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84th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Six killed in Israeli raid

Six Palestinians were killed when Israeli tanks entered a West Bank village, despite U.S. calls for Israel to withdraw from Palestinian-controlled territory. Israel said the six were killed when they opened fire on Israeli troops entering Beit Re'ema on Wednesday, and the Israelis returned fire.

During the operation, Israeli soldiers arrested two men allegedly involved in last week's slaying of Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi, an army official was quoted as saying.

Israel said the operation in the village, located near Ramallah, was aimed at rooting out terrorists, but the Palestinian Authority said in a statement that it considers Prime Minister Ariel Sharon "and his chief of staff responsible for this planned massacre."

Israel to mull withdrawal

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon plans to meet with members of his Cabinet on Thursday to consider withdrawing soldiers from six Palestinian-controlled cities in the West Bank.

Israel Radio said a withdrawal was expected to start by the weekend.

Anti-terror bill passes House

Jewish groups applauded a final version of anti-terrorism legislation that increases the authority of law enforcement officials to combat terrorism.

The bill, which passed the U.S. House of Representatives on Wednesday, calls for wiretapping suspected terrorists, sharing intelligence information about them, tracking their Internet movements and prosecuting those who knowingly harbor terrorists.

The bill now goes to the U.S. Senate for approval.

Powell criticizes Israeli policies

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell acknowledged Israel's right to defend itself, but said Israeli incursions into the West Bank and its policy of "targeted killings" were counterproductive to diplomatic solutions for ending violence in the Middle East.

Speaking before the House of Representatives' International Relations Committee on Wednesday, Powell supported comments earlier this week by a State Department spokesman calling for Israel's withdrawal from the parts of the West Bank it recently entered.

FOCUS ON ISSUES

Jewish outreach works, says study; some say survey sets low standard

By Julie Wiener

NEW YORK (JTA) — Outreach efforts to intermarried Jews increase Jewish involvement and synagogue affiliation rates, say sponsors of the most comprehensive evaluation yet of such attempts.

But some skeptics of outreach to intermarried Jews say the study sets too low of a bar in the way it measures Jewish involvement.

The disagreement over the study reflects a broader debate over the efficacy and goals of Jewish outreach.

The new study by the Jewish Outreach Institute looks at 735 participants in 11 outreach programs throughout North America, ranging from groups for intermarried families with small children to a series of Jewish holiday activities in shopping malls.

In addition to concluding that outreach programs increase participants' involvement in Jewish life, the study reports that outreach projects open to all Jews, whether intermarried or not — such as the shopping mall celebrations — tend to be more effective than ones limited to intermarried families.

The study also found that synagogue-based programs are less likely than other venues to attract families with little involvement in Jewish life, and that the lower the participants' previous engagement in Jewish life, the greater the increase in interest they reported.

"This research study makes a compelling case for 'outreach' — the welcoming of intermarried families and uninvolved Jews into the community — as the best way to ensure Jewish continuity in the face of widespread intermarriage and assimilation," the study's executive summary says.

"Outreach is doable and has an impact," said Egon Mayer, founding director of the institute and one of the study's authors.

Among the many positive responses the study quotes is a Toronto woman who said her program, based in the Jewish community center, made Jewish education and customs meaningful for her children.

"For the first time, they 'feel' Jewish," she said.

Among the study's findings:

- The percentage of intermarried respondents reporting they are moderately involved in Jewish life rose from 30 percent prior to program contact to 47 percent afterward.
- Thirty-five percent of interfaith families said the program had "some impact" on their Jewish home life, and 19 percent reported it had "considerable impact."
- Thirty-five percent of interfaith families who had not previously belonged to a synagogue joined one after participating in the outreach program, and another 25 percent said they were considering synagogue membership.
- After the program, 60 percent reported sometimes going to synagogue services, compared with 33 percent who said they did so before. Participation at Shabbat dinners increased to 65 percent from 35 percent, and participation in "Jewish cultural activities" increased to 51 percent from 32 percent.

The study is based on mail-in surveys completed in 2000 by participants in programs that took place in 1998 and 1999. The programs were funded, in part, by the institute.

Reaction to the study has varied so far, reflecting differing views in the American Jewish community on what the goals of Jewish outreach should be. For some communal

MIDEAST FOCUS

Israel: Seven killed Ze'evi

Seven terrorists were involved in last week's murder of Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi, according to details released Wednesday after a gag order on the case was partially lifted.

Three of the seven were captured by Israeli security forces on the night of the slaying, and one was killed during an Israeli military operation Wednesday in the West Bank village of Beit Re'ema, according to Israel Radio.

Morocco severs ties with Israel

Morocco said it is severing ties with Israel, citing the failure of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

Moroccan officials said they would close their consulate in Tel Aviv, and called for Israel to close its liaison office in Rabat.

Police want trial for letter forger

Israeli police recommended legal proceedings against a man suspected of forging a letter ostensibly from Margalit Har-Shefi to President Moshe Katsav, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

Har-Shefi served 12 weeks of a nine-month sentence for knowing of Yigal Amir's plot to assassinate Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, but failing to act to prevent it. She was then pardoned.

Ex-Ma'ariv publisher sentenced

Former Ma'ariv publisher Ofer Nimrodi was given a 25-month sentence Wednesday by a Tel Aviv court, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

Under the terms of a plea bargain, Nimrodi was found guilty on charges that included obstructing justice, fraud, harassing a witness and falsifying documents.

The 15 months he already has spent in jail will be deducted from his sentence.

leaders, Jewish outreach is successful if it encourages interfaith families to incorporate some Jewish activities into their lives.

In that camp is Ed Case, publisher of Interfaithfamily.com, a Web magazine for intermarried families, who described the institute's findings as "very good news."

"We need to get the word out to more" intermarried families "that these programs exist and that the Jewish community welcomes them," Case said.

At the other end of the spectrum are those who believe programs should spur the non-Jewish spouse to convert, or at least lead to a family commitment to practice only Judaism.

Steven Bayme, director of American Jewish life for the American Jewish Committee, said he welcomed the research but wondered what long-term impact outreach programs have on intermarried families and their children.

Because the JOI study is based only on surveys taken within two years of participation in the Jewish outreach activities, it does not measure the long-term impact of the programs — most of which are fairly limited in scope — on people's lives.

Bayme also said he hopes that while encouraging outreach, the Jewish community will not become "neutral" to intermarriage, but will continue to create a communal expectation of in-marriage or conversion.

Jack Wertheimer, provost of the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary, said the institute's study means little to him without information on whether intermarried families are practicing Judaism exclusively.

"There's an assumption that greater involvement is good, but if the family is involved with both religions, how does that benefit the Jewish community? Does anybody gain from this, aside from perhaps Jews for Jesus?" he asked, referring to the proselytizing Christian group that claims one can believe in Jesus and still be Jewish.

Both Bayme and Wertheimer have long been outspoken in their view that the Jewish community must discourage intermarriage more aggressively.

A study earlier this year by Sylvia Barack Fishman, a Brandeis University professor, reported that most interfaith families — even those that say they are raising their children as Jews — celebrate some Christian holidays.

The outreach institute's study did not ask participants whether they observe any Christian practices or whether the non-Jewish partner is considering conversion.

"Spiritual journeys include the exploration of lots of different things," said Rabbi Kerry Olitzky, the JOI's executive director.

He noted that a recent institute survey of children of interfaith marriages who identify as Jews found that most had explored their non-Jewish roots before deciding on Judaism. "When people come to synagogue to pray and to celebrate, no one asks them what else are you doing in your life," Olitzky said. "We want to encourage, not discourage; include, not exclude; embrace, not push away."

The debate over outreach to the intermarried has shifted over the past decade following the 1990 finding that approximately half of American Jews marry non-Jews.

Initially, such outreach — which consisted mainly of support groups for interfaith couples and of educational programs for interfaith families with young children — was criticized on the grounds that it tacitly encouraged intermarriage.

Later, the debate became one of "inreach vs. outreach," with critics questioning whether scarce communal resources should be used to target people on the fringes of the community rather than on strengthening the commitment of those already involved in Jewish life.

Intermarriage has become increasingly acceptable among rank-and-file Jews. A recent survey found that half of American Jews view opposition to intermarriage as "racist" and 78 percent believe rabbis should officiate at weddings between Jews and non-Jews.

Increasing numbers of Jewish leaders have argued that it is not necessary to choose between inreach and outreach, and that the more gateways that exist to bring American Jews into Jewish life, the better.

According to the institute, there are approximately 1 million intermarried Jewish households in the United States, and more children now have one Jewish parent than two Jewish parents.

While the most extensive evaluation so far, the institute's study was relatively limited in scope, based on surveys of 735 people. □



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JEWISH WORLD

Siberian skinheads attack shul

The Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union launched a campaign to convince local authorities to arrest neo-Nazis whom the watchdog group says are terrorizing Jews in the Siberian city of Tyumen.

The group said skinheads there have smashed the windows of a synagogue under construction seven times, most recently on Sept. 29. Local authorities have termed the attacks "young people's hooliganism" and "seem reluctant to take action to protect the Jewish community," the group said in a statement.

Station loses donors; bias alleged

Two corporate donors said they were ending their support of a Boston-area public radio station because of a perceived pro-Palestinian bias in its reports, according to the Boston Globe newspaper.

One of the donors had contributed more than \$120,000 to WBUR during the past five years, while the other had contributed "tens of thousands of dollars" over the years, the newspaper said.

A spokeswoman for National Public Radio, which has been accused of having an anti-Israel bias in the reports it provides to affiliate stations, told the Boston Globe, "I'm not aware that what's happening in Boston is happening" at other NPR affiliates.

Hezbollah poster removed

A Hezbollah poster hanging in the Middle Eastern studies room of a University of Chicago's library was removed following a storm of controversy.

A former library employee brought back the Hezbollah poster, which shows a clenched fist raised in the air and gripping an automatic weapon, several years ago after a trip to Lebanon.

The poster was removed after protests appeared in the school's student newspaper.

Pro-Palestinians attack book

A U.S. publisher may revise a book on the Arab-Israeli conflict after pressure from pro-Palestinian activists, according to the pro-Israel media monitoring group Camera. "The Complete Idiot's Guide to the Middle East Conflict" uses straight text, humor and cartoons to give readers an understanding of the roots of Mideast conflicts.

Anti-euthanasia decision backed

Britain's chief rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, supported a High Court decision that a man could not help his terminally ill wife commit suicide without facing criminal charges. "The termination of life is the sole right of our Creator. For others to do so is an intrusion into God's domain," his spokesman on medical ethics, Rabbi Chaim Rapoport, said after the ruling last week.

FOCUS ON ISSUES

70 years later, expelled Jews return to visit Berlin university

By Toby Axelrod

BERLIN (JTA) — Dr. Elly Freund took a deep breath.

"I have never told my children, nor my grandchildren, what happened," she said.

Then, in front of hundreds of students at Humboldt University in eastern Berlin, Dr. Freund, 92, spoke of her school years in Nazi Germany.

"In Breslau, we were allowed to study but not allowed to sit on the bench next to an 'Aryan,'" she said.

And when she registered in Berlin, Freund said, she "had to bring proof that I was Jewish, because otherwise I had to take an exam in 'racial studies.'"

Dr. Freund, who immigrated to pre-state Palestine in 1938, was one of 22 former students who returned to Berlin Oct. 15-20 at the invitation of their alma mater.

They were found through the detective work of historian Peter Nolte, who is writing about the expulsion of students during the Nazi period and who organized the Classmates of 1933 program.

In 1933, when Hitler came to power, there were about 8,000 students at the school — then known as the Friedrich-Wilhelms University — including 2,000 Jews.

By May, 2,200 students, most of them Jewish, had been thrown out for political or "racial" reasons. Robbed of their degrees, the majority of them ultimately fled the country, though some later returned.

More than half a century later, 22 of those students, many now in their 90s, spent five days with current students as their guides revisiting the halls they walked in their youth. Many had been back to Berlin since the war, but never for such a reunion.

Some in wheelchairs or with canes, some with family members at their sides, they saw again the classrooms from which they had been expelled — and where Nazis, then Communists, and now students in a democratic Germany have studied.

"We were here in 1989, but there were too many guys my age and I did not trust anyone my age if they were not Jewish," said Dr. John Meyer, who now lives in Beverly Shores, Ind. "Now I am surprised with how much openness people talk about what happened."

One student said he wished there was more discussion in German society of the Nazi period.

"It's hard to get our grandparents to speak to us," said Daniel, an art history student.

For Paul Rosenfeld, 89, one highlight was the lecture he gave at the agricultural institute about dairy production, which he learned after emigrating to Palestine.

"I have heard of reunions after 25 years or 50 years. But 70 years?" he asked. "Who does that?"

The program was the brainchild of Nolte, whose research is supported by the Fritz Thyssen Foundation.

Using university archives, the Internet and the U.S. Social Security death index, Nolte, a fellow of the university's Institute for Historical Research, searched for former students whose academic degrees had been withdrawn by the Nazis.

Nolte suggested to university administrators that the former students be invited back. Of the 50 who were invited, 22 attended the program.

The visit included a tour of the "new" Berlin, dinner with Humboldt University President Jurgen Mlynek, a private tour of Berlin's new Jewish Museum, a roundtable discussion with Parliament President Wolfgang Thierse and a panel discussion.

At the end of the panel discussion, Mlynek gave diploma-like certificates to the guests and shook their hands.

"It was a very, very nice honor that the university has done for these people — but late," said Tamara Rosenfeld Berger, 27, who came from Israel with her grandfather Paul, an expelled student, and his wife Dora.

Nolte agrees — but only partially.

"History is only alive when it is related to individuals," he said. "It is very late, but not completely too late." □

Nolte continues to seek students thrown out by the university in 1933. He urges anyone with information to contact him at jakobartl@worldonline.de.

Long criticized by Jews, Sharpton seeks better ties with trip to Israel

By Julie Wiener

NEW YORK (JTA) — A fiery black leader is making his first trip to Israel, seeking to mend fences with a Jewish community that long has been critical of him.

Rev. Al Sharpton, who is due to leave Saturday on a three-day trip to Israel, may meet with top Israeli leaders and speak before a major Jewish organization there, according to reports.

Several Jewish leaders are welcoming the visit, with some calling it a major step in strengthening black-Jewish relations. Others, however, warned that it would not absolve Sharpton of previous actions and statements that have offended Jews.

After the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks, he realized it is "time for real leaders to step beyond their bounds and sit down and talk about how we stop killing people that are innocent and civilians," Sharpton said at a news conference Tuesday in his Harlem headquarters.

There is talk that the controversial community activist, who has said he is considering a run for the presidency, will speak at a World Jewish Congress convention and meet with Foreign Minister Shimon Peres, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and former Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, but Sharpton's itinerary has not been finalized.

Pressed for details, Sharpton said only that he plans to meet with religious leaders and victims of terrorism. He declined to specify how his trip is being funded.

Sharpton will be traveling with Rabbi Marc Schneier, president and co-founder of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding, and Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, who is known primarily for his books about Judaism's teachings on romantic relationships, particularly a bestseller called "Kosher Sex."

Schneier, who has been active in black-Jewish relations, is one of the few Jewish leaders to have met with Louis Farrakhan, the Nation of Islam leader, who has made several anti-Semitic comments in the past.

The two rabbis sat on either side of Sharpton at the news conference and praised him for what they described as a gesture with broad implications.

"Ultimately, this is a significant step in the strengthening of black-Jewish relations in New York and throughout the country," Schneier said.

"Al Sharpton has stretched out his hands to the Jewish community and to the people of Israel, and the Jewish community will be there to receive it."

Boteach said he hopes "all my Jewish brothers and sisters will extend not just an olive branch but a warm hand of fraternal friendship, seeing Rev. Sharpton as a friend of the Jewish community and of the State of Israel."

"If the Jewish community could extend a hand of friendship to enemies in the Middle East with whom" Israel now has "diplomatic relations, surely we can do so with those who the whole term enemy may be a complete misconception and misnomer," Boteach said. "We have to move forward. We cannot be trapped in the past."

However, several Jewish leaders expressed skepticism about Sharpton's plans.

Others speculated privately that Sharpton simply is trying to

rehabilitate himself in the Jewish community's eyes, paving the way for future political ventures.

"This trip to Israel appears to be a step in the right direction, but an expression of genuine remorse for his past misdeeds will be a more accurate measure of his relationship to the Jewish community of New York," said Michael Miller, executive vice president of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York.

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, said he welcomes Sharpton's interest in Israel, but that a trip should not provide Sharpton with a *hechsher*, the certificate signifying that food is kosher.

"I find it insulting to the Jewish community that we're falling all over ourselves to try to clean his skirts," Foxman said. "All he said was maybe the Israelis are right. He did it, I welcome it. I welcome his epiphany — it's wonderful."

But, the ADL leader noted, "there are so many other important things going on in the world today than Al Sharpton's trip to Israel."

Sharpton, who said repeatedly that his trip was inspired by the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks in New York and Washington, emphasized that he will not be taking a position on Mideast politics. Previously, he has spoken out against the U.S. bombing in Afghanistan.

"I'm not dealing with the questions of foreign policy or the question of what's going on in other areas," Sharpton said. "We can all agree that innocent people should not be killed and not be terrorized."

Sharpton said he would not be meeting Palestinian officials on this trip.

"I'm not trying to mediate the Middle East situation," he said.

Jews have been angered by Sharpton's role in the 1991 Crown Heights riots.

Some people say that a speech Sharpton made at the time incited rioters to burn down Freddie's, a Jewish-owned clothing store in Harlem.

Many also were outraged by Sharpton's support for Tawana Brawley, a black girl found to have fraudulently accused four white men of raping her and smearing excrement on her.

The Israeli Consulate in New York, which typically helps arrange such visits, is not involved in Sharpton's trip, but spokespersons declined to explain why not.

"Israel is always happy when any leader is interested in visiting the country," a consulate official said, but Schneier's foundation is handling the planning and itinerary.

However, Sharpton met last week with Alon Pinkas, Israel's consul general in New York.

World Jewish Congress officials said they are considering having Sharpton speak at their conference in Israel, but have not yet finalized anything.

Sharpton has been in the news recently for his role in New York's Democratic mayoral primaries. Sharpton endorsed Bronx Borough President Fernando Ferrer, who lost to Public Advocate Mark Green, who is Jewish.

Sharpton and other minority leaders have accused the Green campaign — which Schneier supported — of race-baiting for last-minute phone calls to some voters suggesting that Sharpton would have too much political power if Ferrer were elected. The Green campaign has denied any involvement in the calls. □

(JTA Staff Writer Michael J. Jordan contributed to this report.)