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Secretary Rogers Urges Re-opening Of Peace Talks Between Israel and Arabs



Secretary of State William P. Rogers makes a plea for reopening of negotiations between Israel and Egypt as the first step towards Middle East peace at farewell dinner honoring Ambassador Yitzhak Rabin sponsored by the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations. (L. to r.) Ambassador Rabin, Secretary of State Rogers, Jacob Stein, chairman, and Yehuda Hellman, executive director, of the Presidents Conference. In appearing before the 500 representatives of the thirty organizations comprising the Presidents Conference, Secretary Rogers made his first public address to a Jewish organization.

TELL TALES

"One Man Plus The Truth Constitutes A Majority"

BY JACK TELL



(Continued from Page 1)

Edition of United Synagogue Review. Rabbi Sherwin, assistant professor of Jewish Religious Thought at Sperus College of Judaica in Chicago, was quoting leading Orthodox halachic authority, Rabbi Moses Feinstein and Samuel Dresner, listed as leading conservative Rabbis.

There's more to support their contentions that "the opportunity to change lives is too readily forfeited in the attempt to put on a show."

A New York County Supreme Court judge, in an interesting case in which a child's trust fund had been petitioned for monies to finance a lavish Bar Mitzvah party, wrote the following in his decision: "It (Bar Mitzvah) was never meant to be an excuse for pleasures or showing off. The spiritual values which the ceremony symbolizes may not be thrust into second place by ostentation and expensive banquets."

One of the solutions offered is to extend the age of Bar Mitzvah to 15, 16, or 18, on the justification that the origin of the ceremony can be traced back only six or seven centuries, according to Rabbi Sherwin.

But further reference in Talmudic literature claims the calling of a boy to the Torah for the first time was practiced by Rabbi Yehudai Gaon in the 8th Century, some 1200 years ago. The Rabbis who interpret the meaning of passages in the Bible find ample evidence to support all sides of every contention.

We're not about to get involved in this dispute, but we will venture an opinion: "Let them that object, skip the celebration, but continue to view the ceremony as a solemn, serious milestone in the life of a fellow Jew."

Be that as it may, we cannot get away from our original thought of who would be most affected by the abolishment of the Bar Mitzvah ceremony and celebration.

Would it be the Bar Mitzvah boy? We think not. Here is an event that is, sort of, thrust upon a growing lad. It is not something of his own volition. He is told what is going to happen on his 13th birthday and he is directed to prepare for it. He accepts it as part of his life in the Jewish tradition, but he would not miss it, if it never took place.

Would it be the Bar Mitzvah boy, Hebrew School teacher, who would most be affected by the abolishment of the event? Probably not. These learned and dedicated professionals would, in our opinion, prefer to continue to impart knowledge and custom of Jewish tradition long after the boy's first trip to the Torah. A good student, who enjoys his Hebrew School classes, will have no incentive to stop attending because of his Bar Mitzvah. He may continue long into his late teens.

Would the relatives and friends of the Bar Mitzvah be most affected by its abolishment? We think not. To some, the event is a necessary nuisance. They accept it in the course of family dates, but if it did not have to take place, they would never miss it.

So, who would be affected most if the Bar Mitzvah was abolished?

We say it is the parents of the Bar Mitzvah boy. They relish the excitement of the preparation and planning for the ceremony and celebration. They look forward to their son becoming a man.

But mostly they want the reciprocation of all those presents they have handed out for the past Bar Mitzvahs. This was an endowment they have been building through the years, and now it is their turn to receive a return on their investment.

Long live Bar Mitzvah!

threat? His assertion that he would see to it that the Israel flag would not go through the gulf of Aqaba? His booting out of the UN Emergency force? His boast that "the whole Arab nation has moved against Israel; we are burning with desire to get revenge?"

Father Ryan has written that words like "propaganda", "pro-Arab", and "anti-Israel" are loaded words. Who needs to use them?

Ort's 25th Birthday

The American chapter of ORT, the worldwide Jewish organization for rehabilitation and training, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year -- coincident with the 25th anniversary of Israel's statehood. And the work they have done and are planning for the near future are outstanding contributions to the Jewish people.

Formed in 1880 in Russia to develop skilled trades and agriculture among Russian Jews and later to provide "help through work," ORT is at present operating facilities in Western Europe, Moalem countries, Israel, South America, and India. Wherever there are Jews in need, wherever there are unskilled Jews, ORT is there.

The 51st annual national conference of the American ORT federation recently voted a record budget for 1973 to finance stepped-up programs of educational and vocational training for some 70,000 adults and young people in 21 countries, including Israel. ORT also presented the Israeli government with a five-year plan which would bring high school education to virtually all young people in Israel.

And in addition to its activities to help meet the needs of Jewish communities overseas, ORT will continue to provide technical assistance, in cooperation with the Agency for International Development, (AID), and other governmental intergovernmental agencies, to African countries south of the Sahara. ORT's training programs have also been expanded to aid the Arab population, not only in the administered territories, but in Israel itself.

At a time when there is so much talk about self-help ORT is the outstanding example of action -- not just talk.

Zionist and Israeli.

BY ROBERT E. SEGAL

The Catholic Free Press of Worcester, Mass., has recently attracted comments from Msgr. George C. Higgins, secretary for Research of the U. S. Catholic Conference, and Rev. John B. Sheerin, CSP, to the effect that a religious colleague, Rev. Joseph Ryan, S.J., may be misguided in some of his conclusions about Israel, the Arab states, Jerusalem, the degree of threat to Israel posed by Egypt's President Nasser in 1967, and ecumenism.

But Father Ryan currently at the Cambridge (Mass.) Center for Social Studies after a long career as a university leader in the Arab world, isn't about to accept the criticism of Msgr. Higgins and Father Sheerin without putting up quite a battle.

Having participated with Father Ryan in a

long series of discussions about the Middle East in Cambridge in 1970 and having been the not-too-popular object of one of his letters carried by the Boston archdiocesan newspaper, The Pilot, a couple of years ago, I believe I can understand the degree of exasperation Msgr. Higgins and Father Sheerin must now feel in their crossing of swords with him.

In my own exchange with Father Ryan, I had stated that use of the term, "Zionist Jerusalem", was a form of anti-Semitic shorthand. Father Ryan ventured to suggest that my phrasing was hardly conducive to clarity in the development of ecumenical understanding. And then he posed this question: "Why does Mr. Segal object to the use of the term, 'Zionist'?"

Now Father Ryan knew right well that far from objecting to the use of the term, I rather fancied it. My dismay, of course, was rooted in the fact that Arab spokesmen have taken in the course of their war against Israel to insisting that they are not opposed to Jews but very much against Zionists. And several people who look with jaundiced eyes upon Israel and Jews in the round try to rationalize their ways out of their biases by following the line of Arab spokesmen.

Dr. A. Roy Eckhardt, professor of religion at Lehigh University, has hit the practice head on with this observation: "Christian anti-Zionism is the new Christian anti-Semitism . . . In principle, there is little reason to expect that Christians' denigration and persecution of Jews over so long a history should not be revived in Christian policies and behavior regarding the Zionist ideal and the re-establishment of the State of Israel -- in the 'Holy Land', of all places. The anti-Zionist stance of many nations and peoples appears inexplicable apart from the age-old influence of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism within Western and Eastern Christendom."

The main burden of contentions made by Msgr. Higgins and Father Sheerin in their current hassle with Father Ryan is that Father Ryan sells American Catholics short when he suggests that ecumenical relations between American Catholics and American Jews suffer from allegedly Jewish insistence on support for Israel as a proof that Christians are not anti-Semitic. I would leave it to Msgr. Higgins, Father Sheerin and other Catholic churchmen well disposed of to the cause of mutual respect among Jews and Catholics to battle that issue out with their adversary, Father Ryan.

But when Father Ryan continues to insist that Israel was not threatened with annihilation in 1967, I itch to get back into the fray. Israel not threatened? Would careful examination of Russian armaments captured from the Egyptians by the Israelis in 1967 add to Father Ryan's evidence of no threat? Would the 113 raids against Israel by Soviet-Syrian terrorists prior to the Six-Day War constitute no threat? If not, would Father Ryan have opted for the role of reassuring Israeli children no harm would befall them when they had to be carried to underground bunkers for protection against Arab aggressors? Was Nasser's closing of the Strait of Tiran no

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