

IN THE NEWS

**Bush OKs
Palestinian aid**

President Bush signed legislation that earmarks \$200 million in aid for the Palestinians.

The supplemental spending bill, signed into law Wednesday, provides money to support the West Bank and Gaza Strip, including \$50 million for Israel to improve crossing points into the Palestinian territories, and \$5 million for an audit of Palestinian Authority finances.

The bill does not give direct aid to the Palestinian Authority, but Bush may use a presidential waiver to allow some of the money to go to the government.

**Happy 57th
birthday, Israel**

Israel kicked off its 57th Independence Day.

Celebrations began with a ceremony at Mount Herzl in Jerusalem on Wednesday night, formally ending the solemn 24-hour mourning period of Memorial Day.

Among those lighting ceremonial torches were philanthropist Charles Bronfman, believed to be the first non-Israeli to do so, and Azzam Azzam, an Israeli Druse who was freed from an Egyptian prison last year after serving eight years on espionage charges.

**Jews meet with
attorney general**

Jewish leaders discussed the Patriot Act and other issues in a meeting with U.S. Attorney General Alberto Gonzales.

During Wednesday's meeting, several Jewish groups praised the legislation, which enhances law enforcement's counterterrorism tools, while others raised concerns about the right to privacy, sources told JTA.

Gonzales, who became attorney general in February, listed privacy safeguards in the bill, which is up for debate again in Congress.

Gonzales also expressed support for an independent judiciary and said judges should expect to receive criticism as part of their job.



WORLD REPORT

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In one bilingual Galilee school, students seek out common ground

By GIL SEDAN

MISGAV, Israel (JTA) — When the sirens roar for two minutes at 11 a.m. on Remembrance Day, classmates Ittay Garfunkel and Ahmad Namarnah will part ways.

Ittay and his Jewish friends will stand still by the Israeli flag, honoring the 21,781 people who died in the wars since Israel's inception.

Ahmad and his Arab friends will gather in a nearby class, commemorating the Nakba — Arabic for catastrophe — which is how many Israeli Arabs view the Arab defeat and the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948.

Wednesday, when Remembrance Day is observed, is the only day in the school year that the class splits.

Ahmad and Ittay are seventh-graders at the bilingual Galilee School in Misgav. Misgav is the regional center of several Jewish settlements in the lower Galilee, close to the Arab town of Sakhnin.

Aside from the fact that Sakhnin's soccer team won Israel's national cup last year — and its captain, Abbas Suwan, scored a key goal for Israel's national soccer team in an important recent match against Ireland — Sakhnin is best known to many Israeli Jews as a symbol of Palestinian nationalism and friction in Jewish-Arab relations.

It was here that six local residents were killed during riots following land confiscations in 1976. It was here that violent clashes in October 2000 left four youths dead when Israeli Arabs rioted in solidarity with the nascent Palestinian intifada, and police responded with gunfire.

Most of the Arab students attending the Galilee School come from Sakhnin and neighboring villages. The school is one of four Arab-Jewish schools in the country: Two others operate in Jerusalem and in the predominantly Arab area of Wadi Ara, which links the coastal plain with the Jezreel Valley. A fourth operates in the mixed Jewish-Arab village of Neve Shalom between Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

Some 170 students study at the Galilee School, half Jewish and half Arab. It has been the initiative of the Hand-in-Hand Center for Jewish-Arab education in Israel.

In the Galilee School, Jewish and Arab children learn side-by-side in classrooms team-taught by two teachers, one Arab and one Jew.

Each teacher speaks exclusively in his or her mother tongue, assuring that pupils' primary linguistic role model in that language is a native speaker. The two teachers complement, paraphrase and dialogue with one another, but avoid direct translation, which is considered detrimental to the immersion approach.

By the end of first grade, pupils have mastered both the Arabic and Hebrew alphabets. Pupils ultimately become completely proficient in speaking, reading and writing both languages.

Supporters say seven years of experience at the Galilee School and Israel's other bilingual schools shows that "indoctrinating" children for tolerance at an early age bears astonishing results in avoiding prejudice, hatred and chauvinism.

"Certainly I realize that when we cel-

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YOM
HA'ATZMAUT
FEATURE

■ *As Jewish and Arab children study together, they move beyond hate*

Continued from page 1

celebrate Independence Day, it hurts them," Ittay, who lives in the nearby village of Rakefet, says of his Arab friends. "That's why they don't attend our ceremony. When we mourn our dead soldiers, they think about their own dead who were killed by our soldiers."

"I believe that this is the way it should be done," agrees Ahmad. "We want to show the other kids. They think that on this day we don't get along, but we want to show them that we can get along, and how."

■
Last week, 25 parents met for a preparation session ahead of Independence/Nakba Day. Only four Arab parents showed up.

That raised eyebrows among the Jewish parents, since Arab attendance generally is high at teacher-parent meetings.

"Some of the parents were either born during the military government era," which lasted until 1966 and which restricted the freedom of Israeli Arabs, "or are children to parents who lived during those times," says principal Kamal Abu Yunis. "For some of them it's not easy to openly speak about the trauma of the Nakba."

Some 600,000 Arabs fled or were expelled during Israel's war of Independence, deserting 368 villages.

Nimer Namarneh, Ahmad's father, said the school was built on his family's land in fields belonging to the village of Miar, which was destroyed in the 1948 war.

"My family fled because of rumors that the Jews were killing everyone and destroying everything," he says.

Namarneh knows now that it wasn't true: Residents of nearby Sakhnin remained in their homes, raised white flags and became Israeli citizens.

At the Galilee School, Ahmad and Ittay learn both scripts of the country's history.

"Everyone learns about the other side," says Ittay's father, Eldad Garfunkel, who operates an Arabic-translation service.

"Two years ago I attended a meeting of Arab school principals who came to our school. They said they doubted whether there was one Arab school in the country which dealt with the Nakba in such depth."

"If my son had studied at an Arab school, he would not have learned all this," Namarneh says. "This is the message: While the Jews should rejoice on Independence Day, they should at the same time respect the pain of the other; and when the Arabs mourn that they lost the battle for Palestine, they should accept the State of Israel and respect it."

"As citizens, we have learned to live with the political reality," Namarneh says, with no apparent bitterness about his family's lost lands. "We have to face the present situation as it is. I cannot change it. Both sides bear responsibility for what happened."

■
At the parents' meeting last week, the moderator, an Arab educator, asked all parents to put on paper the holidays dearest to them. Most Jewish parents noted Independence Day, Remembrance Day and Holocaust Day. The Arabs wrote down Nakba Day, Land Day and commemorations of the October 2000 riots.

"There is no meeting point," one Jewish parent lamented. "The Jews stick to their days, the Arabs to their own days. These are two totally different worlds."

But then another parent, Dov Koller, raised his sheet. He wrote four days: Holocaust Day, Nakba Day, October 2000 commemorations and Human Rights Day.

He was looking for the missing meeting point; he was trying to make the different worlds merge.

Then he said, "I knew one of the Arab kids who was killed in the October 'events.' He was actually killed twice, once when he was shot and secondly when the ambulance didn't get there in time to save him."

There is, of course a limit to

mutual empathy, and the Galilee School students were expecting to face it Wednesday. After the separate ceremonies, they will meet up to exchange impressions and feelings.

In past years, children said they didn't understand why they couldn't hold one ceremony, which would express both national agendas and raise both the Israeli and Palestinian flags.

"The Israeli flag is hard for me to accept, because they don't let us stand by our Palestinian flag," Ahmad says.

But the school was spared the dilemma, under strict orders from the Education Ministry, which bans the raising of Palestinian flags in school.

The Arab-Jewish dialogue at the Galilee School is the positive mirror reflection of the larger conflict. One people's joy often means the other people's tragedy; the stronger one party gets, the more threatened the other party becomes; and the ultimate goals of both populations do not necessarily match.

But the school has proven that individuals can overcome the conflict of interests. The formula is so simple that it's a tragedy more Arabs and Jews don't use it: Put yourself in your rival's shoes so that you understand him better.

You don't need to identify, you don't need to agree, you don't need to flatter. Just understand, and there will be less space for hatred. ■

'Certainly I realize that when we celebrate Independence Day, it hurts them. That's why they don't attend our ceremony. When we mourn our dead soldiers, they think about their own dead who were killed by our soldiers.'

Ittay Garfunkel

Seventh-grader, Galilee School

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Berlin's Shoah memorial opens and debate rages

By TOBY AXELROD

BERLIN (JTA) — On a cold May night, a man with a mane of gray hair stands alone on a Berlin street, aiming his camera between the bars of a metal fence.

On the other side are 2,711 cement slabs, some twice as tall as he is, assembled in rows.

"I wanted to see it at night, before the memorial is opened and walked on," says Helmut, 53, who lives here and has watched the Memorial to the Murdered Jews of Europe rise from a dusty brown swath of earth in the center of Berlin.

"I've seen it quite often," he says. "But this is a holy moment."

Whatever anyone feels about the memorial, which was officially to open to the public Thursday, it seems impossible to be indifferent to it.

Debate about its construction raged for 17 years, even after the German Parliament reached a decision to build it in June 1999 and even after the last of the cement steles was lowered into place in January.

Designed by American architect Peter Eisenman and complemented by an underground information center, as mandated by Germany's Parliament, the memorial was created by and for German non-Jews.

Many Jews here reserved judgment, saying their views didn't matter much.

By now it's clear that many prominent German Jews feel uncomfortable about the monument.

"It doesn't come from the hearts of people, but from politicians," Albert Meyer, head of Berlin's Jewish community, told JTA. "I'm afraid it's like a final stroke: 'We have done everything for you, we even built a memorial.' But it doesn't give anything to the brothers and sisters who were killed, or to those who are living."

It's true that politicians, including former Chancellor Helmut Kohl, pushed for the memorial, but it was the brainchild of a non-Jewish German TV personality, Lea Rosh.

Seventeen years after the memorial was proposed, it's finally a reality. In the meantime, the Berlin Wall fell, a divided Germany became one and the capital moved to Berlin, where new construction has all but obliterated evidence of the no-man's land between the eastern and western parts of the city.

Also in that time, the Claims Conference and World Jewish Congress brought the is-

sue of reparations and compensation back into the public eye. Jewish immigrants flowed into Germany from the former Soviet Union, more than tripling the Jewish population here to more than 100,000.

Jews have become visible again, bolder, part of the fabric — and yet still apart.

Anti-Semitism also has become more visible, not only on the extremes but in the center of society, and in some Islamic circles.

It's against this backdrop that Eisenman's memorial has grown and become a topic of continuous debate of fluctuating intensity.

The memorial has been subjected to typical postwar German intellectual scrutiny, born of a pleasure in arguing, philosophizing, deconstructing and reconstructing. This is a country where a controversial idea, word or object can generate headlines for days, weeks or months.

Far from the headlines, Helmut focuses his camera between the bars of the fence, hoping to capture the stillness that remains before the memorial is made public.

"Today I had the vision that these buildings all around should be gray, like the stones. This is why I am taking pictures. I want to make a painting," he says.

The grayness of the memorial does seem somehow to spread into the street and the buildings beyond. It was intentional: The memorial represents crimes that were accepted, and so the edges of the memorial blend into their surroundings.

But the site itself is an unavoidable gash.

"This place is big enough to express the wound, the scar that we Germans have," Helmut says.

The day before, Elly Gross viewed the same scene from the Berlin headquarters of the state of North-Rhine Westphalia, on the opposite side of the memorial.

A Romanian survivor of Auschwitz and of German labor camps who now lives in New York, Gross saw the sea of steles as a graveyard.

Below, in the underground information center — like the inner chamber of a shattered pyramid — the story of Gross' lost family is told, together with those of hundreds of other Jews.

Her family was chosen in part for its drama: Gross recognized her own face, and the faces of her lost family, in photos taken by an SS man in Auschwitz.

The family arrived in Auschwitz on June 2, 1944. Someone advised Gross to say she was 18.

"I waved to my mom and brother

and never saw them again," she said.

Seeing their faces in the Berlin display was a shock, even though she knows the photos well.

"I'm not breaking down, but it is emotional," she said. "It's like seeing them again. I always see them again."

The cement steles look at times like still figures, at times like groups assembled, at times like skyscrapers between which fall slivers of light. Raindrops cling to the gray walls. On one stele, a tiny winged insect quivers.

On the pathway lies a cigarette butt, perhaps from a ceremony Tuesday dedicating the memorial. After the ceremony, people were talking about Rosh's announcement that she had found a tooth at an extermination camp memorial 17 years ago and had brought it back to Germany.

On the podium Tuesday, she held the tooth between thumb and forefinger and said Eisenman had agreed to place it in one of the steles.

"It was the most embarrassing thing," said Hermann Simon, director of the New Synagogue Foundation-Centrum Judaicum in Berlin.

Barbara Distel, director of the memorial at the Dachau concentration camp, said it was "beyond the boundaries of tastelessness."

Close to midnight, Helmut is seen for the last time. He is searching for a tree to climb, to get a view of the still-quiet memorial, this time from above.

'Today I had the vision that these buildings all around should be gray, like the stones. This is why I am taking pictures. I want to make a painting.'

Helmut

German photographer

NEWS IN BRIEF

WORLD

Jewish graves desecrated in France

Sixty-five gravestones were desecrated in a Jewish cemetery in eastern France.

The vandalism took place in the city of Sarreguemines between Sunday and Tuesday afternoon, local police believe.

The headstones were overturned and one grave was partially opened.

A swastika was engraved on a mailbox at the entrance to the Catholic cemetery, 600 yards away from the Jewish cemetery.

France's two central Jewish groups, CRIF and the Consistoire, condemned the actions.

Summit blasts Israel

A joint meeting of South American and Arab leaders condemned Israel's actions toward the Palestinians.

Several Arab states, including Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia and Syria, did not send top government representatives to this week's two-day forum in Brazil.

The document released at the end of the summit condemned terrorism but asserted the right of people under occupation to resist within the boundaries of international law.

This language drew criticism from Jewish groups, who called it a carte blanche for Palestinian and Islamist terrorism.

Falash Mura tab listed

The cost for transporting Ethiopian Jews to Israel will be some \$23 million over two and a half years.

The cost was presented Tuesday to officials of the North American Jewish federation system by its overseas partners, the Jewish Agency for Israel and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, which will coordinate the aliyah.

Falash Mura, descendants of Ethiopian Jews who converted to Christianity but have returned to Judaism, now immigrate to Israel at the rate of 300 per month.

The Israeli government plans to double the rate of aliyah starting in June, so the group's immigration can be completed in two and a half years.

The Jewish Agency is budgeting more than \$18 million for the operation; the JDC expects to pay \$4.6 million.

The figures do not include the cost of absorption once the Ethiopians arrive in Israel, said Mike Rosenberg, JAFI's director general of immigration and absorption.

The federation system is expected to raise the funds for the operation, though it hasn't begun that campaign yet.

Israeli soldiers honored in France

French Jewish veterans lit the Flame of Remembrance at Paris' Arc de Triomphe.

Tuesday's ceremony honored Israeli fallen soldiers, and a special musical performance that day benefitted Hadassah hospitals in Israel.

MIDDLE EAST

Rocket hits northern Israel

A Lebanese rocket struck an Israeli border town, causing no casualties.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for Wednesday night's Katyusha rocket attack on Shlomi, which damaged a factory in the town's industrial zone.

Hezbollah and Palestinian terrorist groups operate in southern Lebanon, and Israeli security sources said the launch might have been aimed at disrupting Independence Day celebrations in the Jewish state.

Abbas questions Israel

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas cast doubt on Israeli democracy.

Addressing a conference of South American and Arab leaders in Brazil on Tuesday, Abbas cited Israeli objections to Hamas' participation in upcoming Palestinian Authority elections.

Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom "said there would be no withdrawal from Gaza nor any other city if the Hamas movement wins the elections," the Palestinian Authority president said. "Here I ask myself: What kind of democracy is this? What democracy do the Israelis believe in?"

After Shalom issued his warning this week, Israeli Defense Minister Shaul Mofaz clarified that the withdrawals from the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank will proceed regardless of the results of the P.A. elections.

Closure for Independence Day

Israel sealed its boundaries with the West Bank and Gaza Strip for four days.

The closure began early Wednesday morning, before the start of Independence Day celebrations in the Jewish state, and is to be lifted Saturday night.

Despite a cease-fire with the Palestinian Authority, intelligence warnings of possible terror attacks have mounted in recent weeks.

Mofaz won't raze homes

Israel's defense minister came out against calls to demolish settler property after Israel quits the Gaza Strip.

"After we evacuate the settlers we would have to maintain military forces, security guards and units to raze the houses in the middle of enemy territory, and there is no assurance that there wouldn't be terror attacks," Shaul Mofaz told Israel Radio on Wednesday. "I am not prepared, as the defense minister of the State of Israel, to endanger Israeli soldiers in order to destroy the houses of settlers."

The Palestinian Authority wants the settler properties demolished, and the Sharon government plans to do so.

But senior Israeli officials have called for them to be left intact, as the Jewish state would be responsible for clearing the rubble — a process that could take months.

NORTH AMERICA

Clinton seeks survivor funding

Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.) said she wants more funding to go to services for Holocaust survivors.

Clinton urged Jewish social service organizations Tuesday to seek funding from the \$25.5 million settlement of the Hungarian "Gold Train" litigation.

"Thousands of New York's Hungarian Holocaust survivors who courageously stood up for their rights in this matter stand to potentially benefit from the terms of the settlement and achieve some measure of justice from the horrors they faced," she said in a letter sent to Jewish organizations.

Nazi guard's citizenship revoked

A U.S. court revoked the citizenship of a Wisconsin man who was a wartime concentration camp guard in Poland.

Josias Kumpf, 80, admitted that he stood by a pit in Trawniki, Poland, containing dead and wounded Jewish civilians and was ordered to shoot anyone who tried to escape.

Kumpf "stood guard with a loaded weapon to ensure the complete and 'successful' perpetration of one of the bloodiest single-day slaughters of the Holocaust, the murder of 8,000 men, women and children," said Eli Rosenbaum, director of the Justice Department's Office of Special Investigations.