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83rd Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Peace talks to resume

Israel and the Palestinians are expected to resume contacts Sunday, said an adviser to Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak. Gilad Sher said Oded Eran will meet with Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat.

In the wake of the failed Camp David summit, Erekat has been surprisingly upbeat, telling interviewers he is confident a final peace accord will be reached by September.

The White House welcomed word of the resumption.

Charges against mogul dropped

Russian prosecutors dropped embezzlement charges against media mogul and Jewish community leader Vladimir Goussinsky, citing a lack of evidence.

The officials also freed up his property, which had been impounded earlier this month.

Goussinsky, who had been ordered to remain in Moscow during the course of the investigation, immediately left Russia for Spain, where his family is living.

Senate, House pass religion bill

The U.S. Senate and House of Representatives both passed legislation that requires state and local governments to provide compelling reasons for passing zoning laws that block religious institutions.

The Religious Land-Use and Institutionalized Persons Act, which has the support of many Jewish organizations, is a more limited version of the Religious Liberties Protection Act, which failed last year.

The bill now goes to President Clinton, who is expected to sign it.

Bulgaria irked by JNF decision

Bulgaria's Parliament removed its deputy speaker after he supported a Jewish group's plans to remove a memorial in Israel to Bulgaria's controversial wartime King Boris III.

The Jewish National Fund drew the ire of Bulgaria's government when it said last week it would replace three memorials honoring Bulgaria, one of which named Boris, with a single monument that would not bear any name.

Boris helped save 50,000 Bulgarian Jews from deportation but is accused of allowing 11,000 more to be taken to Nazi death camps from Bulgarian-occupied territory.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Republicans to emphasize unity in convention outreach to Jews

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Jewish delegates attending next week's Republican National Convention in Philadelphia may have to scramble from one event to another if they want to catch all the outreach to Jews.

The Republican Party is interested in being more inclusive, says Matt Brooks, the executive director of the Republican Jewish Coalition, and is actively reaching out to the Jewish community.

Brooks' group, which in the past has co-sponsored events with the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, is branching out on its own this year, hosting three events that will feature prominent Republican candidates, party leaders and member of Congress.

AIPAC, the pro-Israel lobby, instead is teaming with the United Jewish Communities for its own events, including one on Sunday that overlaps with the RJC event.

The American Jewish Committee has slated its own series of programs.

In contrast to past Republican conventions, when delegates and party leaders feuded over divisive issues such as abortion and school prayer, this convention is being touted as a unifying event for Republicans of all stripes.

The Republican platform, which will not be released until next week, is expected to express support for Israel, but will also likely include the issues promoted by religious conservatives that have alienated Jewish voters in previous years.

Republicans this time around are focusing on their candidate, Texas Gov. George W. Bush, and on such issues as education and foreign policy.

On social issues, Brooks said, the party will strive to portray itself as a big tent that can appeal to socially moderate Jews.

For decades, Republicans have faced an uphill battle drawing Jewish support. Republican presidential candidates typically receive around 15 to 20 percent of the Jewish vote.

Ronald Reagan received one of the highest percentages in 1980, with 39 percent. George Bush received one of the lowest in 1992, garnering only 11 percent in his race against Bill Clinton and Ross Perot.

Bush is working very hard for the Jewish vote and is making inroads, Bush's spokesman, Ari Fleischer, told JTA.

There is "no one issue that makes Jews vote Democratic," Fleischer said, adding that Bush has "a sensitivity to Jewish concerns."

When asked about potentially divisive social issues, Fleischer said the Texas governor works to be inclusive and would focus on those areas that unite voters.

Indeed, Jewish Republicans are hoping that Bush may be the one to break the Democratic lock on Jewish voters.

Speaking at the AIPAC conference in Washington in May, Bush reiterated his support for Israel, promised to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem and voiced support for the peace process.

It is not clear what impact his choice of Dick Cheney for vice president will have among Jewish voters.

As secretary of defense under George Bush, Cheney was part of an administration that, as Iraq rained Scud missiles down on Israel, waged the Persian Gulf War against that Arab nation — a positive for many Jews. That same administration, however, was

MIDEAST FOCUS

Peres favorite for president

Former Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres is considered the clear favorite when the Knesset votes for the nation's next president on Monday.

Israel's legislators, who will choose between Peres and former Cabinet minister Moshe Katsav, will vote by secret ballot.

Unity government downplayed

Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak was expected to brief Likud Party leader Ariel Sharon on the Camp David talks.

Senior Likud sources were quoted by the Israeli daily Ha'aretz as saying Sharon did not intend to discuss the possibility of forming a national unity government with Barak.

Settler total grows to 200,000

There are about 200,000 Jewish settlers living in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, according to Israel's Interior Ministry. The settler population increased by 13,600 during the past year, the ministry said.

El Al jet makes forced landing

An El Al jet flying from Tel Aviv to New York was forced to make an emergency landing in Newfoundland when a gas leak was discovered in one of the engines.

Crews were unable to repair the problem, and passengers were required to wait for another plane from Israel to continue their trip.

Lebanon calls on donors for aid

Lebanon's prime minister asked representatives of 40 nations to provide aid for the areas in southern Lebanon from which Israel withdrew in May.

Without such aid, Salim Hoss said Thursday, the "liberated territories" could become "a breeding ground for instability."



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seen by many American Jews as antagonistic toward Israel, especially concerning the Jewish state's settlement policies on the West Bank.

Cheney's conservative record on domestic issues could also alienate Jews, say analysts, even as Bush himself has been challenged on domestic issues.

Jewish groups have taken Bush to task for his stand on church-state issues, including his support for posting the Ten Commandments in schools and government buildings and for allowing student-led prayers before high school football games in Texas. Most recently, Bush was criticized for proclaiming June 10, 2000, as "Jesus Day" in Texas.

Republican supporters, however, dismiss these concerns as peripheral.

"Bush is a different kind of Republican," Brooks said, citing in particular Bush's record on education reform as an issue that will appeal to Jewish voters.

In reaching out to Jewish Republicans, the RJC events at the convention will feature Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz.), Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott (R-Miss.), House Speaker Dennis Hastert and some prominent Republican governors.

The AIPAC-UJC event will feature some of the same high-level Republicans.

AIPAC expects 800 local and national AIPAC members to attend the convention.

Despite the hint of rivalry between the RJC and AIPAC — given the separate, but overlapping events — both groups said there was no problem or animosity.

"I think the RJC decided it was in their best interests to do their own event," Kenneth Bricker, AIPAC's spokesman, said, adding, "I suspect that most folks will attend both events."

Brooks said the convention was a unique opportunity for his organization to showcase itself and that the RJC wanted to host its own event because it has a broad-based agenda and does not — unlike AIPAC — focus solely on Israel-related issues.

For its part, the AJCommittee said it will use the convention as an opportunity to unite with ethnic and religious coalitions on such public policy concerns as immigration, hate crimes and civil rights.

The organization plans to host five events in conjunction with the convention.

Jason Isaacson, director of the group's Washington office, said he wants to communicate the message to the Bush camp and the Republican Party that Jewish voters will support those candidates who speak to issues of concern to the community.

"We want to make it plain to the Republican Party that the Jewish vote is worth fighting for," Isaacson said. □

ARTS & CULTURE

Spielberg hires four top directors as Holocaust filmmaking blossoms

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — Steven Spielberg is one of several prominent American and European filmmakers launching film projects on the Holocaust.

The creator of "Schindler's List" has lined up four top Eastern European directors for a series of one-hour documentaries based on the testimonies of Holocaust survivors, according to the entertainment trade newspaper Variety.

Vojtech Jasny is due to start filming the Czech documentary next week and Andrzej Wajda has been signed for the Polish segment. The two other documentaries are slated to be filmed by Russian and Hungarian directors.

In another European-based project, director Roman Polanski plans to start shooting early next year on "The Pianist," based on Polish author Wladyslaw Szpilman's best-selling memoir of survival in the Warsaw Ghetto.

The project marks the first time that Polanski, who survived the Krakow Ghetto as a child, will direct a film on the Holocaust, according to the Hollywood Reporter.

In a third project, production is slated to begin in late August on the Holocaust drama "Gray Zone."

Slated for leading roles are Harvey Keitel, Steve Buscemi, David Arquette and Mira Sorvino. □

JEWISH WORLD

Nestle makes conditional offer

The Nestle food company said it will contribute to a \$1.25 billion settlement reached between Holocaust survivors and Switzerland's largest banks, but on one condition.

The Switzerland-based company said it wants the U.S. judge who approved the settlement earlier this week to protect Swiss companies that employed forced laborers at their German units.

Nestle used such laborers at several small subsidiaries in Nazi Germany.

10 Commandments display halted

The American Civil Liberties Union praised a decision by a U.S. judge preventing the state of Kentucky from erecting a monument to the Ten Commandments.

The judge ruled Tuesday that such a move would violate the U.S. Constitution's separation between church and state.

Moves to display the Ten Commandments in public have gained momentum in the United States after several school shootings in the past few years.

Teachers to meet on the Web

A group of Jewish middle school teachers will get together regularly via videoconferencing and the Internet in a pilot program planned for this fall.

Jskyway.com, which is coordinated by the Jewish Education Service of North America, is planning to hold the program with 25 participants from day schools in New York, New Jersey, Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts.

If the pilot program works, it will be extended to link Jewish educators across North America.

Film planned about survivor

A Polish Jewish filmmaker known for the Holocaust film "Europa Europa" is making a film on the life of a Romanian Holocaust survivor, according to Variety magazine.

Agnieszka Holland's film will be based on "The Seamstress: A Memoir of Survival," the autobiography of Tuvel Bernstein, in which she recalled her childhood in a Romanian mountain village, her survival during World War II as a seamstress, her imprisonment in the Ravensbruck concentration camp and her search to find lost relatives after the war. Bernstein died in 1983 at the age of 65.

Baseball wants Mideast fans

America's favorite pastime is coming to the Middle East. Major League Baseball signed an agreement with a marketing firm to raise awareness about the sport and increase the number of youth leagues in Israel, Jordan and Palestinian Authority.

Critic of Holocaust groups creates controversy in London

By Richard Allen Greene

LONDON (JTA) — A controversial American academic has left England's capital — but not before criticizing advocacy groups for Holocaust survivors.

Norman Finkelstein was in Britain to promote his new book, "The Holocaust Industry," in which he accuses Jewish organizations and elites — the Holocaust industry, in his phrase — of distorting the memory of the Shoah to extract money from Swiss banks, the German government and German industry.

"I completely support the right to compensation," said Finkelstein, an instructor at City University of New York.

He claims that the numbers of prisoners held as slave laborers for German industry during the war had been "wildly inflated" to enable organizations claiming to represent survivors to "skim off the top."

Finkelstein, 46, is the son of survivors of the Warsaw Ghetto and several concentration camps. He draws a distinction between "the Nazi holocaust," the historic event, and "The Holocaust," the ideological representation, and argues that the latter has overshadowed and twisted the former.

Finkelstein wrote the slim volume in a matter of months early this year.

Finkelstein's visit happened to coincide with "Remembering for the Future," perhaps the largest ever academic conference devoted to the Holocaust.

French filmmaker Claude Lanzmann was also upset at the inclusion of Finkelstein on the cultural program of the conference.

Lanzmann, who directed the documentary "Shoah," withdrew himself and his new film, "A Visitor from the Living," from the program in protest.

Finkelstein launched a scathing attack on the Claims Conference, which has negotiated for compensation from the German government and others.

"Even when they extract monies, they never give them to survivors," Finkelstein said. "I fought for around 20 years to get compensation for my mother from the Claims Conference," he said.

"The most revealing and ugly thing is that, when you speak to actual victims of Nazi persecution, they all share one common demand: They want the money to be distributed by the German government, not by Jewish organizations," he said.

"The irony is that they trust the German government more than 'their own' Jewish organizations," he said.

Greg Schneider, an assistant executive vice president of the Claims Conference, responded to Finkelstein's criticisms by saying, "Any and all of the compensation programs administered by Germany were negotiated by the Claims Conference."

He said that, even when the Jewish press had been critical of the Claims Conference for failing to distribute compensation to survivors, there has been little criticism of the organization's methods.

"I believe in a radical redistribution of the world's wealth," Finkelstein said. "But I do not believe the memory" of the victims "should be used in a shakedown racket. It's a matter of respect for the dead."

The Claims Conference's Schneider said his organization distributed about \$220 million to individual survivors and \$85 million to programs benefiting Holocaust survivors in 1999 alone. □

Candidates call for U.S. aid cutoff

NEW YORK (JTA) — First lady Hillary Rodham Clinton said she may have gone past the White House position when she called for cutting off U.S. aid to the Palestinians if they unilaterally declare statehood.

But at the same time, the New York Senate candidate said she took the position Tuesday, after the Camp David summit collapsed, out of her own personal conviction.

Her Republican opponent, Rep. Rick Lazio, was one of several members of Congress to back legislation calling for the U.S. aid cutoff. □

NEWS ANALYSIS**Jerusalem the symbol ended talks;
Jerusalem the city has its needs***By Avi Machlis*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Jerusalem may be a city infused with historical and religious significance to three of the world's largest faiths, but it is also a city with ordinary people who live ordinary lives.

As the fate of Jerusalem was brought to the negotiating table this week in Camp David, pundits tried to determine whether compromise could supersede the passions that have prevented Israelis and Palestinians from discussing the city until now, and lead to a historic peace accord.

But there was little talk about things like garbage collection or social security, issues that would have been affected by any agreement to change the status of parts of the city. Apparently, passions over the city were too strong for the Camp David negotiators and were primarily the reasons for the summit's end.

If there ever is any decision on Jerusalem, it would need to take into account both the heavenly aura of a city charged with emotion and faith, as well as the earthly details of how municipal bureaucracy would function in a shared metropolis.

The issues are further complicated by difficult geography, with Arab and Jewish neighborhoods in eastern Jerusalem situated side by side.

During the negotiations, it was unclear what type of formula for sharing the city — if any — the leaders were discussing. But it would have been the details that determine to what extent the lives of Israelis and Palestinians would be affected.

What is clear is that during the 33 years since Israel captured eastern Jerusalem in the Six-Day War, the unification of the two sides of the city has created a dynamic that will be hard to reverse.

Many Palestinians work in Jewish parts of Jerusalem and are an integral part of the city's economic pulse — whether as taxi drivers, car mechanics, cooks in trendy cafes or construction workers.

They may work primarily in menial jobs, but at least they have jobs, in contrast to the many Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip who are unemployed.

Indeed, the economic realities of the city, combined with the mutual need for free access to holy sites, are among the reasons why Israeli and Palestinian leaders knew from the start that any change in the city's status could not include a physical division of Jerusalem. Neither side wants new masses of unemployed Palestinians or a checkpoint in the center of the city.

Still, the lives of Palestinians in eastern Jerusalem would likely change significantly if an accord is signed that would place control of their affairs under the Palestinian Authority — and not necessarily for the better.

An increasing number of Palestinians are putting patriotism aside and speaking out openly about their fears of living under Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's regime, with its well-documented corruption and stagnant economic policy.

Khader Ali, a 50-year-old unemployed resident of the Shuafat refugee camp, which could be transferred to the Palestinians, is not looking forward to Palestinian rule as he watches what he calls "corruption or nepotism" just down the road.

"The truth is we don't want either side, the status quo is good," he said. Under that status quo, Ali, who has 12 children, enjoys a standard Israeli per-child social security stipend that totals more than \$1,200 a month — more than the typical salary of a Palestinian policeman and a decent sum even for blue-collar Israeli workers. A few years ago, he worked on the printing press at The Jerusalem Post.

When he lost his job, he received \$500 a month in unemployment benefits for several months.

"Arafat won't pay me unemployment benefits or social security," he said. "We cannot say it openly but we prefer Israel."

For Israelis, it is unclear what the practical ramifications of any agreements on Jerusalem would be.

"Practically speaking, there is no problem for Palestinians to officially take over their affairs in Jerusalem," said Arie Amit, a businessman who served as Jerusalem police chief between 1994 and 1996 and who has published papers supporting a compromise.

"There will be no change whatsoever for Israelis, since they do not go to those places that would be handed over to the Palestinians."

Amit argues that the city is already divided in reality because during the past few years the Palestinian Authority has quietly started providing civil services and even begun to take control of security affairs in Arab neighborhoods of eastern Jerusalem.

He even predicts improvements in security for Israelis if the city is divided, due to increased cooperation between Israeli and Palestinian forces, and expects Palestinians to continue to work freely with Jews. □

What Israel reportedly offered*By Naomi Segal*

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Details are beginning to emerge about the stances taken by the Israeli and Palestinian leaders at the failed Camp David summit.

According to a "very senior source" traveling on Prime Minister Ehud Barak's plane to Israel from Washington, these positions were put forward:

- Israel agreed to grant the Palestinians 88 percent of the West Bank;
- Israel agreed to absorb several thousand Palestinian refugees within the framework of family reunification;
- Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat refused to back off his demand for the right of all Palestinian refugees to return to the homes they abandoned during the 1948 War of Independence;
- The Palestinians rejected a proposal by President Clinton to put off a decision on Jerusalem's Temple Mount and the Old City for several years;
- Israel agreed to grant the Old City a special status under which it would remain under Israeli sovereignty while granting free access to holy sites to all religions;
- Israel agreed to grant the Palestinians autonomous rule over the Temple Mount, but with a request that a special section be reserved for Jewish prayers. Israel also proposed that the Palestinians have free access to the site via a road or bridge;
- Israel proposed that a Palestinian capital be established adjacent to the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem and be under Palestinian municipal rule, but with Israeli law still in effect. □