



IN THE NEWS

Sharon cancels trip to Washington

Ariel Sharon canceled a trip to the United States.

The Israeli prime minister was to travel to Washington next week to address a policy conference of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee and possibly hold talks with President Bush. Sharon's office said Sunday the trip had been canceled due to Israeli government deliberations over Sharon's embattled plan to "disengage" from the Palestinians.

Bush: Palestinian state unlikely by next year

A 2005 deadline for Palestinian statehood is unlikely to be met, President Bush said.

In an interview with Al Ahram, an Egyptian newspaper, Bush backed off the "road map" peace plan's call for a Palestinian state by 2005. That "may be hard," Bush said, but he did not offer a new timetable.

The internationally backed plan had called for the formation of a Palestinian state after a series of preliminary steps by both Israel and the Palestinians that largely have gone unfulfilled.

Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat retorted that a Palestinian state by 2005 was "more than realistic."

Groups condemn Iraqi prisoner abuse

Several U.S. Jewish groups condemned the reported abuse of Iraqi prisoners.

The Reform movement's Religious Action Center and the National Council of Jewish Women called Friday for "full accountability" in the matter arising from photographs of U.S. troops apparently abusing prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison outside Baghdad.

"Maintaining that dignity of all people, which flows from being created in God's image, is incumbent upon each of us," RAC Director Rabbi David Saperstein said.

WORLD REPORT

PUBLISHED WEEKDAYS BY JTA—THE GLOBAL NEWS SERVICE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE · WWW.JTA.ORG

Fight over kosher slaughterhouse in Iowa takes its saltiest turn yet

By AMIR EFRATI

IOWA CITY (JTA) — For more than a decade, tension has been a way of life in Postville, Iowa, where a group of Chasidic Jews are the small town's power brokers, owning the top industry and employer, Agriprocessors Inc., the world's largest glatt-kosher slaughterhouse.

In the saltiest chapter yet, a group of farmers is fighting the company's new, \$10.7 million mechanical wastewater treatment plant, which when complete will discharge more than 14.5 tons of salt used by the slaughterhouse into local streams every day.

Construction of the plant began last month with \$7.5 million in federal grants and loans. But on April 28, Northeast Iowa Citizens for Clean Water filed an appeal with the Iowa Supreme Court to stop construction of the plant until a trial — slated for February 2005 — decides the legality of the proposed level of salt discharge.

The litigation will focus on an August 2003 permit issued by Iowa's Department of Natural Resources, or DNR, authorizing the salt discharge. The state's supreme court will review the appeal for a stay later this month.

The citizens group and environmentalists in Iowa claim the proposed discharge — more than twice the amount the slaughterhouse currently releases into the city's lagoon system — would violate state and federal water quality standards.

They also say it would damage the ecosystem of the scenic Yellow River, a rare cold-water trout stream that connects to aquifers tapped by the farmers' drinking wells, which they say would be contaminated.

"I'm definitely in favor of the new plant," said Jerry Anderson, an environmental lawyer and law professor at Drake University in Des Moines who is representing the citizens group, which has 15 core members. "But the plant will not take one molecule of salt out of the water. It's just going to dilute it. This doesn't comply with the law."

Anderson's clients are asking Agriprocessors to add technology to the new plant that would remove salt from outgoing wastewater.

On two separate occasions this year, the citizens group failed at the district court level to get a stay on the plant's construction.

Sholom Rubashkin, vice president of Agriprocessors, said his company is being targeted by farmers who are purposely ignoring other sources of pollution in the area.

"If people are so concerned about the environment, let's talk about all the other pollutants, like those from the hog farms. Why are they not concerned about that?" he said. "Which contaminant are they attacking? Salt — which belongs to the Jewish people."

Salt is used to leach blood from the meat, an essential part of making meat kosher.

Rubashkin added that Agriprocessors, which will pay back \$4.5 million in federal loans for the plant, is making a "tremendous improvement" to the environment because the plant will reduce pollutants such as ammonia, which kills fish.

"This is all done with the blessing of the DNR," Rubashkin said. "This is the most researched permit ever given in the state of Iowa."

The Lubavitch Chasidim came to Iowa
Continued on page 2

BEHIND THE HEADLINES

■ *Fight over kosher slaughterhouse in Iowa takes its saltiest turn yet*

Continued from page 1

from Brooklyn in the late 1980s to take over a defunct meat processing plant. Chasidic Jews now make up about 10 percent of Postville's 2,200 residents, and the slaughterhouse employs more than 600 people.

Since they arrived, the Chasidim often have been at odds with local farmers — and much of the rest of Postville, says Stephen Bloom, author of "Postville: A Clash of Cultures in Heartland America."

When they opened the slaughterhouse, "there were farmers who pleaded with the Lubavitchers not to dump the tonnage of salt," said Bloom, a journalism professor at the University of Iowa. "Their response was consistent: 'This is how we go about our religion. If you disagree with us, you're an anti-Semite.' There seemed to be little concern by the Lubavitchers about the environment."

But Aaron Goldsmith — the only Chasidic Jew to serve on Postville's City Council, until his term ended in January — said there was "no science whatsoever to support that there will be any negative effect" on the environment from the plant's discharge.

During his term, Goldsmith served on a 10-person committee that unanimously approved the Department of Natural Resources permit after hearing from scientific experts who supported the plan, and he played a key role in negotiating a settlement between the city, the Department of Natural Resources and Agriprocessors over the specifics of the plant's operations.

Goldsmith said the citizens group was "undermining the spirit of cooperation" that made the plant possible and was jeopardizing funds for the project from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the Environmental Protection Agency.

"They're breaking the backs of the town. For those who want to see the Jews leave, this is a great opportunity," he said. "And by holding the project up they're polluting the Yellow River worse."

As for the argument that Agriprocessors should improve technology at the plant to remove salt, Goldsmith said there was "no known cost-effective removal of chloride."

In the 1990s, the City of Postville annexed the land on which the slaughterhouse is located. There have since been many lawsuits involving the slaughterhouse that are pending, settled or already adjudicated.

In 2001, for example, Postville filed a lawsuit to recover \$2 million that it said Agriprocessors owed in unpaid wastewater-related fines, penalties and user fees dating to 1990.

That and other, similar cases were settled out of court in mid-2002.

Agriprocessors plans to expand production from 760,000 pounds to 1.1 million pounds of meat per day once the wastewater plant is up and running in mid-2005.

The City of Postville, which is doing the actual construction of the wastewater plant on land owned by Agriprocessors, supports the project.

"Many, many hours were spent by Department of Natural Resources engineers looking into the question of whether this permit was a good idea and whether it was protective of the environment," said Steven Pace, an attorney for the city. "The conclusion was that it was."

But Anderson said the Department of Natural Resources never conducted a formal environmental study of possible effects on the Yellow River ecosystem, even after 1,300 Postville residents signed a petition in March asking the Department of Natural Resources for such a review.

Lawyers for the Department of Natural Resources said they could not comment on the pending litigation. ■

**Chasidic Jews,
angry Iowans
and a torn city.**

Dialogue amid intifada in Israeli film

By **BILL GLADSTONE**

TORONTO (JTA) — Israeli police officer Benny Herness and Palestinian journalist Adnan Joulani planned to keep in touch after returning from an Israeli-Palestinian peace mission to Japan in 2000.

But the Palestinian intifada intervened. The intifada erupted a week after the debut of an Israeli documentary on their peace mission to Japan, called "Sleeping With the Enemy."

Then the two lost contact until Israeli film director Dov Gil-Har brought them together again last summer to make a follow-up documentary.

The result, "Behind Enemy Lines," made its world premiere last week at the Toronto Jewish Film Festival.

In "Behind Enemy Lines," the two protagonists take turns bringing each other to different places in an attempt to convince the other of his own truth. As the scene shifts from the Yad Vashem Holocaust Me-

morial in Jerusalem to the West Bank city of Hebron, and from Tel Aviv to Jenin, the two engage in a dialogue marked as much by personal warmth as by political heat.

Perhaps the most riveting sequence occurs in the narrow streets of the Jenin refugee camp, as Herness and Joulani, riding in an armored vehicle, encounter roving bands of youths with rocks and iron bars in their hands.

They visit the widow of a suicide bomber and the sites of several terrorist attacks, including a Tel Aviv intersection where a cousin of Joulani's went on a shooting rampage and was shot by an Israeli policeman.

A diehard liberal who hosts a popular TV morning news show in Israel, Gil-Har said he chose to focus on Herness and Joulani because both are moderates within their respective societies.

After participating in the film, Herness said he is still optimistic about peace but realizes it will take much longer to achieve than he had thought. ■

JTA WORLD REPORT

Howard E. Friedman
President

Mark J. Joffe
Executive Editor and Publisher

Lisa Hostein
Editor

Michael S. Arnold
Managing Editor

Lenore A. Silverstein
Finance and Administration Director

Paula Simmonds
Marketing and Development Director

JTA WORLD REPORT is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. For more information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at www.jta.org.
© JTA. Reproduction only with permission.

THIS WEEK**MONDAY**

■ Former President Clinton is the featured speaker at a New Israel Fund anniversary dinner in New York. A fund official said the group does not know what Clinton will discuss, adding that Clinton asked that the event be closed to the media.

TUESDAY

■ The U.S. House of Representatives' Democratic leadership meets with Jewish communal officials. Minority Leader Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.) and Whip Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.) convened the meeting on Capitol Hill and will discuss support for Israel and a range of domestic issues. Democrats are working hard to maintain their traditional 3-1 support among Jewish voters in the face of President Bush's strong support for the Jewish state.

WEDNESDAY

■ B'nai B'rith representatives will lobby in Washington on aging issues and support for Israel. The group will get an FBI briefing on terrorism and will meet with the German and French ambassadors.

THURSDAY

■ The Federal Election Commission announces whether it will modify a rule that would classify as a political committee any group that supports or opposes a candidate on a policy issue. Jewish groups say the proposed change could restrict their activities.

■ The National Archives releases documents on U.S. intelligence and the Nazis. Hundreds of thousands of pages cover U.S. companies that had dealings with the Nazis, espionage and encounters between the FBI and Nazis immigrants to the United States.

■ B'nai B'rith International officials meet in Brazil through Saturday for the group's Latin American branch meeting. The meeting will focus on the fight for human rights and the security of Jewish communities in Latin America and worldwide.

SATURDAY

■ U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell attends the two-day World Economic Forum in Amman, Jordan. Powell will meet with Arab leaders, and he will discuss Israeli-Palestinian peace prospects, among other topics.

SUNDAY

■ The American Israel Public Affairs Committee opens its annual policy conference. Organizers expect a large turnout, and President Bush is slated to address the conference, which runs through Thursday. Organizers had planned to lobby for Israel's Gaza withdrawal plan in Congress, but the uncertainty surrounding the plan means AIPAC activists will focus on other issues, such as a bill urging Iran to end its weapons of mass destruction programs.

Australia removes anti-Israel art

By HENRY BENJAMIN

SYDNEY, Australia (JTA)—Melbourne's city council has withdrawn financial support from an organization that promotes emerging artists following the exhibition of a virulently anti-Israel work.

The 24/7 program had taken space in the display window of a city center car park to show the latest work in a nine-month program that features different artists each month.

The exhibit portrayed the Israeli flag in the background of the window, while on the window itself the artwork featured text with harsh — and wildly inaccurate — “facts” about the Jewish state.

It said that “since the creation of Israel in 1948, 200,000 Palestinians had been killed, 5,000,000 refugees had been created, 21,000 square kilometers of land had been annexed, 385 towns and villages had been destroyed, US \$300 billion military dollars have been spent, 100 + WMDs have been manufactured and 65 U.N. resolutions had been ignored.”

The artwork went on display last week. It was endorsed by the city council, which gave the organization \$8,000 for the project.

The artwork was removed within 24 hours following angry complaints from the Jewish community, politicians and city councilors.

“We are not censors, but there was no way the council could put its name to a work like this,” Mayor John So told JTA.

“The organizers breached their contract with us, which states clearly that we have to be advised beforehand if any work contains any themes which could be interpreted as racial or controversial,” So said. “I have instructed our Arts Committee to take whatever steps possible to get our money back from the organizers. We are not in a position to spend taxpayers' dollars on ventures like this.”

The work was produced by artists Aslan McLennan, 23, and Utako Shindo, 22.

Artist Mark Hilton, 27, who directs the 24/7 group, said he was in Japan when the exhibit went public.

He knew of the content before the work was exhibited, he said, and believed

the issue had been turned into a media circus.

“As I was driving home from the airport I could see the Victorian state government's opposition leader being interviewed, and I knew something was wrong. We received so many threatening e-mails from people out to destroy the exhibit that we had no choice but to remove it,” he said.

But Michael Lipshutz, president of the Jewish Community Council of Victoria, said he had checked with numerous Jewish organizations and had heard of no threats being made against the project.

The city council was correct to withdraw its support, he said.

“This piece of ‘art’ amounts to no more than spurious propaganda,” Lipshutz said. “Their message was heavily flawed.”

Even the state's premier, Steve Bracks, called the exhibit “inappropriate.”

So told JTA that Hilton and his partner, Kiron Robinson, had apologized to the city council.

Hilton denied the work had been a political statement, describing it as a topic “for discussion.”

He added that the artists had the space for a month, and would try to quickly develop a different work depicting media bias and restrictions of free speech.

Ted Lapkin, an executive member of the Australia Israel Jewish Affairs Council, said that missed the point.

“This was not an issue of censorship; this was the use of public money to exhibit blatant propaganda,” Lapkin said. “Perhaps if it was a private exhibition it may have been open to debate, but this cannot be the case when it is sponsored with public money.”

A Palestinian spokesman, Ali Kazak, told reporters that Australian politicians were “allowing themselves to be bullied by extreme lobby groups.”

A spokesman for the city council told JTA that the council had received about 200 phone calls on the issue, with more than 70 percent supporting the council's decision to remove the exhibit.

The city council is considering making an apology to the Melbourne Jewish community. ■

Even the state's premier, Steve Bracks, called the exhibit 'inappropriate.'

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

U.N. affirms Palestinian sovereignty

The United Nations General Assembly overwhelmingly approved a resolution asserting Palestinian sovereignty over all lands Israel captured in 1967.

European Union nations voted for the resolution, which passed Thursday by a vote of 140-6, with 11 abstentions. The vote had been intended as a rebuke to the United States for its recognition last month of some Israeli claims in the West Bank, and went ahead despite U.S. actions this week that backed away from that position.

The resolution contradicts U.N. Security Council resolution 242, whose framers in 1967 rejected Arab-led attempts to mandate an Israeli withdrawal from all territory captured in the war.

Lag B'Omer celebrations

Hundreds of thousands of devout Jews flocked to a holy site in northern Israel to celebrate Lag B'Omer.

Police posted 3,000 personnel at Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai's tomb near the northern town of Meron to secure Sunday's annual celebrations, at which pilgrims danced around bonfires and three-year-old boys had their first haircuts.

Lag B'Omer commemorates Bar Yochai, a miracle-worker who evaded capture during the Roman occupation of ancient Israel, as well as his Talmudic master Rabbi Akiva. The festival also ends the Omer mourning period that begins after Passover.

Seeing green in Tel Aviv

Israeli stoners celebrated international Marijuana Day with a picnic and trance party May 8 in Tel Aviv. The seventh annual event was marked in 150 countries. Legislator Roman Bronfman of the left-wing Yahad Party said he hopes to "change the establishment's drug policy" but denied that the festivities encourage drug abuse.

Use of pot and other recreational drugs is rampant among young Israelis.

New justices for Israel

Four new justices were named to Israel's Supreme Court. The four are former Attorney General Elyakim Rubinstein, State Prosecutor Edna Arbel and judges Esther Hayyut and Salim Joubran. Joubran, who had been serving a temporary appointment on the court, will be the first Arab to serve as a full Supreme Court justice.

The four, and a fifth judge who won a temporary appointment to the court, are scheduled to be sworn in May 24.

Hurray for miluim

Israel honored its army reservists. Cut-rate spa massages and free cell phone calls were among the perks offered Sunday to thousands of Israeli men and hundreds of women who do up to three months of reserve duty a year in the armed forces.

The first-ever national day of recognition was arranged amid growing complaints of reservists shirking duty on the grounds of conscience or convenience.

NORTH AMERICA

Rice, Qurei to meet

Condoleezza Rice will meet with the Palestinian Authority prime minister in Berlin.

President Bush's national security adviser will use the May 17 meeting to probe Ahmed Qurei powers, his ability to open talks with Israel and his willingness to stop terrorist attacks, The Associated Press reported.

Looted art returned

A painting stolen by the Gestapo and auctioned off during World War II was returned to the heirs of a German Jew.

At a May 7 ceremony at the Leo Baeck Institute at the Center for Jewish History in New York, Gov. George Pataki and other officials returned "Head of a Girl," an 1853 work by Anselm Feurbach, to Fran Frederick of New York, the New York Sun reported.

Frederick is the granddaughter of Sigmund Fein, a Leipzig furrier who was imprisoned in Buchenwald before immigrating to America.

U.S.-Israeli missile a hit

A joint U.S.-Israeli missile test passed a crucial test, destroying a ground-to-ground rocket. A joint test of the Nautilus anti-missile system, carried out in New Mexico last week by the U.S. Army and Israel's Defense Ministry, showed the missile struck its target in mid-air using laser guidance, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported.

The Nautilus so far has destroyed 28 Russian-made Katyusha rockets, which the Iranian-backed Hezbollah terrorist group has fired from Lebanon into Israel, and five mortars.

'The Donald' marches for Israel

Donald Trump will serve as grand marshal of the 40th annual Salute to Israel parade in New York City.

"The Donald" will lead 100,000 marchers, 40 floats, 16 marching bands and dozens of entertainers up Fifth Ave. on May 23. "Israel has gone through a lot, and it's my honor," Trump said. The theme of the parade is "Israel, I care and I'm going . . . Let's go to Israel now!"

WORLD

Synagogue bomb near Paris

A bomb was discovered at a synagogue near Paris.

The bomb was placed in the grounds of the synagogue at Villiers-le-Bel, north of the capital and had been placed in a bag inscribed with a swastika and the words "Boom anti-Jews."

The incident followed an attack on a Jewish war memorial in eastern France earlier that day as well as a cemetery desecration near the German border last week.

Police believe those incidents were the work of neo-Nazi groups.

Zealous in New Zealand

New Zealand immigration officials detained the treasurer of the Jewish Agency for three hours at Auckland International Airport.

The incident comes amid accusations that two Israelis arrested and charged with fraudulently attempting to obtain New Zealand passports several weeks ago were Mossad agents.

Last week, Shai Hermesh, treasurer of the Jewish Agency for Israel, and Yigal Sela, his senior consultant, were told by customs officials on their arrival in Auckland, "We are treating all of you Israelis the same — you are nothing but drug dealers and spies," Sela said.

Albanian ruins found

Ruins of an ancient synagogue reportedly have been unearthed in Albania. Excavated by a joint team of Albanian and Israeli archeologists, the synagogue dates from the fifth or sixth century C.E. and is located in the coastal town of Saranda, Archeology magazine reported.

The ruins include colorful mosaic pavements that depict a menorah, a citron tree, a ram's horn, animals and the facade of a structure that may be an ark.

Albanian archeologists had identified the site as remnants of a house of worship about 20 years ago, when Communist prohibition of religion made a more thorough survey difficult.