

JTA daily news bulletin

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

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Vol. XXXVII - Fifty-Third Year

Wednesday, December 9, 1970

No. 236

Franco-Israeli Relations Improving; Determination By Both To Re-Open Dialogue

PARIS, Dec. 8 (JTA)--Israel's new Ambassador to France said today that "the climate between the two countries has already changed" for the better and that it was the hope of all concerned that this trend will continue. Ambassador Asher Ben Nathan addressed a luncheon given in his honor by the Anglo-American Press Association. He said there was a determination in both the Israel and French governments to "improve relations between them and re-open the dialogue." Franco-Israeli relations deteriorated sharply at the time of the Six-Day War when then President Charles de Gaulle branded Israel an aggressor and declared an arms embargo which has not yet been lifted. Replying to questions, Mr. Ben Nathan said he would not disagree with Secretary of State William P. Rogers' statement at a NATO ministerial meeting in Brussels last week that the climate is now ripe for Israeli-Egyptian peace talks. "Indeed, it seems to be better than at any other time since 1967," the Israeli envoy said. He warned of the Soviet Union's designs in the Middle East and the Eastern Mediterranean which he described as "old fashioned imperialism."

New Italian Divorce Law Has Effect On Jewish Divorce, Rabbi Says

ROME, Dec. 8 (JTA)--Rabbis and their legal advisors here are considering the consequences for Jewish couples of Italy's new divorce law. Previously, one expert noted, Jews could not be divorced in Italy even though the Torah permits it. Now Jews who were married by a rabbi can be. But the divorce will not be effected under Jewish law but under the new national law. The Chief Rabbi of Turin, Prof. Sergio Sierra, said: "Until now an Italian Jew could obtain a religious divorce but it would not have had any effect on his status in the eyes of the law of the country. Now this has changed." He noted that the new law is more favorable to women than the Jewish divorce laws. "This (new divorce law) will have to be complied with, otherwise the get (religious divorce) will not be valid," Rabbi Sierra said. He added that he had no complaints about women's advantages under the new ruling.

In Ostia near here today, 60 rabbis opened the European Conference of Rabbis with a session on the religious factor in Israeli-diaspora relations. The three speakers--Sephardic Chief Rabbi Yosef Ovadia of Tel Aviv, Chief Rabbi Jacob Kaplan of France and Chief Rabbi Elie Toaff of Rome--agreed that aliyah was a Torah injunction and therefore not only a personal or political necessity but a religious commitment. Others present included Chief Rabbi Moses Rosen of Rumania, Sephardic Chief Rabbi Solomon Gaon of England and several American rabbis. Dr. Gaon presided at the first meeting in the absence of Chief Rabbi Emeritus Sir Israel Brodie of England, who was indisposed. The participants also visited the remains of a first-century synagogue.

Nixon-Dayan Meeting Anticipated; Nixon Expected To Urge Israel To Return To Talks

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8 (JTA)--The White House has reportedly advised the Israel Embassy here that President Nixon will meet with Israeli Defense Minister Moshe Dayan on Friday. Questioned today about a Nixon-Dayan meeting, White House press secretary Ronald Zeigler told newsmen, "for the time being I do not know a specific time or date but we do anticipate that the President will see Dayan." Mr. Zeigler promised to let reporters know more definitely tomorrow. Meetings have already been scheduled for Gen. Dayan with Secretary of State William P. Rogers, Defense Secretary Melvin R. Laird and other top administration officials. Dayan is expected to arrive in New York tomorrow on a fund-raising mission for the United Jewish Appeal and to meet privately with UJA leaders. Mr. Zeigler spoke to newsmen as President Nixon was meeting with King Hussein of Jordan, who arrived here yesterday. The meeting lasted 55 minutes and no communiqué was issued. The White House press secretary said that the President and King Hussein would discuss the principal elements of the Middle East situation and the chances for peace negotiations.

Mr. Zeigler said King Hussein was expected to explain his government's policies and to convey the views of the governments of Egypt and Saudi Arabia, two countries he visited before coming to Washington. Mr. Zeigler said the discussion was expected to cover U.S. military and economic aid to Jordan. He said Mr. Nixon would repeat to the King the U.S. desire that the Jarring peace talks will "start soon." The Nixon administration reportedly will try to persuade Gen. Dayan to get his government to agree swiftly to return to the stalled Jarring talks. The Israeli Defense Minister is also expected to discuss his country's arms needs and reportedly will ask for more arms on a contractual basis. So far \$500 million has been earmarked for Israel in the form of credit for the purchase of armaments in 1971. The Israelis reportedly feel the sum falls short of their needs. King Hussein was expected to try to persuade President Nixon to put pressure on Israel to return to the Jarring talks and to force Israel to withdraw from occupied Arab territories.

Anti-Jewish, Anti-Zionist Campaign Being Intensified in Czechoslovakia

NEW YORK, Dec. 8 (JTA)--The anti-Zionist, anti-Jewish campaign of the Soviet-run Czech media has intensified, according to information from sources at the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Committee and others. The basis for the current series of broadcasts and press articles is a translation of the book "Beware: Zionism," written last year by a Russian, Yuri Ivanov. The controlled publishing house Epocha has run of 30,000 copies. In an epilogue by another writer, former Czech leader Alexander Dubcek and Czech Jewish liberal Dr. Frantisek Kriegel are accused of being in league with alleged Zionist spies. It is alleged that many former Czechs who moved to Israel have returned as trained

spies "to carry out subversive work." The newspaper Bratislava Pravda, which has been running excerpts from the book, claims that "After having weakened the influence and control of the party (in the Soviet invasion of August, 1968), the Zionist and pro-Zionist forces strove to disrupt the Communist system and stir up the masses."

Dr. Kriegel and his supposed Zionist clique, the charges continue, "gradually seized key positions in the party and state" with the aid of Israeli intelligence forces. "The illegal activity of Zionism in the country did not stop" with the Soviet takeover, it is alleged. The Jews of Czechoslovakia—a 1,000-year-old community that has dwindled from 170,000 before World War II to 8-10,000—was subjected to similar charges by the Stalinists in the late 1940s and early 1950s, and most recently this past summer. In August, Bratislava Pravda and Radio Prague accused Prof. Eduard Goldstuecker, the first Czech ambassador to Israel, of "defeatism and cowardice." Other Czech Zionist leaders were similarly accused on the basis of allegations in the book "Zionism and Anti-Semitism," by Frantisek J. Kolar. Dr. Goldstuecker reportedly left the country after the Soviet invasion and after being subjected to charges of "disgusting Jew" and "Zionist hyena." He was chairman of the Czech Writers Union. Some 4,000 other Czech Jews were also reported to have left the country after the invasion.

Village in Upper Galilee Shelled; Seven Gaza Residents Injured By Grenade

TEL AVIV, Dec. 8 (JTA)—A number of mortar shells were fired at Margalit village in Upper Galilee, from Lebanese territory last night without causing casualties or damage. An Israeli Army unit returned the fire. Seven residents of Gaza were injured this morning when a hand grenade was thrown into a queue of workers waiting for a bus in Medina Square. Security officials are investigating the incident. A curfew violator in Gaza was wounded last night when an Israeli patrol opened fire after he ignored orders to halt. A military spokesman reported today that there were 13 fewer border incidents this week than last week. The total was 14 compared to 27. Three incidents occurred on the Jordanian frontier and two on the Syrian line, the same as last week. But there were only two on the Egyptian front compared to three the previous week and three on the Lebanese border compared to last week's total of six. The biggest drop was in the Gaza Strip where only four incidents were reported compared to 13 the previous week.

Teachers' Meeting With Mrs. Meir Fails To End Strike; Allon Denounces Strikers

JERUSALEM, Dec. 8 (JTA)—Representatives of Israel's striking high school teachers union emerged from a meeting with Premier Golda Meir today apparently determined to continue their month-long walk-out despite exhortations from government officials to end it. A teachers' spokesman said the meeting had "changed nothing." Mrs. Meir reportedly told the strikers that their wage demands would cost the country \$49 million which it could not afford. Deputy Premier Yigal Allon, who doubles as Minister of Education, angrily denounced the strikers in the Knesset today. He accused them of trying to dictate terms to the government on the assumption that they were "holding priceless pawns because, after all, what is more precious to us than our children?" Meanwhile an organization of parents of high school pupils has called for a mass demonstration outside the Knesset building tomorrow to get the government to end the strike.

Orthodox Politicians Unable To Raise Money Promised To Promoters Of Auto Race

TEL AVIV, Dec. 8 (JTA)—Orthodox politicians have been unable to raise the money they promised the promoters of an international automobile race in Ashkelon last month for rescheduling the contest from Saturday to Sunday. They agreed to pay some \$60,000 in compensation for the losses incurred when the promoters had to make refunds to thousands of ticket-holders who could not attend on Sunday, an ordinary working day in Israel. So far they have raised only \$3500. Religious circles are balking against what they call "buying off" the Sabbath. Non-religious Israelis have denounced the deal as a bribe and religious coercion. The politicians, representing the National Religious Party and the Agudat Israel have been counting on the Orthodox community to raise the money.

Pincus: No Ideological Division In Cabinet On Approach To Peace With Arabs

NEW YORK, Dec. 8 (JTA)—Louis A. Pincus, chairman of the Jewish Agency for Israel, denied emphatically yesterday that there is any ideological division within the Israeli Cabinet on the approach to peace with the Arabs. Reports of such division are "gossip" he advised the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, as there is no split among the ministers "on any basic matter." Mr. Pincus stated: "Israel is willing to go anywhere, any time, in the search for peace. The Cabinet stands united on this issue now as before."

New Jewish Community Center Opened In Belgium

ANTWERP, Dec. 8 (JTA)—The new Romi Goldmuntz Community Center was dedicated and recently opened here. A sizeable grant to the Joint Distribution Committee (JDC) from the Conference on Jewish Material Claims against Germany provided the initial funds for the Center. The balance came from the Antwerp community. The major emphasis is on the banquet hall, bar and ballroom which will be the center for dances, bar mitzvahs, weddings and other social and community functions. Major features are the pre-school nursery room, game rooms, art and photography facilities, and radio and electronics laboratory, all stocked with the latest and best equipment. A large area provided for a library, which now has 1,000 volumes, will help to develop the facility into one of the most complete and largest on the continent. The library will also be used by two Jewish schools in the community, Tachkemoni and Yeshod Hatorah. The Antwerp Center is working on a program that will enable it to serve all European Jewish communities in training professional staff and volunteers needed by Jewish Community Centers in all parts of Europe. It will also serve as a workshop to test new ideas and experimental programs as models for other Centers. It is reported to be the most complete such Center in Europe. The building was designed by M. Sagur, one of Europe's foremost architects.

Soviet Freighter Besieged On Land, Sea and Air By Jewish Groups Protesting Trials

LOS ANGELES, Dec. 8 (JTA)—The Gavril Derzhavin, the first Soviet freighter ever to dock at Los Angeles Harbor, was besieged on land, water and air today, by student demonstrators demanding justice for Soviet Jews facing trial. While nervous police, Coast Guardsmen and Harbor Police tried to keep the youngsters away from the vessel, one demonstrator managed to break through police lines to affix an Israeli flag to her hull. A Russian sailor pulled it off and threw it into the water. The demonstration was organized by the Southern California Council for Soviet Jews and the California Students for Soviet Jews. Two of the youngsters, Tom Barnes and Zev Yaroslavsky, tried to approach the freighter in a rowboat to paint slogans on her hull but were blocked by Harbor Police. Meanwhile, a rented helicopter buzzed over the ship dragging a banner that read, "Let The Jews Go." About 50 students picketed outside the dock gates. The demonstrations took place in view of the ship's crew. The seamen were apparently warned by their officers not to respond to questions dealing with Soviet Jews. The ship's master, Capt. Valentin Sobolevsky, told newsmen, "I know nothing about what they want." A student spokesman said the demonstration was called to protest the imminent trials of 34 Soviet Jews accused of plotting to hijack a Russian airliner at Leningrad last spring or other alleged offenses.

Mrs. Meir, Eban Meet With Barbour On Further Clarifications; U.S. Resisting Pressure

JERUSALEM, Dec. 8 (JTA)—Premier Golda Meir presented last night U.S. Ambassador Walworth Barbour with a list containing the main points on which Israel wants clarification from the Nixon administration before agreeing to return to the Jarring talks. Israel's Ambassador to Washington, Yitzhak Rabin, was reportedly scheduled to meet State Department officials today on the same subject. The list was drafted in detail by Mrs. Meir and Foreign Minister Abba Eban and was approved in principle by the Cabinet at last Sunday's session. According to informed sources, the principal point on which Israel wants clarification is its fear of an imposed settlement. President Nixon promised in his latest letter to Mrs. Meir that the U.S. would not interfere in the Jarring talks. But the Israelis have been unable to persuade the Nixon administration to repudiate the territorial map proposed by Secretary of State Rogers a year ago. According to well informed sources, Washington is prepared to stand firm against Israeli pressure to do so. The Rogers plan was presented to a Big Four meeting in New York on Oct. 28, 1969 and was made public by Mr. Rogers last Dec. 9. It called for Israel's return to its pre-June, 1967 boundaries except for minor alterations of its frontier with Jordan. The Israelis claimed that the Rogers plan amounted to an imposed settlement in advance of peace talks which undercut Israel's bargaining position. The Nixon administration has reportedly assured Israel it would not press for the Rogers' map during the early stages of the Jarring talks but refused to abandon it entirely or to pledge not to raise the matter as the talks progressed.

Mrs. Meir's meeting with Ambassador Barbour was obviously more than a routine meeting between a head of government and a foreign envoy. Mr. Eban and the Foreign Ministry's deputy director general Mordecai Gazit were present as were the director general of the Prime Minister's office Dr. Jacob Herzog and Mrs. Meir's chief political adviser, Simcha Dinitz. Observers here said the Israeli government intends to delay as long as possible its decision on the Jarring talks in order to extract as many commitments as it can from the U.S. President Nixon's pledge of continued arms support in his letter to Mrs. Meir was welcomed by the government but it fell short of the written guarantee Israel wants. The Israel government has not, however, confronted Washington with hard and fast conditions for its return to the Jarring talks, and the U.S., in turn, has applied no pressure on Israel. Many observers believe that Israel will agree to return to the negotiating table before Jan. 5 when United Nations Secretary General U Thant must report to the Security Council on the progress of Mideast peace talks. Meanwhile, political circles here said today that the Soviet Union has not slowed down its arms supplies to Egypt and in fact may be accelerating its shipments. They said that Moscow was agreeing to virtually every Egyptian arms request in order to maintain its influence in Cairo following the death of President Gamal Abdel Nasser. The Egyptians, as a consequence, have upped their arms demands, the circles said.

Malik Complaints To Thant Over Entry By Jewish Youths Into Soviet Mission

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., Dec. 8 (JTA)—The Soviet Union has lodged a complaint with Secretary General U Thant over the invasion of the Soviet UN Mission premises on Nov. 29 by a "group of Zionist hoodlums." In a letter to Mr. Thant, made public last night, Ambassador Jacob Malik, permanent representative of the Soviet Union to the UN, demanded that the United States Mission and U.S. authorities take "all necessary steps" to "protect" the Soviet Mission "from similar raids by bandits and intrusions by hostile elements." Mr. Malik charged New York police with laxity. On Nov. 29 a group of youths of the World Union of Jewish Students entered the Mission "to protest Soviet treatment of Jews. The youngsters later assembled on the steps of the Park East Synagogue across the street from the Mission for a further demonstration. Mr. Malik said in his letter, dated Nov. 30, that at 4:30 p.m. Nov. 29, eight unidentified persons "taking advantage of a moment when wives and children of members of the staff of the permanent mission were entering the mission building, broke into the lobby" and "began to behave in a disorderly manner." Mr. Malik said the intruders identified themselves as members of Zionist organizations. "This group of Zionist hoodlums" remained on the premises "in spite of insistent demands" that they leave, he wrote, and charged that the police "took no steps" to prevent them from entering and evicted them "only after insistent requests." He demanded the eight youths be "severely punished."

Kibbutz Exhibit Arouses Wide Interest Among Young Jews, Non-Jews

LONDON, Dec. 8 (JTA)—Representatives of Israel's kibbutz movement participated at the first national careers exhibition which opened today at the Olympia Hall and aroused considerable interest. Nathan Rom, head of the Kibbutz Representatives Bureau here told the JTA that the kibbutz exhibition drew crowds of young Jewish men and women and many non-Jews. Mr. Rom said his bureau has arranged for 1,399 young Britons to spend time at a kibbutz, only 500 of them Jews.

Moshe Dayan To Address United Jewish Appeal Conference

NEW YORK, Dec. 8 (JTA)—Moshe Dayan, Israel's Minister of Defense, will address the United Jewish Appeal's 1971 annual conference banquet on Saturday evening. The conference will launch the 1971 nationwide campaign which raises funds in support of humanitarian programs for immigrants arriving in Israel and for needy Jews in 30 countries around the world. The conference, which begins Thursday and concludes Sunday will be attended by more than 2,000 delegates from 250 communities around the country. In addition to the many Israeli guests attending, most of the major Jewish organizations in the country will be represented. Gen. Dayan will attend a private meeting of the UJA leadership on the opening day of the conference. Commenting on the forthcoming conference, UJA general chairman Edward Ginsberg said:

"During this year of crisis, American Jewry must be made aware of the urgent needs of the people of Israel. Defense expenditures have become so burdensome that there is no cash reserve left to support the educational and social programs so vital to human existence--programs that have been the traditional humanitarian responsibility of Jews of the free world. Furthermore, the arrival of 20,000 new immigrants in 1971 intensifies that burden. 1971 requires us to make nothing less than a total commitment!" On Friday, Shimon Alexadroni, economic Minister of Israel to the U.S., and Yitzhak Rabin, Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. will discuss "Current Problems in the Middle East." Other speakers addressing the conference over the weekend will be Gottlieb Hammer, executive vice-chairman, United Israel Appeal; Moshe Rivlin, director general, Jewish Agency, Jerusalem; Louis A. Pincus, chairman, Jewish Agency for Israel; Samuel L. Haber, executive vice-chairman, American Joint Distribution Committee; and Charles K. Ribakoff II, chairman, Student Co-ordinating Committee for the Israel Emergency Fund.

Rigerman To Make Another Effort To Enter U.S. Embassy In Moscow

WASHINGTON, Dec. 8 (JTA)—Leonid Rigerman, a Soviet Jew who was arrested when he tried to enter the U.S. Embassy in Moscow last month, will try again on Thursday. State Dept. spokesman Robert J. McCloskey said today that Rigerman, who is trying to establish a claim to U.S. citizenship, has requested an appointment at the Embassy Thursday to fill out certain forms required before applying for a Soviet exit visa. Rigerman bases his claim to American citizenship on the fact that his mother was born in the U.S. and his father is a naturalized American citizen. He was born in Russia in 1940 and has lived there all of his life. State Department officials said recently that his claim is still under review and that he has to supply additional information. Moscow police seized Rigerman on the Embassy steps last month. He spent a week in jail on charges of resisting an officer.

Hillel Club Collects Several Hundred Dollars To Aid Pakistan Flood Victims

NORFOLK, Va., Dec. 8 (JTA)—Charles Marks, a senior and Hillel Club officer at Old Dominion University here, has initiated a campus drive for aid-to-Pakistan funds that has netted several hundred dollars in a few days. In the first two hours the 40-member Hillel Club collected \$280 at the state-run university. Shelley Solow, senior and president of the club, said the money would be sent to the International Red Cross for relief of the many thousands of victims of the Nov. 12-13 storm and tidal wave in East Pakistan. The government of that country recently rejected relief aid from Israel. Mr. Solow offered a trophy to the campus organization raising the most money, and the Tidewater Jewish Youth Council scheduled a rock concert for this Sunday at the Jewish Community Center. Mr. Marks said he undertook the campaign to demonstrate that Jewish students care as much for others' welfare as for their own.

Jewish Students Launch Drive For Judaic Studies Departments In City University System

NEW YORK, Dec. 8 (JTA)—A city-wide campaign to institute Judaic Studies Departments in all branches of the City University (CUNY) system is being launched by a group of Jewish students here. The effort is spearheaded by the Jewish Student Union of City College and coordinated by the New York Union of Jewish Students. According to Jonathan Braun, president of the New York Union of Jewish Students, the purpose of the campaign is to "alert students to the power they possess in making Judaic studies a reality and to pressure the various college administrations into establishing permanent Judaic Studies Departments." During the present fall semester, Judaic studies courses are available at City College, Queens College and Brooklyn College on an inter-disciplinary basis.

However, due to student and faculty efforts at Brooklyn College, the Board of Education last week authorized the institution to establish a separate Judaic Studies Department next Fall, offering a major and a degree in this field. According to reports there is a strong possibility that Queens College may soon be authorized to establish a similar department. Campaign efforts therefore will be directed mainly at City College. As part of the campaign, 20,000 stickers declaring, "Work for Jewish Studies" are being distributed at all branches of CUNY. Leaders of the drive are also urging students to join student-faculty committees on Judaic Studies at their respective colleges where they can work from within to have the Department instituted.

Jewish Community Protests Use Of Tax Money For Display Of Christmas Decorations

IOWA CITY, Iowa, Dec. 8 (JTA)—Members of the Jewish community here are protesting a City Council grant of \$400 to the local Chamber of Commerce for the hanging of Christmas decorations throughout the city. The grant was defended by Councilman J. Patrick White who called Christmas a "national holiday, so Jews should regard the decorations as theirs also." Rabbi Leo Diamond, director of the Hillel Foundation at the University of Iowa, voicing the objection of the city's Jewish community, called Christmas "a religious and not a national holiday" adding "as a member of an Iowa City minority, I don't want my tax money used for something not a part of my tradition." He said he did not object to Christmas decorations "as long as they are put up privately."