



Daily News Bulletin

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86th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Two Jews killed in Morocco

Morocco beefed up security for the country's Jewish community after two Jews were murdered in separate incidents. Eli Affriat, 75, was stabbed to death in Meknes on Saturday, and two days earlier Albert Rebibo, 55, was shot in Casablanca.

While police have not ruled out criminal motives in the killings, terrorism is seen as the most likely motive, especially in light of the multiple bombings in Morocco on May 16, which targeted Jewish sites.

Israel: We might kill Arafat

Killing Yasser Arafat is an option for Israel, one of Israel's deputy prime ministers said. Ehud Olmert told Israel Radio on Sunday that killing the Palestinian Authority president is an option after last week's Security Cabinet decision to "remove" Arafat.

U.N. criticizes Israel

The U.N. Security Council is criticizing Israel for its announcement that it would "remove" Yasser Arafat.

The warning was approved Saturday during a closed-door emergency session of the 15-member council. Israel decried the warning, saying it has a right to do whatever is necessary to defend itself. Meanwhile, Ahmed Karia, the new prime minister of the Palestinian Authority, said he would delay appointing an "emergency Cabinet" until Israel rescinded its decision on Arafat.

Police: Suicide bomb belts found

Three bomb belts ready for use in suicide attacks were safely detonated over the weekend, police said. The belts were hidden in a washing machine that was being stored in a butcher shop in the village of al-Azariya, near Bethlehem.

Mexican anti-Semitism law lauded

B'nai B'rith lauded a new Mexican law barring anti-Semitism.

B'nai B'rith International President Joel Kaplan wrote Mexico's President, Vicente Fox, that "it is good to see Mexico standing as a model to other nations." Mexico joins other countries that have laws specifically aimed at anti-Jewish prejudice.

In Brazil, anti-Semitism recently was declared a form of racism.

ACROSS THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

Ukraine gets a new chief rabbi even though it already has one

By Daniel MacIsaac

KIEV, Ukraine (JTA) — When Rabbi Azrael Haikin of Brussels was elected earlier this month to be Ukraine's new chief rabbi, many saw it as a positive sign of Jewish renewal in a former Soviet republic.

"This decision, without doubt, represents a milestone in the history of the rebirth of Jewish life in Ukraine," said a statement by the Jewish community of Dnepropetrovsk, Ukraine, after a meeting billed as the Second Congress of Ukrainian Rabbis.

The only problem was that Ukraine already had a chief rabbi, Yaakov Dov Bleich. Bleich has been widely recognized as the chief rabbi of both Kiev and Ukraine since 1992, and he has no intention of giving up his posts.

So on Sept. 8, when Haikin was formally presented to an assembly of Chasidic Jewish leaders and guests at Kiev's President Hotel, the event that a week earlier had been billed as the appointment of a new chief rabbi for Ukraine took on a decidedly different tone.

No mention of a new "chief" rabbi was made, and the ceremony focused instead on Haikin's leadership of the country's Chabad-Lubavitch movement and the Chabad-affiliated Federation of Jewish Communities, the largest Jewish communal group in the former Soviet Union.

The situation is similar to what happened in Russia in the spring of 2000, when a group of rabbis elected Berel Lazar to be that country's chief rabbi, although Adolf Shayeveich already held that title.

Haikin, 73, will be the first spiritual leader of the Chabad movement in Ukraine to provide central leadership within Chabad's federation.

The Soviet-born rabbi was educated in New York and has served as an educator and leader in the United States, Canada, Morocco, Denmark and Belgium, where he was knighted in 1990.

"I was chosen by the Federation of Jewish Communities of Ukraine to organize a central rabbinate; they all have their local rabbinates but what they need now is a central place which will function like an umbrella organization from a rabbinical standpoint," Haikin said after the presentation, which Bleich attended.

But questions remain over Haikin's presumed role in the rebirth of Jewish life in Ukraine. At issue is the leadership of not only the Chabad movement — to which Haikin and the vast majority of the more than 100 rabbis in Ukraine belong — but also representation of the Ukrainian Jewish community as a whole.

Bleich is a member of the Karlin-Stolin branch of Chasidism. Chabad rabbis numerically dominate Jewish religious leadership throughout the former Soviet Union.

In these countries, the post of chief rabbi is significant not only to Jews, but also to the nations' governments, who often look to the chief rabbi as the representative and chief liaison of their country's Jewish community.

Mark Levin, the Washington-based executive director of the NCSJ: Advocates on Behalf of Jews in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States and Eurasia, said, "In the United States, the concept of chief rabbi is alien, and you have religious leaders of the different movements and influential rabbis who are Orthodox, Conservative, Reform, Reconstructionist and Chabad."

"In many countries, 'chief rabbi' is a more symbolic title, but in the FSU —

MIDEAST FOCUS

Fence to exclude Ariel

One of the largest Jewish cities in the West Bank will not fall within the security fence being put up by Israel.

The predominantly secular Ariel, population 13,000, and nearby settlements Emmanuel and Kedumim will instead be surrounded by their own security fences, an idea that has drawn charges of "ghettoization" from right-wing Israeli politicians. The decision regarding Ariel was taken by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz in apparent deference to U.S. concerns that the barrier Israel is building in an attempt to prevent terrorism expropriates Palestinian-populated land.

Mofaz delays trip

Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz has delayed a trip to the United States. The delay in the trip, which was planned to begin Tuesday, came after Prime Minister Ariel Sharon asked Mofaz to remain in the country due to the security situation, the Jerusalem Post said.

Death brings bomb toll to 23

Tova Lev, 37, died in Jerusalem of her wounds from the Aug. 19 suicide bus bombing in Jerusalem.

Lev is the 23rd victim of the bombing, which killed several children, wounded more than 100 and marked the end of a summertime period of relative calm in Israel.

Committee to look into Orr report

The Israeli government established a committee to debate a report on the October 2000 Israeli Arab riots. The Orr Commission report criticized both the Israeli government of Ehud Barak and the police for their responses to the riots, which left 13 dead. The committee has 60 days to make recommendations regarding the report.

because of the void that existed for so many decades — it represents both a title and a role."

Likely because of the confusion surrounding the new rabbinical appointment in Ukraine, a planned meeting between Haikin and Ukrainian President Leonid Kuchma was postponed. Speaking in his office in the Choral Synagogue in Podil on the day after the Sept. 8 ceremony, Bleich said it is clear Chabad was reconciling itself to the fact that he will remain chief rabbi — a position to which he said he was appointed by "all the communities and all the rabbis in Ukraine" in 1992, for an indefinite term.

Referring to an address at the ceremony by Lev Levayev, the Uzbek-born diamond tycoon who has supported the growth of the Chabad movement across the former Soviet Union, Bleich said, "I think Levayev bent over backwards to make sure not to call Rabbi Haikin chief rabbi.

"He backed off from that, and I think Chabad understood it's not for the good of the community — and they're trying to help the community. That's the most important thing," he said.

For his part, Haikin said he wants to work with Bleich and the new appointment does not represent a challenge to his authority.

"We're not trying to take something away from anyone," Haikin said.

The chief rabbi post is particularly important in former Soviet republics because of the vacuum of Jewish leadership that existed following the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Most Ukrainian rabbis are foreign born, and there has been some competition among them and their religious denominations for governmental recognition, support from the country's Jews — whose numbers run anywhere from 250,000 upward — reclamation of lost property and international funding.

In a 2001 report titled "Jewish Life in Ukraine at the Dawn of the 21st Century," Betsy Gidwitz reported that "the Chabad movement, at the behest of Lev Levayev, and Rabbi Bleich appear to be engaged in a turf battle, each attempting to place rabbis in Jewish population centers that earlier had been deemed too small."

Some Ukrainian rabbis from non-Orthodox movements say the controversy surrounding Haikin's appointment is insignificant to them. Rabbi Alexander Dukhovny, who said he is the elected chief Reform rabbi of Kiev and Ukraine, said that, as before, he will not recognize the authority of any Orthodox chief rabbi of Ukraine who attempts to speak for the Reform movement.

Dukhovny said the Haikin controversy mirrors the similar stir in Russia three years ago. But Bleich said the situation in Ukraine is different. "In Russia there were two communities fighting for power. The framework here is absolutely different: We respect each other and will continue to work together," Bleich said.

He said he sees Haikin's role as assuming the leadership of the country's Chabad movement as well as a Chabad-founded rabbinical court, which Bleich said can serve the whole Jewish community of Ukraine.

But questions remain whether Haikin ultimately will serve as chief rabbi of the country's Chabad movement or, simply, chief rabbi of Ukraine.

"Rabbi Bleich is a very good man," said Chabad's rabbi in Donetsk, Pinchas Vishetsky. "But Rabbi Haikin brings a different level of experience — as a senior rabbi of 70 years of age — to Ukrainian Jewry and to the position of chief rabbi of Ukraine."

He said that Haikin's "knowledge of the Torah and great experience will be of benefit to everyone — Chabad and non-Chabad alike." □

N.Y. museum to open wing

NEW YORK (JTA) — A Jewish museum in New York is opening its new wing. The 82,000 square-foot Morgenthau Wing of the Museum of Jewish Heritage — A Living Memorial to the Holocaust is being touted as the first construction project in downtown Manhattan since the Sept. 11 attacks.

The wing will be dedicated Monday. Named after the museum's longtime chairman, Manhattan District Attorney Robert Morgenthau, the new wing will include an exhibition space, an events hall and an education center. The new wing's first exhibit, on American Jews in World War II, will open in October. □



Daily News Bulletin

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JEWISH WORLD

Iranian AMIA suspect out on bail

Iran's former ambassador to Argentina, arrested in connection with the 1994 attack on an Argentine Jewish center, was released on bail.

Hade Soleimanpour was arrested in Britain last month for his suspected role in the AMIA Jewish center bombing in Buenos Aires, which killed 85. Soleimanpour's extradition request to Argentina is being processed.

Israelis tour Ground Zero

Israeli politicians were slated to visit Ground Zero. Several members of the Knesset are visiting the site of the Sept. 11 attacks in New York on Sunday. The United Jewish Communities is sponsoring the visit.

Israel to close embassy in Bolivia

Israel will close its embassy in La Paz, Bolivia's capital, by the end of this year. In Latin America, Israel has already closed embassies in Panama and Paraguay and the consulates in Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, Brazil's largest cities.

Breyer: U.S. can learn from Israel

The United States could learn from Israel's experience in balancing national security and respecting civil rights, Stephen Breyer said.

The U.S. Supreme Court justice said last Friday in a speech at Columbia Law School that Israeli judges have found compromises that acknowledge security risks while trying to respect human rights.

Breyer cited as an example security defendants who are not allowed to name their own lawyer to visit them, because of fear that they might pass on terrorist instructions, but can choose from a list of court-appointed lawyers for such visits.

Russian Jewish school vandalized

Windows were broken and anti-Semitic graffiti painted on a building housing a Russian Jewish school.

The Sept. 12 incident in the central Russian city of Bryansk was the latest anti-Semitic act against the school.

"They look at us like they are at the zoo; they point at us and yell 'Jews! Jews!'" Rabbi Yitzhak Roitman said.

Majorcan 'lost Jews' get rabbi

The "lost Jews" of the island of Majorca are getting a rabbi for Rosh Hashanah. The Israeli-based Amishav organization is sending Rabbi Shaul Friburg, based in Germany, to the Spanish island, according to the Jerusalem Post. The ancestors of the Jews of Majorca were forcibly converted to Catholicism during the Spanish Inquisition.

Orthodox groups look to new session to get pro-religious bills through Congress

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Orthodox groups are gearing up for an autumn of opportunity in Congress, hoping to seize a moment when they perceive increased national interest — and government support — for allowing religious practice in the public square.

By aligning themselves with other religious conservative groups, Orthodox Jewish leaders have been able to amass critical support to advance certain pieces of legislation in Congress and the White House.

"To some people's appreciation and to some people's consternation, the role of religion and religious advocacy has been more and more accepted and even expected in a lot of public policy debates," said Nathan Diament, director of the Orthodox Union's Institute for Public Affairs.

While insisting that they have good relations with Democrats — traditionally the party of choice for the vast majority of American Jews — Orthodox groups frequently are asked to sign on to religiously conservative agenda items as a means of showing diverse support for hot-button measures. That garners support for many of the groups' own priorities.

"Clearly there are some priority issues for the administration and for the current majority in Congress that dovetail with what has been our agenda for a long time," Diament said.

That includes allowing religious people increased flexibility to practice their faith at work, granting school vouchers for parochial schools and giving federal aid to religiously affiliated charities. Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.), the Republican Party's conference chairman and himself a devout Catholic, is sponsoring the O.U.'s top priority this term, the Workplace Religious Freedom Act.

The legislation, which Orthodox groups hope to see through the Senate this fall, has been a plank in the O.U.'s platform for 11 years. The bill would amend civil rights laws to require employers to accommodate the religious observances of its employees, such as observing holidays and wearing religious garb.

"The existing law has not lived up to its promise," said Abba Cohen, Washington director and counsel for Agudath Israel of America, a fervently Orthodox group. "We are hearing more and more cases of individuals having problems at work with requests for Sabbath and holiday observances."

The workplace act enjoys broad support among a wide spectrum of Jewish groups. The Orthodox groups part company from other Jewish groups when it comes to support for school vouchers.

Both Agudah and the O.U. hailed the recent vote in the House that allowed for scholarships for Washington schoolchildren who were in failing schools. Cohen said he saw the Washington program as a model for the country.

"The D.C. plan will come to represent an important step toward true school choice for all American families," Cohen said.

Orthodox groups say federal funding for parochial schools is in keeping with the Jewish teaching that parents are primarily responsible for a child's education. Other Jewish movements and several public policy organizations argue that federal funding for parochial schools blurs the line between church and state. Also of importance to Orthodox groups are amendments to the Individuals with Disabilities Act.

Orthodox groups are seeking new language in the Special Education Funding Act, which is going through reauthorization, that would allow students in private and parochial schools to receive the same special-education services as students in public schools. The bill is expected to move through the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee this fall.

On social issues, the O.U. has lent its support to a possible Constitutional amendment that would define marriage as between a man and a woman.

The O.U. and Agudah also filed a brief in the Supreme Court last week backing state scholarships for students studying religion in college. □

EDITORS NOTE: Ten years ago this month, Israelis and Jews around the world watched the famous handshake on the White House lawn with a sense of history in the making. Some believed the Oslo Agreement was the harbinger of peace and the guarantor of Israel's future as a Jewish and democratic state. Others saw it as a grave diplomatic error that allowed Israel's mortal enemies the foothold they long had sought. A decade later, Israel is convulsed by violence and terrorism — but some believe the "road map" peace plan may present a way out.

10 YEARS AFTER OSLO

Oslo lessons must be learned if peacemaking is to succeed

By Dennis Ross

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Sept. 13 marked the 10th anniversary of the famous handshake between Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat at the White House.

The high hopes of that day have long since vanished in a sea of blood, with countless victims, searing violence and profound suffering.

Was Oslo doomed from the start?

Some will say yes because Arafat, who became the Palestinian Authority president, was never a partner for peace.

As the American negotiator who spent more time with him than did any other non-Palestinian, I came to the conclusion that Arafat was incapable of making peace with Israel.

He could not give up his mythologies, and he would not acknowledge that Palestinians, too, would have to make concessions. But it is far too easy to blame it all on Arafat; doing so means that none of the lessons of Oslo will be learned.

And there are important lessons that must be learned if peacemaking — if it ever resumes — is to be done in a way that stands a chance of succeeding. While I believe there are many lessons from the past, let me single out three here.

First, peacemaking requires accountability.

One of the most profound failures of Oslo was that neither side lived up to its obligations. Both sides felt it easy to ignore what they had agreed to do, and there was never a consequence.

If Israelis and Palestinians alike wanted the United States in the process, then each needed to know that we would hold them to their commitments and that if they did not perform we would publicly say who was living up to the agreements and who was not.

Though this seems to be an obvious lesson — and President Bush has spoken of holding each side accountable — the pattern of the past remains present today.

With the Mitchell report, the Tenet security plan and now the "road map" peace plan, the problem was not the absence of agreement; it was the absence of implementation.

Steps called for were not taken.

The road map was the least well-defined, with no clear understandings by each side of what was expected of them.

When the Palestinians agreed to a truce — something not even in the road map — no questions were raised, even though the truce became a reason why the Palestinians were not willing to go after the terrorist infrastructure, something that was an essential part of the road map.

If there are going to be plans, understandings of what is required must be clear and the consequences of nonperformance must be spelled out from the beginning.

Second, both sides must prepare their publics for compromise.

People-to-people programs that break down stereotypes and make it harder to demonize are important for making compromise acceptable.

But leaders must lead the way. They must condition their publics that compromise is going to be necessary.

Israelis must know that there will be withdrawals, that they will evacuate many settlements, that they cannot control Palestinians and that geographic contiguity for Palestinians cannot be finessed with tunnels and bridges.

Palestinians must know that there will be no Palestinian state born of violence; that terror will delegitimize their cause; that they will have to compromise on Jerusalem, borders and refugees — indeed, that the solution on refugees must permit a two-state solution, not a one-state solution.

Israel will be a Jewish state and Palestinians must be prepared to recognize it as such.

Throughout Oslo, preparation of publics was conspicuously absent, especially on the Palestinian side — where Arafat treated the very concept of compromise on the permanent status issues as a betrayal.

Third, Arab leaders must assume their responsibilities.

The Arab role during Oslo was limited, in part because the Palestinians only sought their support but never their guidance, and in part because Arab leaders were fearful of being accused by Arafat of asking the Palestinians to surrender their national rights if they pressed him to compromise on the core issues.

But one clear lesson that is particularly relevant today is that without the Arabs, the Palestinians will be unable either to confront their own rejectionists or to make concessions for peace.

Today, when the Palestinian Authority prime minister must confront Hamas and Islamic Jihad while facing resistance from Arafat, only Arab leaders can help create an umbrella of legitimacy for him to act.

The prime minister needs them to declare publicly that Hamas and Islamic Jihad exploded the cease-fire and are threatening not just Palestinian interests, but the cause itself.

Arab leaders must support the crackdown on these groups and also exert meaningful pressure on Arafat not to block what he is doing.

This is not the time to ask for Arafat's help, which would only play to his desire to show he is indispensable; it's time for Arafat to be shown that Arab leaders will no longer remain silent about his efforts to undermine the advent of the prime minister they all supported.

In essence, it is time for Arab leaders to assume their responsibilities if they want to see a peace process that can succeed. They, too, must have obligations and be accountable. They, too, can help with the need to condition for peace.

If they do, and if accountability and the ethos of compromise become part of our efforts to promote peace, we may not have to lament the failed promise of Oslo in another 10 years. □

Dennis Ross, director and Ziegler Fellow at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, was President Clinton's envoy to the Middle East. His book, "The Missing Peace," will be published next year.