



# Daily News Bulletin

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81<sup>st</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Mossad snafu in Switzerland

Two Mossad agents were arrested in Geneva last week for attempting to spy on an embassy there. [Page 2]

### Some Israelis still jittery

An Israeli youth reportedly injected himself with a nerve gas antidote after he heard a car alarm go off. The youth had apparently thought the alarm meant an Iraqi attack was imminent.

Meanwhile, Israel began cutting back the number of gas mask distribution centers after a diplomatic solution was apparently reached to defuse the crisis with Iraq, the Israeli daily *Ma'ariv* reported.

### Israelis arrest Palestinians

Israeli troops arrested six Palestinians in three West Bank towns in an attempt to end a series of stone-throwing incidents reminiscent of the intifada, the 1987-1993 Palestinian uprising. In one incident near Jerusalem, Israeli troops fired live bullets to rescue an officer trapped by a hail of stones.

### Arafat reject Israeli proposal

Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat rejected Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's suggestion that the two meet for a Camp David-style summit to reach a final-status agreement.

Arafat, who met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to discuss the deadlocked peace process, called on Netanyahu to first implement already-signed agreements.

### Islamic decrees issued

Islamic clerics issued decrees to attack Americans around the world to protest U.S. Middle East policy, according to CIA officials. The disclosure came before a U.S. Senate panel, which held a hearing to examine terrorism threats and law-enforcement efforts five years after the World Trade Center bombing.

### Compromise offered to Sheinbein

A Jerusalem court proposed that Samuel Sheinbein, a Maryland teen-ager wanted for murder in the United States, return to America to stand trial and, if convicted, return to Israel to serve out his sentence.

Lawyers for the defense and prosecution are slated to submit their responses next week.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### Official's ouster revives debate over role of Holocaust museum

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The recent ouster of the director of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum has reignited questions about the politicization of the museum and how best to memorialize the Holocaust.

Walter Reich's resignation, forced by the museum's governing body last week, came one month after he refused to escort Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat on a tour of the museum.

Miles Lerman, chairman of the United States Holocaust Memorial Council, had publicly blamed the on-again, off-again invitation to Arafat — it was extended, retracted, extended again, then ultimately declined by Arafat — on "bad advice" from Reich. In his letter of resignation, Reich wrote to Lerman: "As you know, we have differed on the use of the museum, and of the memory of the Holocaust, in the context of political or diplomatic circumstances or negotiations."

While the Arafat episode may or may not have been the issue that led to Reich's ouster — sources close to the museum say his job performance during the last three years was the real factor — his departure has nonetheless focused attention on the complexities surrounding the nature of the 5-year-old institution.

At the same time, the internal maneuvering suggests that even an institution as venerable as the Holocaust museum is not immune to problems in governance and personnel politics. Coming to Reich's defense in an op-ed column published in the *New York Post* this week, Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel said of the outgoing director, "He believes that the Holocaust must not be used politically."

"To him, the memory of the victims is sacred, as is the museum itself, and neither should ever be used as a tool. One may disagree with him, but is that a reason to make him the scapegoat in this unfortunate affair? Clearly, from statements in the press immediately following the incident, this is what happened."

According to the agreement governing Reich's departure, all of the key players agreed not to discuss the issue publicly. The search for Reich's replacement has not yet begun, according to museum officials.

Among Holocaust survivors, scholars and others in the Jewish community, there is general agreement that honoring the memory of those who perished in the Holocaust is the primary concern of the Jewish people, and therefore of the Holocaust museum.

But many also say that the only proper way to honor the memory of the dead is to use that memory to ward off evil against any people — not just the Jewish people — in any time.

Toward that end, in 1995, at a time when inter-ethnic conflicts were raging in Bosnia and Rwanda, the museum created a Committee on Conscience to provide a collective voice to address global genocide.

The idea was first proposed in 1979 by the President's Commission on the Holocaust as part of an overall vision of the institution.

In its report, the commission said it "knows well the potential for the politicization of a Committee on Conscience, but the risks are worth taking if such a body can provide maximal exposure for dangerous developments," raising, in one scholar's words, "an 'institutional scream' to alert the conscience of the world and spark public outcry."

The mandate is still pertinent, said Hyman Bookbinder, a founding member of the museum's council who now sits on the museum's Committee on Conscience. "What is

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Rallies at Goldstein grave

Israeli peace activists demonstrated at the grave of Dr. Baruch Goldstein to mark four years since the Jewish settler opened fire at the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron, killing 29 Muslim worshippers before being beaten to death by an angry crowd.

A group of Jewish settlers held a counter-demonstration at the grave. The Peace Now activists demanded that the grave, located in a park in Kiryat Arba, be removed because it had become a pilgrimage site for right-wing Jewish settlers.

### Women's groups form coalition

Five women's organizations in Israel created a coalition to heighten awareness of women's issues in the months leading up to November's nationwide municipal elections, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

The coalition includes Emunah, Na'amat, WIZO, the Israel Women's Network and the Municipal Women's Councils. The coalition is planning to launch a campaign to expand women's representation in the Israeli political establishment.

### Rabbis: Couple must divorce

A group of Israeli rabbis has ruled that a fervently Orthodox man must divorce his wife, a victim of rape, even though the couple wants to stay together, according to an Israeli newspaper report. The couple has nine children. The Yediot Achronot report said the woman, who lives in the town of Bnei Brak, was raped three weeks ago by three men as she was leaving a mikvah, or ritual bath.

She did not report the event to the police, but did tell her husband, who sought the advice of rabbis on what to do. The husband is a Kohen, making him a descendant of the priests of the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem. According to some interpretations of halachah, or Jewish law, a Kohen must divorce his wife if she has been raped.

the museum for, what is the council for, if not to compel people to pay attention to what the Holocaust means?"

But others are more cautious.

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League and a member of the museum's council, does not believe an "activist view" is appropriate for the institution.

"There's always going to be a very delicate line between history, memory and the current situation, wherever it may be," said Foxman, a Holocaust survivor.

"Whenever the museum will want to take a position, whether it's Bosnia, or whether it's China or Arafat, it will be at risk to disturb some and offend others."

Some Holocaust scholars, meanwhile, say the politicization of the institution may be unavoidable.

"The very idea of a Holocaust museum in Washington is inherently a political act," said Sara Horowitz, a Holocaust scholar who heads the Jewish studies program at the University of Delaware.

"When you invoke a public memory, you are already putting it to a political use and politicizing it in some way."

Horowitz points out that even Yad Vashem in Israel ends up serving certain political purposes.

When foreign dignitaries are taken to the shrine in Jerusalem, "that visit has an inherently political message, which has to do with justification for the creation of the State of Israel," she said.

At the Holocaust museum in Washington, political realities are further complicated by the fact that it remains a federally funded institution with two federal officials — Dennis Ross, the State Department's Middle East coordinator, and his deputy, Aaron Miller — sitting on the museum's council.

Ross and Miller proposed the idea of Arafat visiting the museum as an opportunity to further the peace process by helping him better understand the history and fears of his adversary.

While the building of the museum was substantially funded by American Jews, the Arafat episode highlighted the reality that it remains a federal — not a Jewish — institution.

As a public institution that receives federal funds, some say, it is not the Holocaust museum's place to engage in its own politicking, selecting who may visit and who may not.

"It would be constructive to open the doors wide, which does not mean that there's a specific political agenda," said Deborah Dwork, director of the Center for Holocaust Studies at Clark University in Worcester, Mass.

"It simply means that this is a museum dedicated to the elucidation of a catastrophe, of an atrocity of Western civilization and that all who have any wish whatsoever to learn about this are most welcomed." □

## Operation bungled in Switzerland

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Two Mossad agents were arrested in Geneva last week for attempting to spy on an embassy there.

Swiss diplomatic sources confirmed that the arrests took place, but there were conflicting reports as to whether the agents were attempting to spy on the Iraqi or the Iranian Embassy in Geneva.

Israeli media reported Wednesday that the failure of a Mossad operation last week in Western Europe led in part to the resignation of the head of the foreign intelligence agency, Danny Yatom.

Yatom resigned Tuesday, a week after a government inquiry held him responsible for the failed assassination attempt last September on a Hamas leader in Jordan.

Israeli officials are reportedly negotiating with Swiss officials for the releases of the two agents.

The report said that a Knesset subcommittee on the security services had been briefed on the incident — but only after the committee chair, Uzi Landau, first heard of it from another source, and then approached Yatom to verify if it was true. □



### Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Russia said to have anthrax

The former Soviet Union had hundreds of tons of anthrax and other biological weapons, a high-level defector told *The New York Times*.

Russia is still pursuing a biological-weapons program, Dr. Ken Alibek said.

### Baltic president apologizes

Latvia's president again apologized for his country's role in the Holocaust.

Guntis Ulmanis, who is on a three-day visit to Israel, said at a reception at the home of President Ezer Weizman that the Baltic nation is aware that some of its citizens persecuted Latvian Jews during World War II. Similar comments by Ulmanis last month led to an uproar in his country's Parliament.

While making the apology, Ulmanis also told Weizman that some Latvians had saved the lives of Jews during the war.

Israeli officials told Ulmanis that Latvia should undertake a "serious investigation" of the whereabouts of Nazi war criminals living in Latvia.

Latvian prosecutors maintain that they have no information about people living in Latvia who could be persecuted for the murder of Jews or for other war crimes.

Last month, the Latvian Parliament called on Ulmanis to appear before them and explain his remarks about Latvian participation in the Holocaust, which he made during a trip to the United States in early January.

### Israel to help Cameroon

Israel is dispatching two doctors to the West African nation of Cameroon to help the victims of a train collision that occurred there earlier this month in which some 120 people were killed and 400 injured.

The move comes in response to a request for assistance made by the Cameroon Embassy in Israel.

### Jewish doctors heading to Cuba

A group of Jewish doctors from Florida is reportedly planning to visit Cuba to bring medical supplies to the 1,500-member Jewish community there.

The doctors are expected to bring antibiotics and over-the-counter medicines that are in short supply because of the American embargo of Cuba.

### Henny Youngman dies at 91

Comedian Henny Youngman died at 91 from complications of the flu. His career began seven decades ago with a gig in the Catskills — the Borscht Belt where many Jewish comics rose to fame.

King of the one-liners, Youngman was best known for the quip, "Take my wife, please."

## Pluralism debate erupts despite JCPA's best efforts

By Matthew Dorf

FT. LAUDERDALE, Fla. (JTA) — Despite concerted efforts to keep the religious pluralism debate off the agenda of the annual gathering of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, it just couldn't be done.

A seemingly innocuous resolution marking Israel's 50th anniversary led to bitter debate on the issue among delegates to the umbrella organization, which is made up of local community relations councils and national agencies.

The Women's League for Conservative Judaism objected to a Hadassah-sponsored resolution honoring Israel's golden anniversary because it included a passage recognizing the Jewish state's "guarantee" of certain rights of individuals, including religious rights.

Bernice Balter, executive director of the women's organization, called the statement an "overzealous" one that said "something that is not true. There is no equality of Judaism in Israel."

The fact that the controversy erupted reflected the continuing feelings of intensity on the issue.

The Orthodox monopoly in Israel over religious issues such as conversion, marriage and burial has angered many American Jews, the majority of whom, when they affiliate, identify as Reform or Conservative.

The issue has created a tremendous rift between Israeli and American Jews, and between Orthodox and non-Orthodox Jews.

The Women's League proposal to delete the sentence that included a recognition of religious rights led to a heated debate, during which the Orthodox Union equated the effort with the infamous United Nations resolution equating Zionism with racism.

On Monday, some 300 delegates voted overwhelmingly to delete the reference to religious rights, at which point the resolution was approved by a wide majority.

The next day, however, some delegates expressed concern that the statement's intention to mark Israel's milestone would be lost.

Some expressed particular concern because the deleted passage had nothing to do with religious pluralism, but was rather intended to hail Israel's history of allowing free worship by all faiths in the Jewish state, including Jerusalem, which was off limits to Jews during its occupation by Jordan following the 1948 War of Independence.

This concern then prompted a flurry of negotiating between the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform movements to revisit the issue before the end of the plenum.

So impassioned were Conservative feelings that officials from United Synagogue for Conservative Judaism told JCPA officials that they were considering casting the first-ever veto of a resolution on religious grounds.

But for his part, David Luchins, vice president of the Orthodox Union and the group's longtime representative to JCPA, called the amended resolution, which had deleted the reference to religious rights, "utterly inappropriate."

Luchins compared the flap to the refusal of some anti-peace process groups to sign a Rosh Hashanah greeting to then-Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

"We know what that attitude leads to," he said.

In an effort to reach a compromise, the Reform and Orthodox movements pressed the Women's League to reopen the debate.

The new resolution included a passage that recognizes Israel's "commitment" to "the pursuit of the social, political, religious and cultural rights of all its citizens."

After much hallway negotiating throughout the day on Tuesday, the new resolution was adopted unanimously.

The debates on the Israel 50 resolution came after JCPA had devoted only one session of its four-day plenum to issues related to pluralism.

That session focused on efforts to reach common ground and understanding to avoid an explosion among U.S. Jews over the issue. The session featured Orthodox, Conservative and Reform officials from New York, who detailed how they have held dialogues on the subject.

□

## Survivors struggle to grasp Demjanjuk's victory in court

By Marcy Oster

Cleveland Jewish News

CLEVELAND (JTA) — Part of Cleveland resident Gita Frankel's world was shattered last Friday.

Accused Nazi war criminal John Demjanjuk's face filled her television screen during the local evening news.

Then came the announcement she never imagined she would hear: The U.S. citizenship of Demjanjuk, who lives near Cleveland, had been restored.

Frankel, who survived five years in ghettos and concentration camps, including a stint at Auschwitz, has followed the ups and downs of the Demjanjuk case since it began in Cleveland 20 years ago.

The news of the case, then and now, "has brought back a lot of bad memories," she said in an interview.

"People like him were my guards, too," the concentration camp survivor added.

Frankel lost her entire family during the Holocaust. She had a brother who would be the same age as Demjanjuk today if he had survived.

Demjanjuk "does not deserve to have a free life, to be with his family," said Frankel, her voice trembling.

U.S. District Court Judge Paul Matia's decision to dismiss the 1981 judgment stripping Demjanjuk of his American citizenship left the door open for the Department of Justice's Office of Special Investigations to file a new denaturalization case against the man who was once accused of being the notorious Nazi guard nicknamed "Ivan the Terrible."

Matia said that procedural, not substantive, issues were before the court in this case.

The court considered "whether certain actions (or inactions) by the government denied Demjanjuk information or material which he was entitled to receive pursuant to court discovery orders, whether such conduct by the government constitutes fraud upon the court and, if so, what the appropriate sanction should be," Matia wrote in his decision.

"Whether the defendant was a guard at Trawniki or whether he did anything else that would have disqualified him as a candidate for United States citizenship," were not issues before the court, he wrote.

Eli Rosenbaum, director of OSI, said the department will soon make a decision on whether or not to refile denaturalization proceedings against Demjanjuk.

The case first made news in 1977, when the Justice Department accused Demjanjuk, a Ukrainian native, of operating the gas chambers at the Treblinka death camp in Nazi-occupied Poland in 1942-43.

Several Treblinka survivors identified him as the guard from a photo spread.

The former Soviet Union provided from its war archives a Nazi identification card from the Trawniki camp, where Nazi death camp guards were recruited and trained.

Demjanjuk, a retired auto worker, insisted that he was a Red Army soldier who spent most of the war in a German prisoner-of-war camp.

Demjanjuk has denied that he worked in any of the death

camps. Based on the Trawniki evidence, Demjanjuk was stripped of his citizenship in 1981 and extradited to Israel in 1986.

Following well-publicized and lengthy legal proceedings, an Israeli court convicted Demjanjuk of being "Ivan the Terrible" and sentenced him to death in 1988.

In 1993, however, the Israeli Supreme Court overturned the conviction, saying there was "reasonable doubt" that Demjanjuk was the Treblinka guard.

The court, however, found compelling evidence that he had served as an SS guard at the Sobibor death camp and the Flossenburg and Regensburg concentration camps.

That same year, Demjanjuk returned to the United States, and the 6th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Cincinnati ruled that the Justice Department knowingly withheld information in the 1981 case that could have been used to help the Demjanjuk defense team fight his extradition to Israel.

After the circuit court ruling, the Justice Department asked the U.S. District Court to reaffirm the order that stripped Demjanjuk of his citizenship since evidence also showed that he served at the Trawniki camp.

Demjanjuk asked the court to overturn the denaturalization decision and restore his citizenship.

The judge explained in his decision that he was leaving the door open for the Justice Department to file a new case against Demjanjuk because "just as the government should not be able to profit from misbehavior, neither should a defendant be insulated from the consequences of his alleged moral turpitude because he becomes the inadvertent beneficiary of sanctions against the government."

Alan Rosenbaum, a professor of philosophy at Cleveland State University and the author of the book "Prosecuting Nazi War Criminals," said Demjanjuk still has not been cleared of the charges that he served as a guard at the Trawniki and Sobibor camps.

"I don't think justice has been done. I think that case needs to be heard," Rosenbaum said.

Holocaust survivor Zev Harel said he and his fellow survivors are outraged at the restoration of the citizenship of the accused camp guard.

"From our perspective, justice has been thwarted and not served," said Harel, immediate past president of Kol Israel, a local survivors' organization.

"I hope this is not the end of this story," added Harel, a history professor at Cleveland State University.

"The Justice Department must take this issue further. He obtained his U.S. citizenship illegally, and he has been restored that citizenship which he never had a right to," the Holocaust survivor added.

Rabbi Avi Weiss, an activist from New York, who has previously organized protests at the Demjanjuk home, said the judge's decision "is one of the greatest contributions to Holocaust revisionism."

"It is a terrible desecration to the memory of the 6 million," he added.

Avi Goldman, the child of Holocaust survivors and president of the Cleveland Holocaust Center, believes that members of the Jewish community should again demonstrate in front of Demjanjuk's home.

"Something has to be done. A voice has to be heard that he is not cleared," he said. □