

IN THE NEWS

Haniyeh, Ahmadinejad meet

The Palestinian Authority prime minister and Iranian president, in their first official meeting, vowed to see Israel eliminated.

Hamas leader Ismail Haniyeh, on his first foreign tour since his faction took power in March, met with Mahmoud Ahmadinejad in Qatar over the weekend.

An Iranian news agency quoted Ahmadinejad, who has stepped up support for Hamas in a bid to offset a Western aid embargo on the Palestinian Authority, as saying that "there is no doubt the Palestinian nation and Muslims as a whole will emerge victorious." Ahmadinejad also predicted: "The continued commission of crimes by the Zionist regime will speed up the collapse of this fictitious regime."

Haniyeh, whose Islamist faction is similarly sworn to the Jewish state's destruction, thanked Ahmadinejad for his country's "brilliant stand in the rightful battles of the Palestinians" which "signifies their deep understanding of Islamic principles."

Sex sting rabbi given 6 years in prison

A rabbi who was on the leadership of a national education group and was caught in a child sex sting was sentenced to more than six years in prison.

David Kaye, formerly a vice president at PANIM: The Institute for Jewish Leadership and Values, resigned last year after he was caught trying to solicit sex from someone he assumed to be a 13-year-old boy.

Kaye had initiated discussions in an online chat room with someone from an Internet watchdog group posing as the youngster and working for NBC's Dateline program.

Last Friday, Judge James Cacheris of the U.S. District Court in Alexandria, Va., sentenced Kaye to the maximum recommended 78 months.

WORLD REPORT

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Shifting gears: From war profiteering to undermining electric mass transit

By EDWIN BLACK

WASHINGTON (JTA) — During the late 1930s, Hitler's persecution of Jews was building to a frenzy even as fears of a war escalated. Nevertheless, General Motors' German automotive subsidiary, Opel, remained a loyal corporate citizen of the Third Reich — content to obediently do the Nazi regime's bidding and unstintingly supporting Hitler's program on many fronts. These included economic and employment recovery, anti-Jewish persecution, war preparedness and domestic propaganda. In return, Opel prospered.

Hitler was pleased — very pleased. In 1938, just months after the Nazis' annexation of Austria, James D. Mooney, head of GM's overseas operations, received the German Eagle with Cross, the highest medal Hitler awarded to foreign commercial collaborators and supporters.

On Nov. 9-10, 1938, shortly after Mooney's decoration, nationwide pogroms broke out in Germany against the Jews — Kristallnacht. The American public was finally shocked onto its heels by the night of officially orchestrated burning, looting and mob action against Jews.

President Roosevelt recalled America's ambassador, plunging German-American relations to their lowest point since Hitler assumed power. All things American came under special scrutiny in Germany.

By now, the truth about GM's ownership of the Opel car and truck operation was out in the open among Germans. Reich armament officials increasingly directed Opel's output, including mandating that nearly all vehicles be devoted to military use.

These are among the many findings of a JTA investigation. Thousands of pages of decades-old documents were scrutinized and re-examined to produce this series, which sheds new light on GM's relationship with the Third Reich — and on the company's activities in America. They reveal that even as GM was helping jump-start the resurgent German military, it was undermining America's electric mass transit, and in doing so helped spawn America's unquenchable thirst for oil. GM has declined comment for this story.

The company has steadfastly denied for decades that it actively assisted the Nazi war effort or that it simultaneously subverted mass transit in the United States.

In the months leading up to the feared 1939 invasion of Poland, Alfred P. Sloan, GM's president, defended his close collaboration with Hitler. Brushing off attacks for his partnership with a Nazi regime already notorious for filling concentration camps, taking over Austria and now threatening to install the Master Race across Europe, Sloan was stony and proud.

He stated, in a long April 1939 letter to an objecting stockholder, that in the interests of making a profit, GM shouldn't risk alienating its German hosts by intruding in Nazi affairs. "In other words, to put the proposition rather bluntly," Sloan said in the letter, "such matters should not be considered the business of the management of General Motors."

Indeed, in August of 1939, the world wondered when Hitler might invade Poland. During those days, Opel, under the direct day-to-day supervision of GM's senior executive, Cyrus Osborn, played its role in Germany's

Continued on page 2

**HITLER'S
CARMAKER
Part 3 of 4**

■ GM was making thousands of trucks that would become a mainstay of the Blitzkrieg

Continued from page 1

fast-paced military plans. The company was already manufacturing thousands of Blitz trucks that would become a mainstay of the Reich's upcoming Blitzkrieg.

The German military in early August urgently ordered Blitz truck spare parts to be delivered to Reich bases near the Polish border. Days later in August, nearly 3,000 Opel employees, from factory workers to senior managers, were drafted into the Wehrmacht. Moreover, at about that time, GM's Osborn began evacuating most of the American employees and their families to the Netherlands. Soon, virtually all Opel civilian passenger car sales were eliminated in favor of military orders.

At 6 a.m. on Sept. 1, 1939, Germany launched its Blitzkrieg against Poland, with troops arriving in Blitz trucks manufactured by GM's Opel. The night before, Sloan reportedly told stockholders that GM was "too big" to be impeded by "petty international squabbles," according to a congressional investigation.

Shortly after war broke out in Europe, however, GM executives in Germany tried to distance the American company from its involvement in the brutal German war machine. The Opel board was restructured to ensure that GM executives maintained a controlling presence on the board of directors but continued invisibility in daily management. This was accomplished in part by bringing in GM's reliable Danish chief, Albin Madsen, and maintaining two Americans on that board.

The company's 1939 annual report,

released in April 1940, stated: "With full recognition of the responsibility that the manufacturing facilities of Adam Opel A.G. must now assume under a war regime, the Corporation has withdrawn the American personnel formerly in executive charge... and has turned the administrative responsibilities over to German nationals."

However, GM was still masquerading. By the summer of 1940, a senior GM executive wrote a more honest assessment for internal circulation only. He explained that while "the management of Adam Opel A.G. is in the hands of German nationals," in point of fact, GM is still "actively represented by two American executives on the Board of Directors."

The construction and German-American balance of the many management entities created in the facade of control was constantly shifting during the Hitler years. But regardless of the number of members — German or American — on the various directing, managing or executive boards and committees, GM in the United States controlled all voting stock and could veto or permit all operations.

For all intents and purposes, though, once war began, Wehrmacht requirements and orders determined the specifics of military manufacturing at Opel. Like any nation at war, including the United States itself, the Reich alone determined what weapons would be made by its militarized factories. That said, it was GM's decision to remain operating in Germany, to continue to subject itself to Reich military orders, and answer the Reich's call for ever more lethal weapons.

As anticipated, Opel's Brandenburg facilities were conscripted and converted to an airplane-engine plant supplying the Luftwaffe's JU-88 bombers. Later, Opel's plants also built land mines and torpedo detonators. The factories and infrastructure that GM built during the 1930s were in fact finally used for their intended purpose — war. Opel-built trucks on the ground, Opel-powered bombers in the sky and Opel-detonated torpedoes in the seas brought terror to Europe.

Back in the United States, Sloan tried to obstruct FDR's war preparedness plan-

ning. The GM chief tried to dissuade GM executives with needed manufacturing and production experience from helping Washington's early mobilization plans. In one typical 1940 case, Sloan asked Danish-born William Knudson, who had ascended to become president of GM, not to leave the company and help Washington's war efforts. Sloan, who had become chairman of the company in 1937, warned his friend that the Roosevelt administration would make a "monkey out of you."

Knudson replied, "That isn't important, Mr. Sloan. I came to this country [from Denmark] with nothing. It has been good to me. Rightly or wrongly, I feel I must go." Sloan retorted, "That's a quixotic way of looking at it." By mid-1940, with or without

Sloan's acquiescence, GM had been drafted by Washington to become a major war supplier for the Allies. Sloan had no choice but to comply, and GM and its employees would ultimately make enormously valuable contributions to the Allied war effort.

A subsequent FBI probe of GM senior executives with links to Hitler found collusion with Germany by Mooney, but no evidence of any disloyalty to America. In a separate report to FBI director J. Edgar Hoover, the agent stated, "No derogatory information of any kind was developed with respect to Alfred Pritchard Sloan Jr."

Ironically, while GM was mobilizing the Third Reich, the company was also leading a criminal conspiracy to monopolistically undermine mass transit in dozens of American cities that would help addict the United States to oil.

The defendants were found guilty on one of the two counts: conspiring to monopolize the bus business by creating a network of petroleum-based transit companies that were forbidden to use transportation or technology products other than those supplied by the defendants themselves. The jury found the defendants not guilty on the count alleging a conspiracy to actually control those transit systems.

(Edwin Black is the author of the award-winning "IBM and the Holocaust" and the recently published "Internal Combustion: How Corporations and Governments Adicted the World to Oil and Derailed the Alternatives.")

GM executives in Germany tried to distance the company from Germany's war machine.

JTA

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THIS WEEK

MONDAY

■ B'nai B'rith International continues its annual policy conference through Wednesday. More than 200 BBI members will gather in New Orleans to inaugurate a new president, Canadian Moishe Smith, hear about Jewish and Israeli issues, and learn what BBI is doing to help rebuild New Orleans and other Gulf Coast communities devastated by hurricanes.

■ Avigdor Lieberman, the Israeli minister for strategic planning, launches his first U.S. tour in this capacity. Lieberman meets with the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations in New York on Monday, and on Thursday he attends a conference in Washington hosted by the Saban Center of the Brookings Institution. The conference, which will also feature Bush administration officials, is closed to the media.

■ The Israel Policy Forum hosts its annual Leadership Tribute event in New York, this year hosting Sen. Joseph Biden (D-Del.), the incoming chairman of the U.S. Senate's Foreign Relations Committee.

WEDNESDAY

■ The Iraq Study Group releases its report, which is expected to recommend greater engagement with Syria and Iran, and advancement in Israeli-Palestinian talks as part of an exit strategy from Iraq.

■ The New Israel Fund hosts Ophir Pines-Paz, the Israeli lawmaker who recently quit the Israeli Cabinet after it welcomed Avigdor Lieberman, at a lunch in Washington.

SATURDAY

■ The Anti-Defamation League holds its annual dinner in New York, honoring Rockwell Schnabel, a former U.S. ambassador to the European Union, and Randol Schoenberg, the lawyer who recently won the release of Austrian-held Klimt paintings to the rightful heirs.

SUNDAY

■ Rabbis for Human Rights, an Israeli group that recently expanded its anti-settlement mandate to include anti-torture activism abroad, holds its first North American conference in New York through Dec. 12.

■ The American Jewish Congress honors former CIA Director James Woolsey with its Jerusalem Award in a reception in Los Angeles. Woolsey has been a prominent defender of the Iraq war. Among the speakers is Richard Perle, an architect of the war.

■ The first North American Rabbinic Conference on Judaism and Human Rights is to be held through Dec. 12. More than 200 rabbis, cantors, rabbinic and cantorial students from every denomination are expected to participate at the conference, which is being held in New York in conjunction with International Human Rights Day.

O.U. treats emotional scars in Israel

By BEN HARRIS

NAHARIYA, Israel (JTA) — They're the invisible carnage of Israel's summer war with Lebanon — traumatized children, confined for weeks to bomb shelters, who remain haunted by fears of falling rockets and nighttime air-raid sirens.

Though less visible than the scenes of physical destruction that flooded the news media during Israel's monthlong war with Hezbollah, the psychological wounds inflicted on the region's children are just as real. And despite the millions of dollars poured into the area in recent months, their needs are largely being ignored by Israel's government and by Diaspora Jews.

"We were surprised that no work is being done with these children," Debbie Gross, a therapist working with children in the north, told JTA. "Nobody seems to understand if you move on, basically you're just leaving scars."

Gross reports that she is seeing more reckless behavior, particularly among teenagers, who say they don't believe they will live beyond age 30. Some children still suffer the after-effects of the conflict, Gross says, refusing to shower without a parent nearby or to be alone without the presence of an adult.

Like unexploded ordnance that detonate years later, such fears, if not treated promptly, can surface in adulthood — with devastating consequences for the individual's ability to function as a responsible member of society, experts say.

Rabbi Avi Berman, director-general of the Orthodox Union in Israel, tells of Yifat, 25, a mother of three who grew up in Kiryat Shemona, a northern Israeli city that has been victimized by Hezbollah rockets for years.

The psychic wounds she suffered as a child were never treated and Yifat was crippled when air-raid sirens sounded in July, leaving her unable to be left alone in her home.

"Because she was not treated as a child,

she cannot deal with it today," Berman said. "And we felt that our obligation as Jews is to go out there and make sure that nobody is going to be another Yifat when they grow up."

Berman hired Gross, the founder of a crisis center for religious women in Jerusalem, to oversee a counseling program for children as part of the Orthodox Union's relief efforts in northern Israel, called Project Tzafona, or "To the north."

The program Gross designed brings counselors to northern Israel three days a week. She says the program has reached 2,500 children.

In addition to enabling the youngsters to voice emotions they may

have repressed, exercises also allow counselors to identify children who are in need of more intensive treatment.

In Nahariya, counselor Moria Benjo works with children who suffered through the conflict this summer. Visible through the window are the mountain ridges from which Hezbollah terrorists launched hundreds of Katyusha rockets at Israel.

Inside, Benjo is encouraging a group of girls to remember what gave them comfort during the bombardment. Benjo says the children are in great need of attention, though often they are hesitant to open up at first.

"But when I begin to speak about it, their eyes are open and they don't let me speak," Benjo said. "I see they want to talk about what happened, and we give them skills to accept their feelings."

Berman had been on the job less than a week when the Lebanon conflict erupted. Using connections established through the organization's Makom Balev program, the Israeli version of the O.U.'s American youth organization NCSY, he began delivering supplies to residents confined to bomb shelters.

After the war, Berman used some of the \$450,000 raised through the O.U. Web site and an additional \$425,000 from the United Jewish Communities federation umbrella group to launch the counseling program.

They want to talk about what happened, and we give them skills to accept their feelings.

Moria Benjo

Counselor, Project Tzafona

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Ghajar deal reached

Israel reached a decision on ceding the northern half of an Arab village straddling its border with Lebanon.

The Cabinet approved on Sunday a plan under which Israeli troops that occupied northern Ghajar since the summer war with Hezbollah would withdraw to the southern part of the village, to be replaced by UNIFIL peacekeepers and a small contingent of Lebanese police and troops.

UNIFIL also would monitor the Lebanese-Israeli border, which bisects Ghajar, to ensure that Hezbollah does not smuggle across drugs or arms, or carry out attacks.

Palestinian teen killed

Israeli troops killed a Palestinian stone-thrower in the West Bank.

The 15-year-old boy was fatally shot in Aksar, near Nablus, on Sunday after throwing large rocks on a group of patrolling paratroopers who were trying to remove a roadblock erected by Palestinians. The army initially denied that its troops were involved in any such incident.

Israel Radio said an investigation was under way to determine whether the soldiers who did the shooting had deliberately failed to report it, even though the rules of engagement allow for lethal force to be used against stone-throwers deemed to be posing a lethal threat.

Report: Bombing of Lebanon could be war crime

Israel's use of cluster bombs during the Lebanon war could be considered a war crime, according to a U.N. report. Prepared by an inquiry commission set up to investigate Israeli actions during this summer's war with Hezbollah, the report was presented last Friday to the U.N. Human Rights Council in Geneva.

In addition to recommending that cluster bombs be outlawed, the commission found Israel guilty of "excessive, indiscriminate and disproportionate use of force" and of a failure to distinguish between civilian and military targets, The Associated Press reported. Hezbollah also used cluster bombs during the war, but the authors of the report noted that they had been instructed to investigate only Israel's actions.

Egyptians hunt Palestinian squad

Egyptian police were hunting four Palestinians suspected of planning to attack Israeli tourists in the Sinai desert.

Cairo announced over the weekend that the suspected terror squad had crossed over from the neighboring Gaza Strip and was believed to be looking for potential Israeli victims in Red Sea resorts.

Hezbollah launches mass protests

Hezbollah launched massive protests aimed at toppling Lebanon's Western-leaning government. Thousands of protesters loyal to the terrorist party gathered last Friday in central Beirut, where Prime Minister Fouad Siniora was protected in his office by hundreds of police and soldiers.

Hezbollah, which launched a war against Israel this summer, left the Cabinet ostensibly because Siniora refuses to grant the party veto-wielding powers.

WORLD

Compromise reached on deported children exhibit

An exhibit on Jewish children deported during the Holocaust will be shown in German train stations. Railway chief Hartmut Mehdorn

said last Friday that he was ready to show the traveling exhibit in German stations and nearby sites.

The exhibit is expected to open in Berlin on Jan. 27, 2008, Holocaust Remembrance Day. Mehdorn originally had objected to displaying the exhibit in a place where busy people might not be attentive.

The Central Council of Jews in Germany applauded the decision.

Canada to join Holocaust education task force

Canada is participating in an international task force on Holocaust education, remembrance and research taking place in Budapest. "The Holocaust stands alone in human history for its horrors and its inhumanity," said Canadian Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay in announcing the decision.

"It is crucial that we learn from this experience — not simply to ensure 'never again,' but also to build societies based on human dignity where such acts are no longer possible." The Canadian Jewish Congress praised the government's decision to take part in the three-day task force, which began Sunday.

Slain Russian spy criticized Russian anti-Semitism

Alexander Litvinenko, a former Russian spy who was murdered in London last month, was an outspoken critic of anti-Semitism in the Russian security services.

According to London's Jewish News, Litvinenko's friend and spokesman Alex Goldfarb said the former KGB spy wrote a book called "The FSB Blows up Russia," in which he "condemned latent anti-Semitism within Russia's Federal Security Service." Goldfarb also claims that Litvinenko's assassination by poisoning, which Goldfarb blames on the Russian government, was partially motivated by his association with a number of influential expatriated Russian Jews.

Research reveals rare criticism of wartime Vatican

New research shows that a future pope warned the Vatican of Nazi crimes against the Jews earlier than previously revealed. Israeli researcher Dina Porat claimed that the future Pope John XXIII forwarded an account of Nazi atrocities to the Vatican in 1944, several months before the Vatican claims to have received it, Ha'aretz reported.

The pope at the time, Pius XII, is a controversial figure due to claims that he knew of the Nazi genocide against the Jews and remained silent.

NORTH AMERICA

Jewish groups slam Prager for Koran remarks

Jewish groups slammed Dennis Prager for his attack on a congressman who plans to use a Koran in a private swearing-in ceremony. In his column this week Prager, a conservative talk-show host and author of a number of books on Judaism, rapped the plan by U.S. Rep.-elect Keith Ellison (D-Minn.), saying it would do "more damage to the unity of America and to the value system that has formed this country than the terrorists of 9-11."

Prager said that all members of Congress, including Jews, use a Christian Bible for swearing in. In fact, members of the U.S. House of Representatives are sworn in en masse with no holy books. Some members later hold private, unofficial photo-op ceremonies holding a family Bible, the ceremony to which Ellison, the first Muslim elected to Congress, was referring.

Prager's column was "intolerant, misinformed and downright un-American," the Anti-Defamation League said.

The Reform movement's Religious Action Center said Prager's was a "shameful argument" that would harm Jews were it to gain currency.