



IN THE NEWS

Rocket attack kills Israeli in Gaza

An Israeli woman was killed by Palestinian rocket fire from the Gaza Strip.

Two rockets launched by Al-Aksa Brigade terrorists Thursday slammed into Nativ Ha'asara, a moshav just north of the Gaza boundary, killing the woman in her home.

There were no immediate reports of other casualties.

Gaza withdrawal could be the last

Ariel Sharon hinted that the upcoming withdrawals from the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank will be Israel's last.

"There will not be another disengagement," the Israeli prime minister said in a speech to police officers Thursday.

It was not clear if Sharon was ruling out any further withdrawals, or just withdrawals Israel carries out unilaterally, in the absence of a peace deal with the Palestinians.

But he voiced hope for implementing the U.S.-backed "road map" peace plan, which envisions a peaceful Palestinian state alongside Israel.

"If there is quiet, terrorism stops outright and the terrorist groups' weapons are collected, we can move on to the next stage of the road map," Sharon said.

Israel kills Jihad member

Israeli forces killed an Islamic Jihad terrorist in the West Bank.

The 28-year-old fugitive was killed in a clash in Nablus on Thursday as Israel intensified its search for the planners of this week's Islamic Jihad suicide bombing in Netanya.

In the Palestinian village of Atil, believed to be the hiding place of the group's top terrorist in the West Bank, soldiers conducted house-to-house searches.

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WORLD REPORT

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David Karp

New immigrants to Israel are greeted by Zeev Bielski, chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel, as they arrive at Ben Gurion Airport on Wednesday.

New olim arrive in Israel — but what to do the day after?

By CHANAN TIGAY

ASHKELON, Israel (JTA) — It was 8:45 a.m. on Sept. 11, 2001, when Henry Fuerte, a systems analyst at a large U.S. insurance broker, stepped into an elevator on the 78th floor of the World Trade Center's north tower.

The Brooklyn native was late for work and had caught the express to 78, where a local elevator would shuttle him and other stragglers to the 95th-floor offices of Marsh Inc.

He never got there.

Just as Fuerte entered the elevator, American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the building, between the 93rd and 98th floors, tearing a gaping hole in the giant skyscraper — killing

everyone onboard, along with 355 of Fuerte's colleagues at Marsh, among the thousands who died that day.

Seventeen floors beneath them, Fuerte recalls, the force of the impact blew up the elevator he was standing in. Shrapnel lacerated his eye and he injured his back and knees — but he survived. That, says Fuerte, a 33-year-old in a yarmulke, was thanks not to luck but to God.

Three years, 10 months and a day later — on July 12, 2005 — Fuerte joined some 500 other Jews from the United States and Canada who immigrated to Israel in the biggest single-day aliyah from North America in the history of the Jewish state.

Sept. 11 "was an impetus to me for aliyah,

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■ *New immigrants to Israel try to figure out how to get up new lines*

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because I didn't want to die in New York," said Fuerte, sitting toward the front of an El Al 747 packed with about 300 new olim, or immigrants, on their way to the Jewish state. "Terrorism is all over the world. That being the case, I'd rather be in a place I can call home."

The notion of Israel as home was echoed frequently aboard the flight. Despite the material comforts of America and the potential dangers in the Middle East, many said that they never felt more at home than when in Israel. The flight was sponsored by Nefesh B'Nefesh, an organization that helps North American Jews make aliyah, and the Jewish Agency for Israel.

The Jewish Agency has been the primary facilitator of aliyah for many years. In 2002, Nefesh B'Nefesh was founded specifically to encourage immigration from North America.

Both organizations say they expect 3,200 immigrants to arrive in Israel from North America this year, the first time since 1983 that the figure has topped 3,000.

The groups' initial goal has been to identify people whom Nefesh B'Nefesh's Charlie Levine calls the "low-hanging fruit" — Jews who want to make aliyah but for some reason thus far have found the move untenable.

By year's end the group will have brought more than 6,700 North American immigrants.

The aim is to smooth the process so that aliyah becomes a more realistic option.

In this vein, Nefesh B'Nefesh provides immigrants with financial assistance, employment resources, social services and guidance through the governmental absorption process.

Several representatives of Israel's Interior Ministry aboard the aliyah flight went from seat to seat finalizing immigration papers. The process, which could have taken months in Israel, was done by the time the plane landed.

When Rabbi Joshua Fass, who co-founded Nefesh B'Nefesh along with Tony Gelbart, picked up the plane's loudspeaker, he told those onboard, "Welcome home."

Indeed, generations of Jews have looked upon Israel as a spiritual — and sometimes physical — homeland. Many of those on the flight had been planning to make aliyah for years. Their arrival in Israel was the culmination of years of saving, working and dreaming.

But what now? What do olim do once they finally arrive in Israel?

As Rabbi Mark Smilowitz, 35, who was immigrating with his wife, Michelle, 29, and their three young children, asked: "What am I going to do tomorrow morning?"

Answers varied among those in the latest wave of North American aliyah. Smilowitz, a former yeshiva teacher from Seattle, was heading to the home of relatives in Beit Shemesh.

There he and his family will wait six weeks for their personal belongings to arrive from the United States. Once their packages arrive, they'll move into a house they bought two years ago.

"When you're coming from America, you want to bring that comfort with you," Michelle Smilowitz said, holding her three-month-old baby in her arms. "Making aliyah is hard enough. You need to do everything you can to make it easier."

But as for tomorrow and the next day and next week?

"Getting a driver's license is a big pri-

ority," she said. "You have to get around."

In addition, she said, they'll enroll their 5-year-old son in a Hebrew-language program for youngsters. But as far as the first year in the country is concerned, the Smilowitzes said they'll take the time to slowly get acclimated.

Dan Brotman, an 18-year-old from Boston, had another plan: to join the Israel Defense Forces and possibly a combat unit, as part of the Tzofim

Garin Tzabar program, in which young people from North America move to kibbutzim and serve in the military.

"It's a bit nerve-racking," he said, sitting with two young female friends who were also preparing to enlist. "I won't be able to go back to the U.S. for a visit for a year and a half because of the army. But I think we're going to be fine. We're going to integrate."

After the flight landed, a Canadian, Ryan Paddock, 19, was the first of the new immigrants to be presented with an aliyah certificate in a large ceremony in a hangar just off the Ben-Gurion Airport tarmac.

"Seeing all of you here today is like a dream for me," said the former Winnipeg resident, who also plans to join the army soon.

At the ceremony, the olim, along with family and friends, heard from Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon — with whom Fuerte shook hands — Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom, Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres and the new Jewish Agency chairman, Zeev Bielski.

Each immigrant was then given an aliyah certificate, an envelope of cash and a taxi voucher to get to his or her new home.

For Aharon Horowitz, that new home would be in the Bakka neighborhood of Jerusalem.

Horowitz — who studied political science and Arabic — moved to Israel with his wife. The couple rented their Jerusalem apartment based on a series of blurry, wide-angle photos taken by a friend and were planning to head straight there from the airport.

'I think we're going to be fine. We're going to integrate.'

Dan Brotman

New immigrant to Israel



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At summer camp, professors learn about Israel

By RICHARD ASINOF

BOSTON (JTA) — It wasn't your typical Jewish summer camp: There were no campfires, no songs, no "bug juice" — and the participants weren't teenagers.

For the most part they were middle-aged, tenured and tenure-track professors, engaged in an intensive three-week program to learn how to teach courses on Israel.

The Summer Institute for Israel Studies, in its second year at Brandeis University, brought together 21 scholars from a diverse group of schools. It included Catholic universities such as Seton Hall and DePaul; large public universities such as UCLA, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst and Michigan State; prestigious smaller schools such as Middlebury and Brown; and very small colleges, such as Sweet Briar in Virginia.

The goal was to learn how to teach about Israel — not in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict but, according to S. Ilan Troen, a professor of Israel studies at Brandeis, "to ensure that a more serious and balanced study of Israel be available at universities."

Troen, the institute's director, said he wants to transform the study of Israel from an academic abstraction to the study of "a living society."

The program helps about 20 academics a year prepare to teach about Israel.

"Each year we're talking about 20-30 new courses, with hundreds of students taking them. Each time we do a seminar, we're reaching thousands of students," he said. "If you understand that these professors will be teaching year after year for 30 years, the multiplier effect is tremendous."

To enroll in the all-expenses paid program, participants must commit to teaching a course on Israel. They can participate only with full approval of their campus administrators, who must confirm the desire to have Israel studies in the school's curriculum.

The academic "campers" have come not just from American universities but from Brazil, England, Australia and even Turkey.

In a phone interview from Israel just before the start of the seminar, Troen told JTA that he recently returned from

Turkey, where he attended a class taught by one of last year's seminar participants.

"There were about 40 students in his class and, on the day that I arrived, they were engaged in a debate on how to resolve the issue of Jerusalem between Muslims and Jews," he said. "The passion in the room was extraordinary. Muslim students in a Muslim country were arguing the Jewish side."

The discussion was based on real learning, Troen continued.

"They had read, they had studied. I don't know where else that could happen in the Muslim world — thanks to the fact that the teacher had been through our program," he said.

This year's seminar, which began June 15 on the Brandeis campus in Waltham, Mass., involved two weeks of intense seminars with leading Israel scholars, morning, afternoon and night.

During the third week, participants traveled to Israel for "on-the-job" experiences orchestrated by Troen, including visits to Bedouin villages in the Negev; a Palestinian university in eastern Jerusalem; and Sderot, an Israeli border town that frequently is the target of Palestinian rocket attacks.

The study of Israel on college campuses has become a hot-button issue, particularly following a documentary charging anti-Israel bias in Columbia University's Middle East studies department. But Troen is wary of being drawn into that argument.

"Our 'students' don't teach the Arab-Israeli conflict but, rather, Israel as a total society," he said. "Israel is an incredibly complicated place. Israeli life is more than a sound bite on CNN. The reductionism that comes from the American media can lead to extremism."

At a luncheon halfway through the program, seminar participants shared their experiences of what's happening on their own campuses in relation to the conflict around Israel, Israel studies and Israeli-Palestinian debate.

The biggest problem many said they face isn't with pro-Palestinian students and faculty but with American Jewish

community members outside campus, who often are surprised and enraged to hear critical comments about Israel at academic events — even from Israelis.

Kaylin Goldstein, a professor at the University of Miami, told how a program entitled "Difficult Dialogues," which featured an Israeli Jew and an Israeli Arab,

disturbed many community members in the audience.

"They were expecting to hear a pro-Israel advocacy speech from the Israeli," she said. "It was not a difficult dialogue between the Israelis and the Palestinians. It was a difficult dialogue between Jewish community members interested in Israel, and the reality of Israel."

Many seminar participants said campus dialogue between pro-Israeli and anti-Israeli students and faculty is civil, despite strongly held views.

At Middlebury College in Vermont, "the discussion is very polite. The community creates a polite consensus," professor Theodore Sasson said.

At Brown, professor Micah Gottlieb said, "students are open-minded to hearing and considering different perspectives.

"It's extremely civil," he said, contrasting that with his experience as a student and teacher in Canada, where he said he encountered virulent anti-Semitism.

At Brooklyn College, professor Robert Shapiro said, members of the Jewish community — including many Orthodox Jews and Russian immigrants — make up more of the audience at campus events than do students.

Caryn Aviv, a professor at the University of Denver, said she appreciated a presentation by Brandeis sociologist Shulamit Reinharz on the political and social role women have played in Israel, and welcomed the introduction of gender studies into Israel studies.

Support for the institute comes from many different sources, including the American Jewish Committee. Steve Bayme, director of the AJCommittee's Koppelman Institute on American Jewish-Israeli Relations, called the group a "junior partner" in the Summer Institute.

University teachers learn about the complexities of Israel and the Middle East.

FOCUS
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GOP's Santorum draws support from Jews

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

WASHINGTON (JTA) — For Bob Casey, getting Jewish support should be simple.

The Pennsylvania state treasurer is expected to easily become the Democratic nominee for the Senate in the 2006 midterm elections. He'll be running against Rick Santorum, a top-ranking incumbent Republican who has been a leader in the fight against reproductive rights, separation of church and state and stem-cell research — issues the majority of American Jews support.

But as Casey crosses the state in search of Jewish voters and campaign dollars, he's running up against a powerful segment of the Jewish population — pro-Israel voters, who back those who have proven their support for the Jewish state.

While Santorum may be the embodiment of Christian conservatism on domestic issues, he also is one of the strongest advocates for Israel in the U.S. Senate — and that has brought several prominent pro-Israel donor groups to his side, 16 months before the election.

The Pennsylvania race, one of the most closely watched among the 2006 Senate contests thus far, highlights the dilemma for some Jews, who must choose between two candidates with diametrically opposed views on many issues, both of whom have some attraction for Jewish voters.



Office of Senator Rick Santorum

Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.).

Some Israel supporters are expected to raise a lot of money for Santorum, viewing him as one of Israel's best friends in the Senate. Others will back Casey because they are ardent Democrats or because they view Santorum as a major force pushing the conservative political agenda.

For this latter group, either domestic concerns trump the Israel issue or they believe Casey will support Israel as well, even though

he is untested in that area.

The race resembles the battle lines that emerged in last year's presidential contest, when President Bush tried to add Jewish votes by touting his support for Israel.

While the challenger, Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.), won the majority of Jewish votes, Bush received almost a quarter of the Jewish vote — an unusually high number for a Republican presidential candidate.

Although a large majority of American Jews remains Democratic, the strength of the pro-Israel community, coupled with a growing number of active Republican Jews, has led more GOP incumbents to focus specifically on Jewish votes and donations.

Bush appeared last month at a fundraiser for Santorum in the Philadelphia suburb of Bryn Mawr. The event, which took place on the second day of Shavuot, was hosted by Mitchell Morgan, a board member of the Republican Jewish Coalition, and several Jews served as co-chairs of the event.

Lonnie Kaplan, a longtime Democratic activist in New Jersey, also has raised money for Santorum this year.

He said Santorum not only votes the right way on Middle East issues, but has also shown leadership on numerous pieces of legislation fighting anti-Semitism and promoting Israel's security.

"You need to stick with your friends, whether they're Democrats or Republicans," said Kaplan, a former president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, the pro-Israel lobby. "If you don't, you won't have friends."

Casey has drawn active support from Jews anxious to see Santorum defeated.

They cite Santorum's stances on issues ranging from religious liberty to gay rights.

"People are seeing him as becoming more and more right wing, more conservative and more aggressive on the issue of separation of church and state," Joseph Smukler, a veteran Jewish communal leader who is a past chairman of the Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia, said of Santorum. "I think he's hurt by that."

Santorum was among the strongest advocates

for congressional intervention in the case of Terri Schiavo. He backed a federal review of the case, in which the removal of the brain-damaged woman's feeding tube led to hotly contested fights in the Florida and federal courts and sparked a nationwide debate on end-of-life issues.

In May, Santorum, chairman of the Senate Republican Conference, the No. 3 position among Senate Republicans, was the subject of a New York Times Magazine cover article. In the report, which highlighted his conservative beliefs, a former staffer called him a "Catholic missionary who happens to be in the Senate."

Such comments have pushed many Jews to back Casey, including those who support Israel but have a "domestic conscience and a growing sense of alarm," according to Betsy Sheerr, a pro-Israel activist who is advising Casey and is a member of JTA's board of directors.

Santorum garnered some 40 percent of the Jewish vote in his first race for the Senate in 2000, against former Rep. Ron Klink. But Democrats say Casey is a stronger candidate than Klink was and that Santorum has become more closely tied with conservative Republicans during his first Senate term.

Jews make up 2.3 percent of Pennsylvania's population, and they have been known to support candidates on both sides of the aisle, especially Sen. Arlen Specter, one of two Republican Jews in the Senate.

Casey's situation is complicated by the fact that he opposes abortion rights. Some Jewish donors and political action committees that focus on domestic issues are avoiding the race because of that.

"We've kept to our criteria, and it has

You need to stick with your friends, whether they're Democrats or Republicans.'

Lonnie Kaplan

Former president of the American Israel Public Affairs Committee

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served us well," said Marcia Balonick, executive director of the Joint Action Committee for Political Affairs, which describes itself as a pro-Israel PAC that also focuses on church-state separation and reproductive choice.

Balonick suggested that her PAC would stay out of the Pennsylvania race.

Meanwhile, Alan Sandals, a Jewish lawyer in Philadelphia, announced Wednesday that he will run against Casey for the Democratic nomination. Sandals said he is concerned that Democrats have anointed a nominee whose views he believes are similar to Santorum's on too many issues.

Sandals said he hoped his presence would prompt Casey to address such issues as economic reform and the environment.

But other Jews say they view Casey as a better choice than Santorum on domestic policy and that his position on abortion is not as extreme as that of Santorum.

"When you look at the domestic agenda, broadly speaking, most members of the Jewish community are going to have a lot more in common with Bob Casey than with Rick Santorum," said Scott Gale, a consultant for Casey who served as deputy political director of AIPAC in the 1980s.

The race also presents a challenge for Casey because candidates without a proven record on Israel find there's little they can say that outweighs an incumbent's record.

The issue came up last year when some traditionally Democratic Jewish voters and donors sided with Bush in the presidential race, citing his presidential record on Israel as stronger than Kerry's performance in the Senate.

It could also play out next year in other states with pro-Israel incumbent Republican senators, including Arizona, Missouri, Nevada and Virginia. ■

Candidates and Jewish issues in the 2006 congressional races

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Sixteen months before the 2006 congressional elections, fund-raising has already started in earnest across the country.

Jewish and pro-Israel political groups have determined some places to focus their resources this year. It's too soon to tell which members of the U.S. House of Representatives will be vulnerable, but the Senate picture is a bit clearer:

• **Florida** — Sen. Bill Nelson (D) is considered vulnerable in a state that has increasingly leaned Republican in recent years. In polls, he is garnering around 50 percent, and it remains unclear who his challenger will be. Nelson has more than \$2 million on hand and is expected to get strong support from pro-Israel donors and the statewide Jewish community.

Rep. Katherine Harris (R), known nationwide for her role as Florida's secretary of state in the 2000 presidential election recount, has announced her candidacy, and her name recognition could make it a tight contest.

• **Maryland** — Sen. Paul Sarbanes (D) is retiring after five terms in the Senate, and several candidates have emerged to seek his seat. Rep. Benjamin Cardin (D) is considered the early front-runner. Kwesi Mfume, a former congressman and former president and CEO of the NAACP, is running as well.

Both Cardin and Mfume have good records on Israel, but Cardin, who is Jewish, has stronger support and better relationships with community leaders. The most likely Republican challenger is Lt. Gov. Michael Steele, who is well liked in the state and has made inroads into the Jewish community.

• **Minnesota** — The departure of Sen. Mark Dayton (D) leaves the race wide open. Pro-Israel groups have centered their support around Rep. Mark Kennedy (R), who has accumulated a strong record on Israel since entering the House of Representatives in 2001.

Several Democrats are running or considering the race, most notably Hennepin County Attorney Amy Klobuchar, the chief prosecutor of all adult felony and juvenile crimes in the area. Al Franken, the former "Saturday Night Live" writer who co-hosts a program on the liberal Air America Radio, had considered entering the race but then announced that he won't run.

• **New Jersey** — Sen. Jon Corzine (D) is considered a favorite for governor next year and, if elected, will appoint a replacement in the Senate. He may name a caretaker but could vault one of the state's Democratic congressmen to the front-runner list for the Senate.

Most lawmakers in New Jersey, on both sides of the aisle, are respected by supporters of Israel, and much rests on Corzine's decision.

• **Pennsylvania** — Sen. Rick Santorum (R) presents a conundrum for many Jewish voters: He's a darling of the pro-Israel community for his leadership on Middle East issues and his stance against international anti-Semitism, but he's anathema to liberal-minded Jews because of his positions on social issues, such as his firm anti-abortion views.

While Santorum is expected to get strong support from some Jewish quarters, many Jews are mobilizing behind the state treasurer, Bob Casey, who has been actively courting the Jewish vote. Some Jewish PACs are not backing Casey, however, because he is anti-abortion.

• **Rhode Island** — Sen. Lincoln Chafee (R) has disappointed pro-Israel advocates, who have not been impressed with his work as chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee's Near Eastern and South Asian affairs subcommittee. Chafee may be challenged for the Republican nomination by Stephen Laffey, the mayor of Cranston, and pro-Israel PACs will back Laffey.

The former state attorney general Sheldon Whitehouse has received the support of Democratic Reps. Patrick Kennedy and Jim Langevin and will face Secretary of State Matt Brown in a primary.

• **Tennessee** — Sen. Bill Frist (R) will not seek re-election. While the state has increasingly leaned Republican in recent years, Rep. Harold Ford (D) has name recognition and could be a strong Democratic candidate who will receive help from Jewish groups. Several Republicans are expected to make it a tight primary race.

• **West Virginia** — Sen. Robert Byrd (D) has angered pro-Israel advocates for years; this year he frustrated other Jewish activists as well when he compared Republicans to Adolf Hitler.

A member of the Senate since 1959, Byrd has rarely encountered strong challengers, but he could this year if Rep. Shelley Moore Capito (R) enters the race. Capito would get a lot of help from pro-Israel PACs if she decides to run.

In addition, several other candidates are expected to attract pro-Israel Jewish money, even without strong challengers. They include Sens. Dianne Feinstein (D-Calif.) and Joseph Lieberman (D-Conn.), both longtime darlings of the Jewish community. In addition, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton (D-N.Y.) is expected to receive funds from those seeking to curry favor with a likely 2008 presidential candidate. ■

FOCUS
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ISSUES

In France, debate rages over verdict Le Monde case

By LAUREN ELKIN

PARIS (JTA) — What began as a debate over freedom of the press surrounding a fiercely anti-Israel article has devolved into a clash of special-interest groups.

In late May, a Versailles court of appeals found Le Monde, France's newspaper of record, guilty of "racial defamation" for a June 4, 2002, article titled "Israel-Palestine: The Cancer."

It's not the first time that the French media have asked where exactly the dividing line lies between legitimate criticism of Israel and anti-Semitism, but it is the first time the pro-Israel side has won its case in a court of law. The decision therefore was initially welcomed in the Jewish community.

In the past month, however, the French intellectual elite has re-centered the debate around the figure of Edgar Morin, one of the article's three authors.

Morin, who is Jewish, is a well-respected sociologist and a member of France's intellectual elite. Some see the controversy over the treatment of Israel in the French media being co-opted by the intellectuals at Morin's side, who claim the debate about free speech for themselves.

Any gratification the Jewish community initially took in the ruling has turned to outrage as the controversy has evolved and as Morin's backers attempt to "con-

textualize" the article, blunting its explicit anti-Semitism.

The court cited two particular passages from the article as racist. The first reads: "One has trouble imagining that a nation of refugees, descendants of the people who have suffered the longest period of persecution in the history of humanity, who have suffered the worst possible scorn and humiliation, would be capable of transforming themselves, in two generations, into a dominating people, sure of themselves, and, with the exception of an admirable minority, into a scornful people finding satisfaction in humiliating others."

The second citation reads, "The Jews, once subject to an unmerciful rule, now impose their unmerciful rule on the Palestinians."

The court ruled that the article's offense rests in the implication that "all the Jews of Israel humiliate the Palestinians for their own satisfaction" and that "all Jews around the world" take part in this satisfaction and persecution.

The prosecuting groups — France-Israel and Lawyers Without Borders — sought the equivalent of approximately \$18,000 in damages. The court awarded each group the equivalent of approximately \$3,583 in legal fees and a symbolic \$1 for damages, and Le Monde was ordered to print a retraction.

But the story is far from over: The fees have not been paid, no retraction has appeared, and Le Monde is appealing the judgment.

"We cannot allow jurisprudence like this to stand," Catherine Cohen, the attorney representing Le Monde, told the Guardian, a British newspaper.

Immediately after the decision, CRIF, the umbrella group of secular Jewish organizations in France, expressed its satisfaction: "The CRIF has always believed that criticism of Israeli policy falls under the heading of free and democratic debate but that it must not be expressed through bias or through the demonizing of Israel or the Jewish people."

Outside the Jewish community, reaction to the ruling was surpris-

ingly muted. Journalist Tom Gross noted in The Wall Street Journal on June 2 that though the ruling was a "landmark," it had been all but ignored in France and elsewhere in Europe.

Then, on June 21, Le Figaro came to Le Monde's defense, complaining about the "oversensitivity" of "these types of associations," which seek "to censure the most insignificant article that has the slightest hint of truth to it."

The Jewish press responded indignantly. One writer on the pro-Israel Web site Primo-Europe.com reminded critics "that in 2002, when the article in question first ran, people were parading in the streets of Paris and other French cities crying 'Death to the Jews!' believing they had a right to do so because of such articles."

On June 17, Morin sat down with the Swiss journalist Sylvia Cattori to speak in his own defense.

He pointed to the timing of the article — in 2002, as Israel had gone on the offensive against Palestinians in the Jenin refugee camp who had carried out scores of terrorist attacks.

Morin protested that the offending passages were taken out of context and that "it is made very clear that it is about the Jews of Israel, not those of [Paris] or Brooklyn, who persecute the Palestinians."

As "L'Affaire Morin," so dubbed by the French press, heats up, Morin's assistant, Catherine Loridant — whose e-mail address was printed at the bottom of an article in Liberation, a left-wing daily, about a petition circulating in defense of Morin and his co-authors — has been receiving hate mail.

"It's the Dreyfus Affair in reverse," Morin complained to Liberation. "It's the Jews who persecute me."

Not everyone was buying that argument. "French society, or at least its elite, seems no longer to be able to understand the meaning of words, not to mention its own duties and responsibilities," responded Nicole Leibowitz on Proche-Orient.info, a pro-Israel Web site.

Neither side shows any indication of conceding. For now, Le Monde's appeal remains to be decided, and the debate rages on. ■

A French newspaper article conjures up memories of the Dreyfus Affair.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES



Carolo Cuello

Author Edgar Morin.

THE LONDON BOMBINGS

After terror, British will choose to embrace life

By RABBI JONATHAN SACKS

LONDON (JTA) — As if mocking the scenes of jubilation at London's successful 2012 Olympics bid, the terrorist explosions that came the next day left devastation in their wake.

In all our synagogues, British Jews are joining our prayers with those of others, grieving for the dead, praying for the injured, and sharing our tears with those of the bereaved.

Terror has become the scourge of our age, and it will take all our inner strength to cope with it. I have met far too many victims of terror: survivors of the Istanbul synagogue bombing in 2003; of the 1994 terrorist attack on the Jewish community center in Buenos Aires; in Israel, where almost everyone knows someone who has been affected; as well as survivors of the massacres in Cambodia, Bosnia, Rwanda and Kosovo.

Like others, I have wept for the broken families and shattered lives and the injuries, physical and psychological, that may never heal.

But I have wept also at the courage of the victims. Each year, I go with a group to perform concerts for people who have suffered terrorist attacks. One we met was an 11-year-old boy who had lost his mother, father and three other members of his family in a suicide bombing. He himself had lost his sight.

In the hospital ward, the boy sang with the choir a hauntingly beautiful religious song. We had gone to give him strength; instead, he gave us strength.

London itself has a long history of courage. That too was evident in the calm that prevailed on July 7.

The choice humanity faces was set out long ago by Moses: "I have set before you life and death, the blessing and the curse. Therefore choose life, so that you and your children may live."

The strongest answer to the forces of death is a renewed commitment to the sanctity of life. ■

(Jonathan Sacks is the United Kingdom's Orthodox chief rabbi.)

(This column first ran in the Times of London.)

Jewish film wins German award

By TOBY AXELROD

BERLIN (JTA) — When Germany's new Jewish-themed film comedy reaped the most nominations for the country's highest film awards in May, hardly anyone was more surprised than the filmmaker himself.

Now "Alles auf Zucker" ("Go for Zucker") has swept the awards, winning six prizes — including Best Film, Best Director and Best Actor.

The Best Film award, announced last Friday, carries a prize of about \$600,000.

"I am not used to such attention," the Swiss-born director, Dani Levy, 47, said in a recent telephone interview. Levy has had several other moderate successes in Germany but never a film "that everyone loves. For me, it's a miracle."

"Alles auf Zucker" outpaced "The Downfall," a dark film about Hitler's last weeks, in the race for the top awards. ■

What's funny about an extended family in which fervent Orthodoxy is pitted against assimilation, the communist is pitted against the unscrupulous businessman, the lesbian against the Chasid, and the mama's boy against the supersexy cousin?

What's funny about the conflict between former East and West Germany played out through the eyes of Jews? And what's funny about a Jewish gambling addict who blames his failures on anti-Semitism?

Everything, it seems.

"Naturally, Jews always know how to laugh over themselves. It's in our nature," said Levi, who now lives with his wife and child in Berlin, the city where his mother was born. "What maybe is new here is that Jews are presented with self-confidence. The older generation was afraid to broadcast such images of themselves because they were afraid of anti-Semitism and prejudice. With the new generation, these fears are not so widespread."

In Germany, a film has to appeal to non-Jewish audiences to be a success, and this one does. ■

"You can watch 'Zucker' and know nothing about Jews and still enjoy it," said Nicola Galliner, the founder and director of the 11-year-old Jewish film festival in Berlin, which also thrives on non-Jewish crowds. "I don't think there are many German films on a Jewish subject that are lighthearted."

"I loved that movie," said Irene Runge, the founder of the Jewish Cultural Association in Berlin.

"It used to be that everything about Jews was always about the past," said Runge, who invited Levy and his co-writer, Holger Franke, to talk at the

association's center earlier this year. With this film, "German Jews have fun; non-Jews have fun. And I think you go out of the film with a more positive feeling, not like what we had before. It's how we see ourselves, and that's what I like about it." ■

There's a great curiosity among many non-Jews in Germany about Jewish life, but many people here still associate Jews with victimhood. They may be familiar with Woody Allen's self-effacing Jewish humor, and they may have seen the award-winning Holocaust tragicomedy "Life Is Beautiful."

They may have visited or seen Jewish institutions. But German Jews themselves remain a mystery.

And they need not be, said Levy.

Laughing at another group of people "I have always found painful, whether it's aimed at Jews or others," he said. "There's something disrespectful about it. But if you laugh with people, it's a sign that you like them."

"Zucker" tells the story of a contemporary German Jewish family in which two warring brothers — formerly separated by the Berlin Wall — are reunited after the death of their mother. The nonreligious, communist brother is addicted to gambling; the Orthodox, capitalist brother is a real-estate tycoon.

Through a comedy of errors, the characters rediscover each other's essential humanity. In the process, their own prejudices — and those of the audience — are systematically exposed and blasted. ■

'It's how we see ourselves, and that's what I like about it.'

Irene Runge

Founder of Jewish Cultural Association in Berlin

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Far-right Jews don 'Holocaust tattoos'

Several Gaza Strip settlers wrote their Israeli identification numbers on their arms in a bid to recall concentration camp inmates' tattoos.

Thursday's protests, adopted by several residents of the Gush Katif settlement bloc, appeared to have begun with a local woman who scrawled her identification number on her arm and showed it at a military checkpoint rather than furnish her ID card.

The Yesha settler council urged the protesters to abandon the ploy, which outraged survivors of the Nazi genocide.

"The plan by some right-wing activists to put their identity numbers on their arms perverts the historical facts and damages the memory of the Shoah," said Avner Shalev, chairman of the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial. "It is important that the memory of the Shoah remain a unifying factor in Israeli society, not the opposite."

Fifth dead from bombing

A fifth person died from wounds suffered in Tuesday's Palestinian suicide attack in Netanya.

The 21-year-old soldier, who suffered critical injuries in the blast, was declared brain dead and disconnected from life support Thursday.

Three other victims — a 31-year-old woman and two teenaged girls — died outright in the Islamic Jihad bombing outside a shopping mall in Netanya.

A fourth woman, aged 50, succumbed Wednesday to her wounds. At least 30 other people were injured.

Arrests over Gaza withdrawal protests

Five Israelis have been arrested on suspicion of organizing nationwide road-blocking protests.

The Shin Bet security service lifted a gag order on the arrests Thursday but said only that the suspected activists are from central Israel.

They are accused of coordinating sit-down protests on Israeli highways aimed at derailing the Gaza Strip withdrawal plan.

In the Ramat Gan home of one of the suspects, police found containers of fuel that investigators believe were to be used to ignite tires as part of the demonstrations.

A new museum for Ethiopian Jews

A museum focusing on Ethiopian Jewish culture and heritage will be built in the Israeli city of Rehovot.

Ha'aretz reported Wednesday that the museum, which will cost some \$4.5 million, will include a model Ethiopian village and a memorial to Ethiopian Jews who died in Sudan on their way to Israel.

"We view the conservation of the past as very important and believe the museum will attract young people and adults alike," Rehovot Mayor Shuki Forer said.

NORTH AMERICA

Lawyer to seek Senate seat

A Jewish pensions attorney announced he will run for the U.S. Senate from Pennsylvania.

Alan Sandals announced his candidacy for the Democratic nomination Wednesday; he had previously created an exploratory committee to determine whether to challenge Bob Casey, the Pennsylvania state treasurer, who is viewed as the front-runner.

The winner will challenge Sen. Rick Santorum (R-Pa.), the chairman of the Senate Republican Conference.

U.S. wants Britain to shut down Hamas charity

The United States wants Britain to shut down a charity believed to channel funds to Hamas.

The Senate Banking Committee met Wednesday to examine a number of charities that fund Arab terrorist groups.

Stuart Levey, a senior Treasury Department official, said one frustration was his failure to persuade the British to shut down Interpal, also known as the Palestinian Relief and Development Fund.

"We believe Interpal to be a conduit, one of the principal charities that was used to hide the flow of funds to Hamas. We've designated it domestically here," Levey testified to the committee. "This is one where we disagree with the British, and we hope to see this change."

Sudan prayer weekend begins

Lawmakers launched a weekend of prayer about the situation in Sudan.

More than 20 congressmen joined religious leaders and activists in marking the three-day event, set to take place this weekend in thousands of religious congregations across the United States.

Rep. Robert Wexler (D-Fla.), who organized Wednesday's Capitol Hill event, called the gathering "historic."

"The international community has been unconscionably negligent as nearly 400,000 men, women and children have been killed in the Darfur region of Sudan," he said. "Today we are gathered to let the world know that this silence is unacceptable, and we raise our voices in unison calling on the Sudanese government to bring these atrocities to an end."

Congregations from all Jewish streams will be participating in the weekend.

A memorial grows in Chicago

A sapling originally grown by children in the Terezin transit camp will be planted in Chicago.

The tree will be planted in a special ceremony at the Chicago Botanic Garden on Monday.

The sapling was given to Irma Lauscher, a teacher in Terezin who secretly held classes for children, by a sympathetic camp guard.

WORLD

Extradition of bombing suspects sought

Turkey recently requested that Iraq extradite two Turkish Islamists suspected of involvement in the 2003 bombings of two Istanbul synagogues.

U.S. troops in Iraq arrested the men in January on unrelated charges, and they're being held in Abu Ghraib prison, The New York Times reported.

More than 60 people were killed in the November 2003 attacks on the synagogues and two other bombings of Western targets in Istanbul.

Belarus Jews get Torah scroll

A New Jersey congregation gave a Torah scroll to a Jewish community in the former Soviet Union.

At a festive July 2 Shabbat ceremony in Moscow, Temple Sha'arey Shalom in Springfield, N.J., handed the historic scroll to representatives of the Reform community of Brest-Litovsk, Belarus, during the World Union for Progressive Judaism's biennial convention, held in the Russian capital.

This is the seventh Torah scroll donated to Belarus' 16 Reform congregations, according to Rabbi Grisha Abramovich, head of the country's Progressive movement.