

## IN THE NEWS

## Palestinians to deploy troops in West Bank?

Israel plans to withdraw troops from West Bank cities if the Palestinian Authority maintains a truce on terrorism.

"One of the issues we discussed is a transfer of cities" to Palestinian Authority control, Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz told Israel Radio on Sunday, referring to weekend bilateral security talks. "It is very possible responsibility will be handed over in some of the cities in the next few days." The Palestinian Authority has "shown a readiness to continue to assume responsibility and press ahead with security cooperation."

Israel has cautiously welcomed Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' efforts to win a truce in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, although it still insists on a crackdown as mandated by the U.S.-led peace "road map."

Israeli media named Jericho, Ramallah and Kalkilya as the cities likely to be turned over.

## U.N. backs Israel in border dispute

The United Nations rebuked Lebanon for claiming a section of its border with Israel.

Last Friday's Security Council resolution, which was passed unanimously, said the position taken by Beirut is "not compatible" with U.N. findings that Israel had left Lebanese territory entirely during its 2000 withdrawal.

The Lebanese militia Hezbollah has regularly attacked Israeli troops there, accusing them of being on Lebanese turf.

## Settlers flock to Jerusalem

Thousands of pro-settler activists flocked to Jerusalem to rally against Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip.

Organizers said they expected 100,000 protesters to attend the demonstration.

The rally's main call is for Sharon to hold a referendum on the "disengagement plan."

# WORLD REPORT

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

## Silence on Social Security reflects Jewish communal divisions

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

**W**ASHINGTON (JTA) — Several American Jewish policy groups may remain uncharacteristically quiet during one of this year's most contentious domestic political debates.

The United Jewish Communities, the umbrella organization of the federation system, is expected not to dive into this year's discussion about overhauling the federal program, relying instead on an old statement of support for Social Security programs.

And the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, the umbrella group of local community relations councils and national organizations, does not plan to make it a top issue at its annual plenum here next month.

With Congress and a second Bush administration back in action here, the issue of Social Security reform already is shaping up to be a hot one.

President Bush has made it clear that such reform tops his domestic policy agenda. But he has not yet detailed his proposed reforms, leaving Jewish organizations with no specifics to respond to.

The issue is important to the Jewish communal system because a disproportionately high percentage of Jews are seniors — 19 percent of the Jewish population is older than 65 years old, compared to 12 percent of the general population.

If seniors, especially poorer seniors, end up losing benefits under a new Social Security system, local federations could find themselves forced to devote more resources to that population.

But the reluctance to jump into the de-

bate reflects larger political and economic divisions in the Jewish community, say those involved in domestic policy issues.

Organizational officials attribute the groups' reticence to pressure from the financial sectors, as well as from major Jewish donors with ties to financial industries that could benefit greatly if Bush's initiative to create personal accounts for investing Social Security income comes to fruition.

While Jewish concerns about poverty could lead to skepticism about overhauling the Social Security system, many younger Jews, and financially savvy ones, are interested in the potential market gains from private investment of Social Security income, insiders say.

Other Jewish officials say groups that might be inclined to take on the issue are reluctant to exert much energy on a question that already is being fought by so many outside the Jewish community, including some prominent Republicans who have spoken out against major reforms.

They say they would rather expend their energy on other items of potential concern, including expected budget cuts for social services and judicial nominees.

The UJC, in listing its top domestic policy priorities earlier this month, excluded Social Security reform.

Instead, the organization plans to focus on proposed reforms governing nonprofit institutions; increased homeland security funding for high-risk institutions, which includes Jewish institutions; and several issues relating to seniors, including pressing for funding for retirement communities

*Continued on page 2*

BEHIND  
THE  
HEADLINES

## ■ Jewish groups not saying much in Social Security debate

*Continued from page 1*

and senior transportation and blocking Medicaid cuts.

At the end of the document, the organization cited a resolution the group passed in 1999, which called for Social Security to retain its original purpose as a "universal system" to benefit retirees and their heirs.

But the 1999 resolution suggests concerns about what changes could mean for the system, and encouraged local communities at the time to assess that impact. The UJC resolution also calls for no significant increase in administrative charges to the system, out of concern that such increases would lead to cuts to the beneficiaries.

Insiders say the pressure to stay out of the debate is coming in part from UJA-Federation of New York, which has many donors and activists tied to the financial sector.

Ronald Soloway, managing director of government and external relations at the federation, said his federation is not exerting pressure, but there is an interest in having all voices heard before the national Jewish organizations weigh in on the issue.

"We think there ought to be a conversation about this when there is something on the table," he said, suggesting the 1999 resolution should reflect the community's views until then.

The JCPA also enacted a resolution on Social Security in 1999, similar to UJC's, and is relying on that as it plots its next move. No resolutions on the issue have

been drafted for next month's plenum, and it will not be the focus of any major panels.

Instead, JCPA officials said they plan to include Social Security reform in a broader discussion of poverty. They note that Social Security is used to keep more than 50 percent of the elderly above the poverty line. The merits of Bush's reform plan are not expected to be broached.

"We have been building our 'confronting poverty' initiative for the last four years, and Social Security is the most successful anti-poverty program," said the JCPA's outgoing executive director, Hannah Rosenthal.

Several officials said part of the problem stems from reforms in the JCPA resolution process. Resolutions were drafted last fall when Social Security was not a hot topic in the presidential and congressional elections and in recent years it has become more difficult to add new resolutions in the weeks leading up to the national conference.

Beyond the umbrella organizations, the nation's two major women's groups Hadassah and the National Council of Jewish Women are planning to take on Social Security in their advocacy.

Both groups say they see it as a women's issue, because of the number of senior women who rely on Social Secu-

rity income. They stress the importance of including their opposition to personal accounts, in addition to such hot topics as abortion, judicial nominations and stem cell research.

"Although you have to prioritize and worry about being spread too thin, you can chew gum and walk at the same time," said Sammie Moshenberg, NCJW's Washington director. "It remains to be seen how much time it takes up, and that is based on how the debate is going."

Meanwhile, underscoring the economic and political divide on the issue, the Republican Jewish Coalition has launched a print advertising campaign in Jewish newspapers, advocating private accounts for Social Security.

"Long-term investing has historically generated a significantly better return than money in the Social Security Trust Fund, so this is an opportunity for families to build their retirement savings," the ad reads.

The organization is planning to hold events across the country with surrogate speakers to engage the community in a discussion on Social Security reform.

Officials at the National Jewish Democratic Council say they expect to weigh in on the issue when warranted but do not have any campaign planned on the issue. ■

**'We think there ought to be a conversation about this when there is something on the table.'**

**Ronald Soloway**  
UJA-Federation of New York

**JTA**  
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

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.

## Reform, NCJW have Gonzales doubts

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Two Jewish groups have doubts about Alberto Gonzales' fitness to be attorney general.

The National Council for Jewish Women opposes his confirmation and the Reform movement — which rarely endorses or opposes candidates — says that "important questions remain unanswered."

A letter sent last Friday from Reform's Religious Action Center to all U.S. senators urges them to ask for the release of documents that would shed further light on allegations that Gonzales, as White

House counsel, helped authorize torture techniques.

The NCJW also cited the torture allegations in its statement opposing the confirmation.

The NCJW also focused on Gonzales' role in selecting judicial nominees the NCJW views as far-right, and on what the group said were Gonzales' evasive answers to questions relating to civil liberties and reproductive rights.

The Senate Judiciary Committee voted week along party lines to refer Gonzales' nomination to the full Senate. ■

# Swiss court opens door for suit against IBM

By EDWIN BLACK

WASHINGTON (JTA) — A European Gypsy group suing IBM for conspiracy to commit genocide has prevailed in its efforts to secure jurisdiction in Switzerland, charging that the company consciously coordinated its punch-card automation for the Nazis out of its European headquarters in Geneva.

Switzerland's highest court, the Federal Tribunal in Lausanne, affirmed a lower court ruling from last summer that it did not seem "unreasonable" to conclude that IBM aided Nazi efficiency. The high court ruled last month but only released its decision Thursday, the 60th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.

IBM New York relocated its European headquarters from Paris to Geneva after 1935 to facilitate foreign exchange with the Third Reich, thus opening a basis for later jurisdiction in Switzerland.

In an April 29, 1942, letter, Werner Lier, IBM's general manager in Geneva, outlined for the American consul in the city exactly how IBM Geneva operated. "You will readily understand," Lier explained, "that this office is a clearing office between the local organizations in the various countries and the New York Headquarters."

IBM President Thomas Watson ordered

## THIS WEEK

### WEDNESDAY

■ President Bush delivers his State of the Union speech. He is expected to address his hopes for peace in the Middle East and his plans to introduce private accounts to Social Security. The Reform movement is running a live webcast response immediately after the speech.

■ A black-Jewish-Hispanic congressional group marks the new Congress. The Foundation for Ethnic Understanding will spotlight its newest members, including Sen. Barack Obama (D-Ill.), Sen. Ken Salazar (D-Col.), Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-Fla.) and Rep. Allyson Schwartz (D-Pa.).

### THURSDAY

■ Condoleezza Rice leaves for a week-long tour of Europe and the Middle East. On her inaugural trip as Secretary of State, Rice will meet with Palestinian and Israeli leaders. She hopes to encourage European leaders to contribute greater funds and manpower to advancing Israeli-Palestinian peace.

Lier to instruct the firm's German employees to assist in the 1941 Romanian census that identified many Gypsies as well as Jews. Romanian intelligence units used the census to help round up Gypsies and Jews.

In the concentration camps, IBM's code for Jews was 8 and its code for Gypsies was 12. General executions were IBM-coded as 4, death by gas chamber as 6. The Nazis used these IBM codes to manage and track their prisoners efficiently.

Of the Nazis' prisoners, only Jews and Gypsies were murdered systematically in gas chambers. IBM also developed punch-card systems to track and schedule trains running to concentration camps and elsewhere throughout Europe.

The historic lawsuit by the Geneva-based Gypsy International Recognition and Compensation Action, originally filed in January 2002, has set a precedent for jurisdiction against companies that collaborated with the Nazis, now that the United States and Germany have recognized a global Holocaust restitution agreement.

IBM quietly paid several million dollars into the fund just before disclosures in 2001 that it automated many aspects of Nazi aggression during Hitler's 12-year reign. However, Switzerland has not recognized the restitution agreement. The Swiss high court rejected IBM's contention that it was unaware of how its machines were being used and affirmed the lower court ruling.

That lower court concluded, "The precision, speed and reliability of IBM's machines, especially related to the censuses of the German population and racial biology by the Nazis, were praised" in IBM publications.

"It does not thus seem unreasonable to deduce that IBM's technical assistance facilitated the tasks of the Nazis in the commission of their crimes against humanity,

acts also involving accountancy and classification by IBM machines and included in the concentration camps themselves," the lower court continued.

"In view of the preceding, IBM's complicity with material and intellectual assistance in the criminal acts of the Nazis during the Second World War by means of its Geneva establishment does not appear to be ruled out, as there is a great deal of evidence indicating that the

Geneva establishment was aware that it was aiding and supporting these acts."

**I sent three or four letters to all the directors of IBM in New York, and to IBM in Paris and Geneva, and they never answered. This silence is the arrogance of money and the shame of the guilty.**

**Jean-Phillipe Sambuc**  
Attorney

Jean-Phillipe Sambuc, the attorney for the Gypsy group, said he tried repeatedly to discuss the matter with IBM. "I sent three or four letters to all the directors of IBM in New York, and to IBM in Paris and Geneva, and they never answered," he told JTA. "This silence is the arrogance of money and the shame of the guilty."

Sambuc said the group was open to Jews and other victims of Nazi aggression whose suffering allegedly was aided by IBM, and that the Gypsy case was only "a test case." "IBM is doing its best to kill the case by delay," Sambuc said, adding that one of the five Gypsy plaintiffs in the suit already has died.

IBM repeatedly declined to respond to questions from this reporter about the latest ruling. Jewish leaders also said they have been rebuffed as they tried to get answers from IBM.

In 2004, when IBM's director of worldwide media relations, John Bukovinsky, was asked about the company's involvement in facilitating the extermination of millions of Jews, Gypsies and others, he characterized the disclosures as "old news." When a reporter pointed out that the Holocaust itself was some 60 years ago, Bukovinsky replied, "So what? What is the point?"

*Edwin Black is the New York Times best-selling author of "IBM and the Holocaust" (Crown, 2001), which first revealed IBM's involvement with the Third Reich.*

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## NORTH AMERICA

### CIA refuses access to Nazi recruiting files

The CIA reportedly is refusing access to documents detailing the agency's recruitment of Nazi war criminals.

This refusal comes despite a 1998 law requiring full access to such records, *The New York Times* reported.

Many such documents already have been made public and show a close relationship between the U.S. government and former Nazis.

"I think that the CIA has defied the law, and in so doing has also trivialized the Holocaust, thumbed its nose at the survivors of the Holocaust and also at Americans who gave their lives in the effort to defeat the Nazis in World War II," former Rep. Elizabeth Holtzman (D-N.Y.), a member of the working group requesting the files, told the *Times*.

The Senate Judiciary Committee plans a public hearing next month.

Historians say at least five associates of Nazi leader Adolf Eichmann worked for the CIA, and the agency tried to recruit dozens more.

### State: Hamas still a terrorist group

The U.S. State Department still views Hamas as a terrorist group despite its success in Palestinian municipal elections.

"Winning an election doesn't mean you stop your violence. You stop your violence because you ban violence as a goal. And that has to be the criteria of judging any particular organization or individual," department spokesman Richard Boucher said last Friday, a day after Hamas performed strongly in elections for Gaza Strip local councils.

"We don't think Hamas has a role as long as they maintain a course of violence, as long as they remain a terrorist organization. We don't think they have anything constructive to bring to the process," Boucher said.

### Jewish lay leader dies

Karen Shapira, a national Jewish lay leader, died Jan. 25 of cancer at age 60.

Shapira, who lived in Pittsburgh, was a founding member and secretary of the executive committee of the United Jewish Communities, the umbrella group of the North American federation system.

She chaired its Israel Emergency Campaign work group and was immediate past chairwoman of UJC's Israel and Overseas Pillar.

She also was a past chairwoman of the United Jewish Federation of Pittsburgh.

Appointed by then-governor Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania, Shapira served on the Pennsylvania Commission for Women.

She was on the executive committee of the United Way of South West Pennsylvania and the boards of the Pittsburgh Symphony, the Jewish Healthcare Foundation in Pittsburgh and the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center.

## MIDDLE EAST

### Sharon lawsuit tossed out

An Egyptian court threw out a lawsuit claiming damages against Ariel Sharon for alleged war crimes.

The court in the Sinai town of El Arish ruled Saturday that there was insufficient evidence in the \$12 million suit filed by families of Egyptian soldiers killed during the 1967 Six-Day War, during which Sharon was a senior army commander.

The claimants said they would appeal the decision. Charges of Israeli executions of prisoners of war intensified in the 1990s when a

commander from the 1956 Sinai campaign said his troops killed 49 Egyptians who had fallen captive.

### Jew vs. Jew

Some Israeli settler propaganda is anti-Semitic, an Israeli Cabinet minister said.

"Have you included the Nazi imagery invoked by the settlers?" Israel's communications minister, Dalia Itzik, asked Diaspora Minister Natan Sharansky after he gave a presentation on anti-Semitism in the Cabinet on Sunday.

She was referring to those Gaza settlers opposed to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's Gaza withdrawal plan who recently donned orange Star of David badges recalling those forced on European Jews by the Nazis.

The comments by the Labor Party's Itzik stirred outrage among more rightist Cabinet members.

"Every time they use such tactics, I tell them it is very grave, but do not confuse this with those people who want to kill all of the Jews," Sharansky told her.

### Israeli satirist dies at 80

Israeli satirist Ephraim Kishon died.

A Holocaust survivor who gained international renown for his novels and films poking fun at life in the Jewish state, Kishon died of a heart attack Saturday in his second home in Switzerland.

He was 80.

Having survived Nazi labor camps, the Hungarian-born Kishon immigrated to Israel in 1949, learned Hebrew and wrote satirical columns in Israeli newspapers.

In the 1960s he moved to cinema, writing and directing "Sallah Shabati," a comedy about North African immigrants that won the Golden Globe for best foreign film and was nominated for an Oscar.

## WORLD

### Jews threaten to sue Vatican

A Jewish group threatened to sue the Vatican if it doesn't release information about Jewish children hidden in convents during World War II who may never have been returned to Jewish communities.

The activist group, Coalition for Jewish Concerns-Amcha, is threatening to sue if the Vatican does not release its records within a week, the group said in news conferences Jan. 27 in New York and in Washington, outside the Vatican embassy.

The move comes after the recent discovery of a Vatican letter to French authorities asking them not to return Jewish children who were hidden and baptized to their parents or Jewish communities.

In response, the Anti-Defamation League is circulating a petition calling on the Vatican to release its Holocaust-era baptismal records.

### Holocaust taught in Ukraine

College-level courses on Holocaust studies are currently being taught at 57 universities in Ukraine, Jewish activists told a news conference.

Participants in the Jan. 27 conference in Kiev also were shown new textbooks and teachers' manuals intended for use in Ukraine's secondary schools.

The program to introduce Holocaust education in Ukrainian school curriculum is spearheaded by Tkuma, Ukraine's Holocaust Foundation.

Aleksandr Movchan, an official at the Ministry of Science and Education of Ukraine, said his agency is paying special attention to the issue of Holocaust education at the country's public schools and universities.