

# JTA daily news bulletin

Published by Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Inc. 660 First Avenue, New York, N. Y. 10016

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Vol. XXXVI - Fifty-Second Year

Monday, December 29, 1969

No. 245

## Five Gunboats, Embargoed By French, Speeding Across Mediterranean To Haifa

TEL AVIV, Dec. 28 (JTA)--A Defense Ministry spokesman said today that he knew nothing of five French-built gunboats reportedly speeding across the Mediterranean manned by Israeli crews. The 40-knot Diesel-powered craft were built for the Israel Navy in France but were "frozen" by the French arms embargo against Israel. The spokesman said the only information he had was from foreign news agency reports.

There were "smiles all around in Israel," The London Sunday Express reported today, as the news of the gunboat coup got around. The paper noted that there was no official comment on the incident but that "people in the streets of Tel Aviv were congratulating themselves on having 'pulled a fast one on the French.'"

The paper reported that the five gunboats, now moving eastward in the Mediterranean, were probably heading for a refuelling rendezvous with a tanker. It said that "it looks as though the Israelis have pulled off a cheeky coup in their campaign to keep their armed forces fully equipped with the latest weapons."

The five boats slipped out of Cherbourg on Dec. 25 after they were allegedly sold to a Norwegian firm for oil research in the North Sea. They were said to be flying the Norwegian flag and to be officered by Norwegian merchant mariners with Israeli crews. The boats were reported to have passed through the Straits of Gibraltar Saturday, headed eastward, flying no flag.

### Israeli Naval Concentration Is Reported Off Sicily

The Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported from Rome Sunday that Italian Navy sources at Palermo said there was "an unusual number" of Israeli naval units at present in the Mediterranean between Sardinia and Sicily. Italian coastal stations have picked up numerous signals exchanged between Israeli ships. The strength of the radio signals being received in Sicily, the Italian sources said, confirmed the presence of the ships in that area. British naval sources predicted that the gunboats would reach Haifa harbor by Thursday.

Wire service reports quoted Israeli Embassy sources in Paris as saying that the boats, which cost \$1 million apiece, had been sold to a Norwegian firm and that the Israeli crews aboard them were "loaned" to the new owners. "Apart from that, it has nothing more to do with us. We have got our money back and the matter is now between the French and the new owners," the Embassy spokesman is reported to have said.

But Norwegian authorities in Oslo and Paris denied that Norwegian nationals had purchased the boats. They said there was no record of an import license having been applied for and that the craft would be seized if they entered Norwegian waters. A Norwegian Government spokesman said today he was sure the boats were not flying the Norwegian flag.

The mystery deepened when the French Defense Ministry said Saturday that the boats had been sold by Israel to the firm of Starboet & Weill, S.A., of Oslo. No such firm could be located in the Norwegian capital. According to the French, its headquarters was in Panama. But a Panama law firm identified by the French Defense Ministry as being connected with the gunboat purchase claimed it was only the resident agent for the purchasers and could give no further information.

### French Foreign Minister Orders Full-Scale Inquiry Into Affair

In Paris today, Foreign Minister Jacques Chaban-Delmas ordered a full-scale inquiry into the gunboat affair. Former Information Minister Louis Terrenoire, president of the Franco-Arab Friendship Association, filed questions for the Prime Minister in the National Assembly on the circumstances surrounding the departure of the gunboats.

The five gunboats were the last of a class of 12 such vessels ordered by Israel in 1966. They were designed to carry the Israel-made sea-to-sea "Gabriel" missile. Seven of the boats were delivered before June, 1967 when former President Charles de Gaulle charged Israel with aggression and imposed an arms embargo ostensibly on all belligerents in the Six-Day War. The remaining five boats were held in Cherbourg as they were completed although all 12 were paid for in full by Israel. The last of the class, christened Eilat, was launched only two weeks ago. Israeli naval crews and technicians had been living in Cherbourg for months, ready to take over the boats if the French lifted the embargo. But no such move was made by the French Government.

According to reports from Cherbourg, the boats' departure was cleared by French customs and port authorities just before Christmas. Their sailing was delayed by rough weather. But the boats slipped out of port after dark on Christmas day. The port captain said he did not see them leave apparently because they showed no navigational lights. Their departure was not reported officially.

### Hint French Secretly Acquiesced In Escape of Gunboats From Cherbourg

Some diplomatic circles abroad implied today that the French permitted the gunboats to be taken over by Israel, using the Norwegian firm as a "blind." They said the French want to dispose of the feeling that they are discriminating against Israel although they are not prepared to incense the Arab world by lifting the arms embargo. These sources said the French may have made the gesture toward Israel in order to go ahead with an alleged \$400 million arms sale to Libya, a deal which reportedly includes 50 Mirage jets. The 50 Mirages that Israel bought and paid for two years ago are still under embargo.

Some diplomatic sources abroad claimed that the French, taking note of the fiasco at the Rabat Arab summit conference last week, were leaving an escape hatch open to avoid complete identification with the Arab cause. There is a group of pro-Israel Gaullist deputies in Paris pressing for a French reconciliation with Israel.

### **Eban Tells Cabinet Of Efforts To Explain Israeli Position To Washington**

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA)--Foreign Minister Abba Eban described to the Israel Cabinet today the efforts by Israel's representatives in the United States to explain this country's misgivings over recent American proposals for a Middle East settlement. Israel is concerned that the United States proposals for settlement of conflicts between Israel and Egypt, and the more recent proposals for resolution of the Israeli-Jordanian conflict signified a new American trend toward disengagement.

In Washington, the Israel Embassy issued a policy statement that rejected the American proposals as "an unwitting prescription for the disintegration of Israel." The statement accused the United States of an "abrupt reversal" on the principle of direct negotiations, and charged that "U.S. policy, as unfolding now, comes close to the advocacy and development of an imposed settlement."

It declared that Israel remained "adamant in the view that a lasting peace is feasible only if the Arab governments show a readiness to negotiate their differences with Israel." It said that "there can be little left to negotiate once outside powers virtually decide on each and every item for solution."

The statement, which criticized the American proposals in detail, asserted that "the Arab governments cannot but take courage from the U.S. stand, viewing as they must the concessions as a gesture of appeasement and as a license for further diplomatic and military escalation against Israel."

### **Dayan Warns Israelis To Brace Themselves For Intensified Arab Attacks**

TEL AVIV, Dec. 28 (JTA)--Defense Minister Moshe Dayan warned Israelis today to brace themselves for an intensification of Arab warfare on all fronts next summer. He cautioned against "premature satisfaction" with the apparent failure of the Arab summit conference at Rabat, Morocco last week. Gen. Dayan said the Arabs would continue to build up their military strength and increase the pressure against Israel. He said the Egyptians had been promised more military equipment from Russia but he was confident of the Israel Army's ability to maintain its position of strength along the Suez Canal and every other front.

Gen. Dayan also warned the Lebanese Government today to expect heavy retaliatory blows from Israel if it did not take action to curb terrorist activities from Lebanese soil. He said Beirut should take cognizance of the blasted towns and villages on the Egyptian side of the Suez Canal and the Jordanian side of the Jordan Valley and "learn their lesson" accordingly. He noted that the Lebanese border differed from the others in that there are no natural barriers such as the Suez Canal or the Jordan River.

He said that attacks from Jordan on Israeli settlements in the Beisan and Jordan valleys caused very few casualties among civilians because of the extensive network of shelters. However, he conceded that there was no way to prevent hit-and-run raids by terrorists who move along Jordanian roads and fire a few Katyusha rockets. He said to seal off Israel from such attacks, a defense line would have to be maintained 20 miles inside of Jordanian territory.

Gen. Dayan said Israeli aircraft have dropped hundreds of tons of bombs on Egyptian positions along the Suez Canal since last Thursday which should convince the Egyptians that they will not be able to cross the canal next summer.

### **Bar Lev Hails Commando Raid On Egyptian Base As 'Most Daring' Operation**

TEL AVIV, Dec. 28 (JTA)--An Israeli commando raid that destroyed an Egyptian naval position 115 miles south of the Suez Canal Friday night was hailed today as one of the "cleanest and most daring" operations ever carried out by Israel's armed forces. The praise was offered by the Chief of Staff, Maj. Gen. Haim Bar Lev, who greeted the raiding party when it returned to base yesterday with four Egyptian prisoners.

The target was Ras Ghareb, 115 miles south of Port Suez at the canal's southern entrance, and about ten miles inland from the shores of the Gulf of Suez. The number of Israeli troops involved was not disclosed. But the target was apparently regarded by the Israeli high command as of considerable importance. The raid was the first in which Israeli commandos were supported by the Israeli Air Force. Jets blasted nearby Egyptian positions in sharp diversionary attacks before and during the raid drawing enemy defenses away from the target area.

The commandos achieved almost complete surprise, a military spokesman said today. They were not spotted by Egyptian sentries until they were 30 yards from their goal. A brief gun fight ensued in which there were no Israeli casualties. The four Egyptians captured were reported to have feigned death or wounds. Cairo radio conceded today that the raid took place and said Egyptian forces lost two men killed and four missing.

## Israel Investigating Bus Ambush Which Cost Life of American Tourist

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA)--Israeli authorities are investigating the fatal ambush of a bus Saturday carrying American tourists. One man, identified as Leon Holtz, 48, of Brooklyn, was killed. The bus was returning to Jerusalem from the Negev when it was fired on near the village of Dura in the Hebron area. Holtz, hit in the chest, was rushed to Hebron where he died in an Army hospital.

The area of the attack is under a dusk-to-dawn curfew. The attack occurred at 5 p.m. local time, shortly before sunset. Israeli authorities said the bus should not have been in that vicinity at the time. The bus driver, David Danziger, apparently took a shortcut over a little frequented route in order to get out of the curfew area before dark.

Mr. Holtz was travelling with his wife, Esther. She was taken to Hadassah Hospital in Jerusalem for treatment for shock. No other passengers were injured. Mrs. Holtz was informed of her husband's death by Minister of Tourism, Moshe Kol. She said this was their first visit to Israel, a trip her husband had been planning for 20 years. The couple left their 14-year-old son at home. They arrived in Israel on Dec. 25.

Israeli authorities said the attack was the first on a civilian vehicle in the Hebron area in two months. Previous attacks have been made against trucks carrying Israeli sightseers and against private automobiles. Mr. Holtz's death was the second American fatality in Israel, due to enemy action. Last June, a California school teacher was killed in a rocket attack near the Dead Sea.

## Jerusalem District Court To Issue Verdict Tuesday In El Aksa Arson Case

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA)--A Jerusalem court will hand down its verdict Tuesday in the trial of Michael Denis William Rohan, the 28-year-old Australian sheepherder who confessed to burning the El Aksa mosque in East Jerusalem last Aug. 21.

Rohan pleaded guilty but his defense counsel argued that he cannot be punished under Israeli law because he was insane at the time of the crime. The prosecution does not dispute Rohan's mental condition but insists that he was aware that he was breaking the law when he set fire to the Islamic shrine and is therefore punishable.

## New Dockworkers Labor Dispute Halts Citrus Shipments From Haifa

TEL AVIV, Dec. 28 (JTA)--A new labor dispute with Haifa dockworkers has halted all loading of citrus for export and has imperiled the current citrus export schedule, officials reported today. The conflict developed when new citrus loading crews were introduced by the Port Authority over opposition of the regular dockworkers.

The officials said that all loading to ships was halted and that the port was now filled to capacity with crates of fruit awaiting shipment. They added that the port itself was in a virtual bottleneck of all movement because of the pileup of unloaded fruit. Gen. Ezer Weizmann, the new Transport Minister, took up the problem immediately.

The Citrus Marketing Board said it was considering an order for total halting of all citrus picking because all packaging houses in Israel were filled, as were those in Haifa and Ashdod. Groves in Western Galilee were empty of workers today because the regional packing house was jammed with fruits awaiting movement to the ports.

## Housing Minister Predicts Three Million Population For Israel By 1975

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA)--Israel's Minister of Housing said today that the country's population will reach the three million mark by the end of 1975. According to Zeev Sharef, Israel expects immigration of 60,000 a year and natural increase of about 40,000.

Mr. Sharef spoke to a group of American leaders of the Israel Bond campaign at his home here. He said that each new family housing unit costs \$10,000 exclusive of the social services and educational facilities provided in every new housing project. He pointed out that Israel's defense budget amounts to nearly \$3 million a day or about 20 percent of the gross national product. He said the need was urgent for increased fund-raising and the encouragement of immigration to bring in skilled manpower.

## Polish Commission Begins Study of Nazi War Crimes in Frankfurt

BONN, Dec. 28 (JTA)--Members of the Polish Government's commission for investigation of Nazi war crimes have arrived in Frankfurt and are conferring with the public prosecutor there. The first phase of their inquiry is concerned with the transport of Nazi victims to the Auschwitz death camp and their murder there.

Two former guards at the Sachsenhausen concentration camp have been sentenced to prison terms and a third was acquitted on charges of murdering a 14-year-old Jewish boy during World War II. Kaspar Dexler, 69, was sentenced to eight-and-a-half years in prison and Kurt Iccarious, 64, got four years. Franz Etlinger, 57, was found not guilty and freed.

## Seaman Delivers Plea For Help For Imprisoned Egyptian Jews

TEL AVIV, Dec. 28 (JTA)--An Egyptian Jewish family living in Ashdod revealed today that it had received an appeal for help from Jews in Egypt. It said a message addressed to Defense Minister Moshe Dayan and "to God" was brought to its home by a foreign seaman who visited Ashdod after his ship had called at an Egyptian port. The message said 86 Jews are still held in the Toura prison in Egypt "under unbearable conditions." According to the seaman, one of the prisoners died a few weeks ago.

## See New Drive To Obtain Public Funds For Support Of Parochial Schools

NEW YORK, Dec. 28 (JTA)--The American Jewish Congress warned today against continuing efforts by religious groups to win public funds for parochial schools. It said bills providing substantial state aid to non-public schools had been rejected in 1969 by 17 state legislatures but had been adopted in three states. It asserted that the drive for public aid, if successful, would deal "a devastating blow to our already hard-pressed public school system."

What the AJC described as "substantial" victories in 1969 in obtaining public funds for parochial schools were reported in three states — Connecticut, Rhode Island and Pennsylvania. The new laws there have already been challenged in the courts, the Congress said. Renewed efforts are to be expected in 1970, it said, in all the 17 states in which aid to church-related schools was defeated this year.

## Conservative Youth Call For Synagogue, Jewish Education Reforms

BUFFALO, N.Y., Dec. 28 (JTA)---Two Conservative youth organizations, holding their annual conventions here called today for striking new innovations in the synagogue and in Jewish education curricula to halt the trend toward alienation and disaffection of Jewish youth. The two groups, both affiliated with the United Synagogue of America, were the ATID, composed of college-aged youth, and United Synagogue Youth, composed of high school age youngsters.

Among the proposals adopted by the two parleys was a plea to the rabbis to discard ministerial robes and relocate the "bima" or podium in the center of the synagogue so as to bring the synagogue and the spiritual leader closer to the congregation. Establishment of parent-youth committees to advise and update the services and rotating committees to perform the services and deliver sermons, were also recommended.

David Shneyer, a Rutgers University student, called for a "positive and constructive alternative to present-day synagogue life." Officers and members of synagogues, he said, should be required to take a course in adult education in history and relevancy. Parents, he said, should participate with their children in the religious experience and in the work of the synagogue.

The main thrust of the youth proposals came in the areas of Jewish education. David Schwartz, president of United Synagogue Youth, who called for an upgrading of Jewish education, charged that "the majority of youth do not find Judaism meaningful and a relevant force in their lives."

Recommendations for reform of Jewish education called for revision of curricula in Hebrew elementary and high schools to include "applied" Jewish culture; "relevancy" courses at the high school level, and draft counseling programs in the high schools and synagogue centers.

Mr. Shneyer called for better pay scales in the Hebrew schools to make the jobs attractive for the best teachers and proposed that the Hebrew schools welcome faculty members from other institutions, other rabbis and college students, noting that "even if they have gaps in their Jewish education, if chosen for their communicative and inspirational value, they can serve as a viable faculty force for the Hebrew high school."

## Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir To Keynote National Bond Drive Conference

NEW YORK, Dec. 28 (JTA)--Finance Minister Pinhas Sapir of Israel will be the principal speaker at the national leadership conference here January 9-11 launching the 1970 Israel Bond campaign. The campaign will mark the twentieth anniversary of the sale of Israel bonds.

Louis H. Boyar, chairman of the board of governors of the Israel Bond Organization, in a statement today on the conference, stressed the importance of Israel Bonds during the coming year. He pointed out "Israel must maintain its economy at peak strength in a time of continuing danger." He noted that "special provision must be made for the economic absorption of an immigration that is expected to reach 60,000 during 1970."

## World Jewish Personalities Greet President Shazar On 80th Birthday

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA)--Greetings from noted Jewish personalities throughout the world were presented today to President Zalman Shazar of Israel on the occasion of his 80th birthday. The presentation was made by Dr. Israel Goldstein, president of the Keren Hayesod, the Israel Foundation Fund. The greetings were in a special leather-bound album bearing the 50th anniversary symbol of Keren Hayesod on its cover.

Among the personalities whose greetings were included in the album were Artur Rubenstein, the pianist; Prof. Rene Cassin, the Nobel Peace Prize laureate, and Prof. Jacob Kaplan, Grand Rabbi of France. Marc Chagall, the artist, sent his message in Yiddish, illustrated by a small color sketch.

## Funeral Services Held For Gen. David Carmon In Jerusalem

JERUSALEM, Dec. 28 (JTA)--Funeral services were held here Friday for Brig. Gen. David Carmon, 48, the Israeli military attaché in Washington, who died there last Tuesday of a heart attack. Defense Minister Moshe Dayan and Chief of Staff Gen. Haim Bar Lev were among the mourners.

Gen. Carmon was a native of Jerusalem and had served as a senior officer in the Israel Defense Forces for a number of years. He joined the Hagana, the predecessor of the official army, in 1945 after studying history and philosophy at Hebrew University.

Gen. Carmon became a member of the group that founded the Staff and Command College and later served as deputy chief instructor.