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Power of Public Opinion

The commutation of the death sentence imposed upon the two Leningrad defendants proves once again that even dictatorial regimes are not immune to outraged world-wide public opinion.

While the world can take satisfaction from the knowledge that there will be no firing squads, it remains incomprehensible that in secret sessions, for a crime never committed, 11 persons can be sentenced to prison terms of 4 to 15 years at hard labor.

It is significant that the world looks upon the trials not as attempts to punish hijackers, but as punishment imposed on those Soviet Jewish citizens who wish to emigrate to Israel because they feel they have no future in the USSR.

Undoubtedly, the dissatisfaction of some Jews with the Soviet Union began with the extirpation of Jewish cultural and religious institutions which began in the last years of the Stalin regime. The rise of Jewish national feelings coincided with the proclamation of the State of Israel. And in turn led to the tightening of the screws.

Should the Soviet Union allow all those Jews out who wish to emigrate, it is inconceivable that the bulk of its Jewish people would leave. But for those who wish to leave, the right to emigrate is guaranteed by the Soviet Constitution and by the United Nations Universal Declaration on Human Rights, to which the Soviet Union is a signatory.

Bartycorn

By Rabbi Samuel Silver

With marijuana spotted as a leading cause for current malaise, with nicotine banned from the air because of its cancerous connections, it might be well for us to recognize afresh the perils of an old enemy of mankind, alcohol.

This is an enemy beloved by many. The effort to prohibit the use of whiskey was a flop. But even after the repeal of the Volstead Act, drinking continues to be a favorite American indoor sport.

Many of our jokes deal with inebriation. But it is no joke. The drinking habit endangers not only the health of millions but also our country. At every political gathering the amount of imbibing is frightening. Men who have to make grave decisions about the future of mankind are known to be alcoholic addicts; you find them in Congress, in the Administration, in officers' clubs and everywhere else.

There is no American custom more universal than the drink before dinner. There is no bit of U.S. mores more fixed than the cocktail

party. Try to refuse a drink and you're regarded as quaint. At any social gathering, "What're you drinking?" comes before hello.

No one will argue for the restoration of Prohibition. But even Congress recognizes the fact that thousands of lives are being ruined by John Barleycorn; a national institute on alcoholism has recently been set up with Congressional approval and White House endorsement.

Many young people committing alos suicide through capitulation to this zany American habit of drinking. How many writers, artists, musicians, businessmen and other people (including an incredible number of women) are in the grip of this vicious, pernicious and needless crouge is incalculable.

Not so long ago a group of women associated with the liquor industry staged a party to mark the anniversary of the repeal of the Volstead Act. It would have been better for them and their children to have spent time and money to train people to have the guts to say no when someone suggests the poisoning of one's liver through the deadly drug of alcohol.

Stars Don't Shine East

In this season of Lights, Christians and Jews gaze at lights and stars. They see in them the basic fundamentals to their respective faiths. But the symbols of the season are a dead mockery in the Kremlin's empire of Godless tyranny.

For the Jewish remnants of Hitler's holocaust in the Soviet's vale of tears have yet to endure the searing holocaust of soul-dying - another rung in the abyssmal descent of man into hell's kingdom, to witness yet another act of God's self neglect.

The stars are eclipsed in the East. So are the lights in the land of darkness. And dark is the hope of man. Also eclipsed are the stars over the East River, where as a monumental mausoleum, the UN stands blazing in gilded splendor - lights memorializing the dead hopes of man, the ghost-dreams of a better world. Silence of conscience is its particular death, therein lying interred.

You run from the rectangular pyramid of glass and dead weight. You run for life, for people, real people. What have they to say of Solzhenitsyn's indictment of modern Russia's "spiritual murder" and "fiendish and prolonged torture?" Here and there you find a whimpering of protest, the whispering and crying of beggars. And the humiliation, O God, of your own people. One peddles some packs of matzoh from Pesach to Pesach, tyrant's concession to freedom's cost; the other carries to camp's prisoners, a load of religious articles to kosherize satan's civil servants; another yet pleads the case of religious burial-rites for dying slaves. What an insult to the divine image!

Now you run, faster - for the life of your humanity, for the reason of your sanity; God what has happened to the silent nights of men

THE DEAD SEA IS ALIVE

(Continued from Page 1)

below sea level. Salt-encrusted branches emerge grotesquely out of the shallows, hinting mysteriously at the secrets which time has locked safely away.

And yet -- on these same shores -- stand modern health resorts, which attract their faithful followers from all over the world. At Ein Bokek, they wallow in mineral-rich mud as a cure for arthritic and rheumatic afflictions. A few miles away are the mineral springs of Zohar, whose therapeutic waters reputedly hold various healing properties.

The past is never far away in the Dead Sea area. At Ein Gedi, looking about you at the inviting crops, the verdant beauty, you suddenly realize that, just a few minutes away, the Dead Sea Scrolls were found. Near these peaceful, rich fields, archaeologists discovered -- in the Judean Caves -- the clothes, coins, weapons and remnants of Jewish resistance fighters who held out for years in many caves against the Romans who tracked them down mercilessly for daring to rebel against their mighty Empire.

Midwinter is not only the best time for soaking in the Dead Sea but the ideal time of the year for some excursions into the awesome landscape of the desert along its Western shore. One not to be missed is a trip to Masada, the most impressive by far of all mountain fortresses on the shores of the Dead Sea. Here King Herod designed a supposedly-impregnable fortress thousands of years ago, replete with villa-palaces high above the Dead Sea and cool even on the hottest of days.

At Masada almost a thousand Jews held out for years against 10,000 Roman troops -- only to kill themselves in the year 73 C.E., rather than be subjected to slavery. Today, you can see the "snake path" described by Josephus, the Roman siege dam constructed to get at the defenders of Masada, the store-rooms, the casement walls, the palaces of Herod -- and the superlative view in all four directions which excited Jews and Romans thousands of years ago -- and which thrill present-day explorers.

Located on the route of all major sight-seeing tour busses, the Dead Sea area is still relatively remote and can best be reached by private car. Major American and several local car rental agencies offer a wide variety of American, European, compact and larger, air-conditioned cars. The drive to Ein Bokek, which has the best hotel in the area, takes about four hours from Tel Aviv along excellent, well-marked highways with a stop-over for lunch at biblical Beersheba recommended.

The fine climate, magnificent landscape, low altitude, therapeutic waters, historic associations and El Al's current, below sea-level, winter rates for a ten day holiday make this one of the most attractive travel thoughts as the thermometer starts its downward journey.

and the holy lights and the guiding stars - an eclipse of man's God and God's men!

And you know in your heart of hearts that all of heaven's stars and candles' flames will not dispel darkness and terror until man will not only see lights and gaze at stars, but also live by lights and abide by the stars - until you and all like you, will make the stars shine in the East, for the last of the Solzhenitsyns and his kind.

Rabbi Haim Kemelman, Chairman
 AMERICAN JEWISH RESPONSE COMMITTEE

JERUSALEM (WNS)--Fourteen Israelis were killed when a rockslide crushed the dining hall at Neot Hakikar, a Nahal para-military settlement in the Jordan River valley south of the Dead Sea. Ten other Israelis were injured.

JERUSALEM (WNS)--Officials of the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot announced the U.S. National Institute of Health has awarded the Institute an additional \$210,000 grant for continued research into the nature of the living cell.

NEW YORK--The JDC and local voluntary agencies in Israel will each put up IL 15,000,000 (\$4,286,000) for a five-year program to build eight homes for the aged accommodating 800 residents, hospital facilities for 150 to 200 infirm aged and community services for those living at home.

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