



Daily News Bulletin

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84th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli found dead in West Bank

The body of an Israeli shepherd who had been shot in the back and head was found Monday night near his home in the Hebron hills of the West Bank.

Yair Har Sinai, a 51-year-old father of nine, was the second Israeli killed in an apparent terrorist attack on Monday.

Tracks from the scene of the shooting reportedly led to a nearby Arab village.

Israel to adhere to cease-fire

Israel's Inner Cabinet decided Tuesday to continue adhering to a U.S.-brokered cease-fire plan, but also agreed to maintain the policy of targeting suspected Palestinian terrorists.

Israeli officials defended the policy, which was criticized a day earlier by the U.S. State Department, as a matter of self-defense.

Writer Mordecai Richler dead

Mordecai Richler, a Canadian Jewish literary giant, died Monday at the age of 70.

Richler was best known for his stories about Montreal Jewish life.

"The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz" and "Joshua Then and Now" are among his most famous works. [Page 3]

Germany urged to fight racism

A human rights and pro-democracy organization urged Germany to combat what it called the "serious problem" of a rising tide of anti-Semitic and racist violence there. [Page 3]

U.S. envoy to visit Lebanon

U.S. Middle East envoy William Burns is due to hold talks with Lebanese officials in Beirut on Friday about the weekend's flare-up of violence along the Israeli-Lebanese border, according to a Lebanese official.

The official also said the E.U. Middle East envoy, Miguel Angel Moratinos, is expected to arrive on Friday in an effort to reduce regional tensions.

REMINDER: The JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Thursday, July 5.

NEWS ANALYSIS

What next for Mideast quagmire? Israel and United States at a loss

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — One year after a Camp David summit produced the greatest hope yet that a far-reaching peace agreement between Israel and the Palestinians was attainable, it now appears that peace is as elusive as ever.

Both the Israelis and the Bush administration are at a loss over what to do next to quell the violence that has battered the region for the past nine months.

Just days after U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell failed in his efforts to salvage a shaky cease-fire agreement, the State Department is admitting, as one official put it: "We have no big cards left to play."

"It's only day-to-day efforts to try and keep it moving," the State Department official told JTA.

The Israelis, too, are uncertain where to turn.

Powell visited the Middle East last week in an effort to set a timeline for returning to political negotiations.

But within days of his departure, the violence showed no signs of abating.

On Monday alone — the worst day of violence since the cease-fire went into effect on June 13 — two Israelis were killed in Palestinian shooting attacks, three members of Islamic Jihad died in an Israeli helicopter attack, and two car bombs were detonated in an Israeli town near Tel Aviv.

Should the U.S. cease-fire initiative fail completely, Israeli officials have discussed a number of options, including:

- Overthrowing the Palestinian Authority. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said this week that he and his ministers had discussed — and ultimately dismissed for now — this option in recent days. The Cabinet also discussed the idea following the deadly June 1 terror bombing outside a Tel Aviv disco.

Possible adverse reaction from the international community and the question of who would fill the power vacuum after Arafat's defeat were two key reasons for the ministers' rejection of the option.

- Unilaterally separating from the Palestinians. This idea has been tossed about in one form or another since the tenure of former Prime Minister Ehud Barak. Most recently, Israel Defense Force officials presented the idea of a buffer zone separating Israel from the West Bank.

Opponents of the idea say Israel would have to abandon settlements — or leave them in Palestinian hands. They also cite the exorbitant costs.

Powell returned to the United States having presumably secured agreement for a timetable by which to move from confrontation to cooperation.

The timetable incorporated Israel's demand that a seven-day period of quiet would precede a six-week "cooling-off" period before the sides sit down to implement confidence-building measures.

Those measures, outlined in a report authored by former U.S. Sen. George Mitchell, includes a freeze on Israeli settlements, a halt to Palestinian incitement and the arrest of wanted terrorists.

While Bush administration officials are hoping for the seven-day truce to begin, they know that a full week of quiet is unlikely.

Their strategy for the moment is to work on day-to-day triage, in hopes of preventing escalation and searching for a new strategy to bring Israel and the Palestinians together. "There is some level of resignation that steps have to be taken by

MIDEAST FOCUS

Sharon blasts away at Arafat

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon called Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat a "blatant liar," adding that Arafat gave orders to Palestinian militants to carry out terror attacks against Israel.

"Arafat is our bin Laden," Sharon added, referring to the Saudi terrorist mastermind.

Israeli wants to sue Arafat

An Israeli wounded in a Palestinian terrorist massacre in 1974 plans to sue Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat in the International War Crimes Tribunal in The Hague.

Haim Asulin plans to seek \$1 billion in compensation for the families of the victims of the Ma'alot massacre. Asulin told the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot that if Belgian courts can consider bringing charges against Prime Minister Ariel Sharon in connection with a 1982 massacre in Lebanon, "then certainly a suit can be filed against the murderer of Jews, Arafat."

In the 1974 attack, 24 people were killed when Palestinian terrorists on a suicide mission took over a school.

Israel, P.A. hold heated session

Israeli and Palestinian security officials met late Monday night in an effort to reduce the ongoing violence. The heated meeting, mediated by U.S. officials, came as a wave of violence threatened to destroy a U.S.-mediated cease-fire.

Cracks found in Knesset building

Dangerous cracks were discovered in the pillars and walls of the Knesset building in Jerusalem. Engineers inspected the building following a fatal wedding hall collapse in May.

In a related development, engineers say it is too dangerous to conduct safety tests on buildings built with the same construction method used at the Jerusalem wedding hall, according to the Jerusalem Post.

the parties in the region," the State Department official said. "There is only so far we can go."

Security meetings between Israel and the Palestinian Authority have been fruitful, and the envoys in the region continue their work, the official said. But the State Department is beginning to realize that the problem could be terminal. The Bush administration originally approached the Middle East conflict at arm's length, choosing to delve into the Israeli-Palestinian conflict only when the parties requested it.

Instead of formulating its own approach to ending the violence, the administration latched onto the Mitchell report, which stemmed from an international fact-finding mission and was issued in May. But in recent weeks, the administration has been forced to become more active, according to officials and analysts.

The Palestinian bombing of a Tel Aviv disco brought increased international attention to the conflict. The Bush administration reversed course and sent CIA Director George Tenet to the Middle East. Tenet got both leaders to agree to a cease-fire "working plan," but fighting continued.

Powell's trip last week was seen as a chance to solidify that working plan, and get the parties to move forward.

While some minor headway was made on ironing out the details of the Mitchell and Tenet plans, Powell was unable to get either side to completely stop the violence. And the agreed-upon standard for moving forward — seven days of complete quiet — is seen as nearly impossible to achieve.

With Bush reluctant to get into the diplomatic arena personally, Powell was the biggest arsenal in the administration's hands. Now the State Department will need to look for a new approach.

"The problem now is that the State Department has no second act," said Tamara Cofman Wittes, an analyst with the Middle East Institute. Many believe that they are out of serious options, and will need to rethink their Mideast agenda.

One of the options they should consider, analysts say, is for the United States to step up its day-to-day efforts and increase the pressure on both sides, essentially playing the role of a referee.

Wittes said the State Department will need to "keep a very careful and public eye" on both Israel and the Palestinian Authority, and be ready to scold them when they don't follow the guidelines laid out in the Mitchell and Tenet plans.

Some analysts believe the United States should seek more active support from its international partners because of a growing belief that pressure must be placed on Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat from sources other than the United States.

Much has been made of the fact that Arafat agreed to the cease-fire after the Tel Aviv disco bombing at least in part because of the efforts of German Foreign Minister Joschka Fischer. The belief is that it will take a unified front against Arafat to yield results. "There is a general frustration that Jordan and Egypt aren't doing enough," said an official with a major American Jewish organization.

But Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, disagreed, saying that only American support is critical. "Everything else is irrelevant," Hoenlein said. "The Europeans can't offer anything to Arafat."

The United States, however, has several carrots and sticks in its bag, and being more forceful with consequences for both sides is another option.

The United States could punish the Palestinian Authority for its use of mortars and other weapons, a violation of the Oslo accords, and could reprimand Israel for its use of American-made F-16s, which are supposed only to be used for defensive purposes. The State Department has also raised concerns about Israel's practice of targeted killings.

The United States could withhold or restrict aid to the Palestinians and place one of the Palestinian factions on the State Department's list of foreign terrorist organizations. The major perk the Bush administration could offer Arafat is a visit to the White House.

As for Israel, the United States could follow through with \$800 million in supplemental aid, which was promised by President Clinton before he left, but the Bush administration has been reluctant to follow through given the current situation.

But the Bush administration faces political restrictions to those ideas. Too harsh a penalty against the Palestinians could disrupt the U.S. relationship with Arab countries, crucial to bolstering the White House's policy toward Iraq. □



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JEWISH WORLD

Zhirinovsky: I'm half-Jewish

Russian ultranationalist Vladimir Zhirinovsky admitted something he has denied for years — that his father's side of the family was Jewish. In an interview with Israel Radio's Russian-language station Monday, Zhirinovsky said all his father's relatives, who were Polish Jews, died during the Holocaust.

Teens rally for Israel in N.Y.

An estimated 1,000 youths from Jewish summer camps held a pro-Israel rally Tuesday in New York's Central Park.

Rep. Allan Nadler (D-N.Y.) and Israel's consul general in New York, Alon Pinkas, spoke at the rally, which was aimed at showing solidarity for Israel among Judaism's different streams. The rally was organized by Young Judaea.

Berlin museum to open soon

The Jewish Museum in Berlin plans to open its first exhibit on Sept. 9. The exhibit will chronicle German Jewish history from the Middle Ages.

Italian official visits Nazi camp

Italy's deputy prime minister, who serves as the leader of the right-wing National Alliance Party, recently made his first visit to the only Nazi death camp in Italy.

Gianfranco Fini, whose National Alliance has roots in an earlier, neo-Fascist party, laid a wreath during a low-key visit to La Risiera di San Sabba, which is now a memorial to the Shoah.

Thousands of people, mainly Jews and anti-fascist fighters, were killed at San Sabba or transported from there to Auschwitz.

Clinton to rock band: Play on

President Clinton reportedly called members of the music group Red Hot Chili Peppers and urged them not to cancel a scheduled summer performance in Israel because of the security situation, according to the Israeli daily Ma'ariv.

The local producers of the concert were unaware of Clinton's behind-the-scenes involvement, first reported on MTV, but told the paper they were moved by the former president's effort.

'Mr. Campaign' dies at 92

Gordon Brown, an entrepreneur known as "Mr. Campaign" for his commitment to fund-raising for Montreal's Jewish community, died this week in Montreal at the age of 92.

Brown worked as a communal volunteer for some 50 years, during which time he also raised money to build Israeli institutions. In 1995, he was awarded the Order of Canada, Canada's highest civilian honor.

OBITUARY

A chronicler of Montreal Jewry, novelist Mordecai Richler dies at 70

By Bram Eisenthal

MONTREAL (JTA) — Mordecai Richler, a Canadian Jewish literary giant, died of cancer Monday. He was 70.

Richler was known for his stories about Jewish life in his native Montreal. "The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz" and "Joshua Then and Now" are among his most famous works.

"The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz" was made into a movie starring Richard Dreyfuss.

Although he was known as a novelist, the cigar smoking, hard-drinking writer possessed literary versatility.

Richler was a syndicated columnist who enjoyed writing about what he viewed as the racism of Quebec's separatists. "Oh Canada! Oh Quebec: Requiem for a Divided Country," which he wrote in 1992, earned him many enemies in Quebec.

He was also the author of two popular children's books, "Jacob Two-Two Meets the Hooded Fang" and "Jacob Two-Two and the Dinosaur."

Richler's latest book, about a variant of the game of pool, was called "On Snooker."

Prime Minister Jean Chretien said Richler was the quintessential Canadian man of words.

"He was quite simply one of the most brilliant, original and celebrated artists in Canadian history whose works will continue to stand the test of time for generations to come," Chretien said.

Born in 1931, Richler moved to England and lived there from 1954 to 1972.

During his career, he was the recipient of numerous awards and citations, including Canada's highest civilian honor, the Order of Canada.

He also received a Guggenheim fellowship and twice won Canada's most prestigious literary honor, the Governor-General's Award for Fiction. □

Rights group urges Germany to crack down on extremists

By Toby Axelrod

BERLIN (JTA) — A human rights and pro-democracy organization is urging Germany to combat what it called the "serious problem" of a rising tide of anti-Semitic and racist violence there.

In a report issued Monday by its Anti-Racism Committee, the Council of Europe called on Germany to toughen existing laws against hate crimes.

It also rejected the frequent suggestion that the growth of such crimes is restricted to eastern Germany.

The German government has not yet commented on the report.

According to statistics provided by the German government through last December, there were some 15,591 extremist crimes last year — a 58.9 percent increase over the previous year.

Of those, there were 998 violent crimes, an increase of 33.8 percent over 1999. Among the violent crimes, 64 percent were aimed at foreigners.

The report noted that Germany's lack of an immigration law makes it possible for asylum seekers to be deported to their home countries, where their lives might be in danger. German officials are currently developing proposals for a new immigration law. The report also found fault with German media for spreading negative stereotypes about foreigners and minority groups.

The council suggested that latent anti-Semitism and racism combined with apathy could create deadly results. While calling the rise in racism and anti-Semitic violence "one of the most pressing and dangerous expressions of racism and intolerance in Germany," the council also commended the German government for changing its citizenship laws in January 2000. □

FOCUS ON ISSUES

Reform rabbis debate wisdom of canceling youth trips to Israel

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen
New York Jewish Week

MONTEREY, Calif. (JTA) — The Reform movement's controversial decision to cancel youth trips to Israel this summer was strongly criticized last week by American rabbis at their annual conference — and the action may have consequences for the movement as it struggles to gain a foothold in the Jewish state.

Israeli Reform leaders attending the Central Conference of American Rabbis' convention here were openly angry about the action by Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, on which they were not consulted.

"This has done big damage to our image," said Rabbi Meir Azari of Tel Aviv's Beit Daniel synagogue. "We are suffering from the image that the movement is not Zionist, or not Zionist enough. It affects us more in the streets than in the political realm."

As the Reform rabbis gathered for five days to adopt more tradition-oriented conversion guidelines, fallout from Yoffie's decision took center stage during, and between, speeches in this picturesque seaside town. "People are very angry, very upset at the movement," Azari said.

For years, the Reform movement has been struggling to gain legal recognition for non-Orthodox clergy and institutions, and it seems to have made headway.

Ironically, perhaps, in opinion polls the Israeli public supports Reform and its pluralistic approach to Judaism, but is now calling into question the movement's commitment to Zionism.

"There is a feeling of hurt, of insult, of abandonment," said Rabbi Uri Regev, head of the Israel Reform Action Center.

"The decision was made without understanding our mentality," Azari said. "People understand why parents are not sending their kids, but the only movement brave enough, or naive enough, to announce it was ours. It made our people, who are on the front lines, feel 'Where are you at the right time?'"

Also at issue was the movement's commitment to its members in Israel financially as well as ideologically.

Little of the Israel Reform Action Center's \$1.2 million budget comes from sources outside the movement.

Just \$180,000 comes from the Association of Reform Zionists of America, Regev said.

The rabbi of a Reform synagogue in the Jerusalem suburb of Mevasseret Zion has had to seek funds from American congregations for a needed new building. So far there is only a basement.

Rabbi Andrea London, associate rabbi at Beth Emet — The Free Synagogue in Evanston Ill., has written a letter to Yoffie urging him to donate the money that would have been spent on overhead for the youth summer trip directly to the movement in Israel.

She also suggested that Reform Jews could make more of an impact by donating to Israeli Reform communities than by going on an upcoming solidarity mission.

"Missions in times of crisis are a lot of show and symbolism," London said in an interview. "It's more for us than for them. Can you imagine the good it would do for Reform Jews in Israel if we sent them hundreds of thousands of dollars?"

The outgoing CCAR president, Rabbi Charles Kroloff, said in his main speech that Reform Jews in Israel require "several million

dollars annually" from the movement. "Without that subsidy, the movement will at best limp along and at worst collapse," he said.

Official statements from CCAR leaders here were supportive of Yoffie's call to cancel all youth trips. "It was a sad, painful but correct decision," Kroloff said.

In his address, he urged the rabbis to join the Reform movement solidarity mission to Israel — and to bring congregants with them. The "Spiritual Pilgrimage," as it is being called, is slated to depart July 29. But many of the rank-and-file rabbis here disagreed with Kroloff's assessment.

"Now more than ever we need to show our faces and bodies in Israel, not just say nice words," said Rabbi David Wucher of Congregation B'nai Sholom in Huntington, W.Va. "People are going, they're just not going with NFTY," the Reform movement's National Federation of Temple Youth. "Nothing in this world is more precious to me than my own daughter, and she's going, she's 16, on a Young Judaea trip."

"Someone said to me that" in this age after the 1999 Columbine High School massacre in Colorado, "and they were right, that 'even your daughter's high school principal can't promise you 100 percent that nothing will happen.'"

The other major focus at the convention concerned the changing nature of Reform Judaism.

That was visible here in the variety of morning worship services offered, from one mostly in Hebrew to one incorporating "meditative learning and interactive moments," according to the program; in a session devoted to "Re-imagining Reform Worship."

But the transition from classical Reform, which broke with traditional Judaism in almost every way more than a century ago, to a much different movement focused more on incorporating practices that are part of conventional Conservative and Orthodox religious life, is summed up in the proposed conversion guidelines.

The guidelines, which were overwhelmingly adopted at the end of the convention, extend well beyond what the CCAR last adopted in 1981. Those guidelines took up all of four pages; the new proposal covers more than three times that many and recommends specific steps in greater detail.

These have been debated and discussed at regional rabbinic gatherings — and have gone through 10 drafts.

The new guidelines encourage the use of brit milah, hatafat dam brit — drawing a drop of blood from the penis when a male convert is already circumcised — and immersion in a mikvah, along with the use of three witnesses and a year each of study and living in a Jewish community before conversion.

Reform leaders in the past had bridled at the idea of taking on any ritual that smacked of tradition. Today, though, it is seen as a positive development. The process began at last year's CCAR convention, where a traditionally oriented Statement of Principles was adopted.

"There is value in these rituals, and that's the direction we ought to be moving in," said Rabbi Richard Shapiro, chair of the CCAR Committee on Conversion and a pulpit rabbi in Santa Barbara, Calif.

"We're not converting people to Reform Judaism, we're converting them to Judaism. We have an obligation to do conversions that are accepted by the widest possible part of the Jewish people."

According to Rabbi Martin Weiner, incoming president of the CCAR, "these conversion guidelines really confirm what is somewhat mainstream practice now." He added, however, that there continues to be a wide range of practice. □