



# Daily News Bulletin

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86th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Woman to head JAFI board

Carole Solomon will become the new chair of the Board of Governors of the Jewish Agency for Israel, according to informed sources.

Solomon, the chair of the Campaign/Financial Resource Development Pillar of the United Jewish Communities, emerged as the choice during meetings this week of the Jewish Agency's Board of Governors in Jerusalem.

Solomon was approved unanimously Sunday by the Jewish Agency's nominating committee, which includes representatives of the United Jewish Communities and Keren Hayesod, and on Monday by the World Zionist Organization.

She is expected to be formally approved Tuesday by the entire Board of Governors.

Solomon, who lives in New York, succeeds Alex Grass, the founder of Rite Aid, who served for four years.

She will be the board's first female chair. Solomon beat out Robert Goldberg, chairman of the UJC's executive committee, and Richard Pearlstone, chair of the Jewish Agency's Budget and Finance Committee. Her term would begin in June.

### Shinui joins coalition

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon is expected to present his new government to the Knesset later this week.

The secular-rights Shinui Party signed a coalition agreement with the Likud early Monday, becoming the second party to do so.

Together with Shinui, the National Religious Party and his own Likud Party, Sharon is guaranteed at least a 61-seat majority in the 120-member Knesset. Under the coalition deal with Likud, Shinui will receive five Cabinet ministries, including Justice and Interior Affairs.

### Sharon called leader of 'garbage'

The spiritual leader of Israel's fervently Orthodox Shas Party called Ariel Sharon "the prime minister of garbage cans." Rabbi Ovadia Yosef spoke out after Sharon left Shas out of the government he is forming.

Along with targeting Sharon, Yosef made the comment about "garbage" to blast the secular-rights Shinui Party, which is joining the new government, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz.

## UJC hires former head of Birthright to take control of renaissance pillar

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — The United Jewish Communities' decision to take over its Renaissance and Renewal department signals the latest change at the federation movement's central organization.

The federation system's umbrella offices last week dissolved its management deal with the Jewish Education Service of North America, known as JESNA, which led one of four UJC departments, called pillars, since November 2000.

The UJC named Rabbi Sheldon Zimmerman, who once headed Birthright Israel and Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, to replace Jonathan Woocher.

Woocher headed the Renaissance and Renewal Pillar while also serving as JESNA president.

Jewish renaissance covers a broad range of efforts to boost Jewish identity and involvement, including day schools, adult education, summer camps, college campus activities and synagogue revitalization.

UJC's chief executive officer and president, Stephen Hoffman, said the decision to hire someone devoted exclusively to renaissance and renewal signaled a campaign to get federations more active in renewal efforts.

"I thought it was time to put more share of mind into the role. It was time to get a full-time leader in the role," Hoffman said.

But he insisted the move did not reflect any dissatisfaction with JESNA or Woocher.

Woocher said he had been happy with the partnership.

"We thought it was an effective arrangement and we were pleased to continue to do it, had UJC wanted us to do so," he said.

In the wake of the split, JESNA will be seeking to raise money to fill the gap left in its annual \$4 million budget, Woocher said.

Still, he said, "The financial piece was never a major piece" for JESNA. "It was an opportunity to move forward our agenda and use our expertise to make good things happen in the Jewish community."

UJC's decision to go its own way came amid continued uncertainty about the direction for the organization, which was formed four years ago to give its 156 member federations a stronger voice in how the money they raise for domestic and foreign causes gets spent.

Zimmerman stepped down as president of the Hebrew Union College, the Reform movement's seminary, two years ago after the movement's rabbinical group, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, suspended him from serving in a pulpit for at least two years for alleged sexual improprieties.

It is believed that Zimmerman had an extramarital affair with a congregant at New York's Central Synagogue 17 years ago.

The rabbinical group's executive secretary, Elliot Stevens, said Zimmerman's suspension remains "open-ended."

Zimmerman joined Birthright Israel, the program to provide free trips to Israel for young Jews, in mid-2001 as executive director of its North American office.

He left four months ago, and Birthright hired Simon Klarfeld, who had worked with the Charles and Andrea Bronfman foundation, as interim leader.

Hoffman stood behind Zimmerman.

"I am aware of everything that happened and I was conscious of that before I had any discussions with him," Hoffman said. "There was nothing I learned that deterred me

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Troops end operation

Israeli troops withdrew to the outskirts of the northern Gaza Strip town of Beit Hanoun on Monday, ending a two-day operation against Hamas infrastructure in the area.

Late Sunday night, soldiers destroyed two bridges and two access roads linking Beit Hanoun to Gaza City, Israel Radio reported.

### Israeli jet crashes

An Israeli military jet crashed over northern Israel after the pilot ejected safely.

The pilot was found shortly after the plane went down in northern Israel near the West Bank city of Jenin. The jet went down during a rare snowstorm, but it was not immediately clear if weather was a factor.

### Bush, Sharon may attend shindig

President Bush and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon are expected to attend a May 19 rally in Washington to commemorate Israel's 55th birthday.

The event will feature entertainers and political messages of support for the Jewish state, said leaders of the Israel Forever Foundation, a new organization that has been formed by leading Jewish philanthropists to honor Israel.

### War resister gets hearing

An Israeli conscientious objector is slated to get a hearing before a special army board. Five months after Dror Boymel first was jailed for refusing to serve in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, the army agreed to grant him the hearing.

The hearing was granted after the Association for Civil Rights in Israel appealed to the High Court of Justice, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported. Ten Israelis claiming conscientious objector status are currently in military jails, including Yonatan Ben-Artzi, a nephew of Foreign Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

from my professional regard" for him. For his part, Zimmerman said he intended to develop a "strategic vision" for the pillar that would emphasize a "localized" push for new programs rather than a "top-heavy" approach.

"Jewish renewal is taking place," he said. "The question is whether we can get it onto the agenda of Jewish federations."

Mark Charendoff, president of the Jewish Funders Network, which supports both small and large philanthropies, and a former colleague of Zimmerman's, said Zimmerman's leadership offered one key to bringing "renewed attention and vigor" to the pillar.

But Charendoff said Zimmerman would need an appropriate budget and staff to fulfill his goal.

"What's required are some bold experiments that will capture the imagination of the next generation of young Jews in America," Charendoff said.

For now, Hoffman said he is hoping to "think big and start small" in the pillar, and will likely not significantly change its annual \$790,000 budget in the next fiscal year starting July 1.

Under the JESNA-UJC deal, the pillar included four full-time staffers in addition to Woocher — and several JESNA members on a part-time basis. The UJC awarded JESNA an annual \$650,000 grant for that group, which Hoffman said would remain intact through this fiscal year.

Several people familiar with the renewal pillar, including Woocher, said they felt the joint effort had achieved some success.

Woocher pointed to such programs as:

- the launching of the Continental Council on Jewish Day School Education, which annually gathers a wide range of day school figures;
- the Ezra Initiative, in which federations and synagogues collaborate to deliver intensive adult Jewish education classes in synagogues;
- last fall's "Hadesh: Renewing Jewish Communities" conference at the UJC's General Assembly in Philadelphia, which brought together federation and education officials to discuss initiatives in Jewish identity; and
- Jewish Education Month, a much-publicized joint effort with the Jewish Agency for Israel in January to revive Zionist education nationally.

Despite the split, Woocher said JESNA will continue to pursue its own mission of improving Jewish day school and congregational education and backing better teacher training and recruitment.

But not everyone welcomed the UJC move.

Billie Gold, a past JESNA chair and lay member of the pillar, backed what she called Zimmerman's "terrific" appointment, but remained less happy about the split with JESNA.

Gold said the alliance was intended to be a "model" of how community agencies and federations could cooperate.

"This will probably be good for the UJC as an institution," she added. "Whether it will be better for the community is another issue." □

## Charity ball for Terezin Memorial

PRAGUE (JTA) — A charity ball organized by the Czech Union of Jewish Youth raised thousands of dollars for the Terezin Memorial, which was badly damaged by flooding last summer.

Organizers said last week's event, held in Prague's Hilton Hotel, raised some \$5,500.

They added that the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee had agreed to match the sum.

The Prague Jewish community will donate nearly \$7,000 to the memorial, its chairman, Tomas Jelinek, told JTA.

The 200-year-old fortress town of Terezin was transformed by the Nazis into a camp where Jews from across Europe were held until they could be transported to extermination camps.

Terezin is also known by the German name of Theresienstadt. □



## Daily News Bulletin

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## JEWISH WORLD

### Muslim cleric found guilty

A London-based Muslim cleric accused of supporting Osama bin Laden was found guilty of urging his followers to kill Jews and others. Sheik Abdullah Faisal was convicted of three charges of incitement to murder.

Faisal, who was arrested by British anti-terrorist police last year, will be sentenced next week. The charges are punishable by life imprisonment.

### High court refuses kosher case

The U.S. Supreme Court refused to consider reinstating New York laws that set standards for the labeling of kosher food. The court offered no comment when it refused the case Monday.

Last year, an appeals court struck down the New York laws, ruling that the laws improperly take sides in a religious matter.

### Austria blasts own restitution

The Claims Conference welcomed a report commissioned by the Austrian government that called Austria's attempts at restitution "often half-hearted and sometimes utterly reluctant."

Reacting to the report, Gideon Taylor, the Claims Conference's executive vice president, said: "There seems now to be a new outlook on this matter, and we welcome the change. We hope that the conclusions and recommendations arising from this report will be properly and promptly implemented."

### JCPA plenum opens in Baltimore

Daniel Pearl was honored Sunday as the Jewish Council for Public Affairs opened its plenum in Baltimore. The conference, which also brings together participants in Hillel's Spitzer Forum on Public Policy, honored the slain Wall Street Journal reporter by hosting a dialogue on hate speech on college campuses.

Also at the conference, Ken Pollack, a fellow at the Brookings Institution, gave participants a mixed report card on President Bush's efforts to build support for a war against Iraq, giving him "three A's, three F's and two incompletes."

### 'Pianist' cops European awards

A film about a Jewish musician's survival during the Nazi occupation of Warsaw won the British and French equivalents of the Oscar awards for best picture. Overall, "The Pianist" won seven awards at the Cesar Awards in Paris on Saturday night.

On Sunday, the film, which is based on a memoir, won the best picture award at the British Academy Film Awards. "Amen," a film about the Catholic Church's complicity in the Holocaust, won the award for best screenplay at the French awards.

## Jewish population undercounted, experts say after new British census

By Richard Allen Greene

LONDON (JTA) — There may be far more Jews in Great Britain than previously believed, experts said this month, following the release of 2001 census data.

The census found just under 267,000 Jews in England, Scotland and Wales, making them slightly less than 0.5 percent of the British population. But the religion question was voluntary and nearly a quarter of the population did not answer it.

Further, areas that are known to have substantial Jewish populations tended to have higher than average "no response" or "no religion" answers to the religion question, said Stanley Waterman of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research, a London think tank.

"Everything points to an undercount by the census," Waterman told JTA.

Conservative calculations by the institute suggest there may be as many as 310,000 Jews in Britain — almost 10 percent more than the 285,000 estimate by the Board of Deputies, British Jewry's umbrella organization.

Waterman said the fervently Orthodox community in particular was undercounted. The census found slightly fewer than 11,000 Jews in the London borough of Hackney, home of the country's largest fervently Orthodox population.

Research by the Jewish community recently suggested there were between 17,000 and 22,000 Jews in the borough.

Rabbi Avraham Pinter, the principal of an Orthodox girls school and a former city council member from Hackney, said many fervently Orthodox Jews had not answered the religion question.

"I would have thought the vast majority didn't fill it out," he told JTA.

Many members of the community are second-generation Holocaust survivors, he explained, and they were concerned about telling the government their religion on a form that had their name and address.

Also, he said, one of the two newspapers serving the community discouraged fervently Orthodox Jews from answering the religion question.

"The Jewish Tribune had a negative attitude. They suggested there was a danger in the authorities having this information," he said. "My own daughter didn't fill out the religion question."

He estimated the fervently Orthodox population at 17,000 to 18,000 — and said it was growing at between 5 percent and 8 percent a year.

"All the schools are bursting at the seams. New schools are opening all the time, and they fill up immediately," he said.

The Institute for Jewish Policy Research has done research that may help calculate the size of the undercount.

Institute surveys conducted since the census found that only 84 percent of non-fervently Orthodox Jews in London and 89 percent of Jews in the northern city of Leeds said they were Jewish on the census form.

Barry Kosmin, director of the institute, said there was also an undercount among the elderly and the foreign-born — and perhaps among students, where there was a popular movement to answer the religion question "Jedi," based on the Star Wars movies. "No matter what way you look at it, I guess you have to add at least another quarter — 50,000 to 70,000 more Jews," Waterman said.

That would put the number at between 317,000 and 337,000.

Kosmin said the census found another surprising result: the presence of at least three Jews in every one of the country's 367 local authorities, except the remote Scilly Isles off England's southwestern tip.

While the census turned up a startling number of rural Jews, it found fewer than expected in urban areas.

"The major finding is that Jews aren't where you expect them to be," he said. □

The results of the British census are now available at: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk/census2001/default.asp>. The results of the Institute for Jewish Policy Research's London survey are available at: [http://www.jpr.org.uk/Reports/PJC%20Reports/no\\_4\\_2002/index.htm](http://www.jpr.org.uk/Reports/PJC%20Reports/no_4_2002/index.htm).

**BEHIND THE HEADLINES****Aid to Israel is cut, but activists still pleased with U.S. spending bill***By Matthew E. Berger*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — American Jewish leaders are downplaying a reduction in U.S. aid to Israel and hailing numerous provisions in this year's U.S. spending bill that place restrictions on aid to the Palestinians.

President Bush signed the fiscal year 2003 spending bill on Feb. 20, several months later than originally anticipated. Foreign aid was cut by 0.65 percent across the board, including the \$2.1 billion in military aid and \$600 in economic aid proposed for the Jewish state.

Left out of the spending bill entirely was an extra \$200 million for Israel to cover the cost of fighting terrorism, as well as \$50 million in humanitarian aid for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, delivered through the U.S. Agency for International Development.

But the spending package includes several initiatives that will control how aid is disbursed in the Middle East. Jewish leaders are praising these measures as attempts by Congress to align itself with Israel and combat corruption and support for terrorism among Arab governments.

The first provision mandates that no federal assistance should go to a future Palestinian state until the current Palestinian leadership is replaced, that state has demonstrated "a firm commitment to a peaceful coexistence with the State of Israel" and it has taken measures to combat terrorism.

The provision also calls on a Palestinian state to show it is working toward Middle East peace before it receives government assistance. But the provision includes a national security waiver and an exemption for funds that would help the Palestinian Authority implement reforms.

A second provision calls for Congress' General Accounting Office to investigate whether U.S. contributions to the U.N. Relief and Works Agency, which helps Palestinian refugees from Israel's 1948 War of Independence and their descendants, are being used to promote terrorism.

"The United States has a right to know whether the \$110 million per year we send to UNRWA is being spent in a way that is consistent with our laws," said Rep. Joe Knollenberg (R-Mich.), who introduced the language. "Only an independent investigation by the GAO will settle the question of whether taxpayer dollars are funding terrorist activities."

Israel says UNRWA allows terrorism to flourish in Palestinian refugee camps. In fact, Israeli officials say, one-third of the Palestinian suicide bombers who have struck during the current conflict have come from the Jenin refugee camp, which is serviced by UNRWA.

Congress also passed a provision that would investigate how USAID distributes funds in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, amid concerns that it is hiring contractors affiliated with the Palestinian Authority.

However, in his written remarks upon signing the bill, President Bush said information would be given to Congress only "in a manner consistent with the president's constitutional authority to withhold information that could impair foreign relations, national security, the deliberative processes of the executive, or the perfor-

mance of the executive's constitutional duties."

Also included in the bill is language that allows U.S. citizens born in Jerusalem to have Israel listed as their country of birth on birth certificates, passports and other federal documents. Until now, Jerusalem has been listed without a country, to appease Palestinians who contest Israel's control of the city.

"We're saying Jerusalem is part of Israel," said a senior official with one U.S. Jewish organization. "This is another manifestation of that — plus it's going to be harder for the White House to go around it."

Pro-Israel activists tried to move several other provisions through Congress — including one that would have prohibited aid to the West Bank and Gaza until the U.S. Consulate in Jerusalem comes under the auspices of the U.S. Embassy in Tel Aviv — and one that would require the State Department to list "Jerusalem, Israel" on all published materials.

But those provisions were left out of the final bill after the State Department mounted a campaign against them, Jewish sources said.

Overall, Jewish leaders were pleased with the spending bill, despite the cut in aid.

"This bill contained landmark language codifying President Bush's conditions for Palestinian statehood and required a review of United Nations complicity in Palestinian terrorism," said Amy Friedkin, the president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

"Clearly, America's goals in the region do not include the creation of a state that could be designated a state sponsor of terror. This legislation breaks new ground by codifying the president's vision, demonstrating that the United States speaks with one voice."

Left out of the bill was \$200 million in additional aid to Israel that originally was promised by President Clinton to help cover costs associated with Israel's withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000.

Officials say the \$200 million was not worth fighting for, since Israel is requesting \$4 billion in military aid and \$8 billion in loan guarantees in a supplementary aid package expected to reach Congress later this year.

"The reality is, when you have a much bigger package coming around the corner, you have to make decisions," a senior Jewish official said. "This was a real easy business decision."

Israeli officials in Washington last week for discussions on the supplemental package were told to provide more detailed answers on how the money would be used and on reforms in the Israeli economy. □

**Bobsledders to compete for Israel**

TORONTO (JTA) — One Canadian and two Americans have established a two-man bobsled team that they hope will compete for Israel in the next winter Olympics.

David Greaves of Winnipeg, and Aaron Zeff and John Frank, both of San Francisco, have received authorization from the Israeli Olympic Committee.

All three have applied for Israeli citizenship.

They hope that their bobsled, Israel One, will cheer the people of Israel.

Their newly formed Israeli Bobsled Federation has invented a new Hebrew word for bobsled — "mizchelet bob" — based on the Hebrew word for sled, mizchelet. □