



NEWS AT A GLANCE

■ **Oklahoma City's small Jewish community, although physically intact, was devastated by last week's bombing. But it sprung to action, organizing an appeal to benefit victims of the attack. [Page 2]**

■ **Several thousand former prisoners of the Sachsenhausen and Ravensbruck concentration camps gathered to mark the 50th anniversary of the camps' liberation. The gatherings were tainted, however, by an ongoing controversy over what the end of World War II meant for the Germans. [Page 1]**

■ **The Israel Defense Force launched an investigation into reports that an Islamic militant died after being interrogated by Israeli security agents. Abdel-Samad Hassan Harizat, 30, was reportedly a known supporter of Hamas.**

■ **Nine Israeli army soldiers were wounded when a Hezbollah activist drove an explosive-laden car into their patrol in the southern Lebanon security zone. [Page 3]**

■ **Israel's Ashkenazi chief rabbi criticized the planned participation of Jewish-born Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, the Archbishop of Paris, at a conference on the Holocaust. [Page 3]**

■ **The expert who helped identify the remains of Nazi concentration camp doctor Josef Mengele in 1985 is reportedly among those involved in identifying the victims in last week's Oklahoma City bombing. Clyde Snow has also been involved in past investigations into mass killings in Chile and the former Yugoslavia.**

■ **Israeli authorities have taken into custody the editors of the country's two leading newspapers in connection with a year-old case involving allegations that the papers indulged in wiretapping in an effort to boost circulation. [Page 3]**

■ **The National Union of Dentists in Jordan has warned its members of possible expulsion for treating Israelis. The warning came in response to reports that Israeli visitors to Jordan were taking advantage of relatively cheaper costs for dental services in the Hashemite kingdom.**

Ceremonies mark liberation as Germans debate history

By Miriam Widman

BERLIN, April 25 (JTA) — Amid continued domestic political controversy over the meaning of the end of World War II for Germans, several thousand former prisoners of the Sachsenhausen and Ravensbruck concentration camps gathered during the weekend to mark the 50th anniversary of the camps' liberation.

The political controversy injected itself, but did not overshadow, the ceremonies at the two Nazi concentration camps.

The controversy was originally sparked by statements from German right-wing figures who said the fall of Nazi Germany on May 8, 1945, not only marked the start of Germany's liberation from the Nazi tyranny.

It also represented the start of a reign of terror by the Soviets, who occupied the eastern half of Germany and drove some 12 million ethnic Germans out of Eastern Europe after the war's end, they said.

The controversy intensified after the publication earlier this month of a newspaper ad that expressed similar views.

The ad, signed by hundreds of Germans, some of them well-known figures who do not represent the extreme right, said May 8 marked the beginning of "expulsion, terror, a new repression in the East and the beginning of the division of our country."

Carl-Dieter Spranger, Germany's minister for economic cooperation and development, and Alexander von Stahl, a former federal prosecutor, were among those who signed the statement.

Since the publication of the ad, German newspapers have reported nearly daily comments from prominent politicians and personalities about the issue.

Many, but not all, have condemned the statement. Ignatz Bubis, chairman of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, said it is inappropriate to use World War II as a basis of comparison for anything.

Rita Sussmuth, the president of the lower house of the German Parliament, devoted part of her address Sunday morning at the Ravensbruck camp to attack those who want to compare the atrocities of World War II with what happened to the country under Soviet domination.

"No one disputes what happened to the Germans," she said, referring to Soviet killings of Germans after the end of the war. "But one should not confuse cause with effect." Sussmuth, considered one of Germany's most popular politicians, called for an end to all the discussions about how to interpret the May 8 anniversary.

Foreign minister booed at Sachsenhausen

The issue came up again later on Sunday, when German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel made it clear during an address at the Sachsenhausen ceremony that his views differed from those of Sussmuth.

Noting that the Sachsenhausen concentration camp, which opened in 1936, was not shut down after the war, Kinkel said that "new suffering occurred here" after the war.

Kinkel's comments elicited a torrent of boos from the audience, which called on him to stop speaking.

The minister was also greeted with cries that he was a hypocrite.

Despite the political controversy, the ceremonies included some moving speeches and acts at both camps.

At the Ravensbruck concentration camp, which served as a camp for women and children, some 1,000 former inmates joined 5,000 other guests.

Some women wore their former prison garb. Others covered their heads with clothes bearing the blue and white national colors of Israel.

More than 132,000 women and children were sent to Ravensbruck, which was originally a slave labor camp. The main employer of slave laborers from the camp was Siemens Electric, which manufactured electric parts for German armaments, including the V-2 rocket program.

Gas chambers were later built at the camp, where more than 6,000 women were killed. Their ashes were flung over a lake within the camp's grounds.

On Sunday, as they have at past gatherings, former inmates threw

flowers over the lake in remembrance of those who were murdered here.

Rose Guerin, president of the International Ravensbrück Committee, said the lesson from World War II was that "war is not a means to solve problems."

But she said that despite some positive developments in the world — such as the end of apartheid in South Africa and the signing of accords between Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization — pressing human rights problems remained, as reflected in recent events in the former Yugoslavia and in Rwanda.

Also on Sunday, a ceremony was held at the Sachsenhausen camp, which was built near Berlin and served as a kind of training center for SS officials and other Nazi henchmen, who often used the genocidal skills learned there at other death camps.

Some 100,000 people — including Jews, Communists, Gypsies and union activists — died at Sachsenhausen, where they were shot, gassed or starved to death.

During Sunday's ceremonies at Sachsenhausen, several speakers condemned the September 1992 neo-Nazi arson attacks on Barracks 38 and 39, which were burned to the ground.

One of the most moving speeches before the audience of some 20,000 came from Andrzej Szycpiorski, a Polish writer who was prisoner No. 95936 at the camp.

"When I was asked to come here I thought I would say no," he told the audience. "But here I am at this roll call place. Why am I here when I didn't want to be? I was lucky. I came away alive. Thousands of others stayed forever in Sachsenhausen."

Szycpiorski warned his audience against complacency and underscored the importance for individuals to take responsibility for their acts.

At times, he said, "it appears as if only unconscious people supported" the Nazi regime.

"State violence is not a natural catastrophe, but the result of a willingness to engage in it." □

Jews of Oklahoma City volunteer in relief effort, help raise funds

By Alexandra J. Wall

NEW YORK, April 25 (JTA) — The small Jewish community of Oklahoma City, although physically intact, was left devastated by last week's bombing of a federal building there that killed at least 86 people.

"We're a community of only 2,500 in a metropolitan area of just under 1 million, but we are very tightly connected and we are all feeling the pain from this," said Edie Roodman, executive director of the Jewish Federation of Greater Oklahoma City.

The federation has organized a national relief effort to help the victims of the bombing. Roodman called the response to this appeal "just overwhelming."

By the time she reached her office at 11 a.m. the day of the bombing, Roodman said, she had received 50 messages from Jewish federations across the country offering assistance. The bomb went off shortly after 9 a.m. local time.

"Federations have called with the warmest support. It's been a real outpouring of well wishes and concern," Roodman said.

"It really makes a difference here. We're such a small Jewish community that that kind of bolstering up is really important," she added.

No Jews were killed in the explosion or have been counted among the missing.

Rabbi David Packman of Oklahoma City's Temple B'nai Israel reported that one member of his Reform congregation who worked in a neighboring building

suffered an injury from falling debris. She was released from a hospital.

Packman, whose synagogue is one of two in the area, spoke at the memorial service for the victims Sunday, along with President Clinton, the Rev. Billy Graham and other dignitaries.

In his address, Packman invoked a metaphor of Jerusalem in saying that Oklahoma City would rebuild itself to its former glory.

He also read some passages from the Book of Lamentations that express ways of finding hope after despair.

In Oklahoma City, Jews have been among those volunteering to feed the relief workers, police and others who are working at the building site.

Roodman organized the volunteer effort herself, but said that she has a list of 20 more people who are willing to coordinate the more than 75 volunteers.

"We have been bringing food, giving blood and just doing everything we can," said Packman.

Both Jews and non-Jews have called the Jewish federation, wanting to volunteer, Roodman said.

"The needs are still very fluid," Roodman said, adding that the volunteers would continue to help in whatever capacity will be necessary in the upcoming weeks.

"We don't know what will be needed of us tomorrow," she said.

Roodman said the Jewish community has discussed helping to rebuild the YMCA Day Care Center that was directly across the street from the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.

No children were killed there, but many were hurt, she said, adding, "They lost everything, and we'd like to help them rebuild."

Packman said the community hopes to contribute \$50,000 to help rebuild the downtown area in the name of the Jewish community, and has started the Explosion Relief Fund for that purpose.

But the Jews in Oklahoma City have not been the only ones to offer help. In Tulsa, Oklahoma City's sister city, the Jewish community has offered direct assistance.

Contributions to help rebuild in Oklahoma City can be sent to the Explosion Relief Fund, c/o the Jewish Federation of Greater Oklahoma City, 710 West Wilshire, Suite C, Oklahoma City, Okla. 73116.

B'nai B'rith International has also set up a fund for the victims. The group has so far collected \$64,000. Donations can be sent to the B'nai B'rith Disaster Relief Fund, 1640 Rhode Island Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. □

Phone lines in self-rule areas may be tied up if bill not paid

JERUSALEM, April 25 (JTA) — Israel's Bezek phone company has threatened to cut off some phone services to the Palestinian self-rule areas if a \$4.6 million debt is not paid within two weeks.

A total of 125,000 people would be affected by the possible slash of services to the Gaza Strip and the West Bank Jericho enclave.

Bezek has provided international service to the autonomous zones since the Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement in May. The Palestine Liberation Organization provides local telephone services.

A spokesman for Bezek, which is partially owned by Israel, said, "This is not a political thing. It's a business decision."

If international services are cut, local calls could still be made. □

Car bomb in Lebanon wounds nine Israeli soldiers on patrol

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, April 25 (JTA) — Nine Israeli soldiers were wounded Tuesday when a member of the Hezbollah fundamentalist movement drove an explosive-laden car into their patrol in the southern Lebanon security zone.

Israel Radio reported that the suicide bomber drove into a convoy of vehicles, blowing himself up and wounding the soldiers.

A senior Israel Defense Force officer estimated that there were more than 400 pounds of explosive materials in the car bomb.

The wounded soldiers were flown by helicopter to Haifa's Rambam Hospital, where seven of the soldiers were said to be lightly wounded. The two others were in moderate condition.

Hours before the attack, the IDF chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, said Hezbollah activities in southern Lebanon have nearly doubled during the past year.

Appearing before the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee in Jerusalem, Shahak was quoted as saying that rarely a day goes by without a Hezbollah attack.

He said the primary target of these activities has been the South Lebanon Army, Israel's ally in the region.

One day earlier, an Israeli soldier was wounded as a result of a roadside blast near his patrol in the eastern sector of the southern Lebanon security zone. The soldier was flown to Rambam Hospital, where his situation was described as moderate.

Immediately after the explosion, Israeli gunners opened fire on positions held by the Iranian-backed Hezbollah group, which claimed responsibility for the blast.

The IDF denied reports from Lebanon of mock Israeli air attacks over Hezbollah positions.

Israel Radio quoted an IDF source as saying that those issuing the report may have mistaken the helicopter flown in to take out the wounded soldier as having been part of an attack. □

Jewish-born archbishop stirs debate over role in conference

By Uriel Masad

TEL AVIV, April 25 (JTA) — Israel's Ashkenazi chief rabbi has strongly criticized the participation of the Jewish-born archbishop of Paris at a Tel Aviv University conference, which was scheduled to take place on the eve of Holocaust Remembrance Day.

Speaking at the Great Synagogue of Jerusalem on Sunday, Rabbi Yisrael Meir Lau accused Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger, who converted to Catholicism during the Holocaust, of "having chosen the most difficult period to desert the front of the struggle for survival of the Jewish people."

Lustiger, who was born 69 years ago as Aharon Lustiger to Polish Jews who immigrated to Paris, was scheduled to speak Wednesday at the conference. Titled "The Silence of God," the conference was scheduled to examine the attitude of various religions toward the Holocaust.

In 1940, the 14-year-old Lustiger converted to Catholicism. His mother died at the Auschwitz death camp, and he himself is considered a Holocaust survivor.

Lau, also a Holocaust survivor, told Israel Television Sunday night, "By his conversion to Catholicism, and by his ordination, he has eliminated the Kaddish (the

prayer for the dead) from his life, and has joined the one religion that hounded us and shed our blood for centuries."

"He comes to speak of the silence of God, but should instead explain the silence of Pope Pius XII, who never uttered a word of condemnation during the Holocaust," said Lau, who declined an invitation to appear with Lustiger at an open session of the conference.

Lau added that he considers Lustiger "a babe who was captured," and that he still expects Lustiger to "return to the fold of his people."

Professor Yoram Dinstein, president of Tel Aviv University, which organized the conference, expressed regret over Lau's reaction, particularly, he said, at a time when dialogue between Israel and the Catholic Church is intensifying. Dinstein told the Israeli daily Ha'aretz that Lustiger received the Vatican's permission to participate in the conference.

Lustiger said in a lengthy interview with Ha'aretz that he still considers himself a Jew, and expressed the wish to come and live in Israel one day. □

Wiretapping scandal heats up as police arrest Israeli editors

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, April 25 (JTA) — Israeli authorities have taken into custody the editors of the country's two leading newspapers in connection with a year-old case alleging that the papers engaged in wiretapping in an effort to boost circulation.

Allegations surfaced last year that senior executives from Ma'ariv and Yediot Achronot had been involved in the illegal wiretapping of the offices of each other and other journalists, as well those of public and political figures.

Police originally investigated two private detectives who have since been indicted for wiretapping the phone, fax and cellular phone lines of hundreds of people, including President Ezer Weizman and officials with Shin Bet, Israel's domestic intelligence service.

The police investigation gradually turned to executives and staff at the two newspapers.

On Saturday morning, police arrested Ofer Nimrodi, the editor in chief of Ma'ariv, at Ben-Gurion Airport.

The police also confiscated documents from Nimrodi's home and office. Five other Ma'ariv employees, including the paper's security officer, were called in for questioning.

Nimrodi, who has been questioned by police before, faced allegations of illegally hiring the two private investigators to carry out illegal wiretaps and of obstructing justice. Nimrodi's arrest came after one of the indicted private investigators decided to cooperate with the government.

On Monday, police also called in for questioning the top editors of Yediot Achronot, Israel's largest-selling newspaper. Editor Moshe Vardi and Arnon Moses, managing editor, were questioned by police regarding allegations that they had ordered phone taps on the phones of the rival Ma'ariv newspaper. Police also conducted searches at the offices of the newspaper.

Moses was released Tuesday, but was ordered to return for further questioning. Vardi remained in custody, as did Ma'ariv's Nimrodi. Ma'ariv and Yediot reportedly account for a combined three-quarters of Israel's daily newspaper market. Yediot has a daily circulation estimated at 300,000; Ma'ariv has about 150,000.

Police Minister Moshe Shahal and Police Commissioner Assaf Hefetz said this week that the lengthy investigation is nearing its end. □

Palestinian workers return to jobs after closure lifted

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, April 25 (JTA) — Some 14,000 Palestinian workers returned to their jobs in Israel on Monday, after the Jewish state lifted a closure on the territories.

Only Palestinian men who are older than 30, are married and worked previously in Israel are currently eligible for permits.

But Palestinian leaders criticized Israel.

They said the restrictions on who can work inside Israel are a central cause of the Palestinian Authority's financial troubles.

"The closure has a very large influence and impact on the economic situation in the West Bank and Gaza," Ahmed Karia, the Palestinian Authority official in charge of economic affairs, told Israel Television.

"The dangers of this closure is that it becomes an Israeli policy, more than a reaction to security reasons."

He called for a review of the 1994 Paris Accord, in which the nature of economic relations between Israel and the Palestinian Authority was laid out.

On Tuesday, the Israel Defense Force chief of staff, Lt. Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak, told the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee that the closure could backfire on Israel.

"From an egotistical and security viewpoint, it is easier with the closure," he said.

"It must be remembered as well that the closure over the course of time could bring about the collapse of the Palestinian Authority," he added. □

Another spy tale is told as Israel OKs publication

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, April 25 (JTA) — Another case of espionage involving a Russian immigrant has been disclosed in Israel.

The High Court of Justice on Wednesday allowed the publication of the story of engineer Gregori Londin, who spied for the former Soviet Union for 15 years.

Londin had been recruited by the KGB in the 1970s, before immigrating to Israel in 1973, news reports said.

He had worked for several years in an Israel Defense Force unit developing the modern tank.

Apparently, Londin passed information about the modern tank to Russia, among other things, Israel Radio reported.

He had technical equipment to communicate with Russian contacts.

Londin was arrested in 1988. That same year, a Tel Aviv court sentenced him to 13 years in prison for espionage and contact with a foreign agent.

The High Court, which in the past rejected an appeal by Londin, allowed publication of the story for the first time this week.

Londin, who was 60 at the time of his arrest, had cited his failing health in asking that the sentence be commuted.

Another convicted spy for the former Soviet Union, Marcus Klingberg, is serving an 18-year prison term in Israel.

Klingberg's name made the headlines last week as Israeli media reported a proposed spy swap involving Klingberg and Jonathan Pollard.

Pollard is now serving a life sentence in a U.S. prison for spying for Israel. □

Chabad rescues another group of 'children from Chernobyl'

By Uriel Masad

TEL AVIV, April 25 (JTA) — Twenty-five Jewish children exposed to radiation from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster arrived in Israel this week on the latest in a series of rescue flights organized by Chabad's Children of Chernobyl program.

The children are from Gomel and Mozyr, among the most contaminated cities in Belarus, where thyroid cancer rates have soared to 200 times above average, according to a recently released World Health Organization report. It has been nine years since the Chernobyl disaster, the world's worst nuclear meltdown.

The Lubavitch movement, also known as Chabad, initiated the Children of Chernobyl program in August 1990, in response to requests for help by parents in Belarus and Ukraine. Since then, 16 flights, including the one that landed Tuesday, have brought 1,164 radiation-exposed children to Israel, according to Chabad officials.

They arrive without their parents and live in Kfar Chabad, where they attend school and receive medical care.

According to the Children of Chernobyl program director, Yossie Raichik, there are still thousands of children living in areas "where food is contaminated and medical treatment is sorely lacking."

The latest WHO report cited higher than normal rates of thyroid cancer in the Kiev area and in western Russia. A University of Oregon research team found areas as far as 145 miles from Chernobyl with radiation rates three items above the minimum evacuation criteria.

Chabad recently accelerated its schedule of flights in response to the WHO predictions that the current cancer rates are "only the tip of the iceberg" and will rise dramatically in the coming years, Raichik said.

Chabad is "committed to getting as many children out as quickly as possible and providing them with a healthy living environment, non-contaminated food and the finest medical care in Israel," Raichik said. □

Israelis may find it harder to see a dentist in Jordan

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM, April 25 (JTA) — The National Union of Dentists in Jordan has warned its members that they could face possible expulsion for treating Israelis.

The group's president, Saed Abu Maizer, issued the warning this week in response to news reports that Israeli visitors to Jordan were taking advantage of relatively cheaper costs for dental services in the Hashemite kingdom.

The Jerusalem Post reported that hundreds of Israelis have gone in search of cheap dental care in the Jordanian capital of Amman, where a filling costs about \$14, compared to \$40 in Israel.

The Israeli Health Ministry said it could not prevent people from seeking treatment in Jordan.

Treatment cannot be recommended, either.

Ministry representatives said it is impossible to know how careful Jordanian dentists are in sterilizing equipment to prevent the spread of diseases.

The Jordanians had no figures on how many Israelis have sought treatment there.

Similar directives against having dealings with Israelis have already been issued by other Jordanian professional associations, including those serving writers, doctors, lawyers and engineers. In each case, the directives reflected opposition to normalizing ties with Israel by establishing contacts through their professional fields. □