

**IN THE NEWS**
**Congress passes Darfur accountability act**

The U.S. Congress passed a Darfur accountability act.

The final version of the Darfur Peace and Accountability Act, which passed its final vote Monday in the U.S. House of Representatives, expands humanitarian assistance in the Sudanese region where government-allied militias have massacred hundreds of thousands of people and toughens sanctions against Sudanese officials believed to be involved in the massacres.

The bill now goes to the White House for signing.

**Olmert: Bush can stop Iran**

Ehud Olmert said he believes President Bush will stop Iran's nuclear program.

Olmert made the comments after being asked in a Jerusalem Post interview published Tuesday whether he thinks the Bush administration is capable of preventing Israel's archenemy from producing nuclear weapons.

**Peres: Arab proposal is weak on terrorism**

Shimon Peres said an Arab peace initiative does not deal adequately with the threats of Iran and Islamic terrorism.

The Israeli vice premier voiced cautious support Tuesday for the Arab League proposal for comprehensive peace with the Jewish state, which was first drafted in 2002 and is being reworked in the wake of the Lebanon war.

But he also pointed out its shortcomings.

Under the initiative, Israel would withdraw from the West Bank, Golan Heights and eastern Jerusalem, and accept an "agreed solution" to the Palestinian refugee problem in exchange for full ties with Arab nations.

Jerusalem has so far rejected the initiative, saying peace should not come with pre-conditions.

# WORLD REPORT

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## U.S. rabbis list support for Israel as No. 1 High Holiday focus

By SUE FISHKOFF

**O**AKLAND, Calif. (JTA) — Support for Israel is the No. 1 focus for this year's Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur sermons among American rabbis according to a new survey.

Seventy-two percent of rabbis surveyed said they are talking about the Jewish state, followed by 42 percent who are discussing "creating a better future," 37 percent who are focusing on forgiveness and 34 percent who are urging greater participation in synagogue life.

Almost 140 rabbis responded to the first Rabbinic Leadership Survey conducted in early September by the Synagogue Transformation and Renewal Foundation, or STAR, a nonprofit dedicated to synagogue transformation and leadership development.

Most of the respondents were Reform and Conservative rabbis, and are taking part in one of STAR's synagogue revitalization programs. One-quarter of them were women, and 49 percent were age 40 or younger.

The survey asked about their High Holiday focus, goals for the year ahead, political and social activism, and concerns about Israel and anti-Semitism.

Knowing what rabbis are thinking is important, says STAR's executive director, Rabbi Hayim Herring, because "rabbis are important in shaping Jewish opinion, and knowing where their thinking is heading is of interest to the community as a whole."

Getting involved in Israel was named by 98 percent of the rabbis surveyed as something they encourage throughout the year.

Rabbi Stacy Friedman will discuss Israel

during her Yom Kippur sermon at Rodef Shalom, a large Reform congregation in San Rafael, Calif.

Echoing the view of many, she said she believes there is "definitely" more rabbinic focus on Israel this year after the war in Lebanon.

"People want clarity," she says.

Friedman was planning to make Israel her Yom Kippur focus last year, but after that summer's Gaza disengagement, she felt it wasn't necessary.

She regrets that now, she says. "It's a shame we only focus on Israel when things are not going well."

Rabbi Robert Eisen of Congregation Anshei Israel, a moderate-sized Conservative congregation in Tucson, Ariz., says he usually talks about Israel the second day of Rosh Hashanah, and this year was no exception. He asked congregants to "stay informed," contribute to Israel appeals, and join his synagogue's congregational trip to Israel next June, the first such trip since Eisen joined the synagogue eight years ago.

"I spoke about the need to support Israel, especially at this time," he says.

The STAR survey also indicated that synagogues are playing a key role in getting Jews to be more politically active outside the congregation.

Either during the holidays or in the coming year, 93 percent of the rabbis surveyed say they will encourage people to vote in midterm elections and 91 percent will urge personal involvement in Darfur. In addition, 88 percent said they asked congregants to contribute to Katrina relief, and 68 percent urged donations to tsunami relief efforts.

"It's the thrust in all the denominations

*Continued on page 2*

## ■ STAR rabbis focused on activist subjects such as the Israel-Hezbollah conflict and Darfur

*Continued from page 1*

to try and gain a broader view of what a congregation is all about," Herring says. "Social justice and political concerns have become more important across the denominations."

Rabbi Arnold Rachlis of University Synagogue in Irvine, Calif., a large Orange County Reconstructionist congregation, says he focuses on Jews' responsibilities to the larger world in his High Holiday sermons and throughout the year.

"Of course we feel most acutely the need to support Jewish causes, but what defines us as Jews is" helping to better the larger world, based on those Jewish values, he says.

University Synagogue "supports 20 or 30 causes at any one time." About one-third are Jewish. The congregation is the largest single donor to the hunger relief organization Mazon, which Rachlis chairs. Last year they raised a lot of money for Katrina relief, he says, and he was encouraging members this year to donate to the United Jewish Communities' Israel Emergency Campaign to help in the aftermath of Israel's war with Hezbollah.

"The idea is, it's not Israel or hunger, but Israel and hunger," he says.

Despite increased attention to general political activism, rabbis still focus most strongly on the need to give to Jewish and Israeli-related charities.

Nearly all of them — 97 percent — say they urge such charitable giving from the pulpit. Ninety-four percent say their congregation raised money for Israeli charities this past year and 79 percent

say their congregations took part in pro-Israel rallies. Almost 90 percent of the rabbis say they have increased their efforts to get congregants to visit Israel.

In general, rabbis feel good about their relationship with their board and congregation, with more than 80 percent

reporting that their influence on both groups has increased over the past three years, along with their job demands.

Ninety-five percent believe that their main impact on the congregation is acting as "a moral voice on important issues." ■

## Oriana Fallaci dies at 77

ROME (JTA) — The crusading Italian journalist Oriana Fallaci spent the last years of her life issuing fiery warnings against a Muslim world that she saw poised to overrun the West.

Critics accused Fallaci of sowing racial and religious hatred, but she became a heroine to many Jews and Israelis for her vocal defense of Israel and denunciations of new forms of anti-Semitism.

"She was the most loved and most hated woman in Italy," said Clemente Mimun, the Jewish director of Italian television's main news program.

Fallaci, who divided her later years between New York and her native Florence, died Sept. 15 in Florence after a long battle with cancer. She was 77.

A glamorous woman always seen with long hair and thick eye-liner and a cigarette poised in her fingers, Fallaci was a war correspondent in Vietnam and fought as a child in the anti-fascist resistance during World War II.

She never married but had a passionate affair with the Greek left-wing activist Alekos Panagulis in the mid-1970s. After his death in an automobile accident, she wrote a book based on his life, "A Man," that sold 3.5 million copies.

Fallaci became a celebrity icon in the 1960s and 1970s with incisive, baring interviews of global VIPs including Henry Kissinger, PLO leader Yasser Arafat, Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir and Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. She also wrote a series of novels and other books.

The terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, marked a watershed.

Fallaci's "The Rage and the Pride," a vehement defense of the United States

published soon after the attacks, became a best seller and provoked a storm of controversy with its strong language and uncompromising positions.

She followed with further books and articles that lambasted the West for weakness in the face of Islam and minced no words in her criticism of Muslims in general.

Islam, she wrote in her last book, "The Force of Reason," "sows hatred in place of love and slavery in place of freedom."

One of her most famous essays was

a blistering attack on anti-Semitism published in April 2002 that read like a manifesto.

Repeating over and over the assertion "I find it shameful," Fallaci unleashed a brutal indictment of Italy, Italians, the Catholic church, the left wing, the media, politically correct pacifists and Europeans in general for abandoning Israel and fomenting a new wave of anti-Semitism linked to the Mideast crisis.

In the essay, Fallaci, who long had held pro-Palestinian views, declared herself "disgusted with the anti-Semitism of many Italians, of many Europeans" and "ashamed of this shame that dishonors my country and Europe."

"I find it shameful," she wrote, "and I see in all this the resurgence of a new fascism, a new Nazism."

She recalled that in the past "I fought often, and bitterly, with the Israelis, and I defended the Palestinians a lot — maybe more than they deserved.

"Nonetheless, I stand with Israel, I stand with the Jews," she wrote. "I defend their right to exist, to defend themselves, and not to allow themselves to be exterminated a second time." ■



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# Hungarian Jews worry after protests

By DINAH A. SPRITZER

PRAGUE (JTA) — Peace has been restored to Budapest after violent anti-government protests tinged with anti-Semitism, but some Jews, particularly the elderly, worry about the impact of the turbulent political climate on Hungary's Jewish community.

"Older Jews feel worried, even threatened. They saw some men on the television wearing the old Hungarian Nazi uniform," said Ferenc Olti, a banker and longtime Jewish activist.

Demonstrations in the capital against Prime Minister Ferenc Gyurcsany broke out early last week after a speech he gave to his Socialist Party in which he said he and other party officials had lied to voters "morning, evening and night" and had "done nothing" was made public.

Earlier this month, the country's economic forecast had to be revised downward as the country's budget deficit ballooned to 10.1 percent of gross domestic product, the highest in the European Union.

Protests, led by a few thousand right-wing extremists and soccer hooligans, became violent last week, with attacks on the state television station and some 200 arrests.

Many of the protesters wore fascist symbols. One was reported to have saluted Hitler, while others expressed support for the Arrow Cross, the wartime Hungarian party that murdered thousands of Jews during World War II. One protester reportedly displayed a sign that read "Jews to Auschwitz."

Later in the week, there was a peaceful demonstration of about 40,000 in front of the Parliament seeking the prime minister's resignation.

It was the largest public protest since the unsuccessful 1956 Hungarian revolution, but as of midweek only a few hundred people were picketing the Parliament building in Budapest.

Gabor Szanto, editor of Szombat, a Hungarian Jewish magazine, said, "Jews were afraid something would happen to them over Rosh Hashanah, but there was no incident, so things have calmed down."

Senior right-wing opposition leaders are still pressuring Gyurcsany and his government to resign, however. Whether the protests and political instability continue

will largely be determined by the results of this weekend's municipal elections, which coincide with Yom Kippur Eve.

If there is a win for incumbent Budapest Mayor Gabor Demszky, a supporter of the prime minister, further protests are doubt-

ful, analysts say. But if Demszky loses what is a tight race to his right-wing opponent, the prime minister's critics will feel emboldened, demonstrations may begin anew — and the risk of anti-Jewish propaganda cannot

be counted out.

Szanto, however, said many on the right do not want the stain of anti-Semitism on their campaign.

"There were some phrases uttered by protesters at the earlier demonstrations, like 'dirty Jews,' but it was very rare. When it happened, other protestors shouted they didn't come here to listen to this," he said. "I heard that one of the protesters read the names of 50 politicians and journalists, some of

whom are Jews, who 'should be made to disappear,' but such incidents were very rare," he said.

A protest leader who opposes the prime minister called Szanto and "and told me that I should inform him of anti-Semitic activity by demonstrators so that it would be stopped," Szanto said.

Several observers interviewed by JTA said that although the main right-wing opposition party in Hungary, Fidesz, is not anti-Semitic, it has some anti-Semitic members and is supported by several media outlets that have printed anti-Jewish editorials.

The vast majority of the estimated 100,000 Jews in Hungary support one of the two left-oriented parties in the prime minister's coalition, Szantos estimated.

Olti, 57, does not take comfort in the

dwindling number of protesters. Unlike Szanto, he argues that the expression of anti-Jewish feelings is tolerated and even encouraged by Fidesz.

"During the larger protests, Fidesz parliamentary members spoke under the Hungarian Nazi flag. They said nothing against it, even though it was next to them," Olti said.

Zsuzsa Fritz, director of the Balint Jewish Community Center in Budapest, agrees that the elderly are worried, even though the demonstrations have tapered off. Anti-Jewish aspects of the initial rioting brought back memories of the 1956 insurrection against Soviet rule, Fritz said. The 50th anniversary of the failed revolution is next month.

"The prisons were emptied. Then criminals, including many fascists, joined with the student movement against the Russians. They went around hanging Jews. People blamed Jews for the Soviet oppression because there were some well-known Jews in

the Communist party leadership," she said.

But a Hungarian Jew in her early 30s didn't see what the fuss was about.

"I don't feel anti-Semitism on the street, the extremist rightish people don't protest against the Jews and any Jewish interest," Agnes Szalai wrote in an e-mail. She lives in Prague but was back home in Budapest for the Jewish holidays.

"Everybody was shocked what has happened on the street on Monday and Tuesday night. But now everybody lives as they lived before, in the morning the people go to work, go for lunch, during the day the city is full of people, in the evening the youngsters go to watch films, go for dinner with their friends and enjoy the nice weather," she continued. "That's all what I can see. It is not revolution, just because some crazy people preach in front of the Parliament." ■

## AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

One protester reportedly displayed a sign that read 'Jews to Auschwitz.'

## Czechs on security alert

PRAGUE (JTA) —The Czech Republic went on high alert for a terrorist attack during the High Holidays.

The government announced the alert in the early hours Saturday and said it would continue for some time, with no specifics

given. Czech officials noted that the Czech alliance with the United States in its war on terror might have made it a target, but there was also media speculation that an attack was planned to coincide with Rosh Hashanah. ■

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### NORTH AMERICA

#### Congresswoman leads Sudan rebuke

A U.S. congresswoman who is Jewish led 87 colleagues in writing a letter to Sudan's president rebuking him for saying Jews are lying about Darfur.

"We are grateful that the American Jewish community as well as other faith communities have made a priority of raising the issue of genocide in Darfur," said the letter initiated by Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-Ill.) and sent Monday to Omar Hassan al-Bashir.

"Instead of using the ancient technique of making the Jewish community the scapegoat for your failures, we hope that you will take a close look at your own actions." Bashir is resisting international demands that he allow U.N. peacekeepers to police accords in the Darfur region aimed at ending massacres committed there by government-allied militias. Last week, during the opening session of the U.N. General Assembly that the reports of massacres are "fictions" and that the groups "who made the publicity, who mobilized the people, invariably, are Jewish organizations."

#### Jewish groups back state-church lawyer's fees

Major U.S. Jewish organizations lined up to oppose legislation that would bar courts from awarding attorney's fees when they win state-church cases. The Public Expression of Religion Act, to be considered this week by the U.S. House of Representatives, is sponsored by Rep. John Hostettler (R-Ind.). The American Jewish Committee, the American Jewish Congress, the Anti-Defamation League, the National Council of Jewish Women and the Reform movement joined dozens of other non-Jewish civil rights groups in writing a letter to all U.S. representatives on Tuesday expressing opposition to the legislation.

The Orthodox Union also opposes the legislation and is considering sending its own letter.

#### Olmert to attend General Assembly

Ehud Olmert is expected to attend the United Jewish Communities' General Assembly in November. Jerusalem sources said Tuesday that the Israeli prime minister would likely fly to Los Angeles for the 75th UJC General Assembly, which is scheduled for Nov. 12-15.

But Olmert's office is holding off on making a formal announcement, noting that Israeli prime ministers have addressed past conferences of the North American federation system by video link when their schedule did not allow them to travel to North America.

Other high profile invitees to the Los Angeles conference are Benjamin Netanyahu, former Israeli prime minister; Sandy Berger, former U.S. national security adviser; James Woolsey, former CIA director; and Stanley Fischer, Bank of Israel governor.

#### Israeli to address Congress

An Israeli expert on Hezbollah is slated to address the U.S. Congress this week.

Eitan Azani, senior researcher at the Institute for Counter-Terrorism at the Interdisciplinary Center Herzliya, is scheduled to appear Thursday before representatives from the House's Subcommittee on International Terrorism and Nonproliferation Committee on International Relations. According to the center, Azani's address, tentatively titled "Hezbollah's Global Reach," aims to lay out the Lebanese militia's capabilities and strategies.

### WORLD

#### U.N. envoy blasts Israel on Gaza

A U.N. human rights envoy said Israel has turned the Gaza Strip into a prison. John Dugard made the comments Tuesday to the U.N.

Human Rights Council in Geneva. Dugard also repeated earlier charges that Israel is breaking international law with its actions in the Gaza Strip, which include closings of border crossings and a security barrier along the border with Israel.

Israel says the measures are necessary to prevent terror attacks, which have decreased since it built the barrier.

Dugard also criticized the West for halting aid to the Palestinian Authority after Hamas took power earlier this year.

#### Australian leader presses Arab world on Israel

The Arab world must accept Israel's right to exist, Australia's prime minister said.

"There must be unconditional acceptance throughout the entire Arab world, without exception, of Israel's right to exist in peace and security behind recognized borders," John Howard told a security conference in the Australian city of Canberra.

Howard also said the international community must act resolutely to deal with Iran's nuclear program.

#### Oslo envoy causes flap

Israel's ambassador to Oslo was reprimanded for criticizing the Norwegian royal family.

Miryam Shomrat told a Norwegian television interviewer earlier this week that she was disappointed in the failure of King Harald V and his family to voice sympathy toward local Jews following a recent shooting attack on an Oslo synagogue.

"Forgive me for saying it so openly, but I do think it is a very important gesture that should have been made," she said.

Norwegian Foreign Minister Jonas Gahr Stoere called the comments "unsuitable."

A leader of Norway's small Jewish community, Anne Sender, also took offense at Shomrat's comments.

"We would never have dreamed of taking a stand against the royal family," Sender told the Aftenposten newspaper.

#### French Web site ordered to close down

A French court ruled that a Web site features anti-Semitic content and must shut down within two days.

Monday's decision concerning the extremist group Tribu Ka comes after a lawsuit brought by several French Jewish groups.

The group will be forced to pay a fine if it does not shut down its site by that deadline.

#### English graveyard defiled again

More than 30 graves were defiled in a recent anti-Semitic attack in Manchester, England.

This is the third cemetery desecration in several weeks in Manchester, which is reported to have the highest rate of anti-Semitic incidents in Britain. Some tombstones were pushed over and broken; others were sprayed with anti-Semitic slogans.

In response, the Greater Manchester Police announced their plans to have high-visibility patrols on the main pedestrian routes in Jewish areas, mounted policemen at some of the larger congregations and a mobile police unit in a Jewish neighborhood.

### MIDDLE EAST

#### Rocket wounds woman

A Palestinian rocket salvo from the Gaza Strip wounded an Israeli woman.

Terrorists in Gaza fired at least two rockets at the Israeli border town of Sderot on Tuesday, inflicting moderate wounds on the off-duty soldier. Several other residents were treated for shock.