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Synagogue Council Sets Meeting To Consider Vatican Call For Closer Jewish Ties

NEW YORK, Dec. 11 (JTA)--The Synagogue Council of America announced today that it was convening its constituent agencies to give "the most careful and respectful study" to a new Vatican document that proposes unprecedented steps by the Roman Catholic Church to improve Catholic attitudes toward Israel and the Jewish people. The Synagogue Council is the representative body of the Reform, Conservative and Orthodox branches of Judaism in America.

The Vatican statement was made public yesterday by Lawrence Cardinal Shehan, Archbishop of Baltimore, in an address at a dialogue on the image of the Jew in contemporary culture held at Loyola College under the sponsorship of the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League and various Christian institutions.

Rabbi Henry Siegman, executive vice president of the Synagogue Council, called the Vatican statement "a religious document of far-reaching consequences" which "requires the most careful and respectful study." He said "a document of this importance, which was months if not years in preparation, should not elicit a quick and easy response, particularly by the religious Jewish community whose central concern is the fundamental issues of faith that must remain central in any Christian-Jewish confrontation." He announced that Rabbi Solomon J. Sharfman, SCA president, was convening the SCA constituent agencies to study the document "and the reaction of the Synagogue Council will be made public in due time." He said the Council was meeting next week for what will probably be a series of two or three sessions.

The World Jewish Congress hailed the Vatican statement as "a courageous and much desired implementation of Vatican II" which "augurs well for an even closer cooperation between Jews and Catholics." Dr. Joachim Prinz, chairman of the WJC Congress governing council, said "We welcome this opening of a new gate for creative coexistence of the two religions which have common origins and common goals."

Statement Spells Out Details For Improved Understanding

The Vatican statement highlighted specifics essential to a better understanding by Catholics of Judaism and said teaching of such information "should be extended to all levels of Christian education," using catechetical manuals, history texts, and press, radio, film, television. Such programs "presuppose" appropriate training of teachers in Catholic schools, seminaries and universities, the statement said, and it urged "further research" on Judaism and Jewish-Christian relations.

The statement also recommended joint worship services between Christians and Jews "whenever possible and mutually desirable." It cautioned that Catholic liturgy should not present the Jewish Scriptures as an allegory of the Christian faith but also to view it as valid in itself. Teachers were warned not to make the Old Testament appear in opposition to the New Testament, as a religion "of fear and legalism, implying that only Christianity possesses the law of love and freedom." The "dignity of the human person," the Vatican statement said, "requires the condemnation of all forms of anti-Semitism" and creation of a true dialogue excluding "all intent of proselytizing and conversion."

Cardinal Shehan chose the Baltimore meeting for release of the first statement from the Vatican to implement the Ecumenical Council's declaration on non-Christian religions issued in 1965.

Vatican Says Christians Must Understand Jewish Ties To Israel

The statement on Israel, apparently the most specific ever made on that issue by the Vatican, held that Jewish "fidelity to the Covenant was linked to the gift of a land, which in the Jewish soul has endured as the object of an aspiration that Christians should strive to understand, in the wake of long generations of painful exile, all too often aggravated by painful persecutions and moral pressures, for which Christians ask pardon of their Jewish brothers."

The statement continued that "Jews have indicated in a thousand ways their attachment to the land promised to their ancestors from the days of Abraham's calling" and "Christians, whatever the difficulties they may experience, must attempt to understand and respect the religious significance of this link between the people and the land. The existence of the State of Israel should not be separated from this perspective, which does not in itself imply any judgement on historical consequences or on decisions of a purely political order."

New York Diocese Issues Guidelines To Implement Vatican Statement

Three New York area Catholic sees released today a set of "guidelines for the advancement of Catholic-Jewish relations," which advocate joint community-level councils and outlining general rules for Christian-Jewish dialogue. The document was expected to serve as a model for community action to implement the 1967 U.S. Bishops guidelines and the Vatican Council's repudiation of anti-Semitism.

Father Edward H. Flannery, executive secretary of the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish relations of the U.S. Bishops Committee for Ecumenical and Interreligious Affairs, said the new guidelines would be sent to dioceses throughout the United States. The document was compiled by representatives of the New York Archdiocese and the Brooklyn and Rockville Center dioceses, in collaboration with the ADL, the New York Board of Rabbis and scholars of the major Jewish traditions. The tri-diocesan area

includes some 4.3 million Catholics and 2.5 million Jews.

A major new proposal in the guidelines suggested that a Catholic-Jewish relations committee be formed to consider encouraging "grass roots"; councils. Principles proposed for Catholic-Jewish programs included a creation of permanent diocesan committees, which would include Catholic clergy, religious and laity participation and rabbis and Jewish laymen. Reaffirming the U.S. Bishops' statement, the guidelines warned against any proselytizing in dialogues with Jews. There should be stress on priest-rabbi fraternal encounters and cooperation between service organizations of both faiths, according to the guidelines, which also proposed in a spirit of "openness, candor and friendship," the development of institutes for clergy and lay leaders, grass roots dialogues and special education programs, as well as open houses, joint social occasions and invitations to rabbis and priests to explain liturgy and beliefs to each other's congregations. Catholics were urged to pray in common with Jews wherever this was mutually acceptable.

Constant "scrutiny" of Catholic texts, prayerbooks and other media was recommended to Catholic organizations to eliminate negative references to Jews. The document also asked that "courtesy and charity" pervade the attitudes of all priests in "the difficult situation of marriage between a Jew and a Catholic." Many other specific steps were suggested to improve "Catholic-Jewish amity."

Israel Warns Rogers' Statement May Impair Mideast Peace Prospects

JERUSALEM, Dec. 11 (JTA)--Israel charged yesterday that Secretary of State William P. Rogers' statement of United States Mideast policy was likely to mar prospects for peace in the region because it imposed prior conditions on a settlement. The charge was contained in a statement issued by the government following a late meeting of the Cabinet. It was issued shortly before Foreign Minister Abba Eban departed for the U.S. for talks with Mr. Rogers and possibly with President Nixon.

The Israeli statement said, "The prospects for peace will be seriously marred if states outside the region continue to raise territorial proposals and suggestions on subjects that cannot promise peace and security." It said that "negotiations for peace must be free from prior conditions and external influences and pressures." The Israel Government further maintained that the Middle East tensions referred to by the secretary of State "derive from the aggressive policies of the Arab governments."

It denied that the situation resulting from the June, 1967 war can be considered "expansionism or conquest" and insisted that the Arab governments' refusal to make peace with Israel is the cause of the current trouble in the region. The Government reiterated Israel's contention that the only way to end the Middle East conflict was by a "directly negotiated peace treaty."

In a statement at the airport prior to his departure, Mr. Eban said that Israel stands firm in its position that "no country outside this region can set forth the peace conditions" and that no agreement between the powers can replace an arrangement between the parties concerned.

Major U.S. Jewish Groups Criticize Rogers' Mideast Policy Statement

NEW YORK, Dec. 11 (JTA)--The American Zionist Council and the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations added their voices today to the mounting chorus of Jewish protest against Secretary of State William P. Rogers' statement of American Middle East policy. The Conference, which represents 23 national Jewish organizations and claims to be the spokesman for "the responsible leadership of the organized American Jewish community," urged the Nixon Administration to reconsider the position enunciated by Mr. Rogers. Rabbi Israel Miller, chairman of the American Zionist Council, alleged that the Rogers speech was a "retrogression" from the previous U.S. position which called for the outside powers to concern themselves with broad guidelines and not the specifics of a Middle East settlement.

The Conference, through its chairman, Rabbi Herschel Schacter, voiced "grave concern" over Mr. Rogers' statement which the organization interpreted as being a call for a Middle East agreement "through the Four Power talks rather than through negotiations between the parties directly concerned." It warned that "appeasement of Russian designs will lead nowhere except to renewed conflicts."

Rabbi Miller was especially distressed by Secretary Rogers' suggestion for future boundaries between Israel and Egypt and status of Jerusalem. He claimed that while the U.S. "pays lip service" to the principle of non-intervention by outside powers, "it is obvious that Israel's chief bargaining power has now been bargained away by the U.S." The American Jewish Congress described the Rogers proposals as a "step backward" in the search for a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. The AJCongress complained that Mr. Rogers' speech "contains no word that would oblige the Arab states to refrain from their unremitting efforts to dismantle and destroy the state of Israel."

Israel Jets Shoot Down Three Syrian MIGs In Dogfight Over Damascus

TEL AVIV, Dec. 11 (JTA)--Israel Air Force jets shot down three Russian-built Syrian MIGs in a dogfight over Damascus today as residents of the Syrian capital watched from rooftops. An Israeli military spokesman said the MIGs were downed by gunfire and air-to-air missiles. He said the pilot of one plane was seen bailing out, another plane exploded on reaching the ground and the third exploded in mid-air. All Israeli aircraft were reported to have returned safely to their bases.

Israeli jets staged a two-and-a-half hour attack on Egyptian positions in the Suez Canal zone today and returned safely to base. Five Israeli soldiers were wounded, one of them fatally, in an Egyptian artillery attack in the Dever Suwer section of the Canal yesterday. Two Arab saboteurs were killed last night in an encounter with Israeli border police near Metullah on the Lebanese border. The saboteurs apparently intended to plant explosives at a road-building equipment pool nearby. Israeli artillery exchanged fire with Jordanian and Iraqi batteries in the Beisan Valley area last night following mortar attacks on Yardenia, Haon and Ashdot Yaacov. Israeli long range guns shelled the Jordanian town of Irbid aided by flares dropped from Israeli planes.

The air battle over Damascus culminated three days of artillery battles along the Israel-Syrian demarcation line in the Golan Heights. According to an Israeli military spokesman, Syrian forces shelled Israeli tractors and bulldozers building a road parallel to the demarcation line on Monday. Work was halted temporarily while United Nations observers and Israeli surveyors examined the road building site and agreed that it was well within Israel-occupied territory. When the work resumed, the Syrian batteries opened up again and Israeli artillery returned the fire. Direct hits were scored on a Syrian bunker and two anti-tank gun sites. Syrian soldiers were seen running as ambulances drew up to evacuate casualties. But the Syrians renewed their fire last night. Israeli jets went into action and Syrian jets rose to meet them in an aerial battle that developed over Damascus. Syrian sources said Israeli planes attacked Syrian airfields and military objectives. It was not clear whether the new Damascus Airport came under attack.

Premier Meir Expected To Report Formation Of New Coalition Government

JERUSALEM, Dec.11(JTA)--Premier Golda Meir was expected to inform President Zalman Shazar tonight that she had succeeded in forming a broadly based national coalition government. Her reported success came after the Gahal faction agreed to a compromise proposed by the Labor Alignment governing its freedom of action in the Knesset.

The two factions comprising Gahal--Herut and the Liberal Party--met at their respective centers in Tel Aviv today and were believed virtually certain to endorse the compromise. Their action will remove the last obstacle to the formation of a new government which Mrs. Meir has been trying to put together for more than a month.

Gahal, although a member of the Government, will be permitted to abstain from voting on Government-supported measures dealing with the settlement of labor disputes. The abstention right can be exercised only once on a given bill, but Gahal accepted the limitation, feeling that it will be able to use the right when it will have the most effect.

Gahal (Herut-Liberal Alignment) favors the compulsory arbitration of labor disputes when they involve essential national services and non-binding arbitration of other labor disputes. The Labor Alignment, which holds a majority in the governing councils of Histadrut, Israel, labor federation, opposes arbitration on the grounds that it interferes with Histadrut's functions. Gahal, the country's second largest political party, held out for its right to differ with the Government on such legislation though it will not be an opposition party.

Allon Reports Jews Being Encouraged To Settle In East Jerusalem

JERUSALEM, Dec.11(JTA)--Deputy Premier Yigal Allon disclosed yesterday that Arab residents are voluntarily leaving the former Jewish quarter of East Jerusalem and Jewish settlers are being encouraged by the Government to move in. Mr. Allon spoke in the Knesset in reply to a motion that not enough was done to settle Jews in the Old City, formerly occupied by Jordan.

He said the Government will provide aid and support to any Jew who wants to settle there and was planning to construct more than 7,000 dwelling units for Jewish residents. Mr. Allon stressed that the Arab residents are not being expelled. He said they were gradually moving out after agreeing to accept higher standard accommodations in areas of their choice or cash payment to help them establish households elsewhere. He said the government planned to build 100 new houses in the Wadi Joz sector for Arabs now occupying old or dangerous buildings, 30 of which are presently under construction.

Mr. Allon said there was no section of united Jerusalem, including the Old City, that is barred to Jewish habitation. The authorities are willing to help Jewish individuals and groups who buy or rent accommodations there. He said there were presently 2660 Jews living in the former Jordanian sector and predicted that there would be 42,000 by 1973. Mr. Allon declared that Israel would accept no demand, whatever its source, to change the present status of Jerusalem as a unified city under Israeli rule.

200 Students Demonstrate At Soviet Embassy In London For Russian Jews

LONDON, Dec.11(JTA)--Two hundred students demonstrated peacefully in front of the Soviet Embassy here today demanding the right of emigration for Soviet Jews who want to go to Israel. Two of the demonstrators were received by the press attache of the Embassy who spoke to them for 15 minutes but refused to accept a letter and a petition addressed to the Ambassador.

The demonstration was organized by the Universities Committee for Soviet Jewry. The demonstrators passed out leaflets containing a plea for emigration from 18 Jewish families in the Soviet Georgian Republic and a letter written by Boris Kochubievsky, a Russian-Jewish engineer now serving a prison term for allegedly criticizing Soviet treatment of the Jews.

The two students admitted to the Embassy--Colin Shindler and Philip Marcus--reported that they were told by the press attache that the Soviet Government does not encourage emigration to Israel and therefore rejected applications by Jews. They said the official terminated the interview when they began to question him and asked them not to visit the Embassy in the future.

Dutch Government Says Envoy To Moscow Will Intercede For Soviet Jews

THE HAGUE, Dec.11(JTA)--The Netherlands Government promised today that its Ambassador in Moscow will press Soviet authorities to permit the emigration of Russian Jews to Israel. Premier Pieter DeJong told the Dutch Senate that the matter would be handled by Dr. Gerard Beelaerts Van-Blokland, Holland's Ambassador to the Soviet Union. The Netherlands has been looking after Israeli interests there since Moscow severed diplomatic relations with Israel during the June, 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

Premier DeJong's promise was welcomed by all members of the Senate except the one Communist Senator.

Defense Costs Pose Financial Crisis For Israel, Pincus Warns UJA

NEW YORK, Dec.11(JTA)--The chairman of the Jewish Agency warned here today that Israel faces "a financial crisis of the greatest magnitude" as a result of the outflow of its dollar reserves for defense purposes. Louis A. Pincus told the banquet session preceding the annual national conference of the United Jewish Appeal that Israel's social welfare and educational programs were threatened.

He said the country's "unprecedented defense expenditures" were 50 times greater than in 1951 and more than two-and-a-half times as much as in 1967, the year of the Six-Day War. He said defense costs absorbed 80 percent of Israel's current annual tax revenue, resulting in serious inflationary pressures.

The defense expenditures also result "in a seriously unfavorable balance of trade, a drain on the foreign currency reserve which is down to the breaking point," Mr. Pincus said. On the other hand, he noted that Israel's economy "achieved new heights," its gross national product has gained 11-12 percent each year and its exports have grown from \$50 million in 1948 to over a billion dollars anticipated in 1970. But, he added, "our imports in that year will be some \$2.4 billion."

As a result, he said, "our foreign currency reserve is down to \$442 million, \$58 million below the \$500 million figure which all economists agree is dangerously low." Mr. Pincus warned that Israel faces a further inflationary cycle stemming from the needs of 40,000 new immigrants who will have arrived by the end of this year and 60,000 newcomers expected next year.

JDC Adopts Record 1970 Budget Of \$24.1 Million For 300,000 Needy Jews

NEW YORK, Dec.11(JTA)--The Joint Distribution Committee yesterday adopted a record budget of \$24.1 million for a broad range of health, welfare and rehabilitation services to over 300,000 needy Jews in 27 countries during 1970. The budget will be acted on at the annual conference of the United Jewish Appeal of which the JDC is a major beneficiary.

Samuel L. Haber, JDC executive vice chairman, noted that there was a sharp increase in the number of Jewish refugees, particularly from Poland, and an increase in needs in Israel, Europe and North African countries. He said his organization has earmarked almost a third of its budget for programs in Israel. The largest item is \$6.2 million for health and welfare programs for aged, ill and handicapped immigrants in Israel. Another \$880,000 was allocated for aid to religious and cultural activities there. Mr. Haber said that close to \$2 million has been allocated to Eastern Europe, the bulk of it in Rumania. Over \$4 million has been reserved for some 50,000 needy Jews in Arab and Moslem countries.

Jewish Professionals In Detroit Form Coalition Of Concerned Jews

DETROIT, Dec.11(JTA)--Staff members of Jewish community agencies have announced formation of a new peace group, the Coalition of Concerned Jews, to act on "the whole range of human misery, combatting apathy, particularly among Jews, and the growing limitations on human freedoms." The announcement said, "for us, as Jews, our responsibilities lie not only in our commitment to our fellow humans but from our actions taken toward realizing that end."

The peace group appeared in an advertisement in the current issue of the Jewish News of Detroit, under the heading of "Chanukah Greetings." The advertisement declared that "our world today is beset by monstrous human suffering made the more horrible by the massive apathy to that misery. We call on our fellow Jews--martyrs to tyranny by their very existence--to speak out now against man's ever mounting crimes against man. Start celebrating freedom by demanding peace."

The coalition said it was focussing on the Dec. 12-13 moratorium and on the need "to end the war in Vietnam as the first step in alleviating human suffering." The group developed from a nucleus which signed an earlier advertisement in the English-Jewish weekly on Nov. 7 calling for an end to the war. The coalition statement said that "the response" was "overwhelming. Not only did the Jewish community send its own bus to Washington but it also 'populated' other buses" to the moratorium demonstration in November.

The statement added that "the moral support and encouragement we have received from some in the Jewish community convinces us of the need for something more permanent, with ongoing concerns and a program of its own." Spokesmen said the new group was planning events for the Jewish community, "as well as public events for the general community." They said the coalition would cooperate with other groups to demonstrate a "Jewish presence" in the concerns over "these crucial issues." The spokesman stressed that while the original members came from Jewish agency staffs, membership in the new group did not represent policy of those agencies.

Rabin Heckled by Arabs, New Left Students At Stanford University

PALO ALTO, Calif. Dec.11(JTA)--The Stanford University News Service has praised the "poise and good humor" of Gen. Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's Ambassador to the United States, in the face of pro-Arab heckling which interrupted an address he was delivering to about 300 students on the campus last week.

Gen. Rabin was picketed by about 100 students and other persons supporting the Arab Students Organization and New Left Students for a Democratic Society. A noisy melee developed during which Roger Reed, president of the Young Republicans, was punched in the nose. About 20 demonstrators screamed epithets at the Israeli envoy from the back of the auditorium but declined his invitation to come in and ask questions.

The University News Service said Gen. Rabin "was unshaken by the demonstration, delivering his speech with poise and occasional humor. Joking about American riots and crime, the Ambassador said, 'You're safer in Israel at night than you are in Washington, D.C.'" the News Service reported. In his talk, the former Chief of Staff of Israel's armed forces described how the Soviet Union sent thousands of military advisers to the Middle East and over \$2.5 billion worth of modern arms to the Arabs. "The Arabs urgently need peace," Ambassador Rabin said. "The real war is against poverty, hunger, disease and ignorance."