


IN THE NEWS
House rejects settlement monitoring

The U.S. House of Representatives' most powerful committee rejected an amendment that would have required oversight of Israel's settlement building.

Rep. David Obey (D-Wis.), the ranking member on the House Appropriations Committee, proposed attaching an amendment to the foreign operations bill, which includes \$2.8 billion in assistance to Israel, that would have required the secretary of state to report within six months on Israel's settlement activities.

'Quartet' wants restrictions eased

The "Quartet" of international peace mediators urged Israel to ease restrictions on Palestinian travel.

Representatives of the United States, United Nations, European Union and Russia, on the sidelines of a G8 ministers' meeting Thursday in London, called on Jerusalem "to take immediate steps, without endangering Israeli security," to "facilitate rehabilitation and reconstruction by easing the flow of goods and people in and out of Gaza and the West Bank and between them."

Israeli officials responded by noting that several military checkpoints in the territories have been removed, and many travel permits issued to Palestinians, in light of the recent improvements in the security situation.

The Quartet also said Israel and the Palestinian Authority should cooperate closely on the upcoming Israeli withdrawal.

Conservative leader in Israel loses his job

The president of the Conservative movement in Israel was fired. Rabbi Ehud Bandel was dismissed earlier this week due to a lack of funds in the financially troubled Masorti movement, the Jerusalem Post reported.

Several other administrative employees were let go as well.

■ **MORE NEWS, Pg. 8**

WORLD REPORT

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

As Conservatives plan future, choice of successor to Schorsch is critical

By CHANAN TIGAY

NEW YORK (JTA) — It has become axiomatic in certain circles to say that the Conservative movement is at a crossroads as it considers its future.

With the announcement last week of the upcoming retirement of Rabbi Ismar Schorsch, longtime chancellor of the movement's flagship Jewish Theological Seminary, elements of that future are now slightly less clear, and may hinge in large part on who is selected to succeed Schorsch.

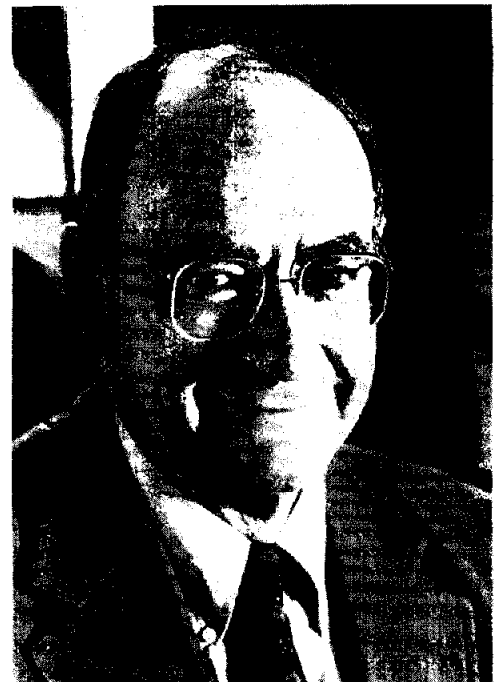
"I think it's a turning point," said Rabbi Neil Cooper, spiritual leader of Temple Beth Hillel-Beth El in suburban Philadelphia. "I think that when the chancellor took over 20 years ago, the challenges facing the seminary and the movement were very different."

Roundly praised for bolstering what he calls "serious Jewish education" among Conservative Jews, Schorsch is retiring at a time of uncertainty for the movement as a whole.

During his tenure, the number of Conservative day-school students jumped, as did the number of students at JTS itself, and the seminary established a large graduate school for Jewish education.

Yet insiders say the movement today is in the throes of an identity crisis, facing dwindling numbers of Americans identifying as Conservative, internal debate over the place of gays and non-Jewish spouses in the fold and difficulties speaking in a unified voice. How the movement resolves such contentious issues will be significantly influenced by the next chancellor.

It seems clear that those charged with choosing a new chancellor would be well aware of candidates' stands on these issues,



Jewish Theological Seminary

Rabbi Ismar Schorsch.

and that their selection could be a bellwether for the future direction of the movement.

"I think that the next chancellor is probably going to be addressing those issues more directly," Cooper said. "All of those kinds of things are pulling at us."

In a June 15 letter to the JTS community and supporters, Schorsch said he would step down officially on June 30, 2006, some 20 years after taking the reins.

"I do so with more than a tinge of sadness, because throughout my tenure, I have found my work deeply fulfilling," wrote Schorsch, who will be 70 when he retires. "But I decided

Continued on page 2

**BEHIND
THE
HEADLINES**

■ *The Conservative movement has to replace one of its most influential leaders*

Continued from page 1

long ago to step down while still in top form.”

Under Schorsch's watch, the movement's camping and day-school arms have grown, with 25,000 students now attending Conservative Schechter Schools and an additional 25,000 Conservative students in community day schools — nondenominational Jewish academies. Conservative students, JTS says, now comprise 25 percent of the national day-school population.

The JTS student body also has grown, jumping from 500 students in 1994 to 700 today. The school's faculty has increased from 90 members in 1994 to 120 today.

In 1996 JTS established the William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education, which the seminary says is the largest school of its kind in the country. Schorsch further has worked to bolster the Conservative movement's affiliates in Russia, Argentina and Israel.

He also has raised \$500 million in annual campaign dollars and over \$265 million in the school's capital campaign that ended in 2004 alone.

Under Schorsch, “we consistently have strong annual campaigns, a balanced budget and effective financial management,” a seminary spokeswoman said in an e-mail.

That's despite news reports that emerged in December indicating that JTS was in debt and was selling off buildings and instituting a hiring freeze to cover loans. JTS denies it froze hires, and continues to maintain that its financial position is strong.

As JTS' vice chancellor for institu-

tional advancement, Rabbi Carol Davidson often is on the road with Schorsch, raising money for the school. Although he is 20 years her elder, she said, when she's tuckered out after a day of strenuous fund raising, Schorsch still has the strength to debrief and analyze the day's events.

That's indicative not only of his “boundless energy,” but also of his “laser vision about just how important serious support of the institution is,” she said.

Since its inception, the Conservative movement has walked a fine line between adhering to halachah, or Jewish law, and embracing modernity and a modern approach to religious observance. Schorsch, for his part, often has come down on the side of tradition, a stance that has not been without controversy.

“It's much easier to join a movement that doesn't have norms,” he said in a recent interview. “The challenge of Conservative Judaism is to be in and of the world without surrendering the importance of norms and boundaries.”

Among these boundaries is the movement's policy precluding the ordination of openly gay rabbis and against allowing its rabbis to officiate at same-sex weddings. Some have said privately that it was unlikely these policies would be changed as long as Schorsch was at the seminary's helm.

Schorsch, for his part, dismisses the argument.

“I don't exaggerate my influence,” he said. “I think I've been a voice. I'm not sure I've been a determinative voice. The debate will continue.”

In March, the Committee on Jewish Law and Standards of the movement's rabbinic arm will meet to examine several teshuvot, or responsa, on the place of homosexuality in the Conservative movement. Those with knowledge of the committee's workings say it could pass teshuvot both in favor of and opposing an easing of the movement's restrictions on homosexuality.

A teshuva that garners the votes of one-quarter of the committee's members is considered an official, halachically tenable opinion, even if another responsa gets a majority of the votes.

In such a case, they say, the new chancel-

lor will play a significant role in determining which teshuva to rally around and, by extension, how the movement approaches the issue in the future.

The role of women in the rabbinate may be another area in which a new chancellor could make strides, observers say. Conservative women rabbis are paid less than their male counterparts, occupy fewer senior positions and are more likely to be unmarried, according to a movement survey.

A new JTS head could work to ensure that those arenas that are supposed to be egalitarian “are truly egalitarian,” said Rabbi Bradley Shavit Artson, dean of the Ziegler School of Rabbinic Studies at the University of Judaism in Los Angeles — and could work to move gender issues into the public eye.

“I think that the new chancellor can continue to work on issues of halachic pluralism,” he added.

Conservative leaders say Schorsch's commitment to educating Conservative Jews has borne fruit.

“What Schorsch has done incredibly well is build the seminary into a first-rate academic institution,” said Rabbi Elliot Dorff, a professor at the University of Judaism, the Conservative movement's other main seminary.

Compared to his student days at the seminary in the 1960s, Dorff — who was a visiting teacher at the seminary in 1999-2000 — said JTS is “a better place to learn and teach, both for students and faculty,” something he called an “incredible achievement.”

“I think a new chancellor would hopefully build on that base academically, but may also be able to help to coordinate the arms of the movement more effectively,” he said. “One of the things we have lacked is some kind of a structure for the movement to speak as a movement. That, at least, has not happened to this point, although there have been attempts. It was not that Chancellor Schorsch didn't try.”

Schorsch for his part, said he doesn't envision a lame-duck year as he prepares to step aside. He hopes to raise “more money than ever” this year, and to continue pushing “the agendas I've been pushing.”

Above all, he said, “I'd just like to bring the plane in for a safe landing.”

Schorsch has often come down on the side of tradition.

JTA WORLD REPORT

Howard E. Friedman
President

Mark J. Joffe
Executive Editor and Publisher

Lisa Hostein
Editor

Michael S. Arnold
Managing Editor

Lenore A. Silverstein
Finance and Administration Director

Noa Artzi-Weill
Marketing Director

JTA WORLD REPORT is published five days a week, except holidays, by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Inc., 330 Seventh Ave., New York, N.Y. 10001-5010. 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.
© JTA. Reproduction only with permission.

Holocaust museum traces the history of a lie

By AVI MAYER

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Arthur Berger remembers hosting a group of foreign clerics in New York in the mid-1990s when his then employer, the American Jewish Committee, had been asked by the State Department to help convey to the guests the American ethos of tolerance and mutual understanding.

So it was a bit of a shock when one of the visitors, a Muslim cleric from the Middle East, mentioned over lunch that he had picked up an “incredible book about the Jews” at the Cairo Book Fair: “The Protocols of the Elders of Zion.”

Berger now is director of communications at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, which is currently hosting “Anti-Semitism: Protocols of the Elders of Zion,” an exhibition on one of the most notorious forgeries in history.

The modest exhibit includes copies of the book that Hitler looked to for inspiration and Henry Ford disseminated for general consumption.

Berger said that the book seems to have a “new life.”

“It confounds people,” he said. “I can’t explain it.”

The Protocols outline a plan for world domination supposedly compiled by a gathering of Jewish leaders held during the First Zionist Conference in 1897. In the account, the characters lay out a step-by-step strategy to fool gentiles — referred to as “goyim” — into doing their bidding.

Plans range from the replacement of the pope to the establishment of a global Jewish government and the appointment of a “king of the Jews.”

The exhibit includes copies of the Protocols from Finland (1924), India (1974) and Japan (2004). The 20 covers are adorned by classic anti-Semitic images, including representations of globes trapped in the clutches of massive “Jewish” snakes, arachnids, tentacled, squid-like creatures and conniving, hook-nosed faces.

A German-language copy from 1920 Berlin looks remarkably like a Jewish prayer book or an early Zionist manual, complete with a blue-and-white Star of David flag and golden type reading, “All Israel are responsible for one another” in Hebrew.

The language that appears most promi-

nently among the artifacts is Arabic, with numerous issues from Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

Last year, Wal-Mart was found to be selling an English-language edition of the Protocols on its Web site. The company made a “business decision” to remove the book from the site after widespread criticism.

According to Kenneth Jacobson, associate national director of the Anti-Defamation League, the persistence of the phenomenon is simple: The Protocols satisfy virtually every manifestation of contemporary anti-Semitism.

From Holocaust denial to conspiracy theories surrounding Sept. 11 and the Iraq war, the themes present in the Protocols permeate modern Jew hatred.

“The Protocols are representative of the pernicious and insidious nature of anti-Semitism,” he said. “They portray the Jews as secretive, conspiratorial, alien, all-powerful.”

Of particular note is the resurgence of those themes in bookstores and television screens around the Islamic world, Jacobson said.

“The Protocols never died,” Jacobson said. “They’ve never gone away. They’re at the core of historic anti-Semitism.”

Though the origins of the Protocols remain uncertain, scholars believe much of the work was plagiarized from an 1864 pamphlet written by French satirist Maurice Joly lampooning Napoleon III’s political ambitions, and had nothing to do with the Jews.

Hermann Goedsche, a German spy, swiped Joly’s pamphlet and excerpts from a novel by Alexandre Dumas in his book “Biarritz,” written under a pseudonym.

In a chapter entitled “The Jewish Cemetery in Prague and the Council of Representatives of the Twelve Tribes of Israel,” Goedsche depicted a secret rabbinical council which met in the cemetery at midnight every 100 years to plan the agenda for the Jewish conspiracy.

The book was translated into Russian

in 1872. In 1891, the Czarist secret police were using it to incite popular ire against Russia’s Jewish population and divert public attention from the country’s political woes.

The work appeared in its final form and under the title “The Protocols of the Learned Elders of Zion” in 1897, apparently compiled by Mathieu Golovinski, an associate of Czar Nicholas II.

The Protocols first reached American shores in 1917 when

Russian emigre Boris Brazil translated them into English.

In 1920, industrialist Henry Ford sponsored the printing of 500,000 copies of the work and included excerpts of the Protocols in his weekly Dearborn Independent through 1927. The Holocaust Museum exhibit includes a copy of Ford’s own diatribe, “The International Jew.”

British diplomat Lucien Wolf — who in 1917 had strongly supported the issuance of the Balfour Declaration, the document pledging British support for a Jewish homeland in the land of Israel — traced the Protocols back to Goedsche’s writings, and published his findings in London in 1921.

Later that year, The Times of London ran a series of articles proving that the work was a forgery, and American Herman Bernstein authored a book documenting its history.

By 1924, however, the Protocols had been translated into German and found their way to Hitler’s prison cell. Taken by the book, Hitler referred to it in “Mein Kampf.”

“To what an extent the whole existence of this people is based on a continuous lie is shown incomparably by the ‘Protocols of the Elders of Zion,’ so infinitely hated by the Jews,” he wrote. “Once this book has become the common property of a people, the Jewish menace may be considered as broken.”

The Holocaust Museum collection contains a copy of the first edition of the Protocols published in Nazi Germany in 1933.

The collection is on display through the end of the year. ■

An anti-Semitic
forgery has
a ‘new life.’

Arthur Berger
United States Holocaust
Memorial Museum

ARTS
&
CULTURE

JDC helps tsunami care-givers help themselves

By GUY SHARETT

PHUKET, Thailand (JTA) — Juree Worawit wasn't hurt in last winter's Southeast Asian tsunami, but that doesn't stop her from envisioning worst-case scenarios as she relives the moment in her mind.

"We're still thinking, 'What if the tsunami had hit on a Monday?'" says Worawit, a kindergarten teacher from a navy base in Phang Nga in southern Thailand, where teams are still looking for bodies from the Dec. 26 disaster.

"Although it happened on a Sunday and the kids were safe, we still feel guilty, just by thinking 'what if,'" she says. "The other teachers and I often speak about what we're going to do if it happens again: Who would grab which kid and to which direction we would run."

Worawit was among 80 participants in one of several five-day seminars organized by the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee in Thailand earlier this month. Half a year after the tsunami killed at least 165,000 people — including 5,400 from Thailand — the survivors still relive the horrific hours that changed their lives.

But the workshop Worawit attended in a Phuket hotel wasn't only for survivors: The majority were aid-givers, people who gave psychological assistance to survivors

— even without training — and who might need to do it again.

Three Israelis — one a trauma expert, the second an art therapist and the third a medical doctor who focuses on body-mind connections — came to give the helpers and survivors the tools to support people dealing with trauma.

Worawit's "reaction is a typical post-traumatic one. It's called 'Near Miss': The mind of a person that was in the second and third circle of vulnerability digests the 'what if' as if it actually happened to him," explains Ofra Ayalon, a trauma psychologist who has worked with terror victims in Israel, after the Balkan wars and in Japan and Turkey after earthquakes. "Our model is multicultural, and I have to say that the trauma is very similar anywhere."

"The fact the participants are Thai and we're Israeli — they're Muslim or Buddhist and we're Jewish — means only that some cultural adaptations are needed, but other than that, we speak exactly the same language," says one of the instructors, Dr. Gillat Raisch.

Raisch is a pediatrician and family doctor who suffered post-traumatic symptoms after saving the life of a child who was severely injured in a car bombing in a Jerusalem marketplace.

Participants in Worawit's seminar all came from Thailand. At other seminars, Thais were joined by participants from Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia.

Though the seminars were intended as a humanitarian gesture, they had inescapable political overtones: Malaysia and Indonesia, majority Muslim countries, do not have diplomatic ties with Israel.

"Barriers were bridged. You really felt people finding their common humanity," says Betsy Sheerr, a JDC executive committee member responsible for the organization's nonsectarian programs, who participated in one of the seminars. "One small step at a time, we can make inroads and change perceptions that can benefit America, Jews and Israel."

"It made me feel very proud as an American Jew — and I stress both parts, American and Jew," says Sheerr, who is a member of JTA's Board of Directors.

Says Dr. Amporn Sornprasit of Prince Songkla University, the local partner in organizing the workshop: "Only now we understand that we, in Thailand, need to be prepared for the next crisis in case there is one. Here we train the new cadre of helpers and teach them how to assist

victims and their families."

The training included mind-body sessions that were unusual for Thai culture.

"Now I will ask you to lie down on the floor and close your eyes," whispers Nira Shiran-Mizrahi, the art therapy expert. As an interpreter translates her words from English to Thai, the participants, mainly women, including some with Muslim head scarves, lie down on the carpet.

"Relax. Now imagine a color is coming into your body. It could be any color and can come to you through any part of your body," Shiran-Mizrahi says.

There is silence in the half-lit room.

"Every color has a meaning," she explains, running between participants who are making drawings on paper in the color each has imagined. "Later we can work with the feelings that these colors represent."

After the scribbling, Shiran-Mizrahi asks participants to look for symbols in their drawings. Later, each writes a personal prayer on the other side of the paper and goes to the beach to make peace with the sea, offering seashells they have painted with their symbols.

After hanging their prayers on a cord between two trees, they stand and sing together in Thai. Participants seem very moved by the sea-forgiveness ceremony, and some have tears in their eyes.

"There was a session where I experienced an immense feeling of pain inside me. It's hard to explain," Worawit says. "Even after you share your feelings with your friends, at the end of the day you stay alone with your thoughts. That's why this workshop was very important for me: It allowed me to deal with my own feelings, so later I can help other people." ■

A humanitarian effort carries political overtones.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES



Guy Sharett

Thais who aided tsunami victims in 2004 take part in a ceremony on June 11, 2005, during a seminar in Thailand.

In Thai village, Israeli helps country he loves

By GUY SHARETT

MEUANG MAI, Thailand (JTA) — Meuang Mai, a small fishing village on the island of Kho Khao in southern Thailand, is a lucky village.

Its 16 houses and all of its fishing boats were obliterated in the Dec. 26 tsunami that devastated southeast Asia, but no one from the village was killed, and no one was even hurt: Fishermen saw the wave coming and ran with their families to the hills.

Six months after the disaster, however, those “lucky” ones still live the trauma every day and miss their old village. The government built them temporary homes and Switzerland donated new fishing boats, but Meuang Mai is a sad place.

“It’s amazing how much money the world has given, yet the villagers hardly see any of it,” says Israeli Yariv “Robbie” Rozen, 31, who has been a volunteer here since the tsunami struck. “After coming so many times to enjoy the beaches of Thailand, I wanted to give something back to this country in a time of crisis.”

After frustrating experiences with the bureaucracy of big organizations, Rozen decided to be an independent volunteer.

“Here I can think of a project, budget and schedule, send e-mails to potential donors and implement it without having to deal with regional managers or country directors,” says Rozen, a former paratrooper in the Israeli Defense Forces. “In big organizations, by the time the people get water, say, they don’t need it anymore, they need food.”

He now is busy building toilets with the villagers and a few kids.

Not far from where they’re working stands “Robbie’s Villa,” according to a sign on a small wooden hut built on stilts. Rozen moved in a few days ago after the tent he was living in blew away in a storm.

Rozen “doesn’t speak much Thai, but we understand each other quite well,” says Chalern Rasidi, who together with his wife, Arunee, has “adopted” Rozen.

“He has been helping us so much. We love him dearly,” Rasidi says. “He bought us water tanks, fridges, everything we needed. Everybody loves him, kids, women, men.”

“At first we weren’t sure who he was; we thought he was a traveler,” Arunee Rasidi says. “Now he’s very close to all of the families in the village.”

Rozen is the only “farang,” a Thai term

for a Westerner, in Meuang Mai. Most of the money he raised for the village comes from the United States.

After two months in Meuang Mai he brought over Pamela Pompeo from New Jersey, who is involved with charity projects and came to Thailand to help tsunami survivors.

“She immediately fell in love with the people, and after a few weeks she asked me to join her to raise funds in the United States,” Rozen says. “We got more than \$8,000 for this village only, and a donation from the Chabad movement in Bangkok.

“This is big money here,” he continues — especially considering that many villagers lost their income in the tsunami, and the Thai government gives every villager only \$40 a month in aid. “We were able to buy 17 water tanks and refrigerators for all the families.”

Six months after the tsunami, nobody in Meuang Mai lives near the water anymore, where the wrecks of boats still lie.

“People are afraid. That’s why the new houses they got from the government are away from the sea,” Rozen says, hugging three kids and showing them photos on his laptop.

Rozen’s “office” is a few yards from the center of the rebuilt village, where the television is and where everyone hangs out. It doesn’t exactly look like an office — it’s a piece of land with some bush — but it’s the only spot in Meuang Mai where there sometimes is mobile phone reception, allowing Rozen to field calls from the various people who fund his projects.

“I can’t hear you, can you hear me?” he shouts into the phone.

Rozen plans to go back to Israel in another month.

“I feel it’s time to leave,” he says. “But I will definitely finish my projects: The bathrooms will be ready, we’re going to have roof extensions so the rain will not come into the houses and we’ll create a system to use rainwater.

“In most of the world, the tsunami is just not interesting anymore,” he acknowledges. “Everybody is sure so much help has been given. But from Meuang Mai I can tell you: The help doesn’t get to the people. It stops somewhere on the way. I promised my friends here I would come back and make sure they keep going forward.”

‘I promised my friends here I would come back.’

Yariv Rozen
Israeli volunteer

BEHIND THE HEADLINES



Guy Sharett

Israeli Yariv Rozen, right, an independent volunteer helping rebuild the fishing village of Meuang Mai, Thailand, following the December 2004 tsunami, stands with one of the villagers while building bathrooms, June 12, in Meuang Mai.

Study: U.S. 'young elites' hostile to Israel

By GARY ROSENBLATT
New York Jewish Week

NEW YORK (JTA) — A new survey of attitudes toward Israel among graduate students at top U.S. universities offers a disturbing, if not frightening, picture of increasing sympathy for the Palestinian cause and blame on the Jewish state for the lack of peace.

The report being issued this week by The Israel Project, a Washington-based group seeking to strengthen Israel's image, finds that "tomorrow's leaders... are hostile to the Jewish state," a growing trend that could jeopardize American foreign policy toward Israel in the near future.

Titled "How The Next Generation Views Israel," the report was written by Frank Luntz, a pollster who has conducted a number of surveys on the attitudes of young people toward Israel and Jewish life for The Israel Project and other groups.

It was based on "face-to-face group interviews" Luntz conducted with nearly 150 students under age 30 in New York, Boston, Washington, Chicago and Los Angeles. They attended law, business, journalism or government programs at Harvard, MIT, Columbia, Georgetown, George Washington, Johns Hopkins, the University of Chicago, Northwestern and UCLA.

Many of the students come from homes sympathetic to Israel, Luntz reported, but through exposure to university professors and mainstream media have grown "impatient" with Israel and emotionally connected to the Palestinian cause, to the point of rationalizing Palestinian suicide bombings and coming to see Israel as a "burden" to the United States rather than "an ally."

What's more, Luntz found a thin line between anti-Israel and anti-Jewish sentiment among "these young elites," noting that "they may not be in the 'Zionism is racism' camp, but they're not all that far away." He said the students "view any U.S. support of Israel as generated by wealthy Jewish special interests rather than as a reflection of the national interest."

Compounding the problem, the report said, is that the students, predominantly left-of-center politically, are so opposed to President Bush that his support for Israel

is seen as a negative factor.

In arguing that Israel is losing the image war, Luntz said the graduate students do not talk about Mideast issues with their Jewish friends, whom they perceive as "indoctrinated" and "emotional."

In the eyes of the graduate students, Luntz said, "to support Israel as a Jew is to be narrow-minded and one-sided. To support the Palestinians is to be progressive and thoughtful."

He noted that many of the students said they changed their attitudes toward the Mideast conflict during their college and post-college years as they "learned more," in their words, about the situation from professors, Palestinians they met on campus and the media. The New York Times is the top source of news information, and the BBC is widely seen as well.

The students believe the American media are biased toward Israel, according to the report, and that Palestinians are making a greater effort toward peace than Israel.

An Israeli government official dealing with media issues said he had not yet read the report but questioned its methodology and intent. The official, who asked not to be named, said the findings would have more weight if they were from an objective poll or survey.

Instead, these were gathered by Luntz in direct conversation with the graduate students, and Luntz's style is to "put his pro-Israel views upfront" so that much of a focus group's reactions depend on whether the participants like him or not, the Israeli official said.

He added that The Israel Project tends to seek out and publicize negative opinions on Israel in order to bolster its own fund-raising efforts, portraying itself as more effective than Israel in the area of hasbarah, or shaping public opinion.

This criticism is not new, and The Israel Project, which once worked closely with officials in the Israeli Foreign Minis-

try, has seen that relationship fade in the past year or two.

Others, though, say Israeli officials are overly sensitive to implicit criticism of their difficult work in seeking to improve Israel's image.

According to Luntz's findings, the graduate students "know nothing about the history of the Middle East," including the fact that the United Nations was involved in Israel's founding or that Israel is a democracy.

About half of the 50-page report offers advice on how to counter the dire situation, and Luntz urged pro-Israel groups and individuals to "express genuine recognition" that Palestinians have suffered, but to blame the problem on corrupt Palestinian leaders.

"If there is such a thing as a magic bullet" in terms of an effective response, Luntz said it is the fact that "America's future leaders hate Hamas and Islamic Jihad," and don't expect Israel to negotiate with them.

The message, according to Luntz, should be that the security fence and other forms of Israeli self-defense are necessitated by the violence committed by these terrorist groups, and that once the groups are eliminated, peace prospects will improve.

Luntz's report contained one overt jab at the approach of organizations like Israel21c, a U.S. group that emphasizes Israeli accomplishments in science, technology, medicine and other areas, and whose slogan is "Israel beyond the conflict."

In recommending advertising that emphasizes peace, tolerance and hope, Luntz criticized ads that only promote Israel's innovative accomplishments.

"You can't get beyond the conflict," he wrote, "until you get beyond the conflict."

Focusing on scientific breakthroughs, he added, "will go unheard unless and until your audience hears and believes that Israel is a proponent of peace, an advocate for justice and a force for compromise." ■

In the eyes of the graduate students, 'to support Israel as a Jew is to be narrow-minded and one-sided.'

Frank Luntz
Pollster

ARTS & CULTURE

Jewish background helps 'O.C.' producer succeed in TV land

By RICHARD ASINOF

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (JTA) — If Jewish elders are serious about reaching out to Jews between the ages of 13-17, they might consider hiring Josh Schwartz to write a script for them.

Schwartz, 28, executive producer of "The O.C." — that stands for Orange County, Calif. — is the youngest producer ever to have a series on network television.

He also is one of the 50 most eligible bachelors in the United States, according to People magazine — but maybe not for long. Schwartz's girlfriend, who is Jewish, just moved in with him.

"She's Jewish, her mom's Jewish and her dad converted; one for our team," Schwartz said with a laugh.

Schwartz spent Passover at his girlfriend's parents' house, where he met the extended family at the seder.

"I sang 'dayenu,'" he told JTA in an interview at his alma mater, Providence's private Wheeler School, the day before giving the commencement speech for the class of 2005.

But don't expect to hear klezmer music anytime soon on "The O.C."

And don't expect many Jewish community leaders to come running to Schwartz, whose interfaith family on the show, the Cohens, invent "Chrismukkah" so they can celebrate both holidays and reap the most presents, without making anyone feel guilty.

Like Seth Cohen, a quick-witted, funny, sarcastic, self-proclaimed "wise ass" on "The O.C.," Schwartz is filled with Jewish angst about life and failure and love that he doesn't mind expressing in public.

In his Ralph Lauren shirt, blue jeans, Converse All-Stars and sunglasses hanging from his shirt, Schwartz projects a boyish earnestness.

Schwartz said he draws a lot upon his Jewish background in his work.

"If you're Jewish, that becomes a part of who you are as a human being. You're disappointed that you didn't have better TV shows during the holidays, and not being able to decorate your tree or have a tree," he said. ■

Polish Jewish past highlighted

By CAROLYN SLUTSKY

WARSAW (JTA) — An exhibit on prewar Jewish life in the Polish city of Czestochowa, a Catholic pilgrimage site with a tiny Jewish population, is taking on a life of its own.

"Coexistence, Holocaust, Memory" opened last spring displaying photographs and stories depicting Jewish life in Czestochowa, which on the eve of World War II was home to 30,000 Jews, or about a third of the city's population.

Just 37 Jews live in Czestochowa today.

After a successful run in Czestochowa, during which more than 11,000 people viewed the exhibit, it moved to Warsaw, where it reopened at the Jewish Historical Institute last fall.

But the effect of the photographs and the stories they told did not stop at the museum doors.

Anna Maciejowska, principal of Czestochowa's Malczewski High School of Fine Arts, saw the original exhibit and wanted to find a way to incorporate its lessons into students' art projects.

Maciejowska decided to involve her students in their own multidisciplinary exhibit, called "From the Inspiration of Jewish Culture." The show opened this month at the National Library in Warsaw. ■

Approximately 250 students from the school viewed the Czestochowa exhibit and studied artists such as Chagall and Bruno Schulz, producing artworks ranging from paintings and photographs to collages, sculptures, linoleum prints, jewelry and metal bas relief carvings.

Students also studied the work of famous Polish Jewish and Israeli writers such as Julian Tuwim, Henryk Grynberg and Amos Oz, and created small books illustrated with the writers' words in Polish, Hebrew and Yiddish.

Szymon Szurmiej, longtime director of the Yiddish Theater in Warsaw, came to Czestochowa to direct students in an adaptation of Isaac Bashevis Singer's "The Dreadful Inn."

Many of the students were reluctant to speak about their projects, preferring to let their work speak for itself.

Katarzyna Polus, who made a painting

based on a photograph she found of an old Jewish building, said she read Singer stories, histories and other texts to prepare for the project.

"I know more than I knew, and I know I'll try to have more contact with Jewish things in the future," she said. ■

Justyna Rumik, who designed and crafted a pair of earrings subtly shaped like a Jewish star, said she was "fascinated with the delicacy of Jewish ornaments" and had read and heard lectures about Jewish history.

A friend of Rumik's said the project had helped him discover his Jewish roots.

His great-grandfather died in Treblinka and his grandparents had taught him bit by bit about what it means to be Jewish, said the student, who declined to give his name.

Maciejowska's daughter, Julia, said she always remembered her mother being interested in Juda-

ism. During the course of the project, Maciejowska realized she was interested in Jewish history not only as an observer, but that she also was on a quest for her roots.

She now is proud to say that she is one-eighth Jewish, a fact she sensed but never confirmed until the exhibit shed light on the Jewish background of her city and — as she began to do research — on her own Jewish heritage.

In November, "Coexistence, Holocaust, Memory" will come to America, including the National Yiddish Book Center in Amherst, Mass., and the Museum of Jewish Heritage in New York City.

It also will make stops at Seton Hall University in New Jersey and the Institute of Texan Cultures in San Antonio, which is near the city of Panna Maria, believed to be the oldest Polish community in America.

Interest in things Jewish among Poles has grown in recent years. In fact, for many Poles, Jewish history and culture are a fascinating part of the country's past that they have had the chance to explore freely only in the past 15 years.

Until World War II, Czestochowa was home to a flourishing community that consisted of all kinds of Jews from Orthodox to secular, a well-respected Jewish high school, Jewish artists and workers. ■

An exhibit shows how Jewish life flourished in Poland.

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

Pro-withdrawal congressional letters have majority

Letters supporting Israel's withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and calling on the Palestinian Authority to disarm terrorist groups garnered signatures from majorities in the U.S. Congress.

Sens. Mitch McConnell (R-Ky.) and Dick Durbin (D-Ill.) — their respective party whips — and Reps. Robert Menendez (D-N.J.) and Deborah Pryce (R-Ohio) initiated the letters to President Bush last month.

The senators closed their letters Wednesday with 71 signatures; the representatives plan to close their letter on Friday, and so far have 268 signatures.

"Failure to establish and enforce the rule of law and to confiscate weapons from the very groups who wish to see the peace process" fail "will only doom" the prospects for peace, the letters said.

Another letter, authored by Reps. Shelley Berkley (D-Nev.) and Dan Burton (R-Ind.), started circulating this week, saying that Hamas should not be permitted to participate in Palestinian elections until the group disarms and renounces terrorism.

Jewish inmate forced to shave

An Orthodox Jew in an Ohio prison accused the prison of forcing him to shave his beard and sideburns.

Ralph Beasley, imprisoned in the Toledo Correctional Institution for murder, was transferred to the facility last year from one that had a religious living program, and was told he could no longer have a beard beyond a half-inch in length.

A spokesperson for the state prisons department said long beards can be used to hide weapons and other contraband.

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled earlier this year that religious minorities in prison have a right to religious practice, as long as it does not interfere with a compelling governmental interest.

Pioneer in Jewish studies dies

Rabbi Nahum Sarna, a leading Bible scholar, died Thursday in Florida at the age of 82.

Sarna, a pioneer in Jewish studies and longtime professor at Brandeis University, was devoted to making biblical scholarship accessible to general audiences.

He was the editor and an author on the Jewish Publication Society's Torah commentary and an editor and translator on its translation of the Bible.

His son Jonathan is a leading scholar of American Jewish history and a member of JTA's board of directors.

MIDDLE EAST

Labor primary postponed

Shimon Peres said he plans to postpone the Israeli Labor Party's primary.

Peres, the Labor chairman, told Israel Radio on Thursday that the party had to probe allegations of improper voter registration before going ahead with the internal election that had been scheduled for June 28.

The Labor Central Committee would be convened Sunday to approve the postponement. Polls show Peres leading the race for Labor's helm.

Jerusalem gay parade canceled

Jerusalem called off this year's gay pride parade in the holy city.

Mayor Uri Lupolianski wrote to organizers of the annual parade, saying he had decided the event offended the sensibilities of Jerusalem's religious population and should not go ahead next week as scheduled.

The Jerusalem Open House, which represents the gay and lesbian communities in the capital, petitioned the High Court of Justice on Thursday, demanding it overturn Lupolianski's decision.

Israel Project opens Jerusalem office

The Israel Project opened an Israel office.

The group, founded in 2002 to promote Israel's image in the United States and around the world, now has an established office in Washington.

The office in Jerusalem, which will be its second, is opening in time to assist journalists covering Israel's withdrawal this summer from the Gaza Strip.

There are 400 permanent foreign correspondents in Israel, but several thousand are expected to arrive ahead of the pullout.

Heading the office is Calev Ben-David, a former managing editor of the Jerusalem Post.

WORLD

French groups oppose Sharon visit

Twenty-five French groups are protesting Jacques Chirac's invitation to Ariel Sharon to come to France in July.

How can Chirac "roll out the red carpet to a war criminal like Sharon?" the groups asked in a collective statement.

The coalition, which is made up of pro-Palestinian groups, as well as several peace organizations, has called upon the public to mobilize against Sharon's visit.

Drug ring linked to Hezbollah

Ecuadorian police broke up an international cocaine ring they say is linked to Hezbollah.

A document obtained by The Associated Press said the ring sent up to 70 percent of its profits to the Lebanon-based Shiite militia.

But police in Brazil said they had no evidence that the people arrested in its country during the bust were linked to Hezbollah.

Police chief sentenced in AMIA case

A former police chief in Argentina was sentenced to four years in prison for losing evidence related to a terrorist attack on a Jewish center.

The former deputy, Juan Carlos Castaneda, was sentenced Wednesday for losing tape cassettes, photographs and videos that were relevant to the ongoing investigation into the 1994 attack on the AMIA center in Buenos Aires, in which 85 people were killed.

Australian Jews want Web site changed

Australia's central Jewish group lodged a legal complaint against a Web site for its anti-Semitic content.

A search for the word "Jew" on Australia's Google site takes surfers to www.biblebelievers.org.au, a Christian site that contains anti-Semitic tracts.

The complaint was lodged by the immediate past president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, Jeremy Jones, who wants the content deleted from the site.

Jones has requested Google take whatever action possible to remove the site from its search pages.

Soviet Jewish dissident dies after robbery

Mikhail Stern, a former Soviet Jewish dissident, died at 86 in Amsterdam last Friday, apparently from injuries suffered during a robbery.

The robbery is not believed to be linked to Stern's religion. Stern, a physicist, was arrested in 1974 after applying for a visa to leave the Soviet Union. He was released in 1977.