

Purim — Feast of Lots

On the fourteenth day of the month ADAR comes PURIM. Every Jewish child knows the story of this minor holiday so that I will not stop to tell it here. The name Purim or Feast of Lots gets its name from Haman casting lots for a lucky day on which to kill his Jewish enemies.

But even if you have heard the story of the first Purim in faraway Persia, you may not know that we have had other Purims in our long and troubled history. One of the most interesting of these deliverances, which is still celebrated by many Oriental Jews, is the Purim of Saragossa, in which our old friend Elijah warned them against their enemy; another is kept at Algiers; another at Rhoades. In all of these tales of different times and places we find the same terrible danger to the Jewish people, the same miraculous deliverance.

Just now we want to hear how the only Purim we in America know is kept in the home and synagogue. This is a jolly holiday for there are presents from everybody to everybody in the family. There are presents of cakes, fruits and nuts to be given to friends and relatives which is known as "Shalach Monoth." This actually means "send money." It was the practice, and still is in some places, to dress up in Purim clothes and go masking around to the neighbors who would give out pennies and nickels to the children. Perhaps some of you will remember this little Yiddish song:

"Heut is Purim; morgen is aus; Giebt mir ein groschen und werf mich hinaus."

Money was also given to poor people on Purim just the way

they did in the story of Esther. They did a half shekel or a half shekel was supposed to be given to the synagogue at Purim. We ought to remember that a half shekel or a half shekel was put with its other half. That's why Jews used to give it on Purim to remember to keep together and help one another out in times of danger.

Probably one of the best known things about Purim are the delicious cakes called Hamantaschen. It means Haman's ears because of their shape. The rather bitter poppy seed is mixed with the sweet honey inside to show that both good and bad times fall to the Jew.

The Megillah or Scroll of Esther is always read in the synagogue on the eve of Purim. When the names of the wicked sons and Haman are read the Dreher (rattle) is shaken to drown out the names. The stamping of feet is also heard as it was the practice of the boys to write the names of these sons on their shoe soles. We now have Purim in the temples, and parties in the carnivals.

The day before Purim is observed as a fast day by many Jews in remembrance of the fast the Jews of Shushan kept with Esther before she went before the king. Also in memory of Esther a special Purim dish is served at the Seudah (feast), consisting chiefly of cooked lentils. This is called Bub and represents the coarse meals Esther ate in the king's palace as she would taste no heathen food.

The fifteenth day of Adar is called SHUSHAN PURIM, as the Jews of the Persian city kept a second day of celebration and thanksgiving.

— R.M.

Iran Shows Why Israel Is Wary

Charlotte Observer, Feb. 21, 1979

The prospect for an agreement to come from the renewed Camp David talks between Israel and Egypt seems gloomy. Considering what has just happened in Iran, is it any wonder Israel is cautious about depending on anything short of arms and territory to protect itself?

Under the shah, Iran was not hostile to Israel and even supplied the Israelis with oil. Under the ayatollah, Iran has booted out the Israelis, cut off the oil sales, embraced the Palestine Liberation Organization and declared itself Israel's enemy.

So Israel has seen how suddenly the fall of a government can reverse a nation's

policy. How can Israel be sure the same reversal won't occur in Egypt when Anwar Sadat yields power?

No doubt the Israelis believe both Sadat's expressed desire for peace and U.S. pledges of support. But in the volatile politics of the Mideast, how long will Sadat be in power? How would the United States react to another oil embargo, or a longterm cutback in supplies and increase in cost as a price for supporting Israel?

The Israelis have survived because they are brave and tough and wary. They should not be expected to forget those survival skills while negotiating.

(Exclusive to the Charlotte Jewish News)

As another negotiating session between Egypt and Israel begins at Camp David (this one might be called Camp David 1½, because the principals have no latitude to make any resolution of outstanding issues), the media have the opportunity to fill their pages with speculation about the future: will a peace treaty be signed? All the negotiators say it will. Egypt is certain because President Carter is surely on the side of Anwar Sadat. Israel is certain because Anwar Sadat is surely so insecure economically and politically, and so menaced by his western border with Libya that he must make peace. Both very big, unreliable assumptions!

Assuming that a peace treaty is to be signed and all the parties

say they intend to abide by its terms, an interesting question arises. Can an orthodox and religious Muslim ever reconcile his beliefs with the presence of a strong Jewish state within the so-called Fertile Crescent, which stretches from Pakistan to Morocco? Can Arab nationalists ever forget that the Arab world once reached from the Chinese border to the French border with Spain and all within it were either born or converted worshippers of Mohammed or "dhimmis" — subject second class peoples?

On the religious aspect, the Koran is full of passages which deify the most prominent figures from the Old Testament and glorify the genealogical chain which reaches from Abraham to Mohammed. Actually, the Cave of Machpelah in Hebron is probably holier to

B'nai B'rith Lecture Series

The next B'nai B'rith Lecture will be March 18 and will feature Mr. Max Dimont speaking on "American Judaism: Wasteland or Renaissance."

Mr. Dimont has recently written a new book, *The Jews in America*, which examines the roots, history and destiny of the American Jews.

Jews, God and History, his first book, sold over a million and a half copies and has become a classic.

His second book, *The Indestructible Jews*, is now in its 12th printing.

Mr. Dimont lectures extensively in the United States and Canada and has lectured at the



Hebrew University in Jerusalem, the University of Haifa and the Weizmann Institute.

Copies of his new book will be available for sale and may be autographed by Mr. Dimont.

A Star Is Born Bienstock on TV

Marvin Bienstock, director of the Charlotte Jewish Federation and the Jewish Community Center, will be appearing on WSOC-TV (channel 9) March 5-9. He will be co-hosting the "Good Morning Carolina" program at 9 to 9:30 a.m.

Though this marks Marvin's debut as a talk-show host, he has made appearances as a guest on several local TV shows. He also appears regularly once a month on WSOC radio. He

has been a professional entertainer specializing in guitar and folk singing. Another facet of his talents has been revealed in his writing ability. One of his recent endeavors has just been published in the *National Center Publications* and two of his articles are included in a book which was published recently about working with families.

At this rate Marvin may be eligible for an EMMY or maybe an EPES...

"THE DICTATORSHIP IS GONE! BRIBES ON THE DICTATORSHIP!"



A Review Yiddish Theatre

Performing before a capacity audience at the JCC on February 1, 1979, the Yiddish Musical Comedy Theatre, starring Chayele Ash and Ari and Abraham Fuhrman, captivated their listeners with Yiddish songs and sketches. The audience could not have been more responsive, clapping and singing along at every opportunity, hungry for the Yiddish conjured up from childhood and remembered in catch phrases and nostalgic melodies skillfully performed.

Chayele Ash, the featured star of the evening, enlivened the stage with her wit and style. Both brash and brassy, she treated us to "Mameh Loshen" in decibels heard clearly in the last row. Ably abetted by her husband Ari and brother-in-law Abraham in several uproarious sketches, she became for us a pitiable maiden, an Israeli tourist guide, a domineering wife, an aged woman, showing her versatility as comedienne and character actress. Both Ari and Abraham Fuhrman made excellent foils for her rakish performances.

Watching the interplay of these enormously talented performers, one could easily sense an art form evolving, carefully honed over the years and brought to perfection with just the proper nuances, just the right timing. Whether Chayele was cajoling, beguiling or entreating her long-suffering co-stars, it was never her intent to be subtle about it and we were continuously on the receiving end of fast and funny oneliners throughout the evening.

Musical selections were impressively sung by Barbara Moskow, a lyric soprano with an extensive musical background. Abraham Fuhrman presented a medley of Yiddish and Hebrew folksongs with great appeal. Rose Jarvis Cohen, a talented accompanist, played all the old favorite Yiddish melodies (on a piano that begs to be replaced), simply served, for this listener, as pleasant interludes, giving Chayele Ash the opportunity to catch her considerable breath and don yet another costume for still another hilarious sketch.

The evening was a long awaited first for Charlotte. It gave so many of us the opportunity to revel in the sounds of Yiddish, the wonderful tones of a language that speaks so eloquently of eras past. The attendance of many out-of-towners emphasizes that Yiddish is alive and well in North Carolina.

— Baila Pransky

Mideast by Southeast

Muslims than to Jews. But, when the Jews of the Hedjaz refused to follow the preachings of Mohammed, they were all killed by his army, and subsequent passages in the Koran have nothing but hate and scorn for the Jews. To a religious Muslim, a Jew can only be "dhimmis" and the State of Israel can never be allowed to exist in its present form. It is not for nothing that the code words for the PLO include the soothing statement that "we want a Palestine where Jews and Arabs can live together in peace and harmony." In other words, Jews can certainly live there if they revert to their "dhimmis" status.

The Arab world's greatest conflict within itself is its relationship to the Western world. On one hand the mores of the West are attractive to Arabs,

because they bring freedom from the strictures of orthodoxy, and certainly the delights and monetary advantages of the Western society. On the other hand, the pull of nationalism contains within it the seeds of rejection of the West. The dream of Saladin pervades the reality of modern civilization. Cannot the Fertile Crescent be re-established? It was Nasser's dream; it is Qaddafi's dream; it has put Pakistan under the strict Sharia Code of Laws; it is the center piece of the Iranian revolution; and it may very well spread elsewhere. In this scheme of things, there is no place for a Christian Lebanon (now almost "purified") nor a Hebrew Israel.

It is a firm belief held by many educated Arabs today that the Establishment of Israel was

and continued to be a conspiracy among the Christian Western world to dominate and eventually destroy Islam. The comparison is strongly made that it is a continuation of the Crusades.

It is indeed unfortunate that the current and past ruling politicians in Israel contained so few educated scholars of the Arab world (Abba Eban is an exception) that they formulated policy vis-a-vis the Arabs from a perspective of Eastern Europe — socialism and the ghetto life.

If anybody believes that Anwar Sadat, a deeply religious Muslim, with his roots in the soil of rural Egypt, is not affected by the Koran and the past glory of militant and authoritarian Islam, then he will accept his smooth words and bear-hug embraces at his deep peril.