



# Daily News Bulletin

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82<sup>nd</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Israel to begin implementation

Israel's Cabinet overwhelmingly approved on Wednesday the first of three withdrawals called for in the Wye II accord signed Saturday in Egypt.

After the Knesset also gave its own approval later in the day, security sources said Israel will transfer on Thursday 7 percent of the West Bank — in an area located near Nablus — from full Israeli control to joint Israeli-Palestinian control. Meanwhile, Israeli officials said the release of 200 Palestinian prisoners called for in Wye II will also take place Thursday.

### Disney faces Arab boycott

Officials at Walt Disney Co. are trying to quell a growing row in the Arab world over whether Jerusalem will be depicted as Israel's capital at a millennial exhibit in Florida.

"Every step is being taken to ensure that none of the exhibits will offend another culture," a Disney spokeswoman in Paris said Wednesday.

The comment came as the United Arab Emirates called for an Arab boycott of all Disney products if the Israeli exhibit at the Epcot New Millennium Village portrays Jerusalem as the capital of the Jewish state.

Meanwhile, Israeli officials lashed out at the UAE. "The criticism is of a political nature that has no basis in what really is going to be shown," a Foreign Ministry spokesman said.

### More bombing suspects arrested

Israeli police on Wednesday arrested two more Israeli Arabs in connection with the two car bombings Sunday in Haifa and Tiberias.

With seven Israeli Arabs now in custody, speculation has been mounting that the attackers had links to militant Islamic groups opposed to the peace process.

### Swiss plan PR campaign

Switzerland plans to launch a public relations campaign to spruce up its image, which was tarnished by charges that it profited from financial dealings with the Nazis and refused to turn over the bank accounts of Holocaust victims.

The government on Wednesday sent to Parliament an \$8.6 million per year plan, dubbed the "Swiss Presence" campaign, to target influential people and institutions abroad with positive messages about Switzerland.

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

### Rejuvenated Hillel more active in Jewish college life nationwide

By Julia Goldman

NEW YORK (JTA) — Fraternities and Hillels once stood in diametric opposition on the scale of what's considered cool in college life: Frats brought to mind "Animal House," while Hillels were known as the "synagogue on campus."

Students at Eastern Michigan University in Ypsilanti won't find such a strong distinction this year at the 1960s-themed "Peace of EMU — Tie One on at Hillel" tie-dye party, the semester's kick-off event co-sponsored by the campus Hillel and Alpha Epsilon Pi.

The national Jewish fraternity encourages its chapters to get involved with Hillels, in part "to get more of a Jewish atmosphere going in our frat," explained Gary Heicklen, a junior and the president of AEPi at the Michigan school, attended by an estimated 1,000 Jewish students.

Meanwhile Hillel gets a partner in bringing Jewish students together to "do Jewish with other Jews," the 76-year-old organization's new mission, which encourages partnerships with other Jewish campus groups and openness to a wide range of Jewish expression. Practically any activity that consciously engages Jews as Jews — from Torah study to tie-dyeing T-shirts — counts toward Jewish renaissance for the 76-year-old Hillel organization.

"We're not looking to get people affiliated," said Richard Joel, Hillel's president and international director. "We want them to participate in their story."

As part of that effort, Joel recently announced that Hillel will pursue a new means of engaging college students: Israel2000.

Part of the pilot program for Birthright Israel, Hillel's Israel2000 will offer free 10-day, first-time trips to Israel for students from 80 campuses across the country.

The Birthright initiative — created by two philanthropists, Michael Steinhardt and Charles Bronfman, who now serves as chairman of the United Jewish Communities — is slated to begin providing similar trips to high school students beginning in 2001.

Hillel is organizing trips for 3,000 of the 5,000 North American college students who could be headed for the Holy Land on Birthright-funded programs this coming winter. Hillel is now accepting applications for the trips, scheduled to begin Dec. 29.

In this and other programs, Hillel is seeking to engage students at more than 100 affiliate campuses in North America, as well as at Hillel foundations in the former Soviet Union, England, Italy, Germany and Israel. Further operations are planned for Eastern and Central Europe.

Beyond going global, Hillel has been undergoing an internal and revitalizing change: Hillel houses have transformed into Hillel foundations, with the freedom and responsibility to design their own programs and fund-raising initiatives. Hillel campuses can apply for accreditation under stringent requirements to become, in essence, franchises of the Washington-based international organization.

Even without full accreditation, affiliation with Hillel offers Jewish campus groups "recognition," said Roger Kaplan, the director of the Freeman Center for Jewish Life at Duke University, which opened the doors of its new 17,500-square-foot building in August. Hillel "gives us complete access and cooperation with a national organization" — its resources, expertise and experience, said Kaplan.

Over the years, the international organization has attracted major philanthropists, whose involvement attests to the growing prominence of private funding in a field

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Shas may bolt over budget

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak's most powerful coalition partner threatened to quit the government Wednesday over a budget proposal that deprives funding for the fervently Orthodox party's school system.

The Shas Party, which holds 17 seats in the 120-member Knesset, is demanding that some \$2.5 million from the nearly \$51 billion budget for next year be allocated to its schools. "If they don't give teachers and kindergarten teachers wages by Rosh Hashanah, we will not stay in the coalition," Shas leader Eliyahu Yishai told Israel Radio. Should Shas bolt the government, Barak would lose his Knesset majority.

### Barak backs Shin Bet bill

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak indicated Wednesday that he would support legislation aimed at softening a landmark Supreme Court ruling barring the use of force by Shin Bet security service interrogators.

"There must be an authority that can, in the hour of need, work quickly and available to approve the necessary investigation in the case of immediate danger," the premier said in a statement. The ruling, which was handed down Monday, is supported by Justice Minister Yossi Beilin and Public Security Minister Shlomo Ben-Ami, both of whom believe that Shin Bet officials should be able to operate effectively under revised guidelines.

### Levy named chief negotiator

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak appointed Foreign Minister David Levy to serve as Israel's chief negotiator in the final-status talks with the Palestinians, Israel Radio reported Wednesday.

The talks, which will deal with such thorny issues as the status of Jerusalem and Jewish settlements, boundaries and Palestinian refugees, are expected to begin Monday.

formerly dominated by mainstream Jewish organizations.

Edgar Bronfman, chairman of the World Jewish Congress, serves as Hillel's international chairman as well as one of its three major donors, together with Steinhardt and the Oklahoma-based Schusterman Family Foundation.

Private support drives some of Hillel's most innovative programs, such as the Steinhardt Jewish Campus Service Corps, a growing group of Hillel recruiters and campus organizers. From Northern California to North Carolina, these 200 recent college graduates have rejuvenated the organization, meeting students in dorms and student unions and working with them to organize Jewish activities on campus ranging from religious study to musical theater.

The first Hillel chapter opened at the University of Illinois at Urbana, in 1923, and soon the growing campus movement was adopted by B'nai B'rith.

In 1994, its parent organization gave up exclusive sponsorship of the campus network due to fiscal constraints. The newly independent Hillel joined with the Council of Jewish Federations — the umbrella organization for more than 189 Jewish federations and affiliated communities that is now part of the United Jewish Communities.

Together Hillel and the CJF launched the Jewish University Students Services Initiative. The initiative outlined a number of long-term goals to increase local community involvement in and funding for Jewish campus life.

By the year 2002, the initiative was supposed to double Hillel's total budget to \$50 million (in 1994 dollars) and gradually increase federations' contributions to cover 40 percent of Hillel's budget.

It also asked federations to cooperate along regional lines to promote a "fair share" policy between communities with large Jewish populations and communities with large numbers of Jewish students.

Most of the 400,000 Jewish university students in North America are concentrated in about 100 schools, many located in areas outside Jewish population centers.

In many cases, however, federations in the 14 regional groupings experienced difficulty in collaborating. Small, intermediate and large federations found they had different priorities. And some colleges far from major cities felt that their needs came second to urban schools.

Now, Hillel reports that the regional consortium idea is being rethought to better reflect each federation's needs and funding abilities. The Jewish communal endorsement in 1994, Joel said, gave Hillel "the right to build relationships with the community," to access federations' expertise and membership — and to raise money.

With CJF's recent merger with the United Jewish Appeal and the United Israel Appeal, Hillel is today an agency of the UJC — North America's most broad-based philanthropic and social service organization.

Hillel's fund-raising has flourished, with nearly two-thirds of Hillel's current \$37 million annual budget coming from individual donors and foundations.

But the federation initiative has been less successful. Some schools, such as Eastern Michigan University, have benefitted from the spirited involvement of the local federation. Whether the enthusiasm will carry over nationally has yet to be seen.

Only three years remain until 2002, when federations are expected to fulfill their more than \$20 million share of Hillel's increased budget.

Federations' allocations to Hillel have increased from \$10.5 million in 1994 to around \$12 million today, with some federations reportedly giving more than required, said Jay Rubin, Hillel's executive vice president and a former executive at the Jewish Federation of Greater New Haven.

But there are signs that "some federations have basically frozen support for Hillel or made minimal increases," Rubin said.

Hillel directors surveyed by JTA said that federations could provide invaluable assistance in cultivating lay leadership as models of communal stewardship for Jewish students, in addition to helping raise funds. "Hillel was on the top of everyone's agenda in 1994," Rubin said. "We don't want to see people take their eyes off the prize and lose that focus."

The UJC merger, however, holds the promise of a renewed focus on Jewish college students. Hillel alone was noted in the section on outreach to college students in UJC's initial platform statement on "Jewish Renaissance and Renewal," one of four pillars undergirding the new national organization. □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Building starts on kids' museum

New York Mayor Rudolph Giuliani and a line-up of other local politicians were among some 300 people who gathered Wednesday in the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn at a groundbreaking ceremony for what is described as the world's first Jewish children's museum.

A \$19.5 million facility created under the auspices of a Lubavitch children's organization, the museum is scheduled to open in 2001 and will use technology and hands-on activities to teach Jewish history, values and tradition.

### Rabbi pleads to lesser charge

A rabbi charged with smuggling drugs into a U.S. federal prison where he served as chaplain to Jewish inmates pleaded guilty Tuesday to a lesser charge.

Eli Gottesman, 74, could have been sentenced to as much as 20 years and a \$250,000 fine. Instead, he pleaded guilty to conspiracy charges, which could put him behind bars for less than a year.

### Jewish leaders confer in Poland

The latest round of ongoing negotiations between the Union of Jewish Communities in Poland and the World Jewish Restitution Organization opened Monday in Warsaw.

Participants characterized the talks as intensive and difficult, concentrating on the central issue of how to form a joint foundation that would take care of Poland's Jewish heritage.

### Rabbi calls for family minister

Britain's chief rabbi called on Prime Minister Tony Blair to appoint a full-time minister to deal with family issues.

During a television interview this week, Jonathan Sacks said the growing divorce rate is creating a "new and deeply unjust form of social inequality, with 50 percent of children who will start life with the advantage of a stable two-parent family and those who will not."

### Russian Jewish writer dies at 91

Lev Razgon, a Russian Jewish writer and human rights activists, died at the age of 91. Razgon's name became famous in the Soviet Union during the late 1980s after he published his memoirs about his years in Stalin's gulags.

When "True Stories" was first published in a Moscow literary journal in 1988 and 1989, the book was recognized as significantly different from most of the literature about the gulags. His stories of what happened to the famous Soviet political and intellectual figures of the 1930s are still considered a unique document about Russia's totalitarian past.

## Human rights groups applaud ban on Israeli method of interrogation

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Human rights groups are hailing an end to Israel's use of interrogation methods they say are tantamount to torture.

Israel's High Court of Justice on Monday barred the Shin Bet domestic security service from using physical force when questioning prisoners.

In its decision, the panel of nine justices unanimously ruled that the Shin Bet had no right to use the interrogation methods, which had been applied over the years to thousands of Palestinian detainees suspected of terrorist activity against Israel.

The decision, written by Chief Justice Aharon Barak, said these methods included violent shaking, sleep deprivation and placing detainees in uncomfortable positions for prolonged periods.

The court, in accepting the seven petitions filed by human rights groups, rejected the conclusions of a government-appointed commission eight years ago, which gave the General Security Service authority to exert "moderate physical force" in certain situations.

In its decision, the court said it recognized the special security concerns of the country, but concluded that in a democracy such as Israel, humiliating and painful interrogation methods are unacceptable. The court left room for the Knesset to legislate on the matter.

Political reaction to the ruling was mixed. Supporters of the decision hailed it as a beacon for democratic rule in Israel. Critics expressed concern that the tough measures used by the security service were intended for "ticking bombs," the term used for detainees suspected of having information that could prevent an imminent terrorist attack. □

## 'Kosher Sex' rabbi's organization probed by British charity officials

By Douglas Davis

LONDON (JTA) — Britain's charity commissioners have frozen the trust accounts of the "Kosher Sex" rabbi's L'Chaim Society amid concern about "the application and control of the charity's funds."

Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, who achieved celebrity on both sides of the Atlantic with his provocatively titled books — which include "Kosher Sex" and "The Jewish Guide to Adultery" — is believed to have transformed the L'Chaim Society, a modest student group he founded at Oxford University, into an organization that generates an annual six-figure cash stream.

During the past 10 years, the unambiguously brash and glitzy style of the New York-educated rabbi has attracted a significant following among Britain's young Jews, but it has also offended many in the Orthodox establishment.

They were particularly upset when he sold an excerpt from "Kosher Sex" to Playboy magazine for a reported fee of \$200,000.

Noted one media commentator: "For an Orthodox rabbi, Shmuley Boteach has an unorthodox way of doing things."

The charity commissioners launched their inquiry into the society three months ago after documents handed to the police were passed on to them. The commissioners, who monitor the activities of Britain's charitable trusts, said they had decided to freeze the society's bank accounts as "a temporary and protective measure."

Their investigation is understood to center on payments that were made by the society, including contributions to mortgage payments on Boteach's \$600,000 London home. Officials of the L'Chaim Society insist that the payments were made only after consultations with charity experts at a leading London law firm. Trustees of the society say they believe Boteach's success has "led jealous opponents to try to bring him and L'Chaim down." □

## Alarm raised as extremists win seats in eastern Germany

By Toby Axelrod

BERLIN (JTA) — The success of an extreme right-wing party in elections this week in the eastern German state of Brandenburg has sounded alarm bells.

Jewish leaders and liberal activists fear that the German People's Party, which could have as many as five seats in the state's Parliament after Sunday's election, will now have an official platform for its xenophobic rhetoric in Brandenburg.

Brandenburg has suffered a steady rise in unemployment and right-wing extremism since the reunification of East and West Germany 10 years ago. Last year, the party won seats in the neighboring state of Sachsen-Anhalt.

It is unlikely that the People's Party will be able to win the support it would need from other parties in Brandenburg in order to implement its anti-immigrant policies. In Sachsen-Anhalt, other parties have marginalized the People's Party representatives.

But the lack of real power does not make the election results more palatable, said Andreas Nachama, president of Berlin's Jewish Community.

"There is no way to put it nicely," he said, calling for a "battle" with the leaders of the People's Party using "all the political means that democracy can use."

"It's a disaster," said Dieter Tienkny, spokesman for the Berlin-Brandenburg region of the Federation of German Unions, which since 1991 has worked with the Berlin Jewish community, Christian groups and sport clubs to fight xenophobia and racism in Brandenburg.

Shortly after polls closed Sunday, vote counts showed that the People's Party had won at least 5.5 percent of the vote, passing the 5 percent minimum required in order to have a representative in the state Parliament.

As a result, as many as five seats could be taken by members of the People's Party, which derives its financial and ideological sustenance from Munich businessman Gerhard Frey.

Frey is publisher of the National Zeitung, an extremist newspaper that frequently tests the limit of German law by suggesting that the Holocaust was not as bad as historians make it out to be. □

## Agunot advocate urges prayer day for changing lot of 'chained wives'

By Julie Wiener

NEW YORK (JTA) — Mattie Klein is a strong believer in the power of prayer.

Three years ago she asked Rabbi Mordechai Tendler of Monsey, N.Y., to write a prayer for agunot, women unable to obtain Jewish divorces.

Klein's daughter recited the prayer under the chupah when she got married, and as a result, says Klein, one of the young agunot for whom she prayed was able to remarry this spring. She reels off a list of other "miracles," seemingly impossible divorce cases resolved after prayers were said.

That faith in prayer has led Klein, now director of a one-year-old New York organization serving agunot, to call for the first

worldwide day of prayer for agunot, scheduled for Sept. 10, before the start of Rosh Hashanah.

Jews who live according to halachah, Jewish law, require a get to dissolve their marriages. Only a man can give a get, and many withhold them out of spite or in order to extort certain financial settlements from their wives. Women denied gets are forbidden from remarrying or even dating, and are called agunot — "chained women." Many are trying to escape abusive relationships.

The worldwide prayer day — in which Klein hopes thousands of women say prayers and psalms for agunot — will be followed four days later by Agunah Get Day, in which estranged husbands are encouraged to grant their wives a divorce.

Klein's organization, L'Maan B'nos Yisrael International, is offering to pay all the costs associated with the get.

The effort has the endorsement of most major Orthodox organizations in North America and Israel, including the Orthodox Union and the Sephardic Rabbinical Council of America.

But other advocates for agunot say that prayer and even a get day, if not backed by a willingness to reinterpret Jewish law or more forcefully deal with intransigent husbands, will accomplish little.

Most agunot advocates urge strategies like prenuptial agreements and public condemnations of intransigent husbands. Such condemnation became a little easier this summer, when a federal judge in New Jersey ruled that religious leaders — in this case the Council of Orthodox Rabbis of Greater Monsey, N.Y. — could not be sued for publicly criticizing a person's religious behavior.

Since 1996, two Orthodox rabbis in New York have generated controversy by annulling the marriages of agunot.

The two — Rabbis Emanuel Rackman and Moshe Morgenstern — have been widely condemned by their colleagues, with critics accusing them of "spurious 'halachic' reasoning."

Virtually no Orthodox rabbi will officiate at marriages of women whose original nuptials were annulled by Rackman or Morgenstern. Klein declined to comment on the two men.

Klein's organization has sponsored get days and smaller prayer days for agunot in the past, but she declined to say how many cases they resolved, noting that their key accomplishment has been to build community awareness.

The prayer to be recited before Rosh Hashanah asks God to have mercy on the agunot, strengthen and deliver them and grant them "the opportunity to marry, to stand under their own wedding canopy and to build trustworthy families within the nation of Israel, with all other Jewish women who wish to be married."

Susan Aranoff, co-director of the Brooklyn-based Agunah Inc., which refers women to Rackman and Morgenstern, is skeptical of the prayer effort, although she commended it for "getting people's attention."

"We say you can't rely on miracles," she said. "The rabbis have to take a more activist approach."

Aronoff is so discouraged by the agunot situation that she is advising women not to have Orthodox weddings.

Another agunot advocate in Brooklyn, Rivka Haut of the Get Organization, agreed, saying Klein's organization is "doing wonderful work, but it's not enough." Haut praised Klein's group for raising awareness and for working to help individual agunot, but it's not "pushing for a global solution to the problem."

Klein is not giving up, however. "With the help of Hashem, nothing is impossible," said Klein. "If God can part the seas, he can handle a few recalcitrant husbands." □