

JTA daily news bulletin

Published by Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Inc. 660 First Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10010

Contents copyright: Republication only by previous arrangement.

Vol. XXXV - Fifty-First Year

Monday March 4, 1968

No. 1

Israel, UN Chief Deny Reports That Arab States Agreed to Negotiate With Israel

JERUSALEM, March 3 (JTA)--Israel has received no word that the Arab states are ready to start negotiations, an Israel Government spokesman declared in response to questions after today's Cabinet meeting. Reports that the Arab states had agreed to participate in negotiations with Israel, under United Nations auspices had been current for some days in dispatches from correspondents at the United Nations.

(Secretary-General U Thant, in an almost unprecedented action, sharply denied a widely-quoted New York Times report to the effect that Egypt and Jordan had agreed to meet directly with Israel to discuss a Middle East settlement under United Nations auspices. Mr. Thant said he had received no indication of this. The Times report had also quoted UN secretariat members as expressing belief that the Arabs would be ready to meet Israelis in face-to-face talks under UN auspices.

(A note to correspondents issued by the UN Press Dept. yesterday quoted a UN spokesman: "Opinions about the Middle East mission of Ambassador Gunnar Jarring attributed to members of the Secretariat" in a report published on 2 March 1968 are completely groundless."

(Dr. Jarring continued his meetings over the weekend with UN officials, heads of the big power delegations and the mission heads of Israel and the Arab states. Among his meetings was one with Ambassador Yosef Tekoah of Israel.

(The UN envoy was understood to have received approval here of his reported intention to invite Israel and the Arab states to send delegations to his Cyprus headquarters and it was understood that on his return to Nicosia, which will be early in the week, he will act in this direction. It was stressed, however, that his dispatch of invitations did not necessarily involve any prior commitment to acceptance or agreement on procedures.)

The Israel Government spokesman also denied reports that members of the Cabinet had reservations on Foreign Minister Abba S. Eban's statement last week that Israel would agree to participation of Ambassador Gunnar V. Jarring, the United Nations special envoy, in Arab-Israeli peace talks. The spokesman declared that Mr. Eban's statement "fully conforms" to the policy previously approved by the Cabinet.

Prime Minister Levi Eshkol spoke at length today on Israel's desire for peace negotiations when he addressed a luncheon of the Jewish War Veterans of the United States who have been holding a conference here. He asserted Israel's readiness to meet the Arabs and told the veterans: "We are making efforts to increase Israel's deterrent capacity. We have learned that when the chips are down, Israel alone must defend herself."

Twelve African States Repudiate Alleged Anti-Israel Stand of Addis Ababa Parley

JERUSALEM, March 3 (JTA)--Foreign Minister Abba Eban informed the Cabinet today that twelve African governments had publicly dissociated themselves from a resolution attributed to them by the Organization for African Unity which demanded unconditional Israeli withdrawal from occupied Arab territories. Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, addressing the same cabinet session, reported on the security situation, including Saturday's El Fatah attack on a heavy machinery depot near Jerusalem.

Mr. Eban said that the officially published resolutions adopted by the Organization for African Unity which just ended a conference in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, contained no reference to Israel or the Middle East. The organization's secretary had given a statement to the press implying that the African foreign ministers who attended the conference had adopted a resolution backing Egypt's demand for unconditional Israeli withdrawal.

Special Ministerial Committee To Study Military Exemption of Yeshiva Students

JERUSALEM, March 3 (JTA)--The Cabinet appointed a special ministerial committee today to study the question of rescinding the blanket exemption of yeshiva students from military service. The committee, which is to make its recommendations to the Cabinet, is chaired by Defense Minister Moshe Dayan and consists of representatives of all parties in the national emergency coalition government.

About 5,000 yeshiva students were exempted from military duty last year despite the Six-Day War and the tense security situation in its aftermath. Several parties have been pressing for a revision of the draft law which automatically exempts anyone enrolling in a yeshiva. They have been supported by religious kibbutzim, many of whose members waived their exemption and served in the armed forces. But revision is bitterly opposed by the Chief Rabbinate and the religious parties, particularly the ultra-Orthodox Agudas Israel.

Shapiro Tells Cabinet Why He Terminated 'Enemy' Status of Occupied Territories

JERUSALEM, March 3 (JTA)--Minister of Interior Moshe Shapiro explained to the Cabinet today the reasons for his ruling last week that Arab territories occupied by Israel during last June's war are no longer to be designated "enemy territory." (Press reports abroad said the ruling created a furor in Arab capitals where it was seen as a move toward outright annexation of the occupied territories by Israel.)

Mr. Shapiro said the sole reason for his decree was to eliminate a "legal anomaly" whereby Israelis entering the occupied zones or Arabs crossing into Israel from them were technically violating the anti-infiltration laws which are directed against terrorists and saboteurs.

West Bank Suspects Held After Attack on Mekorot Equipment Depot Near Abu Gosh

TEL AVIV, March 3 (JTA)--Israeli security forces today arrested several West Bank Arabs suspected of being members of the El Fatah gang that attacked and sabotaged a heavy equipment storage depot nine miles from Jerusalem after murdering its Druze watchman early Saturday morning. A curfew imposed on five Arab villages in the region while the suspects were being tracked down was promptly lifted when the arrests were made.

The suspects were found in possession of khaki clothing and rubber-soled shoes such as used by El Fatah members. While they are almost certainly believed to belong to the terrorist group, authorities have not yet established that they were implicated in Saturday's raid. Footprints left by rubber-soled shoes were found near the scene.

Hit by the El Fatah gang at 3:00 a.m. Saturday was a large open air machinery and roadbuilding equipment depot belonging to Mekorot, the national water works company. It is located near the Arab village of Abu Gosh on the Jerusalem-Tel Aviv highway. After machine-gunning the watchman, the terrorists blew up three tractors with high explosive charges, set fire to a fuel storage tank and destroyed other machinery and water pipes. Border police followed their trail across the old Israel-Jordan armistice line to the village of Kattana. A house-to-house search, aided by Army helicopters, was carried out there and in nearby villages where a curfew was imposed. The saboteurs left leaflets identifying themselves as El Fatah.

Three anti-vehicle mines were discovered and dismantled by Israeli border police this morning in the Beisan Valley in the vicinity of Tirat Zvi, a military spokesman reported. The mines were planted on a road used by border patrols.

To Teach Hebrew Language in East Jerusalem Elementary Schools

JERUSALEM, March 3 (JTA)--The Ministry of Education announced today that Hebrew instruction will be instituted in all schools in East Jerusalem in grades four through nine. As in all Arab and Jewish schools in the rest of Israel, Hebrew instruction will be given for three hours a week.

Israel Bond Drive For 1968 Launched With Record \$41.2 Million In Sales

MIAMI BEACH, March 3 (JTA)--The Israel Bond Organization launched its 1968 campaign with a record initial sale of \$41,272,000 announced at the closing session of its International Inaugural Conference here. The Conference, which set no specific goal for the year, voted to provide the major part of Israel's \$289 million development budget instead of the one-third that has been provided by bond sales in previous years. The conference was attended by 3,000 American and Canadian Jewish leaders. Principal speakers were Vice President Hubert Humphrey who reiterated the Johnson Administration's aim to safeguard the political and territorial integrity of all states in the Middle East, and Maj. General Yitzhak Rabin, Israel Ambassador to the United States, who declared that Israel would never return to the "abnormal" situation that prevailed before last June's Six-Day War.

The announcement of the record initial bond sales was made by Samuel Rothberg, national campaign chairman. He noted that the figure represented a 37 percent increase over the inaugural Israel bond sale of \$30,150,000 at the same time last year. Since the first bond drive 18 years ago, \$1.2 billion has been sold in bonds to further Israel's economy and industrial advancement. At an earlier session of the conference, Abraham Feinberg, president of the Bond Organization, cited the technical and scientific assistance that Israel has been able to render to underdeveloped nations of Asia and Africa. He said that such assistance would be available to the Arab states once peace with Israel was concluded.

Humphrey Says United States Worked Hard For Cause of Peace in Middle East

Vice President Humphrey, in his address, declared that the United States had worked very hard in the United Nations last fall to create the opportunity for a real peace in the Middle East. The Administration, he said, was ready to extend further help to achieve it through guarantees of political independence and territorial integrity for all states, justice for the refugees, the recognized right for national life, innocent passage of the shipping of all nations through international waterways and a limitation of the arms race in the region. Referring to the Israel bond campaign, Mr. Humphrey said "your share in helping to lay the economic foundations for Israel's happier future has been, quite literally, a unique privilege. I congratulate you and I envy you."

Gen. Rabin, making his first public appearance here since his appointment as Ambassador, warned that the Arab states have not altered "to any significant degree" the negative stand adopted at the Arab summit conference at Khartoum last summer.

Israel Accuses Soviet Union of New Outburst of Stuermer-Type Anti-Semitism

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., March 3 (JTA)--Charges of the revival in the Soviet Union of a "terrifying recrudescence" of what was described as "Stuermer-like anti-Jewish propaganda," made in the United Nations Human Rights Commission by the representative of Israel, stirred angry debate in that body Friday, including three attempts by the Soviet and Ukrainian representatives to deny the floor to the accuser.

The charges were made by Dr. Shabtai Rosenne, who said this anti-Jewish propaganda was manifest in "a certain part of the world which has a long tradition of bigotry and anti-Semitism." He charged further that it was being spread with "unconcealed official encouragement and through official governmental public information media, especially the official press." Dr. Rosenne's demand for action by the commission was supported by Sir Samuel Hoare of Britain and was denounced by the Soviet and Ukrainian representatives as "slanderous" and as "anti-Soviet fabrications." The Soviet representative also accused Israel of trying to lay down a smokescreen over violation of human rights he said Israel had committed against the Arabs in Israel and the territories occupied by Israel.

(The Washington Post said editorially Friday that "evidence mounts that a fearful wave of repression is sweeping across the Soviet Union" and that Jews are among groups singled out. The newspaper noted that "particularly since the Arab-Israeli war, Soviet Jews have felt another surge of officially sanctioned anti-Semitism.")

Dr. Rosenne said Israel was not satisfied that the Sub-commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities had devoted sufficient attention to the protection of minorities. He warned that the "seeds for serious international difficulties" were present unless action was taken soon. He expressed concern at the trend of discrimination and anti-Jewish incitement in the Soviet Union, which, he said, was manifested by the rehabilitation of Trofim Korneyevich Kichko of the Ukraine, who, some years ago, had been prevented by authorities from continuing his "hate propaganda." According to some reports, Kichko was a Nazi collaborationist during World War II, Dr. Rosenne added.

Dr. Rosenne said that Kichko, who had been "quietly suppressed" in 1963 after having published a book entitled "Judaism Without Embellishment," had recently reappeared with articles published in the Ukrainian press alongside others whose writings recalled the "evil production" of Julius Streicher, publisher of Der Stuermer. He called the renewed publication of Kichko's writings a trend which the Israeli Government regarded "seriously."

Dr. Rosenne declared that Israel believes the situation of the Jews in the Soviet Union is "so grave that it will soon warrant appropriate action by this commission, if that time has not already come."

"Surely the aspiration of the peoples of the Soviet Union to be acknowledged everywhere as a peace-loving and progressive nation demands a policy more respectful of the dignity of the Jews in the Soviet Union and of Jews everywhere," he said. He said the Israel Government hoped that the Soviet Union this year would "inaugurate a final and permanent revision" of its policy toward Jews, thereby eliminating the necessity for Israel to raise the matter again in the United Nations.

American Catholic Bishops Warn Passion Plays Must Not Cause Anti-Semitism

SOUTH ORANGE, N.J., March 3 (JTA)--The National Conference of Catholic Bishops today warned the writers and producers of passion plays during the Lenten season not to permit them to "become a source of anti-Semitic reactions" which are "foreign and injurious to true Christian piety and to the intent of the Sacred Scriptures as well as offensive to our Jewish brothers."

The warning, probably the strongest ever issued on the subject by the Roman Catholic clergy in America, was signed by six members of the executive committee of the Conference's Secretariat which has its headquarters for Catholic-Jewish Relations at Seton Hall University, a Catholic sponsored university here. They are the Rt. Revs. Msgr. George G. Higgins and Msgr. John M. Oesterreicher, Rev. Edward H. Flannery, Sister K. Hargrove, Rev. John B. Sheerin and Rev. Bernard J. Law.

The statement issued by the Bishop's Conference noted that passion plays could become anti-Semitic when carelessly written or produced and when "simplistic and erroneous interpretations of the sacred writings have occasioned the accusation that the Jewish people of all time bear unique responsibility for the death of Jesus." It went on to state that "history is witness to the injustices and hatred experienced (by the Jews) because they have been considered guilty of Christ's death and thus an accursed people. What we say here, it may be added, is equally applicable to sermons and teachings on the passion of Christ." It listed five examples of how the role of Jews in the death of Christ could be misrepresented or exaggerated in passion plays so as to create anti-Semitism.

The Bishops went on to cite the statement on the Jews at the second Vatican Council which urged that "all seem to it that nothing is taught in catechetical work or in preaching the Word of God that does not conform to the truth of the Gospel and the spirit of Christ." The Council "further has reminded us," the Bishops Conference statement said, "that what happened in His (Christ's) passion cannot be charged against all the Jews, without distinction, then alive, or against the Jews of today. The Council Fathers make St. Paul's assurance their own: 'Now as before God holds Jews most dear for the sake of their fathers.' In consequence, 'the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures.'"

Celler Tells His Legal Steps Needed for Entry of Jews Permitted to Leave Russia

NEW YORK, March 3 (JTA)--Rep. Emanuel Celler, Chairman of the House Judiciary Committee, called today for revision of the 1965 Immigration Act to make provision for the admission into this country of Jews and others leaving a Communist or Communist-dominated land. Mr. Celler told the 84th annual meeting of United Hias Service that "sooner or later" the time will come when the Soviet Union "rolls up its curtain to permit Jews to leave." He said Congress should be prepared for such an emergency.

The New York Congressman told the meeting that elimination of the national origins quota system from the immigration law had been a victory that was "too late" for thousands of human lives. This, he insisted, "must not happen again." He proposed that the Attorney-General be given discretion to "permit entry by parole, without reference to numbers, to those who leave a Communist or Communist-dominated country."

He said that "I would not want to wait for the time when the crisis is upon us to begin consideration of such legislations. I want it done before so that we stand in readiness when the Soviet chains are removed." Mr. Celler disclosed also that he was studying the possibility of introducing legislation providing for "new seed" immigration.

In a report on current migration problems, Carlos L. Israels, president of United Hias, noted that thousands of Jews still in Arab lands received technical and financial aid and said that "we pledge to provide whatever assistance is needed for their resettlement in Western countries."

Gaynor I. Jacobson, the organization's executive director, said there were 15,000 refugees from Arab countries in Italy and France, many of whom desired to emigrate to Western countries. In addition, he said, the agency will continue its aid program for migrants from North Africa, Eastern Europe and Cuba seeking reunion with their families in the free world.

The meeting adopted a resolution urging "full and complete implementation" of the statement by Premier Kosygin of the Soviet Union in December 1966 promising to permit the emigration of Jews from Russia for reunion with their families abroad. In another resolution, Congress was urged to restore the labor provision of the former Immigration and Nationality Law and provide equitable opportunities for all potential immigrants.

A replica of the Statue of Liberty was presented to Rep. Celler by Murray I. Gurfein, chairman of the United Hias executive committee, in recognition of his "devoted efforts to make our country a haven for the oppressed and persecuted." A scroll was presented to Adolph Held by Edwin Rosenberg, chairman of the national council, in recognition of Mr. Held's "dedication to the cause of Jewish refugees" in more than a half-century of service as a member of the United Hias Board.

Committee, Congress, Endorse Kerner Report; Call For Speedy Implementation

NEW YORK, March 3 (JTA)--Two national agencies involved in the civil rights struggle, the American Jewish Committee and the American Jewish Congress, went on record this weekend in full support of the report of the President's National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders and called for its immediate implementation.

Rabbi Arthur J. Lelyveld, of Cleveland, president of the American Jewish Congress, said that all Americans "must accept the necessity of making the sacrifices that the Commission's programs will entail." He warned that failure to act now "would not only deny the slum dwellers of our cities of any hope for a better future but would also condemn the whole of our society to witness the sundering of American democracy."

Bertram H. Gold, executive director of the American Jewish Committee, said all members of the committee were being urged "to promote in every possible way the fullest public understanding of the issues" and the Kerner Commission's recommendations. He reported that his organization had sent a report on mass media and race relations to key communications executives throughout the country and was shortly publishing a handbook on "the police on the urban frontier."

House, Senate Get Concurrent Resolutions Memorializing Warsaw Ghetto Revolt

WASHINGTON, March 3 (JTA)--Sen. Robert Kennedy, New York Democrat, and Sen. Jacob K. Javits, New York Republican, jointly sponsored a concurrent resolution memorializing the uprising 25 years ago in the Warsaw Ghetto. The same measure was introduced in the House simultaneously by Rep. Emanuel Celler, New York Democrat, chairman of the House Judiciary Committee.

The resolution would "recognize and acknowledge the world significance of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising as a reaffirmation of the ineradicable determination to fight for freedom from oppression." Congress would join "in commemorating on April 25 the 25th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto uprising against Nazi occupation forces by the beleaguered and outnumbered Jews of the Warsaw Ghetto."

Annual Jewish Music Festival To Be Observed March 14-April 12

NEW YORK, March 3 (JTA)--The 24th annual Jewish Music Festival, conducted by the National Jewish Music Council, will be observed from Purim, March 14, to Passover, April 12. Its theme this year will be the historical contribution of Russian Jewry to Jewish music. Rabbi Avraham Soltes is chairman of the council which is sponsored by the National Jewish Welfare Board. Some 2,000 organizations are expected to present festival programs.