

THE
Jewish Veteran

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Feature Articles

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By ISRAEL GOLDBERG

DECEMBER



1937



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A SOLDIER STARTED CHANUKAH

About the Wars of Judas Maccabeus

UNTIL Antiochus III, Syrian emperor and descendant of that warrior Seleucus who had helped Alexander the Great in his famous conquests and then carved out an empire for himself in Syria, drove the Egyptians out of Asia Minor in 198 B.C. and obtained possession of Judea, Greek influence on the Jews was largely passive. But when the Greek Seleucidaens acquired control of Palestine they undertook a systematic and ruthless process of Hellenization. All the peoples of Asia Minor surrendered to Hellenism and its pagan religion except the Jews, and even among them there were many who began to ape the Greeks and called themselves Hellenists. But the majority of the Jews held firmly to their faith and ideals and fought passionately to defend them. When Antiochus IV came to the throne of Syria the struggle became more bitter and finally burst into war.

Unsuccessful in his attempt to conquer Egypt in 170 B.C., Antiochus vented his rage on Palestine by massacring thousands of Jews in Jerusalem and embarking on a campaign to destroy completely the Jewish religion. In the Temple he erected a statue of the Greek god Jupiter. On the sacred altar he ordered a swine sacrificed. He issued decrees forbidding the practices of Judaism on pain of death. The decrees against observance of the Sabbath, the study of Torah, the rite of circumcision and the dietary laws were enforced with brutal thoroughness. The land swarmed with secret police and spies. In a short time the people of Judea were at the complete mercy of the mighty tyrant who was bent on extirpating every Jew who refused to be Hellenized.

This policy caused thousands of pious Jews to seek refuge in the caves and hills of the Judean foothills. Among those who fled from Jerusalem was an aged priest named Mattathias together with his five sons who had found safety in the village of Modin when Jerusalem and the Temple had been laid waste and desecrated by Antiochus. Before long the king's soldiers also appeared in Modin. They set up an altar, assembled the people and prepared the sacrifice, calling upon Mattathias to officiate. But the aged man, surrounded by his five stalwart sons defied the king's officer. When a Jewish Hellenist stepped forward to perform the rite, Mattathias slew him. This led to an affray in which the king's men were put to flight by the priest's sons. And thus was done the deed which transformed the martyrs into heroes. Mattathias had raised the standard of revolt which was not to be ended until Judea regained its independence in 142 B.C.

In response to Mattathias's call to "whoever is zealous of the and maintaineth the covenant, let him follow me," thousands of Jews, pious and peace-loving, who had been waiting for the word, rallied to his side in the mountains. One of the first acts of Mattathias was to permit the use of wea-

By ISRAEL GOLDBERG

The military side of the story of Chanukah, the only Jewish festival based on a Jewish triumph of arms against its enemies, provides the subject matter of this thrilling chapter from Jewish history presented on the occasion of the Feast of Dedication.

THE EDITOR.

pons in self-defense even on the Sabbath. Issuing from their caves and hidden retreats, the patriots suddenly appeared in towns and villages, pulled down the heathen altars and punished the Hellenist traitors. The most skilful and intrepid of these daring raiders was Judas, the third son of Mattathias.

The rebellion was hardly under way when Mattathias died. Before he passed on he instructed his sons to accept Judas, the strongest among them, as their captain. And so it fell to the lot of Judas to become the victorious leader in one of the most unequal and glorious wars of history. Over night a tiny non-military nation was suddenly transformed into a nation of fearless warriors, reckless of their lives and eager to meet the foe. This amazing transformation was brought about by the inspiration of their cause and by the example of their leader. This son of a temple priest and of a people of pacifists soon proved himself to be one of the greatest military commanders of all time. The ancient world recognized his genius as a soldier by numbering him among the "nine worthies" who are the nine greatest military leaders of antiquity.

The immediate military problem that confronted Judas was apparently hopeless. How could his untrained, undisciplined and poorly-armed bands resist the onslaught of the imperial hosts of Antiochus. The first test came when a Syrian force from Samaria led by the Governor Appolonius came down, expecting to make short work of the Jewish rebellion. But Judas met and routed the Syrians. In quick succession there came the victories of Beth-horon and Emmaus. At the latter town Judas displayed his brilliant strategy against a greatly superior army sent down by Lysias, the governor named by Antiochus to carry out his will.

Then came the decisive year 165 B.C. Lysias had heard of the defeat of his armies with amazement, but he resolved to try again. In the spring of that year he assembled an even greater host which, marching down from the North, swung into southern Judea and headed for Jerusalem, intending to sweep the hill country clear of the Maccabean irregulars. By this time, however, Judas already had an army of 10,000 veterans. Although heavily outnumbered, Judas decided to attack. And in the battle fought at Beth-zur the mercenaries of Antiochus were unable to withstand the daring of the Jewish patriots. The Syrians broke

and fled, leaving five thousand slain on the battlefield.

Although Judas was well aware that the final victory was not yet won, he took advantage of a lull in the fighting to perform an act which would proclaim to the world that by the valor her sons the Jewish people and faith had been saved. In the month of Kislev he entered Jerusalem at the head of his forces. In little more than three weeks the Judean warriors restored and purified the Temple. And on the 25th day there came the Day of Dedication with sacrifice offered upon a new altar. For eight days the festival continued, and Judas ordained that forever after the eight days beginning with the 25th day of the month of Kislev shall be kept by Jews as the Festival of Dedication or Chanukah.

When the eight days of rejoicing were over, Judas began preparations for the new battles he foresaw. For many years the struggle went on. Judas fortified the Temple and Jerusalem. He fortified Beth-zur and waged campaigns against Judea's hostile neighbors, defeating them all — Idumeans, Philistines, Phoenicians and Ammonites—swiftly and completely. In 163 B.C., after Antiochus had died in Persia, Judas again met an overwhelming force sent down by Lysias. This time the Syrians had a large troop of fighting elephants. The two armies met at Beth-zachariah where Judas' brother, Eleazar, was crushed to death when he brought down an elephant on which he believed the new emperor was riding. When Judas was forced to retreat behind the Temple walls the struggle continued. Two years later Judas won his most brilliant victory, defeating Nicanor, whom the new emperor had sent down to crush the Maccabean brothers. Judas then sent ambassadors to Rome who concluded a treaty of alliance with the mighty empire of the West.

But the Romans were in no hurry with assistance and the odds grew more desperate. Finally, in 160 B.C. at a place called Eleasa, Judas found himself facing a huge Syrian host before which his own forces melted away. It was the great Jewish soldier's last battle. A little band of some 800 men was left to the Maccabean brothers and the enemy fell upon the band dwindled. That same day Judas died of wounds suffered in the battle and his three surviving brothers, Jonathan, Simon and Johanan, carried him over the hills to the village of Modin and buried him beside their father Mattathias.

After Judas' death the struggle continued. First under Jonathan, then under Simon, the fortunes of the Jews rose and fell, then rose again. The record tells of a welter of intrigue and treachery at Antioch, the Syrian capital. The Maccabean leaders took advantage of their opportunities, and by sword and diplomacy, under the leadership of Simon, the last of the great brothers, the independence of Judea was achieved.

FOR DECEMBER, 1937

"For Humanity's Sake—DON'T BUY GERMAN GOODS"

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Chanukah

Chanukah, which began on November 29th, is perhaps the only Jewish festival commemorating a Jewish military victory over an enemy of an Israel. Virtually all other Jewish holidays are symbolic of Jewish spiritual or moral triumphs or recall some tragedy in Jewish history. Chanukah however, reminds us of those days 2100 years ago when a brave Jew, Judas Maccabeus, fashioned an army out of a handful of farmers and teachers and vanquished the mighty hosts of Antiochus, the Syrian tyrant, who was bent on destroying the Jewish people.

For years the Jews had bent their necks meekly to the yoke of tyranny, paying tribute without protest so long as their religious rights were left untouched. But when Antiochus attempted to impose paganism on the Jews, Maccabeus, son of a temple priest, sounded the call to resistance. Before long he was in command of a small but determined army of warriors who put to rout the numerically superior forces of Antiochus. In a series of brilliant victories Maccabeus revealed himself to be a military leader of the first order.

Complete victory was in sight but not yet realized when the Jewish patriots, during a lull in the fighting, went to Jerusalem and purified the Temple. This was in 165 B.C. And in celebration of this historic event world Jewry has observed Chanukah, the Feast of Dedication. Chanukah's teachings are of especial significance for J.W.V.

Fascism Crosses The Atlantic

While the American people have been anxiously watching the alignment of Europe and Asia into Fascist and anti-Fascist blocs and the growing trend toward war between them, we have been overlooking a similar tendency on this side of the Atlantic. It has long been fashionable to say "it can't

happen here." Well, it has happened—in Brazil, the second largest country in the Western Hemisphere. There a military autocrat has abandoned the familiar forms of Latin-American dictatorship in favor of an undisguised Fascist state. Thus we have Fascism crossing the Atlantic.

In our own country there are those who look with longing eyes at Fascism as a solution to some of our economic problems. Let them not be deceived. Those who patronized Fascism in Italy and Germany regret it today. But they are helpless to do anything about it. Here in America we cannot interfere in the domestic concerns of other nations, even when they are on our own national doorstep. But we can see to it that alien philosophies of government do not cross our threshold. Whether it is Fascism or Communism or some other foreignism, our job is to uphold Americanism. If Brazil and other New World nations want Fascism that's their business. Our business is to preserve democracy. And preserve it we shall in the United States if we are sufficiently alert and on guard against those who would destroy it. But we cannot preserve it through inaction and apathy. If democracy is worth having, it is worth fighting for. And now is the time to awaken before "It Happens Here."

Catspaws

Now that Election Day is past, we can safely discuss something that has been itching in us for many weeks. It is no longer a secret that certain groups of Jews in New York interested in the candidacy of the man who was defeated for mayor in New York City, made a deliberate attempt to use the Jewish War Veterans as a political catspaw. But for the prompt and courageous actions of some of our more stable and farsighted leaders, J.W.V. might have been led into a tragic error. Some of our own comrades, regretfully, more concerned with their own political future than with the welfare of J.W.V. seemed willing to allow the organization to be used politically.

It is not necessary to go into the details. The responsible ones in New York know what we mean. We mention it as a warning. As an organization, J.W.V. is not and never will be interested in politics as an organization. Those who thought to trap J.W.V. into political activity now know their mistake. And as for our own comrades who were willing to betray the organization, let them take heed. J.W.V. units have considerable autonomy. But that autonomy must not be perverted to the ambitions of politicians who care nothing for J.W.V. except when it can be useful to them.

Our National Executive Committee was quick to grasp the importance of "putting teeth" into our by-laws, making it extremely dangerous in future for any comrades to use the title "J.W.V." or any office held, in partisan politics. Court-Martial and hasty expulsion is even too light a betrayal for such J.W.V. betrayal.

Gennett's Gesture

Fame has a curious way of bestowing its ephemeral favor on the most obscure, often lifting them to undreamed of heights, permanently or temporarily. Prior to October of this year Isador Gennett was known only to his family, members of the Jewish War Veterans and the American Legion and those who bought newspapers from him at his stand in downtown New York. Then Gennett went to Europe with members of the American Legion making a pilgrimage to the graves of their departed comrades.

On his way to Paris he stopped off in Berlin. Without pausing to think that he was doing anything unusual or sensational, this Jewish veteran went to the Berlin police and to the military commandant and asked permission to lay a wreath at the monument to Germany's World War Dead in Berlin. He identified himself as a Jew. Strange to say permission was not only granted but he was accorded a military escort. And so Izzie Gennett, of the Morris Krumholz Post of J.W.V., laid a wreath while goose-stepping Nazis looked on in silence. And on the wreath were the names of J.W.V., the American Legion and the Disabled American Veterans.

Designed as his personal gesture of peace and goodwill, Gennett's deed created an international stir. When the Nazi powers that be learned of it they were nonplussed. They couldn't remove the wreath without offending all American veterans. Yet it was embarrassing to permit a Jews wreath to occupy such a place of honor in the heart of Naziland. For three days the wreath rested side by side with one deposited at the same place by Mussolini. Then it was quietly removed.

But the effect of Gennett's act could not be removed. It was not a stunt or a publicity gag. It was a simple and effective gesture of goodwill by an American Jew toward the German people. It was an act of bravery and courage symbolic of the Jew's struggle for preservation. It was a unique demonstration of the oft-expressed idea that Jews want to live in peace with their neighbors, that they have no animosity against Germans nor against any other people. All they ask is the right to live as human beings. And all this was summed up in that wreath of Isador Gennett, our comrade.

National Appointments

Adjutant General. Samuel A. Horowitz of Newark, N. J. Graduate New York University, B. Sc., past Commander Suburban Post 78, past Chief of Staff, Dept. N.J.

Surgeon General. Dr. Howard A. Welcher, of North Bergen, N.J. Graduate Jefferson Medical College. Head Director Union City General Hospital. Post Surgeon North Hudson Post 76, Past Deputy Surgeon General.

National Sergeant-at-Arms. Harry Bergen, Jersey City, member Jersey City Post No. 10. Sgt. Bergen has held similar office in three previous administrations.

THE JEWISH PAUL REVERE

Francis Salvador, Hero of South Carolina

By BERTRAM JONAS

Resuming his series of articles on great Jewish soldiers, Mr. Jonas here recalls the forgotten career of Francis Salvador, the first Jew to lay down his life in the American Revolution, and one of the most celebrated patriots of Revolutionary South Carolina.

THE EDITOR.

EVERY schoolboy knows the story of Paul Revere and his famous ride. They are an indelible part of the American tradition. But how many Americans ever heard of Francis Salvador, the English-born Jew who was the Paul Revere of South Carolina in the first year of the American Revolution.

Salvador came of a wealthy mercantile family that traced its roots back to Portugal where its name was Jessurum Rodriguez. His great-grandfather, Joseph Salvador was president of the Portuguese Jewish congregation early in the 18th century and was also the first Jewish director of the Dutch East India Company. There is a record of several substantial loans he made to the British Crown. When the tiny English Jewish community sent a delegation to present its greetings to George III on his accession to the throne, a Salvador was selected as spokesman. And it was the same Salvador who raised funds to send Jews to Georgia in 1732.

Francis was a nephew of this distinguished merchant prince. Born in 1744, Francis was destined for a mercantile career. But when he was 29 the family fortune was all but wiped out by the failure of the Dutch East India Company and an earthquake in Lisbon. It was then that Francis, already a cultured and travelled gentleman, emigrated to America. It was not his intention to stay there permanently but rather to oversee the family's extensive land holdings in South Carolina.

When Salvador reached South Carolina in 1773 the struggle between the Colonies and England was fast nearing a climax. New England was on the verge of open rebellion. In the South the merchant class was ripe for revolt. The growing feeling against the mother country as keenest in South Carolina among the Southern colonies and Salvador quickly threw himself into the patriots' cause with passionate ardor. Soon he became intimate with the great leaders of the colony—Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Edward and John Rutledge, William Drayton and Charles Pinckney, all of whom played important roles in the drama that began with the Declaration of Independence and closed with the adoption of the Constitution. All of these men, like Salvador, were under 30. All were men of means and culture. And all were imbued with a passionate love of liberty.

Salvador has been in South Carolina but a year when the Boston Tea Party set off a train of events that culminated with the convening of the first Continental Congress in September 1774. He was a close friend of Edward Rutledge, who represented South Carolina at the Congress. When Rutledge returned steps were taken for calling a provincial congress at Charleston. Notwithstanding the fact that Jews were barred from public office, Salvador was one of the ten delegates elected to represent Ninety-

Six Districts. Indicative of the great esteem in which he was held was the fact that although he was known to be a Jew, the oath on which he was sworn in was amended to eliminate whatever might be conflict with his religious scruples. Later when South Carolina became a state he was also elected to the legislature, one of the three Jews to be so honored before 1800.

As a member of the provincial congress he took part in the drafting of a bill of rights during a seven-day session in which the grievances of the colony were set forth. He helped frame a resolution of sympathy with Massachusetts. To carry out the decisions of the congress a special committee was appointed and Salvador accepted membership in it, thus exposing himself to arrest for treason if the colonies lost. Before actual warfare began Salvador busied himself with enforcing the non-importation resolutions and in helping to convert the Tories of his state to the patriot way of thinking. When Drayton drew up a special agreement with the Tories promising them protection if they did not aid the British, Salvador's name appeared as one of the witnesses to the document. There was hardly an important meeting in those days in which Salvador did not participate. His advice carried great weight. He had considerable to do also with the drafting of a temporary peace pact with the Cherokee Indians.

Open hostilities with the British in South Carolina commenced soon after the Battle of Lexington, and Salvador was among the first to take the field. His first assignment was a trip into the interior of the colony to prepare a report on means of securing the safety of that territory. He was also a member of a committee authorized to sign and issue colonial bills for paying the army. There are extant letters to him from the leading military figures which reveal that they thought highly of his knowledge of detailed and intricate military problems.

At the outset of the war South Carolina's chief concern was the attitude of the Cherokees. Although a peace treaty had been signed with them, their reliability was open to question. Because his plantation was close to the Indian towns, Salvador was given the job of organizing a watch over the Indians. After the provincial congress had concentrated the state militia in Charles-

ton and then adjourned, Salvador returned to his home to direct the watch on the Indians. Meanwhile, British agents were stirring up the Cherokees, hoping to keep the colonists busy in the interior while a British fleet bombarded Charleston.

When the Indians heard that the English men-of-war had anchored in Charleston they crossed the frontier on July 1, 1776 and massacred white people. Salvador was the first to hear of the foray for two of those who escaped fled to his home. Twenty-eight miles away was Major Andrew Williamson with a company of thirty militiamen sent from Charleston in anticipation of trouble with the Indians. Pausing only to hear the story of the two survivors, both of whom were badly wounded, Salvador, emulating the exploit of Paul Revere, mounted his horse and galloped like mad to Williamson's residence to give the alarm.

Salvador and Williamson were up against a critical situation. The people of the border were without arms or ammunition. It had all been commandeered for the militia in Charleston. Neither were there many able-bodied men available. The entire population was at the mercy of the Indians. Salvador volunteered to ride through the country to round up men. But all he could find were forty. With these Salvador and Williamson marched to the scene of the Indian raid. For the next three weeks heroic efforts were made to organize a defense and ultimately a force of some 300 came into being.

Williamson and Salvador then decided to attack the Indians and they marched to meet them in surprise attack at Essenecca, near the Keowee River. But the Indians and Tories had prepared an ambush. It was the night of July 31st when the South Carolinians headed by Salvador and Williamson crossed the river to the Indian towns. As they approached a deadly burst of fire greeted them. Men and horses went down in confusion. Williamson's horse was shot from under him. And Salvador went down under the fusillade. When a lieutenant came to Williamson's help he sent him to aid Salvador who had fallen behind a clump of bushes. The Indians reached the Jewish patriot first and scalped him. When Williamson arrived Salvador was still alive but dying. With his last breath he inquired whether the enemy had been routed. Upon being told that they were, he said he was happy, and with his hand resting in that of Williamson he said goodbye and died.

Such was the tragic end of the first Jew to die in the American Revolution. It was an untimely end that cut short the career of one destined for a brilliant future. It was a strange thing that the nephew of the man who had greeted King George III should have fallen on the field of battle fighting against the men of that same king.