



# Daily News Bulletin

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## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### **Palestinians threaten violence**

Palestinian violence will continue if Israel does not unconditionally accept a "road map" aimed at jump-starting the peace process, a Palestinian Authority official warned.

Palestinian official Ahmed Abdel Rahman made his comments Monday after the Israeli government said it had 15 reservations about the road map. President Bush said he would present the plan — which the United States developed along with the United Nations, European Union and Russia — as soon as the Palestinian Authority's new prime minister, Mahmoud Abbas, forms his Cabinet.

### **Barghouti: Arafat OK'd attacks**

Yasser Arafat gave clear instructions when he wanted a halt to terrorist attacks and let it be known when he did not, according to a Palestinian leader on trial in Israel.

According to a document allowed for publication on Monday, Marwan Barghouti said during Shin Bet questioning that the Palestinian Authority president made specific requests to him and other Palestinians when he wanted a cease-fire, Israel Radio reported.

When Arafat was quiet regarding terrorist attacks, it was interpreted as a green light, Barghouti said, according to the report.

Barghouti, the head of Arafat's Fatah movement in the West Bank, is on trial in a Tel Aviv court for involvement in the murders of dozens of Israelis in terrorist attacks.

He refuses to recognize Israel's right to try him.

### **Candidates' debate moved**

South Carolina moved a debate for Democratic presidential candidates from the Sabbath to allow Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) to participate.

The debate is now slated to take place after sundown on the evening of Saturday, May 3.

State officials said Lieberman's camp did not ask them to make the move.

### **Palestinian killed in West Bank**

Israeli border police killed a Palestinian in the West Bank. The man killed Monday near a café reportedly was a member of the Tanzim militia who was responsible for a number of shooting attacks on Israelis near Ramallah.

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

### **Opponents of Babi Yar project hold first meeting to organize, debate**

*By Daniel MacIsaac*

KIEV, Ukraine (JTA) — Opponents of a planned multimillion-dollar memorial and community center at Babi Yar are trying to rouse the public to their side.

A group called the Community Committee for the Commemoration of the Victims of Babi Yar invited a range of Holocaust experts, members of the media and the public to attend a discussion forum April 2 in Kiev.

Presiding over the committee was a trio of high-profile Ukrainian intellectuals — psychiatrist and former Soviet dissident Semyon Gluzman, the only Jew among the leaders of the group; Philosophy Institute director Miroslav Popovich; and writer and dissident Ivan Dzyuba — who said they had formed their group earlier this year following months of public demand for an organized opposition.

"After people began appealing to me and to the others not to keep silent on this issue, I appealed to other members of the intelligentsia," Dzyuba said in opening the session.

At issue is a proposal by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee to fund and build the Heritage community center complex at Babi Yar, site of the largest Nazi killings on Ukrainian soil during World War II. As many as 100,000 people were killed at Babi Yar, including 33,000 Jews during two days in September 1941.

The ceremonial groundbreaking took place in September 2001 with members of the Ukrainian government, including President Leonid Kuchma, in attendance.

But debate over the appropriateness of building on what many people claim is a mass grave erupted into controversy in spring 2002 following the first open forums staged by the Heritage center steering committee.

The debate was waged in newspapers, institutes and synagogues across Ukraine, with the country's rabbis, who are mainly Orthodox, supporting the plan and many prominent secular Jewish leaders opposing it.

The JDC made efforts to compromise when it announced that plans to include a theater in the community center complex had been scrapped.

But the JDC remained firm that, besides a memorial to the victims, the complex should include a museum, research center and administrative offices.

With differences unresolved and both sides claiming the support of Kiev's Jewish community, the controversy simmered through the winter. Publicly, the Heritage steering committee spoke of the need to move ahead.

"In my opinion, we have to stop discussion," committee chair and Hillel director Osik Akselrud said last month. "First of all, it could mean losing the money and, second, the concept was discussed by all Jewish leaders."

"The center is uniting the community," he said.

The JDC has remained vague on how long the planning stage would last and when construction might begin.

Further, it announced as recently as last month that it had no intention of implementing suggestions from opposition leaders such as Leonid Finberg, director of the Institute for Judaic Studies, who argued that the proposed complex should be divided, placing a memorial at Babi Yar and the community center somewhere else.

"There is no timetable yet: Only after architect selection and legal contracts with various professionals are completed is there any point in setting a timetable for construction," an assistant executive vice president of the JDC, Amir Shaviv, wrote

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Soldier wounded in Gaza Strip

Israeli soldiers shot a Palestinian who attempted to infiltrate a Jewish settlement in the Gaza Strip.

The soldiers shot the man overnight Monday near the settlement of Netzarim.

An Israeli soldier was lightly wounded by Palestinian fire in the Gaza Strip in an incident Sunday night.

### Palestinian sentenced for attacks

A Palestinian was sentenced to 25 years in prison Monday for involvement in shooting attacks in the Jerusalem area.

The resident of Issawiya was involved in shooting at Israeli vehicles on the Ma'aleh Adumim-Jerusalem road and near the parking lot of the Hebrew University Mount Scopus campus, Israel Radio reported. No one was hurt.

### Israeli-German meeting canceled

Israel's justice minister canceled a meeting with Germany's foreign minister after Joschka Fischer refused to come to the Justice Ministry because it is in eastern Jerusalem.

Germany does not recognize Israel's claim to the eastern part of the city, which was captured from Jordan in the 1967 Six-Day War.

Fischer is in the Middle East for three days of talks with Israeli and Palestinian leaders.

### Mossad workers threaten to quit

Employees of Israel's Mossad intelligence agency reportedly are threatening a wave of resignations if their pension plans are cut as part of an economic austerity plan.

Several high-ranking Mossad officials are among the 155 employees who appealed to the agency chief to fight treasury plans to reduce their pension plans, the daily Yediot Achronot reported.



## Daily News Bulletin

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from New York in early March.

"There is no secondary plan either: The main plan — Babi Yar — is going on, with actually a solid consolidated support for the project from the Jewish community and the authorities as well."

But the Community Committee for the Commemoration of the Victims of Babi Yar made it clear that it plans to try to rally support for a new approach to the project.

"The simple answer is that it is not our task to stop or not stop the JDC proposal," Gluzman said at the April 2 session. "We only know that we need to start a discussion."

The Community Committee envisions a multinational memorial. Among the panel of experts on hand April 2 were Dmitry Molokov, vice director of the Kiev Historical Museum, and Oleh Verchuk, director of the Library of Ukrainian Patriots.

They stressed the Community Committee's position that the tragedy was not solely a Jewish one, since thousands of minorities, Soviet partisans and Ukrainian nationalists also died there during the war.

Presentations focused on the history of Babi Yar, building a case by which the Community Committee could argue against building anything, especially a purely Jewish project, on the site.

Controversy also erupted over details such as the number of Jews killed at Babi Yar. Verchuk rubbed some of those in attendance the wrong way, suggesting that the Jewish victims at Babi Yar went to their deaths "like sheep" — and that any exhibition or historical project be incorporated into the state-run Ukrainian Museum of the Great Patriotic War, as World War II is called here.

Some in attendance, such as pensioner Gilary Lapitsky, came down on the side of the Community Committee.

"I support the idea that Babi Yar become a sacred reserve and that nothing more than a memorial ever be constructed there," Lapitsky said.

Afterward, Gluzman called the meeting the first — and not the last — attempt to broaden the Babi Yar debate and force the JDC to reconsider its plans.

"It was our idea to open the very closed discussion surrounding Babi Yar, and we witnessed some immediate fights on the subject, but even so we'll continue," he said.

"The plan to build a Jewish Heritage Memorial and Community Center in Babi Yar area is the desire of the overwhelming majority of the Kiev Jewish community," the JDC's Shaviv said. "The JDC supports the center as part of its worldwide mission to facilitate the revival of Jewish life. Such a memorial center could certainly become a part of a wider Ukrainian memorial complex in the area."

And the JDC representative for central and Western Ukraine, Volodymyr Glozman, said the launch of the Community Committee does not pose any threat to the JDC proposal or represent a potential delay.

"In May 2002 we opened a public discussion, we invited it, and we heard a lot of different views," Glozman said. "We worked a lot at refining the conception, and we're still working with the architects. We hope to start building in half a year."

Glozman dismissed charges from the Community Committee executive secretary, Vitaly Nakhmanovich, that both the Kuchma administration and the Kiev municipal administration have cooled to the Heritage project, saying everything is on schedule.

He also invited Community Committee members to join the JDC steering committee discussions.

"I should see exactly what this committee is proposing," he said. "If they take a mainly negative approach, we won't be able to use their proposals. But if there are positive ideas, they may be incorporated in the project." □

## Brandeis appoints Israel studies chair

NEW YORK (JTA) — Brandeis University filled what is believed to be the first endowed chair of Israel studies in the United States.

Ilan Troen, who has written a history of Jewish settlement in Israel and a book on contemporary European Jewry, was named recently to the Karl, Harry and Helen Stoll Chair in Israel Studies at the Waltham, Mass.-based school.

Troen, born in Boston, will teach one semester a year at Brandeis while continuing to teach at Ben-Gurion University in Israel. □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Hadassah leader quits

Hadassah's national executive director has resigned.

The resignation of Ellen Marson, who has served in her position since 2001, takes effect at the end of May.

Hadassah is the largest women's organization operating in the United States, boasting more than 300,000 members.

### Hungarian exhibit protested

Hungarian Jews are protesting an exhibition about the country's fascist wartime leader.

The exhibit about fascist leader Ferenc Szalasi and his predecessor, Miklos Horthy, glorifies Szalasi, according to leaders of the Jewish community.

A museum official in Koszeg, where the exhibit opened, said the display is objective.

But it fails to mention atrocities that were committed by Szalasi's regime, a Hungarian newspaper said Monday.

### Jews mark Kishinev pogrom

The 100th anniversary of the Kishinev pogrom was commemorated.

Politicians and dignitaries joined local Jews in Moldova on Monday to mark the events of April 7, 1903.

On that day, 49 Jews were killed and thousands left homeless after Jewish homes and businesses were torched by angry mobs.

As part of the commemoration, a memorial to the victims was unveiled in a park in Kishinev, which is now known as Chisinau.

According to historians, the pogrom was sparked by false claims that Jews used Christian children's blood to make matzah.

### Yiddish radio program wins prize

A series of programs on Yiddish radio won a Peabody Award for excellence in electronic media. The Yiddish Radio Project aired on U.S. public radio in the spring of 2002.

In addition, a film on the failure of the Oslo peace accords also won a Peabody. "Shattered Dreams of Peace: The Road from Oslo" was shown on U.S. public television.

### Brazil gets Jewish center

A Jewish center for young adults was inaugurated in Brazil.

The recently inaugurated center in Sao Paulo features a bar, Internet café, library, auditorium and game room, and will host lectures, courses, happy hours and sports activities.

The center is aimed at Jews aged 18-30.

## WAR IN IRAQ

### One of the Kurds' leaders is Jewish? So they claim in Turkish newspapers

By Yigal Schleifer

ISTANBUL (JTA) — The war in Iraq has ended, and the Kurds in the country's north emerge as one of the war's great victors, liberating themselves from Saddam Hussein's oppressive rule and declaring an independent state.

To the world's surprise, it turns out that one of the Kurds' top leaders is actually Jewish and that the nascent Kurdish country will ally itself with Israel, giving the Jewish state another toehold in the Middle East and access to the oil riches of the Iraqi north.

A far-fetched fantasy? Perhaps, but in the last few weeks, a scenario similar to that has been discussed in various articles in the mainstream press in Turkey, a country watching developments in northern Iraq with great worry.

Turkey, which has a close strategic relationship with Israel, has a Kurdish minority estimated at more than 10 million people and only a few years ago ended a decade-long battle with Kurdish separatists in the country's southeast that claimed some 30,000 lives.

Turkish leaders fear that any move toward independence by Kurds in Iraq could lead to a revival of the separatist movement among Turkey's Kurds.

In the weeks leading up to the war, the Turkish press was filled with various articles reporting, mostly with suspicion, about the Iraqi Kurds' postwar plans.

A Feb. 17 article in the respected daily newspaper *Hurriyet* offered an interesting take on the situation: Massoud Barzani, leader of the Kurdish Democratic Party, one of two political factions that control the autonomous Kurdish area of northern Iraq, is Jewish and comes from a long line of Kurdish rabbis, the article claimed.

The article was based on information taken from "The Folk Literature of the Kurdistan Jews," a 1982 anthology that discusses a Kurdish rabbinic family named Barzani, and from work done by a Turkish researcher who found Ottoman documents that refer to a 19th-century Kurdish rabbi also named Barzani.

In the article, the researcher said Barzani's "Jewish roots" should lead to a different understanding of the region and its history, since the Hebrew Bible states that the Jewish "Promised Land" stretches from the Nile to the Euphrates, an area that would include Kurdish territory in northern Iraq.

A series of articles and columns in the *Haber Turk* newspaper, printed after the *Hurriyet* story ran, took things even further.

"Brothers, we should quit the stories of Mosul and Kirkuk belonging to us," said one column, referring to two oil-rich northern Iraqi cities that some Turks believe were unfairly taken from Turkey when the Ottoman Empire was divided up after World War I. "The real owners have started to come out. I am sure you understand who they are."

Yona Sabar, a Kurdish Jewish professor of Hebrew and Aramaic at UCLA and author of "The Folk Literature of the Kurdistan Jews," said the articles are based on an inaccurate reading of Kurdish Jewish history.

According to Sabar, a 16th-century Kurdish rabbi named Shmuel Adoni also was given the name "Barzani" to signify that he came from the town of Barzan. He was followed by a string of well-known rabbis with the Barzani name, including Asenath Barzani, a woman who was ordained as a rabbi in the 17th century.

But Sabar said it is unlikely that Massoud Barzani is connected to that family.

Rifat Bali, a Jewish historian in Istanbul, said the Barzani story is part of a larger theory circulating for the past few years that has particularly strong popular support in Turkey's conservative nationalist and Islamist circles.

"Islamists here always say that Israel has a Kurdish card it wants to play — that it has good relations with the Kurds and it wants to create a Jewish state from the Nile to the Euphrates, and that includes the Kurdish area," Bali said.

"It's fueled, first of all, by the obsession that Jews are behind everything, and that they use in front of them a crypto-Jew," Bali said. "There is also a Turkish fear that the world is looking from the outside and trying to divide Turkey up."

Indeed, a book titled "Israel's Kurdish Card," which describes the possibility of Israel expanding its borders through an alliance with the Kurds, has been sold in Turkey for the last few years. □

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

**Bucking U.S. and peace groups,  
first Jews move in to Ras al-Amud**

By Matthew Gutman

TEL AVIV (JTA) — The polished Jerusalem stone of the Ma'ale Hazeitim apartment block gleams. It is almost blinding on a sunny day. The stark white is offset by the drab, exhaust-stained structures of the Arab neighborhood surrounding it.

On April 2, when several Jewish families moved into this shiny new apartment block in the Ras al-Amud neighborhood, built on the Arab-dominated Mount of Olives, they raised the hackles of both the Israeli left and the U.S. government.

The Bush administration has told Jerusalem that the neighborhood, which is projected one day to have more than 130 housing units, could make the division of Jerusalem nearly impossible, complicating any future peace agreement with the Palestinians.

Indeed, that's exactly the point, the settlement's backers say.

The father of the project, Arieh King, a 30-year-old former kibbutznik, points out the strategic importance of the site.

For one thing, the mount provides an almost unparalleled view of the Old City. But more than that, "it's the geographical point that connects the Israeli settlement around the Old City," King says. "If we create a strong enough presence here, it makes the division of the city nearly impossible."

In addition, the development, which the Jerusalem municipality considers legal, would scuttle plans for an east-west corridor leading from Arab areas to the Temple Mount, as envisioned in a sample peace plan written in the mid-1990s by former Israeli Cabinet minister Yossi Beilin and PLO official Mahmoud Abbas.

"This corridor would allow the Arabs to enter freely without passing any checkpoint or Jewish community all the way from Jordan," King says. "It's worth our every effort and investment to block the plan."

The Ras al-Amud settlement, which King helped found more than five years ago, is set back on a hill adjacent to the Mount of Olives, which, from the austere neighborhood, appears almost to be paved with headstones.

A Jewish neighborhood in the midst of an Arab area indeed sticks out, said Abu Yunis, who owns a shwarma restaurant around the corner.

Yet, he notes, "If there will be peace, then all this will not matter. We'll live perfectly well side by side."

Yunis is an entrepreneur who believes that "new business is good business." Even Orthodox Jews can eat at his restaurant, he boasts, pointing out a framed certificate proving that his establishment is kosher.

If the Jewish residents of Ras al-Amud want to live in peace, he says, "we will welcome them with open arms."

But, he asks, "What do they want living in a community of 20,000 Arabs?"

The Arab residents of Ras al-Amud seem more interested in American foreign policy than in developments in their own neighborhood.

"That Bush is not a smart man," Yunis says of the American president. "He waged war and now has incensed the entire Arab people. That's stupid politics, if you ask me."

His cooks nod their heads in agreement.

For his part, King is confident that the Jewish neighborhood

will be good for the Arab residents, few of whom participated in recent Peace Now protests at the site. Development would bring them added infrastructure and services and would keep them within the Jerusalem municipality in any future peace plan, King says.

Other Arab areas transferred to Palestinian Authority control have suffered immeasurably since the intifada broke out two and a half years ago. Their standard of living has plummeted, and the Palestinian Authority has been unable to keep services functioning.

Yehuda Yiffo knows the danger of living in a settlement. A resident of a West Bank settlement near Ofra who recently purchased an apartment in Ras al-Amud, he has experienced Palestinian sniper fire.

Peeping out the balcony of what is to be his neighbor's home, Yiffo cranes his neck toward the hillside, where row upon row of Arab homes sit, seemingly slapped one against the other.

For Yiffo, like every member of the new Jewish community here, the memory remains fresh of a Hamas gang from the nearby Jerusalem neighborhood of Silwan that recently was captured.

"Yes, they could use that hill for snipers," Yiffo says — but, like most families in Ras al-Amud, he's willing to take the chance.

In the five years that King and his brother Tzur have lived at the site, they have suffered only a few attacks.

"There is a stone-throwing incident maybe twice a year, but besides that we live and are received here in peace," he said.

While deeply ideological, the residents of Ma'ale Hazeitim aren't fanatics. Many, like King, chat easily in Arabic with locals and help the local economy by purchasing goods from Arabs in eastern Jerusalem.

The Ras al-Amud plot was purchased in the late 1990s by King's father-in-law, American bingo king Irving Moscowitz, who has been heavily involved in efforts to reclaim parts of eastern Jerusalem. Partially due to Moscowitz's patronage, Jewish communities have sprung up in neighborhoods that had been almost exclusively Muslim: Ras al-Amud, Musrara, the Muslim section of the Old City, Sheikh Jarrah and others.

King refuses to say how much the development cost Moscowitz, stating that it's "not anybody's business." But he concedes that "this is not a good place to do business, due to the difficulty and the danger."

For Yiffo, King and their families, however, ideology trumps business. Just above the hill on the other side of the community gleams the Dome of the Rock. The Temple Mount and the Western Wall are a 15-minute walk away, a great bonus for the religious community.

"Jerusalem is the nerve center of the Third World War," Yiffo says. "That's why this place is so utterly important to us and the Jewish people, and important to control."

Important it may be, but those who believe that Israel must create the conditions for future peace with the Palestinians consider it pure folly.

"If the locals wanted to welcome their new neighbors with rice and flowers, we'd be the last to object. But this settlement causes serious complications to the division of Jerusalem," Peace Now spokesman Yariv Oppenheimer says. "It will cause unnecessary and avoidable complications that could lead to bloodshed."

Like others in Israel, Oppenheimer dismisses the settlers' religious argument.

"If we end up sticking to the text, then Israel has to range from the Euphrates to the Nile," he says. "But we don't see Moscowitz or anyone else buying up tracts in downtown Damascus." □