



Daily News Bulletin

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TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Split rulings on affirmative action

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in favor of affirmative action in college admissions, but struck down one particular program.

The court ruled 5-4 in favor of the University of Michigan's vague affirmative action policy for law school admissions, but rejected a point system used by the school's undergraduate admissions program, calling it too specific. [Page 3]

Court strikes down Holocaust law

The U.S. Supreme Court struck down a law requiring California insurance companies to disclose their Holocaust-era policies.

The court ruled 5-4 that the Holocaust Victims Insurance Relief Act, passed in California in 1999, interfered with the president's conduct of foreign policy.

The California law bars European insurers and their American affiliates from doing business in the state if they refuse to publish a full list of all policy holders between 1920 and 1945.

The law was passed to make it easier for Jewish descendants of Holocaust victims to obtain payments.

Mideast talks inconclusive

Israeli-Palestinian security meetings on Monday ended inconclusively.

A meeting between the Israeli army coordinator in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, Maj. Gen. Amos Gilad, and Palestinian Authority security chief Mohammed Dahlan failed to bring the two sides closer to an agreement on a proposal to transfer security responsibility to the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank town of Bethlehem, reports said.

The Palestinians raised a number of demands at the meeting, including an end to Israeli targeting of terrorists, freedom of movement on a major road in the Gaza Strip, extended hours of operation at the Rafah border crossing and the reopening of the Palestinian airport in the Gaza Strip, Israel Radio reported.

Gilad promised to present Israel's response at the next meeting.

Earlier in the day, Gilad said a temporary cease-fire between the Palestinian Authority and Hamas would be dangerous for Israel, since it would give the terrorist group time to rearm.

BUSH & THE JEWS

As Bush seeks Jewish voters, traditional groups feel ignored

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — When President Bush sat down to dinner with about 120 Jews at the White House recently, many familiar faces in the organized American Jewish community ate at home.

Instead of Jewish organizational leaders, the guest list for the dinner, which honored the opening of an Anne Frank exhibit at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum, included Jewish friends of the president, political supporters, rabbis and Jewish White House staffers.

Just two leaders of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations were chosen to represent the entire organized Jewish world.

The White House's handpicked representation of the Jewish community was the latest in a number of events since Bush came to office two and a half years ago that have ruffled the feathers of American Jewish leaders.

Bush is seeking American Jewish support this summer for two very different agenda items — to find a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and to win re-election for another four years in office.

But in seeking that support, some Jewish leaders say, this White House has sidestepped the traditionally liberal Jewish organizations because of frequent scuffles over domestic policy issues.

Instead, the administration has focused its efforts on ingratiating itself with more conservative Jewish leaders inside and outside the major policy groups, and on direct appeals to Jewish voters.

Public gestures, such as the June 11 White House dinner and Bush's recent visit to the Auschwitz concentration camp, are seen as examples of such appeals. Instead of reaching out to the Jewish leadership, Bush used the Holocaust museum dinner to ingratiate himself with individual rabbis and Jewish leaders who support his Middle East policy and with potential donors, while sidelining those who have voiced opposition to some of his priorities, sources say.

Some Jewish leaders say the administration's courting of the Jewish community is similar to Bush's efforts to win black and Latino votes with strong stances on charitable choice and the nomination of minority judges. The difference, they say, is that the appeals to the Jewish community have also been attempts to circumvent the communal Jewish leadership.

The White House liaison to the Jewish community, Adam Goldman, and others at the White House did not respond to requests for on-the-record interviews.

White House officials privately defend their record, saying the Jewish community has been treated fairly and that inroads were made to most, if not all, Jewish organizations. Logistical reasons have caused some Jewish leaders to be shut out of meetings or events, they say.

Some analysts have, for years, predicted a rightward shift in the Jewish vote, but the White House believes that the Jewish vote is now truly in play, and that they can win over a substantial percentage of the American Jewish community in the 2004 election.

Bush received about 19 percent of the Jewish vote in the 2000 presidential election.

Administration officials and their supporters argue that American Jews across the political spectrum, even those who oppose some of Bush's domestic policy positions, are likely to support the president — both politically and financially — because of his

MIDEAST FOCUS

Immigration to Israel down

Immigration to Israel is in a "tailspin," Israel's minister of immigrant absorption said. Tzipi Livni said Monday that her ministry must examine potential immigrants' attitudes so it can make Israel appear more appealing to them.

Nearly 7,700 immigrants arrived in Israel during the first five months of 2003 — a rate that, if it continues, would mean a dramatic drop from the 35,000 who arrived in 2002.

The ongoing Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Israel's faltering economy and cuts in subsidies for immigrants have dampened aliyah, according to the Jewish Agency for Israel, which handles immigration and absorption.

Arafat raising money from Libya?

Yasser Arafat reportedly has raised \$2.5 million from Libyan leader Muammar Gadhafi for suicide bombings.

The money will fund the terrorist activities of the Al-Aksa Martyrs Brigade, according to the San Francisco Chronicle.

Four Palestinians killed in Gaza

Four Palestinians were killed in an explosion in the Gaza Strip on Monday. Israel said Monday's blast was caused when a bomb the four were planting exploded prematurely, a report confirmed by Palestinian witnesses.

Other Palestinians said the four were killed by Israeli tank fire, though Israel said there was no such fire in the area at the time.

Kenya to charge suspects

Kenya is planning to charge four suspects in connection with a November terrorist attack that killed 12 Kenyans and three Israelis. Three of the four suspects are linked to a man thought to be an Al-Qaida operative.

strong actions against terrorism and on behalf of Israel.

In courting Jewish support, the White House has actively searched for like-minded Jews and has fostered a strong relationship with them, while keeping out of the West Wing many of the more familiar representatives of the Jewish community that have been close to previous Republican administrations.

The irony of the situation, some Jewish organizational professionals say, is that Bush now finds it hard to garner full support for the "road map" peace plan among his natural allies, such as politically conservative and Orthodox Jewish groups, which tend to be more hawkish.

Now, leaders of more liberal Jewish groups — whom Bush has largely ignored — are the ones speaking out in favor of the U.S.-backed plan, which calls on Israel to make concessions for peace.

Many veteran leaders of the organized Jewish community say they have endured difficult years under the Bush White House.

Washington representatives of several mainstream Jewish organizations, all speaking on condition of anonymity, say they have experienced unprecedented intimidation and resistance to their concerns.

They complain of being left out of meetings with other religious leaders, having their calls go unreturned and being told that administration officials are unavailable to speak to them.

Several Jewish officials said that when they requested speakers, they were asked how many press releases they had issued recently praising the administration.

Of course, it's hardly a new development that "who's in and who's out" changes with the occupant of the White House.

The Clinton White House also had its favorite Jewish groups, sparking occasional gripes among the Orthodox and politically conservative groups that disagreed with much of Clinton's agenda.

Still, veterans of the Washington scene say Jewish organizational leaders still knew they would be called on when the White House wanted to sound out the Jewish community.

The shift under Bush is not merely partisan, but represents a different approach to engaging the Jewish community, they say.

"It's been more political: We do for you, you do for us," one veteran Jewish official said. "They were making it clear that there is a price to be paid and a reward to be received."

Even leaders from Jewish groups that have been favored by the Bush White House — such as the American Jewish Committee, which Bush addressed in 2001 — say this administration differs from its predecessors, and that, for some groups, an understanding of how to play the new political game has helped them.

"This administration really does insist on a certain code of behavior," said Jason Isaacson, director of government and international affairs for the AJCommittee. "If you sneak up on them and you are unfair or unbalanced in your criticism of them, they take offense."

David Frum, a former Bush administration staffer, said the new dynamic between the White House and the Jewish leadership is part of a movement away from the Democrats who lead most Jewish groups and toward the general Jewish population, which he believes is more supportive of Bush's policies.

"It's perfectly reasonable that an administration, when dealing with a community, would tend to deal with those more sympathetic to it," Frum said.

Matthew Brooks, executive director of the Republican Jewish Coalition, says almost all Jewish groups have had opportunities to meet with the president and other senior administration officials since Bush came to office. "I vehemently and fundamentally disagree with the notion" that some have been shut out, Brooks said. "They have opened up the White House to the entire Jewish community."

Many Jewish officials acknowledge that the Jewish groups can be a difficult lot to handle, with outspoken views, a traditionally Democratic constituency and many demands.

Still, many feel they haven't been given an adequate seat at the table.

"We're looking to hear from them directly at meetings and conferences," one Jewish official said of the White House. "We're looking to get our questions answered." □



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JEWISH WORLD

Court: Sabbath boundary OK

The Supreme Court declined to hear an appeal to a ruling that allows an eruv, or Sabbath boundary, to be built in a New Jersey city.

The court let stand a lower court ruling that the city of Tenafly's denial of the eruv's construction was motivated by a desire to prevent Orthodox Jews from moving into the city.

The Orthodox Union praised the court's move.

Report: Arabs kicked out Jews

Arab countries orchestrated an organized persecution of Jews in 1948, during the creation of the State of Israel, according to a report released by a Jewish group.

The report, released Monday by Justice for Jews From Arab Countries, seeks to trace the history of an orchestrated campaign against Jews in Arab countries.

The document is part of a campaign to publicize the issue of Jewish refugees from Arab countries for the purposes of obtaining compensation and providing a counterclaim in peace negotiations to demands by Palestinian refugees from pre-state Palestine.

French rally for Israel

Around 50,000 people rallied for Israel in Paris on Sunday.

The event, titled "12 Hours for France-Israel Friendship," was organized by leading Jewish organizations, including the CRIF umbrella organization of secular French Jews and the Consistoire, the body responsible for the religious needs of the community.

The first such gathering in the Jewish community in over 20 years, the event attracted a number of political leaders including France's interior minister, Nicolas Sarkozy, and the first secretary of the Socialist Party, Francois Hollande, as well as Israeli Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Addressing the gathering, Sarkozy condemned anti-Semitism in France and described Israel as a great democracy that "has the right to security like any other democracy, no more and no less," Sarkozy said.

Russian synagogue attacked

All windows were shattered and anti-Semitic graffiti was painted on a synagogue 300 miles north-east of Moscow.

No one was hurt in Sunday's incident in Yaroslavl, the Moscow office of the Anti-Defamation League said.

The Yaroslavl synagogue gained nationwide publicity when it was firebombed eight years ago. The culprits of that attack were later apprehended and charged with hooliganism.

Jewish groups applaud court rulings on two affirmative action programs

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Many Jewish leaders are applauding the Supreme Court's split ruling on affirmative action programs in college admissions, which declared the concept legal while striking down systems that rigidly benefit minority applicants.

Supreme Court watchers say the split decision mirrors the consensus within the Jewish community — a belief that diversity in higher education is important, with concerns about preferences for minority applicants.

"A carefully constructed affirmative action program is good for the Jews," said Ethan Felson, assistant executive director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs. "A diverse higher education environment is healthy for Jews and healthy for society."

The Supreme Court ruled Monday that the University of Michigan Law School's program, which gives a small advantage to minority applicants, is legal, by a 5-4 decision.

In a companion case, the court ruled, 6-3, that the school's undergraduate admissions program, which gives "points" to minority applicants, is too similar to a quota and "is not narrowly tailored to achieve the interest in educational diversity," Chief Justice William Rehnquist wrote.

The affirmative action issue has split the Jewish community for more than 25 years. Historically, Jewish groups have been wary of affirmative action quotas because of the numeral limits placed on Jewish enrollment in European and American universities in the 1920s. That led many groups to vocally oppose affirmative action in the 1978 case, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, which outlawed racial quotas.

This time around, Jewish groups were less vocal in expressing their views on the subject. No major Jewish group filed a brief opposing the University of Michigan programs. Instead, the American Jewish Committee and several other Jewish groups — including the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, Hadassah and the National Council of Jewish Women — filed a brief supporting the university's practices.

"Diversity not only provides all students with a richer educational experience, but also prepares them for participation in our pluralistic democracy," said a brief the American Jewish Committee filed in support of the University of Michigan. "Exposure in universities to those of diverse backgrounds and experiences will better equip those graduates who go on to become the leaders of our future."

Jeffrey Sinensky, the AJCommittee's general counsel, said the ruling parses the affirmative action issue in an appropriate way. He called the decision a victory, especially given the conservative makeup of the current court.

"What the court did is solomonically try to split the baby," he said.

The Anti-Defamation League's brief supported neither side, arguing that diversity should be a goal in higher education admissions but questioning the University of Michigan's practices.

Abraham Foxman, the ADL's national director, said the court was able to "strike a delicate balance" between the two interests in the case. "We're satisfied that there are enough caveats in this decision that will make it a lot more difficult for people to say 'race is enough' " to determine admissions, Foxman said.

His main concern was over how schools and other institutions would interpret the law, possibly viewing it as a far-reaching approval of the concept of affirmative action, Foxman said.

Rabbi Marc Schneier, president of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding, said the Jewish community needs to be more cognizant of the importance the African American and Latino communities place on this issue, and not undercut them at a time when the Jewish community is seeking their support on Middle East issues.

"We cannot simply impose solidarity with Israel on the other ethnic leaders and be insensitive to what is most important to their communities," he said, adding that the Jewish communities' muted voice on the case is in part an acknowledgment of that reality. □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

**Despite terror and economics,
North Americans move to Israel**

By Rachel Pomerance

NEW YORK (JTA) — It's the time of year when hemlines recede, sports head outdoors and North American Jews move to Israel.

Each year, most North Americans who make aliyah do so in the summer. Paradoxically, that number has been growing since the Palestinian intifada began in September 2000.

"Israel's going through a very difficult time right now," said Marcos Monheit of North Miami Beach, voicing a key reason many new immigrants give for their move. "We can't take it for granted, and the best way to help is to be there."

About 1,000 North Americans are expected to take the plunge this summer, joining 500 who departed for the Jewish state earlier this year.

Another 300-400 North Americans visiting Israel are expected to adopt Israeli citizenship by summer's end.

North American aliyah has averaged between 1,300 and 1,500 for the past decade, according to Michael Landsberg, executive director of the Jewish Agency for Israel's North American aliyah department.

Last year, however, 2,020 North American Jews made aliyah, up from 1,560 in 2001, he said.

The last major wave of aliyah was in the 1970s, when the aftermath of the 1967 Six-Day War and 1973 Yom Kippur War — when Israel seemed particularly embattled — helped raise North American aliyah to levels of 6,000 to 7,000 Jews annually, he said.

Now, while general immigration to Israel is down — due to Israel's shaky security and troubled economy — aliyah from the West is up, according to the Jewish Agency.

Several say the intifada has rekindled their Zionism, many received economic help to make the move and some say it's just serendipity.

Like Monheit, most of the North American immigrants are Orthodox Jews — some 56 percent this year, down from 69 percent the year before, according to the Jewish Agency.

"We've been away from the land for 2,000 years," said Monheit, chief financial officer for a chain of nursing homes.

"It doesn't make sense to pray for it and not to be there," said Monheit, who will move with his wife and four pre-teen children next month. "Today it's a matter of getting on a plane and going."

Conservative Jews also are a major component of the increased aliyah.

The Jewish Agency, which handles immigration and absorption in Israel, began targeting Conservative Jews in the last five months. With so many Jewish organizational leaders having grown up in the Conservative movement, Landsberg said the Jewish Agency has tried to foster aliyah by sending its emissaries to work with Conservative synagogues.

This year, Conservative Jews make up 21 percent of the group making aliyah, nearly double their proportion in recent years.

Economic assistance also has contributed to the increase.

Nefesh b'Nefesh, a Florida-based group that formed last year, raises funds to help North American Jews make aliyah. According to Landsberg, the group is responsible for 20 percent to 30 percent

of the rise in North American aliyah.

Last summer the group brought 525 North American Jews to Israel; this summer, it will send 930, said George Birnbaum, the group's spokesman.

Nefesh b'Nefesh gives an average grant of \$18,000 to a family of four and \$7,000 to an individual making aliyah, Birnbaum said. The group raises money from private donors in North America with assistance from the Jewish Agency.

For Israel, he added, it's a great return on investment: The average family of four injects \$40,000 to \$45,000 into Israel's economy within six months of making aliyah.

By summer's end, roughly half of the North American Jews making aliyah will have received some assistance from Nefesh b'Nefesh.

Israel, too, has tried to sweeten the deal for North Americans.

Since November, the Israeli government has been offering the same aid package to North American immigrants as it does to immigrants from communities in distress, such as Argentina or the former Soviet Union.

"Aliyah is aliyah is aliyah," said Landsberg, saying Israel will provide all immigrants to Israel with about \$3,300 in cash — the other money comes in housing and job training.

"We need our brothers and sisters here" to offset the demographic challenge of the growing Arab community, he said.

While economic assistance may make it easier for North American Jews to make aliyah, it's not the reason they move, Birnbaum said.

"They're not coming to Israel looking for economic opportunity," Birnbaum said.

"The economy in Israel is far more depressed than the economy in America," he said. "They're coming because they have a Zionist feeling."

However, financial assistance makes "all the difference in the world" for someone to start a life in Israel, he said.

All kinds of Jews give all kinds of reasons for making aliyah.

Some even discover their roots through other cultures: For Matthew Mausner, the impetus came from his work with Native Americans.

An anti-globalization activist and champion for the rights of Native Americans, Mausner was asked about Israel by a Native American who pointed out that he was lucky to have the opportunity to live in his homeland.

"I had never thought of it that way before," said Mausner, 29, a Yale graduate who consults for Goldman Sachs on Wall Street.

After attending a birthright Israel trip, Mausner said he "finally understood what" the Native Americans "were talking about."

They talk of "sacred places and their connection to the land and their feeling of belonging, and I felt that in Israel," he said.

Chana Levi Julian, 48, was visiting Israel when a Bedouin tour guide named Younis changed her life.

"He asked me what are you doing in New York," said Julian, who identifies with the Chabad-Lubavitch movement. "A Jew should be living here in Eretz Yisrael," Younis continued, she said.

Julian told Younis about the family's fear of terrorism and, in particular, the anxiety felt by her daughter, Coby, 12.

The two then called Coby, who was back in the Borough Park neighborhood of Brooklyn.

"There is no safer place in the entire world for a Jew" than Israel, where "God is in charge," Younis told the child. □