



# Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 77, No. 219

Tuesday, November 23, 1999

82<sup>nd</sup> Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Barak defends first lady

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak defended Hillary Rodham Clinton, who was criticized during her recent Mideast trip for sitting silently while Suha Arafat accused Israel of poisoning the Palestinian people.

"I believe the first lady's visit to Israel contributed to the peace process in spite of this incident," Barak told a gathering Sunday in New York of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Meanwhile, the Republican Jewish Coalition is running television ads in New York attacking Clinton for not quickly denouncing the remarks made by the wife of the Palestinian Authority president.

The ad shows Clinton, who is an undeclared candidate for a U.S. Senate seat, embracing Arafat after the speech, saying "Arafat spreads hatred and lies and Hillary embraces her."

### Officer fired for blasting Jews

The Israeli army's chief of staff fired an officer for telling an audience of soldiers that Judaism's Conservative and Reform streams have been more harmful to the Jews than the Nazis. Lt. Gen. Shaul Mofaz ordered the firing of Lt. Gamliel Peretz upon the recommendation of the army's chief education officer.

### Russian extremists air ads

An extremist bloc in Russia launched its televised election campaign with anti-Semitic references.

The ads by the Spas bloc featured party representatives saying that if elected to Parliament they would push for the reintroduction of capital punishment to punish "all those Gaidars and Chubais, who brought about the present miserable state of Russia."

Yegor Gaidar and Anatoly Chubais, the former prime minister and deputy prime minister, are widely believed to have Jewish roots.

The Moscow City Court is expected to rule whether Spas, Russian for "Savior," will be permitted to run in next month's elections.

Because of the Thanksgiving holiday in the U.S., the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Friday, Nov. 26.

## TRANSFORMING THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

### UJC's inaugural event reflects hope, uncertainty about future

By Julia Goldman

ATLANTA (JTA) — North American Jewish community federations decided years ago that it was time to change the way they relate to one another and the rest of the Jewish world.

Last week in Atlanta, the formal transformation began to take shape.

But its real effects may take years to reverberate throughout the United Jewish Communities, which represents nearly 200 federations and some 400 independent communities. People generally "have a feeling" that a change is afoot, but "they don't know what it is," Richard November, the president of the Jewish Community Federation of Richmond, said at the end of the UJC's inaugural event here.

The UJC, formed through the merger of the Council of Jewish Federations and the United Jewish Appeal, became legal Nov. 17, according to papers filed with New York state. The event capped off more than six years of deliberations over how to promote efficiency and give communities a greater say in the way the funds they raise are allocated for Jewish needs at home and abroad.

As more than 5,200 delegates from North America and Israel converged on the southern capital, the UJC's governing bodies met for the first time, beginning the business of reorganizing a social-service and fund-raising system that raised \$790 million in the 1999 annual campaign. But for all of the structure now in place, much of the groundwork for beginning the new organization still lies ahead.

The key to the merger is federation "ownership" of the system, with federations making up the majority of representatives on the UJC's governing boards and committees. Even among the federations' volunteer and professional leaders, however, no clear consensus exists on what the UJC should aspire to do. Moreover, the federations have yet to define what ownership entails, actively and financially.

To shape the UJC's future course, a two-day retreat for representatives from all member federations is being planned for next spring. Discussions of what is being termed "critical governance issues" — such as dues, responsibility for supporting overseas needs, decision-making and defining UJC's aims and scope of activity — will provide the basis for the UJC's future bylaws.

The retreat idea grew out of interviews conducted among 130 federation presidents and executives over the past month by McKinsey & Company, a New York-based management-consulting firm.

The McKinsey report, made public at the General Assembly here, found that "clearly articulated priorities and a vision of what UJC will be and accomplish have not been embraced by the system." As one interviewee, quoted in the report, put it, "You can't start using a road map if you haven't decided where you are going."

Federations agreed that "a national system is needed to enhance the effectiveness of local federations," but differed on its role, McKinsey found.

Some of the people interviewed envision the UJC as a kind of "trade organization" for federations, providing a way for communities to work together on common issues.

Others believe the organization should take the initiative in setting a North American Jewish agenda.

The interviews also revealed a tension between overseas relief and local needs, an issue that was one of the driving forces behind the merger of the UJC's predecessor organizations. But Charles Bronfman, the philanthropist who serves as the UJC's first

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Conversion scandal erupts

Two senior rabbinical court officials in Israel were arrested on suspicion of receiving bribes in exchange for issuing conversion certificates.

The police investigation was launched in response to a complaint filed by the national director of the rabbinical courts, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported. The complaint was based on protests lodged by four women, who said they had been asked to pay sums ranging from \$600 to \$10,000 for the certificates. The two officials were released from detention after complaining of illness.

### Negotiators to buckle down

Israeli and Palestinian negotiators plan to begin detailed negotiations of the final-status issues next week. "We are going into a very crucial stage in our relationship, a very important stage," chief Israeli negotiator Oded Eran said of next Monday's talks.

### Jordan expels Hamas leaders

Jordan expelled four jailed Hamas leaders and is freeing another 20 activists from jail. The Jordanian government said the leaders left the country for Qatar, in a deal brokered by the Persian Gulf emirate.

Jordan said it is cracking down on Hamas, an active opponent of the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, because the group could endanger state security. Hamas accused Jordan of acting on behalf of Israel.

### Churches close in Israel

Churches closed throughout Israel on Monday to protest plans to build a mosque near a Christian holy site in Nazareth. By closing the churches for two days, the protesters hope to draw attention to what they say are growing threats to their shrines.

On Tuesday, Arabs plan to lay a cornerstone for the mosque in a plot of land neighboring the Basilica of the Annunciation.

chairman, told the first meeting of the 123-member Board of Trustees that "this is not simply a merger. This is a new institution."

Joel Tauber of Detroit, the chairman of the executive committee, counseled patience. Noting that 1,000 board and committee appointments have already been made, he said at a news conference that the definition of ownership "was left aside because it is so controversial." Bronfman said that even though questions remain, the high attendance level at the UJC's kickoff event was "an indication of the tremendous groundswell of interest and the desire to be part of it."

High points of the G.A., as the gathering is known, included appearances by Vice President Al Gore, who decided to speak only days before the G.A., and Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, who delivered his address to the closing plenary by video after his plane was damaged while refueling in England en route to Atlanta.

During the G.A., the UJC's 25-member Executive Committee, the Board of Trustees and the 550-member Delegate Assembly convened for the first time. Appointments to the pillar committees, which will begin to meet in the coming weeks, were announced as well.

A separate committee responsible for assessing overseas needs and the distribution of funds raised to support them, known by the acronym ONAD, also met in Atlanta to hear presentations from the system's two main overseas partners, the Jewish Agency for Israel and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

The only fireworks to flare publicly at the G.A. crackled as the Delegate Assembly began to vote on a slate of resolutions that covered issues such as long-term care for the elderly, domestic violence, security at Jewish institutions, the status of Jews in the former Soviet Union and the Middle East peace process.

Objecting to resolutions that he said "call for the enlargement of the federal government in our lives," John Uhlmann, the immediate past president of the Jewish Federation of Kansas City, requested that resolutions include a minority opinion to "give a voice to those in the Jewish community" who do not espouse liberal politics.

His request was denied, the chairman of the Resolution Committee said, because the positions were unanimously believed to be non-partisan and necessary.

A minority opinion, the chairman, Michael Newmark of St. Louis, said, "would only dilute" their impact.

In an interview with JTA, Uhlmann questioned the need to "speak as one on issues that are not central to rescue and relief."

Another potentially explosive issue did not ignite, as the UJC Executive Committee and Board of Trustees agreed to postpone the confirmation of David Altshuler as president of a new UJC foundation, being created to foster independent philanthropy to enhance the UJC's mission.

Members who had set the preliminary plans for the UJC's pillar on Financial Resource Development had called for the creation of the foundation in a report approved by the UJC's transitional cabinet this summer.

But some believe that the foundation's structure was altered, changing it from a semiautonomous arm of the UJC to an independent organization in an effort to attract Altshuler to lead the endeavor.

To resolve the situation, Robert Goldberg, president of the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland, will head a committee charged with outlining, over the next two weeks, a mutually agreeable governance structure for the foundation.

For his part, Altshuler, who is scheduled to take office Jan. 1, declined to discuss the matter except to say, "It will be over before it begins."

Instead, he suggested, "let's talk about the work that the trust will do."

During a separate news conference, Altshuler, who is the founding director of New York's Museum of Jewish Heritage: A Living Memorial to the Holocaust, summed up the feeling of anxious anticipation at the G.A., comparing the event to a brit milah, or Jewish ritual circumcision.

Everyone attending a brit, he said, is a little nervous and uncertain not only about the impending procedure, but about the child's future.

"The only thing that gives you confidence is the lineage" of the child, he said.

Likewise, the UJC is heir to the "most important philanthropic life force on earth," he said, adding that that should "tell you something about the future." □



## Daily News Bulletin

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JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at [www.jta.org](http://www.jta.org).  
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## JEWISH WORLD

### Jewish groups slam Congress, Clinton for linking abortion issue with U.N. dues

By Michael Shapiro

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Jewish groups that back abortion rights are criticizing congressional Republicans who tied restrictive abortion language to the payment of U.N. dues — and chiding President Clinton for agreeing to the deal.

While the groups said they want the United States to pay nearly \$1 billion in back dues so it can avoid losing its vote in the U.N.'s General Assembly, they argued that it should not come at the expense of family planning programs.

"The president has capitulated to a small minority of conservative lawmakers who for three years have held hostage this country's global leadership and women's health worldwide," said Bonnie Lipton, the national president of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America.

Jan Schneiderman, national president of the National Council of Jewish Women, described the efforts of Rep. Christopher Smith (R-N.J.) to attach the restrictive language to the repayment of the U.N. dues as "political blackmail" and said her group is "deeply disappointed that the administration allowed a small group of representatives to hijack U.N. funding in the name of their radical policy objectives."

Under the deal reached Nov. 14 between Congress and the White House, Congress will approve nearly \$1 billion in back dues to the United Nations, and Clinton will accept language barring family planning groups that receive U.S. aid from using their own money to perform abortions or advocate abortion rights. While Clinton is accepting the language of the restrictions, he is expected to invoke a waiver that will nullify them.

If he does this, the administration will face a \$12 million penalty to be cut from the \$385 million budgeted for international family planning. While the waiver will block the restrictions, the agreement marks the first time the provision was written into law.

In 1984, President Reagan issued an executive order barring international family planning groups from receiving grants if they advocated for abortion rights. In 1993, Clinton reversed that directive, and some Republicans, led by Smith, have sought to write Reagan's order into law. Since the language is an annual appropriations bill, it will expire Sept. 31, the end of the current fiscal year.

The American Jewish Congress said it will work to make sure the language is not included in another piece of legislation next year.

"It is unconscionable that our government was put in such an untenable and offensive position in the first place," the group said in a statement. "And it would be a travesty if this agreement becomes permanent. We intend to do what we can to ensure that this agreement has no more than a 10-month longevity."

Former Sen. Bill Bradley, who is running against Vice President Al Gore for the Democratic Party's presidential nomination, criticized the deal. Gore said that while he does not like the restrictions, he understands Clinton's decision. □

### Chechen kidnappers release Jewish teen

MOSCOW (JTA) — Chechen kidnappers have released a Jewish teen-ager whom they had held captive since May.

Maj. Vyacheslav Izmailov, who has been working to free people held by Chechens, is believed to have played a leading role in last week's freeing of Vladimir Fayil, 15, and three Russian soldiers.

More than 1,000 people are currently held by Chechen gangsters looking for ransom. Jews, especially Israeli citizens, are the most desirable prey because it's widely believed that Israel, or the international Jewish community, will pay high ransoms for them.

Earlier this year, Fayil enrolled in the Na'aleh program, run by the Jewish Agency for Israel for youngsters who want to graduate from high school in Israel. But instead of leaving this summer for Israel, he was abducted May 12 in the city of Makhachkala in the Caucasus Mountains. After being kept for 26 days in the region of Dagestan, he was taken across the border to Chechnya and held in the basement of a house. □

### Tearful reunion in Ottawa

A 101-year-old great-grandfather living in Ottawa was reunited with his sister after a separation of more than 80 years.

Benjamin Feinstein and Sara Pyatigorsky hugged and wept when they were brought together recently in his small apartment in the Canadian capital. It was the first time they had seen each other since he left Russia in 1919. Although he had wanted to go to Palestine, Feinstein emigrated to Winnipeg and raised a family of four. Pyatigorsky spent most of her life in Ukraine and came to Cincinnati as a refugee in 1994.

### Lufthansa to take part in fund

Germany's national airline announced it will take part in a compensation fund for Holocaust-era slave workers.

The Lufthansa announcement, which did not include a dollar amount, was reportedly made by representatives of the firm in Israel. The announcement came as German President Johannes Rau urged more German firms to participate in the fund.

### Dalai Lama addresses forum

The Dalai Lama addressed an interfaith conference in Israel aimed at making religion the source of peace in the next millennium.

Rabbis, priests, Muslim clerics and Buddhist monks were among those attending the three-day conference that began Sunday at a site near the Sea of Galilee. The meeting is a "testament, especially in Israel and the Middle East, where religion is often seen as exacerbating conflict," said Rabbi David Rosen, director of the Anti-Defamation League in Israel and chairman of the conference.

### Spielberg unveils digital library

Director Steven Spielberg unveiled his Shoah Foundation's digital library of Holocaust survivors' testimony. The library will be open to the public next April at the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center. The library includes videotaped testimony from more than 50,000 Holocaust survivors in 32 languages.

### Report planned on Swiss policy

A group of historians investigating Switzerland's role during World War II said it will publish its report on the country's wartime refugee policy next month.

The Independent Commission of Experts, headed by Swiss historian Jean-Francois Bergier, has been working on the report since May 1998. According to earlier estimates, Switzerland expelled more than 30,000 Jews during the war, most of whom died. At the same time, the country provided haven to some 25,000 Jewish refugees who survived the war together with Switzerland's 20,000 Jewish citizens.

## Amazon pulls Hitler title from virtual stores in Germany

By Douglas Davis

LONDON (JTA) — The Simon Wiesenthal Center is applauding Amazon.com's decision to stop shipping copies of "Mein Kampf" to Germany.

Even though Adolf Hitler's book is banned in Germany, it was still one of the most sought-after titles for German readers over the Internet.

According to a report by Internet bookseller Amazon.com at last month's Frankfurt Book Fair, the popularity of "Mein Kampf" among German customers was second only to Elizabeth George's detective novel, "In Pursuit of the Proper Sinner."

Amazon's competitor, barnesandnoble.com, in which the German publishing giant Bertelsmann has a 40 percent stake, said its sales put the book in fourth place. Bertelsmann has asked barnesandnoble.com to stop delivering the book to customers in Germany.

"This is a significant victory for the ongoing efforts of German authorities to continue their struggle against any resurgence of Nazism," said Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center. "We are also relieved by Amazon.com's CEO, Jeff Bezos' commitment to the Wiesenthal Center to review marketing policies that, in effect, promoted the sale of hate literature."

The book is still available, however, on the Amazon.com Web site, along with the company's usual array of marketing materials — customer reviews of the book, a list of other books purchased by customers who bought "Mein Kampf" and related suggestions from the company's auction site such as Hitler stamps.

Before the protest from the Simon Wiesenthal Center, Amazon.com had delivered only the English version of "Mein Kampf" to German customers.

"It is patently clear that it is illegal to sell 'Mein Kampf' in the German language in Germany. The law is less clear on the English-language edition." But because "it is uncertain enough, we thought it prudent not to sell it in Germany," said Amazon spokesman Bill Curry. "We do want to comply with the laws of a democratically governed nation."

While it is not illegal for Germans to own copies of "Mein Kampf" — written in 1924 while Hitler was in jail for his abortive beer-hall putsch — its sale in Germany is banned under a law that prohibits the dissemination of Nazi propaganda.

Annotated copies are available for academic purposes, but it is difficult for ordinary Germans to obtain a copy.

The question posed by the high sales figures on Amazon is whether the demand over the Internet is from neo-Nazis or from other readers with curiosity in the subject.

German politicians are worried, and the Bavarian Justice Ministry has announced that it will take legal steps to halt the sale of Hitler's works by U.S.-based Internet companies.

"It's disgusting," said German Justice Minister Herta and Paul Amirian. "We don't want that stuff, and those companies are breaking German law."

In fact, however, there is little that the Justice Ministry can do about online bookstores outside the country.

Meanwhile, online companies are defending themselves on the

grounds that they are upholding freedom of speech. "The decision as to what one chooses to read should be left to the individual. We are not censors," said a spokesperson for Amazon.com.

Among commentators in Germany, the debate has assumed a different dimension: Is the ban doing more harm than good?

Writing in the liberal Berlin daily *Der Tagespiegel*, Hans Monath declared that the book's "myth-like status will not be dispelled by banning it and making it taboo, but by letting it be freely available, accompanied by explanatory notes."

The German authorities are apparently unconvinced, and seem determined to maintain the ban, at least until the copyright expires in 2015. The sole exception is for requests that come via Israel.

One unintended consequence of this exception is that Palestinian booksellers in the West Bank town of Ramallah report that *Mein Kampf* is rated sixth on their best-seller lists.

The book is freely available in Britain and the United States because the publishing house that was originally responsible for "Mein Kampf" sold them the license in the 1930s, but this still raises awkward questions about what to do about the profits. □

*(The Jewish Transcript in Seattle contributed to this report.)*

## Report: Russian aristocrat penned anti-Semitic book

By Douglas Davis

LONDON (JTA) — A Russian propagandist who served both Czar Nicholas II and the Bolsheviks has been identified as the author of a notorious forgery that has inspired generations of anti-Semites.

According to leading Russian historian Mikhail Lepekhine, the true author of "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion" was Mathieu Golovinski, a member of an aristocratic Russian family who embarked on a life of espionage and propaganda for the czarist secret service before switching sides and joining the Bolsheviks.

Lepekhine's findings are based on research in recently opened archives and published in the current issue of the French news weekly *L'Express*.

The work purports to reveal a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy to overthrow the established order by fomenting wars, revolutions and capitalism in order to pave the way for world Jewish domination.

The book created controversy in Hungary, where three editions of it have been printed. Police recently confiscated copies of the books in three towns.

Golovinski briefly studied law before being inducted into the Holy Brotherhood, a secret, anti-Semitic society that routinely published forged newspapers and tracts in its battle against the revolutionary elements in Russian society.

After being publicly denounced by the writer Maxim Gorky as a czarist informer, Golovinski emigrated to Paris, where the head of the Russian secret police, Pierre Ratchkovski, employed him to write pro-Russian stories for the French press.

Dismayed by the modernization that was occurring in the court of Nicholas II, reactionary forces decided to use a forgery to demonstrate to the czar that the rising tide of capitalism in Russia was a Jewish conspiracy aimed at overthrowing him and the established order.

Golovinski started work in 1900 or 1901, drawing liberally on an 1864 French pamphlet. □