

IN THE NEWS

Lubavitcher rebbe's yahrzeit is observed

Thousands gathered in New York City to mark the 10th anniversary of the Lubavitcher rebbe's death. People waited for hours Monday and Tuesday to enter the Queens cemetery where Menachem Mendel Schneerson is buried. Schneerson is credited with turning Chabad-Lubavitch into one of the most prominent public faces of Judaism worldwide.

House leaders back Bush pledge on Israel

Leaders in the U.S. House of Representatives will propose a resolution endorsing President Bush's diplomatic assurances to Ariel Sharon.

Sponsored by House Majority Leader Rep. Tom DeLay (R-Texas) and Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-Md.), the bipartisan resolution emphasizes Bush's recognition of some Israeli claims in the West Bank and his rejection of a Palestinian refugee "right of return" to Israel. The bill is to be brought to the House floor Wednesday.

Buried treasure found at Auschwitz

Archeologists unearthed a trove of Jewish ritual objects buried since the Holocaust near the former Auschwitz death camp.

The items, including ceremonial candlesticks and Chanukah menorahs, were found during an excavation of the foundations of the destroyed Great Synagogue in Oswiecim, the town in southern Poland near the camp. The synagogue was burned to the ground in 1939 after Nazi forces invaded Poland.

The dig was funded by Polish and Israeli sources and the Claims Conference, and filmed for Israeli television.

The only clue about where to dig had been the account of a Holocaust survivor who had seen the synagogue caretaker bury a large box near the synagogue shortly after the Nazi invasion of Poland in September 1939.

WORLD REPORT

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

For Clinton, special regrets about failure in the Middle East

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

WASHINGTON (JTA) — When Bill Clinton calls himself a failed president, it's not because of the scandals, the legislative battles or even his personal life — it's because of the peace in the Middle East that he never achieved, despite long hours spent cajoling Israeli and Arab negotiators.

Writing in "My Life," his memoir that hit bookstores Tuesday, Clinton places the blame squarely on Yasser Arafat.

During Clinton's final days in office, the Palestinian Authority president "thanked me for all my efforts and told me what a great man I was," Clinton writes. "Mr. Chairman," I replied, "I am not a great man. I am a failure, and you have made me one."

Readers who buy Clinton's autobiography looking for details of his relationship with intern Monica Lewinsky, as touted in the book's publicity, also will get detailed insight into Clinton's search for peace between Israel and its neighbors.

Clinton's account of his presidency is chronological rather than thematic; all in all, about 68 pages scattered through the 957-page book are devoted to the Middle East peace process.

The outlines are not new, but there are sharp details about his days spent at several retreats working with negotiators and about whom he believed to be compliant and who played hardball.

Clinton largely faults Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak for the breakdown of peace talks between Israel and Syria. Though Barak was the driving force behind the sum-

mit with Syria in Shepherdstown, W. Va., in January 2000, he didn't have the will to make concessions, Clinton writes.

Barak wanted to draw out the negotiations so he would appear to be a tough negotiator, Clinton writes. But as a relatively new politician, Barak didn't understand that peace with Syria would reap greater political rewards with Israeli voters than if he hung tough, he says.

"Barak had not been in politics long, and I thought he had gotten some very bad advice," Clinton writes. "If Barak had made real peace with Syria, it would lift his standing in Israel and across the world, and increase the chances of success with the Palestinians. If he failed, a few days of good poll numbers would vanish in the wind. As hard as I tried, I couldn't change Barak's mind."

But Clinton saves his harshest criticism for Arafat. As Clinton's second term was expiring in the fall of 2000, he recalls questioning Arafat about his desire to make peace following the failed Camp David summit and the outbreak of the intifada.

Clinton was considering investing his energy pressing North Korea to end its missile production programs, but only if Arafat indicated that even a final push wouldn't bring peace with Israel.

"He pleaded with me to stay," Clinton says of Arafat, "saying that we had to finish the peace and that if we didn't do it before I left office, it would be at least five years before we'd be this close to peace again."

Yet before long Arafat's maneuvering got in the way: After agreement had been

Continued on page 2

BEHIND
THE
HEADLINES

■ For Clinton, special regrets about failure in the Middle East

Continued from page 1

reached that the Muslim and Christian quarters of Jerusalem's Old City would come under Palestinian sovereignty and the Jewish and Armenian quarters under Israeli rule, Arafat demanded a few blocks of the Armenian Quarter.

"I couldn't believe he was talking to me about this," Clinton writes.

Clinton suggests that Arafat may not have been at his full mental capacity in the final months of negotiations, saying he seemed "confused, not wholly in command of the facts."

Then again, he writes, Arafat may simply have been unable to "make the final jump from revolutionary to statesman."

■
The book abounds in revealing anecdotes. For example, Clinton was in awe of Barak's toughness when the Israeli prime minister returned to negotiating immediately after nearly choking to death on a peanut during the Camp David summit.

Clinton describes the day that Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin came to Washington to sign the Oslo accords in September 1993. Clinton forbade Arafat to wear a revolver on his hip, and had to convince Rabin to shake hands with Arafat.

One account shows how high political drama can at times merge with farce. Clinton and his national security staff coordinated a way to ensure that Arafat would not try to kiss Rabin, something Rabin insisted he wouldn't allow.

"National Security Adviser Tony Lake

described the procedure and we practiced it. I played Arafat and he played me, showing me what to do," Clinton writes. "When I shook his hand and moved in for the kiss, he put his left hand on my right arm where it was bent at the elbow and squeezed; it stopped me cold. Then we reversed roles and I did it to him.

"We practiced it a couple of more times until I felt sure Rabin's cheek would remain untouched," he writes. "We all laughed about it, but I knew avoiding the kiss was deadly serious for Rabin."

Clinton speaks at length of his affinity for Rabin, and writes glowingly of the late Israeli leader's work and personality. Clinton describes the night of Rabin's assassination in November 1995: After learning Rabin had been shot, Clinton hit golf balls on the White House lawn while awaiting news of his condition.

The book includes a photo of Clinton, head in hands, hearing the news of Rabin's death from Lake.

"By the time he was killed, I had come to love him as I had rarely loved another man," Clinton writes. "In the back of my mind, I suppose I always knew he had put his life at risk, but I couldn't imagine him gone, and I didn't know what I would or could do in the Middle East without him."

■
Clinton — who received 80 percent of the Jewish vote in 1992 and 78 percent four years later — praises the American Jewish community for its role in support of his peace efforts.

"The American-Jewish community had been very good to me," he writes, explaining his decision to unveil the details of his peace plan at an Israel Policy Forum dinner in early 2001, when he had barely two weeks left in office. "Regardless of what happened, I thought I owed it to them to explain my proposal."

Under Clinton's plan, a Palestinian state would have been established in all of the Gaza Strip and nearly all of the West Bank, with an exchange of territory to compensate for settlement blocs annexed

by Israel. Clinton also proposed that Palestinian refugees have an unlimited right to move to the new Palestinian state, but not to Israel.

Clinton reflects angrily on Arafat's statement, nearly a year after Clinton left office, that he finally accepted the parameters of Clinton's plan.

"Apparently, Arafat had thought the time to decide, five minutes to midnight, had finally come," Clinton writes. "His watch had been broken a long time."

Some of Clinton's explanations about whom he did and didn't pardon in his

last days in office also will have interest for Jewish readers.

Clinton explains his decision not to pardon Jonathan Pollard, the former U.S. Navy intelligence officer convicted of spying for Israel.

During negotiations toward the 1998 Wye accord, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu demanded Pollard's release as a condition for moving forward in the peace process. But Clinton says CIA Director George Tenet said he would resign if Clinton commuted Pollard's sentence.

"For all the sympathy Pollard generated in Israel, he was a hard case to push in America; he had sold our country's secrets for money, not conviction, and for years had not shown any remorse," Clinton writes.

Clinton says he decided in his final days as president to pardon Marc Rich, a contributor to several Israeli and American Jewish causes, because tax evasion charges against him were now seen as civil offenses — and because Rich had paid more than four times the amount in fines that he had evaded in taxes. Clinton says that Barak, for his part, asked him three times to pardon Rich.

The Rich pardon proved among Clinton's most controversial.

Clinton says he didn't pardon Michael Milken, the former junk-bond king who is a major contributor to Jewish day schools, because of objections from the Treasury Department and the Securities and Exchange Commission. ■

Clinton coordinated a way to ensure that Yasser Arafat would not try to kiss Yitzhak Rabin on the White House lawn, with Clinton playing Arafat trying to move in for a kiss.

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.

In a shift, U.N. hosts anti-Semitism conference

By RACHEL POMERANCE

UNITED NATIONS (JTA) — This week's U.N. conference on anti-Semitism was only the latest in a slew of recent international events addressing the growth in anti-Semitic activity worldwide.

The difference was that the host of the conference turned the mirror on itself.

"The U.N. has become the leading global purveyor of anti-Semitism, intolerance and inequality against the Jewish people and its state," said Anne Bayefsky, a Columbia University law school professor whose speech at Monday's conference drew thunderous applause.

The conference, which was open to U.N. non-governmental organizations, member states and the public, came on the heels of conferences on anti-Semitism by the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe in Berlin and in Paris, as well as other recent gatherings.

Organized by the U.N. Department of Public Information, the conference began with an opening address by U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan and included a lineup primarily of Jewish organizational officials.

Many of the speakers used the platform before some 650 attendants to list a litany of grievances against the international body, from its lopsided level of condemnation of Israel to its failure to pass a resolution exclusively condemning anti-Semitism.

Several also noted that one of the most egregious examples of anti-Semitism came under U.N. auspices: the 2001 World Conference Against Racism in Durban, South Africa, in which widespread hate speech and incitement against Jews and Israel prompted Israel and the United States to leave the event.

At the same time, in addressing the conference and in news releases afterward, many Jewish organizational officials called the event a landmark step in repairing the relationship between Jews and the United Nations, which was created after the defeat of Nazism to promote international cooperation and peace.

"This institution is beginning to say there is a problem, there is an issue," said Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, signifying that it was a first step toward addressing the issue.

In his opening remarks to the gathering, Annan said, "Let us acknowledge that the United Nations' record on anti-Semitism has at times fallen short of our ideals. The General Assembly resolution of 1975, equating Zionism with racism, was an especially unfortunate decision."

That decision was repealed in 1991, but the United Nations continues regularly to single out Israel for criticism.

Annan called on the United Nations to follow the action of the OSCE in condemning acts of anti-Semitism and urged the U.N. human rights representatives on racism and religious freedom to "actively explore ways of combating anti-Semitism more effectively."

For their part, Jewish figures praised Annan for his remarks and challenged him to make good on his words.

Elie Wiesel, a Holocaust survivor and Nobel laureate, said he mistakenly thought anti-Semitism had died in Auschwitz.

But "only the Jews perished there. Anti-Semitism is alive and well," he said. "We must prevent the world from entering that fear of the future and the choice is always ours."

Even before the conference concluded, Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom called the secretary-general to commend him for his speech and ask for his help in passing a General Assembly resolution against anti-Semitism, said Arye Mekel, Israel's deputy permanent representative to the United Nations.

"The secretary-general promised that he will help in these efforts," Mekel said.

Just last year, the United Nations failed to muster enough support to pass a stand-alone resolution against anti-Semitism, drafted by Ireland.

Eve Epstein, an adviser to the U.N. Department of Public Information, Annan's statement was "U.N.-speak for 'Let's get this done.'"

"With the moral weight" of the secretary-general behind the adoption of a resolution on anti-Semitism, she said, "odds of its passage are far greater."

A spokesman for the Irish mission to the United Nations said he could not yet respond to Annan's speech or say whether Ireland would reintroduce the resolution.

Ultimately passage of such a resolution will depend on the support of European diplomats and the influence of Arab nations.

Very few Arab and European diplomats showed up for the conference. Israeli officials took note only of diplomats from Algeria, Egypt, the Palestinian mission

and Germany.

Of the speakers, only a handful were non-Jews, including a Christian theologian, a nun, a monk and an imam.

"We would have been happier if there were more non-Jews and there were more diplomats" from the international community, Mekel said. But, he added, "I urged Jewish organizations and ourselves to see the full half of the glass. It's the first time anything like this is being done."

Calling Annan's speech an "action plan," he said, "the next few months will be the test."

Others said they felt the heavily Jewish atmosphere gave Jews their day at the United Nations without facing opposition or controversy.

At the least, "this is now on the record at the U.N.," said Mark Weitzman, director of the Simon Wiesenthal Center's Task Force Against Hate.

Shashi Tharoor, the U.N. undersecretary general for communications and public information, who coordinated the conference, asked "for some realism" by the audience in expecting change. "We have at least opened today a new chapter," he said.

He underscored his point that the United Nations is the only world governing body. "Let's work together, with it and in it," Tharoor said.

Weitzman echoed others in his agreement. "This is the place that gave birth to Israel, that breathed life in Israel," he said. "Given that and given the reality the U.N. plays in the world, I don't think any of us are ready to walk away from it. We want to correct it, not erase it." ■

'Let us acknowledge that the United Nations' record on anti-Semitism has at times fallen short of our ideals.'

Kofi Annan

U.N. secretary-general

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

Survey: Charitable giving up

Americans' charitable giving to public-society benefit groups, including Jewish federations, increased by 2.3 percent in 2003, an annual survey found.

Overall, donations from Americans increased by 0.6 percent in 2003, according to the Giving USA survey. Giving to religious organizations increased by 2 percent last year. These groups, which received \$87 billion, took in the largest share of donations.

Donations to international affairs organizations increased by 12.1 percent, but foundation giving decreased by 4.7 percent.

ADL wants Syrian miniseries out of festival

The Anti Defamation League called on Syria to withdraw a 30-part miniseries it submitted to the Cairo Television and Radio Festival. "While purporting to present the 'true history' of the rise of modern Zionism and the establishment of the State of Israel, 'Ash-Shatat' instead demonizes the Jewish people through hostile depictions and the propaganda of age-old anti-Semitic conspiracy theories," the ADL said in a statement.

The festival, titled "The Media and Human Rights," begins Wednesday and is broadcast over Egyptian television.

Bush awards Podhoretz, Lauder

President Bush awarded the nation's highest civilian honor to Norman Podhoretz, the Jewish political theorist.

Podhoretz helped cultivate neo-conservatism in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and long steered its flagship publication, *Commentary*. Neo-conservatism was founded by former liberal intellectuals, many of them Jews, alienated from the American left because of its perceived appeasement of communism.

Bush awarded other Medals of Freedom to Pope John Paul II and, posthumously, to Estee Lauder, the Jewish cosmetics magnate and philanthropist.

MIDDLE EAST

Two Palestinians killed in Gaza

Israeli forces killed two Palestinians in the Gaza Strip. At least one of the men shot dead during Tuesday's raid on the village of Beit Hanoun was a Fatah gunman, witnesses said.

Israel, Kurds deny spying report

Turkey cautiously accepted Israel's denial of a report that it is training Kurdish separatists.

"Israel has told us it is not true," Turkish Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul told reporters Tuesday, referring to a report in the *New Yorker* magazine that said Mossad agents have been operating among Kurds in northern Iraq to spy on Iran and Syria. Ankara fears separatism among Kurds in Turkey could be strengthened by the mobilization of their countrymen in Iraq.

"Everyone knows Turkey's sensitivities on this issue," Gul said. "I hope our trust is not in vain." An Israeli official in Washington and a Kurdish leader both denied the *New Yorker* report.

Hamas raps Arafat

Hamas criticized Yasser Arafat for saying he recognized Israel's right to be a Jewish state.

The Palestinian Authority president told Ha'aretz last week that he wanted a state alongside Israel, based on the offer he rejected at the 2000 Camp David summit.

When asked if Israel should remain a Jewish state, Arafat said

"definitely," adding that the Palestinians had "accepted that openly and officially in 1988 at our Palestine National Council."

A Hamas Web site on Tuesday accused Arafat of betrayal. "These positions represent new concessions" by Arafat, who "has given legitimacy to the expulsion of refugees in 1948," the Islamic terrorist group said in a statement.

In the interview, Arafat called for the return of Palestinian refugees to Israel, but said this could be managed without disrupting Israel's Jewish character.

Saudi blames Zionists for execution

Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah blamed Israel for the execution in Saudi Arabia of an American defense contractor.

"Zionism is behind it," Abdullah told Saudi television. "It is not 100 percent, but 95 percent that the Zionist hands are behind what happened." Paul Johnson, who had worked in Saudi Arabia for a decade, was beheaded last week by Islamic terrorists.

'Transfer' gains support

Almost two-thirds of Israeli Jews believe their Arab compatriots should be "encouraged" to emigrate, a poll found.

The Haifa University survey of 1,016 Israelis published Monday found that 64 percent said they favored Arab emigration and some 55 percent of Jews see Arab citizens as a threat to national security. Suggesting that these views are linked to a two-state solution with the Palestinians, 60 percent of respondents said they wanted Israel to withdraw from the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Labor Party lifts safety net

Israel's Labor Party filed a motion of no-confidence Tuesday in Ariel Sharon's government.

Filed over socioeconomic matters, the motion officially ended the safety net Labor had given the Israeli prime minister since the Cabinet approved Sharon's Gaza withdrawal plan.

Envoy: Dismantle outposts

Israel must dismantle West Bank settlement outposts, the U.S. ambassador to Israel said.

Speaking Tuesday to Israeli Army Radio, Daniel Kurtzer said Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon had promised U.S. officials he would dismantle illegal outposts in accordance with the "road map" peace plan. On Monday, Israel's High Court of Justice postponed the evacuation of one outpost.

P.A. officer arrested for terrorist role

Israel arrested a Palestinian Authority security officer who allegedly helped Hamas carry out a double suicide bombing in March.

Muwayin Abdel Aziz Atallah allegedly helped the two bombers infiltrate into Israel, where they killed 10 people in an attack at Ashdod's port.

WORLD

Police raid branch of Israeli bank

Police raided the Paris branch of an Israeli bank as part of an international investigation into a suspected money-laundering operation. Officers entered the Paris branch of Bank Hapoalim on Monday, confiscated documents and arrested four employees, including the branch manager, the local daily *Le Parisien* reported.

According to the paper, the investigation concerns a fraud operation in which about 20 people are suspected of accepting some \$75 million in checks as payment for a never-published advertising package for various government organizations.