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84th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israel gets Gulf War reparation

A U.N. panel awarded \$74 million to Israel for the costs it incurred from Iraqi Scud missile attacks during the Persian Gulf War.

The U.N. Compensation Commission rejected most of the \$1 billion that Israel had requested.

The commission, charged with making payments to victims of Iraq's 1990 invasion of Kuwait and the resulting Gulf War, received a total of \$8.58 billion in claims from Israel, Germany, Turkey and Syria, but only awarded approximately \$79 million in compensation.

New attacks mar cease-fire

Palestinians fired a large mortar shell from the Gaza Strip into Israel on Thursday.

The shell landed near a kibbutz, but caused no damage or injury.

Israeli officials charged that the Palestinians had for the first time used a 120-millimeter mortar, which has a range of more than two miles, adding that the weapons' use marked an "escalation in the Palestinian violence."

Israeli troops came under fire Wednesday night in two areas of the Gaza Strip, Israeli officials said.

V.P. urged to avoid Muslim group

The Zionist Organization of America is urging Vice President Dick Cheney to cancel his planned meeting Friday at the White House with the American Muslim Council, which has praised terrorist groups.

Last year, George W. Bush returned a \$1,000 donation the group made to his presidential campaign, because of its extremist positions.

Hillary Clinton also returned a \$1,000 donation the group made to her senatorial campaign.

Report: Blair won't meet Sharon

British Prime Minister Tony Blair reportedly turned down a request from Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon to meet in London next week.

Israel's Army Radio reported that Blair is concerned that human rights groups would want to arrest Sharon after the BBC aired a documentary this week in which some lawyers said Sharon could be indicted on war crimes charges in connection with the massacre of Palestinian civilians by Christian militiamen during the 1982 Lebanon War.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Fury in Poland and Ukraine after Yad Vashem 'vandals' take murals

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME (JTA) — An international controversy has erupted after officials from Jerusalem's Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial secretly removed from Ukraine Holocaust-era wall paintings by a Polish Jewish artist.

After the officials removed the wall paintings by Bruno Schulz — which were discovered this winter in the Ukrainian village of Drohobych — Yad Vashem said it had acted to preserve the work of a Jewish artist who was a Holocaust victim.

"The correct and most suitable place to commemorate the memory of the Jewish artist, Bruno Schulz — killed by an SS officer purely because he was a Jew — and the place to house the drawings he sketched during the Holocaust is Yad Vashem," Yad Vashem spokeswoman Iris Rosenberg said in a statement.

But the move triggered outrage in Poland and Ukraine, where Schulz's works are revered as national treasures — and where removal of art from the wartime period is strictly regulated by law.

A leading international Jewish monuments expert called the move "plunder" and said it could set back by years the progress of Jewish monument preservation.

Jews in both Ukraine and Poland expressed shock at the secret removal of the paintings and expressed concern that it could provoke an anti-Semitic backlash.

"I am very disturbed and ashamed," said a member of the board of the Union of Jewish Communities in Poland. "I think the paintings should remain in their place. Only there, in their original place, can they be fully meaningful. Money for their restoration was already found."

Because of its actions, Yad Vashem will now "be perceived with suspicion," he added. "What a shame."

Indeed, a cartoon last week in *Rzeczpospolita*, a leading Polish newspaper, showed two Chasidic Jews standing by the walls of Jerusalem, commenting, "And to think it all started with one little fresco."

The cartoon also depicts a long truck — labeled "Yad Vashem Institute" and driven by another bearded Jew with sidelocks — that drives by with an entire Polish city on its trailer.

"It's a big story here and a real embarrassment," said another Jewish source in Warsaw. "Everyone is either shaking their heads with disbelief or smiling cynical smiles of belief."

The murals, scenes illustrating Grimm's fairy tales, were the last known works painted by Schulz, a Polish Jewish artist and writer who was killed by an SS officer on a Drohobych street in 1942.

Schulz, who was from Drohobych — a Polish city that became part of Ukraine after World War II — was ordered to paint the murals for the bedroom of the child of the local Nazi commandant, Felix Landau.

They were discovered under layers of surface paint, in what is now the pantry of an apartment in the house, by German filmmaker Benjamin Geissler, who went to Drohobych in February to make a film about Schulz.

It was known that Schulz had painted the murals, but it was Geissler who located the house. He searched for the paintings with the cooperation of the current residents.

"The discovery of the previously unknown Schulz works caused a stir in Ukraine and Poland," a Jewish source in Warsaw said. "Discussions began about making a Schulz museum on the site, and apparently the German Krupp Foundation even offered

MIDEAST FOCUS

Israeli killed at close range

The Israeli killed near the West Bank settlement of Homesh on Wednesday was shot at close range by an assailant when he went to the home of a Palestinian with whom he had business contacts.

Ilya Krevitz, 62, was killed by a single bullet to the head outside the home of a Palestinian printer.

Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's Fatah Party claimed responsibility for the killing.

In a related development, the B'Tselem human rights group lashed out at Palestinian officials who have claimed that attacks on Israeli settlers are legitimate.

"Statements of this kind undermine fundamental principles of both international human rights law and international humanitarian law," the group said.

Olympian to swim at Maccabiah

A U.S. Olympic gold medalist says he will swim in the Maccabiah Games next month, despite the violence in the Middle East.

Lenny Krayzelburg, who earned three gold medals in the 2000 Sydney Olympics, says he never considered dropping out.

"I want to come close to my heritage," said Krayzelburg, who was born in the Soviet Union and will be visiting Israel for the first time. "It's important to show support for Israel."

Some 2,000 athletes are expected to compete in this year's Maccabiah, down from the 5,000 who originally registered for the Games.

Knesset panel to ban words

The Israeli Knesset's Ethics Committee plans to distribute a list of banned words in an effort to improve the parliament's typically overheated atmosphere, according to the Israeli daily Ma'ariv.

On the list are such words as "Nazi," "idiot" and "monster" — as well as more piquant terms like "swamp-fly," "well-poisoner" and "zero of zeros."



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substantial funding for its creation." In mid-May, however, experts sent by Yad Vashem arrived in Drohobych and physically removed five large pieces of the murals from the walls and somehow smuggled them out of the country.

Soon after, Yad Vashem published a news release saying that the paintings were in Jerusalem and had been removed by Yad Vashem conservators led by Marek Shrayberman.

The statement said Yad Vashem had paid the current owners of the apartment \$100, adding that it had a letter from the Kalyuzhnyi family donating the paintings as a gift to Yad Vashem, in full agreement with local Drohobych authorities.

Yad Vashem said the removed pieces show a princess, a horse-drawn carriage and several other figures, including two dwarfs.

It said the murals are being restored and will be put on display at Yad Vashem's new historical museum in Jerusalem, slated to open in 2004.

Local authorities in Drohobych sharply deny any cooperation in the removal of the paintings. They point out that Ukrainian law — like similar laws in other countries — bars the removal of pre-1945 cultural objects, art works or antiquities without a special permit.

National culture authorities in Ukraine said they learned of the paintings' removal only from the media. The affair was front page news in Poland, where officials and intellectuals described Yad Vashem's methods as vandalism.

Poet Jerzy Ficowski, Poland's leading expert on Schulz, called the removal of the paintings a "criminal act" and expressed shock that an institution of Yad Vashem's standing would be party to such an undertaking.

The Polish Ministry of Culture issued a protest and said it expected the Ukrainian authorities to investigate.

The scandal has added fuel to fiery debates over the fate of Jewish property in post-Communist Europe. Schulz was a Jew and a Holocaust survivor, but in Poland he is regarded first and foremost as a Polish writer.

In a letter published in Poland's Gazeta Wyborcza newspaper, one of the 400 or so Jews still living in Drohobych voiced dismay.

"Not just Jews and Poles," wrote 80-year-old Dora Katznelson, "but also Ukrainians who read every day in Ukrainian newspapers about the barbarous theft of Schulz's paintings, cry in wonder, 'Yad Vashem? It's impossible.'"

In the United States, Samuel Gruber, president of the International Survey of Jewish Monuments and one of the world's leading experts on Jewish heritage sites, warned that Yad Vashem's action could set back the cause of preserving Jewish monuments.

"In my view, this action by Yad Vashem was not only arbitrary, uninformed and ill-advised, but it has the potential of setting back by 10 years the progress in protection and preservation of Jewish sites and monuments, including Holocaust sites, mass burials, and others places presumably of concern to Yad Vashem and Holocaust survivors," Gruber said.

"Ukraine today, despite its problems, is not to be treated as Uganda or Iraq," he said. "In recent years, laws and procedures have been adopted to deal with this sort of situation."

"By this action, Yad Vashem gives the green light to any number of institutions and individuals that claim a 'moral right' to plunder cultural heritage without consultation and consideration by all concerned parties." □

Investors get Israel tax cut

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israel's Finance Ministry said Wednesday it would ease tax regulations on private foreign investors in Israeli venture capital funds in order to encourage investment.

In place of a flat 20 percent Israeli tax rate on such investments, foreign investors will pay according to tax rates in their home country.

The new regulations were expected to benefit countries such as Germany, Switzerland, Belgium and the Netherlands where such investments are not taxed.

However, private investors from the United States, who have injected the largest amount of investment in Israeli venture capital funds, would not gain from the new regulation, because the U.S. tax rate is also 20 percent. □

JEWISH WORLD

Israel initiative to be launched

North American federation leaders plan to meet in Jerusalem this weekend for a Solidarity Shabbaton, during which they will meet with Israeli officials and unveil plans for their Israel NOW Solidarity Initiative.

The estimated \$4 million program is designed to give North American Jews the chance to express solidarity with the people and government of Israel.

Banks to profit from slave fund

German banks will make millions of dollars as a result of the transfer of funds to pay Holocaust-era slave and forced laborers, German officials acknowledged Wednesday.

The officials made the comment after the Polish-German Reconciliation Foundation, which will distribute payments to former laborers in Poland, charged that Germany had set an artificially low exchange rate for the \$788 million earmarked for Poland.

McDonald's pulls Egyptian singer

McDonald's apologized and pulled a new ad campaign in Egypt after the American Jewish Committee demanded it be withdrawn because it featured a popular singer who promotes hatred of Israel.

Singer Sha'aban Abdel-Rahim, who is featured in the ad, hit the top of the Egyptian pop charts with her song, "I Hate Israel."

Powell blasts Zionism resolution

Organizers of a U.N. conference on racism scheduled for August in South Africa will have to work to ensure that the conference does not consider a resolution saying that Zionism is a form of racism, U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell told a U.S. Senate committee on Wednesday.

Solidarity rally held in D.C.

Rabbi Seth Mandell told some 1,000 participants in an Israeli solidarity rally held outside the Israeli Embassy in Washington on Wednesday that his son "wasn't killed because of land, he was killed because of hate," according to the Washington Jewish Week.

Koby Mandell, a 13-year-old who grew up in Maryland, was murdered along with a teen-age friend while hiking in the West Bank last month.

Swiss march for slain rabbi

About 500 people marched in Zurich to call on Swiss officials to find those responsible for the June 7 shooting death of a 71-year-old rabbi visiting from Israel.

During Wednesday night's march, a rabbi said Kaddish at the spot where Rabbi Abraham Greenbaum was killed.

With belief in faith-based plan shaky, group tries to find a little consensus

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — With solutions to the problems surrounding President Bush's faith-based initiative still elusive, a new group is attempting to find some common ground on the controversial issue.

The study group includes critics such as representatives of liberal Jewish groups and advocates of church-state separation, as well as the director of a substance abuse center who recently got into hot water for his statements regarding Jews and Jesus. It met Tuesday for the first time to find areas of agreement in the White House's plan.

Meanwhile, Congress continues to probe the issue with a House committee scheduled to work on a bill this week, following recent hearings in the House and Senate.

Despite all the activity, there are no concrete answers yet to the problems that many Jewish groups — and others — still have with charitable choice, the initiative's most controversial component, which allows religious institutions to bid for government social service contracts.

Many Jewish groups still fear that an expanded partnership between the government and faith-based institutions could infringe on religious liberties and imply tolerance of employment discrimination.

Orthodox Jewish groups, though, maintain that religious organizations are discriminated against under current law, and should be given a fair chance to compete.

It is difficult to foresee how the study group will be able to bridge certain gaps.

For example, some members feel direct funding to religious groups is unacceptable, while others say that without direct funding a greater role for churches and synagogues cannot succeed.

The group, formed by Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.) and the conflict resolution organization Search for Common Ground, is headed by Harris Wofford, a former Democratic senator from Pennsylvania.

The American Jewish Committee and the Religious Action Center of Reform Judaism are participating.

Wofford and Santorum suggested the group may agree that the government can provide at least two things: technical assistance to small faith-based providers and tax changes to allow non-itemizers to deduct their charitable contributions.

The tax change, an idea supported by many groups, was not included in the administration's tax bill, but Santorum and Sen. Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.) proposed legislation calling for that change.

In an op-ed in Tuesday's Philadelphia Inquirer newspaper, Wofford and Santorum wrote that "conditions are ripe for us to unite in this effort."

They also wrote: "Let's not allow honest differences over church-state separation to escalate into another round in America's culture wars."

The White House has moderated its position on charitable choice somewhat over the past several months but is not backing away from the overall initiative.

Just how the plan will be implemented is still the ultimate question without an answer.

"There's so much discussion, but things remain remarkably unclear," said Murray Friedman, director of the Feinstein Center for American Jewish History at Temple University.

One of the members of the working group is John Castellani, the director of Teen Challenge, a substance abuse treatment program, who came under attack after testifying before Congress that Jews at his center were "completed" — that is, had accepted Jesus — as part of their treatment.

After Castellani's statement, Rabbi David Saperstein, the director of the Religious Action Center, wrote a letter to Bush warning him of the expansion of charitable choice laws resulting in the funding and strengthening of organizations that make proselytizing a core component of their work.

But Saperstein is welcoming Castellani's participation in the working group saying Castellani could learn to understand the deep sensitivities of the Jewish community, and that better relationships could be formed out of such a dialogue. □

With solidarity rallies spreading, UJC wants to build Israel support

By Michael J. Jordan

NEW YORK (JTA) — The umbrella of North American federations is set to unveil a multi-pronged, \$4 million solidarity campaign titled "Israel NOW — and Forever."

The United Jewish Communities project — which should receive final approval by late July — combines various advocacy, education and fund-raising activities and will last until winter, said Gail Hyman, UJC's vice president for marketing and public affairs.

"We understand there's a great desire for a national program," Hyman said.

"We have a responsibility to listen to our community and to offer the kind of program that will resonate from coast to coast. And unfortunately, that takes a little time. But now we have the support and we're ready to act."

The first step will be this weekend's "Solidarity Shabbat" of UJC leadership in Jerusalem, where they will meet with Israeli leaders and hammer out final details of the campaign.

Among the other campaign highlights:

- Heavy promotion of solidarity missions to Israel.
- Advocacy- and media-training for campus and community activists, in conjunction with local Hillels and Jewish community relations councils, "to train their leadership to become strong advocates on behalf of Israel," Hyman said.

- A fund-raising initiative to assist all Israeli families directly affected during the violence by death, injury, property destruction, psychological damage — "We understand there are lots of children having great difficulty," Hyman said — and perhaps even economic support for small business owners.

- A "media tour" that will take Israeli spokesmen and U.S. Middle East experts — scholars, journalists and other opinion-shapers — into key communities across North America to meet with local media.

- A major mission to Israel, called "Journey to Solidarity I," to be held Sept. 9-14.

- Production of 1 million leaflets, to be distributed Sept. 17 in all synagogues during Rosh Hashanah, to remind Jews of the need for solidarity. "As we sound the shofar this year, it will also be a call to action for every Jew in North America," Hyman said.

- A Solidarity Shabbat on Sept. 22-23 that will reach out to synagogues, churches and university campuses to show that "support for Israel extends beyond the Jewish community," Hyman said.

- A major outdoor rally in New York Sept. 23, with a concurrent rally possibly in Los Angeles. New York was chosen not only because of its huge Jewish community but because it is America's "media capital," Hyman said. The UJC also "wants our voices heard by members of the United Nations," who will be convening their General Assembly just days later.

The intensified UJC campaign comes on the heels of a slew of pro-Israel rallies organized nationwide at the grassroots level.

Some Jewish activists say they now hope the federation establishment will be emboldened to take charge of the solidarity campaign more publicly.

"I can understand that they took a wait-and-see attitude," said Rabbi Kenneth Brander, who co-chaired a rally Sunday that drew upward of 3,000 participants in sweltering Miami.

"But now that they've gotten the message that there is a serious

commitment to do these things, they have the responsibility to take the ball and run with it," Brander said. "And we're there to work with them. We're all serving the same cause."

One turning point for activists was the June 1 terrorist bombing of a Tel Aviv disco, which killed 20 Israeli youngsters.

The massacre seemed to fuel the passion at a June 3 rally in New York, which was organized by an inter-denominational coalition of rabbis and drew some 10,000 participants.

A UJC rally originally scheduled for that day, which was to have included Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, reportedly fell through because of scheduling and security issues for Sharon.

In addition to Miami, smaller demonstrations have been held in cities such as Chicago, Cleveland, Boston and Denver.

At the South Florida event, one activist drove from as far as St. Petersburg — more than four hours away — to learn how to organize a similar rally in his region, Brander said. After initial hesitations, the local Jewish federations threw their weight behind the rally with finances and other resources, Brander said.

"My personal intuition is that if I put together a rally and it fails, well, it's an Orthodox rabbi whose rally failed; here today, gone tomorrow," Brander said. "But if the organized community puts together a rally and it fails, the consequences may be more significant in terms of how the public would view the organization, the Jewish community and the state of Israel."

Hyman, though, maintains that since the outbreak of Mideast violence, "there's been a lot of activity that has taken place and that continues to take place," including more than 100 rallies and numerous community-based missions to Israel.

Brander and other activists, meanwhile, have called for a "March on Washington" similar to the Dec. 6, 1987 rally in the nation's capital demanding freedom to emigrate for Soviet Jews.

"If there is no public display at the national level, there's a group of us committed to creating that display — and I think we have the wherewithal to do it," Brander said.

But the activists hope UJC will take the lead.

Hyman said the UJC will deliver its message to Washington at the organization's General Assembly on Nov. 9-14.

Besides, the UJC has its plate full for the coming months.

"This is only phase one of Israel NOW," Hyman said. "Unfortunately, we anticipate that we'll have to continue the program beyond this year." □

Conservative leader dies at 79

NEW YORK (JTA) — Rabbi Bernard Mandelbaum, a former president of the Conservative movement's Jewish Theological Seminary, died Tuesday night in Florida at the age of 79.

Mandelbaum, an author and influential voice in the Conservative movement, spent much of his life at JTS. In addition to serving as president of the seminary from 1966 to 1972, he was ordained by JTS and taught midrash there as well.

His most notable work was a critical edition of midrash.

Rabbi David Kogen, who was vice chancellor of JTS while Mandelbaum was president, praised Mandelbaum's influence on the Conservative movement and his work for the school.

Kogen emphasized that Mandelbaum built a reputation as a popular speaker and effective fund-raiser.

Mandelbaum's death — believed to be the result of a massive heart attack — came suddenly. Mandelbaum is survived by his second wife, Marcelle, a sister and five children. □