

# The Vatican's Hidden Agenda?

Full diplomatic relations between the State of Israel and the Vatican were established on June 15 of this year. This momentous event brought—at best—mixed emotions to most Jews. Since it's renewed statehood in this century, Israel has sought the recognition of the Vatican. This desire is understandable since the Roman Catholic Church has 1.5 billion adherents and over the centuries anti-Semitism flourished and Jewish blood flowed where Catholics were either a majority or large minority. The holocaust was no exception. With the ending of World War II, the Jew proved a double dilemma to the Vatican.

## The First Dilemma

First, how could the Vatican dispel the dark cloud of suspicion of Papal implication in the holocaust? Since the Vatican signed a concordat of cooperation with Hitler, many concluded that the very fact the Papacy never publicly denounced the holocaust implied silent consent. Hitler in a friendly session with Bishop Bering and Monsignor Steinman observed that his policy for the Jews, after all, was "what the church had done for 1,500 years."

But the Vatican was intent on changing its public image. The Vatican II Council (1965) declared that all Jews are no longer responsible for the crucifixion of Christ. Then the Vatican followed with phrases, such as, "God holds the Jews most dear" and "the Jew is our elder brother." From the mouths of their newly found younger brother, these were encouraging statements to a people who have suffered bitter persecution and anti-Semitism for centuries. Yet these expressions fall short of acknowledging that the Jewish people have a glorious covenant destiny with God that is separate and distinct from the Christian church.

## Image Change?

The Israeli government was satisfied with the Vatican's change of image. But did anything more than the image really change? The fact that the Vatican did not recognize Israel until after the PLO did speaks volumes. The Vatican was in an embarrassing situation. If the Vatican continued to refuse recognition of Israel after so many others (including the PLO) have, suspicions that the Vatican was anti-Semitic would be confirmed. But before such recognition, the Vatican wrung out of Israel the promise to be included in negotiating the final status of East Jerusalem.

Israel's leaders were elated that the Vatican gave up its demand for the "internationalization" of Jerusalem. But exactly why did the Vatican give up this demand?

## The Vatican's Second Dilemma

The Vatican's second dilemma is related to the theological problem posed by Israel possessing East Jerusalem, the Old City.

Why did the Vatican demand Jerusalem's internationalization during the UN debate of the Partition Plan in 1947? New York's Cardinal Spellman committed all energy to keep Jerusalem out of Israeli control. He telegraphed the Papal nuncios (ambassadors) in South American countries with the demand that they urge their home governments to take an uncompromising stand at the UN for the internationalization of Jerusalem. The Vatican's ostensible reason for this policy was that thus all three major faiths would be guaranteed free access to their holy places. However, from 1948 to 1967 when Jordanian forces occupied Jerusalem, Jewish holy places were shamefully desecrated and synagogues destroyed. Furthermore, Jews were denied access to East Jerusalem and the Western Wall. During this time, the Vatican never once raised a cry for internationalization. In fact, since acquiring Old Jerusalem in 1967, Israel has guaranteed all (Christians and Moslems in addition to Jews) free access to their holy places. With Israeli control, the Vatican renewed insistence that Jerusalem be internationalized to provide free access—a privilege the Israelis already assured the three faiths! Obviously, a deeper reason exists for Vatican opposition to Israel's possession of Old Jerusalem.

The Roman Catholic Church believes Israel's right to be the Kingdom of God ended forever with the destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple by the Roman Legion in 70 CE. When the Roman Catholic Church grew to world prominence, it claimed to be the rightful heir of the Kingdom of God. Rome—Vatican City—became the "New Jerusalem." The rebirth of Israel challenged Catholicism's "Kingdom of God" theory. But the claim of Rome to be "the eternal city" was completely deflated when Jerusalem, "The Eternal," became the capital of Israel in 1967.

Some Christian theology designated many Old Testament places and events as pictures or "shadows" (also termed "types") of realities that would replace the historic place or event itself. In type-and-shadow theology—if the type or shadow reappears—then the supposed reality is not valid. Thus, the re-emergence of Old Jerusalem as Israel's capital destroys the Vatican's claim to be the "New Jerusalem"—the capital of the actual Kingdom of God.

Yes, the Jewish community must recognize the real issue of Jerusalem. Jewish leaders feel that if they can convince the Vatican that Israel will always provide free and equal rights to all three faiths, certainly then, the Vatican will recognize Israel's control over Jerusalem.

If only the issue were that simple. Why does the Vatican act like a world political power, exchanging ambassadors with other nations? No other Christian church claims this prestigious status. The only excuse that the Vatican has to act as a world power is the claim that it is both the spiritual and the temporal Kingdom of God, the New Jerusalem. In the coming months and years, Catholic prelates in every nation will both covertly and

overtly try to influence public opinion against Israel's controlling East Jerusalem. As already shown, Israel's possession of the capital of its ancient kingdom is a challenge to Rome—a challenge which Rome is compelled to remove!

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Why then did the Vatican recently drop its demand for internationalization if it doesn't want Israel to have Jerusalem? The answer is plain and simple. The Vatican caved in to PLO pressure, not Israeli, on the internationalization issue. The PLO is vigorously opposed to internationalizing Jerusalem because it wants East Jerusalem to be the capital of a Palestinian state. The Vatican's main concern was that Jerusalem not be in the hands of the reborn Jewish State.

None should be surprised if the Vatican throws its negotiating weight fully behind Arafat when East Jerusalem's status is deliberated. The Vatican—be it remembered—opposed Israeli control of Jerusalem in 1947. In September 1982 (as well as several other occasions), the Vatican received Yasser Arafat, an international terrorist, with all the honor and dignity accorded a head of state. The prestige of administering the holy sites of a Palestinian—ruled Jerusalem would greatly enhance the Vatican's larger agenda as the "New Jerusalem," the Kingdom of God.

That the Vatican is determined to terminate Israel's exclusive sovereignty over East Jerusalem is reflected in the statement of the Vatican's Foreign Minister, Jean-Louis Tauran (Amman, Jordan, July 9, 1994):

"Before territorial problems are resolved, we have to find international guarantees to safeguard the uniqueness of the city. . .and assurances that never again one party should claim Jerusalem as its possession [emphasis ours].

"It [Jerusalem] should be a crossroads of peace, a bridge between Earth and Heaven." Of course, the Vatican wants a major part in the administration of that "bridge." Evidently, Israel has its counter ploy. The September 2nd, 1994 JEWISH PRESS stated that Foreign Minister Peres has offered "the Vatican a sizable amount of control over Jerusalem."

## **The Vatican's Greater Agenda**

All heads of state are eager to meet with Pope John Paul II (TIME, August 23, 1993). Why? He is not just the head of a church, but the head of the Papal State. The Vatican is the capital of this church-state government. Through his priesthood he has an intelligence gathering network that is the envy of every government. This network reaches down into almost every town and villa over much of the globe. John Paul II plays power politics with a skill that awes world leaders. Nations are anxious to exchange ambassadors with the Vatican. Pope John Paul and former President Reagan successfully plotted the downfall of the Communist Empire (TIME, February 24, 1992). During this clandestine

campaign Archbishop Pio Lashi said to the diplomat, Vernon Walters, "It is a very complex situation listen to the Holy Father [Pope]. We have 2,000 years experience at this." It was further observed, "Step by reluctant step, the Soviets and the Communist government of Poland bowed to the pressure imposed by the Pope and the President." The Pope's ultimate agenda is revealed in the following statement he made on April 21, 1990: "A united Europe is no longer a dream. *It is not a utopian memory from the Middle Ages* [emphasis added]. The events that we are witnessing show that this goal can be reached." The Pope wants to revive the Holy Roman Empire of the Middle (Dark) Ages.

## What Now?

Can Rabin and his administration outmatch the Vatican on Jerusalem? In the final analysis, neither Vatican prelates—nor secular presidents nor military might—are any match for the Almighty. The warning of the Almighty in Zechariah 12:3 stands: "And in that day will I make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people: all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered together against it."

Jerusalem, indeed, will be internationalized! But Jerusalem will belong to the Jew forever. People from all over the world will come to Jerusalem to worship, but it will be to learn about the God of the Jews and to praise His Holy Name.

"Yea, many people and strong nations shall come to seek the Lord of hosts in Jerusalem, and to pray before the Lord. Thus saith the Lord of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you." Zechariah 8:22, 23 (also Isaiah 2:2, 3; 60:10-12; 66:18-22).