



# Daily News Bulletin

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82<sup>nd</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Iran accuses U.S., cites Pollard

Iran is defending its arrests of 13 Jews on espionage charges by going on the offensive and accusing the United States of hypocrisy.

Israel Radio quoted Radio Tehran as stating this week that the United States is hypocritical because it refuses to release Israeli spy Jonathan Pollard, and yet insists that Tehran should release its 13 Jewish detainees.

President Clinton has twice denied clemency to Pollard, a former U.S. naval intelligence analyst who was sentenced in 1987 to life in prison for spying for Israel.

Meanwhile, Clinton and Secretary of State Madeleine Albright plan to raise the issue of the 13 detainees when they meet later this week with dozens of world leaders in Cologne, Germany, according to National Security Adviser Sandy Berger.

Berger gave the assurance in a letter sent to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

### Meretz balks at Shas' inclusion

Israel's secular Meretz Party is balking at joining a coalition with the Shas Party even after the resignation of Shas' leader, Aryeh Deri.

"It's not enough that Aryeh resign. We have to see that this resignation is serious," Meretz leader Yossi Sarid said Tuesday after Deri announced that he would step down as head of the fervently Orthodox party.

Sarid is calling for a "cooling-off period" to see whether the Moroccan-born Deri, who was convicted in March on bribery charges, will indeed withdraw from public life.

### Plans made for Kwara Jews

Outgoing Israeli Foreign Minister Ariel Sharon met Tuesday with Ethiopia's ambassador to Israel to coordinate the immigration of some 3,000 Kwara Jews to Israel.

The meeting took place at Zewde Otoro's initiative, according to Israel's Foreign Ministry.

It followed two days of Israeli government planning sessions to relocate and absorb the Jews of northern Ethiopia, who were not brought to Israel along with other Ethiopian Jews in the 1980s and earlier this decade.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### Senior U.S. chaplain envisions role for clergy in helping rebuild Kosovo

By Peter Ephross

NEW YORK (JTA) — Now that the Kosovo war is over, a senior chaplain in the U.S. Armed Forces — a rabbi with 27 years of active duty — hopes to be part of the rebuilding effort.

"The goal has to go beyond stabilization, to reconciliation" in order "to overcome the hatreds and the wounds that started the last conflict," Rabbi Arnold Resnicoff wrote in a series of e-mail interviews.

He will be meeting with international groups to see how the chaplains who will accompany the 7,000 U.S. troops that are expected to enter the war-torn region can help.

Building relationships among different groups has always been important for the 52-year old rabbi.

In fact, Resnicoff — who reports directly to NATO commander Gen. Wesley Clark — was motivated to apply to rabbinical school because of his friendship with an Episcopal priest.

In Vietnam's Mekong Delta, Resnicoff — serving as a naval officer — developed a close relationship with Chaplain Luther Westling.

"He was Christian through and through, and yet had enough Christian love to reach out and help me," recalled Resnicoff, who is based in Stuttgart, Germany, and oversees U.S. chaplains serving in 89 countries from Albania to Zimbabwe.

Indeed, when Resnicoff applied to the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary in 1972, he was told he was the first applicant to the seminary "whose application packet had not had a letter from any rabbi telling what a nice Jewish boy I was. Instead, it was a letter from an Episcopal priest telling what a nice Jewish boy I was," writes Resnicoff.

During the ensuing years, Resnicoff — who credits his interest in the military to his father, an immigrant from the Soviet Union whom he calls "the most patriotic man" he has ever met — has seen firsthand the destruction in Vietnam and the devastation caused by the 1983 bombing of the U.S. Embassy in Beirut. One of only 33 Jewish chaplains — out of a total of 4,000 overall — currently in the U.S. Armed Forces, Resnicoff first got involved with the military while in high school.

Most recently, Resnicoff, who holds the rank of U.S. Navy captain, witnessed the havoc wreaked on the lives of the Kosovar refugees when he visited refugee camps and attended a meeting of non-governmental organizations working in the region.

The conflicts in the Balkans have occupied much of his work in recent months. In addition to his visits with refugees at Camp Hope in Albania, he had Thanksgiving in Macedonia, Chanukah in Bosnia, and has frequently visited U.S. troops serving in the region.

In part because of his relationship with Westling, Resnicoff steadfastly believes that religious faith can serve as a force for reconciliation.

He is trying, as he puts it, to find an answer to the question: "Is there a way in which religious teachings and values can bring people together, not tear them apart?"

To this end, he focuses on interfaith dialogue.

In Bosnia, for example, he has been meeting with Catholic, Eastern Orthodox, Muslim and Jewish leaders to see how these religious heads can play a role in building a long-lasting peace in one of the early flash points for tensions in the Balkans this decade. "We, like the Kohanim, the priests in biblical times, are symbols that, although

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Israel strikes deep in Lebanon

Israeli jets launched strikes Wednesday at suspected Hezbollah targets in northeast Lebanon near Syria. The attack was the furthest north Israel has struck in Lebanon this year.

All planes returned safely after attacking the "terrorist targets," an Israeli military spokeswoman said in Jerusalem, giving no further details.

### Amnesty cites Israeli violations

Amnesty International criticized Israeli human rights violations in its 1999 annual report. The report, which covered incidents in 1998, cited the "extrajudicial execution" of alleged terrorists, hostage-taking and the use of torture.

The report, which leveled similar charges against the Palestinian Authority, also said executions and "disappearances" were commonplace elsewhere in the Middle East and North Africa.

### Arafat calls on workers to quit

Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat called on Palestinian construction workers to quit their jobs in Jewish settlements in the Gaza Strip to prevent the expansion of settlements there, Palestinian officials said Wednesday. Workers who showed up at the settlements were threatened with a year in jail and fines, according to Jewish settler leaders in Gaza.

Meanwhile, a poll conducted earlier this month by a firm in the West Bank found that about half of the 1,320 respondents disagreed with the idea that Arab construction workers should quit their jobs helping to build settlements.

### Conversion performed on Internet

Israel is refusing to accept the Internet conversion to Judaism of a Romanian woman who wants to make aliyah. The conversion was reportedly performed by a U.S. rabbi affiliated with the Reconstructionist movement.

war is not the same as peace, neither is it completely different. Just because we cannot follow all rules of peace, and must do things in war that we would not normally do, we should not throw all rules to the wind," he writes.

"My role is to ensure we protect not only our bodies, but our souls."

Resnicoff's interfaith work is not the only way that he has made his mark.

In the early 1980s, Resnicoff, whose grandfather and great-grandfather were both rabbis, was active in helping to establish the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, giving the closing prayer at a 1982 rally for the project that drew an estimated 200,000 people.

"The fact that there could be a memorial which made no statement about the war, but only symbolized the fact that all people, on all sides, would mourn those whose lives were lost, was a major achievement," he said.

Because of Resnicoff's observance of kashrut, he relies heavily on vitamins and diet drinks when he is stationed abroad. His observance led him to be in Beirut when the U.S. Embassy was bombed there in October 1983. He had traveled there to conduct services after a Jewish member of the Marine Corps was killed by a sniper, and he stayed an extra day because it was Shabbat.

In the midst of the carnage the next morning, Resnicoff took off his kippah to wipe the dirt and blood from someone's face. The yarmulka became so bloody that he discarded it. A fellow chaplain, a Roman Catholic, tore off a piece of his camouflage uniform and put it on Resnicoff's head.

That story, part of Resnicoff's report on the bombing that he sent to then-President Reagan, was included in a speech Reagan gave at a 1984 conference of the Moral Majority, and reportedly led to the 1985 Department of Defense edict that allows soldiers in uniform to wear head-coverings. □

## Youth killings stir new debate over violence in Israeli culture

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Outgoing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Premier-elect Ehud Barak visited the home of a Jerusalem family Sunday whose 15-year-old son was murdered last Thursday by another teen-ager.

The visits came as increasing public attention in Israel was devoted to the growing wave of juvenile violence.

The murder of Gilad Raviv in Jerusalem on June 10 took place only a few days after the murder of Yevgeny Ya'acobovitz, also 15, in Nazareth.

Raviv was stabbed to death by another youth, who later said he had reacted to insults against him.

Five youths were detained in the murder of Ya'acobovitz.

A recent survey carried out by Israeli educational television showed that 92 percent of children encounter some form of violence at school.

In reaction to the survey's results, educational television will air special programs encouraging tolerance.

Even as politicians and experts argued about the cause of this wave of youth violence, another related incident occurred Saturday, when a 56-year-old man suspected of having wounded a 29-year-old man following a quarrel between their 7-year-old children was detained in Ashdod.

The discussion of the incidents and the solutions proposed to the problem are similar to the national dialogue that occurred in the United States following the April massacre in a Colorado high school.

Assa Kasher, one of Israel's leading philosophers, said Sunday that the violence among youths reflected the general level of violence in the society. "Youths regard part of the behavior of grown-ups as a license to kill," he said.

Public Security Minister Avigdor Kahalani suggested that knives in schools should be confiscated.

A leader of the fervently Orthodox Shas Party, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, blamed the problem on secular youths not studying the Torah. □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Services to focus on detainees

Synagogues across the United States plan to dedicate Sabbath services this week to the plight of 13 Iranian Jews arrested by Tehran on charges of spying for Israel. The initiative, announced Tuesday by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, is backed by the leading rabbinic and congregational arms of all the Jewish streams.

Meanwhile, Orthodox synagogues throughout Britain plan to offer a special prayer this Saturday for the 13 detainees. The prayer, composed by British Chief Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, appeals to God to "preserve and protect the arrested members of the Jewish community of Iran" and "return them speedily to their families."

### WJC issues appeals

The World Jewish Congress appealed Tuesday to the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights and the president of the International Committee of the Red Cross to make personal pleas to Iran for the release of 13 Jews accused of espionage.

"This is a blatant case of religious persecution," WJC Executive Director Elan Steinberg said in an open letter to the two officials. "The lives of these 13 individuals are in danger. I implore you to speak loudly and publicly about this injustice."

### German memorial plan rejected

A German parliamentary committee rejected on Wednesday a government plan to erect a national Holocaust memorial in Berlin.

The committee objected to plans to include a Holocaust documentation center as part of the memorial. The rejection was the latest setback in a more than decade-long controversy surrounding the memorial's construction.

### 'Freedom Ride' takes to the road

A weeklong tour commemorating the 35th anniversary of the deaths in Mississippi of three civil rights workers, two of them Jewish, was launched Wednesday at a Jewish museum in New York.

The trip, which re-enacts the freedom rides of the early 1960s, will include a stop at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington. Participants will later make their way to the Mississippi gravesite of one of the men killed.

### AJPA gathers in Philadelphia

Some 70 Jewish editors and publishers are gathering this week in Philadelphia for the annual meeting of the American Jewish Press Association.

The conference plans to address such issues as the aftermath of the Israeli elections and the responsibility of the Jewish press to local communities.

## Hezbollah gunmen reported ready to open new battle front in Lebanon

By Douglas Davis

LONDON (JTA) — Iranian-backed Hezbollah gunmen are poised to escalate their attacks on positions occupied by Israel and the Israeli-allied South Lebanese Army in the southern Lebanon security zone, according to the London-based newsletter Foreign Report.

Two weeks after the SLA withdrew from the Christian enclave of Jezzine, Hezbollah is now planning to fill the vacuum and open a new front in the area, the newsletter reported this week. The new front may force an Israeli retreat from positions near Jezzine, the report said, adding that Israeli soldiers have already conceded that terrain and are spending much of their time in bunkers.

Most Israeli operations in the area are "relatively safe, long-range artillery barrages and air raids on hilltops which look like target practice," said the newsletter.

"The only defense the Israeli Army has come up with against increasingly sophisticated roadside bombs has been to hire local bulldozers to scrape the roadsides, making bombs easier to spot."

The report appeared as four Hezbollah political leaders — three of them members of the Lebanese Parliament — visited Jezzine on Wednesday.

In the first such visit since the SLA withdrawal, the four sought to assure the local population that they have no intention of sending gunmen into the area. A similar assurance was made that day by Hezbollah's leader, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah.

Also on Wednesday, Israeli jets launched strikes at suspected Hezbollah targets in northeast Lebanon near Syria. The attack was the furthest north Israel has struck in Lebanon this year.

The newsletter also reported that Washington has developed a working paper for restarting Israeli-Syrian negotiations.

The talks, suspended in 1996, will resume if Israeli Prime Minister-elect Ehud Barak signals his willingness to withdraw entirely from the Golan Heights in return for peace with Syria, and if Syrian President Hafez Assad is willing to accept a comprehensive peace pact with Israel, including the opening of an Israeli embassy in Damascus, in return for the full Israeli withdrawal.

The working paper also contains a timetable:

- The target for an Israeli-Syrian peace treaty will be three years, including the Israeli withdrawal from the Golan.
- Israel and Hezbollah will agree to a six-month cease-fire, during which Israel will gradually withdraw from the security zone. □

## Judge: Man covered up his wartime past

TORONTO (JTA) — A 76-year-old Ukrainian native living in Ontario was a Nazi collaborator who covered up his past to attain entry to Canada in 1948, a Canadian judge ruled this week.

The decision clears the way for Canada's Cabinet to revoke Serge Kisluk's citizenship and call for a subsequent deportation hearing.

The court found that Kisluk was involved in the death of a 20-year-old Jewish woman and must have known about the mass executions of Jewish civilians in a Ukrainian town near Makovichi, where he worked for the Germans as a railway guard and auxiliary police officer in 1940 and 1941.

Kisluk is the third suspected Nazi collaborator found to have entered Canada through deceitful means since the country's Justice Department stepped up its campaign against suspected Nazi war criminals in 1995.

In the last three and a half years, the Canadian government has initiated proceedings against 15 Nazi war crimes suspects.

Three suspects have died, two have left the country voluntarily and two more have been permitted to stay.

Other cases are slated to get under way soon. □

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES****Jewish groups eye own books  
in light of Christian Coalition's loss**

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Pat Robertson's Christian Coalition, once a powerful political juggernaut with grand plans of putting a Bible in every classroom and a Republican in every elected office, has slammed headlong into a wall set up by the Internal Revenue Service.

The IRS concluded that the political activities of the conservative Christian lobby, which had been battling for tax-exempt status for 10 years, were too partisan. The group's voter guides, distributed in churches across the country and widely criticized as blatantly partisan, were a main source of contention.

The group's ideological opponents, including an array of Jewish and non-Jewish activists who have countered the coalition in battles from abortion rights to prayer in school, called the ruling long overdue. But even as critics reveled in the setback dealt to the coalition, some Jewish legal experts said the IRS decision should prompt Jewish groups to scrutinize their own voter education activities more closely.

The IRS first denied the group tax-exempt status last year, but the IRS kept the ruling under wraps until the Christian Coalition was notified in recent weeks that it would lose its appeal.

The ruling came as no surprise to those who have watched the coalition rally voters behind GOP candidates who support the group's conservative "pro-family" agenda in every election since 1990. It simply provided additional evidence to what most observers have long believed: that the Christian Coalition, in essence, has served as the theological arm of the Republican Party.

The ruling deals a stinging blow to an organization that has been struggling in recent years. A dominant force that helped Republicans take control of Congress in 1994, the Christian Coalition's influence has waned in the two years since Ralph Reed departed as executive director. The coalition has lost 700,000 of the 2.8 million members it once had and is now mired in debt of \$2.5 million, Newsweek reported this week.

Robertson has given \$1 million of his own money to help bail out the organization, which he founded in 1988 after his unsuccessful race for the Republican presidential nomination.

But he has repeatedly clashed with senior staff members on leadership decisions in recent months, and at least six top officials have either quit or been discharged.

As a result of the IRS ruling, the Christian Coalition has decided to split into two entities.

One, called Christian Coalition International, plans to endorse and make financial contributions to candidates and would not be tax-exempt. A second group, called Christian Coalition of America, would assume the existing tax-exempt status of the Christian Coalition of Texas and would continue to engage in voter education activities.

Robertson vowed last week that his organization would continue to be a powerful force in American politics.

But critics say the ruling is likely to make conservative pastors wary of maintaining close ties with the group and churches less willing to distribute its controversial voter guides for fear of risking their own charitable statuses.

Last year, the coalition distributed some 72 million voter guides in churches around the country.

"Pastors would have to be out of their minds to distribute these guides now," said the Rev. Barry Lynn, executive director of Americans United for the Separation of Church and State, which launched a campaign in 1997 to warn churches about legal limits on political activities and to urge them to reject the coalition's voter guides.

"The Christian Coalition's credibility is shot. That's the real impact of the IRS action," Lynn said.

For tax-exempt Jewish advocacy groups that are banned by law from engaging in "substantial political activity," the ruling may prompt a closer look at their own voter education practices.

"I don't think anybody in the Jewish community has done anything that's remotely as systematic as what the Christian Coalition did, but there are gray areas," said Marc Stern, a lawyer with the American Jewish Congress.

Groups such as the Joint Action Committee's Education Foundation and the National Jewish Democratic Council have distributed guides to help educate Jewish voters about issues ranging from U.S.-Israel relations to church-state separation.

But unlike the congressional "scorecards" distributed by the Christian Coalition, which rate each candidate, the guides do not suggest how voters should cast their ballots.

Stephen Silberfarb, deputy director of the NJDC, said his group's voter guides are "meticulously" crafted not only to stay within the limits of the law, but to steer as clear as possible from the gray areas.

Still, the impact of ruling remains unclear.

"It's possible that all this means is that if you're really stupid and you shove it in the IRS's face, that they'll shove back," Stern said of the coalition's clear partisan politicking. "But it may mean the beginning of a new attitude of more stringent enforcement of these prohibitions."

Meanwhile, as the Christian Coalition reorganizes and prepares to explicitly identify itself with conservative Republican candidates, some Jewish activists have raised concerns about the notion of partisan political activity organized along religious lines.

While religious groups may have a right to endorse and fund candidates, some question whether it is healthy for society.

"When religious groups begin to endorse candidates, the implications are if you're going to be a good religionist, you've got to do what they say," said Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism.

"That raises the prospect of people having to choose between their religious conscience and individual conscience, and that's bad for democracy."

Whether the Christian Coalition's new activities can help strengthen the foundering organization remains to be seen. At the same time, few doubt that the Christian right will continue to play an influential role in the American political process.

"I think it's too early to write their obituary," said Matt Brooks, executive director of the Republican Jewish Coalition, which has worked closely with the Christian Coalition on various legislative issues.

"They're not going to disappear," Saperstein agreed. "And those people who think that their agenda is inimical to the interests of our community are going to have to remain vigilant to their activity." □