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RABIN CONFIDENT THERE WILL BE NO SUBSTANTIAL U.S. CHANGE ON MIDEAST

By Yitzhak Shargil

TEL AVIV, April 20 (JTA)--Premier Yitzhak Rabin has expressed confidence that the United States will continue to provide military and economic aid to Israel and that there will be no substantial change in America's political position on the Middle East, although he conceded that there are differences with Washington that must be resolved before it is possible to progress toward peace in the Middle East.

Rabin made those points in an interview published Friday in Maariv. "Arms shipments from the U.S. according to signed agreements with the U.S. continue to arrive and will continue to arrive," he said. He also predicted that after the Geneva conference ends there will have to be a renewed round of bilateral talks with Egypt to achieve a partial settlement. Observers noted that Rabin was indicating that the Geneva talks cannot be viewed as imposing a settlement on Israel but only as paving the way for future bilateral talks.

On the issue of American economic aid, Rabin said: "We shall get more than we have received until now, but it is logical to assume that we shall not get all that we have asked."

Rabin said Egyptian President Anwar Sadat was convinced during the recent bilateral talks that the U.S. would be able to extract far-reaching political concessions from Israel without any political steps on his part. He said Sadat derived that belief from the fact that the U.S. had intervened to save the Egyptian Third Army when it was surrounded by Israeli forces in the Yom Kippur War--something the Russians were unable to do.

Economists Less Optimistic

A less optimistic outlook has been expressed by leading economists who are urging the government to adopt contingency plans predicated on a substantial reduction of U.S. economic aid. Shimshon Ehrlich, the senior economic analyst of Haaretz, wrote Friday.

According to Ehrlich, economists employed by the government foresee a cut of as much as a half billion dollars in economic assistance from the U.S. which would immediately throw 100,000 Israelis out of work, more than 18 percent of the nation's labor force. Ehrlich noted that this assessment was even gloomier than a previous one made by the Bank of Israel which calculated that a drop in American aid would result in 60-70,000 unemployed.

Ehrlich reported that the economists assume that every dollar less received by Israel would mean IL 14 less production. A cut of a half billion dollars from the U.S. would equal a IL 7 billion production deficit in Israel representing 13 percent of all local production and employment. The writer pointed out that Israel's imports amount to \$7 billion annually against exports of only \$3.8 billion and the deficit must be covered by loans, grants and aid funds from abroad.

Economic circles are demanding that the government appoint an ad hoc committee immediately to study contingency plans in the event of a

large-scale reduction in American aid in order "to avoid last minute, uncalculated decisions." Meanwhile, the Economic Planning Authority at the Finance Ministry has prepared a new five-year economic plan calling for drastic changes in the economy even if U.S. economic aid continues at its present rate.

HIGH USSR CHURCH MISSION DUE IN ISRAEL; SEEN AS POSSIBLE HARBINGER OF CHANGE BETWEEN TWO COUNTRIES

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, April 20 (JTA)--The visit to Jerusalem next month by a high-ranking mission of the Russian Orthodox Church has aroused speculation here that it may be a harbinger of a change in relations between Israel and the USSR. The group will be headed by the Metropolitan Nikodim, the second highest prelate in the Russian Church hierarchy. He and his 40-man entourage will be quartered at the Greek Patriarchate as guests of the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem, Benedictus.

High Soviet church leaders are often reputed to be close to the Kremlin. Nikodim is unofficially dubbed the "Foreign Minister" of the Russian Orthodox Church. Speculation that the visit may involve more than church matters was intensified by the fact that two Soviet emissaries--understood to have been members of the clergy--reportedly met secretly with Premier Yitzhak Rabin and top ministers here two weeks ago to discuss political matters and Israeli-Soviet relations.

The head of the Russian Church Mission in Jerusalem, Archimandrite Seraphim, called on a senior official of the Ministry of Religious Affairs last week to inform him officially of Nikodim's visit and to ask assistance in making the arrangements for it. Officials here noted that this was the first time that Israeli authorities had received formal advance notice of a visit by Russian Church leaders. In the past, the Israeli government learned of such visits only informally.

The last high level visit here by a Russian churchman was that of Nikodim's superior, Patriarch Pimen, in May 1972. Speculation was rife at that time; too, but it turned out that Pimen devoted most of his discussions with Israeli ministers and other officials to the question of church-owned lands. Litigation was going on at that time with the "White Russian" church over the lands. The "White Russians" are represented in Jerusalem and receive every courtesy and freedom but the government extends formal recognition only to the official "Red" Russian church.

WAXMAN PREDICTS WOMEN WILL BE ADMITTED TO RABBINICAL ASSEMBLY WITHIN THE FORESEEABLE FUTURE

LIBERTY, N.Y., April 20 (JTA)--Rabbi Mordecai Waxman, president of the Rabbinical Assembly, predicted tonight that women will be admitted to membership in the Rabbinical Assembly, the rabbinic branch of Conservative Judaism, within the foreseeable future. In his presidential address opening the Assembly's 76th anniversary (Diamond Jubilee) convention at Grossingers Hotel here, Rabbi Waxman cited this as an example of the organization's flexibility and its policy of adapting traditional Judaism to changing times. The convention opened following a special convocation of

the Jewish Theological Seminary of America at which 63 rabbis were presented with honorary Doctor of Divinity degrees by Chancellor Gerson Cohen.

"There is no generation gap in the Rabbinical Assembly although more than sixty years separate its youngest and oldest members," Rabbi Waxman observed. He defined the unifying ideology of Conservative Judaism as "a commitment to the preservation of Jewish tradition and to the idea that it has to be compatible with conditions imposed by the American landscape and by new intellectual developments."

He pointed out that the Conservative movement had grown to be the largest Jewish religious group in America in its 75-year history and that the fact of this policy, making the movement the "normative form of American Judaism," had proven to be successful. "We have operated with a strong pragmatic sense and with an institutional sense for the life of tradition of our fellow Jews. We have sought a middle road. We have never been tempted to push theories to extremes as the Reform and Orthodox have done," Rabbi Waxman said.

Referring to the admission of women to the Rabbinical Assembly, Rabbi Waxman said that "While it was set forth in a resopsum in 1955 that women be allowed to be called to the Torah, this decision did not begin to be implemented in any great degree (each rabbi and congregation ultimately makes their own decision) until the issue of women's rights became a major issue in the society as a whole and in Jewish life in the 1970s.... The issue, indeed, is already settled. The question of the entry of women into the Conservative rabbinate, for example, is not a matter of whether, but when."

Problem Facing U.S. Judaism

The great problem facing American Judaism, Rabbi Waxman said, is the developing of a religion that meets the needs of the individual. "The heart of the problem," he stated, "is the fact that we are not getting across the sense of Judaism as a religion which lends meaning and significance to the life of the individual. Yet this is precisely what a great many people are looking for in a time when spirits are low and causes have vanished."

Continuing, he declared that providing a "compelling" and life-integrating Judaism is not being done successfully by anyone today. "It has almost certainly never been achieved by any generation of Jews which has lived in a relatively free non-ghetto situation. It is certainly not being achieved in Israel today. A casual Judaism cannot be a causal Judaism. What is really needed is the creation of a religious revival, rather than an institutional revival which characterized the 1950s," Rabbi Waxman said.

Scores Administration's Reassessment

Discussing Israel, he said that for Jews "the welfare of Israel is not a political issue, as some of our fellow religionists of other faiths seem to think. It is a central religious issue whose origins are in the Bible and the prayer book and the rituals of our faith." While "applauding" American help to Israel, he said that "we strongly deplore the double-talk and double-think which seems to be involved in the Administration statement about the 'reassessment of American policy in the Middle East.' It seems to indicate American weakness where there should be strength. We have yet to hear of Russia abandoning its friends."

On Israel's present and future negotiations with the Arab countries, the Conservative leader said, "We strongly believe that Israel does seek peace and should accept the risks for peace. We do not believe, in the light of the rich experience of broken agreements, that an apparent peace today which endangers national existence tomorrow is a reasonable risk."

Referring to international affairs generally, Rabbi Waxman urged the United States to "have the will and the strength to maintain a decisive posture.... It must be strong enough to resist oil blackmail and industry takeovers which threaten the welfare of the American people...." On Jewish issues, he said America must "reassert our concern for the welfare of not only the Jews of Israel, but also for the Jews of the Soviet Union and Syria and all other places where they are in danger."

He urged the Conservative movement to "participate in the internal Jewish political process, together with other branches of Conservative Judaism, and officially be represented in the decision-making bodies sponsoring relationships between Israel and the diaspora, the World Zionist Organization and the Jewish Agency. This is where the action is, and we cannot be side-line spectators."

MOBILIZATION EXPANDED TO HELP ISRAEL COPE WITH FINANCIAL CRISIS

WASHINGTON, April 20 (JTA)--An expanded program of mobilization to help Israel cope with its current financial crisis was initiated today by more than 150 national and community leaders of the Israel Bond Organization meeting here to strengthen Israel's economy in the face of the recently intensified Arab boycott. The action to mobilize greater financial resources through the enrollment of the business, labor, and professional communities through the sale of State of Israel Bonds was taken at an all-day emergency conference at the Washington Hilton Hotel which was addressed by Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Yigal Allon, Ambassador Simcha Diniz and Economic Minister Zeev Sher.

At the same time, the conference stressed the central importance of the participation of every Jewish family on a maximum level in strengthening Israel's economy through the purchase of Israel Bonds. Allon's address to the conference participants was off-the-record.

Sam Rothberg, general chairman of the Israel Bond Organization, asserted that the thrust of the Arab economic boycott, added to Israel's critical financial position as a result of the Yom Kippur War and the effects of a staggering rate of inflation, poses an extremely serious problem for Israel. "The intensity and scope of the assault on Israel's economy (by the boycott) and those who support and do business with it have made the economic front a most vital sector in Israel's struggle for survival and security, for freedom and independence."

Sher, Israel's Economic Minister to the United States and Canada, pointed out that the Israelis are now the highest taxed people in the world because they are required to carry the heaviest defense burden in the 27-year history of Israel. He and Michael Arnon, president of the Israel Bond Organization called upon the Jewish communities in the U.S. and Canada to provide a major share of the new Israel Development Budget for this year; which amounts to \$1,070,000. Arnon added: "The crisis in Israel is a challenge too immediate, too great, and too personal for any Jew to overlook or underestimate."

BEHIND THE HEADLINES**THE GHORBAL INTERVIEW IN MARCHAR: FACT OR FICTION?**

By Joseph Polakoff

WASHINGTON, April 20 (JTA)--A Buenos Aires magazine article in which the destruction of Judaism was advocated and in which the Catholic Church was attacked has been scorned and repudiated by the Egyptian and Argentinian ambassadors implicated with it. But puzzling factors continue to elude clarification.

The article, which has gathered attention on four continents and aroused especially wide American and Israeli concern, appeared in the March issue of the extreme right-wing Argentinian periodical "Marchar" (To March) in which its editor, Patricio Kelly, reported his interview with Egyptian Ambassador Ashraf Ghorbal. (See original report in JTA Bulletin April 2, P. 2) The interview took place Jan. 13 in the Egyptian Embassy in Washington after Kelly had been introduced to Ghorbal by the Argentine ambassador here, Alejandro Orfila.

According to the Marchar article, Ghorbal referred to Judaism as the "bridgehead" of "exploiting colonialism" which "must disappear." The envoy also was said to have described as "irrevocable" the Arab decision "to destroy Judaism as has been promised by our friends here in the United States, Russia and also in your country, as has been established by Rega Lopez." In addition, Marchar quoted Ghorbal as saying that among the "foes of the Arab struggle" the Catholic church "is the most dangerous of all."

Rega Lopez, considered the "strong man" in Argentina, is the Minister of Social Welfare since last January and private secretary to President Isabel Peron. According to reliable reports by those knowledgeable with the Argentine scene, one of Lopez's first acts was to oust his arch-rival, former Minister of Economy Jose Ber Gelbard, a Jew, whom Argentinians had hailed as their economic savior because of his trade agreements with the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China.

Ghorbal Says It Wasn't So

In attempting to learn the origins of the article and the motives for its publication, the Jewish Telegraphic Agency communicated directly with Ghorbal, Orfila, leading members of their embassies and also consulted U.S. officials and other sources concerned with Argentina and Middle Eastern affairs. In addition to his personal conversation with JTA, Ghorbal wrote a letter to the JTA that repudiated the article and avowed no animus whatever toward Judaism.

That the interview actually took place and that Orfila introduced Kelly to Ghorbal has been confirmed personally to JTA by both ambassadors. But while Kelly reported the interview lasted 90 minutes, Ghorbal said it was only two minutes. No copy of the Marchar edition carrying the article is available here but excerpts of the article had been forwarded to newsmen and others from Buenos Aires.

Kelly was reported to have "gone underground" since the incident became public and Argentine authorities were described as displeased with his article. He was described by an Argentine official as having spanned the political spectrum from extreme left to extreme right. His publication also appears to have suddenly suspended operations.

'Relied On A Fertile Imagination'

To an inquirer about the "painful matter" of

the magazine article, Ghorbal wrote: "Mr. Kelly did not speak any English and I told him in a combination of Spanish and Italian in precise terminology 'that the Egyptian people hold a great friendship for the Argentine people and that I was happy to visit the beautiful city of Buenos Aires in 1963.' He understood what I said and he did not stay with me for more than two minutes.

"He did not ask any questions nor did I volunteer any statements except what I stated above. Thus, I am bewildered how the words I have spoken could become the words that he published. It is obvious, therefore, that Mr. Kelly has relied on a fertile imagination inventing a whole interview which is totally contrary to my views and philosophy and those of my government."

In addition to providing JTA with a copy of this letter, Ghorbal also made available to JTA copies of his exchange of letters with Orfila. The Orfila letter of March 31, reflecting on what had happened, said that "upon his arrival in Washington, Mr. Kelly requested a meeting with you through this embassy. According to conversations with him, he wanted to prepare an analysis on the Mideast situation. Since the printing of his evaluation of this meeting, it has become obvious that not only were your thoughts and position not reflected correctly, but concepts were expressed that were not even discussed during this meeting."

Orfila's letter also said that "this article was printed in a publication practically unknown in Argentina outside of extreme nationalist groups" and that "his actions have been reported to the Secretary of the Press of the Argentine government." JTA asked Orfila, in view of the reported obscurity of Marchar, why he had recommended Kelly to Ghorbal for an interview. Orfila replied that he was being "logistical" and assisting an Argentine journalist.

Reflects Views Of Libyan Envoy

Ghorbal told JTA that the article "transcends the Arab-Israeli issue" and "we have never practiced any such thing as anti-Semitism." The article, he said, reflects "not the ambassador of Egypt but of Libya." Plainly disturbed by the article, Ghorbal said "That man (Kelly) messes up my very close relationship that I have been enjoying with my many friends of the Jewish faith in the United States."

Following up his conversation with JTA, Ghorbal in a letter to JTA April 10, wrote: "It is needless for me to reiterate that Egypt has never practiced anti-Semitism, anti-Judaism nor anti-Catholicism. Egypt does not believe in such a hateful philosophy. Our leaders have been on record to stress that." He mentioned Barbara Walters' visit to Egypt last September that included a visit to the Cairo synagogue and interviews with Jews there. "All these interviews have been shown on the 'Today' program on NBC," Ghorbal wrote. "It testifies to what I stated above that Egypt is a land of tolerance and brotherhood."

Journalists Differ With Ghorbal's Assessment

Despite Ghorbal's assertions, a number of Jewish and non-Jewish journalists who recently visited Egypt, including the eminent author Robert St. John, offered totally different assessments of the Jewish condition extant in Egypt. Several noted that there are no weddings, no bar mitzvahs, no ritual circumcisions. Several also noted that the use of synagogues and of Jews in its precincts for propaganda and tourist attractions and the tokenism of a Jew in a high position are presented in Egypt just as they are presented in the Soviet Union, Poland

and Czechoslovakia where Jewry and Judaism are also enroute to extinction.

The eminent author, Robert St. John, in a series of reports from Cairo written exclusively for The Jewish News of Detroit in the last three weeks, had this to say about the Jewish condition in general and synagogues, in particular:

"Before Israel became a State Egypt had approximately 100,000 Jews. (No two authorities agree on the precise figure. Some say 80,000; others put it as high as 150,000.) Fifteen years ago, when I was last there, although Egypt had twice gone to war against the Jewish State there were still a great many Jews left and many of the twenty Cairo synagogues were still functioning. Today there are two hundred Jews left in Cairo and about the same number in Alexandria. (This figure also is not precise, for there are some Egyptian Jews who for years have not identified and have gradually vanished into the polyglot population, just as had happened in New York and other large cities.)

"About the synagogues.... Travel brochures issued by the Egyptian government list the Synagogue Ben Ezra in the area called Old Cairo as one of the ten or twenty most important sites for tourists to visit. Surrounded by twenty Coptic churches and twenty-nine mosques and close beside the great Coptic Museum, it is the only one of Cairo's synagogues now in presentable condition."

Describes 'Real Shock'

But, St. John continued, the "real shock" came when he walked "down a narrow, twisty street, extremely filthy, even for Cairo, called Shari Mohassar al Knachab, the Street of the Wood Cutters. This is the way into the heart of what was once one of the most congested Jewish quarters anywhere in the world. These shops, these houses, this whole area was one hundred percent Jewish. Now all trace of Jews and Judaism is gone. The small shops are owned by Egyptians now. There's not a Mogen David anywhere until you come to the ruins of the Matmonides Synagogue. Ruins? The walls stand but last Rosh Hashana the roof caved in....

"A young Orthodox rabbi from Boston says he is trying to persuade the Egyptian government to do something to save buildings like this before it is too late. The cultural attache of the American Embassy says maybe the Smithsonian Institution could be interested. Someone speaks of a demoralized community. It's more than that. It is a community in the last stages of utter decay. Just fifteen years later. Pity the two hundred!"

ARGENTINE JEWRY APPREHENSIVE

By Asher Mibashan

BUENOS AIRES, April 20 (JTA)--Jack D. Weller, chairman of the Joint Distribution Committee, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that he sensed a greater feeling of apprehension among Jewish leaders here over the general political situation than was evident in former years.

Weller, who is on an inspection tour of JDC facilities in Latin America, accompanied by JDC executive vice-chairman Samuel L. Haber, left today for Santiago, Chile. He and Haber spent nearly a week in Buenos Aires and made a one-day visit to Montevideo, Uruguay.

Weller, who visited major Jewish institutions, community centers, social clubs and schools, said at a press conference before his departure that he gained the impression that the Argentine Jew-

ish community was "very much alive," its leaders "dedicated" and Jewish education of "great importance."

However, Weller said that the community institutions which are led mostly by volunteers, are in great need of professional help. He said the JDC has offered scholarships for Argentine Jews to train in the U.S. on condition that they return here to work for Jewish institutions. "We have also offered constructive aid where we judged it needed and where our experience could be helpful," Weller said.

SENATE TO HOLD HEARINGS ON PROPOSAL FOR 6-MONTH EXTENSION OF UNEF, UNDOF

WASHINGTON, April 20 (JTA)--The Senate Foreign Relations Committee has scheduled a hearing for tomorrow on a proposal that the United Nations extend its mandate for its emergency force in Sinai to six months. The UN Security Council voted last Thursday to extend the UNEF mandate for three months ending July 24. The Senate proposal would also seek to extend to six months the UN peace-keeping force on the Golan Heights. The proposal was introduced April 9 by Sen. William Brock (R, Tenn.) and co-sponsored by eight others, including Sen. John Sparkman (D, Ala.), the committee's chairman, and Dale Bumpers (D, Ark.).

In the Security Council meeting, China and Iraq did not participate. The other 13 members of the Council voted for the three-month extension. Previous extensions had been for six months. The resolution on extension said the Council was concerned "over the prevailing state of tension in the (Mideast) area." The UN body called on the parties concerned to implement promptly Resolution 338. UN Secretary General Kurt Waldheim is to report to the Council, when the extension date expires, on developments in the area and measures taken to implement the Council's call for a settlement.

HUNGER STRIKE SET IN CINCINNATI

CINCINNATI, April 20 (JTA)--About 20 Cincinnati Jews will begin a hunger strike here tomorrow in sympathy with the family of Vladimir Slepak. A fast in Moscow is being conducted by Vladimir and Maria Slepak and their son Aleksandr; Aleksandr Lunts and Vladimir Prestin. Jews and non-Jews are also conducting sympathy hunger strikes in Miami, Chicago and Philadelphia.

The hunger strike here also is in solidarity with Mark Nashpitz and Boris Tsitilonok, who were tried recently in Moscow and sentenced to five years in exile. Rabbi Uri Herscher, assistant to the president of the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, one of the institutions sponsoring the hunger strike, will speak with the hunger strikers Monday morning.

The hunger strikers will assemble at the Jewish Community Center tomorrow and each following day at noon, will gather at Fountain Square in downtown Cincinnati. They said they would try to continue their fast at least as long as the Soviet Jews continue theirs. Three Russian Jews who have settled here will be among the hunger strikers.

JERUSALEM (JTA)--Jewish Communists who foresaw the rise of Nazism and the "final solution" scheme originated the idea of the "Red Orchestra" spy net at a time when there was an understanding between Hitler and Stalin. Leopold Trepper, the mastermind behind the net, told a Jerusalem audience this weekend. Trepper, who settled in Israel last February, said the spy net which was established in 1938 included some Jews who were expelled from Palestine by the British.