


IN THE NEWS
Abbas purges security chiefs

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas fired 20 of his security chiefs.

Among the more senior officers laid off Thursday were Fatah strongmen known as loyalists of the late Yasser Arafat.

The move followed a Hamas mortar barrage against Israeli targets in Gaza, endangering the truce Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon declared Tuesday.

"The Palestinian Authority will not tolerate any actions that will sabotage the agreement reached with Israelis on a mutual cease-fire," said Abbas' Cabinet secretary, Hassan Abu Libdeh.

Anti-Semitic attacks up in Britain

Violent anti-Semitic attacks in Britain rose dramatically in 2004, a British Jewish group said.

There were 83 assaults last year and 532 anti-Semitic incidents, according to the Community Security Trust, a group that monitors security for British Jews.

"The single most important thing is for our community to enlist others to join in the protest against the attacks," Britain's Orthodox chief rabbi, Jonathan Sacks, said in a statement, Reuters reported. "Jews must not be left to fight anti-Semitism alone."

Anti-Jewish plotter convicted of terror

A U.S. jury convicted a postal worker of urging the killing of Jews.

Ahmed Abdel Sattar was convicted Thursday in New York, along with civil rights lawyer Lynne Stewart and Arabic interpreter Mohamed Yousry, who were both found guilty of giving material support to terrorists.

The three carried messages between members of a terrorist organization and cleric Omar Abdel Rahman.

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WORLD REPORT

PUBLISHED WEEKDAYS BY JTA—THE GLOBAL NEWS SERVICE OF THE JEWISH PEOPLE • WWW.JTA.ORG



Pool/BP Images

U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice is welcomed by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon at the start of their Sunday meeting in Jerusalem.

Pro-Israel groups slow to react to new Bush push for Palestinians

By RON KAMPEAS

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Like any first-born confronted with the end of only-child status, the pro-Israel community in Washington is learning to deal with the Bush administration's new baby: a plan for a viable Palestinian state.

Many of Israel's friends on Capitol Hill maintained a sullen silence last week when Congress passed two resolutions essentially welcoming the prospect of Palestinian statehood, and when President Bush almost quintupled aid to the Palestinians in hopes of achieving that state.

NEWS ANALYSIS

Most conspicuous in its silence was the pro-Israel powerhouse, the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, which issued a tepid commendation of the resolutions — after the fact, and only when reporters asked.

"This is not in AIPAC's comfort zone," one senior House staffer said. "Many of us on the Hill think they lost here."

AIPAC officials say privately that the initiatives are par for the course and that there was little point in opposing them, given their origin in the White House. They would have preferred to wait a month or so to see if new Palestinian Author-

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■ *Delayed reactions from Jewish groups meet new Bush push*

Continued from page 1

ity President Mahmoud Abbas makes good on his pledge to stop terrorism and end anti-Israel incitement — but otherwise, the pro-Israel community is on board, they say.

It might not have a choice. Bush is making renewed talks between Israel and the Palestinians a centerpiece of his second-term foreign policy. As a result, the man who last year was lauded by many in the Jewish community as the most pro-Israel president in history is marching into uncharted territory, unabashedly advocating a Palestinian state.

"We are working to achieve new successes particularly in Arab-Israeli diplomacy," U.S. Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice said Tuesday in a keynote policy speech in Paris, where Bush hopes to repair alliances frayed by the Iraq war. "America and Europe both support a two-state solution — an independent and democratic Palestinian state living side by side in peace with the Jewish state of Israel."

Rice had just spent Monday meeting separately with Abbas and Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon; on Tuesday, the two declared their intention to end violence. They are each to meet separately with Bush at the White House in the spring.

To be sure, every time Bush or an aide mentions hope for a Palestinian state, it is conditioned on an end to terrorism and the introduction of democratic reforms, items Rice dutifully listed.

Rice also emphasized "the need for Israel to meet its own obligations and make the difficult choices before it," references

to Israel's pledge to withdraw from the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank.

Many pro-Israel groups, chief among them AIPAC, have become accustomed to extracting the best deal possible for Israel from Congress and the administration, and to encountering profound skepticism about the Palestinians.

That may have hobbled them last week, said Seymour Reich, new president of the Israel Policy Forum and a past chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations.

"I have no doubt that AIPAC's skepticism of Palestinian efforts in the past has been justified, but AIPAC, like others, has to take another look and give Mahmoud Abbas a chance to encourage him to stop terrorism and to be a full-fledged partner of Sharon," Reich said. "Things are moving fast. Jewish organizations have to catch up and begin to express support for the initiative."

AIPAC officials say they helped draft both resolutions.

Reich noted that Israel isn't exactly opposing the initiatives.

"If anyone needs a signal from Jerusalem, it's clear that Sharon is not unhappy with the steps the Palestinians have taken. Obviously they could do more, but it's a very good beginning," he said.

Americans for Peace Now, which enthusiastically endorsed the congressional resolutions and the proposal for \$350 million in aid to the Palestinians, said there is a new game in town.

"This is Bush driving the policy, having a Senate leadership that is willing to allow him to take the lead, and a White House that is capable of overcoming resistance in the House of Representatives, where many are far from supportive of the peace process," said Lewis Roth, APN's executive director. "Tremendous changes took place over a couple of days."

At least one group has pronounced itself loudly in opposition to the initiatives.

"We urge the Bush administration and Congress to stop this folly and stop the funding of the Palestinian Authority terrorist regime until they fulfill their 11-year-old obligations" from the Oslo peace accords, Morton Klein, president of the Zionist Organization of America, said in a statement.

"This is appeasement of the worst sort."

The slowness of the pro-Israel response was underscored by how the initiatives unfolded. Insiders say AIPAC did not even attempt to influence the Senate resolution, the product of both parties' leadership. Attempts by Israel's most ardent defenders in the House to moderate the language flopped, and it became more pro-Palestinian from draft to draft.

Bush's proposal to spend \$350 million similarly caught the community off guard.

There had been talk for weeks that Bush would seek to raise the annual \$75 million disbursement to the Palestinians to \$200 million. No one knew Bush would go as high as \$350 million until just hours before his State of the Union speech.

Furthermore, the State Department, which had frozen projects in Palestinian areas since the October 2003 killing of three Americans riding with a U.S. diplomatic convoy in the Gaza Strip, is dipping into about \$400 million in preapproved funds, even though the killing hasn't been solved.

About \$40 million of that money will go immediately to infrastructure and education projects. So will much of the \$350 million, though \$50 million of it is to be set aside for Israel to spend on high-tech transit stations between Israeli and Palestinian areas.

Much of the anxiety arises from how Bush plans to spend the rest. The State Department already has had to quash a report that Rice is raising money for pensions for "retired" terrorists.

The Conference of Presidents, whose leaders will be in Israel next week for their annual mission, said it would probe how the money is to be spent.

"We're going to look at that, at what measures Israel expects of the Palestinians," said Malcolm Hoenlein, the group's executive vice chairman.

AIPAC has yet to comment on the financial initiatives. The only Jewish organizations that have unabashedly backed the resolutions and the aid proposals have been those championing greater U.S. engagement in the region: Americans for Peace Now, the Israel Policy Forum and Brit Tzedek v'Shalom. ■

'This is not in AIPAC's comfort zone. Many of us on the Hill think they lost here.'
Senior Capitol Hill staffer

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JTA WORLD REPORT is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10061-5010. For more information about how to subscribe by e-mail, fax or regular mail, call (212) 643-1890, or visit our Web site at www.jta.org.
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Jewish community faces Google hate sites

By CHANAN TIGAY

NEW YORK (JTA) — Jewish officials are angered by the use of a Web site to create online hate communities, but they are taking different approaches on how to confront the issue.

Orkut.com is one of several social-networking services available on the Internet. Created and run by Google, it offers users the opportunity to join communities where topics of shared interest are discussed.

In addition to groups celebrating the rap artist Eminem, tequila or McDonald's, for example, some users have developed groups for people who share a distaste for particular races, ethnic groups or sexual orientations.

One such community, called the "Jewish Problem," asks users: "Why are Jews hated so much? Well here is the place to tell the people why. They own entire industries, the media, and even America itself. They have TOO much 'behind the scenes' influence and it needs to stop now."

The number of people who join the hate communities is relatively small. Whereas the Eminem group has 45,308 members, the Jewish Problem — whose logo is a stick figure throwing a Star of David into a trash can — has 14 members.

Brian Marcus, director of Internet monitoring for the Anti-Defamation League, said the organization plans to call Google about the Orkut hate communities. But he also said that singling out Google, the Internet's most popular search engine, when so much hate speech is available elsewhere on the Internet is not necessarily productive.

"Looking at the broad world of hate on the Internet, focusing on just this small section of it somewhat diminishes the impact of so many other large organized Web sites" supporting "hate groups and even terrorist groups that are using the Internet," Marcus said.

But David Harris, executive director of the American Jewish Committee, said such instances of hatred must be dealt with one by one. "What choice do we have?" asked Harris, whose group sent a letter to Google demanding that the company enforce its own terms of service, which forbid hate speech. "You do it retail; you can't do it wholesale."

Lauren Gelman, associate director of Stanford Law School's Center for Internet and Society, said that according to U.S. law,

Google would not be held accountable for the behavior of those who use its services. But both Harris and Marcus, like other Jewish officials interviewed for this story, urged the company to enforce its own rules about the proliferation of hate speech through its site.

For its part, Google says that when users violate its service terms "we take the necessary steps, which can include removing the content."

"There are instances when Orkut users misuse it, but it is a very, very small number compared to everyone who uses it," Google spokesman Steve Langdon said. "There's a certain amount of trust we have to place in the users, or it's not a saleable service."

Orkut users must be invited to join the site by another member.

Marc Stern, general counsel for the American Jewish Congress, said the Orkut case highlights the fact that the Internet has rendered old models of responding to hate speech obsolete.

In the past, responses were made "on the assumption that there wasn't a high distribution" of the hate speech "and that it was easily countered by other speech, by exposure," he said. "The trouble with this is that neither of those criteria continues to apply. It's not visible, it's not subject to exposure and it's not easy to counter with your own speech. And so that requires some rethinking."

Last year, after Web users discovered that the anti-Semitic site jewwatch.com showed up in the top position when they searched Google for the word "Jew," an online petition campaign was launched demanding that the company bump the site.

Though Google said it does not tamper with search results, it did post a disclaimer calling the site "disturbing" and explaining how it might have emerged in the top slot, where it remains.

Also in 2004, a French court ordered Yahoo, another Internet search engine, to "dissuade and render impossible" access to Nazi artifacts that had been put up for auction.

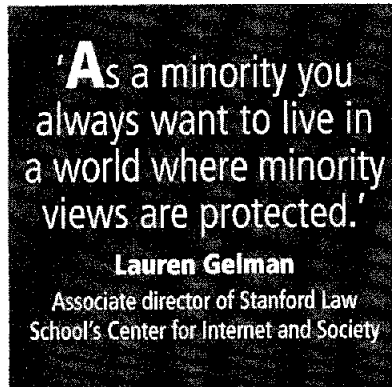
But the auction of such memorabilia is legal in the United States and raised the complex

issue of whether foreign countries whose laws differ from those in America can sue American-based Internet providers whose content is not limited by borders.

Reversing the decision of a lower court in the case, a U.S. Court of Appeals ruled that the U.S. District Court lacked jurisdiction in the matter, essentially leaving the larger issue unresolved.

For Stanford's Gelman, the Orkut issue comes down to protecting free speech. Even the expression of offensive sentiments is guaranteed in the Constitution, she said.

Hate speech is "more dispersed in that it comes into your house more easily" than in the past, "but that doesn't really change the legal principle," Gelman said. "I'm Jewish and I absolutely think that this is the appropriate way to address this. As a minority you always want to live in a world where minority views are protected."



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Jewish Problem

description: For Those of you who want to help keep America and the whole world beautiful by taking out the trash. We all know Jews are a problem and have been for thousands of years. But in an age of "political correctness" its hard to voice ones opinion without being attacked himself! People ask, "Why are Jews hated so much?" well here is the place to tell the people why. They own entire industries, the media, and even America itself. They have TOO much "behind the scenes" influence and it needs to stop now. Join this group and openly post your comments and questions or start up a discussion.

category: Government & Politics
owner: ESCOTTLEY_G
type: moderated
forum: anonymous
language: English
created: Monday, December 06, 2004
size: 14 members

Join
view forum
view events
invite friends
report as bogus

The 'Jewish Problem' discussion group is one of several on the Orkut Web site that have become a forum for anti-Jewish messages.

Yuschenko's win is a loss for Chabad rabbi

By WALTER RUBY

DNEPROPETROVSK, Ukraine (JTA) — Ukraine's elections were widely seen as a triumph for democracy. But the ascension of President Viktor Yuschenko — who officially took the post Sunday — leaves the man widely characterized as the most powerful Jew in Ukraine outside the circles of influence.

Still, few observers believe Rabbi Shmuel Kaminetzky, spiritual leader of the Jewish community of Dnepropetrovsk and one of the most influential political operators on the Ukrainian Jewish scene, will be in the political wilderness for long.

The Israeli-born and Brooklyn-bred Kaminetzky, 39, is a Chabad wunderkind who was dispatched in 1990 by the Lubavitcher rebbe as an emissary to the rebbe's hometown of Dnepropetrovsk, a heavily industrial city of about 1.5 million in what was once the industrial heartland of the Soviet Union.

Kaminetzky quickly set about building what many consider to be the most united and smoothest-functioning Jewish community in the former Soviet Union.

In a region where Jewish infighting is intense, most agree that Kaminetzky has been an effective bridge-builder.

Largely thanks to Kaminetzky's efforts, the Jewish Agency for Israel, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and the Dnepropetrovsk Jewish community all "work together here without the turf wars that are common in cities throughout the FSU," said Sophia Morovina, associate director at the Jewish Agency's local office.

The community boasts state-of-the-art facilities including a home for the aged, a teacher-training institute, a day school serving 600 students and extensive programs for orphans and children with disabilities.

It also offers a variety of services to both Jews and non-Jews in Dnepropetrovsk, including a network of soup kitchens and a gynecological clinic that tests women for cervical cancer.

Due in part to his political acumen and networking ability, and due also to the support he enjoys among a loyal set of new millionaires and "oligarchs" serving on the Board of Directors of the Jewish Community of Dnepropetrovsk, Kaminetzky gained access to top Ukrainian government officials that was unmatched among

the country's leading Jews.

Affording Kaminetzky direct access to the then-president of Ukraine, Leonid Kuchma, was the most powerful member of the Jewish community and the country's largest media mogul, Viktor Pinchuk. In the late 1990s, Pinchuk married Kuchma's daughter, Olena.

Kaminetzky frequently jetted to Israel with top Ukrainian government leaders, and his praise for Kuchma's successful efforts to prevent anti-Semitic violence in this traditionally anti-Semitic country helped Kuchma in his interactions with the United States and other Western countries.

But Kuchma's reign ended this January with the ascension of Yuschenko, who defeated Viktor Yanukovich in a third-round election after weeks of street protests in Kiev. Results of an earlier round in which Yanukovich claimed victory were thrown out after the country's Supreme Court ruled there had been massive fraud.

Pinchuk backed Yanukovich in both rounds of the election — meaning that Pinchuk's ally, Kaminetzky, now finds himself out of favor.

"I won't have the privilege anymore of going to Kiev for a cup of tea" with the president, Kaminetzky said a little wistfully. "The party is over for me. It was a nice friendship while it lasted."

But Kaminetzky, who lives in Dnepropetrovsk with his wife and seven children, is putting the best possible twist on the election results.

"Everyone is very happy and excited and hoping for change," he said in a recent telephone interview with JTA. "People in our city are now looking forward to the prospect of someday getting E.U. passports. We also are more hopeful that the ecological situation, which is very bad in Dnepropetrovsk, will begin to get better."

Kaminetzky acknowledged that the Jewish community of Dnepropetrovsk, which is located in a mainly Russian-speaking part of the country, voted for Yanukovich by a margin of about 60 percent to 40 percent.

An estimated 40,000 Jews live in the

city, with about 20,000 more in the outlying region.

Many Ukrainian Jews voted for Yanukovich out of fear that there may be anti-Semites in Yuschenko's camp. But Kaminetzky believes Yuschenko has done everything he can to make the country's Jews feel comfortable, including appearing at a Kiev synagogue during Chanukah.

"Yuschenko's movement does have a Ukrainian nationalist perspective, but that seems to me a case of feeling positive about being Ukrainian, rather than being against another people," Kaminetzky said.

'The party is over for me. It was a nice friendship while it lasted.'

Rabbi Shmuel Kaminetzky

**ACROSS
THE FORMER
SOVIET UNION**

In building the city's Jewish community, Kaminetzky has shown a talent for working with people whose level of Jewish observance is far less than his own, including a powerful community lay leadership headed by many of Dnepropetrovsk's leading industrial barons. An estimated 70 percent of the heavy industry in the region, including large steel mills and other giant plants, are Jewish-owned.

In addition, a range of international and Israel-based organizations, including the Jewish Agency and the JDC, have worked fruitfully together under Kaminetzky's aegis, providing a wide range of social services.

The Dnepropetrovsk community also has a longstanding relationship with the Jewish community of Boston, a politically liberal bastion that does not at first glance appear to be a logical fit for a community headed by a Chasidic rabbi.

Together the two communities have collaborated on several social service projects, including the home for the aged and the gynecological clinic.

According to Barry Shrage, president of Boston's Combined Jewish Philanthropies, "What Rabbi Kaminetzky has accomplished has been amazing. Our connection to Dnepropetrovsk has given hundreds of our people a chance to see and take part in a miracle — the rebirth of Jewish life out of nothing."

Shrage acknowledged that the two communities were unlikely allies.

"Yes, we disagree on some issues, but we have been able to join forces for the good of

the Jewish people. This isn't about politics but about serving people in need," he said.

Among the businessmen active in the Dnepropetrovsk community is Yevgeny Zeldis, who was born there in 1955 and today runs a construction company.

Zeldis, who first got involved in Jewish life in the 1990s when he decided to send his two children to the Jewish community day school, says his growing involvement with the community leadership has changed him.

"I am no more of a believer in God than I was a decade ago, but I am certainly more informed and educated as a Jew," he said.

Businessman Edward Sartan said Kaminetzky plays another sensitive but necessary role — reconciling clashing business interests that otherwise might settle their differences in a less civilized fashion.

"We have had situations where our Jewish businessmen are fighting each other over a factory and they come to Reb Shm-

uel, who is friends to both of them, and he works out an agreement to reconcile them," Sartan said, referring to Kaminetzky. "There is no Beit Din; he is the one who decides in such cases."

But not everyone in the community is pleased. Some say there is a certain Soviet-style feeling to Chabad's dominance of Jewish life here, with a photo of the late Lubavitcher rebbe in almost every room of community-run institutions.

Vladimir Levy, a leader of the Reform movement in the nearby city of Zaporozhe, said efforts several years ago to create a Reform congregation in Dnepropetrovsk failed because Kaminetzky used his influence with top officials, including the then-governor of Dnepropetrovsk province, to make sure the Reform group didn't receive required authorizations.

Kaminetzky acknowledges that he wasn't happy about the prospect of the Reform group operating in his city but

denies interceding with the authorities. The Reform group may have given up after realizing that the city's secular Jews, their natural constituency, preferred a united community to a fractious one, he said.

Kaminetzky dismisses the contention that Chabad plays an outsized role today not only in Dnepropetrovsk but throughout the Jewish communities of Russia, Ukraine and the rest of the former Soviet Union.

"Look, it should be clear that Chabad has no hidden agenda to dominate Jewish life or to take over anything," he said. "But we do get offended when people look at us as some kind of cult. Chabad is the Jewish people and works on behalf of the Jewish people. It's as simple as that." ■

(This article was made possible, in part, by support from the Charles and Lynn Schusterman Family Foundation, the Joseph and Harvey Meyerhoff Family Charitable Funds and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.)

Russian Jews react to upsurge of public hate

By LEV KRICHEVSKY

MOSCOW (JTA) — Russian Jews are calling for action after 20 politicians signed a letter to the country's prosecutor general asking him to ban Jewish organizations in the country as extremist.

The leadership of the Euro-Asian Jewish Congress, along with the European Jewish Congress and the Conference of European Rabbis, will raise the issue with members of the European Parliament, said Mikhail Chlenov, the Euro-Asian group's secretary-general.

Jewish groups may ask European legislators to blacklist the Russian lawmakers who signed the anti-Semitic letter.

Russian Jewish groups also may file a lawsuit against the lawmakers who signed the letter, which was condemned in a vote in the Russian Parliament late last week.

The steps being taken by Russian Jewish groups come as officials and individuals in the community consider how to react to what appears to be a revival of anti-Semitism, as exemplified by the letter and by public reaction to a televised debate that involved one of Russia's leading anti-Semites.

More than half of the viewers who called the NTV channel Feb. 3 during a prime-time debate on one of the country's most popular talk shows supported the Communist lawmaker Albert Makashov over former Soviet cosmonaut Alexei Leonov.

Makashov, a retired army general with a history of making anti-Semitic statements, was among the lawmakers who signed the letter that generated headlines in Russia and around the world late last month.

Leonov, the first man to walk in outer space in 1965 and the commander of the Soyuz spaceship crew in 1975 during the joint

Apollo-Soyuz flight, is not Jewish but was picked by TV producers to challenge Makashov over his anti-Semitism.

Throughout the broadcast, Makashov made anti-Semitic statements against Jewish oligarchs who, he claimed, had robbed Russia of its wealth and exert complete control over its economy.

On air, the president of the Russian Jewish Congress accused Makashov of violating Russian legislation that makes hate speech a criminal offense.

The judges on the "K Baryeru" program — a popular TV host, an actress, a poet and former NHL hockey player Sergei Makarov — gave the nod to Leonov, who spoke against anti-Semitism and xenophobia.

But the audience thought differently: Over 53,000 of some 100,000 call-in votes went to Makashov, whom the viewers found more convincing than Leonov.

The results of the vote gave many Russian Jews the shivers.

Vladimir Solovyev, the show's host and himself a Jew, said support for Makashov could mean that for Russia the year now is "1904, the eve of Jewish pogroms of 1905, or it is Germany of 1932?"

Semyon Belenkiy, 68, a pensioner, said immediately after the broadcast that the international community should unite around the goal of saving Russian Jews and should help "every single Jew emigrate from this anti-Semitic country."

One Russian Jewish journalist called on President Vladimir Putin to break his silence about the show.

"This show is a signal to the Jews, including those who had never thought about leaving their native country. It's time to take our kids out of here," Tankred Golenpolsky, founder of the International Jewish Gazette, Russia's oldest Jewish periodical, wrote to Putin in a letter circulated Tuesday. ■

ACROSS
THE FORMER
SOVIET UNION

'Israel Apartheid Week' draws ink, not bodies

By BILL GLADSTONE

TORONTO (JTA) — A controversial series of Israel-bashing lectures at the University of Toronto may not have attracted many people, but it did manage to attract widespread media coverage that included a tickertape headline on CNN.

Sponsored by the university's Arab Student Collective, "Israel Apartheid Week" was "a cheap, misleading propaganda exercise detached from reality," Israeli Ambassador Alan Baker said.

Still, it may have accomplished its aim.

The lecture series "has taken the words 'Israel Apartheid' and projected them into the mainstream media," lamented Tilly Shames, director of Israel Affairs for Hillel of Greater Toronto. "The Arab Student Collective has seen this as a successful achievement."

The collective launched the five-day lecture series by building an outdoor mock refugee camp, but the dozen or so participants were outnumbered by about 20 Jewish and pro-Israel students who distributed fact sheets about apartheid and positive material about Israel.

"It made me uncomfortable because the students seemed unwilling to dialogue with anyone who disagreed with their viewpoint," said Lauren Parl, a fourth-year sociology student. "It was very frustrating for us because we attempted to talk to them and they said, 'We're not willing to talk to you unless you recognize Israeli state terrorism.' It didn't make for a comfortable

atmosphere," she said.

Each of the five lectures during the week was premised on the notion that Israel is an apartheid or racist state. All were free and open to the public.

Josh Lieblein, a third-year life sciences student, said participants in the anti-Israel lectures made a concerted attempt to link Israel with the system of racial separation that once prevailed in South Africa.

"One speaker said, 'Every time we say Israel, we must say apartheid right after,'" Lieblein said. "That's a direct quote."

The first four lectures were delivered by representatives of the International Solidarity Movement, Solidarity for Palestinian Human Rights and other pro-Palestinian groups. The fifth, on divestment and apartheid, was by Ilan Pappé, an anti-Zionist Israeli academic from the University of Haifa.

The lectures each drew about 100 people, about one-third of whom were pro-Israel students seeking to counterbalance the content. A few shouting matches occurred, but student council and university officials were on hand to ensure that they didn't grow into more serious confrontations.

The provocative lecture series apparently was timed to coincide with Hillel's 20th annual IsraelFest, a 10-day cross-campus celebration of Israeli arts and culture featuring a range of events, including a concert by Israeli musician Idan Reichel that drew 800 people. And more than 200 students showed up for Shabbat dinner.

The university received many requests to stop the anti-Israel lecture series, including one from B'nai Brith Canada, but Hillel, which is a constituent member of the Canadian Jewish Congress, did not request a cancellation.

"We do recognize the importance of upholding freedom of speech on campus for all groups," Shames said. "While we disagree with the title, the tone and the objectives of Israel Apartheid Week, we felt we could not ask for speech to be banned from this campus before hearing what was said."

However, Frank Dimant, national executive vice-president of B'nai Brith Canada, said the university "was helping to create the building blocks of anti-Semitism in Canada and certainly in the

world of academia" by allowing the events to proceed.

Fearful of the possibility of either hate speech or violence, B'nai Brith had urged the university to step up police presence at the venue, and university campus police were in attendance.

"When one considers the tens of millions of dollars that Jewish donors have poured into the University of Toronto, who now find their children and grandchildren marginalized on campus, it's a real insult to the people who helped to build the university," Dimant said.

"Is the University of Toronto hosting a free and scholarly exchange of ideas, or a racist rally masquerading as an academic conference?" asked Alistair Gordon, spokesman for the Canadian Coalition for Democracies, which had requested that the event be cancelled.

During the week, university provost David Farrar received hundreds of e-mails about whether to allow the lecture series to continue. "The university is committed to the principles of free speech and, as such, permitted the student group to proceed," he said. "The views may be repugnant to some, but they do not constitute hate."

Hillel director Zac Kaye and other Jewish officials gave the university high marks for its response to Jewish students' concerns.

"Our abiding concern was that Jewish students would not be intimidated and students in general could go about their business and there would not be a confrontation," he said. ■

Is the University of Toronto hosting a free and scholarly exchange of ideas, or a racist rally masquerading as an academic conference?

Alistair Gordon

Canadian Coalition for Democracies



Ellan Tsekman

A protester holds a sign advocating for the boycott of Israel, in Toronto Feb. 4, during an 'Israel Apartheid Week' lecture series at the University of Toronto.

ARTS & CULTURE

Football pioneer Friedman voted in Hall of Fame

By PETER EPHROSS

NEW YORK (JTA) — Benny Friedman has been elected to the Pro Football Hall of Fame, perhaps with a little bit of help from his former players at Brandeis University.

When Friedman, a Jewish quarterback who was a pioneer in developing the forward pass, was elected to football's shrine over the weekend, it came after several years of effort by those who knew Friedman as a coach at Brandeis from 1951 to 1959.

That effort was based not just on what Friedman achieved in building a short-lived football program at Brandeis — he was the school's first athletic director and its only football coach — but also on what he contributed to his players' lives.

Last fall, Friedman was named as one of the 15 people eligible to be voted into the hall this year.

Headed by former team manager Bob Weintraub, the group of Brandeis grads sprang into action. Brandeis President Jehuda Reinharz wrote a separate letter to the Hall of Fame selectors, pushing for Friedman's selection.

They had a lot of accomplishments to promote. Though the Brandeis alumni knew Friedman as a coach, he made his mark as a player by introducing the forward pass as a legitimate weapon.

Friedman first starred for the University of Michigan, where in 1926 he became the first Jew to captain the football team.

He is believed to have led the NFL in touchdown passes during the years he played, 1927-1933, though statistics for the period are spotty.

A sportswriter for the New York Daily News, Paul Gallico, once wrote that Friedman was the "greatest football player in the world." He was named to the National Football League's All-Time team in 1951.

Friedman died in 1982. ■

Kosher meat supply is low

By CHANAN TIGAY

NEW YORK (JTA) — Five hunks of Hebrew National salami lie side by side in a glass display case at Ben's Kosher Delicatessen in midtown Manhattan.

Cordoned off in a corner of the case, they don't look like much — especially when compared with the crispy corn

dogs and enormous latkes. But the guy managing the restaurant's takeout counter is relieved that he has any salami to sell at all.

For the last several months, a shortage of Hebrew National products has hit kosher restaurants and food distributors across North America, forcing some, including Ben's, to fill the gap with other meat products.

"We had to replace it with inferior product," the man says, asking that his name not be used.

And the inferior product led to inferior sales, he says: As the shortage dragged on, Ben's, which operates several restaurants in New York and Florida, lost money from customers unwilling to pay for anything but the venerable brand that "answers to a higher authority," as the famous advertisement put it.

The shortage comes at what should be a time of celebration, as Hebrew National, which was founded on Manhattan's Lower East Side, celebrates its 100th birthday.

"At this point, we've been working very hard to increase production," says Julie DeYoung, a spokeswoman for ConAgra Foods Inc., the Omaha-based food giant that bought Hebrew National in 1993. "We are for the most part filling orders on the most popular products. For the minor products, there will continue to be some shortages for a period of time." ■

The most popular products, DeYoung says, are the outfit's extensive line of hot dogs — Hebrew National's Web site lists half a dozen different varieties of beef franks alone. Products still experiencing shortages, she says, include such pack-

aged lunch meats as turkey and salami.

Hebrew National has seen "several-digit growth" in demand for its hot dogs in recent years, DeYoung says.

"Demand is outstripping the current supply," she says. "We have built a new manufacturing facility" in Quincy, Mich., "to allow us to increase production to be able to fully meet demand."

Getting the new factory up to speed — what DeYoung calls a "ramp-up process that takes time" — has contributed to the shortage.

Demand is strongest on the East Coast, she says, though demand on the West Coast is picking up. And as super retailers like Costco begin stocking

Hebrew National products, DeYoung says, the company is becoming, as its name suggests, national.

Overall, kosher products have experienced growing popularity in recent years, fueled in part by the belief that kosher products are healthier. ■

Rabbi Menachem Genack, the rabbinic administrator of the Orthodox Union's kashrut division, says the increase may not have to do with an increasing number of people keeping kosher.

"In terms of the general Jewish population, there is a precipitous demographic decline of our population, so in that respect there are less kosher consumers," Genack says.

But Muslims who maintain halal diets, for example, can eat kosher meat. And people who are lactose intolerant often look for the pareve label, indicating that no dairy was used in making a particular product.

"The segment of the market that thinks kosher is an added value — that may be growing and that may be reflected in Hebrew National's numbers," Genack added.

But for the man behind the counter at Ben's, the reasons for Hebrew National's success are much simpler.

"You can't beat their hot dogs," he says. ■

The segment of the market that thinks kosher is an added value — that may be growing and that may be reflected in Hebrew National's numbers.'

Rabbi Menachem Genack
Orthodox Union kashrut division

NEWS IN BRIEF

MIDDLE EAST

Sharon: More prisoners may be freed

Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon said he may be prepared to release more Palestinians jailed for deadly attacks.

If Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip this summer goes smoothly, more prisoners who have killed Israelis will go free as a goodwill gesture to Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas, Sharon told Ha'aretz on Thursday.

He said he made the promise to Abbas at Tuesday's summit in Sharm el-Sheik, where the two leaders declared a cease-fire.

The prisoner issue is a potential deal-breaker for Abbas, Sharon said.

Israel plans to release 900 Palestinian prisoners in the coming days, including three jailed for murderous terror attacks in the 1970s and 1980s. Abbas has demanded amnesty for all 8,000 Palestinians held in Israeli prisons.

Security chief named

Israel named a replacement for outgoing Shin Bet director Avi Dichter.

Yuval Diskin, a 27-year veteran of the domestic security service with extensive experience in fighting Palestinian terror, will take over from Dichter when he retires in May, the Prime Minister's Office said Thursday.

Diskin, 49, was chosen over Dichter's deputy, who now plans to resign.

Old Shin Bet hands describe Diskin as charismatic and capable of thinking in strategic terms.

Israeli pundits speculate that Dichter will enter politics when he steps down from the security service.

Intifada victim vindicated

Israel's Supreme Court backed a Palestinian seeking compensation for injuries sustained during a confrontation with Israeli troops.

Azzam Daher was struck by an Israeli rubber bullet and paralyzed in the West Bank city of Jenin in 1993, during the first intifada.

His original lawsuit, claiming that the officer who shot him used excessive force, was thrown out by Jerusalem District Court.

But on Thursday, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of Daher's demand for compensation.

The case has returned to the lower court, with instructions to award Daher damages, which will be paid by the state.

Yad Vashem upset by revived myth

Israel's Holocaust memorial called the discovery of a bar of soap said to be made out of Jews killed in the Holocaust a myth.

Officials at Yad Vashem called an Israel Radio report on the subject a "pure invention that was given a stage by the media."

Israel Radio said members of the Romanian Jewish community believe the soap that was found in a funeral home was made from Jewish bodies.

Historians believe the Nazis did not make soap out of human corpses, despite long-held beliefs.

NORTH AMERICA

Lantos to link U.S., Arab aid

A high-ranking Democrat will introduce legislation to make U.S. assistance to the Palestinians conditional on Arab aid to the Palestinians.

"The Gulf Arabs, not the American taxpayer, should be leading the way to help the Palestinians," Rep. Tom Lantos (D-Calif.) said Thursday at a meeting of the House of Representatives International

Relations Committee, where he is the ranking member.

Lantos referred specifically to President Bush's request this week to Congress to approve \$350 million in assistance to the Palestinians.

Arab states that have enjoyed a windfall from rising gasoline prices have yet to make good on \$400 million they pledged to the Palestinians in 2002, Lantos said.

Talmud presented to Library of Congress

A 73-volume version of the Talmud, translated into English by American Jews, was presented to the Library of Congress.

The library received the Schottenstein version of the Talmud, which also has commentary in English, on Wednesday in a presentation in Washington, attended by several dozen legislators.

The new translation, produced by ArtsScroll, took 15 years to complete and cost more than \$23 million.

The event helped mark the 350th anniversary of Jews in the United States.

U.S. to fund Palestinian news show

A U.S. grant will fund a newsmagazine program on Palestinian TV.

The \$675,000 grant, through the State Department's Middle East Partnership Initiative, will appear biweekly on 11 independent Palestinian networks and will "focus on peaceful political participation, social responsibility, and gender equality," the department said Thursday in a statement.

It will be administered through Search for Common Ground, a nonprofit group.

The Middle East Partnership Initiative supports Middle East reform.

WORLD

Jewish Agency gives same-sex benefits

For the first time, the Jewish Agency for Israel gave full benefits to an employee's lesbian partner.

A female emissary in the United Kingdom received full benefits for her partner of three years.

The partner will receive full insurance coverage, and the couple will receive a higher housing and moving allowance than a single emissary receives.

The emissary is open about her identity in her position.

Survivor cancels event in German city

A Jewish author refused to speak in a German city on the same day as a neo-Nazi march.

Holocaust survivor Ruth Klager, 74, who was to speak in Dresden's main theater on Sunday, the anniversary of the Allied bombing of the city, has withdrawn after learning of a planned demonstration by supporters of the National Democratic Party on that day.

In a letter to the theater, Klager — who was born in Vienna and survived Theresienstadt, Auschwitz and a labor camp — said that to deliver her talk on Victor Klemperer's "Life as German and Jew" would become a mockery if at the same time "thousands of anti-Jewish party supporters are demonstrating on the street."

Ex-Argentine president denounced in bombing

The Argentine government denounced the country's former president for his role in hindering the probe into the bombing of a Jewish center.

Argentina's Special Investigation Unit issued its ruling Wednesday, saying Carlos Menem tried to guarantee that Iranian links to the 1994 attack on the AMIA Jewish center in Buenos Aires not be investigated. Eighty-five people died in the bombing.