

THE CHARLOTTE JEWISH NEWS

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Editorial

The celebration of Chanukah is a happy one. The Maccabees did win their fight, however brief the victory. A reborn Israel lives, not without problems, but it is surviving. We in the United States are living as free Jews: free to worship and actively participate in a free society. We are much more fortunate than our fellow Jews who live in countries where they cannot exercise their rights as free citizens and are denied their rights to worship as Jews. We have been able to "rescue" many of them, but there are many, many more who still need our help. Even though Israel is a land of freedom, they too need our help, but in other ways. Our continued financial assistance is vital.

Much of the world around us is still in havoc and basically cruel. The recent occurrences of violent anti-semitism in France and the upheaval in the Mideast are fitting examples of this. Unfortunately, we relive the story of Chanukah in every generation.

Our enemies would like to rule the world and impose their will on all humanity. They are the Khoemeinis, the Covingtons, the K.K.K.'s, the Arafats and the "Jews for Jesus" leaders. We play a game of survival; we strive for a peaceful solution of the problems for all men and nations. We will not and must not permit these tyrants to continue to arise and challenge both our freedoms and our faith. Our Jewish people will survive, we will continue to live.

On December 7th, here in Charlotte, N.C. as part of our Chanukah celebration we will have our annual Marathon ("a run for freedom") and a special program in recognition of Soviet Jewry Day. At this time the menorah will be lit to rekindle our commitment as Jews. It is our hope that our brothers and sisters in the Soviet Union and all oppressed lands will some day be able to live without oppression and to worship as Jews. Join with us to celebrate Chanukah on this day and help us light the "lights of freedom."

It All Adds Up To Cash!

If you want to know what Israel is wrestling with these days read such dailies as *The Jerusalem Post*. You'll read about strikes of immigrants in the absorption centers. The media are running a public campaign for funds to help the poor aged in Tel Aviv. Present and prospective settlers in the new *mitzpim* or hilltop settlements in the Galilee are protesting against the lack of housing. The strikes were precipitated by the suicide of a Russian immigrant who had been in a center for 28 months.

An investigation is in progress as to the circumstances, and there is no question that there were personal and family factors involved. But the headlines read: "Immigrants seize three centers after man's suicide." Regardless of the personal factors, such headlines have forcefully dramatized a situation we have known all along and which we have been bringing to the attention of your constituents; we don't have housing into which to move the immigrants after

they finish the five months at the absorption center. This is the period of time during which the immigrants learn Hebrew and are supposed to find a job and a place to live.

But they don't stay only five months. We have some 16,000 beds in "temporary" facilities and they have been fully occupied for a long time, because we don't have apartments for the immigrants. That's why they stay a year, 18 months, two years, or more in the absorption facilities.

The problem isn't jobs. There are jobs to be had, but no housing with the jobs. And solutions for temporary arrangements cost money, cash money.

Or, a small absorption item — help for immigrant scientists. What an irony! We desperately need research and development for products for export and to reduce imports. So we cut off aid to scientists who could help reduce our balance of payments deficit, which in turn would contribute to preserving instead of cutting budgets. This in turn would enable us to provide jobs

for these scientists without recourse to special Agency aid. All for lack of cash now.

Here's another news story; this one dated August 26, 1980: "A public fund-raising campaign is underway in Tel Aviv, where the lack of funds to aid the elderly is particularly acute." We had to cut out of the budget supplementary assistance of the elderly. The supplement was intended to beef up the meager allowances the elderly get from the Israeli equivalent of Social Security. (If not eligible for government Social Security, the Jewish Agency pays.) Now *Hameshakem*, a sheltered workshop program, is in danger. For this we have a budget, but we lack cash.

We are budgeted for 30 hilltop settlements in the Galilee and these are critically important. Don't let anybody tell you that the spirit of pioneering and "frontiering" is dead in Israel. It is very much alive. We have four and five candidates, young immigrants and young Israelis, for every one of the places available in these settlements. Not only do we lack permanent housing for them, we can't provide adequate temporary shelter for many of them.

Housing is a desperate issue for us in Israel. Housing for new immigrants, housing for the Galilee settlers, housing for young couples, housing for large families.

The issue is money. Cash for housing, for the education of the youth, for the elderly and for the settlements in the Galilee. As for absorption, we need and want immigrants. The critical factor may well be what we are able to do about absorption now. **It all adds up to cash. Cash now.**

— Harry M. Rosen

Ed. note: In 1980 Charlotte raised \$620,000 in pledges. We urge those who have outstanding balances to respond to Mr. Rosen "in cash." This is the time to act for Israel's benefit and for our own in terms of tax credits for 1980.



"Charlotte's A Good Place To Live"

Dear Editors:

My name is Mark Barkan. I am the father of two and an immigrant from Soviet Union. At the present time I am employed by Duke Power Company in Charlotte, N. C.

Me, my wife and oldest sons (our little boy was born in this country) came to Charlotte on September 15, 1976. We have also had big dreams and empty pockets. I can't say our pockets much heavier today, but dreams have not been dashed. Perhaps, we know the difference between being wishful & willing.

Arrival was day of wonder and pleasure, some strange people met us, placed us into apartment one can't even dream about in Russia (by the way — same apartment Kaminkers reside in now.) Furniture was not just from Wickes and dishes were not out of 24 persons dining sets. It was everything we needed, food, shelter and what was most important, open hearts.

Paradise did not last long. I started to work on 23rd day after I came to Charlotte. No, don't worry dear reader, it is not another story of despair and dashed dreams. This is the story of usual life of an average American family and possibly a short guide for every newcomer to this wonderful country, no matter where you from.

Yes, I did start my working career as an electricians helper for Universal Electrical Con-

tractors. Having Masters Degree in mechanical engineering and some 12 years of solid experience in construction and plant engineering fields I did not feel disappointed pulling wires on residential construction. I lived with a dream that one day I will move into house of my own. It happened 11 months after we arrived in Charlotte. It was not in Charlotte at that time, because my search for engineering finally led me to a plant engineering job in Hickory, N. C.

Did we miss Charlotte? Yes, very much. We found home, friends, we found Life! God, how different it was from everything we left back in Russia. I was very surprised to read Mr. Ostrovsky's statement, "They are given jobs, shelter, medical treatment: If job is given to you over there it is for sure worse than Kaminkers refused to take here. Free medical treatment — agree, but "you get what you pay for" works all over the universe. And in Russia if you try to yell you probably get food and shelter alright, and then never be heard from again.

There is a struggle for survival in Russia, but in different aspect, such as where to find some food, clothes, etc. I did not mean to get it free, but to pay for it. Money became meaningless in that country, unless you had connections in goods distribution media.

So, I want to ask questions. Do

I blame Jewish Federation for "forcing" me to accept "unsuitable" job? No, any job is suitable if it provides my living. Do I blame anybody for not finding "suitable" job for me? No, I have to go out and find this job. And if I deserve a better job I shall get it, no matter what kind of help I have. It is said in the Bible, I don't remember which part, "and you to earn your own bread." Or maybe it is not in the Bible. You understand they don't educate in a religious way in the Soviet State. Just a philosophy of life. "Nobody will help you until you start helping yourself."

First words we heard in the U.S. were "Smile, be happy." And that what we are doing for more than four years. It was not always that good. Mr. Kaminker, once my next door neighbor, saw me coming home dirty and tired and even then, a month or so after Kaminkers came to Charlotte, he could not understand the source of my happiness. He was looking for easy ways. Seems he is still in search. In that way he is unlike majority of normal Russian immigrants who are willing to be useful in their new country and therefore for themselves. These are able to do it on their own.

I want to bring my word of appreciation to the people of Charlotte, to the Jewish Community as to folks of other religions, for helping our family to be home not just with our



Across The Editors' Desks

bodies but with our souls.

Ed. note: Since this was written Gregory and Alla Kaminker have left Charlotte to live in Philadelphia.

Congratulations

Dear Editors:

I want to extend our compliments and congratulations to the Charlotte Jewish Federation and your staff for receiving the Council of Jewish Federations Public Relations Award for Small Cities. It is obvious that people well beyond Charlotte appreciate the fine Anglo-Jewish publication of the Federation, "The Charlotte Jewish News."

As we say down South...Mazel Tov on a job well done and an award well deserved.

Sincerely,
Norman Olshansky
ADL Regional Director

More

Congratulations

Dear Ann and Rita:

Congratulations to you and The Charlotte Jewish News for your second award as one of the best newspapers in the Jewish Federations Public Relations Competition.

Wow!

But then to those of us who read you regularly it really isn't any surprise at all.

Sincerely,
— Rolfe Neill
President and Publisher
The Charlotte Observer
The Charlotte News

The Editors welcome comments and letters expressing all points of view and reserve the right to edit.