

Matzoth At Kennedy Airport

BY HYMAN BRICKMAN

In recent years it has been a HIAS practice to distribute matzoth to Jewish refugees arriving at Kennedy Airport during the week before Passover. Our good Lubavitcher friends have been most helpful and cooperative in this project by providing the matzoth. Indeed, they have on their own initiative embellished the gift to include other holiday goodies as well as a Hagadah in Russian and Hebrew.

What strikes the onlooker, and of course those of us who are involved throughout the year on an almost daily basis in welcoming these refugees, is not only the sincerity and dedication of the benefactors but also the diversity of the reactions to these gifts by the new arrivals. The Hagadah tells of four different sons. We too found four different "sons" at the airport.

There was, to begin with, the one who did not want to touch the object as though it were contaminated with deadly microbes or would burn his hand. It was a conditioned reflex. He had grown up in a social order where the mere possession of Judaica or Jewish objects was ample ground for criminal prosecution and even exile. He was acting in self - defense.

Then there was the one who smilingly recognized the object through its transparent wrapping, handled it for a moment and then attempted to divest himself of it by passing it to a nearby countryman or returning it to the donor. This person exemplifies the end result of decades of cultural deprivation and religious intolerance. He knew he was Jewish and he understood that the matzoth represented a venerated symbol of Judaism though its meaning was beyond his grasp. However, despite the tiny flame still glowing inside him, he preferred to continue living as an individual without a faith.

The third type accepted the offering with a smile and a "spasibo" and examined it carefully as one would a newly acquired household appliance. It was to him a clear indicator that he had come to a different kind of world, where he was free to worship or not, to observe or not, to lead a Jewish life or not. The matzoth he was holding could mark the beginning of a return to the faith of his ancestors.

The most touching reaction of all took the form of an emotional outburst as the sight of the matzoth conjured up memories of parents and grandparents who had somehow managed to lead genuinely Jewish lives, behind drawn shades, despite harassment and jeopardy. How pleasant it was years ago when the calm of a Sabbath or festival descended upon the household and community!

Throughout the year these four types pass through Immigration and Customs under our watchful eye and with our help are sent off to the communities that will look after them. Last year there were more than 25,000. We cannot assign them to categories as we are able to do Erev Passover. Only with matzoth is that possible. Yet we know that all four types keep coming through those electronically operated doors to freedom.

In their new communities - and there are 160 thus far that have welcomed them - the restoration of these refugees to a full Jewish life is readily accepted as a challenge and an opportunity, and the "success stories" we receive are heartening. They tell of men and women who are exercising their freedom of speech by talking about and on behalf of the U.J.A. or their Federations, who have enrolled their children in Jewish schools, who have become active in their houses of worship, and who are themselves acquiring a Jewish background. They have strengthened their communities.

This year we shall again distribute matzoth at the airport, and we shall again witness the

drama as these refugees experience freedom of religion for the first time in their lives. All four types will be there. They will go on to their destinations -- to communities eager and prepared to receive them. These communities have had a year's experience since last Passover and are therefore going to do better. They will do more than last year, and less than next.

HOUSING PROJECT SET FOR JERUSALEM

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- The Israeli government has ordered the expropriation of 1000 acres in East Jerusalem for construction of a Jewish housing project. The land involved is empty acreage between the existing neighborhoods of French Hill and Neve Yaacov on which 10,000 housing units will be built.

Housing Minister David Levy, in urging the move, stressed that unless the land was expropriated the Arab inhabitants of the areas might put up buildings between the two Jewish neighborhoods.

The project is part of a long - held Israel plan to encircle Jeru-

salem with Jewish residences. About 30 percent of the land is owned by Jews, 68 percent by non - Jews and two percent by the State. Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek is the only political figure to criticize the move made March 11. He said he has always supported the project but since the government does not now have the funds to build the houses the expropriation will hurt Israel's image abroad.

IF YOUR BUSINESS CANNOT AFFORD TO ADVERTISE THEN ADVERTISE IT FOR SALE IN THE LAS VEGAS ISRAELITE.

Holiday Wishes



First Western Savings ASSOCIATION

Passover Greetings

Standard Surgical Supply Of Nevada SALES



Complete Line of Physicians Equipment and Sickroom Supplies

— RENTALS —



FREE DELIVERY FOR SERVICE CALL

382-9675

SAME DAY SERVICE

HOURS — 8:30-5:00 Weekdays Saturday till Noon

1778 INDUSTRIAL ROAD - LAS VEGAS

Attention KENO BUFFS

8 Out Of 8 For \$1 WINS

\$50,000.00

