

## IN THE NEWS

**Sentences in Red Sea bombings**

Egypt sentenced 13 men in connection with a wave of Red Sea resort bombings.

An Egyptian security court sentenced three to death, confirming a decree handed down previously by an Egyptian cleric, and the other 10 to between five years and life in prison Thursday after convicting them of complicity in suicide bombings between 2004 and 2006.

The attacks killed more than 100 people, including 11 Israelis.

**Israel may free senior terrorists**

Israel is considering the release of Palestinians jailed for involvement in deadly terrorist attacks as part of efforts to retrieve a captive soldier. Israeli sources said Thursday that select prisoners "with blood on their hands" could go free in an eventual swap for Cpl. Gilad Shalit, who has been held by Palestinian gunmen since June.

According to the sources, such an amnesty would be limited to Palestinians who played supporting roles in serious attacks or would-be terrorists who were captured before they could strike.

**Seattle shooting victim has baby**

Dayna Klein, whose act of defiance halted a shooting spree at the Jewish Federation in Seattle, had a baby. She gave birth Tuesday to a boy, the Seattle Times reported.

Klein was at the Seattle federation July 28 when a gunman attacked. Shot in the arm, Klein crawled to her desk and dialed 911, despite the gunman's warning that anyone who did so would be killed.

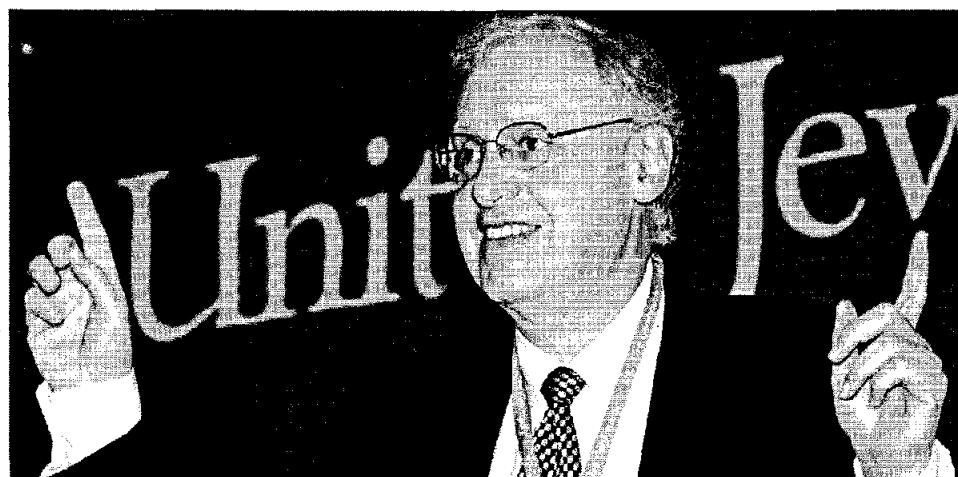
Klein named her newborn Charley Paz, which means peace in Spanish, as a tribute to Pam Waechter, who was killed in the attack.



# WORLD REPORT

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## Purell founder seeks to keep the federation system healthy



Robert A. Cumins

Joseph Kanfer, the new top lay leader of the United Jewish Communities, attends the group's recent General Assembly in Los Angeles.

By JACOB BERKMAN

**N**EW YORK (JTA) — Can the CEO of the company that makes Purell hand sanitizer keep the North American federation system healthy?

Joseph Kanfer, the new top lay leader of the United Jewish Communities, is hoping to make the umbrella organization as accessible and successful as the flagship product of GOJO Industries Inc.

Kanfer, of Akron, Ohio, faces a daunting task following his election as chairman of the UJC board of trustees on Nov. 15.

The federation system, which includes 155 local federations, has created new momentum after raising nearly \$350 million through its Israel Emergency Campaign in the wake of Israel's war with Hezbollah in Lebanon over the summer.

And the system takes in nearly \$3 billion annually through its campaigns, special drives and endowments, making it the second largest charity in the United States.

But even though the federations' combined annual campaign is growing incrementally — from \$826 million in 2000 to \$877 million in 2005 — the number of federation donors has shrunk significantly over that same period, from 650,000 to about 565,000, according to UJC figures.

Kanfer, 59, has a straightforward mission for the system that provides millions of dollars for local, national and overseas needs: "Broaden the base," he told JTA in a sit-down at the UJC's General Assembly in Los Angeles in mid-November, the day before he took office.

Achieving that goal has eluded his predecessor.

*Continued on page 2*

PROFILE

## ■ Joseph Kanfer has used his business model to transform two Jewish nonprofits

*Continued from page 1*

cessors, but those who have worked with Kanfer say he is uniquely qualified to succeed.

The father of three daughters and a son, he is described as something of a Jewish Renaissance man with a global vision for the broader Jewish community.

In Akron he attends Chabad-Lubavitch services and regularly learns with the center's rabbi, Mendel Sasonkin, who also offers classes at the city's GOJO headquarters. But Kanfer says he also belongs to and attends all three mainstream synagogues in Akron, across the denominational spectrum.

The immediate past president of UJC's Renaissance and Renewal Pillar, which is charged with looking at Jewish identity issues and the Jewish future, he is also keenly in tune with the need to engage young Jews.

In his meeting with JTA, Kanfer referred often to Jewish texts.

Kanfer understands from personal experience the need for UJC to have multiple entry points.

Growing up in Canton, he belonged to an Orthodox shul, but his family was not particularly religious.

A self-described gym rat, Kanfer said he spent hours at the local Jewish center. In high school he found out that his parents couldn't afford the membership, but it was being subsidized by the local Jewish community.

"When I discovered that, it left an indelible impression of community responsibility," he said.

But it wasn't until his oldest daughter, Marcella, entered kindergarten in 1978, at what was then the Hillel Academy in Akron, that Kanfer became involved in the organized Jewish world.

He would eventually become president of the school — now named the Jerome Lippman Jewish Community Day School, after his uncle.

But it is Kanfer's reputation as a master strategic planner that has federation executives and outsiders encouraged that he might be able to invigorate the federation system.

Kanfer helped pioneer what he and his company called the "Alignment Model" to transform GOJO from a family-run soap business, which started by selling industrial-strength grease cutter to auto mechanics from the trunk of a car, into the company that pushed Purell into the far reaches of the world market.

The eight-step model, which is displayed in every conference room at GOJO headquarters, involves developing a purpose, vision, core values and benchmarks for success before even thinking about a strategy to change a company.

The model stresses working with a company's personnel and strengths rather than starting anew.

For GOJO, that meant a paradigm shift from just selling soap to looking at the company as one that promoted "well-being through hygiene and healthy skin," Kanfer explained. Providing well-being meant figuring out how to get the hand sanitizer into hospitals, restaurants, schools, military bases and other facilities all over the world.

The model has been widely used in the business world, but Kanfer has also used it to transform two Jewish nonprofits — the Jewish Education Service of North America and Jewish Family & Life.

At JESNA, which Kanfer served as board chairman, that process involved clearly defining its purpose to improve Jewish education, said its CEO, Jonathan Wocher.

That meant no longer working alone as a boutique consultant, but trying to work as a think tank with local Jewish education boards and with the Partnership for Excel-

lence in Jewish Education, which focuses on day schools, to accomplish their collective goals.

Kanfer said he has spent the past six months examining how UJC works and developed a two-year plan to build on the organization's strengths.

He said he intends to use the Alignment Model to tweak an organization that is often seen as fractured, top heavy and bogged down by an unwieldy democratic process.

Kanfer suggested several areas that needed improvement:

- improving lay and professional partnerships;
- streamlining the UJC's decision-making process by creating "coalitions of the willing" that would enable the organization to act quickly in certain situations rather than getting bogged down waiting for consensus; and
- figuring out how to deal with the shifting Jewish population.

Kanfer also suggested that a system apparently concerned with courting and appeasing large donors needs to recognize the federation's true capital — not only monetary assets but social capital as well.

He said he would like to emphasize the importance of smaller federations in a system in which big-money federations tend to take the lead or work on their own.

This philosophy already seems to have hit home with UJC executives.

In extensive conversations with JTA during the four-day General Assembly, UJC President and CEO Howard Rieger said the system must figure out how to work better as a cohesive unit.

A key, he said, is convincing stronger federations that they need to help smaller federations succeed. The failure to do so allows potential donors to slip through the UJC cracks, especially as the younger generation starts to move away from larger cities and toward areas with smaller Jewish populations.

As an early step in his plan, Kanfer said he would like UJC to start a college campus campaign to have students give \$18 donations just to accustom them to the idea of giving.

**K**anfer has developed a two-year plan to build on the organization's strengths.

### WORLD REPORT

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# O.U. now free to oppose Israeli government

By BEN HARRIS

JERUSALEM (JTA) — As Israeli forces mobilized in the summer of 2005 to remove 8,000 settlers from the Gaza Strip, anger mounted among American Orthodox Jews.

Not only was Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's government relinquishing territory some viewed as Jewish land by birthright, but many felt the withdrawal was a concession to terrorist intimidation that would invite further bloodshed.

But the Orthodox Union, the largest Orthodox umbrella group in the United States, remained silent, following a longstanding policy of not taking public positions opposed to the security policies of Israel's government.

That policy was reversed last week when the Orthodox Union adopted a resolution at its biennial national convention in Jerusalem empowering its leaders to publicly oppose Israeli government positions if they deem it necessary.

At the end of a four-part resolution on Israel — which expressed, among other things, the union's "historic obligation" to preserve the rights of Jews to live freely throughout the land of Israel and its skepticism about trading land for peace — the O.U. moved to allow itself to publicly oppose the government in "exceptional circumstances," as determined by the organization's board of directors or executive committee.

The resolution's practical impact may be only to change the focus of debate from whether to dissent publicly to what qualifies as exceptional circumstances.

But its adoption, and the intensity with which delegates argued over seemingly minor distinctions in language and emphasis, reflects a larger generational shift within the union.

"This organization is becoming a lonely place for those who believe in old-fashioned modern Orthodoxy," said David Luchins, a longtime O.U. board member who opposed the change. "The older generation was influenced by teachers who taught us not to get involved in Israeli issues. The grassroots is not satisfied anymore with that approach."

Proponents of a more robust public posture counter that Orthodox Jews have a religious duty to make their voices heard on issues of consequence for the future of Israel and the Jewish people.

"If you're going to be perceived as the

organization that represents Orthodox Judaism in North America, you have an obligation," said Aron Raskas, a Baltimore attorney who chaired the commission that drafted the resolution.

Raskas acknowledged that opposition is sometimes best expressed privately, but said there are moments that call for a more public position.

"Silence is often construed as tacit approval of the policy," he said.

Diaspora Jewry's role in Israeli decision-making long has been contentious, with many arguing that since Israelis alone bear the consequences of their government's actions, American Jewish organizations have no right to influence them.

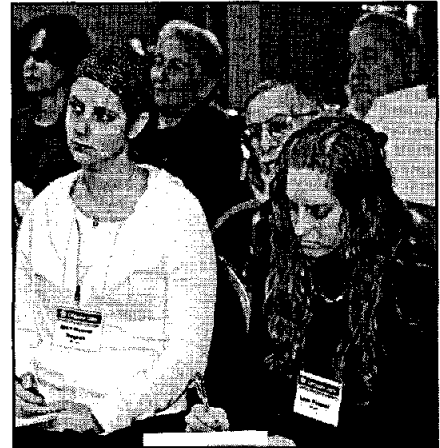
But Israel's withdrawal from Gaza, with the spectacle of Jews removing other Jews from their homes, sparked a groundswell of protest in the Orthodox community that severely challenged that view. Raskas called it a "lightning-rod issue" for the Orthodox Union.

At the convention, debate over the union's proper role in Israeli decisions essentially pitted the moralists against the pragmatists — those who believe American Jewry has an obligation to speak out against those who worry that the costs may outweigh the benefits.

Hillel Halkin, a noted author and translator who participated in a panel discussion on the subject, reminded the group that if it speaks out, other organizations will too. The cumulative effect will be a diminution of American Jewish influence on matters pertaining to Israel, he said.

Americans are just as divided on Israel-related issues as are Israelis, Halkin argued, and a split in the American Jewish community "could nullify its utility as an Israel lobby."

During the question period that followed, it appeared Halkin's urging had fallen on deaf ears. Virtually every questioner asserted not only a right but a moral imperative to oppose policies they believe put Jewish lives at risk, with many drawing analogies to the period leading up to World War II, when American Jewry was



Brian Hendler

Delegates listen to a speaker at the Orthodox Union's biennial national convention in Jerusalem, Nov. 23.

silent in the face of Hitler's rise to power.

"We have to worry what history is going to say about us," said Rabbi Emanuel Feldman, who sat on the panel along with Halkin and O.U. Chairman Harvey Blitz.

Feldman suggested that some issues are so morally compelling they demand a public response even when the practical effects are nil, or even negative.

The resolution was adopted after debate on several proposed amendments, which differed primarily in the amount of leeway they allowed in determining when to take an opposing position in public.

One amendment, which dropped the "exceptional circumstances" language in favor of a broad mandate to publicly communicate "the views reflected in this resolution," fell three votes short of the required two-thirds majority.

O.U. President Stephen Savitsky lobbied for passage of the more sweeping amendment, arguing that the "exceptional" clause would mire the board in debate over what qualifies as exceptional.

But the original language prevailed, reflecting a compromise between a widely perceived need for the union to take a public stand and the organization's longstanding policy.

"I think the process worked," Luchins said. "I think the center held."

Silence is often construed as tacit approval of the policy.

Aron Raskas

Chairman, Resolutions Committee

BEHIND  
THE  
HEADLINES

# What did GM know – and when?

By EDWIN BLACK

WASHINGTON (JTA) — By the spring of 1933, the world was beginning to learn about the lawlessness and savagery of the Nazi regime, and the Reich's determination to crush its Jewish community and threaten its neighbors.

On March 27, 1933, a million protesters jammed Madison Square Garden in New York, and millions more around the world joined in a coordinated show of protest against Nazi brutality. By May 10, 1933, Nazi-banned books were being torched in public bonfires across Germany. The corporate library at General Motors' Opel in Germany was purged, as well, of Jewish-authored publications and other undesirable literature.

Beginning in the late spring of 1933, concentration camps such as Dachau were generating headlines reporting great brutality.

By June 1933, Jews everywhere in Germany were being banned from the professional, economic and cultural life of the country. As state-designated pariahs, they were forbidden to remain members of the German Automobile Association, the popular organization for the general German motorist. Hitler's anti-Semitic demagoguery and the daily, semi-official, violent attacks against Jews were discussed in the American media almost daily.

GM's president, Alfred P. Sloan, knew what was happening in Germany. Sloan and GM officials knew also that Hitler's regime was expected to wage war from the outset. Headlines, radio broadcasts and newsreels made that fact apparent. America, it was feared, would once again be pulled in.

Nonetheless, GM and Germany began a strategic business relationship. That relationship is largely the focus of a JTA investigative series that re-examines the company's conduct on both sides of the Atlantic before, during and immediately after World War II. GM has declined comment for this story. The company has steadfastly denied for decades that it actively assisted the Nazi war effort.

## Unleashing the Blitzkrieg

Opel became an essential element of the German rearmament and modernization Hitler required to subjugate Europe. To accomplish that, Germany needed to

rise above the horse-drawn divisions it deployed in World War I. It needed to motorize, to "blitz," that is, to attack with lightning speed. Germany would later unleash a Blitzkrieg, a lightning war. Opel built the three-ton truck named "Blitz" — to support the German military. The Blitz truck became the mainstay of the Blitzkrieg.

Quickly, Sloan and James D. Mooney, GM's overseas chief, realized that the Reich military machine was in fact the corporation's best customer in Germany. Sales to the army yielded a greater per truck profit than civilian sales — a hefty 40 percent more. So GM preferred

supplying the military, which never ceased its preparations to wage war against Europe.

In 1935, GM agreed to locate a new factory at Brandenburg, where it would be geographically less vulnerable to feared aerial bombardment by allied forces. In 1937, almost 17 percent of Opel's Blitz trucks were sold directly to the Nazi military.

That military sales figure was increased to 29 percent in 1938 — totaling some 6,000 Blitz trucks that year alone. The Wehrmacht, the German military, soon became Opel's No. 1 customer by far. Other important customers included major industries associated with the Hitler war machine.

Expanding its German workforce from 17,000 in 1934 to 27,000 in 1938 also made GM one of Germany's leading employers. Unquestionably, GM's Opel became an integral facet of Hitler's Reich.

More than just an efficient manufacturer, Opel openly embraced the bizarre philosophy that powered the Nazi military-industrial complex. The German company participated in cultic Fuhrer worship as a part of its daily corporate ethic. After all, until GM purchased Opel in 1929 for \$33.3 million, or about one-third of GM's after-tax profit that year, Opel was an established carmaker with a respected German persona. The Opel family included several prominent Nazi Party members. This identity appealed to rank-and-file Nazis who condemned anything foreign-owned or

foreign-made.

For all these reasons, during the Hitler years, Sloan and Mooney both made efforts to obscure Opel's American ownership and control. As a result, the average storm trooper, Nazi Party member or German motorist accepted the company's cars and trucks as the product of a purely Aryan firm that was working toward Hitler's great destiny: "Deutschland uber alles."

## The masquerade

Opel became an early patron of the National Socialist Motor Corps, a rabid Nazi Party paramilitary auxiliary. Ironically, most of the members of the corps were not drivers but Germans seeking to learn how to drive to increase national readiness. Opel employees were encouraged to maintain membership in the motor corps. Furthermore, Opel cars and trucks were loaned without charge to the local storm-trooper contingents stationed near company

headquarters at Russelsheim, Germany. As brownshirt thugs went about their business of intimidation and extortion, they often came and went in vehicles bearing prominent Opel advertisements, proud automobile sponsor of the storm troopers.

The Opel company publication, *Der Opel Geist*, or *The Opel Spirit*, became just another propagandistic tool of Fuhrer worship, edited with the help of Nazi officials. Hitler was frequently given credit in the publication for Opel's achievements, and was frequently depicted in *Der Opel Geist* portraits as a fatherly or stately figure.

Hitler's voice regularly echoed through the cavernous Opel complex. His hate speeches and pep rallies were routinely piped into the factory premises to inspire the workers. Great swastika-bedecked company events were commonplace, as Nazi gauleiters, or regional party leaders, and other party officials spurred the gathered employees to work hard for the Fuhrer and his Thousand-Year Reich. Opel contributed large cash donations to all the right Nazi Party activities. For example, the company gave local storm troopers 75,000 reichs-

HITLER'S  
CARMAKER:  
Part 2 of 4

A 'Directorate' comprised of prominent German personalities created what GM officials variously termed a 'camouflage' or 'false facade' of local management of Opel.

marks to construct the gauleiter's new office headquarters.

In the process, Opel became more than a mere carmaker. It became a stalwart of the Nazi community. Working hard and meeting exhausting production quotas were national duties. Employees who protested the intense working conditions, even if members of the Nazi Party, were sometimes visited by the Gestapo. SS officers worked as internal security throughout the plant. Order was kept.

Of course, GM's subsidiary vigorously joined the anti-Jewish movement required of leading businesses serving the Reich. Jewish employees and suppliers became verboten. Established dealers with Jewish blood were terminated, including one of the largest serving the Frankfurt region. Even longtime executives were discharged if Jewish descent was detected. Those lower-level managers with Jewish wives or parentage who remained with the company did so stealthily, hiding and denying their background.

To conceal American ownership and reinforce the masquerade that Opel stood as a purely Aryan enterprise, Sloan and Mooney, beginning in 1934, concocted the concept of a "Directorate," comprised of prominent German personalities, including several with Nazi Party membership. This created what GM officials variously termed a "camouflage" or "a false facade" of local management. But the decisions were made in America. GM as the sole stockholder controlled Opel's board and the corporate votes.

Among the decisions made in America beginning in about 1935 was the one transferring to Germany the technology to produce the modern gasoline additive tetraethyl lead, commonly called "ethyl," or leaded gasoline. This allowed the Reich to boost octane that provided better automotive performance by eliminating disruptive engine pings and jolts. Better performance meant a faster and more mobile fighting force — just what the Reich would ultimately need for its swift and mobile Blitzkrieg.

As early as 1934, however, America's War Department was apprehensive about the transfer of such proprietary chemical processes. In late December 1934, as GM was considering building leaded gasoline plants for Hitler, DuPont Company board director Irene du Pont wrote to Sloan: "Of course, we in the DuPont Company have always recognized the propriety and desirability of closely cooperating with the War Department of the United States. ...In



Collage by JTA

GM's Opel Blitz truck was a pivotal cog in Nazi Germany's military machine. It is shown here juxtaposed next to a Panzer tank, made by another manufacturer.

any case, I know that word has gone to the War Department and have the impression that they would be adverse to disclosure of knowledge which would aid Germany in preparing that chemical." The profits were simply not worth it, argued du Pont.

Sloan had already bluntly told du Pont, "I do not agree with your reasoning to this question." Days later, Sloan appended that GM's commercial rights were "far more fundamental... than the question of making a little money out of lead in Germany."

GM moved quickly — in conjunction with its close ally Standard Oil. Each company took a one-quarter share of the Reich ethyl operation, while I.G. Farben, the giant German chemical conglomerate, controlled the remaining 50 percent.

The plants were built. The Americans supplied the technical know-how. Captured German records reviewed decades later by a U.S. Senate investigating committee found this wartime admission by the Nazis: "Without lead-tetraethyl, the present method of warfare would be unthinkable." Years after the war, Nazi armaments chief Albert Speer told a congressional investigator that Germany could not have attempted its September 1939 Blitzkrieg of Poland without the performance-boosting additive.

### Dwarfing the competition

Within a few years of partnering with the Hitler regime, Opel began to dwarf all competition. By 1937, GM's subsidiary had grown to triple the size of Daimler-Benz and quadruple that of Ford's fledgling German operation, known as Ford-Werke. By the end of the 1930s, Opel was valued at \$86.7 million, which in 21st-century dollars translates into roughly \$1.1 billion.

In the meantime, GM was responsible

for stunning growth in Germany's economy. As most economists of the day knew, and as Sloan himself bragged, automobile manufacturing created thousands of factory jobs, hundreds of suppliers, numerous dealerships, widespread motorization and an attached oil industry.

Moreover, the growth of the highway network, from local roads to the Autobahn, spurred a construction boom that spawned thousands of additional jobs and necessitated hundreds of additional suppliers. Even GM's own sponsored expert historian, who decades later examined Hitler-era documentation, concluded: "The auto industry spearheaded the remarkable recovery of the German economy that boosted the popularity of the Nazi regime by virtually eliminating within a few years the mass unemployment that had idled a quarter of the workforce and contributed so importantly to Hitler's rise."

But Reich currency restrictions obstructed the outflow of cash for profits or even the purchase of raw materials to build trucks. GM in America circumvented those regulations through the overseas sales of German pencils, sewing machines, Christmas tree ornaments and virtually any other exports that would earn foreign currency internationally. Those sales proceeds were then exchanged for profits or raw materials through complicated bank transfers.

Ironically, while GM's Opel was a deferential corporate citizen in Nazi Germany, going the extra mile to comply with Reich requirements and making no waves, Sloan helped foment unrest at home as part of the company's efforts to undermine the Roosevelt administration.

For example, the GM president was one of the central behind-the-scenes founders of the American Liberty League, a racist, anti-Semitic, pro-big business group bent on rallying Southern votes against Roosevelt to defeat him in the 1936 election.

# Settlement report seeks moral reckoning

By URIEL HEILMAN

JERUSALEM (JTA) — When Peace Now released a report last week charging that 40 percent of Jewish settlement territory in the West Bank is built on privately owned Palestinian land, the report's co-author said she hoped it would serve as a wake-up call to principled Israelis.

Hagit Ofran, the granddaughter of famed Israeli philosopher Yeshayahu Leibowitz and the product of a religiously observant family, said she wanted the findings — aimed as much at the settlers themselves as at the outside world — to present an acute moral dilemma to the decent people who live on what she argues is essentially stolen property.

In a few cases, she said, that has happened.

"People feel very uncomfortable about this report," said Ofran, who co-authored it with Peace Now's longtime settlement watch team director, Dror Etkes. "Settlers approached me and asked me about my sources because they don't want to be land stealers. I'm sure there are people who don't want to live illegally or on stolen land."

For the most part, settlers reacted to the report dismissively, critically or angrily.

"There is nothing new in Peace Now's claims," Emily Amrousi, a spokeswoman for the Yesha Council, the main settlers' group in the West Bank, told reporters.

Settlement advocates said the data on land ownership are based largely on specious claims — unsubstantiated, unofficial and, in some cases, unclaimed property deeds. Some said it also ignores a pattern of Arabs building on Jewish-owned lands.

Government spokesmen said they would have to review the data before commenting on the report's accuracy.

But Peace Now said the report, called "Breaking the Law in the West Bank," is based on Israel's own records.

The formula used to determine the findings was relatively simple: Peace Now overlaid maps of private Arab property in the West Bank, obtained illicitly from Israel's Office of Civil Administration, with maps of the settlements themselves.

The results showed that of the land the settlements occupy, approximately 39 percent is under private Palestinian ownership. Of the remainder, 54 percent is state owned, 1.3 percent is privately owned by Jews and about

6 percent is "survey land" with unclear ownership.

The report did not consider the reliability of the Civil Administration maps, which critics have since questioned. But the use of Israeli maps means that, if anything, the extent of Palestinian land ownership is estimated conservatively, Ofran said.

Facing anger and bewilderment from both pro- and anti-settlement activists, Ofran said the findings were both painful and surprising.

"Making this discovery did not bring me joy," Ofran told JTA in an interview Tuesday at Peace Now offices in Jerusalem. "I always believed that at least according to Israeli law the settlements were on state land, even if the world held that the land was illegally seized.

"It's very sad to me that very idealistic people, good people, people who would be upset if their own child stole a pencil, are living on stolen land," she said.

"I've met people who say, 'OK, this may be true, but why are you doing this? Why be a stinker? You are giving Israel a bad name.' I have no interest in giving Israel a bad name; I'm interested in Israel not being bad."

As the product of a family steeped in religious Zionism, Ofran said she feels a strong emotional connection to the settlers, whom she regards with a combination of admiration and disappointment. Ofran admires them for their idealism, motivation and Zionism, but is distressed that their energies are being directed toward an enterprise that seems doomed to ruin.

"In the end, the solution to this conflict will be two states: a Palestinian state beside Israel and the uprooting of the settlements," she said. "Everyone knows this."

Imagine, Ofran said, if the settlers' energies instead were directed toward building Israel proper.

"If they turned these energies to things connected to building our society rather than building war with our neighbors, they would have a much more constructive impact on Israel," Ofran said.

"But they've isolated themselves. They've disengaged."

Ofran said her grandfather, who died in 1994, had a big influence on her life and her political ideology. A prolific writer, philosopher and Torah scholar, Leibowitz's critiques of Israeli policy toward the Arabs made him a reviled figure among some Jews and an intellectual hero to others.

Though Ofran, 31, said she decided as an adult to stop being religiously observant, she is still steeped in the world of Talmudic exegesis. She has continued to study Talmud at institutions such as Jerusalem's Hartman Center, and she appended a Talmudic adage to last week's Peace Now report called "One Violation Leads to Another."

"When you begin breaking the law, you justify worse and worse things," Ofran said.

Still relatively new to the settlement watch team, Ofran is sufficiently anonymous to settlers that she can visit settlements in the West Bank to survey their growth without too much trouble. She talks to residents when she can, keeping her identity discreet.

At some settlement outposts, residents have learned to recognize Peace Now's vehicle and they don't allow Ofran in the gate. In such cases Ofran tries to photograph the settlement from nearby hilltops.

Ofran's partner, Etkes, who has been tracking settlement growth for several years, has been assaulted or run out of settlements on several occasions. Ofran and Etkes supplement their site visits with aerial photography and mapping technology to track the settlements' growth.

"Part of why I took this job was because I love to hang out in the territories," Ofran said. "The Land of Israel is an important thing, and I love it.

"I especially love Hebron. But we cannot be there as occupiers."

For the time being, Ofran said, Peace Now is focusing its legal strategy toward uprooting illegal West Bank outposts. Though these outposts are officially illegal, no action is taken to uproot them unless a court orders the authorities to act. Peace Now petitions the courts to take that action.

## BEHIND THE HEADLINES

"I have no interest in giving Israel a bad name; I'm interested in Israel not being bad."

Hagit Ofran



# Film captures failed suicide bombers

By TOM TUGEND

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — Hassan is deeply frustrated because he was caught by Israeli police before he could blow himself up, killing Israeli civilians.

"If I had been killed, my mother would call it a blessing," the 16-year-old says. "My family and 70 relatives would have gone to paradise and that would be a great honor for me."

Hassan is one of more than a dozen Palestinian suicide bombers captured

before they could carry out their missions and interviewed in "Suicide Killers," a documentary by French Jewish filmmaker Pierre Rehov.

## ARTS & CULTURE

The movie's subtitle, "Paradise is Hell," is a deliberate counter-allusion to last year's Oscar-nominated Palestinian feature "Paradise Now" — which critics said aimed to humanize

its two suicide bomber stars.

The prison interviews with the would-be bombers, both men and women, will leave most viewers shaken, not because of the ferocity of the terrorists but because of their calmness and the certitude of their convictions.

No regrets or second thoughts are apparent, except for the failure of their missions. The women in particular display a truly frightening serenity.

Rehov, the film's producer and director, has made six previous documentaries on

Israeli-Palestinian relations and societies. He's the product of a multicultural upbringing.

Born in Algeria into an old Jewish family, Rehov said in a phone interview that he grew up among Arabs and Muslims and continues to feel comfortable among them.

That background, and his French citizenship, made it easier to conduct the interviews once the Hamas prison bosses, who in effect control the inmates of the Israeli prison, gave their permission.

Rehov's main purpose, and the most interesting aspect of the film, is to explore the terrorists' minds and motivations.

Israeli occupation, revenge for Palestinian deaths, frustration at checkpoints and poverty may all contribute to convincing young men and women to strap on explosive belts, but the real reasons for the bombers' hatred lie much deeper, Rehov contends.

He assigns two psychological factors to the formation of the terrorist mindset, both inherent in Islamic religion and tradition: a high degree of sexual frustration, and a deep sense of humiliation and wounded pride.

Rehov's conclusions seem to be borne out to a considerable extent by the prisoners' own words and the commentaries of Arab, Israeli and other experts interspersed in the film.

The would-be terrorists rarely speak of nationalistic grievances, but constantly emphasize their religious mandate.

"Our goal is to kill all enemies of Islam," one young woman says.

"Those who die for Allah are not dead but live in paradise," a young man proclaims.

Such beliefs easily reinforce hatred of Jews.

"Jews have never obeyed God and are not part of mankind," another prisoner adds.

One former terrorist recruiter says volunteers signify their wish to become "martyrs" by declaring that they wish to "marry Allah."

A sense of shame is another major motivating factor for aspiring terrorists, ac-

cording to Rehov.

"It's bad enough that the infidel West is superior in technology and wealth, but to have been defeated by Jews, whom Muslims have held in contempt for centuries, is the utmost humiliation," he said.

Rehov treads on more controversial ground when he lists sexual frustration as perhaps the key component of the terrorist mind.

"Young Muslim men are raised in a highly restrictive atmosphere, riddled with sexual guilt and taboos," he said. "They grow up without a natural relationship to women, whom they hold in deep contempt."

The fantasy of rewarding martyrs with 72 virgins in paradise is part of that, as is the sense that the Israeli lifestyle, with its half-clad women, is corrupting Islamic purity, Rehov said.

The filmmaker dismissed another Western belief — that if Islamic moderates are encouraged, they'll eventually rein in the extremists.

"Suicide Killers" has screened at film festivals in Europe, America and the Far East. Rehov expects that the film will open in commercial theaters early next year. ■

Filmmaker Pierre Rehov lists sexual frustration as perhaps the key component of the terrorist mind.

## COMMUNITY

### TRANSITIONS

■ The Board of Governors of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion made four appointments: Barbara Benioff Friedman, chairwoman; Mark Biderman, treasurer; H. Jerome Lerner, vice chairman; and Gary Bockelman, chief operating officer.

■ Rabbi Eric Wittstein was named vice president in charge of North America operations and development at the World Union of Progressive Judaism.

■ Zvi Galil was named president of Tel Aviv University.

■ Rabbi Nochem Kaplan, director of the Chabad movement's Office of Education, was elected to the Commission on Standards and Review of the National Council for Private School Accreditation.

### HONORS

■ The Zionist Organization of America honored past leaders of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations Mortimer Zuckerman, Ronald Lauder and James Tisch at a dinner in New York.

■ The American Jewish Archives Journal received the Ohioana Library Association Award for Editorial Excellence.

■ Sara Rubin, executive director of the Boston Jewish Film Festival, was awarded the insignia of Chevalier in the Order of Arts and Letters by the Consul General of France in Boston.

■ The Jewish Foundation for the Righteous honored Carole and Barry Kaye at its annual dinner.

■ MyJewishLearning.com won the International Academy of Visual Arts W3 Silver Award.

■ The YIVO Institute for Jewish Research awarded its \$5,000 Jan Karski and Pola Nirenska Prize to Joachim Russek for his work in Polish-Jewish studies.

■ The Everybody Wins New York! foundation honored the Jewish Theological Seminary for its support

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### WORLD

#### Finland requests U.N. session on Darfur

Finland's ambassador formally requested a special session of the U.N. Human Rights Council to discuss genocide in Darfur. The request Thursday was made on behalf of 20 other countries.

The session is expected to take place in mid-December, at the conclusion of the council's third regular session.

The Human Rights Council has come under criticism for its singular focus on Israel, and Finland's request, coming after U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan called on the council to widen its focus, was welcomed by Jewish groups. "This request for a special session on Darfur is a refreshing break from the politics of this council and its predecessor," said Shai Franklin, director of international organizations at the World Jewish Congress.

#### Lawmaker's assistant fired over Nazi video

A Polish lawmaker's assistant was fired after a newspaper revealed a video in which she gave the Nazi salute. Maciej Giertych, who represents the extreme-right League of Polish Families in the European Parliament, dismissed Leokadi Wiacek after seeing video of a neo-Nazi gathering that was posted on the Dziennik newspaper's Web site. Wiacek apologized for her "irresponsible behavior."

The video also has put a spotlight on Giertych's son, Education Minister Roman Giertych, who heads the League of Polish Families and is honorary chairman of the All Polish Youth, the group that organized the rally. The Socialist opposition has called for the minister's resignation in reaction to the video.

Meanwhile, Polish prosecutors are investigating the rally, staged in southern Poland in 2004, since the propagation of Nazism is illegal in Poland.

The rally was held in front of a burning swastika, and attendees can be heard shouting "Sieg Heil."

#### Blast hits FSU Holocaust memorial

An explosion occurred at a Holocaust memorial in western Belarus. Wednesday's blast caused minor damage to the monument to the victims of the Brest Ghetto, the AEN news agency reported, citing a local Jewish leader.

A homemade device was planted and detonated under the wreaths and flower baskets, causing a fire that smeared the monument with soot. According to Boris Bruk, chairman of the Brest Jewish community, this was at least the sixth act of vandalism since the monument was unveiled 14 years ago.

The Jewish community has protested the local authorities' refusal to open a criminal investigation into the incident, which police described as petty hooliganism.

### MIDDLE EAST

#### Bush boosts Abbas

President Bush said achieving Israeli-Palestinian peace was key to stabilizing the wider Middle East.

"There is no question that if we were able to settle the Israeli-Palestinian issue it would help bring more peace to the Middle East," Bush told reporters Thursday after meeting Iraqi Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki in Amman.

"Therefore our government is focused on helping develop the two-state solution."

Bush reiterated his endorsement of Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, who has been struggling to revive peacemaking efforts since Hamas took over the P.A. government in March. Bush said Abbas deserved credit for coming out against Hamas'

harder line. "He deserves support in peeling his government away from those who do not recognize Israel's right to exist," Bush said.

#### Abbas: Unity talks deadlocked

Mahmoud Abbas said his efforts to form a Palestinian Authority coalition government were at a "dead end."

The Palestinian Authority president made the announcement Thursday after talks with visiting U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

"In the past few days we have come to the conclusion that the doors are locked," Abbas said. "We are at a dead end."

#### Bush, Abdullah focus on Israel

Israel's relations with Syria and the Palestinians were the focus of talks between President Bush and Jordan's king.

Bush and Abdullah II met Wednesday in Amman and Thursday with Nouri al-Maliki, the prime minister of Iraq, to discuss how to move forward in Maliki's war-torn land.

In a separate dinner Wednesday evening, however, the focus was on Israel, administration officials said.

"On the Israeli-Palestinian situation, the president and the king both thought this was a potential moment of opportunity," a senior administration official said in remarks distributed to the media.

Bush and Abdullah both were impressed by Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's offer this week of a prisoner exchange as a means to rekindle Israeli-Palestinian talks, and agreed on the need to bolster Mahmoud Abbas, the relatively moderate P.A. president.

#### Israel releases Hamas minister

Israel released a Hamas government minister from custody. Abdel-Rahman Zidan, the public works minister, was among Palestinian Authority Cabinet members from Hamas detained after gunmen affiliated with the terrorist group nabbed an Israeli soldier in a June 25 cross-border raid.

Zidan was released Wednesday near the northern West Bank city of Jenin, Reuters reported. It quoted a spokeswoman for Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert as saying that Zidan was released on the orders of a military court.

#### Israeli strike ends

An Israeli public-sector strike ended. Airports, seaports and government ministries resumed normal operations Thursday after the national Labor Court issued back-to-work orders to thousands of striking employees.

The strike had been called Wednesday to protest nonpayment of municipal workers. The Labor Court suspended the strike for a week while the Histadrut labor federation and Finance Ministry hold talks on a resolution.

### NORTH AMERICA

#### Bush wants \$10 million for Abbas force

The Bush administration plans to ask Congress for as much as \$10 million to reinforce troops loyal to Mahmoud Abbas. Lt. Gen. Keith Dayton, the top U.S. military envoy to the Palestinians, wants \$20 million from Western donors to bolster the P.A. president, a relative moderate, as he confronts Hamas, the separately elected terrorist group that controls the P.A. Cabinet.

According to a Reuters report Wednesday, Dayton has raised \$5 million from foreign donors and plans to ask for \$10 million from Congress.

Congressional appropriators have been reluctant to fund the Palestinian Authority as long as Hamas is governing.