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Israeli High Court Urges Government To Enact Law Eliminating 'Nationality' Status

JERUSALEM, Nov. 21 (JTA)--Israel's Supreme Court recommended today that the Government introduce legislation that would delete reference to "nationality" from the State's population registers. If such legislation is passed, the court could avoid ruling in the controversial case of an Israeli naval officer, Lt. Commander Benjamin Shavit, who is suing to have his children registered as Jewish by nationality although their mother is non-Jewish and professes no religion. The Ministry of Interior had rejected Commander Shavit's application, claiming that there can be no distinction between Jewish nationality and Jewish religion. The case was brought before the Supreme Court. Its landmark nature was demonstrated by the fact that nine of Israel's 10 justices are hearing the case where normally three or sometimes five judges conduct hearings. The 10th justice disqualified himself in order to avoid a tie decision.

Since the State of Israel was established it has defined "nationality" as a concept distinct from citizenship. As a result, the nationality of Israelis has been registered as Jew, or Arab, or English, or Greek, etc. even though all of the registrants are Israeli citizens.

Justice Shimon Agranat, the American-born president of the Supreme Court, suggested to the Attorney General, who is appearing in the case on behalf of the Government, that suitable legislation be introduced which would align Israel with most Western countries where nationality and citizenship are equated in law. If the Cabinet decides not to introduce such legislation, the Supreme Court will rule in Commander Shavit's case.

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency learned from circles close to the Orthodox National Religious Party that the party "probably" would not oppose such legislation. There are other Orthodox parties in Israel to the right of the NRP.

In a related development, the presidents of the Beit Din — rabbinical courts — met here yesterday and adopted a resolution protesting the Supreme Court's intervention in cases which they claim are the domain of rabbinical courts. The case of Commander Shavit which seeks to determine "who is a Jew" was given as one example in the resolution. Another was a recent Supreme Court ruling that a rabbinical court could not determine the amount of support payable to the child of a separated couple. The meeting of rabbinical court presidents was presided over by the Sephardic Chief Rabbi Itzhak Nissim. The Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Isser Untermann is not a member of the Beit Din because he has passed the statutory age limit.

Bank Of Israel Partially Rescinds Ban On Foreign Exchange, Applicable To Tourists

JERUSALEM, Nov. 21 (JTA)--The Bank of Israel today partially rescinded a ban it had imposed earlier in the day on the exchange of foreign currencies except United States and Canadian dollars. The move was made in order to accommodate tourists who arrived with only Swiss francs or pounds sterling in their possession and is applicable only to tourists. But a ceiling of \$40 per person was placed on the amount of currency a tourist might convert to Israeli pounds for each day of his stay. There is no ceiling on dollar exchanges.

The ban on currency exchange, to remain in effect until further notice, was a result of the currency crisis in Western Europe that stems from the weakening French franc and may lead to the devaluation of the franc and other European currencies. Tourists arriving at Lyda Airport and at Haifa early today could not convert their francs to Israeli currency because of the uncertainty of the market value of various international currencies. They were given free transportation to their hotels.

Treasury officials and Bank of Israel experts meanwhile were considering what course Israel would follow if any European currencies were devalued. It was noted that the Israel pound has always been linked to the British sterling, especially as Britain is the chief market for Israel's number one export — citrus. Sources said Israel was not likely to devalue its pound unless Britain devalued the pound sterling. Others said that even if sterling is devalued, Israel would stick with the dollar rate which is presently 3.5 Israel pounds to \$1.

Non-tourists today were prohibited from trading in foreign currencies. The Tel Aviv stock exchange was closed this morning but reopened in the afternoon for small transactions only. There was a great demand for dollar-linked bonds. There was also a heavy demand for gold and unofficial dollars on the "free market."

NATO Inaugurates New Air Command Designed To Keep Watch On Soviet Fleet

WASHINGTON, Nov. 21 (JTA)--The North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) inaugurated today a new air command intended to track Soviet submarines in the Mediterranean and to interpret the intentions and capability of the Russian fleet there, it was reported here from Naples. NATO Secretary-General Manlio Brosio warned, at a ceremony introducing the command, that "any crisis in the Mediterranean and Middle East would have world consequences." Gen. Lyman L. Lemnitzer of the United States, Supreme Allied Commander in Europe, said that the expanded Soviet Mediterranean fleet "indicated more than just a desire to be present." The new command is called Marairmed and consists of U.S., British and Italian planes. Greece and Turkey are slated to participate later.

'Haaretz' Reports Israel Will Permit More Than 7,000 West Bank Residents To Return Home

JERUSALEM, Nov. 21 (JTA)--The newspaper Haaretz reported today that Israel will announce shortly that it will permit the return of a substantial number of former West Bank residents beyond those covered by the 7,000 permits issued last summer but still unused. According to the newspaper, Israel will announce this move in the Special Political Committee of the United Nations General Assembly in New York.

The Ministry of Interior announced Tuesday that the deadline for the 7,000 permits outstanding will be extended to Jan. 31, 1969 and that unused permits will be transferred to other refugees who apply for repatriation. The announcement was apparently in response to appeals by the United States and Great Britain in the UN for a "greatly expanded program" for the return of refugees displaced by the June, 1967 war. The 7,000 permits cover some 25,000 persons including minors.

Haaretz said that Israel will contribute \$350,000 to the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Arab refugees (UNRWA) this year in addition to \$70,000 granted that agency for vocational schools.

In a related development, the possibility of extending West German "development aid" to Arab refugees in Israel-occupied territories was discussed here yesterday by Foreign Minister Abba Eban and West Germany's Minister of Transport Georg Leber. Mr. Leber arrived here on the inaugural flight of Lufthansa, West Germany's national airline, which has established service to Frankfurt and Munich from Israel. It was suggested in the conversation that such German assistance could be extended through UNRWA. West Germany is not a member of the UN but contributes to UNRWA. Mr. Leber was joined by Dr. Georg August Zinn, Prime Minister of the State of Hesse, and Bonn's Ambassador to Israel, Karl Knoke, on a visit yesterday to the Yad Vashem, the memorial and archives of Nazi holocaust victims.

Egypt Will Support New Summit Conference To Deal With Arab-Israel Dispute

LONDON, Nov. 21 (JTA)--An Egyptian spokesman said Thursday that Egypt will support Jordan's proposal for a new Arab summit conference to map future strategy in the Arab-Israel conflict, it was reported here from Cairo. Prime Minister Bahjat al Talhouni and Foreign Minister Abdel Moneim Rifai of Jordan conferred for more than two hours yesterday with President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. They reportedly delivered a message from King Hussein urging a new summit meeting. The Jordanian ministers earlier visited King Faisal of Saudi Arabia on the same subject and said they had "successful" talks with him. According to dispatches from Damascus, the ruling Baathist Party has declared that Syria will boycott an Arab summit meeting.

(Faisal is urging the Arabs to settle their dispute with Israel by force but Nasser and Hussein cling to the hope of a political solution and are striving to keep alive the mission of United Nations special envoy, Ambassador Gunnar V. Jarring, the London Guardian reported from Beirut yesterday. The newspaper said Faisal is unalterably opposed to a new summit conference. In a memorandum to the Arab League last month, he urged Arabs to stop listening to "the hackneyed tune of political or peaceful resolutions" and to give "all-out support to Palestinian guerrillas and settle the issue by force.")

Middle East diplomatic observers believe Faisal's approval is necessary for any Arab summit because his treasury, together with Kuwait and Libya, have subsidized the Egyptian and Jordanian economies since the Six-Day War. Faisal has said he would attend a new summit session only if the Arabs publicly declared that the Jarring mission has failed. Iraq is believed to be unenthusiastic about a summit parley.

Eban Tells Knesset Israel Will Permit Freeing Of 15 Ships Stranded In Canal

JERUSALEM, Nov. 21 (JTA)--Foreign Minister Abba Eban told the Knesset (Parliament) yesterday that Israel still was ready to permit the freeing of 15 merchant ships stranded in the Suez Canal since the 103-mile waterway was closed during the June, 1967 Arab-Israel war. Mr. Eban, replying to questions, said he had reiterated this position to British officials who raised the issue during recent talks in London. He said Israel attached no conditions to a possible survey by the Egyptians to clear a channel and permit the ships to leave by way of the canal's southern entrance.

But Israel will permit re-opening of the canal along its entire length only on a basis of "law and equality" — meaning that ships of all nations including Israel's would be allowed to navigate it, Mr. Eban said. Egypt has rejected this demand and has said that it would re-open the canal only if Israeli occupation forces withdraw from its east bank.

An agreement to free the stranded ships was negotiated last year by the United Nations special envoy, Ambassador Gunnar V. Jarring. Israel said it would permit a survey by the Egyptians preparatory to opening a channel to the southern end of the canal. However, when the Egyptian craft began to survey a northern exit, Israeli forces fired on them and the clearing operation was abandoned. Israel maintains that under the cease-fire agreement neither it nor Egypt can take any unilateral action regarding the canal.

Debate On Occupied Territories Policy Sharpens With Sapir-Dayan Exchange

TEL AVIV, Nov. 21 (JTA)--An increasingly bitter debate over policies in the occupied territories between former Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir, secretary-general of the Israel Labor Party and Minister Without Portfolio in the coalition Cabinet, and Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, has spilled

out of the Knesset (Parliament) and into the Israeli press. Mr. Sapir used a Labor Party rally in Safad to accuse Gen. Dayan of disclosing secret decisions by a ministerial committee on the occupied territories in the Knesset. He challenged the Defense Minister's assertion that his proposed plan of economic integration of parts of the West Bank with Israel was consistent with decisions already made on the highest Government level and policies already in effect.

Gen. Dayan replied to Mr. Sapir through the local press. His supporters supplied newspapers with mimeographed copies of statements on record in the Knesset and booklets containing reports already published to illustrate that Gen. Dayan was not revealing any secrets and that his proposals were based on sound decisions already taken. Mr. Sapir is expected to raise the issue at next Sunday's Cabinet meeting.

U.S. Offers Resolution Extending Life Of UN Arab Refugee Agency For 3 Years

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., Nov. 21 (JTA)--A United States draft resolution calling for extension of the mandate of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees for three years was circulated here today. The document was under study in the Special Political Committee which is considering UNRWA's General Assembly mandate, due to expire June 30, 1969, and the agency's financial problems. The committee's debate is based on the annual report of Commissioner-General Laurence Michelmore.

"The continuing critical financial position" of UNRWA is a focal point of the U.S. resolution which notes that despite Mr. Michelmore's efforts to collect additional funds to help relieve the serious budget deficit of the past year, contributions to UNRWA still fall short of funds needed to cover essential budget requirements.

The proposed resolution would have the Assembly urgently request increased and generous contributions. It would also note "with deep regret" that repatriation or compensation of the refugees, as originally urged in a 1948 resolution dealing with the refugee problem, has not been effected. It would also express regret that no substantial progress has been made in reintegrating, repatriating or resettling the refugees. Under the measure's terms, Mr. Michelmore would be directed "to continue his efforts in taking such measures, including rectification of the relief rolls, as to assure, in cooperation with the Governments concerned, the most equitable distribution of relief based on need."

UNRWA's problems have multiplied since the Six-Day War of June, 1967 and the ensuing flight of UNRWA-registered refugees of the 1948 Arab-Israel war and newly-displaced persons from Israel occupied territories. The agency, set up in 1950 to care for refugees of the 1948 hostilities, faces a \$3.2 million deficit in 1968 and a \$5 million one next year.

In another UN unit, the Legal Committee, which is now concerned with the question of defining aggression, Israel exchanged charges with Syria and Egypt yesterday. Adnan Nachabe of Syria accused Israel of aggression against Arab countries, but Reuven Nall of Israel said it had acted in self-defense after Arab leaders pronounced, in the press and on radio broadcasts, their intention to annihilate Israel. For this purpose, Mr. Nall said, they had moved "tremendous forces" to Israel's frontiers and had undertaken other hostile acts. Replying, Mr. Nachabe said Israel was the attacker and had unleashed the June, 1967 war.

The representative of Egypt on the committee, El Sayed Abdel Raouf El Reedy, accused Israel of violating "contractual obligations" as well as its responsibilities as a UN member. He cited the occupation of Arab territories, said Israel had annexed the Old City of Jerusalem and had failed to comply with numerous resolutions of UN bodies dealing with the Middle East. He said Egypt had repeatedly expressed readiness to accept the Nov. 22, 1967 Security Council resolution on Middle East peace and charged that Israel had not indicated whether it would comply with its provisions or when it would withdraw its troops from the territories.

French National Radio Will Beam 15-Minute Daily Yiddish Broadcast To East Europe

PARIS, Nov. 21 (JTA)--The French National Radio will start a daily 15-minute Yiddish broadcast that will be beamed to Eastern Europe and will be heard clearly as far away as Moscow. The program will carry news of a non-partisan nature as well as cultural and educational items. No date was announced for the start of the broadcasts but they are expected to begin before the end of the year.

BBC Agrees To Donate Tapes And Microfilmed Scripts To Israel State Archives

LONDON, Nov. 21 (JTA)--The British Broadcasting Corp. (BBC) has agreed to donate to the Israel State Archives tapes and microfilmed scripts of its short-wave Hebrew Service broadcasts which were terminated on Oct. 27 after 19 years. Arrangements were discussed during the recent visit of Dr. Alex Bein, archives director, who met with BBC officials. Material is now being selected on the basis of its historical importance. Erwin Bienenstock, former head of the BBC's Hebrew Service, is selecting scripts that relate to Anglo-Israeli relations and Anglo-Jewish affairs.

The BBC's half-hour Hebrew broadcasts were ended by order of the Foreign Office, which cited economic reasons for its action. The move aroused a storm of protest here and abroad. Some quarters and several newspapers charged that the suspension was politically motivated and that the Foreign Office had bowed to Arab pressure.

Johnson Briefs Nixon, Agnew On Current U.S. Mideast Policies, State Dept. Action

WASHINGTON, Nov. 21 (JTA)--President-elect Richard M. Nixon and Vice President-elect Spiro T. Agnew have been briefed by President Johnson on current United States policies in the Middle East and State Department moves in the Arab-Israel conflict, it was learned here today. Gov. Agnew met with the President yesterday.

The State Department is known to be seeking a more flexible Israeli response in peace moves in line with U.S. efforts to avoid a Middle East confrontation with the Soviet Union. State Department officials have also made it clear that they are determined to avoid an identification of American policy with Israel to such an extent that U.S. influence may not be regained in Egypt and other Arab states.

'Life' Magazine Opposes 'Simplistic And Automatic' U.S. Backing Of Israel

NEW YORK, Nov. 21 (JTA)--Life Magazine has called on the Nixon Administration to find "more hopeful avenues" toward a Middle East peace "than a simplistic and automatic backing of Israel, or nursing a new naval belligerence of our own." In the lead editorial of its Nov. 22 edition, the magazine also urged the restoration of U.S. diplomatic relations with Egypt and a general strengthening of American-Arab ties.

According to Life, the Middle East is a region ripe for application of "the American talent for assistance in economic development" which "in time could help heal the Arab weakness and disarray which, rather than Russian trouble-making, is the root cause of Middle Eastern instability." Life believes that President Nasser of Egypt "would welcome a little assistance and cooperation from the U.S., if only to lessen his heavy dependence on Russian aid."

Life criticized the pro-Israel statements by both Vice President Hubert H. Humphrey and Richard M. Nixon during the election campaign because they confirmed "Arabs in their illusion that American policy in the Middle East is dictated by Zionist sympathizers." The Johnson Administration's "policy of restraint, which seems about to yield to Israel's request for 50 Phantoms, makes Nixon's promise (to arm Israel) seem all the more incautious," the editorial said. "Premier Eshkol of Israel... has had no serious complaint about Johnson's policy but seems even more cheerful about what he hopes Nixon's will be."

City Changes School-Opening Time So Students Can Attend Talmud Torah

NEW YORK, Nov. 21 (JTA)--Superintendent of Schools Bernard Donovan today ordered New York City public schools to open 45 minutes earlier in the morning to make up time lost by students and teacher pay losses resulting from the New York City teachers' strike that ended this week. Dr. Donovan acted at the request of Brooklyn Jewish community leaders who complained that the extension of the school day by 45 minutes beyond the 3 p.m. closing time originally ordered created a problem for more than 50,000 Jewish students who attend religious classes in Talmud Torahs after school hours.

The matter was brought to the attention of Deputy Mayor Robert W. Sweet who was visited at City Hall yesterday by a committee representing the Brooklyn Jewish Community Council. The committee also expressed concern over the "anti-Semitic climate engendered by the school strike" and asked the city administration to help the Council carry on a continuous dialogue with black community leaders to bring about better relations between Jews and Negroes. The 34-day teachers' strike centered on a dispute between the mainly Negro and Puerto Rican Ocean Hill-Brownsville experimental school district and the predominantly Jewish United Federation of Teachers.

ADL And N.Y. Archdiocese Cooperate In TV Series On Jews And Judaism

NEW YORK, Nov. 21 (JTA)--A closed circuit television series on Jews and Judaism was inaugurated here today by the New York Archdiocese and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith which co-produced it. The series, consisting of five one-hour programs on "The Image of the Jews in Literature" and seven half-hour programs on "Jews and Their Religion," will be viewed by nearly 8,000 teachers in New York Catholic schools. According to Archbishop Terence J. Cooke and Dore Schary, ADL national chairman, more than a quarter of a million parochial school children will be affected ultimately by inclusion in their curriculum of the material in the programs and in published resource aids and texts. The series was described as "an outgrowth of increasingly close cooperation between Catholics and Jews since Vatican II Council" and "a 'first' in the field of inter-religious relations."

Rabbi Claims Four Year Stay On College Campuses Poses Threat To Jewish Survival

KIAMESHA LAKE, N.Y., Nov. 21 (JTA)--A Long Island rabbi claimed here today that the four year stay of Jewish youth on American campuses poses a threat to Jewish survival. Rabbi Saul I. Teplitz, of Congregation Sons of Israel in Woodmere, chairman of the commission on education of the United Synagogue of America (Conservative), addressed the convention of the National Women's League of the United Synagogue.

He said that one reason why the campus environment was a "threat" was that many Jewish professors on campus who should be the advisers, if not the idols of youth, do not possess a basic grounding in Jewish heritage and its values and thus are not able to guide Jewish youth.