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Rwanda genocide victim among speakers at annual public Holocaust service

Premier Doer stresses need for vigilance

Story and photos by REBECA KUROPATWA

"We must be ever-vigilant when it comes to instances of anti-Semitism."

That was the highlight of Premier Gary Doer's address at the annual Public Commemorative Service on the grounds of the Manitoba Legislature last week.

Doer reminded the hundreds at the Manitoba Holocaust Memorial that the events of the Holocaust must never be forgotten, and read the provincial proclamation of Yom Hashoah.

Doer noted that B'nai Brith Canada reported 27 incidents of anti-Semitism in Manitoba last year. Among other things, he also emphasized the importance of reflecting on and educating ourselves about the lessons of the Holocaust and upholding human rights, and affirming diversity and multiculturalism in Manitoba.

Ya'acov (Kobi) Brosh, consul general for Ontario and Western Canada, told the crowd of school-children and adults: "We must remember the Holocaust as this is our past, but also because it is our present and our future. Today the threat against Jews and against Israel is very real, including calls made by heads of states to completely annihilate Israel."

Brosh was "very touched and impressed by the ceremony."

"It is wonderful that the premier and the mayor came to show their support today," he said later. "As well, it was so good to see a diverse mix of young students, from both the public and the private schools. Other countries such as Europe have so much reason and necessity to mark

this day of remembrance."
Winnipeg Mayor Sam Katz lost close relatives in concentration camps. He was moved to tears when sharing this fact with the audience.

Katz said, "We must remember those who died, and those who survived and found the strength to rebuild their lives. And, we must work toward being a city of tolerance, respect, and



PREMIER GARY DOER speaks.



YA'ACOV BROSH, Israeli consul general: "Today the threat against Jews and against Israel is very real."

acceptance."

Rwandan genocide survivor Christian Butera, who, at age 10, was saved by Paul Rusesabagina, the manager of the hotel depicted in the film "Hotel Rwanda", told the crowd that "remembering is a duty for all of us if we want to build a better world."

Shelley Faintuch, community relations director of the Jewish Federation of Winnipeg, which organized the annual event, said: "It was particularly impressive that so many non-Jews were in attendance. One thing that perhaps was not caught is the coordinated ringing of the bells at St. Luke's

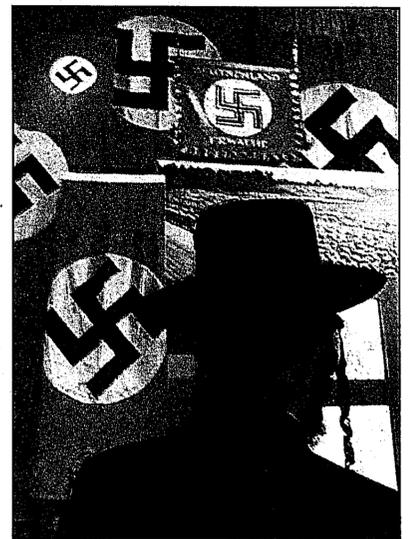
CHRISTIAN BUTERA, a Rwandan genocide survivor: "Remembering is a duty for all of us if we want to build a better world."

Anglican Church at the precise moment that the shofar was sounded by Steven Field at our Holocaust commemoration. This was organized by Reverend Robert Brownlie, a member of our Interfaith Round Table."

Holocaust survivors at the ceremony included Fela Shwemer, Sara Deudscher, and Tema Handsman, among others.

Schwemer's oldest daughter, Havale, was murdered during the Holocaust. This year, in June, marks what should have been Havale's 60th birthday.

Schwemer recalled after the ceremony that at the end of the Holocaust, she "weighed no more (Cont. on page 2. See "Holocaust commemoration")."



Yom Hashoah

A Chasidic Jew views Nazi banners and memorabilia during a visit to the Yad Vashem Holocaust Museum in Jerusalem, April 24, 2006. Israel's Holocaust Remembrance Day began April 24 at sundown and lasted until the following evening, commemorating the six million Jews who were murdered at the hands of the Nazis during World War II. Credit: Brian Hender/JTA.

Surrounded by domestic pessimism, Olmert forms a coalition government

By DAN BARON
JERUSALEM (JTA) - Just in time for Israel's 58th Independence Day, Ehud Olmert has clinched his new coalition government. But while the prime minister promises to set the Jewish state's borders and to calm, if not end, the conflict with the Palestinians, domestic realities post serious challenges.

Olmert's Kadima Party on Sunday signed up a third faction, Shas, and thus gained control over 67 of the Knesset's 120 seats.

The government was to be sworn in May 4. Having a parliamentary majority is crucial for Olmert, who has vowed, in the absence of peace talks with a Palestinian Authority ruled by Hamas, to implement major moves in the West Bank - the evacuation of isolated settlements and annexation of major settlement blocs. Ceding more land after last year's Gaza Strip withdrawal is bound to be opposed by right-wing parties. Olmert would appear to have forestalled this obstacle by enlisting a range of coalition partners from the center-left Labor Party to the religious and rightist Shas.

But Shas joined up on the promise of getting key social portfolios in the Cabinet and without expressly endorsing the planned removal of settlements - raising the potential of a falling-out just when Olmert's "convergence plan" kicks off. Avigdor Lieberman, whose nationalist (Cont. on page 23. See "Olmert forms coalition government").

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