

IN THE NEWS

Israel kills six Palestinians

Israeli forces killed six Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

Three of the Palestinians killed, at least one of them armed, were shot dead Wednesday as tanks and troops circled Beit Hanoun, a Gaza town used for rocket attacks on Israeli towns.

Kassam rocket claims two Israeli lives

Two Israelis, including a baby, were killed by a Palestinian rocket.

Hamas terrorists in the Gaza Strip claimed responsibility for the makeshift Kassam rocket attack that hit a house in the Negev town of Sderot on Wednesday, also wounding 10 people.

Congressman wants AIPAC prober probed

A U.S. congressman wants the Bush administration to probe the man investigating the premier pro-Israel lobby.

Rep. Robert Wexler (D-Fla.) asked President Bush on Wednesday to investigate David Szady.

The FBI's assistant director for counterintelligence, Szady is leading the investigation of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and has led government agencies involved in targeting Jewish employees for probes in the past, according to a JTA investigation.

"Given the fact that no information has surfaced to substantiate the highly incriminating accusations against AIPAC, I am perplexed by the manner in which you and your administration have handled this case," Wexler said in a letter to the president.

Wexler said Bush should determine whether Szady has unfairly targeted Jews, and if so, remove him from the case and fire him.

■ MORE NEWS, Pg. 8

Reminder: JTA World Report will not be published Oct. 1.



WORLD REPORT

PUBLISHED WEEKDAYS BY JTA—THE GLOBAL NEWS SERVICE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE • WWW.JTA.ORG

Voter registration surges among Americans in Israel

By RON KAMPEAS and DINA KRAFT

JERUSALEM (JTA) — For Republicans and Democrats vying for Jewish votes, it's become a well-worn cliché: a handful of votes in Florida could swing this year's presidential election.

What's not so well known is that those Florida votes might not even be in Florida.

Six thousand ex-Floridians living in Israel and the territories are eligible to vote in U.S. elections in November — more than 10 times the number that decided the 2000 election for George W. Bush.

"One selling point I have for people is that I remind them that 537 votes made the difference in Florida," said Mark Zober, who as the Israel head of Democrats Abroad has been canvassing the country to register votes.

"It's sort of a shotgun approach; you go to an event and hope there are Florida people," said Zober, in his mid-50s, who made aliyah in 1972 from Whittier, Calif.

And not just Florida people. Zober's Republican counterpart, Kory Bardash, said his organization was focusing on all swing state expatriates.

"We have made heavy efforts in trying to identify Americans from Florida, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Michigan," said Bardash, 39, who made aliyah from New York City nine years ago.

Expatriates vote according to their last U.S. address.

Such calculations are at the center of what officials from both parties are saying is the most intensive effort ever to get out the eligible American voters in Israel and the Palestinian-populated territories.



Ron Kampeas

Phillip Foss registers to vote at a Democrats in Israel event in Tel Aviv.

Howie Kahn, the nonpartisan program director for the Jerusalem branch of the Association of Americans and Canadians in Israel, organized a registration evening in early September and said it was the largest turnout ever.

"This is amazing," he said, watching Israelis from Jerusalem and surrounding suburbs and settlements crowd into AACI headquarters in Jerusalem's genteel Talbieh neighborhood.

"The feeling is that every vote counts."

Not just in Israel. Both parties say they

Continued on page 2

■ *Americans in Israel are registering to vote in growing numbers*

Continued from page 1

are recording unprecedented interest from Americans overseas, to the extent that a flood of requests has overwhelmed electoral officials in some states, they say.

Americans who have voted abroad in previous elections are automatically processed, but each request from a first-time overseas voter means state officials have to run thorough checks on the application. This year's overwhelming first-time voter interest means that many states are not meeting deadlines for mailing out the ballots. That means that voters abroad might not meet state voting deadlines, which vary between Nov. 2 and 10.

"I'm really worried about it," said Joan Hills of Republicans Abroad. Her organization is encouraging members to use an alternative method, faxing a request to the Pentagon for a write-in ballot. The service is open to all Americans, not just the military, and the deadline is Oct. 3.

Americans in Israel account for about 150,000 of the estimated 4 to 7 million Americans abroad. They are said to be the fifth largest expatriate community in the world — after Canada, Britain, Germany and Mexico; their counterparts in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and eastern Jerusalem number about 40,000.

But both populations are believed — like their brethren living in the United States — to vote in higher percentages than other Americans.

Bardash, the Republican, said he alone had registered 9,000 voters by mid-September, and anticipated overall turnout to be

double that of 2000, when 14,000 Americans voted in Israel.

Once registration is completed — the deadline for most states is Oct. 2 — voters abroad await their absentee ballots, which then must be sent back to the States.

One reason for his registration drive's success, he suggested, was that the unprecedented closeness between the Bush and Sharon administrations has brought more Americans in Israel around to the Republican point of view.

"What you hear on the street is a significant appreciation for Bush administration policies and a large amount of Democrats who are registered Democrats are going to be voting for President Bush in this election," he said.

"I feel there is an enthusiasm to vote overall, and a particular enthusiasm to vote for the president."

In the 2000 election, Bush got 35 percent of the American Jewish vote in Israel, considerably higher than the 19 percent he scored among American Jews in general.

But polls surveying the preferences of the overall Israeli population have shown a marked shift in support in favor of Bush — depending on the poll, numbers show 48-49 percent support Bush, while 18-29 percent support Kerry. If that redounds onto American Jews in Israel, Bardash could be right.

Adelaide Kahn, an octogenarian in Jerusalem who has children living on a West Bank settlement, said she feels now she made a mistake voting for Al Gore in 2000.

"I want this man Bush to make it," said Kahn, who moved from Connecticut to Israel in 1976.

The reverse flip will likely take place among Palestinians here, most of whom voted for Bush in 2000, believing he would slow what they perceived as President Clinton's pro-Israel peace drive.

Palestinian-Americans are likely to follow U.S.-based friends and relatives who have turned away from Bush because of his post-Sept. 11, 2001, policies on security, Iraq and Israel.

Polls show most Arab Americans voting for Kerry this time around.

Two subsectors among American immigrants in Israel are especially fertile

for Republican culling: settlers and the Orthodox, who appreciate Bush's hawkish tilt and his conservative values.

Mordechai Adler, a fervently Orthodox computer specialist in Petach Tikva, said his community was ideal for recruitment.

He said that he decided to register Americans in his community when he realized how easy it was to do and how concentrated his community is.

Knowing how involved his Haredi community is in the Israeli elections, he thought they would be interested in participating in the American elections.

Adler, who emigrated from Chicago 15 years ago, said he was not pushing a

partisan agenda — he is happy to register both Democrats and Republicans — but the reactions he gets reflect Republican talking points.

"The war on terrorism, the security issue, Israel is at the forefront on the war on terrorism; that is going to be the major issue, that is what I'm hearing from everyone," said Adler, who added that he was so busy registering voters last week that he barely had time to prepare for Yom Kippur.

Democrats in Israel say concerns about terrorism and security could work for them as well.

President Bush's policies endanger Israel, they say, because they are adventurist and isolationist.

"People are saying, 'We have to get Bush out of there'" said Zober of the Democrats in Israel group. "The chaos in the world is not helping us here in Israel."

The philosophical question of whether Americans in Israel should even exercise the right to vote has become an issue. A recent essay in the Jerusalem Post by noted author Hillel Halkin, arguing that voting should be confined to one's country of residence, drew pages of heated response.

Some who attended the AACI voter registration event said voting was a moral obligation wherever they live, or however influential their vote was.

"It's important for everybody to vote, whether or not it makes a difference," said Jaime Walman, 27, from Boston, who is living in Jerusalem with her fiancée, a rabbinical student.

In Israel and the territories, the most intensive effort ever to get out the absentee vote for U.S. elections.

JTA WORLD REPORT

Howard E. Friedman
President

Mark J. Joffe
Executive Editor and Publisher

Lisa Hostein
Editor

Michael S. Arnold
Managing Editor

Lenore A. Silverstein

Finance and Administration Director

Paula Simmonds

Marketing and Development Director

JTA WORLD REPORT is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For more information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at www.jta.org.

© JTA. Reproduction only with permission.

Presbyterians stand by Israel divestment

By URIEL HEILMAN

NEW YORK (JTA) — Not long ago, the Presbyterian Church USA managed to do something most Jewish organizations can only dream of: It generated Jewish unity.

Jewish groups were outraged when the organization passed a resolution over the summer calling for divesting from companies that do business in or with Israel.

The group is sticking to its position after meeting here Tuesday with Jewish religious leaders and organizational officials, who aired their sentiments face to face with the Presbyterians for the first time since the decision in July.

As the Jews expressed unanimous, vehement opposition to the move, church officials said they were eager to “dialogue” with the Jews on the issue and expressed regret that the discussion had not taken place earlier.

But they also insisted that the church, representing 3 million-plus members, would not back away from the decision, which passed by a 431-62 vote at the group’s General Assembly.

“We’re looking forward to this being the first of a number of meetings,” Rick Ufford-Chase, moderator of the General Assembly, said at a news conference following Tuesday’s meeting in New York. “It’s clear to us this conversation should have taken place some time ago.”

Rabbi Paul Menitoff, executive vice president of the Reform movement’s Central Conference of American Rabbis, told JTA after the meeting that fundamental differences remained.

“There’s a natural divide in terms of perspectives. We see things through radically different lenses,” he said. “We put on the table very clearly our concerns.”

The bulk of the meeting was devoted to the issue of divestiture, participants said, with the Jews arguing that the decision was patently unfair and the Presbyterians arguing that it is meant to promote peace in the region.

The Presbyterian Church USA has about \$7 billion in assets, most of it earmarked for pensions. Church officials could not say how much of their assets are invested in companies that do business in Israel.

“The conversations crossed each other,” David Elcott, U.S. interreligious affairs director for the American Jewish Committee, told JTA. “The Jewish community vented

all of the arguments in support of the State of Israel and explained the failures of the Palestinians. The Presbyterians spoke of the powerlessness of the Palestinians and the power of Israel over the Palestinians.”

No accord was reached, except to step up dialogue efforts.

While this hardly is the first conflict between Jews and Presbyterians, even on issues relating to Israel, the decision to divest from Israeli companies or companies doing business in Israel touched a particularly raw nerve among Jews.

It could do serious damage to Jewish-Christian relations, some observers said.

It could also have a domino effect on other churches considering similar moves, resulting in substantial economic hardship to Israel. Already, there are signals that the Anglican Church could be next; the Anglican Peace and Justice Network last week issued a report that alarmed Jewish officials in its placement of the lion’s share of the blame for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict on Israel.

“If the Presbyterians go ahead with any kind of divestment, the Anglicans are not far behind,” said A. James Rudin, senior interreligious adviser at the AJCommittee. “They already are showing interest in it. There could be other church bodies that want to follow it, and it can spread.”

Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union for Reform Judaism, which hosted Tuesday’s meeting, said, “The Jewish community is deeply disturbed about this.”

He said his group already has reached out to the Anglican Church but has not yet received a substantial response.

The July resolution at the Presbyterian General Assembly was different than past Presbyterian resolutions perceived by Jews as hostile to Israel, Rudin said.

“Up to now it’s been: Cut off aid, Israel should stop building settlements — it’s verbal. This is the first one that I know of that a resolution coming out of a church body has talked about divestment. We’re talking about money,” he said.

“This one’s really got teeth. It has a chilling effect,” Rudin added. It represents “a real threat to the economic life and security of Israel.”

The point of Tuesday’s meeting was not necessarily to get the church to reverse its decision — Jewish officials said that clearly was unrealistic — but to sensitize church officials to the issue.

“We asked for the meeting,” said Rabbi Joel Meyers, executive vice president of the Conservative movement’s Rabbinical Assembly. “They jumped at it because I think that underneath there really is a genuine feeling to be closer to the Jewish people for a dialogue.”



Uriel Heilman

Presbyterian leaders and Rabbi Eric Yoffie, right, meet Tuesday in New York to discuss the Presbyterian Church’s recent call to divest from Israel.

In election, Ukrainian Jews backing status quo

By WALTER RUBY

KIEV, Ukraine (JTA) — The choice for Ukrainian Jews in elections slated for October basically boils down to two men.

On one hand is Prime Minister Victor Yanukovych, a protege of the authoritarian and reputedly venal incumbent president, Leonid Kuchma.

Yanukovych, 54, the former governor of the eastern Ukrainian industrial region of Donetsk, is widely reported to be a member in good standing of a mafia-like "clan" of apparatchiks and businessmen that owns and operates everything that isn't tied down in that region.

Yanukovych echoes Kuchma's line of favoring closer ties with Russia than the United States and, if elected president, is believed likely to appoint Kuchma as prime minister, thereby leaving operational control of the country in Kuchma's hands.

Yanukovych's principal rival in the Oct. 31 election is a charismatic former prime minister named Victor Yushenko, who advocates greater privatization of the nation's economy and transparency in business practices to prevent corruption.

Yushenko calls for an end to government censorship of the media and respect for human rights, and advocates a foreign policy that focuses on decisively grounding Ukraine in the West by joining NATO and the European Union.

Given that rather stark choice and the inclination of most of the estimated 500,000 Jews in this strategically important country of 48 million to favor democracy and Westernization, one might expect a decisive majority of them to lean toward Yushenko.

Yet in a series of interviews conducted during the month of July, JTA found a preponderance of Jews either favoring Yanukovych or declaring a "pox upon both your houses" kind of neutrality on the two main candidates.

Mikhail Gurvitz, chairman of the Reform movement in the central Ukrainian city of Zhitomir, remarked, "I am for Yanukovych, who is a centrist. Yes, there have been undemocratic things done during Kuchma's reign, but much of the opposition isn't democratic either. What they really stand for is Ukrainian nationalism and anti-Semitism."

Tatyana Levy, a 20-year-old student from Odessa interviewed in the Crimean

resort town of Alushta, said, "In recent months there has been a noticeable resurgence of anti-Semitism in the media and in the streets. I like Yushenko personally, but am fearful that if the opposition wins, anti-Semitism may come back with a vengeance."

The preference for Yanukovych by many Jews appears to be due to the fact that Jewish organizational life grew exponentially during the 10-year reign of Kuchma.

In addition, anti-Semitism, a staple of Ukrainian life since the 17th century, largely went into hiatus — at least until 12 months ago.

Kuchma developed close business and personal relationships with such Jewish business "oligarchs" as Vadim Rabinovich, Grigori Surkis, who owns Kiev Dynamo, the country's most successful soccer team, and Viktor Pinchuk, an industrialist and media magnate who several years ago married Kuchma's daughter, Olena.

There is a widespread expectation among political observers that if Yushenko is elected, he may put Kuchma on trial for multiple forms of corruption, and might launch legal action against some pro-Kuchma oligarchs as well.

Ukrainian Jews express fear of unnamed shadowy figures in the opposition coalition backing Yushenko who were said to be ultranationalists and anti-Semites.

Beyond their take on Yushenko, Jews here continue to fear that the opposition coalition — an unlikely amalgam of pro-capitalist and pro-socialist parties brought together by their common detestation of Kuchma — strongly leans toward a brand of Ukrainian nationalism and anti-Semitism suffused with anger at Jewish oligarchs.

The oligarchs are portrayed as having illegally acquired many of the nation's natural resources on behalf of world Zionism.

At the end of July, Yushenko sought to address the perception of the opposition coalition as being suffused with anti-Semitism by publicly expelling a prominent member of his Our Ukraine Party, Oleg Tiagnybok, for publicly expressing anti-Semitic views.

Yushenko told JTA: "We will not allow anyone to" make remarks negatively

"impacting the national feelings of any national group."

Officially, most Jewish leaders and organizations are neutral in the leadership contest between Yushenko and Yanukovych.

Nevertheless, there is little doubt that some, like Rabinovich, president of the All-Ukrainian Jewish Congress and United Jewish Community of Ukraine, and Pinchuk, both of whom have substantial holdings in the Ukrainian print and electronic media, are solidly in the Yanukovych camp.

Alexander Feldman, president of the Jewish Fund of Ukraine and a member of Parliament, last month endorsed Yanukovych in his role as president of the Association of National-Cultural Societies of Ukraine, an influential organization representing many of the country's

minority communities.

Other top Jewish leaders, like Rabbi Yaakov Dov Bleich of the Jewish Confederation of Ukraine and Ilya Levitas of the Jewish Council of Ukraine, while officially neutral, have strong personal ties with Kuchma and key members of his government.

The vast majority of the approximately 25 Jewish members of the Ukrainian Parliament are solidly pro-government; the principal exception is Evhen Chervonenko, a former racing-car champion who is Yushenko's closest Jewish adviser.

The only community leader of note who appears sympathetic to the opposition is Yosef Zissels, a Jewish movement and human rights activist during the Soviet era, and presently president of the Va'ad of Ukraine.

Zissels suggested it is inevitable that some Jewish oligarchs with close ties to Kuchma will suffer adverse economic and personal consequences if the president is driven from power as a result of an electoral defeat by his protege, Yanukovych.

"I believe Yushenko would be better for the Ukrainian nation as a whole than Yanukovych, although perhaps a bit worse for the Jewish community," Zissels said. "Still, the difference for the Jews would be relatively insignificant, and if Yushenko can bring Ukraine closer to democracy and Europe, I am ready for it to be a bit more complicated" for some Jews.



UKRAINIAN
ELECTIONS
2004

Anti-Semitism rises in Ukrainian media

By VLADIMIR MATVEYEV
and WALTER RUBY

KIEV, Ukraine (JTA) — One of Ukraine's most powerful politicians has refused to denounce a leading Ukrainian newspaper for publishing a virulently anti-Semitic article asserting that 400,000 Jews joined the S.S. during the Nazi invasion of Ukraine in 1941.

In an exclusive interview with JTA, Aleksandr Moroz, leader of the Socialist Party of Ukraine and a candidate for president in elections scheduled for Oct. 31, said he was in no position to determine the veracity of the notorious opinion piece in *Silski Visti*, or *Village News*.

"I have defended *Silski Visti* and will continue to do so," Moroz said. "I personally think the argument of the author of the article, Vasily Yaremenko, citing 400,000 Jews in the S.S. is incorrect, but I am not in a position to know all the facts."

Moroz's comments, along with statements by other leading Ukrainians, indicate a worrisome acceptance of a surge of anti-Semitism in the mass media as Ukraine gears up for the elections.

Although Moroz is unlikely to win the election — he is currently drawing about 10 percent of the vote — his refusal to condemn *Silski Visti* is significant because he is a respected figure here who has led the charge in accusing the government of corruption and complicity in the murder of an opposition journalist.

The article, "Jews in Ukraine Today: Reality Without Myths," was published last fall as a paid advertisement in the newspaper, which with 500,000 readers is one of the most widely circulated newspapers in Ukraine.

Meanwhile, in an interview with JTA, the paper's editor, Vasily Gruzin, defended the newspaper's decision to publish the piece.

"Although we published the Yaremenko article as a paid advertisement and not as a position we ourselves endorsed, I happen to believe the figure of 400,000 Jews taking part in the German invasion of the Ukraine is not far from the truth," he said.

"I personally have nothing against common Jews, but rather against a small group of Jewish oligarchs who control Ukraine both economically and politically. I believe the point of Zionism today is Jewish control of the world, and we see this process at

work in Ukraine today."

Not long after the Yaremenko article appeared, Moroz, Victor Yuschenko — a pro-Western presidential candidate who is believed to be favored by the Bush administration — and another prominent opposition leader, Yulia Tymoshenko, issued a statement headed "Hands Off *Silski Visti*," opposing an effort by the government to shut down the newspaper on grounds of inciting ethnic discord.

The statement further cited the need for freedom of the press from government control.

With a few exceptions, nearly all of the mass media here are tightly controlled by the government of President Leonid Kuchma, who balances between Russia and the United States and has allowed Jewish life here to flourish.

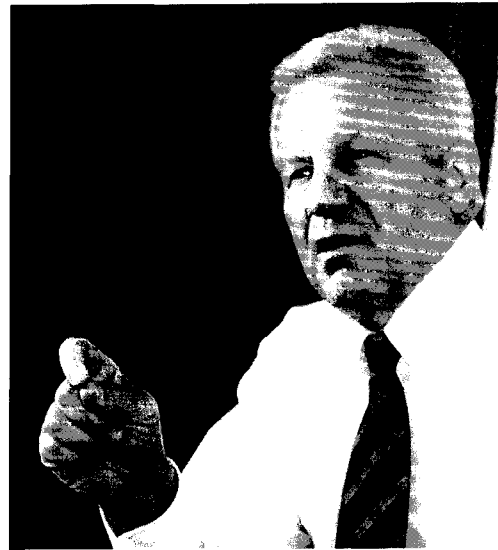
At present, the government's case against *Silski Visti* is being considered by an appeals court and the newspaper continues to publish three times a week.

Following the opposition leaders' statement, an outcry from Jewish community leaders spurred Yuschenko to issue a statement criticizing the *Silski Visti* article as anti-Semitic and urging the newspaper to apologize, which Gruzin, the paper's editor, has ruled out.

Nevertheless, many Jews remain concerned about Ukrainian nationalism and anti-Semitism in both right- and left-wing opposition parties and appear to be leaning toward supporting Prime Minister Viktor Yanukovich, a protege of Kuchma, in the elections.

This comes despite the government's tendency toward repressing opposition media and political parties and frequent allegations of its involvement in mafia-like business activities.

The wave of anti-Semitic agitation in the Ukrainian media began in 2002 with the publication of defamatory articles in the magazine *Personnel*, published by the Interregional Academy of Personnel Management, a university-like institution offering leadership training to 35,000 students on more than 10 campuses across the country.



Vladimir Matveyev

Aleksandr Moroz, leader of the Socialist Party of Ukraine.

Although the school's board includes such respected figures as former President Leonid Kravchuk and former Foreign Minister Boris Tarasyuk, its academic leaders have taken a strongly anti-Western political line, fostering close ties with Russia and the Islamic world.

The academy's president, Georgi Schokin, has addressed three conferences in Saudi Arabia, and the American anti-Semite David Duke has appeared at three of the school's conferences in Kiev.

The Interregional Academy, which financed *Silski Visti*'s publication of Yaremenko's article as a paid advertisement, has published his books and aggressively promoted his writings.

Edward Dolinsky, executive director of the United Jewish Community of Ukraine, accuses both the government and the opposition of tolerating open displays of anti-Semitism here.

He asserted that his organization has "appealed to both the president and prime minister many times to state categorically that there is no place for anti-Semitism in Ukraine in the way Chirac did recently in France. But they have not done so."

Dolinsky granted that Ukraine's deputy minister of foreign affairs made a statement condemning anti-Semitism at the Berlin conference on anti-Semitism hosted by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, but said the government fails to speak clearly on the issue to its own population here at home.

However, he added, the opposition is even worse on anti-Semitism.

French group works for Arab Jewish refugees

By PHILIP CARMEL

PARIS (JTA) — When the International Court of Justice ruled in July that Israel's West Bank security barrier was illegal, Yves-Victor Kamami learned a valuable lesson.

"The lesson of the security barrier is that everything is now an issue for the courts," Kamami told JTA in an interview. "There will come a point when the permanent borders of Israel are settled and then the world will move on to the issue of the refugees. We have to be ready for that."

A former president of Bnai Brith France and an executive member of the CRIF umbrella organization of French Jews, Kamami recently set up the International Federation of Jewish Refugees From Muslim-Arab Countries.

The organization aims to raise international awareness about the hundreds of thousands of Jews who left Arab countries from 1948 onwards following the creation of the State of Israel. It will do so by collecting eyewitness accounts of Jewish life in these countries from emigres.

"It's getting on now for 60 years," Kamami said. "Many of those who were forced out are already dead and if we don't make an inventory soon, this will be lost in the trash can of history."

Some 900,000 Jews left Arab countries after 1948 and more than 600,000 went to Israel. They and their descendants now make up around half of Israel's Jewish population.

There were various reasons for the vast exodus of Sephardic Jews.

Some were entranced by the birth of the Jewish state and left their homelands for Zionist ideals.

Others saw their futures compromised in the newly independent North African states because of the association of Jewish communities with former Colonial powers.

Still others, facing government-sponsored anti-Jewish riots in countries such as Iraq and Egypt, were forced out and should be categorized as refugees, Kamami said.

All, though, faced a pervasive climate of hostility in which attacks against the Jewish community were liable to break out at any time and where Jews — and Christians — were second-class citizens.

Today, fewer than 8,000 Jews remain in Arab countries; some states, such as Libya, were totally emptied of their Jewish populations.

Kamami accepts that his project to

gather testimony from those who left Arab countries is not the first — nor indeed, the only — attempt to undertake such a task.

The World Organization of Jews From Arab Countries was set up in 1975 to address the issue of Sephardic refugees but has since suffered severe funding difficulties and has been largely moribund in recent years.

Attempts by JTA to contact the organization both in the United States and Israel were unsuccessful and the group does not run a Web site.

Nevertheless, two U.S.-based organizations — Jews Indigenous to the Middle East and North Africa, and Justice for Jews From Arab Countries — are both very active.

Following a campaign by the latter group, the issue was forced onto the U.S. political agenda earlier this year with the tabling of twin resolutions in the Senate and House of Representatives calling on President Bush to ensure that "any explicit reference to the required resolution of the Palestinian refugee issue is matched by a similar explicit reference to the resolution of the issue of Jewish refugees from Arab countries."

Israel also got in on the idea a few years ago when it announced that it was partnering with the American Sephardi Foundation on a project to preserve and collect 10,000 claims from previous compensation initiatives that had been abandoned.

Kamami, though, says what has been missing until now has been the existence of a francophone group because "most Jews who left Arab lands — whether they came to France, Israel, the U.S. or Canada — spoke French."

"It's also much more logical for international bodies such as the U.N. Having a Web site in English or Hebrew is not as effective and running it from the U.S. falls into the problem here of a latent anti-Americanism," he said.

Some emigre organizations in France are less keen, however, on such a campaign, convinced that claiming reparations from former countries will damage future contacts with their places of birth.

Simon Atias, the president of the Paris-

based Organization of Jews Originating from Morocco, strongly disagreed with the notion that the term "refugees" could be ascribed to Jews who left Morocco.

"That's much more applicable to people who were forced out of Iraq and Egypt," he told JTA, presumably because Jews faced less hostility in Morocco than elsewhere in the Arab world.

However, he, too, noted that after a long period during which there was little activity in campaigning for Sephardic Jews, there had been a sudden upsurge of interest in recent years.

"There was something in Israel, but they really didn't do anything until negotiations with the Palestinians started," he said.

That's true for Ka-

mami, too — as he readily admits.

"The new trend is victimology. We need to show the trauma and the climate of physical attacks on Jews which is what forced them to leave," he said.

Kamami believes the issue of the dispersal of Jews from Arab countries has been ignored for so long because the Jewish world was largely uninterested in hearing about their plight.

"Historians were occupied with the Shoah, which was obviously the major disaster to befall the Jewish people," he said, adding, "So no one wanted to hear others speaking about losing their property or their money. They didn't have the right to talk about it. Some feel they still haven't. They were ashamed. What was their experience compared to the Shoah?"

Half a century later, he said, times have changed. The issue of the Palestinian refugees will soon become a major issue for debate and Israel will need to confront it, Kamami believes.

In fact, rather than talk of refugees, Kamami prefers to refer to what he calls "an exchange of populations."

"Seven hundred thousand Palestinians left or were forced out in 1948 and that's less than the Jews who were forced out of Arab lands," he said.

"We can talk of a population change like between Germany and Czechoslovakia after the war or between Hindus and Muslims" following the end of British rule in India. ■

We need to show the trauma and the climate of physical attacks on Jews.'

Yves-Victor Kamami
French Jewish leader

COMMUNITY

TRANSITIONS

■ Jeffrey Finkelstein was elected CEO and president of the United Jewish Federation of Greater Pittsburgh.

■ Former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was elected to the board of directors of the American Friends of the Yitzhak Rabin Center.

■ Michael Gelman, the chairman of the United Jewish Communities, was named the first chairman of the Israel Project.

■ Jerry Silverman was named executive director of the Foundation for Jewish Camping.

■ Daniel Allen, former executive vice chairman emeritus of United Israel Appeal, became the executive vice president of American Red Magen David in Israel.

■ Jonathan Gruber was named education director at the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous.

■ Jewish National Fund board member Joseph Hess was named vice president of the International Arid Lands Consortium.

■ Morry Weiss was elected chairman of Yeshiva University's board of trustees.

■ Rabbi Aryeh Kaplan and his wife Sharona were appointed the Torah Educator couple for the Orthodox Union's Jewish Learning Initiative on Campus program at UCLA.

HONORS

■ Swedish Prime Minister Goran Persson received the World Statesman Award from the Appeal of Conscience Foundation. Also honored were Sir John Bond, chairman of HSBC Holdings plc Group, and John Whitehead, chairman of the Lower Manhattan Development Corp.

■ The American Jewish Committee gave its Jan Karski Moral Courage Award to Sister Rose Thering.

■ The National Foundation for Jewish Culture presented its annual Jewish Cultural Achievement Awards in the Arts to theater producer Daryl Roth, writer Wendy Wasserstein, writer Anne Roiphe, painter and sculptor Tobi Kahn and Richard Siegel, the foundation's executive director.

■ The Israel Cancer Research Fund awarded \$1.625 million in grants to 53 Israeli scientists for 2004/2005.

■ The Anti-Defamation League gave its Dore Schary Awards to student filmmakers Kristin Pichaske for her documentary "Guguletu Ballet" and Tanja Mairitsch for the narrative film "Fueling the Fire."

■ Hillel gave Exemplars of Excellence awards to lay leaders Judy Novenstein of Potomac, Md.; Scott Garson of Shaker Heights, Oh.; Marcia Polisuk of Rio de Janeiro; Tom Blumberg of New York, N.Y.; Evan Krame of Potomac, Md.; Maury Fertig of Deerfield, Ill.; and Bea Mandel of Los Angeles.

Anti-Semitism fueled Red Sox curse?

By PETER EPHROSS

NEW YORK (JTA) — Most casual baseball fans know about the "Curse of the Bambino."

Now a sportswriter has written that the curse — which links the Boston Red Sox's failure to win a World Series since 1918 to the sale of slugger Babe Ruth the following year to the New York Yankees — has anti-Semitic origins.

The publication of the story comes as the history of Jews in baseball is getting unprecedented publicity, including a recent two-day conference at baseball's Hall of Fame celebrating Jewish players. The story also comes as Shawn Green, a player with the Los Angeles Dodgers, made headlines with his decision to sit out one of his team's two games during Yom Kippur.

As writer Glenn Stout tells it, the story revolves around the anti-Semitic attitudes of pre-World War II America — and some previously unchallenged historical inaccuracies.

In the September 2004 issue of Boston Baseball magazine, Stout writes that the roots of the animus against Harry Frazee, then the Red Sox owner, lie in his battles with the president of the American League, Ban Johnson.

Knowing that Frazee was from New York and was a theatrical producer, Johnson assumed he was Jewish. But he was wrong — Frazee was Protestant, Stout writes.

The Frazee-was-Jewish story gained further traction when Frazee was blasted in automobile magnate Henry Ford's anti-Semitic newspaper, *The Dearborn Independent*.

Frazee's tenure as owner of the Red Sox amounted to "the smothering influences of the 'chosen race,'" the *Independent* railed in 1921.

The problem, the *Independent* decided, was that Frazee was an unprincipled businessman, not a baseball purist.

"Baseball was about as much a sport to Frazee as selling tickets to a merry-go-round would be," an article in the paper said, according to Stout, adding that "baseball was to be 'promoted' as Jewish managers promote Coney Island."

The caricature was furthered by a

sportswriter named Fred Lieb, who wrote histories of several teams, including the Red Sox. Published in 1947, Lieb's history of the team paints a portrait of Frazee that is "as pointed as that of the Shakespearean character Shylock," writes Stout, who told JTA he donated his pay for the article examining the curse to the Anti-Defamation League.

Fast forward about 40 years, to when New York Times columnist George Vecsey indirectly referred to a curse connected to Frazee's sale of Ruth after the Red Sox let a 1986 World Series victory against the New York Mets slip through their grasp.

The curse was further etched onto the popular mind a few years later by Boston

Globe columnist Dan Shaughnessy in his book, "The Curse of the Bambino."

Stout made sure to emphasize that neither Vecsey nor Shaughnessy is guilty of anti-Semitism.

To some, the link between anti-Jewish sentiments and the curse may

seem tenuous. But to Stout, the anti-Semitism of Ford and Lieb set the stage for later interpretations of Frazee's sale of Ruth as the onset of this decades-old curse.

For his part, Vecsey has since written a mea culpa.

Shaughnessy, however, isn't convinced by the entire argument.

"I don't see what this has to do with the history of the Red Sox," he told JTA. He added: "The story is an enormous stretch."

Fans appear to be split on how much time they want to give Stout's article.

Since the piece appeared in Boston Baseball, Stout says he has received several e-mails from readers.

One man wrote to tell him that he thought it was OK to read the article during Yom Kippur since it dealt with Jewish issues.

"I got a kick out of that," Stout said.

But Martin Abramowitz, a Red Sox fan and the force behind the recently published set of Jewish baseball cards, has his eyes more fixed on worrying about the present, especially the upcoming baseball playoffs, than about baseball's past.

Noting that the Red Sox and their longtime rivals from New York might meet in the playoffs, he said, "We're too busy trying to beat the Yankees." ■

The anti-Semitism of Henry Ford helped perpetuate a baseball myth, a new article says.

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

Poll: Russian Jews prefer Bush

Russian Jews in New York City prefer President Bush over Sen. John Kerry for president, a poll found.

Fifty-four percent of Russian American Jews in the city said they would vote for Bush if the election were held today, according to the survey conducted for the American Jewish Committee.

Fourteen percent of these respondents said they would vote for Kerry, a Democrat from Massachusetts, while 25 percent remained undecided.

The survey, to be released early next month, was conducted among 789 Russian American Jews in New York City between July 20 and Aug. 25.

A separate survey released by the AJCommittee found that U.S. Jews nationwide prefer Kerry over Bush by 69 percent to 24 percent.

Pollard disputes Sharon's backing

Jonathan Pollard is disputing Ariel Sharon's claim that he raises the issue of Pollard's imprisonment in contacts with U.S. officials.

Pollard, the former U.S. Navy intelligence analyst serving a life sentence in a U.S. jail for spying for Israel, said White House contacts say the Israeli prime minister has not raised the issue of freeing Pollard.

Sharon told Israel Army Radio in a Yom Kippur-eve interview that "I have brought up this issue up in all of my meetings in the United States and I have not missed one opportunity to solve this issue."

Web site helps Russian Americans vote

There's a new Russian-language Web site to help immigrants understand the U.S. voting process.

The site, www.wevote.us, is part of the Civic and Voter Education Initiative, a program to help Russian-speaking Americans become part of the American political process.

The site is a joint initiative of the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, the Local Russian Emigre Organizations coalition and the World Congress of Russian Jewry.

Hate music to go to kids

A company with links to hate groups is planning to distribute sampler CDs to American students, the Anti-Defamation League said.

Panzerfaust Records, a neo-Nazi label based in Minnesota, is planning to distribute 100,000 CDs featuring white-power bands to students aged 13-19, the group said.

Shul sanctioned after inviting gay rabbi

A synagogue in New York City is losing support from its umbrella organization because it invited a gay rabbi to give a sermon during Rosh Hashanah, according to reports.

The Union for Traditional Judaism is pulling its support from the Montauk Minyan, which featured Orthodox Rabbi Steve Greenberg as one of its speakers during the holiday, the New York Jewish Week reported.

A spokesman for the small congregation says Greenberg did not address gay or lesbian issues during his talk.

But the union says homosexual behavior is incompatible with Jewish law.

Not loafing off

An American Jewish day school is baking what it hopes will be the world's largest challah.

The Solomon Schechter Day School in western Massachusetts is hoping its 40-foot-long challah will get into the Guinness Book of Records.

MIDDLE EAST

Confessions in Jerusalem vandalism

Two Israeli Jews were arrested in Jerusalem for scrawling anti-government graffiti during Yom Kippur.

The men confessed to the crime, an Israeli police spokesman said Tuesday. The men are believed to be leftist extremists, and reportedly said they carried out the crime, and others, for ideological reasons.

Settlers suspected of assault

West Bank settlers are suspected of assaulting two American peace activists. A middle-aged couple from the Christian Peace Maker group were set upon by five masked men while escorting Palestinian children to school near Hebron on Wednesday.

One victim suffered a broken arm, the other a punctured lung.

WORLD

Lithuanians honored for helping Jews

Lithuania's president honored 55 Lithuanians for protecting Jews during World War II.

Valdas Adamkus presented the Lithuanians with Life-Saving Crosses as part of Lithuania's commemoration of what it calls "Jewish Genocide Day," The Associated Press reported.

Jewish officials on delegation to rights forum

Two Jewish leaders were named to the official U.S. delegation for a conference of European human rights.

Mark Levin, the executive director of the NCSJ: Advocates on Behalf of Jews in Russia, Ukraine, the Baltic States & Eurasia, and the Anti-Defamation League's Fred Lawrence were named public members of the U.S. delegation to the OSCE conference, scheduled for Oct. 4-15 in Warsaw.

Hungarians rally against neo-Nazis

About 1,000 demonstrators rallied in Hungary to protest a planned neo-Nazi rally. The demonstrators who gathered in front of Budapest's Terror House museum on Sunday protested the planned Oct. 15 rally of the Hungarian Future Group.

German extremist to face charges

The head of Germany's largest right-wing extremist party is to face charges of denigrating the state.

The chief prosecutor of Berlin has filed charges against Udo Voigt, president of the National Democratic Party, for remarks he made in a recent interview with the newspaper Junge Freiheit, or Young Freedom, according to Tuesday's edition of the Berlin daily newspaper Tagesspiegel.

In the interview, Voigt called Hitler a "great statesman" and said the government of Germany today is an "illegitimate system" deserving of "revolutionary change."

Peace train?

The former Cat Stevens addressed a Canadian organization in 1998 that is a front for Hamas, a Toronto newspaper reported.

The ex-pop singer, now known as Yusuf Islam, was the keynote speaker at a fund-raising dinner for the Jerusalem Fund for Human Services in Toronto, according to the National Post, which viewed a videotape of his talk.

A British citizen and Muslim convert, the former singer described Judaism as a "so-called religion" and called for Muslims to "raise the banner of jihad" and to return to Jerusalem, the paper reported.

He was deported from the United States last week for national security reasons, according to the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.