



Jewish Telegraphic Agency

DAILY NEWS BULLETIN

660 FIRST AVENUE

NEW YORK 16, N.Y.

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Vol. XXXI - 46th year

Thursday, June 25, 1964

No. 124

MEDITERRANEAN CONFERENCE CLOSES; PLANS PARLEY ON ARAB-ISRAEL ISSUE

FLORENCE, Italy, June 24: (JTA) -- Mayor La Pira of Florence closed the Fourth Mediterranean Conference here today with an announcement that work would be started immediately on plans for the Fifth Conference to be devoted exclusively to the Arab-Israel problem:

"We shall send announcements to the Arab countries and to Israel and to other nations interested in this question," the Mayor told the final session of the conference. He expressed hope that "the road which was opened in this hall in 1958, which led to the Algerian peace, will lead to the peace of Jerusalem, to the peace of Abraham and through to world peace."

The "operative message" of the Fourth Conference had been a "message of peace, unity and liberation for the Mediterranean and for all its peoples," he declared. He asserted that "despite appearances to the contrary," the Fourth Conference had represented a hope for "solution of the Arab-Israeli conflict."

Israeli participants were gratified by the decision of the Conference's steering committee to dedicate the Fifth Conference entirely to the Israel-Arab problem. Elimelech Remalt, a member of Israel's Liberal party, speaking on his own behalf and that of other Israel participants, told the delegates that the unique importance of the Florence meeting was its atmosphere of belief in the force of spiritual and moral values and in the innate good will of men. He called Mayor La Pira's optimism "really encouraging."

Zubi-Abdul Aziz, the Vice-Mayor of Nazareth, also expressed hope for a dialogue between Arabs and Jews at the earliest possible time. He touched on the problems of the Arab refugees which he told the delegates "must be solved without creating new tragedies for them or tragedies for others." The Nazareth Arab leader said that both Israel-Arab wars had brought bloodshed and destruction "but no solution."

Michael Aillot of France, another speaker, expressed confidence that the Mayor's hopes for Arab participation in the conferences would be realized at the Fifth Conference. The Arab countries did not participate in the Conference which closed today.

Fenner Brockway, a Labor member of the British Parliament, told the Conference that "after half a century of public life, there is nothing I would wish more than to contribute to the reconciliation of Jews and Arabs." He added that he had many friends "on both sides" and that "I know that beneath these differences there are many excellent intentions for an understanding which would change the Mediterranean area into a garden of the world."

Warns Russia on Discriminations; Says They Lead to Anti-Semitism

The participants adopted a number of resolutions, including one dealing with "religious and cultural minorities in European communities." The resolution urged governments of Communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe, particularly the Soviet Government, to "permit free exercise of all religious and cultural life" as a means of reducing international tension;

The resolution said the refusal of those governments to do so, "sometimes aggravated by local excesses," were in "contrast with the affirmed principles of Communism;" He also emphasized that such refusals often provoked "the reappearance of discriminations which unavoidably lead to racism and anti-Semitism."

Mayor La Pira was urged at the Conference to convey to Pope Paul VI the "intense hope" of the delegates that the Ecumenical Council will approve the draft declaration on Catholic-Jewish relations;

The appeal to the Mayor by Daniel Mayer, head of the League for the Rights of Man in Paris, apparently was prompted by unconfirmed reports that a section of the draft specifically absolving Jews for responsibility for the Crucifixion of Christ has been at least temporarily deleted from the draft.

AMERICAN JEWISH COMMITTEE TAKES ISSUE WITH RABBIS ON TALKS IN ROME

NEW YORK, June 24: (JTA) -- The American Jewish Committee took issue today with the Rabbinical Council of America, an Orthodox group, which charged the 58-year-old Jewish organization with involving itself in "areas of theology" by seeking the adoption of a statement on Catholic-Jewish relations by the Ecumenical Council which is to resume its session in September. The rabbinical group, at its annual convention this week, urged that interreligious cooperation between Christians and Jews be conducted on the basis of "sound sociological doctrine rather than the complicated area of theology."

A statement issued today by Morris B. Abram, president of the American Jewish Committee, pointed out that greater cooperation and understanding between the Jewish, Protestant and Catholic communities has been a major responsibility of the American Jewish Committee in its intergroup relations program since its establishment in 1906.

"A primary objective of its human relations program in this area arises out of the long-felt need to counteract the stereotype of the Jew as a 'Christ-killer,' which has been an underlying source of hostility to the Jew for almost two millennia," the statement said. "As a basic step in this program, we have stimulated Christian religious educators and intergroup research specialists to examine their teachings with regard to content growing out of this stereotype."

"No organization seriously wishing to come to grips with anti-Semitism can avoid realizing that such teachings, found in prayers and liturgy, in Sunday school lessons and weekly sermons, have proved to represent one of its most profound and subtle roots, serving not only to stigmatize the Jews but also to rationalize continued persecution," the statement pointed out.

"This centuries-old problem," the statement continued, "was first broached as a subject for scientific examination and analysis 30 years ago, when the American Jewish Committee suggested to Protestant leaders a series of self-studies of church and Sunday-school teaching materials. Out of this suggestion have come historic findings, first under the aegis of Drew University, later at Yale Divinity School. Early in 1963, Yale University Press published 'Faith and Prejudice,' by Dr. Bernhard E. Olson, the report of Yale's seven-year project in this field. Only recently a report on a parallel self-study of Catholic teaching at St. Louis University was released, and is already having a profound influence."

Says Its Statement to Vatican Was Approved by Rabbis and Scholars

Pointing out that a similar purpose motivated establishment by the American Jewish Committee in 1961 of a chair in intergroup relations at the International University for Social Studies "Pro Deo," in Rome, the first such project at a European Catholic institution of higher learning, Mr. Abram stated: "The movement toward critical self-examination on the part of the religious communities of the impact of their teachings in the formation of attitudes toward other groups is, in part, traceable to the pioneer work of the American Jewish Committee. A great impetus was given to the movement by the advent of Pope John XXIII and the convening of the Vatican Council, and particularly through the efforts of Cardinal Bea."

"Shortly after the announcement of the convening of the Vatican Council in Rome, the American Jewish Committee was invited by high Church officials to submit, out of its long background and experience in this field, practical suggestions for improving Catholic-Jewish relations. Drawing on its own studies, on substantial research by its own staff, and after consultation with eminent scholars and rabbis representing Orthodox, Conservative and Reform Jewish viewpoints, the Committee prepared and submitted two comprehensive, scholarly memoranda to one of the preparatory commissions of the Vatican Council. A third memorandum, prepared by an eminent American Jewish scholar and professor of a leading Jewish theological seminary, was subsequently submitted, also by invitation from Catholic authorities in Rome."

Denies Entering into 'Areas of Theology'; Lists Rabbis Consulted

"The Committee's memoranda pointed to practical problems and documented them with specific illustrations," the AJC statement stressed. "We did not, as some of our critics in the rabbinate have recently suggested, look to enter into 'areas of theology' nor 'blur the distinctive religious character of each faith community.'" On the contrary, we emphasized the social, psychological, and human relations consequences of specific statements found in educational, liturgical, and homiletic materials, quoting extensively from Catholic sources. Our emphasis on human relations concerns earned our documents the approval of an Orthodox Rabbi with whom they were shared, as well as with Conservative and Reform Rabbis, and prominent university scholars."

"These documents were among matters discussed in late March 1963, when Cardinal Bea met with Jewish religious leaders including the rabbinate at the American Jewish Committee's Institute of Human Relations in New York. At this meeting were a group of outstanding Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Rabbis, in their capacity as individuals,

along with members of Cardinal Bea's entourage and officers of Pro Deo University in Rome;

"The American Rabbis who attended included faculty members of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America, the then president of the Rabbinical Assembly of America, the president of a leading Orthodox Jewish university, the then president of the Synagogue Council of America, and the then president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis;

"Earlier, consultations had been held with a leading Orthodox scholar of Yeshiva University, the President of the World Union of Progressive Judaism, Professors of Jewish history at Columbia and Harvard Universities, the President of Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion and one of its distinguished faculty members, and the President of Yeshiva University;

"The American Jewish Committee's concern for relationships between Catholics and Jews has at all times been based upon its competence and long experience in intergroup relations; moreover, where useful it has collaborated with, or drawn upon, the expertise of scholars and leaders who have made important contributions to the cause of Christian-Jewish relations in various parts of the world; Thus the criticism of our activities as being involved in "areas of theology" is unfounded. If at any time theological matters entered into the consideration, Jewish theological scholars of renown were consulted;"

The statement concluded with pointing out that the private audience which a group of leaders of the American Jewish Committee held with Pope Paul VI at the Vatican recently was non-theological in nature. "It was strictly within the framework of our human relations concerns and our responsibility to assist in the betterment of Catholic-Jewish relations," the statement stressed;

KHRUSHCHEV ASKED IN SWEDEN TO ACT ON RIGHTS FOR JEWS IN RUSSIA

STOCKHOLM, June 24; (JTA) -- The Central Council of Swedish Jewish Communities sent a communication today to Soviet Premier Khrushchev, now visiting Sweden, urging him to intervene to end discriminatory measures against Soviet Jews;

The communication recalled the traditional fight of the Soviet Government against "old-time prejudices" against minority groups, adding that one of those prejudices, anti-Semitism, was deeply rooted in Eastern Europe;

"We are confident that your intervention would strengthen confidence in the Soviet Union and its people and in your efforts for international peace and understanding," the Swedish Jewish representative body said;

In Copenhagen, the Scandinavian Jewish Youth Federation, representing 3,000 members, issued an appeal for facilities for a cultural exchange between the Jews of the Soviet Union and the Scandinavian countries; The Federation offered to arrange theater performances, concerts and lectures by Soviet Yiddish artists in the Scandinavian countries and to assist in arrangements for Scandinavian Jews to give performances in the Soviet Union;

The Federation statement said that an exchange of Yiddish literature and delegations of Jewish students would benefit both Soviet and Scandinavian Jewry and contribute to peace and co-existence;

U.S. RABBIS APPEAL TO WORLD RELIGIOUS LEADERS ON FATE OF SOVIET JEWS

FALLSBURG, N.Y., June 24; (JTA) -- An appeal to the world leaders of the major religions to express their opposition to the continued policies of the Soviet Union "in uprooting and destroying the fundamental tenets of Judaism and religious liberty" was voiced today by Rabbi Israel Miller of New York, the newly elected president of the Rabbinical Council of America; The Orthodox group of spiritual leaders ended their five-day convention here today;

"These leaders," Rabbi Miller said, "should arouse and mobilize the peoples and governments of the world in a vigorous campaign to reverse anti-Semitic outbursts which have been fully confirmed in reports emanating from Russia." He pointed out the contradiction in the Soviet Union playing a role as the champion of the newly emerging nations of Africa and South America while at the same time undermining the religious and cultural freedom of Russian Jewry.

Referring to the religious situation in American colleges today, Rabbi Miller announced that he will appoint a campus commission as part of the Rabbinical Council to help students in understanding the secular challenge to their religious ideals;

The Commission will cooperate with communal and college agencies in an attempt to instill students with what the Rabbi termed "a sense of commitment to religious values;"

NEW YORK CITY COUNCIL DEMANDS IMMEDIATE REMOVAL OF JORDAN MURAL

NEW YORK, June 24, (JTA) -- The New York City Council adopted unanimously last night a resolution demanding immediate removal of the controversial anti-Israel mural at the Jordan Pavilion at the World's Fair. At the same time, Alex Rose, vice-chairman of the Liberal party of New York, resigned from the board of the Fair as a protest over the Fair's policy of refusing to act on the mural.

Councilman John Samueli, a Queens Democrat, proposed that if World's Fair president Robert Moses ignored the Council demand for removal of the mural, the Council should enact a law to make it a misdemeanor to display on city property material which stimulates prejudice. The City Council resolution called the mural "a source of insult to millions of people in this city, state, country and the world."

Mr. Rose resigned after a hectic meeting of the World's Fair board Monday night at which he introduced a resolution to change the Fair's policy of neutrality on the mural issue. The issue was not debated after the Fair's attorney said the issue was involved in pending court suits. Mr. Moses, who has rebuffed all appeals for removal of the mural, ruled that the issue could not be discussed. He was sustained by the directors, 59 to 24.

In his letter of resignation, Mr. Rose called the mural "sheer war propaganda--offensive to a sovereign people and to millions of American citizens, Jews and non-Jews alike; Mr. Rose disclosed in his letter that Mr. Moses had told him he intended to "stay with this policy all the way." He said that this left him no choice but to resign. He added that he was convinced that "a basic mistake has been made by the World's Fair leadership and should be rectified."

ISRAEL'S DIPLOMATIC REPRESENTATIVES IN SOUTH AMERICA MEET IN LIMA

LIMA, June 23, (JTA) -- Israel's improving relations with the nations of Central and South America was discussed at a meeting of Israel's diplomatic representatives held here. The conference included the ambassadors and chiefs of mission to Argentina, Colombia, Chile, Cuba, Guatemala, Venezuela, Bolivia, Brazil and Ecuador.

The conference was held under the leadership of Dr. Chaim Yachil who explained that the meeting was of a routine nature and is held each year to evaluate the political situation in Central and South America. Dr. Yachil stressed the friendly ties between Israel and the nations of the Southern Hemisphere.

President Belaunde of Peru honored those attending the conference with a special dinner at his palace. Also invited were leaders of the Peruvian Jewish community and high ranking government officials.

Dr. Yachil's visit to Peru coincided with the visit of an Egyptian emissary whose mission was to disseminate anti-Israel propaganda in connection with Israel's Jordan River plan. At a press conference held in Lima, Dr. Yachil had an opportunity to explain Israel's right to the use of the Jordan waters as well as reiterate his country's wish for peaceful cooperation with her Arab neighbors.

The Peruvian journalists expressed great interest in the mutual assistance pact between Israel and Peru. At present a number of military officials are in Israel studying the Nahal - soldier-farmer corps and the Gadna cadet corps with the view of adapting these systems to Peru for the colonization of the jungle region.

CITY OF PRAGUE PAYS TRIBUTE TO KAFKA; HOLDS CEREMONY AT EXHIBITION

LONDON, June 24, (JTA) --The city of Prague paid tribute last night to the late Jewish writer Franz Kafka in a ceremony described as "emotionally moving and politically significant," it was reported here today from the Czechoslovak capital.

The ceremony was held at the opening of a large exhibition of documents, photographs, manuscripts and letters about Kafka's life. He died in 1924 at 41. Until last year the official Communist attitude towards Kafka was that he represented "bourgeois decadence" and "cosmopolitanism."

The principal guest was Max Brod, Kafka's life-long friend and editor, who flew to Prague from his home in Tel Aviv. Mr. Brod, with tears in his eyes, described his late friend as having had "a positive attitude toward life." He recalled that Kafka was one of the 20th Century's first writers to deal with the forces of alienation and loneliness which affect man, but stressed that Kafka had "a joyful nature," being intensely interested in sport and the theater.

The second speaker was Edward Goldstuecker, Czechoslovakia's leading authority on Kafka. Dr. Goldstuecker was recently released from prison after serving a sentence as co-defendant of the executed Czech-Jewish Communist leader Rudolph Slansky, who was convicted during the infamous "Slansky Purge trials" in 1957. Dr. Goldstuecker indicated that the exhibition which was attended by high-ranking Ministry of Culture officials meant that the Communist regime had fully rehabilitated the works of Kafka.