



Daily News Bulletin

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85th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Four victims buried

Funerals were held for four Israelis killed in a terror attack last Friday in a West Bank settlement. [Page 3]

2 Palestinian children killed

Two Palestinian children were killed over the weekend. On Sunday, an 11-year-old boy was killed in the West Bank city of Tulkarm after he and other students threw rocks at Israeli soldiers.

A second boy, also 11, was injured by a rubber-coated bullet in the leg, according to a Palestinian doctor.

On Saturday, a 9-year-old Palestinian girl was killed by a stray bullet as she stood outside her home in a Gaza refugee camp.

Nonobservant told to stay home

An Israeli Cabinet minister sparked a public outcry for saying that Diaspora Jews should not immigrate to Israel if they do not think they will live a religiously observant life.

Health Minister Nissim Dahan, of the fervently Orthodox Shas Party, made the remarks Saturday at a convention of world Orthodox leaders.

Chief rabbi blasts cloning

Israel's chief Ashkenazi rabbi was among a group of religious leaders criticizing an organization that said over the weekend it was behind the birth of a cloned baby.

Yisrael Meir Lau said Judaism favors technological developments and medical progress that can help save a life or solve infertility problems, but it rejects the artificial creation of life.

"The moment medical science tries to take upon itself duties and areas which are not its responsibility such as shortening life, doning, or creating life in an unnatural way, we must set down borders in order not to harm the basic belief that there is a creator of the universe in whose hands life and death are placed," Lau said in a statement.

Because of the New Year's holiday, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Thursday, Jan. 2.

FOCUS ON ISSUES

With warmth and hard work, Chabad grows quickly on campus

By Rachel Pomerance

NEW YORK (JTA) — At nearly 11 o'clock one Chanukah night, Rabbi Eitan Webb was still making his way through his list of holiday phone calls.

The new Chabad-Lubavitch rabbi at Princeton University even called those who had visited his home only once for Shabbat dinner, offering holiday wishes and gently asking about their lives.

Webb's devotion offers a glimpse of Chabad's signature method of outreach — personal attention and devotion to each Jew — that has attracted droves of followers around the country.

"At Chabad we use a phrase, 'Every Jew is family,'" said Rabbi Hirsch Zarchi, 29, who heads the Chabad house at Harvard, where he is known to everyone as "Hirschy."

As Jewish organizations of all stripes wonder how to get young people more involved in Jewish life, Chabad's approach appears to be working.

Chabad is the "fastest-growing Jewish presence on campus," said an official with one Jewish organization. "They have actually sent more students to Israel than any other organization, including Birthright and Hillel, which is clearly evidence of their reach and commitment."

There currently are full-time Chabad houses on 61 college campuses across the United States. Chabad offers part-time programming at another 80 schools.

The fervently Orthodox movement is in the midst of a new push to open full-time houses on another 20 campuses. Of those, 12 already have opened.

The campuses targeted in the latest wave are those considered prestigious or that have large Jewish populations, and that have requested a Chabad house, according to Rabbi Menachem Schmidt, a member of Chabad's executive committee and the Chabad representative at the University of Pennsylvania.

The rationale was to find students with leadership potential and groom them into Jewish leaders, said George Rohr, the philanthropist who funded the initiative.

"There are many worthy organizations who respond to the expressed needs of students who affiliate Jewishly. The reality, though, is that the vast majority of students are not Jewishly involved," Rohr said. "Chabad emissaries are unparalleled in engaging this huge student body, creating welcoming entry points for them and empowering them with Jewish warmth and knowledge."

In some cases, however, Chabad's presence has sparked tension with other Jewish organizations on campus, particularly Hillel, said journalist Sue Fishkoff, author of a new book on Chabad outreach called "The Rebbe's Army."

"In general, where Chabad is small and there's a very strong Hillel, there tends to be less of a conflict because Hillel does not see Chabad as that much of a threat," she said.

But at Princeton University, the Center for Jewish Life — a joint program between the university and Hillel — decided not to include Chabad when it arrived on campus in November. The center's director, Rabbi James Diamond, said the decision had to do with Chabad's "methodology," which he called "confrontational."

"There are many students who come in here who are very much searching for their Jewish identity, and they really are not comfortable being confronted, and they made that very clear to us," Diamond said.

Chabad is "tolerant but not pluralistic," Diamond said. "We are religiously tolerant

MIDEAST FOCUS

Settlement infiltration thwarted

Israeli security officers thwarted a suspected terrorist infiltration of the West Bank settlement of Kiryat Arba. An exchange of fire erupted Saturday night when a security officer spotted a suspicious figure near the settlement's perimeter fence. The suspected assailant fled. On Sunday, a bomb went off close to a truck near the settlement of Ariel.

Birthright participants arrive

Some 400 Canadians arrived in Israel on a Birthright Israel trip. The group that arrived last Friday is the first of some 7,500 young people from around the world who are expected to take part in free tours of Israel over the next few months.

Among the participants in the current group are 20 students from Montreal's Concordia University, which created headlines earlier this year when pro-Palestinian demonstrators forced cancellation of a speech by Benjamin Netanyahu, who later became Israel's foreign minister. Birthright's numbers are significantly lower than originally projected when the program was launched in late 1999, but it is still drawing more participants than most Israel programs.

Israel to press aliyah effort

Israel's Cabinet decided to continue increased efforts to seek new immigrants from Argentina, Uruguay, France and South Africa. Prime Minister Sharon said at Sunday's Cabinet meeting that he views aliyah as Israel's most important goal.

Lieberman: Gulf will support U.S.

Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) said Arab states in the Persian Gulf likely would support a U.S. attack on Iraq. Speaking to reporters last week in Bahrain, Lieberman said he had received encouraging responses from the leaders of Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.



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and pluralistic." Expanding on a Hillel slogan, he said Hillel's approach is to "meet the students where they are, not where we want them to be."

Chabad's mission, however, sounds similar: "To try to engage every single Jew on that campus and empower them with the knowledge and the experience of Judaism on their own terms," in Zarchi's words.

Students who attend Chabad programs confirm that approach.

"I don't feel that a certain dogma or a certain way of viewing Judaism is imposed upon the Jewish students who go to this house," said Emily Ludmir, 21, a Harvard senior who attended a Chabad day school in Orange County, Calif., but prays at a Reform congregation.

"It feels like a very open and welcoming place" and a "space where you can really feel like you could be Jewish," she said.

Observers say the warmth of Chabad's approach is central to its success on campus.

Emissaries are dispatched strategically as family units — a rabbi, his wife and children — to give visitors the experience of the roles, customs and intimacy of Jewish family life.

According to Rabbi Yossi Brackman, who opened a Chabad house at the University of Chicago this spring, "When you want to show people Judaism, you want to show them real-life Judaism, and you see that in the family."

Early in his tenure as head of the movement, Chabad's late rebbe, Menachem Mendel Schneerson, "set his eye on the college student," according to Rabbi Moshe Kotlarsky, director of the International Conference of Chabad Lubavitch Emissaries.

"The rebbe intuited that the energy and enthusiasm emblematic of youth, coupled with a student's deep desire to find his or her life's purpose, needs to be met with the care, respect and wisdom of our ageless Torah's blueprint for life," Kotlarsky said.

Chabad began outreach on campus with visiting yeshiva students in the early 1950s. The first official Chabad house opened at UCLA in 1969, and growth had been steady until the recent spurt of activity.

Chabad generally has been regarded as a "warm, accepting place to explore your Judaism," Fishkoff said.

In contrast, some students say Hillel attracts a regular crowd of people, and those who come in just once or twice might feel "out of place," Harvard's Ludmir said.

But not everyone finds Chabad's approach alluring.

"I couldn't stand them," said Jordan Davidson, 24, who graduated in 2000 from Brown University, where he said Chabad rabbis would pounce on students emerging from the cafeteria and student union.

"They would come right up to you and ask you if you were Jewish, and I had seen people say that they were Jewish and then get harassed by these people and then followed down the street, and that was really obnoxious to me," Davidson said.

"The awful thing to me was saying that I wasn't Jewish, just lying to them about my ethnicity because I didn't want to be harassed and I didn't want to be associated with these people," Davidson said.

"While these guys are noble in their efforts, and I'm sure their cause is fantastic, their approach probably drives more people away than actually attracts people," he said.

But proselytizing on campus is very unusual, Schmidt said.

"No one initiative can satisfy the needs and sensitivities of each individual student," he said. "We provide a very wide array of programming so that each student can find his or her relationship with their heritage."

On some campuses, Chabad's growth has been remarkable.

In five years at Harvard, for example, Chabad's premises have grown from a tiny, one-bedroom apartment into a 3,800-square-foot building with three floors.

The group also has made inroads among faculty. President Lawrence Summers has lit the Chabad menorah on campus, and law professor Alan Dershowitz acts as the liaison among Chabad, students and faculty.

Many students say their connection to the group grows out of their friendship with Chabad's rabbis, who see themselves as spiritual counselors.

Harvard's Zarchi said he answers calls every day from students grappling with personal crises, including one student who called at 1 a.m. to talk about a problematic romance. □

JEWISH WORLD

U.S.: No restrictions on diplomats

The U.S. State Department denied that it refuses to post Jewish diplomats to Saudi Arabia.

State Department spokesman Philip Reeker said Dec. 26 that overseas assignments are "free from discrimination" and that there is no agreement between the United States and Saudi Arabia to avoid assigning Jewish diplomats to the country.

Reeker's statement comes after former U.S. official Timothy Hunter told the Middle East Forum that Jewish officers in the State Department had a letter "J" placed next to their name, so that selection panels would not choose them for Saudi posts.

Attack on Iraq backed

The leader of Germany's Jews is backing a U.S. strike against Iraq.

War against Iraq may be necessary to avert even greater horror, Paul Spiegel told the weekly Bild am Sonntag newspaper.

He also told the paper that he was sure that "if Iraqi dictator Saddam Hussein has weapons of mass destruction, he would use them."

Spiegel was re-elected earlier this month as president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

Ruling upholds Swiss paper

Swiss journalists are within their rights to call Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon a war criminal, according to the Swiss Press Council.

The council's Honorary Court, which decides ethical questions for Swiss journalists, ruled last week on a complaint filed against the Neue Luzerner Zeitung after the newspaper ran a story earlier this year attacking Sharon.

In its ruling, the court cited freedom of the press as an overriding concern.

The Israeli government criticized the ruling, saying, "We were astonished and completely disappointed with the decision." Frank Lubke, director of the Center Against Defamation and Anti-Semitism in Zurich, called the ruling scandalous and said it would set back efforts to combat anti-Semitism in Switzerland.

Israelis support U.S. attack

A majority of Israelis favor a U.S. attack against Iraq according to a new poll.

The poll, taken by the Yediot Achronot newspaper, found that 61 percent of those surveyed said a U.S. attack would be good for Israel. The poll had a 4 percent margin of error.

A separate poll, administered by Ma'ariv/New Wave, found that 53 percent of Israelis believe Iraq will strike Israel if attacked by the United States.

That poll had a 3 percent margin of error.

Targeted killings debated following deadly terror attack

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is vowing to step up targeted killings of suspected Palestinian terrorists.

He made the comment following a terror attack last Friday night at a West Bank yeshiva, in which four students were killed and some 10 others wounded.

Reflecting the odd vagaries of Middle East politics, his vow also came as Israeli and Palestinian officials began reviewing the latest draft of a U.S. "road map" for achieving peace in the region.

Speaking at Sunday's Cabinet meeting, Sharon said that he and Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz had agreed to strike at terrorists, those who help them and those who send them.

Also speaking at the meeting, Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein criticized the targeted assassinations policy, saying it must only be used as a last resort when all other attempts to arrest wanted Palestinians have failed.

Israel's practice of targeted killings is not new, but Sharon's statements again threw a spotlight on the controversial policy.

In last Friday's attack, two Palestinian gunmen dressed in Israeli army uniforms and armed with rifles and hand grenades infiltrated the settlement of Otniel south of Hebron.

They entered the yeshiva through the kitchen, firing on students and guests who had gathered for Shabbat dinner.

One of the students on kitchen duty managed to lock the door leading from the kitchen to the dining room, preventing the terrorists from entering the dining room.

All four of the students who were in the kitchen were killed.

One gunman was killed in a half-hour shootout with Israeli troops. The second terrorist fled but was found later and killed by Israeli soldiers.

On Sunday, the four Israelis killed in the attack were buried. They were identified as Pvt. Yehuda Bamberger, 20, of Karnei Shomron; Zvi Zieman, 18, of Re'ut; Gavriel Hoter, 17, from Alonei Habashan; and Staff Sgt. Noam Apter, 23, of Shilo.

Islamic Jihad claimed responsibility for the attack, saying it came in retaliation for the slaying a day earlier of one of its leaders in the Jenin area.

Israel blamed Arafat for the Otniel attack, saying the Palestinian Authority has failed to clamp down on terror.

A Palestinian official said Israel's policies, including the targeted killings, were to blame for the ongoing attacks.

Meanwhile, Israeli and Palestinian officials began reviewing the latest draft of an international diplomatic initiative aimed at ending more than two years of violence.

The draft of the road map was given to the two sides after President Bush met in Washington earlier this month with other members of the so-called diplomatic Quartet — Russia, the European Union and the United Nations. Israel persuaded Bush to agree not to publish the draft until after Israeli elections are held Jan. 28. In the meantime, each side was expected to review the draft and draw up responses.

According to the Jerusalem Post, which published details of the road map on Sunday, there were few changes in the revised draft.

According to the newspaper, the first stage of the road map calls for both sides to call for an end to violence and commit to stop incitement. It also calls for a complete freeze on Israeli settlement activity for visible steps by the Palestinians to fight terror. The Palestinian Authority is called on to undertake political and security reforms.

The second stage begins with Palestinian elections and concludes at the end of 2003 with the establishment of a Palestinian state with provisional borders. It also calls for an international conference convened by the Quartet.

The third stage, lasting until the end of 2005, calls for a second international conference that would include final-status talks on borders, refugees, settlements and Jerusalem, the Jerusalem Post reported.

Political sources in Jerusalem were reportedly satisfied with the latest version, Israel Radio reported Sunday. Though Israel has begun drawing up its response, it is not expected to be submitted until after the elections, the report said. □

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

Watchword is now security for the Jews of Guatemala*By Jan Sedaka*

GUATEMALA CITY (JTA) — Outside the high wall that surrounds Sharai Benjamin Synagogue, guards are checking visitors' identification.

A sign above the metal detector warns, "Firearms prohibited."

In the sanctuary, all eyes are on the B'nai Mitzvah twins, but memories drift to the terrifying abduction of their grandfather.

Though it happened years ago, friends and family vividly remember the negotiations, the ransom payment and, finally, the businessman's release.

This Central American country has been called the kidnapping capital of the world, and prominent Jewish families have been among the victims. Security concerns occupy Joey Habie, originator of Har Carmel, a new 142-acre development that Habie hopes will unify and strengthen Guatemala's Jewish community.

Many Jews left Guatemala during a brutal 36-year civil war that ended in 1996. "Most didn't want to leave us, but the violence became too much," Habie says. "Now the situation is less grim, and we want to be sure the community doesn't deplete itself again."

Like the biblical mountain from which it gets its name, Har Carmel rises boldly, and on all sides reveals a dramatic vista. Thousands of lush green acres stretch out below, a pleasant reminder of why the Maya called this place Guatemala, or Land of the Trees. Har Carmel will have 200 homes, a community center, a sports complex, a synagogue and a school. The project grew out of a more modest educational improvement plan.

"At first we only intended to build a school," says Rabbi Carlos Tapiero, who served the community for 12 years before leaving for Israel a few months ago.

The community's Consejo Central, or Central Council, had been talking about offering education beyond its present nursery school and kindergarten.

"Joey Habie told us he'd be willing to donate a large tract of land if we'd consider a more ambitious project," Tapiero says.

Ultimately, Habie not only gave the community the land, but also undertook developing the project.

Bulldozers are now at work preparing the ground for the first homes. Construction of the community center begins late this year.

Guatemala has about 11 million inhabitants. More than half are direct descendants of the Maya, an ancient Indian civilization that flourished in Central America and Mexico.

There are about 850 Jews belonging to 310 families, according to a 2000 Consejo Central census.

Though many communities are losing numbers, Guatemala's Jewish population is about the same as it was a decade ago.

"Many who left the country during the violence have returned, drawn back by ties to our close community," says Victor Cohen, lead architect on the Har Carmel project.

Most of the country's Jews make their homes here in the capital, living in secure apartment buildings and walled compounds.

Some longtime residents are skeptical of the Har Carmel plan. Several say they fear Jews will be "sitting ducks" for kidnappings or Al-Qaida style attacks.

Habie rejects claims that he is building a ghetto.

"This will be as secure a development as you can get," he says.

"The real ghettos are the high-rise apartments people are living in now."

Har Carmel will have a security gate with state-of-the-art communications, including links to law enforcement. Armed guards will patrol inside and outside the grounds 24 hours a day.

These precautions are not extreme, but "normal in today's world," says Habie, whose father was murdered by terrorists in 1980. "Security is a worldwide issue."

More than half of Har Carmel's quarter-acre lots have been sold. The cost is \$25,000 per lot, payable to an endowment fund that will help build the community center and school. The synagogue will be financed by donors.

Habie even has interviewed Argentine Jewish families seeking to flee that country's economic crisis. He is offering incentives for settlement in Har Carmel, such as deferred payments for both land and construction, for those with skills as engineers and technicians.

Some American Jews also have purchased lots, with the idea of building vacation homes. Guatemala City is a two-hour flight from Miami, and three hours from Dallas.

"What is unique about this development is the way it demonstrates faith in the future," Tapiero says. "Perhaps because Jews here have lived so long amid violence, there is a yearning to come together, this time in tranquil surroundings."

There is a wide disparity of income in Guatemala, which has virtually no middle class.

For Jews who have been successful, security is important.

Some employ bodyguards, euphemistically called "drivers" or "chauffeurs." Others deflect unwanted attention by dressing modestly and driving older, nondescript cars. Still others use helicopters to avoid abductions and car-jackings.

Enough Guatemalans pilot their own helicopters to make bird-like flocks of them a common sight in the rush-hour sky.

Helicopters can span any distance in the country, which is about the size of Louisiana. Some lawns offer "guest heliports."

"Jewish kidnap victims have been targeted because of their wealth," and not as a result of anti-Semitism, says Uri Roitman, a security specialist. "Their abductors' motives were not political. They just wanted money."

Jews always have been active participants in Guatemala's largely Christian society.

Guatemala has not been a place of overt anti-Semitism, though an attempt was made some years ago to deface the Sephardic synagogue. The country traditionally has been a stronghold of the Catholic Church, but Tapiero says Protestant evangelical groups also have become powerful.

"Evangelicals are very friendly to Israel, and they are nearly half of the Christian population," he says.

Guatemala has had friendly ties with Israel since the Jewish state was created in 1948. But the Arab lobby has consistently blocked attempts to move the Guatemalan Embassy to Jerusalem.

The Arab population here, which now numbers about 800 families, is growing rapidly.

Jews and Arabs have had mostly amicable relations in Guatemala since the immigration of both groups in the early 20th century. A few Arab children enroll each year in the Jewish school.

But the political climate is changing as Arabs here react to developments in the Middle East.

"There is definitely potential for demonstrations, vandalism or worse," says Roitman, who adds that he is preparing his security services to deal with Arab terrorism "just in case." □