



# Daily News Bulletin

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84th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Israel withdraws from Ramallah

Israeli troops withdrew from Ramallah. Despite Wednesday's move, troops continued to impose a blockade on the West Bank city in an effort to prevent terror attacks.

Israeli forces had moved into parts of six Palestinian cities after the Oct. 17 assassination of Tourism Minister Rehavam Ze'evi by a Palestinian squad.

Following the latest withdrawal, Israeli forces remain in Jenin and Tulkarm, which the Jewish state's military regards as the most dangerous Palestinian cities.

### Witness said 3 soldiers are dead

An eyewitness led Israel to announce that three soldiers kidnapped last year by Hezbollah are dead.

Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said Wednesday that Israel announced last week that the three are dead because "someone saw."

In October 2000, Hezbollah gunmen kidnapped the soldiers — Benny Avraham, Adi Avitan and Omar Souad — from a disputed area on the Israel-Lebanon border known as Shabaa Farms.

### Nazi vet addresses U.S. school

A former Nazi SS member denied the Holocaust during a speech at a Wisconsin military academy.

According to local reports, Konrad Mikula told more than 120 students at the Kenosha Military Academy that he does not believe in the existence of Nazi concentration camps and that World War II history is simply propaganda.

Mikula visited the school Oct. 24 at the invitation of a longtime friend who is the school's commandant, Lt. Col. Jack Gibbons.

The Anti-Defamation League called the visit "outrageous, grossly insensitive and shameful."

### Arafat won't declare state

Yasser Arafat will not declare an independent Palestinian state when he addresses the U.N. General Assembly on Sunday.

Speaking for the Palestinian leader Wednesday, Information Minister Yasser Abed Rabbo denied reports that had circulated earlier this week.

"The Palestinian leadership shall not take dramatic steps such as the unilateral declaration of a state. We shall not surprise anyone," Rabbo said.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### With city still reeling from Sept. 11, Bloomberg's business clout is key

By Michael J. Jordan

NEW YORK (JTA) — In an election dominated by the aftershocks of the Sept. 11 terrorist strikes, New Yorkers facing economic insecurity voted their purses and elected a Jewish business whiz over a Jew with political know-how.

It didn't hurt that recently minted Republican Michael Bloomberg spent at least \$50 million of his own fortune on a blizzard of self-promotional ads and was endorsed by the hugely popular outgoing mayor, Rudy Giuliani.

Tuesday's contest capped the first foray into politics for Bloomberg, who built a fortune estimated at \$4.5 billion dollars on his financial news business.

His stunning victory over Democrat Mark Green — Bloomberg overcame a double-digit deficit in the final week, in a city where registered Democrats outnumber Republicans by a 5-1 ratio — marked the first time in recent history that New York will have two Republican mayors in succession.

Until Sept. 11, there had been no overarching issue in the campaign, but the terror strikes changed all that.

They not only sparked widespread fear for New Yorkers' personal safety, but they cost the city an estimated \$100 billion in damages and roughly 100,000 jobs.

Everything else — schools, crime, public transportation — became secondary to public security and economic recovery.

That seemed to sway hordes of "Giuliani Democrats" — including many Jews, who voted for Bloomberg by a margin of 52 percent to 48 percent — who consider themselves socially liberal but fiscally conservative.

A lifelong Democrat until last year, Bloomberg defines himself the same way.

While race was a prominent theme in the Democratic primary — Green's critics accused him of stirring fears that a "black-brown" coalition of blacks and Hispanics would once again drive up crime rates that a robust economy and Giuliani's police force had driven down — the Jewishness of both Green and Bloomberg was barely noticed.

Many Jewish observers say it shows that Jews have become a common feature of the political landscape in New York, which boasts the largest Jewish population in the world outside Israel. Bloomberg is the city's third Jewish mayor — Abe Beame and Ed Koch were the others.

"This is not groundbreaking territory like Joe Lieberman was" as the 2000 Democratic nominee for vice president, said Bob Kaplan, director of intergroup relations and community concerns for the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York. "This is New York. Jews are certainly not an unfamiliar part of what our city is," he said. "We're an experiment in diversity that sometimes has problems, but overall works well."

That doesn't mean that faith or ethnicity was completely irrelevant.

This summer, the Anti-Defamation League assailed Bloomberg for saying he wouldn't "have a problem" with elementary schoolchildren reciting the Lord's Prayer.

Bloomberg also criticized Giuliani for blocking Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat from joining other world leaders at a 1995 concert at Lincoln Center.

Bloomberg also caught flak for waiting until just before launching his campaign to quit several elite country clubs that are said to be Jewish-only.

In the week before the elections, the black-owned Amsterdam News — a local paper often accused of anti-Semitism — endorsed Bloomberg over Green because the latter purportedly was backed by a Jewish cabal controlling New York. Bloomberg

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Palestinian suspect killed

An Israeli undercover unit killed a Palestinian man in a village near Hebron.

An Israeli army commander was quoted as saying that Issa Debabseh was wanted by Israel for the killing of a Jewish settler a few years ago. He was killed when he reached for a gun as the unit tried to arrest him on Wednesday, the commander said.

### Palestinian killed after mortar fire

Israeli troops killed a Palestinian gunman in the Gaza Strip. In Wednesday's violence, five other Palestinians were wounded by Israeli fire near the settlement of Neveh Dekalim in the Gaza Strip.

The army said it returned fire after Palestinians fired mortars at the settlement.

### Peres hopeful about diplomacy

Shimon Peres expressed optimism about the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. Despite the continued violence, "there is a good chance of restoring the peace process," the Israeli foreign minister said Wednesday in Paris after meeting his French counterpart, Hubert Vedrine.

Peres also said Israeli troops would continue to withdraw from Palestinian cities they entered nearly three weeks ago. Once the withdrawals are completed, "maybe we can see a cease-fire in the whole of the West Bank," Peres said.

### Israeli calls for Iran sanctions

An Israeli Cabinet minister is seeking increased U.S. sanctions against Iran.

Transportation Minister Ephraim Sneh said Wednesday during a visit to Washington that Iran is the source of "spiritual inspiration" and military assistance for terrorist groups in the Middle East, and that he feared the United States would ignore Iran in its global war against terrorism.

criticized the newspaper's word choice — but accepted its endorsement.

At the election-night gathering of Green supporters, two Jewish observers also suggested that repeated references to Green as "arrogant" was a code word for a certain kind of "smarty-pants" Jew. Both Green and Bloomberg live on New York's affluent Upper East Side and attended Harvard. But Green, a lawyer and the city's public advocate, has a far more intellectual mien.

In an August profile, the Forward described Bloomberg as "ambivalent" about his Jewish identity, despite the fact that he does identify himself as "an American Jew" who belongs to Manhattan's Reform Temple Emanu-El and is vice chairman of the board of New York's Jewish Museum.

Bloomberg is a heavy donor to nonprofit groups, but many are non-Jewish.

"Am I glad to be born a Jew? I never even thought about it in that context," Bloomberg told the Forward. "You are what you are. Would I like to be 6 foot tall and able to throw a football like John Elway? Sure, I would like that."

With two candidates, both Bloomberg and Green were presumed to support Israel, and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict was never an issue in the campaign.

Bloomberg had never visited Israel until earlier this year, once remarking to the Jerusalem Report that there was "no good skiing there."

However, he went on to tell the Forward, "I'm a big believer that Israel is a big symbol of freedom."

If he has strong opinions on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Bloomberg has kept them to himself.

"I read about it a lot," he told the Forward. "It's a very difficult situation that's gone on for a long time. I don't know about second-guessing negotiations. I just pray that they do what's right."

Some New Yorkers, though, reckon that foreign affairs will be a more prominent aspect of the mayor's job after Sept. 11. Prior to the attacks, Giuliani occasionally forayed into the Middle East conflict, consistently coming down on the side of Israel.

But on Sept. 11, "the international stage directly affected New York," said Pam Wolfe, a 34-year-old television producer interviewed while voting Tuesday.

It's unclear to some whether a Jewish mayor — who might be accused of bias vis-a-vis the Middle East — will feel more constrained about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict or the U.S.-led war in Afghanistan.

Wolfe, though, suggested that a Jewish mayor would "have a little more leeway" on Israel, as voters probably expect him to support for the Jewish state, and endorse that support as part of his entire package.

"If people look at it as a conflict of interest, then he should stand up against it," Wolfe said. "If a Jewish mayor is voted in, he's also being voted in for who he is."

A non-Jewish voter, though, said that while he expects the next mayor to take an enhanced role in foreign affairs, the mayor must keep in mind that he represents all New Yorkers.

"The stakes are now so much higher," said Alex Manette, a 32-year-old actor who voted for Bloomberg because of his business expertise.

"It's important for the mayor to have a voice, but his personal biases needs to be put aside," Manette said. "Whoever gets into office will have to find that fine line of what to say, what not to say." □

## Boeing, El Al may team up

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Boeing and El Al Israel Airlines may create a joint airline-security business.

The two companies recently signed a memorandum of understanding to study the feasibility of creating a joint venture to establish a security and safety business for airlines, airports and governments worldwide.

State-controlled El Al is well known for its security expertise, and many passengers consider it safer than other airlines.

The two companies plan to take 60 days to examine how a joint venture would be established. If formed, the venture could include developing technology, manufacturing products, designing systems and procedures, and training personnel, according to the Jerusalem Post. □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### O.U. applauds anti-suicide move

The Orthodox Union applauded U.S. action against physician-assisted suicide. Attorney General John Ashcroft changed a policy Tuesday so that doctors who prescribe lethal drugs to patients now face revocation of their licenses to prescribe medicine.

Ashcroft said that physician-assisted suicide was not a "legitimate medical purpose" for handing out such drugs.

The O.U. said the new policy is consistent with ancient Jewish values that recognize the infinite sanctity of human life.

"The Bible instructs us to surely heal the ill, not to speed their departure from this earth," said Nathan Diament, director of the O.U.'s Institute for Public Affairs.

### Book to list attacks in France

French Jewish students plan to document the recent rise of anti-Semitic violence.

The Union of Jewish Students of France said the "White Book," to be published in February, will cover anti-Semitic incidents in France since the start of the Palestinian uprising in September 2000.

At its national convention this week in Lyon, the group also declared its intention to begin a Jewish-Muslim dialogue.

The Union has more than 15,000 members and is the largest Jewish student association in France. It recently waged campaigns against Holocaust-denial at French universities and the sale of Nazi memorabilia over the Internet.

### Judge rules on neo-Nazi site

A judge asked French Internet providers to block access to a U.S. neo-Nazi Web portal.

The coalition of seven organizations that initiated the court action against the Front 14 Web portal were disappointed that the Paris judge did not legally force the Internet providers to block access.

The neo-Nazi portal provides links to more than 300 neo-Nazi and xenophobic Web sites.

The case included testimony from technicians, legal scholars and philosophers.

### Anne Frank conference planned

The diary of Anne Frank will be the subject of a two-day conference in England.

The University of Sussex in Brighton is hosting the Nov. 22-23 conference, which will coincide with an exhibition about Frank's life that will appear at Brighton College.

Attendees at the conference, "Dear Diary: New Approaches to an Established Genre," will also examine other Holocaust diaries and discuss their role in Holocaust education.

## Deadline is fast approaching on Nazi-era fund in Czech Republic

By Magnus Bennett

PRAGUE (JTA) — Organizers of a Nazi property fund in the Czech Republic have renewed their appeal for claimants to come forward as the application deadline approaches.

The Prague-based Endowment Fund for Victims of the Holocaust said this week that it had received about 190 claims since July, mainly from the United States, Israel and Great Britain.

The fund allows Jews around the world to claim compensation for property seized by the Nazis.

Unlike claims made directly to the Czech state, whose own property restitution laws bar claims from non-Czech citizens, the fund will pay out money to people of any citizenship.

But the team coordinating the fund, which was set up last year by the Czech Federation of Jewish Communities in a joint initiative with the Czech government, is urging others to claim a share of the \$2.5 million fund before the Dec. 31 deadline.

"There is very little time left and we would urge people not to postpone their application," said fund coordinator Jarmila Neumannova.

The compensation payments were made possible by Czech legislators, who last year voted to provide the money for victims of property seizure, including non-Czech citizens, as a humanitarian gesture.

The rate of applications has been increasing in recent weeks after a slow start, organizers said.

Currently they are receiving about 20 new claims a week, which will be processed once the deadline passes.

A small staff handles queries via telephone, e-mail, fax and office visits, and said it would provide help to those who are unable to obtain paperwork directly from Czech authorities.

The fund's project assistant, Lumila Pocova, said the main documents required for applications were the claimant's birth certificate, a death certificate of the original property owner, if deceased, and an extract from the land register to prove original ownership.

"We can help people even after the deadline with documentation required for applications," Pocova said. "For example, if people know the exact address of their property, we can apply on their behalf for an extract from the land register."

The terms of the compensation plan state that claimants must establish that the original owner of real estate was the victim of racial persecution by Nazi authorities between Sept. 29, 1938, and May 8, 1945.

The definition of persecution includes people who had to leave what is now the Czech Republic, those who were imprisoned in a concentration camp or ghetto, and those who were forced to remain in hiding to escape imprisonment or death.

Those entitled to claim are original owners and their rightful successors, including husbands, wives, children and other descendants.

People who have already received compensation for property loss from another source will not be entitled to claim, but the fund will consider applications from claimants who are still involved in court proceedings.

After the end-of-year deadline has passed, all submitted claims will be assessed by the fund's board, which includes four Czech Jewish representatives, four Czech State officials and a representative of the American Jewish Committee.

The World Jewish Restitution Organization is also represented on the fund's supervisory board.

The board's chairman, Tomas Jelinek, said it would take several months to process all the applications. "We hope to distribute all of the money before Pesach next year," he added.

Further information about compensation can be obtained from Czech embassies or on the fund's Internet site at [www.fondholocaust.cz](http://www.fondholocaust.cz).

Claims may also be made in writing to: Endowment Fund for Victims of the Holocaust, P.O. Box 103, 120 21, Prague 2, Czech Republic. □

## NEWS ANALYSIS

## Law that spurred emigration for Soviet Jews approaches its end

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — A historic law that helped ensure the emigration of tens of thousands of Soviet Jews may become a casualty of the war on terrorism.

In the 1970s and 1980s, the Jackson-Vanik Amendment helped pry open the gates of the former Soviet Union for thousands of Soviet Jews by tying U.S.-Soviet trade to free emigration.

Today, with America trying to shore up Russian support for the war in Afghanistan, however, it appears that the law soon may become a thing of the past.

Once instrumental in lobbying for the legislation, U.S. Jewish groups have been consulted by the White House on the potential change, and say they understand the reason for adjusting the landmark law.

But they also want assurances that the Russian government will help Jewish communities in the former Soviet Union.

In doing so, the American Jewish groups part company with their Russian Jewish counterparts, who are asking the United States to lift the trade regulations without any strings.

The amendment's goal — free Jewish emigration from Russia — has been achieved, the Russian Jewish groups say.

Bush appears likely to offer a permanent change when he meets with Russian President Vladimir Putin in the United States on Nov. 13 and 14.

White House reasons for repealing the amendment are twofold. Washington wants to hold together its fragile international coalition against the Taliban and Osama bin Laden's Al Qaida terrorist network, and is looking for something to offer Putin for his support. The White House also wants to entice Russia to support Bush's missile defense program.

Enter the Jackson-Vanik Amendment. Adopted in 1974, the amendment made it a goal of U.S. foreign policy to get the Soviet Union to relax its emigration restrictions.

Sponsored by Sen. Henry Jackson (D-Wash.) and Rep. Charles Vanik (D-Ohio), the amendment prohibited the extension of U.S. government credits and most-favored-nation trade status to any country with a "nonmarket economy" that didn't allow its citizens to emigrate freely.

The amendment was prompted by congressional concern over the Soviet Union's treatment of its Jews. The White House says it is receiving a "generally positive reaction" to the repeal idea, but some concern is still palpable on Capitol Hill.

Rep. Benjamin Gilman (R-N.Y.) wrote a letter to Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage expressing concern that anti-Semitism is still prevalent in Russia and that it is too early to change Jackson-Vanik.

Sen. Gordon Smith (R-Ore.) is wary of any changes to the amendment and plans some sort of legislation to address the issue — depending on the changes actually made to Jackson-Vanik.

If changes are made to Jackson-Vanik, there still has to be "some accountability of the Russian government, and the U.S. will review how Russia treats its Jewish population," said Smith's press secretary, Joe Sheffo.

The United States is looking to allow Russia and six other former Soviet republics a gradual way out of the restrictions, a Bush administration spokesman said Monday.

In addition, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said that "broader considerations apply" beyond emigration policies.

Jackson-Vanik no longer applies to Georgia and Kyrgyzstan. Belarus, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan are unlikely to be considered for the step because of continued restrictions on emigration, some say.

Besides Russia, countries being considered include Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, and Ukraine.

The three Baltic nations were gradually released from the Jackson-Vanik restrictions after the fall of communism in 1991.

Since the collapse of the USSR, Russia has been granted normal trade relations every year through annual presidential waivers.

According to Jackson-Vanik, in order for Russia to receive such a waiver, its emigration policies must pass an annual review. The waivers allowed Russian trade with the United States to continue unhindered over the past decade, but Russia resents the review process and wants normal trade relations to be permanent.

The Russia government, which calls the Jackson-Vanik amendment "notorious," would like to get rid of the Cold War relic entirely.

The Bush administration recently approached Jewish groups to gauge their reaction if the United States rescinded the amendment for Russia and the other former Soviet republics.

A consensus to back the Bush initiative is emerging among Jewish groups, but pressure still will be needed to ensure that Russia adheres to human rights standards, said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

"We want to know for sure that the government is committed to getting out of the way and allowing the Jewish communities to re-emerge," said Harold Luks, chairman of NCSJ: Advocates on behalf of Jews in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States and Eurasia.

In contrast to their U.S. counterparts, the two main umbrella groups representing Russian Jewry said last week that they support the change.

The Russian Jewish Congress, which only a year ago was highly critical of Putin's policies, now has adopted a pro-Putin stance, appealing to the U.S. Congress and major U.S. Jewish organizations to encourage the Bush administration to seek a complete legislative repeal of the amendment.

"The time has come to repeal this law. There is no state-sponsored anti-Semitism in Russia and there is free emigration," Alexander Osovtsov, RJC's executive vice president, told JTA.

Berel Lazar, one of Russia's chief rabbis, sent a letter to Bush on Oct. 31, urging him to consider granting Russia normal trade status. According to Lazar, under Putin anti-Semitism in Russia has declined dramatically, all restrictions on emigration have been removed and the quality of life for Jews in Russia has vastly improved.

On the Russian street, Jews have mixed feelings about the proposed step.

"It was comforting to know that if something is not OK, the U.S. has got an effective instrument to force the Russian government to alter it," said Tanya Liberman, a 44-year-old Moscow-based programmer.

"Now the emigration is really free, but I am not really sure that everything is OK — and going to be OK." □

(JTA correspondent Lev Gorodetsky in Moscow contributed to this report.)