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LEADING AUTO FIRM COMMISSIONS STUDY OF ITS WARTIME USE OF SLAVE LABOR

By David Kantor

BONN, Jan. 21 (JTA) -- The Daimler-Benz AG., the Stuttgart-based automobile giant which manufactures the prestigious Mercedes, has commissioned an independent study of the company's history which includes the utilization of slave labor during the Nazi era.

A company spokesman told reporters yesterday that the study may lead to the payment of reparations to surviving slave laborers, many of whom are Jews, or to their families. He said the company expects to have a full account of the matter sometime next fall and will decide then how to proceed. He stressed that the question of reparations will not be limited to the legal aspects.

The Cologne-based Society for Business History was engaged in 1983 to do research in connection with the company's planned centenary celebrations. Their work includes an historical account titled "Daimler-Benz in the Years From 1933 to 1945." According to Hans Pohl, an advisor to the Society, Daimler-Benz used POWs and concentration camp inmates to expedite military production after the start of World War II.

20,000 Slave Laborers Forced To Work For Firm

According to his preliminary study, about 20,000 slave laborers from 20 Nazi-occupied countries were forced to work for Daimler-Benz at its various plants. Pohl said large numbers of them were Jews. The company, which has not paid reparations to date, said it has not been confronted with specific demands to do so.

Pohl said he has concluded on the basis of evidence on hand that Daimler-Benz did not identify itself with the Nazis beyond what was absolutely necessary to keep the company in operation. While most of the Board members were members of the Nazi Party, many of them joined after the Nazis took power in 1933.

An exception was Wilhelm Kissel, Board chairman when the war broke out. He joined the Nazi Party in 1934 but had been a member of the SS and of a Nazi professional organization before then. Kissel died in 1942 and was succeeded by Wilhelm Haspel, who was not a Nazi Party member.

Daimler-Benz was Germany's third largest motor company in the 1930's and, in order to survive, had to cooperate with the Nazis, Pohl reported. He said that as more and more male auto workers were recruited into the army, the company employed women and forced laborers, including concentration camp inmates and POWs. They were assigned by the State Labor Exchange as needed, he said.

One Board member, Jacob Werlin, was Hitler's expert on matters relating to automobile production, Pohl said. But he reportedly used his contact with Hitler to advance the interests of Daimler-Benz.

Daimler-Benz is one of the few German industries to voluntarily investigate its wartime activities and relations with the Nazi regime and to consider

reparations to slave laborers without being prodded. Earlier this month, the Flick industrial conglomerate paid the equivalent of \$2 million to the Conference on Jewish Material Claims Against Germany representing Jewish slave laborers used by one of its subsidiaries, Dynamit Nobel.

But this was done only after nearly 20 years of fruitless negotiations and after Flick's new owners, the Deutsche Bank, approved the payment as a "humanitarian gesture," not a legal obligation. Other German industries that have paid reparations to slave laborers include Krupp, Siemens and J. G. Farben.

A First For An Israeli Leader:

PERES WILL BE RECEIVED BY A SENIOR MEMBER OF BRITAIN'S ROYAL FAMILY

By Maurice Samuelson

LONDON, Jan. 21 (JTA) -- Israeli Premier Shimon Peres, who arrives in Britain tonight for a five-day visit, will be the first Israeli leader to be received by a senior member of the British royal family.

It will happen when he attends lunch as guest of the Prince and Princess of Wales. The heir to the throne's invitation to Peres is regarded here as an attempt to make up for the fact that the British royal family has not yet visited the Jewish State despite frequent invitations.

Peres is coming to Britain as guest of Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, the first such visit since then Premier Menachem Begin was received by Labor Prime Minister James Callaghan eight years ago. The atmosphere for the Peres-Thatcher encounter had been threatened by a British invitation to a PLO-Jordanian joint delegation three months ago. But Israeli displeasure at the planned meeting was softened when the British, at the last minute, refused to talk to their PLO guests.

The royal luncheon for Peres is regarded as further evidence of Britain's wish to improve relations with the Israelis. It should also go down well in the British Jewish community, which has increasingly resented the lack of contact between the royal family and the Jewish State.

Peres will make two major speeches -- at the Royal Institute for International Affairs and at a dinner hosted by Thatcher. He will also have talks with Foreign Secretary Sir Geoffrey Howe and Trade Secretary Leon Brittan, as well as with opposition party leaders.

Peres will also address Jewish communal gatherings and pay a private call on 88-year-old Dorothy de Rothschild, who last offered to finance the construction in Jerusalem of a new national Supreme Court building. He will also visit Oxford University to meet Sir Isaiah Berlin, the philosopher.

Peres will arrive in London from The Netherlands, where he is paying an official visit. He will leave here for West Berlin, the first visit to the former capital of Nazi Germany by an Israeli Premier.

APARTMENTS IN THE HEART OF HEBRON RENOVATED FOR JEWISH OCCUPANCY

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 21 (JTA) -- The Gush Emunim chalked up a victory with serious political implications yesterday when 13 apartments, renovated for Jewish occupancy, were consecrated at a religious ceremony in the heart of Hebron.

Deputy Premier and Housing Minister David Levy (Likud-Herut) said at the ceremonies that additional construction for Jews will begin immediately in a nearby courtyard. The Housing Ministry invested about \$1 million this year for construction of Jewish flats in Hebron.

Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin (Labor) told the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Security Committee yesterday that he is firmly opposed to Jewish settlement in Hebron but is forced to abide by the terms of the coalition agreement under which the Labor Party and Likud formed their unity government last year.

The coalition agreement does not extend to Tel Rumeida and other parts of Hebron where the Gush Emunim have repeatedly tried to put up Jewish settlements.

The flats on which Sephardic Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliahu affixed mezuzahs yesterday are in 19th century buildings known as the Bet Hadassah and Bet Hasson complexes. They remained Jewish property after the Jewish population fled Hebron during the 1929 Arab uprising. The Gush Emunim have long claimed the right of Jews to resettle there.

In 1979, a group of women and children, headed by Miriam Levinger, wife of Gush Emunim leader Rabbi Moshe Levinger, moved into the Bet Hadassah building. They remained there for nine months, guarded by Israeli troops. The Likud-led government of Premier Menachem Begin made no attempt to evict them, although the move was clearly illegal. Since then, other Jewish squatters, including Levinger himself, have occupied the premises.

Returning To 'Land Of Our Forefathers'

Levy said that "in consecrating homes in Hebron, we are returning to the land of our forefathers." Referring to peace efforts in the region, he declared, "We will make peace with (the land of) Israel."

The Housing Ministry has completed plans for 11 more apartments and a center for "Land of Israel" studies in the courtyard of the Avraham Avinu synagogue in Hebron. The project architect, Saadia Mendel, said in a television interview that he considers the building plans an expression of political positions. He said he planned the new buildings as an integral part of the Moslem quarter of Hebron.

KNESSET MARKS KING'S BIRTHDAY

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Jan. 21 (JTA) — The Knesset yesterday commemorated the birthday of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., in a special session, attended by President Chaim Herzog, members of the diplomatic community and other guests.

Shlomo Hillel, the Knesset Speaker, said that the life of the slain civil rights leader was devoted to fighting racism and for the human rights of his Black brethren in the United States.

"As a people who have continuously been subject to racism, suffering, and exile, and lack of tolerance, we feel deep appreciation for this exceptional fighter who has turned into one of the symbols of the American nation," said Hillel.

Yaacov Tzur, Minister of Absorption, who spoke on behalf of the government, said the educational force of King was in his rare ability to put

the contents of the fight in "plain and human terms" and to make them a unified force. Tzur also expressed concern over expressions of racism in Israeli society.

But Knesset members Mohammad Miari and Matityahu Peled, both representatives of the Progressive List For Peace, were unimpressed. They said the special Knesset session was hypocritical, since, for the past 18 years, the Palestinian people have been under an oppressive regime, and for the past 38 years, the Arabs of Israel have been discriminated against.

In recognition of the new American federal holiday honoring King, Israel celebrated January 20, 1986 as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. In addition, schools and universities marked the day with special programs which took note of King's life and works. The Jerusalem municipality also named a street after King.

HISTADRUT SEEKING LINKS WITH SOUTH AFRICAN BLACK UNIONISTS

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 21 (JTA) — Histadrut, Israel's trade union federation, has sent a two-man delegation to South Africa to establish permanent links with Black trade unionists there. According to The Jerusalem Post, the mission has the behind-the-scenes blessings of the Israeli government, despite ties with the apartheid regime in Pretoria.

The Foreign Ministry has provided part of the delegates' expenses, the Post said. The Histadrut men are to meet leaders of the new Black Trades Union Federation and the Congress of South Africa Trades Unions, including Cyril Ramaphosa, secretary of the powerful National Miners Union.

The objective of the Israelis is reported to be to enlist a group of Black trade unionists to attend a labor studies course at Histadrut's Afro-Asian Institute here. That project will be financed by Histadrut and the California-based Center for Foreign Policy Options, headed by State Senator Tom Hayden. The Center is sponsoring the delegation's trip to South Africa.

WJC TO HOLD 50th ANNIVERSARY ASSEMBLY

JERUSALEM, Jan. 21 (JTA) — The 50th anniversary of the founding of the World Jewish Congress will be marked here January 27-30 at a plenary assembly that is expected to bring together some 900 delegates, alternates and observers from Jewish communities in 68 countries around the world. The meeting will be the eighth plenary assembly since the WJC was founded in 1936 in Geneva by Rabbi Stephen Wise.

The four day meeting will receive reports on Jewish life from Argentina to Zaire, hear from top spokesmen of the Reagan Administration, the government of Israel and the Third World, and debate issues of East-West relations, Arab-Jewish peace, and the creative community of the Jewish people. Edgar Bronfman, WJC president, will chair the assembly.

Among the scheduled speakers at the meeting will be Defense Minister Giovanni Spadolini of Italy, a stern critic of his government's policy toward terrorism; U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Vernon Walters; Dr. Bernard Lown of Boston, a leader of International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War, who shared the 1985 Nobel Peace Prize.

Also, Enrique Iglesias, Foreign Minister of Uruguay; Ram Jethmalani, a member of the Supreme Court of India; Rep. Julian Dixon (D. Calif.), former chairman of the Black Congressional Caucus; Premier

Shimon Peres; Deputy Premier Yitzhak Shamir; Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin; and World Zionist Organization Executive chairman Leon Dulzin, speaking as chairman of the World Conference on Soviet Jewry.

Yitzhak Korn, chairman of the Israel Executive of the WJC Congress, who participated in the 1936 founding assembly, will take part in the 1986 assembly. He will be presented with a medal by Dr. Gerhart Riegner, co-chairman of the WJC Governing Board.

A highlight of the assembly will be a discussion of "The Jewish People and the Changing World" with Saul Bellow, Nobel Laureate in literature; Sir Isaiah Berlin, British political scientist and president of Wolfson College, Oxford University; Yitzhak Navon, former President of Israel, now Minister of Education and Culture; and Carl Sagan, astronomer and author. Rabbi Arthur Hertzberg will chair this session, at which each of the participants will receive a Nahum Goldmann medal, named for the late WJC president.

JEWISH-ARAB TENSIONS CONTINUE TO ESCALATE OVER TEMPLE MOUNT

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Jan. 21 (JTA) — Tension between Jews and Arabs stemming from recent confrontations on the Temple Mount continued to escalate this week over the issue of Jewish prayer at the site of two of the holiest shrines of the Islamic faith.

The matter was discussed before the Knesset's Interior Committee yesterday where there seemed to be some uncertainty as to what the law permits. Arabs were further angered yesterday when Sephardic Chief Rabbi Mordechai Eliahu proposed that a synagogue be erected on the Temple Mount. The Mufti, Sheikh Sa'ad A-Din Al-Alami, chief of the Moslem Council, responded in effect that it would be over his dead body.

Meanwhile, a delegation of six Israeli Arab mayors visited the Mufti on the Temple Mount today to express solidarity with the Moslem religious authorities' refusal to allow Jews to worship there. It was the first visit to the site by Israeli Arabs in any official capacity. Mayor Tarek Abdul Hai of Tira stated that Jewish demands to worship on the Temple Mount were motivated by political not religious reasons.

Sheikh Al-Alami, who is the top Moslem religious functionary in Israel, declared, "Just as I will not pray in your synagogues, I don't want Jews to come and pray here."

Actions Precipitating Latest Strife

The latest religious strife was precipitated when several members of the Interior Committee, headed by its chairman, Dov Shilansky (Likud-Herut), visited the Temple Mount two weeks ago to investigate allegations of illegal construction there. They were confronted by angry crowds and had to be extricated by the police.

The committee members repeated their visit a week later and while it passed without incident, Arab youths stoned police just outside the Temple Mount area and 17 were arrested. On both visits, the Knesseters were accompanied by ultra-nationalist Jewish activists who are not members of the Interior Committee.

Their presence, and the fact that on the first visit the news media was invited with cameras, con-

stituted what the Moslem authorities contended was deliberate provocation. Police have maintained tight surveillance over the area since then. Last Sunday they prevented several Jews from entering the western gate of the Temple Mount when it appeared they intended to stage a demonstration. Two members of Rabbi Meir Kahane's extremist Kach Party were detained.

The Temple Mount is open to all visitors and is, in fact, a tourist attraction. But Israeli law forbids Jewish prayers at the site of the Al Aksa Mosque and the Dome of the Rock (Mosque of Omar) which, after Mecca and Medina (in Saudi Arabia), are the holiest Moslem shrines. Deputy Attorney General Yoram Barsella told the Interior Committee yesterday, however, that Jewish prayer on the Temple Mount was not a criminal offense.

No Illegal Construction Work Taking Place

David Kraus, Inspector General of Police, explained to the committee that organized Jewish prayer was banned by a ruling of the Supreme Court but an individual was entitled to pray there as long as he did not do so demonstratively.

Aharon Sarig, Director General of the Jerusalem Municipality, informed the committee that contrary to allegations, no illegal construction was taking place on the Temple Mount. He said there was some reconstruction work which did not require licenses but he knew of no prayer platforms being erected.

In other developments, there was religious strife in Hebron last Friday where Jews and Arabs scuffled at the Patriarchs' Tomb. An elderly Arab reportedly attempted to stab a Jewish worshipper.

Mayor Teddy Kollek of Jerusalem who has long taken pride in his ability to maintain peace between Jews and Arabs in the city, reacted angrily over the weekend to a demand by one of his deputy mayors, Rabbi Nissim Zeev, that Israeli Arabs be banned from living in the Neve Yaacov neighborhood. He said unless Zeev retracted his statements he would be dismissed from office.

An Arab family of 12 children barely escaped injury when their flat in Neve Yaacov was set on fire last week. Other Arab residents have complained of threats and harassment by Kach Party activists.

HOLOCAUST DENIAL BOOK TO REMAIN IN SCHOOL LIBRARY

TORONTO, Jan. 21 (JTA) — A book that claims the Holocaust is a hoax as well as controversial publications will not be banned from the library at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto.

After a three-month investigation, a special committee has ruled out adopting a policy that would remove books such as "The Hoax Of The Twentieth Century" from library shelves. The book denies the well-documented fact that six million Jews died at the hands of the Nazis.

The new policy of the Institute, however, approved by its governing council, could result in a book being placed in a "limited access" area if it is the subject of an "adverse judgment" by a Canadian court.

TEL AVIV (JTA) — A woman was slightly injured and taken to a hospital for treatment for shock when a bomb exploded in Afula Tuesday. It was the eighth terrorist blast in the Jezreel valley town in recent months. The explosive charge was hidden under bushes near the Afula bus station.

SPECIAL TO THE JTA TREE-PLANTING PROJECTS TAKING ROOT By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 21 (JTA) — As rain and hail pelted Jerusalem from leaden skies yesterday, Moshe Rivlin, world chairman of the Jewish National Fund, looked through his office window on King George Street with unconcealed delight. At last, some really heavy rain.

With only a week to go to Tu B'Shvat, the traditional 15th of Shvat ("New Year for Trees," JNF foresters around the country had been seriously concerned over the dearth of rainfall during this remarkably mild winter. It had not reached drought proportions yet, but there was cause for alarm for foresters and farmers.

Rivlin's men plan to plant some 3.5 million new trees around the country. They must be snugly in the ground and growing by February 28 at the latest. "Winter came late this year," said a gnarled woodsman waiting to see the JNF chairman. "But thank God it's come at last."

The JNF men pray for rain on every day save Tu B'Shvat itself, when they hold ceremonies at old and new sites around the country. This year, the central event will be in south Jerusalem, just off the road that leads from the southern suburb of Talpiot towards Bethlehem.

Tree Planting in IDF Commemorative Forest

Chief of Staff Gen. Moshe Levy and the members of the Israel Defense Force General Staff will be the first to plant trees in an IDF commemorative forest, situated in the area of some of the heaviest fighting of the 1948 War of Independence.

The area was the scene, too, of a brief but dramatic battle in the 1967 war. Anxious Jerusalemites watched in anguish as an Israel Air Force plane was downed just outside the Mar Elias convent, midway between the capital and Bethlehem.

Within hours of that setback, the Old City fell into Israel's hands, and within two days all of Judea was controlled by the IDF.

Other Ceremonies Marking Tu B'Shvat

In other ceremonies marking Tu B'Shvat, 100,000 school children and 50,000 soldiers, immigrants, pensioners and other organized groups will help the JNF professionals reach this year's tree-planting goal.

Because of the unseasonal weather through November and December, Rivlin has had to lower his sights. But he still hopes to achieve three million plantings before the end-of-February cutoff date.

The focal areas are:

* Galilee: Here the JNF forestry department is moving ahead impressively on several fronts. Seven hundred dunams of the Toukan Hills, near Kibbutz Lavie in southern Galilee, have been earmarked for afforestation this year and a new settlement, Avtalyon, is to be completely surrounded by greenery.

But most significantly, JNF is contributing its land-preparation and afforestation skills to the major national goal of turning the entire Kinneret shoreline into Israel's main inland tourism resource.

The hills rising above Tiberias are to be afforested — partly with the aid of the Swiss JNF. One section will be named the Rambam Park, commemorating Maimonides who, according to tradition, is buried in Tiberias.

To the northeast of Lake Kinneret the JNF is aiding a group of seven kibbutzim which jointly are implementing a major holiday resort project of hotels, water-sports, and scenic trekking to be available to visitors from Israel and abroad.

Conditions are very difficult, Rivlin noted in an interview with the Jewish Telegraphic Agency. "The rocks are basalt. The ground slopes. We have to build terracing, and plan each tree spot individually," he said.

* In the Negev, JNF this year is planting at Pit-hat Shalom, the border region just south of the coast. At Yotir, in the Hebron Hills, "We are literally pushing the desert back — and this will be a boon to the fledgling settlements in the area," Rivlin said.

Other Ambitious Projects

Another Negev project now underway is a Golda Meir Park near Kibbutz Revivim, where the late Premier's daughter lives with her family and where Golda herself was a frequent visitor. The site is close to one of the roads leading to Eilat. Southbound holiday-makers will be able to pause there for a unique experience of verdant relaxation in the heart of the arid desert.

Given the aridity, JNF is experimenting with over 30 strains of trees and bushes to select those best suited for the rigors of the southern climate.

Around Jerusalem, "our green belt is gradually nearing completion to the north of the capital, and now we have turned eastwards," Rivlin said. Here, too, the trees steal from the desert. He is planning a ten-dunam-wide strip of green bordering the city to the east of the Mt. Scopus-Mount of Olives line.

There are similar though less ambitious projects afoot to surround Ashdod and Beit Shemesh, two less glamorous cities, with their own green belts, too.

Abroad, JNF's Education Department predicts it will reach more than half-a-million Jewish children through various Tu B'Shvat-related activities in schools, youth groups and community centers.

A Remarkable Innovation

Looking beyond Tu B'Shvat, which is traditionally the JNF's red-letter day, perhaps the most remarkable innovation in JNF forestry at this time is going ahead quietly in a 400-dunam experimental site in the north of the country. It is an attempt, the first in Israel, to grow trees specifically for timber.

To date, JNF supplies one half of the Israeli timber industry's requirements in chipboard, all from thinning out existing forests. Chipboard comprises wood shavings and small pieces compressed together. It is extensively used in furniture manufacture here and abroad.

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TEL AVIV (JTA) — Israeli technicians spent two weeks in an isolated desert area demonstrating to American experts the capabilities of the Israel-made drone—pilotless light aircraft used for reconnaissance purposes. Those demonstrations resulted in a major contract from the U.S. Navy, according to an article in *Bamahane*, the Israel Defense Force monthly magazine. The Israel-made drone fulfilled the American requirements with respect to maximum cruising range and altitude, ability to spot hidden targets, take-off and landing on short (70-meter) runways, and maintenance needs.