

JEWISH NEWS BRIEFS

NEW YORK-- Membership in Jewish Community Centers and YM & YWHA's throughout the U.S. has soared to 700,000, a new high which represents close to a 30 percent growth since 1953, the latest volume of the JWB Year Book reveals. JWB is the National Association of YM & YWHA's and Jewish Community Centers.

NEW YORK-- A tall, personable, 22-year old, first graduate of South America's first preparatory school for rabbis, the Seminario Rabínico Latino Americano, founded in Buenos Aires in 1961, has arrived in this country to complete his studies for the rabbinate at The Jewish Theological Seminary of America in New York. He is one of 32 new students drawn from various regions of the United States and from abroad who will embark upon the course leading to ordination when term opened October 26.

NEW YORK (WNS) Establishment of a Commission on Inter-marriage in American Colleges, aimed at combating the inroads of inter-marriage on the campuses, was announced by the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America in a statement which said that the commission is to be headed by prominent scholars, educators, academicians and rabbis.

BRIDGEPORT (WNS) The Bikur Cholim Synagogue of this city was the target of two Molotov cocktail bombs hurled by an unidentified man who is being hunted by the police.

PITTSBURG (WNS) Vigorous support of the spirit of revolution throughout the world against feudalism and the status quo was urged here by Associate Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas at the 18th Biennial National Convention of Women's American ORT.

NEW YORK (WNS) American commitment to peace and stability in the Middle East via establishment of a reasonable arms balance between Israel and "Those who threaten her security" was counseled here by Senator Robert F. Kennedy, New York Democrat.

Addressing a dinner of the American Friends of the Hebrew University, the former U.S. Attorney General said that equality of armaments was "preferable to imbalance" but that absence of armaments "under appropriate safeguards" was "better still."

BALTIMORE (WNS) An investigation of charges that some faculty members of the University of Maryland were manifesting attitudes that "many consider outright anti-Semitic" was demanded by State Senator Paul Dorf, according to a report in the Baltimore Jewish Times, English-Jewish weekly.

Triggering the demand for an investigation was an article in the student university paper Diamondback charging that a German-language teacher who scheduled an exam for the first day of Rosh Hashanah had threatened Jewish students that if they did not take the exam they would get failing marks. Subsequently the teacher cancelled the exam, but in talks with students who showed up for the ordeal he was reported by the student newspaper to have divested himself of the following wisdom: "I hope those of you who showed up will not go to hell."

Another professor was quoted by the student newspaper as having said that "Rabbis have enough to do this time of the year without having to issue excuses for absences by Jewish students."

WASHINGTON (WNS) Planned participation in the 1966 Tel Aviv International Fair was announced by the U.S. Department of Commerce. Details of its projected pavilion are to be announced later.

SPRINGFIELD (WNS) A fire that recently destroyed Beth El Temple, causing damage estimated at one million dollars, was not due to arson, it was reported by State police officials after an investigation of the incident.

NEW YORK--Torah convocations for Jewish military personnel on duty with the U.S. Armed Forces in Great Britain, Germany, France, Spain, Turkey and Greece will be conducted by Rabbi Selwyn D. Ruslander, spiritual leader of Temple Israel, Dayton, Ohio, until Nov. 24, it was announced here by Rabbi Israel Miller, chairman of the National Jewish Welfare Board Commission on Jewish Chaplaincy.

CHICAGO (WNS) The Jewish community of this city honored the government and people of Denmark for their "courage, humanity and indomitable will" in rescuing virtually the entire Jewish population of Denmark from the hands of the Nazi murderers. Highlighting the event was presentation to Torben Ronne, Danish Ambassador to the United States, of the Jewish Welfare Fund's Shofar Award. The Ambassador on accepting the award, said "the Nazi occupation of Denmark made it clear that a policy of neutrality cannot keep a country out of wars."

LONDON (WNS) A former Nazi facing trial in Cologne, Germany, has asked the Egyptian Government to grant him political asylum and to do business in the country, according to a report from Cairo. The applicant was identified as Helmut Cramer, a former SS lieutenant. He is wanted in Cologne for distributing Nazi propaganda.

TECHNY, ILL. (WNS) A Chicago Rabbi, Herman E. Schaalman of Emanuel Congregation, has been named to the faculty of a Catholic Seminary here. He was invited to join the faculty after giving a series of lectures last spring. Rabbi Schaalman is former president of the Chicago Association of Reform Rabbis.

TEL AVIV (WNS) Infiltrators from Lebanon blew up an unoccupied house in the settlement of Margaliyot, it was disclosed when Israelie officials filed a complaint with the mixed UN armistice commission.

St. Louis Blues Sung In A Chasidic Schul?

By Sidney Peilte

Some time ago, I came across a story in a Jewish periodical which I should like to share with the readers of the LAS VEGAS ISRAELITE. The tale is amusing, for one thing, and for another shows how some liturgical music is born.

In a certain big city, so the story goes, there is a section densely peopled with Chasidic Jews, who are known to express their love for the Almighty through singing their prayers instead of reciting them. One such Chasid, whom we'll call Reb Murphy, (not his real name) was always looking for new tunes, and whenever he saw an announcement of the opening of a new Chasidic Schul, he'd make a bee-line for it, on the first available Saturday-walking all the way, of course.

Now, Reb Murphy (not his real name) had two mischief loving sons, Sean and Owen (not their real names) who generally accompanied their father on these tune-hunting expeditions. Each one would memorize a third of the new melody, and repeat it on the homeward journey and by the time they arrived home, they'd have it down pat. At the first opportunity, usually the following Saturday, the new song would be interpolated into the services by Reb Murphy, for he would be called upon most often to be Bal Tefillah.

Well, Sean and Owen, as a prank, decided to teach their father the "St. Louis Blues." To carry out their little plot, they agreed to alter the tempo and the key and add one or two cantorial trills, thus giving it more of a Semitic sound. In furtherance of their scheme, they'd sing a few bars of the altered song at intervals in their father's presence, until he'd heard the whole thing.

As anticipated, Reb Murphy learned the song as rearranged by his two sons and tried to puzzle out where he'd heard it sung, but, of course, was unsuccessful. Yet there

it was, the basic melody of the "St. Louis Blues" had been retained, albeit the rhythm had been slowed and some improvised cantorial flourishes had been added. This newly acquired song so titillated the musical palate of Reb Murphy, that at services the following Saturday, he introduced this latest addition to his repertoire at the first opportunity, as part of the service. He repeated the song for the benefit of his listeners and by the third repetition, the congregation was singing it too. Thus the "St. Louis Blues" with the changes mentioned, but, nevertheless, still the "St. Louis Blues," came to be a part of the synagogue service.

It will, with doubt, come as something of a surprise to many readers, to learn that a good deal of the music sung in our synagogues is not of original Jewish composition. Much of the liturgical music was borrowed, during the early years of the dispersion of the Jewish people, from the various countries in which they dwelt, and adapted by the Chazanim of the times to suit their individual tastes. This story, then, is not as far-fetched as it seems.

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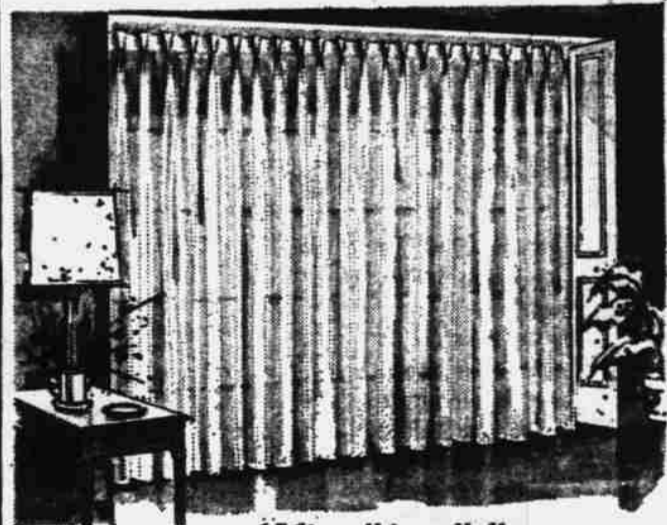
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