

JTA daily news bulletin

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

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Vol. XXXVIII - Fifty-Fourth Year

Tuesday, May 25, 1971

No. 101

Riga Trial Begins; Synagogue in Riga Locked; KGB Prevents Jews From Praying

NEW YORK, May 24 (JTA)--Mrs. Riva Aleksandrovich said at 10:30 a.m. (EST) that the trial of her daughter, Ruth, and three other Latvian Jews had gotten under way nine hours earlier in Riga. She told a press conference that she had received the news of the starting time by telephone from her husband 30 hours earlier and had not been advised otherwise since then. The news contradicted one published report here that the trial had been put off until next month. (In London, information received here from Jewish sources in Riga confirmed that the trial had begun. The other three defendants are: Boris Mafstier, Mikhail Shepshelovich and Arkady Shpilberg. Jewish sources reported that neither Miss Aleksandrovich nor Shepshelovich have pleaded guilty. The sources also said there has been no word of response by Mafstier to charges against him. The prosecutor in Riga will reportedly try to prove that the accused have been printing and circulating treasonable material. All four are charged with activities "harmful" to the Soviet State which carry penalties of up to 15 years at a "strict regime" labor camp which means at hard labor, the sources said.)

Mrs. Aleksandrovich also reported that when a group of Jews went to the Riga synagogue, the only shul in the city for 40,000 Jews, to pray for the Riga defendants, they found it locked and the yard filled with KGB (secret service) officers "who banished them out of the yard." A few minutes later, speaking to an audience of 120 women at a meeting sponsored by the Women's Plea for Soviet Jewish Prisoners of Conscience, an ad hoc interfaith group, Mrs. Aleksandrovich reported that the Riga trial had been moved from the center of town to a peninsula reachable only by crossing a bridge. She said the intent of the shift was to make it impossible for friends of the defendants to gain proximity to the proceedings. Meanwhile, Jewish sources here disclosed the names of the nine Jews scheduled to go on trial in Kishinev on Wednesday. Six of them are from that city: Aleksander Galperin, 25; Gari Krishner, 25; Semeon Abramovich Levit, 24; David Rabinovich, 24; Abraham Trachtenberg, 24 and Arkady Voloshin, 25. Three are from Leningrad: David Iserovich Chernoglaz, 32; Anatoly Moiseyevich Goldfeld, 25 and Hillel Zalmanovich Shur, 34.

Thousands At Funeral Of Elrom; Turkey Pledges Crackdown On Terrorists

TEL AVIV, May 24 (JTA)--Knesset members and Cabinet ministers headed by Acting Premier Yigal Allon joined thousands of mourners today at the funeral of Ephraim Elrom, the Israeli Consul General in Istanbul who was murdered Saturday by Turkish terrorists. Elrom was buried with full honors at the military cemetery at Kiryat Shaul. He was laid to rest near the grave of his only son, Gideon, who was killed in a plane crash less than two years ago. Elrom's body was flown from Istanbul last night in a Turkish military transport. It lay in state at the Tel Aviv branch of the Foreign Ministry. Foreign Minister Abba Eban eulogized the late diplomat whom he described as the victim of a "merciless, senseless murder." Chief Army chaplain Rabbi Shlomo Goren officiated at the burial services. The Turkish government was represented by its chief of protocol who accompanied Elrom's coffin on the flight from Istanbul and by the Charge d'Affaires and members of the Turkish legation here.

Meanwhile, it was reported from Istanbul that a manhunt was ordered by the Turkish government in an effort to apprehend Elrom's killers. Some 30,000 troops and police conducted a house-to-house search for the terrorists and the government called for new measures against the extremists. Three men were reported to have been arrested in connection with the kidnaping but martial law authorities who made the announcement gave no indication as to what part they may have played. Turkey's Premier Nihat Erim sent a message to Premier Golda Meir stating that his government "will do everything in its power to give these killers the penalty they deserve." According to reports, the kidnapers are still at large.

Police Rip Placards Carried By Rabbis Protesting Trials Of Soviet Jews

WASHINGTON, May 24 (JTA)--Officers of the Executive Protective Service, the special White House unit assigned to shield foreign diplomats from illegal demonstrations and physical harm, tore up placards carried by a group of rabbis today outside the Soviet Embassy. The 35 rabbis were making their second circling of the block, protesting the trials of Soviet Jews, when an EPS sergeant read a mimeographed statement warning them to cease demonstrating within 500 feet of the Embassy. The rabbis nevertheless raised their signs and continued their march, and "the EPS police literally ran after them and grabbed the placards from their hands and tore them up," it was reported to the Jewish Telegraphic Agency by Samuel H. Sislén, assistant community relations director of the Jewish Community Council of Greater Washington. Sislén said the officers outnumbered the rabbis. There were no arrests. The demonstration was sponsored by the Washington Board of Rabbis, the Rabbinical Assembly of Washington, the Rabbinical Council and the JCC. The rabbis representing all three branches of Judaism--proceeded to a nearby rally by more than 400 students of the Hebrew Academy. Three high school students were charged with delinquency today after parading in front of the Soviet Embassy bearing an Israeli flag. They were Reed Shneider, Martin Kramer and Andre Weitzman. In Superior Court today, charges were dropped against David J. Fitzmaurice, secretary general of the International Union of Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers, who had flown an Israeli flag atop the union building, within 500 feet of the Soviet Embassy, last Dec. 30.

Rabbi Sets Six Month Deadline For The Establishment Of National Torah Fund

NEW YORK, May 24 (JTA)--Rabbi Joseph Karesick, president of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America, set today a six month deadline for the establishment of a "national Torah fund" to aid financially ailing Hebrew day schools. He told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the

step would have to be taken within six months unless the Jewish Federations and Welfare Funds assumed greater responsibility for Jewish education. Rabbi Karasick said the Orthodox community would not be asked to stop supporting the Federation. He estimated however that if part of the monies they now contribute were diverted to a Torah fund, the Federation might find its income reduced by 25 percent. Rabbi Karasick said the establishment of a separate Torah fund would be undertaken reluctantly because the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations prefers a "total community" effort. But, he said, the pressure is increasing and "we have come to the point where we may have to act."

Rabbi Karasick said that the approximately 400 Orthodox Jewish day schools with a combined student body of 80,000 operated on an aggregate annual budget of \$60-80 million. He said they were presently short of their budgetary needs by about \$30 million. Another spokesman for the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations told the JTA today that the Orthodox community appreciated essentially what the Federation does for hospitals, day care centers and other community services but it does not do enough for Jewish education. Rabbi Karasick observed that Federation leaders all over the country have spoken in opposition to State or Federal aid for parochial schools. He said that a separate Torah fund was inevitable if the various measures pending in State legislatures for aid to religious schools do not materialize and the Federation remains adamant. Asked whether enactment of some of the pending legislation would alter plans to establish a Torah fund for Jewish education, Rabbi Karasick said that in that event the plans would be "re-evaluated" though not necessarily abandoned unless the Federation acted.

Kremlin Leadership Concerned Over Recent Developments In Egypt

JERUSALEM, May 24 (JTA)--An authoritative Israeli source described the forthcoming visit of Soviet President Nikolai V. Podgorny to Egypt today as an obvious attempt to see for himself whether and how Soviet interests were being affected by the recent political upheaval in Cairo. The source told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that in Israel's view, President Anwar Sadat "is not in a mood to dissociate himself from the Soviet Union" because his dependence on Moscow for arms is too great. However, the source added, "the Soviet government is probably disturbed by the recent American initiatives in the Middle East. It must be considered after all, that the cease-fire-the Jarring mission and now the project to reopen the Suez Canal are all products of American initiative." The source said that the American moves, now accompanied by Sadat's ouster of Vice President Aly Sabri and many other pro-Soviet officials, have aroused the Kremlin leadership's concern over exactly what the Soviet position in Cairo is. The source said that Israel has not yet been notified by the United States of Egypt's reaction to the latest Israeli note conveyed to Cairo by Assistant Secretary of State Joseph J. Sisco earlier this month.

The source said, "We hope that President Sadat speaks on two levels, a rhetorical level which found expression in his speech before the National Assembly and a concrete level on which he may be willing to negotiate. If that is so there may still be hope." The source confirmed to the JTA that there has been no response from the U.S. to date to Israel's requests for additional arms supplies when the current contracts expire. "There has been no negative reply," the source said. "Rather, we are in a Nirvana. We have been given no picture as to what the arms supply situation will be when the contracts run out." The source stressed, however, that there was no question of American pressure, although "I cannot say we are not worried." The source disclosed that Foreign Minister Abba Eban's forthcoming visit to eight African countries was directly linked to the conference of the Organization of African Unity to be held at the end of June. The eight Arab member states of the OAU are expected to try to get the all-African conference to adopt anti-Israel resolutions. "These policies are usually shaped in the course of the month preceding the conference," the source said, indicating that Eban's visit was calculated to counter the Arab moves.

State Dept. Silence On Mideast Sign There May Be Serious Move To Interim Accord

WASHINGTON, May 24 (JTA)--The State Department is holding fast to its policy of "quiet diplomacy" in the Middle East. Department spokesman Charles Bray parried questions about progress toward an interim Suez settlement at today's press briefing. He refused to comment on the impending visit to Cairo of Soviet President Nikolai V. Podgorny. At one point he told newsmen, "Let me not get into the Middle East." The official silence indicated to some observers that there may be serious movement at this time toward an interim settlement. Though Israel's Foreign Minister Abba Eban characterized President Anwar Sadat's latest speech as "negative and extreme," Israel, according to Bray, is prepared to continue negotiations toward an agreement that would reopen the Suez Canal. Bray gave no hint as to what may have transpired at yesterday's meeting between Eban and U.S. Ambassador Walworth Barbour in Tel Aviv or Israel's Ambassador Yitzhak Rabin's meeting here with Assistant Secretary of State Joseph J. Sisco. He said the Sisco-Rabin talk was within the context of the continuing series of discussions on the Middle East. Asked if the U.S. was "discouraged" by the slow pace of negotiations, he replied, "We have yet to be discouraged." Observers here said the State Department's "quiet diplomacy" reflected caution not to undercut the position of Sadat at a time when he has succeeded in crushing a coup aimed against him by the pro-Moscow faction in Cairo.

Israel's First Commercial Jet To Be Displayed At International Air Show

PARIS, May 24 (JTA)--The first commercial jets manufactured in Israel will be displayed at the International Air Show which President Georges Pompidou will open officially Thursday at Le Bourget Airport. But there will be no Israeli officials among the foreign dignitaries attending the opening, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency learned today. The organizers of the air show, a syndicate of French aircraft manufacturers, banned invitations to officials of countries that France regards as belligerents in the Mideast conflict--Egypt, Syria, Jordan and Israel. M. Chassigny, president of the syndicate, told the JTA that he had sent an invitation to a "foremost Israeli personality" to attend in a private capacity "because of the friendship and esteem which we have for him." He said the invitation was turned down. Delegations present from Arab countries not regarded as belligerents by France include: Libya, Lebanon, Iraq and Algeria. Israel's "Jet Commander" and the "Arava" will be exhibited at the Air Show.

Appeal For Public Response To Trials; Committee To Hear Testimony On Soviet Jews

NEW YORK, May 24 (JTA)--Haggard from her almost nonstop efforts to alert Americans to the situation of her daughter, Ruth, and three other Riga Jews on trial in that Soviet Latvian city, Mrs. Rivka Aleksandrovich called again today for an upsurge of public opinion against such trials of Jews. "I am sure that to keep silent today is a grave sin," she declared. "If anything helps it is public opinion--perhaps a call from the White House would help... To stand aside, not to interfere is to sin." Therefore, she pleaded with 120 Jewish women leaders: "Don't sin." Mrs. Aleksandrovich addressed a press conference and then a meeting arranged by the Women's Plea for Soviet Jewish Prisoners of Conscience, an ad hoc committee representing 17 Jewish organizations and Church Women United, the National Council of Negro Women, the National Council of Catholic Women and the Young Women's Christian Association. Mrs. Aleksandrovich, whose United States tour is being coordinated by the American Jewish Conference on Soviet Jewry, said the new Soviet trials represented "a new page in our (Jews') mournful age-old history." Three speakers--two Catholics and a black--spoke out at the meeting in support of Mrs. Aleksandrovich's cause. Sister Rose Thering, O.P., of the Institute of Judeo-Christian Studies at Seton Hall University asserted:

"Discrimination against Jews is a fact in the Soviet Union... Christians have a moral responsibility to speak out... Our brothers are on trial for their convictions, their beliefs." Sister Rose read a telegram she was about to send to Pope Paul VI. It called on the Pontiff to exercise his "gracious intervention" to obtain the release of the Soviet Jewish "prisoners of conscience." Mrs. Jacqueline Greiman Wexler, president of Hunter College, said she fully understood and endorsed the goals of those who cry "Never again," although she rejected the use of violence to obtain those goals. Mrs. Eleanor Holmes Norton, chairman of the New York City Commission on Human Rights, said it was "inexcusable" for blacks not to aid Jews in trouble, considering their own misfortunes. "We feel very specially for Ruth Aleksandrovich and for Soviet Jews," she said. The gathering endorsed a resolution read by Mrs. Faye Schenk, president of Hadassah. It concluded: "In the names of our common humanity we appeal to the government of the Soviet Union to free the Jewish prisoners, to stop the trials and to grant to all Soviet Jews the freedom to live as Jews at home or to emigrate and live as Jews in Israel." Mrs. Dorothy Goldberg, the wife of former United Nations Ambassador Arthur J. Goldberg, announced that on June 22, at a location to be set, a newly formed "Committee of Inquiry" will hear public testimony on the situation of Soviet Jews.

The panel will consist of Gen. Telford Taylor of Columbia University, chief prosecutor at Nuremberg; Bayard Rustin, black civil rights leader; Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America; Prof. George Wald, Nobel laureate of Harvard; former Sen. Charles E. Goodell of New York; Prof. Hans J. Morgenthau of New York and Chicago, and J. Brook Mosley, president of the Union Theological Seminary. At the end of the program, held across the street from the UN, the women proceeded to a silent vigil at Dag Hammarskjold Plaza. Meanwhile, the National Women's League of the United Synagogue of America has assured Mrs. Aleksandrovich that "we... will not falter in our efforts to press for fair trials for the imprisoned Jews; as well as for the rights of Russian Jews to emigrate." Mrs. Henry N. (Selma) Rapaport, president of the League, wrote in part: "Our hopes and prayers go forth, along with yours, that your daughter, Ruth, will be freed and that in the not too distant future, she will be reunited joyously with her family in Israel... (We) are determined that American Jewry will not rest, nor will it be silent, until those who wish to leave the Soviet Union be permitted to do so... Through you, we salute Ruth and her colleagues for their courage and sacrifices for principle in these difficult days... They are an example to the world that principles and convictions are still important in our world."

Federation Sets Up Emergency Fund To Help Eliminate Hazards In Jewish Day Schools

NEW YORK, May 24 (JTA)--A special emergency fund of \$200,000 to aid in eliminating serious hazards to the health and safety of students which exist in many Jewish day schools in the metropolitan area has been secured with the help of the Federation of Jewish Philanthropies. Seed money for the emergency fund project was provided by Joseph S. Gruss, a member of Federation's Committee on Jewish Education. Gruss offered to contribute \$100,000 to the fund if an equal sum could be obtained from other concerned members of the Jewish community. This matching sum was provided by a small group of Federation Board members and other Jewish communal leaders. A committee of distinguished Jewish leaders will be appointed to assume responsibility for the implementation of the program through the Board of Jewish Education, an affiliated agency of the Jewish Federation. Critical inadequacies in facility and equipment exist in at least half of the 138 Jewish day schools throughout the city. These include such hazards as fire violations, outmoded kitchen facilities presenting health dangers, and lack of essential equipment to achieve conformity with elementary building code standards. The limited financial resources of the schools are applied almost entirely to meet operating costs and provide a small number of scholarships for needy students.

1,000 At Film Festival Sign Petition Calling For Right Of Jews To Emigrate

PARIS, May 24 (JTA)--Several hundred film producers, directors, actors and critics attending the Cannes film festival, were present this afternoon at a meeting in defense of Soviet Jewry. They were addressed by the Soviet Jewish film director and writer Afim Sevela who claimed that more than a million Russian Jews wanted to emigrate to Israel. Sevela left Moscow two weeks ago on his way to Israel. Ten thousand leaflets calling for an end to the trials of Jews in the Soviet Union were distributed near the Congress Palace where the film festival is being held. About 1,000 persons signed a petition to Soviet Communist Party chief Leonid Brezhnev to let Jews emigrate.

10,000 Persons Mark Fourth Anniversary Of Jerusalem's Reunification

JERUSALEM, May 24 (JTA)--An estimated 10,000 persons jammed the Walling Wall square today to mark the fourth anniversary, according to the Hebrew calendar, of Jerusalem's reunification after the Six Day War. A mass thanksgiving service was held. Memorial prayers were conducted for the 181 Israeli soldiers killed in the battle for East Jerusalem.

