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Riga Student Said To Have Immolated Himself To Protest Anti-Jewish Discrimination

LONDON, April 27 (JTA) -- A 21-year-old Jewish student at Riga University in Latvia tried April 12 to burn himself to death in the center of Riga as a protest against discrimination against Jews, it was reported here today. He was said to have shouted to Russian Marines to let him die or to give him freedom to emigrate to Israel. The student was identified as Ilya Ripps, a mathematics student. The incident was said to have taken place in front of a liberty statue and was witnessed by two American tourists, one from New Jersey, who told the story to the Geneva office of the International League for the Repatriation of Russian Jews.

The tourists said that they saw Mr. Ripps standing in front of the statue with his clothing soaked in gasoline. He put a match to himself and was engulfed in flames. A group of Russian Marines rushed up to him and put out the blaze. The incident was said to have been witnessed by a large crowd. The Americans said that he was brutally beaten and taken to a police station. He was reported variously to be under police guard in a hospital, with severe burns, and to be in a prison. His condition and whereabouts was not known.

Mr. Ripps reportedly said that he and other young Jews in Russia wanted to go to Israel because emigration was the only solution to the problems of Russian Jews. He wanted Jews in the West to try to persuade the Russians to let them go. According to Nina K. Solarz, executive director of the International League's New York office, the student had had several encounters with officials in the past because he persisted in applying for emigration and demanding freedom.

Strauss Leads Opposition To Abolition Of West German Statute Of Limitations

BONN, April 27 (JTA) -- The prospect arose today that the West German Government may not get the required majority vote in the Bundestag (lower house) to abolish the statute of limitations on prosecution of Nazi war criminals and other murderers. The measure has many opponents including the Christian Socialist Union (CSU), the Bavarian sister party of Chancellor Kurt Georg Kiesinger's Christian Democratic Union (CDU). The CSU's leader Franz Josef Strauss said he would vote against abolition.

In a related development, the German trade union movement expressed "great concern and disappointment" that the Government had "not found it necessary to request a ban on the National Democratic Party" despite Interior Minister Ernst Benda's assertion that he had adequate evidence to justify a ban. Mr. Benda contends that he can prove the right-wing NPD, seen by many as neo-Nazi, is anti-democratic and unconstitutional. The movement said the German worker would not understand how a party which pursued non-democratic policies and a number of whose members had supported the Nazi regime could be permitted to function. The unionists saw the decision as having possible world-wide repercussions.

Meanwhile, the NPD, which is seeking Bundestag seats in this year's Federal election, set for September, has made "victory" statements and has attacked Mr. Benda and West Berlin Mayor Klaus Schutz, who has renewed his demand that the three Allied powers in West Berlin outlaw the NPD chapter there because of the sensitive position of the city, which is deep in East Germany. The United States, Britain and France, whose authority over the city stems from World War II, has rejected that bid.

The Munich state prosecutor has brought a lawsuit aimed at seeking a ban on the Deutsche National Zeitung, a right-wing paper. The charges were filed, at the Government's request, against Dr. Gerhard Frey because the paper has allegedly printed anti-Semitic news and features over a long period of time.

The Cabinet's decision to drop the statute of limitations that deals with murder and genocide was taken Thursday when Chancellor Kiesinger's conservative forces capitulated to the demand of Social Democratic Justice Minister Horst Ehmke that there be no modification of the bill to codify certain circumstances under which an accused Nazi could be excused for having been forced or ordered to commit his punishable acts. Guenter Diehl, the chief Government spokesman, said that the Cabinet had decided that "codification would have resulted in serious legal problems...important groups of criminals would escape." The Christian Democrats and Christian Social Union had pressed hard for the "codification" guidelines, presumably to establish a standard distinguishing between deliberate Nazi criminals and those who were "victims" of the system and were acting under orders.

The 20-year statute is scheduled to go into effect on Dec. 31, after which no new cases against Nazi criminals and other murderers could be opened. The statute was drawn up in 1945 and extended for five years in 1965. Mr. Ehmke declared that 10,000 cases of Nazi criminals were currently under investigation and that there are 16,000 to 18,000 accused who would face trial. It would be unjust, he said, for those caught before the end of 1969 to be punished while those caught afterward would not stand trial. He noted that the Bonn Government could not subscribe to a United Nations convention on the non-applicability of statutory limitations on war crimes and crimes against humanity which would punish those whose crimes had already been deemed by law not punishable. Adherence to the convention would be contrary to the Constitution, he said.

Dr. Prinz Hails Cabinet Decision In Message To Chancellor Kiesinger

NEW YORK, April 27 (JTA) -- The American Jewish Congress, in a cable to Chancellor Kiesinger in Bonn, welcomed the decision of the West German Cabinet to press for abolition of the statute of limitations. Dr. Joachim Prinz of Newark, N.J., a former rabbi of Berlin expelled by Hitler for his anti-Nazi activities and currently chairman of the AJCongress's international affairs commission, said: "We are deeply gratified by the decision of your Cabinet...It would be unthinkable to allow the mere passage of time to purchase exoneration and immunity for those responsible for the heartless degenerate brutalities of the Hitler regime. This is a step in the long way back for the German people. We congratulate you and your associates for acting in a manner that helps redeem the past and that makes credible your announced determination not to give succor or encouragement to those who willingly served the cause of Nazism a generation ago or to those who would serve its purposes today."

220 Legislators Sign Declaration For Direct Negotiations, Opposing Imposed Solution

WASHINGTON, April 27 (JTA) -- A bi-partisan declaration urging the Arab states to enter into direct peace negotiations with Israel and opposing attempts by outside powers to impose a Mideast settlement has been signed so far by 200 members of the Senate and House of Representatives. The declaration was drafted by Sen. Hugh Scott, Pennsylvania Republican, and Sen. Abraham Ribicoff, Connecticut Democrat. Among the signatories are Sen. Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts, the Democratic whip, and Sen. Edmund S. Muskie of Maine, the Democratic Vice-Presidential candidate in the 1968 election.

The declaration condemned "one-sided United Nations resolutions which ignore Arab violations of the cease-fire and which censure Israel's reply and counter-action." In it the lawmakers said, "We deeply regret that Israel's Arab neighbors, after three futile and costly wars, still refuse to negotiate a final peace settlement with Israel. We oppose any attempt by outside powers to impose half-way measures not conducive to peace." The declaration added that "to ensure direct negotiations and to secure a contractual peace settlement, freely and sincerely signed by the parties themselves, the U.S. should oppose all pressures upon Israel to withdraw prematurely and unconditionally from any of the territories which Israel now administers."

The declaration was made public as reliable sources here said that the Nixon Administration has agreed to a new \$30 million arms deal with Jordan including the sale of a second squadron of 18 F-104 jet interceptors. King Hussein of Jordan has purchased one squadron and obtained an option for a second three years ago. Deliveries of the first F-104s have been delayed and are not expected to start until some time this summer. Observers here had said it was doubtful that the King would be permitted to exercise his option owing to persistent tension in the Mideast. However, during his official visit to Washington earlier this month, he told the Nixon Administration that he wanted the additional squadron and the sale has apparently been approved in principle. Details are now being worked out, the sources said. The Administration also agreed to sell Jordan other equipment including armored personnel carriers, communications equipment and small arms, but balked at a Jordanian request for more tanks.

Reliable sources said the Nixon Administration viewed the sales as primarily a symbolic gesture to bolster King Hussein's shaky position against the rising strength of Palestinian guerrillas in Jordan and to satisfy the demands of his officers' corps for more new weapons. The sources said the Administration believed Israel had no cause for concern since the aircraft deliveries have not even begun and Jordanian strength and technical capabilities are still far inferior to Israel's. Jordanian pilots are training at U.S. Air Force bases.

Egypt Challenges Reports That It Considers Suez Cease-Fire Null And Void

JERUSALEM, April 27 (JTA) -- Egypt today appeared to be back-tracking from reports last week that it considered the cease-fire along the Suez Canal null and void. The semi-official Cairo newspaper Al Ahram, which reflects the views of President Gamal Abdel Nasser, accused foreign press media of having "distorted" a statement made last Thursday by the official Government spokesman, Mohammed H. el-Zayyat. Al Ahram confirmed that the Cairo Government acknowledged all United Nations resolutions, including the cease-fire resolution of June 10, 1967 and the Nov. 22, 1967 measure setting forth principles for a Mideast settlement.

Foreign Ministry sources here said yesterday that Egypt has not informed any UN organ of its intention to abrogate the cease-fire agreement with Israel. UN cease-fire observer headquarters here also denied that the Egyptians had raised the issue in talks between Lt. Gen. Odd Bull, chief of the observer corps, and the Egyptian Deputy Foreign Minister Salah Gohar last week. The talks were said to have been concerned mainly with the safety of UN observers in the Canal area who have frequently come under fire in recent weeks.

The Al Ahram report was in effect a reply to a U.S. statement of concern over reports that Egypt did not consider itself bound by the cease-fire resolution. The concern was voiced by State Department spokesman Robert J. McCloskey. The U.S. was also reported to have conveyed to the Egyptian Government through diplomatic channels an appeal to restore the cease-fire along the canal. Egyptian artillery shelling has been going for more than two weeks and Egyptian commandos have made a half dozen forays against Israeli positions on the canal's east bank. The situation was considered sufficiently urgent by UN Secretary-General U Thant to warrant his special report to the Security Council last week warning that the cease-fire was nearly dead and that a virtual state of war existed in the zone.

It was in reaction to Mr. Thant's report that Dr. el-Zayyat made the statement in Cairo last week

that Egyptian guns will continue to fire across the canal so long as Israel continued to fortify its positions on the east bank. Al Ahram quoted Dr. el-Zayyat as having said "the cease-fire decisions cannot remain in force forever. If this were the case, we should have agreed that Israel should have new borders on the cease-fire line." Al Ahram claimed that news agencies had distorted the statements,

It was reported from Cairo yesterday that Egypt had informed the UN that it did not consider the Suez Canal to be the cease-fire line envisioned by the Security Council's June 1967 resolution. According to Cairo, the line should be east of the canal along positions allegedly held by Egyptian troops, when the resolution was adopted, from which they were subsequently driven by Israeli forces acting in violation of the cease-fire.

Israeli Military Forces Repulse New Commando Raid At Canal, Killing 6 Egyptians

TEL AVIV, April 27 (JTA) -- Israeli forces repulsed a fifth Egyptian commando raid across the Suez Canal south of Qantara Friday night killing six Egyptians. Israelis also fought gun battles with guerrillas in the Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights and in the Jordan rift south of the Dead Sea over the weekend. Four potential saboteurs were killed in those clashes, a military spokesman said. Nine Israeli soldiers were injured Thursday night when their truck hit a mine south of El Arish in the northern Sinai Peninsula. All were hospitalized and three were released almost immediately.

Jordanian forces fired bazooka shells at an Israeli patrol near Shaar Hagolan in the Beisan Valley today. Mortar and automatic fire was exchanged between Israeli and Jordanian forces near the Valley settlement of Kfar Ruppin last night. No Israeli casualties were reported in either incident. The semi-official Middle East News Agency in Cairo said Egyptian troops attacked an Israeli artillery outpost and munitions dump and rocket base near Port Fuad in the northwest Sinai yesterday. Syria claimed that an Israeli soldier was killed and an Israeli half track and an observation post were destroyed in a gun duel in the Golan Heights yesterday. Maj. Gen. Chaim Bar-Lev, Chief of Staff of Israel's armed forces, said Friday that security forces had successfully foiled all attempts by saboteurs and terrorists to penetrate the country during its 21st anniversary celebrations. He attributed the successful preventive measures in large measure to the terrorists' failure to enlist the support of the local Arab population in occupied territories.

State, Commerce Departments Urge Senate Not To Offer Anti-Boycott Legislation

WASHINGTON, April 27 (JTA) -- Officials of the Departments of State and Commerce have urged a Senate subcommittee not to propose new legislation against the Arab boycott of American firms trading with Israel. Assistant Secretary of Commerce K.N. Davis, Jr. and Roger P. Davies, deputy assistant Secretary of State, appeared before the Senate international finance subcommittee.

Mr. Davis said the Arab boycott had not weakened Israel and that U.S. action against the boycott was unnecessary and undesirable. He said if Congress enacted new restrictions on Arab trade tactics, all this would do would be to close profitable Arab markets to American business and industry. A 1965 law calls on American businessmen to refuse to cooperate with the Arab boycott but it imposes no mandatory restraints on trade with Arab countries. Mr. Davis said the non-mandatory law should be left as it is.

He conceded that the 1965 law had not "significantly" weakened the Arab boycott but insisted that U.S. legislation could not generally be expected "to be a decisive factor in eliminating a foreign Government practice." Mr. Davies agreed that the law should not be strengthened.

New Mystery In 'Dakar' Disappearance--Why Did It Deviate From Course To Haifa?

TEL AVIV, April 27 (JTA) -- A further mystery was added to the riddle of the disappearance of the Israeli submarine Dakar which vanished with all hands in the Eastern Mediterranean more than a year ago. Admiral Abraham Botzer, commander of Israel's Navy, said that examination of a buoy from the Dakar that was washed up on a Gaza Strip beach several months ago indicated that the submarine, en route from Britain, might have deviated from its course to Haifa by 40-60 miles. He said the buoy however gave no clues to possible causes of the Dakar's disappearance nor did it provide evidence to warrant a new search for the craft and her 69 officers and crew.

Admiral Botzer said the buoy was examined by experts from the Israel department of fisheries and Haifa Technion, including experts on corrosion and metallic behavior. Their findings indicated that the buoy had been submerged for more than a year and had been floating on the surface for about a week or two weeks before it was washed ashore. Marine fauna and weeds attached to the buoy's line indicated that it may have been lost some 60 miles from the Egyptian coast. This led to the conclusion that the Dakar deviated from her course by from six to 10 degrees. He said the buoy was apparently trapped at 600 to 1,200 feet below the surface.

El Fatah Delegation First Ousted Then Admitted To International Moslem Parley

LONDON, April 27 (JTA) -- A three-man delegation of El Fatah, ousted Thursday from the 20-nation International Moslem Conference at Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, was readmitted yesterday through the intervention of the Egyptian delegation. The El Fatah leader, Abu Hishan, said he was seeking world Moslem support for the guerrilla struggle against Israel.

Conference officials had evicted the El Fatah members because they represented no government and the conference was billed as non-political. But Dr. Abdel Aziz Kamel, head of the Egyptian delegation, arranged to have them admitted as observers without the issue being put to a conference vote. It appeared that El Fatah also gained status because of the turmoil it has created in Lebanon, a half Christian, half Moslem country.

Rapaport Says Arab Propagandists Are Making Inroads Among U.S. Christian Clergy

TOLEDO, Ohio, April 27 (JTA) -- A leader of Conservative Judaism warned today that Arab propagandists are making serious inroads among the organized Christian clergy in this country. According to Henry N. Rapaport, national president of the United Synagogue of America, the failure of Christian leadership to understand the Jewish position regarding Israel "has caused a gulf in Christian-Jewish relations."

Mr. Rapaport addressed a meeting of the United Synagogue's Northern Ohio region here. He cited examples of Protestant Church publications which carried anti-Israel articles refusing to present a balanced picture of conditions in the Middle East. He said that frequently when Church editors are approached, they reject recommendations to present another viewpoint. "While the Christian laymen sympathize and seem to understand the cause of Israel, many of the organizational Christian clergymen do not, and are making little effort in this direction," Mr. Rapaport said. "They fail to comprehend such questions as the peoplehood of Israel and the relationship between the Jews of Israel and their worldwide religious counterparts."

Mr. Rapaport however, praised the understanding of the American Catholic community and its leadership. He lauded Pope Paul VI who, Mr. Rapaport said, "spoke out vigorously against the barbarous hangings of Jews in Iraq."

Dropsie College Plans Central Archive To House Books, Periodicals And Manuscripts

PHILADELPHIA, April 27 (JTA) -- Dropsie College for Hebrew and Cognate Learning plans to establish a central archive to house all of its more than 95,000 books and periodicals and its many priceless manuscripts under one roof for the benefit of scholars. Dr. Solomon Grayzel, professor of history at the post-graduate institution, said the plans depended upon the availability of funds from benefactors.

Addressing a symposium of the Society of American Archivists, Dr. Grayzel noted that Dropsie College is the repository of some 450 fragments from the Cairo Genizah in Hebrew and Arabic, among which is a fragment from a Bible Codex more than 1,000 years old. He said the college also possesses the oldest known Passover Haggadah dating back to the eighth Century; 256 Oriental manuscripts, some fragments of Coptic papyrus, 32 incunabula dating back to the first printing of books before the year 1500, and 290 books from the 16th Century. Among other prized possessions is a stone from the Third Wall of the ancient Temple of Jerusalem, Dr. Grayzel said. The new center would facilitate research for the faculty and student body and would make the archives more accessible to scholars from all over the world, he said.

1,500 Worshipers Hear 'Now' Music--A Rock Oratorio At New York Reform Synagogue

NEW YORK, April 27 (JTA) -- An overflow crowd of 1,500 worshippers attending services Friday night at Reform Temple Israel of New York heard a rock oratorio "Prayers For Friday Night," a mixture of classical strains and gentle rock beat. Rabbi Martin Zion introduced the oratorio as the "now" music. For the occasion both he and Cantor Jonas Javna dispensed with their robes and wore tuxedos.

Feet tapped in rhythm as the four-man choir sang the "Borchu" prayer to the accompaniment of a drum, two guitars, piano and string bass. A few heads shook disapprovingly when Cantor Javna sang the "Shema" in English. In his sermon, the Reform rabbi said, "it is our right to change. Not change for its own sake but for the vitality of our faith." In announcing plans for the unusual Friday night service, he had declared that it "confronts the needs of many who may not be reached by the traditional modes of worship. It faces the task seriously and with reverence."

The service was given a standing ovation. The rabbi and the cantor signed autographs and accepted congratulations. The cantor explained that the service had been conceived a year and a half ago when he met composer Gary Friedman at a symposium on Jewish music.

The 19-year-old composer said Jews were aware of the need "for a new sound and Judaism is meeting that need." Prof. Louis Ronfeldt, chairman of the music department of Mount San Antonio College in California, who attended the service, said he agreed. He said the service carried a "meaningful, moving spiritual message."

AJCongress Opposes Albany Bills Authorizing State Funds For Church Colleges

NEW YORK, April 27, (JTA) -- The American Jewish Congress has urged leaders of the New York State Senate and Assembly to reject bills before both chambers that would authorize state funds for church-affiliated colleges and universities. The AJCongress' new York metropolitan council stated in telegrams to the legislative leaders in Albany that the measure would violate the state and Federal Constitutions and the principle of separation of church and state. In "channeling vast funds over the years to church-affiliated colleges and sectarian institutions" the state would "deprive public colleges and universities of desperately needed funds," the AJCongress charged.

It noted further that the legislation, introduced by both the Senate and Assembly rules committees, would eliminate present requirements that private institutions receiving state aid meet the same educational standards applicable to public colleges and universities. "Thus, the proposal would make it possible for private and sectarian institutions inferior to existing public colleges to receive state aid while the state university and the city university struggle along on austerity budgets," the AJCongress message declared.