



Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 81, No. 2

Friday, January 3, 2003

86th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Diplomats admired Munich attack

British diplomats in Jerusalem showed sympathy for the Palestinian terrorists who kidnapped Israeli athletes at the 1972 Olympic Games, according to a report in the London Daily Telegraph.

According to newly declassified documents, Gayford Woodrow, the consul general in Jerusalem, sent a letter to the British Foreign Office six days after the attack, saying: "Before we reproach the Arabs too much, perhaps we might try to put ourselves in their shoes. They are, after all, human beings with normal human failings. The Palestinians in particular have seen their land taken away from them by a group of mainly European invaders equipped with superior armed force and modern technology."

Nine Israeli athletes and five terrorists were killed in the incident.

3 Palestinians killed in Gaza

Israeli troops killed three Palestinian youths suspected of planning a terror attack in the Gaza Strip. The three, armed with knives and wire cutters, were spotted in an area declared off-limits to Palestinians near the settlements of Dugit and Alei Sinai.

Meanwhile, two Israeli soldiers were lightly wounded in an overnight search for terrorists in the Gaza Strip. Israeli troops, tanks and engineering crews, backed by military helicopters, took part in the operation.

Troops demolished several structures in Rafah that the army said had been used to launch grenade and rocket attacks.

Near Ramallah in the West Bank, a Palestinian was killed in an explosion believed to have been caused by a bomb that went off prematurely, Palestinian sources said.

Israel suspends China arms sales

Israel has suspended defense sales to China under pressure from the United States.

Israel is seeking to build its relations with China, but the U.S. State Department is concerned that arm sales to China could threaten Taiwan, a strong U.S. ally, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said.

An Israeli official told Ha'aretz, "This is simply a new American dictate, and we had no choice but to comply."

Israel forces winning campus battle, say students attending AIPAC meeting

By Rachel Pomerance

WASHINGTON (JTA) — A conference room filled with suits is nothing unusual in this town — except when the suits are all filled by college students.

As part of an initiative to groom a new generation of pro-Israel activists on campus, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee brought 240 students to Washington last weekend for four all-expense-paid days of intense advocacy training.

When pro-Palestinian activism swept the country's college campuses after the intifada began in September 2000, it seemed that nearly every Jewish organization hatched plans to "take back the campus." The different groups often work together through a coordinating body, the Israel on Campus Coalition, that formed last fall.

The effort appears to be working: Students say anti-Israel forces on campus are on the wane.

Within the Jewish community, there are "clearly differences of opinion when it comes to how to deal with detractors of Israel," said Daniel Frankenstein, 21, a junior at the University of California at Berkeley, where he leads several secular campus groups.

AIPAC doesn't advocate for any specific policy, but pounds out a simple message about the necessity of a strong U.S.-Israel relationship, he said.

AIPAC teaches students the benefits of the relationship to the United States and shows them how to pass that message along to campus leaders.

"I knew why to advocate for Israel, but it was AIPAC that taught me how," said Jesse Gabriel, 21. His cufflinks shining, the suave Gabriel, Berkeley's student body president, explained that AIPAC showed him how to engage the "important people on campus," including student leaders.

At its first such conference this summer — the Saban National Political Leadership Training Seminar — AIPAC stressed three objectives for student activists: circulating pro-Israel petitions, bringing a member of Congress to campus and holding Israel forums.

At the second Saban conference, AIPAC added three more objectives: having campus activists visit congressional district offices, convincing campus newspapers to write pro-Israel editorials and getting faith-based groups on campus to issue statements of solidarity with Israel.

The conferences are a segment of the Schusterman Advocacy Institute, an expansion of AIPAC's 20-year-old student program.

The program now focuses on 60 campuses, chosen because they have large Jewish populations and feed Congress with future leaders. On each campus, AIPAC works with four "portfolioed activists" — each with his or her own designated tasks — to turn Jewish leaders into pro-Israel activists.

AIPAC officials say the new initiative will continue even if Israel and the Palestinians reach a peace agreement — because it still will be necessary to educate Jewish and non-Jewish students about Israel, the group says.

"This is the antidote to the apathy and an antidote to the entropy which could erode the U.S.-Israel alliance, even if Israel's detractors weren't hell-bent on driving a wedge between the two countries," said Jonathan Kessler, AIPAC's leadership development director.

Workshop attendants, most of whom are "portfolioed activists" on their campuses, say the challenge is raising the interest level among students.

"There's more ambivalence than there is anti-Israel" sentiment on campus, said

MIDEAST FOCUS

Poll: Scandal hurting Likud

A vote-buying scandal continues to cut into the Likud Party's lead ahead of upcoming elections, according to a new poll. But Likud is still poised to win the most seats of any party in the Jan. 28 vote.

A survey in the Ha'aretz newspaper shows Likud winning 31 seats in the 120-seat Knesset, down from 41 seats in polls conducted three weeks ago. But a poll in the Ma'ariv paper showed Likud with 34 seats, down only one from the newspaper's previous survey.

Search for missing Israeli

Israeli forces on Thursday found the body of an Israeli man who may have been killed by Palestinians the previous night. Police were checking whether the body, found in a burned-out car in the Jordan Valley, was that of a 70-year-old man who had business ties with Palestinians.

A leaflet issued Thursday by the Al-Aksa Brigade, linked to Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement, claimed that one of its members had shot and killed an Israeli there.

Israeli troops kill infiltrator

Israeli forces killed a Palestinian terrorist who had infiltrated an Israeli moshav on Wednesday night and holed up in a couple's house.

The occupants of the house escaped out a window when the gunman's rifle jammed after he fired one shot. Moshav Maor is located inside Israel, not far from the border with the West Bank.

Palestinians blast P.A. on rally

Some Palestinians are criticizing the decision to allow children to carry Kalashnikov rifles and dress as suicide bombers at a recent march of Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement. Some also criticized gunmen at Wednesday's march, which celebrated Fatah's 38th anniversary, for shooting guns into the air all day.



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.

Arielle Bernstein, 21, a senior at the University of Pennsylvania. But a key inroad was circulating a petition of solidarity with Israel, she said.

"It was the catalyst for a dialogue" and a "start to educate people," she said.

Currently, 13 of the 60 campuses targeted in the initiative have published pro-Israel petitions in their campus newspapers.

In all, about 40,000 signatures have been collected, with a goal of 120,000 by AIPAC's policy conference in late March.

AIPAC trains the activists to sway opinion by targeting campus leaders.

"AIPAC said, 'Become friends with them, meet them for coffee,'" said Toby Osofsky, 22, a senior at the University of North Carolina, where she is the AIPAC campus liaison.

Osofsky can interest and influence campus leaders with exclusive offers.

With AIPAC's help, Osofsky arranged a 50-person lunch with Mark Regev, a spokesman for the Israeli Embassy in Washington, and made an opportunity for certain guests, including the student body president, to have some private time with Regev.

One challenge is to reach those on the left as well as on the right. But many say that focusing on the American perspective of the U.S.-Israel relationship can supersede politics.

"Whatever side of the aisle you're on, this is an important issue for America," Bernstein said.

"What they're modeling for us is their national strategy," Bernstein said, referring to AIPAC's success in securing support from both parties at the congressional level.

"AIPAC is in the relationship-building business," the group's leadership development deputy director, Brian Jaffee, said in a discussion about bridging the partisan gap. "We see friends and we see potential friends."

Meanwhile, AIPAC sees itself as part of a broader Jewish communal effort to make campuses pro-Israel. "Activists, not AIPACists," the group's "campus creed" reads.

For their part, students seem to think that Jewish organizations are doing a good job cooperating to equip them with resources. The anti-Israel activists are losing ground, they say.

According to Frankenstein, there is a difference between the anti-Israel movement and the pro-Israel one.

While the former are a small group of activists, the latter is an "entire Jewish community that has come together and said in unison, 'We stand for Israel, we stand for a strong U.S.-Israel relationship, we are proud to be Jewish and we stand up for what we believe in.'"

For Frankenstein, the momentum has made a personal difference.

"I felt scared to be openly Jewish," he said, fearing a personal attack at Berkeley — a site of virulent anti-Israel activism, culminating in a brick thrown through the campus Hillel last spring and the takeover of a university building by pro-Palestinian activists.

Now the "pervading sense is that we have taken back the campus" from "people who hate the State of Israel and are anti-Semitic," Gabriel said.

The two anti-Israel protests on campus this year were puny, he said.

And Frankenstein once again feels comfortable wearing his Israeli soccer jersey on campus. □

P.A. officials stealing aid

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Palestinian Authority officials are stealing aid provided for refugees and other needy Palestinians, according to documents taken by the Israeli army during a recent raid in the Gaza Strip.

Arab nations and the U.N. Relief and Works Agency are giving the aid, which officials have been taking and selling on the black market and at pharmacies in the Gaza Strip since 1996, according to the documents. Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat has tried to take steps to halt the theft, but these measures have not worked, according to the Jerusalem Post.

Much of the theft has been orchestrated by P.A. Minister of Supplies Abu Ali Shahin, an Arafat confidant, the paper reported. Officials with the Palestinian security services also have been implicated, according to the Post. □

JEWISH WORLD

Astronaut's flight will highlight growth of Israel's space program

By Irene Brown

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla. (JTA) — The Israeli post office issued a stamp in December featuring the country's first astronaut, who is scheduled to fly on NASA's space shuttle in mid-January.

"Every time you are the first, it's meaningful," says Col. Ilan Ramon, 48, a father of four who previously flew fighter jets in the Israeli Air Force.

Israel will join an elite club of 30 nations that have sent at least one citizen into orbit aboard a U.S. shuttle or a Russian Soyuz capsule. The countries include Saudi Arabia, Mexico, Syria, Costa Rica, South Africa, Poland, Afghanistan and Cuba.

"It's peculiar that it would have taken this long to fly an Israeli, given our strategic alliance with Israel," says John Pike, with the Arlington, Va.-based research group GlobalSecurity.org. "I mean, we flew a Saudi almost 20 years ago."

Prince Sultan Salman Abdul Aziz al-Saud, a member of the Saudi royal family, flew as a guest on the space shuttle in June 1985, ostensibly to oversee the release of a Saudi-owned communications satellite. After the Challenger accident six months later, NASA banned nonastronauts — and commercial satellites — from the shuttles.

Israel has had a thriving, if low-key, space program for two decades. The Israel Space Agency was established in 1983 to nurture and oversee industrial and scientific programs that would pave the way for an indigenous space program.

Israel concentrated its efforts on developing a small expendable launcher, which was based on its Jericho 2 medium-range ballistic missile, and pioneering a series of small but powerful remote sensing satellites.

The Shavit, which means "comet" in Hebrew, is a 59-foot-long, three-stage, solid-fuel rocket designed to carry payloads weighing about 700 pounds into orbits roughly 300 miles above the planet. To avoid dropping spent rocket segments on neighboring countries, Israel launches its spacecraft against the planet's easterly rotational spin from a coastal launch site south of Tel Aviv.

The Shavit has a mixed track record, with two of six flights failing to deliver their payloads into the proper orbit.

Israel Aircraft Industries, which manufactures and operates the Shavit program for the Israel Space Agency, has formed partnerships to market commercial versions of the Shavit booster. Efforts have been hampered, however, by a worldwide glut of launch vehicles and a shortage of satellites needing rides to orbit.

"Work is proceeding, but slowly," says Rick Kelley, with Orlando-based Coleman Aerospace.

Israel has had more success parlaying its small satellite programs into commercial venues. Israel Aircraft Industries' Ofeq spacecraft, a remote sensing eye-in-the-sky used by the country's military agencies, has a civilian cousin called the Earth Resources Observation Satellite.

Images from EROS-A, which was launched in 2000, are marketed by Cyprus-based ImageSat International, a subsidiary of Israel Aircraft Industries and Elbit Systems' Elop division.

A more powerful spacecraft, EROS-B, is scheduled for launch in 2004. Israel plans to grow the constellation to eight spacecraft.

Israel also has developed a low-cost communications satellite, called the Afro-Mediterranean Orbital System. Built by Israel Aircraft Industries in partnership with Alcatel Space of France and Daimler-Benz Aerospace of Germany, the first AMOS spacecraft was carried into orbit by a European Ariane 4 rocket in 1996. AMOS 2 is scheduled for launch in 2003.

The 2,000-pound AMOS spacecraft is Israel's most successful commercial space product so far. China selected the Israeli satellite over European designs for up to 10 spacecraft purchased by Hong Kong Satellite Technology Group, which is owned by the Chinese government.

China wants the satellites in part to support television broadcasts of the 2008 Olympic Games in Beijing, and plans to launch the satellites on its Long March expendable boosters. □

Soviet immigrant gets Israeli post

An man who immigrated to Israel from the former Soviet Union was named Israel's ambassador to Russia.

On Wednesday, Arkady Melman, who immigrated to Israel 15 years ago, was appointed the Jewish state's envoy to Moscow.

Melman, 45, is the first Russian immigrant to be named a major Israeli ambassador, Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said.

Attack on ambassador thwarted

Israeli security officers arrested a Palestinian suspected of planning to assassinate Israel's ambassador to Germany.

The Palestinian also is suspected of trying to recruit a Russian immigrant to smuggle a bomb into a Jerusalem nightclub, the daily Ma'ariv reported Thursday.

Danish police crack down

Danish police seized money belonging to a Palestinian charity that allegedly aided Palestinian terrorists.

Danish officials would not comment on the case, but a spokesman for the Al Aqsa charity said Thursday that the police were acting on new anti-terror laws making it a felony to give financial support to terrorist groups.

The charity denied that it backs terrorism, saying it gives money to groups in the West Bank that help orphans.

JCC to go up near Ground Zero?

A New York group is seeking to build a Jewish community center near Ground Zero.

The Jewish Week of New York reported that a group called the Jewish Community Project of Lower Manhattan is seeking support and funding for a JCC in the neighborhoods of Battery Park City and Tribeca, near the World Trade Center site.

Monster.com for Jews

A new Web site is aiming to find jobs for Jews in the United States.

The site, www.hatzlacha.com, was created recently by the Rabbinical Board of Greater New York as a resource for job seekers — and for employers as well.

The site — "hatzlachah" is Hebrew for "good luck" — was created "in a time when more pink slips are likely to find their way to the hearts of an even larger number of Jewish households around the country, thousands of which have their children studying in private yeshivot," the company said in a news release.

NEWS ANALYSIS

With all eyes on Labor and Likud, Shinui Party showing huge gains*By Leslie Susser*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — While pundits are watching the contest between Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's scandal-rocked Likud and Haifa Mayor Amram Mitzna's shell-shocked Labor, a subplot is developing in Israel's upcoming election.

Shinui, a small and until now little-noticed party, led by an outspoken journalist who has never served in the government, has been quietly making sweeping gains.

Just a month before the Jan. 28 election, polls are predicting as many as 14 seats for Shinui, which has just six members in the current Knesset.

The party is led by Yosef "Tommy" Lapid, 72, a Hungarian-born Holocaust survivor who before joining the Knesset was an abrasive, screaming fixture on Israel's political talk-show circuit.

If the pollsters are right, Shinui could be the big winner in the January election, emerging as a key player and kingmaker in the next Israeli government.

A coalition built around Likud, Labor and Shinui could be the first all-secular government in Israel's history, with major implications for questions of religion and state.

It also would have an overwhelming mandate for peace moves with the Palestinians or — if negotiations prove impossible — for intensifying Israel's anti-terrorism campaign.

If Shinui becomes part of the ruling coalition, how it adapts to the responsibilities of government will determine whether it's able to become a stable centrist force or whether — like earlier centrist groupings such as the Democratic Movement for Change, Tsomet and the Center Party — it starts disintegrating as soon as it tastes power.

In the meantime, Shinui is picking up votes everywhere. Shinui, not Labor, has been the main beneficiary of the corruption scandal in the Likud's November primaries: More than 100,000 Likud defectors are thought to have gone to Shinui, boosting its electoral tally by three seats, and there could be more to come.

Even more importantly, Shinui has become the party of the young. It's the "in" thing for young, middle-class, mainly Ashkenazi Israelis to support Shinui, much as they once supported the leftist Meretz.

These young people are skeptical of the left's promises of peace and deterred by the right's bleak vision of the future; they see Labor and Likud as passe; and they are tired of feeling exploited by fervently Orthodox Israelis who don't work or serve in the army, but still receive government benefits.

Those feelings mesh with Shinui's main messages: an approach to the Palestinians that takes the middle ground between left and right, and a commitment to ending perceived Orthodox privilege and religious coercion.

Shinui's pledge to curtail the power of the fervently Orthodox also appeals to another huge reservoir of potential political support — Russian immigrants — who say that many immigrants who are not Jewish according to religious law are persecuted by the Orthodox establishment. The attitude of the Interior Ministry — currently controlled by the fervently Orthodox Shas Party — toward Russian immigrants is absurd, Lapid says.

"Shas people, whose sons don't serve in the army, deciding on

whether someone who does" serve deserves full citizenship is the "height of immorality," he says.

It's far from assured that Lapid will be able to introduce his secular agenda — Labor or Likud may fear alienating the religious sector — but if he did, Israel would become a different country. There would be civil marriage and divorce; a more inclusive definition of who is a Jew; army service for all, including the fervently Orthodox; public transportation on the Sabbath; and better relations with Reform Jews abroad.

Shinui's success has come at a price, however: As the party soars in the polls, it is attracting criticism from all sides.

Some critics, who charge that Shinui's main message is negative — opposition to the Orthodox — say it represents an unhealthy phenomenon in Israeli politics.

Left wingers attack Shinui as brutally capitalist, accusing Lapid of creating a party for wealthy, secular Ashkenazi Jews that they say feeds on hatred of the fervently Orthodox and contempt for Sephardi Jews and Arabs.

Right wingers dismiss Shinui as a left-wing party because of its readiness to dismantle settlements in any peace deal with the Palestinians. Left wingers say Shinui is secretly right wing, and recall that Lapid once suggested planting bombs in Palestinian cities in retaliation for terrorism against Israelis.

Lapid unabashedly presents Shinui as the party of the middle class, the "haves," and advocates a strong market economy on the Reaganite and Thatcherite models.

The government should give the people fishing rods, not fish, he says — in other words, not subsidies but the skills to make a living.

Lapid's panacea for Israel's present economic crisis? Cut income tax to a maximum of 50 percent, which could help thousands of small businesses to survive and hire new employees, thereby cutting unemployment.

Left-wing observers ask how such a party would help Russian immigrants with practical issues such as housing.

Despite the criticisms, Lapid feels his party is well-positioned. He believes Sharon will win the election, and Likud will then have three coalition choices: a narrow coalition with the far right, which he won't want; a coalition with Labor and the religious parties, which Labor won't want; or a coalition based on Likud, Labor and Shinui, who together would have more than 70 seats in the 120-member Knesset, laying a base for a secular-leaning government.

That prospect is anathema for the religious parties, especially Shas, which fears being excluded from the next government and losing public funding for its educational system.

Sounding the alarm bells, Health Minister Nissim Dahan of Shas suggested that Diaspora Jews should think twice about making aliyah — because, he said, they might be tempted to assimilate under a secular government.

Shas spokesmen explained that Dahan meant it might be easier for potential immigrants to live full Jewish lives abroad rather than in Israel. But pundits took Dahan's hyperbole as an indication of just how worried Shas is about Shinui's growing power.

Before Shinui, Israelis' experience with centrist parties has not been good: They invariably have lacked ideological cohesion and have broken up.

Shinui, however, seems to have more ideological glue than its predecessors — and, in Lapid, a stronger leader. □

(Leslie Susser is the diplomatic correspondent for the Jerusalem Report.)