

IN THE NEWS

Judge: Statute use has no precedent

The judge in the classified information case against two former American Israel Public Affairs Committee staffers said he was concerned by the never-used statute cited in the charge.

"What I'm really expressing discomfort about is that it's always nice to have clear precedent to follow," Judge T.S. Ellis III said last Friday as he considered a motion to dismiss the case against Steve Rosen, AIPAC's former foreign policy director, and Keith Weissman, a former Iran analyst.

In alleging that Rosen and Weissman received information about Iran and relayed it to others, the U.S. government is using a never-used 1917 statute that bans the receipt and transmission of national defense information.

Ellis postponed a decision on whether to dismiss for at least a week.

Israeli soldiers vote from front line

Front-line Israeli soldiers began casting votes for the country's general election. Special ballot boxes were opened Sunday at army bases on Israel's border with Lebanon and Syria, two days before other citizens were scheduled to go the polls.

Throughout Israel, security services went on high alert following warnings of at least 16 planned Palestinian terrorist attacks.

Hamas ministers' swearing-in scheduled

The Palestinian Authority government under Hamas will be inaugurated Wednesday.

Officials in the radical Islamic group said over the weekend that a parliamentary confidence vote in its new 24-member Cabinet was expected on Monday or Tuesday.

Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas urged Hamas to endorse peacemaking with Israel, and hinted that if it did not, he could fire Prime Minister-designate Ismail Haniyeh.

WORLD REPORT

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

Study of young Jews uncovers identity and pride, but less affiliation

By SUE FISHKOFF

OAKLAND, Calif. (JTA) — Young Jews in the United States are proud of being Jewish, even if they're not sure what that means.

They feel part of a global Jewish community, but not the federation or synagogue community of their parents and grandparents.

And although they avoid denominational affiliation currently, they have fond memories of the Jewish institutions of their childhood, including Hebrew school.

These are some of the findings of a new study of college-age Jews conducted by Anna Greenberg of Greenberg Quinlan Rosner Research for Reboot, a New York-based network of Jewish creative initiatives.

JTA received an advance copy of the report, which will be formally unveiled April 2 in Denver at the annual conference of the Jewish Funders Network.

"Grande Soy Vanilla Latte with Cinnamon, No Foam: Jewish Identity and Community in a Time of Unlimited Choices," bears one of the more imaginative titles in recent sociological research, using a Starbucks analogy to explain Generation Y Jews, young people between the ages of 18 and 25.

"The ability of the individual to mix and match the contents of his or her grande cup is really no different than the power to choose the way he or she defines identity in America," says Stacy Abramson, Reboot's executive director.

The study's central finding is that young Jews embrace their Jewish identities, but struggle to find meaningful Jewish communal connections.

The study is based on in-depth interviews with 35 scientifically selected young Jews and group interviews with another 37 in focus groups, representing a wide geographic and religious spectrum.

The data were used together with data from "OMG! How Generation Y is Redefining Faith in the iPod Era," last year's Reboot study of young Americans of various faiths and ethnicities, which interviewed 1,975 young people. That study focused on religious identity, practice and civic engagement among young Americans in general. The new report is one of several recent studies of young American Jews conducted by major organizations, including Hillel and Brandeis University.

The "Latte" study found that, like their non-Jewish peers, young American Jews have multiple, overlapping identities, of which "being Jewish" is just one, and not always the primary one. They avoid institutions, they have diverse social networks, they're self-confident and they feel part of a global media culture.

"Their Jewish community is theoretical, populated by people they have not met," Greenberg writes. That doesn't mean it isn't very real, she says. "In some cases, it manifests itself when they meet other Jews and discover they have a common shorthand, easy conversations and shared childhood experiences to talk about."

One young California woman told Greenberg, "I feel very lucky to have Jewish roots. I feel like I'm connected to something that is millennia old. I think it's amazing."

Another woman from Minnesota said, "It is like you belong to a club in a way," adding,

Continued on page 2

FOCUS
ON
ISSUES

■ Many Jewish college students are indifferent to Jewish institutional life

Continued from page 1

"It is cool because anywhere you go, if you are in college, and you are like, 'Oh, you're Jewish? Cool, I'm Jewish too!' And then you have something to talk about."

They're not joining synagogues — only 30 percent consider attending services an important part of being Jewish — although many of them say they might join when they get older and have kids. Compared with other religious and ethnic groups, young Jews are less likely to attend services regularly: Some 22 percent of Jews go every week versus 35 percent of young people overall.

They're certainly not joining major Jewish organizations such as the Anti-Defamation League, the United Jewish Communities or the American Israel Public Affairs Committee. Most respondents didn't even recognize those names, much less understand what the organizations do.

"The young generation is hungry" for Jewish meaning and community, says Roger Bennett, senior vice president of the Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, one of the study's funders. "But few of the mechanisms we've invested in appear to be working. They're not complaining about Jewish institutional life, they've gone a step further — it's completely irrelevant to them."

The senior associate national director of the ADL, Ken Jacobson, says he's "not discouraged" by these findings.

Noting that 73 percent of those surveyed said remembering the Holocaust is very important to one's Jewish identity, he says

that "shows young people take things seriously, when you get them in a room and talk to them.

"There are unfortunately a lot of young people not affiliated, but those who are in some way affiliated are a group about which one can be very hopeful," he says.

Eric Levine, the UJC's vice president for Jewish renaissance and renewal, says he welcomes studies like this that tell Jewish organizations what people are really thinking.

Reacting to respondents' inability to recognize the acronyms of major Jewish organizations, Levine wondered how many American Jews of any age would be able to do so. "I don't think it means we need to throw out the entire structure" of Jewish organizational life, he says, "but it might make us think about how to create new kinds of expressions and organizations that are more reflective of the next generation's interests and concerns."

Answers by college-age Jews at a recent "Jewlicious" conference in Long Beach, Calif., organized by the blog and by Beach Hillel, reflected some of the study's findings.

Asked what it means to be Jewish, Zach Newman, 20, of Orange Coast College, said, he's "not sure," and is "still trying to figure that out; you can explain one part of it, and then there's always something more."

Nadav Greenspan, 24, a recent graduate of the University of California at San Diego, answers a question with a question. Asked whether he avoids institutions and synagogues, he said, "that depends on what you consider a synagogue." He used to attend Hillel services, but isn't sure that "counts."

His friend Tammy Goldstein, a senior at UCLA, says that for her, being Jewish means "being proud, wearing a Star of David necklace and saying, 'yeah, I'm Jewish!'" Both are very attached to Israel, because they grew up there, but they quickly add that "makes us different" from most of their peers.

Not that different, actually: 43 percent of the "Latte" respondents had been to Israel — a higher percentage than other

comparable studies — and 54 percent said that "caring about Israel" matters "a lot" to their notion of what it means to be Jewish.

Overall, Bennett and Greenberg describe the study results as very optimistic.

First, Greenberg points out, young Jews "are positive about their Jewish identity, and that's something we haven't seen before on research about Jewish youth."

Those she interviewed "have a notion of being a people that has survived," and take

pride in that. "In the homogenous pop culture they live in, it makes them different," she suggests.

Also, Greenberg points to the respondents' happy memories of childhood Jewish institutions, which she says "gives them a reservoir of positive feelings about Jewish identity."

The challenge to Jewish communal leaders and organizations is, she says, to "figure out how to deal with" those memories, particularly given the high rate of intermarriage.

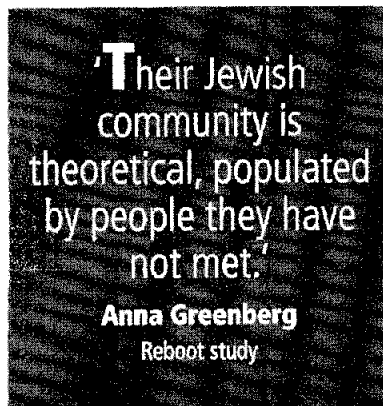
Bennett says the study results argue for creative approaches on the part of the organized Jewish community.

"The Jewish communal future is in our own hands," he says. "Every Jewish institution that understands that and puts its faith in young people has a rosy future. Any funder that wishes to innovate is going to prosper."

Bennett points to some of the new, creative Jewish initiatives — JDub music, Tiffany Shlain's movie "The Tribe," Sandi Dubowski's documentary on Orthodox Jewish gays and lesbians, "Trembling Before G-d" and the Progressive Jewish Alliance — and says that what they have in common is a reliance on the power of culture to convey meaning and create community.

"That's the beauty of culture, it travels," he says. "As these organizations grow and spread, the community can be as well served as any."

In particular, Bennett points to Jewish blogs like Jewlicious.com, and says that a "global network of people engaged in Jewish culture" is growing up around them. ■



JTA WORLD REPORT

Daniel J. Krifcher
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.

Imams, rabbis meet for peace in Spain

By DANNY WOOD

SEVILLE, Spain (JTA) — It's not often that the keynote speakers at a conference speak openly about the possibility that the meeting will fail. But speakers at the second World Congress of Rabbis and Imams for Peace, held last week in Seville, Spain, made it clear that if this year's event didn't lead to a concrete plan of action, it will have to be judged a failure.

The congress was the second time that more than 150 rabbis and imams have come together in the name of peace, with the last meeting held in Brussels. The group already is taking some small steps, such as examining textbooks used by Jewish and Muslim schools in Jerusa-

THIS WEEK

TUESDAY

■ Israelis vote in national elections. Kadima, the centrist party headed by Interim Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, is widely expected to win. Its main challengers are the Likud Party, headed by former Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, and Labor, headed by trade unionist Amir Peretz.

FRIDAY

■ The National Union of Jewish Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual Transgender, Intersex, Queer and Questioning Students meets for a three-day conference in Wesleyan, Conn.

SATURDAY

■ The first-ever New Orleans International Jewish Music Festival begins. The lineup for the two-day event includes top U.S. and international Jewish musicians, as well as some local New Orleans musicians. Proceeds from the festival will benefit Jewish culture and education in the New Orleans area.

SUNDAY

■ The Jewish Funders Network conference, in Denver, is organized around the theme "Plug and Play Judaism: Identity and Community in the Global Era." Several hundred of the world's most prominent Jewish philanthropists from around the world discuss and debate issues related to the future of Jewish identity in sessions with some of the major thinkers and leaders on this subject. The three-day conference focuses, in particular, on the challenges philanthropists face in an environment where individuals and communities are redefining the Jewish experience.

lem to ensure that educational materials don't encourage intolerance.

At the conclusion, the congress' executive committee issued a statement condemning violence in the name of religion, with words that could be seen as a repudiation of anti-Jewish agitation by Hamas and Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad.

"We deplore any incitement against a faith or people, let alone any call for their elimination," the statement said.

The Congress also called for respect for religious institutions, cemeteries, symbols and holy sites, and reaffirmed that "there is no inherent conflict between Islam and Judaism."

"One cannot exaggerate the importance of this event. Taking into account the backdrop of violence in Europe and ongoing conflict in the Holy Land, the very fact that we are meeting here is nearly a miracle," Shear Yeshuv Cohen, the chief rabbi of Haifa, said as the conference concluded March 22.

"We will return to our communities to educate for peace and reconciliation, because that is what God wants from us," he said.

Sheik Imad al-Falouji, imam of Gaza and the senior Palestinian Authority figure at the conference, said, "Religious leaders must play a role to promote a culture of dialogue. We can impact on our political leaders to consider these values in their policy-making decisions."

The patrons of the event — the kings of Spain and Morocco — didn't attend the forum, but the Hommes de Paroles Foundation, which sponsored it, stressed that the delegates who attended carry enough weight in their communities to make a difference.

The aim of the conference is to make a positive contribution toward resolving religious conflict wherever it arises.

According to the Jewish representative of Moroccan King Mohammed VI, Andre Azoulay, "the word of God has been kidnapped," and it's no longer enough for religious representatives to watch from the sidelines as religion is

used by those who preach hatred.

Things got off to a strong start: Rather than wait for the workshop sessions, Israel's Ashkenazi chief rabbi, Yona Metzger, called at the opening ceremony for the formation of an international association of religious groups, a sort of United Nations of Religions.

There also were signs of mutual understanding. When Abdulaziz Othman, director general of the Islamic Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization angrily called for an international law to stop the publication of offensive material such as the cartoons of the Islamic prophet Mohammed that touched off violent riots throughout the Muslim world, Michael

Melchior, chief rabbi of Norway and a former Israeli Cabinet minister, condemned disrespectful attacks on any faith.

There was a willingness on both sides to take some level of criticism. When an

Israeli rabbi harangued Muslims for not standing up sufficiently to Osama bin Laden, imams in the audience listened respectfully.

Difficult and relevant questions often were swept aside.

On the issue of terrorism, the leaders condemned any act of violence in the name of religion.

When pushed to comment on how this might apply to Palestinian suicide bombers, however, al-Falouji instead demanded that Israel change its policy toward the Palestinians.

When rabbis were asked to comment on the conditions that could lead to a sharing of the Holy Land, Rabbi Daniel Sperber from Bar-Ilan University in Israel said that was an issue for politicians.

Tensions were never far from the surface, even over coffee, where al-Falouji argued with Stuart Altshuler, a rabbi from Orange County, Calif., over the status of Jerusalem and Israel's occupation of West Bank land the Palestinians claim.

Faced with difficult questions from journalists, the rabbis and imams often would respond with bromides about believing in the same god and how peace begins with dialogue.

BEHIND
THE
HEADLINES

Signs of mutual understanding but a reluctance to tackle difficult questions.

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

Services begin for crash victims

Funeral services were scheduled to begin Sunday for the American Jewish tourists who died in last week's bus crash in Chile.

The services for the 12 victims of the crash, which occurred on a B'nai B'rith trip when a bus plunged down a cliff, came after a memorial service was held Saturday in New Jersey.

The victims were identified as Marvin Bier, 79, Shirley Bier, 76, Marian Diamond, 75, Maria Eggers, 71, Hans Eggers, 72, Carole Ruchelman, 63, Robert Rubin, 72, Barbara Rubin, 69, Frieda Kovar, 74, and Arthur Kovar, 67, all from Monroe Township, N.J.; and Linda Greenfield, 63, and Ira Greenfield, 67, from Stamford, Conn.

Two survivors — Harold Ruchelman and Bernard Diamond, both 68 and from Monroe Township — were released from the hospital last Friday to accompany their wives' bodies back to the United States.

A number of Jewish organizations, including Chabad, B'nai B'rith International, the Jewish Agency for Israel and the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, had sent representatives to the scene to help the families and survivors.

California official asks pensions to snub Iran

California's state controller called on the state's two largest pensions to check whether they have holdings in companies that would be subject to Iran-related sanctions.

"As fiduciaries protecting our retirees' benefits, we must act responsibly by taking action against companies sanctioned for facilitating weapons proliferation in Iran," Steve Westly wrote in letters last Friday to the California Public Employees' Retirement System and California State Teachers' Retirement System. Laws sanctioning companies that deal with Iran have been in place since 2000, but enforcement is likely to increase as the United States seeks to isolate the Islamic republic as it ignores calls to subject its nuclear program to international scrutiny.

The American Israel Public Affairs Committee praised Westly and said he should serve as a model for other states' officials.

U.S. ends Palestinian development funding

The Bush administration announced it would stop funding Palestinian infrastructure projects.

Israeli officials had asked the United States to continue funding several projects, such as a sewage plant near Hebron, but the United States said it will provide only humanitarian assistance to the Palestinian Authority once Hamas takes power in coming days. U.S. law prohibits the government from dealing with terrorist groups.

WORLD

U.N. to aid Palestinian bird flu

The United Nations agreed to help the Palestinian Authority fight an outbreak of deadly bird flu.

U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan told Israeli Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni that he would call on the World Health Organization to help P.A. officials, who confirmed a second outbreak in the Gaza Strip last Friday.

Israel has expressed concerns that the P.A.'s financial problems and general ineptitude would hurt its ability to fight the bird flu, which has also been detected in fowl in Israel.

Argentines remember dictatorship

Argentine Jews are participating in memorials marking the 30th anniversary of the country's last military dictatorship.

Argentines are holding nationwide tributes, demonstrations, conferences, vigils and art exhibitions around the country, remembering and repudiating the military government that ruled from March 24, 1976 to Dec. 10, 1983.

During those years 30,000 people were kidnapped, tortured and "disappeared," including some 1,900 Jews, a number far higher than Jews' proportion of the population.

Ahead of the biggest demonstration, held last Friday, the AMIA central Jewish institution covered its building with an Argentine flag containing the words "Never Again."

The DAIA Jewish political umbrella group spread posters around Buenos Aires with the slogan, "For Human Rights — For Justice — For Democracy," and debates DAIA organized at the city's Law University received government support.

Holocaust memorial vandalized in Ukraine

A Holocaust monument was vandalized in southern Ukraine.

The monument in the city of Sevastopol was smeared with black paint, swastikas and anti-Semitic graffiti.

The incident took place on the night of March 22-23. Local authorities are investigating the incident.

Acts of anti-Semitic vandalism in the southern Ukraine region of Crimea have been occurring almost every month during the past year, local Jews said.

MIDDLE EAST

IDF head plays down Hamas threat

The chief of Israeli armed forces played down speculation that Hamas could redouble terrorist attacks once it takes over the Palestinian Authority.

"I cannot say that the installation of a Hamas government in the Palestinian Authority is a harbinger of more terrorism," Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz said last Friday during an address at Bar-Ilan University.

"In many ways, the opposite is true.

"They will try to prove that the image that has stuck to them is not true, and will make efforts at restraint."

Though it has largely abided by a cease-fire Palestinians declared last year, Hamas has said it reserves the right to take up arms against Israel again.

Firm loses purchase due to security concerns

An Israeli company abandoned its planned purchase of a U.S. software security firm in the wake of intensive U.S. government scrutiny.

Check Point was ready to pay \$225 million for Sourcefire, a Maryland firm that runs virus protections for some U.S. government security agencies, among other clients.

The two companies decided March 23 to kill the deal.

The Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States, the U.S. body that reviews all sensitive sales, ran an extended review in part because of national security concerns.

Fatal election stunt

An Israeli political activist was killed while trying to hang a campaign poster on an electricity pole.

The 26-year-old Labor Party supporter, a decorated reserve combat soldier, was electrocuted Saturday after climbing up part of the high-voltage grid overlooking the highway between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem.

The Electricity Corporation had sent out warnings against such stunts to all political parties taking part in this week's elections, which are scheduled for Tuesday.