

## IN THE NEWS

**Tenet resigns  
as chief of CIA**

George Tenet, the CIA director who authored a cease-fire plan for Israelis and Palestinians in 2001, has resigned.

Tenet was very involved in security cooperation between Israel and the Palestinian Authority before the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks shifted the director of central intelligence's focus.

Tenet was an adamant opponent of the release of Jonathan Pollard, a former U.S. Navy intelligence analyst who spied for Israel, and told President Clinton during the 1998 Wye peace negotiations that he would be unable to continue serving if Pollard was freed.

**Syrian envoy:  
Peace would be real**

Peace between Israel and Syria would include full diplomatic relations, the Syrian ambassador to the United States said.

Imad Moustapha told JTA that a peace agreement with Israel would include an exchange of ambassadors and open borders.

In negotiations in 2000, Syrian delegates suggested an agreement that did not include an exchange at the ambassadorial level or unrestricted travel.

The ambassador, a noted reformist in Syria, recently accompanied the first U.S. Jewish delegation to Syria.

**Reps want Bush  
to confront Iran**

U.S. lawmakers are asking President Bush to work with G8 members to confront the threat of Iran's nuclear weapons program.

More than 208 members of the U.S. House of Representatives sent a letter to Bush ahead of the summit next week in Georgia of the Group of Eight industrialized nations. The letter requested a multilateral approach to dealing with Iran and the use of economic sanctions.

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# WORLD REPORT

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PPO/BP Images

Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat, right, shakes hands with Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman during talks last week at Arafat's headquarters in the West Bank city of Ramallah.

## Egypt's new role could rescue Sharon from the Gaza quagmire

By GIL SEDAN

**J**ERUSALEM (JTA) — The latest coalition crisis hasn't been all bad for Ariel Sharon: For one thing, it has helped kindle a friendship with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Over the last few days, Mubarak and the Israeli prime minister have held several telephone conversations on how to push forward Sharon's disengagement plan from the Palestinians, despite the political obstacles Sharon faces at home.

In a conversation Monday, Mubarak re-

iterated his support for Sharon's plan and promised to promote it internationally.

But Mubarak's role goes far deeper, according to the Egypt's state-run Middle East News Agency. The agency reported that both Israel and the Palestinians have accepted an Egyptian plan for a cease-fire, a resumption of peace talks and a meeting between Sharon and Palestinian Authority Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei. The report could not be

confirmed in Israel.

Right-wing figures in Israel have voiced reservations about the shifting winds in

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**NEWS  
ANALYSIS**

## ■ *Egypt's new role could rescue Sharon from the Gaza quagmire*

*Continued from page 1*

Israel's latest political drama.

News of Egypt's expanding role came as Sharon battled opposition to his disengagement plan within his own Likud Party and Cabinet, and amid growing U.S. pressure for progress toward an Israel pullout from the Gaza Strip.

Washington is urging Israel to lay the groundwork for the withdrawal in cooperation with the Palestinians. Sharon's chief of staff, Dov Weisglass, went to Washington this week to meet with President Bush's national security adviser, Condoleezza Rice.

Meanwhile, Israeli Foreign Minister Shalom is planning to head to Cairo. The official purpose was to set up a joint committee "to improve relations between the two countries."

But behind the scenes was an attempt to create a dramatic change: For the first time since 1967, Egypt might play a role in the Gaza Strip.

It would function not as a ruling authority, as it did from 1948 to 1967 but, Israel hopes, as a broker helping the transition to Palestinian rule and preventing arms smuggling from Egypt into Gaza.

Once Israel begins withdrawing troops and settlers from Gaza, some 200 Egyptian military experts would help P.A. security services impose their rule over the crowded strip, halting terrorist attacks and setting the stage for an orderly and complete Israeli withdrawal.

In the meantime, Sharon is gaining politically from these new developments

with Egypt: He has signaled to his rivals in the Likud that he means business and is laying the groundwork for a withdrawal.

Mubarak benefits by demonstrating that he is doing something on behalf of the Palestinians, something many Egyptians have sought for a long time. At the same time, Egypt's involvement weakens Hamas, which stands to lose from an orderly transition to P.A. rule, and limits the radical Islamist group's power base in Gaza, on Egypt's doorstep.

In the past two years, Egypt has improved its relations with Hamas. Egypt allowed the opening of a Hamas office in Cairo, and Egypt mediated in talks last year between Hamas and the Palestinian Authority over a possible cease fire.

But relations between Egypt and Hamas cooled after Israel's killings of Hamas leaders Sheik Ahmed Yassin and Abdel Aziz Rantissi. Hamas' leadership has since shifted more toward Damascus.

The new Egyptian-Israeli dialogue came despite Israel's killings of the Hamas leaders — indeed, perhaps because of them.

Contrary to many doomsday prophecies, Egypt has not turned its back on Israel over the killings. Even Israel's recent military incursion into Gaza — which led Turkey to threaten to recall its ambassador from Tel Aviv — did not deter Mubarak from getting involved.

Omar Suleiman, Cairo's intelligence chief and a seasoned Middle East peace broker, has been paying frequent visits to Jerusalem and Ramallah, headquarters of the Palestinian Authority.

But some Israeli experts are raising their eyebrows over Egypt's return to the arena. "I must say that I am concerned," said Yuval Steinitz, chairman of the Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee. For years, Steinitz has suspected Egypt's motives in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, saying "the real policy of Egypt is to allow Israel and the Palestinians to bleed together."

Steinitz blames the Egyptians for having failed to prevent arms smuggling from Egypt into the Gaza Strip — and

perhaps for supporting it.

"For years we have said that the Palestinian Authority was not doing enough to fight terrorism, until we realized that the P.A. was a terror-supporting regime," Steinitz said. "The same applies to the Egyptian authority."

Other Israeli experts say they hope Egypt's new role will help lift Israel out of the political mire.

Matan Vilnai, a leader of the Labor Party, said combating terrorism is "a high-profile Egyptian interest."

"I believe the Egyptians are potentially very good allies," he said in a recent radio interview.

Asked what has changed to spur the Egyptians to become more involved, Vilnai said, "If there is change, it is on the Israeli side, because the Egyptians have always been there."

The Palestinian reaction to the developments was somewhat subdued. Following a meeting of Palestinian leaders at Yasser Arafat's office in Ramallah, the Palestinian Authority issued a statement Monday urging the dispatch of "international observers" to Palestinian-populated areas. That could include Egyptian experts.

Other Palestinian groups said they hoped any Egyptian security role in Gaza would not serve the interests of the "Zionist enemy."

Sami Abu Zuhri, Hamas' spokesman in Gaza, urged Palestinians and Arabs "not to be deceived by the Zionist premier Ariel Sharon's unilateral withdrawal plan," which he said was just a ploy in Sharon's scheme of "murder and devastation."

If the Egyptians actually succeed in helping stabilize Gaza, their role could be a model for the West Bank, with Jordan serving as mediator there.

Israel's talks with Cairo also could have more immediate effect: the departure of Arafat from quasi-detention at his compound in Ramallah.

In his talks in Jerusalem, Suleiman insisted that the Palestinian Authority president's return to Gaza is paramount to restoring stability there.

But Israeli officials have indicated that there is no change in Israeli policy regarding Arafat: He can travel wherever he wants, but may not be allowed to return. ■

**If the Egyptians succeed in helping stabilize Gaza, their role could be a model for the West Bank, with Jordan serving as the stabilizer there.**

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# Jewish power struggle shuts down Vilnius shul

By LEV KRICHEVSKY

MOSCOW (JTA) — Lithuanian Jews have done what the Communists never dared to do: close the only synagogue in the country's capital.

The synagogue in Vilnius, which celebrated its 100th anniversary last September, was shut last week by Simonas Alperavicius, the community's president, because of a dispute over the post of chief rabbi of Lithuania's Jewish community.

Alperavicius told JTA the step was a temporary measure intended to "show who is the master in the synagogue."

The closing of the Vilnius shul establishes Lithuania as the latest battleground in a power struggle over who controls Jewish life in the former Soviet Union — and who gets to represent Lithuanian Jewry in negotiations with the government for the restitution of Jewish property.

The fight pits those aligned with Chabad-Lubavitch against other Lithuanian Jewish officials. Battles between Chabad and non-Chabad Jews in Russia and Ukraine occasionally have turned nasty, and if last week's incident is any indication, the situation in Lithuania may be following suit.

Lithuania is home to 5,000 to 8,000 Jews.

Alperavicius closed the synagogue after fist-fighting broke out during Shavuot services between two groups of worshipers who wanted to have the other's rabbi removed from the shul. The service also was interrupted by police, who were called in by one of the groups.

Community members said it is the first time since the Holocaust that the synagogue has been closed.

"The Jewish community considered that the physical safety of worshipers wasn't guaranteed and decided to close the synagogue," Alperavicius said in a statement published this week in the community's newspaper.

Alperavicius supports Lithuania's recently appointed chief rabbi, Chaim Burstein, an Israeli Orthodox rabbi and former Soviet refusenik. Burstein's appointment was supported by some international Jewish bodies, including the Conference of European Rabbis.

The other figure claiming the mantle of chief rabbi is Sholom Ber Krinsky, a U.S.-born Chabad rabbi who has been Lithuania's only resident rabbi since 1994.

Krinsky is widely credited for building a network of Jewish institutions in post-Communist Lithuania.

Krinsky also is backed by Israel's Ashkenazi chief rabbi, Yona Metzger.

Alperavicius and his supporters said they objected to Krinsky's nomination as chief rabbi because he belongs to a Chasidic group, while Lithuanian Jewry historically has been known as a stronghold of opposition to Chasidism.

Krinsky says Alperavicius simply wants to maintain his power.

After the synagogue was closed, Burstein said, some Krinsky supporters came to his home demanding that the synagogue be reopened. A scuffle resulted, and Burstein said he was grabbed by the neck and suffered a minor injury. Community officials who oppose Krinsky then filed complaints with the police.

Witnesses who support Krinsky said they never lifted a hand against Burstein. Instead, they accused Burstein's people of resorting to physical violence and committing what one party described as a "spiritual holocaust" against the Jewish community.

"Even in the times of the Communist regime our synagogue was open. It was only closed by the Nazis!" said an unsigned e-mail sent around town.

The power struggle in Vilnius broke out last year when the Alperavicius-led Jewish community nominated Burstein as Lithuania's chief rabbi just as Krinsky, a longtime local community rabbi, stepped up his effort to become the officially recognized chief rabbi. The post previously was held by a London-based rabbi who paid only occasional visits to this Baltic country.

The battle over the post also affects negotiations between international Jewish groups and the Lithuanian government over the restitution of former Jewish communal property.

Lithuania has not adopted restitution legislation to enable the Vilnius Jewish community to receive dozens of properties seized by the Soviets when Lithuania was annexed by the Soviet Union in 1940.

Negotiations between the World Jewish Restitution Organization and the Lithuanian government on the matter have been under way for three years.

At stake are at least 100 parcels of property, sources say.

Some say Krinsky wants to become Lithuania's official chief rabbi to ensure that Chabad gets some property through the restitution process even though Chabad owned little property in Lithuania before 1940. Without Krinsky as an advocate,

Chabad would have little chance of getting any property from the government.

For its part, Chabad accuses Alperavicius and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee of removing Krinsky from the board negotiating on Lithuanian Jewry's behalf.

The JDC says Krinsky was never on the board, and that in any case the World Jewish Restitution Organization is responsible for the board's composition.

Krinsky said the conflict surrounding the synagogue has been aggravated by the JDC, which he charged pays for Burstein's salary.

"The Joint is dividing the community," Krinsky said. "Ten years we had peace and tranquility, we built the infrastructure of Jewish life in Lithuania. The Joint brought divisiveness to our community."

A JDC official in charge of Lithuania denied the accusations.

"We stand for the right of each community to decide who their leaders and rabbis should be," said Andres Spokoyny, the Paris-based JDC country director for the Baltic and Scandinavian states.

Spokoyny denied that the JDC is paying Burstein's salary.

"We are very concerned that the public fight inside the community is damaging the fabric of Jewish life in Vilnius," Spokoyny said.

As long as the synagogue remains closed, services are being held at two separate locations in town: one in Vilnius' Chabad center, the other in the community center that houses Alperavicius' office. Chabad said some people also have met to pray outside the locked synagogue.

Fisticuffs, recriminations and debate on Nazi-era property restitution rile Vilnius Jews.

# Pro-Israel activism on campus gaining ground

By CARL SCHRAG

BERKELEY, Calif. (JTA) — Common wisdom has it that Jewish students are facing a deep crisis as college campuses across the United States burn with anti-Israel fervor.

Certainly there has been an outpouring of anti-Israel agitation at many campuses since the Palestinian intifada began in September 2000. Faculty, especially in the field of Middle Eastern studies, often are anti-Israel, and student efforts to force schools to divest their holdings in companies that do business with Israel have garnered headlines, if not mass support.

Last fall, Israeli Cabinet minister Nathan Sharansky visited 13 American college campuses and reported that he was horrified by what he found.

But aside from the most egregious cases, is the common wisdom true?

Some say the campus scene in fact should be a source of hope and inspiration for the Jewish community.

At scores of schools across the country, pro-Israel students have mounted a dramatic effort over the past two years to take back campuses from anti-Israel activists.

"We have spent the last two years trying to tip the balance on campus in favor of Israel," said Alexander Ross Berger, 20, a junior at George Washington University in Washington. He and others say they have succeeded by targeting student leaders, the fraternity system and other campus opinion makers.

The turning point was spring 2002, when Israel responded to a wave of Palestinian terrorist attacks by invading the West Bank.

Palestinians claimed Israeli troops massacred hundreds of Palestinian civilians in the Jenin refugee camp in April of that year. The fallacious charges sparked anti-Israel demonstrations worldwide.

At the University of California at Berkeley, students returned from spring break to find that someone had lobbed a cinder block through the glass doors of the Hillel building. Then came the campus' annual Deir Yassin rally, commemorating an episode in Israel's 1948 War of Independence in which Jewish militia-men killed Arab civilians.

One Jewish student described the rally

as "one of the scariest moments of my life." The crowd called Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon a Nazi, and people spat at anybody who seemed to question the anti-Israel sentiment.

But even at the height of the crisis, the situation was never as clear-cut against Israel as it seemed.

As some 1,500 to 2,000 anti-Israel students occupied a campus building during the Deir Yassin rally, thousands of Berkeley students were casting ballots for student government officers. When the results were published, Jesse Gabriel, who had been a member of the Israel Action Committee, had been elected student body president.

Gabriel and Daniel Frankenstein, another Jewish student, were what Frankenstein called "the dynamic duo of Israel activists" in the student senate.

Gabriel's freshman year coincided with the beginning of the Palestinian intifada. Not knowing how to advocate for Israel, he did what thousands of other supporters of Israel had been doing for decades: He tried to convince protesters that they didn't understand the situation.

Over time, he said, he came to realize that he had little chance of winning an argument with someone who was holding a poster denigrating Israeli soldiers as Nazis.

That summer, Gabriel, Frankenstein and Rebecca Simon, another Berkeley student, went to Washington to participate in the American Israel Public Affairs Committee's Saban National Political Leadership Training Seminar, an intensive program for 250 college students from 60 campuses.

"We were given the tools to take back the campus," Frankenstein said. "Not only have we taken it back — we own the campus now."

Rather than engaging in shouting matches and refuting every anti-Israel comment, poster or speaker, the students were taught to promote their own agenda of pro-Israel messages by networking.

Simon organized a campus visit by former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak

and used it to build relationships with a wide range of student leaders.

Many Jewish groups have campus outreach and support programs, but many observers believed they wouldn't be able to cooperate. The Israel on Campus Coalition, established in 2002 by the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Foundation as anti-Israel agitation on college campuses was growing, set out to coordinate multiple efforts to help students adopt a proactive approach to pro-Israel activity.

"We have to unlearn many of the old approaches," said Wayne Firestone, who directs the coalition and Hillel's Center for Israel Affairs. "You don't have to chase after every extremist who says something nasty about Israel. It just isn't worth the time of Jewish students, who can do more important things to impact on public opinion on campus."

The ICC has brought together groups with diverse viewpoints — its two dozen members run the gamut from the dovish

Americans for Peace Now to the hawkish Zionist Organization of America — though they don't see eye to eye on every issue.

Some might say the coalition isn't diverse enough. While many students support Israel, others say

they feel alienated by efforts to line them up behind Israeli government positions.

In early May, a controversy arose over the removal of one student, Julian Redford, as Hillel president at the University of Richmond in Virginia.

Redford sent an e-mail to the Israeli Embassy in Washington, asking, "Could you please stop sending me e-mail after e-mail about radical Zionist propaganda?" according to news reports.

Hillel officials said they objected to the tone of Redford's comments. When she refused to apologize, the local JCC, which oversees Hillel, fired Redford.

Robert Blecher, a Middle East history professor at the university, organized a letter-writing campaign in Redford's defense.

"It is a sad day for Judaism when standing up for one's beliefs is deemed inappropriate," the letter states.

Firestone denied any effort to stifle diverse points of view. Redford had every right to explore her Jewish identity and

## A CHANGING RELATIONSHIP? Part 3

Some students feel alienated by efforts to get them behind Israeli government positions.

ask critical questions about Israel, he said — but as an individual student, not through her position as Hillel president.

Some groups help students speak out against the Israeli government, though not necessarily against Israel itself. Recent Brandeis University graduate Judah Ariel, 23, works closely with students across the country as campus committee chair of Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, a dovish group.

"A lot of students are very pro-Israel but their sympathies lie with Labor or Meretz, not with Likud or the settlers," he said. "Brit Tzedek helps them find ways to express their Zionism and their support for Israel in the way we believe is the only option for Israel."

A year ago, three students from the University of Oregon in Eugene went to Washington to attend AIPAC's annual policy conference. This year, 12 students from Eugene signed up.

Lach Litwer, 24, a senior from Portland, Ore., said he was not involved in Jewish campus activities until the day he went to Hillel for free pizza and was recruited to join Alpha Epsilon Pi, a Jewish fraternity that has put Israel advocacy at the center of its national agenda.

Last year, AEPI's director of programming invited Litwer to attend AIPAC's policy conference. Then Litwer learned about the birthright Israel program, and got the chance to see Israel last June.

Birthright, which offers free 10-day trips to Israel to Jews ages 18-26 who never before have been on a peer trip to the Jewish state, has had a significant influence on campus activism.

Hillel serves 15 percent to 30 percent of Jewish students, Hillel's president, Avraham Infeld said, but birthright offers an opportunity to reach out to another 40 percent of Jewish students — those who aren't opposed to Jewish or Israel-related activities but have not really felt compelled to explore them.

"If we can pinpoint five or six participants on every birthright bus who have leadership ability, they can be the ones to reach the 40 percent," Infeld said. "We need to find those leaders and invest heavily in them."

Litwer, who serves in the U.S. military reserves and is considering signing on for active duty after graduation, said Israel has become a central part of his identity. He said the growth of pro-Israel activity on campus excites him. "I almost wish I wasn't graduating this year," he said. "I



Carl Schrag

Rebecca Simon and Daniel Frankenstein at a Berkeley pro-Israel rally they helped organize.

want to see what we can do next year."

The empowerment of pro-Israel activists isn't limited to Berkeley and Eugene. Hillel has placed unprecedented emphasis on Israel over the past two years and works closely with AIPAC to develop strong advocacy groups on campus.

Jonathan Kessler, AIPAC's leadership development director, oversees a far-reaching program to groom thousands of pro-Israel leaders on campus. Through seminars in Washington, trips to Israel and a network of campus liaisons who work with student leaders, AIPAC helps students build a pro-Israel presence on campus.

"I do not agree that anti-Semitism on campus is rampant," Kessler said. "I do not agree that we're losing the battle, and I do not agree with the alarmists who assert that the sky has fallen."

"Generally speaking, Jewish students are not scared," he said.

The key is hope, not fear, he said.

"I want my own children to grow up confident but to know that it's not always easy to be Jewish or pro-Israel," Kessler said. "It's up to parents and institutions to prepare young people for the challenges they'll face."

At Berkeley, the approach seems to be paying off. In April, two years after pro-Israel students mounted their pro-Israel campaign on campus, barely 150 people showed up at the annual Deir Yassin rally.

Gabriel noted that a pro-Israel petition on campus garnered over 1,500 signatures,

while an online petition from Students for Justice in Palestine has garnered only about 150 signatures in three years.

This year, AIPAC launched a pilot core education program at four campuses. Groups of about 50 students at the University of Texas, Washington University, Northwestern University and American University underwent on-campus training to get more comfortable talking about Israel and to identify creative ways to generate support for the Jewish state.

At a recent session at the University of Texas, students brainstormed about how to engage other students in discussions about Israel.

They role-played situations ranging from a chance encounter at the dentist's office to a conversation between roommates. The pro-Israel group, Texans for Israel, was named Best Political Group on campus in April.

Gabriel, the former student body president from Berkeley, acknowledged that there are uncomfortable moments for Jews and pro-Israel students at Berkeley. But he argued that it's a wonderful time to be Jewish on campus.

"The most empowering lesson is that when the Jewish community comes together, we can do anything," he said. "We may be small, but we can effect change. That's what happened at Berkeley."

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# Reform rabbi is on conversion mission in Spain

By JEROME SOCOLOVSKY

MADRID (JTA) — As airplanes rev their engines in the distance, the rabbi from Kansas City stands on the balcony of his airport hotel room holding a Torah scroll in his arms, and welcoming his latest convert to Judaism.

Rabbi Jacques Cukierkorn is on a mission to convert people to Judaism in Spain, the land of the Roman Catholic Inquisition where untold numbers of people have some Jewish ancestry.

But the Reform rabbi's efforts aren't exactly appreciated in Madrid, where the active Jewish population numbers about 5,000 and all but one of the synagogues are Orthodox.

"We can't be like the Catholics and think that with a drop of water you've become Jewish," says Jacobo Israel Garzon, president of Madrid's Jewish community.

Cukierkorn's latest series of ceremonies was conducted during a layover at Madrid's Barajas International Airport following correspondence courses with the candidates that take at least one year to complete.

In total, Cukierkorn has converted 20 Spaniards to Judaism — most of them in Madrid, where there is no Reform temple.

He also has performed dozens of conversions in Brazil, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela, Ecuador and the United States, and has written a guide to Judaism to help potential Spanish-speaking converts.

"There's nothing I can do as a rabbi that is more transcendent than conversions. This has a future impact on Judaism," Cukierkorn told JTA in an interview in the cafe of the airport hotel.

Cukierkorn is rabbi of the New Reform Temple in Kansas City. He says he has a long interest in "lost" Sephardic Jews that may stem from his own personal history: Born in Brazil, some of his ancestors were Spanish Jews who immigrated to Poland.

Most converts find him via his Web page. He says he performs conversions only in locations where there is no Reform rabbi.

In interviews for this story, the converts asked to be identified only by their adopted Hebrew names, citing widespread anti-Semitism in Spain.

Ariel, a civil servant from Madrid, traced his family's roots back to Jews who were forced to convert during a pogrom in

1391 in the northeastern Spanish city of Lerida.

He began reading books about Judaism and studied Hebrew in college. But after his two sons were born, he said, he "realized I had to recuperate my Jewish heritage for their sake."

Ariel was circumcised by a urologist friend, and he then had his sons, aged 4 and 5, circumcised as well.

He approached the Jewish community about formal conversion, but says their demands "basically meant having an Orthodox rabbi in my kitchen, and I couldn't demand that of my wife. After all, she did not marry an Orthodox Jew.

"The Internet was my only option," he adds.

Several weeks ago, Ariel and his entire family underwent a conversion ceremony led by Cukierkorn.

Another recent convert was Yakov, a clinical psychologist who flew in from Spain's Canary Islands for his ceremony in Madrid. The Canary Islands are a major European resort off the coast of Africa, and only have a smattering of Jews, mostly senior citizens from the British Isles.

Asked why he wanted to become Jewish, Yakov embarks into a lengthy discourse on philosophy and identity, citing Karl Jung, Martin Buber and other thinkers.

"I had been searching for something that was already inside me," he says.

But when he approached the official Jewish community in Madrid, he wasn't encouraged to convert, he says.

So he, too, found Cukierkorn's home page on the Internet.

Cukierkorn claims Jewish communities in Spain are turning away a great number of people who could be a benefit to Judaism.

"These people are drowning in a sea of indifference," he says.

A Conservative leader in Spain disagrees.

"We are not leaving anybody by the wayside," says Felipe Crasny, president of Bet El, Madrid's only Conservative

synagogue, which is affiliated with the worldwide Masorti movement.

Bet El, which has about 60 member families, has no rabbi, but Crasny said several people are taking conversion classes

with the congregation's spiritual director, Mario Stofenmacher, and probably will end up converting abroad.

Israel Garzon, the Jewish community president, also denies Cukierkorn's allegation. He says the community accepts "sincere" converts, and about a dozen people become Jewish every year

in Madrid. They take classes in Spain, but must go to Israel for the final ceremony performed by the Orthodox Chief Rabbinate of Israel.

Jews started trickling back to Spain in the 19th century after the Inquisition was finally abolished. But the community started to grow only after the establishment of the State of Israel, when Sephardic Jews from neighboring Morocco — many of them descendants of Jews expelled from Spain in 1492 — moved back to Spain fleeing anti-Jewish sentiment.

Jewish immigrants in recent years have come from Latin America, and they have tended to be largely Conservative, Reform or non-practicing.

Israel Garzon has sought to open up Madrid's Jewish community to them — and one of his policies has been to propose a fast-track conversion finalization process for people who already have become Jewish under Reform or Conservative procedures.

Israel Garzon concedes that there's nothing he can do to keep outsiders like Cukierkorn from conducting conversions in Spain.

"But what bothers me is that he leaves people with the feeling that they've converted, and then they're surprised when they're not accepted by everyone," Israel Garzon says.

He notes that his own wife is a convert, "and it took her years and years" to undergo the conversion.

For his part, Cukierkorn sees what he's doing as a divine mission. "God has guided me this way," he says.

Cukierkorn claims Jewish communities in Spain are turning away many people who could be a benefit to Judaism.

## COMMUNITY

## TRANSITIONS

- Paul Miller was named president of the American Jewish Congress.
- Larry Garber was named executive director of the New Israel Fund.
- The Maltz Museum of Jewish Heritage in Cleveland named Carole Zawatsky its founding executive director.
- Samuel Salkin was named executive director of the Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund and the Goldman Environmental Prize.
- Daniel Alter was named director of the Anti-Defamation League's civil rights division.
- Jordan Tannenbaum was named chief development officer of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.
- Roy Zuckerberg was named chairman of the board of Ben-Gurion University.
- Eve Wald and Michael Rosenfelt were named co-chairs of the Israel Cancer Research Fund.

## HONORS

- The American Jewish Committee honored Sen. Hillary Clinton (D-N.Y.). Tatyana Sapunova, a Russian woman injured when she dismantled a booby trapped anti-Semitic sign, was also honored. Professor Bernard Lewis was honored for his work on Muslim-Jewish relations. Ana Palacio, Spain's former foreign minister, received a diplomatic award.
- Ben-Gurion University honored Edgar Bronfman with an honorary doctorate.
- The U.S. Institute of Peace in Washington named Israeli academics Moshe Ma'oz and Jacob Shamir as senior fellows.
- Hadassah was honored by Women-Heart, the National Coalition for Women With Heart Disease, for its efforts to educate women about health risks to their hearts.
- Kolot: The Center of Jewish Women's and Gender Studies honored Shifra Bronznick for creating change in the Jewish world.
- Peter Gordon of Harvard University and Tel Aviv University's Akiva Friedman were named co-winners of an award on Jewish thought presented by the Goldstein-Goren International Center for Jewish Thought at Ben-Gurion University.

## U.N. agency honors Tel Aviv

By DINA KRAFT

TEL AVIV (JTA) — Under the layers of soot, the stucco walls are beginning to crumble and the once-sleek rectangular balconies have peeling walls and battered shutters. Inside, a bicycle is chained to the curved metal railing lining the staircase.

The address is 79 Gordon St., one of hundreds of Bauhaus-inspired buildings that line the streets of Tel Aviv, home to the largest collection of Bauhaus-style buildings in the world. Many, like this 1935 building, are classics of design but are in sore need of restoration.

In recent years, however, the conservation bug has begun to catch on in Tel Aviv, with hundreds of the city's 4,000 or so Bauhaus-style buildings restored — repaired, painted in gleaming whites and pastels, and returned to their former glory.

On Monday, the "White City" of Tel Aviv will be declared a World Heritage Site by the United Nations Education and Cultural Organization. The White City refers to the Bauhaus-style architecture in and around the city center.

City officials hope the honor — Tel Aviv is only the second city in the world to be given the title — will give a boost to much needed restoration efforts.

"Tel Aviv is not an ancient city, but now it looks like an old city, and I would like it to look like a new city, fresh and clean, all the wrinkles ironed away," said Danny Kaiser, the city's chief engineer.

To make that happen, the city is offering unique incentives to the owners of the buildings to take on the expense of restoring their properties. In exchange for committing themselves to restoration, for example, owners can receive permission to add additional floors to the building as long as the floors blend in with the original structure. Some real estate-related taxes also can be reduced.

"I think people are starting to recognize that it is not a burden but an opportunity," Kaiser said, adding that owners need to see their buildings as precious property worth investing in.

Restoration ultimately is a worthy investment, he said, providing extra income from the creation of new apartments and increased rent because what was once a

run-down building suddenly becomes a highly sought-after property.

The building at 3 Strauss St. has been expertly restored. It now appears as it once did — a large, cream-colored building with dark red railings and a window running vertically the length of the staircase.

Such windows, dubbed "thermometers" by architects because one could see people going up and down the stairs, are typical of Tel Aviv's Modern-style buildings.

"You look around and each building could look like this," said Peera Goldman, who heads restoration efforts for the Tel Aviv municipality. She shakes her head and sighs.

The Bauhaus-inspired architecture, more accurately referred to as part of the Modern or International style, reached the country's shores in the early 1930s with the arrival of Jewish architects fleeing Europe.

Constructed between 1931 and 1956, the buildings had looked somewhat out of place with their flat roofs and pastel colors, but along the Mediterranean coastline they seemed to find their home.

Architects also adapted their designs to suit Tel Aviv's weather and landscape.

The Modernist movement was based on the concept of art in the service of society, striving for architecture that was functional but at the same time aesthetic. It sought to remedy the ills of the Industrial Revolution and concomitant urban poverty, and its emphasis on concepts of utopia and equality fit well with the Zionist ideology in pre-state Palestine.

"The buildings adapted to the culture and climate of the place," Goldman said. "It was a very good integration of the socialist spirit of the Israeli ethos of the time and the ideology of the Modern movement."

Characteristic of the building style are columns and ribbon windows running horizontally. There is experimentation with the idea of volume and a focus on the asymmetrical. Tel Aviv was chosen by UNESCO not only because of the buildings, but also for the city's original urban design.

"The new town of Tel Aviv is an outstanding example of new town planning and architecture in the early 20th century, adapted to the requirements of a particular cultural and geographic context," a UNESCO statement said. ■

A city known  
for its beaches is  
honored for its  
architecture.

# NEWS IN BRIEF

## WORLD

### Belzec memorial dedicated

A memorial was dedicated to victims of the Belzec death camp in Poland. The memorial was dedicated Thursday and follows years of neglect at the site, where an estimated 600,000 Jews were killed.

"I trust that as of today the memory of what happened here will not be only Jewish or Polish alone. We should spare no effort to make it part of the collective memory of the whole of Europe and the world at large," Polish President Alexander Kwasniewski said.

The memorial cost \$5 million and was paid for by the Polish government and the American Jewish Committee.

### Israeli attacked in Berlin

An Israeli tourist was punched in the face on a Berlin street by a man who identified himself as a Palestinian.

Police, who did not reveal the name of the victim, said the incident occurred Tuesday evening in a neighborhood of Berlin with a large Arab population.

Police spokeswoman Christine Rother said two men approached the Israeli, who was walking with an American companion, and tore off his yarmulke.

After the Israeli put his yarmulke back on, the Palestinian punched him several times and fled together with the other man. The victim was taken to a local hospital in an ambulance, where he was treated and released.

### Cemetery desecration: Was it the wind?

French police think a gust of wind might have toppled grave-stones at a Jewish cemetery in eastern France.

Earlier this week, the caretaker of the Jewish cemetery in Belfort found more than 50 gravestones overturned and facing in exactly the same direction. The stones, dating from the end of the 19th century, contained no anti-Semitic or Nazi references.

### France wants violent schoolchildren out

France's Ministry of Education appealed a court decision ordering a school to take back two students expelled for assaulting a Jewish classmate.

Two 11-year-old students at Paris's prestigious Montaigne High School were expelled from the institution last November after they attacked and shouted anti-Semitic insults at a Jewish student.

However, a youth tribunal earlier this week ordered the school to reinstate the pupils and pay \$750 compensation to their families.

### French Open controversy

French sports officials are denying that the main tennis stadium for the French Open was a transit camp for Jews during the Holocaust.

It has been widely reported that Jews were held at Roland Garros during World War II.

But French officials say that while political prisoners were held there, it was not a transit camp for Jews. The tournament, one of tennis' four Grand Slam events, concludes this weekend.

## NORTH AMERICA

### Campaign tactic irks religious leaders

Several rabbis condemned an e-mail from the Bush-Cheney campaign that solicits help from Pennsylvania religious leaders.

"The Bush-Cheney campaign demonstrated that it is not interested in matters of faith, but exploiting people of faith," Rabbi Jack Moline, a board member of the Interfaith Alliance and the rabbi at

Agudas Achim in Alexandria, Va., said during a telephone conversation with reporters.

The Interfaith Alliance consists of religious leaders who believe in strict church-state separation. The campaign e-mail asked that churches and other religious institutions be used as gathering places for Bush-Cheney supporters.

## MIDDLE EAST

### Atomic agency: Iran still frustrates

U.N. nuclear inspectors remain frustrated by Iranian stalling, according to their latest report. Iran has improved its cooperation since a scathing report in March from the International Atomic Energy Agency, the IAEA said this week.

But, the new report said, Iran still is being obstructive on several key issues.

Iranian officials continue to delay access to sensitive sites, have not yet sufficiently explained contamination in some locations, and have offered contradictory explanations about whether Iran possesses centrifuges capable of making weapons-grade uranium, the report said.

### An 'Israeli Inquisition'?

The Turkish prime minister likened Israel's handling of the Palestinian uprising to the Spanish Inquisition.

"Our forbears, at the height of their strength, opened their hearts to the Jews expelled from Spain during the Inquisition," Recep Tayyip Erdogan said in a Ha'aretz interview published Thursday, his first remarks to Israeli media since stirring up controversy last month by attacking the Sharon government's security policies. "Today the Palestinians are the victims, and unfortunately the people of Israel treat the Palestinians the way they were treated 500 years ago."

The Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem did not immediately comment.

### Vanunu wants out

Nuclear whistle-blower Mordechai Vanunu applied for permission to leave Israel. Backed by the Association of Civil Rights in Israel, Vanunu petitioned the High Court of Justice on Thursday to overturn restrictions on his movement in effect since he was released from prison in April. "The last five or six weeks since I am free have proved to me that the restrictions are very unjustified and even stupid and impossible to implement," Vanunu told reporters in Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, more than 70 British legislators have written to Mordechai Vanunu inviting him to address Parliament in London.

### Gays and lesbians march in Israel

Hundreds of people attended Israel's annual gay pride parade in Jerusalem.

The demonstrators marched Thursday through downtown Jerusalem, ending with a party at Liberty Bell Park. Some 150 fervently Orthodox Jews held a counterdemonstration not far from the route of the parade.

### Yemenite family gets to Israel

A Yemenite family, said to be held against its will in New York, arrived in Israel.

The Jewish Agency for Israel brought Na'ama Nahari and her five children to Israel on Wednesday. They landed at Ben-Gurion Airport on Wednesday after 15 years in the United States. After landing, Nahari said Satmar Chasidim helped family members leave Yemen, but would not permit them to move to Israel.

The father of the family reportedly remains in the United States.