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PASSOVER STARTS TONIGHT; MESSAGES HIGHLIGHT SOVIET DISCRIMINATIONS

NEW YORK, April 15. (JTA) -- Passover will be ushered in at sundown tomorrow by Jews in the United States and throughout the world. With the observance of the first seder tomorrow night--even in the Soviet Union, where grave restrictions are in effect against the baking or obtaining of matzoh--the Jewish people will start celebrating the ancient, traditional festival of liberation, marking the emergence of the Jews to freedom from Egyptian bondage. A joyous holiday, Passover this year--as in other recent years--will be marred for the Jewish people by the severe, anti-religious oppressions imposed by the Soviet Government on the 3,000,000 Jews living in the USSR.

Thousands of American Jewish men and women in the service of their country, whether in the armed forces or in civilian capacities, will celebrate Passover in Army, Navy, Air Force and other installations around the world. The National Jewish Welfare Board has arranged Passover facilities for Jewish service personnel on duty in 600 military installations abroad, as well as for their families, aboard Naval vessels and troop transports, at missile bases and tracking stations, and for patients in Veterans Administration hospitals in this country.

Also included in JWB's worldwide Passover arrangements are a number of American Jewish civilians serving with the Peace Corps in Nepal, Tanzania, Tunisia, Pakistan, Liberia, and Ethiopia and with State Department missions in Thailand and India. Passover services, sederim on base, in synagogues, Jewish Community Centers and other community facilities, home hospitality, and, at many installations, special Passover meals for the entire eight days of the holiday, were organized in the United States and at some 70 overseas points by the 270 full and part-time Jewish chaplains, regional JWB consultants, community Armed Services Committee and Veterans Committees and Jewish Community Centers.

J.D.C. Sends 665,000 Tons of Supplies to 100,000 Jews in 10 Countries

In 10 European countries where matzoh and other Passover supplies were either unavailable or in short supply, the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee furnished 665,000 pounds of matzoh and other Passover needs. Charles H. Jordan, JDC's director-general for Europe, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency in Geneva that the shipments, largest in 13 years, would make possible full observance of the Passover by 100,000 needy Jews.

One of JDC's major recipients was the French Jewish community which is still struggling to meet the needs of the huge influx of refugees from North Africa. Mr. Jordan also reported that, because of a breakdown in local sources of supply, the Orthodox community of 1,800 Jews in Melilla, Spanish Morocco appealed to the JDC and received 13,000 pounds of matzoh.

In other parts of Morocco and Algeria, Tunisia, and Iran, the JDC made special cash grants to enable poverty-stricken Jews to buy Passover foods locally. In Poland, matzoh has been baked by the religious community with equipment provided by the JDC. Needy Polish Jews also were given funds to buy matzoh.

Conference on Soviet Jewry Details Charges Against the U.S.S.R.

But while relative freedom from religious persecution was being enjoyed by Jews in most of the countries behind the Iron Curtain--not only in Poland but also in Hungary, Rumania, Czechoslovakia and Bulgaria--the anti-Jewish discriminations were pointed up especially during Passover for the Russian Jewish population, second largest in the world.

The American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry, comprising 24 national Jewish organizations representing the overwhelming majority of American Jews, dealt with that subject in a special Passover statement, issued by the chairman of the Conference steering committee, Label A. Katz. He is also national president of B'nai B'rith. The Conference statement was supplemented by a lengthy special report, entitled "The Soviet Assault on Passover," detailing the history of Soviet restrictions on matzoh from 1957 to 1965.

Expressing the American Jewish community's "chagrin and dismay" over the USSR's "pernicious assault" on Passover observance, Mr. Katz said: "As a result of official Soviet policy, the vast majority of Soviet Jews will not have matzoh again this year. This

means that they are again forcibly deprived of the chief means of observing Passover properly; American Jewry protests this discriminatory deprivation with all the force at its command."

Noting that, "consistent, systematic, world-wide protests" had apparently caused the Soviet Government to shift its policy on Passover observance, by making this year's ban on matzoh "less than total," Mr. Katz voiced gratification over this slight change in policy. But he noted that the change affects Jewish religious congregations in only three "showcase cities"--Moscow, Leningrad and Odessa. Even there, he pointed out, many difficulties have been put in the way of those Jews wanting matzoh, and the costs of matzoh are "exorbitant;"

Except for Odessa, he stated, the matzoh ban remains in force throughout the Ukraine, affecting hundreds of thousands of Jews all over that region, including the capital Kiev, where the congregation's request for a matzoh-baking permit had been denied. He charged that:

"Matzoh baking has been prohibited this year in Minsk, capital of Byelorussia; there is no sign of matzoh baking in any of the Baltic countries; in Riga, capital of Latvia, arbitrary obstacles prevented implementation of the permit which the congregation ostensibly received; in Moldavia, which has a sizable Jewish population, especially in its capital of Kishinev, no matzoh baking is allowed;"

Mr. Katz's belief that only world-wide protests had brought about the slight shift in the Soviet Government's anti-matzoh policy this year was supported by a statement made in an interview here last night by Associate Supreme Court Justice Arthur J. Goldberg. "The limited action of the Soviet Government in regard to its permission for the baking of matzoh, at least in Moscow," he said, "is certainly an action in response to world opinion; Facts show that there is still anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, and anti-Jewish actions by the Government persist, in spite of Soviet denials."

Passover Messages from Organizations Stress Israel, Zionist Commitments

Virtually every Jewish organization in the United States issued a special Passover message. Max H. Fisher, general chairman of the United Jewish Appeal, declared that, as American Jews marked the exodus of the Hebrews from bondage, "we can be joyful and proud that we have aided the modern exodus which, in the 27 years since the founding of the UJA, has resettled more than 1,335,000 uprooted Jews in Israel, and another 350,000 in other havens."

Abraham Feinberg, president of the Israel Bond Organization, pointed out that the observance of Passover "sharpen[s] our vision as Jews, and heightens our sense of achievement and responsibility in the work that we are doing to strengthen Israel as the expression of the Jewish love for freedom."

Dewey D. Stone, chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel, Inc., said that, while "the commitment to freedom expressed in the Passover holiday is as old as the Jewish people," American Jews must remember that "in each generation, freedom may again become a perishable commodity." Dr. Emanuel Neumann, chairman of the American Section of the Jewish Agency, stated that the resettlement in Israel from 1960 to 1964 of some 250,000 Jewish refugees, under Jewish Agency auspices, constituted a "modern recreation of the Biblical Exodus" which was "in keeping with the Passover spirit and tradition."

Dr. Max Nussbaum, chairman of the American Zionist Council, and president of the Zionist Organization of America, urged all Jews to rally under the Zionist banner to help safeguard Israel's security and the welfare of Jews everywhere, adding that the Passover festival signified the need for Jewish alertness against dangers to Israel, and to the survival of the Jewish people.

Other Zionist Leaders, Religious Groups Pinpoint Oppressions in Soviet Union

The plight of the Jews of the Soviet Union was cited in a message from Mrs. Rose L. Halprin and Dr. Israel Goldstein, as co-chairmen of the World Confederation of General Zionists, who said that neither the Jewish people, nor the free world "can rest peacefully" until the bonds on Soviet Jewry were lifted. Further concern for the fate of Soviet Jewry, calling for world leadership to halt those operations, were voiced in Passover statements by Mrs. Mortimer Jacobson, president of Hadassah; Rabbi Uri Miller, president of the Synagogue Council of America; and Moses I. Feuerstein, president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America.

Max Bressler, president of the Jewish National Fund of America, called on American Jews to remember at the seder table the unfinished work of land reclamation in Israel, and the need to help both the new settlers and those en route to Israel. Mrs. Eli Reznikoff, president of the Mizrahi Women's Organization, said that if Jews in the United States are to be "truly free" they must give "total moral and spiritual support" to the struggle of the American Negro for freedom, and to the integration of the Oriental newcomers in Israel.

A similar call for American Jewish support for the struggle of the Negro for full civic equality was contained in the Passover message of Dr. Joachim Prinz, president

of the American Jewish Congress. Murray I. Gurfeln, president of United Hias Service, said some 12,000 Jewish men, women and children would be helped by Hias this year to find new homes, fleeing from "spiritual bondage."

Rabbi M. M. Schneerson, the world leader of the Lubavitcher Hassidic movement, called on Jews to implement the spirit of Passover by rejecting modern idolatries of every kind.

TOURISTS FLOCK TO ISRAEL FOR HOLIDAY; EL AL PLANE TRAVEL AT PEAK

TEL AVIV, April 15: (JTA) -- Many thousands of tourists have poured into Israel in recent days to observe the Passover holiday here. Hotels announced they were booked to capacity. Fully loaded planes have been landing at Lydda Airport on an around-the-clock basis. A single day's record number of 1,222 tourists arrived on El Al planes today, for a total of nearly 7,000 brought in by the airline for the holiday.

Food markets were reported adequately supplied, and prices very moderate. Special second seders have been arranged at luxury hotels as well as by the Zionist Organization of America at the ZOA House, and by the Histadrut, Israel's Labor Federation.

STATE DEPT. SAYS U. S. A. WANTS TO AVOID MIDDLE EAST ARMS RACE

WASHINGTON, April 15. (JTA) -- A State Department spokesman said today that, while the United States will continue to refrain from becoming a major supplier of arms to Middle Eastern nations, "we reserve the right to provide limited amounts of conventional military material to meet legitimate defense needs." Spokesman Robert McCloskey stressed that requests were dealt with on a "bilateral basis." He refused to comment on whether the simultaneous announcement of U. S. consideration of arms for Israel and for Arab states was actually a formula to supply some arms to Israel in a manner least offensive to the Arabs.

Mr. McCloskey said that, in deference to the wishes of nations making arms requests, the Department does not divulge the nature of requests or the progress of discussions. He noted that the United States does not grant all requests received. He said: "The United States seeks to avoid contributing to a Near East arms race" but would supply limited arms to nations of the region on a bilateral basis.

BCURGUIBA SAYS NASSER, TITO KNEW OF HIS ISRAEL-ARAB PEACE STAND

PARIS, April 15. (JTA) -- President Habib Bourguiba of Tunisia renewing his appeal for an end to Arab-Israeli hatreds, disclosed today that Egyptian leaders knew and approved of his intention to make his views publicly known.

The Tunisian leader's latest effort was in an interview in today's issue of the French weekly, Nouvelle Observateur, in which he reiterated his stand for a negotiated solution of the Israel-Arab dispute. Specifically, he urged "an end to the bitter hatred which divides Arabs and Jews and which leads the Arab masses to a fanaticism which will be dangerous the day when negotiations will have to start."

Referring to a recent visit to Cairo, he declared: "I told Cairo that I intended to make my views publicly known, on condition that I should not be accused of betraying the Arab cause. Everybody agreed. There were some differences of evaluation, but no serious disagreements." He also said that President Nasser of Egypt expressed, in an interview with the French monthly, "Realities," ideas "not so very different from my own."

He asserted that he had reason to believe that President Tito of Yugoslavia did not support the unrelenting hostility of the Arab leaders against Israel. He hinted that his recent talks with Tito led him to believe that the Yugoslav leader, "without doubt one of the Arabs' best friends in general, and Nasser's in particular, "might feel that "Arab-Jewish co-existence could be realized."

From Belgrade, the Tunisian leader went to Cairo where, he said, he spelled out his ideas to Nasser and his advisers. He said: "I told them that the Arabs could not remain eternally on a defensive position and that our stand only consolidates Israel and shows the world our inability to resolve the problem. For 17 years, Arab efforts have been unsuccessful. Why not try my method?" he said he had asked the Egyptians,

He then asserted that "the time has come to say aloud what everyone in the Middle East ruling circles thinks secretly. Things must happen. There should be proposals and counter-proposals and international action. A new situation which will bring new appreciations must be created." He proposed that the Arab leaders undertake "a clear diplomatic action. Should it fail, then--secure in world approval, the clarity of our positions and the organization of the Palestinian refugees themselves--we can envisage other means."

SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO BUILD NEW ISRAEL EMBASSY ON TEL AVIV SITE

TEL AVIV, April 15: (JTA) -- The Soviet Embassy will erect its own building here on a plot of land the Soviet Government retained when it recently sold most of its property to Israel, it was reported here today.

OFFICIAL GREEN LIGHT GIVEN RIBICOFF DRAFT AGAINST SOVIET BIAS

WASHINGTON, April 15. (JTA) -- State Department spokesman Robert McCloskey made known today that the Department has decided not to object to the Ribicoff resolution which provides for Congressional condemnation of Soviet anti-Semitism. It was learned that the State Department, in view of criticism of its opposition to the Ribicoff resolution, noted the deterioration in American-Soviet relations and felt that the previous reasons for America's opposition to the resolution no longer applied.

It has now been decided that, while the resolution may not have a significant effect, the Department feels that, under present circumstances, it can no longer object. Mr. McCloskey said that the Department's views were contained in a letter by Assistant Secretary of State Douglas MacArthur 2nd, to Chairman J.W. Fulbright of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, who had requested the current position on the pending measure.

Mr. MacArthur stated that, after weighing possible advantages against disadvantages, it had been decided not to object to adoption of the Ribicoff draft at this time.

Chief Rabbi of Moscow Discusses Jewish Issues with American Newsman

NEW YORK, April 15. (JTA) -- Rabbi Yehuda Leib Levin, chief rabbi of Moscow, told the Associated Press in Moscow that his Central Synagogue has no library or Hebrew school, and that applicants for the Yeshiva in his congregation from other parts of the Soviet Union cannot come to the capital because there is no place for them to live in the crowded city, and residence permits are refused to them, the AP reported here today. The last graduating class of the Yeshiva completed its studies there three years ago, Rabbi Levin told the American news agency, the class of "less than 30" including a few rabbis, schochtim and cantors, the report stated.

The rabbi also said, according to the report, that no Hebrew prayer books have been printed in the Soviet Union since 1956, when the only other edition was published since 1917; and that Soviet Jews are trying to print a prayer book "for all seasons" and hope that, eventually, a Hebrew Bible will be published. Rabbi Levin told the AP reporter: "It is difficult for us to realize all these objectives at once."

Other statements attributed to the rabbi in the Moscow report included an assertion that Moscow has no Jewish cemetery, Jews and Christians being buried in common burial grounds; that there are few Bar Mitzvahs in the synagogue because "almost 90 percent of the children are Pioneers," (a Communist organization for children); that the Jewish "believers" contribute money to the synagogue, but need no help from abroad; and that: "In the Soviet Union we have no anti-Semitism, but maybe there are some anti-Semites."

COURT HEARS JEWISH CONGRESS DEMAND FOR FREEDOM TO PICKET FAIR

NEW YORK, April 15. (JTA) -- Judge Birdie Amsterdam, of the New York State Supreme Court, reserved decision today on a motion by the American Jewish Congress, seeking a preliminary injunction to restrain Robert Moses, president of the New York World's Fair, and the World's Fair, from interfering on the Fair's opening day with the organization's plans to picket the Jordanian Pavilion for continuing to display a mural considered defamatory to the Jewish people and Israel.

Howard M. Squadron, chairman of the Congress Commission on Law and Social Action, presented arguments on a suit filed April 9 by Dr. Joachim Prinz, president of the AJC and 10 others. The aim of the suit is to obtain a permanent injunction, restraining Moses and Fair officials from arresting organization officials from exercising their constitutional rights of free speech.

The probability is that a decision will be handed down within the week, in view of the fact that the Fair will reopen April 21. Picketing efforts by Congress officials during the first Fair season, last year, led to arrests and subsequent dismissal of charges against the defendants.

WEST GERMAN PRESIDENT SIGNS NEW LAW ON NAZI CRIMES TRIALS

BONN, April 15. (JTA) -- President Heinrich Lübke has signed the bill, adopted by Parliament, extending the West German statute of limitations for prosecutions of Nazi war criminals for an additional four and a half years. The statute had been scheduled to go into effect on May 8. Under the extension, the effective date will be January 1, 1970.

DR. MARTIN RIESENBURGER, EAST GERMAN CHIEF RABBI, DEAD AT 69

BERLIN, April 15. (UTA) -- Dr. Martin Riesenburger, Chief Rabbi of East Germany, died yesterday at the age of 69, the official East German News Agency has reported. As the only rabbi in East Germany, he served the eight other synagogues in the country on a rotating basis in addition to his congregation in East Berlin.

A former lay preacher, Dr. Riesenburger was named by the Communist authorities in 1953 to the East Berlin post after the former rabbi had settled in West Berlin. In 1961 he was awarded the Patriotic Order of Merit, and East Berlin's university granted him an honorary doctorate of law.