



IN THE NEWS

Abducted settler killed

Palestinian terrorists killed a West Bank settler abducted earlier this week.

The body of Eliyahu Asheri, 18, was found early Thursday in Ramallah following intensive Israeli searches in the area. Security sources said Asheri, a resident of Itamar, appeared to have been executed shortly after his abduction Sunday by the Popular Resistance Committees terrorist group.

Israel arrests Hamas politicians

Israeli security forces detained dozens of Hamas politicians in the West Bank.

Eight members of the Palestinian Authority Cabinet were taken into custody in Thursday's sweep, as well as 20 lawmakers from the terrorist group. At least 30 other Hamas political officials were detained.

Israeli security sources described the sweep as a means of pressuring the Palestinian Authority into securing the release of Cpl. Gilad Shalit, an Israeli soldier abducted Sunday.

Groups praise flag amendment rejection

U.S. Jewish groups commended the U.S. Senate for rejecting a bid to ban flag burning. A proposed constitutional amendment to allow Congress to consider banning the "physical desecration" of the U.S. flag failed by a single vote Tuesday to get the necessary two-thirds majority.

"We share in the pride and patriotism the flag inspires in millions of Americans, yet we believe the flag desecration amendment undermines the commitment to freedom, and particularly free expression, that our country and our flag represent," Reform's Religious Action Center said in a statement.

The National Council of Jewish Women also praised the Senate vote.

WORLD REPORT

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



A Jewish security expert addresses an Orthodox Union seminar on synagogue security, in the wake of Sept. 11.

Jewish groups hope they can keep homeland security money flowing

By RON KAMPEAS

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Jewish groups gratefully absorbed more than half of the homeland security funds last year aimed at protecting nonprofits — and they're campaigning to make sure the money keeps flowing.

An array of Jewish groups nationwide is just now beginning to spend the \$14 million of the \$25 million mandated by Congress in 2005 to secure at-risk nonprofit groups. Another \$25 million mandated in the 2006 budget is mired in intergovernmental infighting.

The United Jewish Communities, the umbrella body of the North American Jewish federation system, is lobbying to make sure the \$25 million allocation survives in the Homeland Security Department's 2007 budget, due to be referred this week to the full Senate.

FOCUS ON ISSUES

"We believe there is a critical threat against Jewish community assets in the United States," William Daroff, the UJC's vice president for public policy and its top Washington lobbyist, told JTA. "It doesn't take a brain surgeon to see that Jewish institutions are near the top of the terrorists' list."

The senators who sponsored the original legislation, Arlen Specter (R-Pa.) and Barbara Mikulski (D-Md.), are scrambling to make sure the money survives the mark-up this week from the Appropriations Committee to the full Senate.

"We must help protect our hospitals, schools, community centers, synagogues and churches from terrorist violence," Mikulski said in a statement to JTA. "This is a federal investment in added security to help protect organizations at risk of terrorist attacks."

Senators are believed to generally favor

Continued on page 2

■ Jewish groups absorbed more than half of homeland security funds for non-profits

Continued from page 1

the legislation, but are susceptible to lobbying by a White House that strongly favors retaining executive power in decisions such as where to spend homeland security money.

The \$14 million that Jewish groups received in the 2005 budget reached 18 communities: Atlanta; Baltimore; Broward County, Fla.; Boston; Chicago; Dallas; the Washington metropolitan area; Houston; Los Angeles; Long Beach, Calif.; MetroWest, N.J.; Miami; New York; Philadelphia; Portland, Ore.; San Diego; San Francisco; and Seattle.

No organization could apply for more than \$100,000, though some federations received more because they housed multiple applicants on the same campus. Most states bar the listing of individual groups for security reasons, but it's known that New York's Jewish community was by far the leader in receiving funds, getting about \$4.5 million of \$6.3 million allocated to nonprofits in the city.

■
The funds are an unqualified boon, Jewish leaders agree.

"It was a terrific process. It's going to mean a lot to these programs," said Ron Soloway, managing director of government and external relations for UJA-Federation of New York. "Even to this day, we have parents who worry about the safety of institutions" accommodating their children in pre-school, day care or school.

It has taken until now to sign the contracts for the services because of the need to ensure that contractors meet Homeland

Security Department standards. The grants are limited to "target hardening," or physical and material protections. Applications for programs or salaried employees are not considered.

Jewish organizations asked for barriers, reinforced doors, blast-proof windows, security cameras, gates and fencing.

Jewish day schools in the Chicago area, for example, installed a film on windows to prevent shattering in case of a bomb blast.

"Glass shattering is a major cause of injury and death and serious injury, especially for kids," said Joel Carp, senior vice president of the Jewish United Fund/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago.

The original guidelines for applicants, written when Tom Ridge was department secretary, seem tailored for Jewish groups. Criteria included nonprofits that were likely to be targeted by State Department-designated terrorist groups.

"Prior attacks within or outside the United States by international terrorist organizations against the nonprofit organizations or entities associated with or similarly situated as the nonprofit" would qualify a group for the grant.

■
According to those criteria, all a Jewish organization had to do — and many did, according to Jewish officials — was cite the devastating bombing of the AMIA Jewish center in Buenos Aires in 1994, widely believed to have been carried out by Hezbollah, a designated terrorist group.

It's not clear whether those criteria will apply to the 2007 allocation if it survives this week's budget process. Jewish officials say a disagreement between Congress and the Bush administration has dogged the disbursement of the \$25 million for 2006. Congress wants local involvement in deciding which nonprofits get the money, and wants the Homeland Security Department to consider potential threats as well as known threats.

Jewish groups say it makes sense to keep the decision-making local because the federations have close relations with municipal and state decision-makers.

"We work very well with state agencies," Carp said.

Some 23 Chicago-area Jewish groups, including four synagogues, received about half of the \$3 million allocated to the city.

According to Jewish and congressional officials, Homeland Security jealously guards its discretion in how the money is spent and wants to focus on known threats from groups like Al-Qaida, rather than on groups that might only theoretically be targeted.

That approach is short-sighted in an age when "freelance" terrorists are popping up everywhere, said one Jewish official involved in requesting funds. The official cited a message found scrawled this week in the hold of a ship importing Guatemalan bananas into California that read, "This nitro is for you Mr. George W. Bush and your Jewish cronies."

The origin of the threat, which is still under investigation, is unknown; the potential target might not appear on a list of groups known to be targeted by established terrorists.

"The problem is getting the department to shift its thinking away from known threats and to potential threats," the official said.

■
Spokesmen for the Homeland Security Department did not return calls seeking comment.

Another factor in the concern over whether the money continues to flow is perceived government bias against nonprofits. Homeland Security initially sought to protect private interests and government targets.

Nonprofit officials say their crucial role in stemming the devastation of last year's hurricane season, at times in place of a floundering government, has proved the value of protecting nonprofits. Jewish officials cite Jewish hospitals and mental health clinics that deal with post-traumatic stress as examples of nonprofits deserving protection. ■

'It doesn't take a brain surgeon to see that Jewish institutions are near the top of the terrorists' list.'

William Daroff

Vice president for public policy,
United Jewish Communities

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.

Moscow JCC gets a boost

By LEV KRICHEVSKY

MOSCOW (JTA) — A long-planned Jewish community center slated for Moscow has received a boost.

On Monday, Arkady Gaydamak signed an agreement with the religious Jewish community of Moscow, which has long sought partners to help build a multimillion-dollar community center across the street from the city's Choral Synagogue.

The JCC, Moscow's second, would be an attempt to attract the large number of Moscow Jews who are secular.

Gaydamak, a business tycoon and philanthropist who made a name for himself in Israel and Russia by buying sports teams and media outlets, told JTA that construction of the 130,000 square-foot center, to be completed by the end of 2008, may top \$30 million.

This week's signing, attended by philanthropist Ronald Lauder, may jump-start the project, which for years remained mired in negotiations among international Jewish groups, leading Russian Jewish philanthropists and the Moscow Jewish community.

Almost six years ago, the city of Moscow gave the Moscow Jewish Religious Community, the group that operates the synagogue, a free lease of a nearby plot. The community group, which at the time had strong ties to the Russian Jewish Congress umbrella organization, intended to rely on the RJC's financing in order to build the center.

Community leaders received the land — a prized spot a short distance away from the Kremlin — but the plot is untouched. It still contains a dilapidated Soviet-era red-brick school later turned into a hospital, which has not been in use for more than a decade.

The project was originally designed to bring together the Moscow community, the RJC, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee and private donors, and at some point the coalition also included the Jewish Agency for Israel. But constant upheaval within the RJC and rising building costs have delayed construction.

Some six months ago, the JDC and some other donors withdrew from the

project, mainly due to disagreement about the ownership rights to the new center.

A senior JDC official told JTA that the group is looking for a space to build its own community center in Moscow.

Then Gaydamak, 53, stepped in.

Since last year, he has served as president of the Congress of Jewish Religious Communities and Organizations of Russia, an umbrella for Jewish religious groups.

Until last year, he was among the leading donors of the Chabad-led Federation of Jewish Communities, the region's largest Jewish group.

Observers said Gaydamak joined the Congress of Jewish Religious Communities, which includes Orthodox and Reform congregations, because he no longer was satisfied with his secondary role in the federation.

Gaydamak denies this assessment, saying he joined the congress because he saw great potential in the organization.

In 2001, his funds were used to build the chabad-led federation's Marina Roscha JCC, also in Moscow.

"I'm not new to this," he told JTA of his decision to build a new center. "Why am I doing this alone? Because no one else wants to do it," he said.

For his contribution, Gaydamak will receive one-third of the new building for commercial purposes.

Leopold Kaimovsky, the executive director of Moscow's religious community, said the center will include facilities for educational, social, welfare, cultural and athletic programs and a kosher restaurant.

The eagerness of the synagogue to have its own community center — that will inevitably compete with the Chabad-run center — stems not only from the groups' rivalry.

Many Jewish leaders agree that without a modern community center separate from the synagogue, the community

has little chance to attract secular Jews.

"To our Jews, a synagogue is associated only with religion, and many Jews could not find a place for themselves here," said Adolph Shayeveich, the synagogue leader and one of Russia's two chief rabbis. "In the new center, I hope, all Jews of Moscow will find a place for themselves."

Arkady Gaydamak's daughter Katya agreed.

"Such a stunning synagogue should have a place like that," Katya Gaydamak said.

Like all three of Gaydamak's children, she was born and raised in Paris after Gaydamak left the Soviet Union in the early 1970s.

Katya, a jewelry designer who divides her time between Paris and London, said the new center has special meaning to Moscow Jews who grew up here, such as her father.

Gaydamak would tell his children what the neighborhood of the

Choral Synagogue meant to local Jews during Soviet times, she recalled. "Dad told us how it was to be Jewish in Moscow back then. Now younger Jews here are taking too much for granted."

In the 1970s and 1980s, the street next to the synagogue was the site of mass gatherings of Jews.

Defying the ever-present KGB agents, members of the community celebrated Jewish holidays, sang, danced and exchanged news about the emigration status of their friends.

Back then, the street and synagogue were referred to by some Moscow Jews as Gorka, or the Hill, a reference to the street's steepness.

Katya Gaydamak said the new center should revive some of the old-time memories associated with the site.

At least, those involved in the project say, those memories will be preserved in the center's name, Na Gorke, or On the Hill.

ACROSS
THE FORMER
SOVIET
UNION

'To our Jews, a synagogue is associated only with religion, and many Jews could not find a place for themselves here.'

Adolph Shayeveich
Choral Synagogue

Eight lessons of the divestment fight

By ETHAN FELSON

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Last week, the 217th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA voted 483-28 to replace its controversial stance on divestment from Israel, adopted two years earlier, with a more balanced, nuanced approach.

They said suicide bombing and terrorist attacks are crimes against humanity. They recognized Israel's right to defend its pre-1967 boundaries with a security barrier. They even atoned for the pain caused by their actions of two years ago.

The hard work of pro-Israel activists, along with intense conversations within the church, helped turn a corner. The challenge now falls to those who sought changes: We must take heed of the lessons learned so that the corner we turned doesn't lead back to the same old place.

Here are some of those lessons:

- Strategy matters.

Our approach was strategic. In the end, we knew, this would be a decision Presbyterians must make. We rejected a frontal assault through newspaper ads and editorials, and we didn't form an alliance of Jews and Presbyterians to take on the church.

Grass-roots dialogue was our approach: We took our case to church leaders in each city and town, trusting that they would continue the conversation within the church. Through the Israel Advocacy Initiative, the United Jewish Communities and Jewish Council for Public Affairs partnered to conduct research, hold regional advocacy training, take missions and provide consulting and program assistance to communities.

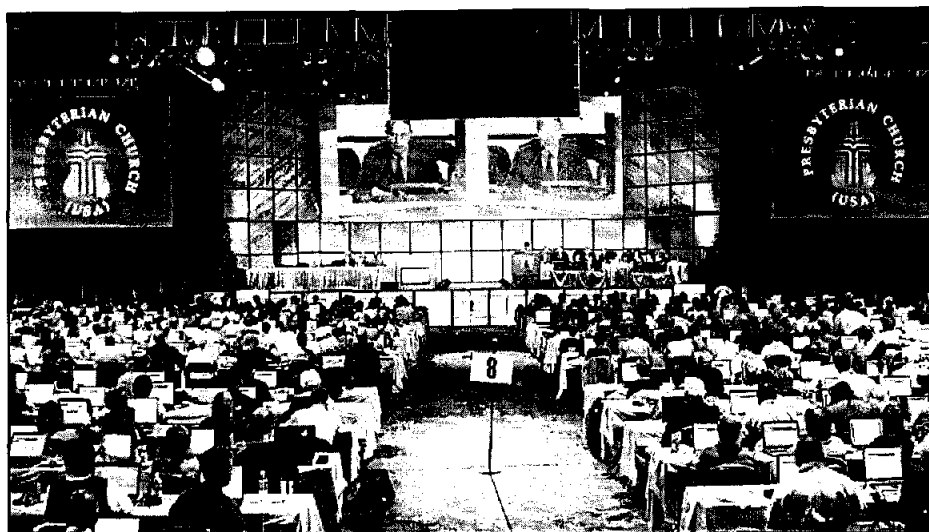
- Coordination counts.

The coalition that helped defeat Israel-focused divestment was breathtakingly broad. We started with the religious streams and defense agencies, and eventually more than a dozen national Jewish groups worked together.

- We share goals.

Ending the threat of Israel-focused divestment was never our final goal. Our goal was, and is, Israeli-Palestinian peace — the same goal as our Protestant partners have — an end to terrorism, two viable states living side-by-side in peace, an end to suffering.

Divestment, we said, was a great dis-



Joseph Williams/Presbyterian Church USA

The Presbyterian Church USA's General Assembly in Birmingham, Ala.

traction, unlikely to affect the parties in the conflict or the companies targeted. Its predominant effect, we explained, is on interfaith relations.

- We have different narratives.

More than just disparate understandings of history, we actually put the cart and the horse in a different order. For pro-Israel advocates, terrorism is the primary obstacle to peace, and Palestinians must dismantle the terrorist infrastructure.

For most pro-Palestinian advocates, the occupation is the primary obstacle to peace.

• Motivations can be quite complex.

A conflict in the Christian church between liberals and conservatives plays a central role in this debate.

Evangelicals increasingly embrace Israel and Jews, with Muslims portrayed almost as an anti-Christ. Some liberal Christians view Palestinians as powerless, virtual co-religionists whose plight is paramount.

Pro-Palestinian activists are not automatically anti-Israel; many want the same two-state solution we seek. Many do not see the same complexities in the conflict that we may, sometimes because we have vastly different sources of information.

- Passivism and power are the elephants in the room.

For many influentials in the church, power is inherently evil and the weak conversely are innocent. "Turning the other cheek," in their view, leads to peace, and the more powerful party must take the first move.

Israel is viewed as that powerful party. They see the West Bank security barrier as an offensive and permanent measure.

Terrorism is rejected, but often so is Israel's obligation to defend itself against terrorism.

Quite dissimilarly, we view Israel as a nation under constant threat, we see terrorism as a weapon of devious power, and we see the security barrier as a defensive and temporary measure.

- Tone and message matter.

Experience has conditioned us to project strength through confrontation. When things get hot, we

start talking. This can cause others to stop listening.

- It's all about relationships.

At the end of the day, it's all about whom you know. We have reached out and had difficult conversations, and we were heard.

We can't stop here. We must continue dialogue, bringing speakers to churches, listening, learning and always keeping our eyes on the prize — a day when Israelis and Palestinians live side-by-side in peace. ■

Ethan Felson is assistant executive director of the Jewish Council for Public Affairs.

OP-ED

We took our case to church leaders in each city, trusting that they would continue the conversation within the church.

Op-Ed: Presbyterians just want 'shalom'

By The Rev. SUSAN ANDREWS

BETHESDA, Md. (JTA) — For eight days earlier this month, I lived in a Birmingham hotel and immersed myself in the great Presbyterian family reunion — our 217th General Assembly.

As a former moderator of the Presbyterian Church USA, and as a committed peacemaker, I simply did not want to be anywhere else. The main focus of my week was to work for reconciliation between Jews and Presbyterians, reinforcing the historic partnership we have shared as passionate advocates for justice and shalom, peace.

Presbyterians have struggled over the past two years to reconcile two deep commitments that we hold dear. The first is our commitment to respectful and affectionate interfaith relationships with our Jewish brothers and sisters, a commitment built upon the biblical understanding that we share a covenantal relationship with the one God of Abraham, Moses and Jesus.

The second commitment we Presbyterians have is our solidarity and love for our Arab brothers and sisters in the Middle East, a solidarity and love based on 150 years of mission and engaged ministry with Christians in the region.

■
The sufferings and injustice caused by the occupation of Palestinian lands has greatly diminished the Christian presence in the West Bank and Gaza Strip. We grieve just as much with remaining members of our Christian family whose lives have become intolerable, as we grieve with our Jewish brothers and sisters who live in the fearful shadow of suicide bombers.

For the past two years, these two deep commitments have been in deep conflict as a result of the actions taken at the 2004 General Assembly in Richmond. The decision at that assembly to “initiate a process of phased selective divestment in multinational corporations investing in Israel” caused great pain and dismay among our Jewish partners, even as it gave great hope to our Palestinian partners — and left Presbyterians divided as a denomination.

At our General Assembly last week, we worked hard to break this impasse and move forward in our witness for peace and reconciliation. In consultation with our

Jewish and Palestinian partners, and in humility before God, the assembly overwhelmingly adopted a new statement about positive social investing for peaceful purposes in the Middle East. I believe this statement moves us forward in three ways:

- **Reaffirmation:** As Presbyterians, we reaffirmed our commitment to work with both our Jewish partners and our Palestinian partners to pursue peace and justice in the Middle East. We reaffirmed our historic commitment to the vision of a two-state solution for Palestine and Israel — two sovereign and secure nations, living respectfully and peacefully as neighbors.

We reaffirmed the moral responsibility we Presbyterians have claimed to be socially responsible in investing our resources through positive engagement with the corporations who handle our funds — a long and careful process of research, dialogue and action, with divestment as a rare final step only after every other engagement strategy has been exhausted.

And we reaffirmed our commitment to work with our Muslim, Jewish and Christian partners to end the occupation.

- **Refocus:** For two full years, thousands of Presbyterian congregations have been in dialogue with Jewish friends and partners, listening to the expressions of concern prompted by the actions of the 2004 General Assembly. We also have heard the gratitude and hope that our actions gave to our Palestinian Christian partners who have often felt abandoned and sidelined by the wider Christian world.

■
We came to the Birmingham assembly truly committed to honor both of these commitments. The statement passed by this year's assembly refocuses, rephrases and reinterprets the actions we made in 2004, but it does not repudiate those actions.

The 2004 decision to “initiate a process



Susan Andrews, pastor of Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church in Bethesda, Md.

OP-ED

of phased selective divestment” has now been more accurately described this way: “To have those financial investments of the Presbyterian Church USA as they pertain to Israel, Gaza, East Jerusalem and the West Bank, be invested in only peaceful pursuits, and affirm that the customary corporate engagement process of our denomination is the proper vehicle for achieving this goal.”

- **Renewal:** The new Presbyterian statement begins with important words: “We acknowledge that the actions of the 217th General Assembly caused hurt and misunderstanding among many members of the Jewish community and within our Pres-

byterian communion. We are grieved by the pain, accept responsibility for the flaws in our process, and ask for a new season of mutual understating and dialogue.”

■
It is our passionate hope that Presbyterian and Jewish congregations across the country will re-engage with one another in worship, dialogue and action for peace. And that we will renew our commitments to be partners in covenant love, pursuing together God's vision of shalom.

May it be so. ■

The Rev. Susan Andrews served as moderator of the 215th General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA. She is currently pastor of Bradley Hills Presbyterian Church in Bethesda, Md.

As Presbyterians, we reaffirmed our commitment to work with both our Jewish partners and our Palestinian partners to pursue peace and justice.

Dovish group still pushing talks

By DAVID SILVERMAN

WASHINGTON (JTA) — As the Bush administration looks for ways to resuscitate the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, a dovish group claiming to represent a fresh voice in the Jewish community feels it's gaining momentum.

Catalyzed by opposition to Israel's proposed unilateral steps in the West Bank, Brit Tzedek v'Shalom, the Jewish Alliance for Justice and Peace, is offering lawmakers an alternative message to the one from the majority of the organized Jewish community.

Brit Tzedek, which bills itself as a pro-peace, pro-Israel movement, insists on a negotiated two-state solution between Israel and the Palestinians. In the four years since it was founded in the midst of the Palestinian intifada, the group claims to have grown to more than 34,000 supporters in more than 30 chapters nationwide.

Last week, about 150 supporters converged on Washington for the organization's National Advocacy Days, which included a reception on Capitol Hill and a lobbying mission in the halls of Congress.

"We believe that there's no way you can resolve a conflict between two peoples by one people dictating the end of the game," Steve Masters, national chairman of Brit Tzedek's Advocacy and Public Policy Committee, said of Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's plan for a unilateral withdrawal from most of the West Bank.

"I haven't seen any example anywhere in the world where you can resolve any bilateral dispute unilaterally," Masters said. "People have a fantasy that they can do that, but it really is only a fantasy."

Brit Tzedek presents its approach as a departure from the view represented by the American Israel Public Affairs Committee, but AIPAC spokesman Josh Block said the pro-Israel lobby long has supported a negotiated, two-state solution. However, that approach has changed since the Palestinians rejected Israeli peace offers and launched the intifada, then elected terrorist group Hamas to lead the Palestinian Authority.

"Absent a viable Palestinian partner that is sincere and willing to end terrorism," Block said, "the United States must support Israel to secure its society until that partner emerges."

Brit Tzedek disagrees.

"Our basic message is that Israel cannot have any peace and security without a negotiated solution," Masters said. "There really isn't any time when a negotiated settlement isn't the right solution."

Brit Tzedek is urging Congress and the Bush administration to use public diplomacy and back-channel discussions to engage relatively moderate figures like Palestinian Authority President Mahmoud Abbas.

"You work on ways to make him viable, you strengthen him, you strengthen the moderates and you give Hamas a way out, so that there

is not just a losing proposition for them," Masters said. "You work on ways so that there is a way for them to win by becoming more moderate, more pragmatic."

It's an old question — whether continuing to engage the Palestinians when they seem to turn away from peace nudges them toward moderation or rather shows them that rejectionism bears no cost.

Diane Balsler, Brit Tzedek's executive director, says there's an absence of a debate on Israeli policy in the pro-Israel American Jewish community, leaving many Jews without a voice.

"In Israel there has always been a debate," Balsler said. "Yet in the American Jewish world, people have been scared of that debate for a long time."

According to Benjamin Murane, chairman of the Brit Tzedek Campus Committee, the result is a black-and-white paradigm. "The Jewish community in general is very, 'Here is our opinion on these issues, and that's the way you are going to take it.' You are either pro-Israel all the way or you are anti-Israel," Murane said.

Others say that's simply not the case.

"Even today in the American Jewish community there are a range of Jewish voices — some to our right and some to our left — and they reflect different perspectives," said David Harris, executive director of the American Jewish Committee. "The notion that there is no debate is really a cheap shot and on closer examination

does not jibe with the facts."

Rather than silencing voices like Brit Tzedek's, most groups simply reject their approach as simple-minded, several Jewish leaders said.

"Sloganeering about peace is one thing, but achieving peace is another," Harris said. "It may be a feel-good exercise to claim you're on the side of peace, but peace with whom given today's reality?"

Still, some lawmakers on hand for Brit Tzedek's Capitol Hill reception welcomed the diversity in the Jewish voice.

"One of the things that I've discovered is that there's a rich diversity of opinion among supporters of Israel and the Jewish community," said Rep. Earl Blumenthal (D-Ore.). "Too often in Congress we are dealing with bumper stickers, we're dealing with slogans, we're dealing with the lowest common

denominator. This is providing the context, the nuance, the challenging ideas."

Rep. Betty McCollum (D-Minn.) promoted Brit Tzedek as a counterweight to what she described as AIPAC's sway over the Jewish community.

"It is important that you are here because there is an understanding in Congress that AIPAC speaks for each and every one of you," she told a crowd of about 90 at the reception. "There is a perception that there is only one voice on behalf of what the goal and how to work towards the goal for peace in the Middle East is."

The organization is generally opposed to Jewish settlement in the West Bank, but would accept Israel's retention of some settlement blocs if Palestinians are compensated with an equal amount of land from Israel proper.

It is adamantly opposed to cutting aid to the Palestinian people.

"I don't see how we can serve our national interest and how Israel can meet its interest of peace and security if the Palestinian people are driven into a financial and economic cataclysm," Masters said. "I've never seen a place where people who are starving are getting more moderate and more reasonable in their demands." ■

FOCUS
ON
ISSUES

'I've never seen a place where people who are starving are getting more moderate.'

Steve Masters

National chairman, Brit Tzedek

ARTS & CULTURE

Poles support Jewish museum

By DINAH A. SPRITZER

PRAGUE (JTA) — Anyone who thinks the planned \$58 million Museum of the History of Polish Jews doesn't have the support of general Polish society might have to reconsider.

Eleven leaders from the country's top business and employer associations joined forces recently to announce their endorsement of the museum and to urge members to contribute financially.

"For all Poles, the memory of the Jewish people is part of the history of the Polish commonwealth that should — no, must — be remembered, with all its positives and negatives," Slavomir Majman, president of the Managers Association in Poland and a museum supporter, told JTA.

Majman and his colleagues signed a petition calling on businesspeople to make donations to the museum, which is set to open in 2009 but still is short of the millions of dollars it needs to fund exhibitions.

About 60 businesspeople attended the event, where association heads said they would circulate pledge sheets at their annual meetings.

"When I saw these guys standing in front of the TV cameras, signing this petition without fear, I thought, 'Is this the Poland I've been reading about?'" asked Ewa Wierzynska, the museum's deputy director.

She was referring to media coverage since the League of Polish Families, a party with a history of anti-Semitism, joined the governing coalition in April.

In addition, several high-profile incidents in the past six months have raised fears in the Diaspora for Polish-Jewish relations.

It's in this environment that some in Jewish circles privately have voiced concerns over public support for the museum project.

Wierzynska has been working behind the scenes with groups like the Business Center Club, the Polish Employers Federation and the Association of Entrepreneurs, who she says have shown a very positive attitude to the museum.

The city of Warsaw donated \$13 million and a plot of land for the museum next to the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising Memorial. ■

Dating site targets religious

By YULIANN VILKOS

KIEV, Ukraine (JTA) — A few months ago, Natalia Loshakova did not believe in online dating.

After all, the Jewish Dnepropetrovsk native has many friends, and is "not desperate," she says.

It still feels awkward, says Loshakova, 22, to check her e-mail first thing in the morning, and she's not used to looking forward to the phone calls she gets from the man she met on www.mazeltov.org.ua, a new Dnepropetrovsk-based Web site for Jewish singles.

"I can't believe it, we haven't met but I like him so much already," Loshakova confesses.

For about a month, the two communicated online, then switched to phone calls. Now they plan to meet in person.

The two-month-old Web site is for Jewish singles in Ukraine. It was created to solve a specific problem: In a country where the Jewish community is relatively small, with a major population center in Kiev but small, scattered communities elsewhere, young Jews say it's difficult to find Jewish partners.

Unlike similar dating services in the United States, this one has a clear goal: marriage and Jewish children. There's another difference as well: This one accepts only halachic Jews, those who have a Jewish mother or who have converted under Orthodox auspices.

The idea was hatched last winter by Udi Ben-Ami, Israel's consul general in Dnepropetrovsk, and local Chabad rabbi, Shmuel Kaminetski.

"It has always disturbed me to see how many single Jews in Ukraine can't find someone to marry," Ben-Ami says, adding that he's met many Ukrainian Jews in their 30s "who never got married, because they couldn't find a Jewish spouse."

Potential clients are required to meet with an approved rabbi and produce evidence that they are Jewish.

"We are worried about losing our people, and so we try to help them build pure Jewish families," Kaminetski says.

He says this requirement also makes

it easier for users, who do not have to ask about their prospective partner's Jewish status before engaging in conversation.

One of the site's other goals is to bring young people from intermarried families back to Judaism. Kaminetski says that he won't reject applicants who show a "genuine desire to find a Jewish partner and convert."

Currently the site features profiles of some 100 users. About 1,000 more are on the waiting list to get passwords, according to the site's administrator, Lisa Goldenberg.

Most of the users are 20 to 40 years old, with a slight majority of men, Goldenberg says. There are a few users from Russia, Israel and Germany "who seek Jewish partners from Ukraine," she says. The site currently operates only in Russian.

"We have only opened recently, so we don't really have any couples or marriages yet," she says. "But I see that people are writing to each other and I've been getting positive responses already."

In addition to contacting each other through e-mail, users can IM each other privately. They are encouraged to put up their photographs, says Goldenberg, but in keeping with the site's traditional approach, men and women are only able to view pictures of the opposite sex.

"We think it's understandable. Jewish Orthodox tradition does not accept same-sex relationships," she explains.

Also, "We don't put up photos that are too revealing, such as those that show a person in a swimming suit," Goldenberg says.

And the site does not operate on Shabbat and Jewish holidays.

Taras Tverdokhlib, 22, likes the new Web site and approves of its strict acceptance rules, saying there are so many dating sites already that this one "would not be needed" if it didn't have this specific goal.

But Alexandra Oleynikova, 19, doubts the project will succeed. She says having to show proof of a Jewish mother will scare off many users.

"I want to meet somebody, and they make me show my documents?" she says. "It seems a bit weird." ■

ACROSS
THE FORMER
SOVIET
UNION

The site doesn't
use revealing
pictures or operate
on Shabbat.

NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

Kosher suppliers subpoenaed

Federal subpoenas were served against several kosher meat suppliers in the United States in connection with an antitrust investigation. The New York Jewish Week reported that AgriProcessors, in Postville, Iowa, is among those hit with subpoenas. The subpoenas could be focusing on collusion in the kosher industry.

The Conservative movement currently is investigating complaints about working conditions at AgriProcessors, the country's largest kosher slaughterhouse.

NBA draft has strong Jewish flavor

Three Jewish basketball players were selected in the NBA draft. The Los Angeles Lakers took UCLA's Jordan Farmar in the first round, while Israelis Lior Eliyahu and Yotam Halperin were taken in the second round by the Orlando Magic and the Seattle Supersonics, respectively.

Eliyahu, whose rights later were traded to the Houston Rockets, is expected to continue playing in Israel for now.

Darfur postcard campaign reaches 1 million mark

The Million Voices for Darfur campaign has reached its goal of collecting 1 million postcards against the genocide in Sudan.

The postcards, which will be delivered to the White House and Capitol Hill, ask President Bush to "support a stronger multinational force to protect the people of Darfur."

The campaign has been a project of the Save Darfur Coalition, the group of 150 faith-based advocacy and humanitarian organizations responsible for April's Darfur rally in Washington.

Orthodox think tank closing

A modern Orthodox think tank is closing its doors. Edah is closing in part due to financial issues, the New York Jewish Week reported.

Edah was founded nine years ago to strengthen centrist Orthodoxy as the movement drifts to the right.

White House to Chabad: Bush won't press Israel

The Bush administration will not force Israel into concessions, top White House officials told representatives of the Lubavitch movement.

Chabad-Lubavitch culminated a two-day commemoration of the 12th anniversary of Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson's death with meetings Wednesday with Michael Chertoff, the Homeland Security secretary, and Joshua Bolten, the White House chief of staff. Both men are Jewish.

Canadian Jews blast Israel boycott

Canadian Jewish leaders criticized a church group for backing an Israel boycott.

The criticism came after the United Church of Canada's Toronto division endorsed a motion calling for economic sanctions and a boycott of Israel. The church group, which represents some 300 churches, also issued statements in support of the Ontario wing of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, which approved a controversial boycott of Israel in late May.

Columnist: 'New York Times' code for 'Jews'

A newspaper columnist said White House attacks on the New York Times were code for attacks on Jews.

"Many members of the president's base consider 'New York' to be a nifty code word for 'Jewish,'" Jon Carroll wrote in Thursday's San Francisco Chronicle.

Carroll said the attacks were an attempt to rally Bush's Republican base.

The Republican Jewish Coalition called Carroll's charges "reckless and irresponsible."

Kentucky employees denied access to Web sites

State employees in Kentucky cannot access three Jewish Web sites.

The employees have not been able to access jewishlearning.net, jewishworldreview.com or jewsweek.com for several months after an employee distributed material from one of the sites that was deemed religious, Gwen Pinson, general counsel for Kentucky's Finance Cabinet, told JTA.

News of the ban comes as Republican Gov. Ernie Fletcher's administration faces criticism for blocking access to blogs among other Internet sites last week.

Access to the sites can be restored only if an employee appeals to the Commonwealth's Office of Technology, Pinson said.

Jewish groups join employee protection initiative

Eight Jewish groups signed on to an initiative to protect the rights of hospitality industry employees.

The Reform, Conservative and Reconstructionist movements were among Jewish groups to join the Informed Meetings Exchange.

Launched Wednesday together with Christian and Muslim groups, the exchange is an information clearinghouse on relations between hospitality industry employers and employees.

Other Jewish groups include the Progressive Jewish Alliance, the Workmen's Circle, the Jewish Council on Urban Affairs, Jewish Funds for Justice and Panim.

WORLD

Romania marks wartime pogrom

Romania marked the anniversary of a World War II-era pogrom.

Thursday's commemorations marked the 1941 Iasi pogrom, where at least 10,000 Jews were killed on the orders of local authorities.

The government promised to teach children about anti-Semitism and the pogrom.

MIDEAST

Israeli man's body found

The body of a missing Israeli man was found. The body of Noah Moscovitz, 62, was found on the eastern outskirts of his hometown of Rishon le-Zion on Thursday, two days after he was reported missing.

The Al-Aksa Brigade terrorist group had claimed it was holding an Israeli of the same age, but a police probe ruled out foul play in Moscovitz's demise, raising the possibility that he died of natural causes while out on a walk.

Lawmaker blasts Arab colleagues

A right-wing Israeli lawmaker wants Arab colleagues who identify with Palestinian terrorist groups banned from the Knesset.

Zevulun Orlev of the National Union-National Religious Party said Thursday he would submit legislation calling for the banning of Arab lawmakers who openly sympathize with Palestinian terrorists.

His decision followed comments by Arab lawmakers Azmi Bishara and Ahmed Tibi about Sunday's abduction of an Israeli soldier by Gaza Strip gunmen.