


IN THE NEWS
Rallies demand Gilad Shalit's return

Thousands of Jews around the world gathered Monday to protest the recent kidnapping of an Israeli soldier by Palestinian gunmen.

The largest gathering was in New York City, where a crowd of several hundred, including Jewish leaders and their interfaith colleagues, stood in front of the Syrian mission to the United Nations. Rallies also were held in Washington, Ottawa and Santiago, Chile. Community meetings were held in Paris and Johannesburg, while Australia and Buenos Aires are planning initiatives lasting two weeks.

In London, a delegation submitted a letter requesting Shalit's release to the Syrian ambassador, who accepted the letter and invited several people into the embassy. The rallies were sponsored by the Jewish Agency for Israel and the World Zionist Organization.

Israeli strike kills three Palestinians

An Israeli airstrike that apparently went awry killed at least three Palestinians teenagers.

Monday's strike in the Gaza Strip was aimed at Palestinian fighters shooting rockets into Israel, but the missile misfired and hit the teenagers. An earlier Israeli strike killed two suspected terrorists in Gaza.

Poll: Palestinians back rocket attacks

Most Palestinians support the kidnapping of Israelis and rocket fire from the Gaza Strip, a survey found.

According to a Jerusalem Media and Communications Center poll issued this week, 77 percent of Palestinians back the abduction of Israeli soldiers, while 67 percent favor expanding the tactic to Israeli civilians. Sixty percent said Palestinian terrorist groups should continue firing rockets into Israel.

WORLD REPORT

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Lieberman's support for Iraq war creates dilemma for Jewish backers

By DAVID J. SILVERMAN

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Six years after Joe Lieberman presented Jewish Democrats with an unprecedented triumph, he may pose an intractable dilemma.

If the U.S. senator from Connecticut loses an Aug. 8 primary to a come-from-nowhere challenger, Jewish Democrats may have to choose between loyalty to the party and the man who made history in 2000 as the first Jew nominated to a national ticket.

Lieberman announced his decision last week to collect enough signatures for an independent run if he loses the primary in his bid for a fourth term. That's a sign that he perceives a real threat from Ned Lamont, a millionaire whose challenge focuses overwhelmingly on Lieberman's support for the Iraq war.

"I'm going to be there on Nov. 7 one way or another," Lieberman told The Associated Press after his announcement.

The question for Jewish Democrats is where will they be.

"It does present a dilemma," said Steve Grossman, a former chairman of the Democratic National Committee.

"If you consider yourself first and foremost part of the pro-Israel community, you will stick with Joe Lieberman," said Grossman, who also is a past president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. "If you're so overwhelmingly convinced that ending the war as soon as possible is of paramount importance, I could understand why you would find Joe Lieberman a candidate you could no longer support."

Lamont's campaign says the issue isn't so clear-cut, insisting that he, too, is focused on Israel.

"Israel's security is a topic that is very important to Ned," said Liz Dupont-Diehl, the campaign's communications director. "He has a lot of respect for Israel."

She said Lamont had met with a number of Jewish leaders. Jewish officials, however, say they haven't sensed any outreach.

"I don't think he's spoken out effectively to things the mainstream Jewish voters feel," said Richard

Greenfield, publisher of the Connecticut Jewish Ledger.

On Lamont's Web site, the single foreign issue addressed is Iraq. Israel merits a passing mention in that context: "Israel is no safer" since the Iraq war, the site says.

If Lieberman does end up losing the primary and running as an independent, it would split Jewish voters, said Steve Rabinowitz, a strategist who advises Democrats and Jewish groups.

"A lot of Jewish Democrats will support the Democratic nominee because they're Democrats, but there will be support for the icon Joe Lieberman," he said.

Grossman said he's supporting Lieberman.

"I don't criticize those who can't support Joe Lieberman because he no longer represents the views of progressive Democrats.

"But there has not been a greater champion of Israel and the well-being of the Jewish people," Grossman said.

It's unclear how many Jewish Democrats share that view. Jewish fund-raisers canvassed by JTA said they favored Lieberman

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**FOCUS
ON
ISSUES**

■ *If Lieberman runs independently, will he command the loyalty of Jewish Democrats?*

Continued from page 1

— even those who profoundly disagree with him on Iraq.

But an internal Democratic poll of Connecticut Jews sees Lamont leading by 50 percent to 41 percent, JTA has learned. The sample was small, but the results were a dramatic departure from the 90-plus approval rating Lieberman scored among Jews after Al Gore named him as his running mate in 2000.

Connecticut Jews make up 111,000 of the state's 3.4 million people, or a little more than 3 percent of the population, according to the Jewish Virtual Library.

Lieberman's backers attribute the shift to opposition to the Iraq war. Jewish opposition to the war has always outpaced general opposition.

"I find the behavior of a large segment of the Jewish community to be reprehensible and outrageous," said John Droney, a former chairman of the state party who is advising Lieberman to run as an independent. "When he's in trouble like this, they all ought to rally to him. It's too bad that you have to listen to an Irish-American to realize that you've got to support your own home cooking."

Lamont, a cable TV millionaire, has closed the gap significantly by battering Lieberman on his support for the war and his friendliness to President Bush.

In a May 2 Quinnipiac poll of likely Democratic voters, Lieberman enjoyed a 65 percent to 19 percent lead. In a June 8 Quinnipiac poll, the lead had dwindled to 55-40. A recent Rasmussen poll showed Lieberman

clinging to a six-point lead.

Lamont's supporters ran a float in a July 4 parade in Hartford that featured a caricature of the kiss Bush bestowed on Lieberman after Bush's State of the Union address in January. A bumper sticker on the float read, "Just (politically) married," and supporters shouted, "Joe Must Go!"

Much of the impetus comes from Democratic bloggers furious with Lieberman for supporting the war. MoveOn.org, a clearinghouse for antiwar activists, backs Lamont.

"There's no question about it; Lieberman is running a two-phased campaign," said Rabbi Menachem Genack, an Orthodox

Union official who lives in New Jersey. "He has to run against a nationwide coalition of bloggers and also against Lamont."

Voters should take into account Lieberman's solid record on a host of issues other than Iraq, including support for labor protections and health reform, said Sue Turnbull, the Jewish vice chairwoman of the Democratic National Committee.

There already are signs of a split in the party. Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) said she backed Lieberman, but added that she wanted to "be clear that I will support the nominee chosen by Connecticut Democrats."

By contrast, Senate minority leader Sen. Harry Reid (D-Nev.), and Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.), who heads the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee, refuse to comment on whom they will support after the primary.

Jewish Democrats should be wary of Lamont, pro-Israel fund-raisers said.

"The people who are doing this have no concern for Israel or issues of concern to

the Jewish community," said Dr. Ben Chouake, president of Norpac, a nonpartisan, New Jersey-based political action committee. "This is an example of an extreme left that really is looking to put a scalp on their wall to show that they have power."

Democrats in general are missing the bigger picture, said Alan Solomont, a Boston-based Jewish fund-raiser who headed funding for John Kerry's 2004 bid for the presidency.

"The left in our party who favor a different approach to Iraq are turning their fury on Joe in a way that I don't think is particularly helpful," Solomont said. "I

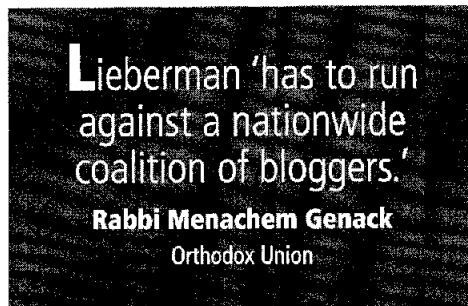
differ with Lieberman on Iraq but I don't think Democrats can afford to break ranks right now in the face of extreme right-wing control of the entire federal government."

Democrats hope to win back one or both houses of Congress in November. But Marvin Lender, a Connecticut entrepreneur who chairs the Israel Policy Forum and has backed Lieberman for decades, says a Lieberman loss would send an unsettling message to Democrats who hope to win.

Ultimately, when it comes to Jewish support, Rabinowitz said, Lieberman might be a victim of his success: Now that a Jew has placed on a national ticket, Jews no longer feel the need to reflexively support every Jewish candidate.

"We have achieved as a community virtually every level of acceptance politically in this country," he said. "So as much pride as there has been, Jews are way past the point where we knee jerk for the Jewish candidate."

Washington Bureau Chief Ron Kampeas contributed to this story.



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Envoy's brother moves to Israel

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The brother of the former U.S. ambassador to Israel moved to a West Bank settlement. Ben Kurtzer, whose brother Daniel wrapped up his term as U.S. envoy in Tel Aviv last year, arrived in Israel last week in a group of 250 immigrants from North America brought by the Nefesh B'Nefesh program. "We decided that

this is our home and we want to live among our people," Kurtzer told the Ynet news Web site.

"This is a very special country and we are very happy to be part of it." According to Ynet, Kurtzer and his family are to live in Ma'aleh Adumim, the biggest West Bank settlement.

Moscow Torah classes attract big names

By LEV KRICHEVSKY

MOSCOW (JTA) — Gary Kasparov is used to being in the spotlight, but less used to discussing Torah in a public forum.

But that's exactly what the former world chess champion did on a recent evening at a Moscow Jewish community center.

The talk on the weekly portion by Kasparov, 43, was part of a weekly seminar called Dvar Torah. Each Thursday night, the seminar brings together a group of businessmen, journalists, academics and professionals for that reason.

The seminar — now in its second year — is the brainchild of Yevgenia Albats, one of the best-known names in Russian political journalism of the last two decades and a professor of political science.

Kasparov, whose father is Jewish, said when Albats first approached him with the idea of speaking on what looked like a purely religious subject, he was inclined to say no.

"At first, I was shocked," he said. Until he found out what the portion was about.

Last year, Kasparov retired from a professional career in chess to devote his time to politics and pro-democracy activism.

So it was no wonder that he turned his talk about a portion from the Book of Numbers into a debate about freedom and slavery, mass thinking and society's ability to take responsibility for its own future — subjects that are relevant in today's Russia.

The weekly seminar started in September 2004 with 15 people and has grown since then.

The list of speakers reads as a who's who among the Russian business, journalistic and intellectual elites: from leading business tycoons and prominent lawyers to television anchors and a former Russian foreign minister. Some spoke out of curiosity, others were captured by Albats' enthusiasm and, in the words of many of them, could not afford to say no to her.

One of the participants on a recent Thursday said he has missed only a handful of sessions in nearly two years.

"To me, this is the most meaningful event in the life of the Jewish community of Moscow," said Mikhail Berger, a lead-

ing financial journalist.

To him and many other regulars, the seminar is particularly valuable because it is a rare grass-roots Jewish initiative in Russia.

"Most of other events are more of a formality, being part of someone else's agenda," Berger said. "What's happening here touches me personally. It brings me back to reading the text."

Albats has 170 people on her mailing list, and her weekly e-mail announcements on upcoming sessions include Web links

to different Torah commentaries — from the most traditional to contemporary ones. Those who come to the seminar "can be whatever they want, from Jewish Orthodox to atheists," she said.

"But before you make your judgment, you first need to read the book," she said.

In fact, speakers and participants don't necessarily have to be Jewish, although she thinks that "98 percent of those who come are Jews."

Of course, celebrity speakers like Kasparov get the highest number of attendees — as many as 70.

But Albats says she never strived for numbers. In fact, she shuns excessive publicity, does not allow photographs to be taken at the meetings and has refused several television requests.

She is running this activity on a slim budget, and the only organization that has some input is the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which provides space for the seminar in its Nikitskaya JCC in Moscow.

ACROSS
THE FORMER
SOVIET
UNION

'Stop thinking of yourself as a zhid, persecuted and resentful, and start feeling like the People of the Book.'

Yevgenia Albats
Founder, Dvar Torah

Albats says for many of her speakers — especially the well-known figures — it is often not an easy step to accept her invitation, given that most Russian Jews are not even remotely familiar with the Torah.

She is not sure whether her project can be replicated. But her own initiative is modeled after what she saw at Harvard University a few years ago when she was completing her post-graduate studies there.

Some 30 years ago, Rabbi Ben Zion Gold of Harvard established a worship and study group at Harvard's Hillel, and Albats said attending these sessions was one of the best experiences she had at Harvard.

Each session opens and closes with a traditional Jewish blessing in Hebrew on reading the Torah.

When it fits the portion, Albats organiz-

es a mini-lecture on subjects like Jewish dietary laws, liturgy or cantorial tradition and invites knowledgeable speakers.

And at almost every session, there is a rabbi or even two in attendance: Mos-

cow's chief rabbi, Pinchas Goldschmidt, who is Orthodox, and Russia's first and only woman rabbi, Nelly Shulman, from the Reform movement, attend nearly every week. They always have the privilege of making the final comments on the portion.

Albats, who has authored many articles and a book on issues of anti-Semitism and tolerance in Russia, sees the seminar as a vehicle to help people define their Jewishness in positive terms.

"It's the most important thing here: to stop thinking of yourself as a zhid, persecuted and resentful, and start feeling like the People of the Book."

Stamp to depict Greenberg

NEW YORK (JTA) — Jewish baseball star Hank Greenberg is among four former sluggers who will be depicted on a series of U.S. stamps. The 39-cent stamps of Greenberg, Roy Campanella, Mel Ott and Mickey Mantle will be unveiled July 15

at Yankee Stadium. Greenberg, who is in baseball's Hall of Fame, was the first modern Jewish baseball hero in the 1930s and 1940s. He was twice named MVP during his career, which was mainly spent with the Detroit Tigers.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Olmert takes on E.U. censure

Israel rebuffed European Union criticism of its offensive in the Gaza Strip.

Prime Minister Ehud Olmert on Monday suggested that the 25-nation bloc, which last week accused Israel of "disproportionate" use of force in its hunt for Palestinian rocket crews and an abducted Israeli soldier in Gaza, is guilty of bias.

"What exactly is the criterion by which one measures the proportion of more than 1,000 missiles shot at innocent civilians against the measures that were taken by the State of Israel in the last few days?" Olmert said at a briefing for the foreign media.

"When was the last time that the European Union condemned this shooting and suggested effective measures to stop it?"

Settlers arrested for anti-police plot

Five West Bank settlers are in Israeli custody on suspicion of plotting to attack police.

The five Yitzhar residents were arrested recently on a tip that they planned to torch a car belonging to a senior Israeli policeman in the northern West Bank, security sources said Monday after a gag order on the case was lifted.

Yitzhar is considered one of the most extreme West Bank settlements.

Turks rally against Israeli policy

An estimated 20,000 Turks protested Israel's military actions in the Gaza Strip.

"Down with Israel" was shouted at Sunday's demonstration in Istanbul, The Associated Press reported.

The protest came a day after Turkey's foreign minister, Abdullah Gul, strongly criticized Israel's incursion, which is aimed at freeing a captive Israeli soldier and halting Palestinian rocket attacks into southern Israel.

Ya'alon: 'Two states' no longer relevant

Israel must abandon the two-state paradigm when it comes to dealing with the Palestinians, its former military chief said.

"The two-state paradigm is not relevant," Moshe Ya'alon said Monday at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, where he has been a fellow since leaving the military last year.

"Israel should issue a new paradigm." Asked to elaborate, he said one scenario could involve a regional arrangement among Israel, Jordan, the Palestinians and possibly Egypt.

He said the Hamas regime, Iran's increased role and Palestinian instability made Palestinian statehood unrealistic for now.

He said Israel should establish a "defensible-borders" policy, which would include a heightened military presence in the West Bank and pressure on the international community to recognize Israeli sovereignty in West Bank areas close to Israeli population centers.

NORTH AMERICA

Jews for Jesus pressed on logo use

New York subway officials called on Jews for Jesus to stop using the subway's logo in recruitment efforts.

The officials sent the letter June 28 after the missionary group began using the subway's logo in its "Behold Your God" campaign, even though the subway rejected Jews for Jesus' licensing application.

The campaign in the New York area, which runs through July,

represents the final stop on the group's five-year, \$22 million tour of every city outside Israel with a Jewish population of 25,000 or more. Jewish groups in New York have banded together to combat the campaign.

Arabs threaten legal action over borders

An Arab American group threatened legal action over reports that Israel is blocking entry to Americans of Palestinian descent.

"We would not tolerate a country barring Americans entry because they are Jewish, black, Asian or Latino, and we certainly should not do so because they are of Arab descent," the Arab American Institute said in a statement Monday based on a Ha'aretz report and on the personal experiences of its members.

Ha'aretz reported Monday that "thousands" of European and Americans had been blocked from entering Israel and the West Bank, some when they reached entry points, including Ben-Gurion Airport.

The Israeli Embassy in Washington had no comment, but Ha'aretz suggested the problem was caused by a breakdown since Hamas assumed power in the Palestinian Authority in March. According to prior agreements, Israel must vet Palestinians entering its borders in consultation with the Palestinian Authority, but consultations have stopped since Israel refuses to deal with officials from the terrorist group.

New York City gets Chasidic cop

The New York Police Department recruited what is believed to be its first Chasidic officer.

Brooklyn native Joel Witriol, 24, starts his training at the police academy Monday, according to the New York Post.

Witriol has a degree from United Talmudical Seminary in Brooklyn, N.Y., and has served as an auxiliary officer in Crown Heights.

The department is allowing Witriol to keep his beard and peyos, or sidelocks.

Witriol also will be excused from working on Shabbat and Jewish holidays.

Reconstructionists dedicate camp

The Reconstructionist movement dedicated its first permanent summer camp site.

Camp JRF was dedicated Sunday in Pennsylvania's Pocono Mountains.

The camp is open to boys and girls entering the third through 12th grades.

The camp runs two sessions that combined last for six and a half weeks as well as a 12-day mini-camp for campers entering the third and fourth grades.

WORLD

London victims remembered

An art exhibit opened featuring the work of one of the Jewish victims of last year's London bombings.

The exhibit featuring Miriam Hyman's work is on display at London's City Hall.

Hyman, a photo editor and artist, was one of three Jewish victims killed in the July 7, 2005, suicide bombings. London Mayor Ken Livingstone called Hyman's illustrations "vibrant and life-affirming," the European Jewish Press reported.

Two other Jews, Anat Rosenberg and Susan Levy, also died in the bombings, which killed 52 people.

An interfaith concert was held in Hyman's memory at the South London Liberal Synagogue last Friday, one of many ceremonies held across the capital to remember the victims.