



SCHMOOZE NEWS

A brief newsletter disseminating information about Israel, as well as contemporary issues affecting the Jewish Community, Lifestyle, and Spirituality.

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Did you know?

- ◆ “Prime Minister Ehud Olmert proposed the title for the blockbuster hit, *Pretty Woman*, starring Richard Gere and Julia Roberts. He suggested the title when his friend, movie producer, Aaron Milchan, was working on the film.”
- ◆ “Shimon Perez, currently, Israeli Deputy Prime Minister, is the oldest and longest serving minister in Israel’s history. He is 82 years old and has served as a Knesset member since 1952 in 22 governments.”

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For in-depth coverage of the latest news affecting the Jewish community worldwide, visit *Global News Service of the Jewish People* (www.jta.org). JTA is an international news service whose daily reports include the latest information about the Middle East peace process, political developments in Washington and Jerusalem, and the activities of anti-Semites affecting Jewish life.

JTA is a not-for-profit corporation and has no allegiance to any specific branch of Judaism or political viewpoint. JTA has established a reputation for journalistic integrity, outstanding reporting and insightful analysis. Over the years, the Jewish community has come to rely on JTA as the single most credible source of news and analysis available about events and issues of Jewish interest anywhere in the world.

France: An Example of International Agenda

By Meredith J. Martin

When most people consider French culture, they think of the Eiffel Tower, fine art, shopping, and exquisite wines depicted on glossy tour brochures designed to attract tourists. Rarely discussed by the French is another and some say more pervasive aspect of French culture—anti-Semitism. One does not see the desecrated synagogues or swastikas painted on Jewish graves, or hear anti-Semitic comments hurled at the Jewish population in the streets of Paris. These things are either not discussed or cleverly hidden in the back pages of French newspapers.

France is home to approximately 600,000 Jews. During World War II, France’s Vichy government security forces abandoned over 61,000 Jews to the Nazis who were then later deported to Concentration Camps in Auschwitz, Dachau, and Treblinka.

Anti-Semitism took root in France long before World War II. In more modern history, anti-Semitism had a

prominent place during the reign of Napoleon III. Hatred of Jews increased exponentially during the French Revolution of 1789. Although Jews were given rights and religious freedom, it was a ploy by the government to separate the Jews from the rest of the French population by encouraging them to create a separate and distinct group. Jews were not accepted in main-stream French society.



The most recent rise in anti-Semitism began in 2000 following the second intifada. France’s considerable Muslim population inspired French culture in new eruptions of violence against Jews. Since then, many more acts of anti-Semitism have been reported. The Anti-Defamation League cites the following incidents: a Jewish man with his three children walking home from synagogue were detained and verbally assaulted

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Russian Synagogues Hit

JTA Daily News—Two Russian synagogues were vandalized on the eve of Rosh Hashanah.

A synagogue in the southern city of Astrakhan was vandalized twice within a few hours early Friday. In one attack, assailants threw a Molotov cocktail at the synagogue, setting its door ablaze. A guard at the building quickly put out the fire. Another synagogue was vandalized in the far eastern city of Khabarovsk, where vandals threw stones at a shul shattering several windows. Criminal investigations were launched into both attacks.

Russian Jewish organizations expressed shock and indignation over the incidents. Berel Lazar, one of Russia’s two chief rabbis and leader of the Federation of Jewish Communities, the country’s largest Jewish group, said Russian Jews could express their solidarity with the stricken communities by showing up for Friday night synagogue services across the country. “If the God-haters who attacked the synagogues wanted that way to scare Jews on these holy days, I am sure they have miscalculated,” Lazar said in a statement. ■

Anti-Semitic Attacks Increase in U.K.

www.wiesenthal.com—With this month’s observance of the Jewish New year and the marking of 350 years of the re-entry of Jews into England, British Jewry has little to celebrate as a result of the increase of anti-Semitic hate crimes in the U.K. A 12-year old Jewish girl on a London public bus, after being asked her religion, was beaten into unconsciousness by 7 youths. According to reports, no one on the bus, including the driver came to her rescue.

“This shocking hate crime is just the latest in an increase in anti-Semitic activities in Britain that include spray-paint vandalism on a synagogue, verbal abuse and hate-mails,” said Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Wiesenthal Center. The recent thwarting of a mega-terrorist attack by British-born Islamicists raises the fear of a backlash against the Jewish community.

According to the *Times of London*, “anti-Semitic violence has become endemic in Britain, both on the streets and university campuses.” *The Sunday*

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Yes, They Actually Said That...

"We have discovered how to hit the Jews where they are most vulnerable. The Jews love life, so that is what we shall take away from them. We are going to win, because they love life and we love death."

—Hassan Nasralla, leader of the terrorist group Hezbollah, 2004

"Today there is no avoiding stating the plain truth: *We have a Jewish problem.* The government is totally paralyzed and is unwilling to issue even the mildest rebuke to Israel, no matter how outrageous its behavior. Why? Because the Jewish lobby is so powerful, American politicians are afraid of it...we don't elect politicians to serve 3 percent of the population and a foreign country."

—Charley Reese, *The Suncoast News*, August 2006

"We have always said that in our war with the Arabs we had a secret weapon - we have nowhere else to go."

—Golda Meir, former Israeli Prime Minister, October 1969

Initiative: Talkback offensive in Support of Israel

Israel Today—In hopes of reversing a tide of anti-Israeli protests, a pro-Israeli organization launched a campaign to defend Israel and sway public opinion in her favor by "talking back" on websites based all over the world.

Called "Take three minutes," the propaganda war has begun in earnest. Students and activists who speak foreign languages were called to join the "talkback war". The behind the scenes battle is a public relations campaign waged by Israeli students who are looking for recruits.

The students plan to log onto different websites considered hostile to Israel and to flood them with pro-Israeli opinions. The campaign's goal is to balance the comments and even tip the scale toward pro-Israeli reactions.

Foreign-language speakers who want to join the mailing list of the Israel at Heart organization can turn to the organization's website (israelatheart.org) for more details. ■

More Effective Epilepsy Treatment Coming Out Of Israel

"A pioneering researcher in Israel has developed a new anti-epileptic treatment that he believes is safer and more effective than the current drugs and has already signed an agreement with a US major pharmaceutical company to work towards developing it for the world market under the name Valroceamide - a combination of a known antiepileptic drug, valproic acid, and a glycine derivative, glycinamide." This will come as good news for the one-third of epileptics worldwide who do not react positively to existing medication for the condition.



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Anti-Semitic Attacks Increase in U.K. (Continued)

Telegraph pointed to recruitment of Muslim students on British campuses to take part in terrorist attacks. This included one university student who was suspected of having links to the foiled plot to blow up transatlantic flights. In addition tapes made by al-Muhajiroun, a disbanded terrorist group, were also discovered. ■

France: An Example of International Agenda (Continued)

by a group of men; a Molotov cocktail was thrown at the entrance of a synagogue in Stains, France; a Jewish cemetery in Avignon was vandalized and anti-Semitic slogans were painted on the premises.

One of the most disturbing developments in French government is the rise of Jean-Marie Le Pen, the president of the French extreme-right Front National Party. Some of Le Pen's public statements have included stating that the killing of Jews in gas chambers as a "mere detail of history", the German occupation of France as "not particularly inhumane", and making anti-Semitic comments about Jewish musicians and leaders in France using satire and stereo-types as well as referring to President Chirac as being "in the pay of Jewish organizations, and particular of the notorious B'nai B'rith."

Although these comments are of public record, Le Pen enjoys relatively wide support in France. In 2002, he received nearly 17% of the total votes in the first round of French elections! Incredibly, he receives 15-18% of votes in his many campaigns. The people who have voted for him are the same who have heard his anti-Semitic remarks and on some level agree with him and wish to see him lead France! This in no means indicates a majority of the French votes, but is an indicator of things to come. A candidate such as Le Pen might be unthinkable in the United States, but in France an anti-Semitic platform is gaining support rapidly.



President Jacques Chirac has been noted in the press for conceding to some of the anti-Semitism in his country. However, he has not made any real inroads to end the violence against Jews that is becoming more prevalent in France every day. Israel's past president Ariel Sharon, alarmed at the growing violence there made a statement in encouraging French Jews to make Aliyah. Chirac stated that there is no need for such measures despite the several reports of violence annually. In the first quarter of 2004 alone there were 67 reported acts in France.

What is the future for French Jews? Based upon current statistics, the problem of anti-Semitism is not abating; neither does it seem that the French government will take any meaningful measures to put an end to the rise of violence. One thing is for certain; France has a long history of anti-Semitism that is not going to end on its own. The only way that French Jews can ensure the safety of their families and a secure future is to heed the advice of the Israeli government and make Aliyah to Israel. ■

ADL Calls On Governments To Help Stop Hate Violence

Warsaw, October 12, 2006—The Anti-Defamation League today called on the 56 nations of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to make countering anti-Semitism and intolerance among youth a priority. Gary M. Bretton-Granatoor, ADL Director of Education, discussed the impact of hate crime on youth and proposed initiatives that could be replicated in different countries. He said, "While we had come to view anti-Semitism as a relic of history, or as views of a dying generation, events indicate a startling trend that the offenders are young, and, sadly, so are their victims." ■