



NEWS AT A GLANCE

NEWS ANALYSIS

Concern mounts over success of Buchanan in early GOP races

By Matthew Dorf

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Stung by Pat Buchanan's strong early showing in the race for the Republican presidential nomination, Jewish Republicans will continue to distance themselves from the man many consider a borderline anti-Semite.

Boosted by a second-place "victory" in this week's Iowa caucus and by last week's upset in the Louisiana caucus, Buchanan has emerged as the early choice of the religious right for the GOP nomination.

While a Buchanan nomination remains a longshot, his strong showing early in the race has moderate Republicans rushing to loudly denounce him.

"Pat Buchanan has a very strong hate message and message of class warfare and unfortunately, a number of Republican Iowans bought it," said Bud Hockenberg, a Jewish Republican activist in Des Moines. "Pat Buchanan poses a grave danger for the Jewish community."

Buchanan has championed a socially conservative platform with an emphasis on policy goals advocated by the religious right. He has promised to propose a constitutional amendment to outlaw all abortions in the United States, to take steps to end immigration and to bring prayer into the nation's public schools.

Matt Brooks, executive director of the National Jewish Coalition, the pre-eminent Jewish Republican organization, said, "Pat Buchanan's views are so far out of the mainstream of the Republican Party today that they are practically out of the Republican tent."

Brooks added, "He is a rather large nuisance, like a little dog who is constantly barking at your heels."

Fearing that there could be a repeat of the 1992 convention debacle, when the party appeared intolerant and exclusive, Republicans pledged this year to keep the GOP's far right wing in check.

"We're not stupid. We learned from our mistakes in 1992," Brooks said. "We have a much stronger party chairman and will have a much stronger nominee who will stand up to the extreme forces in the party. There will be a series of ground rules precisely to avoid what happened in '92."

Sen. Bob Dole (R-Kan.) won 26 percent of the Iowa vote to Buchanan's 23 percent. Former Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander finished third with 18 percent, followed by Steve Forbes with 10 percent and Sen. Phil Gramm (R-Texas) with 9 percent. Conservative commentator Alan Keyes brought up the rear with 7 percent.

The candidates will travel to New Hampshire for Tuesday's primary and then begin a five-week sprint through 30 states that will likely decide who will represent the GOP in the November elections.

Democrats in Iowa gave President Clinton overwhelming support in the Democratic caucus, where he ran unopposed.

"Amazingly, 50,000 Democrats turned out to support the president in a year when he faced no opposition, compared with a total 100,000 Republicans for all their candidates," said Gary Rubin, past president of the Jewish Federation of Greater Des Moines and a board member of the National Jewish Democratic Council.

But Rubin also voiced concern over local support for Buchanan.

'No friend to the Jews'

"This is a pretty grim scenario for Iowans, and quite frankly an embarrassment," Rubin said.

Buchanan has shunned the Jewish community during this campaign. The former presidential speech writer turned talk show commentator turned presidential aspirant was the only declared Republican candidate to decline an invitation to speak to a National Jewish Coalition forum last year.

In his current campaign, Buchanan has stayed away from the fiery rhetoric that led Kenneth Stern of the American Jewish Committee in a 1991 report to describe him as a man who is "no friend to the Jews, and has serious problems with 'Jewish issues.'"

Buchanan has drawn the ire of the Jewish community for criticizing U.S. foreign aid to Israel as "subsidizing a policy that denies to Palestinians

■ Jewish Republicans distanced themselves from Pat Buchanan, who has emerged as the early choice of the religious right for the GOP presidential nomination. [Page 1]

■ The University of Massachusetts took steps to deny a prominent Holocaust denier access to its World Wide Web site, according to the Simon Wiesenthal Center. [Page 4]

■ Officials from Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority initialed a joint agreement in Oslo on sharing water resources in the Middle East. Israel already has separate agreements with Jordan and the Palestinian Authority governing the management of water resources. [Page 2]

■ The head of the Israeli army's intelligence branch told a parliamentary committee that even though Palestinian security forces were working to apprehend terrorists known to be planning attacks against Israelis, they were making no effort to eradicate the infrastructure of the fundamentalist militant groups.

■ The political movement headed by Natan Sharansky officially turned into a political party to take part in the upcoming Knesset elections. Sharansky predicted that his party, Israel B'Aliyah, could win as many as six seats in the Knesset.

■ A Palestinian official said Israel's decision to hold early elections might delay a meeting of the Palestine National Council aimed at amending clauses in the Palestine National Charter that call for the destruction of Israel. Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres has said the Jewish state would halt peace talks with the Palestinians if the charter is not amended.

■ Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan told Iran's parliament that he planned to use the unity of Muslims in the United States to fight Washington's anti-Iranian policies. The comments of the black nationalist Muslim were broadcast on state-run Tehran Television.

that God-given right to a homeland" and accusing Israel and its "amen corner" in the United States of leading the charge for the 1991 Gulf War.

Buchanan has riled the Jewish community for his defense of accused Nazi war criminals and his support for views espoused by Holocaust deniers.

He has questioned the number of Jews gassed at Treblinka and accused survivors of having a syndrome of "group fantasies of martyrdom and heroics."

He was particularly active in the defense of John Demjanjuk, an SS guard acquitted by the Israeli Supreme Court of being Ivan the Terrible.

Nonetheless, the court found credible evidence that he committed crimes against humanity.

In addition, Buchanan stands accused of using classic anti-Semitic theories to fan his conservative ideology.

"The anti-Semitic models on which he has based his conservatism combine to produce a man with a severe Jewish problem," Stern wrote in the 1991 paper on Buchanan, a sentiment that remains valid today.

"Buchanan has said things in the past that remain deeply troubling to the Jewish community," said Stern, AJCommittee's program specialist on anti-Semitism and extremism.

While most of the Jewish community remains on the sidelines watching the Buchanan campaign, at least one group has been actively protesting his candidacy.

"Pat Buchanan is the most dangerous anti-Semite in America today," said Ronn Torrosian, national spokesman for the Coalition for Jewish Concerns-AMCHA.

"It is simply unbelievable that a man with this record of anti-Semitism and hate can get this strong a level of support in America," said Torrosian, whose group, which is headed by Rabbi Avi Weiss, plans to follow Buchanan on the campaign trail and disrupt his speaking engagements.

With so much attention focused on Buchanan's success in Iowa and the rise of Alexander's campaign, Dole has mockingly been labeled the "front walker" by many commentators.

Dole, a favorite among many Jewish Republicans, attracted little support from religious right voters in Iowa and relied heavily on the vote of senior citizens.

With Buchanan running strong in New Hampshire — where he received 37 percent of the vote four years ago when he challenged then-President George Bush — Dole has reason to worry, many observers say.

But Buchanan's success to date is largely traced to the support of the religious right, who comprised an estimated 37 percent of voters in the Iowa caucus.

Road to San Diego

This week's caucus featured the votes of registered Republicans in a state with a large evangelical Christian population that turned out to vote in significant numbers while many other GOP voters stayed home.

The religious right is expected to have less of an impact on the outcome of the New Hampshire primary than in Iowa.

"The road to San Diego is a very long process and Buchanan is very vulnerable with a number of constituencies," Hockenberry said, referring to the site of the Republican convention scheduled for August.

The religious right is expected to play a large role on March 5, when voters go the polls in 12 states.

As the candidates trek to New Hampshire, Alexander and Dole are confident that there are fewer religious right voters to throw their political weight behind Buchanan.

In addition, the New Hampshire primary rules

allow Independents to cast their votes for a GOP candidate, weakening the voting strength of the party's right wing.

Brooks predicted, "We are seeing the heyday of the Buchanan candidacy. He will fade after New Hampshire."

Regardless of whether Buchanan's success continues, Jewish Democrats fear that his message has struck a chord in grass-roots America.

Ira Forman, executive director of the National Jewish Democratic Council, said Buchanan's success is "very worrisome for all America and all of us as Jewish Americans."

His success "proves that the radical right has a significant place in the party," Forman said.

Rubin of Des Moines agreed that the results of the Iowa caucus demonstrated the influence of the religious right in the GOP, pointing out that "the candidates with an appeal to the right — Gramm, Keyes and Buchanan — together received a significant share of the caucus votes."

For Jewish Democrats, however, Buchanan's strong showing may have a silver lining.

Buchanan's success "certainly plays into the hand of the Democrats because people will rally to the Democratic Party if he continues on a successful path, but I'm not hoping for that," Forman said.

"The country can't afford Pat Buchanan's success."

Jewish Republicans disagree vigorously on the question of Buchanan's national appeal.

"Buchanan in no way has a significant following," Brooks said.

But he added, "He will be the social conservative candidate of this election." □

Peres: Water rights on Golan key to peace treaty with Syria

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A peace treaty with Syria will not be achieved without a resolution of the issue of water rights on the Golan Heights, Prime Minister Shimon Peres has said.

"Without a solution to the water problem we will not have any agreement," he said Tuesday, adding that one solution might be that Syria "would get water from Turkey and we would keep all the water sources that are under our authority today."

The Golan Heights, which Israel captured in 1967 and which the Syrians have demanded be fully returned to them, is a key water-gathering region in the Middle East.

Tributaries flowing from the Golan feed into the Sea of Galilee, which provides 30 percent of Israel's water needs. The Golan is also the site of the headwaters of the Jordan River.

Water, security arrangements on the Golan and normalization of ties have been at the center of the negotiations between the two countries. Another round of talks in eastern Maryland is scheduled to begin Feb. 28.

The Syrian and Israeli governments have said they want to pursue the peace talks even though Peres has called for early national elections.

Meanwhile, representatives of Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian Authority, meeting Tuesday in Oslo, initialed an accord on regional water development.

The Israeli Foreign Ministry described the document, which is still subject to approval by the three governments, as the first of its kind.

The accord addresses the parties' interests in jointly developing water resources, but it does not touch on the controversial issues of water rights and sharing of existing resources. □

ADL audit shows decline in anti-Semitic incidents

By Heather Camlot

NEW YORK (JTA) — Anti-Semitic incidents in the United States declined in 1995, a drop commensurate with the trend in crime rates across the country, according to the Anti-Defamation League's annual audit of anti-Semitism.

The ADL recorded 1,843 incidents last year, a decrease of 11 percent from 1994, and the first decline in three years.

In 1995, 108 arrests were made for anti-Semitic hate crimes, down from 141 in the previous year. Forty-seven states and the District of Columbia have hate-crime statutes.

"Through the intensified efforts of law enforcement and continued educational outreach, we hope this is the beginning of a trend away from anti-Semitic acts," Abraham Foxman, the ADL national director, said in a statement. "But, we must remain vigilant."

Among the reported incidents, Freddy's Fashion Mart, a Jewish-owned business in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City, was torched in December in an attack widely believed to have been motivated by anti-Semitic rhetoric.

In Cincinnati, a rabbi's son was beaten by four youths until he collapsed.

The audit is based on reports made by 42 states and the District of Columbia to the ADL and to law enforcement agencies. Many of the acts, the ADL pointed out, are not crimes, such as the distribution of hate propaganda and racial slurs, both of which are protected by the First Amendment.

The ADL audit revealed that the states with the largest Jewish populations also have the highest number of incidents. Fully 55 percent of all reported acts occurred in New York (370), California (264), New Jersey (228) and Florida (152).

Personalized attacks on Jews and Jewish institutions continue to be the most common anti-Semitic incidents, totaling 1,116. These are described by the ADL as "in your face" intimidation and hostile acts.

In 1995, these included a pig's head mounted to the front door of a synagogue in York, Pa., and, shortly after the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, a spectator at a Cleveland Browns football game holding up a sign reading, "They killed the wrong Jew," referring to team owner Art Modell, who decided to move the Browns to Baltimore.

Vandalism accounted for 727 of the reported anti-Semitic incidents, but the only category showing an increase was cemetery desecrations.

Skinhead-related incidents decrease

College campuses saw their first decrease in anti-Semitic incidents in seven years, from the 1994 high of 143 to 118, a decline of 17 percent.

The number of skinhead-related incidents also decreased, from 24 to 17 in 1995.

"It's a statement about American society," said Bernard Reisman, Klutznik professor of Contemporary American Jewish Studies at Brandeis University. "As people become more sophisticated, they become more accepting of one another."

But, Kenneth Stern, program specialist on anti-Semitism and extremism at the American Jewish Committee, said the focus should be on long-term trends, rather than yearly records.

"It would be dangerous to jump to conclusions based on statistics from one year to the next," Stern said.

It is still important to continue with "monitoring,

surveying, education, political activism and long-term research to discover what is likely to occur and what are the implications," he added.

Anti-Semitism will never completely disappear, Foxman said in an interview. "Unfortunately, until we develop a vaccine against bigotry and anti-Semitism, it will always be with us." □

Accusations in Egyptian media about POWs rankle Jewish state

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Egypt's ambassador to Israel was summoned this week to discuss with Deputy Foreign Minister Eli Dayan the continuing appearance of accusations against Israel in the Egyptian media.

Egyptian newspapers have been reporting since the summer that Israeli soldiers killed Egyptian POWs during the 1956 Sinai Campaign and the 1967 Six-Day War.

Recent newspaper reports allege that Israel used the POWs' body parts for transplants and medical experiments.

This week, Ambassador Mohammed Basiouny said that Egypt was not trying to worsen ties with Israel. He added, however, that the matter must be investigated. "We would like to start an investigation to find out" where the truth is, Basiouny said after meeting with Dayan.

Dayan said the issue prompted Egypt not to invite Israel to the International Book Fair in Cairo scheduled for next month. "Not only are we not invited to Cairo, we have learned that they will have a special day devoted to the issue of Egyptian prisoners of war," he said.

The issue first entered public debate after an Israeli reserve army general said last year in a newspaper interview that Israeli soldiers had killed Egyptian POWs during the 1956 Sinai Campaign.

Since then, Egypt has issued repeated demands that the matter be investigated and that those responsible be put on trial.

Israeli officials have neither confirmed nor denied the allegations.

But in an effort to calm the situation, Israel agreed to appoint a reserve army general, former Tel Aviv Mayor Shlomo Lahat, to investigate the allegations and report the results to Cairo. □

Shamgar panel wraps up testimony

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The Israeli commission investigating the security lapses that led to the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin has completed the testimony segment of its proceedings.

The final two witnesses appeared Tuesday before the three-person Shamgar Commission, headed by former Chief Justice Meir Shamgar.

The witnesses, two senior officers for the Tel Aviv district, answered questions about the specific instructions police received regarding security in the parking area where Rabin was shot after leaving a Nov. 4 rally. Rabin's confessed assassin, Yigal Amir, is now on trial.

In December, the commission sent letters to six top security officials and an assistant police commander, warning them that they stood to be harmed by the findings.

The head of the Shin Bet, Israel's domestic intelligence service, at the time of the assassination has resigned.

A Justice Ministry official said attorneys for those who could be implicated by the inquiry had until Feb. 25 to issue written summations.

The panel is expected to submit its findings and recommendations to the government in April. □

Massachusetts school blocks Holocaust denier from Internet

NEW YORK (JTA) — The University of Massachusetts has taken steps to block a prominent Holocaust denier access to its World Wide Web site, according to the Simon Wiesenthal Center.

Ernst Zundel, 57, a German-born resident of Toronto, circumvented a German government effort to block access to Internet sites promoting racial hatred.

Zundel countered the German government action this month by enlisting the help of Internet activists at 10 prestigious American universities. The activists said they cooperated mainly because they oppose any effort to regulate and censor the Internet.

The Wiesenthal Center last week commended the University of Massachusetts for ordering the graduate student who posted the messages for Zundel on the university's Web site to remove them.

"The bottom line is that while bigots may have the right to put their ideas in cyberspace, institutions of higher learning supported by taxpayers and public grants have no obligation to provide them with access and legitimacy," said Rabbi Abraham Cooper, associate dean of the center.

"The university was right to conclude that such activity constitutes inappropriate use of public resources."

Germany, where Holocaust denial is a crime, had sought to block access to Internet sites posting messages that promote racial hatred. The move was aimed at preventing Zundel from propagating his message that the Holocaust was a hoax.

"It is our hope that other schools will follow the example set by the University of Massachusetts," Cooper said. The other nine schools include the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Stanford University, the University of Texas and the University of Pennsylvania.

The Simon Wiesenthal Center's National Task Force Against Hate is now canvassing more than 2,000 American colleges and universities to find out their rules for the use of their on-line services. □

Israel's chief rabbi, Mandela share imprisonment experiences

By Suzanne Belling

JOHANNESBURG (JTA) — Israel's Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau met last week with South African President Nelson Mandela at his Pretoria residence, where the two leaders compared notes on their periods of imprisonment.

Lau said in an interview that he and Mandela "found a common language from the very first moment."

"We were both prisoners, he for 27 years and I for only six — between the ages of 2 and 8 in concentration camps during the Holocaust," said the rabbi, who was on a three-day visit to South Africa.

Mandela's opposition to apartheid in South Africa was a major factor in his imprisonment.

Lau also said, "I told the president that the only difference was, as written in his book 'Long Walk to Freedom,' that while he hoped for a better tomorrow, we didn't want to see the sun rise on another day.

"I also told him that now we could thank God we both had survived and were able to lead our people, as in Exodus, people who came from slavery to freedom."

Mandela said he was hoping to finalize arrangements with the Israeli Embassy to visit the Jewish state in the near future, Lau said. "I promised him the red carpet treatment when he comes," the rabbi added.

Mandela has a great "warmth towards South Africa's Jewish community," Lau said. □

European Union, Palestinians to negotiate trade agreement

By Joseph Kopel

BRUSSELS (JTA) — The European Union is willing to reach a trade agreement with the Palestinian Authority, according to E.U. officials.

At a meeting here last week, the 15 E.U. foreign ministers invited the European Commission, the union's executive body, to start discussions with the Palestinian Authority about the accord.

The ministers agreed to start the discussions after the Palestinians held their Jan. 20 elections, which "conferred democratic legitimacy on the Palestinian Authority," according to a recent E.U. statement.

According to diplomatic sources here, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat will send soon a delegation to Brussels to begin exploratory talks with the European Commission about the accord, which will also open the door to regular diplomatic contacts between the two parties.

E.U. sources said there are some legal obstacles to reaching an E.U.-Palestinian accord, the most notable being that no Palestinian state exists.

The two sides will seek to reach an interim accord that will not interfere with Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, which are slated to resume in May, the sources said.

The Palestinians already benefit from E.U. concessions that allow all their industrial products and many farm goods into the 15 E.U. member-nations duty-free. □

Hebrew daily Davar Rishon to close

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The Hebrew daily Davar Rishon is expected to close this week, after an unsuccessful attempt to get the financially strapped newspaper back on its feet.

Davar Rishon, which was previously called Davar, was founded by Israel's Histadrut trade union federation.

The newspaper was taken over by employees last year and renamed after Histadrut officials decided that they could not cover the paper's growing deficit.

The newspaper, with a circulation of 20,000, continued to be published under the leadership of veteran journalist Ron Ben Yishai.

But efforts failed to find a private investor who would rescue the paper from its financial difficulties.

"The only thing that could save the paper now would be if by way of a miracle we found a business group that will come up to save the paper," Ben Yishai told Israel Radio. He said the paper needed some \$2 million to cover its losses.

With Davar no longer on the scene, only three major dailies will be left in Israel: Yediot Achronot, which has a circulation of about 250,000; Ma'ariv, with about 160,000 readers; and Ha'aretz, whose circulation stands at about 65,000. □

Israeli trade deficit soars

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's trade deficit reached one of its highest levels ever in January, with imports exceeding exports by more than \$1 billion.

The Central Bureau of Statistics said this week that imports last month totaled \$2.6 billion and exports about \$1.6 billion.

The deficit was 10 percent higher than during the same period a year ago.

The 1995 trade deficit totaled a record \$10.2 billion. □