

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. XXXVIII - Fifty-Fourth Year

Wednesday, April 14, 1971

No. 72

Eban Rejects Iraqi Government Claims That There Are No Jews in Prison

JERUSALEM, April 13 (JTA)--Foreign Minister Abba Eban today rejected Iraqi government claims that no Jews were being held in prison and that the 4000 Jews still in Iraq were leading lives of freedom and equality. Addressing a special Knesset meeting called to discuss the fate of Jews in Iraq and other Arab countries, Eban said that reports reaching here in the past few days stated that dozens of arrests have been made in the past few weeks. Jews arrested last December and later freed, he added, were now facing re-arrest and new trials. (In New York, an official of the World Jewish Congress today told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that he had no specific information to confirm or deny reported Iraqi government statements that 16 Jews, who along with some other 24 Jews, had been charged with attempting to leave the country illegally, had been released from jail.) (Also unconfirmed was a radio report from London that 200 Iraqi Jews had crossed the border to Iran.) The Knesset had been recalled from its Passover recess after more than 30 members of the Gahal faction, Free Center, Agudath Israel and the State List parties had requested the special session.

President Zalman Shazar, members of the Cabinet and Archamandridge Anthony Grabbe, who is the head of the Russian Orthodox Church in Exile in Jerusalem were present, the public galleries were packed. Eban told the Knesset that Israel had and is still doing a great deal to save the Jews in Arab lands. He called on the Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee to publish a report which should "bring to light some of the behind the scenes work that is being done...What we demand is release from bondage and salvation of our brethren trapped on Arab soil. Until we have achieved this we cannot rest." The Knesset voted unanimously to "instruct the Parliamentary Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee to rally world opinion to save the remnants of the Jewish population now being held hostage in Egypt, Iraq, Syria and other Arab lands." Gahal leader Menachem Beigin introduced a motion recommending a "Brussels type conference" for Iraqi Jews to be held in New York. During the Knesset session, several hundred Israelis of Iraqi origin held a demonstration of solidarity with Iraqi Jews outside the Knesset building. Ashkenazi Chief Rabbi Isser Untermann visited the demonstrators and gave them words of encouragement.

Four Synagogues Desecrated; Swastikas, Hammer-And-Sickle Emblems Painted On Walls

WASHINGTON, April 13 (JTA)--Swastikas and hammer-and-sickle emblems were painted on the walls of four synagogues and another synagogue was stoned over the weekend here, it was learned today. The foot-high desecrations were painted on with black enamel paint and the apparent use of stencils. The daubings -- effected at night in a respectable, low-crime neighborhood -- victimized Tifereth Israel, a Conservative temple, and Ohev Shalom, Beth Shalom and Agudath Achim, all Orthodox. Summit Hill Congregation, an Orthodox synagogue, was stoned during Passover service by assailants who fled. Rabbi A. Nathan Abramowitz of Tifereth Israel, former chairman of the Washington Board of Rabbis, said that while a similar incident at his shul five years ago was found to have been committed by youngsters, this time "It looks like a professional job."

The worst-marred building was Beth Shalom, suffering its first vandalism in its 13-year existence. All six of its doors were smeared with paint. Ironically, the building has floodlights that are on at night. Observers said the stoning of Summit Hill was apparently not connected with the smearings at the other four synagogues. Although the neighborhood, in upper northwest Washington, has had its population turn in recent years from predominantly Jewish to significantly black, an official of one of the vandalized synagogues said Jewish-black relations in the area were friendly. Another official noted that the American Nazi Party held a rally here last Saturday in Lafayette Park and that its 11 participants reportedly included four men who were allegedly beaten by Jewish Defense League members outside the White House two weeks ago during a rally for Soviet Jews. He speculated that the neo-Nazis might have vandalized the synagogue to avenge the JDL action.

Plans Dropped To Demolish Oldest Synagogue In The Netherlands

AMSTERDAM, April 13 (JTA)--The Town Council of Nymegen has dropped its plans to demolish the town's synagogue, one of the country's oldest Jewish houses of worship, following the intervention of The Netherlands Minister of Culture Dr. Marga Klompe. Instead, the synagogue will be renovated at a cost of 600,000 florins (\$166,140) with The Netherlands government contributing 40 percent of the cost and the Province of Gelderland 10 percent. Dr. Klompe, a Roman Catholic, looks upon the synagogue, which was built in 1727, as a monument which commemorates the Jewish community which flourished in Nymegen before World War II and the Nazi occupation of Holland.

Commerce Secretary Meets With JDL'ers Protesting Trade-With The Soviet Union

WASHINGTON, April 13 (JTA)--Secretary of Commerce Maurice H. Stans acceded to Jewish Defense League demands today and met for 10 minutes with 10 JDL'ers protesting trade with the Soviet Union. Stans interrupted a staff meeting to see the demonstrators, who entered his offices in anger over what they called the Commerce Department's compliance with a \$1.6 billion industrial deal with the USSR by the National Machine Tool Builders' Association. They charged the Department with maintaining friendly relations with a country "openly engaged in genocide" of Soviet Jewry. Department spokesman Harry Weiss said Stans expressed "great personal sympathy" with the JDL's argument but told them the Department did not act unilaterally on such matters and could not be held responsible for U.S. trade policy. The Builders' Association deal, Weiss added, was a private arrangement initiated by the association. He said the \$1.6 billion figure cited by the JDL was inaccurate, but would not elaborate. JDL spokesman Rafael Perl, a law student at Georgetown University and a leader of the Washington Committee for the Release of Captive Soviet Jewry, agreed that Stans was "sympathetic to our cause."

Detailed Proposal For Interim Agreement Reported Ready For Cabinet Meeting

JERUSALEM, April 13 (JTA)--Premier Golda Meir intends to submit to the Cabinet, at its regular weekly meeting next Sunday, a detailed proposal for an interim solution of the Middle East stalemate that has been worked out by her and her "inner circle," the newspaper Haaretz reported today. The proposal, it said, is that Israel will agree to a reopening of the Suez Canal if Egypt will declare an end to her belligerency against Israel. Under the reported Israeli plan, Israeli troops will withdraw 8 kilometers (5 to 6.2 miles) from the canal; no Egyptian troops are to move into the vacated areas, and Israel is to get detailed guarantees against a violation of this agreement by Egypt. The character of the guarantees sought by Israel is not yet clear. The progress of Sunday's Cabinet meeting will depend on the kind of guarantees the United States is willing to offer. Other questions still to be hammered out involve the timing of the Israeli pullback -- on the signing of the agreement or after the clearing of the canal; a new armistice with Egypt, and machinery for supervising such an armistice. Premier Meir's "inner circle" consists of Deputy Premier Yigal Allon, Foreign Minister Abba Eban, Defense Minister Moshe Dayan and Minister-Without-Portfolio Israel Galili. The Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee discussed an interim settlement today, with Eban in attendance.

Opposition leader Menachem Beigin demanded last night that a canal reopening be discussed separately from questions of withdrawal, territory or refugees. Speaking in Tel Aviv to the National Council of the Herut Party, of which he is chairman, Beigin proposed that a mixed Israeli-Egyptian commission -- on the lines of the one that functioned for 18 years -- consider the canal question, it should, he added, make certain that Israeli ships flying Israeli flags be guaranteed access to the waterway. Beigin denounced the government's readiness to retreat from the canal under an interim arrangement. The former Minister-Without-Portfolio warned that there were 65 Soviet ships in the Mediterranean, 25 of them warships, and a reopened canal would facilitate what he called Soviet Union expansionist schemes.

On another matter, Beigin suggested that Herut initiate negotiations with the Liberal Party for a total merger of the two factions, which now are parliamentarily united as Gahal. Beigin said he had already called on Liberal leader Yosef Sapir, former Minister of Commerce and Industry, to agree to talks shortly. He said Sapir, while not rejecting the idea, was skeptical about it, as many Liberals want to maintain their sovereignty.

State Department Reports Soviet Union Has Established Naval Base In Egypt

WASHINGTON, April 13 (JTA)--Secretary of Defense Melvin R. Laird reported today that the Soviet Union has established a naval base in Egypt. He refused to elaborate, however, harking back to Secretary of State William P. Rogers' call for "quiet diplomacy." Laird, speaking at a press conference, said the recent shipments of Soviet weaponry to Egypt included "sophisticated" armaments, and that the United States will watch the situation "very carefully" to see that the military balance of power is not tipped against Israel. State Department spokesman Robert J. Closskey said later at his regular noon briefing that while there is "uncertainty between what we know and what we hear," it was "possible, of course" that the Soviet deliveries have included, as reported, MIG-23 jets. McCloskey said there was no hard evidence of a Soviet personnel build-up in Egypt. Replying to a series of questions by the Jewish Telegraphic Agency correspondent, McCloskey said that while the U.S. favors implementation of all the parts of Security Council Resolution 242 of Nov. 22, 1967, "we can't stand opposed to measures of accommodation which serve the maintenance of the cease-fire."

McCloskey was apparently alluding to the current consideration of the Middle East parties for an interim solution involving a reopening of the Suez Canal in return for an Israeli troop pullback in the Sinai Peninsula. As for the cease-fire itself, which officially terminated March 7, McCloskey said it was "holding, holding." He declined comment on Egypt's proposal that her troops be allowed to cross the canal as part of the interim solution, saying it would "prejudice" the situation. The State Department spokesman insisted that "we are not assuming the role of middleman" in place of Dr. Gunnar V. Jarring, the United Nations' Mideast intermediary, but that the U.S. would be willing, if asked, to deliver Israel's awaited policy statement on a canal reopening to Egypt. McCloskey said Secretary Rogers had not yet decided to visit the Mideast during his upcoming visits to London -- April 27-28 for a meeting of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) -- and to Ankara -- beginning April 30 for a meeting of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO). But McCloskey said a decision on a Mideast stopover would be made before Rogers left for London -- that is, within the next two weeks.

New Arrivals In Israel From Russia Say More Jews Promised Exit Permits Next Month

TEL AVIV, April 13 (JTA)--Another group of immigrants from the Soviet Union, this time mostly elderly people, arrived here last night from Vienna. It was the second group of immigrants from Russia within 24 hours and the fifth since last Thursday. They came from Vilna, Tzernowitz, Kovno and Riga. All said they had received their exit permits early this month. The same, they said, applies to a number of immigrants still awaiting transportation in Vienna. The new arrivals said that more Jews in Russia have been told they will get their exit permits by May 5.

Thunder Storms, Rains Wreak Havoc; Pilgrimage Continues Despite Storm

JERUSALEM, April 13 (JTA)--Unseasonable rains and thunder storms wreaked havoc in Israel during the past twenty-four hours, shutting down airports at Jerusalem and Rosh Pina in the Galilee, collapsing a 60-foot section of the Jericho-Jerusalem road and damaging other roads, as well as crops and houses. In Jerusalem, firemen rescued people trapped in 20 flooded houses. Twenty-foot high waves on Lake Tiberias smashed into the promenade of Tiberias and damaged homes, cafes and the waterfront quay. In the Negev, huge waterstreams coursing down the mountains flooded the roads. Ships anchored outside the breakwaters of Israeli harbors were ordered to put out to sea to avoid the constantly changing highwinds. Despite the storm, the annual Passover pilgrimage to Jerusalem continued. About 1,000 persons arrived in Jerusalem yesterday by train where they were welcomed at the railway station by officials of the Religious Affairs Ministry.

1200 Persons Participate In Exodus Rally For Soviet Jews; Urge Nixon, U Thant To Act

NEW YORK, April 13 (JTA)--Some 1,200 persons attending an "Exodus Rally for Soviet Jews" today outside Brooklyn Borough Hall signed petitions calling upon President Nixon and United Nations Secretary General U Thant to intervene with Soviet authorities to permit Soviet Jews to emigrate to the lands of their choice. Passersby joined in the petition-signing and dancing in the streets which followed the singing of Cantor Chaskele Ritter of Congregation Ahavath Israel of East Midwood. The rally was sponsored by the Brooklyn Jewish Community Council and the Brooklyn Division of the American Jewish Congress. City Comptroller Abraham D. Beame, told the rally, "we cannot neglect the thousands of Jews who want to come to Israel from Russia. Those people see Israel as their salvation as well as their sanctuary. We must not forget them. We must help their effort by bringing to the attention of the world and to the UN the need to assert their rights." Borough President Sebastian Leone called upon the civilized world to "Join with us and with the Jews in urging Soviet authorities to allow the Jews of the Soviet Union to chose their own identity." The Rev. Charles H. Straught Jr., executive director of the Brooklyn Division of the Council of Churches of New York, called upon all Americans -- Christians and Jews -- to urge the Soviet leaders to let the Jews leave.

The Reverend Joseph Konrad, representing the Most Rev. Francis J. Mugavero, Bishop of the Catholic Diocese of Brooklyn, noting that every human being has the "right to religious liberty," called upon the audience to join in a call to Soviet leaders for religious liberties for Soviet Jews. Sol A. Liebman, president of the Community Council, said it was "fitting and proper that we demonstrate our support for the efforts of three million Jews to escape the repression of the Jewish religion and the Jewish culture." Harold M. Jacobs, chairman of the board of organizations of the Union of Orthodox Congregations of America and a past president of the Council, said of the Jews of the Soviet Union, "They were born Jews and Jews they wish to remain. We, the people of Brooklyn, 2,500,000 strong, cry out in the name of freedom. 'Let our people go.'" Abe Klugsberg, executive director of the Brooklyn AJCongress, stated that "It is a crime against humanity to cut off the Soviet Jews from the rest of Jewry throughout the world. Opportunity must be given to Soviet Jews who desire to migrate to other lands, and to do so without hindrance and penalty."

Normal Hebrew Day School Marks 25th Anniversary in Casablanca

NEW YORK, April 13 (JTA)--Ceremonies attended by religious and lay leaders of Casablanca Jewry were held recently in that city to mark the 25th anniversary of the founding of the Normal Hebrew School in Casablanca. Alan M. Stroock, chairman of the board of the American Friends of the Alliance Israelite Universelle, announced today. The school, established in 1946 by the Alliance Israelite Universelle, is the equivalent of an American teacher's college and its hundreds of graduates teach Jewish subjects in various Alliance Israelite schools in North Africa or serve as spiritual leaders in Jewish communities throughout the world, Stroock said. The school has a current enrollment of 126 men and women from all parts of Morocco who receive a thorough training in liberal arts and science subjects as well as in advanced Jewish education. Emile Sebban, principal of the school, told the gathering that the school has greatly contributed to the strengthening and deepening of Jewish religious life in many communities, Stroock reported.

City Official Scores JDL Declaration To 'Smash Heads'

NEW YORK, April 13 (JTA)--A declaration by Rabbi Meir Kahane that the Jewish Defense League was initiating a campaign to "smash heads" in the Boro Park section of Brooklyn in an effort to curb an alleged rise in anti-Jewish incidents was condemned today by Dr. Marvin Schick as "extraordinarily asinine." Dr. Schick, special deputy assistant to Mayor John V. Lindsay, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that Rabbi Kahane's declaration was asinine because anti-Jewish crime in Boro Park has been "very low." He stated that "I certainly have not heard of anything in recent weeks" to justify unilateral JDL action. Rabbi Kahane, the JDL's national chairman, told some 300 persons attending a rally last night at Public School 103 in Boro Park that his members would patrol the streets in that area with "trained karate experts and two-way radio cars." This was necessary, he said, because "Jews have been beaten regularly here because the Jew is known as an easy pushover." After his speech, Rabbi Kahane personally led JDL members to the local police precinct headquarters to inform police of JDL's intentions. Dr. Schick said that police patrols in Boro Park's heavily Jewish section were reinforced this week for fear of possible anti-Jewish acts during Passover, but that after the holiday they will be back at their normal strength. He said the city had no plans to increase its police manpower in Boro Park to keep watch on the JDL which, he noted, was "very adept at public relations" but ineffective in protecting residents. Rabbi Kahane could not be reached for comment on Dr. Schick's statements.

Israeli Scientist Says Technology Of Israel Superior To Egypt's And Gap Widening

TEL AVIV, April 13 (JTA)--An Israeli scientist compared the technologies of Israel and Egypt today and found Israel's vastly superior. According to Prof. Yuval Neeman, head of the faculty of physics and astronomy at Tel Aviv University, Israel enjoys a seven-to-one ratio over Egypt in technological fields, an increase from the four-to-one ratio that existed a few years ago. If Israel's development continues at its present or higher rate, the gap will be even further widened, Prof. Neeman said. He explained the disparity by observing that Egypt receives ready-made technologies from outside without any sound foundation of its own. He said there was no scientific atmosphere in Egypt for basic research and many Egyptian scientists pursue their fields abroad.

Holocaust Week Observances To Recall Tragedy Of Six Million Jews

LOS ANGELES, April 13 (JTA)--A series of events intended to recall the Nazi holocaust is being sponsored by the Community Relations Committee of the Jewish Federation-Council for the week of April 18-24. Morton M. Silverman, Holocaust Week chairman, announced. The week will be launched with a traditional community service marking the 28th anniversary of the Warsaw Ghetto Uprising. According to Cyrus Levinthal, Observance chairman, children of survivors will participate in a candle-lighting ceremony; ghetto survivors will say Kaddish; there will be Yiddish poetry readings of the holocaust and singing of ghetto songs.

Possible Bias in Philadelphia School System Under Study By JCRC

PHILADELPHIA, April 13 (JTA)--The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Philadelphia, concerned about possible anti-Semitism in the school administration, has launched a study to determine whether, over the past decade, there has been "a relationship between appointments and the ethnic identity of the appointee, and... a correlation between the ethnic composition of school and the ethnic identity of appointees." The president and executive director of the JCRC, Theodore R. Mann and Albert D. Chernin, advised Superintendent of Schools Dr. Mark R. Shedd by letter of their plans for the project. Although, Mann and Chernin noted, there has been "long-standing JCRC concern about the process for making appointments and promotions in the Philadelphia schools," the immediate spur to their study was the recent case of Theodore Beck. The acting principal of South Philadelphia High School, he was turned down for the principalship. "In the light of his educational career, the recommendation of the screening committee, endorsements of faculty, parent and community bodies and student support, Mann and Chernin told Dr. Shedd, "the JCRC board found it difficult to comprehend why the principalship was denied to Mr. Beck."

Chernin told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that while there was no proof of anti-Semitism in the Beck case, the JCRC survey would attempt to root out any such motives before the problem, if it exists, gets worse. The JTA contacted Dr. Shedd's office but he could not be reached for comment. The two Jewish community leaders said their new study would be similar to the one the JCRC used several years ago "that led to the end of the quota system" in several prominent schools of major universities in the Philadelphia area. The JCRC, according to Mann and Chernin, has authorized the American Jewish Committee, one of its constituent members, to study separately "ethnic succession in the Philadelphia schools." The entire project will be coordinated by a technical advisory committee of executives of six constituents -- the AJCommittee, the American Jewish Congress, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, Brith Sholom, the Jewish Labor Committee and the Workmen's Circle.

COLPA Taking Action In Court Ruling On Sabbath Observers Employed By Post Office

NEW YORK, April 13 (JTA)--The United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia recently ruled that the United States Post Office does not have to arrange its work schedules so as to give Saturday as a day off to one who requested it on grounds of religious observance and not on the basis of seniority. The National Jewish Commission on Law and Public Affairs (COLPA) was asked to comment on this ruling. Julius Berman, president of COLPA, said that COLPA has been in close contact with the postal workers in the Virginia case for the past few weeks "as part of our Sabbath Observer program. We have been actively following the post office problem for some time as we have received numerous complaints from Orthodox Jews who have faced employment problems with various branches of the United States Post Office in connection with sabbath observance."

The problem with post office employment practices regarding sabbath observance is very complex, Berman said. The post office maintains that the various statutes and regulations requiring accommodation to Sabbath Observers do not apply and that it, therefore, is not required to make any accommodation. Nevertheless, in some instances, we have been successful in arranging accommodations for particular individuals through negotiations with local postmasters, supervisors and post office officials in Washington. Berman said that COLPA is currently gathering data in connection with a coordinated, judicial, legislative and administrative program to establish rules requiring an accommodation throughout the Post Office Department. The program, parts of which are already in operation, is being directed by Howard Rhine and Nathan Lewin, national vice-presidents and Sidney Kwestel, national secretary and chairman of COLPA's Sabbath Observer Committee.

'Masada Shall Not Fall Again' Is Theme Of Third Night Seder

NEW YORK, April 13 (JTA)--Dr. Sol Stein, executive director of the National Committee for Labor Israel, told 2,000 persons attending the Committee's 39th annual Third Seder, that current developments in the Soviet Union are similar to the pre-Exodus period in ancient Egypt. "We are on the eve of a massive airlift to freedom for Russian Jewry," he declared. "And Israel is ready to welcome them home." Participants in the Third Seder used the Haggadah titled "Masada Shall Not Fall Again," which was written by Nahum Gutman, a member of the national committee's executive staff, and was inspired by recent excavations of the mountain fort that was the site of the last Jewish stand against the Romans after the destruction of the Second Temple in Jerusalem. The excavations confirmed the account of Josephus, the Jewish general who defected to the Romans and then wrote his report of the Jewish rebellion in a book titled "The Jewish War."

The Masada Haggadah, asking "Why Masada shall not fall again?" answered: "Because three generations of Halutzim (pioneers) swear upon it; because the survivors of Auschwitz and the Warsaw Ghetto swear upon it; the unflinching Jews of Russia swear upon it; the defenders of Israel swear upon it; the million members of Histadrut swear upon it; and because the entire Jewish people swear upon it." Dr. Stein declared that "When the Third Jewish Commonwealth came into being in 1948, the Jewish people showed the world once again that liberty was dearer than life itself. A new generation of heroes has arisen -- the Israel Defense Forces." He noted that "Behind this extraordinary army is the modern society of Israel, technologically advanced, politically mature, culturally dynamic." He added, "In our time, Masada is not isolated, not cut off from the world. This time, Israel can face her enemies with certitude. She is prepared to fight for her survival and win." The Seder was conducted Sunday night.

Eight Vilna Jews Send Cable To Shazar Expressing Hope For Exodus For All

JERUSALEM, April 13 (JTA)--President Zalman Shazar received today a cable from eight Vilna Jews expressing "best wishes to the Jewish people for a happy festival of exodus for every one of us equally." The cable was signed by Leopold Lutzman, Rachel Rabinovitz, Boris Gutman, Jacob Feitelson, Meir Gefen, Zalman Zhelinsky, Leonard Schravkov and Elena Levin.