

IN THE NEWS
**U.N. sees hold-ups
in Lebanon pullout**

The United Nations said there are hold-ups in negotiating the final withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon. Israel this month quit all Lebanese territory that its forces overran during its war with Hezbollah, except for the northern part of Ghajar.

Talks have been under way for weeks on Israel's demand that the bolstered United Nations peacekeeper force in southern Lebanon impose new security regulations in Ghajar to ensure Hezbollah does not use the village as a conduit for attacks or drug smuggling.

**Waxman blasts
Justice on Harman**

A top congressional Democrat called on the Justice Department to publicize what it knows about an investigation into relations between AIPAC and a Jewish congresswoman.

Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.), the ranking member of the U.S. House of Representatives Government Reform Committee, said in the letter sent Thursday that allegations of improper relations between Rep. Jane Harman (D-Calif.) and the American Israel Public Affairs Committee seem "absurd."

**Yad Vashem
gets large donation**

An American couple gave \$25 million to Yad Vashem, the largest single donation ever given to Israel's Holocaust memorial.

Sheldon Adelson and his wife, Miriam, gave the donation to help enhance Yad Vashem's programs in Holocaust education, documentation and research.

The donation is expected to help expand Yad Vashem's teacher-training activities in Israel and abroad and develop special programs for senior teachers, educational coordinators and shapers of public opinion.

A ceremony in honor of the Adelsons will be held Friday at Yad Vashem.

WORLD REPORT

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Jewish charities top list, but is it a complete picture?

The top 10 Jewish organizations

on the Chronicle of Philanthropy's Philanthropy 400

Name	Ranking	Rank last year	\$ raised in 2005	% change from 2004
United Jewish Communities	34	42	\$333,824,000	↓ 3%
Jewish Communal Fund	54	82	\$247,296,323	↑ 49.3%
American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee	70	60	\$203,330,851	* 3.4%
UJA-Federation of New York	72	84	\$196,744,000	↓ 18.9%
Jewish Fed./Jewish United Fund of Metro. Chicago	141	133	\$111,118,618	↑ 0.6%
Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston	174	238	\$88,779,140	↑ 40.8%
Jewish Community Foundation (L.A.)	178	153	\$87,765,940	even
Hadassah	194	183	\$81,043,950	↓ 3.3%
United Jewish Foundation and Jewish Fed. of Metro. Detroit	208	237	\$77,445,442	↑ 22.6%
American Society for Technion-Israel Institute of Technology	209	247	\$77,212,300	↑ 27.7%

By JACOB BERKMAN

NEW YORK (JTA) — Jewish groups annually look to The Chronicle of Philanthropy's list of top 400 fund-raising organizations the way the business world looks to the Forbes Fortune 500 list — to see how well Jewish philanthropy is doing.

This year's list, called "Philanthropy 400," placed 24 Jewish groups or institutions in the top 400, with the United Jewish Communities, the umbrella organization of the North American federation system, ranked highest at No. 34. It raised \$333,824,000 last year, down from \$344,106,000 in 2004, when it ranked 42nd.

But the list, published this year in the bi-

weekly's Oct. 26 issue, raises questions about how accurately — and completely — it portrays Jewish giving.

The list ranks charitable groups based on money collected in 2005 from private donors — not from government grants or fees that organizations charge. It was culled from IRS Form 990 tax documents and from information the charities provided.

The Jewish Communal Fund of New York, a direct-assist giving fund to which donors contribute and then decide later how to allocate their gift, was the second-highest grossing Jewish organization. It climbed to the No. 54 spot after seeing a huge increase last year, from some \$165 million to more than \$247 million in 2005. The increase was due in

Continued on page 2

■ *The UJC ranked highest this year of the Jewish philanthropies, at No. 34*

Continued from page 1

large part to a donation of a \$40 million art collection, according to Susan Dickman, the fund's executive vice president.

The Combined Jewish Philanthropies of Greater Boston also made a huge jump, moving up 64 spots to No. 174 after increasing its earnings by 40.8 percent, according to the list.

And the Jewish National Fund, which raised more than \$43 million in 2005 made the list for the first time, at No. 354. Its addition is significant because the organization's campaign has steadily gone up since 1998, when it raised \$18 million, according to the vice president of its campaign, Bud Levin.

But it wasn't all good news on the Jewish front. The Chronicle showed a 1.7 percent drop in total intake by the Jewish federations listed, and three federations dropped off the list, as did the Jewish Community Foundation of San Diego. That drop, according to UJC officials, does not represent a drop in the overall money that the federation system took in 2005, which was up by \$20 million. Instead, they said, it reflects some declining campaigns in certain cities.

In the past, Jewish groups have looked at the list as a yardstick that shows that Jews are disproportionately philanthropic, as the number of both dollars and Jewish groups represented is much higher than the tiny percent of the American population they represent.

And those who utilize the list, mostly other charities and foundations, are quick to praise it as the only such accounting of the country's top charities. As Mark Char-

endoff, the president of the Jewish Funders Network, noted, it is the only benchmark against which charities can measure their fund raising against that of other charities — both Jewish and non-Jewish.

But how accurate a portrait of Jewish giving does it actually paint?

It's "astonishing in any system, where Jews make up 2 to 2.5 percent of the population that they represent 5 percent of the organizations on this list," said Gary Tobin, the president of the Institute for Jewish and Community Research, which studies Jewish philanthropic trends.

Still, he said, the list "doesn't even reflect the size and scope of the philanthropic network," because some major Jewish charities are under-reported and because of a discrepancy in how the Chronicle and how Jews define religious giving.

JTA discovered at least one accounting error that left one federation off the list.

The Associated: Jewish Community Federation of Baltimore was ranked No. 243 on last year's Philanthropy 400 after raising more than \$60 million in 2004. It was dropped from the rankings this year, which would have meant it dropped below the nearly \$38 million that the 400th-ranked United Jewish Communities of MetroWest, N.J., took in.

But when JTA contacted the Baltimore federation, representatives there said their campaign and endowments both saw gains in 2005, bringing its intake to about \$68 million.

The Chronicle investigated the discrepancy and found that it had indeed made an error. The publication will print a correction, said Holly Hall, the features editor at the Chronicle, who put together the Philanthropy 400 with seven staff members over the last three months.

The capacity for error is just one of the problems in using the listing to evaluate the Jewish philanthropic landscape, according to philanthropy experts.

The biggest problem, he said, is that UJC's ranking is not based on a comprehensive picture of what the federation system as a whole brings in. The 990 forms show UJC took in \$333 million in 2005. That represents the total of what each of the federations gave to UJC, the umbrella or-

ganization for the 155 member federations, to distribute overseas and for its operating expenses.

But in 2005, that system as a whole took in more than \$839 million through individual campaigns alone, a UJC spokesman told JTA. And that is on top of \$1.4 billion in new gifts to federation endowment

funds. In total, the federation system has more than \$10.5 billion in endowment funds, which yielded \$800 million and paid out \$1.2 billion in grants in 2005.

The Chronicle has pushed UJC

to consolidate the private donations made to all 155 federations, similar to what the United Way does with its subsidiaries. Hall said that two years ago, UJC submitted to the Chronicle an off-the-record sum of \$2 billion, which would have made it second on last year's list, after the United Way.

Whether to file as one federation system is a constant discussion within UJC, according to Steve Hoffman, the group's former CEO and president of the Jewish Community Federation of Cleveland, which ranked No. 212 on the 2005 list.

But, in the end, he said, federations prefer to file individually so that some of the larger federations can stand out.

"There is value in brand identity on the local level," he said. "In case of New York and Chicago, they are among the most prominent charities in the U.S., period." The 72nd-ranked UJA-Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York raised nearly \$197 million and the 141st-ranked Jewish Federation/Jewish United Fund of Metropolitan Chicago took in more than \$111 million.

But that arrangement helps skew the landscape of Jewish giving, Tobin said.

"You have this huge network of federations operating year in and year out through regular and special and emergency campaigns and building and philanthropic funds. It is a huge enterprise, and it doesn't show up on this list."

Another issue in using the list is that religious groups are not required to file 990 forms. So while some religious groups are included on the list because they submitted information to the Chronicle, according to the report, they are not well represented in general. ■

In the past, Jewish groups have looked at the list as a yardstick that shows that Jews are disproportionately philanthropic.



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Secular yeshiva engages young Israelis

By DINA KRAFT

TEL AVIV (JTA) — Ofri Bar-Am, 19, folds her legs underneath her on a library couch and peers closely at a photocopy of the biblical passage describing the oldest recorded case of sibling rivalry in history, Cain and Abel.

A student at the first secular yeshiva in Israel, Bar-Am underlines phrases, scribbles notations and promptly dives into a psychological and theological discussion with her study partners about the story's layered meanings and relevance.

"Cain's whole purpose seems to be trying to please God, and when that doesn't happen he breaks down and kills his brother," she said. Pointing out a puzzling phrase she asks, "What does it mean? How did this happen?"

Bar-Am is part of an incoming class of 30 young, non-religious Israelis who, like her, are combining study at the secular yeshiva with army service. A total of 150 students are attending classes here.

The Secular Yeshiva of Tel Aviv, as it's called, has students divide their time between studying Jewish texts and volunteering in economically disadvantaged areas of south Tel Aviv where the yeshiva is located. There they do informal education projects with local elementary school students and after-school programming for them.

The goal is to give young, secular Israelis an education that will show them that they too have a rich culture to tap into and explore. Like many Israelis, young and old, those that come to the yeshiva know little about Judaism and feel alienated from religion, which they view as the domain of the fervently Orthodox.

There's no expectation or even intention for religious observance to follow.

Instead, the yeshiva's founders hope students will gain an appreciation for religious pluralism and a desire to fuse their newfound knowledge of Judaism with work for social justice and human rights.

The yeshiva is a project of BINA, The Center for Jewish Identity and Hebrew Culture, sponsored by the United Kibbutz Movement. The organization hopes to strengthen pluralism and democracy in Israel by focusing on the humanistic aspects of Judaism.

"One of the reasons for the secular yeshiva is to counter the mindset of opposition to Judaism as only a religious concept. We are here to give a different answer," said

Tal Shaked, 33, a former lawyer who serves as yeshiva head.

"I want to see people who are more socially minded, so the study is based not just on analyzing texts but seeing how these ideas can be applied as individuals and as members of Israeli society," she said.

About half of the 30 students currently studying ahead of their army service pay tuition and follow the yeshiva model of studying from early morning until late at night, studying in pairs known as chevrotas.

The other half combine their yeshiva studying and volunteering with odd jobs to support themselves.

Organizers hope to win official recognition from the government as a combined yeshiva-army program, a type that exists in the modern Orthodox community and receives state funding.

Another group of post-army students also combines study with work and, like the others, lives in communal apartments in the Shapira and Kiryat Shalom neighborhoods of Tel Aviv.

Eventually the plan is to be able to accommodate some 500 students. There are teachers from the three main streams of Judaism — Orthodox, Conservative and Reform.

The yeshiva receives funding from the New Israel Fund, the Commission on Jewish Identity and Renewal and the Jewish Federations of Los Angeles and New York City. It reflects a trend in recent years of secular Jewish Israelis seeking a stronger connection to a heritage muted by the founders of the state, who preferred to detach Judaism from Zionism.

Several centers have opened in Israel that have begun to introduce Jewish text study to a secular audience. This yeshiva, however, is the first seminary of its kind in Israel.

"I think Israeli society has paid a price for Zionism's attempts to cut out religion. It has created an identity crisis," said Ariel Nitzan, 18, from Kibbutz Lotan, who will be doing a half-year of work-study at

the yeshiva before joining a combat unit in the army, then returning for a period to the yeshiva.

"I feel like I'm also doing something for national security, but from a different point of view," Nitzan said. "I'm dealing with the question of Jewish identity and contributing to social justice on some level."

Dana Ben-Asher, 19, said she was always interested in Jewish topics but on Kibbutz Dorot, where she grew up, the focus was on socialist Zionism, as it is at most secular kibbutzim.

"We would build a sukkah and would ask why, and all the answers would be about pioneers and the importance of being Israeli," she said.

The yeshiva students complain that in high school they were taught the Bible as a dry, impersonal subject.

Avigail Graetz, 30, a playwright and teacher who gives a course at the yeshiva on sibling relationships in the Bible, grew up in Israel's small Conservative movement.

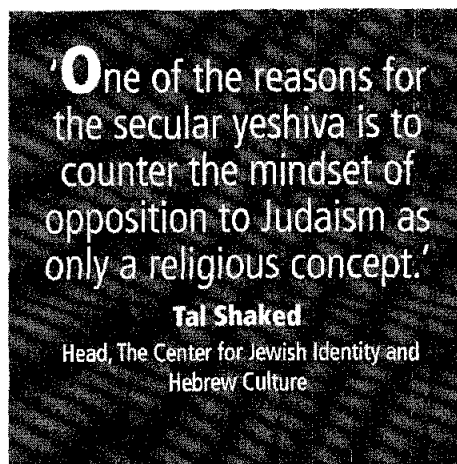
"They don't even notice how they peel the layers back," she said of her students' astute analyses in her course.

If you start discussing the Bible per se, you can turn them off, she said — "but when you talk about siblings in general they bring themselves into the text, and it's beautiful. Their interpretations, their broad conceptions are so enriching."

Graetz said the approach to study is not about "right or wrong. We aren't doing it for halachah, and we don't come from a place of 'God knows better.'"

Efrat Kolenberg, 23, from Haifa, is among those in the yeshiva doing work-study after the army.

"I want to live a life of meaning and to be part of a community," she said, sitting at a picnic table outside of the yeshiva/community center. "Jewish texts interest me because they deal with our lives. Through them I can think about myself and my society, and ask questions I wouldn't otherwise be asking about my culture." ■



Groups watching local ballot initiatives

By RON KAMPEAS

WASHINGTON (JTA) — In an election year that already defies the dictum that “all politics are local,” U.S. Jewish groups are urging their voters to help decide national issues through a decidedly local means: the ballot initiative.

The message a number of national groups have sent to members is that the future of issues as diverse as abortion access, gay-partner rights, the death penalty, affirmative action and stem-cell research will play out Nov. 7 in local ballot initiatives.

The initiatives add more “big-issue” layers to 2006 midterm elections that already are unusually focused on national issues, particularly the Iraq war.

Jewish officials say successful ballot initiatives in one state often presage national trends, no matter how isolated or far-flung the locale. For example, gay-marriage-ban initiatives in Hawaii and Alaska in 1998 have since ballooned into constitutional bans in 20 states, with eight more on the ballot this year.

With such successes fueling the popularity of ballot initiatives in recent decades, deciding which ones to focus on becomes a challenge, a senior official of one national Jewish organization said.

“These things are spreading like a malignant tumor,” the official said.

That snowball effect makes it crucial for voters to understand what’s on a ballot, and many state branches of Jewish groups host forums on whether or not they’re endorsing or opposing an initiative.

“Our branches are presenting information about ballot initiatives, even those we don’t have a stake in,” said Sammie Moshenberg, Washington director of the National Council of Jewish Women.

Tax laws that prohibit nonprofits from campaigning for candidates do not apply to ballot initiatives, which means that the Jewish voice has been especially robust on the various propositions.

In addition to the Reform movement’s Religious Action Center and NCJW, the Anti-Defamation League, American Jewish Committee, Hadassah: Women’s Zionist Organization of America and local Jewish community relations councils



Photo courtesy j. the Jewish news weekly of Northern California

Several Jewish groups are battling efforts to ban gay marriages. Pictured is a Jewish man marrying his partner in a civil ceremony in San Francisco in 2004.

have been active supporting and opposing initiatives. Orthodox Jewish groups, which in the past have taken opposing views on many of the domestic issues backed by other Jewish groups, are staying out of this year’s ballot battles to conserve resources.

Here’s a selection of ballot initiatives that have caught the attention of national Jewish groups:

- **Death penalty:** A number of Jewish groups, including the Reform movement and the AJCommittee, have joined a coalition of opponents to a ballot initiative that

would restore the death penalty in Wisconsin, which banned it in the 1850s.

The initiative comes as support for capital punishment is receding, the result of DNA evidence and the role it has played in releasing dozens of death-row inmates throughout the 38 states where the death penalty is still available. Keeping the death penalty off Wisconsin’s books would lend momentum to national efforts to suspend capital punishment.

- **Abortion:** Chapters of national Jewish groups like the AJCommittee and the NCJW in California and Oregon are active in pushing against parental-notification

initiatives in those states, but perhaps the most critical ballot initiative is in South Dakota, where the Jewish community is minuscule.

The South Dakota initiative would overturn legislation passed earlier this year that banned abortion in all cases except when a woman’s life is at risk. Believed to be the broadest existing criminalization of abortion, the legislation makes it a crime to abort a fetus even in cases of rape or incest.

- **Affirmative action:** Michigan voters will consider an affirmative action ban so broad it has earned the opposition of Jewish groups that in the past have hedged

in their support for selecting candidates based on race or ethnic origin, like ADL and AJCommittee.

Detroit’s NCJW chapter has led opposition, Moshenberg said.

- **Stem-cell research:** Hadasah’s St. Louis chapter and the local JCRC have taken the lead in stumping for a

ballot initiative that would ban government interference in embryonic stem-cell research, except for human cloning.

The issue has been a Missouri focus in recent years because evangelical Christian groups have pressed the legislature to ban the research because it violates their definition of life.

U.S.
ELECTIONS
2006

A number of Jewish groups, including the Reform movement and the AJCommittee, have joined opponents to a ballot initiative that would restore the death penalty in Wisconsin.

Arabs, Muslims re-emerge in U.S. politics

By CLAUDE R. MARX

SALEM, Mass. (JTA) — Arab and Muslim Americans, long in the shadows of American politics, are building on the activism they began in 2004.

Next month's likely election of the first Muslim to Congress, coupled with increased campaign donations and a voter registration drive, indicate that the groups are continuing to raise their profiles after briefly becoming less politically active after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

As of Sept. 30, seven Muslim and Arab political action committees had contributed a total of \$160,000 to federal candidates, up from \$130,000 at the same time during the last election cycle.

There are 52 Arab Americans seeking office this year, up from 49 in 2004, according to the Arab American Institute, a Washington-based lobbying and advocacy group.

At least 35 Muslims are seeking office, according to the Web site of the Muslim Alliance, a California-based advocacy group. Keith Ellison, who is heavily favored, would become the country's highest-ranking Muslim elected official if he wins an open U.S. House of Representatives seat from Minneapolis.

The Washington-based Muslim American Society has launched a renewed effort to get the nation's 2.2 million Muslim registered voters to the polls. The strategy includes a revamped Web site, more voter education programs and more voter-regis-

tration machines in mosques.

In 2004, 84 percent of registered Muslims voted — far above the national average — compared with 41 percent in 2000, according to the Muslim American Political Action Committee. University of Akron political scientist John Green said participation levels increased because Muslims and Arab Americans were frustrated by what they felt was the singling

out of some community members for harassment after Sept. 11.

The Arab American Institute has a voter registration and get-out-the-vote effort as well. It includes placing signs in English and Arabic in neighborhoods with many Arab Americans, reading, "our vote is our power."

"The threats to civil liberties from the Patriot Act and concern about the war in Iraq are sources of great concern in our community. That is really motivating our members to vote in greater numbers," said James Zogby, president of the Arab American Institute.

His organization has formed alliances with a broad array of politicians, including Pennsylvania Gov. Edward Rendell, a

Jew, because Rendell has been responsive to Arab American concerns on economic and civil rights issues.

Zogby said campaign giving has been strong this year, but victims of the war in Lebanon are receiving some funds that might otherwise have been donated to U.S. political candidates.

Officials of four Muslim advocacy organizations did not return requests for comment.

Of the 3.5 million or so Arab Americans in the United States, 60 percent are Christian. Significant concentrations of Arab Americans live in California, Florida, Michigan, New Jersey, New York, Ohio and Pennsylvania, all of which have closely watched races this year.

Approximately 4.7 million Muslims live in the United States, more than 80 percent of them black Muslims or non-Arabs from South Asia.

"The Muslim and Arab communities around Detroit can make a significant difference in individual races, but elsewhere they don't have the numbers. But they can make a bigger

impact by raising money and joining broader coalitions," the University of Akron's Green said.

In 2004, Arab Americans and Muslims supported Sen. John Kerry (D-Mass.) over President Bush by 72 percent to 28 percent. In 2000, Bush received 46 percent of their support, according to exit polls.

Both parties face obstacles in attracting Muslims and Arab Americans to their permanent support bases.

Bush has made several well-publicized visits to mosques and has gone to great lengths to note that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan are against terrorism, not against Islam. But he angered Muslims and Arab Americans in several speeches by referring to some terrorists as "Islamic fascists."

Many Democrats have criticized the war in Iraq and what they see as Bush administration attempts to restrict civil liberties at home. However, the strong influence of Jews in the party could make it difficult for Democrats to be overly receptive to the agenda of Arab Americans and Muslims.

Claude R. Marx is a political columnist for *The Eagle-Tribune* in North Andover, Mass.

U.S.
ELECTIONS
2006

The threats to civil liberties from the Patriot Act and concern about the war in Iraq are... really motivating our members to vote.

James Zogby
President, Arab American Institute



Congressional candidate Keith Ellison.

Ellison for Congress

Tiny community lives on in Bahrain

By LARRY LUXNER

MANAMA, Bahrain (JTA) — If you want to find the only synagogue in the Persian Gulf, come to Bahrain — a tiny desert kingdom linked to Saudi Arabia by the 15-mile King Fahd Causeway.

But don't expect to find kosher restaurants, yeshivas or Yiddishkeit in this land of mosques and minarets; just 36 of Bahrain's 700,000 or so inhabitants are Jews.

That's not much — but these three dozen people form the only known Jewish community in any of the six countries comprising the Gulf Cooperation Council (Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates).

"The community is quite happy," said Nancy Khedouri, 31, a Bahraini Jew. "People are very friendly. I went to school here, and all my friends from childhood are here. They always accepted me for who I was. It's a very open society."

Bahrain, the smallest of the Arab League's 22 member nations, is slightly smaller than New York City. Its wealth is derived from vast petroleum resources, and its capital, Manama, is a modern, traffic-congested metropolis crowded with gleaming office towers, banks and shopping malls.

Annual per-capita income here is a healthy \$19,000, though that's less than that of Bahrain's richer neighbors — Qatar and the UAE — which have successfully diversified their economies into tourism and financial services.

While an unknown number of expatriate Jews live in the GCC countries, working on contract for governments or private companies, only in Bahrain has a real Jewish community ever existed.

That's a source of pride for Bahraini officials, who mentioned that fact during recent lobbying for a free-trade agreement with the United States. In order to win approval for the agreement in 2004, Bahrain agreed to drop its boycott of companies that do business with Israel.

Bahrain's ambassador in Washington, Naser al-Belooshi, spoke proudly of his country's Jewish community at a recent speech at a synagogue in Florida sponsored by the Jewish Federation of Palm Beach County.

Khedouri, who's writing a book on the subject, says that as many as 1,500 Jews once lived in Bahrain. Nearly all of them came

from Iraq, starting with the Yadgar family in the 1880s. The Yadgars became wealthy from the textile trade, while another prominent Jewish family, the Nonoos, made their fortune in banking, and the Khedouris are Bahrain's leading importer of tablecloths and bed linens.

Electronics retailer Rouben Rouben was born in 1954 to a Sephardi Jewish family from Baghdad.

"In the 1930s and '40s, the area along Al-Mutanabi Road was known as 'Jews' Street' because there were so many

Jewish-owned shops," Rouben told JTA. "On Saturday, all the shops would close for Shabbat."

Things changed in 1948 with the establishment of the State of Israel. Riots erupted, the synagogue was burned down and most of Bahrain's Jews immigrated to Great Britain.

Even in the 1960s, there were still 200 to 300 Jews in the country, but after 1967 — when anti-Israel riots again broke out following the Six-Day War — Jewish communal life in Bahrain came to an end.

Today, the country's Jews rarely get together, Khedouri said. The last Jewish funeral was in 2001, and they barely managed to get a minyan.

"The community is dying out," she said. "There is no rabbi here, so all religious ceremonies must be conducted abroad. Most of the people who are still in Bahrain are single. There's not much to choose from, and there are very few cases of intermarriage."

Finding the shul isn't easy, because it isn't identified in any way as a Jewish house of worship. Even Khedouri had a hard time locating the nondescript beige structure along Sasa'ah Avenue in a low-class commercial district of Manama.

In fact, the only marking on the synagogue itself was a blue-and-white bumper sticker slapped on the front door with the Arabic word "la," or "no," superimposed on the U.S. and Israeli flags, with a message in Arabic: "Every dinar you pay toward American goods goes to kill a Pal-

estinian. And every dinar you pay toward the Palestinian people helps restore their rights."

Shopkeepers eyed this reporter warily as he snapped pictures of the synagogue, which is always closed — as is the Jewish cemetery on the outskirts of town.

However, both were visited in the early 1990s by Yossi Sarid, a left-wing member of Israel's Knesset, when a solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict appeared imminent. The Jewish state quietly set up trade offices in Oman and Qatar, two moderate Arab countries that seemed ripe for peacemaking.

"Then the intifada started and things went backward," said Rouben, noting that the trade office in Oman closed in the wake of hostilities, though the Israeli mission in Qatar remains open for business.

Rouben's nephew, Daoud Rouben, 19, is studying architecture at MIT. Daoud

has two sisters; one goes to Cambridge University, while the other is at the London School of Economics on a Bahraini government scholarship.

"I think people abroad have an image that the Middle East is full of tension

between Arabs and Jews," said Daoud Rouben, who was back home visiting family. "But if I walk down the street here, people can't tell where I'm from. They think I'm just another Bahraini."

The only restriction at all, the elder Rouben said, is that he can't travel to Israel. But he claims he wouldn't do that anyway until there's peace between Arabs and Jews.

Khedouri says she feels the same way.

"We've never been to Israel, we have nobody there, and because we hold Bahraini passports we cannot travel to Israel," she said. "As far as we're concerned, whatever the government will not let us do, we will not do. We're law-abiding citizens."

Rouben said that even during Israel's recent war with Hezbollah, he had no problems.

"Since we are a very small community, everybody knows who we are. Even if you gave me all the wealth of this world, I wouldn't leave this country. For me, it is home." ■

AROUND THE JEWISH WORLD

In 1948, riots erupted, the synagogue was burned down and most of Bahrain's Jews immigrated to Great Britain.

OP-ED

A boy's impression of two 1956 crises

By DANIEL S. MARIASCHIN

WASHINGTON (JTA) — Fifty years ago this month, I experienced my first awareness of the world around me.

It was the vague awareness of a 7-year-old in a household that had only a radio but which did have two parents who avidly followed world affairs.

Evening table talk often would be about Eisenhower administration policy in the Middle East.

In October 1956, I recall being made aware of two major events at the time whose impact and reverberations are still being felt today.

I can still hear the radio newscasts about the Hungarian uprising against Communist rule that began Oct. 23. What I recall best is hearing that young Hungarians were throwing Molotov cocktails at Soviet tanks in the streets of Budapest.

"What's a Molotov cocktail?" I remember asking my parents.

On Oct. 29 the Suez Campaign began, in which Israel joined Britain and France in an assault on the Sinai Peninsula and the Suez Canal. The British and French were eager to turn back Egyptian President Nasser's nationalization of the Canal; Israel was responding to incessant Palestinian terrorist attacks originating from then-Egyptian occupied Gaza. I was amazed when my father read aloud from the newspaper that "the Israelis had captured 40,000 Egyptian army blankets" as a result of its successful advance in the Sinai.

Fifty years later, I certainly follow events much more closely. Israel and Hungary still are making news; many of the Budapest street fighters of 1956 lived to see a free and democratic Hungary.

While the Suez Canal remains nationalized, Israel still is fighting a war on terrorism that has seen no respite over these many years.

Maybe we need to make a real difference while we can, so that 50 years from now today's 7-year-olds will not be lamenting, as we do, that the more things change, the more they stay the same. ■

(Daniel S. Mariaschin is executive vice president of B'nai B'rith International.)

Archive uncovers old Yiddish tunes

By CHANAN TIGAY

LOS ANGELES (JTA) — "Bay mir bistu sheyn" may very well be the most famous of all Yiddish songs.

It was the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers' most popular song of 1938. Renditions have been recorded by the Andrews Sisters, Ella Fitzgerald, Judy Garland, the Barry Sisters and Rudy Vallee, among other musical luminaries.

Yet until recently, only a handful of theater historians were aware that the song — whose title means "In my eyes, you're beautiful" — originated in the Second Avenue Yiddish theater of the 1930s.

Even fewer people knew what the play that launched this massive hit was about. Indeed, many casual listeners didn't even know that the words of the title were anything more than gibberish, or some form of Americanized German.

In fact, the original song was in Yiddish; the popular versions maintained only the Yiddish of the title, substituting English for the rest.

Thanks to the Milken Archive of American Jewish Music, that's all changing.

The Los Angeles-based institution has unearthed the back story to this iconic song and many others, and has set it down in the liner notes to its three-CD set of Yiddish theater songs — along with a new recording of the piece as it might have sounded when originally sung at Brooklyn's Rolland Theater in 1932.

It's one of more than 600 works, ranging from popular to liturgical to classical, newly recorded by the archive.

Founded in 1990 by Lowell Milken, chairman of the Milken Family Foundation, the archive is an effort of international scope to record, preserve and distribute American Jewish music that might otherwise be lost, and to accompany it with written historical documentation. Most of the music has never before been recorded, archive staff say.

On Nov. 13, in conjunction with the Unit-

ed Jewish Community's General Assembly, the Jewish Federation of Greater Los Angeles, the Jewish Community Foundation and the Milken Archive are sponsoring a concert of Jewish music at L.A.'s Disney Hall that will include a Yiddish theater review. Among the performers will be Theodore Bikel, Leonard Nimoy and the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

Later in November, the archive will release "Great Songs of the Yiddish Stage, Vol. 3," the 50th CD release since the archive's inception. "The Milken Archive Deluxe Box Set," a collection of these first 50 discs, will be available at the archive's Web site, www.milkenarchive.org.

As for "Bay mir bistu sheyn," which was written by composer Sholom Secunda, researchers discovered booklets about the

play from which it was plucked — "M'ken leben nor m'lost nit," or "One could really live but they won't let you" — in the basement of a New York museum.

Along with the aid of other historical materials, they were able to piece together the basic plot of the show, which the album notes say was "decidedly weak, even for

typical Second Avenue fare."

Still, Levin says, knowledge of the lost Yiddish plays of Second Avenue "is important sociologically and historically."

It was "a whole Jewish culture," he says. "And not only a Jewish culture — a whole chapter of American culture."

Though the archive's liner notes say the dialogue from the show that spawned "Bay mir bistu sheyn" is nothing to write home about, here, at least, is the summary of the long-lost plot, from the CD booklet:

"Jake, a shoe factory worker who is fired for union organizing activity, is in love with the owner's daughter, Hene. In response to her concern about the endurance of his commitment to her, he sings 'Bay mir bistu sheyn' to her at some point in the first act. Despite a series of predictable attempts to thwart the marriage, they are, of course, wed in the end."

Now, after their 74-year honeymoon in obscurity, Jake and Hene can — tenks Gott! — live happily ever after. ■

ARTS & CULTURE

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NEWS IN BRIEF

NORTH AMERICA

Bush: Shalit return would help Syria

President Bush said facilitating the return of a captured Israeli soldier would help Syria in American eyes.

Bush was asked at a news conference Wednesday what would persuade him to work with Syria.

Bush listed helping Iraq succeed; not interfering in Lebanon; and ending sponsorship of anti-Israel terrorism.

Help Israel get back the prisoner that was captured by Hamas," he said, referring to Cpl. Gilad Shalit, captured by gunmen affiliated with the terrorist group in a June 25 cross-border raid.

Two-state initiative mounts

Organizers of an initiative to promote greater U.S. engagement toward a two-state solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict met in New York.

The organizers met Wednesday, said Jeremy Ben-Ami, one of the lead organizers, but he would not add further details except to say that the meetings are ongoing.

The organizers have approached George Soros and Charles Bronfman for funding.

Bronfman did not return calls seeking comment

Dems to host Israel online meeting

Top U.S. congressional Democrats will host an online "town hall meeting" about Israel on Friday.

Participants in the meeting at noon, Eastern Time, include Rep. Nancy Pelosi (D-Calif.), the minority leader; Rep. Henry Waxman (D-Calif.) and Rep. Alcee Hastings (D-Fla.), both likely committee chairmen if Democrats win the U.S. House of Representatives on Nov. 7; and other members of the Democrats' Israel Working Group. Questions for the group may be posted at <http://demcaucus.townhall.house.gov>.

Jewish senator ranked high

A U.S. Jewish senator consistently got the highest marks in a good government group's analysis of lawmakers' relations to special interests.

Sen. Herb Kohl (D-Wis.) was the senator with the lowest reliance on special interest money, according to Public Citizen's analysis published this week. Kohl also scored lowest in contributions from lobbyists, out-of-state contributions and political action committees.

MIDDLE EAST

Peres: West bolsters Iran

Shimon Peres chided the international community for not being firmer in its efforts to curb Iran's nuclear program. "Iran is not strong.

The reaction to Iran is weak, and that is what strengthens it," the Israeli vice premier said Thursday after talks with visiting European Union foreign policy chief Javier Solana.

The U.N. Security Council has agreed to discuss sanctions against Iran for its refusal to halt atomic procedures that could be used to produce a bomb, but implementation of the council decision has been held up by internal disagreements.

Israel criticized on security policies

An Israeli human rights group accused Israel of violating international law in its handling of Palestinian security prisoners.

In a report issued Thursday, B'Tselem said Israeli security forces have arrested some 9,000 Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza

Strip, incarcerating many of them within the Jewish state.

This, it said, constitutes a breach of international laws against civilians from an occupied territory being forcibly transferred to the territory of the occupying power.

B'Tselem further alleged that prison arrangements make it hard for inmates' families to visit.

Israel's Justice Ministry had no immediate comment on the group's claims, but said Israeli forces make all efforts to grant prisoners visitation rights without compromising national security.

Israel launches rebranding campaign

Israel's Foreign Ministry launched a drive to rebrand the country internationally.

Senior Israeli diplomats and PR executives held a two-day conference in Tel Aviv this week aimed at coming up with ways to offset the Jewish state's reputation abroad as country constantly at war.

The strategy, once formulated, is meant to be implemented in 2007 with a ministry budget of \$4.6 million.

Foreign Minister Tzipi Livni said she wanted to replace Israel's "conflict" image with one of tourism and investment.

Poll: U.S. Jewish-Israel ties weak

Young Israeli Jews learn little about American Jewry in school, according to a new study. More than 60 percent said the subject had never been studied at all, while 13 percent said the subject of American Jewry was studied at least once. The study, conducted by the American Jewish Committee, surveyed 150 history and civics teachers. Recent studies of American Jews in their 20s and 30s, meanwhile, indicated a very low sense of connection to Israel.

Young Jews visit northern Israel

About 2,000 young Diaspora Jews in Israel as part of the Masa program gathered in northern Israel in a show of solidarity following this summer's war.

The group held a solidarity march through the city of Acre. Some arrived from Jerusalem, where they met with Knesset members and with soldiers who fought in Lebanon.

WORLD

Russian Jewish community drops synagogue bid

A Jewish community in Russia had to drop its claim for an old synagogue building confiscated by the Bolsheviks.

The Krasnodar community will ask the city for a plot of land to build a new shul instead.

The synagogue building now houses the local offices of the Communist Party of the Russian Federation.

"We have tried to get the old building of the synagogue transferred to the community, but we failed," community chairman Yuri Teitelbaum told the Interfax news agency this week.

European politicians delay Israel trip

A visit by a European Parliament delegation to Israel was postponed due to Israel's concern over a far-right French delegate.

The trip by 16 politicians, scheduled for Oct. 28-Nov. 4, was delayed, according to EUobserver.com, because of the presence of Marine Le Pen, a member of the National Front and daughter of anti-immigration politician Jean Marie Le Pen, who has made anti-Semitic comments in the past.

"The composition of the delegation, which includes a person coming from a party whose ranks are linked to anti-Semitism and Holocaust deniers, made it very, very difficult for us," an Israeli diplomat reportedly told EUobserver.com.