



# Daily News Bulletin

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86th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Israeli police probe Mitzna

Israeli police launched an investigation into allegations that the leader of the Labor Party received a bribe from a Haifa contractor.

Amram Mitzna allegedly used offices provided by the contractor during his bid for the Labor leadership and in exchange issued the contractor building permits. With Israelis set to vote in national elections next week, Mitzna demanded that investigators complete their probe by Sunday.

The allegations against Mitzna were submitted by a Likud Party activist from Haifa who previously tried to implicate Mitzna on charges of receiving illegal campaign contributions through a foreign bank account under his father's name.

### Federations may be ousted

North American Jewish federations voted to oust federations that do not pay their dues, according to sources close to the issue. A final tally of the vote, conducted during a conference call Wednesday, isn't expected until at least next week, but participants say the vote was overwhelming.

"There's no question it passed," said Steven Nasatir, president of the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago. Fifty-five federations had voted for the resolution before the call, with no votes against, and others voted during the conference call, according to one participant.

The resolution was drafted after federations in San Francisco and Tidewater, Va., complained that their dues were too high, and threatened not to pay them.

### Prosecutor leaked document

A senior Israeli prosecutor leaked a crucial document in the Sharon loan affair. Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein told a news conference Wednesday that the prosecutor, Lior Glat-Berkovitz, had been suspended and officials are considering launching criminal proceedings against her. Rubinstein said political "ideology" motivated Glat-Berkovitz to leak the document pertaining to the probe of a loan Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's family received from a South Africa-based businessman.

Glat-Berkovitz admitted she leaked the document because her son is about to enter army and she wanted to unseat Sharon, according to Ha'aretz.

## ISRAEL VOTES 2003

### As parties fight for votes, 'Anglos' find they're a commodity in demand

By Jessica Steinberg

JERUSALEM (JTA) — As Israel's Jan. 28 election approaches, the country's English-speaking immigrants find themselves in the unusual position of being courted.

For the first time, more than one political party is reaching out to this small but influential community — but the Western immigrants wonder whether they ever can be well represented in the Middle Eastern-style bazaar of Israeli politics.

Known locally as "Anglo-Saxons," the English-speaking immigrants hail from the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and South Africa. The community numbers around 200,000, most of them — some 120,000 — from North America.

In the past, the Anglo community has voted overwhelmingly for right-leaning parties. There have been exceptions, notably in May 1999 when Labor Party chairman Ehud Barak beat the incumbent prime minister, Likud Party head Benjamin Netanyahu.

But then Ariel Sharon of the Likud trounced Barak in February 2001, as Israelis — natives, veteran immigrants and newcomers — veered back toward the right in the face of the Palestinian intifada.

Nearly two years later, many Israelis, including Anglo immigrants, still identify as right-of-center. And even with the return to the old system of casting just one vote — for a party, rather than a prime ministerial candidate — expected to cut into small parties' support, the Anglo community isn't lining up monolithically behind the Likud.

Since a Likud victory seems probable, many voters may decide to cast ballots for other parties to influence whether Sharon forms a narrow, right-wing coalition or a unity government with Labor, said Stu Schnee, a marketing manager originally from New Jersey.

Schnee has voted faithfully for the Likud in most elections, but this time is considering voting for the National Union, a small, far-right party.

"I have no illusion that the National Union will change anything, but the question is who will be Sharon's partners?" Schnee asked. "Likud is pushing the peace negotiations forward, just more slowly."

As for the Labor Party, chairman Amram Mitzna "is a dreamer — with the best of intentions, but out of touch with reality," Schnee said. But Schnee's mind is still open.

"I have to read the polls," he added. "If Sharon is up, then I'll vote National Union. If he's in trouble, then I have to make sure he gets more votes than Mitzna."

Recent polls project that the Likud will win some 32 to 33 seats in the Knesset, while Labor is expected to win about 20.

Likud's poll numbers had fallen as Sharon and his party were caught up in several corruption scandals. The troubles began during the Likud's December primary, as charges of ballot buying and selling, and of underworld involvement, made headlines.

More recently, Sharon has been accused of accepting an illegal donation from an overseas friend with business interests in Israel, to pay off an earlier illegal contribution to a Sharon campaign. The prime minister has denied any wrongdoing.

"In the old days, I would vote Likud, but it might have been out of habit," said Mordy Kehat, 44, a native New Yorker who has been living in Israel since he was 11.

"When I look at the Likud today, I'm kind of put off by the people," said Kehat, a former Israeli air force officer. "I don't like the politicians that make up the rank-and-file, and I didn't like that they didn't hold open primaries."

This time, however, Anglo voters such as Kehat have more of a choice, as several

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Israeli police on election alert

Israeli police believe Palestinians may try to carry out terror attacks on Israel's Election Day next week.

Police Commissioner Shlomo Aharonishky said Wednesday that some 30,000 security guards and 1,500 soldiers will supplement police forces on Jan. 28.

### Rocket hits Israeli home

A Palestinian rocket hit an Israeli home in the Gaza Strip, landing in the living room but causing no injuries. Palestinians also fired rockets at another Gaza settlement, but caused no injuries.

The rocket that hit the home caused serious damage, but missed children and their mother, who was in the kitchen, according to the Jerusalem Post.

In another incident in Gaza, Palestinians fired a rocket at an Israeli convoy, but caused no injuries. Soldiers later found and dismantled three rocket launchers that were used in that attack.

### Candidate: P.A. harassing me

A professor who has announced plans to run for president against Yasser Arafat claimed he is being harassed by Palestinian security forces.

"Security men have been watching my activities very closely in an attempt to hinder my efforts to mobilize supporters," Abdel Sattar Kassem told the Jerusalem Post.

### Calls to unify Israeli rabbinate

The time has come for Israel to have just one chief rabbi, Israeli President Moshe Katsav said.

"Authority should not be vested in an individual based on his origin," Katsav said Wednesday. Israel has separate chief rabbis for its Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities.

The Sephardi chief rabbi, Elyahu Bakshi-Doron, agreed with Katsav. "It's time to put things right — to convey love, peace and brotherhood," he said.

factions have decided to woo English-speaking immigrants.

Given his rather centrist point of view, Kehat is strongly considering Yisrael Ba'Aliyah, Natan Sharansky's immigrant faction, which has been aiming itself at English-speaking voters for the last year and a half and has put an immigrant from the United States high on its Knesset slate.

"In spite of the fact that I've been here for 35 years, and in spite of the fact that the party is an immigrant party, I like that they want to absorb what we have to give," said Kehat, a partner in a company offering kosher trekking experiences. "Their name suggests that it's not just a matter of absorbing immigrants, but absorbing immigrant values into Israeli society."

Yisrael Ba'Aliyah won kudos from Anglo voters in the fall, when the party fought against a proposed tax reform that would have radically increased taxes on immigrants' overseas assets.

The party succeeded in exempting certain retired immigrants from the law, which may have won them new voters.

"This American thing isn't just an election ploy. They've been doing it for the last year and a half," said Russell Rothstein, 34, a venture capitalist who lives in Rehovot.

Rothstein voted for Likud in the last election. This time, he says, "The Likud doesn't care about me as an Anglo. But Yisrael Ba'Aliyah was the only one who really stood up for the rights of immigrants on the tax reform issue."

Yisrael Ba'Aliyah's number of seats in the Knesset has fallen as its members have migrated to other parties to the right or left of the right-of-center faction.

It also has been upstaged among immigrants to a certain degree by the Israel Our Home Party of veteran immigrant Avigdor Lieberman. But Israel Our Home runs more on a right-wing platform toward the Palestinians than as an immigrant party per se.

In an effort to gain more seats, Yisrael Ba'Aliyah is touting a candidate with American background: Eli Kazhdan, 33, a Russian-born, U.S.-raised immigrant who has been with the party since it was founded in 1995, serving as an adviser to Sharansky and as the party's executive director for the past year and a half.

There is no equivalent for the word "accountability" in the Hebrew lexicon — nor in the Israeli political reality, Kazhdan told JTA.

Yet, he said, "it's gratifying to see that many English-speaking olim in Israel appreciate the fact that we have served as their voice and as their representatives in the corridors of the Knesset and government, and are willing to entrust us with their vote for the upcoming four years."

"Eli Kazhdan is attuned to the American way of life, but he has integrated into the Israeli establishment," said Ze'ev Khanin, an expert on Israel's immigrant parties and a lecturer at Bar-Ilan University. "Yisrael Ba'Aliyah is a party in crisis and they're eager to expand their political base, so Eli came in at the right time and the right place."

Yisrael Ba'Aliyah isn't the only party appealing to Anglo immigrants.

The left-wing One Nation Party says it will work against parts of the new tax reform that could harm Western immigrants. The party also says new immigrants should be eligible for stipends for their disabled children, and says it will press the government to give pensions and medical insurance to elderly retirees who move to Israel.

But the party's worker-oriented, socialist platform seems unlikely to appeal to a significant number of Anglo immigrant voters, who arrive in Israel with a strong capitalist background.

Two other parties that draw from the professional classes and share a desire to separate religion and state — Meretz, a left-wing faction, and Shinui, a centrist, free-market faction — may appeal to some Anglo voters, particularly those attuned to Western-style notions of "good government."

Like Yisrael Ba'Aliyah, Shinui has an Anglo campaign coordinator, while Meretz and Meimad, a left-leaning religious party that has joined with Labor, have Anglo-focused outreach.

Rabbi Michael Melchior, a Scandinavian native who heads Meimad, has claimed that his party has the largest Anglo participation, with around 25 to 30 percent of its leadership composed of Western olim.

Yet Meimad's ally Labor, like the Likud, is doing little to solicit English-language voters. Labor has held parlor meetings and events for English speakers, but neither party has an Anglo voter representative nor an English language option on its Web site. □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Group wary of abortion limits

The U.S. Reform movement's activist arm called on the pro-choice community to oppose legislation that will restrict abortions.

On the 30th anniversary of the Roe v. Wade decision that legalized abortion in the United States, the Religious Action Center said in a statement released Wednesday that bills before Congress, in addition to new state laws, are preventing women from making "informed decisions about their own lives and bodies."

### Turkmen Jews arrested

A Jewish family living in the former Soviet republic of Turkmenistan was arrested recently on charges of terrorism. The family, which was released after intervention by Israeli officials, was arrested by Turkmen secret service officials.

Officials rounded up suspects in an alleged assassination attempt against the president of Turkmenistan, Saparmurat Niyazov. Jewish sources in Turkmenistan are denying allegations that the Jewish community is facing any persecution.

### Papon refuses to attend hearing

Nazi-era war criminal Maurice Papon refused Tuesday to attend a court hearing near Paris.

The court is slated to hold a hearing Thursday to determine whether Papon's medical condition permits his return to jail. Papon's lawyer, however, told Reuters that he had sent the judge a medical certificate from Papon's personal physician advising Papon not to leave his home.

Papon was released from prison last September after an appeals court ruled he is too old and sick to serve out his 10-year sentence for his role in deporting more than 1,500 French Jews during World War II.

### Muslim cleric on trial in London

A London-based Muslim cleric wanted to kill Jews, Hindus and others as part of an Islamic holy war, according to British prosecutors. Sheik Abdullah Faisal, 39, was accused Wednesday of supporting Osama bin Laden and urging his followers to use chemical and nuclear weapons.

### U.S. agency cites Saudis

The U.S. Commission on International Religious Freedom reportedly recommended that Secretary of State Colin Powell name Saudi Arabia a "country of particular concern."

State Department officials say Saudi Arabia's record on religious freedom might merit sanctions under the 1998 International Religious Freedom Act, but they question the effectiveness of escalating public criticism of the Saudi regime, the paper reported.

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

### Leading Oxford scientists condemn academic boycotts targeting Israel

By Richard Allen Greene

LONDON (JTA) — As debate rages across Europe over efforts to boycott Israeli academics, a group of leading Oxford University scientists plans to condemn academic boycotts based on nationality.

In an article in the journal *Nature* that is to be published on Thursday, the group will say it is unequivocally opposed to such actions.

Two of the scholars, Richard Dawkins and Colin Blakemore, previously have been associated with calls to boycott Israeli academics.

They wrote last month in England's *Guardian* newspaper that they were "dismayed to be implicated, entirely against our intentions," with the boycott.

The two met fellow scholars Michael Yudkin and Denis Noble for a series of discussions on the principle of academic boycotts.

Yudkin, an Oxford biologist who is Jewish, told JTA that he "was prompted to set up the study group" that produced the paper "by the call for an academic boycott of Israel last spring."

Separately, two Israeli scholars based at King's College London are prodding a section of the Linguistic Society of America to pass a strong anti-boycott resolution.

Shalom Lappin and Jonathan Ginzburg have collected more than 225 signatures on a petition "calling on our colleagues to oppose this and all other academic boycotts."

The Linguistic Society currently is polling its entire membership on the anti-boycott motion, Lappin told JTA.

The controversy began last April, when more than 100 academics signed a letter proposing a boycott of Israeli scholars to protest Israeli policy toward the Palestinians.

Steven and Hilary Rose, a husband-and-wife team, launched the boycott movement with a letter in the *Guardian* newspaper.

After simmering for several weeks, the issue burst into flame when Mona Baker, a professor of translation studies at the University of Manchester Institute of Science and Technology, removed two Israelis from the editorial boards of journals she edits.

The two Israelis, Miriam Shlesinger of Bar-Ilan University and Gideon Toury of Tel Aviv University, both are vocal critics of Israel's treatment of Palestinians. Shlesinger has chaired the Israeli branch of Amnesty International.

In fact, Israeli academics have been at the forefront of domestic criticism of Israel's approach to the Palestinians.

Baker, who was born in Egypt, expressed regret that her action would cause "some amount of inconvenience and distress" for "Israelis who are not directly responsible for Israeli state policies."

She later claimed that the boycott was directed not against individuals but institutions.

But Lappin and Ginzburg — who describe themselves as "strong opponents of Israel's continued occupation of the West Bank, Gaza and East Jerusalem" — dismissed her explanations.

"Academic boycotts in general and Dr. Baker's mode of observing this one in particular are entirely unacceptable," their petition says.

Such boycotts "target people without reference to their views or actions, but solely on the basis of the fact that they live and work in a particular country."

A number of other top British scholars and institutions have criticized the boycott effort. The *British Medical Journal* condemned it in the strongest possible terms in its first issue of 2003.

One leading Israeli academic said the boycott movement had had little effect on his work or that of his colleagues.

"Personally I have not encountered any boycott. None of my colleagues has," Efraim Inbar, director of the Begin-Sadat Center for Strategic Studies at Bar-Ilan University, told JTA. "I just participated in an international conference at the university where there were Brits, Spaniards and Germans." □

## AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

**French Jews fewer, older and intermarried — yet leaders relieved***By Philip Carmel*

PARIS (JTA) — The most comprehensive survey of French Jewry in more than a decade shows falling numbers, an aging population and increasing rates of intermarriage — yet the survey's results have been met with a sigh of relief by French Jewish leaders.

That's because French Jews said they felt like they belonged in French society, supported transferring their Jewish heritage to future generations and expressed solidarity with Israel.

In fact, French Jews appear to be little different from those in other Diaspora communities: While numbers decline, increasing resources are needed to meet the needs of an aging population and a community that wants to invest in education.

Results of the survey, "The Jews of France, Values and Identity," have only recently been published. But the interviews with more than 1,000 heads of households were conducted in January 2002, a period that marked the beginning of a wave of anti-Semitic attacks on French Jews and community institutions.

At the time, Jews increasingly were concerned about their future in France — or so we were led to believe by a local Jewish press filled with advertisements for new communities in Israel and other countries, most notably in French-speaking areas of Canada.

However, while French Jews placed terrorism, anti-Semitism and racism at the top of their concerns, some 90 percent of respondents said they were happy with their lives in France.

Government publication of statistics based on religious or ethnic identity is prohibited in France. The survey — commissioned jointly by the country's principal Jewish welfare organization, the United Jewish Social Fund, or FSJU, and France's United Jewish Appeal — placed the French Jewish population at around 500,000.

The figure rises to 575,000 if non-Jewish spouses are included. The FSJU's director, David Sa'ada, said that confirms findings from other reports in recent years.

Nevertheless, it finally lays to rest what Saada described as "the 700,000 myth," a figure widely quoted in French reference books as the country's Jewish population.

"It's not the number of Jews that matter," Sa'ada told JTA. "This study shows we have a strong and diversified community but, most importantly, one that is happy and well-integrated."

This hasn't changed since the survey was completed, Sa'ada said, despite anti-Semitic attacks and the strong showing by far-right candidate Jean-Marie Le Pen in France's presidential election last year.

"I don't think Le Pen's success reflects a rise in anti-Semitic feeling among French people. If anything, a lot of anti-Semitic statements recently have come from the far left, from anti-globalization groups and the like," Sa'ada said.

"A lot of Le Pen's support also came from people who perceived a rise in crime, from people who felt insecure in their homes," he said. "The government has started to do something about that now, and that feeling of greater security also exists among French Jews."

Yet the survey clearly shows that France's Jewish population has fallen by some 35,000 since 1980, leading sociologist Michel Wieviorka said. The drop cannot be accounted for by aliyah rates in recent years, Wieviorka wrote in the Jewish monthly *L'Arche*.

The survey did not show where the departing Jews had gone.

The survey's 30 percent intermarriage rate was up sharply from a 1988 study carried out by the same groups. For those younger than 30, the intermarriage rate increased to 40 percent, the survey found.

In addition, the survey confirmed the marked change in the demographic structure of the community since World War II.

Around one-quarter of France's Jews died in the Holocaust. With the influx of Jews from former French colonies in North Africa in the 1950s and 1960s, the community was transformed into a largely Sephardic population.

Here too, the findings showed a continuing trend, with 70 percent of those interviewed describing themselves as Sephardic and 24 percent as Ashkenazic.

The numbers from 1988 were 50 percent and 34 percent, respectively.

The survey provides valuable information for Jewish welfare organizations, most notably regarding the community's educational needs.

Only around 15,000 children went to Jewish schools in 1988. The figure has shot up today to some 29,000, and Sa'ada believes it could double again in the next decade.

"This is a positive trend, because we see young Jewish families keen to impart a sense of Jewish identity and education to their children," Sa'ada said.

But it doesn't mean the community is becoming more inward-looking, he told JTA. "Eighty-five percent of those children go to schools which are registered with the Ministry of Education. They follow the same secular curriculum as any other French child in a state school," he said.

Such a "return to community" manifests itself in other ways in the survey as well. Only 22 percent of French Jews said they visited a community institution at least once a month in the 1988 survey, a figure that has risen to 30 percent in the latest poll. Those who said they never attended community institutions fell by half, from 35 percent in 1988 to just 18 percent in 2002.

Moreover, when respondents were asked to indicate which institutions they visited, synagogues far outpaced community centers, other Jewish institutions and study circles, reflecting another of the study's finds — an increase in religious practice.

Fears of insularity largely have been dismissed, with the survey showing that Jews are as likely to donate to non-Jewish causes as are other French citizens.

On Israel, the reality differs from the perception in the French media, which have tended to portray French Jews as hard-line.

According to the survey, however, 48 percent of French Jews believe Israel should trade land in exchange for peace, while 39 percent do not. Another 13 percent said French Jews shouldn't express an opinion on the subject.

On aliyah, there has been a polarization during the past 15 years. In 1988, 40 percent of respondents said they had no intention of moving to Israel, a figure that climbed to 58 percent in 2002.

On the other hand, those saying they would make aliyah "very soon" increased from 3 percent to 6 percent over the same period. Moreover, the figure rose to 12 percent among families with school-aged children, and reached 28 percent among families with children currently in Jewish schools.

These figures were confirmed recently by statistics from the Jewish Agency for Israel, which showed that aliyah from France doubled in 2002 to more than 2,500. □