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MARCH 27 - APRIL 2, 2015

FIRE VICTIMS BURIED

► JERUSALEM BURIAL FOR 7 BROOKLYN CHILDREN

By EDGAR ASHER
ISRAEL CORRESPONDENT

The seven children, ages 5 to 16, who died in a fire at their home in Brooklyn on Shabbat, March 21, were laid to rest in Jerusalem on March 23.

Hundreds of mourners, including Chief Rabbi DAVID LAU and Jerusalem Mayor NIR BARKAT, attended the funeral at the city's Har Hamenuhot Cemetery.

The children's father, GABRIEL SASSOON, was away from home at the time, attending a religious conference. Their mother GAYLE escaped with another daughter, SIPORAH, 14, by jumping out of a window. Thought to have been in a different part of the house than the other children, they are hospitalized in critical condition.

The fire was likely caused by a malfunctioning hot plate, left on in the kitchen as part of the family's Shabbat observance.

Eulogizing his children at the Jerusalem funeral, their father said, "I have paid the ultimate sacrifice. Here before you are seven innocent lambs...."

The reference to seven innocent lambs alludes to the biblical injunction to bring a burnt offering of "seven unblemished lambs" to the Temple in Jerusalem on the first of the month (the seven Sasson children died on the first day of the Hebrew month of Nisan). ❏



PASSOVER PROVISIONS — Volunteers representing virtually all aspects of the community rolled up their sleeves March 22, as a year's worth of planning turned to the practical effort of packing provisions to enable all local Jews to celebrate Passover. The parcels are delivered March 29 from the Maot Chitim warehouse location in Morton Grove (above). ❏

Travel warning to Israelis

► ISRAEL GOVERNMENT URGES CAUTION FOR 41 COUNTRIES

By LINDA GRADSTEIN
THE MEDIA LINE

During the upcoming school holidays of Passover and the summer, many Israelis travel abroad. Europe is only a few hours away by plane, and the beaches of Cyprus and Greece are even closer.

Vacations abroad, even including the flight, are often cheaper than local getaways, because of the high price of Israeli hotels.

However, this year the Israeli government has

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 2

MAOT CHITIM VOLUNTEERS MEET PASSOVER NEEDS

► OVER 1,000 PARTICIPATE IN ANNUAL PASSOVER EFFORT

By GILA WERTHEIMER
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

With the help of over 1,000 volunteers, Maot Chitim of Greater Chicago will ensure this Passover — as it has for over a century — that needy Jews will have food and other supplies to celebrate the holiday.

From putting boxes together to packing non-perishable items (such as matzah, wine, gefilte fish and candles) and perishables (chickens, eggs, and so forth), and sending drivers throughout Chicagoland to deliver the parcels, Maot Chitim has grown to a massive year-round project.

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 3

Wine so Fine

The secret behind the wine of the Negev, famous 1,500 years ago for its taste, may be within reach following the announcement last month by Haifa University that researchers have discovered grape seeds from that era which will now undergo DNA sequencing. ❏ — JEWISH STAR

Boycotters targetted

► ILLINOIS BILL ALIGNS WITH FEDERAL LAW BUT APPLIES TO U.S. OR FOREIGN COMPANIES BOYCOTTING ISRAEL

By GILA WERTHEIMER
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Illinois state legislators are set to vote on a bill that will ban state agencies from doing business with any companies that boycott Israel.

Senate Bill 1761 was filed February 20 by State Senator IRA SILVERSTEIN (D-8), with a companion bill, House Bill 4011, filed February 27 by State Representative SARA FEIGENHOLTZ (D-12).

The bill is scheduled for third reading in the Senate this week.

The Illinois law, which Feigenholtz described as aligning the state's policy with federal policy, adds the stipulation that it applies not only to doing business with American companies, but also with foreign companies if they boycott Israel.

Both Feigenholtz and Silverstein told the JEWISH STAR that the bill has bipartisan support and the support of Governor BRUCE RAUNER.

"I've been overwhelmed and de-lighted by the support I've been getting for the measure," Feigenholtz said. Silverstein said his colleagues are "extremely supportive" of the bill.

"It's plain and simple," Silverstein added. "If people want to boycott the only democracy in the Middle East for no reason, there are consequences."

Feigenholtz spoke of the strong trade relationship between Illinois and Israel, which "we want to fortify, not impede."

With the boycott, divestment and sanctions (BDS) movement against Israel active at universities and with academic organizations, "we're in a time when we need to tell people about the relationship. We need to build it, not tear it down."

Speaking March 8 at the Tannenbaum Chabad House Northwestern Jewish Center reception, Governor Rauner declared that the state will pull its pension investments from any company that divests from Israel (JEWISH STAR, Mar. 20).

Feigenholtz noted that the governor's office is working through its investment portfolio to identify any companies that have divested from Israel.

Under the bill, not only would state agencies be barred from contracting with companies that boy-

cott Israel, but its five state-funded retirement systems could not have investments in such companies.

Federal anti-boycott

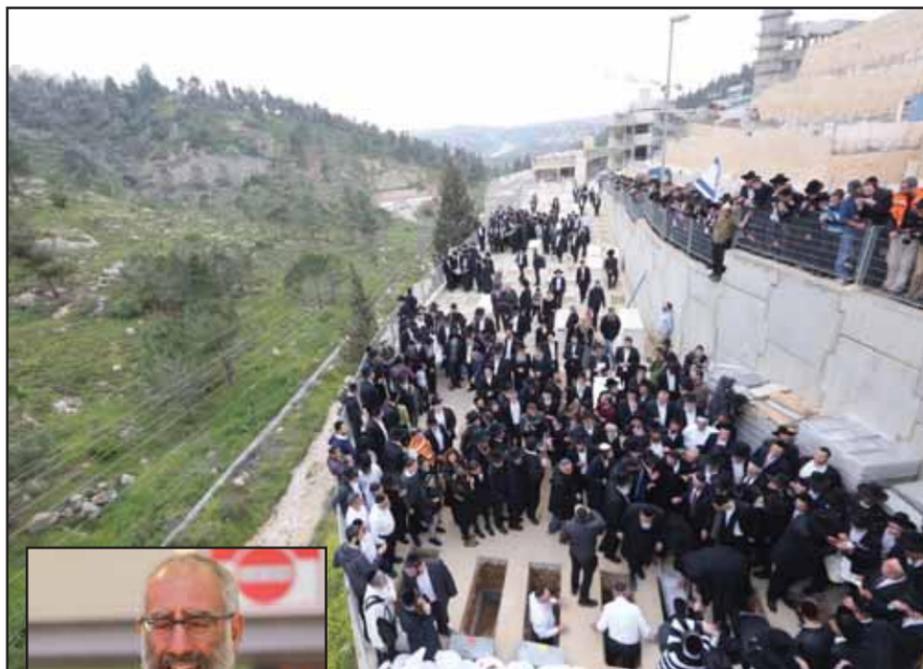
Nearly 40 years ago, two Federal anti-boycott laws took aim at American individuals and companies which complied with the Arab boycott of Israel.

The Arab boycott of Israel, which dates to the Fifth Palestine Arab Congress of 1922 and thus

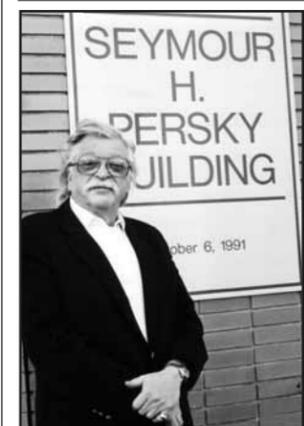
pre-dates the establishment of the Jewish state, gained its own administration in 1951 when the Office of the Arab Boycott was established by the League of Arab States, with headquarters in Damascus.

It had little effect for many years, but as American trade with the Arab countries began to grow dramatically in the 1970s, the Arab boycott increasingly impinged on it. At its height, some 8,500 foreign

PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 2



The seven child victims of the Brooklyn fire during the early morning hours of Saturday, March 21, were buried Monday afternoon, March 23, in the presence of several hundred mourners, at Jerusalem's Har HaMenuhot Cemetery. Their father, Gabriel Sassoon, tearfully eulogized them as "innocent lambs". ❏



Repairing the World

Philanthropist and Jewish leader Seymour Persky, who was honored during the 1990s by more Jewish groups than any other individual, died here this week.

He donated \$1 million to The Ark in 1991, and their California Avenue location was named after him. Editorial, page 4. ❏

Travel warning

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

issued travel warnings for 41 countries, including in Europe and Asia:

"Recent terrorist attacks by Islamic extremists in Belgium, Canada, Australia, France and Denmark raise concerns over additional attacks against Western targets, including Israeli and Jewish targets, by veterans of the fighting in Syria and Iraq who are affiliated with Global Jihad (including Islamic State) and by local elements inspired by the terrorist organizations."



MOSHE KAHNON / JASHERNET PHOTO

New Finance Minister

Moshe Kahlon, 54, the founder and head of the new Kulanu Party in Israel, said March 23 he would join the coalition-in-formation of Benjamin Netanyahu.

The 10 Knesset seats gave the prime minister enough seats to form a new government.

The following day, Kahlon — who campaigned on the need to improve social and economic conditions in the country — was set to be named Finance Minister in the new coalition.

A former Knesset and cabinet member, Kahlon's family comes from Libya. ☑

The travel warning, issued by the National Security Council Counter-Terrorism Bureau, noted that it is illegal for Israelis to travel to "Syria, Iraq (including Iraqi Kurdistan), Iran, Lebanon, Yemen and Saudi Arabia."

The warning comes amid a spate of attacks on Western and Jewish targets, including the *Charlie Hebdo* satirical magazine and the Jewish supermarket in Paris, the shooting in Denmark, and just last weekend, an attack on a synagogue in London.

Israeli terrorism experts say Israelis do not seem to be the primary target of these attacks.

"Until now there have been two main targets — governmental targets in Western countries and Jewish institutions," REUVEN EHRLICH, a terrorism expert told TML.

"Israelis have not been the target, but I cannot tell you what it will be in the future," he added.

Israelis told to be quieter

However, the warnings do not seem to be affecting travel plans.

Israelis have one of the highest rates per capita of travel abroad, taking two million trips a year, although there are no statistics about how many of them are travelers who fly several times a year.

Israeli travel professionals say they are telling their clients to maintain a lower profile.

"We are asking our passengers to be a little quieter, which is a good thing no matter what," said MARK FELDMAN, CEO of Ziontours in Jerusalem.

"Israelis tend to be loud and raucous and call attention to themselves. We have several groups going to Europe in the next few weeks and we have told them not to congregate in the lobby, not to speak in loud voices and if possible, not to speak in Hebrew."

At the same time, he said the travel warnings have "zero" influence on his clients' travel plans. Many young Israelis spend months or even years traveling after their compulsory service in the army, visiting Asia, India and Latin America.

The Israeli travel warning also urges caution when visiting synagogues or Jewish sites around the world.

"The global terrorist campaign by Iran and Hezbollah continues to threaten Israeli and Jewish targets around the world, especially tourists and Jewish symbols (rabbis, community leaders, Chabad houses).

Most of the countries mentioned in the travel warning, such as Afghanistan, Libya, Sudan, Somalia and Burkina-Faso, are not popular hot spots for Israelis to visit.

But one spot that is included in the list with "very high concrete threats" is the Sinai Peninsula.

Israelis controlled Sinai from 1967 until 1982, when Israel withdrew as part of the peace treaty with Egypt.

Yet Israelis continued to visit Sinai in ensuing years, and some continue to do so, despite a series of attacks that have killed dozens of Egyptian police and soldiers there.

"I have been going to Sinai to the same place for 25 years and I'm going again in two weeks," LINDA EPSTEIN, who works part-time for an American foundation, told TML.

"Israelis go everywhere in the world that is strange and exotic and even a little bit dangerous, but this magnificent place next door seems to hold some kind of barrier for them."

She said that like all Israelis she has lived through wars, rocket attacks and suicide bombings, and said the chances of anything happening are "exceptionally small."

"I've been to over 100 countries and there is no place I find as serene as Sinai," she said. ☑

Boycott

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

companies were on the Arab League's blacklist for doing any business with Israel.

U.S. anti-boycott laws were enacted in 1976 (the Ribicoff Amendment to the Tax Reform Act) and 1977 (amendments to the Export Administration Act), to prevent American companies from taking part in foreign boycotts not sanctioned by this country.

Non-compliance with the 1977 law could mean a fine of up to \$50,000 and five years in prison.

By that time, several states, including New York in 1975 and California in 1976, had enacted their own anti-boycott laws. These were superseded by the federal law.

The 1977 anti-boycott bill was signed into law by President JIMMY CARTER following considerable debate and lobbying.

At the signing, according to a JTA report from that time, he said that his concern about foreign boycotts "stemmed, of course, from our special relationship with Israel."

Boycotts based on religious or ethnic grounds were "a profound moral issue from which we should not shrink," he said.

Illinois boycotters

The first criminal prosecution under the 1977 Federal anti-boycott law was of Baxter International Inc., of Deerfield, Illinois.

The company paid \$6.5 million in 1993 to settle civil and criminal charges against it by the Commerce and Justice departments (JEWISH STAR, May 7, 1993; Sept. 27, 1996).

Prior to that, the largest anti-boycott settlement involved Safeway Stores, Inc., then the largest food chain in the United States.

In 1988, Safeway agreed to pay nearly \$1 million to settle U.S. Commerce boycott cooperation



YOU BE THE JUDGE

"The humiliating denouement to America's involvement in Yemen came over the weekend, when U.S. Special Forces were forced to evacuate a base from which they had operated against the local branch of al-Qaeda. This is the same branch that claimed responsibility for the January attack on Charlie Hebdo...."

TOPIC Orwell's world

So who should Barack Obama be declaring war on in the Middle East other than the state of Israel?

There is an upside-down quality to this president's world view.

His administration is now on better terms with Iran — whose Houthi proxies, with the slogan 'God is great, death to America, death to Israel, damn the Jews, power to Islam,' just deposed Yemen's legitimate president — than it is with Israel....

To adapt George Orwell's motto for Oceania: Under Mr. Obama, friends are enemies, denial is wisdom, capitulation is victory.

The current victim of Mr. Obama's moral inversions is the recently re-elected Israeli prime minister....

Now we are treated to the astonishing spectacle in which Benjamin Netanyahu has become persona non grata for his comments doubting the current feasibility of a two-state solution.

This, while his Palestinian counterpart Mahmoud Abbas is in the 11th year of his four-year term, without a murmur of protest from the White House....

Mr. Obama now threatens a fundamental reassessment of U.S. relations with Israel....

Israel will now be treated to pariah-nation status by Mr. Obama. ☑

— Source: Bret Stephens, "The Orwellian Obama Presidency," *The Wall Street Journal* (March 24, 2015).

CHICAGO JEWISH STAR QUOTE OF THE WEEK

charges; in the same year, Sara Lee Corp., of Chicago, paid a \$725,000 penalty (JEWISH STAR, Aug. 21, 1987; April 2, 1993).



Sara Feigenholtz and Ira Silverstein.

With the 1994 Oslo Accords, the Arab boycott lost traction but did not disappear. Today, the BDS movement has revived the boycott, moving the staging grounds to European countries. ☑

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Passover

5775/2015

PASSOVER BEGINS
FRIDAY NIGHT, APRIL 3*
1st Seder April 3
2nd Seder April 4

CHOL HAMOED
INTERMEDIATE DAYS
From Sun. night, April 5
to Thurs. night, April 9

FINAL TWO DAYS
OF PASSOVER

Thursday night, April 9 to
Saturday night, April 11

Yizkor...Saturday, April 11

PASSOVER ENDS, CHAMETZ RETURNS
Saturday night, April 11

*April 3: Destroy chametz by 11:33 am

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 - Roasted Chicken or
 - Roast Brisket of Beef with HORSERADISH
 - Coffee or Tea & Dessert

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Wishing Our Friends and Customers a Happy Passover!