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66 JEWISH GROUPS FILE HIGH COURT BRIEF ON RELIGION IN SCHOOLS

WASHINGTON, Feb. 25. (JTA) - Sixty-six Jewish religious and civic bodies joined in a law brief submitted to the United States Supreme Court today, challenging religious exercises in the public schools. The friend-of-the-court brief was submitted in the two cases scheduled for argument before the High Court Wednesday, testing the constitutionality of school Bible reading and recitation of the Lord's Prayer. One of the cases arose in Pennsylvania, the other in Maryland.

Signing the brief were the Synagogue Council of America, representing Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Jewish congregational and rabbinical bodies; and the National Community Relations Advisory Council representing six national Jewish agencies and 57 local Jewish community councils across the country. The brief was submitted by Leo Pfeffer, general counsel of the American Jewish Congress, as attorney for the SCA and the NCRAC.

In their joint brief, the Jewish organizations advanced these main arguments in urging the court to declare unconstitutional a Pennsylvania statute requiring daily reading from the Bible, and a Baltimore school board rule requiring daily reading from the Bible or recitation of the Lord's Prayer:

1. School religious practices that confer official sanction on the religious literature or liturgy of a particular faith violate the "establishment of religion" clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.
2. "Voluntary" participation in sectarian school practices is a fiction; the pressure on children to conform is such that religious exercises in school are a denial of the "free exercise" of religion guaranteed under the First Amendment.
3. The long-standing nature of many school religious practices does not make them valid or constitutional.

The Jewish organization's brief declared: "It is constitutional to study the Bible as a work of literature. It is, we contend, unconstitutional as an act of devotion. If the approach to the Bible or religious music or art is an intellectual study, it is proper in the public school. If the approach is worship or faith, it belongs in the home, church and synagogue."

Summarizing the argument, the joint NCRAC-SCA brief concluded: "A judicial decision forbidding State-sponsored religious practices such as Bible reading or Lord's Prayer recitation does not manifest hostility to religion, any more than the constitutional provisions on which it is based indicated any hostility to religion on the part of the fathers of our Constitution. On the contrary, history has validated the premise upon which the First Amendment is based--that the separation of Church and State is best for religion and best for the State."

SUPREME COURT ASKED TO REVERSE DENIAL OF BENEFITS TO SABBATARIAN

NEW YORK, Feb. 25. (JTA) -- The American Jewish Committee and the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith have joined with the American Civil Liberties Union in supporting the right of a South Carolina woman of the Seventh Day Adventist faith to unemployment insurance benefits after she refused to work on Saturday.

The two Jewish organizations and the ACLU submitted a joint "friend of the court" brief to the United States Supreme Court in support of an appeal by Mrs. Adell H. Sherbert of Spartansburg, S.C., against a ruling by state authorities rejecting her application for unemployment insurance benefits.

Mrs. Sherbert was fired from her 35-year job with a textile firm when the company changed to a six-day work week, and she refused to work on Saturday on religious grounds. The brief said that the South Carolina ruling in effect "penalized" minority groups, and that freedom of religion was jeopardized if an American could be forced to decide between his religious conviction and his right to receive the benefits of an established social welfare program.

SOVIET UNION CLOSES LAST SYNAGOGUE IN CHERNOVTSY; LINKS 'ISRAELIS'

NEW YORK, Feb. 25. (JTA) -- The Soviet authorities have compelled the congregation of what is believed to have been the last remaining synagogue in Chernovtsy, in the Ukraine, to disband and close the institution, it was learned here today. The city, formerly known as Czernovitz, capital of the Rumanian province of Bukhovina, once had one of the largest Jewish populations in Eastern Europe. The Jewish population of the city today is estimated at between 40,000 and 50,000.

A report on the closure of the synagogue was published in the January issue of "Voyovnichy Ateist," (Militant Atheist), official organ of the Ukrainian Institute for Dissemination of Scientific Knowledge on Atheism, copies of which were received here today. The story made clear that the action was forced upon the congregation by "3,000 loyal atheists" who took over the edifice for a mass-meeting.

Participants at the meeting, the publication reported, charged that "Israeli diplomats" had visited the synagogue at various times, "offending Soviet citizens by their attacks against the Soviet system." The worshipers, the paper said, had "protested against the behavior of the Israeli diplomats."

The meeting, according to the Soviet periodical, discussed "what goes on behind the walls of the synagogue." Charges were made that the Jews there were occupied mainly with "dividing honors as well as with dividing the proceeds of the communal cash-box." The periodical asserted that two members of the synagogue's board of trustees, identified as Reich and Bronstein, had "demanded that the house of worship be closed as a center of conspiracies, swindling and foul attacks against the Soviet people."

The mass meeting reportedly turned into "an attack against the trustees of the synagogue." Finally, three other board members--named as Schechter, Kleiman and Riesel--presented a resolution calling for the shut-down. The resolution was passed, stated the Kiev report, "and the building, on Russky Stree, is now being used as a school, School No. 27, with eight grades."

GUARDIAN REFUTES KHRUSHCHEV DISCLAIMERS ABOUT SOVIET ANTI-SEMITISM

LONDON, Feb. 25. (JTA) -- The Guardian of Manchester, Britain's leading Liberal organ, challenged today assertions by Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev that there was no policy of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union. The newspaper declared editorially that what Mr. Khrushchev "cannot claim is that the 'progressive' Soviet Government does anything to discourage or suppress manifestations of loathsome anti-Semitism."

Mr. Khrushchev, in a letter to Lord Bertrand Russell, the full text of which was made public today, stated categorically that "There is not and never has been an 'anti-Semitic policy in the USSR because our multi-national, Socialist State excludes the possibility of such a policy. Our Constitution proclaims equality, regardless of nationality and race. Advocacy of racial or national discrimination is punishable by law. Our motto is: Man to man is friend, comrade and brother. In the future, I will continue (in that spirit) with all persistence and consistency."

Mr. Khrushchev's letter to Lord Russell was in response to a protest written by the philosopher about the large number of death sentences imposed upon Soviet Jews recently, after the latter had been convicted of "economic crimes." Lord Russell had requested clemency for the Jews.

Lord Russell did not make public the text of his letters to Mr. Khrushchev, in the belief that his intercession might be more effective if he did not publicize his views. He disclosed, through an aide, that he had been in touch with the Soviet Premier on the Jewish question since last year when he, with Prof. Martin Buber and Francois Mauriac appealed to Mr. Khrushchev for clemency for Jews sentenced to death for "economic crimes."

The Soviet leader conceded in his reply that there were Jews among those sentenced to death, but insisted "the Western press admits that, among those punished, there are people of different nationalities." He stated that death sentences had also been imposed on "Russians, Byelorussians, Georgians and Ukrainians." "We appreciate your humanitarian considerations," he told Lord Russell, "but humanity is inconceivable without justice."

The Guardian, in its editorial, said: "Of course there is anti-Semitism. There has never been a time in modern history when Russia and all other countries in Eastern Europe were truly free of anti-Semitism--not even when the Red Army fought its victorious civil war battles under the command of Leon Trotsky (who was a Jew), nor 25 years later when the Nazi extermination of Jews found all too many Russian helpers. A solid and apparently irreducible, basic element of Russian anti-Semitism never disappeared."

The Guardian cited the growing number of "minor show trials" which ended in death sentences and in which "an alarmingly large number of the victims were Jews."

American Jewish Committee Charges Russia Uses Jews As 'Scapegoats'

NEW YORK, Feb. 25. (JTA) -- The American Jewish Committee today challenged Premier Khrushchev's denial of anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union, and accused the Soviet regime of a policy of making the Jews in Russia scapegoats for its internal economic problems. In the Committee statement, A.M. Sonnabend, its president, charged that Jews were

serving "to bear the brunt of public discontent for the low standard of living and shortage of goods in the USSR." In addition, he stated, Jews, "as a vulnerable minority," are being used "as the object lesson to show how seriously the state regards economic crimes."

The statement further charged that "in singling out Jews for economic offenses, publicly branding them as Jewish by their affiliation with the synagogue--the only remaining Jewish institution in the Soviet Union--punishing them more harshly than non Jews in more responsible positions, and shooting a disproportionate number of them, the Soviet Government shows it is possible to condemn Stalinist policies while practicing them with regard to Jews. The recent closing of the Lvov synagogue is one more illustration of how the Soviet Union is pulverizing the Jewish religious community and terrorizing its Jewish citizens."

EUROMART MAY RESUME TALKS TODAY ON LINK WITH ISRAEL AT BRUSSELS

BRUSSELS, Feb. 25. (JTA) -- The Council of Ministers of the European Economic Community, which meets tomorrow for the first time since the rupture of negotiations for the admission of the United Kingdom to the European Common Market, has on its agenda the question of negotiations with Israel, Turkey and Iran for trade agreements.

The Council of Ministers is expected to formulate instructions for the negotiating body representing the six-nation bloc, which is due shortly to enter the second round of negotiations on an agreement with Israel. Israel, with some 40 percent of its export markets in the European Economic Community, seeks some overall agreement that will keep the gates of the six nations open to its exports.

THREE MEMBERS OF ARAB SPY RING ON TRIAL IN JERUSALEM; CROSSED INTO GAZA

JERUSALEM, Feb. 25. (JTA) -- A trial was opened before the District Court here today of three Israeli Arabs charged with maintaining contact with Egyptian intelligence in the Gaza Strip, and recruiting other Israeli Arabs for espionage activities. The Arabs, aged 19, 22 and 24 respectively, are alleged to be key members of a spy ring.

One of the accused, Nashf Said, described as the head of the gang, who speaks Hebrew fluently, has admitted crossing into the Gaza Strip three times, once with a 16-year-old Jewish girl friend. A fourth member of the ring, Huhmad Hemed, who is already serving a four year prison term, admitted under cross examination today that he was recruited by Said.

ISRAEL COALITION LEADERS DIVIDED ON RECOGNIZING MIXED MARRIAGES ABROAD

JERUSALEM, Feb. 25. (JTA) - Members of the Ministerial Legislative Committee were divided today over a bill drafted by the Interior Ministry, which would prohibit the registration of marriages contracted abroad between Jews and non-Jews.

The bill was prepared to modify existing laws under which Israelis of different faiths, marrying abroad outside Israel jurisdiction, can return to Israel and have their marriages registered. The Israel Supreme Court, in a decision last week, ruled that, under existing law, such marriages, although invalid under Israel law, must be registered in the applicant's identity card.

Religious Affairs Minister Zorach Warhaftig, one of the five members of the Legislative Committee, warned that his party, the National Religious faction, would leave the coalition unless the proposed bill were passed. He said the purpose of the bill was to plug a loophole in the present law which permitted Israeli Jews to marry non-Jews abroad and return to Israel.

The majority of the Committee, on the other hand, took exception to a stipulation in the bill which states that every document pertaining to the marriage of a Jew must first be approved by the Rabbinate.

BEN-ZVI REFUSES TO FREE MAN CONVICTED OF ENDANGERING SECURITY

JERUSALEM, Feb. 25. (JTA) -- President Izhak Ben-Zvi today rejected petitions for the release of Aharon Cohen, a former Mapam leader serving a two-and-a-half-year prison sentence for offenses against the security of the state, when he transmitted information to foreign agents. Originally sentenced to five years, Cohen's sentence was reduced on an appeal to the High Court, where a minority decision recommended acquittal. President Ben-Zvi's rejection of the amnesty appeal was based on an opinion of Justice Minister Dov Joseph.

ISRAEL FIRM GETS GIBRALTAR CONTRACT FOR LARGE-SCALE CONSTRUCTION

HAIFA, Feb. 25. (JTA) -- Solel Boneh, the construction firm of the Histadrut, the Israel labor federation, has been awarded through its subsidiary in Cyprus a large-scale contract for the construction in Gibraltar of various projects, including military installations, it was announced here today by Simcha Golan, a spokesman for the firm. He noted that Gibraltar will be the eleventh country where Solel Boneh has been awarded contracts.

Mr. Golan disclosed that French and German financial firms had promised to back Solel Boneh if it is awarded a contract to build a \$30,000,000 hospital in a country "in this region," which he declined to name.

CELLER INTRODUCES BILL TO ELIMINATE 'NATIONAL ORIGINS' IMMIGRATION RULE

WASHINGTON, Feb. 25. (JTA) -- Legislation aimed at striking down the "national origins" quota system from present U. S. immigration policy was introduced today by Democratic Congressman Emanuel Celler, of New York.

Under his proposal, the non-quota status of immigrants coming from Western Hemisphere nations would be maintained; but, in addition, it would authorize a total annual immigration quota of 250,000 for equal distribution among four classifications. These include cases of family unification and occupational class, refugee asylum class and resettlement class. Visas would be granted to immigrants without regard to country of origin, with the only limitation being that no more than 15 percent of the quota allocation could go to inhabitants of any one country in a single year.

ROCKWELL ALLOWED TO SPEAK ON U. OF CHICAGO CAMPUS DESPITE PROTESTS

CHICAGO, Feb. 25. (JTA) -- Warner A. Wicks, dean of students of the University of Chicago, announced today that the university would permit American Nazi Party Fuehrer George Lincoln Rockwell to speak on the campus tomorrow. Dean Wicks said permission for the anti-Semite to lecture demonstrated "the freedom we take pride in," and that such freedom exists "in fact as well as in name." Residents of a dormitory invited Rockwell to speak. Other students protested.

Chicago police riot squads were alerted today to defend the Nazi leader and his followers, it was learned. Officials of nearby Northwestern University canceled a scheduled appearance by Rockwell on the Northwestern campus earlier this month.

HILLEL FOUNDATION BROADENS SCOPE TO INCLUDE COLLEGE FACULTIES

WALTHAM, Mass., Feb. 25. (JTA) -- The B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundation today broadened the scope of its campus activities by inaugurating an intensive national Hillel program for Jewish faculty members. The Hillel Commission, holding its 40th anniversary meeting on the Brandeis University campus here, adopted a proposal outlined by Professor Louis Gottschalk of the University of Chicago, to provide Jewish faculty members with "a continuing opportunity to examine the meaning and relevance of Jewish teachings, and to discuss issues of Jewish scholarly and ethical concern."

The program would also be designed to encourage the faculty group "to explore, in common with intellectuals of all faiths, some of man's ultimate questions, and help develop an understanding of our respective traditions on a level which would reflect the intellectual needs and standards of the academic community."

Dr. Gottschalk, who today was elected successor to Dr. William Haber, of the University of Michigan, as chairman of the Hillel Commission, headed a Hillel faculty consultative committee that laid the groundwork for the new program. The committee, comprised of distinguished educators from a dozen campuses, met here yesterday to formulate policy recommendations for the new program. Dr. Haber, a member of the committee, said that exploratory work for the faculty program is being financed by a \$20,000 grant made to the B'nai B'rith Hillel Foundations by the Charles E. Merrill Trust.

Konvitz Delivers Convocation Address; Kahn Notes Need for More Funds

Dr. Milton Konvitz, in the principal convocation address yesterday, deplored the loss of "many of our best minds and talents" among Jewish professors and intellectuals who "have evaded or escaped from the Jewish community and have no ties or Jewish loyalties." But the existence of a small minority "who are deeply involved, deeply committed and well informed Jewish intellectuals, is a new phenomenon of the American campus," he said.

The need for greater community support for Jewish education among college students was stressed in a report by Rabbi Benjamin M. Kahn, Hillel's national director. While advocating more funds for every phase of Jewish education, he noted that the \$65 million spent annually on the primary and secondary level averages about \$100 per student, as compared to an average expenditure of \$8 per student on the university level. The problem is further aggravated by heavy increases in Jewish college enrolments each year, Rabbi Kahn said. He reported the results of a Hillel study which show that there are now more than 275,000 Jewish students at American and Canadian colleges, representing about seven percent of total enrolments.

The study also showed that more than 200 North American colleges with Jewish enrolments of 25 or more students are without religious or cultural facilities for them.

The Hillel Commission reelected Joseph Paradise, of Rye, N. Y., as vice-chairman; Philip W. Lown of Lowell, Mass., treasurer; and Maurice Bisgyer, of Washington, as secretary. Dr. Haber, whose retirement as chairman, a post he held for eight years, was in conformance with B'nai B'rith's policy of limiting the tenure of its highest officials, was elected an honorary chairman, sharing that distinction with Dr. Abram D. Sachar, president of Brandeis.

Dr. Gottschalk, the new Hillel chairman, is 64, has been a member of the Hillel Commission since 1959, and had served a five-year span as president of the Chicago Board of Jewish Education. He has been a member of the University of Chicago faculty since 1927.