4 Arabs Walk Out At Rabbi's Remarks
Special to The New York Times.
New York Times (1857-Current file); Apr 9, 1954; ProQuest Historical Newspapers The New York Times (1851 - 2002) pg. 1

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WASHINGTON, April 8 — A Government luncheon today to promote international amity fired Arab-Jewish enmity instead.

Representatives of four Arab nations walked out of a Shoreham Hotel ballroom in protest against a remark by an American rabbi, Dr. Norman Salit of New York, president of the Synagogue Council of America.

The speaker referred to "murders by Jordanians" as he digressed from the subject of a new postage stamp—designed to carry the symbols of faith and freedom around the world—into the delicate arena of Middle East politics.

Distressed United States officials offered instant apologies to no avail. Dr. Salit expressed his regret immediately after the incident.

Before the day ended, more formal measures were taken. Dr.

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RABBI'S REMARKS 'INSULT' TO ARABS

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Salit wrote apologetically to Postmaster General Arthur E. Summerfield and Secretary of State Dulles. The Postmaster General, sponsor of the luncheon, forwarded copies of Dr. Salit's letter with an explanation of his own to the four Arab officials, three of them Ambassadors.

In the meantime, however, the foreign officials expressed their feelings in strongest terms.

The Arab representatives were Dr. Farid Zeineddine, Ambassador of Syria; Dr. Moussa al-Shabandar, Ambassador of Iraq; Sheikh Asad al-Faqih, Ambassador of Saudi Arabia, and Kamel Ali Fahmy, charge d'affaires of Egypt.

The luncheon followed a ceremony at the Post Office Department at which President Eisenhower dedicated the new stamp, which will be used largely in the international air mail.

Diplomats from many embassies attended the luncheon. Dr. Salit spoke after Dr. Roy G. Ross, general secretary of the National Council of Churches, and Francis Cardinal Spellman, Roman Catholic Archbishop of New York.

Dr. Salit, after speaking of the need for liberty, equality, and fraternity throughout the world, referred to the Israeli-Arab friction in the Middle East; asserted that the United Nations had protested killings by Israelis but not killings of Israelis; referred to "murders by Jordanians," and remarked that Israel was the "only democracy in the Near East."

At about that point the four rose with a noticeable scuffing of chairs and departed as a group. Abe Goff, Post Office Department solicitor, hurried after them to acknowledge that "this was a gross breach of courtesy."

The Arab officials would not be mollified.

'Misinterpretation' Seen

Inside the ballroom, Mr. Summerfield tried to meet the situation in his closing remarks. "I regret more than I can tell you the misinterpretation, I am sure, of words uttered by one of our guests by our friends from across the sea," he said. "I hope there will be no misunderstanding in anyone's heart."

Dr. Salit told news men: "I am very sorry it happened. I had no wish to offend any feelings or insult anyone. I merely spoke in what I considered to be the spirit of the stamp."

The Ambassador of Syria, Dr. Zeineddine, commented afterward:

"We thought that American citizens were speaking on the occasion and were speaking as Americans. Dr. Salit instead spoke as a representative of Zionism and Israel and what he said was untrue.

"We stood up and bowed our heads to what he had to say as a religious man, but he spoke as a Zionist later on. And that was a blasphemy to religion as well as an act of the most uncourteous and abject nature. So we thought the best way to express our protest was to withdraw from a situation which Dr. Salit made very unbecoming for us or or others to attend."

The Ambassador of Iraq commented:

"In the future, if any American authority invites other representatives, they [the Arabs] should be given a list of speakers, and if any Zionists attend either they [the Arabs] are not going to attend or they are going to prepare to answer them."

A State Department source said Secretary Dulles and Assistant Secretary Henry A. Byroade Jr., who were present when the incident occurred, were distressed. They had no advance knowledge of Dr. Salit's remarks and were surprised at the injection of any political discussion, this source said.

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