

IN THE NEWS

Sharon calls for Gaza withdrawal

Ariel Sharon announced a plan to evacuate most Jewish communities in the Gaza Strip.

The Israeli prime minister confirmed the plan, first reported by the Ha'aretz newspaper on Monday, in remarks to his Likud Party faction. According to Ha'aretz, 17 of Gaza's 20 Jewish settlements are to go, though Sharon didn't give a time frame.

Clinton rips U.N. on fence hearing

Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.) will circulate a letter in the U.S. Senate blasting an impending hearing on Israel's security fence.

The letter on the Feb. 23 hearing at the International Court of Justice will be addressed to U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, since the United Nations called on the international court to take up the issue.

Israel's fence is a political and security issue, not a legal issue for the court to decide, Clinton said Sunday at a news conference in New York against the U.N. vote to send the matter to the court, according to officials with the Israeli government, which had a representative at the news conference.

ADL rejects Gibson's peace plea

Abraham Foxman rejected an overture from Mel Gibson about his upcoming movie on Jesus.

The Anti-Defamation League's national director wrote to Gibson that his letter "does not address any of the issues we raised" and does "not mitigate our concerns about the potential consequences" of "The Passion of the Christ," which Foxman and others see as blaming Jews for the death of Jesus.

Gibson had asked Foxman to set an "example for all our brethren" by following the path of respect and "love for each other despite our differences."

The film is slated to open later this month.



WORLD REPORT

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Calls mount for leadership as Palestinians slide into anarchy

By GIL SEDAN

JERUSALEM (JTA) — "Yes, we are in a state of anarchy."

That is how Zayyad Abu-Zayyad, a member of the Palestinian Legislative Council and a former Palestinian Authority Cabinet minister, describes life today in the areas ruled by the Palestinian Authority.

"Certainly when a Palestinian policeman cannot walk around freely wearing his uniform, this creates a vacuum in which everyone does whatever one pleases," he said.

The situation is becoming grave, Abu-Zayyad told JTA.

"We have people selling land that is not theirs, and our courts are unable to enforce the law. Everyone who has money can purchase as many arms as he wants and can do with them whatever he wants. There is strong collaboration between our mafia and the Israeli mafia," he said.

"I am surprised at the level of mutual tolerance within the Palestinian society that still exists," he added. "Other societies would have been at a much worse state."

However, Abu-Zayyad distinguishes between a state of anarchy and the possibility that the Palestinian Authority is on the verge of disintegration.

"The P.A. is not collapsing," he said. "Should it happen to collapse, it would certainly not be in Israel's interest; all extremists would go on a rampage. I know that there are a number of Palestinian intellectuals who feel that the P.A. should give up and let Israel take over — I am not among them."

A resident of the Jerusalem suburb of al-Azariyya, Abu-Zayyad is a close associate

of P.A. Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei. Accordingly, he relieves Qurei of any responsibility for the deterioration of affairs.

"No one helps him, neither" P.A. President Yasser "Arafat, nor the Israelis nor the Americans. He still stays put, but I am not sure for how long," Abu-Zayyad said.

Israeli and American officials reportedly consider Qurei a tremendous disappointment. Perhaps because he witnessed the fate of his predecessor Mahmoud Abbas — who tried to wrest real power from Arafat and was forced to resign within three months — Qurei has demonstrated virtually no leadership since taking office last fall, Israeli and American officials say.

There is a high probability that he soon will resign or be forced to resign, Israeli officials believe.

Maj. Gen. Aharon Ze'evi-Farkash, the head of intelligence for the Israel Defense Forces, told the Cabinet this week that Arafat understands that the present state of affairs weakens the hegemony of his ruling Fatah Party and further strengthens the political stock of fundamentalist groups like Hamas.

As a result, Ze'evi said, Arafat recently instructed uniformed P.A. police officers to return to the streets of Palestinian cities to demonstrate a political presence.

However, the lack of discipline in the force is such that the suicide bomber who killed 11 civilians on an Israeli bus in Jerusalem last week was a P.A. policeman from Bethlehem.

Arafat finds himself under heavy pressure from Egypt to cope with the anarchy and create conditions that would enable a meeting between Qurei and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon. Qurei has kept his distance from Sha-

Continued on page 2

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

■ *Prominent Palestinians are calling on Arafat to establish law and order*

Continued from page 1

ron, demanding that Israel suspend construction of its West Bank security fence as a condition for meeting.

Sharon, who believes the fence will dramatically change the strategic relations between Israel and the Palestinians in Israel's favor, refused.

"He wants to succeed, but this is not enough," Abu-Zayyad said of Qurei. "He has learned the lesson from Abu Mazen," he said, using Abbas' nom de guerre.

Abbas "annihilated himself politically," Abu-Zayyad said, "after having met Sharon and receiving nothing from him."

Sharon released hundreds of Palestinian prisoners, relaxed anti-terrorist restrictions in the West Bank and turned over several cities to P.A. rule in an effort to bolster Abbas' prestige. The Bush administration, which has shunned Arafat because of his ties to terrorism, warmly embraced Abbas.

Palestinians say the Israeli and American gestures were not enough.

Abu-Zayyad draws a picture in which the Palestinian Authority has absolutely no power to stabilize the situation. But that's not an accurate description, according to some Israeli experts.

Reserve Col. Shalom Harari, an expert on Palestinian affairs at the Interdisciplinary Center in Herzliya, told JTA that this is yet another show staged by Arafat, who throughout his career has carefully cultivated chaos and disorder to garner

international sympathy and blur his responsibility for events.

"The story repeats itself every few months: Internal unrest in the Palestinian Authority reaches a heating point, Arafat makes a few moves to prove that he is in control but then lets go and allows the instability to continue," Harari said.

According to Harari, Arafat thrives on a situation of "divide and rule," regardless of the consequences for his people.

However, Harari said, the one difference is the fact that now Palestinians speak of anarchy.

The watershed was the attempt last fall on the life of Ghassan Shaka, mayor of Nablus.

Shaka's brother, Ahmad, was shot dead in Nablus by bullets apparently aimed at Shaka, one of the most prominent figures in the Palestinian areas.

Following the murder, Shaka wrote a sharply worded letter to Arafat that was published in all Palestinian newspapers.

"The continuation of this threatening and painful situation, and the impotence of the Palestinian law authorities, will force us to take our rights into our hands," he wrote.

Once Shaka spoke out, others followed suit. In an article in the London-based Al-Sharq al-Awsat newspaper, former Arafat

adviser Imad Shakur demanded that Arafat take immediate steps to return law and order to the Palestinian streets.

First, Shakur wrote, all factions — most of which maintain terrorist militias — should be transformed into legitimate political parties; the militias should be dismantled and integrated into the legitimate P.A. security forces; and the Qurei government should resign and an emergency government be created.

In fact, the first two suggestions are close to obligations the Palestinians accepted under the "road map," but then said they could not be expected to carry out.

Recent opinion polls show public Palestinian support for Shakur's demands. A poll conducted two months ago by the Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research in the West Bank and Gaza Strip showed that a record high of 81 percent said P.A. institutions are riddled with corruption. Two-thirds of those people believe corruption will remain the same or even increase in the future.

Indeed, Abu-Zayyad said Monday that he, too, believed nothing much would change — unless Israel takes the initiative and renews peace talks with the Palestinian Authority. ■

Continued P.A. impotence is going to 'force us to take our rights into our own hands.'

Ghassan Shaka
Nablus mayor

Feds probing jailed Jewish activist

By TOM TUGEND

LOS ANGELES (JTA) --- Federal investigators are questioning a Jewish activist about the 1985 murder of an Arab-American leader.

Jewish Defense League activist Earl Krugel, who pled guilty last year for his role in a plot to bomb a California mosque and the office of Rep. Darrell Issa (R-Calif.), has not been forthcoming about a possible link to the murder of Alex Odeh, western regional director of the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, according to The Desert Sun newspaper.

Under Krugel's plea agreement, he must cooperate with police.

Krugel's co-counsel, Peter Morris, told the Los Angeles Times newspaper that his client "has met all the obligations to the government under the plea agreement."

Morris accused the prosecution of "overreaching."

Krugel's sentencing and hearing on the plea agreement are scheduled for March 29.

The JDL has denied involvement in Odeh's murder, though several members have been investigated.

Krugel was arrested by authorities in December 2001 along with the leader of the JDL, Irv Rubin.

Rubin, committed suicide in November 2002 at a federal detention center. ■

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Parley to focus on early childhood education

By JOE BERKOFSKY

NEW YORK (JTA) — For 16 years, Bobbi Breslove has prepared children for grade school and taught them Jewish values.

Breslove is a head teacher at the Friedland Nursery School at Temple Beth Rishon in Wyckoff, N.J., where 22 teachers steer 150 children up to kindergarten age through a curriculum tied to the Jewish calendar.

But when she retires, Breslove, like thousands of colleagues who work in Jewish early childhood education, will have accumulated no pension or other benefits.

"I'll leave with what I came with — nothing," she says.

Still, Breslove is among the luckier teachers: Three years ago, Beth Rishon approved a three-year pay raise starting at 25 percent.

That "certainly made you feel more appreciated," she adds.

Financial security remains in short supply among the estimated 60,000 Jewish educators nationwide, however. That's especially true among early childhood teachers, who generally do not receive benefits and draw salaries even lower than those paid to their public school counterparts, a new study shows.

The survey by the Coalition for the Advancement of Jewish Education comes as the national Jewish federation system's Jewish Education Service of North America launches an unprecedented drive to improve recruitment and retention in the field.

Billed as the first Jewish Education Leadership Summit, the JESNA conference in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., from Feb. 8-10 will feature an unusual mix of mega-donors and teachers, administrators and lay leaders from congregational and day schools. They will engage in "hands-on work" aimed at finding and keeping top Jewish educators.

The summit already has attracted more than twice the 150 people expected because the issues are "striking a responsive chord," says Jonathan Woocher, JESNA's president.

Highlighting the summit will be the Jewish Educator Recruitment/Retention Initiative, a recent project of JESNA and the Covenant Foundation. The initiative aims to create marketing strategies to at-

tract new educators and make "cultural and structural changes" to "improve the quality of professional life for Jewish educators," according to the plan.

The initiative comes as Jewish education has grown into a \$3 billion-plus enterprise nationwide. An estimated 535,000 students attend early childhood programs, day schools and congregational schools, where 66,000 teachers and administrators work, according to CAJE.

Yet that money "is not always spent in the most efficient and effective way," Woocher says.

One area ripe for economic change, CAJE maintains, is teacher wages in early childhood programs. The coalition's survey, conducted over the past three years, found that the median annual salary for early childhood educators is \$22,550 based on a 25-hour work week — well below the \$54,000 median Jewish salary that the most recent National Jewish Population Survey found. A follow-up census of early childhood educators that included head and assistant teachers found they earned a median of only \$15,000.

In comparison, full-time Jewish day school teachers earn a median \$41,250, while congregational school teachers who work just a few hours a week earn an estimated \$2,500.

Most early childhood educators are women with a median of 12 years of experience. They typically rely on their spouses for the bulk of the family's income, the CAJE survey found.

"Is it really defensible from a Jewish point of view to be paying someone a salary on which they cannot be raising a Jewish family?" asks Eli Schaap, CAJE's assistant executive director.

CAJE hopes to tackle the issue in part with its Project Kavod: Improving the Culture of Employment in Jewish Education. Also backed by a grant from the Crown family's Covenant Foundation, the three-year, \$430,000 plan will examine "the flow of money" at three early childhood programs in Miami, Schaap says.

Project Kavod will gather educators, administrators, parents and rabbis to craft

a vision and strategy for their schools that boosts benefits and salaries and outlines steps for professional development and advancement, Schaap says.

Some say that such efforts, and the JESNA conference, signal an emerging trend at the intersection of Jewish education and philanthropy.

In the wake of data showing rising Jewish intermarriage, some major philanthropists such as Charles Bronfman launched efforts in the past decade such as

birthright israel to promote Jewish identity among young people.

Others, like former hedge-fund king Michael Steinhardt, helped launch the Partnership for Excellence in Jewish Education, or PEJE, which focused on promoting Jewish day schools as a way to build Jewish identification, and in

six years invested \$16 million to found 60 new schools.

In December, PEJE unveiled its own strategic plan not only to expand day school enrollment but to improve marketing and recruitment of teachers, sharpen school fund raising and financial management and build ties between schools and the community.

"Jewish philanthropists are realizing that high-profile, sexy programs alone will not transform the community if attention is not given toward transforming its infrastructure and recruiting and training a new generation of leaders," says Yosef Abramowitz, chief executive officer of Jewish Family & Life!, an educational multimedia enterprise, and a columnist for the Chronicle of Philanthropy.

Among the big givers at the JESNA summit will be Bronfman, Steinhardt, Susan Crown, Harold Grinspoon, Laura Lauder, Lynne Schusterman, Diane Troderman and Arnee Winshall.

Last November it was Steinhardt who caused a stir by pledging \$10 million to Jewish education and challenging other mega-donors to make up the rest of a proposed \$100 million Fund for Our Jewish Future.

Some say it would take at least that amount of money to address the problem of low teacher pay.

A growing number of voices in the Jewish community are urging that teachers of Jewish education be paid a living wage.

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Palestinian killed in Gaza

Israeli troops killed four terrorists in the Gaza Strip, including a multiple amputee.

Yasser Abu Aish, an Islamic Jihad commander who lost both legs and an arm to Israeli tank fire last year, was shot Monday as he tried to lob a grenade at troops who stormed his home in the Rafah refugee camp. Among the other terrorists killed were Aish's gunman brother, a member of Hamas, and the top Al-Aksa Brigade commander in Rafah.

Dead end in Arad quest

A bone fragment received from Hezbollah as possible evidence of Ron Arad's death did not come from the missing Israel Air Force aviator.

Ha'aretz reported Monday that the fragment was passed to Israel via German envoys mediating last week's prisoner exchange deal with the Lebanese terrorist group. DNA testing revealed that it was not from Arad, but the newspaper quoted senior Israeli officials as saying that Hezbollah probably believed the fragment could shed light on his fate.

Mombasa trial begins

Four Kenyans went on trial for the November 2002 terrorist attacks on Israeli targets in Mombasa.

Prosecutors said Monday that the defendants orchestrated the suicide bombing of the Israeli-owned Paradise Hotel, which killed 15 people, three of them Israelis, and attempted to shoot down an Israeli passenger plane, on orders of Fazul Abdullah Mohammed, an Al-Qaida mastermind who remains at large. The four men deny the charge.

WORLD

Slave fund wants money back

The German foundation compensating Nazi-era slave laborers wants unclaimed funds returned for distribution to other Holocaust survivors.

The Foundation for Remembrance, Responsibility and Future, a joint creation of the German government and industry groups, presented its proposal to the German Parliament's Committee on Internal Affairs. Under the plan, the Claims Conference and other organizations distributing the funds would be required to return unpaid money after 30 months.

In the past, some organizations in Eastern and Central Europe entrusted with the task of distributing funds to survivors have been overwhelmed with claims, and some funds reportedly have been squandered.

Germany pledged roughly \$5 billion to the fund in 2001.

Freed prisoner wants to fight

The German Hezbollah member freed in last week's prisoner exchange wants to continue fighting Israel.

According to news reports, Steven Smyrek, 32, who was jailed in Israel in 1999 for planning a suicide bombing, intends to visit the Lebanese Embassy in Berlin this week to ask for long-term residence in Lebanon.

Together with another freed prisoner, Smyrek had tried to be transferred directly to Lebanon after he was freed rather than going to Germany.

However, German authorities refused to make any exception that might endanger the delicate transfer agreement.

E.U. may fund 'Geneva accord'

The European Union said it will consider funding an unofficial Israeli-Palestinian peace plan.

Following a Monday meeting in Brussels with the principal backers of the "Geneva accord" — former Israeli Justice Minister Yossi Beilin and former Palestinian Authority minister Yasser Abed Rabbo — the external relations commissioner of the European Union, Chris Patten, said room could be found within the E.U. budget to provide "technical support" for the accord.

Both Patten and E.U. foreign policy chief Javier Solana strongly backed the accord, with Patten describing it as "one of the most positive and helpful things to happen in the Middle East in the past few years."

E.U. official: Fight anti-Semitism

There is no place for anti-Semitism or racism in Europe, the president of the European Commission said.

Speaking to more than 100 Orthodox rabbis from across Europe, Romano Prodi said political, religious and intellectual forces must work together to fight hatred and discrimination. Prodi spoke after receiving the 2003 Humanitarian Achievement Award from the Rabbinical Center of Europe.

Prodi joined the group in dedicating the first Jewish teacher training academy to open in Vienna since the Holocaust.

Earlier, the rabbis met with Austrian President Thomas Klestil, who pledged that Austria would fight anti-Semitism.

Concert interrupted by anti-Semitism

A concert by an Israeli singer in France was interrupted repeatedly by anti-Semitic shouts.

A group of youths shouted "Death to the Jews" and "Dirty Jew" at singer Shirel at the Saturday evening concert in Macon in central France, the Bureau for Vigilance Against Anti-Semitism said in a statement.

Shirel was performing in a fund-raising concert for Yellow Pieces, a charity that supports hospitals and is headed by Bernadette Chirac, the wife of the French president.

NORTH AMERICA

L.A. federation wins one for workers

An organization linked to the L.A. Jewish federation won a significant victory for Latino and Asian garment workers.

Wet Seal, a large-scale retailer, agreed in the recent settlement with Bet Tzedek that it bears responsibility if one of its contractors underpays workers.

The settlement is likely to have a major effect on California's \$22 billion apparel industry, which employs 140,000 workers.

Campus interview: Jews run the world

A California college newspaper ran an interview comparing Jews to Nazis. They have "learned from their tormentors," political science professor Leighton Armitage said in The Sentinel, a paper at Foothill College in Los Altos Hills, Calif.

In the interview published Jan. 28, in which the reporter eggs on Armitage, the professor says the Holocaust provides a cover for Jews to cry anti-Semitism when Israel is criticized, that the American Israel Public Affairs Committee surreptitiously controls Congress and that Israel is "buying our election."

Foothill College Republicans and the Jewish Student Union are asking the editor and professor to publish apologies, the reporter to resign and Armitage to undergo sensitivity training.