



The Jewish VETERAN

VOL. 26, NO. 3

17

Published By The Jewish War Veterans
Of The United States Of America

POSTMASTER: If undeliverable for any reason, please return to sender
1712 New Hampshire Ave., N.W., Wash. D.C. 20009, postage guaranteed

MARCH, 1970

JWV Delegates Return From Second Israel Convocation



National Commander Bernard Direnfeld presents the JWV Medal of Merit to Pope Paul VI at a private audience in the Vatican. According to the JWV Commander, the Pope expressed great appreciation for receiving the JWV award which was given in recognition of his work towards furthering peace. The Pope pointed out that he was honored especially to receive the award from men of the Jewish faith who had known war at first hand. The Pope also pledged that he would continue to work for closer relationships between Catholics and Jews to combat anti-Semitism. Commander Direnfeld was asked to express thanks to all JWV members and wish them success as they start their 75th year.



Late last month, President Nixon called together all of the heads of the major veteran's group in the United States for a meeting at the White House. Discussions were wide-range and dealt not only with problems within the veteran's community but with American defense effort and her problems in Viet Nam and the Middle East. Commander Direnfeld reported that it was a very frank exchange. Commander Direnfeld is shown to the right of the President.

Scores Soviet Tactics

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Jewish War Veterans has deplored "the cynical use of captive, helpless Jews in the Soviet Union to exploit its anti-Israel policies."

JWV National Commander Bernard Direnfeld of Cleveland, Ohio, referred to a staged press conference held in Moscow this week in which 40 Jews were paraded before the press to exhibit anti-Israel and anti-Zionist expressions.

In a statement issued in Washington by Commander Direnfeld, the JWV pointed out that "the tactics now being used by
(Continued on Page 2)

Punish Hijack Countries

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Jewish War Veterans today demanded that countries refusing to cooperate in international agreements concerning hijacking and sabotage should be written off as landing points for international jet travel.

In a statement released in Washington, JWV National Commander Bernard Direnfeld of Cleveland, Ohio, warned that hijacking and political sabotage of airlines "had reached crisis proportions that made it mandatory for every country in the world to confer on steps to stop these insidious practices."

(Continued on Page 3)

The Jewish War Veterans held their second convocation in Israel last month with more than 500 delegates and their wives attending what was a most successful and inspiring event. Highlights of the convocation, officially held in the Wise Auditorium at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, were an address by Israel's Deputy Prime Minister Yigal Allon and American Legion National Commander J. Milton Patrick.

Mr. Allon welcomed the JWV-ers to Israel and urged that they bring back to the United States an urgent appeal for help from "Israel's only friend."

Mr. Allon made special reference to the National Commander of the American Legion, pointing out that the Legion had more members than Israel's entire population. He thanked the Legion Commander for coming and for the Commander's many expressions of support which had come from the organization in the form of resolutions and statements over the years.

Commander Direnfeld presented Mr. Allon with the JWV Medal of Merit which was slated for Israel's Prime Minister Goldia Meir.

The convocation brought together delegates from all over the United States who had, during the week preceding the convocation, toured Israel. This was the first time they were all together.

Earlier in the week, the National Executive Committee met at the Tel-Aviv Hilton. The NEC, Chairman Joseph Solomonow of Los Angeles, heard addresses by Moshe Kol, Minister of Tourism; Col. Kalman Keet, Head of Israel's veterans group; Col. Rafael Efrat, who briefed delegates on the military situation; and American Legion National Commander J. Milton Patrick.

A moving episode in the meeting resulted from an interview with two recent immigrants from the Soviet Union. The interview

(Continued on Page 2)

Editorially Speaking

THE DECLINE OF THE VA HOSPITALS

The situation at our VA hospitals is close to a medical disgrace.

What had been one of the greatest medical care systems in the world is now on a steep decline. This is intolerable. As National Executive Director Felix Putterman pointed out in his column last month, the standard measurement for hospital care and staff ratio reveals how badly our VA system is now lagging behind other hospitals. The VA is now operating 1.5 staff per patient in general hospitals, and less than 1 in psychiatric hospitals. The national non-veteran hospital staff ratio is higher with 2.72 for each patient in general medical communities and state and local government hospitals and three staff per patient in university and teaching hospitals.

The VA must maintain the highest level of medical care. We don't have to prove their necessity . . . at least we thought we didn't have to. Obviously, the time has come for us to reactivate national interest in the VA hospital system and through political confrontation and education, insist that Congress appropriate the funds necessary to maintain high standards.

The time has come for more effective action.

It's too late for too little.

ISRAEL AN ALL AMERICAN PROBLEM

We were honored to have with us during the convocation in Israel the National Commander of the American Legion J. Milton Patrick. Commander Patrick, along with our JWV leaders, met with Prime Minister Golda Meir and participated in all the activities of our NEC and our convocation.

Commander Patrick indicated that he was much impressed with his trip to Israel and that he certainly gained deeper insight into the problems that this young democracy faces in its efforts to maintain its freedom and integrity. Throughout his travels in Israel, the National Commander of the American Legion reiterated that in its resolutions, the American Legion has many times declared itself a friend of Israel. There is every reason to believe that this friendship between the world's largest veterans organization and Israel will continue in the years to come.

In the opening minutes of his speech to the convocation (quoted elsewhere in this issue), Commander Patrick said "Some years ago, a friend suggested that if I wanted to see what free men and women can achieve in adversity, I should go to Israel. I have never had better advice."

The position of the American Legion is, indeed, quite similar to ours on the question of the Middle East. They call for direct negotiations between the warring parties. They call for maintaining the arms balance. They, too, hold the Soviet Union's motives suspect.

When the Legion speaks, they speak to and for grass roots America. We pray that President Nixon will recognize in the Legion's posture the thinking and direction of the so-called "silent majority."

Scores

Continued from Page 1)
the Russians, namely to force denunciations of fellow Jews in Israel by prominent Soviet Jews, is reminiscent of the Nazi era, when by force Hitler used Jews as pawns in his designs to exterminate the Jews of Europe."

Commander Drenfeld pointed out "there has been a State policy in the Soviet Union of cultural genocide against the Jews for a number of years. This policy has been expressed in terms of inhibiting cultural expression, discrimination, fear campaigns, and threats against Soviet Jews who exhibit a desire to immigrate to Israel."

"It is bad enough," he said, "that 3,000,000 Jews are held captive in the Soviet Union. But to play upon their fears by forcing men to speak against their brothers is unconscionable."

The Jewish War Veterans is the oldest active war veterans organization.

Delegates Return

Continued from Page 1)
was conducted in Yiddish and there followed a long question and answer period by members of the NEC.

The NEC men heard reports from the National Commander and National Executive Director; the Travel Committee, under Chairman Samuel Samuels, PNC; the Insurance Committee by Chairman Malcom Tarlov, PNC; and the Chairman of the Israel Soldier's Welfare Association Committee, PNC Charles Feuereisen. A single policy position was approved concerning the Jewish Defense League which had been formulated at the National Policy Committee meeting in January. The policy approved is as follows:

1. No member or officer is permitted to use the name of JWV to identify himself as a member of the JDL.
2. No sponsorship of JDL speakers by JWV echelons or individuals so identified.
3. Neither JWV contributions nor platforms afforded JDL.

Also approved was a \$6 registration fee for the national convention, a new charter for Winston Towers Post 192, Department of Illinois and Pompano Beach Post 196, Department of Florida.

Maspeth Post 673 was allowed to change its name to Pfc. Sy Levitan-Maspeth Post 673.

Commenting on the convocation, Commander Drenfeld indicated that he consider it "most successful" and was hopeful that the policy of having convocations in Israel would continue in the future.



Thoughts aboard an El Al jet, 31,000 feet above the North Atlantic, on the final leg of our return flight from the Second J.W.V. Convocation in Israel.

My mind is full with material enough to fill many columns and elsewhere in this issue of The Veteran you will find in-depth reports on the thrilling J.W.V. pilgrimage of 1970.

As I write this prior to our return to the States, I feel certain that the U.S. media probably carried complete details on the several incidents that were perpetrated against El-Al, Swissair and the scores of innocent civilians in Israel itself. My thoughts touch on that impact of course, but my main concern, at this time, is with the morale of the Israelis and any effect that such incidents might have on them.

The J.W.V. itinerary included a visit to Hebron and on the morning of our scheduled trip to that small town, our guide suggested that we make the trip so that we would arrive there in the early part of the day. As he said it, "I prefer the bright light of the morning rather than the lengthening shadows of the late afternoon."

Go to Hebron we did, on a misty, cloudy day. A bus load of American tourists, an Israeli driver and guide and a desire to see, with our own eyes, the resting places of the early Hebrew prophets. As in all of Israel, armed soldiers could be seen on the streets and as we stopped in the town square, small knots of military patrols seemed to alert themselves as we disembarked. By this time we were old-hands at Israel touring, and we paid little heed to the omnipresent military presence. We were at ease, with no forewarning of the tragedy that would strike, in this same spot, only an hour or two later, when a visiting Christian tourist would be killed as a result of a terrorist attack on a bus load of civilians.

Then—a news flash on the radio—the Arab Terrorists had struck and we had the full details of the mad-dog attack on the bus load of Christians. Of course, our people were distressed, but as we mixed and mingled with the Israelis it was clear that the thrust of their concern was not for themselves, but for the effect that the incident would have upon their guests, the visitors to their country. Unlike reactions that we have seen elsewhere, there was

no panic, no call to arms, just a determined effort to root out the culprits and to take every measure possible to prevent a recurrence of the attack.

Life in the market places, the cafes, the hotels and the streets of Israel continued at the same unhurried pace. The authorities were in charge and the people were willing to let them do their work.

"This Arab terrorism will not frighten us," the Israelis said. "If they force us to we will take measures that will put an end to this kind of action. The governments of the world have an obligation to put their weight behind efforts that will cause the Arabs to act as civilized human beings."

We didn't have to worry about the morale of the Israelis. But what about the Americans? Would travel agencies be deluged with cancellations? Would the chatter at coffee-katches and cocktail parties be full of "The terrible state of affairs" in the Mid-East? Would American Jewish parents have second thoughts about sending their children to Israel for a year or two in the universities? Would the slow trickle of aliyah come to a stumbling halt? In simple language, would American Jews have the courage not to be frightened off by the Arab terrorism?

Only if we, the diaspora Jews, knuckle under, will the Arab strategy work. Because tourism provides a major share of Israel's economic strength, we can not let it falter. To maintain an effective deterrent posture takes millions of dollars and Israel's defense depends upon the dollars that the tourists bring in to their country. If you don't have the money our defense is weaker. Simple logic.

Courage is a beautiful word and the Israelis are a sterling example of this beauty. But how about us? When the chips are down will we be found wanting? We have a mission to perform. We have to spread the word that travel to and through Israel is safe because the Israelis make it so with their whole being. A trip to Israel will be an unforgettable experience that will be savored long after the first blush of gratitude for a safe return has faded away. We, the Jews of the Diaspora, can do no less than put our money where our brothers and sisters of Israel put their lives, on the line, in Israel, day after day after day.