

FRENCH CHIEF RABBI CALLS FOR DIALOGUE BETWEEN JUDAISM, ISLAM
 By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, June 19 (JTA) -- Rene Sirat, the Chief Rabbi of France, believes Judaism has more of a common language with Islam than with Christianity. He called here Thursday for a dialogue between Judaism and Islam, stressing that the issue was religious, not political.

Political problems should be left to those who deal with them, but the religious leaders of Judaism and Islam should tackle the theological issues and discuss them thoroughly, the Algerian-born Chief Rabbi told a conference here attended by leaders of the French Jewish community and Israelis of French origin.

"We have no major theological problem with the world of Islam. It is Christianity which claims it is versus Israel," Sirat said. Esau hates Jacob, according to the Midrash whereas Islam regards the Jews as "Ahl Al-Kitab," the People of the Book. Islam has never claimed to be the true Israel, the French rabbi observed.

He urged Israel to face the East rather than serve as a bridgehead between East and West. He quoted Isaiah: "Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance." He added, "If we really know how to be the kingdom of Cohanim (priests) and a sacred people, then peace will prevail."

Sirat asked those attending the conference, "How many of you have ever read the Koran?" He said he asked because "If we want a dialogue, we have to find out what the partner for the dialogue says about himself."

AIPAC DECIDES IT WILL NOT CONTEST REAGAN'S PLANS FOR AWACS TRANSFER
 By Judith Kohn

WASHINGTON, June 19 (JTA) -- The American Israel Public Affairs Committee has decided not to contest the President's plans to transfer five AWACS radar planes to Saudi Arabia.

In the absence of any inclination in Congress to pursue legislation blocking the delivery, the main pro-Israel lobby here settled for an appeal to the legislature to ensure that all conditions agreed on with the Saudis are met.

A statement issued by AIPAC following a meeting of its Executive Committee Wednesday afternoon, called on Congress to "exercise its oversight function" with regard to Saudi compliance with the conditions for delivery required by Congress and agreed to by the Saudi government.

Those conditions include the securing of AWACS technology, the assurances that the aircraft will not be used for purposes hostile to Israel, and Saudi cooperation in seeking Middle East peace.

Urges That Technology Remains Secure

"AIPAC urges Congress to seek firm assurances from the Administration that the AWACS technology remains secure and that these aircraft will only be used in the best interest of the United States, including not used in a manner hostile to Israel," the statement read.

The expected decision came shortly after the President sent a letter to Congress certifying that all conditions for transferring the planes to the Saudis had been met.

An initial move in Congress to block the transfer was dropped following the unsuccessful Congressional effort to prevent a proposed missile sale to the Saudis last month. Although AIPAC had decided not to actively oppose that sale, there was strong enough Congressional opposition to block it in a vote that was later overturned when the legislature failed to override the President's veto.

Blocking delivery of the AWACS planes would require specific legislation both preventing the transfer and appropriating over \$3 billion to cover the amount already deposited by the Saudis for production of the aircraft.

AUSTRIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY ASSAILS 'IRRESPONSIBLE' LANGUAGE OF CONSERVATIVE POLITICIANS DURING WALDHEIM'S ELECTION
 By Reinhard Engel

VIENNA, June 19 (JTA) -- The Austrian Jewish community spoke out strongly this week against the anti-Semitism that permeated the election campaign of Kurt Waldheim.

The community's board of directors issued a statement at a press conference Wednesday deploring the "irresponsible" language of conservative politicians who supported Waldheim, candidate of the People's Party, who won a substantial victory over his Socialist opponent, Kurt Steyer in the June 8 run-off elections for the Presidency of Austria.

The anti-Semitism was a backlash against the persistent efforts, primarily by the World Jewish Congress, to expose Waldheim's Nazi past. Dr. Ivan Hacker, president of the Austrian Jewish community, noted that the community had consciously refrained from making statements during the election campaign. "But now, after the election, we cannot stay silent any longer" because "further silence would be harmful to all of us."

Accused Of 'Lueger Type' Anti-Semitism

"We have to take note of the irresponsibility of those leading politicians" who "might not have acted out of an inner conviction, but cynically used the means of Lueger-type political anti-Semitism," Hacker said. He was referring to Karl Lueger, a popular Mayor of Vienna at the turn of the century who was one of the first European politicians to employ anti-Semitic propaganda to win office.

Hacker did not name anyone in the Waldheim campaign. But younger members of the community board singled out, among others, Michael Graff, Secretary-General of the People's Party. Graff promptly denied that he had made a single anti-Semitic statement during the election campaign and attacked "the Mafia-type methods of the slanderers of the World Jewish Congress."

He said it would have been conducive to reconciliation if "those speaking out now" -- meaning the Jewish community board -- "had dissociated themselves in time from the slanderous campaign of the WJC."

Graff, during the election campaign warned the WJC to desist from publicizing evidence against Waldheim lest "sentiments would rise here in Austria that none of us wants."

Hacker said, "As Jews, democrats and Austrians, we consider it our unavoidable duty to point to tendencies which carry with them immeasurable damage for our country, even if they are directed only against the Jews." He said the remarks by some party leaders were without precedent in the Austrian second republic.

Others Accused Of Anti-Semitic Remarks

Other board members attributed anti-Semitic remarks not only to Graff but to Alois Mock, chairman of the People's Party, Marga Hubenik, conservative Deputy Speaker of the Austrian Parliament, Walter Schwimmer, a conservative member of Parliament and president of the Austria-Israel Friendship Society, and several others.

According to the younger community board members, all of them "directly, shamelessly and without restraint, used anti-Semitic language in order to win an election." Dr. Daniel Charin, of the Jewish Socialist Bund, stressed that anti-Semitism is not only a problem for Jews but "a matter of greed, hatred and intolerance, a sickness of the soul."

During the four months after Waldheim announced his candidacy, the WJC systematically compiled and made public evidence indicating that the former United Nations Secretary General was implicated in atrocities against Yugoslavian partisans and civilians and the deportation of Greek Jews when he served as an intelligence officer in the Wehrmacht in the Balkans during World War II.

Waldheim was forced to admit his military service, something he omitted from his autobiography and managed to conceal for 40 years. But he insisted he was in no way involved in war crimes.

Community Stands By WJC

While the Austrian Jewish community held various opinions about the WJC campaign and the manner in which it was conducted, some of them critical, it refuses to disassociate itself from the WJC. Paul Gross, a deputy president of the community, described the WJC Wednesday as "a sort of United Nations" of world Jewry.

He said it was clear that "in a pluralistic society, not all share the same opinion. There were and still are disagreements. It may happen that a single community does not go along with the view of the majority within the WJC." He added, however, "We never disassociated ourselves from that organization and we do not intend to do so in the future."

Community board members were skeptical of Waldheim's approaches to the Jewish community since his election. "If we Jews are not able to pick our enemies, we can at least choose our friends," Hacker said. Asked if the Jewish community can have an unproblematic relationship with Waldheim in the future, he replied, "I don't know."

Charin alluded to Waldheim's announcement that he would shortly visit the site of the Mauthausen concentration camp and its satellite camps north of Vienna, one of the most notorious concentration camps of World War II.

"Going to Mauthausen and bowing one's head is not enough to get instant absolution for what one did in the weeks and months before. It makes sense only if there is also an inner bow," he said. He added that "trust is something one has to earn through work and if one has lost it once, it takes a long time to get it back."

HOSPITAL NURSES STAGE WALKOUT

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 19 (JTA) -- Hospital nurses throughout the country left their wards for three hours Thursday, handing their patients over temporarily to the doctors, families and friends of the sick. The only departments to continue normal work were the emergency and reception centers in the hospitals, the intensive care units, and maternity and premature babies departments.

The demonstrative work stoppage, from noon to three p.m., was intended to press for the demands of the some 10,000 female and male nurses employed in hospitals, out of the total nursing population of some 22,000 for representation in a separate union -- or at least a special section within the Histadrut's General Nurses Union -- to represent them in their special demands.

The said their main objective was not for increased pay but for better working conditions in the hospitals. The nurses union opposed the work stoppage, pointing out that they had recently gained a 12 percent salary increase for nurses, and were in the process of negotiating the employment of more nursing personnel.

Demonstration At Home Of Premier

In addition to the hospital nurses, the General Union's members include nurses employed in sick fund and other clinics and public health nurses, all of whom work normal daytime hours, unlike the hospital nurses who have longer hours and work in shifts throughout the day and night.

Representatives of the hospital nurses have been camping out outside the home of Premier Shimon Peres in recent days to draw attention to their demands. Ministry of Health officials admit the hospital nurses have a good case, but say they can negotiate only with the Histadrut Nurses Association, within the framework of general government economic and employment policies.

The Health Ministry did not implement its threat to obtain back to work court orders for the striking nurses, as the latter had said they would not obey the court orders, preferring to go to prison for contempt of court. The hospital nurses have threatened to go out on a more extended work stoppage next week if their demands are not met.

ISRAELI GENERAL CONCLUDES THREE DAY VISIT TO FRANCE

PARIS, June 19 (JTA) -- Gen. Dan Shomron, Deputy Chief of Staff of the Israel Defense Force, concluded a three-day trip to France Thursday at the invitation of the French Army.

The Israeli officer visited various French military installations and conferred with French Army officers. Shomron led the Israeli raid on Entebbe in 1976 to rescue French and Israeli hostages aboard a hijacked Air France plane.

The Israeli officer met with the Chief of Staff of French ground forces, Lt. Gen. Maurice Schmitt, for what was described as a "general exchange of views" in which the fight against terror is believed to have played a central role. Shomron also visited the paratroop base used by the Rapid Intervention Force which has been used for missions in both Africa and Lebanon.

Dozens of senior French Army generals and admirals attended a reception given for Shomron at the Israeli Embassy. He is the highest ranking Israeli Army officer to visit France since June 1967 when Gen. Charles de Gaulle imposed an arms embargo against Israel on the eve of the Six-Day-War. (By Edwin Eytan)

PROBE URGED IN ARAFAT MEETING WITH ISRAELI MEMBERS OF THE PROGRESSIVE LIST FOR PEACE

JERUSALEM, June 19 (JTA) — Four Alignment Knesset members asked Attorney General Yosef Harish Tuesday to order a police investigation into the recent meeting between leaders of the Progressive List for Peace and Palestine Liberation Organization chief Yasir Arafat.

The Knesset members urging the police probe were Edna Solodar, Amnon Lin, Avraham Katz-Oz and Yitzhak Peretz. They made the request following the meeting between Arafat and Knesset MK Mohammed Miari of the Progressive List and Riah Abu-Assal, secretary General of the Party. The meeting had taken place last week, apparently in Tunis. It was attended by a number of Arafat's aides, Miari said.

The four Knesset members asked Harish to check whether Miari and his colleague had not violated the law. If they had, the Knesset members said the Attorney General should ask the Knesset to waive Miari's immunity in order to try him.

Miari, in a statement issued Tuesday, said that those attending the meeting with Arafat discussed the situation in the region and the prospects for peace. Miari said that Arafat had told him he was willing to "continue with the dialogue with representatives of the peace camp in Israel, Alignment representatives included ... Arafat had told me that the ray of light which could take us out of the freeze is the peace forces in Israel."

U.S.-SOVIET MIDEAST TALKS

WASHINGTON, June 19 (JTA) — The U.S. and the Soviet Union will hold talks next week in Stockholm on the Middle East, the State Department announced Thursday.

According to spokesman Charles Redman, the talks are a continuation of similar discussions last February in Vienna and are within the framework of exchanges with the Soviets on a range of regional issues. He said they would take the form of "an exchange of views" rather than negotiations on strategy.

"We don't intend to negotiate any agreements, nor do we anticipate any joint U.S.-Soviet actions to emerge from this kind of discussion," Redman said. The U.S. delegation will be headed by Assistant Secretary of State for Near East and South Asian Affairs Richard Murphy.

RABIN ASSURES SOLDIERS INJURED IN ROAD ACCIDENT WHICH KILLED THREE
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, June 19 (JTA) — Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin has assured soldiers injured in a severe road crash earlier this week that work would be speeded up on building a by-pass road at the side of a dangerous stretch of road on which their truck lost its brakes and crashed. The accident on Monday left three Israel Defense Force soldiers dead, and 23 others injured.

The accident brought to 13 the number of people killed since 1974 on the same stretch of steep winding road from the settlement of Ma'aleh Ephraim outside Jerusalem to the Jordan rift junction north of Jericho.

The three soldiers killed in the crash were buried Tuesday. They were Raviv Set, 20, of Kibbutz Yagur; Neil Ben-Atar, 19, of Kibbutz Kfar Hanassi; and Yiftah Ophir, 20, of Moshav Kidron. Rabin said he ordered the new construction on this dangerous road, much used by military traffic, as soon as he took over as Defense Minister.

Initial reports of the accident said that the civilian passenger-carrying truck in which the soldiers were travelling, heavily loaded with their kitbags, had lost its brakes on the steep hill and went over the edge into a dry river bed at a sharp bend.

ISRAEL COMMITTED TO EXPANDING AID PROGRAMS IN THIRD WORLD COUNTRIES

NEW YORK, June 19 (JTA) — An Israeli foreign ministry official here last week for the special UN session on the economic crisis in Africa told a meeting of Jewish, Black, Hispanic and Asian leaders that Israel remains committed to expanding aid programs in Third World countries.

Benjamin Avileah, director of MASHAV -- Israel's Division of International Cooperation -- said Israel wants to share its own experiences with development and shortage of resources with other developing countries. The address to the group was organized by the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York.

Avileah cited the many programs conducted in African nations last year and said Israel's technical assistance was primarily agricultural. Israel is the only country in the world where desertification has receded and the country wants to share those types of arid zone technologies with its African neighbors, Avileah said.

28,000 Trained In Israel

According to Avileah, in the 28 years of MASHAV's activity more than 28,000 trainees from 112 countries have come to Israel for courses in such areas as agriculture, community development, regional planning and public health.

Another 25,000 professionals were trained by Israeli experts in "on the spot" courses in their native lands, the Israeli officials told the JCRC meeting. In addition, 9,000 experts were sent to emerging nations to teach courses on specific subjects relevant to the timely developmental needs of individual countries.

Avileah pointed out that living conditions in many countries are not improving. "Africa today," he asserted, "eats ten percent less than it did 15 years ago."

In response to the crises confronting the Third World, the Israeli Foreign Ministry, through MASHAV, has offered these struggling nations an integrated development program which has been embraced even by governments which have yet to establish diplomatic ties with Israel.

In 1985 alone, Avileah noted that 770 foreign trainees studied in Israel; 650 men and women took "on the spot" courses in their own countries; 23 Israelis were stationed in Third World countries for long term programs -- mainly in agriculture and ophthalmology; and 100 short missions were completed in the fields of agriculture, community development and public health.

FAMOUS CINEMA DESTROYED IN BLAZE

TEL AVIV, June 19 (JTA) — The Mograbi Cinema, one of the oldest in Tel Aviv and a famous landmark on the corner of Allenby Road and Ben Yehuda Street, was gutted by fire Tuesday night. Police and firefighters said that preliminary investigations appear to rule out arson. The blaze broke out in the upper balcony area, when the building was empty, shortly after the second show of the evening had ended.

CORRECTION

A report on the Chaplaincy Commission in the Daily News Bulletin dated June 19 incorrectly identified the Commission's chairman. He is Rabbi Barry Greene.

MEDICAL JOURNAL ARTICLE CAUSES STIR

By Margie Olster

NEW YORK, June 19 (JTA) -- Several leaders of Jewish and Catholic organizations and scores of other readers have attacked an article on the physical causes of the death of Jesus published in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (JAMA), saying the authors perpetuate versions of the death of Jesus which are the source of much modern Christian anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism.

The critical letters condemn the authors for their historical rather than their medical analyses and claim that the article treats the gospels' accounts of the crucifixion as literal and historical fact. But actually, there is much controversy over and inconsistency in these accounts, the letters said.

The nine-page Journal article gives a synopsis of the events leading up to the crucifixion. One critic called this synopsis a "conflation" of four conflicting and "disparate texts."

Physical Torture Is Detailed

The main body of the article details Jesus' gruesome physical tortures as described in these accounts with particular attention to the flogging and crucifixion. The article was part of a series on torture but that was not indicated anywhere in the article.

The authors then offer different explanations of medical effects of these types of injuries and back up their findings with evidence from archaeological discoveries. The article also includes illustrations (done by a medical artist) of cross-sections of wrists and feet with metal spikes driven through and explanations of these injuries.

The authors claims to offer "a modern medical interpretation of the historical evidence" to show that Jesus was in fact dead when taken down from the cross.

Seeking Accurate Account

"Accordingly, it is our intent to present not a theological treatise but rather a medically and historically accurate account of the physical death of the one called Jesus Christ," the article said.

The critics challenge the historical accuracy of these accounts. But the authors give the following guarantee: "Using the legal-historical method of scientific investigation, scholars have established the reliability and accuracy of the ancient manuscripts."

The sources cited in the article are identified as ancient Christian and non-Christian writings and modern works as well as the Shroud of Turin.

But Rabbi James Rudin, American Jewish Committee director of interreligious affairs, and Eugene Fisher, executive secretary of the Secretariat for Catholic-Jewish Relations, who sent letters to JAMA, claimed the article completely ignores modern scholarship on the New Testament.

Editor Of Journal Responds

In a June 12 editorial response to reactions to the article, JAMA editor George Lundberg wrote that the Journal received "a deluge of letters" on this article. Lundberg told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency that the majority of the letters were critical, but that many also praised "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ."

The journal devoted equal space, nine pages, to publishing these letters in a later issue, Lundberg said. Although the editors knew the article would

raise controversial religious issues, Lundberg insisted that it had "nothing to do with religion." The article was presented as the first of a series on torture to give an example of state-sponsored torture practiced by different groups historically, Lundberg said.

"The article was an account of perhaps the most influential single event of torture in history with physiologically sound analysis showing the horrifying pain of a common ancient Roman punishment," Lundberg wrote in the editorial. Lundberg also said the authors and editors had no anti-Semitic intent.

Taking Issue With JAMA Articles

But these two organizations took issue particularly with the accounts of the Jewish trials and the interpretation presented in the JAMA article which holds that the Jews "persistently demanded crucifixion" for Jesus.

The letters say that disputed ideas are presented as fact in the article such as the account of a trial by the Sanhedrin, Jesus' conviction for blasphemy and the role of Pontius Pilate. These aspects "are highly questionable as historical events, but tell us much about their authors' theological perspectives," Fisher wrote in the letter.

Fisher contends that the gospels "whitewashed" the historical figure of Pontius Pilate and placed more blame for Jesus' death on the Jews. But the JAMA article presents an account of Pilate simply acceding to the Jews' demands to crucify Christ and presents the idea of collective Jewish guilt for the crucifixion.

The AJC letter said "Serious scholars have long ago laid these untruths to rest. By giving them the dignity of a 'scientific' presentation in JAMA, you have dealt a body blow to years of painstaking Jewish-Christian dialogue and reconciliation."

Accused Of Pop-Historiography

The letter goes on to say that this type of interpretation of the Passion story has been traditionally a source of anti-Semitism and anti-Judaism.

"Most major denominations and all responsible scholars strive to take care in the presentation of the gospel story in order to avoid fanning the flames of anti-Judaism anew," the AJC letter said. "One sure way of fanning those flames is to engage in a pop-historiography which is innocent of all critical method, demonstrated by (the) authors ..."

The authors of "On the Physical Death of Jesus Christ" which appeared in the March 26 issue, include Pastor Wesley Gabel of the Homestead United Methodist Church in Bethel, Minn.; and William Edwards, pathologist at the Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn. The illustrator was Floyd Hosmer, from the Medical Graphics Department of the Mayo Clinic.

The AJC letter charges the authors with following the lead "not of academic scholars but of fundamentalist writers who eschew scientific methods of textual analysis."

Fisher said of the article, "While perhaps of interest medically, your readers should know that the picture it paints of the historical events surrounding Jesus' death is, from the historical point of view, far from certain. Indeed, the article appears to ignore the results of most modern biblical and historical scholarship."

Rabbi Rudin of the AJC told JTA that the article received more credibility than it deserved by appearing in the country's leading medical journal. "This is a misuse of JAMA's credibility in this area," Rudin said. "It is so out of character for a clinical, scientific journal."