

JTA daily news bulletin

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Nine Jews Go On Trial: Formally Charged With Activities Hostile To Soviet Union

NEW YORK, May 11 (JTA)--The Soviet press agency, Tass, announced in Moscow that the nine Jewish prisoners in Leningrad were formally charged today with "activities hostile to the Soviet Union," according to reports received here. Eight of them were charged with having been accomplices of the nine Jews convicted in Leningrad last December for allegedly trying to hijack an airliner last June 15. Two of the current defendants, Grigory Ilya (Hillel) Butman and Lev Leibovich Korenblit, were reportedly accused of a direct attempt to hijack two Soviet airliners. Tass did not say they were charged with treason in addition to "hostile activities," but reliable unofficial sources said they in fact were. The Soviet news agency said the defendants had received "considerable sums" from abroad to finance their "hostile activities," and that they in turn had "smuggled slanderous information abroad" using tourists as contacts.

Tass singled out J. Dinerman and Company of London as an alleged sender of "valuable parcels" to the alleged agitators. The British Trade Development Office here described Dinerman as a small firm of "general merchants." A spokesman for the New York office of Tass refused to confirm the reported charges in Moscow to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. JTA sources in London said conviction on a charge of anti-Soviet activities carries a maximum penalty of 7 years' imprisonment, while conviction for treason carries the death penalty. According to one source, a charge of intent to commit crimes against the state — a more serious charge than anti-Soviet activities — was dropped. The eight defendants charged with complicity in the alleged June 15 hijacking attempt in Leningrad were said by Jewish sources to have been in Riga or Odessa at that time. The trial was open today to immediate members of the defendants' families, but closed to the press.

Eban: Efforts Being Made To Secure Release Of Imprisoned Soviet Jews

JERUSALEM, May 11 (JTA)--Foreign Minister Abba Eban addressed the Knesset today on the trial of nine Jews which opened in Leningrad this morning. Today's Knesset session was the third in three months to be devoted to the situation of Soviet Jews. But Eban spoke to a half empty chamber. Only the visitors' gallery was full as he expressed the hope that "enlightened public opinion the world over would again raise its voice today as it has with some success in the past." Eban assured the House that efforts were being made to mobilize world opinion to secure the release of imprisoned Jews but said he was unable to give details at an open plenary. He recalled that the international outcry at the first Leningrad trial last December helped get the sentences of the accused Jews reduced and was also partly responsible for delaying the opening of the new trials. Another factor, he said, was the 24th Communist Party Congress held in Moscow early in April which prompted Soviet authorities to hold off on the trials in order to protect their image. Eban ridiculed charges that the nine Leningrad defendants planned subversive activities with postcards from Israel, Hebrew songs, Hebrew textbooks and the Bible. All they wanted, he said, was their right to emigrate to Israel. He lauded the spirit of Soviet Jews and suggested that the Soviet regime would do well to recognize that a fear campaign directed against Jews would do nothing but accelerate their desire to go to Israel.

Israel Bond Organization, Union Stalled On Current Talks

NEW YORK, May 11 (JTA)--Both sides agreed today that no progress has been made in negotiations to avert a strike by 500 employees of the Israel Bond Organization scheduled to start at midnight Friday when the present contract expires. Representatives of Local 1707 of the Community and Social Agency Employees union, AFL-CIO met last night with representatives of the Israel Bond Organization management. A spokesman for the latter told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that there was "no noticeable movement, nothing new." Eric Strong, representing Local 1707, agreed that there were "no new developments. The status quo remains." Further meetings are expected but none have been scheduled. According to Strong, the Bond management said it would agree to meet again when the union reduced its demands. Strong said the union was standing pat. He conceded that the situation represents an impasse. Wages and certain fringe benefits are the crux of the dispute. The Union contends that Israel Bond Organization sales have increased from \$105 million annually to \$175 million over the last four years. The Bond Organization derives its entire budget from the Israel Treasury. According to its prospectus the Treasury has to remit six percent of annual Bond receipts to cover expenses in the U.S. A Bond spokesman said that even based on the higher sales, the Treasury remittances would fall far short of covering the union demands which he estimated would amount to \$7 million per annum.

Ambassador Finger, Official At U.S. Mission To UN, Resigns

UNITED NATIONS, N.Y., May 11 (JTA)--Ambassador Seymour Maxwell Finger, the highest-ranking Jew at the United States Mission, was distressed at being shunted away from Middle East matters four years ago, but that was not the reason for his resignation, announced today, he told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency correspondent. Finger, who has been in the Foreign Service for 25 years and at the U.S. Mission for 15, disclosed today that in September he will become a professor of government at Staten Island Community College of the City University of New York, as well as a senior advisor on policy studies for the United Nations Association of the U.S.A. Finger, 56, is currently senior advisor to UN representative George Bush. Finger explained to the JTA that he had indicated in February his intention to resign. He said his relationship with Bush was not a factor in his decision, which he said he would have held to even if Charles W. Yost had continued in the UN ambassadorship past Feb. 28. He has always had "a long-time urge to teach," he explained at a press conference a few minutes earlier.

"I have to get off the merry-go-round at some time." Ironically, one of Finger's new colleagues at the UNA-U.S.A., will be Yost, who was named a counselor there after losing his envoy's post.

At the press conference, Finger said he saw a trend at the UN toward success in peacekeeping. The UN's role in peacekeeping, he observed, "depends on how governments use it." The world organization has weaknesses in that area, he admitted: "It is a Fire Department that can put out only certain kinds of fires. There just don't happen to be those kinds of fires around." But, he stressed, he was convinced the UN "will rise to the occasion" when it becomes necessary. Finger criticized the Soviet Union for obstinacy on peacekeeping progress. "Moscow just shut the door on negotiations," he complained. Finger, who was born in New York, was named to his present post in January, 1967. His diplomatic background includes service in Stuttgart, Paris, Budapest, Rome and Vientiane. He was instrumental in the creation of what is now the UN Development Program (UNDP). His chief current duty, as U.S. representative to the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), will be taken over by Bernard Zagorin, now special assistant for international affairs at the Treasury Department. Zagorin is also Jewish.

Jewish Emigres From Soviet Union Stage Demonstrations For Soviet Defendants

TEL AVIV, May 11 (JTA)—Jewish emigres from the Soviet Union began a series of demonstrations in various parts of Israel in behalf of nine Jews who went on trial in Leningrad today and others facing imminent trial in Riga and Kishinev. About 30 emigres went on a march last night from Beersheba to the Walling Wall in East Jerusalem to protest the trials. Their numbers were re-enforced by Soviet and other immigrants from Kiryat Gat and other settlements along the route of march. Beersheba police requested police depots along the way to assist the marchers. In Upper Nazareth, a new Jewish settlement area in Galilee, recent emigres from Russia met today and appealed to world Jewry and "all peace-seeking and freedom loving nations and the United Nations" to intervene for the release of Jews imprisoned in Russia for wanting to go to Israel. According to information received here today, Jewish circles in North and South America, Europe and Australia are planning a series of "counter trials" to parallel the trials in the Soviet Union. The demonstration trials will be a platform for charging the Soviet regime with persecution and discrimination against its Jewish citizens. Evidence will be heard on the treatment of Jews in the USSR.

State Department Lowers 'Quiet Diplomacy' Curtain On Mideast Talks

WASHINGTON, May 11 (JTA)—The State Department lowered the curtain of "quiet diplomacy" today on developments in America's quest for a peace settlement in the Middle East. Department spokesman Charles Bray told newsmen at today's press briefing that he couldn't say what the next step would be in maintaining the momentum of Mideast peace talks. He said UN mediator Dr. Gunnar V. Jarring would be returning to New York this week and assumed that he would be briefed fully on Secretary of State William P. Rogers' recent Mideast tour. He refused to comment on Egyptian President Anwar Sadat's statement of his country's terms for an interim Suez agreement to the Arab Socialist Union in Cairo last night (see separate story). He refused to say whether Rogers' Mideast visit has broken the impasse in the Jarring talks, observing that he would leave that question up to Dr. Jarring. He also would not comment on Rogers' report on his Mideast tour to President Nixon at the White House yesterday. "We have made another return to a period of quiet diplomacy," Bray said.

Sadat's Terms: Israel Pull-Back 115 Miles; 6 Months' Timetable For Total Withdrawal

LONDON, May 11 (JTA)—President Anwar Sadat of Egypt laid down tough terms to Secretary of State William P. Rogers last week for an interim settlement with Israel to reopen the Suez Canal. Reports from Cairo today said Sadat told the 360 member parliamentary faction of the Arab Socialist Union, Egypt's only political party, that Israel would have to pull back 115 miles from the waterway and would have to agree within six months to a timetable for its complete withdrawal from all occupied Arab territory. On the issue of Israeli navigation through the canal once it is reopened, Sadat said he told Rogers, "We will first study it within our political organizations before giving you an answer." He reportedly described Rogers' Mideast visit as an effort to move negotiations "from a standstill to an active phase." A 115 mile pull-back from the canal would place Israeli forces at El Arish, about 25 miles from the old Israeli-Egyptian border. Israel has not indicated the extent it is willing to withdraw but has made it clear that it would not withdraw beyond a point that would deprive it of military control of the canal's east bank and that it would not abandon its Bar-Lev line of in-depth fortifications. Sadat said he told Rogers that Egyptian military reoccupation of the east bank was essential to reopening the canal and "guarantee the safety of navigation."

ECC Statement Calls For Israel's Return To Pre-War Borders, Rights Of Refugees

PARIS, May 11 (JTA)—The six member nations of the European Economic Community (Common Market) meeting here reportedly adopted a joint policy statement on the Middle East that calls for Israel's return to its pre-June, 1967 borders, the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their former homes and support for the Jarring peace mission. The ECC nations are France, West Germany, Italy, Belgium, Holland and Luxembourg. The final text of the statement has not been released. According to diplomatic sources France was the "dynamo" that brought the Middle East issue before the ECC in a political context. The sources said the policy statement was adopted unanimously following a full debate. It calls for Israel's return to its old borders with only "minor adjustments approved by all concerned."

While supporting the Security Council's Resolution 242, the statement goes further than the resolution by suggesting the establishment of a large number of demilitarized zones on both sides of the border, in effect restricting Israel's sovereignty in parts of the territory it held before the Six-Day War. The statement reportedly calls for full UN control over the Old City of Jerusalem and its holy places, contingent on agreement by both sides. On the refugee issue, the policy statement would give the Palestinians the option of returning to their former homes or accepting full financial compensation. It provides for the presence of UN observers to ensure that the refugees can choose their option without pressure from any side. The statement also calls for free navigation by the shipping of all nations through the Suez Canal and the Straits of Tiran.

SPECIAL NEWS BULLETIN

Requests By Three Defendants Rejected; Witnesses Testify Under Coercion

NEW YORK, May 11 (JTA)--Reliable Jewish sources reported late this afternoon on the proceedings today on the opening day of the trial of nine Soviet Jews in Leningrad. They included three of the defendants: Grigory Ilya (Hillel) Butman, whose request that two Jewish prisoners, David Iserovich Chernoglaz and Arkady Voloshin, be permitted to testify for him was refused; Isaac Kaminsky, who complained he had not received packages sent to him; and Lev Naumovich Yagman, whose request for a book by the late Zionist Revisionist leader Vladimir Jabotinsky, was denied. Witnesses named Knapov, Shlimovitz and Goldfeld said they were testifying against the defendants under coercion. A witness named Teroblnetz, however, was said by the Jewish sources to have refused to testify under coercion.

2500 Persons Demonstrate Outside Soviet Mission In Protest Of Trial

NEW YORK, May 11 (JTA)--Twenty-five hundred people demonstrated in front of the Soviet Mission to the United Nations today to protest the trial of the Leningrad Nine. The demonstration, organized by the Center for Russian Jewry and the Student Struggle for Soviet Jewry, heard Rabbi Steven Riskin of Lincoln Square Synagogue, Rabbi Abraham Weiss and Jacob Birnbaum, chairman, national secretary and national director respectively of both organizations, criticize the inability of Jewish organizations to "respond with sufficient speed" to the crisis of Soviet Jewry. The demonstrators then marched to the UN Mission where they requested that Pres. Nixon issue a statement on behalf of the prisoners and that the Voice of America broadcast in Yiddish and Hebrew in the same way they broadcast to other ethnic groups inside the Soviet Union.

Soviet Jewry Committee Calls For Release Of Angela Davis, Ruth Aleksandrovich

LONDON, May 11 (JTA)--The Universities Committee for Soviet Jewry is linking the impending trial of Ruth Aleksandrovich in Riga with that of Angela Davis, a professor of psychology at the University of California. The group has distributed posters demanding, "U.S.A. Free Angela Davis -- USSR Free Ruth Aleksandrovich." A committee spokesman said the similarity between the two cases derived from the fact that both young women were "involved in dramas arising out of the tragic and confused times we live in." Miss Davis, a black militant and self-proclaimed Marxist-Leninist, has been indicted for complicity in a court room kidnap attempt which resulted in the killing of a judge. Miss Aleksandrovich, a 24-year-old nurse, has been in prison since last October but has not been informed of the charges against her or when her trial would begin. The spokesman said that while Miss Davis has been allowed to speak and write from jail, Ruth Aleksandrovich has been held incommunicado since her arrest, has no defense counsel and only her KGB (secret police) jailers have access to the documents on her case. While Miss Davis' trial will be held in full view of American and world opinion, Miss Aleksandrovich "may never be able to speak in her defense unless world public opinion raises its voice against this inhumanity as it has spoken up in the case of Angela Davis," the committee spokesman said.

New Trial Termed Cruel, Unjust; Efforts To Be Taken For Administration To Act

NEW YORK, May 11 (JTA)--Arthur J. Goldberg, declared today that the new trial of Soviet Jews constituted a "cruel and unjust policy" on the part of the Soviet Union in contravention of UN declarations it signed. Speaking at a press conference organized by the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry, the former Supreme Court Justice and former U.S. ambassador to the UN, said the trial of the nine Jews is "shocking and ominous in its implications." Rabbi Herschel Schacter, AJCSA chairman, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that "We are requesting a meeting at the highest levels of American government" on the issue of the Leningrad trial. He said Goldberg had not, contrary to reports today, agreed to express his feelings by telephone to Soviet Prosecutor General Roman A. Rudenko in Moscow. Rabbi Schacter said Goldberg told him there would be "no point" to such a "futile exercise," as Rudenko was not an important enough official. During his press conference, Goldberg said the new trial belied the hope that the Kremlin policy toward Soviet Jews since last December was a move toward what was "hopefully believed to be a liberating trend." He called on the USSR to change its policy, since "where anti-Semitism exists, everyone is a victim."

Dayan Played Key Role In Preventing Breakdown Of Rogers' Talks

JERUSALEM, May 11 (JTA)--The Jewish Telegraphic Agency learned from very reliable sources today that Defense Minister Moshe Dayan saved the talks between Secretary of State William P. Rogers and Premier Golda Meir from virtual breakdown last week. The sources said that Dayan accomplished this by demonstrating unexpected flexibility in private talks he held with Rogers' top aide, Assistant Secretary of State Joseph J. Sisco, at a time when the Rogers-Meir talks had deteriorated almost to the point of acrimony. The sources said that when Rogers and Meir held their first meeting here last Thursday, Mrs. Meir did most of the talking and devoted her remarks largely to Jewish history, the Holocaust and similar subjects. While acknowledging the weightiness of these matters, Rogers considered them irrelevant to the issues immediately at hand and was visibly irritated. At one point he was reported to have said, "We did not come here to listen to all this," the sources said.

According to the sources, Dayan was concerned with the way the talks were going and suggested to Mrs. Meir that he meet privately with Sisco on Friday while Rogers was on an aerial tour of Sinai. The Premier agreed and at his meeting with Sisco, Dayan reportedly surprised the American by his flexibility on the issues on how far Israel would pull back from the Suez Canal and the crossing of the canal by Egyptian police. Dayan reportedly made one over-riding condition -- that the cease-fire be extended with no time limit. It was also agreed that the principles Israel submitted to the U.S. could now be conveyed to Cairo, with the modifications agreed to between Dayan and Sisco. On that basis Rogers decided to send Sisco back to Cairo, the sources told the JTA.

Police Probing Arson, Looting Of Jewish Group's Office

BUENOS AIRES, May 11 (JTA)--Police are investigating the arson and looting of the office of Jose Moskovits, chairman of the Argentine Association of Jewish Victims of Nazism who transacts business in connection with German indemnification of Nazi victims. Certain important documents disappeared from the office along with a valuable collection of Judaica.

Yeshiva Leaders Appeal To Federation Officials To Provide Adequate Funds

NEW YORK, May 11 (JTA)—Standing beside a stained-glass panel reading "Blessed Is He Who Giveth," two spokesmen for the city's financially troubled yeshivas pleaded for funds last night at a meeting of the board of trustees of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies of New York. Rabbi Abraham Kelman, principal of Prospect Park High School and Day School, spoke fervently of the "terrible burdens" faced by yeshivas. They suffer from "most inadequate facilities," the pupils are "terribly dismayed," the parents are "harassed and burdened," and an education is being dispensed "on the backs of Jewish teachers" who receive \$3,500-\$4,000 a year, he declared. The city erects "magnificent buildings in the name for those who destroy them," Rabbi Kelman complained, but Jewish children are "packed in like sardines." The administrator concluded: "If something is not done, the yeshivas will collapse. . . . We think that the future of Jewish life depends on Jewish education. . . . It is a vital matter of our life and our future. . . . And we say to you: You must provide the funds. . . . This is your problem as much as ours."

The other yeshiva spokesman was Rabbi Moshe Malinowitz, president of the National Association of Hebrew Day School Administrators of America, an affiliate of Torah Umesorah, the National Society for Hebrew Day Schools. In tones as impassioned as those of Rabbi Kelman, Rabbi Malinowitz said his was "not a voice that is raised in anger, but in anguish." The yeshivas, he declared, face "a heart-rending problem." In addition to financial difficulties — yeshiva children in New York, representing 41 percent of the population, receive \$1 per child a year from Federation here, while those in Los Angeles, representing 4 percent of the population, get \$125 a year — the facilities for them here are so insufficient that some of them are "rat traps." The New York Federation, Rabbi Malinowitz insisted, must "wake up" to a situation in which some parents give up vacations and cars to afford Jewish education for their children and others have their children barred because there are no funds at the yeshivas to teach them.

Forty-three yeshiva leaders attended the meeting of 200 Federation officials, at which Lawrence B. Buttenweiser, a lawyer, was named Federation president, succeeding George H. Heyman, Jr., now a vice chairman of the board. The organization had granted their request to attend and to present their case. Rabbis Kelman and Malinowitz each spoke for 10 minutes. Asked to comment on the rabbis' demands, Federation executive vice president Sanford Solender told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reporter that the matter was one of "very great concern" to the organization and would be given "every consideration." He declined to give a more specific response. In a statement issued prior to the board meeting, Torah Umesorah criticized the Federation for having "turned down its own Functional Committee Report on Education which would have appropriated \$1.3 million additional funds for Jewish education." Instead, the day school society charged, the Federation board "piously proclaims its historic involvement in Jewish education but fails to give any direct subventions to assist the (local yeshivas) with critically needed funds." The Federation resolved two weeks ago "that all avenues be searched to find additional funds required." A spokesman for the Federation explained to the JTA: "We never approve dollars for anything. We only approve concepts."

Hartke Sends Petitions To Dobrynin Urging Kosygin To Permit Jewish Emigration

WASHINGTON, May 11 (JTA)—Sen. Vance Hartke, Democrat of Indiana, sent Soviet Ambassador Anatoly F. Dobrynin copies of a petition with more than 1,500 signatures calling on Premier Aleksei Kosygin to permit Soviet Jews to emigrate. The petition, sent to the Soviet Embassy by special messenger, had been gathered by the Purdue University Committee on Soviet Jewry, an ad hoc group formed through the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation on the Indiana campus. It had been presented to Hartke by Dr. Gary Moroff, a former Purdue graduate student who is the committee's chairman, and Dr. Alfred Jospe, Hillel Foundations' national director of program and resources and former Hillel director at Indiana University. Students and faculty at Purdue, delegates to the recent convention of the Indiana State Association of B'nai B'rith and residents of Lafayette, Ind., were among its signers. In a letter accompanying the petition, Hartke said American Jews have expressed "grave concern" over the condition of Jews in the Soviet Union. "I personally share this concern," Hartke said in his letter to Dobrynin, adding: "I trust you will convey our message to your Premier. World public opinion awaits his decision." The petition declared that it is "impossible to live with pride and dignity as Jews in the Soviet Union," deplored the arrests of Jews who had appealed to Soviet and Western leaders for the right to emigrate and called on Premier Kosygin to abide by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights — of which the Soviet Union is a signator. "We appeal to you (to) uphold international obligations and grant what you yourself regard as a just request," the petition said. "Set the prisoners free! Let those who wish to go do so!"

B'nai B'rith 'Going Away' Gift To Wexler: 10,000 New Members

WASHINGTON, May 11 (JTA)—Enrollment of 10,000 new members is the "going away" gift being planned by the B'nai B'rith Membership Cabinet to Dr. William A. Wexler when he retires in October as international president of B'nai B'rith. Philip M. Klutznick, international president of B'nai B'rith from 1953 to 1959 and now heading a special "Honor Bill Wexler Committee," said the special campaign will continue until Oct. 13, the 128th anniversary of B'nai B'rith and the opening day of its triennial convention in Philadelphia. Klutznick described the 10,000-member tribute as a "meaningful acknowledgement to Bill Wexler that his six years at the hub — in a turbulent period of unusual challenge to Jewish life — are a record of wise effort and much fulfillment."

Florence L. Hoffman, Distinguished Communal Leader, Dies At 62

SOUTH ORANGE, N.J., May 11 (JTA)—Florence L. Hoffman, wife of Philip E. Hoffman, President of the American Jewish Committee, died last night at her home. She was 62. Mrs. Hoffman, a distinguished communal leader, was prominently identified with many Jewish and civic educational and philanthropic causes. She was a former Chairman for both the American Red Cross and the United Jewish Appeal campaigns in Orange, N.J. She was currently a member of the Board of the Women's Division of the Theresa Grotta Center Mental Health Association and formerly served on the Board of the Women's Association of Temple B'nai Jeshurun of Short Hills, N.J. A life member of Brandeis University, she was on the Women's Board of East Orange Hospital and was active also in the Daughters of Israel and Kessler Institute of West Orange.