

FOR THIS WEEKEND

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### Israel Threatened???

The uncovering of a Syrian-directed spy ring, in which young Jews including Sabras have been involved, has created a shock-wave through Israel and the Jewish world. The ring, according to Israeli officials, was broken up in the nick of time - just before it was to engage in sabotage activities.

So far so good. But some gnawing questions arise, especially in the minds of those who can recall similar situations in the U. S. in which government officials "discovered" them "foiled" similar spy rings and saved the day for democracy.

Will the episode be used to limit dissident views and expression in Israel? Already there is a report of tightened control on left-wing groups to prevent them from making contact with hostile elements. Yet sources say authorities do not intend to impose political control.

To what extent are there genuine "spies" and to what extent is there police provocation that goaded possibly misguided Jews into foolish ventures? Here again, according to reports, Israeli agents infiltrated the spy ring and kept its members under close surveillance.

What evidence is there other than reported trips to Damascus and Budapest, that they were engaged in anything more nefarious than anti-Zionist propaganda?

Why has the wrath of the right wing in Israel been immediately, unhesitatingly, dare we say even, directed purposefully, against Mapam and Hashomer Hatzair as the probable culprits in the spy ring episode?

One of the members had been a member of a Hashomer Hatzair Kibbutz. But at least one other is a member of the Communist Party. Why no wrath directed against it or against Matzpan, an avowedly anti-Zionist, anti-Israel, pro-Arab terrorist movement?

These questions need to be clarified because the security of Israel is at stake. But if there is any possibility that this may be a "witch hunt" against the left, then the security of Israel can indeed be in danger in a more fundamental way.

### Nixon on Amnesty

BY ROBERT E. SEGAL

Hugh Sidey, writing of the Nixon landslide and of the President, in his second term, as the undisputed leader of "A New Establishment," observed in "Life" that "no President has yet found a favorable place in the history books through rancor and revenge -- and Nixon knows his history."

When one tries to apply that yardstick to the thorny issue of amnesty for young Americans who

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found service in the Vietnamese War repugnant to such a degree that they either deserted or left the service, one grows increasingly curious as to how Mr. Nixon will handle the issue. Americans awaiting the verdict on amnesty are at a minimum of 40,000, a maximum of perhaps 130,000. A year or so ago, the U. S. Justice Department advised the Supreme Court that about one in every 15 young men ordered to report for induction said they were conscientious objectors. Many destinies are at stake; the hearts of thousands of American parents are torn by glum prospects for amnesty.

Paced by the Pentagon and the American Legion, both vigorous opponents of amnesty for draft resisters and deserters, the foes of reconciliation for those who were willing to risk loss of rights of full American citizenship rather than participate in the adventure in Vietnam seem at the moment to have most of sentiment in their favor. Vice President Agnew is on record as desiring to place out of bounds those now seeking amnesty. "They should be forced to realize that they are being punished, and the punishment should have the connotation of deprivation of privileges," he has declared.

The President himself has stiffened on the issue. Perhaps impressed by a Gallup Poll underscoring the determination of most Americans to deny amnesty, perhaps impressed with the demand of 300 former Prisoners of War that those evading the draft be regarded as Americans giving aid and comfort to the enemy, the President has said: "America will not turn her back on those who served, nor make a mockery of their sacrifice by surrendering or granting amnesty to draft dodgers and deserters."

Those who chose to desert America must pay a price.

This pronouncement is consonant with the President's oft-quoted assertion that "the average American is just like the child in the family. You give him some responsibility, and he is going to amount to something. If on the other hand, you make him completely dependent and pamper him and cater to him too much, you are going to make him soft, spoiled, and eventually a very weak individual."

Are those who agonized over Vietnam and found service in that cause a violation of their innermost convictions to be left, then, to suffer forever the ignominy of the new Establishment's verdict, sans mercy, sans hope, sans consideration of what is to some a painful moral choice?

Will the President give short shrift to the new appeal of John Cardinal Krol of Philadelphia, begging for charity and justice on the part of those empowered to grant amnesty? Will the President be deaf to representatives of the Synagogue Council of America, the National Council of Churches and the National Conference of Catholic Bishops who advocate amnesty? Will the opinion of thousands who hold that the immorality of our involvement in Vietnam should remove the onus from those who opted for personal non-involvement be lost in the sea of present consideration?

An American President wrestling with a similar call for amnesty a century ago rose to the challenge and responded with courageous affirmation. Of that immortal Lincoln it was later to be written: "Great captains, with their guns and drums/ Disturb our judgment for the hour/ But at last silence comes. These all are gone, and, standing like a tower/ Our children shall behold his fame; the kindly-earnest, rave, foreseeing man/ Sagacious, patient, dreading praise, not blame/ New birth of our new soil, the first American."

Not many months before he took a hard line against amnesty, Richard Nixon assured us that he would be very liberal with regard to the issue once American involvement in the war was ended. That day of detachment nears. When it does arrive, how will he finally deal with the burning issue of amnesty--this second-term President who knows well what rancor and revenge can do to a chief executive's place in history?

NEW YORK--The International Board of Governors of Shaare Zedek Hospital held a special session on the site of its new Medical Center in Beit Hakerem opposite Mount Herzl, where a new 500-bed hospital will be flanked on one side by two out-patient clinic buildings capable of receiving 1,000 patients daily, and the four-story Nursing Educational Center, housing the School of Nursing and living quarters for 180 students. On the other side of the main building will be wings for the Research Center, clinical laboratories, medical library, lecture hall and auditorium, and the service facilities and power plant.

## TELL TALES

"One Man Plus The Truth Constitutes A Majority"

BY JACK TELL

(Continued from Page 1)



creative imagination, the thought was derived from and patterned after a real, historical person. During the 4th century, Nicholas, an eight year old orphan, but independently wealthy, spent his life being kind and generous to the less fortunate in his native town in Asia Minor. He was elevated to Bishop of Myra and in the 9th century was canonized. His Dutch name was Santa Claus.

The furthest reference to a Christmas tree is a legendary story of a wounded Swedish officer being cared for by the people of Leipsig during the 30 Years War in the 17th century. As an offer of gratitude he set up a lighted tree in a church on Christmas Day.

The Christmas tree was introduced to America in 1747 by Germans settling in Pennsylvania. Five years later the Moravian sect decorated their trees with lighted candles. Catholic and Protestant colonists from Holland introduced the annual St. Nicholas visitation to America.

Early colonists were divided in the recognition of December 25th. Members of Church of England, Dutch Reformed, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Episcopalian and certain German sects honored the holiday. Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians and Puritans ignored the date. It was on the night of December 25, 1776. George Washington crossed the Delaware River to defeat the Hessians celebrating Christmas at Trenton.

Fantasy had Santa arriving in a cart, a wagon, on mule, drawn by goats and other means of transportation until Clement Moore's "A Visit From St. Nicholas" in 1822, and thereafter the popular conception was a sled drawn by reindeer. In 1847, the first classroom Christmas tree was decorated in a New York City Episcopalian Sunday School.

The individual states commenced declaring Christmas a legal holiday. Alabama, which, like all southern states celebrated Dec. 25 with fireworks a la Fourth of July, was the first, in 1836, and the rest followed suit; California, 1851; Nevada, 1861; Utah, 1882, etc., with Oklahoma being last in 1890.

As late as 1855, all religions were still not in accord in their tolerance of the holiday. The Dec. 26 edition of the year's New York Times stated: Churches of Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists were not open yesterday. They do not accept the day as a Holy one, but Episcopalian, Catholic and German churches were open. Inside they were decked with evergreens. However, by 1880, all evangelical churches were accepting Christmas.

Passing of Christmas gifts in those days was not emphasized, except the wealthy were expected to be generous to the poor. In the middle of the 19th century, due to the influence of Charles Dickens' writings, singing of Christmas carols became prevalent, and the sending of cards began in 1875.

The classic editorial which began, "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus," in response to a child's query, was written by Francis Church for the New York Sun of Dec. 21st, 1897.

In recent years Santa Claus has become to be known as a communal folk figure. A Pennsylvania judge ruled in 1936, that any doubters of Santa Claus who appeared before him would be held in contempt of court. The court citation read: Santa is not a figment of the imagination but an actuality. He is the symbol of kindness, a token smiling charity and a badge of all that is cheerfully benevolent.

Commercial exploitation of Christmas has become systematic and thorough, impelling Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Episcopalians and Jews, to band together in Milwaukee in 1949 and decree to put Christ back into Christmas.

Meanwhile millions of non-Christian homes in scores of non-Christian countries, including Japan and India, have taken unto their own the kindness and charity and cheer of Christmas and proudly display decorated and lit trees on December 25th.

All this proves the true sense of Christmas has not waned -- its just that the Spirit of Christmas has overwhelmed and is about to inundate all humans in the four corners of the earth.