



# Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 81, No. 140

Tuesday, July 29, 2003

86th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Sharon begins 3-day U.S. visit

Ariel Sharon met Monday afternoon with President Bush's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice.

The meeting precedes the Israeli prime minister's talks Tuesday with Bush.

Sharon's three-day visit follows Bush's first White House meeting with Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian Authority prime minister. Given Bush's strong statement to Abbas about the need to disarm Palestinian terrorist groups, Israeli officials expect little discord in the Bush-Sharon meeting.

"The Israeli and American sides are strategically on the same page," Mark Regev, spokesman for the Israeli Embassy in Washington, told JTA. "The new leadership in the Palestinian Authority is projecting a new vision. If that new leadership follows through, there really is a chance for peace."

Sharon is also slated to meet with Vice President Dick Cheney, Senate leaders and officials with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

### Prisoner release grows in scope

Israel's Cabinet approved more Palestinian prisoners for release than originally contemplated. Media first reported that the Cabinet approved the release of 110 Hamas and Islamic Jihad prisoners as a goodwill gesture toward the Palestinians.

However, a senior official on Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plane to the United States later revealed that in the coming weeks Israel will release some 560 Palestinian prisoners.

### Hope helped European Jews

Bob Hope, who died Sunday at age 100, volunteered to perform at a World War II show to benefit endangered European Jews.

In 1944, Hope performed at a Madison Square Garden benefit for the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe.

Hope's performance took place as the Allies were refusing to take direct action to stop the mass killing of Jews in concentration camps, scholar Rafael Medoff has written.

"This was not merely another benefit concert for a worthy cause. For Hope to support the controversial Emergency Committee took political courage," Medoff wrote.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### One year after deadly bombing, university determined to move on

By Jonathan Udren

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Inside the cafeteria next to Hebrew University's Frank Sinatra Building, Arab and Jewish students gather for lunch. Though they sit at separate tables, they chat and laugh together, seemingly carefree.

The blown-out windows have been repaired, the blackened walls repainted. Almost no trace can be seen of the bomb that killed nine people — including five Americans — and injured more than 80 at the university last July 31.

Yet directly in front of the cafeteria grows an unusual-looking tree: Its leaves are hearty and vibrant but its trunk is tilted and its roots jet out of the ground at various angles.

"We have planted a living tree" as a memorial for the bombing victims, "which is symbolic," Hebrew University President Menachem Magidor told JTA. "Our roots were shaken but, just like the tree, we keep growing and going forward."

On Thursday at 1:30 p.m., exactly a year after the bombing, Magidor, Jerusalem Mayor Uri Lupolianski, other university officials and family and friends of the victims will pause for a moment at a memorial ceremony. There will be songs, poetry and speeches in memory of the tragedy — and continued hopes for real peace.

Other ceremonies will be held across the United States, including in New York, Boston, Washington and Los Angeles.

Despite the challenges over the past year — mourning, replacing lost faculty, increasing security and drawing new students — Hebrew University is pushing forward.

"We're dealing with research and major university issues while there is the feeling we are in a war zone," Magidor said. "But we can overcome such terrible shock and still go on producing world-class education and research."

Citing the tenacious Israeli spirit, Magidor reported an increase in overall student applications this past year.

The Rothberg International School is still suffering, however: Before the bombing, it averaged 500 to 600 undergraduate overseas students each year, while fewer than 100 came last year.

"Many schools in North America have issued a ban for their students to come here because of the fear of danger, and" fear "that they will be held responsible," said Shimon Lipsky, Rothberg's vice provost. "Some schools have even put stumbling blocks in front of students who still wanted to come."

With the recent abatement in the intifada, there has been a 10 percent rise in enrollment for Rothberg's upcoming summer Hebrew language classes. The school expects the rise to be reflected in enrollment for the fall semester as well.

Lipsky said there will be a big push to attract North American students for the spring 2004 semester.

"There really is a feeling that we have turned the corner and that things are getting better," he said. "We're hoping that students will again say that Israel and Jerusalem is a place that they would like to come to."

As much as the university pushes forward, however, its roots have been shaken permanently.

Inna Zusman, 22, was one of the 80 people injured in the bombing. She woke up from a coma a month after the bombing unable to breathe or walk on her own.

"The first month and a half I was just working on breathing without a machine,"

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Soldier's body found

The body of a missing Israeli soldier was found. Israeli officials said they found the body of Cpl. Oleg Sheichat on Monday buried near the northern Israeli city of Nazareth.

Sheichat went missing July 21 after leaving his base near Safed. Police are investigating a terrorist link to the death.

### Iraqi aliyah criticized

An Israeli politician criticized the Jewish Agency for Israel for bringing six elderly Iraqi Jews on aliyah.

The six arrived in Israel last Friday. Colette Avital, chairwoman of the Knesset's Immigration and Absorption Committee, said bringing over the immigrants was a P.R. act by the Jewish Agency in the wake of a sharp decline in immigration to Israel.

A Jewish Agency spokesperson said it was the duty of the agency and the State of Israel to bring over Jews in distress whenever possible.

### Black Hebrews recognized

Israel has given permanent resident status to the Black Hebrew community.

Monday's decision by Interior Minister Avraham Poraz means that the 2,000 Black Hebrews, who live in the Negev, will be able to serve in the army. African Americans who emigrated from the United States, the Black Hebrews believe they are descended from the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel.

### Arabs vandalize Jewish graves

Arabs have vandalized some 100 graves on Jerusalem's Mount of Olives, according to an Israeli burial society. The vandalism has occurred in recent months since government budget cuts forced the cemetery to fire two night-time guards at the cemetery, according to officials with Jerusalem's General Hevra Kadisha, the Jerusalem Post reported.

she said. "Six months after, I realized that there was no progress" with her legs "and that I would have to stay in a wheelchair."

Zusman said she harbors anger toward Arabs, and says tighter security at the university could have prevented the attack. Magidor admitted that the desire to maintain an open and pluralistic feeling on campus, for students of all races and religions, may have blinded administrators to the security risks.

"The first reaction was shock," he admitted. "We knew we were not immune, but maybe we thought naively that the campus should be immune."

The university has provided Zusman with an apartment near campus, and she plans to return to her computer studies this fall.

The bombing also changed the life of Billy Shapira, the head of student administration. For a year and a half Shapira had served as head of human resources at the university until her sister-in-law, Levina Shapira — who was the head of student administration — died in the bombing.

"Two weeks later they asked me if I would take Levina's place, so I sat down with my husband and my children, and with" Alex, Levina's husband, Billy Shapira explained. "They all told me to take it, and Alex said that this way things that Levina was working for will be continued."

The two families often had spent summer weekends together in a cottage near Haifa, where Billy and Levina Shapira would discuss their goals and issues concerning the university.

From these conversations, Shapira knew how eager Levina was to see a new and modern university center.

Since taking her new position, Shapira — who has a picture of Levina over her desk — has continued the university center project. Scheduled to open in October, the building will serve as a high-tech, central information center for current and interested students, and will provide new office space for Shapira's department.

Despite her pain, Shapira said she is not angry with Arabs in general, only with the particular people who planted the bomb.

"We don't hate the Arabs, we understand their needs," she said. "But they need to understand that killing us is not the way to achieve peace. We want peace, and my family, we have paid our portion for this peace."

Rwan Harb, a 19-year-old Arab student who just finished her first year at Hebrew University, agrees that violence is not the right path, but understands the terrorists' logic.

"Killing people is not the way, and I pray for peace not just for myself, but for everyone," Harb said. "But the bombs put pressure on the Israeli government to search out peace."

Another student, Iran Ben-Ari, didn't go to class last July 31. Three friends who did were badly injured in the blast.

Ben-Ari, 24, still describes himself as "extreme left," though many of his former political allies have changed their views since the Palestinian intifada began nearly three years ago.

"It's our fault. We drove them to this," Ben-Ari said. Palestinians "are living in conditions that don't suit human beings. They cannot leave their homes, and there is no hope. Of course blowing up bombs is not right, but the way in which Israel handles the situation is wrong also."

Yitzak Levin, an American exchange student who describes himself as a religious Zionist, was outside the cafeteria last July 31 during his first few hours on campus when the blast occurred.

His determination to continue his studies in Jerusalem never wavered, Levin said, and the experience may even have strengthened his desire to be in Israel during this difficult time.

"We see from the Israelis that we can't let terrorism dissuade us from our goals. The best thing we can do is carry on," Levin said.

That's the lesson university administrators draw as well.

"Now we are in a crisis but eventually there will be peace, and we are still committed to that," Magidor said. "We are saddened and disappointed, but this does not change our resolve." □



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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](http://www.jta.org).

## JEWISH WORLD

### Report: Israel should be model

The United States should study Israeli intelligence-gathering techniques, according to a congressional inquiry.

A new intelligence agency should learn from the Israeli success in "penetrating terrorist organizations," said the report, the result of a joint inquiry of the Senate and House of Representatives.

The report looked at intelligence efforts before the Sept. 11 attacks in New York and Washington.

### Poll: Jews more accepted

Four times as many Americans would refuse to vote for a Muslim presidential candidate as for a Jewish nominee, a new poll finds.

The survey by the Pew Research Center for the People and the Press found that 10 percent of Americans would not vote for an otherwise qualified Jewish presidential candidate, while 85 percent would.

The survey of 2,002 adults also found that 8 percent would not vote for an otherwise qualified Catholic, while 90 percent would; and 38 percent would not vote for a Muslim, while 56 percent would.

Two-thirds of respondents said their religious beliefs play at least an occasional role in their decision-making.

The poll, conducted between June 24 and July 8, has a margin of error of plus or minus 2 percent.

### Claims Conference aliyah?

The Claims Conference says Natan Sharansky's call for the group to move its offices to Israel is moot.

Gideon Taylor, executive vice president of the Claims Conference, responded that "we are proud to have three offices and 80 staff members in Israel, and will continue to maintain a major part of our activities in Israel."

Speaking last week to the New York-based group that oversees Holocaust restitution, Sharansky, an Israeli Cabinet minister, said that the largest Jewish group outside Israel should "be set up in Jerusalem," the Jerusalem Post reported.

### Jews for Jesus ad blasted

British Jews are demanding that a Jews for Jesus billboard be taken down. The poster in a Jewish neighborhood of London features a group of fervently Orthodox Jews at the Western Wall in Jerusalem.

One of the Jews is wearing a Jews for Jesus T-shirt with the caption "Think for yourself."

The Board of Deputies umbrella organization wrote to the Advertising Standards Authority, that the "advertisement is clearly based on the principle that the majority of Jews are unable to 'think for themselves' — i.e., believe in Jesus. This is a highly objectionable notion."

## AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

### Internet friends meet each other for first time in Argentine center

By Florencia Arbiser

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) — The more than 300 people who met recently in the basement of a Jewish community center here already knew many details of each other's lives — but not one another's faces.

The AMIA auditorium was packed July 5 for the first meeting of Spanish-speaking cyber-surfing Jews.

The two-day meeting ended with promising news: the creation of an Internet department in the Jewish community center to promote Internet contact among Spanish-speaking Jews, helping them maintain a connection to Judaism.

"I live in a small town in Chaco province," said Adriana Krapivka. "We are only five non-assimilated Jews there, my family. If it wasn't for the Internet, how could I be in touch with Judaism?"

The meeting was a kind of virtual family reunion. Following an opening message from AMIA's president, Abraham Kaul, Internet users from the Argentine provinces, neighboring countries, Spain and Israel spoke about their reasons for coming to the first meeting.

"This is a unique opportunity," said Jaim Grau, an accountant who came from Barcelona for the meeting. "It's the first time virtual Jewish friends from any language share an organized meeting. If we could bring some coherence and coordination to all the possibilities the Internet is providing us, it certainly will be worthy."

"I came to be with the family I meet every night in front of my computer," said Ruti Mastich, an Argentine woman who made aliyah 20 years ago.

Jorge Lipschitz — known as "Lipi" in online Spanish-speaking Jewish forums — was the architect of the meeting.

"I belong to a virtual kehilla," or Jewish community, Lipschitz told JTA in an interview in his office a few days before the meeting. "Together, we share circumcisions, kaddish and marriages. The people I am in touch with are my virtual, strong family."

Lipschitz told of a woman in the online forum who had to send her 11-year-old son by himself to Australia. The boy had a six-hour layover in a New York airport.

"A friend from the Net waited for him and took care of him," Lipschitz said. "That is what we build."

The event was free to participants, who also received a free CD-ROM guide to Jewish Web sites in Spanish.

One man from the Argentine provinces told how Internet connections with other Jews helped him find a job in a Jewish company in Buenos Aires. Another couple told how they began dating through a Spanish-language site for Jews.

The meeting was organized with the support of AMIA and sponsored by the local Israeli Embassy, the World Zionist Organization, the Jewish Agency for Israel, the World Jewish Congress and Buenos Aires municipality.

The new AMIA Internet department recently began work.

The department's goals include: extending Argentina's anti-discrimination laws to the Internet; making Internet servers more stringent in prohibiting "offensive content;" and creating an online education forum with Jewish teachers and community leaders.

"We will work to coordinate Hispanic Jews' Internet activities," Kaul said.

For Lipschitz, the meeting helped "to establish a seed for a shared and unique Zionist Jewish virtual identity that will allow us to act organically, to develop Jewish life and to fight anti-Semitism."

"The meeting is a clever project," said Arie Avir, the Jewish Agency's Latin American representative.

He added that he hoped the Internet could help preserve Judaism and counter the effects of assimilation in the region. In addition, the Internet can help Diaspora Jews "to be linked with Israel," according to the cultural attache of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, Lior Haiat. □

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

## Aliyah from former Soviet Union brings a surprise — anti-Semitism

By Ariel Fingerman and Elana Shap

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Synagogues defaced by swastikas in B'nai Brak? Graves vandalized in Beit Shemesh? A teenager harassed for being a Jew on her way to school in Netivot?

Such cases may seem farfetched, but they all occurred in the Jewish state. According to the Information Center for Victims of Anti-Semitism in Israel, there have been some 500 such incidents in Israel during the past three years.

"The Russian-language newspapers in Israel print a story on an anti-Semitic incident every week, and at every police station in the country at least one anti-Semitic case is registered," says Zalman Gilichinsky, director of the information center.

It's ironic, he adds, that some victims who are immigrants from the former Soviet Union have come all the way to Israel to experience anti-Semitic aggression for the first time.

Until last month, the Israeli government virtually ignored such incidents. However, recent articles in *Yediot Achronot* and *Ha'aretz* have helped place the issue on the national agenda.

In a June 22 Cabinet meeting, Justice Minister Yosef "Tommy" Lapid told Prime Minister Ariel Sharon that "neo-Nazis have arrived in the country." The following day, Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein ordered an investigation into the matter.

The main focus of the investigation is a Russian-language Web site called the White Israeli Union. According to their manifesto, the site's organizers are "people who have pride in themselves and are sick of living among the dirty bastards."

Photographs on the site, which were printed in Israeli newspapers, include a destroyed Israeli flag and teenagers in Israel Defense Forces' uniforms offering Nazi-style salutes. The site identifies Jews, Arabs, immigrants from Muslim republics of the former Soviet Union and foreign workers as "enemies."

The site urges racist sympathizers to enlist in Israeli army combat units so they can murder as many Arabs as possible.

Anti-Semitism also is surfacing in other Israeli venues: Arbat, a bookstore with branches across Israel, sells books imported from Moscow with titles such as "The Holocaust Myth" and "Jewish Fascism in Russia."

When Gilichinsky, 38, decided to make aliyah from the Soviet Union 15 years ago, he never imagined he would be dealing with this phenomenon in the Jewish state. Today he divides his time between teaching Judaism to new immigrants and coordinating a team of 10 other volunteers. "This phenomenon is very sad, but someone has to do the work," he says.

Efraim Zuroff, director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center in Israel, describes anti-Semitic acts in Israel as an "aberration."

But his organization doesn't monitor such cases, Zuroff says. "Anyway, this is not like anti-Semitism in other parts of the world," he says. "Here there is not a danger that they will reach power."

Gilichinsky not only monitors the incidents, but also helps victims take their cases to police. He says the perpetrators of anti-Semitism in Israel almost always are Russian-speaking youth who are not Jewish, though some are the descendants of Jews.

"They have a strong connection with Russian culture,"

Gilichinsky says. "Since skinheads are a trend today in Moscow, some of them have already started to be seen in Israel."

In a great majority of cases, the victims are elderly Russian Jewish immigrants.

"They are more unprotected and easily recognized by the anti-Semites," Gilichinsky says. "Israelis, on the other hand, can defend themselves and know how to go to the police, hence they are hardly attacked."

Dvora Biton, 38, turned to Gilichinsky for help after an unpleasant situation developed about two years ago. She told JTA that her adversary was a neighbor in Yeroham, a city in the Negev Desert.

In the beginning, the relationship with the neighboring family was pleasant, and the Bitons, who are Orthodox Jews, invited them for a Shabbat dinner. When they discovered that the neighbors were not Jewish, however, the Bitons decided to cut down on their social contact.

The neighbor reacted badly and started to call Biton "zhidovka," a pejorative Russian term for a Jew. Every time they met, the neighbor made the cross sign on her chest, shouted, spat on the floor and cursed Biton, she says.

"Life became unbearable," Biton says. "It sounds absurd, but we finally decided to move and today we live in Eilat."

The investigation that Rubinstein ordered last month is a victory for Gilichinsky, who until not long ago was avoided by the authorities.

"They prefer to brush this issue under the carpet," he says. "They think my work could denigrate the Russian aliyah."

The most prominent institutions in Israel that monitor anti-Semitism take a cautious approach to Gilichinsky's organization. Roni Stauber, coordinator of an annual Tel Aviv University report on worldwide anti-Semitism, says he doesn't plan to include Israel among the 30 countries monitored. "We don't have enough information on incidents of this nature in the country," he says. "And I don't see this subject as a big problem."

Laura Kam, a local spokeswoman for the Anti-Defamation League, says the organization doesn't look at anti-Semitism in Israel.

It's a "marginal phenomenon," she says, the "product of discontented youth who face problems linked to their condition as non-Jews in the country."

According to Kam, the ADL might review its position if Israeli authorities confirmed the existence of a major problem.

"Meanwhile, we think that the people who give publicity to these incidents are using them for a political agenda — they want to change the Law of Return," which guarantees Israeli citizenship not just to Jews but to their children and grandchildren, she says.

Gilichinsky admits that's true: He says he favors an immediate change to the Law of Return to prevent immigrants who are not Jewish from entering the country.

"This law was created to increase the Jewish population in Israel, but today it has the opposite effect and it is increasing the numbers of non-Jews," Gilichinsky says.

But he rejects the idea that neo-Nazism in Israel is a product of the treatment that young non-Jewish immigrants suffer.

"If we followed that logic, the anti-Semites should be attacking Israelis and not other immigrants," he says. "Throughout history, Jews were always blamed for anti-Semitism. Now we cannot point to the Jewish state as the cause of this evil." □