

IN THE NEWS
**Thousands protest
U.N. and Iranian leader**

Some 35,000 supporters of Israel protested outside the United Nations building.

Wednesday's protest in New York, organized by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, was held to show solidarity with Israel; ask the United Nations to enforce Security Council Resolution 1701, and denounce Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's presence at the 61st convening of the U.N. General Assembly.

**'Quartet' presses
Israel on revenue**

The "Quartet" working for Middle East peace called for Israel to release tax and customs revenue it has collected for the Palestinians.

In addition to calling for the release of the more than \$500 million in revenue, which Israel stopped turning over to the Palestinians after Hamas took over the Palestinian Authority, the Quartet welcomed Palestinian efforts to form a national unity government, and agreed to expand funding to the Palestinians while continuing to bypass the Palestinian Authority.

**Bush, Abbas
trade compliments**

President Bush praised Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas for his attempts to reduce the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

"I can't thank you enough for the courage you have shown," Bush said after meeting Abbas on Wednesday in New York.

The two men did not address the issue of a possible Palestinian unity government.

**Reminder:
The JTA World Report
will not be published on
Monday, Sept. 25 because of
Rosh Hashanah.**

WORLD REPORT

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For Israel, 5766 proved to be a particularly turbulent year

By LESLIE SUSSER

JERUSALEM (JTA)—The Jewish year 5766 was one of the most dramatic in Israel's history: It saw a sitting prime minister dismantle his ruling party and then suffer a massive stroke that left him comatose; a terrorist group that refused to recognize Israel's existence elected to the pinnacle of Palestinian power; and a war with another terrorist group in which more than 100 rockets slammed into Israeli cities and towns nearly every day for more than a month.

And that's just for starters.

Facing intense opposition within his Likud Party, Prime Minister Ariel Sharon broke away from the Likud in November 2005 to form the Kadima Party. The move significantly altered Israel's political landscape, placing Kadima and the Labor Party at the center of the political spectrum, with parties to the left and right seemingly marginalized.

Riding a wave of popularity, Sharon seemed certain to be re-elected by a huge margin, with a mandate to continue his policy of withdrawal from Palestinian territory following the unilateral withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and northern West Bank in the summer of 2005.

But it was not to be. After an initial, small stroke in December, Sharon suffered a major stroke Jan. 4 and fell into a deep coma from which he has not emerged.

His deputy Ehud Olmert took over as acting prime minister, paving the way for his election to the premiership in late March on a promise to complete the process of separating Israel and the Palestinians by enacting a massive unilateral withdrawal from almost all of the West Bank.

There also were precedent-setting elections

among the Palestinians: On Jan. 25, the fundamentalist Hamas swept to power, ousting the secular Fatah Party after almost 40 years of uninterrupted rule.

Israel refused to have any dealings with the Hamas government unless it recognized Israel's right to exist, accepted previous Israeli-Palestinian accords and renounced violence. Most of the international community backed the Israeli position, severed diplomatic contacts and cut off aid when Hamas refused to meet the demands.

The result was violence, with the Palestinians taking advantage of the end of occupation in Gaza to launch daily rocket barrages at Israeli towns near the border. Violence escalated after Palestinian gunmen from Hamas and other factions killed two Israeli soldiers and kidnapped a third, Gilad Shalit, on June 25.

On the northern border, Hezbollah, a terrorist group financed and armed by Iran and Syria and with seats in the Lebanese government, had built up an enormous rocket capability after Israel's unilateral withdrawal from southern Lebanon in May 2000. Shortly after Hamas' capture of Shalit, Hezbollah opened a second front with a cross-border raid July 12 that killed eight Israeli soldiers. Two others — Ehud Goldwasser and Eldad Regev — were kidnapped and dragged back to Lebanon.

Hezbollah thought Israel's answer would be the sort of limited, pinprick responses it had carried out after other Hezbollah attacks over the past six years, but in this case the group badly miscalculated.

Israel launched airstrikes against Hezbollah targets and Lebanese infrastructure and called up ground forces for a possible land

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■ *The past year saw political upheaval on both sides of the Green Line*

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invasion. Olmert was determined to change a situation in which Hezbollah felt it could attack Israeli soldiers with impunity, confident that Israel would not take strong retaliatory action for fear of attack from the 14,000 or so rockets that Hezbollah had trained on Israeli cities and towns.

There were other strategic considerations too: Israeli military planners saw Hezbollah as the long arm of Iran, building up its rocket power to attack Israel if the Jewish state or the United States took military action to prevent Iran from obtaining nuclear weapons. The Israeli war effort was aimed at restoring Israel's deterrent power, removing Hezbollah's rocket threat and creating conditions for the return of the abducted soldiers.

The initial air strikes were highly successful: In just 39 minutes on the night of July 12, the Israeli air force destroyed most of Hezbollah's Iranian-made Zilzal long-range rockets, which were believed capable of hitting Tel Aviv. Over the next few days, the air force reduced Hezbollah's Beirut headquarters to rubble, destroyed weapon stores and killed dozens of elite Hezbollah fighters.

But it soon became apparent that incessant Hezbollah rocket fire from mobile launchers could only be stopped by a large-scale ground operation. This did not materialize until the last few days of the war — and as a result, Hezbollah was able to continue firing more than 100 rockets a day at Israeli civilians in the North and claim victory on the grounds

that Israel had been unable to stop the Katyushas.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1701, which brought the fighting to an end Aug. 14, called for an embargo on arms to be imposed on Hezbollah, the militia to be removed from southern Lebanon and for the area to be patrolled by the Lebanese army, backed by a large U.N. force.

Increasingly beleaguered at home, Olmert presented these postwar developments as a major change in the strategic balance. Israeli leaders also argued that Hezbollah had lost between 500 and 800 fighters and taken a far more severe beating than was generally realized.

But the mood in Israel after the war was one of anger at what was widely seen as the government's poor management of the ground war. Military analysts and ex-generals were highly critical of the failure to order an early large-scale attack, and reservists returning from the front complained of confused orders, a lack of confidence in their superiors and shortages of food, water and equipment.

Pressure mounted on Olmert to set up a state commission of inquiry with the power to subpoena witnesses, impound evidence and recommend the dismissal

of political and military leaders. The prime minister responded by setting up a government-appointed, rather than an independent, probe.

By year's end, Olmert had acknowledged that his grand plan for a West Bank withdrawal would have to be put on a back burner, and Hamas was trying to get Palestinian terrorist factions to agree to a temporary truce and to establish a national unity government to break the international boycott.

Overall, 5766

generally was a good year for the Israeli economy, though the war in the North led to an estimated 1 percent loss in economic growth, which had been projected at more than 4 percent for the second year running.

The war also generated demands on the government's purse strings: More than \$1 billion for rehabilitation of northern Israel and an additional \$5 billion for the defense budget.

At the same time, a poverty report in late August revealed that 1.6 million Israelis, or more than one-quarter of the population, was living below the poverty line. The fiscal challenge was to meet the military and social needs without creating inflationary pressure. ■

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Extremist gains 'alarming' in Germany

BERLIN (JTA) — German Jewish leaders have called right-wing extremist gains in German state elections "alarming."

On Sunday, voters in the former East German state of Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania gave the neo-Nazi National Democratic Party of Germany 7.3 percent, more than the 5 percent necessary to have a seat in the state Parliament.

The state becomes the fourth to have right-wing extremist parties in a local Parliament in reunified Germany.

Many observers say that high unemployment in eastern states plays a role in turning voters to the right.

Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, the home of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, has an unemployment rate of 18.2 percent.

Charlotte Knobloch, head of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, called the results "shocking, and a political statement of bankruptcy." She urged mainstream politicians to "go on a committed offensive against increasing right-wing extremism."

In a statement issued Monday, she said all supporters of democracy must be alarmed by right-wing gains in broad areas of the north eastern state. ■

Belated homecoming for Herzl's children

By DINA KRAFT

JERUSALEM (JTA) — More than a century ago, Theodor Herzl, the father of modern Zionism, sat down to write his will. His heart was growing weaker and he feared his end might be near.

He stipulated his desire to be buried in the Jewish state — once it was established — alongside his children.

On Wednesday, two coffins draped in Israeli flags containing the remains of Pauline and Hans Herzl were carried into the national cemetery named for their father, and buried in the reddish brown earth of Jerusalem.

"Today, by bringing the bones of Pauline and Hans, we are completing the mission and completing a historic circle," Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert said, speaking just a few feet away from the fresh graves, which were covered in sand and marked by small white plastic signs.

The two died within a day of each other in September 1930 — Pauline after a long period of homelessness and possible addiction to morphine, and Hans by his own hand. Distraught over his sister's death, he shot himself in the head.

They were buried in a shared grave in Bordeaux, France. Their reburial in Israel ends a bizarre and dark chapter in Zionist history.

The Zionist establishment was not eager to advertise the unhappy end that the children of their visionary leader met, and did not press for their burial in Israel. Meanwhile, the Orthodox religious establishment was opposed to bringing their remains here because Hans had violated Jewish law — first by converting to Christianity and later by committing suicide.

Only after Israeli historian Ariel Feldestein pursued the case for six years, after coming across related documents in a brown envelope marked "Top Secret" at the Central Zionist Archives, did Israeli authorities begin exploring how Herzl's final wishes might be honored after so many years.

"Why has this not been done before in recent times?" Feldestein asked at a ceremony Tuesday in Bordeaux when the coffins were disinterred. "I think it's a question of negligence."

Officials from the Jewish Agency for Israel "came here to Bordeaux in 1949 but decided not to move the coffins. They returned in 1956 and put up a sign marking agency

recognition of the coffins, but did not touch them. For both occasions, I cannot tell you why no transfer was made," he told JTA.

Feldestein managed to convince Israel's Sephardi chief rabbi, Shlomo Amar, that Hans appeared to have recanted his conversion and might be considered a Jew. Amar subsequently wrote a ruling that Hans was a Jew, that his suicide was a byproduct of being mentally unstable and that he should be allowed to be buried in Jerusalem.

"We had the opportunity and we did it, to bring human justice to Herzl," Feldestein said at the ceremony marking their reburial in Jerusalem.

Afterward, talking to reporters, he said times had changed. In 1956, when the state had closed the case on the subject, Israel had "different rabbis and a different generation."

The Herzl siblings' remains were brought to Israel as part of a joint initiative of Olmert and Zeev Bielski, chairman of the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency.

Bielski said the mission was an especially moving and essential one, since it made amends for the way the WZO snubbed Herzl's children — especially Pauline, when she was destitute and desperate for funds.

"This is about bringing historical justice," Bielski said.

The family had enjoyed a comfortable, bourgeois existence in Vienna and Paris, but by the time he died of heart failure at age 44 in 1904 Herzl had used up his money pursuing the Zionist cause, leaving the family penniless.

The Zionist movement raised money to support the family after Herzl's death, investing the funds in Austro-Hungarian bonds, at the time the safest currency in Central Europe. But once World War I broke out, the money was worthless and the family's financial state became precarious.

After Herzl's death, his wife, Julie, spent time in a series of sanitariums and died three years later, at age 39. According to the most authoritative book written on the family, "The Labyrinth of Exile," Julie was cremated, but Hans is said to have left the urn with the ashes somewhere on a train.

All three of the Herzl children suffered

from varying degrees of mental illness. Their messy personal lives and hard-scrabble existences hardly resembled the royal future Herzl imagined for them.

For the World Zionist Organization that Herzl founded, the children became an embarrassment. WZO offices turned down a request for financial assistance from Pauline. By some accounts, the homeless Pauline may have died of hunger.

Hans, the son Herzl envisioned would one day serve his people as a prince, lived in London and struggled for years to get by, earning a paltry living translating his father's writings.

Battling depression and seeking a feeling of connection, he converted to Christianity in 1924, joining the Baptist Church and then hopping among various denominations. He tried being Catholic and then Protestant, Unitarian and Quaker.

Trude, the Herzls' youngest child and her parents' favorite, was killed in the Nazi concentration camp Theresienstadt. She likely was buried in a mass grave.

Her son, Stephen, the last hope for Herzl's imagined dynasty, also met with a tragic end. He survived the war in England, where he served as a lieutenant in the British army, visited British Mandate Palestine once in 1945 but refused to settle there, and took a diplomatic posting for the British government in Washington.

Two months after hearing of his mother's and father's deaths in Theresienstadt, he committed suicide in November 1946 by jumping off a Washington bridge.

On Tuesday, the bodies of Hans and Pauline were removed from the cemetery in Bordeaux in a ceremony organized by the Jewish Agency's Paris office.

On Wednesday, under the shade of a white tent over the graves of Pauline and Hans Herzl, relatives living in Israel took in the scene of politicians, flowered wreaths and television cameras.

"At last they have come here in a respectful way," said Rachel Telmon Herzl, 82, whose grandparents were both cousins of Herzl.

JTA correspondent Brett Kline contributed to this story from Bordeaux.

His children's lives hardly resembled the royal future Herzl imagined for them.

NEWS IN BRIEF

WORLD

Envoy upset at Ahmadinejad's U.N. visit

Israel's U.N. envoy criticized the United States for allowing Iran's president to attend the U.N. General Assembly summit.

"It is hard to accept that the administration would allow someone who calls for Israel's destruction, and whose actions led to the deaths of Americans, to enter the United States," Ambassador Dan Gillerman told Israel Radio by telephone Wednesday.

Gillerman appeared to be referring to Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent calls for the Jewish state to be "wiped off the map" and his reputed role in the 1979 storming of the U.S. Embassy in Tehran.

The United Nations, while headquartered in New York, is a sovereign entity.

Addressing the General Assembly on Tuesday, Ahmadinejad accused Israel of being a "constant source of threat and insecurity" in the Middle East and lamented the Palestinian "tragedy."

He also lambasted the United States and Britain for pushing the U.N. Security Council to curb Iran's nuclear program.

Sudan blames Jewish groups on Darfur

The president of Sudan said Jewish groups are lying about violence in Darfur to raise money for Israel. Speaking Tuesday at the U.N. General Assembly, Omar Hassan al-Bashir said reports of deaths and refugees in Darfur are "fictions," and that those "who made the publicity, who mobilized the people, invariably, are Jewish organizations."

The U.S. Jewish community has taken the lead in organizing against the mass violence in Darfur, but has been led by the American Jewish World Service, which does not raise funds for Israel.

Bashir's comments came the same day President Bush denounced government-sponsored violence in Darfur and named Andrew Natsios as his special envoy to the region.

Jewish man assaulted in Ukraine

A Jewish man was beaten in the Ukrainian city of Odessa. Haim Weitzman, 24, was attacked by a group of young men Monday.

According to some witnesses, Weitzman was hit several times on his head after one of the youths he was passing shouted, "I don't like yids!" Weitzman, who received minor injuries and is recuperating at home, was wearing traditional Orthodox Jewish garb.

He reported that local police initially refused to accept his report of the incident, but later opened an investigation.

Local Jewish leaders said the incident was not an isolated case in Odessa; over the past year there have been several anti-Semitic attacks on Jewish individuals and institutions.

Germany finalizes peacekeeper commitment

Germany finalized its contribution of troops to an international peacekeeping force in Lebanon.

The lower house of Parliament in Berlin ratified a plan this week to dispatch 2,400 troops to former Hezbollah strongholds in southern Lebanon.

They will join the UNIFIL peacekeeper force, which is tasked with preventing another flare-up of violence between the Lebanese militia and Israel. Given Germany's Nazi history, the deployment is significant both in Berlin and Jerusalem.

MIDDLE EAST

One dead in Gaza airstrike

Israel's air force killed a Palestinian suspected of belonging to a Gaza rocket crew. The Palestinian was killed in an airstrike Wednesday

after being spotted near a rocket launcher in the northern Gaza town of Beit Lahiya.

Security sources said the launcher had just been used to fire into Israel, and that the Palestinian was believed to be there to retrieve it. Another person was wounded. Several rockets were launched into Israeli territory Wednesday but caused no casualties.

Lebanon pullout could be delayed

Israel's military chief played down hopes of a full troop pullout from southern Lebanon by Rosh Hashanah. Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz said Wednesday that pullouts were being held up by delays in deploying UNIFIL peacekeepers and Lebanese troops in former Hezbollah strongholds.

"We very much hoped it would happen by Friday, but in the dialogue we have been holding with the United Nations and the Lebanese army there are a few issues still to be tended to," Halutz told Israel Radio. "I hope it will take place in the next few days, but it looks likely to be after the holiday."

Israel raids W. Bank traders

Israeli forces confiscated more than \$1 million from West Bank money-changers. Wednesday morning's raids targeted about a dozen small businesses in Ramallah, Jenin, Nablus and Tulkarm. Security officials said the operations aimed to prevent funds from reaching Hamas and Islamic Jihad terrorists, as well as Hezbollah agents, through legitimate-looking fronts.

NORTH AMERICA

Cantor sentenced for abuse

The former cantor of a New York City synagogue was sentenced to 12 years' probation for sexually abusing his nephew.

The judge on Tuesday also ordered Howard Nevison, 65, former cantor at Temple Emanu-El, to refrain from all contact with children under age 12. The attacks took place from 1993 to 1997, while the boy in question was 3 to 7 years old.

Two other family members were previously convicted of molesting the boy. At the sentencing, the nephew, now 17, called Nevison a "coward" who had robbed him of his trust and happiness.

"As a cantor in the Jewish religion, you should know that what you did will not sit well with God," he said.

Yale creates center on anti-Semitism

Yale University created a center to study anti-Semitism.

The Yale Initiative for Interdisciplinary Study of Anti-Semitism will provide a place to research anti-Semitism and brainstorm ways to fight it, said Charles Small, director of the center at the Ivy League school.

It's unclear whether the center will offer a major, he said.

The announcement comes amid a general increase in anti-Semitism around the world.

Shabbat boundary approved for San Diego

A Shabbat boundary will go up in San Diego's tony La Jolla neighborhood.

The City Council approved the boundary, which permits religiously observant Jews to carry objects on Shabbat, after a stormy session Sept. 18.

The petition was brought by Congregation Adat Yeshurun, an Orthodox synagogue with 285 families.

Opponents argued that the eruv, which will encircle eight square miles and use almost a mile of wire some 20 feet off the ground, is unsightly and could be dangerous if the wire falls.