



Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 79, No. 127

Tuesday, July 10, 2001

84th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Bomb kills Israeli officer

A 22-year-old Israeli army captain was killed Sunday night when a roadside bomb exploded as his jeep passed near Hebron in the West Bank.

Palestinian militants claimed responsibility for the attack, which killed Capt. Shai Shalom Cohen.

Another soldier riding in the jeep sustained light injuries.

Suicide bomber strikes in Gaza

A Palestinian suicide bomber blew himself up near an Israeli checkpoint at the Kissufim Crossing separating Israel from the Gaza Strip. Hamas claimed responsibility for Monday's attack, which caused no Israeli injuries.

The bomber was the first of 10 "human bombs" that Islamic militants had vowed would avenge the death of an 11-year-old Palestinian boy during a weekend clash between Israeli soldiers and Palestinian gunmen.

Israel's Cabinet secretary claimed that Israel had given Palestinian officials information about the suicide bomber before he carried out the attack. "The Palestinian police didn't do anything about it when they should have prevented it," Gideon Saar said Monday.

Arsonist targets Jewish homes

Police are seeking a woman they believe is connected with a series of arson attacks on a fervently Orthodox Jewish neighborhood in London.

Stamford Hill, home to what is believed to be the world's largest Chasidic community outside Israel and New York, has been the scene of six attacks in the past five weeks. [Page 3]

U.S. seeks to deport Nazi guard

The U.S. Justice Department is seeking the deportation of a former machinist who lives in a Cleveland suburb, saying he served as a Nazi concentration camp guard.

The department's Office of Special Investigations alleges that Wasyl Krysa assisted in atrocities in a concentration camp in Poland and lied about his wartime past when he applied for a U.S. visa in 1951.

In a court filing last week, Krysa admitted that he served as a camp guard during the war, but maintained he was forced to serve the Nazis.

THE 2001 JEWISH OLYMPICS

As athletes train and unwind, they're ready for Maccabiah to begin

By Jessica Steinberg

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Greg Spector, a strapping, 6-foot-4-inch volleyball player from Los Angeles, tends to be philosophical when discussing why he decided to participate in this year's Maccabiah Games.

"The Maccabiah makes a statement," said Spector, 31, sporting a yellow visor and green satin yarmulke for lunch at Jerusalem's Haas Promenade. "It's about representing a world of Jews and showing what it is to be Jewish."

During the 16th quadrennial Maccabiah Games — known as the Jewish Olympics — there are usually 5,000 participants competing for 10 days.

But this year, because of ongoing Israeli-Palestinian violence, only some 2,000 athletes from 40 countries are expected to attend the 16th edition of the Games, which have been shortened to seven days and officially begin July 16.

North America usually sends the largest contingent of competitors, with 600 of the continent's best Jewish athletes taking part. This year, there will be about 380 athletes coming from North America.

For a while, it wasn't clear whether the U.S. team would attend the Games.

In early June, Maccabi USA's Executive Committee urged organizers to postpone the Games until next year because of the current security situation.

When the Israeli government asked the committee to reconsider, it met again on, after a series of discussions, members voted to attend.

"We're Jews, and we're here in the State of Israel as an expression of solidarity," Jordan Weinstein, chairman of the Maccabi USA steering committee, told U.S. participants Monday. "Israel needs us now, and you are ambassadors for the U.S."

His remarks triggered a round of high fives among the audience, as the participants congratulated each other on making it to Israel this summer.

A recent U.S.-mediated cease-fire between Israel and the Palestinian Authority played a major role in getting the players here this year, said Bob Spivack, president of the Philadelphia-based Maccabi USA.

"When we felt more comfortable after the cease-fire, we polled our leadership and felt that we could provide a quality cultural and educational experience," said Spivack, who has been involved with the Maccabiah for 20 years. "And the proof that we made the right decision is that" so many "kids showed up."

The cease-fire has been far from complete, however, and Israeli officials are taking precautions because of the security concerns.

At least one armed guard is being assigned to each busload of athletes, and there will be more than 600 police officers and soldiers at the opening ceremony at Jerusalem's Teddy Stadium.

There is also a 24-hour hotline for athletes to call with any problems or questions.

About half of the American athletes are first-timers, Spivack said. Through e-mails, letters and phone calls, Maccabi USA organizers told potential participants about a U.S. State Department travel advisory warning of regional violence, and then let them make their own decisions.

"This is a group of special kids," he said. "The fact is, they had a choice. In years past, it was just about a free trip to Israel. This time they had to decide."

The U.S. team arrived Sunday evening — an El Al plane full of energetic, excited participants wearing official blue Maccabiah T-shirts and baseball caps.

Gathering for the introductory session Monday morning at Kfar Maccabiah in

MIDEAST FOCUS

Barak lashes out at Arafat

Former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak blamed Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat for starting the current conflict, saying the Palestinian leader lacks the will to make peace with Israel.

In his first major address since his election defeat earlier this year, Barak told an audience at Tel Aviv University on Monday, "There is no Palestinian leadership willing to go to an agreement that will assure even the most basic interests of Israel."

Warning of attack at Ben-Gurion

Israeli police set up roadblocks Monday at the entrances to Ben-Gurion International Airport and beefed up checks of luggage entering the terminal following warnings of an imminent Palestinian terror attack.

Israeli officials advised passengers to arrive at the terminal at least four hours before their flights to make time for extra security procedures.

Ministers spar over restraint

Israeli ministers sparred at Monday's weekly Cabinet meeting over Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's ongoing policy of restraint when dealing with Palestinian violence.

Israel Radio quoted minister Shlomo Benizri of Shas as protesting that the country is mobilized only following mass terrorist attacks, but when Israelis die one by one, all is well.

Sharon was quoted as responding that no one should tell him how to fight terrorism.

Israel issues tap water alert

Israeli health officials warned residents of Tel Aviv and surrounding suburbs on Monday not to drink tap water, citing an unexplained cloudiness.

A Health Ministry official said the cause was not immediately known, but added that he did not think the water had been deliberately polluted.



Daily News Bulletin

Shoshana S. Cardin, *President*
Mark J. Joffe, *Executive Editor and Publisher*
Lisa Hostein, *Editor (on leave)*
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.
© JTA Reproduction only by previous arrangement.

Ramat Gan, the group hooted and hollered its way through a video history of the Maccabiah Games.

Created in 1932, the first games were held in the Ramat Gan stadium. Over the years the Games have featured some of the world's best Jewish athletes, such as swimmer Mark Spitz, baseball player Sandy Koufax and gymnast Mitch Gaylord.

This year, one of the American swimmers is Olympic gold medalist Lenny Krayzelburg, who won two gold medals in the 2000 Sydney Olympics.

Most of the participants are not professional athletes. Some 75 members of the U.S. team are under 17 and play on their school varsity teams.

The swimmers are mostly college-age, while the rugby players are generally in their late twenties, said Barbara Lissy, one of the Maccabiah coordinators.

While the Maccabiah isn't a professional competition, it does take time — and money — to prepare for and participate in the Games.

Each player must raise \$5,000 to cover participation costs. In addition, there are the tryouts and midyear training sessions.

There is also the four-day pre-camp when the U.S. team spends time touring around Israel.

Josh Henkin, a muscular 30-year-old rugby player from Burlington, Vt., currently working on a doctorate in molecular physiology, decided to attend nine months ago.

A second-time Maccabiah participant, Henkin didn't have any doubts about attending, considering it his duty both to the rugby team and the State of Israel.

His tennis player sister, however, "bailed" because she found the security situation precarious.

Avi Fogel, a high school basketball player from San Diego, Calif., had some trouble getting the necessary support for making the trip, particularly from his mother.

"My mom was flipping out," said Fogel, a long-legged 16-year-old whose father is Israeli.

"I always wanted to come, and I was planning on it since last summer. We finally got my family in Israel to convince her."

Many of the players present said they had little hesitation when deciding whether to attend.

In fact, Seth Baron, a swimming coach from Atlanta, found himself becoming a proponent for this year's Games.

"I've been to the Games three times, so I didn't have to come again," Baron pointed out. "I think some of my swimmers jumped on board because of that."

Now that they have arrived, the U.S. athletes are happy about being in Israel.

During yesterday's 6:30 a.m. volleyball practice, one team member couldn't stop grinning, said Spector, a graduate student in classroom education who is also co-coaching the women's team.

Why the smile?

"I'm playing volleyball in Israel," said his teammate. "What could be better than that?"

Well, winning — although there may well be a slim chance of that happening.

The Israeli team has consistently won the gold medal in volleyball, as well as in swimming.

It's the camaraderie that brings athletes back time after time, Spector said.

It's also an opportunity to compete against and get to know other Jewish athletes from around the world, even when they have to use sign language to understand one another, he said.

"We had such a good time playing Turkey in volleyball last year, and then hanging out with them afterward in the lobby," he said.

"Or look at the rugby players. They go out and break noses, rip off ears, but then they go to the pub and hang out. It's just a lot of fun." □

Israeli smokers to get snuffed

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli smokers soon will be unable to light up in many public places.

Under tough new anti-smoking rules taking effect Aug. 1, Israeli cinemas, restaurants, banquet halls and other places of entertainment will have to confine smokers to a specially ventilated room away from other patrons. □

JEWISH WORLD

Jail offers interfaith program

A new interfaith program in an Ohio jail is trying to teach religion and religious tolerance by housing 48 male inmates in a single dorm.

Six Jews, six Muslims and 36 Christians will participate in the 10-month Horizon Interfaith Program at the Marion Correctional Institution, a medium-security facility.

Vilnius Jewish students graduate

Top Lithuanian politicians were among the 800 people who attended a Jewish day school graduation on July 4 that was believed to be the first such event in Vilnius since World War II.

The Beis Menachem school is one of 52 Jewish schools operated in conjunction with the Federation of Jewish Communities in the Soviet Union.

German Jews blast Assad visit

German Jewish leaders published a full-page newspaper ad condemning Syrian President Hafez Assad's plans to visit Germany this week and calling on the German government to distance itself from him. "He who seeds hate is an unacceptable negotiation partner for the German government," the Central Council of Jews in Germany said in the ad.

Tornado strikes Yiddish concert

The toll of those killed after a tornado struck an open-air Yiddish concert in France grew to 11 over the weekend. More than 50 people remain hospitalized, 17 of them in serious condition, from last Friday's tragedy. The European Center for Yiddish Culture sponsored the concert, which was held in the northeastern French city of Strasbourg.

Polish Jews face backlash

Polish Jews say anti-Semitic attacks have increased in the months since the country began coming to grips with a World War II-era pogrom in the town of Jedwabne in which Poles massacred their Jewish neighbors. A member of Warsaw's Jewish community, who declined to give his name, told The Associated Press that he had been the victim of more ethnic slurs in the past two months than in the past five years.

Hebrew National owner dies at 90

Leonard Pines, the longtime owner of Hebrew National Kosher Foods, perhaps the most well-known kosher food company in the United States, died July 4 in Florida at the age of 90. Pines developed the Lower East Side deli meat business he inherited from his father, who emigrated from Romania.

Pines expanded the market for Hebrew National with advertisements that told consumers that his company answered to a "higher authority."

Police launch search for arsonist targeting Jewish homes in London

By Richard Allen Greene

LONDON (JTA) — Police here are seeking a woman they believe is connected with a series of arson attacks on a fervently Orthodox Jewish neighborhood.

Stamford Hill — home to what is believed to be the world's largest Chasidic community outside Israel and New York — has been the scene of six attacks in the past five weeks.

No one has been injured, but one family of 13, including six children, had to flee their house when it filled with smoke.

The attacks are being treated as a racial crime because all the targets have been Jewish homes, according to a police spokeswoman.

All six attacks have been at private houses, and all but one have taken place between midnight and 6:30 a.m.

"These attacks could have been deadly, as they occurred in the middle of the night," a Jewish community security official told JTA.

Last Friday, police released a closed circuit television image of a person they are seeking in connection with the attacks. The suspect is an Afro-Caribbean woman, about 35 years old.

The picture — a grainy, computer-enhanced image of a heavy-set woman with a headscarf and a bag over her shoulder — has been shown on TV and has run in at least one national newspaper.

Police also have put up posters in the neighborhood asking for help locating the woman.

The Jewish community is pleased by the police response to the attacks, said a spokesman for the Community Security Trust, which monitors anti-Semitic incidents in Britain.

"The police reacted very speedily," said Mark Gardner of the Trust.

There was a repeated pattern to the attacks, with the arsonist spraying the doors of homes with a small amount of flammable liquid before setting them on fire.

The police believe the attacks are the work of a single individual, not a group, which was a source of some relief to local residents.

A prominent local rabbi said he hoped that the issue would not be blown out of proportion.

Rabbi Abraham Pinter also said he is relieved that the suspect was an Afro-Caribbean woman, rather than, for example, "someone of Middle Eastern appearance or a white skinhead."

"There is no racial tension between the Jewish and Afro-Caribbean communities," the rabbi added.

He suggested that the suspect might have mental health problems.

"There are people who find pleasure in making fires, and of course we need to find and catch such people," he said.

He said that while it is important not to "make the issue bigger than it is, obviously there is fear that it could lead to serious injury or worse."

He said local residents are being vigilant and are ready to call the police if they see anything suspicious. Stamford Hill, in north London, is home to 56 synagogues and 21 Hebrew schools. □

Discord as WWII memorial unveiled

MOSCOW (JTA) — Ukrainian Jewish leaders and Polish scholars clashed recently during the dedication of a monument to 49 professors killed by Nazis and local collaborators during World War II, according to the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews.

The monument does not mention that most of the slain professors from the city of Lvov were Jews.

The Poles dismissed the protests, saying that the professors were not Jews since they would not have been allowed to teach at the university if they had not been baptized. □

ARTS & CULTURE

The Cohenheads dance the hora? It must be footloose New Orleans

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — The theme of this year's Mardi Gras parade in New Orleans was "2001: A Space Fallacy" — and the Jewish contingent, masked as the Cohenheads, danced the hora through the French Quarter behind the Mothership Yentaprise, tossing out a thousand Star of David-emblazoned bagels to the hungry masses.

Led by King David and Jewish American Princess Adama, attended by droid 3CPAs and a klezmer band, the "Krewe du Jieux" flaunted its mission statement:

"To kibbitz on strange new worlds; to seek out new life forms and sell to them retail; to boldly schlep where no one has schlepped before."

New Orleans is one of the few cities in America where Jews feel secure enough to play off their stereotypes at the largest public event of the year.

Catherine Kahn, president of the Southern Jewish Historical Society and a fifth-generation resident of New Orleans, confirms the local Jews' sense of comfort.

One of the many pleasant aspects of Jewish life here is "a sense of belonging," she says. "Historically, this is a city with a great sense of tolerance, the flip side being that we tolerate a lot of crookedness in our public officials."

The tone was set when the first wave of young Jewish men migrated from Alsace-Lorraine — then a disputed area on the French-German border — in the late 18th and early 19th centuries and found the prevalent French patois more congenial than the strange English language of northern cities.

The new immigrants were readily accepted by the Creoles — descendants of the early French and Spanish settlers — and married their Catholic daughters.

Bending Jewish law to fit local realities, the articles of incorporation of Gates of Mercy, the first synagogue founded in 1828, stated that "No Israelite child shall be excluded either from the schools, from the Temple, or the burial ground, on account of the religion of the mother."

Today the Jewish community of Greater New Orleans stands at between 10,000 and 12,000.

The roots of the community's religious life are in the Reform movement — the first Conservative congregation was not formed until 1958 — and today there are three Reform shuls, including the Touro Synagogue, which has been in continuous use since 1909.

Shir Hadash is the flagship Conservative temple and Congregation Beth Israel is centrist Orthodox.

Even with all this congregational activity, the city's laissez-faire attitude comes through in an oft-repeated local gag.

"When do New Orleans Jews keep kosher?"

"When they eat raw oysters only in months with an 'r' in their names."

Which means, in practice, that they abstain only in May, June, July and August — when the oysters are out of season anyhow.

The dictum does not apply, of course, to the Chabad movement, which has established a presence on the Tulane University campus. Tulane, a private university, has a student body that is more than one-quarter Jewish, remarkable in a state where Jews make up less than half a percent of the total population.

One reason is that Tulane, in its entire history, has never had a restrictive Jewish quota, so in the early and middle decades of the past century, "a lot of smart Jewish kids who couldn't get into northern universities came to Tulane," says Kahn.

In return, Jewish philanthropists have endowed many of Tulane's buildings, academic chairs and a Jewish studies program.

The uptown Jewish Community Center, following a \$4 million renovation, is one of the most handsome in the country.

The Jewish Federation has created an innovative program, under which any Jewish child can receive a \$1,000 grant to attend the summer camp of his or her choice. The new focal point for Jewish building and programs is the upscale suburb of Metairie, a favorite of young Jewish couples with children.

In the works there is a Jewish "campus" with a new community center and a day school going up to the eighth grade.

Well worth a visit is the Dispersed of Judah Cemetery, which displays some of the most elaborate tombstone sculpture of any Jewish burial ground.

Politically, New Orleans is largely run by African-American politicians — the population is 60 percent black — though one of the two incumbents on the seven-person city council is Jewish. Blacks, Jews and labor unions pulled together nine years ago, when Ku Klux Klansman David Duke ran for governor of Louisiana against the notoriously corrupt incumbent, Edwin Edwards.

The less than rousing campaign slogan of the anti-Duke forces was "Vote for the Crook — It's Important." The slogan, and the fact that it helped Edwards beat Duke, says something about "the bizarre nature of Louisiana politics," says Sandra Levy, executive director of the Jewish Endowment Foundation.

Generations of New Orleans Jews speak with pride about their children and grandchildren having remained in their birthplace.

It is also not unusual to find sixth- and seventh-generation Jews in the metropolitan port city at the mouth of the Mississippi River.

But in recent years, the demographics have changed, says Levy, with young Jewish men and women seeking career opportunities in the larger Southern and West Coast cities. □

Group wants to change Bible

NEW YORK (JTA) — A national interfaith group wants to remove what it says are anti-Jewish phrases from children's Bibles in an effort to build bridges between Christians and Jews.

The Philadelphia-based American Interfaith Institute is targeting Bible publishers across the country.

Some English translations of the Bible still include dozens of references to cruel actions taken by Jews against Jesus and his followers, although the Roman Catholic and most mainline Protestant churches have rejected since the 1960s the claim that Jews killed Jesus. □

Pills could help treat diabetes

NEW YORK (JTA) — An Israeli hospital is researching the use of pills to deliver insulin, an advance that could soon improve the lives of millions of diabetics worldwide.

Officials at Hadassah Medical Center at Ein Kerem in Jerusalem said insulin showed up in the liver and bloodstream of 12 nondiabetic volunteers within 30 minutes of ingesting the new pill. Currently, diabetics have to inject insulin with a needle. □