

JEWISH ORGANIZATIONS TO WORK OUT STRATEGY AND POLICY TO DEAL WITH EFFECTS OF THE EQUAL ACCESS LAW

By Ben Gallob

NEW YORK, July 26 (JTA) -- The National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council (NJCRAC), representing a wide range of 11 national Jewish organizations and 111 local Jewish Community Relations Councils, is arranging for seminars in eight cities to work out policy and strategy at the local level for dealing with the effects of the newly-enacted equal access law, Albert Chermín, NJCRAC executive vice chairman, reported today.

The proposal, approved by the Senate last May, and approved 337-77 by the House in a second vote on the measure yesterday, would permit religious groups to hold meetings in public schools but only before and after regular class hours.

Since President Reagan, at his Tuesday night press conference, listed the measure as one of six he particularly wanted adopted by Congress before adjournment, his signature is assured.

Chermín told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency today that the NJCRAC planned to hold a consultation in New York City on September 9 with the American Jewish Congress, to coordinate the eight regional conferences.

The AJCongress, in a statement denouncing the House action, said it would "carry the fight to the courts to have this legislation invalidated." An AJCongress spokesman told the JTA it was too early to determine how such a fight would be implemented.

Many Jewish officials questioned by the JTA noted that one of the problems involved was that the issue would not be joined until the 1984-85 school year begins, and planned monitoring started of such public access by church groups would indicate whether fears of Jewish groups of proselytizing of Jewish school children materialized.

Plans To Challenge Law's Constitutionality

Rabbi Henry Michaelman, executive vice president of the Synagogue Council of America, told the JTA that the SCA's six rabbinical and congregational organizations, Orthodox, Conservative and Reform, "regretted" the new law and that the SCA planned to challenge its constitutionality.

A commitment to "closely monitor" how this "controversial law" is implemented and readiness "to challenge unconstitutional practices that may grow out of its administration" was made in a statement for the American Jewish Committee by its president, Howard Friedman.

He called the measure "a sharp departure from Congress's traditional caution and concern that religious liberty and separation of church and state not be tampered with." The Committee said the measure was "open to abuse by those who proselytize and seek to impose their religious preferences upon others. It would even allow extremist hate groups such as the Ku Klux Klan and the American Nazi party to gain access to the public schools."

Chermín said the eight regional meetings would be held in Hartford on September 13; Houston, September 19; Atlanta, September 20; Los Angeles, October

2; Philadelphia, October 3; Chicago, October 8; Columbus, Ohio, October 9; and in Miami, October 24.

Chermín said the number of Jewish communities, through Jewish community relations councils and similar local organizations, to be represented were: 20 in Hartford; 19 in Houston; 10 in Atlanta; 20 in Los Angeles; 30 in Philadelphia; 18 in Los Angeles; 10 in Miami; and 15 in Columbus.

Chermín said the equal access legislation would be one of several problems in church-state relations affecting Jews to be discussed and analyzed at the eight regional consultations. He said that the equal access measure would be examined in terms of policy and strategy.

Chermín added that the consultation gatherings were expected to produce guidelines for local community relations councils and similar groups to aid them in responding to any abuses of the new law in schools in their cities.

Monitoring schools is one of the strategies the eight consultations are expected to examine and approve for use at the local level to determine whether abuses occurred and how court action should be taken if that step was deemed necessary by the local Jewish community relations groups.

Cites 'The Only Bright Spot'

Friedman also said, in the AJCommittee statement, that "the only bright spot in this rather disturbing picture of Congressional action is that, even as Congress was considering such radical legislation, two federal courts of appeal, in Georgia and Pennsylvania, rendered decisions in two cases that struck down as unconstitutional public school religious activities that are very similar to those authorized by the equal access legislation."

However, an attorney specializing in constitutional law, who asked that his name not be used, said there were significant differences in the Georgia and Pennsylvania laws, compared to the new equal access law.

Other Jewish organizations reacting to the House action included the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, International B'nai B'rith, and Agudath Israel.

Fears Expressed By Jewish Groups

Seymour Reich, chairman of the ADL civil rights committee, said, in a statement, that "under the guise of free expression for students, the bill will open our public school doors to religious and cult groups, some of which use high pressure proselytizing techniques" and that the measure "could open to racist and extremist organizations the opportunity to operate in our public schools."

Gerald Kraft, president of B'nai B'rith, denounced approval of the new measure and said it would turn the nation's schools "into religious battlegrounds where our children will be the only victims." He called the measure "a backdoor way of returning prayer to the public schools" and added that it took "a large chunk out of the constitutional wall separating church and state."

David Zweibel, director of government affairs of Agudath Israel, called the measure "ill-conceived and dangerous." He, too, expressed fears of missionizing activities on public school premises. Zweibel made a special point of stressing the "distinction" between

Agudath Israel opposition to the equal access measure and its support of legislatively-approved "school prayer initiatives where there are built-in and iron-clad guarantees that the prayer would indeed be non-denominational in form and character."

Jewish organizational opinion, outside the Orthodox agencies, continues to be one of strong opposition to any federal, or local law, permitting prayer in the public schools.

Such a law, repeatedly debated but never approved despite Reagan's strong support, was introduced this morning and approved in the House. A source told the JTA that the new version has no definition of what such prayers should contain or exclude, being "completely vague" on that critical point.

ADMINISTRATION OFFICIAL SAYS NO STUDY IS UNDER WAY ABOUT AS U.S.-ISRAEL DEFENSE PACT By Helen Silver

WASHINGTON, July 26 (JTA) — The United States is not about to announce a bilateral defense pact with Israel (as has been reported in the press) and "no such study is under way," Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Richard Murphy stated yesterday in testimony before the Hamilton Subcommittee of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Murphy was asked by subcommittee chairman Rep. Lee Hamilton (D. Ind.) whether there are talks between the U.S. and Israel on how to counter the Soviet Union in the region, referring to talks under the joint political-military group. Murphy replied:

"Those talks which have gone two rounds — one in January and one in July, the first in Washington, the second in Israel — have been carrying out what the President announced last November when he described the creation of the group, which is to study possible ways of cooperation and our mutual security interest, giving priority attention to the threat posed by increased Soviet activity in the region."

Murphy added, "We are concerned about the influence gained by the Soviet Union through its major arms supplies to Syrians; they have made major supplies through Iraq."

Asked whether the U.S. and Israel are engaged in contingency planning, he said that the two governments have discussed possible joint exercises but that the only agreement that has been made public is for joint medical exercises, he stated.

Progress In Lebanon Assessed

Assessing progress in Lebanon, Murphy stated, "There are welcome signs that the Lebanese government is having some success in addressing the many problems before it and that the various political factions are beginning to come together. The United States has strongly backed efforts to form a more broadly-based government and to undertake the internal reforms needed for reconciliation between Lebanon's warring factions. We hope the government will make further progress toward restoring stability and security."

Says Syria Is A 'Helpful Player'

Regarding the role of Syria Murphy said: "We believe that Syria has been one of the helpful players in these recent developments. We also believe that Lebanon needs peaceful cooperative relations with both Syria and Israel. No lasting solution is possible which fails to take into account the interests

of both of these important neighbors. We will continue to encourage Lebanon to deal directly with Israel on the issue of Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon and security arrangements along their border." (See related story.)

Cites Jordan's Role

Murphy added, "With Jordan, we continue to enjoy productive relations on many levels. As befits friends, we have maintained an ongoing dialogue on many issues: Jordanian security and economic development; the Iran/Iraq war and stability in the Gulf; and prospects for broader peace in the area. Jordan has maintained its continuing interest in seeking a political solution to the conflict with Israel."

Murphy reaffirmed the Administration's commitment "to seeking progress toward a just and lasting peace wherever progress is possible. We also remain committed to the positions in the President's initiative of September 1, 1982."

Future Of The Peace Process

Murphy was asked by the Congressmen whether "the peace process now is in abeyance until after our election." He replied that U.S. policy has been to support opportunities to achieve movement in the peace process, but he added, "I think our elections are a major factor in the calculations of the parties."

Murphy stated that the "next step as visualized by the Administration is to broaden the talks to include Jordan and represent the Palestinians ... in the overall peace process. That remains probably the next essential step. How to create that framework for that step to be possible, remains to be seen."

Asked whether the Camp David framework for the peace talks were still viable, Murphy stated, "We have said that we consider that the autonomy talks have gone as far as they could under that framework." He added, "We do not expect that the autonomy talks could go forward with only the participation of Israel, Egypt, and ourselves." He added that he believed Jordan wants to get into the peace process but that the right framework hasn't been found.

SOLONS CHALLENGE U.S. OFFICIAL'S REMARK ABOUT SYRIA'S 'HELPFUL' ROLE IN RESTORING STABILITY IN LEBANON

WASHINGTON, July 26 (JTA) — The Reagan Administration surprised a Congressional panel yesterday with the assertion that Syria is playing a "helpful" role to restore stability in Lebanon because it succeeded in forcing the abrogation of the May 17, 1983 agreement between Lebanon and Israel which the U.S. sponsored and helped negotiate.

Members of the House Foreign Affairs Committee's subcommittee on the Middle East and Europe promptly challenged the testimony to that effect by Richard Murphy, Assistant Secretary of State for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs.

Their skepticism was aroused because the Administration, including President Reagan and Secretary of State George Shultz, have repeatedly accused Syria during the past six months of obstruction in Lebanon and involvement in terrorist actions against the U.S.

Murphy, crediting Prime Minister Rashid Karami with success in restoring order in Lebanon, told the panel: "We believe that Syria has been one of the helpful players in these recent developments. We also believe that Lebanon needs peaceful, cooperative relations with both Syria and Israel. No lasting solution is possible which fails to take into account the interests of both these important neighbors."

Rep. Ed Zschau (R. Calif.) asked Murphy how he could describe Syria as "helpful" after the Administration has been depicting it as a prime troublemaker in the region. Murphy conceded that Damascus had caused trouble but said that was because of the 1983 withdrawal and security agreement between Lebanon and Israel.

"Clearly the Syrians had their sights set on blowing up that agreement," Murphy said, "and when that was blown they showed themselves ready to move in the direction of helping to restore stability in Lebanon." President Amin Gemayel of Lebanon formally abrogated the agreement last March 17.

According to Murphy, the Syrians "have come to a policy decision that a stable Lebanon and a stable Beirut" are necessary for overall stability in the region.

When Rep. Larry Smith (D. Fla.) said he was "distressed by the choice of the word 'helpful,'" with respect to Syria, Murphy replied: "It's a relative term. If someone throws you down a well a hundred feet and you're not very happy and they they haul you up 50 feet and you can see the light at the top of the well, you feel a lot better and you call them helpful, but you never would have been down there in the first place if they hadn't thrown you down there."

FINAL COUNT OF SOLDIERS' VOTE GIVES TEHIYA ADDITIONAL KNESSET SEAT AND LABOR LOSES ONE SEAT

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, July 26 (JTA) — The ultra-nationalist Tehiya Party has gained one Knesset seat and the Labor Alignment has lost one, according to unofficial but apparently accurate reports from the Knesset tonight, based on a final count of the soldiers' vote.

The gain gives Tehiya five Knesset mandates, making it the largest of the small factions. Labor dropped from 45 to 44 seats, reducing its margin over Likud to only three Knesset votes.

Tehiya's success will make it easier for Likud to form a coalition government. But political observers maintained that Labor's chances should not be written off because Likud's ally gained a single seat. One seat is important but not crucial, they said.

Both of the major parties are strenuously wooing the various religious factions and former Defense Minister Ezer Weizman's new Yahad Party. Labor hopes that with their backing, a narrowly based coalition government could be formed and later expanded, possibly into a national unity government embracing Likud but headed by a Labor Prime Minister.

Likud entertains similar ideas. Deputy Premier David Levy and former Defense Minister Ariel Sharon met for two hours with Weizman today, apparently trying to persuade him to accept a top post in a Likud-led government.

In the Labor camp, former President Yitzhak Navon and Mayor Teddy Kollek of Jerusalem held long conversations with the former Sephardic Chief Rabbi Ovadia Yosef, spiritual leader of the new religious faction, Shas. Shas won four mandates in its first run for the Knesset and is vital to both Labor and Likud. Informed sources said tonight that neither Weizman nor Shas have committed themselves to either side.

In light of the final vote tally, Aharon Abu-Hatzeira's Tami faction looms as a pivotal factor despite its poor showing — dropping from three to one Knesset mandate in Monday's elections. Without

Tami's single vote, Labor cannot muster the 60 votes necessary to block a Likud-led coalition, even if Weizman should join forces with the Labor Alignment.

By the same token, Likud cannot form a government without the Tami vote, assuming that Weizman refuses to link up with Likud.

ISRAEL CLOSES ITS OFFICE IN LEBANON

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, July 26 (JTA) — Israel announced today that it has closed its liaison office in Lebanon at the urging of the Beirut government. The 30 Israeli diplomats, military and commercial attaches who had lived and worked there for more than a year, were flown home by helicopter late last night.

The closure ends in effect Israel's attempts to maintain at least quasi-diplomatic relations with Lebanon, one of the main though unannounced objectives of its war in Lebanon. The office, known officially as the Liaison Commission, was located at Dbayeh, a Beirut suburb about 10 miles north of the city. It had been staffed jointly by Israeli and Lebanese officials.

The shut-down became unavoidable after the Lebanese government withdrew its personnel from the building earlier this week and announced that it would withdraw the Lebanese army soldiers who guarded the premises today.

Israeli officials said the closure would create severe hardships for Lebanese who wish to visit relatives in Israel-occupied south Lebanon or who do business in south Lebanon or in Israel. One of the chief functions of the liaison office was to issue permits for travel into south Lebanon.

Now, according to Israeli officials, Lebanese who wish to cross the Awali River bridges or to ship goods across the river will have to apply to Israel Defense Force representatives in south Lebanon and await the permits by mail, a process that could take days or weeks.

TERRORIST GETS LIFE IMPRISONMENT

JERUSALEM, July 26 (JTA) — A young Palestinian terrorist was sentenced to life imprisonment for murder by a military court in Ramallah yesterday.

Jammal Al-Awarne, 22, was convicted of the fatal shooting of Yaacov Kor, an Israeli shopper in Bethlehem's open air market two years ago. During his trial he confessed to membership in El Fatah, the military arm of the Palestine Liberation Organization. He underwent military training in Damascus. He also confessed to throwing Molotov cocktails at Israeli military and civilian vehicles and planting explosives in Jerusalem and Beit Shemesh.

He shot Kor in the head at close range in 1982. About a year later he himself was seriously wounded when Allan Goodman, an American-born Israeli soldier, opened fire on Arab worshippers as they left their mosques on the Temple Mount in East Jerusalem.

TEL AVIV (JTA) — Two Katyusha rockets were fired into Israel from Jordan in the early hours of Thursday morning without causing casualties or damage. The last such incident occurred a year ago and Israeli sources believe both attacks were by terrorists who infiltrated Jordan from Syria although the Jordanian army has taken great pains to prevent such infiltration. Residents of Kibbutz Neve Eitan, east of Bet Shean, reported hearing two explosions and seeing two flashes at about 3 a.m. local time. Israeli army units found the impact crater and fragments of one of the rockets and were searching Thursday for the point of impact of the other.

A UNIQUE TRIPLE BAR MITZVAH CEREMONY FOR A LONG ISLANDER

By Ben Gallob

NEW YORK, July 26 (JTA) — A vice president of a Long Island Reform synagogue confirmed today that a son of a congregational family is celebrating his Bar Mitzvah in three countries over a period of three months, an event which a national Reform rabbinical official said he believed was "virtually unique" in American Jewish history.

Burt Wagner, vice president for ritual at Temple B'nai Israel in Elmont, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency, in a telephone interview, that Matthew Kopp had observed his Bar Mitzvah at the Harel synagogue in Jerusalem last Saturday, would observe it again on August 4 at a synagogue in Cordoba, Spain, and complete the triple Bar Mitzvah rite at Temple B'nai Israel on September 22.

Rabbi Elliot Stevens, administrative secretary of the Central Conference of American Rabbis, the Association of Reform rabbis, told the JTA that it was "an absolute certainty" that such a triple ceremony was unique.

The Cordoba synagogue Kopp will enter is 669 years old. The thousands of Jews of Cordoba, birthplace of Maimonides, were expelled during the Inquisition on orders of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella that all Jews leave Spain in 1492.

The American Jewish Committee said only a few hundred of the 12,000 Jews now living in Spain are residents of Cordoba. The three-tiered Cordoba synagogue is now a national monument, located in the ancient Jewish quarter of Juderia.

'This Will Be History'

Rabbi Samuel Kehati, rabbi of Temple B'nai Israel, who is officiating at all three ceremonies and who made the arrangements for the Cordoba rite, said of the Cordoba Bar Mitzvah, "This will be history."

The idea of a Bar Mitzvah in Cordoba occurred to Kehati last year on a tour of Spain which included a visit to the Cordoba synagogue. Since the Cordoba synagogue is now a national monument, Kehati made his request to the Spanish government which gave it prompt approval.

When Kehati returned to Elmont, he asked Kopp's mother and father, Steven and Maxine Kopp, if they would agree to their son's being Bar Mitzvah at the Cordoba synagogue. Matthew was the only choice because, in their small congregation, he was the only one at the right age. The parents agreed with enthusiasm.

Kehati had been scheduled to lead a synagogue tour to Israel and Spain this summer. He and the Kopp parents attended the ceremony at the Jerusalem synagogue. The other members of the tour will meet in Cordoba to participate in the Bar Mitzvah rite there.

First Bar Mitzvah In Cordoba Since 1492

Kehati said he was told by Spanish officials that Kopp's Bar Mitzvah rite would be the first in the Cordoba synagogue since at least 1492. Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, the AJCommittee's director of international affairs who was formerly the AJC's director of interreligious affairs, said, referring to the fact that Kehati will perform the ceremony, that "it would not be inconceivable in a community with such a small Jewish population that it would not have a rabbi to perform a Bar Mitzvah."

Matthew Kopp's father said, "They say they have the record of the last Bar Mitzvah in 1480 or 1490—something. And now comes my son, Matthew."

Wagner, who left yesterday for Spain to complete arrangements for the Cordoba event, said he had no idea how many Cordoba Jews were members of the congregation, noting that there would be enough synagogue tour participants to provide the required minyan.

CARE CONCLUDES ITS PROGRAM IN ISRAEL

NEW YORK, July 26 (JTA) — CARE, the international aid and development organization, and Israel's Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, announced the closing of CARE's program in Israel after 35 years, it was reported here by CARE today.

According to Dr. Philip Johnston, CARE's executive director, "The closing of our program in Israel was prompted by the impressive strides made by Israel and its people toward a higher standard of living through its economic and social development efforts. We are proud of having served as a bridge of understanding and friendship between the people of Israel and the United States."

Johnston noted that the total value of CARE projects in Israel since 1949 was \$66,390,000 worth of goods and services.

The closing of CARE in Israel will be marked by two days of ceremonies next week, including a tree-planting ceremony honoring CARE which will take place in the Peace Forest in Jerusalem.

Care's Programs In Israel

CARE's program in Israel was established in 1949 when the newly-founded State was confronted with problems of war, the influx of immigrants, and economic crisis. CARE's initial program effort was in the category of a feeding program. This continued to be the mainstay of CARE's involvement, although in later years feeding programs were directed at Gaza, the West Bank, and Sinai, while they were under Israeli governance. CARE began self-help programming in Israel in 1952 with a donation of books to Hebrew University.

CARE's most recent efforts have focused on the provision of vocational workshop equipment to vocational training schools established by the Ministry of Welfare. Participants included children of immigrants, the handicapped, and adults seeking vocational training.

TALMUDIC LAW COURSE AT SAO PAULO U.

SAO PAULO, July 26 (JTA) — An introductory course in Talmudic law has been initiated at the University of Sao Paulo, the World Jewish Congress reported today. The course is sponsored by the departments of philosophy and general law theory of the law faculty, in cooperation with the University Association of Jewish Culture. It is being taught by Prof. Zeev Falk of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem and of the University of California at Berkeley. Some 70 people attended the inaugural lecture of Falk, which was translated into Portuguese.

ISIDORO BERECHICHEZ DEAD AT 82

MEXICO CITY, July 26 (JTA) — Isidoro Berechichez, a well-known Jewish writer and journalist, and a past president of the Central Jewish Committee, the representative body of Mexican Jewry, has died here at the age of 82. For many years he was also the secretary general of the Central Jewish Committee and the president of the Committee's Cultural Commission. Berechichez, who came to Mexico from Lithuania in the early 1920's, founded some of the outstanding institutions in the country. He was a contributor to the local Jewish newspaper, *Der Weg*, and headed the Tzvi Kessel literary award committee until 1976 when the name of the prize was changed to the Fernando Jeno Award.