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ISRAEL SEEKS INTERNATIONAL ACTION ON TORTURE OF ISRAELIS BY SYRIA

JERUSALEM, Dec. 23, (JTA) -- Israel took steps today in several ways to seek the liberation of more Israelis held in Syrian prisons and to obtain objective, international investigations into the manner in which Israelis freed by the Syrians Saturday had been tortured. The actions followed the weekend exchange of prisoners in which 18 Syrians were released by Israel for 11 Israelis held by the Syrians.

Israel requested the military observers of the United Nations Truce Supervision Organization to check the reports received from the Israeli returnees that at least four more Israelis are in Syrian jails now. At the same time steps were being prepared to lodge a similar request with Secretary-General U Thant at United Nations headquarters in New York. One of the Israeli returnees provided the names of four Israelis still being held by the Damascus authorities.

Meanwhile, Israel requested the International Red Cross to probe into the manner in which Syria had mistreated those who were freed this weekend. Seven of the 11 returnees have been shown, as a result of medical examinations and interrogations, to be "grave mental cases," Government circles said. All seven of these men, it was said, had been in Syrian hospitals prior to their release.

The Red Cross was requested to send qualified medical personnel here immediately to examine the returnees. Israel informed the Red Cross headquarters at Geneva that the Israelis had been subjected to "most inhuman" treatment and to torture.

International Red Cross Expected to Comply with Israel's Request

GENEVA, Dec. 23, (JTA) -- Moshe Bartur, Israel's permanent representative at the European headquarters of the United Nations today requested the International Red Cross Committee here to send to Israel immediately a team of qualified medical personnel to investigate the mental and physical conditions of the 11 Israelis released from Syrian prisons Saturday.

According to the Israeli request, such medical examinations are necessary at once, since the Israelis had been subjected to extraordinarily cruel treatment while in Syrian hands. Israel's request is expected to be complied with by the International Red Cross here.

(At the United Nations, today, Michael S. Comay, Israel's permanent representative, sent a letter to Secretary-General U Thant, informing him of the request to the International Red Cross. In the letter, Mr. Comay quoted Mrs. Golda Meir, Israel's Foreign Minister, as declaring that eight of the 11 Israelis returned in the prisoner exchange Saturday had "suffered physical distress and mental and emotional disorder as a result of the inhuman conditions under which they had been kept (in Syria) and the torture and abuse to which they had been subjected.")

CHIEF RABBI OF ISRAEL WILL NOT PARTICIPATE IN WELCOMING POPE PAUL

JERUSALEM, Dec. 23, (JTA) -- Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Nissim will not participate in the welcoming ceremonies in Israel in connection with the visit to be made here by Pope Paul VI on January 5, it was indicated here today by the Chief Rabbi's office. The office said the Chief Rabbi will not go to Megiddo, where the Pontiff is scheduled to enter Israel from Jordan, and will not take part in the ceremonies scheduled here, when the Pope is to return to Jordan via the Mandelbaum Gate.

While the Chief Rabbi's office declined further comment, it was indicated that Rabbi Nissim felt that his participation in the ceremonies could be only on the basis of reciprocity. This was taken to mean that Chief Rabbi Nissim would greet the Pope only if the latter would include in his itinerary a visit to the Chief Rabbinate of Israel.

(In Rome, today, Pope Paul said, in his annual Christmas message, that the purpose of his forthcoming pilgrimage to the Holy Land is "solely religious." He stated he will greet not only Christians but also "those outside the fold of Christ, and our good intentions will embrace all the peoples of the earth, far and near.")

SECRETARY RUSK SAYS U.S. POLICY IS COMMITTED TO ISRAEL'S SECURITY

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23. (JTA) -- Secretary of State Dean Rusk said today that "this Government's policy of commitment to Israel's welfare and security, and its capability and intention to deter potential aggression in the Near East, are clear and are fully understood by all the nations of that region."

The Secretary said in a letter to Rep. Leonard Farbstein, New York Democrat, that "these policies have provided and should continue to provide effective protection to Israel against possible aggression." Mr. Rusk stated that he shared the Congressman's concern "about the possibility of an arms race in the Middle East and the ever-present threat of a renewed disruption of stability." He said the United States has "consistently and patiently worked to reduce the threat of an arms race in the Middle East, and to promote peaceful resolution of the long-standing conflicts among nations there." He added that "we continue to do so."

Rep. Farbstein had urged the Department to implement the Congressional amendment authorizing severance of aid to the United Arab Republic. But Mr. Rusk replied that "to administer the aid program and to coordinate it with our foreign policy objectives, flexibility is required. Circumscribing in detail the administration of an assistance program in a particular country reduces that flexibility and hampers the execution of policies, with whose goals I am sure you agree, in an area of the world marked by uncertainty, instability and rapidly changing political patterns."

Rep. Farbstein declared in Congress that "many members of the Congress and millions of citizens concerned about the preservation of peace in the Middle East" are gratified that President Johnson has asked Mr. Myer Feldman to continue serving as deputy counsel to the President and personal adviser on Near Eastern issues.

CONFERENCE OF JEWISH COMMUNITIES IN BRAZIL PLEADS FOR SOVIET JEWRY

RIO DE JANEIRO, Dec. 23. (JTA) -- A resolution calling upon the authorities of the Soviet Union to lift its restrictions against Jews in the USSR was adopted unanimously last night at the closing session of the fifth national conference of the Confederation of Jewish Communities of Brazil. The conference was held at Porto Alegre. The resolution demanded that Soviet Jews be given treatment equal to that accorded members of other religious groups and nationalities in the USSR.

Other resolutions adopted by the conference advocated support for rabbis in small Jewish communities; and called upon Jewish organizations to give priority in aid to Jewish schools in their communities, as well as to build new Jewish schools. The conference elected Dr. Moises Koifman, of Sao Paulo, as president. Chosen as honorary presidents were Prof. Fritz Feigl, Senator Aron Steinbruch and Naftali Jaffe.

RABBIS APPEAL TO GERMAN GOVERNMENT FOR PENSIONS AS NAZI VICTIMS

NEW YORK, Dec. 23. (JTA) -- A demand that the West German Government pay pensions to rabbis who lost their posts as a result of Nazi persecutions and now live outside Germany was voiced at a press conference here by the Organization of Rabbis Who Survived the Nazi Holocaust. According to the rabbis, surviving rabbis living in Germany do receive pensions, but those who are in this country or in other lands are being discriminated against under the West German indemnification laws.

Many of the rabbi-survivors, the leaders of the organization said, were too old or weak, as a result of Nazi persecutions, to continue holding their rabbinical posts, it was stated at the conference. It was emphasized that these survivors are "clearly entitled to pensions as victims of Nazism."

HILLEL GROUPS URGED TO INCREASE PARTICIPATION IN SOCIAL ACTION

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23. (JTA) -- A conference of B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation directors today urged increased participation of Hillel groups in civil rights programs, and warned against "false separatism which tend to impede the growth of religious maturity among college students."

Hillel directors, meeting here for a review of their work on U.S. campuses, issued a statement deploring the "divisiveness which tends to encourage loyalties to denominational institutions rather than to 'K'lal Yisrael'--the total Jewish community."

Emphasizing the importance of Hillel involvement in social action programs, particularly in civil rights areas, the directors said in a resolution that social action "should be regarded as an integral part of every Hillel foundation's activities." Calling social action "Jewish by definition," the resolution noted "it need not be laboriously defined by a constant reference to Jewish sources in an attempt to rationalize involvement."

Rabbi Jack J. Cohen of Hebrew University in Jerusalem said that the Hillel program on the campus must remain a pluralism "not of live and let live but of live and help live, and of live and be enriched by contact with others."

FARBAND-LABOR ZIONIST ORDER OPENS FIVE-DAY CONVENTION TOMORROW

NEW YORK, Dec. 23, (JTA) -- The 50th anniversary convention of Farband-Labor Zionist Order will open its five-day sessions beginning Wednesday at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel here with an attendance of some 2,000 delegates and guests from all parts of the United States and Canada. The Farband now numbers 40,000 families in more than 320 branches in over 120 communities.

According to an announcement by Louis Segal, general secretary of Farband, the Golden Jubilee Convention will be devoted to discussions and actions on problems encompassing the entire range of Jewish community life in this country, the mapping of plans for an expanded program in all major fields of Jewish endeavors, and the economic strengthening of Israel.

In the sphere of Jewish education, Farband has pioneered in the establishment of a network of folk schools, kindergartens, day schools and institutions of higher learning. The organization was also instrumental in the establishment in New York of the Jewish Teachers Seminary and Peoples University, from which many students have graduated as teachers in the various school systems. The multi-faceted and diversified activities of the Farband encompasses such major spheres as fraternalism, Jewish education, Zionism, community affairs, and numerous projects in Israel for the economic development of that land.

The convention sessions will highlight addresses by noted leaders in all walks of American and Jewish life, as well as taped addresses of greeting by Israel President Zalman Shazar, Premier Levi Eshkol and former Premier David Ben-Gurion. Guest speakers at the opening session will include Israel Ambassador Avraham Harman; Dr. Emanuel Neumann, chairman of the American Section of the Jewish Agency; and Meyer L. Brown, president of Farband, who will chair the session and deliver the keynote address. Senator Kenneth Keating will deliver a major address on American policy in the Middle East at the Thursday morning session, which will also highlight a report on the activities of Farband by Mr. Segal.

CANADIAN JUSTICE MINISTER HAILS JEWISH CONTRIBUTIONS TO COUNTRY

MONTREAL, Dec. 23, (JTA) -- Justice Minister Lionel Chevrier has hailed the Jewish community in Canada as a "tremendous factor in our development which has made many outstanding contributions to Canada's economic, cultural, social and political growth."

In an address at the Chevra T'Hilim Synagogue, here, marking the congregation's 60th anniversary, Mr. Chevrier said the Jews represent "an astonishingly high percentage of what is a relatively small community which has contributed to Canada far more than its number would indicate."

"The history of the Jews reveals how much their temporal blessing was consecrated to the service of God and to aiding the poor, in the best days of their history," he declared. "Even today the same spirit of generosity has characterized your people, not only to your own brethren but also to Protestants and to Catholics."

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE RULES HISTADRUT CAMPAIGN TAX EXEMPT

NEW YORK, Dec. 23, (JTA)--- Dr. Sol Stein, national executive director of the 40-year-old Israel Histadrut Campaign, sponsored by the National Committee for Labor Israel, announced today that the organization has recently received a definitive, favorable ruling from the Internal Revenue Service declaring the campaign to be tax exempt and that contributions made to the campaign are deductible by the donors.

The same tax exemption ruling also exempts bequests, legacies, devises, transfers or gifts for federal estate and gift tax purposes, Dr. Stein stated. He stressed that he has been advised by counsel that the Israel Histadrut Campaign meets the requirements of the Internal Revenue Service as published in its recent ruling regarding the deductibility of contributions made to American philanthropic organizations with overseas programs.

CANADIAN JEWISH CHRONICLE CHANGES HANDS; OLDEST CANADIAN WEEKLY

MONTREAL, Dec. 23, (JTA) -- The Canadian Jewish Chronicle, Canada's oldest anglo-Jewish weekly, has been sold by its owner, Max Wolofsky, effective Jan. 1, 1964. The Chronicle was established in 1914 by Mr. Wolofsky's father, and incorporated in the Canadian Jewish Times, which was founded in 1897.

Max Melamet, well-known in South Africa and Canadian Jewish leadership circles, will be the new editor as well as vice-president of the proprietor corporation. President of the company is Stanley R. Shenkman, Montreal architect and business man. Chairman of the board will be Bernard Bernstein, a South African business man who settled in Canada recently; and David Novek, a young public relations man, will be managing editor. Expansion and change of format are planned for the first issue to be published Jan. 3, 1964.

ISIDORE SOBELOFF TO BECOME EXECUTIVE HEAD OF LOS ANGELES FEDERATION

DETROIT, Dec. 23. (JTA) -- Isidore Sobeloff, executive vice-president of the Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit, has accepted the position of executive director of the Jewish Federation-Council of Greater Los Angeles, it was announced simultaneously in both cities by Judge Irving Hill, president of the Los Angeles Federation-Council and Max M. Fisher, president of the Detroit Federation.

Mr. Sobeloff will assume his new duties September 1, following the attainment of his sixty-fifth birthday on August 30. William Avrunin, associate director of Federation since 1948, will become the executive director of Federation when Mr. Sobeloff leaves. Julius Bisno and Martin Ruderman will continue in their present posts as associate executive directors in Los Angeles. The executive committee and the board of governors of the Detroit Federation formally accepted Mr. Sobeloff's resignation "with great reluctance and regret" to take effect next fall.

"Mr. Sobeloff," said Mr. Fisher, "has grown up with us here and we have grown up with him over the last 26 years. Los Angeles is a rapidly growing community, second in size only to New York, and it offers a great complex of opportunities while facing problems which require the proved administrative leadership and the executive skills and stature which Soby can bring to it. We had hoped that he would continue his work here. At a time when most men might choose to remain in an established and stabilized atmosphere, Soby has elected to face a new challenge in a new community.

"For all our regrets," Mr. Fisher continued, "we admire his courage and we shall be regarding what he may be able to do in Los Angeles not only as his contribution but also as a contribution by the Detroit community to the well-being of the entire American Jewish community. For us here he has built well and we can grow on the fine foundation--he has helped so much to set up. He has provided a training ground in community organization and administrative leadership for many men now serving in important posts throughout the country and fortunately for us, Bill Avrunin is a distinguished product of this process. The professional direction of our community services will continue in good hands." Mr. Sobeloff joined in paying tribute to Avrunin.

Los Angeles Community Welcomes Sobeloff; Lauds His Achievements

In the Los Angeles statement Judge Hill explained that when the Jewish Community Council and the Jewish Welfare Federation of that city were merged in 1959, the agreement to set up a unified central community organization under its present name of Federation-Council provided for the appointment of an executive director and that the new position is now being filled in accordance with that decision.

Quoting from a report submitted by a selection committee headed by Dr. Max W. Bay and approved unanimously by the Federation-Council's board of directors, Judge Hill stated: "The Los Angeles Jewish community is very fortunate to have enlisted the interest and service of a man who is considered the dean of executive directors in Jewish welfare organization, a man of outstanding abilities, of great energy and enthusiasm, who, having attained the pinnacle of success in one career, sees in this new opportunity a challenge which can be successfully overcome, thereby affording him and our community a new level of fulfillment. Ours is destined to be one of the great Jewish communities of America."

Mr. Sobeloff has served as executive director and executive vice-president of the Jewish Welfare Federation of Detroit since 1937. He is a former president of the National Conference of Jewish Communal Service, has held numerous other positions in the field of Jewish community organization here and abroad, and is a frequent contributor to social work literature. Among the national agency boards on which he has served are the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds, National Jewish Welfare Board, Joint Distribution Committee, National Foundation for Jewish Culture and Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Mr. Avrunin was the East Central States Regional Director of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds before coming to Detroit as associate director of Federation in 1948. He also served as executive director of the Jewish Federation of Fort Wayne, Indiana and supervisor at the Jewish Board of Guardians, New York City, as well as public welfare investigator and group worker in Cleveland, Ohio.

Born in Cleveland in 1911, Mr. Avrunin has a BS degree from Ohio State University School of Journalism, and completed his graduate work at Western Reserve University, School of Applied Science. He has been a lecturer at the University of Michigan School of Social Work and a member of the faculty of the Training Bureau for Jewish Communal Service. He spent two months in Israel directing the Study of Voluntary Fund Raising in 1962 and 1963 under the auspices of the Jewish Agency for Israel in cooperation with the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds.

19,000 FILL MADISON SQUARE GARDEN IN N. Y. AT SECOND CHANUKAH FESTIVAL

NEW YORK, Dec. 23. (JTA) -- For the second time in two weeks, an overflow audience filled Madison Square Garden tonight when 19,000 persons attended the Chanukah Festival for Israel sponsored by State of Israel Bond Organization.