

World Jewish news

Across the former Soviet Union

Nationalist youth group in Russia stages event to mark Holocaust day

By LEV KRICHEVSKY

MOSCOW (JTA) – A Kremlin-backed youth group that previously alarmed human rights watchers with its attacks against liberal politicians has held a Holocaust-remembrance event.

About a dozen of young men clad in red white-sleeved nylon jackets spent several hours near the Moscow Choral Synagogue January 27 quietly handing out leaflets with “6,000,000” on top to passers-by. The leaflets listed the names of the Nazi concentration camps and Jewish ghettos during World War II and contained a text urging people to never forget the victims of the Holocaust.

The young men are members of Nashi, or Ours, the well-funded pro-Kremlin youth movement that claims 150,000 members nationwide. The group



A member of the Kremlin-backed youth group, Nashi, distributes leaflets paying homage to Jewish victims of the Holocaust, January 27, 2006, opposite the Moscow Choral Synagogue. Credit: Lev Krichevsky/JTA.

was created last March, and its mass events – including a 50,000-strong “patriotic” youth rally in Moscow last May – have attracted wide, mainly negative, media coverage.

By holding the event, the group insisted it was very concerned by the rising tide of xenophobia and anti-Semitism in Russia and wanted to use the anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz to raise public awareness about the issue. “Recent events in Russia have shown that a nationalist card is being played,” said Boris Yakemenko, the group’s deputy leader for ideology and brother of Nashi leader Vasily Yakemenko, a former Kremlin official. Yakemenko said the group was concerned by racially motivated murders of foreign students that occurred in Russian provinces and by this month’s attack on a Moscow synagogue that left eight people injured.

To make the message look more emotional, the group installed a large poster, a replica of its leaflet listing places of mass extermination of Jews. Next to the poster, Nashi activists put a life-size installation: an entrance to a pre-war Soviet apartment, purportedly once occupied by a Jewish family.

Poll: Russians don’t dislike Jews, and more are against anti-Semitism

By LEV KRICHEVSKY

MOSCOW (JTA) – The majority of Russians do not harbor negative feelings toward Jews and the percentage of Russians who disapprove of anti-Semitism has increased since last year, according to a new nationwide poll.

A year ago, a poll conducted by the same firm, the Public Opinion Foundation, found that 47 per cent of Russians said they were neutral toward those who dislike Jews, compared to 38 per cent this year.

Last year, 34 per cent said they had negative feelings about those who do not like Jews, compared to 42 per cent this year.

Among other findings of the poll conducted by the foundation, a leading Moscow-based polling firm: * Seven per cent of the respondents distrust or dislike Jews, 84 per cent do not have these feelings and 9 per cent found it difficult to answer this question; * Five per cent said they approve of the people who do not like Jews, 38 per cent indicated they were neutral toward such people, 42 per cent were negative about the people who don’t like Jews and 16 per cent found it difficult to answer; * Eight per cent believe that in the area where they live there are many people who harbor negative feelings toward Jews, 31 per cent said that there are few such people; 19 per cent said that there are no such people at all, and 43 per cent could not answer definitely.

The poll was taken on January 21-22 in 44 Russian regions.

World Jewish news/Spanish column

Behind the headlines

European Union mixed on funding for Palestinians following Hamas win

By DINAH A. SPRITZER

PRAGUE (JTA) – Panic is perhaps the best way to describe the European response to the recent Hamas win in the Palestinian Legislative Council election.

European Union bureaucrats and foreign ministers held a flurry of meetings and consultations following the Hamas landslide in the Palestinian elections two weeks ago that are aimed at creating a new position on European Union financial aid to the Palestinian Authority. The 25 member-state European Union, which gave the Palestinian Authority some \$600 million U.S. in 2005, is the P.A.’s single largest source of financial support.

On the political front, the initial E.U. stance toward Hamas could be found in the clear-cut words of German Chancellor Angela Merkel, who during a visit with P.A. President Mahmoud Abbas said Germany would not speak to Hamas until it renounced terrorism and recognized Israel’s right to exist. The European Union, like the

United States and the United Nations, echoed Merkel’s position on January 31, although slipping in the caveat that Hamas needs time to adjust to its new situation.

“We don’t want a Palestinian Authority that collapses,” the E.U.’s external relations commissioner, Benito Ferrero-Waldner said. How much time the Europeans will give Hamas after it forms a government in the next few months, and how flexible they will be, is the source of much speculation.

“The E.U. will inspect every sentence coming out of the mouth of Hamas leaders to look for some sign of movement towards peace so that the E.U. can keep giving the P.A. money,” said Emanuele Ottolenghi, a fellow at the Oxford Centre for Hebrew and Jewish Studies and at the Middle East Centre of St. Antony’s College at Oxford University.

Michael Emerson, a senior research fellow at the Centre for European Policy Studies of Brussels, took a more conciliatory view.

Ad depicting greedy Jew airs in Slovakia despite protest

By DINAH A. SPRITZER

PRAGUE (JTA) – A controversial television advertisement that depicts a Jew in traditional Orthodox garb trying to ratchet down the price of a chainsaw is being broadcast in Slovakia, a year after it elicited protests from Jews in the Czech Republic.

The ad’s portrayal of a Jew as a stereotypical wheeler-dealer driving a hard bargain shouldn’t be an issue in Slovakia “because it is a Catholic country,” explained Ladislav Segin, the Slovak director of Mountfield, the firm that is running the ad. The Mountfield garden equipment company, which has Czech and Slovak headquarters, gained worldwide attention last year after the Israel’s ambassador to the Czech Republic, Arthur Avnon, asked the Czech branch to stop the running ads, which he said “describes Jewish people in a way that the worst anti-Semites would describe them: As greedy.”

A series of radio, television and newspaper interviews with Czech Jewish leaders followed, but as the ad was only slotted for a short run, the protests did not have an impact on its airing.

The Mountfield ad features a well-known Czech comedian, Zdenek Izer, dressed as a religious Jew with a long fake beard, large black hat and flowing black robes. He rubs his hands together with apparent cunning as he asks the Mountfield cartoon mascot, “What’s all this trumf stuff about?” referring to a slot on the firm’s carnival-like wheel of fortune that provides discounts to shoppers.

As the Jewish character repeatedly wins discounts from the wheel, he tells the dejected mascot, “Don’t give me that,” in language that is stereotypical of 1930s Jewish slang. Leaving the store with a greatly discounted chainsaw, the Jewish bargain shopper pretends to the mascot that his cheap booty is “no big deal,” but then shows the audience that he knows better, grotesquely sticking his tongue out, revealing that he has duped Mountfield with his haggling skills.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Jews remember King

NEW YORK

(JTA) – Jewish leaders mourned the death of Coretta Scott King, who died January 31 at age 78. King, the widow of Martin Luther King Jr., “continued her husband’s legacy of strengthening black-Jewish relations,” said Rabbi Marc Schneier, president of the Foundation for Ethnic Understanding. She “fought for the civil rights of Jews, and she supported issues and concerns of the Jewish community,” particularly the State of Israel.

Schneier said Leah Rabin, widow of the late Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, told him that the most comforting letter she got after her husband’s assassination was from King.

Hamas issue hurts event

LONDON (JTA)

– Merrill Lynch withdrew its sponsorship from a London discussion of the Palestinian elections because a Hamas supporter is participating. The event, “The Palestinian Elections and Their Consequences,” was slated to be held February 1 at London University’s School of Oriental and African Studies, the Jerusalem Post reported.

Spielberg defends ‘Munich’

JERUSALEM

(JTA) – Steven Spielberg lambasted members of the Jewish community who came out against his film “Munich.” Speaking as part of a roundtable in the latest Newsweek magazine, Spielberg said criticism leveled at him and screenwriter Tony Kushner over the depiction of Israel’s hunt for the Palestinian masterminds of the 1972 Munich Olympics massacre is unfair.



Noticias de Israel y el Mundo

por ALEJANDRO FABBRO

Homenaje.

El Gobierno Argentino rindió homenaje a las víctimas del Holocausto, el acto se desarrolló en el edificio de la Cancillería y contó con la presencia de directivos de la DAIA.

Esta fue la primera vez que se llevó a cabo este homenaje, luego de que la Asamblea General de las Naciones Unidas aprobara el 1 de Noviembre pasado la instauración del 27 de Enero como día en memoria de las víctimas del Holocausto.

En el acto se hicieron presentes el secretario de Relaciones Exteriores de Cancillería, Roberto García Moritán y el titular de la DAIA, Jorge Kirszenbaum.

La resolución declara al día 27 de Enero como Día Internacional del Holocausto, insta a los Estados a elaborar programas educativos que inculquen a las futuras generaciones las enseñanzas del Holocausto con el fin de ayudar a prevenir actos de genocidio en el futuro.

Además rechaza toda negación, ya sea parcial o total, del Holocausto como hecho histórico y condena todas las manifestaciones de intolerancia religiosa, incitación, acoso o violencia contra personas o comunidades basadas en el origen étnico o las creencias religiosas, donde quiera que tengan lugar.

Disconformidad.

Hapoalim se encuentra a la cabeza de las quejas de los consumidores, esto significa que el supervisor de bancos obligó a devolver mas de 24 millones de Nis a los clientes al encontrarse justificado el 27 % de las quejas contra los bancos en el año 2005, según informó el Banco de Israel en su informe anual.

De la suma total el Primer Banco Internacional debe pagar 13,3 millones de Nis por comisiones relacionadas con la tasa de interés Libor y el Banco Leumi tiene que pagar 4,5 millones por comisiones relacionadas con Leurniphone.

Durante los 4 últimos años los bancos fueron obligados a devolver un total de 127 millones de Nis a sus clientes por cargos injustificados y otras quejas.

De acuerdo con el informe, el banco Hapoalim tiene la proporción más lata de quejas justificadas con un 30 % por encima del 28,7% en el 2004.El banco Leumi tiene la proporción más baja de quejas justificadas con un 16,6%, esto significa una reducción del 19,5% con relación al año anterior.

La sección de quejas sobre los servicios bancarios e información sobre bancos del departamento de supervisión bancaria del Banco de Israel manejó 5.501 requerimientos en 2005, comparadas con 5.467 requerimientos del 2004 y 4.644 en el 2003.

De los 5.501 requerimientos del 2005, 4 mil fueron quejas, en tanto que los otros fueron pedidos de información y otras demandas.

Nos reencontramos próximamente.

Jewish school opens in New Orleans

NEW YORK (JTA) – A Jewish school recently reopened in New Orleans. The Torah Academy reopened earlier this month, welcoming 28 students from nursery school through eighth grade – slightly more than half the students it had before Hurricane Katrina, the New York Jewish Week reported. Another Jewish school in New Orleans, the New Orleans Jewish Day School, delayed its reopening from January to August because too many students are attending schools in other cities this year.

2nd Annual

QUEET ESTHER'S DISCO PURIM BALL

70'S AND 80'S MUSIC
DANCING
COCKTAILS (cash bar)
HORS D'OEUVRES
SILENT AUCTION
DOOR PRIZES
AGE 25-45

Sat, Mar 11 at 8:30 PM
Shaarey Zedek Synagogue • 561 Wellington Crescent

TICKETS JUST \$30 ea. call 975 3401 by mar 8.

Attire: smart casual. Leave your polyester suit at home.

An initiative of the Shaarey Zedek FUSION COMMITTEE

DESIGNED BY THE SHAAREY ZEDEK COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT