

## IN THE NEWS

## State Dept. ratchets up warning on Israel

The kidnapping of a U.S. citizen prompted the State Department to warn Americans to leave the Gaza Strip and defer travel to Israel and the West Bank.

Unknown gunmen kidnapped an unidentified U.S. citizen and two Europeans on Saturday in the West Bank; the captives were released within hours after the Palestinian Authority agreed to pay a ransom.

U.S. policy opposes paying ransoms, State Department spokesman Richard Boucher said.

## Awareness day planned on Sudan

U.S. Jewish groups joined a coalition planning a day to raise awareness about government-sponsored killings in Sudan.

Some 20 groups are part of the Save Darfur Coalition, which is planning an interfaith day of conscience on Aug. 25 to take place in churches, synagogues, mosques and community centers across the country.

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the American Jewish World Service are among the groups that formed the coalition. The United Jewish Communities federation umbrella group also is participating.

## French police: Incident not biased

French police say an incident Sunday in which three Jewish youths were attacked near Lyon was not anti-Semitic.

According to reports citing police sources Wednesday, the Jewish youths mentioned nothing about anti-Semitic insults during police questioning, despite referring to such remarks in earlier interviews with journalists.

Following the incident, in which the youths were kicked and punched during an altercation with a group of 15 young men, the state representative in the Lyon region issued a statement alluding to the anti-Semitic nature of the attack.

# WORLD REPORT

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## 20 years after Conservatives began ordaining women, inequity persists

By URIEL HEILMAN

**N**EW YORK (JTA) — Women in the Conservative rabbinate are paid less, occupy fewer senior positions and are more likely to be unmarried than their male counterparts, a new survey has found.

They also lag behind men when it comes to holding onto their first jobs, are less likely to occupy full-time positions and almost unanimously say they are uninterested in senior rabbinical posts at large congregations.

The findings were part of a study released last week by the Conservative movement that marked 20 years since the movement began ordaining women as rabbis.

"It points out to us that the Conservative movement as a whole has to be aware of and do more to help women rabbis gain an absolutely equal footing in terms of their acceptability and positions, and especially their compensation and benefit level," said Rabbi Joel Meyers, executive vice president of the Rabbinical Assembly, the movement's rabbinic arm.

The Rabbinical Assembly's membership is now 11 percent female, with 177 women.

The survey of 233 rabbis — called Gender Variation in the Career of Conservative Rabbis: A Survey of Rabbis Ordained since 1985 — was sponsored by the Rabbinical Assembly and conducted largely via mail-in surveys. Roughly equal numbers of men and women were polled.

The study found that 83 percent of women pulpit rabbis lead congregations of less than 250 families, 17 percent lead congregations of between 250-499 families and none lead

congregations larger than 500 families.

By contrast, 27 percent of men lead congregations of less than 250 families, 48 percent lead mid-size congregations and 25 percent lead congregations of more than 500 families.

Compensation packages also were disparate, with the mean total compensation paid to men \$40,000 more than that paid to women. Even when accounting for full-time work, pulpit work and congregation size, men's compensation packages on average still led women's by \$21,000.

Men reported being more satisfied with their careers than women, according to the study. Men held onto their first jobs longer than women; 85 percent of men said they left their last professional post willingly, compared to 67 percent of women; and 26 percent of men said they had been denied a contract renewal by their congregations or agencies, compared to 41 percent of women.

The study also found that 80 percent of male rabbis reported being married parents, compared with 42 percent of women. Nearly three times as many women reported being single as men — 38 percent of women versus 14 percent for men.

The study was accompanied by a Rabbinical Assembly policy memorandum with "action items" for addressing the gender gap.

Among the strategies are plans to give women rabbis more visibility to speed their social acceptance by Conservative congregations, offer women executive coaching to help them move their careers forward, and monitor job placement and searches to guarantee

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FOCUS  
ON  
ISSUES

## ■ Conservative women rabbis lag behind men in pay, seniority

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women equal opportunities.

"The Rabbinical Assembly is committed to the ideal that 'Rabbi' is a gender-free designation," the policy memo said. "We want to call upon all of the institutions of the Conservative movement, from the smallest to the largest, to examine their attitudes towards women in religious leadership and their openness to inviting such leadership into their midst."

The study noted that the findings mirrored gender gaps in many other, non-Jewish professions.

Part of the problem, according to the study, is that women themselves are uninterested in pursuing senior positions, due in part to quality-of-life considerations, social norms, family and finance.

Women are less interested than men in pursuing pulpit work or congregational work, and a whopping 91 percent of the women surveyed said they did not want to be a senior rabbi at a large congregation.

"What should equal access look like if the overwhelming majority of women don't want the benchmark position?" the survey asked.

"That is to us one of the most fascinating and puzzling statistics in the study," said Rabbi Julie Schonfeld, director of rabbinic development at the Rabbinical Assembly and a member of the study's advisory committee. "To me that was a surprising statistic and it needs further study, and I don't want to guess" as to the causes for it, she said.

One of the authors of the study, He-

brew University sociologist Steven M. Cohen, said women likely would want leadership positions more if they had a better chance of attaining them.

"You can't disentangle three processes," he said. "One, women may to some extent on average have different aspirations for their professional careers than men; secondly, those aspirations may be shaped by their assessment of the openness of the market for their candidacy; third, the market may close off opportunities to women."

Conservative women rabbis need to be encouraged to aspire to leadership positions, Cohen said, but Conservative synagogues also need to be made aware that they're acting in a biased fashion.

"Equality of opportunity is an imperative. It's really a matter of justice," said Rabbi Amy Eilberg, co-director of the Yedidya Center for Jewish Spiritual Direction, in northern California, and a member of the study's advisory committee.

"Statistically, it's possible that it could turn out that a higher percentage of men aspire to large congregations than did women," she said. "Equity does not mean that women should necessarily want the same things that men do. The equity that is required is that a candidate who has aspirations should have the same opportunities as a man."

Rabbi Jerome Epstein, executive vice president of the movement's congregational arm, the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, said his organization has been running programs for at least two and a half years to try to "open the door a little bit wider" for female rabbis.

"We were not going to wait for a study to tell us what we intuitively understood," Epstein said.

Much of the time, that has meant trying to convince congregations to consider hiring female rabbis — with the exception of nonegalitarian Conservative congregations, which will not hire women rabbis out of consideration for halachah, or Jewish law.

"Congregational search committees in many cases never interviewed a woman rabbi; it didn't even dawn on them," Ep-

stein said of egalitarian synagogues. "In many cases, they just said, 'Of course we're going to take a male rabbi.'"

United Synagogue staff have used role-playing exercises and other methods to train the group's regional directors to be more effective at persuading congregational search committees and synagogue boards to give female candidates a fair shot, Epstein said.

Some of the considerations when hiring a woman rabbi are legitimate, Eilberg noted.

"Is the rabbi going to have a baby? Is the rabbi going to get married and leave us? What kind of career track is this woman on? We know that a

search committee may rightly wonder if a woman is as likely to work a 60-70 hour work week as a man," Eilberg said.

The key, she said, is to ensure equality of opportunity.

Because it has only been 20 years since the movement began ordaining women, it's understandable — though not excusable — that many congregations are reluctant to hire women, Conservative rabbis said.

"This is a short period of time in the life of the Jewish world and certainly the American Jewish community," Epstein noted. "It will take some time to move this to the area of full equality. What this study does is serve as a bold reminder that our work has just begun."

In the survey, 91 percent of the women rabbis said they did not want to be a senior rabbi at a large congregation.

## Help for Paraguay

WASHINGTON (JTA) — B'nai B'rith International is helping to send \$2.5 million in supplies to fire victims in Paraguay.

The donated pharmaceutical and medical supplies will aid victims of Sunday's supermarket fire in Asuncion that killed more than 400 people and injured hundreds more.

Members of B'nai B'rith Paraguay will distribute the shipment when it arrives Aug. 8.

"People are fighting for their lives in local hospitals," said Jack Fleischman, president of B'nai B'rith Paraguay. "We need help. We need medicine and supplies." ■

### JTA WORLD REPORT

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# Terror is major issue in House race in Florida

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

WASHINGTON (JTA) — A Jewish congressman seeking the Democratic nomination for a U.S. Senate seat in Florida is accusing his opponent of being soft on terrorists in her backyard.

Rep. Peter Deutsch (D-Fla.) has focused his campaign against Betty Castor in part on whether, as president of the University of South Florida from 1994 to 1999, she allowed an ally of the Islamic Jihad to operate a front for the terrorist group on campus.

Castor, who also served as the state's education commissioner, has been fighting back, saying she did everything she legally could to prevent the spread of teachers with links to terror at the school. Her arguments have earned her the endorsement of at least one Florida Jewish newspaper.

Deutsch hopes the issue will cast doubt on Castor's leadership abilities in the minds of voters, particularly Jews. An observant Jew, the congressman also has been reaching out to his base by visiting synagogues on Shabbat and giving several lectures on the issues of the day.

While less than 4 percent of Florida's population is Jewish, the Jewish community traditionally has played a large role in state politics, gathering enormous attention during the presidential election recount four years ago.

In an election year where control of the Senate is considered in play, Florida is a key battleground state in the presidential race, and an active senatorial race could be a factor in changing the political landscape in Washington.

Castor currently leads Deutsch by more than 16 percentage points ahead of the Aug. 31 primary, according to a poll taken late last month by Mason-Dixon.

Alex Pinelas, mayor of Miami-Dade County, also is in the race but trails Deutsch by double digits.

The winner of the Democratic primary will take on the winner of the Republican one, likely either former Rep. Bill McCollum or Mel Martinez, the former U.S. secretary of housing and urban development.

Deutsch says Castor is unelectable in November because of her ties to USF. While she led the school, Sami Al-Arian, a computer science professor at its main campus in Tampa, ran a think tank called

the World and Islam Enterprise, or WISE, that raised money for Islamic militants. The think tank brought one professor to the school who eventually went on to head Islamic Jihad in Damascus.

Deutsch and his supporters say Castor should have fired Al-Arian when she received affidavits about his activities, or at least should have launched a thorough investigation.

"She had the information and did nothing," Deutsch told JTA last week in Boston, where he was attending the Democratic National Convention. "Evil was in her midst and she did nothing."

The accusations have been fostered predominantly by the American Democracy Project, an independent group that largely is funded by Deutsch supporters. The group has attacked Castor with print advertisements about Al-Arian.

"All of the information together provides compelling documentation that the campus was being used as a front for the Islamic Jihad terrorist group without a challenge from the university," said the group's treasurer, Bernie Friedman.

Castor's campaign counters that she suspended Al-Arian and cut ties with the think tank when she learned the FBI was investigating Al-Arian. She also had a former president of the American Bar Association investigate Al-Arian. The investigation concluded that the university made only small blunders in its relationship with the think tank.

Friedman dismisses the investigation, saying it didn't delve into off-campus activities of Al-Arian or think-tank officials.

Castor aides say FBI and Department

of Justice officials did not provide information to the school that would have been grounds for firing Al-Arian, and that is why he eventually returned to the school.

Al-Arian was reinstated as a professor a year before Castor left the school and was dismissed shortly after the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks. Al-Arian later was indicted on terrorism charges, and his trial is set to begin in January.

"It took seven years for the FBI to have the information to indict Al-Arian," Castor spokesman Matt Burgess said.

The campaign notes that Al-Arian campaigned for President Bush in 2000, and was able to pass clearances to visit the White House in 2001.

Castor's handling of the Al-Arian case has received accolades from Sen. Bob Graham (D-Fla.), whom the candidates are seeking to replace. It also has won the support of the Jewish Journal of South Florida, which endorsed Castor last week.

The editors said Deutsch was unfairly holding Castor accountable for the Al-Arian situation, and compared his heavy-handed campaign tactics to those of former President Richard Nixon.

The paper's endorsement is significant, considering that Deutsch has been campaigning actively in Jewish communities. He plans to spend every Shabbat this month in a synagogue in a different community, praying with constituents and giving lectures.

Deutsch said he will be speaking as a member of Congress, not campaigning, as houses of worship are prohibited from supporting candidates for office.

"I know where the line is, so I don't walk the fine line," he said.

**A candidate led a school with a professor who raised money for Islamic terrorists.**

## Rabbi Alfred Wolf dies at 88

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — Rabbi Alfred Wolf, who pioneered U.S. Jewish summer camps and the California interfaith movement, died Sunday in L.A. at age 88.

He served as associate and senior rabbi of Wilshire Blvd. Temple, the oldest Reform congregation in Los Angeles, from 1949 to 1985. After his retirement, Wolf started a new career as founding director

of the Skirball Institute on American Values, sponsored by the American Jewish Committee.

Wolf was born in Eberbach, Germany in 1915. He started his religious studies at Hebrew Union College in Berlin, and said he owed his life to being transferred as an exchange student to the HUC's Cincinnati campus after the Nazis came to power.

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## WORLD

### E.U. fraud squad eyes Arafat

The European Union reportedly wants to interrogate Palestinian terrorists about funding abuses by Yasser Arafat.

The E.U. fraud squad, which is investigating the extent to which the Palestinian Authority has funneled European aid money into terrorism, recently asked Israel for permission to question imprisoned members of Arafat's Fatah movement, Ha'aretz reported Wednesday.

According to the daily, the request from the 25-nation bloc is likely to be approved by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and his National Security Council, who long have sought to focus international scrutiny on the P.A. president's terrorist links.

Israeli and E.U. officials did not immediately comment.

### Russian Jewish newspaper burglarized

The editorial office of Russia's oldest Jewish newspaper was burglarized.

Burglars took seven editorial computers but not the monitors on Sunday, according to Tankred Golenpolsky, founder and editor in chief of the weekly International Jewish Newspaper. Golenpolsky said that most surprising to him was the fact that much of the archives was stolen, including paper documents, CD-ROMs and financial documentation.

"I'm not saying this is anti-Semitism because there is enough crime around without it," he told JTA. The Federation of Jewish Communities has offered the paper temporary office space.

### Vilnius Jews squabble

An internecine dispute within Vilnius' Jewish community took a new turn.

Over the weekend, supporters of one of the contenders for the post of Lithuania's chief rabbi were not allowed to attend services in the city's only synagogue.

The president of the community, Simonas Alperavicius, said the decision was made not to allow Sholom Ber Krinsky and his supporters into the synagogue in order to protect order and dignity in the shul. The community leadership says it doesn't want Krinsky as chief rabbi because he was a member of the Lubavitch movement. Lubavitch historically had no roots in Lithuania, which long was known as a stronghold of opposition to Chasidism.

Krinsky in turn accused Alperavicius of Nazi-like behavior and a desire to control community institutions for his personal gain, accusations Alperavicius denied.

Krinsky and his supporters organized open-air services outside the synagogue.

Earlier this year, the community temporarily closed the synagogue for services following some infighting.

## MIDDLE EAST

### Deadline set for Gaza evacuation

Israel plans to evacuate all Gaza Strip settlers by September 2005.

Ariel Sharon's national security adviser, Giora Eiland, was quoted as announcing the plan Wednesday in the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, the first formal presentation of the timetable for the Israeli prime minister's plan to "disengage" from the Palestinians.

Eiland added that all Israeli troops will be out of Gaza by December 2005, and that by 2008 there will be no more Palestinian laborers in Israel.

There was no immediate comment on when the government

would move on four West Bank settlements also slated for evacuation under the disengagement plan.

### Palestinian security guards shot

Four members of the Palestinian Authority's military intelligence force were shot and wounded. The men were hurt Wednesday when their vehicle was ambushed by unidentified gunmen in the center of Gaza City.

The attack came as Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat turned 75 on Wednesday. Unlike in past years, there was no mention of the event in Palestinian media, apparently because of the ongoing crisis in the Palestinian Authority.

### Aid workers leave Gaza

A U.N. aid agency withdrew all but a handful of its foreign workers from the Gaza Strip.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency, which tends to Palestinian refugees, said Wednesday it was pulling all but nine of its foreign staff out of Gaza.

UNRWA began evacuating staff last month amid increasing chaos between Palestinian Authority security forces and pro-reform vigilantes in Gaza, during which several foreigners were briefly abducted.

But agency spokesmen said the latest round of evacuations was prompted by deep Israeli military incursions to rout Palestinian rocket crews out of northern Gaza.

### Israeli Arab held in Hamas plot

An Israeli Arab student was linked to a Hamas plot to bomb a Jerusalem cafe.

The suspect, a Galilee Arab who was studying for a master's degree at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, was arrested last month for aiding a Hamas terrorist cell from Hebron, the Shin Bet announced Wednesday.

He is accused of helping plot a triple suicide bombing at Jerusalem's Caffit restaurant, which was foiled after the Shin Bet received advance intelligence and posted extra security in the area.

### Army service leads to citizenship

A new law gives automatic Israeli citizenship to non-Jewish soldiers who serve 18 months in the Israeli army.

The bill passed its final two readings in the Knesset on Wednesday. The new law also applies to soldiers who have been released from military service before completing 18 months of service due to illness or injury that occurred during their service.

## NORTH AMERICA

### Group to Bush: Nudge Sharon

Americans for Peace Now urged President Bush to lobby Israel to comply with the "road map" peace plan.

The dovish group called on Bush to press Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to meet Israel's obligations under the road map, a plan crafted by the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations.

The group contends that Sharon's government has promoted settlement growth in the West Bank in violation of a road map provision to freeze settlement expansion.

### Hillel updates campus guide

Hillel has updated its Guide to Jewish Life on Campus. The online database reviews hundreds of college campuses around the world according to indicators like Jewish student population, kosher dining options and Jewish studies courses.