



# Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 76, No. 105

Friday, June 12, 1998

81<sup>st</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Report: Russian-Syrian deal

Russia sold advanced anti-tank missile systems to Syria and the two countries are discussing the sale of long-range surface-to-air missiles, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

While the purchases would represent an advance in Syrian military capabilities, the newspaper reported that the Israeli defense establishment had not altered its assessment that the likelihood of a war with Syria in the near future is very low.

### Roof collapse kills two

Two Israeli youths were killed and another teenager moderately hurt when a roof collapsed in a school gymnasium in the southern Israeli town of Beersheba.

Rescuers worked for hours before extracting the bodies of the two students, Lior Coballo and Shlomi Toledo, from the rubble. According to witnesses, a group of students were playing basketball when the roof collapsed. Investigators are examining whether the collapse had any connection with renovation work being done on the building.

### U.S. criticizes Wiesenthal report

The U.S. State Department criticized a report which charged Switzerland was "thoroughly saturated" with pro-fascist groups that influenced the country's wartime government to tilt in favor of the Nazis.

State Department spokesman James Rubin said most Swiss people had sympathized with the Allies, not the Nazis. The report, issued earlier this week by the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center, was also criticized by Swiss Jewish and government officials. [Page 4]

### Way for extradition cleared

Germany granted permission for a former World War II concentration camp commander to travel through its territory, clearing the way for him to be extradited to Croatia.

It is not known when Dinko Sakic, the commander of the Jasenovac concentration camp who was discovered in April living in Argentina, will arrive in the Balkan country.

Meanwhile, Argentina turned down Yugoslavia's extradition request for Sakic because it is "based on the same events for which he will be tried in Croatia."

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### Fallout from prayer amendment looms over the political landscape

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — From the moment it was introduced in Congress last year, the "Religious Freedom Amendment" was seen by its opponents as a thermonuclear device looming over the church-state battlefield.

The proposed constitutional amendment would have allowed for prayer in schools, religious displays in federal buildings and taxpayer funding of religious schools — much of what church-state watchdogs had spent a good part of the century fighting against.

Last week's defeat of the measure in the House of Representatives may have defused that bomb, but the vote itself is expected to have a pronounced fallout just the same.

While Jewish groups and church-state watchdogs hailed the defeat as a victory for religious liberty, most conceded that the vote portends future battles over contentious issues such as school vouchers.

The vote also could have electoral consequences for lawmakers on both sides of the issue.

Religious conservatives have promised to remember the vote, and some Jews have suggested that they, too, might weigh this issue when it comes to backing candidates this election year.

In the House's first vote on a school prayer constitutional amendment since 1971, the "Religious Freedom Amendment" failed June 4 by a vote of 224-203 — 61 short of the two-thirds majority of lawmakers present that is necessary for passage.

No Jewish lawmakers, including the two Republicans in the House, voted for the measure. The amendment, sponsored by Rep. Ernest Istook (R-Okla.), had been advanced as a means of reversing 30 years of court decisions its proponents claimed had distorted and restricted constitutional protections of religious freedom.

Jewish groups, together with a broad coalition of religious and civil liberties organizations, the Clinton administration and most Democrats, opposed the so-called Istook amendment as unnecessary and dangerous. They said a wide array of religious activity is already permitted in public schools.

Rep. Chet Edwards (D-Texas), who spearheaded opposition to the measure, called it a "horrible solution in search of a problem."

The proposal was strongly backed by religious conservatives led by the Christian Coalition, which conducted an aggressive lobbying effort for the measure, running radio ads and flooding congressional offices with post cards and telephone calls.

Indeed, proponents of the amendment claimed a victory in bringing the long-shot amendment up for a vote and in winning even a simple majority.

"We have long recognized this is an uphill battle and requires perseverance over the long term," said Randy Tate, executive director of the Christian Coalition. "Passage of a constitutional amendment often requires four or five attempts, so we will continue our efforts on behalf of a religious freedom amendment in future sessions of the Congress."

Although Istook said he would continue to push for the proposal, the next showdown on the church-state front is likely to center around educational issues.

Some observers believe that the vote will give a boost to congressional efforts to pass legislation on school vouchers, which would enable families to use public funds

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Stabbing in eastern Jerusalem

An Israeli security man guarding a Jewish house in eastern Jerusalem was stabbed by a Palestinian during an argument over an archaeological dig that has been going on for several years.

The guard was slightly wounded during the incident, which took place in Jerusalem's Silwan neighborhood.

Earlier this week, dashes erupted in Silwan after a Jewish group known as Elad took over buildings in the predominantly Arab neighborhood.

### Rights activists detained

Israeli police detained six foreign human rights activists during a demonstration against the expansion of Jewish settlement in eastern Jerusalem.

The police forcibly dispersed the gathering after the demonstrators staged a sit-in near four homes that were occupied earlier this week in the predominantly Arab neighborhood of Silwan by members of the Elad group.

The demonstrators, who were members of a group called the International Committee on the Middle East, were in Jerusalem to attend a forum organized with a Palestinian human rights group to mark what they termed "50 years of human rights violations" by Israel.

### Israel backs paternity leave

Israel passed a paternity leave law. Under the law, a father of a newborn child can take up to half of the country's standard three-month paid maternity leave in place of the child's mother.

### Viagra disappears from Knesset

Samples of the anti-impotency drug Viagra disappeared at a meeting of an Israeli Knesset committee meeting, according to a news report. The theft came as doctors and experts were testifying about the drug's safety.

or tax credits for parochial schools. These efforts have had mixed success in recent years. Congress has approved a voucher plan for the District of Columbia, which President Clinton vetoed, while attempts to adopt vouchers at the national level have proved unsuccessful.

"They're going to look for other ways that don't require two-thirds to push their agenda," Steve Silberfarb, deputy director of the National Jewish Democratic Council, said of religious conservatives.

"It doesn't have to be in one fell swoop like a constitutional amendment. They know they can also try to go about it by chiseling away brick by brick, until all of a sudden the wall is gone."

Beyond the Beltway, fallout from last week's vote is likely to be felt in elections across the country. Istook promised that the vote would not be forgotten in the minds of the public when House members face re-election in November.

The Christian Coalition, for its part, made it clear from the outset that it intends to include each lawmaker's vote in its voter guides for the upcoming election.

"The House vote was designed to identify which members of Congress support the religious right agenda," said the Rev. Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State.

"Those who were brave enough to oppose this gambit will now face harsh and unfair attacks during the upcoming election season."

In what may be a precursor of things to come, the Christian Coalition distributed a "call to action" in Edwards' Texas district, accusing him of "bigotry directed at Christians."

"His attitudes have no place in Texas or anywhere in America," the Christian Coalition's flier stated.

Observers said lawmakers in the Bible Belt — mainly Southern states, where religious conservatives are a potent force — would likely feel the brunt.

For their part, Jewish political activists also suggested that this issue might become a critical one in determining Jewish support for candidates.

Some even went as far as saying that it may now be difficult to support members of Congress who voted for the amendment — even lawmakers who have traditionally been supportive of Israel. Others, who might not get directly involved in partisan politics, said they would look at roll call sheets as they redouble efforts to educate lawmakers about church-state issues.

It is important to demonstrate to members of Congress that the Jewish community considers this "an emblematic vote" that "we will remember," said Michael Lieberman, Washington counsel for the Anti-Defamation League.

Republicans, who by and large supported the Istook amendment, would be most likely affected by any Jewish reassessment.

For his part, Matt Brooks, executive director of the pro-Republican National Jewish Coalition, said he anticipated that Jewish Democrats "are going to try to demagogue this issue and try to give the Republican Congress no credit whatsoever for its defeat."

His group and the Orthodox Union were among the few Jewish groups who took no position on the Istook amendment.

Recognizing the potential electoral consequences, some members of Congress who opposed the Istook amendment are now hoping that another piece of legislation addressing religious liberty issues can provide cover.

This week, lawmakers introduced a bipartisan bill known as the "Religious Liberty Protection Act." The bill is aimed at restoring some of the protections that existed under the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, which the Supreme Court struck down last year as unconstitutional.

Jewish and other civil liberties groups were strong backers of that law, which made it harder for government to interfere with the free practice of religion. The new legislation also has the support of a broad coalition that includes Jewish groups and religious conservatives.

"It's something positive members of Congress can vote for," said David Harris, director of the Washington office of the American Jewish Congress.

"If they want to be about the real business of protecting religious liberty in America, this act will be the widely supported vehicle for doing so." □



## 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

### Legislators: Fire museum official

U.S. Reps. Jon Fox (R-Pa.) and Michael Forbes (R-N.Y.) are urging the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum to reconsider the appointment of John Roth as the director of the museum's Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies.

Roth, who has come under fire from the Zionist Organization of America, has apologized for a 1988 article.

In that article, he compared Israeli policies to those of Nazi Germany.

### Virginia school stirs controversy

Civil libertarians are criticizing a Virginia high school that asked Protestant ministers to teach a course on the history of Western religions.

A spokesman for the American Civil Liberties Union said the proposed optional course appeared to be a way "to circumvent the separation of church and state" as well as a way "to impose the Bible on students."

### U.S. efforts welcomed

The Jewish Council for Public Affairs adopted a resolution welcoming the Clinton administration's efforts to "reinvigorate" direct negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

The board of directors of the umbrella Jewish group said the "stagnation in the peace process" was of deep concern to the organized American Jewish community.

### Lileikis trial urged

An official with the Simon Wiesenthal Center said in a letter to Lithuania's president that an alleged war criminal should be brought to justice.

The trial of Aleksandras Lileikis was postponed in March and again in May to give defense lawyers more time to find evidence and witnesses.

"It appears that the trial of Lileikis may never actually take place," wrote Efraim Zuroff, director of the center's Jerusalem office.

Lileikis, 91, is accused of collaborating in the deaths of Jews when he was head of Lithuania's security police during World War II.

### Wagner aria nixed

An Israeli opera company nixed the idea of playing a piece by a 19th-century German composer known for his anti-Semitic views.

The decision by the Tel Aviv Opera came after protests over a suggestion by the opera's musical director that a work composed by Richard Wagner be performed.

Hitler was an admirer of Wagner's works, seeing in them an artistic form of "pure Aryanism."

## Jewish lawyer charges CIA with 'double standard' for Jews

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — A Jewish lawyer with the CIA is threatening to sue the federal government for singling out Jews as security risks.

Adam Ciralsky, 28, was placed on administrative leave in October, when CIA officials revoked his security clearance after he was questioned about his Jewish connections, according to a source with direct knowledge of the incident.

A member of the CIA's honor program for lawyers, Ciralsky was set to rotate into a White House post to advise Richard Clark, the administration's terrorism expert at the National Security Council.

But when the time came for his security clearance to be renewed, the CIA blocked the appointment and placed him on leave with pay, said the source who asked not to be identified. According to the source, the CIA asked Ciralsky about his parents' contributions to Jewish causes, including the Milwaukee Jewish Federation, his contact with Americans who have dual Israeli citizenship and his recreational trips to Israel. Ciralsky spent a semester studying in Israel, the source said.

"To question Ciralsky's loyalty to the United States based on his very common connection to Jewish causes and to Israel is an offense to the entire Jewish community," said Washington attorney Neal Sher, who is representing Ciralsky.

The multimillion-dollar lawsuit, which has been drafted but not yet filed, charges that the CIA violated Ciralsky's civil and constitutional rights.

"There is a pernicious and double standard for Jews," said Sher, the former executive director of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, where Ciralsky worked as an intern while an undergraduate at The George Washington University.

Ciralsky had previously passed at least two other security clearance exams. He has had clearances since at least 1993 when he worked at the Defense Intelligence Agency, another of the federal government's espionage agencies.

Jewish government officials with security clearances have complained for years that they are subjected to more rigorous questioning and a higher presumption of guilt than other officials. Many say the problem stems from the 1985 arrest of Jonathan Pollard, a Navy analyst who pled guilty to passing U.S. secrets to Israel. Pollard is currently serving a life sentence for those crimes.

CIA spokesman Mark Mansfield refused to comment on the specific case, but said the CIA "categorically rejects" all charges that Jews are considered special security risks.

"The notion that the CIA violates the constitutional rights of Americans or discriminates on the basis of race, gender, religious affiliation, national origin, political views or any other basis is simply without foundation," he said.

Ciralsky was traveling and could not be reached for comment. □

## Iran might have executed a Jew

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel is seeking clarification regarding reports that Iran executed a Jewish community leader in Tehran.

Deputy Defense Minister Silvan Shalom, answering questions in the Knesset on Wednesday, said Israel had appealed to the Red Cross, the United Nations and other international organizations to verify what happened, and what has happened to other Jews who have been arrested in Iran.

Shalom's remarks followed reports over the weekend that a 60-year-old activist in the Jewish community in Tehran had been hung, reportedly because of his ties with Israel and his efforts to help Iranian Jews emigrate. According to the reports, the man had disappeared a month ago. Last week, Iranian authorities reportedly informed the family that he had been executed, without explaining why.

The man's brother was quoted as saying that he had been killed because of his Jewish activism. According to reports, some 13 Jews have been executed in Iran since the 1979 Islamic revolution. More than 10,000 Jews are estimated to live in Iran. □

## Swiss blast report alleging wartime pro-Nazi influence

By Mitchell Danow

NEW YORK (JTA) — Swiss Jewish leaders and government officials have lambasted a report alleging that Switzerland was “thoroughly saturated” with Nazi sympathizers during World War II.

The report, released here Wednesday by the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center, claims that there was a close relationship between senior Swiss government officials and Swiss extremists to attempt to deny Jewish refugees entry into Switzerland during the war years.

The report comes amid ongoing efforts by Jewish groups to pressure Switzerland to confront its wartime record — specifically its financial dealings with Nazi Germany and its withholding of assets deposited in Swiss banks during the Holocaust era.

The 128-page report, written by historian Alan Schom, also provides an overview of Nazi and pro-Axis groups that operated in neutral Switzerland in the 1930s and 1940s. Schom has written a number of books dealing with French history and the Napoleonic era. Saying the “extraordinary variety and number” of such groups is “most striking,” the report claims that 36 pro-fascist organizations “had cells or chapters in more than 160 cities, towns and villages” throughout Switzerland.

The report’s purpose, according to its author, is to “show the influence that the pro-Nazi, fascistic and super-patriotic associations had on the government and people of Switzerland.” It cites evidence found in Swiss archives indicating that the Swiss justice minister during the war, Eduard von Steiger, had promised the semi-secret Swiss Fatherland Association that the government would “reduce fundamentally” the influx of Jewish refugees.

Rolf Bloch, the leader of the Swiss Jewish community, described the report as “one-sided and exaggerated.”

Similar criticisms were voiced by Swiss government officials.

Swiss President Flavio Cotti, who saw an advance copy of the report, flatly rejected its findings as “wrong.”

Ambassador Thomas Borer, the government’s point man in dealing with issues connected with Switzerland’s wartime past, called the report “absurd and wrong.”

Switzerland has a mixed record where the Jewish refugee issue is concerned. The country expelled more than 30,000 Jews during the war, most of whom died. At the same time, however, Switzerland provided haven to some 25,000 Jewish refugees who survived the war together with Switzerland’s 20,000 Jewish citizens.

By comparison, the United States admitted 21,000 Jewish refugees during the war. Canada admitted about 9,000.

Jewish refugees admitted to Switzerland were accepted on condition that Jewish groups pay in advance for their support — a sum that is estimated at some \$40 million.

This policy did not extend to the 300,000 non-Jewish refugees who flocked to Switzerland and whose needs were paid for by the wartime Swiss government.

In January, the Wiesenthal Center issued a report, also written by Schom, charging that Switzerland operated refugee camps during the war in which Jews were used as slave labor.

That report was contradicted by a number of Jews who had lived in the camps and who said that Switzerland had provided them with a safe haven during the war. □

## Russian Jews flock to events celebrating Israel’s 50th birthday

By Lev Krichevsky

MOSCOW (JTA) — Isaak Shpiz has never been to Israel, but the Jewish state has still been an important part of his life.

“I remember that my father told me it was a historic day when Israel proclaimed its independence,” says the 66-year old retired engineer. “Since then, what’s going on in Israel has always been significant to me.”

During the Six-Day War in 1967, Shpiz said, his “heart ached when I thought that Israel wouldn’t survive.”

For most of his life, Shpiz says he has kept his feelings about the Jewish state to himself.

“I wouldn’t tell anyone except for my family — and God forbid at work — how I felt about our state,” he said.

It is different for Shpiz’s granddaughter Sonya. For her, a student at one of Moscow’s Jewish day schools, Israel is a part of daily life. Her school curriculum includes such subjects as Israeli history and geography.

Israel is also the country where she spent a few weeks with her friends last summer and the place “where I will probably live after I finish school,” says the 13-year-old.

Both generations joined some 6,000 Muscovite Jews at a central Moscow park to celebrate Israel’s 50th anniversary.

The daylong event in Moscow, just one of several jubilee celebrations for Israel that have been held throughout Russia in the past few months, was organized by the Russian office of the Jewish Agency for Israel.

It offered a variety of events: entertainment for children; a lottery for a free 10-day trip to Israel; and dancing, singing and fashion shows on three different stages in Moscow’s Hermitage Park.

Those who wanted a more quiet way of spending the day could enjoy a photo exhibition about the history of the Jewish state in a secluded corner of the park as well as non-stop showings of documentaries about Israel.

On a more practical side, those interested in moving to Israel could find out about job opportunities there by talking with representatives from Jerusalem, Beersheba and Haifa.

And Israeli and Russian music pulsed at a late-night disco at the park — which is located directly across the street from the once-feared Moscow police headquarters.

The healthy turnout for the event demonstrates the pride that many Muscovite Jews feel for Israel. Shpiz, for example, refers to the Jewish state as “our state.”

Avraham Burg, chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel — who flew to Moscow to address the gathering — said that just a few years ago most people would reluctantly admit they were Jewish. “Now, everybody’s saying, ‘I’m Jewish and I’m proud of it,’ ” he said.

Alla Levy, chairwoman of the Jewish Agency in Russia, noted that the scale of the commemorative events in some cities had exceeded the Jewish Agency’s expectations. She said that many of those who took part in the celebrations had never previously participated in public Jewish life.

Indeed, Levy said that many Russian Jews appeared to be more enthusiastic about the Jewish state’s jubilee than Israelis themselves. □