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ISRAEL RESERVES JUDGMENT ON SYRIAN-EGYPTIAN MERGER; WATCHES MOVE

JERUSALEM, Feb. 2. (JTA) -- The implications which the unification of Egypt and Syria into a United Arab Republic may hold for Israel were reviewed here today at the regular weekly meeting of the Israel Cabinet. Israel is watching Syrian-Egyptian developments closely, though political observers feel that unification of the two Arab states is at least as much concern to the other Arab states and to the Western Powers as to Israel.

Asked about Israel's official reaction to the formation of a joint state by Egypt and Syria, a Foreign Office spokesman here today said that the Israel Government is reserving judgment. "Our reaction," he stated, "will be based on developments as they actually relate to Israel matters."

The spokesman pointed out that from Israel's point of view no practical steps have taken place in the Egyptian-Syrian merger. Many questions remain to be answered before Israel can react to the merger, including the question of whether Egypt and Syria will have one or two votes in the United Nations. Also whether one of the merged countries will accept international obligations incurred by the other. Israel considers that the obligations entered into by Syria, including its armistice pact with Israel, still exist, the Foreign Office spokesman said.

Israeli circles were, meanwhile, speculating today on the ultimate effect of the Syrian-Egyptian merger on Israel's security. The general opinion here is that while the merger is unlikely to increase immediately the danger of aggression against Israel, the long-term prospects are less hopeful. Since common factors ensuring a lasting value for the merger are few, it is considered possible that the government of the merger states will try to make up for the union's weakness by aggression against Israel.

For Israel the unification of Syria and Egypt into one country presents a technical problem of armistice relations. While Israel maintains a limited contact with Syria through the Israel-Syrian Armistice Commission, the Government of Israel declared the Israel-Egyptian armistice pact is null and void during the Sinai campaign. With the merger of Egyptian and Syrian armies now, the status of Israel-Syrian armistice arises. However, government circles here indicate that Israel will continue Israel-Syrian relations for the time being on the basis of the armistice agreement signed by the two countries.

State Department Reserves Position on Syrian-Egyptian Union

WASHINGTON, Feb. 2. (JTA) -- The State Department issued a statement on the merger of Egypt and Syria withholding judgment on the move until it receives more information from its embassies in the two Arab countries. The statement reads:

"Obviously there are a number of steps yet to be carried out before the union is completed, and therefore it would be premature to comment definitely. In general, however, the United States has always held that the establishment of closer relationships with the Arab world is for the Arab peoples themselves to determine, with regard to the desires of the peoples directly concerned and the welfare and stability of the area as a whole.

"The United States has, as yet, only incomplete information on these points, and must at this time reserve its position."

Experts Discuss Possibility of Eliminating One Arab Seat from U. N. Rolls

NEW YORK, Feb. 2. (JTA) -- The question whether Syria and Egypt will lose the separate memberships they now hold in the United Nations after becoming one country was raised today in UN official circles. No definite answer exists, but experts on UN procedure said that the merger may result in the elimination of one of the two Arab countries from the UN rolls.

Spokesmen of some Arab delegations at the United Nations also envisaged the possibility of only one seat in the UN for the two merged Arab states, inasmuch as the external affairs of these two Arab states will be conducted by a single foreign ministry. However, not all Arab members conceded that a loss of seats must necessarily occur as a result of the formation of a joint Arab state. Jawdat Mufti, charge d'affaires of Syria, said that such speculation was "premature." In the opinion of some delegates, the question is not immediately urgent, since the formal processes of the merger are expected to take some time.

U.N. TO APPOINT NEW TRUCE CHIEF; SEVERAL CANDIDATES SUGGESTED

UNITED NATIONS, Feb. 2. (JTA) -- Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold is canvassing possibilities of filling the post of chief of staff of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization at the request of Lt. Gen. E. L. M. Burns, commander of the UN Emergency Force, UN headquarters said today.

The announcement followed a report that Sweden had suggested to Mr. Hammarskjold that he appoint Col. Carlsson von Horn, head of the Malmö defense area in Sweden, to the UNTSO post and that other governments also had suggested candidates for the position.

The UN statement said that Gen. Burns has been on leave from his post as UN Chief of Staff since his appointment in November, 1956 as UNEF commander, retaining his chief of staff duties only in relation to the demarcation lines between Israel and Egypt where UNEF contingents are stationed. The statement emphasized that in January, Gen. Burns suggested to Mr. Hammarskjold that it might be desirable to reach a definite arrangement about UNTSO and that he was, therefore, placing his post as UNTSO chief of staff at Mr. Hammarskjold's disposal.

The UN statement also said that if a new chief of staff was named, Col. Byron V. Leary, who has been acting chief of staff in Gen. Burns' absence, would remain as deputy chief of staff until the end of his contract.

SEN. HUMPHREY CRITICIZES U.S. ARMING OF ARABS; WANTS BORDERS GUARANTEED

WASHINGTON, Feb. 2. (JTA) -- Chairman Hubert H. Humphrey of the Senate Foreign Relations subcommittee on the Near East yesterday criticized what he termed the U.S. Administration's failure to meet the Soviet challenge in the Middle East. At the same time, he lauded Israel's "midway Point Four program" by which Israel is extending technical assistance to Ghana, Burma, and other new nations.

Speaking before a conference on Middle East development sponsored by the Middle East Institute, the Senator stated: "It would be helpful if a few people started to say what is indeed the fact--that many of the problems of the Middle East existed long before the State of Israel was established, and that they would continue to exist independent of the so-called 'Palestine question.'"

He said that too often Americans looked at the Middle East "almost exclusively" in terms of the Arab-Israel dispute. He thought "the United States must stop hemming and hawing, playing both sides of the street as though the right hand can be separated from the left." He added that he still did not know what the State Department's actual attitude toward Egyptian President Nasser might be.

"The Administration has failed to meet the challenge" in the Middle East, Sen. Humphrey declared. He asserted that "the President has given no indication of freeing himself from, or even being very alert to, the disastrous, irrelevant, and unrealistic policies pursued during the past five years in the Middle East." He called for a coordinated new policy including discussion of a regional arms embargo with Russia, a guarantee against forceful change of borders, increased economic aid and establishment of a comprehensive Middle East development authority by the free world.

Sen. Humphrey questioned whether U.S. arms furnished the Arabs would ever be used against the Soviet Union. He indicated that the recipients of the arms might use them more likely against Israel. He said the Baghdad Pact actually proved to be only a "source of disunity."

Eric Johnston, who has served as special Presidential envoy to the Middle East, told the conference that the Arabs fear Israel more than Communism. He said many Arabs feel Israel eventually will be liquidated. According to Mr. Johnston, the Soviet Union was exploiting such Arab attitudes.

Chairman James Terry Duce ruled discussion of the Arab refugee question "out of order" when a conferee sought to raise the issue from the floor. The conferee, taking the Arab side, demanded to know why the conference had not taken up the Arab refugee problem. Mr. Duce said it was a "thorny problem" and thought progress was being made in viewing it in human rather than political terms. He said further discussion of the matter could only result in "heat and not illumination."

Israel's economic achievements were lauded at the conference by A. J. Meyer, associate director of the Harvard University Center for Middle Eastern Studies. At the same time he said: "Israel's astounding economic advance to date has been directed by decentralized arrangements. More than a dozen agencies--government ministries and bureaus, Histadrut and others--"evolved elaborate plans for their particular operations, but to date the arrangement represents a mosaic of plans rather than a coordinated whole."

PROBE STARTED INTO FOOD POISONING OF ISRAELI SCHOOL CHILDREN

JERUSALEM, Feb. 2. (JTA) -- The Ministry of Education has launched an investigation into the food poisoning of some 1,000 Israeli schoolchildren last Thursday. Thirty of the boys and girls are still in bed suffering from the after-effects.

KHRUSHCHEV REFUSES TO INTERVENE FOR ARAB-ISRAEL PEACE; ASSAILS ISRAEL

LONDON, Feb. 2. (JTA) -- Soviet intervention between Israel and the Arab states would serve no useful purpose at this time, Nikita S. Khrushchev, Soviet Communist Party head, told the Times of London in an interview this week-end.

In a lengthy interview in Moscow which covered many of the major political problems of the world today, Mr. Khrushchev insisted that there would be no value in intervention at this moment because relations "have been so aggravated" between Israel and the Arabs. "Israel," he advised, "should bear in mind her own complex situation and also the interests of the Arab states. At the moment she is not doing so and takes up a position in an aggressive manner," he charged.

MOSCOW ATTACKS HOWARD FAST, AMERICAN WRITER, AS A 'MILITANT ZIONIST'

NEW YORK, Feb. 2. (JTA) -- Howard Fast, American writer who broke with the Communists, was denounced in the Soviet press this week-end as a "militant Zionist." Literaturnaya Gazeta, leading literary organ in Moscow, said that the real reason behind Mr. Fast's break with the Communists was his love of Israel. According to the Moscow newspaper, Mr. Fast last year denounced the "insulting" tone of a message the Kremlin sent to Israel after her armies invaded Egypt in November, 1956.

"Fast got indignant at the sharpness of the note to Israel," the paper wrote. "But he did not get indignant at the fact that Israel started the aggression. The truth is that Howard Fast is not a Marxist, not an internationalist, but a militant Zionist who camouflages the insistent preaching of national exclusiveness with platonic words about fraternity."

CHANCELLOR ADENAUER WELCOMES REVIVAL OF JEWISH LIFE IN WEST GERMANY

BONN, Feb. 2. (JTA) -- West German Chancellor Adenauer marked the occasion of the 25th anniversary of Hitler's coming to power in Germany by receiving a delegation of the Central Council of the Jews in Germany and voicing strong disapproval of all manifestations of anti-Semitism.

The Chancellor welcomed the revival of Jewish communal life in West Germany and expressed his determination to assist in the integration of Jews in the Federal Republic.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS IN GERMANY GRUMBLE AGAINST RESTITUTION CLAIMS

BONN, Feb. 2. (JTA) -- Leaders of Germany's provincial governments have picked up the cue dropped by Fritz Schaeffer, Bonn Justice Minister, and have begun blaming the economic situation of their state governments on "miscalculations" of restitution compensation due victims of the Nazis.

In Dusseldorf, Willi Weyer, Finance Minister of Northrhine-Westphalia, told the provincial legislature that incorrect estimates of the obligations assumed in the Federal Indemnification Law had "burdened" the state.

He was picked up on this by a Christian Democratic deputy who demanded that the state's obligations not be used to cut down the claims of those entitled to compensation. A similar view was expressed by a Social Democratic deputy who, however, agreed that Northrhine-Westphalia's obligations were "disproportionate."

The Finance Minister of Rhineland-Pfalz, Dr. M. Nowack, blamed a state deficit of 52,000,000 deutschemarks on a miscalculation of anticipated income tax returns and of obligations to the Nazi victims. He "recognized" the moral necessity of paying compensation but complained that if they had to do it all over again the German states would not enter into the same contracts as far as their share of compensation was concerned.

TURKEY'S LEADING ANTI-SEMITE RENEWS HIS CAMPAIGN AGAINST JEWS

ISTANBUL, Feb. 2. (JTA) -- Despite the fact that he has been arrested several times and had newspapers closed under him because of his anti-Semitic and ultranationalist writings, Turkey's leading anti-Semite, Djevat Rifat Atilhan, has launched a new campaign of slander against the Jews.

Atilhan just published a book entitled "Islands and the Sons of Israel," and began writing articles for Hur Adam, a small reactionary and racist weekly. In his first article for Hur Adam, Atilhan has called on "all true Moslems" to form a front against the Jews and other enemies of Turkey. He attacked as "insolence" a suggestion by a local Jewish newspaper that mention of a Turkish citizen's religion be omitted from his identity card.

POLISH GOVERNMENT REPORTS EMIGRATION OF 30,300 JEWS DURING WAR

VIENNA, Feb. 2. (JTA) -- More than 30,300 Polish Jews emigrated to Israel during 1957, according to official Polish Government statistics made available here today. Polish authorities said permission had been given to such emigration to help reunite families.

3,900,000 AMERICANS OVER AGE 14 DECLARE JEWISH RELIGION AS THEIR FAITH

WASHINGTON, Feb. 2. (JTA) -- Some 3,900,000 Americans over the age of 14 declared their religion as Jewish, the United States Bureau of the Census reported here this week-end on the basis of a projection of a sample survey covering 35,000 families.

The bureau obtained this result in reply to a question: "What is your religion?" It established that 96 percent of the American people list themselves as belonging to some religious faith. In the sample survey, the first on religious affiliation ever taken by the bureau, it was also established that some 79,000,000 persons consider themselves Protestant and 30,700,000, Roman Catholic.

Although the sample survey asked a question about religious affiliation, the Census Bureau announced several months ago that because of opposition from a number of organizations and individuals it would not ask such a question in the 1960 national census. Major Jewish organizations and civic groups voiced opposition to the original plan to include such a question in the census. They insisted it violated the Constitutional American principle of separation of church and state.

JEWISH GROUPS ISSUES JOINT STATEMENT OPPOSING SUNDAY "BLUE" LAWS

NEW YORK, Feb. 2. (JTA) -- Compulsory Sunday observance laws violate the principle of religious liberty, declared a statement of position issued today jointly by all the constituent organizations of the Synagogue Council of America and the National Community Relations Advisory Council.

The erection of religious statues or the placing of religious symbols on publicly owned property, likewise represent serious impairments of the principle of separation of church and state, the same organizations declared. They also affirmed their opposition to the asking of questions about religious affiliation or belief in the course of federal population censuses.

Affiliated with these two coordinating agencies combined are the congregational and rabbinic bodies of the Conservative, Orthodox, and Reform movements in Judaism -- the United Synagogue of America and Rabbinical Assembly of America; the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America and Rabbinical Council of America; the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and Central Conference of American Rabbis; together with the American Jewish Congress, Jewish Labor Committee, and Jewish War Veterans of the U.S.; and thirty-nine Jewish councils in major cities throughout the United States.

The position opposing asking of questions about religion in the census was adopted some time prior to the decision by the United States Census Bureau to drop a proposed plan for seeking such information in connection with the 1960 census. Many representations were made to the Bureau of the Census and to the United States Department of Commerce, prior to the announcement last December 12 by Census Director Burgess that the plan for a question of religious affiliation had been dropped.

Regarding the erection of religious symbols on publicly owned property, the Jewish organizations declared that this "constitutes in effect a dedication of the premises to one sect or creed, to the exclusion of others." The evils inherent in such display of religious symbols on public property, they continued, "are substantially aggravated when religious statues or symbols are placed on public school premises.

"In such cases, sensitive and defenseless children, rather than mature adults, are principally affected. Moreover, attendance at school is not voluntary but is by compulsion of law. To compel children to obtain their secular education in an atmosphere charged with a religion violative of their beliefs is to deny them their full religious liberty as well as to breach the relationship of confidence and trust that should mark their school experience."

In opposing Sunday observance laws, the Jewish groups declared that, at the same time, they "regard as salutary laws requiring gainfully occupied persons to observe one day of rest in each week," but they held "that the choice of the day to be so observed should be a matter of individual preference."

ISRAEL FOREIGN MINISTER TENDERS DINNER TO U.S. JEWISH LEADER

JERUSALEM, Feb. 2. (JTA) -- Israel Foreign Minister Golda Meir tendered a dinner here in honor of Jacob Blaustein, honorary president of the American Jewish Committee. United States Ambassador Edward B. Lawson was one of the guests.

B'NAI B'RITH LEADERS RECEIVED BY POPE PIUS XII IN VATICAN CITY

WASHINGTON, Feb. 2. (JTA) -- Pope Pius XII granted an audience to Philip Klutznick and Frank Goldman, president and honorary president respectively, of the B'nai B'rith, it was announced here today when the two B'nai B'rith leaders returned from a trip to Rome and a subsequent tour of Israel. The Pope congratulated Mr. Klutznick and Mr. Goldmann on the good work and philanthropy of the B'nai B'rith.