

**POPE WANTS TO VISIT JERUSALEM
TO DELIVER A MESSAGE OF PEACE**

ROME, March 6 (JTA) -- Pope John Paul II said Wednesday that he was prepared to go to Jerusalem as soon as circumstances allow, "to deliver a message of peace together with the Jews and the Moslems."

The pontiff made the offer at the conclusion of a meeting at the Vatican with representatives of the Christian churches in the Middle East.

The closing declaration issued at the meeting called for "justice for the Iraqi, the Kuwaiti, the Palestinian and the Lebanese peoples" through dialogue, without which there can be no justice.

It upheld "the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to a homeland and to choose freely their future" and the right of the Israeli people "to live within secure borders and in harmony with their neighbors."

The declaration was signed by the pope and his visitors.

A papal visit to Jerusalem would be the second in nearly 30 years and would spotlight the Vatican's failure so far to extend diplomatic recognition to the Jewish state.

The pope gave no sign in his discourse to the Christian dignitaries that recognition was in the offing, though he referred to Israel by name.

But non-recognition was no barrier to Pope Paul VI's visit to Jerusalem in the early 1960s. Jordan still occupied East Jerusalem, and Pope Paul crossed into the Israeli sector by way of the Mandelbaum Gate, long since dismantled.

The Arab bishops who met with the pope this week insisted that all contacts between Christians and Moslems should be under their supervision, for otherwise Christianity in the Middle East "would definitely be assimilated to the Western world."

The closing declaration urged Christians in the Middle East to conduct themselves with respect for that region and to "assure our Jewish and Moslem brothers that we wish to maintain with them a sincere and fruitful dialogue."

**BRITAIN AND ISRAEL AGREE ON NEED
FOR DIRECT PEACE TALKS, LEVY SAYS**

By Joseph Mills

London Jewish Chronicle

LONDON, March 6 (JTA) -- Britain and Israel see eye-to-eye on Middle East peace, Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy said after a two-hour talk here Tuesday with Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd.

The two countries agree that the successful prosecution of the Persian Gulf war has increased the chances for peace in the region.

But they also agree that an international conference for Middle East peace would lead nowhere at this time, Levy said. The Foreign Office affirmed that an international conference no longer tops the agenda.

The British government instead seems to accept the Israeli idea, set forth by Levy, of direct negotiations with the Arab states and parallel talks with the Palestinians.

But two British opposition parties, Labor and the Liberal Democrats, still favor an international

peace conference under the auspices of the United Nations, a position long advocated by the European Community but opposed by Israel.

The Israeli foreign minister explained at a news conference Tuesday why he thinks direct talks are superior to the international conference scenario.

"As a person who understands the Arab mentality," the Moroccan-born foreign minister said, "an Arab leader at a conference would not have to explain to his people that he was making peace if he were working under the auspices of a conference. On the other hand, in direct negotiations, the people would see that he meant to make peace."

Any Arab leader who agrees to direct talks will find Israel a willing partner, Levy said.

He said Israel still stands by its May 1989 peace initiative calling for the election of Palestinian representatives in the West Bank and Gaza Strip with whom Israel would discuss autonomy and the eventual status of the territories.

The plan languished after Israel refused to hold talks with anyone remotely associated with the Palestine Liberation Organization.

The Palestinians "have to break the barrier of fear that the PLO has imposed on them," Levy said at the news conference. In any event, the PLO has been sidestepped because it supported Saddam Hussein in the Gulf war, he said.

The foreign minister stressed that "Israel will enter into a peace process with prior conditions. This means that you cannot decide from the beginning what the outcome will be."

He described his meeting with Hurd as "very constructive and helpful."

Foreign Office sources said Levy displayed a constructive attitude about solving the Arab-Israeli dispute. Though they saw no signs of an immediate breakthrough, they liked the idea of parallel talks, an approach that also has been backed by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, who is due to visit Israel on Monday.

**ISRAEL TO LAUNCH SPY SATELLITE,
ARENS SAYS AT INTELLIGENCE DEBATE**

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 6 (JTA) -- Criticism of the performance of Israel's intelligence services during the Persian Gulf crisis produced a surprise announcement by Defense Minister Moshe Arens on Wednesday: He told the Knesset that Israel would soon launch its own spy satellite.

The disclosure was the first in public by a senior Cabinet member. Israel has launched two experimental communications satellites over the past two years. The second was launched last April, a day after Saddam Hussein threatened to destroy half of Israel with chemical weapons.

But neither of the satellites possessed intelligence capabilities.

Opposition politicians have berated the government for its need during the Gulf war to rely on U.S. satellite data for intelligence about Iraqi Scud missile launchers.

Labor Knesset member Michael Bar-Zohar accused the government of ignoring Iraq's military buildup since 1981, when Israeli war planes destroyed its nuclear facility in a pre-emptive raid.

He claimed that Israel had no advance intelligence of Iraq's invasion of Kuwait last Aug. 2.

Arens maintained that Israel's intelligence was up to date throughout the Persian Gulf crisis. He said that he had in fact relayed information to U.S. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney before the Gulf war began on Jan. 17.

The Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee decided nevertheless to establish a subcommittee to study the functioning of the intelligence community during the recent hostilities.

Intelligence On Scuds Assailed

An outspoken member of the panel, Yossi Sarid, engaged in verbal jousting Tuesday with Gen. Amnon Shahak, outgoing chief of military intelligence, who has been promoted to deputy chief of staff, effective April 1.

Committee members outdid each other in praise of the general at what was a festive farewell held behind closed doors because of the sensitive nature of Shahak's former job.

Sarid's sharp questioning was a jarring note. It was revealed to the Knesset plenum Wednesday by Bar-Zohar, a committee member.

Sarid, who represents the dovish Citizens Rights Movement, observed that "Shahak is a qualified and talented officer whose promotion should be welcome.

"But the intelligence community suffers from objective problems, unrelated to the personality or talents of this or that officer, and those need re-evaluation," he said.

One of Sarid's most serious charges was that Israeli intelligence failed to obtain basic information about Iraqi missile launchers.

Shahak, a soft-spoken man who wears what some describe as a perpetual cynical grin, told the Knesset member he was doing an injustice to the thousands of officers and soldiers of the intelligence corps who had prepared "an accurate reading of the situation."

When one deals with intelligence, there is always an element of doubt, Shahak said. He insisted nevertheless that the figures on the number of Iraqi missile launchers, fixed and mobile, were accurate.

ACTION URGED AGAINST LAWYERS WHO HELP SOVIETS LEAVE ISRAEL

By David Landau

JERUSALEM, March 6 (JTA) -- A Jewish Agency official urged legal action Wednesday against "unscrupulous" lawyers who are offering to help Soviet immigrants in financial distress leave Israel for other countries.

Uri Gordon, chairman of the agency's Immigration and Absorption Department, said he had planned a quiet and thorough investigation into the phenomenon. But it was prematurely disclosed by Absorption Minister Yitzhak Peretz in a Knesset speech Tuesday in which he revealed information he had received from Gordon.

Peretz, stressing the urgency of the problem, claimed that 1,000 olim have already availed themselves of the services of such lawyers, who have set up shop in Tel Aviv and Haifa. They offer to arrange immigration to Canada, South Africa, Germany and Australia, where they promise jobs will be waiting.

Many Soviet olim are having trouble finding jobs, especially in the professions for which they were trained. Gordon accused the lawyers of "unscrupulous exploitation" of their difficulties.

According to Interior Ministry figures reported by Ha'aretz, only 500 olim left Israel in the past year and have not returned. Another 500 left but records show they did return.

Gordon announced, meanwhile, that initial applications have been received for nearly 63,000 Soviet Jews since the beginning of the year, despite the Persian Gulf war, which began on Jan. 17 and ended only last week.

He said 411,507 family applications were received during all of 1990, representing 1,159,827 Soviet Jews. So far in 1991, there have been 25,800 applications, representing 62,822 Jews.

Although the rate of arrivals slowed down during the recent hostilities, Gordon predicted it would return to the prewar level by next month.

He noted that the Hungarian airline, Malev, has resumed flights suspended when the war started and that Lot, the Polish airline, plans to return to Tel Aviv on March 20.

Because the Soviet authorities do not permit direct immigrant flights to Israel, Soviet olim must change planes at various Eastern European capitals.

El Al, the Israeli airline, has been flying throughout the emergency. Now the various other national carriers are resuming service from Budapest and Warsaw.

Soviet Jews who postponed their travel plans because of the war are now ready to go, Gordon said. He predicted a gradual increase of aliyah to the prewar rate.

Jewish Agency Chairman Simcha Dinitz predicted this week that 300,000 Soviet Jews would immigrate to Israel this year. To date, the figure is 21,745.

ISRAEL MUST TAKE 'DRASTIC STEPS' TO ATTRACT INVESTMENT, U.S. WARNS By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 6 (JTA) -- Israel has been advised to adopt an American blueprint for economic recovery if it hopes to attract foreign investments.

Fight inflation, expand free trade and privatize government-owned enterprises, Israelis were told this week at a meeting of the American-Israel Joint Economic Committee, which has met every six months since 1985 here or in Washington.

Richard McCormack, the undersecretary of state for economic and agricultural affairs, headed the U.S. delegation to the talks. Speaking at a news conference after the talks concluded, McCormack said that under existing circumstances, chances are slim that foreign entrepreneurs would invest capital in Israel.

"The Israeli economy needs to take drastic steps to cope with the great challenge of aliyah," he said. He recommended greater flexibility in the job market so that hundreds of thousands of immigrants can find employment.

He called for further cuts in the annual inflation rate and greater exposure of the country to imports to make the local economy more competitive.

McCormack said foreign investors expect a profit margin similar to what they can get in Singapore or Greece. Otherwise they will not come here in significant numbers.

Herbert Stein, another member of the American delegation, suggested that further privatization would rid the government of an economic burden and advance the economy generally.

NEO-NAZI GROUP PROPOSES THAT AT&T STOP PROVIDING PRODUCTS TO ISRAEL

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, March 6 (JTA) -- The National Alliance, a neo-Nazi group that owns 100 shares of stock in the American Telephone & Telegraph Co., has called on AT&T to stop providing products and services to Israel.

In a shareholder proposal put forward in a proxy statement, the National Alliance calls upon the phone company to "phase out all sales of AT&T products and services to the State of Israel and to Israeli businesses" because "sales of AT&T products and services to the State of Israel and to Israeli businesses may contribute toward violations of the human rights of Palestinians."

The AT&T proxy statement was made public last week in advance of the company's annual shareholders meeting, scheduled to be held April 17 in Chicago.

The National Alliance's supporting statement in the proxy cites a report enumerating Israeli abuses of Palestinian human rights, published by the Swedish Save the Children organization.

The author of that report, Anne Nixon, objected to the National Alliance's use of her figures in the proxy statement.

AT&T's directors recommend against the proposal and noted that the National Alliance's "professed concern for human rights lacks credibility and is even misleading, given the consistent anti-Semitic bias in the proponent's literature and public statements."

"Clearly, the proponent is using the proxy process not to attempt to advance human rights, but to achieve anti-Semitic goals."

Melvin Salberg, national chairman of the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, praised AT&T's recommendation in a letter to Robert Allen, chairman of AT&T's Board of Directors.

Salberg wrote that the resolution by National Alliance, which is based in Arlington, Va., is "replete with gross distortions and misleading information regarding Israeli policy toward the Palestinian Arabs living under Israeli administration."

Proposals Defeated Last 3 Years

The National Alliance has owned 100 shares of AT&T stock since at least late 1987, when the racist group submitted a proposal to be included in AT&T's 1988 proxy.

Each of the three annual proxies since then has included a National Alliance proposal that AT&T end its affirmative action program. And each of those three years the proposal has been overwhelmingly rejected by over 90 percent of AT&T's shareholders.

The racist group this year moved the focus of its proxy statements from the black community to Israel, because it is "trying to exploit the Middle East situation and use that as a tactic for divisiveness," according to Jerome Chanes, co-director for domestic concerns of the National Jewish Community Relations Advisory Council.

"The best counteraction is public exposure and education," he said.

Using proxies as a platform to air anti-Semitic views may be a new strategy for groups like the National Alliance, say experts at national Jewish defense organizations, who have not seen this kind of effort before.

"This a very harmful tactic," according to Annette Kolski-Andreaco, executive director of the American Jewish Committee's Pittsburgh

office. "It has the potential to provide a lot of disinformation to people. Millions of stockholders may not understand that these are lies."

Over 2.5 million shareholders own approximately 1.09 billion shares of AT&T stock.

According to Irwin Suall, ADL's fact-finding director, the National Alliance's effort "has not been effective except that it has brought them a certain amount of publicity and attention."

The National Alliance, an outgrowth of the Liberty Lobby and the old American Nazi Party, is led by William Pierce, who wrote "The Turner Diaries," an anti-Semitic diatribe in the form of a novel, published in 1978 under the pseudonym Andrew Macdonald.

The group distributes a wide variety of Nazi propaganda, including Adolf Hitler's "Mein Kampf" and "Imperium," a book by Francis Parker Yockey, which advocates the preservation of Western culture through Hitlerian racism.

FIRE AT SYNAGOGUE IN SYDNEY IS FOURTH ARSON IN SIX WEEKS

By Jeremy Jones

SYDNEY, Australia, March 6 (JTA) -- A shocked Jewish community demanded more police protection and effective anti-hate legislation after the fourth fire in six weeks to seriously damage synagogue property in Australia's largest cities.

The latest target of unknown arsonists was the Bankstown and District War Memorial Synagogue, which was almost gutted by flames Tuesday. No arrests have been made.

A side door was forced open and flammable liquid splashed through the interior. Most of the furnishings were destroyed, but the Torah scrolls were rescued.

Max Platus, president of the congregation, removed them safely from the Ark while firefighters poured water into the blazing sanctuary.

Leslie Caplan, president of the Executive Council of Australian Jewry, described the fire as "the latest in a series of sickening attempts to damage and destroy Jewish places of worship."

"The attacks are further evidence of the need for the Australian government to enact strong and effective legislation against racist violence and incitement to racial hatred," he said.

The fire was the third in Sydney. The Sephardi Synagogue was damaged by a suspicious blaze on Feb. 26. Arsonists caused \$80,000 to the North Shore Temple Emanuel kindergarten in suburban Chatswood earlier last month.

At about the same time, the North Eastern Jewish War Memorial Center in the Melbourne suburb of Doncaster was torched.

Gerald Falk, a former president of the Executive Council who has dealt with anti-Semitic outbreaks for more than 40 years, called the latest attacks unprecedented. "Even during the peak of the strength of the Australian Nazi Party in the 1960s we did not envisage this level of violence against Jewish places of worship," Falk told the Jewish Telegraphic Agency.

Gerry Hand, the federal minister for immigration and ethnic affairs, said such attacks were "contrary to Australia's democratic principles and our traditions of fairness and tolerance." He said they would not be tolerated.

The Bankstown Synagogue serves a diminishing Jewish community in the center of a Sydney neighborhood now populated mainly by Arabs and Moslems. But there is no evidence yet linking the wave of arson to events in the Persian Gulf.

LORD JAKOBOVITS IS FIRST JEW TO BE AWARDED TEMPLETON PRIZE

By Debra Nussbaum Cohen

NEW YORK, March 6 (JTA) -- Immanuel Jakobovits, chief rabbi of Great Britain and the Commonwealth, has been awarded the 1991 Templeton Prize for Progress in Religion, marking the first time that the prize has been given to a Jew in the award's 19-year history.

Great Britain's Prince Philip will present the prize to the outgoing chief rabbi at a private ceremony at Buckingham Palace on May 7. Public ceremonies honoring Jakobovits will take place in Toronto on May 27 and in Vancouver, Canada, on May 29.

The award, announced here Wednesday at the United Nations Church Center, is being granted as Lord Jakobovits retires from his post after a career that spanned five decades. It carries with it a stipend of 410,000 pounds sterling, the equivalent of about \$800,000.

Jakobovits was knighted Sir Immanuel by Queen Elizabeth II in 1981 and made Baron Jakobovits of Regent's Park by the queen in 1988, becoming the first rabbi ever to sit in Britain's House of Lords.

Jakobovits is the author of several books about Jewish medical ethics and about Zionism, as well as numerous scientific and legal articles.

He is also an outspoken on the subject of Arab-Israeli peace. During a news conference here after he was announced as the winner, Jakobovits said that Jews and Palestinians must make "an effort of conciliation to reach a solution and an understanding."

He said that he would not propose dealing with the Palestine Liberation Organization until the group removes from its charter a commitment to the destruction of the State of Israel.

Three Years After Furor

Born in Konisberg, Germany, in 1921, Jakobovits fled Nazi terror in 1936 at the age of 15 and went to London, where five years later he occupied his first pulpit. By 1947, he was minister of the Great Synagogue of London.

He served as chief rabbi of Ireland from 1949 to 1958, and went on to become the founding rabbi of New York's Fifth Avenue Synagogue in 1958. In 1967, he returned to Britain, where he was appointed chief rabbi.

Jakobovits' selection as this year's winner of the prize comes three years after international furor was aroused by awarding the prize to Dr. Inamullah Khan, secretary-general of the World Muslim Congress.

After several American and international Jewish organizations documented that Khan and the Muslim Congress were anti-Zionist and anti-Semitic, Templeton Prize sponsors delayed presentation of the award by several months.

Khan eventually received the award in September 1988 in Melbourne, Australia.

His organization's newsletter has published anti-Jewish and anti-Israel diatribes, including an article decrying the "Zionist stranglehold" on the news media and American politics.

The Templeton Prize was created in 1972 by John Marks Templeton as a counterpart to the prizes in other disciplines awarded by the Nobel Prize Committee.

Past winners include Mother Teresa of Calcutta, the Rev. Billy Graham and Alexander Solzhenitsyn.

WOMEN OF THE WALL GO TO COURT, AMID CRIES OF HERESY, DEVILTRY

By Gil Sedan

JERUSALEM, March 6 (JTA) -- Women demanding the right to worship as a group at the Western Wall had their day in court last week.

But the Feb. 27 hearing before a three-judge panel of the High Court of Justice was completely overshadowed by euphoria attending the end of the Persian Gulf war, although the outcome could profoundly affect the nature of Israeli society.

Women of the Wall, an Israeli group, and its overseas support organization, the International Committee for Women of the Kotel, are suing the Israeli government, the Chief Rabbinate and the Israeli police for failing to secure the women's right of religious expression and freedom of access to the most holy site of the Jewish faith.

The women appealed to the High Court two years ago, demanding the right to pray at the Wall as a group, with Torah scroll and prayer shawls. Their appeal followed an encounter at the Wall during which the women were cursed and assaulted by traditionalist Orthodox Jews.

The authorities have since criminalized the chanting of prayers and touching of sacred objects by women in the Western Wall plaza.

The women, who say they do nothing that violates halachah, or traditional Jewish law, have accused the authorities of blatant discrimination against women and pandering to the prejudices of Orthodox groups.

The High Court bench was occupied by the president of the court, Meir Shamgar, flanked by Justices Menahem Elon and Shlomo Levin.

The women are represented by Arnold Spær, one of Israel's foremost legal experts.

The state and the religious establishment have deployed their legal heavy artillery in the persons of Deputy State Prosecutor Nilli Arad; Menachem Terlo, representing the religious political parties; and Rabbi Simcha Meron, representing a group of rabbis.

An Issue Of Religious Access

Their basic argument is that the women disrupt public order because their very presence at the site arouses angry emotions. The state also contends the court is in no position to adjudicate an issue of such emotional religious impact.

Spær contended that the state's actions were arbitrary, inasmuch as the Western Wall is not a synagogue nor is it the possession of one faction or another, but rather a holy site sacred to all Jews. He pointed out that there are no laws that govern prayer at the site.

Spær also argued that since the State of Israel is the protector and guarantor of freedom of access to many sites holy to several religions, it is unprecedented to allow one faction or denomination in a religion to impose its practice on others of the same faith at a holy site.

The state's brief contained the opinions of several current and former chief rabbis of Israel, and other rabbis who decried women's prayers as "the work of the devil" and "desecration."

Some of the rabbis' statements denounced the women as "stubborn" and "heretics."

The court adjourned without setting a date for its next hearing.

Meanwhile, the women are barred from praying according to their custom. But they do meet every Friday morning for a demonstrative prayer session at the Western Wall.