

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Monument gone in Alabama

A Ten Commandments monument was removed from the rotunda of the Alabama Judicial Building. Workers moved the monument to a non-public area of the building on Wednesday.

Religious protesters continued to pray in front of the courthouse. [Page 3]

### U.S. unmoved by Arafat's words

The White House says Yasser Arafat's call for Palestinian terrorist groups to renew their "cease-fire" shows he is "part of the problem." Claire Buchan, a White House spokeswoman, said Wednesday that the Palestinian Authority president's comments are insufficient.

Instead, she said, the Palestinian Authority must dismantle terrorist groups and consolidate the various P.A. security forces under Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas.

State Department spokesman Philip Reeker said Wednesday that "nothing has changed in respect to Arafat," whom both Israel and the United States refuse to deal with because of his ties to terrorism.

Arafat, who retains control over most P.A. forces, reportedly is preventing Abbas from using them to crack down on terrorists.

### Palestinian killed in West Bank

Israeli soldiers killed a Palestinian who attacked them in the West Bank. Wednesday's death occurred after the man tried to stab one of the soldiers near Rachel's Tomb in Bethlehem.

Earlier Wednesday, Israel lifted its closure on the West Bank cities of Jericho and Bethlehem. In the Gaza Strip, a Kassam rocket fired by Palestinians landed near an Israeli settlement, but there were no injuries.

### Britain freezes charity's assets

Britain froze the assets of a Palestinian charity believed to be funding Hamas.

Britain's Charity Commission said Wednesday that it had frozen the assets of Interpal — The Palestinian Relief and Development Fund, which it is investigating for terrorist links.

President Bush, who froze the assets of Hamas-linked charities last week, urged other countries to follow suit.

## Conservative Rabbinical Assembly to launch survey on female rabbis

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — Are female rabbis hitting the stained-glass ceiling?

That's one of the questions to be asked in a new study by the Conservative movement's Rabbinical Assembly, which is undertaking the first study of Conservative women rabbis since the movement began ordaining them in 1985, JTA has learned.

"Overall in society, it's clear that women's advancement in many areas is not equal to that of men," said Rabbi Julie Schoenfeld, the R.A.'s director of rabbinic development, who is heading the study.

The assumption is that many women rabbis are not earning as much as men, Schoenfeld said.

Until now, there has been no hard evidence to back up that assumption in the Conservative, Reconstructionist or Reform movements, which all ordain women.

But the R.A.'s study, which is scheduled to be released in the spring of 2004, will attempt to gauge issues such as whether a salary gap exists between men and women rabbis, why women rabbis chose the positions they did and what kind of competition they faced for jobs.

"We are attempting to establish a baseline of data," Schoenfeld said.

The study ultimately will have implications for all three of the denominations that ordain women, women rabbinical leaders said.

"Any time a study like this comes out, it holds up a mirror to make sure that what you're doing is right," said Rabbi Amy Small, president of the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association and rabbi at Congregation Beth Hatikvah in Chatham, N.J.

If the study reveals an earnings gender gap in the Conservative movement, "we'd want to go back and make sure we don't have that problem" in the Reconstructionist movement, Small said.

Of the 236 Reconstructionist rabbis, 110 are women.

The \$25,000 study, launched with a \$17,000 grant from the Jewish Women's Foundation of New York, in addition to funding from the Rabbinical Assembly and private donors, should "have broad implications around the country," said Sherri Greenbach, executive director of the Jewish Women's Foundation.

The foundation is a private, non-denominational grant-making group that supports Jewish women and girls.

"Although there is a lot of anecdotal information" about women rabbis, she said, "to create change there needs to be quantitative information about why women rabbis are making the choice they're making."

The study is still in the planning stages.

The Assembly has hired sociologist Steven M. Cohen of Hebrew University to head the study.

Cohen, who will work with a panel of Conservative rabbis to formulate the study's questions, said he is preparing to examine the "career trajectory" of female and male rabbis.

"There is an impression that men have been more likely to have been hired for the more prestigious, larger congregational posts," he said. "We don't know that for a fact, but if it's true, the question is why."

Women face other issues too, said one member of the rabbinical advisory panel, Rabbi Toni Shy of Temple Beth Israel in Port Washington, N.Y.

The difficulties many career women face in holding a high-powered job while raising a family are especially acute for women rabbis, who are expected to be available

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Abbas on way out?

A vote of confidence was scheduled for Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas.

The vote, which is scheduled for Monday, comes as Abbas is engaged in an ongoing power struggle with P.A. President Yasser Arafat.

Israel said Wednesday that if Abbas is ousted, it would not recognize or negotiate with an Arafat-led government.

### Israel finds weapons cache

Israeli soldiers discovered a warehouse of weapons in Nablus. The discovery was the third such find since Israel entered the West Bank city last week.

Israel has been operating in Nablus and Jenin in recent days in an attempt to dismantle the Palestinian terrorist infrastructure there.

### Bedouins involved in terror?

Israel arrested three Bedouins believed to be Hamas collaborators.

The Bedouins allegedly compiled information to be used in terrorist attacks against Israeli soldiers in the Negev.

Their Hamas recruiter also was arrested.

The Bedouins were arrested by the Shin Bet on Aug. 11, but the information was released to the public only on Wednesday.

### Sharon scandal intensifies

One of Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's sons paid back a loan with money he received from an anonymous businessman, according to Ha'aretz.

The payback of the loan to South African businessman Cyril Kern with money from an Austrian bank is increasing suspicion that the Israeli prime minister and his son Gilad may have been involved in illegal activities. Israel is asking Austria to let it investigate the case in Austria.



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at all hours of the day, Shy said. As a result, she said, fewer women with young children are going into the pulpit.

Rabbi Jerome Epstein, executive vice president of the United Synagogue, the Conservative movement's congregational arm, said congregations need to know "that a rabbi is going to be there when they need that rabbi."

"I've heard congregations say that if a rabbi is a woman and someone is in the hospital at 3 a.m., she's not going to want to leave her children" to attend to that person, he said.

At the same time, he added, congregations need to give women the same respect men receive.

Epstein said the study will be very helpful in helping both synagogues and rabbis understand each other's needs.

In 1985, Amy Eilberg became the first woman ordained at the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary of America, following a protracted debate over women's ordination.

Today there are 177 women among about 1,500 Conservative rabbis in all. The telephone survey will attempt to reach all of these women, as well as 177 of their male contemporaries, to capture a "whole generation," Schoenfeld said.

Rabbi Zari Weiss, co-president of the Reform movement's 220-member Women's Rabbinical Network, said women generally have had substantial support in the Reform world, though anecdotal evidence suggests that women rabbis earn less than men.

In that respect, the report's "results might affect all of us," Weiss said.

The Reform movement, which has about 1,700 rabbis — including 373 women who belong to the Central Conference of American Rabbis — became the first Jewish stream to break the rabbinic gender barrier when Sally Priesand was ordained in 1972.

Since then, Reform women rabbis have reached leadership ranks in the movement's professional organizations.

Among them are Rabbi Laura Geller of Temple Emanuel in Beverly Hills, one of the more notable pulpit positions, and Rabbi Jackie Koch Ellenson, director of the Women's Rabbinical Network.

The Reconstructionist movement ordained its first woman, Sandy Eisenberg Sasso, in 1974, though women began occupying leadership positions in Reconstructionism in the 1960s, Small said.

Schoenfeld said women in all the liberal Jewish movements stand to learn from this study.

"We think that what happens with Conservative women rabbis will have much broader implications beyond the Conservative movement," she said. □

## Group: Stop Palestinian forum

NEW YORK (JTA) — A Jewish group called on Ohio's governor to prevent a pro-Palestinian student conference from taking place this fall.

The Palestine Solidarity Movement is linked to individuals and organizations that have aided terrorists, The Coalition for Jewish Concerns-Amcha said.

The Palestine Solidarity Movement recently moved its conference to Ohio State University in a break with a more radical faction in New Jersey, which is expected to hold its own conference at Rutgers University. □

## Honduran shul rededicated

NEW YORK (JTA) — A synagogue in Honduras that was destroyed by a hurricane is slated to be rededicated.

A dedication ceremony will be held Sunday in Tegucigalpa for the synagogue now known as Shevat Achim, which was destroyed in 1998's Hurricane Mitch.

It was rebuilt in part through the efforts of Phillip Gelman, a New Yorker living in the city.

Several Jewish organizations, including B'nai B'rith, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the American Jewish World Service, have joined local Hondurans in supporting the project. □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Brief arrest in AMIA bombing

Belgian police briefly arrested an Iranian in connection with the 1994 bombing of an Argentine Jewish center. But Saied Baghban was quickly released because he has diplomatic immunity.

Baghban, a secretary at the Iranian Embassy in Brussels since 2001, was among eight Iranian officials ordered arrested by Argentine Judge Juan Jose Galeano on Aug. 13.

### Canada orders extradition

A Canadian court ordered the extradition of an accused Nazi camp guard to Italy.

The court said this week that Michael Seifert must go to Italy, where he has been convicted in absentia for 11 murders at the Bolzano concentration camp during World War II. A provincial court judge ordered the retired sawmill worker taken into custody immediately after the Aug. 27 judgment, which was made after a lengthy hearing.

A resident of Vancouver, Seifert, 79, immigrated to Canada in 1951 and later attained Canadian citizenship.

### Rabbi indicted in school scam

A New York rabbi was charged with stealing federal grant money intended for a school for disabled children, *The New York Times* reported.

Prosecutors said Rabbi Milton Balkany diverted \$700,000 in grant money to build the school, instead using it for personal gain and for companies in New York and Israel that are connected to his family. Balkany, who is free on bail, runs the Brooklyn Bais Yaakov school.

### Belarussian synagogue torched

A synagogue in Belarus was set on fire.

The arson at the synagogue in Minsk, which occurred Tuesday night, is the latest of several anti-Semitic actions reported in the former Soviet republic this year. The facade of the building was damaged in the fire.

### More volunteers in Israel

Participation in the Otzma volunteer program in Israel has risen sharply.

Forty-one young adults arrived in Israel last week to live and work for 10 months through the United Jewish Communities' program, tripling last year's number. Otzma places participants in absorption centers and enlists their help in community service projects.

The number of volunteers is the highest since the intifada began, according to the organization. Other groups also have reported a rise in participation in Israel-based programs this year.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

### Jewish groups celebrate outcome of Alabama case, but worry for future

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Jewish leaders praised the removal of a monument of the Ten Commandments in the Alabama Judicial Building but are concerned by some of the developments the case has spawned.

"The result was what we wanted," said Deborah Lauter, the Anti-Defamation League's Southeast region director. "We celebrate the rule of law prevailing."

Despite the legal victory, some in the Jewish community are concerned by the amount of support Alabama Chief Justice Roy Moore has received in the state and in Congress.

They worry that he will be portrayed as a martyr in future clashes over church-state issues.

They also worry that public response to the Ten Commandments case might cause some federal judges to let other unpopular orders go unenforced.

"What is symbolic about any discussion is the depths of feelings on both sides," said Marc Stern, the American Jewish Congress' general counsel. "These two sides really don't understand each other."

Jewish groups were active while the case was in the courts, supporting efforts to force Moore to remove the monument, which he installed one night two years ago.

But since the federal court ruled in their favor last year, Jewish groups have taken a less active role — waiting and watching as Moore defied the court order.

State officials moved the monument on Wednesday from the building's rotunda to a private area, while Christian religious activists who support Moore prayed outside.

"We've been happy to just let Judge Moore self destruct," Stern said.

Despite often taking a religiously conservative stance on church-state issues, the fervently Orthodox group Agudath Israel of America has not taken a position on the Ten Commandments case.

"God and the concept of morality does not violate the church-state separation," said Rabbi Avi Shafran, Agudah's director of public affairs. "But something that is blatantly in support of a particular religion would be very clearly unconstitutional."

Other Jewish organizations filed briefs seeking the monument's removal last year, claiming it violated the Constitution's ban on government promotion of religion.

The briefs argued that the monument not only endorsed religion, but also backed a particular religious perspective.

"The display of the Ten Commandments sends a message of exclusion to those who do not share the Judeo-Christian religious tradition and a message of favoritism to those who do," said a brief filed by ADL, the American Jewish Committee and the Commission on Social Action of Reform Judaism, among other interfaith groups.

The debate has highlighted the fact that not everyone shares Jewish groups' definition of the separation of religion and state.

Lauter said she repeatedly has had to explain the difference between a tablet of the Ten Commandments in a courthouse and the words "In God We Trust" on American currency.

"'In God We Trust' is not saying, 'This is a Christian nation,'" she said. "The statue, with Judge Moore's rhetoric, is saying, 'This is a Christian nation.'"

Stern said he also has been concerned by support Moore received in Congress. A measure earlier this year in the U.S. House of Representatives Appropriations Committee would have prevented the government from using federal funds to enforce Ten Commandments rulings like the one in Alabama.

The measure passed the House, but it was not included in the Senate version of the spending bill.

Sen. Wayne Allard (R-Colo.) introduced a bill this month that would give states the right to display the Ten Commandments on state-owned property.

"These are no longer politically unthinkable things," Stern said. "The absence of opposition is troublesome." □

## NEWS ANALYSIS

**Hezbollah gets pragmatic as Israel stands its ground**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Relations between Israel and Hezbollah may be reaching a historic turning point: For one of the first times in the complicated relationship between Israel and the radical Shi'ite organization, it seems that Hezbollah has blinked first.

A few days ago, Hezbollah allowed a German mediator to visit kidnapped Israeli businessman Elhanan Tannenbaum, who is being held in Lebanon.

Despite its threats to kidnap Israeli soldiers to speed up negotiations for the release of Lebanese prisoners in Israel, Hezbollah gave in to the Israeli position that a precondition for negotiations was a sign that Tannenbaum was still alive.

In a speech three months ago, the secretary-general of Hezbollah, Sheik Hassan Nasrallah, purposely was vague about Tannenbaum's fate in an effort to keep Israel guessing — and to raise the value of a possible deal for information on the captured businessman.

Indeed, in the past, Nasrallah has demanded a high price — such as the release of thousands of Palestinian prisoners and 12 Lebanese held in Israel, in exchange for information on missing Israelis believed held in Lebanon.

Eventually, however, Hezbollah was forced to deliver the information first, allowing German mediator Ernest Uhrlau to visit Tannenbaum. Uhrlau reported that the prisoner was in fair condition.

The Shi'ite militant group was immediately rewarded.

On Monday, Israel released the bodies of two Hezbollah fighters killed in south Lebanon in the late 1990's, turning them over to the Red Cross in Lebanon.

All of a sudden, a deal with Hezbollah seemed more possible than ever before.

Israel is demanding the return of Tannenbaum and three soldiers kidnapped along the border three years ago, who Israel believes are dead. In exchange, Israel is offering to release 12 Lebanese prisoners, including Shi'ite activist Mustafa Dirani and Sheik Abdul Karim Obeid, one of the leaders of Hezbollah.

This is a breakthrough, said reserve Brig. Gen. Rafi Noi, former head of Israel's northern command.

According to Noi, it is significant that Hezbollah made the first move this week, seeming just as eager to strike a deal as Israel.

Three factors led to the apparent change in Hezbollah's attitude.

First, there is growing internal pressure: Families of Lebanese prisoners held in Israel are losing patience over Hezbollah's failure to reach an agreement for the release of their relatives. The Shi'ite group is facing growing criticism that it needlessly escalates the conflict along Israel's border at a time when Lebanon finally is recovering economically from years of war.

Second, there is increasing international pressure on Hezbollah: The war in Iraq and heavy American pressure on Syria and Iran sent a clear signal to Hezbollah that it no longer enjoys the automatic support of its two state sponsors.

Third, there is concern that escalating tensions or even just

maintaining the status quo with Israel could jeopardize Hezbollah's status in Lebanon.

But both Israel and Hezbollah are dancing on a tightrope.

Two weeks ago, relations seemed to reach a dangerous point when Hezbollah fired an anti-aircraft missile across the border. The rocket killed an Israeli youth in the town of Shlomi and forced residents of the northern Israeli city of Kiryat Shmona into bomb shelters. Thanks to tough Israeli warnings and American mediation, Hezbollah restrained itself from further action, and quiet has returned to Israel's northern border.

At present, Hezbollah fighters are deployed all along Israel's border with Lebanon, from Metulla in the east to Rosh Hanikra in the west. They man positions and fly their flags, often within view of Israeli soldiers on the other side of the border fence.

Hezbollah also is believed to have thousands of missiles deployed in southern Lebanon that could hit major Israeli population centers.

"There is a new situation and Hezbollah faces new dilemmas," Middle East expert Ya'acov Havakuk said. "The organization now realizes that the situation is more complex than in the past and that it cannot beat Israel."

In a recent interview with the Christian Science Monitor, Nasrallah said his group's military wing did not have to remain a permanent fixture along the border. However, this could change only within the framework of a "comprehensive settlement" in the region, he said.

In some ways, it is easier for Israel to negotiate with Hezbollah than with the Palestinians. In contrast to the Palestinian arena, with its multiplicity of competing and overlapping groups, Hezbollah is a very structured organization, with political wings and social service branches in addition to the military branch.

Nasrallah is the group's uncontested leader. He was elected to his post in 1992 after Abbas Mussawi was assassinated in an Israeli missile strike.

Friends and enemies alike — including Israel — consider Nasrallah a man who honors his word.

"I recall that at times we refrained from taking certain action against Hezbollah, because Nasrallah threatened that they would respond so and so, and we knew that he would stand by his word," Noi said.

Nasrallah maintains that he does not receive orders from Iran and Syria, but he is well aware that without their support in money and arms, his organization would be far less powerful.

He also knows that the U.S. and Israel already are warning Iran and Syria. After the Shlomi incident, Israeli fighter jets buzzed the palace of Syrian President Bashar Assad as a warning against Syrian sponsorship of attacks from Lebanon into Israel.

The decision to allow the German mediator to visit Tannenbaum can be linked to a recent statement by Assad that he was willing to help with the Israeli prisoner issue. Nasrallah apparently received clear signals from Damascus that it was time to take a different position in negotiating with Israel.

Yet Nasrallah is always a hard bargainer, and the road toward a final exchange is a long and winding road.

Eyal Zisser, a professor of Middle East studies at Tel-Aviv University, predicted that Nasrallah will squeeze the maximum out of Israel until a deal is sealed.

And, of course, there's always the possibility that Hezbollah could change its mind at the last minute. □