

JACK TELL'S NEWSPAPER

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Moscow Visitors

The coming to the United States next week of Chief Rabbi Yehuda Leib Levin of Moscow and a delegation of three religious leaders from other cities in the Soviet Union is a significant event for world Jewry in general and Soviet Jewry in particular even though it has been surrounded by marring circumstances.

For years, the Soviet government has been deaf to the pleas of Jewish leaders throughout the world who sought to establish ties with the Jewish community in the Soviet Union. Now that Moscow has seemingly relented, it has cynically chosen the discredited American Council for Judaism as the host and sponsor of the visit, and for a transparent reason -- to utilize the occasion to buttress its anti-Zionist madness and, possibly, to placate liberal world public opinion which stands aghast at the Soviet treatment of its Jewish nationals. Tragically, the Chief Rabbi has been made a pawn in a cynical squeeze play.

It would have been preferable if the venerable rabbi and his entourage of religious leaders had come as the guests of the rooted Jewish community in America, of those who are dedicated to Jewish survival everywhere rather than of those to whom Jewish ongoing is anathema. But the matter is an extremely delicate one, and it were better perhaps if we forgot the motivation and the backstage maneuvering at least while the distinguished guests are with us.

Whatever the Soviet motivation and the despicable role of the American Council for Judaism, it must be recognized that the coming of the delegation holds great significance if only because this is the first wedge in Moscow's morbid refusal to permit contact between its Jewish religious community and Jews abroad. Hopefully, the delegation's visit will lead to wider opening of doors and bring encouragement to the alienated Jewish community in Russia that has for several decades now been sundered from Jewish roots elsewhere.

At this writing we have no knowledge of specific plans by Jewish religious, communal and educational bodies to honor the Chief Rabbi and his three-man retinue. We are convinced however that, in the absence of obstacles not of their own making, they will receive the distinguished guests from the Soviet Union in a manner befitting Jewish tradition. We are also sure that when it leaves, the delegation will carry away an impression of a Jewish community in America that is mature, responsible and sensitive to Jewish needs and problems wherever they arise.

NEW YORK (WNS) United Hias Service, reacting to press reports that Washington intends to provide visas to Polish Jews wishing to emigrate to the United States, said it was alert to the situation and in "constant touch with the State Department and other government agencies with respect to working out viable plans and procedures for the admission of the oppressed and persecuted Polish Jews."

Jerusalem (WNS) Since he does not consider himself a member of the Zionist Organization, former Premier David Ben-Gurion expects to attend the forthcoming World Zionist Congress "as an invited guest."

A. Council For Judiasm DENOUNCED DEFENDED

The anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism was denounced by its former executive director as "bigoted" against Negroes and guilty of "deliberate refusal" to concern itself with the plight of Jews in Communist and Arab lands.

Dr. Norton Mezvinsky, who served as the Council's executive head from February 1967 until last month, made his charges at a news conference in the Overseas Press Club, 54 West 40th St.

Dr. Mezvinsky said the Council had "consistently refused to sustain even the most general discussion of civil rights" and that its leadership had "vied with some of the more bigoted circles in this country in its approach to the race problem."

He noted, for example, that the Council had "decided against issuing any statement or making any gesture on the death of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. 'and that it' studiously avoided taking any stand whatsoever" on the Report of the President's National Advisory Commission on Civil Disorders.

He also disclosed that the Council had rejected a proposal to invite a Negro speaker to its 1968 annual conference, "no matter what his outlook." As a result, Dr. Mezvinsky said, he was obliged to "disinvite" Louis Lomax, the Negro author, and Dr. James E. Cheek, president of Shaw University, who had originally accepted his personal invitations to participate in the conference.

On the Council's pro-Arab attitude, Dr. Mezvinsky revealed:

1) Elmer Berger, the organization's executive vice president, has "freely given speech writing assistance to Arab representatives at the United Nations, notably George Tomeh of Syria."

2) Raffi Berger is sincerely committed to the Arab cause and deeply committed against the Israeli cause. His bias is evident in his writings, speeches and associations with Arab leaders and with pro-Arab organizations, such as the American Friends of the Middle East and the Holy Land Center in New York."

3) The Council is guilty of "willful failure" and "deliberate refusal" to use its Philanthropic Fund to help Jews in Communist and Arab countries "where an anti-Zionist fund might have better access than any other Jewish fund." He said the fund distributed a little over \$1000,000 annually.

Dr. Mezvinsky deplored the "failure" of the American Council for Judaism's leadership "to concern itself with the plight of Jews in Arab countries last summer, to use its credibility with the representatives of the Arab States to this end and similarly to use its philanthropic fund to this end."

He attributed the organ-

NEW YORK (WNS) The American Council for Judaism, reacting to a charge by its former executive director that it was bigoted against Negroes and guilty of "deliberate refusal" to concern itself with the plight of Jews in Communist lands, issued a blanket denial, rejecting the charge that the council was unconcerned with the plight of Jews in Arab countries and that Rabbi Elmer Berger, executive vice president of the organization, had virtually ghost written a speech for George Tomeh, Syrian Ambassador to the United Nations.

Dr. Mezvinsky's charges were denied by George Bagrash, acting executive director of the council, who said his organization's invitation to Rabbi Levin stemmed from "deep concern" for the Jews in Russia. He also denied the council unconcern with the plight of Jews in Communist and Arab lands and rejected the charge that the Philanthropic Fund denied aid to Jews in the Arab countries after the Six Day War, declaring he knew of no "Fund policy that would preclude such aid."

Mr. Bagrash also denied the charge that Rabbi Berger had supplied the Arab envoys at the United Nations with anti-Israel material, first because the Arabs did not need his help and secondly because they could secure whatever material on the philosophy and history of Zionism from the library. He also said the council membership was 20,000 and not 5,000, as Dr. Mezvinsky asserted. He also denied that the council was bigoted against Negroes and, as proof, he cited the fact that Rabbi Berger had addressed Shaw University, at Raleigh, North Carolina. "If we are bigoted and oppose dialogue with Negroes, why would Rabbi Berger to to Shaw?" he asked.

ization's "lack of integrity" to "the reactionary, dogmatic and actually un-Jewish tendencies of large sections of the leadership."

Dr. Mezvinsky in his prepared statement also disclosed the background of the forthcoming visit to this country of a delegation of Jewish religious leaders from the U.S.S.R., headed by Chief Rabbi Yehuda Leib Levin of Moscow. He reported: "The invitation to the Soviet Jewish religious leaders was extended by the Council 'through the official organs of the Soviet government.' He said the Council's contact with Soviet officials was denied by Richard Korn, president of the Council, when the Soviet Embassy in Washington announced the forthcoming visit last April.

Dr. Mezvinsky said the visit of the Soviet Jewish religious leaders "will lose much of its significance and effectiveness if it does indeed materialize under the aegis of the American Council for Judaism."

TELL TALES

"One Man Plus The Truth Constitutes A Majority"

BY JACK TELL



(Continued from Page 1)

developed. Pill boxes and concrete peepholes were established along the entire border, with murderous machine-guns taking pot shots at anything that moved within range. Bands of infiltrators planted mines in roads, dynamited public utilities and public buildings and bombed gathering places.

This is the atmosphere in which Sirhan lived and spent the formative years of his life, from the age of four to 13. An Arab who murdered an Israeli citizen was considered a hero. News of a busload of children being killed by a mine was cheered. Dozens of lives being snuffed out by a bomb in a theatre called for a celebration and the destruction of a synagogue was hailed as a victory. It mattered not that the victims were innocent, non-violent persons, often women and children. The criminal acts were encouraged and rewarded. Such was the atmosphere surrounding a young teenager, who now is charged with assault with attempt to murder a brilliant, ambitious, fearless public spirited man devoted to God and his country.

We do not know, of course, but it is our contention that Sirhan is neither feeble, nor fanatical. Police reports state he is calm, deliberate and without remorse. He is talking at length on many subjects, except the shooting, it is disclosed, and refuses to give any information about his background, including his name. He had four \$100 bills in his pocket, when captured, obviously for getaway requirements. Immediately after the shooting, he fought desperately to break clear, hoping presumably to get lost in the large gathering he knew was assembled. Fortunately, Ram football player Roosevelt Grier, a close Kennedy supporter, grabbed the gun hand and held on to the alleged assailant.

Why was Sen. Kennedy chosen as the No. 1 target? Perhaps it was because he advocated the U. S. uphold its commitment to deliver the 50 jet planes to Israel along with other designated arms to keep the balance in the Middle East. But in the public TV debate, Sen. Eugene McCarthy also advocated the shipments to Israel. It could be that Kennedy's emerging as the primary winner was the determining factor in the strategy for the ignoble deed. But recent headlines show Vice President Hubert Humphrey, also a strong advocate of Israel support, leading in electoral votes for the nomination.

There was however, one rather recent incident, which may have effected the assailant's desire to single out Sen. Kennedy. It was the publicized appearance, last week, of the senator at a synagogue in Northern California. He was photographed wearing a yonolka and being greeted by prominent Jewish citizens. Whatever the reason for this calamitous incident, the cause was a hatred for Jews and Jewish sympathizers, inbred before he had learned to read and write.

There are other Sirhans with warped reasoning about killing people and countries. The adult who leered through a slit in a stone wall with swaying machinegun to terrify tourists and civilians, was a hero to the children when he bragged about his exploits. Many of those youngsters are now of age to go out on their own. Some are here in America.

When will the next attempt be made? And where? And who will be the next victim?

As a lifetime newspaperman, we feel compelled to comment on the coverage of this news event.

The TV reports were superlative. Actual shots of news happening, made newspapers seem obsolete. But on-the-spot interviews of spectators, still under strain of emotion, showed the fallacy of the human brain. Contrary views made in full seriousness by competent authority are mute testimony of the insufficiency of our system of witnesses testifying in court. Forinstance:

Many persons including a former attorney general, asserted they heard four or five shots. The police report stated there were eight shots. A doctor who attended Sen. Kennedy as he was lying on the floor, stated there were two wounds, the head and neck. When asked, he said he was not aware of a hip wound. Immediately thereafter, a news reporter, who had interviewed the same doctor, phoned in his story. The telephone conversation was relayed over the air. The story quoted the doctor as stating the senator was wounded in the hip. These are items of minor importance, true, but they point up the disadvantage of making utterances public without first checking out the facts, like any responsible newspaper would.

On another point, we note that the two Republican candidates for the presidency, Rockefeller and Nixon, were most conspicuous by their silence in offering neither prayer for the stricken senator, nor condolence after his death. Perhaps it is protocol not to pass party lines in these circumstances, but to this naive writer, we say protocol be damned. As for Reagan, governor of the state where the tragedy occurred, his indifference makes him a disgrace to the human race.

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