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82nd Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Papon to seek pardon

A convicted Nazi collaborator plans to seek a pardon from French President Jacques Chirac. Maurice Papon's lawyer said the pardon would be sought because of his 89-year-old client's failing health.

Papon, who was sentenced in France last year to 10 years in jail for helping deport Jews to Nazi concentration camps, began his jail sentence in a prison hospital last Friday after Switzerland turned him over to French officials. [Page 3]

Sheinbein gets 24 years

An Israeli court gave a 24-year prison sentence to a Maryland teen-ager who fled to Israel after a 1997 murder.

Sunday's decision reflected an August plea bargain Samuel Sheinbein reached with prosecutors in which he admitted to killing and dismembering a teen-age acquaintance. The plea bargain angered U.S. prosecutors, who said Sheinbein would have received a stiffer sentence in the United States.

KKK rally sparks violence

About a dozen members of the Ku Klux Klan faced thousands of angry protesters during a KKK rally in Manhattan.

The Klan members, who appeared in their traditional hoods and robes but without masks, complained that they could not get their message across because the city had denied them a sound system.

Seven protesters were arrested on a variety of charges, including one man who allegedly assaulted a Klansman prior to Saturday's rally.

Three police officers were injured while trying to control the anti-Klan crowd.

Former leader criticizes Baptists

The Southern Baptist Convention's campaign to target Jews, Muslims and Hindus for recruitment goes against Christian teachings, according to a former convention leader.

"We need to cultivate personal relationships rather than launch a new crusade that's confrontational and abrasive," Keith Parks said.

Parks, who spent 13 years as head of the group's International Mission Board, left the convention after the group elected more conservative leaders in 1990.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Some communities come together to force hate groups to hit the road

By Daniel Kurtzman

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Last July one of Matthew Hale's neighbors in East Peoria, Ill., tacked up a simple sign: "Hate Has No Home Here."

That appeared to be the consensus of the 200 local residents who gathered for a prayer vigil outside the headquarters of the World Church of the Creator, which Hale runs out of his parents' home, after a member of the group went on a deadly shooting rampage targeted at minorities.

Like the residents of Billings, Mont., who chased out white supremacists in 1993, and dozens of other communities around the country that have stood up against hate, East Peoria sounded its own variation on the mantra: "Not in Our Town."

In the wake of a series of high-profile murders and shooting rampages sparked by hate, from Jasper, Texas to Laramie, Wyo., from Illinois to California, communities across the country have increasingly begun to explore ways to neutralize bigotry and counter the scourge of hate-driven violence.

While some politicians and activists involved in the fight against racism, anti-Semitism and bigotry have underscored the importance of strengthening federal hate crimes laws and curbing access to guns, many communities around the country are taking more localized approaches, focusing on raising awareness of the dangers of hate and turning its manifestations into opportunities to promote tolerance.

"The remarkable thing is that a hate group coming to town can serve as a catalyst for very good things," said Mark Potok, an analyst with the Southern Poverty Law Center, a Montgomery, Ala.-based group that tracks hate groups.

"A number of communities around the country have used appearances of hate groups to build unity coalitions or anti-hate groups of one kind or another, and often these groups have far outlasted the Klan or the neo-Nazi appearance of one day."

As an aid to communities looking to develop positive responses to hate, the Southern Poverty Law Center has begun distributing a new publication titled "Ten Ways to Fight Hate." It outlines a series of steps that have been tested in communities around the country by a wide range of human rights, religious and civic organizations.

The guide advises people to take an active stance against hate; organize a diverse coalition of allies; support the victims; persuade politicians and community leaders to stand against hate; teach tolerance to children; and examine the root causes of racism, prejudice and bigotry. That's exactly what the residents of East Peoria, led by the mayor and the city attorney and joined by civil rights activists, sought to do in July in response to the violence linked to the World Church of the Creator.

"We will not surrender the minds of our young to Matt Hale," Charles Dobbelaire, the mayor of East Peoria, said in July as he announced the creation of a commission to combat hate and teach tolerance. "I know that still today there are those who believe we should not attract attention to the hatemongers," he said.

"They believe that if we quietly go about our everyday life, those who preach hate will fade slowly into the night. I ask you this: If we do not speak out, loud and clear, when the hate messages spewing forth from this so-called church lead to death, then when do we speak out?"

East Peoria was just one stop on a larger civil rights tour that retraced Benjamin Nathaniel Smith's path through Illinois and Indiana. The tour was organized by the Illinois-based Center for New Community, a group that monitors hate activity in the

MIDEAST FOCUS

Barak pledges pluralism

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak pledged to find ways to allow people from all Jewish religious streams to "feel full partnership" in Israeli life. Barak made his comments in a speech at the Conservative movement's Schechter Institute of Jewish Studies in Israel.

The speech, which took place last week on the fourth anniversary of the Hebrew date of the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin, is believed to be Barak's first appearance before a non-Orthodox movement since taking office earlier this year.

Publisher linked to murder plot

The publisher of the Israeli newspaper Ma'ariv is under investigation for being involved in a murder plot, a spokesman for Israel's Justice Ministry said last Friday.

Ofer Nimrodi, chief executive officer of the Israel Land Development Co., "vehemently denies" the allegations, according to his lawyer.

Algerian leader meets Israelis

Algeria's president held talks with Israeli Cabinet ministers Shimon Peres and Shlomo Ben-Ami during a regional conference off the coast of Spain over the weekend.

Abdelaziz Bouteflika told a reporter from the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot that Algeria would consider establishing ties with Israel only after arrangements are reached with Syria and Lebanon.

Haifa museum cancels exhibit

An art museum in Haifa canceled an exhibit in which a naked woman was to be tied to a cross after some members of the Christian community in the Israeli city protested. Over the weekend, Christian youths got the cross from museum officials and burned it. The exhibit was to have included three men firing paint pellets at the nude female model.

Midwest, as part of its goal of building "moral barriers against hate for the long haul," said the Rev. David Ostendorf, the group's director.

"We're past the time when we can sort of quietly let these groups operate in our communities," he said. "It's crucial that we speak up and speak out and take action to expose them, to rally against them if necessary."

Similar approaches have been utilized elsewhere around the country.

In Colorado, what started as a rally of outraged citizens following the murder of an African immigrant outside a Denver hotel in 1997 ultimately led to the creation of a coalition dedicated to fighting hate.

"We said we will not tolerate this in our town, and we decided we would keep the organization intact because we did not just want to be a group that held rallies when people got killed.

"We wanted to try to prevent this sort of thing," said Anita Fricklas, who co-chairs Colorodans United Against Hatred and serves as the Colorado regional director of the American Jewish Committee. The group has been using the Internet as its primary organizing tool. "A lot of the hate groups have Web sites, so this is a way to say we're fighting hate on your turf," Fricklas said.

One of the better known and most imaginative examples of a community taking a stand against hate activity occurred six years ago in Billings.

White supremacists had appeared in town, terrorizing residents by distributing Ku Klux Klan fliers, desecrating a Jewish cemetery, intimidating black churchgoers and hurling bricks through the windows of Jewish homes displaying menorahs.

Outraged citizens took immediate action.

A volunteer workforce formed to paint over racist graffiti, religious groups from every denomination held marches and candlelight vigils and the local newspapers printed full-page menorahs that nearly 10,000 residents displayed in the windows of their homes and businesses as a gesture of support for the town's Jewish families.

Billings' response, which drove the white supremacists out of town, is not that hard to replicate, according to Christine Kaufmann, co-director of the Montana Human Rights Network, which helped organize the community's response.

"It's really very simple. People think this is a big deal, but it's just organize, organize, organize — very basic steps," she said.

"You call together a bunch of people, say what you want your community to be like, start throwing out ideas, and it snowballs from there," she added. "There really is no magic. The reason I guess it doesn't happen more often is that it's a lot of hard work that no one is getting paid to do."

Battles against hate may be won through organizing and a community's stand, but hate will never be eradicated, as most of those trying to stamp it out readily admit.

Abraham Foxman, the national director of the Anti-Defamation League, believes, though, that people can be "inoculated" against it if efforts are focused on an even more fundamental level — in the home, with parents teaching tolerance to their kids.

The ADL earlier this month launched an anti-violence television ad campaign in conjunction with NBC aimed at encouraging parents to talk to their children about hate.

"It's an acquired disease," Foxman said. "We inflict it, we develop it, we impart it to the kids and we infect them with it."

For that reason, he said, "we're also capable of preventing it." □

Netanyahu denies allegations

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said he and his wife are innocent of allegations they illegally kept gifts received while he was in office.

"Sara and I are now going through very difficult days of personal attacks and stinging insults for things we did not do," Netanyahu told Israel Television on Saturday while attending a party for his 50th birthday.

Police questioned the Netanyahus last week after investigators confiscated several boxes of gifts from their home, apartment and storage rooms. Police have not charged them with any crime. □



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JEWISH WORLD

Austrian Jews face more threats

The head of Austria's Jewish community said threats against Jews increased 10 times during the recent election campaign of Jorg Haider and his far-right Freedom Party, which placed second in the vote.

Ariel Musikant said Jews have experienced a significant rise in hate mail, threatening phone calls and harassment on the street. An estimated 12,000 Jews live in Austria.

Iraq warns of Iranian missiles

Iran will have an atomic bomb and long-range missiles by 2007, according to an Iraqi newspaper. In a front-page editorial Sunday, *Babel*, which is owned by President Saddam Hussein's eldest son, Uday, said the United States ought to change its hostile policy towards Iraq over the next five years, otherwise the balance of power in the Gulf would tip in favor of Iran.

Mandela reports to Clinton on trip

Nelson Mandela met last week with President Clinton to discuss his recent tour of the Middle East.

The former South African president said he believes Iran wants peaceful relations with the West and Israel, despite comments to the contrary by Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali Khameni.

Ezra Pound denied honor

The dean of a New York cathedral decided not to honor the poet Ezra Pound with a place in the cathedral's Poets' Corner because of Pound's anti-Semitism. This month's decision by the Rev. Harry Pritchett Jr., which overruled a vote by a group of American writers, came after members of St. John's the Divine threatened to protest if Pound was honored.

The United States arrested Pound in 1943 after he aired broadcasts for two years in Italy that partially blamed Jews for the world's economic problems. He was later confined to a mental hospital before being released in 1958.

Cleveland backs school station

The first university radio station went on the air in Israel earlier this month with the support of Cleveland's Jewish community.

The station run by students at Hebrew University in Jerusalem will broadcast programs in Hebrew, Arabic, English and French.

Lebanon irked by French stamp

Lebanon reportedly plans to ban mail into the country that bears a French stamp featuring the Israeli flag. The country's postal service will return all mail carrying the stamp, which was issued in January to honor 50 years of French-Israeli diplomatic relations.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

French Nazi collaborator caught, but many wonder who helped him

By Lee Yanowitch

PARIS (JTA) — After 18 years of legal maneuvering, convicted Nazi collaborator Maurice Papon is finally behind bars.

But questions persist about the preferential treatment the 89-year-old former Vichy official appeared to have enjoyed.

Swiss police seized Papon late last week in a hotel in the swanky ski resort of Gstaad and whisked him back to France, where he was taken to a prison hospital.

Papon had fled to Switzerland last week before a Supreme Court appeals hearing, which upheld his 10-year prison sentence for crimes against humanity.

He was found guilty of helping deport some 1,500 Jews to Nazi death camps during World War II, when he was supervisor of Bordeaux's Service for Jewish Questions and the second-ranking official in the area for the pro-Nazi Vichy regime.

At the beginning of his trial in Bordeaux in October 1997, a presiding judge allowed Papon to remain free during the proceedings in an unusual decision that triggered outrage among the civil plaintiffs — most of them relatives of Jews deported to Nazi death camps.

This is why, even after his conviction, Papon stayed out of prison pending his Supreme Court appeal. When he fled into exile on Oct. 10, he was certain he would lose his appeal.

"The question that has to be answered is whether he benefitted from any collusion or help in fleeing," said Alain Jakubowicz, president of a regional branch of the CRIF, France's umbrella group for Jewish organizations, and lawyer for B'nai Brith France in the case.

A number of measures could have been taken to avoid his flight. Months before his initial trial, Nazi-hunter Serge Klarsfeld asked the Justice Ministry to confiscate Papon's passport.

But because of Papon's age and the high positions he had held in postwar France — Paris police chief and budget minister — Klarsfeld's demand was ignored.

"The government and the justice system are fully responsible for Papon's flight out of France. If he had raped a little girl, they would have found some procedural means to prevent him from leaving," said lawyer Arno Klarsfeld.

From the moment the first charges were filed against Papon in 1981, French government officials repeatedly intervened to prevent the case from coming to court and dredging up memories of France's collaboration with its Nazi occupiers. Papon is the only senior French official to be taken to account for Vichy's anti-Semitic policies.

When Papon failed to surrender to police on the eve of his appeal last week, the appeal should have been automatically rejected without a hearing, according to French law. Instead, in another surprise move, court president Hector Milleville allowed lawyers from each side to argue the case.

In the end, the appeal was rejected on the grounds of Papon's absence.

"This case has been one exception after another from beginning to end," Jakubowicz said at the time.

Immediately after the appeal was thrown out, France issued an international arrest warrant for Papon.

Within a few hours, he was arrested. France's secret service, which now admits that it kept tabs on Papon from the moment he fled, tipped off the Swiss police.

Wishing to avoid a lengthy extradition procedure, Switzerland handed Papon over to French police the following day.

"The implementation of a formal extradition process is not necessary," Swiss Justice Minister Ruth Metzler told a news conference as Papon was taken by helicopter back to France.

"The Cabinet clearly wanted to expel Mr. Papon as quickly as possible."

Dogged by its own wartime demons for the past few years, the Swiss government did not want to be seen as harboring a war criminal. □

NEWS ANALYSIS

With peace talks, the issue of Palestinian refugees resurfaces

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM (JTA) — For more than 50 years, the Palestinian refugee problem has festered on the sidelines.

Throughout that period, Palestinian leaders focused their struggle on earning international recognition of their right to self-determination.

But now, with most world powers ready to accept Palestinian statehood — and with many Israelis also learning to live with the idea — the problem of almost 4 million Palestinians living in refugee camps throughout the Arab world is returning to the diplomatic agenda. Given the seemingly irreconcilable positions on the issue, it could well block the way to a final Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement.

“We have fought and have made sacrifices, we have seen our camps in Lebanon destroyed as part of our struggle to return to Palestine,” Suheil a-Natur, a Palestinian human rights activist from Lebanon, said recently. “But when the Palestinian leadership signed the first agreement with Israel, they totally neglected us.”

But did they? The Oslo accords left the refugee question — along with other “thorny” issues such as Jerusalem, Jewish settlements and final boundaries — to final-status negotiations.

Those talks began last month, six years to the day after the historic Rabin-Arafat handshake on the White House lawn. They are expected to pick up momentum in the coming months and result in a framework agreement by February and a final agreement by September 2000.

As a result, the refugee issue will soon be back on the table.

In 1949, at the end of Israel’s War of Independence, the bulk of the Palestinian population — 726,000 according to figures from the United Nations Relief and Works Agency — became refugees. Only 156,000 remained in Israel proper.

Fifty years later, the refugee problem has quintupled.

According to UNRWA there are now 3.5 million refugees in Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The total Palestinian diaspora comes to an estimated 5,350,000.

During the past five decades, all but one of the Arab host countries refused to turn the refugees into full citizens, nurturing the notion that the Palestinians would someday return to their homes — and in the process keeping the pressure on Israel to one day accept their right to return.

Jordan alone gave the refugees full citizenship rights. Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and the Persian Gulf states gave Palestinians employment opportunities, but none took the initiative to remove the refugees from the camps and integrate them into their respective societies. As a result, the various refugee populations remained in abject poverty.

Israel initially agreed to absorb some 100,000 refugees, but nothing came of the proposal, except for 40,000 who were reunited with families already living in the Jewish state.

At an address in the Knesset recently, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak expressed “sorrow” over the suffering of the Palestinians, but stressed that this was not the result of “guilt feelings or taking responsibility for creating the conflict or for its outcome.”

The Israeli daily Ha’aretz recently reported that Barak was

seeking to solve the refugee problem within the permanent settlement’s framework agreement. According to the report, Barak rejects the return of the Palestinian refugees to Israel proper. Israel will agree, though, to their return to the Palestinian self-rule areas.

The Palestinians have suggested that a future state would issue passports to all Palestinians wherever they are, thus ending the problem of stateless refugees.

The most acute problem exists in Lebanon, which has 368,000 Palestinian refugees. Over the decades, Lebanon put strict limitations on the refugees, resulting in their inability to leave the squalid camps and improve their standard of living.

This is one issue on which the fractionalized Lebanese society is unanimous: No one wants the Palestinian refugees there.

The official line of the Lebanese government calls upon Israel to accept the refugees’ right of return.

“Our firm stance is that we insist on Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon, the west Bekaa Valley and the Golan Heights, and a guarantee for the right of Palestinian refugees in Lebanon to go back home,” Lebanese President Emile Lahoud said recently, setting out his country’s terms for peace with Israel.

Residents of the Rashidiya refugee camp near the Lebanese port city of Tyre recently complained that the Lebanese authorities have blockaded their camp, preventing the entrance of any supplies, except for food, water and medicine. The refugees are “illegal aliens in Lebanon,” said human rights activist Natur.

“The Lebanese government does not want to grant us Lebanese citizenship, and the Palestinians do not want to become Lebanese citizens.”

Jordan, meanwhile, is concerned that if the refugee problem is not resolved, Lebanon will eventually deport its own refugee population — with Syrian help — to Jordanian territory.

Seven years ago, a multinational team was established to discuss the refugee problem. The committee met a number of times, but made no progress. The Palestinians repeatedly raised the issue of the refugees’ right of return; the Israelis repeatedly rejected it.

Yosef Hadas, the head of the Israeli negotiating team, said at the time that he foresaw a “difficult confrontation with the Palestinians over their demand to implement their right of return.”

“The Palestinians will not agree to limit their right of return only to the West Bank and the Gaza Strip,” he added.

A proposal has been floated to bypass the question of returning refugees by compensating them for the property they left behind 50 years ago.

Recently revealed documents show that in 1951 Israel estimated the value of abandoned Arab property at \$1 billion, equivalent to \$6 billion in today’s dollars. But there have been reports that Israeli officials are thinking of bringing to the table a demand that Jews be compensated for property they left behind in Arab lands before coming to Israel — a demand that could well offset any Palestinian compensation claims.

Ghassan al-Imam, a columnist for the London-based Arabic newspaper Asharq al-Awsat wrote recently: “Because of the terrible insistence of the Arabs to make peace with Israel in exchange for a piece of land which will not stand the flow of returnees, there is only one alternative: Resettlement.”

Resettlement, that is, of the Palestinian refugees in their current host countries. But since none of the host countries — except for Jordan — is willing to accept what they consider unwanted guests, the problem is likely to remain unsolved. □