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Nasser In Moscow; His Foreign Minister Says Egypt Accepts Reality Of Israel

LONDON, July 4 (JTA)--President Gamal Abdel Nasser, of Egypt, arrived in Moscow today as his Foreign Minister, Mahmoud Riad, who is currently touring Scandinavian capitals, launched what appeared to be a new Egyptian peace offensive and a determined effort to discredit Israel in the eyes of nations that have been friendly to it or neutral in the Middle East dispute. The Egyptian Chief of State was warmly welcomed in Moscow by Soviet President Nikolai V. Podgorny, Premier Alexei N. Kosygin, and Leonid I. Brezhnev, first secretary of the Soviet Communist Party's Central Committee. But attention here was focused on the remarks of Mr. Riad who reportedly said in Denmark today that allegations that the Arabs demand the destruction of Israel was "stupid propaganda" because "we accept the realities and one of those is Israel" and "we only want peace now."

These were the latest developments in a week that saw renewed activity by United Nations special peace envoy Ambassador Dr. Gunnar V. Jarring, a proposal from Moscow for an agreement to slacken arms shipments to the Middle East, and visits or scheduled visits by top aides of the Johnson Administration to Middle Eastern capitals.

According to the British Broadcasting Corp., Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart hailed Mr. Riad's reported Copenhagen remarks as a sign that a Middle East settlement might have come appreciably nearer in the last few weeks. Another promising sign, Stewart reportedly noted, was the renewal of direct contacts between Dr. Jarring and all of the interested parties in the Middle East dispute. Dr. Jarring, officially on vacation, met with Mr. Riad in Stockholm two weeks ago and with Israel Foreign Minister Abba Eban in The Hague last week. Following that meeting, Dr. Jarring flew to Moscow for talks with the Soviet leaders who are now entertaining Mr. Nasser.

Just prior to his departure for Moscow, Mr. Nasser was visited in Cairo by McGeorge Bundy, president of the Ford Foundation and a former advisor on defense and foreign relations to Presidents Kennedy and Johnson. Mr. Bundy then flew to Beirut; it was announced in Jerusalem today that he was expected in Israel on July 15. Also due to visit Israel in mid-July was White House advisor Walt Rostow Jr., while former United States Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, now president of the World Bank, was due in Cairo shortly. Although Mr. Bundy's visit to the Middle East was officially in connection with Ford Foundation matters, there was considerable speculation here and in Jerusalem that he might have been entrusted by President Johnson with some special mission in connection with a peace settlement. The London Times reported from Beirut today that a Middle East solution was hardly possible unless Moscow and Washington strive in the same direction and noted that Mr. Johnson's decision not to seek re-election may have provided an opportunity — hence the signs of improving relations between Washington and Cairo and the series of visitors from Washington and New York to the Middle East. The Times' implication seemed to be that Mr. Johnson, who will retire next January, feels free now to pursue a Middle East settlement without undue concern over domestic politics.

Diplomats See Moscow, Washington Pursuing Similar Courses

That view coincided with a general feeling among diplomatic observers that both Moscow and Washington are moving along parallel, if not converging courses, to push some sort of Middle East settlement now.

Observers here felt that the timing and tone of the Egyptian Foreign Minister's reported remarks in Denmark were important and could be linked with the official description of Mr. Nasser's Moscow trip as "a peace mission." These observers see the Soviet Government's active diplomacy as an encouraging development. Press reports in recent days have pictured the Russians as worried over the threat to left-wing Arab regimes by conservative Arab governments should the Middle East impasse continue or a new war erupt. They also said that the United States and Great Britain were deeply concerned by the lack of progress so far toward a Middle East settlement and were prepared to push energetically for one.

Much now depends on the reaction of the Israel Government, observers said here today. According to the BBC, some think that the "hawks" in Tel Aviv may take the Egyptian attitude as evidence that a tough policy pays and will argue in favor of increased toughness in the hope of forcing the Arabs into direct negotiations. Others suggest that the international climate is now so strongly in favor of a settlement that Israel would find it difficult to maintain a completely uncompromising attitude.

(The Paris daily, *L'Aurore* said today that Mr. Nasser instructed Foreign Minister Riad to influence public opinion against Israel in Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Finland so that he might have Scandinavian support when the Palestine problem is raised again at the UN. The paper did not think he would achieve his aim because the democratic countries of Scandinavia "have more sympathy for the State of Israel than for the Arab countries where dictatorship is almost universal.")

(In Helsinki today, a high-ranking official of the political department of the Finnish Foreign Ministry took sharp issue with a reported remark by Mr. Riad that "the northern countries are not satisfied with Israel's stand." He said that if Mr. Riad had meant to include Finland in that statement, he is wrong. The Finnish Government, he stressed, remains neutral in the Middle East dispute and has not expressed dissatisfaction with the stand of Israel.

(Foreign Ministry sources in Finland were quoted as saying that no official criticism whatever of Israel's position had been expressed in talks with Mr. Riad.)

Arabs Reportedly Surprised By Kosygin Middle East Arms-Reduction Plan

LONDON, July 4 (JTA)--The London Daily Telegraph said yesterday that the Arab world had reacted with surprise and concern to Soviet Premier Kosygin's proposals for a limitation of arms shipments to the Middle East. The Soviet Union's three main arms customers in the Middle East — Egypt, Syria and Iraq — the Daily Telegraph said in a dispatch from Beirut, expressed surprise at the announcement. There was considerable speculation, the paper said, that the Soviet Union was now pressing hard for an Arab-Israeli settlement along the lines of the Nov. 22, 1967 United Nations Security Council resolution. The supply of arms to the Middle East the Daily Telegraph noted, would be an important factor in this context.

The paper added that Egypt has reportedly complained to Moscow about the virtual drying up of the Soviet arms flow, the quality of the arms they have already received and the prices the Soviet Union is charging for military spare parts.

West Bank Arab Leaders Call Halt To Activities Directed Toward Possible Peace Talks

JERUSALEM, July 4 (JTA)--Arab leaders of the West Bank have called a halt, at least temporarily, to activities directed toward possible separate peace talks with Israel, it was reliably learned here today. It was also disclosed for the first time that the Arab leaders had discussed some of their peace plans with British, American and other foreign consular officials in Jerusalem. That disclosure apparently embarrassed the governments involved. Several embassies explained that their consular officials were not trying to pressure or influence anyone but sought merely to find out what kind of plan might be acceptable.

The acting Consul General of Great Britain told Israel Foreign Ministry sources here today that no initiative had been taken by legation officials to propagate a plan discussed by various groups of West Bank Arab leaders to request a United Nations mandate for the West Bank for five years. The British official said he called on the Foreign Ministry at his own initiative after reading press reports of a meeting of Arab notables in Nablus where a British vice consul was said to have explained the plan. According to the acting Consul General, a vice consul attended the Nablus meeting in the course of his normal duties and was asked about a plan of apparently Tunisian origin that had appeared in the London Times. He did not initiate the conversation on the subject nor did he in any way advance or propagate the plan, the British official said, adding that the British Consulate does not engage in political activities among the population of Israeli-occupied territories.

The West Bank Arabs have decided to leave peace efforts, for the time being, to the Arab governments and the Big Powers. They want to see the outcome of President Nasser's latest visit to Moscow before they move any further on their own, it was reported here. They have also noted that Israel so far has not been willing to commit itself to any plan until peace talks get under way with the Arab states. A number of Israeli Cabinet ministers said in speeches last week that they did not believe the Palestinian Arabs should be Israel's partners in peace discussions to solve the Arab-Israel conflict because they could not solve problems on a regional scale.

World Union Convention Calls Off Plans For Mixed Prayer Service At Wailing Wall

JERUSALEM, July 4 (JTA)--The World Union for Progressive Judaism today called off plans for a mixed prayer service at the Western (Wailing) Wall in view of the strong opposition by Orthodox groups. The Orthodox followers filled the area near the Wall all night and today to prevent the Liberal-Reform mixed service.

Rabbi Jacob Shankman of New Rochelle, N.Y., president of the World Union, conferred today with Israel Prime Minister Levi Eshkol and later announced the cancellation of plans for the service at the Wall. Rabbi Shankman said the Union did not want to cause strife among Jews and precipitate action by "irresponsible elements."

The World Union opened its 15th annual convention, being held in Jerusalem, yesterday. The meeting was attended by Mr. Eshkol and the mayor of Jerusalem, Teddy Kollek. After a brief greeting, Mr. Eshkol told the 500 delegates to the convention from 25 countries that the style of life in Israel is determined by the Jews living in Israel and if Reform Jews wanted to change it they would have to migrate in increasing numbers to make their influence felt.

The mixed prayer — men and women participating together — is prohibited by Orthodox Judaism. Before the prayer service was called off, the Knesset's committee on interior affairs endorsed the decision of the Ministry of Religion that male and female worshippers should continue to pray separately at the Wall.

Rabbi Shankman and Dr. Maurice Eisendrath, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, are expected to submit a number of specific requests to Mr. Eshkol. These are known to include recognition of the right of Reform rabbis to perform marriage ceremonies and financial help to local Reform synagogues, similar to aid given to Orthodox congregations. Observers believe that it will be difficult for the Government to meet these demands because the Knesset (Parliament) has given authority on such matters to Israel's Chief Rabbinate, which is Orthodox.

Rabbi Levin Says There Are 102 Synagogues, Minyanim Registered With Authorities

MONTREAL, July 4 (JTA)--During his Montreal visit, which ended yesterday, Rabbi Yehuda Leib Levin of Moscow said that there are 102 synagogues and minyanim (groups of at least 10 men who gather to pray) registered with the Soviet authorities. He was asked about them at a meeting with the leadership of the Canadian Jewish Congress.

Also asked about the number of rabbis in the Soviet Union, he said he had no way of knowing since there is no central Jewish rabbinical body, according to Rabbi Isaac L. Hechtman, executive director of the Montreal Jewish Community Council (Vaad Hair).

Rabbi Levin and Cantor David Stiskin of Leningrad were the guests of Montreal Jewry for 47 hours following their nearly two-week trip to New York. They left Montreal on Wednesday on a Soviet Aeroflot airliner for the 10-hour trip back to Moscow.

Rabbi Hechtman, who provided JTA with details of the Levin-Stiskin Montreal visit, related that Rabbi Levin was also asked why there is no central Jewish religious body in the Soviet Union comparable to such bodies permitted other religions. Rabbi Hechtman said that Rabbi Levin replied that Soviet authorities have told him that since Russia is officially an atheistic country and the Jewish community there had no central body even before the Russian Revolution, the Government cannot be expected to allow one now.

A public meeting held Tuesday at the Beth Zion Synagogue, second largest in Montreal, was jammed, Rabbi Hechtman said. There were 1,500 inside and another 1,200 outside, by police estimate, that could not get in. Rabbi Levin drew the biggest applause there, Rabbi Hechtman said, when he said, "May God help us to hear good tidings from you, and you from us." He told the audience that he could not speak in the name of the Jewish community of Soviet Russia, but only on behalf of the worshippers of his own synagogue, the Choral Synagogue, in Moscow, Rabbi Hechtman related. Rabbi Levin was said to have expressed hope that all the religious leaders of both the United States and the USSR would endeavor to seek to influence the Governments of both nations to promote peace. When there is peace, he reportedly said, the Jews benefit from it.

Rabbi Hechtman revealed that Cantor Stiskin told him that he does not make his living as a hazzan in Leningrad but rather as an engineer in a Government factory there.

Rabbi Levin said that he had a rather limited idea of Jewish life in the United States gathered from Jewish visitors to his synagogue -- and that many came with cameras which they used during services, and drove up in limousines. He said he was amazed to see the vitality of Jewish life in the U.S. and that he had known only what it was like 50 years ago, Rabbi Hechtman said. Rabbi Levin reportedly said he felt encouraged to hope that Russian Jewish youth would help to make Russian Jewish life equally vital in coming years.

Rabbi Hechtman, who also heads the Vaad Harabonim, the Montreal Council of Orthodox Rabbis, said that Rabbi Levin and Cantor Stiskin were given a reception at the home of Rabbi Pinhas Hirsprung, whom he described as Montreal's Chief Rabbi. Rabbi Levin visited the Maimonides Home and Hospital for the Aged and a number of educational institutions in Montreal. Rabbi Stiskin sang at several places.

15 Conservative Rabbis To Visit Russia, Czechoslovakia, Rumania

NEW YORK, July 4 (JTA)--A delegation of 15 American rabbis, members of the Rabbinical Assembly, will visit the Soviet Union, as well as Czechoslovakia and Rumania, later this month. It will be the first such visit by a Rabbinical Assembly delegation. Rabbi Wolfe Kelman, executive vice-president of the association of Conservative rabbis, who will head the delegation, said the rabbis have received visas from Soviet authorities for the visit. They will spend 10 days in the Soviet Union, visiting Moscow and Leningrad, and two or three days each in Prague and Bucharest.

They will make the visit from London, where they will attend the conference of the World Council of Synagogues from July 15-18, Rabbi Kelman said. They plan to arrive in Leningrad on July 18. Their visit also will be the first by an American delegation since the first visit to the United States by Rabbi Yehuda Leib Levin of Moscow and Cantor David Stiskin of Leningrad.

In Syracuse, the Upstate Council of Youth for Soviet Jewry began yesterday a campaign to secure 100,000 signatures on a petition calling for removal of religious and cultural discrimination against the Jews of the Soviet Union. Five thousand copies of the petition were being distributed throughout the area. The signatures will be presented to the Soviet Embassy in Washington, Dec. 10, International Human Rights Day.

Chile's Largest Newspaper Assails Soviet Anti-Semitism

SANTIAGO de Chile, July 4 (JTA)--Chile's most important newspaper, El Mercurio, charged in an editorial yesterday that the Jewish community in the Soviet Union continued to be deprived of the national rights enjoyed by many other peoples in that country and had no liberty to practice its religion and teach its children in its own language.

The editorial, which welcomed the convening of a Latin American conference of intellectuals here today to consider the Soviet anti-Jewish policies, sharply criticized the Soviet regime for having introduced charges of "economic crimes" against Jews. It stressed that protests against the Soviet anti-Jewish policies were most appropriate today since this is International Human Rights Year, and it welcomed the initiative of intellectual elements in condemning Soviet anti-Jewish "cultural genocide."

NCRAC Urges Jewish Support For Poor, Backs Civil Disobedience As Force For Change

SAN FRANCISCO, July 4 (JTA)--The National Community Relations Advisory Council concluded its four-day plenary session here yesterday with a statement on "equal opportunity" urging "full support by Jewish groups to urban coalitions and other anti-poverty efforts" and endorsing aid to the establishment of Negro-owned businesses in ghetto areas. At the same time, the Council recommended that the Jewish community assist Jewish merchants who have suffered from ghetto riots and want to relocate.

Other policy declarations adopted by the 250 specialists in intergroup relations supported the "propriety" of non-violent civil disobedience as a force for social change but condemned "violence in any form" as a threat to traditional American civil liberties. The delegates, representing nine national organizations and 81 local community relations councils, reaffirmed the NCRAC's traditional opposition to the use of public funds to assist sectarian schools. Representatives of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations dissented, however.

The NCRAC also warned against "too much reliance" on a commercial-industrial approach to ghetto problems. While it recognized the contributions of jobs, housing and other resources that business and industry, subsidized by Government funds, could make to the urban crisis, it saw that approach as opening a danger of social change being dominated by commercial-industrial values "with emphasis on economic validity rather than social need."

In its statements on violence and non-violence, the NCRAC said that non-violent action "to provoke change through judicial review or orderly political action," even when unlawful, "may serve the profoundest interests of a democracy" by correcting injustices. But it foresaw "danger of a progressive impairment of orderly democratic procedures by groups using violence who not only undermine democratic processes themselves but also invite the political repression of civil liberties."

American Council For Judaism Confirms Rabbi Berger's Separation From Group

NEW YORK, July 4 (JTA)--Officials of the American Council for Judaism confirmed today that Rabbi Elmer Berger, its executive vice-president and principal spokesman since 1943, had severed his connection with the anti-Zionist organization, but they declined to discuss the circumstances. A formal statement in behalf of the Council will be issued next week on the return to New York of Richard Korn, Council president, it was stated.

Rabbi Berger, 68, a bitter foe of the State of Israel and of the Zionist movement, submitted his resignation to the Council Board last Sunday. According to Clarence L. Coleman, board chairman, it was accepted "with regret." Council officials termed "preposterous" reports that Rabbi Berger's resignation had been precipitated by adverse publicity in connection with the visit here of Rabbi Yehuda Leib Levin of Moscow at the Council's invitation.

Rabbi Berger's resignation followed by a matter of weeks the resignation of the Council's executive director and another staff member. In a statement made following his resignation as executive director, Dr. Norton Mezvinsky charged that Rabbi Berger had given speech writing assistance to the Syrian Ambassador to the United Nations.

Dodd, Ribicoff, Hollings Favor Dropping Poland's 'Most Favored Nation' Status

WASHINGTON, July 4 (JTA)--Sen. Thomas J. Dodd, Connecticut Democrat, yesterday introduced a Senate resolution that would suspend the "most favored nation" treatment for Communist Poland. He told the Senate that Poland had recently reversed a trend toward liberalization and is now "engaged in virulently anti-Semitic propaganda reminiscent of the worst of Hitler and Stalin."

The resolution was co-sponsored by Sen. Abraham Ribicoff, Connecticut Democrat, and Sen. Ernest F. Hollings, South Carolina Democrat. It would suspend the preferential treatment now accorded Poland "so long as the Polish Government continues its present campaign against Polish intellectuals and students and religious institutions and the Jewish minority in Poland, and so long as it continues to conduct itself as a total satellite of Moscow in the sphere of foreign policy."

Sen. Dodd said that "since the conditions on which 'most favored nation' treatment for Poland were predicated no longer exist, I believe it makes sense to let the Polish people know that we strongly disapprove of the drift back to Stalinist rule."

Rabbi Miller Says Zionist Future Depends Upon Territorial Movement

NEW YORK, July 4 (JTA)--Rabbi Israel Miller, chairman of the American Zionist Council, told a special meeting of the Council that "the future hopes of our movement" lay in the establishment of a single territorial Zionist movement "so that it becomes an effective instrumentality in order for us to implement our tasks and meet the new Zionist challenges." The meeting was held to consider decisions taken by the recently concluded World Zionist Congress in Jerusalem.

Rabbi Miller told representatives of the Council's nine constituent national Zionist organizations that the Congress offered American Zionists "an unprecedented and much needed opportunity to restructure itself into a unified movement." He asserted that "since the American Zionist organizations overwhelmingly supported the proposals, I am hopeful that they are now prepared to move ahead in the spirit of the decisions made at the Zionist Congress."

Forward Association Purchases \$250,000 In Industrial Development Bank Shares

NEW YORK, July 4 (JTA)--The Forward Association, which owns and publishes the Jewish Daily Forward and owns and operates Radio Station WEVD in New York, has purchased \$250,000 of stock in the Industrial Development Bank of Israel.