

NEWS AT A GLANCE

- **Five Israeli soldiers were wounded in attacks by Hezbollah in the southern Lebanon security zone.** The Israeli casualties were the first in the region since the U.S.-brokered cease-fire reached in late April. [Page 2]
- **Representatives from the five-nation monitoring group on the southern Lebanon cease-fire, which took effect after 16 days of fighting, are to meet again this week in Washington, D.C.** Members of the group have failed to agree on its structure and focus.
- **The Israeli government approved a plan to compensate northern residents who suffered damage from Katyusha rocket attacks last month.** More than \$250 million will be disbursed over the course of three years. [Page 2]
- **A Canadian federal judge stepped down from the case of three accused Nazi war criminals after prosecutors complained that he was "unable or unwilling" to handle the matter expeditiously.** [Page 3]
- **A U.S. attorney in Boston said a jury would try an accused Nazi war criminal if a federal judge denies a motion to strip him of his U.S. citizenship.** Aleksandras Lileikis faces possible deportation to Lithuania. [Page 3]
- **The American Jewish Committee and Howard University jointly launched a new magazine, CommonQuest: The Magazine of Black-Jewish Relations.**
- **Jordan's King Hussein and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat met with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo, and called on Israel to withdraw from all occupied Arab territory and to renounce ideas of expansionism and domination.** The leaders also said recent violence in the Middle East should not distract people from peace as a strategic objective.
- **The redeployment of Israeli troops in Hebron will take place one month after Israeli and Palestinian officials agree on the details of the move.** The pace of talks ensures that the redeployment will take place after Israel's May 29 elections.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**Holocaust survivors welcome payments from Austrian fund***By Marta S. Halpert*

VIENNA (JTA) — Nearly one year after the Austrian government began offering compensation to Holocaust survivors, some 10,000 people from around the world have applied for the one-time payment.

According to some of the recipients, the \$7,000 payment was a welcome gesture.

"This money will make our life a bit easier," Saul Gottlieb of Florida wrote to the Austrian National Fund.

"My wife and myself are survivors of the concentration camp Bergen-Belsen, and we do not hold the children responsible for the sins of their fathers," the 91-year-old Gottlieb wrote.

"Vienna is and stays my home city and I will never forget my wonderful youth there, which was unfortunately brutally interrupted."

Gottlieb is among the 2,200 people who have already received the payment since the fund was created by the Austrian Parliament in June 1995, said Hanna Lessing-Askapa, the fund's general secretary.

The fund, officially known as the National Fund of the Republic of Austria for the Victims of National Socialism, was created as a gesture toward the victims of the Nazi regime in connection with the 50th anniversary of the re-establishment of the republic.

"We are aware of the fact that the immeasurable human suffering inflicted upon you, the loss of home and health is irreparable, but this is one way of trying to build a human bridge to the surviving victims," the president of the Austrian Parliament, Dr. Heinz Fischer, wrote in his letter to potential applicants.

According to a news release from the Austrian government last year, beneficiaries of the fund include people who were "persecuted by the Nazi regime out of political, racial, religious or ethnic reasons; because of their sexual orientation; or [because of] their disabilities."

'We are 50 years too late'

Lessing-Askapa said her office expects to receive a total of 20,000 applications and hopes to process 8,000 of them annually.

Of the 10,000 received so far, she added, "roughly 7,100 came from the United States, followed by 3,600 from Israel, 3,000 within Austria and 2,600 from the U.K."

Letters from Haiti, Zimbabwe and Zambia are among those she has received.

Lessing-Askapa, whose father escaped the Holocaust by fleeing to Israel, was quick to concede the limitations of the fund's goals.

"We are 50 years too late," she said. "And we know that this amount can only symbolize a modest gesture by the Austrian republic. The suffering imposed on these people can neither be reversed nor repaired in any way."

Nonetheless, as the letters she displayed attested, the fund's efforts had been received warmly by a number of the recipients.

"Never before had we received such a nice letter from an Austrian authority," George Weissberg wrote from England. "It's a reconciling gesture. We are happy that you, dear Mrs. Lessing, were spared to go through those very dark years."

By contrast, Jewish officials in New York who are closely involved in the issue of making restitution to Holocaust survivors were critical of the Austrian government's one-time payment, describing it as too little, too late.

"Before there was nothing" paid by Austria, said one such official. "Now it's not enough and late."

Paul Grosz, president of the approximately 8,000 members of the Austrian Jewish community, was also concerned that what he described as the "gesture" of the Austrian government was coming too late for many Holocaust survivors.

Fearing that many of the older applicants will not live to see their cases settled, he cited a case from his own family.

"My mother-in-law was born in 1900 and she applied. A few months

later she died," Grosz said, noting that the right to the payment was voided by her death.

Grosz, who along with Fischer is a member of the board of trustees overseeing the fund, said the board would likely seek a change of the fund's rules to allow payments to be inherited by surviving family members.

In an effort to give priority to the claims of elderly applicants, Lessing-Askapa said 32 people older than 100 were among the fund's first recipients.

Among them was Miriam Kaplan from Canada.

Born in 1891, she wrote to the fund's office: "We were so happy to receive your questionnaire. It feels so good not to be forgotten altogether by the country you were born in.

"It gave me a sense of belonging to my irreplaceable home."

Although those eligible for the payment could simply mail in their applications, Lessing-Askapa said many people nonetheless chose to visit the fund's office in Vienna.

People "just want to talk to somebody after having been silent for so long," Lessing-Askapa said. "Some start to tell their story of suffering in camps. They simply unload their burden here.

"We had men here who broke out in tears for the first time in 50 years." □

(JTA foreign editor Mitchell Danow in New York contributed to this report.)

IDF soldiers hurt in Lebanon as Hezbollah resumes attacks

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The Islamic fundamentalist Hezbollah movement is showing that it has no intention of halting attacks on Israeli soldiers and their allies in southern Lebanon.

Clashes between Israeli forces and Hezbollah gunmen erupted over the weekend — some two weeks after a cease-fire was achieved — in the security zone.

On Sunday, five Israeli soldiers were wounded, one of them seriously, in two separate Hezbollah attacks in southern Lebanon.

An Israel Defense Force officer was seriously wounded when an anti-tank rocket fired by Hezbollah hit a patrol in the northeastern sector of the southern Lebanon security zone.

In a second incident, four other IDF soldiers were wounded, two moderately and two lightly, by shrapnel from mortar shells fired by members of the Shi'ite Hezbollah movement at an IDF outpost in the area.

The IDF responded by shelling Hezbollah positions north of the security zone.

Israeli warplanes attacked Hezbollah targets in the eastern sector of the zone.

Last Friday saw the first Hezbollah attack in the security zone since the April 27 cease-fire went into effect. Hezbollah members detonated roadside explosives, killing a soldier from the Israel-allied South Lebanese Army and wounding two others.

Israeli military sources said Hezbollah had resumed its attacks to show that it remained undeterred by the cease-fire agreement.

The agreement bars attacks on Lebanese and Israeli civilian populations, but does not prohibit fighting between Hezbollah and the IDF within the security zone.

Last Friday, diplomats from the five nations responsible for monitoring the cease-fire held their first meeting in Washington.

The five — the United States, Israel, France, Syria and Lebanon — met for three hours.

But the group failed to agree on monitoring arrangements.

The delegates were scheduled to meet again Tuesday.

The Syrian delegate, Ambassador Walid Muallem, said there were still differences over the structure and focus of the group.

Syria and Lebanon reportedly favor an arrangement that would limit the group's activities to monitoring the military aspects of the cease-fire.

Israel and the United States have reportedly expressed the desire for the group to include economic and political considerations on its agenda.

Syrian officials in Damascus accused Israel over the weekend of trying to turn the monitoring committee into an alternative channel for regional peace talks.

They said the United States should push for a resumption of the Israeli-Syrian negotiations, which were suspended after a wave of suicide bombings in Israel in late February and early March. □

Compensation for north approved

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — A plan to compensate residents of northern Israel for damage sustained in last month's Katyusha rocket attacks was approved this week by the Israeli government.

The government of Prime Minister Shimon Peres approved Sunday a special budget allocation of more than \$250 million that will be disbursed during a period of three years.

The compensation plan calls for direct aid to residents, as well as aid for economic and infrastructure development projects.

More than 700 Katyusha rockets fired from Lebanon by Hezbollah fighters rained down on northern Israel during Operation Grapes of Wrath, Israel's 16-day onslaught against the militant Islamic movement that ended with a U.S.-brokered cease-fire April 26.

The plan's adoption came as Kiryat Shmona residents demonstrated Sunday outside the Prime Minister's Office in Jerusalem, protesting what they said was slow government compensation payment.

Finance Ministry officials denied any hold-up in the payment of compensation, saying that claims were paid within three days after being filed. □

Crowds expected at Jerusalem Day

By Michele Chabin

JERUSALEM (JTA) — More than 1 million Israelis and tourists are expected in Jerusalem this week for the city's celebration of Jerusalem Day.

This year's festivities began April 9 and will continue throughout the week.

They are part of the 20-month-long Jerusalem 3,000 celebrations marking the third millennium since the founding of King David's capital.

Jerusalem Week began with a Peruvian pre-Columbian ceramic exhibition at the International Convention Center.

The exhibit, a special tribute to Jerusalem from the people of Peru, includes many rare pieces, some dating back to the time of King David.

The week's festivities will include two musical extravaganzas, a huge street carnival and a Jerusalem Solidarity March to the Western Wall.

Because of the large number of people expected and the potential for terrorist attacks, security is expected to be tighter than usual. □

Accused Nazi collaborator awaits deportation decision

By Michael Gelbwasser
The Jewish Advocate

BOSTON (JTA) — As far as U.S. prosecutors are concerned, accused Nazi collaborator Aleksandras Lileikis' days in Massachusetts are numbered.

U.S. Attorney Donald Stern said a jury would try Lileikis, 88, if U.S. District Judge Richard Stearns denies the prosecution's motion for a summary judgment that would strip him of his U.S. citizenship.

Stearns heard the motion, which was filed in early February by the federal government, on May 8.

"I am sure that if he [Stearns] ruled against us, we would seek a very prompt trial date," Stern said after the hearing, which Lileikis did not attend.

During the 90-minute hearing, federal prosecutors presented "execution cards" and other historical documents that Lileikis, as the chief of the Lithuanian security police, also known as the Saugamas, signed to deport thousands of Lithuanian Jews to Nazi death camps.

Lileikis, a Lithuanian native who has acknowledged that he was the former head of the Saugamas in the Vilnius province, held the position from August 1941 to July 1944.

The prosecutors claim that the documents prove that Lileikis' role in the killings was more prominent than he led U.S. officials to believe when, under the Refugee Relief Act of 1953, they granted him a visa in October 1955. He sought citizenship in 1976.

The documents came from the Lithuania Central State Archives.

Handwriting experts authenticated Lileikis' signature, the attorneys said.

William Kenety, senior trial attorney for the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations' Criminal Division, said the documents shown to Stearns were "a small sample of the surviving documents" bearing the signature of Lileikis.

"The end result is indisputable," Kenety said. "Between 40,000 and 50,000 Jews in Vilnius were murdered by that man alone."

'Merely a drudge'

But John Rogers Carroll, one of Lileikis' attorneys, denied those charges, saying that Lileikis was a minor, "ministerial" link in the Nazis' chain of command and that he "did not participate in the persecution" of the Jews.

Carroll said the prosecution's evidence "show you zero" about what Lileikis' state of mind was when he signed them. The documents were just "his signature on pieces of paper."

The Nazi leaders "left nothing to chance," Carroll said, adding, "and they left nothing to the Lithuanians."

As merely a drudge for the Nazis, Carroll said, Lileikis was eligible for a visa under the Refugee Relief Act.

This regulation prevents people who "personally advocated or assisted in the persecution of any person or group of persons because of race, religion or national origin" from receiving visas.

Carroll said government officials checked Lileikis' background thoroughly and were "fully aware of what he was" before granting him the visa.

By stripping Lileikis' U.S. citizenship and deporting him now, Carroll said, federal officials would be saying that their predecessors "didn't know what they were doing."

"The government knew what he was and gave him a visa," Carroll said.

But that happened only after the government rejected Lileikis' two previous applications for a visa.

He first tried to come to the United States in 1950 under the Displaced Persons Act.

The 1948 act excluded people who helped, voluntarily or involuntarily, persecute races; who voluntarily helped the Axis armed forces against the Allies; or who belonged to movements that were hostile to the United States.

Lileikis applied for a visa again in 1953, this time under the Refugee Relief Act, but no visas were available at the time.

Carroll said the act allowed the United States to accept more of Western Europe's 209,000 homeless Eastern European refugees from World War II.

Whereas the Displaced Persons Act focused on the applicant's "knowledge" of widespread persecution, Carroll said, the Refugee Relief Act focused on the individual's "intent."

"That was an interpretation of the law that was current at that time," he said.

If Stearns supports the prosecution's position, Lileikis would have the right to appeal it, the U.S. attorney said.

But if the judge sides with Lileikis, Stern said, the case will go to trial and "the evidence which we presented in affidavit form will be presented by live witnesses."

If Lileikis is deported, Lithuania is one possible destination, the attorney added. □

Judge steps down from trial of accused Nazi war criminals

By Gil Kezwer

TORONTO (JTA) — A federal judge has removed himself from the case of three Canadian citizens accused of Nazi war crimes after federal lawyers complained that he was "unable or unwilling" to deal with the case quickly.

Associate Chief Justice James Jerome filed a memo with the court last week advising that another judge deal with the joint denaturalization proceedings of Johann Dueck, Helmut Oberlander and Erichs Tobiass, all of whom live in the Ontario province.

A new judge, whose name has yet to be announced, is scheduled to hear the application to delay the proceedings when hearings resume this week.

Jerome resigned 11 days after Ted Thompson, the assistant deputy minister of justice, took the unprecedented step of complaining directly to Chief Justice Julius Isaac about Jerome's foot-dragging.

While the legal maneuvers pleased Jewish groups, it outraged Ottawa lawyer Donald Bayne, who represents Dueck.

Earlier this month, Bayne asked that the case be delayed because of Thompson's interference and Isaac's response to him, calling it "a serious affront to the Canadian system of justice" and "scandalous."

Dueck, 76, a retired mechanic living in Saint Catherines, is accused of taking part in the killing of Jews and other civilians as a member of the Selidovka district police in German-occupied Ukraine from 1941 to 1943.

Oberlander, 72, of Waterloo, is accused of having been a member of a commando unit that massacred hundreds of thousands of Jews in Ukraine and Crimea after the German army's advance into the southern Soviet Union in the summer and fall of 1941.

Tobiass, 84, of Toronto, is accused of participating in the execution of civilians in Latvia from 1941 to 1943 while he was a member of the Latvian security police, an SS auxiliary unit responsible for the deaths of 30,000 Latvian Jews. □

Pro-Likud Jews, Christians gather at 'unity conference'*By Shawn Cohen**Washington Jewish Week*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The National Unity Conference showed that being pro-Israel is a relative term.

In contrast to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's policy conference held here last month, the recent Unity event stacked speakers against the peacemaking efforts of Prime Minister Shimon Peres.

Conference participants, several of whom stood on the sidelines at the AIPAC event, hammered away at the Israeli-Palestinian peace accords, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat, the concept of a "new Middle East" and U.S. policy in the region.

"The U.S. bipartisan Middle East policy appears to be geared more toward appeasement of the Arab demands for regional hegemony than toward a sincere pursuit of durable peace," said the conference policy statement, unanimously approved by the roughly 200 participants.

The Unity conference, sponsored by Voices United for Israel — an organization of Christians and Jews dedicated to a "safe and secure" Israel — featured mostly supporters of the opposition Likud Party in Israel.

Among the speakers were Morton Klein, president of the Zionist Organization of America; Yigal Carmon, former adviser on terrorism to Prime Ministers Yitzhak Shamir and Yitzhak Rabin; and Yoram Ettinger, Israeli Embassy congressional liaison under Shamir.

At one session, Ron Nachman, a Likud Party Knesset member and mayor of Ariel in the West Bank, told participants that differences between Israel and the Palestinians appear to be irreconcilable because Arafat demands Jerusalem as the capital of a new Palestinian state and intends to bring another million Arabs into the territories.

He asked the crowd whether it would accept these demands and the audience responded with chants of "No. No. No." Nachman replied, "If that is the answer, then we are going on a collision course."

Accusations of proselytizing

Several Washington policy experts provided analyses on issues related to the Arab-Israeli peace process, including Rand Fishbein, former special assistant for national security affairs to Sen. Daniel Inouye (D-Hawaii), Frank Gaffney of the Center for Security Policy and Thomas Moore of the Heritage Foundation.

Discussing policy statements, members pondered a proposal to condemn efforts by the Clinton administration to "interfere in democratic elections in Israel." That suggestion was dropped after drafters said it could alienate members of Congress from Clinton's Democratic Party.

The conference's final statement urged immediate hearings "on the wisdom of our attempt to gain the assent of Syria's Hafez Assad to a peace accord with Israel" and a move by Congress to cut off aid to the Palestinians due to "the PLO's abject failure to comply" with the agreements it signed with Israel.

Representatives of two Jewish organizations, Jews for Judaism and the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, protested the event, accusing some organizers of being "proselytizers."

Outside the conference room, organizers sold copies of Likud leader Benjamin Netanyahu's new book, "A Place Among Nations," and journalist Steven Emerson's videotape "Jihad in America," about the Islamic fundamentalist network in the United States. But participants said no efforts were made in connection with the conference to convert Jews to Christianity. □

Arab Americans flay Israel at conference on tolerance*By Shawn Cohen**Washington Jewish Week*

WASHINGTON (JTA) — In a rage over Israel's military operation last month in Lebanon, Arab Americans lashed out at the Jewish state at an event designed to promote tolerance and civil rights.

The American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee conference, which hosted educational seminars on such issues as the Arab-Israeli peace process, civil rights and Arab images in the media, began the same day that Israel shelled a U.N. compound in Lebanon, killing at least 91 refugees.

Israel has said it was aiming for a Hezbollah target several hundred yards from the compound. For this reason, the April 18-21 event also provided one of several recent forums for Arab Americans to speak out against Operation Grapes of Wrath and, for some, against the Jewish state.

The committee, which claims to have some 30,000 members, making it the largest Arab American grass-roots organization, was established in 1980 by former Sen. James Abourezk (D-S.D.) to protect Arab Americans from discrimination.

The group also has called on the United States to freeze aid to Israel and lift sanctions against Iraq.

It has offered lukewarm support for the Arab-Israeli peace process, saying that Israel should "withdraw from territory it occupies in Lebanon, Syria and Palestine, including Jerusalem."

In addition, the committee has condemned "all forms of terrorism" but calls actions by the Islamic fundamentalist Hezbollah movement against Israel "legitimate resistance activities."

Hala Maksoud, the committee's interim president, said the conference was designed to promote tolerance for Arab Americans, not to attack Israel. But given the event's timing, she said, "a lot of anti-Israel feeling" erupted.

'Rhetoric of the past'

Whether this was an isolated event remains open to interpretation.

Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League, said some of the outbursts at the conference reflected the tone of the organized Arab American community.

"I'm troubled by the conference and concerned, but not surprised," Foxman said. "These are the mainstream organizations of Arab Americans. They still hold on to the rhetoric of the past."

On April 19, the conference was to feature Walid Muallem, Syria's ambassador to Washington, as the keynote speaker. But the diplomat canceled after being called to Syria to help deal with the crisis in Lebanon.

The replacement, oncologist Philip Salem, was quoted as saying, "Many people feel that Israel is a cancer on the Middle East." Responding to a burst of laughter and applause, he said, jokingly: "I have 30 years of experience with cancer."

AT&T, which sponsored the event, reportedly was embarrassed by the negative publicity. Afterward, the company called the cancer reference "unfortunate" and said it would never have supported the event had it known that these comments would be made.

Maksoud said organizers made no effort to control the speeches, which she said were presented in a town meeting type of setting. She added that she regretted some of the rhetoric, including the cancer remark, saying, "This is not at all the kinds of statement that an AAADC official would make." □