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CATHOLIC-JEWISH PAPER ON HOLOCAUST SAYS VATICAN CONDONED NAZI REGIME

By Tom Tugend

LOS ANGELES, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- The Vatican may have tacitly condoned the strengthening of the Nazi regime and failed to aid its Jewish victims, according to an unprecedented document released by Catholic and Jewish leaders in Southern California.

The document, the first of its kind to explore the Catholic Church's role as an unwitting accomplice in Adolf Hitler's consolidation of power, will be sent to the Vatican, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops in Washington, and to 3,000 Catholic schools, seminaries and parishes across the United States.

"This is, in my opinion, unique and is pioneering and ground-breaking," Rabbi A. James Rudin, national director of interreligious affairs for the American Jewish Committee, told the Los Angeles Times.

The five-page statement was drafted by the Catholic-Jewish Respect Life Committee, consisting of 23 Southern California religious leaders and educators. It was released Friday at a news conference in Anaheim, Calif.

Leading members of the committee are Rabbi Alfred Wolf and Monsignor Royale Vadakin, both veteran leaders in Catholic-Jewish relations here.

Relations between Jews and Catholics in Southern California have long been considered as a model for the rest of the country.

Vadakin said that while many Catholic-Jewish committees in the United States have discussed the Holocaust, the current statement is the first to be published and distributed to educators. Parishes across the country will next decide whether to incorporate the material into their school curricula.

Titled "The Holocaust: At the Edge of Comprehension," the document is based on historical evidence, rather than church sources.

'Many Christians Closed Their Ears'

A section on "Complicity and Righteous Action" suggests that the Vatican tacitly aided Hitler, immediately upon his assumption of power, by signing with him the 1933 Concordat. Ostensibly, the Concordat protected the church's rights under the Nazi regime, with the presumption that the Vatican would not protest the growth of German nationalism under Hitler.

Hitler immediately ignored the Concordat's protective clauses, paving his way to the assumption of total dictatorial power, says the statement.

"In light of this, we are now free to ask whether the compromises made by the Vatican with the Nazis did not, in the long run, do more harm than good," the statement concludes.

"It would be misleading to suggest that the Roman Catholic Church did everything in its power to come to the aid of the Jews," it says.

Another part of the statement points out that "in the face of the growing threats against the Jews, all too few Christian groups raised their voices to protest. Many Christians closed their ears to the Jews in their darkest hour."

On the other hand, the document says "it

would also be an inaccurate rendering of history to assert that every Roman Catholic stood by idly and watched as the demonic strategies of the Nazis claimed the lives of 6 million Jews."

The statement on the Holocaust was accompanied by a second document on "Forgiveness/Reconciliation," which probes how the Catholic and Jewish faiths address the theological questions of forgiveness and reconciliation.

This document was drafted by the Los Angeles Priest-Rabbi Committee, which has put forward statements on interreligious topics for nearly 20 years.

The Catholic-Jewish committees that prepared the two documents said that they had worked on the statements for two years.

They decided to concentrate on the Holocaust issue following the visit by Austrian President Kurt Waldheim to Pope John Paul II in 1987. The meeting was bitterly denounced by Jewish groups across the world, in light of the alleged actions by Waldheim as a German army officer during World War II.

ARMY COMMANDER DISCIPLINED FOR ORDERING IMPROPER FORCE

By Gil Schar

JERUSALEM, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- An Israeli army company commander has been relieved of his duties for involving his unit in a confrontation that resulted in serious injuries to a Palestinian child.

He is the second officer suspended this month for contravening the Israel Defense Force's regulations governing the use of force against civilians. Neither officer has been identified.

The disciplinary action was ordered by Brig. Gen. Ya'acov Or, the West Bank military commander, against a captain who allegedly acted "contrary to standing orders."

The incident occurred Jan. 23 in Tura el-Gharbiya village, near the West Bank town of Jenin. Troops who entered the village were stoned by local youths and opened fire, wounding a 5-year-old child in the head.

A military inquiry established that the captain entered the village without prior approval and with a force too small to discourage a confrontation. He was disciplined for creating a situation that could have been avoided.

An IDF major was relieved of his duties two weeks ago after troops under his command opened fire on youths in Jinia village, killing a 30-year-old resident of Ramallah.

Military sources said the two cases belied rumors that the IDF whitewashes breaches of discipline in the territories.

The incidents cast light on the principles that govern military conduct in dealing with the intifada.

While the IDF does not tolerate attempts to block the free flow of traffic on the main highways, its deployment in the territories is constrained.

A large, visible presence is maintained in the cities and towns. But remote villages are out of bounds, except for occasional raids on known trouble spots, which are planned to avoid unnecessary confrontations with the populace.

OFFICER, TWO SOLDIERS INJURED BY LAND MINES IN SOUTH LEBANON By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- An officer and two other soldiers were injured in land mine explosions that damaged two Israel Defense Force tanks Friday in the southern Lebanon security zone.

The tanks were traveling separately to Beit Yahoun, where a third Merkava tank was immobilized by a land mine the day before.

The IDF Northern Command is investigating how the tanks could have been damaged on roads that presumably had been swept for mines.

Amal, the mainstream Shi'ite militia, claimed credit for planting the mines.

The IDF and its allied South Lebanon Army, meanwhile, foiled two infiltration attempts in the eastern sector of the security zone Friday. An IDF patrol in the Taibeh region came under light weapons fire from would-be infiltrators presumed to belong to Nayef Hawatmeh's Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine.

The soldiers returned the fire and were joined by SLA troops in a search for the infiltrators, who fled northward out of the zone. There were no IDF or SLA casualties.

SLA soldiers captured an armed terrorist near the Khardalah bridge in the eastern sector of the security zone. The man was heading toward the Israeli border with a Kalachnikov assault rifle and six magazines.

LIKUD HARD-LINERS STAND GROUND AS PARTY NEARS PIVOTAL SESSION By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- Likud opponents of Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's peace initiative are determined to have a showdown when the party's Central Committee convenes on Feb. 7.

So, apparently is Shamir.

Hard-liners Ariel Sharon, David Levy and Yitzhak Moda'i have rejected appeals by some of their own supporters in the Likud Knesset faction to postpone the meeting, lest the result be a split in the party.

The three dissident ministers said Sunday they would insist the meeting be held on schedule and that they would press for a series of votes on specific issues, hoping to dismantle Shamir's plan piece by piece.

The prime minister declared Sunday that he would "insist firmly" on a blanket endorsement of the speech he plans to deliver on his conduct of Israel's peace diplomacy.

Shamir said in an army radio interview that he sees the issue as one of confidence in himself personally, as leader of the government and the party.

He said he would resign immediately if his positions are not backed by his party.

"I don't feel constrained," said Shamir. "I shall act in the national interest and propose a resolution in keeping with the Israeli peace plan."

He was referring to the constraints imposed on the plan by majority vote at the last meeting of Likud's Central Committee in July 1989.

At that time, the Sharon-Levy-Moda'i bloc attached a series of conditions to Shamir's plan for Palestinian elections in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, which are to be followed by negotiations on limited self-rule and eventually on the

final status of the territories.

Although the conditions clearly would not be acceptable to even the most moderate Palestinians, Shamir agreed to be bound by them.

His opponents now accuse the prime minister of effectively ignoring the constraints in the conduct of his peace diplomacy with the United States and Egypt.

Peres And Rabin Divided, Too

The United States has proposed guidelines for an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue to be hosted by Egypt in Cairo, the purpose of which would be to establish the rules for the elections.

Israel has accepted the guidelines in principle, though it seeks certain assurances.

Sharon, who is minister of industry and trade, is urging Likud to renounce the election plan, on the grounds that it would inevitably lead to creation of a Palestinian state.

Levi, who is minister of construction and housing, and Moda'i, who is minister of economics and planning, hold the same view.

The Labor Party, meanwhile, also seems to be tugging in two directions.

Its leader, Vice Premier Shimon Peres, appears ready to pull out of the coalition with Likud now and try to form a narrowly based, Labor-led government in partnership with the ultra-Orthodox and the left-wing parties.

But Labor's No. 2 man, Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin, will not consider Labor's secession from the government until after the Feb. 7 Likud conclave.

Nevertheless, the rival Laborites, each with his bloc of supporters in the party, do see eye to eye on the peace policy. They agree that two Palestinians deported from the territories could be members of the Palestinian delegation that has dialogue with Israel.

Rabin is understood to have made this position clear during his recent visit to Washington. Peres reportedly reiterated it at his meeting with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo last week.

Likud is fiercely opposed. Israeli correspondents who accompanied Peres to Cairo said he told Mubarak that Labor would withdraw from the government if Likud refuses to compromise over the composition of the Palestinian negotiating team.

SUMMER TIME HOURS DRAW PROTEST By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- Secular Israelis are protesting because the Orthodox-controlled Interior Ministry has tailored daylight-saving time this year for the convenience of the observant minority.

Summer time, which allows an extra hour of daylight, will be in effect for 154 days, slightly longer than in past years, but shorter than in the United States and Europe.

It will begin on March 24 and end on Aug. 25, to accommodate Orthodox Jews who otherwise would have to wait until a late hour to recite Selichot, the prayers that precede the High Holy Days.

In the United States, clocks revert to standard time at the end of October. In Europe, standard time resumes at the end of September.

Non-religious Jews have accused Interior Minister Arye Deri of bias toward Orthodox demands.

ISRAEL, EAST GERMANY TO BEGIN TALKS ON REPARATIONS, DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- Israel and the German Democratic Republic will have their first contact ever Monday in Copenhagen, the army radio station reported here Sunday.

They will meet in the Danish capital to discuss possible East German reparations for victims of Nazism, which Israel considers to be prerequisite to the establishment of diplomatic relations.

The Israeli team will be headed by Michael Shilo, adviser to the Foreign Ministry on diaspora affairs, army radio said.

Israel has long demanded that East Germany acknowledge its historic responsibility for the Holocaust and offer some restitution, even if not on the scale of West German reparations.

East Germany insisted until recently that it is anti-fascist and bears no responsibility for Hitler's crimes.

But since the surge for democratic reforms, the new government in East Berlin has signaled it is prepared to accept a share of responsibility. It has also indicated a desire to improve relations with Israel.

The East German prime minister, Hans Modrow, said during a visit to Vienna on Friday that the GDR anticipates establishing diplomatic ties with Israel and opening negotiations on reparations for Holocaust victims.

His remarks gave credence to reports of the Copenhagen meeting, which was to have been secret but was widely leaked to the Danish media, army radio said.

NEW BRAZILIAN LEADER PROMISES TO RE THINK ZIONISM-RACISM VOTE

By Susan Birnbaum

NEW YORK, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- The president-elect of Brazil said here last week that Brazil's vote in 1975 supporting the "Zionism is racism" vote at the United Nations was "a mistake" and that he would review it when he returned to Brazil.

Fernando Collor de Mello, who last month was chosen as Brazil's first popularly elected president in 25 years, told Edgar Bronfman, the president of the World Jewish Congress, that "Brazil made a mistake" in 1975 and will not vote that way again, Bronfman said.

Collor, who will be sworn in on March 15, met with Bronfman for a half-hour Thursday at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, along with WJC Secretary-General Israel Singer and Executive Director Elan Steinberg.

The Brazilian president-elect was in the United States to meet with President Bush. They were to discuss Brazil's sinking economy and staggering world debt, among other issues.

Collor, a center-right candidate, appealed to the poor in his two presidential runs -- the first in November, along with 20 other candidates, and then the Dec. 17 runoff against Luis Inacio da Silva, a trade unionist who had Marxist support.

Collor agreed to meet with the WJC at the behest of the president of the Confederation of Brazilian Jews, Benno Milnitsky, and Rabbi Henry Sobel of the Congregacao Israelita Paulista, both of whom were also present at the meeting.

The issue of the Palestine Liberation Organization was not discussed, said Steinberg.

Sobel said Collor and the Jewish community "have the same agenda." He said Collor's statement about the U.N. vote was a reiteration of his declaration during the campaign that he intended to "re-examine this question."

"We focused on the resolution of equating Zionism with racism, and we were pleased to get a very definitive answer," said Steinberg.

Both Milnitsky and Sobel concurred there is no real current problem of anti-Semitism in Brazil, "but there is a possibility there could be," said Milnitsky, who has for the last two years also been president of the Latin American Jewish Congress.

Milnitsky said the danger to Jews in Brazil stems more from a lack of identification with Judaism than from anti-Semitism. That could only be remedied by a stronger belief system, he said.

Milnitsky said there is no doubt that Collor is against anti-Semitism. Collor even claims a distant Jewish ancestor.

LAWMAKERS ASK BUSH TO INTERVENE ON BEHALF OF THE JEWS OF SYRIA

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- More than 100 members of Congress have asked President Bush to act "on behalf of the beleaguered Jewish community in Syria."

In a letter written by Rep. Stephen Solarz (D-N.Y.), the lawmakers implored Bush to make "continued expressions of concern" that Syria allow "at least unmarried Jewish women, and hopefully the entire Jewish community, to emigrate."

The letter, signed by 122 members of the House of Representatives, said there are roughly 4,000 Jews in Syria who "face a number of deprivations and hardships, the most serious of which is the denial of their right to emigrate."

It asked Bush to persuade Syria to let about 100 single Jewish women emigrate "for whom there are few marriageable Jewish men available."

"In this very traditional culture, if a woman is not married by an early age, it can become a real stigma that jeopardizes her chances of ever marrying," the letter stated.

Jewish women in Syria have a difficult time finding husbands because many young men have fled Syria. Women are more fearful about trying to escape, out of fear of being caught and raped.

The lawmakers also asked Bush to make an "immediate, humanitarian appeal" to Syrian President Hafez Assad to release three Jews who are in prison.

Each of the three, Jack Lalo, Selim Soued and Eli Soued "has already served more than the usual six to 12 months for their alleged offenses," they wrote.

An administration official said Lalo has been in jail since July 1988 and has a term of two or three years, for trying to escape from Syria.

The Soueds have been in jail since December 1987. Until November, Syria did not allow relatives of the Soued brothers to visit them, the official said. They have been detained for two years without a trial, on the grounds of having visited Israel.

Under Syrian law, visiting Israel is illegal. Most Jews leave Syria either by illegally crossing the border or by legally taking a trip abroad and not returning, the official said.

The official called Syria's handling of the Soueds' case "most troublesome."

**STATE DEPARTMENT OFFICIAL REFLECTS
ON 'PERVERSE CONSEQUENCE OF GLASNOST'**
By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- A high-ranking State Department official speaking here called the re-emergence of popular anti-Semitism in the Soviet Union a "perverse consequence of glasnost," Mikhail Gorbachev's policy of openness.

Raymond Seitz, assistant secretary of state for European and Canadian affairs, said that with the "dismal" economic situation in the Soviet Union, it seems inevitable that "some people at some time will seek out a scapegoat."

Nevertheless, he said, it is in the U.S. interest that Gorbachev's program of perestroika, or restructuring, continue.

Seitz made his remarks at a Jan. 25 meeting of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York. Also addressing the JCRC gathering was Michael Schneider, executive vice president of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee.

Seitz said that President Bush would to put forward a human rights agenda at the superpower summit in June that would include asking for resolution of the remaining refusenik cases.

He said that "progress has been made and continues to be made" to free those who continue to be denied permission to emigrate.

"We are on the threshold of a new order in Europe," Seitz told his listeners. "It is possible that we are now coming to the end of a long European story of tension, divisiveness and confrontation."

When asked about German reunification, Seitz said that while he understands concerns on the part of some, he believes it is the will of the German people to reunify and that the Western nations cannot stand in their way.

Outreach Groups Must Avoid Turf Wars

Trying to prevent reunification, he said, would likely backfire and "hasten what it is we want to avoid" -- German ultranationalism fed by a sense of isolation.

He said he believes the Germans are committed to going about reunification in "a cautious serious, mature, measured" manner.

Schneider of the Joint Distribution Committee discussed the situation of Jews in Eastern Europe served by his agency.

Glasnost and perestroika, he said, "have turned the Jewish world topsy-turvy."

Schneider said there is now an unprecedented opportunity for his agency and other Jewish organizations to develop Jewish communal life in the Soviet Union.

"It is imperative that all the Jewish organizations put turf and turf considerations aside," he said. By the time the various groups sort out who should be responsible for various aspects of outreach to communities in Eastern Europe, he cautioned, "the opportunity could be lost."

Schneider stressed that with all the excitement about the unprecedented emigration of Soviet Jews, it should not be forgotten that there will be Jews remaining in the Soviet Union for a substantial period of time.

He said even if Jews leave the Soviet Union at a rate of 100,000 per year, the annual birth-rate will almost totally replenish that number.

"For the foreseeable future," he said, "there will be a Jewish population in the Soviet Union, for better or for worse."

ARRIVING OLIM SPARED STRIKE DISRUPTION
By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- Soviet immigrants got a true taste of Israeli life on Sunday, when employees of the Absorption Ministry went on strike to demand higher wages and more job openings.

But the strike was limited to two hours and tailored to cause minimal interference with the processing of immigrants from the Soviet Union.

Only a handful of workers from the processing force at Ben-Gurion Airport joined their colleagues in a protest rally at ministry headquarters in Jerusalem.

The eight who remained on the job were enough to handle the two plane-loads of immigrants that arrived Sunday morning from Moscow via Budapest.

"Although we complain about our poor wages, we are Jews and we must absorb aliyah," said Avraham Schusterman, head of the absorption unit at the airport.

ALIYAH SWELLS DEMAND FOR MOHALIM
By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- The influx of immigrants from the Soviet Union has unexpectedly exacerbated a longstanding problem: the shortage of mohalim in Israel licensed to circumcise older children, teen-agers and adult men.

According to Rabbi Yosef Weisberg, national supervisor of circumcisions, there are only a half-dozen such mohalim in the entire country. They find it hard to keep pace with the scores and sometimes hundreds of uncircumcised males arriving each day.

Israeli law requires that the circumcision of boys 1 to 12 years old be done at a hospital under a general anesthetic. Teen-agers and adults are given a local anesthetic.

Patients who normally spend a night in the hospital are now sent home the same day because of the increased demand.

Few ritual circumcisions are performed in the Soviet Union, where the operation is frowned upon by the authorities. The handful of mohalim employed there by religious families get little experience and lack equipment.

DANES RALLY FOR 'VICTIM' OF ISRAEL
By Eli Kohen

COPENHAGEN, Jan. 28 (JTA) -- Danes are rallying around Ulla Lyngsby, a teacher who claims she was tortured and abused while in police custody in Israel last year.

They have donated 15,000 Danish kroner (about \$2,270) to her cause since advertisements appeared in local newspapers last November asking for public support.

Lyngsby, who teaches kindergarten, was involved with pro-Palestinian groups in Denmark. She visited Lebanon and Syria in 1989 and then went to Israel. Two days after arriving, she was arrested on suspicion of being an agent of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

A court ordered her held in custody for 11 days. She was released in six, after questioning, and ordered to leave the country.

Israeli officials say their investigation shows she helped the PLO. They deny she was abused.

Lyngsby said she would sue Israel for 35,000 kroner (about \$5,300) to compensate her suffering.