

ITALY'S JEWS WELCOME FORTHCOMING VISIT OF THE POPE TO ROME SYNAGOGUE

By Lisa Palmieri-Billig

ROME, March 18 (JTA) -- The Jewish community has warmly welcomed the Vatican's announcement Monday that Pope John Paul II will visit Rome's main synagogue next month.

But while this is viewed as an "historic gesture" which may well be the first Papal visit ever to a Jewish house of worship, the feeling among Jewish leaders is that it will be up to the Pontiff whether the occasion is merely "symbolic" or contributes substantively to Catholic-Jewish relations.

"It could be a fantastic step forward," said Tullia Zevi, president of the Union of Italian Jewish Communities, "or it could be a perpetuation of ambiguities." She was referring to certain fundamental issues that remain unresolved after more than 20 years of Vatican-Jewish dialogue that began after Vatican Council II in 1965.

The chief Vatican spokesman, Joaquin Navarro Valls, announced at a press conference Monday that the Pope's visit would take place in the afternoon of April 13. He said it would be the first such visit in living memory, though he could not be certain it would be an historic precedent.

Important Step Toward Dialogue

The Jewish community, in a statement released Monday night, expressed its "satisfaction at the decision of Pope John Paul II to visit the synagogue of Rome," adding that "this will mark an important step in the direction of an ever more rewarding dialogue."

The Rome synagogue was the scene of a traumatic event in October, 1982 when worshippers were attacked by Arab terrorists with machineguns and grenades. A two-year-old boy, Stefano Tache, was killed and 34 persons were wounded.

More than a year earlier, on February 9, 1981, the spiritual leader of the synagogue, Rome's Chief Rabbi Elia Toaff, met with the Pope at a church adjacent to the old Jewish ghetto, about 100 yards from the synagogue. From that time on, a Papal visit to the synagogue itself seemed more and more in the realm of possibility, awaiting only the appropriate "conditions."

Not Enough Progress Cited

Zevi stressed in her remarks Monday that the conditions could never have materialized but for the changes in Catholic-Jewish relations engendered by Vatican II. Yet there is disappointment in Jewish circles here and abroad that the changes have not progressed further than they have. One issue that wrangles Jews is the Vatican's persistent refusal to extend formal recognition to the State of Israel.

This was one of the main criticisms vented by a Jewish ecumenical group in June, 1985 over a just published Vatican document called "Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching the Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church."

According to the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations (IJCIC), the Notes fail to acknowledge the religious significance of Israel to the Jewish people and refer only briefly and superficially to the Holocaust.

The IJCIC called them a retrogression from the historic "Nostra Aetate" (Our Times) which emerged from Vatican Council II in 1964 and the December 1, 1974 "Guidelines and Suggestions for the Application of the Declaration Nostra Aetate."

Dr. Joseph Lichten, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith's liaison with the Vatican, told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency Monday that the Pope's forthcoming visit to the synagogue "will certainly be a historical event. Never before has a Pope set foot in a Jewish place of worship." He added, "I did not expect this to come about so soon, but I am pleasantly touched that it has."

Visit Is Seen As A Necessary 'Next Step'

A Papal visit to the synagogue has been long considered a necessary "next step" in the interreligious dialogue by Jews and by enlightened Christians. But it was never openly solicited by Rome's Jewish community.

The Jewish community, which has existed for 2,000 years and survived more than a millenia under the "shadow" of the Vatican, in good times and bad, has always felt itself to be the "wronged party." It therefore considered it inappropriate to take the "first step" for this potentially symbolic move.

It would be up to the Vatican to make the move, the Jews always felt, considering the historical context of Jewish relations with the Church of Rome. The groundwork was laid by the Pope's visit several months ago to the Waldensian Protestant Church in Rome, another historical "first."

John Paul II, moreover, has received more world Jewish leaders in audience than any of his predecessors. Wherever possible, he has met with Jewish leaders abroad in the course of his considerable travels.

The main synagogue is an historical landmark in Rome. Located in the Lungotevere Cenci, near the River Tiber, it was laid down in 1900. On July 2, 1904, it was officially visited by King Victor Emmanuel III. It was formally dedicated on July 28 of that year at ceremonies attended by the highest authorities of the Italian State and the Rome municipality.

A DIPLOMATIC EFFORT BY SHULTZ

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 18 (JTA) -- Secretary of State George Shultz attempted some conciliatory diplomacy between Israel, a sworn Arab enemy of Israel, and the Soviet Union -- with mixed results -- at the funeral in Stockholm Saturday of Prime Minister Olof Palme of Sweden who was assassinated last week.

Premier Shimon Peres related the events to the Cabinet Sunday, which included a "meeting" with Talib Ibrahim, the Foreign Minister of Algeria.

Peres said he was greeted by Shultz in the building where world leaders attending the funeral were housed. Shultz invited Peres into his suite where he discovered that the Secretary had a guest -- Ibrahim. He said the

Algerian diplomat seemed extremely embarrassed when Shultz introduced them and encouraged them to shake hands. The Algerian Foreign Ministry promptly denied any handshake with the Prime Minister of the "Zionist entity."

Peres told the Cabinet that Shultz and former West German Chancellor Willy Brandt, chairman of the Socialist International, both tried to arrange a meeting between him and the Russian Premier, Andrei Gromyko, who was also attending the funeral. But the Russians declined, saying there was not enough time for such a meeting, Peres said.

STUDY PREDICTS THAT UNITY WILL OUTWEIGH DIVISIONS AMONG JEWS

WASHINGTON, March 18 (JTA) -- Despite deeply rooted conflicts within the American Jewish community, the forces that unite it will continue to outweigh the pressures that divide it, according to a sociologist specializing in Jewish affairs.

Dr. Samuel Heilman, professor of sociology at Queens College of the City University of New York, asserted in a report that "sectarianism, division and dissensus have been a continuing element of Jewish communal existence from the beginning and throughout the century."

The 39-page study, "American-Jewish Disunity: An Overview," was commissioned by the American Jewish Congress and released at its 1986 biennial convention at the Shoreham Hotel here. Some 500 delegates from throughout the United States are attending the meeting, which concludes Wednesday.

Dire warnings of Jewish disunity have been issued in newspapers, periodicals and journals, according to Heilman, citing a number of major areas of division such as the dispute over conversion, the definition of "Who is a Jew," and the status of women in Judaism.

Experience Of History

However, Heilman said that while the Jewish community has always lived with fragmentation, "the experience of history suggests that even the bitterest disputes get resolved in one way or another -- either the various groups of Jews find that the forces that divide them are less significant than those that unite them, or some external adversary reminds them that they are one."

The rifts in the American Jewish community are not merely between Orthodox and non-Orthodox elements -- Conservative and Reform Jews are also divided on many issues, and the Orthodox are divided into modern and traditionalist groups, Heilman wrote in the report.

Heilman suggested that the divisions between various groups appear to be based on "competing worldviews." He said that "one worldview seeks to prevent all change while the other encourages or embraces change. Both views, however, remain convinced that they will ensure the survival of Judaism and the Jews."

The first view, he said, holds that change is suspect and ultimately threatens to erode Judaism, while the second says that those who fail to adapt and change will stagnate. In addition, Heilman pointed out that there also remains Jewish groups that are in the "ambiguous middle position" between the extremes.

But Heilman also noted that despite divisions on various issues, it is difficult to characterize today's divisions as any deeper than those that have divided Jewish life throughout the ages. Equally significant, he wrote, are some strong signs of unity, one of the strongest being the willingness of a number of leaders from the Orthodox, Conservative and Reform branches to talk to each other and work for "understanding and rapprochement."

SIR JOHN GLUBB DEAD AT 88 By Maurice Samuelson

LONDON, March 18 (JTA) -- Lt. General Sir John Glubb who, as Glubb Pasha was commander of Jordan's Arab Legion, died Monday at the age of 88.

More so than the legendary Lawrence of Arabia, Glubb personified romantic British identification with the Arab cause, which he supported both as a soldier and as a distinguished author and historian. His service in the Middle East spanned the rise and fall of Britain as the most influential power in the region.

When he arrived in Iraq in 1920, British influence was at its height but when he was expelled from Jordan 36 years later it was crumbling rapidly.

In March 1939, Glubb was appointed by Emir Abdullah to command of the Arab Legion which, as a small mechanized force of Bedouin, had been involved in skirmishes with Arab gangs infiltrating through Transjordan to fight the British in Palestine. With the outbreak of World War II, the force was expanded and took part in the suppression of the pro-Nazi coup in Iraq in 1941.

After the war, Glubb and his Legion were drawn into the escalating Arab-Jewish conflict over Palestine. With its British officers, the 4,000-strong Legion proved to be the most effective Arab army in the 1948 Palestine war. As a result, it succeeded in holding much of the West Bank territory allotted to the Arabs in the United Nations partition resolution of November 29, 1947.

Glubb remained head of the Legion after the signing of armistice agreements between Israel and her neighbors. But with the assassination of King Abdullah in 1951, his personal position was seriously weakened. He became a target of anti-British fanaticism whipped up by President Gamel Abdel Nasser of Egypt, and in 1956 King Hussein expelled him from Jordan on seven hours' notice.

He remained true to the Arab cause nevertheless and an unbending critic of Israel. In his autobiography, published a year after his ejection from Jordan, Glubb wrote:

"I believe that the creation and maintenance of the State of Israel by armed force was a mistake. That the result has been disastrous for the British and Arabs alike is only too obvious. It seems to me not improbable that it will ultimately prove to be disastrous for the Jews also."

Following the Six-Day War, he advanced the theory that the war had been stirred up by the Soviet Union deliberately to weaken the Arabs and make them permanently dependent on it.

SHAMIR, LEVY TRY TO HEAL RIFT

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 18 (JTA) -- Yitzhak Shamir and David Levy, bitter rivals for leadership of Herut, met in the Foreign Minister's office alone Tuesday evening, their first meeting since the Herut convention broke up in chaos five days ago. It was at Shamir's initiative.

The meeting was unannounced and Levy, who is Minister of Housing, told reporters before entering Shamir's office that it was up to the two of them to find ways to heal the rift in Herut. He admitted, however, that he was not bringing any formula of his own. Aides to Levy said he was prepared to listen to whatever ideas Shamir might advance.

It was learned later that Shamir extended an invitation to Levy which the latter promptly accepted. Herut sources said earlier Tuesday that the rival camps remained at odds over a proposal by Minister of Commerce Ariel Sharon, also a contender for Herut leadership. Sharon has suggested a three-way power sharing arrangement by which Shamir would be elected chairman of Herut, Levy chairman of its Executive Committee and Sharon chairman of the Central Committee.

Shamir, denied endorsement at the aborted convention, insists that he hold both the party and Executive Committee chairmanships, a tradition established by former Premier Menachem Begin who held both positions during his many years as undisputed leader of Herut.

16 DRUZE RIOTERS RELEASED ON BAIL

By Gil Sedan

—NAZARETH, March 18 (JTA) -- Sixteen Druze charged with rioting during Premier Shimon Peres' visit to the Golan Heights last month were released on bail Monday by a Nazareth District Court. But presiding judge Avraham Assa imposed tough conditions.

They may not leave their village without prior approval by police. They cannot leave their homes after dark and they must not engage in public activities. "In a respectable society, citizens should know how to control themselves," Judge Assa said. But he found the charges against the defendants were insufficient to remand them in custody pending the outcome of legal proceedings. The prosecution had demanded their incarceration.

The rioting was the latest disorder in a conflict between the 12,000 Golan Druze and Israeli authorities since Israel formally annexed the Golan Heights four years ago. The Druze, claiming they are citizens of Syria, refused to accept Israeli identification cards. When the authorities tried to force them to take the cards, the Druze declared a general strike which lasted several months.

The demonstration against Peres was a reminder that they still refuse to accept Israel hegemony over the territory.

STREET RENAMED TO HONOR THEOLOGIAN

BONN, March 18 (JTA) -- The municipal council of the university town of Marburg, overriding objections by local residents, voted unanimously last week to re-name a street in honor of Leopold Lucas, a Jewish theologian who died in the Theresienstadt concentration camp in 1943.

Lucas was the founder in 1902 of an association for Jewish studies in Marburg. Householders on the street to be re-named for him protested that they

did not want to be associated with Lucas or his fate. But Mayor Hanno Drechsler of Marburg replied that the street name will be a reminder of the thousands of other Marburg Jews who perished in the Holocaust. Lucas' wife, Dorothea, died in Auschwitz in 1944.

FIRE RUINS MATZA FACTORY

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 18 (JTA) -- A fire which swept through the Aviv matza bakery in the religious township of Bnei Brak Monday sent two firemen to the hospital for treatment for smoke inhalation and destroyed more than 100,000 packages of matza intended for export.

The bakery is one of the three run by the Aviv company and, according to its spokesman, the fire will not affect Passover supplies. Aviv provides about 60 percent of Israel's matzot and its packages are a familiar sight in American supermarkets during the Passover season.

According to the fire department, the blaze was caused by an electric short-circuit. It raged for hours and was still smoldering Tuesday morning. Ten fire companies fought the conflagration which forced a diversion of traffic from the main highway between Petach Tikva and Tel Aviv that runs through Bnei Brak.

Electric power was cut off for hours in nearby Pardess Katz and parts of Bnei Brak. Residents of buildings near the burning factory were evacuated to hotels in Tel Aviv.

REPLICA OF CHALLENGER SPACE SHUTTLE TO STAND AT ENTRANCE TO JNF PARK

NEW YORK, March 18 (JTA) -- A replica of the Challenger space shuttle will stand at the entrance to the Jewish National Fund's American Independence Park in Israel; it was announced this week. A seven-foot model of the shuttle was presented to JNF as a gift to the people of Israel at the JNF's annual conference in New York.

At the same meeting, a forest in memory of Leon Klinghoffer, slain by Arab terrorists on the Achille Lauro, and his late wife Marilyn was formally dedicated by JNF.

The Challenger model, which was built by the Brooklyn Union Gas Company and displayed at John Kennedy Airport until the day the shuttle exploded, will be given a permanent home in the JNF's new Challenger Forest, now being established by JNF outside Jerusalem. It was accepted by Moshe Yegar, Israel's Consul-General in New York.

A scroll marking the formal dedication of the Klinghoffer Forest was presented to the daughters of the late couple, Lisa and Ilisa, by Representative Ted Weiss (D-Manhattan).

A GUARDIAN ANGEL FOR DOWNED PILOTS

TEL AVIV, March 18 (JTA) -- The Tadiran Electronics Co. has unveiled a guardian angel for downed pilots in the form of a small two-way radio that guides rescuers to a flyer who has bailed out or made a crash landing.

The radio, known as the PRC-434, switches on automatically whether or not the pilot is conscious. It responds to signals sent by search planes and gives the planes the exact location of the downed aircraft. It carries a small screen that lights up to inform the pilot that help is on the way.

In addition, it provides for voice communications between downed pilots and rescuers so that the former can identify themselves. This helps rescue parties avoid traps set by hostile forces.

DEBATE ON SINGLE-ISSUE PACS

WASHINGTON, March 18 (JTA)—A forum on Jewish political power erupted into a sharp debate on "single-issue PACs" Sunday night at the American Jewish Congress' 1986 National Biennial Convention here at the Shoreham Hotel.

Rep. Barney Frank (D. Mass.), asserting that more than 80 percent of members of Congress support Israel and do so for moral, not financial reasons, charged that pro-Israel, single-issue PACs often end up being "shaken down" by politicians who would not change their position even if denied PAC funds. Giving campaign funds to such officeholders or candidates "is too often a waste," he said.

"You don't buy support for Israel with Jewish money," he said. "That's what our enemies say. We get support for Israel because it is in the moral and strategic interest of the United States to support the Jewish State." Too frequently, he went on, pro-Israel PACs will support candidates who, except for their support of Israel, differ sharply with the Jewish community on such issues as school prayer and abortion.

Other forum panelists addressing the 500 AJ Congress delegates from across the nation were Richard Altman, director of the National Political Action Committee (NatPAC), one of the largest pro-Israel committees; political analyst Ben Wattenberg; and Lynn Cutler, vice chairperson of the Democratic National Committee.

Importance Of Pro-Israel Contributions

Altman, responding to Frank's charge, asserted that "everything is not okay with U.S.-Israel relations." He cited the 1981 Congressional vote in favor of the AWACS sale to Saudi Arabia in 1981 and contended that support for the sale "came from legislators from states like Wyoming, Montana and Arkansas." The Jewish community, he noted, cannot afford to ignore legislators and candidates from such areas, and it is important for the Jewish community to encourage support of Israel through political contributions.

Wattenberg noted that the United States is a nation of special-interest groups that must make trade-offs on political issues. In some instances, this may involve difficult compromises, he suggested. "If 90 percent of a Congressman's supporters are for school prayer, and he is for Israel, then you shouldn't withhold money because of his position on school prayer," he said. He also asserted that the Jewish community itself is split on a number of domestic issues.

Frank replied that in instances where pro-Israel candidates are running against each other, American Jews should support the candidate who best represents their position on non-Israel issues.

Other Concerns Voiced

Wattenberg declared that "the most important thing for Israel is a strong, assertive United States policy around the world." For that reason, he added, opposition by liberals to defense spending and other aspects of an aggressive American policy has been counterproductive.

Wattenberg criticized those who he claimed want Israel to be treated as a special case in terms of American foreign policy. "Israel is part of the world," he said. "The U.S. has a global foreign policy that cannot be put into compartments, one for Israel and another for the rest of the world."

Frank retorted that many of those demanding an assertive policy in other parts of the world were far from favoring an aggressive American stance in opposing apartheid in South Africa.

Cutler argued against a perception of single-issue support for Israel. "The concern I have these days," she said, "is that we (the Jewish community) will be seen as a single-issue community. We should make a clear statement that we are interested in and will give money for other issues."

While she accepted the concept of single-issue PACs for Israel, she said the Jewish community should go beyond that to show concern on other issues. She urged the Jewish community to continue its long tradition of social concern and commitment.

GROWING NUMBER OF YORDIM ARE RETURNING TO ISRAEL

By Yitzhak Rabi

NEW YORK, March 18 (JTA) — A growing number of Israelis who have resided in the United States and Canada for a number of years are returning to Israel, despite the precarious economic situation there. According to Israel's Ministry of Labor and Social Affairs, 1,700 Israelis returned home in 1985.

Consul Amos Haddad, head of the Ministry of Labor's delegation here, said in a summary report on 1985 to Moshe Katzav, Israel's Labor Minister, that among the Israeli's returning to Israel are individuals who left excellent high-paying jobs in the U.S. or Canada "for more satisfying jobs in Israel, although the pay is considerably lower." According to Haddad, the yordim, Israelis who left Israel, who are returning home resided in North America between two and 11 years.

Haddad's report, which was released here last week, stated that some of the returning Israelis said they decided to go back because they preferred to give their children an Israeli education, although the relocation meant lowering their standard of living.

The report disclosed that the number of yordim that have registered with the Ministry of Labor's delegation in New York, indicating their wish to return to Israel, reached, by the end of 1985, 13,400 heads of families, or approximately 40,200 individuals. In 1984, the report said, 10,850 heads of families had registered.

Haddad noted in his report that approximately 700 families registered to return to Israel during employment fairs in October-November 1985 which the Ministry of Labor's delegation organized in cooperation with high technology industries in Israel. The fairs were held in New York, Los Angeles, San Jose and Toronto.

In addition, Haddad said, more than 100 Israelis signed work contracts with employers in Israel at those employment fairs. "Some of them have already returned to Israel and some of them are in the process of doing so," Haddad said.

"In the Ministry of Labor's delegation in New York there are presently more than 2,500 files of returning Israelis who are expected to go back to Israel during 1986-1987, once they find employment," Haddad said. He added: "Today, there are many Israelis who are ready to go home immediately, but only if they were offered a suitable job."