



# Daily News Bulletin

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84th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### **IDF enters Gaza refugee camp**

Israeli forces entered a Palestinian refugee camp in the Gaza Strip from which Palestinian gunmen had fired guns and mortars on nearby Jewish settlements.

Israeli tanks and bulldozers destroyed at least 11 buildings from which Palestinians had fired. In the battle late Tuesday night with gunmen at the Khan Yunis refugee camp, Israel's army killed two Palestinians and wounded 25 others.

The assault marked the first time since the outbreak of fighting last September that Israeli troops entered Palestinian-controlled territory.

Israeli Defense Minister Benjamin Ben-Eliezer said Israel had no interest in retaking Palestinian territory.

### **Security officials meet**

Israeli and Palestinian officials held a high-level security meeting Wednesday night.

The meeting followed telephone discussions between U.S. Secretary of State Colin Powell and leaders from both sides.

### **Sixth Israeli dies from accident**

A sixth Israeli soldier died of wounds suffered in an armored personnel carrier accident last week near Hebron. Along with Sgt. Aviad Koltitz, five other soldiers were killed when the APC rolled over.

### **Bush proclaims Heritage Week**

President Bush proclaimed April 22-29 as Jewish Heritage Week.

"The many oppressions historically borne by the Jewish people remind us that we must remain committed to religious liberty and tolerance for all," Bush said in the proclamation. "Jewish families have shared their resources, time and talent to help others. Their contributions to our national life and character help make America a better place."

### **Beilin, Arafat meet in Ramallah**

Former Israeli Justice Minister Yossi Beilin met in the West Bank city of Ramallah with Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

Beilin later said that Arafat was willing to resume negotiations unconditionally. Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has said he will not return to negotiations until Palestinians cease violence.

## FOCUS ON ISSUES

### **Group to focus on social justice, but some worried about partisanship**

*By Julie Wiener*

NEW YORK (JTA) — According to a popular joke, a group of American Jewish tourists in Israel ask their tour guide, "How do you say tikkun olam in Hebrew?"

Tikkun olam, of course, is a Hebrew term, one that describes the Jewish obligation to repair the world.

The joke's humor lay in the fact that many American Jews are more literate in social activism than in Hebrew.

According to a new study, however, most American Jews not only don't know it's Hebrew, but aren't even familiar with the term tikkun olam.

And with only 31 percent reporting that Israel is personally very meaningful to their Jewish identity, chances are they won't be asking Israeli tour guides much of anything.

The findings were two pieces of a recent study measuring American Jewish attitudes toward "social justice," a somewhat vague term that can fit a variety of causes, depending on the speaker's politics.

The study's major finding — that American Jews remain strongly supportive of predominantly liberal social justice causes — is being used to promote the new organization that commissioned it.

Amos: The National Jewish Partnership for Social Justice, was officially launched last week.

It aims to place social justice higher on the Jewish communal agenda and to provide training and other support for Jewish groups that want to address social justice issues.

Amos' founding comes as a number of people tout social justice and community service as a means of engaging unaffiliated young Jews:

- A new organization in its planning stages, Partnership for Service, seeks to increase community service rates among young Jews while teaching what Jewish tradition has to say about volunteering.

- Through a project called Tzedek Hillel, several campus Hillels are focusing on volunteer efforts, including spring break programs in which students build houses for the poor, for example.

- Several Jewish organizations are discussing the possibility of joining forces for a Jewish Peace Corps in which recent college grads would commit to a year or two of service, combined with Jewish learning.

The new study, based on phone interviews with 1,002 U.S. Jews, indicates strong Jewish support for social justice.

But it also reveals a fundamental paradox that likely will affect Amos and similar efforts.

The overwhelming majority of American Jews say social activism is important to their identity as Jews, and they feel proud that Jewish organizations do social justice work.

In fact, 56 percent say social justice is more important to their Jewish identity than Torah or text study.

Nonetheless, a clear majority — 74 percent — doesn't care whether their own social activism falls under Jewish or secular auspices.

"If you don't perceive your community as sponsoring social justice activities, you're not going to say you prefer to do them with other Jews," said Leonard Fein, the

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Group cites Hebron abuses

Human Rights Watch accused both Israel and the Palestinians of committing abuses against civilians in the West Bank city of Hebron.

The group said Wednesday that Palestinian gunmen, including some belonging to Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's Fatah movement, have targeted Israeli civilians living in Hebron's Jewish neighborhoods.

It also said the Israeli army has used excessive force against unarmed Palestinian demonstrators.

### Buses ordered to use armor

The Israeli army is demanding that the Egged bus company begin using armored vehicles on its Jerusalem-Tiberias and Jerusalem-Kiryat Shemona routes, Israel Radio reported.

Buses on those routes, which travel through the Jordan Valley, have come under Palestinian fire.

### Protesters support draft resisters

About 100 young Israelis took part in a demonstration to support draft resisters, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported.

The demonstrators called Tuesday for the release of an imprisoned conscientious objector.

### 'Bread police' descend on shops

Israeli "bread police" are fining Tel Aviv restaurants that are serving bread during the Passover holiday.

One legislator said a law enacted in 1993 is being misapplied because it deals only with shops displaying bread products in their windows, not with those serving such products to customers.

But an official with the fervently Orthodox Shas Party, which controls the ministry responsible for enforcement, disagreed: "This law exists to safeguard the Jewish character of the state, and we intend to enforce it."



## Daily News Bulletin

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founder of Mazon, a Jewish hunger-relief organization and one of Amos' architects.

Jewish organizations need to address the "big issues of our time" to show Judaism's relevance, Fein said.

Not everyone interprets the survey as a clarion call for more social justice activities.

"When I see these surveys that show that for many Jews," the "meaning of Jewish identity is social justice, I worry, because among other things that doesn't tell you why you shouldn't marry a Unitarian," said Elliott Abrams, president of the Ethics and Public Policy Center, a conservative think tank in Washington. "I don't know that spending more energy on those activities is an effective strategy for Jewish continuity in America."

Abrams, who serves on the advisory committee of the American Jewish Committee, said selection of social justice causes should be done on the basis of the "the higher the Jewish content, the better."

"Jewish groups have to be very careful not to allow partisan politics or ideological politics to creep in," he said.

It is not yet clear how Amos will manage to assist Jewish organizations and champion social justice while avoiding controversy over its choice of causes.

Amos' survey indicates that American Jews' favorite causes include abortion rights, fighting against anti-Semitism, access to affordable health care and strengthened gun control laws.

Few causes enjoy complete consensus, however.

In recent years, a number of Jewish leaders, particularly Republicans, have questioned community activism on issues that are not explicitly of Jewish concern.

In 1999, top leaders with the UJA-Federation of Greater New York urged the Jewish Council for Public Affairs, which coordinates the policies of Jewish organizations on social issues, to narrow its focus to issues of direct concern to the Jewish community, such as elder care and Jewish rescue.

The JCPA and the United Jewish Communities, the federation umbrella organization, still are hammering out what role each should play on social justice issues.

However, Hannah Rosenthal, the JCPA's executive director, downplayed the lack of consensus.

A recent survey conducted by the JCPA showed that the "overwhelming majority of Jewish federation donors support social justice public policy and efforts," she said.

In particular, Rosenthal said, there is widespread support not just for aiding Jews in poverty but for "public policy that deals with the poor throughout the country."

Diana Aviv, the UJC's vice president for public policy and a board member of Amos, said, "As the federation system thinks about what its own mission is, the scope of the work it engages in relative to its resources may be a subject for federations to talk about, but federations do embrace social justice.

"We work on immigration issues not just so Soviet Jewish refugees can come, but so that we have generous policy for all," Aviv said.

"When we work for better conditions in our nursing homes, it's for all recipients, not just for Jews."

It is not yet clear how large Amos will be, how it will be funded or how many organizations it will work with. It has a preliminary arrangement to work with the JCPA on poverty-related issues, and for now is being funded primarily by three private Jewish foundations.

Rabbi Sid Schwarz is founder and director of the Washington Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values, which offers teen and adult seminars on the connection between Judaism and social activism.

He said he welcomes Amos.

However, Amos needs to stick to its mission of training and consulting, and not champion specific causes, Schwarz said.

"Some of the principals in Amos, when they see issues they just start to salivate," Schwarz said. "Unless they discipline themselves in this area, they'll quickly become a shadow of the JCPA."

However, Rosenthal said she thinks Amos will augment, not duplicate, the JCPA's work by helping to train leaders and mobilize resources.

"They are the increased capacity that local communities cannot afford," Rosenthal said. "It's a perfect fit." □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Jews asked to help slaves

The U.S. Reform movement wants to draw attention during the Passover holiday to the issue of slavery in Africa.

The Religious Action Center in Washington has distributed readings and prayers to be read during the Jewish holiday of freedom and asks that people commit themselves to work on behalf of slaves in Sudan and Mauritania.

### Agency leads trip to Shoah sites

Hundreds of Jewish youths and Hebrew teachers from the Ukraine and Moldova visited Holocaust sites in Ukraine and Poland last week on a trip sponsored by the Jewish Agency for Israel.

The tour made a stop in Lvov, Ukraine, where a daylong seminar was held on the Holocaust and the history of the Jews of Eastern Europe.

### ADL slams Pokemon accusation

The Anti-Defamation League denounced an accusation by several Muslim religious leaders that Jews and Israel are conspiring to lure Muslim children into gambling and other immoral activities.

In one such accusation, the ADL said, a Saudi religious leader declared that the popular Pokemon children's game, which originated in Japan, is a "Zionist conspiracy" to influence Arab children.

Among the "spurious accusations" the ADL cited, some Muslim religious leaders in Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Egypt claim that "Pokemon" is a Japanese word meaning "I am Jewish."

### Shoah policyholders published

More than 10,000 additional names of potential claimants of Holocaust-era insurance policies have been published by the International Commission on Holocaust Era Insurance Claims. The names, supplied by the Czech Republic and the state of Washington, are available at [www.icheic.org](http://www.icheic.org).

### Clinton speech to aid Shoah effort

The Canadian Society for Yad Vashem announced that President Clinton will deliver a speech in Toronto on June 25. Expected to discuss his years in office and the Middle East peace process, Clinton will collect a speaking fee of about \$100,000.

Proceeds from ticket sales will be used to build a black granite Holocaust remembrance wall in a Toronto city park, organizers said.

### Roth novel wins fiction prize

Philip Roth's "The Human Stain" won the 2001 PEN/Faulkner Award for fiction. The novel about a classics professor accused of racism already has won two major Jewish book awards.

## Czech officials vow crackdown after neo-Nazi rock near Prague

By Magnus Bennett

PRAGUE (JTA) — A neo-Nazi rock concert has prompted officials to promise to crack down on extremist groups using the Czech Republic as a safe haven.

Interior Minister Stanislav Gross said the fight against far-right activities now is a "top priority" following a weekend concert near Prague attended by 400 extremists, many of them foreigners who entered the country legally.

Among the groups playing on stage was the Slovak band Juden Mord — or "Death to the Jews" — whose first album cover features an image of the gates of the Auschwitz death camp.

Gross' vow came after a hastily arranged meeting with top police officials, who have come under fire for failing to take action against organizers of similar concerts staged on Czech soil as often as twice a month.

President Vaclav Havel joined the fray Wednesday, saying he hoped the police role would be "properly examined."

Police maintained a strong presence at the latest concert but made no arrests. A spokeswoman said police had not intervened because the event was a "private party."

That inaction angered anti-fascist organizations and Jewish community representatives.

"The police said they could take no action because they had no legal right to do so," said Tomas Jelinek, vice chairman of the Prague Jewish Community. "But when you have a band called 'Juden Mord,' what more do they need?"

The Czech Federation of Jewish Communities also condemned what they consider to be the police's weak response.

The group's president, Jan Munk, said in an open letter to Gross: "The presence of several known extremists and the visible symbols and speeches of a Nazi character, which could be seen by a television audience, all took place in the face of passive police assistance."

In addition, he noted, the name Juden Mord "is in our opinion so self-explanatory that to have allowed the concert to take place cannot be considered anything other than indirect support of anti-Semitism."

The letter added to the pressure on the interior minister.

Gross, who earlier in the week floated the idea of a special state commission to monitor extremist groups, said officials had "run out of patience" with such events.

"We intend to take several steps, but I don't want to indicate to extremist groups what these are," he said.

Police chief Jiri Kolar told journalists that there was a "growing tendency" for extremists to stage concerts in the Czech Republic.

"The problem is not the ability of the police to act. It is a legal problem," he said, referring to a lack of coordination among police, prosecutors and the courts.

Many believe action is long overdue.

Petr Horak, a spokesman for the anti-racist group HOST, told JTA that the Czech Republic is seen as a perfect location for neo-Nazi groups, partly because authorities have done little to deter them.

"The police have allowed such concerts to take place in the past, when they really should have arrested the organizers," he said.

Horak argued that police inaction may also be partially due to some officers' sympathy with the skinheads and fascist groups.

The Interior Minister's idea of a special commission has drawn a lukewarm response.

Jelinek said he couldn't understand why a commission is needed.

"A commission is something you set up when you don't have any ideas," he said.

Others urged caution.

Jan Fabry, a special government advisor on extremist groups, warned against hasty action.

"I feel it is not important for the moment to act in a hasty manner," he said. "It is better to establish within the government one organization which can act when it is necessary in a coordinated manner, but it is going to take some time." □

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**Former Waffen SS member breaks his oath to convict a war criminal***By Bram Eisenthal*

MONTREAL (JTA) — A former member of the SS is partially responsible for bringing a Nazi murderer to justice.

Adalbert Lallier, born in Hungary, was drafted as a radio operator when he was a young man. He soon found himself a member of the Waffen SS's 7th Division, where he witnessed something he would never forget — the shooting of seven Jewish prisoners.

The site was an anti-tank ditch between the Czech villages of Theresienstadt and Leitmeritz.

The killer was his commanding officer, 2nd Lt. Julius Viel, a man Lallier said he had respected until that moment in the spring of 1945.

Without warning, Viel picked up a rifle and shot to death seven men who had been digging ditches.

Now Viel, 83 and sick with cancer, faces 12 years in a German prison thanks in no small part to Lallier, a key witness for the prosecution during Viel's recent trial in Germany.

Viel was convicted April 3, but his attorney is appealing.

For Lallier, the conviction helps him conclude a period of his life that has haunted him for the past 56 years.

"I witnessed seven Jews murdered and did nothing about it," Lallier told JTA. "I decided to spend the rest of my life doing everything possible to undo the terrible shame of having seen this and not acting."

Lallier, a former university professor, lives in Quebec, two hours from Montreal.

He was born in Banat, in the southern part of Hungary. His mother was Hungarian and his father a member of the Austro-Hungarian armed forces.

After his mother died, Lallier was raised by his grandmother in a community with three nationalities — Germans, Hungarians and Serbs.

When the Hungarians were finally allowed their own high schools, Lallier attended one and graduated in 1941.

"We then heard that a German draft list had been created. Suddenly, a German colonel showed up at our home, looked at me and my brother — Andre was 20 and I was 17 — and warned us not to try to run away or we would be caught and shot.

"My brother had a beautiful Jewish girlfriend — I remember her lovely, long black hair — not long after, all the Jews in our village were rounded up, including this girl and her family," Lallier said. "We never saw her again. Eventually, Andre did run away from the army. We never saw him again, either."

Immediately after the war ended, Lallier had an opportunity to give something back to the Jewish people, he recalled. He was sent to a POW camp in Vienna, where he helped out as a case worker handling Jewish refugees.

"Canada didn't want textile workers or jewelers, but I falsified statements about their occupations to allow these people into Canada," he said.

Lallier described how he helped one man immigrate to Canada, where he opened a popular Hungarian restaurant.

"When I went there decades later, he remembered exactly who I was and it was a happy reunion," Lallier said.

Lallier came to Canada in November 1951 and quickly

established himself in academia. He contributed to the creation of a Jewish studies program at Montreal's Loyola College, a Jesuit institution.

Lallier's decision to come forward with information on Viel's murders was a serendipitous one.

In the mid-1990s he was a member of the Canadian Executive Service Organization.

He was assigned to the Czech Republic, where he would help Czech bankers understand the workings of the capitalist financial system.

"I took a bus to Theresienstadt," Lallier said. "I wanted to touch the soil near that ditch, where those seven men were murdered.

"It was then that I swore I would find out, once and for all, what became of Viel. I knew I had to pursue this issue."

In 1997, a friend and former student, lawyer Stephen Korda, arranged a meeting between Lallier and American Nazi hunter Steve Rambam.

"I revealed the name of my superior officer, breaking the Waffen SS oath that had been a curse all my life, and lifted myself out of the blackness in my soul," Lallier said. "Rambam called me a while later to say he had found Viel and the circle was complete."

Lallier was called to Germany to testify against Viel four times, twice in Stuttgart and twice in Ravensburg.

"He didn't speak to me, just glanced at me and claimed he didn't remember me," Lallier said of Viel's reaction upon seeing him. "I knew he was lying. He knew I was his accuser and I knew I was looking at a killer."

During the trial, he was attacked by defense attorney Ingo Pfliegner.

"This attorney attempted to portray the charges against Viel as nothing more than a conspiracy by the Canadian government, the Canadian Jewish Congress, Stephen Korda and Steve Rambam," Lallier said.

Lallier was the only man from his unit who testified that he witnessed the shootings.

"We were all in a state of shock when it happened, as most of us were young, inexperienced men," he said. "It happened right in front of our eyes and yet, when questioned, the others said they could not recall them. I could not believe it when I heard that."

The worst incident was a report in Reuters that Lallier was under investigation himself and might have his Canadian citizenship revoked.

The report turned out to be false. Nevertheless, Lallier was forced to retire prematurely after several academic colleagues who learned of his past complained to the administration.

Lallier has no regrets about coming forward with his information, however.

"The most important thing is that I did my best to help the Jewish people, in my own little way," he said.

He hopes to speak to groups of people, non-Jewish students perhaps, to tell them what he experienced during the war, he said.

Following his experiences during the trial, he is also convinced that "the German people have changed. They understand now that a strong democracy is essential to keep the right in check."

And he wants the world to know how seven Jewish men, aged 24 to 46, changed his life forever and deserve to be properly remembered as people and not just numbers in a Nazi registry.

They were Josua Baruch, Robert Friedmann, Wilhelm Kaufmann, Ladislav Kras, Victor Schutz, Klastimil Severin and Victor Stern. □