

# BULLETIN

May 1, 1955

## RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SMITH CASE

The Smith case has become a major focus of public attention in the past few days. The release of the Vitt letter, which was widely distributed, has caused a great deal of concern and discussion. The letter, which was written by a prominent agricultural leader, has been widely quoted and has caused a great deal of concern and discussion.

The letter, which was written by a prominent agricultural leader, has been widely quoted and has caused a great deal of concern and discussion. It is a white paper on the subject of anti-Semitism in the agricultural industry, declaring that many Russian Jews had turned into "hook-nose travelers," "worst kinds of traitors." Mr. Ladejinsky is a Russian-born Jew who came to this country in 1922 and still has relatives living in Russia.

Last night, Joseph Barr, national commander of the Jewish War Veterans of the United States, asked President Eisenhower for an appointment to discuss the "injection of anti-Semitism" into the case. He was granted an appointment for Tuesday morning. In asking for the appointment, Mr. Barr told the President that it seemed to him that Mr. Smith has "personally endorsed anti-Semitism as a basis for characterizing Ladejinsky as a security risk."

### A. J. C. Asks Benson to Disavow Anti-Semitic Letter

Another Jewish community leader, Irving M. Engel, president of the American Jewish Committee, has called for urgent action in the Ladejinsky case. In a letter to Secretary Benson, Mr. Engel "deplored" Mr. Smith's release of the Vitt letter as "a regrettable and harmful incident." Mr. Engel urged Benson to make a "prompt and public disavowal of the use of this communication."

Support of Mr. Ladejinsky came from many sides. Secretary of State Foster Dulles has pledged that if the Agriculture Department releases the agronomist back, the State Department will do the same. The Jewish Community Council of Minnesota has supported Mr. Ladejinsky in an editorial.

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reorganization plan, Mr. Ladejinsky's job was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Agriculture Department and he, routinely, applied for transfer to that Department. It was the Agriculture Department's clearance system that found him "highly" risk.

The Department of Agriculture defended its ouster by pointing out that Ladejinsky worked as an interpreter for Amtorg, the Soviet trading organization, in 1931. He wrote anti-Communist articles he had written in 1944 and 1945, asserting that Mr. Ladejinsky's father and three sisters were alive in Russia at the time those articles appeared, and hinted he might have made a deal with the Russians leading him "to believe his family would not be harmed."

Anti-Semitic Letter Called "Classic" by Benson Aide

Releasing the Vitt letter, Mr. Smith told newsmen that it was a "classic." The letter said, in part:

"Regrettably... all through the last 65 years or so there was a sprinkling of Russian revolutionaries of various persuasions coming into the U.S.A. for asylum... Equally regrettable was the fact that a goodly share of these revolutionaries were found among the Russian Jews... Russian Jews who came here running from the Tsarist regime may have had reason to be revolutionaries, with Jewish persecutions then going on in Russia.

"However, Jews who turned into Reds or fellow-travelers after 1919 were the worst kind of traitors, not only to their new mother country, the U.S.A., but to their own people, because Stalin's persecution of Jews in Russia really was a persecution, which the previous Imperial Government never matched even to a small extent. The Rosenbergs, the atom spies, are a good example... Mr. L. may be innocent 100 percent but facts from his past speak against him. Thus, for the sake of Uncle Sam, he must go."

Mr. Ladejinsky referred to the Vitt letter as the type of "vicious, anti-Semitic, Fascist brand of writing usually associated with crackpots." Mr. Smith denied he had called the Vitt letter a "classic" defense of the Agriculture Department's position, but said he made it public to show the views of one man who had had experience with Amtorg. Vitt had himself worked for Amtorg and had written that "from my own experience with Amtorg their interpreters were among their key people; the reliability from the Soviet side had to be 100 percent." Mr. Vitt asserted he was "not a Jew biter" and said "some of my best friends are among Jews."

FLOOD WATERS RECEDE IN TEL AVIV AREA; NEGEV HARD HIT

TEL AVIV, Jan. 2, (JTA) -- Floods caused by heavy rains have receded in the Tel Aviv area and in central Israel this week-end as the rains let up, but the southern region of Israel, the Negev, which previously had escaped effects of the torrential downpours, reported flood conditions.

The town of Beersheba was described as an island in a great lake. Roads leading to the town and radiating from it were under water. Elsewhere in the Negev, the story was one of waters raging through normally dry wadis and overflowing their banks.

Around Tel Aviv, the outskirts of which had suffered heavily from the flood waters, emergency squads continued work, evacuating families from houses which had been damaged or weakened.

Hadassah, responding to emergency appeals, announced the contribution of 100,000 pieces of clothing, valued at \$150,000 for victims of the floods. The clothing will be distributed to residents of the immigrant camps and other flood victims through the Government's welfare centers.

President Nahab Ben Zvi visited areas affected by the floods and his office subsequently announced his contribution of 250 pounds for the relief of the flood victims.

**CREW OF BAT GALIM HOME AFTER 94 DAYS' IMPRISONMENT**

TEL AVIV, Jan. 2. (JTA) -- The captain and crew of the *Bat Galim* were home today, weary after 94 days of imprisonment in a jail where they were beaten, robbed of their personal possessions and, in the wilderness of the Gaza strip where they were ordered to walk to the Israel border, a considerable distance away.

Just before noon, yesterday, an Israel Army patrol spotted the captain and nine sailors, all tired and shivering in summer clothes, shuffling toward the border. An ammunition carrier was summoned and, just as soon as the ten men reached the border, they were taken aboard. By the time they reached the nearest settlement, at Kissufim, hundreds of Negev settlers had gathered to greet them with songs, flowers and congratulations. They were immediately given warm clothing, then taken to this city where they were met by their families.

Zvi Shidlo, captain of the *Bat Galim*, declared on his arrival here that the Egyptians had taken from him and his sailors all their rings, watches and other valuables, including \$1,400 in cash.

"Our men were put in separate cells after we were taken to Cairo," Shidlo said. "Our hands were chained behind our backs, and we were beaten at regular intervals--in my case, every 15 minutes, in the cases of the men, about every hour. The soldiers who entered our cells to beat us did not question us--they simply beat us, and they seemed to be expert at the job."

Capt. Shidlo told how some of the crew members were left bleeding after these beatings, yet all were left on bare floors for two days without any medical attention. It was not until several days later when they were taken to another jail, and were to be visited by United Nations observers, that the men were given medical treatment, the *Bat Galim's* master said.

The captain had not seen his ship since it was seized by the Egyptians in the Suez Canal early on the morning of September 28. The Egyptians have announced, since, that they will release the ship--provided it is sailed southward, away from the Suez Canal, instead of through the Canal toward Haifa, which was its original destination.

The Israel Foreign Ministry charged this week-end that Egypt's refusal to let the ship continue its voyage to Haifa is a violation of a resolution adopted three years ago by the United Nations Security Council on freedom of passage through the Suez. In accordance with that resolution, Israel is pressing its complaint against Egypt which is scheduled to come before the Security Council at UN headquarters on Tuesday.

**Eban Confers with State Dept., U. N. Council Head on Bat Galim**

WASHINGTON, Jan. 2. (JTA) -- Israel Ambassador Abba Eban has conferred in the past 48 hours in Washington with Deputy Undersecretary of State Robert D. Murphy and Ambassador Leslie K. Munro of New Zealand on the subject of the Israel freighter "*Bat Galim*." Ambassador Munro will preside at the Security Council's meeting on January 4. The Israel Embassy has not revealed the content of these talks.

It is assumed in official circles that Mr. Murphy described recent efforts of the United States to secure the onward passage of the "*Bat Galim*" to Haifa in conformity with the Security Council's resolution on free passage adopted on Sept. 1, 1951.

It is understood that a majority of the members of the Security Council, including the United States, are prepared to speak in favor of the principle of free passage in the Suez Canal for all ships without distinction of nationality or flag.

**SHABAN CONFERS WITH MOROCCAN GOVERNOR ON JEWISH HEALTH PROBLEMS**

PARIS, Jan. 2. (JTA) -- Abel Shaban, president of the executive of the World OSE Union, accompanied by the Union's medical director, Dr. H. Fajerman, and J. Shaban, president of the OSE in Morocco, conferred with the Governor General of Morocco on the work of the OSE in that country and on the health problems of the Jewish population of that North African protectorate, a communique from OSE headquarters here announced today.

Later, the communique declared, Mr. Shaban conferred with the French Minister for Public Health and Social Welfare. Following this interview, Mr. Shaban praised the cooperation and assistance of the French authorities in alleviating the misery of the Jews living in the mellahs--ghettos--of North Africa.

Reporting on the mellahs, which he called "hell on earth" and "living cemeteries," the South African Jewish leader said that between 60 and 70 percent of the total Jewish population of Morocco live in the mellahs. The poverty and sickness which exists in the mellahs, he continued, are "unbelievable and indescribable."

The Jewish world, Mr. Shaban said, is doing much to relieve the misery of these Jews, but this assistance is by no means commensurate with the great need prevailing in the North African countries. In order to take care of these Jews, world Jewry must make an effort of the same magnitude as that made in behalf of Jewish displaced people at the end of World War II.

Terming the present effort in behalf of the North African Jews as "nothing but a drop in the ocean," Mr. Shaban called for the creation of a coordinating board in each of the countries of North Africa in which Jews live--to be composed of OSE, ORT, Alliance Israelite Universelle and Joint Distribution Committee--to plan and direct work on the scene. Such coordinating units must also develop local leadership from among the mellah Jews, he noted.

Praising the ORT, Alliance, JDC and OSE for performing a "most useful national task," the world OSE leader said that the Jewish health society was doing a "super-human job." Only those who could see the OSE's work on the spot could possibly "imagine the extent and scope" of its activities, he added. The OSE was in the vanguard in saving human lives and in laying the foundations of a future healthy generation, he concluded.

**FOUR JEWS HONORED IN QUEEN ELIZABETH'S NEW YEARS HONORS LIST**

LONDON, Jan. 2. (JTA) -- Four Jews were honored in the Queen's New Years Honors List released yesterday. Most prominent among them was Basil Henriques, who received a knighthood in recognition of his services in behalf of youth.

Other Jews on the list included two new Commanders of the Order of the British Empire: L. F. Salzman, a historian, and M. W. Goldblatt, director of research laboratories. E. J. Hayim, described as a "British subject lately resident in China" was made a Commander of the British Empire in the portion of the list assigned to Foreign Office personnel.

The 64-year-old Henriques, who is a member of a famed Sephardic family in Britain, is a founder and warden of the Bernard Baron St. Georges Jewish Settlement, which provides leisure time and other activities for young people in London's East End. He is a magistrate and a member of the Home Office Consultative Committee on Juvenile Courts.

**FRENCH CONSISTOIRE CALLS ASSEMBLY TO ELECT NEW GRAND RABBI**

PARIS, Jan. 2. (JTA) -- The Consistoire of French Jewry called today for a general assembly of the organization to meet here January 16 to elect a new Grand Rabbi of France. The post has been empty since 1952 when Grand Rabbi I. Schwartz died. Rabbi Jacob Kaplan has held the post of Acting Grand Rabbi since then.

WEST COAST RALLY ASKS CHANGE IN U.S. MIDDLE EAST POLICY

SAN FRANCISCO, Jan. 2. (JTA) -- A resolution urging the United States Government to reconsider its current Middle East policy and to suspend arms shipments to the Arab states was adopted unanimously at a community protest rally held here this week-end. The meeting, attended by some 1,000 persons, also urged the U.S. to do nothing to impair the military balance in the Middle East and to grant the states of the area economic and technical aid in fighting poverty and its consequences.

The meeting was sponsored by the American Zionist Council, American Christian Palestine Committee, B'nai B'rith, Jewish War Veterans and a number of other local Jewish groups. Among the major speakers at the rally were Rabbi Irving Miller, national chairman of the American Zionist Council, and George Christopher, president of the Board of Supervisors of San Francisco.

JEWISH AGENCY HEAD HITS "BLACKOUT" ON U.S. ARMS AID TO ARABS

NEW YORK, Jan. 2. (JTA) -- Washington's officially announced "security blackout" on arms shipments to Iraq came under severe criticism this week-end from Mrs. Rose L. Halprin, acting chairman of the Jewish Agency, on the eve of her departure for Israel to attend plenary sessions of the Jewish Agency executive.

Mrs. Halprin pointed out that "the security blackout in this case seems to have been influenced by political considerations representing recent State Department policy that has distressed many Americans." She said that she referred to the State Department policy of arming the Arab states "at a time when their official spokesmen continue their unrestrained incitement against Israel and reiterate their pledges of ultimate war against the new State."

U.S. AUTHORIZES \$1,000,000 IN GRAIN SORGHUM FOR ISRAEL

WASHINGTON, Jan. 2. (JTA) -- The Foreign Operations Administration has announced an authorization of \$1,000,000 in grain sorghum for Israel. The grain sorghum will come from the United States and its possessions.

ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION GIVES \$500,000 FOR NEAR EAST PROGRAM

PRINCETON, N. J., Jan. 2. (JTA) -- The Rockefeller Foundation has granted \$500,000 to Princeton University's program in Near Eastern studies for research, teacher training and interdepartmental study. Dr. Harold W. Dodds, president of the university, announced this week-end. The two main objectives of the program are the training of men for government service or business positions in the Near East and the training of teachers.

JUSTICE JACOB PANKEN RETIRES FROM BENCH AFTER 30 YEARS

NEW YORK, Jan. 2. (JTA) -- Justice Jacob Panken of Domestic Relations Court retired from the bench this week-end upon the completion of his second ten-year term as a Domestic Relations judge. The 76-year-old jurist also served a ten-year term as Municipal Court justice.

Judge Panken was a pioneer in the Jewish labor and socialist movement in this country, together with such well-known figures as the late Abe Cahan, editor of the Jewish Daily Forward. He helped organize the International Ladies Garment Workers Union and the leather goods workers union. He was active in Jewish relief work after World War I and helped found the American ORT Federation.

JEWISH DOCTOR GETS NORWEGIAN GOLD MEDAL FOR MEDICAL PAPER

OSLO, Jan. 2. (JTA) -- Dr. Leo Eitinger, a Norwegian Jewish physician, has been awarded the King's Gold Medal for a paper on the effects of military life on the health of Norwegian soldiers, it was announced here today. The paper was presented in a competition sponsored by the Medical Faculty of Oslo