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## Poland Is Latest Arena Of Jewish-Christian Relations

By Marc H. Tanenbaum

It is not a little ironic that Poland, which has been attacked by some Jewish spokesmen unrelentingly for its historic anti-Semitism, has suddenly become the most active arena for Jewish-Christian relations.

Despite the recent sensational headlines over the resolution in principal of the Auschwitz convent controversy, a wide range of serious academic, intellectual and religious activity has in fact been taking place between Poles and Jews for nearly a decade.

A number of major Israeli scholars have been engaged in significant joint research projects with the Research Center on Jewish History and Culture in Poland at the Jagiellonian University of Krakow, and also at Warsaw University. They have already published bibliographies and essays on Polish-Jewish culture between 1919-1939, and on Polish-Jewish relations between 1945-1985.

Professor Antony Polonsky, a Polish Jew who lectures at the London School of Economics, has written a survey paper describing the wide range of these Polish-Jewish exchanges today.

Polonsky recently accompanied Sir Sigmund Sternberg of London on a Nov. 24-28 mission to Poland (owing to health reasons and below-zero weather in Poland, I was unable at the last minute to join them in the long-planned mission).

At the meeting, assurances were given by Polish Prime Minister Tadeusz Mazowiecki, Cardinals Jozef Glemp and Franciszek Macharski, and others concerning the Auschwitz convent and promoting Jewish-Christian relations. The Polish leaders also discussed the founding of the Polish Society for Jewish-Christian relations.

Yet despite the slow but substantial progress that has been made in bettering Polish-Jewish relations in the past decade, Polish Jews are now deeply worried that "irresponsible actions or statements by Jews abroad, with little knowledge of Polish conditions, enormously complicated their conditions."

They pleaded with us "to use your influence to persuade Western Jews to refrain from ill-judged and provocative statements or actions ... which enormously complicate our situation."

## Behind The Scenes

At The United Nations

By David Horowitz

A World-Union Press Feature

## Firmness Pays — The U.S. Teaches The Arabs A Lesson

UNITED NATIONS (WUP) — The much-heralded maneuver in the waning days of this year's General Assembly to change the status of the PLO from a non-governmental Observer to that of an "Observer



State" ended in a resounding fiasco for the Arabs. They who generally manage to force the UN to swallow whatever absurdity they feed it — such as the "Zionism is racism" resolution — this time found that the UN gagged and spat out the unpalatable falsehood that the PLO was like Switzerland.

The UN did so, moreover, not because of the intrinsic demerit of the proposal — which flies in the face of all accepted canons of international law, namely, that to be a state there must be a defined territory with a population over which the entity claiming to be a state has control, but because the U.S. effectively wielded its big stick — it would cut off all monetary contributions to the UN if this monstrous proposal were to be adopted. The U.S. Government declared in a manner which convinced the majority of UN Members that, this time, America meant what it said.

As the U.S. pays about a quarter of the UN's total

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## TELL TALES

"One Man Plus The Truth Constitutes A Majority"

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rejoicing in the spirit of Christmas.

The metamorphosis of Christmas was not a straight, smooth road from the way it was to what it is. There were bypaths, drawbacks, tangents, and obstacles created by the natural course of history through the ages.

While Santa Claus is obviously a result of creative imagination, the thought was derived from and patterned after a real, historical person. During the 4th Century, Nicholas, an eight year old orphan, but independently wealthy, spent his life being kind and generous to the less fortunate in his native town in Asia Minor. He was elevated to Bishop of Myra and in the 9th Century was canonized. His Dutch name was Santa Claus.

The furthest reference to a Christmas tree is a legendary story of a wounded Swedish officer being cared for by the people of Leipsig during the

## King of One Liners



HENNY YOUNGMAN

...Man of Many Talents.

Don't turn around, but who is that behind you?

30 Years War in the 17th Century. As an offer of gratitude he set up a lighted tree in a church on Christmas Day.

The Christmas tree was introduced to America in 1747 by Germans settling in Pennsylvania. Five years later the Moravian sect decorated their trees with lighted candles. Catholic and Protestant colonists from Holland introduced the annual St. Nicholas visitation to America.

Early colonists were divided in the recognition of December 25th. Members of the Church of England, Dutch Reformed, Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Episcopalian and certain German sects honored the holiday. Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians and Puritans ignored the date. It was on the night of December 25, 1776, George Washington crossed the Delaware River to defeat the Hessians celebrating Christmas at Trenton.

Fantasy had Santa arriving in a cart, a wagon, on mule, drawn by goats and other means of transportation until Clement Moore's "A Visit From St. Nicholas!" in 1922, and thereafter the popular conception was a sled drawn by reindeer. In 1847, the first classroom Christmas tree was decorated in New York City Episcopalian Sunday School.

The individual states commended declaring Christmas a legal holiday. Alabama, which like all southern states celebrated December 25 with fireworks a la Fourth of July, was the first, in 1836, and the rest followed suit: California 1851, Nevada, 1861, Utah, 1881, etc., with Oklahoma being last in 1890.

As late as 1855, all religions were still not in accord in their tolerance of the holiday. The December 26 edition of the year's New York Times stated: Churches of Presbyterians, Baptists and Methodists were not open yesterday. They do not accept the day as a Holy one, but Episcopalian, Catholic and German churches were open. Inside they were decked with evergreens. However, by 1880, all evangelical churches were accepting Christmas.

Passing of Christmas gifts in those days was not emphasized, except the wealthy were expected to be generous to the poor. In the middle of the 19th Century, due to the influence of Charles Dickens' writings, singing of Christmas carols became prevalent, and the sending of cards began in 1875.

The classical editorial which began, "Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus," in response to a child's query, was written by Francis Church for the New York Sun of December 21st, 1897.

In recent years Santa Claus has become to be known as a communal folk figure. A Pennsylvania judge ruled in 1936 that any doubters of Santa Claus who appeared before him would be held in contempt of court. The court citation reads: Santa is not a figment of the imagination but an actuality. He is the symbol of kindness, a token smiling charity and a badge of all that is cheerfully benevolent.

Commercial exploitation of Christmas has become systematic and thorough, impelling Roman Catholics, Lutherans, Episcopalians and Jews, to band together in Milwaukee in 1949 and decree to put Christ back into Christmas.

Meanwhile, millions of non-Christian homes in scores of non-Christian countries, including Japan and India, have taken unto their own the kindness and charity and cheer of Christmas and proudly display decorated and lit trees on December 25th.

All this prove the true sense of Christmas has not waned — its just that the Spirit of Christmas has overwhelmed and is about to inundate all humans in the four corners of the earth.