



# Daily News Bulletin

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## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Iranian Jew calls for justice

An Iranian Jewish leader called for a fair trial in the case of 13 Jews arrested by Tehran on charges of spying for Israel.

"If the results of the investigations prove them guilty, they should be punished. But if the opposite were proved, they should be released immediately," Manouchehr Eliasi, was quoted as saying Saturday in the moderate newspaper Entekhab.

A report in a hard-line paper in Iran, meanwhile, said the 13 suspects had been linked to the Mossad, Israel's foreign intelligence service. [Page 1]

### Polish rabbi angers community

A personal appeal made by Poland's outgoing chief rabbi to Pope John Paul II to remove the one remaining cross standing outside the site of the former Auschwitz death camp embarrassed and angered Poland's Jewish leaders.

The Union of Jewish Communities issued a statement declaring that Rabbi Menachem Jaskowicz, an elderly Auschwitz survivor, was not speaking in an official capacity when he urged the pope directly last Friday "to take the last cross out of the camp so that Jews who come here can say their final prayer before dying."

The incident spotlighted the issue of who should speak for Polish Jewry and underscored the will of Poland's baby-boom generation of Jewish leaders to manage communal affairs on their own. [Page 4]

### Israeli survivors to receive funds

Needy Holocaust survivors living in Israel can begin filing claims on Monday for moneys from a \$185 million Swiss fund created in 1997.

Approximately 60,000 survivors are expected to receive \$1,000 from the fund.

Bureaucracy has been blamed for delays in distributing the money, which is separate from a \$1.25 billion class-action settlement reached last year with Swiss banks.

### Israel bars Munich mastermind

Mohammad Daoud Odeh, one of the planners of the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre, said Sunday he would appeal an Israeli High Court of Justice ruling to bar his entrance from Jordan to the Palestinian self-rule areas in the West Bank. [Page 4]

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### Families fear for Iranian prisoners; world pressures Tehran for release

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — Amid an international effort to secure the release of 13 Iranian Jews who face possible execution, U.S. relatives of the accused spies are publicly expressing fears for the lives of their loved ones.

Nasrin Javaherian of San Jose, Calif., is the sister of Nasser Leviahim, 49, the oldest among the prisoners. She said that her brother's family was at first reluctant to even acknowledge that Leviahim had been arrested. Iranian Jews and their families in the United States have traditionally refrained from making public statements about their situation for fear of reprisals.

After the charges were announced, Javaherian called her family five times in one night. "I was so scared, I was crying all the time," she said in a phone interview, trying hard to control her emotions.

She said her brother is the father of three sons, the youngest 18 months old, and a manager of an electric company in Shiraz. She speculated that the Iranian authorities might have gone after him because he frequently volunteered as a Hebrew teacher.

Leviahim's wife has not been allowed to see her husband since his arrest in March, but she can bring kosher food to the prison once a week, a process that involves signing four different papers. "We have no idea whether he's getting the food," Javaherian said.

Javaherian was one of the relatives who met with the Rev. Jesse Jackson, who declared his readiness to fly to Tehran together with the same ecumenical team that earlier obtained the freedom of three American soldiers held in Yugoslavia.

Political leaders in the United States, Israel, Germany and France sought to mobilize world opinion on behalf of the threatened prisoners. Efforts are also under way to enlist the support of Italy, Spain, Britain, Holland and other European Union countries, as well as the United Nations, the Vatican, Japan and Canada.

In Washington, resolutions have been introduced in the House and Senate calling on the Clinton administration and foreign governments to seek the release of the 13 Jews and condemning Iran's treatment of its religious minorities.

While the world outcry continues, many observers are puzzled why Iran would arrest the Jews at a time when the government of President Mohammad Khatami has signaled a desire to improve relations with the West.

Sam Kermanian, secretary-general of the Iranian American Jewish Federation in Los Angeles, said the answer lies in an internal power struggle between Iranian moderates, led by Khatami, and fundamentalist hard-liners.

"There are conservative groups in Iran which advocate strict Orthodox Islamic values and see any contact with the West as threatening these values, and they try to sabotage Khatami's policies," Kermanian said. It is the hard-liners who control the security apparatus, which arrested the Jews, as well as the judiciary, he noted.

The high-profile public actions follow months of behind-the-scenes maneuvering during which Jewish organizations sought to influence Tehran through quiet diplomacy.

The first batch of five Jews was arrested in January, Kermanian said.

In the second wave of arrests, Iranian security forces took another eight Jews into custody in late March, shortly before Passover.

The 13 Jews range in age from 16 to 49 and were mainly residents of the southern city of Shiraz, while others were arrested in Tehran and Isfahan, Kermanian said.

During the first months of imprisonment, the Jews were not charged with any

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Barak taps former Mossad head

A former head of the Mossad was among several former military officers recently named as top political advisers by Prime Minister-elect Ehud Barak.

In addition to reserve Gen. Danny Yatom, who will take on a newly created post coordinating all political and security activities in the Prime Minister's Office, reserve Brig. Gen. Zvi Stauber was also named as an adviser to Barak.

The prime minister-elect also named Yitzhak Herzog, the son of the late Israeli President Chaim Herzog, as Cabinet secretary.

Yatom stepped down as head of Israel's foreign intelligence agency in February 1998 following the bungled assassination attempt on a Hamas political leader in Jordan.

### Israeli wounded in Lebanon

An Israeli soldier was wounded in a clash with Hezbollah gunmen in Israel's southern Lebanon security zone Saturday.

The Hezbollah attack took place not far from where an Israeli soldier was killed last week.

### Palestinians don't trust Barak

Almost two-thirds of Palestinians are suspicious of Israeli Prime Minister-elect Ehud Barak's intentions regarding the stalled peace process.

Some 45 percent of the 1,320 people polled support armed attacks against Israel, down from 53 percent in January.

The poll by a firm based in the West Bank has a margin of error of 3 percent.

### Dalai Lama visits Israel

The Dalai Lama, in Israel on a private three-day visit, said non-violence could help bring about peace in the Middle East.

The exiled Tibetan Buddhist leader is in the Jewish state to take part in an interfaith conference.

crimes, and some signals from Tehran indicated that they might be set free. Then early last week, in a confusing series of announcements and retractions, Iranian officials accused the 13 of spying for Israel and the United States, which "at certain instances provide for capital punishment," the Islamic Republic News Agency reported.

The espionage charges are ridiculous, said Kermanian. "No one would recruit spies among a group (of Jews) who have high visibility and are constantly watched by the authorities," he said. In a country riddled with corruption, any nation hostile to Iran could have its pick of spies at \$1,000 a month, he added.

The 13 prisoners, including a 16-year-old boy arrested in his classroom, are mainly religious Jews, Kermanian said. They incurred the government's displeasure for such "crimes" as teaching Hebrew, holding religious classes and requesting permission to close their businesses on Saturdays.

Following the March arrests, an informal consortium of Jewish organizations began a quiet effort to mobilize their most influential contacts. Members included the American Jewish Committee, American Jewish Congress, Anti-Defamation League, B'nai B'rith International and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said Abraham Foxman, ADL's national director.

Last week, after Iran announced the spy charges, consortium members decided to go public. Foxman contacted Jackson, who agreed to meet with the ADL leader and relatives of some of the prisoners in Los Angeles on Thursday. Among some 50,000 Iranian Jews in the United States, Los Angeles is home to the largest concentration, with 30,000.

Foxman stressed the seriousness of the situation by noting that at least 17 Iranian Jews, including community leaders, have been executed in Iran since 1979.

In a news conference in Los Angeles on the following day, Jackson described the meeting with the relatives as "a deeply moving experience. I watched bitter tears roll down their faces in anguish and pain and fear for their loved ones."

Jackson said his first move would be to appeal to the religious authorities in Iran "to allow us to visit and gain the release of the 13 prisoners, and to appeal fervently that their lives be spared.

"I have seen some evidence that Iran is trying to rejoin the world. One expression would be to set the 13 Jews free," Jackson said.

Jackson, who repeated his message in a meeting with prominent rabbis in New York on Sunday, said he will meet with the Iranian mission to the United Nations on Monday.

Nazir Khaja, national president of the American Muslim Council, said he has been in contact with Rabbi David Saperstein, the director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, and after receiving a full briefing he intended to take up the fate of the 13 prisoners with the Iranian government.

Taking the lead in urging congressional action has been Rep. Brad Sherman (D-Calif.), whose House resolution has now also been introduced in the upper chamber by Sen. Charles Schumer (D-N.Y.). Sherman said in a phone interview that one purpose of the resolution was to warn Iran that its persecution of Jews would set back any attempts by Tehran to improve ties with the West. Since neither the United States nor Israel has diplomatic ties with Iran, it is particularly important that France, Germany and Japan, Iran's major trading partners, exert pressure on the regime, Sherman noted.

He said he was watching closely in which court the 13 Jews would be tried. "It could be a regular civilian court, a military court, or a Revolutionary Council court.

"But unfortunately the options here range from bad to awful."

Sherman has been inundated for months with letters and personal calls from the Iranian Jewish community in Los Angeles.

Most of the pressure has come from part of the community affiliated with the International Judea Foundation — Siamak and the Eretz Cultural Center.

These groups believe that the more-establishment Iranian American Jewish Federation had been too cautious in its quiet diplomacy until last week, when the spy charges were announced.

In Tehran, the official radio charged that the 13 Jews were part of a "Zionist espionage ring" and accused the United States and Israel of trying to "sensationalize the scandal" and of interfering with Iran's internal affairs. □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Child survivors gather for reunion

Some 1,000 Jews who escaped the Holocaust as children are converging on London this week for a three-day reunion to mark the 60th anniversary of their flight.

Almost 10,000 children, mostly Jews, from Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia were saved in the Kindertransports when Britain granted entry visas to children between 1938 and 1940.

### Lawyer: End case against rabbi

A lawyer for a New Jersey rabbi charged with arranging the 1994 murder of his wife called last week for the dismissal of the charges against his client.

The attorney for Fred Neulander claimed that the local prosecutor's office had leaked information on the eve of High Holidays last year from a grand jury investigating the case.

### Netanyahu joins lecture circuit

Benjamin Netanyahu recently retained a U.S.-based company to represent him on the lecture circuit.

The Washington Speakers Bureau did not state what the outgoing Israeli prime minister would earn for each speech, but the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot estimated he will command \$60,000 per lecture. In one speech, "The Role of Leadership in the Modern State," Netanyahu plans to discuss how to deal with solitude.

### Museum apologizes to Lithuania

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum apologized to Lithuania for any offense caused by a CD containing a parody of the Lithuanian national anthem.

The CD includes a collection of songs from the Kovno ghetto, produced in conjunction with a museum exhibit. The parody, which reflects the experience of ghetto inhabitants, included the lines: "Let your cities and villages and fields burn. Die like you killed us over centuries," according to Lithuania's official news agency.

In a letter to Lithuania's ambassador in Washington, Sara Bloomfield, director of the museum, said no offense was meant to the government or people of present-day Lithuania by including the song on the CD.

### JNF to close Atlanta office

The Jewish National Fund of America decided to close its Atlanta office at the end of June due to a budget deficit.

The move came after JNF staff in Atlanta failed to meet fund-raising goals.

The office, located in one of the fastest-growing U.S. Jewish communities, served as the organization's regional hub for nine states.

## Despite a decade of efforts, Austria won't return archives

By Bill Gladstone

TORONTO (JTA) — Israelis, Austrian Jews and even a U.S. senator have asked Austrian officials during the past decade to return to Jewish hands a large archival collection that once belonged to the Jewish communities of the easternmost province of Austria.

Despite these efforts, however, the archives chronicling life in Burgenland remain in an Austrian archive.

According to Hadassah Assouline, director of the Jerusalem-based Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People, the disputed collection occupies more than 120 feet of shelf space in a regional archives in the Austrian city of Eisenstadt.

The Central Archives has one of the most extensive collections of documents pertaining to the Jews of the Diaspora.

Assouline made an extensive inventory of its contents in 1988.

The material, which dates from the late 17th to the 20th century, includes Jewish communal record books and burial society records, as well as school, military and tax lists.

Also included are rabbinical correspondence and numerous letters between Jewish communal figures and the Esterhazy family of Eisenstadt, the long-standing patrons and protectors of Burgenland's Jews.

Assouline maintains that the collection, which Austrian archivists salvaged from the Nazis, is "stolen Jewish property."

"This is property belonging to the Jews of Burgenland, and under normal circumstances it never would have left their possession," she says.

The Austrian government has maintained that the issue is a regional, not a federal matter.

Officials of the regional archives in Eisenstadt have asserted that they cannot legally send the material to Israel.

Under Austrian law, they explained, material in the possession of a national or provincial archive cannot legally be given to someone outside the country.

Burgenland, famed for its well-known "seven communities" with their illustrious rabbis and yeshivas, was an important center of Austro-Hungarian Jewish life from about 1690 until September 1938.

Then, the Nazis expelled the Jews and declared 10 cities, including Eisenstadt, to be "Judenrein," or rid of Jews.

When the Burgenland collection resurfaced after the war in a regional archives in Eisenstadt, the Jewish community in Vienna requested its return, but to no avail.

The Jewish community in Austria's capital city is the legal heir to all Jewish communities of Austria.

A request from an organization of Burgenland Jews in Israel was equally unsuccessful.

Since the early 1980s, Assouline has persuaded successive Israeli ambassadors to Austria to raise the matter with the Austrians.

In 1986, the chief of the Burgenland archives agreed to microfilm much of the collection and ship it to Jerusalem on an open-ended "long-term loan."

Microfilming occurred in 1994, but the archives subsequently refused to lend the materials as agreed.

In a bid to break the bureaucratic logjam, U.S. Sen. Frank Lautenberg (D-N.J.) wrote to the Austrian Embassy in Washington last December, asking for help "to bring this matter to a satisfactory close."

His office has not yet received a reply.

Assouline remains adamant that the collection is culturally valuable and must eventually be returned to the Jewish people.

"This material chronicles a very important chapter of our history," she says.

"It's no less valuable than bank accounts, buildings, art, or any other type of stolen Jewish property.

"It must be returned." □

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES****Reaction to rabbi's appeal to pope highlights generation gap in Poland***By Ruth E. Gruber*

ROME (JTA) — A personal appeal made by Poland's outgoing chief rabbi to Pope John Paul II to remove the one remaining cross standing near the site of the former Auschwitz death camp has embarrassed and angered Poland's Jewish leaders.

Rabbi Menachem Joskowitz reignited the debate over religious symbols at the former Nazi death camp. But last Friday's incident also spotlighted the issue of who should speak for Polish Jewry and underscored the will of Poland's baby-boom generation of Jewish leaders to manage communal affairs on their own.

Joskowitz, an elderly Auschwitz survivor, was among the people who shook hands with the pope during the pontiff's visit to the Polish Parliament in Warsaw as part of a 13-day trip to his native country.

Joskowitz, a distinctive figure with his long white beard and black attire, thanked the Polish government for forcibly removing last month hundreds of crosses illegally erected outside Auschwitz by radical Roman Catholics.

But he shocked Jews, Vatican officials and Polish politicians alike when he urged the pope directly "to bring his people to take the last cross out of the camp so that Jews who come here can say their final prayer before dying."

Before the pope's visit to his native country, the Polish government removed approximately 300 crosses that had been placed near Auschwitz in the past year by Catholic activists.

The fate of the last cross, erected a decade ago in honor of the pope himself, is the subject of delicate ongoing negotiations.

Poland's Jewish leaders, long at odds with Joskowitz on a number of issues, immediately disowned the rabbi's actions.

The Union of Jewish Communities in Poland issued a statement declaring that Joskowitz had spoken in a strictly personal capacity, not in the name of the Jewish community, and noting that Joskowitz had retired from his position as chief rabbi effective Sunday.

"I hope when he does, he leaves the country," said Jerzy Kichler, the president of the group, an umbrella organization.

Said a member of the Warsaw Jewish community: "Polish Jews have been deeply embarrassed by the way in which the rabbi made his remarks. Unfortunately, he used broken Polish and spoke in a way that seemed to show a lack of respect for the pope."

The statement by the union expressed appreciation for the government action in removing the illegal crosses. It noted that many Jews, like Joskowitz, found the continuing presence of the remaining "papal cross" unacceptable, but stressed that the problem had to be discussed in a way that would not be offensive to either side.

"Of course Rabbi Joskowitz can express his strongly held opinions," Stanislaw Krajewski, a member of the union's board, told JTA. "But not in public suggesting that he represents 'the Jews.' His appeal has made the search of satisfactory solutions concerning the problem of the cross even more difficult."

Joskowitz's action, and Jewish reaction to it, however, transcended simply the cross issue. They reflected the deep, generational changes in Polish Jewry since Joskowitz was brought

in as chief rabbi a decade ago. Joskowitz, a Ger Chasid and Yiddish speaker, survived Auschwitz and left Poland for Israel after the war. Even after his appointment as Poland's chief rabbi, he has continued to spend much of his time in Jerusalem.

For much of his tenure, Joskowitz remained largely divorced from the revival of communal life among younger Jews, allying himself with the remnant of elderly Holocaust survivors like himself who personally recall the grandeur of Poland's prewar Jewish life.

He came into conflict with the younger, more liberal Jewish leadership, and he demonstrated little sympathy for assimilated young Poles, many of them the products of mixed marriages, who sought to recover their Jewish roots.

Throughout the 1990s until he left his post last year, charismatic American Rabbi Michael Schudrich, the director of the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation programs in Poland, served as the main spiritual point of reference for these younger Jews.

In April, Warsaw Jewish community leaders announced that they had hired a Russian-born, 25-year-old modern Orthodox rabbi, Baruch Rabinowitz, to become rabbi of Warsaw, in a move aimed at further buttressing the revival of communal life.

Rabinowitz told reporters that reactions to Joskowitz's appeal did not hinge on whether one agreed or disagreed with his sentiments, but were a "question of living with the Polish people and our relationships with the Catholic Church."

The Holocaust was a dominant theme of the pope's visit to Warsaw. Also on Friday, the pontiff, visibly moved, prayed at the monument at Umschlagplatz, the spot where 300,000 Jews were shipped to Treblinka from the Warsaw Ghetto in 1942 and 1943.

"Lord, hear our prayer for the Jewish nation, which because its ancestry is very dear to you," he said, after praying in silence for at least five minutes. "Support it so that it receives respect and love from those who still do not understand the magnitude of its suffering." □

**Israel bars Munich mastermind**

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Bowing to German pressure, outgoing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu instructed Israel's security services Sunday to prevent the entry into the West Bank of Mohammad Daoud Odeh, who is responsible for the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre in which 11 Israeli athletes were murdered.

The premier also ordered that the VIP card of Daoud Odeh, who goes by the nom de guerre of Abu Daoud, be revoked.

Abu Daoud called the decision "illegal," and said he would petition the High Court of Justice.

Abu Daoud has lived in the Palestinian self-rule areas without hindrance from the Israeli security authorities for the past three years. He was one of the members of the Palestine National Council who was allowed to enter the West Bank in 1996 to annul the clauses of the Palestinian Covenant calling for Israel's destruction.

The Israeli move came following a warrant calling for Abu Daoud's arrest that was issued in Germany. The German warrant created a no-win situation for Israel, which chose to risk increasing tensions in its relations with the Palestinian Authority.

In his autobiography published last month, Abu Daoud admitted that he planned the hostage-taking at the Munich Olympics, which led to the massacre. □