



Daily News Bulletin

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85th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Clashes at illegal outpost

Israeli settlers clashed with police and soldiers trying to remove them Sunday from an illegal West Bank outpost. The protesters burned tires, set fire to a field near the Gilad Farm outpost and blocked equipment brought in to remove the structures from the site.

By Sunday night, after six hours of confrontations, the last two standing structures at Gilad's Farm were dismantled, Army Radio reported. But later that night, settlers returned to the site to rebuild the structures.

In another development, right-wing Cabinet ministers called Sunday for Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer's resignation because troops sent to evacuate the outpost traveled there before the end of the Sabbath.

Israel: Civilians used for cover

Israeli officials say they have proof Palestinian terrorists used civilians for cover during a clash in the Gaza Strip last week.

During the Oct. 17 clash, eight Palestinian civilians were killed and dozens wounded by army tank fire, sparking international criticism of Israel, including from the United States.

According to the interim findings of an army inquiry into the incident, photos taken during the fighting in southern Gaza show Palestinian gunmen firing on Israeli targets from a civilian area, Israel Radio reported.

The findings of the inquiry are expected to be submitted later this week, the report said.

Britain urged to recall envoy

The Simon Wiesenthal Center called on British Foreign Secretary Jack Straw to recall Britain's ambassador to Israel.

The call was issued after envoy Sherard Cowper-Coles was quoted by the Israeli daily Yediot Achronot as saying last week that "Israel has reduced the West Bank and Gaza Strip into a vast concentration camp."

The director of the center's Paris office, Shimon Samuels, said in a letter to Straw that if the comments are verified, "We urge the prompt recall of Mr. Cowper-Coles for Holocaust revisionism, banalization of the memory of its victims, and endorsement of the most extreme voices of Palestinian anti-Semitism."

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

It's Jew vs. Jew in Minnesota, in close race for U.S. Senate seat

By Sharon Samber

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Minnesota voters are poised once again to elect a Jew to the U.S. Senate — though it's not clear whether it will be Democratic incumbent Paul Wellstone or his Republican challenger, Norm Coleman.

Both candidates have strong backers in the state's 45,000-strong Jewish community.

With Democrats struggling to maintain their narrow control of the Senate, every race is under heightened scrutiny.

The Minnesota race has been deemed "neck and neck" for weeks now by political observers.

Wellstone's seat is seen as vulnerable, leading Republican Jews to open their pocketbooks to Coleman.

Fund-raisers in St. Louis, Dallas and Los Angeles have raised \$300,000 for Coleman, according to Matt Brooks, executive director of the Republican Jewish Coalition.

On the other side of the aisle, the National Jewish Democratic Council PAC sent a mailing to supporters highlighting the Wellstone race and encouraging contributions to the senator's campaign.

Also, the Joint Action Committee for Political Affairs, a Jewish group that advocates abortion rights and a strong U.S.-Israel relationship, lists Wellstone on its "most endangered incumbents" list and encourages contributions to support him. JACPAC has given \$6,000 to Wellstone's campaign since last year.

Unlike some other high-profile races that have galvanized Jewish attention this year, Jewish voters in Minnesota don't have to mobilize against an anti-Israel candidate or focus on a single overarching issue where a candidate's position could determine their vote.

Instead, the candidates are quite distinct — a conservative who is pro-life and for action in Iraq, a liberal who is pro-choice and against unilateral action in Iraq — and it's unclear how Jewish voters will weigh all the factors.

"The big question is what are the swing issues going to be for Jewish voters," said Steve Silverfarb, director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of Minnesota and the Dakotas.

Among the issues affecting Jewish voters' decisions are national security, the economy and education, Silverfarb says.

The two candidates' positions on Iraq are a microcosm of the divisions in the American Jewish community, but it's not clear how much the Iraq issue will sway Jewish voters.

Coleman strongly supports the resolution passed recently by Congress authorizing President Bush "to execute the U.N.'s mission to disarm Iraq."

The resolution will not give the president a "blank check" for unilateral action, he argues, but the goal of U.S. policy must be Iraqi disarmament.

Wellstone has not said he would oppose military action against Iraq in every circumstance, but he does not want the United States to act alone.

"We should act forcefully, resolutely, sensibly — with our allies, and not alone — to disarm Saddam," Wellstone said.

"Authorizing the pre-emptive, go-it-alone use of force now, right in the midst of continuing efforts to enlist the world community to back a tough new disarmament

MIDEAST FOCUS

Sharon agrees to redeployment

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon agreed to reduce the army's presence in Hebron.

On Sunday, Sharon accepted a proposal by Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer for a partial redeployment there.

At the same time, the army would maintain a presence on two hilltops to prevent Palestinians from firing at Jewish neighborhoods. The army is expected to implement the decision soon.

PLO's D.C. office kept open

The Bush administration has allowed the Palestine Liberation Organization's office in Washington to stay open six more months. President Bush temporarily waived the provision in a law that forbids the PLO from having a D.C. office. The waiver has been used regularly since 1994. PLO representative Hasan Abdel Rahman is expected to be replaced by Palestinian moderate Hanna Siniora, but the Palestinian Authority has not made the change official and Rahman denies it will happen.

Olive-pickers confronted

Israeli settlers fired in the air Saturday to prevent Palestinians picking olives near West Bank settlements.

The incident was the latest in a series of confrontations between the olive-pickers and the settlers, whose communities have been targeted by Palestinian gunmen.

Last Friday, residents of the Palestinian village of Yanun, near Nablus, abandoned the village.

They told The Associated Press that they were driven out by worsening attacks by Jewish settlers. In another development, police have questioned a number of Israelis in connection with the Oct. 6 shooting death of a Palestinian who was harvesting olives near the settlement of Itamar.

resolution on Iraq, could be a costly mistake for our country."

Wellstone said he supports stripping Saddam of weapons of mass destruction, and urged the prompt resumption of U.N. weapons inspections with unfettered access and an expedited timetable.

He joined 22 other senators in voting against the Oct. 10 resolution authorizing Bush to use force if necessary.

Coleman says Wellstone's vote is typical of his opposition to defense spending, which Coleman says places him "out of the mainstream."

Wellstone opposed the Persian Gulf War in 199.

But he did vote for the most recent defense authorization bill and has supported several pieces of anti-terrorism legislation. In most cases, however, he voted against increases in defense spending.

Despite Wellstone's anti-war stance, the Veterans of Foreign Wars' national political action committee endorsed him.

The Republican Jewish Coalition says national security and the Iraqi threat are the main issues that will persuade Jews to vote for Coleman.

The consensus in the Jewish community is to act against Iraq, placing Wellstone "on the fringe," Brooks said.

In contrast, Democratic strategists argue that domestic issues, not Iraq, will decide the election.

As a pro-choice liberal, Wellstone may be closer to the Jewish community than Coleman on domestic issues.

Experts caution that Jewish voting patterns in Minnesota are hard to gauge for a variety of factors: There are relatively few Jews there, polls do not sample Jewish voters specifically and the state typically has a strong third-party presence.

Wellstone's performance in the Jewish community may also depend on how seriously some of his constituents take the charges that his positions are not sufficiently pro-Israel.

In recent letters to the editor of the American Jewish World, the Minneapolis Jewish paper, some touted Wellstone as a staunch friend of Israel while others criticized him as too sympathetic to the Palestinians.

Wellstone's voting record shows consistent support for foreign aid to Israel. He also signed or co-sponsored various congressional letters in support of Israel.

"Wellstone has tremendous support in the Jewish community," said Jim Farrell, a spokesman for the Wellstone campaign.

Farrell cited letters to Bush criticizing Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat and Wellstone's support for moving the U.S. Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

But Wellstone didn't sign on to a number of other letters and resolutions, including a 1998 letter that urged President Clinton to stop publicly pressuring Israel to make concessions and that criticized Arafat for violating the Oslo peace accords.

Morris Amitay, a pro-Israel activist and founder of Washington PAC, a pro-Israel group, says Wellstone has a "poor record" on Israel.

Washington PAC gave \$2,000 to Coleman, who has what Amitay called a strong position paper on Israel.

"I have every reason to believe that Coleman would be better" on Israel, Amitay said.

But one Jewish official says the community is not sure of how to proceed on the Iraq issue and that, in any case, American Jews are not single-issue voters.

Two Minnesotans who spoke to JTA appear to reflect the divisions on the race within the Jewish community.

Businessman Bill Aberman, a Wellstone supporter, told JTA that both candidates would be strong supporters of Israel.

He also thinks that people distort Wellstone's stance on Iraq — portraying him as more extreme than he is — and that, in any case, the Jewish community wants to move slowly on the Iraq issue.

Attorney Andrew Parker, a Coleman supporter, says Wellstone sees a moral equivalence between Palestinian terrorism and Israeli military retaliation and that Wellstone has not been good for the Jewish community.

In addition, he believes Wellstone is on the wrong side of the Iraq debate, Parker said. □



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JEWISH WORLD

UJC fund gives to Israel

The United Jewish Communities said its Israel Emergency Campaign is allocating \$18 million to the Jewish state.

In an announcement last Friday, the umbrella group of North American federations said the funds will help Israel's medical services, trauma relief programs and citizen safety programs. Since the fund was initiated in September 2001, donors have pledged \$319 million to help Israel.

Poet blasts ADL, Israel

New Jersey's poet laureate criticized Jewish and Israeli groups' involvement in U.S. politics.

Amiri Baraka, under fire for a poem called "Somebody Blew Up America," which insinuates that Israel knew in advance of the Sept. 11 attacks, said last week the Anti-Defamation League should be "registered as an agent of a foreign power," according to The Associated Press. The governor of New Jersey, the ADL and other groups have called for his resignation over the poem.

Baraka, who has refused to quit, also blasted N.J. Gov. James McGreevy for naming Israeli Golan Cipel as an unpaid liaison to the Jewish community.

Auschwitz synagogue gets Torah

A group of American Jews presented a Torah to a century-old synagogue near the Auschwitz death camp.

On Oct. 17, a group of 26 Jews from Cleveland gave a scroll to the Lomdei Mishnayot Synagogue, which reopened two years ago and was among a dozen shuls that served 7,000 Jews in the Polish city of Oswiecim before World War II. The Auschwitz Jewish Center Foundation raised \$10 million to renovate the synagogue and an adjacent building.

Rabbis to make solidarity visit

Some 41 rabbis are slated to make a solidarity visit to Israel next week. The visit is sponsored by the Reform movement's ARZA/World Union.

As part of its plans, the group will meet with the families of terror victims and visit the city of Hadera, the target of numerous Palestinian terror attacks.

Former Conservative leader dies

Rabbi Seymour Essrog, a leader of Jewish affairs in the Baltimore area and on the national stage, died last Friday. According to several sources, Essrog was diagnosed recently with prostate cancer and was beginning chemotherapy treatment, but no details about his death are yet available.

From 1998-2000, he served as national president of the Rabbinical Assembly, the umbrella organization for Conservative rabbis.

At Canadian campus rally, speakers assail anti-Semitism

By Bill Gladstone

TORONTO (JTA) — One month after pro-Palestinian demonstrators prevented Benjamin Netanyahu from speaking at Montreal's Concordia University, more than 500 people assembled on another Canadian campus for a forum about the Concordia riot.

The rally came as Nazi-hunter Simon Wiesenthal asked Concordia to reinvoke the former Israeli prime minister to speak at the school.

Bob Rae, a former premier of Ontario, was the headline speaker at the rally, which was organized by an interfaith group called Canadians Against Anti-Semitism and filled the largest auditorium at the University of Toronto.

Like the speakers who followed him, Rae linked the Concordia disturbances of Sept. 9 to a growing international climate of hate against Jews and Israel — expressed in union resolutions, divestment campaigns, boycotts of Israeli intellectuals, and pamphlets, posters and pronouncements that appear to meet every definition of hate speech.

Rae called anti-Semitism a "vicious virus" that has not been wiped out in the world. "There's not exactly a parallel today to Kristallnacht and Hitler," he said. "But when I see a cartoon in a London newspaper of the Israeli prime minister with a big hooked nose, or a cartoon in an Italian newspaper showing an Israeli tank rolling over the baby Jesus" during a military operation in Bethlehem, "I know that we face a particular challenge that we must take seriously and that we must ask our government to take seriously."

A former leader of the left-leaning New Democratic Party, Rae split from the party earlier this year after its federal foreign affairs critic rushed to Ramallah to embrace Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat and to condemn the alleged "Jenin massacre" on Canadian television.

Rae called on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation and other media outlets to acknowledge that their broadcasts about the mythical massacre were in error. Several months ago, U.N. officials concluded that despite numerous Palestinian claims to the contrary, Israel had not carried out a massacre in Jenin's refugee camp during a military operation there earlier this year.

"Don't jump on every bandwagon every time there's a headline that an atrocity has been committed until the investigation is completed," he urged. "I'm still waiting for someone at the CBC to say, 'We were deceived about Jenin.' Even the United Nations itself got swept up in an investigation."

Newspaper columnist Margaret Wente also addressed the rally.

"Where has the leadership been on campus?" Wente asked.

"Probably the only hate speech that is tolerated now is the hate speech on campus about Israel and about America — and these are linked," she said.

After the Concordia riot, the university administration declared a "cooling-off period" and a moratorium on public events related to the Middle East.

But Wiesenthal has written to Concordia officials from his home in Vienna, urging them to announce immediately their intention to invite Netanyahu back for a second speaking engagement. "Failure to do so will only embolden those who see violence as the only way to achieve results," Wiesenthal wrote.

University officials indicated they would consider the request, which was hand-delivered to the school by Rabbi Abraham Cooper of the Los Angeles-based Simon Wiesenthal Center. □

Hezbollah seeking long-range missiles

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Hezbollah is attempting to obtain long-range missiles that could hit most of Israel.

A senior Israeli official said the terrorist organization has missiles that can reach Haifa and is seeking missiles that could reach as far south as Beersheba. President Bush said last week that the United States would view any Hezbollah action against Israel as a terrorist attack. □

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD**New genealogy center will help German Jews trace their roots***By Toby Axelrod*

BERLIN (JTA) — The search for Jewish roots in Germany may be easier now, thanks to a new research center that opened this week in Würzburg.

The Ephraim Gustav Hoenlein Genealogy Project is designed to help Jews of Germanic descent trace their origins. It is a joint project of the Ronald S. Lauder Foundation and the Jewish Community of Würzburg.

"This will hopefully be a source for other people to look back to their roots," Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, told JTA. The new center is named for Hoenlein's father, who fled Nazi Germany with his family and immigrated to the United States.

The genealogy center is one of two new Lauder Foundation projects announced Oct. 14. The second, the Lauder Chorev Centre, will be completed in 2004.

The center will provide room and board for Jewish teenagers attending Lauder Jewish educational programs, summer camps and leadership training seminars in Würzburg.

The Lauder Foundation has been active in Würzburg for three years, said Rabbi Benjamin Krauss, director of the foundation's Frankfurt center.

Up to now, Lauder programs in Germany have focused on building a new generation of Jews with knowledge about Judaism. With the new genealogy center, the focus will be on building connections with the past.

"I hope it will be similar to what he have in Poland, with Jews from America and Israel coming here to find out more about their roots," Krauss told JTA. "This can range from simple inquiries to requests for help in fixing up certain places or in creating a family tree."

Krauss said the center will accept donations from people who wish to use its services.

Archivist Michael Schneeberger will oversee the work of the new center, Krauss said.

"Today, Jewish family research is world research," said Schneeberger, 53, a convert to Judaism. Even starting with only a family name and a place of origin, he has been able to trace far-flung relatives and reconstruct family trees.

Schneeberger's interest in genealogy started with his own attempts — as yet unsuccessful — to track down a paternal Jewish ancestor.

"I want to help more people find out about their background," he said.

Malcolm Hoenlein knows the route well. Over the years, he has reconnected with his family history in Frankfurt, Würzburg and Ermreuth.

During his recent visit for the dedication of the new center, Hoenlein saw the graves of his great-grandparents, spoke to neighbors who had known them and visited their house.

Like many refugees from Nazi Germany, Ephraim Hoenlein lost his parents and his home, but didn't discuss his experiences with his children.

Now, his son said, "It is important for the younger generation to be able to find out about and explore their history."

Hoenlein noted the Torah portion in which God tells Abraham where his ancestors came from, but does not say where Abraham is headed.

"For many people, knowing where they come from helps them to know where they are going," Hoenlein said. □

Czech Jews shocked as conviction of 'Mein Kampf' publisher reversed*By Magnus Bennett*

PRAGUE (JTA) — Czech Jewish leaders are dismayed that the country's Supreme Court has overturned the conviction of a publisher of "Mein Kampf."

After publishing thousands of copies of Hitler's anti-Semitic text in Czech without footnotes or disclaimers, Michal Zitko was fined about \$60,000 last year for "supporting and promoting a movement aimed at suppressing human rights and freedoms."

The conviction was upheld on appeal at the beginning of 2002.

But the Czech Supreme Court has returned the case to prosecutors, saying Zitko could not have promoted Nazism because a movement has to exist at the time when a suspected crime is committed. The court's public relations office was not available for comment. Zitko's defense lawyer, Tomas Sokol, welcomed the ruling.

"It was not proved that there existed a movement which would be promoted or supported by the publication of this book," he said.

The ruling shocked Czech Jewish groups and politicians. Interior Minister Stanislav Gross called it "shocking and crazy," while Justice Minister Pavel Rychetsky said the decision had been "made in haste."

The Czech Federation of Jewish Communities said it is "very disappointed."

"It is obvious that this is an incredible mistake," said the federation's executive director, Tomas Kraus. "We can only hope that this is a mistake and there's not something else behind it which we can only speculate about."

Kraus said he would ask the justice minister to push for the law to be tightened. "The wording of the law is just too vague," said Kraus, a former lawyer. "If the criminal code had said 'promoting Nazism, fascism or similar movements aimed at suppressing human rights or freedoms,' there would not have been a problem."

Rychetsky played down press speculation that the ruling could make it difficult to prosecute anyone indulging in neo-Nazi activity. He said promoting Nazism remains a criminal offense and that the court ruling did not set a legal precedent. "Were someone to say that the gas chambers were a good thing, that would still be punishable by the law," Rychetsky said. □

Riefenstahl probe dropped

BERLIN (JTA) — German prosecutors dropped a Holocaust denial investigation of filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl.

The lawyers said last Friday that comments by the legendary filmmaker, best known for her Nazi-era propaganda films, were not sufficient to lead to a prosecution.

Riefenstahl was accused of Holocaust denial by a Gypsy organization after telling a newspaper that none of the Gypsies taken from concentration camps to be used as extras in the wartime feature film "Lowlands" died in the camps. □