

Lightning UJA Mission to Israel Stresses Need for Tourism, Solidarity

By Harvey Cohen

The page of the calendar would be turned to May in just a few days. Wendy Smith, a sophomore at Yale, was preparing for final exams when she abandoned her books and left for Israel for 36 hours. Cindy Fox and Traci Taylor both of Charlotte, were at the Federation's Young Leadership graduation. Travel agent Francine Mellon was contacted during the middle of a convention in Chicago, repacked her bags and took off for Israel instead of returning home. The inspiring words of Emily Zimmern about missions to Israel were all Cindy and Traci needed to make a decision to go...now! Fox, a marketing research analyst, went to her boss the next day and asked for time off. Taylor did the same thing at First Union where she is employed in the Human Resources Department.

Fox and Taylor were among the 365 Jews from 57 cities and towns across the country who made a lightning-paced 36-hour visit to Israel. Their purpose was to display their solidarity with Israel in light of violent terrorist efforts aimed at destroying the peace process. Soon after their return, a peace accord was signed.

The trip was initiated by the

United Jewish Appeal and organized in less than a week by UJA in cooperation with El Al Airlines, the Israel Ministry of Tourism and the Conference of presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations UJA President Marvin Lender, who chaired the National Solidarity Mission said, "It was urgent for us to express our solidarity in Israel and then carry a message back to Diaspora Jewry that Israel is safe and beautiful and it is crucial to continue visits and tourism to Israel."

The morning following their arrival in Jerusalem, United States Ambassador Edward Djerejian told the mission participants of recent developments concerning negotiations between Israel and the PLO, assuring them that the United States was working to ensure that Israel would have peace with security. Later that day, Israel's Ezer Weizman told the group that at this pivotal point in history, Israel is negotiating for peace from a position of strength.

Despite its brevity, the 36 hours that the UJA National Solidarity Mission spent in Israel made a far-reaching impact. "When I joined this mission, I thought my main aim was giving a message to other American Jews about visiting Israel," said Smith as the group con-



Israel's President Ezer Weizman addresses the 365 participants from 57 US communities on the United Jewish Appeal's National Solidarity Mission as, l. to r., UJA President Marvin Lender and UJA Executive Vice President Rabbi Lurie look on.

cluded its visit. "But even in the very short time we were here, I realized that our message to students and families we spoke to...was touched that we came and eager to hear what we had to say. I'm already planning to

come back soon with my friends to continue the dialogue."

Taylor said, "I'm sure some people have put off going to Israel because they weren't sure if it was safe or not, but if that's all that's keeping them from

going, let me tell you I felt safer there than I have at times leaving work late in downtown Charlotte." Reflecting on their experiences, Fox and Taylor both agreed they will go back to Israel just as soon as they can.

Soviet Teenagers Arrive in Israel In Current ORT 'Youth Aliyah'

Some 400 teenagers from the republics of the former Soviet Union have been brought to Israel as part of Project Na'Alah (Let us make Aliyah), and are studying together at the Joseph Harnatz ORT School of Engineering in Jerusalem and at ORT Natanya. Most are in the

11th grade and are 16 to 17 years old.

"On my most recent trip to Israel," commented Sandy Isenstein, national president of Women's American ORT, "I had the wonderful experience of meeting a class of 30 of these

youngsters who are studying at the ORT School of Engineering. I was greatly impressed with their adjustment to life in Israel, their courage and that of their families who deemed it necessary to remove their children from anti-Semitism and a dangerous political situation."

In addition to their studies, the Soviet teenagers participate in extracurricular activities together with their Israeli counterparts. The Israeli government hope that upon completing their education, the students will choose to remain in Israel and, eventually, effect the immigration of their families as well.

More than 252,000 students presently are enrolled in ORT's 800 school and projects. The ORT program encompasses 52 countries and is the largest non-governmental network of vocational educational and technical training centers in the world.



Sandy Isenstein, right, national president of Women's American ORT, meets a young teenager from the former Soviet Union at the Joseph Harnatz ORT School of Engineering in Jerusalem.

Photo by Debbi Cooper

SINCE 1883, IT HAS BEEN OUR PRIVILEGE TO SERVE THE JEWISH FAITH.

Harry and Bryant Co.
INC.

500 Providence Road

332-7133

Moving?



You may think you're moving only a "jump" away, but unless we receive your change of address, *The CJN* can't be delivered. Please notify us when you move. Write to: *CJN*, 5007 Providence Road, Charlotte, NC 28226.



Larry Horowitz, CLU, ChFC

Hinrichs Financial Group
230 S. Tryon St. - Suite 1400
Charlotte, NC 28202-3215
(704) 371-8600

Helping in the CREATION, PRESERVATION and DISTRIBUTION of your Estate.

Compliments of



CAROLINAS
MEDICAL CENTER