

Six Jews marked their bar and bat mitzvahs in Murmansk, Russia, at a celebration last month organized by the Jewish Agency of Israel, with the support of the Jewish Federation of Cleveland.

Murmansk is the world's largest city north of the Arctic Circle, located at the northwestern tip of Russia near Norway and Finland. It is 1,600 miles by air from London.

Its declining population, currently about 307,000, reportedly includes a few hundred Jews.

The city was founded in 1916. Its Jewish settlement may date to the early 1920s, when the Soviet government encouraged urban workers to settle in agricultural areas, including along the Murmansk railway, according to the *American Jewish Year Book* for 1925-6.

Regardless of whether or not there were Jews there at that time, according to the *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* copies of the anti-Semitic *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* were circulated in Murmansk following the onset of the Russian Revolution of 1917, and the end of World War I and the assassination of the Czarist family, both in 1918.

During World War II, Murmansk's port city location made it a notable way station for armaments and supplies sent to the Soviets by the Allied forces to support their war effort against Hitler's Germany.

In 1999, the Russian State Archives transferred from its collection to various Jewish communities Torah scrolls which had been seized by the Nazis; one was given to Jews in Murmansk.

That scroll was described at the time as being the "Torah closest to the North Pole" in the world (JEWISH STAR, Dec. 24, 1999).

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Chabad vs. NU trial set for 1/14

► LAWSUIT ALLEGING DISCRIMINATION OVER DISAFFILIATION

By GILA WERTHEIMER

ASSOCIATE EDITOR

When Northwestern University abruptly ended its 27-year affiliation last fall with Tannenbaum Chabad House and its founder and director, Rabbi DOV HILLEL KLEIN, the Chabad organization in Illinois sued the university for discrimination.

That lawsuit is now moving forward, with a trial date set for some time in January 2014.

Discovery and deposition phases are set to begin, Rabbi DANIEL MOSCOWITZ, Director of Lubavitch Chabad of Illinois, told the JEWISH STAR last week.

The lawsuit was filed in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Illinois.

Last September, Rabbi Klein received a letter from the university informing him of the disaffiliation (JEWISH STAR, Oct. 5, 2012).

The basis for the action was the assertion by the Evanston university that Rabbi Klein had served alcohol to underage students, thereby contravening university policy.

Rabbi Klein denied the allegation, saying that any alcohol served at Chabad was for Jewish ritual purposes.

Northwestern's policy prohibits serving alcohol

for any reason to anyone under the age of 21.

Illinois state law, however, permits alcohol consumption for religious purposes for those under age 21.

The lawsuit states that even though other campus organizations have engaged in "the same acts for which Rabbi Klein stood falsely accused", the university chose to cut its ties only with Tannenbaum Chabad. By this, it singled out the organization and discriminated "against Chabad and the Jewish faith."

It seeks the award of "all possible damages."

Named in the lawsuit are Northwestern University, Vice President of Student Affairs PATRICIA TELLES-IRVIN and University Chaplain TIMOTHY STEVENS.

Northwestern President MORTON O. SCHAPIRO described the disaffiliation as "a most unfortunate, but unavoidable, situation" (JEWISH STAR, Oct. 19, 2012).

Rabbi Klein, who founded Tannenbaum Chabad in 1985 to serve Jewish students at Northwestern, has received strong support from students and alumni.

He is continuing activities from the Chabad House, which is not on the campus. ☞

Hebrew National did not adhere to kosher standards "as defined by the most stringent Jews who follow Orthodox Jewish law", as it claimed.

ConAgra Foods, which owns Hebrew National, successfully filed a motion to dismiss the case, which was done on January 30.

The judge ruled that "kosher" is a religious standard subject to rabbinic debate, not a court ruling.

Hebrew National is certified kosher by the Triangle K agency, with kosher slaughter by AER. ☞

IDF's new strategy: You shoot, we plant

► TOTAL: 1,532 TREES

By ARYEH SAVIR

TZAFIT NEWS AGENCY

In the vicinity of Nahal Oz, on the Gaza border in southern Israel, some 800 IDF soldiers last month planted 1,532 trees.

That number equated to the number of rockets fired by Hamas terrorists at Israel from Gaza during Operation "Pillar of Defense" in November 2012.

The tree planting, which also celebrated the holiday of Tu B'shvat, was part of a project named "A Plant for Each Rocket."

The commander of the Education Corps, Brigadier General ELI SHERMEISTER, conducted the event, which was also attended by the Southern Command CO Major-General TAL RUSO and JNF World Chairman EFFI STENZLER.

The road around Nahal Oz has been the target of several shooting incidents over the years, and some of these have caused fires in the area.

The trees will provide Israeli residents with

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for never coming

The president in the White House it was announced

Despite telling Israeli Palestinian leaders end phone calls that ing peace talks is a ority, Kerry knows can happen until Netanyahu forms a new government and the Palestinians hold elections, expected later this year.

Kerry's most critical stop will be Cairo, where the negotiations and most in Arab country is the third year of it tion and is in danger of becoming a failed

The Egyptian is on the verge of unemployment is the illiteracy rate ing, the crucial tourism industry has been damaged and the blood of p



Well Beyond

In the Negev la Force's Skylark I-Elbit Skylark drone

Easily assembled pound aircraft is p remain aloft for up feet, and be removed During its mission streams a live video

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