

Passover Message

By Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, President
Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

As Pesach of 5747 is underway, world events remind us increasingly of the exile in Egypt and the consequences for the Children of Israel. We read at the beginning of the Book of Exodus that there arose a new pharaoh over Egypt who knew not Joseph. Because this new pharaoh was unaware of the contributions which Joseph had made to Egypt during a period of great drought and famine, he viewed the Israelites who lived in his country with suspicion and apprehension. Our modern world is not significantly different, and we need to be aware at all times of the need to educate society at large to the realities of Judaism and the history of the Jewish people so that we do not again fall prey to ignorance and prejudice.

Thus, at this time we are faced with a new ruler in Soviet Russia, and are concerned with the fate of the Jews who live there. The latest news fills me with the hope that there will soon be another modern day exodus of our Russian brethren, as reports indicate that a real change in Soviet attitudes is in the offing, and some 12,000 Jews may be permitted to emigrate in the next 9 to 12 months. This news is a sign that the Soviet authorities are swayed by pressures which we in the West are able to bring to bear on them; yet behind the "good" news is the reality that there are more than 400,000 Soviet Jews who wish to leave. We who live in this land of freedom must remember that each Jew is responsible for his sister and brother, and that we cannot desist from our endeavors on behalf of Soviet Jewry until all those who wish to leave have done so.

The lessons which we learned as a result of the Holocaust can be summed up in the phrase "Never Again!" We have set out to educate the present generation who did not live through that horrific period, why and how the Holocaust happened, and I am filled with hope that this lesson

is being learned by the young, especially in Israel. The reports of how young Israelis are attending and being moved by the trial of John Demjanjuk, the accused "Ivan the Terrible," indicate that there is now a new interest in history and the lessons to be learned from it. This trial, which is causing so much distress for those who give evidence as well as those who relive their own experience of the Holocaust through it, may yet make a very positive contribution to the ideals which are at the core of the meaning of Pesach, that all men should live in freedom.

Lastly, in these days when so many make their living in ways which are not in consonance with Jewish ethics, we should remember that the Torah, when it speaks of the clauses which govern human relations, incorporate the injunction in Leviticus 19: "Just balances, just weights, a just hin and a just ephah shall ye have." As with so many other moral and ethical injunctions, it is followed by the phrase: "I am the Lord Your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt." The memory of past oppression was not to be forgotten; but it was to be recalled in every dealing with our fellow men and women. We are taught that honesty is akin to righteousness, and that alone exalts a nation.

May this Pesach bring freedom to all who are oppressed and may it remind us of our obligation to seek the welfare of our country, our community and our people.

Canada Has No Plans To Invite Waldheim For An Official Visit

NEW YORK (JTA) — Canada has no plans to invite Austrian President Kurt Waldheim for an official visit, the Canadian Ambassador to the United Nations, Stephen Lewis, has informed the World

Jewish Congress here.

"Our Minister of External Affairs, the Rt. Hon. Joe Clark, has stated that there are no plans to invite Waldheim to Canada, nor has he expressed a desire to visit the country," Lewis stated in a letter to Israel Singer, Secretary General of the WJC. His letter was in response to a request by the WJC that Canada issue no invitation to Waldheim in light of his Nazi past. Waldheim was Austria's first Ambassador to Canada after World War II.

The Canadian position is analogous to that of the United States. The White House stated last August that President Reagan would not invite Waldheim.

The Austrian President was exposed by the WJC and others during his election campaign last summer to have been involved in atrocities against civilians and resistance fighters while working as a Wehrmacht intelligence officer in the Balkans during the war.

He has been effectively boycotted by the international community since his election last July 8. His diplomatic isolation was broken last week, however, when King Hussein of Jordan, in Austria on a skiing holiday, invited Waldheim to visit his country this year.

Greek Food Festival Celebrates 15th Year

One of the most colorful and festive annual events held in Las Vegas, the Greek Food Festival, will celebrate its 15th anniversary as a Las Vegas tradition on May 10, 1987 in the mammoth space center convention complex of the Sahara Hotel.

All of Las Vegas will shout "Yia Sou!" -- the Hellenic greeting meaning "Good Health" -- during the day-long celebration of Greek culture and tradition when the space center is transformed into a huge Greek bazaar featuring the scrumptious dining of the Greek Islands, the rousing folk dances and fun games and shopping stalls.

The Greeks truly have a zest for living and St. John's Greek Orthodox Church, the beneficiary of the annual festival, has brought that zest to Las Vegas in a big way over the past 15 years. Each year thousands of Las Vegans turn out to enjoy the fun and good fellowship, and especially the fantastic food prepared by the ladies of St. John's Church.

"Kali Orezi!" -- the Greek toast "Bon Appetit" -- is heard throughout the festival as the merrymakers munch on such Greek delicacies as "Souvlakia" (Shish-Kabob), leg of lamb, dolmathes (grape leaves stuffed with meat and rice), Spanakopeta (Baked Spinach), Loukaniko (Greek Sausage), and Baklava (Greek Pastry) and Greek wines and beer.

Add the rousing music of the two Greek bands, the Olympians and the Hellenic Sounds, and everyone become a Greek For a Day and joins in the festive circle dances.

Plan now to enjoy the 15th annual Greek Food Festival on Sunday, Mother's Day, May 10th in the Sahara Space Center, 11 a.m. to 10 P.M. Regular admission is only \$3.00 for those thirteen years of age and over, \$1.00 for those six to twelve years of age with children five and under admitted free.

Yia Sou, Las Vegas!

For further information, please call 382-2750.

A Passover Statement

By
Dr. Joseph P. Sternstein
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This year, our celebration of the Passover festival has a special meaning. As we retell the tale of the Exodus from Egypt and celebrate the freedom which the Israelites found in the Jewish homeland, we remember those Jews still yearning to leave the Soviet Union - and we hope that recent optimism over their situation will actually result in increased emigration.

Our history has taught us that we must remain steadfast in our struggle to assure the deliverance of all our people, no matter where they may be. Indeed, we must never be satisfied until any Jew who wants to return to Israel is assured of the right to do so. While demanding this basic human right, it behooves us to also prepare for their arrival in the land of their dreams and prayers.

The Jewish National Fund has been reclaiming Israel's land for 85 years, and we are well aware of the fact that new immigrants mean new absorption demands in terms of housing, industry, agriculture and recreation. JNF is determined to meet these challenges with the assistance of Jewish communities worldwide.

The Jewish homeland stands ready to receive Jews seeking to escape from their exile in the Soviet Union, just as it received our forefathers from their wanderings in the desert. For our part, let us celebrate the Festival of Freedom not only through our prayers for the liberation of our brethren, but also through the continuing redemption of our ancestral homeland.

Happy Passover

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