



# Daily News Bulletin

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85th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### 7 Palestinians killed in West Bank

Israeli troops killed seven Palestinians in separate incidents Thursday in the West Bank. Five were armed Palestinians killed during exchanges of gunfire with soldiers. Two were described as innocent bystanders.

In one of the incidents, near Jenin, troops killed an Islamic Jihad leader who opened fire when the soldiers came to arrest him. Four soldiers were wounded, one of them seriously, in the exchange of fire. The army later demolished the terrorist's home.

### Gaza infiltration foiled

The bodies of two armed Palestinians were found Thursday morning near a Gaza settlement.

The night before, Israeli troops had spotted suspicious figures near the settlement of Netzarim and opened fire. The Palestinians were armed with rifles and hand grenades.

### Hamas, Fatah fail to agree

Officials from Hamas and Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement concluded meetings in Cairo without any agreement regarding suicide attacks against Israeli civilians.

A Hamas representative, Osama Hamdan, left Cairo on Thursday, telling The Associated Press that meetings with Fatah would continue, but the two sides still differ on the "management of the conflict with Israel." Fatah, along with Egypt, a mediator in the Israeli-Palestinian dispute, are pressing Hamas to call a temporary halt to the attacks.

### U.S. seeks to deport N.Y. man

The U.S. Justice Department is seeking to deport a New York man for concealing his Nazi past.

The department's Nazi-hunting Office of Special Investigations filed a complaint in a Brooklyn federal court Thursday alleging that Jaroslaw Bilaniuk, 79, from the borough of Queens, persecuted Jews while serving as an armed guard at a slave-labor camp in Nazi-occupied Poland.

The prosecution maintains that Bilaniuk concealed his Nazi past in order to gain entry to the United States after World War II.

Including the Bilaniuk case, OSI has started 10 such prosecutions during 2002, a new record, according to OSI Director Eli Rosenbaum.

## ISRAEL'S ARAB MINORITY

### Move against Arab party could spark crisis in Jewish-Arab ties

By Gil Sedan

NAZARETH (JTA) — Nearly two years ago, in Israel's last elections, members of Azmi Beshara's Balad Party spearheaded the public campaign among Israel's Arab citizens to boycott the elections.

Now Balad has taken a U-turn: It is launching an international campaign against Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein's demand to ban the party from running in the upcoming general elections.

Rubinstein's request to the Central Election Committee to disqualify Balad relies on a recent amendment to the Basic Law: The Knesset banning parties that negate "Israel's existence as a Jewish state and express support for the armed struggle against Israel."

At stake not is only the status of one Arab party: The attempt could impact the already-fragile relations between the Jewish state and its Arab citizens.

The Central Election Committee will have to define the thin line between the political rights of the Arab population and the possible challenge to the very existence of the state. In other words, it will have to decide how Arab an Arab party can be.

Rubinstein came to the election committee with a thick portfolio of documents — many of them from the Shin Bet security Service's secret archives — designed to prove that "Balad is putting on a mask."

In other words, the party, which claims to be a legitimate political organ of Israel's Arabs, actually is a tool in the effort to destroy Israel as a Jewish state, Rubinstein claims.

The main points Rubinstein raised:

- On June 2001, at a rally in Damascus, Beshara called for "a united Arab stand to expand the resistance against Israel."

- In September 2000, even before the outbreak of the Palestinian intifada, Beshara met with Hamas representatives in Hebron and told them that as a member of the Knesset he was a tool in the Arab struggle against Israel. He allegedly told them that he had urged Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat to form a united Palestinian front and unilaterally declare a Palestinian state, a move that Israel's Arab citizens would endorse.

- Balad has a "hidden agenda" that calls for the creation of a secular state in place of the Jewish state. The boundaries of the new state would lie "from the Jordan River to the" Mediterranean Sea. Only a minority of Israeli Jews — those who lived in Palestine before 1948, and their descendants — would be allowed to live there.

Beshara has denounced the charges against him as "a lie and a libel." He asked why the attorney general is using the Shin Bet to try to disqualify a political party, and launched an e-mail campaign directed at human rights organizations, members of parliaments and other public figures throughout the world, protesting the attempt to "deprive Israel's Arabs of their political rights" and "enforce Zionist ideology."

Beshara, 46, undoubtedly is the No. 1 ideologue in the Israeli Arab political arena. Despite his limited political power, his call for "a state of all its citizens" — which would strip Israel of its Jewish nature — has had a tremendous impact on the political thinking of Israel's Arab population, and has been adopted by the other major Israeli Arab parties.

Although his faction holds just one seat in the Knesset, Beshara has worked hard

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Sharon: Iraqi weapons in Syria

Iraq may be hiding chemical and biological weapons in Syria, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said. Sharon said in a TV interview Tuesday that Israel was trying to verify information that Iraq was transferring chemical and biological weapons to Syria in order to hide them from U.N. weapons inspectors.

According to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz, weapons transferred from Iraq to Syria in recent weeks were apparently earmarked for Hezbollah forces in Lebanon, to be used against Israel in the event of a U.S. offensive against Iraq.

### Buffer zones around settlements

Israel began setting up buffer zones around Jewish settlements in the West Bank to keep out Palestinian terrorists. Ra'anana Gissin, an adviser to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, said Thursday that the fenced-in zones will have beefed up patrols and special observation towers.

### Israeli defense minister can't run

Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz cannot run in the upcoming Knesset elections, the head of the Central Election Committee ruled. Justice Mishael Chesin determined that the required six month "cooling-off" period had not passed since the former army chief of staff was officially discharged from the military in mid-August.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon responded to the decision by saying that, even if Mofaz is not in the Knesset, he would again name Mofaz defense minister if he wins the elections.

### Israel won't vaccinate citizens

Israel's Health Ministry decided not to vaccinate the public against smallpox. Ministry officials said they reached the decision because they believe there is no strong threat of an Iraqi biological attack.

to establish himself as the prime alternative to the growing influence of the Islamic Movement in Israeli Arab politics.

Recent polls show that he is still far from reaching that goal, because Beshara may be more radical than his voters.

A survey conducted by Sammy Smootha and As'ad Ghanem of Haifa University projected that the Communist Hadash party — which recently formed an alliance with legislator Dr. Ahmed Tibi — would become the strongest Arab party in the next elections, with four seats.

The United Arab List, which is strongly influenced by the Islamic Movement, would shrink from five seats to three, and Balad would win two Knesset seats, according to the polls.

The survey also showed that Israeli Arabs would not boycott the Jan. 28 elections, as they did in February 2001. Some 71 percent plan to vote, and a quarter of those would vote for Jewish parties.

The survey also found a reversal of the trend of "Palestinization" among Israeli Arabs.

Nearly 45 percent identified themselves not as Palestinians but primarily as Israeli Arabs, reversing a trend that had seen Arabs' self-identification as Israelis drop from 54 percent in 1995 to 34 percent in early 2001.

The researchers said the change was due primarily to disappointment with the results of the Palestinian intifada against Israel.

Smootha and As'ad conclude that banning Balad will not create a "political earthquake" among Arab voters. Based on their survey — which was held prior to the attorney general's request — they said that Balad supporters would boycott the elections, but supporters of other Arab parties would not.

Some analysts, however, argue that banning Balad would have repercussions beyond the Arab electorate. Writing in the Ma'ariv newspaper, commentator Yehuda Litani said Rubinstein's appeal might already have produced an additional Knesset seat for Balad.

If Balad is disqualified and its voters boycott the elections, Litani said, the chances that the Labor Party could prevent the Likud Party from forming the next government would become even slimmer.

Prior to his move against Balad, Rubinstein asked the Central Election Committee to ban the candidacy of Baruch Marzel, an activist from the far-right Herut Party, for allegedly promoting racist views. Some critics see the move as an attempt to balance Rubinstein's push against Balad.

Shawki Khatib, head of the Supreme Monitoring Committee of Israeli Arabs — an organization of Arab mayors, legislators and other public figures — came out in defense of Balad's right to run in the elections.

Khatib, himself a member of Hadash, argued that no democratic state can ignore Beshara's message that the state belongs to "all its citizens."

The Central Election Committee will begin reviewing a number of appeals to disqualify parties next week. Petitions to do so also have been filed against Hadash and Herut.

If the committee bans any of the parties, they can appeal to the High Court of Justice. The process should be completed by Jan. 6, more than three weeks before the elections.

The Central Election Committee is chaired by Supreme Court Justice Michael Heshin, and includes representatives of the various parties.

Though the votes to ban the parties may be there, the committee is unlikely to rush to take drastic measures. □

## Report: Palestinians trained in Iran

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Hundreds of Palestinians wounded in clashes with Israeli soldiers reportedly received medical treatment in Iran, where they were recruited by Iranian intelligence services.

The Palestinians received military training in Iran, and were sent back to the West Bank and Gaza Strip with orders to carry out terror attacks against Israel, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz, which cited Israeli security officials. □



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## JEWISH WORLD

### Legal fund for Concordia Hillel

The Canadian Jewish Congress is setting up a legal defense fund after the Hillel at Montreal's Concordia University filed a lawsuit against the school's student union.

Earlier this month, the Concordia Student Union voted to ban Hillel from the Montreal school and cut off its funding, charging that Hillel distributed material advertising a volunteer program with the Israeli army. Under intense pressure, the student union later conditionally reinstated Hillel, but continues to withhold funding.

Hillel's lawsuit, filed with Quebec Superior Court last week, seeks the unconditional restoration of funding, as well as \$100,000 in damages. Donations to the legal defense fund may be sent to: Canadian Jewish Congress, Hillel Legal Assistance Fund, 1590 Docteur Penfield Ave., Montreal, Quebec, H3G 1C5.

"Our involvement is intended to be a tangible demonstration of national community and organizational support for their actions," CJC National President Keith Landy said.

### Subway may damage shul

Jewish officials in the Russian city of Kazan are trying to save the city's only synagogue from damage. The synagogue is among many buildings in Kazan's historic center that are facing damage from the construction of the city's first subway line.

Local Jewish donors and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee are expected to spend thousands of dollars on geological research and construction work to reinforce the foundation of the 1915 synagogue, one of Russia's largest.

### Solzhenitsyn history published

A controversial book on the history of Russia's Jews by Nobel Prize-winning author Alexander Solzhenitsyn debuted in Moscow bookstores.

The second book of the two-volume study, "Two Hundred Years Together: 1795-1995," explores the history of Jews in Russia from 1916 to 1995, with a focus on Jewish participation in the Bolshevik Revolution and Soviet apparatus.

### Minister criticizes Paris school

An Israeli Cabinet minister condemned the Pierre and Marie Curie University in Paris for trying to impose an academic boycott on Israeli universities. Israeli Education Minister Limor Livnat sent letters of protest Wednesday to French officials.

"Even in times of hatred between different countries during the Middle Ages, the scientific and academic world continued to work together to obtain knowledge and carry out joint research in a positive atmosphere," Livnat wrote.

## AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

### Spat over painting sparks debate on free speech for Vancouver Jews

By Lauren Kramer

VANCOUVER, British Columbia (JTA) — The relationship between art and Jewish sensitivities can be a rocky one.

Coming shortly after the Jewish federation in nearby Seattle canceled a speech by actor Leonard Nimoy, whose book of photographs of women wearing Jewish ritual items was considered sacrilegious in some circles, Vancouver artist Jeannie Kamins says she is facing a different kind of censorship.

Kamins' art is being shown at the Jewish Community Center of Greater Vancouver. But she recently had to remove one of her pieces, a portrait of Canadian Parliament member Svend Robinson, after members of the Jewish community told the JCC that they found it offensive.

Kamins' "offense" is that Robinson is a fierce critic of Israeli policy toward the Palestinians.

During an April 2002 visit to the West Bank, Robinson appeared on television confronting Israeli soldiers as he attempted to reach the besieged headquarters of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

Robinson later declared that the Israeli government and military were "guilty of torture and murder."

Kamins said she painted Robinson's portrait in 1992 "as part of a series of portraits of people who I feel have integrity, political commitment and who are controversial."

She added that she included Robinson's portrait in the exhibition not to offend, but because it represented one of her best works.

"It's outrageous that I should be judged by what I put in when it was not a political piece, but a picture of a man sitting on a bench. This is not free speech," Kamins said. "What is important is why it was removed and how decisions of exclusion are determined at the JCC."

Claire Belilos, a member of Vancouver's Jewish community, disagrees.

"When you exhibit somewhere, you have to consider their values and policies, and if you don't like those policies, you go elsewhere," she said.

"I think Kamins showed a total lack of sensitivity by exhibiting that piece, because Svend has proven by his actions and words that he's an enemy of Israel. How would you like it if she painted a portrait of Hitler and showed it there, at the JCC, calling it free expression?"

Rabbi Barry Leff, who leads the Beth Tikvah Congregation & Center in Richmond, British Columbia, agreed with Belilos.

"Freedom of expression must take into account the context of where it is being expressed," he said. "A venue like the JCC has the right to display things that are in accord with their values, and if the JCC felt that having Robinson's painting was not compatible with the organization's values, they're perfectly within their rights to ask Kamins to remove it."

That issue surfaced again last year, when the Jewish Museum in New York was criticized for an art exhibit that critics said trivialized the Holocaust.

Gerry Zipursky, the JCC's executive director, told Vancouver's weekly Jewish newspaper that he would discuss the issue at a future board meeting.

He said Kamins agreed to remove the painting from the exhibit after she was informed that there had been some complaints, particularly from Holocaust survivors.

He added, however that the removal of the piece was not about freedom of expression.

"We are clear about our loyalty and support and relationship with Israel," he said. "That doesn't mean to say that there can't be freedom of expression, but if people try to make issues political in nature, in our view, we try to remain apolitical."

Kamins isn't buying that explanation.

"I think the people who complained about that portrait want to stifle controversy," she said. "They're pig-headed, narrow-minded bigots." □

## ARTS &amp; CULTURE

### 3-D display at Spanish museum sheds light on Jewish 'Golden Age'

By Jerome Socolovsky

TOLEDO, Spain (JTA) — The silhouettes of men in hooded white robes praying in the synagogue looked like ghosts from the past.

They removed a Torah from the ark and carried it around the sanctuary decorated with Islamic-style arches.

A rabbi ascended to the covered pulpit in the center chanting Hebrew hymns.

The phantom figures may not have been real, but their heritage is. They are part of an animated, three-dimensional display at a major government-sponsored exhibit on the life of Jews in medieval Spain. There are more than 300 works of art and relics from Spain and abroad in "Sefarad: Memories of a Lost Land."

It is one of the most comprehensive attempts yet undertaken in this country to recreate the "Golden Age" of medieval Spanish Jewry — or Sefarad, as it is commonly referred to in Spain.

People have been standing in long lines to get a glimpse of the free exhibit at Toledo's San Marco Cultural Center.

According to organizer Ruth Fernandez, more than 40,000 people have already visited the exhibit.

Exhibition curator Isidro Bango said the exhibition was important because "it's our own culture. Sefarad is part of Spanish culture."

Bango, an art professor at the University of Madrid, said the exhibit was designed with non-Jewish Spaniards in mind, and not only because of their widespread ignorance about Spain's history before the expulsion of Jews in 1492.

The bearded, deep-voiced lecturer said Spaniards should get to know "Sefarad" because it is in their blood.

"All of us probably have some Jewish blood in our veins, but our ancestors had to hide it, and this was a tragedy," Bango said.

Despite the universal nature of the exhibit, it is also fascinating for Jews and others more familiar with Jewish history.

Bango found sources in Spanish archives on the type of prayer robes worn by medieval Jews.

That's why the clothing shown in the holographic display is different from what many rabbis wear today, which is based on what Jews wore elsewhere in Europe, he said. "If we had listened to a rabbi, we would have been wrong," Bango said.

At the entrance to the exhibit, the visitor is welcomed with a wall-sized panoramic video telling how Jews are thought to have come to the Iberian Peninsula as far back as 2,000 years ago.

A fictional Jewish immigrant describes his delight at finding a lush land of sun, hills and gleaming shores that reminds him of his historic homeland.

Inside, the exhibit is peppered with artifacts of Jewish life — kiddush cups, wedding contracts, rare manuscripts, a Star of David belt buckle, a brass case for phylacteries and an astrolabe — an astronomical measuring device — with Hebrew lettering.

One highlight is the famed Codex Hilleli, on loan from the Jewish Theological Seminary in New York.

It is thought all other copies of the Hebrew Scriptures created in Spain were once corrected against this codex.

Another treasure is a 500-year-old Torah scroll — flakes of parchment precariously held together at the edges — from the

provincial archive of Huesca in the Pyrenees Mountains.

A visitor who has been to the magnificently — and expensively — reconstructed Halevi synagogue in Toledo's Jewish Quarter might be startled by the model of the synagogue in the exhibit.

In the actual synagogue, the intricate patterns and Hebrew lettering on the walls are all white or light brown, whereas in the model, they burst forth in many colors. Bango said the synagogue's colorful decoration was another example of research for the exhibit revealing new information on medieval Jewish Spain.

As Toledo resident Javier Casado, 28, inspected the synagogue model, the strains of "Shalom Aleichem" could be heard from speakers in the ceiling. "The Jewish community played a very important role in Toledo's history," said Casado, a researcher at the National Archive.

He added that he hoped the exhibit would be reminder "that what happened 500 years ago should never happen again."

Spanish-born Angel Maranon of San Rafael, Calif., toured the exhibit while visiting his native land with his American wife. "This was a very dark period in our history. The more that is exposed, the better," he said.

Maranon said he believes anti-Semitic attitudes still exist in Spain, noting the country's foot-dragging before it finally established diplomatic relations with Israel in the 1980s.

While the exhibit celebrates the flourishing of Jewish cultural and religious life, it also doesn't shy away from the bitter ending — beginning with riots and forced conversions in the century before the expulsion.

The "crucifixion" of the Holy Child of La Guardia — a fabricated story about a Toledo boy killed by Jews and Marranos for morbid ritual purposes — is shown in a painting from the Madrid National Historical Archive. Bango said he wants to challenge this story; he says belief in it is still prevalent among many Spaniards, including senior Roman Catholic clergy.

A painting of a 1656 Auto da Fe, a mass execution of "Judai-zers" and other supposed heretics, leaves the visitor haunted by the enduring power of the Inquisition.

But visitors can also study Queen Cristina de Bourbon's 1834 decree disbanding the tribunal. And at the exit, a map shows where Sephardic Jews fled and built new lives, from Goa, India to Savannah, Ga. and Newport, R.I. □

*"Sefarad: Memories of a Lost Land" runs until January at the Centro Cultural San Marcos. It is expected to travel later to other cities with large Sephardic communities, including New York, Toronto and Amsterdam. More information on the exhibit is available at <http://www.seacex.com>.*

### Stem cells from Israel to Berlin

BERLIN (JTA) — The first human embryonic stem cells destined for a German research lab arrived in Berlin from Israel.

Neurobiologist Oliver Brustle of the Berlin-based Robert Koch Institute plans to conduct tests over the coming months to determine whether the cells can be used to repair nervous system defects, according to Reuters.

The institute said Brustle is the first researcher in Germany granted permission to work with the cells.

In order to avoid creating a situation in which cells are cultured for research purposes, German law only permits the use of stem cells cultured outside of Germany before Jan. 1, 2002. □