



Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 80, No. 189

Monday, October 14, 2002

85th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

4 Palestinians killed in clashes

Two Palestinians were killed in clashes with Israeli troops carrying out an anti-terror operation early Sunday in the Gaza Strip.

In another incident, soldiers killed two armed Palestinians who were trying to infiltrate from Egypt into Yuval, a moshav in the Negev.

Three soldiers were wounded in the dash that erupted after the infiltrators were spotted. Palestinian sources said a 3-year-old boy was one of the two people who were killed in southern Gaza.

Group backs U.S. Iraq efforts

The Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations expressed support for U.S. efforts to have Iraq "divest itself of weapons of mass destruction." [Page 3]

5,000 rally for Israel

Approximately 5,000 people attended a Christian Solidarity with Israel rally last Friday in Washington.

Christian Coalition founder Pat Robertson and the minority whip of the U.S. House of Representatives, Tom DeLay, were among the evangelical Christian and conservative political leaders who proclaimed their support for Israel, according to the Washington Jewish Week. Robertson was one of a number of speakers who emphasized the biblical connection of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel.

He added that "Palestine has been occupied by Yasser Arafat and his thugs."

Slurs allegedly hurled at Jews

A group of Jews protesting a divestment conference at the University of Michigan say they were confronted by about 75 people who shouted anti-Semitic slurs at them.

The handful of protesters, led by Michigan Student Zionists and the New York-based Coalition for Jewish Concerns-Amcha, claim they were surrounded Saturday evening by activists shouting "Palestine will be free from the river to the sea," and, in Arabic, "Death to the Jews."

Amcha attorney Steve Lieberman is filing a request that the university hand over surveillance equipment to document its claim. During the three-day weekend conference, attendees called for universities to divest from companies that do business with Israel.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

With Russian census taking place, a true Jewish count seems unlikely

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — How many Jews are there in Russia?

With current estimates ranging from 250,000 to more than 3 million people, one might hope that Russia's census, taking place this month, could help answer the question.

But experts and Jewish leaders here warn that Russia's first national head count since the demise of the Soviet Union will likely understate the size of Russian Jewry.

And some Russian Jewish leaders are worried that census numbers could lead some to the conclusion that Russian Jewry is disappearing — which could result in less funding from overseas for Russian Jewish activities.

Results of the census are expected in 2003, but the debate is already on in the Jewish community whether to accept the tally of Russian Jews at face value.

Mikhail Chlenov, president of the Va'ad, a Russian Jewish umbrella organization, admits that any number in the lower range — he expects the number to be around 300,000 — may prove "catastrophic" for many in the community.

"Jewish leaders, especially in the provinces, are already horrified by the result the census will bring," Chlenov said.

The census will count what Jewish demographers term as "core Jews," or those who identify themselves as Jews in interviews.

"What the census will give us is a number of people who are not hesitant to identify themselves as Jews," said Yevgeny Satanovsky, president of the Russian Jewish Congress.

But the actual or "potential" community is several times bigger, most Jewish leaders say.

Russia's two chief rabbis, Berel Lazar and Adolph Shayevich, said this number could exceed 1 million people.

Satanovsky puts the number even higher — at 3 million.

"This is the number of those who are feeling Jewish or may become Jewish if community outreach is successful," he said.

He pointed out that a survey commissioned this year by his organization revealed that there are 232,000 households in Moscow alone registered under Jewish-sounding names.

Census takers will not ask a question about religion. In Russia, Judaism is generally considered an ethnic characteristic.

The most recent census, conducted in 1989 when the Soviet Union still existed, counted 551,000 Jews within the borders of what two years later became the independent Russian Federation. The entire Jewish population of the USSR stood in 1989 at 1.45 million.

If the estimates given by various experts are to be trusted, Russian Jewry shrunk by about one-half in the past 13 years. Hundreds of thousands of Russian Jews left for Israel, the United States and Germany since the breakup of the USSR, and they are continuing to leave Russia at the rate of about 20,000 people a year.

If the results of the population surveys in Russia and other former Soviet states are to be taken as a true statistical picture, with such a rate of emigration there would now be no Jews at all left in this part of the world.

When the results of this year's census are received, Jewish demographers,

MIDEAST FOCUS

Humanitarian measures OK'd

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon approved humanitarian measures to ease hardships on the Palestinians.

During consultations with Cabinet ministers Sunday, Sharon also agreed that Foreign Minister Shimon Peres renew contacts with Palestinian Authority officials, Army Radio reported. The moves came after U.S. officials criticized Israel for not following through on promises to ease the situation of the Palestinian civilian population.

Israeli politician dies at 52

Israeli politician Maxim Levy died of a massive heart attack last Friday at 52. Levy was mayor of Lod and a former Knesset member. He was first elected to the Knesset in 1992 as a member of the Likud Party. He later split from the party to found the Geshet Party with his brother, legislator and former Cabinet minister David Levy.

Alert guard gets prize

An alert security guard who prevented a suicide attack in Tel Aviv last Friday received a \$5,000 reward. The award was given by a Swiss Jewish millionaire who had promised to honor civilians who prevent terror attacks, Israel Radio reported.

The attack was averted when Michael Sarkisov prevented the bomber from entering a café near the city's crowded beachfront promenade. Sarkisov, assisted by other security guards, wrestled the bomber to the ground and bound his arms and legs.

Terror victim's organs donated

The organs of an Israeli man killed in a terrorist shooting last week were implanted in several people. A 52-year-old Israeli Arab man received the liver of Oded Volak, who was shot in the head Oct. 8 in a Palestinian ambush near Hebron.

sociologists and community leaders will face the difficult task of defining the size of what experts call the "extended Jewish population."

Extended Jewry includes all those who may not identify as Jews in the census but have some Jewish background or attachment to the Jewish community. Some experts believe this population may also include non-Jewish marriage partners of Jews, or even members of households that have Jewish members.

The size of the extended Jewish community, according to most Jewish leaders, stands somewhere between 500,000 and 1.5 million.

Although most Jewish leaders believe the census will undercount the Jewish population, they are nonetheless doing their best to make sure the total is as accurate as possible. Since the count depends on how many people will declare themselves as Jews, some Jewish leaders were busy in recent weeks calling on their constituencies to do just this.

Lev Toitman, a community leader in the former Jewish autonomous republic of Birobidzhan, recently went on the airwaves of a local radio station to call on Jews to register themselves as such.

"In the past, Jews could have registered as non-Jews during the census because of official anti-Semitism," he said. "There is no reason for Jews to hide their identity anymore."

Meanwhile, representatives of major foreign Jewish agencies working in Russia say the census will have a minimal effect on their policies.

"The numbers that the census will get will be under-reported," said Asher Ostrin, the Jerusalem-based director of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee's activities in the former Soviet Union.

"We operate on intuition and on a lot of anecdotal evidence because we have not seen any methodology that was compelling enough" to trust the numbers, he said.

Karol Ungar, director of the Russia office of the Jewish Agency for Israel, said his organization believes there are 550,000 Russians who have the right to make aliyah to Israel according to the Law of Return, which grants citizenship to any Jew with at least one Jewish grandparent.

"If the number the census will get us will differ from the ones we use, we will certainly bring some corrections to our work" in Russia, he said.

But Jewish Agency officials here say they are aware that many of those who can make aliyah will not identify as Jews in the census.

Ostrin said the census can give a clearer demographic picture of the community, including such things as age distribution.

Complicating the picture is the fact that the census is not very popular among Russians, Jewish or not.

Many Russians are not likely to give any information to census takers, and as many as 40 percent are likely not to give truthful answers to all census questions.

A number of recent polls have shown that a significant percentage of the population is wary of letting strangers in because of a fear of burglary.

Others are reluctant to answer questions out of fear the authorities could use it to track down their incomes, the polls showed.

Census officials are trying to alleviate these fears, saying no personal data will be shared with law enforcement officials, tax authorities or any other government agency.

But Jewish leaders say these fears could prompt some Jews not to give any information at all.

"Some Jews will decide not to participate in the census," Satanovsky said. "These are typical middle-class Russian citizens who have no trust in the state, who fear both criminals and tax authorities."

Some Russians say they will not participate in the census as a protest.

Valery Shapiro, a 63-year-old retired pharmacist in Moscow, is one of them.

"I will not participate in the census to protest the very low pension I am getting from the state," Shapiro said.

But he said that if he had to give his information he would not identify himself as a Jew because of deep-seated fears.

"I don't believe the officials when they say all the information will be protected," he said. □



Daily News Bulletin

Norman H. Lipoff, *President*

Mark J. Joffe, *Executive Editor and Publisher*

Lisa Hostein, *Editor*

Michael S. Arnold, *Managing Editor*

Lenore A. Silverstein, *Finance and Administration Director*

Paula Simmonds, *Marketing and Development Director*

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.

JEWISH WORLD

Christian group OKs conversions

The World Evangelical Alliance reissued a declaration defending the conversion of Jews.

In response to an August report from U.S. Roman Catholic bishops that opposes efforts to target Jews for conversion, the evangelical organization issued a statement saying they have a right to share Christianity with Jews.

The statement also decries anti-Semitism and says that Christian churches have "been much to blame for tolerating and encouraging it." The alliance represents 120 national and regional church fellowships and 75 nondenominational ministries.

Orchestra honors Daniel Pearl

A Jewish-Arab youth orchestra performed a tribute to Daniel Pearl. The group played traditional Middle Eastern music and classical Western compositions in Tel Aviv on Oct. 10, which would have been Pearl's 39th birthday. Pearl, a Wall Street Journal reporter who was kidnapped and killed in January by Islamic militants in Pakistan, played the violin and mandolin. The U.S.-based Daniel Pearl Foundation marked his birthday with 100 events in 20 countries.

No pig's head at Hillel

A report that a pig's head was left at the Indiana University Hillel is untrue, the center's director said.

The story, brought up again in a recent U.S. News and World Report column on anti-Semitism at U.S. colleges, alleges that someone left a pig's head at Hillel's doorstep.

Poll: Russians down on Israel

Almost 50 percent of Russians harbor negative attitudes toward Israel, according to a new poll. Forty-six percent of respondents in a national opinion poll said they feel negatively about Israel, compared with 24 percent of those who say they feel positively about the Jewish state.

In a similar poll seven years ago, 41 percent of Russians expressed positive feelings toward Israel. Only one nation, Iraq, scored worse than Israel in the recent poll, with a 49 percent negative response.

Ohio man accused of Nazi crimes

The U.S. Justice Department wants to revoke the citizenship of an Ohio man accused of guarding Nazi concentration camps. Jakob Miling, 78, is charged with obtaining U.S. citizenship illegally by concealing his service as a Nazi guard.

The department's Nazi-hunting unit, the Office of Special Investigations, alleges that Miling manned machine gun posts at the Sachsenhausen camp and later served in the SS at the Gross-Rosen camp.

Jewish groups offer their support for force against Iraq as 'last resort'

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Jewish groups are supporting a resolution from their umbrella organization backing the Bush administration's use of force against Iraq "as a last resort."

The resolution from the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, released Saturday, expresses support for President Bush and Congress in seeking to make Iraq destroy its weapons of mass destruction and stop weapons development programs.

The resolution has changed significantly from the draft released last week. It now specifically includes support for "the use of force as a last resort" — the draft had offered support only for unspecified presidential initiatives — and supports White House efforts to build U.N. and other international backing.

"Iraq must conform to the resolutions adopted by the Security Council and the other standards which President Bush has specified," the resolution says. "We support the efforts to enlist the United Nations and international cooperation to secure Iraqi compliance, including the use of force as a last resort."

That placates both critics who said that an explicit warning of military action was needed and those who said that nonviolent tactics needed to be endorsed as well.

"It says what we wanted to say, that we stand with the United States," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents.

The final version was composed after individual groups provided feedback on the draft last week.

Many leaders said the draft was too vague, with the conference not presenting a clear view as to whether Jewish groups supported more controversial elements of the American debate, such as unilateral action if international support was not forthcoming.

Hoenlein said the draft was meant to be vague in order to elicit feedback for the final version.

The resolution comes after the major debate in the United States on the war has ended, with both houses of Congress voting to give the president authority to use military action if necessary. The House of Representatives voted 296-133 in favor of the resolution Oct. 10, with the Senate concurring early the next morning, 77-23.

But Hoenlein said the American debate is not over.

"There is going to be an ongoing debate, and there's a feeling that we have to be on record on how we stand," he said.

While there were concerns about the draft language, most Jewish leaders had suggested last week that they would support the conference's resolution.

Leaders of the conference's constituent groups praised the final resolution as a thoughtful consensus representing a wide array of Jewish opinion.

"It shows that Jews can stand proudly with our country but recognize the tragedy of war," said Hannah Rosenthal, executive director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. "It's as good as a situation as can be when one is about to wage war."

The JCPA shelved a resolution on the issue last month, a sign that Jewish support for a U.S. attack might not be as comprehensive as once thought. Some have argued that the JCPA's hesitancy was an impetus for the toned-down language from the conference.

The JCPA is slated to review the issue again at a New York meeting on Monday.

Morton Klein, national president of the Zionist Organization of America, said the resolution was not one his group would have written, but it was still a fair compromise.

The conference's leadership has been criticized in the past for not always seeking consensus before acting. But the process used on this statement was well-received.

"I think they handled it well," said Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, a frequent critic of the conference's decision-making.

But he still believes the conference "tends to improvise" in decision-making and needs a more established process, Yoffie said.

One major organization, the American Jewish Committee, has said it will not support the conference resolution because it believes it would be inappropriate for Jewish groups to speak out on Iraq at this time. □

IBM technology used at Auschwitz, journalist says in book update

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — An author says he has discovered the missing link in documenting the connection between IBM and Auschwitz.

Journalist Edwin Black caused a stir when he built a case against IBM because of the role the company's technology played in assisting the Holocaust.

But until now there had been no direct link to Auschwitz, the most infamous concentration camp and killing center.

However, a recent discovery, prompted by a coincidental finding in a phone book from the 1940s, shows that IBM-made Hollerith equipment — such as punch-card machines, sorters and tabulators — were used in Auschwitz's slave labor section.

Auschwitz researchers told Black the IBM machines were used to identify people with certain skills, primarily those needed for construction of buildings in the part of the camp complex known as Auschwitz III.

An IBM spokeswoman says it has been known for decades that the Nazis used the company's technology. But Black, in an update to his book "IBM and the Holocaust," argues that the new finding is significant.

"The infamous Auschwitz tattoo began as an IBM number," he wrote.

In 1943, camp prisoners were given five-digit Hollerith numbers, which later were tattooed on their forearms. The numbers were intended to track living inmates, but with so many prisoners dying in the camp, a different, Auschwitz-specific identification system was used later.

With the use of IBM technology, Black has argued, Hitler was able "to automate his persecution of the Jews."

According to Black, the Nazis used IBM technology to help identify Jews in censuses, registrations and genealogical programs, run railroads and organize concentration camp slave labor, among other uses.

Nazi Germany became IBM's most important customer outside the United States, Black argues. IBM and the Nazis jointly designed — and IBM produced — technological solutions to help exterminate Jews and other enemies of the Nazi regime, he says.

"The Nazis were efficient, but they used American innovation," Black said.

IBM says it "categorically condemns any actions" which aided the Nazis.

"The Nazi regime used equipment manufactured by IBM's German subsidiary; that has been well-known for decades," said Carol Makovich, a spokeswoman for IBM.

It has indeed been known that IBM supplied technology to Germany in the 1930s. But IBM had said it cut ties with its German subsidiary in 1941.

Black, however, maintains that IBM's relationship to Nazi Germany was longer and deeper than the company has admitted.

Black says he was denied access to IBM files and that the company doesn't acknowledge its role.

"Illumination would be the best reparations we can hope for," he said. "This latest disclosure removes any pretext of deniability, and completes the puzzle that has been put together about IBM in

Poland," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

"The picture that emerges is most disturbing," Hoenlein added. "IBM must confront this matter honestly if there is to be any closure."

Hoenlein made his comments in Black's update.

Makovich said the company turned over its archival materials to two universities several years ago. If additional documents are found IBM will make them available, she said.

She did not indicate that the company would issue any sort of public apology.

A class-action lawsuit against IBM for its alleged aid to the Nazis was withdrawn last year following German complaints that the lawsuit impeded restitution payments to Holocaust victims. □

Slovak government inks agreement to pay Shoah-era property claims

By Magnus Bennett

PRAGUE (JTA) — The government of Slovakia has agreed to distribute \$20 million to the local Jewish community as compensation for Holocaust-era property losses.

Slovak Premier Mikulas Dzurinda and Fero Alexander, the executive chairman of the Central Union of Jewish Religious Communities, signed a compensation agreement Oct. 9. A new commission will be formed to distribute the funds.

The commission, which will decide how to distribute the money after it starts work early next year, will include four representatives of the Jewish community and three government officials. In order not to overburden the state budget, the agreement stipulates that the \$20 million will be held in the national bank of Slovakia for 10 years, during which time only accrued interest can be withdrawn.

This is expected to provide an estimated \$1 million a year in revenues. After 10 years, the initial \$20 million compensation payment will be transferred to the Jewish community.

The director of the community, Jozef Weiss, said money would be used to compensate Holocaust survivors, help restore dilapidated cemeteries and synagogues and fund cultural and social programs.

As happened with a similar fund in the Czech Republic, the commission is likely to set a time limit for property loss claims.

Weiss said such payments will "just be symbolic, rather than full compensation for those whose property was confiscated during the war and not returned afterward."

Slovakia's Jewish leaders first began negotiating a compensation agreement with state officials four years ago.

"In 1998, we saw it as a good signal that we were not refused right away, but we realized that it would not be a simple process and that it would take a long time," Weiss said.

The Slovak Jewish community is now shifting its efforts to a different front: Community leaders are trying to get compensation from Germany to reclaim millions of dollars the wartime Slovak government allegedly stole from Jews and paid to the Nazis to deport tens of thousands of Jews to concentration camps.

The community lost its case in a German court earlier this year, but an appeal will be heard in Berlin in January. □