Campus Jews, Arabs negotiate club talks

By Rebecca Mugler
Lantern staff writer

Two historically-opposed student organizations met for the first time Monday night in the Ohio Union to discuss possible negotiations.

The Jewish Student Activities Board and the OSU chapter of the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee met in the hopes of launching a Palestinian-Jewish dialogue on campus.

"We hope to give the OSU community a greater understanding of both the stumbling blocks and possibilities for peace at the same time," said David Bernstein, a member of the Jewish Student Activities Board.

Suhail Zidan, spokesman for OSU chapter of the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, said their organization is currently trying to continue the momentum of negotiations emerging in the Middle East.

"Our long-term goal is to promote and achieve Palestinian sovereignty," Zidan said. "The American people have the right to know the whole truth, not just one side. Concern has been focused on Israeli human rights, but the Palestinians have basic human rights also."

About 400 people met in the West Ballroom of the Ohio Union Monday night to hear the debate between John Quigley, an OSU professor of political science and law, and Don Schueftan, a researcher from Hebrew University in Jerusalem.

Quigley said the United Nations' Security Council has been attempting to initiate an international conference to ease tensions in the Middle East for the past six years. Israel and the United States are the only two countries that remain opposed to negotiations with the Arab countries, specifically Palestine.

Schueftan, who spoke for the Jewish Students Activities Board said, "The recent element in the Palestinian world, namely the PLO, has not reconciled itself with Israel, although some of its leaders profess they have."

Schueftan said the Arab world has come a long way in the past 20 years.

"More Arab countries realize today that their attempts to undermine the state of Israel will produce things that are counterproductive to their own well-being."

He said until a few months ago, all Palestinians had stated in very clear language that they wanted total destruction of the state of Israel. Now, some Palestinians are willing to consider the possibility of a peaceful co-existence with Israel, he said.

"If you’ve had a long experience that has threatened your very existence, you also need some securities before you’re willing to make concessions," Schueftan said.

Schueftan said he and at least half of the Israeli population have no problem with withdrawing from the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. But certain conditions must be met first, he said.

"Israel will not be party to any settlement unless the PLO accepts that Israel is there, period," he said. "The question is: Will we have something on the other side that is willing to co-exist with Israel?"

Quigley, who spoke for the OSU chapter of the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee said, "I don’t think the public is aware of the extent of the tragedy that befell the people of Palestine as a result of the establishment of Israel."

Quigley said if people realized the tragedy of the situation, more support would come from Americans to allow for a sovereign Palestinian state.

"Palestinians have requested the area along the West Bank of the Jordan River and the Gaza Strip, but the Israelis have refused to comply," he said.

Schueftan said the main problem lies in whether the PLO will use the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a springboard for a “right to return” which would allow the Palestinian refugees to the eastern sections of Palestine.

"The position of the Palestinians now is that there should be a Palestinian state in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip that would co-exist alongside Israel," Quigley said.

He added that the PLO would not use this area for military purposes against Israel simply because the west side is too small to pose a viable threat.
Israeli holiday signifies peace

50 OSU students march on Oval

By Melissa Eisen
Lantern staff writer

About 50 OSU students celebrated Israel’s birthday and Israeli-Egyptian peace by marching around the Oval and singing Israeli songs Wednesday.

May 10th was Yom Ha’atzmaut, Israeli Independence day.

The peace march and a party afterward were presented by the Jewish Student Activities Board, Student Forum on Israel and Ohiopac.

Michael Pasternak, co-chairman of the events, said the holiday marks 41 years of democracy in the Middle East. It also celebrates 10 years of peace between Israel and Egypt from the Camp David accords, he said.

“We are celebrating the peace as Jews and Americans,” said Pasternak, a senior from Cleveland majoring in philosophy.

David Bernstein, co-chairman of the march and party, said Israel’s independence gave Jews around the world their own land and own identity. “A secure Israel means a secure Jewish world.”

Bernstein, a senior majoring in philosophy, explained the struggle of Jewish people for a secure Israel.

He said the United Nations voted on Nov. 29, 1947 to divide Palestine into a Jewish and Arab state. The Jews accepted the plan, but the Arabs rejected it. Arabs from seven nations fought with the Jews in the Independence War, which lasted over a year. Israel won in 1948 and was able to survive.

In the war, 6,000 Israeli soldiers were killed. The soldiers are remembered on Yom Ha’zikaron, the day before Independence Day.

Bernstein said the holidays are only a day apart to show that Jews remember those who died in wars for Israel, but also celebrate the life of their nation.

Before the march began at about 4 p.m., near Bricker Hall, students observed a moment of silence for the soldiers.

Students holding a banner of Israel’s flag led the peace march around the Main Oval. An American and an Israeli flag were carried by other students as the group walked and sang Israeli songs in the drizzling rain.

Bernstein smiled and shouted names of Israeli cities, and the others replied in a chorus of “Israel.”

A few of the people held “Happy Birthday” signs they made.

Some passersby joined the march at different places on the Oval. Two students trailed on bicycles.

At the end of the march, the group sang Hatikva, the Israeli national anthem.

A party was held at about 4:30 behind the Ohio Union, but the group had to go indoors because of rain. Students listened to Israeli music and ate Middle Eastern food. For dessert, they had cake decorated with the words “Happy Birthday, Israel.”

Jay Gross, a junior from Livingston, N.J., majoring in journalism, said he attended the celebration because “all you hear about Israel is war. This is happier.”

Bernstein said Israel’s Independence Day is like the Fourth of July, except there is more celebrating because Jews have witnessed the birth and growth of their nation. He said there are parades, parties, airplane and army shows.
Awareness week to bond Jewish students

By Tracy Turner
Lantern staff writer

In an effort to enhance awareness of the Jewish culture, the Jewish Student Activities Board and the B'Nai B'rith Hillel Foundation are sponsoring a Jewish Cultural Awareness Week.

“We want to express to the entire Ohio State community that Judaism is not just a religion,” said Susannah Lazar, co-chair of the cultural week. “We are a people with culture and tradition.”

According to a statement released by the Hillel Foundation, the awareness week is “an attempt at bonding the OSU Jewish student community, while simultaneously informing the campus non-Jewish community about the various aspects of the Jewish people.”

“Hopefully, this awareness will help educate students that many of the stereotypes and myths of Jewish people are just that; stereotypes and myths,” said Shawn Fink, a sophomore from Beachwood.

John Rothman, a political activist and lecturer who spoke Wednesday night on Israel and the Persian Gulf, suggested the idea for the awareness week during a speaking engagement last year at Ohio State after seeing similar programs for other minority groups.

“This is an opportunity to understand a culture by exploring it,” said Rothman. “Students need to take advantage to learn about the different cultures as they are celebrated.”

He said Jewish people have a common language, history and land as well as literature, art and religion, just as other minority groups.

“This week is about our pride in who and what we are,” said Rothman. “It’s good for people to understand each other.”

Rothman said it is important the celebration be tempered by the knowledge that people are dying in the Gulf.

“We hope that in celebrating in what we are, that we are mindful that we are on the eve of momentous days,” he said. “We must pray for friend and foe in the Middle East.”

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**Jewish Awareness Week Events**

The awareness week will run through Feb. 28 and will feature:

- **Today** — Luncheon discussion with Cantor Vicky Axe of Temple Israel, noon to 1:30 p.m., at Hillel along with Shabbat services. The charge is $3 per person.
- **Sunday** — Kaplan Scholar Series: Professor Dagmar Lorenz of the OSU German department will present a lecture on anti-semitism past, present and future, 8 p.m., at Hillel.
- **Monday** — A luncheon discussion with Rabbi Harold Berman of Congregation Tifereth Israel, noon to 1:30 p.m., at Hillel.
- **Monday** — Professor Aaron Kraschebaum, department of Jewish law at the Tel Aviv University School of Law. He will present “The Good Samaritan in Jewish Law” at 8 p.m. in the Law Building auditorium.
- **Wednesday** — Megillah reading on Purim Eve, 7:30 p.m., at Hillel.
- **Thursday** — Purim reading of Megillah 10:00 a.m. at Hillel.
- **Thursday** — A concert featuring Avraham Rosenblum 8 p.m. at the Ohio Union Conference Theater. Tickets on sale at Hillel.
- **Everyday** — The Judaic Art Show featuring Mary Etta Moore at the Exposures Gallery at the Ohio Union. All food products served at the events are Kosher. For more information call Hillel at 294-4797.