

WORLD NEWS BRIEFS

JERUSALEM, (JTA) -- Dr. Felix Shinnar, head of the Israel Mission at Cologne, returned to his post today after three days of consultation with Mrs. Golda Meir, Israel's Foreign Minister, and other high Foreign Office officials on current differences between West Germany and Egypt. Dr. Shinnar took with him a message to the effect that it was West Germany's duty to seek moral rehabilitation from its Nazi past and not a "balance" in its foreign policy. The message was interpreted here as a plea by Israel to the Bonn Government not to be influenced by Nasser's blackmail threats that he will recognize East Germany if the Government of West Germany does not halt its aid to Israel.

LONDON, (JTA) -- Maurice Edelman, president of the Anglo Jewish Association, pleaded for unity among British Jews in presenting the situation of Soviet Jewry to Premier Kosygin and Communist party Secretary General Brezhnev on the forthcoming visit of the Soviet leaders to Britain. Speaking at a luncheon, he said that Soviet Jews had "the status of a national minority but not the rights accorded to other national minorities."

BONN, (JTA) -- Dr. Ewald Bucher, the Minister of Justice who has been one of the most adamant West German officials in opposing extension of the cutoff date for the prosecution of Nazi war criminals, threatened last night to resign if the deadline was extended. It is scheduled to become effective May 8 if no action is taken.

BELGRADE, (JTA) -- The Yugoslav Federal Assembly and the Federation of Jewish Communities in Yugoslavia denounced, in separate actions, the West German Cabinet decision to adhere to the May 8 cutoff date for the prosecution of Nazi war criminals.

ROME, (JTA) -- Significant sections of the Italian press featured articles opposing West Germany's plans to cut off prosecutions of war criminals after May 8. An article in Avanti, influential Socialist daily, asked whether German agreement to let its statute of limitations go into effect would mean that even Hitler could go free if he should return after May 8.

NEW YORK, (JTA) -- Grave concern over the mounting danger of "international, Nazi-inspired, anti-Semitic groups" in Argentina and other Latin American countries was expressed here today in a statement issued by the World Conference of Jewish organizations. At the same time, the Conference expressed appreciation to the Argentine Government for its efforts to eradicate subversion and terrorism.

The statement was adopted at a special meeting of the Conference and signed by the World Jewish Congress, the American Jewish Congress, B'nai B'rith, Canadian Jewish Congress and the Jewish Labor Committee. Dr. Nahum Goldmann, who presided at the special meeting, is chairman of COJO, and Label A. Katz, national president of B'nai B'rith, is co-chairman. The meeting was held after a conference between a delegation representing COJO and the Argentine Ambassador to the United States, Dr. Norberto Barrenechea.

NEW YORK, (JTA) -- The National Institute of Arts and Letters, which limits its membership to 250 persons of "outstanding creative achievement" named three Jewish authors in electing 13 new members.

They were Alfred Kazin, critic and writer; Howard Nemerov, award-winning poet, critic and novelist; and Isaac Bashevis Singer, fiction writer in Yiddish whose work in English translation has attracted widespread praise in this country. The three were half of the six members chosen for the Department of Literature. There are now 240 members in the Institute.

WASHINGTON, (JTA) -- Legislation to make Americans naturalized since the end of World War II able to seek relief under the War Crimes Act was introduced in the Senate by Sen. Jacob K. Javits, New York Republican, and Sen. Paul Douglas, Illinois Democrat. The measure is similar to one introduced in the House by Rep. William F. Ryan, New York Democrat. Under the War Claims Act, American citizens may seek compensation for losses from any country which was an enemy of the United States during World War II.

LONDON, (JTA) -- A delegation of top leaders of the Board of Deputies of British Jews met with the West German ambassador, Dr. Hasso von Eitzdorf, protested against his Government's plan to put into effect the statute of limitations on war crime trials after May 8, and obtained from his the assurance that he would report the sentiments of British Jewry to the authorities in Bonn.

JERUSALEM, (JTA) -- Mrs. Golda Meir, Israel's Foreign Minister, conferred here with the special two-man mission sent by United Nations Secretary-General U Thant to probe what Mr. Thant has viewed as the "deteriorating situation" along Israel's borders with Jordan. The two, Brig. Indar J. Rikhye, military adviser to Mr. Thant, and Pier Spinelli conferred with Mrs. Meir after visiting Amman, capital of Jordan, where they reviewed the situation with Jordan's Minister of Defense.

BONN, (JTA) -- State Secretary Gunter von Hase, head of the Government Information Office, said that the Arabs "should always have a special understanding of our relations toward Israel." On the other hand, he added, "Israel understands our relations with the Arab states."

CASABLANCA, (JTA) -- Three violently anti-Jewish attacks were published in one week in Moroccan newspapers representing virtually every shade of political opinion in this Moslem country.

BUENOS AIRES, (JTA) -- The Buenos Aires police, continuing their probe of a neo-Nazi terrorist cell flushed out near the Ezeiza airport, hinted of early arrests.

LONDON, (JTA) -- A Russian Jew and his wife were sentenced to death in a court in Minsk after being convicted of "economic crimes," according to the Minsk daily newspaper, Zviazda. The newspaper named the couple as Semion Borisovich Briskin and his wife Celia.

CANTOR KOHN'S PARENTS WOMEN IN CANTOR'S LIFE



Hannah and Herman Kohn



Wife Willa, daughter's Susie, Debbie, and Loretta

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Kohn, a respected family. Herman Kohn was a knowledgeable man who advised and helped others.

Apart from being a landowner, and extremely wealthy, he was a devout scholar, and known for his charity. He was a kind man and often on Sabbath night Hannah would receive many unexpected guests for dinner.

In 1928, on Aug. 12th, they welcomed a son, Joseph, who increased the family to five girls and two boys.

At the age of five, Joseph, whose life we are following, was sent to a Secular Hebrew school where he remained until 11 1/2. He then attended the Yeshiva, the seminary and to private tutors for secular training. Joe spent one year at Kesso Yeshiva, and went on to the Rabbinical Seminary of Nyirmada, in Hungary, where he studied a minimum of 55 hours per week.

He lived at the Seminary for 3 1/2 years. Then the Hitler holocaust struck in 1944.

A dramatic decision had to be made and only Herman Kohn had the strength and foresight to make it. In order to save some, if any of the family, which consisted of Joseph's uncle and cousins, as well as his sisters and brother, Kerman Kohn suggested that part of the two families be divided. The three younger girls of his family to be put in the custody of a non-Jew, who was being paid to protect them, and who, immediately upon receipt of his money, turned them over to the Nazis. Enough said, they never survived.

The rest were split up, Joseph went with his uncle, Moisha Abraham Kohn.

Today, it is with grateful heart, that Cantor Kohn, can say his uncle is living in Israel. The rest of Joe's immediate family were found, and exterminated, with the exception of a cousin, Mordecai, who escaped and rejoined his own father and Joseph. It was a desperate effort to survive, for the boys were approximately 16.

A room was built, which from the outside of the house looked part of the building. It had to be entered thru a double bottle-necked opening in the top. Buckets of sand were placed in a position to be overturned and thereby covering the cracks to the opening.

At one time a Nazis not knowing what he was doing, kicked this container of sand,

thereby unwittingly saving the lives of four human beings cramped into a closet size room below. In this hiding place, they lived for 20 weeks, eating only crackers and water.

The time eventually came when supplies ran out, and they had to forage for food. Joe (as we know him) and his cousin Mordecai, (to whom Joe gives full credit for saving their lives) accidentally started a fire in an empty building and were arrested by the Russians, who occupied Hungary.

The boys were charged with committing Major crimes against the state, and were held over for a Major trial.

They were prisoners for four weeks, when they outwitted their guards, and escaped. Joe then joined the resistance movement in Budapest.

In 1945 Joe returned to his home, where he found complete and total destruction. He was not allowed to enter his family property, as the Russian's were using his family residence for their headquarters. There was no trace of his parents.

Joe moved to another part of Hungary, and with two of his cousins, who had also escaped the wrath of the Nazis, operated a distillery for 6 months. For a time Joe lived in Budapest with an Uncle, a "Chust Rabbi".

He then traveled to Prague and on to Germany, and finally to the U.S.A. through an organization, founded by the late Eleanor Roosevelt. It was in 1947 when he came to reside with his Uncle the "Tzelemer Rabbi" Grunwald, in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. Joe recommenced his education, going to his Uncle's Yeshiva, and studying under the famed Cantor Weiser for the Chazonim. After two years he came to Los Angeles, where he graduated from Roosevelt High school.

Just about this time Joe entered the U.S. Armed Forces. He served two years in the Intelligence Corps in Korea, where he was wounded after earning three bronze stars.

After his discharge in 1953, he took the post as Cantor for Fremont Street Temple, for one year. He also took advantage of the G.I. bill, and went to the Los Angeles college to major in music. He then served as Cantor at Temple Mogen David for four years.

In 1957 the small community of La Mirada needed to found a House of Worship.

Joe volunteered his services for the first year, and after the La Mirada Jewish Community Centre became established, was paid a small stipend for the second year.

In July, 1959, he came to Las Vegas, and without even conducting a Service, rendered two songs for the members in charge of retaining a Cantor for this community. He immediately was offered the position without any further discussion. Cantor Joe plunged right in to build our Jewish Community. He helped in every way with the growth of the Educational school. He always had a friendly hand for our youngsters, who, without it, could not have had the incentives towards living a Jewish life. Through the generosity of his own pocket, Cantor Joe helped many in time of need. He spent many added extra hours of training the youngsters, without compensation to be sure that no child would be deprived of the little added joys. Many a boy who could not afford it enjoyed the Mitzvah of a Kiddush table at his Bar Mitzvah through Joe's generosity. Children automatically love him, and this is a recommendation that cannot be questioned.

To listen to his voice, when he calls the Congregation to prayer on Sabbaths and Holidays, is in itself, a privilege. In addition to his being a great showman, he sings from his heart. Many who have heard his rendering of "Eso Enai" which proclaims, "I look to the hills from whence cometh my help" cannot help but weep. When they hear his joyful Israeli songs, they must again feel the beat of happiness along with him.

The past February 10th was the 14th anniversary of Cantor Joe's marriage to

Willa (nee Rothstein), whom he met, when she was the youngest student admitted to the University of Judaism in 1950. He married her in 1951, when she was 16. They now have three girls, Loretta just recently Bat Mitzvahed, Debbie and Susie.

Willa herself has a colorful background, being born in Siberia, and eventually coming to L.A. in 1949 to live with relatives. She is also a teacher in the Educational School at Temple Beth Shalom, alongside her husband, and on occasion, when teased about singing, says it is satisfying enough to have her husband be the star.

Irony has a way of stealing into every picture. Mordecai Greenfield, Cantor's cousin, having lived thru' all the ordeals of Nazism, and who is now living in Israel, fell from a truck and is now permanently crippled. This is a great source of concern to Cantor Joe, who is also concerned with bringing a young surviving cousin to America from Hungary, behind the Iron Curtain.

Cantor Joe is 100% American. In 1953, he won a City Wide Evening School Gold cup for the speaking subject "I am an American".

Let us all join together in wishing Cantor Kohn, many years of fruitful living in this great country. Although time cannot replace what one has lost, it can always, eventually, heal the wounds. From his beautiful family will come Nachus and Simchus, and from his friends and Congregationists - whom he shares with Rabbi Aaron S. Gold, there will always be an understanding and affection, earned through Cantor Joe's grim determination and earnest efforts.

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