

VOL. 68 - 73rd YEAR
MONDAY, MARCH 19, 1990
NO. 53
**POPE, MEETING WITH JEWISH LEADERS,
AFFIRMS CHURCH TEACHING ON JUDAISM**
By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, March 18 (JTA) -- Pope John Paul II took a step toward healing the breach that has developed in Catholic-Jewish relations in recent years by meeting Friday at the Vatican with a delegation of American Jewish leaders.

The pontiff reaffirmed the Roman Catholic Church's adherence to the 1965 Nostra Aetate decree of the Second Vatican Council, proposing "a systematic study of the council's teaching" on the irrevocable nature of God's bond with the Jewish people.

"It is the task of every local church to promote cooperation between Christians and Jews," the pope was quoted as telling the delegation, which included top officers of the American Jewish Committee.

It was the first Jewish group to have an audience with the pope since he received a delegation of rabbis at his summer residence outside Rome in September 1987.

Jewish groups had refrained from meeting with the pope after the Catholic Church broke an agreement to remove a Carmelite convent from the grounds of the former Auschwitz death camp by the end of February 1989.

While the nuns remain there, ground was finally broken last month for an interfaith prayer center that will house them eventually.

"The successful resolution of this crisis proves the ongoing strength and not the weakness of the Catholic-Jewish dialogue," AJCommittee President Sholom Comay said after the Vatican meeting.

The American Jewish leaders were generally pleased with their audience.

Disappointment On Israel

But Alfred Moses, chairman of AJCommittee's Board of Governors, expressed disappointment at a news conference later that the pope did not respond to Comay's plea for the Vatican to extend full diplomatic recognition to Israel.

Comay, who spoke for the group, also urged the Polish-born pope to intensify his leadership in "publicly opposing all forms of anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, an area of the world that means so much to both Catholics and Jews."

Rabbi A. James Rudin, director of AJCommittee's Interreligious Affairs Department, stressed that Friday's meeting with the pope wasn't "just a ceremonial visit," but one that was substantive. "A lot has happened and is happening" in both the Catholic and Jewish communities, he said.

When the pope met with the Jewish leaders in 1987, there was great resentment over the papal reception he had granted Austrian President Kurt Waldheim in June of that year. Waldheim had served during World War II as an intelligence officer in a German army unit linked to atrocities in Greece and Yugoslavia.

Still, Rudin said, "with all the problems, there have been more positive Catholic-Jewish encounters in the past 25 years than in all the previous 1,900 years of Church history. It's one of the success stories of the 20th century."

**SHAMIR PICKS UP EARLY SUPPORT
AS PARTIES CONFER WITH PRESIDENT**
By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 18 (JTA) -- Likud Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir and Labor Party leader Shimon Peres each visited President Chaim Herzog on Sunday and urged that he give them the mandate to try to form the next government.

Herzog, who also received delegations from other parties, expects to complete his statutory consultations with all factions by Tuesday afternoon. By law, the candidate he chooses has up to three weeks to form a government and may ask for a three-week extension.

Meanwhile, several surprising developments emerged since the Likud-Labor national unity coalition last Thursday became the first Israeli government toppled by a no-confidence vote in the Knesset.

One is the surge of support for Shamir within Likud.

Another is the schism within the ultra-Orthodox Shas party, whose failure to support Shamir was the immediate cause of the government's downfall.

While media pundits were predicting Shamir's political demise, the Likud Knesset faction hammered out a unanimous statement of solidarity, released in Tel Aviv at 3 a.m. local time Sunday, after a grueling session that began Saturday night.

Shamir's powerful rival, Deputy Prime Minister David Levy, went along with the consensus, despite some muttering among his cohorts, who had been leading a dump-Shamir movement.

Sharon Backs Shamir

But it was Shamir's archenemy and severest critic, Ariel Sharon, who unexpectedly issued a strong statement endorsing the premier's continued leadership of Likud.

Sharon resigned from the Cabinet on Feb. 19, charging that Shamir was yielding to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's terms for an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue.

But according to Sharon, the veteran Likud leader redeemed himself by flatly rejecting a coalition-saving compromise offered Thursday by Shas, which included an affirmative response to Baker.

Likud politicians are not certain, however, that their leader can muster enough strength to form a narrowly based coalition that could govern without Labor.

The ultra-Orthodox or "haredi" parties are the key.

Agudat Yisrael, which accuses Likud of renegeing on past promises, has issued a solemn pledge not to cooperate with Shamir.

But a revolt seems to be brewing in Shas against its spiritual mentor, Ovadia Yosef, Israel's former Sephardic chief rabbi. It was on Yosef's instructions that five of Shas' six Knesset members absented themselves from the no-confidence vote, allowing its adoption by a vote of 60-55.

The exception was Absorption Minister Yitzhak Peretz, who voted in support of the government Thursday.

He resigned from Shas on Sunday and an-

nounced he would form his own, independent party.

Quitting with him was Shas Secretary-General Yehezkel Schayjk, a close aide to Rabbi Eliezer Schach, spiritual leader of the two-member Degel HaTorah Knesset faction.

Although Shas brought down the Shamir government, its representatives recommended to President Herzog on Sunday that he name Shamir to form a new one.

Degel Sides With Likud

In fact, Rabbi Yosef was urging his activists Sunday to "go forth to the masses and explain" that his decision on Thursday did not stem from any hatred of Likud. He appeared to be trying to mollify pro-Likud opinion in his party's constituency.

On the other hand, Yosef said he had no regrets over his action last Thursday. "I am completely at peace with my decision," he said Sunday. "I have no qualms of conscience. I will not be frightened or constrained by anyone."

Yosef explained that he acted on principle. He believes the dangers of war will increase if Israel rejects Baker's proposal and is run by a right-wing government.

Yosef represents a decidedly dovish trend in the ultra-Orthodox camp that supports territorial compromise to save lives. In that respect, it is much closer to Labor than Likud, the decision to back Shamir notwithstanding.

Degel HaTorah, which supported the government last Thursday, also has followed a dovish policy. But it, too, is backing Shamir for now.

President Herzog is said to want a new government as quickly as possible.

The present caretaker regime has glaring vacancies, since Shamir fired Vice Premier Peres a week ago, precipitating the resignations of all of the Labor ministers. His government fell before he could appoint replacements.

U.S. PUTS PEACE PROCESS ON HOLD UNTIL ISRAEL FORMS A GOVERNMENT

By David Friedman

WASHINGTON, March 18 (JTA) -- The Bush administration has put the Middle East peace process on hold until a new government is formed in Israel.

But State Department spokeswoman Margaret Tutwiler indicated Friday that the administration is optimistic that once a new government is formed in Jerusalem, the effort to bring about Israeli-Palestinian talks can move forward from the progress that has been made so far.

"Obviously there is a pause in moving the peace process forward," Tutwiler said.

Tutwiler conceded that it will "take some time for a new government to be formed." But she stressed that this is "exclusively an Israeli matter that only Israelis can work out."

"We recognize that this is a delicate time in Israel, and we look forward to working closely with the Israeli government that emerges," she added.

President Bush has been accused by some of precipitating the government's collapse by saying on March 3 that there should be no "new settlements in the West Bank or East Jerusalem."

But Tutwiler on Friday again rejected the charges that the Bush statement caused Israel's political crisis. "I do not, nor do any others, subscribe to that," she said.

CARTER, BRINGING NEWS FROM SYRIA, GIVES BOOST TO LABOR LEADER PERES

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 18 (JTA) -- Former President Jimmy Carter gave a boost Sunday to Labor Party leader Shimon Peres, who is trying to convince potential coalition partners that now is an auspicious time for new peace overtures by Israel.

Carter, architect of the 1978 Camp David accords, which led to Israel's peace treaty with Egypt, arrived in Israel on Sunday, after brief stays in Damascus and Amman.

At a meeting with Peres, Carter reported that Syrian President Hafez Assad had indicated a willingness to enter negotiations with Israel.

While Carter has brought such impressions from Damascus before, the new element, according to Peres, was that Assad this time did not link a willingness to talk with Israel to a resolution of the Palestinian conflict.

Carter brought no actual message from Assad. But he conveyed the sense "that maybe we are not too far away from a time that some talks can start with the Syrians on peace as well," Peres said.

In any event, it fit in with Peres' own thinking as he attempts to form a new Labor-led coalition government.

When he introduced the no-confidence motion that toppled Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's government last Thursday, Peres spoke of a positive change in Syrian policy toward Israel.

He also said Carter shared his view that once negotiations with the Palestinians got started, Jordan might join the peace process.

Carter's three-day visit to Israel was billed as "official," meaning that he was a guest of the government.

But it became a private visit after Foreign Minister Moshe Arens refused to finance those parts devoted to meetings with Palestinians.

The former president responded by announcing he would fund the entire trip himself.

JORDAN SAID TO BE READY TO JOIN ISRAELI-PALESTINIAN TALKS IN CAIRO

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 18 (JTA) -- Jordan may re-enter the Middle East peace process by sending a representative to Cairo if the proposed Israeli-Palestinian dialogue takes place there under Egyptian auspices.

That is the expectation of President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, according to the respected Hebrew daily newspaper Ha'aretz.

The newspaper based its report Sunday on information it said was relayed to Jerusalem by the Egyptian ambassador, Mohammed Basiouny, on his return from a meeting with Mubarak in Cairo last week.

The envoy reported that Mubarak expects King Hussein to have Jordan participate in negotiations alongside the Palestinians and Egyptians if the peace process progresses.

Hussein pulled out of the peace process in disgust in July 1988, after failing to reach agreement on a Jordanian-Palestinian joint delegation to negotiate with Israel.

According to Basiouny, Mubarak expects the process to lead to an interim solution that would include a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation but not a Palestinian state, Ha'aretz reported.

**MOYNIHAN TO INTRODUCE RESOLUTION
RECOGNIZING JERUSALEM AS CAPITAL**

By Allison Kaplan

NEW YORK, March 18 (JTA) -- Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan (D-N.Y.) announced Sunday that he will introduce a resolution in the Senate this week calling on President Bush and Secretary of State James Baker to recognize that Jerusalem is the capital of Israel and must remain united.

Moynihan got a standing ovation when he made the announcement here at the 12th annual congressional breakfast of the Jewish Community Relations Council of New York.

It was attended by 15 members of New York's congressional delegation and more than 300 local and national Jewish leaders, who paid tribute to Rep. Richard Gephardt (D-Mo.), the House majority leader.

Gephardt, who received JCRC's Benjamin Rosenthal Congressional Leadership Award, delivered the keynote address, in which he strongly backed Moynihan.

The congressman criticized Bush's March 3 remark equating Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem and the West Bank.

"A united Jerusalem is the capital of Israel," Gephardt asserted. "The concept of settlements in Jerusalem makes no sense. Israelis don't 'settle' in their own capital. They live there."

Rep. Stephen Solarz called Bush's remark "unfortunate, untimely and unwise." But he praised Baker "for his tireless and relentless efforts to move the peace process forward."

Moynihan has advocated U.S. recognition of united Jerusalem as Israel's capital since his term as U.S. envoy to the United Nations. He also has called repeatedly for Washington to move the U.S. Embassy in Israel from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem.

But the resolution he plans to introduce Tuesday does not call for relocation of the embassy. Asked why he did not use this opportunity to revive that proposal, a Moynihan aide, David Luchins, explained that the senator did not want to risk losing backers over the embassy issue.

He "felt he wanted maximum support for a minimal statement," Luchins said.

The resolution would have Congress declare "that Jerusalem is and should remain the capital of Israel" and that Congress "strongly believes that Jerusalem must remain an undivided city, in which the rights of every ethnic and religious group are protected."

It "calls on the president and secretary of state to issue an unequivocal statement in support of these principles."

**ABIE NATHAN MEETS AGAIN WITH ARAFAT
AND PLANS TO TRAVEL TO SOUTH YEMEN**

By Hugh Orgel

TEL AVIV, March 18 (JTA) -- Peace advocate Abie Nathan, who recently spent four months in prison for having contacts with the Palestine Liberation Organization, met again with Yasir Arafat in Jerusalem on Friday.

It was his second meeting in eight days with the PLO chief, who reportedly praised Nathan for having the courage of his convictions.

In a telephone interview from Tunis, Nathan told Israel Radio that he planned next to leave in a day or two for South Yemen, where he hoped to persuade the authorities to allow the remaining Jews there to immigrate to Israel.

He said Arafat had helped him obtain an

entry visa for South Yemen.

Nathan said that while in Tunis, he had obtained the names of several Israeli politicians who had maintained contacts with the PLO. He said the list included politicians from both the Likud and Labor parties, but he refused to divulge their names for the time being.

The 62-year-old activist was convicted and jailed last September under Israel's anti-terrorist law, which forbids meetings between Israelis and members of terrorist organizations. He was released Feb. 9 with time off for good behavior, after serving two-thirds of a six-month sentence.

But no sooner was he freed than Nathan told reporters he planned to renew his PLO contacts. He said he would try to persuade Arab leaders to sign a declaration that they would make peace with Israel if the Palestinian problem were solved.

Police spokesman Ron Yishayahu said when Nathan was released that no action would be taken against him for threatening to violate the law unless he actually did so.

**A MILLION SOVIET JEWS EXPECTED
TO EMIGRATE, SAYS WZO OFFICIAL**

ATLANTIC CITY, N.J., March 18 (JTA)-- One million Soviet Jews so far have received permission to emigrate, and Israel is expected to absorb them over the next three years, according to Simcha Dinitz, chairman of the World Zionist Organization and Jewish Agency Executives.

In addition, Israel expects at least 10,000 Romanian Jews to immigrate this year and thousands more from Ethiopia, Argentina and other Latin American countries, Dinitz said.

His disclosure was the first from an authoritative Israeli source since Israel announced two weeks ago that it was imposing a blackout on aliyah figures as a protective measure.

The WZO leader addressed more than 400 young American Jews here Saturday night at the first Keshet Conference of the WZO's aliyah department. The two-day conference closed at noon Sunday. Keshet was established by the WZO's aliyah department in North America to maintain contact with American Jewish youths who have visited Israel or studied there under various WZO programs.

Dinitz said there were 20,000 Jews in Romania and 60,000 still living in Ethiopia. He did not specify how many Ethiopian Jews were expected in Israel this year, but indicated a number already have arrived.

The increase is attributed to the warming relations between Israel and Ethiopia, which restored diplomatic ties in November.

As many as 2,000 American olim could be settled in Israel this year, according to Chaim Chesler, executive director of the WZO aliyah department in North America.

Also addressing the gathering was Malcolm Hoenlein, executive director of the Conference of Presidents of Major American Jewish Organizations, who said his group was still awaiting a reply from President Bush to a letter it sent him more than a week ago.

The letter asked Bush to "clarify" his March 3 remarks equating Jewish settlement in East Jerusalem and the West Bank. Nine members of Congress of both parties sent Bush a similar request on March 14.

Hoenlein said the Conference of Presidents believes Bush has departed from the policy of past U.S. presidents with respect to Jerusalem.

**FORMER NAZI GUARD LOSES CITIZENSHIP
BUT WILL NOT BE DEPORTED, SAYS OSI**

By Howard Rosenberg

WASHINGTON, March 18 (JTA) -- A former Nazi concentration camp guard who has lived in this country since 1955 has been stripped of his U.S. citizenship, but will be permitted to remain in this country.

Jakob Habich, 77, a retired butcher in Chicago, was deprived of his citizenship Wednesday by Judge James Moran of the U.S. District Court in Chicago.

But Habich will not be deported because of an agreement he made with the Office of Special Investigations of the Department of Justice.

The OSI made its decision based on a medical report submitted to the judge, showing that Habich's health would be endangered by deportation and a trial.

Habich came to this country in 1955 and became a citizen in February 1962. He admitted to having concealed his membership in the Nazi SS Death's Head Battalions, as well as his service as a prison guard at the Auschwitz and Lublin concentration camps.

But he denied "having personally participated in the death of any civilian or in any other atrocities," he said in the agreement he signed earlier this month with the OSI.

The United States, unlike Canada, Great Britain and Australia, lacks jurisdiction to try on its own soil perpetrators of wartime atrocities in other countries. But it may deport denaturalized citizens or extradite people wanted by other nations on suspicion of committing war crimes.

The U.S. government agreed that Habich may remain in this country, but that if he leaves the United States and tries to return, the government may try to deport him.

The Justice Department took a similar action in February 1988, when a New York court stripped a Jewish kapo, or concentration camp collaborator, of his citizenship but did not deport Jacob Tannenbaum, an elderly shul-goer who lives in Brooklyn.

**WEST GERMAN MEDIA IMPRESSED
THE WJC WILL MEET IN BERLIN**

By David Kantor

WEST BERLIN, March 18 (JTA) -- The West German press is impressed that the World Jewish Congress has selected this city, the probable capital a united Germany, as the site of its next meeting.

It will be the first time the organization holds a major meeting on German soil, the news agency DPA observed. The WJC was founded in Geneva in 1936, three years after Hitler came to power.

The WJC's meeting in Vienna in 1985 marked the first step toward reconciliation with a nation that had once been part of the Third Reich. But Berlin is the former core of Nazi power, from which the authority to set up the death machinery was derived, the media noted.

It saw in the WJC's decision, therefore, "a major turning point" for that organization.

In a stroke of symbolism, the formal conclave, culminating in a statement on German unification, will take place May 8, the anniversary of V-E Day, when the Allied forces declared victory over the Nazis.

The meeting will begin on the evening of

May 6, alternating between East and West Berlin. It will culminate on May 8, will be held at the Wannsee Villa, the site where the Nazi chiefs met on Jan. 20, 1942, to declare and work through the specifics of the Final Solution, the program to annihilate the Jews.

Lake Wannsee is a suburb of West Berlin.

The West German Jewish community announced the upcoming meeting on the front page of the *Allgemeine Jüdische Wochenzeitung*, the newspaper of West Germany's Jewish community.

The DPA reported that the meeting will be a further sign of improved relations between Germany and Jewish communities worldwide.

In New York, Elan Steinberg, executive director of the WJC, said the meeting was being held on May 8 "to commemorate the victory over the Nazis and to discuss the question of unification." This is not, he emphasized, "a congratulatory meeting on German unification."

The WJC is in the process of polling its 70 member communities on their views on the matter. An answer reflecting all the responses will be given in a formal statement on May 8 by WJC President Edgar Bronfman, Steinberg said.

Jewish reactions have been split over the desirability of a united Germany.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir of Israel warned late last year that it could become a mortal danger for Jews.

But the Israeli foreign minister, Moshe Arens, said during his visit to Bonn last month that he welcomed the prospect as an "expansion of democracy" to the eastern part of the divided country.

The Jewish author and Holocaust historian Elie Wiesel has expressed grave concerns over a possible unification, as have some leaders of the American Jewish community.

But Wiesel has said he does not believe the Holocaust could recur, because it was a "unique event." Yet it is imperative, Wiesel said, that the Germans never forget what the Nazis did.

EAST GERMANY RETAINING LINK WITH PLO

By David Kantor

WEST BERLIN, March 18 (JTA) -- East Germany, while reaching out to improve relations with Israel, appears anxious to maintain its strong ties with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Foreign Minister Oskar Fischer said last week that his country still supports Palestinian self-determination and is eager to continue its friendly contacts with the PLO.

He spoke shortly after a visit to East Berlin by Farouk Khadoudi, the PLO's senior foreign policy spokesman and a reputed hard-liner.

Fischer did not mention the main issue of dispute between his country and the PLO: East Germany's decision to end its military training program for guerrilla fighters, which included instruction in terrorist tactics and sabotage.

At the same time, East Germany has made a number of overtures to Israel in recent weeks. The two countries have held two rounds of talks in Copenhagen aimed at exploring the establishment of diplomatic relations.

In a letter presented at the end of the second round of talks on March 9, Prime Minister Hans Modrow told Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir that his country fully recognizes its special responsibility toward Jewish victims of the Holocaust and is ready to establish diplomatic relations with Israel.