



Jewish Telegraphic Agency

DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

660 FIRST AVENUE

NEW YORK 16, N.Y.

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Vol. XXXI - 46th year

Friday, March 27, 1964

No. 62

PASSOVER STARTS TONIGHT; CELEBRATION MARKED BY SOVIET DISCRIMINATIONS

NEW YORK, March 26. (JTA) -- Jews throughout the United States--and throughout the rest of the free world--will usher in Passover tomorrow night under the shadow of increased anti-Jewish propaganda in the Soviet Union and the denial of matzoth to religious Jews there, including non-delivery of matzoh parcels sent by Jews from abroad.

At the same time, Passover will be marked in American Jewish homes with joy over the progress in Israel and the normal development of Jewish life in all democratic countries. Congregational seders will be held in many synagogue centers, while family seders will be held in thousands of homes with the chanting of the Haggadah which tells the story of the deliverance of the ancient Hebrew from bondage in Egypt.

Joseph Meyerhoff, general chairman of the United Jewish Appeal, said in a Passover message that tens of thousands of new immigrants in Israel have been aided in preparing for their Passover celebration by the provision of matzoth, other Passover foods, and cash grants for the purchase of the holiday necessities, arranged ahead of time by the United Jewish Appeal.

Mr. Meyerhoff announced that, in addition to special Passover aid provided other immigrants in Israel, special arrangements had been made by the Jewish Agency, a UJA beneficiary, to supply Passover needs to immigrants arriving in Israel on the very eve of Passover. Among the celebrants in Israel, he said, will be 10,000 youngsters in Jewish children's home; and 51,000 patients and clients of Malben, a Joint Distribution Committee program aiding the sick, aged and handicapped among Israel's immigrants. JDC is also a major UJA beneficiary.

J. D. C. Shipments of Passover Food Was Largest This Year

Mr. Meyerhoff announced that JDC's shipments of Passover foods to Europe this year were the largest ever sent. These shipments, he said, included 237,000 pounds of matzoth, plus 33,700 pounds of matzoh meal and 25,000 bottles of sacramental wine. Of the vast shipments of matzoth, 150,000 pounds went to France, to meet the needs of the large number of immigrants resettled there or in transit from North African countries. Jews in other countries among those aided to celebrate Passover properly included communities in Albania, Belgium, Greece, Italy, Portugal, Spain and Yugoslavia. The JDC has made special grants to Jews on relief rolls in North African countries.

Special Passover arrangements have also been made for newly arrived Jewish refugees in New York, aided by the New York Association for New Americans; for 40,000 youths throughout the world, including Israel, in training centers and schools conducted by ORT; and for Jewish migrants in the United States, Canada, Brazil, Australia and other free countries aided by United Hias Service. All of these agencies benefit from the UJA drives which must now be stepped up, Mr. Meyerhoff pointed out.

Jewish servicemen and women and their families, as well as American Jews serving with the Peace Corps in Pakistan, Liberia and Ethiopia, and Jewish personnel employed by the State Department in Thailand, Vietnam and India, have been assured of adequate Passover facilities by the special holiday program of the National Jewish Welfare Board. About 100,000 Jewish GIs on duty with American military forces at home and abroad have been supplied by the JWB with Haggadahs, and otherwise assured of full Passover facilities. Jewish chaplains have been assigned to many overseas, as well as domestic, military and naval installations.

United Hias Service, which is celebrating its 80th anniversary this year, is "especially mindful" at this time of the fact that "the story of Jewish exodus is as current today as it was in Biblical times," Murray I. Gurfain, president of the organization, pointed out in a special Passover message. Noting the organization's services since 1884, he emphasized that: "Jewish men, women and children from Eastern Europe, North Africa and Egypt are caught up in today's wave of migration, and our agency is finding havens and homes for them in free countries of the Western world."

Dr. Dewey D. Stone, chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel, Inc., expressed confidence in his Passover message that the sense of "being our brother's keeper" would continue to spur American Jewry toward "supreme efforts to meet the needs of those who are looking to us for the means of building for themselves and their families a new life of freedom and

dignity." He stressed that "In the United Jewish Appeal, American Jewry has created one of the most remarkable and the most effective instrumentalities for the realization of that tradition, extending the words 'may he who is hungry come and eat' beyond the geographical limitations of their homes and communities to their brothers overseas."

Abraham A. Feinberg, president of the Israel Bond Organization, declared that the Passover season faces American Jewry with a special "historic challenge." By continuing the flow of Israel bond dollars at a high level, "he stated, 'we can continue to perform an historic service to Israel's future and to the cause of freedom. This Passover season is an appropriate time to resolve that we do our full part.'"

Soviet 'Anti-Semitic Maneuvers' Stressed in Passover Message

Morris B. Abram, president of the American Jewish Committee, devoted his Passover message chiefly to the discriminations against Jews in the Soviet Union. Emphasizing that "the situation of the Jews in the USSR is continuing to worsen," he pointed to the fact that the Jewish faith there "is kept in an atomized condition as part of the campaign of cultural and religious genocide." He referred particularly to the anti-matzo restrictions imposed upon Soviet Jews, and said that this "is but another tactic in its anti-Semitic maneuvers. With all the administrative twists and barriers, the fact remains that countless Jews in Russia will be deprived of this ancient symbol during the eight days of the holiday."

On behalf of the American Jewish Congress, Rabbi Joachim Prinz, president, issued a Passover message in which he linked three of the most vital contemporary issues of concern to the American Jewish community during this year's festival. These, he said, are: Israel's security and its drives toward international peace and further domestic progress, the situation of the Jews in the USSR, and the American Jew's active role in the Negro drive toward "a full measure of equality."

Passover was seen as "a challenge to American Jewry, to free itself from the shackles of apathy and inaction in the face of cultural deterioration" in a statement issued on behalf of the American Zionist Council by Dr. Max Nussbaum, chairman, and Nathaniel S. Rottenberg, chairman of the Council's administrative committee. The American Zionist Council is the central coordinating body of all Zionist groups in the United States. The two AZC leaders emphasized the need for a "unified and strengthened Zionist movement, with an American-oriented program."

Synagogue Council Issues Passover Message to 3,000 Congregations

Three thousand American congregations--Orthodox, Conservative and Reform--were in receipt today of a special Passover message from Rabbi Uri Miller, president of the Synagogue Council of America, the national coordinating agency for the rabbinic and congregational organizations of all three branches of religious Judaism in this country.

Rabbi Miller laid particular stress on the need to guard against divisive forces within and without the Jewish community. He emphasized the need for "inner unity" as an essential factor toward overcoming "competing, fragmentizing, repetitious and, often, misleading postures being projected in the name of Jews and Judaism."

At the same time, he called for world leadership "to halt the now clear Soviet policy of spiritual and cultural annihilation of Judaism as a faith in the Soviet Union." He noted that the problem of Russian Jewry "is a perfect example of how tyranny would destroy a great part of our people, religiously and culturally," calling for vigilance against "despair and spiritual annihilation" wherever anti-Jewish oppressions might arise.

Passover greetings on behalf of the more than 300,000 members of Hadassah, the Women's Zionist Organization of America, were issued by Hadassah's national president, Mrs. Siegfried Kramarsky. Her message, too, emphasized the situation of the Jews in the USSR, "isolated from their fellow Jews" around the world and "deprived of the means of celebrating Passover in accordance with Jewish tradition." The Hadassah leader also pointed out that Passover is "a time to commit ourselves anew to helping Israel absorb the immigrants from many lands, who come to the Jewish State to be citizens of a democracy."

Similar messages were issued by the Zionist Organization of America, B'nai Zion, and leaders of all Rabbinical organizations in this country.

CONGRESS RESOLUTION ON MATZO TO SOVIET JEWS TOO LATE FOR ACTION

WASHINGTON, March 26, (JTA) -- With the Passover seder only one day away, the resolution submitted in Congress last week to use U.S. facilities to send matzo to Soviet Jews, has still not gone beyond the preliminary parliamentary steps. It is now virtually certain that the resolution will not be adopted in time for action by the Administration had it chosen to act on it.

The delay on this matter was caused by several factors. Some feel that Ohio Democratic Congressman Michael Feighan who submitted the resolution in the House acted too late for completion of the procedure even under the best of circumstances. Moreover, on the Senate side, the legislators were busy debating the civil rights bill deferring most of other legislative actions.

MOSCCW DEFENDS AUTHOR OF ANTI-SEMITIC BOOK; SAYS HE HAD 'GOOD INTENTIONS'

WASHINGTON, March 26. (JTA) -- The Soviet Embassy here today transmitted to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency the text of a statement distributed by the Soviet news agency Novosti, in defense of the anti-Semitic book "Judaism Without Embellishment," published by the Ukrainian Academy of Science in Kiev.

The statement, written by a Jewish Communist named Shimon Katz, claims that T.K. Kitchko, the author of the notorious book, had acted under his right to engage in anti-religious propaganda, and wrote the book "with good intentions." At the same time the statement contained some vague criticism of the way the author tried "introduce scientific views on Judaism to his readers." The statement stressed that "the policy of the Soviet Government in the nationality question cannot be appraised on the basis of only one work by an atheist."

The Soviet Embassy here also told the JTA today that it had no information about the fate of the individual parcels of matzoh which were sent to Soviet Jews from abroad, and which were reported here to have been held up by Soviet customs authorities instead of being delivered to the addressees. The Embassy said this report would have to be checked in Moscow.

An Embassy spokesman, Yuri Bobrakov, told the JTA that the private matzoh bakery in Moscow is now operating again, and that the Embassy had received photographs showing the operation. He said the bakery had been closed down for only three days, and cited information attributed to Novosti that 800 pounds of matzoh were being baked there daily. The agency report, he stated, gave a detailed description of the baking process. He claimed the matzoh were being distributed "to four Moscow synagogues."

British Communist Party Protests Against Soviet Anti-Semitic Book

LONDON, March 26. (JTA) -- The British Communist Party today joined other Communists in the Western world in criticism of the anti-Semitic book, "Judaism Without Embellishment," published in Kiev by the Ukrainian Academy of Science.

The British Communist protest was, however, more limited than those registered by the French, American and Italian Communist groups. It was restricted to the caricatures in the book. These have been termed by Western critics as reminiscent of the worst material published in "Der Stürmer," by Julius Streicher, the most rabid of the Nazi anti-Semites.

John Gellan, British party secretary, said in a statement that "British Communists would certainly dissociate themselves from the illustrations." Making no reference to the information in the book, Gellan said the illustrations reproduced in the West "has shocked" people in Britain.

Swedish Communists Join in Protests Against Soviet Book

STOCKHOLM, March 26. (JTA) -- The Swedish Communists have joined the protest against the Soviet anti-Semitic book, "Judaism Without Embellishment." The Stockholm young Communist groups sent an open letter to the Soviet Young Communist Organization asking whether the book has actually been published. If so, the Swedish Communists stated, they wanted to express "surprise and protest" at the anti-Semitic tendency of the book.

The Stockholm radio, reporting on the open letter, stressed that there has been a great deal of discussion in both Swedish and foreign newspapers of the book in recent weeks, and so far there has come no denial of its official nature from the Soviet Union.

European Writers Union Asks Soviet Authors to Condemn the Book

ROME, March 26. (JTA) -- The European Writers Union appealed today to the Soviet Writers Union to act against the publication of "Judaism Without Embellishment," which it called "an anti-Semitic libel." The appeal was conveyed in a cable from the organization's general secretary, Gian Carlo Vigorelli.

The cable stressed that European writers had reacted with "shocked protest" against the publication of the book by the Ukrainian Academy of Science. It said the writers group was awaiting "clarification" and "requests your intervention to repair the moral, cultural and political damage done by this publication." It expressed "surprise and grief" about the book.

MOSCOW RABBI SENDS PASSOVER GREETINGS TO CANADIAN JEWISH CONGRESS

MONTREAL, March 26. (JTA) -- Rabbi Y.L. Levin, Moscow Chief Rabbi, in a letter addressed to Michael Garber, president of the Canadian Jewish Congress, extended Passover greetings to the Canadian Jewish community and expressed the hope that "peace will spread throughout the whole world."

The letter also acknowledged the congratulatory message sent to Rabbi Levin by Mr. Garber on behalf of the organized Canadian Jewish community on the occasion of the recent celebration of Rabbi Levin's 70th birthday. The exchange of correspondence was in Hebrew.

ARGENTINE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT ACTS TO CHECK ANTI-SEMITIC GROUP

MENDOZA, Argentina, March 26. (JTA) -- The Mendoza provincial government took steps today to prevent further anti-Jewish activities of the Guardia Restauradora Nacionalista after three members of the extremist nationalist group were arrested last week on suspicion of having been implicated in the bombing of the Mendoza Jewish Club. Last week's bombing of the club was the second in a month.

Police here confirmed today that anti-Jewish violence is an integral part of the program of the extremist group. In April of last year, the Buenos Aires Government had decreed a ban on the GRN as well as the anti-Semitic Tacuara organization and closed down the headquarters of both organizations. The two groups, however, have continued to act openly, even to the extent of claiming credit for their activities.

In a public press conference today, spokesmen for the GRN said that they constituted "a Roman Catholic apostolic group" to fight liberalism. "We are nationalists and attack Jews not for being Jews but for being Communists," they declared.

The Egyptian embassy in Buenos Aires issued a communique today that Hussein Triki, who has been distributing anti-Semitic propaganda on behalf of the Arab League, is not affiliated with Egypt's diplomatic mission in this country. The communique also disclaimed responsibility for the activities of Raul Hassen, who has been helping Triki in his work.

JEVISH COMMUNITIES IN BRAZIL TO SEEK BAN ON ANTI-SEMITIC 'PROTOCOLS'

RIC DE JANEIRO, March 26. (JTA) -- The executive of the Confederation of Jewish Communities in Brazil decided today to request the Government to prohibit the distribution of a Portuguese edition of the "Protocols of the Elders of Zion," the notorious anti-Semitic forgery which has been made available in this country for a nominal price. The distribution of the anti-Jewish booklet was reported to be extensive throughout Brazil.

Last year, the Brazilian Government, following the intervention of the Jewish Confederation, banned the distribution of a local edition of Hitler's "Mein Kampf." It is expected that the Government will act similarly with regard to the "Protocols."

U. S. RELIGIOUS ZIONISTS SEVER AFFILIATION WITH AMERICAN JEWISH CONGRESS

NEW YORK, March 26. (JTA) -- The Religious Zionist Organization of America, Mizrahi-Hapoel Hamizrachi, has adopted a resolution severing its affiliation with the American Jewish Congress and has notified the Congress of its action, Rabbi Israel Tabak, acting president of the religious Zionist group, announced today.

Rabbi Tabak said the action was an outgrowth of a communication sent by seven major American non-Orthodox organizations to Israel's Premier Levi Eshkol, urging him not to permit "coercion in Israel by religious extremists." The American Jewish Congress was one of the seven.

Dr. Tabak asserted that aside from the "coercion" charge, "which Mizrahi considers false and malicious," the signing by the American Jewish Congress "without prior consultation of a document dealing with so crucial a religious matter, is an act of bad faith."

400 YESHIVA STUDENTS SENTENCED IN ISRAEL FOR DEMONSTRATIONS

JERUSALEM, March 26. (JTA) -- Four hundred yeshiva students charged with demonstrations in a Catholic mission courtyard in Jerusalem last September were found guilty today of criminal trespass. They were sentenced to fines of 25 pounds (\$8.33) to 100 pounds (\$33) or jail terms of three to 15 days, depending on age.

The court, in imposing sentence, said that even if the students were actuated by the loftiest motives, as had been contended by their defense attorneys, this could not change that trespass had taken place.

SABBATARIAN BILL IN MASSACHUSETTS SIGNED INTO LAW BY GOVERNOR

BOSTON, March 26. (JTA) -- A bill permitting limited exemption for Seventh Day Sabbatarians from the state Sunday closing law was signed into law yesterday by Governor Endicott Peabody. It permits a person who is solely in control of a business to do business on Sundays if he cannot perform any labor on Saturdays because of his religion.

The issue, in which Massachusetts Jewry appeared before many legislative hearings, has been a controversial one for several years. A similar measure was approved previously in the lower House of the Legislature last year but failed in the State Senate.

Governor Peabody was quoted as saying "I am very happy that I am signing this bill on the eve of the Jewish holiday of Passover." Rabbi Dr. Samuel J. Fox, President of the Massachusetts Council of Rabbis, called the act "a most significant historic occasion which continues the tradition of freedom in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts."