

# JTA daily news bulletin

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## Nixon Tells UN Assembly Mideast Peace Urgent, Denounces 'Sky Piracy'

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., Sept. 18 (JTA) -- President Nixon told the United Nations General Assembly today that "substantial alterations in the map of the Middle East" cannot be conducive to peace. Recent events in the area, he said, "point up anew the urgency of a stable peace."

He also called, in his address during the opening day of general debate, for "respect for the sovereign rights of each nation to exist within secure and recognized boundaries."

Mr. Nixon told the 126-nation International organization that the United States was convinced that "peace cannot be achieved on the basis of anything less than a binding, irrevocable commitment by the parties to live together in peace."

Failing a settlement, the President said, an agreement on the limitation of arms shipments might help stabilize the situation. He said that the U.S. has indicated to the Soviet Union "without results" its willingness to enter into such discussions. In this connection, in addition to talks on the Middle East, the U.S. hopes to begin talks with Soviet leaders on the limitation of strategic arms. "There is no more important task before us," the President declared.

The President reiterated U.S. support for the Security Council's Nov. 22, 1967 resolution as charting the path to a settlement. The UN cease-fire resolutions "define the minimal conditions that must prevail on the ground if settlement is to be achieved," he said. "A peace, to be lasting, must leave no seeds of a future war. It must rest on a settlement which both sides have a vested interest in maintaining," Mr. Nixon said.

He told the packed General Assembly auditorium that one of the common concerns of the international community is the securing of international air travel safety. "Sky piracy cannot be ended as long as the pirates receive asylum," he said. This comment was taken by observers as a reference at least to Syria and Cuba.

"By any standards, aircraft hijackings are morally, politically and legally indefensible. The Tokyo Convention has now been brought into force, providing for the prompt release of passengers, crew and aircraft. Along with other nations, we also are working on a new convention for the punishment of hijackers. But neither of these conventions can be fully effective without cooperation," the President said.

"I urge the United States to give high priority to this matter. The issue transcends politics; there is no need for it to become the subject of polemics or a focus of political differences. It involves the interests of every nation, the safety of every air traveler, and the integrity of that structure of order on which a world community depends," the President said.

## White House Links U.S. Aid To Israel Desalination With Arab Refugee Issue

WASHINGTON, Sept. 18 (JTA) -- The White House has linked any agreement to assist Israel in construction of a prototype desalination plant "with some corresponding gesture to friendly Arab nations, hopefully to alleviate the refugee problem which is causing instabilities in the Middle East," it was disclosed today.

The disclosure came in a White House letter written on behalf of President Nixon by William E. Timmons, deputy assistant to the President. It was dated Sept. 13 and sent to Rep. William F. Ryan, New York Democrat, who had inquired about the current status of the United States commitment to assist Israel with desalination activities. A budgetary provision submitted by the prior Johnson Administration for Israeli desalination was eliminated by the Nixon Administration. Attempts are being made in Congress to restore an appropriation to implement the commitment that was first voiced by President Johnson in 1964.

While raising a number of questions about the proposed desalination project, including the Arab refugee question, Mr. Timmons said he was "confident that, during the next few weeks, (presumably during the visit of Israeli Premier Golda Meir) we can develop a proposal which will be optimum to the United States as well as to Israel, either similar to the original proposal or an improvement thereupon. The President is mindful of the fact that joint studies of desalination plants have been carried out by the United States and Israel since 1964, and that both parties have contributed considerable sums of money. Please rest assured that our response will take this past history into account."

Mr. Timmons stated that the desalination issue had been "under intensive study by the several government departments which are involved in or affected by administration decision." The White House official revealed that "some of the considerations involved in this study had been: does the proposal made by the Johnson Administration still represent an optimum insofar as the research and development plans of the Department of the Interior are concerned; how is it affected by what we have learned about desalination during the past year? From the Israeli point of view, will the proposed desalination plant be able to furnish water at a low enough cost so as not to constitute a drain on the Israeli economy; would it be preferable to view our possible involvement with Israel as a water research project

to which both parties contribute and from which both parties will eventually benefit? Further, how can we accompany any agreement with Israel with some corresponding gesture to friendly Arab nations, hopefully to alleviate the refugee problem which is causing instabilities in the Middle East?"

Rep. Ryan stated that he did not see the relevance of linking the "long-time commitment on desalination to the issue of Arab refugees." He added that he had been trying to get a clarification of the Nixon Administration's view of the commitment for several months and that he did not regard the White House letter as an adequate answer. Rep. Ryan also said desalination planning was vital to Israel and that "the administration should clarify its position before or during the forthcoming visit of Premier Meir."

### **Investigating Committee Will Submit Report On El Aksa Mosque Fire Next Week**

JERUSALEM, Sept. 18 (JTA) -- The special committee investigating the Aug. 21 El Aksa mosque fire will submit its report to Premier Golda Meir next week, it was learned today. Its contents will not be made public until Mrs. Meir returns from her official visit to the United States next month. Sections of the report which might incriminate the suspected arsonist, Denis Michael William Rohen, will be withheld until after his trial.

Repairs to the fire-damaged wing of the mosque will begin next week under the supervision of an Egyptian engineer, JTA learned from reliable sources. He is Abdul Moneim Abdul Wahab who served as architectural supervisor of the mosque during the Jordanian occupation of East Jerusalem. He did not return to Cairo until some time after the June, 1967 Six-Day War. Israeli security authorities are said to have raised no objections to his return to supervise the repair work.

The mosque will be open for prayers tomorrow after debris from the fire is cleared away. The damaged area will be separated from the main hall by carpets. Israel's Minister for Religious Affairs, Zerach Warhaftig, said yesterday that even the slightest hint that Israel was responsible for the fire contained "an element of viciousness."

### **Israeli Pilots Urge Government To Seek UN Action To Release Passengers In Israel**

TEL AVIV, Sept. 18 (JTA) -- The Israeli Pilots Association has urged the government to take action before the United Nations General Assembly to secure the release of two Israeli nationals held by Syria after their TWA airliner was hijacked to Damascus Aug. 29. The pilots cabled Minister of Transport Moshe Carmel.

It was learned meanwhile that the International Federation of Airline Pilots Associations (IFALPA) will hold a meeting in Israel Nov. 5 to discuss operational problems resulting from the hijacking of civilian airliners. Pilots from many countries are expected to attend the meeting as well as observers from Eastern countries.

(In London, the Association of British Travel Agents assured the Zionist Federation that it was taking all possible measures to secure the release of the two Israelis detained in Syria. The assurances were given by Dennis Walsh, chairman of the association, in response to an inquiry by the Zionist Federation. Mr. Walsh said his organization was acting independently of what any individual members might do.)

### **Report Heavy Exodus Of Czech And Polish Jews To Western Countries**

NEW YORK, Sept. 18 (JTA) -- A heavy exodus of Jews from Poland and Czechoslovakia to Western countries was reported today by the United Hias Service, the international Jewish immigrant aid society. Harold Friedman, president of the organization, announced that 112 Jewish refugees from Poland and Czechoslovakia landed at Kennedy Airport on two chartered flights this week and more arrivals of Hias-assisted migrants are expected shortly. Mr. Friedman said that so far more than 3,000 Polish Jews have applied to the Hias office in Vienna for help in migration and resettlement. Most of them plan to join relatives abroad.

According to Gaynor I. Jacobson, executive vice president of Hias, more than 2,000 Czechoslovak Jews have requested the agency's assistance since the summer of 1968. He said that almost all of them have been resettled in Western countries.

### **Israel Says Lost Pilot Shot Down In Raid Held Rank Of Major**

TEL AVIV, Sept. 18 (JTA) -- A military spokesman today disclosed the name of the Israeli pilot who bailed out over the Gulf of Suez and was lost after his jet was hit by anti-aircraft fire on Sept. 9. He was identified as Maj. Hagai Ronnen, 31.

He was shot down in the course of Israel's 10-hour tank and armored infantry raid on Egyptian military installations on the west shore of the Gulf of Suez and is still missing. Apart from one wounded soldier, Maj. Ronnen appears to have been the only Israeli casualty in the operation which left at least 150 Egyptian soldiers dead.

Reserve Sgt. Bruno Sharef, who was killed by Egyptian fire in the Suez Canal zone Tuesday, was buried here today. Sgt. Sharef, 38, came to Israel in 1946 under the Youth Aliya program. His father was killed by the Nazis. Yosef Klarman, head of Youth Aliya, announced in Jerusalem yesterday that a monument will be built there to memorialize all Youth Aliya graduates killed in Israeli wars since 1948.

A Lydda military tribunal pronounced a life sentence today on Ibrahim Samaro, a 26-year-old Arab from Nablus who was one of the terrorist group that planned the bombing of the Hebrew University cafeteria last March and planted the explosives. The prosecutor said he asked for life imprisonment only

because there is no capital punishment in Israel.

### Labor Member Of Parliament Denies She Accused Fellow MPs Of Forcing Pro-Israel Stand

NEW YORK, Sept. 18 (JTA) -- A Labor Member of the British Parliament denied today that she had accused Jewish fellow-members of forcing the Labor Government to take a pro-Israel stand in the Mideast conflict or that she had questioned their loyalty to Britain. But the remarks attributed to Mrs. Margaret McKay, a 58-year-old MP from Clapham, were confirmed today by the chairman of the group she addressed here on Tuesday and by others present at the meeting.

Rev. Dana Klotzle, chairman of the Interfaith Committee for Middle East Peace and Development, told JTA that Mrs. McKay said there were 62 Jewish MPs in the Labor Party delegation who were "150 percent Zionist" and that Prime Minister Harold Wilson was forced to yield to their pressure because of his slim majority of 80 in the House of Commons. Rev. Klotzle also confirmed that Mrs. McKay had asked rhetorically whether the Jewish MPs were "representing Israel or representing Britain." He confirmed further that the Laborite had used the phrase "screaming Zionists" to refer to MPs who took Israel's side in the June, 1967 Arab-Israel war.

At London Airport today, Mrs. McKay described the remarks attributed to her as "a low provocative lie" and "utter balderdash." She admitted that she said there were 62 Jewish Labor MPs in Parliament (there are actually 34) but claimed she did not question their loyalty or ask whether they represented Britain or Israel. The Labor Government's party whip, Robert Mellish, described Mrs. McKay yesterday as a "prejudiced woman" and said she would be asked to explain her alleged remarks when she returned to Britain after a four-week speaking tour in the U.S. He said her allegations were "grossly untrue."

The furore over Mrs. McKay arose after the United Press reported her remarks at what was supposedly a closed meeting of the Interfaith Committee at the Church Center for the United Nations here. The meeting was attended by about 35 persons including a representative of the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism and the rabidly anti-Israel Friends of Jerusalem, an organization linked with the ultra-Orthodox Neturei Karta.

According to a representative of another major national Jewish organization who was present as an observer but asked not to be identified, Mrs. McKay claimed that Americans were not getting a true picture of the Middle East conflict because the American press was "controlled" and the U.S. Congress had to pay attention to "Zionist pressure." Rev. Klotzle confirmed that this statement had been made. He said the question of Britain's attitude was raised by a member of the Friends of Jerusalem who wondered why the Labor Government had not taken a "firmer stand" toward Israel inasmuch as it enjoyed a Parliamentary majority. At that point Mrs. McKay mentioned 62 Jewish MPs and said Prime Minister Wilson "had to count heads."

Rev. Klotzle described Mrs. McKay as a person deeply concerned with the plight of Arab refugees. He said she was invited to address the meeting at the request of one of the members of the Interfaith Committee but that he had expected her to offer practical suggestions for a solution to the refugee problem rather than to indulge in polemics. He described her as "very emotional."

The Interfaith Committee for Middle East Peace and Development was established about two years ago by the joint staff of the Church Center for the United Nations which houses several Christian groups. According to its chairman the committee's purposes are humanitarian and it tries to reconcile conflicting views on the Middle East dispute. A Jewish observer familiar with the group said that was correct but that the committee had become "top-heavy" with anti-Zionist elements since its founding.

(In London yesterday, Mr. Mellish said "by insinuating that there is an Israel lobby in the House of Commons which imprisons the Prime Minister, I think (Mrs. McKay) does a great disservice to her own point of view." Mrs. McKay is a public relations consultant who has frequently championed the Arab cause in Parliament. She joined the Labor Party in 1932 and has held various positions in the trade union movement since 1928.)

### Beigin Differs With Dayan On Whether Army Should Take Only Defensive Actions

TEL AVIV, Sept. 18 (JTA) -- Menachem Beigin, leader of the Herut Party, took issue with Defense Minister Moshe Dayan today over the latter's alleged opinion that Israel's Army should take only defensive actions. Mr. Beigin is a minister-without-portfolio in the coalition Government.

Addressing a Gahal (Herut-Liberal alignment) election rally, Mr. Beigin said the idea of a defensive posture did not coincide with reality. He said the Army's stance, as approved by the Government, is a system of classic defense and offense. Mr. Beigin said the defensive posture is essential but the offensive is also required. He said Israel had the right to employ both systems in self-defense and to attack the aggressor to prevent him from preparing to attack Israel.

### Ghor Canal Unrepaired; Farmers Make Do With Pumps

TEL AVIV, Sept. 18 (JTA) -- Jordanian farmers are resorting to old diesel-powered pumps to irrigate their crops in place of the Ghor irrigation canal that was damaged by an Israeli air attack last month. The pumps draw water from the Yarmuk and Jordan rivers but only enough to irrigate a fraction of the area formerly watered by the Ghor canal.

Jordanian authorities have made no effort to repair the canal which has been damaged twice by Israeli attacks. Following the first attack, Israel agreed not to interfere with repair work after Jordan promised to restrain guerrillas and its regular forces from shelling Israeli settlements on the opposite bank.

## Jewish Congress Joins Fight On N.J. High School Prayer As 'Sectarian'

NETCONG, N.J. Sept. 18 (JTA) -- The American Jewish Congress charged today that a purportedly non-denominational prayer recited at an assembly in the Netcong high school yesterday was in fact sectarian and demanded that the local board of education discontinue such practices at once because they are "improper, divisive and harmful."

Netcong is one of two New Jersey townships accused by the state chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union of evading the 1962 Supreme Court decision barring prayers in public schools. In Sayreville, N.J. public schools yesterday, 6,500 students were given a two minute "meditation" period to pray silently if they wished. The Netcong prayer service took place in the high school gymnasium before the start of classes. Attendance was said to have been voluntary and the blessing read was culled from the Congressional Record.

But Rabbi Israel Dresner, of Springfield, N.J., president of the New Jersey Region of the AJCongress, claimed that the prayer which concluded with the words, "In the Redeemer's name we pray" was "unacceptable to those not of the Christian faith." Netcong is a community of 3,500, mainly Roman Catholic and Italian. It is not known if there are Jewish students enrolled in the high school.

Rabbi Dresner said in a telegram to Palmer N. Stracco, president of the Netcong school board that "Jewish children and others whose religious background forbids them to participate in the kind of religious ceremony sponsored by the Netcong schools are placed in a cruel and intolerable dilemma. They must either participate in religious ceremonies of a plainly Christian, sectarian character or subject themselves to being singled out as different and unwilling to conform to the plainly expressed desires of the school authorities." Rabbi Dresner said further that "the fact that the prayer reading is advertised as 'voluntary' makes the dilemma for the Jewish child worse rather than better. It leaves him with full responsibility for the decision as to whether to violate his conscience and expose himself to the penalties of non-conformity. No child of any faith should be placed in that position."

Rabbi Dresner said this situation was "impermissible legally or educationally and we urge you to terminate the practice immediately in accordance with the oath you took to uphold the U.S. and New Jersey constitutions."

## Cleveland Tri-Faith Leaders Urge U.S., UN Action On Iraq, 'Piracy'

CLEVELAND, Sept. 18 (JTA) -- Jewish, Protestant and Catholic clergymen here have called on the U.S. State Department and the United Nations to take action to prevent bloodshed and human indignities in the Middle East such as the hangings in Iraq and the detention of two hijacked Israelis by Syria. A statement deploring these and other Mideast events was issued today over the signatures of Rabbi Alan S. Green, president of the Greater Cleveland Board of Rabbis, Rev. Donald Jacobs, executive director of the Greater Cleveland Council of Churches and Rev. John F. Wessel, director of inter-religious affairs of the Catholic Diocese of Cleveland.

"As religious leaders we view with deep concern and sorrow the latest developments in the Middle East where specific acts of piracy and mass execution, coupled with inflammatory calls for 'holy war,' further heighten tensions," their statement said. "We are concerned about the fire in the El Aksa mosque in Jerusalem and the use by extremists and some leaders of this regrettable incident to inflame feelings and incite the Arab nations to a 'holy war' against Israel."

## British Chief Rabbi Sends New Year Greetings To Soviet Jews On BBC

LONDON, Sept. 18 (JTA) -- A Rosh Hashanah message to Soviet Jewry from Chief Rabbi Immanuel Jakobovitz was broadcast on the BBC's Russian Service program today. The chief rabbi said: "The welfare of Russian Jewry is constantly in our thoughts and prayers, particularly in this season when Jews all over the world are reunited with pleas for the blessings of peace, prosperity and good will among nations and communities. In these anxious as well as momentous days we especially plead for the peace of Jerusalem and the speedy relief of all now suffering from fear, hunger or repression. May we hear happy tidings from you and in turn be able to convey to you reports of progress and stability from our communities so that together we may secure in freedom the continuity of the Jewish contribution to a better and more peaceful world."

## Jews Urged To Omit Grapes From Sukkot To Aid California Pickers

PHILADELPHIA, Sept. 18 (JTA) -- Philadelphia Jews were urged today to omit grapes when they decorate their Sukkot for the fall harvest festival that commences Sept. 27. Rabbi Elias Cherry, president of the Greater Philadelphia Board of Rabbis, said the omission would be a gesture of support for California grape-pickers who have been striking for over a year for the right to organize a union. Sukkot is the most appropriate occasion for Jews to take action against the sin of "oshek," the exploitation of the hired man, Rabbi Cherry said. The Sukkah is traditionally decorated with fruits of the season.

## 19-Year-Old Girl Named By Winnipeg Temple As Canada's First Female Cantor

WINNIPEG, Sept. 18 (JTA) -- Nineteen-year-old Beverley Cohen, an attractive brunette who studies French at the University of Manitoba, earned the distinction today of being named Canada's first female cantor. Her appointment was announced by Temple Sholom here.

Miss Cohen, a mezzo soprano and prize-winning pianist, sang leading roles in three Gilbert & Sullivan operettas while in high school and appeared in the university's production of "My Fair Lady." She was the winner of the French government award in first year French at the university.

A Temple Sholom official said that Miss Cohen might also be the only female cantor in North America. Miss Cohen is a resident of Winnipeg.