

Joy of Chanukah



CAPTIVATED BY THE LIGHTS are Mor Levanon and Sam Kassirer, students at The Rashi School, Boston's Reform Jewish day school, as they and Rabbi Richard Melrowitz, headmaster, prepare for the holiday.

Chanukah: Opportunity to Bear Witness for Judaism

By Nehemia Polen

Judaism has no cult of the martyr. Of course there were those great souls, such as Rabbi Akiva, who were put to death rather than surrender their faith; but it is safe to say that our primary memories of these individuals relate to their glorious lives, not their deaths.

Contemporary culture actually treats the martyr with dislike bordering on contempt. Listen to Bernard Shaw: "Martyrdom is the only way in which a man can become famous without ability." We are suspicious of the intensity and certainty of the martyr. As Anatole France put it, "To die for an idea is to set a rather high price upon conjecture." We tend to value openness, pragmatic flexibility, and complacency, above commitment, conviction and determination.

While the glorification of martyrdom may seem to have little place in Judaism, it is instructive to recall that the word 'martyr' originally meant 'witness,' and we Jews know (or should know) quite a lot about witnessing. The prophet Isaiah (43:10) tells us, "You are My witnesses, saith the Lord." According to the Midrash (*Vayyikra Rabba* 6:1), Jews by their way of life bear witness to God. When we are unfaithful to the covenant, we bear false witness against our Divine friend. When, however, we make sacrifices for our faith, daring to remain Jewish in the face of seemingly insurmountable odds, as did the Maccabees, then we bring powerful testimony to the reality of His presence.

This is surely the inner significance of

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Rabbi Dr. Nehemia Polen is Rabbi of Congregation Tifereth Israel in Everett. Teacher, writer and speaker, his imaginative and powerful holiday messages appear exclusively in the Advocate.

Holiday 'War of Symbols' Envelops Several Cities

By Andrew Silow Carroll

NEW YORK (JTA) — A federal district court judge in Tampa turned down a request from the Lubavitch movement Tuesday to order the cities of Sarasota and Tampa, Fla. to allow members of the movement to place menorahs on public land in those communities.

Judge Elizabeth A. Kovachewich ruled that Lubavitch would not be irreparably harmed by the cities' refusal to allow menorahs to be placed on public land and that the movement had not successfully demonstrated the merits of its claim that it was entitled to place religious symbols on public property.

the American Jewish Congress reported.

A federal district court judge in Ohio turned down a similar request Tuesday from Lubavitch representative's seeking permission to place a menorah on public property in Cincinnati, AJCongress reported.

The Florida and Ohio cases are just the latest skirmishes in what some are calling "the war of the symbols." At issue is a fundamental question of constitutional rights and, perhaps not coincidentally, a restatement of the basic Chanukah theme: What is the best way to protect the religious freedom of the minority despite the symbolic and cultural influence of the majority?

In the view of the Luba-

vitich, the Brooklyn-based Hasidic sect also known as Chabad, the best way is by ensuring "equal treatment." A Constitution that allows Christmas trees and other holiday decorations to be displayed on public property should protect the lighting of menorahs in government places, they argue.

For groups like the American Civil Liberties Union and such major American Jewish organizations as the AJCongress and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the answer is to remove all religious symbols — crosses, creches and menorahs — from public property and government buildings.

As some Americans celebrate Chanukah this week

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Gaza Unrest Spreads to Jerusalem

By David Landau

JERUSALEM (JTA) — As clashes between Israeli troops and Arabs continued in the Gaza Strip, the week-long unrest which has claimed 15 lives and dozens of wounded spread to East Jerusalem.

On Tuesday and Wednesday, police reported tire-burnings and demonstrations in various parts of East Jerusalem, including the Old City. In some cases, demonstrators were dispersed with tear gas. Most Arab shops remained closed.

The disturbances and merchants' strike in East Jerusalem were apparently organized to protest the move by Herut hard-liner Ariel Sharon into his new home in the Old City's Moslem quarter.

He held a housewarming and Chanukah party there Tuesday night, attended by Premier Yitzhak Shamir and several dozen other guests, including leading political figures. About 300 armed police stood guard outside.

Sharon, who is minister of commerce and industry and a former defense minister, explained that his new flat, in a building owned by Jews in 1948, was intended to spur a renewal of Jewish residence

in the Moslem quarter that began 100 years ago.

But many Israelis consider it a provocation. According to Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek, it is likely to heighten tensions in the city. Kollek pointedly declined Sharon's invitation to his Chanukah party. Sharon had told reporters last week that he hoped the mayor would light the first candle.

While the festivities were going on, groups of Israelis demonstrated for and against Sharon at the Damascus Gate, several hundred yards from his new home. Sharon's supporters were members of Rabbi Meir Kahane's extremist Kach party. His critics were from the Peace Now movement. No incidents were reported.

But a delegation from the dovish Citizens' Rights Movement met with Arab neighbors of Sharon and expressed solidarity with them.

The CRM contingent was joined by a member of the Herut Central Committee, Moshe Amirav, who called Sharon's move a "provocation." He said he wanted the Herut minister to know that many members of his party do not agree with him. It was disclosed several weeks ago

that Amirav had met for talks with certain pro-Palestine Liberation Organization personalities from the West Bank.

Meanwhile in Washington, the Reagan administration has told Israel at the highest level that it opposes many of its actions on the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, a senior

State Department official said.

Richard Murphy, assistant secretary of state for Near Eastern and South Asian affairs, made the remark in testimony before the House Foreign Affairs subcommittee on Europe and the Middle East, which was holding its first hearing devoted exclu-

sively to the territories since 1982.

Murphy said that in discussions with Israel, the State Department has voiced concern over the killing of nine unarmed Palestinians earlier this year. It has also criticized Israel's policy of "collective punishment," whereby Israel has closed Palestinian

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Reasons Behind Violence in the West Bank and Gaza

By Yehuda Litani

JERUSALEM — Some call them "events," others describe them as "troubles," while military experts talk about "a wave of violence" that will pass in due course.

But it seems that the intensified use of force by both Palestinians and the Israeli Defense Forces in the territories during the past week has reached a new stage.

It is still too early to completely understand what has happened in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

What has happened is still within the bounds of civil

strife. But, within these bounds, it is a further intensification of violence that resembles only two other periods during the past 20 years of Israeli rule in the territories — 1975-76 and 1980-81.

What ignited the flames this time? What led to the clashes that caused the death of 15 and the wounding of dozens of Palestinians in Gaza and West Bank (some of them seriously) during the past week?

There are three main causes. The immediate — and least important — was a road accident in the Gaza

Strip involving an Israeli truck and two Gaza vehicles last week in which four residents of Gaza's Jebel refugee camp were killed.

Immediately after that, rumors spread in Gaza and the West Bank that the Israeli truck driver had intentionally smashed into the two Arab vehicles in order to take revenge for the stabbing of an Israeli merchant in Gaza earlier in the week.

But there were two underlying reasons for this latest outburst of violence.

The first was the summit

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CJP Campaign Passes \$12.5 Million Mark

Community '88, the Combined Jewish Philanthropies' annual campaign, has passed the \$12.5 million mark, the earliest a campaign has ever reached that milestone.

Chairman Ruth B. Fein attributes this remarkable performance to a sense of responsibility within the Jewish community and commitment to one another that is demonstrated by the dedication of volunteers who are the backbone of the campaign, and the positive response of men and women who increase their gifts to meet our community's growing needs.

This quality was dramatically demonstrated on "Freedom Sunday," December 6, when 4,000 Bostonians

boarded buses chartered by CJP and the Jewish Community Relations Council to travel to Washington and join 250,000 other Americans in calling for free emigration for Soviet Jews.

Mrs. Fein said that as more Soviet Jews are permitted to leave, we are called upon to augment the budgets of the agencies in metropolitan Boston and in Israel that are involved in resettlement efforts.

Over 300 Russian Jews have arrived in Boston this year, six times as many as the year before. Five hundred are expected in 1988, and resettlement costs average more than \$2,200 per person.

Noting that half of all CJP

dollars are earmarked for social services in Israel, Mrs. Fein underscores that the challenge to the Community '88 campaign is to raise at least \$2 million more than last year to meet resettlement costs at home and abroad.

Energized by this mandate, the campaign is moving forward. Overall, totals are 16% ahead of last year's and showing a consistent pattern of increases through each CJP division.

Major Gifts, chaired by Alan Leventhal, is recording a solid level of increase. Totals to date are in excess of \$10,000,000, with about two-thirds of all gifts already reported.

The Impetus of Community '88 was clear at Sunday's Health Professions breakfast for members of the Physicians, Dentists, and Psychologists Teams. The 350 health professionals in attendance heard former refuseniks Vladimir and Maria Slepak and

Congressman Stephen Solarz, and pledged more than \$200,000, bringing the combined totals for the Professions Divisions to over one half million dollars.

The Accountant's Breakfast on Sunday morning provided 150 members of that Team with an opportunity to make their pledges to Community '88, and they responded enthusiastically.

Results from the first half of the two-week long Mobil-

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Gorbachev Made Only Minor Human Rights Concessions

By Edwin Black
Advocate National Correspondent

WASHINGTON — "A snow job on human rights!" That's how Morris Abram, chairman of the National Conference on Soviet Jewry, assesses Mikhail Gorbachev's summit response on Jewish emigration.

Lashing out at Gorbachev as a man "who stands against the tide of history," Abram makes clear his great disappointment in the General Secretary's dismissal of the emigration issue. But, borrowing a slogan from his days as a civil rights activist, Abram promises just as emphatically, "We shall overcome. Soviet Jewry will be free. It is inevitable."

Profound disappointment in Gorbachev's headline on Russian Jewry was heard throughout the Jewish community, and even in the Reagan administration. "I don't think anyone could possibly be encouraged by what Mr. Gorbachev said," asserts Jerry Strober, spokesman for

the NCSJ. "We heard over and over again the same old line," maintains Max Green, White House liaison to the Jewish community, adding, "In all our meetings, Gorbachev continued to claim that the only Jews being turned down are those who have 'state secrets.'"

Throughout his stay, Gorbachev was clearly ranked by omnipresent reminders on the issue. Invariably he responded with defiance. At

one point, Gorbachev reportedly complained to a persistent President Reagan, "You are not the prosecutor and I am not the accused." In another instance he said he was "tired" of hearing about human rights. And during his farewell press conference, the General Secretary chided the media for pursuing the topic. Specifying only "222 cases" denied on grounds of state secrecy, he declared,

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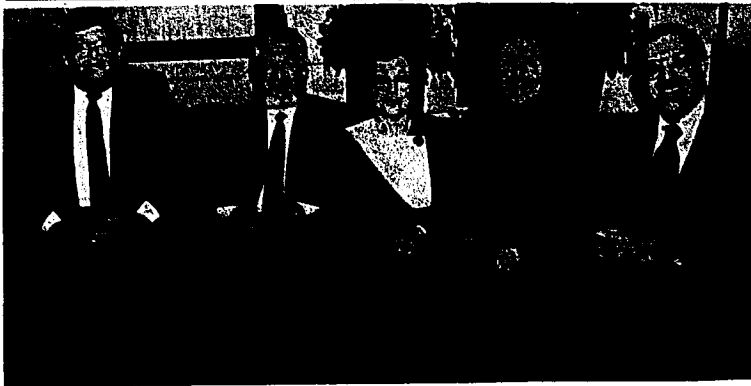
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MEET WITH FREED REFUSENIKS — Major CJP supporters gathered on Sunday afternoon at the home of Susan and Glenn Rothman in Wellesley to greet Maria and Vladimir Slepak, who endured 17 years as refuseniks in Moscow and Siberia before they were permitted to emigrate to Israel last October. Shown with the Slepaks are, left to right: Alan Schwartz, CJP's 1987 Campaign Chairman who chaired this special reception; Vladimir and Maria Slepak; Ruth B. Fein, CJP's Community '88 Campaign Chairman, and CJP President Joel B. Sherman.

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Holiday 'War of Symbols'

(Continued from Page 1)

and other Americans prepare to celebrate Christmas in two weeks, the "war of the symbols" is being fought on a number of fronts, including:

•Hyde Park, Vt., where attorney Valerie White and the ACLU are crusading for removal of a cross from the courthouse lawn.

•Palm Beach, Broward and Dade counties, Fla., where the state Department of Transportation it had previously granted the Synagogue of Inverrary-Chabad to erect menorahs at five toll plaza locations along the Florida Turnpike.

•Chicago, where the city has reversed a decision to display a menorah in Daley Plaza downtown, and has revoked a Chabad permit.

That so many of these disputes involve menorahs is a relatively new development. Traditionally, the war of the symbols has focused on Jewish objections to Christian displays: nativity scenes on courthouse steps, crosses on the roofs of firehouses.

Display on public land implies government sponsorship, Jewish groups have long argued, and government sponsorship conveys the unconstitutional "establishment" of religion by government, barred by the First Amendment to the Constitution.

"When the symbolism is Christian, as it almost always will be, given the demography of America, the message conveyed is the establishment of Christianity," Marc Stern, co-director of the American Jewish Congress Commission on Law and Social Action, writes in a recent report.

But in recent years, the Lubavitch movement has shown a new assertiveness in erecting menorahs on public property, meaning Jewish groups are now taking opposite sides on constitutional issues. And for a change, the public relations race may belong to the Lubavitch, who speak to the segment of the

Jewish rank and file that believes, "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em."

The Florida cases began after the City Commissions in Sarasota and Tampa denied Chabad permission to place "a religious symbol" — a menorah — on public land.

Tuesday's court decision turned down a last-minute request by Chabad to place a temporary restraining order on the bans.

According to Rabbi Alter Bukiet, executive director of Chabad Lubavitch of Manassas, Fla., Chabad had been attempting to demonstrate that a menorah, like a Christmas tree, is a universal, secular symbol as well as a religious one — and its message is thus protected under its constitutional right to free speech.

But according to a brief filed in the Sarasota-Tampa case by the American Jewish Congress on behalf of the Sarasota-Manatee Jewish Federation, the ADL and itself, Chabad's claims for the secularity of the menorah are a "sham," masking the movement's true purpose in attempting to erect the menorah.

"The menorah is intended to be a religious symbol, and the (Lubavitch) leaders boast of its success in that regard," according to the brief.

The brief followed a standard argument in church-state litigation: A Christmas tree, unlike a menorah, is for First Amendment purposes a secular symbol, because it carries a seasonal, but no actual religious, significance.

As in other communities, the local Jewish federation in Sarasota had invited Chabad to erect its menorah on federation or other privately-owned property. According to Jack Weintraub, executive director of the Sarasota-Manatee Jewish Federation, Bukiet's reply to that invitation was, "We'll do that, too."

Members of the Lubavitch movement concede that erecting the menorahs on public property is one of the very goals of the program —

Opportunity to Bear Witness

(Continued from Page 1)

the miracle of Chanukah: an eruption of the Divine beyond the natural order, confounding expectations and shattering illusions. It is a miracle when a small flask of oil, enough to burn for one day, burns for eight days; it is equally miraculous when a small family together with a rag-tag band of followers displays the faith and courage to challenge a mighty army and emerges victorious. And perhaps the greatest miracle of all is that Israel, the "ever-dying People" (borrowing a phrase of Simon Rawidowicz), is still here to tell the tale.

But we are not simply retelling the old story; we are adding new chapters to it. Who would have expected that in our own day, the Jews of Russia, forcibly removed from the sources of Torah and peoplehood, would return with such steadfastness and courage? Who would have imagined that a tradition of language, culture, and religious commitment, having undergone a violent discontinuity, would reassert itself in an extraordinary display of organic regeneration?

American Jews are justly proud of the solidarity we recently displayed with our Russian brothers and sisters. It was indeed a powerful act of witness. Yet the truth is that we have received much more from them than we have given to them. For us it was a quick trip to Washington, a momentary interruption in our lives, a family reunion on a grand scale. For them, life is a daily testimony of faith and devotion, a submission to higher values and ideals in the midst of a society which attempts to transvalue all values and subvert all ideals.

In teaching Chanukah to our children, we frequently emphasize the lighthearted and trivial aspects of the holiday. It is understandable that we are tempted to focus on latkes, dreidlach, and eight

nights of presents: like it or not, Chanukah is in competition with the "other holiday." Yet we do our children a disservice if we give them the impression that Chanukah (and, by extension, Judaism as a whole) is all fun and games.

We need to remind them and ourselves that Chanukah began in self-sacrifice and daring witness, whose power we still draw upon today. To teach Judaism accurately, it is necessary to include the crucial fact that at times our commitment to Torah requires us to take unpopular positions, to swim against the current of society to bear witness to higher truth.

Otherwise we are in danger of transforming Torah into sentimentality and kitsch. This results in Jews who cannot take themselves or their tradition seriously, who, in defensiveness and emptiness, internalize and adopt hateful ways of thinking about themselves. It should be a matter of deep concern that the pernicious and insidious "JAP" stereotype seems to have been fostered and propagated largely by Jews.

Chanukah is a time to honor our truly noble women, and men as well. Not just by recounting the midrashic stories of the heroism of Judith and Hannah, but by a renewal of our own faith, a decision to give witness, in all climates and circumstances, whether we are called upon to joy or self-transcendence. This witnessing of which we speak should not be confused with heavyhanded ostentation or religious exhibitionism. All it means is to adopt a stance of firmness, consistency, and quiet determination in relations to Torah, the Commandments, and matters affecting the Jewish people.

To those who witness in such a manner, God can only respond, "Gather My pious together unto Me; those that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice." (Ps. 50:5)

an effort to provide what one rabbi described as "qualitative visibility."

"On public property it's us looking together — it's not 'you' looking in," said Bukiet.

Tuesday's court decisions have by no means settled the "war of the symbols." According to Ruti Teitel, assistant director of the legal affairs department of ADL's civil rights division, "The differences between the Lubavitch and the rest of the community don't just revolve on this issue. It's just one part. There's aid to parochial

schools, moments of silence, on and on. All are fundamental policy questions of how best to protect Jews."

Jewish Trivia at Beth David

Temple Beth David of the South Shore is holding its annual congregational "Chanukah Jewish Trivia Dreidel Game" which will take place Friday evening, December 18.

Traditional jelly donuts will be served at the Oneg Shabbat which follows services.

Beth Elohim Party

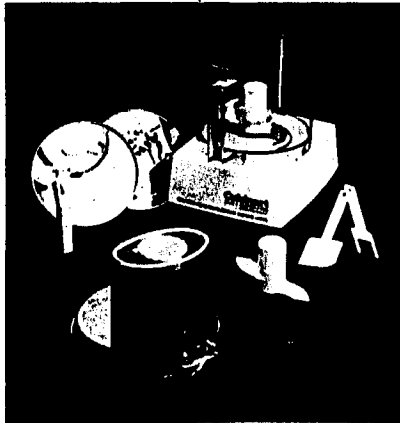
On December 20, Temple Beth Elohim, 10 Bethel Road, Wellesley, will hold a Chanukah party at 1:30 p.m. Lunch, games, crafts will be available.

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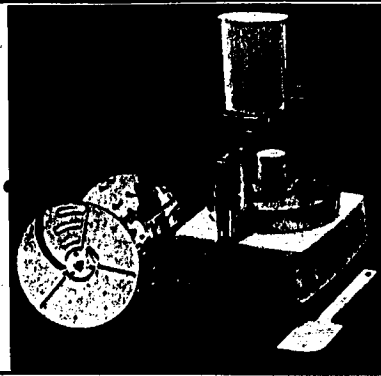
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- Puree 2 cups cooked vegs.
- Mix 2 cups cheese or onion dip.
- Prepare 18 oz. box of cake mix.
- Make 2 cups frosting.
- Make 1 1/2 cups chocolate sauce.
- Make dough for 9" pie or quiche crust.
- Chop 1 1/2 lbs. meat for meatballs, hamburger.

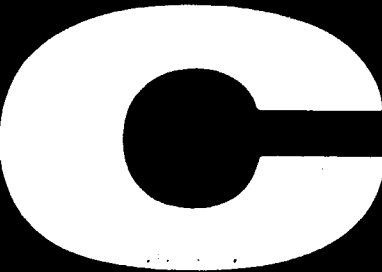
- Make 1 qt. coleslaw.
- Mix cookie dough for 50 3" chocolate chip cookies.
- Make 1 pt. fruit ice, ice cream or frozen yogurt.

- Mix batter from scratch for 8" 3-layer cake.
- Knead dough for 1 1/2 lb. loaf of white bread.
- Grind peanuts for over 1 cup fresh peanut butter.

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