

# "John Lennon Peace Forest"

BY ROBERT E. SEGAL

News out of Tel Aviv has it that Israeli children, with the cooperation of Arab young people, are planting a "John Lennon Peace Forest" in the mountains of the Galilee region in memory of the 40-year-old Beatle who was gunned down in Manhattan December 8. The idea for the memorial, according to press reports came from a group of Orthodox Jews who emigrated to Israel from the United States.

The proposal manages to make a coherent response to cynics who displayed inability to grasp the core significance of the Beatles when a troubled Mark Chapman used a gun to write finis to the life of a talented musician. The project serves also to bring our attention back to the real and symbolic grandeur of planting thousands of trees in Israel, a cherished enterprise associated indelibly with the Jewish Na-

tional Fund.

Behold what we have here: Young Israelis, aware of the magic of the Beatles' songs, honor the most creative of this circle of musicians not by erecting a monument of stone or placing a plaque in an odd corner of Israel, but by giving young enthusiasm and a tender touch to a living memorial. To that venture they attack the name, Peace, and as partners in their enterprise they invite Arab youths in a shared concern for rearing peace in an area so long despoiled by gunfire, violence and terrorism. Let those who scoff at homage paid to Lennon and his Beatle brothers be reminded that Hebrew translations of the musicians' lyrics have long been top favorites of many Israelis.

And what was the nature of the denigration of John Lennon and his associates in the hours following his death? "Lennon promoted nonsense, narcotics, nudity, and noise," wrote one metropolitan newspaper columnist. "He wasn't just 'a happening of meat and bones.'" And an embittered associate professor brought in the verdict, with more care for grammar than for justice, that John Lennon was responsible for hundreds of stoned kids who dropped out of college and fell into the habit of shoplifting.

Missing in these cruel indictments was more

than charity. The minds, the eyes, the ears of these detractors failed lamentably to understand that the Beatles fashioned hymns of hope of an entire generation angry at older men who dispatched young fellows to die in Vietnam, demoralized by an American Presidential regime that promised to end crime in the streets and ended up by luring crime into the White House. The Beatles' compositions were cries of protest against anonymity in a crowded world, expressions of a profound yearning for worldwide peace, tributes to fearless leaders in the campaign for equality of opportunity, prayers to keep ever green the memories of the Kennedy brothers and Martin Luther King, mid-century American martyrs.

John Lennon, one thoughtful admirer said, "carried in all his anti-establishment bias a kind of integrity of opposition; he carried within him an archetype that inspired a revolution of consciousness."

"If all of us just loved and cared for one person each; that is all it takes; love breeds love," Yoko Ono Lennon reminded the millions of her family's friends.

Yoko Lennon's prayer is consistent with the planting of a "John Lennon Peace Forest" in Galilee. And the development of that Israeli forest reminds all of us that in Israel, 1981 is Tu B'shvat -- the New Year of the Trees. In that season Israeli parents will be planting trees in the names of their children. Where in all the world is there a more striking combination of practical and revered work -- the good labor of causing trees to flourish in a barren land, a labor of road blazing, water storage, reclamation? Dedication going into that effort comprises a joyous hymn hauntingly close to a line in the message given the world by John Lennon's widow: "Spend well for your children and loved ones; if there is any left, give to the ones who are in need."

## REFUSNIK IS ARRESTED

NEW YORK (WNS) -- Kim Fridman, a long-term refusnik from Kiev, was arrested and was transferred to a local prison it was reported by the National Conference on Soviet Jewry (NCSJ). No details were available as to the nature of the charges against him.

The news of Frid-

man's arrest follows "malicious hooliganism" a charge which could result in his being imprisoned for five years in a labor camp.

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