

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. XXXVI Fifty-Second Year

Thursday, February 13, 1969

No. 32

Syrian MIG-21 Shot Down By Israeli Jets Over Golan Heights, Another Flees

TEL AVIV, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- A Syrian MIG-21 was shot down by Israeli fighter planes in a mid-day dogfight that developed over Quneitra in the occupied Golan Heights after two Syrian planes flew over Israeli-held territory. The second Syrian MIG apparently fled before the Israeli interceptors arrived. The other crashed over Syrian territory. The pilot was seen bailing out, a military spokesman reported.

Kfar Ruppin in the Beisan Valley came under heavy mortar attack from Jordanian territory last night for the first time since Israel's December 3 air strike at Iraqi troop concentrations across the Jordan River. Israeli forces returned the fire and no casualties were reported on the Israeli side, though three homes in Kfar Ruppin were slightly damaged. Adult settlers spent the night in bomb shelters. Children have been sleeping in shelters for months as a matter of routine precaution.

Gen. Odd Bull, chief of the United Nations truce observer team in the Middle East, reported today to Secretary-General U Thant that the Suez Canal situation has grown "serious" as a result of continuous exchanges of fire between Israeli and Egyptian forces.

He said that most of the firing seemed to have been initiated by Egyptian troops and was aimed at Israeli Army working crews on the East Bank. (Mr. Thant conferred afterward with Egyptian Ambassador Mohamed Awad el-Kony on the overall Mideast situation, and was believed to have touched upon the Bull report.)

An Israeli soldier was injured yesterday by Egyptian sniper fire--the third such injury in about a week--following a day of sniper fire.

Israel's Sephardic Chief Rabbi Invited To Attend Levin Event In Moscow

JERUSALEM, Feb. 12 9JTA) -- Sephardic Chief Rabbi Itzhak Nissim has received an invitation to attend the special 75th birthday celebration planned for Rabbi Yehuda Leib Levin of Moscow's Central Synagogue on Feb. 23.

The Chief Rabbi's Bureau said that Rabbi Nissim was investigating the possibility of accepting the invitation. A Bureau spokesman said that it was considering approaching the Embassy of Finland in Israel on the matter. Finland has represented Russian interests since the Kremlin broke relations with Israel during the 1967 Arab-Israel war. (See related story on Page 4.)

Israeli, British Officials Confer, Triggering Speculation Of Possible Arms Purchase

LONDON, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- A meeting here last week between Israel's Deputy Defense Minister Gen. Zvi Tzur and Britain's Minister of Defense Denis Healey has given rise to speculation that Israel is seeking to buy new armaments in Britain. The military attache at the Israel Embassy here confirmed that Gen. Tzur had met with Mr. Healey and with a number of other British high officials. He refused to comment on reported arms purchases but said the conversations covered "a number of issues relating to the Middle East in general and Anglo-Israeli relations in particular."

The London Times' military correspondent said today that the Defense Ministry confirmed that the meeting took place. He noted that Israel is a "good customer" for British arms and, with the British Army replacing its Centurion tanks with Chieftans, there are many Centurions available for sale to Israel.

Leading Frenchmen Establish Committee To Seek Emigration Of Jews In Arab Lands

PARIS, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- A group of prominent French political and community figures has established a "Committee for the Safety of Jews in Arab Lands" which announced that its first task will be to use all means at its disposal to secure the right of emigration for Jews in Iraq and other Arab countries where they are oppressed and threatened. Chairman of the group is Jacques Mercier, a Gaullist member of Parliament, who presided at a public meeting here yesterday at which establishment of the committee was announced. He shared the platform with Chief Rabbi Jacob Kaplan, and former French Defense Minister, Gen. Pierre Koenig.

Mr. Mercier pledged, "We shall not rest but shall continue to fight for basic human rights until they are achieved." He likened the situation of Jews in Iraq, Syria and Egypt to the Jewish plight under the Nazis. The new committee is also opposed to President Charles de Gaulle's anti-Israel policies in the Middle East. One speaker, Salomon Friederich, head of the France-Israel Alliance, urged the de Gaulle Government to alter its position favoring an imposed peace in the Middle East. He said Israel has already experienced the "emptiness" of international guarantees and can rely only on direct negotiations with the Arabs to achieve peace.

French Senate Committee Sees Serious Differences With Washington On Mideast

PARIS, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- Serious differences exist between Washington and Paris over the interpretation of President de Gaulle's call for Big Four talks on the Middle East, the chairman of the French Senate's Foreign Affairs Committee disclosed in a report published yesterday.

Sen. Andre Monteil said that the United States' acceptance of President de Gaulle's proposal was ac-

tually a polite, diplomatic rejection of it, presented in a way that would spare Gen. de Gaulle's feelings. He said that contrary to the view held in Paris, the Nixon Administration believes all consultations should take place within the framework of the mission of United Nations special Middle East envoy, Gunnar V. Jarring. He said further that Washington's insistence that bi-lateral talks take place first to determine whether Four Power talks were feasible virtually cancels France's insistence on Big Four consultations. The Foreign Affairs Committee was scheduled to hold a full-scale debate on the Middle East next week.

Gahal Faces Split Over Staying in National Coalition Government

JERUSALEM, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- Gahal, the parliamentary alignment of the Herut and Liberal parties which almost precipitated a Cabinet crisis over alleged remarks of Prime Minister Levi Eshkol in a Newsweek interview, today faced a split in its own ranks.

Differences have developed between the leaders of the two factions over whether to remain in the national coalition Government. The issue was the subject of a party caucus yesterday, the fourth in 24 hours, which decided to refer it to a joint conference of Herut and Liberal leaders to be held in Tel Aviv tomorrow.

Meanwhile, Minister of Interior Moshe Shapiro, leader of the National Religious Party, another coalition partner, urged Gahal to remain in the Government. Menachem Beigin, militant leader of the right-wing, nationalistic Herut, was known to favor leaving the coalition which was set up as a Government of "national unity" on the eve of the June, 1967 Arab-Israel war. It was during that crisis that Mr. Shapiro and others demanded a broadening of the coalition to include Gahal and the then Rafi faction of Mapai whose leader, Gen. Moshe Dayan, received the portfolio of Minister of Defense.

Joseph Saphir, leader of the Liberal Party, apparently favors staying in the coalition. He and Mr. Beigin are Ministers Without Portfolio in the Eshkol Cabinet.

Both leaders met with Prime Minister Levi Eshkol and Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon yesterday and were persuaded to support the Government in a Knesset (Parliament) vote on a motion of no confidence introduced by the splinter Free Center faction. The motion stemmed from a remark attributed to Mr. Eshkol by Newsweek that Israel was not interested in retaining such heavily populated Arab centers on the West Bank as Nablus and Jenin. Mr. Eshkol insisted that the remark was not included in the transcript of his interview which Newsweek senior editor Arnaud de Borchgrave submitted for his approval prior to publication. The Gahal ministers accepted the Government's explanation that Newsweek was guilty of a breach of trust. But there was no denial from any source that Mr. Eshkol made the statement attributed to him off the record. He has expressed such views in the past, especially at meetings of the Labor Party. But he has never been explicit and never mentioned place names, such as Nablus and Jenin, as being outside the boundaries that Israel considered necessary for its security, sources said.

The Gahal faction is opposed to Israel's withdrawal from any of the occupied Arab territories. Mr. Beigin was believed to feel that it was time to withdraw from the national coalition and reconstitute itself as an opposition party. He was said to be confident that Herut could rally a large segment of the population under the banner of a "greater Israel" and win a substantial vote in next fall's national elections.

The Government withstood the no-confidence vote yesterday by a vote of 74 to five, with seven abstentions.

Terrorist Bomb Wrecks Washroom in East Jerusalem Bus Terminal, Arab Held

JERUSALEM, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- A terrorist bomb wrecked the washroom in the East Jerusalem bus station today, slightly injuring a 23-year-old Arab who was hospitalized and questioned by police for possible implication in the explosion. The blast in the terminal, which serves Arab busses, was the second in East Jerusalem in the past two weeks. It shattered windows in the terminal but caused no other damage.

EI Fatah Leader Announces That French, Dutch Volunteers Have Joined His Forces

JERUSALEM, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- Palestinian Arab guerrilla leader Yasir Arafat announced today in Cairo that French and Dutch volunteers have joined his forces to fight Israel. Arafat heads the El Fatah and Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) guerrilla organizations. He said that the Europeans joined El Fatah, which also includes Arabs from Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Lebanon and Jordan. Arafat announced the presence of non-Arabs in his forces shortly before conferring with Jordanian Premier Bahjat al-Talhouni.

The Jordanian official was reportedly in Cairo to confer with Egyptian leaders on announced plans to transfer some 4,000 PLO regulars now in Egypt to Jordan. The move was announced in Cairo apparently without King Hussein's assent.

President Nasser has thrown full support behind the Palestine Executive Committee established last week at a meeting of the Palestine National Council with the aim of unifying terrorist activities. The Palestine Liberation Army and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine boycotted the meeting. The Army is one of the most important and strongest terrorist groups and is the military arm of the PLO, a political body which attended the Cairo sessions and whose ruling body is the Palestine Executive Committee. The Palestine National Council claims to represent the various Palestinian Arab terrorist and political groups and has 105 members, headed by Yehia Hammouda. Hammouda announced after the Council meeting that a five-member team would try to bring the two dissident groups back into the Executive Committee.

Rabbi Rosen, On Political Stump, Affirms Loyalty Of Jewry To Rumania

BUCHAREST, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen of Rumania abandoned the pulpit for the political stump here. He has been re-nominated as a candidate for the National Parliament, representing the Vacaresti district of Bucharest. He told an audience of several thousand workers and intellectuals that it was in the Vacaresti district 28 years ago he was arrested and taken to be executed by the pro-Nazi regime. "I was spared by a miracle," he said. He told the crowd, "We Jews are Rumanian citizens, devoted and loyal, free and faithful to our religion." He said that "Rumania has never had a regime which was as loved and respected by the whole of the people as the present one is."

In another event closer to his vocation, Rabbi Rosen spoke at ceremonies opening a kosher restaurant in Bucharest. It was established by the Federation of Jewish communities with assistance from the Joint Distribution Committee and serves some 300 observant Jews daily. Some pay reduced prices for their meals and others are served free. Dr. Rosen was joined at the restaurant by Israel's Ambassador Eliezer Doron.

Leader Says Argentine Jews Lag Behind British, Americans in Assimilation

LONDON, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- A leader of Argentine Jewry described the Jewish community in his country as one that has "not yet reached the point of linguistic and cultural assimilation which British and American Jews have reached." According to Simcha Sneh, general secretary of the Zionist Organization of Argentina, the Jews there "are now at a point at which British and American Jews were some 30 years ago." Mr. Sneh, who stopped over in London en route from a Jewish leadership meeting in Israel, spoke at a reception given for him by the World Jewish Congress Yiddish committee and the Association of Jewish Journalists.

He said one sign of the relative lack of assimilation among Argentine Jewry was the publication of two Yiddish dailies in Buenos Aires in addition to Davke, a journal sponsored by the WJCongress but written and edited in the Argentine capital. Mr. Sneh said that 20 percent of all Jewish children in Argentina attend Jewish day schools.

Givens Voices Fears For Canadian Jewry; 'Slumlord' Accusations Hurlled In Halifax

TORONTO, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- Fears for the future of Canadian Jewry in the face of increasing disunity in the nation over the Provincial separatist movement--particularly in Quebec--was voiced here by the former Jewish Mayor of Toronto. Philip Givens, now a Liberal Member of Parliament, told a B'nai Brith regional council meeting, "People tell us that we Jews are paranoid. We live in times reminiscent of the 1930s. The whole fabric of our country is at stake and seems to be coming apart at the seams. We Jews have learned by experience that when anything happens to dis-unify a country, we are the minority group that suffers first."

Concern was voiced at the meeting over the growth of black anti-Semitism, particularly in the port city of Halifax where the B'nai Brith Anti-Defamation League was investigating black militant accusations that Jewish "slumlords" own most of the Negro ghettos.

Allan Grossman, Ontario Minister of Correctional Services, agreed with Mr. Givens that there was cause for alarm. "It may be that we are at the 11th hour now as Jews and as Canadians," he said, predicting that conditions would worsen before improving. Arthur Harris, chairman of the event, expressed concern that Canada might import from the United States violent clashes between races and ethnic groups. "The percentage of Negroes is higher in Halifax than it is in Omaha or Minneapolis," he said. The black accusation of Jewish slumlordship in Halifax had a "frighteningly familiar ring," he said.

Twickenham St. Becomes A 'Shtetl' For Filming Of Ben-Gurion Documentary

LONDON, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- Twickenham Street, a South London thoroughfare, will be disguised as the main street of a 19th Century Russian "shtetl" for the filming of a biographical documentary of the life of former Prime Minister David Ben Gurion of Israel. Covenant Communications Corp., which is making the film, intended to shoot the sequences in the Polish town of Plonsk, where Mr. Ben Gurion was born and spent his childhood. But the Warsaw authorities refused to grant them permission.

Most of the film has been shot on location in Israel. But parts of London will be used for sequences concerning Mr. Ben Gurion's activities here. They include a hotel where he stayed and the Battersea Town Hall which will stand in for the British Foreign Office.

3 French Rabbis Visiting United States To Study Orthodox Jewish Community

NEW YORK, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- Three recently ordained French rabbis have come to the United States for the first Orthodox-sponsored program in this country for post-graduate study and rabbinical field work by foreigners. The graduates of the Ecole Rabbinique Seminaire Israelite de France are Rabbis Claude Zaffran, Roger Toutou and Alain Guedj. They will remain here through the fall under a program of inter-communal cooperation arranged in 1968 by Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America and the Consistoire Central, the central Jewish community of FRANCE. Consistoire Central, the central Jewish community of French Jewry. Also cooperating are Yeshiva University and the Rabbinical Council of America. The program is designed to provide an understanding of the well-developed system of the U.S. Orthodox Jewish community and its institutions which the rabbis may utilize in their own communities.

Trade Between Rumania, Israel Expected To Increase 50 Percent; Pact Renewed

JERUSALEM, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- Trade between Rumania and Israel is expected to increase by 50 percent this year, it was announced when Finance Minister Zeev Sharef and Rumanian Agriculture Minister Nicolae Giousau signed a document renewing a trade agreement. Trade between the countries doubled in 1967 and redoubled in 1968.

Rabbi Calls For Establishment Of 'Truth Squads' To Answer Anti-Semitic Attacks

NEW YORK, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- An Orthodox rabbinical leader proposed today the formation of "truth squads" to reply to anti-Semitic attacks from militant Negroes and he added a demand that communications media be forced to give equal time to Jews to combat such attacks.

The proposals were made by Rabbi Jacob J. Hecht, executive vice-president of the National Committee for the Furthurance of Jewish Education, a Lubavitcher Organization. Charging that "almost every channel of communication in the United States is being used to spread vicious anti-Semitic remarks," Rabbi Hecht declared it was "morally and legally right that the Jews who are the hapless object of such scurrilous falsehoods be given an opportunity to set the record straight."

He said that while a few Negro leaders like Mayor Carl Stokes of Cleveland had recognized the debt owed by the Negro to Jews, far too many Negro militants "act as if Jews were the ones who brought them over from Africa, worked them as slaves on plantations and then exploited them in the cities."

He noted that several weeks ago, during the height of synagogue vandalism and attacks on individual Jews in New York City slum areas, he had suggested that if city officials could not provide adequate protection, Jews should organize their own brigades or auxiliary police forces. He added that he was now proposing that "we defend ourselves against these verbal attacks by organizing 'truth squads' comprised of lawyers, educators and religious leaders." He noted that if such volunteer forces did not have communication outlets, "they will be powerless" and that is why "we must demand equal time on the radio and TV networks, national press, educational systems and local levels."

He cited as one major area for such responses the public schools, particularly in New York City, where Negro children often are exposed to anti-Semitic teachings.

New N.Y. Rights Chief Urges Revival Of Jewish-Negro Coalition

NEW YORK, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- New York City's newly appointed Human Rights Commissioner yesterday urged a revival of the coalition between Jews and Negroes which has been split by racial tensions. Simeon Golar, a Negro, spoke before a predominantly Jewish audience at the Daughters of Jacob Hospital and Home for the Aged. He said he wanted to be an "honest broker on behalf of all the people of this city." He said he was "personally saddened to see your people vilified even as I see my people are oppressed."

Mr. Golar was appointed chairman of the City's Human Rights Commission by Mayor John V. Lindsay, succeeding William H. Booth, also Negro, who became a center of controversy when Jewish groups accused him of insensitivity to increasing Negro anti-Semitism. Mr. Booth has been appointed a judge of of the Criminal Court.

The occasion for Mr. Golar's appearance before the Jewish audience was a celebration of Sephardic and Spanish culture marking the Spanish Government's official abolition of the decree of 1492 that ordered the expulsion of Jews from Spain. The Daughters of Jacob Hospital and Home for the Aged is an affiliate of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York.

Brooklyn Rabbi, Once Arrested By KGB, Declines Invitation To Levin Celebration

NEW YORK, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- A Brooklyn rabbi who was arrested in Kiev during the Six-Day War and interrogated by the Soviet secret police (KGB) for allegedly spying and organizing illegal immigration to Israel has refused an invitation to attend the Feb. 23 birthday celebration of Rabbi Yehuda Leib Levin of Moscow. Rabbi Harry Bronstein said in a letter to Menasha Michalowitz, chairman of the body that governs Moscow's Central Synagogue, "I feel it would be unwise to expose myself again to the secret police." He said that he would send Rabbi Levin a congratulatory cable.

The rabbi was arrested in June, 1967 and interrogated for two days until he became ill and was expelled to Prague. He told the JTA that he had been doing aliyah (immigration) work at the time.

Rabbi Bronstein is president of an organization known as Al Tidom (Do Not Be Silent) which furnishes Jews behind the Iron Curtain with cultural and religious needs. He is vice president of the Rabbinical Alliance of the United States (Orthodox) and a member of the executive of the Agudat Israel Organization.

Name Olin To 3 Posts Connected With 1969 Maccabiah Games In Israel

WALTHAM, Mass., Feb. 12 (JTA) -- The United States Committee, Sports for Israel, Inc. has selected the athletic director of Brandeis University for three key posts in connection with the 1969 Maccabiah games in Israel. Irving Olin, adjunct associate professor of physical education at the Jewish-sponsored non-sectarian college, was appointed to the committee's board of directors, named chairman of the New England Committee, Sports for Israel and was appointed to the committee which will select a U.S. basketball squad to compete in the Maccabiah. Mr. Olin was coach of the 1961 American basketball team which won an Olympic gold medal.

Nixon Reply To Shazar Message Pledges Efforts To Build 'Lasting Peace'

JERUSALEM, Feb. 12 (JTA) -- President Richard M. Nixon has sent a warm reply to President Zalman Shazar's note congratulating him on his inauguration. Mr. Nixon pledged all of the "energy and strength" of his Administration "to build a true and lasting peace for all mankind." He thanked Mr. Shazar for his "thoughtful and heartening message on my inauguration as President of the United States." He said, "I hope and trust that our lines of communication will remain open as we seek a world in which no people will live in anger or unwanted isolation."