

IN THE NEWS

**Jail time
for settlers?**

Israeli settlers who take up arms to resist evacuation under Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's withdrawal plan could face five years in prison.

A draft criminal code made public by the Justice Ministry on Sunday would also make re-entry by settlers into evacuated areas of the Gaza Strip and West Bank punishable by three years in jail.

The draft is expected to be approved by the Cabinet next month and brought for Knesset ratification on Nov. 3. Israel fears the planned withdrawals in 2005 from Gaza and the West Bank could be met with violent resistance and even civil war.

A compensation plan already approved by the government would deprive those settlers who do not leave their homes voluntarily of some \$15,000 in relocation perks, such as rent subsidies.

**House votes
to keep 'under God'**

The U.S. House of Representatives voted to keep the term "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The bill, which passed the House 247-173 on Sept. 23 and is unlikely to stand for a vote in the Senate this year, would prevent federal courts from hearing cases about the pledge's constitutionality.

The Supreme Court heard a case about whether the phrase violated the separation of church and state earlier this year, but did not rule on its merits.

**Palestinian mortars
kill woman in Gaza**

Mortars fired at a Gaza Strip settlement killed an Israeli woman.

Hamas claimed responsibility for the mortar attack last Friday on the Neveh Dekalim settlement in the Gaza Strip.

One of the three mortars fired struck a home in the settlement mortally wounding 24-year-old Tiferet Tratner, who was visiting the settlement.



WORLD REPORT

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Advocates for Israel taking on bans on university study in Israel

By RACHEL POMERANCE

NEW YORK (JTA) — Ever since Ari Kaiman traveled to Israel on a United Synagogue Youth teen tour four years ago, he has wanted to go back.

"The moment a Jewish person steps foot in the Land of Israel, breathes the air, he feels at home," the University of Florida senior said.

For Kaiman, the trip made him want to spend part of his college time in Israel. But it wasn't easy.

Citing the U.S. State Department travel advisory to Israel, the University of Florida — like the vast majority of other colleges across the country — suspended its programs in Israel. While most universities will approve transfer credits, in Kaiman's case going around the university meant risking credits for course work abroad.

"I thought there was a very real possibility I would sort of lose out on a whole semester," Kaiman said, a prospect he called "very scary."

Ultimately, Kaiman not only spent last spring at the University of Haifa but gained full credit for that semester and an ulpan, due to what he says was a combination of luck and persistence.

He also acquired "an intimate knowledge and love" of Israel and helped pave the way for others at his university to study in Israel, Kaiman said.

Trying to overcome the academic hurdles to study in Israel is the latest element of American Jewish organizations' pro-Israel advocacy work on campus amid the Palestinian intifada.

That's because restrictions on Israel study

deal a blow to the Jewish and Zionist identity that a trip to Israel can fuel.

"We're really losing one of our greatest assets on campus, which is students who have a really in-depth knowledge of and connection to firsthand experience in Israel," said Lisa Eisen, chair of the Israel on Campus Coalition, a coordinating body of 26 Jewish groups that have a presence on campus.

Jewish students who have spent time in Israel "are our best advocates," she said.

The ICC recently launched "Let Our Students Go!" a national campaign to call attention to the issue.

ICC member groups are urged to work with university administrators, alumni and community leaders to remove barriers for those who want to study in Israel. For example, the campaign suggests establishing scholarship funds for study abroad

and bringing university administrators and the risk managers they consult on Israel missions to show them firsthand student life in Israel.

"The point of all these things is to demonstrate that the Jewish community views the opportunity for study abroad in Israel as a priority and an asset both to the campus and the community," said Wayne Firestone, director of the ICC and Hillel's Center for Israel Affairs.

Considering the fact that Israelis produce more academic papers per capita than any other country, "to exclude firsthand personal experiences learning of the history of Western civilization where it actually occurred is criminal," he said.

The top leaders of many ICC member organizations turned up in New York on Sept. 9

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**FOCUS
ON
ISSUES**

■ *Activists make studying in Israel their latest battleground*

Continued from page 1

at Columbia University's Hillel to launch the campaign.

"If the kids are willing to put their own academic careers on the line," then "the least we can do is give them the backing," said Malcolm Hoenlein, executive vice chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, which is an ICC member.

The campaign comes as the Jewish Agency for Israel, an ICC member, spearheads a major effort to provide more funding to Israel study programs.

By granting subsidies to students on the basis of need, the Jewish Agency, in partnership with the Israeli government, aims to halve the cost of Israel study programs to encourage young Jews to study in Israel.

The Israeli government is slated to give \$10 million this year to groups that bring 18- to 26-year-old Jews to Israel on educational programs of at least five months.

■

Every year, the Israeli government will increase its contribution by \$10 million, with a matching grant from sources assembled by the Jewish Agency.

"We consider long-term study programs one of the best ways to incentivize Jews to live in Israel," said Michael Landsberg, executive director of the Jewish Agency's North American aliyah delegation.

The violence of the Palestinian intifada has turned many students, and their parents, against study in Israel. But university policies that discourage study in Israel also have had a substantial effect.

"A student who is particularly focused on studying in Israel can generally still do so, but those who are choosing from a variety of options will be more likely to choose an easier path," said Amy Sugin, director of the office of academic affairs for the Hebrew University of Jerusalem's Rothberg International School.

At the same time, Sugin notes that the decline in enrollment since the intifada began has begun to reverse.

For example, 381 American students enrolled in Hebrew University this summer and fall. That's 35 percent below pre-intifada levels, but a 36 percent increase from last year and a 100 percent jump from the year before.

The upswing is due to the fact that terrorist incidents have decreased, Sugin said, but also because several rounds of students that have studied in Israel during the intifada have returned to their home campuses having had positive experiences.

The increased demand to study in Israel is prompting administrations to revisit their policies, Sugin says, making this a "pivotal time" in activism on the issue.

For example, the University of Pennsylvania shifted its policy after students affiliated with Pennpac, a pro-Israel campus group, launched a letter-writing campaign urging a policy review and bombarded the provost with 400 letters in the last two weeks of the 2003 fall semester.

The university moved from a position of suspending its Israel study programs to allowing students to study in Israel if they file a petition to study abroad and then sign

a waiver accepting responsibility for their own safety, according to The Daily Pennsylvanian. The issue comes down to student safety, said Geoffrey Gee, Penn's director of study abroad.

"If the State Department or other government agencies say that its not safe to be in a place," then "we would not be in any position to contradict that," he said.

For universities that have put in place obstacles to Israel study, it mainly comes down to liability and the perception of insecurity in Israel, the ICC's Eisen said. "We do not believe, for the most part, that this is anti-Israel animus," she said.

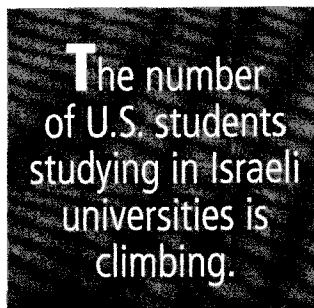
While no one would deny that there has been terrorism in Israel, Eisen said, "I think students who actively want to go to Israel and who go with their eyes open should be enabled that opportunity."

For Gregory Shill, preventing students from studying in Israel is "tragic."

As a Columbia university student, he had to fight hard to spend spring 2001 at Tel Aviv University.

He successfully lobbied the student council to pass a resolution calling on the university to allow students to go to Israel. He also helped round up signatures for a petition on the issue to pressure the university, which ultimately allowed them to go after signing a waiver of liability.

For Shill, spending a semester in Israel during the intifada will inform his personal and professional choices. He hopes to make a career in politics — "to help Israel achieve peace," he said.



The number of U.S. students studying in Israeli universities is climbing.

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Reform mad at Swaggart statement

NEW YORK (JTA) — Reform Jewish leaders have "vehemently condemned" Christian evangelist Jimmy Swaggart's pledge to kill any gay man that approached him romantically.

"Rev. Swaggart's statement that 'if any man came onto me, I'd kill him and tell God he died,' is deplorable and should be condemned by all people of decency," said Rabbi David Saperstein, director of the Religious Action Center for Reform Judaism.

"It goes beyond homophobia to actually

condoning violence against homosexuals." Swaggart apologized Sept. 22. He said the pledge was facetious, and that he has said the same thing about other groups and did not mean any harm.

Saperstein said Swaggart's apology showed a lack of understanding of the gravity of the comments. "As Jews, we know all too well the implications of hateful incitement. Empty apologies do nothing to correct the corrosive and destructive implications of Rev. Swaggart's statements."

Campaigns reach out through Jewish media

By MATTHEW E. BERGER

WASHINGTON (JTA) — The presidential campaigns and their surrogates are reaching out to Jewish audiences through the Jewish media.

Jewish political organizations — the National Jewish Democratic Council and the Republican Jewish Coalition — are touting their candidates and attacking their opponents through a series of print advertisements launched this month.

These ads go farther than the Rosh Hashanah greetings candidates and organizations normally send out. They go to the heart of the key issues for the Jewish community this election season: Israel, the war against terrorism and the separation of church and state.

With less than two months to go before Election Day, Jewish political operatives are hoping to cement their support within the

Jewish community and persuade undecided voters. Of particular concern are key battleground states with large Jewish populations, like Florida, Ohio and Pennsylvania.

"I think they're both doing more outreach this time around than they did in the past," said Elie Rosenfeld, chief operating officer at Joseph Jacobs, an advertising agency specializing in Jewish consumers. "It's because the Jews are a concern in the states that are a concern."

The NJDC's Victory Fund has run two ads. One highlights Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry's record on Middle East issues, such as supporting Israel and its security, and taking on Saudi Arabia's links to terrorism.

The second highlights comments Bush administration officials have made advocating an increased role of Christian faith in government.

Both say "There Is a Choice" and tout Kerry's "20 Years of Standing With Us."

One RJC ad says "Read what John Kerry Had to Say about Israel in his acceptance speech:" with a large amount of white space below, followed by the words "Absolutely Nothing" in block letters.

"John Kerry's Silence on Israel Says a Lot," the ad reads, along with a solicitation for readers to join the organization.

A second RJC ad features a photo of President Bush at the Western Wall in Jerusalem, with a quote comparing attacks against Israel and the United States. It features highlights from Bush's comments in May to the American Israel Public Affairs Committee.

Already, the question of the validity of the ads is being raised.

The RJC issued a news release Wednesday, suggesting the NJDC was purposefully trying to mislead the Jewish community.

"They put in half-truths, trying to misrepresent the positions and policies of the president and his administration," said Matt Brooks, the RJC's executive director.

Among Brooks' complaints is that the NJDC used misconstrued comments from Education Secretary Rod Paige that got a Baptist Press news service reporter fired.

Ira Forman, the NJDC's executive director, defended the group's ad, which high-

lights Republican comments promoting America as a Christian state.

"There is no argument from anyone that this administration has done more to diminish the wall between church and state than any administration in the last 100 years," Forman said.

Both Jewish political groups are loathe to discuss the strategy behind their ads or their placement, but different trends have emerged.

Republicans — who all admit that their chances of overturning traditional Jewish support for Democrats in November are slim — are taking the longer view, hoping to slowly change views about the party and build up

membership in the RJC. The NJDC ads focus more closely on the candidate.

Forman said the ads are strictly being sent to swing states.

"What we're trying to do is educate and influence marginal voters in battleground states," he said.

The strategy also includes extensive voter contact programs in several cities with large Jewish populations, like Palm Beach, Fla., Cleveland and Philadelphia.

The Kerry/Edwards campaign also took out ads in some of the nation's larger Jewish newspapers in non-battleground states. These ads, geared predominantly at donors and other supporters in cities like New York and Washington, featured the Kerry and Edwards families and mixed messages of Rosh Hashanah greetings and support for Israel.

Under current election laws, campaigns are not allowed to coordinate with political advocacy groups, commonly known as 527s, for their Internal Revenue Code designation. That is why, sources said, you have seen NJDC and Kerry/Edwards ads in some of the same newspapers.

No Bush/Cheney ads have appeared in Jewish newspapers, Brooks said.

"The goal of the advertising campaign is to build membership and discuss the issues with the community," Brooks said. Sources said the ads may expand beyond the battleground states for that purpose. Neither side would say how much money they intend to spend on advertising in the Jewish community, or on their larger outreach effort. ■



TUESDAY

■ Jordanian Foreign Minister Marwan Muasher arrives in Washington for meetings with Secretary of State Colin Powell and Condoleezza Rice, President Bush's national security adviser. He will also speak to the Saban Center, a Middle East think tank. Muasher will discuss Jordan's role in helping the Palestinians assume authority once Israel withdraws from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank next year.

■ Leaders of the Presbyterian church meet with Jewish officials in New York. The meeting is expected to focus on the church's call in July for selective divestment from companies that do business with Israel.

THURSDAY

■ President Bush and Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) are meeting in their first presidential election debate, in Coral Gables, Fla. The debate will be on foreign policy; each candidate has gone out of his way to mention support for Israel in foreign policy speeches. Given the role Florida's Jews may play in this crucial swing state, look for more of the same.

FRIDAY

■ A number of Muslim-American groups are convening an "anti-terrorism" alliance. The 26-organization "Free Muslim Coalition Against Terrorism" will convene at a Washington-area hotel. Kamal Nawash, a Palestinian American and a Virginia Republican, is behind the effort. Nawash has said that one of the reasons he entered politics is to bring American Muslims and Arab Americans more into the mainstream.

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

Kerry: alliance with Israel 'nonnegotiable'

Democratic presidential candidate John Kerry said the U.S. alliance with Israel is "nonnegotiable."

The Massachusetts senator told an audience at Temple University that, as president, he would launch an effort to improve outreach to the Muslim world to help fight terror.

"Let it be clear that the issue here is advancing democracy in Arab nations, not yielding to pressure to undermine Israel, the only democracy in the Middle East," Kerry said last Friday.

"Our alliance with Israel, the survival and security of Israel, are nonnegotiable. The only solution is a Jewish state of Israel living side by side in security and peace with a democratic Palestinian state."

Kerry also cited Israel as a model for effective terrorist containment, saying he would use Israeli police searches for terrorists as a training model.

Powell presses Arafat on leaving

Colin Powell directly appealed to Yasser Arafat to cede power to the Palestinian prime minister.

An Arab journalist asked the U.S. secretary of state last Friday how long the Palestinians must suffer because of the deadlock in Israeli-Palestinian relations.

Powell blamed the Palestinian Authority president. "We need an empowered prime minister. Chairman Arafat, we do not believe, was the individual who could serve as a responsible interlocutor," he said.

"Chairman Arafat will not yield power and authority to that prime minister."

Powell put his plea in the form of a question to Arafat: "Mr. Chairman, how long can you wait? How long can you stay in this position, where the Palestinian people are suffering, where it's difficult to go forward toward the objectives of the road map, where it's difficult to achieve what you say is your dream of a state for the Palestinian people? And the whole international community is waiting to engage with you."

Goss sworn in

Porter Goss was sworn in as CIA director.

The Senate easily confirmed Goss, a Republican congressman from Florida, in a 77-17 vote Sept. 23, and he was sworn in at the White House last Friday.

As chairman of the House Intelligence Committee, Goss opposed the agency's deep involvement in Middle East peacemaking and was also an outspoken opponent of amnesty for convicted spy for Israel, Jonathan Pollard.

Sharon always talks Pollard

Ariel Sharon raises the case of Jonathan Pollard in each of his meetings with U.S. officials.

The Israeli prime minister told Israel Army Radio in a Yom Kippur-eve interview that "every effort needs to be made to gain his freedom, and we are making these efforts."

Pollard, formerly a U.S. Navy analyst, was sentenced to life in prison in 1986 for passing secrets to Israel.

The judge, under pressure from the Reagan administration, ignored the prosecution's recommendation of a lighter sentence, and since then, Israeli leaders have pressed his case.

"I have brought this issue up in all of my meetings in the United States and I have not missed one opportunity to solve this issue," Sharon said.

MIDDLE EAST

Kassams hit Sderot

Three Palestinian rockets hit the southern Israeli town of Sderot.

One of the Hamas-made rockets fired from the Gaza Strip on Sunday struck a home in the town but caused no serious casualties.

Four residents were treated for shock after the latest in almost daily rocket attacks on Sderot, which had raised calls for Israel to step up military sweeps in Gaza.

A radar system meant to give residents a 20-second warning of incoming rockets has so far failed to detect the low-flying Kassams.

Jerusalem synagogue defaced

The walls of a Jerusalem synagogue were defaced with graffiti.

Graffiti such as "The intifada will win — Sharon is a murderer" was found on the walls of Jerusalem's Great Synagogue late Friday night, the *Jerusalem Post* reported.

Because of Yom Kippur, nothing could be done to remove the graffiti. In a separate incident not far away, vandals spray-painted graffiti against Israeli officials in the Jerusalem neighborhood of Rehavia.

The latter incident is believed to be the work of those opposed to Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and parts of the West Bank.

WORLD

U.N. official: Barrier is a land grab

Israel's security barrier is a land grab, a U.N. human rights official said.

"There is no compelling evidence that suicide bombers could not have been as effectively prevented from entering Israel if the wall had been built along the Green Line — the accepted border between Israel and Palestine — or within the Israeli side of the Green Line," John Dugard said last Friday in a report to the U.N. General Assembly, using the term that describes Israel's pre-1967 borders.

"The course of the wall clearly indicates that its purpose is to incorporate as many settlers as possible into Israel."

Israel says the "Green Line" is based on a 1949 armistice agreement, and is not an internationally recognized border.

Dugard is a South African law professor who has been commissioned by the U.N. Commission on Human Rights to monitor the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

Agency wants nuclear-free Middle East

The U.N. atomic agency called for a nuclear-free Middle East.

Egypt proposed the resolution at the International Atomic Energy Agency, and it was accepted last Friday by consensus.

The agency is "concerned by the grave consequence, endangering peace and security, of the presence in the Middle East regions of nuclear activities not wholly devoted to peaceful purposes."

The resolution did not directly mention Israel, but it was clearly aimed at the Jewish state, which has a policy of "ambiguity" on its nuclear capacity and has not signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

Foreign scientists assess that Israel has up to 200 nuclear weapons.

The resolution was also probably directed at Iran which has threatened to quit the treaty, and which is believed to be developing a weapons program.