CAIRO DEFENDANT COMMITS SUICIDE
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One of 13 Accused in 'Zionist Spy Ring' Dies in Cell—'No Other Way,' Note Says

Special to The New York Times.

CAIRO, Dec. 21—One of thirteen defendants in the trial of an alleged Zionist espionage ring here was found dead in his prison cell today. His wrists were slashed and police authorities listed the death as suicide.

The dead man was Max Bennett, 37-year-old alleged acting leader of the espionage and sabotage ring. He was to have testified today. He had been kept under close surveillance because he had tried over the week-end to have potassium cyanide poison smuggled into his cell.

A letter addressed to his wife, found beside him, said: "There was no other way, I took this decision calmly. I risked a minimum penalty of five years in prison. I cannot bear that. Marry again. Our daughter needs a father."

Wife Believed in London

Bennett's wife was said to be South African-born and is believed to be living in London.

During the trial, which opened Dec. 11, the prosecution asserted Bennett had been sent here from France by Abram Dar, alias John Darling, identified by Egyptian authorities as an Israeli Army officer and chief organizer of the alleged ring. Dar is being tried in absentia.

Bennett, who was born in Hungary, obtained a German passport in 1946. He was said by an official of the West German Legation to have entered Egypt two years ago to work for Cairo Motors, a Ford agency, and to represent a German organization of war disabled. He had become acquainted with a number of leading Germans and Egyptians, including former President Mohamed Naguib, who headed a similar Egyptian organization.

Army Contacts Charged

The prosecution has charged that Bennett made contacts with Egyptian Army personnel, obtained topographical data and assisted in the establishment of wireless sets for the alleged espionage ring.

In a related development, Col. Salah Gohar, Director of Palestine Affairs, charged that Israel had sought to retaliate for the espionage trial here by the Dec. 6 sentencing of four Palestinian Arab students to five year's imprisonment as spies. The students and two other persons whose status is unknown here were seized by Israeli authorities inside Israel Feb. 5.

Colonel Gohar produced transcripts of Israeli complaints to the Israeli-Egyptian Mixed Armistice Commission dated Feb. 12 in which the prisoners were described as infiltrators, not spies. He also produced records of a United Nations investigation of the incident and the extract of proceedings Aug. 3 in which Israel and Egypt agreed to dismiss 1,242 pending complaints, including the one concerning the student infiltrators.

Colonel Gohar said he believed the youths had been tortured to force confessions to trumped-up espionage charges.

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