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84th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Palestinian snipers kill baby girl

Israel sealed off the West Bank city of Hebron after Palestinian gunmen killed a 10-month-old Jewish girl.

Shalhevet Pass was with her father, Yitzhak, when Palestinian snipers opened fire on the Avraham Avinu neighborhood from the adjacent Palestinian hill of Abu Sneineh. [Page 4]

Columnist calls on Foxman to quit

A New York Times columnist called for the resignation of the national director of the Anti-Defamation League because of his involvement in President Clinton's pardon of financier Marc Rich.

In his column Monday, William Safire wrote that Abraham Foxman, who lobbied on behalf of Rich and whose organization has received \$250,000 from the billionaire, should resign "to demonstrate that ethical blindness has consequences."

An ADL spokeswoman said Foxman has no intention of resigning. [Page 1]

New hate crimes bill planned

U.S. lawmakers are set to introduce hate crimes legislation that would authorize federal prosecution of crimes motivated by a victim's sexual orientation, gender or disability. A similar measure passed last year, but was stripped out of a bill at the last minute.

Nearly half the Senate has signed onto the bill, which is expected to be introduced Tuesday.

Kindertransport film wins Oscar

A Jewish-themed film was named best documentary feature at Sunday night's Academy Award ceremonies. "Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport" chronicles the rescue of some 10,000 children from Nazi-dominated Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia before World War II, their reception in Britain, and their lives after the war. [Page 4]

Arafat calls for more fighting

Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat called on Palestinians to prepare themselves for another 100 days of conflict with Israel, according to the Jerusalem Post.

Arafat also accused Israel on Sunday of planning to assassinate Palestinian leaders and take over the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Foxman details Rich efforts, denies quid pro quo for donations

By Michael J. Jordan

NEW YORK (JTA) — As the Marc Rich pardon casts its shadow over those who lobbied on his behalf, the head of the Anti-Defamation League is seeking to dispel impressions that he went to bat for the billionaire fugitive because of Rich's donations to the ADL.

ADL National Director Abraham Foxman, who was questioned by congressional investigators last week about his allegedly pivotal role in the Rich pardon, summoned journalists to his New York offices last Friday to argue that he was not influenced by the \$250,000 Rich gave the ADL over a period of 16 years.

The most recent donation — for \$100,000 — was pledged in the fall of 1999 and arrived in February 2000, Foxman said, shortly after Rich Foundation head Avner Azulay met with Foxman to discuss Rich's legal predicament.

"There's nothing dirty or ugly about it," Foxman told reporters. "The fact is he did give money, with no strings attached."

For some, Rich's donations and Foxman's involvement raise questions not only of a quid pro quo but about the propriety of America's leading fighter against anti-Semitism straying from his mission to lobby for a fugitive.

The incident also sheds light on how business is conducted and favors swapped among elites and moneyed interests.

Foxman was among the prominent American Jewish leaders and Israeli politicians who lobbied President Clinton to pardon Rich. Clinton cited Jewish pressure as a reason for granting Rich clemency. The ADL chief was invited to Washington on March 19 for what he described as "a conversation" with the House of Representatives Government Reform Committee, which is investigating the Rich pardon and others made by Clinton in the last days of his presidency.

Rich fled the United States in 1983 to avoid trial on charges of racketeering and evading \$48 million in taxes. He also was accused of breaching U.S. sanctions against Iran by trading oil with the Islamic regime.

On Monday, in a column on campaign finance reform, prominent New York Times columnist William Safire called on Foxman to resign.

"The purchase of a pardon by Marc Rich haunts the Senate this week," Safire wrote. "The stain spreads; now we learn that the fugitive billionaire, with \$250,000 to the Anti-Defamation League, induced its national director to lobby President Bill Clinton for forgiveness and thereby bring glee to the hearts of anti-Semites. (Abe Foxman should resign to demonstrate that ethical blindness has consequences.)"

ADL spokeswoman Myrna Shinbaum described Safire's comment as "ridiculous." "Mr. Foxman has no intention of resigning," Shinbaum said.

A call to ADL National Chairman Glen Tobias was referred back to Shinbaum.

In his meeting with journalists — including reporters from Newsweek, The New York Times, The Washington Post and The Associated Press — Foxman insisted that Rich's donations had nothing to do with the ADL chief's support of the pardon.

Rich's largesse was a drop in the ADL bucket, considering that the organization's annual budget is about \$50 million, Foxman said.

Foxman conceded, however, that "people give you money in anticipation that there will be a relationship. The guy who gives you \$100 doesn't get as much attention as the guy who gives you \$10,000," he added.

Foxman expressed surprise that he has been mentioned as such a pivotal figure in

MIDEAST FOCUS

Mubarak accepts Sharon's denial

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak said he is satisfied with statements from Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon denying reports that Sharon lobbied U.S. congressional leaders to halt military aid to Egypt.

Mubarak said the relationship between Egypt and the United States is solid and warned against any efforts to disrupt it.

Amnesty: Respect human rights

Amnesty International called on Israel and the Palestinians to respect fundamental human rights despite their ongoing violence.

The human rights group asked both sides on Monday to refrain from extra-judicial killings, attacks on civilians and torture and arbitrary arrest.

Jordan expels Israeli journalists

Six Israeli journalists were asked by Jordanian authorities to leave the country after the officials said their lives were in danger. The six had traveled to Amman to cover the Arab summit scheduled to convene in the Jordanian capital Tuesday.

Riot hearings closed to public

The hearings of an Israeli commission probing the killing of 13 Israeli Arabs by police during riots last October will no longer be open to the public. Instead, the deliberations will be transmitted by television to another room. Sunday's decision came after a police officer testifying last week was attacked by an Israeli Arab whose son was killed during the rioting.

Saudi officials ban Pokemon

Islamic officials in Saudi Arabia banned Pokemon video games and cards, which they consider an evil influence on Saudi children. The officials said the products have symbols that include "the Star of David, which everyone knows is connected to international Zionism and is Israel's national emblem."



Daily News Bulletin

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the lobbying effort. Foxman said he was the first to recommend enlisting the aid of Rich's ex-wife, Denise, a wealthy New York socialite heavily involved in Democratic fund-raising. The idea was raised in a meeting initiated by the Rich Foundation's Azulay, who asked Foxman for his advice on the pardon issue, Foxman said.

Foxman said he believed the loss of Rich's middle daughter to leukemia might have softened the enmity between the divorced couple.

On Dec. 7, Foxman wrote Clinton, urging him to pardon Rich. Had he known details then that he later discovered about the Rich case, he would not have sent the letter, Foxman said.

Foxman said he was led to believe by Rich's backers that if the Switzerland-based commodities trader returned to America — to be by his dying daughter's side, for example, or at her funeral — he would be jailed immediately.

Foxman now knows that was not necessarily true. Documents collected by congressional investigators indicate that the government was willing to show leniency toward Rich if he agreed to stand trial. Foxman also said he was unaware that Rich had renounced his U.S. citizenship. Rich also holds Spanish and Israeli citizenship.

After issuing a press release earlier last week saying that he "probably" should not have lobbied for Rich, Foxman went further last Friday.

"I'm not infallible; I'm capable of making mistakes," he said. "I made a wrong judgment because it wasn't directly on target with what ADL's mission is."

Foxman said he first met Rich in Switzerland through mutual acquaintances some 16 years ago, shortly after Rich fled abroad. Rich approached him, Foxman said, because U.S. authorities' robust prosecution efforts led Rich to believe that "what happened to him may have happened to him because of anti-Semitism."

Foxman later told Rich that "unless he could produce evidence beyond his feelings, this was not something the ADL would undertake."

Rich never followed up with concrete evidence, Foxman noted.

However, the two apparently hit it off well.

Foxman, who was born in what is today Belarus, said he learned that Rich was born in a nearby town. In "seven or eight" subsequent lunches and dinners through the years, the two sometimes conversed in Yiddish.

Never, it seems, did they discuss the more controversial aspects of Rich's life.

For example, Foxman said, Rich never expressed regret for profiting from oil trades with Iran while that country occasionally accused some of its Jews of spying for Israel, and executed them. In fact, said Foxman — whose organization has been among Iran's most outspoken critics during the current case of 10 Jews imprisoned for alleged espionage — he never broached the subject with Rich.

"We discussed cabbage and kings and Jewish life," Foxman said.

Yet Rich did express an interest in defending Jews from anti-Semitism, and began to give money to the ADL. His only condition, Foxman said, was that the money be used for ADL programming, not for overhead.

The first project Rich funded was an exhibit celebrating 500 years of Jewish life in Latin America. Later, Rich's money went toward a prejudice-reduction program in Europe and Israel called "A World of Difference."

The Rich connection paid more than just financial dividends for the ADL, however.

"I value relationships because they help us do our job," Foxman said.

In 1989-1990, for example, Romania's revolution against the Communist authorities was accompanied by a wave of anti-Semitism.

Foxman asked Rich, who had business ties to Communist Romania, for help in reaching highly placed contacts. Rich's people facilitated a meeting with then-Prime Minister Petre Roman, who condemned the anti-Semitic backlash.

Such deeds, and the philanthropic work of Rich's foundation in Israel, convinced Foxman that Rich deserved a second chance.

America "is a country that bends over backward to give second chances," Foxman said. "The extent of Marc Rich's suffering has become disproportionate to his mistakes," Foxman then wrote to Clinton. "His life has been committed to making the world a better place."

But as reporters grilled Foxman last Friday, forcing him to recount three times the chronology of donations and pro-Rich lobbying, the ADL chief grew testy. Journalists, he said, seem to be interested in only one thing: "When was I bought?" □

JEWISH WORLD

Freedom Party loses support

Austria's far-right Freedom Party came in second in municipal elections held Sunday in Vienna. The party won only 20.2 percent of the vote, according to unofficial results, suggesting there is growing disillusionment with the xenophobic party.

Italy marks WWII massacre

Italy's president joined government and religious leaders in a ceremony Monday marking the anniversary of Italy's worst World War II Nazi atrocity, the mass execution of 335 men and boys at the Ardeatine Caves south of Rome.

The March 24, 1944, massacre took place in reprisal for the partisan slaying of 33 German soldiers.

Some 75 of the Ardeatine Caves victims were Jews. The anniversary of the massacre was Saturday, but the official ceremony took place Monday in deference to Shabbat.

HUC marks 125th anniversary

The Reform movement's seminary is celebrating its 125th anniversary this spring by sending scores of its scholars, clergy and administrators to more than 350 Reform congregations in North America for Shabbat programs.

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, which is based in Cincinnati and has additional campuses in Los Angeles, New York and Jerusalem, is the oldest rabbinical seminary in the United States.

Britain asked for extradition

Lithuania asked Britain to extradite an 85-year-old man suspected of murdering Jews during World War II. In February, a Lithuanian court issued an arrest warrant for Anton Gecas, charging him with participation in the killing of Jews and other civilians in Lithuania and neighboring Belarus.

Blast interrupts WWII ceremony

Several people were badly shaken when a loud explosion interrupted a ceremony commemorating the first transport of 1,000 Jewish women from Poprad, Slovakia, to Nazi concentration camps in March 1942.

Slovak police said they believed fireworks had been ignited next to the town's former synagogue, where the ceremony was held, but added that it was too early to say whether it was linked to the event.

Nazi collaborator dies at 80

A Nazi collaborator who escaped from prison while serving a life sentence for persecuting and torturing Jews in the Netherlands during World War II died March 26 in Spain at 80. Auke Bert Pattist fled a Dutch prison after his trial in 1948.

Canada funds Palestinian brochure, but officials say their role is minor

By Bram Eisenthal

MONTREAL (JTA) — Canadian officials have confirmed that their government financed a brochure calling for Palestinians to realize the "Right of Return" by taking back homes and property lost inside Israel during Israel's 1948 War of Independence.

An official with Canada's Foreign Affairs Department, however, denied charges that the Canadian government took a leading role in producing "Witness to History: The Plight and Promise of Palestinian Refugees."

The brochures were printed by a nongovernmental organization run by prominent Palestinian legislator Hanan Ashrawi, which receives funding from the Canada Fund for Local Institutions, the official said.

The 56-page, illustrated brochure calls for Palestinians to repossess the homes they lost in 1948.

The Palestinian insistence that refugees and their descendants — some 3 million to 4 million people in all — have the right to return to homes lost in the fighting that surrounded the birth of the State of Israel helped sink peace talks under the last Israeli government.

Israel sees acceptance of the Right of Return as demographic suicide, and the Palestinian insistence on the right as a veiled call to eliminate the Jewish state.

An article that ran over the weekend by the Israeli journalist David Bedein in Canada's conservative National Post newspaper claimed that the brochure was "published and distributed by the Canadian government."

According to Bedein, the inside page of the brochure states that the Canadian government was responsible for publishing and distributing the document through its Canadian Representative Office in Ramallah.

The brochure features an introduction by Ashrawi calling for the Palestinian return to 531 villages lost during Israel's War of Independence. Many of these villages no longer exist.

Carl Schwenger, a spokesman for the Foreign Affairs Ministry in Ottawa, stressed that "our take is different" than Bedein's.

Schwenger noted that Canada has been a consistent backer of U.N. Security Council Resolution 194 — which recognizes the Palestinians' "inalienable right of return" — yet supports attempts to solve the Palestinian refugee problem by settling them elsewhere in the world.

Canada remains the gavel-holder for the working group established under the Oslo process in 1993 to negotiate the future of Palestinian refugees, Bedein notes.

"To imply that this office" in Ramallah "handed the brochure out is incorrect," Schwenger said. "And they also did not advocate the positions in the brochure. In fact," Foreign Affairs Minister John Manley "was burned in effigy by pro-Palestinian protesters for suggesting that some refugees might wish to come to Canada."

The brochure was published by Ashrawi's Palestinian Institute for the Promotion of Global Dialogue and Democracy, Schwenger said, which received "between \$1,000 and \$10,000" toward publishing costs from the Canadian fund.

Ashrawi's stated proposal was to promote UNRWA — a U.N. agency established after the 1948 war to care for Palestinian refugees — as a candidate for the Nobel Peace Prize, Schwenger said.

Canadian legislator Irwin Cotler, a noted human rights advocate, said he had recently returned from a visit to the Canadian Representative Office in Ramallah, which acts as a de facto Canadian Embassy to the Palestinian Authority.

Cotler met there with the office's chief representative, Tim Martin, and an assistant, John Laine. In his article, Bedein accuses the pair of "helping fan the flames of a refugee war to conquer all of Palestine" through their backing of the Palestinian cause.

During his March 9 meeting with Martin and Laine, Cotler said, he saw a book on Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations.

"There was but one copy and I asked them if I could borrow it," Cotler recalled. "They gave it to me, but were concerned that they might be seen as distributing it."

In addition, Cotler said, "they referred as well to another booklet — the one in question, I assume — which they also stressed they did not publish or distribute." □

Palestinian snipers in Hebron murder 10-month-old Israeli girl

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A 10-month-old Jewish girl has become the latest victim of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israel sealed off the West Bank city of Hebron after Palestinian gunmen killed Shalhevet Pass.

Shalhevet was with her father, Yitzhak, when Palestinian snipers opened fire on Hebron's Avraham Avinu compound from the Palestinian neighborhood of Abu Sneineh, which overlooks the settler compound.

Shalhevet, who was shot in the head, is the youngest victim of the six-month-old Israeli-Palestinian conflict. She was the first Jewish civilian casualty in Hebron since violence erupted last September.

Her father and 15-year brother also were injured.

Israeli forces responded by firing with tanks and machine guns at the Palestinian neighborhood.

One commentator noted that it was unlikely Israel would immediately unleash a harsher response, out of concern for preventing an escalation ahead of an Arab League summit in Jordan later this week.

Hebron, which is split between Israeli and Palestinian control, has long been a flash point because the city's Jewish and Palestinian populations live side by side.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer ordered that Hebron be sealed off and a curfew imposed on Abu Sneineh after they consulted with Israeli security officials.

Sharon said the Palestinian Authority bears direct responsibility for Shalhevet's murder.

Legislator Shaul Yahalom of the National Religious Party called on Sharon to order Israeli forces into Abu Sneineh to assassinate those responsible for the attack.

"If Sharon does not do this, he will prove he is undeserving of the position for which he was overwhelmingly elected: to restore security to Israel's residents," Yahalom said.

The leader of Israel's Peace Now movement condemned the attack. He also called for the removal of all Jewish settlers from Hebron. □

Documentary on refugee children during World War II wins an Oscar

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — A Holocaust survivor, a legendary folk singer and a documentary on refugee children during the Nazi era were among the Jewish artists and themes sharing the spotlight during this year's Academy Awards ceremonies.

Branko Lustig, who was a child prisoner in Auschwitz and Bergen-Belsen, won his second Oscar on Sunday night for co-producing best picture award winner "Gladiator."

Lustig earned his first statuette in 1993 as co-producer of "Schindler's List."

Folk singer and composer Bob Dylan, born Robert Allen Zimmerman, won the best original song for his composition "Things Have Changed" from the film "Wonder Boys." He performed the song via satellite from Sydney, Australia.

Marcia Gay Harden, a non-Jewish actress, received an Oscar as best supporting actress for her wrenching portrayal of American Jewish artist Lee Krasner in "Pollock," a biographical film about painter Jackson Pollock.

The evening's most moving remarks may have been those delivered by Deborah Oppenheimer, whose "Into the Arms of Strangers: Stories of the Kindertransport" was named best documentary feature.

The film chronicles the rescue of some 10,000 children, mostly Jews, from Nazi-dominated Germany, Austria and Czechoslovakia in the 18 months leading up to World War II, their reception in Great Britain, and their lives after the war.

Oppenheimer dedicated her Oscar to "the survivors of the Kindertransport."

She also dedicated it "to their parents who loved them so much that they had the courage to send them away" and "to the memory of my mother, who was among the 10,000 children, and to my grandparents, whom she never saw again." □

Looking for love in the right places: Jewish singles gather in Budapest

By Agnes Bohm

BUDAPEST (JTA) — They came, they checked each other out, they partied.

That was the agenda for some 500 Jewish singles from around the world who came to Budapest earlier this month to search for love — or just have fun for a weekend.

Some — like Gabor K. from Munich and a blond woman from New York who would not give her name — said they found love at first sight. Others came to the March 16-18 "Jewish European Ball" and — well, didn't find that special someone.

The weekend, which included a traditional Friday night dinner and a walking tour of Jewish Budapest, was the brainchild of two Austrians, Dana Teichner and Ariela Gluck.

Two years ago, they organized a similar gathering in Vienna, and last year in Marbella, on Spain's Costa del Sol. The next event also will be held in Marbella on July 8-15.

"We both come from the relatively small Jewish community of Vienna, and our idea was to bring young people together for a special weekend each year in a Jewish atmosphere," Teichner said.

Both religious and secular Jews may attend, she said. Organizers maintain a strict age limit of between 20 and 40.

Most of the guests were singles, but Teichner preferred not to call it a singles event, saying some participants came to "develop relationships for business purposes."

The highlight of the weekend, the Saturday night ball, was held in Budapest's historic Museum of Fine Arts.

The cost for the weekend was \$433 plus airfare, Teichner said.

That was too much for some local Hungarian Jews, however, who could not afford to attend.

"This event is too expensive to us," said one young man in his 20s.

Teichner said most attendees came from England, Germany, the United States and Canada, adding that some came from as far away as South Africa and Australia.

"For those who could not afford it, we tried to find sponsors," she added.

One attendee called the weekend a "great way to have fun — especially for those who find a match." □