

THE JEWISH COMMUNAL PROFESSIONAL

BY RALPH I. GOLDMAN

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Ralph I. Goldman is Executive Vice President of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee. This article is based on a paper submitted by Mr. Goldman to the International Conference of Jewish Community Service held in Jerusalem last August.)

The Jewish professional has been an integral part of Jewish life since the Jewish community came into being. His form and title have changed through the ages, and his role has changed with the changing needs. But always his purpose has remained steadfast -- to serve his community and to preserve it.

In each generation leaders have come forth to serve the Jewish community, often at great personal sacrifice, and at times at great risk. Some were self-appointed, some imposed by governments, others elected by the community or appointed by the elders. They were chosen for their special skills in administering funds and property, supervising charity, interceding with the authorities, interpreting the law, and other abilities essential to the functioning of a voluntary community.

The professionals who staff the Jewish communal service agencies represent a wide variety of specialties. While many are social workers, others are trained administrators and managers, psychologists and sociologists, teachers and rabbis, public relations practitioners and journalists, researchers and social planners, community organizers and fund-raisers, and physicians and lawyers. Each community, by its own set of needs and level of development, determines the specialties of its professionals.

The lack of a career structure in the "Jewish civil service" in many communities, here and abroad, is an obstacle to further professionalization. There has been increasing recognition,

however, that we stand to lose our best professional talent if we do not build into communal service mechanisms to assure professional growth and advancement. Attempts to develop community-wide pension funds and more attractive career opportunities are among a growing number of efforts to attract and retain professionals.

We have made real advances in our professional ability to serve the Jewish community. We can bring even greater gains by defining -- and demanding -- basic essential qualifications for professionals in whom the welfare of the Jewish community is entrusted.

What must distinguish the Jewish communal worker is his commitment to Jewish survival. He must see himself as the guardian of Jewish community and as the exponent of a rich and illustrious tradition. The North American Jewish communal professional of the 1980's is different from his predecessor of the 1930's. They no longer see economic and welfare problems as the major thrust. The trauma of the Depression has been displaced by the Holocaust and the birth of Israel. Today they see Assimilation and intermarriage as major threats, and look toward Jewish education to halt the erosion of Jewish life.

If we reflect on the concept of commitment, we must also ask ourselves if feeling alone is enough. Is not a base of knowledge essential? We readily accept the dictum that professional work in an ethnic framework requires a thorough understanding and acceptance of the values and customs of that community. Applying this dictum to professional work in our community, we must conclude that a Jewish communal professional can rightfully claim expertise only if his professional talents and commitment are grounded in Jewish knowledge.

EGYPT WILL CONTINUE PEACE

TEL AVIV (WNS) -- President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt assured a Labor Party delegation that he

intends to carry on the peace process with Israel initiated by the late President Anwar Sadat while at the same time asserting that he does not want to see Jerusalem divided, according to the head of that delegation, Labor Party leader Shimon Peres upon his return from Cairo.

Peres said "Mubarak assured us, in the clearest possible manner that he would continue Sadat's policy of working for an undivided Jerusalem through various ethnic groups in Jerusalem should be allowed to give expression to their own interests. He said the five person delegation was also given assurances that the peace process would be broadened after Israel's final withdrawal from the Sinai next April.

However, Peres came under attack from Geula Cohen, a leader of the ultra-nationalist Tehiya party which opposes the peace treaty with Egypt and is demanding that Israel abandon its commitment to withdraw from Sinai. Cohen accused Peres of "misleading the public." She

claimed that "as everybody knows, both Anwar Sadat and Hosni Mubarak really want and still want to divide sovereignty in Jerusalem.

FRANCE WILL CONTRIBUTE TO SINAI FORCE

WASH. (WNS) -- The State Department said that it "welcomed and deeply appreciated" the positive attitude expressed by French President Francois Mitterrand in his statement that France would be willing to participate in the multinational force that is to patrol the Sinai after Israel's final withdrawal in April 1982. Mitterrand made his statement in an interview with five reporters in Williamsburg, Va., where he met with President Reagan.

Mitterrand's remarks on France's participation in the Multi-national Force and Observers (MFO) were seen as a reversal of France's previously negative attitude toward the Camp David accords and the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. In the interview with the five reporters, Mitterrand refused to be quoted directly. But his offer of French troops to help oversee peace in the Sinai was reported to have been "firm." It was seen, in addition, as an offer to help the U.S. in the difficult task of putting together the multinational force of which

only Fiji, Colombia and Uruguay have said they would provide assistance.

Earlier, Mitterrand said he supports the peace proposals of Saudi Arabia Crown Prince Fahd because they "can open up discussions" in the Middle East leading to peace in that area. The important point of the eight-point plan proposed by the Crown Prince is "recognition of all states in the area," which includes Israel. Mitterrand said on ABC-TV "Issues and Answers" program filmed in Paris before he left to the United States. "That is a very considerable step forward" he said.

Meanwhile, British officials in London were busily pouring cold water on prospects for a European contingent in the peace monitoring force in Sinai following Israel's final withdrawal from Sinai. They have confirmed that the subject was touched on at the recent European Economic Community (EEC) meeting in London and that it could come up again at the imminent meeting of the EEC's Council of Ministers in Luxembourg.

JERUSALEM (WNS) -- Christian supporters of Israel will plant a 50,000 tree forest within a few years as an expression of solidarity with the Jewish State, it was announced here as some 3,000 Christian pilgrims from around the world gathered in the country during the Succoth holiday.

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