



# Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 76, No. 7

Tuesday, January 13, 1998

81<sup>st</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Coalition survives Knesset vote

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's coalition survived a no-confidence vote in the Knesset by a vote of 54-54.

A pair of no-confidence motions were supported by former Foreign Minister David Levy's Geshet Party. His recent resignation left the Netanyahu government with a slender 61-59 majority in the Knesset.

A majority of 61 votes in the 120-member Knesset is required to bring down the government and go to new elections.

The motions were introduced by opposition parties over the recently passed state budget and Levy's resignation.

### High Court to hear AIPAC case

The U.S. Supreme Court is slated to hear arguments Wednesday in a case stemming from an action against the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

The case dates back to 1989, when a group of former government officials, all known as staunch opponents of Israel, sought to convince the Federal Election Commission to regulate AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobby, as a political action committee.

The court's decision could come down anytime before its term ends in June. [Page 4]

### Iran refuses U.S. congressman

Iran will not receive an American congressman who has expressed an interest in visiting Tehran, an Iranian official was quoted saying on Iran's state-run radio. Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) said last week that he wanted to go to Iran to see if Iran-U.S. relations could be improved.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu denied that his government had given Israeli rabbis permission to make contact with Iranian clerics.

The comment came after Rabbi Menachem Froman of the West Bank settlement of Tekoa was quoted in the Israeli media as saying that the contacts have been going on for several months.

### Israel on high alert

Israeli security forces were placed on high alert following warnings of possible terrorist attacks.

Public Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani said that Israeli security forces had carried out a number of arrests in recent days in an effort to thwart terrorist attacks.

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

### Heschel and King: Two visionaries are linked again

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK (JTA) — One was a black Baptist preacher, the other a white-bearded rabbi born to lead a Chasidic dynasty.

In life they stood arm in arm as men committed to righting their nation's moral wrongs, as religious leaders unparalleled in influence and stature — and as personal friends.

Slavery and the struggle for redemption: The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. and Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel knew both intimately, and devoted their lives to helping their people reach a Promised Land. For King, that was a land free of racial discrimination. For Heschel, it lay in inspiring people to develop an intimate relationship with God, to do God's work in the world and to feel joy in doing it.

Now, decades after their deaths, King and Heschel are being paired once again.

This year, the 25th *yahrzeit* of Heschel's death falls on Jan. 16, just days before King's birthday is celebrated as a federal holiday on Jan. 19, 30 years after his assassination. Hundreds of activities are slated around the world to remember Heschel. Some of those, particularly in the United States, will commemorate King as well.

It's reflective of his widespread influence that about 300 communities of Jews around the world — from Vancouver, British Columbia, to Bennington, Vt.; from Greensboro, N.C., to the Netherlands; and from Berlin to Jerusalem — are honoring Heschel's memory and legacy in an organized way.

Heschel was — and is — the closest thing that many liberal Jews will ever have to a *rebbe*, a Chasidic master whose teachings and writings guide their lives.

For many, Heschel's vision of man's role in the world was so powerful that it resonates today even more strongly, perhaps, than it did in the first years after his death on Dec. 23, 1972. "What was amazing about Heschel" was the sense he gave that by working to fix the world's wrongs, "you really are repairing the universe, bringing to it a fusion of the Chasidic and prophetic," said Rabbi Arthur Waskow.

Waskow, director of Philadelphia's Shalom Center, which is devoted to bringing Jewish spirituality to bear on issues of social justice, has been centrally involved in making people aware of Heschel's *yahrzeit*. For more than six months he has been helping organize events all over the world by providing community leaders with excerpts of Heschel's work and writings about the late rabbi, and sharing information about him over the Internet. Heschel's influence over nearly all segments of the Jewish community — as well as over Protestants and Catholics, whites and blacks — has been profound, say people from each of those quarters.

"Heschel and my father were prophetic voices in the wilderness, crying out and urging us to come together and go beyond our perceived differences and limitations," Yolanda King, the civil rights leader's eldest child, said in a telephone interview.

"Through their ministries and work, they really urged us to be the best that we can be, summoned us to be our best selves."

Born in Warsaw in 1907, Heschel was nurtured in the bosom of a great Chasidic community and recognized as an "ilui," a child prodigy in Torah.

Both of his parents were from prominent Chasidic families, his mother the twin sister of the Novominsker *rebbe* and his father the grandson of the Apter *rebbe*.

While a teen-ager, Heschel began reading secular books, in addition to studying Talmud, his daughter, Susannah Heschel, wrote in the introduction to the 1996 book of her father's essays she edited, "Moral Grandeur and Spiritual Audacity."

He went to Vilna, Lithuania, to study at a gymnasium, then later to university and a liberal Jewish seminary in Berlin. He was one of the few students there able to develop

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Syrians camp out in Israel

Despite the lack of diplomatic relations, a group of Syrians was treated to some Israeli hospitality this week.

Israeli Army Radio reported that the Syrians were on an El Al flight from Amman, Jordan, to Amsterdam over the weekend when airline officials discovered that the travelers had failed to arrange entry visas to Holland. Despite El Al's request, Holland refused to accept them.

With no other connecting flight, the Syrians had to spend the night at Ben-Gurion Airport.

An airport official said the airline arranged for food and mattresses to be brought to the travelers. They were flown back to Amman the next day on a charter flight arranged by El Al.

Asked about the unusual passenger list, El Al officials said that since the airline began flights to and from Amman, citizens of the entire region were taking advantage of the route to catch connecting flights to other destinations.

### Syria arrests suspect

Syrian security forces arrested a Syrian national suspected of being a contact for a retired Israeli Mossad agent, an Israeli newspaper reported Monday.

The Israeli daily Ha'aretz said the suspect was believed to be close to the Syrian government, and had met with the former Mossad field officer, Yehuda Gil, several times over the past 21 years.

Gil, 63, was arrested two months ago and has been charged with fraud, embezzlement and passing information to the Mossad with the intent to damage state security.

### New Israeli party founded

A new secular, centrist political party announced its intention to run in the next Israeli general elections.

The party, which is reportedly aligned with Tel Aviv Mayor Roni Milo, is called Atid, Hebrew for future.

relationships with people at the Orthodox seminary down the street, wrote Susannah Heschel, who has been appointed an associate professor of Jewish studies at Dartmouth College.

After being deported by the Nazis to Poland in 1938, Heschel escaped just six weeks before the German invasion of his homeland in 1939, thanks to an invitation to teach at the Reform movement's Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati.

Heschel quickly discerned a profound problem among American Jews — one that many say remains a problem today. "Heschel did not find enough American Jews struggling with the reality of God nor responding to divine imperatives," the author of two books about him, Brandeis University professor Edward Kaplan, wrote in an article.

Heschel judged American Jews as being in the throes of a second Holocaust — what he called "spiritual absenteeism," Kaplan wrote.

By the time the war was over, Heschel's mother and two of his sisters had perished in Hitler's fires. In Ohio, Heschel met and married his wife, Sylvia, and within a few months was invited to teach at the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary. They moved to New York, where he remained at the seminary for close to three decades. It was after he married that he began writing his most important works — "Man Is Not Alone" and "The Sabbath," both published in 1951, "God in Search of Man," in 1952, and "Man's Quest for God," in 1954.

In the 1960s, he was politically active, becoming a prominent advocate for the black struggle to attain civil and human rights and a powerful opponent of the Vietnam War.

"Until Heschel, Jewish liberalism was very much the province of Reform rabbis, and he felt their Judaism wasn't very deep," according to Rabbi Arthur Green, who studied closely with Heschel while at JTS.

Then there were Jews, Green said, who were very observant but "who cared nothing for the outside world. Heschel bridged that in a very authentic and unique way."

Heschel met King at a conference on race and religion in Chicago in 1963 and they became fast friends. He protested with King for the black cause in many venues. King, in turn, articulated strong support for Israel and against the anti-Semitism that emerged in the black community a few years later.

In 1965 Heschel marched, arms linked with King's, to Selma, Ala., protesting discrimination against blacks. For Heschel it was the quintessential political expression of his religious mandate. "I felt that my feet were praying," he said afterward in an oft-quoted statement.

When Heschel founded Clergy and Laity Concerned About Vietnam, he asked King to speak at New York City's Riverside Church for the cause, something that was politically risky for the minister at the time. But even after many others abandoned King and his cause, Heschel stood by him, said Yolanda King.

In 1968, just 10 days before he was assassinated, King addressed a conference of Conservative rabbis at Heschel's invitation. The rabbi introduced his friend by saying that "Martin Luther King Jr. is a sign that God has not forsaken the United States of America," recalled his daughter. Heschel was the only Jew invited to speak at King's funeral.

The two shared many theological parallels in their writings and speeches, said Susannah Heschel, most centrally "that God is not the 'Unmoved Mover.'"

Heschel's political activity "was barely tolerated" at JTS, according to Green.

But some of his students, including Green, as frustrated as their teacher by the passivity of American Jews, decided to change things. In the late 1960s they founded Havurat Shalom in Somerville, Mass. That community became the model for small, participatory havurot — groups of Jews who gather to study and pray together — and the basis of the Jewish renewal movement.

Heschel remained active until soon before his death, which came as he slept on a Sabbath evening a quarter-century ago. Despite his unmatched level of commitment to social action, it was not the heart of his life, said his daughter. For her father, "The starting point wasn't marching to Selma, it wasn't social activism, it was being a mensch," she said. More than anything else, she added, he was concerned about "treating other people with consideration and compassion."

"He said that every Jew is an image of God, and when you look at somebody you should be reminded of God and to live your life so people can be reminded of God," Susannah Heschel said. "And he did that." □



## Daily News Bulletin

Caryn Rosen Adelman, *President*  
 Mark J. Joffe, *Executive Editor and Publisher*  
 Lisa Hostein, *Editor*  
 Kenneth Bandler, *Managing Editor*  
 Lenore A. Silverstein, *Business Manager*

JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at [www.jta.org](http://www.jta.org).  
 © JTA      Reproduction only by previous arrangement.

## JEWISH WORLD

### Court declines lesbian's case

The U.S. Supreme Court declined without comment to hear an appeal from a Jewish lesbian who says the state of Georgia broke a law when it withdrew a job offer after learning that she was planning a Jewish commitment ceremony with another woman.

A lower court had ruled that there was "considerable doubt" that she "has a constitutionally protected right to be 'married' to another woman."

### Ellis Island before High Court

The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in a case that will determine whether Ellis Island belongs to New York or New Jersey.

A decision about the future of the famed immigration center, where many Jewish immigrants from Europe entered the United States, is expected by the end of the court's term in June.

### AJC to open Germany office

More than 400 guests have signed up to attend festivities marking the February opening of the first branch of an American Jewish organization in Germany.

The American Jewish Committee's office is expected to facilitate German-Jewish relations and coordinate the AJCommittee's activities in Central and Eastern Europe.

### Jews sign unity proclamation

The Jewish Federation of Central New Jersey and local rabbis from across the religious spectrum signed onto a proclamation for Jewish unity.

The statement, believed to be one of the first which join together federation and rabbinic leadership, commits the signatories "to engage in dialogue, even when we disagree. We are committed to respecting our diversity, working together to build and support our community and shared institutions."

The rabbis who signed the statement designated Jan. 23-24 as Jewish Unity Shabbat.

### One quintuplet dies

One of the quintuplets born to a Chasidic woman in Brooklyn, N.Y., over the weekend has died.

Miriam and Chaim Schnitzler, members of the Satmar Chasidim, became parents for the first time when their babies were born 13 weeks premature.

### Former official defends Papon

A colleague of a former Vichy France official accused of deporting 1,560 Jews during World War II testified last week that Maurice Papon did not pressure his staff to work with the Nazis.

The testimony contradicts the prosecutor's case against Papon.

## Germany to compensate survivors in Eastern Europe

By Deidre Berger

FRANKFURT (JTA) — Holocaust survivors living in Eastern Europe will finally receive direct financial compensation from Germany.

Under an agreement reached between Germany and the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany announced Monday, the Bonn government will pay about \$27 million a year for the next four years into a fund that will be administered by the Claims Conference.

The Claims Conference executive committee, which will meet next month, and the German Parliament must approve the agreement, but negotiators on both sides do not expect any obstacles.

Although Germany will not begin paying into the fund until 1999, some of the survivors could begin receiving pension payments later this year. Claims Conference officials in Frankfurt expect the payments to begin operating in July, using funds already at the group's disposal.

Claims Conference officials estimate that there are 16,000 to 18,000 eligible survivors.

However, Claims Conference representatives warned that the process of verifying the eligibility requirements of the applicants could delay the beginning of payments.

While the new fund is unrelated to the Swiss fund established last year to aid needy Holocaust survivors, some of the survivors in Eastern Europe who are slated to receive \$1,000 from the Swiss fund this year will also get compensation from Germany, said Elan Steinberg, executive director of the World Jewish Congress in New York.

German and Jewish negotiators agreed that pensions would only be paid to survivors who have received no other direct German financial compensation for their sufferings during the Nazi era. Members of the Green Party criticized this stipulation, pointing out that it will exclude some survivors in Poland and the former Soviet Union who received, since 1991, one-time payments of less than \$1000.

Germany has paid more than \$54 billion in compensation to Holocaust survivors since World War II, but no payments were made to those living in the Soviet-bloc countries during the Cold War.

After the collapse of the Soviet bloc, Germany maintained that it could not afford to pay individual pensions to survivors in Eastern Europe. Instead, the German government set up general funds in those countries to be used mainly for social services that would benefit the survivors.

Despite persistent reports that most of those funds never reached the survivors for whom they were intended, Bonn continues to hold to this model of compensation. A German-Czech fund inaugurated this month largely financed by the German government will be used to fund social service programs — not individual compensation — for survivors in the Czech Republic.

In recent years, Jewish organizations have repeatedly demanded that all survivors, including those living in Eastern Europe, receive German government pensions. Germany had refused to negotiate until last year, when it was embarrassed by reports that former SS officers, including alleged war criminals, were receiving pensions.

The German-Jewish negotiations, which began in earnest last August, were on the verge of collapse several times. There were reports of misunderstandings between the two sides and disagreements among some of the 23 organizational members of the Claims Conference, which was founded in 1951 to help Holocaust survivors obtain compensation from Germany.

The new agreement means that the mainly impoverished survivors living in Eastern Europe will finally receive at least token compensation for their persecution by the Nazis. The eligibility requirements for the new fund will be the same as those for survivors living in the West and in Israel. Criteria include proof of confinement in a concentration camp for at least six months — or in a ghetto or in hiding for at least 18 months.

Those who were under 18 who lived in hiding or under a false identity for at least 18 months can also apply for pensions. □

## U.S. Supreme Court prepares to hear case involving AIPAC

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The American Israel Public Affairs Committee is putting on a confident face as the Supreme Court prepares to consider a case that observers say could have important implications for the pro-Israel lobby.

The justices are scheduled to hear arguments on Wednesday in *FEC vs. Akins*, culminating a 9-year-old battle involving allegations of improper political activity by AIPAC.

The case stems from 1989, when a group of former government officials, all known as staunch opponents of Israel, began battling to convince the Federal Election Commission to regulate AIPAC as a political action committee and thereby subject it to restrictive campaign-finance laws. Such a designation would limit contributions to and expenditures by AIPAC, which in spite of its name is not a political action committee.

The case is being watched closely not only by the Jewish community, but by a variety of political forces anxious to see whether the case will have broader implications for campaign-finance practices.

Political action committees, commonly known as PACs, raise funds to support political candidates. AIPAC, which makes no such expenditures, defines itself as a registered lobby on behalf of legislation affecting U.S.-Israel relations.

"As a practical matter, I don't think any of the likely outcomes are going to have an impact on AIPAC," said Tom Hungar, a partner in the law firm representing AIPAC.

AIPAC is not a direct party to the case, but submitted a friend-of-the-court brief asking the court to dismiss the complaint.

In 1992, the FEC, which monitors compliance with campaign laws, found that AIPAC spent money in an effort to influence congressional elections.

But the FEC also ruled that this was not AIPAC's "major purpose" and determined that the pro-Israel lobby did not have to register as a PAC.

A lower court and a three-judge panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia initially upheld the FEC's decision.

But in December 1996, the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled that the FEC misapplied the law.

The court said the percentage of an organization's work that is campaign-related should not determine the definition of a PAC.

If the Supreme Court overturns the lower court's ruling and allows a group's "major purpose" to determine if it is a PAC, then the case against AIPAC would end.

But if the court upholds the appeals court and strikes down the major purpose test, AIPAC's fate would once again lie with the FEC.

The FEC could, according to some legal observers, restrict the organization's ability to raise and spend money and force the lobby to open its books for public disclosure.

For their part, AIPAC officials and lawyers for the organization envision no such scenario. They have long maintained that AIPAC, as a membership organization, has the constitutional right to communicate with its members on any subject.

A decision could come anytime before the court's term ends in June. □

## Israeli-Palestinian survey shows accord on separation

By Mitchell Danow

NEW YORK (JTA) — Israel and the Palestinian Authority may not agree on much these days, but a recent poll shows that their respective peoples agree on at least one thing — the need to create a complete separation between them.

According to the survey, conducted jointly by a Tel Aviv University research center and a Palestinian institute, 81 percent of the Israeli respondents and 63 percent of the Palestinians interviewed support a closed border. At the same time, large majorities of Israelis and Palestinians — 77 percent and 65 percent, respectively — said relations between the two peoples should be intensified in order to build support for peace.

While the two sets of answers may seem contradictory, the researchers believe that increased relations and separate borders are not mutually exclusive.

"In our estimation, both sides are interested in enhancing the prospects for peace, but wish to do so without forfeiting their separate identities," according to an evaluation of the poll issued by Tel Aviv University's Tami Steinmetz Center for Peace Research, which conducted the study with the Jerusalem Media and Communications Center.

"For Palestinians, the main purpose of the separation is to attain the goal of sovereign Palestinian statehood; for Israelis, the principal factor is the fear of terrorism."

Both the Israelis and Palestinians surveyed supported the Oslo peace process — 59 percent and 68 percent, respectively — and the majority of both groups also were optimistic about the prospects for Israel and the Palestinian Authority reaching a final settlement.

In evaluating the obstacles now facing the peace process, the Palestinian respondents blamed the Israeli government — as did the Israelis polled, though by a smaller proportion. Among the Palestinians, 61 percent cited Israeli factors as obstacles to peace.

Among Israelis, the figure dropped to 39 percent, with the most salient obstacle, cited by 27 percent of them, being the government of Israel and the prime minister.

This result contradicts statements by the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that Israelis believe the Palestinians to be the biggest obstacle to peace.

The Israeli respondents also pointed to obstacles on the Palestinian side — 9 percent cited terrorism and another 9 percent cited Arab attitudes and mentality. Some 16 percent of the Israelis blamed both sides.

A large difference emerged between the two groups regarding their sense of personal security since the peace process began.

Most Palestinians — 64 percent — sensed an improvement, while 12 percent felt their situation had worsened.

Among Israelis, 35 percent felt less secure, while a small minority — 9 percent — felt an improvement in personal security.

The survey, which had a margin of error of plus or minus 4 percent, involved 1,185 Palestinian respondents and 1,002 Israeli respondents who are at least 18 years old.

Among the Israelis, half were Jewish, half Arab.

The results among Israeli Arabs were weighted to reflect their proportion within the Israeli electorate, which is 11 percent. □