

**SUPREME COURT'S KIRYAS JOEL DECISION  
EVOKES MIXED REACTION IN JEWISH WORLD**

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, June 27 (JTA) -- While Orthodox Jewish groups are expressing disappointment with the Supreme Court's 6-3 decision Monday to close the Kiryas Joel school for disabled Chasidic children, many mainstream Jewish organizations are praising the court for fortifying the wall separating church and state.

Across the board, all Jewish groups wasted little time either celebrating or condemning the decision.

Instead, they were focusing their energies on finding a way to educate the 200 disabled students from Kiryas Joel, an Orange County enclave about 40 miles northwest of New York City.

New York state's attempt to create a school district exclusively for Satmar Chasidic children "crosses the line" of acceptable separation between church and state, Justice David Souter wrote in the majority opinion.

Chief Justice William Rehnquist, as well as Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas, dissented from the majority opinion.

Justices Harry Blackmun, John Paul Stevens, Sandra Day O'Connor and Ruth Bader Ginsburg joined the majority opinion, and Justice Anthony Kennedy wrote a concurring opinion.

The ruling upheld a 1993 New York State Court of Appeals decision that the school district violated the constitutional guarantee of separation between church and state.

The district was formed in 1989 by decree of the New York State Legislature, which was responding to the concerns of Chasidic parents who believed they could not send their disabled children to religious schools in the area because of inadequate facilities, or to public schools because of religious and cultural differences.

The Kiryas Joel school serves about 200 students, almost all Satmar Chasidim, with an annual budget of \$6 million. It had remained open pending the decision of the Supreme Court.

**'Back At The Drawing Board'**

According to the Supreme Court's decision, the school could reopen as an offshoot of the Monroe-Woodbury School District in separate buildings at district headquarters or even near one of the yeshivas in the town of Kiryas Joel.

Abba Cohen, Washington director of Agudath Israel expressed "great disappointment" with the court's decision.

The Agudah's general counsel, David Zwiebel, said the decision leaves the families "back at the drawing board."

"The immediate result is that there are 200 children whose educational needs now need to be considered," said Zwiebel, whose Orthodox group had filed a friend-of-the court brief supporting the school district.

Cohen called upon the Jewish community as a whole to come together to pressure the school district to find a quick solution so the school does not have to close altogether.

Aside from Orthodox groups, however, most Jewish organizations applauded the Supreme Court ruling.

Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, which is an ardent supporter of church-state separation, called the decision an "enormous relief."

"I'm delighted to see this ruling, but we must now come together to accommodate these children," Saperstein said.

Kenneth Bandler, spokesman for the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council, echoed the call to find appropriate educational services for the Chasidic students in a way that does not violate the separation of church and state.

"Our view all along was that Kiryas Joel was a core violation of the Establishment Clause" of the First Amendment, which prevents the government from becoming involved in religious practices, said Bandler, whose group had filed a separate brief in the case.

**JERUSALEM MAYOR LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN  
TO BAR ARAFAT FROM VISITING CAPITAL**  
By Dvorah Getzler

JERUSALEM, June 27 (JTA) -- Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert called together all eight of his deputy mayors Monday to set up what amounts to a "war room" to prevent Palestine Liberation Organization Chairman Yasser Arafat from coming to Jerusalem.

As part of his initiative, Olmert is planning to enlist the aid of world Jewry and fly in plane-loads of demonstrators.

The former Likud health minister called out his troops in response to recent statements by Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin that Arafat has the same right as any other Muslim to come to Jerusalem to pray.

Rabin's comments -- made during Sunday's weekly Cabinet meeting and during media interviews last week -- are certain to exacerbate the already bitter dispute in Israel regarding Arafat's stated intention of coming to Jerusalem to pray at the Al Aksa Mosque, Islam's third holiest shrine.

Despite the brouhaha, sources close to the government said here Sunday they did not expect that Arafat would seek to visit Jerusalem in the near future, despite Rabin's acknowledgement of his right to do so.

Israeli officials still do not know exactly when Arafat plans to make his long-expected visit to the newly autonomous regions of Jericho and the Gaza Strip.

Each of Olmert's deputies -- all of whom belong to right-wing parties -- has been given a "portfolio," or specific area of responsibility, within the overall plan to ensure that there will be no Arafat visit.

Meir Porush of Agudat Yisrael, for example, will be in charge of raising public awareness of the campaign throughout the country; another deputy will be in charge of fund raising.

Olmert's plan to fly in protesters from the Diaspora is part of his stated goal of bringing "a

million demonstrators" onto the streets of Jerusalem if Arafat attempts to visit.

During the first session of the campaign, the mayor told his deputies that the first plane of Jews from abroad -- a jumbo jet from Canada -- had already been booked to capacity and is due to arrive at an unspecified date to take part in a mass demonstration.

In New York, representatives of American Jewish organizations had mixed reactions to Olmert's effort to enlist Diaspora Jewry in his campaign.

"I don't think American Jews should intervene that way," said Steven Bayme, director of the American Jewish Committee's Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations.

"That's a matter of internal Israeli policy, and not something we as an American Jewish community should be involved in," said Bayme, acknowledging that Arafat's proposed visit poses a tough dilemma.

However, Betty Ehrenberg, executive director of the Institute for Public Affairs of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, had a different view.

"We're in support" of the plan, she said, adding, "I don't think the Arafat visit is really intended for freedom of religious worship as it is purported to be; it's politically motivated and intended to be politically provocative."

She said her group intends to poll its membership and see whether they would want to fly over to participate in a mass demonstration.

Herbert Zweibon, chairman of Americans for a Safe Israel said, "it cannot hurt" if American Jews join the Israeli effort.

While it is primarily the responsibility of the Israelis to take to the streets, he said, "it can't hurt anybody to go to Jerusalem. And it certainly can't hurt if Jews in Israel understand that there is a community out there equally concerned about Jerusalem."

Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said that while he and other leaders of the umbrella group met with Olmert recently, "nobody's approached us about" participating in a protest.

"When it comes to Jerusalem, people's feelings run very high, as they should," Hoenlein said. "There are a lot of people who believe Arafat should not go to Jerusalem."

#### Plan Lends Credence To Palestinian Fears

In Jerusalem, meanwhile, Ornan Yekutieli of Meretz, a leader of the opposition in the city council, criticized Olmert's plans and said they lent credence to Palestinian fears that free access to Jerusalem holy sites might be denied.

Deputy Mayor Shmuel Meir, part of the stop-Arafat campaign, told Israel Radio he feared the police might close off Jerusalem some days before any projected Arafat visit and thus ensure a capital city that was free of all demonstrators.

"That's why we have extended the tent city," said Meir, referring to an encampment of West Bank settlers opposed to the Israel-Palestinian peace initiative who have recently taken over a site opposite the Prime Minister's Office.

Meir also promised that on the day of a planned Arafat visit, Jerusalem would come to a total standstill. He added that torches of protest

would be lit throughout the city and in other towns supporting the struggle.

The tent city has grown during the past week, and now boasts toilets and a water supply set up courtesy of the Jerusalem municipality in what Olmert has described as a "humanitarian gesture."

With the start of the long summer vacation, the tent city is beginning to resemble something of a summer camp, with skull-capped youngsters dashing about to spread messages of protest.

Some of them are pasting onto cars bumper stickers with such message as "Judea and Samaria Are Right Here" and "Hebron Forever."

*(Contributing to this report was Larry Yudelson in New York.)*

#### **AMERICAN TEENS BOARD 'EXODUS' FOR RECREATION OF HISTORIC VOYAGE** By Michele Chabin

ROME, June 27 (JTA) -- They have seen the movie and read the book.

Now 600 North American teen-agers will have the opportunity to learn about the famed Aliyah Bet ship "Exodus" from its original captain.

Ike Aharonvich, the man who dared challenge the British blockade of then-Palestine, was scheduled to be on hand when the teens board a ship bound for Israel this weekend.

The teens represented a variety of youth groups including Young Judea, National Federation of Temple Youth, Habonim and United Synagogue Youth. They were scheduled to attend workshops and seminars related to Aliyah Bet -- the illegal immigration of Jews to Israel before it became a state. During the three-day trip from Brindisi, Italy, to Israel, Aharonvich and other crew members will describe their stand-off with the British Navy.

The brainchild of Uzi Narkiss, former head of the North American delegation of the World Zionist Organization, the trip was designed to bring American youth closer to their Jewish roots.

Ehud Praver, a Jewish Agency emissary, called the program "a unique way to show American youth the history of Israel's creation."

"American Jews have a number of means to teach the Holocaust. Museums and programs are reaching out to Jews and non-Jews," he said.

But unfortunately, he said, "there is no real, strong, effective means to show the creation of Israel. There is a need to deal with the history that brought us to the creation of Israel."

Noting that the program "Project Exodus," will take place on a ship with two swimming pools and air-conditioning, Praver said, "We didn't use the notion of recreation when we publicized the trip. Rather, it is a sea journey to relive history."

Instead of subjecting the teens to the overcrowding and substandard conditions that characterized actual Aliyah Bet voyages in the 1930s and 1940s, the Jewish Agency-WZO "wants the kids to enjoy the trip, the sun decks and the dancing and singing -- everything that is done in a group camp," said Praver.

"In a sense, this is a floating summer camp. It has been shown that kids learn best when a program combines enjoyment and learning. We hope to strike this balance on the 'Exodus '94.'"

## VISIT BY FAR-RIGHT AUSTRIAN LAWMAKER SPARKS CONTROVERSY ON CAPITOL HILL

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, June 27 (JTA) -- Last week's visit by a far-right Austrian politician known in Europe for praising Hitler's employment policies and posing for photos with neo-Nazis sparked considerable controversy here.

Jorg Haider, 42, the leader of the Austrian Freedom Party who is sometimes called the "Austrian David Duke," said the main purpose for his week-long visit was to solicit the support of over 200,000 Austrian citizens living in the United States who are eligible to vote in the Austrian elections.

But his visit also included meetings with State Department officials and prominent congressmen, as well as a tour of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

A slick politician who recently led an unsuccessful campaign to keep Austria out of the European Union and another one to declare his country closed to foreigners, Haider heads his country's third-largest party, with 23 seats in the Austrian parliament.

Prior to his ascent to the Austrian parliament, Haider was forced to resign as governor of the German province of Carinthia in 1988 after he expressed support for the Third Reich's labor policies.

Haider, who says unabashedly he wants to be the next Austrian chancellor, continues to garner support among young neo-Nazis and old communist leaders.

Many predict his rise into the ranks of serious government players will reach new heights after Austria's next elections in October.

Haider's visit here was mired in controversy even before he arrived.

At the behest of the Simon Wiesenthal Center, U.S. Rep. Robert Torricelli (D-N.J.) sent a letter to colleagues on Capitol Hill urging them to refuse to meet with Haider.

"In light of the surge of extreme right-wing violence against foreigners and Jews in Europe over the past few years, it is clear that the likes of Jorg Haider should not be dignified with a visit to a United States congressional office," Torricelli wrote.

### Congressmen Pose For Photos With Him

Despite the letter, U.S. Reps. Lee Hamilton (D-Ind.), the powerful chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee, and Frank McCloskey (D-Ind.) met with Haider and posed for photos with the Austrian party leader.

This prompted an angry response from Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

In a letter to Hamilton and McCloskey, Cooper expressed the center's "deep disappointment" over the decision to meet with Haider.

"Armed with photos, (Haider's) going to go back home with new political capital and legitimacy," Cooper said.

The letter urged the congressmen to "find appropriate ways to communicate your true feelings about Jorg Haider to the people of Austria."

According to an aide to McCloskey, the congressman received Torricelli's letter just as Haider was walking in the door. The aide said

McCloskey plans to send a letter to Haider this week expressing his concerns about Haider's embrace of Hitler's labor policies and his opposition to membership in the European Union.

An aide to Hamilton would say only that the meeting was in line with the congressman's practice to meet with democratically elected officials.

Haider, clearly upset by Torricelli's letter, said in an interview that it was "surprising because it is widely known that Americans are fair and before they make a judgment they want to hear out the other party. Apparently here the judgment was made without doing that."

Cooper, also upset by Haider's visit to the U.S. Holocaust Museum, said, "I don't understand how anyone in the Austrian or Jewish community can categorize this as anything but cynical.

"Someone who just completed a campaign to keep Austria out of the European Union is xenophobic, anti-foreigner, anti-immigrant, anti-Semitic," he said, adding, "Haider came to Washington looking for more respectability and visibility."

In an exclusive interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency after a speech at the National Press Club on June 22, Haider defended his record and derided his critics as "erroneous" and "unfair."

Despite widespread news accounts that Haider has met with German neo-Nazi leaders, Haider categorically denied any contacts with "these types of people."

He said stories about his contact with neo-Nazis are "invented to create a mood against me."

Reacting to his two-hour visit to the U.S. Holocaust Museum, Haider said, "I think that even those individuals who don't know much about history will realize that we must do everything to enforce tolerance, everything to enforce human rights and everything to strengthen democracy."

Haider's father reportedly travelled to Munich in 1933 with Adolf Eichmann and Alois Brunner as part of the so-called Austrian legions.

When asked about the impact his family history has had on his political and personal life, Haider said that his political activity has been shaped by his belief that "we must do everything to prevent from ever happening again a similar racist regime, a totalitarian regime as the Nazi regime was."

Haider denied he is a Holocaust denier, saying "we had a regime that committed murder on an industrial scale, five, six, seven, eight million people. The numbers are not important, it is awful enough if it happens to one person."

### VANDALS TARGET SWISS JEWISH CEMETERY

BERLIN (JTA) -- Switzerland's oldest Jewish cemetery has been desecrated by unidentified vandals twice in the past four months, according to Swiss Jewish newspaper *Judische Rundschau*.

More than 100 gravestones at the Zurich cemetery were overturned in the latest attack, which took place June 17.

On that day, youths were seen running from the cemetery by two visitors, who called police. The Jewish community, which had not told the media of the first attack, went public this time.

Repairs to the cemetery, which was opened in 1862, will cost the equivalent of \$30,000.

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:  
JEWISH GROUPS JOIN THOUSANDS  
IN GAY RIGHTS MARCH IN NEW YORK**

By Pamela Druckerman

NEW YORK, June 27 (JTA) -- Jews from as far away as Israel and as close as New York's Greenwich Village were among the tens of thousands participating in this week's Stonewall 25, the International March on the United Nations to Affirm the Human Rights of Lesbian and Gay People.

Alongside gay Buddhists, Mormons, Quakers and witches, the Jewish groups -- representing synagogues, seminaries and communal organizations -- were as passionate about their Judaism as about the need for gay rights.

Since Sunday's march took place on a Jewish fast day commemorating the Roman destruction of ancient Jerusalem, members of some Jewish groups took a break from the day's festivities to say the appropriate prayers.

For Saul Mizrahi, a founding member of the gay and lesbian Congregation Beth Simchat Torah in Greenwich Village, the moment illustrated the balancing act of being both proudly Jewish and openly gay.

"How do you unravel two identities?" It's like a pretzel. Do I dance? Do I mourn? Do I eat?" he asked.

The June 26 march marked the 25th anniversary of the Stonewall rebellion, when a police raid on the Stonewall Inn -- a gay bar in Greenwich Village -- was met with unprecedented resistance and a three-day uprising for gay rights.

The event is considered to have been the launching pad for the gay rights movement.

For many of the Jews marching behind blue and white banners, the rebellion was also the springboard for religious and cultural reconciliation.

"Now I feel proud to be able to walk on the subway with a gay Jewish button and an earring," said Rick Landman, who had come to the march from Rochester, N.Y. "I wasn't able to do that 25 years ago."

**Synagogue Ties Help Them Come Out**

Members of gay and lesbian synagogues throughout the country said that solidifying their Jewish roots gave them the social and spiritual base from which to define themselves.

Others said that their association with synagogues helped them to feel comfortable coming out with their homosexuality.

"There's no point in praying to God if you have to lie about who you are," said Ron, a public school teacher who asked that his last name not be used. "Fortunately, here all the parts of myself can be synthesized."

Despite these advances, many gay Jews find the two worlds irreconcilable and choose to dissociate themselves from religious life.

Others determined to grapple with both identities say mainstream religious life, and the laws and customs forbidding homosexual relations, are an ongoing source of conflict and debate.

"I am outraged by people who use Jewish laws and traditions as a whip to beat 10 percent of our people," said a fifth-year rabbinical student at the Reform movement's Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion.

"We are their teachers, their counselors, their youth leaders and -- yes -- their rabbis," said this student, who declined to be named.

While the Reform movement ordains openly homosexual rabbis, the Conservative movement-- despite considerable discussion in recent years-- does not.

Nonetheless, a group affiliated with the Jewish Theological Seminary, which trains Conservative rabbis, had come to march under their own banner.

Wearing a white knitted yarmulke, Michael Orlow, who graduated JTS with a master's degree in philosophy, said the group was lobbying to keep gay rights on the Conservative agenda.

But it is the Orthodox movement that maintains the staunchest opposition to homosexuality. This opposition often forces Orthodox gay men and lesbians to leave the movement, permanently repress their homosexuality or go deep underground.

After an arranged marriage failed and a series of Orthodox Jewish therapists were unable to "cure" him of his homosexuality, a man-- who would not give his name for fear of reprisals -- sought help in a secret support group for gay Orthodox Jews.

**Parents Told To Say Kaddish**

The 20ish man, who was raised in an Orthodox home, said his Holocaust-survivor parents called him a Nazi after he told them he was gay.

The despairing parents were advised by several Orthodox groups to cut him off and say Kaddish, the Jewish prayer for the dead.

Dedicated to his religious beliefs, he moved out of his parents' house but did not give up on religious life. "I refuse to leave Judaism," said the bearded man, wearing traditional tzitzit and yarmulke. "I've seen so many others that have."

A middle-aged couple from New Jersey, members of Mishpacha -- a Jewish support group for relatives of gays and lesbians -- said they have struggled to reconcile their Jewishness with their son's homosexuality.

But they said that they -- and many parents in similar situations -- have had a difficult time.

"There's a kind of disjunction to how they love their children and love their religion and are finding a kind of split. It's distressing," said the woman, who asked not to be named. "I would have preferred he married a girl," her husband said.

Landman, the Rochester resident, founded the International Association of Gay and Lesbian Children of Holocaust Survivors and is an original member of the radical Gay Liberation Front, which grew out of the Stonewall rebellion.

He said there are deep links between growing up with survivors and facing the AIDS crisis. "When my parents were younger, I would ask, 'Where's so-and-so?' " Landman recalled. "They would answer, 'Don't ask, they're probably dead.'"

"It's the same answer today," said Landman. When people ask about an original member of the Gay Liberation Front, the response is, "he's probably dead."

The specter of AIDS loomed over the march. Rabbi Sharon Kleinbaum of Congregation Beth Simchat Torah missed the festivities because she was officiating at the funeral of a congregant, a 36-year-old doctor who had died of AIDS.