

Who is behind the bus ads in Rome for a 'trip to Palestine?'

Is the Vatican's travel agency involved in the "Palestine trip" bus ads whose itinerary includes Jerusalem sites holy to Christians?



[Giulio](#)

Dec 2, 2016, 12:43 PM



[Meotti](#)

(GMT+2)

Ad for "Palestine" trip

Is the Vatican's travel agency really involved in the "Palestine trip" bus ads exposed on *Arutz Sheva*?

On November 23rd, I exposed the story of a bus in Rome, used by the Vatican travel agency to sponsor a trip to "Palestine" whose itinerary as advertised included visits to iconic Christian sites - except that they are in Israel's capital city of Jerusalem. Israel does not appear in the ads.

A few days later, the head of the Zionist Organization of America. Morton Klein, demanded that the Vatican end its promotion of pilgrimages to Christian sites in "Palestine" and its "erasing Israel from the picture" even though visits include those iconic sites in Jerusalem. "The ZOA regards this a sinister reiteration of Catholic replacement theology, whereby Jews and Judaism are theologically dismissed from history", the ZOA said in a statement. "We urge the Vatican to cease organizing and promoting tours to Israel that do not name the country, do not refer to its Jewish history and which shun contacts with the country of its 'elder brothers.'"

Later on, probably after receiving a response, the ZOA seemed to retract the story, writing that "it now seems that the Vatican travel office does not organize tours of Christian sites; they are operated by private contractors."

Private contractors? Those who addressed the ZOA may have relied on English speakers' lack of knowledge. Look again.

From the photos accompanying this article, readers can clearly see the yellow logo in the bus. It says "ORP". It is Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi.

This is not a "private contractor", but the Vatican pilgrimage office and the official travel organization backed by the Holy See. Readers can go on their [official website](#) and read what they say: "Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi is an office of the vicariate of Rome, an office of the Holy See, reporting directly to the Cardinal Vicar of the Pope".

The travel office's charter appears on the [Vatican website](#). The [Catholic News Agency](#) calls it "the Vatican body that oversees all pilgrim activity".

Here is what the [Wall Street Journal](#) says: "The ORP was founded in 1934 to organize trips for Vatican officials and groups of Italian Catholics to the Holy Land and other pilgrimage sites. The office shot to prominence after the election of John Paul II in 1978. When John Paul took the papacy on the road, ORP became the primary coordinator of his entourage". The *Journal* calls Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi "the Pope's travel agent".

So there are only two alternatives: Either the Vatican's travel agency took the decision to call Israel "Palestine" without the Holy See's approval and its symbol was used without authorization to advertise these trips, or what I wrote is more than correct.

Tertium not datur. No third possibility is given.

ad for trip to "Palestine"INN:GM

Giulio Meotti is an internationally known journalist for Il Foglio and an Arutz Sheva columnist. His books include "J'Accuse: the Vatican Against Israel" published by Mantua Books.

Zionist Organization of American Reacts

ZOA Appalled that Vatican Tours Erase Israel – Visiting Sites in Jerusalem Labeled 'Palestine'

A Sinister Echo of Replacement Theology

SHARE

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT MORTON A. KLEIN 212-481-1500

NEW YORK, NOVEMBER 29, 2016

The Zionist Organization of America (ZOA) has criticized the Vatican for organizing and promoting tours of Christian sites in Jerusalem, Israel's capital city, as part of tours to 'Palestine,' erasing Israel from the picture. The ZOA regards this a sinister reiteration of Catholic replacement theology, whereby Jews and Judaism are theologically dismissed from history. Replacement theology served for centuries as the warrant and inspiration for theologically-inspired hatred, as well as vicious persecution of, and violence against, Jews.

The ZOA is deeply critical of the Vatican's organizing and promotion of tours to Israel, the biblical, historical and legal homeland of the Jewish people, which erase and thus deny the

Jewish identity, indeed the very name, of the country, substituting ‘Palestine.’

A report from Italian journalist Giulio Meotti, a writer for the Italian daily, *l’Espresso*, indicates that Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi, a Vatican office that organizes pilgrimages to Christian sites around the world, sponsors a trip in “Palestine,” with iconic Christian sites in Israel’s capital city of Jerusalem. This is in addition to the fact that, as Meotti writes, “Catholic tourist maps and pilgrimage brochures omitted the name ‘Israel,’ using instead the sanitized expression ‘Holy Land,’ one of the visible effects of the Catholic ‘replacement theology,’ which adopts a de-Judaizing language. It [is also] no secret that Catholic pilgrims spend virtually all their time visiting holy sites in

Palestinian-run territory, staying in Palestinian Arab hotels and listening to Palestinian Arab tour guides. As a result, these pilgrims return filled with hatred towards Israel” (Giulio Meotti, [‘Vatican buses promote trips to Jerusalem, “Palestine,”](#) *Israel National News*, November 23, 2016).

ZOA National President Morton A. Klein said, “The ZOA is deeply critical of the Vatican’s organizing and promotion of tours to Israel, the biblical, historical, and legal homeland of the Jewish people, which erase and thus deny the Jewish identity, indeed the very name, of the country, substituting “Palestine’ was never and is not now a sovereign state, much less one with legal responsibility or effective control of many of the sites being visited on these tours. Palestine is not even an Arab name but named by the Romans.

With its *Nostra Aetate* declaration in 1965, the Catholic Church repudiated its historical position holding the Jewish people responsible for the death of Jesus, renounced its traditional claim that Jews had been rejected by God, condemned anti-Semitism, and called for ‘mutual understanding and respect’ between Catholics and Jews. It is difficult to see how this epoch-making new affirmation and policy is being in any way honored by the Vatican with respect to the tours to Israel that it organizes and promotes. “When Pope John Paul II visited the Rome Synagogue in 1986 — the first pontiff to visit a synagogue — he embraced Rabbi Elio Toaff and declared Jews the ‘elder brothers’ of Christians. One does not treat an elder brother as non-existent

and revise one's language to avoid referring to him, while exclusively seeking the company of his hostile neighbors.

“We urge the Vatican to cease organizing and promoting tours to Israel that do not name the country, do not refer to its Jewish history and which shun contacts with the country of its ‘elder brothers.’”

Pave the Way Foundation acts to expose the phony bus advertisement to stoke anger and mistrust

From: Gary Krupp <krupp@optonline.net> Date: November 30, 2016 at 3:58:57 PM EST To: gmenken@5wpr.com

Subject: Urgent

Dear Mr. Menken,

I am contacting you about the recent press release issued by the ZOA referencing Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi, the Vatican travel service.

This release was based on an article that appeared in Israel by Giulio Meotti, who at the very least is substandard journalist. This article about the attached photo of the so-called Vatican bus, is completely false. The Vatican travel office does not operate any buses. It is simply an official travel service, which contracts out its travel arrangements.

We inquired about this in Rome after reading your release. This is the response we got back Opera Romano (Diocese of Rome Travel Office)

“Definitely, it is not the Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi. The Rome bus tour is operated at least by 5 companies. The only one entitled to run “Christian Rome” (and goes inside the Vatican Gardens), not “Catholic Rome” is the ORP. The picture you sent me doesn’t bear the name of the agency that printed the leaflet and tells you a lot: it is simply a private enterprise that may be a Palestinian one.

It is my hope that you will verify what we have stated and issue a retraction as quickly as possible. Personally, as Jews, we certainly have enough enemies in the world that we do not need to further fuel hatred against us especially citing such misinformation.

Author attempts to make a case for not retracting the ZOA retraction:

He is unaware that this “Bus Ad” was a trick designed to create a negative response



Journalist Makes Case Why ZOA Shouldn't Have Retracted His Vatican/Palestine Story



FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT MORTON A. KLEIN 212-481-1500

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 2, 2016

By Giulio Meotti

ORP Bus in Israel (Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi)

Close up of ORP Sticker on Bus (Opera Romana Pellegrinaggi)

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This article was published by *Israel National News* and may be found [here](#).