



# Daily News Bulletin

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82<sup>nd</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Berlin recalls Kristallnacht

Amid festivities marking the 10th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, several ceremonies were held in Berlin to mark the 61st anniversary of Kristallnacht.

At one ceremony held at a Jewish cemetery that was recently vandalized, speakers warned about the growing popularity of right-wing extremism in eastern Germany. [Page 4]

### Clinton signs MIA bill into law

President Clinton signed into law a bill directing the State Department to investigate the cases of three Israeli soldiers missing since 1982.

The legislation signed Tuesday directs State Department officials to raise the issue of the missing soldiers, including Zachary Baumel, an American citizen, with Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinian Authority.

### U.N. resolutions debated

Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority Chairman Yasser Arafat, attending a conference in Paris, gave differing interpretations of U.N. Security Council resolutions on final borders in the West Bank.

Barak maintained that resolutions 242 and 338 do not apply to the West Bank, while Arafat said they provide the land-for-peace formula upon which the entire Oslo peace process is based.

### Southern Baptist strategy scored

The heads of four rabbinical seminaries in the United States sent a joint letter to the president of the Southern Baptist Convention condemning his group's strategy of targeting Jews for conversion.

"The Jewish community is deeply offended that the SBC has formally embraced a strategy that attempts to deceive Jews into believing that one can be both a Jew and Christian," said the letter, which was organized by the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York and sent to the Rev. Paige Patterson.

The presidents of the rabbinical schools connected with Yeshiva University, which is modern Orthodox, and the Conservative, Reconstructionist and Reform movements signed the letter. The convention has also recently intensified its conversion attempts against members of other religions.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### Israel sacrifices a perk to ensure aid, Wye funding

By Michael Shapiro

WASHINGTON (JTA) — After a month of intense political haggling between the White House and congressional Republicans — and a lobbying blitz by Israeli officials and Jewish groups — a foreign aid bill that includes \$1.8 billion in aid to implement the Wye agreement appears to be a done deal.

But the deal was clinched only after Israel agreed to pay a price.

Israel agreed to give up for one year its perk known as "early disbursal," which allows Israel to receive its annual \$1.9 billion in military aid from the United States in a lump sum payment so it can accrue interest on the money.

According to all accounts, the move freed up enough money to make the foreign aid bill acceptable to President Clinton, who had already vetoed an earlier version of the legislation because it was less than he had requested.

Sources close to the negotiations also said Israel's sacrifice was the key in allowing the White House and Republican leaders to figure out a way to add money to the foreign aid bill without being accused of dipping into the politically sensitive Social Security trust to fund foreign aid.

As a result of the compromise, the U.S. House of Representatives last Friday passed a \$13.5 billion foreign aid bill that adds \$1.8 billion in emergency funding to implement Wye.

The bill also includes nearly \$3 billion in economic and military aid for Israel, nearly \$2 billion for Egypt, \$225 million for Jordan and \$75 million for the Palestinian Authority.

The Senate was expected to pass a similar bill later this week, possibly as early as Wednesday.

The inclusion of the funding to help implement last year's Wye agreement between Israel and the Palestinians was considered a major victory for Clinton and Jewish activists who had pushed Congress hard to fulfill the pledge Clinton had made at the Wye talks.

The Wye funding provides \$1.2 billion for Israel, \$400 million for the Palestinians and \$200 million for Jordan.

In addition to the Wye funding, the compromise bill includes an additional \$799 million for other programs such as debt relief for poor countries, nuclear threat reduction in the former Soviet Union and aid to Africa.

As a result of the change in disbursal, Israel is still slated to receive an estimated \$1.35 billion early, which means 30 days after the enactment of the foreign aid bill.

The United States would hold on to at least \$550 million, which could mean a loss of an estimated \$60 million in accrued interest for Israel.

Although the exact details are still being worked out, the theory behind the move is this: Since the United States will not be paying all the aid up front, the money will still be on hand in the U.S. Treasury.

According to budget procedures, there is a distinction between budget authority, or money earmarked to be spent that could actually take several years to be paid out, and outlays, money that is actually being spent now.

By not giving Israel at least \$550 million of the aid up front, the United States was able to create \$2.6 billion more in budget authority to cover Wye and the other programs, many of which spend the money appropriated at a slow rate over several

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Weizman recovers from surgery

Israeli President Ezer Weizman successfully underwent an operation in Jerusalem to remove his gall bladder. Weizman, 75, was conscious and feeling well after Tuesday's surgery, according to a spokeswoman at Hadassah University Hospital in Ein Kerem.

Weizman, who was hospitalized twice in recent months for gall bladder complications, is expected to return home by the end of the week.

### Report: Chemical attack averted

Israeli and Palestinian security forces thwarted a "chemical terror attack" by Hamas militants that was planned to coincide with the Israeli elections last May, Israel Channel Two television reported.

Security agents uncovered the plan when the commander of a Hamas cell was questioned about a different attack, the report said.

### Settlers protest withdrawals

Jewish settler leaders are protesting Israel's planned withdrawals from more of the West Bank.

Ephraim Sneh, the nation's deputy defense minister, showed the leaders maps that outline the next phase of withdrawals. They said additional territory is being transferred to Palestinian self-rule, while the Palestinians are illegally staking out land in areas under sole Israeli control.

### Legislator slams emigres

An Israeli legislator set off an uproar during a committee meeting Monday, when he dubbed non-Jewish immigrants from the former Soviet Union a "fifth column" and a security threat.

Knesset member Shmuel Halpert, a member of the fervently Orthodox United Torah Judaism bloc, said such immigrants included all sorts of "unsavory" types. Interior Minister Natan Sharansky accused Halpert of incitement, and demanded he immediately apologize.

years. However, there are some risks associated with the change in disbursal.

It could weaken the flexibility of Israeli defense officials who are used to having the money in the bank, Jewish activists and Israeli sources said, adding that it also could set a precedent for eliminating the provision down the road.

But they said those costs pale in comparison to the possibility of not getting the special \$1.2 billion in military aid to help defray the cost of further withdrawing from West Bank territory.

Mark Regev, spokesman for the Israeli Embassy in Washington, said Israel is "glad" the Wye aid is coming through.

But he declined to comment on the early disbursal decision because the Senate had not yet considered the bill.

Last Friday's 316-100 vote in the House of Representatives marked a sharp contrast to last month's narrow passage of a foreign aid bill, which was ultimately vetoed by Clinton.

But the lack of debate belied the behind-the-scenes drama last week that led to the easy vote on the floor.

After the early disbursal was proposed by Republicans and agreed to by the pro-Israel lobby, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, and Israel, GOP leaders wanted to vote on a bill that included the full Wye aid package but only a small amount of additional funding for other foreign affairs programs.

This tactic was especially troublesome to the 21 Jewish Democrats who had all voted last month — in an unprecedented move — against a foreign aid bill that included Israel's nearly \$3 billion in annual aid but not the Wye package.

The Jewish lawmakers, who have routinely been the driving force in advocating for passage of the foreign aid bill, said they voted against the measure because it did not provide funding for Wye and because it shortchanged assistance programs in Africa and Latin America, among others.

Jewish activists and congressional staffers said that by including the Wye aid, the Republicans were trying to win the support of AIPAC, which had made passage of the Wye aid its key goal this year, and enough Democratic support to override a presidential veto.

At the same time, they said, that plan put Clinton in the unenviable position of having to veto a bill with the Wye aid, one of his key priorities, because it did not include other foreign aid programs.

For their part, the Republicans had been saying they did not want to add more to foreign aid at the expense of domestic programs, including Social Security.

During a Nov. 4 meeting on Capitol Hill with two top Jewish officials in the Clinton administration — Jack Lew, director of the White House Office of Management and Budget, and Sandy Berger, the national security adviser — Jewish Democrats were split down the middle.

Half wanted to vote for the bill because the Wye aid was included and work to add additional money for other programs when the House and Senate versions of the bill were reconciled in a conference committee, according to those involved with the discussions.

The other half said they would vote for the amendment adding the Wye aid to the bill but would vote against the measure's final passage because it fell short of the administration's request for foreign affairs funding.

One Democratic staffer said the lawmakers were concerned that if Jewish lawmakers only supported aid to Israel and not other parts of the world, that would cause a rift with black and Hispanic lawmakers, who might not support aid to Israel in the future.

At the same time, several Jewish groups had made clear to members of Congress that they, too, wanted additional aid for foreign programs in general.

In the end, Republican leaders saw that the strategy was not gaining significant numbers of Democrats and was also alienating the more conservative members of their own party.

Faced with the Clinton administration demand that the foreign aid bill be settled before the rest of the spending bills be resolved, they opted for a compromise.

They went back to the White House to negotiate and hammered out a bill that included the Wye aid and another \$800 million for other programs. □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### High court urged on voucher plan

The Orthodox Union is urging the Supreme Court to review a Vermont voucher program that allows families in rural areas to send their children to public or private schools, but not parochial schools.

The O.U. joined the Christian Legal Society in filing a friend-of-the-court brief asking the court to reverse a ruling by the Vermont Supreme Court upholding the program.

### Students call for deportation

A group of students at a Jewish school in New York rallied against a man whom the U.S. government is attempting to deport for his alleged war crimes.

Some 160 students from the Maimonides High School on Long Island demonstrated at the house of Michael Gruber, who is accused of having been an armed SS guard at the Sachsenhausen camp in Germany. Gruber's deportation trial is slated to begin early next year.

### Claims Conference issues guide

A Jewish group is releasing a guide aimed at helping Holocaust survivors file for Nazi-era compensation.

The "Guide to Compensation and Restitution for Holocaust Survivors" is available at the Web site of the Claims Conference at [www.claimscon.org](http://www.claimscon.org).

### Dutch Jews back insurer

A Dutch Jewish group threw its support behind an insurance firm in the Netherlands, saying calls by the World Jewish Congress for a boycott against the firm are unfair. "There is no reason for a boycott. Aegon has been fully cooperative," Joop Sanders, secretary of the Central Jewish Board of the Netherlands, said Tuesday.

The comment came after the Dutch Association of Insurers, to which Aegon belongs, announced it is providing some \$21 million to cover unpaid insurance policies and help Holocaust survivors.

A day earlier, the WJC said it planned to push for a boycott against 10 U.S. subsidiaries of Aegon if it failed to join a Holocaust restitution panel by December.

### Internet firm makes 'em laugh

A New York-based company with a technology development center in Israel has produced Internet technology aimed at giving users a laugh. NetCustomize has launched eLOL, electronic Lough Out Loud, which enables users to receive personalized entertainment content.

The desktop application enables users to specialize the kinds and quantity of jokes they receive. eLOL is located at [www.elol.com](http://www.elol.com).

## American Red Cross leader pushes for full Israeli membership in group

By Fredy Rom

GENEVA (JTA) — The International Committee of the Red Cross is considering granting membership to Israel's Magen David Adom.

American Red Cross officials urged the inclusion of the Israeli humanitarian organization during an international assembly held in Geneva.

At last week's meeting, the president of the American Red Cross, Dr. Bernadette Healy, said the Star of David emblem should be recognized by the International Red Cross.

The exclusion of Israelis is "a betrayal of the sacred principles of this movement" and "cannot be tolerated any longer," she said.

But swift action does not look likely. The assembly agreed to establish a working group to deal with the issue and report back to the next assembly in four years.

While Israeli diplomats welcomed the new U.S. initiative, they said they would have preferred a more discreet approach. This serious problem cannot be changed by a "beat of the drum," one Israeli official said.

Meanwhile, the International Red Cross continues to be plagued by allegations that some of its officials helped high-level Nazis obtain travel documents at the end of World War II. The documents, according to the allegations, enabled such top Nazi figures as Adolf Eichmann and Josef Mengele evade capture at the war's end.

This week, the Swiss-run ICRC called on researchers at the University of Geneva to launch an investigation of the allegations, ICRC spokesman Urs Boegli told JTA.

He also stated that Israel's continued exclusion from the International Red Cross is "not acceptable to us."

If Israel is included, the red Star of David would join the red cross and red crescent as emblems to protect aid workers in wartime.

Emblems used by Red Cross agencies were established in the 1949 Geneva Conventions on the conduct of war.

The Star of David was excluded by a 22-21 vote at that time.

Since then, Israel's Magen David Adom has worked closely with the Red Cross, but it has only observer status at the meetings of international body.

The Red Cross symbol was originally adopted by Swiss humanitarian leaders in 1863. The emblem reverses the colors of the Swiss flag, which has a white cross on a red field. Arab groups belonging to the humanitarian movement were later allowed to use a crescent. □

## U.N. panel calls Ontario policy biased

TORONTO (JTA) — Canadian Jewish officials are calling on the Ontario government to fund all private schools, including Jewish schools.

The call comes in the wake of a U.N. panel ruling that the province discriminates when it gives money only to Catholic schools.

Ontario's support for the private schools of only one religious community is unfair and "cannot be considered reasonable and objective," the U.N. Human Rights Commission said. Although the panel gave the Ontario government 90 days to comply with last Friday's ruling, there is no penalty if the province chooses to ignore it.

Nearly four years after Toronto parent Arie Waldman launched a complaint before the United Nations, the 18-member panel decided that the province was violating a 1976 international human rights convention. Waldman, who claims to have spent nearly \$100,000 to educate his two sons at Jewish day schools, asserts he is entitled to full compensation since he also pays education taxes into provincial coffers.

The Canadian Jewish Congress, which has long objected to the province's practice of funding only Catholic private schools, hailed the ruling.

Its legal challenge of the practice ended three years ago when the Supreme Court of Canada found that Ontario was within its rights to fund schooling for only one religious group. □

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES****Memories of evil and triumph mix on German anniversaries***By Toby Axelrod*

BERLIN (JTA) — While headlines here trumpeted the 10th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, a small group gathered amid a cold drizzle to commemorate another, more somber, anniversary.

In the wake of two recent attacks on Jewish cemeteries in Germany, speakers said the anniversary of the Nov. 9-10, 1938, Kristallnacht pogrom, when Nazi thugs ransacked Jewish-owned shops and set synagogues ablaze across Germany and Austria, holds even greater significance.

"It is not only Jewish people who are asking, 'Are the Nazis coming back?'" said Reinhard Kraetzer, mayor of one of Berlin's districts.

"The problem of extreme right-wing developments among our youth" includes "much greater numbers than we want to admit," said Peter Kirchner, the former leader of East Berlin's Jewish community.

"It is a known fact that it is very difficult to win back such youth for democracy."

Despite the weight of history, the general atmosphere in Berlin was festive.

The events commemorating the fall of the wall included rock concerts and a performance of 166 cellists led by Mstislav Rostropovich, who 10 years ago spontaneously gave a solo concert here.

But even amid the festivities, Kristallnacht was not completely forgotten.

The ceremony, held at one of the two Jewish cemeteries recently desecrated, was one of several in Berlin.

Later in the afternoon, an anti-fascist demonstration and commemoration of Kristallnacht was held at a Holocaust memorial on the west side of town.

The Kaddish, Judaism's traditional prayer for the dead, was chanted by Berlin's senior cantor, Estrongo Nachama, a Holocaust survivor and father of Andreas Nachama, president of the Berlin Jewish Community.

A crowd of 2,000, including former Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev and former President Bush, gathered for the annual memorial, which featured remarks by Andreas Nachama as well as local and national politicians.

Nazi crimes "went ahead because there was no outcry in the land," said Wolfgang Thierse, president of the German Parliament, who also called on contemporary Germans to speak out against the growing tide of right-wing extremism.

The numbers supporting this tide are alarming. At a recent symposium on youth violence, sponsored by Berlin's Center for Research on Anti-Semitism, researchers reported more than 50 percent of youths in some towns identify with extreme right-wing views, blaming social and economic problems on democracy and foreigners.

Virtually every day brings fresh news about attacks on foreigners. Confronting such problems is "the greatest challenge for Germany in the coming decades," Andreas Nachama said in a recent interview.

Many observers agree that the rising xenophobia in what was Communist East Germany resulted from its inability to confront the Nazi past.

"The theme was practically a taboo during the years," of East Germany's existence, "so there is very little knowledge," wrote Werner Schubert in the Lausitzer Rundschau newspaper over the weekend.

He called on fellow residents of Weisswasser, a former East German town near the Polish border, to share remembrances of Kristallnacht and local Jewish history.

But the lack of attention paid to the Holocaust in eastern Germany doesn't mean that the events commemorated this week are far from residents' minds.

"I don't think Kristallnacht is far from Germans' thinking," said Salomea Genin, a Jewish Berliner who returned to this city of her birth after World War II.

"People are riddled with guilt feelings and they don't necessarily confront it, but it is there," said Genin, who is behind another commemoration to take place Nov. 17.

That event will be the first time that Berlin will hold a special service remembering 35 Jews burned at the stake there in 1510.

"The Germans have always liked to forget dates like Nov. 9, 1938, but they cannot deny that they burned synagogues, pillaged Jewish stores and killed hundreds of Jews," said German writer Stefan Heym, 86, who had come to the afternoon ceremony from his home outside Berlin, and sat wrapped in an overcoat, his walking cane leaning against his chair.

Heym, who is Jewish, fled Nazi Germany in 1933. He later left the United States during the anti-Communist hunts by U.S. Sen. Joseph McCarthy, and returned to Germany in 1953.

Brigitte Rothert, 71, has not forgotten Kristallnacht.

Rothert, whose mother was a Jew who converted to Christianity, recalled walking through the streets of her home town, Dresden, with her mother on Nov. 10, 1938, and seeing the "destroyed shops, the broken display windows."

A Jewish friend had opened the door of her corset shop and collapsed.

"Someone had put gas into the shop through the keyhole, and when she went in she had no idea and fell unconscious," Rothert said.

"I feel it is my duty to be here, and the duty is getting more important," said Lucie Rosenberg, 77, a non-Jewish Berliner who married Holocaust survivor Werner Rosenberg after the war. "Unfortunately, there are new dangers." □

**More Israelis going it alone**

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Fewer Israelis are getting married and those who do are waiting longer to tie the knot, according to the latest statistical survey published this week by the Central Bureau of Statistics.

According to the report, 38,000 couples wed last year, with the average age of grooms 26, and brides 23. The divorce rate remains relatively low compared to other developed countries, with about 10 percent of couples divorcing in the first 10 years of marriage.

Other findings: Israel's population stands at 6.169 million people, with 79 percent Jewish, 14.9 percent Muslims, 2.1 percent Christian, 1.6 percent Druse and 2.1 percent undefined. The Jewish population in the West Bank and Gaza Strip totals 172,200. □