



# Daily News Bulletin

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85th Year

## TOP NEWS IN BRIEF

### Chaim Potok dies at 73

Chaim Potok, the celebrated novelist known for depicting the Chasidic world, died of brain cancer Tuesday at 73.

Potok's best-known works, including "The Chosen" and "My Name Is Asher Lev," describe Orthodox Jews struggling to maintain their faith in a secular world. [Page 4]

### Israel kills Hamas leader

Israel killed the leader of Hamas' military wing in the Gaza Strip. Hamas vowed to avenge the assassination of Salah Shehada, who was killed when Israeli planes rocketed his house early Tuesday.

According to Palestinian sources, 15 people, including nine children, were killed and more than 100 wounded in the strike. An estimated 100,000 marched in a funeral procession for the dead, who included Shehada's wife, three of his children and two of his aides.

U.S., European and U.N. officials criticized Israel for killing civilians along with Shehada in the airstrike. White House spokesman Ari Fleischer said Tuesday that Israel's attack was "heavy-handed," adding that President Bush "has said before Israel has to be mindful of the consequences of its actions."

### Suspects killed near Nablus

Israeli soldiers killed three suspected Palestinian terrorists near Nablus on Tuesday.

The three, who were armed with assault rifles and grenades, were believed to belong to the Hamas terror cell responsible for killing nine Israelis in an ambush last week near the West Bank settlement of Immanuel, Israel Radio reported.

### State Dept. opposes missile sale

The U.S. State Department reportedly is concerned about Israel's plans to sell its Arrow anti-missile system to India.

Secretary of State Colin Powell plans to raise the issue during an upcoming visit to India, The Washington Post reported Tuesday.

U.S. officials fear the sale will exacerbate tensions between India and Pakistan, the paper said. Because the Arrow missile program was developed jointly by Israel and the United States, American approval is required for the sale.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

### With situation looking bleak, spate of proposals raised to move forward

By Leslie Susser

JERUSALEM (JTA) — The aphorism that things must get worse before they get better fits today's Israeli-Palestinian conflict like a glove.

Twenty-two months of armed conflict have taken their toll on both sides. Beyond the dead and wounded, economic suffering has reached new heights.

As the Israeli economy sinks into deeper recession, and life for the Palestinians under curfew and closure becomes unbearable, both sides are looking for a way out.

The past few weeks have seen more creative thinking, open meetings, back channels and international involvement than at any time in the past two years.

Those efforts might be derailed, at least temporarily, by Israel's airstrike in Gaza early Tuesday morning, which killed Hamas military leader Salah Shehada and at least 15 civilians. The attack was widely condemned internationally because of the civilian casualty toll.

Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat called the attack a massacre and said it had scuttled what he claimed was a potential Hamas agreement to suspend suicide bombings.

For its part, Hamas vowed vengeance, threatening to accelerate violence, which had been largely under control since the Israel Defense Force reoccupied Palestinian towns and cities across the West Bank last month.

Some Israeli analysts, however, say the airstrike, other recent military successes against Hamas and the reoccupation itself have helped restore Palestinian respect for Israeli power.

This, they argue, could evoke more conciliatory and creative Palestinian approaches that may spur the diplomatic process forward.

For Israel, three issues are key: a cease-fire, reform of the Palestinian armed forces and a Palestinian decision-making process that bypasses Arafat.

For the Palestinians, the immediate goals are an Israeli withdrawal from West Bank cities and alleviation of the population's day-to-day hardships.

Various formulas are being proposed to meet those goals.

In talks this month with Palestinian leaders other than Arafat, Israeli Foreign Minister Shimon Peres has been trying to find creative solutions for all these problems.

On withdrawal, Peres proposes a "Judea First" option, under which the IDF would withdraw from cities in the southern West Bank such as Jericho, Hebron and Bethlehem.

If those places remain quiet, the IDF would start pulling out of northern cities like Jenin, Nablus and Ramallah.

Peres has hinted that total withdrawal would be contingent on a clear Palestinian blueprint for new elections.

The voting would take place as soon as Israel completes its withdrawal, and the outcome would have to guarantee that Arafat is neutralized.

To help alleviate Palestinian suffering, Peres has said that Israel is ready to release about 10 percent of the Palestinian tax funds it has frozen — as soon as a mechanism is set up, with American assistance, to guarantee transparency in the money's use.

At the same time, E.U. foreign policy chief Javier Solana has been trying to arrange a credible cease-fire.

He is urging Arafat's own Fatah movement, with its Tanzim militia, to publish a unilateral cease-fire call in both The New York Times and the Arabic press. The Arabic

## MIDEAST FOCUS

### Rabin's daughter resigns

Israeli Deputy Defense Minister Dalia Rabin-Pelossof resigned Tuesday to protest the Labor Party's continued presence in the government.

In her resignation letter, which has yet to take effect, Rabin-Pelossof said she could not remain in the government, charging it was not carrying on the diplomatic legacy of her father, the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

Rabin-Pelossof's decision came on the heels of Trade Minister Dalia Itzik's disclosure that she is considering giving up her Cabinet seat to become Israel's ambassador to London.

### Israeli envoys meet Bush officials

Two aides to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon met with Bush administration officials Monday to get an update on last week's meeting of the "Quartet."

Brig. Gen. Moshe Kaplinsky and Dov Weisglass met with Secretary of State Colin Powell and National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice to discuss the meetings Powell held in New York with officials from the United Nations, European Union and Russia.

### Fertilizer used in bombs

Palestinian terrorist groups have begun using a compound from fertilizers to build more powerful bombs, according to Israeli security sources.

The sources said the new chemical compound can produce a more powerful blast and is less dangerous to work with than materials previously used, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported.

### Ex-army chief to enter politics?

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon reportedly invited Israel's just-retired army chief Shaul Mofaz to join the Likud party if he enters politics. Sharon is said to have extended the offer at a private lunch with Lt.-Gen. Mofaz last week, the Israeli daily Ha'aretz reported.



## Daily News Bulletin

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version would be accompanied by arguments against the continued use of violence.

In Solana's vision, Hamas and Islamic Jihad would then fall in line and relatively moderate Arab countries like Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia would come out in support of the cease-fire. Israel would then start withdrawing from Palestinian cities, along the lines of the Peres formula.

Egyptian and Jordanian instructors would move in to train the reconstituted Palestinian security forces, which would be responsible for keeping the peace. A similar plan, by CIA Director George Tenet, has an added proviso: Palestinian police would be screened for credibility before they take over.

Peres's Palestinian interlocutors on security and finance, P.A. Interior Minister Gen. Abdel Razak Yehiyeh and Finance Minister Salim Fayed, have presented plans of their own.

Yehiyeh put forward a more ambitious, longer-term security proposal: The IDF withdraws to the positions it held before the intifada erupted in September 2000. Palestinian forces move in and take over security responsibility.

Under Yehiyeh's plan, Israel and the Palestinians then renew security cooperation and the Palestinians carry out Israel's major security demands: reducing the number of different armed forces from over a dozen to three under one unified command; confiscating illegal weapons; and ending incitement against Israel.

Fayed proposes a 100-day plan for thorough reform of P.A. financial practices. To create absolute transparency, he is proposing that all Palestinian funding go through just one bank, and that he sign all checks personally.

Other, less official groups of Israelis and Palestinians have been putting forward even farther-reaching proposals.

In back channels, mainly in Israel and Europe, they have been sounding each other out — and drafting plans for a permanent peace deal.

One of the more interesting proposals emerged from a mid-July meeting in Belgium between Ziyad Abu Ziyad, the P.A. official formerly in charge of Jerusalem affairs, and a group of Israeli academics.

Abu Ziyad published a statement of principles that included major Palestinian concessions on two of the issues that torpedoed the Camp David process: sovereignty over Jerusalem's Temple Mount and the "right of return" for Palestinian refugees.

Regarding the Temple Mount, Abu Ziyad proposed that there be no sovereignty, but rather Palestinian administration of the mosques atop the mount and Israeli administration of the Western Wall along its side.

As for the refugees, they would have the right to return to a new state of Palestine, not Israel.

These are proposals the Israeli left, at least, could live with. They seem to indicate a new and potentially important pragmatism in some Palestinian quarters after 22 months of bloodletting.

On the Israeli side, in meetings in Greece and elsewhere, former Shin Bet domestic security service head Ami Ayalon has been airing similar proposals to Palestinian moderates such as Al-Quds University president Sari Nusseibeh, the top PLO official for Jerusalem.

Politicians on both sides have failed their people, who should be given a chance to take charge of their own destiny, Ayalon says.

As soon as groups from the two sides have agreed on a draft peace deal, they will seek to gather a million signatures on each side to force the politicians' hands, Ayalon says.

Given the situation on the ground, such solutions might seem light years away right now. But, perhaps, as the old aphorism suggests, things will start moving precisely because the situation is so bad. □

*(Leslie Susser is the diplomatic correspondent for The Jerusalem Report.)*

### Sharon orders worker deportations

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has ordered police to immediately begin deporting some 50,000 illegal foreign workers.

It could take up to a year to deport the workers, who include Palestinians and Jordanians, according to the Israeli daily Ha'aretz. □

## JEWISH WORLD

### Koran requirement sparks lawsuit

The University of North Carolina is being sued over a requirement that incoming freshman read portions of the Koran.

Three students and a Christian group, the Virginia-based Family Policy Network, filed a lawsuit Monday, charging that the requirement impinges on students' religious rights. School officials said the requirement, which was instituted because the topic of Islam is timely, was not intended to promote Islam.

### Buchenwald memorial overhauled

Work began Tuesday on restoring a memorial at the Buchenwald concentration camp.

The memorial, which was created in 1958 and includes a group of 11 bronze figures, depicts prisoners' resistance to their Nazi guards.

The restoration is expected to take two to three years and cost some \$990,000, according to The Associated Press.

### Torah scrolls donated to Israel

Six Torah scrolls from a synagogue that was desecrated in Wales arrived in Israel on a special Jewish Agency for Israel flight Monday.

The Swansea Jewish community donated four of the scrolls to the Israel Defense Force and two to educational institutions. The initiative follows the July 10 desecration of the synagogue in Swansea.

### Canadian anti-Semitism up

Anti-Semitic acts are growing more frequent in Canada, a new report says.

Nearly 200 anti-Semitic incidents were reported to B'nai Brith Canada in the first six months of 2002, compared with 121 such incidents in the same period last year and 286 for the whole of 2001, the organization said in its latest Audit of Anti-Semitic Incidents.

### ADL: Hate groups competing

Neo-Nazi groups in the United States are posing a new threat, according to the Anti-Defamation League.

Extremist groups are in competition to be regarded as the true successor to the once-notorious Aryan Nations, the ADL says. The breakup of the Aryan Nations last year has led to a number of splinter groups that are calling for violent attacks against Jews, gays as well as other minorities.

### Intifada costing Israel \$11 billion

The Israeli economy has lost some \$11 billion in the past two years of conflict with the Palestinians, the Finance Ministry's chief economist said Monday. Michael Sarel added that the loss amounted to about 10 percent of Israel's gross domestic product.

## Draft deferrals for yeshiva students sparking secular-religious tensions

By Naomi Segal

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Secular-religious frictions have flared again in Israel over a bill that grants draft deferrals to fervently Orthodox yeshiva students.

A source of bitter debate for years, the so-called Tal bill was given final approval Tuesday by the Knesset in a 51-41 vote.

The bill was named after former Supreme Court Justice Zvi Tal, who headed a commission to resolve the issue of the military deferrals. It calls for granting yeshiva students draft deferrals until age 22, when they will be given the opportunity to take a year off from studies to work without being drafted.

At the end of that year, the students will be required to decide whether to declare Torah their "profession" and resume their studies, or do a shortened military service or one year of national service.

Before the vote, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, who opposed yeshiva deferrals before taking office, told legislators that he was voting for the bill "with a heavy heart."

Defense Minister and Labor Party leader Benjamin Ben-Eliezer had sharp words for the prime minister.

Referring to the Israeli army's ongoing efforts to clamp down on Palestinian violence, Ben-Eliezer said that whoever seeks to pass the Tal bill now is "disconnected from the people."

During Tuesday's Knesset session, legislators rejected an amendment that would require yeshiva students to serve two weeks each year in the Civil Guard.

Last week, the Knesset committee that prepared the Tal bill had approved the amendment — but the committee reversed its decision on Monday.

Committee chair Yossi Katz of Labor, who initiated the amendment, called its defeat a big mistake.

"We have before us a proposal which was intended in a clearly symbolic way to convey to the public, all of the public, that no Jew in this state is exempt from some kind of service to the State of Israel," Army Radio quoted Katz as saying.

Knesset member Moshe Gafni of the fervently Orthodox United Torah Judaism bloc attacked Katz for introducing the amendment.

"This is a controversial issue that contradicts the basis of the Tal bill," Gafni said after the amendment was first approved by the committee last week.

Following Tuesday's vote, the Tal bill will go into effect in six months and remain in effect for five years. Near the end of that period, another Knesset debate will be held to decide whether to renew the law.

The Tal bill's approval came four years after Israel's High Court of Justice struck down the Defense Ministry's 50-year-old arrangement for granting exemptions to yeshiva students.

Critics claimed the arrangement had evolved from a means to promote Torah study for a limited number of Jewish scholars into a rubber stamp for thousands of draft dodgers. At issue are draft exemptions granted annually to fervently Orthodox Israelis who declare "Torah their conscience."

The arrangement was devised by Israel's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, who authorized the defense minister to grant a limited number of draft exemptions and deferrals to yeshiva students.

In 1954, when the arrangement was signed, some 400 yeshiva students were granted deferrals. According to recent estimates, that number has reached 30,000.

The High Court of Justice ruled in 1998 that the arrangement had created a sense of inequality in Israeli society, and was not anchored in law. It asked the Knesset to pass legislation resolving the issue one way or another.

Over the years, the issue has become a political hot potato. Both Sharon and his predecessor, Ehud Barak, came out against the exemptions before they came into power, only to moderate their positions upon becoming prime minister and facing the political clout of the fervently Orthodox parties.

The issue has become even more volatile in light of the Palestinian intifada, which has focused attention on the burden of providing security for Israel's citizens. □

## OBITUARY

**Chaim Potok dead at age of 73,  
was literary pioneer and scholar**

By Peter Ephross

NEW YORK (JTA) — Chaim Potok was a novelist who paved the way for a younger generation of religious American Jewish writers — and a Jewish scholar who worked tirelessly to bring Jews and Judaism closer together.

Potok, who was raised in an Orthodox home but later became a Conservative rabbi, died Tuesday at his suburban Philadelphia home of brain cancer at the age of 73.

The best-known of Potok's more than 15 works, including "The Chosen" and "My Name Is Asher Lev," describe Orthodox Jews struggling with maintaining their faith in a secular world.

"He is a major figure in the American Jewish literary canon," said Daniel Walden, a professor emeritus of American studies, English and comparative literature at Penn State University. "His essential mission was to explore the core-to-core cultural conflicts of our civilization, and in doing so he exposed what the Jewish experience was like, what the Jewish religion was like."

Some of his interest in these "core conflicts" stemmed from his own experience in the Korean War, where he encountered Korean Buddhism as a U.S. Army chaplain — an experience he later fictionalized in "The Book of Lights."

Indeed, he opened the religious Jewish world up as much to non-Jews as to Jews.

Years after "The Chosen" was published, Potok received letters and e-mails from nuns and priests, as well as Protestant clergy, thanking him for writing the book, Walden said.

Earlier Jewish writers, such as Bernard Malamud, Philip Roth and Saul Bellow, were religious skeptics. But Potok wrote from within the Jewish religious tradition, Walden said.

As a result, he served as a model for the next generation of American Jewish writers — Allegra Goodman, Nathan Englander and Myra Goldberg — who wrote about the religious experience.

Potok chafed at being labeled a Jewish writer, but when he tried to write about other subjects — in, for example, "I Am the Clay," a book about Korean refugees — he was less successful.

"He was pigeonholed as a Jewish writer, and the few times he tried to write his way out of that, his public wouldn't let him," said Ellen Frankel, the editor in chief of the Jewish Publication Society.

Potok's most famous book, "The Chosen," focuses on Danny Saunders, who is raised in a Chasidic home in Brooklyn.

Saunders' attraction to the more tolerant world of his friend Reuven Malter puts him at odds with his father, who wants him to remain within the Chasidic world. The story was familiar to Potok. He spent a fervently Orthodox childhood in New York, where he was born to parents who had emigrated from Poland.

"My father, especially, wanted me to be a professor of Talmud in a yeshiva. This business of writing at first seemed frivolous to him. When it persisted, he didn't know what to make of it," Potok said in an interview two years ago.

Even though he never fulfilled his father's expectations, Potok did become a Jewish scholar. In 1965, he earned a doctorate in philosophy from the University of Pennsylvania, writing his dissertation on the German Jewish philosopher Solomon Maimon, a contemporary of Immanuel Kant. The last year of his doctorate was spent in Jerusalem, where he also wrote "The Chosen."

From 1966 to 1974, he was the editor in chief of the JPS in Philadelphia. During his tenure, he launched JPS' series of Bible commentaries and emphasized the publication of children's literature.

For more than 15 years, he served chairman of the editorial committee, which oversees JPS' acquisitions.

Frankel met with Potok several times a year at Hymie's, a Philadelphia-area delicatessen — where Potok usually ordered a bagel and a coffee. The bearded Potok was sometimes warm and effusive, and sometimes silent and brooding — but he was always very intense, Frankel said.

"Often, you would ask him a question, he would think for a moment, then he would cut right to the chase," she said.

Potok was the literary editor of JPS's five-volume Torah commentary.

During the 1990s, he adapted and edited that commentary into one volume that is used in Conservative synagogues throughout North America — even though the project took him away from his writing. "He loved the Jew in the pew," Frankel said.

Jeffrey Tigay, one of Potok's colleagues on the JPS project, said Potok — in both his novels and his Torah commentary work — saw modern Judaism as an amalgam of Jewish tradition and the cultures it comes into contact with.

"In his novels, characters, like Potok himself," are dealing with their own crises of faith by adopting critical methods and understanding Judaism in a more sophisticated way, said Tigay, a professor at the University of Pennsylvania.

Though he found his home in Conservative Judaism, he spoke passionately about the Orthodox community, which he believed had grown too narrow-minded.

"The yeshiva is the foil I strike out with. Or the foil I strike out against," he once said. "Fundamentalism is an absolutely wrong reading of Jewish traditions."

In addition to "My Name Is Asher Lev" and "The Chosen," which was made into a Hollywood movie starring Robby Benson — Potok addressed this world in several other works.

Potok was also a passionate lover of Israel — where he lived for several years — but "he was not Israel right or wrong. He felt he had the right to express an opinion," Frankel said.

Potok also was engaged in the Soviet Jewry movement.

Lev Gorodetsky, who was involved in clandestine Jewish activities during the Soviet era, remembers hosting an underground conference of Hebrew teachers in 1984, at which Potok lectured on American Jewish literature.

Gorodetsky, who recently served as JTA's Moscow correspondent, remembers that even though the event was held underground, word spread quickly that Potok was in town — even the KGB lingered in the shadows of the gathering.

In 1997, Potok published a book on the subject of Soviet Jews, "The Gates of November," which focused on the Slepak family, refuseniks who moved to Israel after gaining their freedom.

Potok, it seemed, always had something to write.

Potok told an interviewer in 2000 that he was tired because had gotten up that day at 4:30 a.m. When the interviewer asked him why he had started his day so early, Potok replied, "Because there were sentences in my head that had to get out."

Potok is survived by his wife, Adena; two daughters, Rena, and Naama; a son, Akiva; and two grandchildren. □

(JTA correspondent Lev Krichevsky in Moscow contributed to this report.)