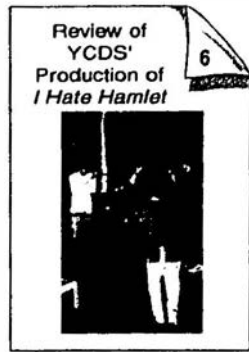


Yeshiva University Commentator

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The NYC Fire Department was called to extinguish the flames consuming a YU Semicha apartment on 186th Street. The fire had been caused by a pot of rice left on the stove. See story page 5.

Photo: Daniel Berkowitz

Politicians Converge on YC Campus for Legislative Breakfast

BY STEVEN MIODOWNIK

It was the stuff of public relations reveries: Two of the most prominent and influential members of the United States House of Representatives, flanked by one state assemblyman, one state senator, and one city councilman, sitting down to a YU Food Services Department bagels and lox buffet in Belfer Hall.

But the expertly orchestrated March 15 morning was neither the brainchild of a David Rosen nor the workings of a Bruce Bobbins or Jeffrey Rosen-garten. It was rather a student initiative which brought Charles Rangel (D-Manhattan), Ben Gilman (R-Rockland), Public Advocate Mark Green, State Senator Olga Mendez, State Assemblyman Herman "Denny" Farrell, and City Councilman Guillermo Linares to YU for the sumptuous spread and the series of speeches.

At the dais proudly sat Ryan Karben, chairman of the Yeshiva College Communal Affairs Committee, and YCSC President Josh Fine; around the ta-



l-r: YCSC President Josh Fine and Communal Affairs Chairman Ryan Karben presenting National Leadership Award to Congressman Charles Rangel (D-NY)

bles sat an eclectic collection of deans, PR people, students, politicians, and representatives of other politicians. With the stated purpose of the early Friday morning event to honor those who represent YU students in government, eating was summarily followed by speech-giving. Rabbi Michael Miller, executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York and son of Senior Vice President Emeritus Rabbi Israel Miller, delivered the keynote address. Still jet-lagged

from his participation in Mayor Rudy Giuliani's solidarity mission to Israel, Rabbi Miller exhorted the thirty students in attendance to consider public service for a career and to realize the profoundly positive effect public servants can have on people's lives. He then crossed Amsterdam Avenue to tell Supplementary Rabbis students why they must know their political representatives.

Following Miller's presentation, the morning's four honor-
continued on page 11

Special Report

Racial Attitudes at YC

The fears, the findings, the truth

BY ARI KAHN

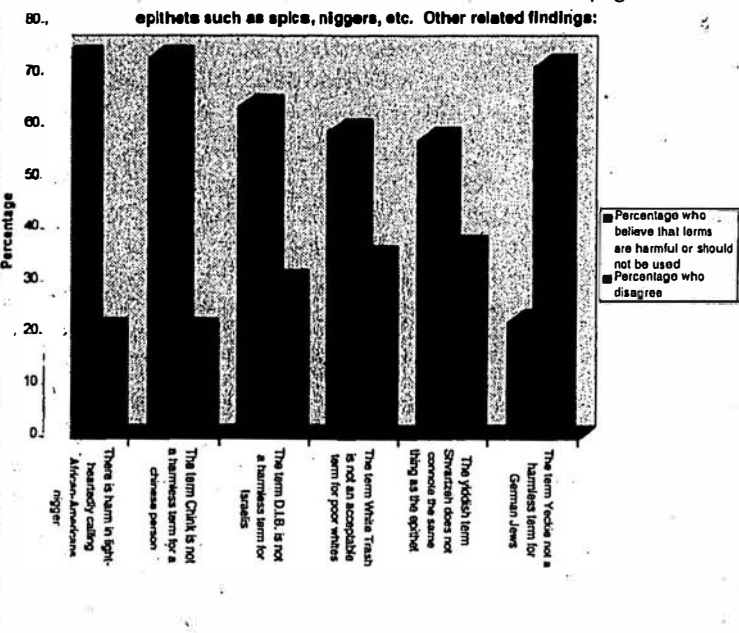
The results of a *Commentator* poll surveying racist attitudes among undergraduate students are in, and they are encouraging, if not a little surprising.

Belying all suspicions of racist attitudes, the poll found that the vast majority of respondents, 71%, contend that college educated people should not be using epithets such as *spics* or *niggers*. 78% of respondents feel that the term *chink* is a harmful term for

Chinese persons, while 63% feel that *white trash* is not an acceptable term for poor whites. The 111 subjects were randomly selected and were stratified according to residence.

Dr. Marelyn Schneider, a sociology and statistics professor, explained the significance of the figures by comparing them to the General Social Survey of 1994. The survey, which polled Americans all over the country, found that 61% feel it is OK to state that

continued on pages 8 and 9



\$3500 of Commentator Equipment Stolen from Schottenstein

University and Burns Security refuse to accept liability

BY ARI GRUEN

For the third time in the last year and a half, student activity equipment has been stolen from the Schottenstein building, once again inciting debate between students and faculty over responsibility for the security - or lack thereof - of student activity offices, most of which are located in Schottenstein. In the latest incident, \$3500 of merchandise was stolen two weeks ago, when both a brand new *Commentator* Pentium computer and co-editor-in-chief Owen Cyrulnik's portable stereo system were mysteriously lifted from the newspaper office, located on the third floor of Schottenstein.

Cyrulnik discovered the burglary when he returned to the *Commentator* office in the afternoon of Wednesday, March 13th, after having worked in the office the evening

before. This incident is the third such reported theft in Schottenstein in recent memory, as the Dramatics Society reported props, as well as personal possessions stolen in the past fall semester; and WYUR, the Yeshiva University radio station, reported missing equipment from their office in the summer of '94.

The thieves somehow managed to smuggle the bulky hardware out of the building unnoticed. There are five entrances to Schottenstein, all within view of the guard booth located in front of the building. The guard booth is occupied at all times, with guards rotating every eight hours. The doors, according to security personnel, are always kept locked, with access to the building granted by the security guard on duty to those who have a YU identity card. In addition, the *Commentator* office itself is always

locked when not in use.

A rather incensed Cyrulnik commented "If we lock our doors and the building is guarded, it seems to be a reasonable expectation that no one should be able to walk off with a three thousand dollar piece of equipment."

Cyrulnik went on to express his amazement that somebody could walk out of Schottenstein with a large computer and an equally bulky "box" without a guard noticing anything. "This is not something you could hide under your coat!"

So how did someone manage to slip out two expensive pieces of machinery?

Martin Tollinsky, President of the Yeshiva College Dramatics Society suggests a possible scenario. According to Tollinsky, on December 22nd, he and Seth Dimbert, technical
continued on page 14

EDITORIALS... EDITORIALS... EDITORIALS... EDITORIALS... EDITORIALS...

Community College

In past years students have run a modest and brief Yom Hashoah program featuring a candle lighting ceremony and a personal account of a holocaust survivor. Usually fewer than 200 people attend the activity and no one from the New York community at large makes any effort to be at this event. But if Yeshiva University represents the center for modern Jewish Orthodoxy, then should not an event so crucial to our modern Jewish identity attract the bulk of the orthodox Jewish community?

In the yesteryears, men and women of all ages would frequently journey to 185th and Amsterdam Avenue to hear the Rav deliver a shiur; and multiple families would regularly *treat* their children to Sunday breakfast or dinner in YU cafeteria. The communal presence at the Rav's hesped three years ago personified the love affair between Yeshiva University, Rav Soloveitchik, and the Orthodox Jewish community as thousands of Jews packed both Lamport auditorium and Weisberg Commons.

Today, YU no longer serves as that meeting place or binding fabric for dispersed Jewish neighborhoods to gather together in one setting - as one community. Jews throughout the New York area would rather attend a Yom Hashoah ceremony at Lincoln Square. And at Rabbi Lamm's eulogy of Prime Minister Rabin only students on campus filled Lamport to capacity - with no representation coming from the Jewish community at large.

It is clear that when it makes the effort, YU is capable, even today, of attracting communal attention. Take, for example, the Yeshiva University National Model United Nations or the Red Sarachek Tournament run out of the admissions office -- students from around the country flock to these events because they are the only ones of their kind in the world. Just this past week, political leaders city and state-wide came to YU's own Belfer Hall for a legislative breakfast. Clearly, YU still has the potential for leadership, but it needs to translate that potential into reality.

The time has come for YU to step forward and assert itself as the epicenter of the modern orthodox Jewish community once again. There is much that needs to be done. But by accepting the responsibility of designing a Yom Hashoah program that will appeal to the entire Jewish Community, Yeshiva will have taken a major step in the right direction.

A Calendar for Everyone

The University's decision to halt classes for Pesach vacation on Tuesday morning, one day before the holiday begins, once again creates an un-called-for stress for the hundreds of out-of-town students who, assuming they make it home, will have little or no time to prepare for the most time-consuming holiday on the Jewish calendar.

This is not the first time the University has shown a lack of consideration for out-of-town students. In September, only two days of class were scheduled between Yom Kippur and Succot, leaving out-of-towners with the no-win choice of either missing the two days, or spending the High Holidays away from home. Adding insult to injury, classes resumed on the morning after Simchat Torah, forcing students to take red-eye flights and still miss morning seder.

The Calendar Committee must allow for out-of-town student representation in order to receive advanced input regarding these issues. Admissions and PR incessantly boast our record recruitment of students from all over the US, and indeed, all over the world. If the administration hopes to keep attracting a multi-demographic student body they must be courteous to the needs of that population.



The Commentator

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LETTERS To the Editor

Hamevaser Heat

To the Editor:

I am a Lubavitcher Chasid and a student at YU. One would think that in YU - where there are Sefardim, Modern Orthodox Jews, Litvaks and all other types of Jews - being a Lubavitcher Chasid would not present any problem. While that is usually the case, this Purim I was hurt by the Purim issue of *Hamevaser*.

The majority of Purim issues from various school papers were cute, containing good-natured jokes and self deprecation humor. *Hamevaser*, on the other hand, chose to be mean-spirited and offensive. They put a Rosh Yeshiva on the cover of their paper and called it "Hamoshiach?" An article on the front page parodied a recent advertisement placed in the New York Times by *Agudas Chasidi Chabad*. The conclusion of the article called "The Baba Soloveitchik" (one might wonder how Sefardic students feel about that) is "Yechi adoneinu moreinu ve-rabeinu, Reb Dov Ber lebt noch!" This is obviously a play on a phrase said by many Lubavitchers. Apparently the editors of *Hamevaser* (who called for greater understanding among Jews after the Rabin assassination) do not find the turmoil within Lubavitch some-

thing to be pitied, or at the very least left alone. Rather, they seem to think that other people's pain is to be ridiculed.

For any newspaper to blatantly make fun of a particular group and that group's beliefs is questionable. To make fun of a group of your fellow Jews is inexcusable. When the paper that elects to be malicious is the "Yeshivish" paper - one that presumably epitomizes Torah values such as *Ahavas Yisroel* and *Achdus Yisroel* - the decision is unconscionable.

The Rebbe was a *chaver* of the Rav in University of Berlin. The Rav attended several *farbrengens* (or tishes) given by the Rebbe. Do the editors of *Hamevaser* think that their malice is a good representation of the Rav's "Torah U-Maddah" ideal? Do they feel that the Rav would join them in attacking their fellow Jews? I sincerely hope not. One cannot help but wonder what Mordechai, who was "*doresh tov le-amo ve-dovayr shalom le-chal zaro*" would think of *Hamevaser's* "Purim spirit."

Yekutiel Sandman
Class of 1998

We Want YOUR Input:
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LETTERS

To the Editor

The Whole Truth

To the Editor:

The article on the views of the members of the Academic Standards Committee of YC by Ariel Konstantyn in the March 13, 1996 issue of *The Commentator* seriously misrepresented some of my views and misquoted others. The author is guilty, in my opinion, of a real lack of journalistic integrity for the way in which he reported my position, and more significantly, in not verifying quotations and comments with me before publication as I had requested that he do in order to avoid just this circumstance.

To suggest that I believe that *Shana Bet* students, as a group, should "stay far away from YU" is absurd. The best evidence of the absurdity was the shared response of many of my students to *The Commentator* quotation, "Was it all made up or only partly made up?" The many *Shana Bet* students who take the time to get proper college educations upon their return from Israel are among YC's, and my, finest students, and certainly have a very positive impact in the classes which they take and the activities in which they participate. But *Shana Bet* is not an unmitigated blessing. There are *Shana Bet* students (just as there are *Shana Aleph* students) whose Israel experience leads them to adopt an unproductive attitude to the college education which their parents demand that they get, or which they believe is necessary for future *parnasah*; they would have rather remained learning in Israel and never have come to YC. They are frequently the very ones who are trying to graduate in a hurry and to minimize their participation in the college experience. The presence of such students at YC has a deleterious effect, whether we like it or not, on the academic atmosphere of the College. The same is true for the student, *Shana Bet* or not, who is simply uninterested in a liberal arts education and is therefore only interested in amassing credits on a transcript, whose goal is not to go to college, but to get out of college; not to obtain an education, but to get a degree.

I believe, however, that a Yeshiva College degree should be worth more than a Touro College, or even a Queens College,

degree. The *Shana Bet* students should not presume that Yeshiva College must accommodate his desire to learn for an extra year and still graduate from college with his entering class. The decision to remain for a second year, like many other crucial decisions which the student will make in the course of his life, must be the product of the evaluation of a variety of factors, of relative cost and benefit. To quote Rabbi Tendler, "For Torah study you are supposed to give up a little bit." The term Torah Lishmah strikes a jarring note to my mind when it is coupled with student's demands that it enable him to dispense with six months of college study. Yeshiva College does not owe a student *Shana Bet* at the cost of his education.

The cheapening of the YC degree just so students can spend an extra year learning is therefore too expensive a trade-off in my view. We may esteem and commit ourselves to Talmud Torah as a fundamental value, the one which is *keneged kullam*, and engage in it as a life-long activity, but Talmud Torah, nevertheless, cannot eliminate the need for, or substitute for, a liberal arts education. The mission of Yeshiva College is to give its students a liberal arts education in a Torah atmosphere, not to enable *Bnei Torah* to avoid getting such an education. I believe that in an ideal world students would learn as long as they wanted, without getting college credit, and then go to college for the appropriate amount of time to gain an education. Unfortunately, the world is not yet ideal.

If a Yeshiva College degree is not to be devalued, it has to be a degree from Yeshiva College granted to students who attend Yeshiva College, not a degree granted from Yeshiva College to students who passed through here while achieving a large part of their "college education" by collecting a variety of credits in high school, Israel, and summer school. If you want a YC degree, you are just going to have to go to YC. That doesn't seem to unreasonable to me.

Cordially,
Moshe J. Bernstein
YC '66, RIETS '69
Associate Professor of Bible

Masterpieces III

To the Editor:

Congratulations on publishing the best piece of writing (Mr. Zeitchik's "Thank You, Pat Buchanan") which I have come across in thirty years of perusing the *Commentator*! It reveals a wisdom far in advance of his age.

Sincerely,
Manfred Wiedhorn
Professor of English,
Yeshiva College

Mazel Tov To:

Eric Weisberg & Erica Goldberg
Yehuda Jacoby & Yael Tilson
Ari Rosenthal & Chana Benjaminson
On Their Recent Engagements

Credit Cap: The Saga Continues...

To the Editor:

Having read your article, "The Players," of March 13, I find myself contemplating one particular statement of an Academic Standards Committee member who is a proponent of the Credit Cap. The article credits Dean Michael Hecht with a statement averring "It goes a long way towards accomplishing what the faculty wants to accomplish...upgrading the seriousness of academic excellence of the college." This sentiment's unintentional message places me against the Credit Cap, not in favor of it.

Let's look at the Cap itself, before approaching the view cited above. One stated goal of the Credit Cap is to "improve[s] the amount of interaction that students have with faculty members and with libraries," says Dean Avery Horowitz. Does this Cap accomplish that? The only result actually mandated by the Cap is a requirement for students to take their courses in YU, instead of elsewhere. In other words, the students will learn from YU faculty instead of Queens faculty; either way, the overall degree of interaction with faculty goes unchanged. Libraries are under the same circumstance. There is nothing in the Cap which forces students, let alone entices them, to take more courses or spend more time with teachers.

Dr. Richard Nochimson points to a second goal of the Credit Cap, declaring, "I believe in a college education, not to just assemble the requirements for a degree." Am I missing something, or does the Credit Cap do absolutely nothing regarding degree requirements? The credit cap shifts courses to the YU campus, nothing else. The Cap doesn't level the playing field against the draw of early graduation; all it does is shift courses around.

This brings us to another statement on the glories of the Cap, one with which I concur. "It will improve the quality of the YC degree," claims Dr. William Lee. This is true; the US News and World Report grants more points to institutions with students who stay in school longer. This is not the way to accomplish that goal, though; it is a deceit following along the lines of four students cheating on an Organic Chemistry exam. Students should stay in school longer when they are induced to stay by offerings of better courses, of an inviting and interesting faculty, not by locked doors and a calendar. This is artificial inflation of rank, and nothing more.

Why, then, does the faculty endorse this smoke-and-mirrors tactic? For the reasons stated above: "It goes a long way towards accomplishing what the faculty wants to accomplish." I have a great respect for Dean Hecht, the source of this statement; the students know him as someone who works very hard for both the welfare of the students and the quality of academic life in the University. Having acknowledged that, let's take a look at why the rest of the faculty backs the Cap, how it "goes a long way towards accomplishing" their goals.

The current furor over the academic quality of YC began with the publishing of an article in US News and World report, ranking YC below the top 100 colleges in the nation. The faculty would like to see that change, and one key factor in evaluating rank is the average duration of a student's stay in the University. How

better to lengthen that stay, than to lock the doors? It's so much easier than fixing the problems that make students want to leave! The score goes up, and neither the faculty nor the administration has to lift a finger beyond the expense of printing a new course catalog. What more could the faculty want, and what would be a finer goal? Of course the student senators were applauded; drinks all around for the staff that has its ranking raised without changing a thing!

Blaming the students for leaving early is futile when there is no reason for them to stay, and claiming that two years in Israel makes students "anti-college" is unsubstantiated, at best; why not look at what you offer those students, first?

To begin, why not try offering substance, instead of the transparent trifle which is the cap? How about increasing the number of colloquia and faculty lectures, and actually timing them between classes? The point is for people to attend, not to say that you have colloquia. The Thursday Club Hour is a University joke; are students supposed to fly from a class to a lecture class without skipping a beat? True, this would require actual effort, but how about re-arranging the classes to allow for attendance at lectures?

Mentoring programs would also be a step in the right direction. Again, effort and money come into play, but the fact is that any real, honest improvement is going to require investment. The Credit Cap is something for nothing, and even the something is rather paltry. Instead of forcing students to stay, mentors within the various fields would be a true step toward encouraging academic excellence.

Third, how about encouraging student activism? The best resource for organizing lectures people want to hear, at convenient times, is always going to be the student body. Judging from the time slots the administration chooses, they just don't understand the schedule. The same goes for the selection of electives to offer, and the general attempt of the administration to convince the students to be more serious about academia. The administrators have tried, and haven't succeeded; students have a much better chance for success.

Fourth, how about a core exam? Whether at the Senior level, or at each grade level, why not have an exam testing general knowledge? The Cap does nothing to ensure a broader base of education; an exam in various fields would guarantee minimal standards. Again, money and effort to design and grade the exam; does anyone reading this think that our administration is allergic to spending?

The bottom line is that the Credit Cap is a misdirected remedy for a faculty which is implicitly admitting that it has failed to inspire, failed to attract, and failed to educate the student body of YC. Dean Adler, Dr. Schwartz, let's drop this talk of a do-nothing Cap, and work at some real changes. An Ivy League tuition deserves Ivy League solutions.

Otherwise, a poor education will remain a poor education, and what will we have to show for it? I have a lot respect for Dean Hecht, Dr. Lee and the other members of the Academic Standards Committee, but let's face facts: a real education lasts longer than the US News and World Report.

-- Moderchai Torczyner
YC '94, RIETS '98

Yeshiva College



Campus News

CBS Correspondent Lectures on American-Israeli Relations

BY SHMUEL BODENHEIMER

The President's Circle sponsored and arranged for CBS's former Israel correspondent Dan Raviv, "from Tel Aviv" to speak to a crowd of 100 students, administrators and alumni last Wednesday night in Belfer Hall. Raviv, who spent the last twelve and half years in London, discussed the mercurial US - Israel relationship since the State's inception in 1948.

Preceding the lecture Raviv dined together with invited student leaders and administrators in President Lamm's office in Furst Hall, where Co-Chairman of the President's Circle Louis Tuchman delivered the keynote address.

The dinner party then proceeded to Weisberg Commons where Raviv described the relationship between the two allies as a "roller coaster ride," Raviv asserted that American foreign policy concerning Israel has always been most determined by the relationship between the American President and the Israeli Prime Minister, and less determined by political advisors or constituents of these leaders.

Raviv also talked of another aspect of the U.S.-Israel relationship: While America helps Israel, it does so for America's best interest: for example, at the outset of the Yom Kippur War, Israel turned to America to help fund the war and provide weapons, both of which President Nixon guaranteed. Yet, several days into the war, America still did not deliver and instead took her time. Only after the Soviet Union assisted the Egyptians did Nixon and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger take action and assist Israel. Nixon's concern was the Cold War and he saw Israel as America's outpost in the Middle East. Nixon saw the Yom Kippur War as a "macho man match against the Soviet Union,

and a strategic move against the USSR with Israel being a key piece on the chess board - and not necessarily a battle to protect an ally.

Following his lecture, Raviv spent time addressing questions posed by members of the audience. Would Bob Dole as President be as good for Israel as Bill Clinton? If Netanyahu were to be elected Prime Minister of Israel what would become of the peace talks, and would ties between America and Israeli leaders remain close? How tired are Israelis of fighting and how does that effect the peace process? Raviv answered these questions pretty much as expected with much insight.

However, one member in the audience asked Raviv for his opinion on the political dealings behind the Jonathan Pollard case. Raviv's response capped off one of his main themes throughout his speech. He answered that Clinton has refused to free Pollard because he needed to prove to the American people that he is a true leader. Having caved in on several issues (such as gays in the military), Clinton felt he could not be seen as a "soft" President in the upcoming elections, and therefore, under no conditions, could release a convicted spy. However, Raviv asserted, if Clinton were to lose the elections in November, for a country he apparently likes, he just might release Pollard, if enough pressure were to be applied.

Confident, humorous, entertaining, and interesting, Dan Raviv captured the audience and "had the audience in his pocket," as one YC student stated. The lesson was insightful and the message critical: while we live comfortably in America, and America is our ally, we must not become too dependent upon America for her agenda is based on her interests before anything else.

Jewish History Test Revealed One Day Early

BY YUDY SHEINFELD

The integrity of a Yeshiva College student was tested last week when a mid-term exam in Modern Jewish History labeled "Spring 96" wound up in his hands one day premature.

Upon receiving the test, the student brought the problem to the attention of the Deans' office. An attempt was made to contact the instructor, Rabbi Rosensweig, who was in Israel at the time so that new questions could be formulated in time to administer the exam. Unsuccessful, Associate Dean Michael Hecht decided to cancel the test.

However, when Hecht saw that the Yeshiva College test being administered slightly differed from the stolen test, he realized that the 'hot' test was actually the IBC midterm which was given a day earlier. Although the Yeshiva College class test varied from the stolen IBC test, the JSS midterm, given the same day as the YC test, was identical to the stolen test.

In order to determine who smuggled out and distributed the exam,

IBC/JSS Dean Michael Shmidman and Rabbi Rosensweig decided to give his JSS students an ultimatum - to turn in the perpetrator or take a new exam. As of yet, no student has accepted responsibility for the exam, and a new exam will therefore be scheduled.

Students in the YC class remarked confidently that courses like Rabbi Rosensweig's Jewish History course is taught in an "essay form." The tests are generally eight essay questions that basically summarize the previous half of the semester; therefore, even without stolen tests, students have a substantial idea as to what the questions will be from previous tests.

Hecht, who was shocked and disturbed about the incident, stated that he was happy that the integrity of Yeshiva College was upheld. He also stated that he has asked Rabbi Rosensweig to try to change his tests to eliminate the repetition of questions from the "mesorah".

This event occurs in the shadow of an incident in which four students were caught cheating on an Organic Chemistry exam last semester.

Students Duke It Out In Race Symposium

BY GARY STRONG

Over thirty students attended the Racial Harmony Council's symposium, last Tuesday, where two YC students debated the issue of Jewish tolerance and respect towards gentiles in today's society. YC seniors Eli Duker and Yair Silverman led the discussion titled "The Concept of Am Ha-Nivchar (the Chosen Nation) and the Status of the Non-Jew."

Yair Silverman opened the symposium by supporting an augmentation of the status of the non-Jew. He quoted the Rambam several times stating that non-Jews should be given the same respect as our fellow Jews, and that Jews need "Divine grace and human merit" in dealing with non-Jews as people of the land. Silverman then quoted Rav Aharon Soloveitchik, saying, "A racist is a person who does not know all the Torah. It is only how much Torah has gone through you." Silverman added that the Jews have the unique experience to not only work within the Jewish community but also within the secular world.

Eli Duker, the second speaker of the night, began by quoting Rav Saadia Gaon

as saying, "Klal Yisroel only exists for Torah." Duker then took a more radical approach to the subject matter by showing that non-Jews are all different from Jews, reasoning that Jews have 613 mitzvot while non-Jews have only seven. Duker was clearly less sympathetic to the view that non-Jews should be treated with equal respect.

The debate predictably drew mixed reactions from the audience. YC junior Steven Zimmerman agreed with Silverman, saying, "It was refreshing to hear a point of view which fits today's society. We no longer live in a totally cloistered environment." On the other side of the coin, YC junior Robert Solomon commented that, "Duker said what needed to be said...Non-Jews are not inferior, we are just the better people."

Racial Harmony Council President Chaim Motzen deemed the symposium a success. "We will continue to bring on speakers who can teach the student body of Yeshiva University about different cultures. Our first two events have been beneficial and insightful; hopefully future speakers that follow offer the same insights," said Motzen.



Photo: YUPR

l-r: President Norman Lamm, President Circle member Shalom Lamm, JSS President David Merklin and CBS News Correspondent Dan Raviv at a reception in the President's Suite in Furst Hall.



Photo: Josh Fine

Director of Facilities Management Jeffery Rosengarten confers with building resident, MYP Rosh Yeshiva Rav Meir Goldwicht outside the burning apartment.

Fire Destroys YU Semicha Apartment

BY NOAH STREIT

On Friday, March 15, about 3:00pm, an unattended ice pot caused a fire which destroyed a YU Semicha apartment and filled the entire building with smoke, bringing emergency fire vehicles racing to the scene.

Two of three post-graduate YU students who inhabited the apartment, left rice cooking as they went to purchase some last minute items for Shabbat. The other student who lived in the apartment was away for Shabbat and did not find out about the fire until Saturday night. When the two returned, they found that the rice had caught on fire and their kitchen was in a blaze. The fire then extended into one bedroom and partially into the dining room.

The two tenants immediately notified the fire department, who arrived in record time.

Meanwhile, Itiel Goldwicht, son of one of the Roshei Yeshiva of MYP, Rabbi Goldwicht, smelled smoke as he was coming down the stairs, to the lobby. He immediately notified all the rest of the apartments, by pressing on their ringers and telling each apartment, including his own, that a fire was taking place. The building began to evacuate, but fire-fighters asked that people not leave their apartments as they were confident in their ability to contain the fire.

Upon their arrival at the scene, the firemen decided to smash the outside windows of the apartment, thereby alleviating the smoke and the pressure inside the apartment. One of the firemen was injured as he broke the glass, because the pressure build up inside of the apartment caused the glass to explode in his face.

After the windows had been broken the firemen began hosing the fire down from the outside, while other firemen entered the actual apartment and proceeded to squelch the fire completely. The fire was out within 10 minutes.

The three tenants are now out of the apartment looking for other places to live, but as one of the three told me, "People were living here and our lives have been suddenly blown apart. It's such a violating and terrible situation, the firemen come in here and smash the windows, there is glass all over the place.

We are all going to have to move, and we're all scrambling around to find places. People are sleeping over at friends and living out of their suitcases, the whole thing is such a terrible thing. We want to put it past us and move on." At least one tenant did not have insurance on his items that were destroyed.

Several of the young YU families are concerned about the future, commenting that there are many non-functional smoke detectors in their buildings. Additionally, many of their floors do not have fire extinguishers, and many of the windows on the inside of their apartments remain unsafe. These tenants claim that YU facilities management officials have checked these building several times, and even written up reports, but nothing has ever been done.

At least as far as the building on 186th street is concerned, both Mr. Don Sommers, the head of YU security and building superintendent Felix Balbouena disagree. Mr. Balbouena said that there is nothing wrong with the smoke detectors nor are there any violations of the fire code. Mr. Sommers, concurs, "these are privately owned buildings, and the buildings are in compliance with all fire regulations."

Additionally, Sommers noted that in the particular apartment of the fire the smoke detector was not properly working since they had taken the batteries out of the smoke detector. "It is the same thing we tell the fellows in the dorm, if they that it puts people's lives in danger," stresses Sommers.

As a result of the fire, security has begun to crack down on students keeping any sort of heating appliances in the dormitories. As Mr. Sommers, indicated, "This is why they are not allowed to have appliances in the dorms with heating elements, because they start fires. People can be careless and they leave something burning in a room and the next thing you know, we could have the same scenario in any room at any time."

This past week, there was a sweep through all dormitories for coffee pots and heating appliances; surprise sweeps of the dorms will continue to be made indefinitely in order to curb the use of such appliances that may cause fires.

Fire Hazards Spark Dormitory Raid

BY ARI HIRT

Burns security officers raided all Main Campus dormitory rooms last week in search of illegal toasters, coffee makers, or other electrical appliances that are deemed potential fire hazards in the student handbook. While the raid succeeded in finding and confiscating more than one hundred such appliances to the office of security, many students complained how the officers lacked any courtesy or concern for the rights of the residents.

A team of one captain and one officer quickly knocked and bursted into the room of Head counsellor Wesley Kalmar, who was sleeping sick in his bed. Kalmar then got out of bed angry at the meager warning which the security officers had given the residents and asked the captain for his name to report to Chief of Security Donald Sommers.

Sommers ordered the raids in response to a fire which consumed a semicha student's apartment two Fridays ago when he left a pot of rice unattended for too many hours. While extinguishing the flames, fire department officials overheard other students discussing how they hold similar appliances in the dormitories. The department in turn pressed Sommers to ferret out all such electrical devices.

The office of Safety and Security usually conducts two such surprise raids a year, once in the fall and another in the spring. But this one drew wide objection varying among students, residence hall advisors, and the office of the Dean of Students.

According to Sommers, officers are told to knock on the resident's door, wait at least a minute before using the master key to enter the room, and then search only what is in plain view, precluding any opening of drawers or cabinets. Students, however, tell of several instances when the officers barged into the room despite the student's request

to "wait just a minute." While Security fitted most confiscated appliances with receipts stating the owner's name, several students recall how certain officers simply ignored their request for a receipt before their personal appliances were confiscated.

Sommers asserts that every student should have been given a receipt and assures the *Commentator* that the Office of Safety and Security will take full monetary responsibility for all damages incurred to the appliances during the process.

Dean of Students Efreim Nulman was perturbed when first learning about the raid from the *Commentator*. According to Nulman, the Office of Security had agreed to notify the Dean of Students prior to any such dormitory invasions. In the past Security had also agreed to include a resident hall advisor on its 'Raid Team' and to inform all dorm counselors in advance.

Captain Sommers, however, contends that in the past when dorm counselors were informed prior to the raid they would simply warn their friends on the floor to hide all illegal appliances. The raid in turn would prove worthless and futile. And since resident hall advisors do not participate in the raid, security guards can never go alone but rather must always raid in pairs in order to allay any suspicions of thievery in cases of misplaced appliances. One guard of every pair must always be a lieutenant or captain.

Although residents despise these bi-annual raids they are mandatory routines which help insure the fire safety of the dormitories. The raids are as essential to fire safety as is the rescue training all dorm counsellors receive as well as the extinguishers, hoses, and smoke alarms which align every floor. "This has been a sore point all the time, but a necessary evil," comments Sommers. "And in order to avoid fires, I will take the heat for it."

All those who are interested in being committee chairmen at YUNMUN VII (February 1997), please contact:

Owen Cyrulnik
795-7395

Joelle Tollinsky
545-8172

before April 22 in order to schedule an interview.

Interviews will be conducted shortly after Pesach vacation.

I Love Barrymore: A Review of YCDS' Production *I Hate Hamlet*

BY RYAN KARBEN

YCDS' spring production *I Hate Hamlet* is set in the loft of the fabled John Barrymore, a reputed legend of the American theater whose mid-century portrayal of Hamlet was the greatest ever. This critic has no way of assessing the validity of that claim, but I can say that Zvi Engel is the most compelling personality to grace the Schottenstein Center stage since 1993.

Engel's portrayal of Barrymore is subtle and rich; he neither stumbles nor slips and remains a presence on the stage even when his character is silent. He has taken the advice his character offers the struggling stage-actor Andrew Rally: to feel himself the character he portrays.

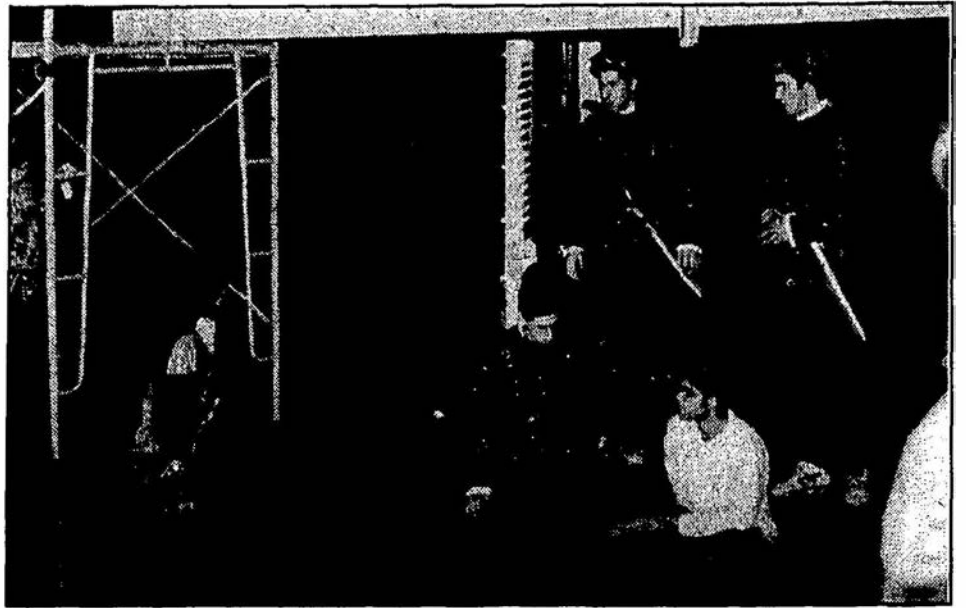
Engel's superb performance, however, is but one component of another brilliant production by YCDS Faculty Advisor and Artistic Director Dr. Anthony S. Beukas. Every aspect of the performance—from the period costumes for the ensemble to the lighting concept for the monologues—reflects his keen eye for detail. Particularly noteworthy is his use of the set. It is not mere scenery; the performers interact with it—climbing, crawling and jumping from the scaffolding. This constant motion adds immeasurably to the dynamism of the performance.

The play-within-a-play-within-a-play

concept is a bold experiment and it has been performed with aplomb by a brilliant supporting cast. Veteran actor Seth Dimbert's portrayal of the mammon-obsessed Hollywood agent Gary Peter Lefkowitz is characteristically splendid. He again demonstrates his ability to portray every nuance of his character, an ability he showcased as Murray in *The Odd Couple*.

Eric Freeman and Jeremy Danzer (as Freddy and Dean, respectively) are also both impressive assets, though Danzer seems a bit unaware of how powerfully his voice carries through a very small theater. The members of the Shakespeare-performing ensemble, particularly Yoni Kahan, Marc Cohen and Meir Zeitchik, also contribute greatly to the play's success. The technique of alternating scenes from Rally's life with scenes from the Bard's plays is pulled off quite well.

The only less-than-compelling performance is Robert Bagdadi's portrayal of the protagonist, Andrew Rally. He knows his lines perfectly and demonstrates an enviable enthusiasm on the stage, but he does not appear to have had the time to internalize the inner torment that Rally putatively feels. Rally is supposed to be torn between his artistic need to scale the creative heights already conquered by Barrymore and his late-twentieth century television-star impulse to follow Lefkow-



Lead character Rob Bagdadi (*Hamlet*) seated during rehearsal before opening night.

itz to Hollywood. Bagdadi fails to discern this tension, offering instead a superficial Rally who, while entertaining and effective, is dramatically overwhelmed by Engel's Barrymore. His raw talent, though, is impressive and he will surely be an asset to future YCDS performances.

No observation of this performance would be complete without offering well-earned praise to Elliot Berlin for his portrayal of Louie. Berlin is wonderful in every regard, from the way he delivers his lines to his unbelievably realistic recurring cough. His performance is sensitive and tender, nuanced and effective. He shines in his final undergraduate performance.

Beukas and Stage Manager Eric Heine should be justly proud of a play that is able to raise compelling questions about

art while entertaining a rapt audience. YCDS has offered an impressive variety of performances in recent years, ranging from the provocative and moving *Lips Together, Teeth Apart* to the more entertaining *Sherlock's Last Case*. Every season is marked by the same professionalism and dedication that has made YCDS such an asset for the past thirty-one years.

Barrymore posits that the life of the actor forces a choice between fame and glory, with the former cheaply attained and the latter acquired through struggle. Beukas and his company have realized both: a vaunted reputation and artistic achievement. They deserve the theater's most enduring tribute: a sustained standing ovation.

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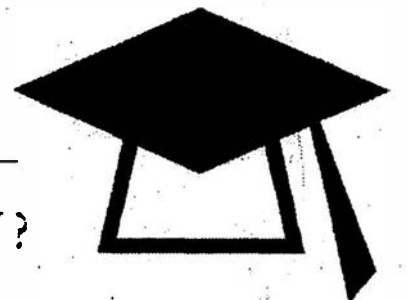
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Too Smart For Your Own Good

A PESACH THOUGHT BY DR. NORMAN LAMM

One of the most beloved parts of the Haggadah concerns the Four Sons, yet an analysis of this Jewish typology leaves us slightly confused. The four do not seem to be organized properly; they are somewhat disarrayed. Hence, while the *Rasha*, the Wicked Son, is a classification of piety and ethical behavior, the other three are categorized according to intellect: the Wise Son or *Chakham*, the Simple Son or *Tam*, and the exceedingly foolish one who cannot even ask, the *She'eino yode'ali'sheol*. Furthermore, why are there two types of unintelligent sons, the *Tam* and the unquestioning one? Since they are both unwise, does it not mean that essentially there are only three sons, not four?

R. Yitzhak Arama, the author of *Akedat Yitzchak*, solves our problem by offering a new definition of the *Tam* and presenting the Haggadah's Third Son in a new light. For while the Jerusalem Talmud clearly declares the *Tam* to be one who is faulted intellectually, calling him a *tipesh* or fool, the *Akedat Yitzhak* maintains that he is not typed intellectually but religiously and ethically. The Four Sons are divided into two classes, he tells us. Intellectually, the *Chakham* and *She'eino yodeia li'sheol* are opposed to each other: the first is Wise, the second Foolish. Then, however, there is the criterion of conduct. Here the *Rasha* and *Tam* are counterpoised: the first is Wicked, the second Good. The *Tam* is the opposite not of the *Chakham*, but of the *Rasha*. That *Tam* is a complimentary word is seen from the fact that Father Jacob was called *tam* -- *Yaakov ish tam* -- and that the Talmud's term for an animal that is benevolent rather than dangerous and murderous is -- *shor tam*. The *Tam*, then, is not the Simple Son or Foolish Son, but the Wholesome Son, the pious and good and obedient one.

Thus, while the *Tam* is the opposite of the *Rasha*, he is also different from the one who cannot ask. For while the latter is childish and infantile, the former is child-like and simple -- and what a noble virtue simplicity is! The *Hafetz Hayyim* and the *Hazon Ish* and others like them were brilliant scholars -- but they exuded simplicity. And, to go from the sacred to the secular, Prof. Albert Einstein was not exactly a simpleton; yet how marvelously simple he was in all his ways!

Yet the *Tam* is also different from the *Chakham*. Despite all the praise we heap on this Wise son, he is not unblemished. For some strange reason, which may go deep into the unconscious of our race, there has always been an instinctive element of suspicion about this *Chakham*. Witness the sarcasm with which the Yiddish saying refers to someone as "der *Chakham* fun de *Mah Nishtanah!*"

Wisdom can, after all, be distorted. One who is only wise is always in danger of becoming merely smart; and the smart man often succeeds only in outsmarting himself!

One of the brightest men in Biblical history was Korach -- and he was trapped in his own shrewdness when he decided to lead the rebellion against Moses. Note Rashi's observation -- *Korach she'pikieich hayah mah raah li'shtut*

zu: Korach was so bright, what led him into this foolishness? Perhaps even more to the point is the added comment of the Kotzker Rebbe: *mah raah li'shtut zu -- li'heyot pikeiach!* What led Korach into this foolishness -- of being shrewd! A *Chakham* can become merely a *pikieich*, smart; and this is foolish, for then he may outsmart himself.

The *Tam* may very well be as wise as or wiser than the *Chakham*. There is only this difference: unlike the Wise Son, he has no desire to display his learning before others by asking impressive questions. He is a man without pretenses. He does not wear his *lomdut* on his sleeve. And herein, indeed, lies his superiority over the *Chakham*.

Every Shabbat at *Minhah* time we recite the verse *adam u-vehehmah toshia, ha-Shem*; we implore the Almighty to help both man and animal. But the Talmud (*Hullin* 5b) had another explanation, maintaining that our prayer refers to one species, men only -- the kind of men *she-hen arumin be'daat u-mesimin atzman ki'behemot*, those who are brilliant in intellect and yet act as simple as animals. What marvelous restraint that requires -- to possess an acute mind and

"In our Jewish world, we suffer from both horrendous *am haaratzut* and spritual anemia, so we must find a balance between intellectual sophistication and spiritual integrity--neither one can be an adequate substitute for the other."

an abundance of learning, and refrain from exhibiting them to your fellow men! The Talmud, obviously, was well aware of the *hubris* of intellectuals and academicians.

The crux of the matter is not the possession of intellect, but the relative values one assigns to intellect and goodness. Thus, when R. Yehudah Halevi pleaded for the superiority of historical experience and personal participation over abstract reasoning, he was stating the case for the *Tam* over the *Chakham*. Furthermore, the ultimate test of both humanity and Jewishness, and the essential guarantee of their survival, lies not in ideal thinking but in ideal living. The author of the *Or ha-Chayyim*, who lived during the expulsion from Spain, writes that when Jews were put to the test of choosing between kissing the cross or enduring exile and even death, the sophisticated philosophizers embraced Christianity under pressure, while the masses of ordinary men and women and children, usually unsophisticated and unlearned but who loved God and lived Judaism simply, dared to risk death and exile. He thus confirms the importance of a total view of Jewish living.

In essence, the Hasidic movement represented the emergence of the *Tam*, the reaffirmation of the virtue of simplicity, of moral conduct, whether or not accompanied by intellectual prowess.

It was not a revolt against scholarship or intellect or the study of Torah; certainly Judaism, more than any other religion, places a premium upon knowledge and intellectual attainment. It was a protest against the overemphasis of these virtues at the expense of the inner life of the Jew, his emotions, his heart, his soul. *Temimut* -- the act of being a *Tam*, the wholeness of personality, the integration of all experience into a simple love of and submission to God -- was considered as superior to the isolated quality of *hokhmah*.

R. Nahman Bratzlaver, put it this way: *ahar kol ha-hokhmot*, after all this wisdom, one ought to discard all his sophistication and turn to Hashem in order to serve Him *bi'temimut u-vi'peshitut gamur*, in utter wholesomeness and simplicity, "without any awareness of being "wise." The greatest *hokhmah* of all, he says, is *li'veli li'heyot Chakham kelal*, not to be "wise" at all, for in fact there is no completely wise person in the world, for man's wisdom is as naught compared to that of the Creator. *Ve'ha-ikkar hu, ki Rahmana liba ba'i*, above all, the Merciful God desires man's heart -- not, assuredly, in the American Jew's sense of "a good heart" excusing one from living like a Jew, but in the sense of an emotional and spiritual deepening of the experience and practice of the *mitzvot*. Hasidism is unimpressed by intellectual acrobatics. It prefers heart over mind, faith over philosophy, ded-

ication over dialectics, love over learning. The third son, the *Tam*, is thus regarded as even greater than the first, the *Chakham*.

Can such a point of view be accepted today? I believe so. Our society in general suffers from an overabundance of knowledge at the expense of man's wholeness, his self, his integrity. Science reigns supreme, and learned journals in a dazzling array of disciplines and sub-disciplines proliferate. Knowledge is universally acknowledged as the key to a better job and a more convenient life-style, as a source of power. All this is unquestionably true. Yet when the mind and its achievements are so stressed that all else is excluded, that man is considered a machine whose loves and hates and fears and passions and aspirations are trivial -- then we have outsmarted ourselves. Then man is in eclipse; he/she is like a freak child who has an abnormally large head and undersized body and heart. And a sophisticated computer, "smarter" than he is, becomes more valuable than a human being.

In our Jewish world, we suffer from a horrendous *am haaratzut*. There is no doubt that we are intellectually anemic. We must find a balance between intellectual sophistication and spiritual integrity -- neither one can be an adequate substitute for the other. I have never derogated intellectual investigations into Jewish Thought -- Heaven knows we do not have enough of that -- but there must be respect

as well for the simple *Mah zot* of the *Tam* provided, of course, that the *Tam* too exercises his intellectual dignity and does not deprecate the value of *hokhmah*.

Let us emphasize this again and again. The *Tam*, as the full Jew, is fully cognizant of the value of wisdom, and himself possesses learning in abundance. But he insist upon integrating learning into the totality of a responsive, religious, reverent personality. To the inquiring college student the *Tam* declares; be not over-wise. Goodness counts too, so do not be too smart for your own good... Judaism cannot be grasped only by reading and debating, although that is necessary for any intelligent person; it must, in the final analysis, be tasted and tried. The *Chakham* seeks proof of G-d's existence, and that is fine. But better yet is the kind of *Tam* who offers proof, in his daily conduct, of the existence of a *man*, a human being, a Jew with a heart and a soul -- the image of Hashem.

We live in a world where, unfortunately, the *Rasha* reigns supreme. It is not enough, in this kind of environment, to emphasize the *Chakham* alone. For while it is true that wisdom is indispensable both to general life and Jewish living, it is equally true that beyond all the complexities and subtleties that tantalize man's mind and confound his understanding there stands the simple and sublime truth of the One God, Author of all. It is the *Tam* who can include wisdom in his personality and transcend it, who can possess scholarship without displaying pretentiousness, who can develop his intellect and yet, in the moment he turns to his G-d, abandon his self-consciousness and serve his Maker with wonder and simplicity, with love and faith.

One very important point remains to be made, and that is one of extremely significant contemporary significance. And that is that even in Torah, where we engage in the highest and most recondite forms of *Hokhmah*, we must strive for at least an equal measure of *temimut*. To use only our intellectual apparatus in applying Halakha to "real life," it is not enough to be clever or even wise; one must possess an equal or greater measure of moral rectitude, of plain goodness, of a simplicity that bespeaks submission to the moral code of Judaism. A *posek* is not a computer in human form; he is a living, feeling, sensitive Jew who possesses much learning. We who have witnessed the cruel distortion of Torah by those who claimed halakhic sanction for murder must be doubly careful. Wisdom alone, in the sense of technical halakhic expertise, can make one forget the simple injunctions against bloodshed and libel and verbal as well as physical violence. But that is not the way of Torah. *Torat Hashem temimah, meshivat nefesh*. The Torah that Hashem reaches is one of *temimut*; it is that which will restore our people to our primordial dignity as the *Am Hashem*.

Afilu kulanu *chakhamim*, kulanu *zek-enim*, kulanu *nevonim*, kulanu *yodim* et ha-Torah, *mitzvah alenu le'saper bi'yetziat mitzrayim*. The answer to the *Tam's* simple question is the teaching that *be'hozek yad hotzianu ha-Shem mi-mitzrayim*, that G-d took us out of Egypt with a strong hand; and that we today too must feel gripped by His presence, knowing that God is a good Father whose powerful hand grasps ours and leads us safely through the hills and vales of life, avoiding all the traps and snares, and into the *geulah shelemah*, the complete and final redemption of all Israel; and through Israel -- all the world.

blacks are genetically inferior to whites while 66% do not favor the removal of racist books from the library.

"The reality is," said Shneider, "we [Yeshiva College] have a higher percentage who dislike anti-social behavior... We seem to be much more socially concerned about the language we use. We don't have unbridled freedom in our lives, we learn restraint, and I guess our students have recognized that."

Nonetheless, 61% of YC say that the Yiddish term *shvartzel* does not connote the same thing as the epithet nigger. While in the minds of most Jews this might be true, to RIETS Mashgiach Rav Yosef Blau the question students ought to be asking is 'how do blacks feel?'

"I assume that most blacks treat a Jew calling them *shvartze* in a similar fashion to the person using another name. To me the issue is, how do African-Americans react to it, and therefore, it makes no difference that I can say to myself 'It's not the same.' If I know that an African-American is offended by the phrase, then I have no right to use that phrase even if I can

away from places they are not wanted.

63% of respondents argue that integrated neighborhoods are safe, and 58% state the government is not spending too much on improving the conditions of blacks and hispanics. As far as the obstacles blacks face, 61% contend that most African-Americans do not have the same educational opportunities as white Americans, along with 62% who maintain most African-Americans do not have the same occupational opportunities as white Americans.

However, when the results are correlated with the city in which respondents spent their adolescence a disturbing picture begins to emerge. While 95% of those who live outside the New York area agree that racial epithets are harmful, only 68% of students from the New York area concur. 74% of students from outside New York say that integrated neighborhoods are safe while only 56% from the New York area agree. In similar questions there is a consistent 20% difference in the attitudes of New Yorkers, and always toward the less tolerant side. This discrepancy is especially troubling in what is billed as the world's premiere cosmopolitan city.

The problem may be that certain segments of the community are not cosmopolitan. Dr. Schneider submits that, "The orthodox Jewish community... basically lives within its own confines. Ethnocentrism is alive and well in New York City, and certainly alive and well in the Jewish community. The reality is, when you are familiar with [only] your own, it's easy to stereotype people you know nothing about whereas Jews who live outside of New York are more likely to become acquainted, either in the malls or in the neighborhoods with other groups of people. Familiarity helps you understand that people are similar since a lot of our images of people we don't know are false."

Rav Blau also interpreted this discrepancy along the same lines, "Many yeshiva students have never been seriously exposed to non-Jews... they live in Jewish neighborhoods and go to Jewish schools and their limited experience has not been positive. Someone who... has made friends with blacks, Indians, or Irish, tends to be more open. If you have a closed society you gain many things. One of the things that you lose is openness and... our stereotyping becomes much, much easier."

86% Believe most blacks would have acquitted O.J. Simpson

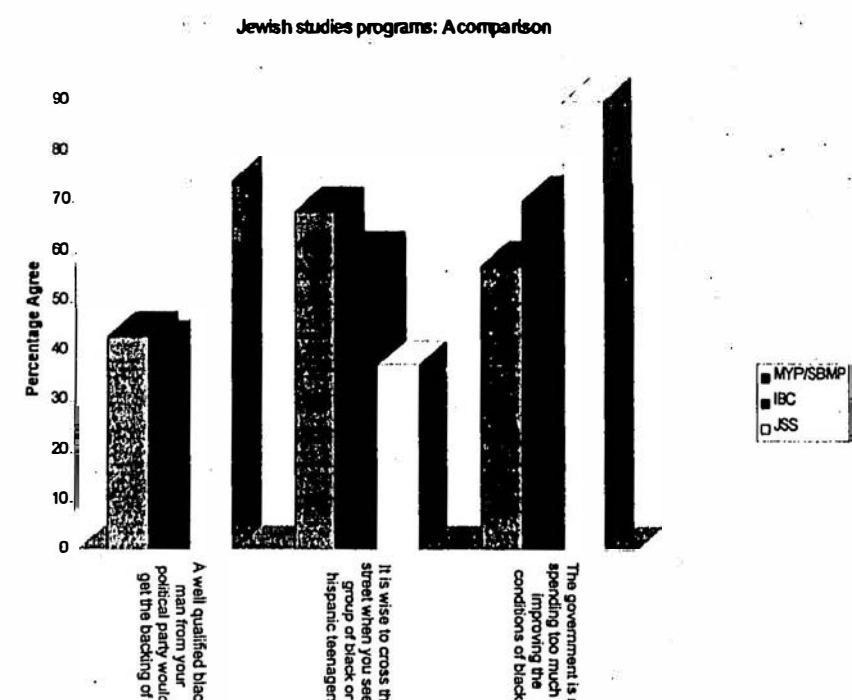
convince myself clearly that it's different."

Rav Moshe Tendler agrees. "Language has an ability to carry with it connotations that can be unpleasant. It is because of this that we have to be more sensitive to non-Jews than to Jews because with *goyim* there is a greater danger of *Chillul Hashem*, because... God gave us a Torah that is supposed to make us behave 'better' than they do."

English professor Dr. Will Lee suggested that there may be a "double standard" at YC. "Students are rightly extremely sensitive about stereotyping of Jews, but they aren't nearly as sensitive about stereotyping of other peoples."

As such, he explained that "there are students on campus who will make racial cracks because they think they're being funny, or because they're not thinking at all."

The poll also touched on socio-economic issues that involve blacks. 74% feel that blacks should push themselves where they are not wanted. In the General Survey of '94, only 69% took that position, with 31% arguing that blacks should stay



Racial Survey Uncovers Mixed Attitudes

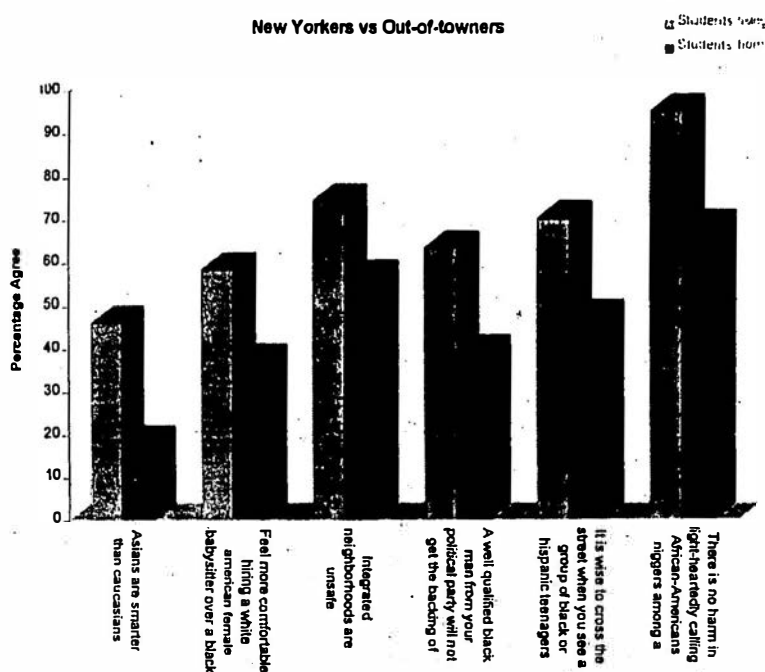
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Dr. Lee also attributed students' attitudes to their limited exposure to minorities.

"Dickens was anti-Semitic but he didn't know very many Jews. I doubt that there are very many students on campus who have been friends with a black family or a Hispanic family. If you don't know people it's easier to be prejudice."

One result of this ethnocentrism is students' cultural ignorance of black history. Only 39% knew that before the 20th cen-

agree or disagree with the statement 'Underneath their fur most apes and monkeys have white skin.' One person wanted to know what was expected of him and wrote on his form back "What am I, a [expletive deleted] zoologist?" The question was actually designed to root out a racist belief that since blacks and monkeys are so closely related, monkeys have black skin underneath their fur. Their failure to recognize that this question had any connection to a poll on tolerance goes



tury, Africans, like Europeans, made important contributions to the world as inventors, explorers, and conquerors. Less than half of the respondents recognized that hundreds of years ago, African societies engaged in social welfare practices in their concern for widows and orphaned children, and 43% did not know that black men voluntarily joined George Washington's Continental army during the revolutionary war.

Eric Ashkenazi, a YC junior who was selected for participation in the survey, feels the results are not absolute verdicts.

84% believe black and Hispanic teenagers are more prone to violent confrontations than white teenagers

"I dispute the fact that solely on the basis of this poll we can determine if there is a problem or not. I don't think you can take the raw data and automatically translate it, without having a little more knowledge of the situation." Together with many other respondents, he had difficulty understanding the relevance of certain questions.

One query in particular drew widespread criticism. It asked the person to

towards the credit of the students, explains Dr. Shneider.

The question of cultural and racial tolerance has been discussed much recently at YU, perhaps as an outgrowth of its prominence in the national debate that ensued following the OJ verdict and the Farrakhan March. Rav Blau welcomed students back from their winter intersession with a lecture on racism. Last semester physical education instructor Stanley Watson gave a talk on tolerance shortly after the assassination of Yitzchak Rabin, and on March 19th, a student symposium was given as part of the Torah U'Maddah Project, co-sponsored by the Committee for Racial Harmony.

Racism Among Jews

The *Commentator* poll was partly a reaction to this interest and also hoped to serve as a springboard for heightened awareness and constructive debate regarding racial issues. However, the findings of the second half of the poll, which questioned students about their attitudes toward Jews of different cultural backgrounds, left much to be desired.

Only 50% of American-born Jews would marry Russian Jews, and only 57% said they could marry Jews from Iran, Iraq, Syria, or Morocco. 31% said Ethiopians would be permissible, 44% would allow their children to marry converts, and 43% would allow their children to marry Jews from non-religious homes.

Similar patterns follow for students who are themselves from Russia, Iran,

Iraq, Syria, and Morocco, with each group making exception for his own kind. In other words, almost 100% state it is fine to marry American Jews or Jews with their own cultural background, but barely half support intercultural marriage, marriage with converts, or marriage with people from non-religious homes.

Schneider feels these results follow the normal patterns, "Americans prefer people from their own culture. Russian immigrants prefer people from their own culture. It's not a 'Jewish thing', it's a cultural difference. When we talk about marriage, we're talking about language, we're talking about food, we're talking about dress, these are different cultural patterns. So if one has a choice, the normal choice would be to feel more comfortable, in terms of marriage, with your own kind."

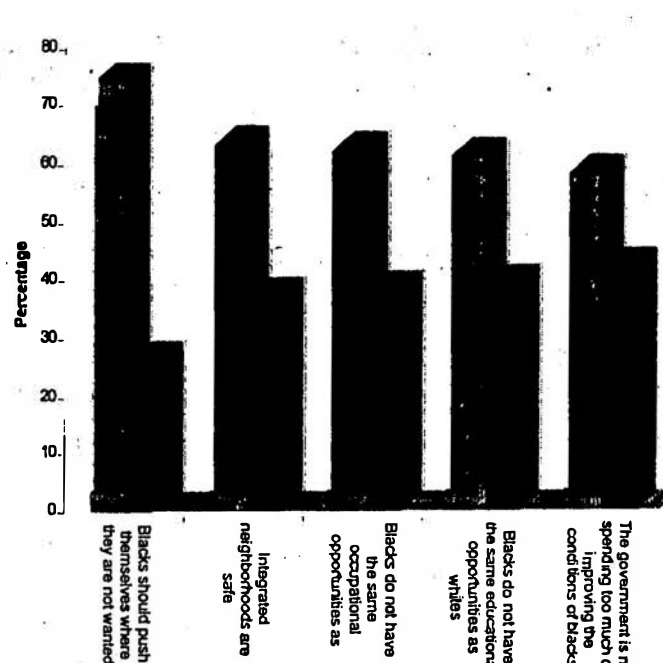
Rav Blau feels that this is more of a parent problem than a problem with the students in the yeshiva. "I always felt that the best part of yeshiva is the fact that it's a meritocracy," he told us, "If there were two boys and you had a question that one could answer, you would go to him. It would not matter that the other was the son of a Gadol, you would go to the person who could help you with the answer." It surprised him to find out how the students really felt, and he took these figures to mean that they were worried about *yichus* (family lineage).

"What happens here," commented Dr. Schneider, "is that theoretically we are supposed to treat them [converts] better. They chose the religion and went through the whole process of converting, but like one of my students said to me, 'We got so into this *yichus* thing, and how do you have *yichus* if you're a *ger*?'"

There is a correlation between the response to these questions and the Jewish Studies program the respondent is in. A student enrolled in JSS is far more likely, by a differential of over 20%, to permit himself to marry someone from a non-religious home than an MYP student.

Poll Causes Stir on Campus

Before the results were even in there was controversy, with rabbeim denouncing



ing the survey in their shiurim, and students around campus critical of its intents. As Rav Blau explained, "Number one, there is a position in many circles of the yeshiva that the *Commentator*... has a tendency to go for the sensational, to find fault and be critical of what goes on here at Yeshiva. The assumption is that if someone doing a survey tends to find fault, they're looking to catch us again. Number two, there are a lot of people at Yeshiva so accustomed to YU being criticized that they always assume the worst."

Everyone who knew about the poll had something to say, though not all thought it was a bad idea. Some people worried that the questions and answers could be misconstrued. Rav Tendler explained that, "Language changes its connotation as society's problems vary. When I was growing up, certain modern epithets were not derogatory terms. Then

42% of Seniors believe that the average intelligence of blacks is lower than that of whites, as compared to 65% of Juniors, and 69% of Sophomores

people became more sensitive, and the older Roshei Yeshiva... who learned the language as they were growing up, find it difficult to change the way they speak because they don't mean it in a derogatory way."

"It's one thing if you're trying to denigrate someone, then say 'I'm trying to denigrate someone'. Yes, about Farrakhan I say he's an animal in man's clothing. Why? Because he's a man who wants to kill us, he wants to destroy us, and you have a right to speak negatively about

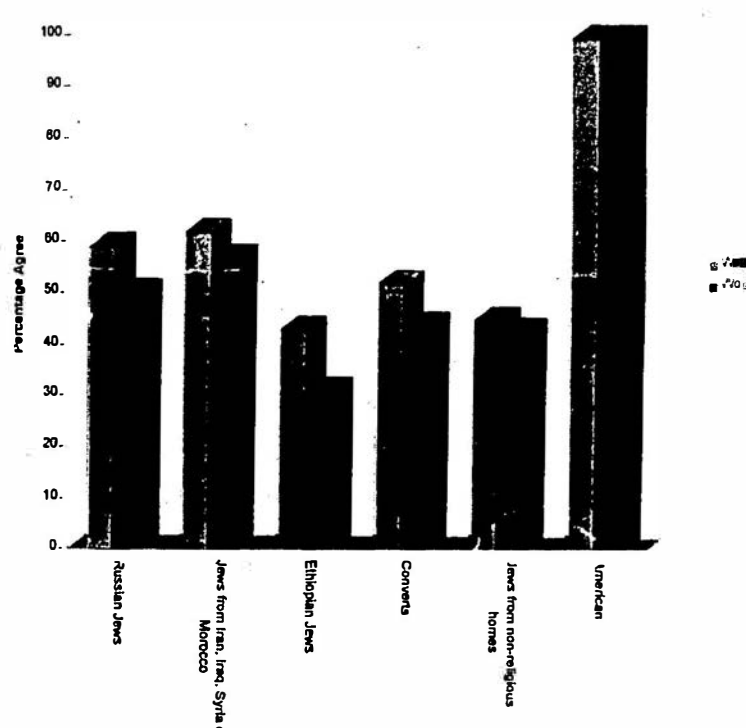
him. But who in our society has any *Taynas* [qualms] against a man because his skin is black?"

Dr. Beukas suggested inviting Louis Farrakhan to speak on campus and engage in "an organized debate" with the students.

"Where does he get his attitudes from? Let's have a dialogue, because without a dialogue you have separate camps. But that'll never happen because the mentality here is that 'if it disagrees with us you can't have them'."

One result that drew criticism was the assertion by 56% of respondents that Ethiopian Jews are really Jews and should not have to convert. Many pointed out that this question is one of complex halacha and in no way does a negative response indicate intolerance or prejudice. Rav Tendler contends, "We broke our backs and spent our money to get Ethiopians out of Ethiopia even though in *halacha* I am convinced, as my father-in-law (Hagaon Rav Moshe Feinstein T"z) was, that these are "regular" blacks. Yet, because they are *A'noshim Me'chubadim* who identified themselves with Judaism and were persecuted because they were Jews, then I'm not worried about the *halachic* definition of Jew anymore, because I have a moral

Would you allow yourself or your child to marry a Jew from a different background?



definition of a Jew, and I have a moral obligation to spend my money to risk my life in order to save them. That's the value of the individual. The *halacha* comes in when I have them safely in *Eretz Yisrael*."

Josh Fine, the YCSC president, acknowledged the importance of the survey, "I do not see the *Commentator* as a rabble-rouser. This is an issue that students need to bring up with the administration, because if such a survey would not be conducted, the administration would not be discussing this issue right now. Even without knowing the results of the survey, the administration has now begun to show a certain interest in dealing with YC's racism problem; they are saying that cultural tolerance may be an issue on this campus."

VP for Academic Affairs William Schwartz insisted that he has never been aware of any racism amongst YU students and, in fact, students have traditionally been actively involved in groups which interact with and strengthen the Washington Heights neighborhood. Schwartz cited the Community Literacy Club and Council on Racial Harmony as good examples of YU students reaching out to the community at large.

"Since I've been here I've felt nothing

but respect," reports Stanley Watson, Yeshiva University's beloved assistant athletic director who is an African American. "Maybe some guys are curious and therefore asked me about what it was like growing up in the segregated South or in Harlem, but I look at that as natural curiosity. I really feel that the students have enveloped me with, if not curiosity, a lot of understanding, and yes, love too. I've never had any problems with any prejudice or something of that nature."

Mr. Watson gave the *Commentator* a few suggestions to help better the relationship between YU and the community in which it is located, "Basically I'd say to just make yourselves available and speak to the members of the community. We had a student here that was on the fencing team who went out and bought shirts for a whole team in a league that played up at the Wallenberg playground (on Laurel Hill). Acts like this show the community that some of the guys, or individuals, are definitely willing to get closer and bring some type of accessibility to the members of the community. When he would go out to the playground to cheer his team on, you could see that the kids adopted him."

"Just reach out, make gestures. If you make human gestures towards another

human in the community, it's something that's seen by other members of the community and they'll appreciate it.

61% do not believe that Africans made any important contribution to the world prior to the 20th Century

We'll eventually see that we're all the same. Something in the future that the administration might want to think about is outside usage of the facilities. Let some kids come in and use the gym for a couple of weeks in the summer or open up the pool to the community. If we see that it works and they respect the facility it could be something that becomes far-reaching."

"Since I've been here I've felt nothing

MYP's Rav Kahn Lectures to JSS Students

BY DAVID S. GREENBERG

MYP Rosh Yeshiva Rav Aharon Kahn delivered a shiur on the philosophical and hashkafic ideas of Pesach to 70 JSS students in an Ideological Issues Course last Tuesday. The lecture was inspired by JSS President David Merklin in an effort to bridge a widening gap between the JSS and MYP students.

Daniel Blank, a JSS senior referred to the shiur as "enlightening and invigorating." Rav Kahn enjoyed the experience as well. "The event was really something special," he said. "The tremendous nachas I got from these bochrim was like no other."

The idea of a Mazer Yeshiva Program rabbi lecturing in JSS was the brainchild of JSS president David Merklin. Merklin said that he sensed growing fissions between students of different Jewish studies programs at Yeshiva University and had to do something about it. "The essential point of the shiur was to form a state of achdus between the JSS and MYP

guys." Merklin said the walls dividing the Jewish studies programs need to be torn down, and that all stereotypes of students must cease. In order to facilitate this, Merklin thought of asking an MYP rabbi to address JSS students.

Rav Kahn was extremely happy to take part in the event and is eager to see a "bridging of the gulf" between the different branches of our institution. "Everyone speaks of building bridges; we are always trying to connect some bridge across a wide river. However to build the bridge is not the solution, rather what we need to do is dry the river."

Both Merklin and Rav Kahn understand that this is not something that will happen overnight. Rav Kahn commented that the "process is a long and hard one. It will take time and effort on both the talmidim and the rebbeim involved." Rav Kahn encouraged the JSS students to participate in extracurricular activities like the sichot' mussar shmoozes given on Wednesday nights.

Senators Propose to Extend Senate Terms

BY EZRA TUCHMAN

The student Senate voted this past week to move ahead with a proposed amendment that would allow students to serve on the Senate for more than two years. According to the provisions of the amendment, a senator may circumvent the current two-year limitation, provided that he resubmit an application and that he be readmitted by his colleagues.

The amendment was introduced by Isaac Sasson, a current member of the Senate who is approaching the two year limit. Sasson, an active member of the Senate, drafted the amendment in an attempt to circumvent the rule. Though admittedly, personal interests may have influenced the drafting of the amendment, Sasson and several of his supporters contend that the amendment reflects the best interests of all students as it facilitates continuity and experience.

Uriel Lubetski, vice-Chairman of the Senate, explained, "There is no reason why Ike or any other student should not serve more than two years. We asked and were told that there is no fundamental reason behind the two year limitation. It just so happens that there has never been anyone in the position to challenge the rule. Ike is committed to the Senate and deserves to serve for a third year."

Daniel Wolf, a senior member of the Senate, agreed: "Ike is devoted to the Senate. He has done a lot of work on behalf the Senate and the students, and has developed close relationships with the faculty and administration. The best

interests of the Senate and the student body are served if he is permitted to stay a third year. I can't understand why anyone would disagree."

However, several students do disagree. Lubetski, in an interview with *The Commentator*, did admit that a number of Senators expressed their reservations about the proposed amendment. They fear that allowing any Senator to influence legislation for such an extended period of time would endanger the very legitimacy, and perhaps the very existence of the Senate.

A number of student leaders also expressed their disapproval. Both Dov Simons, Vice President of YCSC and Shraga Goldenhersh, Vice President of the Junior Class, have publicly challenged the authority of the Senate to pursue this amendment. Goldenhersh, a perennial opponent of the Senate, quipped, "This a perfect example of Soviet authoritarianism. Why not invite Stalin or Castro to run the Senate?" Simons and Goldenhersh fear that if the amendment is passed, the Senate will gain too much independence and could ultimately come under the domination of an individual whose ideals are antithetical to those of the majority of the student body.

Despite these reservations, Josh Fine, YCSC President, has agreed to negotiate with the student Senators to bring about a compromise acceptable to both sides. Sasson and the students who support him hope that a resolution is reached prior to the start of the fall semester.

The Commentator Wishes all students, faculty & administration a Chag Kasher V'Sameach

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Alumni Networks by Invitation

BY HESHY WILLIG

Last Tuesday the SSSB Alumni Association held an evening of networking at the Village Crown restaurant, where only twelve students were invited to meet with the approximate thirty alumni in attendance. Last year's president of YCSC Daniel Billig and Eyal Feiler co-chaired the event and hand-picked the students to be invited.

Some students indicated frustration and anger after they learned that the event had taken place and they were not invited. However Toby Weiss, Director of Alumni affairs, explained that "this was an alumni event, where students were allowed to attend - not a student function." As a result, students at large were not informed and were hand-picked because of space consideration - the restaurant could not hold more than the fifty people already in attendance.

Among the students in attendance were

twin brothers Daniel and Jonathan Lifshutz who had started last year an Alumni big brother mentor program with Billig. At last year's alumni program over sixty students and alumni gathered at a restaurant to initiate a program whereby alumni would assist current students in getting jobs. According to Daniel Lifshutz the alumni event this past March 19th was just that, an alumni gathering. He attended to establish ties in order to plan future events where more students would be invited. He already plans to hold an event this year after Pesach.

Billig, Dean Harold Neirenborg, and Eyal Feiler all addressed the crowd to open the evening. Then the alumni were allowed to converse with other alumni in their respective fields, enabling them to secure information on potential openings for career advancements. They also provided students with leads on job opportunities as well as tips on where to interview and how to interview.

Student Court in Recess

BY DAVID SWIDLER

Earlier this semester Justice Ralph Madeb vacated his seat on the Student Court when he graduated. Just last night, YCSC President Joshua Fine and his council approved the appointment of YC senior Jeremy Lustman as Madeb's replacement.

Although the organization has been relatively inactive in recent months on an official level, the Yeshiva College Student Court plays a role in the judicial processes involved in student council functions.

As the judicial arm of the Council, the Court operates in conjunction with the Office of the Dean of Students to help settle issues that directly involve conflicts between specific students and the administration, and disputes between students who agree to use the Student Court as the arbiter.

In cases requiring administrative ac-

tion, the Court will subsequently recommend a course of action to the Dean; the recommendation will then be given great weight in the decision-making process.

YCSC President Josh Fine noted that despite the perceived inactivity of the Court this year, it fills a crucial niche in the bureaucracy that is YU. Unlike other organizations under the aegis of YCSC, the Court does not generate its own activity; rather, says Fine, it is important that the Court simply exist in case there should arise the need for it to take action.

Chief Justice Patrick Amar is concerned that not enough students are familiar with the function and availability of the court; to that end, he and his fellow justices drafted a letter to *The Commentator* in which they detailed its functions, but it was not printed. He therefore wishes to remind students that they should be aware of the asset they have in the Court, and that they should not hesitate to take advantage of it.

Op-Ed:

A Second Year of Study in Israel

BY RABBI YOSEF BLAU

It is generally recognized that a year of study in Israel after high school has a strong positive effect on the religious growth of young Jewish men and women. Many students who pass through twelve years of yeshiva education without developing any love for learning, or react negatively to their experience, change dramatically while attending an Israeli yeshiva. Even our successful graduates return with heightened commitment and greater learning skills. A study by Rabbi Sholom Berger, which includes interviews with students before, during and after Israeli studies confirms this impression.

During the past few years steadily increasing numbers are choosing to stay in Israel a second year even though they receive no college credit for doing so. Some parents are apprehensive about the delay in continuing secular education and fear that their children will become too religious and removed from the norms of the family. From the perspective of the Israeli yeshiva a second year solidifies the impact of the first and is a time of serious learning without months of adjusting. A compromise year and a half has become a real option.

There is clearly a self-selecting process that determines which students stay a second year. Nevertheless there are sufficient numbers to see a pattern. Most of

those who stay for their second year are serious about their studies and serious students tend to do better in all areas secular as well as religious. Returning to college with greater maturity they master the dual program far better than those who have had only one year and get frustrated by their inability to duplicate their Israeli experience. It is true that more of them express an interest in going into Jewish professions, the rabbinate and Jewish education. While this may upset parents who are concerned about standards of living, the future of our community depends on our producing qualified people in these areas.

The net benefit far outweighs the delay of a year and the long range effects will be a community of adults who remain committed to serious Torah study and religious observance. Conversations with students years later indicate that they look back to that additional year of learning in Israel as a special experience. Unfortunately, no study of the impact of a second year has yet been made, but reviewing the records of recent graduates of Yeshiva I suspect will surprise those who think that this is a narrow group of religious extremists who denigrate their secular studies. There can be no serious discussion of Torah Umada without a solid foundation of Torah knowledge. For most of our students this requires two full years of full time learning in Israel.

Breakfast with the Bureaucrats

continued from page one

ees were presented with awards recognizing their political achievements. College Republicans chairman Idel Kolodny presented Guillermo Linares with a "City Leadership Award." Linares, a native Dominican who only recently aspired to the political scene, spoke of his peaceful contact with the Jewish neighbors of his boyhood farm on the northern coast of the Dominican Republic. A current Washington Heights resident, Linares was visibly pleased by the recognition of the Jewish community.

Olga Mendez, another minority in powerful public office, also warmly accepted her "State Leadership Award," which was presented next by AIPAC coordinator Jeremy Lustman. Ms. Mendez, after ebulliently thanking Lustman for his introduction, devoted her remarks to praise of comrades in public service, Karben and Fine, and Yeshiva University for its partnership with the rest of the community. Mendez earned a degree in Educational Psychology from YU's Fekauf Graduate School in 1973.

College Democrats chairman Menasha Shapiro drew some laughs during his introduction of Herman Farrell by noting the influential legislator's penchant for driving flashy sports cars. Farrell gratefully accepted his "State Leadership Award," bantering with Karben and Rangel, and admitting no wrongdoing on the

fast car issue.

Rangel, friendly with the other honorees, also seemed to be enjoying his moment in the YU spotlight. Karben reserved for himself the presentation to Rangel of the "National Leadership Award," candidly referring to the aspirant to chairmanship of the House Ways and Means Committee as "Charlie," and clearly basking in the presence of Rockland County's Ben Gilman, chairman of the influential House Foreign Relations Committee. Gilman and Rangel, longtime Albany and Washington colleagues, exchanged effusive greetings behind the podium and underscored the prominence of those gathered at the legislative breakfast.

Many local politicians who were not in attendance sent their liaisons to the Jewish community in their stead. Young representatives of Assembly Speaker Sheldon Silver, State Comptroller Carl McCall, Manhattan Borough President Ruth Messinger, and Assemblyman Ed Sullivan sat among YU students during the proceedings.

Afterwards, Karben beamed from the morning's success: "Most students view their elected officials as a bunch of talking heads on television and, to many politicians, students are a nameless and faceless constituency. What makes this event so wonderful is that it bridges an unfortunately widening divide between the electorate and our country's political leadership."

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BY SIMCHA GISSINGER

The name of a Yeshiva goes a long way towards explaining what the Yeshiva's philosophy is, or at least, what was the intent of its founders. Brooklyn's Torah Vodaas Yeshiva was so named because its founders envisioned a place where students could study Torah, and in the afternoons study secular subjects, or Daas, as they dubbed it. While their goal may never have been fully realized, Yeshiva University's RIETS takes the name of Rabbeinu Yitzchok Elchonon Spektor, a 19th century visionary and world-renowned Gadol.

And, as one might expect from the namesake of YU, Rav Spektor was brilliant, innovative, and, yes, controversial in his time.

Yeshiva University was founded shortly after the passing of Rav Yitzchok Elchonon, who had become known at the time of his death as "Rabban Shel Kol Yisrael". Rabbi Robert S. Hirt, Vice-President for RIETS, explains that Rabbi Isaac Elchonon lived at a time when he saw the world as he knew it unraveling before him, and he was aware of the fact that Lithuanian Jewry would have to confront the emerging world with certain changes.

"Isaac Elchonon lived at a time when he saw the world as he knew it unraveling before him, and he was aware of the fact that Lithuanian Jewry would have to confront the emerging world with certain changes."

Likewise, throughout its history, YU has introduced educational and doctrinal changes into its curriculum in order to help talmidim approach the challenges of their careers and of the world's ever-evolving technology.

Rav Spektor, unlike many other gedolim of his generation, staunchly supported the Orthodox Zionist Movement, desperately wanting Bnei Yisroel to return to Eretz Yisroel. He was, to a large degree, a bridge between the Jewish communities of Israel and Lithuania of his time, in that he would regularly answer questions from Israel. On the same token, said Rabbi Hirt, RIETS integrates the learning methods and ways of the Lithuanian Jewish communities of earlier generations with the Jewish community in Israel of today.

Perhaps his attribute most applicable to YU students was his unwavering love for Torah learning. Historians document that he used to recite the daily prayers using the same niggun [tune] with which he would study Talmud. His life and accomplishments are best memorialized by the dedication of over-worked YU students who stay up in the Beis Medrash all hours of the night, and his legacy is justly served by association with them.

RABBEINU YITZCHAK Centennial Yahrzeit ELCHANAN ZT'L

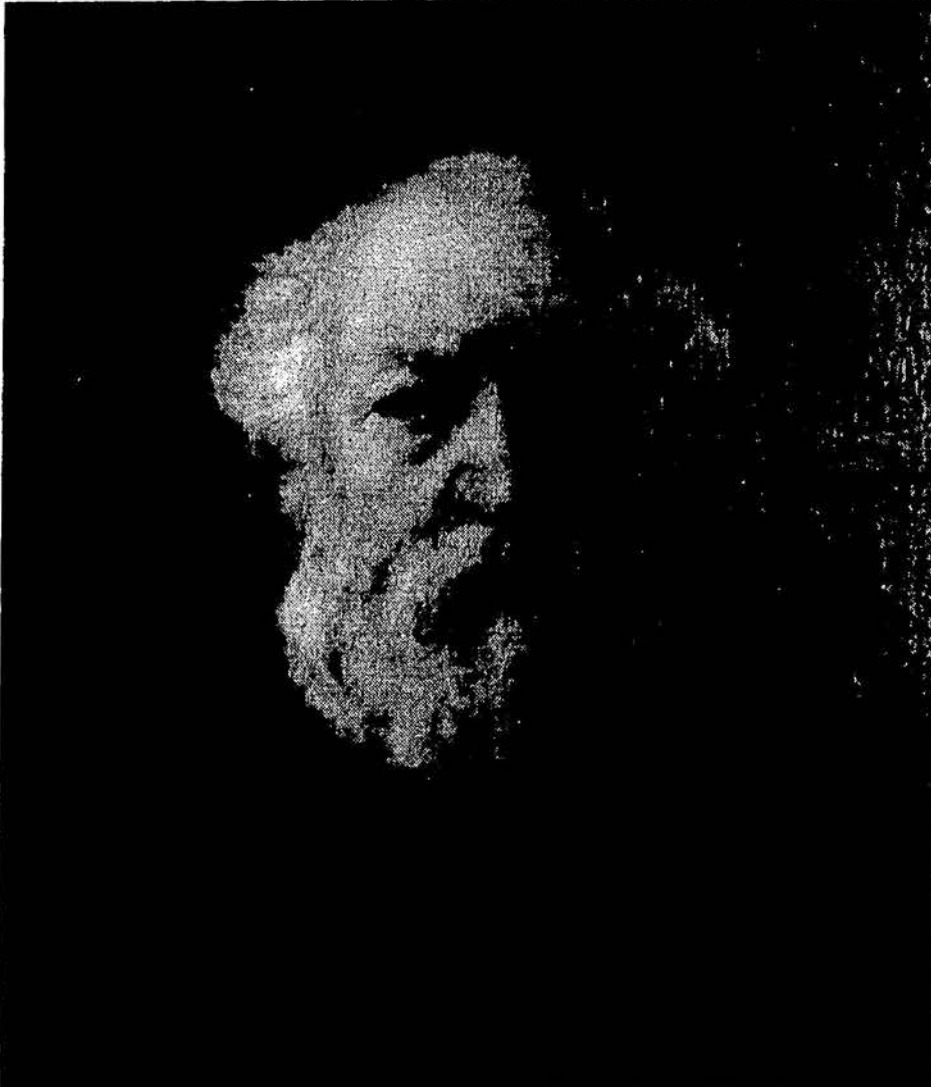


Photo: YUPR

Rabbi Lamm delivers memorial shiur

BY RON FINBERG

Following an established YU tradition, President Norman Lamm gave his yearly shiur last Tuesday, March 11, commemorating the yahrzeit of Rabbeinu Yitzchak Elchanan Zt'l. This year was especially significant in that it marks the 100th anniversary of the yahrzeit. The address was scheduled during the Yeshiva University Rabbinic Alumni Mid-year Conference. The Rabbinic Alumni sponsored the lecture which, unlike the rest of the conference, was open to all Yeshiva University students.

Rabbi Lamm dedicated the well-attended shiur to Rabbi Belkin Zt'l and began with a brief summary of Rav Elchanan's life story, stressing his greatness in Torah and his importance to the Jews of his time. The shiur itself was based on a question that Rav Elchanan addressed in his book *Be'er Yitzchak*, dealing with the subject of "Devarim she B'lev," or inner thoughts and intentions that are not spoken aloud. The specific issue focused on an individual who wished to divorce his wife simply because of a Russian law that all non-civil marriages had to be dissolved.

Rabbi Lamm presented a lengthy resolution in which Rav Elchanan decided that based on another argument between the *Rambam* and the *Rash*, all opinions could permit the divorce.

Brief Biography

Isaac Elchonon was born in 1817 in the town of Rosh, in the province of Grodno, Russia. At the age of eight he was given the title of Illui [genius], because of his mastery of many Talmudic Tractates and Tanaic texts. According to the custom of the day, he was married when he was just

Rabbi Lamm concluded with a powerful synopsis on the value that is to be gained from studying such an obscure and seemingly impertinent case. He pointed out that with all the various cases brought, Rav Elchanan maintained a systematic approach. He also stressed the bias Rav Elchanan used, as he was dealing with a marital issue and had to find a leniency, but couldn't use this bias "whimsically" or "foolishly" and had to find a proof that would be accepted by his peers.

Most importantly, Rabbi Lamm demonstrated Rav Elchanan's ability to stay within Torah law and still find an answer that the Bet Din wanted to hear. Through these steps, the audience gained an insight to Rav Elchanan's mind and a greater understanding to the world of ruling halachas.

Rabbi Lamm's shiur was only one in a series of addresses during the day-long Rabbinical Council of America Conference, which coincided the One Hundredth Yahrzeit. Earlier that morning, Rav Shlomo Wahrman, Rosh Yeshiva of Long Island's Hebrew Academy of Nassau County, delivered a drasha on the telling of the Exodus from Egypt in Belfer Hall. After Rabbi Lamm's shiur, the RCA members dined in Weissberg Commons and heard from Rav Gedaliah Schwartz, the RCA's *Av Beis Din*.

Bar-Mitzvah. His teachers were Rabbi Elijah Shik and Rabbi Benjamin Diskin, who ordained him with Semicha

At the young age of twenty-two he challenged many of the day's leading rabbis by suggesting that they were using an erroneous formula in Gittin, or divorce bills, and proposed an alternative solution to ameliorate the agunah (non-di-

vorced woman) problem. Largely because of his young age, his rulings were considered radical. However, it wasn't long before even Rabbi Isaac Shavel, one of the greatest of Rav Yitzchok Elchonon's contemporaries, acknowledged Rav Yitzchok Elchonon's superiority in this phase of the law.

It is probable that his early success in this interpretation of domestic law led Rav Yitzchok Elchonon to devote a good portion of his life to fighting the plight of the Agunah. This was a major problem in his era because of the many wars and persecutions in Russia. Rav Yitzchok Elchonon was known for his lenience in regard to this problem. Following in the footsteps of their Yeshiva's namesake, the rabbeim at YU have taken up the sociological problem of the agunot. MYP Rosh Yeshiva Mordechai Willig, through the Orthodox Caucus, has formulated a Halachic prenuptial agreement.

In 1864 Rav Yitzchok Elchonon became rabbi of Kovno. He would serve there for thirty-two years, until his death. It was in this position that he gained fame as the chief rabbi of Russian Jewry. When Rav Yisroel Salanter established the "Kollel Perushim", Rav Yitzchok Elchonon was one of its firm supporters, despite

"Likewise, throughout its history, YU has introduced educational and doctrinal changes into its curriculum in order to help talmidim approach the challenges of their careers and of the world's ever-evolving technolo-

staunch opposition. When the Russian government later closed the Yeshiva of Voloshin, it would be the "Kollel Perushim" that would continue as the bearer of the torch for learning. Rav Yitzchok Elchonon was known to recite his prayers in the sing song manner of the Talmud, because of his unflinching attachment to Talmudic study. His opinion was highly valued regarding all questions affecting Jewry of his day.

While never formally trained in Madda, Rav Yitzchak used a knowledge of history and scientific technology to fight the halachic and hashkafic battles of his day. Recognizing that anti-semitic feeling was growing in Central Europe, he induced Rav Samson Raphael Hirsch to write a book disproving the libels against the Talmud. When the murder libel became rampant in Russia, Rav Yitzchok Elchonon was often called upon to testify to the fraudulence of this slander. It was he who inspired Dr. Dembo to explain *Shechita* scientifically, proving that the it was not a cruel means of slaughter.

Rav Yitzchok Elchonon publication the "Baer Yitzchok" contains responsa on all sections of the Shulchan Aruch, the "Nachal Yitzchok" discusses questions of civil law of Choshen Mishpat, and the "Ain Yitzchok" deals with family and domestic laws.

Credit Cap Nears Reality in Faculty Vote

BY ARNON STORFER

Professors at the faculty meeting last Wednesday voted 23-5 in favor of the 44 credit cap, sending the proposal to the offices of President Lamm and Vice-President of Academic Affairs

Dr. William Lee, who also serves as chairman on the Senate, commented that the vote of the Academic Standards Committee in the past has served as an accurate litmus test for ensuing faculty votes. One notable exception occurred in 1981 where curriculum reform was passed and subsequently vetoed by the faculty with by a vote of 30-0.

The atmosphere at the faculty meeting, held on March 20, was described by Assistant Dean Avery Horowitz as "calm and intelligent." During the meeting professors clarified passages, and unanimously voted to remove two words from the proposal which had been inserted for aesthetic purposes.

The proposal requires that students take courses worth at least 84 credits on campus at Yeshiva College or Sy Syms School of Business. The mandate contains a provision for transfer students from accredited colleges and calls for an evaluation of credits according to the current procedure. Those students will be required to spend a minimum of four semesters on campus.

The credit cap also contains a 'grandfather clause' and will not affect students currently enrolled in YU or students graduating from high school by the end of June 1997.

In their own interest?

Questions were raised by students that a faculty vote on an issue such as the credit cap may be considered a conflict of interests. They stated that a vote in favor of the proposal would increase the number of semesters a student must stay on campus, thus increasing the need for more courses which would translate into more dollars out of students' pockets and into the professors' pockets. Horowitz discounted the implications stating, "I am 100% confident that the professors had only academic standards in mind."

One professor concurred with Horowitz remarking that, "you won't get rich being a professor here." The professor agreed with the credit cap mentioning that the additional time spent on campus will forge a greater cohesiveness within the university and thus create a greater college experience for students.

The next stop for the credit cap bill is the desk of Vice President for Academic Affairs Dr. William Schwartz. Schwartz is expected to approve the bill and pass it on to Yeshiva University President Dr. Norman Lamm and the YU Board of Trustees for formal signatures.

Textile Mogul Aaron Feuerstein to Speak at Yeshiva University Commencement '96

BY HESHY WILLIG

Yeshiva University is set to bestow an honorary degree upon Mr. Aaron Feuerstein at its annual graduation to be held on May 22. Feuerstein, himself a YU graduate (Class of '47) and President of Malden Mills, a textile company in Lawrence Massachusetts, is being honored in recognition of his humanitarianism. Feuerstein gained national recognition this past year when amidst an economy of corporate downsizing and layoffs, he continued to pay his workers' wages and benefits for over three months after his factory was severely damaged in a boiler explosion on December 11.

YU will also be presenting an honorary doctorate to Mr. Robert Rubin, the US Secretary of the Treasury. According to Mr. David Rosen, Director of the Public Relations Department, Mr. Rubin will be giving the keynote address in recognition of his efforts as a public servant, managing the economy of the country and contributing to world economic development. According to Rosen honorees for graduation are selected by YU President Rabbi Norman Lamm in conjunction with the Board of Trustees and are meant to recognize individual contributions to society at large. In addition, there is always one honoree selected from Israel.

Honorary degrees will be also be given to Dr. Bernard Shapiro, Principal and vice-chancellor of McGill University, in Montreal; Dr. Harold T. Shapiro, President, Princeton University; and Dr. Daniel Tropper, a three-time alumnus (YC '63, RIETS '68, BRGS '70) is the Founder and Director of the Gesh-



Aaron Feuerstein

er Foundation, an organization that conducts programs to encourage understanding among Jews of varied religious backgrounds and to intensify Jewish identity.

Notably missing at commencement, however, will be any student speakers. Yeshiva College Student Council President Joshua Fine attempted to change the long-time tradition this year, but his efforts were not successful. According to Rosen, he received Fine's memo too late to act upon it this year - as any decision would have to be cleared with several members of the administration. He does hope, however, that students will have the opportunity to speak at future graduation ceremonies.

The Commencement Exercises are scheduled to take place at 11:00AM at the Paramount in Madison Square Garden.



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Persistent Schottenstein Burglaries Still Unsolved

continued from page one

consultant to YCDS, parked in front of the Schottenstein building in an unmarked, rented van, entered an unlocked door, proceeded to remove several pieces of furniture from the building, loaded it into the van, and then drove away.

Of course, Tollinsky and Dimbert were not stealing the furniture, but were rather returning rented props from their fall production. However, no security personnel asked them to explain their actions, nor show proper identification. Equally as disturbing is that they were not asked to log out the equipment - all equipment removed from Schottenstein is supposed to be logged out by the security guard on duty.

Tollinsky has learned the hard way what seems to be the recurring lesson when dealing with Schottenstein security: doors, even when supposedly locked and guarded, do not necessarily translate into restricted access. In the fall semester, a silver tea set was stolen from a locked props room located behind the stage in Schottenstein. In addition, a CD-player was taken from the "tech" room where YCDS usually stores its sound system equipment.

Both Tollinsky and Cyrulnik point to the widespread distribution of keys to the internal locks at Schottenstein among maintenance and security personnel as a contributing factor in the spate of thefts. The lock on the props room was changed immediately following the incident there,

and Cyrulnik has now requested new locks for the Commentator office. Assistant Dean of Students Rabbi Chaitoff says that the request will be acted upon shortly.

However, Chief of Security Don Sommers does not believe YU students are correct in jumping to conclusions in regards to who is the perpetrator at Schottenstein. Although all the investigations of the thefts at Schottenstein are still open (unsolved) he points out that historically, the result of most security investigations into theft have pointed to the students rather than the staff of the university.

Sommers admits there is a problem with controlling the spread of the office keys, but that the problem mainly lies with the students. This sentiment was also expressed by Rabbi Chaitoff who suggested that "The students have to be accountable with what they do with the keys they receive in terms of giving them out, lending them, making copies of the keys, and even leaving the office rooms open." Sommers, therefore, makes several suggestions to students who use the Schottenstein building. He stressed the importance of key control saying that "there is no reason for every person to have a key." In addition, he advises that all expensive pieces of equipment, even the equipment found in locked rooms, should be bolted down. Sommers compared the situation to securing items in your home: "you don't leave jewelry all over the place; you put it in a

safety deposit box."

Sommers also suggests that students remember the obvious - lock the rooms. He points out that "My captains go up there late at night and find rooms open all the time."

Sommers promises that some changes will be implemented by the security staff. He believes there is a definite need to restrict access to Schottenstein, especially during after-class hours, although he realizes that some balance must be reached on the issue. "On one hand you don't want it too restrained so people can use the place; on the other hand there has to be more control." In the future, the chief of security would like greater communication with the students as to what kind of equipment they have locked up in the offices. He points out that he had no idea as to the sophistication of the Commentator computers before this situation arose.

Reimbursement Sought

Unfortunately, all the suggestions and

plans for future security arrangements at the Schottenstein building cannot bring back the stolen computer and portable sound system.

The Commentator asked the university to cover the cost of replacing the stolen items as the university did for WYUR, but the university refused. "The university deals with everything on a case by case basis. There is no overall policy from our perspective," commented Rabbi Chaitoff. He stressed that the WYUR case was a special situation and has no connection with the current incident.

However, Rabbi Chaitoff and Dr. Nulman, Dean of Students, have offered to assist the Commentator in preparing a proposal for the "President's Circle." Rabbi Chaitoff pointed out that the "President's Circle," a group of YU alumni who strive to enhance student life on campus, have been very helpful to the Commentator in the past.

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MAJORS ON CAMPUS

Part One: Accounting for its Popularity

In the first of a two part series, *The Commentator* explores the motivations and goals of students majoring in Accounting. In the next issue we will take a look at the other heavyweight major on campus - Biology

BY DANIEL SANDERS

When SSSB's first Dean, Dr. Schiff, came to the school he felt that one of the first means to success was to restructure the accounting department by using distinguished business schools such as NYU and Wharton as its model. Since then, the department has grown and developed into a well rounded program and continues to be one of the most popular majors in YU.

"The success of our program is the teaching of academic material that has practical value," remarks Dr. Snow, one of the department's most popular and well liked professors. In addressing the accomplishments of the school, Dr. Snow also commented that the fact that the department can cover in three years what most schools do in four, due to students' years in Israel, shows just how serious the success of the department is to the school.

Why students take the Accounting Route

When asked why they pursued an

accounting major most students answered that they felt accounting provides the broadest business background to utilize in a career. Steven Bernstein, a first year student in the program, remarked: "I'm not exactly sure what I want to do when I finish college, but I thought and see now that accounting would cover so many integral business areas." A lot of students did mention that one of the motivating factors that initially drew them to the major was the fact that they thought it would be easier to get a job later, as most students start out in Accounting Firms. Others who had originally majored in the subject have ultimately moved on to other fields where the knowledge of accounting has proven valuable.

Despite the fact that some students know that they probably will not remain accountants, they still get adequately trained in the field at Sy Syms. A former SSSB president and graduate of the accounting program, Ofer Naor, noted how the mix of professors, especially the ones that maintain consulting practices on the outside, provide the students with a real life perspective of the profession.

Job Placement

The past success in the department has been evident in high scores on the C.P.A. exams, but most notably and importantly in the placement of its graduates. Associate Dean Jaskoll explains: "the success of a department depends on the ability of students to land jobs... as seen for a number of years how firms have heavily recruited our students." However, when asked why Earnst & Young did not send a recruiter this year, Dean Jaskoll explained that there has been a minor setback in recruitment at that firm due to the retirement of Sym's main recruiter, but students need not worry as Earnst & Young recently merged with Kenneth Levinthal, who did have recruiters here this year.

At the same time, Dean Jaskoll and others involved in the career placement of students recognized that it will be more difficult to attain jobs as readily as students have in the past, as a result of the economic down-sizing which has taken place recently.

Firms have also been upset and discouraged over the high YU turnover

ratio - students from YU leave after 2 years much more readily than other employee. Jaskoll acknowledged this fact but explained how some students want to excel faster than the firms allow for and challenged the firms to do more to try to keep them.

Where to go in the future

Lately, there have been discussions about what will happen when New York adopts the new 150 credit hours that will be required to take the C.P.A. examination. This could cause students in other universities to spend an extra year in school. Addressing this issue, Dean Jaskoll mentioned that he had attended a meeting held by the state C.P.A. association where it was made clear to him that SSSB students would not be affected, as the Judaic studies credit hours should be able to cover the ensuing requirements.

Can the school maintain its edge in the future when prospects for jobs sink in uncertainty? Only time will decide the answer but based on what has been achieved thus far the future must be promising.

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Yad Ezra has recently added a new service to the many communal functions it serves. They have recently built a post-natal care facility in which mothers of large families can stay with their newborn infant and receive round the clock care from a highly qualified staff of doctors and nurses. We, the Presidents of the Yeshiva University Undergraduate Student Councils, would like to raise \$50,000 in order to fund the dedication of one of the rooms in this facility. The importance of this gesture is tremendous. Not only are we assisting in a big mitzvah, but we are showing this organization, which receives no governmental funds, that there are people that care for the work that they are doing. We are pleased to announce the beginning of this drive right before the Holiday of Passover, when the Nation of Israel was born. This drive is going to show our solidarity with other needy parts of this Nation of ours. We hope that this drive is successful and we can make this the beginning of a wonderful relationship with this very worthwhile organization.

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 Elections will be held on
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**Deadline for submitting name for candidacy:
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*

**Nominations Week will be from Sunday,
 April 21st - Thursday April 25th at 7pm.**

*

**Campaign Week will be from Sunday April
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*

**The Election will be held on May 2nd from
 12:00pm - 7:00pm.**

**YCSC President Josh Fine
 781-9886**

YESHIVA SPORTS

Mighty Tennis Team Still Undefeated

BY RON SAMET

The YU Tennis Team has picked up this season right where it left off the last - undefeated. After the team's first three matches of the 1996 season they are 3-0 and do not intend on looking back. As they hope to perform as well as last year's 9-0 team, this strong array of players have thus far dominated their opponents by beating them in straight sets 22 out of the 23 victories. In other (non-tennis) words, they are good...really good.

The tennis team began their season with a shut-out victory against Polytechnic College. The highlight of the day was the match of the number two seed, Tzvi Zilbershteyn. After a long and difficult first set that ended in a tie breaker, Zilbershteyn politely requested several minutes before the start of the second set. He quickly davened Mincha, and proceeded to destroy his opponent 6-0. Now, at every match the team tries to gather a minyan so that everyone can ride easy victories. Wins against Polytechnic also bounced off the rackets of the three Samets, two Ciments, two Hirts, Josh Hasten, Benet Schachter, and Jeff Rothman.

The team's next victim was Baruch College where Hasten, Pfeifer, Slotnick, and Avraham Ciment got right to work by defeating Baruch's top four seeds in straight sets. Ciment was energized by the sideline presence of his fiancée, Becky Gruen, who provided some sup-

porting words during changeovers. The two Hirt brothers, as well as Ronnie Samet and Elbaum, smashed home the final two wins in doubles competition to keep YU undefeated.

After smooth sailing victories, YU found true competition on the courts of NJIT. After a brief scare, the mighty Macs emerged victorious. The six singles matches left things at a 3-3 tie between the two teams, leaving the victor to be decided in the doubles matches. The three wins in singles were achieved by the David and Ron Samet, and Josh Hasten, while hard fought defeats were suffered by Avraham Ciment, Pfeifer, and Slotnick. Hasten noticed Coach Bandler pacing a little bit, and said, "This is the first time Coach is actually worried." On to doubles...

David Samet and Ari Ciment paired up and knocked off their opponents 7-6, 6-1. With the score 4-3, the YU team only needed one more victory for the win. Coach Bandler sent Hasten and Shai Samet to play the number two doubles spot, as Slotnick and Ronnie Samet teamed up for the number three seed. Wins from both these doubles teams sealed off a 6-3 victory over a competitive NJIT, and affirmed the effects of Coach Bandler's "Just Win" slogan.

During matches the players are very supportive of their teammates, yet they continue to encourage fans to come watch and cheer them on in their remaining matches.

The Commentator

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