

# Israeli news

## Behind the headlines

### October riot inquiry exposes rift between Israeli Arabs, Jews

By GIL SEDAN

**JERUSALEM (JTA)** - A commission probing last fall's riots, in which 13 Israeli Arabs were killed by police, is exposing the raw nerves that first provoked the deadly clashes. Last October's riots - most of which took place in the Galilee as an expression of Israeli Arab solidarity with the nascent Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip - left many Israelis questioning the loyalty of the nation's Arab population.

From the perspective of the Israeli Arab community, the police actions that resulted in the 13 deaths only intensified the feeling that Israeli Arabs are subject to discrimination in the Jewish state. Since then, Israeli Arab solidarity with the Palestinian uprising has only grown, and "the blood of 13 Arab Israeli citizens is still fresh," according to relatives of those killed in the riots.

Under pressure from the Israeli Arab commu-



**Autopsies show police used live fire on Israeli Arabs**  
A border policeman (L) giving evidence at the March 12 state commission session on last year's Israeli Arab riots. Supreme Court Justice Theodor Orr is seen on the right hand side of the bench. Copyright: *Isranet*.

nity and Jewish doves, former Prime Minister Ehud Barak created a state commission of inquiry, headed by Supreme Court Justice Theodor Orr, to look into the October events. Barak apologized for the deaths of the 13 shortly before the February 6 elections for prime minister. The move was widely seen as an attempt to court Arab voters. In addition, former Internal Security Minister Shlomo

Ben-Ami, who oversaw police operations in the Barak government, sought to distance himself from top police brass.

The Arab community was not mollified, however, and its boycott of the elections contributed to Barak's landslide defeat at the hands of Ariel Sharon. The commission is still in the early stages of its work, but the fact that police officials find themselves under interrogation for the deaths of the 13 has provoked some criticism from Israeli Jews.

The inquiry's findings likely will determine the professional fate of Commissioner Alik Ron, who as head of the police force's northern command was responsible for dealing with the October riots. In recent years, Ron has been among the foremost voices warning of the radicalization of Israeli Arabs and the growth of support for Muslim fundamentalist groups. Israeli Arabs, in response, claim Ron is a racist who treats Arabs with unnecessary harshness.

Conspiracy theories about Ron abound in the Arab community. Just after the riots, for example, Arab teen-agers in Kafr Manda told a reporter that Ron himself appeared at the scene of a particularly intense clash at the entrance to the village and urged his men to use live ammunition against the Arab rioters in order to save money on tear gas.

Ron has stated in recent weeks that his hands are clean and that, given the extent of the rioting, police could not have acted differently. He also insists that police acted in self-defence in those incidents that resulted in the 13 deaths.

# THE JEWISH POST & NEWS

Vol. 14 No. 33 WINNIPEG, WEDNESDAY, March 28, 2001 4 Days in Nisan, 5761

Candle lighting 7:30-8:40 p.m.  
Shabbat ends at 7:39 p.m.



**MEIR ROMEM**, Israeli consul-general to Ontario and Western Canada (at left) and Premier Gary Doer met in the premier's office March 20. Romem also met with four provincial cabinet ministers.



## Consul-general invites Doer to visit Israel

### Possibility of premier heading Manitoba 'mission' discussed

Israel's consul-general for Ontario and Western Canada had a meeting-packed schedule during a visit here last week.

Meir Romem met with Premier Gary Doer, four provincial cabinet ministers and Mayor Glen Murray during his two-and-a-half-day stay.

He also held get-togethers with Jewish community officials, rabbis and university students.

"I tried to promote relations between Israel and Manitoba," the Toronto-based diplomat said March 20 of his meetings with Doer and the cabinet ministers.

Romem also invited Doer to visit Israel. The premier "agreed in principle" to make the visit, Romem said. "Hopefully, he'll go as head of a mission of public officials and businessmen. We still have to work on it to form a proper mission and a timetable."

Eric Robinson was one of the four provincial government ministers Romem met with separately.

He offered Robinson, Manitoba minister of aboriginal and northern affairs, some advice for helping Manitoba aboriginal students who drop out of school early.

"I mentioned this is an area where we can advise, because we have experience helping people of different backgrounds."

Romem told Robinson about a "special school" Israeli school dropouts can attend, to get extra tutoring.

He also spoke with provincial government officials about the possibility of holding an economic seminar in Winnipeg, to inform local businesspeople about trade opportunities with Israel.

Romem didn't talk about politics much with government officials. But in meetings with them and other elected officials in Canada over the past few months, he said, he's usually found them "very understanding of our situation."

(Cont. on page A7. See "Consul general".)

## Mordechai found guilty of sexual harassment

Former minister Yitzhak Mordechai leaving the Jerusalem Magistrates Court March 21 after his conviction. Copyright: *Isranet*.

Former Likud Transport Minister Yitzhak Mordechai was found guilty by the Jerusalem Magistrates Court March 21 of two charges of sexual harassment under aggravated circumstances. He could face a prison sentence of up to seven years if his appeal against the conviction is rejected. The two incidents took place when he was head of Israel Defence Force Northern Command. A third charge, alleged to have taken place when he was Transport Minister, which precipitated the whole investigation and subsequent trial, was dismissed. The trial, which ended in February, lasted for five months. Sentence was to be handed down later. See story on page A23.

## 'The Israel you don't see on CNN'

Israelis going about their business, lamenting tourism slump, say Winnipeg participants on Solidarity Mission

"We saw the Israel you don't see on CNN."

That's how Dr. Ian Goldstine summed up a Solidarity Mission he and about other 160 other Canadians went on to Israel last month.

"People were extremely happy to see us," Goldstine, senior vice-president of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg/Combined Jewish Appeal said last week of Israelis he met on the February 13 to 18 trip.

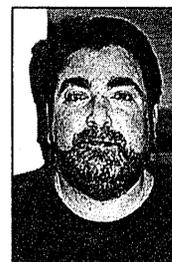
"They said: 'We need people to come. It's important to the country.'" The Canadians, including seven from Winnipeg, toured Israel during their five-day visit, and saw a number of areas that were "under stress".

"We went to the north, near the Lebanese border," Goldstine said. "We'd walk at night in Jerusalem and Tel Aviv... There are certain areas in any city or any country where it's better not to venture. It's a common sense thing."

Goldstine acknowledged that there's "always a concern" in Israel about "random acts of terrorism. But we felt safe."

The United Israel Appeal/Federations Canada organized the mission, and most participants were from Toronto and Montreal.

(Cont. on page A10. See "Solidarity mission".)



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## Scholarships available at THE JEWISH FOUNDATION OF MANITOBA

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For more scholarship information and guidelines, see our website at [www.jewishfoundation.org](http://www.jewishfoundation.org) or contact the office at 477-7520.



## THE JEWISH FOUNDATION OF MANITOBA

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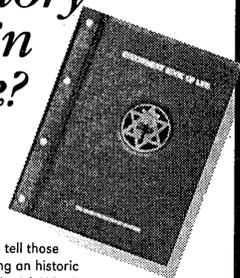
## Is your story written in the Book?

Many of the names in our community are being lost, with no record of the individuals bearing those names and their participation in the life of Winnipeg's Jewish community. We would like the opportunity to tell those stories and others, thereby leaving an historic legacy for future generations of Jewish Winnipeggers. To date, 171 individuals have had their stories, or the story of a loved one, entered into the Endowment Book of Life.

We would also like to leave a financial legacy, and for this reason every participant in the Endowment Book of Life makes a promise that they will include a bequest to The Jewish Foundation in their wills. The Foundation does not ask to know the amount of the bequest; it is a private matter for the individual to decide. We call it a "Promise for the Future."

Everyone is eligible to be included in the Endowment Book of Life. Each year in September we hold a signing ceremony where this year's stories are entered into the Book. In order to have time to write the story and prepare for the event, we need to know of your intention to participate no later than April 30, 2001.

Please contact Sheldon Mindell, Director of Endowment Development, at The Jewish Foundation of Manitoba office.



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