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Both Israeli Chief Rabbis Receive Invitations To Attend Moscow Event For Levin

JERUSALEM, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- Ashkenazic Chief Rabbi Isser Untermann has received an invitation to attend the 75th birthday celebration planned in Moscow for Rabbi Yehuda Leib Levin on Feb. 23, it was learned today. Sephardic Chief Rabbi Yitzhak Nissim also has received one from the head of the Moscow Central Synagogue, the celebration sponsor, and is considering accepting it.

Rabbi Untermann said today that he was needed in Israel and would not attend but would send a congratulatory message to Rabbi Levin.

Observers cannot recall any invitation from the Soviet Union for a visit by Israeli religious leaders since the establishment of the State and are speculating about the significance of the two just received. It was generally assumed that the invitations could not have been sent without authorization by Soviet officialdom.

Symington Confers With Eban While On Mediterranean Fact-Finding Mission

JERUSALEM, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- Sen. Stuart Symington (D., Mo.), chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee, stopped over in Israel briefly today on a fact-finding mission to the area and conferred with Foreign Minister Abba Eban. Sen. Symington was accompanied by Maj. Gen. John Murphy, director of legislative liaison between the U.S. Air Force and the U.S. Senate, and Arthur Kuhl, chief clerk of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee. They left this afternoon for Greece.

Mr. Eban reportedly explained to the visitors why Israel saw no immediate danger of a renewed outbreak of full scale warfare in the Middle East. He also reiterated Israel's peace aims which are a contractual settlement with each of its Arab neighbors freely negotiated between the parties concerned.

Israel Denies Receiving Request To Free 15 Merchant Ships Stranded In Suez Canal

JERUSALEM, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- Official circles denied reports in several newspapers today that Israel had received a request to free 15 merchant ships that have been stranded in the Suez Canal since the June, 1967 Arab-Israel war via the canal's southern exit. According to reports from Cairo, Egyptian Government spokesman Mohammed el-Zayat, said today that the go-ahead has been given for a new survey of the southern half of the canal with a view to extricating the trapped vessels.

Israeli sources said that any new proposals to free the ships had to be submitted through Lt. Gen. Odd Bull, United Nations Secretary General U Thant's cease-fire observer team chief. They noted that Israel agreed 13 months ago that the ships should be freed via the southern exit, but the Egyptians prepared to dredge the northern reaches of the waterway without obtaining Israel's consent as stipulated by the cease-fire agreements. After Israelis fired on an Egyptian survey launch, the survey was called off and no further attempts have been made to free the ships.

Gen. Bull reported to Mr. Thant today for the second time in two days that the situation along the Suez Canal was becoming "serious" again. He referred to a new rash of machinegun and rifle fire across the canal which, he said, appeared to originate mainly with Egyptian soldiers.

Tekoa Letter To Security Council Raps Egyptian Attacks At Suez

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., Feb. 13 (JTA) -- In his second letter in two days to Security Council president Armand Berard of France, Israel's Ambassador Yosef Tekoa today drew the Council's "urgent attention" to a "mounting series of new attacks" by Egyptian forces in the Suez Canal area.

Asserting that Egyptian troops have fired repeatedly on Israeli forces on the Canal's East Bank since Feb. 5 and that 18 mines were discovered today at various points along the waterway, Mr. Tekoa charged Egypt with endangering security and undermining Mideast peace efforts.

He cited reports by Lt. Gen. Bull which he said testified to the "total restraint" of Israeli forces in the face of the attacks, especially "grave and prolonged" ones on Feb. 10 and 11. He noted that a mine exploded on the East Bank near Kantara yesterday and that sniping continued today.

The Israeli envoy asserted that the military actions were a "deliberate and planned attempt to disrupt the relative tranquility which has prevailed for some time in the Suez sector and to generate a situation of tension." He said the snipings, minings and recent incursions into Sinai by Arab terrorists followed "warlike declarations" by Egyptian President Nasser in which he emphasized Egyptian intentions to pursue terrorism and approved rejection by terrorists of the Security Council's Nov. 22, 1967 resolution laying the groundwork for a Mideast settlement.

Israel charged here yesterday that Egypt had "come out openly in full support" of Arab guerrilla operations, asserting that it created and is directing them. Mr. Tekoa charged in a letter to Mr. Berard that Egypt, Jordan and Syria were providing training areas, instructors and arms for the commandos. He claimed the weapons included the Klatchnikov automatic rifle and the Katyusha anti-tank and anti-personnel rocket. These items, he said, were made in the Soviet Union and given to the commandos by the

Egyptian and Syrian Governments, which had received them from Russia.

Members of irregular forces captured recently in Sinai "are openly recruited in Egypt and dispatched by intelligence officers to carry out sabotage operations behind the cease-fire lines to be described later by the Egyptian propaganda machinery as actions of the 'Arab Sinai Organization,' Mr. Tekoah said.

Israeli statistics claim that between June 6, 1967 and Dec. 31, 1968 there were 1,288 acts of sabotage and border incidents. Of these, 920 took place in the West Bank, with 166 in the Egyptian sector, 37 in the Syrian region, 35 near Lebanon and 130 in the Gaza Strip. Israel puts its losses for the period at 234 soldiers and 47 civilians killed, 765 soldiers and 330 civilians wounded. The State lost nearly 800 men during the Arab-Israel war of 1967.

The Tekoah letters came against a background of growing Western concern over the increasing guerrilla campaign. The Big Four are believed to see the guerrillas as a major problem in the attempt to bring about a Mideast settlement. U.S. representative Charles W. Yost said on television Tuesday that the guerrilla action was "perhaps the most difficult aspect" of the Mideast crisis--one he termed "urgent and dangerous."

He said the Arab Governments might lose control over the guerrillas, making peace efforts "infinitely more difficult." This situation could come about, he said, unless there is important progress toward peace in the next few months.

United States Moves Cautiously Toward 4 Power UN Conference On Mideast

WASHINGTON, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- The United States is moving with deliberate caution toward a Four Power conference on the Mideast proposed by France and supported by the Soviet Union, and will not participate in one unless there is some chance of broad agreement among all parties concerned, the State Department indicated today.

The Department's official spokesman, Robert McCloskey, told newsmen that the Four Power talks at the UN will not be held until bi-lateral meetings produce "sufficient consensus" and it appears that multilateral talks would be productive. Ambassador Yost met today with Soviet Ambassador Yacob A. Malik and French Ambassador Berard. Yesterday he talked with British Deputy permanent representative Sir Leslie Glass. He has also had meetings with the UN's special Middle East envoy Gunnar V. Jarring and Secretary General Thant. Mr. McCloskey today sought to discourage speculation that the bi-lateral talks had produced nothing of substance.

Before entering Four Power talks, the U.S. is reportedly seeking clarification of the Soviet Mideast peace proposal of Dec. 30, 1968, which is seen as heavily favoring Egypt. A major consideration is that nothing should be done that might hamper Dr. Jarring's mission. It is believed that he would be helped materially by a Four Power elucidation of some of the ambiguities of the Security Council's Nov. 22, 1967 resolution from which his mission derives its mandate.

In Paris today, opposition members of Parliament and some Gaullists attended a public meeting at which President de Gaulle's embargo on military equipment and spare parts to Israel was denounced and his policy of seeking a rapprochement with the Arabs criticized. The meeting was presided over by Nobel Peace Laureate Prof. Rene Cassin.

Prime Minister Harold Wilson, of Britain, visiting Bonn, told the JTA at a press conference that the Big Four would not try to impose a peace settlement. A British Foreign Office spokesman told the JTA in London that a meeting of representatives of the Western European Union, called by British Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart on the Middle East, will be held Friday but without French participation. Paris pulled out because a Mideast agenda item was postponed at last week's Union meeting in Luxembourg.

French Foreign Minister Michel Debre said in Paris yesterday that the resolution has to be enforced in 1969. He said France always recognized Israel's right to independent existence but not "her right to impose her will on others."

A report by the official Soviet news agency Novosti here today said that Syria was prepared to accept "a political settlement in the Middle East" despite "reservations." According to Novosti correspondent Georgy Dadyants, the Syrians are prepared to adhere to a settlement formulated by Egyptian President Nasser in an interview published recently in Newsweek magazine. Syria has been the most militant of the Arab participants in the June, 1967 war and has not accepted the Security Council's resolution.

The Israeli newspaper Haaretz reported today that President Nasser has agreed to ban the transfer of 4,000 Arab guerrillas from Egypt to Jordan while Four Power talks are pending. The transfer of the guerrillas, fighting arm of the Palestine Liberation Organization, was approved by Col. Nasser but created consternation in Jordan which is already overrun with guerrilla groups. The move was taken without consulting King Hussein. It was believed to have been the subject of talks this week between Jordanian Premier Bahjat al-Talhouni and Col. Nasser in Cairo. Mr. al-Talhouni said in Cairo today that Jordan would never act unilaterally in the Mideast crisis or negotiate with Israel.

Haaretz also reported that France has agreed to send about 40 military advisers to Lebanon at Beirut's request to help re-organize the Lebanese Army. The advisers are reportedly expected in about six months. There was no immediate comment from Paris or Beirut.

Civil Unrest On West Bank And East Jerusalem Declines Somewhat, Officials Report

JERUSALEM, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- The civil unrest that has plagued East Jerusalem and the principal West Bank towns for the past two weeks appears to be receding, security officials said today. But school strikes and attempted demonstrations by students continued in several places.

Four students of the College des Freres in East Jerusalem were arrested yesterday after leaving their schoolyard to demonstrate at the French Consulate. Police used red-tinted water to break up a demonstration by elementary school girls in East Jerusalem. The stains left by the water are a sign to the girls' parents that they had participated in a demonstration.

Security forces in Bethlehem thwarted an attempt by students to leave their schoolyard for a demonstration. High schools were closed yesterday in Tulkarem, Ramallah, El Birreh and Jenin. The school strike in Nablus, the largest West Bank town, went into its 10th day, but a six-day business strike there ended and all shops have been open since Monday.

Settlers Escape Injury When 2 Beisan Valley Settlements Come Under Fire

TEL AVIV, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- Two Beisan Valley settlements came under fire from Katyusha rocket launchers in Jordan last night but there were no casualties. The fire was directed at Masada and Menahamia and at an Israeli patrol in the vicinity of the latter. Settlers took to bomb shelters as Israeli units returned the fire.

An Israeli Army vehicle was ambushed by bazooka and automatic rifle fire in the Golan Heights yesterday, about two miles west of the Israel-Syria cease-fire line. Guerrillas used Russian-made Kalashnikov assault rifles. The vehicle was hit but no occupants were hurt.

Anti-Jewish, Anti-Zionist Organization Registers With French Authorities

PARIS, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- A new organization which has paid homage to an executed Nazi collaborator and defined its purpose as "the fight against Jewish influences and Zionist propaganda" in France has registered with authorities as a "legal association," it was learned today. The group held its founding meeting on Feb. 6 to commemorate the 1945 execution of Robert Brasillach, an anti-Semitic propagandist who was convicted of war crimes by a French court. Membership in the group includes several right-wing personalities and avowed anti-Semites.

Former Latrun 'No Man's Land' Will Be Divided Among Villages And Kibbutzim

JERUSALEM, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- The Jewish Agency announced today that some 2,000 acres of the former "no-man's land" in the Latrun area will be divided between seven hill villages and two kibbutzim in the district, which lies on the main route between Tel Aviv and Jerusalem. Part of the land will go to the new village of Modiim established on the site of an abandoned Arab village.

The Jewish Agency's agricultural department disclosed that it has drawn up development plans for 22 settlements and one township in the Golan Heights of Syria. The plan includes 10 existing settlements. According to Brit, organ of the kibbutz movement, there are at present 11,400 acres of arable land in the Golan Heights, and the Jewish Agency is planning to reclaim an additional 25,000 acres for agriculture. Another bulletin, Yediot, published by the moshav (small-holders) movement, said plans have been completed for the establishment of more settlements in the northern Sinai and along the Jordan Valley.

Allon Tells Nazareth Jews And Arabs That Treaty With Security Is Chief Aim

NAZARETH, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon told a mixed audience of Jews and Arab Christians here yesterday that a peace treaty with mutual security guarantees between Israel and the Arab states is Israel's principle aim. He said the Arab states needed peace even more than Israel in order to divert the money they now invest in the arms race to developments for the benefit of all the people in the area. Mr. Allon spoke at a meeting of the Arab residents of Nazareth, the ancient Christian town in the Galilee, and Jewish residents of the new suburb known as Upper Nazareth.

An Arab member of the Knesset (Parliament) became the first non-Jewish Israeli to receive a decoration awarded for special services to the State. The decoration was presented to Seif Aldin Azuabi yesterday by Mr. Allon in recognition of Mr. Azuabi's efforts to unite Arabs and Jews both before and after Israel's independence and for special unspecified services to the nation.

The award was created recently by a special ministerial committee for decorations sanctioned by Prime Minister Levi Eshkol. In the past it has been conferred on former members of Haganah, and the Irgun Zvai Leumi, Jewish para-military organizations of the pre-Statehood era.

U.S. Students Demonstrate Against Iraqi Hangings; Christians Hold Prayer Service

JERUSALEM, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- American students and faculty members at the Hebrew University demonstrated here against the hangings of nine Jews in Iraq on charges of spying for Israel and demanded more active United States intervention to save the remaining 2,500-3,000 Jews of that country. The orderly demonstration was organized by the Yad Vashem, the Heroes' and Martyrs' Remembrance Authority. Later a delegation went to Tel Aviv to deliver a petition signed by American lecturers at the Hebrew University to the United States Embassy.

About 350 American students took part and some fasted all day. Speakers included Dr. Ezra Spicehandler of the department of Hebrew literature and Dr. Jack Cohen, director of the Hillel Foundation on the Hebrew University campus.

Hundreds of Christians of various churches attended an inter-denominational Christian prayer service for the well-being and deliverance of Iraqi Jews at the Dominican Convent in Jerusalem. The event marked the first time that common prayers by Christian denominations were held in the modern city.

Leading U.S. Negroes Will Attend Israel Parley On Technology, Human Development

NEW YORK, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- A conference on technology and human development to take place in Israel next April with the participation, among others, of six American Negro leaders, is expected to lead to better understanding between Jews and Negroes in New York, according to Theodore W. Kheel, the labor mediator. Mr. Kheel is president of the American Foundation on Automation and Employment, a sponsor of the conference.

He announced today that participants in the conference will include Whitney M. Young, Jr., executive director of the National Urban League; Bayard Rustin, executive director of the A. Philip Randolph Institute; Dr. Kenneth B. Clark, president of the Metropolitan Research Center; Dr. James R. Dumpson, dean of the Fordham University of Social Service; Douglas Pugh, program adviser on social development for the Ford Foundation; and Franklin Williams, director of the Center for Minority Affairs at Columbia University.

Mr. Young noted that the conference had been planned many months before the escalation of racial tension between Jews and Negroes in New York. He voiced hope that the trip would give him "an opportunity to see what's been done on helping underdeveloped people." He added, "We can benefit from what's been done in Israel--an amazing job--and have greater understanding of our own problem."

JWV Reports Increased Assistance Sought By Negro Ex-GIs

WASHINGTON, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- The national commander of the Jewish War Veterans of the United States disclosed today that the number of Negro ex-servicemen seeking assistance from his organization in veterans' matters has increased by more than 100 percent in the past year. According to Charles Feureisen, "This does not indicate a national wave of anti-Semitism among Negroes, especially among the young men returning from Vietnam."

The commander said JWV service officers in New York, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, Boston, Pittsburgh and elsewhere have "met hundreds of earnest young Negroes seeking veterans rights for education, housing, insurance...as provided for under the G.I. Bill." He said that Negroes lack veterans service organizations and feel comfortable in accepting Jewish assistance. "There might be some local antagonisms, perhaps in areas of New York City, but our evidence does not indicate a national pattern of anti-Jewish alienation in the black community," Mr. Feureisen said.

Intervention By Agudath Leader Stops Daylight Time Bill Hurtful To Orthodox

NEW YORK, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- The Orthodox Jewish community in New York has averted potential problems that lay buried in a bill before the State Senate that would have made Daylight Saving Time mandatory the year-round.

Mindful of problems encountered by Orthodox Jews in England with the introduction of full Daylight time there, Rabbi Moshe Sherer appealed successfully to State Sen. John Marchi not to seek passage of the bill. Rabbi Sherer is executive vice president of Agudath Israel of America.

The Marchi bill would have given New York City residents an extra hour of daylight that would have benefited homeward-bound school children and working women. Rabbi Sherer pointed out that Daylight time in winter would mean advancing the clock for one hour. According to religious law, the earliest time that morning prayers can begin is an hour before sunrise. In winter the sun rises about 7:15 A.M. (Eastern Standard Time), and prayers cannot begin before 6:15 A.M. If an observant Jew had to begin praying at 7:15 A.M., many who must be at work early would face a conflict, Rabbi Sherer pointed out.

Remains Of 27 Masada Defenders Will Be Buried On Mount Of Olives In Jerusalem

JERUSALEM, Feb. 13 (JTA) -- The remains of 27 defenders of Masada, the Jewish mountain fortress that held out against Roman legions in 73 C.E., will be given a heroes' burial on the Mount of Olives, overlooking the site of Solomon's Temple, the Ministry for Religious Affairs announced. The remains were discovered six years ago by Prof. Yigal Yadin, a Hebrew University archaeologist. An examination and investigation by scholars in London reportedly confirmed that the remains are those of the defenders of Masada who chose suicide rather than surrender to Roman hands.

The heroism and the identity of the Masada defenders has been questioned by an American rabbinic scholar who is said to be an outstanding authority on the Second Jewish Commonwealth. According to Dr. Solomon Zeitlin, professor of rabbinic law and history at Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate learning in Philadelphia, the Masada defenders were not the zealots who defended Jerusalem against the Romans but Sicarii whom he calls "a rebel and fanatic group."

He said their resistance was an "inglorious chapter in Jewish history" because they committed mass suicide in violation of Jewish law and left the Masada stronghold to the Romans without the loss of a single Roman soldier. In contrast, he said, the zealots fought heroically for the city of Jerusalem which fell to Rome, but at a heavy cost to its legions. Dr. Zeitlin said the Sicarii were interested only in their personal freedom, did not aid the defenders of Jerusalem and even attacked their fellow Jews. Dr. Zeitlin stirred another controversy several years ago when he claimed that the Dead Sea Scrolls were not antiques, but dated from the Middle Ages.