



# Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 81, No. 66

Monday, April 7, 2003

86th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Women's group barred from site

Reversing an earlier decision, Israel's Supreme Court ruled that a women's group cannot pray in an organized service at the Western Wall in Jerusalem. In a 5-4 decision Sunday, the justices gave the government a year to prepare an alternate nearby site, known as Robinson's Arch.

If arrangements are not made within a year, the Women of the Wall will be allowed to pray at the Western Wall, the court ruled.

Members of the group, who read from the Torah and wear prayer shawls during the monthly service, expressed deep disappointment with the decision.

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### Belgian law will stand

Belgium's ruling coalition failed to pass amendments that would have ended a war crimes lawsuit against Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

The amendments would have retroactively forbid Belgian courts from trying people suspected of war crimes if they come from democratic states that allow for a fair trial.

Sharon and numerous international leaders, including President Bush, have been indicted in Belgium's wide-ranging war crimes law.

The suggested amendments would have removed a major impediment to Belgian-Israeli relations.

### Holocaust memorial under way

Construction has begun on the Holocaust memorial in Berlin, four years after the German Parliament approved its design.

In ceremonies last Friday, German legislator Wolfgang Thierse said the memorial was expected to be finished in two years, in time to mark the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II.

Meanwhile, visitors to the site will be able to watch construction and read about the project's development. The memorial, designed by American architect Peter Eisenman, will consist of 2,700 cement steles, some up to 15 feet high, on a huge site near the Brandenburg Gate.

A documentation and information center will be created under the memorial. The design was approved in 1999 by Parliament after more than 10 years of debate and discussion, and is expected to cost some \$22 million.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### On campus, pro-Palestinian activists use anti-war forum to spread message

By Rachel Pomerance

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Since military action against Iraq began, American college campuses have erupted in protests against the war — many of them featuring aspects of pro-Palestinian, anti-Israel rhetoric.

"I personally think that" the Iraq war and the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are "really related," said Shaun Joseph, 22, who heads Students Against War on Iraq at Brown University.

Joseph, a non-Jew who describes himself as a socialist, characterizes the two conflicts as acts of "U.S. imperialism — both in the U.S. support of Israel's actions against the Palestinians and in this direct war on Iraq."

Jewish leaders fear that the anti-war activists' support for the Palestinians may help bring the Palestinian message to a broader audience.

Experts say anti-war forces represent a minority on campus, but they are far more vocal than the war's supporters.

Analysts note similarities to the opposition to the Vietnam War two generations ago, when anti-war forces comprised only a fraction of the student body but gained so much attention that they profoundly influenced the country.

With students transfixed by the war — MTV, which has sent a correspondent to Kuwait, says young people rank the war as their top issue of interest, alongside drugs — Jewish leaders fear anti-war protesters could introduce the Palestinian agenda to a huge audience. "You're going to have all these young people engaged in discussion or concern about the Middle East in the context of the Iraq war who will have been exposed to potentially very hostile" messages about Israel, said Wayne Firestone, director of the Center for Israel Affairs for Hillel: The Foundation for Jewish Campus Life.

"If the teach-ins they go to and the rhetoric they're hearing at the rallies are all anti-Israel because that's whose running the anti-war protests on campus, then there's a serious concern that they will be affected by that," he said.

According to Jonathan Kessler, leadership development director for the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, "The anti-Israel activists on campus have made a strategic decision to embed themselves into the anti-war movement," so they can "engage large numbers beyond their traditional coalition of disenfranchised."

"They're willing to soft-pedal their anti-Israel animus for the time being, or at least until U.S. policymakers are no longer focused on Iraq," Kessler said.

President Bush has pledged to present the international "road map" toward Israeli-Palestinian peace after the new Palestinian Authority prime minister is confirmed in coming weeks. And international pressure for a peace agreement is likely to mount once the Iraq war ends.

But not everyone thinks the Palestinian perspective will catch on. "It could easily work to the pro-Israel point of view," said Jonathan Snow, 22, a senior who writes a biweekly column on the Middle East for Johns Hopkins' campus newspaper.

Facts on the ground, he said, may work to Israel's advantage: Palestinian supporters who claimed that Israel would take advantage of the war with Iraq to commit human rights abuses have been discredited. Meanwhile, Palestinian terrorist groups such as Islamic Jihad have launched attacks on Israel ostensibly to show solidarity with Iraq, and Palestinian volunteers reportedly are flowing through Syria to fight U.S. soldiers in Iraq.

In any case, not only do most college students mirror the general U.S. public in

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Ministers lax on masks

Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz was the only Cabinet member to carry a gas mask to the weekly government meeting Sunday.

Other ministers said they had left their masks in the car, Israel Radio reported. Despite an army directive issued to citizens on the eve of the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq, few Israelis have been heeding the order to keep their gas mask kits with them at all times.

### Sharon presents objections

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon presented Israel's reservations to the "road map" toward peace to his foreign and defense ministers.

Sharon also told the Cabinet on Sunday that Israel had 15 main reservations to the diplomatic initiative, and would submit them soon to the United States, Israel Radio reported.

### Barghouti trial resumes

The trial of Palestinian leader Marwan Barghouti for the terrorist murders of Israelis resumed in a Tel Aviv court.

Three other Palestinians convicted of terrorist activities, who were expected to serve as prosecution witnesses, were declared hostile witnesses Sunday when they refused to cooperate, Israel Radio reported.

Barghouti says he is a political leader and does not recognize Israel's right to try him. He faces charges of involvement in the murder of 26 Israelis in terrorist attacks carried out by his Fatah movement.

### Bomb-making factory destroyed

Israeli troops destroyed a bomb-making factory in the West Bank.

The West Bank and Gaza Strip were under closure Sunday amid warnings of terrorist attacks, Israel Radio said. At the same time, 12,000 Palestinians with permits to enter Israel were allowed in.



## 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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sympathizing with Israel, but polls have shown that 18- to 35-year-olds support the war on Iraq more than their elders do. And several campuses showed signs of support for U.S. troops once the war began.

Most Jewish students back the war with Iraq, sources say. Among those who oppose it, many are turned off by the anti-Israel — and sometimes anti-Semitic — undertones of the anti-war activity.

"It gets really frustrating when the two issues are directly linked," said Daniella Risman, 19, Hillel co-chair at Oberlin University in Ohio.

Jewish opponents of the war feel "their issue is being tainted," said Risman, who worries that Oberlin students will link "anti-war and anti-Israel sentiment as one."

But not everyone agrees.

Eric Bukstein, a senior in Judaic studies at the University of Michigan, said pro-Palestinian activists aren't really becoming a major part of the anti-war movement.

To amass the broadest support possible, anti-war activists are wary of distracting students with too many messages, Bukstein surmised. He added that his university — which has large Jewish and Arab student populations and hosted the second national student conference of the Palestinian Solidarity Movement last fall — has become an incubator for activity around the country. Another Palestinian solidarity conference is planned for Rutgers University in October.

Most Jewish students say they feel relatively secure on campus. They hail their advances in defending Israel since the start of the intifada, when they were shocked by the intense anti-Israel, and even anti-Semitic, activity on American campuses.

Many say they feel more prepared since Jewish organizations, realizing the strength of pro-Palestinian activism on campus, began devoting more time and energy to training student advocates for Israel.

Still, there may be early indications of trouble. In the last two weeks, three anti-Semitic incidences have occurred at the University of Florida: Someone shouted "Death to the Jews" outside a Jewish sorority house and swastikas were drawn on a Jewish student's car and scratched into a Jewish teaching assistant's desk.

The incidents occurred despite the fact that supporters of Israel are stronger than their opponents at Florida, according to several students at this week's AIPAC policy conference in Washington.

"I feel like it has to do with the war," Florida sophomore Nina Alexander-Hurst, 20, surmised.

At Oberlin, stickers claiming that "Zionism equals racism" have littered the campus in recent weeks, prompting the university president to issue a call for dialogue in the campus newspaper.

Complicating issues for Israel backers, pro-Palestinian sentiment runs deep in academia, especially in many humanities departments, experts say.

While many university administrations have responded to anti-Israel activity with diplomatic dialogue, most faculty remain identified with the Palestinians, according to Edward Beck, president of Scholars for Peace in the Middle East, an international network of pro-Israel faculty members.

"It's not politically correct for faculty to stand for Israel on college campuses," Beck said.

Most faculty members, including Jewish ones, show "little or no interest in affiliating or expressing public support for Israel," while there is a "vocal core of academics in America who are very hostile to Israel," Firestone said.

The silence of most professors could be due to a desire to remain neutral in order to maintain their credibility, or their devotion to research and teaching rather than political activism. Yet given professor's influence over students, anti-Israel sentiment among faculty members could force Jewish groups that have focused on training student advocates to alter their strategy.

"We're starting to see that the solutions of student empowerment are not going to suffice if you continue to have either incidents or problems with hostile faculty members," Firestone said.

Addressing the faculty's stance is "the next major issue for our community to be looking at more critically," he said.

"Whatever the solution is, it will require faculty members to be part of" it, he said. But he added, "I don't think we're anywhere near the answers." □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Arson strikes kosher restaurant

A fire at a kosher restaurant near Paris was arson, police said.

The window of the restaurant in Epinay-sur-Seine, in the northern suburbs of the capital, was smashed early April 3 and flammable material was thrown into the building.

The restaurant was empty at the time of the attack. Police have yet to establish whether the motivation was anti-Semitic.

In a related development, French Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy visited the offices of a Zionist youth movement in Paris where two Jewish youths were beaten up during an anti-war demonstration in March.

Addressing the upper house of the French legislature April 3, Sarkozy also condemned demonstrators who had carried flags showing a swastika in the middle of an Israeli flag. Sarkozy said it was disgraceful that a swastika should be associated with "one of the world's great democracies."

### American activist wounded

An American activist was wounded in the West Bank, apparently by Israeli gunfire.

A member of the International Solidarity Movement said Brian Avery, 24, of New Mexico, was shot in the face by Israeli forces in an armored personnel carrier while acting as a human shield in the West Bank city of Jenin, The Associated Press reported.

One of the group's members said Avery was wearing clothing clearly identifying him as a foreign activist.

The Israeli army said there were exchanges of fire in the area at the time between Israeli troops and armed Palestinians, and it was not certain Avery was shot by Israeli forces. Another American member of the group, Rachel Corrie, was killed last month when she was run over by an army bulldozer in the Gaza Strip.

The army said that incident was an accident.

### Group: Add brigade to terror list

B'nai Brith Canada is pressing its country's government to add a Palestinian organization linked to Yasser Arafat to a list of terror groups. The group said the Al-Aksa Martyrs Brigade should be added, particularly since the Tanzim, another militia linked to Arafat's Fatah movement, recently was put on the list following pressure from Jewish groups.

### London paper takes awards

London's Jewish Chronicle was named the best weekly newspaper in Britain's 2003 Newspaper Awards. The paper's Web site was named best weekly newspaper on the Web for the third year in a row, making the Jewish Chronicle the only newspaper to receive two awards at the ceremony.

## Women's prayer group suffers defeat, but will struggle to pray at the wall

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — After 14 years, the effort by a women's group to hold organized prayer services at the Western Wall has suffered a setback.

In a 5-4 ruling Sunday, Israel's Supreme Court reversed an earlier decision that had recognized the right of the group known as Women of the Wall to pray at the holy site in the manner they choose.

The court also gave the Israeli government 12 months to prepare an alternate site for Women of the Wall to hold its monthly prayer service, in which participants read from the Torah and wear prayer shawls.

But the court ruled that if preparations at the designated location, an archeological site at the southern end of the Western Wall known as Robinson's Arch, are not completed within a year, the group must be allowed to pray at the Wall.

The justices were ruling on an appeal filed by the state to a May 2000 decision recognizing the group's right to hold prayer services at the Western Wall, and instructing the government to take the appropriate arrangements to make this possible.

Sunday's ruling was "very disappointing," said Batya Cohen-Kallus, chairwoman of Women of the Wall. "We had every reason to hope that the court would back and affirm" the May 2000 decision.

Instead, Cohen-Kallus said, "we've backtracked."

Since the late 1980s, Women of the Wall has been fighting for the right to hold its prayer services in the manner it chooses at the Western Wall.

Group members say such practices are becoming increasingly accepted in Orthodox circles, but some past prayer services drew angry — and sometimes violent — outbursts from fervently Orthodox worshippers.

The Israeli government has argued that the group's service at the wall could threaten public order.

Women of the Wall consistently has rejected proposals of alternate prayer sites.

"Robinson's Arch is nothing more than an archeological site," and does not have the sanctity or holiness of the Western Wall, Cohen-Kallus said.

Attorney Frances Raday, who represented Women of the Wall, said the court did not backtrack on its recognition of the women's right to pray at the wall. But in its decision, she said, the court chose to protect the sensitivities of other worshippers over the right of the women to pray at the wall.

National Religious Party legislator Shaul Yahalom welcomed the court ruling.

"The Supreme Court saw the need to preserve the rights of most of the worshippers in the world to not be hurt," he said on Israel Radio.

Just as the court ruling three years ago in favor of Women of the Wall prompted fervently Orthodox legislators to initiate a bill that would impose jail sentences for women who read from the Torah, wear prayer shawls or blow the shofar at the Western Wall, this decision appeared to be only part of a long battle.

"The one good thing that has come out of this is that we're finished with the Supreme Court for the time being," Cohen-Kallus said. "We hope to turn this into a public debate."

She drew encouragement from the new political landscape, including the popularity in the last election of the secular-rights Shinui Party, and Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's handling of the fervently Orthodox parties. "We intend to use all the government and nongovernmental support we have," she said. □

## Kiryat Arba attack thwarted

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli troops killed an armed Palestinian who tried to infiltrate the settlement of Kiryat Arba on Saturday night.

The gunman took cover on a rooftop in Hebron after he was spotted by an Israeli security patrol. The terrorist was killed and an Israeli soldier was lightly hurt in the exchange of fire. □

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

## Some worry about motives as Christians rally for Israel

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Walking into the Mayflower Hotel here, you would have thought you were at a meeting of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee — if it weren't for the shouts of "Hallelujah" and "amen" that accompanied the thunderous applause for pro-Israel sentiments.

And if it weren't for some of the hard-line comments coming from the speakers.

Janet Parshall, a Christian radio host, told 600 Christian supporters of Israel on April 2 that if she were president she would classify the Palestinians as enemies of the United States, remove all territory and weapons from Palestinian control, cancel the peace agreements that created the Palestinian Authority and dismantle refugee camps.

"If I were made the president for one day, my road map would look a little bit different," she said, to a huge ovation, referring to the plan for peace created by the United States, Russian, United Nations and European Union.

The International Fellowship of Christians and Jews' first "Stand for Israel" day brought pro-Israel Christian activists to Washington just a day after AIPAC had finished its lobbying on Capitol Hill.

It also brought big-name speakers from the Jewish community — including Israel's ambassador to the United States, Daniel Ayalon, and Reps. Eric Cantor (R-Va.) and Tom Lantos (D-Calif.).

"We share the same belief in God and we share the same destiny," Ayalon told the audience.

Jewish leaders once feared that evangelical support for Israel was based on the idea that the Jews' return to the Holy Land would expedite the second coming of Jesus, or that by supporting Israel they would have better access for proselytizing among Jews.

But in the past two years many Jewish leaders have reached out to Christians, believing their commitment to helping Israel is genuine. In the climate of violence in the region and anti-Semitism around the world, many Jewish leaders have concluded that Israel must accept friends wherever the Jewish state can find them.

Yet some Jewish leaders are looking down the road, warning that hard-line Christian support for Israel during a time of conflict will prove to be an impediment if an Israeli-Palestinian peace process is renewed in the months or years ahead.

Because of their belief that God gave Israel to the Jewish people, and that Christians who help the Jews will be rewarded by God, many in the evangelical Christian community loathe the idea of Israel giving up land for peace.

"I think Israel is terribly wrong to give up the Golan," Parshall told JTA on April 2, referring to the plateau in the north of Israel that the Jewish state won from Syria in the 1967 Six-Day War and placed on the bargaining table before peace negotiations collapsed in 2000. "I don't think it's a matter of just giving land away."

Comments like these concern Jewish leaders who support plans for President Bush's "road map" toward renewed Israeli-Palestinian peace talks and an eventual Palestinian state.

"If you look at the specific positions of these groups on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, they are across the board in line with the Israel hard right," said Lewis Roth, assistant executive director of

Americans for Peace Now. "They have very little empathy for the Israeli people in the broader sense who support a two-state solution, a return to negotiations and the evacuation of some settlements from occupied territory."

Roth argues that the evangelicals' biblical motivation for supporting Israel make them less willing to support concessions in the name of peace.

"People who are locked in to an 'end of times' theology have a vested interest in perpetuation of the conflict," he said.

The concern is heightened by the fact that Christian influence, in the Jewish community and nationally, is growing.

Gary Bauer, the former Republican presidential candidate and current president of American Values, was a keynote speaker at AIPAC's policy conference last week. He received several standing ovations, blasting international participation in any Israeli-Palestinian peace effort and speaking out against the U.S. State Department.

"Whoever sits in the confines of Washington, and suggests to the people of Israel that they have to give up more" land in exchange "for peace, that is an obscenity," he said.

In addition, Parshall received a boisterous response for some of the most hard-line comments made last April in a Washington rally for Israel. The Israeli Embassy in Washington hosted a National Prayer Breakfast last year for Christian leaders, and prominent Jewish leaders like Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, have spoken positively of Christian support for the Jewish state.

Ralph Reed, former executive director of the Christian Coalition, serves as co-chairman of the fellowship's Stand for Israel events. He was influential in turning the Christian community into a major player in national politics, and he now is speaking out on Israel's behalf.

Reed dismisses the concern that Christian support for Israel could hurt peacemaking. "My position has always been that what is in Israel's national security interest is best determined by Israel," Reed said. "It's not our job as people thousands of miles away to come to conclusions they are better equipped to make."

George Mamo, executive vice president of the fellowship, said Christians' support for Israel is based solely on their love of Israel and the Jewish people, and that Christians take a "realpolitik" view toward ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Christian leaders point out that the evangelical community did not speak out against the Oslo peace process, although Roth claims Christian leaders were "working hard to be an impediment."

For her part, Parshall says she would oppose any deal that includes the dismantling of Israeli settlements in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. In her speech to the Christian audience, she spoke glowingly about visiting the kitchen of an Israeli woman in a "settlement," a term she said she hates because it doesn't accurately describe the reality.

But she concedes that her view is not the only one among Christian backers of Israel. "It's not a universal view, just like it's not a universal view in the Jewish community," she said.

Jewish leaders say that just as Jews and Christians disagree on some domestic issues, they may disagree on what Israel should accept in the name of peace.

"We can disagree with them on that," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. "What brings us together is a common commitment to Israel." □