

JEWISH NEWS BRIEFS

NEW YORK (WNS) Former Israeli Premier David Ben Gurion has ended his whirlwind three-week visit to the United States on behalf of the United Jewish Appeal and the Israel bond campaign with what his intimate friends described as a satisfying reassessment of the American Jewish community. His next stop-over is Canada, where he is to visit a number of Jewish communities.

OSHERLIN, Ohio, (WNS) Oberlin College officials here announced that the noted Yiddish novelist Isaac Bashevis-Singer has been invited to give a two-week lecture course as an artist-in-residence under the auspices of the Beatty B. and Amy F. Williams Lectureship at the college.

WASHINGTON (WNS) Observance of the 25th anniversary of The Jewish News of Detroit was called to the attention of the Senate of the United States in a speech by Senator Robert P. Griffin in which the Michigan Republican attributed the success and impact of the publication to "the untiring efforts of one man -- Philip Slomovitz."

NEW YORK (WNS) Planned participation of the Synagogue Council of America next May at a Boston conference with Christian churchmen was sharply denounced here by the Union of Orthodox Rabbis.

TEL AVIS (WNS) The Jewish population in Poland was estimated at more than 28,000 by Hersch Smoliar, visiting editor of the Warsaw Yiddish daily, Folkstimme addressing a gathering of Israeli journalists here, who received him as their guest. Mr. Smoliar said his newspaper was the only means of making contact possible "under the present circumstances" between Jews in Russia and Jews in the rest of the world, including Poland.



ISRAELITE COLUMNIST TRUDE FELDMAN WITH BEN-GURION.

BEN-GURION

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in educational and cultural endeavors. He believes that Israel must not only inculcate in its citizens its great spiritual heritage -- particularly that which was derived from the Bible -- but also the value of education.

In pursuit of his new goal, the Ben Gurion has been the motivating force in the establishment of a new educational center -- the College of the Negev, which will rise near his Negev (desert) cottage in Sde Boker.

To be named MIDRASHAT SDE BOKER, Ben Gurion hopes to make it the Oxford of the Negev.

The college, several of whose buildings have just been erected, will serve as a focal point for graduate work and for fundamental studies.

Ben Gurion said that the Institute will open its doors not only to Jew and non-Jew alike, but also will cater to the many new immigrants -- to 'boost their standards'. It will also specialize, he said, in the study of water resources and underground ores.

"The Medrasha will be beneficial to the nation and hasten the economic independence of Israel," he said.

He indicated that the utilization of water resources through desalinization and other methods is one of his nation's greatest technological problems. He expects that atomic energy will help resolve the dilemma.

Ben Gurion pointed out that the Negev -- where he now spends most of his time -- has great resources and minerals awaiting development. "A significant part of Israel's future lies in that now-barren area," he said "There is room for another million people there."

He went on to say that in ancient times, that area was

the crossroads between Europe, Asia and Africa, and 'it surely ought to be so once again'.

"The desert area contains vital industrial potential and we should build this up."

Yet he warned that Israel must not only pursue commercial objectives -- "we must also be a center for culture and learning."

"We will build a Jewish civilization on these two bases: First, on the spiritual heritage of the Bible and second, from the learning achieved through scientific research and technology."

In this regard he said: "We want the best students of American and Canadian Jewry to come to Israel, especially the young scientist with a pioneering spirit. We want them to help us develop Israel. But we want young people who are really looking for a meaning and for a purpose to their lives."

He is convinced that the study of Hebrew is necessary to the survival of Judaism. He predicts that Jewish culture may diminish in America. He believes that American Jew will be completely assimilated into the predominant Christian culture of the country.

"The American Jew should learn the Hebrew language and get a sound Jewish education in order to maintain themselves as a cultural entity," he said, "This alone can keep American Jewry really Jewish."

"The Jew has a sort of spiritual superiority," he said, "which I feel is the secret of his survival."

"The sound Jewish tradition and culture can only be preserved in Israel," Ben Gurion added, "Israel should create a society that can be a 'light to other nations'."

Ben Gurion said he would like to see Israel double her population within the next six years, and he anticipates that four million people might be living there by 1975. He forever solicits American 'recruits'.

"Tell the youth of America," he said before I left, "that besides making the Bible an integral part of their lives, they should come and visit Israel for at least one year."

He quipped: "They might like our country enough to move here, to work here, and to bring up a new generation of Israelis."

The venerable leader is still spry and active at 80. He lives in an agricultural settlement, (Kibbutz) called Sde Boker in the Negev and walks for an hour and a half each morning.

"Walking is our best exercise," he says.

His daily gymnastic exercises include standing on his head.

"My doctor recommended standing on my head," he said, "This makes the blood flow into the head and helps clear it up."

One of his hobbies is collecting rare books, especially those related to the Greek philosophers. He can read Plato in the original language. His collection also includes books on Hinduism and Buddhism.

An avid reader, he is the author of numerous books and articles on a variety of subjects.

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