

**LEVY OFFERS PEACE INITIATIVE,  
BUT NOT TILL GULF CRISIS ENDS**  
By Gil Sedan

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- Ending the state of war between the Arab countries and Israel.
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Arens addressed 150 delegates attending the national executive meeting of the Canadian Jewish Congress, which is being held in Israel for the first time in the organization's 72-year history.

The group was addressed Tuesday by Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, who acknowledged that its presence was an act of solidarity with Israel at a time when many were canceling visits because of the possibility of war in the Persian Gulf.

"We don't always feel that we have strong support from Canada," Arens said, according to reports from Jerusalem.

"When the United Nations Security Council condemned Israel for the Temple Mount incident, Canada was part of that vote," he said.

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Arens went on to say he was disappointed by the absence of financial aid from Canada, "one

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"Your presence is a manifestation of unity which is the essence, the strength of the Jewish people," Shamir said.

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Jewish leaders, maintaining it is never more important than now to demonstrate solidarity with Israel, are urging individuals and groups to go to there immediately. Organizations planning meetings in Israel are being exhorted not to cancel them.

But the government is sending the opposite message.

A spokesman for the Department of Foreign Affairs, Jim Dollimore, confirmed that all Australians in Israel have been advised to leave in view of the repeated threats by Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein to use devastating weaponry against Israel.

The department has also requested prospective tourists to alter their plans. It noted that the families of Australian diplomatic staff and "non-essential personnel" are being evacuated as the Jan. 15 deadline for Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait approaches.

### Air Service Could Be Reduced

"Australians should be aware that in view of increasing tensions in the region, it is possible that scheduled commercial air services to some countries could be reduced or suspended. Demands for available seats may be strong."

The government's warning was addressed to the approximately 13,000 Australians in 10 Middle Eastern countries. About 10,000 of them are in Israel.

Mark Leibler, president of the Zionist Federation of Australia, said that to his knowledge, "no Australians living in Israel are considering leaving because of tensions in the Gulf."

He said he will depart for Israel this week to join other Australians on solidarity missions.

A senior delegation of Australian Jews also confirmed plans to visit Israel in the first week of February.

Their tour was originally coordinated with the plenary meeting of the World Jewish Congress in Jerusalem, but the American-based WJC decided to postpone it and hold its Executive meeting there instead.

Australian Jews consider it imperative that Jewish leaders all over the world make an extra effort to show solidarity with Israel.

Gerry Levy, member of the New South Wales Jewish Board of Deputies, has written to every organization and prominent community personality to participate in the solidarity mission.

Isi Leibler, a vice president of the WJC and former president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, argued that it is a matter of the "mutual survival" of Israel and other Jewish communities for Diaspora Jews to visit Israel.

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**BEHIND THE HEADLINES:**
**NEW ISRAELI LINE FOR REVERSING TOURISM SLUMP IS 'COME ANYWAY'**

By Howard Rosenberg

JERUSALEM (JTA) -- What do Iraq, the warm weather in Europe and the U.S. economic slump have in common? They are all reasons why tourists have been staying away from Israel.

To combat the tourism decline, Israel's Tourism Ministry has come up with a slogan to get U.S. Jews to visit: "Dafka Tourism," meaning "Tourism Especially Now," or "Tourism In Spite Of" current conditions in the Middle East.

Jews and Christians alike, both in the United States and Europe, are avoiding Israel in such droves that only 37,000 tourists arrived from abroad in November, compared with 90,000 in November 1989.

Until recently, tourism was Israel's No. 1 source of foreign dollars, generating \$1.8 billion in 1989. Tourism revenues for 1990 had been forecast at \$2 billion, but that was before the Persian Gulf crisis began. When all the tallies from last year are complete, Israel will have lost as much as \$750 million in potential revenue.

Tourism Minister Gideon Patt tried to put the best face on the situation recently, telling reporters here that there was really no crisis. "In business you have ups and downs," he said. "A few bad months don't destroy a business."

Patt said December was an improvement over November's drop. But he said, "I don't know what's going to happen in January," when "everybody will be hiding themselves under the beds" in anticipation of war breaking out in the Gulf.

In all likelihood, Israeli hotel beds will for the most part be empty underneath as the Jan. 15 deadline for an Iraqi pullout from Kuwait nears.

**Europeans Less Afraid Of Coming**

So 1991 will likely start on a sour note for Israel's tourism industry and make it difficult to exceed or even reach the 1.4 million visitors who came to Israel in 1989.

Of those 1.4 million tourists, 869,500, or 62 percent, came from Europe, compared with the 195,000 tourists from the United States, representing about 14 percent of the total.

But the numbers are deceptive, since Europeans tend to spend much less per capita than tourists from the United States. Europeans mainly visit Israel to vacation in Eilat or make pilgrimages to Christian holy sites.

Europeans also tend to be much less afraid of Israel's geographic proximity to Iraq than American tourists.

"Europeans are closer to situation. They understand better the geography and the history," said Tourism Ministry spokesman Joseph Shoval.

"They know the Middle East. They know that Iran and Iraq and Israel are not in the same place, that there's 1,400 kilometers in between."

"From the United States looking at the Mediterranean, this all seems to be one on your (television) screen," Shoval said.

European tourists are expected to come to Israel in near normal levels once the weather cools significantly in their respective countries. Israeli officials believe they will go ahead with their usual Caribbean-style vacations in Eilat, despite the political climate.

But Israeli officials have a gloomy outlook for a full resumption of American Jewish tourism as long as the Gulf crisis continues.

Visiting Israel should be a "matter of commitment," Shoval said, urging Jews to "vote with your feet."

He said U.S. Jews have received conflicting signals in recent months about the wisdom of visiting Israel, with a number of Jewish organizations canceling or postponing trips.

**100 Solidarity Missions**

After an outcry from Israeli officials, American Jewish groups reassessed the wisdom of staying away from Israel and booked some 100 "solidarity missions" to Israel from last November through February.

But a small portion of the participants on those missions will be first-time visitors to Israel, who normally make up the bulk of American Jewish tourism to Israel.

And it is unclear whether the mere fact that solidarity missions are going to Israel will be enough to persuade American Jews who have never visited that it is safe to do so.

When the Jewish Telegraphic Agency posed that question to Patt, he replied, "I'll tell you directly: No."

He also said that American Jews may decide to stay away from Israel for economic reasons.

"If the Gulf crisis continues, New York has a problem, Washington has a problem, London has a problem," he said. "The price of oil will be \$35, \$40, \$50 a barrel. There will be inflation. There will be unemployment."

The U.S. economic downturn is likely to make it even more difficult for Christian pilgrims from the United States to take vacations in Israel. Already, they are coming in smaller numbers, though the drop has not been as steep as that for American Jewish tourism.

While U.S. Jews need to consider making "Dafka Tourism," Christian pilgrims to Israel "use the slogan on the dollar, you know, 'In God We Trust,'" Shoval quipped. "They don't have so many complications. They are not so Jewish. They don't ask so many questions."

Patt said he could not name five Christian groups that canceled plans to come to Israel after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. And he said he could not name five Jewish groups that had went ahead with earlier plans to visit, despite the Gulf crisis.

**Christians Come, But Spend Less**

While having Christians visit Israel is good publicity for Israel, they do not spend as much in Israel as Jews do, Shoval said. Jewish visitors "buy here, they are going to the galleries, and they feel like buying and doing."

"Greek pilgrims coming for one week here couldn't care less," Shoval said. A Greek pilgrim "is not coming to Israel -- he is coming to his church. And if he gives a donation, it's not to us -- it's to the church."

In an effort to boost tourism, the Tourism Ministry and El Al Israel Airlines brought 2,000 travel agents and 1,000 journalists to see Israel in 1990, from places as remote as South Korea.

The goal of that strategy is long-term: to have a tourism boom once the Gulf crisis is over.

In the meantime, officials are pushing "Dafka Tourism."

"Yes, they do stab Jews here. And yet you can come. And yet we would like you to come. We need you," Shoval said.

"Each one of the solidarity missions is moving this wheel a little bit. It's a huge wheel, and what we need is to create this momentum."

**UAHC OFFERS REDUCED MEMBERSHIP TO ATTRACT UNAFFILIATED YOUTH**

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, Jan. 3 (JTA) -- Combining a need to attract more young people to congregational life with modern marketing techniques, the Union of American Hebrew Congregations has started two new programs to involve unaffiliated young people in Reform congregations.

"Half of American Jews are unaffiliated (with a synagogue)," according to Rabbi Alexander Schindler, UAHC president. "And while the Reform movement is the fastest growing movement, the ranks of the unaffiliated are growing at an even faster rate."

Schindler noted that while up to 85 percent of American Jews belong to a synagogue at some point in their life, many drop out when they don't need the temple's services, like religious school, and come back when they do. He called these "revolving-door Jews."

"The biggest leakage occurs when kids go off to college, and in young married couples," he said.

Rabbi Renai Altman, director of programs for the UAHC Task Force on the Unaffiliated, added that the programs, called the Privilege Card and the Access Card, are part of an effort to "develop congregations that people feel part of. We have to find a way (for temples) to stop being service organizations and try and bring back a sense of membership."

The Privilege Card and the Access Card, for adults age 22 to 30 and college students, respectively, are designed to make it easier to become involved with congregational life.

**Perceived Cost Of Membership**

Privilege Card holders enjoy reduced, even waived, temple membership fees for one or two years.

When a synagogue does charge a membership fee, it is usually \$100 or \$150 a year.

Altman said that "the perceived high cost of membership" is the primary obstacle cited by young people, who are just beginning their careers and families, when it comes to joining synagogues.

The Privilege Card is being distributed to graduating college students this spring, and to every son and daughter of a family affiliated with a Reform congregation.

In tandem with the card program, the UAHC is encouraging congregations to develop programming designed for young adults.

According to Rabbi Jerome Epstein, executive vice president of the United Synagogue of America, which represents Conservative Judaism's 800 congregations, getting young people involved in synagogue life quickly is the key to a program like this.

In the early 1970s, United Synagogue had tried a program waiving dues for young congregants under the age of 30 or 35 but found it didn't work because "we didn't engage people in programs," Epstein said.

"We got them into the synagogue without capturing their imagination. Engaging them in programs has been the focus of our efforts since then."

Epstein plans to keep close tabs on the success or failure of the Reform movement's new program. "Just because it didn't work in the '70s doesn't mean that it won't work today," he said.

The Access Card, offering even more benefits to college students, is slated to go to 15,000 undergraduate and graduate students in the coming weeks.

With the card, the student gets a directory of the 200 congregations in the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico which are participating in the outreach programs.

The directory lists each of the services that the congregation provides, from free tickets to High Holy Day services to adult-education courses, rabbinical counseling and a number to call in emergencies.

Many participating synagogues will also pair a student with a family for Shabbat meals, an occasional phone call and a ride to synagogue events.

The UAHC has designed the programs with marketing in mind. The Privilege Card is introduced to young adults through a peppy direct-mail campaign designed to attract the attention of "twentysomethings."

Advertising and press materials are available to congregations to use locally.

The Access Card comes with a kit, in addition to the directory of congregations, which is printed on environmentally conscious recycled paper.

The kit includes a brochure and newsletter on UAHC-sponsored programs and information about Reform Judaism, including Israel and summer programs. The kit also contains instructions for organizing and conducting religious services and Jewish activities on campus.

Getting people involved in synagogue life early benefits the Jewish community as a whole in the long term, Schindler pointed out.

"All the research has shown that Jews who go to a synagogue have more interest in giving an intensive Jewish education to their children, are more likely to give charitably and are more likely to go to Israel," he said.

**ANTI-SEMITIC VANDALS WRECK HOME OF ITALIAN JEWISH BUSINESSMAN**

By Ruth E. Gruber

ROME, Jan. 3 (JTA) -- While revellers were ushering in the new year in Rome on Monday night, anti-Semitic vandals broke into and partially destroyed the summer home of a Jewish businessman in the suburb of Velletri.

It was one of the most savage assaults on record, according to accounts by local witnesses published in *Il Messaggero*.

The house, which was empty at the time, was invaded at about midnight. The intruders scrawled slogans such as "Jews your place is in the lager" (concentration camp), "Go away forever" and "You die as always by gas."

They turned on gas jets in the kitchen and left a lighted fuse. The explosion, which wrecked most of the interior of the house owned by Cesare Spagnoletto, alerted neighbors, who called the police and the owner.

The vandals also smashed furniture and tore out bathroom fixtures.

According to *Il Messaggero*, it was the second anti-Semitic attack in Velletri in recent months.

The newspaper said that six months ago, anti-Semitic slogans were scrawled on the shutters of a Jewish-owned shop. The town council at the time passed a special resolution condemning the act.