



Daily News Bulletin

Vol. 81, No. 181

Tuesday, September 30, 2003

86th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Bush meets rabbis

President Bush told U.S. rabbis that a "simple formula" exists for judging the new Palestinian leadership. Speaking to 15 rabbis in the White House on Monday, Bush said that the United States would deal with new Palestinian leaders if they dismantle terrorist groups and fight terrorism. Until then, he said, "everything's on hold," according to Rabbi Steven Pruzanski of Teaneck, N.J., and others who attended the meeting.

Bush said he supported Israel's security fence along the border with the West Bank, as long as its route does not preclude later territorial negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians.

Bush said he would look into the plight of Jonathan Pollard, but made no comments about the chances of a pardon for the former Navy intelligence officer serving a life sentence for spying for Israel.

Attendees said Bush twice became emotional during the meeting — once while discussing his recent trip to the site of the Auschwitz death camp and once when he acknowledged that people pray for him.

Concern about filling in for Hamas

The United States is concerned about replacing some basic social services provided by Hamas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Anthony Wayne, assistant secretary of state for economic and business affairs, told Congress last week that while the United States is working to cut all funding to terrorist groups like Hamas, "it is important to remember that a significant portion of this money has gone to provide extensive basic services to the Palestinian population — services the Palestinian Authority has not yet successfully provided."

He suggested that the United States and its partners in the diplomatic "Quartet" — the United Nations, Russia and the European Union — make sure such services are available.

Senators press Russia on Iran

Senate leaders are calling on Russia's president to cut nuclear cooperation with Iran.

In a letter to Vladimir Putin, the Senate Majority Leader and Minority Leader said they are "deeply concerned" that Russia is supplying fuel to an Iranian reactor. American Jewish groups have long pushed for increased U.S. pressure on Russia on this subject.

THE RABBINIC MATCH GAME

For new rabbis, the job search can be grueling — but rewarding

By Joe Berkofsky

NEW YORK (JTA) — Brian Schuldenfrei was wandering around midtown Manhattan one gray March day, clutching his cell phone, when the realization struck.

The 28-year-old rabbinic student had recently emerged from the grueling "interview week" at the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary, where synagogues meet pulpit candidates for the first time in a kind of rabbinical job fair capping the five-year program.

The Rabbinic Match Game Part 1 of a Series

He realized that he was so wrapped up in the job search that he'd forgotten to attend an important theology lecture.

Now Schuldenfrei was nervously awaiting call-backs.

The call he particularly wanted was from the 1,600-family Sinai Temple in Los Angeles, one of the Conservative movement's most prestigious congregations, where an assistant rabbi position was available.

"I wouldn't put my phone in my pocket because I was afraid I would miss that call," Schuldenfrei says. "I've never experienced more stress."

Like other professionals, rabbis must endure the rigors of job hunting — competing for jobs, campaigning to convince prospective employers to hire them and haggling over contract terms.

While each religious denomination follows its own set of rules and traditions that shape the rabbinic placement process, the goal is the same across the religious spectrum.

"It's really about making the best match," says Rabbi Joel Alpert, placement director for the Reconstructionist movement.

While some of the movements almost have turned the process into a science, the crucial ingredient is the chemistry between rabbi and congregation.

"Like falling in love, the subjective is the most important factor in the end," says Rabbi William Lebeau, dean of the rabbinical school at JTS.

After what seemed to Schuldenfrei an eternity, Sinai Temple's senior rabbi, David Wolpe, a rising leader in the movement, invited him for an interview.

Schuldenfrei hopped on a flight to Los Angeles, arriving in time to attend Friday night services, eat dinner with Wolpe and congregation lay leaders and polish up a Shabbat sermon.

The next day he delivered the sermon to 1,000 congregants, led a luncheon class for about 100 people, including board members, then spent the afternoon with the synagogue president, Wolpe and Sinai Temple's other assistant rabbi, Sherre Hirsch. On Sunday, Schuldenfrei returned to the synagogue for still more meetings.

For the rabbinical job-seeker, that kind of hectic, pressure-filled pace is typical.

"It's very high stress. You're constantly on your toes, meeting tons of people," says Geri Newburge, 29, ordained this spring at the Reform movement's Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and newly hired assistant rabbi at Temple Emanuel in Cherry Hill, N.J.

"The synagogue visit is very difficult because you're wearing two kipot," Schuldenfrei says. "You want to be the most gracious, dynamic, inspiring person, while trying to think critically. You're evaluating them as much as they're evaluating you."

Others say the challenges surface as they begin searching for a pulpit.

Unlike the Conservative and Reform movements, which strictly tie experience levels

MIDEAST FOCUS

Ariel says Ariel in

The West Bank city of Ariel will be included in Israel's security fence, Israel's prime minister said.

Ariel Sharon made the announcement at a Likud Party meeting Monday, Ha'aretz reported. Ariel is several miles beyond the "Green Line," the boundary that divides Israel proper from the West Bank. U.S. officials have warned that the cost of building the fence around certain settlements may be deducted from \$9 billion in U.S. loan guarantees to Israel.

Rosh Hashanah closure lifted

The Rosh Hashanah closure of the West Bank and Gaza Strip was lifted. An Israeli military spokesman said Monday that the decision to restore limited traffic between Israel and the Palestinian territories was made despite the murder of an Israeli man and infant at a West Bank settlement over the holiday, and ongoing intelligence of further planned attacks.

Arrests in soldier's murder

Three Israeli Arabs have been arrested for the murder of soldier Oleg Shaichet two months ago. A gag order on the case was lifted Monday after one of the suspects re-enacted the abduction and killing in Kafr Kana, an Arab village in the Galilee.

Israeli TV said it was not clear whether the three acted out of solidarity with the Palestinians or just to steal Shaichet's rifle, which has not been located.

Dahlan blasts intifada

Outgoing Palestinian Authority Security Minister Mohammed Dahlan criticized the use of violence in the Palestinian intifada.

"We did not understand 9/11 in a correct and fundamental way that would have allowed us to help the national interest of our people," Dahlan told The Associated Press on Monday. Dahlan made his comments on the third anniversary of the intifada.



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.

to congregation size, the modern Orthodox and Reconstructionist movement do not maintain such rules. So rabbis from those movements need to consider congregation size as well.

"It's a little bit more free market," says Rabbi A. Mark Levin, director of the Gertrude and Morris Bienenfeld Department of Rabbinic Services, which is part of RIETS. "The rabbis and the communities determine the fit."

Two years ago, Judah Dardick found a land of opportunity when he was set to complete his ordination at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary, or RIETS, the rabbinical school of Yeshiva University, modern Orthodoxy's banner institution.

Congregation Beth Jacob, a 140-family Orthodox synagogue in Oakland, Calif., was one of seven shuls that invited him for interviews.

Beth Jacob wanted a rabbi to step in and fill the shoes of its longtime leader, Rabbi Howard Zack. But Dardick was worried, despite the congregation's relatively small size.

"What if I don't know enough?" he said he asked himself. "I've never been a rabbi and it's a big Torah. That was my greatest anxiety — that I couldn't handle it."

From the congregation's perspective, hiring a rabbi is no small task, either.

The search for a new rabbi, especially a senior position, can stretch for months and involve large search committees that spend many hours vetting candidates.

In 1997, for instance, Sinai Temple in Los Angeles convened a 55-member search committee that spent six months interviewing candidates before picking Wolpe, who had conducted High Holiday services there.

Seminary officials say congregations' competing desires for youth and experience are a dilemma every new rabbi faces.

"Every congregation is looking for the messiah," says Levin, of the Yeshiva University rabbinical school.

At Oakland's Beth Jacob, most officials believed that the small congregation stood little chance of finding another veteran of Zack's stature to step in, so they looked for a more junior rabbi.

Despite some anxiety among members over choosing a younger replacement, Kaye says the committee drafted a list of characteristics the synagogue sought in a leader and realized Dardick embodied them.

"We were realistic," he recalls. "We realized no one person would be everything."

The non-Orthodox denominations steer new rabbis into assistant rabbi roles — partly to alleviate the pressure of being in the main pulpit in the shadows of departed giants, and partly to reduce competition with older rabbis.

"The congregation knows it's not going to find the messiah in its assistant," says Rabbi Richard Levy, director of rabbinic studies at the Los Angeles campus of the Reform movement's Hebrew Union College.

Yet even the journey to an assistant rabbi's job can prove arduous.

Neal Schuster, 33, a recent HUC graduate, used the Internet to research congregations he was interested in, learning about their rabbis, senior staff and synagogue location. Like many of his classmates, he cast a wide net.

When Reform congregations sent representatives this spring to HUC's Cincinnati campus for an annual three-day meet-and-greet with upcoming graduates, Schuster spoke with 14 congregations.

Schuster and his wife decided they wanted to raise their toddler-age children in an affordable area, and his first choice was Congregation B'nai Jehuda in Kansas City, a 1,400-family temple. Fortunately, Schuster was the congregation's first choice, too.

Rabbi Arthur Nemitoff, 49, was hired at B'nai Jehuda as senior rabbi just before Schuster. The pair hit it off.

While he sees the importance of serving as a mentor, Nemitoff says, he also sees drawbacks in thinking of new rabbis as mere assistants. "Whether you're an assistant or associate rabbi, the first three letters" of the title are the same, he says.

Meanwhile, Schuster, who arrived in Los Angeles in midsummer, says so far he's keeping busy organizing and simply "figuring out what this community is all about."

At Sinai Temple in Los Angeles, Schuldenfrei is already making progress.

"He is just spontaneously and authentically approachable and kind," Wolpe says of his new hire. "That made a tremendous impression."

And Congregation Beth Jacob in Oakland recently renewed Dardick's two-year contract. □

JEWISH WORLD

Babi Yar massacre marked

Ukraine's president marked the 62nd anniversary of the Babi Yar massacre.

Ukrainian officials laid flowers Monday at the site in Kiev where more than 33,000 Jews were killed and dumped into a ravine in September 1941. Between 100,000 and 200,000 people, including non-Jews, were killed there during the war.

Meanwhile, demonstrators in New York protested the building of a memorial and center at the site of the Babi Yar massacre. Organizers said some 45 people demonstrated outside the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee's headquarters in New York on Monday.

"My heart was broken when I read in the papers what kind of center they want to build," said Fira Stukelman, a Holocaust survivor who attended the demonstration.

"We don't understand the purpose of that demonstration," said Amir Shaviv, the JDC's assistant executive vice president. "Ten days ago, the JDC communicated to the group in writing our position" — that the issue is "a 'public debate' between Jewish organizations in Kiev, and urged the group to join that discussion."

Arnold: I'm sorry

Arnold Schwarzenegger apologized for a 1986 wedding toast to Kurt Waldheim.

"It was a mistake," the California candidate for governor told the Jewish Journal of Greater Los Angeles last week about his toast to his Austrian compatriot Waldheim, the former U.N. secretary-general who covered up having served in a pro-Nazi unit during World War II. Schwarzenegger, who is leading in polls for California's Oct. 7 recall election, has been an active supporter of the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

Austrian far right struggles

Austria's far-right Freedom Party finished last in two regional elections over the weekend.

The poor showings by the party associated with Jorg Haider lead some analysts to believe that Haider may return to national politics. For a time, the party was part of the Austrian government after it finished second in national elections in 1999, spurring Israel to temporarily suspend diplomatic relations with Vienna.

Anti-hate program in Germany

An American Jewish anti-bias program will be implemented in three Berlin high schools. After three years of preparation, the American Jewish Committee on Sept. 29 announced the launching of Hands Across the Campus, a program tested on American college campuses and now geared toward racism, xenophobia and anti-Semitism in Germany.

Furor in Argentina over official's allegations of Israeli invasion plan

By *Florencia Arbiser*

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) — As Argentine President Nestor Kirchner left last week for the opening of the U.N. General Assembly in New York, he hoped to continue making progress on the investigation of the 1994 bombing of Buenos Aires' main Jewish community center.

That probe, he believed, would improve relations with the country's Jewish community, which had long complained about the government's slow and inept investigation of the AMIA attack, which killed 85 people.

But Kirchner's trip is being overshadowed by a scandal at home involving accusations of anti-Semitism.

On Aug. 13, the head of the Argentine army, Roberto Bendini, was giving a class to second-year captains at the War School. Bendini allegedly said that "small Israeli groups" disguised as tourists were planning to invade Argentina's Patagonia region.

Almost a month later, on Sept. 12, the local newspaper Infobae published new information about the substance of that classroom lecture, unleashing a public debate that has resisted government efforts to resolve it.

The journalistic director of Infobae, Jorge Grecco, told JTA that the newspaper story was based on such materials as student notes.

The Jewish community's DAIA political umbrella organization and the AMIA Jewish community center were furious and demanded explanations from the government. Radical and Peronist party senators also demanded that the government explain Bendini's comments.

Government officials met with Jewish representatives and created a special commission to investigate the reports, but many have expressed support for Bendini. The two-person commission, coordinated by the army and Defense Ministry, consisted of Gen. Nestor Perez Vovard and Secretary of Military Affairs Julian Dominguez.

The government told Jewish leaders it was making every effort to ascertain if Bendini indeed had talked of a supposed Israeli plot against Patagonia.

If true, the remarks would be seen as a sign of anti-Semitism in Argentina, where fantastical allegations of a supposed Jewish or Israeli plot to attack Patagonia featured prominently in the arrests and interrogations of many Argentine Jews under the military dictatorships of the 1970s.

Government sources seem to believe that Bendini is the victim of an internal fight in the military following a recent restructuring.

Aside from a recent phone call to AMIA President Abraham Kaul, in which he denied making the reported remarks, Bendini has remained silent.

After an investigation that lasted less than two days, the commission said it had determined that Bendini had not made the remarks in question.

DAIA members met recently with the head of the Argentine Cabinet, Alberto Fernandez, and came away satisfied.

"It is clear to DAIA that there is no proof to incriminate Bendini. Although we have demanded that the government stay alert, we're finished with this topic," DAIA's executive director, Claudio Avruj, said.

"We were not afraid to clarify what was necessary," Fernandez said, according to the La Nacion newspaper. "We are satisfied that we have done all we could for the Jewish community."

But members of AMIA — who at the last minute were left out of the meeting with the government, with no explanation — are not satisfied.

"We believe there is more to be investigated," Kaul said in an interview.

Grecco, who has written a prize-winning book on the Argentine army, said a commission composed of army officers is not the proper forum to investigate the actions of a military man. The government investigation was primarily a "political production," Grecco said, and protected Bendini.

Now, the Simon Wiesenthal Center is demanding a more far-reaching investigation into the incident. □

FOCUS ON ISSUES

Two years after Sept. 11, Jews raise concerns about Patriot Act

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Two years after the USA Patriot Act became law, Jewish groups are still searching for the balance between law enforcement and civil liberties.

The passage of the act in the aftermath of the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks divided Jewish groups who were ambivalent about the legislation from allies in the civil rights community that immediately sought to have the law revoked.

The central reason for the Jewish groups' hesitancy is that the act's provisions were designed to target groups that target Jews.

"We can't ignore the fact that every Jewish community is threatened by terrorism," said Michael Lieberman, Washington counsel of the Anti-Defamation League.

Privately, some Jewish activists admit that had law enforcement used the tools to target a minority other than Arabs or Muslims, Jewish opposition to the act might have been more pronounced.

Provisions in the bill, such as the freezing of terrorist assets and new rules for border crossing, can be used by law enforcement to protect Jews, Lieberman said.

"Every congregant who walks through a synagogue in this world for Rosh Hashanah will walk past security guards and cameras," he said. "This has an impact on the analysis we do on tools we want law enforcement to have."

The law updates procedures to allow police to track new technology, such as cellular phones and e-mail. It also knocks down barriers that prevented information sharing between local and national law enforcement agencies.

Post-Sept. 11, intelligence groups said the divisions hampered cooperation that might have helped anticipate the attack. Civil libertarians say the barriers, in place since the 1970s, prevented spying on U.S. citizens.

Proponents of the legislation say the provisions are essential for staying ahead of the modern terrorism threat, and for updating law enforcement tools that were crafted to fight the Mafia, not terrorism networks.

Critics say the new laws reverse traditional American notions that a suspect is innocent until proven guilty and has a right to counsel. "I have constituents in jail without charges, without their family officially knowing what's going on," said Rep. Bob Filner (D-Calif.).

Filner, who is Jewish, joined Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D-Ohio), other lawmakers and civil rights groups Wednesday to introduce new legislation, entitled the "Benjamin Franklin True Patriot Act," that would repeal many of the Patriot Act's provisions.

The new legislation, Kucinich said, balances liberty and safety. "There is a sentiment in Congress to move to challenge this idea that we have to forsake the Bill of Rights in order to be safe," said Kucinich, a Democratic candidate for president.

He is supported by many civil rights groups, including the American Civil Liberties Union, the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the Council on American-Islamic Relations.

Kucinich also was joined by the Religious Action Center for

Reform Judaism, the first Jewish group to speak out against the Patriot Act.

Mark Pelavin, the RAC's associate director, said his organization does not officially endorse every provision of the proposed legislation, but agrees that the bill addresses concerns the Reform movement has raised about the Patriot Act.

While Jewish law allows for the infringement of individual privacy when lives are at stake, those intrusions should be as limited as possible, Pelavin said.

"We must be vigilant in ensuring that our effort to destroy terrorism does not undermine the very liberties that make this country worth celebrating and protecting," he said.

Pelavin says many of his constituents are unsettled by a perceived threat to civil liberties. He hopes that Kucinich's legislation will start a dialogue about the Patriot Act and its effect on individual rights.

"I think many people are concerned that some of the provisions this bill targets do not contribute to security," he said.

Other Jewish groups are hearing the same thing. Some Jewish community relations councils are backing referenda seeking to recall the legislation.

Some Jewish leaders support the repeal of individual provisions of the law, but will not call the entire bill a failure.

"It certainly has not been our position that the USA Patriot Act is a perfect document," said Richard Foltin, legislative director of the American Jewish Committee. "If we were not in the middle of a war on terrorism, there would be different judgments made."

That led AJCommittee to back a sunset for the bill that would force Congress to reexamine the Patriot Act after several years. They also support a bill that would repeal some specific Patriot Act provisions, such as the "sneak and peek" law, which allows delayed notification for search warrants.

Kucinich says the Patriot Act was rushed through Congress before members could take a full accounting of its implications. Jewish groups make the same argument, saying that time has allowed them to better understand the act and the way law enforcement uses the provisions.

"The impact, both emotionally and security-wise, of 9/11 was so big that America needed time and needed to be able to sort out the pieces of it," said Reva Price, Washington representative of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs.

Even with such reservations, Jewish groups also are wary of Kucinich's strident tone. Jews may be frustrated with some actions of Attorney General John Ashcroft but they don't want to demonize him, because they believe he is sincere in wanting the bill purely as a tool against terrorism.

Jewish groups also are eager to examine new legislation Ashcroft wants, including his Patriot Act II, which would give law enforcement more tools for homeland security protection. Jewish leaders say the approach is piecemeal, separating what is necessary for security from what is superfluous.

What's clear, Jewish groups say, is that such considerations are uncharted territory. While opponents compare the Patriot Act to the herding of Japanese into detention camps during World War II and other violations of civil liberties, Lieberman says the difference now is that the threat is real, not perceived.

"You have to start from the idea that terrorism is different," he said. "You are not trying to find the criminal, because the criminal may kill himself. You are trying to prevent the crime." □