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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Roth leaves Holocaust museum

An internationally renowned Holocaust scholar resigned as director of a research center run by the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum. John Roth said he decided that his "happiness and well-being" would be best served by remaining in his current teaching position at Claremont McKenna College. [Page 4]

Clinton clarifies Mideast stance

President Clinton said Palestinian statehood "can only be settled through negotiations between Israel and the Palestinians."

In a letter to the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, Clinton also wrote, "It is not our intention to second-guess Israel's decisions on security nor have we done so." The letter, dated June 23 and released Tuesday, was in response to a May letter expressing concern among American Jews that the U.S. administration was unduly pressuring Israel to move the peace process forward.

Survivors sue Swiss central bank

Lawyers for five Holocaust survivors filed a class-action lawsuit in New York against Switzerland's central bank for damages stemming from stolen Holocaust-era assets.

The suit, which asks that the banks "return all identifiable property looted from plaintiffs," comes as talks between Jewish negotiators and three Swiss commercial banks to reach a settlement on claims stemming from the Holocaust era have stalled.

U.N. debates Jerusalem plan

The Palestine Liberation Organization called on the U.N. Security Council to condemn Israel's plan to expand Jerusalem's municipal boundaries.

But as delegates debated the issue, Great Britain proposed a compromise that would involve a letter of criticism from the council's president but not a vote. Jewish leaders met with Bill Richardson, the U.S. ambassador to the United Nations, to urge the United States to push for the softest criticism possible.

Because of the Independence Day holiday, the JTA DAILY NEWS BULLETIN will not be published Monday, July 6.

UJA, CJF move in together and make plans for wedding

By Lisa Hostein

NEW YORK (JTA) — They have barely finished moving in together, and already they are making plans to stand under the chupah.

The United Jewish Appeal and the Council of Jewish Federations, which together make up American Jewry's central fund-raising establishment, physically combined forces this week in a Manhattan office complex, cementing a partnership that began to take shape several months ago.

The move to the trendy Chelsea neighborhood marks a significant step in the consolidation of resources at a time of change in the Jewish world and when Jewish needs — locally, nationally and abroad — surpass available Jewish communal funds.

"The partnership was not created for neatness, but to do things better," said Martin Kraar, executive vice president of CJF and a driving force behind the consolidation.

"We need to do more with less," he said.

But the real culmination of what has often been a contentious process, pitting local federations against national agencies, is expected to occur in less than a year, when the UJA and CJF move from partnership to a full merger.

For 50 years, the United Jewish Appeal has been a well-known institution that, in concert with local federations, raises money for Israel and other overseas needs. CJF serves as an umbrella organization for some 200 local federations, providing services and guidance for fund raising and leadership development.

The cultures of the two organizations were so different that there was a time not so long ago when leaders of the institutions balked at public use of the term "merger."

Now, in a sign of how quickly the process has moved — driven in part by large-city local federations that are demanding a more efficient and responsive national system — these same organizational officials are preparing for a key meeting next week in Chicago, which is being billed as "The Road to Merger."

More than 100 individuals from around the country, representing the partnership, national agencies and local federations, are slated to come together July 7-8 to hammer out a wide array of issues — including the mission of the new entity, how it will be funded and how it will be run. CJF and UJA have agreed in principle to a complete merger. The organizations announced plans to complete the technical aspects of the merger by the end of 1998 and to finalize all other issues no later than April 1, 1999.

Whether all the key players will ultimately sign the marriage contract is not yet certain. Most insiders are expressing cautious optimism that it will happen, but as one key figure said, echoing the sentiment of many: "Until some important issues are resolved, there has to be some doubt it will happen."

The purpose of the new national organizational structure is, according to documents, "to create a national environment for raising greater financial resources, to satisfy needs at home and abroad, and for serving communities better and in a seamless manner."

Many details still need to be worked out. The new entity has neither a name nor an executive to head it. Questions of governance and direction have yet to be resolved.

And some in the community worry that more attention is being paid to the details than to overall vision and goals. To the skeptics, those involved plead for patience.

"It's going to take a couple of years for all of this to work itself out," said Steven Nasatir, president of the Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago. "People need to be patient and invest in the outcome."

Richard Pearlstone, the immediate past president of UJA, summed up a commonly voiced vision for the future by focusing on two key issues: Jewish continuity and Jewish

MIDEAST FOCUS

Netanyahu slams Weizman

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused the country's president of siding with Arab leaders. Netanyahu said he was sure that Arab capitals were "brimming with satisfaction" because of remarks made by Ezer Weizman, who had called on Netanyahu to schedule early elections and accused him of being "cut off from reality" because of his handling of the peace process.

Meanwhile, 50 percent of Israelis in a poll published in the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot said they wanted early elections, while 39 percent did not. The poll has a margin of error of 4.5 percent.

Israel sentences Palestinians

Israel sentenced two Palestinians to jail terms in connection with a 1997 bomb attack that injured 16 people in Tel Aviv. The two men, sentenced to 25 years and 18 years, were found guilty of belonging to a Hamas cell responsible for the attack and of planning to kidnap Jerusalem Mayor Ehud Olmert.

Meanwhile, Israel asked the Palestinian Authority to hand over three men suspected of killing an Israeli taxi driver. The Justice Ministry said this brings to 36 the number of Palestinians Israel has asked to be extradited.

Sharansky calls on Russians

Israeli Cabinet minister Natan Sharansky said the Russian government should increase its efforts to halt the transfer of missile technology to Iran. Sharansky made this comment to reporters in Almaty, the capital of Kazakhstan, during an official state visit to the former Soviet republic.

Spain, Israel to hold conference

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his Spanish counterpart, Jose Maria Aznar, announced that a bilateral technological seminar would be held in Madrid in November.

responsibility. "We are still talking about 'tikkun olam' and Jews helping Jews," said Pearlstone, using the Hebrew expression for making the world a better place. Pearlstone will co-chair a committee charged with finding a new chief executive for the new entity.

Said Dr. Conrad Giles, president of CJF and the other co-chair of the joint partnership: "If all we end up with is a refined, new, efficient bureaucracy, without a sense of mission and clearly articulated purpose, we will have failed."

It is clear that raising more money is a central goal of the partnership.

"We never have enough money to do what is needed," said Kraar, who is sharing the title of co-executive vice president of the partnership along with Bernard Moscovitz, executive vice president of UJA.

The central system raises an annual \$1.4 billion each year, including \$750 million in the annual campaign conducted by UJA and local federations. The rest comes from endowments and capital campaigns. But there are an estimated \$1.8 billion worth of needs, according to Kraar, from raising educated and committed American Jews to feeding hungry Jews in the former Soviet Union.

Over the past year, the partnership has begun to take shape in several ways, including:

- the creation of a 29-member partnership operating committee to oversee the process;
- the establishment of six strategic subcommittees — from needs assessment to budget and finance — to work out operational details;
- the consolidation of regional UJA and CJF offices to create five joint regional offices aimed at providing more effective and comprehensive services to local federations.

The five regions are:

- the Northeast, based in Bergen County, N.J., a region of 3 million Jews;
- the Southeast, based in Atlanta, a region of 250,000 Jews;
- Southeast Florida, based in Deerfield Beach, Fla., a region of 650,000 Jews;
- the Midwest, based in Chicago, with a satellite office in Cleveland, an area of 800,000 Jews; and
- the West, based in Los Angeles, a region of 1.3 million Jews.

As the partnership moves toward the merger, a host of thorny issues has yet to be resolved. One of the key and most contentious issues, many insiders agree, will revolve around what is known in the federation world as "collective responsibility," the obligation of local federations to contribute to national and international needs.

"Everybody agrees on the need for collective responsibility," said Pearlstone, but there is disagreement among federations over "what that means and how much money that includes."

Much of that discussion has focused on support for the Jewish Agency for Israel, the primary recipient in Israel of funds raised by U.S. Jews. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee also receives funds raised for overseas needs for its work in Israel and countries around the world. The Jewish Agency, whose main task is the rescue and resettlement of Jews, has undergone a major restructuring of its own during the past year, drastically cutting its budget and streamlining services.

The federation system provides about \$200 million annually to the Jewish Agency. Responding to a cash emergency, federations committed close to an additional \$60 million in emergency funds this year. But there is debate in the community over whether the Jewish Agency should be the sole recipient of American Jewish funds raised through local campaigns and whether it should be guaranteed a certain minimal amount.

Several local federations, such as San Francisco, have opted to direct a portion of their funds for Israel to specific programs there. Federations that take this approach argue that it gives them greater control over allocation of funds and makes individual donors feel more connected.

The United Israel Appeal, which serves as the link between U.S. Jewry and the Jewish Agency funds, believes that federations should support JAFI as the central "global agency designed to respond to the needs of Jews everywhere," said Bennett Aaron, the new chairman of UIA.

UIA recently joined the CJF-UJA partnership, even moving into the new central offices, but insiders say they are not certain whether the organization will ultimately be part of the new, merged entity, in part for legal reasons. □



Daily News Bulletin

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JEWISH WORLD

Suit against Yeshiva University marks latest battle for gay rights

By Julia Goldman

U.S. officials to meet on banks

U.S. finance officials are scheduled to meet Wednesday to discuss the possibility of sanctions against Swiss banks over claims relating to Holocaust-era assets. The meeting in New York comes after the passage of a July 1 deadline that the finance officials had set for the banks to reach a settlement with representatives of Holocaust survivors.

BRCA linked to ovarian cancer

A new study found that the BRCA1 and BRCA2 genetic mutations that lead to a hereditary predisposition for breast cancer are also associated with a 10-fold increase in the possibility of getting ovarian cancer. The study, underwritten by the genetic testing company Myriad, was published in the July issue of the *Journal of Clinical Oncology*. The mutations are found more often among Ashkenazi Jews than in the rest of the population.

Campaign set on Holocaust art

Some 39 countries launched a campaign to make restitution for art stolen from Holocaust victims. The announcement came as representatives of the nations joined with Jewish groups representing Holocaust survivors at an organizing seminar at the State Department in advance of a second international conference on Holocaust-era assets to be held this fall.

Survivors to get funds next month

U.S. and British officials announced that the first payments from an international fund set up by the two countries to benefit Holocaust survivors are expected to go out next month.

Payments from the \$57 million fund, which is separate from a fund set up by Switzerland last year, are slated to be distributed to Holocaust survivors in Eastern Europe through the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. Sixteen countries have so far made contributions to the fund.

Dutch officials cancel Israel visit

Holland's government postponed an official visit to Israel because of the stalemate over the Israeli-Palestinian peace process. The delegation of officials from the Dutch Foreign Ministry was scheduled to travel to Israel this week in order for talks on the Mideast security situation.

Jews for Jesus launch drive

Jews for Jesus launched its annual July missionary drive. The campaign, which in the past has included missionaries proselytizing in major cities across North America, was marked by a full-page ad in *The New York Times* headlined, "Believing in Jesus Makes a Jew More Jewish."

NEW YORK (JTA) — A discrimination lawsuit against Yeshiva University is shaping up to become the latest battle for gay and lesbian rights at the school.

Filed last week in New York State Supreme Court on behalf of two students at the school's Albert Einstein College of Medicine and on behalf of the Einstein Association of Gays, Lesbians and Bisexuals, the lawsuit charges discrimination in housing on the basis of marital status and sexual orientation. Both Yeshiva University and its medical school are named in the lawsuit, which is one of the first such cases in the country to claim unequal access to married-student housing, according to legal experts.

Einstein offers housing to all single students and to married students, their spouses and children. Students with same-sex partners do not have access to married-student housing because they cannot legally marry, according to the school's policy.

The plaintiffs in the lawsuit, Sara Levin, 26, and Maggie Jones, 23, claim that because they could not share on-campus housing with their respective long-term partners, they were forced to find more expensive apartments far from Einstein's Bronx, N.Y., campus. They are suing for a reversal of Einstein's housing policy, which is set by Y.U., damages for emotional distress and extra housing and commuting costs.

But Scott Emmons, a professor at Einstein and a faculty advocate for the school's gay association, said that beyond the lawsuit, the group is looking at the case as a bellwether for the school's policies toward homosexuals.

"We will not accept anything less than a statement in the school's literature" that ensures equal benefits to all students regardless of sexual orientation, including benefits for domestic partners, Emmons said in a telephone interview.

The current lawsuit is not the first controversy concerning gay and lesbian life at Y.U., which despite its Orthodox roots, is a non-sectarian institution — with the exception of its rabbinical school.

In 1994, controversy erupted over the presence of gay and lesbian student groups on Yeshiva's campuses, with vehement opposition voiced by Orthodox students and faculty, who cited religious objections to homosexuality. At that time, Y.U. reiterated its secular status; in compliance with New York City human rights law, officials said, it had no choice but to allow the groups as a recognized part of student activities.

Responding to the current lawsuit, Y.U. issued a brief statement saying that its housing policy "is applied equally to all applicants for student housing without regard to their sexual orientation." But the lawsuit claims that the housing policy has a "disparate impact" on gay and lesbian students with regard to married-student housing.

At a June 24 news conference, Levin, one of the plaintiffs, said she was told the school did not and would not honor domestic partnerships.

"I felt certain that the school would change its policy if I made a reasonable appeal," she said, "thinking that this is a medical school that has a history of embracing peoples who have been marginalized within medicine and society."

Y.U. officials refused to answer questions relating to the case, on the advice of lawyers. In a telephone interview, Dr. Richard Hays, the speaker of Einstein's faculty-student senate, also declined to comment on the lawsuit, but did refer to a senate resolution passed on Oct. 2, 1996, after the legislative body first heard Levin's complaint. That resolution reaffirmed previous requests that Y.U.'s administration change its "policy of denying benefits to the same-sex domestic partners of members of our community."

Previous senate resolutions, the document said, had been "consistently ignored."

Unable to resolve the issue on their own, Levin and Jones took their case last year to the American Civil Liberties Union. "They had done everything they could," said Matthew Coles, one of the ACLU lawyers for the plaintiffs, adding that subsequent meetings with Y.U.'s administration were unproductive. "We explained the law to them. They thought we were wrong," he said in an interview.

Y.U. is expected to file its first response to the students' lawsuit within the next three weeks. □

Holocaust scholar resigns post in wake of ongoing controversy

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — In the end, John Roth decided his “happiness and well-being” would best be served 3,000 miles away from the specter of controversy hanging over the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

Roth, an internationally renowned Holocaust scholar, resigned Monday as director of the museum’s Center for Advanced Holocaust Studies, a post he was slated to officially begin in August.

The resignation came in the wake of sustained criticism over several articles he had written, including a 1988 piece in which he compared Israeli policies toward the Palestinians to the Nazis’ treatment of Jews.

His decision left his critics satisfied and his supporters, including most officials of the museum, dismayed.

In his letter of resignation, Roth said he decided that his “happiness and well-being — family, professional, and personal — will be served best” by remaining at Claremont McKenna College in California, where he chairs the philosophy and religious studies department.

Sara Bloomfield, the acting director of the museum, which is a federal institution, expressed “deep regret” following Roth’s decision. “In spite of the public attention given to your appointment by a very few individuals, there was and continues to be very strong support for you as the right person for this important position,” Bloomfield wrote to Roth Tuesday, after receiving his letter of resignation.

Last week, 40 prominent Holocaust scholars attending a conference in Europe came out in support of Roth, a non-Jew who was slated to become the first director of the new center.

Criticism, however, continued unabated in recent weeks as Morton Klein, president of the Zionist Organization of America and one of the most vocal critics of Roth’s selection, pressed forward with his campaign to oust Roth.

Klein publicized a series of what he called “troubling writings” by Roth. One of the Roth articles Klein circulated, titled, “Irony in Israel,” compared the actions of the Israel Defense Forces to Palestinian terrorists.

Responding to Roth’s decision, Klein said the resignation “is in the best interests of the Holocaust museum, protecting its sacred purpose of teaching about the uniqueness of the Holocaust and the inappropriateness of loose analogies to other historical events.”

Rep. Michael Forbes (R-N.Y.), who joined with Rep. Jon Fox (R-Pa.) in urging the museum to remove Roth, said in a telephone interview he was pleased that Roth “decided to react to the sensitivities raised in the Jewish community about his appointment.”

“This has been, frankly, about making sure that the scholarly work of the museum is not impaired by some controversial writings that put Israel or the Jewish people in a negative light,” Forbes said, adding that he hoped the museum “will be more judicious as they seek to fill the position.”

The decision did not come as a complete surprise to museum officials. Bloomfield said in an interview that she knew Roth had been wavering and had tried to talk him out of the move.

However, a source with knowledge about Roth’s resignation suggested the parting of ways was a “mutual decision. It did not happen in a vacuum.”

But if there was any doubt among members of the museum’s governing council about whether it was in the museum’s best interest for Roth to take up the post amid a cloud of controversy, it did not come out publicly.

The U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council voted overwhelmingly last month to reaffirm Roth’s appointment and also unanimously passed a resolution repudiating the “character assassination” it said was being waged against him.

Abraham Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League, who cast the lone dissenting vote in the council against Roth because he concluded Roth’s mind-set was “flawed,” said this week he felt “sorry for him” because of the way the controversy played out through “personal attacks.”

But, he said, ultimately Roth’s resignation was the “right decision for both him and the museum.”

“He’s probably a very good scholar of the Holocaust but the wrong fit for the Holocaust museum,” Foxman said.

The council’s academic committee plans to reconvene soon to discuss finding a replacement.

Bloomfield, who has worked at the museum and at the organizing committee that preceded it for 12 years, said Roth’s resignation marked the end of “an unfortunate incident.”

But she said she remained confident that it would not tarnish the museum’s future role as a center for Holocaust scholarship and research. “Small events like this are blips in what I see as a very fine history that will continue,” she said. □

(JTA correspondent Matthew Dorf contributed to this report.)

Germany agrees to expand compensation for survivors

NEW YORK (JTA) — Some 7,500 Holocaust survivors will receive compensation from Germany as a result of a new agreement.

The agreement signed last month between Germany and the New York-based Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany expands the eligibility criteria to two groups of survivors who until now have not received any compensation from the German government.

Payments are expected to be made after Jan. 1, 1999.

One group is made up of survivors who were denied compensation because their annual income exceeded \$16,000 for a single person, or \$21,000 for a married couple. But for 4,500 survivors, who meet this criteria when their Social Security income is excluded, compensation now will be available. The new agreement excludes Social Security from income tabulations.

The other group includes survivors who spent the war years in camps that were not included in the original compensation agreement. Survivors who were incarcerated in special camps for Jews located in Austria, in forced labor camps on the Austro-Hungarian border or in forced military labor battalions for Hungarian Jews on the Ukrainian front will now also be able to receive compensation. Some 3,000 survivors fall into this category.

The German government will spend \$25 million a year on the pensions for these 7,500 survivors. □