

75th ANNIVERSARY YEAR

MONDAY, JUNE 15, 1992

VOL. 70, NO. 113

**JEWISH GROUPS CONCERNED OSI  
COULD BE HARMED BY U.S. PROBES**

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, June 14 (JTA) -- Jewish groups are voicing concern that internal probes into the U.S. Justice Department's handling of two high-profile war crimes cases could undermine the Nazi-hunting efforts of the department's Office of Special Investigations.

"What we have is the beginning of a campaign to cripple the investigation of Nazi war criminals," said Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center here.

"I think it is time for Jewish groups and Jewish organizations to rally behind what is developing into a general assault on Nazi prosecution efforts in this country and other countries," said Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress in New York.

Cooper and Steinberg sounded the warnings after the Justice Department announced last Friday that its Office of Professional Responsibility would investigate OSI's handling of the case against John Demjanjuk, who was extradited to Israel in 1986 and later sentenced to death there for war crimes.

Department investigators have also been re-examining OSI's proceedings against Andrija Artukovic, a Cabinet official in the wartime Nazi puppet state of Croatia who was also extradited in 1986 and later died in a Yugoslav prison.

While neither review has found any misconduct yet on the part of OSI prosecutors, Jewish officials expressed concern the internal probes could throttle future war crimes investigations.

"I am certain that the judicial process will completely back the Office of Special Investigations, which has been rigorous in its investigatory and its prosecutorial efforts," said Steinberg.

"But I am concerned that the falsifiers of the Holocaust will succeed in the public relations arena where they failed in the courts."

**Court Reopens Proceedings**

Questions about OSI's handling of the Demjanjuk case surfaced after new evidence from the former archives of the Soviet Union came to light casting doubt on whether the retired Cleveland autoworker was indeed the notorious "Ivan the Terrible" who operated the gas chambers at the Treblinka death camp.

The evidence appears to suggest that Demjanjuk was at another death camp, Sobibor, and that a similar-looking Ukrainian, named Ivan Marchenko, was the real "Ivan."

On the basis of that evidence, Israel's High Court of Justice is now considering an appeal of Demjanjuk's conviction.

And in the United States, a federal appeals court has reopened proceedings to see whether Demjanjuk was extradited on the basis of "erroneous information."

The 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati has ordered the Justice Department to turn over by July 15 any evidence indicating that Demjanjuk is not "Ivan the Terrible" and to detail when U.S. agents first learned of each such item of evidence.

The Justice Department's criminal division

began its own investigation of OSI's handling of the case six months ago. And last Friday, it turned the case over to the department's watchdog unit, the Office of Professional Responsibility.

The department said that the six-month preliminary review had turned up no evidence that disproved Demjanjuk was a guard at Treblinka.

However, Assistant Attorney General Robert Mueller, head of the criminal division, acknowledged that the department had in its possession in 1978 copies of two Soviet interrogation reports concerning another man believed to be "Ivan the Terrible."

Mueller said that neither report mentions Demjanjuk by name, but contains testimony that two men operated the gas chambers at the death camp, one of them surnamed Marchenko.

**Charges On Artukovic Skimpier**

The case involving Artukovic is different, in that he admitted to serving as interior minister and minister of justice in Nazi-controlled Croatia, David Nimmer, the lead U.S. federal prosecutor in the extradition hearing, said in a phone interview.

Artukovic, a California resident, was denaturalized and extradited to Yugoslavia in early 1986, after a 35-year legal fight.

Described in the Yugoslav press as "the Butcher of the Balkans," he was convicted by a Zagreb court on four counts of murder and of running two dozen concentration camps where 700,000 to 900,000 Serbs, Jews and Gypsies were tortured and put to death.

After winning a stay of execution, Artukovic died of natural causes in a prison hospital in 1988.

According to newspaper reports, the renewed Artukovic investigation focuses on allegations that an OSI historian overlooked information in a Croatian state archive pointing to conflicts in key evidence about Artukovic's actions as a Cabinet minister.

Knowledgeable sources have cast doubt on the allegations, which come mainly from a Florida historian employed by Artukovic's son, Radoslav, a Los Angeles stockbroker who has continued to defend his father's name.

"Rad Artukovic has claimed to have uncovered new evidence from the first day of the (extradition) trial, and so far there is nothing to substantiate it," said Nimmer, who is now in private practice. "So you can draw your own conclusions."

But whether or not OSI is ultimately vindicated, Jewish officials are concerned that the investigations could harm the unit's credibility and effectiveness.

Noting that the Justice Department has just received voluminous new information from the archives of the former Soviet Union, Cooper of the Wiesenthal Center said the effort to prosecute Nazi war criminals living in the United States is far from over.

Cooper noted that President Bush had recently told the Wiesenthal Center of his commitment to the continued vigorous prosecution of war criminals.

"We will watch closely whether the Bush administration will stick by this commitment, or whether we see some slippage," he said.

## IRAN IS HOLDING MISSING AIRMAN, FAMILY TELLS SUPPORTERS AT RALLY

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 14 (JTA) -- There is "definite" information that missing Israeli air force pilot Ron Arad, captured in Lebanon six years ago, is in Iranian hands, his brother told a solidarity rally over the weekend.

Chen Arad spoke as speculation mounted that two Germans held in Lebanon for more than three years would be freed within hours.

Over 1,500 friends and supporters of the missing airman attended the rally in Givat Ala, in the Jezreel Valley, held outside the house which he and his wife, Tami, were building at the time of his capture, but in which they have never lived. The cottage was completed by friends and fellow members of their moshav.

Arad has long been the only Israeli still missing in Lebanon thought to be alive. Hopes that he might be freed were raised last year as U.N. negotiators brokered the release of several Western hostages. But those hopes were dashed when the last of the American and British hostages were freed in December.

There has been no published word about the Israeli prisoner of war, who has variously been reported to be held by different Moslem groups.

Reports that the two German hostages, Thomas Kemptner and Heinrich Strubig, would soon be freed were given credibility by the arrival in Beirut on Sunday of the U.N. special hostage negotiator, Giandomenico Picco, who has been on hand in the past when Western captives have been released.

And German government officials in Bonn reported that Bernd Schmidbauer, state minister in the chancellery of Helmut Kohl, had flown to Syria on Sunday. All hostages have been released from the Syrian capital of Damascus.

The English-language Teheran Times reported in Iran that obstacles for the Germans' release had been cleared and said that the two could be freed by Sunday night or Monday morning.

There has been no word on any deal involving the release in Germany of the two brothers, Mohammed and Abbas Hamadi, who are being held for terrorist acts. It is believed that the Hamadi clan in Lebanon is responsible for the capture of the two Germans.

Last week, Germany insisted that it had made no commitments to the kidnappers of the Germans to release the Hamadis.

## TWO HEZBOLLAH GUNMEN KILLED AS COMBAT GOES ON IN LEBANON

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 14 (JTA) -- As combat continued in southern Lebanon, two Hezbollah gunmen were killed and two Israeli soldiers very lightly wounded last Friday in a clash just beyond the northern edge of the border security zone.

An army spokesman reported that an Israel Defense Force patrol had encountered the terrorists near Beit Leif village, but U.N. and Lebanese reports put the scene of the incident, which involved seven Israeli tanks, as near Sribbine village, about a half-mile north of the zone.

The army spokesman denied that the patrol had crossed the zone border, but a spokesman for the Northern Command confirmed that an eight-hour incursion north of the zone had taken place.

However, he added that it could not really

be described as a "normal incursion" but rather a "business as usual patrol" that went beyond the zone, "to clean out an area in which we thought there might still be some Hezbollah terrorists wandering around."

The Northern Command spokesman explained that the zone border is not demarcated on the ground, "and it is not as though we broke down any border stations to get where we got."

## GORBACHEV, NO LONGER A LEADER, GETS HIGHEST WELCOME TO ISRAEL

By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM, June 14 (JTA) -- Former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev, who arrived here on Sunday on an unprecedented four-day visit, received the kind of official welcome usually reserved for heads of state.

Foreign Minister David Levy welcomed Gorbachev and his wife, Raisa, at the airport, along with other Foreign Ministry officials and scores of photographers.

"There is a warm corner in Israel for you, who have done so much for the freedom of our people," Levy told Gorbachev.

Although there was no red carpet for the Gorbachevs to walk down -- a protocol reserved for visiting heads of state -- the couple seemed genuinely touched by the dignified reception.

Gorbachev said he would "not hide my deep feelings and honor toward this people."

The Gorbachev visit is special in that the Foreign Ministry is handling it.

From Ben-Gurion Airport, Gorbachev and Levy traveled by motorcade to Jerusalem, where the foreign minister hosted a special lunch at the King David Hotel. Following lunch, Gorbachev visited with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek.

In the evening, politicians and pundits gathered at the presidential residence for a festive dinner. Emerging from a white Mercedes, the Gorbachevs were greeted by President Chaim Herzog and his wife, Aura.

Among the invitees were former Prisoner of Zion Natan Sharansky and his wife, Avital, who were meeting Gorbachev for the first time. While waiting in the receiving line, Sharansky was asked what he expected to hear from Gorbachev.

Shaking his head skeptically, he replied, "Nothing."

Sharansky owes his freedom to Gorbachev, who ordered his release from jail in February 1986, a year after taking office. Soon after, hundreds of other political prisoners were freed and the emigration gates were swung open. Some 400,000 Jews have come to Israel since then.

Addressing Gorbachev, Herzog said, "For Israel, you will always be remembered for your contribution in lessening the tension between the superpowers in our region; as the person who strengthened the ties between the Soviet Union and Israel; and as the person who opened up the gates for Soviet Jewry and enabled them to make aliyah."

Gorbachev responded: "My visit here can be seen as a symbol of the changes that have taken place in the Soviet Union. For Jews here and the Soviet Union, their lives can only improve as relations between our two countries continue to grow."

He then turned to Shamir and quipped, "I hope the road to peace takes less time than it took Moses to cross the desert."

## SCHACH CREATES CONTROVERSY AGAIN, CALLING SEPHARDIC LEADERSHIP LAME

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, June 14 (JTA) -- Rabbi Eliezer Schach, spiritual mentor of the strictly Orthodox Degel HaTorah party, has touched off another storm of controversy in Israel's political community, this time with a statement that appears to belittle Sephardim.

Charges of racism and elitism were leveled at the 96-year-old sage after he was quoted as saying that the "Sephardi religious leadership is not mature enough to lead the state or lead religion."

In the superheated public atmosphere just 10 days before the election, Schach's statement has become a national point of reference, with representatives of almost every party mentioning it in their public remarks.

The Mitnagged rabbi, who is dean of the large Ponevezh Yeshiva in Bnei Brak, is no stranger to controversy here. He has locked horns often with the Lubavitcher rebbe, Rabbi Menachem Schneerson of Brooklyn. And his opinion was considered a fulcrum in 1990 against Labor leader Shimon Peres' efforts to form a Labor-led coalition government.

At that time, Schach delivered a highly publicized speech to some 10,000 delegates of Degel HaTorah, in which he refused to talk politics but nevertheless was credited with swaying votes to Likud by his stinging polemic against secular Jews and the kibbutz movement in particular, a domain of Labor.

That summer, Schach again made headlines by claiming that some 20 percent of the most recent immigrants were not Jews. And he again lambasted the kibbutzim.

Last month, he gave his blessing to plans for his party to reunite with its Hasidic rival, Agudat Yisrael, from which he had turned two years ago when Agudah aligned with Lubavitch.

In the latest turn of events, Schach's remarks, made June 10 at a meeting of rabbis, were being interpreted by his own aides as an attack on the Sephardic Shas party and, in particular, its leader, Interior Minister Arye Deri, one of the youngest Israelis ever to hold Cabinet rank.

### Extensive Press Coverage

Schach's aides said the aging rabbi had gone on to lament that "certain young persons are trying to take over the yeshiva world."

But they said his ostensibly anti-Sephardic remarks had been taken out of context and published with an aim to discredit him.

Among Shas members there was no official reaction. The party's mentor, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, was given a demonstratively warm welcome when he arrived Saturday night for his weekly talk at the Bukharan Quarter synagogue in Jerusalem. There he cited the Mishnaic aphorism, "Silence suits the wise."

Privately, Shas activists claimed the Schach statement would boomerang favorably for their party. "It's worth two or three more seats to us," they told reporters.

Schach had plainly intended his remarks to persuade strictly Orthodox Sephardim to vote for the United Torah Front, the joint list comprising Agudat Yisrael, Schach's own Degel HaTorah, and the Sephardic minister of absorption, Yitzhak Peretz.

Among Schach's many Sephardic disciples,

some insisted there had been no general aspersion against their community, while others freely admitted that they found themselves "torn now by conflicting loyalties."

The general media gave saturation coverage to the sage's remarks right through the weekend. The Israel daily Ma'ariv on Sunday devoted seven pages to the statement and its aftermath. The paper's main news headline claimed Schach had sought a firm commitment from Shas that it would not align with Labor after the election and, failing to obtain that, had launched his attack on the Sephardic party.

Among the political parties, reactions varied.

Charlie Biton of the far-left Hatikvah party filed a criminal complaint with the police against Schach on grounds of incitement to racism.

Labor urged the voters to throw out "Schach and his allies, the Likud."

And Yossi Sarid of the left-wing Meretz bloc described Schach as "one of the great dividers of the nation."

Likud reaction was largely muted, which is understandable given the close political alliance between Likud and Schach over recent years.

Schach's aides cited this alliance as evidence that the sage has nothing against most Sephardic politicians. His contact man in Likud is Commerce Minister Moshe Nissim, a son of late Sephardic Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Nissim.

## JEWISH CHILDREN FIND REFUGE IN ISRAEL FROM WAR IN BOSNIA

By Agnes Bohm

BUDAPEST, June 14 (JTA) -- Some 70 Jewish children and 20 adults from war-torn Sarajevo made their way last week to Israel via Budapest, many of them leaving parents and other family members behind.

Although the travelers hope eventually either to return to their homes in Bosnia-Herzegovina or be reunited in Israel with the rest of their families, the farewells seemed tragic, reminding some of the way children were evacuated from Nazi-occupied Europe at the beginning of World War II.

The sadness was compounded by the fact that many Jews who wish to leave Sarajevo cannot, said Tuvia Raviv, a Jewish Agency official in Budapest who is responsible for the aliyah of Jews from the former republics of Yugoslavia.

"Several hundred Jews are still there in Sarajevo. We are trying to get them out," said Raviv, who is in everyday telephone contact with the Jewish community there.

But although the situation is very bad in the capital of Bosnia-Herzegovina, where corpses line the streets, there has been no singling out of Jews in the pitched ethnic battles between the Christian Serbs and Moslem Slavs, he reported.

There are more than 5,000 Jews living in the former republics of Yugoslavia, most of them in Belgrade, the capital of Serbia. With no war raging there, Jews are remaining for now, Raviv said.

Jews hesitate to leave their property, which is more jeopardized than their Jewishness, he said.

According to Raviv, some 400 Yugoslav Jews have left for Israel since the ethnic fighting began last August, a quarter of whom were children between the ages of 10 and 18.

They are among the hundreds of thousands of Yugoslav refugees who have left in recent months for the West, mostly for Western Europe.

# EARTH SUMMIT A POSITIVE EXPERIENCE FOR ISRAEL, CHIEF OF DELEGATION SAYS

By Rochelle G. Sidel and Jayme Brenner

RIO DE JANEIRO, June 14 (JTA) -- Dr. Uri Marinov, head of Israel's delegation to the Earth Summit that wound up here Sunday, said it was "not at all a bad conference for Israel from a political point of view."

Marinov, director general of Israel's Ministry of the Environment, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that except for an anti-Israel speech by the representative of the Palestine Liberation Organization and some "lip service" from a few other countries, there were no problems for Israel at the U.N. Conference on Environment and Development that convened here June 3-14.

"It was a relatively easygoing or good conference for Israel," he said. "There were no political outbursts and no anti-Israel resolutions."

Eased by the atmosphere, which did not include the traditional anti-Israel positions taken by so many international conferences, Marinov pointed out particularly "Agenda 21," the most important document to come out of the conference, where references to lands of occupation were removed beforehand.

Such language was retained in the less important Rio Declaration on Environment and Development, because the United States did not want discussion on this document opened up at the meeting, and Israel agreed.

Israel also signed the Convention on Climate Change, after long and difficult negotiations. This accord establishes general principles on reduction of toxic gases emissions.

## '10 Green Commandments'

Marinov's political position was clearly a lesser one than that of other countries, which were represented by presidents, prime ministers and kings.

He explained that the approaching Israeli elections had kept Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and government ministers from participating at this time. He also said the timing of the conference's concluding summit on Friday and Saturday interfered with Sabbath observance.

But Marinov said the only disadvantage Israel experienced by not sending its political leaders was an inability to make a statement during the summit phase of the conference.

While only heads of state were allowed to speak during the concluding weekend, Marinov made Israel's presentation on the opening day.

His message included "10 Green Commandments" for regulating people's relationship with the environment.

They began, "We must respect the environment. We are duty-bound to cherish all the creatures in the world, all the plants that grace its surface, all the waters that divide it, all the wealth that lies beneath it, and the air that drifts above."

"We must alter our behavior, as individuals and as nations, in order to preserve the Earth in all its glory."

"We must integrate environmental considerations into all decision-making, and we must promote sustainable development."

Marinov was introduced at the conference by Dr. Celso Lafer, Brazil's new foreign minister, who is Jewish.

In addition to Lafer, two other Brazilian government officials were prominent at the Earth

Summit: Congressman Fabio Feldmann and Education Minister and Secretary for the Environment Jose Goldemberg.

Both men are members of Brazil's Jewish community of some 140,000 people, which comprises 0.1 percent of the country's population.

## Israel Challenged On Water Use

Israel signed both the Convention on Climate Change and the Convention on Biodiversity, which it had held out from endorsing until last Thursday night, taking its cue from the United States, which refused to sign the document.

Israel had individually disagreed with an item of the document on the need to grant free access to water resources to "oppressed people."

Palestinian delegates in Rio blamed Israel for taking 80 percent of Gaza Strip and West Bank water reserves. Responding, Marinov produced a document showing that Israel used less water last year than it did before the Six-Day War.

The Israeli position was also strongly criticized by delegates of Arab and Islamic countries. Some of them, like Qatar's representatives, blamed Israel for damaging the environment in the territories.

But overall, Marinov was pleased with the results and atmosphere. He said the mere fact that more than 100 heads of state came together to discuss environmental issues is a major accomplishment.

"It brought the environment to the center, and this is unbelievably important," he said.

Besides the Israeli delegation headed by Marinov, there was almost no Jewish presence at Riocentro, the site of the conference, though a few non-governmental Jewish organizations were represented.

Roaming the halls was Warren Eisenberg, director of the International Council of B'nai B'rith, accompanied by a Brazilian member of the organization.

No other major or minor American Jewish organizations or religious groups were officially present at the NGO part of the conference, which was held in Flamingo Park.

There a booth set up by the PLO was proudly selling everything from baby bibs to potholders stamped, "I love Palestine" and "Jerusalem -- West Bank."

## Rabbis From U.S., Israel, Holland

Several Jews participated as individuals at a special closed meeting of the Global Forum of Spiritual and Parliamentary Leaders on Human Survival.

Susanah Heschel, an American Jewish feminist writer and professor, represented Judaism on a panel of religious leaders that included the Dalai Lama, who sang "Hava Nagila" and joined rabbis in prayer for "a new world of peace."

Other Jewish delegates included Rabbi Henry Sobel of Congregacao Israelita Paulista in Sao Paulo, Rabbi Levi Weiman-Kelman of Congregation Kol Hanesama in Jerusalem; Rabbi Marshall Meyer of Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in New York; and Rabbi Avraham Sotendorp from the Liberal Synagogues of The Hague and Amsterdam.

The only organized Jewish group participation took place during an interreligious vigil from June 4 until the morning of June 5, when Rabbis Nilton Bonder of Congregacao Judaica do Brasil in Rio and Zalman Schachter of Philadelphia led some 300 members of Rio's Jewish community in prayers throughout the night.