



IN THE NEWS

Shelling follows Gaza Strip deaths

Israeli troops killed three Palestinian gunrunners in the Gaza Strip, drawing mortar fire on Jewish settlements.

Soldiers shot at several youths spotted in an off-limits area of Rafah, on Gaza's border with Egypt, killing three of them Saturday.

Another two were arrested and confessed to arms smuggling.

In response, Palestinian terrorists fired at least 25 mortar bombs at Israeli settlements in Gaza, the worst violence in several weeks.

One group, Islamic Jihad, said it was no longer bound by an internal truce declared last month at Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' behest.

Sharon, Bush to talk withdrawal

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon left for talks with President Bush, their 10th meeting.

Sharon took off Sunday for Crawford, Texas, where Bush keeps a ranch.

At their meeting Monday, the president is expected to show support for Sharon before the summer withdrawal of Israeli soldiers and settlers from the Gaza Strip.

Bush also has said he will raise U.S. misgivings at Israel's plan to add 3,500 new homes to the West Bank settlement of Ma'aleh Adumim, which the Sharon government has put on hold.

Katsav meets Assad, Khatami

Israel's president exchanged pleasantries with Syrian and Iranian leaders at Pope John Paul II's funeral.

Moshe Katsav twice shook the hand of Syrian President Bashar Assad last Friday, and also spoke briefly in Farsi with Iranian President Mohammed Khatami.

Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom also attended the funeral, and met with Moroccan Foreign Minister Mohammed Ben-Issa.

WORLD REPORT

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With Pride in Israel Mission, UJC seeks bridge to lesbians, gays

By JOANNE PALMER

NEW YORK (JTA) — In many ways, the UJC Pride in Israel Mission, scheduled for mid-August, will be a standard United Jewish Communities trip to Israel.

The group will look at Israeli archaeology, sample Israeli wine, tour Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, celebrate Shabbat and be briefed on the political situation.

It will learn about "the broad set of services being provided overseas using federation dollars," said Stuart Kurlander of Washington, the mission's national chairman, who holds a battery of positions in the UJC and the Jewish Federation of Greater Washington.

But like other interest groups, it also will learn about areas of particular importance to its members. In this case, that's the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered, or LGBT, community in Israel.

After the mission travelers will be able to extend their stays in Israel. One recommended activity is the 10-day Jerusalem World Pride 2005 festival, which will culminate in a march through the capital.

"It's groundbreaking," Kurlander said of the mission. "It has the potential to lead to an increased involvement by Jewish members of the LGBT community. It's really about the engagement of this part of our community with all that we do within our federation, with establishing a bond and a shared sense of purpose."

Organizers of the LGBT mission, the

first UJC has sponsored, hope to nurture connections between North American and Israeli gays and lesbians, and to strengthen participants' bonds to each other and to the federation system.

"It's long been recognized that there are a number of LGBT Jews living in our communities," Kurlander said. "The interest is in engaging them as we would engage single or young couples. It's just another constituency of our federation."

Registration for the mission has just begun, so organizers don't know how many people to expect. They do know that the rabbi in residence will be Steve Greenberg, the gay Orthodox rabbi who appeared in the documentary "Trembling Before G-d."

Another participant will be Rep. Barney Frank (D-Mass.).

Frank, who is Jewish and openly gay, said he has been to Israel many times and has met often with gay and lesbian Israelis.

"I've also worked quietly with the Israeli government" on gay and lesbian issues, he said.

"This is something the left doesn't appreciate: The Israeli government is giving asylum to gay Palestinians," Frank said. "These are people who would be killed by the Palestinians just for being gay. They're allowed to live in Israel."

Frank doesn't think American Jews will criticize the mission.

"There's some concern over Pride Day in Jerusalem, but I think the concern is misguided," he said. But he added, "I do think it's important that people should be respect-

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BEHIND
THE
HEADLINES

■ UJC sponsors Pride in Israel Mission for gays, lesbians

Continued from page 1

ful. I'm not for public nudity in any gay pride parade."

Frank thinks Israelis have done a better job in some ways than Americans in integrating gays and lesbians into the larger culture.

"The Israel Defense Force has openly gay and lesbian members, and it hasn't lost any of its fighting ability. You can hardly argue that being gay or lesbian makes the IDF an unfit force," he said.

Greenberg thinks the mission gives gays and lesbians an opportunity to reconnect to a tradition many feel has rejected them, but for which they still yearn.

"This is an opportunity for people who still find themselves spiritual or faithful in some way, or who remember when they were, or who feel a connection to Israel or to Jewishness in general, to do what pilgrims do — to go to Israel for personal renewal and for a sense of reconnection to the land of Israel, to the people of Israel, and, for many of us who will be on this mission, to the God of Israel," he said.

"We're simply not going to be excluded any more. We're going to insist that we have a place at the table," he continued. "This is one of the ways we're going to do that."

Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum of Congregation Beth Simchat Torah, New York City's gay and lesbian shul, is a national co-chairwoman of Jerusalem World Pride 2005.

The festival includes interfaith seminars and workshops. It's sponsored in Israel by the Jerusalem Open House, an

organization that welcomes Jewish, Christian and Muslim gay men and lesbians.

Yale University and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem are sponsoring a two-day academic conference during the festival on issues of homosexuality and religion.

Jerusalem has hosted gay pride parades for three years, but this is the first to be sponsored by an international organization, Interpride.

"It's focusing not on the politics of Israel, but on bringing to Israel the international voices of many types of LGBT people, including people of faith from all different religions," Kleinbaum said.

■
Opposition to the festival has made odd bedfellows of groups that rarely make common cause. Many media outlets carried photographs from a news conference last week where high-ranking Jewish, Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Protestant and Muslim clerics met to denounce plans for World Pride.

"They are creating a deep and terrible sorrow that is unbearable," The New York Times quoted Shlomo Amar, Israel's Sephardi chief rabbi, as saying.

Kleinbaum noted the irony.

"I think we should be given the Nobel Peace Prize for getting those people in a room together, agreeing on something," she said. "We want to show the world a very different kind of religion, not the kind that's based on hatred. We want to show a religion's face of love, of toler-

ance and of the value of diversity."

Reaction to the mission and the festival has been muted in North America.

"We have serious concerns and we are deciding how we will be reacting," said a spokesman for the Orthodox Union's executive vice president, Rabbi Tzvi Hersh Weinreb.

Rabbi Daniel Lapin of Toward Tradition, a conservative political group headquartered in Washington state, reacted strongly.

"My first reaction was that it was *deja vu*," Lapin said. "This was the Nazis marching in Skokie."

He was talking about an incident in the late 1970s when the American Nazi Party marched through an Illinois city, upsetting the many Holocaust survivors who lived there and causing a firestorm of protest.

"I'm not saying that the homosexuals are Nazis," Lapin continued. "I am saying that there is such a thing as deliberate provocation. To hold the march in Jerusalem, which is certainly the center of biblical civilization — and this is the same Bible that tells us that homosexuality is immoral — is a provocation."

He was less angered by the UJC mission, but still did not approve of it.

"It might be appealing, in a childish sort of way," he said, "but to undermine whatever precarious stability and unity remains in Israel's population seems to be an act of childish self-indulgence rather than an act of concern for the Jewish people." ■

'We're simply not going to be excluded any more. We're going to insist that we have a place at the table.'

Rabbi Steve Greenberg

Mission's rabbi in residence

Study: Jews in S.F. need outreach

PACIFIC GROVE, Calif. (JTA) — Jewish institutions in the San Francisco area should focus on increasing Jewish engagement among the unaffiliated rather than on fundraising from them, a new study says.

The community-wide scan of Jewish professionals in nearly 100 institutions was carried out by the New York-based Jewish Outreach Institute. Sponsored by the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund, it

follows similar studies in other cities.

The Jewish population of the Bay Area has nearly doubled in 20 years, but the area still has low synagogue affiliation and high intermarriage rates compared to the rest of the country.

The report counsels taking outreach to the streets — into malls, movie theaters and bookstores.

The full report will be released April 20 in San Francisco. ■

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Back from Israel, Jewish kids go to school in Russia

By LEV KRICHEVSKY

MOSCOW (JTA) — With his shaggy hair, a black T-shirt featuring a heavy metal band and a CD player on his waist, Boris Ulyansky looks a lot like an Israeli teenager.

That's what he used to be.

The son of Russian Jews who immigrated to Israel, Ulyansky returned to Russia a few years ago with his family when his father got a job as an executive with a Moscow-based company.

His parents decided to send their son to a Jewish day school in Moscow.

"The choice was mostly due to the atmosphere here. It's comfortable and easy to be

here," says Ulyansky, a graduate of Moscow Jewish Day School No. 1311.

"The distance between the teachers and the students here is much less than in other Russian schools; it's almost like in Israel here," he adds.

The 1980s and 1990s saw a huge wave of Jewish emigration from the former communist empire, mostly to Israel.

When the dust settled and some of the former Soviet republics stabilized economically — which coincided with an economic downturn and heightened security concerns in Israel — some of the emigrants returned to their native countries.

Many returned with their children, some of whom were born in Israel or had gone there when they were quite young. Many of these children end up at Jewish day schools across the former Soviet Union.

"There is an ongoing flow of returning families in our school," says Grigoriy Lipman, principal of the Moscow Jewish day school, which has been open for 14 years.

"These are kids who have spent five to seven years in Israeli schools, who often come here without any knowledge of Russian," says Lipman, whose school has 340 students in first through 11th grade, when Russian high school ends.

Exact figures are hard to come by, but as much as 10 percent of the students in Russian Jewish schools in larger cities across the former Soviet Union, such as Moscow, are believed to be from families that returned from Israel.

"Of course, these kids first come here with very good Hebrew," says Sharon Ganon, an Israeli who teaches Hebrew at Moscow School No. 1311. "But the longer they live here the worse their Hebrew is getting."

She recalled the time a second-grader started crying in class. He realized he was forgetting the Hebrew alphabet.

"They clearly do not speak Hebrew at home. They have three to four hours of language a week, and that's it," Ganon said.

Some teachers say the presence of these students returning from Israel may interfere with the strong pro-Israel feelings the schools try to instill.

"There is a certain conflict here," says Ganon, who admits that she finds it difficult to address such situations.

"It may seem to their parents that it's easier here," she says. "But it's not easy

for the child in the first place" because they have to make new friends and adapt to a new culture.

"In almost every class, I have two or three of these kids. A few years ago such kids were a rarity here, but now there are more and more of them," she says.

"In the beginning these kids look like Israeli kids. But as time goes by, they start to talk

in Russian at Hebrew classes. They start to listen to Russian music and they want to be just like the others around them."

Once, during a lesson, Ganon caught a glimpse of how these students feel about Israel and about being torn between two countries.

A primary school class was learning the Hebrew verb "lagur," which means "to live."

"I asked the students where they want to live, and the few Israeli kids in class said they didn't know," Ganon says. "That reflects to me what's going on in their families. They know what's going on in Israel, and you can't tell them that Israel is the most wonderful place on earth."

But Ganon says there are moments when the Israeli students show their ties to the Jewish state.

At a ceremony a few years ago marking the anniversary of the 1995 assassination of Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, she says, "I saw the difference between them and the Russian kids. Many Israeli kids had tears in their eyes, unlike the Russian kids, to whom it all looked much more irrelevant."

An experience at one Tu B'Shevat celebration may be more typical, however. The kids listened to Hatikvah, Israel's national anthem, and one of the girls started to cry. When asked why, she said she missed Israel.

"But a couple of months later, on Purim, the same girl already sang a song in Russian," Ganon said. ■

'In the beginning these kids look like Israeli kids. But as time goes by, they start to talk in Russian at Hebrew classes.'

Sharon Ganon

Teacher

THIS WEEK

MONDAY

■ Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon meets with President Bush at Bush's ranch in Crawford, Texas. The principal topic will be Israel's plans to pull out of the Gaza Strip and part of the northern West Bank, and the coordination of the move with the Palestinians. Sharon flies to Washington on Tuesday, where he is expected to meet with senior members of Congress, administration officials and Jewish leaders.

TUESDAY

■ The director and star of an Israeli film now playing in North America will take part in a panel discussion on the film in Washington. Eytan Fox, the director, and Lior Ashkenazi are among those discussing "Walk on Water," a drama that follows a Mossad agent who tries to track down an aging Nazi war criminal.

WEDNESDAY

■ The Leo Baeck Institute and New York City's Center for Jewish History present the premiere of Richard Teitelbaum's electro-acoustic opera, "Z'vi," based on the life of the 17th-century false messiah, Shabbetai Zevi.

■ Caterpillar shareholders meet in Chicago to consider a resolution calling on the company to investigate its ties to the Israeli military, and the role its bulldozers play in the destruction of Palestinian property. The U.S. Campaign to End the Israeli Occupation will hold demonstrations supporting the resolution at Caterpillar dealerships in a number of U.S. cities.

THURSDAY

■ The Abraham Fund holds its annual dinner in New York City. Former U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross is the featured speaker.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Minor violence on mount

Hundreds of Jewish activists tried to march on the Temple Mount but were driven back by police.

The turnout for Sunday's religious rally in Jerusalem's Old City was far lower than the organizers for the far-right group Revava had hoped, thanks to a heavy police presence aimed at preventing a riot by Palestinians at the mount's two mosques.

Scuffles ensued at the Western Wall plaza, and 22 right-wing activists and a Palestinian were arrested.

In a related development, Israel arrested a Hamas leader who entered the Temple Mount illegally to block the protest.

Israeli police arrested Hassan Youssef, who did not have a permit to enter Jerusalem, as he was driving back to the West Bank from Jerusalem on Sunday.

U.S. lowers travel warning to Israel

The United States renewed its warning against travel to Israel and the Palestinian areas, but lowered the danger status in Israel's case.

The State Department travel warning issued April 7 urged Americans to "carefully weigh the necessity of travel to Israel" and to "defer unnecessary travel to the West Bank and avoid all travel to Gaza."

For the last two years, the warnings have recommended "deferring" travel to Israel, so "careful weighing" is an upgrade.

"It's a first step in the right direction and we hope this will lead to the lifting of the travel warning," said Daniel Ayalon, Israel's ambassador to Washington.

The warning also said that Israel's planned July evacuation of settlers from the Gaza Strip will lead to protests that "at best will be severely disruptive and at worst may result in physical confrontations leading to violence."

NORTH AMERICA

Tanner nominated to head umbrella group

Harold Tanner, a former president of the American Jewish Committee, was nominated to head U.S. Jewry's most powerful umbrella group.

In addition to heading the AJCommittee from 2001-2004, Tanner, an investment banker, has served the UJA-Federation of New York.

He has been a contributor to Jewish life at Cornell University; recently, Cornell announced a prize named after him, to be given to those supporting Jewish life in the world and at the university.

If approved, Tanner would succeed James Tisch, who will complete his second one-year term on May 31.

Yankel Rosenbaum's family sues hospital

The family of the rabbinical student killed during the 1991 Crown Heights riots is suing a New York City hospital.

The family of Yankel Rosenbaum is suing the Kings County Hospital for failing to properly treat the 29-year-old for the stab wounds inflicted by Lemrick Nelson, according to the New York Daily News.

Rosenbaum was killed in the anti-Jewish violence that erupted in the Brooklyn neighborhood after a Chasidic driver's car accidentally struck and killed a 7-year-old black child, Gavin Cato.

U.S. court revokes guard's citizenship

A U.S. court revoked the citizenship of a former Nazi concentration camp guard.

The court ruled last Friday that John Hansl had participated in persecution when he served in the SS Death's Head battalion at Natzweiler and Sachsenhausen.

His lawyer said she would appeal the decision, which was given in the case brought by the U.S. Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations.

WORLD

Jews attend pope's funeral

Jewish leaders were given a seat of honor last Friday at Pope John Paul II's funeral.

"They treated the Jews in a manner that was highly respectful, and they treated us as the heads of an important religion," the chairman of the World Jewish Congress, Rabbi Israel Singer, told JTA from Rome.

Jewish leaders in attendance included Rabbi Arthur Schneier of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation and New York's Park East synagogue; Shear-Yashuv Cohen, the chief rabbi of Haifa; Oded Weiner, director general of Israel's chief rabbinate; Rome's chief rabbi, Riccardo Di Segni; and Elio Toaff, rabbi emeritus of Rome, who was the only Jew mentioned in the pope's will, Singer said.

Henry Sobel, rabbi of Brazil's largest synagogue, attended as part of the Brazilian presidential delegation.

Israel welcomes U.N. reform proposal

Israel welcomed Kofi Annan's proposal to reform the U.N. human rights body.

The U.N. secretary-general on April 7 told the Geneva-based U.N. Human Rights Commission that its "declining credibility" required an overhaul, not just piecemeal reform.

The commission, which has been chaired by notorious human rights abusers such as Sudan or Libya, singles out Israel for criticism more than any other nation.

Israel's Foreign Ministry welcomed the speech and expressed the hope that it "leads to concrete changes," the Jerusalem Post reported.

Annan, who in recent weeks has proposed a range of U.N. reforms, wants to create a new human-rights body along the lines of the U.N. Security Council.

The U.S. veto power on the Security Council historically has protected Israel from excessive censure.

Politician 'tired' of Holocaust

A New Zealand politician was placed on "temporary leave" from his party after insensitive remarks regarding the Holocaust.

The country's Labor Party announced John Tamihere would not participate in party activities this week after he was quoted in a weekend interview as saying, "I am sick and tired of hearing how many Jews got gassed."

In a statement, Prime Minister Helen Clark said Tamihere's remarks are deeply offensive.

Russian city gets synagogue

A new synagogue and Jewish community center was inaugurated in the Russian city of Yekaterinburg.

The Rohr JCC and Synagogue inaugurated last Friday was built on the site where the city's synagogue stood until it was destroyed some 40 years ago, during Communist rule.

The new center will house an Orthodox synagogue and a charity center with a soup kitchen, among other things.

The more than \$2 million construction was made possible through a grant from the U.S.-based Rohr Family Foundation, as well as gifts from some 150 local donors that included local Jewish public officials, businessmen and community members.