



Doron (left): Your viewpoint changes after going there every day; Elgarrisy: No longer concerned about the drive to Ariel. (Guthman)

Eminent domain through education

AFTER the evacuation and dismantling of Yamit in 1982, a few activists from Samaria met in Kedumim to discuss how they could reinforce settlement in their region. One of the ideas was to establish an evening school to serve area residents.

In the fall of 1987, the evening school - located in Ariel - opened its doors during the daytime as well, launching a one-year preparatory (*mechina*) program for students needing to improve matriculation (*bagrut*) scores. The timing could not have been worse; three months later, in December 1987, the intifada erupted. Nevertheless, the school continued to attract students, the vast majority of them commuters from inside the Green Line.

Today, construction is nearing completion on an additional building on the Ariel campus of what has turned into the College of Judea and Samaria, the single largest employer in Samaria and a school of some 4,000 students that is well on its way to becoming an independent degree-granting institution.

This point is not lost on the school's administrators. "Ninety percent of the students come ... from within the 1949 Armistice Lines," says executive committee chairman Yigal Cohen-Orgad, a former Likud finance minister. "These are people who otherwise would not be exposed to the region."

Shlomi Doron, 24-year-old sociology and education student from Kfar Sava, had never been to Samaria before he began studying in Ariel two years ago. He began his studies at Bar-Ilan University, but transferred to Ariel simply because it was closer to home. "With traffic jams in the morning it sometimes took me two hours to get to Ramat Gan," he said. "It takes about 40 minutes to Ariel."

Economics also played a role in Doron's decision to study in Ariel. He said he will save

some NIS 2,000 over the year in transportation costs, and that "the tuition payments are more convenient. At Bar-Ilan they accept payment only in three installments, while in Ariel you can break it into seven payments."

Doron, who voted for Labor in the last elections, said his political views have changed. "I had all kinds of stereotypes about settlers that were turned upside down by going to Ariel," he said. "Your viewpoint changes by going out there every day."

Ronit Elgarrisy, a 23-year-old geography major from Petah Tikva, agrees. This is her second year at the school, after a year in its preparatory program. "Before coming out here I thought we should just give back everything so they [the Palestinians] would just leave us alone.... Now I say, 'Why, what for?'"

Elgarrisy said she heard of the school by word of mouth and was attracted by its small size. "Here there are 12 students in a class; at Bar-Ilan you sit in lectures with 120. The relationship to the students is different, more intimate, more informal."

Elgarrisy said at first she was "concerned" about the drive from Petah Tikva to Ariel on the Trans-Samaria Highway, but "this is something you get used to."

The college is headed by Prof. Ozer Schild, former president of Haifa University who moved to Ariel over the summer to cast his lot with the settlement movement.

"My wife and I were living in Haifa," he explained. "We could see which way things were going and felt we would feel better about ourselves if we lived in Samaria than in Haifa."

An Israeli flag hangs in each classroom, and students are required to take a number of courses from a curriculum that includes

courses in Judaism, Zionist history, and Land of Israel studies. A similar requirement exists at Bar-Ilan, but there the requirement is to take courses in Judaism.

Schild and Cohen-Orgad said - and Elgarrisy and Doron confirmed - that the college is not involved in ideological indoctrination.

"There is an educational value in a Jewish, Zionist awareness," Schild said, speaking of the school's required courses. "There are certain things that are part of one's cultural heritage that everyone should be aware of. This can be taught separately from the political aspects.... The political conclusions they draw are a different matter, but they should know what happened, how Jewish settlement in Israel started, where it differs from other movements."

"The college is affiliated with Bar-Ilan University, and the degrees in the sciences and liberal arts ... are from Bar-Ilan. However, the school is moving toward its own accreditation, and already can issue a BTech [bachelor of technology] degree for practical engineering."

Cohen-Orgad said the Education Ministry, headed first by Shulamit Aloni and then by Amnon Rubinstein, has been fair in its funding of the school, and that the college has not felt a financial crunch because of its location.

"We had a lot of question marks when the government changed hands," Cohen-Orgad said, "but things have worked out."

Asked if he was not concerned that political realities might wash away the college and the work he is devoting to it, Schild responded with a quote attributed to Confederate general Stonewall Jackson during the American Civil War: "We shall do our duty, and the Lord will determine the consequences." H.K.

Higher education hits the marketplace

AMERICAN influence in this country runs deeper and wider than Pizza Hut and shopping malls, as a glance at the dominant trend in higher education bears out.

A gradual revolution, born of demographics and improved matriculation scores, is taking place higher learning. Israel is slowly entering the era of independent, degree-granting colleges.

It is a revolution that will change the academic landscape and, its supporters maintain, lead to a more egalitarian society. Detractors warn, however, that this phenomenon will lower standards and financially squeeze the already strapped universities.

Bar-Ilan, Haifa, Tel Aviv, Ben-Gurion and the Hebrew universities - along with the Weizmann Institute, the Technion, the Open University and the Bezalel Academy - have a monopoly on granting degrees.

Soon they will have to make way for smaller, liberal-arts and technical colleges in places like the Jezreel Valley, Sha'ar Hanegev and Ariel. Kind of like Swarthmore meeting Tel Hai, Haverford coming to Karmiel.

The idea of turning regional colleges - that have for 20 years been extensions of the universities - into independent, degree-granting bodies gained momentum in 1990, when planners in the Education Ministry looked at the demographics and realized that the universities could not accommodate all those knocking on their doors.

According to the ministry, the number of students in higher education has risen from 76,000 in 1990/91 to 115,500 in 1994/95. About 135,000 are expected to be enrolled by the end of the century.

Chaim Adler, director of the Hebrew University's School of Education, said the massive wave of aliyah was only partly responsible for the increase. A significant increase in the number of students passing the bagrut exams is also increasing the demand.

According to Adler, 37% of all Jewish 17-year-olds in this country matriculated in 1993, up - he estimated - from between 20 and 25% some 20 years ago. The percentage among Arab students was considerably lower, but also on the rise over the last 20 years.

The increase in students passing the matriculation exams is the result of a "general upgrading of schooling," Adler said. "Until the early 1980s, the schools concentrated on being expensive, on bringing everyone in. Once this was achieved, there was a growing emphasis on the quality of education."

At the same time, the structure of the market was changing, and more professions were demanding degrees. "Many occupations today, like nursing, teaching and social work, did not demand de-

The growth of independent, colleges is changing the academic landscape here, for better or for worse, Herb Keinon reports

education. If you have a very selective system, and there are two candidates for each spot, then the better students will get the spot. And the better students are generally from the upper classes."

Adler said that education "should strive to be an equalizer," and that the more degree spots open, the greater the chances for educational equality. "Obviously there is no such thing as complete equality," he said. "But the economic gaps have been growing in this country, and I don't think education should exacerbate it."

However, Nachum Finger, rector of Ben-Gurion University of the Negev, says there is also a downside to this trend. First of all, the development of a degree-granting college system will "siphon money from the universities; there is absolutely no doubt about that," he said.

The colleges are cheaper for the government, since there is no need to support large, expensive research apparatuses.

Adler counters that, as government money gets tighter, the universities here will have to do what universities around the world do, and that is compete more actively for foundation funds and grants.

Finger is also worried that the colleges "will bring about a lowering of standards. We may see a dichotomy of degrees, with the market eventually sensing the difference between a college and a university degree. I don't think the colleges will be able to attract quality instruction, since they will not be research institutions. And to some extent, their location in distant localities won't attract the best teachers."

The concern about the quality was dismissed by Adler, who said the American system has proved that a degree from colleges like Oberlin, Antioch or Reed are on par with those of the top universities. Adler admits, however, that attracting top-flight teachers to the colleges may be difficult because they do not have the same appeal as a larger research university. The solution, he said, is to create programs that attract academics to teach in their field in these colleges.

Finger's final objection is that the colleges - a number of them bound to spring up in the center of the country - will keep students from going to universities in Beersheba and Haifa for liberal arts degrees, leaving these universities with empty spaces and less funding.

"In certain fields, like engineering, we will not have a problem," Finger said. "But in the liberal arts there will be strong competition. Someone living in the center of the country will ask himself whether it is worth it for him to put out the money to come live here, if, for less money, he can get an equivalent degree closer to home."

The gay question - Yeshiva University's current identity crisis

UNDER the proud banner of *Torah Umada* (Torah and knowledge), Yeshiva University aims to be the American institution that exemplifies modern Orthodoxy, navigating a dicey course through a diverse contemporary society.

But some YU students charge the banner is being betrayed at the university's Benjamin N. Cardozo Law School, where they say financial support for a gay group violates religious doctrine.

The university, they say, should at all times to the Lesbian and Gay Student Alliance at Cardozo or take "Torah" out of the banner.

Others say that YU grudgingly supports the group only to the extent that civil law demands, and note that the school, despite its obvious religious sensitivities, is nonsectarian.

"The [law] school, because of its affiliation with YU, is stuck between a rock and a hard place," said Karen Marcus, leader of the gay alliance. "It's a school with an identity crisis."

Founded in 1886, YU calls itself the oldest and most comprehensive university "under Jewish auspices." For more than two decades, the institution has been nonsectarian, which makes it eligible for government aid and a favorable tax status that entices benefactors.

The university, which includes the Albert Einstein College of Medicine, is subject to the New York City Administrative Code. That bars discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. And

for the law school to earn accreditation, the American Bar Association also requires that there be no discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation. There is a religious exemption to this ABA requirement, but the provision is vague and it is not clear whether it could be applied to Cardozo.

Although YU has a cultural and historical affiliation with the Orthodox community, only the rabbinical school is a religious organization. The Rabbi Isaac Elchanan Theological Seminary has its own board of governors, although it shares many institutional services with YU.

At the Washington Heights campus in Upper Manhattan, YU's undergraduate Yeshiva College draws Orthodox men. More than 170 blocks to the south, in Greenwich Village, Cardozo has a diverse student body. Almost half of the 930 law students are women, and 9 percent are minorities. While Cardozo does not keep data on the religion or observance of students, it is clear that the Orthodox are not in the majority.

Jeff Stier, one of the editors of the law-school newspaper, the *Cardozo Law Forum*, said: "It appears that Yeshiva University is willing to go on representing itself as an Orthodox institution, while at the same time giving part of its building to a homosexual club."

"If the existence of a gay club is necessary to the viability of the law school, so be it," said Stier, a second-year law student. "However, such a law school must then

Some Yeshiva University students are up in arms over the school's support for a gay group, Marilyn Henry reports from New York

not have the *Torah Umada* symbol plastered all over its buildings and literature."

Stier, whose opinion seems to be shared only by a small group of Cardozo's students, has kept alive an issue that attracted attention last spring, when a graduating student gave a speech at the Cardozo commencement.

That man publicly extended his thanks and love to numerous people who had been supportive during his years as a law student - including a man whom he identified as his partner of many years.

Marcus, a third-year student who expects to graduate in May, said she chose Cardozo because it had a good reputation and was located in New York.

"I really didn't expect the kind of bad reception I got," she said, referring to the vehemence of some Orthodox students toward lesbians and gays. "Some people are using religion as a prop to cover homophobia."

"I'm Jewish, but Cardozo is nonsectarian. We have all kinds of students - black students, Asian students, Jews who don't observe the Sabbath. We have Jews who eat ham sandwiches," she noted.

"This is a law school. We're taught about freedom of speech, the free exchange of ideas," Marcus said, adding that it was inconceivable to her that Cardozo would not abide by the principles it teaches.

She also said that the gay group's support from the school was minimal: a small office, a phone line, a bulletin board, and funding from the Student Bar Association. Last semester, the group got roughly \$400 to pay for refreshments at meetings and lectures, she said.

To others, the issue is less the level of material support than the legitimacy it bestows on the gay alliance. "There's a difference between discrimination and sanc-

tioning a club, which is like giving it a 'Good Housekeeping' seal of approval," J. David Bleich, a rabbi who teaches at both the law and theological schools, was quoted as saying in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

On Wednesday, as classes were resuming at Cardozo after the semester break, the university president, Norman Lamm, said: "As a rabbi I cannot and do not condone homosexual behavior, which is expressly prohibited by Jewish law."

"But as president of a non-denominational institution that

must accommodate people who reflect a wide range of backgrounds and beliefs, it is my duty to [ensure] that the policies and procedures of Yeshiva University conform to the applicable provisions of secular law, even in the rare instances in which these may offend my own religious beliefs and personal convictions."

Lamm and other university officials have declined to comment further.

Stier is not satisfied with YU's response. "Dr. Lamm simply cannot have it both ways," Stier said. "He can be the president of a wonderful Jewish institution, Yeshiva University, which completely adheres to his *Torah Umada* philosophy, or he can preside over a secular institution that does not pretend to be the anchor of modern Orthodoxy."

While it is impossible to gauge the depth of feeling about the gay alliance, it seems clear that some people simply want the issue to evaporate.

"YU does everything to make the Orthodox students comfortable here," said one member of the staff, who declined to be identified. "Kosher food. Closed on Shabbat. Mezuzas. No one is ever going to have to worry about having some important law-school test scheduled on a *hag*."

"The modern Orthodox want to live in the real world? This is the real world. It's ridiculous to get upset about the gay group," the staffer continued. "And to keep bringing up this issue, it isn't just hurting the gays, and it's not just hurting the law school. It's hurting all of YU. Is that what they want?"

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