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MULTI-FAITH GROUP SUES ONTARIO

By Tribune Staff

TORONTO – Just how unfair could provincial policy be towards non-Catholic, faith-based schools to result in a lawsuit against the McGuinty government by the Multi-Faith Coalition for Equal Funding of Faith-Based Schools (MFC) and eight families of disabled children?

At a press conference last Tuesday at the main legislative building at Queen's Park, the legal representatives for MFC and two families involved in the legal action said why they filed the lawsuit the previous day, alleging discrimination against disabled children in Ontario's non-Catholic religious schools.

Allan Kaufman, MFC lawyer, and Brian Shell, whose firm, Shell Lawyers, filed the suit, explained that in 2000 the provincial health ministry began funding to assist students in faith-based schools who required speech therapy, occupational therapy, physiotherapy and/or nursing services. The Catholic and public schools had already been getting this funding. Each of these services continues to be provided by the McGuinty government in the religious schools today, from Ontario's ministry of health, with one exception: If the child needs a speech therapist to help with a language delay disorder, no government funding is provided to hire a speech therapist in the school, since the child does not have a stuttering problem. No such distinction is made for government funding of language delayed children in the Catholic and public schools in Ontario, Kaufman said.

However, since the year 2000 and continuing to date under the McGuinty government, according to Kaufman, no government funding has been provided to any of the religious schools for children who need help in the classroom for blindness, deafness or a learning disability. "These happen to be the major categories of disability that we need funding for in the schools," he said. "The justification offered by McGuinty is that the funding for the blind, deaf, and learning disabled comes from the Ontario department of education, and not health. Of course, the Catholic and public school kids do receive Ontario government funding for the blind, deaf, and learning disabled, regardless of which Ontario department pays for it."

Therefore, out of the \$14.4 million set aside by the McGuinty government each fiscal year for disabled students in all of the province's faith-based schools,



Nada Moussa (right), mother of a partially blind 10-year-old (left) who attends a Muslim school, albeit with great difficulty, and a younger daughter in Grade 1 who's also visually challenged, spoke to the press about the family's decision to sue the government. In background: Allan Kaufman, lawyer for the Multi-Faith Coalition for Equal Funding of Faith-Based Schools.

only about \$4.5 million has been spent annually.

"This is what they'll have to answer to in court," Kaufman declared. "It is truly a challenge for the government to explain why it hasn't provided the in-school support that children get in public and Catholic schools. Where is the equal protection of the law?"

According to the suit applicants,

there are about 675,000 children enrolled in the Catholic system and only about 50,000 in the other faith-based schools. The latter translates to 2 per cent of Ontario's students.

"The government has given us the runaround over the past three months," Kaufman said. "They refused to give us a document explaining these figures. ... We're

confident the \$10 million is unspent. We've sought to have a meeting with the attorney general, the minister of education, the minister of health, even the minister responsible for special education. ... Our letters went unanswered. We have been completely and totally shut out. Is it any wonder, then, that we have to resort to suing them to get their attention? "It's blatant religious discrimination. The situation is intolerable."

Nada Moussa, mother of a partially blind 10-year-old who attends a Muslim school, albeit with great difficulty, and a younger daughter in Grade 1 who's also visually challenged, spoke to the press about the family's decision to sue the government. The younger child will not be able to attend the faith-based school. "I wish she could go to the Islamic school, but she can't. She needs braille," Moussa said. "She needs even more help than the older girl. I don't have any choice. I wish we could do something about it. So many families are waiting for that."

The older child, Tebat Kadhem, said she needs a teacher or assistant to help her read what's on the board. She has to miss her recess daily "just because of my eye vision. I need software with bigger print in the computer class."

In fact, Khalid Khokar, MFC officer and principal of the Islamic school in Cambridge, said he has been forced to deny admission to a number of special needs children who "have had to enroll in public school where the government

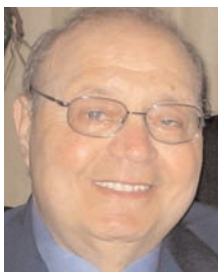
Canada Day a time to cherish our fundamental democratic principles

TORONTO – July 1 marked the 140th anniversary of Canada's independence.

"We are proud of our great country and the many diverse accomplishments of Canadians from all walks of life," said Gerry Weinstein, national president of B'nai Brith Canada.

"On this day of national celebration, we must cherish the fundamental democratic principles upon which this country was founded, notably tolerance and respect for all peoples. As Canada continues to grow and expand, welcoming newcomers from other lands, we must rejoice in our diversity, and educate our youth about core Canadian rights and values.

"On this day of national solidarity, let us honour the brave Canadian soldiers, many of whom are currently deployed



GERRY WEINSTEIN

in Afghanistan, fighting on the frontlines on the war against terrorism. Let us recognize their many sacrifices and their vital role in furthering democracy at home and abroad.

"Let us continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder alongside the other democracies of the world, upholding the unshakable bonds of friendship, which unite us all."

Olmert ready to let 250 terrorists out of jail for no-terror pledge

SHARM EL-SHEIKH, Egypt (Arutz-7) – During his concluding speech at the Sharm El-Sheikh four-way conference last Monday, Prime Minister Ehud Olmert announced his decision to release 250 terrorists from Israeli prison.

Candidates for release are those whose terrorist activities did not end in known deaths, and who were imprisoned for terror-related activities on behalf of Palestinian Authority Chairman Mahmoud Abbas's Fatah faction.

The released individuals will have to sign a commitment to refrain from further terrorist activities after their release.

Addressing his remarks to Palestinian Authority Arabs, Olmert said that Israel is just as sensitive to the issue of its kid-



EHUD OLMERT

napped soldiers as the residents of the PA are to the issue of their relatives serving time in Israeli jails as convicted terrorists.

Olmert mentioned Gilad Shalit, held by Hamas, and called his Hamas captors "inhumane" and "emotional extortioners."

See OLMERT, page 2.

A new star on the right?

By Atara Beck
Tribune Staff Writer

JERUSALEM-TORONTO – Many observers are looking at Knesset member Arieh Eldad as a symbol of hope for the beleaguered Jewish state that has had its share of corrupt leaders.

In fact, the Israeli politician is heading a new national movement called *Hatikvah*, which means, literally, the hope. Eldad is a world-renowned medical doctor. He was surgeon general of the medical corps and the head of plastic surgery at Hadassah hospital in Jerusalem when the second intifada broke out in 2000.

"There were about 3,000 casualties in two years, mostly burns, among other injuries, from suicide bombers," he said in a phone interview from Jerusalem. "I realized that preventive medicine is the most effective way to practice. Prevention is so much more efficient. In terror, preventive medicine doesn't lie within the hospital walls, but in the field of politics. We can prevent this terrible wave of terror. And the only way is by preventing the creation of a Palestinian state west of the Jordan River – the famous two-state solution that is actually a suicidal plan.

"Every piece of land given away is interpreted as just another stage towards the goal of elimination of the state of Israel," he continued. "We can see that from Gaza. It will turn into Hamas-tan" were the exact words that he, in the orange camp, used. [The colour orange was the symbol of the active protestors against the disengagement in Gaza.] So I decided to leave the ivory tower of academia."

Is *Hatikvah* another new party?

"Not exactly," he said. "It's a new movement. The National Union in Israel, with which I can be a part of and have no ideological conflict, consists mostly of religious people. Of the nine

See ELDAD, page 3.

See LAWSUIT, page 2.

NEWS

Graffiti on culture centre strengthens aboriginal resolve

By Aaron Broverman
Tribune Staff Writer

TORONTO-MANIWAKI, Quebec — With Swastikas, SS lightning bolts and white power slogans adorning their cultural centre on National Aboriginal Day (June 21), the members of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg Al reservation were left literally picking up the pieces.

Members of the community gathered to restore the overturned picnic tables and replace the broken tent poles for the day's festivities. The songs were sung, the games were played and the food was served as planned.

The attack, under the cover of darkness the night before, did nothing but strengthen their resolve. Many saw this racist vandalism as nothing new, only another chapter in the saga of systemic discrimination that has been plaguing Native Americans for 500 years.

"The type of education that has to be considered is a very serious reality check about the ignorance of racism," says Rene Tenasco volunteer coordinator at the Kitigan Zibi Cultural Centre where the attack took place.

"Even though people talk of racism, they don't really understand what racism is in all its tyranny. The North American Holocaust in this country has not stopped, it's a daily event and people have to realize what is really going on: The policies that are imposed day to day by another race of people who tell us day in and day out what we should be as First Nations people, how we should live and how we should be educated from cradle to grave."

Education called key to 'ignorance of racism'

The community sees this incident as an opportunity to move in a positive direction and generate dialogue that condemns racism regardless of community differences.

Jewish community organizations were quick to react. Allan Adel, National Chair, B'nai Brith Canada's League for Human Rights, in a letter to Chief Jean-Guy Whiteduck expressing deepest sympathy to the members of the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg community, said: "This attack against your community reminds us that hatred affects all of us and that the solution lies in standing together to counter its insidious spread."

"My Co-President Sylvain Abitbol joins me in expressing outrage that any community should be subjected to such viciousness," said CJC Co-President Rabbi Reuven Bulka. "The fact that the perpetrators of this hateful act chose to employ Nazi imagery acts to underline an important reality: Those who hate do so indiscriminately. They attack all of us when they attack anyone."

Opposition leader Stephane Dion, just a week after announcing plans for his own task force to defend cultural communities, also condemned the attacks. He called them "an affront to the values of tolerance and diversity that define Canadian society," saying, "Canadians

take great pride in our nation's diverse communities, and we respect the rich history of our First Nations peoples. Our society must be safe for citizens of every culture, religion and ethnic background. As we strive to ensure our communities are both welcoming and safe for all Canadians, we will continue to fight hate crimes and all forms of discrimination."

Tenasco and his community appreciate the support. "Support is support. We know where they are coming from and we appreciate that," he said.

He was also quick to point out that the Jews' own experience of oppression cannot be compared to those of his own people.

"The Jewish people were left with a homeland, not us. The Jewish people still have their language, not us. The Jewish people are still allowed to practice their religions, traditions and way of life, not us," he said.

Still, even though the Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg Algonquin reservation is hurting, Tenasco promises that this attack has them reorganized and reenergized.

"Education is no longer just a possibility, it has to happen. If it won't happen, then none of this is worthwhile. The government legislation has to be addressed. We really appreciate and admire those that support the First Nations people and our objectives and ambitions in life because the true character of our people is one of peaceful coexistence. We were the first people to ever offer it."

Ottawa tightens money laundering, terrorist financing regulations

OTTAWA — Finance Minister Jim Flaherty announced the publication of final regulations that the government believes will ensure Canada continues to be a global leader in combatting organized crime and terrorist financing.

Flaherty said that the government "will be relentless in its efforts to prevent money laundering and terrorist crimes. We are taking an international leadership role...by devoting substantial new funding to bolster our analytic, investigative and prosecution resources."

The new regulations bring Canada's anti-money-laundering and anti-terrorist-financing regime in line with new Financial Action Task Force standards. They also follow recommendations made in the 2004 Auditor General's Report and in a 2004 Treasury Board-mandated evaluation of the regime.

The regulations include:

- Enhanced customer due diligence measures such as new requirements to identify the beneficial owners of corporations and other entities.
- Special due diligence measures including identification and

monitoring of correspondent banking relationships and politically exposed persons.

- A requirement to report attempted suspicious transactions.
- Enhanced information sharing among the Financial Transactions and Reports Analysis Centre of Canada (FINTRAC), law enforcement and other domestic and international agencies.
- The establishment of a registration regime for money service businesses.



FINANCE MINISTER
JIM FLAHERTY

Katsav cops plea bargain avoids rape charge

JERUSALEM (JTA) — Israeli President Moshe Katsav confessed to sexual misconduct under a plea bargain that spared him more serious rape charges and possible prison time.

Katsav will be convicted of sexually harassing and molesting female staff as well as witness tampering, Attorney General Menachem Mazuz said last Thursday. Katsav will receive a suspended prison sentence and pay compensation to the complainants.

The deal allowed Katsav to escape a possible indictment on charges that he raped a former aide, for which he could have spent as much as 18 years in prison.

Katsav, who had long denied wrongdoing in the case, is the first Israeli head of state to be convicted of sexual misconduct. He resigned his presidency early as part of the plea; his term was to have ended next month. Shimon Peres is taking over as his elected successor.

Government denies financial support, parent says

LAWSUIT cont. from page 1.

will pay for what they need."

The applicants say this lawsuit is a "test case." They're fighting "not only for the rights of these eight families, but also on behalf of other families waiting for justice," Kaufman said.

Missy Hecker, mother of Max Greenberg, a learning-disabled 11-year-old who was diagnosed with "non-verbal learning disorder," spoke with journalists after

the conference about the hard work and huge expense her family has endured to help Max reach his full potential.

"When Max was in Grade 3, he could barely function in class," she wrote in a press release. "This wasn't a shortcoming of his school. This was a failing of our government. Max will continue to have struggles, and because he attends a Jewish Day School, he is being denied support by the provincial government that is

his constitutional right as a learning-disabled person."

Hecker and her husband have spent about \$14,000 in the past two years to help Max with his attention and information processing issues. They purchased, among other items, a laptop and a digital recorder.

"It's been really hard. He's been managing, but there are a lot of other families who don't have the financial means to pay for these supports," she said.

Stranger than fiction...

OLMERT cont. from page 1.

Olmert then announced, "Out of sensitivity to the matter of the prisoners, I decided today to bring before the government of Israel a decision according to which we will release 250 prisoners, members of Fatah, without blood on their hands, and who will commit themselves to refrain from further involvement in terrorism. I do this because I understand the importance of negotiations with the Palestinian Authority."

He added that the intended mass terrorist release had another purpose, as well: "It is important that every Palestinian know that whoever is prepared to have peaceful and conciliatory relations with us will receive our hand outstretched in peace."

In addition, he promised to transfer withheld tax revenues to the PA to make "meaningful" improvement in the freedom of movement of the Arab population in Judea and Samaria, and to renew commercial ties with that population. Israel will not cut basic supplies to Gaza, either, he avowed, saying, "We will not punish the

Gaza population for the actions of the Hamas leaders."

According to Olmert, the new Abbas- and Fatah-led government of the PA "recognizes Israel's right to exist," accepts the "two states for two peoples" solution to the Arab-Israeli conflict, "opposes terrorism," and "includes no representatives of terrorist organizations."

Therefore, Olmert explained, "it is a government with which we can proceed to a regional solution."

To that end, he continued, "I agreed with Abu Mazen (Abbas) to meet at least once every two weeks. We agreed on continuing the talks that will bring about, as soon as possible, the advent of a Palestinian State alongside the State of Israel."

Olmert said that he is, "by nature, optimistic, and precisely in these days I see an opportunity, a way to promote the region's diplomatic processes."

As well as Olmert and Abbas, the Sharm El-Sheikh summit included Jordan's King Abdullah II and the host, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

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NEWS

Doctor-turned-politician seeks secular support

ELDAD cont. from page 1.

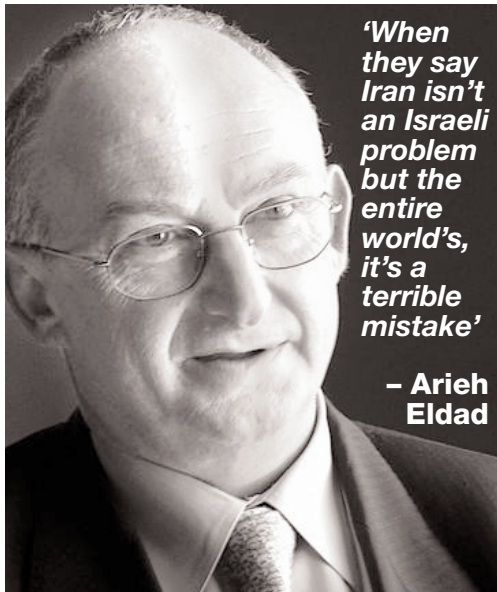
Knesset members, eight wear kippot. I'm the ninth. The nationalist camp (known as the right) is so much larger, but people will not vote for a religious party because they want them to reflect other issues as well. I really want to create a gate for the secular right to join this camp. Now they feel they must vote for Likud. Some voted for [Avigdor] Lieberman [head of Yisrael Beiteinu], mistakenly taking him for being right wing, but he's ready to establish a Palestinian state. He joined Kadima, and since the meeting at Sharm el-sheikh he's part of those agreeing to transfer \$350 million to the Palestinian Authority to strengthen [PA President Mahmoud] Abbas. Releasing 200 prisoners just as a gesture.

"I really feel we need a party in the nationalist camp that will represent the non-religious who were Likud before Likud went for the withdrawal from Gaza. A lot of them feel they can't vote Likud now because they saw the destruction of the Gush Katif towns."

Does Eldad believe the atmosphere is ripe for yet another party? Are there enough citizens fed up with what's available now?

"Certainly, there are enough people," he said. "What's still to be seen is whether they'll choose me as their leader. I think that during the last few elections, the majority voted for a leader, not a plan. They voted for whom they identified as a strong leader. The majority who voted for Sharon initially wasn't for the disengagement. Although he was a strong leader, he took them to places where they didn't want to go."

Should people in the Diaspora



'When they say Iran isn't an Israeli problem but the entire world's, it's a terrible mistake'

- Arieh Eldad

do anything to help?

"Various levels of activity would be welcome from North America," Eldad answered. "First, there can be a level of activity in the US to try to influence the administration. Second, financial support. Foreign citizens can't contribute to a party, but they can support a campaign firmly against a Palestinian state. People can contribute money to strengthen those positions. They can't advocate for a party, but they can advocate for the rejection of an independent Palestinian state. That rules out Likud, among others."

"There's, for example, American Friends for a Strong Israel (AFSI), Professors for a Strong Israel and others. Support for such a campaign could be promoted in Israeli papers, buying time on television and radio, billboards, etc."

What can be done about the

danger of post-Zionism?

"We can do very little about the post-Zionists," he said. "But they're a very, very thin layer of Israeli society and they receive proportionally more publicity in media. The majority of the people of Israel are Zionists - not post-Zionists, not anti-Zionists, not at all. They need a strong voice. Every week I publish an article in *Ma'ariv* [Israeli daily] and people stop me to thank me. The louder we can talk to the people, the more they'll realize they're in the majority. Only a small percentage of the population reads my article, but we can buy louder space - in colour - to attract attention. These things work. People aren't buying Coca Cola only because it tastes good. It's well advertised."

Don't most people still believe in the theory of two states, Israel and Palestine?

"A two-state solution is no longer a valid option. I think that more

and more people are realizing that. Land for peace was very popular before the 2005 disengagement and the war in Lebanon. Now less than 20 per cent of Israelis - and that includes 20 per cent Arabs among them - support any further withdrawal. They don't trust the Arab leaders anymore. That's left only for the politicians to pretend they have a plan, a hope. They're not courageous enough to say they have nothing. So they're repeating the same slogan.

"I think Bush needs the old plan because he has nothing else. He needs a photo op at Sharm-el Sheikh. I don't see any real plans on the horizon. But politicians who say there are no plans on the horizon won't be elected in the US and maybe not in Israel either. So they're trapped into repeating the same old plans, even though they know [PA leader] Abu Mazen is irrelevant. Even if he were strong,

one would have to examine very carefully what he demands as a final settlement, which would practically mean the elimination of Israel as a Jewish state. He's against terrorism only because he sees it doesn't do them any good. But he wants all of Palestine, just like Hamas."

What about the threat from Iran? "Iran is in a race to produce nuclear arms, not only to eliminate Israel, but towards the production of 40-50 nuclear bombs. Within two to three years it will have enough uranium to produce 50 bombs."

"They're working on a ballistic missile plan. These missiles already cover all of Israel and parts of Europe, but they want a longer range to retaliate against any attack that would punish them for attacking Israel. They won't be stopped by any political or financial pressure. Israel's policy is a

tragic mistake. When they say it's not an Israeli problem but the entire world's, it's a terrible mistake. If it's everybody's problem, it's no one's problem. If the American president would want to attack Iran, he can't get approval, because of the mess in Iraq.

"But Israel should say that Iran is precisely Israel's problem and before Iran strikes any European country, it will strike Israel. We can't afford to let this happen. We have to make it clear to the whole world that we have to strike first. And if we figure out that our conventional plan isn't enough, we'll have to use any means we can. The idea is to contain the conflict within the framework of a conventional conflict before they have the nuclear power, which could result in a nuclear world war. The world would be much better off if Israel finishes the conflict with conventional weapons."



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COMMENTARY/LETTERS

Graduates learned new set of 3 'Rs': Recognizing, relating and reflecting



Avi Shafran

I was recently privileged to address the commencement ceremony of Bais Yaakov of Baltimore, an Orthodox girls school founded in 1942. Below is an edited version of my remarks to the more than 100 high school graduates, their families and friends.

Back in the day – the day when I was in grade school, that is – we were taught the '3 Rs' – Reading, 'Riting and 'Rithmetic (that's math to you, and yes, we didn't spell so good back then). Of course, you've all learned those things and more. And as students of a school like Bais Yaakov, you have also learned the really important things for meaningful life.

Among them, I think, are another '3 Rs.' At this special moment in your lives, please permit me to briefly review them.

The first one is Recognizing – specifically, recognizing the good, the precise translation of the Hebrew phrase *bakarot batov*. Its simple sense – gratitude – is something you graduates surely feel this evening – towards your parents, your teachers and your classmates, for all that they have given you. But the term's deeper meaning is to recognize – with a capital 'R' – the good that is always present in our lives, all the things with which we are constantly blessed. Because everything we have is a Divine gift. We're called Jews after Judah – so named by our foremother Leah because of her gratitude – *hoda'ah* – that God had given her "more than her share" of sons. We Jews are always to see what we have – whatever it may be – as "more than our share."

The larger world has a rather different ethic. An advertisement recently asked me, "Don't you deserve a new Lexus?" Well, no, I don't particularly. I'm not at all sure I even deserve my used Saturn with the manual roll-up windows either. In fact, every morning when I open its door, I thank God for granting it to me. There is a contemporary social disease one might call *eskumpmir-itis* – from the Yiddish phrase "It's coming to me." We have to try mightily not to contract it.

As it happens, there is a vaccine for the disease of entitlement: The blessings we say throughout every day. Each is an expression of *bakarot batov*, a recognition of a gift, and of its Source. We do well to say them carefully, and think of what we are saying.

The second 'R' is Relating – trying to feel what others are feeling, empathizing. Here, too, a very different atmosphere envelops the world around us. Maybe it's different in Baltimore, but in New York the roads teach much about empathy – about how things are when there isn't any. Obviously each of us cares most about himself – that's why 'Love your neighbour like yourself' takes 'yourself' as the given – but the law of the jungle is not our law. We are charged to try to

see the world through the eyes of the other.

You've heard, no doubt, about the new father-to-be who paced the waiting room for hours while his wife was in labour, about how the process went very slowly and he became more and more agitated, until, an eternity later, the nurse finally came in to tell him his wife had delivered a little girl.

"Thank heaven!" he burst out. "A girl! She'll never have to go through what I just did!"

You will meet people like that, I assure you – although, with God's help, not your future husbands – and they exemplify the self-centredness we have to strive mightily to shun.

The third 'R' is perhaps the most important, since it touches on a Torah commandment and concept of singular status: *Kiddush Hashem*, or 'Sanctifying God's Name.' That imperative, of course, requires a Jew to die rather than commit certain sins, or any sin in certain circumstances. But we're charged not only with dying, if necessary, in sanctification of God's name but also with living in a state of such sanctification. This 'R' is thus 'Reflecting' – for, as observant Jews, our actions reflect not only on ourselves, our parents and teachers and schools, but on our Torah – in fact, on our Creator.

Today, perhaps, more than ever. Waiting at a bus stop once, I was approached by a young mother whose little boy was cowering behind her. She approached me and asked politely if I might assure the child that I was not Osama bin Laden. Turban, black hat, whatever, we do both have beards. I managed to convince the young man who I wasn't, but was struck by the realization that Mr. Bin Laden not only has the blood of countless innocents on his soul but the sin of desecrating God's name. We must counter with the opposite.

What an incredible obligation – and what an incredible opportunity.

Maimonides, in his laws about sanctification of God's name, adds that great Torah scholars have a particular mandate to act in an exemplary way – for they are perceived as the most powerful reflections of the Torah. I don't think it's a stretch to understand those words to apply today to all who are perceived to be reflections of Torah. In a world like ours, all identifiably Jewish Jews are "great Torah scholars" regarding this law – and we must all endeavour to act the part.

The opportunities are ubiquitous. Receiving change from a cashier, a smile – not to mention a "thank you" – leaves an impression. On the road, where politeness is at a premium, driving politely leaves an impression. The way we speak, the way we interact with others, all leave an impression. We must leave the right one.

So, dear graduates, remember always, above all else, just who you are: reflections of God on earth.

Reflect well.

And may your reflections be clear and brilliant, and help merit a fourth 'R' – the ultimate Redemption.

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Rabbi Avi Shafran is director of public affairs for Agudath Israel of America.



Conservative thanks Liberals for help in garnering support from Jewish community

Re: End to partisan bickering sought, *Jewish Tribune*, June 27, 2006

It is very kind of Jason Cherniak, the Liberal Party of Canada's York Region Director, to give the Conservative Party of Canada so much credit for successfully making inroads in the Jewish community. Because of the inspiring leadership of Prime Minister Stephen Harper and his winning team, we have come a long way from the days when the Jewish community's support for the Liberals was taken for granted by many, most especially by the Liberal Party of Canada themselves.

In moving forward from that sorry state of affairs, we have indeed come much closer to Jason's goal of non-partisanship in the Jewish community. Of course, a small minority of Canada's Jews – Jason being one – may be having trouble adjusting to this new reality, which is the only explanation I can offer for him first calling for non-partisanship and then signing his letter, 'Liberal Party of Canada (Ontario) Area Director, York Region.'

But I would be remiss not to

thank Jason for all the help his party has given the Conservative Party of Canada in making inroads in the Jewish community. Whether it be senior Liberals marching with supporters of Hezbollah in Montreal, or the deputy leader of the Liberal Party calling Israel's actions "war crimes," or even a former Liberal Foreign Affairs Minister laying a wreath on the grave of Yasser Arafat, it would almost seem as if the Liberals don't want the Jewish community's support anymore.

However, even with this (possibly intentional, possibly unintentional) help from the Liberals, Prime Minister Harper and the Conservative Party of Canada have proven themselves to be perfectly capable on their own when it comes to giving the Jewish community reasons to vote for them in the next election.

If it's community safety Jason is worried about, then he need look no further than Public Safety Minister Stockwell Day's ongoing efforts to establish a security fund outside places of worship, including synagogues. Minister Day has been

working on this issue since November 2005, while the Liberals seemed to have been asleep on the watch until very recently.

And while a vague Liberal motion to condemn Iran may have passed unnoticed in that country, Foreign Affairs Minister Peter MacKay recently distinguished himself, and Canada by extension, by making this country the only one to stand with Israel at the UN Human Rights Commission's disgraceful show of anti-Israel hatred two weeks ago.

I would ask the *Tribune's* readers to remember Minister MacKay's stand, and Prime Minister Harper's rock-solid support for the state of Israel, as proof that the Conservative Party of Canada's willingness to take risks in promoting the interests of Israel and the Jewish community knows no bounds. Can Jason Cherniak honestly say the same of his own party?

*Joshua Lieblein
Member, Community
Relations Council
Conservative Party of Canada*

Letter writers

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If you wish to remain anonymous we will consider the request only if a name, address and telephone number is included, so we are able to confirm that you sent the letter.

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COMMENTARY

Unfocused thinking and the NDP

"Mr. Speaker, tragically, the Palestinian unity government has collapsed. Never in 40 years had a Palestinian political body brought together the views of so many Palestinians. All major political movements were included.

"Instead of seeing the unity government as a unique opportunity to advance the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, the Conservative government shamefully boycotted, undermining the advocates of compromise, compounding political divisions within Gaza and the West Bank and increasing the insecurity plaguing the lives of Palestinians and Israelis.

"The only viable government in Palestine is one that represents all Palestinians. Peace cannot be achieved without Hamas at the table. It is a fraud to pretend otherwise. It is imperative for the Canadian government to provide leadership and push for a unified, multilateral diplomatic front.

"The current strife and tragic loss of life in Palestine and Israel will only be stemmed when a policy of peace and inclusive dialogue replaces the politics of militarism, boycott and division."

— NDP MP Alexa McDonough to Parliament, June 18, 2007

By Rochelle Wilner

On June 18, 2007, Alexa McDonough, the NDP Foreign Affairs and International Development Critic, made a statement in the House that illustrates better than anything else the total absence of any clear principles in that party's thinking on the Middle East.

She first lamented the collapse of the "Palestinian unity government" as if this was a natural disaster like the collapse of a dam. In fact, Hamas played a central role in that collapse and was indeed a key instigator. Hamas spokespersons have confirmed that they had been stockpiling weapons and ammunition and that this attack to take over Gaza had been planned for some time.

In this, Hamas demonstrated its profoundly anti-democratic nature. McDonough and the NDP should be in the forefront of criticizing this putsch and condemning Hamas for its actions.

Instead, McDonough praises the previous "unity government" as bringing together "the views of so many Palestinians." The Hamas led government, however, continually rejected the previous international agreements signed by the Palestinian Authority and refused the continuation of negotiations with Israel. That is one of the causes of the struggle with Fatah, a group also committed to the ideology of terror to achieve their goal with the singular difference that they have maintained an outward commitment to ongoing negotiations to achieve their aspirations.

Instead they have led a relentless campaign of launching Katyusha rockets against civilians in Israel and have continued to refuse to change their Charter, which calls for a worldwide struggle against Jews (not Israelis, not Zionists, but Jews) and the destruction of Israel.

Apparently this rigid commitment to a racist ideology and to the use of terrorism is what McDonough and the NDP think they can use as a basis for negotiation and compromise. One wonders whether she has read the Hamas Charter and if she has read it, whether she understands it. If she understands it, does she believe it or support it?

It is as if she had praised the German governments of 1932-33 because they included Nazis and so also represented "the views of so many" Germans. When the Nazis took over by violence in 1933, would she then have condemned their enemies for having "forced" them to do so — even though it was what they had planned to do all along?

Hamas also continues to receive its principal support from Islamist sources, including significant funding from Iran, much of which has been spent on weapons. How else did Hamas succeed in pushing out the Fatah security forces? How else does Hamas find money to import and build rockets?

Given that Hamas has been clear and precise in declaring its intention to destroy Israel and her people, it is hard to see what "negotiations" or "talks" with them could possibly have achieved.

McDonough also seems to forget that Israel pulled out of Gaza unilaterally, which did not put an end to military attacks against Jewish civilians. To the contrary, they increased.



ROCHELLE WILNER

It was Hamas that sanctioned the kidnapping of an Israeli soldier from Israel. This is the policy that McDonough and the NDP are giving their blessing to at a time when President [Mahmoud] Abbas, who was indeed elected by all Palestinians, has called them "murderous terrorists" because of their summary execution of Fatah supporters in the streets.

The entire international community has condemned these actions. McDonough and the NDP have passed over them in silence, and seemingly, exonerated the Hamas thugs. Instead, they bring their hands about the "the current strife and tragic loss of life in Palestine" completely ignoring Hamas' direct role in these aggressive assaults.

The Conservative government has maintained a consistent policy in dealing with governments and parties that are ready to recognize Israel and negotiate with it on a realistic basis for peace and in refusing to deal with Hamas. For this, they are to be commended.

McDonough and the NDP, on the other hand, can't even be consistent with their own statement. Hamas are the very ones who have eschewed democracy and promoted racist hatred and who have taken militarism and terror as their preferred route. It is they who have created the effective division of the Palestinian Authority into two territories. These are the things the NDP statement should condemn.

Hamas will become more "pragmatic" only if the international community maintains its isolation of this extremist group and if the western nations eschew the kind of confused, dangerous and unfocused thinking exhibited by McDonough and the NDP. One can only hope others follow the example of Stephen Harper and the Conservative government of Canada.

Rochelle Wilner is the Conservative Party candidate for the federal riding of York Centre.

Why numbers matter in understanding the Shoah



Alex Grobman

One of the most common errors in describing the magnitude of the Shoah is the number of people who died. Figures range from 50 million to 11 million, a reflection of a fundamental misunderstanding of the uniqueness of this catastrophe. The use of 11 million is a particularly egregious historical distortion as it equates the destruction of the Jews of Europe with that of the others who were murdered.

We study the Shoah to understand what transpired, why it happened and what it tells us about the attitude of Western civilization towards Jews and other minorities living in the West. It is not a contest to see which group suffered the most or sustained the greatest numerical losses.

If we are to learn from history, we must be concerned about objective truth, with transmitting what actually ensued and not allowing those with their own particular agenda or ignorance to obscure our understanding of what occurred. Distinguishing between different historical events does not, and should not, lessen or demean the suffering of others.

When we refer to the Holocaust, we mean the systematic bureaucratically administered destruction by the Nazis and their collaborators of six million Jews during the Second World War. The Jews were found "guilty" only because they were viewed inaccurately as a race. The Nazi state orchestrated the attempted mass murder of every person with at least three Jewish grandparents.

Millions of civilians and soldiers were killed as a consequence of war. Communists, political and religious leaders were eliminated because they were viewed as a potential threat to the Nazis. When the Nazis murdered approximately 10,000 Polish intelligentsia, in 1939-1940, and Polish Catholic priesthood in western Poland, for example, they were trying to prevent these groups from becoming a political and spiritual force that could unite the country against them. Similarly, when the Nazis murdered more than 2.5 million Soviet prisoners of war, they were killing a military force that had fought them on the field of battle.

European Jews, on the other hand, were the only people marked for complete destruction. To the Nazi leadership, the Jews were a satanic force that controlled both the East and the West and posed a physical threat to the German nation. There was no way to stop this alleged international Jewish conspiracy from gaining total control of the world, the Nazis reasoned, except to physically destroy every Jewish man, woman, and child. Failure to do so, Hitler believed, "would not lead to a Versailles treaty but the final destruction, indeed, to the annihilation of the German people."

When the executioners questioned their superiors about the need to kill every Jewish woman and child, Heinrich Himmler, head of the SS, claimed that he would not have been "justified in getting rid of the men — in having them put to death, in other words — only to allow their children to grow

up to avenge themselves on our sons and grandsons. We have to make up our minds, hard though it may be, that this race must be wiped off the face of the earth."

For a number of reasons, we do not know the exact number of Jews who were killed. German historian Wolfgang Benz posits that there were 6,269,027, which is more than earlier studies by Jewish scholars found. Six Million is the most accurate and acceptable term.

The Nazis also annihilated a minimum of 300,000 Sinti and Roma from Germany, the Baltic region, Ukraine, Croatia and Serbia, although the precise number cannot be determined. Many thousands of others were also killed: The physically and mentally disabled, homosexuals, Jehovah's Witnesses, socialists, communists, trade unionists and political and religious dissidents.

None of these groups, however, were the primary target of the Nazis — not the mentally disabled, who were killed in the euthanasia centres in Germany (here it is to be noted that the Nazis did not

When we refer to the Holocaust, we mean the systematic bureaucratically administered destruction by the Nazis and their collaborators of six million Jews during the Second World War.

exploit this program to the civilian populations outside the Reich); not the homosexuals, who were regarded as social deviants but for whom the Nazis did not have a consistent policy (homosexuals were persecuted only in the Reich and in areas annexed to it but not in countries the Germans occupied); not the Gypsies, who were partly seen as "asocial" aliens and Aryans within society, and therefore, did not have to be annihilated completely; and not the Jehovah's Witnesses, who had refused to swear allegiance to Hitler and who declined to serve in the German army, but who were not marked for extinction. In fact, only a small number were incarcerated in the camps, and most of them were German nationals. The Nazis also did not single out every socialist, communist, trade unionist, or dissident — just those they perceived as a threat to the Reich. The Jews alone were the primary target of the Nazis.

When we use 11 million or any other number than the Six Million to describe the Shoah, we are distorting the historical record. We trivialize the importance of this unprecedented event in modern history, minimize the experiences of all those who suffered and prevent a legitimate understanding of its causes and its universal implications for Western society.

The stakes are too high to misrepresent history for, as Richard Rubenstein accurately noted, "Auschwitz has enlarged our conception of the state's capacity to do violence. A barrier has been overcome in what for millennia had been regarded as the permissible limits of political action."

Our continued interest and fascination with the Nazi period should keep us vigilant, Jacob Talmon observed, for "it is entirely possible that this is the end that awaits many races and nations. And the Jews will then prove to have been the first victim of this new experiment."

Dr. Alex Grobman's most recent book is Nations United: How the UN is Undermining Israel and the West. He is also the author of Battling for Souls: the Vaad Hatzala Rescue Committee in Post War Europe and the co-author of Denying History: Who Says the Holocaust Never Happened?

NEWS

Dimant, Schneider visit Sderot and Gaza evacuees



B'nai Brith Canada Executive Vice President Frank Dimant and B'nai Brith World Centre Director Alan Schneider examine some of the hundreds of Kassam rocket shells in Sderot recently. They are looking at possible assistance projects for residents.



Israel Consul General Amir Gissin (centre) flanked by UIA Executive Vice President Linda Kislowicz (left) and B'nai Brith Canada's Frank Dimant. Gissin will take up his duties in Toronto later this summer.

SDEROT, Israel – B'nai Brith Canada Executive Vice President Frank Dimant and B'nai Brith World Centre Director Alan Schneider made an extensive visit here last week to view the damage done to the city by constant Palestinian rocket attack – the last of which hit the city just hours before their visit.

and youngsters, some dedicated to the disadvantaged Ethiopian population, which even in good times is struggling to integrate into Israeli society.

By order of the authorities, the programs must be held in environments that are safe from Kassam attacks, and therefore, all of *Afikim Banegev's* activities have been moved to crowded, dank bomb shelters.

Schneider and Dimant pledged to develop a proposal with *Afikim Banegev* Director Shlomit Ekstein to assist the organization – one of the few continuously operating in Sderot throughout the period of increased danger – in continuing to provide critical services to the people of Sderot.

Schneider and Dimant also visited with families evacuated from Gush Katif who, nearly two years later, are still living in a caravan city at Nitzan, with little prospects for permanent housing or jobs in the near future.

During the visit they saw synagogues, homes and infrastructure damaged by the improved Kassam rockets now being used against the city from Gaza. They also met with representatives of *Afikim Banegev* (Route in the Negev) – a non-profit organization composed of committed religious educators and social activists who, since 1993, have settled in Sderot from all over the country with the purpose of assisting the very large underprivileged populations in the depressed city.

Schneider and Dimant toured three of the organization's after-school clubhouses for children



Israel Consul General Yoram Elron (right) will be working in Montreal. Dimant met with him last week in Israel.



B'nai Brith Canada's Dimant has senior-level discussions with Yoram Ben Zeev, Israel's Deputy General for North America, recently on his visit to Israel to attend the World Zionist Council meeting and to visit Sderot.



Kassam rockets don't limit their damage to homes and businesses in Sderot. Here a synagogue was ripped apart.



Sderot youth welcome visitors from B'nai Brith into one of their 'homes away from home' – a bunker protects them from the frequent Kassam rocket attacks.

Hebrew U researcher makes breakthrough in fight against obesity

By Gil Zohar
Tribune Israel Correspondent

JERUSALEM – A researcher at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem may have found the cure for obesity – though the breakthrough could take another five years of laboratory testing on animals before being approved for humans.

Yaniv Linde, 32, a doctoral student at the university's department of organic chemistry, recently patented a peptide compound in the European Union and the United States that he developed, which mimics the activity of the naturally occurring hormone aMSH (alpha Melanocortin Stimulating Hormone). That hormone, which is excreted when humans eat, binds to a receptor in the brain called MC4R, causing the brain to signal the stomach that it feels full, he explained.

"Obesity leads to many illnesses including cancer, diabetes, strokes and heart disease," Linde told the *Jewish Tribune*. "Should everything work out, this could solve a lot of serious diseases. It's a wonderful feeling that I have got this far, with the preliminary tests, towards solving these health issues."

The Israeli pharmaceutical development company Bioline Rx Ltd. purchased development rights from Yissum, the Hebrew University's technology transfer company, and is currently working towards creating a commercial anti-obesity drug. Founded in 2003 by leaders in the Israeli life-sciences sector, Bioline Rx trades on the Tel Aviv Stock Exchange under the symbol BLRX.

Linde, who is working towards his doctorate under Professor Chaim Gilon, was named a first place winner of the Kaye Innovation Award, which was presented June 6 during the 70th annual meeting of the university's board of governors.

The compound was developed in conjunction with Professors Annon Hoffman and Shmuelik Hess of the university's pharmaceutical department.

Linde and his research associates have developed a novel method for synthesizing a peptide (a compound linking two or more amino acids) which can serve as an analog to the naturally occurring aMSH. They were able to demonstrate that their peptide, which they call BL-

3020, displayed good metabolic stability to intestinal enzymes when swallowed, and that it was able to cross the intestinal wall and gain access into the blood stream. Once in the blood, it could make its way to the MC4R receptor and "close the circuit" to send out the "full" signal. The result?

A person wishing to overcome obesity could take this compound orally to curb his appetite, thus leading to natural weight loss.

In experiments with mice, it was shown that a single oral administration of BL-3020 led to reduced consumption over a period of 24 hours. Over a 12-day period of daily dosages, the mice weighed 40 per cent less than the average for mice of their size and age who were not being given the compound.

The Jerusalem-born Linde, who notes he is married to a "slim woman" and has a baby daughter also of a normal weight, has spent four years in development "so far," he adds. He is hoping to receive his PhD in 2009.

He will be in Montreal at the end of June to attend an international conference of the American Peptide Association and to present a poster of his research.

Beth Am history ready to be published

TORONTO – A history of Congregation Beth Am and the Beth Am Players – an ensemble of members who staged plays – is ready to be published.

It was written and edited by Al and Rosalynne Federman, two original congregation members. Al was the first editor of the *Beth Am Bulletin* and Rosalynne was a Sunday school teacher, director of the children's drama group and wrote and directed many of the Beth Am Players productions.

The history encompasses the years from 1954 to 1978, when Beth Am merged with Beth David B'nai Israel.

To obtain a copy and receive an income tax receipt, donations made out to Beth Am ARCHIVES Fund can be sent to Beth David B'nai Israel Beth Am, 55 Yeomans Rd., Toronto, ON M3H 3J7.



B'nai Brith's Frank Dimant examines rocket damage in Sderot home.

NEWS

JEWES WITHOUT BORDERS

By Aaron Broverman
Tribune Staff Writer

TORONTO — Right now, five Canadian Jewish students from the Greater Toronto Area are joining their American counterparts in sacrificing all modern comforts to assist developing communities in Uganda, Thailand, Honduras and Ghana with American Jewish World Service's (AJWS) summer volunteer program.

Each has different goals, each is at a different place in their religious journey, each is unsure of what to expect. Still, they all fan out across the globe to fulfill the central Jewish tenant of *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world).

Their journey began on June 17 at the AJWS head office in New York City for the three-day pre-trip orientation. They were introduced to their team leaders, engaged in team-building activities and told what regional non-profit they would be partnering with at their destination. It was also the last time all the volunteers would be together before being separated into their respective country contingents.

Among the crowd were Azriel Grysman and Beckie Chemiak, both heading to one of the poorest villages on the Laos border to build a school dining room. Both are extremely well travelled. Beckie, 18, has just returned after a year of studying and volunteering in Israel at a children's residential school, before jetting off on this trip after only a three-week respite. Azriel, the oldest of the Canadians at 23, has previously gone with AJWS on its shorter winter volunteer session.

Even though they'll both be spending their days living in shacks, miles from the nearest hospital with only enough supplies to fit in a backpack, they're both compelled to do this for vastly different reasons. Beckie, having raised money for various social justice causes throughout high school and through AJWS, will finally get the chance to do the work her fundraising efforts have gone towards.

"Ideally it would be nice to help Jews internationally," she said. "But we can't ignore [the fact] that there are people in the

world who live on less than a dollar a day in such awful conditions. Going to work on a grassroots level to put the bricks down helps Jewish youth actually see what's going on, instead of just forking over the cash from their wallets."

Azriel has already done the type of actualization Beckie seeks, but feels as if he never got to make much of a difference during his short winter experience. He's also going to Thailand for spiritual reassurance.

"I feel like I'm at a bit of a crossroads," he said. "I love the Orthodox traditions of Judaism so much, I don't think I could do anything else, but I question what it said in the scriptures, so right now I don't know what to believe."

He hopes that the many ethical dialogues that will occur between the different sects of Judaism on this trip will help him reaffirm his faith more clearly or help him to incorporate other ideas into his spiritual life. Like many orthodox Jews on the trip, he can more easily maintain Jewish tradition by going with AJWS as opposed to another relief organization.

"I fully expect that this trip will change my life at the core level," he said.

For Laura Colvin, 20, another participant here, getting to do this trip with her best friend Deborah Cole, 20, was a fortunate twist of fate.

"I was supposed to go to Ghana last year with AJWS," she said, "but I had a minor surgery and they wouldn't let me go." Thanks to that unfortunate delay in her plans, both she and her former Leo Baeck Jewish Day School classmate will now be sustaining agriculture in Uganda.

"I'm more than ready to dig ditches and I hope to God I get to dig a well," she said. "On the previous trip I would've been building a school, so I don't want to miss out on helping school children either."

Like all five of the Canadians going with AJWS, Laura is an experienced volunteer, helping at a probation camp near her school in California.

"I think you'd kind of have to [be a volunteer to go on this trip] almost, in order to see, not only what you can get out of the trip, but also what you can put into it," she said.

Unlike the rest of the Canadians on the trip, she goes to a Christian school — Pepperdine University. "I love the Judeo-Christian values they have, like 'No drinking on campus.'"

Her motivation to make this trip is based on a quiet rage.

"It really bothers me when people think of Africa as just one country, not a continent, or that every person is living what you see on TV."

She hates that people are so shocked to find that there are great modern cities such as Cairo in Africa, or that there's an international airport. She intends to prove them all wrong and bring back a taste of what Africa is really like.

"I feel that as long as I'm here I want to be able to do as much as I can and not waste my time."

For her friend Deborah, it took her sister Jennifer's past travelling experiences and inspiring words from Free The Children founder Craig Kielburger to motivate her to join this trip.

"He said that they really do appreciate your help over there and that you could help over here in Canada, but we have so much more here, whereas overseas they are appreciative of even the smallest things, so it's a different experience," she said. "When he went to a school at lunchtime, every single kid waited until the last person was served before they ate. You go to schools here



American Jewish World Service volunteers provided the manpower for a number of projects last summer in Honduras, as these photographs will attest. This year volunteers will be working in Uganda, Thailand, Honduras and Ghana.



and it's free for all, a very different value system."

Her only concern, like her friend Laura, is that she won't be able to do enough by August 7 when the trip ends.

Despite all of the volunteer experience among the Canadian participants, for Ariella Nadler, 21, social justice is a relatively new endeavour, but one she is eager to jump into with both feet.

Ariella, who is going to Honduras, saw friends around her raising money for Darfur and wanted to finally put the values her Judaism has always taught her into practice.

"It's just a perfect fit for me,"

she said of AJWS, "I can observe Shabbat and weekly prayer while getting involved in building a community and unlike other Jewish organizations, AJWS isn't so concerned about helping other Jews, they just want to help people."

She's reluctant to go so far as to say she's "helping" them because she feels the villagers will help her in so many more profound ways.

"I don't know exactly what those are yet, but I'm just looking forward to it," she said. "So many of my friends say they wouldn't do it because they couldn't handle no fresh water or electricity, but if that's what

it takes to fulfill my responsibility as a Jew — bring it on."

For Ariella, every experience is a religious one, and like Azriel, she looks forward to learning from and debating with the other participants in her group.

"The fact that *Tikkun Olam* is a basic tenant of Judaism is what propels me in this direction; I've had a Jewish education all of my life," she said.

Like so many here, she hopes the experience will only enhance her future.

"I hope this is the beginning of bigger things in the social justice landscape for me," she said.

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NEWS

IRAN, SYRIA, PALESTINIANS

Three dimensions of conflict: Middle East expert

By Rebeca Kuropatwa
Tribune Western Correspondent

"Israel faces three different qualitative dimensions of conflict," said Dr. Hillel Frisch. "From greatest to least worrisome are Iran, Syria, and the Palestinians."

The Calgary Jewish Community Council presented Frisch as guest speaker recently to discuss *Prospects for Peace in the Middle East*, at 7:30 p.m. at the Jewish Community Centre (JCC).

Frisch is the author of *Countdown to Statehood: Palestinian State Formation in the West Bank and Gaza*. He is the senior lecturer in the departments of Political Science and Middle East History at Bar Ilan University and senior researcher in the BESA (Ben-Gad-Sadat) Centre for Strategic Studies.

Since the early 1990s, Israel has created an image of vitality, innovation and globalization, said Frisch.

But this image changed drastically since the wave of violence in 2000, he added.

"Israel's image is now tarnished. It is seen as a problem state in the world. And amongst Jews, there is growing apprehension about its very society's fabric."

With the stepped up Palestinian violence in 2003, "what resulted was the absolute contraction of the Israeli economy, and a sharp reduction in the standard of living of Israelis," said Frisch. "Even the War of Independence did not have that kind of sweeping impact."

Today Israel faces strategic challenges at various geographical fronts, said Frisch. "On the southern front is Egypt, arguably the most powerful Arab state. On the eastern front, there is less of a threat, Jordan, and the more serious threat, Iraq, with a constant flow of financial wherewithal. And on the northern front is Syria."

Israeli politicians and security



PHOTO: Courtesy of the Winnipeg Jewish Federation
Dr. Hillel Frisch, at the JCC in Winnipeg, just after the interview.

have to contend with a possible nuclear option by Iran, a power that was always outside its geo-strategic concerns, said Frisch.

"It is the most serious threat, because it has the most political clout and potentially the most lethal weapon in the Middle East."

The successful launching of a nuclear bomb would probably result in 100,000 deaths, said Frisch.

"Iran also has clout by proxy, via Syria, Hezbollah and Hamas."

The only way to quell the Iranian threat is if the Americans take the reins, according to Frisch.

"If the US attacked Iran, Syria would likely bandwagon with the US, but if Israel attacked Iran, Syria would side with Iran. Ideologically, it couldn't side with

Iran. The Americans would have to do bargaining through bombing to get Iran to scuttle the nuclear option. It would not be about democratizing Iran, or trying to cause the downfall of its regime. Trying to first attack Syria would be far more dangerous. It would bring together in a common cause the Muslim Brotherhood, spilling into the Palestinian people and destabilizing Egypt."

Because of Syria's partial political influence, Hezbollah, it is the second challenge Israel faces, conveyed Frisch.

"It also had lethal influence in destabilizing Lebanon and in weakening forces that are indirectly allied with Israel - Sunni Muslims."

The Palestinians are a threat, but they do not have political influence outside of their borders, said Frisch.

"In the 1982 Lebanon War, the Palestinians were the centre stage of the problem. Yet, in the 2006 Second Lebanon War, the Palestinians were absent. The Palestinians have always claimed that they are at the heart of the Israeli-Arab conflict, but the last war proved this is not the case."

Israel will deal with Gaza, but there are priorities, and they are nowhere near top priority, surmised Frisch.

"We are entering into the end of an era with the Palestinians. The two-state solution that once held legitimacy has, because of seven years of violence, lost its ground. Peace takes two active parties. If Oslo proved anything it is that agreements are cheap. The issue is its durability."



PHOTO: COURTESY OF CJC
CJC CEO Bernie Farber (left) and outgoing CJC President Ed Morgan (second from right) congratulate new CJC Co-Presidents Rabbi Reuven Bulka (second from left) and Sylvain Abitbol (right) at the CJC Plenary session in Ottawa recently.

Conflict avoided at CJC plenary

By Jewish Tribune Staff

OTTAWA-TORONTO - Sylvain Abitbol and Rabbi Dr. Reuven Bulka were acclaimed recently as the new co-presidents of Canadian Jewish Congress (CJC) at its 28th National Plenary Assembly in Ottawa.

Having two presidents is a first within the organization. According to a CJC press release, participants approved changes to CJC's governance through new bylaws that simplify its corporate structure and leadership. Also, the amendment of CJC governance rules under Bylaw 67 eliminates elections for the position of president, a change that some observers perceive to be anti-democratic. In fact, Rabbi Bulka is on record as saying - before the issue of a joint presidency was settled - that elections are necessary if the voices of the everyday people (*amcha*) are to be heard. Afterwards, however, he publicly supported Bylaw 67.

According to a report in *The Canadian Jewish News*, one observer suggested the offer of a joint presidency was made because there was some concern that Rabbi Bulka might beat Abitbol in an election.

Asked why he changed his mind regarding the bylaw, Bulka said he didn't want to discuss the issue.

"The bylaws are bygone," he said. "I don't want to talk about it. We're fully functional, not looking backward, looking forward."

"There were concerns. The concerns were addressed. We're fine. We have a crackerjack group of people on board, facilitated by the bylaw and the people involved. If anything, it expands the reach of Congress to the community in a very significant way."

The change in the bylaw would appear to help protect the organization from takeover by hostile or dissident groups. This is a common practice introduced by major organizations.

Bulka added that he's happy to respond to questions regarding any topic, but the bylaw is a "regressive issue. In the end, the major concern is making sure Congress and the community talk to each other."

CJC's new leadership slate also includes: Jack Mintz, vice president; Calvin Goldman, honorary legal counsel, and Elizabeth Wolfe, secretary-treasurer. Board members include: CJC Past President Ed Morgan; CJC Pacific Region Chair Gerry Cutler; CJC Quebec Region Chair Victor Goldbloom; CJC Ontario Region Chair Frank Bialystok; Brent Belzberg; Judy Kremer; Joel Reitman; Debbie Kimel; Saul Koschitzky; Philip Berger; Berl Nadler; James Scharfstein; Howard Morry; Joseph Gabay; Ben Zarnett; Hershel Sahian; Harold Brief; Igor Korenzvit; Paul Brown; Ron Prehogan; Nora Gold; Joel Richler; Mark Freiman; Michael Grand; Rabbi Reuven Pouppko; Armand Kessous; Adam Atlas; Sue Carol Isaacson; A. Mark David; Abby Morris; Gerald Gall; Ted Zacks; Bob Willmot; and Steven Farber.

British elite against boycott, survey finds

LONDON (JTA) - Most of Britain's elite think boycotting Israel is a bad idea, a new poll found.

In the poll conducted by Populus, 86 per cent of respondents opposed an academic boycott of Israel, 80 per cent said it is an unreasonable way to express disapproval of Israel's treatment of the Palestinians and 70 per cent

thought it would be bad for Britain's image and economy.

The Populus Network is composed of nearly 1,000 British business, cultural and political leaders. It also includes figures from trade unions and think tanks.

(The Jewish Tribune will publish a comprehensive report in the next issue.)

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FEATURE

Wanted: Younger audience for amazing Singing Soldiers



By Rick Kardonne
Tribune Correspondent

TORONTO – The Singing Soldiers of the Israel Defence Forces presented a fabulous show sponsored by the Jewish National Fund at Beth Emeth Bais Yehuda Synagogue recently.

Despite the loss of air conditioning in the social hall due to a violent thunderstorm that struck the neighbourhood, the large audience quickly forgot the heat and sang and danced along to the very talented ensemble of singers and musicians who are in their early 20s.

It was unfortunate that there were not more young people present, because the excellent choice of material included contemporary Israeli pop hits of Yemenite-Jewish folk origin, which favourably compares to the best of jazz and reggae today while still retaining a distinctively Jewish folk flavour. This concert had the potential to create a very positive image of Israeli pop culture to Toronto Jewish students.

Tzvi Bums' composition set to the concluding Shabbat prayer Adon Olam – which he personally first introduced to the Diaspora at Beth Tzedek in November 1976 – set the pace of excellence early in the hour-long concert. The fast segments of his rendition of the prayer, which require expert vocal dexterity, were flawlessly performed by the two female singers Hadar Aviv and Maya Asher.

A Yemenite version of the familiar horas *Lach Yerushalayim* and *Sisu et Yerushalayim* followed, and then, *Esh* (Fire) dedicated to 20,000 Israeli soldiers lost in all of the wars and the countless civilian victims of Arab Muslim terror.

Following a rendition of Nurit Hirsh's 1978 hit *I was Born for Peace*, a memorial song to the soldiers serving in Hebron and the

Gaza checkpoints was performed: A minor-key rocking reggae song, as good as any melody by Bob Marley or today's Barrington Levy, which, accompanied by the virtuoso jazzy flute of Maya Asher and the blues-oriented alto saxophonist Lev Loftus, got even the most elderly members of the audience dancing.

Another excellent choice of material was a medley of recent polyrhythmic Yemenite-Jewish Israeli pop songs, which not only are exciting dance numbers but can easily become modern jazz hits. Loftus performed an excellent minor-key rumba solo. And when the Singing Soldiers did perform the standard classics such as *Jerusalem of Gold*, *Hallelujah* (winner of the 1979 Eurovision Song Festival) and Diaspora Jewry's biggest hit, Mordechai Ben-David's 1980 classic *Mashiach*, the audience greatly appreciate their masterful renditions of these familiar songs.

All of the performers were outstanding. But if there is one who deserves special praise, it is Hadar Aviv. The daughter of a Yemenite-Jewish mother and a Moroccan-Jewish father, her thrilling soprano voice blends rhythmic Mideastern and North American soul sensitivities into a unique style all her own. Together with Carmela Cabari, who performed at a Beit Halochem concert several years ago in Toronto, Hadar Aviv is a worthy standard-bearer for her generation, following in the footsteps of such Israeli greats as Yaffa Yarkoni, Shoshana Damari, Geula Gill, Chava Alberstein and Ophira Gluska. She should definitely tour North America in the near future to inspire Jewish youth. Above all, The Singing Soldiers presented a patriotic Zionist concert with the highest musical standards.

Quartet picks Blair as peace envoy

JERUSALEM (JTA) – Tony Blair will be moving to Jerusalem to become the Quartet's special peace envoy to the Middle East.

Representatives from the diplomatic grouping of the United States, Russia, the European Union and the United Nations agreed on the appointment at a meeting last week in Jerusalem. Blair's biggest advocate for the appointment was US President George W. Bush, but Russia reportedly dragged its feet due to its strained ties with Britain of late. The post of special envoy

had been vacant for more than a year.

"I think that anybody who cares about greater peace and stability in the world knows that a lasting and enduring resolution of the Israeli-Palestinian issue is essential," Blair said. "As I have said on many occasions, I would do whatever I could to help such a resolution come about."

A major part of his job will be working with the Palestinians on security, economics and governance.

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PROFILE

Michael Landsberg beats the odds, achieves dream

By Neil Becker
Tribune Correspondent

TORONTO — Well-known veteran television personality Michael Landsberg is a prime example of someone who has overcome some great odds to fulfill his lifetime dream of being a sports broadcaster.

An admitted underachiever in school, Landsberg, who is a former 'Man of the Year' in the Jewish Community was diagnosed with dyslexia — and had to leave University Of Toronto because of his marks — before enrolling at Ryerson where he excelled in the Radio & Television Arts Program.

"I knew that I had to make it through school and that it goes from the most important to least important (when you graduate) thing in your life," said Lands-

berg, a TSN employee since 1984. "I worked harder than most, which led to my success."

He admitted to being terrible at the beginning but steadily improving by ad-libbing in the car. Despite the dyslexia, which according to Landsberg made him write in a scribbled, unreadable fashion, he was able to excel in the television industry because he found what he termed "my passion" and the one thing he was interested in.

He believes that everyone has a passion and they just have to find it no matter what and not let anything get in the way.

This future broadcasting icon did every thing he could to get better, including taking voice lessons every week, volunteering at a cable station, and getting involved at the campus radio station.

That work paid off in spades when, after graduating, this Toronto-born resident passed his open audition with CHFI, where he was tested on his ability to ad lib on the spot.

"It's a practice skill and when someone snaps their fingers, I can talk," Landsberg said. "I felt confident (in the audition) because I've basically been practising for so long in the car."

After a year and a half of getting his feet wet in the industry, Landsberg, who always preferred watching and talking sports rather than playing, joined forces with a brand new television station in 1984 called TSN.

"I just wanted an opportunity and I still come to work every day loving what I do."

After completing approximately 5,000 Sports Desk shows, he

decided to change directions and left Sports Centre to pursue his own TSN show, *Off The Record*, otherwise known as *OTR*.

"I thought it was time for a change," he said.

"Early on we concentrated on the social and moral issues of sports."

Since Sept. 8, 1997, when the first show aired, various sports celebrities such as Terrell Owens, Mark Messier, Steve Nash, Lennox Lewis, Vince Carter, Roger Clemens and Paul Tracy have made guest appearances on *OTR*, which airs Monday through Friday at 6 p.m. The show consists of discussions and what have been, on occasion, heated debates on the hot topics of sports.

"The show has really evolved over the years. If you don't change then it dies," said Landsberg, who tries to target guests not afraid to voice and debate their opinions.

One show within the past few years, which generated huge ratings and sticks out in the colourful host's mind, involves WWE wrestlers.

These shows include interviews with legends such as 'Rowdy' Roddy Piper, Bobby Heenan, Mean Gene Okerlund, Mic Foley, Jericho and Bret Hart. Other popular wrestlers to make appearances include Edge, Triple H, Rick Flair, Hulk Hogan, Jimmy Hart 'The Mouth of the South' and the master himself Vince McMahon to name only a few.



Michael Landsberg overcame dyslexia to become a topnotch sports announcer and host on TSN. Although he never had one, he suggests that those trying to emulate him should make sure they have a safety net, in case things don't work out.

Another top rated *Off The Record* show was in September 2003, when Bret Hart talked for the first time about WWE Chairman Vince McMahon and what really happened in Montreal pertaining to his controversial match with Sean Michaels.

"It was the first time (Vince) McMahon gave them permission to talk as humans out of character, which was huge for audience ratings," said Landsberg, who credits a lot of his success to his tireless work at preparing for the shows.

"I'm lucky that I found what I'm passionate about. It (talking sports on television) was the first thing that I found that was possible to concentrate on."

Reflecting on his career, Landsberg, whose parents wanted him to study law, never had a back up plan, or as he termed it, "a safety net." Even though things worked out well, he tells those starting out that it's always important to have a backup plan in case things don't work out.

"I was terrible at the beginning, with a high-pitched voice, but with practice I got better and all I wanted was a chance; I got that audition and it's been a great ride," he said.

Landsberg also works tirelessly with charities and golf tournaments in supporting causes for The Hospital for Sick Children,

eye research and dyslexia.

"My daughter has an eye condition and the Sick Kids hospital did wonders to save her vision," said Landsberg in explaining why he donates so much time and money to that cause.

Over the years, this charismatic broadcaster has also been involved with raising money for leukemia and Parkinson's disease.

"It's just so hard to say no, and I think that everyone has the ability to help," he said.

Jewish family reclaims Egyptian hotel

ALEXANDRIA, Egypt (JTA) — A luxury hotel in Alexandria that had belonged to Jews until it was nationalized by Egypt in 1952 was returned.

Founded in 1929 by a French Jewish immigrant, the hotel was seized from the Metzger family in 1952 during Gamal Abdel Nasser's nationalist revolution. Five years later the Metzgers were expelled from Egypt.

Now an 86-room, four-star hotel run by the French company Accor, the Cecil Hotel was returned recently to the Metzger family, then resold to Egypt for an undisclosed amount, according to *Agence-France Presse*.

Since 1976, Toronto's Jewish community has tuned to one source for its daily news: "The Zelda Show".

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SPORTS

Play ball!

Israel Baseball League opens

Runner from the Modi'in Miracle dives safely into base in his team's 9-1 victory over Petach Tikvah in Israel Baseball League opener June 25.

By Gil Zohar
Tribune Israel correspondent

PETACH TIKVA, Israel — For this old-time ex-Toronto baseball fan, the inaugural game of the Israel Baseball League (www.israelbaseballleague.com) on a scorching Sunday late afternoon here was the catalyst for a nostalgic home run — back to 1992 and 1993 when the Blue Jays won back-to-back World Series; and back to my childhood in the 1960s when the Toronto Maple Leafs were slugging it out in the International League at dumpy Maple Leaf Stadium at Bathurst and Fleet Streets. Poignant was the memory of my late father Max Kezzer z"l, a bigger ball fan there never was, who alas never got to see a ballgame in Israel.

The diamond and bleachers here at the Yarkon Sports Complex at Baptist Youth Village near Petach Tikva are reminiscent of Toronto's Christie Pits or Kew Beach sports fields. So too do the smell of barbecuing hot dogs and hamburgers, the concession stand selling T-shirts and baseball caps, and youthful fans with pen in hand rushing up to players seeking an autograph.

I've been transported to a simpler time, a peanuts and popcorn pre-Zionist innocence, when watching a group of grown men whack a piece of cowhide with a stick for a couple of hours seemed like a perfectly normal thing to do.

It's a dream, which Boston bakery mogul Larry Baras shares. In 2005 the Jewish New England businessman teamed up with former Boston Red Sox manager Dan Duquette to create a professional baseball league in Israel.

The IBL's 55-year-old founder

is a Brooklyn-born baseball addict with a degree in politics from the University of Maryland and a background in the securities industry. Today his privately held firm, SJR Foods of Chelsea, Mass., produces baked goods for the American military. But "two years ago, I had this cockamamie idea to set up a professional baseball league in Israel."

Baras started the league because he was looking to do something for Israel, both internally and to draw tourists to the country.

"I don't do well on boards and committees, but I wanted to do something where I felt like I'd be having some impact and do the building on my own," he says.

"I went to a minor-league game, the Brockton Rox," in Massachusetts, he says. "And there were thousands of people there, grandparents and parents and teens and kids. They're dancing to the music; everyone was having such a great time."

"I said to myself, 'If this picture could just be transferred to Israel. There's no reason why not.'"

The result? "Play ball b'aretz (in the Land of Israel)!"

And so today 3,112 mostly American fans are on hand as the 120 players of the six-team league — Bet Shemesh Blue Sox, Modi'in Miracle, Netanya Tigers, Petach Tikva Pioneers, Ra'anana Express and Tel Aviv Lightning — take the field for the opening ceremonies.

They're a mixed crew of pro-ball wannabes and veteran players, mostly American but with a few Canadians and Sabras thrown in for good measure. They're here to play a 45-game schedule, with one paid manager and two player-coaches. It's

all being done on a tight budget. Baras and investors capitalized the league with \$1 million. The players are being paid \$2,000 each for the season.

The teams are sharing three diamonds — Tel Aviv Sportek, Gezer Field at Kibbutz Gezer off the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem expressway, and Petach Tikva. Baras outsourced the food and collectibles concessions, and Kibbutz Kfar ha'Yarok, just north of Tel Aviv, has provided accommodations for the players at a reasonable price.

At the concession stand, one could find Big League Chew gum, five flavours, the same as they sell in America. There were blue baseballs for sale, sporting the IBL logo, and small blue baseball gloves with 'Inaugural Season, 2007-5767' written inside. The hats of the individual teams and one of the league itself were being sold for \$25, shirts with each team's logo was going for 50 shekels, and a shirt with all the team logos for 60 shekels.

Baras' business plan includes selling tickets to American and Canadian immigrants and tourists from the Old Country, and recruiting Israeli fans through razzle-dazzle marketing. Thus Baras recruited Dan Kurtzer, former US ambassador to Israel and Egypt and now a professor of Middle East policy studies at Princeton University, to serve as the league's commissioner — who threw out the ceremonial first pitch.

The game itself goes well, with the Modi'in Miracle whomping the Petach Tikva Pioneers 9-1 in a seven-inning romp that would have been a shutout but for Ryan Crotin's 340-foot homer to left field in the fourth inning. Shortening the game from the

traditional nine innings is one of the accommodations the IBL has made to make the game more appealing to families. Similarly ties are being decided by home run contests rather than extra frames.

For fans like Aryeh Dean Cohen, the season opener is a great success. The Jerusalem journalist and former New Yorker is sitting in folding chairs set up beyond the outfield with three of his four children and his wife, happy to take part in the historic occasion. When Israelis see what it's all about, he says, they will learn why it's so popular in America.

"I think that once Israelis get the sense of the team game, and the excitement, and they see all the team uniforms, and the kids start to get into it, it's gonna be just like it is in the States," says Cohen, between bites of his kosher hot dog. "I think we have a chance to bring the red, white and blue spirit of American baseball over here, and it shouldn't be so much of a problem for Israelis to learn."

Meanwhile, the IBL is having teething problems. The stadium renovations at the Tel Aviv Sportek have yet to be completed, and games there have been hastily re-scheduled for Petach Tikva.

Will the IBL take root in a Middle Eastern country, which has a history of seeing American franchises like Dunkin' Donuts, Ben and Jerry's ice cream and Starbucks coffee come and go?

Stay tuned for the seventh-inning stretch.

Gil Zohar is a Toronto-born writer who now lives in Jerusalem.

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FEATURE

Schwartz's DVD shines light on famous Montreal Hebrew deli

By Mike Cohen
Tribune Bureau Chief

MONTREAL – The name on the marquee in French says *Charcuterie Hebrique de Montreal* (Montreal Hebrew Delicatessen). But to locals, ex-Montrealers and tourists who lineup on the street daily to taste the place's famous smoked meat, it is known simply as Schwartz's.

Noted Jewish filmmakers Garry Beitel, Barry Lazar and Richard Elson were so fascinated with this Montreal institution that they decided to make a documentary about it. The result? *Chez Schwartz*. It takes viewers inside a year in the life of the unique 78-year-old landmark on Montreal's historic Main. Filmed through changing seasons, from the quiet of early morning preparation to the frenetic bustle of packed lunch times and never ending lineups, to the more relaxed ambience late at night – *Chez Schwartz* is an evocative, cinematic portrait of a small spunky deli known worldwide equally for its atmosphere and smoked meat.

Through observational vignettes, viewers come to know the men of Schwartz's – Frank, Johnny, Alex and others: The waiters and busboys, meat cutters and grill men who have become fixtures of the deli – some for as long as 40 years. Most are immigrants from Portugal, Eastern Europe, Latin America and Asia. While they serve generously stacked sandwiches, fries, pickles and cherry colas to an array of local and international patrons, one discovers



Schwartz's Deli is a landmark in Montreal, which has now been immortalized in a documentary film.

how a legendary institution transforms their lives. Besides getting to know their stories, you also meet another group of men – Ryan, Herman, and Adrian: the panhandlers who have stationed themselves at the front entrance for the past 15 years and earn their livelihood from the deli's patrons.

Last week marked the launch/lunch of the new DVD version of the film, directed by Beitel. A percentage of the sale of each DVD sold at Schwartz's will go to MOI – the Montreal Ovarian Cancer Initiative set up by the restaurant's owner Hy Diamond. MOI is an a joint effort of the Institut du cancer de Montréal (ICM) and the Jewish General Hospital (JGH). Diamond's wife died from ovarian cancer last year.

Why make a film about Schwartz's? The idea came from co-producer Elson,

with whom Beitel had worked before on several earlier films including the acclaimed *Bonjour! Shalom!*

"When Richard proposed the idea of a documentary on Schwartz's it wasn't immediately evident how to shoot a film in such a cramped noisy environment," said Beitel. "But Schwartz's was a landmark that I had grown up with and I was surprised that no one had yet made a film about the place. The challenge of getting inside the Schwartz legend appealed to me and my partner, Barry Lazar, who is also a co-producer on this film. For me, it was especially important to find an original approach that would make it clear that this was not a promotional film."

For several months before shooting began, Beitel went regularly to Schwartz's just to observe.

"I soon realized that I was drawn to the stories about the people who work at the deli – the meat cutters, the waiters, the busboys – many who had been there for more than 20 years, some as long as 40 years," he said. "Talking to the staff at Schwartz's I realized that their work wasn't just a job. They felt they were part of a community and that working at Schwartz's filled them with pride and gave them a sense of purpose which other restaurant workers rarely have. And this feeling of belonging also extended to the panhandlers who have been earning their livelihood outside the deli's front entrance for years. It soon became clear that Schwartz's Deli could become the backdrop for a series of interweaving stories that I would follow over a year of shooting."

For days at a time, Beitel was a fixture at the counter watching and listening to what was going on – during both the day and night shifts. There are close to 40 people who work at Schwartz's – all men except for a few cashiers.

How to find the characters and the stories that captured the dynamics of the place became the focus of Beitel's early research. How did people move up the hierarchy from the kitchen to busboy to the counter to the sought after jobs of waiter, cutter and grill man? And who were the most compelling characters? Who would be camera friendly, who would be intimidated? Little by little, he stepped inside the universe of the people who work at the deli and the parallel world of the panhandlers who also formed an integral part

of the Schwartz hierarchy.

The film had a brief theatrical run in Montreal and aired on French language television. Negotiations are underway with *CBC TV*. It has been shown at Jewish film festivals in Vancouver and Toronto, the latter of which attracted 750 people in May, complete with smoked meat sandwiches after the showing. The Calgary International Film Festival included it on the bill and Beitel is now looking at opportunities in Israel and Paris as well.

"I am really proud of this film," said Diamond, a chartered accountant who assumed ownership of the restaurant eight years ago.

"Schwartz's is a unique restaurant and this documentary shows that well."

The documentary on Schwartz's came out around the same time as *Schwartz's Hebrew Delicatessen: The Story*, a book by *Montreal Gazette* columnist Bill Brownstein, which sells at the counter. Reuben Schwartz was the restaurant founder.

Brownstein notes how Diamond has turned down opportunities to franchise Schwartz's because "it wouldn't be the same." In fact legal action was taken against a Toronto businessman who established Reuben Schwartz Deli on King Street in Toronto, which attempted to make customers believe it was a spinoff. That deli has now closed.

The DVD is for sale at stores across Montreal. It is also available for purchase online for \$29.95 at www.chezschwartzfilm.com.

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8:00pm

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