



Daily News Bulletin

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85th Year

TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

Israeli killed in ambush

An 18-year-old Israeli was killed by Palestinian gunmen Thursday in a West Bank ambush.

Erez Rund was wounded after hitching a ride to his home in the settlement of Ofra. He suffered a chest wound and died later in a hospital.

Israel blasts Arafat HQ

Israeli forces attacked Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat's Ramallah compound. In the operation, which began before dawn Thursday and lasted about six hours, Israeli tanks and bulldozers destroyed three buildings in Arafat's compound. One shell hit Arafat's bedroom, but Israeli officials later denied they were trying to kill him.

Israeli officials said the operation was launched in response to a wave of Palestinian terrorism sweeping Israel, including a suicide bombing Wednesday that killed 17 Israelis, 13 of them soldiers.

The army said in a statement that Arafat's Palestinian Authority is "directly responsible for the terrorism that originates in its territory."

One of Arafat's bodyguards was killed and six other people wounded during exchanges of fire at the compound. Arafat, who was not harmed, said of the army operation, "This is fascism, Nazism." He vowed that the Palestinians would continue their struggle.

Peres: New U.S. peace plan

Shimon Peres said a new U.S. plan for ending the Israeli-Palestinian conflict calls on Israel to evacuate all settlements.

In exchange, the Palestinians would waive the "right of return" of refugees and their descendants, the Israeli foreign minister said Thursday.

Peres recommended a speedy resumption of negotiations, adding that this would help resolve Israel's economic crisis.

French leader cancels meeting

The French ambassador to the United States canceled a meeting with American Jewish leaders that was called to discuss anti-Semitism in France.

Several Jewish leaders said they are angry that the French ambassador was ignoring the issue of anti-Semitism. They said he was attempting to meet with Jewish leaders individually to avoid the issue.

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Accusations of anti-Semitism plaguing German political party

By Toby Axelrod

BERLIN (JTA) – Fallout is mounting from accusations of anti-Semitism in one of Germany's major political parties.

One longtime Jewish leader of the Free Democratic Party quit Wednesday, saying she was deeply disappointed with the direction the party has taken.

At issue is not only the character of one center-right party within the democratic mainstream, but the general tone of political discourse as Germany moves toward a federal election in September.

Many observers say that statements by the party's vice president, Jurgen Mollemann, have broken a taboo against expressing anti-Semitism in Germany and have debased the election campaign.

Mollemann, who long has expressed sympathy for Palestinian suicide bombers, recently shocked the German public by blaming a prominent German Jewish leader for provoking anti-Semitism.

He also supported the inclusion in the state Parliament of North Rhine-Westphalia of Jamal Karsli, the ex-Green Party member who said he believes in a world Jewish conspiracy.

"If Mr. Mollemann goes so far as to justify the killers of women and children, then he is on the same level as the terrorists," said Alexander Brenner, head of the Berlin Jewish community, at a demonstration of some 1,000 people Wednesday in front of FDP headquarters here.

On Thursday, Mollemann put his foot in his mouth again, shortly after uttering an apology for his statements against Michel Friedman, vice president of the Central Council of Jews in Germany.

Mollemann had said Friedman's personality was responsible for a rise in anti-Semitism.

Speaking to the state Parliament in North Rhine-Westphalia, Mollemann said he is sorry for blaming Friedman for the rise in anti-Semitism, but he later attacked Friedman's character again and said he would never apologize to him personally.

The quick turn of events dashed hopes that the Central Council would meet with Mollemann to discuss the issue of anti-Semitism in the campaign.

But the council did accept an invitation to meet on June 11 with FDP President Guido Westerwelle, former Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel and Wolfgang Gerhardt, head of the party's faction in the German Parliament.

"If Mollemann shows up at the table, we will refuse to sit with him," Paul Spiegel, head of the Central Council, told JTA through a spokesman.

Hopes for a truce between the party and the Jewish organization were raised somewhat Thursday by Karsli's announcement that he would leave the FDP faction in North Rhine-Westphalia.

On Tuesday, Karsli, who has compared Israel to Nazi Germany, circulated an anti-Israel e-mail to members of the faction. Westerwelle said on Wednesday that this was the last straw and that he wanted Karsli out by June 10.

It appeared Mollemann's apology was only skin deep.

In his statement Thursday to the state Parliament in Dusseldorf, Mollemann said, "If I have wounded the sensibilities of Jews, I ask for their forgiveness."

Spiegel responded favorably, though he and Friedman said they would have preferred that Mollemann ask for Friedman's forgiveness and not direct his statement to "all Jews in Germany." In response, Mollemann told TV reporters that his "apology

MIDEAST FOCUS

Sharon: No action in the North

Israel said it will exercise restraint along its border with Lebanon. Prime Minister Ariel Sharon convened the Security Cabinet on Wednesday night to discuss the situation in the north in light of a Hezbollah buildup in southern Lebanon.

Sharon said Israel has no interest in opening a second front in the north, though the situation could change, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported.

Shin Bet methods nixed

Israel's Knesset defeated a bill that would have given agents of the Shin Bet security service the right to use physical pressure during interrogations aimed at foiling imminent terrorist attacks.

Knesset members from the Likud, Labor, Meretz and Arab parties aligned to defeat the measure in a 30-18 vote. The government was against the bill. "I don't think the State of Israel needs a law that says it is allowed to torture people," Justice Minister Meir Sheerit said.

Poll: Israelis support withdrawal

Most Israeli Jews support evacuation of settlements under a unilateral separation plan, a survey found.

According to data from the May Peace Index, a Tel Aviv University research project, 54 percent of the respondents said settlements weaken Israel's national interest, while 35 percent said they strengthen it. The Peace Index surveyed 576 people and has a 4.5 percent margin of error.

Unemployment reaches high

Unemployment in Israel reached a record high.

The Central Bureau of Statistics announced Wednesday that the unemployment rate in the first quarter of the year was 10.6 percent, with 270,000 people out of work.



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is to the Jewish citizens, but not to Mr. Friedman. I don't like people who slap my hand when I reach out to them."

He said Friedman, with his "unbearable behavior," had not "earned" an apology. And he said some of his political critics "should go into retirement and enjoy themselves."

Outraged, Spiegel said Mollemann was speaking with a "forked tongue and had disqualified himself as a discussion partner and as a democrat."

Spiegel has said he will not allow Mollemann to try to create a split between Friedman and the council. "It is unacceptable to characterize Friedman as a dirty Jew. We will fight that to the last," he told JTA.

At the Wednesday demonstration, demonstrators held signs saying, "Phooey Mollemann, Phooey FDP," "We Love Our Jewish Fellow Citizens: No to Anti-Semitism," and "Never Again," under an image of the yellow star that Jews were forced to wear in Nazi Germany and Nazi-occupied lands.

Susanne Thaler, head of the FDP chapter in Berlin-Dahlem, announced at the demonstration that she was leaving the FDP after 20 years, and that her whole family would join her.

The atmosphere in the party had become too disturbing, Thaler said.

"I feel personally wounded and threatened," said Thaler, who is Jewish.

Her remarks came only a few hours after FDP head Westerwelle, bowing to pressure from within and outside the party, gave Mollemann an ultimatum, ordering him to remove Karsli from the state parliament faction by Monday.

Karsli was denied FDP membership because of his anti-Semitic statements, but Mollemann has continued to support him, treating him like a member of the party although he is not one.

It remains to be seen whether the pressure will lead Mollemann to sever his ties with Karsli or to drop out of the party altogether. But Westerwelle's ultimatum was at least a step forward, according to Spiegel.

Many protesters at Wednesday's demonstration appeared to want both Karsli and Mollemann out. Some gathered signatures for a petition to the two main political parties, the Social Democrats of Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder and the opposition Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union, urging them not to make a coalition with the FDP after the September election.

The protest drew support from several Muslim organizations in Germany, including the Turkish Union of Berlin and Brandenburg, which sent a letter that was read aloud by Brenner.

In related news, some 100 prominent journalists have signed a petition condemning as "racist" Mollemann's recent statements against Friedman.

If Mollemann and his supporters thought their tactics would win votes, they were in for a surprise. According to a poll released Tuesday, the FDP has lost three percentage points in popular support because of the current controversy. If the federal election were to take place this week, the party would only win 9 percent, its lowest level in two months.

The new information does not contradict earlier findings that many Germans — 28 percent overall and 40 percent of FDP members — agreed with Mollemann that Friedman is partly responsible for anti-Semitism in Germany.

But it did show that voters were becoming more concerned about the direction the party is taking, said Manfred Gullner, head of a public opinion research firm.

He said citizens had not taken the anti-Semitism issue seriously at first, but this has changed.

Now it is clear to many that the classical liberal path of the FDP is endangered the longer the debate about anti-Semitism goes on. □

Jewish poet honored in Ukraine

MOSCOW (JTA) — A memorial plaque to famed Jewish poet Chaim Nachman Bialik was unveiled Sunday in Ukraine.

The plaque was placed on the house in Odessa where the poet lived in 1907. Among those attending the ceremony were officials from the Israeli Embassy in Ukraine, city officials and students at local Jewish schools. □

JEWISH WORLD

ADL backs new immigration law

The Anti-Defamation League is supporting a new U.S. program to track terrorists.

"Entry into the U.S. is not a right, it is a privilege, one that is granted by a sovereign state," said Abraham Foxman, the ADL's national director. "It is the right of that sovereign state to withhold that privilege."

Foxman was responding to a newly invoked law, originating in the 1950s, that will require as many as 100,000 visitors to the United States to be fingerprinted, photographed and registered.

The program will target primarily Middle Eastern men between the ages of 18 and 35 and will concentrate on nations identified as havens for terrorist activity.

The plan drew immediate criticism from Arab American leaders, but Foxman believes the plan is well-conceived.

"Because the U.S. was attacked, and because it continuously believes it has been under attack, the U.S. has the right to exercise control," he said. "I wish we didn't have to, but people abused our freedom."

House passes Holocaust bill

Holocaust survivors and their families may be permanently exempt from U.S. taxes on Holocaust restitution payments.

The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill Tuesday calling for a change to previous legislation that did not extend the relief on a permanent basis. It is estimated that as many as 100,000 people could be affected by the change.

UJC plans solidarity Shabbat

Synagogues across North America will hold a Shabbat of solidarity with Israel on June 14-15.

The United Jewish Communities, the umbrella group of North American federations, is asking rabbis to use their sermons to discuss solidarity with the Jewish state.

UJC also hopes the effort will draw awareness to its Israel Emergency Campaign, which has raised \$230 million of its goal of \$300 million for terror relief in Israel.

JNF cited for excellence

The Jewish National Fund was cited for its excellent standards.

The citation was issued by Tzedekah Inc. — a new watchdog group of law and business professionals trained in Jewish law.

The standards are similar to charitable standards published by the Better Business Bureau, but they are specifically geared toward Jewish nonprofit institutions.

As rains flood central Chile, Jewish community offers relief

By *Florencia Arbiser*

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) — The Jewish community of Chile is pulling together to deal with the fallout of the worst rainstorm the country has seen in at least 80 years.

After several days of rain, a heavy storm on Monday dumped an entire year's worth of rain on the central area of Chile, including the capital Santiago, in just one day.

At least 10 people died and between 50,000 and 70,000 have suffered damage to flooded homes.

More than 17,000 of Chile's 20,000 Jews live in Santiago, but the local B'nai B'rith office said that Jews have not suffered severe damage from the storm.

"Some have their offices or factories flooded, but it is not a matter of survival," Ram Tapia, executive vice president of the local B'nai B'rith chapter, told JTA by telephone.

Though not directly affected, the 30 local Jewish institutions are working together to assist people looking for shelter, food and warm clothes. Most of the aid recipients are non-Jews.

At the B'nai B'rith building, some 300 square yards are filled with clothes, milk, diapers and other supplies donated by members of the community.

On Wednesday, the office opened a bank account to pool money to buy construction materials to rebuild houses.

Members of the community are already calling the bank asking how to make donations.

Also on Wednesday, two trucks carrying milk, clothes, diapers and other supplies left B'nai B'rith heading to Loprado County, an hour from Santiago, the country's capital.

In addition to donations, 35 Jewish volunteers spent an afternoon in Loprado helping some 2,000 people whose homes were flooded and who have been living in emergency shelters.

Over the weekend, a group of 2,000 Jewish volunteers, six trucks and 50 four-wheel-drive vehicles will assist residents of the rural area of Lampa. Nearly three feet of water remain in the streets there, and farming areas have been completely destroyed.

Only four-wheel-drive vehicles — provided to B'nai B'rith by an Adventure Tourism Club — are able to get into the area. Along with doctors, nurses and architects, recreational experts will join the mission to assist children.

According to Tapia, the local Jewish community has always been active when its services were needed.

"The new lesson is that we are answering together," Tapia said.

Some 400,000 Palestinians live in Chile, out of a total population of more than 15 million.

Though the rain had stopped on Wednesday, more was forecast.

The possibility of better weather seemed equally ominous.

The huge amount of snow that has been falling over the nearby Cordillera de los Andes is not yet solid. If the sun comes out, it could melt the snow, filling rivers and prompting more floods.

Chile has invested \$700 million in hydraulic infrastructure in the past decade, but the system is not adequate to handle this volume of water. □

Mass. man may be deported

NEW YORK (JTA) — U.S. officials launched proceedings to revoke the citizenship of a Massachusetts man for his alleged Nazi activities.

The Department of Justice says Vladas Zajanckauskas, 87, was a guard and officer who participated in the Nazi liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto.

Zajanckauskas immigrated to the United States illegally after World War II because he concealed his wartime activities when he applied for a visa, prosecutors said Wednesday. □

Israel mourns the lives cut short by latest act of Palestinian terror

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The shock, sorrow and outrage from the most recent terrorist attack intensified as more became known about the victims.

Israeli newspapers were filled with the faces of those killed in Wednesday's suicide car-bombing in northern Israel. Along with running the heart-rending pictures, the papers provided summaries of the victims' lives and ambitions, cut short by the bombing.

• Irena Stanislavsky, whose son David was killed in the bombing, had been looking forward to celebrating his upcoming engagement.

On Wednesday, after learning of her son's death, she tried to gather the strength to call David's fiancée in Ukraine with the news. "I can't do it. I don't know how to tell her that their engagement party, which was planned for next month, won't take place," she told Ma'ariv.

Her 23-year-old son immigrated with her to Israel from Ukraine four years ago. He served as a driver in the army and had recently signed on to extend his military service.

"He loved the army," his mother said. "He was a wonderful person — polite, optimistic, with a sense of humor and joy for life."

"All of the dreams and plans have been shattered, and I'm left alone here. I have no more children," she said.

• Two and a half months ago, 20-year-old Staff Sgt. Zvi Gelbert of Hadera missed a bus — and saved his life in the process, because the bus was the target of a terrorist attack.

On Wednesday, he was not as lucky.

After watching the bus blow up in March, Gelbert was apprehensive about getting aboard another bus.

On Wednesday, he boarded bus No. 830 for the daily ride to his army base.

"He was the prince of the house. A happy and smiling person," his older sister, Zehavit, said Thursday.

In his spare time, Gelbert worked as a referee in a lower-level soccer league, and his dream was to advance to the higher leagues.

His friends said Gelbert was excited about the World Cup soccer games. He is survived by his parents and two sisters.

• The family of Adi Dahan, 17, of Afula, was still mourning the recent death of her older brother, Shlomi, in a fall from a cliff during a hike when tragedy struck the family again.

"A huge wall has fallen on the family, and I don't know how they will deal with the double catastrophe," Adi's uncle, Max Cohen, said.

"Adi supported her family since the tragedy. She was in effect the backbone of the family. Now all is destroyed. God picks the flowers one by one."

Adi was returning home on the bus after visiting her boyfriend in Tel Aviv.

She is survived by her parents, a sister and a brother.

• Staff Sgt. Gennadi Issakov, 20, of Hadera, was supposed to take a later bus to his army base on Wednesday, but he left home early to cover for a friend who wanted to head off early.

His commander had planned to tell Issakov that he had been granted his wish to be named a noncommissioned officer and that he would be promoted to the rank of sergeant. Issakov never got to

his base to find out. "I planned to tell him that I had decided to give him the assignment," his commander said. "When I heard about the attack, I ran to the bus and found his beret. I rushed to the hospital, but was told there that he had been killed."

The commander described him as a motivated soldier who volunteered for extra duties.

Issakov, who immigrated to Israel from the former Soviet Union with his family four years ago, is survived by his parents and two sisters. □

French envoy cancels meeting; makes Jewish leaders' blood boil

By Matthew E. Berger

WASHINGTON (JTA) — U.S. Jewish leaders are fuming after the French ambassador to the United States canceled a meeting with them to discuss anti-Semitism.

Thursday's meeting, coordinated by the Senate Republican Policy Conference and the Republican Jewish Coalition, had been planned at least a month earlier and was to involve close to 100 American Jewish leaders.

But on Wednesday afternoon, Ambassador Francois Bujon de l'Estang canceled.

A French Embassy employee told Senate leaders that the envoy is the representative of a sovereign state and will not meet with nongovernmental organizations.

"This represents a terrible mistake on the part of the French ambassador," said Jess Hordes, Washington director of the Anti-Defamation League. "It sends the wrong signal about his country and their concern for this issue."

A spokesman for the French ambassador later said de l'Estang had previously met with several Jewish nongovernmental organizations about the anti-Semitic incidents in France, and would now prefer to meet with them individually, rather than all at once.

"The fact is he considers this forum not to be the most appropriate way to communicate with NGOs," said embassy spokesman Remi Marechaux.

De l'Estang told representatives of the policy conference that he would still be interested in meeting with its chairman, Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.), but not the Jewish leaders.

Marechaux also said he believed the ambassador's secretary had made the appointment without consulting the ambassador, and the cancellation occurred once he understood the parameters of the meeting.

But the ambassador "knew what the discussion was going to be about and he knew who was coming," said an official who organized the event, speaking on condition of anonymity. "We were going to have asked him pointed questions, but we wouldn't have been rude."

One Jewish leader, who had scheduled a week of travel in Washington around the French meeting, said she believes the French ambassador felt he could manipulate the conversation away from anti-Semitism in France in individual meetings, but would not be able to do so in a larger group.

"It's a divide-and-conquer strategy," she said. "He believes that if he can meet with us individually, he can make separate deals with each of us."

Christian leaders sympathetic to Israel had also been expected to attend the meeting. □