

IN THE NEWS

**Fracas over
'Mossad spies'**

New Zealand imposed diplomatic sanctions on Israel, accusing it of espionage. New Zealand announced the sanctions Thursday after two Israelis whom New Zealand officials suspect of being Mossad agents were jailed for passport fraud.

"The Israeli government was asked for an explanation and an apology three months ago," New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark said in a statement, referring to the arrest of Uriel Zoshe Kelman and Eli Cara in an Auckland police sting in April. "Neither has been received."

Jerusalem asked New Zealand to reconsider the sanctions.

The two men, who denied they were Mossad agents, were sentenced to six months in prison Thursday after they confessed to trying to obtain a New Zealand passport illicitly.

**Arab Americans
supporting Kerry**

Arab American support for Sen John Kerry (D-Mass.) is increasing. An Arab American Institute poll in four swing states shows 51 percent support for the presumptive Democratic nominee for president. President Bush has 24 percent support and Ralph Nader, a Lebanese American running as an independent, has 13 percent, according to results published Thursday.

The poll, run in Michigan, Pennsylvania, Ohio and Florida, continues to show a dramatic reversal from 2000, when Bush polled much better among Arab Americans than Al Gore.

**Suicide bombing
is foiled in Israel**

Israeli security sources said they thwarted a Palestinian suicide bombing. Sources said Thursday that a 17-year-old from Nablus who planned to blow himself up in Israel was captured along with two accomplices.

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WORLD REPORT

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Jonathan Udren

FOR NAME'S SAKE

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon, center, and Finance Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, second from right, pose Thursday with new immigrants from the United States and namesakes, brothers Benjamin, 11, and Ariel Shain, 3, at Ben-Gurion Airport near Tel Aviv.

As Democrats converge on Boston, Jewish groups plan busy schedule

By RON KAMPEAS

WASHINGTON (JTA) — This year's Democratic Party convention will play to the down-home strengths of the presumptive nominees, but Jews attending the proceedings will be emphasizing foreign policy.

Jewish events planned for the week, from a mass reading of the names of Israeli victims of terrorism to chats with top foreign-policy makers, emphasize Israel's role in the party's policy.

U.S. Jews traditionally have been second

only to blacks among ethnic groups in their overwhelming support for Democrats, but the party is concerned that President Bush's perceived strong support for Israel could cut into Jewish support for Democrats. That explains the emphasis on Israel at the convention's Jewish events, which start in Boston the evening of July 25 and run the whole week.

The importance the party attaches to the Jewish vote was reflected in the confirmed guest list for a July 25 reception co-hosted by the American Israel Public

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**AMERICA
DECIDES
2004**

■ *Democrats head for Boston, and Jews get busy*

Continued from page 1

Affairs Committee and the United Jewish Communities: Sen. John Edwards (D-N.C.), the presumptive vice-presidential nominee, and Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), the minority leader in the U.S. House of Representatives.

Among other highlights of the week, celebrities will read the names of the Israeli terrorism victims, and there will be invitation-only AIPAC meetings with top party foreign-policy drafters and strategists.

"The Democratic convention will focus on their support for Israel," said Jess Hordes, Washington director for the Anti-Defamation League, which will host several Jewish events at the convention. "They want to attempt to neutralize the credit the Bush administration has built up with the Jewish community in its support for Israel and combating anti-Semitism internationally."

By contrast, other parts of the convention will play equally to domestic and foreign policy strengths of the candidates and the party platform, a balance reflected in the theme of the convention, as enumerated Tuesday by chairman and New Mexico Gov. Bill Richardson: "Stronger at home, respected in the world."

Party literature suggests that if there were to be an emphasis, it would be on the domestic side: Speeches on July 26 focus on job creation and expanding health care. Highlights also will include the life stories of Sens. John Kerry (D-Mass.) and Edwards, emphasizing down-home attributes: Kerry the war hero, and Edwards

the poor boy who helped the disenfranchised fight corporations.

Domestic policy is not a hard sell to Jewish voters, Jewish Democrats said.

"The Jews we lose over domestic issues — you can have that convention in a phone booth," said Ira Forman, executive director of the National Jewish Democratic Council, which has daily events planned throughout the convention.

Still, some Jewish events are planned to address domestic issues, including an ADL commemoration of Jewish-black cooperation during the civil rights era and an encounter with "Blue Dogs," congressional Democrats who lean conservative on fiscal and social policies.

That, Forman said, was to remind Jewish voters that their best home was with the Democrats, especially as the GOP leans more to the right.

Forman acknowledged the emphasis on Israel derived from concerns over Bush's strength on that subject but said he felt confident that by the time of the convention, the Democratic Party would prove that its nominees were stronger on the issue.

One National Jewish Democratic Council session tentatively is titled "Are Jews becoming Republican?"

Jewish Democrats are seeking to bury memories of some of Kerry's gaffes during the primaries, including a reference to Israel's security fence as a "barrier to peace" and a pledge to name as peace brokers figures such as President Carter and

former Secretary of State James Baker — both perceived by many Jews as anti-Israel.

Forman says he can name a litany of Israel-critical comments made by Bush administration officials, especially regarding the route of the security fence, that are worse than Kerry's statements on Israel.

The party went some way last weekend toward erasing impressions that it lags on Israel issues by matching Bush word-for-word on his historic recognition this year of some Israeli land claims in the West Bank and his rejection of any Palestinian refugee "right of return" to Israel.

Pro-Israel activists said they welcomed such consistency and would be looking for more of it in encounters at the convention, especially in maintaining the isolation of Syria, Iran and Palestinian Authority President Yasser Arafat.

"It will be an opportunity for people to express their appreciation for the Democratic Party's important and abiding support for Israel and the U.S.-Israel relationship," said Josh Block, an AIPAC spokesman, "for Israel's construction of its anti-terror barrier, congressional concern over Iran's pursuit of nuclear weapons and Syria's continued misbehavior, and unwavering Democratic support of Israel's partnership in the war on terror — especially in the last few years when Israel has weathered an unremitting assault from Palestinian terrorism."

The party platform

The Democratic Party platform, which hasn't yet been made public, includes this section on the Middle East:

"The Democratic Party is fundamentally committed to the security of our ally Israel and the creation of a comprehensive, just and lasting peace between Israel and her neighbors. Our special relationship with Israel is based on the unshakable foundation of shared values and a mutual commitment to democracy, and we will ensure that under all circumstances Israel retains the qualitative edge for its national security and its right to self-defense.

Under a Democratic administration, the United States will demonstrate the kind of resolve to end the Israeli-Palestinian

conflict that President Clinton showed. We will work to transform the Palestinian Authority to promote new and responsible leadership, committed to fighting terror and promoting democracy. We support the creation of a democratic Palestinian state dedicated to living in peace and security side by side with the Jewish state of Israel. The creation of a Palestinian state should resolve the issue of Palestinian refugees by allowing them to settle there, rather than in Israel. Furthermore, all understand that it is unrealistic to expect that the outcome of final-status negotiations will be a full and complete return to the armistice lines of 1949. And we understand that all final-status negotiations must be mutually agreed."

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Jews back new European Commission chief

By PHILIP CARMEL

PARIS (JTA) — European Jewish officials don't know too much about how the prospective new head of the European Commission views the Israeli-Palestinian conflict — but that's not necessarily a bad thing.

As the agreed candidate of the E.U.'s 25 countries to head the bloc's vast executive branch, Jose Manuel Durao Barroso of Portugal is prime minister of a country with traditionally friendly ties to Israel. Durao Barroso himself is widely regarded as a committed Atlanticist.

Pending approval by the European Parliament on July 20, Durao Barroso will begin a two-year term as commission president in the fall, replacing Romano Prodi, who is returning to Italy to lead the country's center-left opposition.

Overall Jewish reaction to Durao Barroso's appointment has been positive, with one senior Brussels-based Jewish official describing Durao Barroso as "certainly the least bad of all the possible candidates."

That remark reflects a certain relief among Jewish groups that E.U. member states didn't appoint someone with a more biased approach to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. But it also marks a general lack of evidence about Durao Barroso's views on the subject, on which he rarely has commented publicly.

As one Israeli Foreign Ministry source familiar with Portuguese affairs pointed out, Durao Barroso generally has been evenhanded on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, mostly limiting himself to calling for an end to all violence, even when other European leaders directed their criticism toward Israel.

"We hope he'll bring new winds to the European Union, for balance and more understanding of the Israeli position," the source told JTA.

Last month, after long deliberations among E.U. leaders, Durao Barroso emerged as the principal center-right candidate, overtaking Luxembourg's prime minister, Jean-Claude Juncker, and Belgian Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt.

Other candidates, such as Britain's Chris Patten — the E.U.'s outgoing external affairs commissioner and a forceful critic of Israel — also dropped by the wayside as E.U. heads searched for a candidate

acceptable to all 25 member states.

As a former foreign minister, Durao Barroso is familiar with the Middle East, has visited Israel and has avoided the sometimes heavy-handed criticism some European leaders adopt toward Israel's anti-terrorist actions.

According to Ester Muchnik, vicepresident of the Lisbon Jewish community and a commentator in the Portuguese press, Durao Barroso is known for his "correct" positions regarding Israel and Portuguese Jews.

He also likely would help steer the European Union toward a more balanced stance on the Middle East and better ties with the United States, she said.

"I have never heard him say anything bad about Israel," Muchnik said in a telephone interview.

"Relations with us have been very friendly," she added, noting that before his appointment in Brussels, Durao Barroso had accepted an invitation to attend the centennial of Lisbon's main synagogue later this year.

Durao Barroso's friendliness toward the Jewish community also reflects a certain pride Portugal takes in its Jewish past. Portuguese President Jorge Sampaio refers regularly to his Jewish origins.

Portugal has very little recent history of anti-Semitism, and its fascist dictatorship during World War II refrained from adopting anti-Jewish legislation.

Moreover, Jean-Yves Camus, a Paris-based political scientist specializing in European anti-Semitism, said, "Portugal is one of the very rare countries in Europe, and perhaps the only one, where today there is no problem with anti-Semitism."

That may explain why Durao Barroso "has not really expressed any views on the subject in the past, but there should be no reason why he would not be forceful on the issue" in his new role, Camus said.

Jewish groups in Europe also point to Durao Barroso's alignment with the Bush administration in supporting the U.S.-led invasion of Iraq.

For the moment, the pro-U.S. line remains the main basis for the optimistic view Israel's supporters in Europe have of Durao Barroso.

Durao Barroso generally has been supportive of U.S. policy in the Mideast.

"We don't really know him," an Israeli diplomatic source in Brussels said, "but if I had to go with the press reports I have of him, this is someone from the European center-right who is generally pro-American. That's usually a good basis for us."

Similar reaction came from the Paris-based European Jewish Congress.

The group's secretary general, Serge Cwajgenbaum, said he knew "very little" about Durao Barroso, "although the views we have collected from the Portuguese Jewish

community have been generally positive."

Cwajgenbaum noted Portugal's traditionally strong links to Britain and the United States, which often have set it at odds with its larger neighbor, Spain.

Portugal also has had only very loose ties with the Arab world.

The choice of a candidate with such broad Atlanticist credentials would have been unusual were it not for Durao Barroso's ability to build ties to other European leaders.

While he generally has been supportive of U.S. policy in the Middle East, he has avoided the more confrontational approaches of leaders such as Spain's former prime minister, Jose Maria Aznar, and Italy's prime minister, Silvio Berlusconi.

Durao Barroso has come a long way politically since his days as a law student at the University of Lisbon, where he was a Maoist party leader during the 1974-75 revolution that overthrew the Salazar dictatorship.

Gradually becoming more centrist, he led Portugal's center-right Social Democrats to power in 2002, though the country currently is in difficult economic conditions.

Some E.U. observers believe the commission job could provide Durao Barroso with the perfect opportunity to escape his country's woes.

"There are people who want political stability and think he should have stayed because our economy is not good right now," Muchnik said, "but I think it's right that he accepted the appointment, because it will help give visibility to our small country."

(JTA Correspondent Jerome Socolovsky in Madrid contributed to this story.)

Much paper, but no answers in AMIA probe

By FLORENCIA ARBISER

Buenos Aires (JTA) — The investigation into the 1994 AMIA bombing has accumulated 120,000 pages of records and spawned more than 20 judicial cases on charges ranging from concealment, robbery, giving false testimony and failure to carry out public duty.

So far, however, no one has been found responsible for the terrorist attack against the Jewish community's central facility — much to the community's dismay.

Carolina Fernandez Blanco, a lawyer representing AMIA, noted some milestones in the investigation:

- On July 18, 1994, the day the bombing killed 85 people and wounded 300, parts of a van were discovered containing traces of explosives.

- On July 25, 1994, part of the van's motor was found. That piece guided the investigation toward a suspect named Carlos Telleldin, a mechanic and known car thief.

- On July 27, 1994, Telleldin was captured. That same day, investigative judge Juan Jose Galeano began to suspect that Iran was connected to the bombing. Years later, in 2003, officials said they believed they could confirm that Iran masterminded the attack together with Hezbollah, the Lebanon-based terrorist group.

- In 1995, the investigation compiled information that allegedly links local police officers to Telleldin and the attack.

- On Sept. 24, 2001, the trial of Telleldin, four police officers and 15 others opened.

- In July 2002, The New York Times reported that the Argentine president at the time of the attack, Carlos Menem, was paid a \$10 million bribe by Iran to cover up the Islamic Republic's role in the attack. Menem denied the charges.

- In March 2003, Argentina demanded the extradition of former Iranian officials, including Iran's former ambassador in Buenos Aires, Hadi Soleimannpour. Soleimannpour was arrested in Britain but later was released. For years, investigators have suspected that Iran's former cultural attache, Moshen Rabbani, had strong links to the attack.

- In December 2003, Galeano was dismissed for allegedly bribing Telleldin to testify against the police officers.

- In January 2004, prosecutors presented their closing arguments.



A man pauses in front of a wall of names before the start of a memorial last year marking the anniversary of the 1994 bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center in Buenos Aires.

For Argentine Jews, who have watched each development closely and turned out to each courthouse appearance, the sense of anger and dismay dates back to even before the attack.

"There is almost a certainty that the national government was aware an attack was going to happen," said Fernandez Blanco, the AMIA attorney.

Before the attack, the Argentine office in Milan received information that Hezbollah could attack in Argentina. The information was submitted to the Foreign Office and from there to the national intelligence services — but neither of them reacted.

Fernandez Blanco said many of those involved in the probe showed "disorganization, negligence and concealment."

At the beginning of the case, for example, the federal police's Department of Protection presumably lost 60 tape recordings of telephone conversations at Telleldin's house after the attack, she said.

Last July, the La Nacion newspaper published an investigation blasting the performance of Galeano and the intelligence services. "There are suspicions of having diverted the investigation because it could get close to former President Carlos Menem's environment," La Nacion said.

What Fernandez Blanco calls "the big horror of the case" took place in July 1996, when Galeano was accused of pay-

ing \$400,000 to Telleldin to testify against police officers who were already linked to the case.

During the trial, the intelligence services confirmed the bribe, and Galeano was taken off the case in December 2003. Two prosecutors were removed because they too had known of the bribe.

Fernandez Blanco's criticisms are shared by many Argentines.

A parliamentary commission created to investigate the AMIA bombing as well as the 1992 bombing of the Israeli Embassy in Buenos Aires, which killed 29 people, frequently has been critical of the authorities' efforts on the cases.

Gabriel Levinas, an investigative reporter who is the son of a man who helped found AMIA and is a member of its ethics committee, wrote a book on the bombing called "Below the Rubble" and a report on the attack for the U.S. Congress.

"Ten years of investigation led nowhere," he told JTA. "Either the attack was very well done, or the investigation was very badly done. Was it on purpose or because of inefficiency?"

He cites several instances in which a person involved with the investigation then goes on to face charges himself.

Levinas described the relation between the plaintiffs, the justice system and the accused as "promiscuous."

Meanwhile, the trial of Telleldin and the four policemen is slated to end in a few weeks, and the Jewish world is waiting. ■

**ARGENTINA:
10 YEARS
OF TRAUMA**

Groups remember AMIA bombing 10 years on

By FLORENCIA ARBISER

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) — At 9:53 a.m. this July 18, a loud siren will sound in front of 633 Pasteur St., where the AMIA Jewish community center is located.

The siren will mark the moment 10 years ago on a Monday morning when a bomb went off, killing 85 people in the most devastating terrorist attack in modern Latin American history. Hundreds of Argentines are expected to be standing on Pasteur and in nearby streets to commemorate the anniversary of the tragedy.

The DAIA political umbrella group, together with AMIA and Familiares de Las Victimias — the biggest group of victims' relatives — jointly organized the commemoration ceremony in Buenos Aires.

The next day, DAIA's president, Gilbert Lewi, will be in New York to take part in a commemoration there of the AMIA attack.

Kirchner said he'll attend the July 18

commemoration at the AMIA center, and the day will be declared a national day of mourning. The president attended last year's ceremony a few weeks after taking office, and he has been praised for his commitment to investigating the attack.

Because of infighting in the community, Familiares at first opposed co-sponsoring the demonstration with local Jewish leaders.

"We finally decided not to show our differences to the world on such a day. We're privileged to honor the victims," Sergio Burstein, a prominent member of Familiares, told JTA.

Barely a week before the commemoration, Familiares still hadn't chosen a speaker. "We need to make sure we have someone that won't break down," Burstein said.

The Familiares speech will come after speeches by representatives of AMIA and

DAIA. AMIA President Abraham Kaul said he will speak on the 10-year investigation of the attack, focusing on how the case has lost its focus.

Ten days before the ceremony, DAIA leaders also had not chosen a speaker.

Two other organizations of victims' relatives, Memoria Activa and Apemia, are not taking part in the main celebration. Memoria Activa, which for years has been harshly critical of the investigation, is holding a ceremony the night beforehand in front of the city's central courthouse and will then hold an overnight demonstration with the group Youth in Guard.

Apemia, led by Laura Ginsberg, still hasn't decided how to mark the occasion.

At the main celebration, a child's poem will be read, accompanied by music. Every shop in the area — a supermarket, kiosks, parking lots, grocery stores — will be closed.

Time has not eased grief for family of one AMIA victim

By FLORENCIA ARBISER

BUENOS AIRES (JTA) — It's been 10 years since 21-year-old Cristian Degtiar lost his life in the devastating bombing of the AMIA Jewish community center here, but the loss suffered by Degtiar's family remains as raw today as it was a decade ago.

"Nothing can be as pitifully noisy as silence," Olga Degtiar, Cristian's still-grieving mother, says about life since her son's untimely death. "Cristian is still 21, and I won't see his children or his law diploma."

Grasping her head in her hands near the sunny dining area in the family's home on the northern outskirts of Buenos Aires, Olga remembers the day of the fateful attack that claimed 85 lives — July 18, 1994 — as if no time at all has passed.

When he was killed, Cristian was on winter break from law school. Under normal circumstances, he spent mornings in class, but he had taken on additional hours at his job at the DAIA Jewish community umbrella group during the school vacation to earn some extra money.

Not wanting to wake his family, Olga says, Cristian silently waved goodbye to his mother and headed out to the AMIA center, where the DAIA was located.

About three hours later, Olga, already

hard at work alongside her husband, Juan, at the family's hardware store, received an anxious phone call from her daughter asking where Cristian was.

"Where is Cristian?" Marina Degtiar asked. "There was a bomb at AMIA."

Immediately, Olga and Juan headed down to the AMIA to search for Cristian.

It took two days to locate Cristian's body, which was found intact in the rubble.

Cristian was, by his mother's account, "a boy with a brilliant mind and love for knowledge."

He enjoyed writing and won a trip to Israel for an essay he wrote on discrimination. He was an avid soccer fan, competing in tournaments sponsored by the local Jewish sports league. He was fascinated by immigrants and all things military.

For the first five months after Cristian's death, Olga couldn't bring herself to enter his bedroom. For five years, Juan Degtiar was unable to utter his dead son's name.

Initially, the Degtiars decided to leave the house they had lived in since Cristian was 4. But instead, they enlisted an architect to completely redesign the house's interior layout so that it would no longer resemble the home they shared with Cristian.

Today, Olga sleeps in the same spot that



Florencia Arbisar

Olga Degtiar poses with a photo of her son Cristian, who was killed in the AMIA attack.

was once Cristian's bedroom.

Time has not dimmed the anguish over the loss of her son. Her grief makes it difficult even to attend synagogue regularly, despite the encouragement from her son-in-law, who is a rabbi.

"The synagogue is the place where I can see most clearly how my life has been changed," Olga says. "Inside the synagogue I feel the strong mark of what my life was and what it is."

Anti-drug program focuses on teen prevention

By HEATHER ROBINSON

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — Lindsay, a pretty 19-year-old with striking green eyes, remembers calling her parents during her freshman year in college to tell them she was addicted to cocaine.

Things had gotten so bad that she didn't even leave her bedroom during the last few weeks of spring semester.

"I had drugs and alcohol, I had a TV, and anything outside was too much for me to handle," said Lindsay, who asked that her real name not be used. "I called my parents, crying, 'I'm going to kill myself!' My parents sent me a huge bouquet of tulips and said, 'Stop being neurotic. You're going to Hawaii soon with us and you'll have a nice vacation.'"

"They're loving, wonderful people," she said. "They just didn't get it."

Lindsay now is in recovery at Beit T'Shuvah — Hebrew for House of Return — a Los Angeles-based, inpatient rehabilitation center for Jewish addicts. Last February she told her story to teenagers as part of a new curriculum designed to bring the message of addiction prevention to Jewish teens.

Developed by Beit T'Shuvah and The Change Companies, a publishing company specializing in educational materials promoting behavioral change, the program uses Jewish principles to encourage introspection and a healthy self-image.

It also seeks to counter the "spiritual bankruptcy" that undergirds addictive behaviors, according to Rabbi Mark Borovitz, a creator of the new program at Beit T'Shuvah.

Borovitz himself is a recovered alcoholic, and he frequently shares his story of redemption through faith with Beit T'Shuvah's 120 residents.

Between 1980 and 1988, Borovitz was in and out of prison for crimes including grand theft, insurance fraud and passing bad checks. In 1987, while serving time in a state prison at Chino, Calif., he began to study Torah with Mel Silverman, the Jewish chaplain there.

Upon Borovitz's release in 1988, Harriet Rossetto, founder and director of Beit T'Shuvah, visited him and invited him to work at the center. His work enhanced a budding relationship with Rossetto, and the couple married in 1990.

Borovitz went on to rabbinical school,

graduating from the University of Judaism in Los Angeles.

Rossetto, Borovitz and Beit T'Shuvah's clinical coordinator, Jennifer Ginsberg, developed the prevention program last year, when a disproportionately large number of Jewish teenagers and their families came to them seeking help.

"Our population is getting younger and younger. We're seeing an inordinate number of youngsters who come from top Beverly Hills families, who have gone to expensive private schools, and what they learned was how to use drugs," Rossetto said.

Attention to addiction in the Jewish community, particularly among youth, is overdue, many educators and experts say.

Dr. Abraham Twerski, a rabbi and medical director emeritus of the Gateway Rehabilitation Center in Pittsburgh and author of "Addictive Thinking," a primer on addiction, said many Jewish parents simply are unaware.

"Denial is the name of the game, especially in Jewish communities," Twerski said. "You see kids out late at night on the streets in Jewish neighborhoods, and you know some of them are using, but the parents think, 'Not my kid.'"

Twerski advises two organizations in the New York area at the forefront of efforts to address and prevent addiction among Jewish adolescents: Jewish Alcoholics and Chemically Dependent Others, and the Yatzkan Center.

Founded in 2001, Yatzkan is a small kosher inpatient facility that provides housing and addiction counseling for a handful of teenage boys. Currently there are eight in the program.

Executive Director Lew Abrams says the facility also has an outreach program focused on prevention that has sent speakers to more than 25 Jewish day schools over the past three years. Yatzkan also enlists counselors to train teachers, rabbis and community leaders to identify signs of addiction and discourage drug use among adolescents.

Jewish Alcoholics and Chemically Dependent Others is a volunteer-led organization that supports Jews recovering from

addiction. It also runs occasional retreats for teenagers with addiction problems and adult retreats in New York and Baltimore.

Administrators at both Yatzkan and Jewish Alcoholics and Chemically Dependent Others stress the value of enlisting young people in recovery to speak to young audiences.

"We talk about signs and symptoms, how someone gets involved in experimentation and how to make decisions to avoid it," Abrams said. "It's very effective to have kids address other kids."

The first school to use Beit T'Shuvah's prevention

program was Los Angeles Hebrew High School, a supplemental religious school for students in grades eight through 12.

Principal Bill Cohen said a surge in addiction-related problems — especially eating disorders — among the school's students prompted him to introduce the program to the senior class.

Those behind the prevention program say Jewish spirituality is key to their message. The program offers a curriculum of exercises that employ relevant Torah teachings.

One journal-writing exercise, for instance, poses the question "What is Your Pharaoh?" encouraging students to view the Exodus story as a metaphor for acquiring the freedom that results from self-discipline and self-esteem.

Another exercise, called "Be Yourself," asks students to answer questions using a quotation from the Talmud's Reb Zusha: "On Judgment Day, when the Holy Tribunal asks me, 'Why were you not more like Moses?' I will be unafraid. If they ask me, 'Why were you not more like Zusha?' I will have no answer."

Roger Goodman, 23, a recovering addict who is co-director of the Beit T'Shuvah program, says so far, student response has been positive.

"Several kids called to thank me afterward," Goodman said. "One has been calling me for four months. He's stressed out because his parents put so much pressure on him to do well in school. He's not into drugs or alcohol — yet — and I talk to him a lot about finding other outlets for his feelings."

**'It's very effective
to have kids
address other kids.'**

Lew Abrams
Yatzkan Center

FIRST PERSON

New immigrants cause a (not so) old one to reflect on aliyah

By JONATHAN UDREN

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Almost exactly a year ago, I was one of 330 people aboard an aliyah flight sponsored by Nefesh B'Nefesh and the Jewish Agency for Israel. I was the one with butterflies in my stomach as the plane landed, dreading the bureaucracy and dreaming of my future in Israel.

"Am I crazy for moving here?" I asked myself as I stepped off the plane. That thought disappeared as suddenly "Haveinu shalom aleichem" started playing in the background. All I could focus on was the cheers and flag-waving that awaited me in the hangar as hundreds of people gathered to greet us new immigrants.

This month I stood on the other side of the fence as the first of three Nefesh B'Nefesh planes this summer arrived with new immigrants.

Unlike last year, when I felt the anxiety of the question mark that was my future in Israel, today was a different story.

I thought, "Maybe I'm not crazy for making aliyah. I'm not alone in my dream of building a life in Israel."

After speaking with a few people in the crowd awaiting the plane, I was surprised to learn that many didn't know anyone on the flight. They had come just to be part of the festivities and the welcome.

Avichail Friedman came from Jerusalem to show her support. "I lived in the U.S. and I know all the challenges of leaving and how hard it can be to uproot yourself and your family," she said.

Liz Bernstein came to greet a friend making aliyah.

Bernstein has lived in Jerusalem for nine months but she and her husband haven't yet committed to aliyah.

"To see all these people here dealing with the same issues of making aliyah, and overcoming them, it's certainly inspiring. It gets the wheels turning, thinking about if we're going to stay or not," Bernstein said. ■

How will Begin be remembered?

By DINA KRAFT

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Menachem Begin made his way from a gangly, bespectacled leader of the right-wing Jewish underground to the silver-tongued prime minister who made peace with Egypt, only to spend his final years a recluse, mourning the deaths of his wife and the soldiers he sent to Lebanon.

Fourteen years after thousands choked the streets of Jerusalem to attend Begin's funeral, a new, sleek center of stone and glass across the valley from Mount Zion has been built to honor his memory.

Modeled after an American presidential library, the \$16 million, four-story building hosts an interactive museum, an archive of Begin's speeches and writings, and an educational center to promote his legacy.

But how will Israel and the world remember the multifaceted and charismatic Begin — as the gentlemanly Pole who became the champion of Israel's Sephardi underclass? As the tireless, Holocaust-haunted voice against German reparations? As the opposition leader who toppled the left-wing Mapai Party that had dominated Israeli political life for decades? As the leader who traded land for peace with Egypt and won the Nobel Peace Prize? Or as the prime minister who launched a divisive war in Lebanon that lasted 18 years?

"His legacy is very problematic. To make a unity of his legacy is to say he was this or that, but there were many Begins," said Yaacov Shavit, a professor of Israeli history at Tel Aviv University.

Shavit noted the absence of references to Begin in politics today, even among those who followed him into power from the Likud Party.

"One needs to ask if any of his heirs have continued in the path of Begin," Shavit said.

Begin's friend and adviser Harry Hurwitz, who initiated and raised the private funds to build the Menachem Begin Heritage Center — and who now directs it — views the former prime minister in purely positive terms.

"Begin essentially was a man of adherence to principle. He did not waver and did not change because of the ongoing situa-

tion or polls," Hurwitz said in an interview in his office. "He had his beliefs and his essential belief in the inalienable right of the Jewish people to its ancient land."

Hurwitz met Begin at a secret meeting in late 1946. At the time, Begin was wanted by the British Mandate police.

At the center's museum, a "Wanted" poster is displayed with Begin's picture and a note to the public that the suspect — who often appeared in disguise — had bad teeth and a flat-footed gait.

Hurwitz said Begin would not have supported Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's recent decision to hand the Gaza Strip to the Palestinians as part of a plan to disengage from the Palestinians. Begin saw Gaza as part of the historic Land of Israel, he said.

Yehiel Kadishai, who served for decades as Begin's political secretary and confidante, agreed that it's hard to imagine Begin conceding the Gaza Strip, especially without a peace agreement.

"He would not consider it because he did not accept the idea of making unilateral concessions,"

he told JTA.

"His legacy is love of Israel and love of humanity, but especially the Jewish people. He educated the Israeli nation on how to maintain a sense of self-respect, saying that if you want to take care of your country then the country needs to be strong in order to survive freely," Kadishai said.

In the center's museum, an interactive exhibit on his life begins when Begin was a young man in Poland. Video screens show dramatic re-enactments of Begin — then an activist in the Beitar movement — being interrogated by the Soviets during World War II, and television news footage of Begin's most famous moments, including the signing of the Camp David Accords for peace with Egypt.

Outside the center, finding shade under a squat tree, Yehuda and Hanna Horowitz, a retired couple from Jerusalem, said they missed Begin's style of leadership.

"He influenced so much, he gave so much," Hanna Horowitz said, speaking of the peace Begin made with Egypt and his honest, legalistic political style — a far cry, she said, from the corruption scandals and ugly political rhetoric of today's Israel. ■

Would Begin have supported Israel's plans for a withdrawal from Gaza?

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

House wants Israel in U.N. group

The U.S. House of Representatives unanimously called for Israel to be granted full membership in the U.N.'s Western European and Others Group.

The resolution, passed Thursday, calls on the State Department to lobby for the move and for President Bush and other administration officials to "seek an immediate end to the persistent and deplorable inequality experienced by Israel in the United Nations."

"It is unacceptable that Israel should remain an anomaly in the community of nations only because certain states refuse to allow it to occupy its legitimate place in the Asian group of nations," Rep. Ileana Ros-Lehtinen (R-Fla.) said Wednesday.

After Arab nations refused to allow Israel into the Asian group, it was belatedly admitted to the European group for U.N. activities in New York, but not for U.N. offices abroad.

N.Y. kosher protection becomes law

A law strengthening consumer protection against food falsely or misleadingly labeled as kosher passed in New York State.

The bill became law Wednesday. In 2002, New York's 87-year-old kosher-protection laws, which regulated the labeling of kosher foods, were struck down as unconstitutional on church-state grounds.

The new law mandates that establishments calling themselves kosher post a Kosher Certification Form noting the name, training, education and affiliation of the individual or organization providing the kosher certification.

Al-Jazeera for Canada

Canada will allow Al-Jazeera TV to be broadcast in Canada, over protests from Jewish groups.

Canadian Jewish officials had lobbied the Canadian Radio-television Telecommunications Commission not to allow Al-Jazeera into Canada, but the commission is set to announce that it will give Al-Jazeera a green light, Toronto's Globe and Mail reported.

The Canadian Jewish Congress and B'nai Brith Canada objected to Al-Jazeera because of its track record of airing strongly anti-Semitic content, including material that they say would be considered illegal hate speech in Canada.

MIDDLE EAST

Israelis a little better off

Israel rose slightly on the United Nations' Human Development index, which measures the well-being of 177 nations.

Israel moved up one spot to No. 22, beating out Hong Kong, Singapore and Portugal in the 2004 rankings, which are based on per-capita income, educational levels, health care and life expectancy, Ha'aretz reported. Norway, Sweden and Australia topped the list, issued Thursday by the U.N. Development Program, and Sierra Leone was ranked last.

The United States ranked eighth, with the top 20 spots filled by European and North American nations, along with Japan and Australia. Arab states ranked closer to the bottom, with Egypt at 120, the Palestinian Authority at 106 and Lebanon at 80.

World Bank: Gaza poverty unprecedented

The top World Bank official dealing with the Gaza Strip says the territory is suffering one of the worst recessions in history.

Markus Kostner said in Washington that Gaza had 70 percent unemployment and that the number of Gazans with savings had dropped from 70 percent in 2001 to 13 percent today. Israel wants

the World Bank to help ease its planned withdrawal from Gaza.

Kostner suggested World Bank assistance would be forthcoming only if Israel eased control of its borders with Gaza and the Palestinians increased economic transparency to create an investment-friendly environment.

U.S. House deplores ICJ ruling

The U.S. House of Representatives denounced the International Court of Justice for its recent ruling against Israel's security fence.

The House voted 361-45 Thursday for the resolution, which condemned "the ICJ's willingness to acquiesce in efforts that are likely to undermine its reputation and interfere with a resolution of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict."

The ICJ last week ruled the fence was illegal.

Planes to avoid Israeli Arab town

Israeli security officials have changed flight paths over northern Israel so planes don't pass over the Israeli Arab city of Umm el-Fahm.

Deputy Defense Minister Ze'ev Boim confirmed the change at a Knesset hearing Wednesday, Ha'aretz reported. Aviation industry sources said the change is designed to minimize the chances of aircraft being attacked from the ground.

The changes were implemented not long after Israel's assassination of Hamas founder Sheik Ahmed Yassin.

U.S. shares attack info with P.A.

The United States shared information with the Palestinian Authority about a fatal attack last year on a U.S. convoy in the Gaza Strip.

"We have shared some information with the Palestinians on who may be responsible for this," Richard Boucher said Thursday. "But this needs to result in a serious and credible investigation of a kind that we have not yet seen on the Palestinian side."

Attackers killed three U.S. officials in the Oct. 15, 2003, attack. The Palestinian Authority's failure to track the perpetrators has chilled U.S.-P.A. relations.

WORLD

British Jews and birth rates

The birth rate among British Jews has held steady for the past five years but is 15 percent lower than a decade ago, new statistics show. The figures, released annually by the Board of Deputies, British Jewry's umbrella group, also show that life expectancy has increased.

The board said it hadn't detected an increase in the divorce rate, despite a 2002 law designed to make it easier to force recalcitrant men to grant their wives a religious divorce certificate, or "get."

Kosher in Greece

Greece opened its first kosher restaurant since World War II.

Rabbi Mendel Hendel decided to open the Kol Tuv restaurant, located in downtown Athens and online at www.kosherathens.com, to help Jewish athletes coming to Greece for the summer Olympics keep kosher. Hendel said he was not sure if the restaurant would remain open after the Olympics.

Kostroma police apologize for anti-Semitism

A Russian police chief apologized to a young Jew who was assaulted by an anti-Semitic traffic cop.

The head of the Kostroma region's police apologized to Aleksandr Bakanov, who not long ago was dragged from his car and thrown around by police for no apparent reason, according to the UCSJ: Union of Councils for Jews in the Former Soviet Union. Police later claimed Bakanov resembled a fugitive suspect.