrawal from southern Lebanon.

After the Israeli withdrawal, Syria could no longer offer the pretext that its soldiers were protecting Lebanon from Israeli aggression. Not only were growing numbers of Lebanese tired of being stopped at roadblocks manned by Syrian soldiers, they also were weary of Syrian competition in the economic sphere.

Cheap agricultural imports from Syria compete with Lebanese products, and some 500,000 Syrian laborers have taken the place of Lebanese workers.

"Syria is a very poor country," Winkler said. "It cannot do without the Lebanese market."

Syria's direct military involvement in Lebanon dates back to April 1976, when Syrian troops entered Lebanon and gradually established their control over areas strategically important to Damascus.

Hafez Assad moved in his forces to counterbalance the growing power in Lebanon of the Palestine Liberation Organization and its Druse allies.

Assad justified the intervention by pointing out that the two Arab "sister" nations were bound by language, culture, kinship and history.

Israel gave its tacit approval to the move, provided Assad did not cross a "red line" by putting his troops in a menacing position along the Lebanese-Israeli border.

Israel also hoped that the presence of the Syrian army would weaken the PLO. This hope proved false, however, and six years later Israel invaded Lebanon in an effort to destroy the PLO, which had set up a terrorist mini-state in southern Lebanon.

Israeli forces ultimately forced PLO leader Yasser Arafat to flee into exile in Tunisia, where he remained until the Oslo peace process allowed his return to the Gaza Strip in 1994.

While demanding that Israel withdraw its troops from southern Lebanon, Syria ignored its own commitments over the years to withdraw from Lebanon — citing statements by its Lebanese client governments praising the Syrian presence. □

Report: P.A. freed bombing masterminds

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The Palestinian Authority detained but then freed two Hamas operatives Israel claims were responsible for planning the June 1 disco bombing in Tel Aviv, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported.

According to Ze'ev Schiff, the paper's military analyst, Israel presented the men's names to Palestinian security officials and asked that they be arrested. He said Palestinian Authority officials invited the two for a conversation — not an interrogation — during which they admitted their involvement in the attack.

However, they were released after they signed a statement promising not to carry out further attacks. □



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JEWISH WORLD

Federation gives grants to Israel

UJA-Federation of New York decided to allocate \$100,000 in emergency grants to two crisis assistance organizations in Israel: the Israel Crisis Management Center and the Israel Center for Psychotrauma.

According to the federation, trauma-related services in Israel are overwhelmed as a result of ongoing Israeli-Palestinian violence, which is now in its ninth month.

Slave laborers may receive less

Germany said it may not be able to pay the full sums it promised to Nazi-era slave and forced laborers.

The foundation administering the compensation said it had expected around 1.2 million applicants but is now estimating 1.5 million, and that late applicants may receive less than others.

Last Friday's announcement came as the first 300 German former laborers received compensation from the fund.

In another development, a U.S. judge refused to halt payments of millions of dollars to 51 lawyers who represented Nazi-era slave laborers seeking reparations from Germany.

A last-minute challenge to the more than \$50 million in legal fees came too late and with weak arguments, the judge said last Friday.

Bush's genetics stance praised

Hadassah: The Women's Zionist Organization of America is praising President Bush's comments over the weekend in favor of legislation that would ban genetic discrimination by health insurers or employers.

Research shows that Ashkenazic Jewish women have a hereditary susceptibility to breast and ovarian cancers.

Cheney cancels on Muslims

Vice President Dick Cheney canceled his planned meeting last Friday at the White House with the American Muslim Council, which has praised terrorist groups.

Cheney's office cited a "scheduling conflict."

AJCommittee blasts Syrians

The American Jewish Committee called on Syria to end its 25-year-old occupation of Lebanon.

"Syria's occupation is a disaster for Lebanon," the group said in an ad on the Op-Ed page of Sunday's New York Times.

The ad continued: "Syria has never recognized Lebanon as a sovereign and independent state. Its occupation violates international law and hinders Middle East peacemaking."

Controversy in Britain over charity funded by royalties from 'Mein Kampf'

By Richard Allen Greene

LONDON (JTA) — A controversy has erupted after reports that a British charity set up to aid German Jewish refugees accepted royalties from the sale of Hitler's "Mein Kampf" — even though the group no longer accepts the royalties.

The public announcement that the German Welfare Council no longer accepts the funds followed a report last week in Britain's Sunday Telegraph newspaper claiming the charity had received more than \$675,000 from Hitler's work.

The council disputed the Telegraph's numbers, saying it had received an average of \$5,400 a year from the royalties for the last quarter-century.

The charity said it used some of the funds to meet shortfalls in its budget, and invested the rest. It decided to stop taking the money last year due to the decreasing number of Jewish refugees requiring the charity's service, it said.

The remainder of the "Mein Kampf" money — which the council estimates to be \$50,000 — has been kept separate from other council funds, pending a decision about what to do with the money.

Lord Janner, chairman of the British-based Holocaust Educational Trust, condemned any charity's decision to accept funds from Hitler's opus.

"I would be surprised if any charity would knowingly wish to benefit from Hitler's royalties," he told JTA, describing "Mein Kampf" as an "evil work" and "political pornography of the worst kind."

A combination autobiography and political manifesto, "Mein Kampf" was banned in Britain from 1944 until 1969. But it has been available in English for more than 30 years, despite protests from Jews and the West German government.

When royalties from the sales of the book began arriving at the offices of the literary agency Curtis Brown, the agency asked the West German Embassy in London what to do with the money.

The government of the German state of Bavaria owns the foreign publishing rights to the tract, but the embassy told Curtis Brown that the German Welfare Council would be an appropriate recipient of the funds.

The council was founded in 1952 to aid German Jewish refugees in Britain, and is largely funded by the German Foreign Office.

"The council opposes the commercial publication of 'Mein Kampf.' However, as the publishing house did not refrain from commercial publishing in the U.K., the view was taken that the royalties should at least benefit the victims of Nazi persecution," the council said in a statement.

The charity decided at the end of last year to stop accepting the royalties because "over the past years the advice and support work devoted to victims of Nazi persecution has steadily declined and now amounts to about 10 percent" of the charity's total caseload, the council said.

No figures were available on the number of Jewish Holocaust survivors in Britain. The council now focuses most of its efforts on helping non-Jewish Germans who live in Britain.

Hitler wrote "Mein Kampf" in prison in 1924 after his failed Beer Hall Putsch, and it was first published in 1925. When he became chancellor of Germany in 1933, the book became a required school text. It sold in the millions, and for many years was Hitler's main source of income. □

BBC film on Sharon won't air in Israel

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's state-owned television decided not to air a BBC documentary discussing whether Prime Minister Ariel Sharon should be indicted on war crimes charges in connection with the Sabra and Shatilla massacre of Palestinian civilians by Christian militiamen during the 1982 Lebanon War.

Israel Television's Channel One bought the broadcast rights, but the Israel Broadcasting Authority, which controls the channel, overruled the news department's decision. □

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

French Jewish schools struggle with message in a competitive era

By Andrew Diamond

PARIS (JTA) — As Jewish high school seniors cram for their baccalaureate exams, the Jewish community in Paris is engaged in soul-searching over the role of Jewish education in French society.

Signaling the mounting concern was the publication last month in the Jewish weekly, *Actualite Juive*, of a supplement assessing the state of religious instruction in French Jewish schools. The schools provide both secular and Jewish education.

Surveying numerous school directors, rabbis, teachers and former students throughout France, the paper reports some positive developments — religion teachers, traditionally the lowest paid faculty members, finally have begun to see a rise in salaries.

On the whole, however, the paper presents religious teaching as a communal tradition in danger of becoming irrelevant for a younger generation intent on achieving success in French society.

Religious instruction “is looked upon as the neglected child since there is no grading system sanctioning the level of knowledge, a problem always debated in Jewish schools,” explains Adam Ouknine, the Director of the Lycee Yeshiva Etz-Haim in St. Maur, a suburb of Parisian.

Students in Jewish schools post above-average results on the national exams needed for admission to French universities, but school directors complain that the students sometimes lack motivation in their religious studies.

One contributor to *Actualite Juive* concludes that the biggest challenge to teaching Jewish observance today is “to convey a system of values which in most cases has no relationship with the everyday life of students at home.”

If such sentiments are disturbing to the more conservative members of the community, they are the material upon which Rabbi Vicky Bellahsen staked his candidacy for chief rabbi of Paris, though he ultimately lost to the incumbent, David Messas.

Bellahsen, a former director of educational services for the Consistoire de Paris — the assembly of rabbis and laymen that governs Jewish affairs in the city — criticized the Parisian Jewish educational system for a “lack of dynamism” that fails to meet parents’ expectations.

What’s needed, Bellahsen says, is a renewed effort to relate religious instruction to the reality of mainstream French life.

“We have to show that Judaism has a message to send out to modern civilization,” Bellahsen advises. “There is a necessity to open up to the surrounding cultural environment and to adapt the message of the synagogue to it. We have to interest youth, get the elites back and prevent the ghettoization of the community.”

This call for a more adaptive Judaism reflects a general recognition that market concerns have penetrated the Jewish educational system. Schools apparently have gotten the message both that they must adapt themselves to compete successfully with secular schools, and to prepare their students for the professional challenges they will face in the New Economy.

Judging from the advertisements that fill the Jewish press, many Jewish schools already are in the process of adapting. The quantity of school recruitment ads reveals that competition for incoming students is stiff, especially in the Paris region, a situation that has demanded innovation.

To attract potential students, many schools now tout their

multimedia resources and their ability to train students for the “high-tech world.” In the midst of their reflection on the role of Jewish education and the place of Judaism in modern French society, French Jews recently received an ugly reminder of why Jewish schools remain necessary in the 21st century.

At the College Landowski, a public junior high in a Paris suburb, teen-agers studying English grammar were given practice sheets with sentences expressing an anti-Israeli perspective.

The phrases, which the students were to rewrite in the passive voice, were: “The Palestinian Imad family has buried Wael”; “Israeli soldiers shot him in the head”; “His friends took him to the hospital immediately”; “Teenagers’ deaths keep Doctor Abdel Mari busy every night”; and “Israeli soldiers will kill again Palestinian children.”

Distressed students brought the matter to their parents’ attention; it has now been taken up by the International League Against Racism and Anti-Semitism. Michel Zaoui, the head of the league’s legal division, has reported the situation to the Academy of Versailles — the administrative body that governs the local schools — which has assigned an inspector to investigate the case.

In a meeting with five mothers, however, the school principal refused to comment on the actions of the English professor, telling the women they were overreacting.

Such incidents may help convince French Jews of the need to retain control over their children’s education.

Most likely, it is the more liberal elements of the community — whose children attend public schools, and who view religious instruction mainly as a complement to their children’s secular education — who will be most deeply affected by any anti-Israel rhetoric in the schools. □

Poles to honor rescuers of Jews, but Jews see it as mixed blessing

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME (JTA) — A new plaque in Warsaw commemorating Polish Catholics who saved Jews during World War II is the first step in a larger project to memorialize all Poles who rescued Jews during the war.

Polish Prime Minister Jerzy Buzek and Cardinal Josef Glemp unveiled the plaque last week on the outer wall of Warsaw’s All Saints Church. Plans are being made to erect a larger monument inside the church listing the names of all Polish rescuers.

The monuments come amid an intense debate over Polish behavior during the Holocaust, touched off by the publication last year of the book “Neighbors” by Jan Gross.

The book details how local Poles — not Germans — brutally massacred 1,600 Jews in the village of Jedwabne in 1941.

Jewish reaction has been mixed to the new plaque honoring the righteous Poles and the announcement of plans for the monument. Many fear the honor could be manipulated to whitewash Polish anti-Semitism.

“My feelings are ambivalent,” a board member of the Union of Polish Jewish Communities said. “It is good to honor those righteous Poles. At the same time, this church has been the scene of anti-Semitic activities. Anti-Semitic books are on sale in the bookshop in the basement.

“I do not trust those who are involved in the project,” he added. “I am afraid that the righteous are treated as a veil that would cover the shameful pages of Polish history.” □