



# Daily News Bulletin

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86th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### **Bush, at U.N., blasts Arafat**

President Bush told the United Nations that Yasser Arafat had betrayed the Palestinian cause.

Speaking Tuesday morning at the opening session of the U.N. General Assembly, Bush said the Palestinians "deserve their own state" but would achieve it only under new leaders committed to fighting terrorism.

He also called on Israel to "create the conditions that will allow a peaceful Palestinian state to emerge."

### **Simcha Dinitz dies at 74**

Simcha Dinitz, a former Israeli ambassador to the United States and chairman of the Jewish Agency, died Tuesday of a heart attack in Jerusalem at age 74.

Dinitz spent 37 years in a variety of public posts, including the Knesset, Foreign Ministry and the Jewish Agency, which he headed from 1987 to 1994.

Dinitz's public career ended in 1996 when he was found guilty of fraud and breach of trust connected to misuse of Jewish Agency credit cards, though the conviction was overturned a year later. [Page 4]

### **Al-Qaida planned attack on El Al**

Thai police reportedly foiled an Al-Qaida plot to down an El Al airplane and attack Israeli passengers at Bangkok International Airport.

A man arrested three months ago by police in Thailand was found to have detailed plans of a plot to attack passengers in the terminal and shoot down an El Al plane with a shoulder-launched anti-aircraft missile, Israel's Channel 2 television reported.

### **Iraq off-limits to Israel**

Israel will not be allowed to participate in the reconstruction of Iraq, Iraqi officials said.

Speaking at the International Monetary Fund conference in Dubai, United Arab Emirates, Iraq's interim planning minister said Israeli entrance into the Iraqi market is "out of the question," Agence France-Presse reported.

Other officials said the interim Iraqi government does not intend to recognize the Jewish state.

Because of Rosh Hashanah, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Monday, Sept. 29.

## **Report on NJPS finds limitations as debate over numbers continues**

*By Joe Berkofsky*

NEW YORK (JTA) — A major study of American Jewry may undercount the number of Jews and overestimate their Jewish activity.

Those are among the leading conclusions of an independent review of the National Jewish Population Survey 2000-01, which was published two weeks ago by the United Jewish Communities umbrella group of local federations.

The NJPS said the U.S. Jewish population had declined 5 percent to 5.2 million since the last NJPS in 1990, a period when the overall U.S. population swelled by 11 percent.

That number is "slightly lower" than the figure found in similar studies, says Mark Schulman, founding partner of Schulman, Ronca & Bucuvalas, a prominent polling firm.

Schulman's assessment could fuel a highly public debate over the validity of the NJPS, a \$6 million, five-year project that UJC billed as the most comprehensive study of American Jewry to date, but which has been beset by controversy.

The latest battlefield erupted last week when J.J. Goldberg, editor of the Forward, wrote an editorial blasting the 1990 report's intermarriage statistics as a "fraud," then attacked the new population figures in an Op-Ed piece in The New York Times.

Goldberg's allegations provoked anger at UJC and debate among social scientists. Most demographers say there is little dispute over the fact that the U.S. Jewish population — depending on how you define a Jew — has remained relatively stable.

Egon Mayer, who co-authored a 2001 study called the American Jewish Identity Survey, found 5.3 million people born or raised Jewish, down 200,000 from 1990. Adding non-Jewish spouses or family members, the total is 10 million people.

But the real problem is not strictly numerical, said Steven Bayme, national director of the American Jewish Committee's contemporary Jewish life department.

For half a century, Bayme said, most social scientists have agreed that the Jewish population has been relative stable, between 5 and 5.5 million. The problem, he said, is that the majority of Jews have "no connection" to actual Judaism.

While Jewish numbers won't likely drop sharply for 15 to 20 years, he said, Jewish ignorance "heralds a serious long-term erosion in the future."

Problems began dogging the NJPS a year ago, when the UJC released initial population figures but then cancelled the planned publication of the full report after discovering that the polling firm that conducted the survey between August 2000 and 2001, RoperASW, had lost some of the data.

At first, the UJC appointed an internal audit of the NJPS. That led to the independent review that has just been released.

In the latest outside review, Schulman concluded that the NJPS "questionnaire and study design raise many issues and questions that cannot be fully resolved."

He alludes often in his report to the study's "limitations," but also said that lessons learned from those problems will prove invaluable for similar studies in the future.

Schulman added that these issues likely will have little impact on the analysis of the "relationships between variables" — such as whether more Jewish education produces greater Jewish communal ties.

Despite the less-than-glowing review, the UJC's chief executive officer and president, Stephen Hoffman, said he was confident the survey will yield important information about American Jewry.

"There's a lot of criticizing going on about this number and that number," Hoffman

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Single mothers go home

The woman who prompted a nationwide movement in Israel by single mothers protesting welfare cuts is going home.

Vicky Knafo, who set up a protest camp outside government offices in Jerusalem after walking 125 miles from Mitzpe Ramon to the capital in July, will return home to run for political office.

Knafo said she will run for a council seat in her hometown, and she began dismantling the protest campsite Tuesday, Ha'aretz reported.

### Jewish underground redux?

A new report says a Jewish terror suspect knew about the killings of eight Palestinians in 2002, and planned to bomb Muslim shrines.

The arrest of the West Bank resident for attacks on Palestinians has Israel worried about a new Jewish underground.

Under Shin Bet interrogation, the suspect described roadside ambushes that killed eight Palestinians in 2002 as a "prelude" to the bombing of Muslim sites, including the shrines on the Temple Mount, the Israeli daily Ma'ariv reported.

### Sheik: Israelis welcome

The crown prince of the United Arab Emirates said Israelis should visit his country.

Sheik Mohammed bin Rashid al Maktoum, made the comments Tuesday amid a visit to Dubai by an 80-person Israeli delegation to the annual conference of the International Monetary Fund and World Bank.

Israelis are barred from the Arab emirate, but the Israeli IMF delegation was permitted to enter the country due to IMF rules for host countries.

Asked how he felt about Israelis in his country, Maktoum said, "No problem." He then called on Israelis to visit, the Jerusalem Post reported. "Are you happy?" he asked. "Come back for holiday."



## Daily News Bulletin

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told JTA. "I'm into the overall direction, the overall trends."

"The academicians will battle this out and decide whether the numbers are valid and what should be taken with a grain of salt," Hoffman said. "I believe over time the study will prove to be a valuable tool."

Steven Cohen, a Hebrew University sociologist and chief consultant to NJPS, said his gut feeling is that the U.S. Jewish population ranges between 5.5 million and 5.7 million — higher than the UJC's 5.2 million finding for 2000 and about the same as the figure cited in the 1990 survey.

Several demographers said the discrepancies fall within the statistical margin of error of such studies.

In its efforts to go beyond simple population data to glean a sharper, more inclusive portrait of American Jewish life, NJPS used multiple standards to define who is a Jew.

Such multiple categorizations added to the complexity of the study and its population numbers, Schulman said. He also said the screening method of determining the respondents could have skewed the results.

Once NJPS identified Jews, it went on to identify 4.3 million as more actively Jewish — from holiday observance to keeping kosher to belonging to Jewish institutions. But Schulman warned the study could also "skew toward Jews who are more religiously identified," because they were more likely to agree to a longer questionnaire.

Even before the NJPS was delayed last year, disagreement surfaced over the population counts. Among the chief critics was Gary Tobin, president of the Institute for Jewish & Community Research in San Francisco, who issued his own report counting 6.7 million U.S. Jews, tied to a wider circle of 13.3 million Americans with at least some Jewish ties.

Beside the population problem, Tobin said, synagogue membership figures in the NJPS were inflated. The NJPS found that 46 percent of the 4.3 million connected Jews belong to a house of worship.

That figure was based on a single question, and "studies of religion have shown that people don't report accurately," he said. He estimated the synagogue rolls at half that rate, based on figures from local Jewish community studies.

For their part, UJC officials dismissed the criticism.

"There are all kinds of numbers thrown around," said the project director of NJPS, Lorraine Blass.

Debate over the population figure broke out into full public view last week, after Goldberg's Op-Ed in The New York Times. Goldberg criticized the much-reported NJPS population drop and the previous, much-maligned intermarriage rate of 52 percent — recalculated for the latest survey at 43 percent — as "flawed figures" that the UJC promoted to worry people and enhance fund-raising.

A week earlier, Goldberg wrote in the Forward that the UJC "sexed up" the intermarriage rate last time around to foment worry. The latest NJPS found a 47 percent intermarriage rate for the past five years — or 54 percent if calculated as in 1990.

Goldberg's New York Times column "stuck in my throat," Hoffman wrote in his weekly e-mail to UJC members last Friday. Hoffman told JTA that while he believed the NJPS will ultimately prove worthy, Goldberg's "grandstanding and slander will hurt not the study itself, but the UJC" in the short term.

"If we undercounted, everyone is telling us we undercounted the less affiliated and the intermarried and the more marginal, so it's a Pyrrhic victory for him," Hoffman said.

Goldberg told JTA he believes the UJC suffers from "bizarre psychology" that finds bad news so that Jews will act to beef up Jewish identity and stem intermarriage.

"The numbers are wrong, and therefore they have created a false impression," he said. "They've created headlines across the country, and they don't take any responsibility for them."

In the Jewish social science community, there was an outcry at Goldberg's assertions that the social scientists and UJC had engaged in fraud.

Beyond the community of demographers involved with the study, Rela Mintz Gefen, president of Baltimore Hebrew University, says she has seen an impassioned, healthy discussion in the Jewish social science community as a result of the controversy.

She said there is a "consensus among social scientists that there was no fraud, no conspiracy, but an honest disagreement among scholars over who should be included" in defining a Jew. □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Bush sends holiday greeting

President Bush asked Jews to "pray for peace" in his annual Rosh Hashanah message.

"May we build a future of promise and compassion for all, and may the coming year be filled with hope and happiness," Bush said in the presidential message, released Tuesday.

### Lithuania, face thy past

A top Israeli official delivered a harsh speech to Lithuania's parliament, noting Lithuanian participation in the Holocaust.

The speaker of Israel's Knesset, Reuven Rivlin, who also addressed Latvia's parliament last week, said Lithuania must come to terms with its past.

"Many Lithuanians participated in the genocide of my people 60 years ago," Rivlin said at an otherwise festive opening session of Parliament in Vilnius.

Rivlin also denounced legislation that bars the descendants of Lithuanian Jews from receiving compensation for their lost property.

Rivlin resisted requests from senior Lithuanian officials to soften his remarks.

### Survivor rapped for protest

A German court fined a Holocaust survivor \$400 for protesting a march by neo-Nazis in Munich.

The court said Martin Loewenberg incited others to commit a crime by rallying them to resist the legally approved march last November, a report in Ha'aretz said.

Loewenberg's lawyer said she was ashamed that his actions required defense, and asked the court to dismiss the case.

### Met Council opens food pantry

New York's main Jewish charity group is opening a new kosher food pantry for the poor.

The New York Metropolitan Coordinating Council on Jewish Poverty is scheduled to open a new, 10,000-square-foot food pantry in Brooklyn on Wednesday.

The pantry is the hub of a network that feeds more than 9,000 families every month.

Last year, the group said it provided 2.2 million pounds of food to needy families.

### Apples and honey in Iraq

American Jewish soldiers in Iraq are getting a shipment of Torahs, gefilte fish, and apples and honey for Rosh Hashanah. The shipment is being sent by volunteers, rabbis, politicians and military personnel to Jewish GIs in Iraq and Kuwait.

The Jewish Educators Network, which is coordinating "Operation Apples and Honey," got four synagogues in New York to lend Torah scrolls for the cause.

## Charitable choice regulations allow federal funding for religious groups

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The Bush administration is pursuing its charitable choice goals through new regulations that would allow religious groups to receive federal funds for charitable programs.

After Congress altered the White House's faith-based proposal last year, the White House on Monday announced four new regulations that ease access for religious groups to grants for homeless shelters, drug rehabilitation centers and housing subsidies.

It also proposed new regulations allowing for faith-based groups that receive federal funds to maintain their religious identity, including the display of icons and symbols. The new regulations also would allow for religious charities that receive federal money to discriminate in hiring, choosing only to hire within their own faith.

"What President Bush has said is he wants to remove barriers that have kept faith-based groups out or discouraged them from applying for funds for services," said Jim Towey, director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives. "This brings us a step closer to where there is a completely level playing field for faith-based groups."

The faith-based initiatives have been opposed by many in the American Jewish community, who fear they will erode the constitutional separation of church and state and worry that religious groups will mix charitable services and proselytizing.

Orthodox groups, however, support the initiative because they believe it treats religious groups fairly and equally.

Liberal Jewish organizations say they remain concerned that Bush is doing through federal regulations what he could not do through Congress, after Congress changed the White House's charitable choice package last year. Taken out was a provision allowing religious discrimination in hiring — enacted Monday through the regulations.

"It's not just about proselytizing," said Mark Pelavin, associate director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism. "It's about government support for religious nature and character, programs that evoke a higher power."

The new money available includes \$8 billion in grants that the Department of Housing and Urban Development has set aside for faith groups. The Department of Health and Human Services awarded \$30.5 million in grants to 81 organizations that will use funds to provide technical assistance and sub-grants to faith-based groups.

The proposed rules, which will go through a public comment period, include Department of Education initiatives that will allow faith-based organizations to apply for funding of community technology centers for disadvantaged residents.

The Department of Labor has proposed allowing job training vouchers to be used for religious training services, and the Department of Justice is considering allowing religious groups to receive forfeited assets for social service purposes.

Pelavin said there is concern that faith-based groups will now be competing for the same funds as non-religious organizations, limiting access to federal money. He also cited issues of religious autonomy and prohibitions on religious discrimination in hiring when using federal funds — issues he says should be settled by Congress.

Towey denies that the White House is abandoning its congressional initiatives, arguing that it is being pursued simultaneously. Each house of Congress recently passed the Charitable Giving Act, limiting restrictions on donations to charities, he noted.

Towey said the president is "doing what he can, as chief executive, in the executive branch to remove barriers."

Labor Secretary Elaine Chao defended the discrimination in religious hiring.

"It removes the barrier that would disallow a federal contractor from hiring someone of their own faith," she said.

Pelavin said he worries that funds could be abused if religious charities proselytize their clientele, and that the introduction of federal monitoring of the affairs of religious organizations could be problematic.

Nathan Diament, director of the Orthodox Union's Institute for Public Affairs, said he is confident enough safeguards are in place to prevent proselytizing. □

## OBITUARY

**Ambassador Simcha Dinitz, who headed Jewish Agency, dies at 74**

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — It was October 1973, the Yom Kippur War was raging and Israel was facing the abyss.

Kalman Sultanik, a World Zionist Organization executive, was riding through New York City with Israel's ambassador to the United States, Simcha Dinitz, when Dinitz interrupted to call U.S. Secretary of State Henry Kissinger.

"Kissinger called him back right away," Sultanik recalled. "They were like brothers."

That relationship proved pivotal to Israel's effort to convince the Nixon administration to airlift emergency military supplies to Israel, which helped save the Jewish state and launched a new era in U.S.-Israel ties — though Kissinger himself says that Dinitz's efforts have yet to be sufficiently recognized.

"He was a superb representative of his country, whose role in saving his country in the 1973 war has never been adequately appreciated," Kissinger told JTA.

On Tuesday morning, Dinitz, 74, died of a heart attack at his Jerusalem home. His death sparked an outpouring of grief from friends and former colleagues, who paid tribute to the Zionist leader from the generation of Golda Meir and Yitzhak Rabin.

Dinitz was "Mr. Diplomat," said longtime aide and friend Zvi Rafiah. "I believe he was the best ambassador Israel ever had."

Dinitz's career of nearly 40 years in public service grew out of classical Labor Zionist roots.

Simcha Dinitz was born in 1929 in Tel Aviv and attended the Herzliya Hebrew Gymnasium Secondary School before joining the Jewish underground militia, the Haganah, which gave birth to the Israel Defense Forces.

He fought with the fledgling IDF in Israel's 1948 War of Independence, then studied political science at the University of Cincinnati.

He went on to earn a master's degree in international law from Georgetown University's School of Foreign Service in 1957.

Dinitz got his start at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs' information department in Jerusalem before heading the office of the ministry's director-general.

In 1966 Dinitz was named Israeli envoy to Rome, and in 1968 he became information minister at the Israeli embassy in Washington.

It was during that post-Six Day War period that some credit Dinitz with recognizing a split in American Jewish political views of Israel.

"The liberals in the United States preferred an Israel that was weak and needy — a perpetual, objectified victim," Dinitz said, according to a June 2002 article in the National Review magazine.

Conservatives, on the other hand, "saw Israel defeat the Soviet-backed Arab states on three separate fronts and reached the conclusion that the Jewish state was an ally to be counted on," Dinitz reportedly said.

"Political alliances switched overnight, throwing American Jews for a loop."

In March 1973, Dinitz was named Israel's top envoy to Washington. It was there that Rafiah served as congressional liaison under Dinitz, a period that began with the 1973 Yom Kippur War

and ended with the 1979 peace treaty with Egypt.

Rafiah said Dinitz cultivated "excellent relations" not only with the White House but with "the senators, the media, the Jewish community — everything you would expect from a successful ambassador."

During this era, Congress began approving major annual foreign aid packages to Israel, which since have reached \$3 billion a year.

Upon returning to Israel, Dinitz became vice president of Hebrew University, and in 1984 he was elected to the Knesset from the Labor Party.

In 1988, Dinitz was elected to head the Jewish Agency for Israel and the World Zionist Organization.

That's when Norman Lipoff, a prominent Miami attorney who currently is president of JTA's board of directors, got to know him.

Lipoff had joined the Jewish Agency board and chaired its finance committee, which was about to make some crucial decisions regarding Soviet Jews.

After the Soviet Union crumbled and Jews could leave, it fell to the Jewish Agency to work out the massive plan of getting them to Israel, which became known as Operation Exodus.

"Who was going to bring them to Israel, Aeroflot or El Al? If they had to stay somewhere on the way, where would it be?" Lipoff asked.

"There were major issues — luggage, people's pianos — it was a major logistical challenge,"

By 1990, a massive flow of immigration from the FSU had begun, one that would bring more than 1 million Jews to Israel over the next decade.

Bernice Tannenbaum, who chaired the World Zionist Organization's American section at the time and is a former president of Hadassah, credited Dinitz with motivating the agency to embark on the major FSU effort.

"He involved people to a greater extent in the workings of the agency, and they worked toward a goal," she said.

In another sea change, Dinitz shifted the way immigrants were absorbed into Israel, moving them directly into housing rather than placing them in absorption centers.

Dinitz also headed Operation Solomon, which airlifted 14,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel in a single day in May 1991.

But Dinitz's distinguished career came to an abrupt end in 1994, when he was charged with credit card fraud while heading the Jewish Agency.

A 1996 conviction was overturned in 1998 by Israel's Supreme Court, but the incident left a permanent mark on Dinitz, who remained troubled about the affair.

"It bothered him greatly," Lipoff said. "He had great pride in what he was able to achieve, and it was a major personal burden to have that occur at the end of his career."

Many who knew Dinitz spoke of his personal warmth, his rhetorical eloquence and his ability to find compromise in conflict.

"He carried out his mission with intelligence, indefatigable energy and constant good humor," Kissinger said. "I trusted him even when we had occasional disagreements, and I considered him a close, personal friend."

Dinitz leaves his wife, Vivian; their children Michael, Na'ama and Tamar; and eight grandchildren.

He was due to lie in state on Wednesday in Jerusalem and be buried on Mount Herzl in an area that is set aside for Israel's leaders. □