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AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS APPEALS TO MOSCOW ON SOVIET JEWRY

NEW YORK, April 15. (JTA) -- The American Jewish Congress today concluded its four-day biennial convention with the adoption of a number of resolutions dealing with problems concerning Jews in this country and abroad, as well as with American policy in the Middle East. Dr. Joachim Prinz was re-elected president of the organization for a third two-year term.

In a resolution on the situation of the Jews in the Soviet Union, the convention expressed "deepest concern" at Soviet government action against Jews in the USSR and appealed for a lifting of prohibitions against the baking of matzoh and the enjoyment of "essential" facilities for Jewish survival. The resolution charged that Russian Jews "are denied the means to perpetuate their faith and develop their culture through the education of their children and youth.

"Russian Jews," the resolution said, "are made to suffer deprivations and disadvantages not imposed upon other peoples and nationalities in the Soviet Union." The AJ Congress statement deplored recent evidence of "direct and overt official anti-Semitism" and asked the U. S. Government, "in concert with other nations, to persuade the Soviet Union to remove restrictions that prevent the cultural and spiritual development of Soviet Jewry."

The convention also adopted a resolution calling for a "fundamental reappraisal" of American policy in the Middle East. It urged President Kennedy to "redeem his pre-election pledge" to initiate direct peace talks between Israel and the Arab states and seek an end to the Arab economic boycott and blockade of Israel. The resolution also urged active American support of programs for regional cooperation in the development of water, power and other resources in the Middle East, and proposed a "permanent solution to the troubling and tragic problem of the Arab refugees" through their integration into the countries of the Middle East as part of a broad program of regional rehabilitation.

In another resolution the delegates opposed nuclear weapons for West Germany and warned of a "rising incidence of anti-Semitic publications and activities" there. The resolution urged the Adenauer regime to intensify efforts "to eliminate all taint of Nazi or neo-Nazi influence from public life. It cited recent public opinion polls in West Germany indicating that "two-thirds of the residents of West Berlin--typically the most liberal segment of Germany--object to the appointment of Jews to government positions." The resolution emphasized that "anti-Semitism and rampant nationalism exist in even greater degree in East Germany."

Expresses 'Vigorous Opposition' to Religion in Public Schools

The convention expressed "vigorous opposition" to sectarian observances in the public schools such as Bible-reading, prayer recitation and religious holiday celebrations "including Christmas and Chanukah." In other resolutions, the American Jewish Congress:

1. Opposed Federal aid for parochial schools as a "clear violation of the Constitutional principle of separation of church and state--a violation that would bring in its train all the evils that the Constitutional provision was designed to prevent."

2. Charged that compulsory Sunday-closing laws were "discriminatory and unequal in their operation" and urged the repeal of existing "blue" laws "or at least the exemption from such laws of those persons who observe a day other than Sunday as their religious day of rest."

The resolution on religion in the schools charged that sectarian practices "impair religious freedom, violate the principle of church-state separation and interfere with fulfillment by the schools of their educational function." It also welcomed recent decisions "reaffirming the Constitutional guarantee of religious liberty and the separation principle."

The convention was addressed during the weekend by Ambassador Michael Comay, head of the Israel delegation to the UN, and Senator Jacob K. Javits, New York Republican. Mr. Comay told the delegates that more Arab "mischief-making" is in store in the tense Middle East. The recent "one-sided" resolution in the UN Security Council, he warned, has given the Arab states reason to believe they enjoy "a kind of diplomatic immunity at the United Nations."

Senator Javits asked whether President Kennedy had "turned his back" on his own program for Arab-Israel peace in the Middle East. He called on the Administration to fulfill its "promises" to initiate direct peace talks between Israel and the Arab states.

AMERICAN MIDDLE EAST POLICY ASSAILED IN SENATE BY SIX SENATORS

WASHINGTON, April 15. (JTA) -- Six Senators, addressing the United States Senate here this weekend, sharply criticized American Middle East policy, directing their fire particularly against the U. S. delegation's stand at the United Nations in censuring Israel at the Security Council session dealing with Israel's and Syria's reciprocal charges of aggression.

The critics of the State Department policy vis-a-vis Arab-Israeli issues included Democratic Senators Wayne Morse of Oregon, Paul Douglas of Illinois and Hubert H. Humphrey of Minnesota; Republicans Jacob K. Javits and Kenneth Keating of New York; and Democrat Ernest Gruening of Alaska.

Mr. Morse told the Senate he was filing a formal request with the State Department, calling "for a briefing on the subject by appropriate officers of the Department" as well as by Adlai E. Stevenson, chairman of the U. S. delegation to the UN.

Senator Douglas labeled the Security Council resolution adopted last week, censuring Israel but mentioning nothing about the Syrian provocations against Israel, "a great mistake." He declared outright that the resolution was "one-sided."

Senator Humphrey expressed the hope that, from now on, United States policy in the Middle East "will be one of trying to prevent any provocation, encouraging regional economic development and mindful of the value of a trusted friend, such as Israel."

Stevenson Scored for anti-Israel Stand at Security Council

Senator Gruening read into the record the text of a letter he had sent to Ambassador Stevenson, criticizing what he called "excessive concern with being on the winning side in a United Nations vote, rather than in establishing basic principles for which the United States stands."

Asserting that American foreign policy operates "on a double standard," the Senator from Alaska asked Mr. Stevenson: "How do we reconcile condemning the only true democracy in the Middle East, Israel, economically boycotted and perpetually menaced with annihilation by its far more numerous, encircling and unremitting hostile neighbors, with our inaction with respect to India's seizure of miniscule, unoffending and peaceful Goa, where there had been no provocation?"

Mr. Keating pointed out that Israel had reacted to Syrian provocations, when it acted militarily against Syria recently. If American fishermen in the Rio Grande were to be harassed by Mexican gunfire, as Israel's fishermen had been on Lake Tiberias, Mr. Keating asked: "What would the United States do in such a case? I am certainly sure of what the people of Texas would do. They would undoubtedly send in a sufficient force to wipe out the snipers' nest."

Mr. Javits called for re-evaluation of American policy in the Middle East. "Our Government," he said, "must dispel the impression that it is now ready to blink its eyes at the action of the Arab states in endeavoring to make untenable the State of Israel as a state, while censuring Israel and holding it strictly accountable for every measure it may take in its own defense."

B'nai B'rith President Criticizes U. S. Stand on Israel at U. N.

MILWAUKEE, Wisc., April 15. (JTA) -- United States policy was criticized tonight by Label A. Katz, president of B'nai B'rith, for initiating "aberrant justice" in the Israel-Syria dispute. He charged that the "misproportioned resolution" voted last week by the United Nations Security Council "censures Israel for defending itself from hostile acts continuing Arab provocations on Israel's borders."

Mr. Katz, in a speech here marking the centennial of B'nai B'rith in Wisconsin, said the resolution invoked a double standard, and its effect "can weaken United Nations effectiveness in achieving a peaceful Arab-Israel settlement."

ISRAEL AND JORDAN DELEGATIONS HOLD CORDIAL MEETING ON BORDER INCIDENT

JERUSALEM, April 15. (JTA) -- Israeli and Jordanian delegations to the Jordan-Israel Mixed Armistice Commission met cordially today, assured each other of their respective Government desires to prevent border incidents, and closed their informal meeting after the Jordanian delegation expressed regret over the killing of an Israeli truck driver who was ambushed by gunfire along a Negev desert road to Eilat last Thursday night.

Dr. Edward E. Johnson, special Middle Eastern envoy for the United Nations Palestine Conciliation Commission, met at the Foreign Ministry here with Foreign Minister Golda Meir. He proposed some steps to ameliorate the condition of the Arab refugees. He will make the same proposals during his visits to the capitals of Egypt, Lebanon, Syria and Jordan in the next week or 10 days. The nature of his proposals is being kept secret.

Up in the North, in the Lake Tiberias area, there was also relative quiet today. Israeli fishermen continued running their boats on the lake and in one case, Syrians from the farther shore pelted the Israelis with stones. But there was no shooting.

U. N. COMMISSION ADJOURNS WITHOUT DEBATE ON SOVIET BAN ON MATZOH

UNITED NATIONS, N. Y., April 15. (JTA) -- Efforts to develop an open debate here on the issue of Soviet Russia's banning of matzoh baking for the 3,000,000 Jews in the USSR, failed here this weekend, as the Commission on Human Rights concluded its annual session without taking up the issue. However, the subject, which has been on the behind-the-scenes "shadow agenda" for four weeks, still occupied the interest of many Western diplomats.

As the Human Rights Commission adjourned yesterday, it postponed until its next session, to be held at Geneva a year from now, a detailed debate on the operative clauses of a proposed convention dealing with religious rights and practices. That draft, originally adopted in 1960 by the Commission's Subcommittee on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities, contained a set of principles that would have affected the Russian matzoh situation directly. One of those principles provides that a government must permit persons practicing a religion to obtain the religious articles or foods necessitated by their religious rules.

Meanwhile, however, outside the Commission's chamber, Western diplomats have been pressing Soviet representatives on the matzoh issue. Yacov A. Ostrovski, Soviet representative on the Commission, reportedly told Western diplomats that there was no Soviet law prohibiting Jews from baking matzohs in their own homes. However, in that statement, he had conceded the truth of earlier reports about a ban on matzoh baking in state bakeries which, in previous years, did supply matzohs for the Russian Jews.

Two Soviet officials attached to the USSR's United Nations Mission--L. A. Gouliev and V. R. Filitov--said that the earlier practice of baking matzohs in state factories "had been a mistake." They said the practice "was a waste of money, since the matzohs remained on the shelves for six to eight months, and finally had to be thrown away." They implied that Russian Jewry really did not care whether matzohs were provided or not.

The Soviet Mission was picketed over the weekend by a group of Jewish students from New York. After the pickets were removed, Mr. Gouliev and Mr. Filitov consented to see five members of the Jewish student delegation. However, the Russians challenged the students' "right to speak for Soviet Jews" and insisted there was no discrimination against Jews in Russia. They said the ban on matzoh baking by state factories merely underscored the principle of separation of church from state.

Not only Western diplomats but representatives of Jewish non-governmental organizations accredited to the Human Rights Commission had hoped that the Commission could debate the issue openly. Only one delegate, the envoy from Austria, mentioned the issue openly. The postponement of the debate on the draft principles on religious rights and practices prevented the holding of further discussions on the issue.

CHICAGOANS PROUD OF BLOCK'S ACTION ON STEEL ISSUE; WAS FEDERATION HEAD

CHICAGO, April 15. (JTA) -- Chicagoans, Jews and non-Jews alike, felt very proud this weekend of the fact that Joseph Leopold Block, prominent American industrial leader, who has been president of the Jewish Federation here, was the principal figure--as chairman of the board of the Inland Steel Company--whose resistance to raising the price on steel has brought about the capitulation of other steel companies to President Kennedy's request that they rescind their increase in the price of steel which would have affected the entire economy of the country.

Mr. Block, who has been active in Jewish charitable work here for many years, is president of the Chicago Community Fund and vice-president of the Chicago Chamber of Commerce. He has been president of the Young Men's Jewish Council and took an interest in Jewish communal affairs all his adult life. During World War II, he served as a "dollar-a-year-man" as a member of the War Production Board in Washington.

Inland Steel was founded in 1893 by a group of industrialists headed by Joseph D. Block, grandfather of the company's present head. Joseph Leopold Block, who is now 60, graduated from Cornell University and entered the family business, becoming president in 1953, later progressing to the board chairmanship.

GERMAN CHRISTIANS ATTEND ADULT COURSES ON JUDAISM IN WEST BERLIN

BERLIN, April 15. (JTA) -- After four weeks of operations, the new adult education program, being conducted here by the Berlin Jewish Community at the Jewish Community House, was deemed by leaders of the community to have got off to an excellent start, according to a statement today by H. G. Sellenthin, director of the project.

The project's most popular course is an eight-lecture series being conducted by Rabbi Cuno Lehrmann. Entitled "Introduction to the Essence of Judaism," Rabbi Lehrmann's lectures drew about 70 or 80 participants, many of them Christians who appear to learn for the first time about the common spiritual values held by both Judaism and Christianity.

The courses at the school range from an introduction to Jewish religion and the history of the Jewish people, to Zionism, Israel, and courses in Hebrew from elementary to advanced. The project is the first of its kind since the prewar Jewish extension courses in Berlin were closed down during the Hitler regime.

JEWIS IN CANADA DISSATISFIED WITH PROTESTANT PROPOSAL ON SCHOOLS

MONTREAL, April 15. (JTA) -- A Protestant brief proposing Jewish members on the Protestant committee of the Quebec Council of Education was termed here today "as an interim step of great significance" by Saul Hayes, executive vice-president of the Canadian Jewish Congress.

However, Mr. Hayes emphasized, what is really important is for Jews to sit on the school boards in Quebec and to have a say in the administration of tax monies. "The Jewish community," Mr. Hayes pointed out, "pays its school taxes to the Protestant School Board and Jews are not free to present themselves for election, or to be appointed, to any of the boards. This is an inexcusable violation of even the most basic tenets of democracy."

The Protestant proposal called for an amendment to the Education Act which would permit two associate members on the committee who would be neither Protestant nor Catholic. They would not have any right to vote on any question affecting religious instruction in the schools sponsored by the Protestant church, which most Jewish children in Montreal attend. There are no non-sectarian public schools in the province.

CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS LAUDS NEW IMMIGRATION REGULATIONS IN CANADA

MONTREAL, April 15. (JTA) -- Canada's new immigration regulations were lauded here by the national executive committee of the Canadian Jewish Congress. In a resolution adopted, the leaders of the CJC expressed the hope that the new regulations will be carried out in a way which would give effect to their "spirit and intent."

Mrs. Ellen L. Fairclough, Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, issued a statement declaring: "The most important effect of the new immigration regulations is to make it possible for any qualified person, from any part of the world, to be considered for admission to Canada, without regard to his race, color, national origin or the country from which he comes. The main qualifications are education, training and skill.

"If a person has these qualifications, and has sufficient means to maintain himself until he finds employment in Canada or, alternatively, if he is coming to approved employment or to set up a business, to establish himself in agriculture or to practice a profession, he is admissible, if in good health and character," the statement said.

PRESIDENT KENNEDY URGED TO ACT ON LIBERALIZATION OF IMMIGRATION LAWS

LAKEWOOD, N. J., April 15. (JTA) -- An appeal to President Kennedy to "throw the full weight of his prestige and moral leadership" in support of proposed Congressional legislation liberalizing the immigration laws was voiced here last night by Rabbi Maurice N. Eisendrath, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. The Reform leader made his plea in delivering the principle address at the convention of the New Jersey Reform Congregations.

Rabbi Eisendrath declared that the present immigration laws were "based on the reprehensible national origins quota system, which declares that some people are better, on racial grounds, than others." The United States policy on immigration, he said, constitutes "the most racist law in American history." He urged the President to support a congressional proposal backed by Senator Philip Hart, Michigan Democrat, and endorsed by a group of Senators from both the Democratic and Republican parties, eliminating the national origins quota.

FIRST REFORM TEMPLE DEDICATED IN ISRAEL; HOUSE IS GIFT OF U.S. JEWS

JERUSALEM, April 15. (JTA) -- Israel's first Reform temple was dedicated in ceremonies held here yesterday at a former private home which now serves as the country's only liberal synagogue. About 200 persons attended the services, actually held in the garden outside the house of worship.

Rabbi Jerome A. Unger, of Los Angeles, conducted the services. Since 1960, he has been representing here the World Union for Progressive Judaism. Among those attending were Mr. and Mrs. Robert A. Wishnik, of New York. Their children and grandchildren purchased the former dwelling, presenting it to the Reform congregation as a gift honoring Mr. Wishnik's 70th birthday. Rabbi Jay Kaufman, vice-president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, also addressed the congregation.

DR. EPSTEIN, NOTED JEWISH SCHOLAR, DIES IN LONDON; WAS 68

LONDON, April 15. (JTA) -- Dr. Isidore Epstein, noted scholar and former principal of Jews' College here, died this week-end at the age of 68.

His published works included an English translation of the Babylonian Talmud. He was on the staff of Jews' College for 33 years--as principal for 16 years until his retirement last summer.