



IN THE NEWS

Bush renews Syria sanctions

President Bush renewed sanctions against Syria, citing its continued support for terrorism and its pursuit of weapons of mass destruction.

The sanctions, imposed a year ago because of Syria's support for Palestinian and Lebanese terrorist groups, were set to lapse this month.

In its withdrawal last month from Lebanon and its improvement of border security with Iraq, Syria has gone some way toward fulfilling conditions Congress and Bush set for rescinding the sanctions, but the administration says Syria is moving too slowly.

Razing Gaza's Jewish settler homes?

Ariel Sharon reportedly is leaning toward demolishing the homes of Jewish settlers in Gaza after Israel pulls out of the area.

According to a report in Ha'aretz on Sunday, the Israeli prime minister is planning to bring the subject to a Cabinet vote soon.

Last year he had said the homes would be demolished in order to prevent the Palestinians from "dancing on the rooftops" following the planned evacuation, but he has since come under pressure by some members of the government to leave them intact.

British teachers may reconsider boycott

A union of British university lecturers reportedly will call a special meeting to reconsider its boycott of two Israeli universities.

The Association of University Teachers decided two weeks ago to boycott Bar-Ilan University for its alleged support of Israel's presence in the West Bank, and Haifa University because of accusations that it mistreated a radical left-wing professor.

The decision to reconsider the boycott comes in response to protest letters from union members, Ha'aretz reported.

WORLD REPORT

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Young and old, Jew and gentile come together for March of Living

By CHANAN TIGAY

WARSZAWA (JTA) — Nazis murdered Mary Karaso's entire family at Birkenau. Her mother, father and three siblings all died at the notorious death camp.

And yet, sitting in a wheelchair just a few feet from the train tracks on which cattle cars herded her relatives into the camp — and looking out at row after row of the red-brick barracks that likely were their last home — Karaso felt satisfied.

"I very much wanted to be here, to see this place, to make a Kaddish here before I die," the 85-year-old Karaso said May 5. "Now I am peaceful and satisfied."

Karaso was part of a Greek delegation to the March of the Living, an annual event that in normal years brings Jewish teenagers to Poland on Holocaust Remembrance Day to march from Auschwitz to nearby Birkenau, where most of the camps' prisoners were gassed. That is followed by a trip to Israel to mark the Jewish state's Memorial Day and Independence Day.

Because this year marks the 60th anniversary of the Allied defeat of the Nazis, march organizers opened the trip to groups that have not been included before — adults, multicultural groups, university students and young professionals.

They came from Russia and Romania, Panama and Poland, Ukraine and the United States — and from roughly 50 other nations — to remember and to honor, to mourn and to warn.

There were financial planners from New York and policemen from Austria, represent-

ing groups ranging from the Anti-Defamation League to the Polish Jewish Student Union.

Some wore kipot, some the black hats of the fervently religious; others sported baseball caps. Some wrapped themselves in Israeli flags, some in windbreakers; still others wore the habits of Catholic nuns or priests' collars.

They all marched through a chilly rain along the 1.8 miles of bucolic roadway linking the two camps that comprised the killing center where the largest number of Jews were gassed, shot, beaten, starved and burned to death during World War II.

The marchers passed through the gates at Birkenau and moved into the area where the Nazis' infamous selection process was carried out. From there, they circled behind yard after yard of barbed wire and onto a large field for what march organizers said was the largest-ever Holocaust memorial ceremony.

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, hustled into the ceremony under a tight security cordon, asked those in attendance to "remember those who were sacrificed, and remember the murderers," adding, "Remember the silence of the world."

The Israeli flag, visible everywhere throughout the large crowd, "was missing so much here 60 years ago," Sharon said. "Remember that. Do not ever forget it."

Nobel laureate Elie Wiesel delivered the event's keynote address.

"Here in this place, one could have thought that this was the end of Jewish history," he said.

"Jewish history has not ended here," he

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BEHIND THE HEADLINES

■ Jews and non-Jews of all ages gather at Auschwitz to remember

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added. "It was wounded and remained alive, filled with renewed creative energy."

Also attending the ceremony were 30 members of the German Parliament; education ministers from some 35 countries; more than a dozen members of Knesset; Marek Belka, the prime minister of Poland; the U.S. and British ambassadors to Poland; and Edward O'Donnell, the American special envoy for Holocaust issues.

"The Holocaust is not about the past only; it's about what happens" now, O'Donnell told JTA. "It's about the lessons."

Groups from around the world dispersed throughout Krakow and Warsaw on Wednesday to tour sites central to the once-thriving Polish Jewish community and to the Jews who lived here under German occupation.

They visited synagogues and cemeteries in Krakow's old Jewish district, the ghetto into which Krakow's Jews were relocated by the Nazis and the factory in which businessman Oskar Schindler saved dozens of Jewish lives.

On Krakow's central square, a young boy could be heard asking his mother in Spanish, "Manana Auschwitz?" or "Auschwitz tomorrow?"

In a stirring Yom Hashoah address Wednesday evening just outside the main synagogue of Krakow's prewar Jewish community, Abraham Foxman, national director of the Anti-Defamation League and himself a child survivor of the Holocaust, told some 5,000 people gathered to mark the occasion that the ground on

which they stood, where Polish Jewry had thrived, was "holy ground."

Foxman, whose ADL sent six groups totaling 240 people on the march, invoked what he called the "11th Commandment": "Never again to be silent" in the face of hatred, bigotry, racism and oppression.

No matter how often he addresses the Nazi genocide publicly, it's always a very personal experience, he said.

"I say to myself, 'How many more times can one live through it?'" Foxman told JTA. "You ask yourself, 'Can I cry again?' And the answer is yes."

"The Poles and the Germans would like it to be over, but it's not over," he added. "If it's not over for me, it's not over for them."

Sebastian Schonberg, 16, a German studying the history of World War II in a high-school history class near Cologne, said he joined the march to clear his name.

"It's a little strange to come here," he said, waiting at the gate to enter Auschwitz. "Our last generation did this here. I feel very bad about the past. We want to show that we are not like the last generation."

Olivia Bettan, 21, a student from Paris, said she came in defiance — to make a point in the face of rising anti-Semitism in her country.

"I'm here today to remember the memory of all the Jews killed and to remind the next generation," she said, standing mere feet from the first crematorium the Nazis built at Auschwitz. "There's a lot of anti-Semitism again in France. It's very important to make clear that we are all together so that it will never happen again."

Walking alone through the first floor of a dank building that once was a barracks housing Jewish prisoners, just a short distance from the building in which Nazi doctors performed sometimes-deadly sterilization experiments on Jewish women, an Israeli lieutenant colonel marveled at "how important it is that Israel exists."

"The opportunity to come and stand here as an Israeli air force man, in uni-

form, is a very big honor," said Yitzhak, 48, who could not give his family name for security reasons. "Today, it wouldn't be a simple matter to do this to us again."

Thursday was Sister Joseph Spring's third time visiting the camps. Spring, 59, said that as she learns more about the Holocaust she feels increasingly compelled to teach adults and youngsters about the genocide.

"I think it was the most cataclysmic tragedy of the 20th

century," said Spring, who spent five years in charge of curriculum development for 56 New Jersey-area Catholic schools. "I don't look at this as a Jewish issue. It's just as much a Christian responsibility."

"We have a responsibility to atone," she added.

Gladys Beata, 21, isn't entirely sure if she's Jewish. Her grandmother converted to Christianity around the time the Nazis came to power, but she won't talk about why or what religion she practiced beforehand. It's not an uncommon story in Poland, where many young Jews were raised by Christian Poles in an effort to save them from the Nazi war machine.

Either way, Beata marched. Growing up near vast killing grounds was difficult to swallow, she said.

"I grew up with this thing, that something like this could happen here," she said. "When I was young, my mother told me what happened and I couldn't believe it. It's a hard part of history, but we have to remember."

The ceremony also included a performance of the Yiddish song "My Yiddishe Mama" by Israeli cantor and Broadway star Dudu Fisher, along with the chanting of El Maleh Rachamim, a traditional Jewish prayer for the dead, and the recitation of Kaddish.

And so, after 60 years, Karaso of Greece — along with 18,000 others — at long last was able to recite Kaddish for the family she lost at the site of their deaths.

As the ceremony drew to a close with the singing of Hatikvah, Israel's national anthem, hundreds of blue and white flags blew in the wind, no longer missing at Birkenau. ■

'Here in this place, one could have thought that this was the end of Jewish history. Jewish history has not ended here.'

Elie Wiesel
Nobel laureate

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THIS WEEK**MONDAY**

■ The Senate is expected to approve a final version of an appropriations bill that allocates \$200 million in aid to the Palestinians, including \$50 million for Israel to build new transit points and \$2 million to Hadasah hospitals. President Bush is expected to sign it later in the week.

TUESDAY

■ Arab and Latin American leaders meet at a summit in Brasilia and are expected to issue a joint declaration Wednesday. Officially, the United States has welcomed the summit, but behind the scenes, U.S. officials have warned Latin American leaders not to sign onto any anti-Israel statement. Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas is to attend, and Israel is worried that the declaration will urge an accelerated pace toward Palestinian statehood.

■ Israel's Embassy in Washington hosts its gala Independence Day event. Top Jewish officials meet and greet embassy staff, congressmen and administration officials.

■ The American section of the World Jewish Congress, meeting in New York, discuss ways of combating anti-Semitism. Some 80 representatives of American Jewish groups will meet with officials from the United Nations, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Organization of American States to plan a coordinated U.S. response.

WEDNESDAY

■ A group known as Advancing Women Professionals and the Jewish Community holds its first conference. The event at the Jewish Community Center in Manhattan explore how Jewish professionals can navigate the balance of work and life.

■ Swisspeaks '05, the International Raoul Wallenberg Foundation and Manhattan's Park East Synagogue present a celebration on the 30th anniversary of the death of Carl Lutz's death. The Swiss diplomat helped 62,000 Jews survive the Holocaust.

■ The Jewish Outreach Institute releases key findings from a just-completed survey of adult children of intermarried families at the San Francisco Jewish Community Center. The institute interviewed 90 young adults in Boston, Chicago and San Francisco, looking at their levels of Jewish identification. The final report will be released at the end of May.

SUNDAY

■ The 14th International Conference on Judaism and Contemporary Medicine takes place in New York City.

■ The American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee begins two days of semiannual board meetings in New York. One of the key areas of focus will be the group's initiative to examine the needs of Jewish children worldwide.

Jews confident about new pope

By RUTH ELLEN GRUBER

ROME (JTA) — As Pope Benedict XVI settles into his new role as leader of the world's 1 billion Catholics, Jewish observers are watching keenly to see if he will continue the late Pope John Paul II's groundbreaking policy of reaching out to Jews.

Evidence from the first two weeks of his papacy indicates that he at least intends to do so.

The former German Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger, Benedict was elected to the papacy April 19. The next day, as one of his first acts as pope, he wrote to Rome Chief Rabbi Riccardo Di Segni and other Jewish leaders, pledging to further Jewish-Catholic relations.

He trusted, he said, "in the help of the Almighty to continue the dialogue already begun and to strengthen cooperation with the sons and the daughters of the Jewish people."

Four days later, during the solemn mass that formally inaugurated his papacy, Benedict publicly singled out the Jews for recognition in front of 400,000 faithful and a worldwide television audience of millions.

During his homily, Benedict greeted the non-Catholics among them.

"With great affection I also greet all those who have been

reborn in the sacrament of baptism but are not yet in full communion with us," he said. "And you, my brothers and sisters of the Jewish people, to whom we are joined by a great shared spiritual heritage, one rooted in God's irrevocable promises."

Jewish observers who follow papal policy or who have been active in Catholic-Jewish dialogue say these are good signs.

"Clearly Benedict has gone out of his way to demonstrate that his commitment to Catholic-Jewish relations is as strong, if not stronger, than his predecessor," Rabbi David Rosen, director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee, told JTA.

Rosen, who has met Benedict on a number of occasions over the years, was one of the recipients of the pope's April 20 letter.

**BEHIND
THE
HEADLINES**

The new pope 'has gone out of his way' to demonstrate his commitment to Catholic-Jewish relations.

Rabbi David Rosen

Director, Interreligious Affairs
American Jewish Committee

He said that during Benedict's years as cardinal, when he served as the Vatican's doctrinal watchdog, he made clear that he viewed the relationship with Judaism as totally different from relationships with other religions — and perhaps even from the church's relations with other forms of Christianity. Benedict sees Judaism as the foundation of the church.

In his writings as Cardinal Ratzinger, Benedict also confronted the responsibility of Christians — if not the responsibility of the church itself — for anti-Semitism and the Holocaust.

Professor David Kertzer of Brown University, an expert on papal policy toward the Jews, also said the fact that Benedict wrote to Jewish leaders as one of his first papal acts was "certainly a good sign that he sees continuation of his predecessor's efforts to build good relations with the Jewish community to be a priority.

"The speed with which he took this step,"

Kertzer told JTA, "may also reflect the burden he feels as a German who grew up under Nazism and for whom questions had been raised as to what effects this may have had on his world view."

Ratzinger, 78, grew up in a staunchly anti-Nazi Catholic family, but like nearly all German teenagers then he was obliged to join the

Hitler Youth. He deserted the German army near the end of World War II.

Nonetheless, Kertzer noted that there still were issues clouding Jewish-Vatican relations.

"One of the main irritants preventing full reconciliation between the Holy See and the Jews has been the continuing unwillingness of the Vatican to come to terms with the role played by the church in fomenting modern anti-Semitism in the decades that led up to the Holocaust," he said.

A major opportunity to assess Jewish-Catholic relations will come later this year, with the 40th anniversary of Nostra Aetate, or In Our Time, a 1965 declaration that repudiated all forms of anti-Semitism and rejected the charge that God punishes the Jewish people for the death of Jesus. ■

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Fatah bests Hamas in municipal elections

The ruling Fatah Party bested Hamas in the latest round of Palestinian municipal elections.

Preliminary results show that Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas' Fatah party won 52 of 84 municipalities in the May 5 elections, the second round since the death last year of Abbas' predecessor, Yasser Arafat, and the relaunching of Palestinian-Israeli talks.

The terrorist group Hamas won 30 municipalities, according to the Ha'aretz newspaper, including the cities of Kalkilya in the West Bank and Rafah in the Gaza Strip.

Israel and the United States favor Fatah in the municipal and legislative elections set for July 17, believing Abbas offers the best hope for peace.

Israeli rights group protests barrier

An Israeli civil rights group told Israel's High Court that the route of the security fence violates international law.

The Association for Civil Rights in Israel submitted a statement to the court Sunday, before Monday's scheduled hearing at the court by a panel of nine justices on several fence-related petitions.

The justices are also to hear the state's position on the February ruling by the International Court of Justice at The Hague that the security fence is in violation of international law.

The rights group argues that although the fence route has been altered, most of it still runs through land that lies beyond Israel's recognized borders, making its construction illegal.

The state, meanwhile, is arguing that the ruling by the International Court of Justice was based on biased and inaccurate evidence, and that the court has no "binding legal validity" or jurisdiction over Israel.

Pollard wants refusenik status

Jonathan Pollard, claiming he has been tortured in jail, is appealing to the Israeli Supreme Court to be recognized as a "Prisoner of Zion."

Such recognition would put more pressure on the Israeli government to assist him. According to Israeli media reports, Pollard's Israeli lawyer now has submitted an appeal claiming her client was tortured repeatedly while in U.S. custody.

In the appeal, Pollard said he was repeatedly left naked in freezing conditions while in solitary confinement and at other times was strapped in metal chains while guards doused him with ice water.

Pollard, a former civilian intelligence analyst for the U.S. Navy, was sentenced to life in prison in 1987 after being convicted for transferring classified U.S. intelligence information to Israel.

Israeli army vehicles in Gaza vandalized

Israelis opposed to the country's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip are suspected of vandalizing several Israeli army vehicles.

The vehicles in Gaza were spray-painted on Sunday with slogans such as "Sharon is a Dictator" and "Gush Katif Forever."

The vehicles, in Gaza to help with projects in preparation for Israel's planned pullout from the region this summer, also had their doors covered in glue and were doused with a liquid that disables engines.

NORTH AMERICA

Bush declares Jewish Heritage Week

President Bush declared May 8-15 Jewish Heritage Week.

"America is stronger and more hopeful because of the industry,

talent, and imagination of Jewish Americans from around the world," Bush said in his proclamation, issued May 5.

"Their commitment to excellence in science, public service, law, athletics, literature and countless other fields has enriched our nation and enhanced our culture.

"Through strong ties to family and community, Jewish Americans reflect a compassionate spirit and set a positive example for others." He also cited the role of American Jews in the armed services.

Leaders project gets grant

A project to develop young Jewish leaders received a \$1.5 million grant.

The grant, announced last week, comes from the Professional Leadership Project's co-founders — William Davidson, the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, the Jewish Life Network/Steinhardt Foundation and Marcia and Eugene Applebaum.

The group aims to create more than 500 Jewish professional and volunteer leaders in their 20s and 30s through a planning conference, academic fellowships, professional training and a mentoring network.

The group devised its programming after a conference last summer, where it heard from formerly active young Jews who had become disillusioned and had strayed from the community.

The group also is relying on a study about recruiting and retaining Jewish professionals conducted at Brandeis University's Maurice and Marilyn Cohen Center for Modern Jewish Studies.

WORLD

Britain's Howard to step down

The Jewish leader of Britain's main opposition party said he would step down after losing a bid to become prime minister.

Conservative legislator Michael Howard made the announcement last Friday, the day after British general elections, even though his party cut into the ruling Labor Party's majority.

Howard, 63, who has headed the Conservatives for the past 18 months, said it was time to allow a younger leader to come forward.

Also in the election, a Jewish member of Britain's Parliament lost her seat to a maverick pro-Palestinian candidate.

Oona King lost the eastern London constituency of Bethnal Green and Bow, which has a large Muslim population, to former Laborite George Galloway.

Holocaust survivors gather in Israel

More than 7,000 people gathered at Israel's Yad Vashem to mark 60 years since the end of World War II.

Yad Vashem was open Sunday exclusively to survivors and their families, who toured the Holocaust memorial's new museum and took part in panel discussions on their memories of liberation and beginning new lives.

Soldiers and students also attended the discussions.

Danes apologize for WWII mistakes

Denmark apologized for sending at least 19 Jews to concentration camps during World War II.

The country's prime minister, Anders Fogh Rasmussen, told a crowd of people commemorating the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II that the actions are a "stain on Denmark's otherwise good reputation."

Nearly all of Denmark's 7,500 Jews were saved in 1943, when Danes helped Jews escape impending Nazi deportation by helping them flee to neutral Sweden.