

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

Wednesday, December 30, 1970

No. 250

Knesset Votes 77-27 To Return To Talks; No Confidence Motion Defeated By 81-27

JERUSALEM, Dec. 29 (JTA)--The Knesset voted 77-27 tonight to approve a government motion for Israel to return to the Jarring peace talks. The motion was supported by the Labor Alignment, Mapam, the National Religious Party, Agudat Israel, Poalei Agudat Israel and the anti-Moscow Maki Communist faction. It was opposed by Gahal and the Free Center party. Nine abstentions were registered by the State List, the pro-Moscow Rakach Communists and two NRP Knesset members. A motion of no confidence introduced by the Free Center and supported by Gahal, was defeated 81-27 in an earlier vote. The Knesset also rejected by a 77-27 vote a Gahal motion urging the government to continue its boycott of the Jarring talks and adhere to its policy of direct peace negotiations with the Arabs. A Rakach motion calling for an immediate return to the Jarring talks and implementation of the Security Council's Resolution 242 of Nov. 22, 1967, was defeated 104-three.

Appeal Hearings For Leningrad 11 Confirmed; Public Outcry Seen As Factor In Move

NEW YORK, Dec. 29 (JTA)--Western news sources today confirmed a Jewish Telegraphic Agency report received late yesterday that appeal hearings on the Leningrad sentences will be held tomorrow. The 11 defendants, two of them under sentence of death, are to appear before the Supreme Court of the Russian Federation at ten a.m. Wednesday, sources in Moscow said. The swift move for a hearing was unexpected inasmuch as the normal time for setting an appeal date in the Soviet Union is six to eight weeks after trial. The Leningrad trial ended last Tuesday and sentences were pronounced on Thursday. The news sources said that defense counsel for the accused were given no reason for the quick action. Sources here said that the move, which could result in clemency, was prompted by the outpouring of world protest against the harsh nature of the sentences. But they also speculated that it might boom against the defendants whose lawyers now have little time to prepare their appeal. Arnold Fleishmann, a Baltimore attorney who visited Leningrad a month ago, discounted this idea. He told the JTA that the court-appointed defense lawyers were simply "brokers" trying to get the sentences reduced and their appeal briefs would contain the same arguments already offered in court. Lawrence Speiser, director of the Washington office of the American Civil Liberties Union who also visited Leningrad recently and met with the families of the accused, thought the Soviet authorities might be responding to protests by various government heads, world religious leaders and others.

Speiser noted, in a telephone interview with the JTA that until the sentences were pronounced scant attention was paid the Leningrad trial, except in Jewish circles. He said that Soviet leaders appeared to have been taken aback by the sudden arousal of world opinion but added that it remained to be seen whether clemency will be the result. Tass, the Soviet news agency, defended the severe sentences in a commentary published yesterday. It said they were "in the spirit" of the anti-hijacking convention endorsed Dec. 16 by the International Civil Aviation Organization at The Hague. The 11 Leningrad defendants, nine of them Jews, were convicted of plotting to hijack a Soviet airliner at Leningrad last June 15. Tass observed that The Hague convention endorsed by 77 nations, stressed that states that were parties to it "undertake to punish severely such crimes as hijacking of planes." Tass also condemned what it called an "unbridled anti-Soviet campaign" around the world following the trial. The Tass comment was published before word came out that the appeal hearing will be held tomorrow. Commenting today on the quick appeal hearing, Rabbi Arthur Schneider, of the Park East Synagogue in New York who is president of the Appeal To Conscience Foundation, told the JTA that "it was a most unusual step to have the clemency board convene."

Rabbi Schneider said "this does not mean there will necessarily be clemency," but added that "there is no question that public outcry around the world is and has been effective and the Soviets are certainly overwhelmed by the magnitude of the outcry. We therefore have the right to assume that the clemency appeal may have been caused by this public outcry." Speiser told the JTA that he got the impression during his visit to Russia that Soviet officials are sensitive to accusations of anti-Semitism. Fleishmann indicated that he had received the same impression from his conversation with a Soviet deputy attorney general in Leningrad four weeks ago, just before the trial began. He said the official, named Alexandrov, who is an aide of chief Soviet prosecutor R. Rudenko, assured him that "due process will follow this case." Some observers here noted that Soviet authorities could not be unaware of the irony in Moscow's condemnation of the death sentences meted out by the Franco regime in Spain to six Basque separatists after a Leningrad court condemned two Soviet Jews. The death sentences were pronounced on Mark Dymshitz, alleged ring-leader of the hijack plot, and Edvard Kuznetsov. According to reports from Moscow today, Kuznetsov, for unknown reasons, refused to participate in the clemency appeal but was entered nevertheless by the prosecution. The other defendants have received prison terms of four-15 years.

400 Jewish Leaders Going To Capital To Confer With Officials About Leningrad 11

WASHINGTON, Dec. 29 (JTA)--Protests by American Jewry against the arrests of Soviet Jews and this month's trial and sentencing of nine of them will peak here tomorrow when 400 Jewish leaders converge on the State Department, Capitol Hill, the Department of Justice, several foreign embassies and perhaps the White House. The "National Emergency Conference on Soviet Jewry" is being coordinated by the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. They will seek American and foreign commitments to work for the repeal of the two death sentences and nine prison terms meted out to Soviet Jews and non-Jews accused of an attempted plane hijacking. The Jewish leaders will be addressed in plenary session by former ambassador Arthur J. Goldberg, labor leader George Meany, playwright Arthur Miller, civil rights activist Bayard Rustin, political scientist Hans J. Morgenthau, Dr. John Brooke Mosely Jr., president of the Union Theological Seminary and others.

It was observed here that in its adherence to its oft-proclaimed preference for "quiet diplomacy" in delicate international matters, the United States has in this sizzling issue indicated its efforts only after other countries had publicly declared theirs--and then only vaguely and reluctantly. State Department spokesman Robert J. McCloskey would say yesterday only that "in light of the severity of the sentences handed down at the trial, this matter has received serious consideration in Washington," and that "We have taken steps which we hope will be helpful." In addition to Britain, France and the Vatican, public protests have been made by West Germany, Denmark, Norway, Australia and the Archbishop of Canterbury. Rep. Joseph G. Minish, the New Jersey Democrat who on Nov. 16 became the first Congressman to denounce the current Soviet trials, has collected 47 Congressional signatures on an appeal to Soviet Ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin that he "utilize the power of your office" to reverse last week's sentences in Leningrad.

"To penalize them by life imprisonment or death for their (emigration) activities would be a travesty of justice," the appeal declared, noting that the case "hinges on the fact they wanted to leave the Soviet system" for Israel. The House-based petition was also signed by Democratic Sen. Harrison A. Williams Jr. of Rep. Minish's state; New Jersey's other Senator, Republican Clifford P. Case, said he preferred to endorse a similar petition being circulated in the upper house by Sen. Birch Bayh of Indiana. The signers of the Minish text include James H. Scheuer, Emanuel Celler, Allard K. Lowenstein, Bertram L. Podell and Mario Biaggi of New York; Joshua Eilberg of Pennsylvania; Abner J. Mikva of Illinois, and Mrs. Patsy T. Mink of Hawaii. Five Senators called yesterday for action by the Nixon administration. They were Birch Bayh of Indiana, Edward M. Kennedy of Massachusetts and Abraham A. Ribicoff of Connecticut, Democrats, and Jacob K. Javits of New York and Robert Dole of Kansas, Republicans. Bayh noted that other countries had already made public statements.

Citywide Rally Scheduled In New York; Rallies In Philadelphia, Canadian Cities

NEW YORK, Dec. 29 (JTA)--A two-hour citywide demonstration on behalf of the Leningrad Jews has been scheduled for tomorrow from 12 to 2 p.m. The rally, sponsored by the New York Conference on Soviet Jewry and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations will be addressed by Mayor John V. Lindsay, Cultural Affairs Commissioner Dore Schary, Rabbi Steven Riskin of Lincoln Square Synagogue, labor leader Harry Van Arsdale, a representative of Terence Cardinal Cooke, the president of the Protestant Council of Churches and others. The co-sponsors of the demonstration have asked Jewish businesses in the city to close for the two hours. That appeal is being carried on the American Jewish Congress' phone-in "hot line." An Emergency Vigil to Help Save Soviet Jewry is planned for tonight at the Eas' Meadow Jewish Center on Long Island, to be followed by a mile-and-a-half march to Temple Emanuel. Rabbi Arthur Schneier of Park East Synagogue, president of the Appeal of Conscience Foundation, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that Secretary of State William P. Rogers had told him in Washington yesterday that he and President Nixon had discussed the matter twice over the weekend and were initiating action that Rogers disclosed to him off the record.

Michael Harrington, chairman of the Socialist Party U.S.A., and A. Philip Randolph, honorary co-chairman and a top civil rights and labor leader, urged President Nixon and all other Americans yesterday to "speak out firmly and forcefully on the grave issue" of the Leningrad trial and sentences of "so-called hijackers." They accused the Kremlin "of a return to outright use of terror to suppress all dissidence among its people and of conducting a campaign of anti-Semitism which has culminated in the trial, conviction and sentencing to death of two Jewish defendants for a 'crime' that was never committed." The party called on President Nixon to "let the Soviet rulers know that they cannot pursue their outrageous course without paying a severe penalty in the court of world opinion," and on "all freedom-loving Americans to protest this outrage by Communist Russia." Harrington and Randolph said the Socialist Party U.S.A., the American affiliate of the Socialist International, was "gravely concerned with the implications in this case." About 75 Jewish students marched in protest against the Leningrad sentences today around a gallows erected at the Isaiah Wall near the United Nations. A skull hanging from a noose was labeled Dymshitz and Kuznetsov, the two Russian Jews sentenced to death for their alleged role in a hijack plot. The demonstration was organized by the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry.

There will be a rally in Philadelphia at noon tomorrow, coordinated by the Jewish Community Relations Council and the ad hoc Greater Philadelphia Emergency Council for Soviet Jewry. The latter was formed by Rabbi Sheldon C. Freedman, president of the Philadelphia chapter of the Rabbinical Council of America, and Leonard Schuster, a retailer who wants communities across the country to join in the "grass roots movement." A dozen members of the Emergency Council--from the Philadelphia Union of Students, the Jewish Students Union of Philadelphia Community College and the Collegiate Council of Young Israel of Philadelphia--braved freezing temperatures last night to demonstrate at Independence Hall. They lit eight flares for Soviet Jewry in the spirit of Chanukah. The Canadian Jewish Congress has arranged for a national march on the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa on Sunday, and has sent pleas to Prime Minister Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the Department of External Affairs, Soviet Consulates in Canada and Soviet President Nikolai V. Podgorny. The CJC said 15,000 Canadians had already sent appeals of their own. There was a rally in Winnipeg last night and others are scheduled for Toronto and Montreal. A nine-day daylight vigil continues at the Soviet Embassy in Ottawa, and a four-day 24-hour vigil continues outside the Soviet Consulate in Montreal.

All Of Israel Silent For Two Minutes; Various Groups Appeal On Behalf Of The 11

JERUSALEM, Dec. 29 (JTA)--Israel went silent at 10 o'clock this morning as a two-minute blast on sirens in every city, town and village brought traffic and all other activities to a halt in a national gesture of protest against the sentences imposed on Jews in Leningrad. The gesture had been called for by Histadrut, Israel's Labor Federation. Histadrut's secretary general, Yitzhak Ben-Aharon, visited the Finnish Embassy in Tel Aviv this morning with a note of protest to Moscow on behalf of the union's million members. Finland handles Soviet affairs in Israel. Various organizations in Israel affiliated with world bodies continued to urge the government to intervene with Soviet authorities on behalf of the Leningrad defendants.

Mrs. Meir: Decision To Return To Talks Based On 'Military And Political' Achievements'

JERUSALEM, Dec. 29 (JTA)--Premier Golda Meir sought to reassure the Knesset today that recent developments justify her government's decision to end its boycott of the Jarring talks. She said the decision "derives from very important military and political achievements" which she did not specify. But she mentioned in the course of her speech recent United States military and economic aid, including \$500 million in credits for additional military purchases "under conditions which reveal an understanding of Israel's needs and situation." (In Washington, White House Press Secretary Ronald L. Zeigler said yesterday after the Israel Cabinet approved a resolution to return to the talks, the United States was gratified. Robert J. McCloskey, State Department spokesman also welcomed Israel's decision and said that Secretary of State William P. Rogers may possibly visit the Mideast "at some time when it would be most productive." He stressed, however, that there was no current plan for Rogers to make the trip before negotiations under Ambassador Gunnar V. Jarring's auspices begin.) (At the United Nations in New York, Secretary General U Thant expressed gratification with the Cabinet's decision to return to the peace talks.)

Mrs. Meir declared that "the basic principle is still in force, namely that the Israel-Arab conflict must be ended by a contractual, binding peace agreement" and "until such an agreement is reached, not a single Israeli soldier will be withdrawn from the administered territories." Mrs. Meir's justification for rejoining the Jarring talks was challenged by Menachem Beigin, leader of the opposition Gahal faction, who claimed that 44 of the Knesset's 120 members--a little more than a third--supported his contention that the conditions for Israel's return to the talks have not been created. He urged the House, "out of a sense of responsibility," to oppose the government's return motion. Beigin contended that U.S. political reassurances to Israel were inadequate. He warned that returning to the Jarring talks implied a "re-partition of the land of Israel." Mrs. Meir told the Knesset that security considerations prevented her from disclosing all of the facts that contributed to her government's change of mind on the Jarring talks but all of the facts have been provided to the Knesset's foreign affairs and defense committees. She coupled her appeal for Knesset support with a warning to the Arabs, particularly President Anwar Sadat of Egypt, of dire consequences should they resume warfare against Israel.

French Nobel Prize Winners Urge Soviets To Reconsider Sentences, Permit Emigration

PARIS, Dec. 29 (JTA)--Six French Nobel Prize winners called on the Soviet government today to reconsider the harsh Leningrad sentences and to permit the emigration from Russia of all who wish to leave, "especially those who have been sentenced" in Leningrad. The joint communique, signed by the six Nobel Laureates, some of whom have been associated in the past with pro-Soviet groups, deplored the conditions of secrecy under which the Leningrad trial was conducted and urged the Soviet government to respect the Universal Declaration of the Rights of Man. The signatories of the appeal are Francois Jacob (medicine, 1965); Alfred Kastler (Physics, 1966); Alfred Lwoff (medicine, 1965); Alfred Monod (medicine, 1965); Louis Neel (Physics, 1970) and Rene Cassin (peace, 1968). They recalled that the Leningrad defendants had, prior to their arrest, asked to be allowed to emigrate to Israel and were put under close police surveillance. This, they said, raised the possibility that they may have been the victims of "a police provocation," a possibility that cannot be ruled out because Soviet Jews have been sentenced for similar "crimes" in the past, though they were rehabilitated after the 20th Soviet Communist Party Congress.

Public protests against the sentences continued here. The Communist-dominated Confederation Generale du Travail, the country's largest trade union, released a statement describing the "deep emotion felt by France's working classes at hearing the Leningrad verdicts" and urged Soviet authorities to commute the death sentences. The Communist Party newspaper L'Humanite reported today that the party was taking "concrete steps" to gain a reprieve for the Leningrad accused. The French Communist Party marked its 50th anniversary yesterday and reportedly discussed the Leningrad trial at length. It empowered its secretary general, Georges Marchais, to take all necessary steps to gain clemency for the condemned men in Leningrad. A growing number of professional groups, church associations and political factions ranging from the Maoist Secours Rouge to the moderates, have announced their support of a protest march to be held here tomorrow night. The march will start at the Paris Town Hall and will end at the memorial to the unknown Jewish martyrs. (The chairman of the Christian and Socialist trade unions in Amsterdam cabled Soviet trade union leaders today to intervene for clemency on behalf of the Leningrad defendants and to condemn the treatment of Soviet Jews.)

1,200 Persons, Many Former Concentration Camp Inmates, Hold Rally In Buenos Aires

BUENOS AIRES, Dec. 29 (JTA)--Some 1,200 persons, many of them former Nazi concentration camp inmates, carrying placards reading "Let my people go" and "Free emigration to Israel" concentrated before the Soviet Embassy shouting "Assassins, assassins" and "Freedom, freedom" while police mounted a strong guard to prevent their approach to the building. The demonstrators then marched 20 blocks, escorted by police cars, until Kehilla Hall where an overflow mass meeting took place. The president of DAIAS, Cohen Imach, stressed that not clemency but justice was being asked for the Leningrad 11 and freedom for the three million Soviet Jews. Doctor Nehemias Resnitsky, general secretary of DAIAS castigated the silent majorities for their indifference. The DAIAS cabled Argentine President, General Roberto Marcelo Levingston, asking him to intercede to halt the executions and annul the unjust sentences.

WUJS Calls On Latin American Marxist Leaders To Intercede With Soviet Authorities

LONDON, Dec. 29 (JTA)--The World Union of Jewish Students appealed to Marxist leaders in Latin America today to use their influence with Moscow to have Soviet authorities commute the Leningrad sentences. The appeals to Premier Fidel Castro of Cuba and President Salvador Allende of Chile were sent from the annual student seminar in Dublin. They also appealed for intervention to Regis Debre, the French Marxist writer recently released from a Bolivian prison after serving three years of a 30-year sentence for guerrilla activity. (In Brussels today, Paul Struye, president of the Belgian Senate, cabled the president of the Soviet Chamber of Lawyers asking him to intervene to have the Leningrad sentences commuted.)

