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ISRAEL CABINET FORMALLY ACCEPTS BEN GURION AS DEFENSE MINISTER

JERUSALEM, Feb. 20; (JTA) -- David Ben Gurion formally became Israel's Minister of Defense today following a meeting of the Cabinet at which Premier Moshe Sharett reported on the resignation of Pinchas Lavon from the post which Mr. Ben Gurion has agreed to take over.

Premier Sharett gave a detailed account to the Cabinet of the reasons for Mr. Lavon's resignation. An official announcement issued following the meeting of the Cabinet said that the resignation was precipitated by Mr. Sharett's refusal to agree to Mr. Lavon's proposals for changes in the defense set-up.

Mr. Ben Gurion's dramatic return to office in the Israel Government, after 14 months of semi-retirement, was announced in a broadcast by Premier Sharett. According to reliable sources, Mr. Ben Gurion accepted the defense portfolio on the appeal of his party colleagues because of the gravity of the security situation and the possibility of a Cabinet crisis.

Activities Preceding Ben Gurion's Return Described

The Jerusalem Post, in an exclusive circumstantial report, described today the feverish activities which preceded the stunning announcement that the veteran Israel leader had agreed to emerge from retirement in the Negev to assume a key cabinet post. According to this paper's report, Premier Sharett sent a delegation to Mr. Ben Gurion composed of two close associates in the Mapai Party, Labor Minister Golda Myerson and Mordchai Namir, secretary general of the Histadrut, the General Labor Federation of Israel; They gave Mr. Ben Gurion a full report of the situation with respect to Mr. Lavon and conveyed to him Mr. Sharett's personal request that he assume the Defense portfolio.

Mrs. Myerson left the Ben Gurion retreat at Sdeh Boker in the Negev and met Mr. Sharett at nine o'clock at Kibbutz Netzer Sereni, where he had participated in a memorial meeting. She gave the Premier Mr. Ben Gurion's affirmative response and Mr. Sharett thereupon issued the statement which informed the nation of Mr. Ben Gurion's return.

Sharp criticism of the procedure which led to Mr. Ben Gurion's return to the Cabinet was voiced in the right and left-wing newspapers. These papers charged that no consideration had been given to the fact that Israel is governed by a coalition and asserted that neither Mr. Lavon himself, nor the General Zionists, Progressives and Religious Bloc members of the Cabinet had been informed of Mr. Sharett's approach to Mr. Ben Gurion.

Mr. Sharett's alleged failure to consult Mapai's partners in the Cabinet came under heavy fire from Haaretz and Haboker, General Zionist organs, and from Hatzofeh, the Mizrachi paper. This failure, they asserted, made the Defense Ministry a "Mapai monopoly."

SYRIANS INVADE ISRAEL TERRITORY; HURLED BACK ACROSS FRONTIER

TEL AVIV, Feb. 20. (JTA) -- A Syrian force invaded Israel territory in Upper Galilee, but was driven off after determined resistance by settlers. The Syrian thrust was aimed at the settlement of Gonen, whose settlers hurled the Syrians back across the frontier. The Arabs kept up a continuous fire from their posts until the Israelis directed a heavy curtain of fire at them and silenced them.

Israel security forces clashed with Arab infiltrators in 16 separate incidents during the week ending February 16, it was announced today. In addition, there were seven Arab-Israel incidents involving Arab violations of Israel's border.

HEAT, LACK OF RAIN, DESTROY HALF OF ISRAEL'S CROP

TEL AVIV, Feb. 20. (JTA) -- The unseasonable heat and lack of rain which has prevailed in Israel in recent weeks has already destroyed half of the winter crop and threatens the remainder, an expert of the Ministry of Agriculture revealed today following a tour of the drought areas. Farmers have been hit most desperately in the Southern Negev, the Jezreel Valley and the Upper Ephraim Plateau.

Unless four inches of rain falls soon, farmers say, the remainder of the winter crop will be lost and the summer crop will be in danger. It is not even possible to sow the next crop now because of the extreme dryness of the soil.

JEWS OUTSIDE OF ISRAEL MUST LEARN HEBREW TO SURVIVE, GOLDMANN SAYS

NEW YORK, Feb. 20. (JTA) -- "Jewry's continuity is in greater jeopardy today than ever before in Jewish history," Dr. Nahum Goldmann, chairman of the Jewish Agency, said tonight at a dinner given in his honor by the Histadrut Ivrit of America, an organization promoting the Hebrew language and culture in the United States. He pointed out that Hebrew can become a "centrifugal force" uniting all Jews.

Advising the Jews outside of Israel to adopt Hebrew as their second language, Dr. Goldmann said: "Six million Jews were physically lost to us as a result of Nazi genocide. Another two and a half million are divorced from us spiritually by fiat and repression in the countries behind the Iron Curtain. Then there is the horrible prospect that many small Jewish communities will be further reduced in numbers through assimilation and inter-marriage. The danger of fading away, the most ignoble death of all, faces American Jewry no less than other Jewries.

"Hebrew alone, living Hebrew, can assure survival," Dr. Goldmann continued. "This language, communicating the ideas and values of living Jewish tradition, must become the acquisition of a majority of the American Jewish community, and it is essential if communication between United States and world Jewry, especially Israel, is to be maintained, and our survival depends on successful communication."

The dinner, marking the Tercentenary celebration of the contribution of Hebrew Culture toward 300 years of Jewish settlement in the United States, was the occasion of two events: 1. The Nahum Goldmann Foundation was established by the Histadrut Ivrit; an annual award to the foremost Hebrew educator will be made by the foundation. 2. A special scroll was presented to Columbia University in recognition of that institution's promotion and appreciation of Hebrew culture; Dr. Edgar G. Miller, Dean of the Graduate Faculty, accepted the scroll on behalf of the university.

Three Hebrew educators were cited at the dinner in recognition of their role in spreading the knowledge of the Hebrew language and literature in the United States. They are Boris Margolin and Abraham Spicehandler, past presidents of the Histadrut Ivrit, and Daniel Persky, who has contributed greatly to the diffusion of Hebrew literature in the United States.

ISRAEL PLANS TO DIG HUGE CANAL FROM MEDITERRANEAN TO DEAD SEA

TEL AVIV, Feb. 20. (JTA) -- Final preparations for a giant hydroelectric project which would yield 500,000,000 kilowatts annually are now under way, it was reported here. The electricity will be generated by the flow of Mediterranean waters into the Dead Sea through a 45-mile long canal. The entire project will cost an estimated 100,000,000 Israel pounds.

The canal, which will be 65 feet wide and ten feet deep, will start near the Kishon River, cross the Jezreel Valley to a point south of Lake Kinneret, and flow into the Jordan River toward the Dead Sea.

After producing the electricity, the waters of the ocean would flow into the Dead Sea, where they would keep the water at its present level. The Dead Sea's water level would otherwise be lowered by Israel and Jordan water and irrigation plans which contemplate the use of water from the Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers. Electricity produced by this project will be 40 percent cheaper than present methods, which require large amounts of fuel.

At the same time, other smaller electric stations will be established. The most important of these will be north of Lake Kinneret near Tabgha, where Jordan waters can be used to operate turbines, because of an 830 foot drop by the Jordan waters into the lake.

ISRAEL TO SPEND \$41,000,000 ON IRRIGATION DURING CURRENT YEAR

NEW YORK, Feb. 20. (JTA) -- Israel's irrigation target for 1955, which will be sought with the aid of American Jews, is to add 200,000 dunam--about 50,000 acres--to the irrigated area of the country at a cost of \$41,000,000, Dewey D. Stone, national chairman-elect of the United Israel Appeal, announced here today in a special report to the organization's board of directors. This blueprint will bring the total area under irrigation in Israel to 1,000,000 dunam by the end of 1955.

"We are, of course, deeply gratified," Mr. Stone stated, "to hear reports of possible rapprochement between Israel and her Arab neighbors on using the Sea of Galilee as a reservoir for rainwater. We hail the efforts of Eric Johnston, President Eisenhower's personal envoy to the Middle East, and of the United States government, for seeking to achieve a peaceful and effective solution of these important irrigation problems for the welfare of the people of the whole region. At the same time, however, the UIA and its agencies, are continuing to carry out on schedule an extensive internal irrigation network which will make possible the absorption of needy newcomers to Israel."

Of the total of \$41,000,000 to be spent for irrigation during the course of the current year, a minimum of \$9,000,000 will be provided by the United Israel Appeal budget. The balance will be spent by the Israel Government. UIA agencies are directly concerned with irrigation projects to create a productive agricultural framework for the resettlement of immigrants entering the country, particularly the 30,000 Jews who are expected from North Africa during 1955.

Mr. Stone described as the most important event in the field of irrigation this year the opening by late summer of the Yarkon-Negev pipeline which will carry 100,000,000 cubic meters of water annually from springs near Tel Aviv to parched areas in the Negev.

JOHNSTON RETURNS TO ISRAEL; CONFERS WITH SHARETT ON WATER PROJECT

JERUSALEM, Feb. 20. (JTA) -- Ambassador Eric Johnston, President Eisenhower's personal envoy to the Near East, arrived here today after conferences in the Arab states. He met with Premier Moshe Sharett and reported on tentative agreements reached with the Arab states. Tomorrow, he will go to Tel Aviv to start a new series of talks with Israel water and power development experts,

ADENAUER ASSURES GOLDMANN INDEMNIFICATION LAW WILL BE IMPROVED

NEW YORK, Feb. 20. (JTA) -- West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer assured the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany that major amendments to improve the present Federal Indemnification Law can be expected within the next few months, it was announced here today by the Conference.

Chancellor Adenauer declared that his government and the parliament were determined to effect these amendments before the summer recess and to accelerate the processing of the claims of the victims of Nazi persecution.

The Chancellor's assurances were contained in a letter to Dr. Nahum Goldmann, president of the Conference. The letter was in reply to an appeal for action on several recommended improvements in the Indemnification Law which were submitted by the Conference board of directors following its recent meetings in Paris.

At the request of the board, Dr. Goldmann wrote to Chancellor Adenauer on February 6th, calling his attention to the lag in implementing the commitments made by the West German Government in behalf of individual victims of Nazi persecution and recommending certain important improvements.

"In its essence," Dr. Goldmann wrote, "the indemnification legislation must be simplified. The maze of technicalities which are strangling the law must be abolished. The insistence upon detailed (documentary) proof, which is almost impossible to obtain, must be eliminated. There is need for expanding the categories of persons entitled to compensation and increasing the amounts to be paid. Advance payments must be facilitated and the machinery for handling the claims must be enlarged and improved.

"Perhaps most important of all, however, the spirit which animated the enactment of the law must somehow be communicated down to every official until the compensation which was promised to the claimants becomes not merely a hope but a reality," Dr. Goldmann pointed out in his letter.

In his reply, Chancellor Adenauer wrote: "I am acquainted with the complaints, which have arisen particularly abroad, as a result of the slow pace of individual compensation. In order to bring about quick and effective improvements, new efforts are now being made. A working committee has been formed, consisting of the responsible federal agencies, the highest compensation authorities of the Laender and the Parties of the Bundestag, which is preparing as speedily as possible an amendment to the Federal Indemnification Law."

The Chancellor stressed the fact that "it is assured that the amendments can then be enacted in the shortest possible time, certainly before the summer recess of the Bundestag and Bundesrat." He also assured Dr. Goldmann that the most earnest attention will be given to the specific recommendations of the Claims Conference which are being conveyed in continued consultations between Conference representatives and officials of the Federal Government.

98 PERCENT OF GERMANS WOULD WELCOME HITLER, SURVEY INDICATES

LONDON, Feb. 20. (JTA) -- Forty-nine of every 50 Germans would welcome Hitler today as the "man who gave them the best years of their lives," the Sunday Chronicle reported today from Berlin on the basis of a nationwide survey of German public opinion which the Chronicle says has become a best seller overnight.

The survey, result of eight years of study by its authors, has caused concern among West German officials, the Chronicle said. The German officials fear that its revelations will have an adverse effect on public opinion in the United States, Britain and France.

U. S. MUSICIANS OBJECT TO CONCERTS BY "NAZI-LED" BERLIN ORCHESTRA

NEW YORK, Feb. 20. (JTA) -- A petition calling for cancellation of three scheduled concerts at Carnegie Hall by the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, which arrives in the United States next Sunday to open a six-week tour of 21 cities in the United States and Canada, has been signed by about 750 members of the American Federation of Musicians.

The petition, which 4,000 musicians in New York are expected to sign by Wednesday when it is submitted to an executive board meeting of Local 802--on whom it calls for action to halt the concert--charges that the conductor of the orchestra, Herbert von Karajan, and its manager, Gerhardt von Westerman, were members of the Nazi Party. The text of the petition declares:

"We musicians strenuously object to the appearance of the Nazi-led and Nazi-managed Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra in New York. The conductor, H. von Karajan, as well as the orchestra manager, was an active party member who bears responsibility for the death and exile of countless musicians from Hitler Germany.

"We also protest the United States Government subsidy of this orchestra while American orchestras are denied such support. We urge you to act to prevent this performance."

An official of Columbia Artists Management, which is handling the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra's tour, declared that the petition was in error in stating that the U. S. Government had subsidized the tour. He insisted that the West German Government was subsidizing it entirely.

JEWS IN CURACAO LAUDED ON 300TH ANNIVERSARY BY DUTCH

WILLEMSTAD, Curacao, Feb. 20. (JTA) -- The population of this Dutch island of Curacao is paying tribute to the small number of Jewish families residing here, in connection with the completion of 300 years of Jewish settlement on the island. The Dutch section of the population especially emphasizes the important contributions which these Jewish families and their ancestors have made to the development of the island.

The Jewish congregation of the island--Congregation Mikveh Israel--is considered the oldest in the Western Hemisphere. It was founded here in 1654 by a group of Sephardic Jews whom the Portuguese expelled from Recife, Brazil. The first synagogue on the island was built by Congregation Mikveh Israel in 1732 and remains in use to this day. The congregation was instrumental in building the first synagogue in New York with a contribution of funds to Shearith Jaacob, now known as Congregation Shearith Israel, the oldest in the United States.

BALTIMORE JEWS TO BUILD NEW \$18,000,000 JEWISH MEDICAL CENTER

BALTIMORE, Feb. 20. (JTA) -- Formal application for a building permit for seven Sinai buildings of a new \$18,000,000 Jewish Medical Center was made here by the Associated Jewish Charities. The plans reveal that the Sinai buildings will approximate 8,000,000 cubic feet and comprise the largest single building project in Baltimore history.

The new Sinai will be located on the Jewish Medical Center plot, which is already the site of the Levindale Hebrew Home and Infirmary with 231 beds, and Mount Pleasant Sanatorium with 55 beds. In all, the Jewish Medical Center will have a bed capacity of 709.

JEWS IN ENGLAND TO RAISE \$5, 600, 000 FOR ISRAEL IN 1955

LONDON, Feb. 20. (JTA) -- Trygve Lie, first Secretary General of the United Nations, was the principal speaker here last night at a dinner launching Britain's 1955 Joint Palestine Appeal. More than 1, 200 persons attended the affair. Target of this year's campaign has been set at 2, 000, 000 pounds, which is \$5, 600, 000. The sum of 600, 000 pounds was raised at the dinner.

Mr. Lie told the dinner that the UN and world Jewry were both "parents" to the Jewish State and were both responsible for it. He said that the State of Israel existed as an independent and sovereign state because: 1. The UN and world Jewry had supported it; 2. President Truman had given it immediate recognition, and 3. The "brave young Jewish army" fought and defeated Arab armies attacking from all quarters. He insisted that violations of the UN-negotiated armistice agreements are in fact violations of the UN Charter.

Other principal speakers at the dinner, included Israel Ambassador Eliahu Elath, Sir Simon Marks and Lavy Bakstansky, director of the Joint Palestine Appeal. The latter reported that the JPA had raised 50, 000 pounds more in 1954 than in 1953, while the total sum subscribed in this country by all pro-Israel agencies, in addition to the JPA, reached 2, 218, 000 pounds. This, he added, was the greatest figure ever subscribed in this country to the Zionist cause.

NATIONAL COUNCIL OF JEWISH WOMEN STARTS LEADER TRAINING PROGRAM

NEW YORK, Feb. 20. (JTA) -- Inauguration of a new volunteer leader training program was announced here today by the National Council of Jewish Women, following the arrival in the United States of Mrs. Alisa Sekey of Israel, the first person to be granted a fellowship under the new NCJW program.

The purpose of the program, according to Mrs. Irving M. Engel, president of the NCJW, is to "employ America's organizational life as a laboratory where methods may be learned which will promote welfare and strengthen democracy in other lands" through reinforcement of the capacity of women for leadership in their communities. The program also foresees an exchange of experience and information among women of many lands on the ways in which they have been effective in their communities.

BOSTON JEWISH TEMPLE GROUP GETS LIFE MEMBERSHIP IN NEGRO ASSN.

BOSTON, Feb. 20. (JTA) -- The first Jewish Brotherhood in the United States became a life member of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People at a ceremony here connected with National Brotherhood Week, which opened throughout the United States today.

A life membership plaque, commemorating the event, was presented to Joseph G. Weisberg, president of Temple Israel Brotherhood and co-publisher and executive editor of the "Jewish Advocate," Boston Anglo-Jewish weekly. The history-making contribution of the Temple Israel Brotherhood, which underlined its full participation in the fight for civil rights for Negroes, spearheaded a national drive by the NAACP for life memberships among Jewish, Catholic and Protestant organizations.

PHILADELPHIA JEWISH LEADERS LEAVE FOR ISRAEL ON STUDY TOUR.

NEW YORK, Feb. 20. (JTA) -- A party of 46 Philadelphia Jewish leaders and communal workers and their wives left here by plane last night for Israel to see at first hand the use of funds raised by the Allied Jewish Appeal of Philadelphia.

The members of the "caravan" who are paying their own expenses on this tour, are scheduled to return to Philadelphia on March 6, after meeting with Jewish Agency and government officials, visiting Biblical and historic sites and touring Israel's industrial plants, cooperative settlements, farms and institutions of all sorts.