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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Racism plan = 'subterfuge'

A purported compromise on a resolution denigrating Zionism as racism at the upcoming U.N. conference in South Africa is "subterfuge," according to Jason Isaacson, the American Jewish Committee's director of government and international affairs. [Page 1]

Ben-Eliezer: No pressure on delay

Israeli Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer denied that U.S. pressure or a request from Foreign Minister Shimon Peres caused Israel to postpone a planned incursion into the Palestinian village of Beit Jalla.

"No one pressured me, not the Americans, not the foreign minister," Ben-Eliezer told Israel Radio.

Ben-Eliezer added that he delayed an attack after receiving intelligence information that Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat was making efforts to halt the shooting from Beit Jalla on the Jerusalem neighborhood of Gilo.

Iraq pays Israel \$5 million

Israel received \$5 million from Iraq for damages caused during the 1991 Gulf War.

The payments, which were transferred by the United Nations from Arab oil purchases from Iraq, are part of a \$74.5 million reparations package.

Protests greet new envoy

Israel's controversial new ambassador to Denmark arrived in Copenhagen on Wednesday under heavy security and amid small protests.

Israel's nomination of Carmi Gillon had sparked outrage in Denmark because he has admitted to authorizing the torture of Palestinian suspects when he led Israel's Shin Bet domestic security service between 1994 and 1996.

Israel arrests Islamic militants

Israel arrested several Palestinian militants who had allegedly planned to carry out a terrorist attack near Haifa.

The militants arrested last Friday were members of a suspected Islamic Jihad cell, according to just-released details from the Shin Bet.

Several Israeli Arabs also were arrested in connection with the incident.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

Jews, blacks seek common agenda for anti-racism conference in Durban

By Michael J. Jordan

NEW YORK (JTA) — As Jewish activists scramble to block an effort to resurrect the "Zionism is Racism" canard, they also are working to defuse potential problems with the black community over the issue of slavery reparations.

In the run-up to the U.N. World Conference Against Racism, slated to begin Aug. 31 in Durban, South Africa, attention has focused on the Arab campaign to single out Israel as a racist state perpetrating a holocaust against the Palestinian people.

In response, pro-Israel advocates have enlisted as many allies as they can find — including America's mainstream black leadership.

Lost in the shuffle, however, has been the cause celebre of some black leaders: forcing the U.N. conference to address the legacy of slavery and perhaps hold the Western powers accountable for their historic role in the slave trade.

That has placed American Jewish activists in an awkward position.

Jews have relied on the Bush administration to lobby against the attempt to denigrate Zionism as racism, as well as other perceived anti-Israel or anti-Semitic wording.

A senior South African official said this week that the "Z=R" issue had been removed from the conference agenda, according to Reuters.

However, an American Jewish Committee official working closely on the issue dismissed the purported compromise as "subterfuge."

In the current draft, references to Zionism and Israel simply are replaced with the term "occupying power," said Jason Isaacson, the AJCommittee's director of government and international affairs.

But the document still "is written for no other purpose than to single out Israel," Isaacson said.

The Bush administration has threatened to boycott the conference if attempts to link Zionism and racism continue, perhaps keeping Secretary of State Colin Powell at home or sending only lower-level diplomats.

Either step likely would undermine the credibility of any declaration to emerge from Durban.

Indeed if Powell, America's first black secretary of state, attends, it would be "a prize for the conference," one Jewish activist said.

For that very reason, the U.S. congressional black leadership insists that Powell attend to deal with the slavery issue, despite the anti-Israel rhetoric.

In exchange for their support for the Jewish cause, some blacks want Jews to stand with them on slavery, which in Durban may include a demand for reparations.

Jewish organizations have yet to formulate a position on slavery reparations, and the black community itself seems divided on the issue.

The Bush administration rejects the call for reparations and has indicated that, if addressed at all, the issue must be tackled on America's own terms, not at an international conference.

Joining the blacks would force Jews to lock horns with the one ally that has enough sway to make or break the conference.

Moreover, if Washington carries through on its threat to boycott Durban over Z=R, there is concern that some blacks would blame Jews for it. They also might accuse the Bush administration of using Z=R as a smokescreen to duck debate on America's slave-owning past. Over the past month, anger has built in Congress against the Arab

MIDEAST FOCUS

Fatah member killed in Hebron

Israeli undercover security forces killed a member of Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's Fatah faction Wednesday in Hebron. Imad Abu Sneh was suspected of involvement in shooting attacks. Israel defends its policy of "targeted killings" of suspected Palestinian terrorists, but the international community condemns the "assassinations."

Report: IDF lures rock-throwers

The Israel Defense Force is using female soldiers to lure Palestinian rock-throwers to their doom, according to the Gazan weekly Al-Hayat al-Jadida.

The female soldier performs a strip show, luring the Palestinians away from their piles of stones. She then produces a gun and fires on the hapless crowd, according to the paper, which did not explain where the nude soldiers hide their guns.

The IDF called the story "totally ridiculous."

Druse army service questioned

Druse leaders from Israel, Lebanon and Syria are slated to meet in Jordan next week to consider the issue of Druse serving in the Israeli army.

The scheduled meeting comes as many Druse leaders are calling on their youth not to serve in the Israel Defense Force, particularly in Palestinian areas.

Some 88 percent of draft-age Druse currently serve in the IDF, according to Israeli statistics.

Meanwhile, the army this week appointed its first Druse to serve as a major general and the first Druse to head an infantry brigade.

Hotel must chill, not make ill

A hotel in southern Israel can't serve salads or soft white cheeses until it buys new food service coolers for its dining room, according to the Jerusalem Post.

Health officials made the decision after 136 guests at the Caesar Hotel in Eilat were hospitalized with food poisoning.



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campaign to link Zionism with racism, culminating with a July 26 resolution sponsored by Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) that condemned the direction in which the conference appeared headed.

Black politicians reportedly were irritated by what they considered the Jews' single-mindedness, and their lack of reciprocity toward black concerns.

That caught the attention of Rabbi Marc Schneier, president and co-founder of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding.

Members of the Congressional Black Caucus, Schneier said, were complaining to him that Lantos' resolution was "too one-sided" and did not "refer to the needs and aspirations of blacks on the issue of slavery."

"We were very, very concerned that our colleagues should in no way interpret that we are being insensitive to their needs," Schneier said.

The solution, he said, was for Jews to better communicate the reasons for their visceral rejection of the proposed language at Durban, while simultaneously expressing some support for black concerns.

In collaboration with the World Jewish Congress, Schneier formulated a letter that condemned the language and added: "We also support the efforts of African American leaders to raise and address important issues surrounding the historic tragedy of slavery and the resulting efforts to seek reparations."

The July 31 letter did not commit the Jewish groups to supporting reparations per se, or raising the issue in Durban specifically.

Schneier got 28 Jewish and black members of Congress to sign on, including Lantos and such heavyweights as Rep. Charles Rangel (D-N.Y.); the Congressional Black Caucus chairwoman, Rep. Eddie Bernice Johnson (D-Texas), and Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. (D-Ill.).

"The letter clarified that we are in unison, and it spoke to both issues of concern to our communities," Devona Dolliole, spokeswoman for the Congressional Black Caucus, told JTA.

In addition, it didn't "cross the red lines" established by the White House, said Elan Steinberg, the WJC executive director.

"We don't operate in a political vacuum, and we were aware of the political realities," Steinberg said. "We thought about what we could do to promote both Jewish and black aspirations, without causing harm to our group concerns. We've had our ups and downs over the years; we don't need to have this issue create a new wedge between our two communities."

Though some dismissed Schneier's warning of potential damage to black-Jewish relations as a bid for media attention, his call also highlights the weight Jewish activists give to the half-century-old alliance between the two communities.

Without fail, Jewish activists note Jews' and blacks' common history of persecution and their shared fight for civil rights and against prejudice.

Slavery's legacy one day might become another joint cause.

Some black leaders have solicited tips from Jewish activists on how they successfully extracted Holocaust reparations from Europe.

Other black leaders — primarily from the fringe, activists say — have been less polite, pressing for Jewish support with an approach along the lines of, "You got your reparations for the Holocaust, now it's time to help us."

Jews caution against comparing the two epochs, emphasizing to their black counterparts the uniqueness of the Nazi genocide against the Jews.

They also say the Jewish community cannot be out in front on the issue of slavery, ahead even of the black community itself.

The onus is on blacks first to formulate a consensus — like Jews did with Holocaust restitution — toward the issue, Jewish activists say.

At this point, black opinion seems mixed: Some push for monetary restitution, others for "moral" restitution — primarily in the form of an apology — and still others for increased aid to combat AIDS in Africa.

The Jewish activists "are right," said Dolliole, the Congressional Black Caucus spokeswoman, "we as a community need to determine what are the best ways to address the effects of slavery."

Once blacks themselves have established a communal position, Jewish organizations could determine their take — and may very well follow their lead. □

JEWISH WORLD

Court backs religious claim

A U.S. appeals court recently ruled that a hostile work environment claim can be based on religious bias.

An Orthodox college professor in New Jersey alleged that her supervisors were discriminating against her because of her holiday and Sabbath observance. The court said the professor should be allowed to present the claim to a jury.

Israelis indicted in Ecstasy ring

A Los Angeles grand jury indicted 12 Israelis on charges of operating the largest Ecstasy smuggling network in the world.

Accused Tuesday of running the network was Oded Tuito, 40, whom American authorities are trying to extradite from Spain, Assistant U.S. Attorney Thomas Slesenger said.

Tuito, known to friends as "Fat Man" or "Uncle," allegedly recruited female couriers at topless nightclubs to smuggle the illegal stimulant and hallucinogenic drug, the Los Angeles Times reported.

Students must 'storm' campuses

U.S. Jewish college students need to hold more rallies in support of Israel this school year and "storm all media outlets" with pro-Israel information, said Ido Aharoni, the Israeli consul for media and public affairs in New York.

Aharoni's comments came Monday at an event for an estimated 75 students sponsored by Hillel of New York, the Jewish National Fund, American Israel Public Affairs Committee and the Israeli Consulate.

British program called 'one-sided'

British Jewish leaders are criticizing a television documentary about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as "highly irresponsible" and "showing remarkable contempt for historical accuracy."

The Board of Deputies said ITV's "Back to the Front with Michael Nicholson," shown Aug. 12, aired "a wholly one-sided depiction of an Israel where Jews are tyrannical oppressors and the Palestinians their helpless victims." The program's producers reject the charges.

Group increases 'micro-grants'

An organization for Jewish educators increased its grant allocations tenfold this year. The Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education, which since 1985 has offered small grants for local projects related to Jewish education, recently enlarged its grant pool from \$2,000 to \$20,000. This year's beneficiaries are Washington-area parent-teen workshops on Jewish ethics; an El Paso, Tex., family education project; and a Brooklyn family camp for Russian Jewish families.

Survey: Decade after Crown Heights, Jews, blacks see relations as mixed

By Daniel Fleishman

NEW YORK (JTA) — On the 10th anniversary of the race riots that rocked the Crown Heights section of Brooklyn, about one-third of both Jews and blacks believe relations between the two groups have improved, a new survey found.

Thirty-six percent of Jews and 32 percent of blacks polled in New York City said relations were better in 1991, while only 10 percent of Jews and 9 percent of blacks said the relationship had worsened.

But a plurality of both groups — 49 percent of blacks and 37 percent of Jews — said relations remained unchanged.

Four days of rioting began in Crown Heights on Aug. 19, 1991, when a car driven by a Chasidic Jew accidentally struck and killed Gavin Cato, a 7-year-old black child. Hours later, Yankel Rosenbaum, an Australian Jewish scholar, was chased by a mob of blacks and stabbed to death.

The survey by the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding also found that, on a national level, 51 percent of Jews consider relations between Jews and blacks fair or poor, while only 37 percent think them excellent or good. On that same subject, blacks were more optimistic, with 43 percent rating relations excellent or good and 41 percent fair or poor.

But that trend was reversed in New York, where 44 percent of Jews feel relations are fair or poor and 49 percent excellent or good.

Among blacks polled, 56 percent said relations are fair or poor and 29 percent viewed them as excellent or good.

This is the first time the survey has been conducted, so there is no way to judge whether there has been a statistical improvement or decline since the Crown Heights incident.

Rabbi Marc Schneier, president and co-founder of the foundation, said the relationship between Jewish and black leaders is stronger than it was 10 years ago.

But Schneier said relations between the Jewish and black communities are not yet what they should be.

"I think that if we have been able to form such wonderful relations on the leadership level — which was not the case 10 years ago — if we focus our energies in that direction, we can return to what it was in its heyday," Schneier said, referring to the partnership of blacks and Jews in the civil rights era.

While the survey found that 45 percent of blacks nationally believed Jews helped blacks during the civil rights movement in the 1960s, 55 percent either disagreed, didn't know or gave no response.

Schneier attributed this to "a significant educational gap."

"I do think African American organizations need to take more initiative to educate African Americans. Initiating these programs tends to come more from the Jewish community," he said.

But, he added, "In all fairness, the Jewish community is in a much more favorable position. We don't really have to contend with economics" the way many blacks do.

Some other noteworthy findings:

- Seventy-four percent of Jews in New York and 73 percent elsewhere think Jews and blacks should form a partnership to work on civil rights. Eighty-seven percent of blacks in New York and 77 percent elsewhere agree.

- Thirty-seven percent of Jews and 71 percent of blacks in New York think the U.S. government owes reparations to blacks for its role in the slave trade. Fifty-seven percent of Jews and 73 percent of African Americans believe the government should issue a formal apology.

- Fifty-seven percent of Jews outside New York think the history of slavery is not taught enough in schools, while 48 percent of blacks nationally say Holocaust education is not taught enough in schools.

The survey — of 250 Jews and 250 blacks in New York City — and an equal number outside the city, was conducted by the Global Strategy Group, and has a margin of error of plus or minus 6 percentage points. □

FOCUS ON ISSUES

Jewish teachers say they want a little R-E-S-P-E-C-T

By Julie Wiener

FORT COLLINS, Colo. (JTA) — It may show how dire the crisis in Jewish education is that one synagogue education director from Long Island, N.Y., considers it an achievement that she will have enough teachers for her classrooms this fall — even if they're not up to snuff.

"I don't think all of them are qualified to be teachers — they don't all have the knowledge or skills — but every class has an adult in it," the woman said at last week's Conference on Alternatives in Jewish Education.

Leaders with the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education, the conference's sponsor, estimate that between 10 percent and 20 percent of all Hebrew school classrooms will start the school year without a permanent teacher.

With the beginning of the new school year just weeks away, the shortage of qualified teachers dominated CAJE's 26th annual conference, held here on the campus of Colorado State University.

In formal sessions and informal conversations, participants attributed the shortage of educators to the low salaries paid Jewish teachers, the lack of benefits, the paucity of mentoring or continuing education and the lack of kavod, Hebrew for respect.

Such issues, they say, discourage talented young people from thinking of Jewish education as a career.

With a two-year-old project called "Hanukat CAJE" and an official focus on recruitment and retention, CAJE is trying to mobilize Jewish educators to address the problems.

The 3,500-member CAJE group long has been known for its camp-like summer conference.

Educators trek around sprawling campuses, sleep in dorms, connect with old friends over cafeteria meals, share ideas, stay up late for Jewish folk music concerts and marathon storytelling performances — and attend hundreds of sessions on everything from art projects to teaching children with learning disabilities to the big issues affecting Jewish life in America.

Most of the participants are teachers in congregational schools. For some of them, the annual CAJE conference is their only source of professional development.

Most say they cannot rely on their teaching salaries as their main income, supplementing it with salaries from spouses or other jobs.

In the past few years, education — especially the shortage of personnel — has become a high-profile issue on the Jewish agenda, and CAJE gradually has stepped up its advocacy efforts:

- The group coordinates approximately 10 grass-roots discussion groups around the country, where members discuss the national and local issues they face. At a conference dinner, about 150 CAJE members who have been involved in such groups brainstormed about the causes of the teacher shortage and began a heated discussion on what they can do to improve salaries, benefits and kavod. The discussion will be continued in coming months on the Internet.

- A newly hired CAJE professional is researching issues such as salaries and working conditions, and is surveying members to better determine their needs. Among the preliminary findings: 80 percent of members are women, and 66 percent are between the

ages of 41 and 61. "Young people are not entering the field," said Eli Schaap, CAJE's assistant executive director.

- The group recently started offering low-cost insurance benefits and retirement planning, two things that many Jewish teachers with part-time status do not receive from their employers. It also launched a mentoring program for college students who teach part time in Jewish schools and, in future years, plans to offer mentoring for all new teachers.

- This year's conference featured 21 sessions on recruitment, retention and advocacy, ranging from "Negotiating Strategies for the Professional Jewish Educator" to "Where Have All the Teachers Gone? Recruiting and Supporting New Educators."

- CAJE issued a conference resolution calling on the North American Jewish community to provide competitive salaries and benefits, supportive work environments and mentoring programs for new teachers.

This year's keynote speaker, author and Rabbi Harold Schulweis, added to the advocacy drumbeat.

Schulweis described Jewish educators as "the exploited people of our community." He urged them to recognize their own importance in influencing young Jews and do a better job of championing their cause among people with power.

In an interview, Schulweis, the spiritual leader of Valley Beth Shalom in Encino, Calif., told JTA that CAJE needs to "enter into the consciousness of the synagogue and temple world."

"My board people are good, involved and give money, but don't know what's going on in the schools," Schulweis said, urging Jewish educators to be more vocal in airing their concerns.

At the Hanukat CAJE dinner, participants at first tried to determine which issue — professional development, salaries and benefits, or kavod — the organization should make a priority.

But many soon noted how interrelated the issues are.

Shoshanah Zaritt, director of student life at the New Jewish High School of Greater Boston, said, "We all really felt salaries and benefits are really important, but you can't talk about it without talking about the culture of kavod."

"Part of it is, we as educators need to be educated on how to be advocates for ourselves," Zaritt said.

One Chicago-area religious school director said talk of kavod is hollow if it's not accompanied by tangible benefits.

For years, she said, she struggled to convince her synagogue to give her a pension. The synagogue only relented when she brought in Reform movement professionals to speak with them.

"They told me they loved me and respected me, but" for years "I didn't get a pension," she said. "Once I got the pension, then all of a sudden I felt the kavod."

Privately, some participants wondered whether the CAJE conference itself contributes to, rather than alleviates, a sense that the field is unprofessional. They criticized the no-frills dormitory accommodations and the ultra-casual decorum: Even the executive director came to conference sessions in shorts and a T-shirt.

Others noted that the sessions vary greatly in quality, and generally are too short to delve into topics in great depth.

CAJE's executive director, Eliot Spack, defended the campus locales, saying they keep costs low so that the conference is accessible. People who prefer more upscale accommodations can stay in neighboring hotels, he said.

As for the informality, Spack said, "Nothing says that people have to act and dress as stuffed shirts in order to feel a sense of kavod." □