



# Daily News Bulletin

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84th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Arafat congratulates Sharon

Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat sent Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon a letter of congratulations as Sharon took office.

Sharon, Israel's 11th prime minister, reiterated Thursday that he would negotiate with Arafat only when the violence in the region ends.

Meanwhile, Palestinian militia leader Marwan Barghouti said Sharon "will lead the situation to disaster."

### Sharon to meet with Bush

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon will meet with President Bush on March 20 during Sharon's visit to Washington for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee annual policy conference.

"The United States and Israel share important strategic interests and objectives and enjoy a strong, long-standing relationship," said Ari Fleischer, White House press secretary.

### Evangelicals won't get funded

Evangelical Christian groups in the United States that provide social services will not be eligible to receive direct government grants under a new faith-based initiative, said John Dilulio Jr., the director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. [Page 3]

### Israeli soldiers fire on journalists

Israel defended its soldiers' actions in an incident in which warning shots were fired at three journalists working for Reuters near an Israeli military post in the Gaza Strip. "Civilians are not allowed to approach Israel Defense Force outposts because of a present threat of terror activity," said an army spokesman.

The journalists said they had gotten out of their car Thursday to take a picture of an armored car when the shots were fired.

### Boy dies in Purim tragedy

A 2-year-old Chasidic boy was accidentally run over by a school bus and killed soon after the child's mother gave the driver a Purim gift basket.

Wednesday's accident occurred in the predominantly Chasidic neighborhood of Borough Park in Brooklyn. Police said no charges would be filed against the driver, who is also Chasidic.

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

### Programs for Jewish teachers can't keep up with day school boom

By Julie Wiener

NEW YORK (JTA) — Every time the newly formed North American Association of Jewish High Schools convenes, the room is more crowded — and there is word of new schools in the works.

But given the shortage of qualified personnel, school leaders greet their new compatriots with some ambivalence, said Simcha Pearl, head of the four-year-old New Atlanta Jewish Community High School.

They are delighted at the growing popularity of day schools and the opportunity to create joint programs, like semesters in Israel. But they also are wary of the competition for teachers.

"Everyone's thinking, 'All right, but I have to protect what I have,'" Pearl said.

The personnel shortage in North American Jewish education stems from several factors, among them the rapid growth of new day schools, the shortage of institutions training teachers and administrators for Jewish schools, a national dearth of teachers in general and a history of low salaries.

Day schools are particularly hard hit given the sector's rapid growth in recent years. But all areas of Jewish education — congregational schools, nursery schools, summer camps, youth groups and campus Hillels — face serious shortages.

The personnel crisis also affects other areas of Jewish communal life, such as federations, Jewish community centers and the rabbinate.

Personnel is "the No. 1 problem in North America for the Jewish people," said Rabbi David Silber, co-founder of Ha Sha'ar, a new program training Jewish day school teachers. "Nothing's even close to it."

In the past few years, a number of new recruitment and training efforts have emerged from different quarters, including degree programs, professional development sessions that groom people for top positions and pilot projects in which college students receive training while teaching part time. And salaries reportedly are rising.

But most in the field say the efforts are not nearly enough.

Just how bad is the situation? At virtually every Jewish conference in the past year, recruitment seemingly tops the list of people's concerns.

Still, statistics to measure the shortage are hard to come by. That's because positions usually are filled in the end, albeit after lengthy searches, and not with ideal candidates, said Paul Flexner of the Jewish Education Service of North America.

"There's a tendency in education circles that when school opens you frantically hire at the last minute people to teach in all your classrooms," said Flexner, who is overseeing a JESNA task force on the national shortage of education personnel. "Many of these people are less than qualified."

The shortage of educators with backgrounds in Jewish studies comes as there is a shortage of teachers in general in the United States. That has left Jewish day schools struggling to find not just Judaic studies teachers — a perennial problem — but secular studies teachers as well.

With public schools in many cities stepping up their recruitment efforts and legions of teachers expected to retire in the coming decade, the problem likely will worsen.

Rabbi Robert Abramson, director of education for the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism's department of education — which has almost 70 Solomon Schechter day school affiliates — describes the teacher shortage as a "wave crashing down" that's going to "hit everyone." Institutions located outside Jewish hubs have

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Security increased for Purim

Thousands of police, soldiers and volunteers are being deployed throughout Israel to ensure security at secure Purim celebrations. In recent years, the holiday has been a magnet for terrorist attacks.

### Goldstein grave closed for Purim

Israeli police banned commemorations at the grave of Dr. Baruch Goldstein, who massacred 29 Muslim worshippers around Purim in Hebron in 1994.

Police said allowing any events at Goldstein's grave would encourage anti-Arab incitement and violence.

### Petition filed on army deferrals

A grass-roots Israeli movement petitioned the High Court against Knesset passage Wednesday of a measure extending by two years the army draft deferrals for yeshiva students. The group, known as Awakening, backs a universal draft in the Jewish state.

### Israel may help Olympics security

An Israeli official visited Greece to discuss ways to improve security for the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens. Greece's perceived inability to crack down on terrorism has sparked concern over security at the 2004 Summer Games.

### Pets may flock to El Al

Israel's national airline is offering frequent flyer miles for pets. After three round-trip flights within a three-year period, cats, dogs and birds can earn a free flight on El Al.

### Will Mickey Mouse make aliyah?

The Walt Disney Company is considering building a \$15 million amusement park in Israel, according to the Israeli newspaper Globes. Slated for Herzliya, north of Tel Aviv, the park would be Disney's first business venture in the Jewish state.



## Daily News Bulletin

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particular difficulty attracting talent. "For us in Atlanta, the challenge is to not have the metro New Yorks and L.A.'s and Bostons be the black holes into which are sucked all the great talent," Pearl said.

Day high schools, especially the new Conservative and community ones, have particular trouble finding qualified Judaic studies teachers.

Day elementary schools long have relied on secular Israeli expatriates to teach Hebrew and Judaic studies, said Bruce Powell, head of a new day high school planned for Los Angeles and a consultant to day schools around the country.

High school, however, is another story.

"In high school it gets more complex in terms of Jewish philosophy and theology," Powell said, adding that teen-agers need teachers who are experts on the subject matter and who are religious role models.

"Now you can't just have someone who had a little Bible in school in Israel," he said.

Modern Orthodox high schools have a somewhat different challenge. They have existed for several generations, but most graduates pursue careers more lucrative than education. Thus the schools often hire educators trained in fervently Orthodox institutions, which means the schools end up imparting a more haredi approach to Judaism than parents or lay leaders seek for their children.

The shortage is sparking numerous projects. Among them:

- The United Jewish Communities, the umbrella for Jewish federations, plans to hire a human resource director to launch a national project focusing on recruitment. JESNA, the group's education arm, is facilitating a pilot project in which college students teach part time in local congregational schools while receiving training and mentoring for Jewish education careers.

- Several organizations, including the UJC and JESNA, are teaming up to launch a Web site, JewishJobFinder.com, to serve as a clearinghouse for Jewish jobs.

- Pardes, a Jerusalem yeshiva known for attracting liberal North American college graduates for intensive Jewish text study, began offering alumni this year a master's program jointly with the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

Fourteen students — who receive tuition subsidies and \$12,000-a-year stipends — have enrolled so far, committing to teach at least three years in North American day schools. The program includes a three-week student teaching and mentoring placement in North American day schools.

Even with fellowships, however, it is unclear how many people will take advantage of the new programs unless salaries and status improve.

Silber, whose New York program has trained 19 day school teachers since it began three years ago, said he has difficulty recruiting for the year-long program, which requires a two-year teaching commitment. That's despite free tuition and \$18,000 annual stipends.

People think of Jewish education as "a non-profession, and don't see the opportunities that exist," Silber said.

Cheryl Finkel, head of the Epstein School, a Conservative day school in Atlanta said, "The way I like to put it is, if you're a young woman and dating a Jewish classroom teacher and your mother says that's great, then the problem will be solved."

Finkel, who is leaving her current post to work as a national consultant for day schools, said philanthropic dollars are needed so that day schools can increase salaries without having to raise tuition.

A recent survey by the New York-based Covenant Foundation found that beginning, full-time teachers at North American Jewish day schools can expect to earn, on average, \$21,000 to \$24,000, with "modest" health benefits. Teachers with master's degrees average \$24,000 to \$31,000.

In contrast, U.S. public school starting salaries average \$27,000, with more extensive health benefits.

Already, according to Powell, low salaries are starting to become "old news." Some veteran teachers earn up to \$90,000, he said, while headmaster positions in new day schools are running from \$150,000 to \$220,000.

A growing number of day schools, Powell said, are recruiting rabbis for administrative and teaching posts, luring them from the pulpit with the perk of having Shabbat and Jewish holidays free to spend with their families. □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Bush meets with Jewish leaders, but some feel left out in the cold

By Sharon Samber

#### Israelis may be grilled on Rich

A U.S. House of Representatives committee investigating former President Clinton's pardon of fugitive commodities trader Marc Rich may request written testimony from Israeli officials who lobbied for his release, the Jerusalem Post reported.

The paper noted that senior aides to Clinton had testified that an appeal from outgoing Prime Minister Ehud Barak strongly influenced the president's decision to pardon Rich.

#### Anti-Semitic magazine debuts

An editorial in the first issue of a new extremist magazine in Russia accuses "Judeo-Bolsheviks" of having killed millions of ethnic Russians.

The inaugural issue of *The Admiralty*, published last week in St. Petersburg, is prefaced with a greeting by a regional representative of Russian President Vladimir Putin.

#### C. European Jews ante up

Jewish communities in four former Communist states established a scholarship for students in Jewish studies at the Central European University in Budapest.

The \$2,000 scholarship, contributed by Jewish communities in the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary and Poland, is seen as a step forward in cooperation among these communities.

The money is being disbursed along with a similar grant from the American Jewish Committee.

#### 92nd St. Y goes live to JCCs

The umbrella organization for Jewish community centers in North America expects 20,000 people throughout North America to participate in the debut of a computer-broadcasted lecture series this month.

Panel discussions from Manhattan's 92nd St. Y will be broadcast live by the Jewish Community Centers Association to audiences in 30 JCCs.

#### Reform Jews back Clinton

President Clinton is the best U.S. president in the last 65 years, according to a poll of readers of *Reform Judaism* magazine taken before the Marc Rich scandal.

On a scale of 1 to 5, Clinton received a 4.1, followed by Roosevelt, at 3.7, and Truman, Kennedy and Carter at 3.6. George Bush, the father of the current president, ranked lowest, with a 2.1.

#### Jackson's tardiness hurts psychic

Israeli psychic Uri Geller renewed his wedding vows in a Jewish ceremony conducted by Rabbi Shmuley Boteach nearly 30 years after he was first married in a civil ceremony. The ceremony at his home in England was delayed for two hours because the best man, pop singer Michael Jackson, was late.

WASHINGTON (JTA) — More than a dozen Jewish leaders got a foot in the White House door this week — but others were left wondering why they weren't invited.

Wednesday's meeting, President Bush's first at the White House with the Jewish community since taking office, was intended to focus on domestic issues. But Bush also raised foreign policy issues and took the opportunity to pledge support for Israel, according to Malcolm Hoenlein, the executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

Bush also discussed the need to isolate Iraqi ruler Saddam Hussein and build an international coalition to address the situation in Iran, Hoenlein said.

The president also said he wants to develop an alliance of moderate Arab nations to promote stability in the Middle East, said Stephen Solender, the president and CEO of the United Jewish Communities.

Among the other Jewish groups were represented at the meeting, including the American Jewish Committee, B'nai B'rith, the Republican Jewish Coalition, the Orthodox Union, the American Jewish Congress, Agudath Israel of America, Hadassah: the Women's Zionist Organization of America and the Anti-Defamation League.

Also in attendance was Adam Goldman, the White House's liaison to the Jewish community.

The White House, which would not discuss any details of the meeting, said the meeting was part of the president's ongoing discussions with "people of faith."

As expected, the administration's faith-based initiative was discussed. Bush acknowledged the concerns of some groups, participants said.

Many Jewish groups fear that the president's plan to fund religious groups that provide social services chips away at the constitutional separation between church and state, allows for employment discrimination based on religion and infringes on religious liberties.

Solender said Bush termed his faith-based plan a "work in progress" and said he wanted to work with the Jewish community on the matter.

As the meeting was taking place in Washington, the director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives gave a speech in Dallas in which he addressed one of the Jewish community's concerns about the faith-based program: which religious groups will receive the federal government's money.

John DiIulio Jr. told the National Association of Evangelicals that social service programs run by evangelical groups would not be eligible to receive direct government grants.

But individuals could receive money in the form of vouchers to participate in programs run by evangelical groups, so long as participants were free to choose between programs and provided that secular alternatives were available.

At the meeting with Bush, some groups took the opportunity to raise issues of particular concern to them.

Harvey Blitz, the president of the Orthodox Union, discussed the Workplace Religious Freedom Act, which would require employers to accommodate needs of religious employees, such as scheduling changes for those employees who want to observe religious holidays or allowing Muslim women to wear religious head scarves.

The UJC's Solender asked that as the administration works on the death and estate tax changes it be mindful to continue to provide tax incentives so that wealthy philanthropists will continue to give to charities such as the UJC.

Several Jewish groups appeared to be miffed that they were not invited to the meeting.

Sammie Moshenberg, the director of the National Council of Jewish Women's Washington office, said she was "disappointed" not to be included in the meeting.

"We would have hoped the White House would reach out to the entire Jewish community," she said.

Added Mark Pelavin, the associate director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism: "This meeting seems to be the first step, but we're hopeful it's not the last step," Pelavin added. □

FOCUS ON ISSUES**As Jewish groups feud, restitution for lost Polish property in jeopardy**

By Ruth E. Gruber

BUDAPEST (JTA) — Thousands of properties that belonged to Poland's Jewish community before World War II may not be returned — not because of problems with the Polish government, but because of conflict among Jews.

Poland's 1997 restitution law set a five-year deadline for submitting all claims to communal religious property confiscated by the Nazis and nationalized by the postwar Communist regime.

But an agreement between the World Jewish Restitution Organization and the Polish Jewish community to cooperate on the recovery and management of Jewish communal property has apparently fallen through — 14 months before that deadline.

The current developments mark the latest episode in the acrimonious and highly emotional conflict between world Jewry and the Polish Jewish community that has held up the restitution process in Poland for years.

The agreement, signed last June after years of wrangling, mainly dealt with property in places where no Jews live today.

It mandated the establishment of a joint foundation to research and submit claims, defend claims before state and local officials, own and manage reclaimed property or compensation and use any proceeds for the needs of Polish Jewry, both in Poland and abroad.

There is no firm estimate of the value of property involved, but it could amount to hundreds of millions of dollars.

Under the agreement, reclaimed property in 19 of 49 Polish counties would be retained and used by the local Jewish community. In the remaining 30 counties, reclaimed properties or compensation would be transferred to the new foundation.

Nine months later, however, the foundation has not yet started operations or been registered with the Polish state.

And the WJRO, demanding a greater oversight role and greater accountability, has held back a promised \$800,000 loan to Polish Jewry that was pledged three years ago to cover legal and other necessary expenses for filing claims.

Jews in Poland accuse the WJRO of renegeing on the agreement. Independent observers who have monitored the restitution process also blame the WJRO for blocking progress since last June.

"They have just put up obstacles," said one outside observer who has followed the restitution process. For example, he said, the WJRO did not formally ratify the June agreement until September.

"The Polish Jewish community says that it just can't wait anymore," the source said. "I see no such urgency from the other side."

Jewish leaders in Poland, citing a "moral obligation to their ancestors and to the martyrs of the Shoah," announced last month that they will go it alone — with or without a foundation and with or without WJRO cooperation or financial support — in order to end a "dangerous stalemate."

"We can't waste any more time on quarreling," Jerzy Kichler, president of the Union of Jewish Religious Congregations in Poland, told JTA. "We have a responsibility to ourselves, to our history and to world Jewry. We'll have to hire more than 100 researchers and other people to do the job. We'll take out bank loans or find the money somewhere else."

Kichler said the Polish Jewish community has good relations with other international Jewish organizations such as the Ronald S.

Lauder Foundation and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, and hopes to receive their aid and advice.

"We are ready to cooperate with all who want to be part of the restitution process, but not hijack it," another Polish Jewish leader said.

World Jewish Congress Vice President Kalman Sultanik, one of the signers of last June's agreement on behalf of the WJRO, rejected the suggestion that the WJRO is to blame for the current standoff. He said the WJRO is ready to release the funding once it is convinced that it would be spent properly.

In a telephone interview with JTA, Sultanik said the Polish Jewish community was taking an "extremist position" to find an excuse to break cooperation and go ahead with restitution efforts on its own, presumably to gain primary control of the proceeds.

"We will never accept this," he said.

Amid the acrimony, an enormous job is looming.

Estimates of the number of Jewish properties believed eligible for restitution amount to more than 4,000, but fewer than 600 claims have been submitted so far.

To meet the deadline, at least 10 claims a day would have to be submitted in a costly and exacting process that entails searching archives and filing a variety of legal documents.

"I am very disappointed that the two sides were not able to implement the agreement that was signed and ratified last summer," Henry Clarke, a U.S. State Department representative who mediated last year's agreement, told JTA. "There are too many properties, and there is a real risk that they won't be claimed."

Founded in 1992 by a number of international Jewish organizations and survivors groups, the WJRO was intended to be a central body coordinating efforts to recover Jewish communal and organizational assets seized by Nazi and Communist governments.

But Poland's 1997 law recognized the local Jewish community as the only legal claimant to prewar communal properties.

This outraged the WJRO and other world Jewish bodies, which demanded a dominant role in the process.

They insisted that today's Jewish community in Poland — with only 5,000 or so registered members — could not truly represent the more than 3 million Polish Jews killed in the Holocaust or the thousands of Polish Jewish survivors living abroad.

"Those few thousand Jews who live in Poland are not the inheritors of 1,000 years of Polish Jewish history, of the Jewish hospitals, yeshivas, schools, synagogues," said Sultanik, who also is president of the American Federation of Polish Jews.

Feuds over how to cooperate in reclaiming and managing property stymied the process for two years after the 1997 law was passed. The disputes were so bitter that in September 1999, Clarke was called in to mediate so that restitution could get under way.

Outside observers who followed the process described an occasionally vicious verbal war between the two sides.

"Some of the Israelis in particular demonstrated a contempt for the local Jewish community," one source, speaking on terms of anonymity, said. One Israeli representative was described as "yelling and screaming" during a recent meeting.

Sources close to both sides said the WJRO may ask the Polish government to extend the May 2002 deadline.

The sources also raised the concern that if cooperation between the WJRO and the Union of Religious Congregations is definitively broken, dissident members of the Polish Jewish community — who also are in conflict with communal leaders — may step forward and attempt to present themselves as partners in the restitution process. □