



## NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ Israel lifted the internal closure it imposed on the West Bank town of Bethlehem after the twin suicide bombing in Jerusalem last month. The closure between Israel and the West Bank and Gaza Strip remains in effect. [Page 2]

■ Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said Israel had concrete evidence that Palestinian Authority leader Yasser Arafat was instigating violence among Palestinians. Speaking in Seoul, South Korea, Netanyahu added that the self-rule authority was not yet fulfilling its commitment to fight terrorism.

■ The Swiss asked its Parliament to authorize approximately \$11.4 million more for the commission investigating the role of Swiss banks in looting Nazi gold. The International Commission of Experts, which has a five-year mandate, originally received about \$3.35 million.

■ Israel criticized the Palestinian Authority for remarks made over its television station. A moderator of a cultural program broadcast by the Palestinian Broadcast Corporation questioned the number of Jews killed during the Holocaust and called the Holocaust a Jewish "investment." The chief of the PBC called the remarks freedom of expression.

■ Israel and South Korea have agreed to expand economic ties and boost joint ventures. In a meeting in Seoul, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and South Korean President Kim Young-Sam agreed to meetings of a commission led by the countries' trade ministers, and the creation of a \$6 million dollar high-tech joint research fund.

■ Russia denied reports that it is helping Iran develop ballistic missiles. Israel Television recently claimed that hundreds of Russian scientists are working with Iran and that Israel sent a letter of protest to Russia.

Because of the Labor Day holiday, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Monday, Sept. 1.

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

### U.S. Zionist groups launch race over issues of Jerusalem, pluralism

By Cynthia Mann

NEW YORK (JTA) — Like a piece of film stuck under a projector light, the face of Yasser Arafat burns through the image of the Western Wall, growing larger until it takes over the entire video frame.

"Jerusalem is the capital of the state of Palestine," shouts the kaffiyeh-clad Palestinian Authority leader in Arabic before a crowd, pointing his finger for emphasis.

Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert then appears against a picturesque backdrop of the Old City walls.

"We have to defend" Jerusalem "against the viciousness of Arafat and the Palestinian Authority," he says.

No, this video, titled "Keep Jerusalem United," is not campaign material for an Israeli election.

It was produced in New York by American Friends of Likud and sent to 75,000 homes of U.S. Jews registered to vote in the election for the 33rd World Zionist Congress.

The Congress, slated for December in Jerusalem, sets the priorities and policies of the World Zionist Organization.

The first such congress was convened 100 years ago by Theodor Herzl in Basel, Switzerland, an anniversary that is being celebrated there this week.

The WZO has joint responsibility for the \$400 million annual budget of the Jewish Agency for Israel, its organizational partner. The lion's share of the budget is spent on immigration and absorption as well as on Jewish and Zionist education. Most of the money is contributed by North American federations and the United Jewish Appeal, and other Jewish fund-raising establishments around the world.

The Congress also elects the joint leadership of the two bodies, currently chaired by Avraham Burg.

The race is now entering its final lap. The roughly 150,000 would-be voters are receiving ballots mailed last week by the American Zionist Movement, the official sponsor of the election.

Participants, who became eligible to vote by responding to the first open registration drive, must return their ballots by the end of September.

The United States will send 145 delegates to the Congress, where 500 representatives with full voting rights will gather from around the world.

### Religious pluralism a priority for several slates

The hefty mailings from the AZM included lists of the 10 slates competing for delegate spots and one-page summaries of each of their platforms.

Activists believe that the elections will determine the leadership that will speak on behalf of the Jewish world about the most important issues facing Jews.

Religious pluralism is a priority for several of the slates, reflecting the recognition that many grass-roots Jews who had never before heard of the WZO were galvanized to register because of this hot-button issue.

But from the start, the issue was the centerpiece for ARZA, the Association of Reform Zionists of America, and Mercaz, U.S.A., the Zionist organization of the Conservative movement.

The two also were the most ardent champions of the elections. Several of the other organizations now running slates, including Likud, resisted until late in the game, instead advocating a power-sharing arrangement that would have averted elections.

Rabbi Ammiel Hirsch, ARZA's executive director, is feeling confident.

"I am cautiously optimistic that we are on the verge of a significant breakthrough for the Reform movement and a dramatic power shift in the North American Zionist scene" and beyond.

Hirsch refused to disclose details of what he described as a sophisticated election campaign strategy to win support.

So far, voters have received a postcard featuring ARZA's trademark

campaign image of a Jewish star fractured into two to reflect the divisions sown by Orthodox control over religious affairs in Israel.

"This election is not about Jerusalem," said Hirsch, reacting to Olmert's campaign pitch.

"It is about sending a message to the Israeli political system that we, American Jewry, will not stand for second-class treatment in Israel."

Religious pluralism is also highlighted in the platforms of American Friends of Meretz, a new slate called American Zionists for Unity and Tolerance and the Baltimore Zionist District (headed by veteran activist Shoshana Cardin), the Labor Zionist Movement and the World Confederation of United Zionists.

The other slates in the running are: Revisionist Zionists of America, Religious Zionist Movement and the Zionist Organization of America.

In an interview, Olmert, who was in New York this week to promote Likud support in the elections, spelled out why the "battle for Jerusalem" is his party's rallying cry in an organization not directly involved in Arab-Jewish politics.

"At the end of the day, the World Zionist Organization is the most authoritative spokesman for Jewish affairs worldwide," said Olmert, who set aside a cigar to talk in his hotel room.

He said the elections are a referendum about the fate of Jerusalem because "the Jerusalem issue is at the forefront of the battle now between us and the Arab world."

It is "the most sensitive, most complex, most important, most symbolic issue that is on the national and international agenda," he said, adding that "the most powerful voice" preserving the unity of Jerusalem "is the voice of Likud in Israel and Friends of Likud" in the United States.

Jerusalem's unity, "without any shared sovereignty in any form," is "the one thing about which Jews should not compromise," he said. □

## **Israel reopens Bethlehem, blames Arafat for violence**

*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel has lifted an internal closure that it imposed four weeks ago on the West Bank town of Bethlehem.

Israel had imposed similar internal closures on other West Bank cities in the wake of a July 30 twin suicide bombing in Jerusalem's Mahane Yehuda market that killed 14 Israelis.

But those closures had been lifted in several stages before this week.

A general closure sealing off the West Bank and Gaza Strip from Israel remains in effect.

The closure of Bethlehem had drawn international criticism, especially from Christian groups who said some pilgrims had encountered difficulty getting past Israeli roadblocks to visit what is believed to be the birthplace of Jesus.

The Vatican's envoy to Israel called on the Israeli Foreign Ministry earlier this week to lift the blockade of the city.

Israel had maintained the closure of Bethlehem because Israeli security officials believed that suspected leaders of the Islamic militant group Hamas and those who planned the July 30 attack were hiding in the city.

Before lifting the closure on Wednesday, Israeli security forces rounded up some 15 Palestinians suspected of hostile activities against Israel.

Israel Radio reported that the 15 were believed to

belong to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, another militant group.

Bethlehem was relatively quiet Wednesday, following several days of clashes earlier this week in which Israeli troops fired tear gas and rubber bullets to disperse stone-throwing Palestinians who were demonstrating against the closure.

In the wake of the Jerusalem attack last month, Israel called on the Palestinian Authority to crack down on Islamic militants, a move the self-rule government has rejected.

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, speaking during a visit to Seoul, South Korea, accused Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat of instigating violence in order to heighten tensions.

"We have detailed information that the Palestinian Authority is encouraging street violence," Netanyahu told reporters.

In a related development Wednesday, Israel shut down the offices of a Hamas charity operating near the West Bank town of Hebron.

Israeli officials said they had found materials inciting violence against Israel during a search of the facility.

While he described the situation in the West Bank and Gaza Strip as very tense, the Israel Defense Force chief of staff said Tuesday that he does not think an "explosion" in the territories is imminent.

"It seems the sides are waiting for the pending visit of the U.S. secretary of state," Lt. Gen. Amnon Shahak told reporters after appearing before the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee.

"However, there is no doubt that there is tension and an accumulation of resentment and pressures in the territories, creating a reality which could lead to an explosion."

After U.S. Middle East envoy Dennis Ross visited the region earlier this month, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright indicated that she would soon travel to the Middle East.

But her trip is conditioned on the development of improved security ties between Israel and the Palestinian Authority.

On Tuesday, Arafat said he believed that those ties had improved to the extent that Albright should make the visit.

Asked by reporters whether there was enough security cooperation for Albright to visit, Arafat was quoted as responding, "Definitely, and we have a witness, an American witness."

## **Hamas rejects non-violence**

Representatives from the CIA have been taking part in contacts between Israeli and Palestinian security officials that were arranged during Ross' visit.

Last week, Arafat held two days of "national unity" talks that included leaders of the militant Hamas and Islamic Jihad movements.

During those talks, according to an aide to Arafat, the Palestinian Authority asked Hamas to halt attacks against Israeli targets.

Hamas issued a statement Tuesday rejecting the request, saying it viewed armed struggle as a legitimate expression of its resistance to the Israeli-Palestinian accords.

On Wednesday, Israeli and Palestinian security forces carried out a joint disaster drill in the Gaza Strip.

The two sides worked together to clear away "victims" in simulated traffic and terrorist attacks.

Israel said that despite the collaboration, there was still no intelligence or anti-terror cooperation. □

**EDUCATING OUR CHILDREN****Study: Underfunded day schools require significant outside help**

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) — Jewish day schools, with relatively few exceptions, are seriously underfunded.

That is the finding of a new study, "The Financing of Jewish Day Schools," conducted by Marvin Schick and Jeremy Dauber.

They found that the average per-student expenditures in day schools are well below comparable expenditures at non-Jewish private schools and about the same as they are in public schools. Yet in a majority of day schools, tuition and other mandatory fees cover no more than half of the budget, so that substantial funds have to be raised from outside sources.

"Many, perhaps most Jewish day schools, are forced to live a parsimonious existence," wrote the authors. At the same time, the authors found, tuition is too high for many parents. Unless tuition is made more affordable, they conclude, most American Jews will not elect the day school option for their children.

The study examined data supplied by 154 day schools outside the New York area, including the schools' budgets and enrollments from the 1995-1996 school year. It was funded by the Avi Chai Foundation, a New York-based entity that promotes Jewish education.

Survey respondents included Orthodox schools that are part of the Torah Umesorah network, the Conservative movement's Solomon Schechter system, and the Reform movement's day schools, as well as transdenominational schools known as community day schools.

On issues relating to tuition, the study found:

- The average tuition at community day schools is \$5,059; \$5,465 at Reform schools; \$6,083 at Conservative schools and \$5,131 at Orthodox schools.

- While a minority of students get significant scholarship aid, others don't get any. Thus the average amount paid by parents, per student, at community day schools is \$4,199; at Reform schools \$4,415; at Conservative schools \$5,256; and at Orthodox schools \$3,423.

- Parents who opt against day schools usually cite tuition as the reason.

- The less observant a family is, the more likely high tuition is a barrier to day-school attendance.

**Higher salaries fail to attract gifted teachers**

In examining faculty salaries and qualifications, the authors found:

- Over the past decade or so, salaries have risen to retain and attract educational administrators such as principals and headmasters.

- Higher salaries have not been strong enough magnets to draw gifted people to teaching careers.

- The number of qualified Jewish educators is sparse.

The authors found that when it comes to funding:

- While about 40 percent of the schools reported an increase in local federation funding over the past five years when measured in absolute dollars, 67 percent of the schools reported that such funding had decreased when measured as a percentage of their budgets.

- Instability in fund raising could be offset by endowments.

- Within the day-school world, meaningful endowments are the exception and not the rule.

- Orthodox schools are more successful fund-raisers than their non-Orthodox counterparts, outperforming other schools by nearly 2-1 in per-capita fund raising. □

**Fired scholar awarded \$275,000 for defending Jewish colleagues**

By Roni B. Robbins

Atlanta Jewish Times

ATLANTA (JTA) — Candace Kaspers says she was just doing her job when she questioned the elimination of the posts filled by the only two Jewish professors in her department at Kennesaw State University.

Last week, she won a lawsuit against the Georgia Board of Regents, which oversees the college. She claimed that she lost her job as chairwoman of the Communications Department because she defended the Jewish faculty.

A federal jury awarded Kaspers \$275,000 in compensatory damages for the retaliation that resulted from her charge of religious discrimination.

The Board of Regents has 30 days to appeal the Aug. 21 verdict. Kaspers' case paves the way for four Jewish professors — including the two she defended — to pursue their religious discrimination lawsuits.

The verdict "should send a strong message that those who speak out at the workplace about possible religious discrimination problems will not be punished," said Jay Kaiman, Southeast regional director of the Anti-Defamation League.

The 49-year-old Kaspers, who is Protestant, had questioned a departmental reorganization that eliminated the professors' positions. Kennesaw requires department heads to report concerns about violations of law to their supervisors, her lawyer, Richard Gerakitis, argued during the trial.

"This gives the Board of Regents an opportunity to focus on issues of concern" at the college, she said. "I hope they take this seriously and investigate the issues raised by me and four other Jewish faculty members."

**Claims of religious insensitivity**

Those issues also include claims of religious insensitivity and anti-Semitic acts on campus that arose during the summer of 1994. Kaspers voiced her concerns about such incidents to her supervisor, Lois Muir, on Oct. 31 of that year.

Muir asked Kaspers to resign the next day from her job as department chairwoman. Kaspers filed her lawsuit five months later.

Kennesaw President Betty Siegel said in a statement that the original suit had been pared down considerably before trial and that the Board of Regents only lost the retaliation claim.

The jury ruled against Kaspers' claim that her dismissal was a breach of contract.

Throughout the trial, the defense argued that Kaspers was terminated because of deteriorating relations with her supervising dean — or what attorneys and several witnesses referred to as a tendency to be "insubordinate, uncooperative and ineffective."

The jury's verdict proved that she was right, said Alan Schwartz, one of the Jewish professors who lost his job during the department reorganization Kaspers opposed.

"I would see this trial as a sort of vindication," he said. "I feel vindicated."

His lawsuit and that of the other Jewish professor in the communications department, Bari Levingston, are awaiting trial.

Also pending are lawsuits filed by two other former Jewish faculty members who lost their jobs during the campus-wide reorganization three years ago.

Kennesaw has argued that the reorganization was necessary to cut costs and upgrade the college's credentials. The four Jewish professors held temporary positions with contracts that were renewed annually. □

**NEWS ANALYSIS****National Religious Party leads fight against religious pluralism***By David Landau*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A new front is quickly developing in the battle over religious pluralism in Israel.

The line in the sand was drawn earlier this month when Israel's High Court of Justice ruled that the Religious Affairs Ministry must allow a Reform Jewish woman, Joyce Brenner, to take her place on a local religious council in Netanya.

When Education Minister Zevulun Hammer, the longtime leader of the National Religious Party, took over the Religious Affairs Ministry this week, some observers believed he was going to be more lenient than his predecessor regarding the Brenner case. Eli Suissa of the fervently Orthodox Shas Party resigned from the Religious Affairs Ministry rather than enforce the high court's ruling.

But nothing could have been further from the truth.

Surprising though it may seem to outsiders, the NRP is more hard-line on some of the pluralism questions than its fervently Orthodox partners in the coalition.

The reason for this is rooted in the NRP's fiercely Zionist, strongly nationalistic ideology, which, indeed, is an integral part of its theology.

This ideology prompted Hammer to assert this week that his party wants to see the Knesset enact new legislation that would circumvent the Brenner ruling.

**Suissa looks on approvingly**

The court has ruled on several occasions that non-Orthodox representatives cannot be barred from religious councils on the basis of their religious beliefs.

But Hammer was making it clear that the Knesset, not the court, may have the last say on the matter.

Suissa, who looked on approvingly as Hammer made the statement, had been slated even before his resignation to hand over the Religious Affairs Ministry to the NRP leader under an agreement worked out when Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's government was created last year.

When Suissa resigned, Netanyahu briefly took over the portfolio and enforced the court order — thereby heading off a crisis.

But none of the parties to the controversy believed that the premier's action represented the end of the matter.

The Orthodox parties — Shas, NRP and the United Torah Front — have told the prime minister they want to see an initial vote on legislation that would bar non-Orthodox representatives from the religious councils before the Knesset's summer recess ends.

Netanyahu is trying to postpone a showdown at least until the Knesset reconvenes in November.

On the opposite side of the divide, the non-Orthodox movements intend to push other candidates onto other religious councils — and to go back to the high court if their efforts are stymied.

Another battle over the religious pluralism issue is, meanwhile, being affected by the Brenner case. Earlier this year, Netanyahu created a committee headed by Finance Minister Ya'acov Ne'eman to seek a solution to the ongoing controversy over conversions performed in Israel.

The committee's recommendations could avert the passage of pending legislation that would codify the Orthodox monopoly over conversions performed in Israel, a measure vehemently opposed by the Conservative and Reform movements.

The committee of Orthodox and non-Orthodox representatives missed its Aug. 15 deadline for reaching a compromise and is now struggling to break its deadlock.

Linking the two pluralism issues, Suissa — who retained the powerful post of interior minister after turning over the religious affairs portfolio — indicated Sunday that the Ne'eman Committee's deliberations were likely to cease altogether unless the "status quo" regarding religious councils, violated, in his opinion, by the Brenner ruling, is quickly restored.

And there is little point in looking for a gap between the NRP and the fervently Orthodox, or haredi, parties on these issues.

The NRP, traditionally, has seen the Zionist movement and the State of Israel as invested with divine significance — as a tangible stage in God's scheme for the ultimate redemption of the people of Israel and, through them, of all mankind.

It is vitally important in the eyes of NRP leaders that Israel retain its Orthodox Jewish character.

The party and its followers are the loyal disciples of the state's chief rabbis, of the chief rabbis of each city and of the religious councils, which have exclusive jurisdiction over religious matters for all Jews living in Israel.

Members of each council are appointed by the local municipal council, the religious affairs minister and the local chief rabbi.

The majority of religious council chairmen across the country are NRP loyalists, and these councils have long been considered bastions of NRP support.

For the haredim, on the other hand, an ambivalence remains in their attitudes toward the State of Israel.

While most haredim rejected the radical anti-Zionism of the Satmar Chasidic movement, which regards Zionism as heresy, haredim have never embraced the religious Zionist dogma, but have instead adopted a pragmatic acquiescence to modern-day Israel's existence.

During the half-century of Israel's statehood, political crises have periodically erupted over aspects of what has come to be known as the "Who is a Jew" issue.

The current arguments over conversion are but the latest manifestations of this same profound, and probably irreconcilable, division between Orthodoxy and the other movements over the definition of Jewishness.

For the NRP, perhaps more than for Israel's other Orthodox groupings, Reform and Conservative attempts to win official recognition and equal standing in Israel are a challenge to be confronted with unshakable resolve. □

**Plea for unity made in Basel**

BASEL, Switzerland (JTA) — Jewish unity was the theme 100 years ago when delegates convened here to adopt a call for a Jewish homeland in Palestine.

Unity was again a theme this week at ceremonies commemorating the centennial of the First Zionist Congress.

Avraham Burg, chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel and the World Zionist Organization, told the approximately 1,700 delegates attending the ceremonies that Jewish unity was still crucial even though the dream of Theodor Herzl and his colleagues had been realized with the creation of the state of Israel.

Burg called for a "reform" in religious attitudes that "would enable Jews to live among Jews as equals despite the differences between each other."

His comments came at a time of increasing tension between Orthodox and liberal Jews over pending conversion legislation in Israel that liberal Jews believe will delegitimize their beliefs.

Basel is serving as host for numerous events tied to the centennial celebrations, which will culminate with a formal ceremony Sunday night on the date and in the hall where Herzl concluded the first congress. □