



Jewish Telegraphic Agency

DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

660 FIRST AVENUE

NEW YORK 16, N. Y.

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Vol. XXVII - 42nd year

Wednesday, April 13, 1960

No. 71

ISRAELIS CELEBRATE PASSOVER IN JOYOUS MOOD; PRESIDENT COMES TO KIBBUTZ

JERUSALEM, April 12. (JTA) -- Almost half of Israel's total population was away from home today, visiting relatives or friends for the Feast of Passover. Among the pilgrims were President and Mrs. Itzhak Ben Zvi who left their home in Jerusalem to visit old friends in the settlement of Degnaia.

More than 5,000 tourists arrived by air during the past week, from 14 countries, to spend the holidays here. More than 10,000 tourists and returning Israelis came by ship during the same period.

At Army camps throughout the country, chaplains, assisted by servicemen, worked to prepare the camps for the holidays. By noon yesterday, bread and all other "Chometz" (non-Passover food) had been removed from the camps. By special dispensation of the rabbinate, members of the armed forces were permitted to eat matzot at lunch yesterday before the holiday actually began.

In accordance with custom, all "Chometz" in the possession of the Government was "sold" yesterday to a non-Jew who made a formal down-payment of 150 pounds (\$80). After 10 days' time, Desta Haile, an Ethiopian consular messenger, who during that interval will probably be the richest man in Israel, will "sell" the food stores back to the Government. The sale to the Ethiopian official was made by the Chief Rabbinate.

115,000 JEWS IN 17 LANDS ENABLED BY J. D. C. TO CELEBRATE PASSOVER

GENEVA, April 12. (JTA) -- More than two months of planning by officials of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, here, has enabled more than 115,000 Jews in 17 countries to celebrate Passover this year in accordance with traditional, Jewish religious requirements, it was announced today by Charles H. Jordan, JDC director-general.

Most of the Jewish communities aided were provided only with matzot and Passover wines. In some cases, where the necessity arose, financial aid was also granted. Such assistance was granted to 500 Jewish survivors of the recent earthquake at Agadir, Morocco, now housed by JDC at Casablanca. Special grants were also made for 175 other Jewish earthquake survivors at Inezgane, near Agadir. The JDC sent special emissaries to both of those communities to make sure that the holiday needs would be met fully.

In Poland, the JDC again financed the baking of matzot; and also helped needy families to obtain other necessary religious items for their Passover celebrations. Jewish communities assisted through the JDC program included groups in Albania, Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Yugoslavia, Greece, the Philippines, Dominican Republic and Haiti.

Jews in Poland, Hungary, Czechoslovakia Reported Observing Passover

LONDON, April 12. (JTA) -- Passover was being observed by Jews today in Poland, Hungary and Czechoslovakia and East Germany, according to reports received today from Warsaw. At least 2,000 Jews attended communal seders last night in various cities in Poland.

At Wroclaw, Poland, the city's central bakery acquired new matzot-baking machinery last winter and reportedly has turned out 120 tons of matzot. In Czechoslovakia, large quantities of matzot have been manufactured by the state bakery for distribution not only to Jewish communities in Czechoslovakia but also in East Germany. Wines bottled especially for Passover, certified as "kosher I 'Pesach,'" have been sent to many Jewish communities beyond the Iron Curtain from Bulgaria.

Five thousand copies of the Haggadah have been shipped from London by Keren Hatorah, the fund for Jewish religious education, to Jewish communities in Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary.

(Special Passover services--with American opera star Jan Peerce chanting portions of the Haggadah--were broadcast by Radio Liberty last night to many regions of the Soviet Union. The broadcast, transmitted in time for the first seder, will be repeated every night during the Passover holiday. In addition to the Haggadah, in Hebrew, the program includes messages in Russian, Ukrainian and other languages spoken by various groups in the USSR.)

ISRAEL CABINET TO DECIDE ON TESTING NASSER AGAIN ON SUEZ ISSUE

JERUSALEM, April 12. (JTA) -- The Israel Cabinet may be called on soon to decide whether to make another test of the "practical arrangements" imposed by President Nasser of the United Arab Republic for transit of cargoes to and from Israel through the Suez Canal, it was learned today.

The previous test ended yesterday when the Greek freighter Astypalea sailed from Port Said after having unloaded its cargo of 400 tons of cement taken on at Haifa. The ship had been held at Port Said since December.

The statement by United Nations Secretary General Dag Hammarskjold last Friday condemning the UAR action in confiscating the cargo and denying the ship transit was interpreted here today as an implicit suggestion that Israel should make another try to send a cargo through the international waterway, complying in this with the terms laid down by Nasser in an agreement with Mr. Hammarskjold. The Secretary-General was believed ready to give Nasser another chance to live up to his promise to permit goods from Israel through the canal provided that they were shipped f.o.b. and were the property of the purchaser when they passed through the canal.

(In Stockholm, the Swedish Transport Workers Union announced today it will blockade the loading and unloading of all vessels belonging to the United Arab Republic in reprisal for the Arab blacklisting of Scandinavian ships doing business with Israel. The blockade includes transports to and from UAR vessels, such as oil tankers. A similar blockade was previously decided on by the Finnish Seamen's Union.)

India to Supply Nasser with Munitions for Destroyers

LONDON, April 12. (JTA) -- Arab sources said today that a concrete result of the visit to India of President Nasser of the United Arab Republic would be the provision by India of ammunition for two destroyers which the Egyptians have not been able to arm since 1956.

The two warships of 1,730 tons each, the destroyers Al Fateh and Al Oaher, were acquired by Egypt from the British Navy just before the Suez Canal crisis in 1956. The Egyptians hastily sailed them out of British ports without ammunition and have not been able to obtain shells for the two destroyers' guns since.

Indian warships use the same caliber shell in vessels acquired by the Indian Navy from the British and India will therefore be able to meet the Arab need.

IRAQ STARTS RECRUITMENT OF ARABS FOR A 'PALESTINE ARMY' AGAINST ISRAEL

LONDON, April 12. (JTA) -- Iraqi newspapers and radio announced today that recruitment would start next Saturday under Iraqi auspices for the so-called "Palestine Republic Army" which Brigadier Abdel Karim Kassem, the Iraqi dictator, announced he would set up to "liberate Palestine from Jewish usurpation."

The Ministry of Defense, the press reported, has issued detailed instructions on the enrollment and training of recruits for the new army, but there was no indication where the force would be stationed or how it would be deployed.

The "army" cannot be deployed on Israel's borders unless the Kingdom of Jordan permitted its entry. Jordan strongly opposes creation of such an army since the Kingdom claims title to the areas of Palestine not incorporated in the State of Israel.

ISRAELI FRIGATE SOLD TO CEYLON REPORTED TO BE EN ROUTE TO COLOMBO

TEL AVIV, April 12. (JTA) -- The second of two Israeli frigates sold to Ceylon, the Miznak, was en route today to Colombo where a Ceylonese crew will take over the vessel from its Israel crew. Several Israeli instructors will remain to train the Ceylonese crew and the other Israelis will return home. The Miznak left Israel last Thursday night and crossed the Tiran Straits separating the Gulf of Akaba from the Red Sea at sunrise.

The first ship, the Mivtach, left for Ceylon last year after several months of political debate touched off by refusal of the United Arab Republic to allow a Ceylonese crew to enter the Gulf of Elath where the two frigates were stationed. The impasse was broken when an Israel crew sailed the Mivtach to the Indian Ocean where it was taken over by a Ceylonese crew.

ARAB ACTS AS MAYOR OF ISRAEL CITY WITH MIXED ARAB-ISRAEL POPULATION

HAIFA, April 12. (JTA) -- For the first time since the foundation of Israel, an Arab citizen presided today as mayor of a large city with a mixed Arab-Jewish population.

In adjoining Acre, M. Habishl, the Deputy Mayor, an Arab, was invested with all mayoral powers as Acting Mayor of the city, serving in place of Mayor Y. Gadish, a Jew, who was unable to function in office because of illness.

WORLD BANK COMPLETES LOAN STUDY IN ISRAEL; WILL REPORT TO WASHINGTON

JERUSALEM, April 12. (JTA) -- A special mission from the Washington headquarters of the World Bank has completed its studies of projected, large-scale developments in Israel, and will report to the bank's directorate before June 30, it was announced here today by Stewart G. Mason, head of the mission.

Mr. Mason, who heads the bank's India-Israel desk, has been here for several weeks with a team of experts studying on the spot the various projects. These include plans for port developments at Haifa, Eilat and the new port of Ashdod, totaling costs of \$65,000,000; and plans for expansion of Israeli potash production, to cost \$80,000,000.

The figures, however, refer to the total costs of the projects, and not to the sums being requested in Israel's long-pending loan application before the bank. The mission, according to Mr. Mason, will make its recommendations to the bank directorate before the expiration of the current fiscal year, which ends June 30. If the projects are approved, the bank directorate will determine the size of the loan.

ISRAEL TO SEND DELEGATION TO GERMANY TO DISCUSS \$500,000,000 LOAN

JERUSALEM, April 11. (JTA) -- Felix Shinar, head of the Israel purchasing mission in West Germany, arrived here today for consultations with the Government, presumably on ways and means of following up the recent talks between Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion and West German Chancellor Dr. Konrad Adenauer.

During Ambassador Shinar's stay here, the Government is expected to name a delegation to proceed to Germany to discuss the practical aspects of a German loan to Israel possibly totaling \$500,000,000.

\$22,850,000 PAID BY BONN IN PENSIONS TO JEWISH COMMUNITY EMPLOYEES

BONN, April 12. (JTA) -- The German Federal Government has made pension payments totaling in excess of \$22,850,000 to former employees of the Jewish community organizations in Germany, it was disclosed today. Under the restitution agreements, the German Government undertook to pension former officials and employees of the Jewish communities.

Dr. Ernst Katzenstein, head of the German office of the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany, made the announcement in connection with the final meeting of the Conference's Claims Advisory Board. The board was set up seven years ago to screen the pension claims of former Jewish officials. As a result of its efforts, some 2,800 pension claims, mainly of rabbis, cantors, librarians and social workers, were settled.

(Dr. Heinrich von Brentano, Foreign Minister of the Federal Republic of Germany, last week signed a treaty with the Government of The Netherlands, granting the Dutch Government 125,000,000 Deutschmarks (about \$31,000,000) for compensation of Dutch victims of Nazism. The treaty was the result of several years of negotiations between Holland and West Germany.)

BONN REFUSES TO LIFT PARLIAMENTARY IMMUNITY FOR OBERLAENDER

BONN, April 12. (JTA) -- The Government announced officially here last night that "there is no reason" for lifting the parliamentary immunity enjoyed by Dr. Theodor Oberlaender, Minister for Expellees and Refugees. Since this means that Dr. Oberlaender cannot be prosecuted for alleged war crimes during the Hitler regime, and since the Cabinet member himself announced last week that he was taking an "indefinite leave of absence," the case against Oberlaender seems now to have been closed.

The Government's ruling against the lifting of parliamentary immunity came after the Federal Public Prosecutor's office ruled that the Nightingale Battalion--in which Oberlaender had served as an officer under the Hitler regime--did not participate in the mass executions of Jews and Polish intellectuals. It has been charged repeatedly that the battalion conducted those mass murders at Lwow, Poland, in 1941.

While the opposition Social Democratic Party has scheduled an open demand in the Bundestag (lower House of Parliament) for Dr. Oberlaender's resignation, Dr. Oberlaender himself and some of his backers have begun a series of court actions in an attempt to discredit the Minister's accusers.

Today, Dr. Oberlaender brought a slander suit against a Social Democratic newspaper, "Vorwaerts," which had published documents allegedly proving that the Nightingale Battalion openly advocated a "race war against the inferior people."

Meanwhile, at Munich, a well-known Bavarian industrialist has filed a libel suit against Prof. Carlo Schmid, Social Democratic Vice President of the Bundestag. The Plaintiff, H. Eichelkraut, accuses Prof. Schmid of having stated falsely, while visiting Israel last winter, that the Nightingale Battalion "was one of the troops commanded to exterminate the Jews."

A third suit is pending against Paul Wilhelm Wenger, an editor of the Catholic weekly, "Rheinischer Merkur." A former officer of the Nightingale Battalion, Friedrich Middelhauve, is suing Wenger for libel because he printed testimony from Israeli citizens who accused the Battalion of "anti-Jewish pogroms."

GOVERNOR OF ILLINOIS CHARGED WITH PREVENTING JEWS FROM VOTING

CHICAGO, April 12, (JTA) -- The Chicago Jewish Sentinel, an English-Jewish weekly, charged in its current issue that Governor William G. Stratton of Illinois, a Republican, twice vetoed proposed amendments to the State election law that would have extended the right of the absentee ballot in cases where religious holidays and election days conflict, to keep Jews from participating in the primaries today, the first day of the Passover.

It is estimated that about 125,000 observant Jews in Chicago alone will be unable to vote today unless they disregard their religious beliefs. Under existing legislation, the absentee ballot privilege cannot be exercised by those unable to cast ballots because of religious requirements. A bill to give this right, the paper reported, "was vetoed both times by Gov. Stratton, apparently in the belief that most Jews vote the Democratic ticket."

The paper said in an editorial that "obviously, no other group would be affected." It pointed out that "as things now stand, observant Jews, unwilling to sign their names as they enter the polling booth Tuesday, will be unable to vote. There is nothing that they or anyone else can do about it."

The present law permits absentee voting only for those who are physically ill or absent from the county of their residence. Efforts by a religious committee to secure agreement of the Chicago Board of Elections to permit election officials to do the writing for observant Jewish voters as they may do for the physically disabled, failed because the board held that procedure to be illegal. The Chicago council of the American Jewish Congress is seeking support of an amendment to the election laws that would permit absentee voting for religious reasons.

PASSOVER PREVENTS JEWS IN OUTREMONT FROM PARTICIPATING IN ELECTIONS

MONTREAL, April 12, (JTA) -- Although the Jews are a large majority of the suburban municipality of Outremont, many of them will be unable to participate in the municipal elections today without disregarding their religious beliefs.

Under the election law, the City Council must schedule elections seven days after the close of nominations. The seventh day is today, the first day of Passover. Members of the City Council were unable to find any way out to avoid this unforeseen and undesired disenfranchisement of Jewish voters.

The City Council decided to send a letter to each registered voter explaining its position on the question of the election date. It instructed the city attorney to study the possibility of a charter amendment which would make it possible to avoid conflict in future with religious holidays.

Several Outremont Jewish leaders, including aldermen whose seats are at stake in today's election, said that Jewish voters will not go to the booths on the holiday. J. Y. Nadler, head of the Outremont Citizens' Council, did not file his nomination papers because of the conflict between the holiday and election day.

Alderman Philip Fainer, a leader of the Montreal Jewish Community Council, an Orthodox body, pointed out that "no member of the Jewish community can act as a scrutineer or even be a candidate. There is no dispensation in our religion except in a matter of life or death."

NAZI OPEN-AIR RALLY IN WASHINGTON ATTRACTS LITTLE ATTENTION

WASHINGTON, April 12, (JTA) -- Several hundred persons heard George Lincoln Rockwell, fuhrer of the American Nazi Party, harangue against the Jews over a powerful loudspeaker at an outdoor rally Sunday in an area crowded with tourists. But most of the listeners, strolling to and from the National Gallery of Art and the Smithsonian Museum, drifted away after listening briefly.

The reaction of the average by-passer to the open espousal of the Nazi cause was one of curiosity and surprise. A few indignant persons complained to police. Rockwell was flanked by his "storm-troopers" and protected by a large detachment of police, including armed forces military police, patrolmen, plainclothes, detectives, and mounted officers. His harangue lasted over two hours. It was preceded by the playing of the "Horst Wessel song," the Nazi storm-troop anthem.

RABBI CHAIM HELLER, NOTED TALMUDIC SCHOLAR, DIES IN NEW YORK

NEW YORK, April 12, (JTA) -- Several hundred rabbis, led by Rabbi Joseph Soloveitchik, of Boston, who came here especially for the purpose, attended funeral service yesterday for the late Rabbi Chaim Heller, noted biblical and talmudic scholar, who died Sunday night. He was 81.

Rabbi Heller was born in Bialystok, received his doctorate of philosophy at the University of Wurzburg, Germany, was rabbi of Lomza, Poland, and founded the Academy of Higher Jewish Learning in Berlin in 1922. He came to this country in 1937. He was an honorary president of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada. He had written 15 books, most of them in Hebrew, and had lectured widely.