



## NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ Israeli soldiers killed a Palestinian from a village near the West Bank town of Ramallah after he drove through a roadblock and ignored soldiers' calls to stop. He was later brought to a hospital in Ramallah, where he died of his wounds.

■ The Palestinian leadership announced plans to establish its own city council in Jerusalem. The decision, approved at the Palestinian Authority's weekly meeting, was seen as an attempt to emphasize Palestinian claims to the city.

■ Four Jordanian politicians representing a party that supports the peace treaty with Israel visited Jerusalem. It was the first such visit since the two countries signed their peace treaty in October.

■ The number of immigrant children living below the poverty line in Israel decreased dramatically from 1993 to 1994. In announcing the finding, Israel's Absorption Minister Yair Tsaban also said immigrant children had improved their academic performance, surpassing the national average in college matriculation exams. [Page 4]

■ An Israeli state inquiry commission investigating the disappearance of hundreds of Yemenite children during the 1950s held its first meeting. The panel was appointed by the Supreme Court to investigate allegations that the children of Yemenite immigrants in the 1950s were abducted by Israeli authorities and put up for illegal adoption. [Page 3]

■ The wife of Colombia's ambassador to Israel was stabbed to death with scissors by her 24-year-old son. Genevieve Samper died of wounds to the head, neck and chest. The son, Juan Pablo Meito, was taken to a psychiatric hospital for observation.

■ Top fashion designers from around the world participated in the Fashion World's Salute to Peace. The event, which took place in Caesarea's ancient Roman amphitheater in Israel, attracted 3,000 onlookers and raised about \$100,000 for two local children's charities. [Page 4]

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

### Should religious Jews be held to a higher ethical standard?

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, June 12 (JTA) — Is it right to expect more moral behavior from those who present themselves as religious Jews than from those who do not?

The answer depends on which rabbi you ask.

The question arises in the wake of several instances of visible breaches of ethical behavior committed by Jews who call themselves religious.

Among those whose morality has been called into question is a Reform rabbi who has been the focus of community suspicion in the murder of his wife, though he has neither been arrested nor formally ruled out as a suspect.

On the other end of the denominational spectrum are two leaders of a Chasidic community, who were arrested on charges of sexually molesting a teen-age girl, and an Orthodox district attorney, whose financial abuses of his office and marital infidelities were recently exposed when he was charged with breaking the law.

Such crimes are not limited to members of the rabbinate and Orthodox world, of course, but there is much greater interest in such cases when these individuals are involved.

Recognizing that even rabbis need explicit guidance about behaving ethically in financial and sexual matters in complicated times, the Reform movement updated its rabbinic ethics policy in 1991.

And a few months ago, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Assembly adopted its own rabbinic ethics policy on similar matters.

The Conservative movement has no formal policy, though its rules for filing and dealing with a complaint against a rabbi are in the process of being clarified, said Rabbi Joel Meyers, executive vice president of the movement's Rabbinical Assembly.

#### 'It is legitimate to expect more'

For the mainstream Orthodox rabbinical group, the Rabbinical Council of America, the ethics policy is "the laws of the Torah," said Rabbi Steven Dworken, the group's executive vice president.

"We presuppose that an Orthodox rabbi doesn't need more of a policy than that," he said.

But the current case involving allegations that a rabbi of the Pupa Chasidic sect and his assistant sexually abused a teen-age girl while flying from Australia to Los Angeles suggests that not every Orthodox Jew follows the Torah so closely.

Rabbi Israel Grunwald, the leader of Congregation Toldos Yakov Yosef in the Borough Park section of Brooklyn, was charged with the federal crime of sexually touching a minor and released on bail until a June 21 hearing.

His assistant, Yehudah Friedlander, was charged with more serious sexual abuse and was held until June 8, when he was released on \$200,000 bail.

The court was told that he had admitted to federal agents that he had committed some of the acts, which the girl said included forcing his hand under her clothing and repeatedly touching her breast and her vagina despite her entreaties not to, according to news reports.

In addition, Friedlander reportedly pleaded guilty in 1991 to the charge of third-degree sexual abuse in a Monticello, N.Y., case.

A federal magistrate, in initially denying bail, called Friedlander "a danger to the entire community."

The rabbis' attorney told reporters that both denied the charges.

The case is clearly getting more attention in the media than it would have had the alleged assailants been nonreligious.

Rabbis of several denominations interviewed said the attention is justified.

According to one Orthodox rabbi, Irving Greenberg, "It is legitimate to expect more" moral behavior from someone presenting himself as religious

than from people who do not, though he noted that "no system, no matter how good, will not have individual failures."

The fact that Friedlander had allegedly pleaded guilty to sexual abuse several years earlier, yet retained a position of importance and stature within his community, was of concern, Greenberg said.

"Was that behavior treated with the seriousness it deserves or did the 'old boys' close ranks behind him? It raises that question.

"In the Orthodox community there is too much closing ranks and a 'no one rock the boat' mentality," said Greenberg, president of CLAL — the National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership.

"There is authoritarian leadership, and dissent is not tolerated. Criticism is seen as disloyalty," Greenberg said.

The spokesman for a fervently Orthodox group, Agudath Israel of America, said he was not so certain that the attention paid to religious Jews' failings is legitimate.

"The attention paid to them because they're Chasidim is understandable but lamentable," said Rabbi Avi Shafran.

"What results from it is the reinforcement of the stereotype that Chasidim are hypocrites. The overwhelming majority of the observant world is people determined to keep to the stringencies of their faith.

"For people to think Chasidim are this way, hiding a darker self, is embarrassing to all of us who wear beards and yarmulkes," Shafran said.

In another widely publicized case in New York, Rockland County District Attorney Kenneth Gribetz, an Orthodox Jew, quit his post last month shortly before pleading guilty to two misdemeanor counts of defrauding the government in a deal he worked out with the U.S. Attorney.

### **Congregation reeling in shock**

Although married, a father and grandfather, Gribetz was, in part, done in by his former mistress, who went to the media with information about Gribetz, who had aspirations of becoming a congressman and had been admired by many of his area's religious Jews.

Rabbi Moshe Tendler, Gribetz's longtime rabbi, said in an interview that he had often cited Gribetz in his speeches as an illustration of how a devout Jew can remain faithful to the laws of kashrut and Shabbat while pursuing any career — even one in law and politics.

But evidence police collected from Gribetz's ex-lover's home included whips, a dog collar, sex toys and pictures of Gribetz modeling women's clothing. Their three-year affair apparently included trips they took together funded by taxpayers' dollars.

Tendler, who organized a meeting of community rabbis to levy social sanctions against Gribetz just before his breaches became public, described the former politician's behavior as a "Chilul HaShem," or desecration of God's name.

His behavior "desecrated, emasculated our Torah. It produces or minimizes the claim of Torah, that this is the divine law fit for the human experience. If someone who has been exposed to Torah does these things, what will people say?" said Tendler.

It is the reverse of what a religious Jew is supposed to do, that "the name of God shall be loved by your actions in Kiddush HaShem," said the rabbi, who is also a professor at Yeshiva University and a respected expert on medical ethics.

When a pulpit rabbi is implicated in a breach of ethics, as was the case with Rabbi Fred Neulander, the spiritual leader of Congregation M'kor Shalom, a Reform

temple in Cherry Hill, N.J., it often shines a light on the congregants' expectations of rabbinic behavior.

Neulander resigned from his position in March, four months after his wife Carol was bludgeoned to death. He has not been arrested, but the police have not ruled him out as a suspect in the ongoing investigation.

In addition, the widespread coverage it has received in the local media "has brought to light Neulander's involvement in marital infidelities," according to the Jewish Exponent in Philadelphia.

His congregation is reportedly still reeling in shock from the shocking murder and subsequent upheaval.

Is it right to be more profoundly disappointed by rabbis' failings than those of laypeople?

According to Reform Rabbi Eugene Borowitz, "All Jews are expected to behave to a high standard of human conduct. The commandment not to desecrate God's name falls on all Jews."

But "if that's true of all Jews, it's certainly true of clei kodesh," or holy vessels, said Borowitz, meaning that those who, when they present themselves as religious Jews and rabbis, have a responsibility for representing the highest ethical standards.

Borowitz is a professor of Jewish religious thought at Hebrew Union College, the Reform movement's seminary in New York City. He also authored a book titled "Reform Jewish Ethics and the Halacha."

Leila Gal Berner, a Reconstructionist rabbi and expert on Jewish ethics, said all religious Jews, and especially rabbis, have to guard against "the hubris that comes with the moral authority that people give them."

"When we allow ourselves to fall into a sense of self-importance, moral lapses can happen. In this situation, those involved could have thought that 'no one would believe I would do such a thing,'" said Berner, director of the Center for Jewish Ethics at the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College in Wyncote, Pa.

"Part of the baggage that comes with being a rabbi or religious Jew is the kavod [honor] people give you," she said. "It's very nice but also a burden. With that sense of hubris, then anything goes. Sometimes that expectation of a higher plane of behavior is not realistic and not constructive." □

### **Jordanian politicians' visit to Israel is first of its kind**

*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM, June 12 (JTA) — Four Jordanian politicians representing a party that supports the peace treaty with Israel visited the Jewish state as the guests of the Foreign Ministry.

The two-day visit was the first since the two countries signed their peace treaty in October.

Ahmed Al-Zoubi, head of the Al-Ahrar (Free) Party, told Israel Radio, "We are here to announce that the boycott and hate is over.

"We are not talking about peace because it is already accomplished. We are going to the further step, which is friendship and cooperation between Jordan and Israel," he said.

Al-Zoubi added that even though Jordanians who are opposed to the peace with Israel are vocal, their numbers are few.

The delegation met with Police Minister Moshe Shahal and Deputy Foreign Minister Yossi Beilin before touring the Old City.

The Ahrar Party is one of 22 Jordanian political parties.

It is not represented in the Jordanian Parliament or in the government. □

## Jews seek stronger measures in final anti-terrorism legislation

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON, June 12 (JTA) — In the rush to pass anti-terrorism legislation in the wake of the Oklahoma City bombing, the Senate has watered down controversial measures targeting international terrorism.

Provisions aimed at banning fund raising by terrorist groups in the United States lost out in the end as senators sought to avoid a prolonged fight on the bill.

Despite the Senate's action, there is a long road ahead for the legislation, whose final form is yet to be decided.

The Senate overwhelmingly passed the Comprehensive Terrorist Prevention Act of 1995 last week by a vote of 91 to 8. The House of Representatives began hearings on a similar measure this week.

Although the bill does not include all it had hoped for, the organized Jewish community has praised the Senate for its actions. "This is very important legislation that significantly adds to the authority of law enforcement to deal with terrorism," said Jess Hordes, Washington director of the Anti-Defamation League.

At the same time, Jewish groups are looking to the House to beef up measures designed to combat international terrorists operating in the United States.

President Clinton began the push for new counterterrorism legislation in January. After the Oklahoma City bombing on April 19, members of Congress and the administration put the initiative on a fast track, shifting its emphasis to counter domestic terrorism.

In order to avoid controversy, the Senate stripped parts of Clinton's proposals, including tough bans on fund raising for international terrorist groups through an elaborate licensing system.

Faced with claims of civil liberties violations, the Senate instead restricted fund raising only for foreign organizations, not their domestic counterparts.

Among the groups that will have been affected by such restrictions are the Islamic fundamentalist groups Hamas and Islamic Jihad.

### Aspects of bill 'disappoint' Jewish group

Although welcoming passage of the bill, the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations said it was "disappointed" the administration proposals on fund raising were not included in the bill.

In a statement issued by the group's chairman, Leon Levy, and executive vice chairman, Malcolm Hoenlein, the Conference of Presidents said it would work with the House of Representatives "to strengthen the bill to make it more effective" with respect to funding "since there is increasing evidence of activity in this country by terrorist organizations."

"This is a work in progress," said Hordes of ADL, which along with the American Jewish Committee, has led the organized Jewish community's charge for the bill.

Among the specific concerns is the bill's provision that requires that the ban goes into effect 30 days after a group is designated a terrorist organization.

"Not only does this give persons 30 days to continue to raise funds, but they can move their money," Hordes said. "The only way for this to be effective is if it goes into effect immediately."

The measure is also under attack because it requires the administration to designate every entity separately. For example, if the United States decided to ban funds going to Hamas, the militant Islamic group in the West Bank and Gaza, every hospital and school funded by Hamas would have to be listed separately.

Critics charge that with a waiting period of 30 days, entities listed as terrorist organizations could simply change their names to avoid detection.

Despite all the problems with the fund-raising provisions, Jewish observers say the bill contains many useful provisions.

The bill establishes terrorist acts as a federal offense and authorizes the hiring of 1,000 new federal law enforcement officials to staff a FBI counterterrorism center.

The bill also allows U.S. citizens to sue foreign governments for injuries suffered in terrorist attacks.

However, several of the provisions of the measure sparked controversy, based on concerns of potential violations of civil liberties. Among the most controversial are those that would expedite deportation procedures for aliens suspected of terrorism; broaden authority for wire-tapping individuals suspected of terrorism; and provide greater access to credit reports and telephone records in cases related to foreign terrorism.

Although Jewish activists remain hopeful that the House will strengthen the fund-raising ban, some privately have suggested that the Senate bill will haunt them. "This is not a good starting point," one activist said. □

## Commission hears testimony about lost Yemenite children

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, June 12 (JTA) — A state inquiry commission investigating the disappearance of hundreds of Yemenite children during the 1950s held its first meeting last week.

The panel, comprised of two retired judges and a former general, was appointed in January by the Supreme Court to investigate the fate of the children.

Yemenite activists have alleged that children of Yemenite immigrants in the 1950s were abducted by Israeli authorities and put up for illegal adoption.

Published findings of earlier commissions have not supported allegations of the mass abductions. Officials have said the children were lost in the chaos of the mass immigration and in most cases, died of disease. But suspicions have continued to simmer within the Yemenite community, fueling resentment and calls for a state inquiry.

Last year, Yemenite sect followers barricaded themselves in a compound near Tel Aviv, demanding an inquiry. In a shootout with police, one member was killed.

The panel heard testimony from two witnesses at the June 7 meeting. More hearings were scheduled. □

## Jewish leaders honored in Warsaw

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, June 12 (JTA) — Two Jewish leaders recently received awards at a ceremony in Warsaw for outstanding public service.

At the ceremony late last month at Warsaw University, Włodzimierz Siwinski, university rector, presented Sigmund Sternberg with a medal for outstanding public service. Sternberg is head of the executive committee of the International Council of Christians and Jews.

Sternberg then presented Stanislaw Krajewski, co-chairman of the Polish Council of Christians and Jews, the Interfaith Gold Medallion of the ICCJ. Sternberg, who lives in London, stressed the need for dialogue in order to keep the memory of the Holocaust alive.

Krajewski said Polish Jews born after World War II who live in Poland are Poles as much as French Jews are French. Krajewski is also the Polish consultant to the American Jewish Committee and head of the Jewish Forum in Poland, a group of businesspeople and professionals. □

# BEHIND THE HEADLINES

## Designing their way to peace: Top fashion names make splash

By Michele Chabin

CAESAREA, Israel, June 12 (JTA) — Sixty of the world's best-known fashion designers have paid an unusual tribute to the Middle East peace process.

At the request of the Israeli government, which is trying to improve Israel's image abroad, Calvin Klein, Donna Karan and tens of other big-name designers created outfits that, in their opinion, best symbolize peace.

Hoping to breathe some life into two of the country's most important industries — tourism and fashion — the Ministry of Tourism organized an extravaganza called the Fashion World's Salute to Peace. Sponsors included L'Oreal, El Al and the Holiday Inn hotel chain.

The event, which took place in Caesarea's ancient Roman amphitheater over the weekend, attracted 3,000 onlookers and raised about \$100,000 for two local children's charities. Covered by scores of journalists and photographers, and broadcast live on Channel Two, Israel's commercial television station, the fashion show set more than a few precedents.

Israeli swimwear king Gideon Oberson, whose patriotic blue-and-white striped cocktail dress was a local favorite, called the event "extremely exciting."

"Designers can be very snobby, and they never show their clothes together in the same show. This was a real salute to peace, and proof that Israel is finally on the [fashion] map," Oberson said.

Flown in from New York, Milan and Paris, as well as from Jordan, Egypt and Morocco, the clothes ranged from gorgeous to outrageous. Some of the designers took the peace motif quite literally. Yves Saint Laurent sent a peacock-blue toga with a swooping white dove on one shoulder, while Valentino created a white tank dress with the word "peace" emblazoned in a dozen languages.

## Mushrooms into a map of the world

Isaac Mizrahi, who despite his Hebrew name hails from New York, opted for black leggings and a red crop top with a Jordanian flag over one breast and an Israeli flag over the other.

One of the more eclectic numbers was Russian designer Valentin Yudashkin's "mermaid" dress. Tight-fitting until the midcalf, with a couple of doves at chest-level, the dress mushroomed into a map of the world.

Some of the most imaginative designs came from the 10 Israeli participants.

Using Jerusalem as her inspiration, Dorin Frankfurt designed a gold evening gown with copper and orange stone jewelry.

Tel Aviv native Yuval Ravid, choosing weapons disarmament as his theme, designed a silk and chiffon dress complete with a bullet belt covered with flowers. An olive-branch headpiece completed the effect.

"Israel could attract 4 million tourists by the year 2000 — provided we had a real and lasting peace," Tourism Minister Uzi Baram told the audience.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, who was accompanied by his granddaughter Noa, appeared uncharacteristically relaxed and upbeat. Only hours after speaking with U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher, who spent the weekend shuttling around the Middle East, Rabin said, "I would be happy if our army uniforms could be transformed into the clothes of peace."

Egyptian Amr Khalil, a former fashion designer who shifted to interior design, said he came out of "retirement" to participate in the show. "It was important for an Egyptian to be here," he said. "We officially made peace

a long time ago, but Israelis and Egyptians rarely do things together. It's about time we made contact."

Asked whether he was concerned about the reaction back home, especially from Islamic fundamentalists who do not recognize the 1979 Israeli-Egyptian peace treaty, Khalil replied, "I've already received phone calls from people back in Cairo who watched the event via satellite. They said it was a great show." □

## Standard of living improves for immigrant children in Israel

By Uriel Masad

JERUSALEM, June 12 (JTA) — The number of immigrant children who live below the poverty line in Israel has decreased dramatically, from 43 percent in 1993 to 23 percent in 1994, Absorption Minister Yair Tsaban announced last week.

Tsaban also said immigrant children have improved their academic performance, surpassing the national average success rate in college matriculation exams.

He revealed these and other figures at a June 5 conference marking the publication of the first "Immigrant Children in Israel" report, published jointly by his ministry and the National Council for the Child in Israel.

The council, established in 1980, has published annual reports on children in Israel for the past three years. Although past reports contained a chapter on immigrant children, this is the first report devoted solely to them.

According to the report, immigrant children constituted 27 percent of all immigrants who made aliyah between 1990 and the end of 1994.

Of the 163,887 immigrant children who came to Israel during this period, about 136,000 came from the former Soviet Union, 17,000 from Ethiopia, 2,400 from the United States and 1,800 from France.

About 95,000 immigrant families with children now live in Israel. Most of them, about 57 percent, have one child, and 11 percent have three or more children.

The rate of single-parent families, now at 18,000, has grown in the last two years from 14 percent to 19 percent of all immigrant families, and is more than double the 9 percent rate of single-parent families in the rest of the population.

Tsaban also said various government agencies are working to improve mortgage loan conditions for single-parent families, which will improve the children's standard of living. Tsaban attributed the general rise in living standards of immigrant children to the decrease in unemployment among their parents — from 30 percent in 1992 to 11 percent in 1994.

Another contributing factor to the rise in living standards, he said, are grants for a first child given by the National Insurance Institute, a program that went into effect only recently.

Tsaban also pointed with satisfaction to the continued improvement in immigrant children's academic achievements. In 1993, 48 percent of immigrant children passed their matriculation exams — national tests taken at the end of high school that are a major factor in university admissions. In 1994, the number rose to 50.1 percent.

An average of 47 percent native-born Israelis pass the matriculation exams.

Tsaban called on Israeli society and the various absorption institutions to increase their efforts at absorbing immigrant children, saying that because they adapt easier to their new environment, they become a bridgehead for the successful absorption of their entire families.

"The failure to absorb an immigrant child could have a negative influence on the absorption of the child's family," said the minister. □