

## IN THE NEWS

**Gaza airstrike kills 2 in Rafah**

Two suspected Palestinian terrorists were killed in an Israeli airstrike. Helicopter gunships fired at least two missiles at a car carrying members of the Abu Rish Brigades in the southern Gaza Strip town of Rafah on Thursday.

According to security sources, one of the men was wanted in connection with the killing of three Israeli soldiers in 1992.

**Neve Shalom shul reopens after bombing**

A synagogue in Istanbul struck by a suicide bombing last year was reopened.

The Neve Shalom synagogue was reopened temporarily Thursday following extensive repairs. The formal reopening of the synagogue is slated for October.

Twelve Muslim passersby died after a car bomber struck Neve Shalom on Nov. 15 while a Bar Mitzvah was under way.

It was the second terrorist attack at the synagogue; pro-Palestinian gunmen killed 22 worshipers there in 1986. The synagogue was one of two in Istanbul that was attacked by bombers that day.

Most of the city's 15 synagogues still remain closed while the Jewish community re-evaluates the security situation at each building.

**Edwards: Kerry would back Israel**

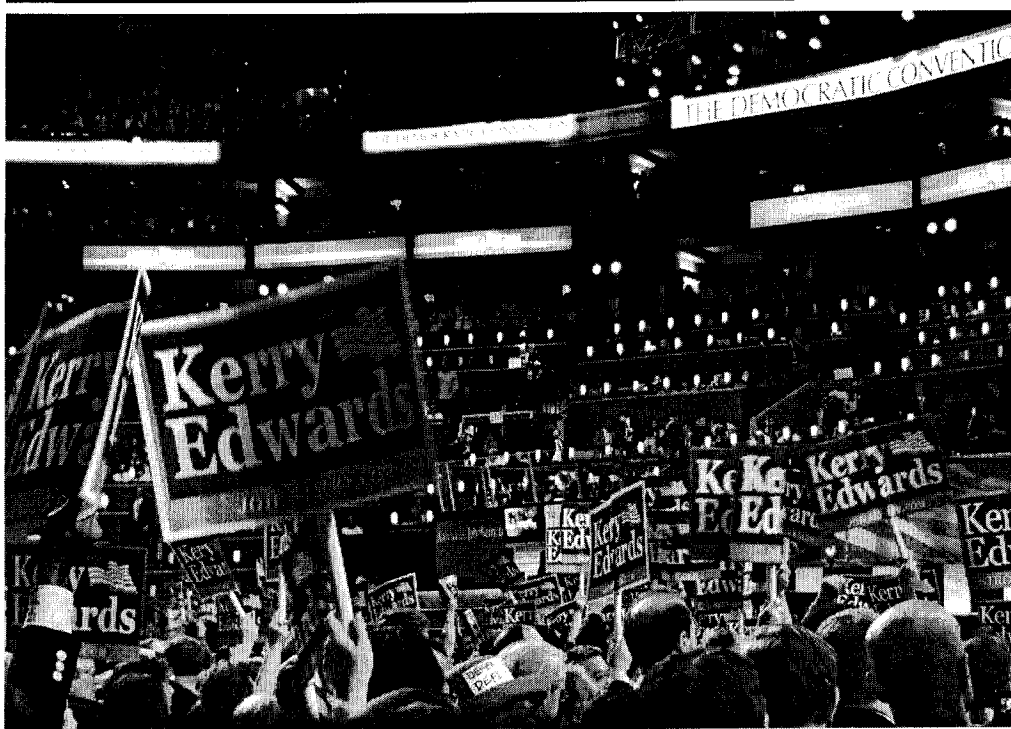
Sen. John Edwards (D-N.C.) singled out support for Israel in his speech accepting the Democratic nomination for vice president.

Outlining John Kerry's vision of regaining international respect for the United States, Edwards said at the Democratic National Convention on Wednesday night, "A new president will bring the world to our side and, with it, a stable Iraq and a real chance for peace in the Middle East, including a safe and secure Israel."

■ **MORE NEWS, Pg. 8**

# WORLD REPORT

PUBLISHED WEEKDAYS BY JTA—THE GLOBAL NEWS SERVICE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE • WWW.JTA.ORG



DNC

Democrats tried to promote a message of unity at this week's national convention in Boston.

## As Kerry formulates foreign policy, some wonder about effect on Israel

By RON KAMPEAS

**B**OSTON (JTA) — It's become the buzz phrase of the Democratic convention: "Strength and wisdom are not opposing values."

President Clinton earned an extended ovation in Boston this week when he packed John Kerry's message on security and international relations into those seven words. Kerry would not hesitate to act, the message suggests, but he also would show greater openness to the concerns of those outside his administration, and abroad.

"Democrats favor shared responsibility,

shared opportunity and more global cooperation," Clinton said. "We live in an interdependent world in which we can't kill, jail or occupy all our potential adversaries, so we have to both fight terror and build a world with more partners and fewer terrorists."

The question Jewish Democrats have been asking has been: What does the message — and its implied criticism of President Bush's foreign policy — mean for Israel?

No one would speak on the record at what is necessarily a love-fest for the party's candidate. But in numerous behind-the-scenes meetings with senior Kerry

*Continued on page 2*

**AMERICA  
DECIDES  
2004**

## ■ *Jews wonder if Kerry's foreign policy would benefit Israel*

*Continued from page 1*

officials, Jewish Democrats have posed hard questions: Would Kerry's overall plan to consult more with other nations, raise the profile of international bodies and restore Clinton-era cooperation with Europe pull the United States away from the extraordinary closeness Bush has forged with Israel?

The anxieties have hardly been quieted by convention speeches, where speaker after speaker has emphasized the kind of global cooperation that Israel's current Likud-led government reviles because of the perceived pro-Arab tilt of the European Union and other international bodies.

It didn't help that figures who have been on the wrong end of Jewish community anger eagerly reinforced that message in forums large and small.

■  
President Carter, who many Jews feel has taken a consistently pro-Palestinian line since being voted out of office in 1980, riled some when he drew a link between the Bush administration's Israel policy and anti-American animus.

"Violence has gripped the Holy Land, with the region increasingly swept by anti-American passions," Carter told the convention in a prime-time speech.

Robert Borosage, an adviser to Jesse Jackson's presidential campaign in 1988, reinforced the point in an Arab American Institute panel.

"America today is more isolated and less admired and less secure than ever," he said, citing U.S. policy toward Israel as one reason.

Senior Democrats say Kerry's message has more to do with alleviating pressure on America in Iraq. But that didn't stop the questions in closed-door forums.

Specifically, would Kerry defer to European demands that the United States end its isolation of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat? Would Kerry be as proactive as Bush in pressing the Europeans to contain the surge in anti-Semitism? And would Kerry be as aggressive as Bush in isolating Iran and pressing it to dismantle its nuclear capability?

For answers, Democrats point to the party platform and Kerry's record: He is unequivocal in supporting the isolation of Arafat and a nuclear shutdown in Iran. As far as anti-Semitism goes, Kerry campaigners suggest he may be even more adamant than Bush.

The president only has alluded to virulent strains of anti-Semitism in the Egyptian and Saudi mainstreams, they say, while Kerry has been more direct, even using an expletive in a meeting three years ago with Hosni Mubarak when the Egyptian president insisted he couldn't control the phenomenon.

■  
Jewish leaders take comfort in such reassurances, but Democrats have been put on the defensive by Republicans.

It doesn't help that Kerry often appears to follow Bush's lead in his pro-Israel policy, approving Israel's West Bank security barrier only after Bush did, and recognizing some Israeli West Bank claims and rejecting a Palestinian refugee "right of return" after Bush had made those historic gestures.

The question of Kerry's approach to peacemaking was central Wednesday to a packed National Jewish Democratic Council forum on whether Jews are turning Republican.

Several noted many in Israel are apprehensive at the prospect of increased U.S. pressure on Israel to make peace when it feels it doesn't have a trustworthy partner on the other side. Others at the forum said there was no reason to fear U.S. activism.

"Being pro-Israel means making sure Israel is at peace," said Geoffrey Lewis, a Boston lawyer who is active with the Israel Policy Forum.

Until now, one problem for the campaign had been the lack of a central pro-Israel figure in the top tier. Kerry filled that hole this week when he named Mel Levine, a former California congressman, to head the campaign's Middle East policy formulation.

Kerry also has consulted with top Clinton-era Middle East officials Martin Indyk and Dennis Ross, both Jews, with a possible eye to appointments.

Levine, Ross and Indyk all have superb relations with the Jewish community, but they still pose a problem of timing: The current Israeli government, led by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, rejects the approach to peace that their biographies suggest, such as initiating and promoting final-status solutions that Likud leaders feel should be left only to Israel.

The Jewish Democrats attending the convention sympathize to a degree with the outlooks of Levine, Ross and Indyk.

Still, they dread confrontations between Sharon's government and an administration that could arise over disagreements about whether one side or the other is fulfilling its commitments.

They are especially concerned that such pressure could emerge because of the dividends Israeli-Palestinian peace would provide toward the international assistance Kerry would seek in Iraq.

The party answer to that concern is a grim numbers crunch: Clinton's final year in office involved much dialogue, little progress and few Israeli dead.

Bush's three and a half years in office have seen little dialogue, little progress and nearly 1,000 Israeli dead.

Dialogue may be painfully slow, they say, but it stems violence.

The intifada erupted on Clinton's watch, they acknowledge, but they also believe that the intense involvement he espoused would have been more effective at stemming the violence than the Bush administration approach, which stepped back from the issue during its first 14 months in office.

"Bush may be pro-Israel, but he has not been successful in being pro-Israel," said Ivy Cohen, a Democratic activist from New York. "Kerry would actively work toward a solution, not just pay lip service." ■

**Would Kerry  
defer to European  
demands on the  
Israeli-Palestinian  
conflict?**

### WORLD REPORT

**Howard E. Friedman**  
President

**Mark J. Joffe**  
Executive Editor and Publisher  
**Lisa Hostein**  
Editor

**Michael S. Arnold**  
Managing Editor

**Lenore A. Silverstein**  
Finance and Administration Director  
**Paula Simmonds**  
Marketing and Development Director

JTA WORLD REPORT is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For more 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).  
© JTA. Reproduction only with permission.

# Temple Mount plot: Extremism or just politics?

By GIL SEDAN

JERUSALEM (JTA) — If there is one thing common to many apocalyptic fantasies about the Middle East, it is that the next world war will begin with an attempt to blow up the Al-Aksa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock on Jerusalem's Temple Mount.

This week, Israeli officials warned that they feared Jewish extremists might be planning just such an attack.

Tzachi Hanegbi, Israel's minister of internal security, said in a television interview over the weekend that intelligence services fear the threat could grow as right wingers seek to block Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's disengagement plan.

"There is real danger that they will want to make use of this most sensitive, most explosive and most sacred site to the Muslims to stage a terrorist attack on the site, whether in a mosque or against worshippers, and then hope that a chain reaction will lead to the collapse of the political process," Hanegbi said.

But to Israel's right wing, Hanegbi's comments were similar to frequent warnings from Israeli officials about Jewish extremists allegedly poised to strike: The claims, though politically useful, are made without any substantial evidence about who the conspirators may be, how many of them there are and how advanced their supposed plans are.

In fact, Hanegbi said, "there is no information on specific people" that might blow up the Temple Mount. But, he said, "There are alarming indications that thoughts" about blowing up the mosque "are substantial, and not only philosophical."

Leaders of Israel's settler movement describe such a vague warning as an attempt to delegitimize their protest campaign against Sharon's disengagement plan.

"They are simply setting the stage for preventive arrests among the so-called 'hilltop youths,'" said veteran settler leader Elyakim Haetzni of Kiryat Arba, referring to young settlers who have zealously defended settlement outposts throughout the West Bank and who are the most heated opponents of Israeli withdrawal.

According to one unconfirmed report, unnamed "right-wing radicals" plan to stage a mega-attack on the Temple Mount, possibly by flying an airplane into Muslim worshippers during prayers.

The buildings on the mount — the Al-Aksa Mosque and the gold-topped Dome of the Rock — have attracted Jewish fanatics since the early 1980s, and blowing up these landmarks was one of the grand designs of the "Jewish underground" that operated during that period.

These Jewish terrorists also killed several students at the Islamic University of Hebron, tried to assassinate two West Bank mayors and conspired to blow up Palestinian buses.

Most of the Jewish groups who dream of rebuilding the Holy Temple on the mount say they would not resort to violence but would wait for the Messiah to miraculously destroy the Muslim shrines. Some small fringe groups, however, could be more inclined to take matters into their own hands.

Aryeh Amit, former commander of the Jerusalem police, warned that this was exactly the scenario security forces fear.

"The problem does not necessarily lie in all those potential terrorists known to the security forces," he said, "but rather in the single anonymous terrorist, unknown to the security forces."

Some 35 years ago, an Australian Christian, Michael Dennis Rohan, set fire to part of the Al-Aksa Mosque. In 1982, Alan Goodman, an American tourist, burst onto the mount and shot at Muslim worshippers.

Hanegbi's comments were the second time in a week that Israeli officials warned against right-wing fanatics. Last week he warned that Jews were plotting to assassinate Sharon, while Avi Dichter, head of the Shin Bet domestic security service, told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that growing numbers of far-right Jews were in favor of hurting Sharon.

"We have intelligence material about dozens of Jews who yearn for the death of the prime minister, with an additional number of 150 to 200 in the outer circle who may agree to it," he said.

The comments triggered criticism from both right and left. The left complained that Hanegbi and the government should

act against potential plotters rather than talk.

"Had the plotters been Arab, they would have long been arrested," said legislator Yossi Sarid of the Yahad Party.

Right wingers slam such comments as a smear campaign against their political camp, noting that most suspects in a ring

of alleged Jewish terrorists apprehended about two years ago have been freed for lack of evidence.

"They point a finger at the hilltop youth because they want to prepare the ground for ethnic cleansing of Jews, to please the Americans," Haetzni told JTA. "How many

do they want to put in preventive arrests, all those 100,000 who stood in the chain today?" he asked.

He was referring to a human chain formed Sunday night from the Gaza Strip to Jerusalem to protest the disengagement plan.

A more likely target might be Yehuda Etzion, convicted when the 1980s underground movement was broken up. Etzion reportedly had developed a plan to blow up the mosque.

"I pray three times a day that 1,934 years after the destruction of the Second Temple, we shall rebuild the Third Temple on the site still controlled by the Muslim robber," Etzion said in a recent radio interview.

He added: "Blowing up the Dome of the Rock is the right thing to do, but this is not the way to prevent the disengagement plan."

Haetzni, a lawyer, used even stronger language. "What Prime Minister Ariel Sharon does on the eve of Tisha B'Av is the actual destruction of the Third Temple," he said. "There are hundreds of thousands of people who feel that if Sharon carries out his plan, this will actually be the destruction of the Jewish national home."

Haetzni charged that Hanegbi's warning could ignite a firestorm among the Arabs. Palestinian and Israeli Arab leaders long have tried to rile up their people with unfounded claims that Israeli officials are scheming to blow up the Al-Aksa Mosque.

**'Blowing up the Dome of the Rock is the right thing to do, but this is not the way to prevent the disengagement plan.'**

**Yehuda Etzion**

Former member of Jewish underground

# Reporter's notebook: Out and about in Boston

By MATTHEW E. BERGER  
and RON KAMPEAS

BOSTON (JTA) — The National Jewish Democratic Council rounded up an all-star lineup at the party's convention here to convince their own that Jews are not becoming Republican.

In a packed ballroom Wednesday, Jewish Democratic political operatives pledged that Jewish voters would grow more comfortable with John Kerry's positions on the Middle East as the campaign swings into action, and admitted that more must be done to reach out to the community.

"When the Jewish community and particularly those who care about Israel learn about John Kerry's record, they will not only be comforted, they will be really impressed," said Mel Levine, a former California congressman who will chair one of Kerry's foreign policy advisory teams.

Jonathan Sarna, a professor of Jewish history at Brandeis University, agreed with the overall premise that the majority of Jews will stick with the Democrats.

But he also suggested that Jews are crediting Bush for the greater empathy Americans now have for Israel.

The rise in anti-Americanism around the world has led more people in the United States to greater understand the plight of Jews, and he said Democratic interests in increasing ties with Europe could turn off some Jewish voters.

## Rock the Temples!

Young Jewish Democrats attending a bash at one of Boston's best-known hot spots on Wednesday got treated to a sermon about Tisha B'Av.

Rob Kutner, a writer for the award-winning "The Daily Show," warmed up the crowd at the Aria event with a few jokes trying to figure out which Jewish holiday most resembles a political convention.

He settled on Passover — in both cases, he said, "It takes a week for our digestive systems to recover."

That got laughs at the event sponsored by the National Jewish Democrat Council and kid show mogul Haim Saban, but then Kutner slid into an earnest exegesis of a Talmudic tale related to "sinat hinam," the reckless hatred among Jews that tradition says helped bring down the ancient temples. He cautioned Democrats never to

exhibit such hatred for their opponents.

There was some chatter during the mini-sermon, and friends of Kutner tried to shush the crowd, but the writer was not aggrieved. "I'm on basic cable, I don't expect much," he said.

Cameron Kerry, the brother of the Democratic nominee, Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.), was also on hand, and regaled the crowd with the tale of his courtship of his wife, Kathy Weinman. "It was basic goy meets girl," he said.

In fact, Kerry's marriage to Weinman 20 years ago led to his conversion to Judaism, and they are active members of Boston's Jewish community today. He told the crowd that the only time he felt prouder than his brother's political rise was at the B'not Mitzvah of his daughters, Jessica and Laura.

That led Kutner to quip that not only is John Kerry good for the Jews, he's so good he contributed his brother to the Jews.

## Looking to Florida

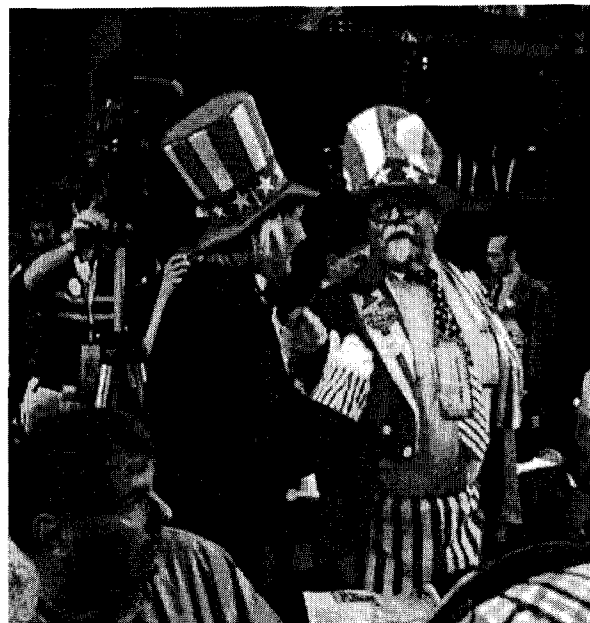
Florida voters know all eyes are on them. And Jews want to make sure what happened in 2000 doesn't get repeated.

But while Jewish Democrats thought they would be running on a platform against the voting irregularities of 2000 this fall, they feel they are better able to showcase Kerry on the merits.

"Four years ago, we thought all we would have to run on is anger and frustration," Stacy Ritter, a state representative in Northwest Broward County and a delegate, said from the convention floor Wednesday evening. "Now, George W. Bush has handed us issues on a silver platter."

Talk of hanging chads and butterfly ballots has been replaced by discussions of health care and the war in Iraq, Ritter said. She added that she almost wants to thank Bush for making it easier to court voters.

Rep. Peter Deutsch (D-Fla.), who is running for the Senate seat being vacated by Sen. Bob Graham (D-Fla.), said people are still thinking about four years ago, but mostly because they are far from



DNC

There was plenty of lightheartedness among delegates at this week's Democratic National Convention in Boston.

convinced that the problems will not be repeated this November.

"It's the fact that there's not been progress," Deutsch said, noting that state Democrats had to go to court to ensure that voting rolls were re-examined.

## Carter on peace

The achievements of 25 years of Middle East peacemaking are in peril, former President Jimmy Carter said as he earned long, standing ovations at the convention's opening night Monday.

He excoriated President Bush for his "mistakes and miscalculations" in foreign policy. "The Middle East peace process has come to a screeching halt for the first time since Israel became a nation," Carter said. "Violence has gripped the Holy Land, with the region increasingly swept by anti-American passions."

Kerry had suggested Carter as a possible Middle East peace envoy, but backed down after Jewish protests against appointing an envoy perceived as having an anti-Israel bias.

## Cheers, then mourning

The convention floor saw an eerie switch Monday night from cheers of joy to chants of mourning. At 11 p.m., minutes after delegates cleared the floor, hoarse from cheering President Clinton's rousing speech endorsing John Kerry for president, about 30 Jews gathered in

AMERICA  
DECIDES  
2004

the Florida section to chant the prayers commemorating the tragedies that have befallen Jews on Tisha B'Av, including the destruction of the two temples in Jerusalem.

Some delegates literally took to the floor, hewing to the tradition of sitting on the ground for the prayers. Others grabbed Kerry-Edwards caps for head coverings. Rabbi William Hamilton of Brookline's Kehilath Israel led the prayers.

#### ■ An Arab and Jew make peace

Newman Abuissa, a Palestinian activist, and Alan Koslow, a pro-Israel activist involved in the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, once had strong differences: Koslow backed former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean in the Iowa caucuses, and Abuissa was strictly in the Kerry camp.

The two, who are among Iowa's 65 delegates to the convention, overcame that problem, and now they are even rooming together in Boston. They spend their evenings discussing other differences. Abu-

issa, an organizer for the Arab American Institute in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, who visits the Middle East once a year, and Koslow, a Des Moines doctor who visits Israel regularly, say they enjoy comparing notes.

#### ■ And Coleman makes 10

Perhaps there was concern about forming a minyan, because it's not just the nine Democratic Jewish senators here. Sen. Norm Coleman (R-Minn.), one of two Republican Jews in the Senate, is in the city as well.

He's part of the rapid response team the Bush/Cheney campaign has assembled in Boston. Coleman is tasked primarily with refuting the foreign policy positions of Kerry and other Democrats.

"It's certainly a narrow experience that I have here," he said. "I'm certainly not hanging out with the Minnesota Democratic delegates."

#### ■ Enjoying the spotlight

Allyson Schwartz could get used to some time in the spotlight.

A Pennsylvania state senator running for the U.S. Congress, Schwartz took to the lectern Tuesday evening to introduce herself to a national audience — even if it was only aired live on C-SPAN.

"I was like, 'I'm not ready to leave the stage,'" she told friends on the convention floor after her speech. "I was having a good time."

The daughter of a Holocaust survivor, Schwartz is looking to succeed Rep. Joseph Hoeffel (D-Pa.), who is leaving his seat to run for the Senate against incumbent Sen. Arlen Specter (R-Pa.).

And she is getting assistance from her son, Jordan.

He is well known in Jewish Democratic circles as the political director of the National Jewish Democratic Council, but he's leaving that job to aid his mom full time.

Schwartz's race, against Republican Melissa Brown, has become one to watch.

"The national party has given this race recognition and that's important," said Schwartz, who lives in Philadelphia. ■

## 12-year-old delegate wows delegates, shul with speech

By JOE ESKENAZI  
J. THE JEWISH NEWSWEEKLY  
OF NORTHERN CALIFORNIA

SAN FRANCISCO (JTA) — When Pauline Moreno watched 12-year-old Ilana Wexler win over the crowd at the Democratic National Convention, she couldn't help but smile.

"That's it, she just sealed her Bat Mitzvah," joked the president of Berkeley's Conservative Congregation Netivot Shalom, where the Wexler family belongs.

After all, which is more difficult: taking the vice president of the United States to task in front of 35,000 attendees and millions of television viewers, or chanting in Hebrew in front of the congregation?

Wexler handled her speech with such aplomb, perhaps a Bat Mitzvah would be more stressful.

The young Oaklander with red curly hair reminiscent of Little Orphan Annie, drew one of the biggest laughs of the convention when she upbraided Vice President Dick Cheney for his gutter talk on the Senate floor.

Cheney used "a really, really bad word," she said. "If I used that word, I would be put in a 'timeout.' I think he should be put in a timeout."

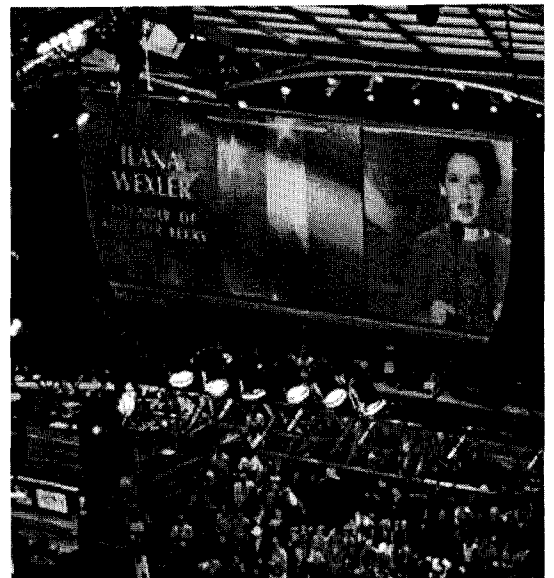
Odds are this won't be the last time you hear that line. Wexler's bravura performance earned booking calls the next day from both David Letterman and Jay Leno.

Moreno is not surprised. "Since she was very young, probably 2 years old, the minute that girl started talking, she talked," Moreno said of Wexler. "She's always been very articulate and very inquisitive and intuitive for a little kid."

Wexler landed her speaking gig after a personal invitation from Teresa Heinz Kerry, wife of Democratic presidential nominee John Kerry. Wexler founded the organization and Web site [www.kidsforkerry.org](http://www.kidsforkerry.org), and she opted out of summer camp to volunteer for Kerry's campaign.

She even turned her birthday party into a Kerry fund-raiser, raising \$2,000 with a dozen or so friends by going door-to-door and trolling at Oakland's Pleasant Valley Mall.

"I am doing Kids for Kerry because John Kerry's plans to help children caught my eye. He wants to make class sizes smaller so children get the best out of learning and he wants to fund more extracurricular activities at school," Wexler said.



DNC

Ilana Wexler spoke at the convention Tuesday night.

A seventh-grader at the Julia Morgan School for Girls in San Francisco, Wexler warmed up for the convention by addressing an audience of 500 at a Women for Kerry event in the Bay Area. That's where Heinz Kerry ran into her, and, evidently, liked what she saw.

"When she called me she said, 'Ilana, do you want to speak at the convention?' And I said, 'Absolutely!'" Wexler recalled. ■

# Teachers go to school to learn about the Shoah

By ALANA B. ELIAS KORNFELD

NEW YORK (JTA) — Ronda Hassig remembers when the Holocaust became real for her — when a young Jewish boy in her Overland Park, Kan., classroom recognized a concentration camp survivors medal on her desk.

“‘Ms. Hassig,’ the student said, ‘I have one of those and it belongs to my grandfather,’” the teacher recalled. “I totally lost it because here was this little guy sitting in front of me and he was the product of someone who had survived a camp.”

Hassig, who had bought the medal at an antique store, is one of hundreds of educators across the United States teaching the Holocaust to their students.

As a result of legislation passed during the last decade, six states — California, New Jersey, Florida, New York, Illinois and Massachusetts — mandate that the Holocaust be taught in their public schools.

Another 11 state governments recommend that schools teach the Holocaust.

Stanlee Stahl, executive vice president of the Jewish Foundation for the Righteous, says that while instituting mandates is noble, it's not enough. “The states don't come up with training money, so here you have a mandate to do something and there's no training,” she said.

It's this void that the foundation aims to fill by bringing 40 middle school and high

school teachers from around the world to its Holocaust education program each summer at Columbia University in New York City. The foundation sponsors the teachers through fellowships in memory of Alfred Lerner, former CEO of MBNA Corp. and a supporter of the foundation's programs, particularly in Holocaust education.

The teachers are selected from areas in the United States where the foundation operates Holocaust training centers. Educators from Poland and Croatia also attended this year's seminar.

Teachers say that before the program at Columbia, which was held June 27-July 1, they received their Holocaust education from the Internet, museums and readings.

At the seminar, the teachers attended lectures by top scholars — including Nechama Tec, Henry Feingold, Deborah Dwork and Robert Jan van Pelt — and then met in discussion groups to learn how to apply the lessons to their classrooms.

Kaysheila Mitchell, a high school teacher from Duluth, Ga., says she will be more confident teaching the Holocaust after the seminar at Columbia.

“I'm here because I know I can't always run and ask the history teacher or get on the Internet,” said Mitchell, a language arts teacher. “I think it's important for me to have the facts straight and know what I am talking about.”

Though the Internet can provide a quick fix to questions on the Holocaust, teachers say there's nothing better than old-fashioned education.

The foundation's primary purpose is to highlight the role played by Holocaust rescuers. The group sends money to 1,600 individuals considered rescuers by Israel's Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial.

As a result, the role of “Righteous Gentiles” — and the possibility of good in the face of evil — was emphasized during the seminar, now in its fifth year.

Ernesto Diaz from Passaic County Technical Institute in Wayne, N.J., believes the Holocaust is one of the most enriching subjects in his curriculum.

“I look forward every year to teach the section on the Holocaust because if there is any section that captivates my students' attention, it's when you talk about the issues related to humanity,” he said.

The Holocaust's message also resonates in classrooms outside America.

Wojciech Laskowski, a high school teacher from Lochow, Poland, lives 12 miles from Treblinka. He thinks his students benefit from their proximity to the camp.

“I organize the lessons with people who remember that time, so it makes the students closer to that time of history,” Laskowski said. “The students realize that in this part of the earth what happened was such a tragic moment in history.”

## Israel expels Russian journalist on spying charges

By LEV KRICHEVSKY

MOSCOW (JTA) — If you thought the world of spy accusations died along with the Cold War, think again.

Last Friday, Konstantin Kapitonov, a veteran Middle East reporter, was ordered to leave Israel after being charged with spying, Russian and Israeli media reported.

Citing an official document issued by the Prime Minister's Office, Israeli media earlier reported that Kapitonov, who has worked in Israel since 2001, was working for Russian intelligence.

Kapitonov, 58, who since 1975 has worked as a journalist in the region, denies the allegations.

For their part, Russian officials did not

provide insights on the Israeli decision.

In his commentary published on Monday on the Web site of the Moscow News weekly newspaper, Kapitonov says the real cause for his expulsion was a recent article he published in a Moscow daily in which he sharply criticized Israel's treatment of non-Jewish Russians who arrived in the Jewish state during the last wave of aliyah from the former Soviet Union.

“In order to find the facts of discrimination against the Russian ethnic minority in Israel, one does not have to be very resourceful. They are on the surface,” Kapitonov wrote in his July 13 article titled Being Russian in Israel.

Kapitonov alleged that Russians are banned from “more than 80 professions” in Israel, and that ethnic Russians can be

fired from work if their employer spots a cross on them. Russians in Israel “can be killed only for speaking Russian, and their murderers will not suffer the punishment they deserve,” he wrote in the popular Moscow daily Trud.

The Israeli media earlier reported, citing an official document issued by the Prime Minister's Office, that Kapitonov was a Russian spy.

“Kapitonov is a representative of Russian intelligence who is in Israel under the cover of journalistic work, through which he establishes connections with Israeli citizens, and uses some of them in intelligence purposes,” last Friday's edition of the Israeli daily Ma'ariv said, quoting from a letter from Ariel Sharon's office.



## HOLIDAY FEATURE

# Russians find some answers at U.S. summer camp

By JANE ULMAN

**E**NCINO, Calif. (JTA) — “Caviar is very popular in Russia. Is sturgeon kosher?” asks Anna Dramchuk.

“It’s controversial,” responds Dr. Abraham Havivi, an ordained rabbi and psychiatrist who is teaching a morning class on practical halachah, or Jewish law, at Lishma, an intensive yeshiva-type program at Camp Ramah in Ojai, Calif. “Different authorities have different answers.”

During her stay at Lishma, a four-week course for 18- to 25-year-olds, Anna, 18, is learning that different authorities frequently have different answers to tough questions.

Lishma, derived from the Hebrew phrase “Torah lishma,” or “Torah studied for its own sake,” was co-founded in 1999 by Rabbi Daniel Greyber, executive director of Camp Ramah, and is co-sponsored by the camp and the University of Judaism’s Zeigler School of Rabbinic Studies.

This year 13 students are taking part in the program.

■  
Anna, her sister, Olga, 19, and her friend Irina Kononova, 18, are from Novosibirsk, Russia, and are the first foreign students to take part in the program.

Kononova was born in Kazakhstan. When she was 6, she heard her mother singing in a strange language.

It was “Tumbalalaika,” the Yiddish folk song, and Irina recalls learning that both her mother and grandfather, whom she never knew, were Jewish.

But she didn’t become interested in Judaism until a year ago, when she moved to Novosibirsk to attend university and met Anna.

The sisters also grew up in Kazakhstan before moving to Novosibirsk.

In Novosibirsk, with its Jewish community of about 20,000, the three young women discovered what Olga calls “a second family” of Jewish groups.

“But a lot of people in Russia are not really religious,” Kononova says. “There is no place in Novosibirsk where students may go and learn Torah.” ■

# Kids stay in Russia for camp

By DINA KRAFT

DUNA, Russia (JTA) — It’s summer camp in all its glory: lakeside sing-alongs, bug juice, budding romances and mystery meat for lunch.

But something is new here: The setting is Russia and Jewish children are belting out lyrics to Hebrew songs as Israeli flags flap overhead.

Such a scene would have been illegal in the days before communism’s fall, but as the Jewish community here again finds its footing, its children are heading to camp. For many, it’s the first time they’re learning anything about being Jewish.

For 70 years, communism tried to stamp out religion. Now, this three-week summer camp tries to give 550 children — most of them from the St. Petersburg area — a sense of identity and a dose of summertime fun.

The camp, on the shores of the Baltic Sea, is funded by the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims as part of the group’s work supporting programs that strengthen Jewish identity. Run by the Jewish Agency for Israel, the camp is a pilot project that organizers hope to build on in Moscow and Kiev.

Sveta Martusevich, 14, is one of the campers, who range in age from 7 to 17. Like most of the other campers, she comes from an interfaith Russian home: Her father is not Jewish and her mother is.

Her mother grew up with no Jewish education. Neither did Martusevich, until she started spending summers at camp and attending a Jewish day school in St. Petersburg.

Her face sprinkled lightly with freckles and her hair pulled into a ponytail, Martusevich speaks English as she shows Jennifer Meyerhoff around the camp’s grounds. Meyerhoff, a member of the United Jewish Communities’ Young Leadership Cabinet from Baltimore, has come along with 160 others as part of a UJC leadership mission surveying the work and needs of the Jewish community of St. Petersburg.

Each of the visiting UJC leaders partners off with a camper.

Martusevich excitedly rattles off the

Hebrew words she has learned and tells Meyerhoff about camp activities: playing basketball and ping-pong, learning Hebrew and Jewish history.

They walk into a large concrete building with peeling white paint and up a flight of stairs. This is where she and others her age stay, Martusevich says proudly.

On the lobby of her floor, streamers hang from the ceiling and a sign in crayon reads, “Hello! Welcome!” in English. Pillows and mattresses are formed into a circle.

“Here we talk about everything,” Martusevich says, referring both to Jewish discussion groups and camp dramas.

Soon a group gathers in the lobby, this time to hear a counselor recount the biblical story of Jacob’s dream. A girl with silver eye shadow and a denim jacket reads a passage of midrash aloud in Russian. Next, they create angel wings from construction paper and magic markers.

The trick, says one of the counselors, Ruth Ben-Arie, a 22-year-old from Tel Aviv whose parents immigrated to Israel from Ukraine, is to hook the campers on Jewish heritage through fun activities.

“We try to mix it as much as possible with creativity,” she says, explaining that they don’t want the kids to feel like they’re in school.

The campers make models of the Golem out of clay, bake matzah and create alternate endings for the biblical character of Jonah after he is caught in the belly of the whale.

On the beach, with the silver gray Baltic waves rolling in, a loudspeaker blasts the popular Israeli song “Yom Yavo,” Hebrew for “The Day Will Come.”

As the UJC visitors prepare to leave, Meyerhoff pulls Martusevich aside to give her a necklace with a Star of David.

Seeing the camp, Meyerhoff says, gives her hope that “future generations will be here to stay.”

Martusevich beams looking down at her new necklace. Then she giggles with her friends.

■  
(JTA correspondent Dina Kraft visited Russia on a trip sponsored by the Jewish Agency for Israel.)

**M**atzah, the Golem and the Jonah story on the shores of the Baltic.

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## NORTH AMERICA

### Sudanese protest leads to arrests

Rabbi David Saperstein and ice-cream icons Ben Cohen and Jerry Greenfeld were arrested after protesting genocide in Sudan.

Cohen and Greenfeld, of Ben & Jerry's ice cream fame, joined Saperstein, the director of the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism, and Zach Rosenberg, its legislative assistant, in front of the Sudanese Embassy in Washington on Thursday.

They were seeking to get arrested and to call on President Bush and world leaders to respond to the starvation and tens of thousands of killings and rapes in Darfur, Sudan.

Congress unanimously passed a resolution condemning the atrocities as genocide last week. "I was brought up to say 'never again,'" Cohen said to about 100 demonstrators before his arrest.

### UJC officially names new leader

Howard Rieger was officially named president and CEO of the North American federation system.

As expected, the longtime president of the United Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh was formally approved for the job Wednesday by the board of trustees of the United Jewish Communities, the federations' coordinating body. Rieger, 61, will succeed Stephen Hoffman, who has held the presidency since 2001.

Apart from a two-year stint as a university professor, Rieger has devoted his professional life to the federation system. He will take over the post Sept. 1 for a five-year tenure.

### Partying like it's 2004

Young Jewish Democrats took time off from the convention to party at one of Boston's hotspots.

Rob Kutner, a writer for the award-winning comedy series "The Daily Show," told revelers at Wednesday night's event not to engage in *sinat chinam*, the reckless hatred among Jews that helped bring down the holy temples.

He cautioned Democrats never to exhibit such hatred to their opponents, whatever the political season.

Also on hand was Cameron Kerry, brother of Democratic presidential nominee Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.), and he regaled the crowd with the tale of his courtship of Kathy Weinman — "it was basic gay meets girl," he said.

Cameron Kerry converted to Judaism.

The event was sponsored by the National Jewish Democratic Council and entertainment mogul Haim Saban.

### Reform push for dialogue with Presbyterians

The Reform movement said the Presbyterian Church's call for proselytizing Jews and divesting from Israel underscores the need for dialogue with them.

"These are dark days for Jewish-Presbyterian relations, but this sad chapter only reinforces the need for enhanced, deeper and more sustained dialogue," said Rabbi Eric Yoffie, president of the Union for Reform Judaism.

After the Presbyterian Church issued a resolution earlier this month calling for divestiture from Israel, the Anti-Defamation League denounced the church, and B'nai B'rith International called for ending dialogue with the church.

Yoffie's group and the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Reform's rabbinic arm, called on North America's Reform rabbis to meet with Presbyterian clergy.

Reform officials said Rev. Clifton Kirkpatrick, the stated clerk of the General Assembly Presbyterian Church, has accepted their invitation for a dialogue.

## MIDDLE EAST

### Jihadnik killed, Kassams land

Israeli forces killed an Islamic Jihad terrorist in the West Bank.

The Palestinian fugitive was shot in a clash with troops Thursday in the village of Ilar, north of Tulkarm. In the Gaza Strip, Hamas terrorists fired at least two Kassam rockets into Israel, striking the town of Sderot.

There were no serious casualties, although nine townspeople were treated for shock after one of the rockets struck near a residential complex.

### Sharon: Peace before disarmament

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said Israel would not enter talks on abandoning weapons of mass destruction before there is Middle East peace.

In a rare public discussion of Israel's "deterrent capability" — a euphemism for the Jewish state's assumed nuclear arsenal — Sharon told Likud Party activists Thursday, "It could be that one day, when we arrive at a comprehensive peace and everyone disarms completely, we will also be ready to consider taking steps."

### Arrow-2 gets the Scud

A test of Israel's Arrow-2 missile against a live Scud rocket was successful.

Previous tests against mock Scuds had been successful, but Thursday's test off the California coastline was the first time a live Scud was intercepted and destroyed by an Arrow.

## WORLD

### Paris pleased with Sharon

France welcomed Ariel Sharon's praise of its efforts to quell anti-Semitism.

"We have seen the statements by the Israeli prime minister saluting France for its determined action in fighting anti-Semitism, action which he said was of exemplary value," French Foreign Ministry spokesman Herve Ladsous said Thursday, referring to remarks by Sharon the night before.

Addressing a group of new French immigrants in Tel Aviv, Sharon thanked Paris for its "determined action" to stop anti-Jewish violence. The move was seen as Sharon's bid to repair ties with Paris after he recently called for French Jews to immigrate and avoid "the wildest anti-Semitism" in their country of origin.

### Fire ravages Siberian synagogue

A fire ravaged the oldest synagogue in Siberia.

The former Soldiers Synagogue in Irkutsk, which was built in the provincial Siberian city in 1881 by retired Jewish soldiers of the czarist army, was practically devoured by fire early Tuesday morning. No one was hurt in the blaze, which almost entirely destroyed the two-story wooden building.

Jewish officials, police and fire authorities all have ruled out the possibility of arson.

The building caught fire in the wee hours Tuesday morning, most likely as a result of a short circuit or a small fire that went out of control, fire authorities said.

### Embassy to reopen in Belarus

Israel is reopening its embassy in Belarus.

The reopening, expected to occur within a month, comes after Israel closed its embassy in Minsk last summer for financial reasons. Belarus then recalled its ambassador from Tel Aviv.