

IN THE NEWS

U.S. rejects Demjanjuk

An Ohio resident cannot be a U.S. citizen because he was a guard in Nazi concentration camps, a federal appeals court ruled. The court upheld a 2002 decision by a Cleveland federal judge revoking John Demjanjuk's U.S. citizenship.

The U.S. government has spent 27 years trying to prove Demjanjuk, 84, was a Nazi guard who tried to hide his past.

"John Demjanjuk never deserved access to the benefits and privileges of citizenship. Today the atrocities of his past have finally caught up with him," said Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League.

Ontario shul is vandalized

A Canadian synagogue was vandalized.

Jewish leaders were outraged after hateful words and symbols were painted on the Beth Zion Congregation in Oshawa, Ontario, including a swastika drawn on a Holocaust memorial plaque at the synagogue's entrance. Offensive phrases included "Einsatzgruppen A," "Sons of Gestapo" and "Smash ZOG," or Zionist Occupied Government.

The incident is the latest in a series of anti-Semitic acts across Canada over the past six weeks that have alarmed community officials.

Two Palestinians killed by army fire

Two Palestinians, one of them an 8-year-old boy, were killed Saturday by Israeli army fire.

The boy was killed by Israeli tank fire during an army raid into the Khan Yunis refugee camp in the Gaza Strip, witnesses said.

The army had no immediate comment on the incident which sparked clashes between soldiers and local Palestinians. In the West Bank, a 22-year-old was killed during stone-throwing clashes against soldiers in Nablus.



WORLD REPORT

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As Likud rejects Gaza pullout plan, Arab gunmen kill mother and kids

By DINA KRAFT

JERUSALEM (JTA) — On its own, the murder of a pregnant Israeli woman and her four daughters in Gaza would be considered a tragedy.

But the fact that the roadside slaying of Tali Hatuel and her young daughters took place on Sunday, the same day that the Likud Party voted down Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan for a unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip, gave the killings a painful irony as well.

The vote dealt a political defeat to Sharon, who had championed the withdrawal plan as the right thing for Israel's security.

Likud members who voted in the referendum disagreed. Of those who turned up at the polls — less than half of Likud's 193,000 eligible voters — roughly 60 percent voted against the plan and about 40 percent in favor, according to preliminary results.

"I think this is a bad day for the country," Israel's absorption minister, Tzipi Livni, said after the vote.

Livni was among the Cabinet ministers backing the plan, which called for a unilateral Israeli withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and parts of the northern West Bank, including the dismantling of Jewish settlements in those areas.

"It indicates that Likud members are against any concessions, and this threatens to make the party irrelevant," Livni said.

But in Gush Katif, the largest Israeli settlement bloc in Gaza, there was some relief.

"Now the plan has to be stopped," said Ezra Eldad, who lives in the Gaza settlement

of Ganei Tal. "We have won the struggle."

Any sense of triumph, however, was tempered by grief at news of the shooting Sunday that left five of Gaza's Jewish residents dead.

Hatuel, 34, who was eight months pregnant, was driving with her four daughters down the main road that connects Gush Katif and a main Gaza border crossing when her station-wagon came under fire from Palestinian gunmen in a car nearby.

The hail of bullets forced the vehicle off the road, and the two terrorists then approached the car and fired at the family at close range. Hatuel and her four daughters — Hila, 11, Hadar, 9, Roni, 7, and Merav, 2 — were killed immediately.

The two gunmen were killed soon afterward by Israeli troops, the Israeli army said.

Hatuel was believed to be on her way to protest Sharon's withdrawal plan.

A blood-soaked baby seat and children's books were found in the car, which displayed a bumper sticker reading, "Uprooting the settlements, victory for terror."

The five were buried Sunday night in a funeral attended by thousands. David Hatuel stood over the bodies of his wife and daughters, sobbing. He had been away from home a lot in recent weeks, helping campaign against Sharon's pullout plan.

On Friday, the girls "drew me a picture and wrote 'Daddy, we are proud of what you are doing for the home where we were born,'" he said at their funeral. "You were my flowers and I will not forget you," he said.

Two soldiers and an Israeli civilian also

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**LIKUD
AT THE
POLLS**

■ *As Likud rejects Gaza pullout plan, Gaza gunmen kill Jewish mother, kids*

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were wounded in the incident.

Hamas, Islamic Jihad and the Popular Resistance Committee claimed joint responsibility for the attack, saying it was carried out to avenge Israel's recent assassinations of Hamas leaders Sheik Ahmed Yassin and Abdel Aziz Rantissi.

Later Sunday, Israel launched a counterattack, with a helicopter strike against a Hamas-aligned radio station in Gaza.

It was not immediately clear if the Palestinian attack influenced Likud Party voting either way.

Many observers predicted in recent days that support for the plan had dwindled, with opponents gradually gaining a majority.

■

The margin of defeat for Sharon's plan in voting Sunday was larger than polls had predicted the weekend before the referendum.

The campaign against the plan had been fierce.

At the sprawling plaza outside the convention center in Jerusalem where some Likud members cast their ballots, banners were strung between trees warning that approval of the plan amounted to a "prize for terrorism."

Teenagers also passed out bumper stickers and pamphlets against the plan.

Omri Sharon, the prime minister's son, voted at that Jerusalem location. His arrival was met with a round of boos and aggressive pushing and shoving toward

him by opponents of the plan.

Families from Gush Katif were among those who approached voters trying to convince them not to support the plan.

Hila Volberstein, who lives in the Gaza settlement of Atzmona, was there with her eight children.

"We are here so people can see us, so we can stay in our homes and keep Israel strong," she said. "As soon as we withdraw, an endless spiral will begin," she said. "Arabs will want" all the Land of Israel.

Rami Shalom, a 75-year-old retiree, was among the few voters at the convention center who openly said he supported the plan.

"We cannot drag this out forever," he said, referring to Israel's occupation of Gaza. "It is a difficult situation and it will not be easy to dismantle settlements, but it looks as if there is no choice."

Opponents of the plan took pains to say they were voting not against Sharon, but against his withdrawal plan.

"We Love Sharon. Vote No," read signs posted around the country.

Sharon had hoped to clinch support for the plan after President Bush endorsed it last month. Bush also said that Israel had the right to retain some West

Bank land in a future peace deal and that Palestinian refugees from Israel's 1948 War of Independence should not be granted the right to return to their former homes inside Israel. Instead, they can live in a future Palestinian state, the president indicated.

Sharon had warned Likud members in recent days that a vote against his plan might lead to the end of his government.

As voters headed to polls, he somberly said the vote would determine the direction in which Israel was headed.

"This is a fateful decision, tough but the most important, which will determine whether Israel will move forward in all areas — in security, in the economy, in education, in industry, in our relations with the United States — or move backward," Sharon said at a Cabinet meeting Sunday. "And each person must think good and well about the future of his children and his own future, and vote for my plan."

But after the vote, it was unclear how the non-binding referendum would impact Sharon's disengagement plan from the Palestinians, the Likud Party or the prime minister's political future.

Aides indicated that one thing was certain: Sharon would not resign. ■

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Expanding boycotts against Israel?

NEW YORK (JTA) — Representatives from 15 Arab countries met last week in Syria to discuss tightening the Arab boycott against Israel.

On the agenda of the four-day meeting, held in Damascus, was blacklisting new companies that do business with the Jewish state, The Associated Press reported.

Officials at the meeting cited statistics showing that Israel loses \$3 billion annually due to the boycott.

Mohammed al-Ajami, who heads the Syrian office of the Central Boycott Office, said last week's meeting was "a direct and practical response to the policy of the criminal escalation adopted by Israel."

Originally instituted in 1951 and funded

by the Arab League, the boycott weakened in the wake of peace treaties between Israel and Egypt, Jordan and the PLO.

Meanwhile, a pro-Israel academic condemned as a "publicity stunt" an effort to enforce an academic boycott against Israel.

Andrew Marks, director of the International Academic Friends of Israel, blasted an open letter sent to the president of Hebrew University and other Israeli universities demanding that they disclose "what Israeli academic institutions are doing to challenge the behavior" of the Israeli government in the Palestinian-populated territories.

"I don't think this is the way to promote peace in the Middle East," Marks said. ■

THIS WEEK

MONDAY

■ Sen. John Kerry gives his first major address to a Jewish group since becoming the presumptive Democratic nominee for president. At the Anti-Defamation League's national leadership conference in Washington, Kerry (D-Mass.) is expected to discuss Israel's Gaza withdrawal plan, international anti-Semitism and hate crimes.

■ Around 300 rabbis meet through Thursday in Lesigny, south of Paris, for the biennial of the European Conference of Rabbis. The meeting focuses on Jewish ethics and will include addresses by Shas spiritual leader Rabbi Ovadia Yosef and Israel's Ashkenazi chief rabbi, Yona Metzger.

TUESDAY

■ Members of the diplomatic "Quartet" guiding the Israeli-Palestinian "road map" peace plan meet in New York to discuss Israel's plan to withdraw from Gaza. Three of the Quartet's members — the European Union, United Nations and Russia — were caught off guard when the United States recently endorsed Israel's unilateral withdrawal plan. The three are expected to press for greater Palestinian involvement in the plan's implementation.

THURSDAY

■ King Abdullah of Jordan will meet President Bush to discuss Israel's Gaza pull-out plan. Abdullah abruptly canceled a trip to Washington last month after Bush recognized some of Israel's claims in the West Bank and rejected the "right of return" for Palestinian refugees to Israel. Jordanian and U.S. officials quietly have been negotiating Jordan's endorsement of the plan.

■ Argentine President Nestor Kirchner and official French government spokesman Jean-Francois Cope address the American Jewish Committee's annual dinner in Washington. Kirchner will receive an award for shedding light on the immigration of Nazis to Argentina after World War II, his commitment to human rights and his commitment to the investigation of the 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish center in Buenos Aires.

■ The Union of Jewish Congregations of Latin America and the Caribbean, a coalition of 11 small, liberal Jewish communities in the Caribbean Basin, opens its seventh annual meeting in Aruba, through Sunday. The gathering will analyze issues of Jewish theological diversity, Jewish migration in the region and interfaith understanding.

■ Christians for Israel meet at the U.S. Capitol to rally for the Jewish state on the National Day of Prayer.

■ The United Nations General Assembly has tentatively scheduled a special session to discuss Palestinian sovereignty over the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Survivors petition for Swiss funds

By JOE BERKOFKY

NEW YORK (JTA) — Clara Schwartz grew up in Hungary, where her father owned a textile business and a winery. Then World War II erupted. Schwartz survived Auschwitz, immigrated to Brooklyn in 1956 and found work in a sweater factory.

Now an ailing widow at 81, Schwartz carries a satchel with a faded picture of her mother and a long list of the prescription medications she requires each month. She lives on \$911 per month in social security payments and occasionally receives reparation payments of \$900 from Germany — not enough for her to afford the \$350 in pills she needs each month. Yet Schwartz refuses to seek assistance.

"I am very proud," she says.

Schwartz was one of some 200 needy Holocaust survivors and groups from around the world appealing last week to the U.S. District Court of Eastern New York in Brooklyn, recounting tales of heartbreak in the hope of gaining a share of the \$1.25 billion Swiss banks settlement.

Estimates of the number of survivors in the United States range from 109,000 to 174,000. They are among 80 groups or entities — ranging from the Israeli government to Roma, or gypsies — vying for a share of nearly \$600 million expected to be left over from the 1998 Swiss bank settlement after compensation is paid to survivors, or their heirs, whose bank accounts were taken from them.

So far, Judge Edward Korman, who is overseeing the settlement, has awarded \$593 million of the settlement's \$1.25 billion.

Under a legal principle known as *cy pres*, or "next best," Korman and an adviser, Judah Gribetz, have signaled that the rest of the money should go to the world's neediest survivors, who they say live in the former Soviet Union and Central Europe. In so doing, they stirred up a storm that converged last week on Korman's courtroom.

Over 10 hours on April 29, survivors and groups made their heart-wrenching appeals to Korman. The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which oversees social services for an estimated 225,000 Jews in the former Soviet Union,

screened video interviews of survivors.

"As someone who has observed poverty and deprivation around the world, those in the FSU are the poorest and the neediest on earth," said Steven Schwager, the JDC's executive vice president.

Also weighing in was the World Jewish Restitution Organization, which along with the Jewish Agency for Israel submitted eight bids for nearly 48 percent of the remaining money to aid 508,100 survivors in Israel — almost half of the survivors left in the world.

Natan Sharansky, Israel's minister of Diaspora affairs, told Korman that the Israelis have "strong disagreements" with indications from Korman and Gribetz that survivors in the former Soviet Union should get top priority once Swiss account holders have been compensated.

Israeli survivors "must be taken into account," said Sharansky, who spoke via video hookup.

Zev Factor, chairman of the Foundation for the Benefit of Holocaust Victims in Israel, which is seeking \$941 million for health and

home care for needy Israeli survivors, said their concerns are no less pressing than those of others.

Like other poor survivors, some 130,000 survivors in Israel must choose between food and medical care, Israeli officials said. The Israelis also have maintained that Korman should adhere to a general rule applied on other Holocaust restitution fronts, that 20 percent of all moneys should go toward Holocaust education and remembrance. Nobel Prize-winning author and survivor Elie Wiesel underscored that point in a letter to Korman.

"Nothing has been mentioned about memory," said Ruth Brand, 76, an Auschwitz survivor who volunteers at the Yad Vashem Holocaust Memorial.

Attorney Paul Berger of Washington said this was the first time in his 47 years in a courtroom that he had cried. As he struggled to maintain his composure, Berman lauded the judge for having the courage to face the dilemmas raised by competing survivor claims.

Korman is "wrestling with issues that have no answers," Berman said. "How do you take resources that are inadequate to do justice?" ■

Israeli survivors
'must be taken
into account.'

Natan Sharansky
Israeli Cabinet minister

NEWS IN BRIEF

WORLD

Arson in London

A London rabbi's car was destroyed by arson. The attack, which took place last week in Stamford Hill, a London neighborhood with a large Orthodox community, is being treated by police as racially motivated.

Jewish tombs hit

More than 100 Jewish tombs were desecrated at a cemetery in eastern France. Swastikas and other Nazi insignia were scrawled on 127 gravestones at the Herrlisheim-Haststatt cemetery near Colmar late last week. Slogans in praise of Hitler, and the words "Juden Raus" — or "Jews Out" — also were painted on the cemetery gates. In recent weeks, a number of Jewish and Muslim graves have been desecrated across the Alsace region.

President Jacques Chirac promised a crackdown.

Anti-Semitic attacks up in France

Anti-Semitic attacks in France rose sharply during the first quarter of 2004.

Figures released Saturday by the Interior Ministry, which collates statistics in cooperation with Jewish groups, reported 67 acts of violence against Jewish persons or property since the beginning of the year, up from 42 incidents in the last quarter of 2003.

The number of overall incidents against Jews, however, fell from 191 to 160 over the same period.

The rise in the number of recorded anti-Semitic acts could stem from increased police activity and the Jewish community's efforts to encourage victims to report attacks, the Interior Ministry said.

Papon denied

France denied Maurice Papon's appeal to his conviction for his World War II-era crimes.

France's highest court of appeals ruled April 29 that it would review the case against Papon, but only to decide if the law was properly followed, not on the substance of the conviction.

Papon, 92, was sentenced in 1998 to 10 years in jail for his role in the deportation of some 1,500 Jews to Nazi death camps in 1942.

In 2002, he was released from prison on medical grounds.

MIDDLE EAST

Annan to Arafat: shape up

The Palestinians have failed to meet their obligations to curb terrorism, Kofi Annan said.

The U.N. secretary-general used unusually blunt language in a private reply to Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, who had written Annan to complain about Israel's plan to unilaterally withdraw from the Gaza Strip.

Arafat believes the withdrawal is a pretext for Israel to keep West Bank land.

In a letter quoted last Friday by Reuters, Annan said he believed Israel should maintain its obligations under the "road map" peace plan, but that the Palestinians must step up to the plate as well.

Iraqis blacklist Israel

Iraq's provisional leaders said they would cooperate with an Arab boycott of Israel.

After talks in Damascus, the anti-Israel campaign's Central Boycott Office said its Iraqi delegation "committed to the boycott rules and will not allow Israel to penetrate their territories in any form," The Associated Press reported.

Boycott officials said Israelis have tried to do business in Iraq since the fall of Saddam Hussein. An Iraqi official said that while he could not confirm that, he would not discount that Israelis may be in Iraq under pseudonyms.

Al-Qaida: Israel would be hit

Al-Qaida would target Israeli cities if it had chemical weapons, according to a recording believed to be from the terrorist group.

A recording broadcast by an Islamic Web site and said to be by top Al-Qaida operative Abu Musab al-Zarqawi admits that the group planned an attack in Jordan, but denies — as Jordanian authorities claim — that the attack would have involved chemical weapons.

"God knows, if we did possess" a chemical bomb, "we wouldn't hesitate one second to use it to hit Israeli cities such as Eilat and Tel Aviv," the voice says in a translation published last Friday by The Associated Press.

Schwarzenegger in Israel

California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger announced job creation agreements Sunday with five Israeli companies in California.

Schwarzenegger was in Israel to attend a groundbreaking ceremony at the planned Museum of Tolerance in Jerusalem.

He was planning to fly to Jordan on Monday to meet privately with King Abdullah II. The trip to Jordan was added to his itinerary after accusations that he was ignoring Palestinians on his trip.

Saudis: Zionism is to blame

Saudi Arabia blamed Zionism for a terrorist attack in the kingdom. "Zionism is behind terrorist actions in the kingdom," Crown Prince Abdullah was quoted as telling a gathering of princes Sunday. Zionism had "misled some of our sons," he said.

Abdullah spoke a day after four gunmen killed seven people, six of them non-Saudis, in the Saudi city of Yanbu.

Israel wins European basketball championship

Israel's Maccabi Tel Aviv won an overwhelming victory over an Italian team in the Euroleague championship final. The final game, played in Tel Aviv on Saturday night, was attended by 10,000 spectators, most of them Maccabi fans.

The 118-74 victory over Skipper Bologna is Maccabi's fourth Euroleague cup title.

NORTH AMERICA

State Dept. to monitor anti-Semitism?

The U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee passed a bill requiring the State Department to monitor anti-Semitism.

The bill, approved by the committee April 29, would require the State Department to complete a review of anti-Semitism around the world by Nov. 15 and include reports on anti-Semitism in the department's reports on freedom of religion and human rights.

JCCs eye new image

The central organization for JCCs will launch a marketing blitz hoping to rebuild the public image of JCCs.

The Jewish Community Centers Association of North America is unveiling "Hagshama: Realizing Our Future — JCCs in the 21st Century" at the group's 2004 biennial in Montreal, which runs from Sunday to Wednesday.

The JCCA, which represents 350 JCCs, YMHAs and camps in North America, hopes to rebrand its image to tell people "what we stand for Jewishly," the group's president, Allan Finkelstein, said. The message is that JCCs "are serious players impacting people's Jewish experiences."