

JTA daily news bulletin

Published by Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Inc. 660 First Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10016

Contents copyright: Republication only by previous arrangement.

Vol. XXXV - Fifty-First Year

Monday, February 12, 1968

No. 29

All-Day Artillery and Tank Duel Rages Along Jordan River Demarcation Line

TEL AVIV, Feb. 11 (JTA)--Fighting raged through the day today along the Jordan River demarcation line from Geshor in northern Israel to the Dead Sea in the south with both Israel and Jordan using tanks and heavy artillery in a steadily escalating duel which continued at nightfall.

The new and widening clash, the second in three days, followed terrorist activity in the Beisan Valley supported by Jordanian covering fire from the east bank of the Jordan River. The Jordanians fired shells at Kibbutz Geshor in three volleys last night but all exploded harmlessly in open fields. The attack was renewed by Jordanian forces this morning with Israeli units returning the fire. During the afternoon the Jordanians shifted the fire to the central section near the Damiyah Bridge. After the fire was returned the Jordanians shifted fire to the Allenby and Abdallah Bridges near Jericho. Firing subsided late in the afternoon at Geshor but the shooting continued in the central and southern river sectors.

The Israeli strategy was to match weapon for weapon, using tanks and artillery when the Jordanians put such arms into action. One Jordanian tank was knocked off the Abdallah Bridge by Israeli gunners. Initial reports said that two Israeli soldiers had been slightly wounded. There were no later reports on casualties.

In earlier clashes with Arab terrorists, Israeli patrols killed eight of the intruders. One patrol killed three terrorists yesterday morning four hours after the guerrillas attacked Kibbutz Yad Hanna with mortar and bazooka shells. Two of the dead intruders were known to have taken part in previous El Fatah attacks. In a previous clash, an Israeli patrol fought with a group of seven terrorists north of Jericho, killing five. One Israeli soldier was killed and three wounded in the encounter.

Israel Government Taking 'Grave View' of Expanded Jordanian Attacks

JERUSALEM, Feb. 11 (JTA)--Government sources reportedly took a grave view today of the continuing Jordanian attacks along the Jordan River demarcation line and warned that if Jordan chose to make the Israeli side of the line an arena of battle, that country must be prepared to face the consequences of such a decision. A report on the clashes was made to the Cabinet at its regular meeting today by Gen. Moshe Dayan, the Defense Minister, in a review of Israel's security situation.

The sources said that protection of lives and property was a cardinal principle of any nation and they noted that Israel had declared previously that quiet must prevail on both sides of its borders. The sources added that it appeared that King Hussein of Jordan was no longer able or willing to restrain aggressive elements in his kingdom. Reports from Jordan, they said, indicated that there was sharp antagonism between the Palestinians and Jordanians in the kingdom, with the former reportedly deriding King Hussein for not acting to "liberate Palestine." The latter were understood to be accusing the Palestinian elements of being a source of continuing provocations, dragging the kingdom into hostilities with Israel against the wishes of the Jordanians.

(Israel made its third formal protest of the week Friday at the United Nations over the continuing guerrilla intrusions from Jordan and warned that Jordan would be held responsible for the "unprovoked attacks.")

Iraq's President Ends Paris Talks Without French Arms Commitment

PARIS, Feb. 11 (JTA)--President Aref of Iraq left here yesterday without a formal commitment by France to provide him with jet planes or other armaments but with a joint communique, signed with President President de Gaulle, stipulating that "there is no possibility of a settlement in the Middle East without prior withdrawal (by Israel) from all occupied territories." Franco-Iraqi negotiations on arms deliveries, particularly the Mirage jet planes, will continue, official circles reported today. President Aref will visit Cairo before returning to Baghdad.

The final communique made no mention of either arms deliveries to Iraq or the granting of rights to a French petroleum company to exploit the Roumeila oil fields in Iraq. Both of these points were brought up by President Aref in press interviews during his Paris stay. He told Le Monde Friday that "if we obtain French arms, and this is not certain, they will be used to equip our army for defensive purposes and not to initiate war." He indignantly denied charges by Gen. Barzani, leader of the Kurdish nationalists in Iraq, that the French arms might be used on the Kurds. On the question of a Middle East settlement, Pres. Aref said "we demand first of all, the unconditional withdrawal of the Israelis from territories occupied last June 5 and we are in full agreement with Gen. de Gaulle's condemnation of Israel's expansionism."

(The Daily Telegraph reported in London yesterday that Pres. Aref made a futile last minute attempt to have Gen. de Gaulle delete a passage from his speech saying that a Middle East settle-

ment must include a permanent peace with Israel and free navigation in the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba. Gen. de Gaulle made the speech at a reception Thursday honoring Pres. Aref at the Paris City Hall.)

(According to the Telegraph, Gen. de Gaulle was believed to have offered Iraq not only Mirage jets, as well as tanks and tactical missiles but French support for Arab policies in a package deal for a "just peace" to include the re-drawing of frontiers by an international commission and Israel's withdrawal from occupied territory.)

President Aref used the reception in his honor as the occasion for a speech bitterly assailing Israel and Zionism. The reception was boycotted by many prominent Frenchmen who had been invited as was a luncheon given in Aref's honor by the Paris municipal corporation. On that occasion too, the Iraqi leader assailed Israel and warned that "Zionist pressure" might paralyze the United Nations.

Hadassah Leaders Attend Ground-Breaking for Moshe Sharett Institute

JERUSALEM, Feb. 11 (JTA)--Hadassah leaders attended ground-breaking ceremonies here today for the new 6 million pound (\$1.7 million) Moshe Sharett Institute, an addition to the Ullman Center for cancer and allied diseases at the Hadassah Hospital. The ceremonies followed the first working session of Hadassah's mid-winter conference which opened in Jerusalem last night.

Half of the money for the Sharett Institute, named in memory of Israel's first Foreign Minister and later Prime Minister, was contributed by the Ullman Foundation. Hadassah will raise an additional 1.5 million pounds (\$430,000) for a building maintenance fund. Israel's Minister of Health, Israel Barzilai, who attended the ceremonies, noted that cancer accounts for 1.8 percent of all deaths in Israel.

Earlier today, Prof. K. Mann, director general of the Hadassah Medical Organization, announced that the Hadassah Hospital's open heart surgeon, Dr. Joseph Borman, will be sent to Cape Town, South Africa, to study heart transplant techniques, probably with Dr. Christian Bernard whose surgical team performed the first human heart transplant operation in medical history. Dr. Borman was born in South Africa.

Foreign Minister Abba Eban, addressing the opening session last night, declared that the Middle Eastern nations must cooperate more among themselves and depend less than they traditionally have on outside powers to determine the fate of the region. He sharply criticized President Tito, of Yugoslavia, for his attempts to promote a Middle East peace formula at variance with the United Nations Security Council's resolution of Nov. 22, 1967. The Tito plan is a version of the non-aligned nations' formula which was rejected by the U.N. last summer. It called for unconditional Israeli withdrawal from occupied territories in return for an Arab statement of non-belligerence. The notion that Israel relinquish the occupied territories without a firm peace treaty is a "prescription for renewed hostilities," Mr. Eban declared.

Meeting with newsmen before the conference, Mrs. Mortimer Jacobson, Hadassah president, announced that a Youth Center will be opened among the Hadassah buildings now being restored on Mt. Scopus to cater to American college youth. These young people, she said, would spend a year of study there in courses accredited by American universities. Some of them may stay on in Israel and others will return to the United States to become Zionist leaders, she said. The Mt. Scopus buildings, the original site of the Hadassah Hospital and the Hebrew University, were cut off from Israel for nearly 20 years following the occupation of Mt. Scopus by the Jordanian Arab Legion during the 1948 war.

Mrs. Jacobson also described an adult movement recently established in the United States by college graduates who want to settle at Tsur Hadassah, near Jerusalem. Most of them are music graduates, she said, and want teaching jobs in Israel. She also noted that Hadassah is devoting greater efforts to place Youth Aliyah children in kibbutzim and establishing proper educational facilities for them.

Israel's Cabinet Seeks to Bolster Jarring's Mid-East Peace Mission

JERUSALEM, Feb. 11 (JTA)--Israel's Cabinet moved today to bolster confidence in the mission of the United Nations peace emissary, Ambassador Gunnar Jarring, in the face of persistent press reports in the Arab countries, and a few in Israel as well, that Jarring's mission had failed. The Cabinet unanimously renewed its mandate to Foreign Minister Abba Eban to continue his talks with Ambassador Jarring and to encourage him to bring both sides together for direct peace negotiations. Mr. Eban and Ambassador Jarring were scheduled to meet here tonight.

Commenting on suggestions made in Egyptian and Lebanese newspapers that the Middle East dispute should be taken back to the Security Council which established Ambassador Jarring's mission by its resolution of Nov. 22, 1967, Mr. Eban proposed that Israel should dissociate itself from such a plan should Mr. Jarring raise the question. The Cabinet concurred. Mr. Eban reported to the Cabinet on the talks between French President de Gaulle and President Abdul Aref, of Iraq in Paris last week. His report was not made public, but it was believed that Mr. Eban sharply criticized the joint communique issued by de Gaulle and Aref on the latter's departure from France yesterday which stressed only one point of the Security Council's Nov. 22 resolution -- that Israel withdraw from occupied territories. This was an imbalanced interpretation of the resolution and a misleading formulation of its intention, Mr. Eban is reported to have stated.

Munich Deputy Mayor Says Priest Studying Passion Play Text for Changes

BONN, Feb. 11 (JTA)--The deputy mayor of Munich, Artur Haser, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that a priest has been studying the controversial text of the Bavarian Passion Play to determine whether there was anything in it that could be called anti-Semitic. The charge has been made repeatedly against the version used in the Bavarian village of Oberammergau where it is presented every ten years.

The American Jewish Congress recently renewed a call for ~~aboycott~~ boycott of the next scheduled presentation in 1970, charging that the villagers had refused to alter its "viciously anti-Semitic" text. The deputy mayor said the priest, Stephan Scheller, had been studying the text for six months and would submit his proposals for changes by next September at the latest. The deputy mayor added that he thought "certain changes will be made."

Another source, Michael Hoeck, an assistant to Julius Cardinal Doepfner, Archbishop of Munich, said that the text had been changed but gave no details other than that it had to be "brought into accord" with the new position of the Vatican Council which approved a declaration repudiating the charge of deicide against the Jewish people in the crucifixion of Jesus, which is the theme of the Passion Play. The assistant added that the text had been changed, not because of the American Jewish Congress call for a boycott of the 1970 performance, but to conform with the Vatican Council position. He said the boycott call was unjustified.

Pope John, As Papal Delegate, Issued Special Passes to Save Jews, Says Aide

ROME, Feb. 11 (JTA)--An American author's statement that Msgr. Angelo Roncalli, who later became Pope John XXIII, issued thousands of false baptismal certificates to enable Jews to escape from the Nazis during World War II, was denied today in a newspaper report which said that he used other means for that purpose.

The denial was made by Luciano Bresciani who served in the secretarial office of Monsignore Roncalli when the latter was Papal Delegate in Sofia, Bulgaria and later in Istanbul, between 1930 and 1944. Sr. Bresciani said, however, that the future Pope had instructed him to issue Laissez Passer documents to Jews in the Balkan countries on the basis of which they could receive transit visas to Palestine from the Turkish Government.

The assertion that Monsignore Roncalli sent false baptismal certificates "by the thousands" to the Papal Nuncio in Budapest for the distribution to Jews was made by Arthur D. Morse in his book "While Six Million Died" just published here. Sr. Bresciani who provided Mr. Morse with information for his book, said that "Monsignore Roncalli was too dedicated to truth to say even one lie or to resort to subterfuge." Bresciani told of one episode in which Monsignore Roncalli's personal intervention saved the lives of some 20 Jews who had succeeded in escaping to Bulgaria in 1944. Their extradition was demanded by the Germans. Roncalli in a personal letter to King Boris of Bulgaria, asked that the ruler refuse. The King cooperated and helped the Jews obtain Turkish transit visas. Sr. Bresciani insisted that he never mentioned baptismal certificates to Mr. Morse.

BBC Expresses 'Regret' Over Television Program Slurring Jews

LONDON, Feb. 11 (JTA)--The British Broadcasting Corporation expressed regret today about a BBC television program in which a performer playing a police officer told a suspect in a case that "you put things in your wife's name just like a Jewboy headed for bankruptcy."

Sir Barnett Janner, former chairman of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, expressed disgust over the program, called "Softly Softly." He said Jewish organizations would certainly take the matter up. Hundreds of Jewish listeners in London and outside sent protests by telephone and letters to the BBC.

The BBC explained that the objectionable phrase was used "as a means of provocation within the context of the story. A tough detective used the word to provoke a crook with whom he was having a drink." The BBC added that it nevertheless "appreciates that the use of the remark gave offense" and said it "regrets" that it was used.

NCJW To Finance Hebrew U. Research on Teaching Deprived Children

JERUSALEM, Feb. 11 (JTA)--A new research center to develop methods to educate underprivileged children will be established at Hebrew University here, it was announced today by Professor Nathan Rotenstreich, university rector. The center will be financed by the National Council of Jewish Women in the United States, which has made an initial contribution of 1.5 million Israeli pounds (\$430,000) for the project.

The institution will be the first in this area to conduct research exclusively dealing with the problems of education for the disadvantaged, Professor Rotenstreich said. The Ministry of Education is expected to participate in the project.

Ambassador and Mrs. Harman Honored by B'nai B'rith at Farewell Luncheon

WASHINGTON, D.C., Feb. 11 (JTA)--Ambassador and Mrs. Abraham Harman were honored by B'nai B'rith today at a farewell luncheon during the annual meeting of the B'nai B'rith National Membership Cabinet. Mr. Harman, who is a member of B'nai B'rith in Jerusalem, urged continued close contacts between B'nai B'rith and Israel as a means of deepening Jewish tradition and commitments among Jews in countries around the world. The Harmans were presented gifts by Dr. William A. Wexler, president of B'nai B'rith, and Mrs. Arthur G. Rosenbluth, president of B'nai B'rith Women, at the luncheon.

Reform Rabbis Urge Federal Tax Boost Only for Fight Against Poverty

NEW YORK, Feb. 11 (JTA)--The Central Conference of American Rabbis, a consistent foe of United States involvement in Viet Nam, said in its annual message for Race Relations Sabbath yesterday that Americans should support a federal tax increase only if such additional revenue was allocated to the elimination of slums and provision of adequate housing, jobs and educational opportunities for the Negro and other minorities. President Johnson has proposed a 10 percent income tax surcharge to halt inflation.

The CCAR said that the member Reform rabbis would not favor a tax increase for the war in Viet Nam, adding that while it commended President Johnson for his job-training and civil rights recommendations, "we are disturbed at the on-going drain of the national treasury because of our Viet Nam policy." The cause of democracy, the statement said "would be better served by throwing our best efforts into eliminating these domestic crises." The Reform rabbis indicated that only "massive investment and involvement" to relieve large-scale unemployment and provide adequate school facilities and housing, rather than a "gradualist" approach would meet the needs of the Negro, adding that "it may be necessary to cut our defense budget" for that purpose.

The statement also suggested "persuasive dialogue" in the community to achieve the desired goals for the Negro" instead of "national mobilizations and picketing of city halls." Protestant, Catholic and Jewish clergymen were urged to combine forces to impress employers, unions and job agencies to find jobs for Negroes. The Reform rabbis also urged school boards, PTAs and taxpayer groups to understand the need to provide "the budget for integrated education that is also quality education."

British Parliamentarians, Jewish Leaders Mourn Death of Sydney Silverman at Age 72

LONDON, Feb. 11 (JTA)--Parliamentarians and Jewish leaders expressed condolences today over the death of Sydney S. Silverman, Laborite member of Parliament and a life-long Zionist, who died at London Hospital Friday at the age of 72. Mr. Silverman, a member of Parliament for 33 years, was hospitalized ten days ago following a stroke.

Dr. Nahum Goldmann, President of the World Jewish Congress, declared that the Congress and he personally were deeply sorrowed. "He was a political leader of admirable courage and unlimited dynamism and a devoted son of the Jewish people," Dr. Goldmann declared.

A joint statement issued by Eva Marchioness of Reading, president of the British section of the WJC and Jacob Halevy, chairman, said: "It is only a week since we elected Sydney Silverman by acclamation as an honorary vice president of the British section of the WJC. Now we have to mourn his passing. He was a doughty champion of all human freedoms but we as Jews shall always cherish his dedicated service to his people."

The late Mr. Silverman was born in Liverpool of immigrant parents from Jassy, Rumania. He graduated from Liverpool University and was a lecturer in English for three years at the University of Finland in Helsinki. He settled in Liverpool in 1924 where he worked as a solicitor and was active in Labor Party politics. He served on the Liverpool City Council and was elected to Parliament in 1935.

What was considered Mr. Silverman's greatest parliamentary achievement was his private members bill for the abolition of capital punishment which is now the law of the land. On another occasion he delivered a memorable speech protesting the arrest of Jewish Agency leaders by British Mandate authorities in Palestine shortly after World War II. During the war it was Silverman who asked the historic question in the House of Commons which elicited from the then Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, the Allied declaration warning the Nazis of retribution for their crimes against the Jewish people.

Funeral Services Held for Rabbi William Rosenblum; Dies at 75

NEW YORK, Feb. 11 (JTA)--Funeral services were held here today for Dr. William F. Rosenblum, rabbi emeritus of Temple Israel since 1964 and rabbi of the Reform congregation for more than 30 years, who died Friday of a heart attack. He was 75.

An early advocate of interfaith programs, racial justice and the ecumenical movement Rabbi Rosenblum had close ties with Protestant and Catholic leaders. He had served as president of the Synagogue Council of America. As an official representative of B'nai B'rith, he met in 1946 and 1958 with Pope Pius XII to consider improved Christian-Jewish relations. Ten years ago he organized a Committee of Religious Leaders of clergymen of the three faiths to improve the moral and spiritual outlook.

Rabbi Eliezer Silver, Orthodox Leader, Dies in Cincinnati at 87

CINCINNATI, Feb. 11 (JTA)--Rabbi Eliezer Silver, former president of the Union of Orthodox Rabbis of the United States and Canada, died here at the age of 87. He was founder of Agudath Israel of America. During World War II, the Orthodox leader organized rescue efforts for Jews in Europe and helped to save many of them from the Nazi death camps. After the war, he was active in efforts to help Jews leave Communist-controlled European countries. In 1943, he led a delegation of several hundred rabbis to Washington to petition President Roosevelt to open Palestine and other nations to the "remnants of the people of the Book." He served as rabbi of Congregation Kneseth Israel here for nearly 40 years.