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85th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Sharon wants Arafat sidelined

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon plans to present President Bush with a plan to sideline Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

Sharon left Israel on Sunday for the United States and is planning to meet with President Bush on Tuesday.

U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell said Sunday the idea of sidelining Arafat is a nonstarter. "It serves us all better if we continue to work with all Palestinian leaders and to recognize who the Palestinian people look to as their leader," Powell said on ABC-TV's "This Week."

Sharon is expected to bring Bush pictures of terrorist victims when they meet this week in Washington. The Israeli prime minister will bring with him pictures of 69 children who have been killed during the last 19 months of violence.

The booklet is being used to offset pictures of Palestinian victims of Israeli military actions that Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah showed the president last week during meetings in Crawford, Texas.

Thousands march for Israel

Tens of thousands gathered in New York to salute Israel. Marchers and onlookers filled Manhattan's Fifth Avenue on Sunday for the annual Israel Day Parade.

Mayor Michael Bloomberg joined Jewish federations, schools and other institutions showing support for the Jewish state. "This is the time to say to the world, 'Terrorists cannot beat us,'" Bloomberg said. "We will not tolerate it." [Page 3]

Palestinians fake Jenin funerals

Palestinians reportedly have been holding phony funerals in the Jenin refugee camp, apparently to make the death toll there appear worse than it is.

An Israel Defense Force drone filmed a funeral procession on April 28, during which stretcher-bearers dropped the purported corpse. The "dead" man hopped back onto the stretcher, but the next time he was dropped, he walked away in a huff.

"The film speaks for itself," IDF Col. Miri Eisen said after showing journalists the footage. "They tried to fabricate evidence of funerals to inflate the number of their dead." According to Eisen, the mock funerals are part of a Palestinian propaganda effort to force an international investigation of Israeli actions in Jenin.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

French Jews cheer Le Pen loss, but their fears for future remain

By Andrew Diamond

PARIS (JTA) — Eric Sarfaty is happy that far-right leader Jean-Marie Le Pen was trounced in France's second-round presidential elections.

But Sarfaty, a dentist who is active in the Jewish community here, said the relief French Jews feel is mixed with a bit of dread following Sunday's vote.

"Many people I have spoken with over the past weeks feel that" incumbent President Jacques Chirac is "very friendly with the Arab states and has a lot of support in the Muslim community here," Sarfaty said. "So there is the perception that with his election things may get worse — that there will be more attacks against synagogues and schools by Arab youths."

Chirac's victory in Sunday's runoff brought an end to an embarrassing two weeks in French history.

But his election doesn't end the problem of how government and society should react to the wave of anti-Semitic attacks that swept France in recent months before abating during the elections, French Jews said.

Chirac received about 82 percent of the vote, with some 18 percent going to Le Pen, according to exit polls.

The 18 percent represented a negligible percentage increase for Le Pen from the April 21 first round vote, when he finished second among 11 candidates with about 17 percent of the ballots.

Despite the lopsided results, Le Pen's vote count still is worrisome, said Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League.

"While the good news is that the French people overwhelmingly rejected the candidacy of Jean-Marie Le Pen, the bad news is that one out of five people accepted his message of hate," Foxman said in a statement.

"The challenge for President Chirac is to lead his country away from the message of hate and toward a more accepting society, where the ideals behind *liberte, egalite* and *fraternite* can be realized."

During the past several months, the Jewish community has been disappointed by the French government's weak reaction to anti-Semitic aggression, carried out mainly by Arab youth inflamed by Israeli-Palestinian violence.

Yet they probably never thought the alternative would be Le Pen, a far-rightist who favors stricter controls on North African immigration to France — and has a history of anti-Semitic statements.

Immediately after first-round results showed Le Pen in the runoff, half a million French citizens took to the streets to say "no" to the Nazism, fascism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism that critics say Le Pen's National Front Party represents.

On May 1, up to 1 million anti-Le Pen demonstrators turned out throughout France, including at least 400,000 in Paris alone.

That sense of crisis helped boost Sunday's turnout to an estimated 80 percent, far higher than in the first round.

Despite the resounding demonstrations against Le Pen, French Jews remain worried about the anti-Semitic attacks, which have been the worst in France since World War II, some Jewish officials said.

"It is hard to know whether the attacks will resume after this is all over," said Samuel, 32, a computer software engineer in Paris.

"If they do, though, I think that the government will act more aggressively to find

MIDEAST FOCUS

'Passover Massacre' toll rises

Another Israeli died of injuries sustained in the "Passover Massacre" at a seder in Netanya.

The death of Eliezer Korman, 74, of Ramat Hasharon, raised the toll from the March 27 suicide bombing to 29. Korman's wife, Yehudit, was also killed in the attack.

Powell: Halt settlements

The Bush administration will urge Ariel Sharon during his visit this week to Washington to curb settlement building, Colin Powell said. "Something has to be done about the problem of the settlements," he said Sunday on NBC-TV's "Meet the Press."

In contrast, National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice suggested on a different news program that the settlements are not a high priority. "Let's take one thing at a time," Rice said on "Fox News Sunday." She added: "Settlements will eventually be an issue. But I think we have to get the context right here. We need to end the terror, create a situation in which there is better security and no violence."

U.N. disbands Jenin team

The United Nations fact-finding team for the Jenin refugee camp was disbanded. U.N. Secretary General Kofi Annan formally canceled the team's planned trip from Geneva to the Middle East on May 2 after Israel raised objections to the group's makeup.

The U.N. Security Council members were unable to agree on the context of a letter that would have criticized Israel's resistance to the mission.

Troops kill Palestinian family

A Palestinian woman and two of her children were killed by Israeli army fire in the West Bank. Israeli troops opened fire after a bomb exploded beside their tank Sunday, wounding one soldier, according to an army statement.



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and punish those behind them. There is a feeling now that things got out of hand in the weeks before the election, and that is why the right did so well."

Many Muslims, who recognized that they and the Jews had a common enemy in Le Pen, "became more involved in the problem of anti-Semitism during the past few weeks," Samuel said.

But, he added, "I'm not sure that these were the people who had anything to do with the attacks in the first place. I suppose we can only hope that the" feelings of unity "will spread.

Sarah, a 21-year-old student living in Paris, said the "election may have woken everybody up about what happens when you do not speak out against anti-Semitism and racism. I just hope we don't fall asleep again."

But, she added, she is not sure that anti-Semitic violence won't return, "as long as the situation in Israel continues."

Though voters from left and right came together to support Chirac on Sunday, there was evidence that the breather from France's normally acrimonious partisan politics was only temporary.

Many French voters, particularly those on the left, were uninspired by either of the two main candidates — Chirac and the Socialist Party's prime minister, Lionel Jospin — in the first round.

As a result, many voted for fringe parties or sat out the vote. That apathy allowed Le Pen to squeak by Jospin to qualify for the runoff.

French media — and Jospin himself — urged these voters to back Chirac in the runoff, despite reports linking Chirac to corruption.

Some voters who voted for Chirac on Sunday apparently chose him as the lesser of two evils.

"I obviously voted for Chirac, but against all my values," Serge Recolin, a 27-year-old medical student, told The Associated Press. "He is a crook, but better than a fascist."

Fears that Sunday's vote isn't the last of Le Pen are heightened by upcoming legislative elections.

If the Socialist Party, galvanized by Jospin's shocking defeat, wins those elections, the result could be a political paralysis that might again lead voters to Le Pen.

"Everything depends now upon the next weeks," Sarfaty said.

Le Pen, 73, once dismissed the Nazi gas chambers as just a "detail" of history. In this campaign, however, he toned down his anti-Semitic rhetoric in favor of a populist crusade against the status quo, patriotic cries for restoring the franc as French's currency and a xenophobic ideology, including a proposal that illegal aliens be placed in transit camps awaiting deportation.

The number of French Jews looking to leave — both to Israel and to other countries — already has increased in the past few months. If the far-right scores more political triumphs, or if the government fails to change course and crack down on anti-Semitism, that number could increase.

Already, there's some evidence to that effect.

At the French-Israel House on Sunday, an annual day set aside to encourage French Jews to buy property in Israel drew more than twice the average number of people, Sarfaty said.

"I had many discussions over the past few weeks about where we would go if Le Pen got a lot of votes," he said. "When people left the office, we would joke and say, 'See you Sunday night at the airport.' But you know, there is always some truth behind such jokes." □

Sharansky's mother dies at 94

NEW YORK (JTA) — Ida Milgrom, who campaigned tirelessly for the freedom of her son, Soviet dissident Natan Sharansky, died in Israel at 94.

Milgrom helped win freedom for her son, and in the process helped make his name become known around the world. Sharansky arrived in Israel in 1986 after nine years in Soviet prisons.

He is now a deputy prime minister and head of the immigrants-rights party Yisrael Ba'Aliyah. Milgrom suffered a stroke March 29 and never regained consciousness.

She died May 1 and was buried a day later in Jerusalem. □

JEWISH WORLD

Poll: Americans want U.S. role

A plurality of Americans believe the United States should play a role in resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. A new CBS-New York Times poll found that 48 percent of Americans want U.S. intervention, with 43 percent opposed.

Sixty percent of Americans approve of President Bush's handling of the conflict, according to the poll, which has a 3 percent margin of error.

Poland, museum in joint project

Poland and the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum plan to work together to create a memorial at a former Nazi death camp.

Groundbreaking for the new memorial is expected to take place next month at the Belzec death camp in Poland.

Teens mobilize for Israel

B'nai B'rith Youth Organization is launching a two-month project of political activism and fund raising for Israel.

BBYO members throughout the United States will write to President Bush asking him to continue his support for Israel, and each chapter plans to raise \$1,000 for Magen David Adom, Israel's volunteer emergency medical service.

Papers have pro-Israel insert

Some 150,000 subscribers to a Brazilian newspaper received a pro-Israel enclosure with their paper.

The May 3 insert in *O Globo*, one of the nation's largest papers, was a joint initiative of the Jewish Museum in Rio de Janeiro and private donors.

About 35,000 Jewish homes already received the insert in Jewish papers published in Rio and Sao Paulo.

Ex-Nazi guard nabbed in Canada

A 78-year-old former Nazi concentration camp guard was arrested in Canada.

Michael Seifert's arrest in Vancouver came 18 months after he was convicted in absentia in Italy of beating, raping and murdering prisoners in a concentration camp in Italy during World War II. He faces life imprisonment in Italy, which is seeking his extradition.

Show solidarity with flowers

U.S. Jews can send flowers to terror victims and their families. Timed to coincide with Shavuot, the Seeds of Solidarity campaign was launched by two organizations, One Family and the Israel Emergency Solidarity Fund.

The deadline for orders is May 14, and they can be placed on-line at www.flowers4israel.org, or by calling toll-free 1-866-SHAVUOT.

Teens lead the way as thousands throng Manhattan's Israel parade

By Rachel Pomerance

NEW YORK (JTA) — Tens of thousands of people turned out for New York's annual Israel Day Parade, but it was children who carried most of the banners of Jewish institutions, federations and schools as demonstrators marched up Manhattan's Fifth Avenue.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict garners endless analysis in newspapers and on television, but the way these children, many of them teens, see it, the matter is simple: Israel wants to make peace, the Palestinians want to fight.

And the schoolchildren are resolute about defending Israel.

"So many people tried to get rid of us, but we're not going anywhere," said Adam Gold, 13, who was there on Sunday with a group from the Jewish Federation of Ocean County, N.J.

In general, the parade was as seamless as the clear sky on a beautiful spring afternoon.

A few hundred people — including some Jews — met for a counter-rally against Israel, but the children at the Israel Day parade shrugged it off.

Josh Mandell doesn't agree with the counter-demonstrators but, he said, they have a right to their opinion. His response was to rouse the marchers in a forceful rendition of "Am Yisroel Chai!"

It was at least the third rally this year for David Wodka, 16, from upstate New York, who also attended last month's huge solidarity rally in Washington and one in Central Park last summer.

Israel is a "great country" and it needs to survive, he said. But he was skeptical that there ever would be peace with Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

After all, Wodka said, then-Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak offered Arafat "90 percent of what he wanted" at the Camp David summit, and Arafat refused.

Israel won't go back to "all of the 1967 borders," Wodka said.

Talya Kahana, 18, is in the parade neighborhood every day as a student at Ramaz, a modern Orthodox school that sent hundreds of students to the parade.

Still, to "see the city packed with Jews" for a day is exhilarating, she said.

But the parade isn't just to energize American Jews, said Ramaz student Corey Miller, 15: It's also to send a message to Israel.

"They need strength," he said.

Demanding that Israel exercise restraint in the face of recurring terrorist attacks is "like tying someone up with ropes" with their "hands behind their back while someone else is smacking them in the face," Miller said. "It's ridiculous."

The tenor of the Ramaz school has changed considerably since the intifada began 19 months ago, said Gabe Marans, 16, whose current events club is consumed with the issue.

But the situation has only strengthened Marans' commitment to make aliyah after he completes his education.

"It's the Jewish homeland, and we haven't had a Jewish homeland" for two thousand years, he said. "We should take advantage of it. Everyone should move there."

Students from the progressive Abraham Joshua Heschel school in Manhattan wore T-shirts with the message, "The work of righteousness shall be peace."

Sarah Belfer, 12, said it pains her that people are being killed on both sides.

"I wish for peace," she said, but added that she has "no idea how to get to that."

Dizzy with exuberance, a mob of Jewish college students swung around each other's arms and banged leather drums.

The Israeli Consulate had convened the campus leaders for a weekend of workshops and parties that culminated in the parade.

After fighting for Israel on college campuses, it was almost surreal to be with thousands of other supporters cheering Israel, the college students said.

Reed Albergotti, from San Diego State, basked in the occasion.

It's a "celebration," he said. People are here to "share our love for Israel. That's what this is about." □

FOCUS ON ISSUES

**Denied highest military honor,
Jewish vets may get recognition**

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — During the Korean War, Tibor Rubin secured a route of retreat for his company by single-handedly defending a hill for 24 hours against waves of North Korean soldiers.

Despite this and other acts of bravery, Rubin has never received the Medal of Honor, America's highest award for bravery in combat. Now, however, there's a chance that Rubin and 137 other Jewish war veterans may receive some belated recognition.

The Pentagon recently received a request to examine whether or not the Jewish veterans were denied the Medal of Honor because they were Jews. Similar appeals regarding anti-Semitism in awarding the Medal of Honor have been routinely ignored by the Pentagon for decades.

But this time the request carries the force of a law, passed by Congress and signed by President Bush in December, ordering just such a review.

To some, the request may smack of special-interest politics, but it is not the first time that the U.S. military, now a model equal opportunity employer, has been forced to revisit its earlier record of discrimination against minorities.

In 1996, the Pentagon reviewed the files of Japanese-American and other Asian-American veterans, and belatedly awarded the Medal of Honor to 21 of them.

The records of African-American servicemen — who were institutionally segregated throughout World War II — were re-examined, and eight were recognized for the nation's most prestigious decoration. A similar review of Hispanic veterans has been mandated.

The congressional bill providing for a review of selected Jewish veterans is known as the "Leonard Kravitz Jewish War Veterans Act."

Kravitz was recommended for a Medal of Honor, but the award was downgraded to a Distinguished Service Cross, the second highest decoration.

All the men on the list, save one, had been awarded the service cross by the Army, Navy or Air Force. The exception is Rubin, who was recommended four times for the Medal of Honor by his commanding officers or comrades, two times for the Distinguished Service Cross and twice for the Silver Star — but didn't get anything except two Purple Hearts and a 100 percent disability.

Rubin has two other distinctions he would just as soon forget — two years in a Nazi concentration camp and 30 months in a North Korean prisoner-of-war camp.

The first impression on entering Rubin's modest home in Garden Grove, Calif., is a living room cluttered with plastic shopping bags and cardboard cartons. They hold 22 years worth of correspondence, appeals and affidavits by his erstwhile comrades, veteran organizations and congressmen, demanding recognition of Rubin's heroism — all routinely ignored by the Pentagon.

Even a small sampling of the papers reveals a record of bravery and sacrifice, counterpointed by the vicious anti-Semitism of a key figure. Rubin was born in Paszto, a Hungarian shtetl of 120 Jewish families, the son of a shoemaker. At age 13, he was transported to the Mauthausen concentration camp in Austria and liberated two years later by American troops. Both his parents and

two sisters perished in the Holocaust. He came to the United States in 1948, settled in New York and worked first as a shoemaker and then as a butcher.

"I was a handsome dog in those days, and the ladies who worked with me always brought me lunch," the 72-year old reminisces fondly.

He tried to enlist in the U.S. Army in 1949, both as a shortcut to American citizenship and, he hoped, to attend the army's butcher school in Chicago. Knowing hardly any English, he flunked the language test, but tried again in 1950 and passed, with some judicious help from two fellow test-takers.

By July of that year, Pvt. Rubin found himself fighting on the front lines in Korea. There he encountered the terror of 1st Sgt. Artice Watson. According to lengthy affidavits submitted by nearly a dozen men who served under Watson, he was a vicious anti-Semite who consistently "volunteered" Rubin for the most dangerous patrols and missions.

For his harrowing acts of bravery, Rubin was three times recommended for the Medal of Honor by two of his commanding officers. Both were shortly afterwards killed in action, but not before ordering Watson to initiate the necessary paperwork to secure the medals for Rubin.

Some of Rubin's fellow GIs were present when Watson was ordered to seek the medals, and all are convinced that he deliberately ignored the orders.

Toward the end of October 1950, massive Chinese troop concentrations crossed the border into North Korea and attacked the unprepared Americans. After most of his regiment had been wiped out, the severely wounded Rubin was captured and spent the next 30 months in a prisoner-of-war camp.

Faced with constant hunger, filth and disease, most of the GIs simply gave up.

"No one wanted to help anyone. Everybody was for himself," wrote Sgt. Leo Cormier Jr., a fellow prisoner.

The exception was Rubin. Almost every evening, he would sneak out of the camp to steal food from the Chinese and North Korean supply depots, knowing that he would be shot if caught.

"He shared the food evenly among the GIs," Cormier wrote. "He also took care of us, nursed us, carried us to the latrine."

The survivors of the camp credited Rubin with keeping 35 to 40 of their number alive and recommended him for the Medal of Honor, Distinguished Service Cross and Silver Star.

Cpl. Leonard Hamm of Indiana wrote the army that Rubin had saved his life, both on the battlefield and in the camp. He went on to upbraid the Pentagon for its "degrading and insulting treatment" of "one of the greatest men I have ever known and definitely one of the greatest heroes in this nation's history."

Should Rubin receive all the medals for which he has been recommended, he would become the most decorated American soldier of the Korean War.

Back in civilian life, Rubin finally got his American citizenship in 1953. He tried to resume his old job as a butcher, but a combination of crippling afflictions, traceable to his war wounds and POW experience, forced him to quit.

He now lives with his wife, Yvonne, a Dutch Holocaust survivor, and has close ties with his son, Frank, an Air Force veteran, and his daughter, Rosalyn.

"I want this recognition for my Jewish brothers and sisters," he says. "I want" non-Jews "to know that there were Jews over there, that there was a little greenhorn, a little shmuck from Hungary, who fought for their beloved country." □