

JTA daily news bulletin

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

Contents copyright: Republication only by previous arrangement.

Vol. XXXVII - Fifty-Third Year

Thursday, December 24, 1970

No. 247

Trial Of Leningrad 11 Adjourns; Plea Entered For Reduced Sentences; Verdict Due

LONDON, Dec. 23 (JTA)--The Leningrad trial adjourned today after defense counsel asked the court for leniency, it was learned here today from reliable sources. A verdict is expected to be rendered tomorrow by the president of the three-man court, N.A. Yermakov. According to the source the defense wound up its case yesterday with a plea to reduce the charges from "banditry and treason" to illegally leaving the country and minor theft of State property. The 11 accused, nine of whom are Jews, are charged with conspiring to hijack a Soviet airliner at Leningrad's Smolny Airport last June 15. According to the Soviet criminal code, preparation to commit a crime is tantamount to committing it and carries the same penalty although the degree to which preparations had progressed at the time of arrest can constitute mitigating circumstances. Chief prosecutor R. Rudenko reportedly has demanded the death penalty for two of the defendants, Maj. Mark Dymshitz, a former military pilot and Edvard Kuznetsov, and terms of five to 15 years imprisonment for the other accused. It was not clear from today's report whether the defense counsel's plea for leniency applied to the two principal defendants or to all 11. Under the criminal code illegal departure and minor theft of State property carries a maximum penalty of ten years' imprisonment. There was no further confirmation today of reports received by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that a new trial was to open in Leningrad this morning. According to the report, the defendant is Igor Borisovich Borisov, a Jew reportedly arrested after applying for an emigration visa.

15,000 March In L.A.; Black Official Says Tragedy Of Gas Chambers Must Not Be Repeated

LOS ANGELES, Dec. 23 (JTA)--More than 15,000 demonstrators marched in downtown Los Angeles tonight to protest the arrest and trial of Soviet Jews. The demonstration, the candlelight walk for Soviet Jews, witnessed the largest crowd to ever participate in a Soviet Jewry rally outside of New York, according to observers. Councilman Thomas Bradley, a black City Councilman told the rally, "We must remember the six million Jews who were sent to the gas ovens 30 years ago. By the same token we must never let it happen again." The demonstration was sponsored by the California Students for Soviet Jews and the Southern California Council for Soviet Jews, both members of the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews, a national grassroots movement dedicated to the liberation of Soviet Jews. The crowd repeatedly chanted "let the Jews go" as their voices echoed throughout the streets of downtown Los Angeles. The demonstrators all carried candles. A menorah was lit in celebration of the eight days of Chanukah. Each candle was dedicated to a Soviet Jewish political prisoner.

Zev Yaroslavsky and Si Frumkin, chairmen of the two organizations, said in a prepared statement that "We will raise our voices in ever growing protest so long as the Soviet Union continues to provoke its Jewish population. This demonstration tonight is a tribute to the entire community--the grassroots." The rally was also addressed by Edmund D. Brown Jr. Secretary of State of California, Mayor Sam Yorty and a host of other political leaders. Police were forced to close off the area surrounding City Hall in order to accommodate the unprecedented crowd. There was no violence. The demonstration was called at this time in order to maximize public pressure against the Soviet Union in regard to the Leningrad trials. Yaroslavsky said, "Last year after the candlelight walk within hours of the demonstration word of the protest was beamed into the Soviet Union for millions of Jews to hear. Tonight we know that the message will arrive in twice the time, twice the potency and twice the meaning. We will not be silent." The march was highlighted by the arrival of a torch which was flown from Modin, Israel, the birthplace of the Maccabees, to Los Angeles in order to light the menorah.

British, French Intellectuals, Scientists, Artists Express Alarm Over Trial

LONDON, Dec. 23 (JTA)--A group of British intellectuals representing the arts and sciences sent telegrams today to Soviet Premier Alexsei N. Kosygin and Communist Party chief Leonid Brezhnev expressing "concern and alarm" over the trial in Leningrad and possible future trials of Russian Jews. The signatories included Sir Laurence Olivier, director of the National Theater; Dame Sybil Thorndike; Malcolm Muggeridge; actress Siobhan McKenna; Prof. A. J. Ayer; Prof. Julius Gould and actor Laurence Harvey. (A similar group of French intellectuals urged the Soviet government in a telegram sent today to open the Leningrad trial to foreign observers. Among the signers were Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Clara Malraux and Yves Montand.) The British personalities stated in their message, "Our anxiety is intensified by reports that similar trials are being prepared of Jewish citizens of the Soviet Union who have unsuccessfully applied for permission to go to Israel." They added that the closed trial in Leningrad "revives memories of the victimizations of 1952."

Eban: Considerable Echo Of World Opinion Opposed To Trial; More Reaction To Follow

JERUSALEM, Dec. 23 (JTA)--Foreign Minister Abba Eban said in the Knesset today that there was a "considerable echo in world opinion" against the trial of Jews in the Soviet Union. He said there have been "important expressions by governments, parliaments, public organizations and personalities of international repute" against Soviet violations of human rights and the treatment of Russian Jews. Eban spoke in reply to a question by Knesset member Moshe Carmel who wanted to know what political and diplomatic action Israel has taken to mobilize world opinion in defense of Russian Jewry. The Foreign Minister said, "I shall shortly avail myself of an opportunity to inform the House of the actions taken and of the considerable echo in world public opinion." He expressed hope that "this world reaction is but the beginning of an awakening of enlightened humanity against an ineffectual attempt to deprive a great Jewish community of its human rights."

Eban spoke in the Knesset as a group of 20 Jews from the Soviet Union ended an eight-day vigil of prayer and fasting at the Wailing Wall which they began on Dec. 15, the day the Leningrad trial opened.

The vigil brought scores of thousands of Israelis to the Wailing Wall compound. The crowd last night was estimated at 25,000 and this morning at 10,000. The demonstrators had pledged to fast until the Leningrad trial ended. It was adjourned today. Several hours earlier, four women fasters fainted from exhaustion. Three were taken to Hadassah Hospital for treatment. An Israeli student was hospitalized this morning for injuries he received in a fistfight with a guard at United Nations headquarters here. A UN officer said he was injured by a student. The students claimed he hurt himself accidentally. They were part of a delegation of the Gahal faction which marched on the UN with a petition protesting the Leningrad trial addressed to Secretary General U. Thant. Three students were permitted to enter the compound to deliver the petition.

Leningrad Court President Says Proceedings Are Against Hijackers Not Jews

TEL AVIV, Dec. 23 (JTA)--The Israel Communist Party (Rakak) newspaper, Kol Ha'am, published an interview today with N.A. Yermakov, president of the three-man court in Leningrad currently trying nine Jews and two non-Jews for allegedly plotting to hijack a Soviet airliner last June. Yermakov, defending the trial, maintained that the accused were not being tried because of their religion or their wish to emigrate to Israel but because they tried to hijack a plane. He said that the chief defendant, Maj. Mark Dymshitz, a former military pilot, forced his wife and two teen-age daughters to join him in the plot against their will and that they were subsequently released from jail. According to reliable reports from Leningrad, the chief prosecutor, R. Rudenko, has demanded the death penalty for Dymshitz and one other defendant, Edvard Kuznetsov.

Yermakov maintained in the interview that all of the accused admitted that they had published and distributed Zionist material. He charged that Dymshitz tried to turn the proceedings into a political trial by claiming that Jews are oppressed in Russia. Yermakov attempted to refute that charge with statistics showing that "the number of Jews in all professions is no less than that of other Soviet nationals." He also dismissed an alleged claim by Dymshitz that despite his military combat record he was refused employment as a civilian pilot after World War II because he is a Jew. According to Yermakov military pilots cannot become civilian pilots in Russia unless they take a special course which Dymshitz did not take. He claimed that many Russian pilots are in the same situation.

Opposition To Bill Forbidding News Media Criticizing Prominent Citizens Abroad

JERUSALEM, Dec. 23 (JTA)--Adverse public reaction has delayed the presentation of a bill in the Knesset that would forbid Israeli news media from expressing criticism of prominent citizens of any country with which Israel maintains friendly relations. The measure, for which the Foreign Ministry has been pressing, was scheduled for a first reading shortly but has been assigned a lower place on the Knesset agenda, presumably to allow for amendments. The bill would render foreign heads of state, heads of government, religious leaders and members of their families immune from criticism by Israeli media. Truth, the usual defense in libel cases, would not be admitted. The Foreign Ministry claims such a measure is necessary because certain countries where the idea of freedom of the press is not as deeply ingrained as it is in Israel, take offense when their leaders are criticized abroad. A Ministry spokesman declined to name such countries but claimed that because of criticism in Israeli newspapers, "we have had very serious trouble." But public opinion here appears to have been outraged by the proposal. Critics assert that it would stifle press freedom in Israel to accommodate countries where press freedom doesn't exist. They warned that if the public acquiesced in such a law there was no guarantee that it would not eventually be extended to forbid criticism of the political and religious establishment at home. Supporters of the bill believe it can be passed if its provisions are watered down to exempt only foreign heads of state and their immediate families.

19 Egyptian Spies Captured, Killed By Israeli Forces In Recent Weeks

TEL AVIV, Dec. 23 (JTA)--A military spokesman disclosed last night that 19 Egyptian spies have been captured or killed by Israeli forces in the Sinai peninsula in recent weeks. The spokesman said that large quantities of intelligence equipment were captured. He said that of the 19, some were regular Egyptian Army personnel and the rest were Bedouins pressed into intelligence service by the Egyptians. One of the latter told his story on television last night. He said he was a fisherman from the Ghardaka region of Egypt and claimed he was forced to perform espionage on the threat of being deprived of his means of earning a living. The military spokesman said the Egyptians mounted their espionage expeditions from Ismailia in the central Suez Canal zone and from Ghardaka on the west shore of the Gulf of Suez opposite Sharm el Sheikh. He said the spying was first reported last November when an Egyptian killed in Western Sinai was found to be carrying espionage equipment. Subsequently, another member of the same unit was captured alive and a short while afterwards two spies were killed in a boat in the Gulf of Suez. An espionage gang was captured this week near Sharm el Sheikh and four Bedouins spying for the Egyptians were captured in the same area, the spokesman said. He released photographs of captured boats and equipment.

Justice Minister Favors Bill To Rescind Law Against Homosexual Acts

JERUSALEM, Dec. 23 (JTA)--Justice Minister Yaacov Shimshon Shapiro told the Knesset yesterday that he favored a bill to rescind the law against homosexual acts between consenting male adults. The bill was introduced by Uri Avnery, of the Haolem Hazeh faction. Shapiro noted that the existing law is never enforced but as long as it is on the books it instills a "nagging fear of prosecution" on the part of male homosexuals who are often afraid to call the police when they are victims of certain offenses. The Justice Minister pointed out further that female homosexual acts are not forbidden by law.

Center For Religious Students To Open Next Year; Project Costs \$1.4 Million

JERUSALEM, Dec. 23 (JTA)--Ramot Shapira, a center for religious students from abroad near Jerusalem, will open its doors next March 1, it was announced by Rabbi Jacob Vainstein, chairman of the Jerusalem Religious Council, who is sponsoring the project. He said the project, to cost \$1.4 million, is about half complete. Construction so far has cost \$700,000, most of it contributed by Orthodox Jews in the United States and Canada.

Lord Caradon, Former Envoy To UN And A Drafter Of Resolution 242, Assails Israel

LONDON, Dec. 23 (JTA)--Lord Caradon, former chief British delegate to the UN in the Labor government, strongly scored Israel today in a speech to the UN Students Association at Oxford. Lord Caradon spoke of "the barbed wire of the Zionist state." He went on to say: "The Palestinians turned to violence and perhaps revenge. I doubt if any of us would have done differently...If the Israelis intend to hold on to Jerusalem by force, then there is no hope for peace." Foreign Office sources indicated they are embarrassed by Lord Caradon's anti-Israel speeches, especially when there is a chance of Israel's returning to the Jarring talks. They also expressed surprise that one of the drafters of and canvassers for Security Council Resolution 242 has now apparently embarked on a campaign to discredit it.

France Persuades Common Market Partners To Formulate Common Mideast Policy

PARIS, Dec. 23 (JTA)--France has taken the lead in persuading its five European Common Market partners to formulate a common policy on the Middle East with each of the six nations undertaking to study an individual aspect of the problem, it was learned here today. The initiative was started at the ECC foreign ministers' meeting in Munich last November. French Foreign Minister Maurice Schumann reportedly persuaded his colleagues from West Germany, Italy, Holland, Belgium and Luxembourg to begin studying the Mideast problem together in order to formulate a joint policy. The other ECC nations were said to have been surprised by the French move. Hitherto, the partners have limited their common policy to NATO and GATT. France is the only Common Market member that is also a permanent member of the United Nations Security Council and that claims to have vital interests in the Middle East.

Following the Munich meeting, the six member states appointed representatives to draw up a list of points on which all are in agreement. The experts have been meeting here. They are expected to end their talks next March and to present their findings at the next foreign ministers' conference in April. According to reliable sources, the Middle East problem has been divided into four sections to which one or more of the Common Market partners has been assigned to give special attention. France will study demilitarized zones which means she will concentrate on the question of frontiers. The future status of Jerusalem will come under the purview of Belgium which is known to favor a form of internationalization for that city. West Germany and Holland will consider the question of freedom of navigation and Italy will concentrate on policy toward the Arab refugee problem.

Senate To Consider Supplementary Aid Package; Expected To Endorse It

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23 (JTA)--The House late yesterday approved and sent to the Senate the administration's supplementary aid package, which includes \$500 million for Israel, \$30 million for Jordan and \$5 million for Lebanon. The Senate, which will consider the package after Christmas, is also expected to endorse it. The House action followed the approval earlier in the day of legislation authorizing the aid program, which passed the Senate by 41 to 20 and the House by voice vote. The authorizing legislation had been delayed for several months over the question of restrictions on American troops in Cambodia.

Special Efforts Made To Assure Christian Citizens, Visitors Have A Happy Xmas

JERUSALEM, Dec. 23 (JTA)--Israeli authorities are making special efforts to assure Christian citizens and visitors of a merry Christmas this year. The Post Office has designed a special holiday postmark for letters mailed from Bethlehem on Dec. 24. The Israeli Police Band will perform throughout the day in Bethlehem's Manger Square where four choirs from the United States will sing Christmas carols. Families in the occupied territories on relief will receive an extra Christmas bonus and a gift of foodstuffs. The Jewish National Fund began distributing over 1000 Christmas trees to Christian residents of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv today. The trees are cypresses from JNF forests. The traditional fir tree is rare in Israel. Special arrangements were announced here today to televise and film the Midnight Mass at the Church of the Nativity. The closed circuit TV set-up is for the benefit of the thousands of worshippers who will be unable to enter the packed shrine.

Jarring Willing To Wait To Last Minute For Israel's Decision On Return To Talks

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., Dec. 23 (JTA)--While the Israeli government heads toward a decision on a return to the aborted peace negotiations, United Nations mediator Gunnar V. Jarring will be spending Christmas with his family in Sweden. No specific date has been disclosed for his return here, and it is believed he wants to wait as long as possible for Israel's decision, which, if favorable, would permit him to file a more positive progress report with Secretary General Thant, who must report on the matter to the Security Council by Jan. 5. (In Jerusalem, Premier Golda Meir said yesterday her government is not influenced by the Jan. 5 deadline. Speaking at a press conference she said the government has completed studying the question of whether to return to the talks and that the decision may be made at next Sunday's Cabinet meeting. But, she added, "it may also take a few more days or even a few more meetings.")

Architects, Landscape Designers Criticize Master Plan To Rebuild Old Jerusalem

JERUSALEM, Dec. 23 (JTA)--A committee of prominent international architects and landscape designers expressed severe criticism yesterday of the Jerusalem Municipality's master plan to rebuild and landscape the Old City and its approaches. Mayor Teddy Kollek responded by announcing that he will invite a leading town planning expert from abroad to review the master plan. The committee was invited by the Jerusalem Municipality to serve as voluntary consultants on the project. The invitation was extended in acknowledgment that Jerusalem is the concern of the entire civilized world. But the experts almost unanimously condemned the plan for a variety of reasons. Christopher Alexander, a California architect, said it failed to solve the problem of transportation between East and West Jerusalem. Another American architect, Louis Kahn, said the master plan puzzled him because "I don't sense the principles behind it." Werner Duttman, of West Berlin, agreed, remarking that the plans were devoid of any central idea. Goren Sidenblat, of Sweden, criticized the plans to raze the old commercial center and replace it with a modern one. According to Henry Mansfield of Canada, the Municipality was on the wrong track in trying to create an artificial architectural style to reconcile Jerusalem's ancient mode with modern vogues.

Jewish Cultural Institute To Serve The Needs Of Jewish Students On City University Campuses

BROOKLYN, N.Y., Dec. 23 (JTA)--The Jewish Cultural Institute, an independent student group financed by funds provided by both the day and evening session student governments, has secured an office in one of the campus buildings and is now officially opening its doors to serve the needs of Jewish students, it was announced here today by Elly Rosen, director of the Institute. According to Rosen, the Institute is the "first and only one of its kind in the City University (CUNY) system." It was formed in September 1970 to care for the cultural and religious needs of the 18,000 Jewish students on the campus, 5,000 of these Orthodox. Rosen noted that while the needs of Black and Puerto Rican students on the campus are catered to specifically by official recognized college-sponsored "Institutes," the college "has yet to establish an official 'Jewish Institute.'" He stated that "one of our major goals is to be adopted by the college and become recognized as a college-sponsored organization. It is my hope that eventually Brooklyn College will assume its responsibilities towards all of its total student community." The actual purposes of the office, Rosen told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, is many-fold.

"First, we hope to act as a direct or intermediary negotiating agency with the Brooklyn College administration and the Board of Higher Education on issues of concern to Orthodox and Jewish students in general," he said. Kosher food, enforcement of rules concerning excused absences on Jewish holidays, and guarantee of multiple sections for courses offered on Friday night and Saturday will be among some of the needs cared for by the Institute. The Institute also projects acting as an on-campus headquarters and coordinating agency for Brooklyn College Jewish groups. An aim of the Institute is to serve as a storehouse and distribution center for materials relating to all Jewish oriented programs and areas of Jewish concern. One of the major projects of the Institute is the publication of "Bas-Kol" an Orthodox-oriented student newspaper, distributed in Brooklyn College and other branches of the CUNY system. The 16-page "pilot" issue was published this week and will be published monthly. The purpose of the paper is to counter the anti-Israel anti-Semitic propaganda circulated on the campus by leftist and black militant groups and to serve as a sounding board for the Jewish students. The Jewish Cultural Institute was originally founded by Mr. Rosen as the Jewish Cultural Expansion Program in 1969, to "combat ignorance through education," by presenting a series of Jewish cultural exhibitions.

Thousands Of Youths Hold Chanukah Torch Relays Throughout Nation

NEW YORK, Dec. 23 (JTA)--Thousands of young American Jews will participate in annual Chanukah Torch Relays this week in more than a dozen cities throughout the nation, it was announced by Herman L. Weisman, president of the Zionist Organization of America. The Chanukah week relays will each have a 3-foot flaming torch proclaiming Chanukah, the Jewish Festival of Freedom. In Chicago, Masada, the youth movement of the ZOA held a Chanukah torch rally today in front of the Israel Consulate. Shaul Ramati, Consul General of Israel, participated in the torch lighting ceremony. Afterwards Masada members ran in a Chanukah torch relay in this city. Similar events were held in other cities. The special Chanukah torch was flown here last week from Israel from Modin via El Al Israel Airlines and given to Masada leaders at John F. Kennedy International Airport. The torch was then flown by Masada members to communities including Westchester and the Bronx, various cities in New Jersey, Long Island, Boston, Baltimore-Washington area, Norfolk, Chicago and Denver. In Westchester, Masada members will hold a relay tomorrow in Yonkers. The torch will be lit by Rabbi Solomon Sternstein, at the Lincoln Park Jewish Center and will then be carried to Mayor Del Bello at Yonkers City Hall.

Fact Finding Mission To Aid College Youths To Counter Anti-Israel Propaganda

NEW YORK, Dec. 23 (JTA)--Twenty-eight students from campuses throughout the nation representing ATID, the college age organization of the United Synagogue of America, will depart for Israel on Dec. 27 on a ten-day fact finding mission. Jacob Stein, president of the United Synagogue who made the announcement today will be in Israel during the project. Its central mission will be to gather on the scene facts on Israel's relationship with her Arab populace. It will include visits to Arab refugee camps and meetings with Arab and Israeli students. The purpose is to factually reinforce the college student in countering the anti-Israel propaganda on today's American campus. "The college students will examine Zionism as a movement for national liberation and the kibbutz as a pure form of democracy," said Rabbi Paul Freedman, director of the United Synagogue Youth Department. He added, "The Israel oriented college student does not lack interest in combatting Arab propaganda but he is put on the defensive. The ten day mission to Israel by ATID collegians will dramatically furnish facts, disqualify New Left concepts and provide the experience for successfully initiating rather than defensively reacting to propaganda on campus." The visit is being coordinated in Israel by the Jewish Agency.

Arabic Press In U.S., Canada Dislike Israel; Mehdi Concedes Israel Has Free Press

NEW YORK, Dec. 23 (JTA)--The ten Arabic newspapers published in the United States and Canada have very little in common except dislike of Israel. But they are staunch defenders of freedom of the press, a condition they acknowledge does not exist in the Arab world, according to an article on domestic Arab newspapers by Spyridon Granitsas appearing in Editor & Publisher, the American newspaper trade journal. A typical paper, according to the writer, is Al Islaah, established in 1931 and published by an Iraqi-born Christian, Dr. Alphonse Chaurize, which claims that "the creation of Israel was a satanic plot of the Communists to drive the Arabs into the Soviet embrace." The newest of the Arabic weeklies is Action, edited by Dr. M.T. Mehdi, an active propagandist for Arab causes in the U.S. He told Granitsas that the Arabic press reflects all of the divisions that exist in the Arab world. However, Dr. Mehdi's newspaper endorsed Arthur J. Goldberg in this year's New York gubernatorial race because it thought his election would "make the Jews more secure in New York and they would bother us less in the Middle East." Dr. Mehdi predicted that in 10-15 years the Arab world will have a free press. "The fact that Israel has more freedom of the press--even during crisis--is mainly due to Western influences while the Jews lived in the West. What we need now is some of the same ideas in the Arab world," Mehdi said. According to Granitsas, most Arab editors believe Jews or Israelis control the American press which, they claim accounts for the alleged one-sidedness of news accounts from the Middle East and distortion of the Arab image.