

THE COMMENTATOR

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Innovation Lab's First Class of Startups and Students Get to Work



President Ari Berman cut the ribbon on YU's Innovation Lab on May 16, 2019.

YU NEWS

By SRULI FRUCHTER

Yeshiva University's Innovation Lab is up and running, providing a space for Israeli startups to collaborate with YU students, alumni and faculty alike. Launched in May 2019, the Lab works in conjunction with Yissum, the technology transfer company of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

The Innovation Lab operates independently as a hub for startups, and also integrates various courses offered at YU's Sy

Given YU's campus existing in the greater New York area, participating startups are also able to capitalize on the opportunity of having an office in New York City.

Syms School of Business and Katz School of Science and Health. The Lab assigns teams of YU students — along with a faculty member — to work with one of the 11 participating startups. It also includes specialized workshops, office space, legal counsel and

personalized guidance from senior high-tech and business professionals acting as mentors.

The Lab's strategic location in the basement of Furst Hall allows for the working space to be easily accessible for students

and startups alike to collaborate. Given YU's campus existing in the greater New York area, participating startups are also able to capitalize on the opportunity of having an office in New York City.

"It has been a mission of mine to strengthen the connection between the university, New York City, and the Israeli tech ecosystem," explained Dr. Maria Blekher, director of the Innovation Lab. "We have been focused on creating a hands-on entrepreneurial

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Student Council Presidents Reinstate YU College Democrats

By YITZCHAK CARROLL and ELISHEVA KOHN

Yeshiva Student Union (YSU) President Ariel Sacknovitz (SSSB '20) and Stern College for Women Student Council (SCWSC) President Aleeza Katz (SCW '20) approved the YU College Democrats as an official club for the Fall 2019 Semester on Sept. 26, apparently reversing an earlier decision to deny the club's approval following the LGBTQ march, which was organized by the College Democrats without official approval from student government representatives earlier this month.

On the morning of Sept. 26, all seven student council presidents released a joint statement reaffirming that all clubs must receive approval from the student government prior to coordinating any event, at the penalty of losing a club's university-sanctioned approval. The statement further stated that "the student government feels strongly that it is important to

have diverse public discourse," and that the student council "value[s] the importance of the YU College Democrats club representing part of our varied student community." The presidents contended that by holding an unapproved event

IX, Section 1, Part B, Subsection vii), the position currently held by Elka Wiesenber (SCW '20). At press time, Wiesenber could not be reached for comment on her role in the decision to remove the College Democrats' club status.

"This should have never happened in the first place and it put us through much stress and anxiety which should have never occurred."

YU College Democrats Co-President Sarah Brill (SCW '20)

under the auspices of a university-approved club, the College Democrats had violated Article VII, Section 2, Parts C and D of the Beren Constitution, which states that clubs must "complete and submit event request and speaker forms ... in the appropriate timeframe."

The Beren Constitution assigns the power of giving and removing club status due to violations of "rules and norms" to the SCWSC VP of Clubs (Article

In an email sent later that day to College Democrats Presidents Courtney Marks (SCW '22) and Sarah Brill (SCW '20), Sacknovitz and Katz stated that "after careful consideration, the YU College Democrats will be sponsored by YSU and SCWSC this semester." The email linked to the statement issued that morning and stated that "all club heads will

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Bob Tufts, Syms Professor, Passes Away at 63 after Long Cancer Battle

By YITZCHAK CARROLL and YOSHI ZIMLOVER

Former Sy Syms School of Business Professor Robert "Bob" Tufts died on Oct. 4 after a 10-year battle with multiple myeloma cancer. A former major league baseball pitcher, Tufts served as a clinical assistant professor in the Strategy and Entrepreneurship Department and was named the Lillian and William Silber Professor of the Year in the 2017-2018 academic year. He was 63.

After graduating from Princeton University with a degree in economics, Tufts was drafted by the San Francisco Giants in the 12th round of the 1977 MLB draft. He played in the minor leagues for the Giants as well as the Cincinnati Reds and Kansas City Royals, and made his MLB debut for the Giants in 1981. Tufts also pitched for the Reds for two seasons in the major leagues. During his tenure as a professional athlete, Tufts converted to Judaism.

Following his career as a baseball pitcher, Tufts obtained his MBA from Columbia University and worked in

finance on Wall Street for more than 20 years.

Tufts began teaching at Syms in Spring 2011 as an adjunct professor, before moving up to visiting clinical assistant professor in Fall 2016 and finally attaining the rank of clinical assistant professor in Fall 2017. Tufts also taught courses at New York University and Manhattanville College. In addition to teaching, he volunteered as a pitching coach for YU's men's baseball team in Spring 2018.

In 2009, as Tufts was preparing to transition into academia, he was tragically diagnosed with multiple myeloma cancer. Myeloma is a blood-based cancer affecting plasma cells. Tufts was reported as cancer-free in 2010, and in response to his battle with cancer, co-founded My Life is Worth It, a non-profit organization dedicated to helping fellow cancer patients.

On the night before his passing, Tufts' daughter Abigail wrote on Twitter that "He loved, and I mean LOVED, being a Yeshiva Professor. It gave him endless amount of joy & meaning."

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THE COMMENTATOR

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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

What Do We Owe YU?

By Avi Hirsch

As YU students, we ought to feel an overwhelming sense of gratitude to the university for the services it has provided us. Many of us depend on scholarship money YU has granted us for an education that we otherwise would not have been able to afford, and we all utilize the countless other services that YU offers its students. Needless to say, these services have had a substantial impact on YU's student body, and the proper response of its students should be one of appreciation and indebtedness.

But no institution is perfect, and YU certainly has its share of flaws. It is inevitable that at times the administration will fail its students in one way or another. At these moments, our response as students cannot be one of blind loyalty based on the gratitude we rightly feel. We cannot stand aside as YU's values are neglected by an administration that is blind to the impact of its policies on the student body. We ought to respond appropriately, whether through meeting privately with administrators to urge them in the proper direction, pressuring YU through newspaper op-eds or public protests, or even withholding donations that YU depends on. The tactics ought to vary based on the severity of the offense, but no course of action can be ruled out prematurely.

Almost two months ago, several days before YU's Giving Day fundraising campaign, a public Facebook group was created by YU alumni called "#PledgeNotToPledge." The group's description states that it consists of "proud YU alumni" who pledge not to donate to YU until the university implements its five demands, the same demands issued by those who protested at the LGBTQ March that morning.

The group, which as of the time of publication consists of over 350 members, generated controversy and discussion among students and alumni of YU over the days following its creation. Popular YU Facebook groups such as "YU and Stern Confessions" and "The Official YU Memes Group" reflected this, with posts critical of the movement garnering over 100 comments from students and alumni, including many frustrated responses from those disturbed by the tactics deployed by "#PledgeNotToPledge." Group members who agreed on their support for the cause debated the merits of the group's extreme

approach among themselves.

Although the group itself has been dormant now for over a month, the fundamental questions it raised that caused so much controversy live on: What, if anything, do we students and alumni of YU owe the university that has given us so much? The benefits we have received from YU surely exceed the education that our tuition has paid for. Our experiences here do not reduce to an exchange of services for tuition money, and our sense of gratitude to YU should correspond to the services it has offered us that often go beyond what is strictly owed.

*The loyalty we feel toward
YU should be directed to
the values that YU claims
as its defining mission, and
should be predicated on YU
continuing to uphold those
values.*

But how should that gratitude be expressed? Should it compel us to refrain from supporting any activity that could financially or otherwise damage the institution that has provided for us? Do we owe it to YU to support it through thick and thin, helping YU continue to provide for future students because it has provided so generously for us? YU is surely capable of violating our trust, in the most extreme sense by supporting causes that run entirely counter to its own value system. If YU were to reject its ideal of *Torah Umadda* outright; if its administration decided to abandon its support for truth, kindness and justice as central tenets of the Judaism it upholds, then there would be nothing meaningful left for us to support. The mere words "Yeshiva University" cannot demand our absolute loyalty to an institution divorced from its values.

The same sense of gratitude and shared values that leads us to support YU, then, should also cause us to care about the continued success of the university in upholding its mission. As members of this community, we all have a stake in its future. Our desire to see it provide a welcoming environment for all its students should compel us to speak out against

problems we perceive in its administration. And to truly effect change at the highest levels of YU's administration, our demands must be backed up by concrete action that will pressure those in charge to fix what is broken instead of merely shrugging it off.

Putting aside the specific demands of the "#PledgeNotToPledge" movement, the tactic of withholding donation money can be viewed not as a betrayal of YU but as an extreme avenue of change, a last ditch effort when all else has failed. If YU's finances will be hurt by the effects of the movement, it is a price that must at times be paid for the sake of the institution itself. Certainly a different, less painful path to accomplish the same goal would be preferable — "pledging not to pledge" should only be considered a last resort. But when a serious problem is ignored by the administration despite student protest or behind-the-scenes pressure, then the tragic result of the situation may leave no other path available to fix what is broken.

At the same time, other questions must be carefully considered before any action is taken. Are the demands being made of YU reasonable, could the university conceivably implement them, and would they truly be in the university's best interest? Will withholding money from YU affect only the "guilty party" — the university itself — or will innocent students suffer financially when they receive less scholarship money, which is overwhelmingly provided by donors? Could an aggressive stance toward the university generate resentment among those in charge, making change even less likely? And if the pressure is too severe, could it potentially lead to an outcome that nobody wants: the financial collapse of YU?

These questions have no easy answers. The right thing to do will always depend on the specifics of each situation, how pressing the issue is and whether it can be effectively handled in a sensitive manner. But as students with a stake in YU's future, our gratitude ought to be more than symbolic. The loyalty we feel toward YU should be directed to the values that YU claims as its defining mission, and should be predicated on YU continuing to uphold those values. We should always be cognizant of the potential danger that comes with absolute fealty to YU: a future in which we continue to support an institution we no longer recognize, warped by an administration we have blindly followed simply because it asked us to.



1 **Minyan Men**
Whether it's for God or the girl, we are genuinely glad you came.



2 **Teaneck reflective straps**
"Or LaGoyim"



3 **Fiddler on The Roof**
Tzeitel married her childhood best friend from Bnei Akiva. Hodel and her boyfriend founded the YU socialist club. And Chava? Apparently, she and her partner *don't believe in the five Torot*. This is what happens when you turn a blind eye to mixed dancing.



4 **Ashley Blaker**
CAN HE PLEASE BE THE 2021 COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER??



5 **Fruber**
Frum Uber. What a time to be alive. I'm just waiting for Frinstagram, Frinder, and Fretflix.



6 **Responding to my Commentator ystuds/sstuds**
True friendship, or downright annoying. There is no in-between.



7 **Slack**
We all hated it at first, but let's be real: we wouldn't swap it for any other app in the world.

7UP DOWN7

by Elisheva Kohn

"Hundreds"

1



How many? Dozens? Hundreds? Alas! In my great and unmatched wisdom, I can assure you that there were in fact MILLIONS! #journalism

How to communicate with your editor

2



Be a mensch. That's just about it.

Severe air turbulence:

3



Are you shaking in your seat? Is your seat neighbor crying hysterically? Do you detect a peculiar smell? Simply pretend you're on the midnight shuttle back to Stern; the familiarity will calm you down.

What's your hashkafa?

4



Chassidishe spiritual gangsta with an affinity for Meir Kahane, the Gush dance, and Bernie Sanders. Or maybe that's just a stupid question.

Midterms season

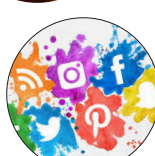
5



But WE WERE ON A BREAK!

No longer being social media manager

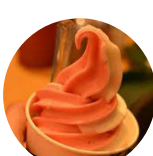
6



Goodbye, stalking people online for the greater good. It was an absolute pleasure.

Cafeteria drama

7



HOW ARE WE SUPPOSED TO USE OUR CAF CARDS AT 16 HANDLES IF YU TOOK ALL OUR MONEY???

INNOVATION LAB,
continued from Front Page

environment in which Israeli-based startups can grow their U.S. market potential while leveraging YU's community of students, faculty experts and NYC business and tech ecosystems."

There are approximately 100 students currently involved in the Innovation Lab. Participants explore topics such as product market fit and customer discovery, and also develop go-to-market strategy for the Israeli startups to grow in the American market. Working directly with the startup founders offers students exposure to the business field — whether that be through delineating a road map for the startups' clients or creating research goals and a framework through running that research — the hands-on makeup of the program allows for experiential learning, a perk valued by many students.

The Lab is funded through a \$350,000 state grant procured by State Sen. Todd Kaminsky (D-Long Island) and former State Assemb. Phil Goldfeder (D-Far Rockaway), who previously served as YU's Assistant Vice President for Government Relations.

Chayim Mahgerefteh (SSSB '20), President of SSSB Student Council, shared, "I got involved with the Innovation Lab because it's a fantastic opportunity to learn how to grow a startup."

This semester, six startups are alumni of the Gvahim Entrepreneurship Center, an Israeli NGO that helps new immigrants in Israel with business and career goals; two are portfolio companies of Cactus Capital, Israel's first student-run venture capital firm which is powered by Ben Gurion University. The Lab is hoping to host 8 to 12 companies per semester.

The Innovation Lab's portfolio companies include both Incubit Ventures at Gav-Yam Negev High-Tech Park, an alumnus of AtoBe Startup Accelerator at Azrieli College of Engineering, and MassChallenge, a global, zero-equity startup accelerator which was founded in 2009.

Truvi, a company which uses an AI-based decision support system to provide predictive and actionable life-saving solutions in real-time, is one of the participating companies involved with the Innovation Lab. It seeks to enable decision-makers with the best matching and available solutions for real-time disaster responses.

"American students can have a much more tailored perspective and access to the American way of thinking," Dr. Nir Tenenbaum, CEO of Truvi, said, "which is led today globally by many American Institutions, NGOs, and donors." For joining with YU specifically, Tenenbaum remarked that "YU is known for its excellent business school."

Other featured companies include CaringEye and Sightbit. CaringEye is developing a multi-sensor device that has drivers receive alerts if children in rear-facing car seats are at risk of suffocation, or were left unattended. Sightbit prevents drowning through advanced AI and image recognition technology, along with developing a system which monitors swimmers and allows beaches to guard larger areas of shorelines at a lower cost.

Professional connections, efficient networking, and garnering a positive word-of-mouth are tools utilized in order for YU to get in contact with these types of startup companies. "Today," Dr. Blekher said, "we have strategic partnerships with Gvahim accelerator and Cactus Capital, and we are continuing to nurture existing connections and build new partnerships."

*YU DEMS REINSTATED,
continued from Front Page*

be required to affirm that they agree to follow the rules set forth by the student councils in order to maintain club status and that they understand the consequences of breaking those rules.” According to the email, club heads will be sent a document that they must sign in order to ratify their agreement.

Marks was pleased with this outcome. “I see this as a huge win and am glad that they changed their minds and are allowing both parties to have a voice on campus,” she said. “There are no other stipulations that we have been told of as of right now and we have not yet been sent the document he wants us to sign.”

“During this time we have seen a power play,” Brill added. “This should have never happened in the first place and it put us through much stress and anxiety which should have never occurred. I hope it never happens again and we can work cohesively with the student councils and vice versa in the future.”

According to the Wilf Student Constitution (Article X, Section 4, Part 2), a majority vote of the General Assembly is required to dissolve an existing club, which did not occur in this situation. It remains unclear how the application for renewal by the YU College Democrats was rejected by Sacknovitz and Katz in the first place without approval by a majority of the General Assembly. Sacknovitz and Katz declined to comment on whether their email represents a true reversal of their prior position or merely a clarification that the club’s application for renewal was not legitimately rejected in the first place.

“This was a student government matter and the university was not involved in the decision,” said Dean of Students Dr. Chaim Nissel when reached for comment. “We are happy to see that our student leaders were able to work together to resolve this matter and value the importance of having bipartisan representation on our campus.”

“The reinstatement of the Democrats showcases the reach of collective power,” said former College Democrats President Molly Meisels (SCW ‘21). “When the decision was made to refuse club renewal, students rose up. Their frustrations with the injustice propagated by the councils led them to enact real change. I hope next time the student council presidents agree to meet with club leaders before taking away club status. Communication is key to ensuring that justice is served.”

Avi Hirsch and Jacob Rosenfeld contributed to this story.

YU College Democrats Denied Club Renewal

By **YITZCHAK CARROLL and AVI HIRSCH**

Editor’s Note: This article was originally published online on Sept. 23. See “Student Council Presidents Reinstate YU College Democrats” (Front Page), originally published online on Sept. 26.

The Yeshiva University College Democrats will not be a university-sanctioned club this semester after their renewal application was rejected by the presidents of the Yeshiva Student Union (YSU) and the Stern College for Women Student Council (SCWSC), two branches of student government at YU. The Commentator has learned. Without YU’s approval, they will be

Molly Meisels (SCW ‘21), who previously served as president of the College Democrats and organized the march, first learned about the Student Councils’ decision to not renew the club from a Commentator inquiry. “I feel disappointed at the fact that my student council representatives are robbing the student body of the opportunity for diverse political opinion, especially since there are two Republican groups on campus,” said Meisels.

According to an email exchange obtained by The Commentator, Student Council leaders objected to the College Democrats’ sponsorship of the event without official approval, noting that the group could only continue to receive university funding if it complied with club protocols, which mandate pre-approval of events.

“It seems like nothing less than retaliation

“YU receives funding from Democratic politicians. I don't think they would be too pleased to hear that Democratic voices are being suppressed at Yeshiva University.”

Former College Democrats President Molly Meisels (SCW ‘21)



The logo of the YU College Democrats

YU COLLEGE DEMOCRATS

barred from running events, hanging up flyers on campus and receiving funding from student activity fees.

The decision to reject the club this semester was made on the heels of last week’s LGBTQ march on the Wilf Campus, which was organized by the YU College Democrats in an unofficial capacity. As the march was planned without approval from university officials or the student government — but under the name of the YU College Democrats — the presidents of YU’s student government decided to delay a decision on the club’s renewal until after the march, when they planned to revisit the matter, according to sources.

Despite warnings from the student government to remove their name from the event, the YU College Democrats proceeded with their name attached to march. Following the march, the presidents of YSU and SCWSC decided the club would not be renewed. The final list of approved clubs — released a week following the march — did not include the College Democrats. According to YSU President Ariel Sacknovitz (SSSB ‘20), the College Democrats are welcome to reapply for club approval for the spring semester.

“There are certain perks that come with being a YU-approved club on campus,” said Sacknovitz. “But those come with rules of having to be approved by the Student Council and needing Office of Student Life approval for speakers and events as well. By breaking those rules — even after being warned, and by opting out of [the rules] — then realistically, you don’t get the perks that come with it, such as the Student Council funding and the club approval.”

According to Sacknovitz, YU’s Office of Student Life (OSL), which is the branch of the YU administration that deals with student activities on campus, did not influence the decision. He further emphasized that the decision was reached without factoring in the purpose of the march. “The consequences of purposefully going against the rules apply no matter who a club is affiliated with,” he said.

for the LGBTQ march that was hosted,” added Meisels. “YU receives funding from Democratic politicians. I don't think they would be too pleased to hear that Democratic voices are being suppressed at Yeshiva University.” The university receives hundreds of thousands of dollars in grants from local Democratic politicians each year, according to city and state records.

“I am deeply disappointed by the decision to strip the YU College Democrats of their club status. This decision serves to confirm the fears of queer Yeshiva University students and sends a clear message: you are unwelcome here,” said State Assemblymember Dan Quart (D-Manhattan). “Now is the time for Yeshiva University to step up and voice its unequivocal support for its LGBTQ students and reinstate the College Democrats, instead of choosing to stymie conversation and hand down undue punishment.”

Rachel Zakharov (SCW ‘20), co-president of the YU College Republicans, was similarly disappointed by the decision. “By revoking club status from the College Democrats, healthy political discourse is limited,” she said.

In an email to Meisels, the student government presidents explained, “A club does not have the right to do anything in both official and unofficial capacities on campus. An approved student club of the YU Student Councils is dependent on the Student Councils; they cannot claim independence whenever it fits their mission.”

“There is no other way to describe this besides disgusting and utterly partisan,” said Courtney Marks (SCW ‘22), co-president of YU College Democrats. “It is not just disappointing, it is appalling; instead of reaching out to us to inform us of their decision, we had to find out from [The Commentator] asking for our opinion. America is a democracy and this school should be a representation of that, and sadly right now it is not.”

A Yeshiva University spokesperson declined to comment on the matter.

Elisheva Kohn contributed to this story.

Wilf Campus Fall 2019 Election Results

By **ZACHARY GREENBERG**

The Wilf Campus student body voted in the Fall 2019 Wilf Campus undergraduate student government elections on Tuesday, Sept. 24. The results of the election were provided to The Commentator by the Canvassing Committee, which oversees student government elections.

The election held races for Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY) PR Secretary, Sy Syms School of Business Student Council (SSSBSC) Treasurer and Yeshiva Student Union (YSU) freshman and sophomore class representatives. YSU freshman and sophomore class representative elections are held every fall semester, since it is many of these students’ first time on campus. The SOY PR Secretary and SSSBSC Treasurer elections were held last spring, but the candidates resigned after being elected, prompting the fall election to fill the seats.

“I would like to thank the TRUE freshmen of YU for voting me in as freshman representative,” said Baruch Lerman (YC ‘23), newly elected YSU freshman class representative. “I can’t wait for a great year with all of you, and I am looking forward to some amazing events.”

In total, 476 out of 1082 Wilf Campus students, or 43.9% of eligible voters, voted for SOY PR Secretary — the only campus-wide position on the ballot, according to the Canvassing Committee. Listed below are the winners of each race:

Student Organization of Yeshiva (SOY)

SOY PR Secretary: Aviv Yarimi

Sy Syms School of Business Student Council (SSSBSC)

SSSBSC Treasurer: Ely Bloch

Yeshiva Student Union (YSU) YSU Sophomore Class Representative:

Meir Lightman
YSU Freshman Class Representative: Baruch Lerman

The breakdown of each race is summarized below:

SOY PR Secretary

Aviv Yarimi - 171
Jacob Tepler - 123
Mathew Wexler (write-in) - 40
Joshua Leichter - 39

SSSBSC Treasurer

Ely Bloch - 69
Moshe Niren - 52
Isaac Ariel - 23
Benny Kutner - 9

YSU Sophomore Class Representative

Meir Lightman - 59
David Lifschitz - 44
Josh Wiener - 13
Josh Hammerman - 11

YSU Freshman Class Representative

Baruch Lerman - 33

New Librarian Program for First-Year Students

By **TZIONA KAMARA**

YU Libraries have launched a new personal librarian program for first-year students. This new initiative is aimed to help new students on campus quickly learn how to glean all the advantages of the campus library. Each first-year student has been paired with a librarian who is there to introduce the student to the library and all that it has to offer, and to help with the process of finding books or conducting research. Previously, this personal librarian program has been available for honors students, but it was decided that the University would be better served if the program was extended to include all first-year students.

Public Services and Outreach Librarian Wendy Kosakoff describes the personal librarian as a “personal banker” of sorts who is there to ensure that students are more knowledgeable about the library. After feeling that the library could be helping more students with writing research papers and other tasks, Kosakoff began researching alternative programs. She realized that the group of honors students is not very large and that the library could have a more significant impact if it focused on a larger group, such as all first-year students. Additionally,

while honors students may occasionally need help with their research, first-year students also need to learn how to navigate the library as a whole.

By their final years at Yeshiva University, students are often able to navigate the library, but when first arriving on campus, the large library with its abundant resources can be overwhelming. A program aimed at first-year students can ensure they are properly trained from the start, making their first year — and the rest of their time on campus — that much easier. Nearly all of Kosakoff’s research pointed to other universities running successful personal librarian programs for all first-year students, as opposed to only honors students. Even graduate degree programs often choose to have a personal librarian program aimed at first-year graduate students.

At the beginning of the semester, first-year students received an email from their personal librarian, welcoming them and letting them know that they are there to help, as well as providing some helpful tips. The expectation is that as the semester progresses and more papers and projects are assigned, an increasing number of first-year students will take advantage of the personal librarian program. The ultimate goal of the program is to build relationships with students that

will last beyond the first year on campus. Kosakoff spoke of the eagerness of the librarians to help students, on both the Wilf and Beren campuses. They “don’t judge, they just help,” no matter how large or last-minute

the request for help may be. She and the other librarians hope that this program will encourage students to feel comfortable approaching the librarians and to take full advantage of the library.

Public Services and Outreach Librarian Wendy Kosakoff describes the personal librarian as a “personal banker” of sorts who is there to ensure that students are more knowledgeable about the library.



Mendel Gottesman Library Research Desk

THE COMMENTATOR

Beren Constitutional Council Rules in Favor of the Defense in First Ever Trial

By **CHANA WEINBERG**

The Beren Constitutional Council — the campus’ student court — held its first trial under the recently enacted Beren Constitution on Sept. 24. The case, *Pollak v. SCWSC*, was decided in favor of the defendant, SCWSC, by a 3-2 margin.

“*Pollak vs. SCWSC* was heard [Tuesday] morning by the Constitutional Council,” read the official statement released by the Council. “The case was brought against SCWSC by the head of the proposed Sexual Abuse Awareness and Prevention Club, with the Education Club and Psychology Clubs signing on as well. Rachel Rosenberg represented the plaintiffs and Elka Weisenberg represented the defense. After much deliberation, the Council ruled in favor of the defense (3-2 vote), feeling that not enough evidence had been presented to prove that SCWSC violated the Beren Constitution. Both the majority opinion and the dissenting opinion will be circulated in the coming days.”

“It was exciting to preside over the Constitutional Council’s first hearing,” said Chief Justice Shana Adler (SCW ‘20). “I think I speak for all the justices when I say that we were impressed with the diligence of all parties involved and hope this case sets somewhat of a precedent for how trials will be carried out in the future.”

“SCWSC maintained that they could not reopen the form for my club application,” Pollak said, explaining her reasoning for bringing the case. A friend suggested to Pollak that she look in the constitution for a solution. “We found that new club applications are ‘to be made during an agreed upon two week period,’ however this semester’s club application was only open for eight days,” Pollak explained.

The plaintiff’s case was represented by Rachel Rosenberg (SCW ‘20), as Pollak was unable to attend the trial.

“Article VII, Section 1B states that applications for new club status shall be made during an agreed upon two week period

within the first three weeks of each academic semester,” argued Elka Wiesenberg, SCWSC Vice President of Clubs, in her opening remarks. “The word ‘during’ clearly implies that the time frame cannot be longer than two weeks, but mandates no minimum amount of time.”

“The constitution was meant to be a lasting and legally binding document that could guarantee student rights and foster student empowerment,” said Shoshana Marder (SCW ‘19), former SCWSC president and creator of the Special Committee on Redrafting the Student Constitution, the

The case, Pollak v. SCWSC, was decided in favor of the defendant, SCWSC, by a 3-2 margin.

“It is disappointing to hear that the Constitutional Committee could not rule in favor of the students,” said Reena Wasserstein (SCW ‘20). But Wasserstein felt “reassur[ed] that there is a system in place that is unbiased and can, to the best of their ability, evaluate and process these types of issues.”

body which updated the constitution to its current state. “I’m glad the constitution and its systems are putting power in the hands of students, and I hope it continues to do so.”

Ratified by a student majority of those who voted on May 28, 2019, the Beren Constitution nullified the three constitutions already in place for each of the

Beren student governments — SCWSC, Torah Activities Council (TAC) and Sy Syms School of Business Student Council (SSSBSC) — and created the Student Government Association (SGA), which combines all the student councils under one constitution.

The Constitutional Council consists of five justices and one alternate justice, with a chief justice counted in the five. The justices were selected by peer and personal nominations, followed by a majority vote by the Beren student council presidents and the chief justice.

Commentator Archives indicate that a Wilf Campus Student Court, whose current system is similar to the new Beren Constitutional Council, existed as early as 1935. In recent years it has presided over cases such as *Rubenstein v. Canvassing Committee* and, most recently *YSU v. Canvassing Committee*.



Stern College for Women

THE COMMENTATOR

The Biggest Mitzvah in the World?

By NOAM GERSHOV

In typical fashion, the biannual Yeshiva University Club Fair attracted hordes of excited students. Ready to conquer the world and sign up for an impossible number of commitments, the students walked about the auditorium, perusing the posters and conversing with the club representatives. As someone interested in medicine, one particular club piqued my curiosity: the Halachic Organ Donor Society (HODS). Behind its stand stood Moshe Nissanoff (YC '21). Nissanoff agreed to sit down with me and explain the purpose and importance of the HODS organization.

Founded in 2001 by Robby Berman, the expressed mission of HODS is to “raise awareness about the *halakhic* permissibility of posthumously donating organs to save lives.” HODS aims to educate and inform the Jewish world about the views of various Orthodox Rabbis concerning organ donation. According to Nissanoff, an organization like HODS would not need to exist if the matter were straightforward. The fact that it does exist implies that a number of challenges are present. Nissanoff explained that the qualms can be broken down into three general categories.

The first challenge relates to superstitious beliefs. There is a religious concept referred to in Hebrew as “*Al tiftach peh l'Satan,*”

or “Do not open your mouth [and tempt] the Satan.” Many people believe, for example, that a healthy person should not sit in a wheelchair or play with crutches, as these actions can “tempt” the Satan to actually cripple the person. Similarly,

to the debate on the threshold of death. Death is either determined as the irreversible cessation of the functions of the brain, colloquially known as brain death, or the irreversible cessation of the heart, known as lethal heart failure. Both

“Saving one life is like saving the whole world.”

Moshe Nissanoff (YC '21)

some argue that becoming a member of HODS urges the Satan to make use of these organs by damaging them. Nissanoff stated that, contrary to this belief, thousands of HODS card-holders are — thank God — healthy. Additionally, people have not shown such superstitious reservations when it comes to purchasing insurance, which — if using the aforementioned logic — would tempt Satan to destroy the insurance holder's house or car.

A second challenge some pose is regarding the fundamental belief of *t'chiyas hameisim*, or the resurrection of the dead. Most Orthodox Jews believe that with the coming of *mashiach*, all who have died will be brought back to life. Some argue that *t'chiyas hameisim* can only occur if one has been buried with all of his or her organs. However, all organs eventually decay and disappear after burial, proving that the retention of organs post-mortem is not necessary for *t'chiyas hameisim*.

The third and most significant challenge to organ donation relates

are completely irreversible, and both forms of death are considered to be *halakhic* death by revered Torah scholars. To name a few in each category, Rabbi Yosef Shalom Elyashiv, Rabbi Ahron Soloveichik, and Rabbi Hershel Schachter believe that irreversible heart failure is *halakhic* death, while Rabbi Moshe Feinstein, Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, and Rabbi Moshe Tendler believe that irreversible brain death is *halakhic* death. According to hods.org, 85.23% of the 341 Orthodox rabbis from across the globe who carry HODS Organ Donor cards define brain-death as *halakhic* death.

Nissanoff emphasized that the belief that the *halakhic* threshold of death is defined as brain-death is very important since “organ donation has a much greater success rate when extracted from a person with brain-death, whereas heart failure causes the organs to rapidly deteriorate.” HODS hopes to educate about both forms of death and encourages people to consult their local Orthodox Rabbis.

Nissanoff related that he became involved in the organization upon seeing an advertisement on the YU Marketplace Facebook page asking for people to represent this not-for-profit cause. The post immediately resonated with Moshe, whose grandfather underwent a heart transplant in 2008. He received a healthy heart from an unfortunate 20-year-old who suffered from brain death after a motorcycle accident. Thanks to the surgery and with the help of God, Moshe's grandfather fully recovered.

As president of HODS, Nissanoff

plans to educate students about organ donation, run fundraising events, and hopefully convince more people to become donors themselves. In fact, HODS is running a 5K race for fundraising on Nov. 17. By bringing this organization one step closer to the student body of Yeshiva University, Nissanoff is confident that others will also take advantage of this huge *mitzvah* and realize that “saving one life is like saving the whole world.”



The YU Halachic Organ Donor Society (HODS) club logo

MOSHE NISSANOFF

Canada's Election: Here Are The Results

By DANIEL MELOOL

On Oct. 21, Canadians went to the polls to choose who would be the Prime Minister. Incumbent Prime Minister Justin Trudeau narrowly won reelection. Trudeau's Liberal Party emerged with a plurality of 157 out of the 338 seats — 13 short of the 170 seat majority needed to have a governing mandate. The opposition Conservative Party led by Andrew Scheer won 121 seats, an increase of 26 seats. The Bloc

Québécois, a separatist party from the province of Quebec led by Yves-François Blanchet, increased its share of seats from 10 seats to 32 seats to become the third-largest party in the Parliament of Canada — an achievement the party has not reached since 2008. The New Democratic Party, a social-democratic party led by Jagmeet Singh, entered the election with 39 seats, but was reduced to 24 — the party's worst result since 2004.

The latest election displayed the growing regional differences

between Eastern and Western Canada. In the prairies, the Conservative Party won all 14 seats in the province of Saskatchewan and 33 out of 34 seats in Alberta, while the New Democratic Party took one. The Liberals lost the only seat they held in Saskatchewan and all four seats they held in Alberta. However, they did capture all 25 seats in the greater Toronto area. The loss of the Liberals' lone Saskatchewan seat particularly stings considering that it was held by Ralph Goodale. Goodale was first elected in 1974 and served as the Liberal Party's deputy leader and Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness. With Goodale's defeat, the Liberal Party no longer has any representation in the province.

While the Liberal Party won the most seats to secure a minority government, the Conservative Party won the popular vote with 6,155,662 votes, a share of 34.44% to the Liberals 5,915,950 votes, a share of 33.10%. This is the first time in decades that a prime minister won an election while losing the popular vote.

The results of the latest election have sparked new calls for electoral reform. While Trudeau and the Liberal Party campaigned on electoral reform in the 2015 election, the party failed to reach

a consensus with other parties on what the new system should be. New Democratic Party leader Jagmeet Singh called the electoral system “broken” as his party was relegated to fourth place behind the Liberals, Conservatives, and Bloc Québécois while finishing third in the popular vote with 2.8 million votes to the Bloc's 1.3 million. An analysis by the National Post showed that: “Under straight proportional representation, the Liberals would have won 116 seats (45 fewer than they actually won), the Conservatives would have won 112 (five fewer than Monday's result) and the NDP would have received 54 seats, which would have translated to 30 more NDP MPs in Ottawa.”

Minority governments are not uncommon in Canada. From 2004 until 2011, Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin and Conservative Prime Minister Stephen Harper governed with minority governments. While Trudeau will remain prime minister, having a minority government will not bode well for him. Without a majority, he will have to form a formal coalition with another party, secure a confidence and supply agreement, or look for support from the other parties on a case-by-case basis to pass bills.

Historically, minority governments have lasted less than two

years. However, the last time a Trudeau was tasked with a minority government, the next election resulted in a majority. Pierre Trudeau, the current prime minister's father, won the 1972 Canadian election with 2 seats more than the main opposition, Progressive Conservatives. The opposition parties held a vote of no confidence which demanded an early election. On election day in 1974, Pierre Trudeau and the Liberals gained 32 seats to secure a majority government. If Justin Trudeau can weave the same magic his father did, his party will be in good shape.

The Liberal minority government will face its first serious challenge when Trudeau will deliver a speech from the throne to put forth his agenda. The agenda will then be up for a vote. If Trudeau does not secure a majority of the votes, his government collapses. The other parties are then invited to form a coalition, and if no coalition is formed, a new election commences. If a new election is called, it is uncertain what will happen. Considering that Trudeau and the Liberals lost the popular vote, it is in their best interest to avoid another election at all costs.



Canadian Parliament, where Trudeau will deliver his agenda.

PIXABAY.COM

A Comprehensive Analysis: Wilf Housing

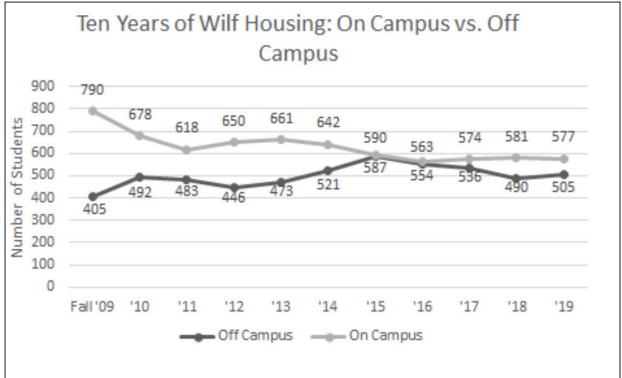
By JACOB STONE

Wilf students are required to live in one of the university’s residence halls in their first year on campus. After their first year, many students choose to move to off-campus arrangements, which are often apartments in Washington Heights. The undergraduate experience for Wilf students varies widely for on- and off-campus students.

To learn more about Wilf housing, The Commentator contacted the university’s Office of Research and Institutional Assessment, which supplied data on the state of Wilf undergraduate student living. Included in the data was information on the history of on-campus and off-campus housing, a breakdown of housing by academic year, and a comparison of on- and off-campus GPAs for Yeshiva College (YC) and the Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB).

Ten Years of Housing

In the fall semester of 2009, 790 Wilf students lived on-campus, while only 405 lived off-campus. The number of students living off-campus increased somewhat steadily until Fall 2015, during which almost equal numbers of students lived on- and off-campus. In Fall 2019, slightly more students live on-campus than off-campus. Overall, the number of students in university housing has decreased in the past ten years. This may be expected given the decline

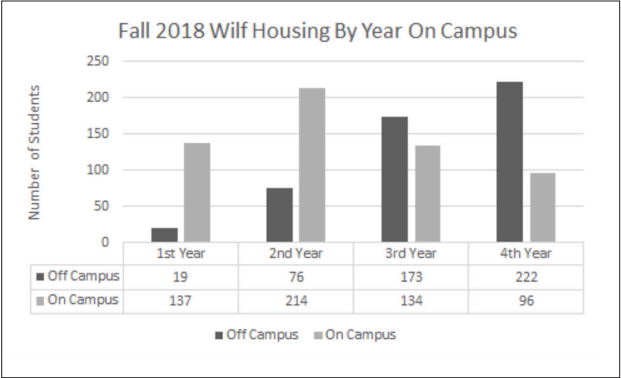


Ten years ago, many more students lived on-campus.

in YU undergraduate enrollment over that period of time

Housing By Academic Year

In the Fall 2018 semester, students who had more credits tended to live off-campus. Of the 156 students who were academically freshmen, 137 lived on-campus while 19 lived off-campus. Of the 318 academic seniors, 222 lived off-campus while 96 lived on-campus. Many Wilf students arrive as academic sophomores due to the gap years they spend in Israel but are not allowed to move off-campus until their second year on-campus, during which they are academic juniors.

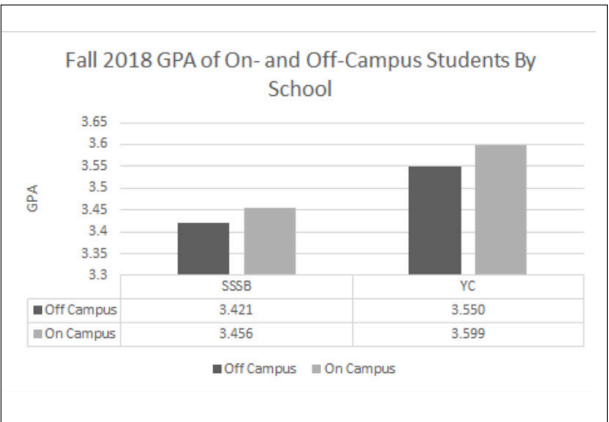


As students get older, they tend to move off-campus.

GPA of On- and Off-Campus Students

A comparison of the average GPAs of on- and off-campus YC and Syms students during the Fall 2018 semester showed that on-campus students had higher GPAs than their off-campus counterparts. The average GPA of an on-campus YC student was 3.599, while the average off-campus student’s was 3.550. The average GPA of an on-campus SSSB student was 3.456, while the average off-campus student’s was 3.421.

Studies at other universities on the relationship between housing arrangement and GPA have given mixed results. Some reports show that on-campus students tend to perform better academically, while others do not show strong correlations between the two.



On-campus students had a higher GPA compared to their off-campus counterparts.

It should be noted that the differences in academic performance between on- and off-campus students are not necessarily due to housing arrangements. Older students tend to live off-campus, and their GPAs might be lower because of tougher upper-level courses in their major among other factors.

The state of housing on the Wilf campus is constantly

In the fall semester of 2009, 790 Wilf students lived on-campus, while only 405 lived off-campus.

changing. The Commentator reported in Spring 2016 that 20% of first-time students had chosen to live off-campus that year. The administration subsequently instituted the current rule that limited first year students to on-campus housing in Fall 2016, claiming that “Student success is driving our decisions. From our experience, FTOCs who live on campus have a better transition to college life and take fuller advantage of campus activities.”

A Warm Reception

By NOAM GERSHOV

All good things must come to an end, even an enjoyable *Sukkot* vacation. After spending time with my family in Los Angeles and Melbourne, Australia, the transition back to school was not easy. I was reminiscing on the break while walking to my first accounting lesson when one of my professors suddenly called my name

and welcomed me back to college. This encounter cheered me up and got me thinking about what makes Yeshiva University such a special place.

I believe there is one aspect about Yeshiva University that is greatly overlooked; namely, the personal relationship one can create with the professors and deans. This relationship is predicated on the relatively small student body. According to U.S. News, the student-faculty ratio at Yeshiva

University (YU) is 7:1, and approximately 60% of the classes contain fewer than 20 students, with only 1% of the classes containing more than 50 students. The national average for student-faculty ratios, in comparison, is 18:1, and the average college class size is about 30 students. One can ascertain that the average YU student is able to interact with his or her professor or dean on a personal level more frequently than in other colleges.

To emphasize the distinction,

I would like to cross a few state borders and share the experiences of a friend of mine at the University of Pennsylvania. He and I are almost exactly the same age, and we both started college this past fall. In the few weeks that I have been on campus, I have had the privilege of meeting with the Dean and Associate Dean of the Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB). Alternatively, my friend at Penn

me into his office, and we ended up schmoozing for more than half an hour. He inquired about my upbringing, how college was going and my current career aspirations. I was even able to ask him for guidance and advice on how to navigate the college experience. On a totally different occasion a few weeks later, I had the privilege to sit down with SSSB Associate Dean Michael Strauss. I once again personally

Dean Wasserman warmly invited me into his office, and we ended up schmoozing for more than half an hour.

has had a “few back and forths with professors; nothing with deans though.” This minimal interaction is typical. The professors and deans simply do not have enough time to meet with their students, let alone form personal bonds.

Unlike the University of Pennsylvania and other colleges that boast massive enrollments well over 20,000 students, the small student body at YU expressly enables these opportunities. After my first accounting class of the year, I introduced myself to the professor. He invited me to tag along with him to meet Dr. Noam Wasserman, the Dean of SSSB. Dean Wasserman warmly invited

interacted with a dean. These are experiences unique to YU.

Why are these interactions significant? For one thing, respectful two-way relationships are always better. Knowing one’s place and proper boundaries of respect are of course necessary, but the students in particular benefit when the conversation is free-flowing and mutual. Students can glean guidance and expectations. They have the forum to ask questions and provide suggestions, and the deans are often even inclined to take these proposals to heart. Above all, they make the student feel welcome and valued as a member of the YU family.



YU students speaking with a mentor

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY

Medical Ethics Society Opening Survey: Where Do You Stand?

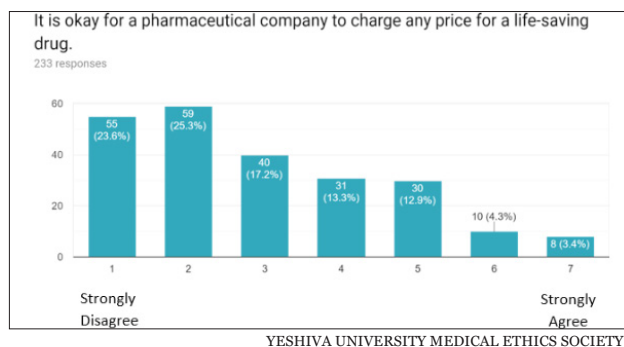
By AVIGAIL GOLDBERGER and ZEV HIRT

Medical ethics issues are rarely simple, sometimes painful and, all too often, emotionally charged. Proponents of both sides of any given issue can almost always justify their arguments, and parties caught in the middle may feel as though there is no single right answer. Although it is difficult to form definitive opinions without knowing all the details of specific cases, it is still valuable to begin these conversations in the abstract to explore the feelings, reactions, and values that determine the proper course of action.

The Yeshiva University Medical Ethics Society (MES) has recently conducted a survey presenting 234 YU students with a series of abstract, opinion-based statements. MES requested that students select their level of agreement with each statement provided on a scale of 1 to 7 (1 being “Strongly Disagree” and 7 being “Strongly Agree,” unless otherwise specified). The anonymous survey was sent via email to YU students. Of the 234 responses, 46.6% were from Stern College for Women (SCW), 34.2% were in Yeshiva College (YC) and 19.2% were in the Sy Syms School of Business (SSSB). The survey did not differentiate between Syms-Men and Syms-Women. A \$50 prize was offered to one lucky winner to motivate respondents. We have selected several of the questions for review in this article.

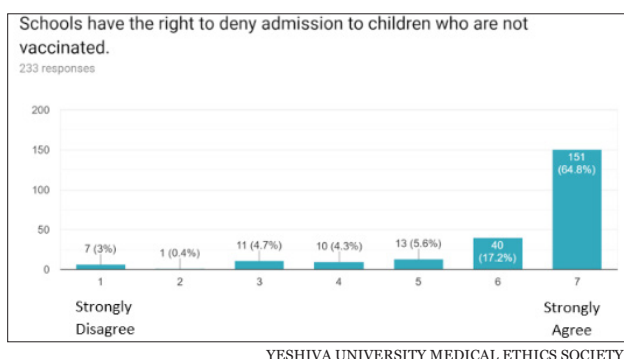
News Source

Students were first asked to select *all* of their main sources of regular news. Facebook was by far the most popular choice, with 50% of respondents indicating that they rely on it for their news updates. 30% stated that they turn to an email newsletter such as BuzzFeed News or The Skimm, 21% look to YouTube, and 42% to another website other than those mentioned. Only 29.5% listed the newspaper as a primary news outlet. Among the 18% of students who filled in “Other” as an option, 8 respondents listed Twitter, 7 respondents wrote that they do not follow the news, and another 5 indicated that they are informed of the news primarily from friends and family members.



Drug Price Restrictions

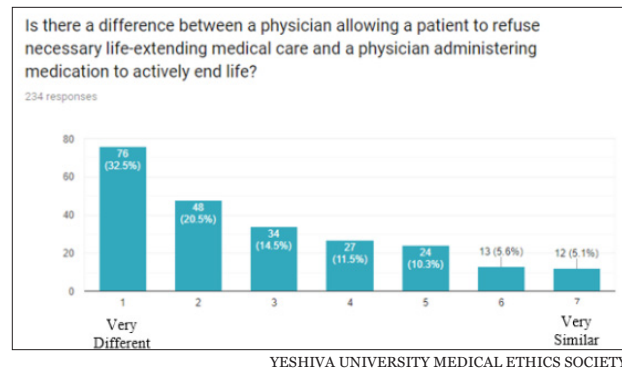
Consumers confront the issue of pharmaceutical drug prices on a daily basis, from over-the-counter treatments to prescription medications. When it comes to assigning a price to a life-saving drug, there may arise a conflict of values between promoting affordability for a critical resource and preserving the basis of free market enterprise. The majority of respondents (66%) believe to some degree that it is not appropriate for a company to take free rein when it comes to drug pricing. A minority (20%) reported that a company should be able to charge any price for a life-saving drug, with 3% of that group stating so in the strongest terms.



School Vaccination Policy

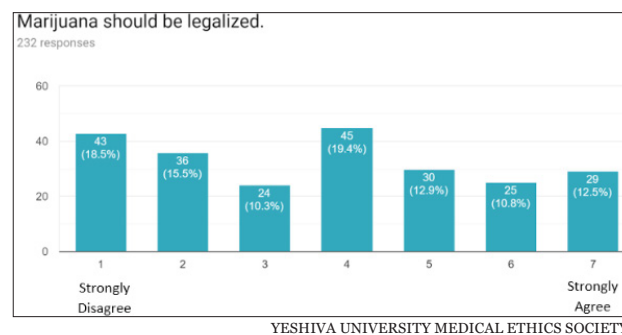
With the recent measles outbreak that began around a year ago and continues to remain a concern, the topic of vaccination has risen yet again to public consciousness.

Regardless of parents' individual decisions whether to vaccinate their children, schools are forced to develop uniform policies to approach the growing population of unvaccinated children. Respondents' opinions were largely one-sided — a staggering 65% strongly agreed that schools have the right to deny admission to students who are not vaccinated. Another 17% agreed moderately, and 6% agreed mildly. Only 3% of respondents expressed strong disagreement.



Physician-Assisted Suicide

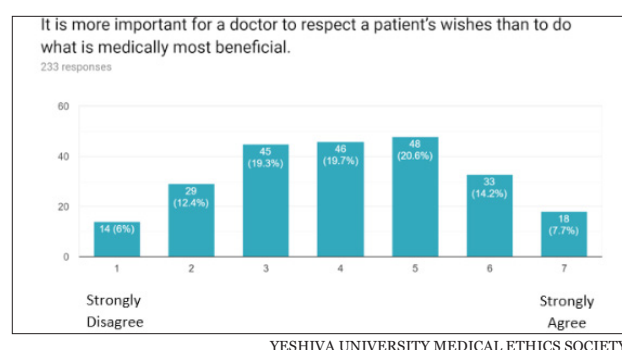
Nine U.S. states and the District of Columbia permit a physician to prescribe medication that a patient can use to end his or her life when the patient is faced with a terminal diagnosis. An alternative approach to hastening death is for a physician to allow for refusal of necessary life-extending care, such as a respirator or feeding tube, thus allowing nature to take its course. While the outcomes of these scenarios may ultimately be the same, the question remains whether a distinction should be made between the different ‘methods’ of dying. Most respondents expressed in some capacity that the two routes should not be viewed as comparable. 67.5% of respondents stated that there is a difference between the two actions. Only 21% stated the two actions are similar.



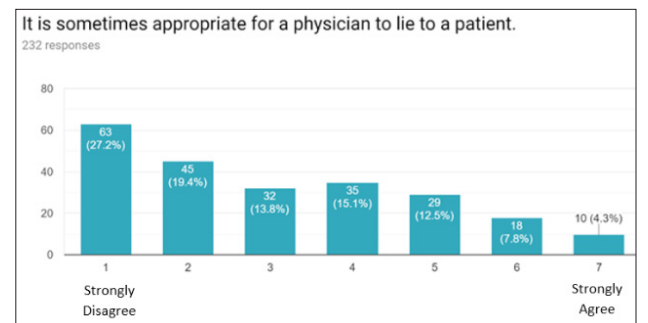
Marijuana Legalization

While the legalization of medical marijuana has been on the upswing since it was first legalized in California in 1996, recreational marijuana use remains a major area of debate among policymakers. A number of states have already legalized recreational use, though neither New Jersey nor New York has yet officially joined their ranks. Our respondents were spread across the board on this issue, with no overwhelming majority prevailing, thus indicating a wide variety of opinions across the YU student body. The marginally largest group of respondents (19%) actually expressed a neutral stance. 44% responded that marijuana should not be legalized, compared to the 36% who agree that marijuana should be legalized. To compare, a 2018 survey conducted by the Pew Research Center reported that 62% of Americans support the legalization of marijuana — in other words, a majority of the broader American populace is in favor of legalization while YU respondents are highly divided.

Respecting Patient Wishes

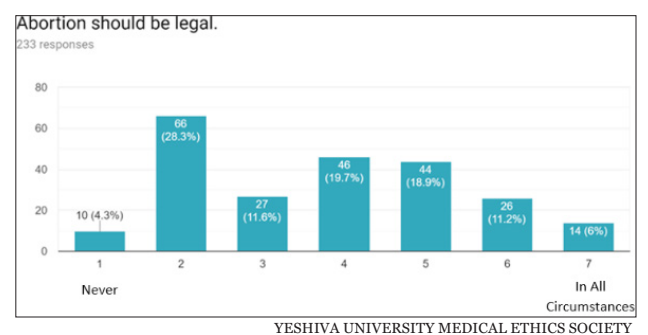


The survey asks whether “it is more important for a doctor to respect a patient's wishes than to do what is medically most beneficial.” There was no unanimous feeling among the students. The majority felt either neutral or only slightly opinionated about the issue.



Lying to a Patient

Although students expressed a range of opinions regarding the respect of a patient's wishes (see above), a majority of students (60.4%) felt that it was not appropriate for a physician to lie to a patient. Interestingly, of the students who stated earlier that doctors must respect patients' wishes, 15% answered that there are circumstances where it is appropriate for a doctor to lie to a patient.



Abortion

The diversity of student opinion is indicative of the complexity of this issue. 44.2% of all students believed that abortion should generally be illegal, compared to just 36% who believed that abortion should generally be legal. 20% of students had neutral opinions on the legality of abortion. This result correlates with the fact that most YU undergraduate students lean Republican, a party which, for the most part, holds pro-life views.

When comparing the various undergraduate YU programs, it was found that 57% of YC students identified themselves as pro-life, versus only 32% of students at SCW who answered similarly. 51% of SSSB students identified themselves as pro-life.

Concluding Remarks

The diversity and distribution of responses only reinforces the nuanced nature of these discussions. Opinion never develops in a vacuum; it is shaped by background, emotional preference, personal experience, religious ideology and a myriad of other factors. Some respondents even filled out the comments section of the survey to report that a neutral response of “4” on the agreement/disagreement scale was not the result of their lack of an opinion on that matter. They explained that they felt they could not, in good faith, give any response without knowing more about a given situation. They, therefore, selected the middle ground numeral to resist taking a stance. This too, is an opinion — namely, that one cannot have an opinion before understanding the facts on the ground.

One of the goals of the Yeshiva University Medical Ethics Society is to help students take ownership of their beliefs by thinking critically about the gray areas and educating themselves about crucial issues. While this survey raises more questions than it answers, we hope it stimulates the students of YU to ask themselves where they stand and realize how much more there is to learn.

Do you feel strongly about any of these issues? We would love to hear from you and see you at future MES events! Contact Avigail Goldberger at agoldbe3@mail.yu.edu or Zev Hirt at zhirt@mail.yu.edu if you are interested in sharing your view and/or contributing to a future MES Commentator column.

Embracing YU's History of Student Protest: Part Two

By **DONIEL WEINREICH**

Editor's Note: This is the final installment of a two-part series on student protests at YU. The first part can be found in the print version of Issue 85.2. The full version of the article can be found on The Commentator's website.

Concerned Students Fight Secularization

In 1969, due to a recently passed NY State law preventing private sectarian institutions from receiving state funding, YU started discussing a plan to restructure. Students voiced concerns that the separation of RIETS and YC would be the end of the synthesis entailed by YU's motto of *Torah U'Madda* and that it might put YU on the path to complete secularization, as happened with the previously religious Harvard and Yale. These fears were enhanced by new promotional materials that failed to emphasize the place of Torah in the curriculum and catalogs that failed to mention the religious studies requirements. The administration attempted to quell these anxieties, insisting that all the changes were purely rhetorical, external and superficial, and that the substance of YU's religious programs and requirements would remain unchanged.

Students, however, remained concerned. The SOY president was vocally worried that YU's religious studies requirements for undergraduates might be found in violation of the law and that YU would dispense with them to preserve their funding. On Feb. 19, 1970, SOY voted in favor of a strike at the discretion of its president. Under this threat, the administration called for a meeting in March between all student leaders and President Belkin himself. President Belkin again reiterated that the restructuring was only on paper and that the Judaic requirements would not change, but this accomplished little. In April, a group dubbing themselves the "Concerned Students Coalition" (CSC) formed and brought demands to President Belkin which included that RIETS be incorporated together with the undergraduate divisions of YU and that the catalogs that failed to mention Judaic requirements be updated. The students received no response to their demands, and as a result, the CSC decided to picket the Chag HaSemicha scheduled for April 12.

On the day of the Chag HaSemicha, 200 male students — almost entirely from the *semikha* program and the undergraduate division of RIETS (now the Mazer Yeshiva Program) — rallied in front of the building, and 50 SCW students picketed in front of Gottesman Library next door. Students were divided about the rally; no student leaders in YC participated, nor did many students from the Erna Michael College (now the Isaac Breuer College). Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik (the Rav) initially discouraged his

students from protesting, but as he spoke at the ceremony, he was informed of the protesters outside, and voiced his support for their cause. In his speech, the Rav lavished many praises on President Belkin, whom he trusted completely, but nonetheless voiced

faculty would not have their contracts renewed, including a popular history professor. Students immediately planned petitions and letter-writing campaigns on behalf of the history professor, though they were unsuccessful.

Once again, in Dec. 1973, five

studying immediately outside the building. In a show of solidarity, the entire faculty joined the strike. The first day of the strike went unacknowledged by the administration. It was only on Friday — the second day of the strike — that the administration agreed to negotiate

200 signatures.

Petitions over tenure denial also circulated at Stern in 1982 and 1983. In the latter case, almost two-thirds of the student body signed, and many wrote personal letters to President Lamm. The frustration culminated in a 50 person sit-in



An outpouring of support for the Bernard Revel Graduate School at the 1991-92 protests.

YESHIVA UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

both concern about the possible dissolving of Judaic requirements as well as anxiety about the future when Belkin would no longer be in charge.

President Belkin was upset by the Rav's remarks, and had a meeting with him later in which he assured him that the religious character of the institution would not change. Belkin also agreed to take the concerns of the CSC seriously and made minor concessions, including raising the salary of *rebbeim* and agreeing to appoint religious advisors.

This was unsatisfactory to the CSC. On May 18, over 100 student members of the CSC marched into administrative offices to deliver an open letter demanding Belkin meet directly with students to address their concerns and demands, including that RIETS faculty be involved in administrative decisions such as admissions and curricula. President Belkin agreed to meet with CSC students, but no new concessions were made.

Students Strike For Faculty

The next decade at YU saw many instances of students standing up for their faculty, particularly at SCW. Until this point, seemingly the only major incident was the dismissal of a German professor at YC in 1952. Student outcry was loud, but no demonstration occurred. This would change in the '70s.

Due to the financial circumstances at the time, President Belkin announced a freeze in faculty salaries and hiring in 1971. It was also announced that five SCW

SCW faculty members were dismissed. Stern students immediately formed a committee to negotiate with administrators, demanding students be involved in faculty decisions, and planned a strike for the next week. Administrators met with students in the hours before the planned strike and agreed to have a student committee review the budget. The strike was averted this time. The same year, a popular economics professor at YC was also not rehired. YCSC sent a strongly worded letter to the administration protesting and considered striking. In seeming protest, the senior class voted for that professor to receive the Senior Professor Award at the end of the year.

Tensions between the administration and faculty remained high over the next few years, as professors attempted to unionize in the face of inadequate salaries and long freezes. At some points, YU professors even boycotted all non-class activities. But students next got involved in the spring of 1976.

In April 1976, with no students or department chairs consulted about the decision, six full-time faculty members at SCW received letters of probable non-reappointment. Student leaders attempted to negotiate with administrators, but the administration was unresponsive. On Thursday, April 29, students at SCW went on strike, demanding both the reinstatement of those professors and that no other professors be dismissed in their stead. For a full week, no Stern students entered the classroom building, instead picketing and

with the leaders of the strike on the following Monday.

On Monday, May 3, strike leaders finally met with administrators. The administration agreed to have student input on future decisions involving faculty reappointment and tenure but refused to rescind the non-reappointment of the six professors. At a student meeting that night attended by over 200 students, a narrow majority voted to continue the strike.

The strike was only resolved another two days later, on Wednesday, May 5, when administrators guaranteed that two of the professors would be kept on for the entirety of the next school year and signed an agreement to form a student committee that would be involved in all future decisions regarding faculty promotion, tenure and dismissal. All six non-reappointments were fully rescinded the next day in accordance with a resolution sent by SCW faculty to the administration after an emergency meeting.

The following years would see more student activism on behalf of faculty, though none would approach the drama or success of the week-long strike of 1976. The next year, an English professor of 25 years at YC approached his mandatory retirement. Petitions circulated and a myriad of letters poured into The Commentator in support of the beloved professor. Eventually, the newly-installed President Lamm agreed to extend the professor's contract another year. That same year, an unsuccessful petition at SCW for a dismissed English professor amassed

at the semi-annual Gottesman lecture in Koch Auditorium, but to no avail. Just as their YC peers had done in 1974, the senior class voted to give the professor in question the Senior Professor Award. YC students would again give a Professor of the Year award to a departing professor in 1999, when a mass of letters failed to reverse the tenure denial of a popular Political Science professor.

The Revel Crisis

Notwithstanding a 100-student protest outside Morgenstern Hall over security — which led to the creation of the local shuttle — in 1979, the next major instance of student protest began in 1991 and continued for months. In December 1991, a Commentator editor overheard YU board members discussing a plan to close the Bernard Revel Graduate School of Jewish Studies (BRGS) due to financial cutbacks. He broke the story in the subsequent issue of the paper, prompting immediate student action. Petitions circulated, flyers were hung, hundreds of students donned black armbands and a Committee for the Preservation of Revel (CPR) was formed. Many students considered this the death of *Torah U'Madda* and an existential threat to the future of Modern Orthodoxy. How could YU not offer graduate degrees in Jewish Studies? Women were particularly upset, as Revel was perceived as one of the only places for women to engage in

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*YU STUDENT PROTESTS,
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advanced Torah scholarship.

Just one week after breaking the story, The Commentator published a special issue devoted to it. Student journalists engaged in a detailed analysis of Revel's finances, questioning whether closing the school would, in fact, lead to substantial savings. The special issue included a massive full-page petition signed by 1,112 students.

Active protest ensued swiftly. Over 250 students gathered in front of Furst Hall, where they marched up to Rabbi Lamm's office to hang the petition on his door. In another protest held a few days later, 300 students formed a human barrier in front of Furst, preventing entry for afternoon classes, and then marched up to Rabbi Lamm's office again. Chants included "Save Revel Now!", "Whose School? Our School!", "No More Lies!", "Jewish School, Jewish Studies!" and "Let Our People Stay!" Even some YU faculty members participated in the protests. 100 Stern students later held a rally on the midtown campus. On another occasion, students held a "learn-in" in the lobby of Furst. Posters plastered the entire school, and hundreds of students sent personal letters to President Lamm. The student body seemed unified in its support of preserving Revel; that semester, the Yeshiva College Dramatics Society even donated the proceeds from one of their shows to the CPR. Outside members of the Modern Orthodox community also began to make fundraising pledges in attempts to keep BRGS afloat.

On Jan. 15, 1992, President Lamm announced the formation of an advisory task force to explore the possibility of preserving BRGS. The task force would fully analyze BRGS's programs and recommend how they could remain viable with minimal cost. Tension remained high, with students questioning the selection process for the task force and the confidentiality surrounding it. CPR leaders held their own press conference after President Lamm announced the task force.

The task force released its report in February, outlining the "minimalist position" for what a restructured BRGS could include while being academically viable. After the release of the task force's recommendation, students continued to exert pressure on the administration, holding pickets on both campuses during Parent's Day.

Soon after the task force gave their recommendations, an independent financial analyst gave a report to President Lamm. The report recommended some restructuring and claimed that anywhere from \$2.3 million to \$2.7 million would need to be raised over the next five years. At that point, pledges had already exceeded \$3 million.

As students awaited President Lamm's decision, protests continued. On March 12, 1992 — exactly 3 months after the closure plan was first announced — protests were still garnering 150 students. Over the course of the entire ordeal, students held four demonstrations, two learn-ins, two pickets and one sit-in.

On March 27, it was officially announced that Revel had been saved.

The task force's recommendations had been accepted. The graduate programs would continue, with a reduction from 40 to 32 courses per year. The announcement was received positively by the students and faculty. They had won again.

It bears mentioning that many of the leaders and participants in

*As many editorials
over the years
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the so-called "Revel Protests" comprise the current crop of Modern Orthodox thought leaders. Many are educators and *roshei yeshiva*, including at YU. The current editor-in-chief of *Tradition* helped lead the protests, and the current president of YU, Rabbi Dr. Ari Berman, participated.

Rally For MTA

The last major demonstration at YU in the 20th century would occur in the spring of 1999. In January, rumors started to circulate that YU was considering closing MTA, its high school for boys. This was justified by administrators on the basis of declining enrollment, financial problems and even space — YC, whose campus is shared with MTA, was near its maximum capacity at the time. In response to these

rumors, there was an outpouring of public support for MTA by alumni, parents and even YU faculty. MTA administrators disputed the reasoning for the potential closure. The YU administration clarified that MTA would remain open during the next year and that the matter was merely "under consideration." Some speculated that the stated reasons were a ruse and that the real impetus was politics and YU's desire to "get out of the high school business."

The administration's backtracking didn't alleviate people's concerns. The MTA administration demanded a concrete decision from President Lamm by the Feb. 17 deadline for sending out acceptance letters. The demand was ignored, and on Feb. 17, amid ambiguity and confusion over MTA's future, the entirety of MTA held a one hour rally outside Furst Hall, which featured speeches, chants and *tehillim* led by then MTA *mashgiach* Rabbi Yitzchok Cohen.

On March 10, facing immense public pressure, YU issued a press release asserting that MTA would remain open and affirming YU's commitment to the institution and its mission. However, one week later, President Lamm dismissed MTA's principal Rabbi Michael Taubes, with many attributing the move to his public protestations. (Taubes returned to MTA as a *rebbe* in 2008, was appointed *Menahel* in 2011 and currently serves as *Rosh Yeshiva*.) In response, undergraduates at YU — with the support of RIETS *roshei yeshiva* — circulated a petition for his reinstatement. Their efforts were unsuccessful, and

President Lamm appointed a new principal shortly thereafter.

Concluding Thoughts

Where do these tales leave us?

It is quite staggering, in retrospect, to consider the sway that student leadership once held at YU. Students were united behind their leaders, who pushed hard for real change and influence in university matters. This stands in contrast to today, when nearly every decision in the institution occurs in a top-down fashion in which students have become complacent. The Senate that students had fought so hard for has been defunct for years.

Any close look at YU's history reveals recurrence. Students are faced with many of the same problems today as they were in YU's past. Today we must deal with an administration that constantly undermines student autonomy, a president who seems to be both unaware of and uninterested in the issues facing undergraduates, a mistreated and discontent faculty, rampant student cheating, dilapidated facilities, rising costs and declining course offerings, among many other issues.

Few, if any, of these problems are new. As many editorials over the years in YU's student newspapers attest, the administration depends on student complacency and short memory. They have repeatedly committed to giving students more of a voice, only to ignore them later. Our predecessors in these sagas knew that this could not stand. Without them, our institution today would be non-existent or unrecognizable. They acted.

What will we do?



Yosef Wildes

YUSEF WILDES

Music Video with Meaning — an Interview with Yosef Wildes

By Avi Lekowsky

Yosef Wildes is a senior at Yeshiva University who helps himself and others find peace with themselves in a hectic world. In this interview, we dive into his latest project, "Take Me Shabbos." We talk about inspirations, meanings and finding spirituality in the most unlikely places.

Avi Lekowsky (AL): Tell us a little bit about yourself.

Yosef Wildes (YW): Hey, I'm Yosef Wildes from Manhattan. I've been involved

in Yeshiva University (YU) for a while now. I went to MTA for two years, spent two years in Israel, and now I'm in my third year at YU majoring in psychology and minoring in creative writing. Between juggling classes and working as an NCSY Coordinator for West Hartford, me and my apartment put on *kumzitzes* some Thursday nights. We call it the House of Love and Prayer, and we invite everyone. We appreciate all and always have a great experience. There's always a sense of trying to create a certain atmosphere in the room of comfort in the middle of the stress of college — the food and singing my roommates help do assists that also.

AL: Music seems to be important to you — how'd you get into it?

YW: Even going as far back as elementary school, I was in the choir. Choir followed me into high school, as well as picking up guitar. Music has always been a part of me and something I've loved for a while. Over time, I continued and started making music in *yeshiva* in Israel. It's kind of become my favorite thing to play — other people's songs don't really do it for me as much as they used to. I love playing around on the guitar, writing lyrics, and making poetry. A poetry class I took here helped me a lot with that. Making music is a great way for me to

express myself. It can be healing and allows me to help other people.

AL: What would you say is the backbone to your music — where does the inspiration come from? Would you say it's something that's changed over time or stayed static?

YW: Maybe more in the past, it used to be more about expressing myself, and while I'd say that still plays a role today, I think it would be cool to recognize and become more aware of a topic. In the process, the music becomes the vehicle to help heal you

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YOSEF WILDES,
continued from Page 10

in terms of well-being. There's this concept of *daas* in Judaism, which refers to an "eye," or the "self" beyond the thoughts and emotions. Once you can tap into this energy, you get closer to yourself and G-d. A lot of it is trying to bring people into that meditative experience.

AL: Your latest project, "*Take Me Shabbos*," focuses on the importance and beauty of the seventh day of rest. There's been tens of thousands of views on social media and people seem to really vibe with it. What is the story behind that and how does it drive a healing experience?

YW: When I make music, I just start strumming the guitar and let whatever's supposed to happen, happen. Usually the chords and the tune starts to come together, and that's when I start singing. I never take lyrics and then force them into a song — it's usually the opposite. It's almost like the tune expresses the words and the words express the tune. Each goes hand in hand and goes together.

For this song, I felt a sense of peacefulness and a unifying energy — which to me, relates to Shabbat. Shabbat is all about a sense of being and not a sense of doing, you're feeling comfort and happiness. The song is all about the buildup: one foot after the next, Shabbat is coming up. Then the lyrics for *Lecha Dodi*

start to appear — '*Come my beloved towards the Queen of Shabbat and receive it.*' At the end of the video, Shabbat comes in and the harmonies explode and come together. You get taken up by this unique and special day, a day of peace and just connecting with family and friends. The music video tries to make the contrast of the weekday and Shabbat noticeable. You see someone on their phone, on the subway, and then the contrast comes in and you see me in a hoodie and a *tallit*

was accomplished through the song, and the video helped accomplish that.

Since MJE was a big part of it, we wanted to have a participant of the program in the video. The guy, who happens to look a lot like me, was the one on the subway on his phone. After that, he puts on a *kippah* and walks into shul and the scenes change. The experience of Shabbat takes over everything and helps relay the situation to Jews of all backgrounds and experiences. Everyone

nature — not the cleanest place. You're wearing all white and walking barefoot, probably getting a bit dirty. What was the significance behind this?

YW: I spent two months in a *hesder yeshiva* in Tzfat, and that's what I wore on Shabbat. It's what a lot of people do there — wear all white like *Yom Kippur*. That's the type of energy I wanted to bring to the video. Tzfat is a very pure place, and the element of spiritual meditation present there is really special. I really love that place, and it helps bring me back to that spirit. There's also a lot of people in Israel who walk around barefoot, so I wanted to use that to help the "nature-y" vibe of the video. I really wanted to portray a state of being free and not being held down by anything.

AL: Anything else you want to plug? What can we expect from you next?

YW: I'm working on a song with Tani Polansky about the prayer of *Nishmat*, and how to show that off in an interesting way. I'm also working on this song called "Imagination," which is being worked on in the studio. It's about tapping into your creativity and your mind and how far you can go with it. I also love putting on *kumzitzes*, and am in the process of trying to create a music/meditation type of program to create something therapeutic.

AL: Thanks for stopping by, good luck with everything you do!

There's this concept of daas in Judaism, which refers to an "eye," or the "self" beyond the thoughts and emotions. Once you can tap into this energy, you get closer to yourself and G-d.

in nature. Everything comes together in a really meaningful way.

AL: Where did the idea for the visuals come from?

YW: There was a guy named Achi Adamit who helped video and edit everything, along with my dad, who runs the Manhattan Jewish Experience (MJE), which sponsored the video. We got together and asked ourselves what we want the story to portray. Jacob Lee is a musician that sings about the human experience who I look up to a lot that uses a trippy elements in his videos that I wanted to use in mine. The nature scenes were inspired by him, along with the shifting of scenes. Creating a trippy vibe

comes together from the day of doing to the day of ebbing and being surrounded by this incredible energy.

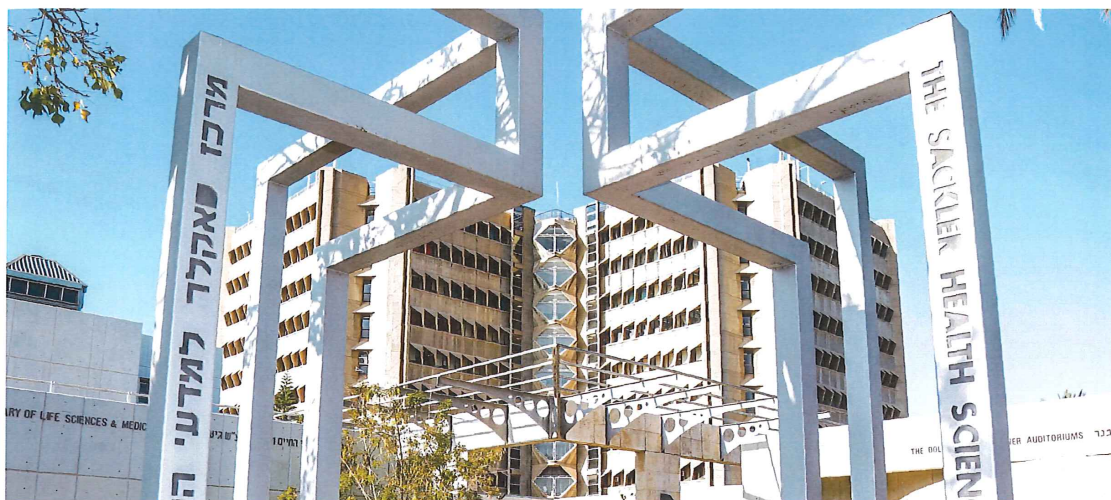
AL: You mentioned your father's organization, MJE, and I noticed a lot of your family was in the video — was this a conscious decision? Or did they just happen to be around?

YW: The video serves a dual purpose as a promotion for MJE and the things they try to do, so it was definitely conscious. The Shabbat table as well was also a bit conscious, because we wanted a family feel to it. Sometimes, you need a warm, family environment to give it that feeling.

AL: You spend a lot of time in the video in



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FROM THE ARCHIVES

Editor's Note: There have been some clubs in the history of Yeshiva University that failed to receive a charter. This issue has recently been brought to the fore when the YU College Democrats were only chartered by Student Council after a heated controversy. The Commentator has chosen to focus on two incidents in the 1950s in which German-themed clubs failed to receive a charter.

From the Commie Archives (December 30, 1952; Volume 18 Issue 5) — Honorary German Fraternity Refused Request for Charter

By COMMENTATOR STAFF

A chapter of Delta Phi Alpha, national honorary German fraternity, which was to have been organized this semester at Yeshiva, has been denied the approval of the administration. The rejection came from Dr. Moses L. Isaacs, Dean of the College, in a letter to Dr. Herbert H. J. Peisel, of Syracuse University, national president of the fraternity. Dr. Belkin supported the action of Dr. Isaacs.

In his letter, written earlier this month, Dr. Isaacs informed Dr. Peisel that it is "with regret that the approval of the administration for a chapter of Delta Phi Alpha has not been forthcoming."

Dr. Peisel, in a letter to Dr. Ralph P. Rosenberg, Professor Geerman, said that "the members of the National Council had unanimously granted" Yeshiva a charter, and that the denial of permission for a chapter of the fraternity puts him and the National Council "in a very unpleasant and embarrassing position." He wrote Dr. Rosenberg that "the members of the Council will want from me an explanation of the situation — unprecedented as it is." "Can you throw a light upon these incongruous developments?" he concluded.

No Chapter at City

Dean Isaacs said that the action was taken, "to use a frayed phrase, because the society has as its goal the propagandizing of German culture. And in the light of six million [Jews], it seems improper to have the fraternity at the College."

Dr. Isaacs pointed out that there is no chapter of the fraternity at City College and hence felt that none should be established at Yeshiva. When queried by Student Council

representatives about chapters of the fraternity at Hunter College and New York University, he said that he believed that "very few Jews are members." No statistics on racial or religious affiliations are available.

The action to found a chapter of Delta Phi Alpha was taken early in October, when several students approached Student Council and the German Department, Professor Rosenberg revealed. Yeshiva has a chapter of Pi Delta Phi, national French fraternity, and Eta Sigma Phi, national Classical Languages fraternity.

"The society has as its goal the propagandizing of German culture. And in the light of six million [Jews], it seems improper to have the fraternity at the College."

Dr. Moses L. Isaacs, Dean of Yeshiva College

Letter to Peisel

Dr. Rosenberg then wrote to Dr. Adolf D. Klarmann, secretary-treasurer, at the University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Klarmann, who is at present in Vienna, Austria, on a Fulbright Scholarship, forwarded Dr. Rosenberg's request to Dr. Peisel at Syracuse.

The national president complied by sending Professor

Rosenberg a statement of the background of the fraternity, and a copy of the fraternity constitution, which was adopted in 1950. An application was submitted, and approved by the National Council of the Delta Phi Alpha on November 18, Dr. Rosenberg disclosed.

The national president's letter, informing Professor Rosenberg of the unanimous approval of the Council, also included a request to "contact your administration with respect to the establishment of a charter." He asked that Dr. Rosenberg inform him of the administration's approval.

The correspondence was directed to the office of the president, Dr. Belkin, for University approval on November 24. The denial of administration approval was made in a letter to Dr. Peisel. A copy of the letter was submitted to Professor Rosenberg.

Founded in 1929

Delta Phi Alpha was founded in 1929 by Professor James Auburn Chiles of Wofford College, who died last year. The fraternity has 71 chapters at present.

The constitution of the fraternity calls for the study of the German language and literature, and "endeavors to emphasize those aspects of German life and culture which are of universal value and which contribute to man's eternal search for peace and truth."

The initiation ritual of the honor society calls for the upholding of "the humanitarian ideals of German thought and German writing which contribute to man's eternal search for truth and peace. The tolerance of Lessing, the folk-sympathy of Perder, the idealism of Schiller, and the humanity of Goethe we treasure among the constructive forces in the history of mankind."

Editor's Note: The following two pieces pertain to a separate incident than the previous article. In 1959, the Yeshiva College Student Council, by a 9-3 vote, refused to charter a German Club. Presented below are the reactions of two individuals to this decision.

From the Archives (December 17, 1959; Volume 25 Issue 5) — Letter to the Editor

By ABE GAFNI

To forget the attempted annihilation of World Jewry by the Nazi terror is, in my opinion, one of the greatest sins any Jew can commit. We must forever remember the atrocity and be constantly on guard against any similar recurrence. Bearing all this in heart and mind, I must nevertheless speak out against Student Council's denial of a charter to the proposed German club.

To identify Nazism with the whole of German culture would be a gross misconception. The writings of Goethe, Heine, and Schiller, the music of Bach and Beethoven, comprise a most important segment of world civilization and deserve the interest of every intelligent individual. Their thoughts and creations exist quite independently of

the later Nazi crimes. The fact that these people lived in the country or wrote in the language of future murderers does not detract from the intrinsic value of their works.

We, in fact, enhance the twisted Nazi philosophy by equating it in our damnation with German culture in general. By not drawing distinctions between the works of Kant and Goebbel we seemingly put the two on the same level. We lose sight of the object of hate by appending to it that which is not worthy of condemnation. As in medicine, we must isolate the disease and stamp it out. The healthy part, however, must be permitted to live.

This, then, would be the purpose of a German club at Yeshiva University — to understand and steady the good; to condemn and destroy the evil



The Commentator archives

From the Archives (December 17, 1959; Volume 25 Issue 5) — Letter to the Editor

By GERALD BLIDSTEIN

Student Council has once again refused a charter to a German Club, and once again will be attacked as narrow-minded and even anti-intellectual. The familiar argument that Germany was responsible for six million deaths is notoriously weak — Jews have been driven from every country and martyred in every land; no one objects to the study of Spanish, or English, or Greek.

This weakness would be fatal if one argued thus: Germans killed

six million Jews, therefore, we must have an ambiguous attitude towards German culture. The therefore, and that which follows it, could damn most culture. The simple statement "killed six million Jews" triggers an emotional response which needs not be justified by therefore which makes deduction childish. We are dealing, then, with a fact. This emotional response exists — it is not produced, as we would have to produce rationally an intellectual opposition to, say, Spanish culture. Should we, however, subdue this emotional response? I believe we should not; I

believe that it is a sign of health that we can still hate and feel disgust.

This feeling must color one's attitude towards German culture and this coloration found a symbol in the opposition to a German Club on Yeshiva Campus. In our personal lives we may express this attitude by not buying German goods. A university must symbolize its emotional response in a different sphere, and it seems to me that the refusal of a charter to the German Club is a valid and authentic manifestation of the feeling.

The Transformation of a Young Democracy: How Israel's Political Landscape Changes as a New Generation of Leaders Steps In

By ALEX FRIEDMAN

Israeli politics has reached a standstill after a second election in six months yielded no clear result. Israel has now come to the difficult point that all young democracies inevitably reach, where their newly constructed political system is put to the test. Israel is still a very young country on the world stage — a mere 71 years old — and the process of developing as a young democracy includes the uncertainty we are seeing right now. America faced many of these early tests, including the presidential election of 1824 between John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson. With neither candidate receiving a majority of the votes, the election went to the U.S. House of Representatives where a “corrupt bargain” took place between Adams and the House Speaker. It almost caused a break in the new country's delicate democracy, but America survived, and so will Israel.

The race for 61 seats in the Knesset has never been simple. No party has ever received an outright majority, and the process of cobbling together a coalition has occurred in every election, whether easily or with great difficulty. There have been all types of parties in coalition governments over the years and all types of governments including a national unity one. Even Prime Ministers Shimon Peres and Yitzchak Shamir, two famously staunch opponents, put aside their differences to create a national unity government and rotation agreement for the Prime Minister position. This occurred after the 1984 Israeli election, when the results produced a stalemate and neither Shamir or Peres were able to cobble together a coalition. The deadlock we are now seeing has

echoes of the 1984 election, but what is different today? Shamir and Peres worked out an agreement, so why can't Israeli leaders today put aside their differences like they always have before? And if they cannot, is there a need to change the Israeli political system as we know it?

first time, Israelis seemed to care more about the political outcome than about financial responsibility. Why the change? Why are Israelis willing to cough up a hundred million dollars for a different result? The answer to that lies with the uniquely conflicted public opinion of the Prime Minister,

into the Israeli political fray at its highest level and topple the legacy of Menachem Begin and Yitzchak Shamir as embodied by Netanyahu. In Israeli politics, unlike in the American system, political power shifts very rarely. If you look at all of Israel's history, there has only been one election of

set election dates every two years. The system works, and changes to it have and will fail.

Israel already attempted to change their election process in the 1990s and 2000s when they enacted the direct election of Prime Ministers. However, the idea was abandoned after only three elections because split-ticket voting between the Knesset and the Premiership saw the weakening of the two dominant parties and the rise of small parties, resulting in gridlock and a weak government. As shown by this example, we should not be looking to completely change Israel's political system just to ensure that a deadlock like the one occurring now does not happen again. Rather, we must work to improve on the political system already in place.

I am no expert in Israeli election law, and many different proposals have been brought forward to reform the system and solve the deadlock, such as sharing the powers of the Prime Minister or creating a minority government supported by a majority of Knesset members by including the Arab parties. However, either way, the notion that the Israeli political system is broken is dangerous for democracy and the country's future. Israel will get through this hurdle just like America — along with every developing democracy in the world — has overcome its political shortcomings. Ultimately, Israel's political system will succeed only when the Israeli public wakes up and realizes that the days of historic revolutionary leaders are over, and that deadlock and mass polarization among this second generation of leaders is natural — and necessary — in order for democracy to flourish.

For the first time in the country's history, Israel has moved past the respected figures that made up the country's founding fathers. David Ben-Gurion, Menachem Begin, Shimon Peres, Yitzchak Shamir, and Yitzchak Rabin, are all gone, leaving an unanswered political future.

There are two main reasons why this election is not like those before: first, the open willingness to bring Israel to a second or third election and secondly, the generational change of the leaders in Israel. Like never before, Israeli leaders have become open, and in some cases even encouraging, of holding further snap elections if a coalition cannot be reached. Elections are very expensive. According to an article by former Knesset member Dov Lipman in the Jewish News Syndicate, the election in October was estimated to cost Israel 220 million dollars directly, while also taking a 410 million dollar hit to the economy due to loss of work, because election day is a national holiday in Israel. As the old saying goes, “democracy isn't cheap”, both figuratively and literally. That's why Israeli leaders have been so wary of snap elections in the past, and have forced compromise instead.

Earlier this year, however, former Netanyahu ally-turned-opponent Avigdor Lieberman defied all Israeli political convention and pushed through a second election — a move which voters seemed to approve, as they gave him a major Knesset seat boost in the September election. For the

Benjamin Netanyahu. While holding a strong base of support with the country's right wing, he has become despised by those in the center and the left, who desire change. It's not like Israeli Prime Ministers have never been hated before — many have been loathed by part of the country — but this time is different.

For the first time in the country's history, Israel has moved past the respected figures that made up the country's founding fathers. David Ben-Gurion, Menachem Begin, Shimon Peres, Yitzchak Shamir and Yitzchak Rabin, are all gone, leaving an unanswered political future. To return to the American example, the American political crisis of the 1824 election occurred after the presidency of the last founding father, James Monroe, and the election became about who will take over the legacy of the founders. The race was between John Quincy Adams, who represented the legacy of the founding fathers, and Andrew Jackson, a popular outsider general who was attempting to break the two-decade rule of Democratic-Republican control. Sound familiar?

I refer, of course, to Benny Gantz, who is trying to break

great turnaround: the election of 1977, the first time Labor lost control to Likud, breaking 29 years of Labor dominance. Since then, the right wing of Israel has controlled the premiership in all but eight of the past 42 years. Israel is not a country of sudden mood shifts, and the political results over the past 70 years have been for the most part predictable. Suddenly, with the loss of the last of the founding fathers, the straight political road has become twisted and Israel's political future has become uncertain.

For 70 plus years, the coalition system has worked well for Israel, allowing the many different groups that make up the country to come together under the broad tent of a coalition government. People from both ends of the aisle are forced to compromise to form a government, and the multitude of parties ensures that voters get to choose the party that closely aligns with their views, and not just one of two broad parties, as is the system in other countries like the United States. Additionally, when governments rise to power, they can produce the sweeping changes they promised their voters, and not get held up by legislative mechanisms like the veto or



Opinions of the Beren Constitutional Council for ‘Pollack v. SCWSC’, First Ever Beren Trial

By SHANA ADLER,
ELIANA LINDENBERG,
Yael Evgi, NOAH ELIACH,
ATARA KELMAN

The following are the Majority and Dissenting Opinions of the Beren Constitutional Council as adapted for the Opinions Section.

Pollack v. SCWSC [September 23, 2019]

Majority Opinion (Adler, Evgi, Lindenberg)

The plaintiffs claimed that after trying to create or renew clubs at the beginning of the fall semester they were denied because they submitted the application after the Sept. 2 deadline. The applications opened on Aug. 26, leaving one week to submit for approval. This timeline has been accepted as fact. The plaintiffs claimed that this one week period violated the Beren Constitution, which states in Article VII Section 1B that “applications for new club status shall be made during an agreed upon two week period.”

While this claim might seem correct on the surface, the wording of the constitution can be interpreted in two ways. The defense argued that the word “during” connotes “within” as opposed to “for the duration of.” The majority of the court felt this was a compelling read of the article. The plaintiff argued that the word could not be read this way, as section 1A of the Beren Constitution states specifically that “the renewal of club status shall be made... within the first three weeks of the fall semester,” which would make the defense’s reading of 1B seemingly redundant. However, 1A refers specifically to the renewal of club status, while 1B refers to applications for new clubs. As such, the reading of “during” as “within” is not a redundant understanding. When the constitution

is interpreted in this way, SCWSC did not violate Article VII;1B by keeping club applications open for one week, as that one week was within the agreed upon two week time frame.

The plaintiff also argued that SCWSC and SGA failed to fulfill their duties of enhancing student life by denying club status if applications were submitted after the deadline. The majority of the court felt that this argument did not hold water. The defense brought evidence to show that they did and continue to fulfill their duties to enhance student life, but stated that they must have hard deadlines made by the student leaders or by OSL in order to operate in a functional manner.

evidence to prove this was the case and thus we found in favor of the defense.

Dissenting Opinion (Eliach, Kelman)

The majority ruled in favor of Stern College for Women Student Council (SCWSC). Article VII Section 1B of the constitution states “applications for new club statues shall be made during an agreed upon two week period within the first three weeks of each academic semester...” The majority opinion claims that SCWSC did not violate Article VII Section 1B by having the club form open from Aug. 26 to Sept. 2 (seven days). The plaintiff argued that the seven days that the student body had to fill out the

rejected Article VII Section 1B by only having the form open for seven days, rather than the prescribed 14.

Some will argue that according to the dictionary’s *secondary* definition, which defines “during” as “at a point in time in the course of,”¹ the defense did not violate the constitution. This definition means that having the club form open for less than two weeks is constitutional. Yet, if we were to accept this definition that the constitution had no minimum requirement, one would need to accept that had SCWSC only opened the form, for say, three minutes, that too would have been constitutional. If we look at the continuation of clause 1B it states that the two week period must be “within the first three

student views, appropriately address student concerns, and ensure that students are informed of all information of impact to their undergraduate experience”. Additionally, Article III Section IV clause B defines SCWSC’s purpose as, “To carry out the desires of the Stern College for Women undergraduate student body.”

The plaintiffs’ concerns in the case at hand were of the rejection of the formation or renewal of the Psychology Club, Education Club, and Sexual Abuse Awareness club; all endeavors that students evidently desired and would enhance their undergraduate experience.

The defense argued that the September 2nd deadline was given to them by the Office of Student Life (OSL). However, in this email exchange with OSL, it is clear that OSL encouraged SCWSC leaders to reach out and adjust the time frame if they thought it would be more fitting for the student body. The genuine wishes of the students to have the full two week period was met with a firm and uncompromising response. SCWSC was less interested in fulfilling their constitutional obligations, but preferred to correct the injustice of ingratitude by the student body.

Today the Constitutional Council lost sight of why the constitution and this very council was created in the first place. We were saddened to see the formalistic attitude which emphasized a narrow and technical reading of the constitution. This case must be contextualized with careful attention to the social and cultural needs of our campus in addition to the more broad and holistic view of our brand new constitution. Is misconstruing one word of the constitution to justify SCWSC’s actions more significant than the aims of the SGA that align with the plain meaning of the text?

“Our job as justices is simply to interpret the constitution, not to enforce it.”

Shana Adler, Yael Evgi and Eliana Lindenberg

The defense supplied emails where SCWSC officials reached out to students who’s clubs had been denied to suggest other ways they would be able to bring their events to campus without forming an official club. They also presented evidence that they sent personal reminder emails to club heads who hadn’t renewed their clubs as the deadline approached.

The majority opinion in this case does not address how the justices personally feel about the goals of the clubs that were denied or the exact timeline of actions taken by heads of proposed clubs once they realized the deadline had passed. These issues brought up by the plaintiff were irrelevant in our final decision. Our job as justices is simply to interpret the constitution, not to enforce it. Accordingly, the final decision lay only in whether or not SCWSC violated the Beren Constitution. The majority felt that the plaintiff did not present enough

club form was in violation of this article which mandates a full two week period. The defense claimed that the phrase “during an agreed upon two week period” only stipulates a maximum of two weeks, but allows for anything less than that. They interpreted the word “during” as a larger time frame in which at some point the club form had to be available.

Three of the five justices were comfortable with this particular understanding of “during” and therefore did not find SCWSC in violation of the constitution. However, the dissenting opinion is troubled by this reading which seems to be contrary to the meaning of the clause. According to the Merriam Webster Dictionary the first definition of during is “throughout the duration of.” This then mandates that the club form be open throughout the duration of the decided upon two weeks. As such, the defendant evidently

weeks of each academic semester”. It thus becomes apparent that the three weeks were the span of time in which the two week window needed to be open. If the two weeks were not a minimum requirement, the additional requirement for a three week time frame would be redundant.

Moreover, when discussing the definition of the word “during” it is relevant to note the intent of the authors of the constitution at the time of its ratification. As an author of the constitution, Justice Kelman can verify that the word “during” was employed to relay the full two week period.

If one is still not convinced of our argument against the defense’s perception of the word “during”, we additionally believe that SCWSC did not fulfill their duties required by the constitution. Article II Section 2 states that the purpose of SGA is “To gather and express student opinion, actively represent

Why YU Needs a Rosh Yeshiva

By RABBI STEVEN BURG

Editor’s Note: The YU Observer is an independent student newspaper of Yeshiva University.

On September 11, 2019, a friend and colleague of mine forwarded me an article from the YU Observer. The email said that I should make sure to read this to the end. I read the article and was astonished by the concluding paragraph. It read: “So, in short: In a clash between humanity and *halakha*, opt for humanity, and have enough faith in *halakha* that the problem will be solved. And if somehow the conflict remains intractable, I would rather suffer for being a good person than sacrifice someone else’s life on the altar of my religiosity.”

I could not believe what I had read. The author seems to state that in a conflict between one’s perceived view of their humanity versus the guidelines of the Torah, one should opt for humanity. It is almost

irrelevant what the article was addressing, in as much as it was attacking the universal beliefs of Orthodox Judaism. Additionally, I can easily imagine this becoming the slogan for anti-Israel rhetoric: while we understand the Torah’s feelings regarding the Jews and Israel, our “humanity” dictates that the Jews must vacate Israel.

Even more troubling was the fact that the writer was not just any student or faculty member, but rather the chair of the Robert M. Beren Jewish Studies department at Yeshiva College. I immediately sent an email to YU administrators informing them that, in my opinion, they had a real issue on their hands. What I came to realize is that the issue is so much bigger than this one article.

As I spoke to many different stakeholders in the YU community, many things became apparent. The general sentiment I heard expressed by YU rabbis from across the board was that this professor’s classes are not reflective of normative Orthodox Jewish thought. If asked, almost all of them indicated that an Orthodox student should not

attend his class. Not only was this the case in Washington Heights, but in Israel as well, many *yeshivot* have told their students that this class was off limits. How someone could hold the title of chair of the Beren Jewish Studies department at YC while also lacking the confidence of so many rabbis, is shocking.

The next surprising conversation I had was with those that tried to explain to me that the Observer was not really a fully sanctioned YU newspaper. I pointed out that it was called the “Yeshiva University Observer,” and had a YU logo on the masthead.

The most worrisome part, however, was the silence. The YU Judaic Studies Department chair had challenged the value system of the Torah, and not one of the other leaders within the institution had said a word. I was told that there were meetings to discuss it, with the end result being a decision to have more meetings. Leadership requires a voice, and there was none here.

Many that I spoke to quoted stories of Rav Soloveitchik’s compassion regarding wedding matches that had to be broken due

to *halakhic* prohibitions. They would relate how Rav Soloveitchik would cry with the affected parties. These were beautiful stories to be sure, but it was reflective of an institution that has yet to replace Rav Soloveitchik with a new *rosh yeshiva*. Given the fact that one would be hard pressed to find anyone under the age of sixty that attended Rav Soloveitchik’s class, this is long overdue.

While it is a beautiful idea that many *maggidei shiur* at YU is referred to as a *rosh yeshiva*, it is not practical. YU needs a *rosh yeshiva* at the top of the institution who can deal with serious issues as they arise and make sure that the institution stays on the Torah path. For two thousand years, this is how Orthodoxy has stayed connected to the *mesorah*. There are so many difficult issues coming up today, and YU has no official Torah voice to deal with them.

Many times I have asked administrators at YU about certain communal issues,

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Youth and the YU Idea

By ZEV ELEFF

In March 2000, YU *roshei yeshiva* denounced a decision by the editors of the school's student-run rabbinic journal *Beit Yitzchak* to include a "problematic" article; one that, in the words of Rabbi Hershel Schachter, "lost all tradition." The *Beit Yitzchak* editors recognized that the article, which proffered source criticism rather than traditional learning, would generate debate. However, they decided to publish it "to see what the response would be ... to test the waters a little," as co-editor Aaron Koller explained. The Commentator reported at the time that YU facilities staff confiscated copies of the volume and, at least initially, RIETS refused to underwrite the cost of the publication.

This episode, full of questions surrounding rabbinic authority and familiar figures, came to mind after reading a plea issued by my friend and senior colleague, Rabbi Steven Burg. Upset about recent campus commotions and troubling statements, Rabbi Burg demanded that "YU needs a *rosh yeshiva* at the top of the institution who can deal with serious issues as they arise and make sure that the institution stays on the Torah path."

That Rabbi Burg took on the issue is reasonable. He is a prominent YU alumnus and a longtime leader within the Orthodox fold. Rabbi Burg was animated to speak up about the school's organizational chart because of his devotion to what Rabbi Norman Lamm called back in the 1960s the "idea of Yeshiva University." Or, as the late Dean Norman Adler put it, Yeshiva College is a Modern Orthodox experiment that tests the religious hypotheses of its teachers and students, as well as of women and men beyond its campus borders. The same is true of the school's other sites.

Yet one of Rabbi Burg's pivotal facts is off the mark. He claims that YU has not had an authoritative, power-wielding rabbinic head

since Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik retired in December 1985. To the contrary, Rabbi Soloveitchik never held that position. President Samuel Belkin was both top executive and Rosh HaYeshiva.

Rabbi Soloveitchik derived his unofficial high status by dint of his peerless stature as a scholar and teacher. That's how he rose above the other excellent RIETS *roshei yeshiva*. In later years, Rabbi Soloveitchik's best students were promoted to the school's faculty and they, naturally, deferred to their teacher's decisions. Among these was, of course, President and Rosh HaYeshiva, Rabbi Norman

Lamm.

Then again, Rabbi Soloveitchik usually steered clear of campus politics. In 1968, for instance, students observed an exceptional case in which the Rav had "broken with precedent" by issuing criticism of recent student activities.

Then who typically took up the gauntlet for YU? Most often, the school's greatest champions were the young people most invested in its *Torah u-Madda* mission. In the 1960s, the outspoken youth movement — a theme threaded throughout American Jewish history — included Rabbi Aharon Lichtenstein, then in his thirties.

There was also the quartet of undergraduates that raised school spirits in 1963 by competing on a nationally televised quiz show, celebrating their yarmulkes and Jewish values while older people preferred that they tone it down. In addition, although Rabbi Ahron Soloveichik was younger than most YU rabbis, he was emboldened to protest the Vietnam War and oppose calls to introduce biblical criticism to the college curriculum. Moreover, the youthful collegians were the ones pushing for genetic screening and more mindfulness about Tay-Sachs disease.

This was a shared sentiment.

There are crucial matters to be addressed by Orthodox Jews. Solving them does not require fortifying our enclave with firmer top-down leadership.



Students protesting the Vietnam War, one of many bottom-up social movements that came to YU.

WIKIMEDIA COMMONS

Beyond Washington Heights, former OU president Moses Feuerstein reassured thousands of listeners in Jerusalem that American Orthodoxy was in good shape heading into the 1970s because of the efforts of young people inspiring a "religious renaissance." Likewise, and back at YU, the subsequent decade witnessed the emergence of younger rabbinic scholars and empowered students (many of whom later went on *aliyah*) taking up various campus causes.

That Rabbi Soloveitchik elevated Yeshiva University is beyond question. However, the pivotal issues facing the school and the broader Modern Orthodox community were typically taken up by cadres of energized young people — both faculty members and students — devoted to sorting out the dilemmas of Judaism and modern life.

As always, there are crucial matters to be addressed by Orthodox Jews. Solving them does not require fortifying our enclave with firmer top-down leadership. Instead, we might assess whether Modern Orthodoxy has, like it did in the past, cultivated women and men prepared to embrace their roles as the champions of their faith.

Do our institutions provide space for today's most remarkable young people? Do they invest their religious visions with a sense of trust in an emerging generation to ignite another bottom-up Modern Orthodox youth movement? Tested time and again like a worthy experiment, this strategy has redounded very well for Modern Orthodoxy and, at its core, is the finest idea of Yeshiva University.

Rabbi Dr. Zev Eleff is Chief Academic Officer of Hebrew Theological College. He is a graduate of Yeshiva College's Jay and Jeanie Schottenstein Honors Program and was ordained at the Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary.

A Tribute to Professor Tufts

By CHAYA-BRACHA WALKENFELD

Professor Tufts was known, first and foremost, for being a great man. I had Professor Tufts during my first semester in YU and though I had him for only one class, I was privileged to get to know him outside the classroom as well.

Professor Tufts could constantly be found by the third floor couches (on the Beren Campus) in the Syms building, talking to students. He made time to talk to whoever wanted. He chit-chatted with his students and gave advice on just about everything. He also had a great sense of humor and after conversing with him, the students always felt good. I was one of those students who could be found talking to Professor Tufts by the couches which, by the way, he called my office. He took a genuine interest in speaking to

me about anything and gave me advice on classes, majors, graduate schools and career choices.

Inside the classroom, he was a great professor. His classes were intellectually stimulating; they kept the entire class engaged and on its toes. He helped to push my creativity to the next level and to come up with out-of-the-box solutions. Before class, he often played music for everyone to enjoy and regaled us with stories.

Professor Tufts truly cared about everyone on an individual level. He would explain that decision making should not be based on averages because most people are not an average. This embodied the way he treated others; he valued each and every person.

I had looked forward to seeing him this year in addition to taking my capstone course with him in the spring and am very sad at this tremendous loss.

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and have found that while everyone is well intentioned, no one wanted to ask *shailos* because they were scared of being limited. This is a mistake. Torah has to be the prism through which we engage the world. The Almighty was well aware of the concerns of humanity, and gave us the Torah to be a light, not a barrier.

If YU cannot set up an ongoing Torah mechanism to deal with flagrant breaches in our *mesorah*, such as the recent article published in the YU Observer, then it risks losing its way and becoming irrelevant. An empowered *rosh yeshiva* would be the check and balance that this great institution desperately needs to keep it in sync with the *mesorah*.

Corrections: An earlier version of this article referred to the "YU Judaic Studies Department." The name of the department in question is the Robert M. Beren Department of Jewish Studies, a department at Yeshiva College. The article also stated that "every maggid shiur is a rosh yeshiva." While many are roshi yeshiva, not all are. The article has been updated to reflect these changes.

Rabbi Steven Burg is the Director General (Mankal) of Aish HaTorah Jerusalem and Aish HaTorah globally.

Statement From Your Student Government Presidents

By YU STUDENT GOVERNMENT PRESIDENTS

To the Yeshiva University Undergraduate Student Body:

The YU Student Government feels strongly that it is important to have diverse political discourse between the YU College Republicans, the YU College Libertarians and the YU College Democrats. We value the importance of the YU College Democrats club representing part of our varied student community.

Part of being an approved club at YU

includes following the rules and regulations put forth by the YU Student Government and their respective constitutions. According to the Wilf constitution, “In order that a club need not reapply for affiliation with Student Government at the beginning of each academic year, it shall ... follow the regulations set forth by the General Assembly” (Article X, Section 4, Part 1). According to the Beren constitution, “Clubs shall: Complete and submit event request and speaker forms ... and otherwise comply with the requirements of the applicable council and the SGA” (Article VII, Section 2, Parts C, D). By not seeking or receiving approval for an event, the YU College Democrats club violated the aforementioned rules. They were therefore

asked to remove the club name from the event, but the YU College Democrats club refused to do so.

To avoid any complications moving forward, the YU Student Government will be asking all YU affiliated club heads to affirm that in order to run an event — in an official or unofficial capacity — they need the approval of the YU Student Government. Failure to adhere to Student Government standards will lead to the loss of club status as a YU affiliated club.

We look forward to working with all of our clubs and students this year, including the YU College Democrats, to maintain our diverse representation on campus.

Your Student Government Presidents		
YSU	President	Ariel Sacknovitz
SOY	President	Yoni Broth
YCSA	President	Leib Wiener
SYMSSC - WILF	President	Chayim Mahgerefteh
SCWSC	President	Aleeza Katz
TAC	President	Bella Adler
SYMSSC - BEREN	President	Miriam Schlos

From the TAC President’s Desk: A Pre-Rosh Hashanah Message

By BELLA ADLER

Editor's Note: This article was originally published online on Sept. 26.

In an essay on last week’s parsha, *Ki Tavo*, Rabbi Jonathan Sacks quotes the prominent psychologist Howard Gardner, who argues that “what makes a leader is the ability to tell a particular kind of story — one that explains ourselves to ourselves and gives power and resonance to a collective vision.” Theodore Hertzl told a story of a state for the Jewish people. Dr. Bernard Revel envisioned an institution in which students could combine modernity with the spirit of Torah.

The education courses I have taken at Stern College have taught me the importance of story sharing as a means for strengthening the creativity muscle in our brains. Storytelling makes the world a better place by giving the author the power to envision a world better than what they tangibly see before them. Stories allow us to ask the “what

if” questions: what if the world looked different? What will it take to become that? Who will I need to help me get there?

Moshe, in one of the last *mitzvot* in the

Leadership is not just about a shared future, but about empowering individual members of a community to write their own narrative.

book of *Devarim*, commands Bnei Yisrael to bring *bikkurim*, their first ripened fruits, to the Temple. When bringing the gifts, there is a basic outline of Jewish history that must be said — it begins with *Avraham*, continues with slavery in Egypt, and ultimately ends with redemption through God’s outstretched hand.

“The Jews were commanded to become a nation of storytellers,” says Rabbi Sacks. We are a people of stories not by choice, but

by obligation. Our religious values and practices span a wide spectrum, yet we are commanded to recite the same baseline story.

Rosh Hashanah is a time of stories. The month of *Elul* is a period of introspection to examine all of the narratives that make up who we are as individuals. The message I want to share with you is this: Be respectful of each other’s narratives. Be a listener and a storyteller. Remember that coexistence of our narratives on campus is what makes up Yeshiva University’s story and that one narrative is not more or less important than the next. Stories, words and ideas are the most powerful weapon we have to change the society around us. While living amidst a time of heated debate over constitutional linguistics, newspaper articles and dialogue, it is too easy to forget that we share a story as Yeshiva University students, even if our individual narratives sound different.

Moshe’s commandment to have *Bnei Yisrael* share their story was not just powerful because individuals were taking ownership over their own history, but because the same words were said by every member of

the Jewish people, creating a feeling of collective responsibility. As Yeshiva University students, we each have our own narrative, but share in the collective responsibility of attending a Jewish university and standing up for its Jewish values.

As I sit in *shul* Monday morning, I will be thinking about storytelling as a form of leadership. Howard Gardner, Theodore Herzl, Rabbi Sacks and many more remind me that leadership is not just about a shared future, but about empowering individual members of a community to write their own narrative. Leaders aren’t just storytellers — they empower other stories to be heard. My hope for our community is that we can use the remainder of *Elul* and *Tishrei* to be listeners of all narratives, as we continue to develop our own stories within the collective responsibility of being Yeshiva University students.

Be a story listener. Be a storyteller. We are the authors of our universe.

The Hate Not Taken Seriously

By SRULI FRUCHTER

“Hi, my name is Anon,” said the 27-year-old German terrorist, “and I think the Holocaust never happened. Feminism is the cause of the decline of the West which acts as a scapegoat for mass immigration. And the root of all these problems is the Jew. Would you like to be friends?”

This past Yom Kippur, Oct. 9, the terrorist shared this in his 35-minute video over the game streaming platform Twitch; he was driving to a synagogue in Halle, Germany, hoping to perpetrate his plan of massacring Jews.

According to reports, armed with a shotgun and homemade explosives, the white supremacist failed to enter the locked synagogue and instead shot and killed 40-year-old Jana Lange, a music-loving passerby who had reprimanded him for making so much noise. Soon after, he rerouted to a nearby kebab shop and shot and killed 20-year-old Kevin S., a construction worker eating his lunch.

When I first heard the news, I was drinking a glass of water, quenching my thirst after the Yom Kippur fast. I listened as my friend scrolled and read from his iPhone, relaying the known details of the horrific attack. I found myself emotionally paralyzed, left completely numb to yet another display of anti-Semitism. This was not an isolated incident, but merely a sample of

the growing hatred in the global petri dish of anti-Semitism.

CNN reported in September that “as a whole, anti-Semitic hate crimes in New York City are up 63% this year as compared with last year.”

In its 2018 general analysis on worldwide anti-Semitism, Tel Aviv University’s Kantor Center reported, “The countries with the highest number of cases are the US (over 100 cases), the UK (68), France and Germany (35 each).”

How are we supposed to feel? As Jews, our tragedies always seem to take the backseat to other conversations, whitewashing our trauma and our fear. Was it not even a year ago when 11 Jews were gunned down in the Pittsburgh Synagogue Shooting? Yet the real threats facing worldwide Jewry are dismissed and excused.

We need not look much further than the Jewish community in the tri-state area to see the vibrant presence of anti-Semitism affecting even Yeshiva University. Two months ago, The Commentator reported that the Vanguard News Network (VNN), a white supremacist platform, had published photos of hundreds of former and current YU faculty members and students.

VNN’s forum includes chatrooms where users discuss their anti-Semitic sentiments. Blood libels are consistently referenced, describing Jews as rat-like or blood-thirsty beings. Some of the website’s popular tags

include “Jewish nose” and “Jews inbreeding.” The Commentator also reported that “one user on the forum called the international Hillel organization ‘a group of Jewish supremacist thugs,’ and another referred to a Holocaust survivor as an ‘alleged Shlomocaust survivor.’”

It feels like anti-Semitism is lurking right outside my home.

Let us not forget Columbia University’s disconcerting invitation to Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad to speak at its recent World Leaders Forum on Sept. 25, 2019. Though Mohamad had previously peddled anti-Semitic rhetoric — describing Jews as “hook-nosed” and claiming that they “rule the world by proxy” — Columbia University President Lee Bollinger defended the university’s decision. Despite significant student backlash, Bollinger insisted that “to abandon this activity would be to limit severely our capacity to understand and confront the world as it is, which is a central and utterly serious mission for any academic institution.”

In her opening remarks at the event, Vishakha Desai disavowed Mohamad’s anti-Semitic views on behalf of the university. Nonetheless, in the midst of a question and answer session at the forum, Mohamad defended his past comments, asking the audience, “Why is it that I can’t say something against the Jews?” Moreover, after denying ever questioning how many Jews were

murdered in the Holocaust, he proceeded to do just that, parroting the claims of Holocaust deniers. By welcoming Mohamad to its World Leaders Forum, Columbia University provided a platform for an influential anti-Semite to express his hateful views. In doing so, the university implicitly validated his hateful rhetoric, isolating Jewish students in the process.

Had another public figure associated with a racist ideology been invited, wouldn’t the university backtrack upon such student backlash? Could it defend giving a microphone to hate speech with an appeal to the “utterly serious mission” of the university? Would such a figure ever be invited in the first place?

Hateful expressions against Jews never seem to be seen in the same light as those against other minorities; the crossroads of intersectionality always seem to pass over us, excluding us from practically every demand for change.

Anti-Semitism has become a cliché, viewed as an exaggerated complaint or a mere talking point. We must acknowledge it; we cannot deny the rising tide of anti-Semitism or pretend that it will just go away. Jewish history has shown that when people say they want to kill Jews, we need to believe them. Anti-Semitism cannot stand alone; it must be taken seriously. As a Jew, I don’t want to feel safer; I want to be safer.

Silly Rabbit, Nazism is Bad: A Jojo Rabbit Review

By JOSH LEICHTER

What is satire? If you were to go off of the official definition, the answer would be any use of irony or humor to poke fun at an institution, a group of people, or just a single person. Often in film we see filmmakers use satire as a way to make light of controversial or sensitive topics in the world. Classic films like “Dr. Strangelove”, which is an amusing portrayal of Cold War politics and the nuclear debate, as well as more recent features like 2017’s “The Death of Stalin”, which saw high ranking Soviet officials in a bumbling quest to take up the mantle of their beloved dictator, are examples of this type of satire. By using satire correctly, audiences can laugh at and dissect different events in history as well as apply these same societal issues that may still be prevalent in today’s day and age.

One particular target of satire in film and media at large is the Nazi Party, and more specifically, Adolf Hitler. These takedowns and mockeries of such a ruthless leader have been employed

since he was still alive, with the iconic 1940 Charlie Chaplain film, “The Great Dictator”, which saw Chaplain himself portraying both a Jewish barber and the fictitious Adenoid Hynkel, who sported the same toothbrush mustache as his real-life counterpart. Another film released in 1967 by Mel Brooks called “The Producers” showcased two scheming producers putting on a play titled ‘Springtime for Hitler’. In this film, Nazis performed choreographed dances in a swastika formation on stage and sang the eponymous song dressed in lederhosen. These films were collectively nominated for seven Academy Awards including Best Picture. “The Producers” won Best Original Screenplay.

With the release of the film “Jojo Rabbit”, directed by Taika Waititi (“Thor: Ragnarök”), the aforementioned classics been brought up as examples of successful uses of satire to make a mockery of Nazi Germany. Despite similarities between all three films’ portrayal of Nazism, the way that “Jojo Rabbit” makes its attempt comes off hollow. The basic plot of the film is centered around 10-year-old

Johannes “Jojo” Betzler, a member of the local Hitler Youth and blind worshipper of the Fuehrer to the point that he imagines Hitler as his best friend, struggling with accepting the propaganda he is fed when he discovers his mother is hiding a Jewish girl named Elsa in his house.

One of the main issues with the film is its lack of a clear tone, shifting between comedy in the first two acts before turning into a more dramatic black comedy for the final act. This tonal change makes the moments that the film is trying to portray as thought-provoking and

emotional come off flat and uncomfortable. In one of the exchanges between Jojo and Elsa, Jojo insists he is a Nazi due to the fact that he loves swastikas. In a counter to this assertion, Elsa states that Jojo is simply a 10-year-old boy who happens to like swastikas and is wearing a uniform that puts him in a club greater than himself. Elsa’s argument can explain how children are taught hate from a young age, yet when it is juxtaposed, as it is in the film, to the discussion of the various far-fetched claims the Nazis made about Jews, a viewer is bound to feel awkward.

When the movie jumps from portraying the imaginary version of Adolf Hitler as a unicorn eating fool to him yelling at Jojo for saying that maybe Jews aren’t as bad as he thought, there is a sense that the comedic and dramatic elements do not blend well. Had the film attempted to stick with comedy all the way through, its attempts to satirize the Nazis would have come out stronger, but with the lack of balance between the two tones in the film, it just winds up falling as flat as the Fuehrerbunker did when it was blown up by the Soviets.



“Jojo Rabbit”, a FOX Searchlight production, was released on Oct. 18, 2019

TIME.COM

No Money, No Food: How YU’s New Meal Plan is Harming Students

By MILI CHIZHIK

As the summer came to an end and the new school year began, one could sense a number of clashing feelings in the air: excitement, the unquenchable thirst for knowledge, and looming anxiety about what the new course load would bring. I was eager to dive right back into my studies and see my friends and classmates once again. I was looking forward to being back in Manhattan on my own. I have to admit that I was also slightly excited to go back to the dorms — an unpopular opinion among most YU students.

What I did not expect or anticipate was that the money dedicated to all my future meals this semester would be spliced — practically in half — and that I’d only be given the value for half of what I paid.

Just four days before the start of the semester, the Yeshiva University Dining Services sent out an email describing a new meal plan that was to be put in place starting this semester. YU Dining Services has typically offered two meal plans to students who live on campus — reduced and standard — while those who commute have a \$400 per semester plan. The new meal plan includes a “Membership Fee,” which would be “used to pay the fixed, non-food costs of the Dining Halls,” as stated in the email sent to all YU students. Once the “Membership Fee” is paid, the student is a member of the new Yeshiva University Undergraduate Dining Club, where the student can purchase tax-free and significantly-discounted food. After the deduction of the \$675 “Membership Fee,” it leaves those on the reduced meal plan with \$825 and those on the standard meal plan with \$1075 to spend for the rest of the semester. Furthermore, those on the commuter plan do not receive any of the benefits of the Dining Club.

With this “Membership Fee” for someone on the reduced meal plan, 45% of his or her money is taken away from what is supposed to be solely dedicated to food purchases. The so-called “significant discounts” only range from 35% to 40%, a 5%-10% disparity from what was taken away for the “Membership Fee.” Additionally, part of the caf money can be used for restaurants, but those purchases are not be discounted. Thus, the cost of an average meal purchased from a restaurant costs two days’ worth of meals in the cafeteria.

As described by the YU Dining Services, the Dining Club was introduced to YU “in response to student feedback to ensure food pricing [that] is easier to understand and to better help students manage their budgets.” As soon as I read the email, I planned out an entire semester’s meals and calculated how much I’d be able to spend to last until the fall semester ends. After spending hours trying to fit in meals with some degree of variability, I calculated that if I eat the bare minimum, I would still have to add an additional \$45 to my account. My meal breakdown did not include any snacks, beverages, lunches on Sundays or Fridays, breakfast on Sundays, any condiments (such as cream cheese or peanut butter), any transactions in restaurants, or the majority of the semester’s Shabbat meals. The meal breakdown can be found here.

Because of the lack of price labels on the majority of the food in the cafeterias, it has become very difficult for students to budget their meals. Last year, most students would agree that the food in the cafeteria was notoriously overpriced. This year, ALL students would agree that the food in the cafeteria is exorbitantly overpriced. A number of students have told me that they have already gone through 60% of the money on their caf card in a matter of five weeks and don’t know how they’ll be able to afford food for

the remaining 11 weeks of the semester. No matter how well one budgets him or herself, it has become nearly impossible to eat properly and maintain a healthy, nutritious lifestyle under the new system.

Additionally, a sizeable minority of students are on a gluten-free diet, and thus rely entirely on protein-rich foods and vegetables to get the nutrition they need. However, these foods are exponentially higher in price than other foods in the cafeterias, and so these students are running out of their caf money at a much faster, unsustainable rate. One SCW junior told me that because of her gluten sensitivity, she has already gone through 64% of her money this semester, and doesn’t know how she’ll be able to afford food after she runs out.

The YU Dining Services also claimed they are copying the meal plan systems put in place by two SUNY universities, Albany and Binghamton. These schools also have a membership fee and significant discounts, but their discounts are 18% and 30%, respectively, which are greater than the discounts given in YU. One might imagine this is simply due to the difference between the cost of non-kosher food and kosher food, but these discounts apply to both kosher and non-kosher foods. Another difference between these schools and YU is that both SUNY schools offer more meal plans: SUNY Albany offers 10 different plans and SUNY Binghamton offers six different plans. Because of these vast differences, it is unfair for YU to input an inefficient system, especially without notifying students in advance of the new changes.

After sending a petition out to my fellow students (link to the petition can be found here), I received approximately 250 signatures opposing the new meal plan. Over 70 people also relayed their feelings in the comments. One sophomore wrote, “do they think that they’re giving us such a bad education that we can’t figure out that they’re ripping

us off?” Another out-of-town student wrote, “the school is straight-up stealing money from us that we paid for food!” An in-town junior wrote that “specifically because YU is a Jewish institution, it should uphold the morals, values, and Halacha that it inculcates in its students. Stealing and trickery are in direct conflict with said morals, values and Halacha. It would be one thing if YU was upfront about its ridiculous prices and policy, but it is downright insulting to mask the appropriative policy as beneficial to the student body.”

Two of the most concerning comments were from an out-of-town freshman and junior. The former said, “please let me eat normally again,” and the latter wrote, “I’m scared that I will have to start skipping meals because I already feel like I am out of money!” Why should students have to worry about whether they’ll be able to afford lunch or dinner, let alone lunch and dinner? The fact that students will start skipping meals to reduce their expenditures in the cafeterias is outrageous. Especially for those students currently dealing with or recovering from eating disorders and body dysmorphic disorder, this dining plan may put them at risk of developing or furthering their unhealthy eating habits.

The Rambam writes in Hilchot Teshuvah 2:9 that sins between man and God, such as eating forbidden food, can be atoned for on Yom Kippur. However, sins between man and his fellow, such as stealing, cannot be forgiven until the injured party is appeased and given what he is owed. In Hilchot Genevah 1:2, Rambam writes that stealing even the smallest of amounts is prohibited by the Torah. It has been almost three weeks since Yom Kippur and students are still waiting for what we are owed by the school.

ClickPay: A New Way to Pay Rent

By ZACHARY GREENBERG

This past summer I had the privilege of interning for ClickPay, an electronic payment platform company specializing in real estate transactions. While there, I was exposed to ClickPay's mission to simplify and automate the rent payment process.

ClickPay was conceptualized on a bike ride in 2009 by Tom Kiernan, the current CEO, and Steven Van Praagh. While cycling, Tom and Steven had been discussing the frustrations associated with rent payments. At that time, the only way to process paying rent was by mailing check payments, which can be an arduous process for both property managers and tenants. Property managers were tasked with tracking and ensuring timely payments from hundreds — and in some cases thousands — of monthly rent payments. Not only was this inefficient, but tenants mailing their checks had an increased likelihood of incurring late-payment fees if the checks weren't processed until after the rent payment due date. It was at this moment that the founders realized that there must be an easier way.

And thus, ClickPay was born.

ClickPay provides customizable electronic solutions for property managers to bill and collect rent from their tenants. Their services include online payments, on-site check scanning, and e-billing. Instead of spending their time collecting payments, property managers can now focus their efforts on

renovating their existing properties or researching and purchasing new assets. Furthermore, ClickPay provides landlords with reusable payment templates to make it as smooth as possible to acquire additional properties.

This product is not only convenient for landlords, but for tenants as well. Aside from the simplicity of paying rent online, ClickPay accepts a variety of payment methods including e-check (ACH), paper check, debit and credit cards, American Express, and cash. Part of what makes ClickPay unique is its service providing automatic text messaging to remind tenants to complete their payments.

Many YU students living in Washington Heights use ClickPay for paying rent. "ClickPay is very convenient and easy to use," remarked Daniel Elfenbein (YC '21), a frequent ClickPay user. "It's linked to my bank account and set on auto-pay, so I'm never stuck with any late payment charges."

To the modern-day rent payer, this may not seem like such a novel idea. In fact, during an interview, CEO Kiernan reflected, "It seemed like such a monstrous opportunity. I just assumed that, like every other business, rent payment had gone online. I asked friends who rented, and all of them mailed a paper check into their landlords."

Due to their efficient and simplistic platform, ClickPay quickly emerged as a leading company in real estate payment. In December 2013, ClickPay merged with rival NovelPay, a company that offered a similar platform to ClickPay. As both companies were leaders in the

automated rent payment market, the merger enabled ClickPay to offer more forms of payment options and integrate their software with real estate accounting programs that were previously incompatible with their own software.

In March 2015, ClickPay acquired RE Lockbox service, which sends customer payments directly to a location accessible by the property managers' bank. The acquisition expanded the company's staff and resources to support its fast-paced growth.

Since its inception, ClickPay has seen constant growth, currently servicing almost 2.5 million units and processing over \$55 billion in annual transactions.

Due to their success, RealPage — a provider of software and data analytics for estate companies — acquired ClickPay for \$218.5 million in 2018. Based in Texas, the acquisition gave RealPage access to the East Coast market.

Personally, it was amazing to see this innovation upfront. During a town hall meeting which I attended, a CFO illustrated the plans for a future RealPage project that would combine ClickPay with several other leasing software programs to initiate Leasing Through Living, a program that will simplify and automate all aspects of the leasing process from beginning to end.

From a simple idea conceived on a bike ride to a large company with over 100 employees, ClickPay has revolutionized how people pay rent. By combining resources and working together, ClickPay and RealPage hope to further automate and improve the leasing process.



Zachary Greenberg (left), with his uncle Rafi Gasner, an operations analyst at Click Pay

ZACHARY GREENBERG

Nike Vaporfly: Marathon Innovation or Unfair Advantage

By EFRAIM WIENER

On October 12, 2019, Kenyan runner Eliud Kipchoge became the first person to finish a marathon in under two hours. This amazing feat deemed impossible by many seemed to push the limits on human athletics and performance. However, because of the controlled setting of the race, Kipchoge's time of 1:59.40 is not considered the official marathon record. (His 2018 Berlin finishing of 2:01:39 stands as the official record.) A factor that might have also unfairly contributed to his success was his choice of shoes: the Nike Zoom Vaporfly 4%.

There are a number of factors that give this shoe the optimum speed. It contains a carbon fiber plate that pushes the runner in a forward motion, a lightweight material, and a special foam midsole. All of these factors give the runner an increased advantage of moving faster. This is not to say that Kipchoge wouldn't have broken two hours in a different pair of shoes. In fact, in his first attempt at breaking two hours, as part of Nike's "Breaking Two" project aimed at marketing the new VaporFlys, Kipchoge missed the mark by over twenty seconds.

However, many specialists are concerned that this shoe may fall under the category of "technological doping," a term used to describe the use of certain sports supplies or equipment to gain an unfair athletic

advantage. For example, swimmers in the 2008 Olympics were racing with the Speedo LZR Racer that allowed for extra speed and

agility which the Olympic committee later banned from competitive racing. Similarly, Kipchoge may have had an unfair advantage

The Nike Zoom Vaporfly 4% will give runners the opportunity to run like Kipchoge and defy what they thought was previously possible.



Racing officials are considering banning the Nike Zoom Vaporfly 4% from competitive competition.

PIXABAY

with his state of the art shoes.

Currently, the Vaporfly can go in one of two directions. Either marathon and Olympic committees will deem it suitable, or rule it out for future use. If the latter is true, and the shoes are deemed "too fast," Nike will have to alter the Vaporflys to comply with racing standards. If Nike is allowed to continue giving its athletes the Vaporflys for competition, runners who are not signed with Nike are either going to leave when their contracts are up or push their producers to innovate and create a similar — if not better — shoe. In the next coming months, it wouldn't be surprising to see similar shoes modeled after the Vaporfly.

Consider the Nike "Be Like Mike" slogan, which inspired people to be like Michael Jordan. When kids lace up their Kobes, take turnaround jumpers and shout "Kobe!", they feel empowered; they have the opportunity to step into the shoes of a successful athlete. Similarly, the Nike Zoom Vaporfly 4% will give runners the opportunity to run like Kipchoge and defy what they thought was previously possible.

The shoes of the future are upon us, with each innovation causing an increase in speed and success on the course. Nike, as always, has a plan in place to put it ahead of its competitors. The question now becomes which company will be the next to take a step towards defying the impossible.

Struggle for The Deal

By MEIR LIGHTMAN

Remember the shaky relationship between Ross and Rachel that lasted throughout the 10 seasons of Friends and spanned most of our childhood? This is the perception of many who see the bickering between the Presidents of the U.S. and China on trade. While there is general optimism from analysts, investors and consumers, there is no clear indication that the two countries are headed towards an agreement.

Beginning at a campaign rally in June 2016, President Trump accused China of the “greatest job theft in history,” and initiated two executive orders to counter the unfair trading practices of our largest Asian trading partner. The main reasons for such a divide are because we have had a growing trade deficit and the Chinese government has seized American technology as the government seeks to boost its own technology industry. For years, the United States and China have had a rocky relationship but since President Trump took office, he made it his responsibility to construct a deal that will mutually benefit the two largest economies

in the world. This goes without saying that neither nation can survive without the other; China relies on U.S. agriculture while the U.S. is dependent on the Asian country’s manufacturing and abundance of steel. Even more so, the global economy relies on the two largest trading partners and, therefore, has reciprocated with unpredictable fluctuations in markets around the world.

“The back and forth play between these countries is nothing new. This tit-for-tat has been going on for the last two years.”

Last year, when the United States Administration added three levels of tariffs valued at \$550 billion worth of Chinese goods, China counteracted by levying duties on \$110 billion worth of American products. Just a couple of months ago, the White House decided as “a gesture of good will” to delay the increase from 25% to 30% in tariffs on \$250 billion worth of goods, which was set to take effect on October 15. As a result, China mutually agreed to soften the burden by exempting pork and

soybeans from additional tariffs.

Most recently, the two countries have agreed to “Phase One” of what claims to be a larger agreement. On October 11, China acquiesced to increase purchases on U.S. agriculture goods, while also coming to terms with new guidelines on intellectual property, financial services and currency management. As a result, the U.S. has postponed the tariff increases that were set to take

effect on in the middle of October, leading markets in both countries to increase since the announcement. Throughout the prolonged negotiations, this has been the most significant step toward reaching a possible settlement and the countries remain optimistic that there will be a deal signed earlier than previously expected.

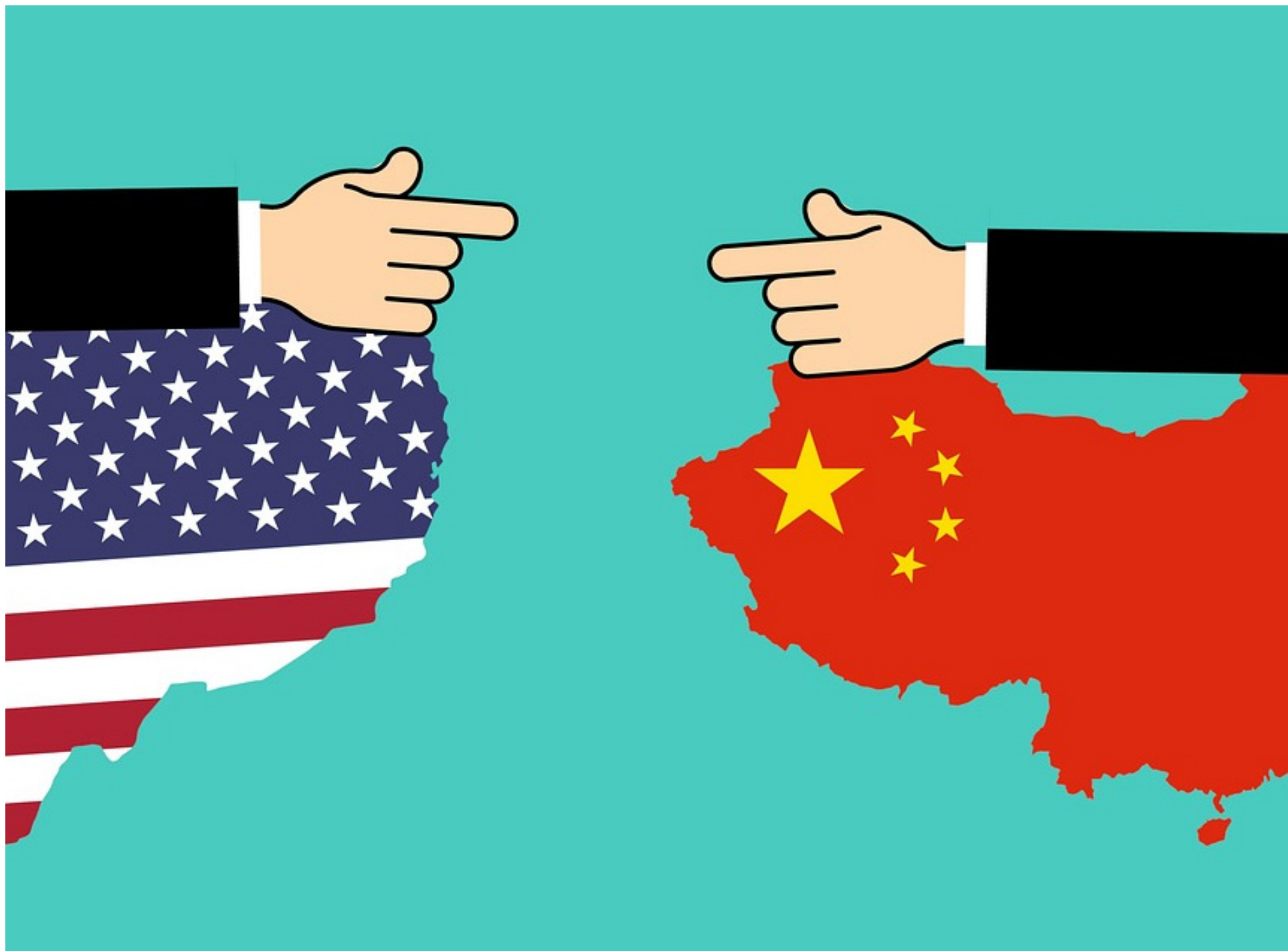
The back and forth between these countries is nothing new. This tit-for-tat has been going on for the last two years, commencing with U.S. inquiries into the Chinese

telecom conglomerate Huawei and its tight-knit relationship with the Chinese regime. In May, Huawei and its counterpart ZTE Corp. were blacklisted from performing business with American companies and alluded to in a national emergency announcement issued by the White House. With cybersecurity threats on the rise, the Executive Order stated that the exchange of technology developed in adversarial countries can “create and exploit vulnerabilities in information and communications technology or services, with potentially catastrophic effects and thereby constitutes an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States.” Technology has become the new driving force of countries and as the race to implement 5G intensifies, Chinese companies are seeking to become the global cartel for the new equipment.

The longer these two countries battle over trade, the greater the chance that other countries will look to jump into China’s 1.4 billion consumer market and attempt to replace the role of U.S. companies. As U.S. companies fear this possibility, Chinese companies are also on high alert not to lose 19% of the

country’s exports that are transported to the U.S. Although trade has continuously grown between the U.S. and China over the last 40 years, it will be a heavy blow to both sides, if the countries cannot strike a deal.

Ultimately, as a result of the current tariffs and the fear of additional increases, major household names such as Google and Gap have relocated manufacturing operations to other countries such as Vietnam or Bangladesh. The next 12 months will be one of the most heightened periods of tension for President Trump, not just because he will be on the campaign trail, but he will need to secure a decades-long trade deal to garner support amongst Americans. Currently, China appears to view itself as the underdog with Chinese President Xi Jinping mentioning the word ‘douzheng,’ struggle, almost 60 times in a recent speech to members of the Communist party. As analysts hope that the 2020 U.S. election will encourage the two countries to move closer to a deal, for now, all eyes are on the two world leaders and the subtle hints they continue to drop.



A deal yet to be reached

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