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Eban, Board Of Deputies Of British Jews Concerned Over Fate Of 40 Iraqi Jews

JERUSALEM, April 8 (JTA)--Foreign Minister Abba Eban expressed "great concern" last night over the fate of about 40 Iraqi Jews reportedly awaiting trial in a Baghdad jail. Reliable sources said at least three of the Jews face summary execution and that death sentences may be pronounced on several others. Eban said "this serious development is yet another reminder of the sad state of Iraqi Jews." He dismissed an "off-the-cuff" denial by the Iraqi Embassy in Paris that any Jews are being held. "There are rumors that the Iraqi rulers intend to stage executions of Jews," Eban said. "We should like to believe that the Iraqi rulers would not dare to repeat the barbarity of public hangings in the squares of Baghdad and that the civilized world will not stand by idly." He said "The Israel government has taken and will continue to take all possible steps and will not rest until there is an end to the persecution of Jews in Iraq and in other Arab countries and until these Jews are freed." (In London today, a delegation representing the Board of Deputies of British Jews presented a letter to the Iraqi Ambassador expressing "shock" over reports on the fate of the 40 Iraqi Jews. The letter, signed by Board president Michael Fidler and Lord Janner, also referred to reports that 136 Jewish men, women and children were facing trial in Iraq. It appealed to the Iraqi government to act in accordance with human rights concepts permitting any person to leave any country including his own.)

Demonstrations In London, Tel Aviv On Behalf Of Iraqi Jews Facing Execution

LONDON, April 8 (JTA)--Jewish students and adults demonstrated peacefully today outside the Iraqi Embassy here protesting the imprisonment and threatened execution of Jews in Iraq. The demonstration was organized by student groups with the support of the Board of Deputies of British Jews and other major Jewish organizations. Demonstrators carried banners reading: "Let Them Go Home," and "Stop the Barbaric Executions." (A mass rally was also held in Tel Aviv. Demonstrators carried posters reading: "Let My People Go," and "Hands Off Iraqi Jews.")

Koch Says Fewer Jews Have Been Permitted To Leave Soviet Union Than Reported

NEW YORK, April 8 (JTA)--A New York Congressman who just returned from a visit to Russia reported today that only 750 Jews have been permitted to leave the Soviet Union during the past three months. Rep. Edward I. Koch, Democrat-Liberal, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the figure of 750 was given to him by a U.S. Embassy official in Moscow last week. He agreed that it was much less than the figures contained in recent reports from other sources which indicated that more Jews have emigrated from Russia since the beginning of 1971 than in all of 1970 when 1,000 left. But the Congressman pointed out that the U.S. Embassy could only give an estimate because no official figures are available. Koch said that according to Jews, Western newsmen and others he spoke to while in Russia, at least 300,000 Soviet Jews or ten percent of the Jewish population, would emigrate if they could. Koch said he went to Russia at the urging of many of his constituents who are concerned over the fate of some 25-30 facing trial in Leningrad and Riga. He said that in Leningrad, no Soviet official would see him despite the intervention of the U.S. Consul there. But in Moscow he met with Andrei A. Korobov, president of Inturcollegia, a major association of Soviet attorneys.

Koch told the JTA that when he pointed out that many Jews have been held in jail without trial beyond the nine-month limit provided by Soviet law, Korobov looked up the statute and replied, "You are right." Koch said the Soviet attorney promised to bring up the matter with the chief Soviet prosecutor Roman A. Rudenko. Koch said he spoke to the families of two imprisoned Jews in Leningrad. He said they were "afraid" but threw "caution to the winds" by talking to him because they recognize that the Soviet authorities respond only to the pressure of world opinion. The Congressman said he has written to Secretary of State William P. Rogers asking the State Department to take more vigorous steps on behalf of the imprisoned Jews. Asked by the JTA what the U.S. could, realistically, do that it hasn't done before, Koch replied, "make public protestations." He said the Soviets dread being held up to scorn before world opinion and would respond more readily to public representations by the U.S. than to private diplomatic approaches. In this case, he said, the U.S. could point out that the Soviets were violating their own laws by holding Jews without trial.

Ranking Republican Opposes Mideast Peace Force That Would Include Soviet Troops

WASHINGTON, April 8 (JTA)--Sen. Gordon L. Allott, Republican of Colorado, declared his opposition today to a Middle East peace force that would include Soviet soldiers. "No sensible solution," he advised his colleagues, "will attempt to legitimize the Russian presence, which he called "the major source of unresolvable tensions" in the area. Allott's statement was considered significant in that he is the chairman of the Republican Policy Committee in the Senate. He inserted into the Congressional Record what he called the "majestic address" by Israeli Foreign Minister Abba Eban at a New York dinner of the Jewish United Fund-Israel Emergency Appeal on March 18. Eban said then that Israel could not passively agree to Egyptian settlement proposals, disregarding her security needs. That position, said Allott, is necessary "to avoid sacrificing long-term interests for short-term image." The Coloradan--whose state ranks 15th in Jewish percentage of population and whose home city of Lamar has fewer than 100 Jews--stated: "I am confident that the United States will do nothing to impede this prudent policy." The composition of any Mideast security force must be agreed on "by the parties directly involved," Allott emphasized, and there must be no "dictated boundary." He added that "the 'peace talk' from Cairo is as yet unconvincing."

Proposals For Interim Arrangement With Egypt Taken Up By Knesset Committee

JERUSALEM, April 8 (JTA)--Proposals for an interim arrangement with Egypt that could lead to the reopening of the Suez Canal were taken up today by the Knesset's Defense and Foreign Affairs Committee. An official announcement said discussions of the subject would be continued within a few days. Although the Knesset adjourned a week ago for spring recess, the committee continues to meet. It was briefed today by Foreign Minister Abba Eban who reported on his recent talks with U.S. officials in Washington. Meanwhile the government was reported to be considering the military and political effects of an interim arrangement. Israel's proposals on the subject are expected to be ready within a week to 10 days and will be submitted to Washington for transmission to Cairo, informed sources said. The latest initiative for an interim arrangement originated in Washington and Israel apparently prefers the United States to serve as "broker" on this issue rather than United Nations mediator Dr. Gunnar V. Jarring. According to one Israeli view, any such arrangement must be preceded by mutual declarations of termination of hostilities and a state of non-belligerency from Israel and Egypt. This condition is reportedly insisted upon by Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, Transport Minister Shimon Peres, Police Minister Shlomo Hillel and Minister-Without-Portfolio Israel Galili.

But other Cabinet members, among them Eban, are said to believe that Israel must adopt a more realistic if somewhat softer position that would be easier for Egypt to accept. Nevertheless, Cabinet ministers unanimously agree that no Egyptian troops can be allowed to cross the canal should Israeli forces be withdrawn any distance from its east bank under an interim arrangement. Israel would grant access to its side of the canal to Egyptian technicians and other civilian personnel necessary to restore the canal to a useable condition. The Israel Labor Party convention which ended yesterday endorsed the principle of an interim arrangement while it strongly backed the government's refusal to make any prior commitments to withdrawal from occupied territories. The Labor Party got a pat on the back today from its coalition partners, the National Religious Party, for declining to discuss at the convention a series of recommendations for religious reforms in Israel. The agenda item was dropped after several Party leaders, including Premier Golda Meir, decided that it would offend the Orthodox bloc. "It has been a long time since the Labor Party took such a conciliatory step toward religious Jewry," an NRP spokesman said today.

Jewish Youths Picket Department Store To Protest Sale Of Soviet Goods

LOS ANGELES, April 8 (JTA)--The city's largest department store, the May Company, was picketed yesterday by more than 200 students protesting its selling of Russian vodka, caviar and furs and its giving floor space to a travel agency selling tours to the Soviet Union. The demonstration was coordinated by the Southern California Council for Soviet Jews and the California Students for Soviet Jews. Zev Yaroslavsky, chairman of the SCCSJ, said the demonstrators had "exposed (May's) complicity with the Soviets' oppression of Jews" and "we intend to see to it that Americans stop spending American dollars in the Fascists' dictatorial Soviet Union." He added that there was "an excellent possibility that May Company will take all Soviet goods off their shelves and will evict the travel agency involved in selling tours to the USSR." But he added: "If they don't make any concessions then we will make hell for May Company." Si Frumkin, chairman of the CSSJ, declared: "We will be back again not only at May Company but at any other department store or travel agency which deals economically with the Soviet Union." The two demonstrating groups are affiliated with the Union of Councils for Soviet Jews.

State Department Officials Pledge Continued Diplomatic Efforts For Soviet Jews

WASHINGTON, April 8 (JTA)--Officials of the State Department have pledged to continue their diplomatic efforts to win the easing of Soviet restrictions on Jewish religious life and emigration. This statement was made here in a meeting this week between a leadership delegation of Zvi Agudath Israel of America and Herbert Okun, assistant director of the State Department's Soviet Desk and other State Department officials. The Orthodox youth organization, which had been invited by the State Department, told Okun that they and "the vast majority of religious Jewish youth in the United States (are) vehemently opposed" to extremist actions on behalf of the Jews of Russia. The Department officials in turn stressed their readiness to help any Jew seeking to emigrate to the U.S. and promised to speak up at international bodies for the rights of Soviet Jews. Following the Department meeting Rabbi Menachem Lubinsky, spokesman for Zvi Agudath Israel, stated: "We are satisfied by the active concern that the U.S. government has shown concerning the welfare of Soviet Jewry. We reached a full understanding on the damaging effect on Jews in Russia of any provocative acts in this country." Rabbi Lubinsky informed the JTA today that further meetings with State Department officials are being planned.

Stormy Demonstrations Mark Funeral Procession For Terrorists Killed By Patrol

TEL AVIV, April 8 (JTA)--Stormy demonstrations punctuated by gunfire and stone-throwing took place yesterday afternoon at the Dжебалия refugee camp in the Gaza Strip during a funeral procession for two of the four terrorists killed yesterday morning in an encounter with an Israeli Army patrol. Two women were injured, one of them seriously, by shots fired by a youth hiding among the mourners. The two women were hospitalized. Several thousand refugees were following the funeral procession, many waving black flags and one hoisting an Egyptian flag. Stones were thrown at an Israeli patrol that was present to prevent the march from entering the main streets of the camp, where more disturbances might occur. Tension continued this morning as rumors spread that the two women had been hit by Israeli fire. The four Palestinians killed yesterday morning were members of the Popular Liberation Forces and were being sought for terrorist activities. At least one of them was a senior officer of the P.L.F. The Israeli patrol suffered no casualties. In Gaza last night, an Israeli border policeman was attacked by an Arab youth who tried to knife him in the back. The policeman was slightly injured, but managed to shoot his assailant dead.

Passover 5731: Ancient Cry Of 'Let My People Go' Continues For Jews In USSR

NEW YORK, April 8 (JTA)--As American Jews prepared for observance of the Passover holiday which begins at sundown tomorrow, their national and local leaders and spokesmen released holiday greetings, many of which drew an analogy between the Israelites' flight from Egypt 3,000 years ago and the present day struggle of Soviet Jewry to be free. Jewish leaders focussed on the pertinence of the Passover message of freedom to events in Russia and the Middle East today. Dr. Emanuel Neumann, chairman of the Jewish Agency's American section saw the holiday as an appropriate occasion to "reiterate the pledge we have made so many times in recent years: that world Jewry will resolutely maintain its solidarity with the people of Israel in their firm resolve not to bow to modern Egypt's intransigence." He further declared: "As in the days of the Pharaohs, Egypt would once again destroy Israel, if it could. With the backing of Soviet Russia, it seeks to impose borders on Israel that would make it impossible for Israel to maintain its own security." Sam Rothberg, general chairman of the State of Israel Bonds, said, "The full impact of the significance of Passover as a celebration of freedom is explicitly expressed for us in the decisive stand by the people of Israel for a future of freedom and peace. Equally explicit are the shock waves of news dispatches detailing the courageous struggle for freedom and Jewish identity in Soviet Russia. These two parallels of the ancient Passover lend relevance and immediacy to the observance...this year."

Max M. Fisher, president of the Council of Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds observed that "urgent social problems in our nation call on us for leadership in the common actions against poverty, and for that equality which is the promise held out by civil liberties and human rights to be enjoyed by all. The brave stand of our courageous fellow Jews in the Soviet Union impels us to double our efforts to help them in their determination to live as Jews and to emigrate to Israel and other free lands." Edward Ginsberg, general chairman of the United Jewish Appeal, noted that "the majority of the 50,000 immigrants who will arrive in Israel this year are experiencing real freedom, as we understand it, for the first time. They come from lands of oppression and persecution where the word 'Jew' means 'enemy'...Freedom from political and cultural persecution is only the first step to a new life. These immigrants also seek--and deserve--freedom from want. In fulfilling their vital and traditional responsibility of providing for these immigrants in need, the Jews of America have maintained a Jewish tradition as old as Passover itself." Rabbi Harold I. Saperstein, president of the New York Board of Rabbis declared that "The observance of Passover is a timely reminder that the idea and ideal of freedom stand high among humanity's basic desires and needs...Yesterday it was Pharaoh; today it is the Soviet Union where 3 1/2 million Jews are pleading for their right to practice their religion and the continuation of their cultural and religious way of life or to be allowed to leave for Israel and other countries of the free world."

Jews Languishing In Arab Lands, Abused And Imprisoned, Must Not Be Forgotten

Philip E. Hoffman, president of the American Jewish Committee, welcomed "the cracks that have begun to appear in the walls that have for so long encircled our brethren in the Soviet Union." But while acknowledging that increasing numbers of Jews have been permitted to emigrate from Russia, Hoffman decried the restrictions still applied to the more than three million Jews who remain there. Rabbi Israel Miller, president of the American Zionist Federation said, "During this festival of redemption, our hearts and thoughts turn to our fellow Jews, forgotten by many, who languish in Arab lands, abused and imprisoned. Our prayer is that they may soon find their way from enslavement to freedom in Israel." Ira Guilden, president of the Israel Bond Organization declared that "Israel must be maintained as a land which can answer the needs of Jews wherever they may be. It is estimated that hundreds of thousands of Jews in the Soviet Union have officially registered their intention to leave the country. If any substantial number of Jews are in fact allowed to go to Israel, the tasks facing Israel, and the economic responsibilities of the Israel Bond drive will be greatly increased." Rehavam Amir, Consul General of Israel in New York, said in a message to American Jews, "Today, more than ever, we are keenly aware of the continuous link of the past of our people with present events. Ever since the deliverance and the exodus of our people from bondage to freedom this deep yearning for peace and freedom has become part and parcel of our hopes, prayers and aspirations."

The American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry issued a call to American Jews "to remember the plight of their fellow Jews in the Soviet Union when observing the holiday which commemorates the exodus from Egypt and the liberation of the Jewish people from oppression under the Pharaohs." Rabbi Gilbert Klaperman, chairman of the New York Conference on Soviet Jewry said, "In every generation, the Passover Haggadah says, one ought to regard himself as though he personally had come out of Egypt...This year we are all slaves; next year we shall be freemen. Thus Jews the world over rededicate themselves to freedom and justice for mankind." Dr. Alfred Gottschalk, acting president of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, observing that "Passover opens with a special meal, the seder, during which the youngest member recites four traditional questions," offered a new question pertinent to 1971: "How can we be free while others are not?" Citing the plight of Soviet Jews, he called for "a new dedication to the fight against slavery of all kinds among all people at all times." Rabbi Bernard L. Berzon, president of the Rabbinical Council of America said in a Passover message, "The drama of Passover highlights the eternal struggle between the exponents of religious liberty and the hateful advocates of spiritual and physical oppression. Passover celebrates man's yearning for freedom and its achievement. It is most significant that Israel was reborn 23 years ago during this same season of freedom."

Thousands Of Jews Will Be Observing Passover For The First Time As Free People

Harold Friedman, president of the United Hias Service, said "The anguished cry of 'Let Our People Go' rings loud and clear in behalf of Jews who yearn for the opportunity to begin new lives in freedom and dignity." He referred to Jews in the Soviet Union, in the Arab states of the Middle East and North Africa and in some Latin American countries where "extremists take over the reins of government!" "We are gratified that thousands of Jews will be observing Passover for the first time as free people,"

he said. "Our hearts are with our countless less fortunate brethren." Rabbi Menachem M. Schneerson, the Lubavitcher Rebbe used the occasion of Passover to urge Jews to "intensify their study of the Torah and increase their observance of its commandments." He also urged Jews to use at least a minimum quantity of "Shmurah Matzos" during the holiday season--matzos made from the flour of wheat grains "which have been carefully guarded, from the instant they were out in the field, against any contact with water." Such contact might cause leavening and disqualify its use during Passover, the Lubavitcher Rebbe said. Herman L. Weisman, president of the Zionist Organization of America, said in his Passover message that Zionists "who have labored to create the State of Israel renew our pledge at this Passover season to Israel's peace and security...Equally we confirm the yearning of our brethren in the Soviet Union to be free so that they too can go to Israel."

Mrs. Henry N. Rapaport, president of the National Women's League of the United Synagogue of America, said that "The significance of Passover, 1971 is that for the first time the Jews of silence--the Jews of the Soviet Union--who for years have feared even to dare hope for freedom, are today actively seeking to achieve this freedom." Also referring to Soviet Jewry, Rabbi Bernard A. Poupko, president of the Religious Zionists of America, urged Jews to "remember and recognize that much more than we have done for Soviet Jewry, Soviet Jewry has done for us. Among others, the cause of Soviet Jewry has attracted an impressive segment of our otherwise alienated youth. These young men and women who until recently expressed a dreadful emptiness in their existence, have suddenly discovered that there is a great cause worth fighting for and even sacrificing for." Mrs. David M. Levitt, president of the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods said, "this holiday just before Spring, a season of rebirth and hope, comes when efforts are being made to arrive at a peace settlement between Israel and Egypt, when Jews are seeking religious and cultural freedom in the Soviet Union including the right of emigration, and when the struggles in Vietnam and Southeast Asia brings tragedy to countries and peoples... Let us rededicate ourselves to the cause of freedom and brotherhood and let us not tire of making our voices heard."

Passover In Israel: Joyous And Festive For The Old, Sabras, And New Jewish Arrivals

JERUSALEM, April 8 (JTA)--Israelis appeared to forget the stalled Jarring peace talks, the precarious nature of the cease-fire and other troubles external and internal today as they made final preparations for the Passover holiday which starts at sundown tomorrow. Markets were jammed with last minute shoppers stocking up on holiday foods and delicacies. Prices were higher, as they always are on the eve of a festival. But goods were in plentiful supply and most customers didn't seem to mind paying the price. There was an air of prosperity in the country on the 23rd Passover eve since Israel became a State. It was enhanced by the flood of tourists. A record-breaking 50,000 visitors from abroad have poured into Israel during the past few weeks to celebrate Passover and Easter in the Holy Land. They stand out in the crowds by reason of their dress, their ubiquitous cameras and their frequent requests for directions. Israel's hotels of all categories are enjoying the biggest boom in years. A JTA reporter who telephoned hotels to ask for a room, just as a matter of curiosity, encountered a stream of unprintable language from harassed room clerks. Most Israelis will celebrate the traditional seder in their homes. Exceptions are the tens of thousands of soldiers on active duty all over the country, in the occupied zones and on the cease-fire lines.

The Army's chaplaincy corps has made elaborate preparations on their behalf. The traditional Passover foods have been supplied to all posts and field kitchens. Haggadahs have been distributed along with thousands of gift parcels provided by the welfare services for soldiers who have no families. Ample supplies of matzos were sent to all units. The wine will be brought by chaplains, cantors and readers when they visit the various posts to conduct the seder. Passover is the only day when wine is permitted on military posts. But soldiers on active patrol or guard duty will get only grape juice. Defense Minister Moshe Dayan, Chief of Staff Haim Bar Lev and ranking senior officers of Israel's armed forces will attend a special seder to be conducted by Army chief chaplain, Gen. Shlomo Goren. The official announcement said it would take place "somewhere in Israel." A group of new immigrants from Soviet Russia will attend a special seder at Neve Sharett, a residential quarter near Tel Aviv. For many of them it will be the first seder of their lives. Israel's two chief rabbis, Isaac Nissim and Isser Untermann issued special prayers and messages for the holiday. They urged Israelis to observe the traditions and prayed for peace.

Public Seders Planned In Many Cities; Jews, Non-Jews To Share In Common Seders

NEW YORK, April 8 (JTA)--A series of Passover observances for the aged, the ill and the indigent and for children with handicaps was announced today by the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York and its 130 affiliated agencies. Traditional holiday observances for children will be held at the Federation's Pleasantville Cottage School of the Jewish Child Care Association which will be attended this year by about 400 boys and girls, the Federation announced. The Federation's Joint Passover Association will also make it possible for thousands of needy families to enjoy the Passover festival in their homes. Federation hospitals have planned for the holiday, the announcement said. Beth Abraham Hospital in the Bronx and the Malmonides Medical Center in Brooklyn will hold seders. The Federation's community centers and YM-YWHA's have been busy with pre-holiday preparations which included instructions in cooking Passover foods. Public events are also scheduled in cities across the country to celebrate Passover. The coincidence this year of Passover and Easter prompted the Catholics and Jews in Philadelphia to share the Passover seder as a means of furthering inter-religious understanding. The Jewish-Catholic Relations Committee of the Cardinal's Committee on Human Relations proposed that Jewish families invite Catholic neighbors for either the first or second seders in their homes or to community seders in synagogues. Catholic youth groups will be invited to participate in model seders or third seders held by synagogue youth groups. The National Jewish Welfare Board announced that traditional seders will be held for Jewish members of the armed services in Vietnam and in 600 other overseas and domestic military installations. The Jewish Association for Services for the Aged is sponsoring a number of community seders for lonely, poverty stricken elderly men and women in various sections of NYC and on Long Island. The 39th annual Third Seder of the Greater New York Histadrut Council will be held Sunday evening.