

Turkey Celebrates Jewish-Muslim Peace

(cont'd from preceding page)

Empire. The Ottomans continued serving as a refuge to persecuted Jews to the very end of the Empire.

In 1923, the Ottoman Empire, defeated in World War I, was dissolved and replaced with the Republic of Turkey. Although modern Turkey is a secular nation, its population today is 99% Muslim. Jews continue to live and thrive there.

In modern Turkey, Jews have served in the Parliament and are integrated into the life of the country. During World War II, Turkey, still reeling from its defeat and dismemberment in World War I, remained neutral. Not only was Istanbul a hotbed of political intrigue, but the entire Turkish nation became a safe haven for Jews who could cross its borders. Turkish medical centers and universities were filled with Jews, fleeing Nazism. One Turkish diplomat has a tree planted in his honor as a "Righteous Gentile" at Jerusalem's Yad Vashem. In 1953, only four years after Israel's War of Independence, a new synagogue was constructed in Istanbul, a predominantly Muslim country. This was of particular significance because at Israel's creation 100,000 Turkish Jews, deeply committed to Zionism, uprooted and moved to the Jewish state.

The Jewish community in Turkey now numbers some 26,000 people, 25,000 of whom live in Istanbul. There they maintain several Jewish schools,

two Jewish hospitals and two Jewish homes for the aged as well as numerous youth and social groups.

The Jewish world is focusing on Spain in 1992. Most Jewish organizations are sponsoring tours to Spain during the Quincentennial commemoration of the Spanish Expulsion. The Jewish community of Turkey, along with Muslim friends, have created a foundation to encourage American Jews to visit the land that rescued the exiled Sephardi Jews, from Spain in 1492 and from Portugal in 1497. Beginning this year of 1992 and for the next five years Turkey is rolling out the red carpet to Jewish visitors from abroad. I was privileged to be among a small group of American rabbis invited to Turkey this past December who saw the beauty of the country, the warmth of the people and were able to dialogue with them in critiquing their five-year celebration.

In 1992 we look back 500 years to Spain and recite the "Kaddish." We look to Turkey, the nation which rescued our people, and we recite the "Kid-dish" of joy. This is a milestone year, celebrating 500 years of Muslim-Jewish peace and harmony. Hopefully, as the Middle East peace talks progress, 1992 might also be a milestone year as Arab Muslims and Jews struggle to find ways to live together in peace.

Enjoy an Unique Experience

By Simon Estroff

I returned on Jan. 1 from another successful three-week stint in Israel. It was a truly remarkable experience. I arrived there on Dec. 9, joining 16 other eager volunteers, to go to Ashdod Naval Base, overlooking the beautiful Mediterranean Sea. Yes, I did have a room with a view and a breeze. This group of eager men and women did light duties such as landscaping, painting, office work, warehouse duties and, of course, kitchen duties. While we were there, the Base had their annual inspection and passed with flying colors. The General thanked us for all we did to help and we were very proud of this accomplishment. The food was excellent and healthy too. Many new friends were made. Most of the soldiers spoke very good English.

There was plenty of free time when we could visit as a group, Masada, Ein Gedi and Arad as well as Jerusalem. Each trip was with a professional guide and in a modern bus. On the weekends we were free to leave the base and make our own plans. We were also offered home hospitality and I elected to go to Pardess Chana again.

When our three weeks were



Simon Estroff, dressed in fatigues, at Yad Vashem.



Three of the young Israeli soldiers: (L to R) Chezzi, Elon, Yossi.

up, the base had a lovely farewell party for us and issued us diplomas, service pins and spoke many kind words about us. It was very touching and a day we'll never forget.

Volunteers for Israel is a wonderful program for anyone

18-70, single or married. If you want to visit Israel in a very special way, have an experience that you'll never forget, meet some of the greatest people in the world, and do it all for less than you ever imagined, then call me at 535-2936, or call the NY office at 212-643-4848.

Charlotte Ad Club Helps to Combat Child Abuse

Child Abuse and neglect is one of the most serious problems facing our nation, our state, and our community. In North Carolina and Mecklenburg County, the problem of child abuse and neglect is both chronic and growing. An estimated 10,000 children are being abused in Mecklenburg County, right now.

Nationwide, North Carolina ranks 41st among the states in "well-being" of children, with over 4,500 incidents of suspected child abuse or neglect reported in Mecklenburg County last year. Only by pulling together as a community can we combat these appalling statistics.

This year, the Charlotte Ad Club's public service campaign will focus on child abuse and neglect. Phase I will involve creating a high level of public awareness, support and participation. Phase II is intended to aid the public in identifying and reporting suspected cases of

child abuse or neglect.

Many area businesses have donated money and/or resources to support this project. However, additional funds are still needed to cover the most basic of expenses in order for this campaign to be successful.

Please call Lisa Madsen, 334-8296, should you wish to donate to this worthy cause, or if you have any questions.

Rabbi David M. Zielonka, chaplain of Rauch Industries in Gastonia, NC, will teach a course entitled "Introduction to Judaism" during the spring semester at Belmont Abbey College in Belmont. This class is one of 144 across the U.S. that will be underwritten this year by the Jewish Chautauqua Society (JCS).

Rabbi Zielonka is a member of the B'nai B'rith Adult Education national speakers bureau. He was the spiritual leader of Temple Emanuel in Gastonia, 1983-91.

Rabbi Zielonka will also present a talk on "Jewish Scrip-



Rabbi David M. Zielonka

tures" to an assembly of students at Covenant Day School in Matthews on Mar. 13. This lecture is being underwritten by JCS.

Rabbi Richard Harkavy, spiritual leader of Temple Emanuel in Greensboro, NC, will teach the course "Introduction to Judaism" during the spring semester at Greensboro College.

Rabbi Harkavy was ordained by Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion in Cincinnati, OH in 1984.

To date, more than two million students have attended JCS sponsored seminars and lectures. JCS also produces educational video programs and supports interfaith institutes. It has

donated over 100,000 volumes of Judaica to school libraries. Founded in 1893, JCS is the educational arm of the National Federation of Temple Brotherhoods, an affiliate of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

Registration Being Held For Drama Classes At Children's Theatre

An eight-week session of drama classes will be offered at The Children's Theatre Feb. 10-Apr. 4. Classes are designed to enhance creativity, build self-confidence and encourage individuality. By using stories, poems and music, your child has the chance to act out new experiences that may not be part of their day-to-day life. These "non-threatening" classes are not performance-oriented and are offered for ages three-Junior High. Classes meet once a week for one hour. The cost is \$32. Please call The Children's Theatre Education Dept., 376-8025, 9 a.m.-5:30 p.m. weekdays for information on how to register your child. Registration will be taken until classes begin if space is available.

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