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Joy and Doubt on Pope's Plan to Visit Synagogue

By E. J. DIONNE Jr.

Special to The New York Times

ROME, March 19 — Rome's chief rabbi has praised Pope John Paul II's decision to visit Rome's main synagogue as "courageous and coherent," and the Israeli Foreign Ministry said it hoped the visit might be a prelude to Vatican recognition of Israel.

But a leader in Catholic-Jewish discussions said the visit, which may be the first by a Pope since the earliest days of the church, was clouded by papal statements last month.

Rabbi Ilia Toaff, Rome's chief rabbi, said at a news conference Tuesday that the Pope's planned visit on April 13 was

"an historic fact."

In Jerusalem, a spokesman said Foreign Minister Yitzhak Shamir told a group of visiting Brazilian clergymen that he welcomed the Vatican's announcement and that he hoped the time was ripe to expand informal ties between the Vatican and Israel.

Both the Vatican spokesman and the Israeli Ambassador to Italy said Tuesday that they saw little likelihood of any immediate change in the Vatican's diplomatic stance toward Israel.

The Vatican has declined to give formal diplomatic recognition to Israel. This has caused growing dissension between Jews and the Holy See.

Rabbi Marc Tannenbaum, the international affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, said in an interview Tuesday that Jewish leaders were also concerned that recent Lenten homilies by the Pope suggested he was backing away from the progress made in Catholic-Jewish relations in the last two decades.

"Normally, we would have rejoiced that this happened," Rabbi Tannenbaum said. "But to be completely honest, the mood I see in the Jewish community is very mixed and filled with some anxiety."

"On the one hand, this Pope has made some of the strongest and most

affirmative statements about the Jewish-Catholic dialogue, the Jewish people and moving statements of the meaning of the Holocaust," he said.

But, the rabbi continued: "There is the perplexity many of us feel about recent homilies of the Pope, which have been deeply upsetting."

"We are wondering: Who is the real Pope John Paul? Where does he really stand toward Jews and Judaism?"

The two homilies that have caused concern among prominent Jews were given by the Pope here last month.

In one passage in a sermon given on Feb. 18, the Pope said the "new Israel" of Christianity "assumes and surmounts the former."

The passage upset Jews, who have long criticized Christian theology for implying that Judaism had been "dis-

placed" by Christianity. In the Jewish view, this diminishes the dignity of Judaism.

The "New Covenant" is an idea deeply embedded in Christian theology, and Catholics maintain that it does not necessarily imply any insult to Judaism. Some Catholic theologians, however, have been sympathetic to Jewish efforts to clarify the concept to remove any taint of anti-Semitism.

On Feb. 28 the Pope referred to the "promised land of Abraham."

"This land became for many generations the country of the people of the old Covenant," the Pope said. "Yet, the God of the Covenant does not contain his promise in any single terrestrial country. In no temporal habitat."

"And no temporal condition of human existence can fulfill God's promise," John Paul concluded.

Although the passage might be seen as typical of John Paul's insistence on the transcendent and other-worldly nature of faith, Rabbi Tannenbaum said the statement denigrated Jewish theological claims to Israel.

"Not only is God's covenant with the people of Israel abrogated," Rabbi Tannenbaum said of the two statements, "but so is God's covenant with Abraham about the Promised Land."

"We welcome the Pope's coming to the synagogue, it's an act of friendship," Israel Singer, secretary general of the World Jewish Congress, said. "But we expect the Pope do more than come to a synagogue."

"We hope the Pope will deepen the relationship between the Roman Church and the Jewish people by recognizing Israel," Mr. Singer said.

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CHIEF RABBI CHIDES POPE

Words used "bound to revive memories of religious antisemitism"

London and Rome, February 27, 1986

(JCNS) Pope John Paul II has been criticised by Britain's Chief Rabbi, Sir Immanuel Jakobovits, over a homily he gave in a Rome parish church on Sunday.

Sir Immanuel said this week that the Pope had used words "which were bound to revive memories of religious antisemitism, which we, as Jews, had hoped would be permanently behind us."

Expressing regret that Pope John Paul II had used expressions like "the sin committed by the Israelites in refusing Jesus," the Chief Rabbi said that many Jews would regard them as "retrograde and hurtful."

Although Roman Catholics used theological language that was "often unintelligible and unfamiliar to Jews," he would continue with his "efforts aimed at increasing mutual understanding," Sir Immanuel said, "especially having regard to the good relations that exist between Jews and Catholics in many countries."

The Pope's homily gave most authoritative endorsement to what is generally referred to among experts and promoters of Christian-Jewish dialogue as "the theology of appropriation" or of "substitution."

The first part of the homily was devoted entirely to the theme of the "old" and the "new" Israel. The liberation of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt was "at the centre of the Easter of the ancient covenant," the Pope declared, adding that, at the same time, "it leads us into the very heart of the Easter miracle of the new Covenant

"...The expression 'wandering Aramean'...refers to the history of Israel. The term 'wandering' recalls the idea of someone seeking a path leading to a safe haven, to a land where he will no longer feel a stranger...but will live in the fullness of longed-for freedom.

"God fulfils this aspiration. He redeems the People of Israel from the slavery of Egypt, leads them into the Promised Land, initiates them into the Covenant and makes them His people."

However, continued the Pope, "because of the numerous transgressions of the Covenant, God promises to the Chosen People a new covenant, which will be ratified with the blood of his own son, Jesus on the cross.

"The Church, the expression of the new Covenant, represents the continuity of Israel, wandering in the search for salvation.

"It is the new Israel which presupposes and transcends the old, because it has the necessary strength to live in accordance with all the requirements of the Divine Covenant...."

The "Easter event" was the cause of "our salvation." It "invites us not to repeat the sin committed by the Israelites in refusing Jesus, but to hope in the justice which comes from him."

Observers have pointed out that this is the fourth time in less than a year that the Pope has quoted from the Gospels to emphasise the alleged role and responsibility of the Jews in the condemnation and crucifixion of Jesus.

His homily also reaffirms the concept that of the "new" Israel, that is to say, the Roman Catholic Church, replacing the "old" Israel - the People of Israel - and defines the role of biblical Israel as merely one of preparation for Christianity.

In a later Lenten homily, the Pope carried this concept a step further. Speaking about "definitive realisation of the truth about the land promised to Abraham and his descendants," he remarked: "This land became for many generations the homeland of the ancient Covenant."

"However, the God of the Covenant does not restrict His promise to any specific terrestrial homeland, to any temporal dwelling. And no temporal condition of human existence can accomplish God's promise."



Guarded optimism expressed on Pope's visit to synagogue

JEWISH WORLD*

*APRIL 11-17, 1986

By WALTER RUBY

As the historic visit of Pope John Paul II to Rome's main synagogue on April 13 approaches, members of the international Jewish liaison group for relations with the Catholic Church are hoping it will result in some improvement in the increasingly troubled Catholic-Jewish relationship.

Last week, two leading and frequently feuding members of the group, the International Jewish Committee on Interreligious Consultations, adopted 'wait and see' attitudes towards the visit—the first ever by a pope to a Jewish house of worship.

After a meeting of the group last week, both Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, international affairs director of the American Jewish Committee, and Israel Singer, general secretary of the World Jewish Congress, expressed hope that the Pope would use the occasion to make a statement that would strengthen ties between the two religions. They hoped also that the Pope's words there would reverse the tenor of recent Papal homilies which IJCIC members view as anti-Semitic and damaging to Jewish-Catholic relations.

Troubling Homilies

In one such homily, given March 3 on the occasion of Lent, John Paul declared that "the Pascal event, as it was realized in Christ, invites (us) to avoid the sin of Israel, who refused Jesus."

During the same homily, the Pope told the faithful, "Because of the many transgressions of the covenant, God promises his chosen people a new covenant, one that shall be ratified with the blood of the savior on the cross. It is the new Israel that presupposes and goes beyond (the old covenant)...not through obedience to the ancient laws that give knowledge of God but not his salvation, but through faith in Jesus the savior."

John Paul also seemed recently to downplay the theological significance of the Land of Israel, stressing that "the God of the covenant does not enclose his promise in any individual homeland or any temporal dwelling." Jewish leaders believe the statement evidenced a lack of sympathy for Jewish claims to the land of Israel.

Both Tanenbaum and Singer indicated they expect the Pope to make conciliatory statements at the Rome synagogue. But both expressed their conviction that IJCIC must work behind the scenes with key Vatican leaders to ensure the synagogue visit is not mere window dressing.

"What we are saying is 'Will the real John Paul please stand up,'" said Tanenbaum. "We hope and expect he will speak in a conciliatory vein at the synagogue, but what we want to know is what this pope feels about the Jews in his kishkas."

Despite their present agreement on the Pope's synagogue visit, Tanenbaum and Singer made clear that the sharp disagreements between them, which nearly led earlier this year to the disintegration of IJCIC, have not yet healed. Referring to Singer's charge last year that the IJCIC failed to press the Vatican hard enough to



Pope John Paul II meeting with Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, right, of the American Jewish Committee, and David Gordis, the committee's executive vice president, last year.

recognize Israel and WJC President Edgar Bronfman's public call on New York Cardinal John J. O'Connor to urge the Pope to do so, Tanenbaum remarked, "The tough guy, street brawling approach did not work." In fact, said Tanenbaum, the episode had given "extremists within the Catholic hierarchy an excuse to speak out" against strengthening Catholic-Jewish ties.

"I think the WJC has had second thoughts about their approach," Tanenbaum said. "If, however, there is another such eruption from the WJC, we will have to look again at whether or not we can work with them."

Singer responded sharply, "If it is street brawling for the president of the WJC to make a polite suggestion to the cardinal of the city with the world's largest Jewish population that he use his good offices to request that the Vatican recognize Israel...then we are all street brawlers."

Singer affirmed that the WJC had not backed away from its position "but believes that at this time, in advance of the Pope's visit to the synagogue, we ought to give the Vatican a chance to restate its position. What Tanenbaum calls street brawling is simply a statement of a dignified Jewish position."

Tanenbaum said that in his contacts with various high level Vatican officials, he has found that many of them have also expressed "dismay" over what he called "the regressive tone of the Pope's recent statements on Jews and Judaism."

His Vatican contacts, he said, noted that the Pope received his training within the Polish Church, where the supposed status of the Jews as sinners and rejecters of Christ is taken as a matter of course.

Said Tanenbaum, who was one of the founders of IJCIC and has generally been the Jewish spokesman with the most conciliatory line towards the Catholic Church: "I am

outraged by the Pope's remarks. They are unforgivable. Unlike Catholics, however, I do not think the Pope is infallible and believe we must mobilize our friends in the Catholic Church to understand that they do not have to accept the Pope's teachings on the Jews."

Tanenbaum said he had received reassuring signals from such Catholic supporters of Jewish-Catholic dialogue as Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, president of the Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, and Cardinal Jean-Marie Lustiger of Paris, a Jewish born prelate who "is extremely close to this Pope," according to Tanenbaum.

"I would expect that Willebrands and Lustiger will play some role in drafting the Pope's statement and that he will likely return to the more positive themes of statements he made before this series of homilies," Tanenbaum said.

"Even if that occurs, we are still left with the question of how we deal with the good cop, bad cop symbolism the Pope has been showing us," Tanenbaum cautioned. "Certainly, one positive gesture in the synagogue is not going to be enough to negate what he said before."

"We are going to have to face together those basic questions that have been raised," he said. "We are going to have to insist that the Vatican face the hard questions and give us meaningful assurances that the anti-Jewish statements will not be repeated."

'Something in the Air'

Tanenbaum said his recent conversations with top Catholic officials had left him optimistic on the issue of Vatican recognition of Israel.

"Something is in the air in Rome" on that topic, he said. "There are serious internal strategy sessions going on in the Vatican on how to bring it about. One cardinal said to me, 'The decision has been made to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. The question is not whether

but when and how.' "

Tanenbaum said he believes the main problem for the Vatican is concern that establishing relations with Israel could lead to reprisals by fanatical Muslims against Christians in Lebanon and other parts of the Arab world. The Jewish community ought to be aware of the delicate nature of the issue for the Vatican and not pressure the Pope publicly, he said.

Asked whether the Pope's homilies had not undercut his moderate position and validated that of Jewish hardliners like Singer, Tanenbaum replied, "On the contrary, I believe there is evidence that extreme positions on the Jewish side served as a justification for more extreme positions on the Catholic side.

"There is no question there is a dangerous dynamism here," said Tanenbaum of the Pope's statements, "but I know many Catholic leaders are dismayed also. I am hopeful that the WJC has had a

chance to re-evaluate its actions and that IJCIC can now move forward together in our dialogue with the Vatican."

But in Singer's view, "The homilies have undercut the position Marc was taking before. In his more recent statements, he is saying the kinds of things that I was saying six months ago."

Singer called the Pope's upcoming synagogue visit "a symbolic act," but added, "Symbolism can also be substantive. I hope he will use the occasion to reassert the spirit of *Nostre Aetate* and begin moving forward again toward full normalization between Catholics and Jews vis a vis temporal relations with Israel." *Nostre Aetate* was the declaration issued by Vatican II under Pope John XXIII in 1960 that included a section disavowing the belief that all Jews in all times shared responsibility for Christ's death.

Asked if his present cautious but hopeful language did not represent

a shift from the more abrasive tone he employed to describe Jewish-Catholic discussions in Rome last year, Singer said, "We happen to be right before an important event—the Pope's first-ever visit to a synagogue. It is a very hopeful event when a Pope comes to a synagogue for the first time in 2,000 years. Let's not prejudge the event before he shows up...I would reject any suggestion that the WJC has backed away from its stance on dealing with the Church from a position of Jewish pride and dignity."

Asked about Tanenbaum's assertion that the Church is moving toward recognition of Israel, Singer commented, "I'd prefer not to give prophecy. I would only re-emphasize that we will continue to make clear to the Vatican in a polite but firm manner that we want recognition. Recognition by the Vatican is not necessary for Israel's survival, but we want good relations with every country." □

DOMESTIC NEWS

04-21-86

3043

Jewish leader claims pope is ready to formally recognize Israel

By William Bole

Religious News Service Staff Writer

WASHINGTON (RNS) — A Jewish leader with close ties to the Vatican says Pope John Paul II has decided to formally recognize the State of Israel.

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum, director of international relations for the American Jewish Committee, said he learned of the Vatican's intentions during recent meetings with cardinals in Europe, the United States and South America.

Meanwhile, Rep. Edward Feighan (D-Ohio), a Catholic, has taken the extraordinary step of introducing into Congress a resolution calling on the Vatican to establish full diplomatic relations with Israel.

A spokesman for the Vatican Embassy in Washington, Rev. Blaze Supich, said there would be no comment on either Rabbi Tanenbaum's disclosure or the action in Congress.

In the past few weeks, Rabbi Tanenbaum said in an interview on April 18, at least two cardinals have told him that "the decision has been made by the pope and the Vatican Secretariat of State" to establish formal ties to the Jewish state.

"The question is not whether it will happen," said Rabbi Tanenbaum, who has been on a whirlwind private diplomatic tour to persuade the Vatican to alter its stance toward Israel. "The question is when and how it will happen."

The rabbi, a longtime leader in efforts to forge closer ties between Jews and Catholics, said that among the prelates he has recently met with on the issue of Vatican-Israel relations are Cardinal Jean Marie Lustiger of Paris, who was born of Jewish parents and is a close friend of the pope, and Cardinal Bernard Law of Boston.

Rabbi Tanenbaum said he has also met with six cardinals from Brazil and Argentina and with Cardinal Johannes Willebrands, the Vatican's ecumenical officer; that he is scheduled to meet with Cardinal John O'Connor of New York, and has been in contact with Cardinal Joseph Bernardin of Chicago.

The Jewish leader declined to identify the cardinals who reported movement by the Vatican on recognition of Israel, but added that they are "people very close to the pope."

The issue of Vatican recognition of Israel came into the open recently with Pope John Paul's historic visit on April 13 to Rome's main synagogue. Jewish leaders praised the visit, the first ever recorded by a pope to a Jewish house of worship, but also asserted that recognition of the Jewish state must go hand in hand with acceptance of the Jewish religion.

The Vatican has cited concerns about guarantees of international access to holy places in Jerusalem, as well as unsettled disputes over Israel's boundaries and the rights of Palestinians in the Israeli-occupied West Bank, in explaining its policy of non-recognition.

Behind the Vatican stance has also been the "genuine fear" of reprisals against Christians in Moslem-dominated Arab countries in the event of church moves toward fuller recognition of Israel, Rabbi Tanenbaum said.

Citing these concerns, the rabbi called on Jewish groups to be patient as the Vatican works out the problems and to avoid public attacks on its current stance toward Israel. "There have been some shrill, tough-guy confrontational statements that haven't helped the situation," Rabbi Tanenbaum said of criticism by Jewish groups.

Rabbi Tanenbaum, who was an official observer at the mid-1960s Second Vatican Council, which renounced past anti-Semitism of the church, said the Vatican was likely to take "several interim steps" before announcing full diplomatic recognition of Israel.

One possible step would be to appoint an apostolic delegate to Israel, he said. Currently, there is what Catholic and Jewish leaders regard as "de facto" Vatican recognition of Israel, whose diplomatic mission to Italy has full access to Vatican offices. Formal recognition of Israel would, apart from the heavy symbolic impact, involve an exchange of ambassadors between the Vatican and the Jewish state.

Rabbi Tanenbaum said this could happen by the end of the year, "provided the boat is not rocked by extremists on any side." He said Vatican fears of reprisals against Christians "are not an abstraction," and are reflected in the 100,000 Maronite Christians in Lebanon who have been "massacred" by Moslems.

The Jewish leader also said that on the day of the pope's visit to the Rome synagogue, the Catholic bishop of Tripoli, Libya, and several priests and nuns there were arrested in what he interpreted as a message by Col. Moamar Khadafi that "if you make positive gestures toward Israel, there will be reprisals against Christians."

The Libyan bishop, priests and nuns were released on April 16, he said. Despite this, Rabbi Tanenbaum asserted that Vatican recognition of Israel would bolster the prospects of peace in the Middle East by helping to dispel the "illusion" among Arab rejectionists that if "they hold out long enough the state of Israel could be dissolved."

Eugene Fisher, director of Catholic-Jewish relations for the National Conference of Catholic Bishops, said he knew of no Vatican decision on formal recognition of Israel. "But I know that they have been moving in that direction," said Mr. Fisher, who added that he is aware of Rabbi Tanenbaum's meetings with Catholic prelates and that the rabbi would be in a good position to assess any new developments.

In Congress, Rep. Feighan, whose constituency in the suburbs of Cleveland is largely Catholic and Jewish, was joined by 11 other members of the House of Representatives in introducing his resolution on Vatican recognition of Israel. In a separate action, 23 members of Congress, led by Rep. Charles Schumer (D.-N.Y.) have signed a letter calling for such a step by the Vatican.

Mr. Feighan has also sent a letter to Secretary of State George Shultz asking that the Reagan administration prod the Vatican on the recognition issue. Such intervention by members of Congress into the affairs of a church is highly unusual.

But a Feighan spokesman said the establishment of diplomatic ties between the United States and the Vatican in 1983 gives Congress an opening to press the issue. He added that pro-Israel members of Congress want to take advantage of the current attention to the question of Vatican-Israel ties occasioned by the pope's synagogue visit.

"The pope has tremendous moral authority around the world," said the letter to Mr. Shultz. "His conviction that Israel has a right to its place in the Middle East would not only add strength to those nations which have already stood with Israel, but would lend credence and authority to those moderates in the Middle East who continue to search for peaceful ends to the conflicts there."

JUN 25 1986

O'CONNOR

TEMPLE EMANU-EL

Stephen Listfield
Rabbi

Arthur Hertzberg
Rabbi Emeritus

Kurt Silberman
Cantor

Rabbi Ari Fridkis
Educational Director

June 20, 1986

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
American Jewish Committee
165 East 56th Street
New York, New York 10022

Dear Rabbi Tanenbaum:

I understand fully what you are doing when you say, as quoted in today's New York Times, Page A3, "It is important to record that Cardinal O'Connor is a devoted friend of the Jewish people and is deeply committed to the security and well-being of the people and of the State of Israel". But it seems to me that the Cardinal would be best served if he would be a more vigorous apologist for himself vis-a-vis Israel, rather than relying on his Jewish friends.

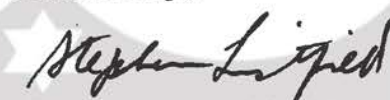
I know full well that Cardinal O'Connor was careful to say that he believes in the right of Israel to exist. The Cardinal's problem is that the press will rightly treat that as a "dog bites man" story. It is his support for a Palestinian homeland that will obviously, and I suppose justifiably, be the truly quotable part of his statement.

I submit that Cardinal O'Connor's comments will not necessarily be taken well by the Jewish community for the following reasons. Calls for the redress of the Palestinian problem, within the political context of our time, inevitably imply that Israel is responsible for this problem. If Cardinal O'Connor's Jewish friends truly wish to help him in his public statements, it seems to me that they would recommend to the Cardinal that if he must issue calls for a Palestinian homeland based on all the injustices that have been dealt to Palestinians over the years, that he be careful to include the fact that 22 Arab states have consistently denied meaningful refuge to their Palestinian brethren, that the Jews accepted but Arabs rejected the 1947 U.N. call for partition, that Palestinians have manifestly been used as pawns by Syria, Egypt, and other Arabs in order to serve their own political ends, etc.

Rabbi Marc Tanenbaum
June 20, 1986
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In sum, the question is not whether Cardinal O'Connor is generally friendly to Israel and to Jews, which I imagine that he is. The question is, Is the Cardinal advertently or inadvertently contributing to the perception that Israel has caused a Palestinian problem and Israel ought to solve it?

Sincerely,



Stephen Listfield

SL/jd

cc: Cardinal O'Connor



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CONVERSATION WITH JOHN CARDINAL O'CONNOR, JUNE 27, 1986

On Friday afternoon of this date, about 2 p.m., Msgr. Jim McCarthy, personal secretary to Cardinal O'Connor telephone me to say that the Cardinal could meet with me at 4:30 p.m. I was eager to get a first-hand sense of his views and feelings on his Lebanon and Rome trip, and therefore went to see him. (Ted Ellenoff could not make it; and David Gordis was not in the office.) We met in his small guest room and were alone for about an hour.

The Cardinal began by thanking me for my brief comment in the New York Times that said that he is "a friend of the Jewish people and a supporter of the security and well-being of the State of Israel." I immediately told him that even though that was a small excerpt of what I had said to the N.Y. Times reporter who called me from Rome, I have received a number of criticisms for defending him, I showed him a letter from a rabbi in Englewood, N.J., who said that while he understood what I was trying to do, let the Cardinal defend himself. I told the Cardinal that that rabbi and others who called me were disturbed by reports of what the Cardinal had said about "the Palestinian homeland" and his implication that Israel alone was responsible for their plight.

There was similar consternation over his statements that ~~somehow~~ somehow Israel held the key to peace in Lebanon, and that Israel has some role to play in assuring the security of some 8 million Christians in the Arab world. I made the point forcefully that since 1982, it is Syria, the Shiite and Sunni Muslims, and Druse who hold the key to Lebanon's peace and to the future of Christians in Lebanon. Did he really intend to scapegoat Israel?

As to Israel's guaranteeing the security of Christians in Arab lands, I found that incomprehensible. Should he not have been addressing that responsibility to Arab leaders, not Israel?

On the Palestinian homeland, that is precisely what Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres was about in seeking out aggressively talks with King Hussein, searching for a formula in some "Jordanian option." It was King Hussein who publicly declared that the PLO's Yassir Arafat torpedoed that option. Why did he not deal with that fact fairly, and in a balanced way?

There was a lot of defensive phumpping back and forth. It is clear that he knows very little about the complexities of the Middle East. It is also clear - and I referred to it - that his tour was arranged by Msgr. John Nolan, head of the Catholic Near East Welfare Association, which for decades has been involved in refugee care for Palestinian refugees. I mentioned that Msgr. Nolan has had a long-established reputation for being pro-Arab and anti-Israel, and he blinked vigorously.

Along the way in our polite but increasingly sharp talk, the Cardinal said a number of things of significance:

- 1) He made a number of pro-Palestinian, pro-Arab statements in order to establish his credibility in the Arab world. (He blurted that out in an almost confessional way.)
- 2) He knew he was risking some of his credibility in the Jewish community, but hoped that his good record on Jewish issues - particularly Soviet Jewry, the Nazi Holocaust, and anti-Semitism - would help

prevent too much erosion of his standing with the Jewish community.

3) He has been given "a semi-mandate" by Cardinal Casarolli and Archbishop Silvestrini of the Vatican Secretariat of State to become a principal "actor" for the Vatican on the Middle East. He said that while other Cardinals and Bishops have made occasional statements on the Middle East, none has concentrated on it as a central concern. He said he plans to do that. (Historically, Cardinal Spellman played such a role, but in a quieter, more diplomatic but politically potent way. Cardinal Cooke, a former social worker, contented himself with the social welfare aspects mainly of Palestinian and other Arab refugees.)

4) He said he favors "Vatican full diplomatic relations with Israel" but first a number of obstacles have to be gotten out of the way. He said the status of Jerusalem is not a problem; "the international statute" is a matter of formality. The preconditions for establishing diplomatic relations with Israel, he suggested, have to do with some resolution of the plight of the Palestinians; reinforcing peace in Lebanon; and somehow trying to assure the security of Arab Christians in the Middle East.

5) He made in somewhat emotional manner ~~xxxx~~ a big point that he had a two-hour audience with ~~the~~ Pope John Paul II at which he reported on his Lebanon trip. He said the Pope would not abandon the Arab Christians and would do nothing that would lead to their further massacres.

O'Connor then said that if the Vatican were to establish diplomatic relations with Israel tomorrow, there is no question but that thousands of Christians would be killed in reprisal. We have to find a way to prevent that from happening.

In a nice way, I "presumed" to say that the Vatican is now paying the price for allowing itself to be intimidated and blackmailed by the extremist Muslims and Arabs. I reminded him that during Vatican Council II Nasser threatened reprisals against Arab Christians if Nostra Aetate would be adopted. Cardinal Bea refused to be intimidated. He made a public statement that the declaration was spiritual issue and has nothing to do with politics. He then secretly sent then Msgr. Willebrands to Egypt and Iraq to mollify the Arabs, but Bea proceeded undeterred in having the declaration adopted. Most of the threats petered out.

As Israel and American foreign policy have demonstrated, the Arab-Muslim leaders respect strength and exploit weakness. He just listened.

6) If he plans to become active in the Middle East, I then said, it is essential to his credibility that he visit Israel and meet with Prime Minister Peres and other Israeli political and religious leaders. He then asked me to explore that possibility with Peres' office since I was leaving for Israel on Sunday. He said he wanted to meet with the Prime Minister; only the question of schedule has to be worked out.

I told him I would be glad to do that. Once the decision is made, he would be hearing from me and/or from an appropriate Israeli official.

7) During our talk, he repeated several times that Vatican diplomatic relations would be helped if Israel made some public declaration of concern for the Palestinians, and the peace of Lebanon. I replied that Peres and other Israelis have done that often before; the issue is not statements but the political will of the Arabs to negotiate peace. But he would be free to discuss that with Peres and other Israelis.

July 15, 1986

Mr. Robert Semple, Editor
OP-ED Page
The New York Times

Dear Bob,

I just wrote the enclosed OP-ED after coming back from an extended conversation with Cardinal O'Connor and a visit last week with Israeli foreign ministry officials.

This is an urgent and important subject, and I hope you will consider it for publication shortly.

With warm regards.

Cordially,

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ADDRESS TO HIS HOLINESS, POPE JOHN PAUL II, ON THE OCCASION OF HIS RECEPTION
OF LEADERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY, NOVEMBER 26TH. 1986.

Your Holiness,

We have the privilege of being among those who welcome you to Australia, part of the New World, now a multi cultural society, but above all, a land of free men and women.

It is not quite 200 years since the first European settler arrived in Sydney Cove. From the very beginning, Catholics and Jews were minority groups who shared the early struggle for political and religious equality. Australian Catholics succeeded in this struggle in 1836 and this success was soon followed by Jewish emancipation.

Since that time, our Communities in Australia have shared the diversity of concerns that confront minority groups. Together we share a present concern for the continuation of a school system which permits freedom of choice and welcomes religious commitment.

We recognise and appreciate that this meeting is a mark of your continuing commitment to improving relations between the Catholic Church and the Jewish people. We are deeply conscious of the fact that in April of this year you made an historic journey to visit the synagogue in Rome. The words that you chose to say at that Service touched the heart of Jews around the world. You remembered with special blessing Pope John 23rd whose achievements in the relationship between Christians and Jews brought about the Declaration Nostra Aetate. You spoke of us as "our dearly beloved brothers" - "elder brothers".

Brothers belong to one family ... a relationship we have no difficulty in recognising. For more than twenty years Catholics and Jews in Australia have held consultations and discussions on matters of mutual interest and concern. The Catholic Church has examined its text books and introduced into seminaries and schools courses for the study of Judaism. We look forward to continuing dialogue on all of these matters.

We greet you as Pontiff of the Catholic Church but you are also the son of your land and your people. As a child of the twentieth century no one could be more sensitive to the tragic history of Poland and its people, of the terrible consequences of war and of the suffering of the Jews of Eastern Europe. The Australian Jewish Community still includes a great many survivors of the Holocaust and their children.

As you said, standing at Auschwitz "I pause with you before the inscription in Hebrew. This inscription awakens the memory of a people whose sons and daughters were intended for total extermination It is not permissible for anyone to pass by this inscription with indifference..." After the experience of Treblinka, Auschwitz and Majdanek there was reason enough for Jews to despair to the world. But this was not to be. In many ways the survivors taught us how to live ... how to reaffirm life, how to begin again ... Against all odds the Jewish people broke the bonds of hopelessness by re-establishing a state of their own in the land that is holy and by bringing back to life a language in which the prophets spoke and the psalmist sang. For Jews everywhere the State of Israel is an expression of faith in the future. In your Apostolic Letter of Good Friday 1984 you wrote: "For the Jewish people who live in the State of Israel and who preserve in that land such precious testimonies of their history and their faith, we must ask for the desired security and true tranquility that is the prerogative of every nation". A Christian understanding of the drama and history that has led in our day to the miraculous re-establishment of the covenant binding the people of Israel to the land of Israel is the touch stone of the future relationship between the Jewish people and the Church. We look forward to the Church's formal recognition of this reality.

We understand the historic nature of the dialogue which is now opening between the Church and the Jewish people, and trust that your visit will

PAGE THREE: ADDRESS TO HIS HOLINESS, POPE JOHN PAUL II, ON THE OCCASION OF
HIS RECEPTION OF LEADERS OF THE AUSTRALIAN JEWISH COMMUNITY, NOVEMBER 26TH
1986.

stimulate that dialogue in Australia. Your determination, goodwill and
leadership in this great undertaking is recognised and applauded by the
Jewish World.

LESLIE CAPLAN, A.M.,

President

Executive Council of Australian Jewry



Mr President, dear Friends,

Earlier this year, I had the pleasure and privilege of visiting the Synagogue in Rome and of speaking with the Rabbis and the assembled congregation. At that time I gave "thanks and praise to the Lord who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth (Is 51:16) and who chose Abraham in order to make him the father of a multitude of children, as numerous 'as the stars of heaven and as the sand which is on the sea shore'" (Gen 22:17; cf. Is 15:5). I gave thanks and praise to him because it had been his good pleasure, in the mystery of his providence, that the meeting was taking place. Today, I praise and thank him again because he has brought me, in this great Southern land, into the company of another group of Abraham's descendants, a group which is representative of many Jewish people in Australia. May he bless you and make you strong for his service!

It is my understanding that, although the experience of Jews in Australia - an experience going right back to the beginning of white settlement in 1788 - has not been without its measure of sorrow, prejudice and discrimination, it has included more civil and religious freedom than was to be found in many of the countries of the Old World. At the same time, this is still the century of the Shoah, the inhuman and ruthless attempt to exterminate European Jewry; and I know that Australia has given asylum and a new home to thousands of refugees and survivors from that ghastly series of events. To them in particular I say, as I said to your brothers and sisters, the Jews of Rome, "the Church, in the words of the well-known Declaration Nostra Aetate, 'deplores the hatred, persecutions, and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and by anyone'".

OUTLINE

The Catholic Church wishes to consolidate and extend the improved relations she has with the Jewish community in Australia and throughout the world.

1. The Pope expresses his gratitude for this meeting with representatives of the Jewish community in Australia.
2. He recalls how Australia gave a new home to thousands of Jewish refugees who fled the European holocaust.
3. The Holy Father hopes that this meeting will help to consolidate the improved relations between Jews and Catholics in Australia.
4. The attitude of the Catholic Church to Jews is one of respect and fraternal love.
5. Jews and Catholics, while recognizing genuine differences in religious belief and practice, are called to engage in true and fraternal collaboration for the well-being of society:
 - To defend life;
 - To defend all fundamental human freedom.
6. A common concern is that of religious schools.
7. The faithful love of God endures for ever.

My hope for this meeting is that it will help to consolidate and extend the improved relations you already have with members of the Catholic community in this country. I know that there are men and women throughout Australia, Jews and Catholics alike, who are working; as I stated at the Synagogue in Rome, "to overcome old prejudices and to secure ever wider and fuller recognition of that 'bond' and that 'common spiritual patrimony' that exists between Jews and Christians". I give thanks to God for this.

Where Catholics are concerned, it will continue to be an explicit and very important part of my mission to repeat and emphasize that our attitude to the Jewish religion should be one of the greatest respect, since the Catholic faith is rooted in the eternal truths contained in the Hebrew Scriptures, and in the irrevocable covenant made with Abraham. We too gratefully hold these same truths of our Jewish heritage, and look upon you as our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

For the Jewish people themselves, Catholics should have not only respect but also great fraternal love; for it is the teaching of both the Hebrew and the Christian Scriptures that the Jews are beloved of God who has called them with an irrevocable calling. No valid theological justification could ever be found for acts of discrimination or persecution against Jews. In fact, such acts must be held to be sinful.

In order to be frank and sincere we must recognize the fact that there are still obvious differences between us, in religious belief and practice. The most fundamental difference is in our respective views on the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth. Nothing however prevents us from true and fraternal cooperation in many worthy enterprises, such as Biblical studies and numerous works of justice and charity. Such combined undertakings can bring us ever closer together in friendship and trust.

Through the Law and the Prophets, we, like you, have been taught to put a high value on human life and on fundamental and inalienable human rights. Today, human life, which should be held sacred from the moment of conception, is being threatened in many different ways. Violations of human rights are widespread. This makes it all the more important for all people of good will to stand together to defend life, to defend the freedom of religious belief and practice, and to defend all other fundamental human freedoms.

Finally, I am sure we agree that, in a secularized society, there are many widely held values which we cannot accept. In particular consumerism and materialism are often presented, especially to the young, as the answers to human problems. I express my admiration for the many sacrifices you have made to operate religious schools for your children, in order to help them evaluate the world around them from the perspective of faith in God. As you know, Australian Catholics have done the same. In secularized society, such institutions are always likely to be attacked for one reason or another. Since Catholics and Jews value them for the same reasons, let us work together whenever possible in order to protect and promote the religious instruction of our children. In this way we can bear common witness to the Lord of all.

Mr President and Members of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, I thank you once again for this meeting, and I give praise and thanks to the Lord in the words of the Psalmist:

"Praise the Lord, all nations!

Extol him, all peoples!

For great is his steadfast love toward us;

and the faithfulness of the Lord endures for ever.

Praise the Lord!" (Ps 116/117).

DOMESTIC NEWS

12-29-86

4924

Editors' Advisory**By Religious News Service**

Misery loves company is how some phrase it. Actually, challenge seeks colleagues is more like we experience it at Religious News Service. As we look to the future, we take some perverse comfort in seeing that other news organizations — bigger ones, more worldly, definitely better financed — also are undergoing some intense soul searching.

In this regard I was drawn to an article in the New York Times Magazine (Dec. 28, 1986) titled "CBS News in Search of Itself." Their dilemma is very much like ours, namely, how to build on a past that includes the long shadows of giants such as Edward R. Murrow and Walter Cronkite. That future of excellence also has to be on a tighter budget.

I share the closing statement of CBS News President Howard Stringer with you since many of you, too, face the challenge of ordering a new day from a noble past: "CBS News ... can't use the past as a blueprint for everything that it does in the future. But the past has to be part of the tradition. That continuity, if you like, is what keeps the whole company together."

In 1987, RNS will be operating, for the first time in its history, on a budget that is not dependent on outside subsidies. The break-even point has been reached only because of diligent efforts to streamline the service and to refine our understanding of who we serve and how best we can do that. All the while, we have also worked hard to keep faith with a tradition that has engendered a great deal of trust and good will on the part of our customers. We want to assure you that those efforts will continue through the new year.

Judy Weidman

12-29-86

4923

O'Connor turnaround on Israel visit upsets officials**By Steve Rodan****Religious News Service Correspondent**

JERUSALEM (RNS) — When the head of the Catholic Archdiocese of New York, Cardinal John O'Connor, announced his plans to visit Israel, the rumor mill began to churn with speculation that the Vatican was ready to establish diplomatic relations with the Jewish state.

But as the cardinal left on Dec. 27 for his Middle East trip, Israeli officials as well as Vatican envoys in Jerusalem were upset about the visit and the hopes it generated.

"It's a delicate situation," said the Rev. Marcel Dubois, a leading Catholic theologian who is on a special Vatican commission on Jerusalem. "It (the trip) could be used as publicity for both Arabs and Jews. The situation is, from a diplomatic point of view, very confusing."

The reasons for the dismay differ: Vatican envoys say Cardinal O'Connor violated a firm policy set by the Holy See against clerics getting involved in Middle East politics. Cardinal O'Connor had billed his visit as a "fact-finding mission."

For their part, Israeli officials are upset that the cardinal, after accepting then-Prime Minister Shimon Peres' invitation last summer to come to Israel, now says he will not visit Israeli leaders — at least not in their offices. The officials point out that Cardinal O'Connor will meet with Jordan's King Hussein and Prime Minister Zaid al-Rifai.

The bad feelings produced by the Cardinal O'Connor trip add to the increasing frustration of Israeli diplomats over the Vatican's refusal to recognize the Jewish state. Since the founding of Israel in 1948, officials have urged senior Vatican officials, including several popes, to establish diplomatic relations with Israel.

Over the years, the Vatican has given several reasons for its refusal to recognize Israel. In the last decade, the official refusal was based on the lack of delineated borders between Jordan and Israel. The Vatican does not have a papal nuncio, or ambassador, in Jordan, either. Instead, both countries share an apostolic delegate, a lower-ranking Vatican envoy.

Despite the lack of diplomatic ties, Israeli officials had expressed hope that the Vatican was moving toward official recognition of the Jewish state. In April, Pope John Paul II visited for the first time Rome's ancient synagogue and conducted services there. Three months later, the archbishop of Marseilles, France, Cardinal Roger Etchegaray, arrived to receive an award from Ben-Gurion University.

The O'Connor trip, however, appears to have shattered hopes of any Vatican move to recognize Israel. The idea for the trip began after Cardinal O'Connor returned from Lebanon last June, declaring the need for a Palestinian homeland.

Jewish leaders in New York urged the cardinal to see the Israeli side of the story, and in September convinced Mr. Peres to extend an invitation for Cardinal O'Connor to visit Israel. Cardinal O'Connor accepted and Israeli foreign ministry officials, encouraged by the reaction of Jewish leaders, began to believe that the Vatican was ready to compromise on its refusal to recognize Israel.

But last week, Cardinal O'Connor, on orders of the Vatican, backtracked. He said his trip would be private and suggested that he made a mistake in the way his mission was presented.

Sources in the apostolic delegation couldn't agree more. They say that had Cardinal O'Connor planned to meet with Israeli leaders during a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, then the Vatican would have stayed out of the affair. But by billing it as a "fact-finding trip," Cardinal O'Connor was embarking on a diplomatic, not religious, mission.

"The Vatican does not like when cardinals mix in the politics of the Middle East arena," Msgr. Richard Mathes, cultural attache to the apostolic delegation, said. "This is a firm position from the Holy See. We don't want to burn our fingers here in politics."

The way Vatican officials in Rome saw it, those in the apostolic delegation said, Cardinal O'Connor was trying to make foreign policy for the Roman Catholic Church. "It's a political game, not a religious one," said one envoy.

But that attitude has angered officials of major Jewish organizations. Rabbi David Rosen, head of inter-religious affairs for the Anti-Defamation League of the B'nai B'rith in Israel, said that "conservative elements in the Vatican ... give the Jewish people the feeling that after 38 years, the Vatican has not recognized the reality of the Jewish state."

Rabbi Rosen, who called Cardinal O'Connor "a friend of the Jewish people," said if he refuses to see Israeli leaders during his trip "it would be better if he not come at all."

Israeli officials are still unclear what Cardinal O'Connor will do when he arrives in Israel via Jordan on Jan. 1. A foreign ministry spokesman said he has not heard of the cardinal's schedule from his envoy, Msgr. John Nolan, who is now in Amman.

Foreign ministry sources said they hope Cardinal O'Connor will meet with Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Foreign Minister Peres, but at the same time have not ruled out cancelling such plans if the cardinal places conditions on any such talks.

Aides to Prime Minister Shamir said he will be glad to meet with Cardinal O'Connor in his office in Jerusalem. The aides stressed that the meeting must take place in Jerusalem.

Jerusalem Mayor Teddy Kollek, who was supposed to be visited by Cardinal O'Connor, has also expressed anger. A Vatican official said the cardinal would not come to Mr. Kollek's office.

Aides to the mayor say in that case Mr. Kollek is considering refusing to meet Cardinal O'Connor at all. "But in the meantime we'll wait and see," said Savannah Merwyn, the mayor's spokeswoman.

12-29-86

4922

American Jews outraged by Vatican's 'political gamesmanship'

By Religious News Service

NEW YORK (RNS) — American Jewish officials expressed outrage at the Vatican's order to New York Cardinal John O'Connor not to meet with Israeli government officials in Jerusalem during his 10-day visit to the Middle East.

"The Vatican has embarrassed John Cardinal O'Connor and itself more than it embarrasses Israel," said Nathan Perlmutter, national director of the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) of B'nai B'rith. He said that "the Vatican's long-expressed and genuine concern with theological anti-Semitism is welcome, but its concern is compromised by this kind of cynical, political gamesmanship."

The Vatican cancelled the cardinal's plans to meet with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and President Chaim Herzog because the Holy See does not have diplomatic relations with Israel. Cardinal O'Connor said he "should have consulted the Vatican when setting up a meeting with the president and the prime minister."

Lester Pollack, president of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York, said the "unscheduling" of the meeting "signals a critical setback in the process of advancing understanding" between Jews and Catholics. He charged that the Vatican action caused "great embarrassment and hurt" to the cardinal.

Morris B. Abram, chairman of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, said that "Israel is right to expect that it be dealt with as any sovereign state should be." He expressed the hope that "good sense will prevail and that an equitable solution will be found so that Cardinal O'Connor's visit to Israel will be a wholly successful one."

12-29-86

4930

Lutheran, UCC health systems agree on merger

By Religious News Service

NEW YORK (RNS) — An agency of the American Lutheran Church, in an attempt to revitalize Protestant influence in the health care arena, has taken a step toward what was described as "the first and only church-sponsored, regionally integrated system of health care in the country."

Meeting in Minneapolis Dec. 16-17, the executive committee of the ALC Church Council approved a merger of the ALC's Lutheran General Health Care System and Evangelical Health Systems Corp., owned by 85 Illinois congregations of the United Church of Christ (UCC).

"Generally, Protestant churches have lost their influence in healing ministry," said

ON CARDINAL O'CONNOR'S VISIT TO THE MIDDLE EAST

This is a brief review of the press coverage of Cardinal O'Connor's statements regarding his perceived role as an active peace-maker between Israel and her Arab neighbors. It documents that nothing that the December 22 story in the New York Times interview reported with Rabbi Marc H. Tanenbaum was not said publicly before both by the Cardinal and Mayor Koch.

Tanenbaum: "He (the Cardinal) said that he would...try to make some basic contribution to improving relationships with Israel and its Arab neighbors."

Cardinal O'Connor: "John Cardinal O'Connor returned yesterday from a seven-day trip to Lebanon and Rome saying he would gladly go to Israel if that would help bring peace to the Middle East...."

"The Cardinal said he hopes to lobby vigorously for the Palestinian homeless and others suffering in Lebanon.

"I will be presumptuous enough to make contact with the White House and the UN to plead for an intensification of concern.

"I am going to attempt to contact the very large number of representatives of the Lebanese people in the U.S. to try to bring them together in some fashion...perhaps in a conference in New York to discuss what they might do for the Lebanese people."

"O'Connor said the major disappointments of his visit were his failure to make direct contact with the American hostages, his inability to visit leaders of the Shiite and Druse Moslem factions and the lack of response to his feelers seeking to visit Syrian president Hafez Assad on behalf of the hostages."

(NEW YORK POST, June 21, 1986)

"CARDINAL SEEKS LEB PARLEY"

Cardinal O'Connor said yesterday he would move to organize a conference to bring Christians, Moslems, and Jews together here to discuss ways to resolve the strife in war-torn Lebanon.

O'Connor said he would 'attempt to contact a large number of Lebanese people here in the United States...to discuss what they can do for the Lebanese. And my Jewish friends can make a significant contribution.'"

(N.Y. DAILY NEWS, June 21, 1986)

"O'CONNOR ENDS TRIP TO LEBANON"

"He said at the news conference that he was 'prepared to go anywhere in the world to see anyone who might want to talk to me about peace and justice in Lebanon and elsewhere.'"

"O'CONNOR SEES MIDEAST ROLE FOR VATICAN"

"Amman, Jordan, Dec. 31 - John Cardinal O'Connor said today that he would probably suggest to Pope John Paul II and other Vatican officials that they consider taking the lead in calling an international conference to work out a Middle East peace settlement.... Papal sponsorship, the Cardinal said, could be seen as an alternative should the other approaches prove unworkable."

(NEW YORK TIMES, January 1, 1987)

ON VATICAN-ISRAEL DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS

"Jewish leaders such as Rabbi Tanenbaum believe that the Vatican has begun to realize that its refusal to recognize Israel has not protected the security of Christians and so would consider some move toward upgraded diplomatic status."

(NEW YORK TIMES, December 22, 1986)

"O'Connor made the proposal (for a conference on Lebanon) at a wide-ranging press conference during which he defended previously stated views on a Palestinian homeland and discussed a possibility that Israel could receive diplomatic recognition from the Vatican.

"O'Connor who met with Pope John Paul in Vatican City, said he felt the Holy See might conceivably advance the possibility of formal diplomatic recognition of Israel if it 'assists substantially' in the following areas:

"Resolving the Palestinian homeland question;

"Restoring peace in Lebanon;

"Trying to indicate in some way that Christians should be protected in the Middle East."

(NEW YORK DAILY NEWS, June 21, 1986)

"He also conditioned his support for formal diplomatic recognition of Israel by the Vatican on a solution to the Palestinian problem and safety guarantees for Christians living in the Middle East."

(NEW YORK TIMES, June 20, 1986)

MAYOR KOCH

Reporting on his "private, off-the-record" meeting on July 17 with Cardinal O'Connor and Israeli Ambassador Benjamin Netanyahu, Mayor Koch said that the Cardinal's "statement may in fact be an effort to resolve one of the major sticking points in Catholic-Jewish relations - the resistance of the Vatican to recognize Israel diplomatically.

"I believe it is his desire to do what he can in a responsible way to effectuate that diplomatic formal recognition as soon as possible."



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