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AMERICAN EXPRESS SAYS IT DOES NOT BOYCOTT ISRAEL; EXPLAINS POSITION

NEW YORK, May 7. (JTA) -- The American Express Company, which has been charged with closing its office in Israel under pressure of the Arab boycott against Israel, issued a statement today declaring that the office was closed in 1956 because it "did not create sufficient revenues to become self-sustaining."

The statement stressed that "American Express now offers to the traveling public a full range of travel services to Israel, including transportation, hotel and sightseeing" and has Israeli agents to service the needs of its travel clients at port and air terminals. It claimed that this form of representation through selected agents is practiced by the company in 48 other countries. It added that through local agents in Israel, American Express "continues to promote export and import shipping business with Israel" and is equipped to arrange the sale of drafts payable through Israeli banks.

(The Israeli Consulate in New York, commenting on the American Express statement, said: "The statement fails to answer the main question. It is and remains strange that American Express should have closed their own office in Israel in Spring 1956, a few months after a peak year for Israeli tourism. The alleged commercial considerations for this action make even stranger reading in the light of the record-breaking tourism to and in Israel, stimulated by Israel's tenth anniversary, when almost every shipping and air line has increased their services to Israel.")

American Express emphasized in its statement that in order to maintain a profitable office in any foreign country, the firm must be able to develop travel business of local origin. "In the case of Israel, business arising from this source was negligible in view of restrictions imposed by the Israeli Government on its nationals (i. e., 40 percent travel tax, a travel allowance of only \$10 per person per trip, and a mandatory exit permit)" the statement said. "As a result, travel business originating locally was almost completely confined to a few foreign tourists and representatives of American institutions who booked return passage through American Express, Tel Aviv.

"In the final analysis," the statement continued, "the office of American Express in Tel Aviv did not create sufficient revenues to become self-sustaining; consequently, it functioned merely to provide non-revenue producing services for American Express clients visiting Israel from other countries. In the course of five and one-half years, American Express was unable to put the office on a paying basis despite substantial investments in the world-wide promotion of services to Israel. Cumulative losses from the operation continued to rise; staff salary and wage expenses increased by approximately 30 percent in terms of dollars--and this despite the reduction otherwise expected from depreciation of the Israeli pound from \$2.80 to 56 cents."

The statement went on to explain that "American Express, in accordance with accepted business procedure, maintains an established policy to close out unprofitable offices when it appears there is no reasonable prospect that such enterprises can be run profitably and when clients of the company can be serviced efficiently by locally appointed agents." It concluded by stating that "American Express will continue its efforts to develop tourism to Israel and to promote sales of financial and shipping services for that country" and that "a full range of American Express services for Israel will always be offered within the limits of demand for such services."

JORDAN REFUSES TO PERMIT ISRAEL CONVOY TO PROCEED TO MT. SCOPUS

JERUSALEM, May 7. (JTA) -- A new Mt. Scopus "crisis" was seen in the making today following Jordan's demand for the removal of two maintenance men from the regular fortnightly relief convoy ascending the Israeli enclave on the height. Israel refused to remove the men and the Jordanians refused to permit the convoy to proceed unless the two were removed. Eventually, the entire Israeli party returned to the new city.

Several days ago, in routine fashion, the Israeli authorities handed United Nations officials a list of maintenance men and police guards who would relieve the present garrison.

Last night the Jordanians entered objections to the two, named Levy and Cohen, accusing one of being a "spy" and the other of having "infiltrated" Jordan territory.

When Israel was informed of the objections, acting truce chief Lt. Col. George A. Flint was summoned to the Foreign Office and informed that Israel insists that Jordan has no right to decide who will participate in the convoy.

That the Jordanians were shown the list surprised Israeli circles, since Israel had made a point during the negotiation of the Mt. Scopus agreement by Dr. Francisco Urrutia, UN Secretary General's personal representative, that only the UN had the right to see and check on Israel's list of men and supplies going up by convoy.

A similar storm blew up several months ago when Jordan refused to permit the regular convoy to cross Jordanian territory to make its way to the Hebrew University and Hadassah Hospital buildings atop Mt. Scopus. Then the Jordanians objected to the transportation of gasoline which, they charged, was being used to power excavating tools for use in digging trenches and building fortifications.

Israeli Officials Hope Incident Will be Settled Soon

Only after Dr. Urrutia negotiated for weeks with the parties was the matter settled with a new Mt. Scopus "agreement"--not yet fully implemented--which provided for demilitarization of the hill and gave the UN exclusive inspection and control rights as far as the convoys were concerned. Apparently, the UN observers have been sharing their exclusive inspection rights with the Jordanians by showing them the Israeli lists of men and lading going to the enclave.

The reason behind the latest bit of Jordanian troublemaking is shrouded in the unknown, but it follows a meeting between Jordanian Premier Rifai and UN political adviser here, Henri Vugier. At that meeting, the Premier warned M. Vugier that unless the UN put an end to what he claimed was Israeli work on fortifications Jordan would "take steps." He specifically charged that pneumatic drills could be heard on the ridge.

The incident also came just as the last tension-laden fuss--the protest against Israel troops and equipment participating in an Independence Day parade in Jerusalem--died down. Israeli officials expressed the hope tonight that the latest incident would be settled soon and indicated that they expected a reply from UN truce chief Maj. Gen. Carl C. von Horn tonight or tomorrow morning.

UNITED ARAB TROOPS MOVED INTO SINAI; DEPLOYED TOWARD ISRAEL BORDER

TEL AVIV, May 7. (JTA) -- Troops of the United Arab Republic entered the Sinai Peninsula and deployed toward the Israel border, it was reported today in a broadcast over Radio Cairo monitored here.

The radio said the soldiers had entered the scene of Israel's lightning victory over Egypt in 1956 to "fight locusts." Military observers here, however, believe that the number of troops and the range of their movements is far in excess of what is needed to fight the insect pests.

GREEK CITIZEN SENTENCED IN ISRAEL AS SPY FOR EGYPT; ADMITS CONTACTS

TEL AVIV, May 7. (JTA) -- Alcibiades Koukas, a Greek citizen, was sentenced today to four years' imprisonment following his conviction on charges of spying for the Egyptians. The 37-year-old former paratrooper in the Greek Army was arrested last September.

The sentencing judge, M. Kennet, acting president of the Tel Aviv District Court, said there was no doubt that Koukas had been sent to Israel by Egyptian agents operating out of Athens. He expressed the hope that Koukas' fate would serve as a warning to others who attempted to violate Israel's security laws. A representative of the Greek consulate here was present at the trial since its beginning January 28.

Koukas was arrested after snapping pictures of military camps and other army installations. In his room were found pictures and "invisible ink." He admitted having been contacted in Athens by a "necktie merchant" named Tanassis and an Egyptian captain named Samir.

U. S. CHRISTIAN LEADERS REAFFIRM THEIR SUPPORT FOR A FREE ISRAEL

NEW YORK, May 7. (JTA) -- Christianity's concern with the preservation of the State of Israel as "oasis of freedom and democracy" in the Middle East in the present cold war era was stressed today by Dean James A. Pike and other distinguished Church dignitaries at an Israel 10th anniversary luncheon tendered here by the American Christian Palestine Committee. Some 250 persons representing major religious and civic bodies attended the function which was also devoted to a farewell reception in honor of Dean Pike who is leaving New York this week to become Bishop Coadjutor of the Protestant Episcopal Church of California.

Father George B. Ford, recently retired from the Corpus Christi Catholic Church, said that "the happenings in Israel during the first ten years of this young and vibrant nation should bring great satisfaction to Christians." He noted that "the sacred places are accessible and revered."

DR. GOLDMANN HOPES KHRUSHCHEV WOULD ENTER "DIALOGUE" ON SOVIET JEWRY

NEW YORK, May 7. (JTA) -- The hope that the Soviet Government will finally recognize that the legitimate national rights of the Jews in the Soviet Union cannot be "stifled," and will permit Soviet Jewry free national self-expression, "both in terms of cultural self-expression and in terms of the right for those who wish to do it to emigrate to Israel," was expressed today by Dr. Nahum Goldmann in an article in the New York Herald-Tribune.

Dr. Goldmann pointed out that over many years there have been attempts to talk with Soviet leaders about the situation of the Jews in the Soviet Union, but these attempts came to nothing because Soviet spokesmen claimed that "there is no Jewish problem in the Soviet Union." However, in his recent statement to the Paris newspaper "Le Figaro" Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev made an important departure by emphasizing that the Jews in the Soviet Union constitute a nationality separate and distinct from other nationalities in the USSR, and that they do not live in similar conditions to the other nationalities there.

"This admission, albeit in negative terms, is essential to a serious dialogue on the implications of the Soviet-Jewish problem," Dr. Goldmann stated. "Once this is admitted, it obviously creates the question of how this nationality lives and what its future is to be." The world Jewish leader then went on to emphasize that Mr. Khrushchev, by his recognizing the existence of a Jewish nationality on the part of the Jews in the Soviet Union, and the existence of a Jewish question there, has created for the first time "the conditions for a dialogue." He expressed hope that "this dialogue will continue."

"Nowhere in his interview does Mr. Khrushchev indicate a belief that Jews as such can be made to disappear," Dr. Goldmann wrote. "Although expressing skepticism about the possibility of a Jewish 'collective existence,' he does not even hint at the possibility of Jewish assimilation. This represents a far-reaching change in the appraisal by the Soviet leadership of the nature of the Jewish problem, and this new appraisal is entirely in accordance with the facts. For even if a Jew in the Soviet Union completely assimilates to the culture surrounding him, he is still regarded as a Jewish national.

"In his identity card his nationality is registered as Jewish, and it is impossible for this Jew to 'solve' the problem of his Jewishness by forgetting about it and affiliating himself, as it were, to any other nationality within the Soviet Union. There would seem here to be an admission of what students of Jewish life in the Soviet Union have felt for years, namely that the Jewish problem in the Soviet Union cannot be solved by assimilation or de-Judaization.

"On the other hand, Mr. Khrushchev's skepticism about collective Jewish existence for the Jews of the Soviet Union is incompatible with the record. After 40 years in which an enforced assimilation policy was imposed on Soviet Jewry, this policy failed and is no longer even referred to by Mr. Khrushchev. But the Jewish nationality in the Soviet Union is not permitted any expression of its national existence, such as is accorded to other nationalities in the Soviet Union," Dr. Goldmann stressed.

Expresses Concern over Khrushchev's Characterization of Jews

The world Jewish leader emphasized in his article that Khrushchev's characterization of the Jews as "essentially intellectual" gives cause for concern. "Wherever such generalizations have been made," Dr. Goldmann wrote, "they have always been accompanied by an attempt to discriminate against Jews, as such, by imposing restrictions of one kind or another on their entry into universities or the professions. One cannot help reading between the lines of Mr. Khrushchev's statement on this point a justification of the numerous complaints that reach us from the Soviet Union, that in practice the right of Jews to secure a higher education is being restricted.

"That means in effect that the Jewish nationality in the Soviet Union is deprived of all the positive attributes of nationality," Dr. Goldmann continued. "It cannot come to the national center in Israel; it cannot organize its national cultural life as it wishes--but at the same time it is left with all the negative aspects of its national existence, namely restriction for individual Jews to develop as they wish and the impossibility of assimilation. That constitutes the basic description of the nature of the Jewish problem in the Soviet Union, whose existence Mr. Khrushchev has now recognized. It must be emphasized that this is not the situation in other Communist countries, such as Poland, where Jews do enjoy the positive rights of nationality, such as immigration to Israel and the right of cultural organization and self-expression."

Dr. Goldmann expressed regret over the fact that Stalin's successors have so far done nothing to make it possible for the liquidated Jewish cultural institutions in the Soviet Union to revive, even though many requests for this have been made on the part of the Jewish writers and poets that still survive. "There are still writers in the Soviet Union producing works in Yiddish, which they cannot publish," he stated. "It is also known that the Soviet government has before it applications to permit the revival of the Jewish theater, the establishment of a newspaper and a Jewish literary publication, as well as the creation of a Jewish publishing house. All these applications have so far been rejected."

JEWISH LABOR CONVENTION URGES FULL INTEGRATION IN SOUTHERN SCHOOLS

MONTREAL, May 7. (JTA) -- A resolution calling for all-out implementation of the United States Supreme Court's decision on integration of white and Negro schoolchildren in the Southern states was adopted here today at the concluding session of the week-long convention of the Workmen's Circle. The Jewish organization, which has 90,000 members in the United States and Canada, has several large and active branches in the South.

The delegates also called for repeal of the McCarran-Walter Immigration and Nationality Act and the substitution of a measure "of more humane qualities" and of a policy of freer immigration "consonant with the best interests of the judicial process."

In addition, the Workmen's Circle called on Secretary of State John Foster Dulles to demand of the Arab states that they call off their boycott of American and other nations' companies which either employ Jews or Israeli nationals or have commercial contacts with Israel. A resolution said that the "continued policies of the Communist-controlled Arab federation and other Arab states constitutes a violation of the Human Rights Charter of the United Nations, for it brings an economic boycott against not only a fellow member of the UN but against the citizens of other UN members."

The delegates sent their greetings to the State of Israel on the occasion of its tenth anniversary. However, they expressed official "dismay" that the Yiddish language had not been recognized by the State of Israel and added the hope that the Yiddish language would be given a status equal to that of Hebrew. Israel Breslaw, American labor leader, was elected the new president of the fraternal organization. He succeeds Jacob Zuckerman.

PIONEER WOMEN OF AMERICA PLANT WOOD FOR FALLEN ISRAELI SOLDIERS

JERUSALEM, May 7. (JTA) -- The first tree of a wood to be planted in memory of the 171 Israeli soldiers who died in the Sinai operation was planted today in an area overlooking the Gaza Strip. The project, on Jewish National Fund land, is sponsored by the Pioneer Women of America, sister organization of the Working Women's Council of Israel.

The first tree was planted by Mrs. Yehudit Simchonit, mother of the late Gen. Asaf Simchonit, commander of the forces which overran the Sinai Peninsula in less than a week in the fall of 1956. He died a few days afterwards in an airplane crash. The wood will consist of 171 circles of 100 trees--each circle in memory of a different fallen hero. Relatives of the slain men will plant the first tree in each circle.

Present at the ceremony were representatives of the Pioneer Women, Maj. Gen. Chaim Laskov, Israel Army Chief of Staff, and Minister of Agriculture Kaddish Luz. Gen. Laskov, in a short address, warned the enemies of Israel "as these trees grow and deepen their roots, our enemies' ways will not be able to uproot us."

At a ceremony in Tel Aviv, this week was named Pioneer Women's Week. Premier David Ben Gurion, Foreign Minister Golda Meir and Mrs. Rachel Yanait Ben Zvi, wife of the President of Israel, were present at the proclamation ceremony. Five hundred Pioneer Women are visiting Israel in a pilgrimage participating in the tenth anniversary. It was announced that the organization had already transferred \$500,000 to Israel this year and would send an additional \$75,000 as an anniversary gift.

AMERICAN FOUNDATION TO BUILD THEATRE FOR INBAL TROUPE IN ISRAEL

NEW YORK, May 7. (JTA) -- Plans to build a school and theatre in Tel Aviv for Inbal, the Yemenite dance troupe, were announced here today by the America-Israel Cultural Foundation. The present troupe will extend its training and prepare dancers for concert performances while other young Yemenite men and women will be trained in the company's traditions.

20,000-VOLUME LIBRARY ON AMERICAN SUBJECTS OPENED IN TEL AVIV

TEL AVIV, May 7. (JTA) -- A new 20,000-volume library, chiefly devoted to American subjects, was opened here today at ZCA House. The library is named in honor of Abraham Goldstein, former president of the Connecticut Region of the Zionist Organization of America.

"DIARY OF ANNE FRANK" ATTRACTS CAPACITY AUDIENCES IN BRAZIL THEATRE

SAO PAULO, May 7. (JTA) -- Capacity audiences have been attending the performance of "The Diary of Anne Frank" given in one of Sao Paulo's leading theatres. All newspapers commenting on the first performance of the play in Brazil have made a point of recalling the tragedy of European Jewry under Nazi rule. Felipe Carone, who plays the role of Anne Frank's father, is of Lebanese descent.

PRESIDENT OF CHILE RECEIVES ISRAEL'S MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS

SANTIAGO, Chile, May 7. (JTA) -- Chilean President Ibanez received today Moshe Carmel, Israeli Minister of Communications, who is visiting a number of Latin American countries. Mr. Carmel was accompanied by Israeli Minister I. Goren. Mr. Carmel also met with several other Chilean Cabinet members.