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MORE STREET ART — Cows, globes, horses, kassam missile fragments — cities have decorated their streets with all sorts of art in recent years (*Jewish Star*, Aug. 10). Jerusalem has now added bears.

The "United Buddy Bear" exhibition, which opened there at the beginning of this month, features 133 identical fiber glass figures of bears, each decorated by a different artist in the style of his or her country. It's been a big hit in Jerusalem, having arrived there after being exhibited in Berlin, Hong Kong, Istanbul, Tokyo, Seoul, Sydney, Vienna and Cairo.

The motto for the exhibition — "The Art of Tolerance" — was penned by the exhibition's creators, Eva and Klaus Herlitz, of Germany. At the end of the world tour (which is to include Beijing and Buenos Aires), the bears will be sold at auction for UNICEF and other organizations helping needy children throughout the world. To date, nearly \$2 million has been raised. ❏

WHEN THE LAND RESTS

► EVERY 7 YEARS, AGRICULTURAL LAND IN ISRAEL IS TO LAY FALLOW; IT'S CALLED *SHEMITTAH*

By **BATSHEVA POMERANTZ**

It comes about every seven years, and this Rosh Hashanah is one of them: the start of the *shemittah* (or sabbatical) year in the Land of Israel.

The word *shemittah* (Hebrew, שמיטה) means "let fall" or "let rest". It begins this year on September 13.

In modern-day Israel, only about 3% of the population works in agriculture, where advanced technology is used to yield an abundance of produce during the *shemittah* year.

Contrast this with Biblical times when society was 100% agrarian: fields and orchards had a *hefker* status (that is, they were ownerless property), and crops became available for all (as the Torah mandated).

During the *shemittah* year plowing, sowing, planting, reaping and harvesting are forbidden. Fruit that grows (by itself, so to speak) during this year is consid-



GUSH KATIF METHOD — The "detached" method of agriculture was pioneered and fine-tuned in the Israeli-populated Gush Katif communities, until their destruction by Palestinians during Israel's Gaza Disengagement in 2005.

Above: Cucumbers grown in a Neveh Dekalim greenhouse in the Gush Katif settlement bloc in the Gaza Strip.

ered holy and is traded in a special way.

The first *shemittah* followed the conquest and division of the land of Israel by Joshua, until the Babylonian exile following the destruction of the First Temple.

During the 40-year exile, the few remaining Jewish inhabitants were not obligated to observe

► PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 3

Holocaust NGO

► YAD VASHEM GETS UN RECOGNITION

Yad Vashem, Israel's national Holocaust museum, was accredited Aug. 9 as a non-governmental organization by the United Nations. The accreditation will permit the museum to participate in U.N. deliberations and enhance collaboration on issues of Holocaust remembrance. ❏ JTA



Our Annual Synagogue Guide, pages 8-10.

INSIDE

- Editorial: Giuliani's insight 4
- By the numbers..... 4
- DC: New pragmatists..... 5
- Anti-Semitic state..... 6
- Elvis' yahrzeit..... 7
- DVD: "Les Misérables"..... 8
- Community Calendar..... 10
- Torah: Spiritual witnesses 11

Saudi airline: No Bibles, crucifixes, stars of David

► ANALYSIS: TIME TO SEND A SIGNAL TO THE DESPOTS OF RIYADH

By **DANIEL PIPES**

MIDDLE EAST FORUM

Saudi Arabian Airlines (known as Saudia) declares on its English-language web site that the kingdom bans "Bibles, crucifixes, statues, carvings, items with religious symbols such as the Star of David."

Until the Saudi government changes this detestable policy, its airline should be disallowed from flying into Western airports.

Michael Freund brought this regulation to international attention in a recent *Jerusalem Post* article, "Saudis might take Bibles from tourists," in which he points out that a section on the Saudia web site, "Customs Regulations," lists the forbidden articles above

► PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 2

PROTEST TO CCHR

► CITY OFFICIALS TALK WITH JUF LEADERS ABOUT ARAB FESTIVAL COMPLAINT

By **DOUGLAS WERTHEIMER**

EDITOR

A meeting to discuss anti-Israel activity at a recent City of Chicago Arab festival went well, and included an assurance that the City opposed the promotion of such "political positions", participants have told the *Jewish Star*.

The Aug. 7 meeting — between the Chicago Commission on Human Rights' (CCHR) chairman Clarence Wood, its First Deputy Commissioner Kenneth Gunn, and the Jewish Federation's Jay Teath and Michael Kotzin — was called by the Federation and took place at its downtown office.

Teath is executive director of the Jewish Community Relations Council and Kotzin is the JUF/Federation's executive vice-president.

The impetus was the discovery of anti-Israel literature distributed at the first-ever Chicago Arabesque festival, held in June at Daley Plaza (*Jewish Star*, July 13).

In 2003, a *Jewish Star* investigation revealed that Chicago's Arab Heritage Month had become a source of anti-Israel activity — to

► PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 2



GENOCIDE OR MASSACRE? — Armenians are marched to a nearby prison in Mezireh by armed Turkish soldiers, April, 1915.

Armenian Genocide Affirmed

IN REVERSAL, ADL SAYS OTTOMAN TURKS COMMITTED GENOCIDE

ASSESSING EVENTS OF 1915-1918

ADL HAD FIRED CRITICAL DIRECTOR; THE BERNARD LEWIS FACTOR

CHICAGO JEWISH STAR AND JTA

In a dramatic reversal, the Anti-Defamation League's national director issued a statement August 21 using the term "genocide" to describe the massacres perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenians.

The ADL and its national director, Abraham Foxman, have faced mounting criticism in recent weeks for refusing to use the genocide label, and essentially opposing a proposed congressional resolution that would do so.

The controversy intensified last week when

Apology from Wiesel attacker

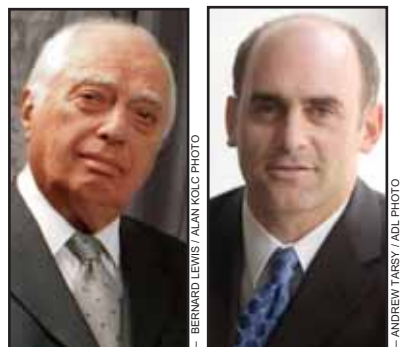
► WIESEL: "I EXPECTED IT. I'M A NOVELIST. I IMAGINE SITUATIONS ... IT'S CLEVER"

Eric Hunt, the man who accosted Elie Wiesel in a San Francisco hotel on February 1, apologized in court.

Wiesel, 78, a Holocaust survivor, Nobel laureate, and famed author, was on the witness stand in San Francisco Superior Court Aug. 13 recounting what he described as his most harrowing ordeal since World War II, when Hunt blurted out, "I'm terribly sorry about what happened."

Wiesel said he wasn't sure the apology by Hunt, 23, of New Jersey, was sincere.

"I expected it," Wiesel said. "I'm a novelist. I imagine situations. This is something a character would do. It's clever, very clever." ❏ JTA



Andrew Tarsy (right) was fired as head of the ADL's Boston office after publicly challenging the group's refusal to call the 20th Century Armenian massacres "genocide".

Professor Bernard Lewis (left) has called the 1915 Ottoman Turkish onslaught a "terrible slaughter", but has refused to characterize it as genocide.

Foxman fired Andrew Tarsy, the director of the ADL's New England region, for denouncing the organization's position in an interview with the *Boston Globe*.

"In light of the heated controversy that has surrounded the Turkish-Armenian issue in recent weeks, and because of our concern for the unity of the Jewish community at a time of increased threats against the Jewish people, ADL has decided to revisit the tragedy that befell the Armenians," Foxman said in his statement.

"We have never negated but have always described the painful events of 1915-1918 perpetrated by the Ottoman Empire against the Armenians as massacres and atrocities," Foxman said.

"On reflection, we have come to share the view of Henry Morgenthau, Sr., that the consequences of those actions were indeed

► PLEASE TURN TO PAGE 3

Saudi airline

FROM THE FRONT PAGE
under the rubric, "Items and articles belonging to

religions other than Islam." Freund followed up by calling the Saudia office in New York, where an em-

ployee identified only as "Gladys" confirmed that this rule really is applied.

"Yes, sir, that is what we have heard, that it is a problem to bring these things into Saudi Arabia, so you cannot do it."

An unnamed official at the Saudi consulate in New York further confirmed the regulation. "You are not allowed to bring that stuff into the kingdom. If you do, they will take it away. If it is really important to you, then you can try to bring it and just see what happens, but I don't recommend that you do so."

Responding to the Saudi ban on churches and Bibles and Stars of David, some would ban mosques, Korans, and crescent moons in the West, but that is clearly untenable and unenforceable, given the freedoms of speech and worship.

The Koran, for example, is not a Saudi artifact and cannot be held hostage to Saudi policies. However closely it identifies with Islam, the Saudi government does not own the religion.

Further, as Stephen Schwartz of the Center for Islamic Pluralism points out, signs in Saudi airports warn Muslim travelers that the airport's *mutawwa'in*, or religious police, confiscate Korans, other Islamic literature, and Muslim objects of non-Saudi origin.

While discriminating specifically against Shiites and Ahmadis, this policy manifests a wider insistence on Wahhabi supremacism.

More broadly, the Saudi leadership runs a country that the American government has condemned repeatedly as having "no religious freedom" and being among the most religiously repressive in the world.

Saudia is probably the only civilian airline whose logo includes swords.

portal to the world, offers a pressure point for change.

To take advantage of this vulnerability, Western governments should demand that unless the Saudi government at least permits "that stuff" in, Saudia faces exclusion from the 18 airports it presently services in Europe, North America and Japan.

If those routes were shut down, Riyadh will face a tough choice:

- Ignore this action: Allowing Western airlines to service Saudi Arabia without reciprocity would presumably be too great a humiliation for the monarchy to abide.

- Cut off the Western airlines in return: Cutting off the Western airlines would unacceptably isolate Saudia from major markets and premier destinations.

- Permit non-Wahhabi religious items: That leaves the Saudis no choice but to accept the import of "Bibles, crucifixes, statues, carvings, items with religious symbols such as the Star of David."

Further, once these materials are allowed, other benefits would likely follow, such as permitting non-Islamic religious buildings and services in the kingdom for the millions of non-Muslims who live there.

Muslims who reject the Wahhabi interpretation of Islam would also eventually benefit from this loosening.

Such joint action also sends a long-overdue signal to the despots of Riyadh — that Westerners have thrown off their servile obeisance to their writ.

Who will be first to act? Which national government or municipality will arise from the customary *dhimmi* posture and ban

Saudia (slogan: "We aim to please you") from its runways, thereby compelling the kingdom to permit infidel religious items, monotheistic and polytheistic alike, into its territory?

Where are you Athens, Frankfurt, Geneva, Houston, London, Madrid, Málaga, Manchester, Milan, Munich, New York, Nice, Osaka, Paris, Prague, Rome, Vienna, and Washington, D.C.?

If no government acts, what about a delegation of Christians, Jews, Hindus, Buddhists, and others boarding a Saudia flight with much publicity, openly displaying their religious artifacts, during the airline to confiscate these?

Or which public service law firm in those eleven countries will bring local human rights suits against Saudia as an arm of the Saudi government?

This issue provides an opportunity for left and right to unite against radical Islam. Who will take the lead to confront Saudi discrimination, arrogance, and repression? ❖



YOU BE THE JUDGE

"200 Jews still live secretly in Karachi [Pakistan], all that remains of a community numbering 2,500 at the time of Pakistani inde-

TOPIC independence in 1947.

Pakistan: 60 years of independence Mag-

Shalome, the community's synagogue, was demolished in July 1988 by order of President Zia ul-Haq to make way for a shopping plaza.

Israeli independence in May 1948 saw the Karachi synagogue set on fire." ❖

—Source: Patrick Belton, "Karachi's Forgotten Jews", *Jewish Chronicle* (London), August 17, 2007

JEWISH STAR QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Wrestling with Rashi

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On the occasion of the Asher Library and Newberry Library's joint acquisition of a rare 1481 edition of the *Postilla*, historian **Deeana Copeland Klepper** shares what brought Christian scholars to Jewish teachings on the Bible, with images from lavishly illuminated copies of the text.



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Exploring Jewish Learning and Culture

Signaling Riyadh

Saudia, the state-owned national carrier and its

Protest

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

such an extent that 26 percent of the programs for that year were devoted directly or indirectly not to Arab Heritage but to the Jewish state (*Jewish Star*, Nov. 21, 2003).

Teath, who found the anti-Israel material at Chicago Arabesque and contacted Clarence Wood about it, said at the time that he was "at wit's end because this is a problem that has happened in the past."

A meeting between Wood, Kotzin and Teath

had taken place following the *Jewish Star's* 2003 report on Arab Heritage Month. At that time, Wood had made a similar commitment.

Wood told the *Jewish Star* this week that while the city "will not tolerate" such political activity, it was impossible to expect that even the most vigorous monitoring effort could be completely successful.

He said that he had renewed his suggestion to the Federation that the Jewish community could establish an advisory council like the one on Arab Affairs, which would operate under the CCHR umbrella.

Teath told the *Jewish Star* that the Federation had declined the offer.

Noting that he has grown "tired at what's happening" with the politicization of the Arab Affairs council, Teath told the *Jewish Star* that he had contacted three of the corporate sponsors of Chicago Arabesque to tell them what had happened.

Replied one: "[We] had no forewarning of the anti-Israel dimensions of the [Chicago Arabesque] Festival. You can be certain that if we had, we would have immediately canceled our sponsorship.

"... I can assure you [we] will not be sponsoring this event again." ❖

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