

GRAPEVINE• By **GREER FAY CASHMAN**

■ **APROPOS AMERICANS**, there were five at the first Zionist Congress in Basel in 1897. There will be a lot more representing the American Zionist Movement in Basel this coming Sunday, August 28, at the 125th anniversary celebration of the Zionist Congress, which was initiated by Zionist visionary Theodor Herzl, who later wrote that in Basel, he had established a Jewish state, and predicted that within 50 years everyone would know that. Indeed, in 1947, the UN General Assembly voted in favor of the partition of Palestine, and in May 1948, the Jewish state evolved from a dream into a reality, and has been represented at Zionist Congresses since that time. At final count, there will be some 1,200 representatives of Zionist organizations in attendance. The American Zionist Movement, headed by **Deborah Isaac** and **Herbert Block**, comprises 41 national Jewish organizations representing diverse ideological, political and religious beliefs and practices, but united in support of Israel and the Jewish people.

The Israeli contingent, which will be headed by World Zionist Organization Chairman **Yaakov Hagoel**, will include among many others, representatives of the Jewish People Policy Institute, whose president, Prof. **Yedidia Stern**, will be among the speakers and will discuss unity and solidarity among the Jewish people. He will focus on differences between Israeli and Diaspora Jews in their perceptions of the purpose and future of the State of Israel; and the relationship between Israel and Diaspora Jews, which over the years has changed course.

The congress will give a major boost to Basel's tourism industry. There were a little more than 200 participants from 17 countries at the first Zionist Congress. There's a huge increase 125 years later.