

CONFERENCE OF MOROCCAN JEWISH COMMUNITIES SEEN AS POSSIBLE PRECURSOR OF NEW MIDEAST PEACE INITIATIVE ENCOURAGED BY HASSAN

RABAT, May 16 (JTA) -- Several Knesset members who attended the first national conference of Moroccan Jewish communities which ended here Monday night, expressed cautious optimism yesterday that the event could herald a new Middle East peace initiative encouraged by King Hassan of Morocco.

The conference, which opened Sunday, drew some 500 participants and observers representing the Moroccan Jewish community and Jewish communities in the United States, France and other countries. They included a 35-member Israeli delegation, of which 11 are members of the Knesset representing both the Labor Party and the Likud-led coalition government.

The Israelis were invited with the express permission of Hassan, the first time a group of Israeli parliamentarians have visited an Arab League member-state.

According to Meir Shitreet of Likud, the most important result of the conference could be to pave the way for a new peace initiative. It would be welcomed by Israel if it came from Morocco, he said, adding that King Hassan's prestige will be enhanced in the U.S. and among Jewish communities all over the world for having the conference in his capital.

See King Playing A Key Role

Yossi Sarid, of the Labor Alignment said he was convinced that the Moroccan King could play a key role by inducing Palestinians and Jordanians to join the peace process. He saw the presence of Israelis in Rabat as a first step toward peace in the Middle East and the promotion of a dialogue between Arabs and Jews.

Aharon Abu-Hatzeira, the Moroccan-born leader of the Tami party, a partner in the Likud-led coalition, noted that the leader of the Israeli delegation, Labor MK Rafael Edri, had extended an invitation to Hassan to visit Israel.

According to Abu-Hatzeira, the Moroccan monarch is the only Arab head of state--apart from the President of Egypt--who may be able to make such a visit to initiate a general dialogue between Arabs and Jews for peace in the Middle East.

He said the Israeli delegation had not suggested that the King modify his positions on the Arab-Israeli dispute when it invited him to Israel.

But observers here have cautioned against expectations that spectacular results will emerge from the Rabat conference in the near future. They noted in that connection that relations between Israel and Egypt are at their lowest point since they signed their peace treaty in 1979 and that Syria still opposes the peace process.

The presence of Israelis in the Moroccan capital has already had sharp repercussions. Syria has recalled its Ambassador to Morocco and six Palestinian terrorist groups, often in conflict with each other, have denounced what they branded the dangerous and suspicious role played by the Moroccan government.

In the view of those organizations, Morocco is the foremost "reactionary" regime in the Arab world, spawning "treason," notably its alleged sponsorship of the Camp David accords.

The latter was an allusion to the secret negotiations carried out in Morocco between Israeli and Egyptian representatives which resulted in the late President Anwar Sadat's visit to Jerusalem in 1977.

The six Arab groups that issued the denunciation are: the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, headed by George Habash; the Popular Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine, led by Nayif Hawatmeh; the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine-General Command, of Ahmed Jibril; the Popular Fighting Front of Samir Ghochey; the pro-Syrian Al Saika; and the El Fatah dissidents opposed to PLO chief Yasir Arafat.

U.S. WELCOMES MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT'S HOSPITALITY TOWARD JEWISH CONCLAVE

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, May 16 (JTA) -- The State Department said today that the United States "welcomes" the hospitality of the Moroccan government toward the international conference of Jews from Morocco that included a 35-member delegation from Israel.

"The Congress of the Council of Jewish Communities in Morocco is a bi-annual private event organized by the leaders of Morocco's Jewish community, who this year invited participants from Jewish communities outside of Morocco," State Department spokesman John Hughes said.

"The Moroccan government, which has traditionally maintained a good relationship with its minority communities, has apparently played a welcoming role to this internationalized meeting in aid of fostering dialogue on a range of questions of interest to the countries of the region," Hughes concluded.

DEFEAT OF EQUAL ACCESS BILL COULD END SCHOOL PRAYER ISSUE FOR THIS SESSION OF CONGRESS

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, May 16 (JTA) -- The rejection by the House yesterday of a bill to allow high school students to meet voluntarily on their free time in public schools for religious purposes could end the school prayer issue for this session of Congress.

The bill, known as the Equal Access Act, was rejected when it failed to get the needed two-thirds majority by 11 votes. The vote was 270 in favor to 151 against.

The measure, introduced by Reps. Don Bonker (D. Wash.) and Carl Perkins (D. Ky.), would have cut off federal funds from any school that prohibited voluntary student religious groups if it permitted any other type of student initiated group.

Bonker said yesterday that he doubted that a new bill would come into the House this year because of the shortened session of Congress due to the Presidential conventions. For the same reason, he did not believe that an equal access bill in the Senate introduced by Sen. Mark Hatfield (R. Ore.) would be taken up in that body.

The Equal Access Act was opposed by a coalition of 22 national organizations, including eight Jewish groups. A representative of one of the Jewish organi-

zations noted today that the final vote was very close yesterday with many representatives switching sides at the last moment.

The eight Jewish organizations in the coalition against the bill are: American Jewish Committee; American Jewish Congress; Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith; B'nai B'rith International; B'nai B'rith Women; National Council of Jewish Women; National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council; and the Union of American Hebrew Congregations.

The rest of the coalition is composed of educational, civil rights and religious groups and others, such as the National Coalition for Public Education and Religious Liberty (PEARL).

The effort for the equal access bill came after the Senate in March rejected a Constitutional amendment to permit organized voluntary spoken prayer in public schools. The coalition against the bill, at a press conference last week, said the bill would give the supporters every thing they sought in the Constitutional amendment.

Norman Redlich, dean of the New York University School of Law and chairman of the American Jewish Congress' Commission on Law and Social Action, charged that cults, proselytizing groups and other religious groups could go into schools under the bill and "proselytize and divide our young men and women, boys and girls."

Consequences If Bill Passed

At yesterday's short House debate, Rep. Don Edwards (D. Calif.) said that if the bill passed it would allow missionary groups to use the schools to convert children.

Rep. Charles Schumer (D. N.Y.) said the bill would "add a fourth 'R' to the curriculum of our schools--reading, writing, 'rithmetic and religion. Three students in any school district could get together and invite devil worship, the Rev. Sun Myung Moon and any other cults to their schools and it couldn't be stopped."

Rep. Gary Ackerman (D. N.Y.) noted that while supporters of the bill said that, if adopted, the House bill could be changed later in conference with the Senate, earlier attempts to amend the bill had been rejected.

Arguments By Supporters Of The Bill

Bonker said the bill would "protect public high school students' free speech, without violating the separation of church and state." He said it was not putting prayer back in the classroom but only giving "equal treatment" to religious groups.

Supporters of the bill had argued that it would extend to high schools the 1981 Supreme Court decision in *Widmar vs. Vincent* in which the court ruled that a state university cannot forbid students to use the facilities for religious purposes if it makes them generally available for other student groups.

But at last week's press conference, Redlich stressed that a high school is not in the same category since students are required by law to attend, while going to college is discretionary. It was also noted that in some states secondary school students, the term used in the bill, can be 12-year-old junior high school students.

The bill required a two-thirds vote because it was under a special rule which limits debate and bars amendments. The bill was approved by the Education and Labor Committee headed by Perkins. But if Hatfield's bill is adopted by the Senate, it would come up in the House under the Judiciary Committee where there is less support for it.

N.Y. STATE HOLOCAUST EXHIBIT TO FOCUS ON THE SITE, EXPERIENCES OF REFUGEES IN WWII DP CAMP IN OSWEGO By Rochelle Saidel

ALBANY, N.Y., May 16 (JTA) -- The site and experiences of the 982 refugees in the displaced persons camp that was located in Oswego, N.Y. during World War II, the only refugee camp in the United States that sheltered victims of the Holocaust, will be a focal point of the Holocaust exhibit in the New York State Museum in Albany, it was announced by State Senate Democratic Leader Manfred Ohrenstein (D. N.Y.).

The DP camp, Fort Ontario, was the subject of a discussion here at the first meeting of the advisory board of the State Holocaust Memorial Resource Center/Exhibit earlier this month. Some 50 Holocaust survivors, professors, teachers and other concerned citizens from throughout the state, have been appointed to the board by Ohrenstein.

Describes The 'Sunshine And Shadows'

Abraham Karp, a professor of Jewish studies at the University of Rochester, a past president of the American Jewish Historical Society and now a member of the advisory board, described the DP camp as having both "sunshine and shadows." The sunshine, he said, was provided by Jewish individuals and organizations who cared for the refugees. The shadows were the Justice and State Departments.

The refugees, most of them Jewish, were brought from Italy to America by special order of President Roosevelt in the summer of 1944. While the Oswego camp saved the lives of 982 refugees, conditions and regulations in the camp were less than ideal, Karp noted. They were housed in army barracks behind barbed wire, and had to agree to return to their homelands after the war. Only the intervention of President Truman prevented their deportation, Karp said.

He noted that it was appropriate for New York State to sponsor a Holocaust memorial because, in 1777, New York was the first state to grant Jews full equality, and currently one of every five Jews lives in New York State. Because of the DP camp, this state, more than any other state in the country, was touched by the Holocaust while it still raged, Karp said.

A bronze sculpture commissioned and created by Albany artist Hy Rosen was unveiled by the artist at the advisory board meeting and presented to Ohrenstein for the Holocaust exhibit in the State Museum. The two-foot high sculpture is based on the famous photo of a small boy in the Warsaw ghetto, with hands raised and an SS gun pointed at his back.

The State legislature has appropriated \$90,000 with which to launch the State Holocaust project, at Ohrenstein's request. Individuals are also contributing seed money through the Greater Albany Jewish Federation. Working with the Federation, the New York State Department of Education will be responsible for the exhibit and resource center. Both the exhibit and resource center will enhance the new Holocaust studies program that the Education Department has launched in secondary schools.

TEL AVIV (JTA) -- Israeli workers now earn less in real wages than they did two years ago, according to The Central Bureau of Statistics. The real income of government employees declined by 14% over the last 12 months.

BEHIND THE HEADLINES GREECE AND ISRAEL

By Sheldon Kirshner

ATHENS, May 16 (JTA) — Greece, the only member of the European Economic Community (EEC) which has extended full diplomatic recognition to the Palestine Liberation Organization, has launched a discreet campaign to improve its battered relations with Israel.

Israel's normally distant relationship with Greece reached an abysmal low during the 1982 war in Lebanon, when Prime Minister Andreas Papandreu likened Israel's invasion to Nazi Germany's genocide against European Jewry.

Israel was vilified in the state-run media, Greek dockworkers boycotted Israeli ships, the Greek Orthodox church joined cultural and philanthropic groups in donating blood, food, funds and clothing to the Palestinians, and the Prime Minister's wife, Margaret, led a march on the Israeli Mission here.

Upgrades PLO's Diplomatic Status

After being thrown out of east Beirut by the Israelis in August of 1982, PLO chairman Yasser Arafat chose Greece instead of an Arab nation as his first stop. Arafat embraced Papandreu, and Papandreu said: "I feel deeply moved at receiving ... this great fighter for the freedom of his people."

Less than a year earlier, following Papandreu's election victory, Arafat was invited to Athens. Papandreu, who was a York University (Toronto) economics professor when a military junta ruled Greece, recognized the PLO on a de facto basis. By doing so, he upgraded the PLO's diplomatic status to match that of Israel's.

Greece, which in 1947 cast a vote against the United Nations Palestine partition plan for fear of upsetting the Arabs, thereby reinforced the pro-Arab character of its Middle Eastern policy.

Seeking To Improve Relations With Israel

Of late, however, Greece has sought an improvement in its relations with Israel. As one top-ranking official in the Foreign Ministry put it in a recent interview: "Just because we oppose certain aspects of Israeli policy doesn't mean that our bilateral relations must remain stagnant."

Although Israeli diplomats welcome the thaw, they entertain no illusions about the basic nature of Greek policy in the Middle East. "We encourage any improvement forward," one source said. "But on basic issues, we can't go too far."

First and foremost, the Israelis do not expect Greece to grant Israel de jure recognition. Nor do they believe that the Greek government will ever reconcile itself to Israeli positions on the occupied territories and the Palestinians.

Since the Six Day War, Greece has called for a complete Israeli withdrawal from the territories and for the right of the Palestinians to exercise self-determination as they see fit. Greece, like Israel, supports the Camp David peace process. But Greece, unlike Israel, backs President Ronald Reagan's 1982 peace plan and the Arab League's Fez proposals. The Greeks favor Israel's survival behind secure borders, but they have traditionally been close to the Arabs.

Virtually dependent on Arab oil, they export about 25 percent of their raw and finished goods to Arab markets. And, as Papandreu has pointed out, Greece wants to "develop and enrich" its political and commercial links with its Moslem trading partners.

Limitations Of Pro-Arab Policy

Yet, as the Greeks have gradually discovered, a vigorous pro-Arab policy has its limitations. Expected Arab investments in Greece have not materialized on a scale imagined by the government. "We expected much larger economic co-operation from the Arab states," a Greek official admitted.

The Arabs, say reports, have preferred to invest their petrodollars in Western Europe and in the U.S. Without the massive influx of Arab capital, Greece is hard-pressed to carry out ambitious plans for economic and social reform.

Greece, too, has been disappointed by the fact that the Arabs have reduced their share of Greek imports and greatly increased their imports of Turkish products. In the past few years, Turkey—the first Moslem country to recognize Israel—has downgraded relations with the Jewish state and has landed juicy construction contracts in Arab lands.

The Greeks have failed in their effort to rally the Arabs behind them in their dispute with Turkey over Cyprus and the Aegean Sea. Normally, conservative Arab regimes like Saudi Arabia and Morocco back Turkey, while radical governments like Syria and South Yemen support Greece. Greece had hoped for wall-to-wall Arab backing in return for its favorable shift on the Palestinians and the PLO.

Policy Alienates Jews

Arab considerations aside, Greece's aggressive pro-Arab policy has tended to alienate Jews—particularly in the U.S. At the height of the anti-Israel hysteria, which veered into anti-Semitic directions at times, some Jewish businessmen in the U.S. and in Western Europe began a spontaneous boycott of the Greek economy. And, it is reported, some Jewish travel agents refused to include Greece on their itineraries.

Reasons For Seeking Improved Relations With Israel

According to Israelis in this bustling capital, Greece wants to improve relations with Israel for three reasons:

*The Greeks are disenchanted with the Arabs for not having invested as much funds in the Greek economy as they were apparently led to think.

*The Greeks want to mend relations with the West and with the U.S. in particular. Under Papandreu's Socialist government, Greece has clashed repeatedly with the U.S. over a variety of questions, ranging from the deployment of missiles in Europe to American policy in Central America.

"For Greece, an improvement of relations with Israel is part of the game it plays to improve relations with the West," an informant said.

*The Greeks want to defuse anti-Greek sentiment in diaspora Jewish communities, in part to win U.S. Jewish support for its perennial conflict with Turkey, a U.S. ally.

With a minimum of publicity, Greece has moved away from the shrill anti-Israel rhetoric of 1982. By the same token, Greece has assured its Arab friends that its policy will not undergo any drastic revision.

"An improvement in our relations will be very controlled and balanced," an Israeli diplomat observed. "Greece will be very apprehensive about doing anything that smacks of an open improvement."

In his view, the slow improvement began last year, when Papandreu conferred with Edgar Bronfman, president of the World Jewish Congress; Joseph Lovinger, head of the Central Board of Jewish Communities in Greece; and Ephraim Evron, Israel's former Ambassador to the U.S., on the island of Corfu. Meanwhile, the climate brightened

when David Kimche, the Director-General of Israel's Foreign Ministry, met with Karolos Papoulias, the Greek Undersecretary, in Athens. It was given further impetus when Margaret Papandreou went to New York and held talks with Jewish women's groups.

Nearly two months ago, a high-level Greek delegation attended the opening of Hellenic House at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The Greek party, though not in Israel in an official capacity, consisted of a former Greek President, the Mayor of Salonika, the Secretary-General of the Ministry of Science and Culture, and about 100 other Greeks of Jewish and non-Jewish descent.

Later this month, the first official Greek commercial delegation is expected to visit Israel. It will be led by the president of the Athens Chamber of Commerce. Israeli officials contend that bilateral trade can easily be doubled to \$150 million a year. Before the year is out, Israel will probably play host to the Undersecretary of the Director of Political Affairs of the Greek Foreign Ministry.

Amid these signs of rapprochement, Israelis are pleased to note that overt media attacks on Israel have all but ceased. In spite of all this, observers do not expect Greece to upgrade Israel's diplomatic standing.

Last May, the European Parliament in Strasbourg voted by 133 to 31 to recommend to Greece to establish full relations with Israel. But the Greeks have not complied, and Israel's Mission here remains on the representative rather than on the ambassadorial level.

Asked why Greece declines to accord Israel unfettered recognition, a Foreign Office functionary said: "It's a question of principle." Greece, he said, will not give Israel de jure recognition until Israel withdraws from the occupied areas and agrees to Palestinian statehood under a PLO administration. The official offered no clear answer why Greece, prior to the Six-Day War, refused to offer Israel de jure recognition.

In the absence of a major Arab-Israeli peace agreement, Israel's relationship with Greece is bound to be correct at best. "What we realistically seek are 'normal' relations," said an Israeli diplomat. "No more and no less."

TWO JEWISH YOUTHS CHARGED IN ANTI-SEMITIC VANDALISM

NEW YORK, May 16 (JTA) -- Two Jewish teenagers were arrested last week and charged in connection with last month's anti-Semitic graffiti and swastika daubing of apartments in one of the buildings in Co-Op City, the massive cooperative in The Bronx.

The boys, ages 14 and 15, attempted to collect from police a \$3,500 reward being offered by the Co-Op's management for information about the vandalism. The identities of the two boys were not released because of their youth, police said.

A police spokesman said the two had tried to collect the reward, saying they knew who had daubed the doors of some 51 apartments in Co-Op City. After an investigation, it was determined that the teenagers had lied to police and they were subsequently arrested.

The two youths, arrested in their apartments in Co-Op City, have been charged as juveniles with conspiracy, criminal mischief and falsely reporting a police incident. The youths are also suspects in other similar incidents dating back to November, 1983. Police said the youths described their action as a "prank."

POLICE PROBING POSSIBILITY OF ARSON FOLLOWING CLASHES BETWEEN MOSLEM AND JEWISH UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

JOHANNESBURG, May 16 (JTA) -- Police are investigating the possibility of arson in a fire that swept the Students' Union building in Witwatersrand University early yesterday morning after a week of clashes between Moslem and Jewish students.

The blaze, which gutted the second floor of the building, is believed to have been started deliberately in the offices of the South African Union of Jewish Students (SAUJS).

Trouble began on the campus when the Moslem Student Association distributed anti-Semitic and anti-Zionist material in the course of an Islamic Week program. Subsequently, shots were fired into the Moslem Student Association's headquarters. This was followed by a rash of anti-Jewish graffiti sprayed on campus walls.

Feelings are running high among the university's 4,000 Jewish students. The Zionist Record, a Jewish weekly, has taken the university authorities to task for "bumbling ineptitude" in handling the situation.

COURT EXTENDS LEVINGER'S DETENTION FOR EIGHT MORE DAYS

JERUSALEM, May 16 (JTA) -- The district court in Jerusalem yesterday extended for another eight days the detention order against Rabbi Moshe Levinger, one of the spiritual leaders of the Gush Emunim movement and the Jewish settlers in the old Jewish quarter of Hebron. Levinger had originally been ordered held in custody for 48 hours, while he was interrogated by police.

Reports had suggested he would be released by last night. But the police apparently need more time for their investigations, and the district court agreed that he should continue to be held in custody. Levinger was arrested Sunday night for questioning about his alleged links to a Jewish terrorist underground responsible for acts of violence against Arabs in the West Bank.

TWO ISRAELI SOLDIERS WOUNDED

TEL AVIV, May 16 (JTA) -- Two Israeli soldiers were wounded when their patrol came under small arms fire from ambush north of the Zaharani River in south Lebanon today. They were evacuated by helicopter to Rambam Hospital in Haifa.

Two bazooka shells were fired at an Israel Defense Force patrol north of Juyaeh in the western sector of the front in Lebanon today but caused no casualties. A mine was discovered and safely dismantled by Israeli soldiers on a road near Nabatiyeh that is frequently used by the IDF.

Meanwhile, Israel continued to reduce its military presence in Sidon, the most populace town in south Lebanon. The Saraya building which until recently housed the IDF's civil administration, was formally turned over to a representative of the central government in Beirut. The building now serves as headquarters for the government's southern provincial administration.

TEL AVIV (JTA) -- Unemployment in Israel rose by 43% from October, 1983 to March, 1984, according to figures released by the Central Bureau of Statistics Tuesday. There are 80,000 jobless, or 5.7% of the work force. Unemployment six months earlier stood at 56,000. The Finance Ministry declined to comment on the statistics.