

IN THE NEWS

Hamas could halt withdrawals

Israel hinted that a Hamas victory in upcoming Palestinian Authority elections could stop the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip.

Addressing a Jerusalem conference Monday alongside Palestinian Authority Interior Minister Nasser Youssef, Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom urged an internal crackdown on Hamas as required by the U.S.-led "road map" for peace.

"We must all reject the inclusion of Hamas in the Palestinian political system. There is no place, nor can there ever be, in a democratic society for a political party which bears arms," Shalom said.

'Quartet' stresses Palestinian contiguity

The diplomatic "Quartet" pursuing Mideast peace emphasized the need for a future Palestinian state to have territorial contiguity.

Representatives of the Quartet — a group comprised of the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations, who are driving the "road map" peace plan — met Monday in Moscow, where world leaders are commemorating the 60th anniversary of the victory over Nazism.

A statement from the group supported Israel's plan to pull out from the Gaza Strip and a portion of the northern West Bank this summer.

Sharansky joins Israeli think tank

Natan Sharansky joined an Israeli think tank.

Sharansky, who recently resigned from his post as Israel's minister of Diaspora affairs to protest the country's plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip, is now a distinguished senior fellow at the Jerusalem-based Shalem Center.

Due to technical difficulties, some subscribers to the World Report received a duplicate copy of the May 6 edition or received the May 9 edition late. JTA regrets the inconvenience.

WORLD REPORT

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For Catholic educators, march to death camps deepens lessons

By CHANAN TIGAY

WARSZAWA (JTA) — As an educator at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, Tim Kaiser spends a lot of time thinking about the Nazis' systematic effort to exterminate European Jewry.

As a Catholic, he spends a lot of time wondering how he would have reacted to the German genocide had he lived through World War II.

"I'm attracted to the study of the Holocaust through the bystander and through the perpetrator," Kaiser, 39, said Friday night at a dinner in Warsaw sponsored by the Anti-Defamation League. "The question I ask myself is, 'Could that have been me?' I wonder, 'Am I the bystander?'"

"I keep wrestling with this on a basic, fundamental level," he said.

In Poland for the May 5 March of the Living, along with a delegation of 75 American Catholic educators who completed the Bearing Witness Holocaust-education program, Kaiser's concerns were not unique.

The Bearing Witness program, a five-day professional development workshop, was developed by the ADL in partnership with the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Archdiocese of Washington.

"The history of Christianity is the history of anti-Semitism," said Pete Fredlake, 51, who taught high-school students about the Holocaust for 30 years before taking a job recently at the Washington museum. "They kind of happened at the same time."

"I talk to a lot of people who won't admit

it," continued Fredlake, who wore a "zachor" pin on his lapel. Zachor is Hebrew for "remember."

"They say, 'Well, that all happened in the past and I had nothing to do with it.' I don't think that's healthy. I think it's good to face history," he said.

In addition to the ADL contingent, another 45 Catholic teachers took part in the annual march, where on Holocaust Remembrance Day participants walk from the concentration camp at Auschwitz to the nearby death camp at Birkenau, which together comprised the Nazis' largest killing center.

MARCH OF THE LIVING

In years past, the march mostly was limited to Jewish teenagers, who went to Poland and then on to Israel for the Jewish state's memo-

rial and independence days. This year, in recognition of the 60th anniversary of the liberation of the Nazi camps, the march was opened to many additional groups, including non-Jews, college students, Austrian police officers and young professionals.

At Friday night's dinner, the ADL honored two non-Jews, a German and a Pole. Jerzy Kozminski was recognized for risking his life in order to save a Jewish family from the Warsaw Ghetto. Some of that family's descendants attended the dinner.

"The biggest award for me is that the four generations of the people I had the chance to help save are alive," Kozminski said in Polish through a translator.

Gert Weisskirchen, a member of Germany's Parliament and an outspoken opponent of anti-Semitism, also was honored.

"The Shoah represented a monstrous rip

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■ Polish Catholics march with Jews as they learn lessons from Auschwitz

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in civilization and in time, and the Jews were supposed to disappear in it forever," he said. "The present generation must be the safeguard of this knowledge time and again."

Some 18,000 people from about 60 nations took part in the march, making it not only the biggest March of the Living yet but also the largest-ever Holocaust memorial ceremony, organizers said.

While in future years the number of participants most likely will drop back to previous levels — about 7,000 people — the level of diversity will remain, march officials said.

"If the Catholic educators come here and see firsthand, through the eyes of survivors and through educators, it takes the education they experienced prior to coming here and it raises them to a much higher level in being able to serve their communities in combating intolerance and hatred and developing respect for all humankind," said David Machlis, vice chairman of the march.

As assistant superintendent of the diocese of Paterson, N.J., for five years, Sister Joseph Spring was in charge of overseeing curricula for 56 area Catholic schools. An important part of the schools' programs revolved around Holocaust education, she said.

"I think it was the most cataclysmic tragedy of the 20th century," said Spring, 59, who was making her third visit to the camps. "I don't look at this as a Jew-

ish issue. It's just as much a Christian responsibility.

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

Bryant Begany, 32, teaches sixth-, seventh- and eighth-graders at the St. Pius X School in Whittier, Calif. For him, seeing the camps firsthand is partly about memorializing the victims of the Holocaust.

In addition, he said, visiting the sites would better prepare him to "extract students' innate sentiment of tolerance."

"Intolerance is something that is taught," he said.

The march goes much farther than commemoration, Begany said.

He will be able to use lessons gleaned from the trip to teach students about morality and responsibility.

The majority of Dottie Bessares' students at the Precious Blood School in Los Angeles are Filipino and Hispanic. Most, she said, don't know any Jews.

"I'm bearing witness for them," she said. "There's hope for tomorrow when we remember the past."

Indeed, Fredlake said, he has never found a topic more effective in teaching young students core human values.

"I've always found that it's very teachable," he said. "And it's a way to help kids see that things like democracy don't just happen."

Therese Collins, a non-Jewish Jewish studies major at New York's City College — one of several non-Jews in that department who took part in the march — said that she saw a universal lesson in the Jewish Holocaust experience.

"The Holocaust starts from the notion that one" group of "people are not as good as the rest of the world," said Collins, originally from Antigua.

"There are always stereotypes about Jews, and when you hear about what they went through, their persecution as a minority group, you realize stereotypes don't describe a person. 'Never again' not just to persecution of Jews, but persecution of all innocent people."

(Chanan Tigay traveled to Poland as a guest of the Anti-Defamation League. Carolyn Slutsky in Poland contributed to this report.)

'The question I ask myself is, "Could that have been me?" I wonder, "Am I the bystander?"'

Tim Kaiser
Catholic teacher

Israeli envoy to U.N. stresses country's link to World War II

By RACHEL POMERANCE

NEW YORK (JTA) — Israel's U.N. ambassador stressed the Jewish state's unique connection to World War II.

"The State of Israel represents a people who have endured hardships throughout history, but suffered its worst calamity during the Second World War," Dan Gillerman told the U.N. General Assembly on Monday at a plenary commemorating the 60th anniversary of the end of the war.

"The Holocaust represented the murder of one-third of the Jewish people. Amidst the darkness and despair of those

war years, so many of our parents and grandparents were engulfed in the flames of hatred and lost to us forever."

Noting that 20,000 World War II veterans live in Israel, Gillerman added, "Like the United Nations itself, the State of Israel was born out of the tragedy of the Second World War, with the determination never to forget and never to allow the events of the war to reoccur."

Gillerman paid special tribute to Russia, which played a crucial role in liberating Europe, and where Israel's president is heading the Israeli delegation to a commemoration service in Moscow.

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Iraqi politician's support of Israel costs him dearly

By HEATHER ROBINSON

NEW YORK (JTA) — For daring to visit Israel, Mithal Al-Alusi has paid dearly: It cost him his two sons.

A Sunni Moslem who founded the Democratic Party of the Iraqi Nation, or DPIN, Al-Alusi believes the new Iraq should defy the longstanding policies of most Arab nations and normalize relations with Israel.

Last September, while serving in the Iraqi interim government as director general of the national commission on de-Ba'athification, Al-Alusi visited Israel to attend the Herzliyah conference, an international policy forum that attracts scholars, politicians and Israel's military and political elite.

Al-Alusi hadn't even left the conference when his family began receiving death threats from insurgents.

Ultimately the insurgents murdered Al-Alusi's sons, Ayman, 30, and Gamal, 22, who were assisting him in establishing his grassroots political party.

Al-Alusi hasn't given up, however.

Last week he came to Washington to receive the American Jewish Committee's Moral Courage award. Next week he will return to Iraq, where he continues to build his party, which has 7,000 members from across Iraq.

"It is a great honor for me to be here on behalf of all Iraqis who are fighting against terrorism," he said to thunderous applause and a standing ovation from nearly 1,000 people at the AJCommittee's annual dinner.

"No country can deal with terrorism alone," he said. "We need an alliance of democratic countries, to make it clear to terrorists that there is no dealing with them. There is only one way — to respect peace and human rights."

The AJCommittee's executive director, David Harris, praised Al-Alusi's moral courage.

"Tonight we are privileged to honor a man who has insisted Iraq refuse anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism," Harris told the crowd. "A vast literature has been written about those who stand against strong currents within their societies. Rare indeed are men and women willing to speak out when the cost is fatal."

In an interview with JTA before accepting the award, Al-Alusi elaborated on his positions about Israel, Iraq's future and the need for alliances among democracies.

He is proud to have visited the Jewish state, and believes Israel and Iraq have an increasing amount in common.

Iraq is trying to forge a democratic system, and like Israel it faces continual threats from terrorists who disdain free thinking and individual rights. Both nations, he asserts, would benefit greatly from an alliance, particularly with regard to fighting terrorism.

"I hope I am wrong, but I believe the terrorist era has just started," Al-Alusi said. "Now is the time to build a strategic alliance against terrorism."

Specifically, he would like to see the United States, Iraq, Turkey, Israel and possibly Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates form an "Atlantic alliance" against terrorism.

For more than 50 years, he noted, Iraq was part of a bloc of Arab countries that were united in opposing Israel.

"Many things were done that were not in the Iraqi people's interests. But we have no reason to be against a very successful society" like Israel, he said. "Israel is a reality, it's a modern state and an important part of the Mideast."

Al-Alusi is no stranger to controversy: A onetime member of Saddam Hussein's Ba'ath Party, he and his family were forced to flee Iraq 27 years ago, after he was sentenced to death for opposing Saddam's human-rights abuses.

In the aftermath of the U.S.-led war in Iraq, they did return. He accepted a position as director general of the Iraqi national commission on de-Ba'athification. As a member of the Iraqi National Congress, he was "second man" to the party's chairman, Ahmed Chalabi.

The commission's goal was to trans-

form a totalitarian society into one that embraces democracy. One of the reasons Al-Alusi was interested in visiting Israel, he said, was to consult with people who

knew about the de-Nazification process in postwar Germany, which he felt could inform his efforts in Iraq.

When he returned from Israel, however, the interim Iraqi government stripped him of his position and his security protection for violating a law, established under Hussein's

dictatorship, against visiting Israel. Al-Alusi was issued an arrest warrant and was told to leave the country or he would be jailed alongside former Ba'athists, a near-certain death sentence.

Unwilling to be intimidated and with the help of his sons, Al-Alusi founded the DPIN and got the party onto the ballot for Iraq's January 2005 elections.

Eventually the interim government dropped the charges against him. Shortly before the Iraqi election, Al-Alusi's younger son, Gamal, was quoted saying, "It is true we are in danger, but if this is the price for democracy and peace, it is a very low price."

In fact, the real price was higher. Within days of the election, a car carrying Gamal, Ayman, and Mithal Al-Alusi, as well as a bodyguard, was ambushed by insurgents.

Mithal survived. Ayman and Gamal died of gunshot wounds, as did the bodyguard, Hayder Hassain.

After his sons' deaths Al-Alusi came to the United States, and with help from independent antiterrorism lobbyist Esther Kandel and Yehudit Barsky, director of the AJCommittee's division on Middle East and international terrorism, he shared his family's story with several members of Congress.

Despite great obstacles, he is deeply grateful to the United States for liberating Iraq.

"Thank you, America," he said in his speech to the AJCommittee. "Without your help, nothing could have changed in Iraq."

Tonight we are privileged to honor a man who has insisted Iraq refuse anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism.'

David Harris

Executive director,
American Jewish Committee

**BEHIND
THE
HEADLINES**

NEWS IN BRIEF

WORLD

Peace process gets new envoy

Kofi Annan named a new U.N. envoy to the Israeli-Palestinian peace process.

Peruvian diplomat Alvaro de Soto is the U.N.'s new special coordinator, replacing Terje Roed-Larsen.

De Soto, a longtime U.N. official, drafted the peace agreement that ended the civil war in El Salvador and was the key U.N. negotiator for unsuccessful efforts to unify Cyprus.

Neo-Nazis blocked in Berlin

A neo-Nazi rally in Berlin was blocked. Police revoked the permit for Saturday's rally after approximately 6,000 counterdemonstrators blocked roads along a planned route where an estimated 2,800 members and supporters of extreme right-wing parties planned to march.

On Sunday, German politicians marked the anniversary of what is formally called the day of liberation from Nazism.

Ceremonies were held and wreaths laid at the Neue Wache, a memorial to victims of the war.

Film on German Jew nominated

A Jewish comedy received 10 nominations for Germany's top film prize. "Go for Zucker," a comedy about a German Jew trying to cope with his mother's death, received the nominations Monday.

The awards will be presented July 8.

MIDDLE EAST

Prisoner release on hold

Israel indefinitely postponed the release of 400 security prisoners, which had been meant to boost Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

Prime Minister Ariel Sharon decided Sunday that as long as Abbas does not meet his commitments to crack down on Hamas and other Palestinian terrorist groups, Israel will not carry out a second batch of prisoner releases agreed to at a February summit.

The first group of 500 low-level terrorists went free soon after the summit in Egypt.

Palestinian officials accused Israel of undermining Abbas' standing before parliamentary elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, but Sharon rejected this.

Surveillance mission foiled

A suspected Syrian spy was captured on the Golan Heights.

Israeli authorities lifted a gag order Monday on the case, the second infiltration into the Golan from Syria in as many months.

According to the army, a Syrian equipped with binoculars and a video camera was caught by troops in a demilitarized zone near Kuneitra on Sunday.

He is believed to have been carrying out reconnaissance against an Israeli army base.

Three weeks ago, a Palestinian armed with a shotgun crossed the Syrian border and shot at an Israeli army position on the Golan, causing no casualties.

Israel accused Damascus of encouraging a border flare-up.

Holy Land of hoops

An Israeli team won the top European basketball tournament for the second straight year.

Maccabi Tel Aviv beat Spain's Tau Vitoria 90-78 on Sunday in the final round of the Euroleague in Moscow.

The victory, which won the team its fifth title, sparked nightlong

celebrations in Israel.

"I love you!" Prime Minister Ariel Sharon was reported to have told Maccabi coach Pini Gershon in a congratulatory phone call.

Rumor sparks riot

A rumor that far-right Jews planned to ascend to the Temple Mount sparked a Muslim riot in Jerusalem.

At least seven Israeli policemen and two Palestinians were hurt in Monday's confrontations in an Arab neighborhood of eastern Jerusalem.

It began when hundreds of Palestinians, hearing that the far-right Jewish group Revava would renew its efforts to worship on the Temple Mount, converged on the site.

Israeli police informed the crowd that entry to the mosques on the mount would be limited for security reasons.

Incensed, many of the Palestinians turned violent.

NORTH AMERICA

Lawmakers seek Schneerson books

More than 300 U.S. legislators signed a letter asking Russian President Vladimir Putin to return a collection of books to the Chabad-Lubavitch movement in the United States.

"These rare and irreplaceable writings form a vital part of Chabad's cultural and spiritual heritage," said the letter from 300 members of the U.S. House of Representatives.

The collection contains about 12,000 volumes seized from the fifth Lubavitcher rebbe, Rabbi Yosef Yitzchak Schneerson, as part of a crackdown on religion a few years after the Russian Revolution.

It has been held for decades in the Russian State Library and Russian Military Archives.

Laura Bush visits Holocaust memorial

Laura Bush visited a Holocaust memorial in Latvia. On Saturday, the U.S. first lady placed a rock on top of a headstone at a Holocaust monument outside Riga, a place where the Nazis massacred 25,000 Jews in 1941.

Bush and her husband, President Bush, are traveling to several countries across Europe as part of ceremonies marking the 60th anniversary of the Allied victory in World War II.

Students back Columbia professor

Twenty current and former Columbia students wrote to school administrators insisting that a professor had not harassed a pro-Israel student.

The students, who say they were in Joseph Massad's class on the day of the alleged incident, sent a letter May 3 to Columbia's president, Lee Bollinger, to other top members of the school's administration and to members of a committee that found credible claims that Massad had threatened to kick a student out of class for holding pro-Israel views.

The accusations "are unequivocally false," the letter said.

The report, issued March 31, found that Massad "exceeded commonly accepted bounds" in responding to a pro-Israel student's question about Israeli warnings before military actions in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Neo-Nazis confronted in Boston

Two people were arrested when a larger group of counterdemonstrators confronted a small number of white supremacists who rallied in Boston.

The confrontation occurred Sunday outside a commemoration marking the 60th anniversary of the Holocaust, which drew hundreds of participants.

The two arrested were a white woman who allegedly had been shouting obscenities at a black man, and the man, who allegedly responded by spitting in her face.

Inside the meeting at Boston's historic Faneuil Hall, Germany's consul general to New England spoke of the responsibility of all Germans to remember the Holocaust.