

# POLISH CARDINAL'S DECISION TO CANCEL U.S. VISIT COMES AS RELIEF TO JEWS

By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, Sept. 10 (JTA) -- The decision of Cardinal Jozef Glemp, the Polish primate, to cancel his scheduled visit later this month to a number of U.S. cities was greeted with sighs of relief from American Jewish leaders over the weekend.

Glemp's remarks regarding the controversial Carmelite convent at Auschwitz have deeply angered and offended Jews.

Glemp, the highest-ranking Catholic official in Poland, accused Jews last month of threatening Polish sovereignty and using their alleged influence in the mass media to spread anti-Polish sentiments.

He also called for the agreement between Polish and Jewish leaders for the relocation of the convent to be renegotiated, claiming that those who drew up the 1987 agreement were "incompetent."

Glemp had been set to arrive in Chicago on Sept. 21. He also had planned to visit Cleveland, Detroit, Milwaukee, Boston and Washington. The cancellation of his visit was announced Saturday by the Polish press agency.

Jewish groups in several of these cities made their displeasure with Glemp clear to the local Catholic establishment, and declined invitations to participate in interfaith activities in which Glemp was to have taken part.

In view of the strained atmosphere, canceling the visit "was a wise decision," said Rabbi A. James Rudin, director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee.

Rudin said that if Glemp had arrived in the United States on Sept. 21 as scheduled, his presence would have "exacerbated tensions between Catholics and Jews."

## Weiss Will Press Lawsuit

He added that the visit's cancellation indicated the Catholic hierarchy recognized that Jews had been offended by Glemp's remarks. "Clearly, I think, they heard our concerns," Rudin said.

Rabbi Avraham Weiss called the cancellation "a victory for the forces of decency."

But Weiss, who is religious leader of the Hebrew Institute of Riverdale in the Bronx, said he still intends to sue Glemp for slander.

Weiss charges that he was defamed when Glemp implied that he and six other demonstrators at the Auschwitz convent on July 14 intended to kill the nuns living in the convent. Weiss and his fellow protesters were doused with water, beaten and dragged from the grounds by Polish workers.

Weiss has retained attorney Alan Dershowitz to pursue the matter through the Polish courts and within the Catholic Church.

The Bronx rabbi asserted that the threat of a lawsuit in the United States was a factor in Glemp's decision not to travel there.

Rabbi Henry Michelman, executive director of the Synagogue Council of America, said that "a lot of unnecessary emotions and confrontations will be avoided" by the cancellation of the visit.

"This will give everyone a chance to cool down and calm down," he said.

# AJCOMMITTEE IS URGED TO REMAIN IN GROUP NEGOTIATING WITH VATICAN

By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, Sept. 10 (JTA) -- A split within the umbrella group that officially represents world Jewry in dialogue with the Vatican is causing deep concern among Jewish leaders in the United States and Europe.

In a highly controversial move, the American Jewish Committee informed members of the International Jewish Committee for Interreligious Consultations on Friday of its intention to withdraw from the organization.

Other member groups said AJCommittee's action will seriously threaten the cause of Jewish unity in the midst of the dispute with the Polish Catholic Church over the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz.

AJCommittee made the announcement after the Jewish Telegraphic Agency reported Thursday that an alternative organization to IJCIC is being planned by AJCommittee, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith and the American Jewish Congress. Neither ADL nor AJCongress is currently a member of IJCIC.

Organizations who are IJCIC members are now strongly urging AJCommittee to reconsider its decision.

"It is harmful to Jewish interests -- indeed, some might call it a piece of insanity -- to tear apart the Jewish community and choose the path of disunity at any time," said Seymour Reich, president of B'nai B'rith International.

"But to do so now, when it is so vitally important to create and maintain a united front on the issue of the Carmelite convent at Auschwitz, on the very eve of scheduled discussions with the Vatican on the issue, appears to be utterly without reason," he said in a statement.

## 'For The Sake Of Unity'

Reich, who is also chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, called on ADL, AJCongress and AJCommittee "to step back from the brink and reconsider the effects of any such action."

His sentiments were echoed by Rabbi Henry Michelman, executive vice president of the Synagogue Council of America, who asked AJCommittee to remain in IJCIC "for the sake of unity," and by Rabbi Alexander Schindler, president of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations, who said that "to advertise our differences is to reveal our weakness."

Schindler said that division among Jews "can only play into the hands of those in the Catholic Church who seek to renege on the commitment to remove the Carmelite convent from Auschwitz."

But Rabbi A. James Rudin, who is both director of interreligious affairs for AJCommittee and the current chairman of IJCIC, defended his organization's decision to leave.

"The Jewish community is very pluralistic and this just reflects the pluralism," Rudin said. The new group "will enrich and strengthen the Jewish dialogue universally."

Rudin dismissed criticism that the decision hampers Jewish unity during the crisis over the Auschwitz convent. A crisis often "brings out new

configurations that can be very enriching," he said.

Rudin's status as chairman of IJCIC after the AJCommittee's announcement is now in doubt.

Elan Steinberg, executive director for the World Jewish Congress, said that his group has informed the IJCIC secretariat that it no longer considers Rudin chairman of IJCIC, since AJCommittee has announced its intention to withdraw.

#### Vatican Trip May Be Canceled

Steinberg also said that Gerhart Riegner, co-chairman of WJC's governing board, was told by a Vatican spokesman that Rudin will now not be received by the Vatican's secretary of state, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli.

Rudin was to have led an IJCIC delegation to Rome this month to meet with Casaroli.

The visit was requested by IJCIC in August to discuss the controversy surrounding the Auschwitz convent, the recent remarks by Polish Cardinal Jozef Glemp, which were widely construed to be anti-Semitic, and other tensions in Catholic-Jewish relations.

On Sunday, Rudin would only say that the plans for the visit to the Vatican now "have to be reassessed."

He said that, since "obviously the configurations have changed," the scheduled trip is now "under discussion and advisement." He said, however, that "nothing has been canceled" at this point.

Steinberg said that European community members of WJC have expressed "shock" at what they see as an effort to disenfranchise their communities, currently represented by WJC's presence in IJCIC.

He said the Europeans as well as communities in Latin America have asked WJC to "maintain their representation to the Vatican through the IJCIC structure."

Rudin has insisted that the withdrawal of AJCommittee from IJCIC is not an attempt to destroy or discredit the umbrella group, which was named by the Vatican in 1974 as the organization officially representing world Jewry.

"The breakup of IJCIC is not imminent or desirable," Rudin said. "Our leaving it is not going to cause its breakup."

But Rabbi Michelman of the Synagogue Council stressed that although the groups remaining in IJCIC will represent large numbers of world Jews, AJCommittee's withdrawal is a severe blow to the organization, which prizes Jewish unity.

"We have been truly representative, and that has always meant something to the church bodies with whom we are in constant dialogue," Michelman said. "When we reach an agreement with them, they know they have met with those who are truly representative of the vastness of the world Jewish community."

#### **ISRAELI SOLDIER KILLED IN LEBANON IS THE THIRD TO DIE IN PAST WEEK** By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Sept. 10 (JTA) -- An Israel Defense Force soldier was killed Saturday, when his patrol was ambushed by unidentified gunmen in the Har Dov area of southern Lebanon, on the slopes of Mount Hermon.

One of the assailants was killed by return fire, and another was spotted fleeing from the scene. The IDF said there were signs that a third man may have escaped.

The victim, Sgt. Itai Shienek, 21, of Ramat Hashavim was buried there Sunday.

He was the third IDF fatality in a week. Staff Sgt. David Barzilai of Tel Aviv was killed and Sgt. Aharon Hannuka of Jerusalem was mortally wounded Sept. 2, when their patrol was ambushed by infiltrators from Jordan in the Beit She'an Valley.

The Syrian-backed Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, headed by George Habash, claimed responsibility Sunday for the latest incident. But the IDF is dubious.

Chief of Staff Gen. Dan Shomron told reporters Sunday the identity of the gunmen was uncertain. He would not rule out Hezbollah, the fundamentalist Shiite Party of God, which has been responsible for recent Katyusha rocket firings into Israel.

#### **BUS DRIVER STABBED BY ARAB MANAGES TO AVERT REPEAT OF JULY 6 TRAGEDY** By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Sept. 10 (JTA) -- The driver of a Jerusalem-bound Egged bus was stabbed in the stomach Saturday night by a young Arab passenger, but he managed to bring the vehicle safely to a halt.

The assailant was taken into custody after being badly mauled by fellow passengers. Police described him as a 20-year-old resident of the West Bank city of Ramallah.

He had been sitting directly behind the driver, wearing a skullcap and disguised as an Orthodox Jew.

The driver, Shlomo Assor, was reported in stable condition at Shaare Zedek Hospital in Jerusalem, with stomach and chest wounds.

The incident occurred on the Tel Aviv-Jerusalem highway only yards from where an Egged bus plunged into a ravine on July 6, after an Arab passenger wrested the wheel from the driver.

Sixteen passengers were killed and 27 injured that day in what police described as a kamikaze terrorist attack, although the assailant survived.

The apparent attempt to copy that attack was foiled by the bus driver, who slammed on the brakes when he was stabbed, and by a 60-year-old passenger, who grabbed the attacker and wrestled him out of the bus.

Other passengers swarmed out and began to beat the Arab. The melee was broken up by two officers from a police vehicle that by chance had been following the bus.

The Arab was taken into custody and brought to Shaare Zedek for treatment of injuries administered by fellow passengers.

#### **ARAB BABY LOSES EYE IN WEEKEND VIOLENCE** By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Sept. 10 (JTA) -- At least four Palestinians were killed and scores were wounded by Israeli security forces Sunday, as riots raged in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

The wounded include a 16-month-old baby girl in Nablus who lost an eye to a rubber bullet.

Arab sources claimed five fatalities. The Israel Defense Force would confirm only four.

In Kalkilya, an Arab was murdered Saturday night by masked gunmen, for alleged collaboration with Israeli authorities. He was identified as Yussuf Milhim, 53, secretary of the municipality.

## RABIN SAYS U.S. NOT PRESSING ISRAEL FOR CHANGES IN ITS PEACE INITIATIVE

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Sept. 10 (JTA) -- The United States is "ready to assist in the implementation" of Israel's peace initiative and has not asked for any changes in its call for Palestinian elections, Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin told reporters Friday.

He stressed that "it is not an American initiative, it is an Israeli initiative."

Rabin spoke after meeting with Secretary of State James Baker late Friday afternoon. He also met Friday with Defense Secretary Richard Cheney and National Security Adviser Brent Scowcroft.

In Philadelphia, the defense minister told a gathering of Jewish leaders Sunday that his talks in Washington filled him with "great satisfaction."

He said he returns to Israel encouraged that his "beleaguered country" is in a good position today and has the full backing of the Bush administration on major security and peace issues.

Rabin spoke at the final session of the 1989 Israel Bonds North American Leadership Conference, attended by 350 delegates from the United States and Canada. The conference opened Thursday.

The Israeli defense chief stressed that joint military projects with the United States are going forward with the full encouragement and cooperation of the U.S. government.

Rabin said that he and Baker discussed the peace process and the situation in Lebanon. They signed a memorandum of understanding to transfer material, supplies and equipment for research and development.

### The High Price Of Security

He wished his talks with his own Cabinet colleagues in Jerusalem "were as good" as those he held in Washington, Rabin said.

Rabin said Israel was spending "four to seven times more to fight terrorism" in Lebanon than it did before 1982, when it invaded that country.

He said that in addition to the Shiite Amal militia and the extremist Hezbollah, or Party of God, there are 30 new terrorist groups threatening Israel that did not exist in 1982.

He also said the Arab nations are spending \$40 billion to \$60 billion annually to maintain forces against Israel and to purchase arms.

He explained that Israel spends 85 percent of its defense budget to cope with threats resulting from the arms imbalance in the area.

Speaking to reporters in Washington on Friday, Rabin blamed Palestinian elements for a Katyusha rocket attack on Israel from Jordan last week, saying the terrorists apparently feel they can no longer operate safely from Lebanon.

But Israel holds Jordan responsible, he said, because the attack was launched from its territory. Nevertheless, Rabin didn't think Jordan would allow its territory to be used to open a new front against Israel.

The State Department on Friday condemned the rocket attack, which was believed to have been launched by a Palestine Liberation Organization faction.

But department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler said the United States had no plans to end its ongoing dialogue with the PLO.

## FRENCH FILM DIRECTOR TO BE TRIED FOR INCITING ANTI-JEWISH HATRED

By Edwin Eytan

PARIS, Sept. 10 (JTA) -- The government has ordered that one of France's most acclaimed film directors, Claude Autant-Lara, be put on trial for anti-Semitic incitement.

The 88-year-old filmmaker also was ousted from the French Academy of Fine Arts and resigned his seat in the Parliament of Europe.

Justice Minister Pierre Arpaillange announced Friday that he personally decided to initiate proceedings against Autant-Lara for virulent anti-Semitic remarks he made in an interview published Friday in the leftist monthly *Le Globe*.

Autant-Lara's remarks included a scornful denial of the Holocaust and an expression of disappointment that one of its famous survivors, Simone Weil, did not perish.

Arpaillange said Autant-Lara would be charged with inciting racial hatred, racial slurs and racial defamation. If found guilty of all charges, he could face a one-year prison term.

Autant-Lara quit the European Parliament as moves were initiated by leading French political figures to strip him of parliamentary immunity.

He did so before the justice minister's announcement, declaring defiantly that he was prepared to stand trial for group libel and inciting racial hatred.

Autant-Lara was elected to the legislative body last summer on the list of the National Front, the extreme right-wing party headed by Jean-Marie Le Pen, who himself has denied the Holocaust but says he is not anti-Semitic.

### 'Yes, I Am An Anti-Semite'

As the oldest member of the European Parliament, Autant-Lara was given the honor of formally opening its sessions. He used those occasions to take swipes at unnamed minorities who "dominate us."

The film director had been vice president of the Academy of Fine Arts and was slated to head it next year.

The academy's current president, Marcel Landowsky, said he was shocked by Autant-Lara's remarks and joined other members in demanding his resignation.

Autant-Lara has publicly and proudly proclaimed himself an anti-Semite and seems obsessed by Jews and the Holocaust.

*Le Globe* quoted him as saying, "Yes, I am an anti-Semite when they misbehave and a philo-Semite when they behave alright. Unfortunately, there are not many who behave alright. Jews are not very creative."

Asked if he backed the Holocaust revisionist theory, Autant-Lara replied: "Obviously yes. When one looks (at it) a little closer, it become clear that it is stuffed with legends, lies."

Autant-Lara was particularly venomous toward Weil, a former president of the European Parliament who was once voted the most popular political figure in France.

"She uses her deportation; she plays on it like a guitar. But she came back, didn't she? And she seems to be doing alright," he told *Le Globe*. "So when people talk to me about genocide, I say: They missed that woman Weil."

Weil has refused to proffer charges against Autant-Lara, saying he is not worth the trouble. But several Jewish groups say they will sue him for damages arising from his anti-Semitic slurs.

**HUNGARIANS WELCOME 'THE JOINT'  
BACK TO BUDAPEST AFTER 36 YEARS**  
By Ruth E. Gruber

BUDAPEST, Sept. 10 (JTA) -- An international Jewish philanthropic agency has returned to Hungary for the first time in 36 years to resume officially the many relief, educational and cultural programs for Hungarian Jews it was forced to drop during the Stalinist era.

There was a festive air, an ebullient welcome from local Jewish, Israeli and U.S. representatives, as well as warm expressions of good will from ranking Hungarian government officials present as the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee formally opened its new office at the Jewish community center here Friday.

Loud applause and a chorus of "Mazel Tovs" sounded as community leaders affixed a large mezuzah to the doorpost.

In the gaily decorated function room of the community center, JDC President Sylvia Hassenfeld observed that the new Budapest office is JDC's first in Eastern Europe in more than three decades.

"This is a community which has enjoyed a rich past," Hassenfeld said, gesturing toward the elaborately painted ceiling and the portraits of former community leaders lining the walls.

"I hope from this day forth, their lives will be rich again," she said.

The United States was represented on the occasion by U.S. Ambassador Mark Palmer. Israel sent its diplomatic representative in Hungary, Shlomo Merom.

Merom heads the Israeli consular delegation that established itself in Budapest more than a year ago. Hungary and Israel have no other diplomatic ties.

**Forced To Shut Down In 1953**

Also present at the inauguration of the JDC office were 50 members of the United Jewish Appeal's Chai Mission, most of them from the Baltimore area, who have been visiting Eastern Europe en route to Israel.

JDC is a major beneficiary of the UJA. The agency, which is celebrating its 75th anniversary this year, was active in Hungary before World War II.

Some 600,000 Hungarian Jews perished in the Holocaust. JDC was back on the scene right after the war to administer to the needs of the survivors. But in 1953, it had to shut down its office.

It became active in Hungary again in the early 1980s, but without official recognition or a permanent representative.

"I was asked what our aim was in Hungary," Hassenfeld said. "It is the inscription on the parchment inside the mezuzah. It is written, 'Teach our children the precepts of our faith.'"

"That was a communal responsibility accepted by the Joint at its inception 75 years ago. We hope to continue with the community that precept here in Hungary," she said.

Several others who spoke at the ceremonies recalled their personal experiences with the JDC.

"Forty-four years ago I went for food from the Joint," Merom said. "I still remember the flavor of the Hershey's chocolate and pineapple that we got."

"I want to express the hope that the Joint can now give more and more to improved education here and less to people who need other types of aid," he said.

Conveying greetings from Israel, he also expressed hope that the recently improved links between Hungary and Israel will soon lead to full diplomatic relations.

**One 'Shehecheyanu' Missing**

"Again and again we can say the Shehecheyanu, but that is one Shehecheyanu that is still not here," the Israeli diplomat said.

Two senior Hungarian officials attended the ceremony and spoke warmly and frankly.

They included Deputy Prime Minister Sarkadi Nagy Barna, director of the religious affairs department, and Istvan Banfalvi, secretary of state at the Ministry of Social Welfare and Health.

After paying tribute to "the people from overseas and to the Hungarians who have made this day come about," Banfalvi warned that Hungary was undergoing difficult political and social changes and hardships that generate xenophobia with the potential for anti-Semitism.

"We all know what tragedy this brings to communities exposed to prejudice," the minister said, adding that the fate of Hungarian Jewry under the Nazis "will linger in our minds forever."

Hassenfeld said JDC this year will allocate \$1.5 million in financial aid for the 80,000-strong Jewish community in Hungary.

The official Hungarian news agency MTI reported that Deputy Prime Minister Peter Medgyessy told Hassenfeld and Ralph Goldman, JDC's honorary executive vice president, at a meeting Thursday that the government would contribute 10 percent of that amount.

**Government Pledges Money**

JDC currently runs aid programs that include a kosher kitchen in Budapest for elderly and ill Jews, many of them Holocaust survivors.

It funds the Anna Frank High School, which has 138 pupils, a third more than anticipated. And it runs a summer camp for children on Lake Balaton, southwest of Budapest.

The Hungarian government has contributed one-third of the sum, about \$600,000 that has been earmarked to rebuild and expand the Budapest Jewish Hospital.

JDC funds also will be used to expand the Budapest rabbinical seminary, which trains rabbis for communities all over Eastern Europe.

"One of our most important tasks is to pass on Jewish history and religion to young people," said Asher Ostrin, director of JDC's European Section.

"We are the standard-bearers for Jews here. And more than that, we are their witness," Hassenfeld told the gathering.

The opening of the JDC office was preceded Thursday night by a special concert by the world-renowned cantor, Joseph Malovany.

It was given before a packed audience in the Dohany Street Synagogue, the largest Jewish house of worship in Europe, but in serious disrepair.

More than 1,000 attended, giving Malovany a prolonged standing ovation.

The cantor also appeared Sunday at the dedication of the newly restored synagogue in Szeged, in southern Hungary.

The restoration work was accomplished with JDC help through funds contributed by a former Jewish resident of Szeged, who wishes to remain anonymous.