



# Daily News Bulletin

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## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Denver Jews mourn victims

The Jewish community of Denver canceled its planned celebration of Israel's Independence Day on Wednesday evening, choosing instead to hold a memorial service for the victims of a deadly rampage at a suburban Denver high school Tuesday. None of the victims was Jewish.

An Israeli youth choir visiting for the Yom Ha'atzmaut event was slated to sing both at the Jewish community-sponsored memorial as well as at a vigil sponsored by the city of Denver. [Page 1]

### First lady speaks out on peace

First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton warned Tuesday against any unilateral moves in the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

"If peace is to be lasting, it has to be negotiated and agreed on," she told some 700 guests at a UJA-Federation of New York dinner. Last year, the first lady caused a stir when she told a youth conference in Switzerland via a satellite hookup, "I think it will be in the long-term interests of the Middle East for Palestine to be a state."

### Nazareth compromise backed

Arab Christian leaders in the Israeli city of Nazareth reportedly accepted a compromise on a dispute over a planned mosque in the center of the town.

Under the proposal, a small mosque will be built on a plot of land outside the Church of the Annunciation on condition that Muslim residents remove a protest tent set up at the site.

Muslim leaders rejected the proposal, demanding the entire area.

The land use dispute prompted violent disturbances in Nazareth on Easter Sunday earlier this month.

### Army chief opposes withdrawal

The Israeli army's chief of staff came out Wednesday against a unilateral withdrawal of Israeli troops from southern Lebanon. "The disadvantages outnumber the advantages," Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz said during a television interview.

Public debate regarding the continued presence of Israeli troops in Lebanon has increased as the May 17 elections approach.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### As hate claims young victims, the search for answers intensifies

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Now that hate has once again claimed the lives of innocent students, dumbfounded activists, teachers, clergy and politicians are searching for ways to stem the tide of teen-age violence.

"We need to sort out what's around in our world that's facilitating this kind of thing happening," Rabbi Fred Greenspahn, of Congregation Beth Shalom in Littleton, Colo., said Wednesday, one day after two heavily armed students opened fire in their suburban Denver high school, killing 12 students and one teacher, before killing themselves.

"Who are these kids, and why do these things happen?" Greenspahn wondered in a telephone interview, as his community reeled from the shock of Tuesday's events.

In Denver, the Jewish community canceled its planned celebration of Israel's Independence Day on Wednesday evening, choosing instead to hold a memorial service for the victims, none of whom were believed to be Jewish. An Israeli youth choir visiting for the Yom Ha'atzmaut event was slated to sing both at the Jewish community-sponsored memorial as well as a vigil sponsored by the city of Denver.

Police identified the perpetrators as Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold, both of whom authorities said were members of a group known as the "Trenchcoat Mafia."

Classmates at Columbine High School told local media that members of the group had been obsessed with World War II-era Germany and had spoken openly about April 20 being Adolf Hitler's birthday. Reports said that members of the group wore Nazi symbols and painted graffiti, including swastikas, in the school's bathroom.

Dr. Carl Raschke, author of "Painted Black," which explores violent youth culture, told the Denver Post it appears that the group operates under "a heavy code of neo-Nazism."

That the massacre occurred on Hitler's birthday "probably explains a lot more than we want to imagine," he told the newspaper.

"These kids see themselves as young storm troopers," said Raschke, a professor of religious studies at the University of Denver.

"They want to honor the memory of the master and these kids seriously look to Hitler the same way that young blacks look to Martin Luther King and the way many Christians look to Jesus." Although the students may have had neo-Nazi ties, they apparently did not target Jews in the shooting.

Aaron Cohn was hiding under a table in the Columbine High School library when one of the perpetrators pressed a gun to his head.

"All jocks stand up. We're going to kill every one of you," the gunman said, according to Cohn. Cohn told local media that his life was spared when the shooter shifted his attention to a black student nearby and fired, saying, "I hate niggers."

Doctors said 12 of the 15 dead, including the assailants, were found in the library where Cohn hid.

Another student, Jenni LaPlante, told the Denver Post she had asked members of the six-member strong group, "Why do you guys wear all that German stuff? Are you Nazis?" And they would say, 'Yeah, Heil Hitler.' LaPlante told the newspaper that she never knew whether the suspects were joking or not.

Only a handful of Jewish students attend the high school, according to local residents. One has complained of an anti-Semitic atmosphere created by the same "jocks" targeted by the shooters this week. Steven Greene, the father of a Jewish

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Israelis celebrate independence

Israelis celebrated the state's 51st anniversary Wednesday, flocking to beaches, public parks and military museums.

In Jerusalem, some 10,000 people visited the Knesset, which opened its doors to the public as part of celebrations marking its 50th anniversary.

Meanwhile, security forces remained on high alert for a terror attack, as the West Bank and Gaza Strip were sealed off for the duration of the holiday.

### Barak: Palestinian state to occur

A Palestinian state is inevitable and the only question remaining is how to ensure that it will be a "friendly neighbor," Israel's Labor Party candidate for prime minister said Wednesday.

Ehud Barak added in a televised interview that the policies of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, his main rival in the race for premier, had inadvertently bolstered international support for Palestinian independence.

Meanwhile, Egypt gave its strong backing to Palestinian statehood, but would not comment on whether Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat should declare statehood on May 4, when the interim period of Israeli-Palestinian peacemaking expires.

The date for making the declaration is a "tactical question," Egypt's foreign minister, Amre Moussa, said after Arafat met Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Wednesday.

Israeli President Ezer Weizman was slated to confer with Mubarak on Thursday.

### King Abdullah visits Damascus

Jordan's King Abdullah arrived Wednesday in Damascus for talks with Syrian President Hafez Assad aimed at improving bilateral relations. Water disputes and Jordan's growing ties with Turkey had strained the two countries' ties during the reign of Abdullah's father and predecessor, King Hussein.

student at the school, has complained to school officials about a climate of anti-Semitism, according to the Intermountain Jewish News.

Although the "Trenchcoat Mafia" appears to have adopted some neo-Nazi ideology, it does not appear to be central to their beliefs, according to local Anti-Defamation League officials in Denver who have been in touch with the local police. The police said they found hate material in the suspects' homes.

And two months earlier, researchers at the Simon Wiesenthal Center, who have identified more than 1,500 Internet sites espousing hate and bigotry, had come across two sites promoting anarchy that were apparently linked to the Littleton student group.

"There have always been misfits and outsiders at schools, but what we seem to be getting now is a whole subculture coming together online and magnifying the chances of mayhem," said Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Los Angeles-based Wiesenthal Center.

In their rampage, police said, the shooters deployed lethal pipe bombs, propane-filled shrapnel explosives and plastic containers filled with gasoline and soap.

During a news conference Wednesday in Los Angeles, Cooper displayed illustrations taken from a dozen Web sites that give precise instructions on how to make deadly weapons.

"We can't blame the government or police for what happened," Cooper said. "It's a matter of education, and also high time for Internet service providers to set standards for dealing with hate groups using their services."

Abraham Foxman, ADL's national director, agreed. "Education is the only antidote we have to racism, bigotry and anti-Semitism.

"There's no vaccine or silver bullet," he added.

ADL's "World of Difference" curriculum on tolerance has reached 400,000 teachers, Foxman said, suggesting that tolerance education should be elevated to the same status given English, math and science.

The Wiesenthal Center on Wednesday sent a letter to President Clinton, urging him to recommend a national curriculum on tolerance and civility for all of America's schools. Some are questioning the laws that prevent police from investigating a group until a crime is committed.

"Maybe we should re-examine" such laws "within constitutional standards," Foxman said. "We have to be a lot more creative to be proactive to find out what these groups are." Many others, like the local Littleton rabbi, are searching for answers.

"It's important for us to understand this does not only happen in places we associate with violence," said Greenspahn, who said he planned to hold a discussion about the shooting during services this weekend.

"This is not a problem of them, it's a problem of us." □

(JTA correspondent Tom Tugend in Los Angeles contributed to this report.)

## Rabbi awarded damages for dismissal

TORONTO (JTA) — A Canadian court has awarded \$130,000 in damages to a rabbi who claimed that the synagogue where he served for 25 years was wrong in dismissing him with only nine months' notice.

Justice William Festeryga found that Congregation B'nai Israel, the synagogue in the Ontario town of St. Catharines where Rabbi Joseph Ben-David had worked since 1969, had behaved in a "cruel, abusive, insolent and hurtful" manner when it terminated his contract in 1994.

Although at one point the synagogue alleged it had dismissed Ben-David with cause, it retracted its reason for dismissal before the trial began. Ben-David asserted that he had never been informed of any complaints against him and that the synagogue had given him a "glowing letter of recommendation."

The court also criticized B'nai Israel for attempting to exclude Ben-David and his son from a minyan and for sending a letter to congregants in 1996 that "was calculated to put [the rabbi] in a bad light for trying to enforce his rights in the civil courts."

The 62-year-old rabbi, who claimed that his long record of service should have entitled him to 30 months' notice, received \$110,000 for the wrongful dismissal and another \$20,000 in punitive damages. □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### BEHIND THE HEADLINES

## Israelis contest Palestinian drive to revive U.N.'s 1947 Partition Plan

By Julia Goldman

### Jewish man pursues Swiss suit

A Jewish man whose parents were murdered in Auschwitz after Swiss authorities deported them in 1942 is bringing a lawsuit against Switzerland before the European Supreme Court in Strasbourg, France.

The move by Charles Sonabend comes after the Swiss Cabinet rejected his suit and Switzerland's Supreme Court suspended the case.

Sonabend, a 68-year-old resident of London, is seeking \$68,000 in damages — the largest amount possible under Swiss regulations — under a Swiss law that allows individuals to make liability claims against the state.

In a separate development, the lower house of the Swiss Parliament voted for a second time to lift the immunity of the leader of the right-wing Swiss Democratic Party, according to a Swiss newspaper report Wednesday.

The vote came after the upper house earlier this year overturned a previous lower house vote against Rudolf Keller to allow for his prosecution on charges of inciting racial hatred.

Keller allegedly called for a boycott of U.S. and Jewish goods last year, when the country was confronted with charges about its wartime financial involvement with Nazi Germany.

### El Al crash report expected

Dutch legislators are planning to publish a report Thursday about the 1992 crash of an El Al cargo jet into an Amsterdam neighborhood.

The report is expected to determine whether El Al officials, who have claimed the cargo included no lethal chemicals or weapons, cooperated fully with successive Dutch inquiries into the crash, which killed at least 43 people.

### Legislators pass death camp bill

The lower house of the Polish Parliament recently approved a bill to set up protective zones around the sites of eight former Nazi death camps in Poland.

The bill, which still needs the approval of the upper house, would bar business activity at the sites and require special permits for public gatherings.

The bill would also give the Polish government the power to remove some 200 crosses that were erected last year by Catholic fundamentalists near Auschwitz.

### Cemetery hit on Hitler's birthday

A Jewish cemetery in the Austrian city of Graz was vandalized Tuesday, the anniversary of Hitler's birth.

Nazi symbols and slogans were painted on 12 gravestones in the southern Austrian city.

NEW YORK (JTA) — When the United Nations voted to partition Palestine into a Jewish and an Arab state on Nov. 29, 1947, the Arabs rejected it.

Now, it is the Israelis who are reiterating their long-held position that U.N. Resolution 181 — also known as the Partition Plan — is “null and void.”

The resolution has crept into international discussions concerning Israel and the Palestinians with increasing regularity during the past year, prompting concern among Israeli officials.

The fear is that the Palestinian Authority will try to resurrect the partition plan to legitimate its right to statehood, especially if it decides to put off a unilateral declaration of statehood on May 4, the end of the interim period under the 1993 Oslo peace accords.

The 1947 resolution divided mandatory Palestine into two states: a Jewish one, comprising roughly 60 percent of the land, including most of the Negev Desert; and an Arab one, mostly composed of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and a swath of land in northern Israel. Under the plan, Jerusalem would have become an international city.

At the time, Israel accepted the plan, but neighboring Arab states and the Palestinians vigorously rejected it, precipitating Israel's 1948 battle for independence.

As a result of the Arab aggression and subsequent U.N. resolutions, Israel said Resolution 181 is no longer applicable. Israel is now re-emphasizing that position to “set the record straight,” Israeli officials say.

Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat recently completed a world tour seeking support for Palestinian statehood. Israel contends that under the Oslo accords, the question of statehood is subject to negotiations and any unilateral declaration would be a violation of the accords.

Israeli-Palestinian negotiations have stalled repeatedly over the past several years, and Israel sees May 4 as a “target date” for negotiations, rather than a deadline.

The United States and the European Union have suggested a one-year extension of the peace negotiations to appease the Palestinians, who have said they will not agree to open-ended talks. The Palestinian Central Council is scheduled to meet on April 27 to decide whether to unilaterally declare a state on May 4.

In an April 19 letter to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Israel's ambassador to the United Nations, Dore Gold, condemned the Palestinian effort to revive Resolution 181. Their practical aim, Gold said in an interview, was to justify a Palestinian state “in principle” and not through “negotiating a final-status outcome.”

A reinvigorated partition plan could also pave the way for questioning Israel's sovereignty over Jerusalem in the future, Gold and others say.

In the letter to Annan, which was obtained by JTA, Gold reiterated Israel's position that Resolution 181 has been superseded by later resolutions and developments.

“The only relevant U.N. resolutions governing the peace process,” Gold wrote, “are U.N. Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338,” which called for negotiations between the parties based on an exchange of land for peace.

But Arafat and other Palestinian leaders appear to have made a point of inserting Resolution 181 into their vocabulary as they continue their quest for statehood.

After Arafat met recently with Annan, the general-secretary's spokesman, Fred Eckhard, confirmed that “the secretary-general acknowledges that Resolution 181, together with other U.N. resolutions, is applicable” today.

The Palestinians admit their past rejection of Resolution 181, even referring to the plan — and the establishment of the State of Israel — as “illegal” in the Palestinian National Charter.

But “since the strategic decision to forge a peace on the basis of coexistence, Resolution 181 has become acceptable,” the Palestinian representative to the U.N., Nasser al-Kidwa, wrote to Annan on March 25, two days after Arafat's visit. He said the Palestinians' motive in citing Resolution 181 has only to do with their right to statehood.

“The Jewish state is there. The Arab state still awaits the implementation of this part of the resolution, 50 years after its adoption,” he said. □

## Polish victims of Nazism file lawsuits against German firms

By Toby Axelrod

BERLIN (JTA) — German firms have been hit with new class-action lawsuits, this time on behalf of all Polish victims of the Third Reich.

The lawsuits, announced today by American lawyer Ed Fagan in Warsaw, place more pressure on the German companies that agreed in February to contribute to a fund for World War II slave laborers and Holocaust survivors. Those firms want German government protection from further lawsuits before they will contribute to the fund, which could be as high as \$1.7 billion.

German Chancellor Minister Bodo Hombach told reporters Tuesday that he does not support protection from all future lawsuits. "It would give the impression that the firms want to avoid their responsibility," he said.

The new lawsuits include DaimlerChrysler, Siemens and Krupp. Already, the 12 firms and four banks involved in the compensation fund, including Deutsche Bank, are facing an \$18-billion class-action lawsuit that lawyers reportedly would drop if the compensation fund is high enough.

On Monday, World Jewish Congress Secretary-General Israel Singer met here with German Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder to discuss snags in setting up the fund. Singer had expressed optimism that these problems would be resolved, but details of the meeting had not been revealed. A final agreement is expected in two weeks after meetings between Jewish representatives, German business and government leaders and U.S. government officials in New York and Washington.

Much is at stake for some of the firms involved. For example, New York City officials have said they would block the planned takeover of Banker's Trust by Deutsche Bank until the issue is resolved.

In a separate development, the Cultural Board of the German Parliament announced Tuesday that the Bundestag, or lower house of Parliament, will decide by early September if there will be a national Holocaust memorial in Berlin. The proposal has been discussed for more than 10 years. By most accounts, a majority of Bundestag members favor a memorial but are not happy with the suggested models. □

## Israel's takeover of village in Lebanon ends U.S. mediation

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's recent takeover of a Lebanese village north of the security zone has reportedly ended an American mediation effort to station Lebanese police in the town.

The Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported Tuesday that the move by the Israeli army in the village of Arnoun came as a surprise to the United States and obstructed a U.S. effort that the Lebanese government had been ready to support.

According to the paper, the U.S. mediation effort had been prompted by an Israeli protest against Hezbollah activity in the village.

Arnoun lies on the road leading to the Crusader-built Beaufort

fortress, which serves as an Israeli army outpost.

Arnoun was previously taken over by Israel in February, but Lebanese civilians later tore down barricades around the town that had been put up by the Israeli army.

Israel subsequently asked, via American intermediaries, that the Lebanese government deploy its own troops in Arnoun to maintain order.

Lebanon reportedly rejected the request on the grounds that its troops would appear to be operating against Hezbollah.

But in further contacts with U.S. officials, the Lebanese government said it was not as opposed to stationing police in Arnoun, a move it said would reflect its interest in upholding Lebanese law and sovereignty in the region.

The death of an Israeli army soldier last week in a Hezbollah roadside bombing prompted Israel's Security Cabinet to recommend immediately fencing off the Lebanese village again, rather than await the results of American mediation, Ha'aretz said. □

## Wallenberg honored in Budapest, 50 years after statue disappeared

By Agnes Bohm

BUDAPEST (JTA) — The story of a new monument to Raoul Wallenberg here is convoluted — as befits the uncertain ending of the man the statue commemorates.

Several hundred people, including the mayor of Budapest, leading public figures and Holocaust survivors whose lives were saved by the Swedish diplomat, gathered Sunday to dedicate the statue in the area of this Hungarian capital where Wallenberg focused his activity.

The 19-foot-high statue features a man killing a snake, as well as a relief of Wallenberg's face.

Fifty years ago, a monument to Wallenberg, who saved approximately 33,000 Hungarian Jews during World War II with the help of forged Swedish passports, was slated to be unveiled.

But Communist secret police removed the original statue and took it to a secret location. A few years later, part of the monument surfaced in the eastern Hungarian town of Debrecen in front of the Biogal pharmaceutical plant.

The Israeli company Teva, which bought Biogal in 1995, was originally asked to bring the original statue back to Budapest from the entrance of the Biogal plant, but refused, agreeing only to make a copy of the statue. The company kept the original in Debrecen, where, according to one version of events, Wallenberg was killed.

Teva paid for one-third of the costs of the new statue. The municipality of Budapest and other donors paid for the remainder of the statue.

"At last, the statue of Raul Wallenberg is now rehabilitated and returned to its original place, where it was planned to be exactly half a century ago," the mayor of Budapest, Gabor Demszky, said at the ceremony.

Wallenberg himself was last seen in January 1945, when he was taken away by Soviet soldiers.

Although he is alleged to have died in a Soviet prison, his fate is still unknown.

He "was a mysterious figure, a heaven-sent hero for us," said Gyorgy Somlyo, a poet who was among those saved by Wallenberg. □