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SECRETARY BENSON DISCUSSES LADEJINSKY CASE; SCORES ANTI-SEMITISM

WASHINGTON, Jan. 4, (JTA) -- Secretary of Agriculture Ezra Taft Benson received today a delegation representing the American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith to whom he expressed regret over the fact that his executive assistant Milan D. Smith released an anti-Semitic letter in connection with the dismissal of Wolf Ladejinsky from his post as agricultural economist for the U.S. Government.

The Secretary emphasized that anti-Semitism is abhorrent to him and that he repudiates the anti-Jewish implications in the letter, which was written by a White Russian emigre, George N. Vitt, who impugned the loyalty of American Jews of Russian origin. Present at the meeting today was Mr. Smith, who sought to deny that he had endorsed the anti-Semitic Vitt letter which he had released to the press.

The Jewish delegation was headed by Henry Edward Schultz, national chairman of the Anti-Defamation League, and Murray Gurfein, member of the administrative committee of the American Jewish Committee. It also included Benjamin R. Epstein, national director of the ADL; Herman Edelsberg, ADL Washington representative; Edwin J. Lucas, director of national affairs of the American Jewish Committee, and Nathaniel H. Goodrich, AJC Washington counsel.

Following their talks with Secretary Benson, Mr. Schultz and Mr. Gurfein issued the following statement:

"We came to see the Secretary of Agriculture at his invitation to discuss with him the overtones of the Ladejinsky matter. We expressed our deep concern that the unfortunate release of the Vitt letter had raised questions in people's minds about the injection of religious prejudice in the determination of Ladejinsky's status."

"The Secretary stated that the religious question played no part in that decision. He regretted the release of the Vitt letter and repudiated its anti-Semitic implications. He stated that anti-Semitism is abhorrent to him and that he would never countenance it in his Department. We urged Secretary Benson in view of all the circumstances, to reopen and reconsider the whole Ladejinsky case at the Navy did in the Chasnow matter."

White House press secretary James Hagerty was asked today if the Ladejinsky case was now before President Eisenhower. He declined to answer but did say that Secretary Benson had discussed it with Sherman Adams, the President's assistant. It is understood that Mr. Benson made no commitments to the Jewish delegation as to whether he would reopen the Ladejinsky case.

Joseph Barr, national commander of the Jewish War Veterans, who had announced earlier that he would discuss with President Eisenhower the anti-Semitic overtones of the Ladejinsky case, was received today by the President, but declared later that he had not had an opportunity to discuss the Ladejinsky affair with him.

"BIG THREE" BACK ISRAEL ON SUEZ ISSUE AT SECURITY COUNCIL DEBATE

UNITED NATIONS, N. Y., Jan. 4. (JTA) -- The United States, Britain and France today backed Israel's demand at the United Nations Security Council that Egypt must keep the Suez Canal open for ships sailing to and from Israel under the Israel flag.

The heads of the British, French and American delegations indicted Egypt for its blockade of the Suez Canal, calling such stoppage a violation of the armistice agreement between Egypt and Israel. Brazil, apparently voicing the sentiment of a number of other members of the Security Council, took the same attitude as the Big Three. The Soviet Union's delegate, who in the past had vetoed anti-Arab actions in the Council, refrained from making any comment whatever.

The case of the seizure by Egypt of the Israel vessel "Bat Galim" was acknowledged by all to be clearly a test issue. Fundamental emphasis was placed upon the very issue that Israel has been accentuating, Israel's right to free passage through the Suez Canal.

At the very beginning of today's meeting of the Security Council, presided over by New Zealand's Sir Leslie Know Munro, Ambassador Abba S. Eban, chief of Israel's delegation, announced that he had nothing to say until members of the Council had voiced their comments. Omar Loutfi, acting chairman of the Egyptian delegation, briefly reviewed the "Bat Galim" case, pointing out that the ship's crew has already been released, and making a new suggestion to the effect that a subcommittee of the Israel-Egyptian Mixed Armistice Commission now take charge of the ship, which is still being held by Egypt.

U. S. Delegate Urges Egypt to Let "Bat Galim" Proceed to Haifa

The heads of the three Western delegations then addressed the Council. Henry Cabot Lodge, Jr., United States representative, although the last of the Big Three representatives to speak, seemed to set the tone by declaring "Egyptian restrictions on ships passing through the Suez Canal, whether bound to or from Israel, or whether flying the Israeli or some other flag, are inconsistent with the spirit and intent" of the Egyptian-Israeli armistice agreement and the various resolutions and treaties about freedom of passage through the Suez Canal. Mr. Lodge called upon Egypt to let the Bat Galim continue its passage through the Suez Canal now.

Sir Pierson Dixon, the British delegate, told the Egyptians that after Egypt had decided that the "Bat Galim" crew was not guilty of murder charges originally filed by the Egyptian authorities, "the Egyptian Government could have seen its way to letting the ship proceed on its course through the Canal under such security restrictions as seemed appropriate." He expressed regret that "this course was not followed."

Henri Hoppenot, of France, took the view, just as the U. S. and Britain had, that Egyptian insistence upon blockading the Canal to shipping flying the Israel flag violates the original Constantinople Treaty of 1888, as well as the UN resolution of 1951. Brazil supported the Big Three and insisted that the Israel ship, crew and cargo should have been allowed to proceed through the Canal. In the viewpoint of Brazil, Egypt should also pay compensation to the crew and ship for having been held "in durance vile."

Sir Leslie then adjourned the Council meeting "until next week," without setting a specific date. It was the general consensus among delegates that it is up to Egypt now to alter its course or face a resolution ordering it to do so.

After the meeting, Israel circles expressed deep gratification over the re-affirmation by the three Western Powers and Brazil of the principle of free passage to and from Israel through the Canal. Israelis have attached special importance to the clear formulation of the case voiced by Ambassador Lodge.

DR. GOLDMANN REPORTS TO JEWISH AGENCY ON ZIONIST WORK IN U.S.

JERUSALEM, Jan. 4. (JTA) -- Dr. Nahum Goldmann, chairman of the Jewish Agency executive, reported to the Agency executive today on various aspects of the activities of the American Zionist movement, and on the United Jewish Appeal campaign. He also spoke of the Austrian-Jewish negotiations on Jewish restitution claims and said that the fate of the negotiations would be decided within the next few weeks.

Dr. Giora Josephthal, Agency treasurer, reported on the situation in the immigrant transit camps following the recent heavy rains and floods. He outlined plans for alleviating the condition of the immigrants in the camps and for eliminating the camps altogether.

STABILITY OF SHARETT CABINET BELIEVED ASSURED; COMPROMISE REACHED

JERUSALEM, Jan. 4. (JTA) -- The stability of the coalition Cabinet has been assured as a result of a compromise agreement worked out by Premier Moshe Sharett and the four General Zionist Ministers in the government, informed quarters here believe. Last night the Premier held another meeting with the General Zionist Cabinet members to discuss the question of collective responsibility.

Meanwhile, it was reported here that former Premier David Ben-Gurion, who is staying at Tiberias, conferred for four hours yesterday with Minister of Religion Moshe Shapira on the question of the relations between religion and the state. Mr. Ben-Gurion attempted to convince the Poale Mizrahi leader of the necessity for a two-party system in Israel, rather than the present multi-party system. The ex-Premier has held similar meetings with leaders of the General Zionist, Mapam and Achdut Avoda parties.

17,520 IMMIGRANTS ARRIVED IN ISRAEL IN 1954; 158 FROM UNITED STATES

JERUSALEM, Jan. 4. (JTA) -- A total of 17,520 immigrants arrived in Israel during 1954, with 3,450 coming during December, it was announced here today on the basis of provisional statistics compiled by the Jewish Agency. Of the annual total, 158 were from the United States.

The largest group to arrive was North African Jews, of whom 10,859 arrived during the year. From India came 1,586, while 579 arrived from Yemen and 499 from Iran. The total number of immigrants from Argentina was 362, from Brazil 104 and from Libya 150. The total for 1954 was larger than 1953 when only 10,347 arrived, but smaller than the 23,375 figure for 1952.

CATHOLIC ORGAN IN ENGLAND ASSAILS ISRAEL ON HOLY PLACES ISSUE

LONDON, Jan. 4. (JTA) -- "The Universe," major Catholic publication in England, assails Israel in its current issue and declares that the "very existence of the Holy Places (in Palestine) is in grave peril."

The Catholic organ says that the Vatican "is ceaselessly preoccupied" with the problem of the Holy Places. It reviews the UN resolution on internationalization of the Holy Places, which it advocates, and adds that nothing has been done to implement this resolution.

"Both the United Nations and the State of Israel have a particularly grave obligation in the matter," the Universe continues, "for the modern Jewish State owes its very existence to the fact that the United Nations chose to recognize and sanction Jewish aggression against Arab lands."

U. N. COMMISSION CONDEMNS EGYPT FOR VIOLATING ARMISTICE PACT

TEL AVIV, Jan. 4. (JTA) -- The Israel-Egyptian Armistice Commission condemned Egypt today for violating the armistice agreement by erecting a military post in the demilitarized zone near Nitzanim. The post, which was set up December 24, was evacuated on December 30.

VICTIMS OF RACIAL PERSECUTION TO BE PENSIONED FOR LIFE IN ITALY

ROME, Jan. 4. (JTA) -- Victims of racial persecution in Fascist Italy who lost their ability to work as a result of torture or other persecutions will be pensioned for life under a law passed today by the Italian Senate.

The measure, which also provides benefits for political opponents of Fascism who were persecuted, provides special retirement benefits for persecutees who are still employed. The measure covers political victims since 1922, when Mussolini took control of Italy, and racial victims since 1938 when the first racist laws were adopted.

It is expected that the law will cost the Italian Government 50,000,000 lire in the first year and 100,000,000 lire the next year. The law sets up a commission to establish qualifications for benefits authorized by the measure.

NAZI LAWS AGAINST JEWS LISTED; TO AID IN SEEKING INDEMNIFICATION

DUSSELDORF, Jan. 4. (JTA) -- More than 430 anti-Jewish laws, decrees and ordinances issued by the Nazi regime in Germany have now been compiled and published here for the benefit of individual Nazi victims seeking indemnification. The book was issued with the aid of the United Restitution Office.

Nazi victims presenting compensation claims to the German authorities, must establish the fact that they were persecuted in a given manner. The book deals only with anti-Jewish legislation applying to Germany proper. Additional discriminatory measures enacted by Nazi officialdom in the countries overrun by Germany before and during the war probably exceed 2,000 in number.

In addition to the well-known major anti-Jewish laws, the book, edited by the late Dr. Bruno Blau, quotes such decrees as that of January, 1941, requiring Jews to give up woolen clothing and furs, permitting them to retain one overcoat but specifying that, if it has a fur collar, the collar must be detached; that of December, 1941, banning Jews from using telephones; that of February, 1942, forbidding them to subscribe to or buy newspapers and magazines; that of April, 1942, excluding Jews from the use of public transportation; that of May, 1942, barring them from barber shops; and finally that of the same month, prohibiting Jews from owning pets such as dogs, cats, canaries or goldfish.

U. N. BODY STARTS DELIBERATIONS ON PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION

UNITED NATIONS, N. Y., Jan. 4. (JTA) -- The 12-member United Nations Subcommittee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities opened its seventh session here today to discuss the aspects of the UN Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights which proclaimed the equality of man.

The session was greeted by UN Undersecretary Philippe de Seynes who emphasized the difficult task of the Subcommittee in seeking the abolition of racial and religious discrimination in various fields. Max Sørensen of Denmark, chairman of the Subcommittee, referred in his opening remarks to the decision of the United States Supreme Court on the question of segregation in schools and said that certain political events of the past year "show a trend favorable to our work."

ITALIAN JEWISH COMMUNITIES JOIN IN FIGHT AGAINST WORLD CALENDAR

ROME, Jan. 4. (JTA) -- The Union of Italian Jewish Communities called on Italian Jewry today to cooperate in the world-wide campaign of opposition to the proposal for a world calendar, which is currently under consideration in the United Nations.

JEWISH CONGRESS SEEKS ELIMINATION OF BIGOTRY IN SECURITY PROGRAM

NEW YORK, Jan. 4. (JTA) -- The American Jewish Congress today requested "a comprehensive revision" of the entire security program for Federal employees, so that the program should "serve its legitimate purposes and prevent the free play of anti-Semitism and bias, the harassment of men of courageous and independent views and the imposition of a sterile conformity on the public service."

In a telegram to the Senate Committee on Post Office and Civil Service, Dr. Israel Goldstein, president of the American Jewish Congress, charged that the program was being "perverted because of the vagueness of criteria defining disloyalty, the lack of appellate procedures and the absence of any central supervisory agency."

Dr. Goldstein charged that the circumstances surrounding the dismissal of Wolf Ladejinsky, American agricultural attache in Tokyo, strongly reinforced the suspicion aroused by the earlier cases of Abraham Chasanow, U. S. Navy Department employee, who was reinstated after being suspended on unsubstantiated security charges, and the 24 Fort Monmouth scientists, who were also recently cleared, that anti-Semitism and prejudice were operating at various levels of the employee security program.

Present procedures, the AJC statement asserted, "both invite and sanction abuse, unfounded suspicion, bigotry and downright stupidity, and security officers are hiding behind the plea of the need for secrecy to act like little dictators in their own private Kremlins."

CALIFORNIA SENATE TO COMBAT HATEMONGERS SPREADING BIGOTRY

FRESNO, Calif., Jan. 4. (JTA) -- An offer to cooperate with the House Committee on Un-American Activities in a campaign to expose the activities of neo-Fascist hate mongers who spread religious and racial bigotry has been made by State Senator Hugh Burns, chairman of California's Senate Committee on Un-American Activities.

In a letter to Rep. Harold Velde, chairman of the House committee, which recently issued a report condemning such groups, Sen. Burns praised the report as alerting Americans to the "menace of right-wing neo-Fascists and others who cloak their preachings of bigotry behind a smokescreen of anti-Communism, although actually their purpose is to preach hate against groups of good Americans because of religious and racial differences." In his letter, Sen. Burns noted that much of the literature of these hate groups reaches California through the mails.

CASABLANCA JEWISH PHILANTHROPIC ORGANIZATIONS TO FORM FEDERATION

NEW YORK, Jan. 4. (JTA) -- For the first time in the history of North African Jewry, agreement has been reached among all Casablanca Jewish organizations to create a single united body, similar to the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York, Jules Braunschvig, vice-president of the Alliance Israelite Universelle, reported upon his arrival here today. The aim of the new group, he said, was to conduct a united fund-raising campaign, the proceeds of which would be divided among all constituent agencies.

M. Braunschvig announced the opening of new classes in Alliance schools in Morocco. He said that the new classes would accommodate 2,100 pupils, bringing the total enrollment in Alliance schools in Morocco to 33,667. The total number of students in all Alliance schools in Moslem countries and Israel will reach a record figure of more than 52,000, he declared.

M. Braunschvig came to the United States from Paris to confer with the leaders of the Conference on Claims Against Germany, of which he is a vice-president and also to report to the American Friends of the Alliance on the problems confronting the Alliance.

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE HONORS RETIRING FRENCH AMBASSADOR

NEW YORK, Jan. 4. (JTA) -- Ambassador Henri Bonnet of France was tendered a farewell luncheon yesterday by the American Jewish Committee prior to his sailing for home tomorrow.

Senator Herbert H. Lehman, an honorary vice-president of AJC, presented a gift to the retiring diplomat as a token of the American Jewish Committee's appreciation for "his service to humanitarian causes and his contribution to American-French amity." Irving M. Engel, AJC president, presided.

PUBLICATION OF SPANISH-JEWISH MAGAZINE FOR LATIN AMERICA PLANNED

MEXICO CITY, Jan. 4. (JTA) -- Aron Neumann, editor and publisher of Aonde Vamos, Jewish weekly magazine published in Portuguese in Brazil, arrived here from Rio de Janeiro to prepare the ground for the publication of a Spanish-Jewish magazine to serve Jewish communities throughout Latin America. The magazine will be published in Brazil.

Mr. Neumann, an active Zionist, was received here by prominent Zionist leaders as well as leaders of central Jewish organizations. He will proceed from here to the United States and is expected to arrive in New York about the middle of this month.

ISRAEL MAYOR OPERATED ON IN BOSTON; WILL PROMOTE INVESTMENTS

NEW YORK, Jan. 4. (JTA) -- Mayor Oved Ben Ami of Nathanya, Israel, who arrived last month in this country to help promote large-scale financial investments in Israel industries, has undergone a successful operation in Boston and is now recuperating at a New York hotel, it was announced here today.

Mr. Ben-Ami intends to meet shortly with leading financiers here to set up a corporation for the promotion of pioneer industries in Israel. He will be received by Mayor Robert Wagner of New York to whom he will present an invitation to the Second World Assembly of Jewish Choirs scheduled to be held in Israel during July, 1955. Fifteen choirs from the United States, numbering 500 voices, will participate in the song festival which will take place during the assembly.

ISRAEL SETS MEMORIAL DAY FOR JEWS ANNIHILATED BY THE NAZIS

JERUSALEM, Jan. 4. (JTA) -- Memorial services for the Jewish communities of Europe wiped out by the Nazis were held throughout Israel today and the traditional fast day was observed today, the tenth day of the Hebrew month of Teveth, which has been set aside as a memorial day for the destroyed communities.

Prayers and psalms were recited throughout the day on Mt. Zion and a special mass service was held this afternoon in the "Cave of Catastrophe," on the height. The Israel Chief Rabbinate has called on synagogues throughout the world to light candles for the murdered Jews whose actual date of death is unknown. Their memorial date has been fixed as of this day.

HEBREW UNIVERSITY SCIENTISTS DESIGN NEW INSTRUMENT ON AIR MOVEMENT

JERUSALEM, Jan. 4. (JTA) -- Two Hebrew University scientists have designed an improved katathemometer, an instrument for measuring air movement, it was announced here today. The announcement termed the new instrument "a real advance on anything we knew before on this subject." The scientists credited with the new design are Walter Koch and Deborah Kaplan.